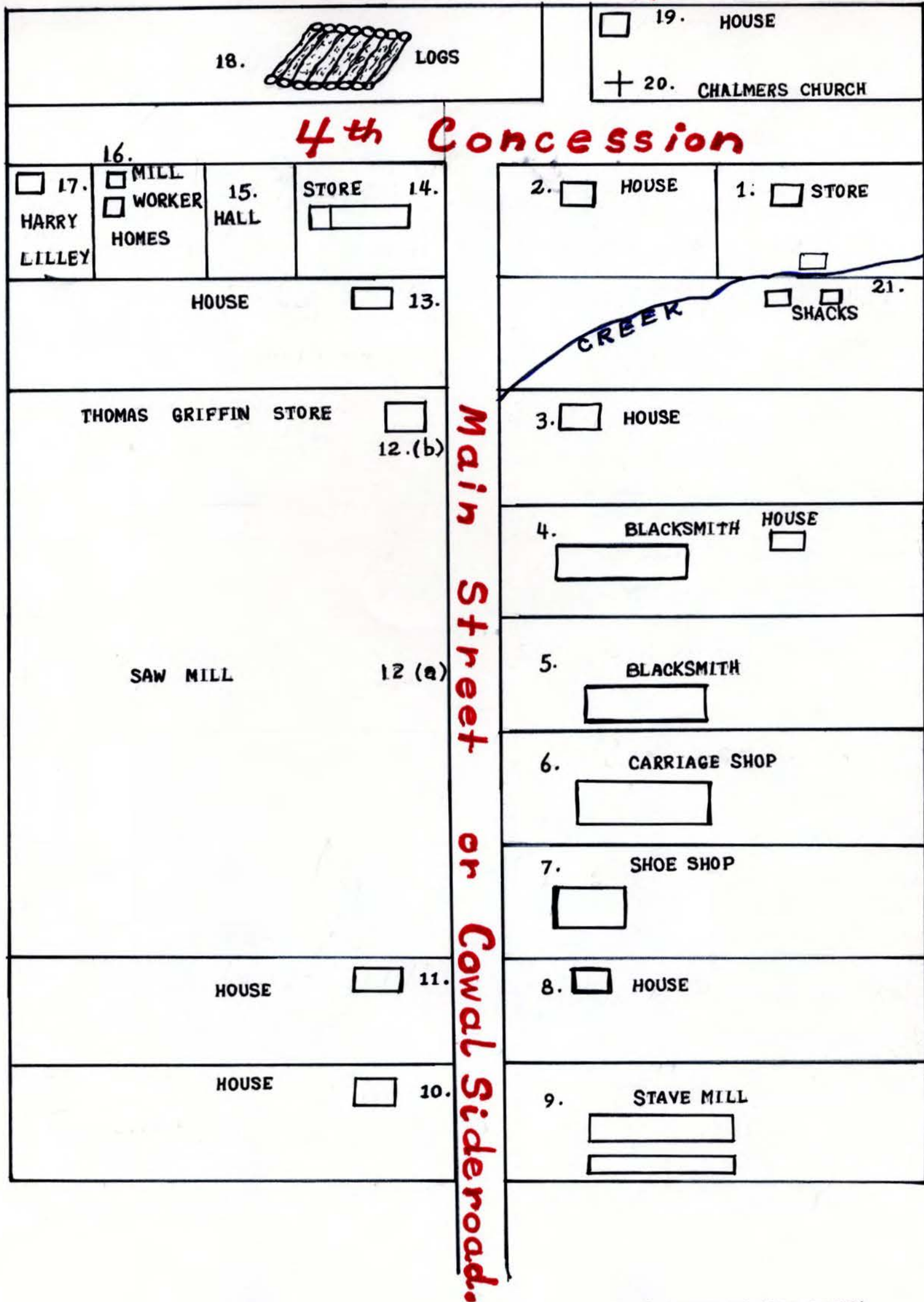


COWAL 1880 - 1900.



