

Ida's Notebook

Ida Risser



Earlier this winter the ice was very thick on the Conestoga River that flows past our meadow. For weeks I simply looked at it but finally decided to try ice-skating. I knew exactly where my white ice skates were stored but was not sure that I could use them. In my youth I skated miles on the ponds and rivers in our neighborhood with friends. And, when the children were home, we often skated together on ponds in our meadow when the ice was not strong enough on the river. However, that was years ago.

My husband generously offered to help me get started. And, our son Philip called down from the barn saying, "Do the skates work?"

I replied that, "Yes, they do but I don't." My ankles are too weak so I gave up and walked about

one-half a mile upstream on the ice. The next day our youngest daughter, Cindy, was home and she decided to walk downstream for almost a mile. The ice was snow covered the day that I took my walk and there were tracks of dogs, birds and raccoons on it. The quiet of the countryside was very pleasant.

It reminded me of how it must have been for the Conestoga Indians. It is said that they had a settlement at the confluence of the Cocalico and Conestoga which is how far I walked that day. Here the river is shallow and there was open water where I hoped to see our geese. They were nowhere in sight and must have gone further to be safe from dogs and to have water to swim in.

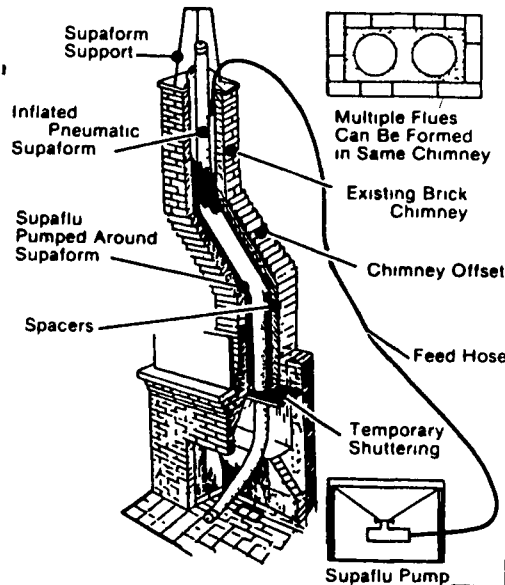
Surely the Indians used the river for transportation and the

woods along its banks for hunting. Years ago many arrowheads were found in our area but it seems that we no longer see any. I have a few but a great uncle of mine had an extensive collection. Collectors can become obsessed with getting a wide variety of Indian artifacts.



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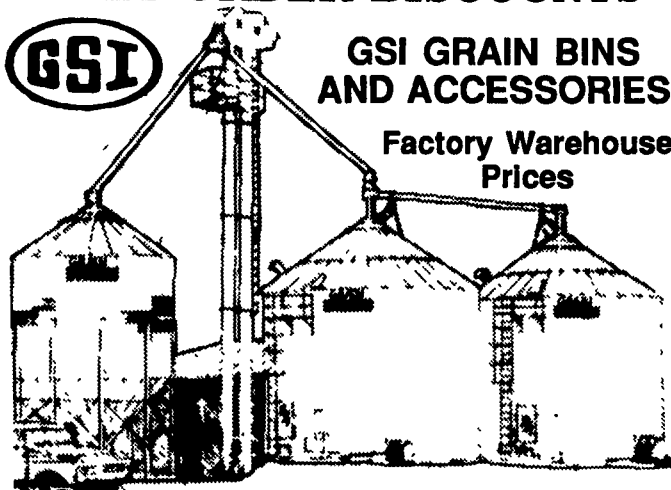
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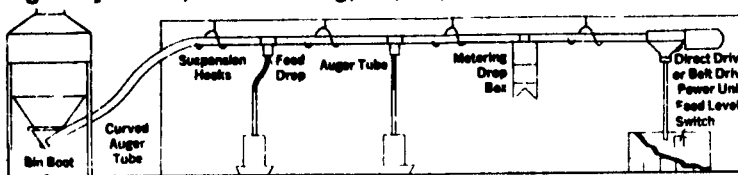
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