

HISTORY OF THE DENNIS FAMILY

In the year 1819 the late Jonathan Emigh with his wife and seven children left their home in Pough Keepsie, Dutchess County, New York, and came to make themselves a home in what was then a dense wilderness of Oxford County. We can only conjecture how they managed to communicate with the friends left behind, but one year later the late Robert Dennis with his wife and eight children undertook the same venture.

They travelled mostly on foot but made use of the Indian and his canoe whenever it was possible. The Dennis family crossed the Niagara River near Lewiston on a rope ferry, the horses being so frightened that the mother removed her blue home spun apron to cover their heads. They were offered a large tract of land, where the City of Brantford now stands, but refused to buy thinking the soil too light. They came on westward locating, the Emigh family on the farm owned at that time by Mr. A. Frain (now by Arthur Kelly) and the Dennis family on the farm now owned by a grand-daughter, Mrs. Wm. Fleming (now by Paul Fleming).

There was no covers for their heads until they could fell trees and lay up a log shanty. There were neither doors or windows. Bear and wolves were very plentiful. The wheat or corn was ground in a hollow scooped out of a hard wood stump worked with a spring pole which had a stone attached. Wild fruit was abundant and the maple trees gave sweet. Wild bees gave honey for all. Wild game came almost to the doors, turkey, geese, ducks, pigeons, deer etc.

They manufactured their own clothing from wool, when they could get it, and spun and wove flax.

The question is often asked, how are the families related. The mother of the late Robert Dennis was own sister to the late Jonathan Emigh, hence uncle and nephew.

We have before us a picture of what can be accomplished by patience and perseverance. We have no boast of millionaires yet a pauper of either name is unknown as far as this branch of family is concerned. With slight exception both families have always upheld liberal ideas.

In church relations the Baptist faith held an easy first. The Baptist Church at Burgesville stands as a living monument to the christian zeal of the early fathers among whom the Dennises and Emighs must be given a fore most place.

All honor to our noble dead and may the rising generations ever seek to emulate the example of those gone before.

As far relationship of the Dennis family to other outstanding families is concerned, that the following names are connected with the Dennises - Holmes, Sackrider, McLees, Woodrow. Also from records that have been traced back to two or three generations in Dutchess County, we find that Emighs and Nichols are also decedents of the Dennises. Other names are Motts and Tuttle. The Woodrows, Motts and Siples and some other older settlers came into the county as early as 1810.

The names of the sons and daughters of Robert Dennis and Eve Tanner are: Jarvis, William T., Platt, James, John, Henry, Maria, Hannah, Rachel and Emmaline.

We might mention that the farm where Cecil Dennis lives has been in the hands of the Dennises about 146 years and where Verne Dennis lives has been occupied over 100 years. When settlement was first made a block of 400 acres was bought from the crown (where Cecil and Paul Fleming now lives).

Typed by Mrs. Wilbur Morley - March 31st. 1966

Written by Stella Mott