

THE OLIVER FARM

a brief history

1871

2002

Copyright © 2002 by A. R. Oliver

Introduction

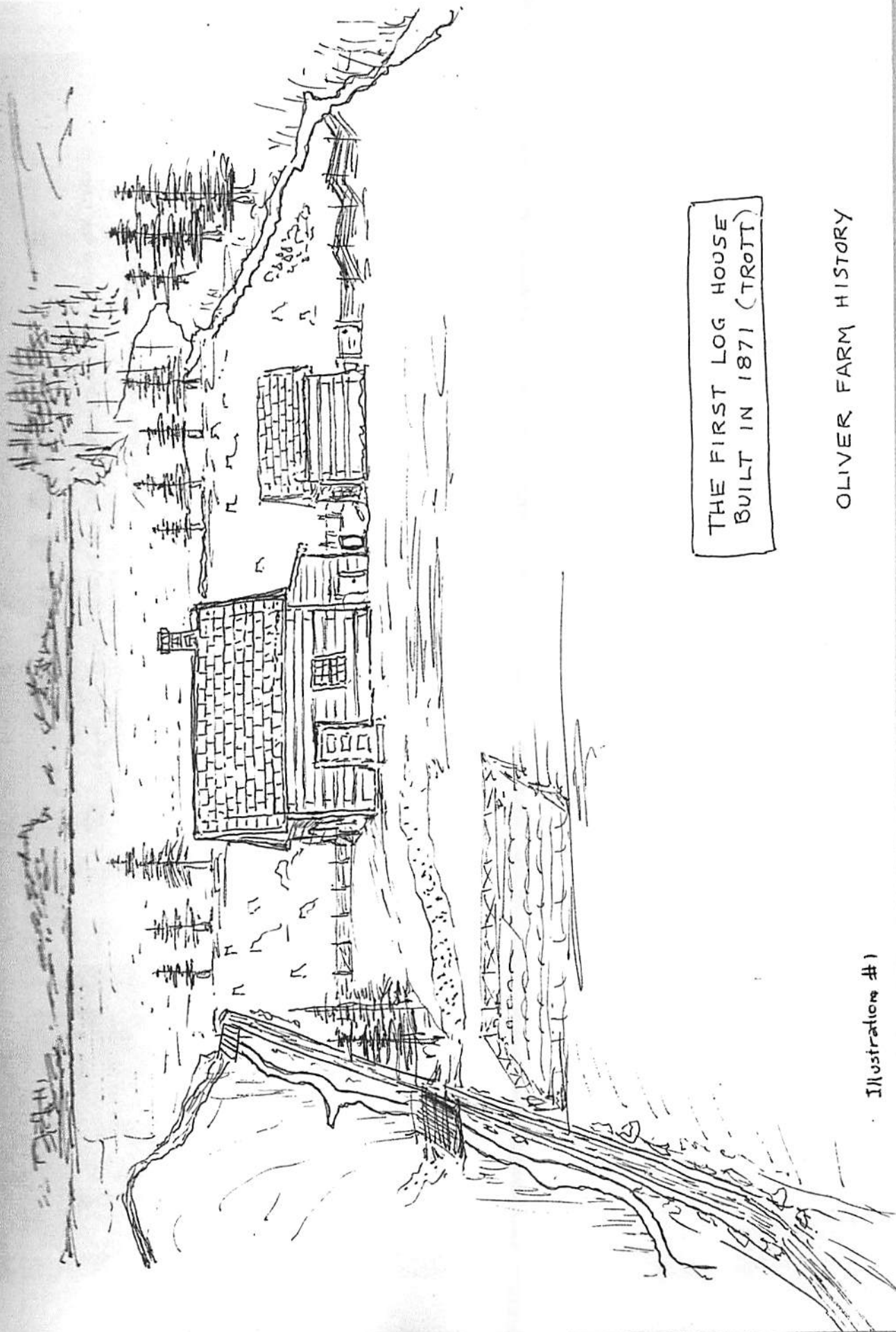
The story of the Oliver farm begins in 1871 when the first pioneer settler, Benjamin Trott, began to clear the land of virgin pine to start a farm in the valley of rich, fertile soil on the south side of Hall's Lake and to prepare a site for a log dwelling for himself and his wife, Melissa.

This peaceful valley, surrounded on either side by gently sloping hills, was in earlier times the home of Indian tribes; the Hurons and the Algonquins as evidenced by artifacts and arrow heads found buried in the fertile soil by later inhabitants.

Some of the lakes still bear the original Indian names; Kenisis, Kashagawigamog, Nunikami and Boshkung. Others have changed, i.e. Kawashebemagog (now Hall's Lake) and Ninetago (now Maple Lake). Ancestors of these Indian tribes can be traced to the Woodland Indians (700 to 1000 AD). The Woodland also included the Muskogian tribes that originated in the Mississippi valley of the U.S.A. In later years (mid 1600's) the Iroquois tribes from south of the Great Lakes (Eric and Ontario) migrated north and began to compete with the Hurons and Algonquins for the coveted beaver pelts. The Iroquois eventually drove the Hurons from the Haliburton area.

To set the mood for this story, I can think of no better words than those of the legendary Gordon Lightfoot who sang with great emotion:

"There was a time in this fair land when the railroads did not run,
And the wild majestic mountains stood alone against the sun.
Long before the white man and long before the wheel,
And the green, dark forest was too silent to be real."



THE FIRST LOG HOUSE
BUILT IN 1871 (TROT)

OLIVER FARM HISTORY

Province of Ontario.

Victoria, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland,
 QUEEN, Defender of the Faith, &c., &c., &c.

To all to whom these Presents shall come—GREETING:

Know All, that We, of Our Special Grace certain Knowledge, and mere Motion, have GIVEN and GRANTED, and by these Presents do Give and Grant unto Benjamin Grott of the Township of Stanhope
in the Provincial County of Haliburton, Yeoman, a Free Grant of the

Heirs and Assigns, forever: All the Parcels or Tract of Land, situate in the Township of Stanhope
in the Provincial County of Haliburton — in our said Province, containing by admeasurement one hundred and one acres — being
comprised of Lots Numbers Eighty One, Eighty Two, Eighty Three, Eighty Four, Eighty Five, Eighty Six, Eighty Seven, Eighty Eight, Eighty Nine, and Ninety
(Eighty one Acres) in the Seventh concession of the Township of
Stanhope aforesaid.

