

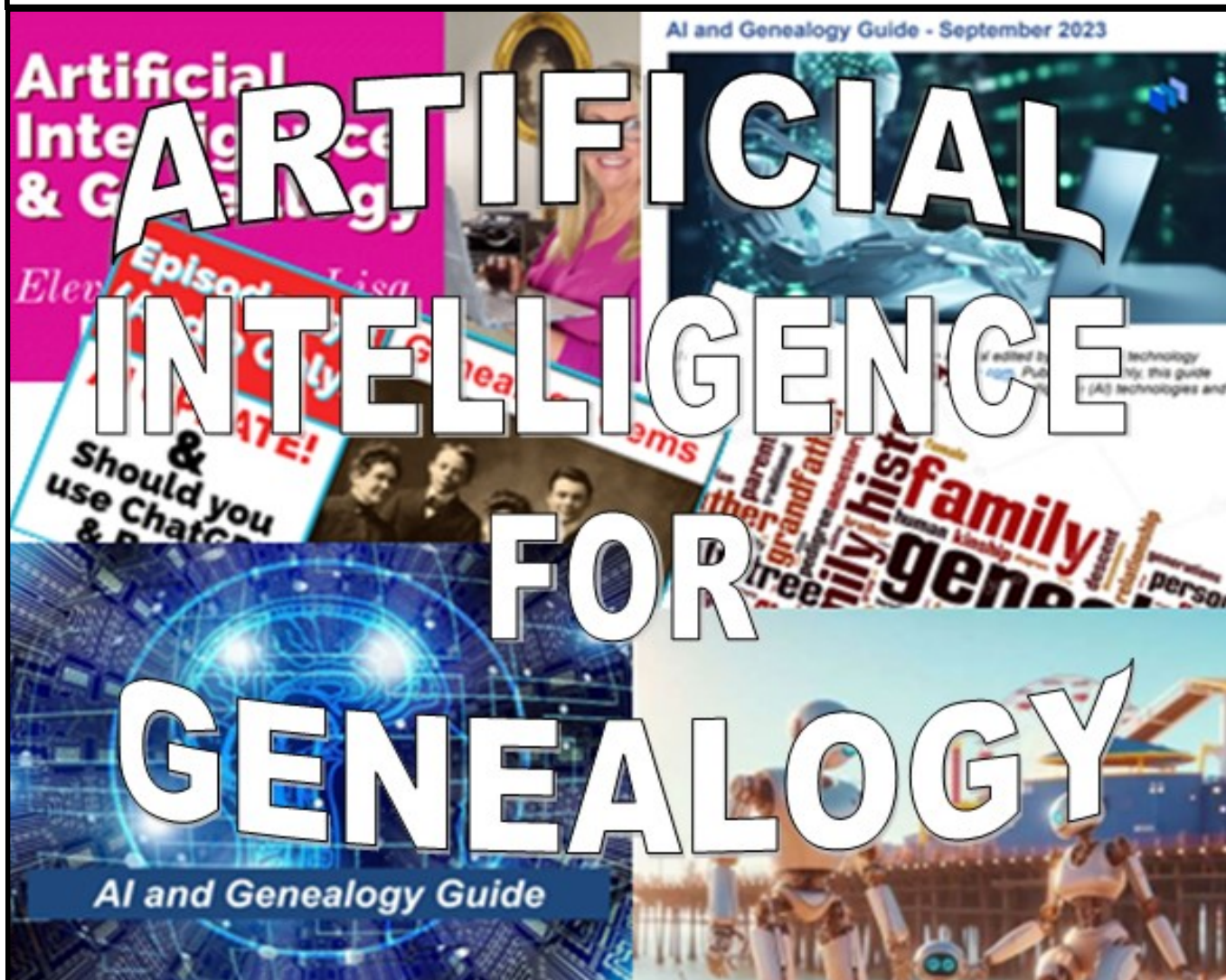
# INFORMER

“OUR 30TH YEAR”

Volume 31, Issue 2

Annual Dues \$18 Individual \$20 Family

April 2024



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### INFORMER JANUARY 2024

Correspondence about dues, memberships, and lost *Informers* should be directed to:  
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**Editor's note:**

We received a notice from Donella Spencer who submitted our January 2024 *Informer* article on pages 16-17, "TAMBLIN 1808 TO SPENCER 1950 ANCESTRY." She mentions "I looked it over again and I noticed that the CAPTION for the photo of Andrew Colburn, who died in 1874, says it was taken "about 1879"! oops! but he was dead by then. I checked the attached email, and I did say I guessed it was "about 1870". I know it was just a typo, or transcription error."



Donella also mentioned that she appreciates our publishing "My first published genealogy article." Have you had your first genealogy article published? This is your newsletter! We would be pleased to publish your first genealogy article, or second, or third.....

Thank you Donella (Dee)! Thanks not only for your article but also your follow up.



### REQUESTING YOUR FEEDBACK

The JCNYSG Presidency requests your feedback on our website and Facebook page. Please answer these few questions. Send your email response to President Tom LaClair at [tomlaclair624@yahoo.com](mailto:tomlaclair624@yahoo.com).

1. How often do you visit the JCNYSG website ([www.jcnygs.com](http://www.jcnygs.com))? Answers may include daily, monthly, quarterly, or never.
2. Do you download the quarterly *Informer* (pdf) from the website? Answers may include quarterly, from time to time, or never.
3. Do you routinely visit and/or follow the JCNYSG Facebook page? Answers may include daily, monthly, quarterly, or never.
4. Do you have any website or Facebook page feedback for us?



### JCNYSG FINANCIAL AUDIT

Walrath Tax Service LLC, P.O. Box 625, Brownville, New York. The following was noted in a letter dated 19 Dec 2023: "I finished the audit of the Jefferson County New York Genealogical Society (JCNYSG) books/bank account. The audit covered membership checks received from 10/27/2021, checkbook register from 10/24/21 and bank statements from 5/12/22 till 11/13/2023. I reviewed all entries and found nothing wrong. The JCNYSG has many deposits because of memberships and very few checks written. Checks were written to other genealogy/historical societies as well as postage and post office box rent. The only large checks were made out for printing. I have no recommendations for improvements and the JCNYSG should continue recording as it has in the past. Sincerely, Michael L. Walrath, EA, Tax Advisor."

# Membership

## Application and Renewal

**MAIL TO:**

**JEFFERSON COUNTY NY  
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY**

**P. O. Box 6453  
Watertown, New York 13601**

**ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP**

**Individual.....\$18.00**

**Family.....\$20.00**

**Donation (if desired) \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Payment Total.....\$ \_\_\_\_\_**

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_

**State, Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone:** ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

**Email:** \_\_\_\_\_

Annual membership provides you the most current issue of the *Informer* via the mail, as well as unlimited internet access to current and past *Informers* since 1994! There are no on-line payments at this time.

**CHECK YOUR MEMBERSHIP STATUS ON THE BACK COVER ADDRESS LABEL**

# SOUNDEX

If you have been involved in genealogy research for any time at all, you have crossed paths with Soundex research. Soundex is the name given to a system for coding and indexing family names based on the phonetic spelling of the name. The code consists of the first letter of the family name, followed by 3 digits representing the first three phonetic sounds found in the name. Similar sounding family names have similar Soundex codes. Soundex is used to index individuals for U.S. census and other purposes.

The Soundex system is a useful tool in searching for ancestors because the misspelling of family names was a common occurrence in official records. As well, the spelling of family names can change over time. The Soundex system is particularly useful for people searching for ancestors in the United States. In 1930, the U.S. National Archives used the Soundex system to index family names for the 1880, 1900 and 1920 census, and part of the 1910 census (the results of the 1890 census were destroyed in a fire). Anyone searching for ancestors in these census records needs to know the Soundex code system.

Soundex is still in use today by the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) to track people for census purposes. It is also used to check the spelling of names in large databases. For example, at one time telephone companies used Soundex to assist telephone operators in locating the telephone number of a person based on an educated guess as to the spelling of the name. For more information on Soundex, visit

<https://www.archives.gov/research/census/soundex>

Soundex Coding Examples					
Name	Letters Coded	Soundex Code	Name	Letters Coded	Soundex Code
Allricht	L,R,C	A462	McGee	C	M200
de Mille	L	M400	McGhee	C	M200
DuBois	B,S	D120	O'Brien	B,R,N	O165
Eberhard	B,R,R	E166	Opnian	P,N,N	O155
Engbrethson	N,G,B	E521	Oppenheimer	P,N,M	O155
Heimbach	M,B,C	H512	Riedemanas	D,M,N	R355
Hanselmann	N,S,L	H524	Scott	T	S300
Henzelmann	N,Z,L	H524	Searles	R,L,S	S642
Herman	R,M,N	H655	Smith	M,T	S530
Hildebrand	L,D,B	H431	Van Lind	N,D	L530
Kavanagh	V,N,G	K152	Waggoner	G,N,R	W256
Lukaschowsky	K,S,S	L222	Zita	T	Z300
McDonnell	C,D,N	M235	Zitzmann	T,Z,M	Z325

**Deborah and Paul Wilson  
JcNYGS members and our liaisons to the Church of  
Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**



# Jefferson County New York Genealogical Society

Meeting Minutes, March 9, 2024  
By Recording Secretary Kelly A. Brown

The meeting was held on March 9, 2024, at the Watertown Church of Latter-day Saints in Watertown, New York. Attendees were Tom and Janine LaClair, Anne Davis, Kelly Brown, Florence Bach, Janet George, Ron & Ann Fillhart, Tracy Robertson, Rose & Don Dillenbeck, Kathryn Muschell, Cliff Schneider, Tom & Judy Wood, Bruce Duxtater, Larry Corbett, Paul Beers, Warren Allen, Donna Abbass, Paul Wilson, Russell Grandjean, Elaine Scott, Robert & Jacqueline Radke, Mary & William Dasno, Joyce Nicholas, Lynn Waite, Bob Comenole, Mary Blanchard, and Michael Case. We had 4 first-time attendees. President Tom LaClair opened the meeting at 1:00 pm.

Treasurer's Report: We reported a current balance of \$7,458.04 in the checking account and a balance of \$2,531.11 in the CD. Paul Beers made a motion to accept the report, seconded by Tom Wood, and passed. Michael Walrath performed a two-year audit of the accounts, and the feedback was positive. Coughlin Printing will allow us to use their permit to save us money. There will be a different permit number on the *Informer* because of this.

We send complementary copies of the *Informer* to various genealogical societies. The Ogdensburg Library would like to start receiving a copy and we'll add them. Tom passed around the upcoming April draft of the *Informer*. Our website is a little behind technology-wise as some pages won't load. We're seeking informal feedback. Tom asked how many people visit it each week and 1 attendee raised their hand. He asked how many attendees download the *Informer* from the site and no one at the meeting does, though two said they will start. He asked how many attendees follow our FB page and 5 people raised their hand.

If anyone has a chance to visit the Fort Drum Museum, it's free with public access and a great place to visit. Tom mentioned that if anyone at the meeting wants to join our society, they can send a check in the mail & get all the mailing information from the *Informer*. Right now, we have about 200 members, but membership is on the decline and we're always seeking new members.

The Jefferson County Historical Society will host the 2024 History & Genealogy Fair at the Paddock Mansion in Watertown on September 28, 2024. JCNYS will attend as well as other historical and genealogical agencies across the county. Last year's fair was a big success and we're hoping for another big turnout. Also, please check out the 2024 Program

section in this *Informer* as we have many exciting events planned for this year! A motion was made to close the business portion of the meeting by Tracy Robertson, seconded by Anne Davis, and passed.

Guest speaker, Kenny Knapp, an avocational archeologist in the area, delighted the group with the history of Indigenous Peoples in the Thousand Islands. He specializes in pre-contact archeology (before the Europeans arrived). Kenny explained the cultural differences between the Iroquois in this area versus the Central New York area. He discussed how technology in archeology has advanced which allows us to gain a deeper insight into their lives. Kenny explained how the St. Lawrence River was formed and how it affected the lives of the Native Americans. A couple of fun facts are that the Thousand Islands were an extension of the Great Plains with caribou traveling up through Chaumont Bay and Grindstone Island to breed and dominate the area. Due to the ocean filling in the gorges when ice disappeared, whales could be found in Lake Champlain and clams were for the picking in Ogdensburg. Kenny brought many fascinating artifacts with the oldest dating back to 10,000 years ago. He gave us a wonderful, detailed account of the geography and lives of the Native Americans in the area. Kenny took questions and after the meeting, visited with our attendees. His presentation was captivating and a big hit with all of us.

The meeting concluded at 2:15 pm with refreshments made by Anne Davis.