THIS MAP IS NOT DRAWN
TO SCALE.

20

THE VILLAGE OF COWAL

1880 - 1906

The following history of the homes and businesses in Cowal is compiled from items in the Dutton Advance and from the memories of Mrs. Philip (Agnes Jean) Campbell, John Archie Patterson, John D. Thomson, and Duncan McNabb. There are probably some inaccuracies, however for the main part it tells the history of Cowal when it had 50 residents and several industries.

Compiled by Mrs. Donald (Yvonne) McCallum.

USE THE MAP ON THE PREVIOUS PAGE TO LOCATE THE
FOLLOWING HOMES IN COWAL AND BUSINESSES.

1. STORE across from the church on the 4th concession
18-- Malcolm Gilmore.
18-- D.A. McNabb.
1883 John Battin and Jim McBride.
1900 It was renovated into a house and McCarty's lived there.
Mrs. Urquhart and Hannah lived in the back part.
The store was demolished.

1892 We are not sure if this is a second store or the same one,
however in 1892 H. Crites, merchant, disposed of his store
to a Mr. Forsyth.
1893 Mr. Forsyth sold out.
1894 David Forsyth opened up the store.

2. HOUSE 1880's Sidney Wilson, engineer at the saw mill, built a house on
this corner lot.
1896 Wilson's house was completely destroyed by fire from a defective
chimney. Insurance was \$300.
1900 Sidney Wilson bought Arch. Thomson's 100 acre farm.
1906 Reuben Adams bought the lot and built a house on it.
---- Jim Reilley lived here.
1930-40's Frank Martin family lived here.
---- House moved to Delaware.

- NOTE
This house was vacant for several years and the ladies had
quilting bees here. In 1925 they sponsored a bread making
course, at which time they decided to join the Women's Institute.
Cowal W.I. had its charter meeting on May 5, 1925.

3. HOUSE 1900 George McCarty lived here.

4. BLACKSMITH In the 1890's Herbert Myers built a blacksmith shop here. He
also built a house. He was an excellent blacksmith, setting a
record for the numbers of horses he could shoe in one day.
His house burnt and in 1903 the new modern one was built. In
September 1905, he moved to Frome. David Anderson then bought
the house. Later it was moved to the Fletcher farm which
Gordon Murray bought and it is still in use today and is on
the farm now owned by Belldoon Farms.

5. BLACKSMITH 188- James McKenzie had the first shop. Originally he had a
shop on the Southwold - Dunwich Townline opposite
Joseph Carroll's, before moving to Cowal.
1885 Robert M. Martin.
1886 Norton Peckham,
---- Robert March.
1893 Peter McKenzie left and moved to London.

6. Carriage Shop

- 1883 C.A. Beardsley sold carriage shop.
 1884 James H. Westcott had shop.
 1885 R.M. Martin is building a carriage shop, which will
 make two shops now. In several months they made 11 rigs.
 ---- Duncan McGeachy has the shop.
 Wride built wagons and sleighs.
 ---- The shop burnt.

7. SHOE SHOP

- 1885 R.M. Chapman opened a shoe store.
 1886 Mr. Malcomes sold shoes and boots.
 ---- Hugh "Racer" McCallum had a shoe store. He was
 nicknamed "Racer" because he wore a rubber suit
 while running.
 ---- Joe Pollack was the next owner.
 ---- The store burnt.

8. HOUSE

- Nancy Campbell (Alex McBride's sister) lived here. She
 married "Knobby" Campbell, who repaired clocks on
 Highway # 3. She only lived with him for a year,
 then bought the house in Cowal. She kept two or
 three boarders who worked at the saw mill.
 1894 Mrs. Campbell's house burnt and she and her tenant,
 Donald McCrea lost everything.

