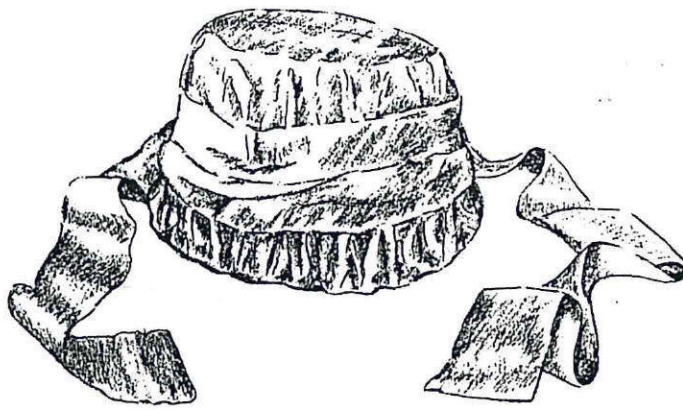


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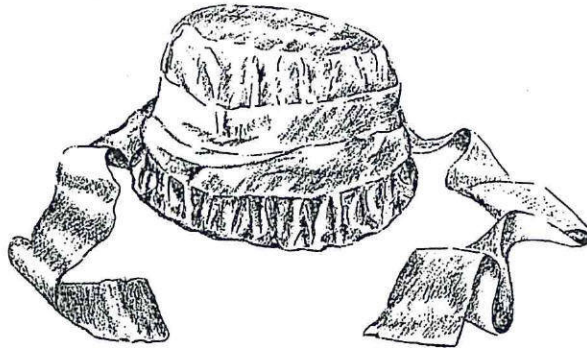


*Elma M. Starr*



Elmer and Elma Starr with their first child, Francis, around the end of 1916.

# CONTENTED



*Elma M. Starr*

1989

Edited by Francis Starr, Stuart S. Starr and Christopher K. Starr.

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Printed by Raven Rocks Press

## Preface

The document you are holding is the memoirs of Elma McGrew Starr (1890-1985), together with supplementary materials regarding her life and character. The memoirs themselves were written at the request of members of her family and are printed primarily with this readership in mind. However, they also contain much of significance in the study of religious and regional history. In particular, her life and public concerns were closely tied up with the Society of Friends (Quakers) in Ohio and southern Ontario. We have tried, without making these memoirs any less personal, to edit and expand them in such a way as to make them more accessible to readers outside of her immediate family and friends.

*The Editors*

The McGrew family  
at home about 1914.  
Standing: (l-r):Anna,  
Edith, Elma, and  
Caroline. Seated:  
Gilbert, and Eliza.



The McGrew sisters,  
presumably around  
1910-1912. Clock-  
wise from upper  
left: Caroline, Anna,  
Elma and Edith.

Below left: Elmer Starr at the age of 21.

Below right: Elma McGrew at about the age of 24.



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## Contented

Centered in contentment and circled with thankfulness to my dear Heavenly Father and His son Jesus Christ on my Earth-to-Heaven journey of over 90 years, I pray for divine guidance recording the facts of my experiences and truths of my faith.

The suggestion to do this came from son Francis, in his letter of Seventh-month 1st, 1980: "Mother, for some time I have been thinking of asking thee to write a testament, or statement, or set of principles to distribute to thy descendents." Later grandson Christopher wrote to me in support of his father's suggestion, emphasizing that my statement should be a record of both the "external and internal events" of my life.

I was both honored and humbled by such an encouragement from these dear ones and freely accepted the challenge. After much prayerful thought that night a clear inspiration came to me of just what I should write. I did not then begin to write it, though, and in the morning the inspiration had left me. After further prayerful thought in the daytime I set down "faith in the Heavenly Father and Son and the gift of Their spirit" as the guiding principle.

I have read that "parents should share their deepest thoughts with their children" and have been pondering what I can remember from my earliest years. My twin sister Edith and I were born Ninth-month 21st, 1890 near Harrisville, Ohio. Our parents were Gilbert and Eliza (Hall) McGrew. My earliest recollection is that when 4½ years old I stood on a chair by the dining room cupboard and reached for an orange which I had seen put there. It was something new to me. Grandmother Hall, hearing me, came from the kitchen. She replaced the forbidden fruit, saying, "It is for thy mother." She gently led me to a chair by my mother, then in bed with my baby sister. I do not remember any punishment.

I may have had a natural inclination to climb, and perhaps to meddle, for my next remembrance is of standing on a chair to touch the bright reflector behind the coal oil lamp on the kitchen wall. The reflector fell and broke. Mother gently helped me down and gathered



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I may have had a natural inclination to climb, and perhaps to meddle, for my next remembrance is of standing on a chair to touch the bright reflector behind the coal oil lamp on the kitchen wall. The reflector fell and broke. Mother gently helped me down and gathered

up the pieces and said, "We will show them to father." I loved my father, but had a heavy heart until he came and I showed him the pieces. A gentle caution from my parents *not to meddle* was the only punishment.

A family routine was for us to all sit still a bit before meals. After breakfast father read from the Bible as we again sat still in our chairs. Then he frequently knelt in prayer, as often did a visiting Minister. This practice at home was a good preparation for regular twice-weekly attendance at meeting for worship. We became accustomed to sit still without entertainment. Sisters Anna and Caroline sat with mother on the women's side of the meeting room, Edith and I with father on the men's side. Sometimes we laid over on his lap and had a nap. I do not remember ever being bored with the silence.

Ida Binns often spoke in meeting. Once her message was "Discouragement is the work of the Evil One," another time it was "The Spirit of God is quick and powerful." Asa Branson, who sat in the top bench of the gallery on the men's side, once said, "I can tell by looking in your eyes if you are worshipping." I thought, "I'll shut my eyes so Asa can't see them." He was very hard of hearing and used an ear-trumpet. Once he was seen pumping water into it and, on being asked why, he said that he had "heard a bad word and was washing it out."

Once when older I secretly questioned, "Am I a Christian?" and "What does it mean to be a Christian?" When I asked mother what Friends believed about baptism she answered, "When thee is older thee will understand." That did not satisfy me, then or later. I felt she should have told me what she thought. Years later in my reading I found the same question much discussed and answered to my satisfaction. Thankfully, I now realize that all my life I have truly desired to know and to follow Jesus, and often I have been blest with a small measure of consciousness of His presence and guidance in various situations.

Edith and I learned the alphabet from capital letters in the Bible at 1st of the chapters. Mother had been a teacher and taught us words and short sentences, as well as numbers and the multiplication tables. She made books for us and set copies for us to learn to write. Penmanship was her specialty.

The summer that Edith and I were 8 years old, Mabel Cameron came to live with us and with our horse and buggy took us the 1½ miles to "Science Knob" Friends School, on a hilltop north of Har-

risville meeting house. Fourth-day evenings she asked us all to memorize passages of scripture. Next morning, after her usual Bible reading, we each stood and recited our verses and then by turns read a chapter from the Bible.

At about 10:30 on Fifth-day mornings we walked behind the teacher to the nearby meeting house, for meeting. The younger children sat with their parents, the older girls with our teacher, the older boys together on the men's side. After meeting we quietly returned to the school house and had mental arithmetic before lunch time. We ate our lunches as we sat at our desks, unless weather favored picnicking in the yard or a nearby wood-land. Teacher often read from an interesting book while we ate. At all times we were expected to behave properly.

About 1900 the school house was moved south and put nearer the Meeting House, near a big oak tree, and called "Lone Oak School." Uncle Samuel Hall moved it with his equipment of big horse-drawn wooden rollers under the house. I watched it being done.

When I was appointed president of our "Students League" literary society, Mother wrote for me an inaugural address with the theme "It is said, 'He who does the best he can, can do no better.' I trust you will not view my mistakes with a critic's eye, but will pass them by."

Once when Edith and I were walking up the hill to school, cousin Albert Ashton came along on his horse. He pulled up beside a stump and from it we climbed on behind him, but we soon slid off onto the frozen ground. We were not hurt. After he tied the horse in a Meeting House shed, he came back and walked to school with us.

Our parents read to us from Friends books or other books about such famous people as Abraham Lincoln and Francis Willard. They also subscribed to the periodicals "Scattered Seeds" "Bird Lore" and "Dumb Animals" for us. Each week we each kept lists of the different kinds of birds we saw. One summer I had 55 on my list. First day morning we eagerly tried to see who would see the first one. Usually it was a cat bird, which had a nest in a tree in the yard.

The top of an old, discarded carriage was our play house. Boards with bricks between them were our cupboard for bits of old dishes. We each had a pet lamb and fed it milk from a bottle. We also had little brown bantam chickens. I liked to milk cows.

Dock and Miranda Wooden were Negro neighbors. She had been a laundress in Cleveland, and we girls took father's white shirts to her to iron stiff bosoms. She had interesting things up the winding stairs

in their log cabin which she liked to show us. Jock and Becky Hill were our other neighbors. From a hole in a hill of our farm he dug coal for us. She came to help with our washing.

The 1st day of school for sister Caroline, we four girls walked over the hill to the south of our house, wearing pretty blue figured calico dresses, all alike and made at home or by our Aunt Caroline Binns.

By 1902 Father was ready to retire from the farm, so Mother and I outlined our desire for a new house.\* This was taken to Robert Sears, an architect in Flushing, Ohio, to perfect. Land was bought from Grandmother Hall near our Meeting House and on the Harrisville Adena Pike. A contractor built upon the cement blocks that father and our hired man, Labe Morlan, had laid. Before the house was all done, Aunt Lizzie McGrew and we four girls moved in, so as to be near the school. The "Sunset Views" house was ready for the family by New Year 1904.

