

LOT 10, CONCESSION 7, YARMOUTH

-by Mrs. Florence Dunning-

On Septemer 1, 1832 the Crown granted to Canada Company, Lot 10, Concession 7, Yarmouth. On August 6, 1845 the above mentioned property was deeded to Jeronimus Rapelje. In 1884 Jeronimus Rapelje sold to Jerome Rapelje, the eleventh child of a family of twelve children, the south half of the south half of Lot 10 and in 1895 he sold the north half of the lot to three older sons, Peter, John and Henry. In 1901, these three brothers sold their north half to a sister, Mrs. Catherine Bristol, a widow. In 1902, she sold to Alonzo Rapelje, her nephew and a son of Jerome, the north half. In 1910, the south half was deeded to Alonzo Rapelje for the care of his Mother and Father, then to be deeded to Bertha as long as she was single or until she died. In 1919, Alonzo Rapleje sold to Hiram and Lottie Allen the north half of the south half. In 1933 the deed of the south half was given to Bertha Rapleje Horswell since she had cared for her mother until death. The north half is nowlanger in the family.

Mr. and Mrs. Harry Horswell (nee Bertha Rapelje) have a daughter, Florence (Mrs. D. Dunning) who with Florence's two children, Bernice and Jim all reside on the Rapelje farm.

HISTORY OF THE RAPELJE FAMILY

-by Mrs. Angus McKenzie-

The Rapeljes were of French Huguenot descent, their ancestors fleeing from Rochelle, France in 1623 to escape persecution.

Jaris Janson de Rapelje, the first in the new world purchased a large tract of land where the city of Brooklyn, N.Y. now stands from the Indians.

Daniel Rapelje, his wife and three children and brother Jeronimus migrated to Canada in 1802, settling in Norfolk County, then came to the mouth of Kettle Creek in 1810 to settle in what is now known as St. Thomas. By that time the family had increased to seven children. Jeronimus Rapelje never married.

The naming of this new community took place in 1817 at the historical raising of the first frame building built by Horace Foster.

Jeronimus Rapelje and Wm. Drake were the two oldest men at the raising and to them went the honor of naming the place. They called it Thomas for Colonel Thomas Talbot and jokingly prefixed it with Saint, to add a little dignity, as Colonel Talbot was certainly not a Saint.

This evidence was recorded in a statement made by Jeronimus to his brother Daniel, the first settler in the new community. Daniel had the rank of Captain and his log home on the Yarmouth side of Kettle Creek was erected in 1809.

There was need for a place of worship, in this little

trading centre, so in 1824 Daniel Rapelje deeded the land for the old St. Thomas Anglican Church on Walnut Street to the past village. The church was completed and opened that year and services are still held in this pioneer place of worship and it is daily open to the public, as is the fine old cemetery, surrounding the frame chapel where many of first pioneers found their last resting place. Fresh graves are to be seen in this picturesque setting to-day, many feeling it an honor to be numbered among the brave heroes of yesteryear.

In 1828, Daniel Rapelje sold to Enos Call, the site on which the first St. Thomas hotel was erected. Call operated the hotel for a year or two then sold it to Miller and Kent. We note here an article taken from the Pioneer St. Thomas Journal of October 20, 1831. "We are now in charge of the St. Thomas Hotel, lately occupied by Enos Call. We recommend to the public, our beds, furniture, wines and liquors. We also keep livery horses and carriages to rent at reasonable terms."

Daniel Rapelje's son Jeronimus moved to Yarmouth township and decided to make farming his occupation and after residing on said land for some years, on September 1, 1832 the Crown granted to Canada Company, Lot 10, Concession 7, Yarmouth.

Harry Devereux Horswell

Harry Devereux Horswell was born on January 5, 1886 and is registered in the Registration District of Tavistock, sub district of Milton Abbot, County of Devon, England. He is the son of the late William Horswell and Sarah Ann Walters his wife. His paternal grandfather owned six hundred acres in Devon, was married five times and lived to be eighty-six. He was able to ride his estate on horseback the day he died. His mother's parents were the Duke and Duchess of Bedford and owned two thirds of County Devon.

