



**STARKS**  
**COMMUNITY REPORT**  
**November 1980**



## FOREWORD

For the last two and a half years we in Starks have been involved in an experiment in rural development. It was in May-June of 1978 that The Institute of Cultural Affairs conducted a week long consult in our village to launch one of twelve Human Development Projects in North America. The concept involves townspeople learning to help themselves in a world of ever changing political and economic structures and adapting to the constant changes we are experiencing.

It has not been an easy two years for our village. Those individuals committed to creating some positive results have had to struggle with an inflationary economy, the reluctance of some townspeople, and the suspicions and distrust of others towards an outside organization coming into a small New England village and trying to create "positive social change".

This report was compiled in November of 1980 during a week-long evaluation of the two and a half years of the development project. It was researched, compiled and written by Starks residents with the aid of Institute staff members. The first section includes the community and project history. The second section discusses the signs of change. The third section deals with the methods of development, including how creative change happens, is sustained and documented.

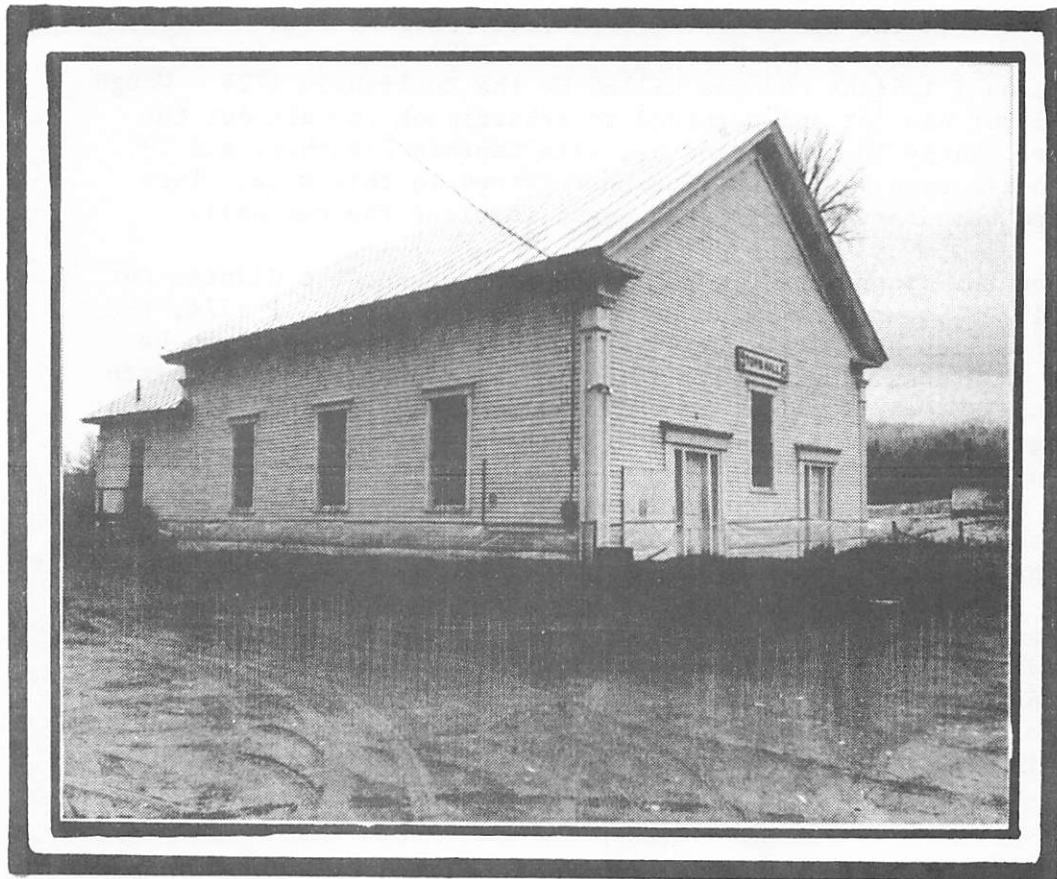
It is our intent to summarize the accomplishments which have happened in Starks over these two and a half years as a record of the development of Starks. This has been done to record the events that have occurred in all aspects of community life. Some of the progress was a direct result of the efforts of those involved in the Starks Human Development Project. Other achievements were results of the efforts of individuals and groups within the community not directly linked to the project. It is hoped that this report will show others what small communities can do when they decide to actively work for the improvement of their community.

Frank Russell

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# COMMUNITY STORY



## STARKS' STORY

### EARLY SETTLEMENT

Before white settlers arrived the Abenaki Indians hunted and camped in the vicinity of Starks.

Starks' recorded history begins with the first white settler on the Sandy River. James Waugh was born in Townsend, Mass. in 1749. When quite a young man he came to Clinton, and in 1773 accepted the New Plymouth Company's offer of land for homesteading. With his gun and dog he started the trek north along the Kennebec River looking for good farmland. When he came to the fork where the Sandy (or Penosquisumquiesbou, as the Indians called it) meets the Kennebec, he continued down the Sandy, and in a sharp bow in the river he found rich earth, pure water, and land cleared where the Indians had planted hills of maize. This lot was almost directly opposite from the historic Old Point, occupied by Father Rasle, who had come to what is now Norridgewock in 1689 as a missionary among the Abenaki Indians and was killed by the English in 1724. Waugh marked out his lot and returned to Sebesticook to wait out the winter. Early in the spring he, with Captain Fletcher, and Fletcher's sons Daniel and Joseph returned to this site. They erected temporary shelters and began to plant the new soil.

When the crops were harvested the men returned to Clinton for the winter, where they each married. In the spring of 1774, the four families began the settlement of Sandy River, later to be known as Starks. On January 10, 1775 Betheabah Waugh gave birth to James II, the first white child born on the Sandy River. That spring the night time whoops and frequent appearances of the Indians alarmed the little band of settlers, so they packed the wives and children off to Fort Halifax for safekeeping. The men continued clearing and planting, and since at harvest time the Indians were still peaceable, the women returned to their homes.

When the Revolutionary War broke out in 1775 Waugh's neighbors, afraid the English would stir up the Indians against the settlers, returned to the larger settlements down the river, leaving Waugh the sole inhabitant on the Sandy River. Waugh was made a captain at this time and led a scouting party on the Kennebec River. After the Indian threat subsided more settlers moved into the area.

In its early days, Starks was know by many as Sawyer's Mills, since the village sprung up around the sawmill built by Luke Sawyer around 1784. He came to Maine from Massachusetts that year, married and settled on Lemon Stream in Starks where he built the

first frame house and mill. This mill was subsequently owned and operated by four generations of Sawyers.

In 1790, sixteen years after its settlement, Starks contained 327 people. It was incorporated as a town Feb. 28, 1795, the 100th town in the state, named after Gen. John Stark, the Revolutionary War hero of the battle of Bennington, and the commander of the northern forces.

#### GROWTH IN THE MID 1800'S

By 1840 the town had reached its peak population (1559) and had a wide variety of both agricultural and industrial activity. The community highway network had reached its maximum development by the mid-1800's with settlement dispersed throughout the town.

By 1860 a carpenter shop and starch factory were built near the mill. Levi Sawyer was doing custom sawing for farmers, who also brought their grains to be milled in the grist mill. You could shop at three different general stores in the village then. John Oliver had a store on the corner of what is now Chicken Street and Madison Road. Two buildings down on the same side of the street was Amos Smith's store. And across the way, about where Kinney's store was in recent years, was W.G. Snell's store. Next to it was J.M. Snell's blacksmith shop. The town boasted a large hotel owned by John Oliver, in later years known as the Clifton House. It was a popular stopover for salesmen, called "runners," who sold hardware and dry goods to the generals. Chicken Street, then a through road to Industry and New Portland, was well-developed in 1860. A village cemetery was on the lot now occupied by Tom Rackliffe's house. On that same side of the street were a tannery and two cobbler shops, one operated by L.G. Smith, who ran the post office from his shop. The schoolhouse was located near the village on Locke Hill Road, which was then a through road to Farmington. In 1860 the town hall and Union Church were not located in the village, but were up on Meeting House Hill, about a mile out of town on the Madison Road. At that time the hill was a center of activity rivalling the village, with a blacksmith's shop, school house, and three Waugh residences there in addition to the church and meeting house.

From the 1850's to the 1870's one of the town's most enterprising businessmen was Ezekial Rackliff. In 1855 he was a carriage builder and painter, and by the 1870's he and his son were making chairs in a shop next to the starch factory across from the mills on Lemon Stream. They later moved their operation to Allen's Mills. Some townspeople still have chairs that were made in Rackliff's shop.

## POPULATION DECLINE IN LATER 1800'S

The town's declining population (now less than a thousand) was leaving its mark, in that there were only two general stores now, operated by Lewis Duley and Warren Higgins. Higgins was one of the town's influential citizens, being the first selectman and postmaster, as well as owner of the country store. His advertisements boasted that he dealt in "dry goods, boots, shoes, glassware, flour, groceries, patent medicines, country produce and all other articles kept in a country store." Levi Sawyer and his son, Benjamin, descendants of the original Sawyer, still operated the saw and grist mills. Levi built his family home across from the stream--the same set of buildings now owned by Paul Willis. The cobbler shops and tannery on Chicken Street were also gone by this time. The village cemetery was moved sometime between 1860 and 1880, reportedly because the townspeople feared it was contaminating the town's well water. The graves were moved to the nearby Locke Hill and Frederic cemeteries.

Two blacksmith shops were in the village in 1883: D.C. Green's in the village center next to Duley's general store, and A. Brackett's shop, down the hill from the Clifton House. The hotel was owned by Tom Buswell and his wife Sarah. It was graced with large porches on both floors, and a barn and stables for guests to house their teams. It hosted numerous travelling salesmen and stage drivers, who stayed overnight in Starks when the town was on the stage line between Anson and Temple.

The village now had two churches. The Union Church had been moved down from Meeting House Hill by ox team. In addition a Methodist Church was built across the way, which is the present Presbyterian Church.

## TURN OF THE CENTURY

At the turn of the century Starks' population was down to 636, but the village was still the hub of activity. A new school was built on the green in 1887 and was there until about 1917. The schoolhouse was then moved to Anson by William Duley and used as a house. A new school was built at the present village school site, with classes held in the town hall annex until the new building was complete. The schoolhouse burned and was replaced with the present building around 1925.

In 1915 the old Union Church was renovated into a town hall, and the old town hall on the hill was abandoned. The new town building was opened with a grand ball and concert on July 22. About that period there was a second hotel in town, the Elm House, located on the main street in what is now Mrs. Pearl Meaner's house.

Angier Gray and his son, Leland, purchased the sawmills in 1917 from John Taylor, who owned them after Greaton, and they faced a major crisis in their first year. A fire caught the shingle mill during the night, and burned the buildings to the ground. The Grays had no insurance and couldn't afford to rebuild the mill. It was quite an essential business. Since the mill cut up to one-half million feet of lumber for farmers in one year, at a town meeting townspeople decided something should be done. They voted to tear down the old town hall on Meeting House Hill, now unused, and use the lumber to rebuild the mill. The job was accomplished by volunteer labor, and the mill continued to serve the community until 1954, when a flood washed it away. The last owner, Harold Henderson, didn't rebuild it, and the only traces left now are the stone sluiceway below the bridge.

