

# Knickerbocker Families of Fort Edward, NY

*And related families named DeGraff, LaValley, Wallace, & Willer*

Bryan Knickerbocker  
28 June 2018

This study was sparked by a question from a distant cousin: Who was Seymour Edward Knickerbocker (number 14 in the treeee below) who died in Cortland County, New York in 1958?

This question turned out to be more complicated than I had originally thought.

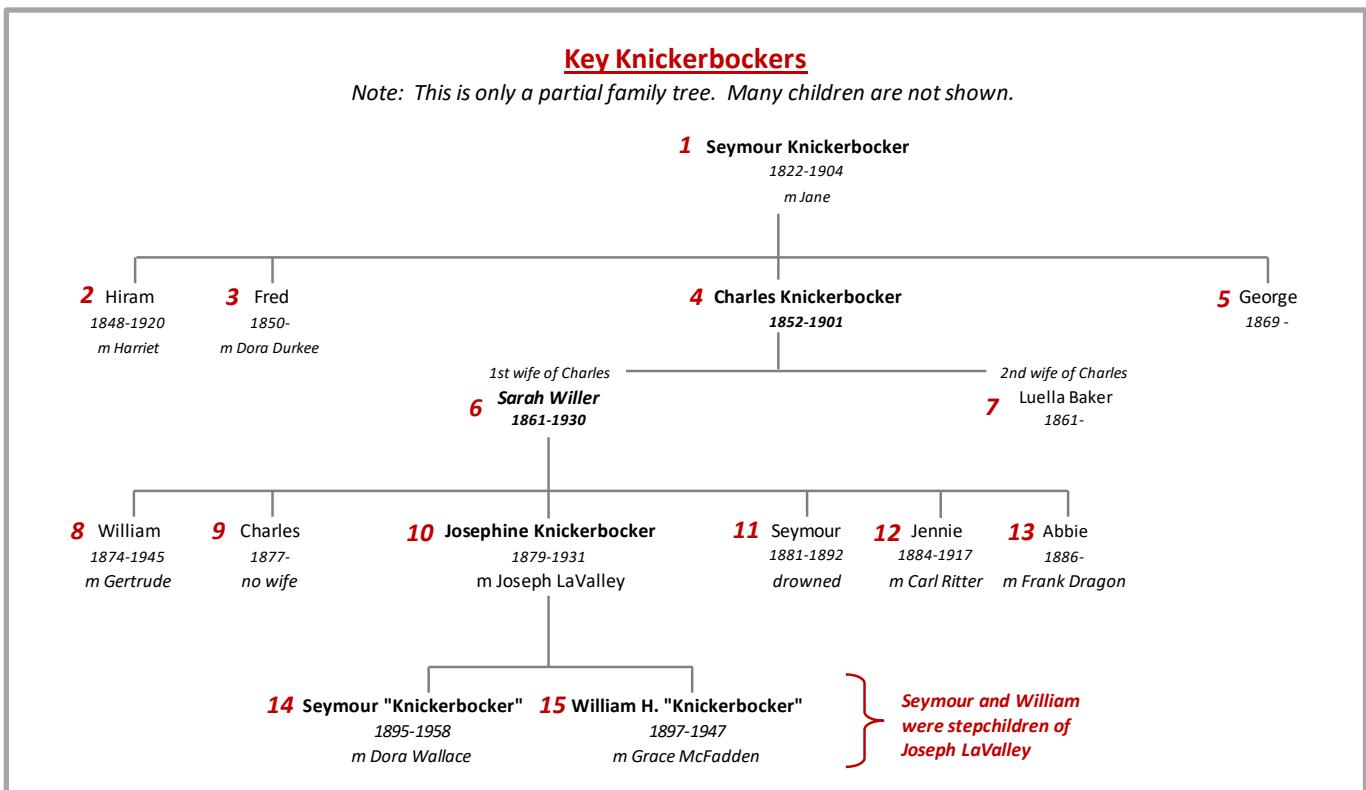
This report discusses Seymour Edward Knickerbocker's ancestors in Fort Edward, New York, . and also discusses families with the surnames Wallace, Willer, LaValley, and DeGraff.

We will not cover every single Knickerbocker who ever lived in Fort Edward. Instead, we will focus on Seymour's grandfather, Charles Knickerbocker (1852-1901).

Many of the people discussed here had chaotic lives. This story includes alcoholism, divorces, assaults, arrests, a lawsuit for wrongful death, and a house of ill repute.

In the end, this story won't affect too many readers. It appears that there are relatively few living descendants of these lines. However, it was fun putting these puzzle pieces together.

Shown below is a partial family tree. These are the Knickerbockers who will be discussed, one at a time. The stories of the Wallaces and other families are woven in at appropriate times.



## Background

This study started with a very simple question:  
Who were the parents of the Seymour  
Knickerbocker who died in Cortland, New York, in  
the 1940's?

To start, we have to know where he was born.

Seymour's draft registration, from 1942, showed  
his birth location as being Fort Edward, New  
York.

SERIAL NUMBER <b>U 2196</b>	1. NAME (Print) <b>Seymour Edward Knickerbocker</b>			ORDER NUMBER
2. PLACE OF RESIDENCE (Print) <b>9 Maple Ave Cortland Cortland NY</b>				
THE PLACE OF RESIDENCE GIVEN ON THE LINE ABOVE WILL DETERMINE LOCAL BOARD JURISDICTION; LINE 2 OF REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE WILL BE IDENTICAL				
3. MAILING ADDRESS (Print) <b>9 Maple Ave Cortland NY</b>				
4. TELEPHONE <b>179 M</b>				
5. AGE IN YEARS <b>47</b>				
6. PLACE OF BIRTH <b>St Edward NY</b>				
7. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PERSON WHO WILL ALWAYS KNOW YOUR ADDRESS <b>Mrs Dorothy Knickerbocker 9 Maple Av Cortland</b>				
8. EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS <b>Beaudry Wall Paper Co.</b>				
9. PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS <b>46 Elm St Cortland NY</b>				
I AFFIRM THAT I HAVE VERIFIED ABOVE ANSWERS AND THAT THEY ARE TRUE. <b>D. S. S. FORTH I</b>				
10-11630-8 <b>S. E. Knickerbocker</b>				

So far, so good.

However, there were several Knickerbockers in Fort Edward. For example, here is an excerpt from a directory for Fort Edward in 1902.