9. STAVE MILL

- 1899 Mr. Atkinson, of Cashmere, has leased Thomas Griffin's
 saw mill for three years. He will be putting in
 machinery for a stave and heading mill and will
 employ up to 10 men.
 1901 A large quantity of hoops and staves are being put out.
 1902 Mr. Coates, Ridgetown, purchased the stave and hoop
 factory and is making extensive alterations.
 1902 New dwellings are being built for the mill workers.
 1903 October 22, a disastrous fire destroyed the stave mill.
 December- Thomas Griffin is not rebuilding the mill
 and Coates has bought the machinery and is moving
 to Dutton.

First the lumber was taken to the saw mill where it was cut
 into bolts or lengths, then into staves. The lumber was
 soaked overnight in vats of hot water to steam off the bark.
 Then it was taken across the road to the stave mill where
 there were two long sheds. Here machines cut thin slices
 of wood into staves which are wider at the middle than at
 the ends so as to produce the characteristic "bulge" shape
 of a barrel. Near the end of each stave there were grooves
 into which the beveled-edge head fitted. The head is a
 circular board that forms the end of the barrel and is held
 in place with hoops made of wood or metal. Barrels have been
 used for over 2000 years. Before machines made the staves,
 they were made by expert craftsmen called coopers. Some staves
 have "bung" holes to release liquids in the barrels. (This
 was how molasses was bought at Giffin's store.) Barrels
 come in different sizes of one quart to sixty gallons, so
 the staves were made in various sizes.

From the Cowal stave mill, the unfinished staves were
 taken to Lawrence Station and shipped by railway to
 companies that made barrels.

10. HOUSE

Duncan Patterson was one of the first owners that we know.
 When he died in 1892 Dougald Morrison, an old sailor, bought
 the house and lot for \$300. His daughter, Annie Morrison,
 married Archibald Thomson and they lived in the house
 where their three children were born- John D. Thomson,
 Archibald Thomson and Annabelle (Mrs. John Quigley).
 They moved to their farm on the 4th concession in 1913 and
 the house was rented out for \$1 a month (taxes were \$4 a year.)
 In 1932 Archie and Effie McLachlin bought the property
 and in 1939 the house burnt. The house of Jack McAlister,
 Stacey's Corner, was moved to the lot and several families
 lived there. In the 1950's John Peter moved it to Muskoka.

11. HOUSE Mrs. Janet McCallum lived in this house and had the Post Office there. Unfortunately the house burned in 1899 and the Post Office was moved to John Thomson's store. The house was rebuilt and Mrs. Jim Bennett lived there and raised their two sons, David and Jim there. In 1906 Thomson's store burned and the Post Office was brought bak to the Bennett home. If the weather was bad Kate Bennett would ride horseback to Iona Station to pick up the mail. When the Bennett's left, the house was moved to Peter McPherson's and the lot is still in the McPherson name.

12.(a) SAW MILL

In 1871 Dick Redmond and William Lipsey ran the saw mill. Lumber was shipped to the Massey-Harris Company by railway from Lawrence Station. Lipsey committed suicide, a top sawyer was killed, so Redmond sold out to Thomas Griffin in 1882. The engineer was Sidney Wilson and the tail sawyer was D.Stride. In 1884 a grain crusher was installed. This was a thriving business with farmers miles around drawing in lumber all winter. In 1903 the mill burned and Thomas Griffin decided no to rebuild. Mr. Coates bought the machinery and moved to Dutton. This was the main industry in Cowal and with its demise, families soon left Cowal to find work elsewhere and today only one home, the church and the hall remain.

12. (b) STORE

After the saw mill burned in 1903, Thomas Griffin built "a neat little store" in 1907, after John Thomson had decided not to rebuild his store. After Thomas died, his wife Jane continued to run the store and following her death their son, Tommy kept the store open for a short while then it was closed in the early 1940's and later was torn down. This had been a great meeting place for many years and many the tale was swapped here.

