

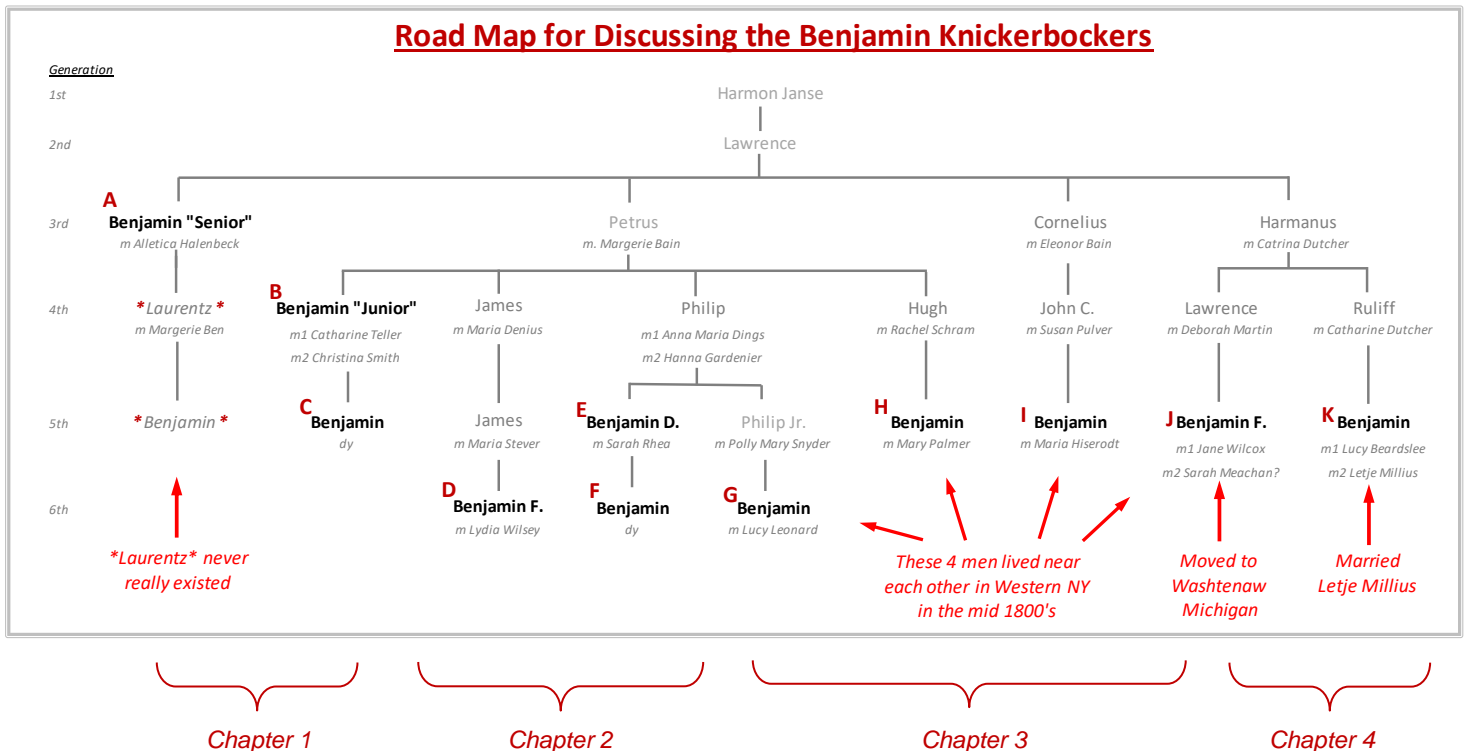
# Many Benjamin Knickerbockers: 2021 Update

Bryan Knickerbocker  
12 July 2021

"Benjamin Knickerbocker" was a popular name among the early Knickerbocker families. This document attempts to track the lives of the various Benjamins.

Knickerbocker genealogy is sometimes difficult. For example, consider the following partial family tree, which contains twelve Benjamin Knickerbockers.

In this tree the various Benjamins have been identified using the letters from **A** to **K**. This report will discuss each of these men.



The four chapters can stand alone. For example, if you only care about the Benjamin who married Lettie Millius, you might read the overview section and then go directly to the last chapter.

Please note that this is not a beginner's guide to Knickerbocker genealogy. The starting point for all studies of the Knickerbockers should be William Van Alstyne's series in NYGB&R. "The Knickerbocker Family" by William Van Alstyne is easily found using Google.

## Overview

This project started because I was very confused about men named Benjamin Knickerbocker.

Ten years ago I created a “simple” spreadsheet to help sort through the various records. The spreadsheet became a monster.

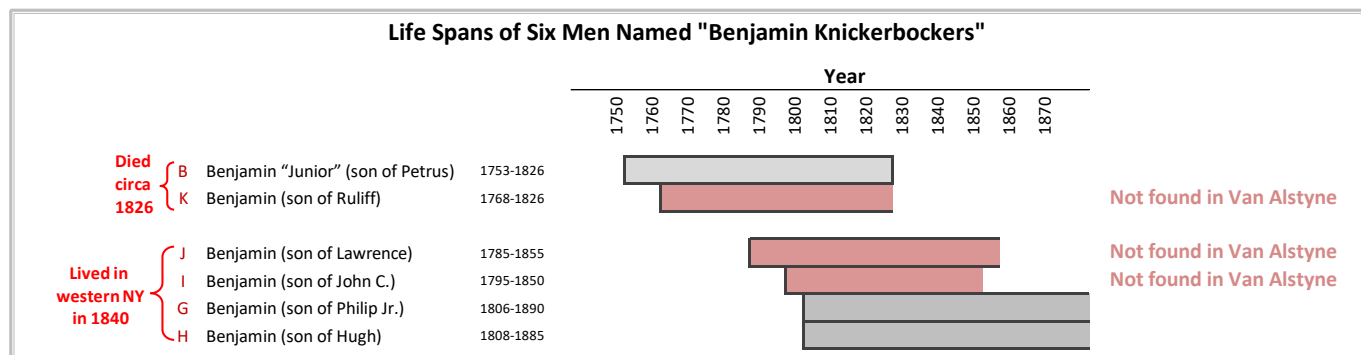
Five years ago I tried to finish this project by writing a report called “Many Benjamin Knickerbockers.” I should never have released that report. There were too many loose threads, and too many mistakes.

