

THE CABOOSE



NEWSLETTER OF THE CUMBERLAND TOWNSHIP HISTORICAL SOCIETY (CTHS)

ISSN 1203-147X

Volume XXIV Number 3

Winter 2016

President's message

Happy 2016 every one. Congratulations to Ivan Tanner on the completion of the historical plaque project for Vars. Again we appreciate the financial support of the City of Ottawa who contributed to this project over and above their regular subsidy of our Society. As a Society we are fortunate to have a combination of energetic and competent volunteers and a sympathetic funding organization such as the City of Ottawa. On a sadder note, we wish to express our sympathies to the Dent family who lost both Constable Harold Dent's son and daughter-in-law this past fall. We take comfort in having honoured Harold Dent's memory this past summer in Navan. On the horizon for 2016, we kick off with a hike of the Old Forced Road which originally linked Cumberland and Bearbrook and was later extended to Vars. Only that last stretch still exists today, though traces of the Road still exist between Cumberland and Bearbrook. And this is the year that we aim to publish our early history of Cumberland Township. Keep your fingers crossed.

G rard Boyer

Our Society

The Cumberland Township Historical Society (CTHS) was founded in 1986. We are a non-profit, volunteer and community-based organization whose goal is to preserve Cumberland Township history.

Our newsletter

The Caboose is published four times each year by the Cumberland Township Historical Society.

Our Executive

- G rard Boyer, President
- Jean-Fran ois Beaulieu, Past President
- Tom McNeely, Vice-President
- Gilles Chartrand, Treasurer
- Verna Cotton, Director
- Ross Bradley, Director
- Ivan Tanner, Director

Ex-Officio

- Dorothy-J. Smith, Caboose editor
- Karly Ali, Website.

Our address and local history room

Cumberland Branch
Ottawa Public Library
Local History Room
1599 Tenth Line Road
Ottawa, ON K1E 3E8

Our World Wide Web address

www.cths.ca



Next meeting of the CTHS

January 6, 2016 – Special Event. A snowshoe trek along the line of the old Forced Road starting 9 a.m. Both trekkers and cheerers-on will meet at the Trinity Anglican Church for light refreshments at 1:30 pm. See map on back page.

Above photo of snowshoers courtesy of Ray Vetter.

New CTHS year started May 1. Thank you to all who have renewed their membership. For those who have not yet done so, the cost remains at the old CTHS price of \$15.

Important Events

For more information on CTHS events, please contact a member of the executive committee or visit our website at www.cths.ca.



2016 CTHS

CTHS meetings - Unless other stated, all meetings are at 10th Line Road Police Station 2nd floor Boardroom. Doors open by 6:30 and start time is 7:00 pm. Parking is on the street beside the Station.

March 2nd, Dorothy J. Smith (with Jeannie Smith): patent and local medicine
May 4th Annual General Meeting

At the Museum – 613-833-3059
CumberlandMuseum@ottawa.ca
Contact the museum for costs and times



Needed - New Talent and New Ideas!

The current Caboose editorial team is ready to let new talent strut their stuff. Randall Ash's last issue was Spring 2015. Dorothy Smith is now entering her fifth year as editor and will step down after the Spring 2016 issue. Dorothy is prepared to continue as a contributor and will assist with advice as desired by the new editor. Email Gerry Boyer and/or Dorothy Smith to let us know of your interest in the editor and/or layout jobs. Take your chance to write some history!

Publications - Reprints available

Muder in Navan from Verna Cotton or other members of the Board.

Memories of Leonard and Other Recollections by Gerald E. Poaps from Audrey Moore \$15 (postage included). Phone 613-728-7466 or write 532 Courtenay Av., Ottawa On K2A 3B3 or email jdm.dorset@yahoo.ca

Lecture Series

Dorothy Smith will deliver a lecture class (six weeks) in the Late Spring 2016 session of Carleton University's Learning in Retirement program (<http://carleton.ca/linr/lecture-series/>). Her mini-course "Putting a Face on the Great War" will tell the story of the Canadian Expeditionary Force on the Western Front from 1914 to 1918, through the experiences of soldiers such as Private Matthew Barkley of Vars. Lectures will be on Thursday afternoons from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. from April 21st to May 26th. The LinR program will be available within the next month and will provide more information on cost and registration to those who might be interested.