13. HOUSE

Thomas Griffin, his wife Jane (Stacey), and son Tom lived here. After his parents both died, Tommy continued to live here alone. Then Ed Halpin lived here, followed by Don Keates. Mr. and Mrs. Steve Katona from Toronto bought the lot and renovated the house and put in a basement. In the 1970's the house was divided in two and Alvey Thompson and his family live in one half and G.A. Martin's in the other part.

14. STORE

1870 James McDougal had the first store. He ran the Deadfall Hotel (near Murray Harries) and around 1870 opened up a small store in Cowal.
 1886 John Thomson bought the store where groceries, shoes, hardware, dry goods etc, were sold. There was an upstairs apartment. The Post Office was located here too.
 ---- Jack McGugan rented the store from Mr. Thomson.
 1906 The store with all its contents were burned.
 The post office was moved to Mrs. Bennett's home.
 ---- The lot was owned by Effie McLachlin and today by the Cowal Hall.

15. HALL

See Cowal Hall.

16. HOMES

West of Cowal Hall, there were two homes and saw mill workers lived there, namely Nick Tarr and John Amos.

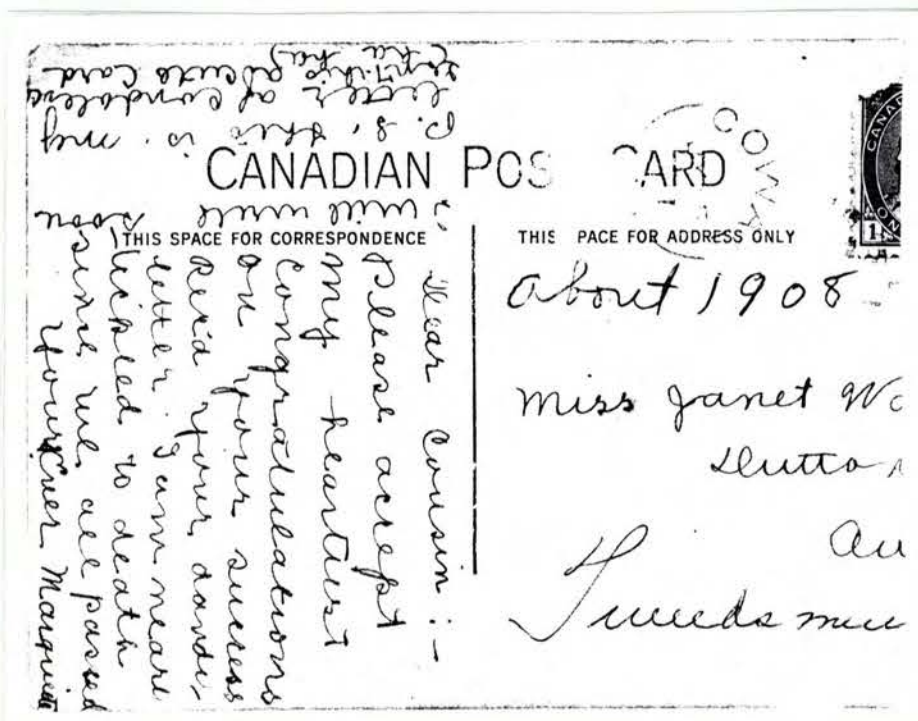
17. HOUSE

Harry Lilley lived in this house with his family. Water was so close to the surface of the ground that just a sand point was used to get water. After the Lilley's left, the house was moved to Preston McBride's. The front section of the old store at the cemetery (which stood where the small shed is located today) was added to the front of the Lilley home, and this renovated house became the home of the McBrides. Around 1922 the Farmers Club required pens for the animals that were to be sold in the consignment sale, so the stockyards were built and were used for the 40 years of the sale.