<b><i>Knickerbockers in the Fort Edward Directory in 1902</i></b>	
Knickerbocker Charles Jr. bds 23 Seminary	
Knickerbocker Frederick T. laborer, bds 81 McCrea	
Knickerbocker James, laborer, h River nr Teft's lane	
Knickerbocker Jennie, em Hotel Hudson	
Knickerbocker Josephine, em 46 Mechanic	
Knickerbocker Luella, widow of Charles, h River	
Knickerbocker Sarah Mrs. h 23 Seminary	
Knickerbocker Seymour, teamster, h 81 McCrea	
Knickerbocker William H. laborer, h Seminary nr Valley	

Who were all these people, and how did they relate to Seymour?

The street addresses shown in the 1902 directory are interesting. The Knickerbockers all lived in a tiny corner of Fort Edward.

This part of Fort Edward is next to the Hudson River, and used to be known as The Point.

Many residents of The Point worked at the nearby paper mills, which are still visible in this satellite photograph.

The red star in this graphic is the center of the events discussed later. Charles Knickerbocker (person 4) lived near the intersection of Oak and McRea streets. So did his in-laws, the Willer family.



## A Warning about Last Names

The story of the Knickerbockers in Fort Edward involves many divorces and remarriages. There were also a few illegitimate children. Thus, many people had more than one last name.

We will use a woman named Myra McDonald as an example. Myra's mother was Luella Baker, who is person number 7 in our story. It takes many different historic records to even begin to understand the name changes for Myra McDonald and her mother.

- 1892** Myra McDonald was living with her parents, Jamson and Luella McDonald.

Jamson M. McDonald	8	1833
Luella M. McDonald	9	1831
Laura M. McDonald	10	
Myra A. McDonald	11	
Alma K. McDonald	12	
Ellen M. McDonald	13	

- 1893** Miss Luella Baker (7) married Charles Knickerbocker (4). She was also known as Mrs. Luella McDonald, the ex-wife of Jamson McDonald.



- 1900** Myra Knickerbocker was the stepdaughter of Luella Knickerbocker and her husband Charles.

Knickerbocker	Charles	Heard	W. M. June 1823 48
—	Luella	Wife	W. F. Oct 1861 37
—	Myra	Sister	W. T. Mar 1883 7
—	Warren E.	Son Son	W. M. Aug 1857
—	George	Daughter	W. F. June 1879 5
—	Albert H.	Daughter	W. T. June 1879 3
—	Hiram	Son	W. M. July 1879 10

- 1910** Myra Knickerbocker was the daughter of Luella Knickerbocker, who was a widow.

Full name	Myra M. McDonald
Color	White
Place of residence	Fort Edward
Age	26 yrs
Occupation	Domestic service
Place of birth	Little River, N.C.
Name of father	James M. McDonald
Country of birth	Virginia
Maiden name of mother	Luella

Knickerbocker	Charles	Heard	W. M. June 1823 48
—	Luella	Wife	W. F. Oct 1861 37
—	Myra	Sister	W. T. Mar 1883 7
—	Warren E.	Son Son	W. M. Aug 1857
—	George	Daughter	W. F. June 1879 5
—	Albert H.	Daughter	W. T. June 1879 3
—	Hiram	Son	W. M. July 1879 10

- 1911** Myra McDonald married Frank Bartholomew. Her parents were Jamson McDonald and Luella Baker.

Full name	Myra M. McDonald
Color	White
Place of residence	Fort Edward
Age	26 yrs
Occupation	Domestic service
Place of birth	Little River, N.C.
Name of father	James M. McDonald
Country of birth	Virginia
Maiden name of mother	Luella

Johnson Alfred	Heard	W. M. June 1823 48
—	Luella	Wife
—	Frank	W. F. Oct 1861 37
—	Myra	Sister
—	Warren	Son Son
—	George	Daughter
—	Albert	Daughter
—	Hiram	Son
—	Clossen	Son

- 1940** In April of 1940, Myra Whaley was living with her husband.

Whaley, Judson S.	Heard	W. M. June 1823 48
—	Myra M. (W)	Wife

- 1940** In July of 1940, Myra Whaley's obituary listed her siblings, including her brother, Warren McDonald, and her half-brothers, Hiram and Clossen Knickerbocker.

TIMES RECORD, TROY, N. Y.,		Survivors include her husband; two stepsons, Edgar and Judson L., Jr., of Fort Edward; two stepdaughters, Mrs. Wilbur Lyons of Hartford City, Ind., and Mrs. Joseph Bristol of Fort Miller; one brother, Warren McDonald, Fort Edward; two halfbrothers, Hiriam and Clossen Knickerbocker of Fort Edward; three halfsisters, Mrs. Howard Bombard of Hudson Falls; Mrs. Stanley Tepoulski of Plattsburgh, and Mrs. Carl Bradley of Portland, Ore., and several nieces and nephews.	
JULY 16, 1940.			
Funeral of Mrs. Whaley.			
Funeral services for Mrs. Myra M. Whaley, 56, who died Thursday at her home in Fort Edward, were conducted at 2:30 p.m., Sunday from St. James' Episcopal Church, Fort Edward. Rev. J. Hugh Hooper, rector, officiated. Interment was in Union Cemetery.			

Thus, Myra cycled through six last names (McDonald, Knickerbocker, McDonald again, Bartholomew, McDonald again, and then Whaley.) Her mother Luella cycled through five last names (Baker, McDonald, Baker again, Knickerbocker, and then Johnson.)

Multiple last names are one of the challenges when researching the Knickerbockers of Fort Edward.

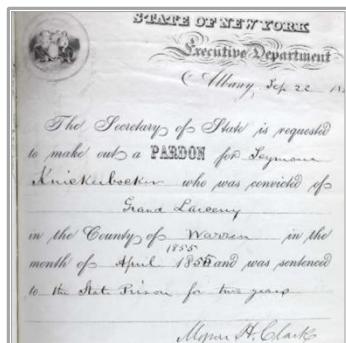
We will now go through the main players in this story, one at a time. We will use the partial Knickerbocker tree as a discussion guide.

### 1. Seymour Knickerbocker (b 1822)

Seymour Knickerbocker moved to Fort Edward in about 1872. Seymour had been living in Warrensburg, about 30 miles to the north.

Seymour spent many years living on The Point in Fort Edward, working various jobs. In the 1900 census, Seymour, age 80, was living at 81 McRea Street. Thus, Seymour was one of the people in the 1902 directory.

Seymour was the patriarch of the Knickerbockers in this story.