We have and do hold, the said Parcel s or Tract s of Land, hereby granted, conveyed and assured unto the said Benjamin Grott, his
heirs and assigns for ever: saving, excepting and reserving, nevertheless, unto Us, our Heirs and Successors
the free uses passage and enjoyment of, in, over, and upon all navigable waters that shall or may be
hereafter found on or under, or be flowing through or upon any part of the said Parcel s or Tract s of Land hereby granted as aforesaid.

GIVEN under the Great Seal of Our Province of Ontario: Witness, The Honorable DONALD ALEXANDER MACDONALD, Lieutenant-
 Governor of Our Province of Ontario.

At Toronto, this Twenty third day of November — in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred
 and seventy-five, and in the thirty-ninth year of Our Reign.

Print No. 620
 Det. No. 6096

By Command of the Lieutenant-Governor in Council.

Thos. H. Johnson
 Secretary

Assistant Commissioner of Crown Lands

Benjamin Trott (1871 to 1883)

Benjamin Trott and his wife Melissa emigrated from England when he was 29 years old and she was 28. They were attracted to the Haliburton area by promises of free land by the Canadian government, who had embarked on a vigorous campaign to attract settlers (The Free Grants and Homestead Act of 1868). Many pioneers made their way to Stanhope Township in the early 1860's after C.R. Stewart, Land Surveyor, completed his survey of Stanhope. (In 1866 Stanhope Township separated from Minden Township and became a municipality on its own). The best agricultural lands were taken up immediately after the survey, so the Trott's had little opportunity to choose. However, they did accept, upon a letter of application, 200 acres of land in Con. VII being Lots 8 and 9 on the south end of Hall's Lake. The conditions that had to be fulfilled in order to receive ownership were as follows:

1. Within 3 years of occupying the land, 4 acres had to be cleared.
2. A dwelling (usually of log) had to be erected with minimum dimensions of 18 feet x 24 feet.
3. The occupant had to provide free labour, as required, to develop/repair secondary roads leading from the Bobcaygeon and the Peterson colonization roads.

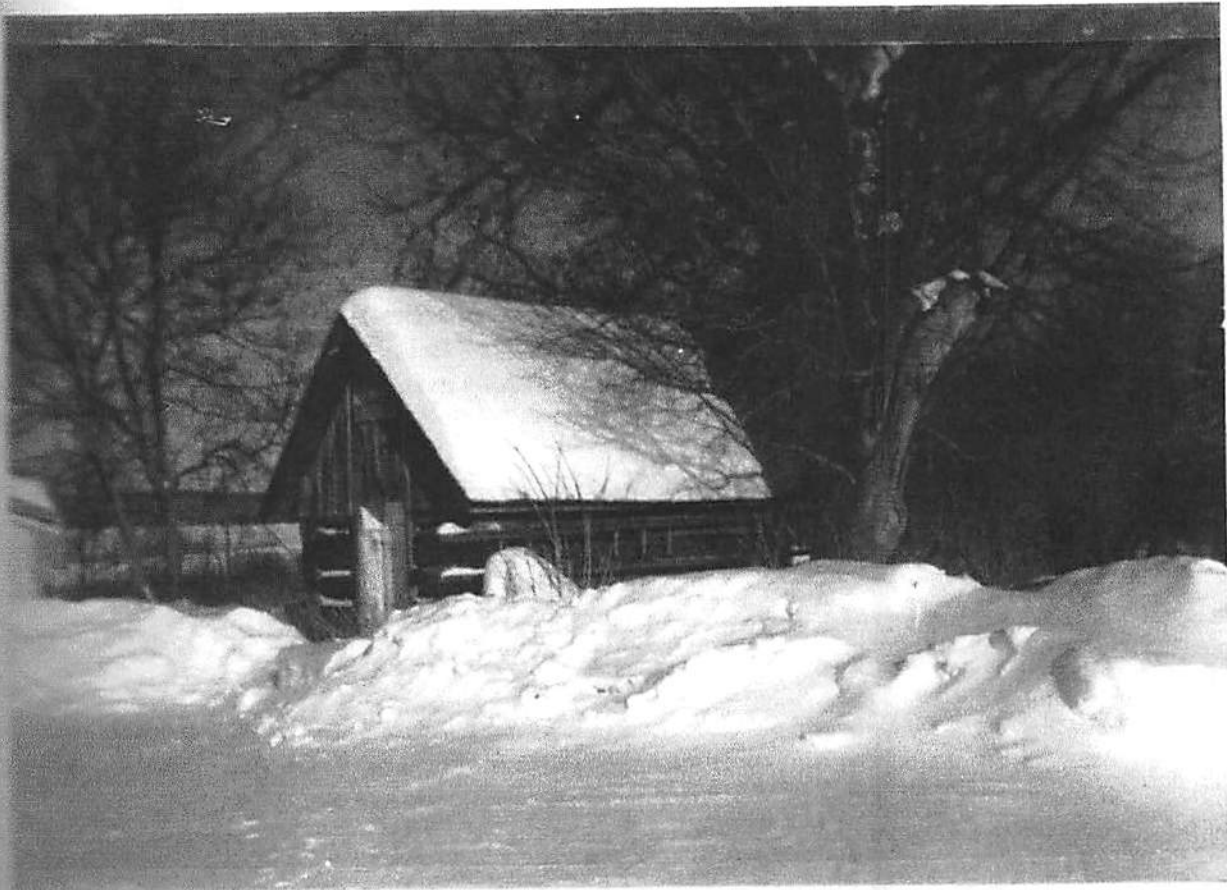
The nearest roads to the Trott's property were the 7th Concession Road and the Boshkung Road (some parts of which were "corduroy" roads made up of logs placed close together crosswise on an earth bed). A secondary road led from the 7th Concession to Hall's Lake. By 1875, Benjamin Trott had cleared four acres along the south shore of Hall's Lake (some of which was partially cleared by the Indians), and had erected a log house; and therefore qualified for a Crown Grant which he received in 1875 (see Illustration #1).

