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THE QUINBY BEEKEEPERS OF HONEY HOLLOW

—Raymond Beecher

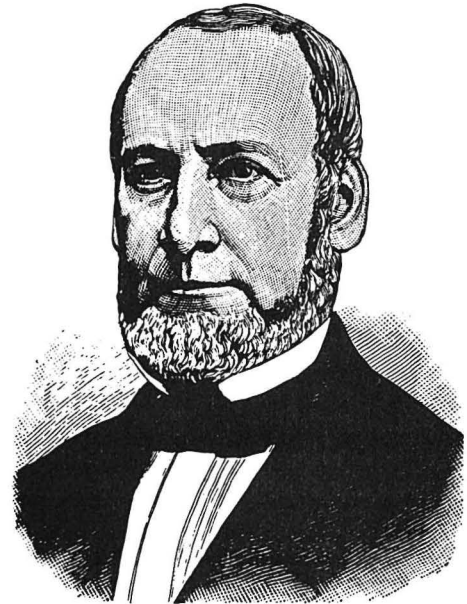
The geographical designation "Honey Hollow" along the East Branch of the Potic Creek in the townships of New Baltimore and Coxsackie is intriguing. Beer's *History of Greene County* provides a modicum of information. Fortunately for local history buffs, George and Alice Peters, summer sojourners of that area, have maintained a pattern of ongoing research which continues to be historically profitable. Their willingness to share this information, together with other material in the Vedder Memorial Library and in the Cornell University Libraries at Ithaca, has made this article possible.

Short biographical accounts of various aspects of Moses Quinby's life have appeared in early twentieth century issues of *Gleanings in Bee Culture* and in the *American Bee Journal* by such individuals as Dr. E. F. Phillips, Arthur C. Miller, T. S. Underhill, P. H. Elwood, J. E. Crane, Lewis L. Winship and Lyman C. Root. And while the Vedder Memorial Library still has on its wanted list the Moses Quinby book *Mysteries of Beekeeping Explained*, it has acquired son-in-law Lyman C. Root and A. I. Root's *ABC and XYZ* volume with the short biographical sketch of Moses Quinby's life.

The Author

As he told it many years later — "With money earned from working in a Coxsackie township sawmill at the age of eighteen years, I earned my first money to purchase my first hive of bees. I commenced without any knowledge of the business to assist me save a few directions about hiving, smoking them with sulphur, etc." It was the beginning of Moses Quinby's lifetime preoccupation with honeybees which would earn him the title "Father of American Bee Culture." Out of this experience would come his major reference volume *The Mysteries of Beekeeping Explained*.

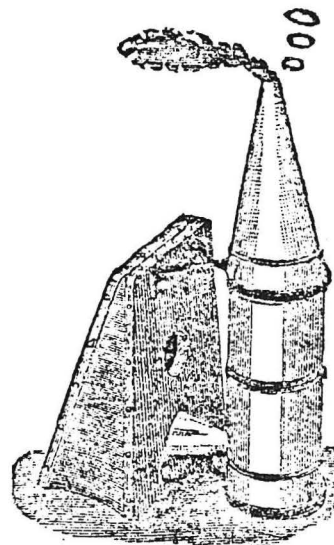
Had Moses followed the well-meaning advice of his relatives and neighbors, his first hive would probably have been his last. At that time (1828) in America beekeeping was a very inexact aspect of agriculture. A few men had the benefit of European observations which were slowly finding their way in print, but to Moses Quinby it was learning from practical experience. And learn he did! So much so that at one time, it has been said, more honey was produced in Quinby's Honey Hollow than in any other part of the United States. The Quinbys even shipped a full boatload of honey to metropolitan New York, which for a time broke the market price.



Moses Quinby



Moses Quinby's home in Greene Co., N. Y.



Quinby Bee Smoker

QUINBY BEEKEEPERS

(continued from page 1)

Moses had come into Greene County as a youth of twelve years, a part of the familiar post-Revolutionary migration of Quaker families from the lower counties of the Hudson Valley. His grandfather, Moses (6), was the first to arrive in the year 1818. The Shapaqua (Chappaqua) Monthly Meeting had issued Moses (6th Quinby generation in America) a Removal Certificate dated June 12, 1818 "for Moses Quinby and family." It was accepted by the Coeymans Monthly Meeting on July 22, 1818. (His ties to Greene County were tenuous; in 1822 he was already requesting a Removal Certificate from the Coeymans Monthly Meeting in order to join the Duanesburg Monthly Meeting; a few years later he was in Carlisle, Schoharie County.) Our Moses (8), his father William, his mother Hannah, and the four other siblings came a few years later. These Quinbys were attracted to cheap land lying in the southern part of the Coeymans Patent adjacent to the northern boundary of the Stighkoke Patent. This area in the narrow valley and on the low hills along the East Branch of the Potic Creek (Cabin Run) had first attracted Pazzi Lapham and lay northwest of the hamlet of Jacksonville (now Earlton). The Quinbys were of English stock who had settled in Westchester County prior to 1664. Interrelated by marriage to other Society of Friends adherents, one finds such surnames as Powell, Underhill, Weeks, Dickinson, Sands, Norbury, Fosdick and Ferris. Moses' (8) grandfather, Samuel, had married Anna Powell, sister of Edward Powell who built the Honey Hollow Grist Mill, the site now owned by George and Alice Peters.

The tenets of the Society of Friends were apparently too strict for William Quinby, father of our Moses. Neither does he appear to have been an industrious Quaker, making the most of his resources to support a growing family. In addition to his wife, Hannah Sands (1788-1837), there were three sons and one daughter. The oldest son, John Sands (1805-1836), frequently represented the family in lieu of Father William. Moses was the next oldest while the two youngest were Daniel William (1815-1882), and Job (1820-1845). Ann, eventually married to Robert B. Weeks, was the only daughter. She was born in the year 1807 and died on January 6, 1832. Several of this family are buried in the Earlton Community Cemetery (cleared of its overgrown abandoned state by the Greene County American Revolution Bicentennial Committee and now maintained by the township of Coxsackie).

Intemperate in habits and prone to legal disputes, William Quinby was not acceptable to Robert Owen's Forestville Commonwealth at Jacksonville as an incorporator. Rather, by a family understanding, son John Sands joined, turning in the Quinby real estate for the common good. When the commune was dissolved eighteen months later, it was son John who, together with John Norbury and James Underhill,

purchased the Community landholding at Honey Hollow subject to the claim of William Quinby for \$907.88.