We don't know much about Seymour's life, but he apparently went through some hard times. He imprisoned for theft in 1855 (then pardoned in 1856).

Whatever issues caused Seymour to wind up in jail, he didn't seem to pass along any "evil ways" to most of his children.

Unfortunately, though, Seymour's son Charles seemed to more than his share of problems. They are discussed later.

### 2. Hiram C. Knickerbocker, the brother of Charles

Hiram was the oldest son of Seymour. Hiram apparently stayed in Warrensburg when his father and younger siblings moved to Fort Edward.

Hiram does not have a large role in the Fort Edward story.

However, Hiram's name was mentioned in an obituary of one of his nephews. This helps us connect his nephew into the larger family. The obituary will be shown later.

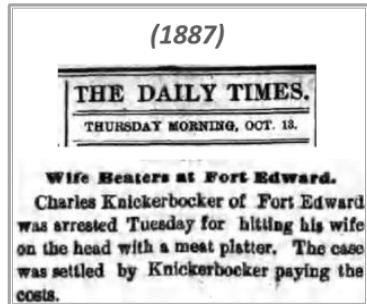
### 3. Fred Knickerbocker

Fred Knickerbocker was the son of Seymour. (He was a different person than Fred Newell, who was mistakenly called "Knickerbocker" in the 1880 census.)

#### 4. Charles Knickerbocker

Charles Knickerbocker, the son of Seymour, was at the center of the chaos within the Knickerbocker family in Fort Edward.

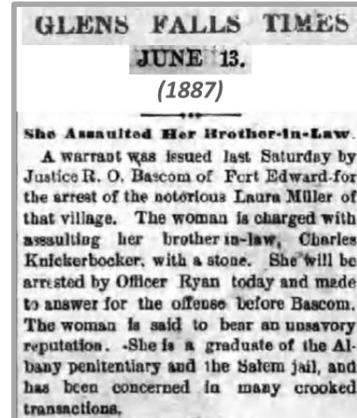
Charles Knickerbocker led a complicated life. Charles may have been an alcoholic. For example, he was jailed for public intoxication at least once, and died when he fell off an embankment while drunk.



Charles was once arrested for hitting his first wife, Sarah.

Charles did not get along with his sister in law, Laura Willer. Charles and Laura were involved in several accusations of assault.

Notice that Laura Willer was described as "notorious." We will discuss the Willer family in the next section.



Charles and his first wife, Sarah, had 6 children together. The children will be mentioned later.

Charles divorced his first wife, Sarah, in about 1890. He then married his second wife, Luella Baker McDonald.

Luella and Charles had 4 children together. The children will be mentioned later.

Shown here is one of the newspaper stories about the death of Charles Knickerbocker.

Charles fell to his death, while drunk.

This wasn't an obituary, in the traditional sense. The story is focused on the unusual circumstances of Charles' death.

It appears that the person who wrote this newspaper story was not a close relative or a near neighbor.

(The story ignored Charles' 1st wife, Sarah, who lived about 2 blocks away. The story also ignored Charles' 80 year old father, Seymour, who also lived nearby. Instead, the story refers to Seymour as being one of Charles' brothers. Nobody who lived nearby, and knew the family, would have mistaken an 80 year old man for the brother of Charles.)

**GLENS FALLS MORNING STAR WEDNESDAY, JUNE 19, 1901.**

**Body of Charles Knickerbocker Found Near the Point at Fort Edward.**

The body of Charles Knickerbocker, a well known resident of Fort Edward, was found in the river near Dead Man's point by Joseph Caher and James Whalen, rivermen, between eleven and twelve o'clock yesterday. The body lay face downward across some logs at the foot of the cliff, his head and arms in the water. The supposition is that he walked off the cliff, which is about seventy-five feet high. His skull was fractured and face bruised. Knickerbocker was about the streets during Monday night, and was known to have started for home

shortly before midnight. He lived on River street, a few hundred feet from the place where he met his death. He probably wandered past his house and lost his way. He was forty-nine years of age, and leaves a wife and six children. He is also survived by four brothers, James, Seymour and Fred, of Fort Edward, and Hiram, of Warrensburg. A sister, Mrs. Plumb, of Bolton, is living. The funeral will be held from the house this afternoon at two o'clock. Coroner Pattee took charge of the case, and after investigating decided that death was accidental.

## 5. George Knickerbocker, the brother of Charles

Charles Knickerbocker had a brother named George who born about 1869. George is hard to trace after 1880. However, he is probably the George Knickerbocker mentioned in a court record that is discussed later.

## 6. Sarah Willer, the first wife of Charles Knickerbocker

Now we come to the most colorful part of this story. It hinges around the family of Sarah (Willer) Knickerbocker.

Sarah (Willer) Knickerbocker led an extremely complex life.

Shown here is the listing for the family of Charles and Sarah Knickerbocker, as of the 1880 census:

1880 Census (Fort Edward)			
Knickerbocker, Charles W. M. 27	Wife	Knickerbocker	Charles
Sarah W. F. 29	Wife	Sarah	Wife
Fredrik W. M. 10	Son	Frederick	Son
William W. M. 7	Son	William	Son
Charles W. M. 2	Son	Charles	Son
Josie W. F. Jr.	Daughter	Josie	Daughter

The person named Fred was called "son." It should say "stepson." This was Fred Newell, who may have been an illegitimate child, as such things used to be called. Fred Newell shows up in many census records and newspaper stories. During his adult life, Fred always called himself "Newell" instead of "Knickerbocker."

Here is a list of all of Sarah's children:

### Partners / Spouses of Sarah Willer

#### 1. Relationship with an unidentified man named Newell in about 1870

Child:

Fred Newell (1870-1949) m Mary Sennett

#### 2. Marriage to Charles Knickerbocker (1852-1901); married about 1876

Children:

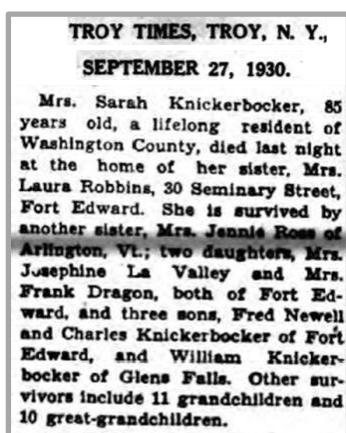
William Henry Knickerbocker (1874-1945) m Gertrude (mnu)  
Charles Knickerbocker (1877-) never married??