These were indeed hard times for the Trotts. It was a harsh and formidable task for a settler to earn a livelihood, raise a family, acquire livestock and farm implements, etc. However, they did persevere for 11 years, living off the land and selling their produce to the lumber camps for cash.

Their Log Home

The log house built by the Trotts is so much a part of this story that a detailed description of its construction is appropriate, especially since it still exists to this day. The foundations were called "mad sills" and were in fact pine logs laying on flat stones, except for the basement area, where the first logs lay on an 8' deep stone wall. The basement, or root cellar, with dimensions 18' x 12', was used to store food in winter (potatoes, carrots, beets, turnips, etc.).

The base logs were of unbroken length (24') and had a 22" flat side. They were hewn to a thickness of 8" and cut at the ends to form a dovetail connection. Trott must have had the assistance of a skilled craftsman to do this work. The upper logs must have been hoisted to position by chains or rope pulled by horses. During construction, the Trotts must have needed temporary shelter, and it would seem reasonable to assume that they also built the 10' by 12' log



**The first log building built circa 1870. The Trott's lived here while the farmhouse was erected.
This building still exists in 2002, and is affectionately known as the "Milkhouse".**

Illustration #2

outbuilding which we now call the "milkhouse" (see Illustration #2). They would also need a "horse stable", and there is still evidence of this structure today.

In the late 1870's a severe depression had hit North America. The Trotts may have come to realize that farming in Stanhope Township was not a viable endeavour. The Victoria Railway had reached the town of Haliburton in 1883, bringing in new settlers. The railway also brought about a shift in the market, which did not favour the small producers like the Trotts. At any rate, not having a family, they decided to leave the Haliburton area and sold their property to Thomas Godwin in 1883 (deed No. 133).

Thomas Godwin (1883 to 1909)

The Godwins, Thomas and his wife Ann, arrived in Canada in 1875 from Somerset, England. He was 22 years of age when he married Ann Davis (2 years his junior) in 1874. They had a son, William, born in 1878 and a daughter, Elizabeth Ann, born in 1880. The Godwins purchased the Trott property in 1883 and immediately began building additions to the log house, adding a hayloft to the horse stable, and clearing more land. Godwin was an entrepreneur! Prior to acquiring the Trott farm (Con. VII, Lot 8 and 9) he had considerable land holdings, which he rented out. The assessment rolls (taken annually by the Township of Stanhope) show the following:

Con. IX, Lot 14	1876 rented to Ed Upton
Con. X, Lot 14	as above
Con. VI, Lot 8	1878 rented to Henry Pearl
Con. VI, Lot 11	1880 rented from Joshua Davis
Con. VII, Lot 10, 11	(This is probably where they lived before buying Lot 8, 9, Con. VII in 1883)

In 1900, Thomas Godwin built a large "kitchen" addition to the log house (at 90 degrees to the original structure). It was of post and beam construction covered with cove siding, which was painted white. The log house was also covered with cove siding at this time. The interior of the log house, which up to this time had bare log walls and an unfinished half storey accessible only by ladder (and was unheated), had the interior log portions finished by Thomas Godwin. He lined the interior walls with lathe and plaster construction, covered with layers of newspaper (later wallpaper) and built a narrow stairway to the "upstairs". He had to cut through the log wall to provide an entrance, leaving the top log intact (which resulted in many a "head bump" in later years). (During renovations in the 1980's, newspapers dating back to 1895 were found on the walls, covered by many layers of wallpaper of varying designs, serving as the only insulation).

The upstairs portion was totally unfinished, exposing the pole rafters. The sloping roof was lined with pine boards 12" wide x 1" thick and covered with wallpaper. The area had been used for storage but, after the boards were installed, became a sleeping area with two bedrooms, heated by a chimney pipe 7" in diameter which lead from the "parlour stove" vertically and horizontally to a red brick chimney on the east side of the house. The chimney rose some 10 feet from a horizontal wooden platform held on vertical wooden supports on either side of the east window. The stovepipe entered the chimney at right angles just above the pine platform. It is a miracle the whole thing did not catch on fire.

40

Cash Received

Expenses - September

51

1890							
July	5	From Mr Brown for Cheese	179	50	Paid Taxes for 1892 to 1893	7	03
	15	" do for 4 Steers	262	79	Cashing Cheques	1	44
	26	" I Reid for Calt Cheese	3	28	Borkeupis	2	50
	"	" Mr Brown for May "	73	00	5 Traps to select	15	00
Aug	1	" G W Stevens for Cheese	272	90	Postage Stationary		30
Sept	6	" Mr Brown "	61		Paid Chas Holland Mowing	99	51
	"	" do "	327	00	Drawing Milk	58	60
	27	" do "	181	75	One Paid Lost etc	36	02
	"	" I Reid refunded	15	00	Freight. Commission	42	17
Oct	25	" Mr Brown for Cheese	200	00	Total Expenses	262	57
Nov	1	" do "	104	00			
	29	" do "	231	88	Total Amt Cash Received	688	66
Dec	13	" do "	153	60	Total Expenses	262	57
			2005	31		426	09

Extracts from Sales Journal of Godwin Cheese Factory, which operated from 1890-1909.

Illustration #3

It is interesting to note that during renovations in the 1980's, some of the pine boards removed from the sloping bedroom walls had been charred at the edges. This remained a mystery until a book was published called "A Way to the West" by Allan Bell that told the story of logging magnate John Radolphus Booth. One chapter tells of a disastrous fire that swept the Booth homestead in Ottawa at the turn of the century. Booth could not sell the charred lumber so offered it to anyone who would pay the freight and pick up the lumber from the nearest railpoint. It is believed that Mr. Godwin obtained these pine boards from the I.B.&O. railpoint and used them to complete the upstairs bedrooms.

Tragically, in the spring of 1900, William Godwin, aged 21, was drowned in a logging accident at Hall's Lake. Later that year, Thomas Godwin's wife, Ann, died. She and William are buried in St. Stephen's Church cemetery, Boskung. Thomas Godwin donated property that William had owned in Lot 8, Con. VI (about 1 acre) to the Anglican Synod in 1900, in memory of William and Ann, and St. Stephen's Anglican Church was erected on the property in 1901. Although there is no written record, he probably helped to build the church.

