

# An Adirondack Spring- May 2014

Dorothy Watts Goodfellow (1905-2004), was born and raised in the Silver Bay area of Hague. You may remember her book "Growing Up Wild" which is a delightful read. Dorothy



was a graduate of SUNY Albany and did graduate work at Harvard. She taught for many years at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh and was a frequently published author. Jane Crammond, Dorothy's niece, recently shared with us a 1974 piece, "An Adirondack Spring" by Mrs. Goodfellow. What follows are excerpts; the entire piece together with other of her writings will

be available in the Museum after June 1st.

"It always seemed as though spring would never come. On our Adirondack farm, the snow lingered long into March. Sometimes into early April, and frequent snow squalls added to the white blanket over the garden and in the woods. But gradually, as the sun rose higher and set later, patches of brown appeared on the fields and in the woods. Freezing nights gave way to milder days and created ideal 'sap weather'. Our father and our hired man Frank, tapped our maple orchard, driving spikes into the bored holes and hanging the pails on the hooks underneath. The boiler pan in the Sugar house was cleared out and wood laid beneath it all ready for the first 'boiling'. The brook, long hidden beneath a layer of ice, burst forth and gushed down from the mountains, through the sugar orchard, and into the still frozen lake, its ice beginning to grow dangerously mushy.

"As we trudged the rutted road from our one-room rural school, we saw the gravel glittering in the afternoon sun, and the ditches full of water. Once home, we ran to the woods to watch Frank collecting the full pails of sap and keeping the fire going under the evaporating pans. Aromatic smoke filtered out through the roof. We drank the sweet maple juice and helped Frank carry pails of it, stumbling over rocks still buried under clumps of snow.

"Then one day, as if by instinct, we ran to the rocky ledges by the spring, and there, nodding gently in the April breeze, were thousands – or so it seemed – of palest blue, pink and white hepaticas. And under the pines along the wood road, we knelt to smell the trailing arbutus, an unforgettable perfume. Trained by our father and mother never to pick the wild flowers and thus destroy their precarious hold on earth, we were content with their sight and perfume. Others, like the red trillium, were not so fragrant! As the snow gradually melted, gay wings or fringed polygala carpeted the floor of the woods, dutchmen's breeches clung to the rocks above the spring and violets nestled by the brook. The most delectable flowers of all, as far as hungry children are concerned, were the toothworts, whose long pepper-like roots were delicious. Standing in the boggy earth where the white blossoms told us where this food lay, dive-bombed by black flies, we dug up and de-

voured these peppery roots, quite forgetting that we were not supposed to pick the wild flowers. Something to eat had priority.

"Everyday we discovered something new as we explored our woods. The two Jersey cows, Molly and Betsy, browsed along the brook on the tender buds of poplar (popple) and drank from the overflow of the spring. And then one day our mother surprised us each with a little cake of maple sugar. To children who never had candy except at Christmas, this was a great treat, and we hoarded it as though it were made of gold.

"What can be happier than a country childhood in the spring! . . . As I look back on that time now, it seems to me that it was a golden age!"

We don't think young Dorothy was exploring the woods in this pretty dress. . . . Pat McDonough

