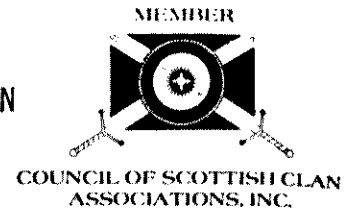




THE BULL'S EYE BULL-E-TIN



SPECIAL ISSUE
January, 1985

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL

In the pursuit of trying to acquaint the members with different facets of our general heritage, we are issuing this SPECIAL BONUS NEWSLETTER.

The funding for this project is through the generosity of three of our members who have contributed donations to be used where best needed. They would be embarrassed if they were to be named. So, on behalf of myself and the general membership I send love and a hearty thank you. It is hoped that all will think the money wisely spent.

The material for this article is the result of another coincidence. The newspaper article was mentioned in the Illinois St. Andrew Society Newsletter. My brother-in-law, Chuck Berk, lives in Peoria. Chuck was contacted, he retrieved that issue from the paper drive pile and sent it on to us.

Jerry Klein granted permission for reprinting his article. Letters were sent to Ben Parker, Rev. Gordon Page, minister of the Elmira United Presbyterian Church, and Monmouth College. Rev. Page was the only one kind enough to reply. He sent along the pages from the Centennial Booklet which pertains to the Turnbills only. The rest of the Booklet deals with family reunions, biographies of people not related to the Turnbills, and other information of that type.

Unfortunately, Elmira is a considerable distance from Mt. Prospect, so I have not had the opportunity to view some of the other items of historical interest displayed at the Stark County Historical Society in Toulon, Illinois. Nor to meet and thank Rev. Page in person.

It is hoped the members will respond to this saga as they have to the Dr. Andrew Turnbull, New Smyrna story. Anyone having knowledge they can add to this story please send it on for our files and perhaps a future follow-up article.

There was another coincidence which came about because of this pursuit. My sister-in-law, Helen Berk Sumerack, graduated from Monmouth College. Her room mate was a Margaret Ann Turnbull Blakey. They had lost touch with each other through the years, both have been advised of the others whereabouts.

It is understood that William Oliver, a poet, in 1837 visited the U.S. and published "EIGHT MONTHS IN ILLINOIS" issued at Newcastle 1843. If, and when, we locate this book, perhaps it will add more substance to this story.

NEWS FROM SCOTLAND - INTERNATIONAL GATHERING 1985

Myra has sent word that her committee has chosen the weekend May 31 - June 2, 1985 for the Turnbull Gathering. Details to follow later.

If the program follows the same pattern as in the past you will have much to look forward to.

ELMIRA

A silent remnant of the past

By JERRY KLEIN
of the Journal Star

A few miles due west of Bradford, Rt. 93 plunges into a countryside that is suddenly and strangely deserted. Advertising signs thin out and presently disappear altogether.

There are few houses or farms to be seen. The road, almost free of traffic, undulates across a gently rolling landscape that looks like Grant Wood country. It is an area hardly changed from the '30s in some ways.

This is one of those narrow roads of vintage concrete, tarred repeatedly over the years and designed for Model A Fords and square, chugging trucks. Now the cars that occasionally whine past are different, small, low, radial-tired, and it is television with Phil Donahue and Johnny Carson that washes across the land rather than radio with "Just Plain Bill" or "Our Gal Sunday."

But there is nevertheless an almost reflexive slowing down to an easier pace. Creeks and streams wander off into the distance, inviting exploration by anyone who was ever a kid and the woods seem untouched, pristine. The road dips and rises.

And there is Elmira, the only town on Route 93, standing solemn and ghostlike at the edge of fields still awaiting the bite of the spring plow.

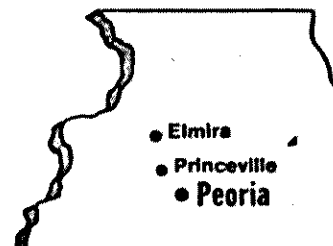
Not much here any more. A road sign and a quaint old school, long abandoned, thrusting its ornate belltower against the sky. A weathered shed, leaning perilously, like an old man with a bad knee. And across the highway the Elmira United Presbyterian

Church, Gordon Page, minister. Off in the distance, a late spring storm trails a dark veil of rain from lowering, black clouds, and a sudden shower dots the windshield. Over there, back of the church, is the small cemetery with its Montooths, Jacksons, McRaes and Armstrongs lying in neat, well-tended rows.

Not a real ghost town. Not yet. But rather a silent remnant of the past. A few houses with cars parked in their driveways, a steel building that used to be the high school, and not a soul in sight. Even the silence has an eerie, unreal ring. Most of the Scottish people who founded this little settlement in the middle of winter nearly 150 years ago are gone now, scattered through the little cemeteries nestled among the hills and ravines, or their descendants settled into Kewanee, Toulon, Peoria, or gone farther westward.

When the first of them arrived in February, 1838, this was the frontier, so remote and unsettled that 21 members of four families crowded into a 16 by 18 foot room in Elmira Township until spring. Most of these, the Olivers, Turnbulls and Rules, had spent six weeks on the ocean voyage from Scotland to Quebec, and another six weeks on the journey to Chicago, Joliet and the wilderness of Stark County.

The town dates from 1843 and it must have grown rapidly. There was coal here, and the rich black soil and these ambitious pioneers made the most of their new land. So progressive, and so pious were they that there were at one time five churches in Elmira, one of them known as the Knox Church



where one service a week was in Gaelic. It was supposedly the only such use of the language in the entire country.

The wooden school was built in 1867 at a cost of \$1,428. The town boasted its own 600-book library. There was a store, and an insurance company was formed here in 1876 — the Farmers Mutual Fire and Lightning Insurance Co. of Elmira. It is still in business, although its headquarters were moved to Toulon in 1920. It was originally meant as a kind of cooperative. If somebody had a fire or other disaster, everybody pitched in and helped pay for the damage. One claim was listed for \$3,000 for the dwelling and \$1,630 for the contents when the parsonage of Rev. C. H. Becker of Elmira burned.

The town had an inventor as well, James Armstrong, who patented a complex corn planter. A model of it is on display in the Stark County Historical Society headquarters in Toulon.