A lot has changed in the last five years. For example, additional information has been found at the Albany Library and on microfilms from FamilySearch.

This newly found information clarified the existence of additional Benjamins. The life stories of Benjamin (son of John) and for Benjamin (son of Ruliff) helped complete the puzzle.

The worst difficulties in tracing “Benjamin Knickerbocker” hinge on six men. The confusion is a result of doubts about when they lived, and also a result of doubts on where they lived.

The following graphic illustrates when six key Benjamin Knickerbockers were known to be alive.



The colors of the bars are important to our story. The gray bars are people who were mentioned at least briefly by Van Alstyne. The pink bars are people who were missed by Van Alstyne. (Van Alstyne did a wonderful job, but his work only scratched the surface.)

The three pink bars show Van Alstyne missed the sons of Ruliff, Lawrence, and John C. As we will see later, these three are crucial to the “Benjamin” puzzle.

For example, the top pink bar shows that Van Alstyne missed **L** Benjamin (son of Ruliff) whose life span was almost identical to **C** Benjamin Junior. We can improve on Van Alstyne’s work by recognizing the existence of both Benjamins, and by differentiating between them.

The confusion about the Benjamins is also based on where they lived.

The following table shows the locations where the six key Benjamin Knickerbockers lived.

<u>Examples of Places Where This Person Lived</u>	
<b>B</b> Benjamin "Junior" (son of Petrus)	Pine Plains
<b>K</b> Benjamin (son of Ruliff)	Amenia and North East
<b>J</b> Benjamin (son of Lawrence)	Amenia and Ontario Co NY and Yates Co NY, Washtenaw CO MI
<b>I</b> Benjamin (son of John C)	Pine Plains and Yates Co NY
<b>G</b> Benjamin (son of Philip Jr)	North East and Monroe Co NY
<b>H</b> Benjamin (son of Hugh)	Pine Plains and Monroe Co NY and Branch Co MI

Two of the six men were born in Amenias.

Five of the six once lived in Pine Plains or North East. (Pine Plains formally split off from North East in 1823.)

A major issue is that four of the six men eventually moved to western New York, to Monroe, Ontario, and/or Yates County. Van Alstyne missed two of the men in western New York: Benjamin (son of Lawrence), and Benjamin (son of John C). Again, we can improve on Van Alstyne's work by recognizing the existence of these extra men.

## Summary

The combination of overlapping lifespans, and overlapping geographies, is what makes the Benjamin story so complex.

After sorting through all the details, the bottom line is that:

- Benjamin (son of Ruliff) is the man who married **Lettie Millius**.
- Benjamin, (son of Lawrence) is the man who wound up in Italy, Yates County NY, and then in **Washtenaw County Michigan**.
- Benjamin (son of John C.) is the man who wound up in **Benton, Yates County NY**.

This document discusses many of the details. About 80% of the discussion is focused on the six men who led overlapping lives.

I have intentionally included details about each man, to the point where you might think that the individual stories are boring. However, when taken together, these stories show where each Benjamin fits.

## Road Map

Shown below is a list of the 12 men that we will trace. Each man is identified by a letter (**A** through **K**) and also by the name of his father.

		<u>Birth–Death</u>	<u>Spouse(s)</u>	<u>Last known location(s)</u>	
<b>A</b>	Benjamin (son of Lawrence)	1728 - 1806	Alletica Halenbeck	Pine Plains NY until his death in 1806	28
<b>B</b>	Benjamin “Junior” (son of Petrus)	1753-1826	1. Catharine Teefer 2. Christina Smith	Pine Plains NY until his death in 1826	79
<b>C</b>	Benjamin (son of Benjamin “Jr”)	1802 - 1808	None (died young)	Pine Plains NY until his death in 1808	293
<b>D</b>	Benjamin (son of James)	1831 - 1918	Maria Stever	Rensselaer Co NY until his death in 1918	702
<b>E</b>	Benjamin D. (son of Philip)	1783 - 1845	Sarah Rhea	Columbia Co NY until his death in 1845	171
<b>F</b>	Benjamin (son of Benjamin D.)	1802 - 1803	None (died young)	Columbia Co NY until his death 1803	292
<b>G</b>	Benjamin (son of Philip Jr)	1806 - 1890	Lucy Leanard	Parma, Monroe Co NY until his death in 1890	328
<b>H</b>	Benjamin (son of Hugh)	1808 -	1. Mary Palmer 2. Phebe Wilcox James	Riga, Monroe Co NY 1830 to 1857 then moved to Branch Co MI	348
<b>I</b>	Benjamin (son of John C.)	1795 -	Anna Maria Hiseradt	Benton, Yates Co NY in 1830 and 1835	241
<b>J</b>	Benjamin (son of Lawrence)	1785 -	1. Jane Wilcox 2. Sara Meacham?	Hopewell, Ontario Co NY in 1820 then Italy, Yates Co NY in 1845 then Washtenaw Co MI in 1850	182
<b>K</b>	Benjamin (son of Ruliff)	1768 -	1. Luc Beardslee 2. Lettie Millius	Dutchess Co NY in 1810	111

These men will be discussed one at a time.

