

Famous Miramichi Men

by

Merle Milson

and

Gillian Biddle

Illustrated by Dawn McLean

Famous Miramichi Men

by
Merle Milson
and
Gillian Biddle

Miramichi Literacy Council - Miramichi Literacy Writers series

This series of booklets are available to anyone who wishes to order them. A single copy is \$3.00, any 3 books would be \$8.00 and a complete set of 24 would be \$60.00. Shipping and handling are extra.

Judy Arnold
President
Miramichi Literacy Council Inc.
P.O. Box 534
Miramichi, NB
E1N 3A8
(506) 773-6734
judy960@hotmail.com

Illustrated by Dawn McLean

Written and produced by Miramichi Literacy Writers, a project of the Literacy Corps Program, Employment and Immigration, Canada, sponsored by Miramichi Literacy Council, New Brunswick

Readabililty Level 5.1

Copyright, Miramichi Literacy Writers, 1987-88

ISBN-0-920709-23-0

Miramichi Literacy Council
Box 206
Chatham, N.B.
E1N 3A6

Acknowledgements: Appreciation is expressed to the staff of the Miramichi Community College for cooperation in finalizing the presentation of this material. We wish to acknowledge support funding from the Governments of Canada and the Province of New Brunswick, especially the Department of Education and Department of Advanced Education and Training.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER I - FRANCIS PEABODY	5
CHAPTER II - WILLIAM DAVIDSON.....	6
CHAPTER III - JOHN MERVER JOHNSON.....	8
CHAPTER IV - BISHOP JAMES ROGERS.....	9
CHAPTER V - J.B. SNOWBALL.....	11
CHAPTER VI - W.S. LOGGIE.....	13
CHAPTER VII - LORD BEAVERBROOK.....	15
CHAPTER VIII - J. LEONARD O'BRIEN.....	17
CHAPTER IX - R. B. BENNETT	19
CHAPTER X - YVON DURELLE	21
CHAPTER XI - FRANK McKENNA: A Man to Watch.....	23

FAMOUS MIRAMICHI MEN

Introduction

Over the years Miramichi men have become famous in many different ways. Some have made a lot of money in business. Others have made their mark in politics. Some were important church leaders. A few became well known because of sports. Whatever they did, each has played a major part in making Miramichi history. Each has helped to make our way of life better.

Here, then, are a few of the most famous Miramichi men. They are listed in order of period.



R. B. Bennett

Francis Peabody
William Davidson
John Mercer
Johnson
Bishop James
Rogers
J. B. Snowball
W. S. Loggie
Lord Beaverbrook
J. Leonard O'Brien
R. B. Bennett
Yvon Durelle
Frank McKenna



Lord Beaverbrook



Francis Peabody



J. B. Snowball

FRANCIS PEABODY

CHAPTER I

Francis Peabody is best known as “the founder of Chatham.” He was born in Boxford, Massachusetts, in 1760. Thirty years later he had a trading business centered in Halifax, Nova Scotia. In 1799, he visited the Miramichi on one of his trading journeys. He liked the area so well that he moved here in the next year.

At that time, the Miramichi had no important villages or towns. The only way to travel was by water. Newcastle had started to grow on the north side of the river. But Chatham was just wooded land. There were no schools, bridges, or churches.

In 1801, Peabody bought a large piece of land near the edge of the Miramichi. In later years, this was to become downtown Chatham. Peabody built a small home on the waterfront. On his land was a large tree. He used to tie his trading boat to this tree and trade from the boat.

Before long he became the most important businessman in a quickly growing town. In 1838, he built a large new home. It was built near the present-day N. B. Telephone Building in downtown Chatham. Peabody used part of his home as a store. This building is no longer standing.

Peabody named his new village “Chatham” He did this in honor of William Pitt, the Earl of Chatham. Pitt was an important person in the English government at the time.

In the 1820’s and 1830’s, Peabody’s business continued to grow. He built a shipyard at England’s Hollow in the east end of Chatham. He also had a sawmill built upriver near Blackville, New Brunswick.

