

Kiebusinski Family

Rev. Gwyneth Rae Kiebusinski (nee Russell)

- Gwyneth Rae Russell was born on October 23rd, 1920 at home in the London suburb of Streatham, England.
- Upon graduation from high school, she studied mathematics at the London University.
- While studying at university, she also worked in the branch of the British Civil Service known as the Secretariat of the Ministry of Works. She began as a clerical assistant, became a clerical officer and, lastly, executive officer. Much of her job entailed being a liaison with British properties overseas, especially embassies and consulates.
- In 1939, the Ministry evacuated from London to Rhyl in North Wales.
- In 1941 Britain was struggling to hold its own in the Second World War and Rae was asked to consider joining the Forces. She applied to join the Royal Air Force (RAF) and was sent on a course to become a flight mechanic.
- Rae found working on the flights to be fascinating and exhilarating. "In fact," she laughs, "I became known as the 'carburetor queen.'"
- As a flight mechanic in the Women's Auxiliary Air Force and later as a Fitter 2 Engines, Rae served at RAF Northolt, a Polish fighter station near London, where she met Jan (John) – her husband-to-be.
- As the war was drawing to a close, she became a mathematics instructor in the Educational and Vocational training program.
- She married Jan in December 1945.
- Rae was both a 'war bride' and a war veteran (of the Women's Auxiliary Air Force).
- She and Jan immigrated to Canada in August 1948 after Rae's family, who lived in Kenora, agreed to sponsor them.
- Rae's maternal grandmother, Emma Shelton, and two of her children, Roy Shelton and Vera Bodger met the couple at the Kenora train station upon their arrival.
- In Kenora, Rae worked as a cabin cleaner at her uncle's tourist resort, and as a bookkeeper at the Kenora General Hospital.
- After three years, John and Rae were offered and accepted work at the Chukuni Lumber Company at Snake Falls (near Ear Falls). They were laid off in 1951 when demand for lumber ceased.
- In 1953 they built a repair garage and service station at Ear Falls on Highway 105, and operated this business and a marina for 18 years.
- After working for several years as a reporter with *The Dryden Observer* and *The Red Lake District News*, Rae was summoned to a meeting of the council of the newly-organized Township of Ear Falls. She was asked to research and write a comprehensive history of the Ear Falls area. Rae went home and discussed the proposition with her husband. He was entirely supportive and the commissioned work began.
- She interviewed many of the local pioneers of the early 20th century and did extensive research in archives, including at the Hudson's Bay Company Archives when it was still in Great Britain.
- *Yesterday the River: A History of the Ear Falls District* was published in 1973 and has been well-received ever since. This book remains the only monograph on the Ear Falls District and its deep connection to the Red Lake area.
- For some time, Rae worked as a secretary-manager at the Ear Falls branch of the Royal Canadian Legion. She managed the bar and organized Saturday evening dances and was also involved in planning the expansion of the Legion hall.
- In 1981, Rae's widowed mother, Hilda Mary Russell, could no longer live alone. Rae went to England to accompany her mother to Canada. She lived with the Kiebusinskis at Ear Falls, and died at age 89 in 1982.
- After the death of her husband John, less than a year later, Rae contemplated deeply on what she wanted to do with the rest of her life. She felt a deep spiritual calling and began seminary studies at St. John's College at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg.
- In 1985, at age 65, Rae made history in the Anglican Church of Canada by becoming the first woman to be ordained as a priest in the Diocese of Keewatin, in which the Red Lake and Ear Falls districts are situated.