Kenny Knapp answering Ann Fillhart's question after the meeting.

Kenny Knapp showing off some of his finds after the meeting.



# RICHARD GEORGE BERTRAND WWII VETERAN AND CLAYTON CENTENARIAN

By JCNYS Member Tom LaClair

As Published in the *Thousand Island Sun* 7 Oct 2015

In an earlier spotlight article, I spoke of the "The Greatest Generation," a term coined by journalist Tom Brokaw to describe the generation who grew up during the deprivation of the Great Depression, and then went on to fight in World War II. In highlighting another one of our dwindling WWII era members, Richard George Bertrand was born in his parent's home at 708 Graves Street in Clayton, New York, on 10 Sep 1915. Richard, the son of George Washington Bertrand and Lena DeRosia Bertrand, both natives of Clayton, recently celebrated his 100th birthday surrounded by family, friends and well-wishers from the community. However, he hasn't always been a centenarian.



Richard Bertrand  
in 1916

Richard spent his youth like any other child in Clayton during the 1920s and 1930s. He says he was not a River Rat per se, but he did enjoy the River community and the happenings of the summer resort town. He recalls when he was four or five his father came home with his first car—a Willys-Knight automobile. His first taste of school was in kindergarten in Watertown's North side. His father was an oil delivery man at the time but moved back to Clayton soon after. On the world

stage, in 1927 Charles Lindbergh left Roosevelt Field, New York on the first non-stop transatlantic flight in history. He reached Paris thirty-three and one-half hours later in the Spirit of St. Louis, his aircraft. In 1929 the nation experienced the 1929 Stock Market crash. The plummeting stock prices led to losses estimated at \$50 billion and started the worst American depression in the nation's history. In 1937 at Lakehurst, New Jersey, the German airship Hindenburg burst into flames while mooring. The fire consumed the largest airship in the world, 804 feet long, within one minute, causing the death of thirty-six people. And in 1938 a nationwide scare developed when Orson Welles broadcast his War of the Worlds radio drama, which included fake news bulletins stating that a Martian invasion had begun on earth.

Back in Clayton, Richard was taught right from wrong and religiously attended St. Mary's Catholic Church where he was baptized, received first communion and was confirmed. Richard enjoyed riding his bicycle and

peddling down to the docks and watching people arriving and departing by rail train. He viewed many come in for daily and weekly excursions visiting the many popular Islands, villages of Cape Vincent, Clayton and Alexandria Bay and the river communities of Kingston and Gananoque, Canada. At age 14 the depression hit; however Richard says his family fared fairly well—his father held his job when others were not so lucky. He attended and graduated from St. Mary's High School 23 Jun 1933, in a class of just seven students. Before graduation, Richard met and started dating Virginia Florence Cantwell, daughter of Frank H. Cantwell and Laurena Bailey Cantwell. In fact the two knew each other all their lives and dated through their teenage years. After graduation he worked at a gas station owned by his Aunt Dorothy Brigham, a gas station that his father had built, not far from where Gray's Wholesale stands today.



Richard and Virginia in 1932

On 10 Oct 1934, Richard and Virginia were married at St. Mary's Catholic Church by Reverend George E. Racette. For their honeymoon, the two drove his father's Packard luxury car to New York City where

(Continued on Page 6)

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they enjoyed big city life for a few days. In their first year of marriage the two moved four times; but only moved three times thereafter. Soon after marriage Richard took a job managing the Texaco Auto Service Station on Pine Camp and the two moved to Black River to be closer to his employment. In 1940, their son, Richard Cantwell Bertrand was born.

Life was going well and then the card arrived—Richard's draft card from the United States Army—it was Oct of 1943. The same month the German Army conquered the Greek Island of Kos, took the 4,423 Italian and British troops there prisoner, then carried out Adolf Hitler's order to execute any Italian officers who had switched allegiance from the Axis to the Allies. Additionally Americans and Japanese ships fought the naval Battle of Vella Lavella, after nine Japanese destroyers arrived to evacuate troops from New Georgia Island. Six U.S. Navy destroyers intercepted the Japanese, battled two days, with the loss of one ship on each side. The news was filled of war overseas and Richard was packing clothing and items for his duffle bag.

At the time of his draft Richard G. was 28 years old and Richard C. was four and one half. Taking a train from Watertown, Richard G. was inducted into the Army 5 Nov 1943, at Syracuse, and immediately boarded a train to a Long Island Personnel Center for further processing. On 26 Nov 1943 he entered Active Service, and was immediately sent to Camp Craft, South Carolina, where he received seventeen weeks of basic training. He then reported to Fort George Meade, Maryland, to prepare for an overseas assignment. First things first though, he returned home to Clayton to spend a couple of weeks leave with family first. Then it was on to Massachusetts where he boarded a ship at Boston Harbor—it was May 1944. Over the next eleven days the ship and crew sailed with an escorted convoy of ships to Liverpool, England, all the time the soldiers watched for enemy submarines. Richard recalls arriving in England finding himself at a dilapidated and dirty British Base, where he remembers well the cleaning, and more cleaning he was assigned to do. Although trained as an Infantryman and Machine Gunner by this time, he was transferred to Communications and Combat Radio School and trained as a Radio Operator 776. This was around the time of D-Day (6 Jun 1944) and he feels this assignment helped save him from being one of the many who stormed the beaches of Normandy.

His next assignment was to Southern England where he received Combat Rifleman certification, then shipped off to France, along the French and Belgium border—it was early Dec 1944. Private First Class Bertrand was assigned to Company B, 120th Infantry and on his very first night he and his unit charged and took the town of Koer. In this ground combat battle, bullets were flying overhead—a quick realization he

was now on the front lines. Although Richard was filling a Combat Communications specialist position, when a fellow rifleman soldier fell beside him, he was selected on the spot to replace him. The unit kept moving forward working themselves along the Roer River into Belgium. They had just taken another town and the unit pulled back for three days of Rest and Recuperation—it was 16 Dec 1944. So much for R&R as the very same day came the unexpected start of the Battle of the Bulge, a major German offensive campaign launched through the densely forested region toward the end of WWII in Europe. The surprise attack caught the Allied forces completely off guard. United States forces bore the brunt of the attack and incurred their highest casualties for any operation during the war. The battle also severely depleted Germany's armored forces on the western front which Germany was largely unable to replace. German personnel and Luftwaffe aircraft also sustained heavy losses. Richard and his unit came through generally well.

On Christmas Day 1944, Richard served on watch duty. Unbeknownst to him, his unit sent out a patrol to search for enemy encampments. On the patrol's return, Richard says, he might have accidentally shot rounds toward their position to scare them back—in the end everything turned out fine. After enduring a non-festive holiday season in the trenches, continuing through Jan 1945, and having now fought in towns in France, Holland, Belgium (Ardennes) and Germany (Rhineland), he was finally easing into an unsettling battle routine. However on 23 Jan 1945 he was placed in a hospital in France and by early Feb 1945 was medevacked to England—he had trench feet—a medical condition caused by prolonged exposure of the feet to damp, unsanitary, and cold conditions. He spent nearly three months in England convalescing after the three months of combat. In late May 1945, he departed England and for the next nine days, sailed on a ship back to the U.S. where he stayed June, July and August as a patient at Camp Butler Convalescing Hospital, North Carolina. He would spend his last days in the military here and was honorably discharged 6 Sep 1945. All together Richard served one year and 10 months; over one year overseas. While in uniform, Richard earned the Bronze Star Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal and Bronze Star Attachment (Double), the World War II Victory Medal, the Combat Infantry Badge (expert), and the Honorable Service Lapel Button WWII.

After returning home Richard landed a job with the United States Post Office as a mail carrier. And it wasn't long after that his daughter Gayon Frances Bertrand came along in 1946. Richard and Virginia moved into their 607 James Street home in 1949—the house Richard lives in today. They paid \$9,200.00 for the home that previously served as Butts Funeral

(Continued on Page 7)

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Home. In fact their bedroom was one of the rooms once used to prepare the deceased for funerals. Asking Richard if there were any spooks or ghosts, he replied if there was, he has never seen them and they have never bothered him. Through the years Richard was promoted from mail carrier to desk clerk, then assistant post-master, and then in 1973 he was promoted to post master. He retired in 1978 with 33 plus years of dedicated service.

When not working at the post office or raising a family, Richard served the Knights of Columbus, where he first joined Council No. 350 in 1933. He has served many years on the local and state level and continues attending local meetings yet today—over 81 amazing years all total. He has served as chairman of the Boys State Program for Colon-Couch Post 821, where he has been a Legion member since 1945. He worked with the Clayton Youth Commission and mentored boys from age 8 to age 14, and served as the local chairman for the Democratic Party. He also served as chairman of the Clayton Housing Authority for 35 years, and was a long time trustee for St. Mary's Catholic Church where he also served as weekly usher. And although he no longer swings the golf club, the local senior's league is named in his honor.

Richard recently celebrated his 100th birthday with family, friends, and town officials dropping in for well wishes. The Knights of Columbus, and his Catholic Church family, showered him with a wonderful birthday celebration with townspeople turning out to recognize Richard on a monumental achievement. The Village of Clayton Board of Trustees gave him a proclamation certificate. The certificate read: "Honoring the occasion, Richard "Dick" Bertrand is named Citizen of the Day." His front window was adorned with "Happy 100th Birthday Grandpa" and several large photo posters shared wonderful 'Kodak moments' throughout his life. A sign on the yard told drivers passing by to toot their horn for Richard's 100th—the honoree said he believes a few too many did!

Richard is full of life; this was not only seen at his birthday celebrations, he drives a car, cooks his meals, cleans his home, attends the gym, reads the paper daily, welcomes guests, and so much more. His two children have given him nine grandchildren, fourteen great-grandchildren, and three great-great-grandchildren and these young ones keep him active as well.

He mentioned that to this day his WWII military letters home to his wife Virginia are safely stored away. Sadly, Virginia passed away in Apr 1993—22 years ago. Virginia, a 1934 graduate of St. Mary's High School was employed at E. J. Noble Hospital in Alexandria Bay, and served as Clayton elections inspector for many years. She was also a past president and member of Colon-Couch Post No. 821



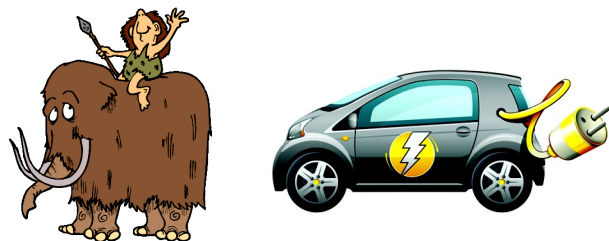
Private First Class Bertrand in 1944

Auxiliary and a past president and member of the 1,000 Islands Council Knights of Columbus Auxiliary.

In closing, I can only hope that if and when I reach his milestone of 100, that I have half the energy Richard has. He most definitely epitomizes and exemplifies his membership in "The Greatest Generation."

JCNYGS Note: Richard George Bertrand, age 101, James Street, Clayton, passed away on Monday, 10 Jul 2017, at Samaritan Summit Village, Watertown, where he had resided since 23 Jan 2017. He was buried beside his wife at St. Mary's Cemetery in the village of Clayton.

**"With the new day comes new strength and new thoughts." – Eleanor Roosevelt**



**FROM PAST to PRESENT**

**1999 Vol. 6 Issue 1 Page 5**

# Records

Contributed by Nan Dixon

A sobering and cautionary word to the uninitiated family historian, and especially to those outside New York State who are so amazed at the scarcity of records here. Even though the law of the state dictated that records be kept beginning in the early 1880s, these sorts of records usually came from the attending doctor.

For the first ten years or so, most of our horse and buggy country doctors were out on call at all hours of the day and night and in all weather. These men gave no importance to filling out a bunch of paperwork when their long day was done. Even though it was the law, many records, if not most, for the first few years never made it to the town clerk.

Babies were born at home, sometimes with a doctor in attendance, and sometimes not. No law dictated THAT. If Aunt Nancy "borned" her sister-in-law's baby (Lena, 1901) she would certainly not rush to register the birth. She went back home (Town of Pamela) to take care of her own brood of young ones. Nobody registered any of her 10, and thus my mother had no record of birth whatsoever, though she was born in the Town of Lyme in 1885 (we hope!) and that was certainly after the registration law had been passed. Rest assured, the doctor did get to Aunt Jen and little Lena eventually, though not in time for Lena's birth, and Lena was duly entered on the books of Brownville.

Deaths were handled in the same informal manner. Most, if not all, people died at home (who would want to go to a hospital and die among strangers!) Sometimes the doctor got around to registering the death, and sometimes he didn't. Or he meant to do it on Monday, but by the time Monday rolled around, he'd had too many births and deaths in the past week, to remember them all, and he just put down what he

remembered. Sometimes the days were right, and sometimes they weren't.

