

# Abby, Laurilla, *and* Mary Ann

The Heritage and Legacy of the Daughters  
of Two Hannah Hickoks

1635–1906



Louise Elizabeth Smith



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## INTRODUCTION

# Abby and Laurilla Meet Mary Ann Summer 1854

*We were brought up to think more of our mother's relations than our father's.—Abby Smith, March 17, 1866.*

Abby H. Smith was the youngest of the five well-educated and talented daughters of Hannah Hickok and her husband Zephaniah Smith. The sisters were brought up to think more of their mother's Hickok relatives, than those of their father.<sup>1</sup>

In the summer of 1854 Abby and her sister Laurilla Smith left their Glastenbury, Connecticut home, to visit the remaining Hickok first cousins of their mother, Hannah Hickok Smith. This included Hannah Hickok Eldred and her daughter Mary Ann Eldred Austin, in Halfway Brook Village, Town of Highland (originally Lumberland), New York.

### 1686 Hickok Ancestors, Southbury, Connecticut

Hannah Hickok Smith and her younger first cousin Hannah Hickok Eldred, their fathers David and Asa Hickok, their grandparents, and their many aunts, uncles, and cousins



Possibly young Abby Smith, courtesy of Historical Society of Glastenbury.

were born and lived in or near the South Britain section of Southbury, Connecticut. South Britain, at the bend of the Pomperaug River, was originally part of Ancient Woodbury.

In 1686, ancestors Joseph and Mary Carpenter Hickok lived somewhat north of the bend of the Pomperaug River, on twenty-five acres Joseph had purchased near the Transylvania Brook. The Smith sisters, well acquainted with the area, had often visited their many relatives and friends who lived there.

### The Smith Sisters

In 1854 Zephina, Cyinthia, Laurilla, Julia, and Abby (ages fifty-seven to sixty-seven) were considered “one of the most intellectual and learned families in the state.”<sup>2</sup>

Kimberly Mansion, their large two-story home on Main Street, was labeled “Misses Smith” on the Glastenbury map.<sup>3</sup> The five sisters shared household chores and sometimes hired workers to maintain their 133-acre property. Their original land, laid out in the mid-1630s, was bordered by the Connecticut River on the west.

The Smiths continued to travel the seven miles to Hartford to shop, market their crops, buy books, visit doctors and dentists, and attend court cases.

The Smith family had always been very caring of their neighbors and the poor who worked in the nearby mills. In the 1830s they had worked tirelessly to fight the horror of slavery.

Zephaniah Hollister Smith, a Yale graduate, was highly respected in Glastenbury. Mr. Smith<sup>4</sup> had been a Congregational minister before becoming a lawyer.

A strong believer in the Bible, Zephaniah encouraged his daughters to, “Read the Bible for yourself.”<sup>5</sup>

Hannah Hickok Smith, a remarkable woman (as we shall read from her own journals), also had a high regard for the Bible. She loved literature and newspapers, wrote poems, liked mathematics, was knowledgeable about astronomy, and fixed clocks. Hannah could read and translate Latin, French, and Italian. In her late seventies she learned Hebrew.<sup>6</sup>





*Barryville, New York on the Delaware River, the border between New York and Pennsylvania.*

### **Hannah Hickok Eldred**

In 1812 the younger Hannah Hickok, her parents, and siblings moved from Connecticut to a sparsely-settled, forest wilderness in New York, then called Lumberland. The Hickok Family settled near Halfway Brook, two miles north of Barryville and the Delaware River, which was the border between New York and Pennsylvania. Lumberland was quite a contrast to the long established communities of Glastenbury and Hartford, familiar to the Smith sisters.

### **Mary Ann Eldred Austin**

In 1826 Hannah Hickok married James Eldred, a widower with five children. Mary Ann Eldred Austin, their only child, was born the following year.<sup>7</sup>

The Eldred two-story home (built in 1830) stood next to their old sawmill, two miles north of the original Hickok property. East of the Eldred property, Halfway Brook flowed four miles south to the Delaware River. The northwest corner of the Eldred acreage became a corner of Halfway Brook Village, which was later the village of Eldred.

