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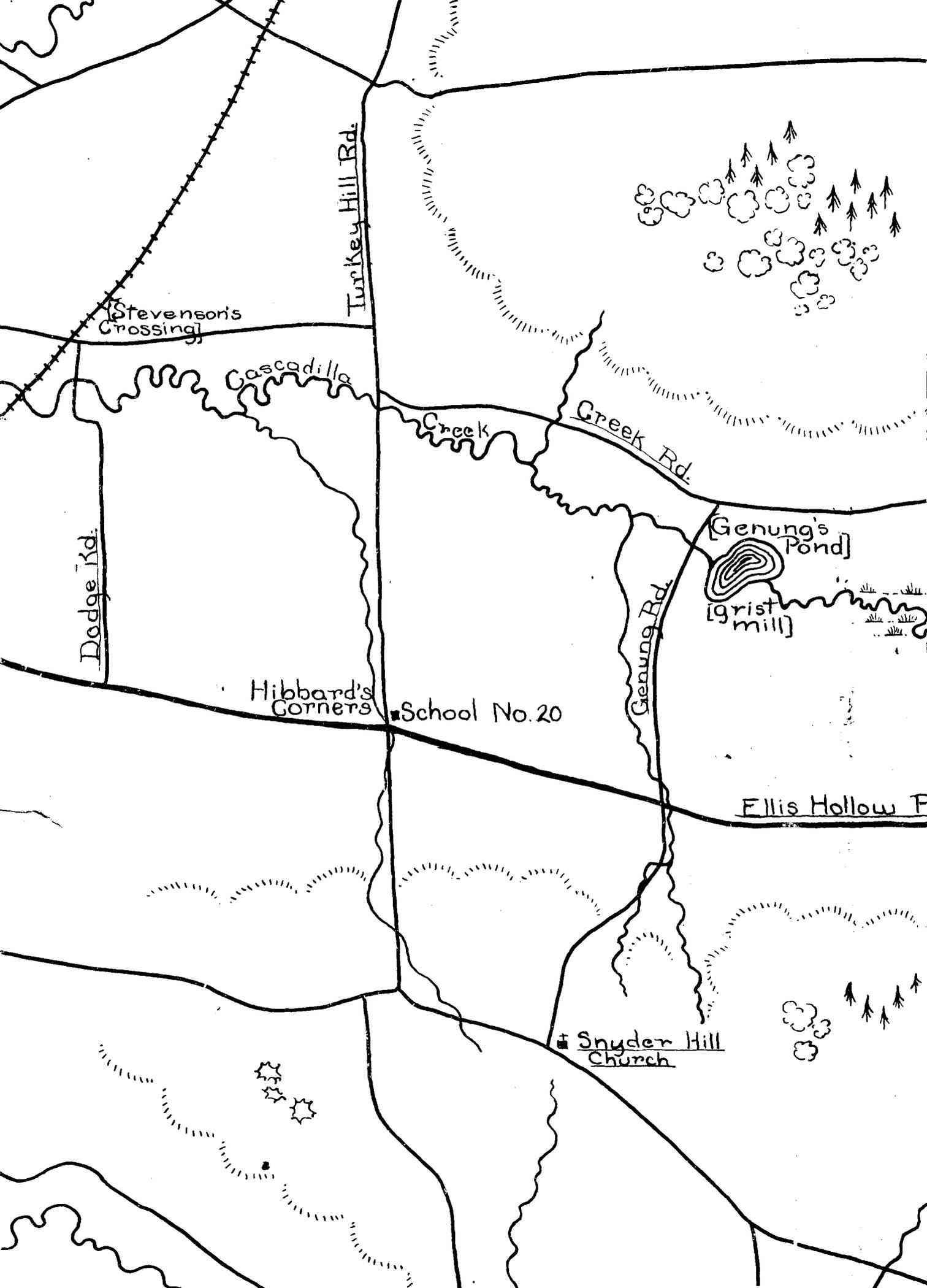
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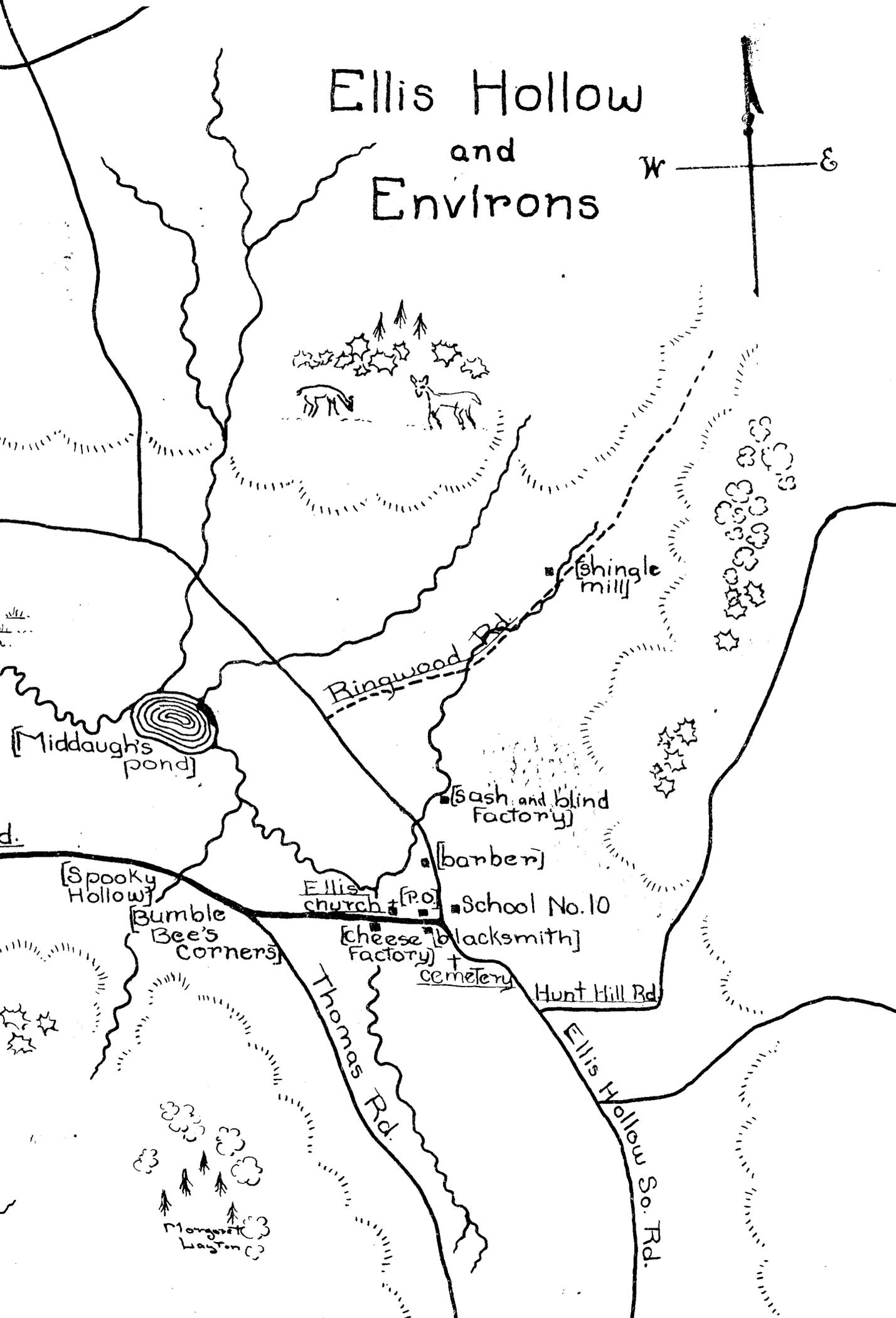
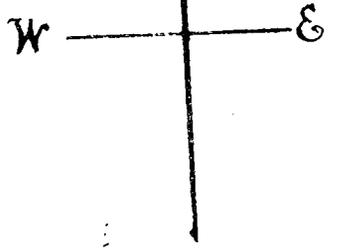
Genung's Pond

Grist Mill

Ellis Hollow

Snyder Hill Church

# Ellis Hollow and Environs



[Middaugh's pond]

Ringwood Rd.

[shingle mill]

[Sash and blind Factory]

[barber]

[Spooky Hollow]

Ellis church

[P.O.]

School No. 10

[Bumble Bee's Corners]

[Cheese Factory]

[blacksmith]

[cemetery]

Thomas Rd.

Hunt Hill Rd.

Ellis Hollow So. Rd.

Margaret Layton



# Ellis Hollow Lore

*Pioneer Days, Yesteryear, Today*

By

**Zelle Middaugh Pritchard**

1962

Published by the Ladies' Circle of the Ellis Hollow  
Community Church in cooperation with

DEWITT HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
OF TOMPKINS COUNTY, INC.

ITHACA, NEW YORK



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To my great-aunt  
ANN H. SMITH

The sketch of the Ellis Hollow Church on the cover and the end-paper map were prepared by Margaret Layton. The map is based on the "Map of Tompkins County, New York, 1853," published by Horace & Charles T. Smith. Present-day names are underlined; interim names are in brackets.