Contact us

- If you have questions or suggestions regarding any aspect of the Society, you may contact any member of the executive by phone or by email:
- Gérard Boyer, President gcboyer@hotmail.com
- Jean-François Beaulieu, Past President (613-841-0424) jeanfb@sympatico.ca
- Dorothy-Jane Smith, Caboose editor (613-225-3554),
- Karly Ali, Website, cths@cyberus.ca

The Caboose is made possible in part through a grant from the City of Ottawa.

The Latest News ... from Yesteryear

From the Ottawa Semi-Weekly Journal

December 26, 1887 Canaan

The new English church is being completed this week and service will be held in it for the first time on Christmas.

Another man made happy! Mr. John [Conn] and Miss Jemima Watson, of this place, were united in holy matrimony last Monday. The bride's father not being in favour of this marriage caused the young people to skip to another part to be united. Doing so they returned to his place on Tuesday, at which place they will reside.

Frank Dawson, the son of Mr. Lancelot Dawson, arrived home last evening to spend his Christmas holidays. He is taking a commercial course in the city.

January 16, 1888

The Grand Trunk Railway company's special excursion train for California left the Canada Atlantic Railway depot on Friday morning [January 13]. The car was run from Ottawa to Kansas City without changes. Among the parties who comprised the party are Mr. Wm. Eady and Mr. James Eady, of Bearbrook, who are going to Crescent City where they intend taking up large farms; Mr. James Allan, of Bearbrook; Mrs. McCallum, of Thurso; Miss Eady, of Thurso; Mr. N. McVeigh, of Bearbrook... It is the intention of some of these, if satisfied with California, to settle there. Mr. Wm. Eady took with him a stallion valued at \$1,800, and two carloads of household effects.

January 30, 1888 Cumberland

Three cases of typhoid fever have broken out in this village; one is serious, the others mild.

Mr. Wilson's grist mill resumed grinding on Thursday after eight days' idleness, during which time a new engine has been put in.

Mr. John Shirkey (sic). tanner and pump maker, contemplates purchasing a boiler and engine to replace the horse power, at present in use on his premises, in order to facilitate his business.

January 10, 1889 Navan

A very happy gathering of the parents

friends and pupils of Navan school took place on the occasion of the holding of a concert. The programme consisted of songs, recitations, dialogues and speeches; including the presentation of a choice gold watch-guard with a [...] given by the pupils of Navan school; a very nice ink bottle and book mark by the Fourth and Fifth classes of the school, and a beautiful edition of Longfellow's poems, by Miss Walsh, an ex-pupil of the school, who is now teaching.

The efficient manner in which the pupils recited their different parts reflected credit on both the pupils and their teachers, Messrs. W.H.H. Sparks and J. Cotton. During the entire concert the pupils displayed a good deal of originality. The concert began by the appointment of Mr. R. Bickerton to the chair. Before the concert concluded the presentation above-mentioned took place accompanied by kind words and an [admiring?] address to their retiring teaching, Mr. W.H.H. Sparks, for the excellent manner in which he had performed his duties, and recalling the pleasing associations which existed between him and his pupils and their parents. ...

December 9, 1889 Bearbrook

Dec. 7 - The members of L.O.L. No. 395 Bearbrook, intend erecting a new hall in the spring. ...

Our young people are now enjoying the excellent skating here.

Mr. A.R. McCrae, of Bearbrook, assisted by A. N. Dunning, of Cumberland, held divine service at the North Indian schoolhouse last Sabbath.