When he died in 1841, Peabody was the best known businessman on the river. He was a fair and just person. This made him very well-liked. Peabody had shown the kind of leadership that caused other businessmen to follow in his footsteps to Chatham. Chatham quickly grew into New Brunswick’s largest town. Francis Peabody was truly one of the Miramichi’s great people.



Francis Peabody

WILLIAM DAVIDSON

CHAPTER II

William Davidson is best remembered as the man who started settlement and industry on the Miramichi. Davidson was born in Scotland in 1740. Scotland was a poor country at the time. At the age of 24, Davidson left his home for Halifax, Nova Scotia. He and his friend, John Cort, hoped to get into the fishing industry. At that time there were lots of fish and money could be made in the fishing industry.

The Nova Scotia government agreed to let Davidson and Cort start their fishing business. The two men found that the Miramichi River was a great place to start. It must be remembered that the Miramichi area was still a part of Nova Scotia in 1765. The men arrived in 1765 and spent the summer here. The Nova Scotia government placed only one limiting factor on Davidson and Cort. They had to take settlers with them to the Miramichi. In 1765, the Miramichi was a wood-covered land. Only a few Micmac Indians lived here. Also there were a few French-speaking Acadians still living on Beaubear's Island near Nelson.

Davidson agreed to take settlers with him. In return, he was given a large piece of land to share with the new settlers. The piece of land given to Davidson took in the land where Newcastle stands today. The next year he returned with about thirty settlers. He set up his fishing industry about twelve miles upriver from Beaubear's Island. Davidson was soon faced with many problems. There were no markets to sell fresh fish. They had to be salted and shipped to Europe. As well, some of the first shiploads were lost in storms. But Davidson kept trying.

He began a new industry on the Miramichi in 1773. That was building ships. This was done because the men had nothing to do all winter long. But Indian raids began against the settlement in 1775. Shortly after, the American Revolutionary War began between England and the United States. The settlement was no longer safe. Davidson left the Miramichi until 1783 when the war ended. When he returned there was nothing left of his first settlement. He had to begin again. He brought new settlers and built a sawmill and three ships. By 1786, forty families were living in Davidson's settlement.

Just when things were going so well, Davidson died suddenly at the age of fifty. He had been caught in a winter storm one night. He became sick and died in June, 1790. Mr. Davidson's grave is found at Wilson's Point. The graveyard is found where the Northwest and Southwest Miramichi River meet. William Davidson was the first to bring settlement to the Miramichi. He also began the industries of fishing and shipbuilding. For years, these were the heart industries on the Miramichi.



JOHN MERVER JOHNSON

CHAPTER III

John Mercer Johnson is best known as Northumberland County's "Father of Confederation." He was one of a group of 36 men who wanted to make New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Ontario into one country—Canada.

John Mercer Johnson was born in England in 1818. The Johnson family moved to Chatham in 1819. Their father quickly became important in Chatham business. Young Johnson went to the Chatham Grammar School and became a lawyer by 1840. It was then that he married Henrietta Shirreff. The Shirreffs were an important Chatham family at that time. The Johnsons built a home where St. Michael's Church parking lot is now found. The house was torn down in the 1920's.

By 1847 Johnson opened a law office with Peter Mitchell of Newcastle. Mitchell would later become Northumberland County's other "Father of Confederation." Both Mitchell and Johnson were supporters of the Liberal Party. Both soon became active in New Brunswick politics.

By 1850, John Johnson was elected to the New Brunswick Legislature. He was only 32 years old. He held this seat until 1865. In that year he lost his riding, but was re-elected in 1866. He represented New Brunswick at the Charlottetown Conference (1864) the Quebec Conference (1865) and the London Conference (1866). These three meetings were held to unite New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Ontario into the country of Canada. Johnson was elected to the first House of Commons in Ottawa in 1867.

John Mercer Johnson died only fourteen months after being elected. He was just fifty years old. His grave is found in St. Paul's Churchyard, Bushville. Bushville is about four miles above Chatham. In 1927 a plaque was put in St. Paul's Church. The plaque was put there to honor Mr. Johnson. Another plaque was placed in the Chatham Post Office in 1941 to honor him. This plaque can now be seen on the outside corner of the new Chatham Post office. This building was opened in 1956 and is at the corner of Henderson and Duke Streets. The plaque was given to the town by the Historic Sites Board of Canada. Johnson Street in Chatham is also named after this great Canadian. John Mercer Johnson is a fine example of the kind of people Miramichiers were and still are today.



