

# THE STORY OF WAITE HILL

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by Lillie Tryon Curtis

*THANKS to Pat Evans for hand typing parts one and two of The Story of Waite Hill. Even if this isn't your Waite family, Lillie Tryon Curtis' narrative of life on Waite Hill is delightful. Pat's hard at work on the last section and I hope to receive it soon. Typed from: "The Lake County Historical Society Quarterly" Volume 19, #4, December 1977. President James A. Garfield Museum, 8095 Mentor Ave., Mentor, OH 44060*

## PREFACE

This story of Waite Hill covers a period of about 50 years after the coming of the first pioneers. During those years, Waite Hill changed from a densely wooded plateau, completely covered with the primeval forest to a square mile of smiling farms and happy homes, each with its own strip of woodland. The terrible toil which this transformation demanded may best be measured by the short life-span of most of these pioneers.

In my own childhood (the 1850s and '60s), it was hard to believe that only forty years earlier the sound of the axe was first heard on Waite Hill. Today (1931), it is still more difficult to realize that little more than a century has passed since its discovery by the white man. It has been a pleasure to collect these scattered family records of a day that is past. Those who read this may perhaps be able to realize the difficulties overcome by these pioneers of Waite Hill.

## THE FIRST PIONEERS

At the beginning of the (nineteenth) century settlers began to arrive in this neighborhood. In the fall of 1799 Thomas and Daniel Judd started afoot from New York state on a hunting expedition. Making their way through the woods with their rifles, they reached a pleasant valley on the Chagrin River in February 1800. "Finding game plentiful, and the river bottoms covered with leeks, they build a wigwam, and spent the winter there." Returning in the spring to New York, they began to make arrangements for migrating to the new country, and in 1805 they came with their families, and the families of James Covert and John Jackson, to make their homes in the same place, which they named "Pleasant Valley."

In July 1811 came the Crary family, consisting of Christopher Crary, Sr., his wife, three sons and four daughters; and also a married son, Erastus, with his wife and two young children. With two ox-teams they drove from Massachusetts and settled southeast of Waite Hill. In September of that same year, John Moore came from New York with his seventeen-year-old son Isaac, his son-in-law Thomas Fuller, and Biarella Miller, and located on Waite Hill. In 1811 also came Isaac, the fist of the sturdy tribe of Morleys, tow of whom later became not only Deacons of the Center Church, but also "Uncle Alfred" and "Uncle Thomas" to several generations of Kirtland and Waite Hill youngsters, by whom they were much beloved for their genial disposition and fund of true "bear stories".

It was not until about 1820 that the mile-square plateau later called Waite Hill was "discovered" by pioneers. Thickly wooded, almost inaccessible on the west and north sides, it was more readily reached from the south. Anyone who saw the beauty of those bold promontories, overlooking the lovely river valley, and at the same time noted the fine soil and the advantageous "lay of the land," would surely have been filled with the desire to make his home there. It was Samuel Tomlinson, a thirty-three-year old Connecticuter, who made the first clearing, on the east side of the plateau. He had been Commission Clerk in General Hall's army during the War of 1812, and had been in Ohio several years, studying the advantages of various localities before making his final selection of this forest-clad table land. He began at once to fell trees, to

clear the land for planting and house building. His nearest neighbors - the Crarys, Moores and Morleys of Kirtland and South Kirtland, and the Judds, Coverts and Jacksons of Pleasant Valley - were men enough to furnish stalwart help when the day came for the house-raising.

In February 1821 came two brothers from Onondaga County, New York, to the place that would bear their name - Erastus Waite, 28 years old; and his brother Alvan, ten years younger. They came to clear land that had recently been purchased by their father, William Waite. The deed, dated November 20, 1820, transferred to Mr. Waite of Marcellus, NY., in "consideration of the sum of \$1,572.80, all that undivided one-half of six-hundred and twenty-nine acres of land.... lying in the State of Ohio, in the County of Cuyahoga formerly township of Carlton, now town of Chagrin."<sup>11</sup> The purchase covered one half of the plateau - the western half- and lay in what is now the township of Willoughby in Lake County.

The immediate aim of the Waite brothers was to prepare homes for two families: their father's and Erastus' own young brood. The first essential in locating a homesite was an abundance of good water - and fortunately that was easily supplied on this beautiful plateau, where gushing springs flowed from strata of the higher hills to the south. They chose a spring and cleared the land nearby for two large log houses. The women and children who would occupy these twin-cabins would never feel the loneliness experienced by many settlers' families in the solitude of the "Big Woods". We may suppose that when spring came the brothers planted a crop, to see them through the next winter, but their labor was still mainly with the axe.

After they harvested their New York crops in the fall of 1821, the Waite families were ready to start for their new home in Ohio. We do not know just how they traveled the 340 miles from Onondaga County. there were, of course, no railroads; and the Erie Canal was not completed until 1828. The first lake steamboat - the "Walk-in-the-Water" - had been launched in 1818, and it is quite likely they used it to shorten the trip from Buffalo to Fairport. But ox-carts were the normal conveyances in those days of bad roads, or no roads at all. The Crary family had traveled the entire distance from Massachusetts to South Kirtland in that way. In 1821, the elder Waites were still in their 50s, vigorous and able to withstand the hardships they would encounter. To the younger ones of the family, the long trek to Buffalo, the exciting voyage on the lake steamer, and the drive from Fairport all must have seemed a delightful adventure into an unknown world. Surely the journey was hardest on Mercy, Erastus Waites' young wife, who made the trip with four small children, including a nine-month-old babe in arms.

They were now "home" and the settlement of Waite Hill had begun. the head of one of the households was the young pioneer Erastus. He and his thoroughly capable wife Mercy soon had their cabin equipped for orderly family living. In New York State, Mercy had been particularly proud of her turkey flock, and had mourned the fact she had had to leave them behind. She used to tell this story of her young son Billy: On the morning after their arrival at Waite Hill, Billy was rambling around the edge of the clearing when suddenly he saw in the brambles a wild turkey gobbler and hen. Immediately he ran to the cabin shouting: "Mother! Your turkeys have come from New York!" They hadn't, of course, but Mercy Waite knew that her Thanksgiving Dinner would not lack the crowning glory in which the descendants of the Pilgrims were accustomed.

In a few months other members of the Waite clan came west: Dexter Otis and Stephan Tinkham and their wives Polly and Roxanna, the two daughters of William and Speedy Waite. The work of clearing away the forest never ceased, and now with five energetic men the land soon began to take a different aspect. Fields were planned and plowed - in some fashion - and wheat seed from the New York crop was sown. On the south side of the plateau the pioneers built a third cabin for Dexter and Polly Otis. The little settlement now had three log homes - sturdy structures that stood for more than four decades.

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<sup>1</sup> *Cuyahoga County Deed Book D, pp. 57-58.*

But the life of the pioneer was harsh and often brutal. A record of these early years as taken from a leaf in Mercy Waite's big bible, makes tragic reading. Erastus and Mercy were wed in Onondaga on New Year's Day, 1817. He was not yet 24; she not yet 20. By February 23, 1821, their fourth child was born. Within a week, Erastus was off to Ohio with Alvan to clear the land. That fall, Mercy managed to bring her babies west safely; but the next year - the heat of August 1822 - little Clarinda sickened and died. Just four days later three-year-old Amanda followed. Now a burial ground was added to the little settlement. In January 1823 another child was born - dead, to be laid in a tiny mound beside her sisters. In March 1824, Mary was born. She survived to adulthood but ironically was a lifelong sufferer from epilepsy. In April 1825 another girl was born and the parents named her Clarinda too. but in less than three years she too was resting in "God's Acre." After six years in Ohio, Mercy Waite had borne four children - and buried four! Only four remained alive. The family survived, but the toll was high. In 1838, the mother of these pioneers, Speedy Waite died. The next year her son Erastus followed: only 47 years old, a man who as in what should have been the prime of life. Eighteen years of intense struggle with the great forest had sapped his strength. Mercy herself lived on in widowhood nearly four decades, the matriarch of her clan.

