

"THE TORONTO CARRYING PLACE"

By

Mrs. Wm. Willoughby
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The earliest recorded history of this area is found in Percy J. Robinson's book "Toronto during the French Regime"; in which in full detail the "Toronto Carrying Place". is described.

This portage thirty miles in length, formed a link between Lake Ontario and the Upper Lakes. It ran from the mouth of the Humber River to the west branch of the Holland River. It was always traversed on foot, and saved a detour of hundreds of miles over exposed waters of the Great Lakes. This was no ordinary Indian trail, but a main thoroughfare as old as human life in America.

After crossing Bloor St. east of Jane St., it followed closely the course of the Humber. It swung to the east of Duncan Creek. Keeping east of the river, it crossed a small stream one and a half miles south of Purpeville. Swinging west, it crossed the east branch of the Humber close to the spot where the road crosses it today at the little village of King Creek. To the north of this ford the trail enters a wilder region, swinging to the east of the 6th. concession road, north of Hackett Lake., and crossing a height of land 1,150 feet above sea level (ridges of King). Keeping slightly to the east to avoid the sources of the numerous small streams flowing northward into the Holland River, the trail ran north a little east of the 6th. concession. The end of the Carrying Place where Simcoe camped is a quarter of a mile south-west of the northern extremity of the 6th. concession road.

Robinson describes the trail as follows:

"Toronto Carrying Place for a century and a half before the arrival of John Graves Simcoe, possesses a history, which, though little known, is always dramatic and picturesque; it is the history of the wilderness, the fur-trade, of the wars and cruelties of the Iroquois, of the adventures of explorers and missionaries, of the discovery of the Mississippi Valley and the Great North West.

By the beginning of the 17th. century the French explorers under Champlain had set up a colony in Quebec, and had made friends of the Huron Indians and enemies of the Iroquois. The Huron hunting grounds fronted on the shores of Lake Ontario and extended to Lake Simcoe; but their fortified villages lay north in the Midland district. Only encampments were built in the hunting area; the one in this district being at Hackett Lake. The Iroquois, the Hurons worst enemies dwelt on the south shore of Lake Ontario in New York State. Continual warring was carried on between these two tribes with the French assisting the Hurons.

Among Champlain's party was a young Frenchman named Etienne Brulé. Winning favour among the Hurons, he was taken into their tribe, and became like them in every respect. On September 8, 1615, Brulé, in company with twelve Huron warriors travelled down the Carrying Place to seek assistance of the Andastes Indians who lived in eastern Pennsylvania in war against the Iroquois. Brulé was the first white man to cross the Toronto Carrying Place, discover Lake Ontario and view the site of the City of Toronto.