Hon. John M. Johnson

BISHOP JAMES ROGERS

CHAPTER IV

The growth of the town of Chatham from 1860 to 1930 can be closely tied to the Catholic Church. There are still many signs today to show how closely one was tied to the other. No one person did more to strengthen those ties than Bishop James Rogers.

Rogers was born in Ireland in 1826. The family moved to Nova Scotia when James was only five. From a very young age he knew he wanted to serve the church. By the age of 25 he had become Father Rogers. He ministered in many parts of Nova Scotia from 1851 to 1858.

In 1860, New Brunswick was made into two dioceses. In the Catholic Church, a diocese is a large piece of land. Each diocese is governed by a bishop. One town is chosen as the center of the diocese. The centers of the two dioceses in New Brunswick were Saint John and Chatham. It was in 1860 that Father James Rogers became Bishop of Chatham diocese. The diocese took in all of northeastern New Brunswick from Moncton to Edmundston. Today, this area is four dioceses.

Bishop Rogers was only 34 when he came to Chatham in 1860. He soon found out what a huge job he had been given. There were few people in the diocese. Also, they were living far apart. Bishop Rogers was very worried about the problems facing the Indians and French people in his diocese. He was also worried about the sick people at the Tracadie Lazaretto. A lazaretto is a hospital for people who have leprosy. By 1868, he was able to get seven "Religious Hospitalers of St. Joseph" to come from Montreal. Things quickly got better at the Tracadie Lazaretto.

These same Sisters began the Hotel Dieu Hospital in Chatham in 1869. They also opened St. Michael's Academy in 1871. The first class was made up of 32 young women. Later St. Michael's Academy was built in 1931.

Bishop Rogers had other churches and schools built throughout Northern New Brunswick during these years. For example, the school for the people of Newcastle was opened in 1854. Rogers also began St. Michael's College in Chatham in 1860. At first, classes were held in the same building as the Church. This building burned down in 1878 and was rebuilt the same year. Bishop Rogers also greatly helped in the opening of a French college at Caraquet in the early 1870's.

The Chatham diocese was very poor in those days. They could not pay their teachers. St. Michael's College was closed for thirty years. But it had been Bishop Rogers who laid the groundwork for the college. The College was finally reopened in 1910. It was renamed St. Thomas College. It was left to younger men like Father James M. Hill to make St. Thomas College grow in the 1920's and 1930's.

Bishop Rogers retired in 1900 and died in 1903. But the schools, churches, and hospitals he had built are still being used today. Bishop Rogers played an important part in the history and growth of the Miramichi.



Bishop James Rogers

J.B. SNOWBALL

CHAPTER V

Like most businessmen, Jabez Bunting Snowball started his business in a small way. Snowball was born in Nova Scotia. He was the son of a Methodist minister. The Snowball family was sent to the Chatham Parish in 1852. At this time, J. B. Snowball was going to university at Mount Allison College in Sackville, New Brunswick. After he completed college, he came to this area to visit his parents. It was at this time that he met Margaret MacDougall. She was soon to become his wife. John MacDougall, father-in-law, owned a store. Snowball and MacDougall became partners in the store. When MacDougall died in 1866 Snowball became full owner. This was how the Snowballs first got started in business in the Chatham area.

Mr. Snowball soon became interested in other areas of business. Beginning in the 1870's, he became active in fishing, sawmills, shipyards, and railways. Mr. Snowball helped build a railway line from Chatham to Newcastle. In time the railway reached as far as Fredericton. Later Snowball sold his share of the railway to Alexander Gibson. Mr. Snowball also owned many small mills at Red Bank, Tracadie, and Bay du Vin. These are small villages in the Miramichi area. He also owned a shipbuilding yard near Chatham. Shipyards were needed to build boats to carry wood to European markets. Snowball also owned fish plants downriver at Shippegan Island. But he made most of his money from the large sawmill he built at Chatham in 1872. The mill was built close to where the Chatham Sewage Treatment plant is today. It was the largest mill in New Brunswick at that time. As many as 900 people a season were employed in Snowball's mills and shipyards.