So though Aunt Nina, whom you KNOW was born right there in Depauville in 1889, never shows up on the town clerk's records, nothing unusual was going on. She probably WAS born there and then, but you'd better hope Grampa put her down in the family Bible, because that's all the record you are going to find!

By 1900 the records are pretty regular. Don't get too optimistic, however. When Grampa Cupemall joined his ancestors in 1908, the family records never got the true story for years. His gravestone said 1899, and the historian searched the Albany records in vain. No Grampa. The reason? The clerk, recording the records, wrote a tad hurriedly, and the people who transcribed the record called him "William Cupenhall", misjudging the r for an n, and the n for an h. Moral of the story: Consult the town clerk's records yourself, or get a good researcher who can decipher nineteenth century town clerk handwriting.

Oh, the gravestone? That story is repeated all over the county. Some time after Grampa's death, some descendant decided Grampa needed a stone, or that his date should be added to the existing stone. When did he die? Well, maybe Bird knows, or Ira, or some other of his children. Or maybe the benefactor wasn't on speaking terms with any of them and made a guess. Or he told the stonecutter, who had other things on his mind that morning and mixed up Grampa with someone else.

Unfortunately, it happened. Primary sources are good, but not infallible!





## A STELLAR SAVE

Donated Civil War-related collection a 'treasure trove' for historical society.

Chris Brock, *Watertown Daily Times*, August 19, 2023.

The World War I veteran, his eyesight clouded due to being gassed in 1918 in the Verdon sector, took a pen decades later, and while looking upon his treasure trove of historical documents, carefully began to print letters to form his words, as if he knew cursive would one day go out of style and future generations may be unable to decipher what he had to say: "I have several cartons that were stored in my father's barn for 50 years or more - all are of war veterans ... I could see these envelopes and old papers and records might be of value to someone. So I got new cartons and I was over two years sorting them out and putting them in A to Z order ... I sorted them in 1954,55-56 ... They contain thousands of envelopes and old papers of veterans of 1812, 1814, Mexican wars, Civil War, Spanish war - books with the records of every man in the service." "Be of value to someone" would prove to be a vast understatement when those cartons, devotedly saved in a barn and later an attic, found their way to the Jefferson County Historical Society last month. "There are no words," said Historical Society Executive Director Toni Engleman. "It's just amazing." The meat of the donation is about 20 boxes of letters from Civil War veterans who sought pensions or increases to their pensions relating to their service in putting down the rebellion. Engleman estimates there's about 3,000 of those letters. The collection also includes war relics such as gas masks, uniforms and things yet discovered. The donation is so vast that Engleman and society volunteers haven't had time to go through everything. The staff has been focusing on the reopening of the society after a 3 1/2-year hiatus. That reopening happened Aug. 5 when about 100 guests arrived at the Paddock Mansion, 228 Washington St., to take in its renovations and fresh exhibits. Among the new displays, only one of the donated Civil War-related envelopes is displayed. The rest of the donation is shelved in the boxes they arrived in. Some of the envelopes have up to a dozen papers inside. It's all so tempting for Engleman and others at the society to suspend usual operations and to spend hours going through it all. "We've been trying to concentrate on the opening," Engleman said. "Every time we walk by it's like, 'Don't look that way!' We're leaving it alone for now because we have to come up with a game plan."

### A 'ZEALOUS' ADVOCATE

The roots of the 3,000 letters in the collection go back to Watertown's "prominent citizen" James A. Dolan. When he died in July 1903 at the age of 65, his obituary in the *Watertown Daily Times* had this subhead: "One of the Best Known Civil War Veterans in Northern New York - A Strong, Manly Nature."

When the Civil War began in 1861, he went to Adams and enlisted in Co. G of the 35th New York Volunteer Infantry, in which he was made sergeant and later, quartermaster sergeant. He would then reenlist in Co. H, 13th New York Heavy Artillery. Later, he worked as an aide on the staff of Gen. Winfield S. Hancock. Dolan served until the close of the war in 1865. He had a menagerie of careers. At 10, he learned stone masonry in Sackets Harbor. After being mustered out of the service, he was associated with Asa Lyons, a prominent Adams contractor who built lighthouses from New York to Florida. Dolan later graduated from a business school in Poughkeepsie. He then began studies in New York City to become a physician. But an incident from his youth got in the way. At age 8, he was kicked in the head by a horse. "A farmhand sewed up the wound with a needle and thread, but did not extract the fragments of bone," his obituary reads. The wound would bother Dolan all his life and would affect his eyesight, which caused him to drop medical studies. Dolan then came to Watertown to work in the pension office of Edgar North. Dolan continued the business after North retired. When Dolan's wife, Mary Rasay Dolan died in 1935, he was described as a Civil War veteran and "pension attorney in the Paddock Arcade." "Many veterans and their families throughout Northern New York owe it to his work that the country they served has recognized their service and their needs," his obituary reads. "He was zealous and warmly sympathetic in his work, throwing his whole soul into it, as he did into everything that he found worthy of his effort." The results of much of that effort is now at the Paddock Mansion, home of the historical society. Dolan was apparently an intermediary -linking Civil War veterans and the commissioner of pensions at the Department of Interior in Washington, D.C. "He gathered evidence for the cases is what I'm assuming," Engleman said. The envelopes not only contain letters from the Civil War veterans, but also affidavits from acquaintances of those veterans, highlighting everything from applicants' character to medical conditions. Engleman was asked to pull one of the letters out randomly and share it. Inside, there were five sheets of paper. "On this 28th day of May, 1910, I did make a careful examination of the above applicant, Jacob H. Wilson," Watertown physician O.O. Stowell began. The applicant was Jacob H. Wilson of Brier Hill. He was shot in the head during the Civil War and had sought at least two increases to his pension. His envelope even contains a document from the Department of Interior, noting his "invalid pension" (No. 300661) was pending, but Wilson must "report himself for examination" to a doctor in Potsdam "upon any Wednesday within three months from the date hereof" - Jan. 12, 1883. Wilson apparently did get that pension, but he later wrote letters seeking an increase to it. In December 1898, he wrote to Dolan: "Dear sir: I received a notice of rejection of any claim for an increase. Now I have made up my mind to appeal it. What is your advice as to an appeal? I am

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 satisfied that I am entitled to a higher rate. Please let me know by return mail." The official document from the Department of the Interior, dated Nov. 26, 1898, that denied the increase is included in the envelope: "You are informed that the above-titled claim for increase of pension under the general law is rejected on the ground that the rate of pension, \$20 per month, is fully commensurate with the degree of disability from pensioned cause." The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' inflation calculator goes back to 1913. At that time, \$20 was worth \$624 in today's dollars. Wilson wrote again to Dolan in February 1903: "I have come to the conclusion to apply for an increase of pension and think I will come to Watertown and see if you are in the business yet ... I know I am entitled to more than I am receiving." Wilson once again tried for an increase in 1910, which involved the examination by Dr. Stowell, who wrote in his typed affidavit: "I find him suffering from the following diseased conditions: gunshot wound of head, right side, causing entire loss of hearing to right ear and affecting left ear very gradually until total deafness is eminent and only a matter of short time. Right eye is likewise effected very much and at times continuing for several hours ... rheumatism general in character ... a cardiac irregularity and valvular insufficiency." The doctor concluded, "The above diseased conditions are progressive and incurable, and by reason of them, independent of any disability he may have, he is totally unable to perform any kind of manual labor." The envelope contains no correspondence dated after the doctor's letter.

### 'SNAPSHOTS' OF HISTORY

Other pension-related letters include ailments ranging from heart disease to epilepsy contracted in the service. Engleman said the letters are "snapshots" of lives. "You know what his character was, like where one neighbor says, 'He was a well-robust man and was very good for helping us.' Some of these tell such good stories, especially when you look through them and there's an affidavit from neighbors." But not all of these neighborly affidavits reflected positive characteristics. "One lady wrote, 'No! He hurt his back way before the Civil War,'" Engleman said. "So it kind of gives you like the character of the person too, because this guy is trying to claim that he hurt his back in the war, but then you have the neighbor chime in, 'He's been hurt for a long time.'" The collection, Engleman said, is invaluable to historians and genealogists. "For historians, it gives a snapshot of these peoples' lives and what they were going through after the war," she said. "For genealogists, some of these are affidavits from families, which tells who their mothers and fathers were. They did a lot of work just to get one pension." The letters were donated in cardboard boxes and alphabetized, with letters inscribed on the boxes. The World War I veteran who alphabetized the collection also, on several sheets of paper, wrote out a register of what names were in the lettered boxes. "He actually did a lot of work for us,

which is pretty amazing," Engleman said. The museum director is still discovering treasures in the collection. Last week, during an interview with the *Times*, she noticed a collection of letters in a paper bag. They weren't letters involving soldiers. They were letters from widows seeking pensions or pension increases. "I just need to resign my post and live here," Engleman joked. But as amazing as the collection is, how it was saved is also an amazing tale.

### A GREAT SAVE

The person who assembled and organized the donated collection, World War 1 veteran Raymond C. Montrois, died at the age of 82 in Watertown in 1978. He served with Company M of the 23rd Infantry, part of the famed Second Division. He was wounded twice and gassed. After the war, he was a U.S. postal carrier, a career he retired from. In his letter in which he explained the background of the collection, he wrote: "These cartons were all broken and scattered in my father's barn. My mother died while I was in France and my father married again and his second wife after his death, asked me to come over and clean out the barn and burn all the old papers and other junk." Montrois was the son of Peter B. and Alice Montrois. Alice died in 1918. Peter married Mary Kelso in 1920. Peter, a native of Quebec, was a painting contractor in Watertown. He died in 1941 at the age of 79. His obituary gives no indication of how he came about owning the collection, saved by his son, Raymond, and donated by his grandson, Edward C. Montrois, of Sandy Creek Valley Road, town of Watertown. "All of this stuff was in his father's big barn on Water Street," Montrois, 92, said, explaining his father's involvement. "The government had paid his father (Peter, father of Ray) five dollars a month to protect this stuff and keep it. The government decided it wasn't worth keeping, so they stopped paying his father."

Montrois said that his father had a house built in 1929 at 721 Lansing St. "He took all of this stuff and put it in half of the attic," Montrois said. "It was floored in and it was insulated. He would work at the post office, come home and go up in that attic. He was putting this stuff in alphabetical order. He was a fanatic on things being perfect. He just kept at it." Montrois served in the 17th Airborne Division and the 808th Military Police Company during the Korean War. "When I got out, my dad said, 'I want you to take care of all this stuff when I die.'" Montrois was employed by Jefferson County as a maintenance foreman from 1953 to 1957 and then by the Watertown Fire Department until 1986, when he retired as captain. When Montrois and his wife, Jane, who died in 2010, moved to different places, the collection moved with them. The last time they were moved by the couple was when they lived outside of Clayton. "I told my wife at the time, 'I know they're valuable, but I can't move them again,'" Montrois said. "So when I built this house on Sandy Creek Valley

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Road, I built a four-stall garage and I had a ladder going up to the attic. I carried all the boxes up there and covered everything." Montrois said his Syracuse-based lawyer had recommended he begin thinking about "unloading all these artifacts." He began thinking of avenues that would allow that. "I have a friend that's a retired master sergeant from the Air Force," Montrois said. "He's very, very smart. He said, 'Ed, the best thing to do is to find somebody who will take them.' One day I was in the garage and I got thinking." Montrois recalled his father's days as a letter carrier. His route included Washington Street. "I remember when I was a kid, he talked about the historical society," he said. "I picked up the phone in the garage where I had a phone book and called there and talked to a girl named Toni." But the collection was nearly dumped, literally. Before the call, Montrois had moved it to the ground floor of his garage. "I had to move stuff to make room for them," he said. "It was very inconvenient and I was tempted to take it right to the town of Watertown dump. They have a great big dumpster van. I came so close to putting it in my truck and taking it right out there. But I didn't do it. And it was the same day that I called the historical society." After the historical society received the call, board of trustees member John Stano, who is also village of Dexter historian, told Engleman he'd take the short drive to the town of Watertown to see what Montrois had. When seeing it, he texted Engleman: "OMG!" "My first thought was 'It's a real big pile of stuff,'" Stano said. "And once I opened an envelope or two just to kind of see what it was, I realized that for local historians and genealogists, this was a treasure trove. It was just priceless." Stano began transferring the collection to his Honda pickup truck. "It filled the bed of my truck, the back seats and part of the passenger side of my truck," he said. "It was a lot of boxes."