There are other indications the William Quinby family finances were at a low ebb even before the establishment of the Commonwealth. On June 11, 1825, by bond and mortgage, William Quinby secured a debt of \$254.54 to Raymond Medad. This claim was assigned to son John Sands Quinby the following year. On June 25, 1827, William Quinby also signed a mortgage on his household goods in favor of William G. Macy, one of the Commonwealth founders; that amount was \$533.20. The document witnessed by John C. Fosdick and Sarah Peterson, both of the Forestville group, makes interesting reading and gives an indication that the Quinbys brought considerable household goods with them when they migrated to Greene County.

A Schedule or inventory of goods, household stuff, implements and furniture sold by William Quinby to William G. Macy [some items listed in shillings]:

5 feather beds \$42	5 bedsteads 7.50	
	5 straw ticks 3.75	53.25
1 Cooking stove		12.00
4 Bolsters, 12 Pillows		8.00
3 Tables \$9.17	Chairs \$8.50	2 Chests \$3.00 [sic]
		21.00
1 Large wheel 12/	1 small do 12/	1 Reel 8/
		4.00
2 Patent wheel heads 6/	3 pails 4/6	1 Tin Oven 8/
		2.31
1 Barrel 6/	1 Butter tub 2/	2 Wooden bowls @1/6
		1.37
1 Pickle tub .50	1 Bread Tray .50	
		1.00
2 Iron pots	1 dish kettle & tea kettle	
		5.75
1 Pan griddle & 1 gridiron		1.87
8 Pewter plates	1 do [ditto] platters	1 do bason [sic]
		2.00
10 Silver tea spoons \$7.50	6 table spoons	2 setts knives
		9.37
	and forks	
1 Britannia tea pot	1 Sett Liverpool ware cups	
	and saucers	3.40
12 Large & 10 small plates	5 Bowls	1.68
2 Tea cannisters, 2 Candlesticks		.61
1 Block tin Coffee pot & 1 pepper box		.42
1 Box	1 Funnel	1 Tin Dipper & 1 Cup
		.40
2 Pitchers	2 Mugs	2 Baking dishes
		.50
2 Oval platters	1 Dish	1 [empty space]
		2 Bread dishes
		2.62
6 Stone pots.	4 Smoothing irons	1.92
1 Pair hand irons [possibly andirons]	1 pr.	
	Shovel & tongs	1.75
3 Bottles.	1 Jug.	1 Wooden Bowl
		1.15
5 Tin pans	1 Steamer	
		1.87
8 Tin baking dishes, mortar, Rolling pin		.65
1 Earthen Bowl	2 Glasses @21	1 Churn
		6 Baskets
		2.46
4 Tea pots	2 Trammels [for fireplace]	1.37
1 Axe	1 Hoe	1 Stand
		1 Small chest
		1 Steelyard
		1 Clock
		7.00
7 Run Linnen yarn	11 Run Tow yarn	
		7 Run Woolen yarn
		9.44
30 Linnen Sheets	22 Pillow cases	48.00
10 Woolen Blankets, 4 Blue & White coverlets		22.00
2 Setts curtains	4 Coverlets	12.00
1 Electrical Machine		60.00
13 Bed Quilts		22.50
3 Window curtains		1.00
6 Table cloths & 10 towels		7.87
Carding machines with the apparatus belonging		197.92
		<u>\$533.20</u>

(continued on page 3)

QUINBY BEEKEEPERS

(continued from page 2)

The inventory implies that William Quinby or a forebear was a wool carder. The electrical machine might have been an early device for electrical shock treatments which later became a popular medical technique.

As the oldest son, John S. Quinby apparently felt a responsibility for the welfare of his parents, brothers and sister. Even after John's marriage to Sarah Delamater, at intervals he provided these close relatives with food, clothing and shelter. The younger brothers — Moses, Daniel and Job, all assisted with the farm chores when not attending winter school sessions. The vague financial arrangement between William Quinby and his son, John, came to a head with the latter's death in 1836 when his father brought suit against John's widow, Sarah Delamater Quinby and Simpson S. Bell as administrators of John Quinby's estate. John had left no will. Moses, Job and Daniel were all called to testify as to the living arrangements. Moses stated he worked for his brother, John, and John's partner John Norbury, in 1827 and 1829, about two years. He was 17 in the spring of the year when he commenced working toward fall. He considered his wages worth \$100 a year. Lost some time — went to school in the winter. His father's family and John's lived together as one family. Daniel was 12 or 13 years old. John supported the family. Supposed John paid the school bills. Moses said he lived in the household after quitting work for the partnership of Norbury and Quinby until he was of age. John provided clothes for him. There were six in the family when Moses commenced working there, besides John. Mother and sister kept house; part of the time they had a girl that John hired.

Daniel testified at the same Surrogate's hearing that he also worked for his brother John in 1833, a year lacking a few days. His father was to be allowed \$100 for Daniel's work, the latter being underage. The money was to buy clothes, etc. John allowed Father William, in return for labor, to use the cow pasture, firewood and house rent.

Sister Ann Quinby, married to Robert B. Weeks, was fortunate in being far from the scene of family confusion, although she was a visitor after her marriage. An undated letter survives; it was written after she and her husband returned to New York City from a visit at Honey Hollow. The couple were then residing at 709 Water Street, Manhattan. Written without punctuation and limited in spelling accuracy, the letter does convey to the reader a feeling of family loyalty. She uses Quaker terminology.

Dear Mother Third day [Tuesday] afternoon I commenced writing to give an account of our journey home as I promised — fifth day [Thursday] we left Coxsackie about 6 o'clock and we got in New York about 4 o'clock a six day [Friday] afternoon. had a pleasant time — we had plenty of company — James Billing & his wife & three children — they lived here but had been in the Country six weeks and they had as much bagged [baggage] as we had — We was informed by the

Captain after coming a board of the death of Pheobe Tompkins — she dide [died] 2 weeks ago yesterday with a fever and was carriade [carried] in the country to be buried — Abel was sent for but did not get down till after she was buried.