Alvan Waite and Dexter Otis were both greatly affected by the Campbellite revivals of about this time (1828 or 1829). The Rev. Thomas Campbell held revivals in Mentor, and both Erastus Waite and Dexter Otis went to hear him preach. They were greatly stirred, and invited Rev. Campbell to come to Waite Hill to preach. He did, and made a great impression and several converts, among the Alvan Waite. In 1830, the Waite Hill settlers formed the "Church of the Disciples of Christ" on Waite Hill, generally known as the "Willoughby Church". Dexter Otis was an original overseer of the church, and soon began to preach as well. All of the Waites were generally known as prominent early Disciples in this area.

In 1827, Sylvester Smith emigrated from eastern New York to Willoughby township. He purchased a piece of land south of the Waite settlement and immediately began his "improvements". One of these was most unusual. When the Smiths settled, they found a large colony of beaver in possession of the lower part of the purchase. This colony had evidently been long established, perhaps for a century or more. The water of several large springs fed a perpetual swamp, and the beaver had added to this an enormous dam, forming a lake of considerable area. This dam extended in a long curve toward the south, making a great causeway, ten or twelve feet through at the base, and two feet broad at the top. It was completely covered with grass and moss, and saplings had sprung up from the sections of trees the beaver had used in constructing the dam. Some time in the 1830s, one of the settlers (most likely Zephanish Smith) got the idea that much rich soil could be reclaimed by cutting the dam and letting the water escape. So, in his spare time Zephaniah set to work with pick and shovel to cut through the beavers' intricate masonry project. Little by little, he dug out sticks and stones and sections of logs. Day after day he worked as opportunity offered - week after week, month after month. It was his hobby, his "fancy-work." It became almost a mania and people began to smile and tap their heads when they mentioned "Zephaniah's dug-way." Weeks and months became years, but at least he made it through the dam, and the water of the lake flowed down the valley toward the east. The placid mirror of towering trees, the favorite drinking place of bear and deer alike disappeared; and in time the industrious beaver, the original architects, and all the larger creatures were forced to seek other solitudes. The place itself, however, remained known as "Beaver Meadow". Farmers came from miles around to the spot to obtain much to mix with their own soil, and successive generations of Waite Hill school children petitioned their teachers for an extra half-hour of noon-time for the long walk on the causeway to Zephaniah's dug-way!"

Throughout these years, the work of clearing away the forest continued. To Mr. Edward M. Otis, Superintendent of Willoughby Schools (from 1909 to 1939), and a grandson of Dexter Otis, were are indebted for the following sketch: "Adna Otis, my father, became a farmer and woodsman. The life of a woodsman

and wood-cutter was a hazardous one. It seemed to me that a winter never passed without a serious accident of some kind. For weeks, father would be laid up with severe cuts from the axe. Sanitary measures were unknown, and typhoid was a common and usually fatal disease. At the age of forty, my father was stricken with this dreadful malady after an axe accident, and nearly lost his life. He never fully recovered, but was left with a partially paralyzed lower jaw. For the remaining two decades of his life, eating, even talking, were difficult for him. This was especially a trial, for he was a singer of unusually ability, and he especially enjoyed singing the inspiring hymns characteristic of that day. Fortunately he was an avid reader. Outside of the bible, which was his chief recreational reading matter, father's reading was limited to a strictly Republican newspaper - the *New York Tribune*. Having passed through the trying days of the Rebellion (Civil War), he had no use for Democrats or Democratic newspapers.<sup>2</sup> For professional ready, *The Ohio Farmer* furnished most of his information."

In the early years, this section of Ohio was visited several times by violent windstorms, or tornadoes, which always caused great destruction and, sometimes, loss of life. The most disastrous of these early storms came in the spring of 1842. It swept in a northeasterly direction from Orange to Concord, cutting a clean swath through the forest and fields 20 rods wide. In Mayfield, mud and water were scooped from the bottom of the river, logs which for years had been embedded on the bank were lifted and strewn on dry land. Two brand new farm houses were leveled, one so completely demolished that not a timber of it could be used again. A new barn was destroyed, its doors and siding striped off and blown as far as two miles. After spreading destruction in Mayfield, the twister rampaged through the adjoining townships of Chester and Kirkland. Directly in the path of the storm stood the log home of Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Hobart - about two miles south of Waite Hill. Mrs. Hobart was in the home with her three small children, preparing the evening meal, the children setting the table. Suddenly they heard a great roaring noise. Mrs. Hobart looked up to see trees falling on all sides, great branches flying by the door, and leaves, brush and grass everywhere. Quickly scooping up the children, she raced to the bedroom. She put the frightened little ones into the bed and hovered over them so that if death were to strike it would come to her first. The house itself was leveled to within tow tiers of logs from the ground. The partition between the main room and the bedroom, being of matched boards and fasten into the beam, swung around in the general destruction in such a way as to protect the mother and children; but the rest of the house was destroyed as the chimney collapsed, splintering the table and shattering the dishes the children had just set upon it. The storm then leaped over, hit the church at Kirkland, turning it on its stone foundation, then leaped to the David Thayer place where a small child was killed by a falling chimney. By the time the storm reached Concord it had spent its fury, but traces of the great destruction remained in evidence for years. The neighbors of the Hobarts opened their doors to the homeless family. Joshua Hobart was a carpenter, fortunately enough, and it was not long before he had converted his shop, which the storm had spared, into a home. Many of the Hobart possessions had been carried miles away, and some were eventually recovered and used as before. Ironically, Mrs. Hobart's "fancy" china - which was too delicate for everyday use on the frontier - was still packed away in the chest that had carried it from New Hampshire. It was under the bed on which the Hobart children lay, and although a house fell in all around it, not one piece of



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<sup>2</sup>A reference to the Civil War "Copperheads."

that china was broken or chipped.<sup>3</sup>

*Photograph of Lillie Tryon Curtis reproduced from The Story of Waite Hill by Lillie T. Curtis; pub. The Lake County Historical Society Quarterly, Volume 19:4; December 1977*

## EDITOR'S NOTES

This account of Waite Hill was written by Mrs. Lillie Tryon Curtis over a period of time in the 1920s and early 1930s, apparently with considerable help from her friends and acquaintances from Waite Hill, where she was born and raised. Mrs. Curtis' narrative was a long, quite involved, often repetitive account which generally followed no chronological order. In editing her work, therefore, I have exerted a small portion of material from a much greater whole and, in addition, have take the liberty of re-arranging portions of the account to make it fit into a logical pattern. The essence and flavor of Mrs. Curtis' work remains as she wrote it, however. These sketches of the "First Pioneers" comprised the first section of a ull-length account of Waite Hill in the nineteenth century, and in the coming months we will be featuring subsequent chapters of Mrs. Curtis' fascinating story. The original manuscript from which this excerpt comes in now in the possession of

Mrs. Catherine Rissness of Willoughby, a great-niece of Lillie Tryon Curtis. The Lake County Historical Society wish to thank Mrs. Rissness for her kind permission to publish portions of her great-aunt's account.

Willis P. Kern, Editor

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My first definite recollection of Waite Hill as a place apart from home and mother was in the early summer of 1860. I was three years old, and hopelessly lost in a big field of bumble bees and clover that was as high as my head - all my landmarks were gone! For at least ten minutes - that seemed to me hours - I had traveled bravely but blindly in the wrong direction and still saw no familiar house or barn or friendly face. Never before had I been out of sight of home alone, and now to drown in a sea of clover! I lifted up my voice and cried aloud. When father finally located me, he lifted me up on his shoulders to look around that I might not get lost again. We were looking south. Directly in front of us was the Waite Hill Road and on the other side of that was Grandfather Tryon's house with the gate wide open. My grandmother was placidly knitting in the cool shade of the north porch. Beyond the house stood the barn, from which a cow-law led up the slope to the east, where there was a large spring at the edge of the orchard. This spring, which fed Grandfather's pond, was near the ruins of Samuel Tomlinson's first log home, built forth years earlier. Slowly father turned me about to see all the familiar sights of Waite Hill. I was back in familiar surroundings, but my first "journey" from home, into that meadow, had been for a short while a frightening adventure.