Besides these businesses, Snowball started the first telephone company in Chatham in 1880. He set up the first public telephone service in New Brunswick. The lines ran from Chatham to Newcastle. He made Chatham the first town in New Brunswick to have an electric street and home lighting service. The family sold the electric company to the town in 1901.

J. B. Snowball was also interested in politics. In 1902, he became Lieutenant-Governor of New Brunswick. Mr. Snowball died in 1907. He was laid to rest in Riverside Cemetery, Chatham. A large family monument marks the place of his grave. After J. B. Snowball's death his business was run by his son, William B. Snowball. He died in 1925.

By this time, the Great Depression had badly damaged the Snowball business. The large Chatham mill closed in 1923 and was torn down in 1930. J. B. Snowball's home, "Wellington Villa," still stands today. It is now an apartment building at the corner of Wellington and King Streets. J. B. Snowball and his family had played a large part in the growth of the town of Chatham for almost fifty years.



J. B. Snowball

W.S. LOGGIE

CHAPTER VI

The W. S. Loggie Company was begun in a very small way in 1873. Like so many other Miramichi companies, the business was centered around fishing, farming, and forestry. In time, the Loggie Company would own stores, fish plants, brickyards, sawmills, and factories where many other products were canned.

The Loggie family first came to the Miramichi in the 1780's. Many of the Loggie family were in business on the Miramichi. But none of them did as well as William Stewart Loggie. Mr. Loggie went to school until he was fourteen. He then worked in the J. B. Snowball General Store. This is where he first learned about the business.

Loggie started his own footwear store in 1873. In the same year, he started a fish plant. He was only 22 years old. In 1878 he opened the Loggie Grocery Store on Water Street. This store would stay open until the late 1970's. The building is one of the oldest ones on the river, dating back to 1838.

In his first few years, Loggie made most of his money from the fishing business. He would build his factories and give boats and materials to the fishermen. In return, they would give the fish they caught. To keep the fishing business growing, he had to open stores all along the river. At one time Loggie owned as many as 45 factories. These plants were found as far away as Dalhousie in northern New Brunswick. The Loggie Company continued to grow. By 1937, it was a million-dollar business.

But business interests were not enough for W. S. Loggie. He also entered politics. He served on the first Chatham Town Council in 1896. By 1900 he had become Mayor Loggie. In 1903, he was elected to the New Brunswick Legislature in Fredericton. He held his riding until 1904. He then won election to the Canadian government in Ottawa. He held the Northumberland County riding for 17 years in the House of Commons.

W. S. Loggie died in 1944 at the age of 93. The company was run for many years by his son, Kerr Loggie, who died in 1947. Another son, Leigh, came home in 1946 to run the company. By the time Leigh died in 1977, much of the Loggie Company had been sold. The Loggie home on Wellington Street was now empty. In time it was sold to the town of Chatham. It is now called the “W. S. Loggie Cultural Center.” W. S. Loggie is best remembered as greatly helping Miramichi business to grow for over eighty years. The Loggie name is closely tied to Chatham business even to this day.



W. S. Loggie

LORD BEAVERBROOK

CHAPTER VII

Possibly no other name is more closely tied to the Miramichi than Lord Beaverbrook's. Lord Beaverbrook's real name was Maxwell Aitken. He was born in 1879 at Maple, Ontario. When his father was sent to Newcastle by the Presbyterian Church, Aitken came with the family. He was only ten months old. Max lived here until he was 23 years old.

From a young age, Max Aitken was a good businessman. As a boy he sold newspapers and soap. He wrote his own four- page newspaper at age 13. Aitken was not a great student. He wanted to study law, but he was turned down by Dalhousie University in Halifax. Instead, he studied law by working with the Tweedie and Bennett Law Office in Chatham. He did this for about two years. Aitken then moved to Halifax and later to Montreal. In the following years, Aitken was active in many businesses. He sold insurance. He took part in the Montreal Stock Exchange. He was busy in other forms of finance as well.

By the time he was 27 years old, he was believed to be Canada's leading financial person. Over the next few years, he made millions of dollars in finance. In 1906 he married Gladys Drury. They moved to England in 1910. In no time, Beaverbrook had been elected to the English government. For a number of years, he spent more time on politics than on finance.