Joseph & Mary got home a first day [Sunday] — It is now a fourth day [Wednesday] — I am going to tell thee how I have past the time since I got home — I am very lonesome indeed when I am alone & think of you all the time and how pleasant I spent the time in your company — seventh day [Saturday] I was engaged in cleaning my house & could get no time to go see Aunt Mary & a first day [Sunday] William D'l was here and stayed all day — a 2d I went & found her [Aunt Mary] middling smart — grandmother has been down and stayed two weeks — went home last fifth day — Aunt Mary has been in the country since I have been gone too — Uncle Thomas is a going to be marriade [married] in six weeks — he went up a first day & they are going to say it before the meeting this week [wedding intentions before the Society of Friends Meeting] — They are a going to hold wedding to Grandfather — I brought Ann Elizabeth home with me 2d day & I am going to take her home tonight — I could not make Moses [Quinby's] pantaloons now but will make them to sent the next trip if he is not comeing down soon which I hope he will, as well as the rest — it seems like a greate while to wait till next Spring before the[e] comes down here — the[e] wanted me to write wither the mice had ate many things which they have not to hurt — found many things safe & our things come safe without any trouble — Robert [husband] holds smart yet he commenced work a seventh day — The[e] must write me a good long [letter] by the next time the boat comes & Moses to[o] must be sure to write & write all the particulars — I have been out and got me some Callico for my Cushions cover and I have been a heming my quilt to[o] today & looked at thy Stitches, the[e] must be careful and not work to hard to get sick — it is as healthy as common about here but very sickly where Coles Tompkins lives — I feel sorry that I did not take more time to visit my neighbors there [at Honey Hollow] wilst I had an opportunity — now I must bid thee farewell and remain thy

Affectionate Daughter

/s/ AKW

do not fail to write by the boat and write when John [Quinby] is a coming down.

Hannah Quinby did get down as indicated by a letter addressed to her at New York by her cousin, Patience Dickinson.

Coxsackie 4 Mo. 20th 1825

Respected Cousin

I cannot well omit writing a few lines to thee — we are tolerable well — I have been remarkable well all Winter much more so than for two years past — but a cold has not left me very smart — I must inform thee Mary Norbury has a Daughter and is very smart it is only six weeks she has been to her fathers twice — they call her Mary Ann —

Catherine Traver has a son two weeks or nearly — it is called Samuel — She has never been so smart before which has almost put a feather in Samuel Ues (Underhill's?) cap — time will not admit me to write much more so in love to thee and all thy family I are thine affectionately

/s/ Patience Dickinson

the affairs of Society [Forestville Commonwealth] is still no more death with yet — there was a friend

(continued on page 4)

QUINBY BEEKEEPERS

(continued from page 3)

[Quaker] at New Baltimore — he had as lives meet Bonapart [Napoleon] with his army as to meet an Heretick [heretic] — they then be thought of great force excuse my scribbling

Moses also had occasion to write to his mother, Hannah, at New York. His letter indicates the state of confusion in the Quinby household at Honey Hollow.

Dear Mother

Aware of thy anxiety to hear from us I am induced to send a few lines tho I know not what to write save that we are all well — John Q. will move today down to the old place — H. Mill [?] is to stay in the house till fall — he had the kitchen and the square room and two bed rooms up stairs — he has taken the place at Cairo again — John Norbury becomes responsible to Aunt Clara — she is expected down here this spring with Sue Ane — As for our house work we have got along fine with it till this morning very well — Father and Job is a going to live with John [Quinby]. Daniel is a going to work for Joseph Drake and I shall board to John Norbury's [his future father-in-law]. We should be glad to have thee here but can make out without thee — It is the calculation for us to move to the stone house when thee gets back. I thing it likely that Claudius and Simpson will come here —

Write an answer and send it by Halsted.

/s/ Moses Quinby

Moses, during his coming of age, had witnessed the breakup of the Forestville Commonwealth, the subsequent partnership of his future father-in-law, John Norbury, and his oldest brother, John S. Quinby; he had found employment by the day with the partnership as opportunity presented itself. During this period he became interested in the honeybee but it apparently remained a sideline for the next few years.

In 1831, at the age of 21 years, unmarried, Moses was seized with a fit of the wanderlust. He decided to travel to Ohio, visiting friends and relatives who had resettled along the way. His diary details that trip. A few entries are quoted.

I left William Quinby at Coxsackie on 9 of Sept. 1831.

We got to Schenectady at noon and I went to Charlton on foot and got to the D[destination] about 4 in afternoon, found them all well and Deborah Powell there on a visit. The next day she wanted a conveyance to Stillwater to her uncle Obadiah Powell. Joseph Tompkins and Mary Ann U [Underhill] and myself went with her. We took dinner and tea before we returned. Young Obadiah has two children grown Moses and Mary — both very fine young people. We got home about 9 in the evening.

Thurs. morning the 15th we were at Utica [by canal barge] and continued till almost night. At half past three I was landing at New London after leaving my valice [sic] at the Inn — in a few minutes I was on my way for Constantia, going on through mud and rain at the rate of 3 miles an hour. I got to Parkers Tavern about dark after having gone one mile and one half out of my way and being some tired I resolved to put up for the night. The next morning I got to Dickinsons about ten o'clock. The road runs east and west with the Lake. Font [Dan'l] lives about a mile this side of the creek. Reuben Dickinson lives further east, Jacob next and

Isaac last. They all have good situations. [Roswell Reed of Coxsackie who speculated in undeveloped New York State land had thousands of acres for sale in the Constantia area. It is entirely possible the Dickinsons and others from the ill-fated Forestville Commonwealth purchased of him. The Coxsackie Judsons also relocated at Constantia until removing to Syracuse.]

The 17th towards noon we started for James U [Underhill's] in the woods. He lives about 2 miles in the woods. The land appears quite mellow. I saw where James U. had set some of the turf on fire, it had burned down below the roots and leaving them naked some like the stumps in Coxsackie that stand in the wetland and thrown out by the frost. We left James U. about dark and came back to Isaac D. and staid all night. Martin Traver came with us the next day, Sunday, for a sail on the lake.

Tuesday the 27th in the afternoon we got to Massilon [Ohio]. The place at present contains between 5 and 600 inhabitants. Kendal [site of the Owenite Community settled by families from the Forestville Commonwealth] is one half mile northeast from there. It is a handsome place 20' higher than Massilon. At Massilon I saw Nathaniel [Underhill]. Went to the D [Dickinson's?] and found Samuel, Deborah and the girls at home.