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## *Preface*

MANY times have I been asked by the newcomers to Ellis Hollow to write some of the stories and happenings of the early days of this little settlement. I never thought I could do justice to such an assignment, and but for the encouragement and boost of confidence of two of my good friends, Elsie Myers and Jennie Hodgson, I would not undertake it now.

Many of the stories or "yarns," as they were called in days gone by, happened before my time and have been handed down through the years. Therefore, if anyone challenges the authenticity of these, so be it. I think the history I bring to you is quite correct.

I was born in Ellis Hollow on February 23, 1881, in the house now owned by Professor Reuben Shapley. My childhood and girlhood were spent here and never have I lived more than seven miles away from this valley. Therefore, I have been in close touch with the "goings on" in Ellis Hollow for fourscore years.

I've roamed the woods and fields in all seasons for flowers, berries, nuts, or just to view the beautiful world from the hilltops. The hills surrounding Ellis Hollow are beautiful at all times of the year, even when winter's frost and snow turn them into mounds of gleaming crystal.

It gives me great satisfaction to know that when my curtain call comes, I will be laid away in the little cemetery here with my family and my ancestors, and my crumbling remains will go back to Mother Earth, back among the hills that I have loved so long.

ZELLE MIDDAUGH PRITCHARD

June 1, 1962



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**Print of Ellis Hollow Church on cover by Margaret Layton**



## Ellis Hollow in Pioneer Days

Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight!  
Make me a child again, just for tonight!

ONE of the many questions I have been asked concerning the pioneer days of Ellis Hollow is whether there were Indians in this valley. I will answer this by quoting some history of the Indians of Central New York from the "Centennial History of the Town of Dryden," wherein we are located.

This history, published in 1898, tells us that in this valley called Ellis Hollow there is evidence that hostile Indians once occupied the locality as a hunting ground. It is authentic that the home of the Cayugas was near the present site of Ithaca on both sides of Cayuga Lake. The Cayugas were one of five tribes that had formed a confederation known as the "Iroquois Confederacy" and said to be conquerors of all neighboring tribes.

The first white men to go among these Indians were fur traders and French Jesuit priests. These Jesuits lived and labored among the tribes in an effort to convert them to Christianity and a better way of life. Records of what these missionaries went through are today carefully preserved in monasteries in France.

Reports of one Father Carheil, who spent twenty years among the Indians, in 1672 described Lake Tiohero (now Cayuga) as abundant with fish and the beautiful surrounding country abundant with game.

The Iroquois Indians had taken sides with the English in the French and Indian War, and remained so in the Revolutionary War; thus the colonies were the victims of the merciless massacres of Cherry Valley and Wyoming Valley.

To avenge these massacres, an invasion was planned by Washington in 1779 and carried out with a force of about 5,000 men by Generals Sullivan and Clinton. This was known as the "Sullivan Expedition." A battle near Newtown (now Elmira) resulted in complete defeat of the Indians and destruction of their villages along Seneca and Cayuga Lakes. Thus, the Iroquois were driven from this part of the state, and the early pioneers of the town of Dryden escaped all annoyances from hostile Indians.

The War of the Revolution was ended in 1781, and within ten years the Iroquois Confederacy deeded its lands by various treaties to the state. In February 1789 the New York State Legislature passed a law governing the surveying and setting apart, for the use of its surviving soldiers of the Revolutionary War, a large section of land between Seneca and Oneida Lakes.

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Known as the "Military Tract," and comprising nearly two million acres, it included our town of Dryden, designated as Township No. 23.

The lots of Dryden were surveyed by one John Konkle of Schoharie in 1790. (I assume Professor Carl Crandall and E. Delos Crumb were not available at this time.) A piece of fifty acres out of each lot was set aside and known as the "Survey Fifty Acres," to be retained by the surveyor for services or to be redeemed by the owner for eight dollars. It is said that many of those who drew the lots were so poor they were unable to raise the eight dollars to save their "Survey Fifty Acres." The lots were drawn by ballot in 1791 by the New York soldiers of the Revolutionary War.

Dryden Township No. 23 was set off by itself on February 22, 1803, having been previously named Dryden by the commissioners of the land office, in honor of the English poet, John Dryden. Not many of the veterans who drew the lots came to settle on them. After passing through seven years of the hardships of war, they shunned the privation of pioneer life in a new place. Many disposed of their titles for mere trifles. There were land sharks in those days, and many soldiers' claims in the Dryden territory were bought by speculators for small sums.

It is said that the original owner of the lot of 640

acres upon which was built the Dryden Center House (now Tweitmann's) sold his title for a hat, a coat, a dollar in money, and a drink of rum. Some, however, retained their lots and became permanent settlers, and their lands are still in the hands of their descendants.

From this time on, settlers became more numerous in the town of Dryden. The first of these settlers experienced much difficulty in reaching their claims for lack of roads through the forests.

In the year 1797 a young carpenter, George Robertson, who owned property in Saratoga County, became ambitious to become a pioneer in the wilderness of the "Military Tract." He purchased Lot No. 53 of Dryden from the soldier to whom it had been allotted, and made a prospecting tour on foot from Saratoga County to Lot 53, Dryden, by way of the Mohawk Valley, Auburn, Cayuga Lake, and Ithaca. He was pleased with this new country and found his possession on what is now the Dryden Road. Lot 53 was later the farm owned by his son, Mott Robertson, and is now Plantation Inn.

He returned to Saratoga and in February 1798 set out with a sleigh loaded with provisions and implements, drawn by two yoke of oxen, for the long journey to his property. He traveled three weeks by way of the Mohawk Valley, Utica, Auburn, and Ithaca (then called Markle's Flats), arriving in Ithaca on March 1,

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1798. There were only three log houses in Ithaca at that date. It took Robertson and his party all the next day to widen the road from Ithaca to Lot 53 in order for the ox teams and sleigh to pass.

Among the other first settlers in the town of Dryden were two brothers, John and Peleg Ellis, who were originally from West Greenwich, Rhode Island, but who had settled in Herkimer County, New York. John Ellis came to Virgil in 1798, having purchased Lot No. 23 of the Samuel Cook estate. His brother, Peleg Ellis, exchanged his property in Herkimer County for Lot No. 84 of Dryden. This was the locality now known as Ellis Hollow.

Peleg Ellis first came to view his possession in 1799. He had difficulty in locating his lot until he met Captain Robertson, of whom I have told you. Robertson, by means of a map and marked trees, succeeded in indicating the boundaries of Peleg's lot.

Up to this point, I have quoted facts given in the "Centennial History of the Town of Dryden," as compiled by George Goodrich for the Centennial Celebration of 1897. What it does not tell us and what I do not know is how Peleg Ellis got into this wooded valley where his purchase, Lot 84, was located. I assume he came from Virgil, as his brother John Ellis already had settled there, but by what route or means of transpor-

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tation he got into the valley, I don't know. He would have needed implements for clearing the land and provisions for means of survival. (He surely must have brought a pop-up toaster.)

It is to be regretted that in our growing years we think little of our ancestors' problems. I had every opportunity to learn all about this pioneer adventure of my great-grandfather, as several great-aunts, my grandmother, and a great-uncle, all children of Peleg Ellis, were living when I was growing up. If I had sought this information when it was available, I could have brought you a more interesting account.

However, we know that Peleg Ellis did survive the rigors of pioneering and cleared the land, making way for civilization to enter the valley that is named for him. He chopped eleven days without knowing there was another human being in the vicinity. Then, Zephaniah Brown, who had already settled on Lot No. 71 in the town of Ithaca (this farm was later owned by Chauncey Scott and is now the home of Merle Kelly), heard the sound of an ax and with gun in hand came out to call on his new neighbor.

I would like to mention here that in the early days sounds and echoes reverberated so plainly through this valley. No doubt, they do the same today, but we are all too busy and moving too fast to notice. Perhaps

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some of the newcomers to the valley do not know how Ringwood got its name. It was from the ring of axes and the quick return of echoes heard by men chopping each side of the ravine.

I've been told that my great-uncle, John J. Ellis, who built and lived in the Gothic house at the T in the road (the house now owned and occupied by Professor Frank Gilmore and family), had a habit of sitting on the front steps of his home on summer evenings and singing hymns heard all up and down the valley.

To get back to the pioneer era, Peleg Ellis built a log house on the headwaters of Cascadilla Creek, somewhat back of the house he later built, which is now the home of Mrs. Elsie Myers and family. He lived in the log house eight years, having brought his wife and two daughters to the Hollow in 1800. Ten other children were born to them after they settled here.

Wild animals, especially deer, were very abundant. It is stated that Peleg Ellis killed eighteen deer so near his log house that he drew them to his door on his ox sled. The woods were so full of small game, squirrels, chipmunks, and rabbits that it was almost impossible to raise grain in the small clearings surrounded by forests without its being destroyed by these pests. They were hunted and trapped, and sometimes poison bait was used to exterminate them.

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Bears and wolves were somewhat troublesome, but they soon avoided the neighborhood settlements. The panther or painter, as it was sometimes called in those days, was the most to be feared by the settlers.