Background information can be found in these older documents on knic.com:

- The Knickerbockers of Pine Plains, New York
- The Knickerbockers in Amenia, New York
- Hugh Knickerbocker and Rachel Schram

There is also a Knickerbocker Unified Tree available on Ancestry (for paid members). We also have a public tree, available for free. See knic.com for links to the public tree.

## **Background: The Sons of Lawrence Knickerbocker**

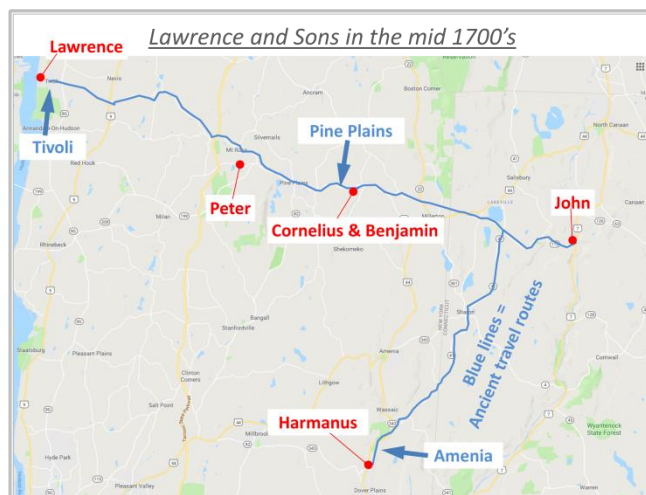
All of the early Benjamin Knickerbockers were descended from Lawrence Knickerbocker (1685-1766). Lawrence was the son of Harmen Janse “Knickerbocker.”

Lawrence and his five sons lived near today’s town of Tivoli NY in the early 1700’s. By the mid 1700’s Lawrence’s sons headed to the cheaper lands east of the Hudson.

This map shows the location of the five sons, as of the mid to late 1700’s. The five sons were within about 20 miles of each other.

The blue lines are the main travel routes. These were well-travelled roads, even in the 1700’s. We have many indications that the five brothers stayed in contact with each other through the 1700’s.

(By the early 1800’s, the next generation of Knickerbockers began joining the migrations to western New York. This was driven in part by the fact that Dutchess County was filling up and becoming expensive.)



Lawrence’s five sons are listed below. The order of the listings is based on their importance to our discussions of men named Benjamin Knickerbocker.

1. Benjamin Knickerbocker (1728-1806)
  - *Benjamin settled Pine Plains near what is now called the Knickerbocker Burial Ground. This was the first man ever called “Benjamin Knickerbocker.”*
2. Petrus Knickerbocker (1720-1783)
  - *Petrus / Peter settled near Mt. Ross, about 3 miles west of Pine Plains. Petrus / Peter had a son and many descendants named Benjamin.*
3. Harmanus Knickerbocker (1712-1805)
  - *Harmanus settled just south of Amenia. Harmanus had 2 grandsons named Benjamin. These two Benjamins led very complicated lives.*
4. Cornelius Knickerbocker (1722-1788)
  - *Cornelius settled in Pine Plains, across the road from his brother Benjamin. Cornelius had a grandson named Benjamin.*
5. John Knickerbocker (1710-1787)
  - *John settled in Salisbury, Connecticut. His family has been studied in great detail. The name Benjamin was not popular in this line. We will not mention this “John” or his descendants during the remainder of this report.*

## Chapter 1: Pine Plain, New York

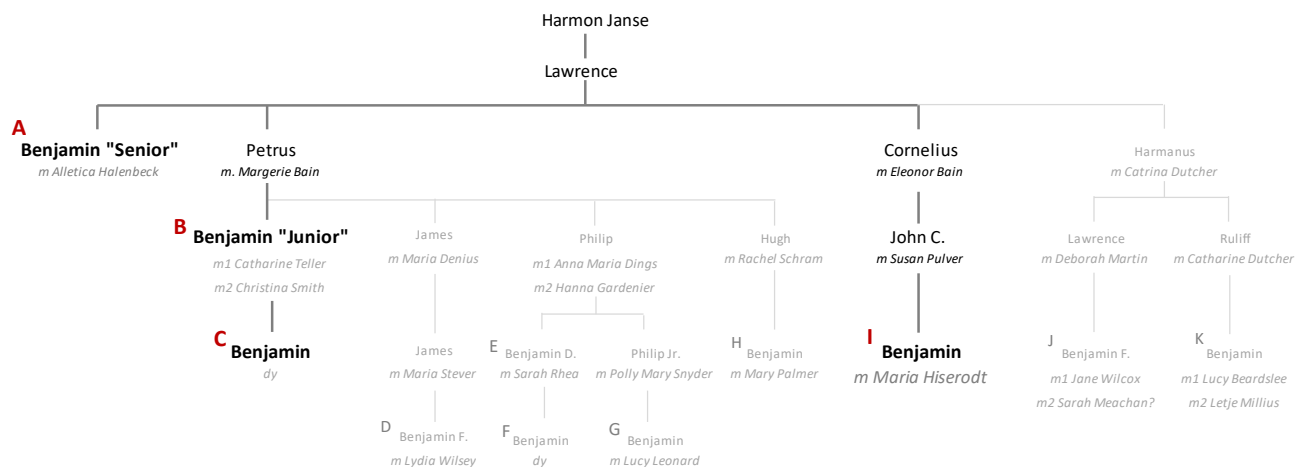
We will start by discussing four Benjamin Knickerbockers who lived near the Knickerbocker Burial Ground in Pine Plains. The burial ground is in the large township of Pine Plains, about 2 miles east of the village of Pine Plains.