Two years later Thomas Godwin remarried, and his bride, Rhoda Davies (then 32 years old), gave birth to twins, David and Florence Godwin, in 1903.

The Assessment Record for the Township of Stanhope shows that in 1903, Thomas Godwin had owned 4 outbuildings (barns), owned 30 cows and had established a cheese factory (see Instrument #3). He paid business tax on this operation until 1909. In addition, he had a shingle mill located in the 4 acre field between their house and Hall's Lake. Thomas Godwin was active in community affairs and acted as school trustee and auditor for the Township tax rolls. In 1907, Thomas Godwin (through his wife Rhoda) had correspondence with Robert Oliver, who was living in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Robert's wife, Jemima, wanted to come to Canada to be with her other brothers and sisters. It was also at this time that Godwin had the opportunity to sell his farm to James Deacon, a young farmer from Hall's Lake. Godwin, being the entrepreneur, decided to sell to Deacon and build another house across the road that he hoped eventually to sell (along with some farmland) to Robert Oliver.

James Deacon (1909 to 1917)

James Deacon was the son of Robert Deacon, a pioneer from the north-east shores of Hall's Lake. James had married Lily Louise Cooper in 1908, and moved into the Godwin farmhouse in 1909. They had a large family. Alice was born in 1909, Arnold in 1911, and twins (unnamed) in 1912. Olive was born in 1913 and Elva in 1915. Harold was born in 1917. The Deacons worked hard and paid off their mortgage by 1913 (see Instrument #476). They moved to Eldon Township in Victoria County in 1917, when Harold was 9 months old. James was 30 years old at the time.

Dated November 24th 1909

Thomas. Godwin
St.ux.

————— To —————

James. R. Deacon

Deed of Land
situate

Township of Stanhope

HART & RIDDELL, 40 WELLINGTON ST. E. TORONTO.

I certify that the within Instrument is
duly Entered and Registered in the Registry
Office for the Provisional County of Hal-
burton, in Book R.T. 1. for the Township
of Stanhope at 10³⁰ o'clock..... P.M.
of the 11th day of December
A.D. 1909. Number 476.

.....*E. J. Young*.....
REGISTRAR

Robert and Jemima Oliver - the Early Years

Robert Oliver, my grandfather, was born in 1867 in Stevenage, England, the third youngest of six children of Arthur James Oliver and his wife, Alice Marshall Taylor. He had four brothers and a sister. Alice, living in North Finchley (near London). He was apprenticed to a butcher but did not like the work, and left home at an early age to join the Royal Welsh Fusiliers (see Illustration 10). He served in India and Burma for eight years, and took part in the Burmese war. Upon his return to London he met Jemima Davies (who was working there), and they were married in 1894.

They had 5 children: Minnie born in London in 1890; Arthur born in Wales in 1891; Alice born in 1894; and Florence born in 1899. A young son, Bertie, died in infancy.

It was difficult to find work in Wales, so in 1899 the Oliver family moved to Featherstone, West Yorkshire, where Robert found work in the coal industry through his next door neighbour, Willie Wrench (my mother's uncle). Arthur was 11 years old at the time. My mother lived close by at Shipman Square, Brighouse.

The work was hard in the coalmines, and in 1902 my grandmother Jemima had a letter from her sister, Annie, who had just emigrated to Philadelphia, U.S.A. and had married a Scottish lad, David Arthur. The Arthurs had a successful coal business in that city and the Olivers decided to come to England to live with Annie and David Arthur. They all arrived in Philadelphia in 1905, and Robert went to work for the Arthur Coal Company. The work was not much better and Robert earned of land in Canada from Jemima's brothers, Sam and Alfred. The Olivers decided to come to Canada; maybe to get away from the coal dust, or just to seek adventure and hopefully prosperity in Canada, the land of opportunity.

Having made arrangements with Sam Davies and Thomas Godwin, the Oliver family arrived at Port Hope in 1907, and stayed in the Godwin house until their own home (across the road) was completed later that year. The Olivers, at that time, were very poor financially - witness the agreement between the Godwin's and the Oliver's that allowed them to buy a house and 20 acres of land for the grand sum of \$150.00, and pay it back in 5 years at 5% interest (see Illustration 11). The Godwin's continued to live in their house on Lot 9 until 1909, when it was then sold to James Deacon. The Godwin's then moved to Milbrook, Ontario.

Jemima had two sisters living in Stanhope Township: Ruth, married to Alex McConnell, and Sarah, married to Alfred Mason (son of pioneer Thomas Mason). The McConnells owned about 400 acres of land in Con. 3 and 4 (now the Howard Walker farm property owned by their son William). Alfred Mason took over the Mason farm when Thomas Mason died at age 103. It was later owned by Alfred's son, Wilfred.

Robert Oliver was a shrewd businessman, and (possibly helped along by his army pension) was able to acquire a great deal of land in the next 10 years. In 1908, he was successful in obtaining a lease grant of 181 acres in Con VIII Lots 8 and 9, from the Province of Ontario. He paid off his loan to the Godwins and thereby obtained title to 49 acres in Con. VII Lot 8, as well as 20 acres in the north part of Lot 9 (which included their homestead), in the year 1914. It may have been at

True Copy of agreement

Halls Lake
Stanhope
Haliburton Co.
Ont. Can.

We Thomas & Rhoda Godwin residing at Halls Lake in the Township of Stanhope Haliburton Co. Ont. do both agree to sell to Robert Oliver of the same address for the sum of \$150. part of Lot 8 & 9 on the 7th Concession in the Township of Stanhope namely North End of Lot 8 containing 9 acres, and North End of Lot 9 containing 20 acres more or less. The Boundary and dividing line on Lot 9 to be on the East. The West Side of Public Road running through the said Lot 9. and on the North Side the Lake. Lot 8 & 9 to be measured 104 Rods down from the South End which shall be the dividing line of the two Properties. The said sum of \$150. to be paid to us Thomas, or Rhoda Godwin or Heirs within 5 years bearing interest at 5 per. ct. per Annum and when the said sum of \$150. is paid to us. We Thomas and Rhoda Godwin and Heirs forever agree to give up all claims to the said part of Lot 8 & 9. on the 7th Concession & agree to hand over to Robert Oliver or his heirs for ever all Titles & Deeds of the said part of Lot 8 & 9. on the 7th Concession. This to be a binding agreement between us Thomas & Rhoda Godwin or Heirs

for ever on one side. & Robert Oliver or Heirs
for ever on the other side. Made this 1st day
of March 1907.