My mother often recalled stories told her by her grandmother (Peleg's wife) of the days when they lived in the log house. She said she would rock her babies in the evening with the panthers crying around the house and only a canvas door at the opening.

In those days, pigs were very scarce and so very valuable to the settlers. This story is told of Peleg Ellis's courage and determination. One winter morning he heard a noise in his pigsty and, investigating, found a bear attacking a pig, his prized porker. Seizing an ax, Peleg beat the bear into unconsciousness and even after the bear died, he continued to beat its body to a pulp.

All the dwellings of this period were lighted as well as heated from the open fireplaces. Even tallow candles at that time were a luxury and only used on special occasions. Mothers and the children would, at twilight, gather pine knots to burn in the fireplace in order to see to spin on long winter evenings. No record was ever made of the hardships and privations those strong-minded pioneer women endured in those early days. Besides caring for and feeding their families, they spun the flax and wove linen and wool for clothing and bed-

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ding for the household. I have at this time some homespun linen and wool blankets made by my great-aunts.

There was not much opportunity for visiting in those pioneer days and "coffee breaks" were quite unknown, but when they did visit, hospitality was genuine. An incident is recorded of the first call made by Mrs. Peleg Ellis on Mrs. Zephaniah Brown. She went on horseback, with one little girl riding in front of her and one sitting behind, on a trail cut through the forest by the men. When she came out of the woods and Mrs. Brown saw her, she heard Mrs. Brown call to her husband, "Zephaniah! Zephaniah! Mrs. Ellis is a-comin' and what'll I have for tea?"

Brown called back, "Strawberry shortcake, and tuckie in the cream. Tuckie it in thick, I say."

This Zephaniah Brown had cleared a road from his place to Ithaca in 1799. This road was extended to the Ellis Hollow neighborhood by Ellis and Brown two years later.

Peleg is said to have been an interesting character, a man well esteemed for honesty and good citizenship. He was not a politician like his brother John, but turned his attention to military affairs. When the War of 1812 broke out, having been captain of the early State Militia in Dryden, he volunteered with his whole company.

This company with Peleg under Colonel Winfield Scott went out to the lines in July 1812 to the battle of Queenston, which is remembered as the Bunker Hill of that war, but was followed by hard-earned victories that secured a triumphant result. An incident of the early-morning crossing of the Niagara River has been told of one of the Dryden soldiers, Stephen B. June of Ellis Hollow. Impressed with the importance of the occasion, he arose in the boat, swinging his hat, and called out the watchword of the expedition, "Death, Hell or Canada."

The landing on the Canadian shore was successfully made and Queenston Heights captured. The commanding officer, General Brock, was mortally wounded there. In the afternoon enemy reinforcements arrived, but help for the American side failed to appear. After a brave but hopeless resistance, the entire American force, including Colonel Scott and Captain Ellis with their men, were taken prisoners.

Captain Ellis, not seeing his townsman Stephen June among the prisoners, went out on the battlefield and, after searching, found June severely wounded, but still alive and conscious. Captain Ellis asked him "Which is it now, June?" and the wounded soldier feebly but firmly replied, "I can't tell just yet, Captain, which it is, but when that British bullet struck me, I

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thought I had all three at once." June lived to return home, and for quite a time his descendants were residents of Ellis Hollow.

Aaron Case, one of the Dryden Company from near Ellis Hollow, was instantly killed by a cannon ball while the regiment was making that crossing of the Niagara in boats. Other soldiers of the Dryden Company from Ellis Hollow and round about were Aaron Genung of Varna, Arthur and Stephen June, Marcus Palmerton, Jonathan Luce, George McCutcheon, and Peter Snyder.

Captain Ellis and his company were paroled and sent home. Peleg was commissioned Major of Infantry.

A magnificent shaft, called the Brock Monument, some 200 feet high, constructed of Niagara limestone, has been erected in commemoration of General Brock and his soldiers who fought at Queenston Heights; it can be seen from Lewiston on the American side by those visiting Niagara Falls.

It is said that while in the army Major Ellis acquired the liquor habit, although he later reformed and joined the church. While under the influence of liquor, he would drill an imaginary battalion in the road in front of his house, giving commands and executing them with all military preciseness and dignity.

Major Peleg Ellis died in the home he built at the Headwaters of Cascadilla Creek, where he had cleared

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the land in 1799. His death came on his eighty-fourth birthday, May 9, 1859. His wife, Ruth Dawley Ellis, survived him, living in the home with a daughter until 1870, when she passed away at the age of ninety-three.

The daughter with whom she lived was Ann H. Smith, the wife of John M. Smith. Widowed, Ann Smith lived in the homestead until her death in 1900. In 1895 she realized her dream of a church in Ellis Hollow, by donating land from the farm which her father had cleared in his pioneer days and the first \$1,000 for its erection. We will hear more about this later.

John Ellis, later Judge Ellis, who had come with his brother Peleg from Rhode Island to Herkimer, New York, and had settled in Virgil, later came to Dryden and then to Ellis Hollow around 1801. He lived in the house now owned by Leverett and Nancy Saltonstall. He was prominent in political affairs, serving in many offices, and was twice a member of the Assembly and Judge of the Court of Common Pleas of Tompkins and Cayuga Counties. In his later years he was called "King of Dryden."

## Yesteryear

NOT much is recorded of the early settlers who followed Peleg Ellis into this valley. I do not know what incentive there was to bring pioneers here, who they were, where they came from, or by what route they came. The "Centennial History" does not give much information of those who came to the Ellis Hollow area. The names Brown, June, Hurd, Snyder, Rice, Hiles, Bishop, and Genung are memories, spoken of as living here in early days, but I do not know where they lived or what year they came. English, Cornelius, and Mid-daugh families were here in the early 1800's.

As to roads or trails, we know that Zephaniah Brown had cleared a road from Ithaca to his place at Lot 71 adjoining the town of Ithaca in 1799, and he and Peleg Ellis cleared and built the road on to Ellis Hollow in 1801. But, I do not know when or by whom the road or trail from Ellis Hollow through Ringwood over the hill to the Bridle Road (now Dryden Road) was built. There must have been some early connection between Dryden and Ellis Hollow, since Peleg Ellis was captain of the State Militia of Dryden before the War of 1812.

I marvel at the fortitude of those early settlers when

I think of the hardships and privations they must have passed through—how they could have brought enough supplies for survival, where they could get renewed provisions, or how they lived until they could build cabins for their families.

They didn't even have matches in those days. Myron Cornelius of Ringwood Road, a descendant of the early settlers, has in his collection of antiques handed down to him a contraption made of iron, like a little stove, which was used to carry coals from neighbors, if the fire went out. And no one knows how far away those neighbors were. How we howl if our electric power is disrupted for a few hours!

Babies were born here in that early period, and much sickness must have prevailed under those primitive conditions, but I don't know where they could have reached a doctor.

I have no information on how the very early settlers received mail. The first Post Office in Ithaca was established in 1804. I assume the pioneers had to go to Ithaca for their mail if they received any. I have been told that all Ellis Hollow mail was put in a box at the Ithaca Post Office, and anyone going to Ithaca would bring the mail to the John J. Ellis home, where residents would go and sort out their own letters. This was previous to 1880.

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In 1880 or 1881 a Post Office was established at the home of William and Luthera Bennett on the corner in the place now owned by Professor Edgar Lemon and family. Mrs. Bennett was the first and only Postmistress while the Post Office was continued. The mail was brought from Brookton every day by a man named Boyce. Later, William Bennett, or someone authorized, went to Brookton for it, sometimes on horseback.

Then came the Rural Free Delivery from Brookton, and the Post Office in Ellis Hollow was abandoned about 1903. Later R.F.D. was changed to Ithaca as it is now.

William Bennett also ran a country store in the residence. Later, a partner joined him, Emmons Ogden, Sr. They enlarged their business and ran a grocery cart around Ellis Hollow and the surrounding area. The store, like all rural stores, was a gathering place for neighbors from all around, coming for mail, groceries, or just to pass the time, enjoy a smoke, and a little gossip and banter with other sitters.

On the same corner, across the road, was the village blacksmith shop run by the jovial Eugene Banfield. This was a thriving and necessary business for a long time.

In an earlier period, a Sash and Blind Factory was operated near the Horton Hunt property, now the home

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of Mrs. Edith Ogden, Clara and Russell Cobb. I do not know who ran this business. I remember the huge water wheel that stood in the creek for years afterward, back of what is now the Clifford Berg residence. A pond on the farm of John J. Ellis furnished the water power for this business.

Also in that early period, a cheese factory was run in Ellis Hollow. Located on the land next to the Jursick house, across from the church, this was a good business for those days and provided an outlet for milk from the farmers who had small dairies.

A lumber business on the farm of Orrin Middaugh, one of the early residents, run by him, and later by his son, Fred Middaugh, was in operation over a long period of years. The mill at the lower end of the farm was powered by a pond fed by Cascadilla Creek.

The larger portion of this farm is now owned by John Meyer and farmed by him. He also owns and lives on the old Sprague property, which was the home of one of the very early settlers. The Middaugh homestead is now the remodeled home of Professor and Mrs. Sienko. Farther down the valley on Cascadilla Creek was another pond on the farm of Peter Genung. This furnished power for a grist mill run by Genung and his son for a period of years.