From the hills and ravines on Waite Hill there gushed many springs, which were a source of joy to the inhabitants. The water was crystal-clear, free from mineral taste, and delicious, although it was somewhat "hard" for laundry. In those days, the springs of Waite Hill supplied the water needs of the entire community. The rolling land between the ravines was a haven for children. In the spring the ridges were covered with beautiful violets, each ridge with its special variety. At the head of these violet covered ridges stood chestnut trees, whose flowers in July made the air fragrant with their scent. Then a gully emerged from the woods and spread into a marsh filled with a lush growth of cat-tails, much frequented in the nesting-season by the lively bobolink and his sober mate. This swamp discharged its water into the river below, and the

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<sup>3</sup>Mrs. Curtis excerpted this account of the tornado from an article written by Etta Madden Hobart, which appears in the Willoughby Republican, March 3, 1922.

treeless pasture, rimmed on the east by the big chestnuts ended in a bald promontory overlooking the Markell valley.

This pasture was always called the "Bousfield Lot" because it had formerly belonged to John Bousfield, one of the English settlers, and at the foot of the steep hillside stood his factory for the manufacture of pails and tubs. This factory had by 1860 been abandoned for several years but, I think, when in operation, had been run by water from our big spring, conveyed by a flume to an over-shot wheel. Just east of the mill a large wooden bridge crossed the river to a narrow road which led to the homes of the Randalls and Gothams. On our side, a road climbed a hill and met the Waite Hill road at the corner, making at the same place a sharp angle with the Kirtland road. These were the roads by which the Bousfield pails and tubs were brought to the people of the Hill and the country to the south and east of us. After Mr. Bousfield left, Charles Fessenden and Nelson Waite operated the mill for a short while manufacturing washing-machines, but after not too many years the mill was altogether abandoned. After that, it remained for many years the chief center of "pernicious activity" for the idle boys of Kirtland Flats.

Another form of "light recreation" for these boys was stoning the myriad small panes in the huge windows of the unused Mormon Temple; they indulged in this activity just to show their skill in marksmanship. But the sturdy timbers of Bousfield's old mill which the boys had marked for total destruction, called for many hours of hard labor, and some ingenuity, in order to undermine the structure in preparation for the grand crash without being themselves involved in the ruin. It was a task at which successive generations of boys toiled. Of course the windows were at once broken, and the clapboards soon after ripped off for bon-fires and other "high-jinks," but the skeleton remained a challenge. Finally, a night-long storm ruined the fun but probably saved the lives of at least a half-dozen young scamps by precipitating the final collapse of the old mill. Needless to say, the mothers of the Flats did not join their sons in mourning this "accident".

Leaving the hot, unshaded hill-top of the Bousfield lot we children were always eager to plunge into the cool freshness of the woods beyond. A few short steps into the coolness and we were upon the bowl of the "Big Spring". A wonderful place it was then, with a great tree guarding the strong flow of cold water. The water was nearly as cold in the heat of summer as in the depths of winter, for its sources were so deep in the earth that it was little affected by changes in surface temperature: nearly ice-cold in the summer, the spring still never froze in the winter. Even the noisy boys entered that little wooded chamber with hushed voices.

Early in the 1970s, water from this Big Spring was forced by hydraulic ram to our house and barn and, soon after this my father and Clinton Hills were tempted by the water's unvarying temperature throughout the year to experiment with brook trout. After a great deal of labor and expense, they demonstrated that these delights of their New York boyhoods could be, in fact, successfully propagated in the spring waters of Ohio. They built sheds, and a series of flat, shallow troughs in order to create a rippling effect when the water ran over them. Next they made fine wire screens to separate the fish by age. They obtained large cans of spawn from a New York State hatchery. They fed the newly hatched fish "bonny-clabber" (or clobbered milk) and the larger ones minced liver or other finely-chopped meat. It was fun to watch them leap into the air to meet the food as it was tossed in. For the half and full-grown fish, they made two deep pools--lovely mirrors of sky and tree-tops and flitting birds. But here was where the temptation offered by those speckled beauties, and only a few of them lived to come of age: the boys caught and ate the majority. The task of guarding the place was too difficult and my father and Mr. Hills abandoned the project. But they had proved to themselves that the trout could thrive here with the correct management.

Projecting into the river valley from father's woods were the two promontories which we called East Point and West Point. Between the two ran a deep gully, the slopes of which were covered with towering trees, mostly maples, and here Grandfather Dexter had built his sugar house. He equipped it with a furnace and a

large, flat boiler, for the rapid evaporation of the sap. When March brought "sugar weather": - sunny days and frosty nights - he began to tap the numerous maples. He fitted the tap-holes with "spiles" made of 16-inch lengths of alder - about one inch in diameter, from which he had drilled or punched out the pith - the work of many a winter's evening. These he tapered at one end so that they would easily fit into the augur holes in the trees. As a rule, grandfather drove two spiles into each tree. The flow of sap was abundant, but the yield of sugar less so; a clay soil produces more maple sugar than our sandy loam. The quality of the product was goo, though, and a night in the sugar "hanty" at sugaring-off time was a joy never to be forgotten.

We made syrup and sugar every spring, as long as the sugar-house stood. My memory calls back the towering trunks of those maples, the rush of the March wind through the leafless branches, and the red glow of the fire when the furnace door was ajar to lay in the long, straight hickory sticks: "Just enough and not too much to keep the sap boiling steadily," grandfather would say, Unfortunately, late in November, my brother Charlie and cousin Jimmy, boys of 10 to 12 years, taken advantage of a late Indian-summer's afternoon with some sport in the river, which left their clothes far too wet for motherly inspection. On the way home, Jimmy was seized with a brilliant idea: "Why not light a fire and dry our clothes?" Soon a small blaze lit the ravine. But it had been a dry autumn and the fire quickly spread throughout the entire wood-let. Grandfather's sugar-house was destroyed in the general conflagration, and he never rebuilt it.

Life on Waite Hill was never dull in those days as changing seasons brought constantly changing chores and pleasures, too. This was a time in our history when machines were being invented with great rapidity and, gradually, they were introduced into common use and lightened the labors of the intelligent farmer. One of the first of these labor-savers was a hand corn-planter, which made the hole and dropped into each hill the required number of seeds. The advancing foot of the man operating this wonder then covered the seed. At first, skeptics were apt to follow behind and dig up each hill to convince themselves that corn was in fact really there, and just so many kernels in each hill! Early in 1860s, father bought another labor saving implement - a mowing machine - a Walter A. Wood, I think it was. It was the first mower on the Hill, and it was a wonderful sight to behold with its long "cutter-bar" set with sharp triangular knives playing swiftly back and forth through the grass. Up until this time scythes had always been used for cutting grass and clover, and they were still used for "patch-work" - mowing fence corners, around stumps and the like. For harvesting the grain crops, the farmers still used the heave "cradles", laying the wheat or oats in clean, straight swatches for raking and "setting-up" - hard, back-breaking work, all done by hand.

Among the most important and interesting activities of early summer was the washing and shearing of sheep. This called for the services of several local young men- a jovial, athletic group of experts from Kirtland: Ben Dagget, Ed Billings, Henry Wells, and one or two others. The sheep had been gathered a few weeks earlier into the River pasture, so that by shearing time they felt perfectly at home there. Father never used a sheep dog. When he would enter the pasture, he carried a measure of salt in the crook of his arm and in a mellow voice called out "Go-day! Go-day! Go-Day!" The entire flock would run to him, on sing about for the salt. Only a perfect June day would do for sheep-washing. Since father was there, we children were allowed to spend the day and oversee the entire operation - and a regular festival we made of it! Wading in the river above the sheep, hunting for wild strawberries, capering through the pennyroyal - we enjoyed them all. The men constructed a bottle-shaped pen on the bank, then urged the sheep down the neck of the bottle and into the stream. A skillful washer could crook a sheep's head with one elbow to keep it out of the water while dowsing the rest of the protesting animal with the other hand to clean away the year's accumulation of grime. The plaintive "bass" soon ceased, as if to no avail. But when the washing was over and the victim was turned loose once more to drip upon dry land, the chorus of bleats that followed

told the world of the outrage that had been done to the innocent creatures. One bath a year was just one too many!