That winter Grandmother Hall was confined to bed. She and Aunt Caroline lived in the east part of the old Hall house. One evening it was thought Grandmother was quite low, so we all went down to see her. She soon died, and Uncle Samuel went for Tabitha Hall to lay out the body. The funeral was held in the Hall parlor, and we all attended the burial in our Harrisville Friends graveyard. Aunt Caroline continued to live in that home, but helped out in Uncle Samuel's and Uncle Joseph's and our home in the area, especially with the sewing of our dresses. She later remarried.

On the north side of our old farm was a deep hollow with a small creek on smooth stones. We girls liked to go there. On a hillside near it was a small tract of land we had bought. Here was a berry patch. Mother, riding side saddle on a horse, and we girls walking, picked berries and brought them back to the house. There were maple trees there too, which Father tapped. Sitting by the open grate fire in the winter, he made spiles from elderberry stalks. These he drove into holes in these trees to catch the sap dripping into wooden buckets. On a stone boat, drawn by a horse, was a wooden barrel for the sap. This was hauled near the house and boiled in a big iron pot hanging from a wooden tripod. The partly boiled sap was then boiled down

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\* This remark is especially revealing and probably means exactly what it says. In a recent letter, Elma Starr's younger sister, Caroline M. Stanley, remarks that Elma was consistently the leader among the four sisters, including her twin, and that the other sisters "liked to have her as leader."

further to syrup on the kitchen stove. Once Mother poured hot sap into a large stone crock and it broke, so that the sap poured out in the floor. She was very sorry, because Father had worked hard for it.

On the twins' 12th birthday, Ninth-month 21st, 1902, Grandmother and Auntie and Uncle Samuel's and Uncle Joseph's families came to our place to dinner. Uncle Joseph's family had recently returned from California and brought us presents and I think they also brought oranges—very rare then.

Father was not a carpenter, but he made a little wooden sled for us to slide down from the chicken house to the north porch past a very big Seckel pear tree. Mother wanted us to learn other people's ways of doing housework, so we often helped in other houses. When I helped Aunt Anna prepare for corn-cutters' supper she gave me 5 cents. When older I received \$3 per week. For three years I was agent for Templin seeds from Calla, Ohio. In 1905 my pay was a 30 piece set of pretty red flowered dishes which was a pleasure to put in an empty cupboard. A 1907 letter from them states: "It is our pleasure to advise you that through your efforts, which we heartily appreciate, you were successful in securing one of 30 prizes of \$6 each in our department. Thank you for the work you have done. We solicit your cooperation and influence in the future." Later pay was in cash, with which I bought bonnets. In 1910 I took a correspondence course in sewing and helped in other homes, especially with children's clothes. Once I lodged at Aunt Elizabeth Stratton's home at Winona and sewed for Mary C. Steer and Emily Satterthwait. For the latter I cut 2 pieces for the same part and there was not material for another piece, a real problem. I do not know now how it was solved, but the dress got made.

After I had been making girls' bonnets for a while, a big black one, the kind women wore, was given me to repair. As I could not get it done properly, I took it to Lizzie Pickitt of Barnesville to do it and teach me how. Later Rachel W. Hall, a specialist in bonnet-work, came from Philadelphia to visit us. She gave me further instruction, and I later inherited her tools and supplies.

From my remembrances of storms, one which I experienced at our McGrew "Sunset Views" home stands out. On Sixth-month 6th, 1906 at 6 p.m. I heard a roaring sound and saw through the window a whirling cloud with straw in it. It ran down a row of apple trees, throwing them right and left, went east about a mile, where it hit a high, steep hill and went up in the air.

The spring of 1907 Edith and I entered Olney Friends Boarding School\* at Barnesville, Ohio. There were 24 pupils. Our cousin Benjamin Thomas was principal, Howard Brinton† and Emma Tabott were the other teachers, and William and Dorothy Ashton were superintendents.

Skating on the school pond was a joy. Big boys helped inexperienced girls to learn. Louis Kirk kindly helped me. "Cousin meetings" in the collection room were once a week. Harlan Webster of Columbus, Ohio, was not really a cousin of mine but we liked to meet. After school was out, "walking to the station" in pairs was common. He asked to accompany me to Tacoma Station. I said I'd be wearing my bonnet, so maybe he would not like that. He did not object. The girls were expected to wear our bonnets to Meetings for worship at nearby Stillwater Meeting, also the once a term we went to town. Harlan came to visit me at our home once, but Mother discouraged our further friendship, since he was a city boy and I from the farm.

The summer of 1911 I attended the Normal School at Scio, Ohio, traveling from Adena by train boarding with Thomas Mooney and wife and walking half a mile to college. I enjoyed the teachers and pupils and received a grade of "A." I paid \$8 for my tuition for two months.

When at Canada Yearly Meeting at Pickering, Ontario in 1903 mother was interested that the children of Norwich, Ontario had school in their parents' homes, so she helped to raise money for a schoolhouse there. I was later accepted as a teacher in that same school, beginning in the fall of 1911. On Ninth-month 4th I took the train from Adena to Cleveland, then I took a trolley car to St. Luke's hospital to see nurse Almeda Hall, once my favorite teacher at Harrisville Friends School. After a short visit, she brought me back to the trolley stop. She told me that when on a sidewalk I should keep on the outside of it in good light. With my bonnet and carrying bag, I would be considered a Red Cross worker and not likely be molested. After leaving the trolley and thinking I must have walked far enough,

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\* A high school run by the Ohio Yearly Meeting, founded in 1837 and attended by about half of Elmer and Elma Starr's descendants. The name was recently changed to Olney Friends School.

† Howard H. Brinton (1884-1973) was a leading scholar of Quakerism in North America.

I stopped at a corner store, where men were sitting at counter. I was told I was on the right way to the wharf for the Port Stanley Steamer. I decided I had been at a bar. On the lake steamer I had the upper bunk in a cabin. The lady in the lower bunk was a nurse and good company. On landing I took a trolley to the steam car depot, where I got my ticket to Woodstock. There I took a hack to Norwich where Joseph Clayton met me. My trunk was not there, but I was assured it would come on the next boat, and it did.

I lodged at the Clayton house during my stay at Norwich, though I boarded around a week at a time at each of my pupils' homes, and the children took care of my lunch box. This lessened each home's pay to me, which was altogether \$200 per year. My mother wrote that she prayed for me the night of my trip. During the 1912 vacation I got a railroad ticket from Norwich to Adena to see my mother before she and Esther Fowler left for Esther's religious visit to the British Isles. This was soon after the Titanic sank, but Mother enjoyed the ocean voyage on the sister ship of the Titanic.

I had gone via Windsor and Detroit but returned via Sarnia, Ontario. It was interesting going through the curving tunnel under the Detroit river. The new Norwich Friends school house was built on the Clayton farm near a large elm tree with 3 big limbs so we called it "Tri Elms School." There were 15 pupils, in all grades. I was not familiar with "Canadian Authorized" textbooks and so had to study the lessons before going to school. I called on the area school inspector to invite him to visit our school and was very pleased when he accepted the invitation.

Each week I wrote a verse or proverb on the blackboard to be memorized and recited in concert. Later I was asked why I wrote, "Hitch your wagon to a star." I replied that that was before I knew one with two *rs*. During Canada Yearly Meeting in 1912 I first met Elmer Starr of Newmarket, Ontario. Later his aunt Emma Pollard invited him, and me also, to their home near Norwich. After that we corresponded. At the end of my second year as a teacher I resigned, feeling it was not best for my attentions to be divided. I loved all the Norwich Friends, and they insisted I stay longer.

In my diary I find the following moving entry on Seventh-month 9th, 1914: "Yesterday, the anniversary of my dear Elmer's and my engagement, a retrospect of the past year, of our love—experiences



and our courtship was much with me. Perfect was the day, perfect were the twilight and evening, so too was the night, the slumbering earth crowned with twinkling, sparkling, starry dome. At an unknown hour I knelt before my open window to view the wonders of God's beautiful night, when one speck of light took its flight from the southern to the western part of the sky, drawing out or leaving a purest white streak in its train. Then all star and train, in their perfection, vanished. A more perfect shooting star I had never witnessed. The mystery—how I should happen to arise and be at the window looking in the right direction all at exactly the right moment—remains with me as surely intended for a lesson from God alone to this very small speck on His earth. While pondering on the vision, desiring that my mind might enable to grasp the intended message, the thought came to me as all about me was quiet, this is an emblem of our love this past year. Such a perfect shooting star must symbolize the spark of love, the train—so closely connected—symbolizing its growth and effects."

With \$30 of my teaching money I bought a sewing machine and made my wedding clothes and some for sister Edith. In Fourth-month 1915 Elmer and I "passed meeting" in Short Creek Monthly Meeting at Colerain, Ohio. My parents accompanied us to both men's and women's meetings to say, "We continue our intentions of marriage with each other." Each clerk then read the meeting's minute of "approval of the marriage," since no obstructions appeared. And in each meeting two Friends were appointed "to see that good order at the marriage and reception was observed." The date for our wedding had been given and approved. We had asked Elmer's sister Evelyn and cousin Alfred Starr and my sister Edith and cousin Edgar McGrew to be attendants at our wedding in the Harrisville Meeting House at 10:00 a.m. on Fourth-month 29th, 1915.

Elmer's parents and his aunt Hannah Starr and uncle John and aunt Lizzie Rowland had come the evening before and lodged in the neighborhood. Uncle John remarked that Elmer "could have found several wives near home." Coming through U.S. Customs, Aunt Lizzie sat upon their wedding present of silverware, so that it passed unnoticed.