- 18. LUMBER In the field across from the Hall, which is owned by Russell Campbell, five or six acres were rented by the saw mill for the storage of logs brought in by the farmers during the winter months.
- 19. HOUSE also see - Part Lot 24, Conc. 3, Arthur Snell.
 This originally was the manse for Chalmers Church.
 1922 Alexander "Sandy" and Maggie McLachlin lived here and bought the property for \$500.
 ---- Cliff and Mary Anderson rented the house.
 1944 Clayton and Bessie Palmer bought the property and set up a saw mill along the creek.
 1963 Robert and Betty Ostrander became the owners and continued to run the saw mill for a few years.
 1970 Arthur (Bud) Snell and his wife Betty and their family moved into the house.
- 20. CHURCH See - History of Cowal United Church.
- 21. SHACKS These small buildings were built along the creek and the mill workers lived in them.



A postcard of Griffin's Store, Cowal.



This is the reverse of the above card. Note the Cowal post mark.

WEAVING

By Mrs. Mary Clarke

Years ago, women had to be accomplished, not saying they are not today, but it is in different arts. The pioneers had to depend on their own skill to keep warm and comfortable. They had to know the art of weaving, spinning and of making things, as there were few stores to buy from and very little money to buy with. Weaving was very important, as woollen blankets and carpet and sometimes towelling were made. Who does not treasure the beautiful figured coverlets or counterpanes as they were sometimes called, the precious hand work of our Mothers and Grandmothers?

To weave, the first thing to consider was the web or the correct colour scheme. With blankets there was only the border to dye, this being a few threads at the end of each blanket. Often no border was used as it cut up into blankets easier and was not so much bother for the weaver. You had to get the width and length of your web, of course the more threads you had in the wider the blanket would be.

Along about the 24th of May you would see flocks of sheep being driven to the river to be washed. Probably two or three neighbours would go together. Usually they had something warming with them as someone might get chilled in the water. Often if the roads were dusty, the sheep were dustier coming home than they were going - but it had to be done according to custom.

Next was the shearing time. In the shade of some native tree, it was sheared by hand and the fleeces rolled up and laid away until the hot days of summer. Then the "picking bees", as they were called, were in full swing. All the women and girls too, of the neighbourhood donned their best apron and sunbonnet and walked to the "bee". Here they enjoyed themselves and had a delicious substantial supper.

This wool was then taken to a carding mill or sometimes it was done at home with the help of two combs - similar to a curry-comb of today. It was made into rolls ready for the spinning. It was not unusual years ago to see two women spinning in the one home. One would spin the warp and the other the filling - the woof and the wold. When it was all spun into skeins of 14 knots, each knot had 44 threads, then began the spooling and warping. The spooling made the width and the warping, the length. They both worked together the spool rack and the warping bars. The spools were quite large, maybe eight or ten inches in length and had wooden pins run down through their centre so they could spin around on the rack, and run freely.

The warping bars were four posts fastened together and about four yards around, which took up considerable space. They had to run freely and each time around made four yards on the length of your web. So if you went around five times, you had twenty yards, eight times you had thirty-two yards and so on.

You had to have two rows of spools, the same number above as below. When you got to the top of your warping bars and the length of your web, there were wooden pegs in a board. You had "to pick up the leese" one thread above and one below and put on these pegs. This gave you the "criss-cross" of the warp in the loom. Then you turned and came back to the bottom and so on until you had the desired length. This had to be done carefully as a loose thread might cause many entanglements, especially with the blankets as the warp was much finer than the carpet warp.

Much care had to be taken in getting the warp off the bars, the leese had to be tied carefully because if one of these would get loose, your work was all undone. A loop was formed and one loop inside a loop under a chain was made, which resembled a huge braid. Each turn up and down the warping bars was called a "bout" and had just so many threads. The weaver knew with so many knots and so many bouts where they were at and how much cloth it would make.

211 A

Weaving - continued.....

Next came the beaming of the warp on the beam in the loom, which called for some muscle both "fore and aft" as the sailors say. There was needed English, Irish, Scotch and much Gaelic in putting the web to place.

The warp was tied to a good strong slat which fitted into a groove on the beam of the loom. Each bout was put on so no big hump was on the beam. In doing this there was a heavy slot with wooden pegs about an inch apart, the width of the loom. It hung from the top of the loom and each "bout" was put in these spaces. It was changed often so it would go on the beam evenly.