There were still two stores in town in 1918. Marohn Greenleaf was postmistress in an annex to Witham's store and her father was RFD carrier. When she gave up the post office, Leland Gray took the job and moved the post office to his family store. The wood stove in the back room always had a dozen or more people seated around it in the winter months. A checker game was usually in progress, with Ed Sawyer and trapper Hebir Whittemore, the acknowledged champs. In the summer, Glenn Frederic remembers as many as fifty people seated on the store's front porch, at that time called the "broadcasting station," because so much information was passed around.

The hall over the store was called Ultz's Hall, after the previous owner, John Ultz. It was the center for all the town's social occasions, much as the store below it was the center of communication. The Order of the Maccabees used the hall for their meetings, and dramas, traveling shows and dances were often held there. In 1936 the store and hall were struck by fire for the third and last time. The store was never rebuilt and the corner lot remains vacant today.

Two blacksmith shops were still operating in town in the early 1900's. Dana Bartlett took over Brackett's shop, specializing in building and repairing carriages and Otis Littlefield, who shod horses, had the shop on the village main street.

A major change occurred in the village about 1915 when asphalt sidewalks were installed on both sides of the street from the bridge to just past the hotel. The sidewalks were the project of the Progressive Club, organized by Church women for the expressed purpose of caring for the welfare of Starks. With the help of many they held baked bean suppers, ice cream socials, dances, and plays to raise money to buy the materials. When the asphalt was obtained, work sessions were organized to build the walks, and a

dozen or more men volunteered their labor for the project. The sidewalks were maintained for more than 10 years before they broke apart. Today only minor traces of the walks are visible. Another significant era began with the coming of electricity in 1927. Madge Fred-eric remembers well the day when a Central Maine Power Company representative came to demonstrate their new appliances.

#### THE COMING OF THE CORNSHOP

The biggest event for the village in the early 1900's was the coming of the corn canning shop. The large building, still the dominating landmark in the village today, was the center of the town's agricultural, economic, and even social life for almost half a century, from 1916 to 1964. According to the Madison Bulletin, the rumor was out around 1915 that Frank Noyes, who owned a cornshop in Carmel, wanted to move or sell his business. It was located in the middle of potato country, where the clay soil made corn raising anything but a paying proposition. Two enterprising citizens, Angier Gray and Leon McLoughlin, realized the possibilities. They talked it over with the farmers in the area and then consulted with Mr. Noyes. The town gave Noyes the school lot, with the remaining land for the shop site donated by private owners, and Arthur Moss, a local farmer who stood to profit from selling corn, then gave the town a parcel of land for the school.

The following winter, Monmouth Canning Company become interested in the Starks factory, and bought it in early 1917. In horse and buggy days, when corn was hauled in by teams, the factory averaged 45 loads of corn a day. On rush days there were five or six teams in line waiting their turn on the scales. Later, when trucks were used, 30-35 truckloads was the daily average. Says Marshall Edwards, who was superintendent at the shop for its last 17 years of operation, "Local People depended on the income to pay their taxes, buy school clothes, for many it was a hobby from their regular routine. They were loyal to a degree you wouldn't believe, in the work they put out in a day."

Monmouth Canning Company closed down the shop in 1964. The decision was the result of increased competition by midwest farmers and the loss of their main plant in Portland due to state highway construction. Maine was the first state to can sweet corn, and Starks was the last town to close its cornshop. The loss of the plant was the end of an era of corn agriculture in Starks and the State.

#### STARKS TODAY

Starks today has nine dairy farms and one large poultry operation

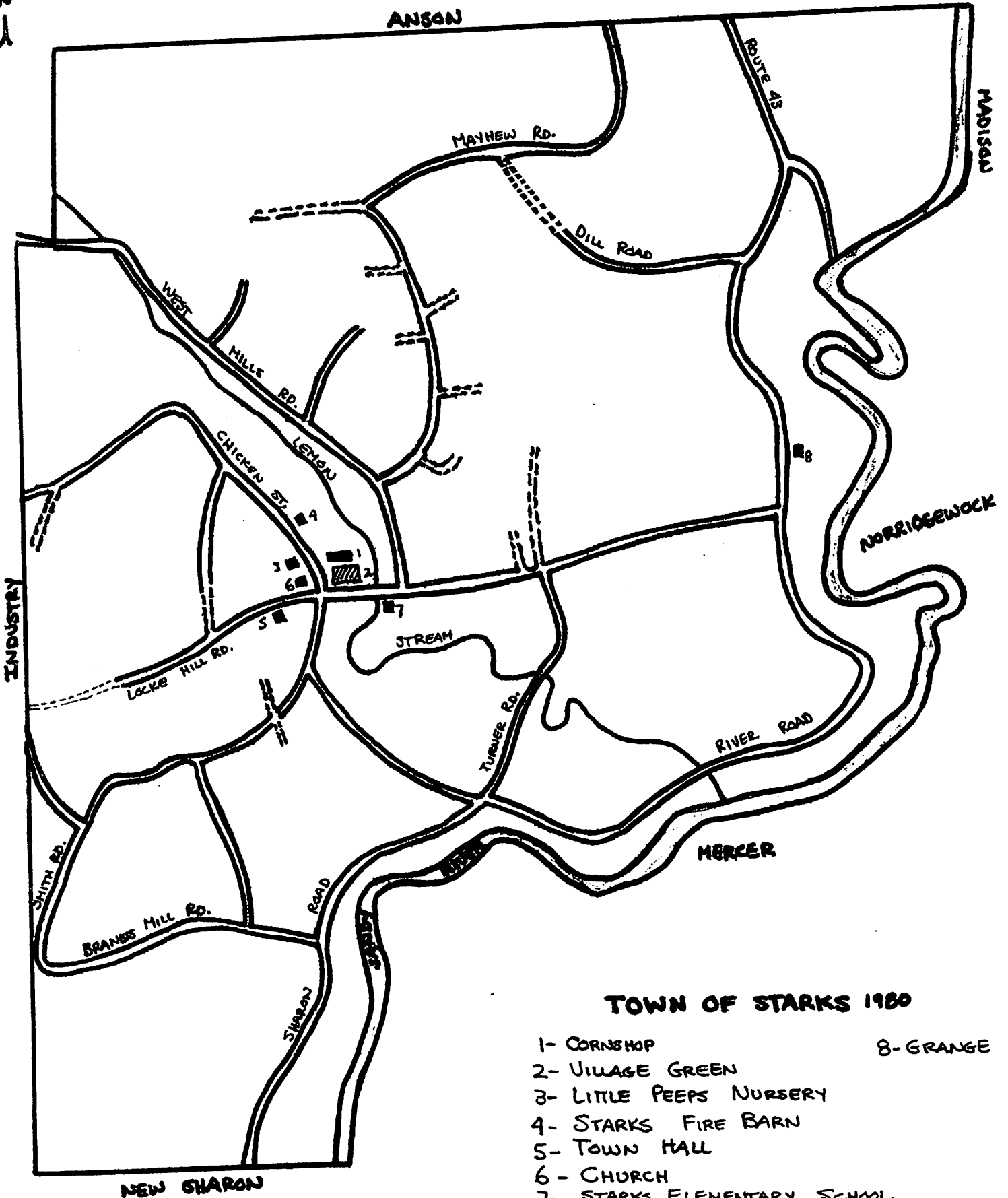
with numerous small family farms. Much of the previously cleared farmland has returned to forests. The old Corn Shop building now houses a general store, a woodshop, a crafts and thrift store, and an auto repair shop. Most employed people work in neighboring towns in occupations including nursing, teaching, construction, lumbering, truck driving or electronics. Out of approximately 140 households, there are 36 retired families. Income figures in 1970 show two families earning under \$2000, none earning \$2000-4000, 28 earning \$4000-6000, and 27 earning in excess of \$6000. Town expenses are covered by property tax assessment set each year at the Town Meeting. A board of three selectmen form Starks' governing body. Public buildings include a Town Hall, a Presbyterian Church, a Fire Barn in the village center and a Grange Hall four miles east of town. A water company supplies the village; outlying homes have their own wells. A good many township residents do not have indoor toilets and all septic tanks are individual. The nearest medical services and shopping centers are in Madison, Skowhegan, and Farmington. No public transportation is available except the Community Action Bus which comes once a week to transport people to Skowhegan or Waterville.

One elementary school serves 60 students from kindergarten to fifth grade in two classrooms. Upper grades travel eight miles to Madison. In Starks less than 10% have completed fewer than eight years of school, 29% completed between eight and twelve years, more than 50% completed high school or more, 5-10% completed college and 1% have post graduate degrees.

From a low of 306 residents in 1960, the town's population has risen about 20%. In the 1970's an upswing began in the population going to 440 at the present, reflecting an increased interest in the rural life style. Many, as a part of the alternative life-style movement, have established homesteads in the wooded areas. Several people have built passive solar houses. Because of the harsh Maine winters and heavy snows, road upkeep is crucially important, exceedingly difficult and expensive. Despite the harshness of the elements and difficulty of obtaining basic services, Starks citizens wish to retain the rural character of the community. We want to provide the necessary care and opportunity for all residents without sacrificing the gifts of solitude, clean environment, and individual endeavor.

(We gratefully acknowledge the work of the Heritage Project and appreciate permission to condense the Starks' Story, with the exception of the section on today, directly from articles in A Ride On The Brick Steamer, Ch. 1 and 2.)

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### TOWN OF STARKS 1980

- 1- CORNSHOP
- 2- VILLAGE GREEN
- 3- LITTLE PEEPS NURSERY
- 4- STARKS FIRE BARN
- 5- TOWN HALL
- 6- CHURCH
- 7- STARKS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 8- GRANGE

UNFINISHED ROADS ===

## JOURNEY OF THE PROJECT

It was in April of 1978 that the leadership of our village was invited to meet with representatives of the Institute of Cultural Affairs. The purpose was to make a decision about hosting one of the Institute's 12 Human Development Projects to be held in North America. Those present represented the town's elected officials, the church elders, and other recognized town leaders.

The outcome of the meeting was an invitation to the ICA to conduct a consult and aid the village in initiating a Human Development Project. While the question of calling a special town meeting to allow greater input into the decision was discussed, it was decided such a meeting was not necessary because of the representation present at this initial meeting.

The consult took place from May 28 to June 3, 1978. The opening feast was very well attended by townspeople, but while some people became excited about what such a process might mean for their town, others say they were already feeling uneasy about who the people were and what the organization represented. One of the most heard comments has been that there were few opportunities for questioning staff members, and, when questions were raised, answers were vague. It became apparent as early as this that a core of resistance was forming.

Despite that resistance, a group of citizens maintained their enthusiasm and have managed to carry out some of the ideas which were proposed during the consult. These people represent many aspects of the community: new comers as well as families which have been in town for generations; young people working along side the town elders; professionals and factory workers. The one thing they all have in common is a desire to make their town a community to be proud of. In the future as they discuss how this was all accomplished, they'll be pleased to be able to say, "I was a part of that".

On the other hand, those who have not become involved also represent a broad spectrum of the community. They cite many reasons for not participating which range from doubt about what the real motives and goals of the organization might be, to being "too busy" or not interested in community activities.