Josephine Knickerbocker (1879-1931) m Joseph LaValley

Seymour Knickerbocker (1881-1892) never married

Jennie Knickerbocker (1884-1917) m Carl Ritter

Abbie Knickerbocker (1886-) m Frank Dragon

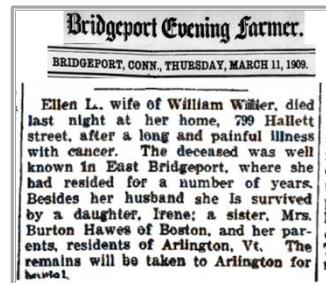
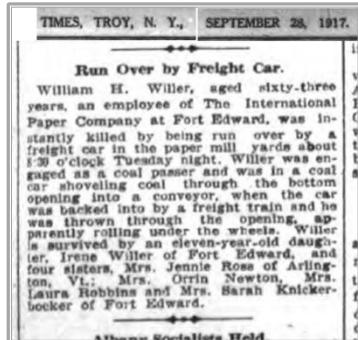


Shown here is Sarah's obituary, which mentions her sisters Mrs. Laura Robbins and Mrs. Jennie Ross.

## William Willer (1854-1917), brother of Sarah (Willer) Knickerbocker

Sarah Knickerbocker had a brother named William Willer. William and his daughter Irene are one of the clues that help prove the connection between the Knickerbockers and Willers.

William Willer's wife Ellen died in Connecticut in 1909. Her obituary mentioned William and their daughter, Irene.

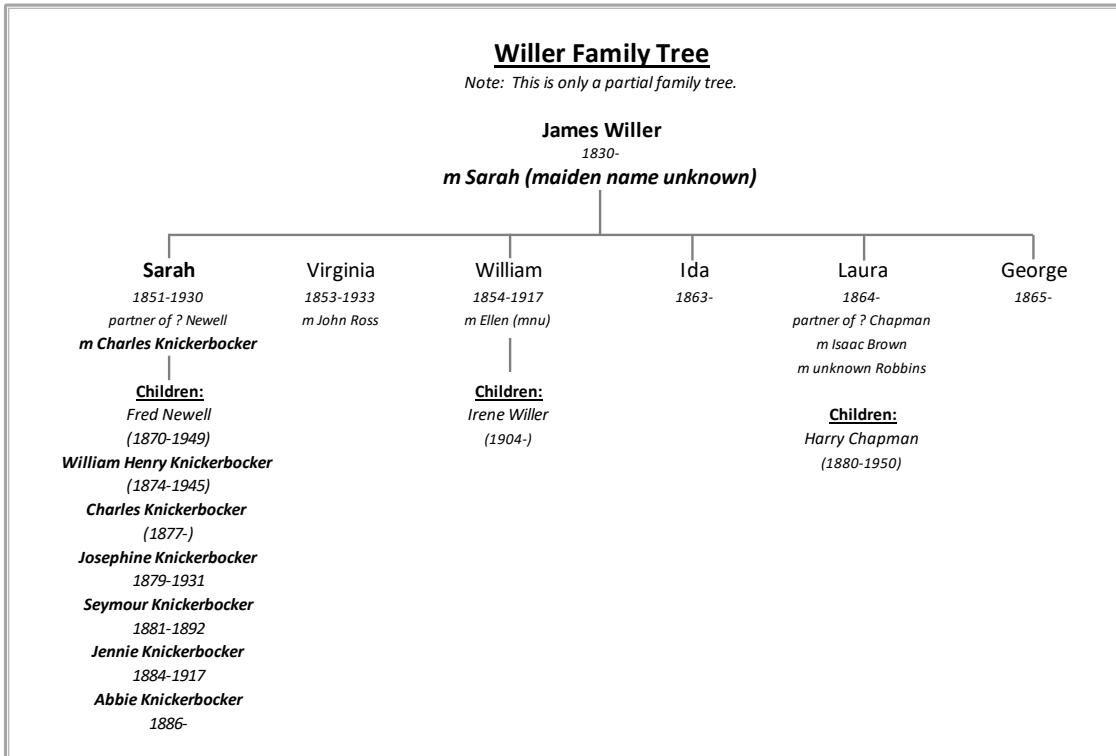


William Willer died in Fort Edward in 1917. His obituary mentioned his sisters, including Mrs. Sarah Knickerbocker and Laura Robbins. William's daughter Irene was also mentioned.

We know from an 1886 Fort Edward directory that a woman named Sarah Willer was listed as being the widow of James. She was living with Laura Willer near the corner of Oak and McRea streets. This was Sarah Willer senior, the mother of Sarah Willer Knickerbocker.

1886	
232	FORT EDWARD
Willer Laura, bds McCrea n Oak	
Willer Sarah, widow James, h McCrea n Oak	

Given this partial family information, and census records, we can assemble a tree for the Willer family:



The Willer family of Fort Edward was described as "notorious" in several newspaper articles. This was because Laura Weller and her mother ran a "disorderly house." Today we would call this a house of ill repute.

Laura Willer and her mother were arrested several times. Most newspaper stories were vague regarding why the Willer women were called "notorious."

The following story, from 1886, provides some details about the Willer's house of ill repute.

*Glens Falls Daily Times, June 16, 1886*

<p><b>THE NOTORIOUS WILLERS.</b> The Willer women, Sarah and Laura, mother and daughter, were next placed upon trial, charged with keeping a disorderly house. A. H. Fursman, of Sandy Hill, was assigned to defend the prisoners. The first witness was in color as dark as the case is in character. Thomas Jackson testified that he had visited the Willer house once for an improper purpose, and John Conlin, of Fort Ann, also swore that he had been a frequent visitor there. He also gave the names of several young men who occasionally visited the house. Conlin admitted on cross examination that he had been in jail and tried for burglary. The witness swore that the whisky he stole at the time he committed a burglary was taken to the Willer house and</p> <p>drank by the women. They told him to steal it. The younger Willer woman had been at Tinney's place during the afternoon and turned a button so that the window could be raised and allow him to get into the saloon and get the liquor, which he did. He had never committed any crime until he got to keeping company with the woman. Joseph La Far followed, testifying that he had been intimate with the young Willer woman. She has a child and never was married, to his knowledge. Two more witnesses, Zacheus Howe and George Knickerbocker, were examined, their testimony being of the same character as that previously elicited. At 6 o'clock court adjourned to 9 this morning.</p>	<p>—The Willer women are two of the worst-looking characters that eye ever rested upon. The marks of sin and iniquity are so visible in their countenances that it is painful to look upon them and realize to what a depth of degradation women can fall. If young girls who are tempted to enter a career of sin could look upon these miserable specimens of humanity they would pause before compromising their good name. The younger of the trio is accompanied in court by a bright-looking boy about 7 years old, who should be taken from her by the authorities and placed in charge of some one who would give him a Christian home.</p>
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Laura Willer's son, referred to in this newspaper article, was Harry Chapman. Harry's birth father might have been Hiram Chapman.