One person had to turn the beam at the back of the loom while someone held the warp at the front. It was necessary to turn it slowly and carefully until it was all on the beam. Then it was ready for the "gears".

There are four gears in weaving blankets or cloth and just two gears for carpet. This was where the "leese" and "criss cross" was made, two back gears and two front ones or upper and lower gears. The gears were made of strong cotton warp, and were about 12 or 14 inches long with a loop hole in the centre which the warp was threaded through and fastened to slats at both upper and lower ends. Each thread was handed in separately and accurately, first an upper then a lower one. This required much time and patience.

The threads had to be handled one by one again and were drawn through the reed. This was tedious too and had to be done correctly or it would cause a flaw in the cloth. When the ends were all drawn through the reed they were tied to another strong slat and fastened to the cloth beam. As you wove your web, you loosened your warp beam and tightened your cloth beam thus accomplishing something.

The reed with all the threads on it were put in the lay. The lay hung from the top of the loom and you swung it back and forth. It was quite heavy and beat in the "filling".

The gears were fastened above to small wooden pulleys and below to the treadles that you worked with your feet. Each treadle had to be put down right or it caused a flaw in the cloth.

With blankets or cloth, you put the yarn on quills. These were made from alder branches and slipped on the spindle of a small wheel, called the quilling wheel.

The skein of yarn was put on the "Swifts". Why they were called such I don't know, because they were the slowest, squeakiest things you can imagine. They were made to turn around as you wound your yarn on the quill.



Mary McBride, age 15, weaving.

Making Soap

by Mrs. James C. Campbell.

In my memory I remember an old leach barrel under the shade of a harvest apple tree. Beside it was a large black iron kettle hanging from a tripod. The lye was pored into the kettle as it ran from the leach.

The base of the leach was built up of bricks or stones with the back higher than the front so that it had quite a slant. A wide board was placed on top with cleats nailed on, to hold the bottom of the barrel up a bit so the lye could run out. Cleats were put on the board slanting toward the front so the lye would run into the large wooden pail or crock.

The barrel is placed on top of the board. The bottom has holes bored in it, in many places. Clean straw is put in the bottom of the barrel, then the barrel is filled and well packed with hardwood ashes. A well or indentation is left in the top and you add water (soft water is the best) from the rain barrel or the cistern. Mother has a steady job emptying the lye and filling the leach barrel with water. Pieces of fat, suet or any bits of fat saved from cooking during the winter is placed in the kettle. When you have enough lye run off, you put a fire under the kettle and boil it. The mixture gets thick like jelly.

To test to see if it is not too strong, touch some to your tongue - if it smarts, you add more soft water and more fat. Do not allow children to be near as the lye burns.

Many farm women made lye and sold it to woollen mills for washing fleece. The soap was stored in wooden barrels for home use. It was used in washing and cleaning. With white sand, lye soap and a scrub brush and lots of arm strong power, the maple floor in the kitchen would clean snowy white.

It was good for the men to use to clean their hands after being around the machinery.

FARMING IN THE 1940'S



Planting corn with a two row planter and a team of horses. About 10 acres could be planted in one day, perhaps 15 if the team of horses were changed to another pair during the day.

HAYING

First the hay, which is various grasses and clovers, is cut with a mower, then each mower swath of hay is raked into long rows with the hay rake. Each row is picked up with the hay loader which is hitched behind the wagon. As the loose hay falls onto the floor of the wagon, a man keeps levelling the hay from the front to the back of the steel wheeled wagon.

