

October 21, 2006
Christmas Tree Ship Sign Dedication
Thompson, Michigan

The narrative below was a speech given by Mrs. Eris Webb of Manistique, Michigan.

“Thompson in the early days after the lumber business boom became mainly a farming community. Most were run by large families with lots of children. My maternal grandmother, Kate Squires, was a valiant woman, and a proud Native American. She served as Thompson Township Treasurer for many years. She was a nurse/midwife who brought more than 300 babies into the world. She often accompanied Dr. Tucker on many of his calls in the area. She walked long distances in all kinds of weather to help those in need of medical care. Many residents couldn’t afford to call the doctor but knew they could depend on Kate. She was a strong woman who knew much about Native American herbs and remedies. One winter evening while out on a errand of mercy, Grandma came upon an old woman known as Squaw Mary, apparently sleeping in a snow bank. Since Squaw Mary was known to be fond of “firewater”, it was assumed she was not frozen there, but merely sleeping, however, she was very cold. Grandma took her in and gave her hot soup and tea and Mary thawed out nicely. Since she was certain that Kate had saved her life and in gratitude, gave her the secret recipe for the famous “cedar poultice” for which Kate become noted. The poultices affected many known healings, many overnight.”

“Kate died too soon in 1942 at the age of 67. She is an unforgettable person and a role model for me. There were always lots of friends around her table and she was the most hospitable person I have ever known. In those days, on many weekends, there were square dances at the Town Hall and Kate played the piano and my Grandfather Hiram, played the violin and sometimes Uncle John called the squares. All of us children loved the square dances because we were sometimes allowed to join in the dancing. The adult dancers would pick us up and spin us around until we were perpendicular to the floor! It was good fun and we felt all grown up!”