As soon as the wool dried, the men sheared the sheep. They had previously built a long shearing table, and now they took positions behind it. Each would grab a sheep before him upon the table and begin to snip away at the fleece- "clip, clip" went the big shears over the broad sides and back; but then, "snip, snip" around the neck and ears with a close and intimate sound that made us children wince with sympathy- We knew how it felt to be "shingled" with a pair of sharp shears! But the ordeal was soon over, and the sheep, now quite naked and shivering were sent on their way. The thick fleece lay on the long table like a thick fur rug. The shearers folded their fleece, tucking in the irregular edges, taking care to leave out the soiled "tags" for the women to wash by hand and spread to dry separately. They then carried the fleece to the baling tables where they pressed it into perfect cubes weighing, I think 5 to 6 pounds, and bound them with a strong "wool-cord," Then they stacked the bales in a clean store-room.

Most of the wool was sold, prices ranging then from 40 to 50 cents per pound. The amount left for home-use was then taken to Dodd's Woolen Mill at Pleasant Valley to be carded and prepared for spinning at home. Before they were married, both my grandmothers had woven their own blankets, bed and table-linen and blue and white linsey-woolly coverlets, but there was no weaving done at home in my day. However, in each home there were spinning wheels, both large ones for wool and small ones for flax, as well as reels, swifts, cards, hatchels, bobbins and spindles for converting the wool and flax into yarn and thread suitable for the constant knitting that was done by every woman. One of the joys of my life was to watch my sunny faced mother stepping lightly forward and back before the big wheel, at her side the mass of soft, fleecy "rolls" of wool from the mill. She would lift a roll, and with a quick twist of her moistened fingers and thumb, fasten a filament to the end of yarn dangling from the spindle. A step forward, a twirl of the big wheel with her left hand and the song began, raising and falling in musical rhythm, as the lengthening thread would evenly on the swiftly revolving spindle. This yarn was then "reeled" off in skeins for dyeing - so many revolutions of the reel and a sharp click told one it was time to tie the knotting band. After a certain number of "knots" a skein was made. There were no commercial dyes then, but every housewife had a collection of recipes handed down from mother to daughter for generations and guaranteed "permanent if directions faithfully followed." After the skeins were dyed and dried, mother placed them on the "swifts" - or on the hands of any reluctant boy or girl who happened by - to hold straight, thumbs kept carefully erect, while the yarn was wound into balls for the busy needles of the women and girls. (Men sometimes rested or sat idle; but women - *never!*) Socks and stockings, large and small, for all sorts of weather and wear, were made at home. Mother used heavy dark blue yarn for the men, white or gray for the women and gay red or light blue for the children. Linen thread was used for most summer-wear items, but most of the boys discarded shoes and socks when summer came. This habit made Sunday a real day of penance, when their mothers' respect for polite society compelled them to crowd their battered and stone-bruised feet into tight shoes or top boots. The knitting of mittens was another considerable item, for winters were long and cold, and travel slow. For heavy teaming, the men required heavy mittens of tufted wool, or special striped ones of blue and white, both kinds calling for special skill in the shaping.

Besides the constant knitting, there was another chore that required a great deal of constant labor by the women and girls; a job that was always there to fill in the odd minutes. Every old garment, when entirely beyond wear, was washed and turned into carpet-rags. Little girls sewed the strips together after the women had cut or torn them to proper width according to the material: narrow for heavy woolen, wider for cotton. Once sewed end to end, we wound the strips into big balls for the carpet weaver. Those that had faded were wound into skeins to be dipped or dyed according to the fancy of the individual; indigo,

orange, crimson, cobalt, bright yellow - all honest, bold colors, no pastels. Then the rug weaver would combing the strips in a "hit-or-miss" style to make a varied-colored rug to set off any room.

Rag carpets used up all the worn cloth, but for scraps and pieces of new material there was another use - the patchwork quilts upon which little girls always took their first lessons in sewing. First was the four-patch, then the nine-patch, then the "Irish Chains" and the "rising suns," the "fruit patches," and finally the album quilts" made from the "missionary barrel" or the minister's donation party. Different people would make and contribute the separate blocks the centers of each being a white square with the seamstress' name in indelible ink and in her own careful handwriting. These were calculated to bring tears of affectionate recollection to the eyes of the recipient - usually did, too! "Log Cabin" quilts and "biscuit quilts", which had patches of silk puffed with bits of cotton batting, were the fancy-work" for many a woman whose conscience would permit not even a single idle moment.

Another task of early spring was soft-soap making. First, the men constructed the "leach." They would build a bench, slightly higher at the back than the front, and long enough to hold two or three strong barrels with holes in the bottoms. In these barrels they placed the ashes from the winter's wood fires, and then it was everyone's job when passing the barrels to pour at least a dipperful of water over the ashes to "leach" through, collecting lye in the trough below. When the lye was strong enough to float a new-laid egg, it was ready to make soap.

All winter, the women had saved every scrap of beef, pork or mutton fat in a specially-constructed container at the end of the wood-shed. When the air became balmy in the spring, then father would swing a big kettle over an outdoor fire. Mother would don her worst dress for the soap-making, but always wore a neat white collar: neither she nor father ever appeared collarless, whatever the work or the weather. Her outfit was complete with a rowdy sort of hat that made us all laugh but never made her look any other than the lady she was. (The only time she ever looked really rowdy was when a runaway horse threw her head-long into a hedgerow, and she came limping home with a black eye and her formerly stiff straw hat hanging in disreputable rings around her neck.) But for the soap-making she wore these old clothes for the purpose - the job was hard, disagreeable and dirty. She constantly stirred the grease-lye mixture, which had a perverse tendency to bubble up when least expected and boil over, and the product - the "soft--soap" - was far from a dainty toilet article; it was to be used with sand and elbow grease for the scrubbing of floors and the scouring of tinware. But to me, soap-making was always a happy day. Just beyond the soap-making kettle was a very old and very large cherry tree over which grew a wild grape vine. This was our first playhouse, and soap-making day was our first chance to occupy it in the springtime. Two boards nailed to the trunk were our steps up, and boards laid across the boughs, tied in place where necessary, provided our flooring. In that house we spent hours with our baby-doll cradle, our china and a little table. In that vine-covered tree there were no danger of falling too far and to be able to spend the whole day there with "Dear Mother" just below making the soap was sheer joy to us.

Most articles that are nowadays purchased in stores ready for use were in those days | 1870s and 1880s | prepared at home. All spices were ground in a hand-mill, in a home-made wooden mortar and pestle. The sugar was either light or dark brown, and soft and moist - so moist it nearly dripped. Block sugar was unknown, but "loaf sugar" came in large cones wrapped in blue paper. A thick knife and a wooden mallet were required to break off lumps of the right size for the sugar bowl. Raisins came in clusters, and required stemming, seeding, washing, spreading and drying before they could be used - it took two days to make a fruit cake. Corn-starch was as yet unknown - sago, arrow-root and isinglass or tapioca were used instead. All the women made preserves, but there were "lighting jars" or "self-sealers" in those days, and preserving or pickling required extreme care and much labor. The hot jar was sealed by filling in the groove around the cover with a hot cement made of resin and beeswax, kneaded with the fingers until the taffy-like coil was

ready to be pressed into place. Great skill and much experience were necessary to assure success. But still, there was always delicious jams and preserves, marmalades and apple-butter, applesauce and pickles to depend upon. In most all household and farm chores, time, care, and persistent hard work were necessary. Today | ca. 1930 |, most of what was produced in the home or on the farm by individual families is now available at the local store. Then "men worked from sun to sun, and a woman's work was never done" - there was a joy in that work, a family togetherness that the convenience of the corner store cannot replace. I hope my recollection of earlier days will help a little to keep memories of a simpler time alive.