What happened to Elmira is a familiar story of the small town bypassed by railroads and progress. The Rock Island line brought prosperity and people into Wyoming and Toulon and Kewanee grew into an important manufacturing and trade center. Elmira and its Scotsmen declined little

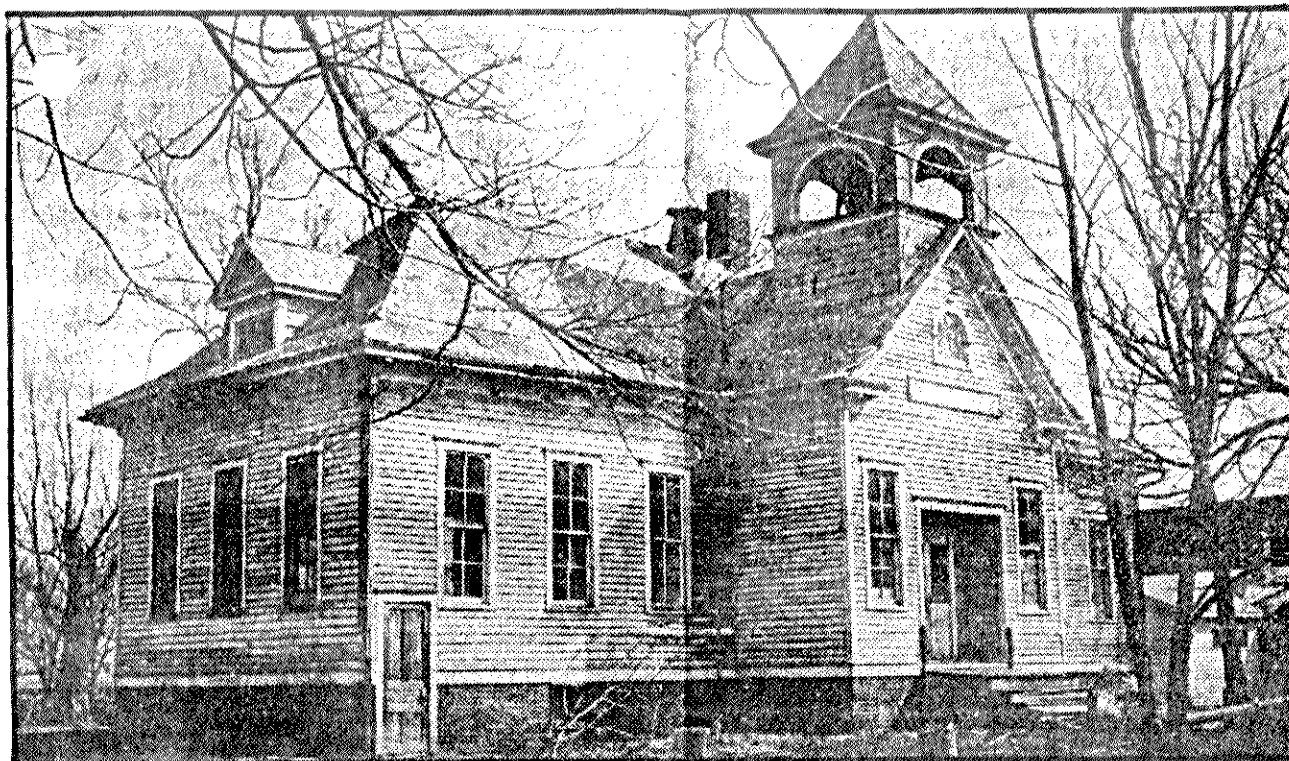
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THE PEGKIA JOURNAL STAR, INC.
1 News Plaza
Peoria, Illinois 61643

July 19, 1984

Dear Dorothy Turnbull Berk

You are most welcome, of course, to reprint my article on Elmira in your newsletter. Credit should, I suppose, be given to the Journal Star.



THE WEATHERED SCHOOL HOUSE IN ELMIRA BRINGS TO MIND THE '30S

by little. From what must have been a population of hundreds at its peak, it sank to about 76 in 1910 and in 1981, 50 people were still living here.

But there came one summer when the town came back to life, like the mythical Brigadoon. It was the centennial celebration marking the arrival of the first settlers who camped out in the bitter winter for a week while they staked out their claims. This was a two-day celebration in the long-ago, pre-war summer of 1938, when a festive pageant was held. There was a kiltie band from Rockford and the wail of the pipes across these now lonely hills and valleys must have aroused both sadness and passion. Dr. J. H. Grier, president of Monmouth College, delivered the major address. A booklet

commemorating the event was published, with poems and reminiscences. Then slowly, slowly, the little town slid into oblivion.

"There was a grocery store there until twelve, fifteen years ago," said Ben Parker of the Stark County Historical Society. "Then there wasn't enough business to keep it going. And the schools consolidated. The kids come to Toulon. When you take a school out of a community, it goes."

For a time, the metal school building was part of the Black Hawk East campus, but nothing much came of that and it is now empty. There remains a single street running off the highway, the elaborate wooden schoolhouse, the single remaining church and

the cemetery, whose first occupant dates from 1845.

And there are still a handful of people who are attracted to this serene, quiet life, which was celebrated by a poem written for the 1938 celebration by Luzette Fleming and Eva Turnbull. "I like to live in a little town.

"Where trees meet over the street,
"You wave your hand and say hello
"To everyone you meet."

And there was a heartfelt tribute by the Rev. John Weston who once served here. "Elmira was thousands of miles nearer to heaven than any other place."

The rest is a collection of memories, faded and buried now beneath the solid granite tombstones.

* * * * *

I am sorry I cannot supply you with more sources. Mine came solely from a visit to Elmira (actually two visits) and a stop at the Stark County Historical Society in Toulon, which has, among other things, a program from the 1938 celebration at Elmira. Ben Parker, who knows almost everything about the area, is most helpful in supplying information.

Sincerely,

Jerry Klein

My last program to be given in Scotland before coming home to be married was in Jedburgh, ancestral home of the Olivers. The chairman of the evening was the Lord Provost who introduced me as belonging to Jedburgh and referred to the Olivers as among the "Defenders of the Marches" (boundary line between England and Scotland) whose names are carved on the wall of the great library at near-by Abbotsford, Sir Walter Scott's home.

As a public speaker I have had unusually delightful experiences but I believe my greatest surprise and thrill came from the large audiences that continued to greet me in Elmira whenever I appeared. This I felt was not entirely due to my art, although I have always tried to apply to it, as to other things in life, the principles of honesty and sincerity taught me in childhood, but rather it was a tribute to the Oliver name as it was known in Elmira, Toulon and Kewanee.

Katherine Oliver McCoy, La Feria, Texas.

THE SETTLEMENT OF THE ELMIRA COMMUNITY

Breathes there a man man with soul so dead,
Who never to himself has said,
"This is my own, my native land,"
Whose heart bath ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he hath turned.
Sir Walter Scott.

I want you to go back with me 100 years and look at this community known as "The Spoon River Country," through the eyes of the first settlers. All you can see for miles is tall coarse grass, which in some places is tall enough to hide the oxen and wagons. In spots along the rivers are groves of trees which stand out like islands in a lake. The groves are clear of undergrowth, and it is to these the settler drives to establish his first home because they give him protection from the high winds and wood for his house and fire.

Your oxen team occasionally startles a deer which bounds away and almost any place you see beautiful prairie chickens. When one descends from the wagon, you must be careful because there are lots of snakes and quite a few of them are rattlesnakes.

For food one can gather plenty of strawberries and some wild plums, grapes and crab apples. And there is plenty of wild game, and fish in the streams.

As one drives along, if you look down in the valley, occasionally you see white bones of buffaloes which formerly roamed here, but due to the severe winter weather and coming in of the white man they have perished or moved on west.

The pioneer is glad to come across an "Indian trail" for he knows it is the easiest road and will lead him to a place to ford the streams.

The whole picture is one of wild scenic beauty and our forefathers set forth with a strong heart and brave courage to make their future wealth and culture. But with God in their hearts and His praises on their lips they were certain of victory.

It is hard for us in our life of luxury to realize fully all the suffering and sacrifice that was endured to give us this beautiful modern community of elegant houses and broad cultivated fields. Indeed, it is a far cry from the "split rail" fence of our forefathers to the "electric fence" of today.