December 9, 1889 Vars

Dec. 7 - Large quantities of wood are being loaded here for the Ottawa market, but the prices paid do not altogether satisfy the farmers.

The recent fall of snow has helped business to a small extent although the dull times usually expected at this time of the year are now upon us.

Mr. Geo. E. Lancaster has a gang of men [...] in fixing up the mill which is [expected to...]

A very successful concert and lunch was given Tuesday evening by the members of Clark Enterprise Lodge I.O.G.T. [International Order of Good Templars]



Extract from the Biography of Walter Griffith and his wife "Eliza" Ann Lowe

by Harriett Tanner (Mrs. Wilbert Tanner)

This extract from the the biography of Harriett Tanner's parents focuses on the early years of her father. Walter Griffith, in the late nineteenth century. It continues the record she wrote in 1978 of her own life which was published in the Autumn 2015 Caboose. As was done with her personal story, I have left her words as she wrote them to ensure the work remains her own.

This is a partial Biography of George "Walter" Griffith, born at Vars Ontario, June 17, 1881, died January 2, 1973 and His Wife "Eliza" Ann Lowe. Born at Bear Brook, Ontario, January 1, 1883, died March 28, 1964.

The cover on a great book was closed about 6 A.M. Jan. 2 1973 when my Dear Dad went to his eternal rest, after living a very busy, useful and often exciting 91 ½ years.

I say often exciting, because it was exciting to always be planning to build or remodel his barns, house or fields. He made his own plans and knew what the finished product should look like. He hired Carpenters etc; when it was necessary to complete a job in a hurry. After the first few years he kept a hired man the year around.

Dad took great pride in making his fields fertile by clearing them of stones brush & stumps. If there were holes or low spots he rolled stones into these, drew top soil in the winter with team and sleigh, from the near by gravel pits, to cover the stone, a good coating of barn yard manure was spread on top, making fertile spots with good drainage, instead of having bog holes (as they were called) in his fields.

Dad had a pain in his stomache from the time he was a young lad. He remembered rolling on the grass with this pain, His mother was milking a cow close by, the cow being tied to the rail fence, which enclosed the barn yard, (the milking was mostly done in this manner during the summer.) His mother gave him some warm milk to drink, which "he said eased the pain," as long as I can remember Dad, milk was one of his

main foods. This pain plagued him on and off all his life. In spite of having every Dr. that came to the area check him over. He took pails of medication (in his life time) for this pain, I have seen him crawling on his hands and knees with it. He would take some medicine, have a rest, a little sleep, he would then be up and out to his work again.

Dad had many talents which were nourished by working for other people. Mr. Wm. Shaw who farmed close by, the Ronan's & Annabel's. where acres of turnips were grown and had to be hoed and thinned in the summer, pulled in the late fall the tops cut off and stored for winter feeding to both cattle and pigs. They were mostly put through a "root pulper", which cut them into slices and fed raw to the cattle & boiled for the pigs. Hoeing and harvesting turnips was hard work, done mostly by young lads. In later years Walter's sons & daughters also found this a tiring chore. Walter also worked for Mr. George Sparks & Sons, a Farmer & Cattle Drover. Mr. Sparks was getting on in years, but he would shove a hunk of bread another of cold pork into the pockets of his coon coat, take the G.T.R. train at Vars to Ottawa, Renfrew and beyond to buy cattle for the Shanty Trade and the Montreal Live-stock Market. Walter got plenty of exercise in those days, chasing cattle, often for miles, running the fat off the entrails, which was rendered for tallow. Candles and soap were made from this tallow. Geo Sparks had seven sons & one daughter. Tom and Russ done the butchering.

These carcass of beef and pork were loaded onto sleighs drawn by horses to Vars, some four miles away, to the Grand Trunk Railway, (later named the Canadian National Railway,) loaded into freight cars which took them to the Shanty Depot, in northern Ontario (as it was then thought of) and Quebec. This meat was delivered by horses to the "lumber camps" to feed the hungry men working in the bush.