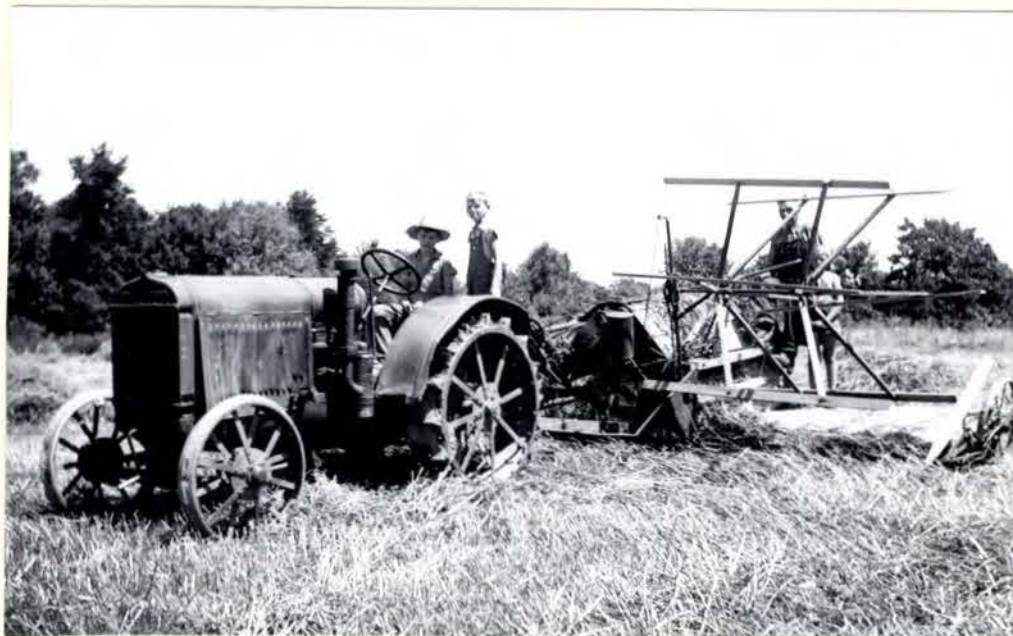
The load of loose hay is pulled into the barn and unloaded with a large fork which runs on a track along the peak of the barn. It would take at least four bundles to unload a wagon. Each bundle is dumped into the mow where a man would "mow" it away - meaning spread it across the mow. On a hot day this was the least liked job.



Haying at R.D. Campbell's. Bob Campbell driving the tractor. Summer of 1948.



Haying became much easier with the introduction of the chopped hay harvester.



Donald Carroll(seated) and David Watson on the tractor,
Dave and Marjorie Carroll on the binder.

GRAIN BINDER

When the oats, wheat or barley were ripe they were cut with the grain binder. Sharp knives cut the stalks, which fell onto a canvas conveyer, which carried the grain through the binder to be bound with binder twine into sheaves. Three or four sheaves were collected on the sheaf carrier before being dumped on the ground. A man sitting on the back of the binder dumped the sheaves with a lever controlled by his feet. The sheaf deck and reel could be raised or lowered with levers too. The sheaves - from 9 to 12,- were piled into stooks.



Threshing Separator

When the grain was dry (about August) it was threshed by the threshing machine. The sheaves were fed into the machine where the grain and the straw were separated. The grain was bagged and put into the granary, the straw was piled into huge piles or straw stacks. As eight to ten men were required to do the threshing, neighbours helped one another at the "threshing bee". It was a busy day for the ladies as well since they had to provide lots of food for the men. Sometimes there was a contest to see who could eat the most. Although it was hard work, it was also a social time and a neighbourliness existed which is not so prevalent today.



Marjorie and Hugh Carroll.

COMBINES

In the early 1940's the first combines made their appearance. Grain could now be threshed right in these machines as they travelled up and down the fields. Now threshing was becoming much easier and faster. After it was threshed, the grain was placed in jute bags and piled on the steel-wheeled wagons and dumped in the granary of the barn. (Oh happy days for the mice and rats!). The outfit shown above belonged to Mac Carroll.



This is the first combine owned by Humphrey Campbell who is driving the tractor with his son, Donald, riding the combine.

CHANGES IN TRANSPORTATION.