After multiple legal problems, Laura Willer left town in around 1890.

She apparently lived for a brief time in Arlington, Vermont, which is about 30 miles southeast of Fort Edward.

Laura was married multiple times, and later returned to Fort Edward.

Sarah Knickerbocker and Laura Willer obviously had a close relationship. (As already shown, Sarah died at the home of her sister, Laura.)

There is no evidence that Sarah Knickerbocker was ever involved in the Willer family's "disorderly" business.

However, the stories about the Willer family give us some sense about the family environment when Sarah (Weller) Knickerbocker was growing up, and when Sarah was trying to raise her own family.

North White Creek, New York  
**THE COUNTY POST**  
FRIDAY, JULY 26, 1891.

Fort Edward.

—Isaac Brown of West Arlington, Vt., and Laura Willer of Sandgate, Vt., were united in the holy bonds of matrimony last Saturday evening by Rev. W. W. Cox, at the Methodist parsonage. Miss Willer was formerly a resident of this place.

## **7. Luella Baker, the second wife of Charles Knickerbocker**

Luella Baker was the second wife of Charles Knickerbocker. In the 1900 census, Charles and Luella were at 34 River Street.

We don't know much about Luella's personality. She was rarely mentioned much in local paper, either positively or negatively.

Luella Baker was married three times.

When Luella married Charles Knickerbocker, she was described as Miss Luella *Baker* even though she had already been married to James McDonald.

Later, when Luella married her third husband, she was called Luella *Knickerbocker* in the marriage record.

### **Husbands and Children of Luella Baker**

#### **1. James McDonald (1859- ); married about 1876**

Children who briefly lived with Charles Knickerbocker:  
Myra McDonald (1883-1940); multiple marriages  
Warren McDonald (1885-1944) m Daisy Prosser

#### **2. Charles Knickerbocker (1852-1901); married in 1893**

Children:  
Georgiana (1894-) m1 David Larner; m2 Stanley Peplowski  
Alice (1897-1987) m Howard Mosher  
Hiram (1899-1967) m1 Ethel Uhrig; m2 Ida (mnu)  
Clossen (1901-1965) m Anna Burns

#### **3. Alfred Johnson (1859-); married in 1913**

No children



One newspaper story about Luella is interesting. After Charles died, Luella sued the hotel owner for selling liquor to Charles.

Luella apparently thought she was in position to complain about someone selling alcohol to her husband.

Perhaps Luella did not have Charles's love of alcohol.

## 8. William Knickerbocker, the son of Charles

William Knickerbocker (1874-1945) was the son of Charles and Sarah Willer. William apparently never had any children. However, his obituary is useful to our story.

The obituary confirms that Fred Newell was a half-brother.

This obituary also confirms that William Knickerbocker (our person number 7) had nephews named Seymour and William Knickerbocker (persons number 15 and 17).

This obituary also mentions Irene Willier, and thus confirms the connection between the Knickerbocker and Willer families.

(Irene lived with William and Gertrude Knickerbocker for several years. It appears that William may have been appointed the guardian of Irene, after her father died.)

TIMES RECORD, TROY, N. Y.
<b>JUNE 15, 1945.</b>
<p><b>William Henry Knickerbocker.</b> Funeral services for William Henry Knickerbocker, 15 Warren Street, Hudson Falls, will be held tomorrow at 2 p.m. from the Potter Funeral Home, Glens Falls. Rev. Walter J. Benedict, pastor of Christ Methodist Church of Glens Falls, will officiate. Interment will be in the Glens Falls Cemetery. Mr. Knickerbocker is survived by his wife, Mrs. Gertrude Knickerbocker; one brother, Charles Knickerbocker of Hudson Falls; one half-brother, Fred Newell of Fort Edward; one sister, Mrs. Abbie Dragon of Fort Edward; two nephews, Seymour and William Knickerbocker of Fort Edward; one cousin, Miss Irene Weller of Hudson Falls.</p>

## 9. Charles Knickerbocker, Junior

Charles Junior was the son of Charles Senior and Sarah Weller. He lived with his mother for many years, and later lived with his brother William. Charles Junior apparently never married.

## 10. Josephine Knickerbocker

Josephine Knickerbocker was the daughter of Charles Knickerbocker and Sarah Willer.

During Josephine's early years, the household included her half-brother Fred Newell. (Fred was Sarah's son from an earlier, apparently illicit, relationship.)

Josephine was about 7 or 8 when her father assaulted her mother, and during the court cases involving the Willer's house of ill repute.

Marriage Date:	9 Aug 1905
Marriage Place:	Fort Edward, New York, USA
Certificate Number:	16400
Records Sharing:	Name
Certificate Number:	Josephine Knickerbocker Joseph LaValley

Joseph LaValley married Josephine Knickerbocker on August 9, 1905, when Josephine was about 25 years old.

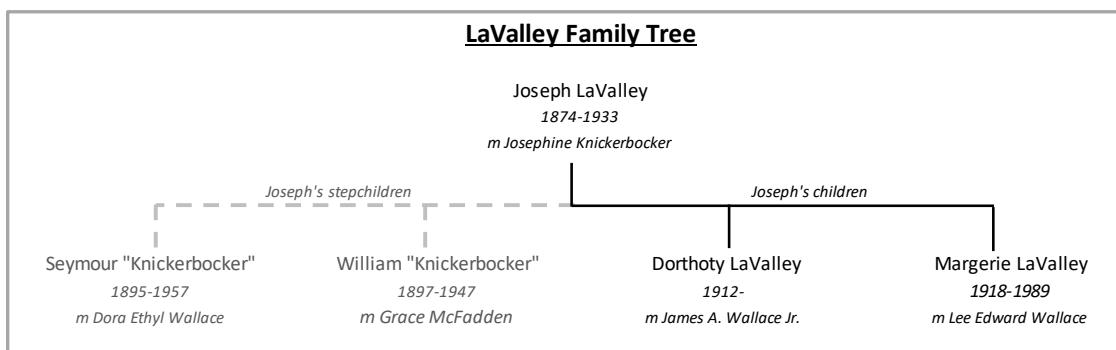
The 1910 census was the first to capture the family of Joseph and Josephine.

