

By 1970 it was clear that Algoma College had outgrown the "little blue shacks" in the Cambrian/Sault College Parking lot, and that its programming needed expansion. Since opening in 1967, full-time enrolment had trebled and large numbers of full and part-time students increasingly strained the limited facilities and offerings. Thus when then Education Minister Bill Davis arrived in the Sault to announce that at long last Algoma could expand to the second and third years, he was met with enthusiasm. And thus Algoma, well on its way to becoming a full degree-granting institution began its search for a permanent home and facilities.

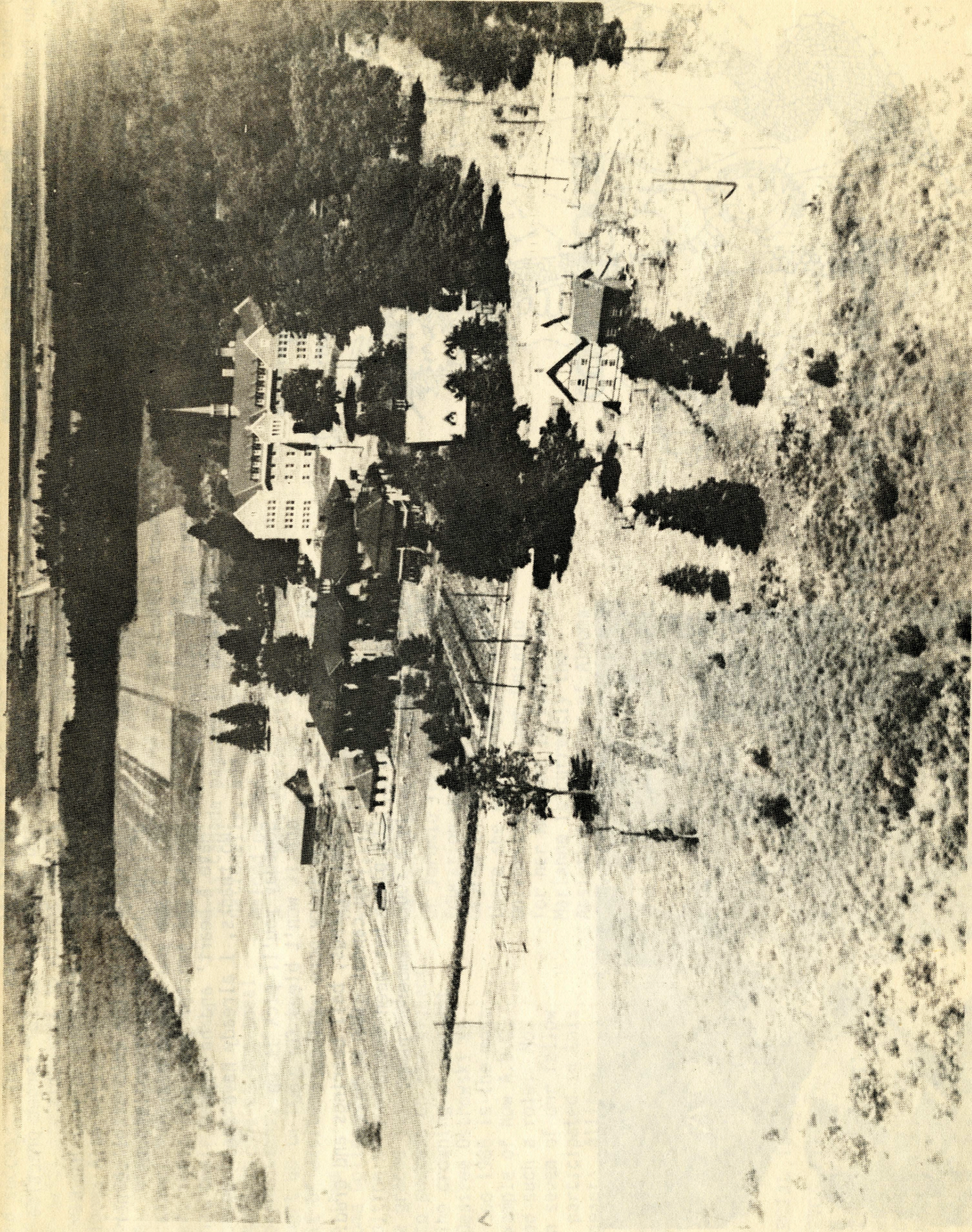
In that same year, 1970, Shingwauk Hall became vacant when, as a result of the implementation of new Federal Native education policies, the Shingwauk Indian Residential School closed its doors that June. After a century of operation as a school and home to many hundreds of Native students from across the region and Nation, the Alma Mater of many Canadian Natives was closed. The clamour to obtain Shingwauk included many voices: the Native people wished to see it continue to fulfil its traditional and legal mandate as a site for Native educational and cultural development; others advocated that it become a home for the mentally retarded; and Algoma College felt that if the College obtained the Shingwauk then the College's location could be guaranteed for at least a few years until plans for a permanent site were developed.

In the end, following the traditional use of the site, and the precedents set by the development of Anna McCrae and Sir James Dunn on the site for native and non-native use, the College entered into an association with the Keewatinung Indian Institute to share the use of the site. There were many complications, however, in obtaining a formal lease to the site.

In 1873-74 the Shingwauk Indian Home was founded through the combined efforts of both Native and non-Native peoples. The Anglican missionary educator Edward Francis Wilson worked with Chiefs Shingwauk and Buhgwujjenene, sons of the legendary Shingwaukonce, to build a Native education centre. Through great efforts funds were raised and the school was built, first at Garden River and later on the present site. For administrative purposes Wilson was the legal agent and first Principal of the School. In 1892 when he resigned his position he entrusted the Anglican Church with his educational and legal mandate turning over the School and its property accordingly. In 1935 when the present Shingwauk Hall was built with Federal Crown funds designated for Indian use, the Church as part of the agreement sold part of the site to the Crown as property "to be used solely for the purpose of maintaining thereupon a residential school for Indian children to be called the Shingwauk Indian Residential School". Thus the Hall was reconstructed while the rest of the site and the responsibility for education continued in the trust of the Church. In 1970 when the School closed the use of the site was thus restricted by law and precedent as well as by tradition.

The need to maintain the Native presence on the site was required to rationalize the transfer by the Crown of the site back to the Church for \$1, and from the Church to Algoma. In order to accomplish this and excited by the possibility of the first "cross-cultural" educational experiment in the Province, Algoma entered into "Principles of Association With the Keewatinung Indian Institute" to share the Shingwauk.

Thus it was that Algoma College came to the Shingwauk site, embraced a century-long tradition of cross-cultural educational development, and emblazoned the Thunderbird on its masthead. And thus our fascination with and commitment to its unique educational project.



An aerial photograph of the Shingwauk site taken in 1935, showing the old and new Halls, the Chapel, farm and outbuildings.