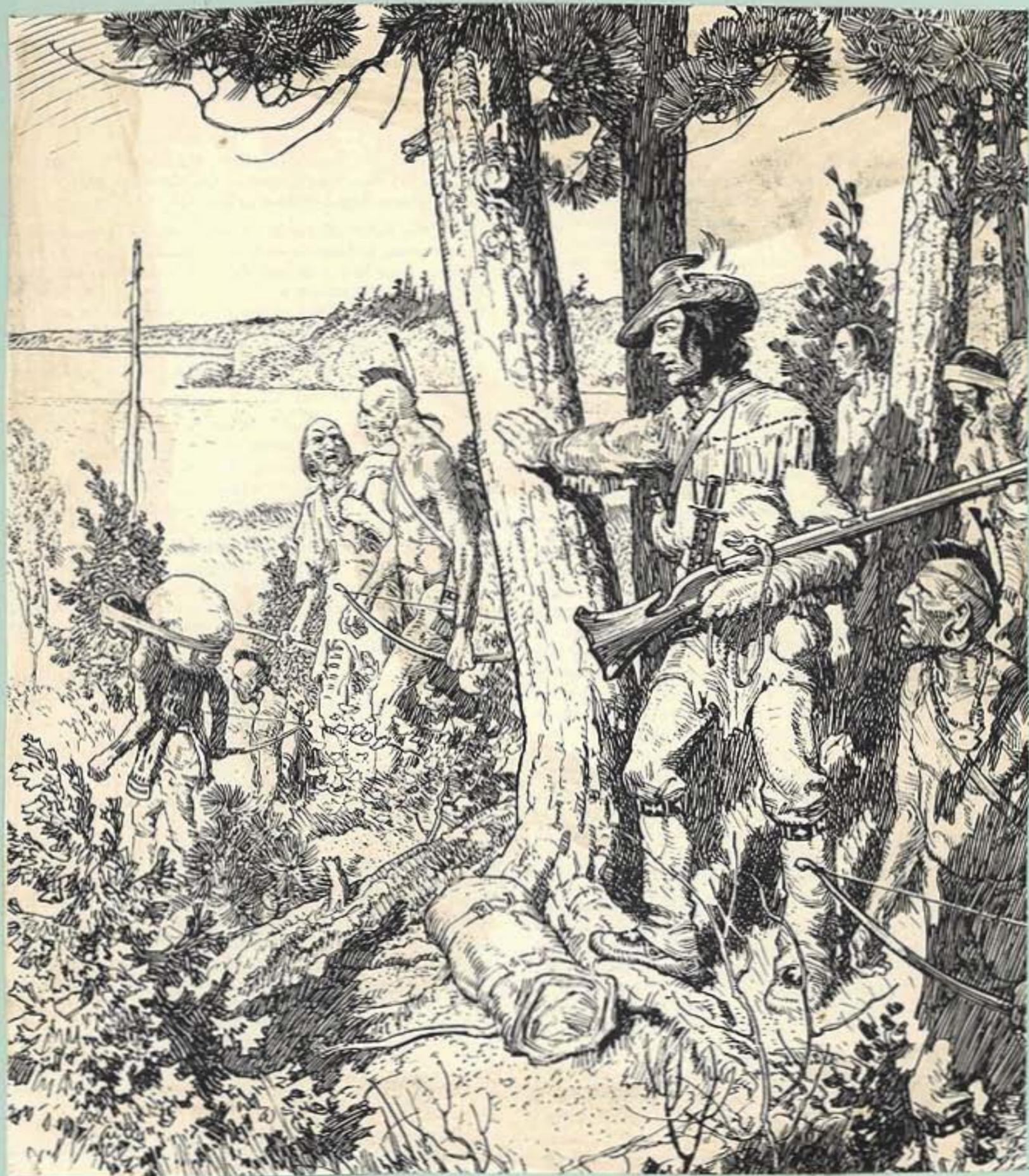
Two Jesuit missionaries, Brebeuf and Charmant, passed this way in the Spring of 1641 on their way back to Fort Ste. Marie, after spending a winter with the Neutrals. About 1895 a small Jesuit stone was found in Vaughan township, in lot 24, concession 5 with the date 1641 carved on it.

By 1649 the Hurons were driven from the land along the Carrying Place; and the Iroquois held undisputed possession of the lands lying between Lake Ontario and Lake Simcoe until the end of the 17th century. This part of the country abounded in fur-bearing animals, and the Carrying Place was used mainly by fur traders.