The last of the Indians had left during the years of 1835-36. A treaty was made with them in Chicago in 1833 in which they signed away all their rights. So the next two or three years saw them all crowded out, and they crossed the river into Missouri. Illinois paid them their last annuity of \$150 in 1836.

The Indians who were here were the Pottawatomies who had drifted down from around Green Bay, Wisconsin. They were a peace loving tribe, but were dirty and lazy and have been compared to the gypsy of later years. The women planted their small crops and the men spent their time in hunting and horse trading. The nearest Blackhawk War came to us was what is now northern Henry and Bureau Counties. Here the men from this neighborhood joined with the other farmers and pushed them on north.

So with the Indians, as with the buffalo, deer and log cabin. They must move on to room for the march of civilization.

The postoffice was first established in 1837 in what is now Osceola and was named Elmira by the first postmaster, Oliver Whittaker, who had come from Tioga County, New York in 1837. When the office was moved in 1846 to the home of Myrtle Brace, the name was also moved.

The Village of Elmira might be said to date back to 1843 when Ambrose Fuller bought land in the southeast quarter of Section 20. It became the mecca of the Presbyterian and Methodist Christians. Churches were built, a school established, and a few settlers gathered around and the nucleus of the present village formed. As a necessity, a store was started in 1865, which also housed the post office that was formerly, from 1845 to this time, in the house of Mr. Myrtle Brace, just east of Elmira, now the home of Mrs. James E. Armstrong. The mail was brought from the Trading Post of Peoria by stage coach and four horses.

The church then, as today, was the heart and core of Elmira. In the early history there were four churches—United Presbyterian, Methodist Episcopal, Presbyterian and Knox, the last being unique in that they held two services, one in English and one in Gaelic. It is said to have been the only church in the United States having Gaelic services. Although in the early days of these churches they did not always see things in the same light, nevertheless, they were sincere and devoutly religious and they have left their imprint on the community. Even down to this day the people of Elmira have a genuineness and stability which is outstanding and is a direct result of their heritage. Today we find the grandsons and granddaughters of these pioneers working hand in hand under one church roof. Elmira without her church, would be like a body without a heart.

The land on which to build a school was donated by Clinton Fuller, and the first school was a red brick one. The directors were Clinton Fuller, Matthew Bell and Myrtle Brace. This school was replaced in 1867 by a wooden building at a cost of \$1,428.

One other thing that showed the character of the early settlers was the formation of "The Elmira Library Association." It was organized January 18, 1866 at the school house with Adam Oliver, President, and William Moffit Secretary. The library consisted of between five hundred and six hundred books, and it was one of the best selections in the district.

In order to better study the Bible, the "Elmira Bible Society" was organized June 24, 1857, with John Turnbull, President, Dr. Boardman, Treasurer and Myrtle Brace, Secretary. It remained active for a number of years but had disappeared by the close of the century.

The land for the "Elmira Cemetery" was also donated by Clinton Fuller, and it dates back to May 20, 1845, when Ambrose Fuller was buried there. The first cemetery for the community was in Osceola Grove, but when the one here was started several bodies were removed to Elmira, one being the mother of Uncle John Turnbull who died in 1843. The cemetery was not incorporated until October 3, 1882, with H. H. Oliver, President, Robert Grieve, Secretary, W. M. Fuller, Treasurer, and Daniel Moon, Sexton.

Many things that played a part in the early history of Elmira have disappeared but the "Farmers' Mutual Fire and Lightning Insurance Company of Elmira," which was organized September 20, 1876, is still in existence. The first officers were Robert Grieve, President, John Turnbull, Treasurer, and James Haswell, Secretary.

Elmira grew rapidly and by 1880 her business and professional circle consisted of Dr. E. R. Boardman, Clinton Fuller, General Store, J. F. Reul, school principal, William McBride, blacksmith, W. Henniger and Alex. Dose, carpenters, John Turnbull, Justice of the Peace, W. M. Fuller Township Clerk, W. H. Stires, painter, H. H. Oliver and William Jackson, large grain and cattle raisers, William Stevenson, plasterer and bricklayer, and George Meisner, shoemaker. In the neighborhood were the Oliver Coal Mines and throughout the district were some of the most practical farmers and stock growers in the State.

One cannot close a history of Elmira without mentioning the "Elmira Rifles" who were organized in 1861 under the leadership of Captain Charles Stuart. The people of Elmira Township raised \$700 to buy uniforms for the volunteers and pledged \$1,980 for the support of their families, some giving as much as \$200. The "Rifles" were the first to leave the County for the war and they made splendid soldiers.

This is an illustration of the way the people of Elmira work together on big issues, forgetting petty jealousy and working shoulder to shoulder for a common cause.

Any of your grandfathers or grandmothers will tell you that they had a lot more fun in those days than we have today with our motion pictures, radio and automobiles. They worked hard but did take time to play. The kirk's were filled every Sabbath, and there was also mid-week prayer meeting.

But for real fun and relaxation, they met in the school house for "Spelling Bees," and "Singing School." They met also in the homes and danced the quadrilles to squeaky fiddle music. The women gathered for rag sewing and spinning bees, and from reports of their chatter in Gaelic, for little pitchers have big ears you know, they must have gossiped in those days too!

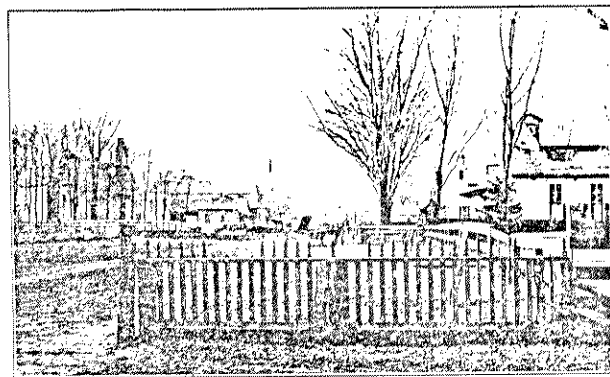
They fulfilled the fourth commandment, that six days shalt thou labor, but the seventh is a day of rest. They did only what was absolutely necessary on Sabbath. On Saturday they carried in all the kindling and the water, cooked the oatmeal, which was served cold the next day, shined their shoes and lined them up in readiness for church. Even the week's whistling had to be finished before Sabbath. Family worship on Sabbath morning was extra long and the knees got a little stiffer than usual from kneeling during the long prayer.

Our forefathers felt they were deeply indebted to divine providence. They came here for economical and religious freedom. They had received both, and they were indeed thankful for the bounty of nature and God.

This morning we have lived for a short while with those hardy pioneers. It all reads as a story to us in our modern life. Each of us in this generation should ask ourselves the question, "Are we doing the best we can with this heritage left with us?" We should thank them from the bottom of our hearts for all they have passed on to us and try in every way to live up to the splendid pattern they have set for us.