There were always racks full of fine apples in the cold cellar - "Grimes' golden," Bellmonts, bright-red Baldwins, Rhode Island Greening, waxen yellow Becks' Pleasants, Baltimores - from which the finest cider was made - , Red Canadas for mild, juicy eating, and brown Russets for springtime. Every evening when the chores were all done and the family gathered round the bright fire, father would get a candle and "take a look down the cellar to see how the apples are keeping." Bringing a big dish of those bright-colored apples, he would sit down with a sharp knife, on the point of which he would pass each apple in turn leaving the juicy fruit neatly pared, cored and quartered. "An apple a day keeps the doctor away," he said, and there was seldom the need for a physician at the Tryon house, where fruit abounded and was freely eaten. All this made the hard work more tolerable, even pleasant.

Like other | products. very few garments of any sort could be purchased ready-made. Men's "best suites" were made to order by a tailor, but all their working clothes were cut and made at home by the women of the family. All the children's clothing was home-made too, long trousers and "round-about" jackets for the boys, and for the girls everyday garments of unbleached muslin or an indestructible cotton fabric of a dingy buff color, brought from China and called "nankeen" - we called it "coolie cloth" and hated it. But we had our frills for Sunday-best. Winter under-wear was always flannel - red for children, gray for father. Houses were not warmed as they are now, it was a regular thing in wintertime to see the living room windows covered with a thick white rime of frost. Even the fine lines shirts and ear-scraping collars were made at home, stitched by hand until the first sewing machine on Waite Hill was installed - in our house. It was a single thread, lock stitch, Wilcox and Gibbs machine, which mother soon learned to run like "lightning," while amazed and admiring neighbor women stood by and marveled at its speed and efficiency. And something speedy was needed for the remarkable clothes that women - then thought fashionable to wear. Starting with the monstrosity called the hoop-skirt, the amount of fabric required for a dress was shocking, especially when you consider the heavy weight of the materials used at the time. As someone said in 1929, "it took the wool of four sheep to clothe a woman then, and now it takes only the silk of a single silkworm." Ten feet 'round was not at all unusual for the hoop. Another fashion of those days, for widows, was to wear a full-bearded and long-haired portrait of her departed husband as her most conspicuous personal adornment. Those fashions are one things about those days I do not miss.

The "King of Stoves" was a great heater, and one night father and mother were awakened by a red glow on the ceiling and the strong smell of burning paint. The fire-board had been ignited by the fierce heat of the "King's" high oven, and was beginning to blaze merrily. Fortunately, father was a determined advocate of the frequent tub for everyone in those days of no bath-room conveniences, even in zero weather. That cold night, after the rest of us had gone to bed, he had performed his own ablutions by the living-room fire, and left the big tub standing to be emptied in the morning. Now, he rushed from his bed and with a mighty heave flung the tub at the stove, drowning the incipient conflagration. The timber of our old house was solid and substantial, but the shingles and clapboards were like tinder, needing only a spark to ignite them, especially in a dry season when warped by the sun. One day in summer, there was company for mid-day dinner. Mother's helper at that time was Lovisa Jewell, a neighbor girl of nineteen or twenty, who had a singularly placid voice and disposition. All the family was seated at the table and Lovisa was in the kitchen

"dishing up." Father had just begun to carve, when Lovisa appeared at the door with a calm sweet voice that was absolutely unhurried, announced "Mr. Tryon, the house is on fire." The carving knife and fork dropped with a clatter, as father rushed into the kitchen. The roof of the wood-house was blazing, and sparks were already falling through to the floor. Ladders were always kept handy for such emergencies, and our guests quickly formed a "bucket brigade," while father stood on the ladder throwing the water where it had the greatest effect. Smouldering shingles were ripped off and thrown to the grass below, and we children ran for old horse blankets and quilts, saturated them with water, and the men spread them across the adjoining parts of the roof, and soon the fire was out and the danger over. Then, after a thorough scrubbing of begrimed hands and faces, we all returned to dinner, which Lovisa had carefully kept warm in the oven.

There was always danger of fire in those days-- with the houses with their snapping wood fires, tallow candles, lamps filled with imperfectly refined oil, and many a house was lost to flames.

The hardest work of the year was in mid-summer, with the harvesting and the threshing of the grain. The younger men were generally expert cradlers, and took pride in their skill and endurance. It was their ambition to work fast enough to keep two other men busy raking and binding behind them, and a third trailing along setting up the bundles. Jacob Hadden was a famous cradler roundabout, and he could always do this quite easily, until Grove Curtis, fresh from the wheatfields of western Iowa, came home with a new time-saving way of binding. As each bundle was thrown down with the one hand, the other hand grasped enough straw from it to bind the next. In this way, no time was wasted in making the band to bind the next bundle, and Grove easily kept up with Jacob - to Jacob's chagrin. The introduction of the McCormick Harvester brought friendly contest of this sort to a close.

I can just barely recall seeing David Whitright and another man thresh with flails. A terrible reckless operation, it seemed to me, as the two men stood opposite each other, alternately swinging their flails above their heads, and bringing the loose "swingle" down with a crash on the grain spread out on the thrashing floor. If the rawhide thong had broken - as they had been known to do - it would have been with fatal results. From the 1860s on, flails were still used for threshing beans or a few bushels of buckwheat, but most of the threshing on Waite Hill was done with a new machine - the Badger "Railroad" horsepower machine. This was a heavy framework set at an incline, having at each side an endless cast iron track, on each of which ran an endless belt made of iron links. These links were connected with those running on the opposite side of the apparatus by wooden bars, like railroad ties, which made a traveling floor. On this team a horse walked, always uphill, hour after hour and day after day, their roadway always breaking off under their hind feet. The power generated by the horses was carried by a broad leather driving belt to the toothed threshing cylinder, into which the men fed the unbound bundles of grain, heads first. Various shakers and screens separated the grain from the straw, sending one one way and the other in another. It was hot and dusty work for eight to ten men or boys, and the women always exerted themselves to prepare ample and appetizing meals for the weary threshers. The men of the neighborhood exchanged days of work through the harvest season, so that every farmer had ample assistance in getting his crop in. The women also volunteered to wait on tables and wash dishes afterward as the harvesters made their rounds throughout the neighborhood. It was really a time of much hearty friendliness and goodwill.

In later years, the "tread-power" of this system gave way to four long "sweeps" extending from a vertical shaft. Four horses at the end of these sweeps traveled round in a wide circle all day long - bad enough for the beasts, but better than the tread-mill. This thresher was operated for years by Charles Worrallo from Geauga County, who traveled with several teams of horses from farm to farm throughout the area, sometimes spending four or five days in one place. This made much more work for the women, for the men now required beds and breakfast as well as midday dinner and supper.

Still later, came the first steam thresher, the Smith brothers, George and Cyrus, the sons of Danford Smith, having the first such outfit in our area. This machine moved in stately but mysterious fashion along the country road, setting the staid farm horses to sporting and prancing about in dismay, and generally upsetting the neighborhood. This went on until some intelligent and compassionate legislator secured passage of a state law that required the threshers be preceded by horses that were familiar with it and not terrified of it, even when it was traveling under its own power on the public highway. This stratagem helped to quiet the nerves of the unsophisticated natives, both horses and humans.

After the hot and heavy labor of July and August, everyone welcomed the pleasant days of early autumn. There remained only the comparatively simple work of cutting and husking the corn, digging and sorting potatoes, and picking and sorting apples. Silo building was unknown then, so all the corn was left to stand in the field until thoroughly hard. The corn-cutter was a simple blade, with a handle like a Cuban machete. A man cut as many stalks as he could carry to the shocks, which stood thick and tall all around the field. Ohio corn, though not as tall as that produced later in Kansas, was always a wonder and delight to our men from New England, being familiar only with the diminutive "Yankee" corn from the northeastern states: they were forever bringing in sample stalks, often twelve to fifteen feet or more, or sample ears, round and full, to show them off to friends and neighbors. As long as the weather remained mild, the husking was done in the field, often to the soft and lovely light of the "Hunter's Moon."

For we children it was the nut-harvest that was the most important, for it was on this that we depended for our Christmas money. There was no lying abed in chestnuts season - after a few frosty nights had opened the burrs and brisk winds had covered the ground with nuts. At that season, when the sun rose "up rose we" to visit the big isolated trees scattered about the farm. Chestnuts sold for about eight dollar a bushel, for which amount we could (and did) buy father a warm fur collar of soft beaver fur for cold winter's days.