Neither Saratoga County, Constantia in central New York, or Kendal in Ohio, could hold Moses — the attraction in Greene County was a neighbor's daughter, Martha Norbury. Some twelve months after his return east, they were wed at the Norbury homestead in Honey Hollow; the date was September 8, 1832. It is believed both Moses and Martha were subsequently disowned by the Society of Friends "for marrying out of meeting." This is further substantiated by Moses accepting election to the post of Captain of militia and his purchase of a military uniform.

For the next twenty-one years until the Quinbys relocated in the Mohawk Valley, Moses spent the major portion of his time with beekeeping, with small scale farming, and by operating his turning mill where he produced simple pieces of furniture and beehives. The family grew as two daughters were born to Martha.

On a terraced hillside Moses kept his rows of hives. Nearby, with water dammed up from the flow of the Potic and the Medway Creeks, he operated his lathe.

Woodcuts of earlier centuries generally depict the beehive of woven straw, conical in shape. By Moses Quinby's time crude wood boxes had come into use as a convenient substitute. It was Moses's determination to make beekeeping a financial success that led him to develop a sectional beehive in his woodworking shop.

To Moses' nephew, T. S. Underhill, at age 5 years in 1840, the Quinby complex of dam, turning mill, beehives, residence and the relatives themselves were "an enchanted place." In later years he would recall:

I well remember the early rural home in the town of Coxsackie, New York, where the Quinby residence was on a hill that we called Honey Hill in contradistinction

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QUINBY BEEKEEPERS

(continued from page 4)

from the valley called Honey Hollow, of which the creek fed the mill-dam pond at the foot of the hill . . . I remember the mill-dam, the water-wheel, and the turning lathe in his cabinet shop were the wonder and delight of my boyhood days. A day at Uncle Quinby's was a rare treat. Honey Hill was a veritable garden of Eden, paths bordered with flowers and fruits in abundance, and the bread and honey was, perhaps, best of all.

Nephew Underhill's most prominent recollection was the great attraction of Uncle Quinby's observatory hives, common box hives with glass slides and wood shutters.

There is where his first study of the habits of the bee commenced. I remember it was my delight to watch these inspections, his showing me the bees at work and pointing out the different kinds of bees, especially the queen, and explaining the head of the colony was a queen and not a king as it was usually called in those days. He showed me the different cells, particularly the queen-cell, with its wonderful history of construction and told that at its completion and maturity the young queen would make a piping sound, which would foretell a coming swarm, and then we would, at evening time, listen for the signal at a hive that showed indications of swarming. Sure enough, next day the swarm would come forth, the mother queen with them.

To the Quinby children, nephews and nieces, Moses Quinby was of exemplary character. He was noted for his moral axioms; a few of these survive:

Subdue your appetites and you conquer human nature.
 What you get for nothing is apt to be mighty expensive.
 When a man boasts of acting disinterestedly, it's safe to say he has an axe to grind.
 The lucky man is one who locks the door before the horse is stolen.

Although of Quaker birthright, Moses Quinby accepted election to a captaincy of the local militia. Somewhere along the way he learned to play the flute. Neighbors and relatives turned to Moses for "wise Counsel"; he was always ready to provide assistance when called upon. His was a genial nature.

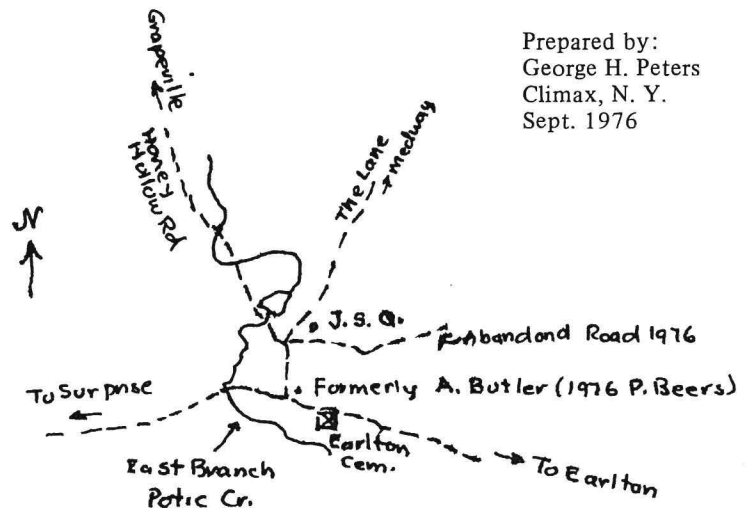
In a paper read before the Northeastern Beekeeper's Association on February 3, 1876, Mr. P. H. Elwood would remark:

High as Mr. Quinby ranked as an apiarist, he stood higher as a man. We who were accustomed to gather at his fireside can never forget his wholesome hospitality. he was a true gentleman unfettered by the stifling conventionalities of modern life. He was always the same, always having a hearty welcome for everyone. True to his Quaker education, he was an intense hater of shams, especially of the human kind . . .

While not easily disturbed in temper, he was not tame in spirit when he had just cause for indignation. He had a very modest opinion of himself and in measuring others did not set himself up as the standard of perfection.

Securing patents was not a goal of Moses Quinby. It was his belief that "If God permitted one to make a discovery it was a duty to reveal everything to others and make its use entirely free. He detested patents and ardently fought the patent hive vendors of the day. When he invented the bee smoker and the capping knife he did not patent them but revealed all details in his writings.

The scourge of foul brood was another negative factor in beekeeping. Moses devised a treatment based on bacteriological principles which has stood the test of time. Although a self-educated man he understood the need for accurate scientific observations and recordings.



Prepared by:
 George H. Peters
 Climax, N. Y.
 Sept. 1976

Location of John S. Quinby's House shown as • J.S.Q. (Foundation of cellar at site 1976) Taken from F. W. Beers 1876 Map brought up to date 1976.