Sometime in the 1890's, Leon Willsey, an Ellis Hollow

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native, who lived with his family in the house now the home of Professor and Mrs. A. L. Neal, built a small building in his yard and opened a barbershop. This was quite a good business and a popular evening resort for the young male population. Later, Willsey moved to Cortland to continue his tonsorial career. The small shop still remains in the Neal yard, a reminder to old-timers who wander back, of the fun and pranks that were hatched in that little building.

Later years other small business was carried on. A shingle mill on the farm of Myron Cornelius was run by him. A cider mill was operated by Horton Ogden on his place.

It seems amazing that, in less than fifty years after Peleg Ellis came into this wooded valley, land was cleared, roads built, farms put into production, homes and schools built, and small industries started. All this was done with only horse and ox power, little machinery and that mostly made by hand, and limited man power.

The men here were good farmers for their time. Only a few had small dairies, and poultry farming was unknown in that day. That was the housewife's project, raising a few chickens by the "Mother Hen" process to provide eggs for home use and a few dozen to exchange for groceries on the day of the "Bennett-Ogden Cart"

visit. Roosters were used for chicken dinners and to provide a good feed for the minister and his wife when they came to visit. My brother once said the roosters had learned, when the minister drove up, to run and lay their heads on the chopping block.

The hard work and the walking done by the farmers in those days is almost unbelievable today. I recall my father's many operations in raising a field of grain. It required walking across ten or fifteen acres of land to hand-sow wheat in the fall; then in the spring go out at four o'clock in the morning to sow grass seed before the wind was strong. Again, at harvest, the same acres were walked over to hand-cradle, bind into sheaves, and cap. This is a sample of the methods for just one crop. Young farm lads of today, when hearing of these operations, don't even know that they required as much skill as driving a tractor.

Hard work was done by the farm women, indoors and out. Taking the place of an extra man on the hay rake and horse fork, and perhaps doing the milking, besides they had to have meals ready for hungry men.

Threshing time was dreaded in the house and out. Threshing machines owned by individuals went from farm to farm. Machines were run by horses, the tread-power method, in the very early days. Extra help was had by changing work with other farmers. This meant

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dinners and sometimes suppers for a gang of men. These were prepared by the housewife.

Farmers who sold their hay baled had hay pressers in the fall. Early presses were run by horsepower also, and a gang of men traveled with the press. This meant boarding men and teams for several days. Sometimes, the hay press would break down and the gang had to be fed for a week or more while repairs were made. This didn't make the farmer's wife very happy.

Later, steam traction engines were used for power for these machines. I must tell you of the first traction engine I ever saw. It was at Hibbard's Corners school. The chug-chug was heard coming up the road. One of the big girls jumped up in her seat and yelled, "Oh! a contraction engine." The laughter and commotion in the schoolroom left the teacher no alternative but to recess the school so that we could go out and watch this engine, drawing a thresher, pass on to Ellis Hollow. All these operations are over now. Grain is threshed as it is cut and hay is baled in the field, relieving farmers of hard, disagreeable jobs and the farmer's wife of feeding gangs of men.

Another fall operation in Ellis Hollow was barreling apples. Most of the old farms had large orchards of the good old choice varieties which farmers barreled and shipped. Barrels piled high on a hay rack, being deliv-

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ered to farms, was a usual sight in the early fall days. Not many of those orchards are in existence today.

Such was farm life in Ellis Hollow in the 1800's and early 1900's. But, surprising as it may seem, some of these hard-working farmers, by rigid economy, raised large families and managed to accumulate what was considered in those days quite large fortunes.

Not much farming is done here now, and all industries are ended. The only business activity at the present time is the building of houses, as Ellis Hollow seems to have lapsed into a residential area.

When the settlement was growing up and families were being reared, there were a great number of lads, teenagers and upwards, who, like the teenagers of today, were not really vicious, but seething to do something out of the ordinary run of rural life. Many tales have been handed down of pranksters who hatched these activities, sometimes innocent fun, sometimes not so desirable for their elders.

What seemed to be a favorite jamboree for these boys was an outdoor chicken roast. This was sort of a forerunner to our present-day barbecue. But, these chicken roasts were never public affairs, as the gangs involved were not always too particular whose chicken roost supplied their feast. One evening a farmer in the Ringwood section, out checking his barn for the night,

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saw the glow of a bonfire up in his pasture. Smelling mischief he straightway started investigating. He surprised these boys just as they were about to indulge in their barbarous feast. After much questioning on his part, they succeeded in convincing him that the chickens were from his neighbor's hen roost—a man of whom he was not too fond. So after a little urging, he accepted their invitation to join their feast, which he did with glee. I never heard whether those boys ever learned what his reaction was when he found he did eat his own hens.

The school in Ellis Hollow District No. 10 was always a large school with an attendance of twenty to thirty pupils. (The school building has been nicely remodeled for a dwelling and is now the home of Miss Gussie Gaskill.) Good teachers taught here, some remaining over a period of years.

An amusing incident occurred at one time when an old Civil War veteran, an eccentric character, became excited because of neglect to raise the flag. He stalked into the schoolroom, delivered an ultimatum to the teacher, and stalked out again. He went over to the Post Office and asked for his mail. When told by Mrs. Bennett there was none for him, he said: "Well, I didn't expect any. It ain't time for Uncle Sam to remember me yet, but I've been tendin' to Uncle Sam's business

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for him. Jist come from the schoolhouse. I told that schoolmarm something. It's the third day she ain't hist-ed that flag. Maybe that flag don't mean anything to those young'uns now, but they may have to fight for it some day and I'm goin' ter see that that flag is histed over that school jist as long as I live at Bumble Bee's Corners." He stomped out, singing his favorite song, "Tell Mother I'll Be There."

This old fellow was a great bee man. It was said he would lie out in his yard and always know his own bees flying over. He could distinguish a queen bee in the air and would often follow a bee into the woods and locate a bee tree. He and his wife lived at the top of the grade, on the place now owned by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Marion, which he appropriately called Bumble Bee's Corners.

Recalling this old veteran's loyalty to the flag brings to mind the political enthusiasm demonstrated in Ellis Hollow in bygone days at election time. Campaigns for election of President or Governor were very hotly carried on. There were political meetings with speeches, pole raisings, and torchlight parades. The Republican pole, of peeled pine, was raised in the triangle, at the T in the road, in front of the John J. Ellis place (now Gilmore). The Democratic pole (I think it was hickory) was raised across the road, by the blacksmith shop.

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These pole raisings were rally meetings, in the afternoon, with much hullabaloo.

The torchlight parades were started at Hibbard's Corners (now the Community Center), made up of men from that vicinity and Snyder Hill, and headed by the "Slab-Town Band." They marched to Ellis Hollow schoolhouse, carrying torches and picking up recruits along the way. Very exciting times for Ellis Hollow! There were many hot arguments between parties, some resulting in long-time enemies.

This "Slab-Town" Band was called on to enliven many of the happenings of those days. It was a fife-and-drum corps, led by Deacon English, who lived on the Genung Road, and composed mostly of his numerous sons. The band was so called from the locality, which was called "Slab Town," reason unknown.

A "yarn" was told of this band playing at some sort of gathering, and after one selection was finished, the old leader said, "Now, we'll play No. 4." His youngest son piped up, "That's what I was a-playin'."

The change and growth in population, has stretched the boundaries of Ellis Hollow to the point of eliminating some of the small localities round about, which were so called from residents who had earlier lived there.

Hibbard's Corners, now Ellis Hollow Community Cen-

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ter, was named for a family named Hibbard, early residents. The Hibbard's Corners School District No. 20 was a very old school, away back into the days of my father, his brothers, and sisters. My father used to tell us a slogan or "yell" they had in his time. It was:

"We're the school of No. 20,  
We live among the hills,  
Where the Cascadilla gently  
Its winding course begins."

There are only a few of the older residents left who had known the "Hibbard's Corners" school by association, and to those few the change of name brought nostalgic pains. But the bow to progress was worth while, as the Ellis Hollow Community Center has proved a great asset to young and old.

Excellent teachers taught at Hibbard's Corners in my school days. One red-headed teacher held forth there for a number of years. She was a great driver and took great pride in the number of pupils she prepared for High School.

One remarkable student started on his way to a career from this school. Warren Ellis Schutt, a descendant of Major Peleg Ellis and John Ellis, "King of Dryden," entered Ithaca High School at an early age, and from there won a University and State Schol-

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arship, entering Cornell with the Class of 1905. While at Cornell, Mr. Schutt was the first student from New York State to win the Cecil Rhodes Scholarship at Oxford, England. This was conceded an honor for New York State as well as for Cornell University. He was also an athlete. He was champion cross-country runner, establishing a record for Cornell in the mile race. At Oxford he was presented a cup by King Edward VII for winning a three-mile race against Cambridge. After his course was completed at Oxford, he was appointed Consul to Germany and later to Italy. After returning to America, he taught English in Columbia University, New York University, and the University of California. In 1946 he joined the English Department at Santa Barbara College, California. Because of ill health, he retired from this position in 1951. Not having regained good health, Warren Ellis Schutt passed away in 1955.

