

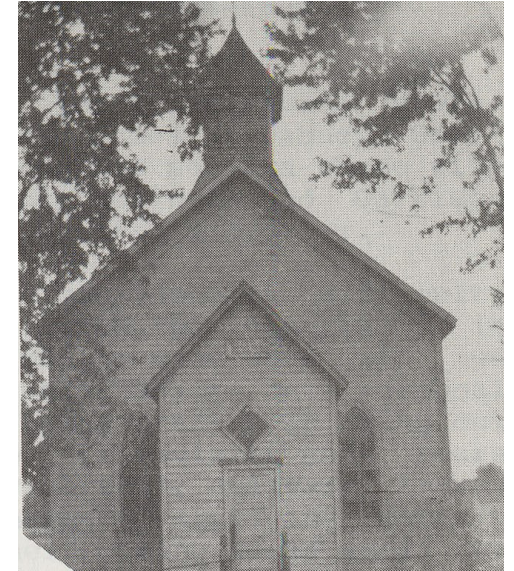
# The Elbert and Harriet Dyke Family Album



*Elbert Snarling Dyke Sr.*



*Harriet Shreve Dyke*



*North Buxton,  
Baptist Church*



*Mariah Dyke*

## Audio Story—Harriet Shreve Dyke

You are such a good friend to visit at this sad time Charity. I can't believe Mama's gone and buried a week already... It just doesn't seem fair that she fell from her horse while doing the Lord's work - preaching to folks who couldn't attend church. I take comfort knowing that she will be in Heaven with my little son George Geoffrey. He was so young only four years old when he died

I was only a young child when my folks came to Buxton from Trenton, New Jersey. We may have been born free, but that Fugitive Slave Act put our freedom at risk. Imagine passing a law allowing anyone to claim you as his or her slave, while not letting you defend yourself in court... We were proud when Uncle Abraham Shadd went to fight for the Union Army in the Civil War and prayed for his safe return. It has not always been easy here in Canada West, but at least there's never been any question of our freedom.

We settled on the 5<sup>th</sup> Concession, just outside the settlement. My father was a teacher in Trenton. He felt so strongly about education that he donated land for a school. I went to school at the S.S. #4 north, on the land he donated. Growing up was a happy time for me. Our house was always full of love and sometimes a little confusion, which is to be expected in a family with eleven children!

Elbert was a youngster when he came to Buxton, too. You know he was born a slave in Virginia. Did you know his father was also his master? He brought Elbert and his sisters with their mother Mariah to Buxton. He bought property on the 7<sup>th</sup> Concession and settled them there. He appointed Elbert's uncle, George Charleston, to be the property trustee. When Elbert turned twenty-one years old, the land became his. Uncle George was good to Elbert and that is why he named Charleston Street after him when he worked with Sarah Johnson on the second village plan of North Buxton.

Elbert's always been smart. He walked five miles each way to attend Rev. King's Mission School. Weren't your brothers in school with Elbert there? Did you know Elbert's father sent for him to teach at his plantation in Louisiana? Elbert proposed to me in 1866 and he accepted the position while he was waiting for my answer. Once slavery ended, it was legal for his father to teach his

former slaves to read and write. However, things did not go well for Elbert in Louisiana. Nonetheless, he taught for five years in the U.S. and Manitoba before coming back home.

Elbert's return was an exciting time for us. He bought land on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> concessions to farm and then we got married December 31, 1873. He opened the first Post Office of North Buxton in 1875, when I was expecting George. Then we opened that grocery store. Before long the rest of the children were born - Harriet, Elizabeth, Arthur, Mary, Elbert and Oliver. They will surely miss their grandmother.

How can it already be 1890? Remember all the hours everyone gave to get the First Baptist Church built here in North Buxton. You and Mother really worked long and hard at it. There were days I thought it would never get built. It surely was a proud moment for all of us to see it standing in 1883. That was the year I was expecting Elbert Jr. Mother was so proud to be elected the first president of the Women's Home Mission Society and Elbert was happy to hold trustee position for the church.

These days Elbert's always busy on Raleigh Township business. He takes his responsibilities as a Councillor seriously. Right now, he's trying to convince the township to improve the drainage conditions for the farmers. My but the children keep me busy - I suppose you know all about that with ten of your own! There is always something to be washed or mended, meals to be prepared, gardens to be tended - the list grows even faster than the children do...

Thank you again for checking in on us. The children will certainly enjoy the Molasses Taffy and . Please come again when you're out this way. I'll see you at the morning service on Sunday.

## Elbert and Harriet Dyke Statistics

**Name :** Elbert Snarling Dyke

**Date Born:** 1848

**Died:** Dec. 29, 1928

**Siblings:** Harriet, Mary, and Jennie Dyke;  
Madonna Brown; Jeffrey Harris

**Occupation:** Post master, Grocer, Farmer

**Married:** Dec. 31, 1873

**Wife:** Harriet Shreve

**Date Born:** 1848

**Died :** Mar. 13, 1943

**Siblings:** William, John, Felix, Abraham,  
Esther, Emma, George B., Joseph, Victoria,  
Amelia

**Occupation:** Post Mistress

**Children:** George, Arthur, Elizabeth, Harriet,  
Elbert, Mary Euphemia Truelove, Oliver

**In:** Virginia

**In:** Raleigh Township

**Religion:** Baptist

**Came to Buxton Settlement:** 1852

**Residence In Buxton:** 7th Concession

**In:** Buxton

**In:** Trenton, New Jersey

**In:** Raleigh Township, North Buxton

**Religion:** Baptist

**Came to Buxton Settlement:** 1852

**Residence In Buxton:** 5th Concession

*\*\* Elbert was the first Post Master of North Buxton in 1875 and served until 1877.*

*\*\* (Daughter) Mary Euphemia Truelove Dyke died at the age of thirteen in 1892.*

*\*\* Harriet became the first woman Post Mistress of North Buxton in 1910 and served until 1924.*

*\*\* Harriet lived with her daughter Elizabeth (Mrs. Vincent) in her advanced years, she lived to be ninety-six years old.*

# DYKE

Provided by Buxton National Historic Site & Museum

GEORGE (master)  
&  
MARIAH 1840-1879 (slave)