Lord Beaverbrook died in 1964 in Surrey, England. He wished to have his remains brought back to Newcastle. They were placed at the base of his monument in the Newcastle Town Square. It was a sad day for all the people of the Miramichi.

Aitken never rose very high in the English Conservative Party. But he did have a lot of power. He used his money to make things happen. For example, he stood behind Bonar Law, who became the Prime Minister of England in the 1920's. It wasn't long before Aitken was honored with the title of Lord Beaverbrook. He was only 38.



Lord Beaverbrook

Beaverbrook bought his first newspaper business in 1916. It was called the "London Daily Express." In the years that followed, he would buy many more newspapers. He made millions of dollars from these newspapers. They made him even more powerful in the world of finance. As well, he continued to buy more businesses in all parts of Canada. During World War II, he helped build England's Royal Air Force into a strong unit. When the war began, England had very few airplanes. Beaverbrook became Minister of Aircraft Production in 1940 and changes came quickly.

After the war, Beaverbrook often visited Canada. In his later years, he was very kind to New Brunswick and to the Miramichi. He gave large sums of money to the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. He also gave money to build the Lord Beaverbrook Arena and the Beaverbrook Civic Centre in Chatham. He had the Sinclair Rink and the Beaverbrook Town Hall built as gifts to his hometown of Newcastle. As well, he helped to rebuild the Newcastle Town Square. Finally, he paid to have his old home in Newcastle changed into the Old Manse Library. He believed in keeping the Miramichi way of life strong and alive. He was one of the people who got the Miramichi Folksong Festival started. Lord Beaverbrook will long be remembered in the people's hearts for his many kind acts.

J. LEONARD O'BRIEN

CHAPTER VIII

J. Leonard O'Brien was another famous Miramichi politician. He was born at South Nelson, New Brunswick. Nelson is a small village about eight miles upriver from Chatham. O'Brien was born on November 6, 1895. He was educated in the Nelson and Newcastle schools. He then graduated from St. Thomas College in Chatham.

He was first elected to the N. B. Legislature in Fredericton in 1925. From 1926 to 1930 he was the Speaker of the House. He later moved on to become a member of the Canadian government in Ottawa in 1940. He represented Northumberland County for five years. From 1958 to 1965 he served as Lieutenant-Governor of N.B. He retired from public office in 1965 at the age of 69.

As well as politics, Mr. O'Brien was active in the family business. The O'Brien Company Limited had been founded in 1867 by his father. He owned a large sawmill in Nelson. When John O'Brien died in 1917. Leonard O'Brien took over the company. Under his leadership the business quickly grew. But then the O'Brien plant burned down. The business was moved to Chatham at the W. and R. Walsh Company plant. In 1942 O'Brien also bought the South Nelson Lumber Company. Next, he started a new company called "Chatham Industries Limited." The company employed almost one thousand people. In 1961, Mr. O'Brien decided to sell some of his mills. He was getting older and it was becoming too much for one man. From 1961 to 1968 he served on the Board of the Atlantic Sugar Refineries Company.

After many years of politics and business, J. Leonard O'Brien died in 1973. He left almost one million dollars to help New Brunswick students go to university. Some of his money was given to the poor. He gave Beaubear's Island to the Canadian Government. Beaubear's Island is now a historic park near Nelson.

In 1974, the O'Brien home was bought by Father C. J. Mersereau. It was soon renamed "The Governor's Mansion." Mr. O'Brien loved paintings and old Miramichi furnishings. These were also bought by Father Mersereau. Father Mersereau could not get the N.B. government to buy the house as a historic building. So, in 1978, he had to sell the paintings and special furnishings. The house is now used as a bed and breakfast hotel most of the year.

J. Leonard O'Brien was famous both in business and politics. But more importantly, he tried to keep Miramichi history and art alive. He will long be remembered for his years of service to the Miramichi.