Walter's Father also bought and sold cattle, when Walter should have been in school he was often chasing cattle or picking stones. He had very little schooling was not much for reading the printed word. He did have a keen mind the wit of his Irish Father and the thrift of his Canadian born Mother, Mary-Ann Marshall, (Her Parents came from Ireland in 1847.) He could read people, he carried a small pencil in his shirt pocket and could tell you how much grain, a bin



Barn-raising on Albert Marshall's farm, 1935. Detail of Walter Griffith. From the collection of Ivan Tanner.

of a certain measurement held, also in a few minutes, how much money his produce would bring once given the selling price. He was a clean tidy man who loved company.

The butcher Trade was a blessing in disguise for Walter and was the means of him getting on his feet, when he started on a "poor farm" with little revenue. He raised all the cattle, sheep and pigs he and his wife Eliza could handle, buying the rest from the neighbouring farmers. In the winter he butchered and hauled this meat to the Ottawa By-Ward Market". Eliza rendered the animal fat, the lard she kept for baking purposes, the tallow she sent to the market along with what butter and poultry she could spare. Walter had to leave hours before daylight on these trips to the market, returning hours after dark had fallen tired out, mostly cold and hungry. The horses had to be taken care of first, then any perishable produce he had brought home had to be taken into the house, before he could eat. Eliza would have his supper waiting. She and the children would have the chores and livestock taken care of. Dad was very fond of fish and bought at least one 100 lb. (wooden box) of fresh frozen Herring every winter. Each night a few were brought in to thaw out and made ready in the morning to fry for breakfast, and eaten after a good plate of porridge had been

enjoyed. As a young girl I remember Dad rolling 9 or 10 (wooden barrels) of apples into the kitchen, these had been brought on the sleigh(covered with blankets) from By-Ward Market, at Christmas time, Each of his neighbours came for theirs the next day.

In later years Dad bought and sold cattle for the American Market. He also liked horses, raised a few foals, bought and sold several head in his day. I once heard him say in answer to a prospective buyer of a choice mare named Bell as to whether she was for sale or not, "Yes" everything but my wife is for sale, at a price. His experience was if he was made a good offer and refused it, very often something happened to this animal which lowered it's value. In later years he had a second Bell.

I remember Dad telling us about the morning Mr. Sparks came into the slaughter house to have a look at the carcass of hanging beef. He turned this way and that asking Tom how much this carcass and that one would weigh and what money it should bring, as usual in winter he had his big coon coat on and in turning around through the meat to view it all, his coat swiped the sides of the barrel which held the entrails, where Walter was scraping off the fat, naturally

this amused a young lad and when Mr. Sparks left Walter said "well I have had my barrel cleaned off three times this morning." He was promptly told by Tom (the eldest of the Sparks Sons) and in no uncertain terms, to never mention the likes of that again. Dad said he never forgot this lesson in respect for older people.

Walter also worked a good deal for his Uncle Tom Marshall, His Mother's Bro; who farmed next to the Griffith's. He always spoke very highly of His Uncle Tom whom he considered a very capable man. This uncle had considerable influence in moulding Walter's life. It was a big loss to Tom's Family and the Community to loose so fine a man in sudden death at the early age or 47 yrs; leaving his wife with 8 children, the youngest less than a year old. Walter received a fine big white cow for one of the spells he had worked for his uncle, as was often the custom in those days the cow was added to his Father's herd.

With working at home and bring home his pay when he worked out, Walter helped his Father pay for three farms. In the spring of 1907 he decided to pull out for himself and take one of the two extra farms. He was now in his 26th year. The McVey farm (as it was called) in the burn, now north Russell, was considered a good hundred acres of land. The McVeys now lived in Vars village. Norah McVey was a fine girl she did not have a steady beau, it might be best to take the McVey farm Norah her Brother Archie were good friends of Walters. Walter was never short of girls both as a young man and later when he had seven daughters. He was a good dancer, waltzing was an art which he greatly enjoyed, he always took a girl to the dances from Cumberland to Russell, with a horse and buggy.