Harry was christened in the Church of the Shipwrecked Mariner in Brentnor, England, a tiny church built on a rock bluff 1130 feet high by a sailor who vowed if he survived he would erect a church on the first land he sighted. He was the youngest of six children and born after his fathers death. His father and two brothers had died from acute Tuberculosis soon after the two boys had returned home on leave from the navy. The mother was advised by the family doctor to take the remaining family to Africa. One of his sisters was a nursing matron, one was very musical and at one time sang for Queen Victoria one was a teacher but suffered delicate health due to a collapsed lung, while his brother was a commercial traveller and later owned a sugar plantation.

Harry attended a boy's boarding school, which was built on his father's estate, prior to going to Africa. They settled in Capetown. At that time the Boer War, a bloody conflict, had been waging for many years. The British Government insisted on certain changes in the domestic government of Transvaal touchin franchise, education, and parliament representation emphatically refused by the Boers who were Dutch settlers. The people of South Africa Republic refused to grant the

British demands and to deny them any say in their affairs. This was the issue which diplomacy failed to settle and which resulted in war.

Harry ran away from home twice before he was 16 to join a brother and a brother-in-law already in the forces. He was brought home both times but was injured the third time with shrapnel and suffered from enteric fever having laid exposed to the heat for 48 hours as vultures circled above. He was taken from the battlefield to the out-post hospital where his sister was Matron. He was involved in the relief of Ladysmith under Buller, Lord Roberts and Baden Powell.

He trained for three years at Thomas Paynton's Wood and Steel Co. as a carpenter and travelled for a while with Dailey - Carte Opera Co. (playing in Gilbert and Sullivan Operas) erecting and taking down scenery. Following this he joined Natal Mounted Police whose main work at that time was trying to control natives and during this time learned the Zulu dialect.

Harry came to Canada with a buddy from the police force on a three month leave. His buddy turned back but he came on and started to work as a hired man for Ernest Luton on the farm next to the Elgin Manor at present. He also worked for the Chaplows and Colemans. He bought a small farm at Frome and worked in Paynes Mills cheese factory. At this time he sang in the Paynes Mills choir where he met Bertha Rapelje and later they were married.

At the time of his marriage he was working on the bridge and building gang of the Pere Marquette Railroad. He also farmed his Mother-in-law's place for some time then moved to Fingal where he bought a farm on part of what is now the property of the Dept. of Lands and Forests. Due to his Mother-in-law's age he and his family returned to the farm in Yarmouth on the south half of the south half on Lot 10 Con. 6 and rented other parcels of land as well. He has farmed as long as his health permitted and was admitted to hospital on October 2, 1971.

WALTERS FARM-SOUTH HALF, LOT 13, CONCESSION 7, YARMOUTH, ONT.

by (Mrs. William) Bessie Dancey Walters

If our 100-acre farm could talk, interesting and varied events would fill the pages of a book, and would reveal many a heartache and pleasure shared by the pioneer folk who battled for life from the good earth.

It was in 1779 that the old homestead observed its first birthday, when the Honourable James Baby acquired it from the Crown. All of Lot 13, a tract of 200 acres, was handed down to his son, John Edward Baby, who sold it to William Sanders in 1846. Mr. Sanders sold the south half to William Squance and retained the north half. The frontage of the south half, which is the Walters farm today, was on Concession 6. The frontage of the north half was on Concession 7, and is owned by Dr. Kenneth Penhale of Chicago.

For the sum of \$1,000. the farm was handed down in 1862 from William Squance Sr., to William Squance Jr. Then in 1874, John Squance, Elgin furniture dealer, bought it and sold it on November 4, 1890, to Wellington Russ and his wife Mehettable. On January 2, 1902, Elgin W. Russ and his wife Christian became the new owners.