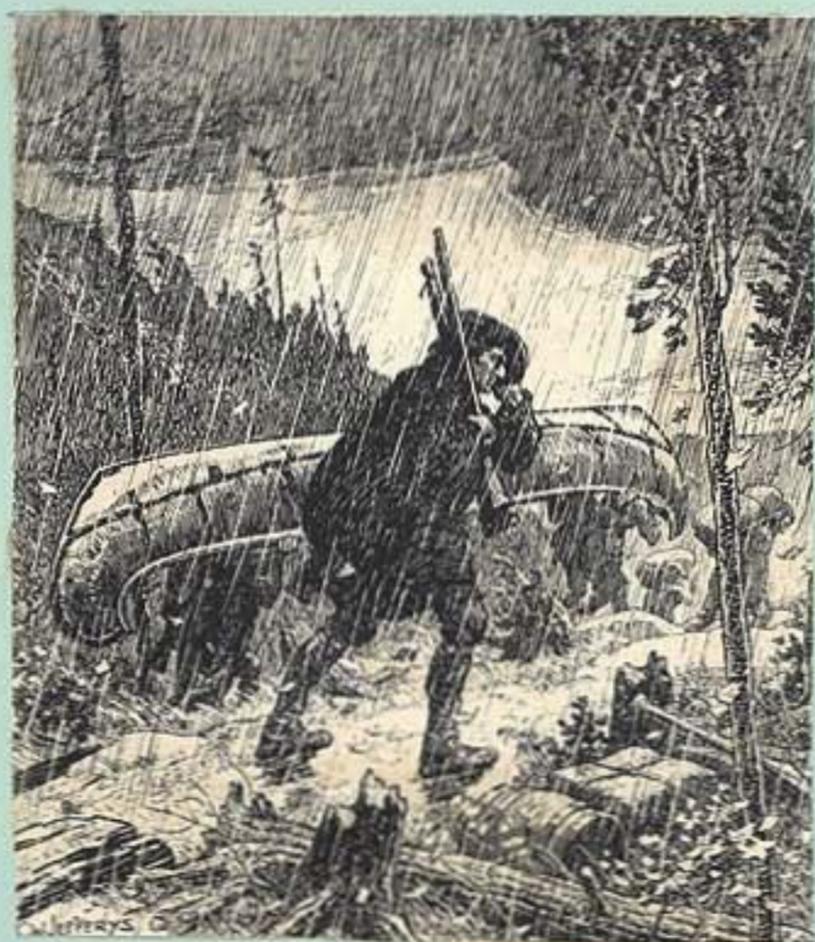
In 1680 LaSalle first crossed the Carrying Place from south to north; then twice in 1681. He found it the shortest route between Lake Ontario and Lake Huron, and a sheltered route in stormy weather. In his account of the trip up the Carrying Place, LaSalle wrote "All baggage must be carried over the crest of very high mountains"--a glowing tribute to the ridges of King. It is also possible LaSalle crossed this route again in 1683 after descending the Mississippi. The Carrying Place may be proud of so many historical memories of this remarkable man.

By 1758 the French had abandoned their trading post at the mouth of the Humber River. The Iroquois had gone back to the south shore of Lake Ontario; and the Mississauga Indians had drifted down from the north to replace them. By 1760 the English were settled at Toronto, and they soon realized the importance of the Carrying Place as the safe way to the Upper Great Lakes. On September 23, 1787, a meeting took place on the Bay of Quinte between the English and Mississaugas. Sir John Johnson was the Indian agent at this time. About one third of York County, including nearly 140 square miles of King Township was purchased from the Indians for the sum of seventeen hundred pounds in cash and goods. 1,107 Indians had an interest in this transaction.

In 1791 the Canada Act was passed, Upper Canada became an Independent province, with John Graves Simcoe as its first Lieutenant-governor. In 1793 Simcoe visited Lake Huron by way of the Carrying Place. A member of Simcoe's party said of the Carrying Place "the scenery was fit for pictures the whole way". In 1794 Governor Simcoe chose and surveyed the route of Yonge Street; and after its opening in 1796, the Humber-Holland route was abandoned. The townships were immediately settled after the Canada Act, and the original trail soon vanished except at its northern terminus in the Holland River marsh.



ETIENNE BRULE AT THE MOUTH OF THE HUMBER, 1615



LA SALLE ON THE TORONTO CARRYING-PLACE, 1681



THE HISTORY OF EVERSLEY

By

Miss A. A. Fergusson.

Eversley stands at the Intersection of The Third of King, two and a half miles north of the townline of King and Vaughan. It is the centre of a fine agricultural district, dotted with lakes and bathed in the warmth of its sunlit fields. It slopes to the south of the Humber River and to the ridges of King to the north.

Possibly the beginning of Eversley was a store on the north east corner, and a large dwelling house attached. Mr. James Tinline was the storekeeper, and we take for granted that the Tinline family lived in the house, as Mr. Tinline Sr. taught the school for some years. His daughter, our dear, much-respected teacher, Miss Elizabeth Tinline, may have grown up there.

As we remember Eversley, a blacksmith shop stood on the south-east corner.....

The Smith, a mighty man was he,
With large and sinewy hands
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Were strong as iron bands.