Mary Turnbull Catton,
June 26, 1938

ELMIRA CHURCH HISTORY



UNITED PRESBYTERIAN KNOX SCHOOL
PRESBYTERIAN PRESBYTERIAN
THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH WAS AT RIGHT OF SCHOOL

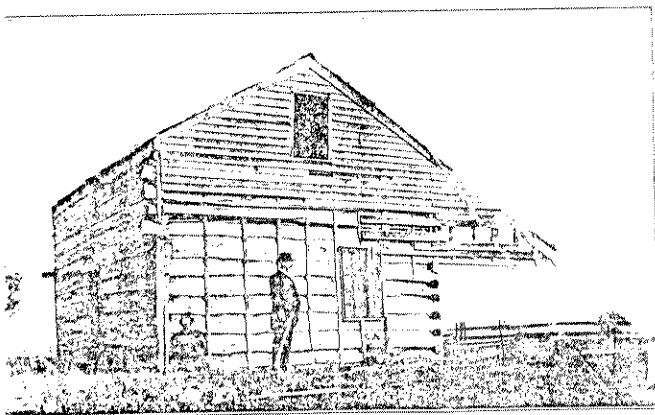
THREE OF THE CHURCHES IN ELMIRA IN THE 80'S

As we look back across the years and think about the "beginnings" around our little village of Elmira, we see several church spires peering out amid the green trees. As we look at them, we think that surely the old truth, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it," must have prevailed here among our forefathers. No doubt they often thought in those pioneer days of the "wee kirks" back in Bonny Scotland, where they worshipped before coming to this promising new country. Perhaps this memory guided them to set about soon after their arrival here, and plan a place where they might find strength and comfort to carry on against the adversities in settling this new land.

As some of the early pioneers chose wooded lands, and others the grassy prairie lands, we find the homes scattered over a wide territory. But they were a neighborly group and as they chatted together, or even when they chanced to meet, they quite often discussed their need of a spiritual leader. Thus it was, that on May 25th, 1839, the church people convened to consider the organization of a church, under either the New or Old School Rules. On June 8, 1839, they met again and organized the first Presbyterian church in Stark County. The record states that John Davis, a regularly ordained elder from Providence church in Tennessee, presided and received into fellowship Polly Davis, his wife, Margaret; Frances and Rosanna, his daughters Helen Brydons, widow of Robert Turnbull, Thomas Oliver and his wife Margaret, Robert Turnbull and his wife Margaret, John Turnbull and his wife Margaret, Calvin Winslow and his wife Betsy, William Parks and his wife Agnes, Mary Wiseman, Sarah Spencer, Hannah Pike, Hannah Fuller, Margaret Moore, and Adam Oliver, all on certificate.

In character, standing, and even in numbers, it was a strong church for that time, being a solemn compact of mature men and women to make their influence for good felt in this community.

William Parks, having been an ordained elder in Virginia, was elected with John Davis to serve as ruling elders. William Parks was also elected clerk of the session. Of the nineteen members fifteen voted for the Old School form and so the church was of that type.



THE FIRST HOUSE BUILT IN THE ELMIRA COMMUNITY

On October 27th, 1839, Liberty Stone and his wife Julia, were baptized and received into the communion of the church and in November, 1841, Betsy Oliver, Charlotte Oliver, Eliza Parks and Rebecca Currier were added to the number. The church in the wilderness kept growing until it soon had a membership of more than forty persons. There seems never to have been a resident pastor, but the names of R. B. Dobbins and W. J. Frazer appear as moderators in some of the first entries. Later, Rev. E. Scudder High seems to have presided at their business meetings and conducted services on Sabbaths. He was an interesting character, a bachelor who lived near Tiskilwa, and many amusing reminiscences of him were related by the old settlers. Coming a long distance to minister to them, he naturally made long visits and preached long sermons. One benevolent old gentleman, at another point in the county, was so moved by the evident weariness and discomfort of the little folks on these occasions that he provided himself with a large pan of "doughnuts" which he passed around about noon, to the great relief of the hungry children, and apparently without in the least attracting the attention of the reverend speaker or disturbing his line of thought, though we imagine many of the good church folk would have relished a bite, too.

Rev. Wm. F. Vail, a minister from Wethersfield, and for a long time, a missionary to the Indians in the west, labored at Osceola as early as the winter of 1837. While his name does not appear on the records, his appointments were part of the time at the old schoolhouse on the State Road, where later this church was organized. He, no doubt, was a "Congregationalist" and supported by "The Home Missionary Society," while this Osceola church was a true blue Presbyterian. The church continued to hold its sessions and services in the old school house for several years and was regularly represented in Presbytery and Synod up to 1850.

Owing to change of residence among its members and the deaths of others, it later disbanded. The first baptism was that of Robert Alexander Turnbull, born August 2nd, 1840, baptized Sept. 26th, 1840, and died January 10, 1841. There were forty-three members belonging between 1839 and August, 1855, when the records ceased. The exact location of this church could not be learned, though it is known to have been near a grove in or around Osceola.

However it had been the worshiping place for many of our pioneer forefathers, before the Scotch element withdrew to form a church of its own, west of the river, in our little village of Elmira. The remaining ones did not forsake their trust, but merged with other congregations. Some of the roots of our churches in Elmira were deeply embedded in this staunch Osceola church of the old school constitution. Yearnings for a church and services of their own kept growing in our new community, and so everyone rejoiced when, in the fall of 1849, Rev. N. C. Weede of Fairfield, now La Prairie, in Marshall Co., began to come over occasionally and preach to this group in Elmira.

On June 15th, 1850, by appointment of Presbytery, the persons interested, met in the Elmira School House, with Rev. N. C. Weede as moderator, and two ruling elders, James Ross and George Davidson, from his Fairfield church, and organized a congregation to be known by the name of The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Congregation of Osceola, in Stark County, Illinois, under the care of the First Associate Reformed Presbytery of Illinois. The following persons were received into the church that day by certificate: Robert Turnbull and his wife Margaret, John Turnbull and his wife Margaret, Robert Scott and his wife Helen, Henry Scott, Samuel Walker and his wife Elizabeth, William Turnbull and his wife Mary, and Charlotte Darby, the wife of James Darby, and by examination and public confession, Duncan Murchison and his wife Elizabeth, Alexander Rule, Robert Turnbull, (of Wm. Turnbull's family) and his wife Elizabeth, James Turnbull (of Wm. Turnbull's family) and his wife Ann, making a total of nineteen. Mr. Robert Turnbull, having been formerly a ruling elder in the Osceola Presbyterian church, was unanimously chosen by these members as ruling elder.

In October, 1852, the congregation voted to change its name from "The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of Osceola," to "The Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church of Elmira," to correspond with the Post Office.

For three years they met and worshipped in the Elmira school house, then at a meeting held at the home of John Turnbull, with Robert Rule, presiding and John Turnbull as Secretary, it was resolved that Finley Murchison, Wm. B. Turnbull, Robert Rule and Henry H. Oliver be a committee to locate a site on which to build a church. On December 24th, 1852, John Turnbull,

Robert Turnbull and Gideon Purdom were elected first trustees. A subscription paper was drawn up, to which sixty-five names were written, representing \$892.

In January 1853, the sum of twenty dollars was paid to Clinton Fuller for one acre of land, just east of his store, and a contract made with Isaac W. Searl to build a church, thirty feet by forty feet, for \$1,275. The foundation was built by Robert Nicholson.

In December, 1854, Thomas Turnbull, William Turnbull, and William Oliver were elected trustees.

