

THE HAIGHT FAMILY

Reuben and Sarah Haight came from Chappaqua, N.Y. to Otterville in 1817 and on to Sparta in 1821. Reuben took his two boys Samuel aged 11 and Ephraim aged 9 to Port Talbot and took up 400 acres of land from Col. Talbot. These were lots 16 and 17, Con. 4. This was covered with bush, no roads. They moved in part of Isaac Moore's log house, and that fall the Moores and Minors helped them cut logs and build a house on the Bostwick trail, where Ephraim Haight's house now stands. They brought what lumber they required for flooring and window frames from Norwich, a distance of 40 miles, through woods almost impassable. The next spring little twigs, all over the logs of which the house was built, leaved out, making the house a bower of foliage. They used their produce, such as 20 bu. of wheat and 15 bu. of corn for a cow, or 4 bu. of wheat for six or eight yards of cotton. At first they made their own clothing from flax and tow. They cooked by the fireplace. A large green log was placed at the back and kept burning by smaller sticks in front and against it. The doors of this log house were divided crosswise, and the children would stand with the lower door closed and see the wolves eyes shining in the darkness. In one winter Samuel and Ephraim chopped and cleared 26 acres and fenced and sowed it with wheat.

The Haight's yearly taxes were 7 Halifax Shillings (\$1.40) and must be paid in cash. The only cash crop was potash, made by leaching hard-woodashes and boiling down the lye until it was solid.

In 1837 the 400 acres were divided between Samuel and Ephraim, with the understanding that they, in turns, make homes for their parents. Ephraim's house was built in 1841 on the old home site Con. 4, Lot 16 by Watson Taylor. In 1848 he married Elisabeth, daughter of Amasa Chase. She came from N.Y. State in 1845 and wishing to teach, got this permission, viz:

"I hereby certify that Elizabeth Chase, having applied for a certificate of qualification to teach a common school, was taken on trial by me, and found qualified to teach English Grammatically, Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography, some Natural Philosophy, etc. and she is hereby authorized to teach a common school in the township of Yarmouth for One Year from and after the date hereof.

"Given under my hand at Saint Thomas
the 25th day of June, 1845,

"Daniel Hanvey
"Supr. Comm Schools
"Yarmouth."

Ephraim's son, Granville, took over the farm at the former's death in 1887. Elisabeth and daughter Maria, retired to the home they built in Sparta in 1903. This house was purchased by Wilson H. Mills in 1935.

1851

W^o Ephraim Wright D^r

To George Webb

May 29	To Making shoes for Ephraim	4..0
Oct ^r 25	& shoe for little Mary sole leather	6..0
		<hr/> 13..0

	Balance due Ephraim on settlement of old Acct	3..0
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	Rec ^d payment George Webb due Ephraim	10..0
		<hr/> 10..0

Rec^d - Sparte April 30. 1858 From Ephraim Wright Four dollars one shilling and five pence in full of ac^t & date