Lawrence's son Cornelius owned the burial ground and the adjacent farm in the late 1700's. Lawrence's son Benjamin Senior owned a nearby farm, apparently across the road from the burial ground.



Four "Benjamin Knickerbockers" once lived within 200 yards of the burial ground: **A** Benjamin Senior (son of Lawrence), **B** Benjamin Junior (son of Petrus), **C** Benjamin (son of Junior), and **I** Benjamin (son of John). Three of the Benjamins (**A**, **B**, and **C**) were buried here.

### Benjamin Knickerbockers who lived near the Pine Plains Burial Ground



The next few pages discuss these four Benjamin Knickerbockers.

(Basic information can be found in the document "Knickerbockers of Pine Plains" but please note that the "Pine Plains" report was written several years ago, and is becoming outdated.)

## A. Benjamin Knickerbocker Senior, son of Lawrence

The first “Benjamin” was the son of Lawrence Knickerbocker and Maryke Dyckman.

Benjamin’s date of birth can be inferred from court records. In 1785, Benjamin Knickerbocker was a witness in a lawsuit related to the property lines of Livingston Manor.

Benjamin testified on October 10, 1785. He gave his age as 57 years, and stated that he was the son of Lawrence. (See *The Law Practice of Alexander Hamilton*, Volume 3.)

[Monday, October 10, 1785]	
Benjamin Knickerbocker } 57 years old	—His father was Lawrence Knickerbocker, never heard of a claim till M <sup>r</sup> Livingston began to build the Mills—sometime before the former trial; does not know how long.

This proves that Benjamin, son of Lawrence, was born sometime between October 11, 1727, and October 10, 1728.

Benjamin married Alletica Halenbeck. She was the daughter Samuel and Jannetje Halenbeck. She was baptized in Germantown in 1735. In 1789, Samuel Halenbeck’s will mentioned a daughter Alleteka, the wife of Benjamin Knickerbocker.

There are several church records for Benjamin and Alletica. We should point out that we are quoting from transcriptions, not the original ancient church records. The transcriptions quoted below were done by the Holland Society, and are considered to be reliable.

There are two church records documenting Benjamin’s membership in churches.

### Church Membership Records

#### Members

<b>Germantown</b>	1766	Benjamin Knickerbacker and wife Alletica Halenback	
<b>Red Hook</b>	Not specified	Lourenz Knickerbacker and wife Maryke Dyk	Benjamin’s parents
“”	“”	Jan Vosburgh and wife Cornelia Knickerbacker	Benjamin’s sister
“”	“”	Benjamin Knickerbacker and wife Aletta Halenback	
“”	“”	Peter Knickerbacker and wife Neeltje Freer	Benjamin’s uncle

The 1766 record from Germantown says Benjamin Knickerbacker and Alleteka Halenbeck, his wife, were accepted as members “upon confession.”

Baptism records show that Benjamin and Alleteka were the sponsors for five baptisms:

<b><u>Baptism Records</u></b>				
	<b><u>Child</u></b>	<b><u>Parents</u></b>	<b><u>Sponsors</u></b>	
<b><i>Germantown</i></b>				
1753	Benjamin	Laurentz Knickerbacker and Margerie Ben	<b>Benjamin Knickerbacker and Alleteka Halenbeck</b>	<i>Mystery (discussed later)</i>
<b><i>Linlithgo</i></b>				
1757	Cathrina	Cornelius Knickerbocker and Elenora Ben	“”	<i>Niece</i>
1758	Samuel	Cornelis Vosburg and Tytje Halenback	“”	<i>Nephew?</i>
1767	Laurentz	Wilhelm Van Alstyne and Cathrin Knickerbacker	“”	<i>Nephew</i>
<b><i>Red Church, Tivoli</i></b>				
1773	Benjamin	Pellataire Dewy and Elizabeth Gardiner	“”	<i>Neighbor?</i>

None of the church records show any children for Benjamin and Alletica.

Benjamin Knickerbocker died in 1805, and was buried in Pine Plains.

The cemetery is known as the Knickerbocker Burial Ground, even though it already existed when the Knickerbockers arrived.

The book *Old Tombstones of Dutchess County* (1928) shows this transcription of Benjamin's tombstone. The age on his tombstone (77 years, 4 months, 14 days) puts his birth in May, 1728. This fits with the court record shown earlier.

KNICKERBOCKER GROUND	
CLASSIFICATION:	Community ground.
LOCATION:	Two miles east of Pine Plains, on the south side of the road.
32. Knickerbocker, Benjamin, d. 1805, Sep. 28, a. 77-4-14.	

(The tombstone still exists, but the inscription is now fading. Many thanks to Melissa Stickles for all of her photographs in this cemetery.)



The tombstone of Alettica has never been found. It appears that Alettica remarried after Benjamin died. Her second husband might have been Gerardus Winans.