The Dodge Road locality, a mile or so below the Ellis Hollow Community Center, is now considered in the Ellis Hollow area. This locality was so called for a widow woman who lived on that road for many years and was always called "Widder Dodge."

This Dodge Road leads over to what was the Stevenson Road. Here the E.C. & N. Railroad had a siding where freight cars were switched for farmers to load and ship baled hay. It was called Stevenson's Crossing.

Widow Dodge's daughter and children lived with her. There were two boys who were very dear to the old lady. But as they grew up, they were a bit wayward. This distressed "Widder Dodge" and she brought forth this excuse to a neighbor. She said, "When they were young, they were good 'biys,' but after they went to the Varna Church to Epworth League, they were ruin't."

Dodge Road brings to my mind an amusing yarn of two Ellis Hollow men. In early days, Saturday was the day most farmers left off all tasks and went to Ithaca to trade—some family strong, others just the men. There were several places where the men used to hitch their horses, swap stories and visit in general. Two of these men used to bet on who would get home first. One had a small, speedy horse that couldn't hold out too long in a race. The other man's horse was a large, young horse, full of vim and vigor. One Saturday night they made a definite wager and started home. After the climb up East State and Mitchell Streets, the race started, the little horse keeping well ahead, but her driver realized she couldn't hold out too long, so on reaching Dodge Road, under cover of darkness, he pulled around the corner. Soon the big horse thundered by, puffing and snorting, being urged on by the driver. After they were well past, No. 1 man turned little

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Mollie back to Ellis Hollow Road and continued leisurely home. The other man nearly ran the hoofs off his steed, and never could understand why he couldn't catch the little horse.

Snyder Hill and Ellis Hollow were more closely associated in the early days than now. The Free Will Baptist Church on Snyder Hill was built in 1856. Several families, who were members and regular attendants of that church, also attended the afternoon service in the schoolhouse in Ellis Hollow. David Cornelius, a resident of Ellis Hollow, was deacon in the Snyder Hill Church, and over a long period was Sunday School Superintendent at Ellis Hollow.

My paternal grandfather, Wessels S. Middaugh, was one of the first deacons in the Snyder Hill Church. He came to this locality from Orange County, New York, in 1807, and settled on the farm now owned by Dr. John and Pauline Whitlock. He had a large family, mostly sons, who grew up and lived in Ellis Hollow, and in turn raised large families, making the name Middaugh quite a predominant one around Ellis Hollow in the later 1800's. But these descendants have all passed on or moved away, except myself, and now the name is only a memory.

My father and mother belonged to and always attended the Snyder Hill Church. Living halfway be-

tween, we youngsters were practically brought up in both churches. And go to church we did! A headache or a bellyache had to be accompanied by quite serious symptoms to be accepted as an excuse for staying home.

The services on Snyder Hill were long and tedious for small fry. Ministers were long-winded, sometimes preaching an hour and a half, and then there was a testimonial meeting and after that, Sunday School. Those testimonial meetings were for the members to stand and express their faith and note their blessings. We young sinners always knew that before one old deacon finished his testimony he would, with a shake of a stubby finger, admonish us with the fact that the "Devil comes around like a roarin' lion, seekin' whom he may devour."

The Genung and Slaughter families were also attendants of both churches.

Social activities were attended by both neighborhoods. The Ladies' Aid Society in each church was usually well represented by the visiting Society. There was a Literary Society in both communities. In winters a contest was carried on between the two societies. The one gaining the most points was given a supper by the losers. Points were acquired by new members and by entertainment such as book reviews,

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readings, essays, and musical selections. Donations for the churches, socials, and picnics were usually two-community affairs.

Rural schools were closed during the bad winter months, so days were rather tedious for youngsters. I think of the many ways vacationing children now have for amusement—radio, TV, and mothers with cars to transport them to outside activities—and I judge that those days of long ago would have been quite dull for children of today.

I passed some time at a neighbor's home, watching her piece quilts and cushions. She pieced all day long. Apparently, she didn't like housework, for I never saw the table, where the family ate, cleared, and large iron kettles that had cooked their meals were all on the floor around the stove. But she was a kindly, happy soul, and I am sure she was never "frustrated" as of today.

Another neighbor, where I whiled away some time, was a weaver of rag carpets and rugs. Her big, old loom had a great fascination for me. It was a great wonderment how she knew where and when to put in colors that made the pretty patterns when finished.

I left home one morning to go down and watch Nancy weave, but surprised my mother by returning very soon. Asked why I came right back, I explained that Nancy wasn't weaving that morning and I didn't like

the smell of her house. I was afraid Nancy hadn't let the cat out soon enough. After thinking this over, my mother had a good laugh, and said she guessed Nancy was making her salt-rising bread. I was glad the cat was exonerated, because I liked Nancy's cat, but I didn't think I'd like that bread.

I've often been asked what the young people did for fun in those days. There usually was some social activity in one community or the other about every week. And in winter, there was plenty to do: skating, riding downhill on sleds, and some dancing.

Fred Middaugh's pond was a great gathering place for skaters of all ages, especially afternoons and evenings. Bonfires all around the edge of the pond would light the pond by night. Now and then, a venturesome lad would break through the ice and would have to run a long way home in wet clothing.

A thrilling amusement was to wheedle a pair of farm bobsleighs, equipped with a high box, from a farmer. These the gang would have to push to the top of the hill at Monroe's corners, tie a handsled underneath the tongue, for the daredevil youngster of the gang to ride belly-gut and steer the bobsleighs down the road with twelve or fifteen fun-loving hoodlums in the box. Away down the hill we'd go, gathering enough momentum to take the load almost to the John J. Ellis place.

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Now and then there would be a kitchen dance with an old-time fiddler, usually "Happy Bill Daniels." If there was space, he sometimes would put on a dance that I think would almost rival the present-day "Twist," called the "Post Hole Swing." It was a fast, whirly dance and lots of fun, if everyone and his pardner knew how to dance it. How I wonder if there is anyone living today who danced to "Happy Bill's" band and calls, for whom this one would ring a bell—

"Lady swings out  
The Post Hole Swing,  
Join your hands  
And circle again."

There also were dances periodically at Slaterville Springs, in Lyme's Hall, which a number from Ellis Hollow attended. Almost always the music was by "Happy Bill" and his boys; sometimes just a piano was played by Charlotte Blakeslee of Ithaca, who could pound out more dance music from a piano than some orchestras.

Of course, there were a few private parties now and then, such as birthday celebrations for some kind friend for whom our "presents" were earnestly requested.

Some of the lads had bicycles to ride, and two had mustang ponies. One lad, riding his mustang, acquired the skill of throwing a lasso and roping farmers' calves

in the barnyards. This lad also acquired the name of being the "Devil" in the community.

There is a pleasant memory of being awakened in the wee small hours of the night to the rhythmic sound of galloping hoofs, mingled with the sweet God-given voice of a neighbor lad, next farm, singing:

"I had a yalla gal, I called Lowrena,  
And we courted 'neath the wild banana shade"

as he was returning from his own courting.

I guess these accountings mostly comprise the "fun for the old days" and the "memory lingers."

Friends tell me the story of Ellis Hollow would not be complete without a recounting of the spooky tales of the "Haunted House," the "Headless Horseman," and the "Pot of Gold." These tales center around the farmhouse on the place now owned by Mildred Schutt. This house burned down some years ago. It is authentic that a murder took place there. One of the men who committed the crime years later died in the County Home, after confessing the murder and telling of burying a pot of gold under a stump in the swamp below the place, but lost the markings of the stump and could never find it afterward.

The victim of the crime was an old peddler, who had always had lodgings at this place on his trips through

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Ellis Hollow. People in the valley became suspicious as time went on, from the fact that the old fellow's horse and cart remained there but no one ever saw the man.

Later on, a gang of farmers were pulling stumps on one of the swampy fields, and the man who lived in that house was among them. When they started to pull a big pine stump, this man said he couldn't work any longer; he had to go home for dinner. After he left, the stump was pulled and under it were found bones, which proved by examination at Cornell to be human bones. This, of course, increased suspicion of the farmer. But evidently, no one ever came to investigate the whereabouts of the old peddler. When the old man died with his confession, nothing was done, except for the many who searched for years for the "Pot of Gold."

Many spooky tales were concocted and they furnished food for many pranks by youngsters of the neighborhood.

Stories were told of a headless horseman, who rode through the dip in the road below this house. That soon acquired the name of "Spooky Hollow." Another hair-raising tale was of the skull rolling down through this hollow in advance of anyone traveling the road at night.

People who afterward lived in this house told of curious noises, groans coming from the old fireplace, and the old chain pump on the porch turning round

and round when no one was near it. My family lived in this house years after, when I was a teenager, but we never saw or heard anything that couldn't be explained.

This is one of the pranks that was played on a young man, who was courting a girl beyond this place, and who had to walk through Spooky Hollow on his way home. Some pranksters fashioned a man out of newspapers attached to wires which were operated by two members of the gang, who were in trees on each side of the road at the top of Spooky Hollow. The spook lay flat in the road until the young man was almost there; then they raised it up. I guess the poor fellow is still running.