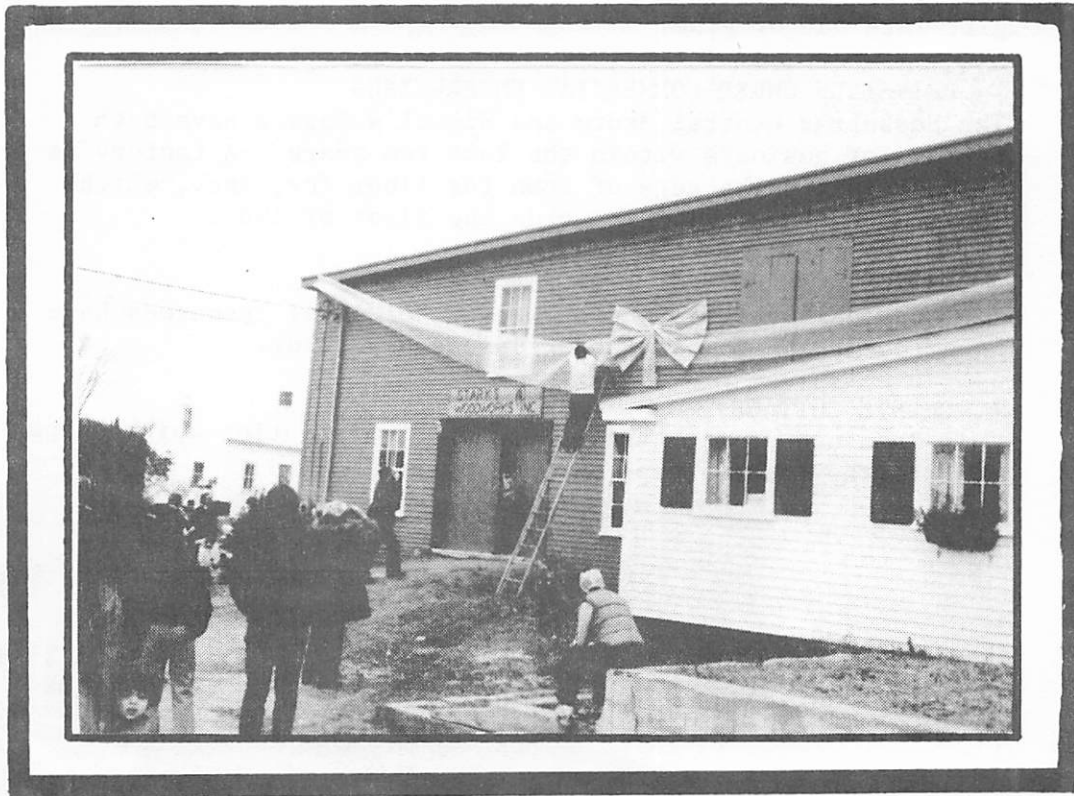
Regardless of what various people may feel was the cause of changes in our community, the fact is that we are a different village today. There are more activities for both youth and

adults. The spruced up village green and newly painted cornshop have changed the appearance of the village center and instilled a new feeling of care in the people. Having a ballfield on that village green has meant that youth and young adults are brought together more often for family recreation.

Some will say that even all these accomplishments are not worth the divisions which have been created, while others recognize that such disagreements exist in any town, have certainly always been present in Starks, and that individuals committed to the growth of their town will always meet with resistance from those who do not wish to see change.

Franklin A. Russell

# SIGNS OF CHANGE



## A. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

INTENT: In June of 1978 it was the hope of residents of Starks to develop the economic self-sufficiency and potential of the community by beginning light industries and developing commercial enterprises that make use of local resources such as land and forest products.

OBSTACLES: Some of the obstacles that had to be faced in order to develop the economic potential of Starks were residents having to travel outside the community (between 20-80 miles) to work and shop; unexplored local markets; the difficulty of keeping small business and agricultural ventures going; and minimal local control over land and resources.

### ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS:

#### 1. STARKS WOODWORKS, INC.

The woodworking shop currently employs four persons and has a potential of employing eight. They manufacture furniture and gift ware out of pine.

#### 2. PRIVATELY OWNED COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES

The Sassafras General Store and Nichol's Garage have both opened for business within the last two years. A factory is being built on the edge of town for Fiber-for, Inc., which should begin operations towards the first of 1981.

#### 3. SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT VENTURES

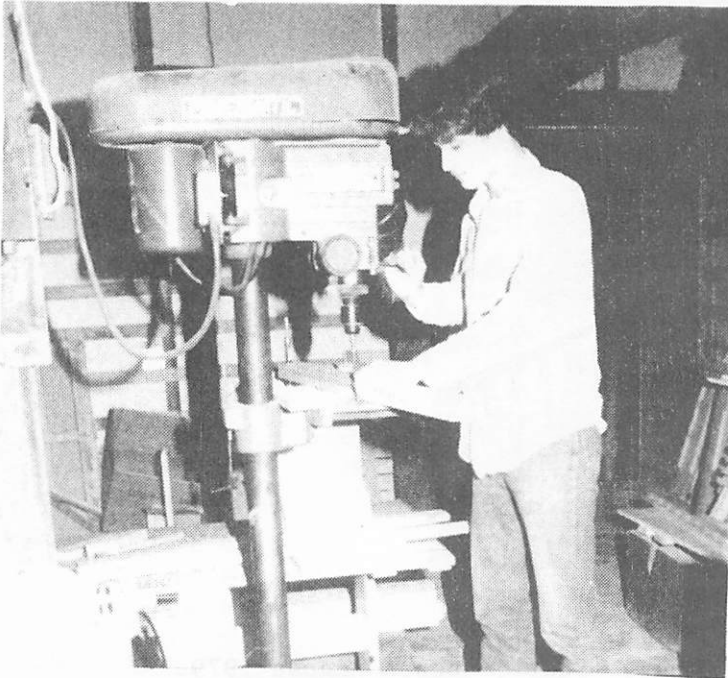
Two seasonal ventures which make use of local resources have been the Wreath Company and fiddlehead picking.

#### 4. CHINTZ COTTAGE

This is a non-profit thrift shop and craft outlet which helps support the Little Peeps Nursery School.



## 1. STARKS WOODWORKS, INC.



A lot of hard work went into the opening of the Woodworks. It was started as a way of providing more jobs in Starks. A loan was secured and a planer, rip saw, shaper, large sander and three bloom sanders were purchased. Later an air compressor was bought. All the machinery was paid for through profits. Materials were purchased by advances on orders.

Four workers started production in June 1979 in a section of the old cornshop. By July there were seven workers, including a manager. Several special items were made. The biggest order was for spice racks at the rate of 20,000 spice racks per month. Orders have been placed from as far away as New York and New Jersey and there have been several repeat orders.

The Starks Woodworks, Inc. was incorporated as a non-profit organization in June of 1979 so that residents would not only benefit from employment but profits would go into expanding the business or assisting other community programs as the board of directors see fit. Currently the board of directors are Bud Hayden, Maxine Turner, George Paquin, and Maryanne Gawlinski.

Due to the loss of orders caused by inflation, the woodworks closed temporarily at the end of May. One worker began in mid-June to make samples to attract orders again and by mid-August four workers were working again. Some chairs were returned in September needing to be redone and two workers were laid off. But by mid-November a number of orders came in, the quality of work was improved, and workers were increased to four again. Acting manager Bud Hayden said, "We've come out from the bottom of the barrel and are now climbing up the side."

Now there are several inquiries for orders. There are orders for tone blocks, lawn chairs, and love seats being worked on at this time. A faster drum sander is being sought and a better location in the old cornshop. As orders continue to increase more workers will be hired.

Since June 1979, nine Starks residents have been trained in woodworking skills and salaries have been paid to Starks families through the Starks Woodworks, Inc..

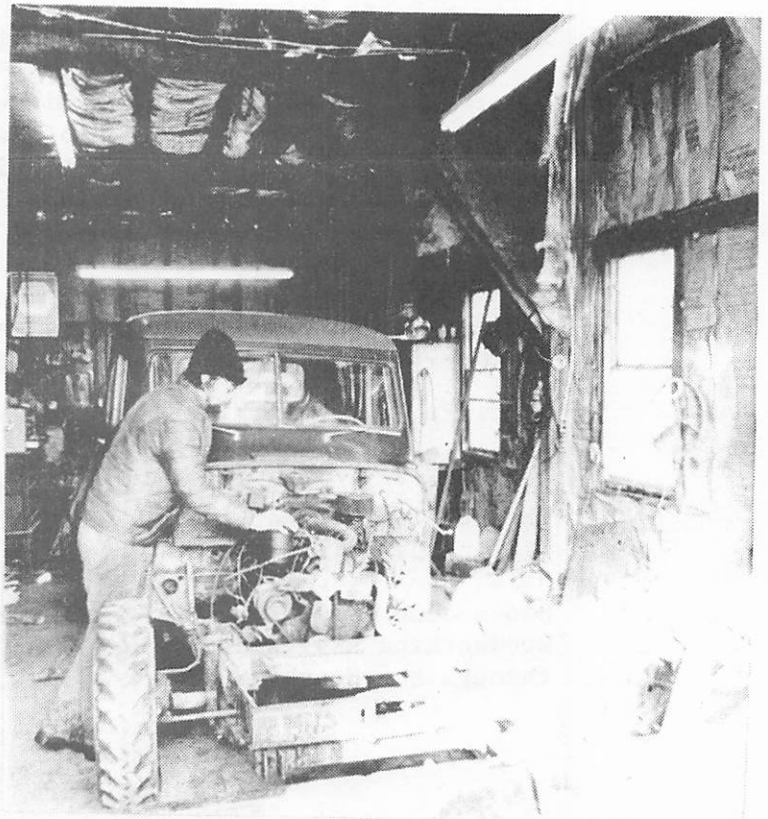
From a conversation with Bud Hayden



A.



B.



C.

A. Sassafra General Store, opened August 1979.  
B. The Starks Wreath Co. made about \$1500 through wreath sales to a nursery in New Jersey.  
C. Nichol's Garage does a lot of major overhaul work.

## 2. PRIVATELY OWNED COMMERCIAL ENTERPRISES

Nichol's Garage was begun by Dana Nichols in August 1979 in a side shed of the cornshop. He took a sorry looking, falling down part of the building and has made it into a going business. It has been winterized, rewired, lighted with the help of friends from all over the Northeast, and has become a gathering place for the men. Dana has over \$10,000 invested in his business and grossed approximately \$15,000 from August 1979 to August 1980. Every type of car and industrial equipment repair and overhaul is done at the garage with the exception of work on automatic transmissions.

The Sassafras General Store opened on Memorial Day 1980, the town having been without a store for three to four months. About a month before the opening, Chris and Bonnie Brown began the renovation of the central part of the cornshop with funds provided by the SEC. The Brown family took out a \$4000 loan to finance equipment and stock. When the store opened there was approximately \$1300 worth of goods on the shelves. In six months this has been expanded to about \$4000 of stock for sale. At this point all profits are being plowed back into the store.

Fiber-for, Inc. is building a factory on Madison road toward the edge of town. They will be producing cattle feed out of poplar chips. They have enough orders at this point for one shift which will employ three people. Operations will begin sometime after the first of the year. Stake Technology, Ltd. is the partner firm in Canada.