In January, 1855, the seats were numbered and a price for renting adopted. At the same time some money was borrowed, two hundred dollars of which brought twenty per cent. The pew rent brought \$225.

On March 30, 1857, The Associate Presbyterian and Associate Reformed Presbyterian churches united as The United Presbyterian Church of America, thus the name of this church was changed in May 1858, to "The United Presbyterian church of Elmira, by which title it has since been known.

In 1860 the church was re-seated and painted under the supervision of Messrs. Graham, Oliver and Grieve. In 1861 pew rents were abolished and the church remodeled. About this time a church tax was raised by regular assessment, something like county taxes. This continued a few years until it gave place to voluntary contributions.

In January, 1879, a motion providing that the trustees procure substitutes for hats to take up the weekly collections, was adopted. The offering boxes purchased then, were used to take up the offering at the Centennial. They were queer oblong boxes about eight inches long by four inches wide and scarcely two inches deep, lined with velvet and had a round handle about thirty inches long from the end of each one. In the old days these handles enabled the ushers to reach all the people in each pew.

In 1881, the question of admitting organ music into the church was decided negatively by eleven for, to sixteen against. However, later, an organ was purchased and duly installed amid much confusion of tongues and some heart aches.

In January 1883, Robert Grieve, Maggie Rule and Janet Jackson were chosen as a committee to select books for a library in the Sabbath School and before long a library of four hundred volumes was established, affording much good reading for the community.

During the pastorate of Rev. John Montgomery, between the years of 1866 and 1873, the congregation purchased six acres of glebe land located in the north part of Elmira, and a commodious parsonage costing between two and three thousand dollars, was erected upon it. Rev. Montgomery moved into this house in the autumn of 1867. The house, although changed somewhat by remodeling, still stands, and is now the home of Mr. and Mrs. J. L. W. Fuller and family, being purchased by them after the federation when the church no longer needed it for a parsonage.

During the period in the 80's, while the congregation was worshipping in their neat and compact church building with its straight-back, narrow-seat pews and plain windows, they saw the need of a larger and better building, so the old building was sold to Peter Hyer and moved to his farm, now Robert Hyer's, to be used as a hay barn. You may see it there at the present time, one might add, as a home for "timothy." In 1893, the new church building was erected at a cost of \$3,500. Many new members came in about this time and the church prospered.

On Sabbath afternoon, December 9th, 1900, while Rev. W. J. Drew was pastor, the church building caught fire and burned down. The congregation soon made plans for rebuilding and work began. The beautiful new modern church costing \$4,500 was dedicated free of debt on October 13, 1901. This building, with modern improvements added from time to time, housed the Psalms-singing congregation until the federation of the two churches, the Presbyterian and the United Presbyterian in 1929. The federation decided to use the recently remodeled and larger Presbyterian church, so the United Presbyterian church was torn down. At present the congregation still owns the property just east of the Elmira store.

When the congregation moved into the new church building in 1893, they left behind some of their customs of pioneer days. One of these was their form of Communion Service. The arrangement of the new church made some of the changes necessary. They still kept the preparatory service on Saturday afternoon before Communion, at which tokens were given out. On Communion Sabbath a long narrow board, neatly covered with a white linen cloth

was to be found placed across the front of the church, with seats along one side of it. At the close of the sermon, Mr. William Oliver, the father of Dr. John H. Oliver, would rise and lead in the singing of a Psalm and the members would reverently walk up the aisle and take their seats at the table. When the seats were filled, the singing ceased and the minister (or elder) would lift the big pewter pitcher and fill the two pewter communion cups with the wine, and the cups would be passed along, each communicant partaking by taking a sip. The bread used was always the unleavened bread cut into small squares and covered with a linen cloth. Each communicant handed in his token from Saturday, as he went to the table. When this group had finished, Mr. Oliver again led the singing while the communicants took their seats and others came up to the table. This continued until all had partaken. The service closed with reverently singing a Psalm and prayer.

Although the table was not used in the new building, the large cups were used for some time before an individual communion service was purchased.

The United Presbyterian Church has been noted for its generous giving to Missions. The various organizations, The Ladies Missionary Society, The Young Peoples Society, Juniors and the Choir, have all had good records and many good workers grew up among members.

The Ministers follow:

Rev. N. C. Weede, installed June 15, 1850. Released April 8, 1857.
Rev. John M. Graham, installed Nov. 1, 1857. Released Sept. 1, 1865.
Rev. John H. Montgomery, installed Sept. 18, 1866. Released Apr. 1, 1873.
Rev. John M. Henderson, installed Dec. 31, 1873. Released Oct. 18, 1884.

And within the memory of many of us:

Rev. James Frank Ross,
Rev. James W. Drew,
Rev. J. Frank Reed,
Rev. Wm. S. MacDougall,
Rev. D. W. McQuiston,
Rev. W. L. Torrence,
Rev. J. A. Greer,

and Rev. A. N. Porter, who was stated supply when we federated in 1929.

And now we must go back several years, for while all this was going on, other churches had sprung up in our wee village, and they all helped to make the history of our community.

Before the year 1856, there was a group of fifty or more persons in Elmira and the surrounding country who could get very little out of an English service, although most of them understood English and spoke it haltingly.

Because the English speaking folks of the community appreciated the great privileges of regular church worship, they felt sorry for any one deprived of such worship and set about finding a way to have the gospel preached to them in their own tongue. The only place from which to get ministers who could give the message in both English and Gaelic was Canada, so in 1856 a group of these Scotch families united to apply to the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada for a minister who could preach in both Gaelic and English. Rev. Duncan McDermid was sent to them for two Sabbaths after which they were without a supply for several years. In 1862, Gaelic speaking ministers from Canada began coming again, and among them were Rev. Adam McKay, Rev. Lochlin Cameron and Rev. Forbes. In 1864 the congregation applied to be received into the Presbyterian Church of Canada so he became the first pastor. Other pastors recorded were Rev. Neil McDermid, Rev. Miller and Rev. Baker. The first elders were James Armstrong, John McLennan and Donald McDonald.

The first services of this Gaelic church were held in the homes of the members or in the Methodist Episcopal Church until 1866, when the record of the first meeting in the Gaelic and English meeting house was made. In July, 1868, the records speak of it as the Knox Gaelic Church for the first time. This church was about thirty by forty feet, plainly built, with a squat steeple, large old-fashioned comfortable pews, a hall-way with an entrance to right and left, while the middle section contained the Sabbath School Library and a seat or two for mothers with crying babies. Coal stoves were on the right and left sides. There was no organ used but instead the congre-

gation sang with a precentor. Little John Murchison seems to have been the one who served most of the time. A funny story is told about one of these song services. One Sunday when the United Presbyterians had no services, Rev. and Mrs. Weede, at that time way up in years and quite deaf, came into the Gaelic church and sat up on the front seat. At the close of the service the minister announced that they would sing a certain Psalm beginning with the 54th verse and singing six verses. There were seventy-two verses in the Psalm. Now Rev. and Mrs. Weede loved to sing and just threw back their heads and let the old Psalm ring out. When the congregation had sung the six verses, Little John closed his book in readiness for the benediction, but the songsters on the front seat had not heard the minister announce six verses and without waiting for much of a breath-intake, started out on the next verse. Little John quickly caught up with them and sang one more verse, again closing his book, but not so the visiting singers. They led the singing through to the end of the Psalm all eighteen verses.