The "Pot of Gold" has never been unearthed, although much prospecting has been done. One man, over on the Creek Road, whose pasture ran down into the swamp, thinking the men might have crossed Cascadilla Creek and buried it on his place, dug about ten acres over by hand in search for it. He went nutty in the process and died in Willard Asylum.

After the burning of Spooky Lodge, the stories died away, and the "Headless Horseman" and the "Pot of Gold" became just memories.

## Ellis Hollow Church

NOW I will tell you of the major event that occurred in Ellis Hollow, the building of our little church, back in the nineties.

No doubt, many living here now know that all religious services were held in the district schoolhouse in the early days. The little band of worshippers who gathered there were members of the Slaterville Springs Methodist Church, Oneida Conference, up to 1888. The minister on the Slaterville Springs appointment preached at another out-charge; therefore, the Ellis Hollow people could only have a minister alternate Sundays at 2:00 P.M.

The attendance for services had increased, and they began to want a weekly service, which they could have, if they transferred to Varna. In 1889, about twenty members withdrew from Slaterville and joined the Varna Methodist Church, New York Central Conference. Rev. M. J. Owen was pastor of that appointment at the time.

In 1893, a young minister, Rev. P. H. Riegel, was given the charge at Varna and Ellis Hollow. He was a very young, frail-looking chap, very ambitious, and

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sincere, and a fluent speaker. Ann H. Smith, youngest daughter of Major Peleg Ellis and living in the old Ellis homestead, was a great worker among this little band of Methodists, a very devout Christian, and deeply interested in the religious attitude of the community. It had long been her ambition for a church in Ellis Hollow. To this young pastor, she confided her desire, and he received her plan very enthusiastically. Together they worked and soon had recruits among the members for the project.

A meeting was called and committees were chosen for raising funds and planning the building. Mrs. Smith, having been left a small fortune by her husband, John M. Smith, pledged to give the building site from her farm, land that was cleared in pioneer days by her father, and also one thousand dollars toward erection of the church. The members and residents of the community round about, pledged their support of the plan, according to their means, in money and work, and soon the building was in progress. Much of the work was done by farmers, donating their time, and much sacrificing was done in giving money. It was a proud day for the people of Ellis Hollow when the church was completed and its doors were thrown open for its dedication.

A great disappointment had come to the members.

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The young pastor, who had done so much to promote the building of the church, had to be transferred from Varna before the church was ready to be dedicated. Rev. J. E. Showers was pastor at Varna and conducted the Dedication Services, in April 1896. The church was filled to capacity from all around the valley, and considerable money was raised through contributions that day.

I would like to record a short biography of Rev. P. H. Riegel, the young pastor whose work and endeavors with the people of the community did so much to promote the building of the church. After being transferred from Varna and Ellis Hollow, Reverend Riegel served at a number of churches in central New York. He was district superintendent of the Central New York Conference for fifteen years. Through twenty-one years of his ministry, he was a trustee of Cazenovia Seminary, Syracuse University, from which he graduated. He was given an honorary degree from there. Dr. Riegel died in Syracuse, in 1959, at the age of ninety-four. He had served as a Methodist minister for sixty-six years.

The church has had many ups and downs through the years. The good old Christians who worked so hard for its building have one by one passed on to their rewards. The inhabitants of the valley changed,

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and only a few remain today who remember the building and dedication, although there are still a few descendants of the old members, who have always lived here, "stemmed the tide," and carried on for its survival.

Many impressive services have been held here. Pretty weddings have been performed, old members have been carried in and out for last rites, and many, many baptisms of the younger generation have taken place at this altar.

In the early days, the regular service was at 2:00 P.M., as the minister preached at Varna at 11:00 A.M. For a period of years, there were midweek prayer meetings and Sunday evening services carried on by the members. There was a goodly attendance for Sunday School, and at one time an Epworth League group met.

Children's Day was a festive occasion. Youngsters would gather the day before, supervised by the ladies, and decorate the church attractively for the program presented by the Sunday School.

Now and then something would occur that would prevent having a minister for the service. This gave a welcome opportunity to one old member who loved to read us a sermon from his prized "Christian Advocate." This old man always chewed green tea instead of tobacco, and that, together with a mouth covered with

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whiskers, didn't present a very pleasing sight or audible delivery. On one of these occasions, a hot, sticky afternoon, well accompanied by Ellis Hollow Church flies, Henry held forth with his ready-made sermon. An old member, who was always in attendance, very hard of hearing, sat on the front seat, elbow on cane, and ear cupped to catch a few of Henry's muffled words. As the reader continued on and on, the congregation and good old Horton Hunt became very restless. At last, unable to endure longer, the old fellow belched out, "How much further you got to go?" No need to say that ended Henry's preaching that day, and ever after.

The only support of this church was by contributions of the few members, with limited incomes, and the endeavors of the Ladies' Aid Society, by public church suppers. The facilities for putting on a supper in the church were very poor. Water had to be brought in in cans, pews had to be removed and tables set up in the sanctuary. All cooking utensils and tools had to be brought in by the women. But regardless of all the handicaps, many a successful supper was held, and Ellis Hollow gained quite a reputation for good food.

The only commercial supper at present is our outdoor barbecue, also a hard project, but we think Ellis Hollow still retains its reputation for a good feed.

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One impressive service, which is a nice memory, was the dedication of the electric lights. When electricity became available in Ellis Hollow, need for it in the church was recognized for a long time. Installation was made by hard work donated at night by men in the community, who understood the work. The power for light, which enabled them to work at night, was donated by neighbors across the way—good Catholic friends.

When the work was completed, a service was planned for Sunday evening at six o'clock. A goodly congregation gathered. The District Superintendent, Rev. Sam Houghton, and the pastor, Rev. Orson Case, conducted the dedication ceremonies. As the lights were turned on, the hymn "Let the Lower Lights Be Burning" was sung by the congregation, and all concerned were very proud and happy.

A heart-rending event happened in the summer of 1951—a severe electric storm passed over Ellis Hollow and the church spire was struck. The fire was discovered by passers-by, and Dryden Fire Company arrived in time to prevent destruction of the church. There was insurance to cover the damage to the tower, and a canvass was made of the community to raise funds for painting the exterior of the church.

There have been many pastors over the years. One

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served Varna and Ellis Hollow sixteen years, a faithful soul, who experienced most discouraging times. He worked hard and prayed much, without results. The church was in one of its low ebbs and the congregation was almost extinct. He finally retired from the conference.

About this time, the District Superintendent and conference decided to transfer our appointment to Freeville. A young minister, Rev. Dean Hill, was on the Freeville charge at the time. Reverend Hill was well liked in our church and things began looking up. Some new residents of the community became interested in the church and the Sunday school, and their help was very encouraging.

But after a short period, another change came. Circumstances called our new workers away, and the assistance and fellowship of Dr. James Murphy and Mrs. Murphy and family and Mr. and Mrs. Myron Hawley and family were a badly felt loss. There are still pleasant memories of their association with our church. The community was greatly shocked last autumn to hear of the death of Dr. Murphy.

The church received the gift of an organ from Myron and Lena Cornelius. This instrument was rebuilt and refinished by Dana and Iva Van Pelt. The Ladies' Church Group had it electrified. We very much appre-

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ciate the organ music in our service—now we wish for a choir—can anyone oblige?

Rev. Dean Hill was transferred to greener pastures, and a young, newly ordained minister, Rev. Robert Kaiser, was appointed to Freeville and Ellis Hollow. Reverend Kaiser is a sincere, ambitious pastor and a great joy to the members at Ellis Hollow. His pleasing ways and good messages have increased our attendance and drawn youth into our church.

We also feel that our prayers, of over the years, have been answered. A goodly number of the new residents have joined our ranks, taking much interest and believing in the need of the rural church. We are very grateful for the help and fellowship.

We are very proud of our clean white church. This paint job was done by our male members, who sacrificed their own spare time and took over the hard and dangerous work of dressing up the church last summer.

We do not like to think of Reverend Kaiser's being inevitable. Members of Methodist Churches and ministers of the Methodist Conference have to school taken away from us, much as we know that it is themselves to the parting of the ways. If and when this time comes, we will send him away with our prayers and hope that our loss will be his gain.

## Today

THE growth of Ellis Hollow, in all directions, in homes and population, during the last two decades, has been astonishing. Since the beginning of 1900, there has been much shifting of residents—the passing of the older ones, as a natural course of events, and moving here and there of others.

Then a few people connected with Cornell University came into the locality, and soon others followed. As one newcomer phrased it, back in 1940, “Ellis Hollow is just discovered.”

All the old homes, that were once farmhouses, have been taken over and rehabilitated. Many of them were homes where I had lived, in my growing years, or were homes of relatives or old friends of my parents, where I had spent much time. It's been very heart-warming to see these places, owned now by people who have modernized them inside and relandscaped them, but most of them are left very much intact as to the exterior. And they are as much prized by the new owners as they were in bygone days.