We the undersigned do } Thomas Godwin
hereby Certify & witness } Rhoda Godwin
that this agreement } Robert Oliver
was made on the 1st day of March 1907
Between Thomas & Rhoda Godwin. or
Heirs on one side & Robert Oliver or Heirs
on the other side.

Witnesses: } Alexander M. Connell
} Alfred Davies

Keira
t day



Robert Oliver
Royal Welsh Fusiliers 1880-1888

Illustration #4



Minnie, Florence, Jemima & Robert: Circa 1915

time, that a barn was built just north of their house. This was later expanded by a larger addition. The family had grown up - Alice was away in Toronto; Arthur had become a school teacher, while Minnie married Leigh Sisson and moved to the "Homestead" on Boskung Lake. Florence remained at home and later married Allan Sisson.

My father, Arthur, went overseas in World War I with the 109th Battalion of the Canadian Expeditionary Forces. Meanwhile, my grandfather Robert continued to buy land. In 1917 he purchased the south end of Lot 8 (52 acres) as well as Lot 9 (including the Deacon house when they moved to Victoria County).

In 1917, the third year of World War I, my father was in France and took part in the battle of Passchendaele, where he was badly wounded and poisoned with Mustard gas spread by the Germans. He was shipped back to England for convalescence, and in 1918 received a letter from my grandfather offering him the Godwin-Deacon farm, which he had just purchased. My father replied, indicating an interest in coming back to his home (in Stanhope Township). He had received advice from his medical doctors that he should not live in an urban environment because of the damage to his lungs.

According to the records in the year 1917, my grandfather Robert, sold all the land he had purchased over the previous years to a lumberman named Frank Gartshore (see Deed #620, April 1918). Just over a year later my grandfather bought all this land back from Frank Gartshore (Deed #655 dated September 30, 1919). The reason for this unusual transaction is not clear, but it is known that during the time Frank Gartshore, a logger, cut a great deal of timber from Lots 8 and 9, Con. VII, before this property was sold back to my grandfather. It is possible that the property was purchased back so it could be conveyed to my father in 1919 when he returned to Canada. It is also possible that the property was sold to Gartshore in 1918 to circumvent the condition of the Crown Deed held by Robert that reserved the timber (and mineral) rights for the Province of Ontario (see Public Lands Act of 1913). This was the situation however, when my father returned from overseas in 1919.

Arthur and Mary Oliver

When World War I ended in 1918 my father was convalescing from a severe leg wound and respiratory damage from mustard gas. He remained in the army doing clerical work in the Orderly Room at Seaford, and during that time he received a letter from my grandfather, Robert, offering him the Godwin-Deacon farm which Robert now owned. Knowing that he would have to pursue outside work (fresh air), he was very much attracted to this offer and decided to share these thoughts with Mary Crowther, who was working in the Firth Woolen Mill, in Brighouse. While on army leave, he had renewed his acquaintance with her, travelling to Yorkshire by train. My mother recalled his visit in her memoirs, saying that she was called from her work place during the middle of the day by the Supervisor, who said she had a visitor in Army uniform. She had not seen him since 1902 when he was 11 years old, prior to the Oliver's emigration to Canada. There were several more visits and letters, and in February 1918 they were engaged. My mother had said she always wanted to come to Canada.

Mary and Arthur were married on November 23, 1918, and on May 14, 1919, set sail for Canada on the S.S. Grampian - arriving in Quebec on May 23, 1919, where the soldiers were welcomed by the Red Cross. From there they travelled by train to Montreal and Toronto, then by the Victoria Railway to Gelert, and finally by stagecoach to Minden. For my father, it was homecoming. For my mother, it was the beginning of a new life in Canada on a farm in rugged, sparsely inhabited, Stanhope Township. She didn't know anyone except the family, but soon made new friends and set out to be, as she said, "a good Canadian". Of course, she had known Minnie, Alice and Florence since childhood in Yorkshire, England, and they were now all together again.

My father obtained a loan from the Soldiers' Settlement Board that enabled him to purchase the land from my grandfather in October 1919, described as follows:

"Southern part of Lot 8, Con. VII (52 acres) and Lot 9 in Con. VII (81 acres) except 20 acres in the north part of Lot 9. Also the south west corner of Lot 8, Con VIII containing 20 acres in a square block. Total 133 acres."

And so it was that the land became known as the Oliver Farm, and was later named "Sunnybrook Farm" by my mother. In 1921, my father purchased Lot 10 Con. VII and Lot 11 Con. VII, containing 43 acres and 2 acres respectively, for the sum of \$250.00 from Allan Hewitt (Deed 1921), which took in "Trott's Point" (although Trott never owned the land). My father, like his father, believed in owning land and considered it a valuable asset. As it turned out, this policy turned out to be a good one indeed.

My parents worked hard to make a living off the land with very few resources. They had a well for water and my mother washed clothes in a tub with a "scrubbing" board. A team and wagon was the recognized means of travel. All the farm work was done by hand (haymaking, seeding and cultivating). Farm machinery was practically non-existent. Shopping was a daylong event and rarely could they go together. It took all day to shop in Minden and someone had to stay and "milk the cows". They worked to keep themselves, and made very little money. The only cash income was obtained from the sale of the "yearlings" and the "two-year-olds", and the cattle buyers always struck a hard bargain (as they knew there was no other choice). They got milk and butter and meat from the cows, sheep and pigs, and eggs from the hens (when they felt like it). Vegetables and meat were made into preserves for the winter, and there is no doubt the winters were more severe in those days!