GOVERNOR'S MANSION

R. B. BENNETT

CHAPTER IX

Did you know that the Prime Minister of Canada in the 1930's once lived and worked in Chatham? Richard Belford Bennett was born in 1870 at Hopewell Hill, New Brunswick. He was not a Miramichier, but had many important ties to this area. While still a young man he taught school at the Douglastown School. This is the present-day Rankin House. Bennett then left the Miramichi to study law at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. When he graduated, he returned to Chatham. In 1893, he joined the Tweedie and Bennett Law Firm. Their offices were on the second floor of the present-day Digdon's Shoe Store in downtown Chatham. Tweedie would later become Premier of New Brunswick.

As well as law, Bennett was also interested in politics. In 1896, he was elected to the first Chatham Town Council. He got elected partly because of the help of a seventeen-year-old boy, Max Aitken. Aitken would later become famous as Lord Beaverbrook. The two would be close friends for the rest of their lives.

Bennett decided to move West to Calgary in 1897. He never returned to New Brunswick to live. Sometimes, he would come back to visit his mother. He never married. Over the years, he made as much as 3.5 million dollars. Some of this money came from his law practice. He also was part owner of the Canada Cement Company and the Calgary Power Company. But most of his money came from the E. B. Eddy Match Company of Hull, Quebec. Bennett had been a good friend of Jennie Shirreff of Chatham when he lived here. The Shirreff family was an important Chatham family for many years. Jennie Shirreff married E.B. Eddy in 1906. She outlived her husband by some fifteen years. When she died, she left most of the Eddy Company to R. B. Bennet, her old friend. The company made millions of dollars.

For many years, Bennett continued to be active in politics. In 1911, he was elected to the House of Commons in Ottawa. By 1927, he was the leader of the Conservative Party. He became Prime Minister of Canada in 1930. However, he was not a very strong leader. Most of his problems were because of the Great Depression. There were a great many unemployed in Canada at that time. The people were poor and unhappy. Bennett lost badly in the 1935 Canadian election and retired to England in 1938. He died there in 1947, a lonely old man.

One of Bennett's lasting ties to the Miramichi is the Viscount Bennett Scholarship. This is a sum of money given each year to a graduating high school student in the Chatham area. R. B. Bennett is not thought of as one of Canada's better leaders. But much of the reason for this must go to the fact that he was Prime Minister at such a hard time.



R. B. Bennett

YVON DURELLE

CHAPTER X

Another Miramichier who made a mark in Canadian history lives today in the tiny fishing village of Baie Ste. Anne, New Brunswick. He did not become well-known for business or politics. Instead, he used the sport of boxing to put the Miramichi on the map. His name was Yvon Durelle.

Durelle was born in October, 1929. This was at the beginning of the Depression Years. The Durelle family was very poor. They made a living at fishing. Education was not thought to be very important. Most people in Baie Ste. Anne at that time were too busy trying to earn a living. For this reason, Yvon dropped out of school in the sixth grade. He went to work on the family's fishing boat.

Yvon's brothers left home in 1940 to fight in World War II. They did some boxing in the army. It was from his brothers that Yvon got interested in boxing. He saw boxing as a way to make some money to help his family.

Durelle's first matches were held in Chatham and Newcastle in 1947. Before long, nobody from New Brunswick or Nova Scotia could beat him. Durelle was not a complete boxer. He was mainly a hard hitter. Yvon really didn't like to train. This often caused him to have trouble keeping to his weight limit.

In the early 1950's Durelle won the Canadian Middleweight Title. Middleweights can weigh only one hundred and fifty pounds. Yvon could not make this weight. He had to move up to the light-heavyweight class. By 1954, Durelle had won the British Empire Light-Heavyweight title. The next two years had their ups and downs for Yvon. But 1957 was a good year. He did very well against highly-rated American boxers like Tony Anthony.

In 1958, he got a chance at the World Light-Heavyweight Championship. He fought against Archie Moore in Montreal. Although he knocked Moore down three times in the first round, he lost the match in the eleventh round.

Durelle was very disappointed after this contest. His interest in boxing quickly went downhill. He retired in the early 1960's. For a number of years he worked for the New Brunswick Forestry Department. He also ran his own night club in the 1970's. He sold it after some troubles at the club. In 1975, he was named to the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame. Yvon now lives a quiet life in his home village of Baie Ste. Anne.