As old places were taken over, demand for houses increased. Emmons Ogden, a born Ellis Hollowite

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and a lifer here, has built many new and beautiful houses in the heart of Ellis Hollow, and has recently opened a new development on what is known as Ellis Hollow South Road. This road has been called numerous names; in early days from old residents the most familiar one to me was the "John E. Bull Road."

Some new residences have been built on Hunt Hill Road. Thomas Road has had its growth of new homes. This road used to be called McMaster Road, from old residents living on the end overlooking Ellis Hollow. Good old Jim McMaster is remembered for his six-foot stature, his ready wit, and his pride in his beautiful game birds.

Ringwood Road has had growing pains that resulted in many houses built by Bud and Belva Cornelius. They also opened up a new section, on the Cornelius farm, called Ringwood Court, where they built a number of houses which are all occupied.

I would like to mention that the old home of David Cornelius remains the same as it was in my girlhood. I remember when the big red barn was built. This place has always been occupied by Myron Cornelius, the son of David Cornelius, who built the house many years ago.

Creek Road, used to be Back Road, got its growth in 1951, when New York State Electric and Gas Corpora-

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tion built a large plant and seven or eight nice houses for employees. Also other new houses have been built on over to Turkey Hill Road. We were glad to have these new neighbors at that time.

Recently, a new development has been opened up on the Genung Road, which promises to be a popular section of Ellis Hollow. The road leading to Ithaca, called Ellis Hollow Road, has been much built up and newly populated for more than two decades.

The Ellis Hollow Community Center had its birth in 1952. In 1940, School District No. 20 voted to send its pupils to Ithaca schools, and from that time on the little old Knowledge Box of Hibbard's Corners was idle. The land on which the building stood automatically reverted to the property of which it was originally a part. In 1949, it was voted by the district to sell the school building to the Earle DeMottes, the present owners of the land, for a token amount.

On January 30, 1952, five families of the Ellis Hollow area gathered to consider the possibility of making the one-room schoolhouse into a community center. In view of the rapidly growing population of the community, it seemed a worth-while idea to have a place where groups and organizations could meet. As the schoolhouse was rather centrally located, it seemed the logical use for it. The project was fully discussed

by the small group, for and against, and the final decision was for a community center; an annual budget of \$25.00 was suggested as an operational fund, thinking of possible contributions of fifty cents per family. The treasury was opened that night with \$2.50. Acquisition of additional land around the building was mentioned for athletic events, a ball diamond, and so on. Earle and Mabel DeMotte agreed to lease land to make this possible. The meeting adjourned with all agreeing they had launched a worth-while project.

Following this meeting and decision of this group, the tentative plans were presented to the next Home Bureau meeting and to the annual school meeting of the consolidated districts of the valley, where the interest and approval of both groups were received.

The first issue of the "Gazette" in early May 1952 noted that each family was asked to contribute \$1.00 to provide funds for repairs to the schoolhouse. Records report the receipt of \$92.50.

At this time, the men interested in the project had made the inspection of the building and rendered their recommendation for necessary repairs, including painting of interior and exterior, also clearing of grounds and preparing a ball diamond and parking lot. The first work bee was held May 17, 1952, under leadership of the late Kenneth Post, whose interest and energy will

always be remembered by those working with him. The success of that first work bee was due to the skill and talents of the men working and to the cooperation of the New York State Electric and Gas Corporation, with their equipment for preparing the grounds. A picnic was served at the finish by the Home Bureau group, on the lawn of the DeMotte home.

Additional funds were obtained by an auction sale of used articles, furniture, appliances, and farm tools, held on the Ag Campus of Cornell, in the judging pavilion. Approximately \$500 was received.

In October 1952 an organization meeting was held to elect officers and directors and adopt by-laws, preparatory for the incorporation of the center. The certificate of incorporation called for mutual assistance, enjoyment, and entertainment for the community and to promote educational, civic, and social welfare for adults and youth.

Much work was done during the fall and winter of 1952, to the exterior and interior of the building. Curtains were made and folding chairs, tables, and an oil heater added, making the center well equipped for operation. In June 1953 the annual meeting and work bee was held. A budget was prepared and voted upon for the ensuing year. To raise funds, a solicitation of the community was made, which resulted in a sizable

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sum and proved the readiness of the community to support the center.

To raise the balance, it was decided to have one big event—a Country Fair. This first fair, September 12, 1953, was so successful that it proved to be preferable to work through the year toward one big project than to conduct a number of money-raising drives. These fairs have increased in attendance and net results each year since the first one.

Much work is now done throughout the year in the preparation. Women meet to make skirts, aprons, and many fancy things for the booths; furniture and articles for the auction are stored, and many plans made leading up to this event.

This fair is unique because it is produced entirely by residents of the community. There is scarcely a family within the boundaries of Ellis Hollow but what pitches in, family strong, in some way, by contributions or to aid in the many chores required to make this event a success. Plants, flowers, and all kinds of vegetables are brought in from gardens round about.

Professor Watt Dimock and Mrs. Dimock are very generous with bulbs and perennial plants from their beautiful gardens, at their home on the Creek Road. This home has always had a great fascination for me, owing to schoolday memories of long ago. The old man

who lived there at the time was thought to be very wealthy in those days. We kids used to look over across the valley, as we walked to and from Hibbard's Corners school, and try to speculate, in our childhood minds, some way to obtain some of this old miser's fabulous wealth. Most of us had never seen him. It was told after his death that large amounts of bills, mildewed with age, were found in old almanacs. I don't know—we kids never found any of them.

Last year, while at the Fair, I stood for a few minutes watching and marveling at the unthinkable crowd, moving about from one booth to another in that small rectangle. As I heard the hullabaloo of the different activities, and from the auction platform came "Old John Whitlock's" warble of "A dollar I got, a dollar I got, who'll make it two?" (Dr. John knows why I gave him this title), my mind went back a long way. I saw that rectangle, a velvety green pasture, in one end a small flock of bleating sheep, waiting to be ducked into the deep pool at the end of the culvert by the owner of the farm and his helper, equipped with high rubber boots for their job. This was the annual spring sheep washing before shearing. For this, our teacher always gave a longer recess, so we could watch the operation. The tall willow trees along the creek were willow brush then, just large enough for a ten- or

twelve-year-old boy, with a sharp jackknife, to make a perfect willow whistle. All this in one lifetime. Demonstrating the progress of God and man.

Yes, the Ellis Hollow Fair has developed into a much publicized event. It seems to be a popular place for old and youngsters to pass away a few hours, and partake of the bargains—the eats, the fun and entertainment, and yak-yak with your friends and acquaintances, for the fair has the congeniality of a big family gathering.

Each year the Community Center has increased its activities, accommodating the meetings for youngsters and adults, regular arranged parties for High School, Junior High, and Elementary groups, and square-dance parties for adults. During the school year, a play school is conducted three mornings a week for a sizable enrollment, teachers supervising. All in all, that 1952 vision of a Community Center has become a very worth-while institution, in one decade.

It would be a difficult task to name anyone who has done more than another for this project. As I see it, it's been team work all along, and a very commendable job, for the community. And we do not forget those who did their bit, and then some, but have been called away to their reward. They will always be missed, not only for their work but for their fellowship.

## TODAY

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As one of the few remaining older ones of Ellis Hollow, and my forefathers, both maternal and paternal, having been among the very early settlers here, I very much appreciate the efforts of our residents of today, in keeping the community a good place to live.

## Closing

AND now my tale of Ellis Hollow is told. I have tried to answer most of the questions asked me of olden times and recount the way we lived it in the "used to be." My story is bound to receive some criticism, and no doubt some of it is prosy and uninteresting. If you find these spots—skip them—they are for the other fellow.

And to those who feel they have not wasted time in reading it, I thank you.

"String people along and you get to the end of your rope quicker," and this is it. Good Night.

A TRIBUTE TO MY CHURCH

Church of my girlhood, you regally stand,  
With open door and outstretched hand,  
Calling to worship, the faithful few,  
Whom God is prompting His will to do.

All through the valley, your spire gleams,  
Pointing to God from our worldly dreams,  
And even to those who enter not,  
Subconscious to them, you're a hallowed spot.

Each year you grow dearer to our hearts,  
For of each life you've been a part.  
You've reared our children, you've buried our dead,  
And succored hopes, that had well nigh fled.

God grant we may ever carry on  
The work of those forever gone,  
Faith of our fathers, Holy Faith,  
May we be true to you till death.

ZELLE MIDDAUGH PRITCHARD

ELLIS HOLLOW LORE

---

OLD HOME DAY SONG OF ELLIS HOLLOW, 1935

(The tune of Cornell Alma Mater)

Far away from noise and turmoil,  
In a little dell,  
Lies the vale of Ellis Hollow,  
Fair as tongue can tell.

Chorus:

Sing its praises, sing them loudly,  
Let the echoes ring  
O'er the hills and down the valleys,  
Sing, old playmate, sing.

Sing of days when cares were fewer,  
Hearts were lighter too,  
When we roamed o'er hill and meadow,  
'Neath the skies so blue.