At this point, they had been married for 5 years.

Seymour and William Knickerbocker, ages 15 and 12, were shown as being stepchildren of Joseph.

1910 Census (Fort Edward)				
La Valley	Joseph	Head	36	
Knickerbocker	Josephine	Wife	30	
	Seymour	Stepson	15	
	William	Stepson	12	

Joseph and Josephine later had two children together.



The two stepchildren, Seymour and William Knickerbocker, will be discussed later.

## 11. Seymour Knickerbocker (b 1881), the son of Charles

Charles Knickerbocker and Sarah Weller had a son named Seymour.

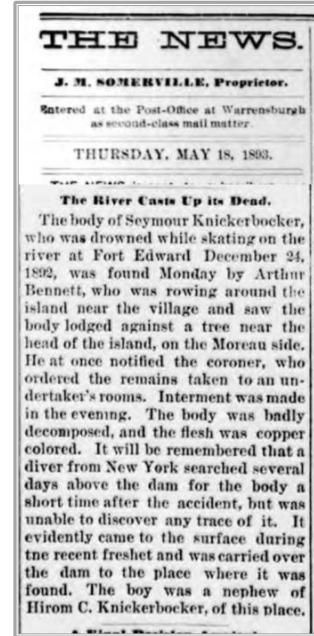
Seymour was living with his mother, Sarah, in the New York State census in the summer of 1892. This was Seymour's only appearance in the census. (The 1890 federal census records were lost in a fire.)

On Christmas Eve of 1892, Seymour fell through the ice while skating on the Hudson River.

Seymour's body wasn't found until May of 1893.

This was the little brother of Josephine Knickerbocker. His death, under such unfortunate circumstances, might be why Josephine named her first son "Seymour."

*(There is a mistake on Findagrave. Without showing any documentation, Findagrave claims that Seymour was a 1 year old when he died. Findagrave is wrong.)*



## 12. Jennie Knickerbocker

Jennie Knickerbocker was the daughter of Charles and Sarah.

Jennie married Carl Ritter in December, 1911. The wedding was at the home of her sister, Mrs. Frank Dragon.

Jennie died relatively young, in 1917, at the home of her mother Sarah. Her cause of death is not known.

Jennie's only role in this story is that she showed up in the 1902 directory that was shown earlier.

## 13. Abbie Knickerbocker

Alice "Abbie" Knickerbocker was the daughter of Charles and Sarah. She married Frank Dragon and lived a long life. There is no sign that the various family problems discussed here had much effect on Abbie.

## 14. Seymour Edward Knickerbocker (stepson of Joseph LaValley)

Seymour Edward Knickerbocker's first appearance was in the 1900 census. He was living in the household headed by his grandmother, Sarah.

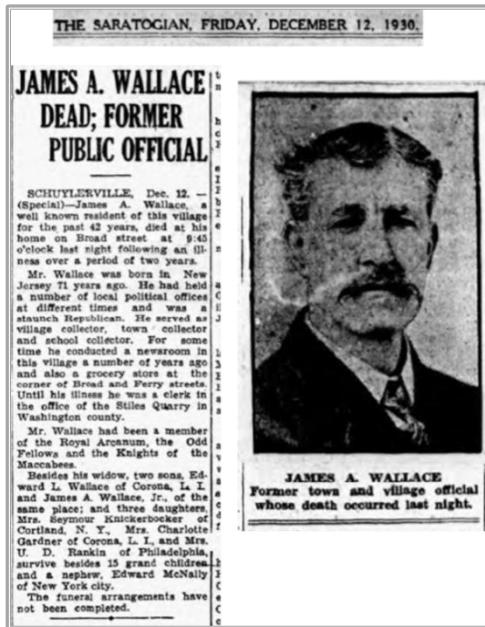
1900 Census (Fort Edward)						
Knickerbocker, Sarah	43 C 2 R	w	F	Sept 1850	49	m
— William H.	Son	w	m	Nov 1874	25	s
— Charles	Son	w	m	Oct 1877	22	s
— Josephine	Daughter	w	F	Jan 1880	20	s
— Seymour	Grand Son	w	m	Sept 1894	5	s
— William H.	Grand Son	w	m	Dec 1897	2	s

As already shown, Seymour later lived with his stepfather, Joseph LaValley.

In 1916, Seymour Edward Knickerbocker married Dorothy Wallace.

## Dorothy Wallace (wife of Seymour Edward Knickerbocker)

Seymour Knickerbocker's wife is easy to trace.

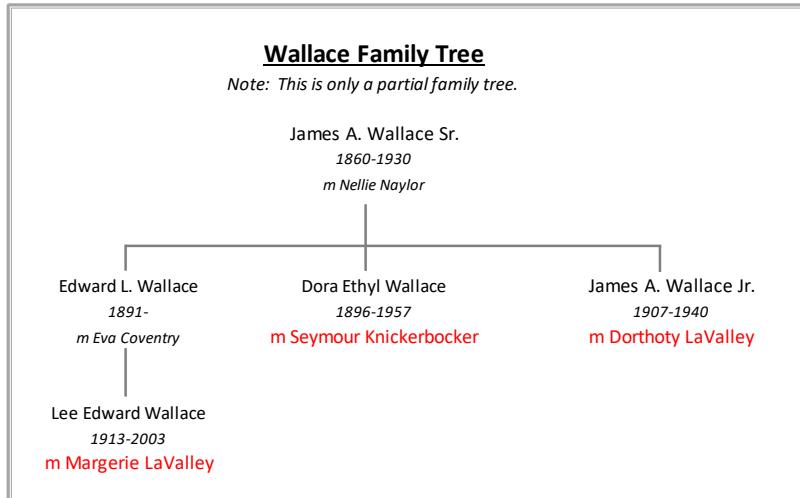


Here is a partial family tree for the Wallaces. Three spouses are highlighted: Seymour Knickerbocker, Dorothy LaValley, and Marjorie LaValley.

These spouses of the Wallaces are easily confirmed.

Dorothy (Wallace) Knickerbocker was the daughter of James A. Wallace Sr., who died in 1930.

The obituary mentions a daughter, Mrs. Seymour Knickerbocker of Cortland.



All three of these spouses were children or stepchildren of Joseph LaValley and his wife Josephine Knickerbocker. There was obviously a strong connection between the Wallace and

LaValley families. Seymour and Dora were married first. Their marriage may have sparked enough family interactions to lead to the other marriages.