Yvon Durelle

FRANK McKENNA

A Man to Watch

Frank McKenna is very likely one of the best known Miramichiers today. He is well-known for his remarkable win in the 1987 New Brunswick Provincial election. Many, however, find him interesting for other reasons. It is his hard-work and drive that are interesting to watch. These are what led him from farmboy to present leader of New Brunswick's government. These will help him in the years to come.

Frank McKenna was born in Apohaqui. This is a small farming town near Sussex, New Brunswick. He was born on January 19, 1948. He was the fourth child of Joseph and Olive McKenna. He had five sisters and two brothers who lived with his family on their farm. The children in the family had jobs to do on the farm. Frank also practiced his sports there. He always wanted to be a great hockey or baseball player. On weekends he helped his grand-parents with their farm work.

It was at a young age that he became interested in politics. His grandmother and father would discuss politics with him. At Sussex High School young Frank became Vice-President of the Student Council. He was also in many sports. He was very good at being a center on his hockey team. He was so good that he was offered a prize sending him to Boston College in Massachusetts.

Instead, he decided to go to Saint Francis Xavier University, better known as St. F.X., in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. He chose to go there in order to join their powerful hockey team. Later he had to quit the hockey team because he decided he was not large enough. In his last year at St. F. X. Frank became President of the Student Union. This was not an easy time to be student president. The students wanted power. They protested many issues in and outside of school. A student union president would help students with school politics. Even with all this going on Frank McKenna still had time to study and do well with his grades. He was named outstanding student in his second and third years at St. F. X. In 1970, he graduated with his Bachelor of Arts degree. He graduated with honors in Political Science and Economics. He was offered scholarships from all across the country.

Later, Frank went to Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario. He studied for a Master's degree in Political Science. While there he spent a summer working as an aide in the office of Liberal Cabinet Minister, Allan MacEachen. It was then that he decided to become a Liberal. Also during this time he found out that he needed to study Law instead of Political Science to get into politics.

So he didn't finish his degree at Queen's but went back to New Brunswick. He even turned down a scholarship to go to Australia. This was a Rotary scholarship. He would have been able to get a degree in Political Science there. He did accept a scholarship to go to the University of New Brunswick. It was a Beaverbrook scholarship this time. He went to the University of New Brunswick Law school for his Law degree.

In 1972 while still in Law school, he married Julie Friel. She was a girl he met when he was at St. F. X.

Frank graduated in 1974, second in his class. He and his wife moved to Chatham, New Brunswick. Chatham is a small town on the Miramichi river. It was there he had accepted a job in a Law office. The office, Martin, Lordon and McKenna became well-known throughout New Brunswick. The McKennas have a family of two boys and one girl.

It wasn't until 1977 that Frank McKenna himself became well-known. He became well-known as a Criminal Lawyer after taking the murder case of Yvon Durelle. Yvon Durelle is well-known for his skill at boxing. He was thought to have murdered a man. He was an unemployed man, Albin Poirier that Yvon was thought to have murdered. This man was said to have told Yvon that he would kill him. Things looked bad for Yvon. He had a reason and many people had said they saw him murder the man. They said they saw him shoot Mr. Poirier four times in a parking lot. This had happened after Yvon and Mr. Poirier had argued. Frank McKenna was able to argue that Yvon acted to protect himself. It was decided that Yvon Durelle was not guilty.

In 1982, Provincial election was held in New Brunswick. The Progressive Conservatives won again over all. Richard Hatfield was the leader of New Brunswick's government. This was Richard Hatfield's fourth time to be elected New Brunswick's leader. There were only 18 Liberals in the government then. There were 39 Progressive Conservatives and 1 New Democrat. Frank McKenna was one of the Liberals. He won the seat for Chatham in the government. He did not win by a lot. He won with only 81 votes more than the Progressive Conservative man. This was not a good time for the Liberals. The Liberals were very disappointed.

The Liberals had to choose a new leader for their party in the 1985 campaign. All the Liberals of New Brunswick would get to decide who would be their leader. At this time Ray Frenette was the Liberal leader. He had become leader to replace Doug Young after he had quit. He would replace him until the Liberals could choose a new leader. Mr. Frenette was most likely to win because of his experience. Frank McKenna was one of Ray Frenette's supporters. Things were not good for Ray Frenette. People wanted a new face. It was now that people started asking Frank McKenna to run for leader of the Liberal party. He didn't want to because he had given his support to Ray Frenette. He did not want to run against him for the leadership.