Uncle Jesse Edgerton read the certificate, which was then signed in witness by our parents and 61 others. There were 66 present at dinner. Father and Mother Starr stayed at the McGrew home that night. Elmer and I went by train to Tunessasa, New York, next day,

and the next day on to Newmarket, where we stayed that night with Father and Mother Starr. The following day we moved into the little house which was to be our home for 58 years. Elmer again helped his father and Elroy and two hired hands on the farm.

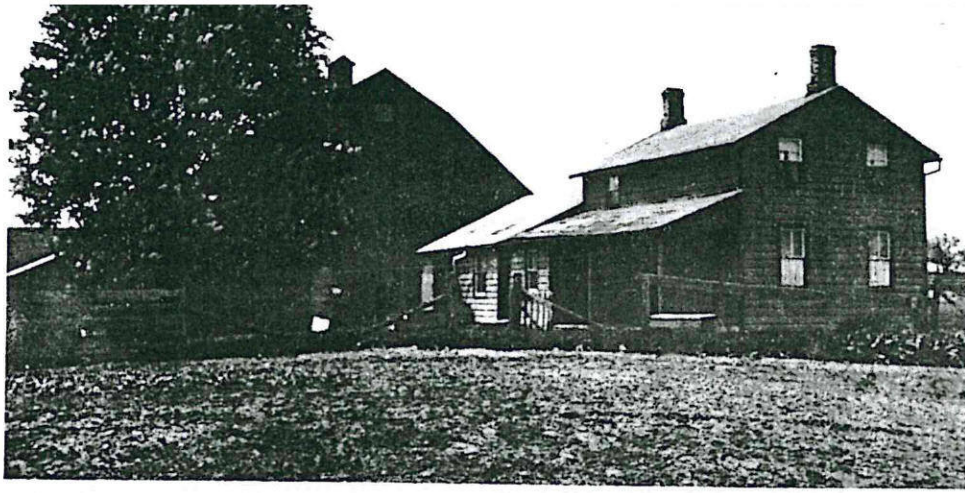
I did enjoy that summer of 1915, getting to know the people of Newmarket and attending Yonge Street meeting. In Ninth-month we took the train to Ohio to visit my parents. They had retired from the farm and built a new house near the meeting house. As it happened, we did not return promptly to Ontario, but occupied the house of Fred and Eliza Hall while they went to California for the winter. Then Elmer went to work on my parents' old farm, and we moved into the North Kitchen and a few adjoining rooms in the house.

My parents were very pleased to help settle Elmer and me in part of this house which had meant so much to them for 40 years. There on Sixth-month 27, 1916 our son Francis was born. I had suffered 17 hours of labor with no anesthetic. Almeda Hall was my loving nurse, saying, "It is the hardest pain to bear, but soonest forgotten." This was in the big north downstairs bedroom where "Little Mary" was born and then died at 2½ years old, and where her sisters Edith, Elma, Anna and Caroline were born.

That winter Elmer had seen an advertisement for a registered driving horse for \$200. He bought it and liked it. The warm, damp summer climate of Ohio did not suit Elmer's health, and we were eager to return to the little house where we had spent our first half-year of married life. We thought to drive to Canada with the horse and buggy, along with the baby, but were persuaded against traveling in this way. Mother and Uncle Samuel opposed us moving back at all, as there were very few other Friends in the Newmarket area, but Father was more in agreement with us. We sold the horse (for \$100) and took the train to Toronto, where Father Starr met us. They helped us get reestablished in our house. Elmer was eager to go to the barn to see the horses.

We named our farm *Starr Elms*, because of the 12 large elm trees near our buildings and because our names begin with "Elm." These magnificent trees years later succumbed to the prevalent Dutch elm disease, but one, "Huldah's tree" on the highest part of the farm, was green much longer.

Our second baby, Gilbert, was born Sixth-month 24th, 1918. On that same day Elmer's brother Nelson Elroy was in a farm wagon when it was hit by a train at the railway crossing in Aurora. He was



Above: Part of the Starr Elms farm in 1915.



Above: Wedding party of Elmer and Elma Starr, 1915. To their right are Elmer's cousin Alfred Starr and sister Evelyn and to their left Elma's sister Edith and cousin Edgar McGrew.

Below: Reading the family bible together, 1959.



thrown out and so badly hurt that he died in a hospital in Toronto before his parents arrived. Several came from there to the funeral at the Starr home. Elroy and Vera Arnold had been married for more than a year and living in an apartment fixed for them in the Starr home. Their son Arthur was then two months old. Elmer told me about the accident. I was too weak to hear much, but I had a vision of Elroy entering heaven and heard sweet music. Elroy was a cheerful and exemplary young man.

That winter there was an epidemic of Asian Flu, which Elmer contracted at a public auction. Soon there were four of us sick with it in each of the two Starr homes, with Father and Mother Starr doing barn chores and housework at both places. I told my mother "We are too sick to all get better. I do not know who will be taken." I was nursing Gilbert, but my breasts went solid and did not respond to a pump. He never had supplementary food, even a bottle. He died of flu in 11 days at 8½ months of age. He was named for my father, who appreciated that but never saw him, though Mother came to us during this period. Father sent us \$5, which we used for a silver name plate on the coffin. Elmer and I were able to be up for the small funeral at our home. Francis had liked to play with Gilbert and missed him.

Our doctor had asked our consent to give Gilbert four drops of brandy with water in a teaspoon at regular intervals as medicine. He prescribed 1 tbsp of whisky in a glass of warm water for me, the worst dose of medicine I ever had. I had not then been involved in temperance work and so did not think to decline it. Near the last Gilbert laid on the lounge and waved his hands and feet (Was he flying away? Affected by the brandy?). Often I have thought "Sweet bud of being, for a moment given, how pure young spirits are in Heaven." I called him "Baby Bright-Eyes."

After Gilbert's death, Francis was a special comfort. I soon walked, holding his hand, to visit our near neighbors, Joshua and Grace Oliver. She had been one of the few to visit us during our sickness, as most were afraid of contracting it. We felt the effects of the flu for months afterwards. Our daughter Harriet was born at home on Seventh-month 24th, 1920.\* She seemed a healthy baby, but was fretful. I was weak, and my milk may not have been very

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\* Huldah was born on Third-month 18th, 1923 and Stuart on Second-month 27th, 1927.

good. Whooping cough was common in our area in the summer of 1920, and Harriet got it. At about that time we got word that my father had died. The doctor pronounced Harriet well enough to travel, so we took both her and Francis to Harrisville for Father's funeral. Sadly, I viewed my dear father's face in his coffin. He had died at Mansfield, Ohio, where he had been taken five months earlier. Mother had visited him there several times, but he did not know her. She was very reluctant for him to go to the mental hospital.

Father had been a steady attender at meeting and in his later years often spoke briefly in worship. Once before meeting he overheard Gilbert Thomas (an appreciated nephew and namesake) talking with John Binns as they hung up their coats. Gilbert remarked to John, "I hear thee has moved again. A rolling stone gathers no moss." John replied, "A setting hen does not grow fat." Father thought them a clever pair.

In 1920 Father Starr had retired from farming and sold one of his farms to Elmer and me. After my father's funeral Elmer returned to Ontario, while the children and I stayed behind for Curtis Smith and sister Edith's marriage in Harrisville Meeting House on Eleventh-month 24th, 1920. To help prepare for the wedding had been an extra strain on me (I was still breastfeeding Harriet). I was in bed when they left for their home in Iowa. Later sister Caroline accompanied us on the train to Starr Elms. We had been gone two months, and Elmer was very glad to have us home. His mother and sister Esther had helped him look after our home.

From my guest book I see that my mother and sister Anna were with us during the last part of Sixth-month 1921.

One day in 1924 Mother and I attended a meeting of the Pine Orchard Women's Institute,\* near Newmarket, to hear Ethel Chapman. That was the beginning of our friendship. I heard her again on other occasions, and she visited us at home. In First-month 1927 I was surprised, on opening the *Ontario Farmer* newspaper, to find that she had taken me as an example of a farm woman in an article titled "An Adventure in Contentment" [see Appendix C].

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\* An organization of rural women for social, cultural and educational purposes. It meets monthly to exchange information and ideas for the improvement of rural life. It is joined with similar local organizations in the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, which in turn is part of the Associated Countrywomen of the World.

This has in fact long been a theme of mine. Often in my memory, I see Amelia Babb looking at our Friends Calendar and hear her reading aloud from it, "A contented mind is a *continual feast*." I believe a Higher Power opened my young mind then to take notice of that and retain it for my life's motto. Various questions arise in my mind concerning its application. Is there a danger of being too easily contented? But an answer is "our contentment can always be in the Lord. His goodness and power, the same yesterday, today and forever."

Once when I was starting from home to attend a meeting of the Willing Workers, the women's group at Pine Orchard Union Church, I went to the kitchen to tell my daughters farewell. I found Harriet on a stool washing dishes. She said, "I am a worker but not a willing worker."

Another time I was at a front door to tell the girls "Farewell" as they were leaving for a party. I said, "Have a good time" and afterwards thought I should have said, "Help the others to have a good time." I thought they looked very good in their new print dresses, which I had made.

My mother was remarried in 1925 to William Steer. They moved to Barnesville, so that I was able to visit my old school while visiting them. Sister Anna had gone with them and finally died there in 1927 of tuberculosis. Later I had another reason to go there, as Francis was at Olney Friends Boarding School in 1932-33. Harriet and Huldah each had four years there and graduated. After I had crossed the Canada-USA border 112 times I quit counting. That was many years ago and I still cross from time to time.