Walter was of a lonesome nature and decided it was too far from the village church & school to settle on the McVey farm, also the Maple Bush on the Bear Brook farm took his eye. His Father had sold more than enough cedar poles out of the swamp (adjoining the maple bush) than was necessary to pay for this Bear Brook farm. Walter and his two brothers, Fred & Ed cut these long cedar poles, hauled them to Vars, loaded them onto flat freight cars, they were shipped to "Hop growing farms," to be used for the hopvines to grow up on. Yeast to make bread was made from these hops. It was over eight years since this farm had been

bought, a good deal of the 98 acres was light soil. Two acres of the original 100 acres was owned by the Methodist church, this church was torn down about 1912, the congregation having moved to Vars for their church service. These grounds were now used entirely for their cemetery.

The more fertile land was not cleared of stones, (we children knew what it was like, to help Dad pick stones.) However with an old mare a younger horse to make a team, 4 cows and 2 sheep from home, Walter settled in a little log house with next to nothing for a stable. The bush was close by and when winter came he had a stable built to house his live stock. The price to his Father for this farm was fifteen hundred dollars, on a note which took five years to pay off.

Walter was busy that first spring 1907, but was becoming a bit lonesome to step out. There was a 24th of May picnic to celebrate "Queen Victoria's Birthday" held at Navan, Jack Sullivan a bachelor who worked off & on for the Griffith's and others told Walter he could get him a girl to take to the picnic. Jack made the arrangements with Eliza Lowe, who lived on the next farm to Walter, to go to the picnic. There were no such things as telephones, Jack was the message carrier. He thought this match would be great, the Lowe's were efficient people and prosperous Farmers. The word was not long in getting to Grandpa Griffith's ears. He was pleased and told (Jack Lalonde a machine & carriage agent) in Vars, if Walt looks to buy a buggy from you, sell him one, he has no money but will pay you in time. Sure enough Walter looked to Lalonde for a buggy, and it was a happy day for him (He told me) to have his first buggy and a brand new one to take his girl to the picnic in some 7 miles away. Alice Ball a girl whom Walter had been keeping company with & was engaged to be married, had broken their engagement in March. Dad told me he & Eliza talked about marriage that night on their way home from the picnic & dance. He was too lonesome living alone. It was not far across the fields to see Eliza & in two weeks they were making plans to be married. Dad always told us he married for suit, if you marry for what you think is love and your bride could not get up and get your breakfast the fascination or so called love would not be long in flying out the window. When a couple suit each other, with the same goals in Life, respect

and love will be a natural part of your life and will grow with each year.

Clemm McElroy who lived across the road from the Lowe's helped Eliza make her wedding dress and hat, using white china silk & lace. The blouse had a high throat fitting neck, made of lace and held firm by a wire frame. The long full sleeves had deep lace cuffs also on a wire frame. A pointed cape collar trimmed with lace fell from the shoulder line over the sleeves and bodice of the blouse. A long full skirt to the floor with rows of tucks around the bottom foot, and rows of tight gathers at the waist which lay flat and form fitting on Eliza's petite hips. She was little in stature, five foot two inches, weighing 98 lbs. The brimmed hat of the same material, had a wreath of white small flowers and a ribbon bow around the head band. Once again Walter went to Jack Lalonde, this time to see if he could borrow \$25.00 to buy his wedding clothes and a few other necessities, possible the engagement and wedding ring. The engagement ring had two crystal and three ruby stones. His dark suit, white shirt with the customary stiff white colloid collar and nice white tie, they made an attractive couple. "What a handsome couple" has often been said by those who have gazed on Dad & Mother's wedding photo. They had a big wedding in Trinity Church, Bear Brook, June 26th; 1907 with the reception and dance at the "Lowe Homestead" with the many Friends and Relatives on both sides attending. (Eliza was the 7th in a family of eleven children.)