Based on interviews with Dana Nichols, Chris Brown and Norman Luce.

## 3. SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT VENTURES

The Starks Wreath Co. started in December 1978. We made about 840 Christmas wreaths which we sold to a nursery in New Jersey. About 28 townspeople worked on making the wreaths, ten of which were local youth. The company made about \$1500. After expenses were paid, we were paid for our labor. Everyone seemed to enjoy this source of employment.

In the spring of 1979 the youth of Starks decided to pick fiddleheads, a small edible fern, for money. Approximately ten of us participated in this money making venture. Some of us made up to \$80 in the short growing season.

Irene Frederic

#### 4. CHINTZ COTTAGE

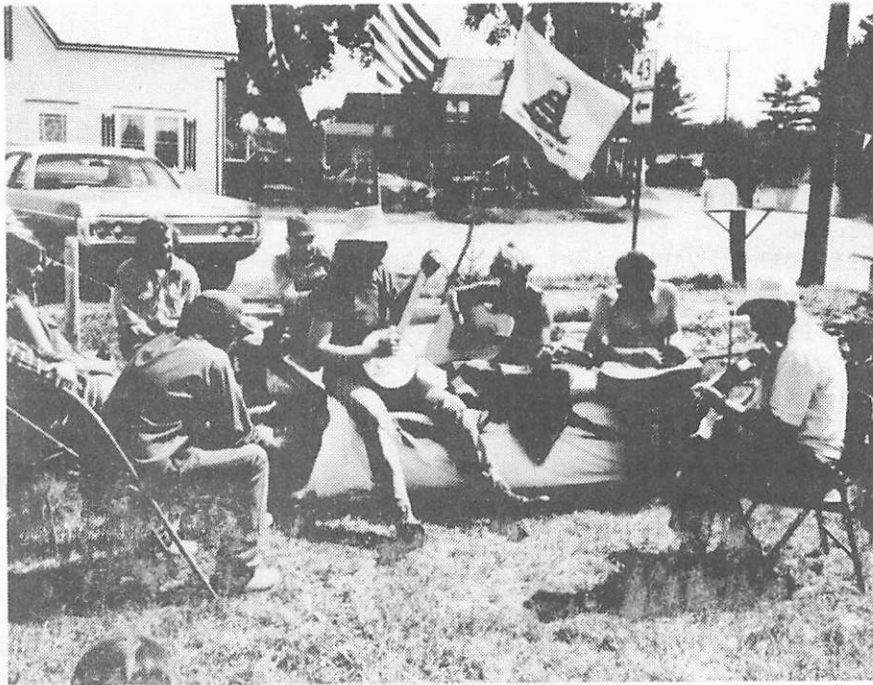
Some of us in Starks have long felt a need for a place where people could get good used clothing at reasonable prices. When the cornshop became available we thought the former office would be ideal for that purpose. A great deal of hard work, time, paint, paper, wallboard- ing went into making a place. A table, chairs, a desk, cupboards and a heating unit as well as lots of materials were donated by in- terested people. Ruby Pressey came up with the name "Chintz Cottage" and a sign was painted to go on the building. The Sudbury Methodist Church donated the clothing to open the shop. Ronnie and Judy Brown drove their pick-up truck to Sudbury, Mass. and came back with it loaded with good used clothing. A group of us met around Gladys Ni- chols kitchen table to organize into a non-profit organization. We decided that the money made at the Chintz Cottage would go to sup- port the Little Peeps Nursery School, for general expenses and scholarships for children who could not otherwise participate. We started advertizing for crafters during the winter and had twelve different people supplying us with a variety of products.

Years ago Starks had a commemorative calendar plate. A copy was made of the original and twenty five plates were made up and sold. Twelve more were ordered and most of them were sold.

We have also taken items on consignment for people. After the first consignment, additional donations from area people as well as from a distance have been received. This has provided a much needed outlet for people. Jane Frost designed a brochure for the organi- zation and a Xerox company made many copies which have been distri- buted over a wide area.



Maxine Turner



#### B. SOCIAL LIFE:

INTENT: It was the hope of some of the residents of Starks to enrich the social life of the community by encouraging activities involving all age groups, establishing educational opportunities and improving public safety.

OBSTACLES: Some of the obstacles that had to be faced were distant educational opportunities, limited means of communication, and limited opportunities for youth involvement.

#### SOCIAL ACHIEVEMENTS:

##### 1. LITTLE PEEPS NURSERY SCHOOL

The nursery school is currently operating two mornings a week for children ages two to five and staffed by local volunteer teachers.

##### 2. STARKS' TREKKERS AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES

The Trekkers were formed during the summer of 1978 to encourage activities for young people up to twelve years old and were staffed by high school youth. Other youth activities have been initiated by townspeople since that time.

3. THE VOICE: A community newsletter is produced monthly and personally delivered to most Starks' residents and mailed to interested people outside of Starks.

##### 4. COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS

July 4th, Christmas, Winter Carnival and other seasonal celebrations have become yearly events in the community.

## 1. LITTLE PEEPS NURSERY SCHOOL

The Little Peeps Playgroup was formed in March of 1979. Some parents in town were concerned that their preschool children did not get a chance to play with other youngsters very often. We formed the group as a non-profit parents cooperative with the understanding that parents would participate or not as their time allowed. Our two original teachers were both certified by the state. Bonnie Brown has had her own nursery before and has taught in the public school system, as has Frank Russell. Both are residents of Starks.

After renting a cottage, we held workdays to paint inside and out, replace broken windows, fix leaks in the roof, hang curtains, and install an oil furnace on loan from Bonnie's father. We opened for business as the Little Peeps of Chicken Street on March 6, 1979 with a well-attended open house. Our original twelve students came from



Anson, Norridgewock and Industry as well as Starks. A number of children, who might not otherwise have been able to attend, have been aided by scholarships provided by the Chintz Cottage.

Our curriculum philosophy has been one of giving children an opportunity to play together, experience sharing, and learn to occupy themselves with activities. We provide a range of materials for cutting, coloring, painting, story telling, and creative play. One of the favorite activities was a field trip to the Maine Farm Days in Aug. 1979. The children enjoyed the animals and the displays of farm machinery. We have had three contra dances, some food sales, and a pancake breakfast to help raise funds. One of those dances was a Halloween Costume Contra Dance.

Since Bonnie and her husband have opened their Sassafras General Store, two other parents have worked in a rotation to aid Frank with the school. Five other parents have helped at the school when substitutes were needed. We are now renting our second "Peep House" because the first one was sold. We look forward to having a permanent home someday.

After a year and a half we have served a total of 38 children, graduated seven, and have a current enrollment of fifteen. This has been a valuable experience of sharing fun and work for both the parents and the children.

Frank Russell

## 2. STARKS' TREKKERS AND YOUTH ACTIVITIES

The Starks' Trekkers was the recreation program that was started in the summer of 1978. We also met during the February and April vacations. The Trekkers was for those children in kindergarten and up to the age of twelve, staffed by Starks' high school youth. We met in the Starks' town hall three days a week. During the course of the summer the Trekkers wrote their own songs, took trips to various places outside of the community, had parties, bought T-shirts and sang "trekker" songs to the Governor. However, because of the lack of staff and no place to meet, the Trekkers were discontinued. Even now many of those involved ask if it would be possible to start the Starks' Trekkers again. In August 1978 the Trekkers put on the play "The River of Tomorrow," including songs and skits of Starks' history which was attended by over 100 people.

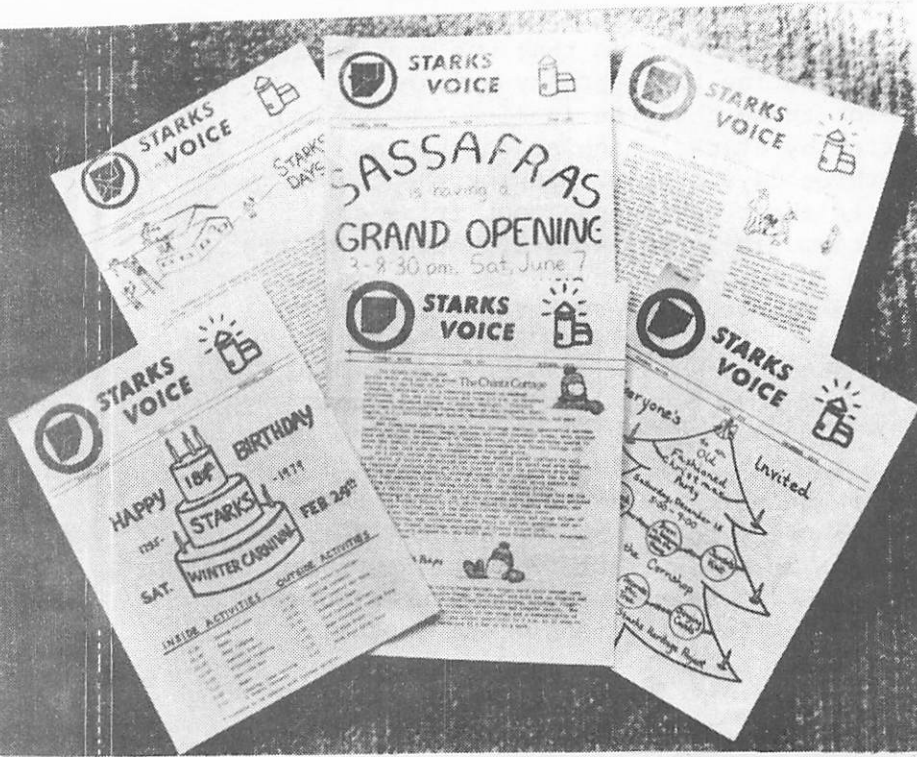
Many other youth activities have been initiated by community people: a Boy Scout Troop and Girls Club were formed by the Starks' Recreation Committee and the Church has an active Youth Group. Sports are an important activity for the 12 to 35 age group, including baseball, basketball, football and a youth league for baseball and football.

Irene Frederic



Trekkers perform "River of Tomorrow" to a full house. During a winter break an ice skating "pond" was created on the green."

### 3. THE STARKS VOICE



The Starks Voice is the newsletter that comes out monthly in the town of Starks. The first issue of the Voice was printed in 1978. The December 1980 issue will be the thirtieth consecutive issue. In the October and November issues we have had ads from the Chintz Cottage and the Sassafras Store. This helps support the cost of printing. 37 people in Starks have at one time or another contributed to the Voice by writing articles. Many others have helped with hand delivery of the paper. Special features in each edition are:

"citizen on the move," the birthdays of the month and a detailed community calendar.

Irene Frederic

### 4. COMMUNITY CELEBRATIONS

On July 4th, 1978, the first Independence Day parade in 67 years in Starks was held. It was a huge success. The program consisted of a large parade complete with color guard in dress uniform, a flag raising, a reading of the Declaration of Independence, and an address by Glenn McGee. Ronald Brown donated fine

Partners enjoy themselves at the Contradance sponsored by the Little Peeps.



barbeque pits and many people brought hot dogs, hamburger, and chicken to cook for lunch. Following lunch, hayrides to the swimming hole and back were given by Earle Sterry. Tug of War, three legged sack races, and egg throwing games were enjoyed under the direction of Joe and Mary Anne McCarthy, and concluded with a soft ball game. The day ended with music by Warren Adams, playing his fiddle, and joined by Peter Cook and Jerry Ginder. The Fourth of July celebration has become a traditional annual affair in Starks. In 1979, a town recreation committee was formed to sponsor the succeeding fourth of July events, and other celebrations, dances, and dinners throughout the year.