These sturdy Scotchmen made much of their church services. Their Sabbath School was at 9:30 o'clock. The English sermon at eleven and the Gaelic service at twelve o'clock. Wednesday evening was always Prayer Meeting night. Communion was very special occasions. They really began on Thursday preceding Communion Sabbath which was always "Fast day," when very simple meals were served. On Saturday at the preparatory service tokens were given out and taken by the elders or minister as the communicants filed past them on their way to the communion table. After the sermon everyone joined in singing the one hundred third Psalm, while the places were filled at the table, much like the United Presbyterians did. The Psalm continued until others filled the places and all were served. On Mondays after Communion everyone attended a Thanksgiving Service at the church.

The greater part of the members had names with a Highland ring to them like MacDonald, McLennan, McRae and many others.

Some of our older residents today remember attending this church when they were small children and being allowed to skip across the road to get a drink between services from the "Old Oaken Bucket" at Clinton Fullers. Usually these children were allowed to play outside during the services in Gaelic. Sometime during the 80's the church was disbanded, its members going to the other churches in the community and the building, later, was wrecked and the lumber sold.

The establishment of the Knox Gaelic church brought a bit of unique history to Elmira, for it is thought to be the only place in the United States where services were conducted in Gaelic.

At this same time our community had several families of Methodists. Before 1859, the Fullers, Clarks, Ferris, and Hudsons were the only ones, and they were members of the Osceola church. Then Rev. W. J. Smith held revival meetings and many others joined them. Application was made to Wethersfield circuit for membership and they were admitted.

About the same time Osceola and Saxon Methodist churches were established about equal distances east and west, on the state road between three and four miles from Elmira.

On March 7, 1859, a meeting was held to consider the question of building a church. Rev. Wm. Smith presided and W. M. Fuller acted as secretary. Mr. John M. Clark and W. M. Fuller were appointed a committee on land, and Elisha Clark and Matthew Bell as a building committee. Everyone went to work with a will. The church built on a half acre of land donated by M. G. Brace, and located just east of the Elmira schoolhouse, was completed and dedicated that fall.

The Methodists were good workers and kept their building in fine shape, but their church being located in a strong Presbyterian community, ceased to exist when weakened by removal of members. The building was sold and the proceeds given to the Toulon Methodist church. The building later burned down.

In writing this history of churches in Elmira we feel it would not be complete without mentioning The Cumberland Church. While not located in Elmira its nearness made attendance possible for many of the early families around Elmira.

Records of this church seem to be lost, so the following is put together from references and reminiscences of some of the older residents of our community.

The Cumberland Presbyterian Church, better known as the Mound Church, from its location near the Mound southeast of Elmira, existed at

the same time as the closing years of the Osceola Presbyterian church and the beginnings of others in Elmira. Its membership included many of the families that lived nearby, the Funk, Fowler, Hepperly, Holmes, Norris, Blanchard, Fleming, Tuttle and other families. The church was located on the east side of the road leading from the Mound School to Earnest Jacksons and near the Jackson corner, while the parsonage was midway at the cluster of trees still standing.

The church was the typical long low building mostly used in those days with windows on the sides and the door in the front end. The pulpit was at the back end and above it the chimney, with a stove pipe coming out from it that divided into two parts and ran down to the two stoves, one on either side of the church. One of our older residents, in describing it to me, remarked: "Well do I remember the night that the lightning struck the church, ran down those stove pipes, leaving burned streaks on the walls on each side." The pews were the straight back narrow seat type that did their best to keep one from going to sleep in church.

During 1868 and 1869 a Mr. Charles Foster from Bradford came over and conducted a singing school in the church building and many were the enjoyable evenings spent there. Since entertainment was scarce in those days, the early settlers thoroughly enjoyed every opportunity to be together for a social evening.

Rev. Mr. Taylor is known to have preached there at one time and the last regular minister, Rev. Mr. Baker, who with his wife and two children lived in the parsonage and ministered to the people for some time. Later visiting ministers came occasionally and sometimes services were held there by the Baptists from Modena.

Just previous to 1880 a number of families who did not feel at home in any of the churches in Elmira, formed a Sabbath School, whose meetings were held in the Methodist church building through courtesy of the trustees. Under the leadership of its Superintendent, Abel Armstrong, the school flourished and attendance increased. After a few months the older people felt encouraged to apply for preaching supplies. Through conference with Rev. John Weston of Peoria, Rev. T. G. Scott of Galesburg was engaged to preach each alternate Sabbath until the next presbytery meeting. By this time it seemed wise to apply for admittance into Peoria Presbytery. On May 8, 1881, The Presbyterian Church of Elmira was formally organized by a committee consisting of Rev. John Weston and Rev. F. G. Scott, ministers, and Alexander Milroy, an elder. Twenty-two persons were examined at their own request according to the usages of the Presbyterian Church and thus became the charter members of the church. They were Abel Armstrong, George Armstrong, Robert Armstrong, Mrs. Jane Armstrong, Mrs. Catherine Scott, Mary Oliver, Addie Stevenson, Daniel Dodd, Mrs. Mary Buchanan, Mrs. Mary McRae, Mary Adams, Mrs. Annie Armstrong, William Beattie, Mrs. Elizabeth Oliver, Mrs. Christina Stevenson, Carrie Stevenson, Mrs. Irene Dodd, Alexander Buchanan, Rebecca McRae and Ovanda Beaver. Abel Armstrong and George Rutherford were elected ruling elders.

Rev. Weston conducted the organization and preached the sermon. Only two of those charter members remain today, Ovanda Beaver of Castleton, and Alexander Buchanan, now past his four score years, who lives near Elmira and attends our services regularly, quite often walking to and from church.

In December, 1881, it was resolved at a congregational meeting to build a church. The following persons were elected an executive committee: John Armstrong, Joseph Chapman, Robert Armstrong, George Armstrong, William Beattie, George Holmes, Alexander Buchanan, John Hindmarsh, Henry Scott, William Stevenson, James Cinnamon, John G. Turnbull, Daniel Dodd and John Fowler.

Clinton Fuller kindly offered to donate a suitable plot of ground and his offer was gratefully accepted. Various committees worked faithfully and soon the church building was completed. On December 15, 1882, the first congregational meeting was held in the new church. The building at that time consisted of what is the main part of the church today. A manse was built soon afterward on the road west from the church.

Many fine and worthy leaders have appeared among the pastors here. During Rev. Dr. A. S. C. Clarke's pastorate the church was remodeled and more suitably arranged for its work. Also during his stay a noticeable increase in gifts to both home and foreign missions was seen. Dr. William Hiram Foulkes, ex-moderator of the Presbyterian church, had this church as his first pastorate. During his stay here he took advantage of a scholarship

and spent six months in Scotland, leaving his work here in charge of Rev. D. G. Stouffer. During Rev. C. H. Becker's pastorate the church was remodeled and the kitchen added, among various other improvements.