Waite Hill people depended mostly on their own resources for meat - there was no traveling butcher's wagon calling at the door in those days. People used the smaller creatures - calves, sheep, chickens - in the summer, but in the fall they often killed a six-month old calf or a fat yearling. A good many pounds of this were cut in thick pieces, salted, smoked and dried ready for use on demand. And a very different article it was, too, from the paper-thin tasteless chips one may buy today in expensive packages. These home-grown, home-cured blocks of fine beef were "tasty" to the very last chip, and hungry children used to beg for the hard end with the string through it, a pleasurable morsel to "gnaw" upon.

The last of November, with its more settled cold weather, was butchering time for all the families on Waite Hill, and the shrill squeal of protesting swine was a sure sign that neighboring families were preparing their supply of pork for the long winter ahead. "Pigs" were not killed in those days, but big porkers weighing five or six hundred pounds were our supply of huge hams and shoulders. Bacon (or sow-belly as they called it in the South) was hardly known at all on Waite Hill, but the "pork-bar'l in every farmer's cellar was always well packed with the clear "side-port" - solid fat, two or three inches thick, "without a streak of lean." This was used in many delicious ways - boiled with greens and cabbage, baked with beans, or sliced, floured and fried in the pan. Men engaged in hard fall or winter work - chipping, sawing, and splitting wood, our only fuel - enjoyed the crisp slices of salt port, and a delicious cream gravy was made with them.

Skillful housewives made "head-cheese" and "souse," and sausages galore, while many pounds of pure fat were "rendered" into "pure leaf lard," for which there was a great demand. All country people in those days were largely addicted to "doughnuts," crullers, and PIE - - apple, rhubarb, cherry, berry, peach, pumpkin, squash, grape, elderberry, "cracker" - the list was a long one, and lard was used in the making of all them. A quarter section of mince pie, with a big slab of cheese, and a plate of warm doughnuts, with two or three cups of tea, would make any lumber man at peace with the world, no matter the weather. And the

consumption of such a light lunch when he "just happened" to come into the house at baking-time, never seemed to interfere with his appetite for dinner at noontime.

The farm was always a busy place, with much varied activity going on the year-round, and with friends and neighbors aplenty to help out in all needed seasons. One day of unusually heavy activity, we were all somewhat surprised when a stranger of very gentlemanly appearance drove in at the gate just at dinner time, and asked if he might get a meal for himself and feed for his horse. The stranger's horse was put in a stall and fed, and the stranger himself joined the procession to the row of wash-basins and clean towels, and after proceeded to the table where he was seated next to father. There was about fifteen at the dinner-table that day, and two girls were kept busy waiting upon them. As usual, father did the carving in his generous way, and there was ample allowance of fresh vegetables and salad, stacks of homemade bread, both brown and white, and for dessert, peach pie. The stranger ate with great relish everything set before him. When the meal was over, he asked for his bill. When father replied that we never refuse a hungry man dinner, and that he was perfectly welcome to such entertainment's as he had at our table, the gentleman was successively amazed, shocked, and embarrassed at what he had inadvertently done. "Seeing the number of people coming in for dinner," he said, "and the signs of activity at every side" the man had mistaken our home for a "country-road-house" or inn, which provided entertainment for man or beast as a matter of business. The poor man could not apologize enough. "Here I came into your home as though I had a perfect right, ate your dinner - and such a dinner! and," he looked shamefacedly at mother - "I even asked for a second piece of that wonderful pie!" But father and mother laughed, and refused to consider the matter as anything other than a good joke.

In these modern days, I love to remember the dearly-beloved home of those early times on Waite Hill.

There were no *daily* newspapers coming to Waite Hill in the '60s. Most families had a Cleveland tri-weekly; a farm journal, like the *Country Gentleman* or the *Ohio Farmer*; and a religious paper like the *Christian Advocate*. Horace Greeley's *New York Weekly Tribune*, to which my grandfather Dexter had been a subscriber since its first issue in 1841, gave important news, both domestic and foreign, and Greeley's vigorous editorials, on a wide range of topics, were a hallmark. There were no serious political feuds on Waite Hill, but plenty of subjects for discussion in that troubled time before the Civil War. The Tryons and others of the York State colony were Whigs from the period of the Revolutionary War<sup>1</sup>, and "Free Soldiers" from the inception of that party in 1848. The "Compromise Measures" advocated by Henry Clay were followed on Waite Hill with a great deal of interest. The passage of the Fugitive Slave Law in September 1850, as one of those measures, caused intense excitement here as elsewhere among the followers of Wendell Phillips, William Lloyd Garrison, Charles Sumner, John Greenleaf Whittier, and others of that great antislavery group of New England. The "underground railroad" was suppose to be in active operation through out the hills of Geauga and Ashtabula Counties, fugitive slaves being passed along from one farmhouse to another, kept in concealment during the day, and being driven secretly by night to the next "station" on the road to freedom. Waite Hill people read and wept and raged when they read Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, published in 1852. Waite Hill men were unanimous in their opposition to slavery, but opinions were divided as to the methods of abolishing it entirely, or of preventing its extension to new territory. John Brown of Ossawatimie had many sympathizers here, while he remained in Kansas, but none approved his rash stroke at Harper's Ferry in 1859.<sup>2</sup>

In 1861, after the election of Abraham Lincoln as President, the "Cotton states" began to secede, and "State Sovereignty" was debated pro and con, with varying opinions on the abstract principles of the question, until the attack on Fort Sumter stopped discussion and united all in a determination to work for the maintenance of the Union and the abolition of slavery. On April 13, 1861, the storm broke forth, and on the 15th, President Lincoln called for 75,000 men to "suppress the insurrection." Seven states had already seceded, and now

four more joined the newly formed Confederacy. Throughout the North, the excitement was intense, and the response to the President's call for volunteers was instantaneous - four times as many men being offered as were asked for. Before the bombardment of Sumter had ceased, Governor Dennison of Ohio had received the pledge of twenty full companies for immediate service. Training began in all the villages, Willoughby and Kirtland both having military companies and regular drill. Waite Hill shared the excitement and participated in the activity of other neighborhoods. There were few men of suitable age in its small population, but later two of Luther Waite's sons, Erastus and Orrin, enlisted in Willoughby. Nathan Tomlinson became captain of a company in a Colored Regiment commanded by Col Shurtliff of Oberlin. James and Samuel Brain enlisted, and John Morley and Sidney Tullar went from our house to join a company raised in Kirtland. Gilbert Hobart, son of Joshua Hobart, served under Grant in the West. All acquitted themselves with honor at the front, while every man, woman and child at home worked with might and main throughout the war to meet the urgent demand for supplies and equipment of every kind.

On April 19th, four days after the President's call to arms, the women of Cleveland formed the Soldier's Aid Society of Northern Ohio, an association "to supply nurses for sick and wounded soldiers needed articles and comforts not furnished by the government, and also to care for the families of volunteers in their homes." On the 23rd of April, a worried officer came to the large hall where the women were hard at work tearing and rolling bandages, and cutting out and making hospital garments. Quickly, the officer announced that a thousand volunteers were on their way to Camp Taylor, the Camp of Instruction just opened near Cleveland, with absolutely no equipment in the way of blankets, tents or camping outfits. Unless the women could do something for them, the men would lie on the ground with no blankets or protection from the sharp April nights. A plan was quickly formed: two ladies rounded up carriages, the city was divided into eight hacks, the canvass began. It was then three P.M. By nightfall, the carriages began to roll in, each packed with bedding - wooden blankets, chintz comfortable, thick counterpanes, patchwork quilts - 729 in all. The next day, the work was resumed till every man in the camp was supplied with a warm cover.