Honey-moons as we know them were not heard of in those days. Walter & Eliza went home to their little log house after mid-night, but were up a dawn to milk their few cows, Eliza brought a cow with her. Walter was the first man to the cheese factory, (a half mile to Bear Brook) that morning. The wind took his hat off on the way to the factory, but he did not stop to get it until on his way home. On that beautiful June morning Walter & Eliza started life together.

Eliza was very efficient, quick in movement a good Home-maker and Mother, in fact like Walter she could turn her hand to almost anything. She was an excellent cook and seamstress, shirts for Walter and the children's clothes from their under-shirt out. She could do almost any kind of fancy work, including embroidery of roses, apple blossoms etc; using a very fine silk thread, which was variegated in

colour. She hooked and braided beautiful mats, fancy quilts were a speciality, she made several each year. She also made beautiful Comforters, carding the wool from their own sheep into batts for these comforters. In her later years she won many prizes at the "fall fairs" on her hand work. Mother was up early in the morning, especially in their first years of marriage when 4 A.M. seldom caught them in bed, summer or winter. She made many quilts & Comforters for wedding gifts and tried to have a quilt for each of her many Grand-daughters, However time ran out on her and she left no quilt for the last six, she did leave a pair of pillow cases for each of these, with embroider or crochet edge.

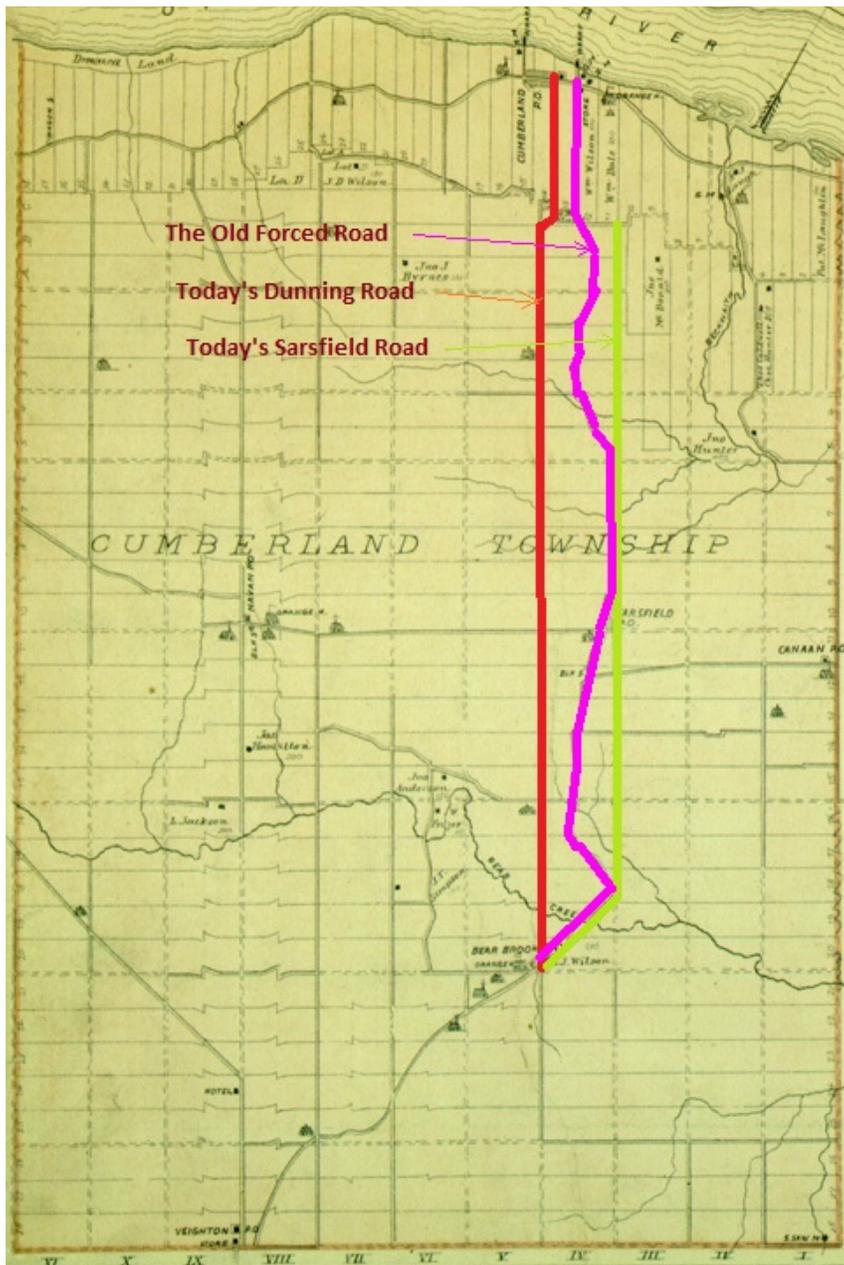
The soap for washing clothes was homemade by putting "hard wood" ashes in a wooden barrel which had clean straw in the bottom, so the ashes would not sift through the 4 or 5 holes which had been bored in the bottom of the barrel. This barrel was then set on two narrow boards over an iron cooler, two or three pails of warm, soft water, was poured over the ashes to start the lye water dripping into the cooler or "kettle", as it was sometimes called. A quart or two of warm soft water was added two or three times a day, until there was sufficient liquid for a boiling. Animal fat from which part of the grease had been rendered was added to this liquid, when this fat was saturated with the lye water a fire was set under the cooler and the mixture brought to a boil for several hours., adding cold water and stirring to make a thick golden mixture. Sufficient soap was made for a year or more at one time. In later years she made hard "white" soap from melted grease, Gillette's lye, borax, ammonia & water. (No soap has ever been made that washed the clothes whiter or cleaner, than that made by Grandma Lowe, Mother & myself.) The dyeing of clothes was another chore Eliza had each spring. The summer clothes of the year before, being rather faded from so many washings, the garments were passed from one child to the next, with the hems turned up or down to fit the new owner. Several were dyed the same colour, by putting the dye and 3 or 4 pails of soft water (from the rain barrel) into the wash boiler on the stove and boiling until the water was clear the dye. A tablespoon of salt was added to set the dye, the clothes were then rinsed until the water was clear and hung on the clothes line to dry, mostly starched first.