Father Starr died on Fifth-month 7th, 1934 in Newmarket after a gallstone operation. In breaking the news, the doctor said to Esther, "Now is the time to say our prayers." She thought, "We *have* been praying."

When I came to live with the Starrs, my widowed sister-in-law Esther was a member of Vandorf Women's Institute. The meetings were likely in the basement of the Wesley United Church. We enjoyed the ladies there, but for various reasons soon joined the Pine Orchard Institute and later the new Bogarttown one, nearer our homes, where I was convener of the History Committee in 1936. These last two institutes joined in a study of our area and especially the history of the two small meeting houses at Pine Orchard. Andrew Hebb, editor of the Newmarket paper, cooperated and printed a

booklet on "Pine Orchard History, 1800-1936." Most all of the 300 printed sold promptly at 50¢ each, the few remaining at \$1 each.

To read over our Starr Elms guest books is enjoyable and memory-reviving! On Eleventh-month 10th, 1933 Henry J. Moore spoke at the Bogarttown schoolhouse outside Newmarket (where Elmer's grandfather, Francis Starr, had been the first teacher) on "The Peace Gardens." It was he who originated the idea for such a place on the international border between Manitoba and North Dakota, an international project which became popular and widely known.

The subject of *peace* among nations has long had prominence in my thinking and has been a lifetime search.\* In the Bogarttown Women's Institute this was at first my main assignment, but when there came a call for work on *temperance* I offered to specialize in that. Elmer once remarked that it was evident "thee is not temperate in thy temperance work." In 1938 I went to Willard Hall in Toronto for a short course in this subject sponsored by the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Toronto. One evening our leader, a local medical doctor, piloted a few of us around to see into some beverage rooms. Not much drinking was going on just then, though, as it was still early.

After one of the large provincial temperance conventions I had an

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\* Nowhere in these memoirs does Elma Starr directly address the matter of her unwavering pacifism. The following remarks on the subject are by her son Francis in a letter to a younger relative. "Once when I was quite young Mother had a discussion with a peddler about Friends' testimonies. The only one he couldn't accept was the peace testimony. I clearly remember him saying, 'But surely, Mrs. Starr, if a man was coming at you with a knife and you felt he had murder in his heart, you would do what you could to stop him, even if you had to kill him.' Mother didn't hesitate to answer that she was ready to die, and a person with evil in his heart was not, and she would have no part in consigning him to Hell. I've remembered that incident many times, especially at the first Friends meeting I attended in China. Bob McClure told us of a young missionary who arrived in Tientsin and was soon surrounded by Boxer rebels and killed. A Chinese boy who witnessed the killing was so impressed with the missionary's non-resistance that he made enquiries and eventually became one of China's best known Christians.

image of the blue sky, sometimes spotted with dark clouds, as an illustration of how our country is darkened by spells of intemperance. With diligent, prayerful effort, the temperance workers' hope for a better world can come to pass, even if temporarily. Many mornings, inspirations and passages of scripture come to mind, and I occasionally feel depressed that I have not done more. Still, I am thankful for much.

Elmer, Harriet and I went to Ohio in the summer of 1940 to attend Huldah's graduation at Olney. After that Elmer and the girls returned directly home, but I went with Mother and two others to spend a month in Iowa with relatives. Aside from visiting, I did a great deal of sewing for Mother before riding home to Ontario with one of my former Norwich pupils and her family.

On Third-month 18th, 1941 (Huldah's 18th birthday) Harriet was married to Alfred Cope of Columbiana, Ohio, in a Friends meeting at Grandmother Starr's home. At her advanced age, Grandmother was unable to travel to the meeting house. The wedding took place in the dining room, because Harriet remembered four funerals in the parlor and would not have it there. The following day Alfred and Harriet left for their home in Ohio.

The next wedding in the family was that of Raymond Stanley of Columbiana, Ohio [see Appendix E] and our Huldah on Ninth-month 30th, 1944 in the Yonge Street meeting house, with the reception at Starr Elms. It was the first wedding in the meeting house in 40 years. Raymond and Huldah then went to Rochester, New York, where he was subject in a series of medical experiments.\* Huldah, meanwhile, worked as a nurse's aide. At the end of his service, they moved to Columbiana where their six children were born.

Both of our daughters were now married and gone to homes of their own, and Francis was now grown and away much of the time. Only the youngest, Stuart, remained. Nonetheless, both at home and in the community there was still so much for me to do.

In 1941 Francis was at a conscientious objector camp at Montreal River in northern Ontario, where he and about 100 other young men

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\* As a conscientious objector to war, Raymond Stanley was exempted from fighting, but he was obliged to participate in other government work. In this case, he underwent one year each of an experimental diet, high-altitude tests, and dehydration tests conducted for the Surgeon General of the United States.



of various denominations were put to work building a road. The next spring they were transferred to British Columbia to fight fires. Early in 1943 he was given leave to return home to help on the farm, and in 1944 he went to China in the service of the Friends Ambulance Unit. Late in 1947 the Friends Service Council of England sent him to Pakistan to help refugees. It was there that he met Dorothy Schlick of Ames, Iowa, whom he married on Sixth-month 17th, 1948.

My first attendance at the Sunday School Convention\* was at Lemonville, Ontario. Seneca Baker was sitting near the door as I entered the hall, and I whispered to him to close the meeting with prayer. He responded, "If I feel called to." I felt a little guilty since, as a Friend, I knew well that it is our way to wait for and respond to a call. I was humbled with the welcome and response to my efforts. In all schools a quiet reverence and spiritualism was felt. The superintendents were solemn and helpful, as were some teachers and older members. All pupils were expected to bring their own Bibles, and to have help, if necessary, to find the text, and to study the lessons before coming to school. Memorizing was encouraged.

Although I had for some time been an intermediate teacher at Pine Orchard Sunday School, it was a surprise at the 1941 Whitchurch Sunday School Convention to find that I was chosen as its president. I felt honored, but unworthy. The outgoing president, William Paisley, helped me as did Jacob Grove, the secretary-treasurer for several years. Thirteen Sunday schools of six different denominations were in the township association, though the Mennonites and Disciples did not join. Elmer taught the young people's class at Pine Orchard for some years. While I was president we left our classes to our assistants and visited the various Sunday schools, usually staying to the church service following. We enjoyed becoming acquainted with so many nice people. After three years I resigned as president, though I continued to attend conventions when I could.

At the close of my third and last Convention as president I asked all to stand quietly, and if anyone felt like offering a prayer I hoped they would be faithful. Four lay persons responded, though preachers were also present. I then resigned, feeling that others should be given the opportunity and responsibility of the presidency.

The York County unit of the Ontario Temperance Federation met

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\* An organization of the various Sunday Schools in Whitchurch Township, which includes Newmarket.

at the home of its president, Dr. Wilson. I took the leadership of its Youth Oratorical Contests and made repeated visits to the WCTU provincial offices in Toronto to obtain material to help our youth in public speaking contests at local and county meetings. These were held in various areas and well attended. I kept a record of the topics and speakers, which I later placed in the Bogarttown museum. These oratorical contests continue to interest me, as younger people are always needed to push the cause of abstinence. At the end of 1955 I retired from the leadership of the contests after 18 years. I did enjoy them, and they were good for the young people and the cause. After Dr. Wilson, J.R. Richardson and J. MacKenzie served as president. These two were among those present at a meeting at Starr Elms in 1971 where it was decided to dissolve our unit of the Ontario Temperance Federation, for reasons I no longer recall.

It is enjoyable to reread my diaries from this period, and I will quote a few entries here.

"Seventh-month 29th, 1947. This beautiful summer morning I opened our north door at Starr Elms and looked up into the blue sky. 'Thanks be to the Giver of our innumerable blessings' was the language of my soul.

"Seventh-month 11th, 1950. I have been thinking of our dear children and longing to do my duty for each one. If our dear Harriet could get here and I would keep close enough to Jesus, He would guide my mind and hands to know what to do for her recovery. There is such satisfaction in reflecting upon our dear Huldah's visit, ending with her diligence in having all our clothes and bedding and hers washed and dried and folded and her bed made up so neatly. I praise Thee, dear Heavenly Father, from Whom all blessings flow."

"Tenth-month 19th, 1950. 'Nothing between' is the language of my heart this perfect a.m., as before the open window I feast on the pure air and cloudless, tinted sky. Nothing to hinder my full view of nature's beauties. Nothing to hinder or hurry me from full and free communion with the Divine, Who has so richly blessed me always."

"Ninth-month 15th, 1952. 'Men, be your masters' was quoted at the very large and inspiring provincial temperance convention in Owen Sound this month. It was my privilege to attend all five sessions."

"'What doth God require of thee, O man, but to do justly, love mercy and walk humbly with thy God.' I am reminded that Joseph Clayton repeated this in our sitting room when he and Bertha Pollard and Elmer and I were in a meeting for ministers and elders. He was

feeling in low spirits. Now, Second-month 1954, he and Carrie are gone, we believe to a glorious reward. May the latter days of my dear Elmer and me, like theirs, be faithful."

In Fourth-month 1945 I had a telegram from sister Edith, informing that our mother was very ill, so I took a train from Toronto to Iowa. When I got to her bedside, Mother asked, "Has thee come to take me home?" I thought, "I have come to take thee as near the Heavenly Home as it is possible for a human to do." At another time she gave a little giggle. I asked, "What is funny?" She replied, "I thought there was a little girl standing by me and I wanted her to get in bed with me." I supposed that referred to Mary, who had died very young. Another time she exclaimed, "Fire," and "I saw something bright." When I thought she was nearly gone, I said "Farewell, Mother." She plainly replied, "Farewell, darling daughter." She said, "Wouldn't that be *awful* if I did not have hope?" Her use of "awful" impressed me, since she did not want her daughters to use that word which "pertained to something wonderful like thunder and lightning." I was there when she died on Fifth-month 19th. Just a few days earlier, as I lay awake one night reflecting on my weeks with Mother, during which she seemed to be awaiting a summons, "God is watching over us and beneath is His hand" were my thankful words.