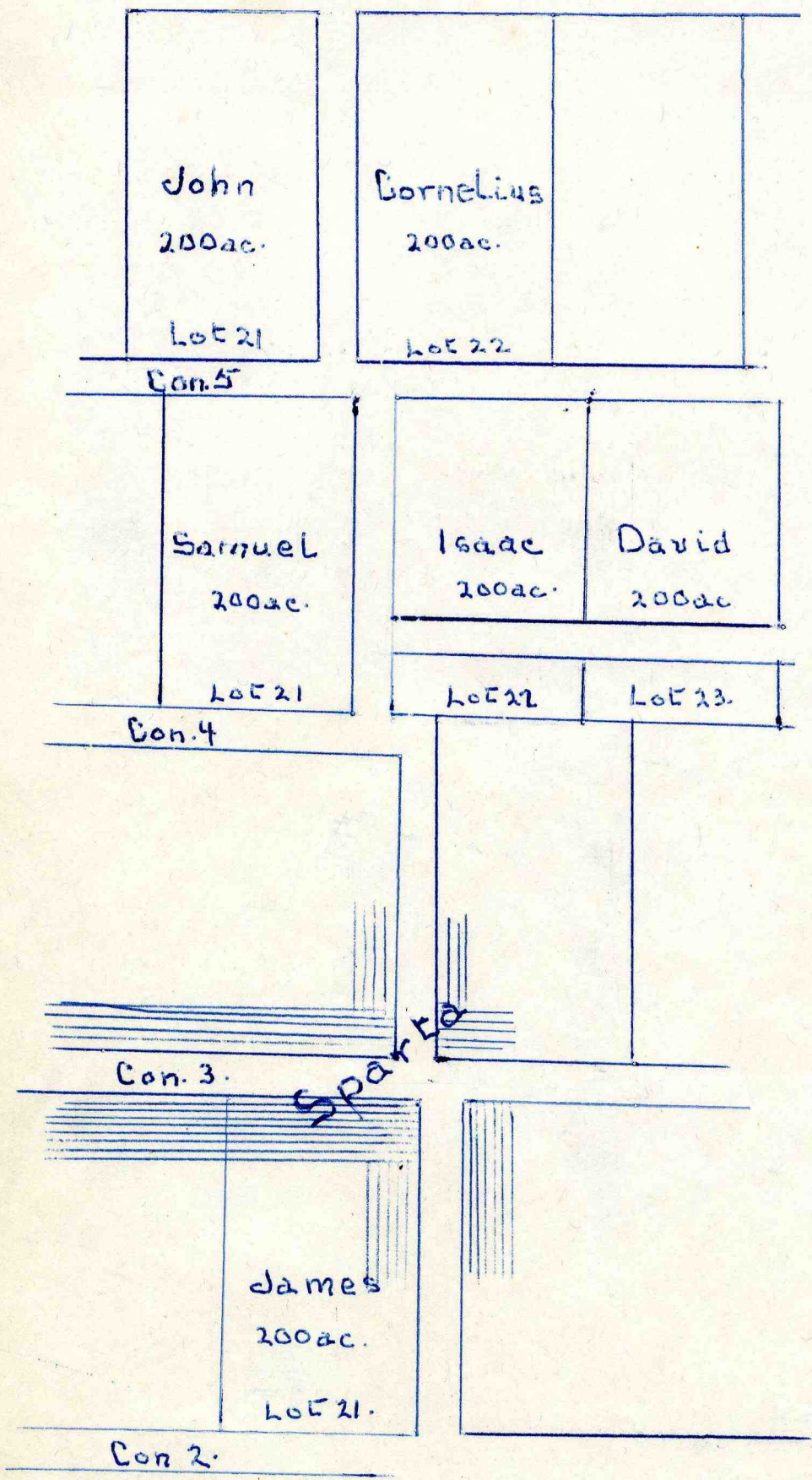
H. B. Smith
p. A. Webb

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Ephraim Wright in life

1855	To John Foster	
June 19 th	To Tanning - calf skin	\$ 0.87 1/2

July 1st 1866



Map showing situation of the 1200 acres purchased by John Mills in 1831 and divided among these six sons.

THE HAIGHT FAMILY (Cont'd.)

Granville sold the farm in 1907 to his cousin Elisabeth Schooley and husband Elston Prior, who lived there until 1927 when their son, Gordon, took over the farm. Since they moved to St. Thomas in 1944 there have been several owners.

Samuel Haight erected a house on the east 200 acres of the old homestead in 1837. This is Lot 17, Con. 4. He and his brother Ephraim built houses much like the old Haight house down on the Hudson, where their father was born. These were large white structures with green shutters and two front doors near together.

In 1839 Samuel married Phebe, daughter of Cornelius Mills. They regularly attended Friends' Meetings - even after she was not able to walk they wheeled her into the Meeting House where she remained seated in her comfortable chair.

Friends' Yearly Meetings meant so much entertaining of guest from Canada and the United States. The brick house built later, several rods east, was even larger than the one built in 1837. They, as well as other Friends, entertained 30 or more for this long anticipated week.

When the large farm was divided all the goods were divided equally but the brothers retained some articles of common use on both farms, and the list of things they regarded as so necessary then is interesting to read to-day; A cross-cut saw, a broad axe, a five pail kettle and a large pair of steel yards.

When Samuel Haight moved into the brick house, east of the old homestead, his nephew James W. Haight lived in the older house for several years. Other families, the Wilkinsons and Ernest White's lived in the old home. Then in 1940 a great niece of Samuel Haight and her husband Russell Zavitz purchased the Haight home and opened up the old fireplace where a three foot log can burn cheerily. The old Haight clock (pictured here) was brought from the Haight home down on the Hudson in New York State and was first cleaned in 1811. This may be seen near the old fireplace and not only tells accurate time but the days of the month.

HAT SHOP

Samuel Haight writes - "In 1827 brother James took the horse and one-horse wagon and took mother (Sarah) back to visit her friends in New York State. While there James learned the Hatters' trade and in 1828 they started back for Canada bringing a "Journeyman Hatter" with them. They commenced the hatting business in a log shop they built a few rods from where Reuben Haight's log house was built in 1821. However, he found it no place in the woods for his business and removed to St. Thomas, opened a shop at the west end of town and successfully carried on the manufacture of hats.