In the early 1920's my father purchased his first car - a Model T Ford. It was used and the price was right. There were no proper roads, but it was quicker than the horse and cutter, and the frozen lakes were often used for highways. Social visits were common - the Hewitts, Harrisons, Davies, Masons, to name a few. My parents attended St. Stephen's church and were involved with church and school activities and, in later years, municipal politics. The social highlights were church picnics, school concerts (Christmas) and the 12th of July Orangemen's parade. My father and grandfather were both active in the Masonic Order.

There was time for canoeing and fishing off the rocks in the spring and ice fishing in the winter. The fish in Hall's Lake were landlocked salmon lake trout, and they were considered special because of their pink flesh. My parents had a canoe called "Cherie", and a large lap strake broad beamed boat called "Niaomi", which was powered by a single cylinder "Elto" outboard motor.

There were no cottages on Hall's Lake and my parents used to paddle in quiet solitude on a Sunday afternoon. Those were the tranquil days before the highways and the motor cars.

In other parts of the world, the economy in the mid-twenties was booming. Expansion was taking place everywhere. Even before the highway, Haliburton County was becoming a popular vacation area. Tourist lodges were built and villages began to prosper. Automobiles were the recognized mode of transportation. Lumbering continued to be big business. The townships each had their own local telephone system owned by subscribers, and radio was taking over from the phonograph.

It was in this setting that my sister, Rosamond, and I arrived on June 10, 1925, being one of three sets of twins to be born in the Oliver farmhouse. We must have been a handful, because not only did my mother have a helper (Rena Coulter), but my grandmother Ann Crowther came from England to help out. Robert and Jemima lived across the road. I can only vaguely remember my grandfather because he died in 1928.

Ann returned to England, and my mother wrote letters to her sisters Edith and Hephsy and brother Fred and his wife Janie. Her youngest brother William had come to Canada and lived in Toronto. Times were good in the late 1920's (it was the "roaring 20's"). My mother began to feel a yearning to visit her family in England. The link with her family had been the letters (no phone calls in those days). My parents no doubt discussed at some length her longing to go back, just for a visit (and maybe to show off her twins).

At any rate, in 1929, my father sold part of Lot 10 (the point) to a Haliburton car dealer, W.R. Curry for the grand sum of \$2000.00 (this shows how things were moving). He kept \$1000.00 in cash and with the remainder purchased a brand new 1929 Chevrolet from Curry Motors. With the \$1000.00 cash, he took my mother back to England and of course we kids tagged along (we were 4 years old). We sailed on the Duchess of Athol, a fairly new Cunard liner. I remember very little of the trip, although a few things stand out - like the giant icebergs at sea; water dripping down my neck as we passed under the aqueducts in Brighouse; and of course, expressions like "ee lad" and "smashing" and "by gum". For my mother, the trip to England was like a tonic. It boosted her morale and gave her strength to face the years ahead. It also meant a great deal to my father to visit the land of his youth. My mother's cousin Lillian came back with them for a visit to Canada.

It was not long after their return that the economic bubble burst and a terrible depression gripped the land (1929). The hard times set in again, but this time the future looked grim indeed for there seemed no light at the end of the tunnel. In a way, my parents were fortunate in that they really had not much to lose in the way of money and they were able to survive again by living off the land. The government of the day - R.B. Bennett's Conservatives - did not really know how to deal with the situation. Bennet tried to follow Roosevelt's "New Deal", but didn't have the know-how or resources to put it into effect. The Ontario provincial government, under Premier Howard Ferguson, did receive co-operation from the Federal Government, and benefited under the Unemployment Relief Bill and "make work" projects. For Haliburton, it meant the construction of Highway 35, in 1934. That did a great deal to open up the County to the new economy - tourism. A good example of this development was the surge of "visitors" who drove their cars to North Bay to see the Dionne quintuplets, who were born May 28, 1934. It is also a good example of the increased involvement by the government in private affairs.

In the depression years my father became active in municipal politics and was elected Reeve of Stanhope Township from 1933 to 1936, during the formative years of the struggling township. He became Warden of Haliburton County in 1938. I can remember the phone ringing constantly during the depression years with anxious requests for relief money. It was a very difficult task and it was not possible to please everybody. In 1934 my father had paid off his Soldiers' Settlement loan and he received clear title to the lands described therein.

My sister and I had been kept home from school by my parents until we were 7 years old, because there was no transportation to Hall's Lake school and they felt it was too far to walk (4 miles) without supervision. Their fears were not entirely unfounded, because Highway 35 was at that time under the initial stages of construction and it was no place for children (even though we followed the old road around the lakeshore to avoid the actual construction as much as possible). One morning being yelled at by the construction foreman, who told us to hide under a large tree while a dynamite charge was detonated at the rock cut (by Fleming's cottage). There was a loud blast and rocks of every shape and size showered down around us. It happened so fast there was no time to be scared. When it was all over the foreman said, "OK kids, you can go now." (We didn't tell our mother). We had good teachers at Hall's Lake School (Althea Gurnahoe was our first teacher). There were only 8 students in the latter years and in 1937 the school was closed and the school section consolidated with SS No. 3 Boskung. My sister and I were picked up by an old REO school bus (driven by John Hewitt), and we completed Grades 9 and 10 at Boskung.

Every summer my Uncle Bill and Aunt Agnes used to drive from Toronto to spend the summer holidays. My Aunt Alice and Uncle Ted, also from Toronto, used to drive up to my grandmother's house for their holidays. My grandmother Jemima died in 1937; she was 77 years old. Upon my grandmother's death, my father inherited the land across the road, i.e. Lot 8 Con. VII north, and Lots 8 and 9, Con. VIII. The farm now consisted of over 200 acres of land, with 100 acres cleared and farmed.

My father had hired help to assist with the harvest and also to cut timber during the winter months. One helper I remember well is Bob Barry, who is now 80 years old. I used to help on the farm during the summer and used to envy the holiday-makers who were swimming in the lake on hot summer days. For me, the year 1938 was a year of decision. While sitting on a grassy knoll overlooking the cultivated farmland, I had to decide whether or not to follow my father's footsteps on the land. It was very clear to me that there was little money to be made in farming in Stanhope Township. I had done well in school and quickly decided that I wanted to follow an academic career (something my father had wanted to do, but due to circumstances, was not able to). I discussed this with my parents and they agreed to pay for my continuing high school education. At the same time it was agreed that my sister would take up a business career, and she enrolled in Shaw's Business School in Toronto.