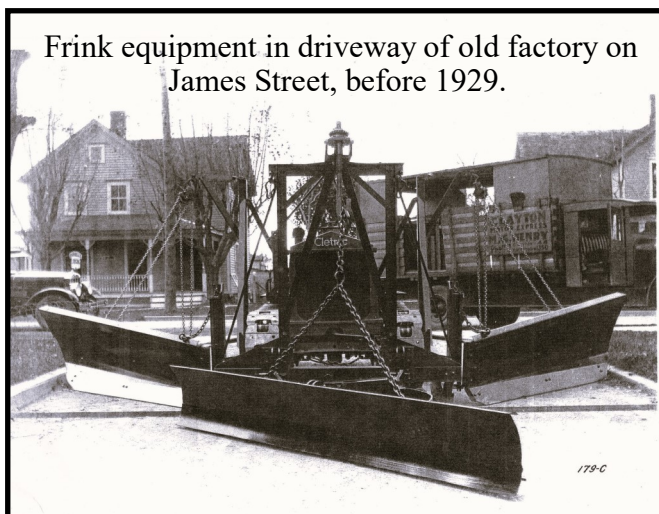
"There was also quite a bit of World War I memorabilia," Stano said. "Ed's father brought home quite a few souvenirs with him, apparently." The Watertown Daily Times reported on the World War I exploits of Raymond Montrois and also interviewed him when he was mustered out of the Army: "Private Montrois brought back enough relics to start a museum." Stano is glad he arrived at Montrois's home when he did. "He said if somebody doesn't want them, maybe he'd just fire up the backhoe and bury them out back. That was another one of his options," Stano said. "I said, 'Please don't do that.'"

### ARCHIVAL BOXES SOUGHT

Now safely at the historical society, Engleman is plotting the next step. She's glad that a new roof was part of the mansion's renovations. "When this roof was leaking, every day, it was like, 'What now?' You'd come in and hope for the best. But we were lucky with the roof leak in that we didn't have much damage to artifacts. We rest a lot easier these days knowing that

it's safe up here." Archival boxes will be needed for the letters, Engleman said. "We can't keep them stored in cardboard and plastic wrap." The archival boxes, Engleman said, cost about \$40 to \$50. Smaller ones for the envelopes are cheaper. She said the society would gladly accept donations earmarked for the cause. Engleman is appreciative of the perseverance of Raymond Montrois, who first saved the collection. "When he came home from World War I, the Civil War didn't happen too long before that. He had the vision that 'This is something important I need to save.' He didn't just listen to his stepmother to go out there and burn everything." The historical society would need an army of volunteers and thousands of hours to properly document the collection. Every envelope, and every piece of paper in each envelope, will require its own unique accession number. "So of the 3,000 letters in there, each one has up to a dozen papers inside," Engleman said. "Each of those will have to be cataloged separately." But if that is done, the director would also like to have all the records digitized so they'll be easily available to the public. "We get so many research requests for things like this," Engleman said. "Normally, we'd send them across the street to the genealogy department at the (city) library. If we had this digitized and put it in some semblance of order, people could go online. We want this to go to the public and for the public to be able to use it. It's not something to hold under wraps. It's something that needs to be shared." The historical society has fielded several requests from people who would like to help in the organization effort. "We're just not there yet," Engleman said. "We're not even sure how we're going to tackle it. Right now, we're focusing on getting fully reopened, because this," she said, pausing and glancing appreciatively at the boxes - "this is going to be a project."

The Jefferson County Historical Society in the Paddock Mansion, 228 Washington St., Watertown, is open to the public Wednesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.



# ASK AUNTY JEFF



By JCNYS Member and Genealogist  
Jean Wilcox Hibben, PhD  
Riverside County, California

Aunty Jeff – Part one of a three-part series on Artificial Intelligence (AI):

**Question:** I keep hearing about AI. I don't understand it or how it works. And is this something that a genealogist needs to even be concerned about?

**Answer (part 1):** AI – Artificial Intelligence – is how a computer learns who you are, what are your interests, and related information that provides the algorithm for YOU, making the output you-centric. This can be helpful in many areas, and we will look at some of those as we explore the pros and cons, rights and wrongs, and ins and outs of the whole thing. Please know that just as technology in general changes faster than the speed of light, or so it seems, new applications (good and bad) are developing as I write this, as you are reading this, and the time in between and long after.

Consider things like “smart” watches, TVs, cars, and just about anything else you can think of that is electronically governed. For someone to say “I'm not interested in using AI,” is hardly practical, for if I were to comment like that on an email or in this column, the algorithm for my interests is already being altered (unless this was typed on my old IBM Selectric, which I do not believe is even in my possession any more, being relegated to the junk heap along with my TV remote control that was wired to the television, my first microwave, and probably most appliances and apparatus that are older than some arbitrary age like “constructed back in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century,” being considered dinosaurs in techno-years).

Aunty Jeff is rather cynical about the subject of Artificial Intelligence and has been woefully unimpressed by some of the experiences she has already had with this mind-reading method of saying what she didn't get a chance to say! Consider this: the other night I was scrolling through one of my “streaming services” on the TV and discovered some ads that were specifically promoting a couple of items I had looked at on my smart phone a few moments before. Coincidence? I might have thought so 2 years ago – or 2 minutes ago – but not likely. These devices seem to be linked together and when I mark a genealogy-focused TV show to be recorded or watched in an hour (having nothing to do with when it

is aired, recorded, or otherwise compiled), I can be fairly certain that an ad for *Ancestry*, or similar genealogy-focused website or publication, will start popping up on my phone or tablet. Remember George Orwell's *1984*? I read it in high school and we laughed when we thought of how the future would be, 20 years after my first introduction to the “big brother is watching you” concept. Well, big brother is watching, but so is big sister, big niece, big nephew, big first cousin once removed, and the whole family, wherever they are, alive or dead. Secrets? Closets can't contain skeletons anymore. Oops, there's the cynicism again. But I'll bet, dear reader, that you are nodding, chuckling, and looking around, appearing a bit paranoid.

So, Alexa, Siri, and all the other gizmos that help us stay current, easily make a grocery list, find out who is at the door or on the phone, remind us to take our medication, and suggest a movie we might like – that's all AI. The more we use the machines, the more precise the algorithms get (think of an algorithm as a recipe that adds, subtracts, adjusts as necessary those components that make up who we are, what we think, what we've experienced, etc.; changing a component changes the algorithm – if I substitute margarine for lard in Grandma's coffee cake recipe, or use gluten free flour instead of the whole wheat flour she used for the creation, I can be assured that our algorithms are different and anyone eating my “just like grandma made” breakfast bread will wonder what I thought I was doing).

How does this relate to genealogy? Think of the family trees, posted to or generated online. Those may have been accurate in their pure form, but other entities may have altered what you researched and included, because someone else disagreed. Or something else intervened to “help” move the process along. If I have been researching records located in Brownville, Jefferson County, New York, AI might help with suggestions for other repositories or websites dealing with historical records for that exact place. But if I am in error, and didn't understand that there is no “s” in “Brownville,” suddenly (and especially if I don't include the county) some suggestions might pop up guiding me to research in a completely different part of the state. Oops. My husband used to say, when I remarked about the “stupid computer” giving me wrong data, “garbage in, garbage out” – the program is only as good as the programmer. More and more, the programmer is AI, but if the foundational information, what is used to create the algorithm, is in error, well, we can't expect to have a positive, or accurate, outcome.

So, yes, genealogists need to be alert to the involvement of AI in research suggestions, data added to a family tree, and probably sources used in the research. More than ever, citing sources should be a high priority for genealogists. And verifying

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information becomes, possibly overwhelming, but exceedingly necessary for us, especially if we are planning to create a family history website or book to present at the family reunion. Just because the GPS on the smart phone directs us to make a U-turn, but such a maneuver is illegal and results in a traffic citation, "I was just following directions" won't cut it in the courtroom. And just because my great-grandfather was John Johnson, whose granddaughter was Virginia, born on 14 August 1911 in Wisconsin, does not mean those people are the same as that other John Johnson with granddaughter Virginia, born on 14 August 1911 in Utah (and, yes, that is a real-life example).



The following is from Lynn Thornton's pamphlet.

### Tales Told Out of School

Collected by Lynn M. Thornton for the  
50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Carthage Central District's  
Centralization Celebration May 22, 2004



Many things have changed since the days of the rural schools: discipline has certainly changed along with the behavior of the students. When there is only one teacher in a relatively isolated setting, then the scene is set for some memorable episodes; here are some recounted about the local scholars and their school.

It was at the Manchester School that teacher Frank Davis demonstrated his brand of discipline. The trouble making of the three Macumber boys, Fred, John and Howard, had become particularly irksome one morning, and by noon, Mr. Davis decided to do something about it. He rang the bell to call school into session, and as each of the Macumber boys came in, he was grabbed and thrown bodily at least a third of the way across the room. One gathered his books and went home, but the others stayed and caused no more trouble after that.

**Emma Mallette** told this story about the principal who used a little psychology on the ring-leader of a group of boys. It seems that four boys had gotten into trouble; Mr. Wright called them in and, one by one, starting with the boy he considered least guilty, took them into his inner office. "I want you to really yell every time I slap my leg," he told the first boy. After sufficient yelling, he let the boy out a back way. He repeated this process with the next two youngsters; then it was time to call in the "master-mind" of the group who was quite traumatized by this time. The young man promised to reform—and as far as we know, he kept his word.

## Forgotten Post Offices

XIX – Millens Bay

Millens Bay was named after Highland Millen, a pioneer who located on the St. Lawrence river at that point. The Millens had 13 children. Three, Abner, John and Jane, were by his first wife, a daughter of Abner Hubbard. There were ten children by his second marriage.

But the real pioneer of Millens Bay, as well as the whole section along the south shore of the St. Lawrence river was Abijah Putman. He came from Rome in 1801 and settled on the inlet of water that later became known as Millens Bay. It was the first settlement along the river. Mr. Putman started a ferry service to Wolf Island. The place became known as Port Putman, after the settler. In 1804 he sold out to John Macomb and Peter Sternberg. They laid out a Public Square of over five acres and reserved a space for public buildings on the upper side. The streets running parallel with the river they named First, Second and so on up to Seventh street. The streets running at right angles they gave the names of Green, Montgomery, Herkimer, Washington, Jefferson, Clinton and Hancock streets. The streets bordering Public Square were named Pleasant Street.

About five or six years after James LeRay decided that he liked Gravelly Point, some four miles up the river, for a village site and named the place after his son, Vincent. The settlement at Millens Bay, or Port Putman, as some called it, lost favor with the incoming settlers. However, Millens Bay had quite extensive lumbering operations and a road by the state was put through from Chaumont to the St. Lawrence river at that point. A post office was opened and much of the time there were one or two stores. When people began to take time to think of summer vacations a summer hotel was opened at the place. About 1870 a union church was established at the place, the Methodist supporters being in the majority. White oak cut from Carlton Island, just out from Millens Bay, was sent to England and put into British naval ships.

A directory of 70 years ago shows that among the places clustered about the bay were a store and post office, hotel, a blacksmith shop, the school house for District No. 5. This church had not yet been built. Among the names appear H. Ainsworth, J. Bearup, W. Richards, landlord of the hotel, J. McKenzie, H. Jones, R. Barritt, Mr. Ingersall, D. Seeley, H. Miller, T. Cameron, A. Fairr, C. Valuere, while just out were the Irwins, the Lairas, the Reffs and others. The post office eventually was discontinued.

## Gazetteer and Directory Of Jefferson County, New York 1866 – 67

Compiled by Hamilton Childs  
Transcribed by JCNYS Member Tom LaClair

JCNYS Note: We were loaned an original edition of the directory for the year 1866 – 67. The delicate booklet is 5 by 8 1/2 inches and contains 207 pages. After an introduction, a several-page overview of Jefferson County was provided, then an overview on the naming of the towns was discussed. The 22 towns in 1866 were Adams, Alexandria, Antwerp, Brownville, Cape Vincent, Champion, Clayton, Ellisburgh, Henderson, Hounsfield, LeRay, Lorraine, Lyme, Orleans, Pamela, Philadelphia, Rodman, Rutland, Theresa, Watertown, Wilna, and Worth. These 22 towns remain active today. Each town has a segment in the booklet where prominent businessmen and businesses are noted. Additionally, there are partial and full-page advertisements from some of these businesses throughout the booklet. The October 2023 *Informer* shared the written history of the towns Adams – Antwerp. The January 2024 *Informer* shared the towns Brownville - Champion. This is a continuation of the towns in alphabetical sequence, transcribed as originally written.