In 1850 Mary Ann Eldred married Henry Austin. The young Austins lived a half mile southeast of Halfway Brook Village and Mary Ann's parents.

In 1854 James and Hannah Hickok Eldred had been

married for twenty-eight years. James had at one time owned 684.57 acres in Lumberland. Lumberland's Postmaster for twenty years, James had also held many positions in the local government. A diligent Bible teacher, Mr. Eldred had been a deacon for over twenty years in their rural Congregational Church.

In 1854 James was seventy-seven years old and his health was failing. He and Hannah lived with Mary Ann and Henry, and Henry's parents Ralph and Fanny Knapp Austin. Fanny Austin was not that well either, and Hannah Hickok Eldred helped her with household chores.

Hannah Hickok Eldred (the same age as Laurilla Smith) seems much more reserved than her cousin Hannah Hickok Smith. Letters written by several of her step-grandchildren, indicate Hannah Eldred was good natured and well-loved. An 1864 letter of Hannah Hickok Eldred encouraged her granddaughter Emma Austin to remember to read her Bible and not forget her prayers.

### **Abby and Laurilla Meet Mary Ann**

In June 1854 Abby and Laurilla arrived at the Shohola Railroad Station in Pennsylvania. The sisters rode the old crude rope-guided ferry across the Delaware River to Barryville, New York.



After the ferry ride, the Smith sisters took a stage four miles north on a rough dirt road that ran parallel to Halfway Brook. (The ride was so miserable that Abby later wrote she would only visit Mary Ann again if she lived in Barryville.)

Two miles north of the Delaware River, Abby and Laurilla passed the old Hickok homestead. In two more miles the sisters turned right at the northwest corner of the original Eldred property.

A short distance later, they crossed a bridge over Halfway Brook and soon arrived at the Austin's.

Abby and Laurilla Smith were welcomed by Hannah Hickok Eldred, her daughter Mary Ann Eldred Austin, and Mary Ann's three little girls: Mary Henrietta, Edith Emogene (Emma), and Maria Adelaide (ages four, three, and one).

In the eight letters Abby wrote "Cousin" Mary Ann Eldred Austin (from November 1854 to May 1869), we learn that Abby was very impressed with James Eldred. She found Hannah Hickok Eldred "perhaps most interesting."

Laurilla was "the most interested" in Mary Ann who seemed like their mother (Hannah Smith) with three young daughters so close in age. Thirteen years later, Abby still remembered the names of those three little Austin girls.

### Unfair Taxes

In late fall 1872 Abby and Julia, the two youngest Smiths, were confronted with unfair taxes which they could not fight, because women could not vote.

Their quiet life changed to one of national recognition. Endorsed by several leaders in the Woman's Suffrage Movement, the elderly sisters confronted their town's unfair taxes and stood up for a woman's right to vote.

In their letters and speeches, Abby and Julia questioned why half the population (women) of the United States could not vote. The sisters referred to 1630's English and American history, principles underlying the United States Constitution, and their knowledge of the Bible, to point out what was rightfully theirs, but had been kept from women.

To appreciate the importance and influence of the events and documents of the 1600s, which were still remembered by the Smiths (and others), this narrative travels back 240 years before the Smith sisters' speeches.

### Sailing for the New World

Our journey begins in 1630s Old England. The country's Magna Carta heritage, King Charles I's unlawful ship tax, forced worship, and England's bad economy play a major part in the future United States of America.

After the 1635 departure of William Hitchcock, thought to be the first Hickok relative of the Smith sisters and Mary Ann, this history travels forward over 270 years.