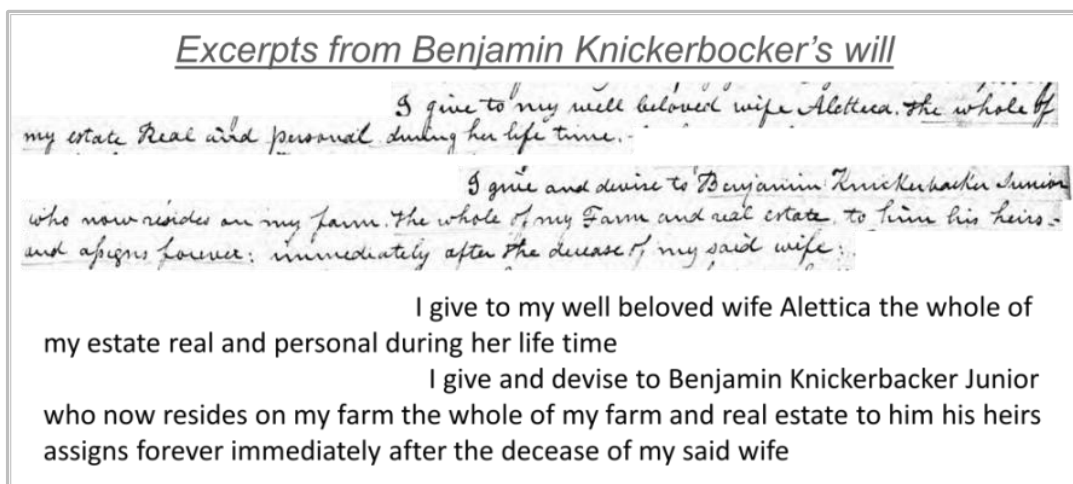
## The will of Benjamin Knickerbocker, Senior

We will discuss the will Benjamin Knickerbocker Senior, our person **A**.

Benjamin left a lengthy will, which is available on Ancestry.

Benjamin left most of his property to “my well beloved wife Alletica” for her life time. Unfortunately, though, this is the only time that Benjamin referred explicitly to any of his relatives. Benjamin never used the phrases “my son” or “my nephew” or “my godson.”

For our purposes, the most interesting part of the will involves Benjamin Junior.



The main beneficiary of the will was “Benjamin Knickerbocker Junior who now resides on my farm.” This wording seems odd. This would be an unusual way for a father to describe his son.

This language prompts an interesting question: What if Benjamin “Junior” was not the son of Benjamin Senior?

A similar situation was recently resolved for the will of Cornelius Knickerbocker of Amenia NY. Amateur genealogists had always assumed that the major beneficiary of Cornelius Knickerbocker must have been his son. It turned out to be Cornelius’s nephew.

(For details of the Amenia situation, see the report “Knickerbockers in Amenia.” The Amenia situation is also summarized later in this report.)

To analyze the will of Benjamin Senior, we need to consider the situation on the day the will was signed: April 11, 1803. Benjamin Senior was a wealthy man. There were seven other “Benjamin Knickerbockers” living nearby who might have wanted a piece of the pie:

<b><u>“Benjamin Knickerbockers” living near Benjamin Senior</u></b>		
	<b><u>Age in April 1803</u></b>	<b><u>Location in April 1803</u></b>
<b><u>Nephew?</u></b>		
<b>B</b> “Benjamin Junior who lives on my farm”	38	Pine Plains
<b><u>Grand Nephews</u></b>		
<b>K</b> Benjamin (son of Ruliff)	35	North East
<b>E</b> Benjamin D. (son of Philip)	20	Columbia Co.
<b>J</b> Benjamin (son of Lawrence)	18	Amenia
<b>I</b> Benjamin (son of John C.)	8	Pine Plains
<b>C</b> Benjamin (son of Benjamin “Jr”)	1	Pine Plains
<b><u>Great Grand Nephews</u></b>		
<b>F</b> Benjamin (son of Benjamin D.)	1	Columbia Co.

One of these Benjamins – the 35 year old – was a scoundrel, living in sin with another woman without having divorced his first wife. (See the later discussion for the son of Ruliff.) Benjamin Senior certainly didn’t want his estate go to a scoundrel.

Benjamin Senior could have used a variety of phrases to clarify the identity Benjamin Junior.

<b><u>Possible wording in Benjamin’s will</u></b>	<b><u>Interpretation?</u></b>
<i>My son</i>	<i>Perfectly clear</i>
<i>My nephew</i>	<i>Too vague</i>
<i>Who lives on my farm</i>	<i>Perfectly clear</i>

The wording had to be perfectly clear to the executors and the probate court. Benjamin Senior could have used the words “my son” but only if Junior was the son of Senior. In reality, the words “my son” do not appear anywhere in the will.

Benjamin Senior chose to use the description “Benjamin Junior who lives on my farm.” This description served its purpose, because it was perfectly clear for the executors of the will. Unfortunately, though, this description is less useful to genealogists.

I had always assumed that Junior was the son of Senior. My opinion changed because of the learnings from studying the wording of the wills of various Knickerbockers. I now believe that “Junior” was actually the nephew of “Senior.” As always ... I hope that new information can be found.

## **\*Benjamin\* son of \*Laurentz\* and his wife Margerie Ben**

This Benjamin Knickerbocker was supposedly the son of a man named “Laurentz Knickerbakker” and his wife “Margerie Ben.”

This story is messy. In the end, we will show why we don’t think the man “Laurentz Knickerbakker” ever existed. Instead, we think Benjamin was the son of Petrus Lawrentzen Knickerbacker and his wife Margerie Bain.