Mother was very fond of flowers having dahlias and geraniums around the old house in the summer, with a number of geraniums in bloom in the house in the winter time, also a Christmas cactus to have in bloom for Christmas Day, along with a few other specialities, such as a fuchsia. These plants had to be taken out of the windows at night in the winter time, so as not to be frozen, the eleven years they lived in the old house. Eliza always tried to have a good garden, all pickles, preserves, jams, jellies etc were made from produce on the farm. She picked strawberries and raspberries in the cedar swamp

and sugar bush close by, with the children helping as they grew old enough. This was needed to help feed her ever increasing and growing family. She made raspberry vinegar which was a treat in summer when cold water was added while boiled hot water in the winter. She also made jelly and jam from the wild choke cherries. She raised chickens, geese and Turkeys. It was important to have goose feathers for pillows and feather ticks for the beds, which were not only soft to sleep on but also warm in the cold winter. Each May or early June she went to the swamp for an armful of cedar boughs to put with the winter clothes and she packed them away for the summer, from the heat and moths.

....

I am sorry to have made so many errors in this my third time of re typing this Biography. I had hoped to make a more perfect job this time, I would love to start over again, but it is very time consuming and I get too tired trying to complete the task, thus so many errors. Maybe some day, Harriett E. Tanner



Map showing the Forced Road which will be both subject and location for the January 6, 2016 meeting (9 a.m. to 1:30 pm)