The Starks Heritage group sponsored an old fashioned Christmas Party in December, 1978 at the cornshop. They had a pot luck supper, Santa's visit, a special program and singing.

In January, 1979 a committee was formed to make plans for a winter carnival, which has become an annual event sponsored by the SEC. The first one was held on February 24th, 1979, the 184th birthday of Starks. The Little Peeps held a successful pancake breakfast. At noon the Progressive Club sold hot dogs, sodas, and sweets. The Senior Citizens Band from Farmington came to entertain and were the hit of the day. Beano was played in the Hall during the day and outside activities were a blindfolded snowmobile race, and snow sculpture. A Princess Contest was held which Tammy Locke won over six other entries. Succeeding Carnivals have had additional events such as a spelling bee, a sawing contest, a baby contest, and a contra dance sponsored by the Little Peeps.



4th of July Parade.  
winter carnival.

Maxine Turner



Blind folded snow mobile race at the

### C. COMMUNITY PRIDE

INTENT: The hope of some of the residents of Starks during the past two and a half years has been to inspire community pride by rediscovering the community's heritage and identity, becoming active in community improvement projects, initiating citizen involvement activities and sharing experiences.

OBSTACLES: Some of the obstacles that had to be faced were a crisis oriented voluntary help network, an unclear picture of how all ages could participate, and the difficulty of learning how to obtain public resource support.

#### COMMUNITY ACHIEVEMENTS:

##### 1. STARKS ENTERPRISES CORPORATION

This is a community development company formed to encourage future development of economic and social life.

##### 2. HERITAGE PROJECT AND HISTORY BOOKS

An historical society has been formed with one of their projects being a series of history books. Four complete chapters of the Starks Heritage have been printed with two more to come.

##### 3. COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS AND WORKDAYS

Village Green, cornshop, swimming hole and winterization are some of the projects worked on by community volunteers throughout the two years.

##### 4. INTERCHANGE WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES

People from Starks have participated in events in many other diverse communities and have hosted visitors from across the continent.



## 1. STARKS ENTERPRISES CORPORATION

The Town of Starks has a long history of mixed economic activity including agriculture, forestry, manufacturing and commercial business. As the community declined in population all areas of the economy suffered. The various mills and stores went out of business. The closing of the sweet corn canning factory in the early 1960's was a major blow to the local economy. As time passed sporadic efforts were made by town residents to attract a business to the old cornshop. The building remained underused for fifteen years. During this time there were many people in town who viewed the cornshop as a potential resource to bring a small number of employment opportunities into Starks and improve the economy. However, little was done until the Starks Enterprises Corporation was created in June 1979. The SEC is the result of a combination of local ideas and selected consulting input from the Starks Human Development Project. The HDP helped give a focus to the various local concerns dealing with economic improvement. In June 1979 a group of people joined together as members of a non-profit community economic development corporation, the SEC. The SEC's primary objective was to benefit the town by bringing in jobs and commercial services. The old cornshop is the focus of the SEC's activities.

During the summer and fall of 1979 much volunteer labor went into upgrading the building. A great deal of material was donated to the effort. The work done on the building and interviews with SEC members so impressed a representative of the Public Welfare Foundation that he helped obtain a \$10,000 grant for renovation expenses. This arrived before Christmas 1979. The cornshop had been so upgraded that Northeast Bank was willing to finance our purchase of it. This was accomplished in February 1980. In the summer and fall of 1980 this program of volunteer labor input continued.

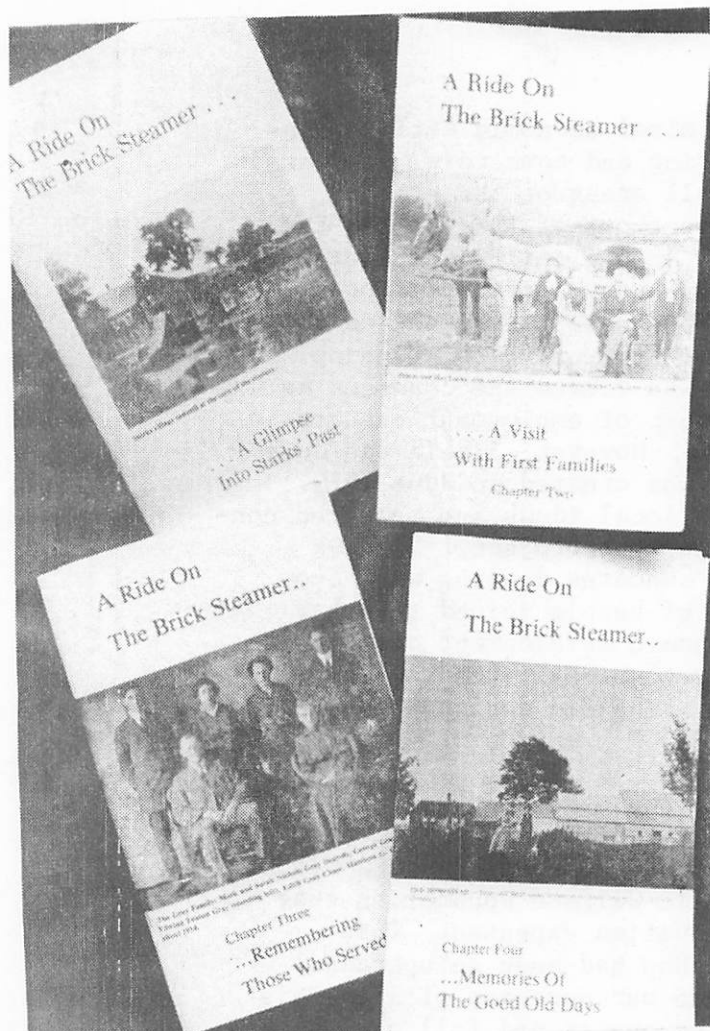
Four new businesses in Starks are tenants of the SEC in the Cornshop: the Chintz Cottage thrift store and craft outlet, Starks Woodworks, Inc., Nichols Garage and Sassafras General Store. Some volunteer help and some materials were provided for each of these.

The SEC actively seeks outside assistance and has both visited and been visited by the County Industrial Development Commission, the No. Kennebec Regional Planning Comm., the State Development Office, State Planning Office and the Maine Development Foundation. The SEC joined the latter organization as a charter member.

The SEC is proud of its membership of 30, a lot for a small town, and even more proud of their solid commitment and achievement. Last, but not least, we have had fun. We think we have worked well together, and we've had a good time at our parties. We look forward to another year.

Paul Frederic

## 2. HERITAGE PROJECT AND HISTORY BOOKS



Many years ago a history of Starks was incorporated in a book with Industry and parts about it were in other histories. Several thought it would be nice to write another more complete history of Starks, and some expressed the opinion that they has always planned to do it. When Joe Nagy came here to write an article and then decided to stay a while, we thought "here is our chance." He had been in the writing field for a long time and was a tremendous help on the first books. We met as a group interested in such a project. The first meeting decided on the subject matter, how it would be written, etc. We decided to make each book a chapter and picked the subject matter for six chapters. We then contacted people who still lived in Starks and those that had lived here for stories of early days as they remembered them. We also had several people who lived in other states write to us with stories and information. We made trips to the State Library in Augusta for references and had pictures made up from some very old glass plates that belong to Clara Sawyer. Pupils from Paul Frederic's geography class made some maps. Joe found a printer to print the first chapter. We only had

250 copies printed as we didn't know whether or not they would sell. They sold very quickly and we had another 250 printed. At present those are all sold out. We have printed three more chapters. Chapter 2 is all sold. We have also worked on stories and articles for chapters 5 and 6 simultaneously. Those for chapter five are being typed. We hope to have that one done before Christmas and the other one by next year.

We talked of starting an Historical Society. One evening at Ruby and Everett Pressey's home Peggy Nichols, Glen McMee, Maxine Turner, Ruby and Everett Pressey met. Mrs. Elizabeth Miller of Norridgewock was a guest and talked about forming a society. The following meeting we drew up some by-laws, picked the name "The Heritage Group" and elected the following officers: President, Peggy Nichols, Vice-president, Ruby Pressey, Secretary, Maxine Turner, Treasurer, Glen McGee. We have several old maps, pictures etc. for the start of a Heritage room as soon as we have a place available and hopefully it will interest more people in such a project.

Maxine Turner

### 3. COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENTS AND WORKDAYS

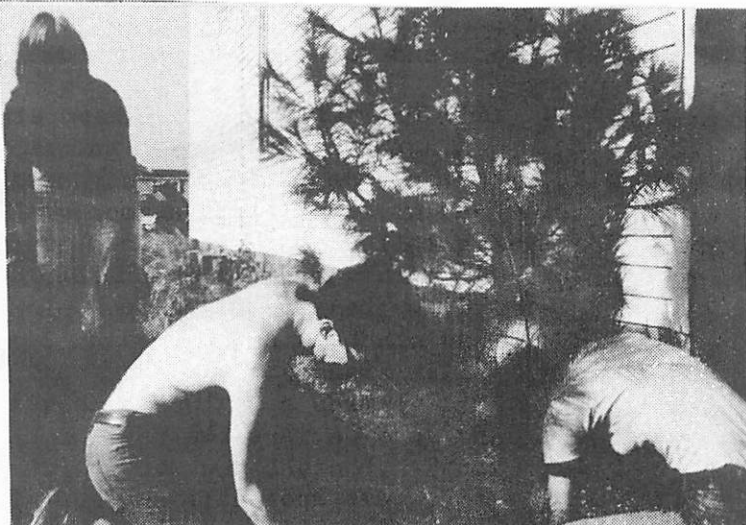
A hush, as nearly 100 spectators watched with anticipation, Paul Frederic, vice-president of the Starks Enterprises Corp., cut the ribbon, hailed by many as the largest they had ever seen, and officially opened the new corn shop. This meant the renovation of what had been an active corn and blueberry canning factory. Two years ago interested townspeople made plans to buy the cornshop and the Starks Enterprises Corp. was formed. Many community workdays in the spring and fall of the last two years have focused on this building. The second floor facing the street, now called the community room, has had an entire new facelift. The whole room was insulated, wall board was put up, and electric wiring was installed. A woodburning furnace was installed in the cornshop, though the future needs will require a larger heating system. The furnace required a chimney and so it was built. A professional mason might smile at some of the work, but smoke goes up it! The old husking room was cleaned. Truck loads of sawdust, used for insulation in the upstairs room over the cement floor, were cleaned out. All of the windows were fixed, requiring many new panes of glass. The main buildings were scraped and painted blue. Why blue? Well, opinions were expressed by many, some wanting yellow, the original color, some red and various other hues. However, when Benjamin Moore, Co. offered free blue paint, blue became the unanimous choice.

