

Wednesday, February 5th, 1975

# WOLVES DON'T BITE

## A BOOK REVIEW

Donald E. Pugh

Local residents frequently wonder where to obtain interesting historical tales dealing with the Michipicoten region. One interesting source is a long out of date but fascinating book entitled "Wolves Don't Bite". Published in the 1920's by J. Curran, editor of the Sault Star, the book is filled with popular articles, stories and humorous anecdotes which had appeared in the Sault Star in the 1920's. Numerous articles tell of Mr. Curran's experiences in Michipicoten, an area which was frequently visited and loved by the author. The main thrust of this book was Mr. Curran's heavily publicized theory that in no case could wolves be proven to have killed a human being. A large reward was even offered by the Sault Star to substantiate this claim, and even today a quick glance at the Sault Star shows the howling wolf symbol on the upper left corner.

Mr. Curran's descriptions are at times unnecessarily pungent. The Mission of the 1920's, a village described as consisting of 100 French and Indian residents, was related to be a place where "a steady job was liable to get the uplifted eyebrow". After all, most of the residents fished, hunted and cut their winter wood, totally free of the tedious ties of regular employment. The key characteristic of this village, according to Mr. Curran was the unusual popularity of that presence known as "demon rum". Mr. Curran continues in his story; "No occasion is complete without its presence, real or implied. The Mission Self Denial Club, which manifests itself by never denying itself anything it can get hold of, was the outstanding characteristic of community life. When a body knew of the arrival of what was technically known in Michipicoten as a "crock" the lucky cabin was sure of the arrival of many smiling guests". The story rambles on to detail how Sam, a gold prospector of unsuccessful experience, lent his good prospecting buddy Jim, his new suit, gorgeous necktie, scrumptious vest, fountain pen, bank book and money. Sam awoke the next day to see his friend Jim, after a hard night on the local blueberry moonshine, a locally produced product, derelict of hat, bank book, money, and with shirt ripped and vest gone.

Other unusual tales include a description of the electric heater in Sir James Dunn's outhouse at the Eagle's Nest (that house on Helen Mountain), the story of Joe Ball's baby moose, and the experience of getting lost on the gold mines (Surluga) Road, in the middle of the night. This book, available at the Sault Public Library, is available to any resident, interested in an inside glimpse into early Michipicoten life during the gold mining boom period.