I promptly returned home to Canada after Mother's funeral. It was not long before Mother Starr, too, passed away, on Eighth-month 18th of the same year, and again I was present.

My diary records the following on Fifth-month 11th, 1935. "Psalm 23 comes precious to mind as I face another day in Toronto. I am to go to the Ontario Temperance Federation office, then to Friends House for lunch, then to a committee meeting at 1 o'clock. After that, I will visit the Ontario Bible College on Spadina Avenue, before taking the 6:45 bus back to Newmarket." This was an example of many trips to Toronto. As I did not drive a car and often had occasion to use the Newmarket-Toronto bus along Yonge Street, I approached the bus company in 1945 about introducing a line along Don Mills Road.\* Later two men called on me to announce that they

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\* Also called Woodbine Avenue. Both this and Yonge Street run north from Toronto, one passing Newmarket on the west side and the other on the east. Starr Elms was on Don Mills Road.

had "come to answer your prayers." They were amused by my puzzled look and asked, "You wonder *which* prayers?" The bus company, they informed me, was very much interested in running a line along Don Mills Road. It would help them to get an operating license for it if there was public support, and they proposed to bring a bus to take all petitioners to Toronto. It was up to me to collect names of petitioners. Elmer took me to call on the neighbors, and we collected 75 names. I enjoyed our trip to Toronto to deliver the petition in person to the provincial parliament, and later the president of the Hollinger Bus Line wrote to thank me for my efforts and express confidence that the request for an operating permit would be approved. The Don Mills Road line did come into being, two buses a day each way, though it was later discontinued as uneconomical.

As I sit in my big chair looking westward out the window of my room at the Walton Home, I have been reviewing the guest books which we began at Starr Elms in Fifth-month of 1915. The first entry reads "I am young and I am small, but I am the first to enjoy the hospitality of this new home—R.R. Hawtin per E.S." Elmer had carried his young nephew over from the Grandfather Starr house across the road. Following that entry is Elmer's Aunt Hannah Jane Starr's name on the same date, with a blank space into which she meant to copy the poem "The New Home." On the next page is the signature of Howard Brinton. He was in Newmarket at the time to teach at Pickering College and was our first dinner guest. Elmer was careful to get all of our visitors to sign the guest book, and in looking through the four volumes I am amazed at how much company we had over the years. Many were our relatives and Friends attending quarterly meeting at the Yonge Street meeting house.

In Twelfth-month 1948 Francis and Dorothy returned from Pakistan. They had been there as relief workers, he with the British Friends and she with the American Friends and were married in Lahore. Dorothy worked as a nurse in Newmarket Hospital, while Francis worked on a nearby farm and sometimes on Starr Elms. Their first child, Christopher, was born in Newmarket in 1949. Later they moved to a farm near Woodbridge, Ontario and then again to Alton. In 1954 they came to live in the new "Grandfather Starr house" down the hill from Starr Elms.

Dorothy was eager to return to active nursing and so went to work

at the hospital in Newmarket. She was also at that time the editor of the *Canadian Friend*, journal of the Canada Yearly Meeting. They remained there until 1956, and in that time the children were often under my care, especially when one parent or the other was away from home. In 1955 the Canadian Friends Service Committee had been hearing of trouble involving the Doukhobors\* in British Columbia and asked Dorothy to go out there to look into the situation. In the summer of 1956 they moved to Ottawa.†

Our guest book entry for Ninth-month 15th, 1952 reads "Stuart S. Starr just returned from England and Europe." He had attended the Friends World Conference in England. Dorothy was also a delegate.

In Eleventh-month 1954 I went to Philadelphia with Francis and Dorothy, in order to visit relatives and attend the Philadelphia Friends general meeting. The *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* carried an article titled, "Bonnet of Canadian Friend Recalls Quaker Plain Forms," in which they said, "The Quaker bonnet has all but passed from the Quaker meeting scene here. It was left to one of several distant visitors to give this plain touch to the annual meeting of Friends in the old Race Street Meeting House on Grace west of 15th Street. Mrs. Elma Starr, 60, diminutive and gentle faced from Ontario, Canada Friends Meeting was marked from several hundred at the meeting by her black cup-shaped bonnet tied under her chin. 'The older Friends in our Conservative Meetings have clung to our plain ways,' she explained. 'The younger Quakers, even in Canada, have discontinued the plain form, but thee'll see them among strict Quakers where I was born in Eastern Ohio.' Her son Francis, a leader

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\* A pacifist-anarchist sect which originated in Russia. Because of religious persecution, they emigrated to western Canada late in the 19th century with the help of Joseph Elkinton, a wealthy American Quaker. One radical subgroup, the Sons of Freedom, refused to send their children to public school or provide approved private education. When the government took custody of the children, the Sons of Freedom began a campaign of often violent protest. Dorothy Starr represented the Quakers in an unsuccessful attempt to mediate the dispute.

† Together with the family of Gordon and Betty McClure, the Starrs moved to Ottawa in order to help the few Quakers there to increase and regularize attendance at worship. The group was soon afterwards recognized as a monthly meeting by Canada Yearly Meeting.

in the Canadian Friends Service Committee, was easily spotted as a visitor by a chin beard. He was accompanied by his wife Dorothy who is editor of the *Canadian Friend* paper. For Francis Starr it was an unexpected reunion with Daniel and Jane Dye now directors of the 'John Woolman Memorial Center,' Mt. Holly, New Jersey. While the Dyes were missionary teachers in Chengtu, China, Starr had been their guest, he being with the wartime Friends Ambulance Unit then. He later served with Friends Service Unit in Pakistan. His wife had also served as a relief worker in Pakistan."

On Sixth-month 1st, 1957, Stuart was married to Caroline Stanley of Whittier, Iowa. Francis came from Ottawa in his station wagon and took charge of Starr Elms while Stuart, Elmer and I took the station wagon to Iowa for the wedding. The reason for the station wagon was so that Stuart and Caroline would have a big car to bring her things to Newmarket, as they were to live at Starr Elms. Stuart took over the farm in 1956, as Elmer then retired, though he continued to help out for many years when he was able. I did enjoy having Stuart and Caroline and their growing family so close to us. All four of their children were born in the hospital in Newmarket.

During those years Caroline's mother sometimes came from Iowa to visit us, as did Francis, Harriet and Huldah and their families, and we had many other visitors as well.

In reviewing my diary and old letters, 1964 was the fullest and most varied at home and elsewhere. [There follows a summary of entries for 76 days during 1964. These include mention of the usual interests of a farm wife, such as weather, crops, family and neighbors, but there is more than that. Of the 76 entries, 28 mention involvement in the business of the Canadian Yearly Meeting and various public issues, of which temperance is the most prominent. The three following entries will serve to illustrate this.]

"Third-month 24th. Good to be at our Newmarket ladies' prayer meeting. Elmer and I called on the editor of the *Newmarket Era* to voice our concern about the liquor vote. He was most courteous. We told him of our dislike of liquor ads in his paper and our appreciation of his editorials."

"Fourth-month 21st. After consulting with Elmer, Stuart and Caroline, I was able to draft the resolution on firearms for the Women's Institute."

"Sixth-month 26th. I am so thankful for big, capable Francis and thoughtful, helpful Lucie and Andrew, here again on a visit. They collected 2+ gallons of maple sap. I feel contented in my efforts for York County temperance. Bert and Irmgard King and daughter Heidi paid us a cheery visit. I am appointed to the Moral Education and Mothers Department of the Newmarket WCTU. I am thankful for good education in all phases of my 73 years. 21 attended the prayer circle at Grace Church. My 'Mother's Day' article appeared in the *Era*, to my satisfaction! We called on our new neighbors in the old Colville house. Good fellowship at Yearly Meeting at Pickering College. The Stanleys all arrived after a 7½ hour trip, and 18 of us had dinner on the lawn before they left for Camp Neekaunis."

"A slave to system and order." That expression has stuck with me. It was my ideal to follow a certain routine in my daily and weekly duties, and the motto in my housework has been "Order is Heaven's first law." But one cold morning I was forced by circumstance to change that order, and then I thought "Do not be a slave to it."

Once I dreamt that I went alone to a neglected old meeting house, where I was surprised to see old relics which the descendants of those from old times had put on display. Then I awoke and wondered, "Am I cherishing old meeting houses and Friends history too much?" My mind was also much exercised once by a dream of straddling a fence. I was in sympathy with the conservative and also with those actively working for change. I was trying to evaluate my position in light of the next Sunday School lesson about the "talents," being desirous to use my talents to the Master's service.

On Seventh-month 7th, 1967, Elmer's birthday, Harriet died after a long illness. Francis took Elmer and me to Ohio for the funeral, and we stopped off in Oakville to pick up Christopher, who also attended. Harriet was a favorite of her grandmother, Harriet Starr, and a dear and capable wife and mother.

In Eleventh-month 1970, Helen Stephenson visited to ask me, on behalf of the Yearly Meeting Committee, to deliver the Sutherland P. Gardner lecture at the next year's Yearly Meeting. I was almost overwhelmed at the thought of such a large responsibility. For the next several months I prayed and meditated on the suggested topic of my "Spiritual Experiences." My dear friend, Grace Pincoe of Toronto, gave much encouragement. The train trip to Winnipeg and the entire meeting were of great interest to me and thankfully remem-

bered. I felt so unworthy and incapable, but the lecture was finally completed and delivered to my satisfaction.