The Presbyterian church has always worked for the best interests of the community. It has a well organized Sabbath School and Missionary Society, a good church attendance and the work of the various organizations has been noteworthy. From its membership several have gone into active christian service: Miss Sibella Rutherford as a home missionary to Manual School in Albuquerque, New Mexico; George A. Armstrong to Ichowtu, China, who was supported by the home church during his nine years there; and Miss Amelia Buchanan, a member of the church, who is working under the Faith Mission in Central Africa.

The following ministers have served the Presbyterian church: Rev. T. G. Scott, Rev. John Weston, Rev. A. S. C. Clark, Rev. William Hiram Foulkes, Rev. W. I. Alexander, Rev. E. H. Thias, Rev. Charles G. Sterling, Rev. P. A. Munneke and Rev. O. Harrison Becker.

In recent years the church people of Elmira thought much about forming a federation. It seemed the wise thing to do and so in 1929, deciding more good might thereby be accomplished in the community, the two remaining churches, The United Presbyterian and The Presbyterian were federated, neither church having an installed pastor at the time. Soon Rev. D. H. Decherd was chosen as our leader. Rev. and Mrs. Decherd accomplished much during their stay here, before going as missionaries to Syria. Rev. F. G. Pratt has been our minister since then, until his resignation last month. His sincere efforts have been felt over the wide territory comprising the membership of the church. The church is the center of everything and our community reaches out in all directions far as the homes of its members. Our choir has been loyal and faithful and deserves worthy mention.

We almost wish that by some magic we could make the poem: "Backward, Turn Backward, Oh, Time, In Your Flight," come true. We should like, as we celebrate our one hundred anniversary to let those fine staunch, old pioneer forefathers of ours have a glimpse of our community today. Its churches all banded together under one roof, working for the good of the community, meetings made easy to attend regardless of weather, as every home has a gravel road from it, while many are fortunate enough to live on the cement road that carries a busy line of traffic through our little village. The Aerial Beacon beside the road just east of Elmira continually flashing a guiding light to the planes above, reminds me of one of our fine Scotchmen who said: to him that beacon was a constant reminder of "Let The Lower Lights Be Burning." So may we of today let our lights that had such a splendid beginning one hundred years ago, keep on shining and our community keep on growing.

Mrs. Eva Elliott Turnbull.

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For much of this information I am indebted to the reminiscences of several of the older residents of our community and to the following: Historical Sketches by Mr. W. H. Jackson and Mrs. E. J. Jackson. History of Stark County by M. A. Leeson. Stark County and Its Pioneers by Mrs. E. H. Shallenberger. Church Records.

THE TURNBULL CLAN



MR. AND MRS. JOHN TURNBULL

Let us go now to the Hills of Bonnie Scotland in the year 1300. King Robert Bruce was out hunting, and he was attacked by a wild bull and thrown from his horse. A Knight stepped from the crowd, threw himself between the King and the bull, and with great strength grasped the bull by the horns, threw it to the ground and killed it. The King was very thankful, and calling the man to him said, "What is your name?" The man said, "My name is Roule." The King said, "Henceforth you shall not be known by the name Roule, but by the name Turnbull, and I endow thee with great wealth." So goes the story of the origin of the name Turnbull, and there is a record of land being granted by King Robert Bruce to one William Turnbull in 1315, and he is presumed to be the one who saved the King's life.

The name, Turnbull, was first found in Scotch history in 1300. It is also found in various forms of Trunbull, Trubles, Turnball and Trubly.

Families of this name were found at early dates, not only in Scotland, but in English Counties of York and London, and were of the landed gentry and hunters of Great Britain. And records show them fighting in British wars as far back as the fifteenth century.

One of the first of the names in America is William Turnbull, who came from Scotland in 1770 and settled in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. His two brothers came five years later and settled in Virginia.

Among the Turnbells who fought in the Revolutionary War is found a Captain Stephen of Virginia, and Brevet Major Charles of Pennsylvania.

Then as now, one finds the names John, Walter, James, Thomas, Edward, William, Robert and Charles, the favorite names of the Turnbells.

The Turnbells, as well as all Scotch people, have been noted for their energy, industry, piety, perseverance, fortitude, courage and loyalty.

From this stock comes the man we are interested in today, better known to us as Uncle Johnnie Turnbull. He was born in Roxburghshire, Scotland (on the southern border), November 23, 1806. His father, Robert Turnbull, after being discharged from the British army, married Ellen Brydon and engaged in farming in Scotland. Starting at the tender age of eight and one half years, Uncle Johnnie served as cowherd for eight years for Thomas Stuart. He then took charge of a flock of sheep, and in 1826 removed to Loch Carron, Ross-shire, where he was shepherd for Adam Scott until coming to

America. On February 22, 1833, he married Margaret, daughter of Thomas and Margaret Oliver.

On June 14, 1837, he, his wife, his mother, his brother Robert, his wife and their family, Thomas Oliver, his wife and their family, Robert Rule and James Graham, set sail for America. Arriving at Quebec after six weeks at sea, all except Robert Turnbull, his wife and their family and his mother, journeyed up the St. Lawrence River, then across the country to Niagara Falls, thence Buffalo, New York. Finding the only passenger boat at the wharf under quarantine, they took an old schooner bound for Chicago.

They were all very curious about America, and as they passed some of the islands the men would wade ashore in quest of discoveries. Once they found a few potatoes growing and some vines like nothing they had ever seen, bearing gigantic fruit which they wanted to taste. As there was no sign of life and the food on the schooner was very poor they thought it would be no mortal sin to help themselves. Back on the schooner they all tasted the new fruit which proved very disappointing. It was a green pumpkin.

When they reached Chicago they found it to be a low, sandy flat, with here and there a cheap dwelling or warehouse, and thought the Americans must be short of land on which to build a city.

From Chicago, they went to Joliet where they found two vacant cabins; the neighbors told them to "move right in" which they gladly did. They cut the prairie grass which gave them clean beds and food for their two cows which they had bought from passing drovers.

Leaving his family here, on January 1, 1838, Uncle Johnnie started out with a man by the name of Parker who owned patents on Government land, to find his future home. Mr. Parker went on horse-back and Uncle Johnnie afoot, knowing very vaguely where they were to meet but somewhere near Wyoming. After much hardship and suffering from the severe winter he met his man, but being somewhat skeptical of the government man he finally bought 140 acres from the Lyle family in the Osceola Grove, with the option to buy more. Later he bought the 160 acres known to us as the George Boardman farm which lies 1/2-mile northeast of Elmira, from the Government by paying \$25 Squatter's Rights. He chose this land because its hills reminded him of Scotland and was desirable for sheep raising.

He trudged back to Joliet and with Adam and Andrew Oliver rigged up an ox sled and two half broken steers and set forth in 20° below zero weather for their new home.

One must mention here the pluck of the women. Despite the cold weather of mid February and the pleadings of the neighbors, his wife insisted upon going on with the men and wouldn't hear of staying behind. And on February 14, 1838, they arrived safely at the Lyle cabin. The rest of the winter eight Lyles and thirteen Turnbells and Olivers lived in a 16' x 18' cabin, and they succeeded in doing it harmoniously, which certainly speaks well for them.

Having no vegetables, meat or bread, they lived on boiled corn and milk from their one black cow. But that summer their crops were splendid and in the fall they bought a hog, and now that they had bacon to add to their menu they considered themselves very well fed, indeed. Thus, passed the first year in America.