On the north west corner stood a wheelwright's shop, presided over by Mr. Robert Reddeth, whose son, Rev. J. J. Reddeth, was a prominent Methodist preacher. His dwelling stood to the north, and north of that was the Hugh Mitchell home. Mr. Mitchell was known as Dr. Tick, as his work was to clean the flocks of sheep from their troublesome sheep ticks. The family were musical and the hymns and psalms on Sundays were led by Dr. Tick's powerful voice, assisted by his family.

Next to the store stood a dwelling where different families lived in our memory. Mr. and Mrs. McKellar retired there in their old age. Later Mrs. P. Gellatly and her daughters, Bessie and Maggie, a highly respected and much loved family kept the post office and a small store later on as the large store was burned down.

Next to this stood the Baptist Church, where the Norman Hutchinson's and other families worshipped. Later on this church was moved to King, where Bethel Baptist services are now conducted by Rev. Mr. Hart.

South of the blacksmith shop stood two homes, one for the blacksmith, whom we remember as Mr. Kitchen, and later Alex. Hurst and his family. The next house and the cheese factory below it housed the families of the Eversley cheesemakers.

The name Eversley is possibly named for a little village in England. Eversley Anglican Church was the church where Charles Kingsley was curate. We remember him as the writer of "Westward Ho." I always think of him in my mind as living next to our Stone Church in the red brick manse of the Tawse family.

The pioneer families included--Rodgers, who owned the 200 acre farm with the large red brick house east of the corner. Mr. Timothy Rodgers raised a family of noted men. Dr. David Rodgers of Newmarket, and the best dentist for a large district around, Dr. Billy Rodgers. Also to the north on a fine farm, Jimmie Rodgers. Also Henry Rodgers, who took over the store for some years, until he left it for the farm, where he died, leaving Thomas Cairns to carry on. He, with Mrs. Rodgers, Aunt Jessie, as she was lovingly called, retired to Aurora, where she died at the age of 94.

Then there were the Wells, probably of United Empire Loyalists stock. Shall we devote a separate chapter to the Wells?

The Fergusons, Scotts, Lloyds, Tawses and Folliotts occupied farms.

THE WELLS

Judge Dalton Wells. Does that name mean anything to You? Had you lived on the Third of King from Eversley down during the last century, you would have known the name of Wells. That was a pioneer family. There were two of the older families, John and Joel and their descendants. I remember old Mrs. John Wells, who, in her old age lived at Eversley in the house in which their grandson Lyle Wells, lives now.

Their sons were Joel and James. Joel owned the south east corner farm and had a red brick house. He built a cheese factory at the south of Eversley. The fame of Eversley cheese was known far and wide. The farmers were out early with their wagons of milk cans going to the cheese factory. After the milk was weighed and the cans emptied into the big tank, the farmers drove a little further to the whey pump and filled the cans with whey for the pigs.

Half way down the west side, was the farm of Mr. James Wells. He also lived in a red brick house. Later it was taken down and the present white brick dwelling was erected. I believe that all the red brick houses were built of bricks burned on the farms. They certainly were large and well built.

Besides the two Well's red brick, and the large Rodgers, there was the Scott home, the Manse, a neat cottage in which the Tawse family lived, also the two sons of Joel Wells, Pearson and Gabriel lived in the very large solid brick house. Now these are painted white.

Mr. William Wells, oldest son of James Wells is still living. He was reeve of King for some years and lived on his farm north of Temperanceville in a red, brick house.

Farther down on the Third, Pearson Wells lived on his fine farm, through which the Humber ran on its way from Lake Wilcox down to Toronto Bay. The railway tracks cut the farm in two on the South. It is now a forestry demonstration, and very beautiful with its blue spruce and scotch pine.

Pearson Wells represented the Liberals for North York in the Federal Government in

Ottawa, for a term. He was highly esteemed. His eldest son was Dr. John Wells, a dentist. He suffered from epilepsy and often was unable for his work. He had married Josephine Erwin and she studied dentistry in Canada, and was a good one too. Their son, Dalton C. Wells, was the first Judge Dalton Wells of whom we spoke, a Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada. So lift up your heads a little higher, ye people of Eversley, for a judge has come from your ranks.