### Town of Clayton

“**CLAYTON** was formed from Orleans and Lyme, April 27, 1833, and named in honor of John M. Clayton, U.S. Senator from Delaware. It is centrally situated on the northwest border of the county. It embraces two-fifths of Penet’s Square, a gore west and another north of that tract, and Grindstone and several smaller islands in the St. Lawrence; the surface is level and slightly rolling. **Clayton**, formally called “Cornelia,” and still frequently called “French Creek,” is situated at the mouth of the French Creek, – called by the Indians Wet-er-ingh-ra-gu-en-te-re, or “Fallen Fort,” from a fort taken by the Oneidas from another tribe, long before the advent of the whites. The village began to be settled about 1820 – 1825, and for some years after 1830, grew very rapidly. The village is regularly laid out; it was surveyed by Clark W. Candee, in 1824, and resurveyed in 1833, by Oliver Child. The business of ship-building began in Clayton, in 1832, by Smith & Merrick, and has since been continued, giving employment to a large number of men. Several vessels have been built here annually. Most of the Ontario and St. Lawrence Steamboat Company’s Steamers were built here. It has long been an important lumber station; large rafts of hewn timber being annually sent down the St. Lawrence to the Quebec market. In the Village are two excellent hotels, several stores, a melodeon factory, shops, and a ship-yard. **Depauville**, named from Francis Depau, an early proprietor, is situated at the head of boat navigation on Chaumont (Sha-mo) River, (or Catfish Creek), six miles from the bay. The place was formerly known as “Catfish falls.” Stephen Johnson built the

first mill and opened the first store at this place, in 1824. At this village and vicinity, the materials for the manufacture of waterlime, exists in vast quantities, constituting an important geological formation. In 1835, the manufacturer of this article was commenced by Stephen Johnson of this place, Mr. King, formerly of Oneida County, Joel Murray and Jared House of Lowville. Mr. Johnson was interested to the extent of one-half, and two mills were fitted up for grinding it. For two years that the business continued, 1,000 barrels were made. This was the first enterprise of its kind in the County. At a future time it may give employment for the industry of great numbers, and a profitable source of investment of capital. **Clayton Center** is a Post Office, a little northeast of the center of the town. Settlement commenced in the town in 1803, but progressed slowly until after the war. For many years, the titles to the portions included in Penet Square, and the islands became the subject of much controversy and litigation. In early times the shores of the St. Lawrence in this and adjoining towns became the scene of many lawless adventures in the persecution of smuggling. During the embargo of 1808, a road was cut through the woods, and immense quantities of potash were taken to Canada without restraint. In 1813 the enemy attacked the advanced guard of Wilkinson’s expedition, commanded by Gen. Brown, at Bartlets Point, but were repulsed. The town has an area of 49,244 acres.”

### Town of Ellisburgh

“**ELLISBURGH** was formed from Mexico, Feb 22, 1803, and named from Marvel Ellis, an early proprietor, and Lyman Ellis, the first settler. It was originally “Minos,” of the “Eleven Towns.” Henderson was set off Feb 17, 1806. It is situated in the southwest corner of the county, upon the shore of Lake Ontario. The surface is rolling and inclined toward the lake. A range of low sand hills extend along the shore, and these are succeeded by a wild, marshy region, producing wild grasses that in dry seasons may be mown. North and South Sandy Creeks are the principal streams. The soil is sandy on the west, clayey through the center, and a slaty loam in the east. There is a sulphur spring in town. This is the wealthiest agricultural town in the County, and is surpassed by a few in the State. **Ellis Village** (Ellisburgh P.O.), the oldest settlement in the county, is situated on the South Sandy Creek, four miles from its mouth, and is a place of considerable manufacturing interests. **Bellville**, situated on North Sandy Creek, three miles from Ellis Village, and a station on the Sackets Harbor and Ellisburgh R. R., when that road was in operation, was named from Belleville in Canada. It began as a farming settlement, by Metcalf Lee, Brandley Freeman, Joshua Freeman, and others, about 1802-3. Its early name was Halls Mills, from Giles Hall, an early settler. The first

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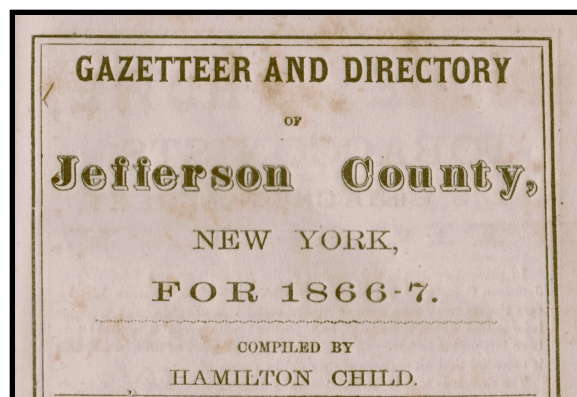
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merchant was Laban Brown; John Hawn was the first inn-keeper. It is the seat of Union Academy, one of the oldest and most successful schools in this part of the State. It is also the center of a wealthy agricultural district, and has several stores, manufacturing establishments, & c. **Pierrepont Manor**, a station on the R. W. & O. R. R., is the residence of Hon. Wm. C. Pierrepont, from whom it derives its name. The village is situated on Bear Creek, a tributary of the South Sandy. It was settled in 1802, by Joseph Allen, with Pardon Earl, and Arnold Earl, who came here from Galway, N.Y. Allen opened the first inn, and Oliver Snow the first store. Mr. P. Earl, after 1807, became a local land agent, and a man of extensive business, and in 1822 the agency of the estates derived by H. B. Pierrepont from William Constable, lying in Jefferson and Oswego Counties, was assumed by William C. Pierrepont, his elder son, who has since resided here, and acquired the title of these lands. The village has at present an inn, a few stores and shops, and forty or fifty houses. **Woodville**, named from Ebenezer, Ephraim, and Jacob Wood, the first settlers, is situated on North Sandy Creek, about three miles from its mouth; is a small village, and contains two or three stores, two hotels, grist mill, paper mill, saw mill, shops, & c. **Mannsville**, named from Col. H. B. Mann, on Skinners Creek, and a station on the R. W. & O. R. R., was first settled by David I. Andrus, an agent for Samuel Wardwell, of Rhode Island, who had made extensive purchases here and elsewhere in town. The improvement by Andrus was slight, and the place only began to increase in 1822, when Daniel Wardwell came on and took charge of the purchases made several years previous by his father, and in 1823 he began the erection of a cotton factory, which, after being in operation two or three years, was burned, Feb. 16, 1827. It is now a thriving village, containing a hotel, several stores, carriage shops, blacksmith shops, tanneries, grist mill, saw mills, & c. **Rural Hill**, in the northwestern, and **Wardwell** in the north eastern part of the town, are hamlets. The lake shore has been the scene of many wrecks, since the country was settled—the first within the memory of those living having occurred in the fall of 1800, when a small schooner was lost off Little Stoney Creek, and all on board perished. A boat of eight men that was sent in search of the vessel, was also swamped and all hands were drowned. Upon the advent of the first settlers, near Ellis Village, on Sandy Creek, were found numerous traces of an earlier occupation by civilized races. It is probable that the French expedition under De La Barre, against the Onondagas, in 1684, met with their terrible disasters from famine and sickness, within the limits of this town. During the war, an engagement took place near the mouth of South Sandy Creek, between a party of 150 American regulars and a few militia and Indians, under Major Appling, and a party of 200 British, who were pursuing a flotilla of boats, commanded by Lieut. Woolsey, laden with stores for Sackets Harbor. The British were

defeated, and nearly the whole party were killed or taken prisoners. The town has an area of 48,570 and 1/4 acres."

## Town of Henderson

"**HENDERSON**, number 6 of the "Eleven Towns," and named from Wm. Henderson, was formed from Ellisburgh, February 17, 1806 (JCNYS Note: The month was blank. The month of February was added based on information from Durant and Pierce's History of Jefferson County, 1878). It lies on Lake Ontario, southwest of the center of the county. The surface is rolling, and is deeply indented with Henderson Bay, formed by a long rocky point known as Six-Town Point. Upon this point are the remains of a small four-sided fortification, evidently built during the French or Revolutionary War. There are in town two small lakes and several marshes. Stony and Little Stony Creeks are the principal streams. The soil is clay and loam. **Henderson**, formerly called "Salisbury Mills," from Lodowyck Salisbury, an early merchant and mill owner, lies on Stony Creek, near the center of the town, and is a place of considerable manufacturing importance. **Henderson Harbor**, on Henderson Bay, is a hamlet. **Smithville**, on the line of Adams, is a place of considerable importance. It is situated on Stony Creek, which here affords water power for use of mills and shops. Roberts Corners, in the southeast corner of the town, is a hamlet. Settlements in the town began in 1802, under Asher Miller, agent for the proprietor. Among the first settlers were Anthony Sprague, Levi Scofield, Jerediah McComber, Samuel Hubbard, Moses Barrett, Wm. Petty, and Daniel Spencer. Willis Fellows kept the first inn, and built the first saw and grist mills. The first child born was Betsy Scofield, and the first death, that of a child of Hosea Heath. Elisha Skinner taught the first school. A small wooden factory was erected in 1814. A Scotch settlement was made in 1803 -7, on the bay. A lighthouse was erected on Stony Point in 1837. At the head of Henderson Bay, is a curved embankment or bar of stone, 100 rods long, and a little above the water, known as "Indian Wharf;" and from this point Stony Creek, there was an Indian trail or portage. The town has an area of 23,501 acres.



**Stowell Cemetery, Town of Ellisburg,  
Jefferson County, New York**

Copied by Mrs. Charles P. Gruman. Whole Cemetery  
Transcribed by  
JCNYGS Member Beverly Sterling-Affinati  
Curator National, N.S.U.S.D. of 1812

*Published in, 'Jefferson County Cemetery Inscriptions'  
Compiled by Mrs. Charles P. Gruman  
Indexed by Genealogy and Local History Department,  
Syracuse Public Library, 1960*

Alverson, Willard – d Jan. 10 1882 ae 86 yrs.  
Wife Lois C. – d Dec. 26, 1875 ae 74 yrs.  
Alverson, Lucy E., dau Wm. & E. – d Apr. 25, 1872 ae  
12 yrs. 11 mo. 6da.  
Alverson, Harry E., son of Wm. & E. – d Apr. 7, 1872  
ae 3 yrs. 11 mo. 24 da.  
Alverson, S. G. – d Oct. 9, 1826 ae 1 yr.  
Alverson, I. G. – d Nov. 5, 1825 ae 4 yrs.  
Alverson, Eliza – d Jan. 29, 1839  
Barney, Carrie A. – d May 30, 1891 ae 27 yrs. 6 mo. 6  
da.  
Benton, Horace – d May 21, 1889 ae 75 yrs. 1 mo.  
Wife Polly N. – d Jan. 21, 1899 ae 87 yrs. 6 mo.  
Brown, Danforth L. – b Jan. 21 1872 – died \_\_\_\_.  
Wife Cora – b Mar. 10, 1874 – died \_\_\_\_.  
Chamber, Tryphene W., wife of Enoch N. Chambers –  
b Sept. 1, 1826, d Aug. 20, 1857.  
Challans, Anna, dau of Wm & Josephine Challans – d  
Mar. 4, 1849 ae 8 mo. 20 da.  
Farr, Juliette, dau of Uri & Huldah Farr – d July 20,  
18\_\_.  
Fillmore, Clark – d July 27, 1863 ae 43 yrs. 8 mo.  
Wife Nelly – d June 19, 1811 ae 19 yrs. 11 mo. 9 da.  
Fillmore, Ferry D., son of Lavias & M. – d Dec. 11,  
1852 ae 6 yrs. 4 mo. 22 da.  
Fillmore, Helen L., dau Lavias & M. – d June 15, 1847  
ae 4 yrs. 5 mo.  
Fillmore Orson – d Aug. 6, 1862 ae 41 yrs. 10 da.  
Fillmore, Susan A., wife of O.B. Fillmore – b Jan. 2,  
1824 – d May 18, 1855  
Fillmore, Ferry – b June 3, 1814 – d Feb. 13, 1879.  
Wife Lucy Ann – b Dec. 27, 1819 – d Nov. 8, 1887  
Frances M., dau Ferry & Lucy – d Apr. 15, 1844 ae 5  
mo. 11 da.  
Fillmore, Frances M. – b Nov. 14, 1843 – d Apr. 16,  
1844.  
Fillmore, Willard, son J. & P. Fillmore – 4 April 1847  
ae 14 mo.  
Franklin, Orren J. – b Feb. 15, 1855 – d July 26, 1908.  
Wife Amelia Welmer – 1862 – 1931.  
Franklin, Riley E. – b 1857-1916.  
Wife Electa E. – d Oct. 4, 1889 ae 22 yrs. 10 mo. 5  
da.  
Franklin, Margaret, wife of John H. – d Mar. 26, 1883  
ae 69 yrs. 11 mo.  
Givens, Nellie L., wife of T. C. Givens – d May 31,  
1892 ae 31 yrs. 7 mo.  
Haskins, Lucetta, wife of Morrill – d May 8, 1836 ae 35  
yrs. 27 da.  
Haskins, Clarence H., son of Albert & Mary J., - b  
Sept. 20, 1858, d Dec. 3, 1861.  
Hathaway, Joseph – d July 24, 1847 ae 60 yrs. 6 mo.