Generally retiring early, it has long been my habit to have clear meditations in the night. An undated diary entry from this period says that "In my night meditations I am occasionally disturbed because of but little consciousness of Jesus. I sense my very deep love and appreciation for my dear husband, who the previous evening dragged in a big piece of wood for the fireplace. My heart ached at his changed condition from the active farmer of earlier years. I also remembered my deep appreciation and love for our thoughtful little grandson Stephen as he ran to help me get a pitcher of water and then ran ahead to open the door for me. Once he said, 'Nancy (his baby sister) is a cutie, I do love her.' Then I thought of dear granddaughter Mary in her pleasure to receive the robin's egg which Elmer had found in the grass. So I feel if I so love these dear ones, I am loving Jesus."

In my diary I find written on Third-month 12th, 1970: "Come up into the sunshine floods my soul this bright, pure morning as I reflect on our baby Gilbert lying dead in our little Sewing Room 51 years ago. More of that sweet, sad time comes to mind as I lay by my dear, quietly sleeping Elmer, who so longs to go too." On Seventh-month 7th, 1973, Elmer's 92nd birthday, Stuart took us for a drive around the farm, but we doubt that Elmer realized it. At 8 a.m. on the 18th I sat by him on our bed and felt his last pulsebeat. Dr. Urquhart came and, standing at the foot of the bed, said, "Yes, he is gone." I felt "Blessed are those who die in the Lord." Stuart phoned Huldah and Francis. I did not feel like doing anything. Many thoughts came to me as I realized my aloneness and reflected on the past. I loved my Elmer with everlasting love.

I dreaded funerals, but the 21st was a fine day, and the Pine Orchard Union Church was full. Several days later, as Francis and his son Andrew drove out the long Starr Elms driveway, Francis turned to bid me farewell and the 7 a.m. sun shone on his face. He looked like Elmer, and I thanked God for showing him to me. I had been praying for a vision of Elmer in Heaven.

Since Elmer's death, I have spent the summers mostly in Ontario and the winters at the Walton Home in Barnesville, Ohio, just a short distance from the boarding school. Relatives have conveyed me on





Above left: At Yearly Meeting in 1930. Back row: Elmer, Stuart, Francis and Elma. Front row: Harriet and Huldah.

Above: At Starr Elms during the golden wedding anniversary celebration, 1965. Left to right: Stuart, Huldah, Elma, Elmer, Harriet and Francis.

Left: At Starr Elms, 1948. Standing (l-r): Francis, Huldah, Harriet and Stuart. Seated: Elma and Elmer.

Below: Family reunion at Starr Elms, 1961. Left to right: Stuart Starr holding Helen Starr, Caroline Starr holding Mary Starr, Wayne Stanley, Raymond Stanley holding Elizabeth Ann Stanley, John Stanley, Huldah Stanley holding Emily Stanley, Rachel Cope, David Stanley, Esther Cope (hidden), Elma Starr, Alfred Cope, Harriet Cope, Andrew Starr, Sushila Starr, Elmer Starr, Lucie Starr, Christopher Starr and Francis Starr.



my trips between the two places. Stuart and family sold Starr Elms in 1979. After searching over much of Ontario for a new place to their liking, they settled on a farm at Brechin, 60 miles to the north.

Two diary entries are among those recording the times I spent back at Starr Elms after Elmer's death:

"Sixth-month 26th, 1974. At 11:30 last night Stuart and Caroline got home from another 'farm hunt.' I have been walking alone towards the back of this good farm, with thoughts of the beauty of this perfect day. As I walked up our curved driveway, admiring the tall trees which Elmer and our sons planted along it long ago, I remembered how Elmer repeatedly thanked God 'for making them grow.' Andrew was leading a calf to tie on lush grass nearby. I am thankful that he takes an interest in things here. I admired the clouds and thought of Jesus ascending into the clouds of glory, wondering what it would be like to see him so come. I had a full heart.

"Sixth-month 24th, 1978. I am thankful to feel well and ambitious in this Starr Elms home again, where my mother used to say that the air was a little purer than any place else she had been. Sun warms my back as I sit at our parents' old desk in the porch. When ready for breakfast, I go to Stuart and Caroline's dining table. Everyone here eats when ready, except at supper, when we all eat together. Stuart and Mary got in three loads of baled hay yesterday. At the barn, Caroline and Mary throw them off the wagon onto a conveyor, which takes them up into the mow for Stuart to put in place. I do like being here with them all. The four children are big now."

When I returned home to Starr Elms, I continued to sort through our things. Granddaughter Helen helped to put my diplomas on the wall, of my 1909 graduation from the Friends Boarding School, a 1910 correspondence course in dress-making, a 1921 correspondence course in home nursing. After baby Gilbert's death I felt that I needed to know more about nursing.

On Seventh-month 18th, 1981, we had a big family reunion in the village of Vandorf, just a few miles south of Starr Elms. It was timed to coincide as nearly as was practical to the 100th anniversary of Elmer's birth on Seventh-month 7th, 1881, and 27 relatives from both sides of his family and our descendants were in attendance. We held the reunion in the old Bogarttown public school building, which has been moved to Vandorf and is now a museum. An enjoyable and thankful occasion.

I do enjoy the big west window of my room here at the Walton Home and the plants in the window sill. I look at them often as I lay down to rest my heart and jittery nerves. Morning and evening and sometimes in between I pray for my sisters and children and grandchildren and give thanks for their preservation and health and that they and many others do not taste alcohol or tobacco or harmful drugs. As I like to retire by 8 p.m. and arise at 6 a.m., I often lay awake and recite poems and scripture memorized long ago and recall past events. Exactly five years ago, Sixth-month 2nd, 1977, I wrote "A perfect morning for an hour's walk in our farm lane to 'stand and stare' and contemplate God in nature in this place familiar to three generations of Starrs. I am happy to be here again for the summer after four winters in Ohio." It is now another perfect Sixth-day morning, and I am thankful for a clear mind to again reflect on that walk along Starr Elms lane. The air was so still as I stood there alone with a feeling of awe. The place is still there, but much changed by the new owners.

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I have just finished reading over my jottings on these sheets, as I again sit by my west window at the Walton Home. It has been a real pleasure to thus recall many of my experiences and blessings. Many have been the precious visitations of the Divine presence to my soul which are not inscribed here, nor anywhere else on paper. Nonetheless, those which I have written will serve as a solemn reminder that I have been abundantly blessed, and my heart overflows with thankfulness. My duty now is to help feed our dear grandchildren and great-grandchildren with the bread of righteousness. Again I pray that the Divine blessing and preservation be with you all.

Very lovingly,

Mother, Grandmother and Great-Grandmother  
Barnesville, Ohio Seventh-month 5th, 1982

## Appendix A

### EXPLANATION OF SOME QUAKER TERMS

Like any ethnic or religious group with a long history, the Quakers have many of their own terms of expression. These are especially prevalent in the speech of older Quakers, such as Elma Starr, who consistently addressed those she knew personally by their first names and as "thee." Such "Plain Speech" does not make up a separate language or even a dialect, but it is a distinctively Quaker manner of expression. Aside from the concern for lack of ostentation, it comes from a very serious attitude toward language. Quakers are direct and literal-minded in speech, as is seen below in the names of the days and months, for example. Several of the more common terms of Plain Speech are explained here in order to make these memoirs more readily understandable. This subject is treated further by William C. Braithwaite (*The Beginnings of Quakerism*, 2nd edition, 1955, Cambridge University Press), Howard H. Brinton (*Quaker Journals*, 1972, Pendle Hill Publications) and Charles M. Woodman (*Quakers Find a Way*, 1950, Dobbs-Merrill), among others.

*Friend.* The Society of Friends is the official name of the Quakers. The more familiar name began as a pejorative term for the group soon after its founding in 17th-century England. The Friends fully accepted the name Quakers, though, so that it quickly lost all negative meaning. The two continue to be used interchangeably.

*Thee, thy, thine.* Many Quakers still use these archaic terms when speaking to one person, in place of the more usual "you, your, yours." It is a hold-over from the time when the nobility were addressed with the plural "you," in contrast to commoners. Quakers found such distinctions inconsistent with their egalitarian spirit.

*First-day, Second-day, etc.* In common English, most of the days of the week are after pagan gods. Wednesday, for example, is named after the Germanic god Wodan, so that Quakers instead call it Fourth-day. This is an illustration of the serious attitude toward language, which assumes that anyone invoking a god, no matter how casually, means to do just that. An additional reason is probably that named days are

an unnecessary extravagance, not plain. All mentions of "Sunday school" refer to those of other denominations or nondenominational groups.

*First-month, Second-month, etc.* As with the days of the week, the months of the year are named after pagan gods. March, for example, is after Mars, the Roman god of war, so that Quakers instead call it Third-month.

*Meeting.* This can refer either to an event or an organization. As an event, a meeting can be for worship (equivalent to a church service or mass) or to conduct the affairs of the organization. A *monthly meeting* (equivalent to a congregation) meets each week for worship and conducts its business meeting once a month. Several monthly meetings together form a *quarterly, half-yearly or regional meeting*, which gathers two to four times a year for a larger business meeting. These are in turn grouped into several *yearly meetings*, each of which normally conducts its main business over a period of several days once a year. The two mentioned in these memoirs are the Ohio Yearly Meeting and Canada Yearly Meeting. A *meeting house* is equivalent to a church. Elma Starr's regular place of worship over several decades, the Yonge Street meeting house near Newmarket, was built in 1810 and is recognized by the government of Ontario as a historic building.

