

Parry Sound

Why the Muskoka area doesn't look like southern Ontario

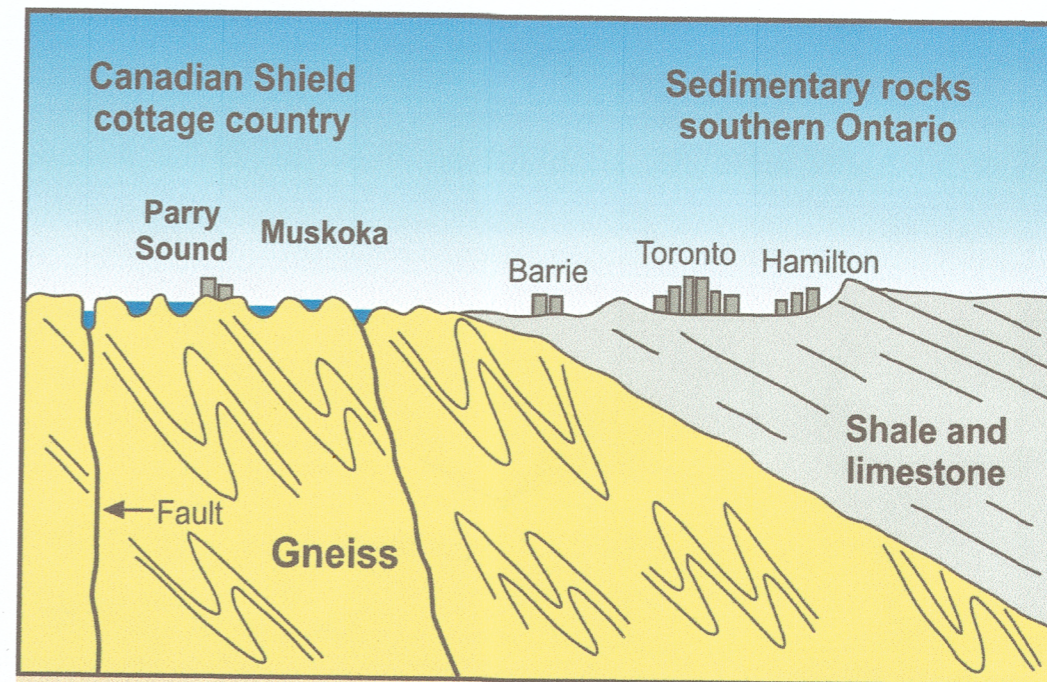
The scenery of Muskoka and Georgian Bay is very different from that of southern Ontario because of different geology. And why is there so little soil on these rocks?

Glaciers scoured the northern region over the past 2 million years, removing soil like a giant bulldozer and pushing, dragging and washing it to the south. Most of the rocks of the Canadian Shield are more resistant to erosion than the younger, sedimentary rocks that underlie the rest of southern Ontario, but the Canadian Shield also includes softer rock types, as well as broken rock in faults and fractures, the result of Earth forces over geologic time that formed these features. Because of this highly variable hardness, the glaciers sculpted a rugged topography of hills and basins. When the glaciers retreated, glacially carved depressions filled with water to become lakes. In contrast, southern Ontario is underlain by large areas of more uniform rock types that are less resistant to erosion. These southern rocks were more evenly and deeply scoured by the glaciers, and thicker layers of glacial soils were left behind by the melting glacier. These soils support the rich agriculture so characteristic of southern Ontario.

Why does Georgian Bay have 30 000 islands?

Georgian Bay is famous for the 30 000 Islands found along its eastern and northern shores. But why are there so many islands, and why only here and not along the shorelines of the other Great Lakes? The answer lies in a unique combination of gneiss, rocky shore and flat topography.

Scott Island, in Killbear Provincial Park, displays characteristic ice-sculpted rock and windswept pine.



The gneiss of Canadian Shield cottage country differs from the sedimentary rocks that form the surface rocks of southern Ontario. These sedimentary rocks were deposited on older Canadian Shield rocks when shallow inland seas covered the region about 550 to 350 million years ago.