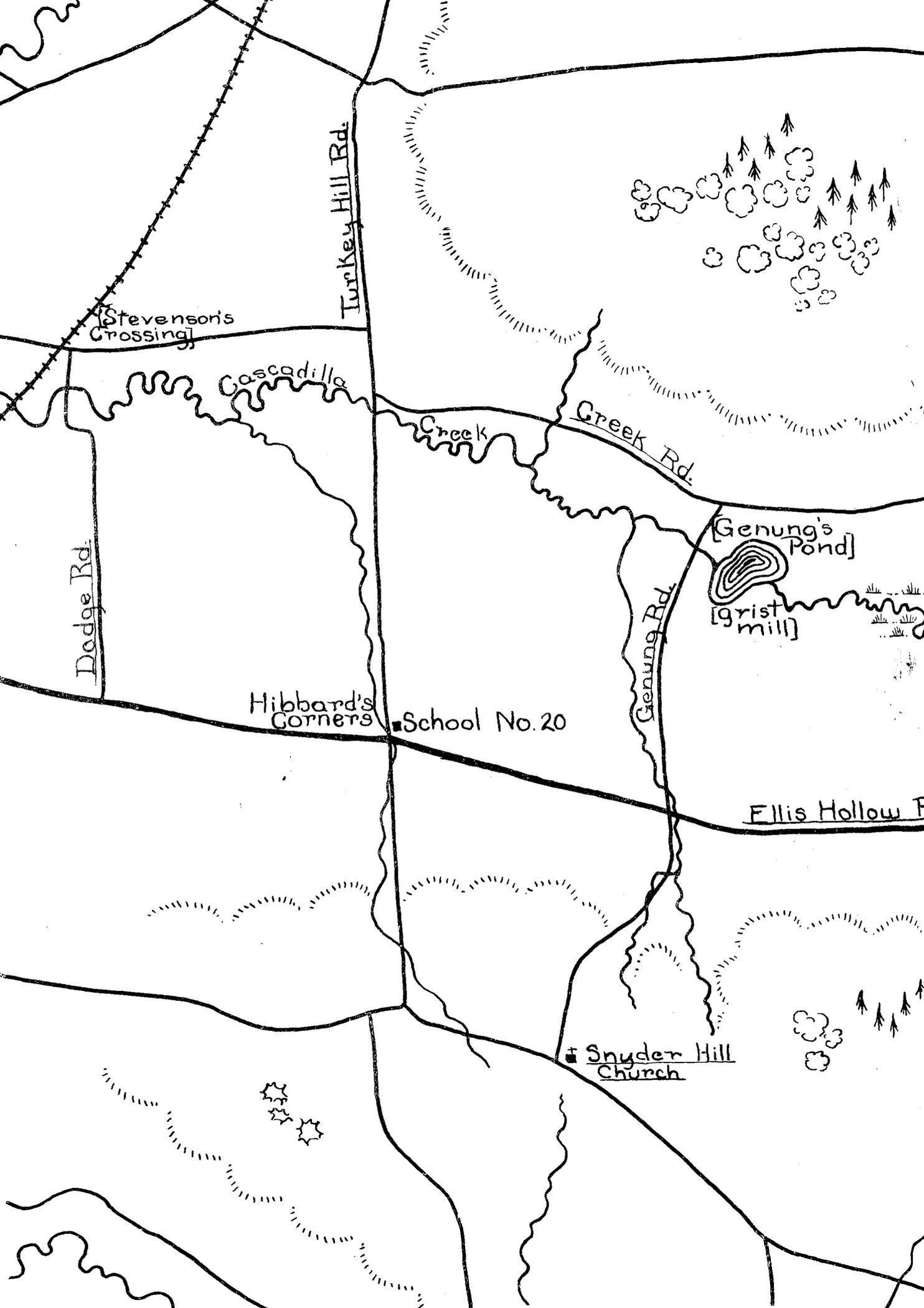
[Chorus repeated]

Many have gone out from this valley,  
Never to return,  
They are sleeping in some church yard,  
Still for them we yearn.

[Chorus repeated]

ZELLE MIDDAUGH PRITCHARD





Turkey Hill Rd.

Dodge Rd.

[Stevenson's Crossing]

Cascadilla

Creek

Creek Rd.

[Genung's Pond]

[grist mill]

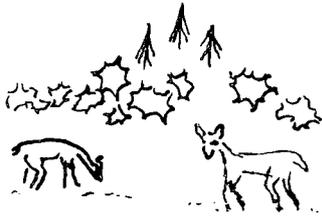
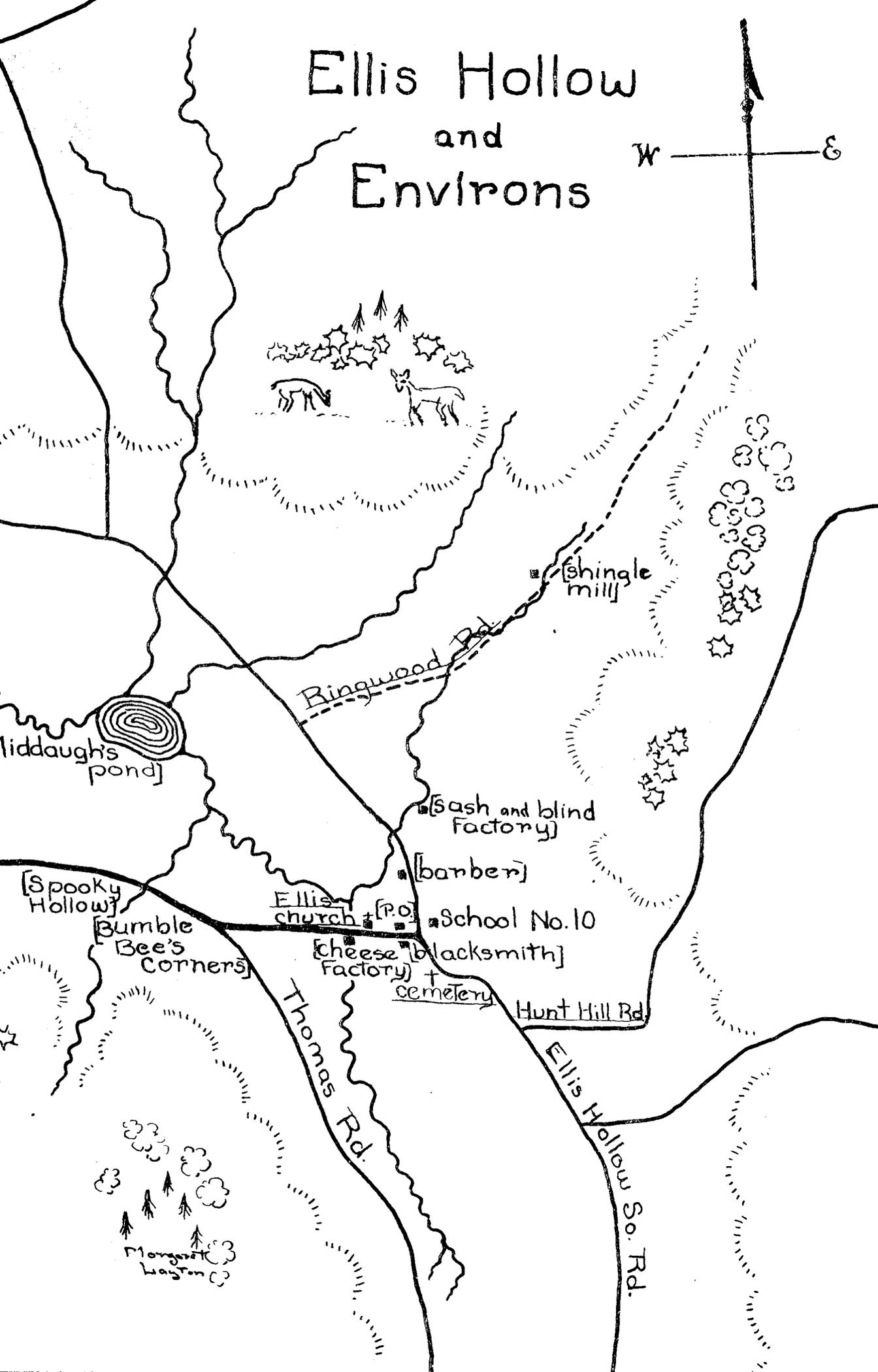
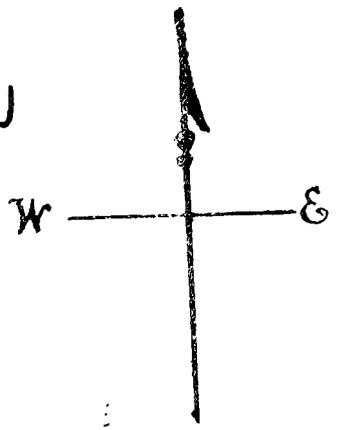
Hibbard's Corners School No. 20

Genung Rd.

Ellis Hollow P.

[Snyder Hill Church]

# Ellis Hollow and Environs



shingle mill

Ringwood Rd.

Liddaugh's pond

Sash and blind factory

barber

Spooky Hollow

Ellis church

Po

School No. 10

Bumble Bee's Corners

cheese factory + blacksmith + cemetery

Thomas Rd.

Hunt Hill Rd.

Ellis Hollow So. Rd.