MILLS

"John Mills, born in 1770, purchased from Alexander Dunlap of Edinburgh, late of Montreal, in the Province of Lower Canada, in 1831, twelve hundred acres of land for, and in consideration of the sum of 950 pounds, lawful money of said Province". Earl Cole has the deed of the land purchased and also a walnut case in which are preserved the cane John Mills used, the delicate scales on which he weighed gold and his and his wife's (Abegail Minard) pictures in quaint little frames. "John Mills was a money-lender or broker and as he did not trust banks; he kept his money - all in gold pieces, in a small box in a wooden chest under his bed. Robbers came one night and broke the front windows but were driven off. This made him more cautious and the children, who slept upstairs, kept horns and tin pans ready so as to make a noise to call neighbors if trouble came, and Mr. Mills kept a gun ready. However, thieves did carry the chest out into the orchard and from the small box they got away with \$1400.00 in gold. This was a heavy loss".

John Mills had ten children and to each of his six sons he gave two hundred acres. He lived to know ten children, sixty grandchildren, one hundred and sixteen great grandchildren and eighteen great, great grandchildren. We cannot say he lived to see them all as he was blind for thirty-five years. He died in 1864. Earl Cole lives on the homestead in 1949.

John Mills made a chopping knife from a file used to chop in a bowl. Made at least thirty years before he died as he was blind about thirty-five years. The knife is in excellent condition at the present time and still in use.

Abram Mills operated a cheese factory on the north end of Lot 22, Concession 4, and there was a grocery store at one time on the south portion of Lot 22, Concession 5, in which Henry Yarwood clerked before building his store in Sparta in 1838.

John Mills and wife, Abigail Minard, were both born in 1770 and died in 1864.

"Our farm, west half of Lot 18, Concession 6, Yamouth, was purchased by my grandfather Abraham Mills from his father, James Mills, in 1850 for the sum of two hundred pounds. My Great Grandfather James Mills purchased the entire Lot, No. 18, years before that date and Grandfather Abraham Mills settled on the west half and Uncle Isaac Mills on the east half. In the following years Abraham Mills purchased Lot, 18, Concession 5, where my father James H. Mills, lived. He also operated a cheese factory on the north west corner of Ronald Burton's farm, Lot 22, Concession 5, for many years.

Grandfather Mills attended market in London, driving back and forth with horses after he got sufficient land cleared and broken to grow vegetables and grain and obtained part of the material used to build his house in that way. The farm was virgin forest and he cut the trees

The Cole home



MR + MRS W. B. Cole with son Earl in buggy

Mr + Mrs Earl Cole



Scales owned by John Mills for weighing gold. He loaned money and gold was the currency then



Cane used by John Mills who was among the first settlers of Sparta great-grandfather of Earl Cole

MILLS (Cont'd.)

in logs and drew them in huge log heaps with oxen and burned them. He and grandmother lived in a little log cabin for many years with the wolves and lynx howling around at night. When they were able to obtain domestic animals, cows, sheep and pigs, they had to keep them closely confined at night so the wild animals could not reach them and kill them. The corn used for domestic purposes had to be ground between stones and wheat was carried down to Lake Erie on their shoulder and taken in a row boat to Long Point where it was ground into flour. Their boots were made of home-tanned leather and reached the knee. The women washed, carded and spun their own yarn for clothing and blankets. They were very warm and durable and entailed many hours of work with the spinning wheel and needles. The yarn, of course, was made of sheeps wool.

The Mills and Russ families were both Dutch descendants and came originally from Pennsylvania. When Calvin Russ first came to Ontario and purchased the farm, now owned by Sinclair Russ, the land was covered by virgin forest. He had no shelter for his wife and baby so brought them on to John Mills' home and left them until he could build a cabin for shelter. When he finally got the cabin built he had to walk to London carrying maple sugar to exchange for hinges and window glass. He had to follow a trail marked by blazed trees and there were lots of wild animals in the woods. He was informed by the merchant in London that he had too much maple sugar so he could not obtain the hinges and glass. He was overtaken by darkness on the way home and had to sit under a tree and kindle a fire to scare off wild animals. He remained in exactly the same place until morning as he would not lose his direction and on his return home was forced to stretch skins over the openings.

We, who live in 1949, with well kept roads, electricity and modern conveniences, can hardly realize how our ancestors lived in those pioneer days.

Compiled by Ula B. Cloes,
Granddaughter of
Abraham Mills and
Calvin Russ.

THE COLE HOME - 1960

The first house was a log cabin on Lot 21, Conc. 5. This was torn down and another house built in 1823. The present home was built in 1880 by W. B. Cole. The lumber was bought for \$5.00 a thousand at Forysthe's Mill at Houghton township and brought by horses and wagon over the sandy roads.

Mr. Cole operated a saw-mill for a few years on the farm and then moved it to Sparta where the Frank Bagnall property now is.

This farm was part of the John Mills property who came from New York State and bought twelve thousand acres of land in 1831. Washington Mills came into possession next followed by Wm. Cole and now his son Earl Cole (a great grandson of John Mills) lives on the farm.