Cleveland was then only a small town - less than 45,000 inhabitants - but the energy and patriotism of this organization - the first of its kind in the country - never flagged. It was the kind center for relief work for northeastern Ohio, and before the end of the war there were 525 branch societies in the country towns and neighborhoods reporting to it, getting instructions from it and sending completed work to it. My mother was Secretary of the Waite Hill Aid Society, and was in frequent correspondence with Miss Mary Clark Brayton, Secretary of the Cleveland Center. Supplies were gathered, packed and addressed for shipment at our house. In those first days, there was no absorbent cotton, no sterilized gauze or surgical dressings. Soft, half-worn cotton sheets and pillow-cases were torn in proper widths, and rolled by hand for bandages. Old table-linen, napkins and table-clothes, the older the better, were cut in two-inch squares and laboriously scraped on a clean board with a dull knife till reduced to "lint" for dressing wounds. Thousands of women and children all over the country engaged in this work. Everything was carefully washed and ironed, hands were faithfully scrubbed, and we worked with large, clean aprons. Bandages and lint were packed in boxes clean to the eye and touch, but medical and surgical knowledge was still antiquated, and nothing was then known of "germs" in connection with disease. One shudders to think of the harm probably done by many of those dressings prepared in homes with pitying love and patient zeal.

Many hospital garments, sheets, pillow-cases and handkerchiefs were made, and knitting needles were busy in every odd moment, making the army socks of heavy wool for the men in the field. Many small articles made for the comfort and convenience of the "boys" away from home and mother, many for the first time in their lives. Pin-cushions, needle-books, button-bags, comb-cases, each furnished with the appropriate articles for keeping the men tidy, were made in great numbers, and an "omnium gatherum", called a "housewife," was in great demand. This was a neat roll, packed with two large spools of strong linen

thread (black and white), a dozen "pants" buttons, and handful of white buttons, pins, needles and a pair of snub-nosed scissors. Hundreds of these were distributed by the Cleveland Center, and a very respectable fraction of the number came from Waite Hill. Women made the rolls by pattern, and children packed them. Many packages of eatables were sent also- dried apples, apple butter, tomato ketchup - relished not furnished by the government. Children had a hand in this work, too. My "twin cousin," Phoebe, and I filled a large vinegar barrel with hundreds of small pickles, dropping them in one by one through the "bung-hole." This was to insure against leakage on the road, which might have happened if the head had been removed for the filling. The soldiers' bill of fare was very limited - "hard tack" "salt pork", black coffee, bacon. There were on camp kitchens traveling with the regiments and there were no canned fruits or vegetables to relieve the monotony of the army rations. The folks at home did all that they could for their own men at the front, but transportation in the '60s was slow and uncertain. Barrels of fresh apples were apt to spoil before they reached their destination, so apples and peaches were dried at home and sent through the Sanitary Commission to the soldiers at the front. Waite Hill orchards furnished many bushels of fruit for this purpose. Our neighborhood "mite Society" met every week at the different house. Frequently, the session began as a "paring bee," both men and women paring, coring and quartering apples, and then stringing them on long stings to be dried on racks above the kitchen stove. After an hour of this work, the women would knit, while the young people sang warsongs, and the men discussed the issues of the day. Before nine o'clock, the "mite-box" was passed around for the five or ten cent paper "shin plasters" or the big popper pennies of the period, and then the people quickly dispersed. Next day's work would begin at dawn, and in wintertime, long before that.

While the women were toiling long hours every day on these tasks, undertaken in the midst of all the ordinary labors of the household, the men who remained at home were doing double duty, caring for their own farms and for those of men who had gone to the war. In addition to this work, military companies were being formed, and drill was carried on regularly in Willoughby and Kirkland. Moreover, it was necessary to keep up the spirits and courage of all, and public meetings of every sort were frequently held. Early in the war, in August or September 1861, after the second call for volunteers, a big picnic was held on Waite Hill as a public drill and farewell for the men about to leave for Washington. In Bunnell's orchard, on the east side of Hobart Road, a long table was built. The women spread it with big platters of sandwiches, cold roast chicken, sliced meats, pickles and cheese, dishes of fruit, and cakes of all sorts. Towering above all, in the center of the table, was my mother's masterpiece - a structure call a "pyramid cake". Beginning at the bottom with a spicy fruit cake, baked in a six-quart milk pan, it diminished step by step to a "cup-cake" at the top, through the exact center of which was thrust a slender staff of a beautiful little silk flag. Covered with icing from the flag-staff down to the big pewter patten on which it all rested, it seemed to me a frosty fortress awaiting the joyous assault of the hungry regiment across the way. Needless to say, it did not long withstand the attack that soon followed. The mown field on the west side of the road served as a parade ground, where soldiers were marching and counter marching, and going through all sorts of military evolution for the admiration of the crowd of relatives and friends. Several companies of "Home Guards" participated in the drill. My father was Captain of the Kirtland Company. Wilson Hobart and A.J. White, both young boys at the time, agree in saying the most conspicuous of all was a company of Zouaves, organized and uniformed in Mayfield, Orange and Chester - their Captain being "Tip" McDowel of Mayfield. The uniforms were of bright red woolen, money for which had been contributed by people in the neighborhoods where the men were enrolled. Naturally, these Zouaves attracted a great deal of attention, both because of their appearance and their snappy drill. In the course of the maneuvers, one man lost his watch, for which a great search was made with no success. Mrs. Hobart later told the story: "Years and years after, when the Presley family owned the farm, that silver watch was turned out by the plow. It had run down and had to be wound before it ticked again." During the temporary lull in the maneuvers, all "stacked arms"

over by the woods back of the field, and gave an interesting display of gymnastics and "circus stunts". The band was playing, the sun shining, and in the center of the great bright field a small child was traveling along toward the woods to find her particular "soldier boy." Suddenly, the bugle sounded the "call to dinner," and the command was issued to form ranks and "Forward March." I can testify to the promptness with which the order was obeyed and the inexorable swiftness of the advance, for I was that child alone in the middle of the field. The earth trembled with the rapid "tramp tramp" and of marching fee, and the whole troop seemed to sweep down to overwhelm me, when suddenly a tall soldier stooped down and swung me to his shoulder, and with band playing and banners waving, I rode triumphantly to the picnic with the regiment.

Early in August of 1863, all our hearts went to the war with Erastus and Orrin, the young sons of Luther Waite. Erastus had passed his 21st birthday; Orrin was not yet 19, but like all the Waite boys, was strong and well-grown, and as anxious as his brother to protect the North from invasion. They enlisted in the Nineteenth Ohio Battery on August 6, 1863, and were sent South almost immediately. <sup>3</sup> There was no time for long training during that national emergency. In September Orrin wrote home from Tennessee: "Dear Mother,"

*Hearing that there will be a mail from here tomorrow, I thought to inform you of our whereabouts and howabouts. We are still at Knoxville, as well, and enjoying ourselves well indeed from "Soggers." Our first section (i.e., the first two guns of the Battery) returned from Cumberland Gap this morning. The Gap was taken on the 9th with 2500 prisoners and 6 pieces of artillery, and all with the loss of only one man. The Carolina troops refused to fight, said they had got enough of it and were very glad to quit. Deserters from Bragg's army are coming in every day. They report the troops very much demoralized, and say that they will quit at the first opportunity. Crittenden occupies Chattanooga with his division, while Rosecrans with the other wing of the army reaches Atlanta so you will see that the "Bragging" army had got to flee to the mountains or get gobbled - and if they do get to the mountains they must leave all of their artillery and baggage for Old Rosie. <sup>4</sup>*

After seven months' service, the army neared Atlanta and on May 21, 1864, Erastus wrote from "Camp in front of Cassville, Georgia:" "Kind Father,"