Just as his older brother, John, was of assistance to Moses as the latter was growing up, so was Moses to his younger brother Job. For a time Moses was appointed court guardian of this younger brother. Interest in honey bees also extended to Job who gradually acquired a substantial number of hives. Dying a bachelor in 1845, he remembered his several nieces and nephews in his will, including the two children of Moses Quinby. The appraisal of his estate by Henry Bedell and Simpson S. Bell in 1845 included:

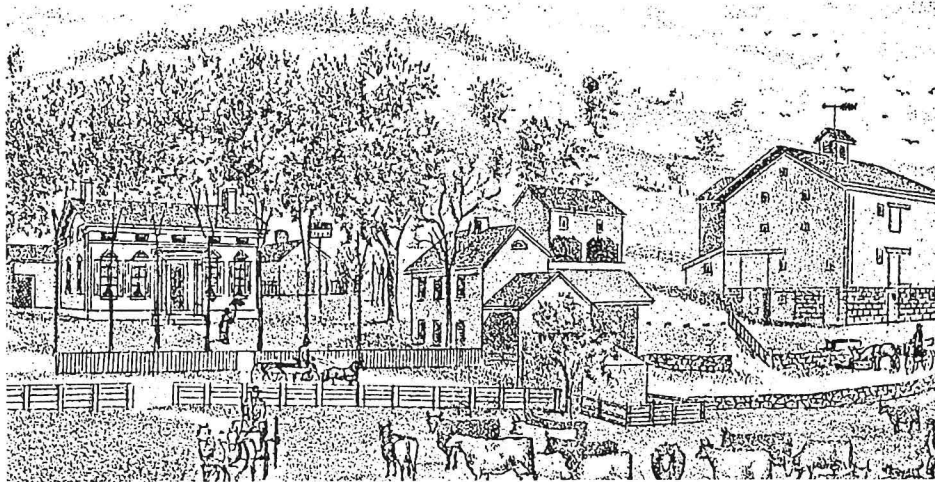
40 hives of bees at Moses Quinby's worth \$3.50 each
 21 hives at Mr. Hallock's \$3.25 each
 ½ of 3 hives at same place at \$3.50
 6 hives at E. Smith's at \$3.50
 4 hives at same place at \$1.50
 42 hives at John Underhill's at \$3.25

This inventory of Job Quinby's hives totaled 114½. Obviously he should also be given some credit for the name "Honey Hollow."

The Honey Hollow land, never good agricultural acreage, by the mid-nineteenth century was already reverting to woods, hayfields and pasture. Due to this soil regression, Moses, Martha and their two children broke their ties to Honey Hollow and in 1853 relocated near Saint Johnsville, Montgomery County. Here, in what Moses considered to be a better beekeeping area, he remained for the rest of his lifetime, dying in the year 1875. His wife, Martha, survived him for almost another quarter of a century, dying in 1901. Both Moses and Martha are buried in the West St. Johnsville cemetery. Of their two children, son

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(continued from page 5)



House and property of Moses Quinby, Town of St. Johnsville, Montgomery County, New York. Sold by Martha P. Quinby on August 16, 1876 to J.D. and R. Nellis.

John became a minister and died without issue (he had served as a lieutenant in the Civil War). Daughter Elizabeth married Lyman C. Root, a noted beekeeper in his own right. Two daughters were born of this union, neither of whom married; thus the direct Moses Quinby line became extinct.

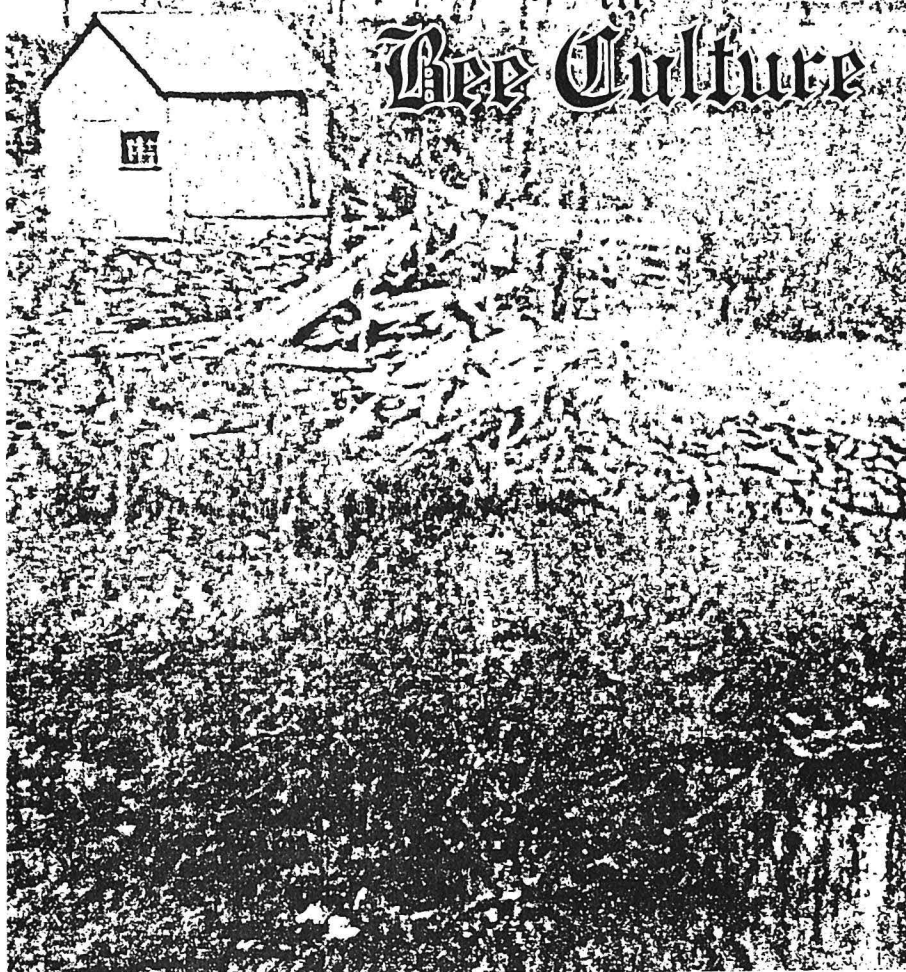
Neither Quinby home remains. The Honey Hollow one, burned in more recent years, has left an overgrown foundation. The St. Johnsville house was replaced by another utilizing the same foundation. When Dr. E. F. Phillips traversed the latter site after World War II, he was shown the location of the apiary, the honey house, terraced vineyards and orchard. Like Honey Hollow, at St. Johnsville Quinby sought to utilize available water power. The free-flowing spring not only furnished household needs for the Quinbys and two adjacent families, but also fed two Quinby ponds – one for fish and one for his turning mill. Mr. Phillips gives us a few details of Moses Quinby's later lifestyle. An ardent chess player, an amateur musician, a promoter of temperance, a man with antislavery views, Moses earned the respect of the entire neighborhood.