This mystery started because of baptism record from Germantown. This baptism from 1753 was the top row in a table shown earlier. The entry in the earlier table looked like this:

	<u>Child</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Sponsors</u>
1753	Benjamin	Laurentz Knickerbacker and Margerie Ben	Benjamin Knickerbacker and Alleteka Halebeck

The original ancient baptism record has apparently been lost, but we have two transcriptions. The transcriptions are consistent with each other, so we suspect that the transcriptions accurately reflect the original document.

The first transcription is from an 1887 book by Ada L. Smith, available on FamilySearch.

This shows that a Benjamin Knickerbocker was baptized on November 4, 1753. The parents were listed as Laurentz Knikkebacker and Margerie Ben.

1753 Novr. 4		
Children	Parents	Sponsors
Benjamin	Laurentz Knikkebacker Margerie Ben <i>BAIN</i>	Benjamin Knikkebacker Syn H. Vr. Letge Halenbeek

The sponsors were listed as Benjamin Knikkebacker and “Syn H. Vr Letge Halenbeek.” The entry *Syn H Vr* is very common in early Reformed Church records. In the late 1700’s the Reformed church used mixture of old German and old Dutch, with a smattering of English. *Syn H Vr* was short for something like *seine vrough*. This translates to *his wife*.

The second transcription of this baptism is from the Holland Society, circa 1900. This is probably the transcription that Van Alstyne saw. (Today it is available on Ancestry.)

Nov 4, 1753.  
Benjamin Laurentz Knikkebacker Benjamin Knikkebacker  
Margerie Ben and wife Letge Halenbeek

The only difference between the two transcriptions is that the Holland Society replaced “Syn H Vr” with “and wife.”

This baptism record is a mystery. The baptism was in 1753, so the father “Laurentz” must have been born before about 1733. However, years of Knickerbocker research have never identified any such Laurentz.

In addition, the history of the Bain family has been thoroughly researched by Bain descendants. There is no evidence of any Margerie Bain who married a Laurentz Knickerbocker.

### **Van Alstyne's Mistake**

This 1753 baptism is a mystery. This discussion was always going to be complicated. Unfortunately, William Van Alstyne made a total mess of things.

The NYGBR study by Van Alstyne reported the following:

This says that Benjamin and Aletteka were married in about 1732.

14. BENJAMIN<sup>s</sup> KNICKERBOCKER (Laurens,<sup>s</sup> Harmen Jansen<sup>i</sup>), m. about 1732, Aletteka Halenbeck.

Benjamin Knickerbocker and Aletta Halenbeck may have had a child:

· 41 i. Laurentz,<sup>s</sup> b. about 1733; m. Margerie Bain (Ben).

This also says that Benjamin and Alleteke appear to have had a child named Laurentz.

41. LAURENTZ<sup>s</sup> KNICKERBOCKER (Benjamin,<sup>s</sup> Laurens,<sup>s</sup> Herman Jansen<sup>i</sup>), b. about 1733; m. Margerie Bain (Ben). They appear to have had an only child:

i. Benjamin,<sup>s</sup> bap. 4 Nov., 1753, at Germantown, N. Y.; spon.: Benjamin Knickerbocker and Letge Halenbeck his wife.

In reality, Benjamin was only 5 years old in 1732. This is proven by the court testimony shown earlier.

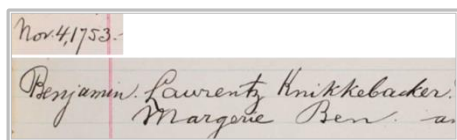
Alletica Halenbeck was born in 1735, three years after her supposed marriage. This is also proven. (On Ancestry, see her baptism record, which names her father. Then see her father's will, which specifically says that she was the wife of Benjamin Knickerbocker.)

Van Alstyne did a lot of good work, but this is completely off base. It seems bizarre that Van Alstyne would assume that the sponsors at this baptism were also the grandparents.

This may be the worst mistake in his entire NYGBR study. There is nothing in this baptism record that suggests that Benjamin and Aletta were the parents of "Laurentz" or that they were the grandparents of the newborn.

For the rest of this report, we will ignore Van Alstyne's mistake, and focus on actual records.

Regardless of Van Alsytne's mistake, this baptism record is troublesome.



This implies the existence of man named Laurentz Knickerbocker who was born before about 1733. He was apparently married to a woman named Margerie Ben.

There is no record of a Lawrence Knickerbocker who was married to a Margerie Ben.

The interesting thing is that Margerie Bain was a real person. Listed below are fifteen baptism records. In fourteen of these records, Margerie Bain was married to Peter Knickerbocker.

The 1753 baptism is the oddball.