Gabriel Wells, brother of Pearson, lived on the farm west, also in a fine red, brick house. He and Pearson Wells, were Disciples of Christ, and attended the church in Aurora, of that denomination. Gabriel Wells built a church on the King corner of his farm, and though in my memory, was not used as a church. It still stands as a church on the north boundry of King, and is known as the old church.

The James Wells, were Presbyterians and worshipped in the Stone Church, built on the south east corner of the James Wells' farm. The red brick Manse was north of the church, the first resident Minister was Rev. John Tawse. He came from Scotland. He had been married three times, and had two daughters, Mary and Georgina. The latter became the wife of Rev. Dr. James Carmichael. Also a son, John, who owned the farm opposite the church. The present school was built on one acre of his farm. The grandchildren of Rev. Tawse still occupy the manse, which was re-built several years ago.

One of the earliest district churches and the oldest of the Presbyterian charges, Eversley congregation was founded in 1834. The present stone church was erected in 1848, and is a landmark of early architectural of the gothic design. The cemetary surrounding from 1837 to 1877, a period of 40 years. The cemetary surrounding the church holds the remains of Rev. John Tawse, minister from 1837 untill 1877, a period of 40 years.

Eversley Presbyterian Church was an offshoot of Newmarket Presbyterian Church. The first church at Eversley was a log structure. It was to be used for divine service on Sundays and for a school during the week. Rev. John Tawse was the teacher. Young men and maidens attended during the winter, adding to their store of knowledge. If any of the young men desired to go further, Rev. Tawse was a grand tutor and gave them every assistance. Among the young men of letters, who rose to prominence was Andrew Yule, who became a school teacher, later the reeve of Aurora, and a highly respected man there. Another man of letters was Frederick Burrows. He became a school teacher, and then a chief inspector of Toronto schools and died only a few years ago. He was a poet of some renown. I have copies of some of his poems. Others, too, got a start from that fine old preacher, Rev. John Tawse.

Sometimes a couple would call to be married. Mr. Tawse would send the children to the back of the room while he conducted the ceremony. At the back of the room, the young men would edge up to the young girls and go through the ceremony with them. I often wondered if any of those couples married in later years.

The log church was replaced by the present stone one, and the school was later replaced by the present white brick one across the road.

I attended both schools. Miss Alice Smeltser was the first teacher. She was the first cousin of Parnham Wells, son of Pearson Wells, and later became his wife. On that first Arbor Day, a new institution, a row of cedars across the front was planted, a living testimony to her memory. No doubt Mr. Parnham Wells assisted in the work.

In the old brick school we had a succession of teachers, all men, and very fine teachers. My brother, Thomas, attended as a wee boy, when a Mr. March was teacher. He may have been good with the older pupils, but gave little attention to the little ones. Thomas used to tell how Martha Curts who was in his class, returned after being absent for a day, and asked him for a lesson. In the first book, they had the first lesson long enough, so he showed her the next one, and the teacher did not know the difference.

My first teacher was Frank Stiver, who, with his charming wife, lived in the part of the store dwelling. I remember when the Rev. Mr. Grant lived in that apartment with his family. He was the first baptist preacher. Later when Mr. Henry Rodgers gave up the store for the farm, Mr. Stiver became storekeeper. He also dealt in organs -- the Uxbridge Organ Co. He sold several of the first organs in the community. My first organ was one of these. It cost \$75.00. The whole family took music on it. The teacher was Miss Izzie Norman, whose home was in King, where Mr. Burt now lives.

After Mr. Stiver, came Mr. Mathew Harry Thompson. The Thompson family lived on the farm north of the new school house. Mr. M.H. Thompson and his family lived in the house where Mr. and Mrs. McConnell now live. After some years he was transferred to Aurora as principal of the public school. He was a good teacher and a strict disciplinarian. Miss Smeltser was the first woman teacher, but since her time we have had a succession of good women teachers.

One of the finest teachers was Archie Campbell. He was very much esteemed. He became Inspector of North York, and passed away a few years ago. He suggested to me that I try for entrance, a rather unusual thing in those days. My brother Henry and Albert were attending high school, but with the cost of the board and room I did not expect to be able to go on. I went up to Newmarket on December 20

and passed first in the 92 pupils trying, so later my turn came to go to Aurora High School, eventually to Model and Normal. Later in 1913-1914, I taught at Eversley School, thoroughly enjoying the youth of those years.