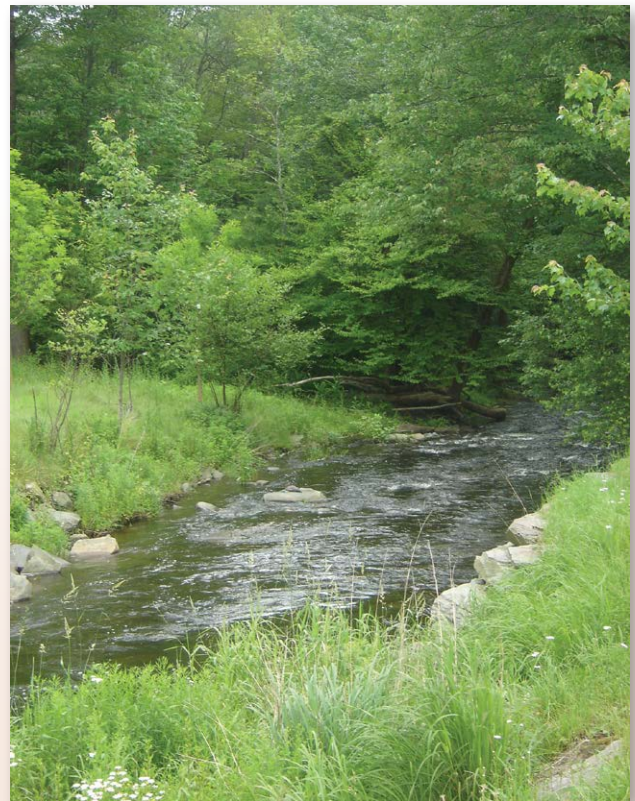
In 1854 we join Abby and Laurilla Smith when they visit



*Possibly young Mary Ann Eldred Austin. Photo courtesy of Katherine M. Calkin.*

Hannah Hickok Eldred and meet her daughter Mary Ann. Over the next fifteen years, we read the eight letters Abby H. Smith wrote to Cousin Mary Ann.

We arrive full circle in the 1870s, when we join Abby and Julia as they oppose their illegal taxes and advocate for the right of women to vote. Though the Smith sisters had a thorough knowledge of English and American history, early Hickok family history is not well known. The reason becomes apparent in Chapter One.



*"East of the Eldred property, Halfway Brook flowed four miles south to the Delaware River." Photo: Cynthia Leavenworth Bellinger.*



*Asa Hickok had recently enlisted when the Battle of Lexington, Massachusetts, took place on April 19, 1775. Lithograph: M. Swett, 1775; Yale Art Gallery; Mabel Brady Garvan Collection, 1946.9.322; 44562. Public Domain.*



## CHAPTER THREE

# Ticonderoga and Crown Point

## The Hickoks and the Revolutionary War, 1775–1783

Asa and Reuben Hickok kept pace with seventy-eight other men from Woodbury (which included Southbury and South Britain), Bethlehem, and Roxbury, on the route to New York.

Fifty-seven years later, when Asa Hickok was seventy-eight years old, he applied for a Revolutionary War Pension. Though he was “old and infirm,” Asa recounted his memory from 1775. (The troops left in May and arrived in June.)

*From Woodbury I marched with a part of the regiment (north) to Litchfield and Gosben in Connecticut; and*

*(northwest) to Sheffield, Massachusetts, and Albany, in New York.*

*From Albany we marched (north some sixty miles) to Fort George on Lake George.*

*From there to the garrison or fort of Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain (northeast another thirty-five miles), where we were stationed and joined by three more companies of Colonel Hinman's Regiment.*

*Four companies of Col. Hinman's Regiment were stationed at Crown Point (ten miles north of Ticonderoga).*

*Col. Hinman commanded until General Schuyler of New York arrived.*

### Men and Supplies for Ticonderoga

Truman Hinman<sup>1</sup> and Shadrach Osborn, in Southbury (still considered Woodbury), purchased supplies, including ten pounds of powder, lead, and flints, and sent them to Ticonderoga, in June and July.

At the end of June Major-General Philip Schuyler (from New York) wrote Col. Ben Hinman that the Continental Congress had appointed him to command the troops in Ticonderoga.

### Wretched Roads

On July 3, 1775 Colonel Benjamin Hinman wrote to Peter Livingston, President of New York's Provincial Congress,<sup>2</sup> while Asa Hickok, other Woodbury men, and the troops at Ticonderoga repaired bridges, mended highways, and removed cannon.