<u>Church</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Child</u>	<u>Parents</u>	<u>Sponsors</u>	<u>Relationship</u>
Rhinebeck / Red Hook	1743	Maricka	Petterus Kneckebacker Meserin Ben	Cornelus Kneckebacker Jannetje Kneckebacker	Daughter
	1745	Philip	Petterus Knickerbacker Meseiri Ben	Adam Klom Elizabeth Ben	Son
	1745	Maricka	Johannes Kneckerbacker Jacameintge Free	Petterus Kneckebacker Meseri Penn	Niece
German- town	1747	Laurentz	Petrus Knickerbacker Megiri (no last name)	Johann Benn Catharine Knickerbacker	Son
	1749	Lisabeth	Petrus Knickerbacker Meserie (no last name)	Hugh Ben Lisabeth ditto	Daughter
The Flats	1751	Petrus	Pieter Knickerbacker Margieata Ben	Peter Vosburg Dorothea Vosburg	Son
German- town	<b>1753</b>	Benjamin	<b>Laurentz Knickerbacker Margerie Ben</b>	Benjamin Knickerbacker Legte Halenbeck	?
Gallatin (Mt Ross)	1755	James	Petrus Knickerbacker Mesere Ben	Peter Ben Hanna Lescher	Son
Linlithgo	1757	Majory	Petrus Knickerbacker Marjory Banes	James Ben Lisabeth Ben	Daughter
Gallatin (Mt Ross)	1759	John	Petrus Knickerbacker Masere Ben	Jacob Hermanss Catharine Vosburg	Son
Linlithgo	1761	Hugh	Petrus Knickerbacker Majory Benn	Pieter Ben Johanna Lesscher	Son
	1764	Hendrick	Johannes Dinkelback Cathrina Milius	Petrus Knickerbacker Majory Ben	Neighbor?
	1767	Marjory	Philip Knickerbacker Anna Maria Dinges	Petrus Knickerbacker Majory Ben	Granddaughter
Gallatin (Mt Ross)	1768	Margery	Adam Dings Marike Knickerbacker	Peter Knickerbacker Margery Ben	Granddaughter
Gallatin (Mt Ross)	1775	Majory	Hugh Ray Majory Knickerbacker	Peter Knickerbacker Marjory Ben	Granddaughter

*I have tried to duplicate the spelling from the Holland Society's transcriptions. The spellings are inconsistent. This is not surprising. The original records were written down over a 25 year span in the 1700's. Each church scribe used their own phonetic spelling. The records then degraded for many years before being transcribed.*

These church records prove that a woman named Margerie Bain was an active member of the Reformed Church. Margerie and her husband Peter had their children baptized in the church. Margerie and Peter were also sponsors for other baptisms.

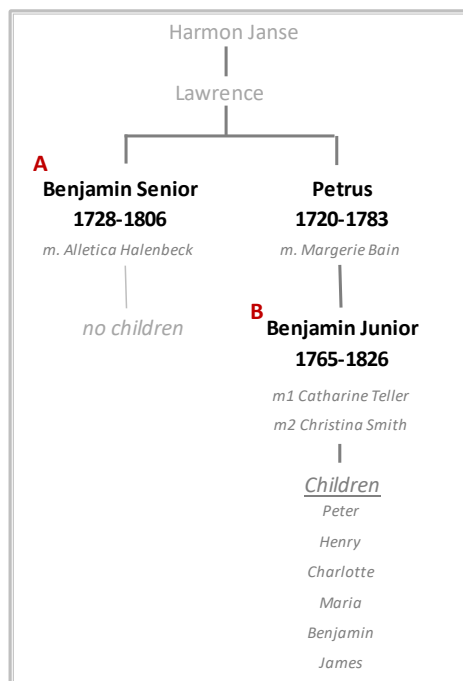
Margerie and Peter had a child about every two years, in 1743, '45, '47, '49, and '51. There just happened to be a gap in 1753, when the mysterious "Benjamin" was baptized. The pattern then resumed, with children in 1755, '57, '59, and '61.

The various church records do not show any evidence of another Marjory Bain who was alive at the same time, married to anybody named Knickerbocker.

Thus, we are stuck with an uncomfortable explanation.

It appears that the church scribe in 1753 made a mistake, and only wrote down only a partial name. The record keeper wrote down Lawrence Knickerbocker, but the father was actually Petrus Lawrenceesen Knickerbocker. ("Petrus Lawrenceesen Knickerbocker" would be classic Dutch shorthand for Petrus, the son of Lawrence Knickerbocker).

This is uncomfortable, but it ties all the puzzle pieces together.



The best available information, as of 2021, suggests that the Benjamin Knickerbocker who was baptized on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 1753, was the son of Petrus Knickerbocker and his wife Margerie Bain.

The baptism was sponsored by the newborn's uncle Benjamin Knickerbocker and his wife Alettie Halenback.

As we will show later, Benjamin "Junior" was born in early October, 1753. This matches very well with a baptism in early November, 1753.

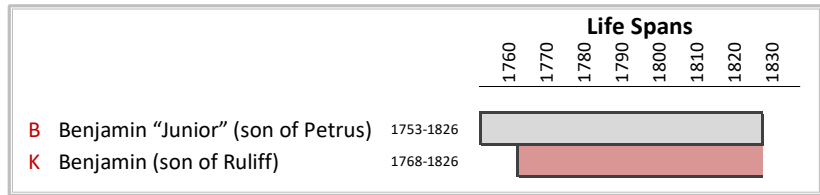
For the rest of this report we will assume that Benjamin "Junior" was the son of Petrus and Margerie.

The next section discusses the life of Benjamin Junior in more detail.

## B. Benjamin Knickerbocker “Junior”

In this section we will discuss key events in the life of **B** Benjamin Junior. We will show that Benjamin Junior led a well-documented life.

As mentioned on page 2, there were two Benjamins who lived almost identical lifespans. These men are misrepresented in many family trees.



There is no doubt that **B** Benjamin Junior and **K** Benjamin were two different men.

### Events in the life of Benjamin Junior

The events below are clearly documented in the historic record. This is only a small subset of Benjamin’s life, but it is enough to clarify the identities of his wife and children.

#### October 3, 1753: Benjamin was born

Benjamin’s tombstone tells us when he was born. (Thanks to Melissa Stickles for the photographs and transcriptions.)