8 da.

Hathaway, Olive M., dau of J & A Hathaway – d Aug.  
14, 1858 ae 33 yrs.  
Hathaway, John J., son Oscar & Mary – d July 28,  
1848 ae 1 yr. 7 mo. 18 da.  
Hitchcock, Lucretia, wife of Frank – d June 2, 1870 ae  
23 yrs. 9 mo.  
Holden, Mary J., dau Timothy & Elizabeth – d Aug. 6,  
1848 ae 17 yrs.  
Houghton, Elijah – 1787 – 1864.  
Wife Sarah Dickinson – 1796 – 1832.  
Wife Brunette Fillimore – 1788 – 1870.  
Hurd, Elizabeth, wife Joseph & dau H. & P. Benton – d  
July 1, 1883 ae 39 yrs. 10 mo.  
Matthews, Norman T. – b Mar. 14, 1818 – d Sept. 24,  
1857.  
McGrath, Hiram, Co. B 186 N.Y. V. – d June 30, 1901  
ae 81 yrs. G.A.R.  
McGrath, Levi – d July 23, 1885 ae 39 yrs. 7 mo.  
G.A.R.  
Nichols, Alpheus – d April 18, 1852 ae 25 yrs. 8 mo.  
Nutting, Russel – d Mar. 20, 1879 ae 71 yrs. 10 mo. 3  
da.  
Wife Betsey – d Dec. 11, 1879 ae 68 yrs. 9 mo.  
Nutting, Wm. R. – d July 26, 1883 ae 70 yrs. 1 mo. 26  
da.  
Wife Sophronia – d Apr 24, 1893 ae 79 yrs. 7 mo.  
Nutting, Betsey A., wife of Henry – b Aug. 5, 1844 – d  
Jan. 30, 1897 ae 52 yrs. 6 mo.  
Nutting, Walter H., son Henry R. & Betsey A. – d July  
27, 1872 ae 10 yrs. 5 mo.  
Penney, Zephannah – d May 14, 1856 ae 72 yrs.  
Wife Sally – d Feb. 21, 1839 ae 48 yrs.  
Penney, Dean S. – son Zephannah & Sally – d Feb.  
23, 1849 ae 22 yrs. 6 mo.  
Mercy, wife Zephannah Penney – d Nov. 21, 1844  
ae 58 yrs.  
Polly, wife of Zephannah Penney – d Mar. 22, 1851 ae  
62 yrs.  
Pierson, Frances, wife H. B. Pierson – d July 13, 1873  
ae 27 yrs. 9 mo. 21 da.  
Ramsell, Cordelia A., wife F. J. – d Jan. 28, 1879 ae  
39 yrs. 7 mo. 6 da.  
Reed, George – d Sept. 17, 1828 ae 79 yrs.  
Wife Martha – d Mar. 28, 1837 ae 85 yrs.  
Reed, Knight D. – d Nov. 22, 1849 ae 60 yrs.  
Wife Polly – (stone broken across date) – ae 84 yrs.  
1 mo. 14 day.  
Reed, Knight D., son of Knight D., Sr., & Polly – d July  
3, 1832 ae 19 yrs.  
Richardson, Rufus, Rev. Soldier one of Gen.  
Washington's life guards – d Sept. 16 1841.  
Wife Ruth – d June 4, 1851 ae 90 yrs. 1 mo.  
Richardson, A. F. – d Oct. 10 1904 ae 81 yrs. 6 mo. 3  
da.  
Wife Betsey A. – d Oct. 3, 1880 ae 55 yrs. 11 mo.  
21 da.  
Risely, Hiram G., Co. H. 76<sup>th</sup> Infy – 1833 – 1912.  
Wife Sophia S. Houghton – 1832 – 1913  
Scott, Lucy A., wife of A. J. Scott – d Apr. 19, 1852 ae  
20 yrs.  
Sprague, Esther wife Franklin – d Dec. 24, 1836 ae 21  
yrs.

(Continued on Page 17)



(Continued From Page 16)

Taylor, Charles M. Co. E 5<sup>th</sup> Reg. Wis. Inftry – d Apr. 20, 1871 ae 31 yrs.  
 Taylor, Grove G. – d April 2, 1847 ae 48 yrs.  
 Taylor, Lydia, dau James & Laurinda – d May 12, 1835  
 Taylor, Adella, dau James & Laurinda – d Apr. 16, 1847 ae 1 yr. 1 mo. 4 da.  
 Taylor, Adelbert, son James & Laurinda – d Apr. 25, 1847 ae 10 mo. 18 wks.  
 Thayer, James – b Apr. 29, 1787 – d Aug. 23, 1861.  
 Wife Fanny – b June 3, 1792 – d Mar. 23, 1856.  
 Thayer, James L. F., son James & Fanny – b June 23, 1837 – d Dec. 5, 1857.  
 Thayer, Rhoda S., wife Lewis M., b Dec. 9, 1818 – d Feb. 16, 1852.  
 Truesdale, L. F. – d Sept. 11, 1846 ae 38 yrs.  
 Wife Louisa – d Nov. 28, 1847.  
 Truesdale, Henry L., son Luther & Louise – d June 15, 1847 ae 5 yrs.  
 Truesdale, Ebenezer – d Feb. 5, 1845 ae 34 yrs.  
 Truesdale, Turissa D., dau E.S.A. Truesdale – d Oct. 1859 ae 1 yr. 1 mo. 14 da.  
 Tubbs, Phebe, wife Clement Tubbs – d Feb. 4, 1856 ae 68 yrs.  
 VanWormer, Clarissa, wife of Hiram – d June 30, 1843 ae 49 yrs. 3 mo.  
 Vorce, Mary, wife William – d Jan. 21, 1849.  
 Vorce, Henry L., son William & Mary – d Apr. 11, 1818 ae 1 yr. 6 mo.  
 Walker, Wm. W., Jr., son Wm. W. Walker – d Feb. 20, 1832 ae 28 yrs. (Not sure 20<sup>th</sup>)  
 Whitney, Laura, wife R. O. Whitney – d July 14, 1843 ae 31 yrs. 1 mo.  
 Whitney, Richard O., - 1811 – 1901.  
 Wife Elizabeth Hungerford – 1813 – 1884.  
 Whitney, (Children of Richard)  
 Ada, 1852 – 1858  
 Hannah – 1846 – 1853.  
 Charles O. – 1854 – 1854.  
 Worthington, Thomas F., son Seth & Sophia – d Nov. 8, 1854 ae 31 yrs.

Note (from Beverly Sterling-Affinati):

Rufus Richardson, who was one of General Washington's lifeguards during the Revolution, settled in town early. He died on 16 Sept. 1841 at 81 and his wife, who was 90, died on 4 June 1851. Son, Freeman, was a soldier in the War of 1812. The old Richardson farm was in the northwest part of town. (Transcriber note: Rufus Richardson was born Sept. 1761 Barre, MA. He married on 24 Feb 1785 at Barre, Worcester Co., MA to Ruth Holden; she was born 4 May 1761. Rufus applied for a pension at Lenox, Madison Co., NY on 22 May 1818. His widow applied from Ellisburg on 27 July 1843 at 82 years. Moved to Ellisburg NY in 1826. A daughter, Sally Richardson Fillmore, age 56 lived at Ellisburg in 1843. In 1853, a son Rufus H. Richardson, age 57, lived in Buffalo, NY) [<http://jefferson.nygenweb.net/ellisburg/ellidp.htm>]

## From George Washington's Mount Vernon Website

Question and Answer Prepared by  
 JCNYS Member, Beverly Sterling-Affinati

### How did General Washington come to have Lifeguards and what was their mission ?

On March 11, 1776, from his headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts, overseeing the siege of Boston, General George Washington issued a General Order to Colonels or Commanding Officers of regiments of the Continental Army. Washington's order directed these officers to select four men from each regiment who would form his personal guard.

General Washington had a clear idea of the type of men he was seeking and the qualifications were laid out in the General Order. Washington wrote, "His Excellency depends upon the Colonels for good Men, such as they can recommend for their sobriety, honesty and good behavior; he wishes them to be from five feet eight Inches high, to five feet ten Inches; handsomely and well made, and as there is nothing in his eyes more desirable than Cleanliness in a Soldier, he desires that particular attention be made in the choice of such men as are clean and spruce."

The official designation of the new unit was "His Excellency's Guard," or the "General's Guard." Enlisted soldiers referred to the unit as "The Life Guards," "The Washington Life Guards," or "Washington's Body Guard." General Washington usually referred to the unit as "My Guards."

### What would General Washington's Lifeguards do?

The explicit mission of the new group was "to protect General Washington, the army's cash and official papers."

Throughout the latter half of 1777, the Lifeguards performed their duties providing close protection for General Washington and other elements of the headquarters staff.

### What would the Lifeguards uniform look like?

In the spring of 1777, correspondence refers to the Lifeguards being dressed in blue and buff uniforms with leather helmets adorned with medium blue cloth binding and a white plume tipped in blue placed on the left side of the helmet. Gibbs also decided to forgo the standard designated regimental number on the uniform buttons and instead opted for "USA," the first known record of the cipher being employed.

# # #

For more information, refer to

SOURCE: <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/life-guards/>

Alan Capps, Ph.D.

Adjunct Professor of History

George Mason University

## THE WONDERLAND OF DIT NAMES

By Virginia DeMarce

The “dit” names are one of the most difficult phenomena in French – Canadian research to explain to anyone coming from outside the cultural tradition. In English, there have been a lot of attempts to explain the meaning of the word—people have used “alias,” “sobriquet,” “nickname,” “called name,” etc. None of these really work. A “dit” name for a French Canadian family is a hereditary, alternative family name. It may be combined with the genuine family name, as by saying someone is named Jean-Baptiste Croteau dit Vincent. It may, however, also be substituted for the family name, and in some cases the substitution becomes almost complete, so the original family name is forgotten.

Given the difficulties that U.S. record keepers had in any case in struggling with the spellings of French names, remember one thing. The overwhelming presumption of American town and county clerks, census takers, recorders of deeds, and naturalization officials was that whatever came last was bound to be the family name. Even when a family in Canada almost always used the combined form, as in Francois Valentine dit Gregoire, the odds are extremely high that in the U.S., he will become Gregoire only, spelled Francis Gregware, or Grayware, Grigwire, as the case may be.

Extensive lists of the “dit” names have been published by such authorities as Tanguay, Jette, and Drouin. However, the situation is complicated by the fact that any of the most popular “dit” names were used by more than one family. There were seven unrelated Quebec families who were “dit Lepine,” and more than that who were “dit Belisle.” So when you are told that that the name you have so painfully identified in all your detective work is a “dit,” the next project is to identify which of the families used that dit may be yours. Just hope that your ancestors were not “dit St.-Onge.” Saintonge was one of the old pre-Revolutionary provinces of France. It provided quite a lot of immigrants to new France, most of whom seem to have been seized with passionate local patriotism. Sad to say, from the point of view of the family historian, when a Frenchman who emigrated to Canada told his new friends, “Je m’appelle St.-Onge,” it had all the genealogical significance of “Just call me Tex.”

A lot of soldiers who stayed in Canada chose to be called by names such as Sanschargin, Sanspeur, and Sanscrainte. On the other hand, a sense of humor might end up in having the roughest, toughest, gruffest man in the regiment called “little rosebud” or “pretty violet” by his comrades. If a girl saw through this façade and married anyway, his descendants to this day may be “did Larose” or “dit Laviolette”.

Other of the dits came from the father’s Christian name. The Chartier dit Robert are descended from Robert Chartier. The Bidaguin dit St-Martin are descended from Martin Bidaquin. The Dique family was descended from an Irish soldier named Richard Grace who married a French Canadian girl and was undoubtedly referred to his new in-laws as Dick—

pronounced Dique and dit Dique. If a mother had no brothers, one son might take her maiden name as “dit” in order to carry it on. Some were uniquely Canadian. The greatest ironworks of New France were at the Forges Saint-Maurice, about ten miles upriver from Trois-Rivieres. When a man named Desforges immigrated to Quebec, the temptation was irresistible; he became Desforges dit St. Maurice. A German named Stern settled at Repentigny, where his name was Gallicized as Etoile. That at once brought to mind the greatest star of all, at Bethlehem, and almost at once he was “dit Noel.”