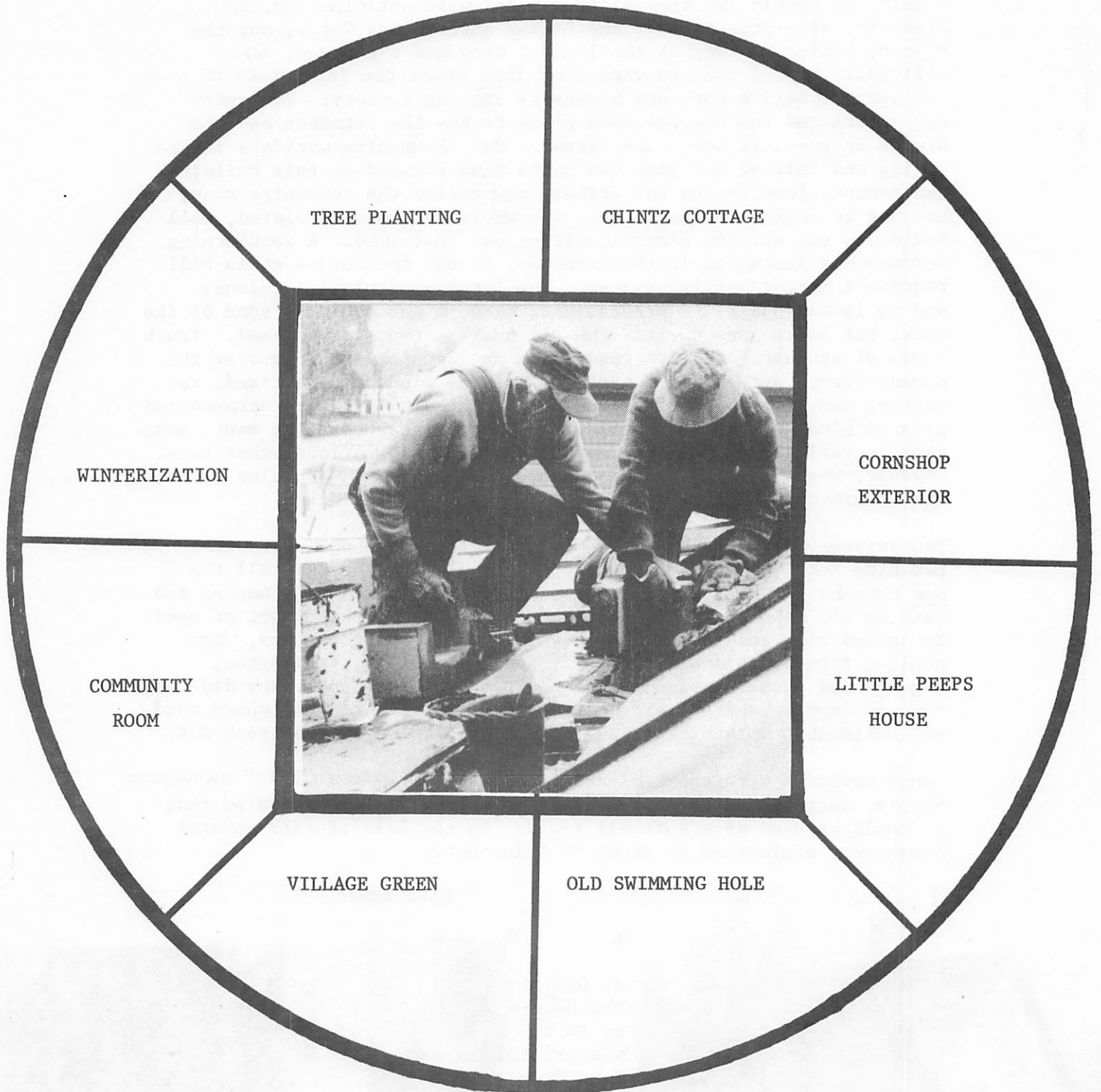
Ten Saturday workdays have been spent on the cornshop. Many have put time into this project, transforming it into what we call the new cornshop. Painters, glaziers, carpenters, mechanics, masons and just we old doobers, doing what had to be done at the moment of need. Young and old, and in between, boys and girls and grown ups, many hailing from far and near: Mass., New York, Conn., Farmington, Augusta and local people donated their time and talents. Why did they come to lend a hand? Their dedication of service to help where needed, fellowship with others like minded, and to enjoy the fresh air.

Other workdays were spent cleaning up the "ole swimmin hole" on Lemmon Stream, cutting the grass and clearing up the village green so that it could be used as a softball field. In the fall of 1978 several homes were winterized by crews of volunteers.

Glen McGee

- A            B
- A. One of the houses to be winterized  
B. A Tree planting session on the green.





COMMUNITY WORKDAYS

#### 4. INTERCHANGE WITH OTHER COMMUNITIES

Several of us have been privileged to attend other projects and events as well as places of interest around our area. Our Heritage Project went to Glen, N.H. to visit the Heritage House. We visited a replica of a blacksmith shop, printshop, tavern, hotel, colonial home as well as "simulated" rides on the ship "Reliance" from England to N.H. and a train ride through Crawford to North Conway.

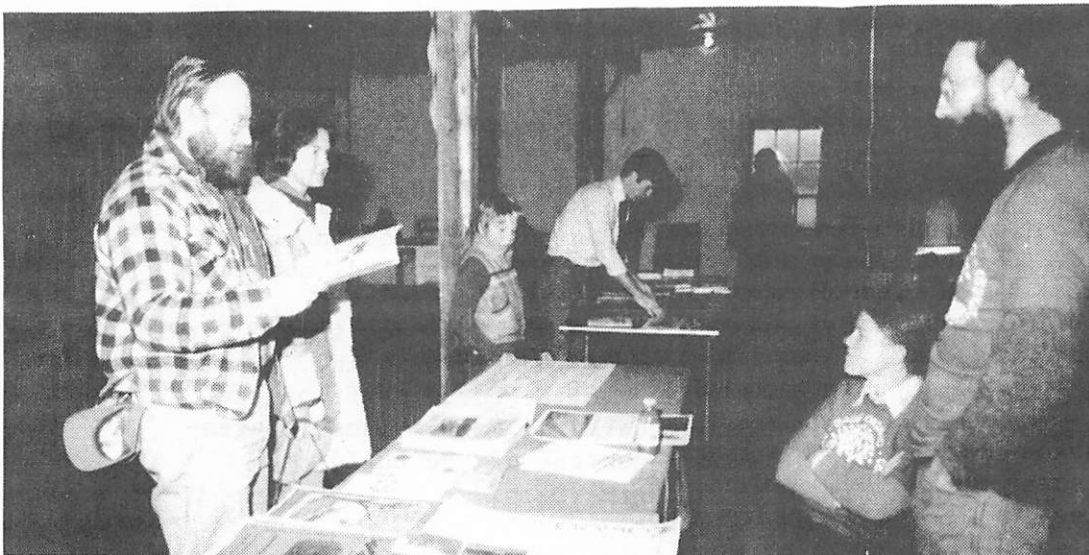
Another interesting trip was to Brown's Mill in Dover-Foxcroft, Maine. This is an old woolen mill which closed four years ago. Charles McCarthy owns the business and water power dam, selling surplus power generated to Central Maine Power Co. There are twelve businesses renting space at present.

Several women from town made a visit to H.O.M.E. in Orland, Maine. This is an outlet store for a variety of crafts. It was started by Sister Lucy and is a most interesting place. Lessons are also given on woodworking, weaving, candle making and other crafts.

In addition to more local visits some of us have been able to visit other projects and events at a distance. The projects in Fifth City, Chicago and Ivy City in Washington, D.C. were real examples of what a community can do to better their social and economic life and neighborhood environment. It was an inspiration to talk to some of the citizens there and feel the pride in their voices.

We have also attended the Global Research Assembly in Chicago. This has been a very broadening experience as so many nations and cultures are represented. We have been present at many regional meetings in New York and Boston and have made calls on individuals in various walks of life. It is always interesting to get input from other areas. Even encountering differing opinions can be a creative learning experience.

Maxine Turner



The  
Rural  
Fair  
November 15, 1980

## FUTURE PLAN

Starks has already extended its demonstration sign beyond the community. Residents from surrounding communities have attended contra-dances in the Cornshop. The Heritage Project has distributed the history of Starks in stores and libraries in surrounding towns. Volunteers from communities as far away as Boston and Northfield, Massachusetts as well as New York and Long Island have participated in workdays. Visitors have been hosted from Augusta, Farmington, Portland, Yarmouth, Cambridge, N. Adams, Congress, and the Public Welfare Foundation. Other visitors from projects such as Lorne, New Brunswick and Charlotteville, New York have participated in celebrations such as the opening of the Cornshop and Starks Days as well as sharing information on woodworking shops. Government representatives from Maine have visited and toured the project and Starks residents have been to Augusta and Washington to meet with officials and their wives. In a meeting to discuss future plans in Starks after two and a half years community residents stated that the Starks Enterprises Corporation, the Heritage Project, the Woodworking Shop, The Little Peeps School and community improvements such as the Village Green are the kinds of things that can be done in other rural Maine towns.

It is clear that Starks is now prepared to move toward a new phase of its development as a project. During the ten day period between November 7 and 16, people worked in groups or task forces on creating a community report of the progress, extension of relationships beyond the community and the key thing to be worked on at the present time. The extension task force focused on preparation for the Rural Fair that was held in the Cornshop on Saturday, November 15th from 1-5 pm. Tables representing groups from within and outside the community were involved. These included The Starks Little Peeps, The Starks Enterprises Corporation, The Heritage Group, The Voice, The Chintz Cottage, The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association, The Community Action Program Energy Display from Skowhegan, Hungry Chucks Health Foods and the Somerset Organization for Mutual Assistance. During the evening a lasagna dinner was sponsored by the Progressive Club in the Town Hall and a little later about 100 people from Starks and out of town attend a contra-dance sponsored by the Little Peeps School.

The key thing that needs work at the present time was felt to be Cornshop Renovation. Continuing work on the renovation has been done over several workdays in October and November 1980, including cleanup of brush out back, ductwork for the heating as well as electrical wiring and plugs, wallboard, and painting of the 60'X60' community room. Further planning, contracts and proposal considerations were made for the \$27,000 needed for the renovation. People who are in a position to assist the S.E.C. were invited to the Rural Fair in order that they could see progress on the building. Community residents added their ideas to an architectural draft of the cornshop that was made available at the Rural Fair. These suggestions will be incorporated in future designs of the building.

# STORIES AND QUOTES from COMMUNITY RESIDENTS



## STORIES

This section includes individual's accounts of their experiences with the Human Development Project in Starks. These were solicited to relate the story in a more individual, narrative style.

Pausing to reflect on the past two and a half years in the Starks Community I find myself going back in time. Asking myself, "what is support?" Spiritual, financial and caring. At this time I prefer to think about the caring support as it relates to Marshall and me during the eighteen years that we lived in the community. For those who do not know what our needs were, Marshall was Superintendent of the Monmouth Corn Canning Company factory and as the canning time approached in the fall, Marshall was faced with the anxiety of "would there be enough help for the pack". As a result of the caring support and pride in the job to be done, the people made his part that much easier by their willing support. Space does not permit me to list more only to add I always found the caring attitude.