Col. Ben requested more men and “suitable implements” immediately. The roads were in such a “wretched condition” that wagons could hardly pass each other.

The forty-four miles between Halfmoon (north of Albany) and Fort George, were especially bad. Since the barracks were too crowded for the health of the soldiers, Col. Hinman asked that the newcomers bring their own tents.

### Failure to Provide

On July 7 Col. Benjamin Hinman replied to Major-General Schuyler's late-June letter.

Since Schuyler would be responsible to lead an invasion into Canada, Col. Hinman wrote that he knew there were



Wood engraving of a “76” Minuteman or Continental soldier. Engraved by Speer from a picture by George W. Maynard. Cover of Harper's Weekly, July 1876. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division: 3b02936.



Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain. Detroit Publishing Co., between 1910 and 1920. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division: det.4a24328.

350 Regulars and 250 King's Troops in St. John, Canada. The King's Troops at St. John were "fortifying and building some watercraft," for an unknown intent. Col. Hinman had tried to inform the very cautious Canadians of friendly intentions towards them, but it was almost impossible to get any information to them. After signing the letter, "I am, Sir, your most humble servant," Col. Hinman added:

*I wait, Sir, with impatience for your arrival, as I find myself very unable to steer in this stormy situation.*

*Sometimes we have no flour, and a constant cry for rum, and want of molasses for beer... the failure of those who provide give great uneasiness to the men...<sup>3</sup>*

When Schuyler finally arrived at Ticonderoga, he began planning for the invasion of Quebec.<sup>4</sup>

### The King's Decision

In October of 1775 King George III had enough of the Colonies resisting Parliament's laws and acts, and declared the Colonies were in open rebellion.

### Fever and Dysentery

In Fall 1775 there was still great sickness at Ticonderoga. Asa Hickok recalled:

*In the fall of the year the men at Ticonderoga were attacked with fever and dysentery and many of them died. (His brother Reuben was very sick and died two years later.)*

*I (Asa) was taken sick with a fever late in the fall, which rendered me unable to go north with the troops to Fort Saint-Jean (John) south of Montreal in Canada, where we had been ordered to march.*

*Around December first I was discharged from further service. Col. Hinman directed me to go to my brother's, who resided near the head of South Bay, and from thence, home as soon as I was able.*

*I appreciated the kind attention of Col. Hinman who was a friend of my father Justus. Before marching with his troops (169 miles) to St. John, Col. Hinman procured a boat and hands to row me and other sick soldiers to the head of South Bay.*

*My brother picked me up and moved me to his house. I remained there until I was able to ride home to my father's in Woodbury—as directed by Col. Hinman.*

### The Long Haul

In December as Asa headed home to South Britain, Connecticut, Henry Knox arrived in Ticonderoga.

Henry arranged for 80 yoke of oxen to haul 42 sleds with much of the captured British equipment, including 60 tons of cannons, mortars, and howitzers, to Massachusetts.<sup>5</sup>

On January 27, 1776 after too much snow, not enough snow, adding oxen, and hiring new workers, the cannons and arms arrived at Cambridge, Massachusetts. Washington used the captured artillery to end the eleven months the British had held Boston hostage.

On March 17, 1776, the British evacuated (left) Boston.



## *The Rest of the Story*

Colonel Benjamin Hinman used some major diplomacy to deal with Colonel Benedict Arnold at Fort Ticonderoga.

When Colonel Ben Hinman arrived at Fort Ticonderoga, Colonel Ethan Allen and Colonel Seth Warner relinquished their command to him. Colonel Arnold would not.

Arnold would not even allow Connecticut soldiers to enter the fort (except upon condition). Colonel Hinman was patient with Arnold, until he learned of Arnold's plan to sail two ships to St. John and surrender them to the British there.

Colonel Hinman "immediately sent a detachment to procure the ships and enlist all those of Arnold's men that were willing. The rest were disbanded."