In September 1939 I enrolled at Vaughan Road Collegiate in York Township and received the shattering news that I could not continue in Grade 11 because I did not have Latin (it was not taught at Boskung). With no one to guide or advise me, I was unceremoniously put back in Grade 10; I was 14 years old. Life in the big city was an exhilarating experience and I remember going with the MacBrien boys to see an Abbott and Costello movie and when we left the theatre we heard the news that war had been declared in Europe. I did not fully comprehend the

significance of the war news, because I had not been aware of the political situation in Europe.

My only awareness of "overseas" had been the visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth to Canada in June 1939. On this occasion, arrangements had been made to have the school children from Haliburton County taken to Riverdale Park in Toronto by special train from Haliburton, on a one-day return trip, leaving Haliburton early in the morning. I remember my parents taking us in the 1929 Chev, and having it turn back at West Guilford because they had forgotten the tickets! When we got to Haliburton the train was just pulling out of the station; however, my father gave the train Engineer a Masonic signal (secret) and because they were both Masons, the train began to stop and my sister and I were able to climb aboard. It was a memorable experience, and I can still see the Queen's smiling face as they drove by in their shiny black 1939 Buick. We had a great time on the train and everyone was in a party mood. I remember Earl Cheaper playing the bagpipes as we passed through Gelert. We were just a bunch of school kids having fun. It was the age of innocence.

Earlier that year the Olivers had visitors from the West: my father's cousin, Emily and her husband William Boyce and their daughter Elsie arrived in a brand new 1939 Chevrolet all the way from Brooks, Alberta. I was particularly taken with the shiny new car, but I think more so by their daughter Elsie, whom I thought to be most beautiful.

After 1939 the farmhouse became a place to come home to, but not a place to stay. My father continued farming and I remember coming home for the summer holidays to help him on the farm and having a great shock when I saw my mother's hair had turned from auburn to gray. My sister completed her business course at Shaw's and was working as a bookkeeper, and later as a teller in the Bank of Montreal in Haliburton. It was there in 1945, that she met her future husband, Lloyd Coneybeare, who had just returned from overseas service with the RCAF. She boarded with Betty Hoxie in the house that was next door to the now head office of the Haliburton Echo. I was an Engineering student at the University of Toronto, at the Ajax campus.

Ajax campus opened to accommodate the returning veterans from World War II. I was also in the Naval Reserve (UNTD) for 2 years, and it was there that I met my future wife, Joy Gilley. We were married on October 5, 1951.

For my parents, it was a time of change. My father was active surveying, selling land and preparing land deeds; my mother kept busy being a housewife and she missed her "twins". In 1944 my father sold his grandparents house to Cecil and Jean Clark and shortly thereafter, the Clarks sold the house and 0.56 acres of land to Charles Walter Hone and his wife, Harriet, of Hamilton, Ontario. In the same year, he sold a building lot to Ken and Lucy Hone for \$25.00 and also a building lot to Charles Hone - who later sold it to Paul Hone. My father took back a timber lot in Con. VII as payment, previously owned by Charles Walter (Charles Walter had given the lot to Charles Jr.).

My father sold a large tract of land in Con. VIII to Highland Lumber Company and continued to sell lakeshore lots (on Hall's Lake). Some of the people that bought the lots were: The Flemings; Innards; Farris; Calvers (Glen Roy Lodge); Deans; McCarthy; and Taylors. One of the lakeshore lots was bought by my Uncle Bill and Aunt Agnes, who built a cottage purchased from Robert Simpson Company (agent for Alladin Homes), on his property in 1936. His last major land development was a subdivision called Plan 186 that was registered in 1950. A year later my father was diagnosed with prostate cancer, and after a 5 year struggle he died in the farmhouse in

January, 1955. The last five years of his life he became a Lay Reader and preached many sermons in local churches.

My mother, who had found the adjustment difficult when her family left the farm to start lives of their own, was equally devastated at the loss of her husband of 37 years. However, she had determination, courage, and an indomitable spirit to make a new life - and this she did - living in the farmhouse as a widow for another 37 years! She had always loved music and she sang in the Madrigal Choir in Haliburton under the direction of William Gliddon. She was active in the Ladies Guild of St. Stephen's Church. Although she never learned to drive a car, there was always a helpful neighbour or friend to take her there and back and do the shopping.

After spending a lonely spring and summer after my father's death, she decided to visit England again, and in 1955 she and a friend, Sarah Parkinson, boarded an ocean liner back to England for a visit with her sisters, Edith and Hephysy. She was 66 years old and in good health. She started to make improvements to the farmhouse: a new oil furnace in 1956 (prior to that it was a space heater in the living room); a new water pressure system with indoor toilet (prior to that it was an outside toilet); new electrical appliances (electric stove, hot water heater, radio and later, television). She was to travel twice more to England, but now these trips were by jet airliner: first via BOAC in 1970 with my sister Rosamond, and later in the 1970's with Christine Pritchard.

She had always wanted to see Canada from coast to coast, and she did make it east as far as Moncton, New Brunswick, where she visited her nephew David Crowther and his wife Maureen. She also travelled west as far as Calgary, Alberta, when she accompanied her cousin Lilian and her husband Stanley Kershaw, on their return to Australia after visiting my mother on the farm in 1972. She also travelled to the Caribbean: once via jet to St. Lucia, and a second time on a Caribbean cruise ship. By the 1970's she was walking with difficulty, having fractured her collarbone (while bowling in Carnarvon), and broken her hip in a fall at the Cozy Corners Restaurant in Haliburton. It was at this time that an agreement was reached with my mother and my sister Rosamond, that I would assume the responsibility for the farm, which required much needed maintenance. As a result, the property was transferred to me by quit claim deed in 1976, and I began to pay property taxes, insurance, etc. on the farm.