In 1916, the "Russ" farm became the "Walters" farm. The name, Walters, already was known in the Yarmouth area. Thomas Dymond Walters, the new owner, and his wife Ann Lemon Halls, had come from their native Cornwall, England, to seek their fortune in Canada. They had settled in Yarmouth on Lot 15,

Concession 7, where they worked in partnership with Thomas' two brothers, George H. and John H. Walters. Eight children were born to Thomas and Ann: Aleta (Mrs. William Matthews of Belmont) Hazel (Mrs. George Matthews, St. Thomas), Ella (proprietor of Ella's Beauty Shoppe, St. Thomas), Hilda (Mrs. Robert Blakley, Dutton), Edna^a (R.N., Mrs. Herbert Evans, St. Thomas), Richard E. ("Dick", deceased 1963, of the Talbotville district), William E. ("Bill", deceased 1960), and John, who died in infancy. Thomas D. Walters and his sons Dick and Bill farmed together until Dick bought what is known as the "Agar" farm today. In 1929, Bill took over the homestead and in 1934 married Bessie Irene Dancey, of Aylmer, Ontario, whom he met at a community party when she was the school teacher at S. S. No. 12, Yarmouth.

Three children were born to Bill and Bessie: Mary Katherine, now Mrs. Fred McQuiggan of R. R. No. 1, Aylmer, who has three children, Sheila, David and Dwayne; William Robert ("Bob") who married Jeanette Campbell and who have three children, Bobby Dana and Denise. Bob bought the George H. Walters farm which is rented at the present time while he is employed as herdsman on the Carl Shaw farm where a modern milking parlour is in use. The youngest in the family, Richard Gary, better known as "Steve" is married to Betty Tapsell and they have two children, Billy and Sherry. ³ Gary is still on the homestead.

During the days when their little family was growing up, Bill supplemented the farm income by renting the "Greenway" farm, cutting and selling wood, dragging and mowing the road-

ways, and making and selling maple syrup which he did in partnership with Fred Sanders who owned the sugar bush and who was a descendent of William Sanders, owner of the Walters farm in 1846. Fine old hard maple trees joined the Walters farm at the line fence. At that time, maple syrup was valued at \$5.00 a gallon.

Everyone in the Walters family worked hard, but come Christmas, the entire family came home. Three generations have sat together to eat the traditionally English Christmas dinner--roast goose, plum pudding and saffron cake. Then, midst mixed groans of discomfort and sighs of satisfaction, they gathered in the spacious farm living room to receive their gifts from Santa Claus, "Grandpa Walters", whose delight it was to dismantle the well-laden Christmas tree.

In 1942, Thomas Dymond Walters died but his wife Ann lived to the grand old age of 97.

The soil on the homestead was second to none, being a fertile clay loam. But owing to the depression of the thirties and the poor condition of the aging barn, the capacity for making money was greatly reduced. About this time, too, Bill's health began to fail and surgery was required. He decided to hold a clearing sale in 1944. Fortunately, by this time, prices were on the upward trend and the sale was a success. On May 30 and 31, 1946, a "bee" was held for the barn-raising. Friends and neighbors came from miles around. Women from the neighboring farms willingly assisted with the meals. It took

seventy-one pies to fill the hungry crowd. Many of these were donated but the majority were baked in the Walters oven of the old wood range and were sweetened with maple syrup, due to the sugar ration at that time.

Records reveal that early pioneers often were solaced at their "bees" with plenty of Canadian "nectar". In some localities it took the form of "corn likker". In this particular district it was called "cider with a hard edge." It was said that the men kept the "scrump" in a keg in the barn area, but since no one showed evidence of having imbibed too freely, and certainly no one missed being on hand for the hearty meals prepared by the women-folk, this will have to be regarded as heresay.

But Bill's health continued to fail. The dust of the land and dust from the straw stacks, for this was the era of the threshing machine, wrought havoc with Bill's lungs. His well-built straw stacks were his pride and joy; not only did he build his own, but those of his neighbors as well. Now the dreaded emphysema began its deadly attack. Specialists advised him to leave the farm but Bill refused. This was his very life. With a laugh he would say, "I'd die in the city anyway, and I'd rather die here."

Through the years, the old house was kept as nearly as possible in its original form. But progress must be made, and to the great satisfaction of his family, Bill effected a few improvements - electric lighting and appliances, oil heating