Things were bad for the Liberal party. Two byelections in Saint John went to Progressive Conservative people. Mr. Frenette then excused Frank McKenna from his support. This left Frank McKenna free to run for Liberal leader. He did not want to see his party go down without a fight.

In May 1985, Frank McKenna became leader of the Liberal party in New Brunswick. He won 1901 votes to 847. He then began to get the Liberals ready for the next election. The next election could come at any time.

Richard Hatfield decided that the next election would be on October 13 1987. Frank McKenna started up his campaign to become the leader of New Brunswick. He needed to have the Liberals win in most places in order to be New Brunswick's leader.

Frank McKenna's campaign was mainly on the issue of leadership. He and the Liberals felt that what New Brunswick needed was leadership. They felt that New Brunswick had done badly from not having good leadership. As we know, good leadership is important for a government.

One of the other issues he spoke about was the New Brunswick government's overspending. The airplane owned by New Brunswick was not used as it should have been. Also the Premier was spending too much. Another issue was the unemployment problem. Frank McKenna stated that if elected he would make sure that unemployment was given top importance.

Frank McKenna is also a supporter of women's and Indian's rights. On the issue of the Meech Lake Accord he spoke out for getting more rights for all Canadians. This also means the French. In fact, Frank McKenna can speak French. He gave his speeches in both French and English. He even spoke French alone to French radio and newspapermen. However, according to one French reporter, he knew many words in French, but didn't have good pronunciation.

October 13 1987, was a red-letter day for Frank McKenna. New Brunswickers chose this bright young man as Premier. All 58 Liberal men were elected. This was the first time in New Brunswick's history that one party won all the seats in a Provincial election. Only once ever before in Canada's history did one party win an election with all seats. This happened in 1935 in Prince Edward Island. Wallace Lea was elected Premier with all seats taken. Once again it was the Liberals who took all the seats.

So at 39, Frank McKenna became Premier. His Liberals took over 37 Progressive Conservative seats and 1 New Democrat seat to win. This ended the 17-year-rule by Richard Hatfield as Premier, a rule that near the end, was full of problems.

Having only one party in government presents many problems to the new Premier. With only one party in government there is no opposition party. There is nobody present to keep them in line. This means everything they do will be watched very carefully. They will be watched by the newsmen and the two other parties. One of these issues is Free Trade. Many people are not pleased with the Premier's stand on the Free Trade issue.

For the other parties, having a one-party government means that the money for the elected opposition is not given out. They will get very little money.

This is not the end of the story. At the present time we have seen Frank McKenna win another award. He won the 1988 Prix Vanier Award. This is an award given to young Canadians between the ages of 18 and 40 – Canadians who have made some improvement to the country. Others who have won this award in the past are Gordon Lightfoot, Marc Garneau and Rick Hansen. Frank McKenna has been awarded this honor with some very well-known people.

We have watched Frank McKenna win after an exciting campaign. His life and politics have been exciting up till now. The future of Frank McKenna will be watched by all with interest.



Frank McKenna

NEW WORDS

area	French	Premier
award	industry	seat
bishop	leadership	scholarship
campaign	murder	settlement
degree	plaque	settler
diocese	Premier	shipyard
finance		

Acknowledgements

The information for this book was taken from the following sources:

1. "Community Leaders of the Miramichi" by Carmel and John MacDonald.
2. "Historical Sketches of the Miramichi" by Lois Martin.
3. "The Prime Ministers of Canada" by Christopher Ondaatje and Donald Swainson.
4. The ATLANTIC INSIGHT magazine, Nov. 1987.
5. MACLEAN'S magazine, Vol 100 No. 43, October 26, 1987.
6. The MIRAMICHI LEADER, issues from Aug. 19, to Dec. 23 1987.
7. The MIRAMICHI LEADERWEEKEND, Jan. 15, 1988, vol. 23 No. 10.
8. The TELEGRAPH JOURNAL, Dec. 31, 1987.