We have been particularly drawn to the Starks' activities during the past two and half years, to observe and help in our small way.

All of the projects during this two and a half years have been great. Naturally we were especially interested in the activities at the Cornshop. The restoration, The Starks Enterprises Corporation, The Chintz Cottage, The Little Peeps, the new Sassafras store, Nichols Garage and the Heritage Books History. All these and more have been accomplished.

However the history of Starks in the Heritage Books will have a long lasting effect because it will always give us a sense of pride knowing we leave this to posterity.

Whether a job is a paying job or whether it is a community service, if it is done well with pride it projects a caring attitude. Because of this attitude we can reflect on the past two and a half years with a sense of accomplishment and gratefulness to the many who gave so much.

Evelyn Edwards

In my opinion I have no opinion of The Institute of Cultural Affairs and their operations in the town of Starks as I never had or was able to find time to get involved either pro or con.

In trying to look at their accomplishments objectively, I believe their overall goals were good but I only wish there had been a way to minimize the pro-con feelings which caused so many rifts between my fellow citizens of this community.

D. Dillon Gray

I have been involved with the Human Development Project since the beginning. My husband, Eldon, and I hosted the first meeting at our home. He was very involved until his death and I have continued with my support. I am not interested in changing the rural status of Starks, but do feel that small, clean businesses can help the economy as well as the tax structure. I think everyone will agree that the overall appearance of the Cornshop with paint and whole windows, and the green with a bulletin board, flowers and trees has certainly added to the general appearance of the town. The Woodworks has had some shaky times, and may still, but things are looking up. The General Store and Nichols' Garage are certainly needed additions and the Chintz Cottage with good, used clothing and crafts has answered a need as well as provided some financial assistance to the Little Peeps. The history books have been a most interesting experience - a lot of hard work, but real satisfaction also. Things that I view in a positive light directly connected with the project here has been discovering so much talent among the townspeople.

Maxine Turner

I have been asked to express a few of my impressions of the last two and one-half years in Starks. This is an amusing consignment, for at my age I have learned that many of the negative impressions and quotes by those opposed to the ICA will be forgotten in the years ahead.

In our town, as in any town, there are strong personalities that favor the positive or negative sides of issues. This is all to the good, because while evil persists in our lives, the positive and the good will prevail.

I have said to individuals and publicly that the ICA has not done anything but what could have been done by, for instance, the Church, the Grange, and by town officials or town people. It is very

possible that in the future years the old Cornshop might have been what it is now. The "village green" might have looked as it does now. The work among our youth, as the Trekkers last year, for instance, and the winterization of several homes that has been done might have been accomplished. However, the above named has been done, and it was done only by the dedication and leadership of the ICA staff with the help of many "town folk".

I think that the ICA made some mistakes in their presentation of their project in our town. Mainly that they did not tell us what exactly the ICA was and the connection with the Order: Ecumenical. The uninformed and negative press only fed fuel to the negative impressions of many.

I had the opportunity, while I was in Washington, D.C., to meet with several leaders of the Institute as well as Senator Percy. I did suggest that as the two years for the project would be coming to a close it might be wise to end their participation here. Let things cool, as it were. The S.E.C. members, still only trying their young wings, decided that a continuance of a few staff members for a time would be of invaluable help in lending their knowledge and experience to the hopes that the Starks Enterprises Corporation has for the old Cornshop. Those hopes, dreams, and visions of what could be accomplished will be enhanced by an improving economy and a positive attitude on the part of us, citizens of Starks, who, with a willingness to lend a helping hand to the Starks Enterprises Corporation, can make Starks - our town - a good place to live.

B. Glen McGee

Although I had lived in Starks for two years, it was the consult which finally got me involved in the community. I live outside the village and it never seemed there was any reason to come into town. It offered so little, it was easier to go to one of the larger, neighboring towns. At the consult, I remember being excited about the possibilities that were raised for the future of the village. I was impressed by the methods and organization that were demonstrated.

I've continued my involvement and still believe that it's all been for the good of our village. There is a new life that is very much in evidence in Starks now. Some of it is cosmetic, but even that adds a lot to one's positive feelings about their town. The village green is maintained now and provides a gathering place for both youth and adult activities. Businesses that are operating provide the village something to identify with. A lot of people are pulling for the Woodworks to make it.

Frank Russell.

It was an eye-opening experience for me coming to Starks and going to the Town Meetings. Although I enjoyed the lively debates, I was surprised by the unwillingness of some people to listen to both sides of an issue. I thought in a small community people would at least listen to each other.

I was never involved before 2-1/2 years ago because we live nearer Anson, 9 miles out of Starks. There was not much going on that would bring me into Starks. Now my husband is active with the Little Peeps Nursery, but I find it difficult to participate after coming home tired from work and caring for two children.

What I remember most in the past 2-1/2 years is the first Winter Carnival for Starks' 184th birthday and the contradance in the Cornshop with the propane heaters going.

It would have been better to start the project in a month other than June, which is the planting season. The most helpful suggestion I have is to recognize the importance of good public and media relations before starting any project. It is important to make your intentions clear in terms that people can understand.

The accomplishments that have happened in Starks have been very positive things. I hope that the Woodworks makes it because it's bringing money into town and providing jobs.

from an interview with Lyn Russell

A project initiated from the ICA activities is the Little Peeps Nursery School. Having this school in town has really been an advantage to my young children. My son was starting kindergarten when the girls started nursery school. He had never had the advantage of attending a nursery school and most kindergarten skills came hard to him. However, my oldest daughter, now in kindergarten, is having a much easier time in school because of her learning experiences in nursery school.

This nursery school project is the only one in which I have been personally involved. I patronize the store quite regularly and have had work done on my car at the garage. It is a real boon to the town to have these small business assets in our community.

Mary Pressey

## INTERVIEWS

The following section is a result of interviews done by teams made up, usually, of one townperson and one ICA staff person. Conducted during the evaluation process in November, 1980, 37 visits were made in order to talk with a cross-section of the community representing both those involved in the project and those who chose not to become involved. It is recognized that the total community is affected by what happens in one way or another. Whenever possible the speaker is identified, but in some cases similar comments came from several people and those are identified as such.

In visiting homes of some of our town folks, Maxine Turner and I received the general impressions that as a whole, the usual gripes of high taxes, roads and the economy of our nation are subjects that are always in the foreground of their thinking. After these subjects have been discussed, we talked about the past, present and future of our town.

As the years fade they bring pleasant memories and anecdotes of the past. The present years bring challenge and the future years, the hopes and dreams of what will be. The present we have with us as we live from day to day. The future lies in the hand of God. So, we talk about the past. Those things that seemed so important as they happened are mostly forgotten. Not so the fact that having a baby was a home affair shared by all. The father waiting impatiently for the doctor so that his horse could be put in the barn. His hands busy as a surcease of his worry for his wife and first child. The children are put to bed as usual cuddled in their down comforters. The mother-to-be calming her own fears by the preparation for the big event. The cost - \$20.00 for the doctor, \$2.00 for the nurse. You need to remember Mr. "Skinny" Churchill who says that "those were the good ol' days." The cows milked by hand by the light of a lantern during the dark hours. The butter and eggs swapped or traded for "boughten" goods- molasses, sugar and salt. Those memories are indeed pleasant to recall.

Would you go back? The answer is "no"! The revival of wood stoves, an entirely new thing to the young families, will refreshen the tales that their parents and grandparents told of so fondly. Will it be a horse and buggy next?

Our town seems to be a good place to live. Many people have hope for the new cornshop and wish that several workers could be steadily employed. They like the looks of the shop, they think that the new grocery store and garage will be of great value to our town. They hope that the Institute may be of help in the plans that the Starks Enterprises Corporation has. They seem hopeful for the closeness of the families in town. They like a church in town. They feel that TV has cut down, or out, the visitations between family and neighbors to play cards, to attend Grange meetings and church activities. Perhaps the cost of gasoline (predicted to be \$2.00 a gallon by next year) will mean more family and neighbor "get-togethers". That would be wonderful!

Glen McGee and Maxine Turner

I joined SEC well after its creation and purchase of the Cornshop. Paul Frederic brought a membership certificate by my house for me and accepted the fee in return. Later, to my surprise, I was elected to the board. I made the mistake of arriving at my first board meeting without a ready excuse and, so, was elected President.

I'm sure the Cornshop can and will be a good addition to the economy, tax base and social scene of Starks. I've been uninvolved in any social movement since the 60's but it seems to be time again. I'm glad to be part of the SEC and hope it grows, and soon!

Peter Cook

I remember as a kid we couldn't get a town baseball team going. The adults weren't interested enough to support the kids. About the only thing we had for kids was the ski tow and that wasn't very many years. Now we've got the softball team for the men and boys and it's a good one!

Bob Pressey

In reviewing the effect the ICA has had, to my mind, on the inhabitants of Starks, I can only say I wish they hadn't come here. We should all be seriously working together to solve some of our municipal problems but with the division in town at this time, it looks like a long, hard road to be travelled before we'll be pulling together again.

Jane S. Brackett

The following quotes are things that were expressed by more than one person who was visited. These were chosen as a representative sample of the varied views in the community:

--The Woodworks, the Peeps, the store, the garage; they're all very positive things. I feel sorry about all the negative and wish more positive could have been accomplished.

--It's nice to have the garage and store in town. For a while we had to go so far to get anything.

--The ICA has jelled a lot of things, but there was community feeling before. Starks people are helpful and they care about each other.

--I like the way that the kids get together at the Peeps School.

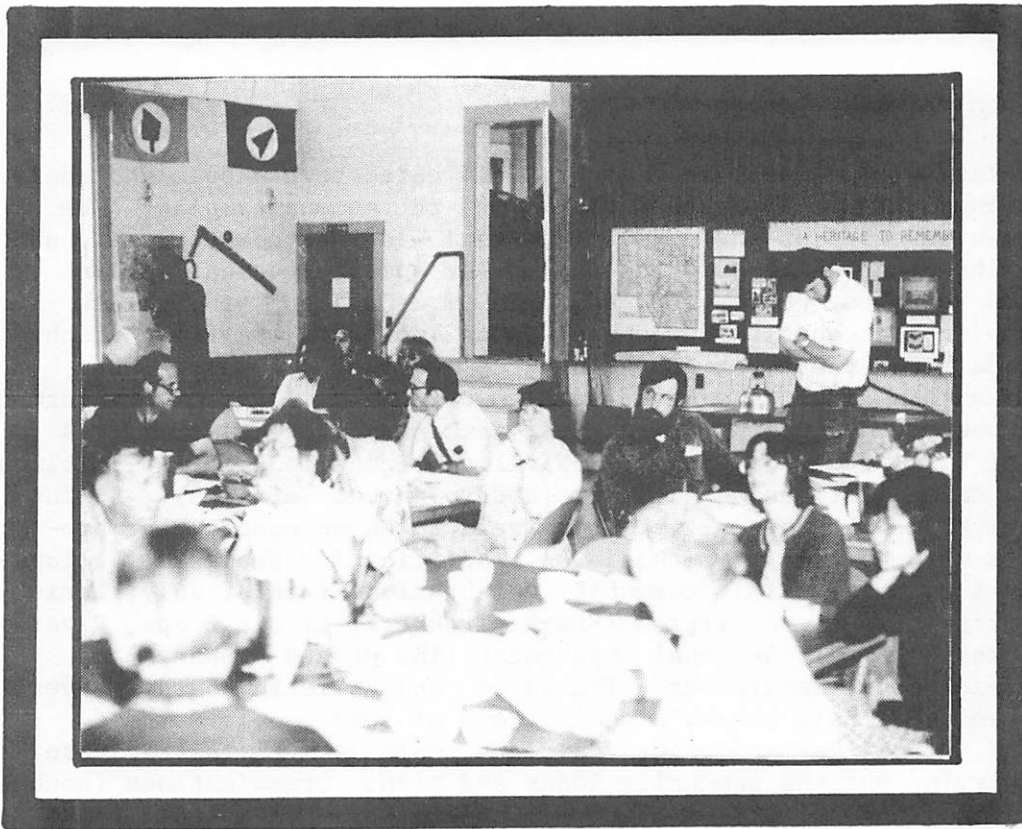
-- I really enjoy the 4th of July parades now. It's nice to have the village doing that.