### The Marriage License of Seymour Edward Knickerbocker

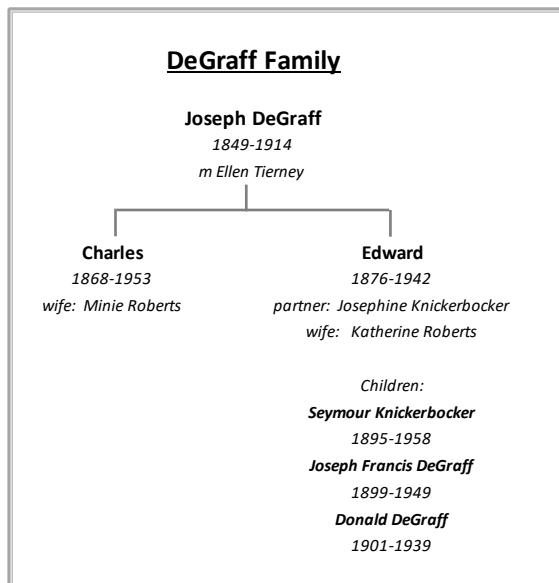
Seymour Knickerbocker was married on October 28, 1916. Here is the marriage license. This was presumably filled out by a county clerk, based on information provided by Seymour and his fiance, Dorothy:

60		Record of Marriages in	
3796		FOR THE GROOM	
..	Seymour Edward Knickerbocker	COLOR white	Dora Etta Wallace
E -	Fort Edward	AGE 21	Schuylerville
ON -	3rd hand paper mill	NO. OF MARRIAGE first	Glow maker
DE -	Fort Edward	WIDOWER	Fort Edward
..	Edward DeGraff	DIVORCED	James A. Wallace
DE -	U. S.	" WHEN	U. S.
..	Josephine Knickerbocker	" WHERE	Hellie Newell
DE -	U. S.	RELATION	U. S.
BY -			
GENE Oct 28, 1916. DATE OF MARRIAGE Oct 28, 1916. PLACE OF MARRIAGE Fort Edward		WITNESS Hubert J. Collier, Mrs. H. E. Ermer	
Bridegroom		OFFICIAL	

This shows Edward DeGraff as the biological father of Seymour "Knickerbocker."

In the Fort Edward vicinity, there is only one "Edward DeGraff" who could have been Seymour's father.

### Edward DeGraff, the Biological Father of Seymour Edward Knickerbocker



Shown here is a partial tree of the DeGraff family.

Seymour Knickerbocker has been included in this tree, based on the evidence shown above.

The DeGraff house was on Notre Dame Street, southeast of the paper mills. The DeGraff house was about a mile from the various Knickerbocker houses.

Seymour Edward Knickerbocker was born early in 1895. Edward DeGraff and Josephine Knickerbocker must have had a fling in about April of 1894, when Edward was about 18, and Josephine was about 15.



Edward's DeGraff's first wife was Kittie Roberts. They were married in 1899.

Edward DeGraff lived in Fort Edward, on Notre Dame Street, in the years between about 1900 and 1910. For example, a newspaper article reports on an accident involving Edward's son, Francis.

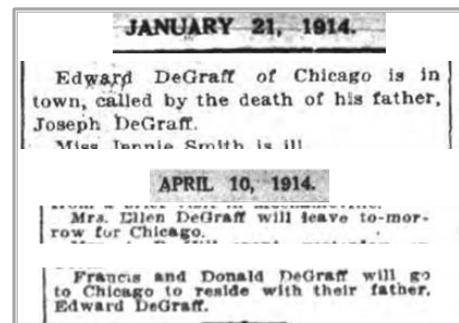
SEPTEMBER 3, 1904.  
Francis, aged five, son of Edward DeGraff, Notre Dame street, was badly burned yesterday while playing with a jack lantern.

By 1911, Edward and his family were living in Chicago.



In the spring of 1911, newspaper stories say that Edward's wife and children returned from Chicago on a visit to Fort Edward. His wife may have already known she was ill. Catherine (Roberts) DeGraff died in Fort Edward in the June of 1911.

Based on newspaper stories, it appears that Edward DeGraff visited Fort Edward periodically. This must have been especially true in the years 1911-1914. Edward's two sons apparently lived with their grandfather, in Fort Edward, during those 3 years.



It was years later, in 1916, when Seymour Knickerbocker told the county clerk that his father was Edward.

We have to take Seymour at his word: his biological father was Edward DeGraff. There is no other possible explanation for the information on the marriage license.

Later, in 1924, Seymour named his son Edward Seymour Knickerbocker. The name "Edward" could have been in honor of Dorothy's brother, Edward Wallace. However, the name "Edward" could also have been in honor of Seymour's father.

## 15. William Knickerbocker (stepson of Joseph LaValley)

We have already mentioned Joseph LaValley's stepson, William Knickerbocker.

The marriage record for William Knickerbocker was hard to find.

In reality, there is no record for a marriage for William under the last name Knickerbocker. Once again, we have somebody whose last name changed in at least one historic record.

Since there is no marriage record for William "Knickerbocker," we need to search for his wife and work backwards.

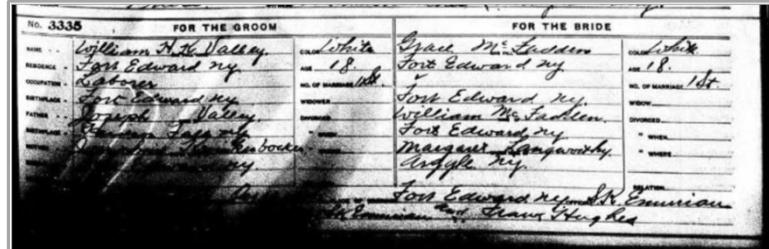
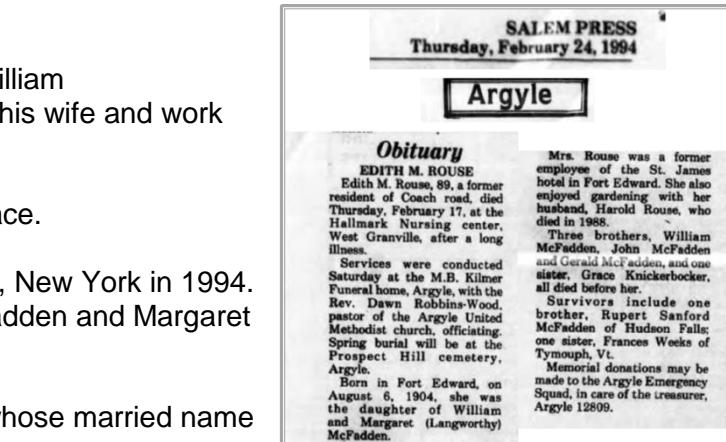
One of William's in-laws was easy to trace.