- She was in charge of the parishes of Ear Falls (St. Paul the Apostle) and Red Lake (Chapel of Cleopas) for seven years, chaplain of the Ear Falls Legion, and was in charge of St. Paul's Church in Ear Falls until 1999.
- She remains active in her Church and is known to sing and play the organ equally well.
- In 1998, she received a "Senior of the Year" award from the Government of Ontario.
- As an octogenarian, Rae continued to write history. Her full-scale history of the first one hundred years of the Diocese of Keewatin was published in 2005 when she was 85. During this decade, Rae also published several books of her sermons.
- In her 90th year, Rae is very grateful for her health, active mind, and ability to remain in her home.
- She feels blessed to have five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Kazimierz Jan (John) Kiebusinski

- Kazimierz Jan Kiebusinski was born on July 17th, 1907 in Lvov, Poland.
- He had three sisters.
- His father died while he was still attending school.
- A benevolent uncle, Jozef Kiebusinski, sent Jan to a Polytechnic in Torun, northern Poland, where he learned to be a mechanical engineer.
- He had a variety of jobs before the Second World War, one of which was to own and operate a fleet of refrigerator trucks taking animal carcasses from farms to cities for sale. This was his occupation when he was recalled to the Polish Air Force before the start of war.
- In Poland there was a form of conscription in which high school graduates were trained in the Armed Forces.
- Jan learned to be a fighter pilot and flew with the famous 303 Polish Fighter Squadron.
- When the German army overtook Poland, Jan was told to fly his plane to a neutral country, so that his plane did not fall into enemy hands. He flew into Hungary and from there walked into Greece, found a boat sailing to Marseilles, and enrolled as a deck hand.
- In Marseilles, he got another ship to take him to Liverpool, England where the Polish Armed Forces were regrouping.
- Jan was sent to Northolt, the Polish Fighter station in the London suburbs, where he flew a spitfire during the Battle of Britain.
- He was shot down and wounded in the English Channel, picked up by British coast guards and after recovering from his wounds went back to Northolt to be in charge of the Motor Transport section.
- He went over on the Second Front with 131 Wing, giving air cover to the Canadian army on the ground.
- Jan was wounded in Holland and returned to hospital at Chippenham, in Wiltshire.
- When the war ended, Jan married Rae on December 19th, 1945.
- Jan immigrated to Canada in August 1948 after Rae's family from Kenora agreed to sponsor them.
- Once settled in Kenora, Jan worked for a repair garage called Kane, Marr Limited.
- After three years, he and Rae were offered and accepted work at the Chukuni Lumber Company at Snake Falls (near Ear Falls), but were laid off in 1951 when demand for lumber ceased.
- In 1953 they built a repair garage and service station at Ear Falls on Highway 105, and operated this business and a marina for 18 years until John's health began to fail.
- John was also a member of the Legion and also of the Chukuni Masonic Lodge.
- John died at home in bed on the morning of April 6th, 1983, a week before Easter, and during a snowstorm.
- He was buried in Ear Falls Cemetery beside their son, Jonathan, and Rae's mother, Hilda.

The Couple

- When the war ended, Jan and Rae were married on December 19th, 1945 in All Saints' Anglican Church at Carshalton, Surrey, England.
- Life in England was not easy for a foreigner and accommodation was scarce because of so much bomb damage to residential property in the London suburbs.
- Rae had family living in Kenora, Ontario, and they agreed to sponsor her and Jan.

- The Kiebuszinskis applied to emigrate and were accepted.
- They flew from London, England, to Montreal in August 1948, and travelled from Montreal to Kenora by train.
- Rae and Jan were met at the Kenora railway station by her maternal grandmother, Emma Shelton, and two of her children, Roy Shelton and Vera Bodger.
- In Kenora, Jan (who became known as John) and Rae found an apartment on Tunnel Island.
- John worked for Kane, Marr Limited, a repair garage, and Rae worked as a cabin cleaner at her uncle's tourist resort, and as a bookkeeper at the Kenora General Hospital.
- After three years, John and Rae were offered and accepted work at the Chukuni Lumber Company at Snake Falls (near Ear Falls), but were laid off in 1951 when demand for lumber ceased.
- In 1953 they built a repair garage and service station at Ear Falls on Highway 105, and operated this business and a marina for 18 years until John's health began to fail.
- Rae and John lovingly adopted two children, Jonathan (born August 19th, 1955) and Laura.
- To his parents' and sister's heartbreak, Jonathan developed cancer of the thigh bone and died on January 1st, 1971 when he was only 15 years old. Years later, Canadian hero Terry Fox died of the same cancer, osteosarcoma.