--I don't think much has been accomplished. The Peeps is real good for the kids, but the Woodworks and Cornshop are still very iffy and identified as ICA rather than community projects.

--There should have been a special town meeting before the start of the project. There would have been a lot more support and participation.

--In any community, as it is in Starks, there will be a number of people who will work for something, a number who will work against and the greatest number who will wait and see what happens.

# DEVELOPMENT METHODS



## THE DEMONSTRATION APPROACH

### THE CONSULT

The Starks Human Development Project Consult was held in May-June of 1978. In this week-long meeting the community, along with consultants from outside the community serving as resources, formed its four year plan for social and economic development. First, townspeople stated their hopes and dreams for the community. Next, the obstacles were identified. Then the practical proposals were decided on for dealing with the obstacles. Finally, the practical proposals and the ways to get them done were arranged into 14 programs (i.e. Community Activity Center, Starks Cooperative Enterprises, Starks Youth Corps, etc.) which provided a focus and structure for community participation. A document containing the ideas and work of the consult was printed to serve as a working "tool" to be used, evaluated and re-formed as the plans were put into practical form and tested.

### THE PROJECT GETS UNDERWAY

Immediately following the consult, interested townspeople and resident Institute staff began carrying out the community plan. The document created at the consult was reviewed in order to create a timeline of activities for the next year specifying what action should be taken, where, when and by whom. On June 14th, a week following the consult, townspeople and Institute staff met in the Town Hall for the first Starks Project meeting. Workshops were held and six committees based on the work of the consult were formed with townspeople volunteering their services on these committees (Rural Life Education, Summer Activities, Economic Start-up, Citizen Care, Communications and Library, and Volunteer Services). During the first months the initial steps were taken on some of the proposals with particular emphasis on beautification projects (Village Green & Swimming Hole); Community Celebrations (4th of July, Christmas Party); Youth Activities (Starks Trekkers, Little Peeps, River of Tomorrow Play); Seasonal Employment (The Wreath Company) and Communications (Newsletter - The Voice and Bulletin Board). Over the two and a half years, a small group of townspeople met and worked on how they and other residents could actively participate in carrying out the community ideas and plan. Organizations (both profit and non-profit) were formed; events were scheduled, including workdays, trips and celebrations. Much hard work and planning went on to think through and organize the activities. Throughout the two and a half years of the project, a special effort was made to make use of support from outside for Starks' plans, including

technical assistance from both public and private agencies.

#### MOTIVATION FACTOR

In every community, the spirit of cooperation, participation and responsibility is very important. Whether a community is motivated to undertake new achievements and to plan for the future is dependent on an element which is hard to see. This factor motivates people, for some unexplainable reason, to make decisions to care about their community. It generates a confidence in the future, which makes itself known in the community's physical appearance, its organization and identity. When this spirit of cooperation, participation and responsibility is present, progress can be carried on indefinitely. It shows up when the need for development is felt, when cooperative efforts demonstrate results and when momentum sustains participation.

## DOCUMENTATION APPROACH

### CONTEXT

The approach used to document the Human Development Projects is unique. It differs from the usual "objective" analysis by recognizing the effect of the documentation process on the community and, therefore, contains questions and procedures which allow the community to reflect on its journey. It differs from the evaluative approach by emphasizing accomplishments, learnings and breakthroughs rather than discrepancies, failures and mistakes. This approach goes beyond apparent negative factors to reveal their creative elements. Thus those involved are assisted in using the experiences of the past and present in order to plan the next steps toward the future. The focus of concern is the community and its future.

### COMMUNITY REPORT

The purpose of the report is threefold. First, it gives form to the story that is in the memory of the community. Sections such as the history of the community, stories and quotes from townspeople are used to portray the process of development. The writing of the report is done as a joint effort of community people and Institute staff.

Secondly, it is a report of the results of efforts expended in the project.

Thirdly, it is a concrete sign of hope. It relates to all concerned with development what can happen in a community and what method and approaches might be helpful.

### METHOD

The method of documentation includes visiting with a cross-section of people from the community. These visits help determine the common story that has emerged. A timeline of the local history and a chart of accomplishments are created with members of the community to check, correct and add data. The major section of the document is a series of reports of the community's accomplishments in the economic, social and human arenas. These reports were written by community residents who had been directly involved in the activities. Each part describes the intent of the community two years ago, the obstacles they faced, and the present signs of achievement. Throughout the week of visitation and writing, community residents played a key role as the ones

who allowed the community story to be told and who wrote and edited the report. This enabled it finally to be the community's report on the accomplishments and learnings of the journey of the past two and a half years.

## THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS

### WHAT IS THE INSTITUTE OF CULTURAL AFFAIRS?

The Institute of Cultural Affairs is a not-for-profit volunteer organization which grew out of an ecumenical church group, and is now working in 32 nations. A central principle is that people are a community's greatest resource, and are the key to the future. The ICA actively promotes the interchange among communities of solutions and breakthroughs related to common concerns. Funds come primarily from individual sources with some churches, community organizations, and businesses providing support. Public dollars have been received for specific projects.

### WORKING PRINCIPLES:

#### . EVERY PERSON'S WISDOM

Every human being can contribute. Community people can shape their own destiny; their effectiveness is multiplied as they work together. Hearing the voice and getting the participation of ordinary people is crucial.

#### . THE REAL SITUATION

The real situation is the only situation you have. Watch out for "if only's." In any given situation, it is possible for people to act creatively. The ICA is interested in what works in actual situations with real people.

#### . FUTURE VISION KEY

Having a vision of the future is a key to a community's progress. When this vision includes the hopes and dreams of everyone, it can allow the various elements of the community to work together. Solutions to problems which are conceived in isolation, without the broad view of a comprehensive vision, may turn out to cause greater problems than the one they were designed to correct.

#### . THOSE WHO CARE

In every community there are people who are concerned with the welfare of the whole community, and who take responsibility for moving ahead. These people may or may not have official positions; they may be found in any age group, any organization and on any economic level. While such a small group may act on behalf of a community, they listen to what others say and think. They show amazing courage and patience, and are of enormous value to a community. These people, and the care they catalyze in their communities are, concretely, the hope of the world.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The effectiveness of a comprehensive development effort such as the one in Starks depends on close cooperation of the public, private, voluntary and local sectors, each bringing the resources to bear in a coordinated effort. That cooperation has been well demonstrated by local, county and regional agencies and organizations as well as many individuals within the New England region. It is appropriate to thank all of those who have provided information, advice and support to the Starks Human Development Project. The generous support has come from far more people than can be listed and all supporters deserve more than appreciation. They deserve recognition as participants in a network which holds a promise for development around the world. We wish to thank the private individuals throughout the State of Maine, New England, the United States, as well as those international supporters who have contributed their time, expertise, concern and private funds to the project. We also wish to thank all those private corporations and businesses who have contributed in kind goods, services, and money to the project.

Most of all, a special thanks is extended to the people of Starks who have supported the project from its beginning with their time and effort.

# Maine Department of Agriculture



Stewart N. Smith, Commissioner

Peter Cook, President  
Frank Russel, Secretary  
Starks Enterprises Corp.  
RFD 1, Box 66A  
Starks, ME

## REPLY TO:

MAINE SOIL and WATER  
CONSERVATION COMMISSION

Frank W. Ricker, Executive Director  
State House Station 28  
State Office Building, Augusta, Maine 04333  
Telephone 207/289-2666  
November 13, 1980

Dear Peter and Frank,

My involvement in SEC has been as an advisor, but mostly as an observer and consumer of methods and procedures in my work.

I feel the town should be proud of its accomplishments it has made over the last several years. They have acquired many necessary human development tools to continue the growth and development of the town.

The implications and next step is to expand the use of these tools to other towns and organizations, enabling them to create their future rather than be a victim of it. This will be one of the new challenges.

Two other areas of expansion seem likely. One is in state government, and the other in educational systems. Some contacts have already been made in these areas.

However, healthy expansion can come only on a solid foundation. Also it must be remembered that anything good must be given away to retain its goodness. Therefore, the people of Starks must continue to set examples and maintain momentum for others to follow.

Judging by the past 2½ years, I feel the people of Starks are big enough to do the job. I rejoice in its continued development.

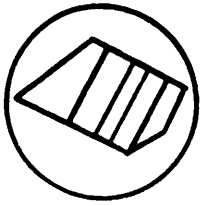
Sincerely

*David Studer*  
David Studer  
Planning & Research Assoc.  
Soil and Water  
Conservation Commission

### Divisions

Administration — Animal Industry — Inspections — Markets — Plant Industry — Promotions — Animal Welfare  
**Commissions, Committees and Boards**

Harness Racing Commission, Milk Commission, Soil & Water Conservation, Seed Potato Board, Veterinarian's  
Examining Board, Agricultural Bargaining Board, Pesticides Control Board, Dairy Council Committee, Milk Tax Committee



# Lorne de l'Acadie Human Development Project Inc.

P.O. Box 90 Lorne, New Brunswick E0B 1Z0 Tel.: (506) 237-2302

November 7, 1980

*Community of Starks,  
Maine, USA*

*On behalf of the community of Lorne, New Brunswick,  
the Lorne de l'Acadie Human Development Project  
Incorporated extends its best wishes to the residents  
of Starks. We will always consider Starks to be  
a sister community and a place where a rare courage  
is found.*

*Yours sincerely,*

*Ronnie Lapointe*

*Ronnie Lapointe,*

*President LHDP Inc.*

**SELECTMEN'S OFFICE  
STARKS, MAINE**

November 26, 1980

Starks Human Development Project

The past few years have represented an exciting period in Starks. Much of the social and economic change in the community during this time must be attributed to the Starks Human Development Project. We are fully aware of the mixed reaction of the town's residents to the project. Citizens that opposed the effort should be free to pursue their interest without fear of being drawn into something they wish to avoid. On the other hand, those that have invested their time and resources in the community improvement endeavor should be encouraged to continue.

In conclusion, we believe the long range benefits from the project far outweigh any short-term problems that arose. Starks is a good place to live. Everyone in town contributes to its character and can help make it a little better place to call home. We hope for a good future for both the town and its residents.

Sincerely,

Selectmen

*Paul B. Frederic*  
*Chas. Nichols*