Now we shall tell of the Ferguson Clan and the Scotts, for they became very close in marriage. Mr. Thomas Scott came from Scotland with his brother Walter (later of South Aurora), his brother Robert, his sister Mr. John Yule, and his old mother - Granny. He was a pioneer blacksmith and built a home and shop on the south west corner of the Third, a block south of Eversley. His brother Robert learned the trade with him, as did other young men. Nearly every implement used on the farm was made by the blacksmith - the iron plows, harrows etc.

The charcoal used in the smithy was burned in the field below the house. The farms were covered with forests. The huge trees were cut down: a large pit was dug, and the logs heaped high in this pit. The earth was thrown over the logs until they were well covered, only a few spaces left where the fire could be laid. Men had to be there day and night. If the fire broke through more earth covered the hole. So the logs were completely burned to make charcoal. Mr. Scott has filled his shed with new charcoal. On the night of March 4th, the whole lot of buildings were burned to the ground - the coal shed, the blacksmith shop, and the dwelling house. Kind neighbours gave shelter to the women and children. There were four wee Scotts at the time - my mother Agnes, known as Nancy, Walter, Helen and wee Jeannie.

On the east corner stood a tavern owned by the Raffartys. Mr. Raffarty had brought a farm. There was a large family, of big boys, and in order to supplement the income they built an extra room to house the bar. It was not a good move, for the boys were good customers and were often seen fighting outside. A new license was needed and names needed to request one. Mr. Scott would not sign for the license. A strange man had been at the tavern a few days before. The night of the fire he disappeared, and the surmise was that he had the fire set and then fled, as he was never seen or heard of again.

Old Mr. Raffarty was a good neighbour and rode his old horse down to the Roman Catholic Church in Richmond Hill on a Sunday morning. When calling on his

neighbours and they would ask 'How are you Mr. Raffarty?', he would reply, 'Still striving to be better'. As he needed money to make a payment on his farm he borrowed money from Mr. George Hartman, east of Aurora. One morning Mr. Hartman rode over to see Mr. Raffarty. He found him working in the field. They exchanged greetings and Mr. Raffarty explained that he was unable to make a payment at present, but invited Mr. Hartman in to dinner. 'There may not be much more but potatoes and buttermilk' he said, 'but you are welcome to it.' So Mr. Hartman shared in the dinner and the two men parted good friends. In time Mr. Raffarty paid the mortgage. Raffarty's Corner was later known as Al Wells' Corner; now Dr. J.T. Phair, Ontario's Deputy Minister of Health lives there.

On the south east corner was the Ferguson home. Mr. Thomas Ferguson married a Glasgow lady, Catherine Kerr. They left Ayr, where Bobby Burns was born in a Ferguson cottage, and sailed for America. After a long sailing voyage they reached New York and remained there until their son John was born. Later they came to Upper Canada, and settled on a farm below Richmond Hill, later known as the Kail Farm, now the home of the great telescope, the OBSERVATORY. There their family increased. Thomas, Hugh and Alex, possibly Margaret joined the family there.

In 1826 Mr. Ferguson bought 400 acres in King, from the Third to Temperanceville. The first 200 acres were kept as a homestead, the next 100 acres were sold to Barnes Beynon, and the rest to Henry Stewart, my great-great grandfather.

Mr. Ferguson was a weaver by trade and his fingers had woven the fine, silken Paisley shawls in Scotland. To cut down the forest and hew out a home was not easy for him. He wove the sheep's wool into blankets and underwear, shirts and pants, to keep out the winter cold. In exchange the neighbours helped him in the making of lumber and building a home. Apparently not a log house was erected, but a full-sized stucco house. In those days the house was built from the ground up, no cellars, but an outside brick cellar for keeping milk and potatoes, apples and preserved fruits. Later, after a century of occupation by the Fergusons, a cellar, the full size of the house was dug by Thomas in 1896. In the cornerstone of this cellar Thomas placed the local papers, Aurora Banner, Toronto Globe and Mail etc.