Uncle Johnnie took pride in the fact that his first vote was cast for Henry Clay. "I lost it," he said, "But he was a grand old man." He served Elmira as Justice of the Peace for over thirty years and Supervisor for three years, and was a school director for several years. He was an original member of the United Presbyterian Church of Elmira.

In 1839 he was listed as having an assessed value of personal property amounting to two hundred and three dollars.

In 1840 he was among the six who had built homes on the west side of Spoon River, of whom the others were: Thomas Oliver, Myrtle Brace, Ambrose Fuller, Henry White and Alfred Woodward.

He and his wife had no children of their own, but his nephew, William B. Turnbull, and her brother, Henry Oliver, lived with them for years, and they reared the following orphans: Lusetta Woodward, Jane, Thomas, Anna and William Rule, and Mary and Mattie Phelan.

His brother Robert came to Stark County in the winter of 1838-39. He bought land about one mile east of Elmira, now the Orville Murray farm, and lived there until his death November 23, 1874, at the age of seventy-five years.



UNCLE JOHNNIE TURNBULL

WM. TURNBULL

Among his children were William B. Thomas, John G., Sophia, and Helen born in Scotland, Robert, James, Adam and George after coming to America.

Another brother, William, who was a shepherd in Scotland, left Glasgow in 1849 with his wife, Mary Harvey, and their children, Robert, George, James, John H. Alexander, William T. Thomas, Ellen, Elizabeth, Margaret and Stephana, and came to Quebec, thence to Chicago and by canal to Peru, Illinois. From La Salle, Robert and James walked across the country to Stark County. The others went on to Chillicothe and were there met by Uncle Johnnie and one of the Olivers who conveyed them to their new home.

He purchased 160 acres of wild land one and one-half miles north of Elmira, which is the present home of David and Mary Ellen Turnbull, and with his sons soon built a snug house, part of which still stands, showing its hand-hewn beams, broke the land and established a splendid farm for his family. He died July 12, 1882 at the age of eight-five years.

Another brother about whom we were able to gather a little information was Frank, who fought in the decisive battle of Waterloo.

The Turnbulls prospered well and today one finds them in all parts of the United States and even in Canada. They have an inherited liking for the soil because the majority of them still follow the life work of their forefathers—farming and stock raising.

We should mention some of the early settlers who helped our pioneers. The Buswells, Halls, Lyles, Parks, Seeleys, Sturms, Spencers, Winslows and

Whittakers who lived east of Spoon River were always willing to lend a helping hand by giving aid in any way possible.

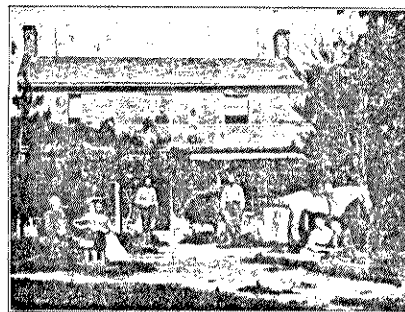
I am indebted to the oldest Turnbull living in this community, Adam Turnbull, for much of my local information. His memory is unusually keen and he can recall many interesting happenings of those early days. It is an inspiration to hear him tell of their joys and trials in making this one of the garden spots of the country.

Mary Turnbull Catton,
June 26, 1938.

Chicago, Illinois.

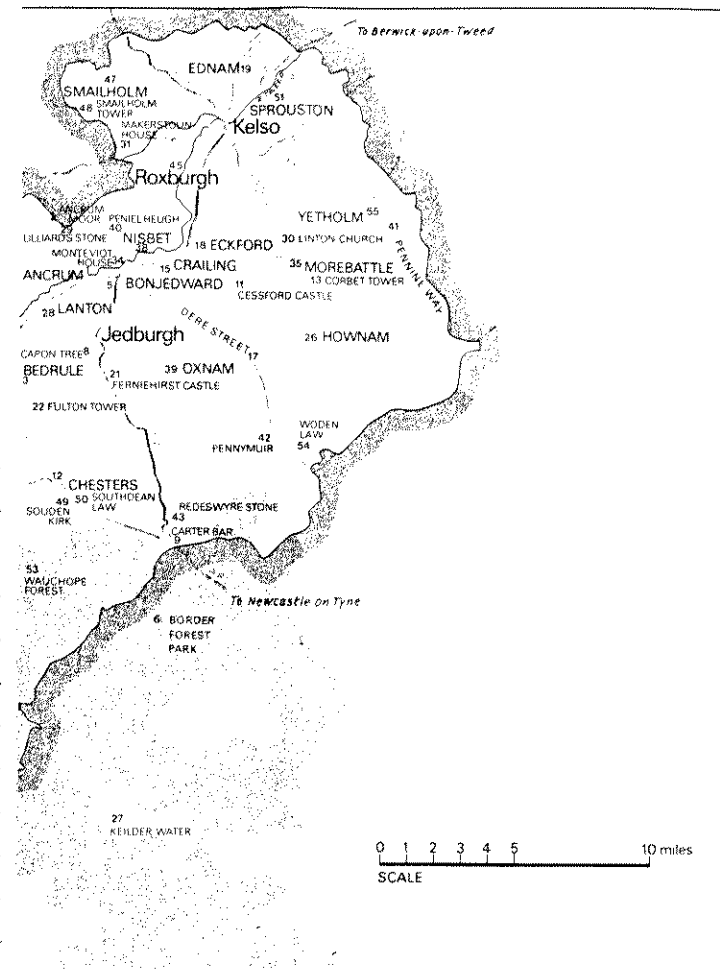
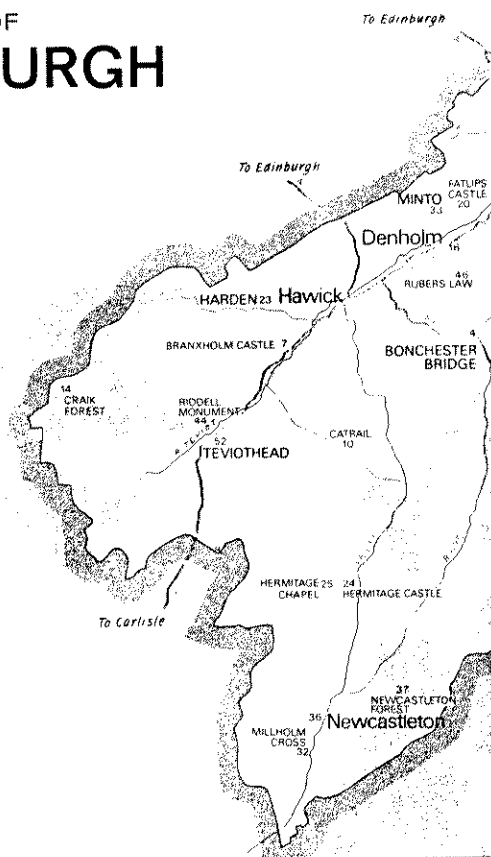
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Am also indebted to Miss Maud Earhart, Hopkinton, Iowa.



THE "OLD BRICK" RESIDENCE OF JOHN TURNBULL

DISTRICT OF ROXBURGH



0 1 2 3 4 5 10 miles
SCALE