Perhaps no better memorial can be left than the words of Moses Quinby as recalled by his son-in-law: "I want it distinctly understood that I cannot afford to spend any time making money." Moses shared his knowledge and experience to all who came seeking help. "He gave 47 years of constant application in honest effort to place beekeeping on a firm business basis. . . which should warrant the name "Father of practical commercial beekeeping in America."

Department of Manuscripts & University Archives, Cornell University Libraries, Ithaca, New York

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Gleanings in Bee Culture

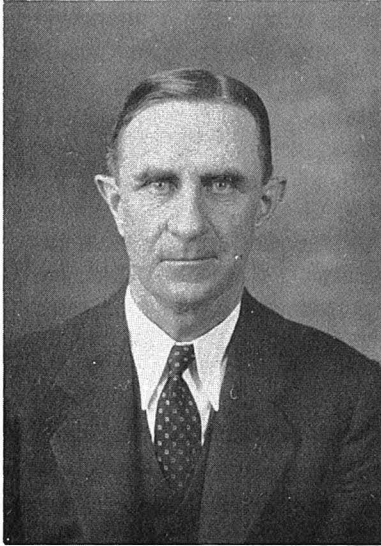


Ruins of the Old Mill and Dam where Moses Quinby made his Beehives at Honey Hollow, Greene County.

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"D. H." RUNDELL'S AUCTIONS

—Raymond Beecher

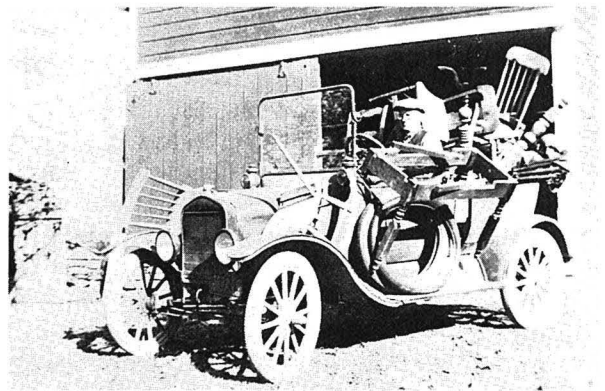


"D.H." Rundell

"Good Lord, won't somebody give me ten cents for this bushel basket of picture frames?" "That golden oak bedroom set is worth a dollar if only for firewood!" These and other humorous remarks were all part of Darius H. Rundell's auction technique during the 1920's and early 1930's in the Greenville area. In those days people "selling out" called in "D. H." to handle the sale; there were no auction barns. And by contracting with D. H. Rundell, the sellers could do no better. Either in the villages or hamlets or out in the countryside, he was trusted by both sellers and buyers. Unless specifically announced, nothing was ever trucked in; neither was anything "knocked down" to the clerk.

In 32 years of auctioneering, D. H. Rundell managed 935 sales. In addition, he handled fruit auctions in Columbia County. This writer recalls several in Greenville village — Woodruff's Hotel and dance hall (site of today's insurance building), Emeline McCabe's on South Street, Dr. Bradley McCabe's sale, the Coonley sale and the Botsford sale, the latter three on West Street. When my father sold out Spruce Grove Farm on the Newry Road on April 10, 1931, D. H. Rundell was the man.

The sales were generally held on a Saturday with hours depending upon the volume of items to be sold. Usually the beginning hour was either 11 a. m. or at noon. Occasionally there was an "all day" sale to avoid selling beyond 5 p. m. when farmers had to tend the farm chores. Two-day sales were nonexistent until much later. Posters of the thin broadside type were printed and distributed by Darius Rundell for posting in such places as Steven's General Store, Hook's Cash Store, and other places where the public was likely to congregate. Classified advertisements were placed in local weekly newspapers such as the *Greenville Local*, the *Coxsackie Union-News*, the *Examiner* or the *Recorder*.



Alton St. John, Sunset Hill South Westerlo in his Model T returning home from a "D.H." Rundell Auction

Photos courtesy Leona Ingalls Rundell

"D. H.", with an occasional helper, could generally manage the entire sale except for the clerk who recorded the buyers' names and the prices bid. Numbers were never used in those days; he knew so many of the bidders or simply asked for the name. Few persons ever cheated by bidding and then leaving without paying.

If there were both farm and household goods to sell, the sale usually started by 11 a. m. "D. H." was very prompt. The crowd began to assemble early to examine the merchandise, to get a good parking place, and a "front row" seat (no chairs provided). Some came just for the sociability of the auction, having no intention of purchasing. It was free entertainment.

With one or two men "pitching in", frequently one or more of the family selling out, the bigger pieces of furniture and farm equipment were moved out-of-doors before the sale, weather permitting. There was usually a large amount of golden oak — high back bedsteads and dressers with large attached mirrors, dining room sideboards, extension tables with several leaves, and high back pressed dining room chairs. Rockers were a dime a dozen. Occasionally one could spot a more desirable piece of furniture in mahogany, walnut or even pine. These pieces usually brought higher bids in contrast to the golden oak then in little demand. The tall case clock (grandfather clock), usually the most valuable piece, was frequently left in the front hall until its turn came up since it needed a firm base and wall support. China, glassware and smaller items were loaded on tables either on the porch or in the front parlor, easily brought up for auction. Darius Rundell never wasted time waiting for merchandise to be put on the auction block, usually an upturned large wooden box or table. Accumulations of so called "junk items" came out of

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"D.H." RUNDELL'S AUCTIONS

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the woodshed, cellar or outbuildings. Even old canned fruits and vegetables, undated and covered with dust, could usually find a buyer and it wasn't for the canning jars.

Many women remained out front visiting with their friends and neighbors while the men could almost always be found bidding on hardware, tools, and lighter farm equipment by the hen houses, woodshed, hay barn or tool house. Livestock was sold from the barnyard enclosure — teams of horses, the milk cow or cows, a few sheep and an occasional goat. The sales seldom included large heads of livestock but could include quantities of hay, sometimes unbaled.