*"Col. Hinman procured a boat and someone to row it with me and other sick soldiers to the head of South Bay." British gunboat sailing on Lake Champlain, Crown Point in background. Ink drawing: Thomas Davies, ca. 1759. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division: 3a52154.*

Arnold's authority was taken from him, ending his seven-day standoff. But it did not stop Arnold from bad mouthing the New England troops to General Schuyler when the General arrived.

(Allen and Arnold had different recollections as to what had happened.)—*wikipedia.org*.

### **Colonel Seth Warner Returns to Roxbury**

Colonel Seth Warner was not well when he returned to Roxbury at the end of the war. Colonel Warner died on December 26, 1784.

His friend Reverend Canfield conducted his funeral service. —*roxburychurch.org*.



*Ruins of the British Fort Crown Point on Lake Champlain, New York. Detroit Photographic Co., 1902; Photochrom prints: Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division: 18215.*

### **All Men Are Created Equal, July 4, 1776**

Asa Hickok said that while he was at Ticonderoga, "General Schuyler received the intelligence of the document called the Declaration of American Independence. The General then ordered the troops at that place to give three cheers."

Since Asa was not at Ticonderoga in July 1776, he may have been referring to "The Declaration of the Causes and Necessity of Taking Up Arms" adopted July 6, 1775, by the Second Continental Congress. The Resolution listed some of the Thirteen Colonies' grievances, including "taxation without representation" and some of the Coercive Acts.

On July 4, 1776 the Declaration of Independence announced that the Thirteen Colonies: New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia were free from the control of the Kingdom of Great Britain.

The Declaration maintained that "all men were created equal." And governments derived "their just powers from the consent of the governed," just as Thomas Hooker had said in his sermon of 1638. The colonies were officially at war.

At the end of seven long years of war the country would still not have implemented ALL men (mankind, men and women) as being created equal. It would take another war and eighty-two years for all men to be able to vote.

In the 1870s Abby and Julia Smith's speeches remind those in government that half the descendants (women) of those who fought for "all men created equal," still did not have the right to vote.

### **New York Headquarters and a Safer Route**

General Washington, concerned the British would invade New York City, moved his Headquarters outside of the City.

In July 1776 two forts were built to prevent British access



Fort William Henry and Fort George were at the south end of Lake George. Photochrom print of Paradise Bay located in the Narrow Island group, on the eastern shore of Lake George. Detroit Photographic Co., 1904. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division: 2008679685.

to the lower Hudson River: Fort Washington near north Manhattan; and opposite, on the west side of the Hudson, Fort Constitution (later Fort Lee) in New Jersey.<sup>6</sup>

In August 1776 the British arrived in New York City and began patrolling Connecticut's coast which bordered Long Island Sound.

To avoid British troops when traveling between New York and Massachusetts, Colonial leaders John Adams, George Washington, and others took a more central east-west route through Connecticut. That route passed through the towns of Hartford, Farmington, Southington, Waterbury (which included Middlebury), Woodbury, and New Milford.<sup>7</sup>

### A Very Hot Battle, October 1776

On Sunday, October 27, David Hickok wrote that an order was given at South Britain's Meeting for "every able-bodied man in the Train Band to march to Stamford forthwith."

Monday a battle took place in White Plains, New York,

some fifty miles southwest of South Britain. David could hear the cannons:

*The cannon played briefly all day. Mr. Reynolds just come from the army and says they had a very hot battle at the White Plains yesterday.*

—David Hickok, October 28, 1776.

*About a hundred and fifty were killed and wounded in the short space of an hour. Quite a number of Woodbury soldiers were killed and several others severely wounded.*

—Rev. Mr. Wildman, Southbury.<sup>8</sup>

*Daniel Downs, Amasa Garrit are killed and John Chilson had his arm shot off in the Battle of the White Plains. A soldier belonging to Boston Government lodged at my house this night, to whom I sold my old watch.*

—David Hickok, November 4, 1776.



