

“In the New World, the Jamestown colony was established in 1606, and times were very tough for the colonists for a number of years. Despite several infusions of hundreds of new settlers, all that remained by 1610 was a pitiful remnant of 60. It was Sir Thomas Dale’s arrival in 1611, with one hundred cows, that marked the beginning of dairying in America, and the beginning of some prosperity for the Jamestown settlers.

An old saying has it that ‘*A young fellow wantin’ a start in life just needs three things: a piece of land, a cow and a wife. And he don’t strictly need the last.*’ The cow had a pervasive influence on America’s history and culture. She is a producer of wealth. She can support a family. She not only turns grass into milk in quantities sufficient to feed a family but also provides extra to sell and she contributes a yearly calf to rear or fatten. The family that takes good care of its cow is well off. She doesn’t ask for much, but she asks every day. The need to milk the cow twice a day even determined the location of churches in the early years of settlement; people had to be able to walk there and back without disruption to the schedules of cows.”

The exact timeline of the arrival of cattle in the Fabius area remains a mystery to us, as yet. Although the early 1798 “Marks & Strays” for Fabius listed the farmers’ names and a livestock “tattoo” (clip, notch or mark on the ear), it did not differentiate between cattle, horses or other livestock. The NYS Census for 1825 is the first census that records the number of cattle. The total population of Fabius was 2,596; “neat cattle” (all cattle) was 3,199 and improved acres (IA: acres that had been cleared for crops or pasture use) was 13,666. By 1835, the population had increased to 2,852, IA to 1639.5, and neat cattle to 4,156. By 1845, New York State has begun to recognize the

emerging butter and cheese industry and compiled the following information for Fabius: population: 2529, IA: 18,238.5, neat cattle: 3,427 (1,917 listed as dairy animals), butter: 171,933#/year, cheese: 239,660#/year. Cheese production in the Town of Fabius was greater than all other towns in Onondaga County and three times the next highest-producing town (Pompey at 69,260#/year). Even though cooperative cheese making was still 10 years in the future, on-the-farm cheese making was becoming more important. Butter and cheese normally sold at the same price. Since cheese converts 10% of fluid milk to a marketable product, while butter has a conversion rate of only 4%, it was much more profitable to make cheese and cheese was also less perishable.

Cheesemaking was an early art and it was very often performed by the farmer’s wife who may have been chosen for her aptitude in making a “fine” cheese. In the early and mid 1800’s, a number of recipe books were written to aid housekeepers in their everyday life. Many of these early publications were printed in England and some very pricey copies are available for sale today. In 1859, Mrs. Eliza Ann (Benedict) Call of Fabius, Onondaga County, NY wrote such a book about what was needed in everyday life amid the

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**YOUNG HOUSEKEEPER
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HOUSEKEEPING,**

TOGETHER WITH

**A COLLECTION OF MISCELLANEOUS
RECEIPTS,**

AND THE WHOLE ART OF MAKING

BUTTER AND CHEESE

BY

MRS. ELIZA A. CALL

FABIUS, ONONDAGA COUNTY, N.Y.