*I think Orrin wrote to you when we were at Camp at Red Clay Station. We left there the 7th, went out about 8 miles in the direction of Buzzard's Roost, were drawn up in line of battle where we lay all day. There was a little skirmishing, but it was not very heavy. Sunday we were in line pretty much all day. And Monday morning about 11 o'clock we moved up in the valley in front of Buzzard's Roost, where heavy skirmishing commenced about 2 p.m. They fell back gradually until within about 1000 yards of their works, when they began to shell our column. Our battery was ordered up to silence their fire, and away we went double quick. They tried to shell us a little, but we got position on a knoll, with our guns covered under underbrush, and fired 100 rounds, but they didn't reply. That night the Rebs worked all night, getting some guns in position higher up the hill, but it did them no good, for our whole line on the left fell back at half past 7 in the morning to draw them out, but they did not come out of their hole. The next day we marched around the right, and the 13th we passed by Generals Logan's and McPherson's headquarters, formed line of battle and marched through the woods about a mile and a half, where we lay through the night. The next morning skirmishing began, and at 1 p.m. our 23 Corps made the charge, and they had hard fighting to, I tell you. The Rebs had a crossfire on them with artillery, and we could not get any of our guns to bear on them until half past 2, when our battery and the 6th Mich. got in position opposite their works and we made it pretty lively for them. We had 6 houses killed in our detachment, but none of the men were hurt. The infantry lost pretty heavy. We were relieved on the morning of the 15th and moved around the left where Gen. Hooker's corps had made a charge and took 4 guns. The Rebs charged 3 times, but were repulsed with heavy losses each time and that night when we got around there, they were fetching in the wounded*

men and prisoners and lots of wounded Rebs. Sunday night they lit out. Monday we started after them and have been close to their heels ever since.<sup>5</sup>

A week later, on May 29, 1864, Orrin wrote from "the field near Alatoona Mts.:" "Dear Father,"

*As there is a rumor that we can send letters this morning I must try and write a few lines, as I know you must be come what anxious about us. Just now, we are well, as usual, but pretty tired. The fight has been going on now for four days. The Rebs have got a good position and seem to think that they can hold it. That, of course will be decided. Our battery has been several times engaged, but none of us have been hurt. No more at present. Please tell all to write soon and often.*

Few if any of those longed-for letters could have reached Orrin; early in July 1864 he was killed by a sharpshooter's bullet in Kenesaw Mountain, and was buried near Marietta, 20 miles from Atlanta.<sup>6</sup> His parents longed to have the body sent home, and Erastus went to his Captain with the request but, as he wrote home:

*The captain thought it would impossible to move it as present, as General Sherman has issued an order forbidding the removal of bodies north until after the 18th of October, the railroad being in such poor condition and kept busy getting supplies to the army.*

Orrin's body still rests in the soil of Georgia. Erastus continued with the army, assisted in the taking of Atlanta, and in time returned home in safety, but deeply saddened by the loss of his younger brother.<sup>7</sup> In May 1864, only a few weeks before the death of Orrin Waite, the Hill was grieved by the news that Sidney Tullar had been wounded in one of the battles of the Wilderness, and had lain on the field with a shattered arm for two days before being found. In the effort to save his life, two amputations of the arm were performed, but the septic condition was too serious, and he died in a hospital at Alexandria. His body was brought home to our house, and on July 2, 1864 he was buried in the cemetery across the way.<sup>8</sup> This was our second funeral within the year, my mother's father, Horace Dexter, having died a few months before.

On April 9, 1865, joy-bells were rung everywhere throughout the North. Lee had surrendered, and the weary war was over - thanksgiving filled every heart. For five happy days, old and young in our little community sang and rejoiced. At half past seven the morning of April 15, the solemn tolling of the College bell sounded across our valley, and people began to count, wondering what sick person in Willoughby had died in the early dawn. Slowly the heavy strokes fell on the air, the vibrations of each allowed to cease before the next one struck. Then from the southeast came the clang of the Kirtland church bell, and fear arose of some new disaster. But no one was prepared for the dreadful news that came, shouted at each house by a rider galloping full speed over Waite Hill: "Lincoln is shot! Lincoln is dead!!" And in an instant all joy was turned to deepest mourning. People had felt such confidence in his wisdom, and believed that he, better than any other, could solve the heavy problems of readjustment. One feature of the morning struck us children very forcibly. The women, of course were shocked, as all were shocked and horrified: But it was the men - even the strong men - who were stricken with the deepest and most enduring sorrow. On that April morning when the galloping horseman shouted the sad news at our gate, we saw our father turn as pale as ashes and stagger against the house-wall as one who had received a deadly blow. Uncle Thomas Morely - rather old, but not till



then feeble - took to his bed and died not long after. Our oldest pioneer, Esquire Thomlinson, was grief stricken by Lincoln's death and never ceased to mourn, until, in August he too passed away.

This is a photograph of the Cowles' family home in Kirkland, now Waite Hill, taken in 1939. Pictured in this photograph are Margaret Devereaux and Horace Cowles, siblings of Lyman Cowles. Lyman was Pat Evans' great-grandfather. Photograph contributed by Pat Evans.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Mrs. Curtis is in error here. The Whig party that existed in the antebellum period originated in the late 1820s and early 1830s, and took its name from its "Whiggish" opposition to "King" Andrew Jackson.

<sup>2</sup> For discussion of antislavery activities in Lake County in general, see Judyth Y. Ullis, "The Servant Who is Escaped", *LCHS Quarterly*, 19, 2 (June 1977) and Harry F. Lupold, "Blacks in Lake County Before the Civil War," *LCHS Quarterly*, 20 1 (March 1978).

<sup>3</sup> Evidently, Mrs. Curtis' memory had faded over the years; the Waite brothers joined the Nineteenth Independent Battery, Ohio Light Artillery, on August 6, 1862, exactly one year earlier than she recalled. The Battery was mustered into the service on September 10, 1862, at Camp Taylor, Cleveland, *Ohio Official Roster of the Soldiers of the State of Ohio in the War of the Rebellion* (Cincinnati, 1899), Vol X, 598, 601. According to Whitelaw Reid, for Covington, Kentucky were, Reid reported, it "remained until July 1863, during which time not a shot was fired, except in the way of practice." Whitelaw Reid, *Ohio in the Wars Her Statesmen, Her Generals and Soldiers* (Cincinnati, 1868, Vol II, 876.

<sup>4</sup> Orrin evidently wrote this letter Sept. 1863. The engagement to which he refers here was indeed bloodless. Confederate General John C. Fraizier surrendered the Cumberland Gap, a formidable stronghold and a strategic pass, to General Ambrose P. Burnside's Union army, to which a portion of the Nineteenth Ohio Independent Battery was attached. Such victories, combined with the apparently hesitant and fearful movements of Confederate General Braxton Bragg, contributed to a feeling of overconfidence among Federal troops in Tennessee. In late September 1863, Bragg's army thoroughly defeated General William S. Rosecrans' Army of the Cumberland at the Battle of Chickamauga, one of the most sanguinary engagements of the war. The Nineteenth Ohio Independent Battery remained in Knoxville with Burnside's forces, and did not participate at Chickamauga. Reid, *Ohio in the War*, II, 876; *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War* (New York, 1956 ed. ), Vol. III, 660-681.

<sup>5</sup> In the spring of 1864, the Nineteenth Ohio Independent Battery was attached to the XXIII Corps, commanded by General Henry M. Judah, a part of the Army of the Tennessee. The battle on May 9, described by Erastus, was according to Reid, hotly engaged. " Reid, *Ohio in the War*, II, 876; *Battles and Leaders*, IV, 293-298. The engagement on May 14 that Erastus mentions was later described by Union General O.O. Howard: the XXIII Corps advanced "against a storm of bullets and shells. ... Logan had a battery well placed, and fired till he had silenced the troublesome foes on a ridge in his front; then his brave men, at a run passed the ravine and secured the ridge." *Battles and Leaders*, IV 301.

<sup>6</sup> Orrin Waite was killed on June 29, 1864. *Official Roster of the State of Ohio*, X, 601.

<sup>7</sup> Erastus Waite was mustered out of the service with his battery on June 27, 1865 at Camp Taylor. *Official Roster of the State of Ohio*, X, 601.

<sup>8</sup> Sidney G. Tullar enlisted on August 22, 1861, and was mustered into the Second Ohio Volunteer Cavalry on October 14, 1861, at Camp Wade, Cleveland, Ohio. He rose through the ranks from Private to Corporal, then to Sergeant. He was wounded at the battle of the Wilderness on May 7, 1864, and died on June 1. His body was initially interred in Virginia but was later returned to the Waite Hill Cemetery for burial, which occurred on July 2, 1864. *Official Roster of the State of Ohio*, XI, 84-85, 761; *Cemetery Records of Lake County, Ohio*, Vol. III, 356.