Terms of sale were announced on the broadsides and in other publicity; at the very beginning of the auction "D. H." would remind the public of credit availability for livestock or large pieces of farm equipment, usually a promissory note for under six months.

In a day when small coins had far more purchasing power, "D. H." would recognize dime bids; he did try to avoid nickel ones. If he could not get the dime or the quarter, he just continued to add items to the pile until it managed to attract a bidder's attention. And when he got one, he would frequently shout "Sold, before he changes his mind."

As to be expected the more valuable household furnishings worth one or more dollars were sold in mid afternoon. George Vanderbilt could usually be depended upon to bid in the antiques but occasionally he lost out to a higher bidder. Georgiana Lockwood of South Westerlo was usually good for a bid or two. Few antique dealers were ever in attendance; no antique shops existed in rural communities in those days.

No matter how frequently it happened, certain items were always good for a laugh and kept the buying public in a friendly mood. If a china chamber pot with cover came up for bidding, it called for a demonstration of how the crochet cover called the "husher" was such a good silencer. "D. H." never let the buyer get away without remarking that if one had a "call of nature" during the night, the silencer prevented the waking up of the bed partner. His humor was never "off color" but quite unsophisticated.

When "D. H." found a husband and wife bidding against each other as occasionally happened when they were standing apart, he would patiently start the bidding over, commenting that he didn't want to spoil a marriage. When the excited bidder would raise his or her own bid, he slowed the pace of accepting bids to get the excited person to "calm down."

Since chairs were never provided, one either brought his own or else sat on the furniture on the lawn up for auction. Frequently as "D. H." reached these items he had to remove people. They always complied. Toward the end of the sale, people began

to load up their purchases and move to the cashier's table to pay up. When this happened things were bid in more cheaply and one could occasionally secure a bargain. If time was running out and the crowd was getting thin, more of the inexpensive items were lumped together or the offering was the balance of a room's contents.

Between auctions "D. H." refinished furniture to supplement his income. As his reputation as an auctioneer spread, he was called farther and farther afield from Greenville, even into Albany and Columbia Counties. In his time he sold many unusual items but the one which made the strongest impression was at the DeProse sale — it was ex-president Martin Van Buren's portable tin bathtub. Coming home from the Herbert Moak sale (New Salem) on May 5, 1950, Darius Rundell remarked, "I'm not going to sell anymore." Retire he did; it was his last sale.

His auctioneer's career spanned a period of time in United States history when prices were low and money in scarce supply. In his 32 years of sales he took in \$27,448.57. The highest individual sale was the Israel Kimmney at Altamont on April 16 and 17, 1946 — it brought in \$679. There was no twenty percent commission in those days. In his earlier years of selling he usually earned a flat ten dollars although at times it ranged between five and fifteen. In later years there was a base of \$15 plus a ten percent commission.

"D. H." Rundell was the product of an auctioneer's training school modified by the type of community in which he lived. His reputation was one of the best; he is part of Greene County's history.

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SHARING THE CREDIT

In the Spring of 1979 issue of this *Journal* we reviewed the Society's first year — 1929. Orin Q. Flint served as the first president, Leonard Bronk Lampman as a member of the Executive Committee while Jessie V. V. Vedder was elected Assistant Secretary and also Historian.

In her article on the life of Jessie V. V. Vedder, Mrs. Mabel P. Smith credits Mrs. Vedder with "securing for posterity in the name of that organization, the priceless heritage of the Bronck Homestead of Coxsackie as a County Museum." Mrs. M. Bruce Wayman of Tappahannock, Virginia, a daughter of Mr. Flint, writes to point out as an attorney and as a close friend of Mr. Lampman, Mr. Flint also persuaded this benefactor to will the Bronck Homestead to the Society. We have in the past and we will continue to acknowledge Mr. Flint's vital role in behalf of the Society. In doing so we do not want to downgrade Mrs. Vedder's part and her close contacts with Mrs. Belle Cooper, housekeeper to Mr. Lampman.

The current group of volunteers who operate the Society and its Bronck Museum have reason to be extremely grateful to both of these individuals.

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VEDDER LIBRARY NOTES

◇ □ A wide range of English Salisbury genealogical material compiled by Salisbury M. Day of Rochester has come from Audrey North of Keuka Park, New York. Mr. Day had, in past years, selected Salisbury subject matter from the published diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Salusbury Thrale. Added thereto was information gleaned from other English sources. The lineage of the Salisbury family commences around 1066 - 1100 in Wales. Incidentally, Mrs. Thrale was the noted friend of Samuel Johnson (see Hesketh Pearson's *Johnson and Boswell*).

◇ □ Frederick N. Patchen, Upper Montclair, N. J. has augmented the Vital Statistics card file with records of Monroe, Bates, Barton and Patchen surnames. Additionally, he has provided the library with a photograph of the Catharine Rossman burial stone taken years ago before its present damaged state.

◇ □ An impressive piece of genealogical research has come from Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Martin, Auburn, Massachusetts. In hardcover, with numerous illustrations, its value is improved with a name index. There is much Greene County material for the Catskill and Lexington areas relating to Finch, Martin (Maerten) and allied groups.

◇ □ The library, through Hope Farm Bookshop, has acquired another Greene County imprint, that from the firm of W. G. Hyer, Printer at Catskill. It is the Reverend David Harrower's *A Farewell Sermon, Delivered to the Church and Congregation in Lexington, N. Y. on the First Lord's Day in November (1826)*.

◇ □ As required by law, an Environment Impact Statement has been produced by the Department of Correction under contract with McKeown and Franz of New York City; it relates to Cossackie II Correctional Facility. Because of its environmental content relating to the area, a copy has been acquired for the library's permanent collection.

◇ □ Through the efforts of Mrs. Shirley A. Mearns, Kingston, we have another 70 duplicated pages of genealogical information from the *Ulster Republican*. This is a long term project of the Wiltwyck Chapter, NSDAR. We are grateful.

◇ □ *The Van Slyke Family of New Baltimore*, is a rough sketch of that family's local history prepared by Suzanne Mullane who has provided a copy for the Vedder Library.

◇ □ Due to the deadlines for masters and doctoral dissertations, independent study courses, etc. the Vedder Library has been making winter appointments for the use of selected material. Oh for a year-round heated library structure funded by some generous donor.