1859

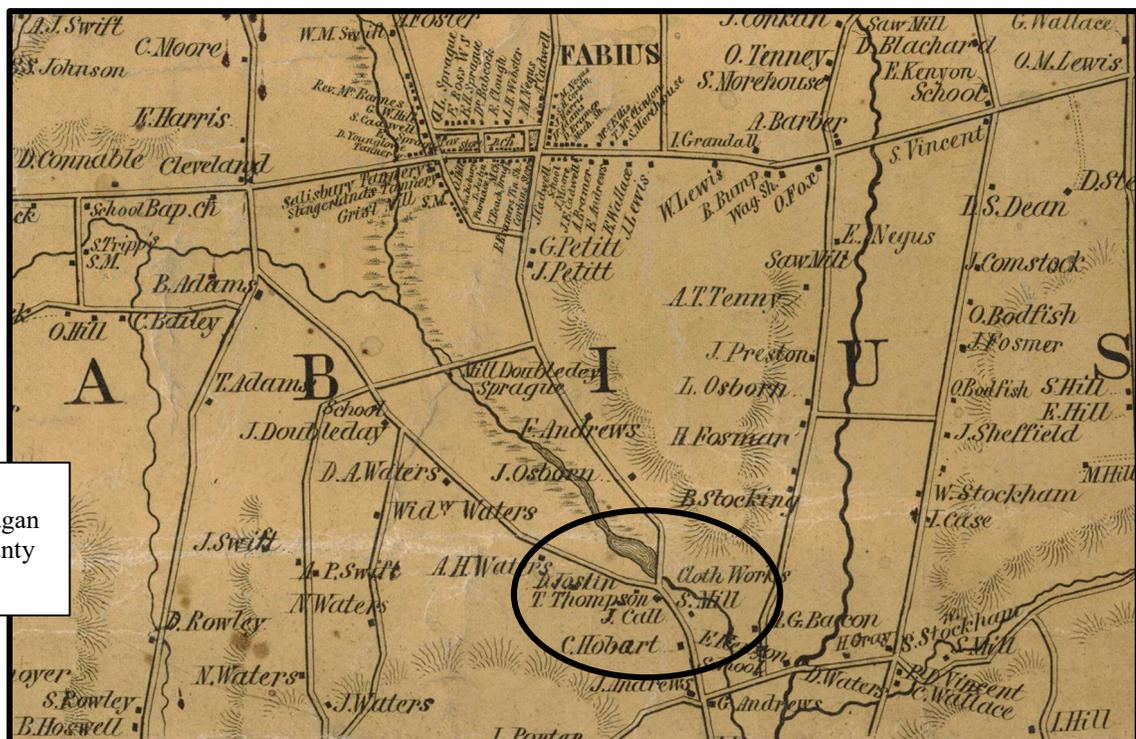
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farming part of the community. Its title: The Young Housekeeper and DAIRYMAIDS DIRECTORY Containing the Most Valuable and Original RECIPES In All the Various Branches of Housekeeping, Together with A Collection of Miscellaneous Receipts and The Whole Art of Making BUTTER AND CHEESE, 1859. In the preface of the book, Eliza stresses that “after careful examination of quite a number of cookbooks in circulation, she has not in a single instance found one that has been written by an experienced Housewife. She has been a practical House-Keeper for 25 years and, by many years of experience, has tested what she is about to write.” This publication contains rules for making butter and cheese, general remarks on keeping a dairy, recipes from pastries and breads to making ice cream, preserving fruits, preparing raised meats and wild game (including eel), homemade cotton dyes, candles, cement, vinegar, to name a few. She even concludes her fine publication with “Hints for the Wife”:

Always be kind to every one, especially to your husband. Don't ever fret or scold. Don't say, "there is no one here but ourselves," and so bring everything on to the table in perfect confusion; but set your table in just as good order when alone with your family, as though you had company. Use a table cloth, if it is nothing but cheap factory cloth; and have that clean and white. Never leave your room in the morning until your toilet is properly prepared. Always wash and dress the children before breakfast. Never neglect one particle of your work for the sake of going visiting. Be prudent, and saving, and industrious. In short, be a Christian, a good wife, a good mother, a good neighbor and a good HOUSEKEEPER. Live in such a manner that your children will rise up and call you blessed. If your husband is not worthy of such a woman, strive to make him so, by kindness.