Edith (McFadden) Rouse died in Argyle, New York in 1994. Edith was the daughter of William McFadden and Margaret Langworthy.

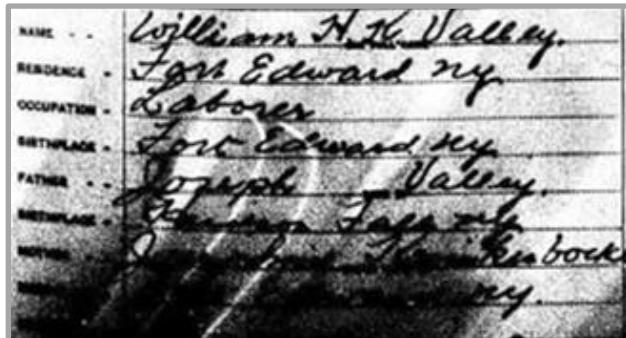
Edith (McFadden) Rouse had a sister whose married name Grace Knickerbocker.

Shown here is the marriage record for Grace McFadden, the daughter of William McFadden and Margaret Langworthy of Fort Edward.

The date is obscured here, but shows up in other records as being October 10, 1916.



The groom's side of the above image is not very clear. Here is the key section, magnified:



The groom, William, described himself as "William H K Valley."

The marriage license was probably filled out by a county clerk. The clerk wrote down what he was told by the bride and groom.

The name "William H K Valley" had to come from the groom.

This appears to be the only time William "Knickerbocker" identified himself as a "Valley."

On his marriage license, William stated that his father as Joseph Valley, and that his mother was Josephine Knickerbocker.

The math doesn't work. William Knickerbocker was born in about 1897. Joseph Valley married Josephine Knickerbocker in about 1903.

There are two possibilities:

1. Perhaps Joseph and Josephine had a fling, and conceived William, several years before they were married. They eventually decided that marriage was the "right thing to do." In this case, Joseph LaValley really was the birth father of William Knickerbocker.

(or)
2. Perhaps Josephine had a fling with another man, and conceived William. Many years later William Knickerbocker chose not to acknowledge his biological father, and declared himself to be William H K Valley, just for a day.

In the end: We might never know the actual biological father of William Knickerbocker.

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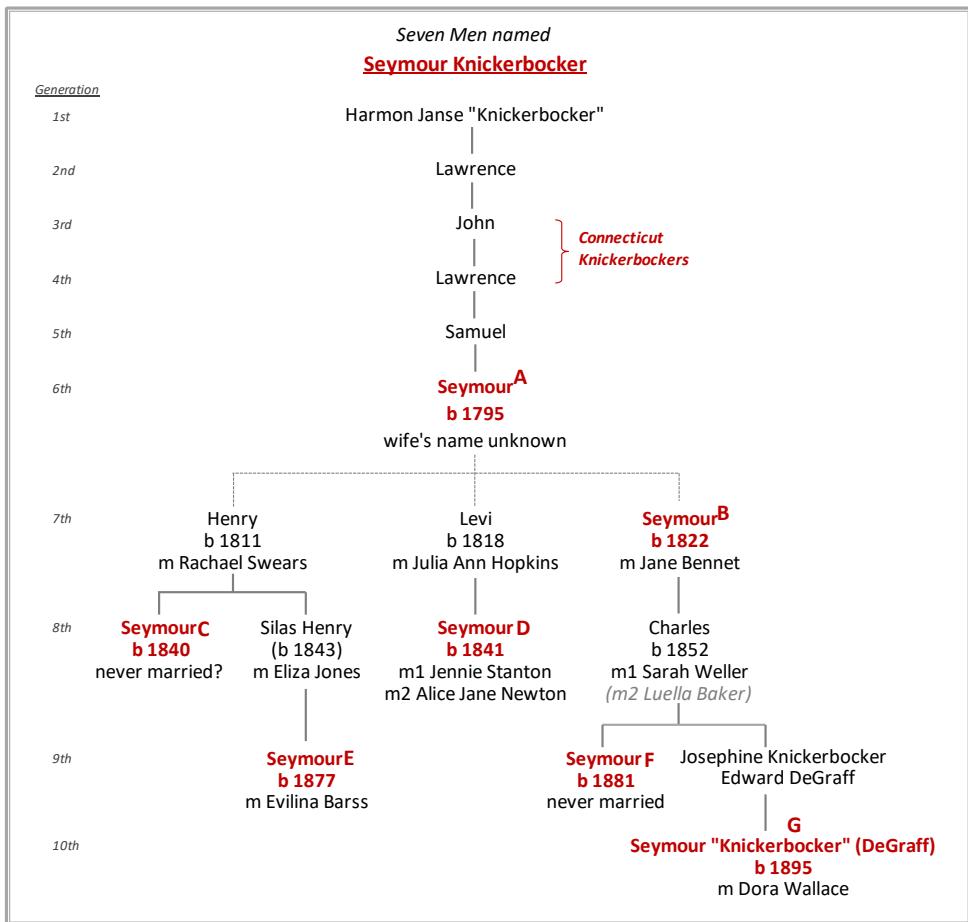
### **Postscript**

*My ancestors have been in Cortland County New York since the early 1800's. Thus, I have always been interested in the history of Cortland County.*

*Before arriving in Cortland, my Knickerbocker ancestors lived in Connecticut. Thus, I am also interested in the Knickerbocker families of Connecticut.*

*The name "Seymour Knickerbocker" is connected to both Cortland New York, and to Connecticut.*

*"Seymour Knickerbocker" was a very unusual name. I have only ever identified seven men who went by that name. It appears that all seven "Seymour Knickerbockers" had roots in Connecticut.*



*By a strange coincidence, two of the Seymour Knickerbockers (D and G) spent time in Cortland, New York*

*This report discussed the three Seymour Knickerbockers who had ties to Fort Edward (B, F, and G). I didn't plan on writing a long report, but I couldn't resist the complex & colorful nature of this story. Now, though, I plan to go back to the broader studies.*

*I do not plan to do any more research related to other Knickerbockers in the Fort Edward area.*

*Bryan Knickerbocker*