## Loyalists

Not everyone was supportive of the war against the mother country. Some sources have said one-third were for fighting, one-third were Loyalists, and one-third were uncommitted.

I have Loyalist ancestors on both my paternal and maternal sides. Both families lost property.

One family fled to New Brunswick, Canada.—LES.

### Horse Neck, November 1776

In late fall 1776 Colonel Ben Hinman was stationed at Horse Neck (near West Greenwich, Connecticut) and the Long Island Sound to support the main army. Asa Hickok once again volunteered.

*On or about the first day of November in that year (1776), I (Asa) volunteered for two months in the company commanded by Captain Elijah Hinman.<sup>9</sup>*

*The company marched from Woodbury to the Horse Neck where the troops awaited further orders.*

*The British men then expected to land somewhere along the frontier of Connecticut. Those of us who volunteered were retained to guard the lives on the frontier, as it was called.*

*While we volunteer men were at the Horse Neck, a major ordered Captain Hinman to march his company, with the exception of a guard to remain at Horse Neck, lower down the Sound, towards New York.*

*The name of the place, where the company men were stationed along the Sound, was called Jagger's Guard, at the time.*

*I remained as one of the guards at the Horse Neck for several weeks, when the guard joined the balance of the company.*

*I remained until the expiration of the time for which the company volunteered. The company men were all discharged at the same time.*

On November 20, 1776 Asa's brother David Hickok wrote in his journal:

*Wednesday I did nothing of any value but sleep and write a letter for John Johnson for I watched last night with John Garrit who is sick of the long fever at brother Justus's.*

*News that Fort Washington (November 16) is taken. The night before last three soldiers which came from the camps lodged at my house; they belonged to the (Massachusetts) Bay government.*



Knox entering camp with the artillery captured at Fort Ticonderoga, winter 1775–76. Hand-colored wood engraving: William H. Van Ingen, ca. 1855. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division: 3g09060.



British version of an American rifleman wearing a military uniform. The American Revolution in drawings and prints; a checklist of 1765–1790. Library of Congress Rare Book and Special Collections Division: 3a45452.

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## Fonts Used in This Book

*Abby Laurilla, and Mary Ann* is set in Garamond Book Condensed, a serif font inspired by the original punch cuts designed by Claude Garamond in the 16th Century.

Sidebar titles are set in Cochin Italic, a serif typeface, originally produced in 1912 by Georges Peignot, based on the copperplate engravings of 18th century French artist Charles-Nicolas Cochin. The “d” matches the written one in the journals of David Hickok and his daughter Hannah Hickok Smith.

Sidebar text is Myriad Pro condensed, a sans-serif typeface designed by Robert Slimbach and Carol Twombly for Adobe Systems.



*The Hudson River. In the background Newburgh, New York, where Asa Hickok and his family most likely crossed the Hudson River and where they would travel for food and necessities. No. 14 of the Hudson River Port Folio; Etcher: John Hill; Artist: William Guy Wall; Publisher: Henry I. Megarey, between 1821 and 1825. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division: 03818.*



## About the Author



Louise E. Smith, 2021. Photo: Gary D. Smith.

Louise Elizabeth (Austin) Smith grew up on treeless Peach Street, in a suburb south of Detroit, Michigan. She has always loved to read biographies and classics.

Louise inherited a deep appreciation of words from her father; and a love of music from her mother. Louise received a bachelor's degree in music education from Western Michigan University and a master's degree in elementary education from Eastern Michigan University.

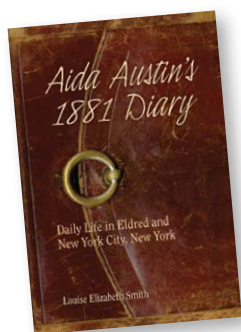
After teaching music and fifth grade classroom for ten years, Louise met and married the love of her life, Gary, then a car designer for General Motors. She applied her educational and musical skills to homeschooling their four children, now grown with families of their own.

At age ten Louise wanted to write fiction, but she didn't know how to create plots or characters. In 2004 Louise found nine pages with anecdotes her grandmother Myrtie Crabtree Briggs (b. 1891) told about her parents, grandparents, and relatives.