Mrs. Eliza Ann Benedict Call was born in Dutchess Co., New York on March 3, 1814. The daughter of Cyrus Benedict (d. Nov., 1848) and Martha Robinson (dau. of John Robinson of Dutchess Co., NY), she married John R. Call (b. 1814 of Dutchess Co.) on Jan. 14, 1834. Some time between 1834 and 1836, they moved to the Onondaga Co. A daughter, Minerva, was born to them in 1836 in Onondaga Co. In 1837, they buried an infant son who died Feb.14, in the Apulia/Truxton Cemetery (located in the present parking area of Labrador Ski Center, Cortland Co.). Between 1840 and 1842, two sons were born in Cortland Co: Cyrus B. (named after his grandfather) was born in 1840 and Homer Duane in 1842. Charles Edward was born in Onondaga Co. in 1846. The 1865 NYS Census Records for Fabius record that Eliza and John Call moved to the Town of Fabius about 1846 and that Eliza was the parent of seven children. We have only been able to identify and locate five of the seven children.



Cutout section
Of the 1852 Fagan
Onondaga County
Map

On May 6, 1855, John R. Call (1814-1855) died at the age of 41-2-16 and was buried in the Evergreen Cemetery in Fabius Village. At that time, the Call family was living in the stone house of Nathaniel Bacon (Fabius Lot #36 and more recently known as the Jim Mack house) and farming approximately 100 acres of land (95 improved acres and 25 unimproved acres).

A 41-year-old widow, Eliza was left to operate and manage the farm with the help of her four children. Nineteen-year-old Minerva was married to a Johnson and living at the home of her mother. Also living at that residence were Cyrus, 15 and listed as a farmer, Homer, 13 and Charles, 9. There were no boarders or farm laborers listed with the Call family household in the Census for 1855, but the farm production was very impressive.

Eliza and her family raised 11 heifers, 23 sheep, 2 pigs, and chickens and milked 5 cows. Besides feeding her family, she produced 300# of butter and 60# of cheese from the cows and 30 fleeces and 180# of wool from the sheep. With the 2 horses, they plowed 20A and harvested 70 bu. spring wheat (4.5A), 220 bu. oats (12A), 19 bu. buckwheat (1A), 125 bu. corn (3A) and 50T of hay. They also harvested 25 bu. potatoes (0.25A), 35 bu. carrots, 10 bu. turnips, 300 bu. apples (6 barrels of cider), 200# honey and 5# wax. They managed and pastured their stock on 45A of pasture. With such a wide variety of experience in animal husbandry, farm management and household domestic skills, it is understandable that Eliza felt she was qualified to publish her "DAIRYMAID'S DIRECTORY."

In Sept. of 1861, Eliza's "middle" son, Homer Duane Call (b. Sept. 9, 1841) left the farm to enlist in Cortland as a Private in the 76th NY Infantry, Co. G for three years. He received no bounty from the town or county for his service. Mustering out on Oct. 9, 1861, he served a total of 40 months, during which time was promoted to 1st Lieutenant. He was eventually discharged in good health with a mere accidental wound of some sort.

On Feb. 4th, 1864, Eliza's youngest son, Charles Edward Call (b. May 1, 1846) left for Syracuse to enlist as a Private in the 10th NY Cavalry, Co. A for three years. He was paid \$300 bounty from the county for his service and mustered out the day following enlistment. He served only 16 months, being discharged in good health on May 19, 1865 in Philadelphia.

From about 1855 until 1865, Elizabeth Ann Benedict Call worked her family farm with the help of her children. Cyrus, her eldest son, had remained on the farm during the Civil War and was able to purchase his own 98-acre farm (also in Lot #36) in 1865. The 1865 Census is very interesting in that it lists Eliza Ann Call's residence with two "heads of household." Under her name are Charles and Cyrus (farmers), with Homer (farmer) and wife Juliette as boarders, and Eliza Odonal (domestic). The second "head" was Walter Tompson (miller) and his wife and infant son, Sarah and Wallace, respectively. There may be an assumption that this was now a two-family home.

Homer and his wife disappeared from the Fabius area between 1865 and 1867. In years 1867 and 1868, Eliza and Cyrus paid taxes on each of their two farms. The 1869 Assessors Records listed only Charles as a taxpayer on his farm in Lot #36. In 1870, he was living in Fabius Village, Lot #16. There was no further mention of any remaining Call family members after 1870.