◇ □ Now available for genealogical research is John C. Hotten's *Original Lists of Persons of Quality; Emigrants; Religious Exiles; Political Rebels; Serving Men Sold for a Term of Years; Apprentices; Children Stolen; Maidens Pressed; And Others Who Went from Great Britain to the American Plantations. 1600-1700.*

◇ □ While the Library's budget permits only limited purchases of historical materials, it is occasionally tempted. That has been the case with the recent acquisition of Dr. Thomas Thomson's leather bound receipt book dating from the late 1700's, with some entries from "Katts Kill." The ancient manuscript volume's entries have provided major clues to the business affairs of this Greene County resident whose stone house once stood on land between Catskill's Main Street and the Catskill Creek. It was Dr. Thomas Thomson's son, Thomas T. Thomson, who contracted for the building of Cedar Grove, more lately known as The Thomas Cole Estate.

◇ □ Miss Sally Pierce of Litchfield, Connecticut, at the opening of the nineteenth century, had established one of the more prominent female academies. Several Greene County girls were enrolled. The Vedder Library has been assisting Ms. Lynne T. Brickley of Boston with related research on Miss Pierce's school, leading to her doctoral dissertation. The Greene County Historical Society's archival holdings contain several paper items - letters and receipts - connected with this educational facility. They are of special value since little of that school's records was preserved.

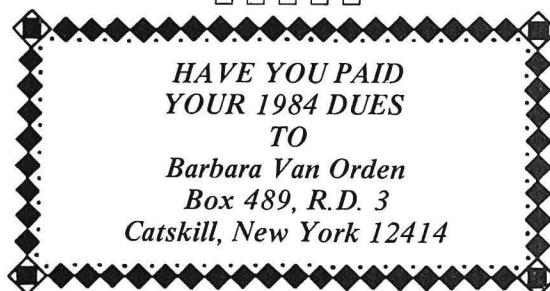
◇ □ Requests for genealogical and county research assistance continue to arrive almost daily by mail and by telephone. This Library does what it can but staff limitations preclude extensive research unless it is on persons or topics of interest to this Society.

◇ □ The Vedder Memorial Library has submitted a proposal to the county in an effort to be of assistance in the preservation of county archives. The plan calls for the establishment of guidelines, the processing of historically significant material, and its use under controlled conditions. The decision now rests with the county administration and the legislature. The Society's part would be without cost to the taxpayer.

◇ □ We congratulate the Heritage Society of New Baltimore and more especially Mrs. Frances Dietz for the completion of an index to its American Revolution Bicentennial volume.

◇ □ Periodically someone asks about the library's newspaper clipping effort. It is an established policy to clip and mount on 8½ x 11" paper articles appearing in local newspapers which have permanent historical value. Users of the library find these topical files of definite interest. Among the helpers in this effort are Frances Adams of Cossackie and Betty Miller of R. D. Catskill.

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(continued from page 6)

Photos courtesy George and Alice Peters

Gravestones of
Moses and Martha Quinby
in
West St. Johnsville Cemetery
Montgomery County, New York



Moses

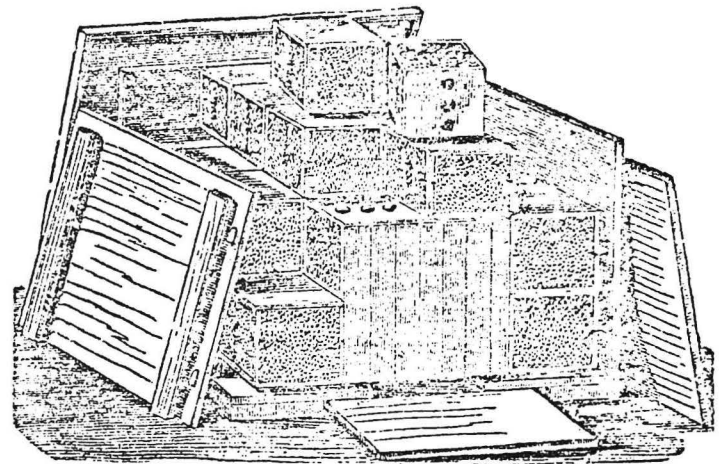


Martha

THE GENEALOGY CORNER

As space permits, this *Journal* will publish bits and pieces of Greene County genealogical information, an interest of many readers. Athens Town Historian, Edith S. Minerly, has contributed her findings for the first appearance of this column. She has copied tombstone inscriptions from "on the spot" effort in the Society of Friends section of Mount Hope Cemetery, Village of Athens. This sect's adherents in Athens were more numerous than is generally realized. In addition to the Mount Hope burial area, they also were buried in their own plot adjacent to Athens Rural Cemetery near the Reformed Church. Many stones, particularly in the latter cemetery, have met the fate of time and those buried are unidentifiable. To some extent this is also true of Mount Hope.

Simple gravestones with minimum inscriptions were a reflection of the tenets of the Society of Friends religious faith – to minimize concern with worldliness. The stones in Mount Hope face in a southerly direction while those of other religious sects generally face in a westerly direction.



Moses Quinby's sectional Beehive



- Salmon Coffin b. 11 mo. 19, 1771 d. 10 mo. 26, 1844.
- Anna Coffin d. 19 12 mo. 1851.
- Ellen Bedell 3 mo. 23, 1821 d. 5 mo. 22, 1896.
- William Bedell 2 mo. 1861 aged 18 years 2 mos.
- William Bedell b. 1813, d. 1861.
- William Bedell d. 1854 aged 82 years.
- Levi Bedell, son of William and Hannah, d. 1818.
- Hannah Bedell, wife of William, d. 1851.
- Margaret Bedell, aged 72, d. 1839.
- Samuel Greeley, b. 8 26 1815 d. 12 9 1880.
- Sara Lawton 13 18 1805.
- Samuel Green b. 1815 d. 1882.
- Frederick son of Nathaniel and Mary Stillick, d. aged 5 mos.
- Sarah, wife of Nathaniel Stillick, aged 53 years d. 1873.
- Caleb Coffin 1825 - 1885.
- Esther Lawton Coffin [wife of Caleb] 1830 - 1921.
- Herbert Lawton Coffin 1873 - 1948.
- Elizabeth Sprague Coffin [wife of Herbert] 1878 - 1960.



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