## Appendix B

### LEARNING BY DOING

by Elma M. Starr

[This is Elma Starr's own abridged version of her graduation essay at the Friends Boarding School in Barnesville, Ohio in 1909. She recorded that she had written it while sitting on a stump in the Girls' Woods and that its final title was suggested by her teacher. "That title has been my life's pattern," she later wrote, and she recalled thinking on graduation day "I know enough now to realize that there is much more to learn." This essay shows very clearly that her strongly practical, activist spirit was well developed at an early age.]

We are packed full of faculties: - physical, mental, moral, social and spiritual, more or less fully developed. A veritable box of tools ready for use.

The rudiments of these faculties every normal being possesses when it enters this life. And it is in the Primary, or play period from 2+ to 7 years that the child naturally seeks to express himself through doing.

Thus the great amount of energy possessed in youth is forcing itself on it. It often takes form of imitating acts of others especially of his elders.

This natural tendency to imitate is characteristic of the human race and especially of children.

However the faculties have some power of originality, or the civilized world would never have produced the great inventions or made the wonderful discoveries which have advanced it beyond what it was 2000 years ago.

But these faculties have to be exercised and cultivated in order that they may grow. They grow and increase in power most rapidly in youth. Then they are most keen and impressionable. That is the time when they are bent in the direction they will ever afterwards follow. Then is the time for cultivation. It is said an ounce of effort then is worth as much as a ton of effort later. And that after 20 years of age it is difficult for the brain to comprehend, or grasp an entirely new idea. But those already gained may be cultivated and broadened.

The plastic muscles quickly take up a new movement, as the fin-

gers in writing, and it soon becomes a reflex act; but it is only with difficulty that an older person learns to write.

Although it is in youth that impressions are most deeply made. Their adaptability depends upon how they are made.

An idea to be clearly comprehended must be expressed in familiar terms or it will mean but little. That which one discovers for himself, is much better known to him than that which he gains second hand from someone else.

While there is nothing that forbids a proper combination of books and the use of the senses at first hand, such a combination is too rarely made.

Any study is useful which compels the student to learn through his own senses.

Botany is a study of this kind, for if one goes out into the fields and studies the real flowers, he learns to rely on his own faculty of observation, which grows keener as it is used.

This learning of facts from an object itself, and not merely by committing to memory what someone else thinks, is of first importance in industrial education, which is attracting public attention today.

Lessons which have formerly been taught children through the agency of books which naturally do not appeal to the interest of the child, are now put before him in such a way, that he can work them out with his own hands and learn and see results.

Some of the metaphysicians used to teach that the soul came in actual contact with matter in the finger tips.

A study of our nervous system mechanism has completely shattered this assumption. But there is a certain connection between the hands and the brain—a kind of subtle power in doing the thing for one's self, which does not come from merely learning what can be done, or what someone else has done. This is especially true in youth. With very young children in the kindergarten and primary grades, this method of learning by doing is used almost entirely to illustrate their school work, thus making it clear to them by picturing their stories, cutting forms from paper, building them in clay;—making their work concrete, not abstract.

In the upper grades the work becomes more technical. It would not be expected of younger pupils to understand a chemical experiment, for example, even if they performed it for themselves and saw the results. But this is just as useful to the older children as the

marking out in sand of the United States and its divisions is to the younger ones.

The experiment explained in detail seen on the printed page may be carefully studied and apparently understood, but it will be much clearer if it is actually performed.

Besides the value of learning by doing, in making clearer and fixing the idea in the mind, it is useful in still another way.

There are many instances in which this manual training has been practically the only thing in the course in which certain pupils can be interested and many such pupils have through this interest been led to its appreciation.

Thus for many an apparently dull pupil, the work bench or the laboratory has been the door through which he has been led into a larger field of knowledge.

He has found that in order to do exact work, and to receive the greatest benefit from the experiments, he must have a knowledge of other subjects concerning it directly or indirectly, and because he sees these once distasteful subjects will bring him more excellence in his chosen line of work, they also become more interesting. And this boy who formerly could see nothing in anything now sees something in everything, because his hands arouse his brain.



## Appendix C

### AN ADVENTURE IN CONTENTMENT

by Ethel M. Chapman

[Elma Starr's friendship with the journalist Ethel Chapman is recorded in her memoirs. The following article, reprinted from the 15 January 1927 issue of the *Ontario Farmer*, is an excellent illustration of her outlook and activities as a young farm wife and mother. Among the photographs used in the article was the one reproduced in the frontispiece.]

Whoever was responsible for starting the sentiment towards "divine discontent" missed a big opportunity in failing to say a word for the divinity of contentment—not the contentment that means a passive satisfaction with things as they are, however they may be, but a state of mind which is enthusiastic, progressive, public spirited and restful to live with.

I have in mind just now one woman in particular, who radiates this like a benediction. I first met her at a Women's Institute meeting at Pine Orchard. Even in the crowd of women she made a picture with her Friend's bonnet which was the only one of its kind in the hall, her healthy glow under the brush of sunburn, her brown eyes that actually twinkled, and on her knee her two-year-old daughter with the same bonnet in miniature, the same glow and tan, the same brown eyes. One could imagine what an artist might do with it.

During the meeting there was a discussion on how to make housework on the farm easier, and she entered into this with a sprightliness equalled only by the sanity of her suggestions, but she never once deplored being a "farm woman". A year or two later I happened in at another women's meeting where she was spreading the same gospel in a debate: "Resolved that the work of the homemaker is as interesting as that of the professional woman." She quoted at length a favorite household poem, of which the following bits might have been written expressly for her:

"I've done angel's work today,  
Yes, such an honor came my way.  
First I cooked, it was so nice  
To plan the pie, stewed fruit and rice.

God sent his angels once to bake  
Cakes for a poor wayfarer's sake  
But just today he honored me  
And sent the task my way you see  
And while I tidied up the place  
And gave each knob a radiant face,  
Back in my mind the thought would lurk  
That I was still at angel's work—  
Putting away the coats and dresses  
Removing small unsightlinesses;  
For oh 'tis such a lovesome thing  
Just straightening out and freshening  
And later in the day, how sweet  
To sit and rest my tired feet,  
Mending the clothes and planning, too  
To make the old things into new  
For surely 'tis an angel's way  
To put things right from day to day."

After this we became great friends, and many a mail left me richer for her rare philosophy. Once she wrote, "Can thee imagine me in our quaint little home, baby asleep, my husband and the older children gone to town, my dishes and separator washed and floors swept? It is ten o'clock; there is a big rice pudding in the oven, a skillet of home canned tenderloin, just opened and as fresh and nice as can be on top of the heater, slowly stewing down to brown for dinner. We are all well and happy and contented as ever, for which we are truly thankful. Just now I am missing a neighbor who has moved away. She was so enthusiastic and full of valuable, fresh suggestions, just the kind of individual our country organization needs to liven up them and us. In the past we have taken so little time for reading and recreation that we soon grow dull, even though we may have the abilities within us of being live and brilliant. Yes, there may be some questions, but we farm women do have brains, and we intend to use them more, and our hands and backs less slavishly. I am full of faith in us."

She revealed a lot in that one letter written while she waited for the dinner to cook—her happiness in things as they are, her desire for progress, her public interest. The fact that in her household "all are well and happy as ever" does not blind her to the fact that "women

need to use their hands and backs less slavishly." At the meeting at Pine Orchard she became interested in the possibility of a community laundry, and afterwards combed every possible source for information on the working of these in the States. "We are putting in an electric plant ourselves," she said, "and my husband would get me an electric washer, but that would not help my neighbors." Later, when it was found impossible to open a community laundry, she got her electric washer, and we happen to know that she invited a neighbor to bring her clothes over and wash with her.

With all her love for her home as it is, she is an ardent student of improved homemaking. After the illness of her first baby, like many another mother, she felt her inadequacy to cope with such emergencies, so she took a correspondence course in home nursing. Later the Women's Institute had a nurse come from the Department to give a course of demonstrations. She takes magazines and searches even the advertisements to see what she can learn. As a result of this she showed me a beautifully soft, woolly couch rug that she had had a factory make for her out of old woolen rags. She studies labor saving equipment and labor saving methods. Her electric washer, the high oven on her stove which saves a lot of unnecessary back bending, and a wire dish drainer, which she made herself, and which won first prize in a home-made labor saver contest, are among her treasured possessions. "We hope to have a water system sometime," she said, "but we cannot put one in this old house." And one day, as I watched her take a baking of bread from the oven, and bring home canned vegetables from the cellar, conversing most interestingly meanwhile on some problems of nutrition, I asked her where she had studied household science. "Down in Ohio, when I was a girl, we had a five day short course in nutrition, once," she told me. "Apart from reading, that is all the household science I've had a chance to study, but I want my little girls to go to Macdonald Institute."

The little girls and their brothers, by the way, are another evidence of their mother's skill in mothering, but she says this is largely due to the way their father has helped, mentioning particularly his system of never saying "don't" to children, but being always ready to put them in the way of doing the constructive thing. She taught in a Friends school before she was married and she is still fond of study, a little scrap book treasury of literary gems grows as the years go on, and she says she wants to "keep in touch with things" so that she can help her children when they are older. She will not need to worry about that.

At the pace she is travelling she is likely to keep several laps ahead of any generation that may come after her.