Another thing to keep in mind is that the “dit” name was not a static phenomenon. A family might acquire, over the years, more than one “dit,” so that it results in a triple rather than a dual name—with sometimes one “dit” being used in the parish registers and sometimes the other. When a “dit” was totally substituted for the original family name, it could then proceed to acquire a new “dit” of its own which was never used with the original family name. The process was a live and dynamic one which continued well into the 19th century. There are French Canadian families which acquired new “dit” names on the U.S. side of the border that they had apparently never borne in Canada, as when the children and grandchildren of the immigrant Pierre Dame suddenly became Pierredame forever more.

At the very least, when confronted with altered or “dit” names at the point of crossing the Canadian border, the researcher must define a range of possibilities as to what the actual family name in Canada may have been.

This is the time, whether you are ready to do actual family research or not, to familiarize yourself with the standard French Canadian genealogical reference works as listed in the “how to do it” annuals. The two-volume Drouin compilation is an alphabetical index of French Canadian families to 1760, with “dits” listed in a separate column next to the family name being indexed. Jette’s Dictionnaire has in back (pp. 1163-1176) a list of “dits” and major orthographic variants of those families in the province by 1730. Tanguay’s seven volumes usually list “dits” in a footnote, but Volume VII has an appendix (pp. 495-601) on dits and variants to 1760.

Consultation of these will give you at least some idea of possible sources of Americanized versions of French Canadian names. There may be five possible sources, true! But for making further progress, five possibilities are preferable to the status of “no idea at all.” In French-Canadian genealogy, it is a great saving of time and effort to realize the possibility of a dit name before you start work. Otherwise your work frequently has to be done all over again.

JCNYGS note: This article, at least twenty or more years old, was previously saved from an undated article, possibly from the NYANDO Genealogical Society Newsletter. The original source documents did not show the exact date or source. We felt this was an applicable article to share for our Jefferson County and North Country readers.

## HEADSTONE DEDICATED TO WAR OF 1812 VETERAN

By Zachary Canaperi of the *Watertown Daily Times*  
Published 10 Sep 2023

CLAYTON — Samuel Linnell, a War of 1812 veteran and prisoner of war, had his new headstone dedicated to him during a ceremony Saturday at the inactive Clayton Center Cemetery on County Route 5.

Several descendants of Linnell watched with gratitude as an honors contingent from Fort Drum led the ceremony. His headstone became official after a flag was neatly folded, cartridges placed carefully inside and handed over to a family member.



The headstone was a well-deserved one. Linnell fought to defend the United States in the Second Battle of Sackets Harbor in 1813, where he was injured and captured by enemy forces. Linnell was a prisoner of war for around a year, before he returned home to Jefferson County. Despite never fully recovering from the injuries he suffered in battle, he was never issued a pension.

Representatives of the Linnell Family Association worked with Jean B. Davis, the director of Cummings Funeral Service, to get Linnell the recognition they believe he deserves. It was a process that required investigation, research and lots of paperwork. On Saturday, it all became worthwhile, when Davis and Linnell's descendants watched the smooth, pearly white stone — with the black capital letters SAMUEL LINNELL — glimmer in the sunlight.

The following biographical information was submitted by Clayton resident Ann Cummings Major-Stevenson, a direct descendant of Samuel Linnell:

Samuel Linnell was born on 27 Jan 1778, in Barnstable, Massachusetts. He died 13 Aug 1847, on Grindstone Island, Clayton, Jefferson County. He was married to Eunice Mosher (born about 1779 in Maine and died 28 Nov 1853, in Clayton, Jefferson County).

Samuel and Eunice were married 24 Aug 1797, in Belgrade, Maine. They were parents to John, Sarah (known as 'Sally'), Sofia, Rufus, Samuel, Charles R., Marshall, Thomas Jefferson and Eunice Linnell.

Their second child, the oldest daughter, Sarah (known as 'Sally') Linnell (born 1801 in Augusta, Maine and died 29 Apr 1891) was married to Thomas Cummings (born about 1805 in Vermont).



They were a 'First Family' of Grindstone Island and donated land to the town of Clayton to create the Lower Cemetery on Grindstone Island, also known as the Civil War cemetery.

They were parents to: Philander, Malvina, Malvina, George, Walter, William Riley, Hall, Jane, George and Betsey Cummings.

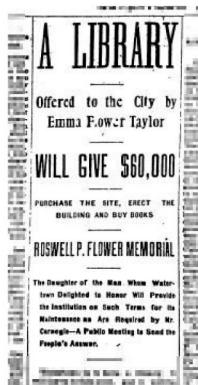
Through their oldest son, Philander, several of veteran Samuel Linnell's great-great-great-great grandchildren keep in touch living in or near the area.

These include: sisters Elizabeth Cummings Gorman O'Brian (Clayton) and Patricia Cummings Gorman Larson (Canandaigua,) and their first cousins Sylvia Cummings Johnson Dillenback (Cape Vincent and North Carolina), her sisters Sandra and Susie (in Watertown), and John Cummings O'Kay (Chaumont) and his siblings, and Brenda Cummings Dix (Fort Myers, Florida) and her brother Steve, and all of their second cousins, Ann Cummings Major-Stevenson (Clayton/Chaumont).

Through Samuel and Eunice's third son, Walter, Walter P. Cummings, director of Cummings Funeral Service (Clayton and Watertown) is also a great-great-great-great grandchild of the honoree Samuel Linnell.



# Flower Library Poster 120 Years Celebration

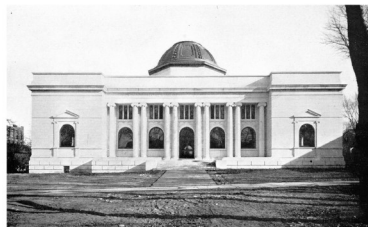


**1901**

In a letter, Mrs. Emma Flower Taylor stepped forward with the purchase of property and a donation of \$60,000 to be given to the City of Watertown to build a library.

Before the gift could be accepted, the New York State Legislature had to enact a bill allowing municipalities to receive such gifts.

*(Watertown Daily Times, April 5, 1901)*



*(Dedication Pamphlet)*

**1905**

On the afternoon of January 4th, the library was opened to the public. The final cost of the building with decorations was \$250,000.

Erected in memory of her father, ex-Governor Flower, Mrs. Emma Flower Taylor will be forever remembered for her contributions to the City of Watertown.

*(Dedication Pamphlet)*



*(Original Library Scrapbook)*

**1957**

The Genealogy Room of the Flower Library was formally opened to the public. The contents included an extensive collection of 2,000 Jefferson County family names.

This collection of family histories has since grown to include more than 18,000 surnames as of 2023.

*(Watertown Daily Times, July 31, 1957)*

**1966**

The Board of Trustees of the Library approached City Council for planning funds approval for the proposed construction of a major addition at the rear of the library. The \$300,000 project was needed to provide necessary services in an expanding community.

Included in the expansion were plans for a new children's department.

*(Watertown Daily Times, February 8, 1966)*

**1903**

The corner stone of the library was laid on Saturday, July 11th by Mrs. Emma Flower Taylor. In a speech given by city resident Samuel F. Bagg, it was said "we are most fortunate, fellow citizens, in the gift of this magnificent library -- in the abundant promise of its future usefulness."

*(Watertown Daily Times, July 11, 1903)*

**1934**

On April 4th, 1934, our beloved benefactor Emma Flower Taylor passed away in Miami Beach. Her generosity continued even after her death as the Flower Memorial Library was one of only two public bequests listed in her will.

*(Watertown Daily Times, April 18, 1934)*

**1960**

Flower Library was presented with the first collection of non-fiction books under a new program through New York State. This effectively provided the library with a designation of Central Library within the North Country Library System.

*(Watertown Daily Times, September 13, 1960)*



**LIBRARY RECEIVES BOOKS**—The North Country Library system with headquarters in the city on Friday afternoon presented the first group of non-fiction books under a new program to the Roswell P. Flower Memorial Library. The Watertown and Ogdensburg libraries will act as depositories for all listed 30,000 books in the next ten years under the North Country Library program. These books will cover a wide selection, especially to be used for reference and research. Frederick H. Kimball, left, president of the Flower Library's board of trustees, and Miss Helen M. Talbert, right, Flower library director, received the books from Robert L. Carter, center, director of the North Country Library System.



**229 Washington Street  
Watertown, New York**

**315-785-7705**

**GRETNA GREEN WEDDING COMMUNITIES**

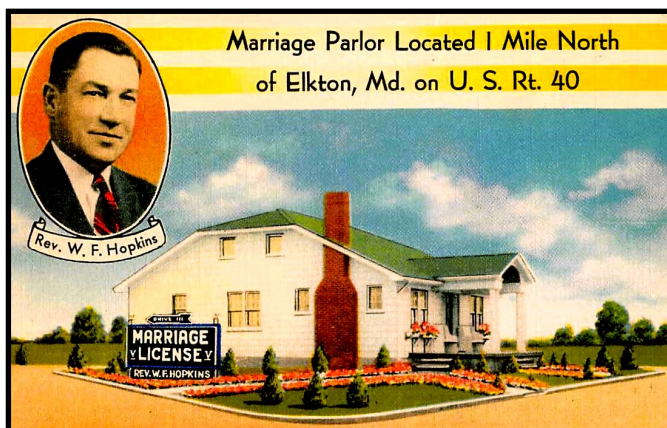
By JCNYS Member Ann Fillhart  
 afillhart@gmail.com

Have you ever been frustrated trying to find a marriage record for a relative you know lived their entire life in Jefferson County? The record may be elsewhere. Perhaps they traveled to a 'Gretna Green' for their wedding.

What are Gretna Greens? The original Gretna Green was (and is) a village on the Scottish side of the border between England and Scotland, on the main route to Edinburgh. An English law passed in 1754 forbade couples to marry under the age of 21 without parental consent. In England and Wales, couples were required to be married in their home church with an official clergyman presiding. Scotland kept their considerably looser laws, asking couples merely to be over the age of 15, not involved with anyone else, and not closely related.

Many young English couples flouted the law and traveled just across the border to the tiny town of Gretna Green, which soon had a thriving business in runaway weddings due to the differences in legal requirements. Gretna Green has now become a synonym for any location that becomes a marriage destination for couples from out of that area.

Niagara Falls, NY, Las Vegas, Nevada, and Elkton, Maryland; all have that history, as does a city within a short travel distance of Jefferson County - Ogdensburg in St. Lawrence County. Ogdensburg was especially popular as a site for marriages for couples from Ontario, Canada, right across the St. Lawrence River.

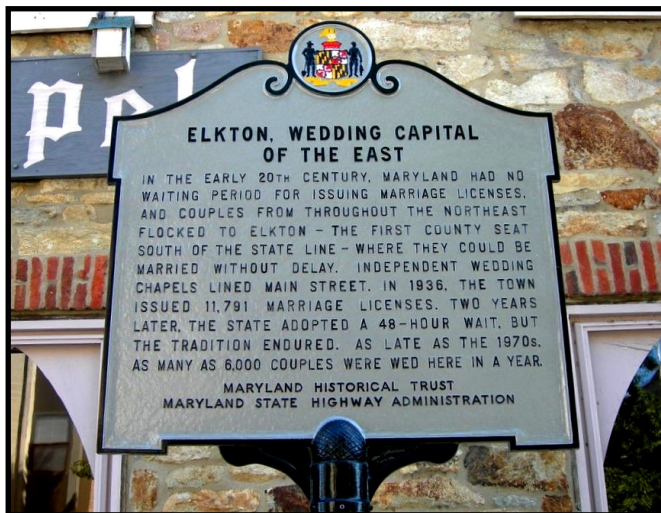


Why would our relatives have left their communities to travel to another town to marry? According to the FamilySearch wiki on Gretna Greens, "They may want to marry at a younger age, want to wait a shorter period after obtaining a license, want to marry without parental consent, want to avoid procedures such as blood tests, want less paperwork, want to avoid paying a marriage bond, want to keep the marriage a secret, want a less expensive marriage, or want to marry a closer cousin than their home district will allow."

Especially in the 19th and early 20th century, I would also add to that list of reasons mixed marriages, perhaps of two different ethnic groups or religions, parental opposition to a match, and premarital pregnancy. If the couple did not want their marriage mentioned in the newspaper, traveling to a different community could avoid that publication. Social attitudes towards marriage have definitely changed over the centuries of settlement in Jefferson County.