Family stories, Louise realized, had built-in plots and characters. With the help of the internet and photos and stories shared by relatives and new friends, Louise began to compile the stories of her grandparents and their ancestors.

*Abby, Laurilla, and Mary Ann* is the sixth book published with the help of Gary who designed the covers, interiors, prepared all of the photos, and added his much needed professional touch. Louise and Gary reside in Cave Creek, Arizona.

## Other Books by Louise E. Smith



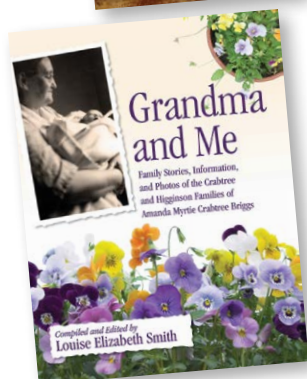
### Aida Austin's 1881 Diary

Aida Austin started a diary at the beginning of 1881, the year she turned twenty in November. Whether in New York City with her Austin cousins or at her home in Eldred, New York, Aida wrote about her daily life: plumbers fixing pipes, dentist and doctor visits, going to Central Park, skating, sailing, shopping, getting the mail, holidays, daily visits with relatives, President Garfield's assassination, drinking tea, and raking hay.

Included at the end of the Diary are photos of Aida's parents, brothers, and some of her Eldred-Austin relatives mentioned in her diary.

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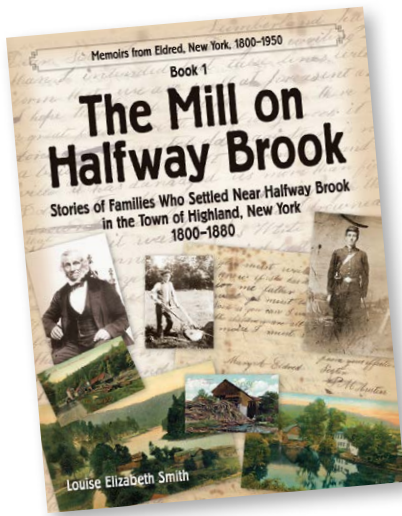
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Amanda Myrtie Crabtree Briggs was born in 1891 in a sodhouse on her father's Nebraska homestead farm. Over the years she told her children and grandchildren the stories of her growing up as well as those of her parents and her Crabtree and Higginson grandparents—real pioneers of the west. This book is a collection of those stories and includes almost 600 photos and documents.

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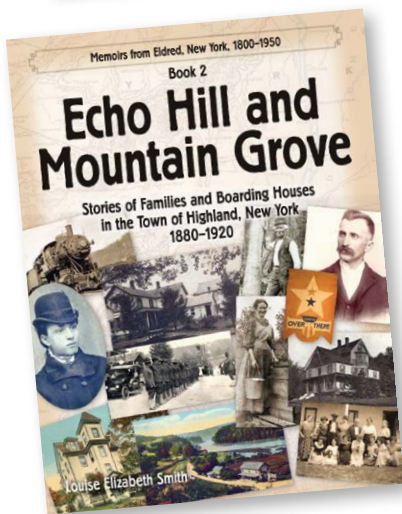
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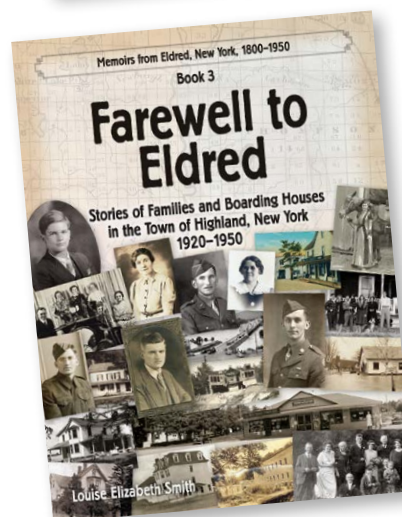
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