My mother continued to live alone on the farm until 1980 (a year after her 90th birthday). She had operations for hip and knee replacements at the Orthopaedic and Arthritic Hospital in Toronto, and was forced to give up the farm and move to Hyland Crest Seniors Home in the fall of 1980. She continued to be active at Hyland Crest, and made many new friends. She celebrated her 100th birthday in 1989 with a big party at the Stanhope Community Hall, where she received honours from the Queen and congratulations from over 100 guests. She wrote her memoirs when she was 102 years old and she remembered clearly every detail of her childhood in Brighouse, Yorkshire, England. She adored her grandchildren and her great grandchildren. She died peacefully from natural causes in her 103rd year on November 2, 1992 at Hyland Crest, and was buried beside my father at St. Stephen's Church cemetery, Boshkung, Ontario.

After my mother's death, I began major renovations on the farmhouse including the addition of a workshop, garage, raised deck and sunroom, as well as several outbuildings. I became known by my family as "Five Sheds Oliver", and I am not finished yet.

My dear sister Rosamond died May 5, 1993, after a long struggle with cancer, leaving me as the only Oliver surviving from that generation. My wife and I were blessed with four children, Wendy, Donald, Peter and Patricia, who along with their children, have been a great inspiration to me and I love them all very dearly. I am still custodian of the farm property, and my children and their families visit the farm on occasion. My sister's children, Beverly, Linda and John with their families, also visit the farm.

I remember becoming aware of being the only survivor after my sister's death, and looking over the land we both loved so well, I recalled a poem we had learned in public school at Hall's Lake in the 1930's:

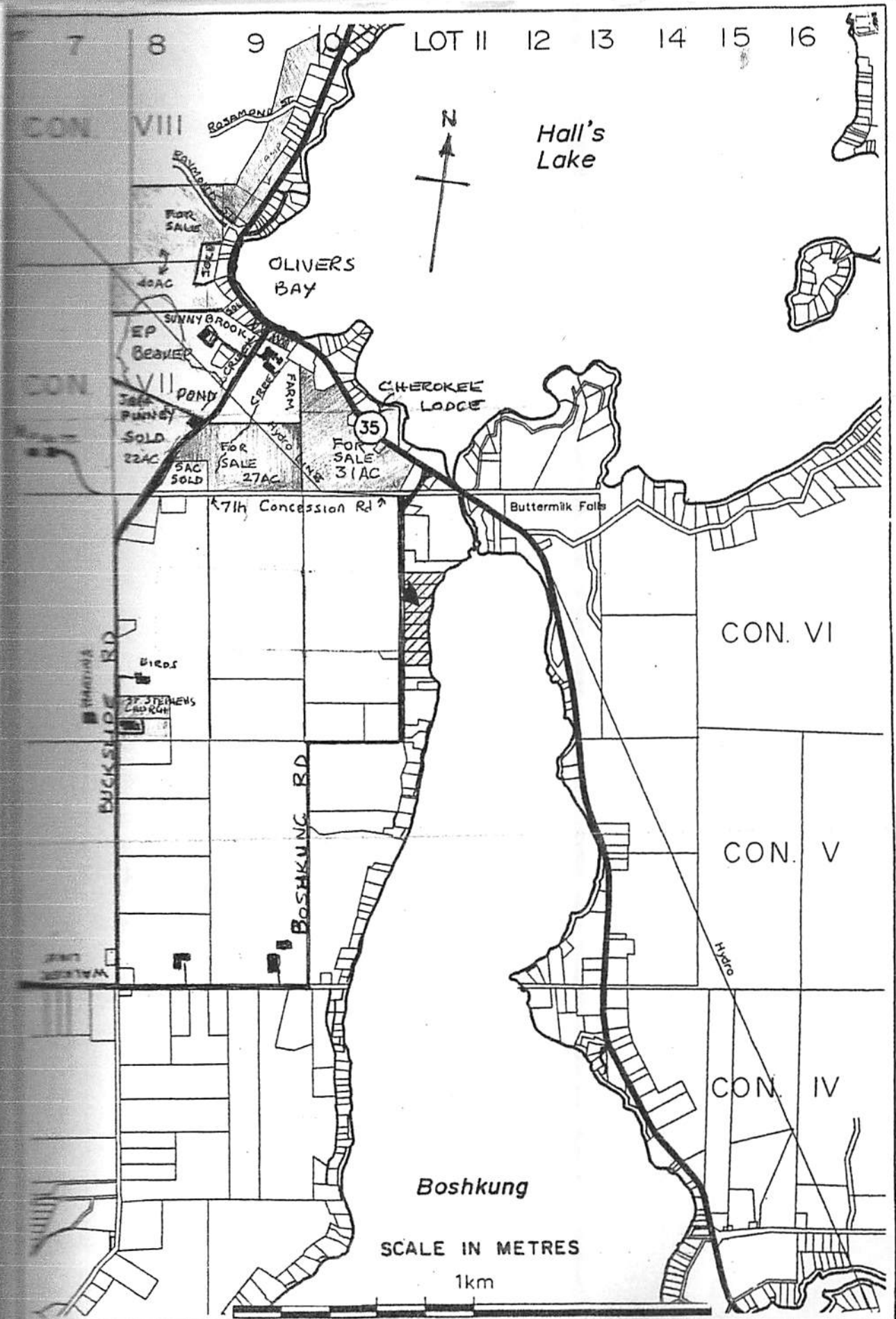
"Along the line of smoky hills, the crimson forest stands,
And all day long the blue jay calls throughout the autumn lands."

Bliss Carmen

And so ends this part of the story of the Oliver farm and the log farmhouse, and the people who lived there over a span of 120 years.

To be continued...

April 2002



7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

CON. VIII

Hall's Lake

OLIVERS BAY

CHEROKEE LODGE

CON. VII

SUNNY BROOK

EP BEAVER

31AC

FOR SALE 27AC

FOR SALE 31AC

7th Concession Rd

Buttermilk Falls

CON. VI

CON. V

CON. IV

Boshkung

SCALE IN METRES

1km

BUCKSIDE RD

BOSHKUNG RD

BIRDS

ST. JEROME'S

CHURCH

WALKER

Hydro