But with all her devotion to her home, she finds time for some other interests. The first of these is her Church. There are not many Friends left in the neighborhood, and the meeting house is too cold to use in winter, so the few Friends families meet at her house occasionally. When they do not get together each family holds its own service. Having grown up in a Friends settlement no doubt she misses the communion with more people of her own religion, but she enjoys particularly the quarterly meetings for the district of Newmarket, Mariposa and Pickering. At the provincial annual meeting at Norwich last year we noticed her name in the program to give an address on "Promoters Peace." But no sectarianism could keep her aloof from her neighbors even in the church life. "Since there is no Friends church here," she said, "we go to the little local Union Church. We like to be with our neighbors, and our little one is in their burying ground, so it feels homelike to go there."

Perhaps the happiness in being with her neighbors is also partly responsible for her interest in the Women's Institute. "We learn so much from each other," she remarked. "At the January meeting the roll call was to be answered by a New Year resolution and a number of the women said they had resolved to be more neighborly. They could scarcely make a better resolution. Next to that, I decided to try to enjoy country living more, and to help others enjoy it more."

The Community Club is another live interest. "Because," she observed, "it is bringing together people who scarcely knew each other even though they lived in the same school section. Whole families attend—parents, young people and children, so in developing a neighborhood spirit and bringing out the latent talent in the young people, it is doing what no other type of organization could do." She spoke most enthusiastically of the president, Earl Toole, a lively and well-known Junior Farmer of York County, and of the help received from the Agricultural Representative and his assistant in outlining the program and assisting in the organization. Naturally she is also interested in having the best for the school—sufficiently interested to attend the annual school meeting this year along with five other women. Three new trustees had to be elected in the section this year and we note that one of them is a woman.

It is not surprising, either, to find her on the auxiliary of the county hospital. Next to her home and church this is probably her

pet interest. "One can scarcely measure the blessing a local hospital can be to a rural community," she said. "We have had a few serious accidents, when it has meant everything to be able to rush the patient to a hospital with every facility including surgical cleanliness to save his life. For maternity cases it is a boon to a mother to have two weeks or more of absolute rest with no responsibility and no worries about the children, as she is sure to have if she stays at home, even with fairly competent help in the house, and whenever I see an item in the paper saying that one of our country women's organizations has sent canned fruit or other supplies to a city hospital, I always read further to see if they have not also remembered their own county hospital.

Even with these public interests to her credit it would be entirely wrong to think of our Friend, with her demure Quaker bonnet and her brown eyes incongruously twinkling beneath it, as a club woman. She is rather, first, last and best of all a neighbor, and she insists that many of her neighbors are doing far more than she. In fact it is just neighborliness that prompts all these interests, just as it prompts her to ask the woman on the next farm to come over and use her electric washing machine. And please note that she is not frittering away energy on movements that do not matter. They are all vital, human things.

In all this rambling, we have neglected to tell her name. That is as she would have it. But since other women readers, on Ontario farms will feel better acquainted if they know who she is and where she lives, she is Mrs. Elmer Starr, of the Starr Elms Stock Farm near Newmarket. Elmer Starr has not been mentioned either, because men do not like being drawn into these stories; but as the theme of our sketch is the glory of contentment it would not be complete without another line from one of her letters, written soon after our first meeting at Pine Orchard: "I am sure thee is happy in going about the province meeting and working with other women, but I wonder if sometimes thee does not envy me my kind husband and three healthy children."

Perhaps this gives us a great deal of the secret of her happy philosophy of life. We always had an idea that it might have something to do with it.

## Appendix D

### MEMORIES OF MY MOTHER

by Stuart S. Starr

[Shortly after her death, Elma Starr's youngest son wrote this memorial at the request of the Yonge Street Monthly Meeting, of which she had long been a member. It is representative of how she was seen by her children and grandchildren. In addition, the first paragraph makes explicit some important points about her upbringing which she must have taken for granted and so did not treat in her memoirs.]

Mother grew up in a very sheltered, puritanical environment with little contact with the "outside." Once she heard a neighbour greet her mother: "Merry Christmas, Mrs. McGrew." She had to ask what that was about—Christmas was a pagan festival to be ignored and "Mrs. McGrew" was a worldly title not in keeping with the plain language. First Day observance was taken very seriously—no unnecessary work, no school work, no sporting activity. Attendance at Meeting was a "must," and reading was strictly from the Bible or Bible-related material. Much of this same atmosphere was carried forward to my own childhood.

To Mother there was a great gulf between right and wrong, truth and falsehood. There was no middle ground, no grey area. She did not approve of reading fiction—it was not true! Mother was a very strong-willed person and, once she had her mind fixed on a course of action, she was not easily diverted from her objective. She was a long-time member of the Women's Institute and put a lot of effort into a movement to improve the status of farm women. During the thirties she was very active in promoting peace—writing letters, speaking, distributing literature, etc. In the mid-thirties she became involved in "temperance" activities and for the next thirty years the battle against "demon rum" was a driving passion in her life. Her efforts were directed towards children and young people; she felt it was better to stop the problem before it started rather than to try to reform the addicted.

Another of Mother's concerns was the need for a "home" for elderly friends. It was her suggestion which planted the seed that

resulted in "The Walton Home" at Barnesville, Ohio, the home in which she spent the last twelve winters of her life. She had a dream of such a home at the Yonge Street Meeting House, but it was not to be, at least during her lifetime.

My parents were very faithful to the Yonge Street Meeting during its period of decline and for a number of years carried the responsibility for the Meeting almost singlehandedly. I think it is probable, if they had not done so, the Meeting would have been laid down and the meeting house might have passed from the hands of Friends, lost from its intended use forever.

Mother had a great love and compassion for all humanity. Many times I recall her going to visit a neighbour who was sick, bereaved or suffering some major loss. Once, in particular, I remember her going at 7 a.m. to visit a neighbour whose barn had burned. She had breakfast with them, read the Bible and prayed with them. And finally, I remember her love of God, her faith in a higher power that gave her the strength and courage that carried her through good times and bad. She believed firmly in divine guidance, read the Bible daily and prayed for guidance, for the preservation of her loved ones and in gratitude for her blessings. And so, on the fifteenth of Sixth Month 1985, in her 95th year, after a long and full life, she passed from this life to the next—a transition which she anticipated with faith and hope and joy.

## Appendix E

### A SON-IN-LAW'S MEMORIES OF ELMA MCGREW STARR

by Raymond W. Stanley

[This memorial by the husband of Elma Starr's youngest daughter, Huldah, is reprinted from the fall 1985 issue of the *Olney Current*, the alumni journal of the Friends Boarding School. It nicely supplements the previous two appendices, as well as the main text, as the author was intermediate between Stuart Starr and Ethel Chapman in his relationship to Elma Starr.]

Elma McGrew Starr was born September 21, 1890, about one mile west of the Short Creek meetinghouse near Harrisville, Ohio. She left this life for the beautiful realms beyond on June 15, 1985. She was a twin with Edith McGrew Smith of Ackworth, Iowa, and is also survived by a second sister, Caroline McGrew Smith Stanley of the Walton Home, Barnesville, Ohio.

At age 90, she told many friends, with a twinkle in her eye, "I am ninety, and my twin sister is ninety, too!"

Elma was endowed with a quick and witty mind and through her 94 years she demonstrated great strength and resolution in dealing with life's issues, whether she perceived them as right or wrong. There was never any question where Elma Starr stood on her convictions. She was a devoted Friend and often wore her bonnet at important times, such as meetings in her beloved Yonge Street Meetinghouse, Newmarket, Ontario, and when she approached the border crossing into the United States, which she made more than 100 times. This little show of "Quaker piety" often provoked smiles and chuckles from her family.

After teaching school at Norwich, Ontario, she met and married Elmer Starr and soon thereafter became a Canadian citizen. My earliest memories of Elma and Elmer date back to the opening of Friends Boarding School in 1936, when they pulled up to the east porch at Olney and unloaded daughters Harriet and Huldah. I can still see Elma taking those steps in her youthful, sprightly manner. In 1940 I visited "Starr Elms," as their Ontario farm was called, to attend Harriet and Alfred Cope's wedding. Elma treated me with great kindness and respect. From that time I found my way back



many times to that lovely farm, to claim their younger daughter as my wife. Elma always welcomed our developing family with such love and affection that she won the great love of all the grandchildren.

Elma was a life member of the Newmarket, Ontario, chapter of W.C.T.U., attending conventions and working tirelessly for the cause of temperance. She always stood up to be counted in matters of peace and war. Her community involvement was active and strong, always directed in the best interests of others. She once gave an impressive lecture at Canadian Yearly Meeting on the subject "Why I am a Christian."

While attempting to provide adequate care for her aging mother Eliza McGrew Steer in 1942, she spoke to James and Sarah Walton, asking if they would consider giving their nice old brick home to the Yearly Meeting for a "Home for the Aged." In 1944 the Walton Home opened as a retirement home and has been a haven of rest and loving care to the present. Elma Starr bears much credit for the Walton Home being in existence. How fitting that she spent many happy years there, and it was her request that she remain in her room there until the last. She had won the love and respect of the staff and other residents, who have given two books in her memory to the Barnesville Library.

In paying their last respects to Grandma Starr, her grandchildren came from Ontario, Washington state, New England, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, and northern Ohio to assist with the burial the day following her death. Several bore her quietly the last 500 feet to her final resting place beside her father in the Short Creek cemetery. It is a beautiful spot on a westward-sloping hillside overlooking the valley where she was born. Her considerable pressed leaf collection was distributed to the immediate family who had gathered at the graveside. The leaves were lovingly dropped onto her casket, after which her grandchildren filled in the grave, chatting about the good times they all had with Grandma Starr.

So ends a life well lived, to the glory of God and her Savior. Her old treadle sewing machine, nimble fingers and sewing skills had earned her the title of "The Sewing Angel." Now she has come into her own.