Destination weddings are also not just a modern invention. Ogdensburg had numerous fine hotels perfect for weddings, as did Niagara Falls and other New York State cities which were popular wedding sites. Easy transportation by train and steamship supported the choice of those cities as a marriage site.

Marriage laws and religious requirements for marriage were factors that have changed over time. Many religions in the past required banns to be read in church for three consecutive Sundays. Others, such as Roman Catholicism, required church permission to marry cousins. Age requirements varied from state to state, leading younger couples to other sites than their home districts.



Elkton, Maryland in the early 20th century is a classic case of a Gretna Green town with favorable marriage laws for couples in a hurry to marry. It was surrounded by states within easy travel distance that all had instituted waiting periods after couples applied for a marriage license. Maryland did NOT have a waiting period, and Elkton quickly became a city dominated by the wedding business. It even entered popular culture. You may remember Katherine Hepburn and Cary Grant's characters mentioning their elopement to Maryland in *The Philadelphia Story*, or Doris Day and Rock Hudson's characters waking up in Maryland after their quickie marriage in the movie *Lover, Come Back*.

Time magazine noted about Elkton, "At the height of the boom, the little town of about 3,000 saw just over

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16,000 couples take their vows. Main Street itself was home to 20 wedding chapels. By the 1930s the marrying ministers were performing over 40 marriages a day."

While technically not a Gretna Green situation, living on an international border led to many 'mixed' marriages of United States and Canadian citizens from the counties and provinces surrounding Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River. Depending on many factors the marriage could have taken place on either side of the border. Jefferson County Genweb has a searchable listing of some of those marriages.

Where can you find marriage records for your family tree? FamilySearch has free searching of "New York, County Marriages, 1847-1848; 1908-1936", with both a partial index and images. Two things to note: It doesn't have records from NYC and the partial index is being added to as completed. Your town or city clerk's office - contact information can be found on the Jefferson County Clerk's page. The County Clerk has an online search feature (there is a fee), or free searching in person, with a fee for copies. Ancestry.com and other paid subscription sites also have access to marriage records.

I hope that some of the excitement of an eloping couple is yours as you find those elusive marriage records, perhaps at the site of an American Gretna Green. And now that New York allows anyone to officiate at a wedding, as long as they've applied at their city or town clerk's office and paid their \$25 fee, you may surprise future genealogists in your family tree by being the celebrant.

Jefferson County Clerk FAQs, including Town Clerk Contact Information

<https://co.jefferson.ny.us/departments/CountyClerk/clerk-faqs>

Jefferson County, NY Genweb - Scroll to the bottom of the page for Canadian marriages

<https://jefferson.nygenweb.net/marrindx.htm>

FamilySearch Wiki on Gretna Greens

[https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Gretna\\_Greens\\_in\\_the\\_United\\_States](https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Gretna_Greens_in_the_United_States)

How One Small Maryland Town Became the Marriage Capital of the East Coast in the Early 20th Century,

<https://time.com/5938395/elkton-maryland-marriage-capital-east-coast/>

One Day Officiant Law in NYS

<https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/27/fashion/weddings/new-york-one-day-officiant-law-marriage.html>

Canadian Marriage & Death Notices

from pre-1860 Newspapers of St. Lawrence Co., NY  
[https://sites.rootsweb.com/~onleedsq/research-newspaper-gren\\_stlaw\\_1860.html](https://sites.rootsweb.com/~onleedsq/research-newspaper-gren_stlaw_1860.html)

## Moffattville XIII

Forgotten Post Offices

On June 15, 1832, a post route was established by the United States to start from Watertown and go to Brownville and thence through the county to reach LaFargeville, Cornelia at the mouth of French Creek, Depauville and back to Brownville. Cornelia, at the mouth of French Creek, is now Clayton. The government decided to use the name of Perch River. The post office was designated at Moffattville, now a forgotten name. Isaac and Melvin Moffatt came into the rich lands along Perch River at an early date and made a settlement. Isaac Moffatt opened a tavern and a little later his son, also named Isaac, opened a store. There was quite a settlement there at the time of the war of 1812. A fort, built for protection in 1812 was used as a store house for grains. In the year 1837 the building was torn down. One gets an idea of the very early date in which settlers located in and near Perch River when they recall that just two miles out of the village in what was for years known as the Baptist Church neighborhood, the settlers had formed a church society on Sept. 7, 1806, which was the first church society formed in the town of Brownville. It is stated that Oliver Bartholomew was one of the charter members and it was he who helped to found the Baptist Church in Watertown. Their church building, of stone, was erected in 1827.

Among the leading business men of Perch River were Smith and Spicer, who conducted a store and also carried on a very extensive potash business in the early days. Men were sent out with teams to buy up the ashes from the surrounding country and bring it into Perch River. The ashes were converted into potash. Silas Spicer, father of Henry Spicer, was skilled in the tanning of leather and making of shoes, so he opened a tannery at Perch River and also a shoe shop. The church at Perch River was erected in 1851, it being a Union Church in which the Methodist, Universalist and Lutheran denominations were the leading promoters.

This community produced Hugh Smith. He was appointed postmaster and served for 21 years, or until he was elected to the assembly in 1873. He had a brother, Levi Smith, who served as postmaster in Watertown. Henry Spicer was elected to the state assembly and was also supervisor of the town. He was a presidential elector at the time of Grant's second election. Mrs. C. H. McCormick, wife of Cyrus McCormick of reaper fame, was a native of this section. The hotel was burned down in 1843 and never rebuilt. Merchants to follow the firm of Smith and Spicer included Michael Quincer, Clark Scott and Lyons Hagan. Lyons Hagan served as postmaster, also William Smith and James Linstruth. About 25 years ago the post office was discontinued.

## Jefferson County Queries

Mail queries to:  
 Thomas LaClair, 17696 Co. Rte. 181, Clayton, NY 13624  
[tomlaclair624@yahoo.com](mailto:tomlaclair624@yahoo.com)

Subject: Jefferson County Informer Query  
 (Some readers do not have internet access. Please include mailing address &/or phone numbers as well as email.)

### OWENS, CAMPO, BULLOCK

I am searching for information on Morris Thomas OWENS. He married Cynthia Jane CAMPO (1863-1941) on 15 November 1890 in Watertown New York. I found him listed as a plumber in the Watertown directory for 1892. Their only child Clara OWENS was born on 28 Jan 1892 Watertown. By 1 May 1895 Cynthia had returned to Canada and remarried Robert BULLOCK in Peterborough, Ontario. Prior to 1890, Cynthia was residing in Prince Edward County, Ontario where she was born. In 1881 she was listed with her parents in Prince Edward county. Nothing more is known about Morris. Any information would be greatly appreciated.

*Tina Hansen*  
 Whitehorse, Yukon, YT Y1A 1C2, CANADA  
[idgetupfamily@hotmail.com](mailto:idgetupfamily@hotmail.com)

### GEORGE, PAGE

My name is Debra Davey. I am doing research on my ancestor, Moses George, Jr., for the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR). I need to prove that Gilman George was the son of Moses and Ann Page George. Gilman George is the father of my Great-Great-Great Grandfather Horace Bartlett George. Ann Page George traveled to Jefferson County by way of New Hampshire and Vermont from Newburyport, Massachusetts. She settled in Browns Corners in about 1815. Her other children were Daniel b. 1787, Caroline b 1789, Charles b 1791, William b 1793, Page 1797 – 1856, Gilman 1799 – 1855, Benjamin 1800 – 1855, Jesse Hoyt 1801 – 1857, Experience "Speedy" 1803 – 1877. I am gleaning this information from Dr. John G. George. Dr. George wrote "The History of the George Family". I have a copy of pages 5 – 8. Thank you in advance for any help you can give me.

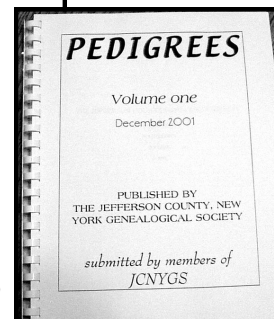
*Debra Davey*  
 815-970-3711

**"Friends are like walls.  
 Sometimes you lean on them,  
 and sometimes it is good just  
 knowing they are there." –  
 Author Unknown**

## JCNYGS MATERIALS FOR PURCHASE

Contact: Greg or Tammy Plantz, 21787  
 Reed Road, Watertown, NY 13601  
 Or email [tgplantz@gmail.com](mailto:tgplantz@gmail.com)

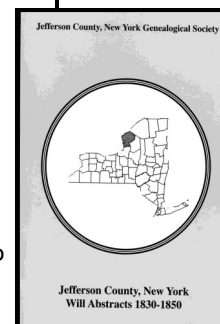
**PEDIGREE BOOK I  
 &  
 PEDIGREE BOOK II**  
**Each Book \$20.00 plus  
 \$5.00 for postage**  
 A collection of pedigrees  
 Submitted by members  
 of the JCNYGS  
 with an every name index  
 Checks made out to **JCNYGS**



All our *Informer* Newsletters Are Now on  
 our website! [www.JCNYGS.com](http://www.JCNYGS.com)

### JEFFERSON COUNTY NEW YORK WILL ABSTRACTS 1830 – 1850

The Will Book contains will abstracts dating from 1830 to 1850. The book contains 194 pages, two maps, and a chart showing the formation of Jefferson County Towns. \$15.00 + \$5.00 for postage. Checks made out to **JCNYGS**



## Family History Writing Prompts

*from Family Tree Magazine*

**Imagine you are one of your descendants, far in the future, writing about your present self.** Write about an event from your own history from that perspective

**Imagine your family represented as a literal "tree."** What kind of tree best represents your family's story? What does it look like and why?

**Did you grow up with any family traditions?** What is the history behind the tradition? Do you practice any family traditions now?

**Choose an event from your family's history and write an alternative ending to it.** Perhaps someone made a different choice or didn't survive something; how would the course of your family's history have changed?

**Pick two ancestors from your family's history who didn't know each other, then imagine a scene where the two meet.** What would they talk about, and what would their first impressions be of each other?

## INFORMER

Jefferson County NY Genealogical Society  
(JCNYGS)  
P.O. Box 6453  
Watertown, NY 13601

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
WATERTOWN, NY  
PERMIT NO. 108

Or Current Resident

## 2024 PROGRAMS

**Monday, April 15, 2024, at 6:00 PM:** Join us at the **Jefferson County Historical Society** in Watertown, 228 Washington Street, Watertown, to receive an overview of the Montrois Collection, donated in 2022. The collection of military memorabilia consisted of more than a dozen boxes containing more than a thousand envelopes.

**Monday, May 13, 2024, at 6:00 PM:** at the **L.D.S. Church**. "Who Are All These People?" Ever wondered who all these matches were in your Ancestry DNA match list? Your base Ancestry premium membership provides powerful tools to help you identify how most of those matches are related to you, even if they are not identified as having a common ancestor. These same tools can also be used to identify unknown ancestors and relatives through proximity matching. This program will provide a hands-on step by step on how to use these tools in your own research.

**Saturday, June 8, 2024, at 1:00 PM:** Join us at the **Historic Union Hotel**, 401 West Main Street, Sackets Harbor, to experience Voices and Votes, a traveling Smithsonian Exhibit. When American revolutionaries waged a war for independence, they took a leap of faith that sent ripple effects across generations. They embraced a radical idea of establishing a government that entrusted the power of the nation not in a monarchy, but in its citizens.

**Monday, July 8, 2024, at 3:00 PM:** JCNYGS **Summertime Picnic** at the home of JCNYGS VP Anne Davis, 17192 Ives Street Extension, Watertown. Bring a dish to pass and enjoy a picnic meal and fellowship. Consider bringing along a lawn chair and a recent genealogy find and/or interesting story.

**UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED**, JCNYGS lectures begin at 6:00 PM at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints building. Come 30 minutes early to get to know other members and share new finds and experiences.

Thank you Paul and Deborah Wilson, church liaisons, and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints local leadership for the free use of the building for JCNYGS programs.

Directions to Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Church where we are presently holding our meetings: From Rt. 81, take exit 44 to Rt. 232 towards Watertown. Drive 1.1 miles and take the second left hand turn onto Ives Street Road. Continue straight into the city. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints chapel is the second building on the right, across from IHCS, as you enter the city limits.

From Watertown, it is on Ives Street, across from IHCS. Take Washington Street to Barben Avenue. Turn on to Barben and take it until it ends at a T. Turn left and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints will be 300 yards on the left.

Or, from Watertown take Massey Street south, veer right onto South Massey, left on to Ives Street.