*In Memory of  
Benjamin Knickerbocker  
who died Oct. 27, 1826  
Aged 73 years 24 days.*



Thus we know that Benjamin was born on either October 3<sup>rd</sup> or October 4<sup>th</sup>, 1753, depending on how the undertaker counted partial days.

#### November 4, 1753: Benjamin was baptized

This confusing baptism record has already been discussed in detail.



The baptism on November 4, 1753 was probably the person who later became known as Benjamin “Junior.” (He was the son of Petrus Lawrentzen Knickerbocker and his wife Margerie Bain.)

### **1791: Son Peter was born**

Benjamin had a son named Petrus who was born September 19, 1791, and baptized on October 16, 1791.

The baptism record tells us that Benjamin's first wife was Catherine Teefer.



Peter was the Benjamin's first known child. Benjamin was 38 years old when Peter was born. Catherine was 12 years younger. This fits the classic profile of a second marriage. However, no records of an earlier marriage have ever been found.

(The baptism records for Benjamin and Catherine's other children have not been found. The first born child might have been a girl, but it is still clear that Benjamin was quite old when he had his first child.)

### **1797: First wife Catherine Teefer died**

Catherine died in 1797, and was buried in the Knickerbocker Burial Ground.

The inscription says that the tombstone was dedicated by her son Peter B. Knickerbocker.



### **1799: Junior showed up in tax records**

New York State instituted a property tax in the late 1790's. The name list was alphabetized – to some extent – so it doesn't show exactly where people lived. 1799 is the first year where records are available.

John C. Knickerbocker, Benjamin Senior, and Benjamin Junior each paid taxes. John C. owned a valuable farm which he inherited from his father Cornelius. Benjamin Senior also owned a valuable farm. Benjamin Junior owned a house and a mill which were much less valuable.

Knickerbocker John C.	House & Farm	2595
Knickerbocker Benjamin Sr.	House & Mill	376
Knickerbocker Benjamin Jr.	House & Farm	3522

Tax records are also available for the years 1800 through 1803. John C, Benjamin and Benjamin Junior are shown in each year.



**1800: Junior showed up in the census**

Benjamin Junior was a head of household in 1800. He was in North East. (Pine Plains hadn't yet split off.)

Benjamin Knickerbocker	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	1	.	1	3
John C. Knickerbocker	3	1	1	.	1	1	.	2	1	.	.
Jonathan Sewell	2	.	.	1	.	3	1	.	1	.	.
Peter W. Pulver	2	1	.	1	.	3	.	1	1	.	.
Jacob Waters	1	.	.	1	.	.	.	1	.	.	.
Benjamin Knickerbocker Jun	3	.	.	1	.	1	1	.	1	.	.

The family compositions were:

	Males					Females					Other free persons
	Under 10	10-15	16-25	26-44	45+	Under 10	10-15	16-25	26-44	45+	
<i>Head of Household</i>											
<b>Benjamin Knickerbacker</b>	.	.	.	1	1	.	.	1	.	1	2
<b>John C. Knickerbacker</b>	3	1	1	.	1	1	.	2	1	1	.
<b>Benjamin Knickerbacker Jun</b>	2	.	.	1	.	1	1	.	1	.	.

Benjamin Senior had some extra persons in his household. At least some of these were slaves or freedmen. (They were mentioned in Benjamin's will.)

Benjamin Junior has two males under 10 and one male 26-44. (These would have been Peter, Henry, and Benjamin Junior). There is one female under 10, 1 female 10-15, and one female 26-44. The only slight issue is that Benjamin Junior was 47, but was recorded as under 45.

Notice that John C. Knickerbocker lived near the two Benjamins. John had several young males in his household. One of these was John's son Benjamin. Another was John's son Andris. They are discussed later.

**1802: Son Benjamin was born**

**C** Benjamin, the son of **B** Benjamin, was born in 1802. His mother was Christine Smith.

Benjamin — Benjamin Knickerbocker — Christine Smith — Parents of son  
18 July —

Christine was Benjamin's second wife.

**1804: Son James was born**

Son James was born in 1804. Again, the mother was Christine Smith.

James 18th Nov 1804 — Benjamin Knickerbocker — Christine Smith —  
Parents of son —

James must have died young.

### **1826: Benjamin died, and his will was proven**

Benjamin died on Oct. 27, 1826. (A picture of his tombstone was shown earlier.)

Benjamin's will was proved on November 26, 1826.

This will was very clearly worded. It mentioned wife Christina, sons Peter B. and Henry, and daughters Charlotte and Maria.

Benjamin left his real estate to his wife Christina for her lifetime, after which the land would pass to sons Peter and Henry.

### **1830: The family farm was sold**

In 1830, Christina and Henry sold their part of the Knickerbocker Farm of Benjamin Knickerbocker deceased.

In a separate transaction, Peter B. Knickerbocker sold his part of the farm. (Dutchess County, book 44, pages 266 and 268). Christina and Henry received \$3,000. Peter received \$3,500. This is consistent with Benjamin Junior inheriting a large farm from Senior.

### **Summary for B Benjamin Junior**

To summarize this section:

We have focused on a small set of records that span Benjamin Junior's life. The identities of Benjamin's wives and children are very clear.

Benjamin Junior is not the same person as Benjamin, son of Ruliff.

**B Benjamin Junior**  
**1765-1826**

m1 Catharine Teller

m2 Christina Smith

#### Children

Peter

Henry

Charlotte

Maria

Benjamin dy

James dy

## C. Benjamin Knickerbocker, 1802-1808, of Pine Plains

Benjamin Junior and his second wife, Christina Smith, had a son named Benjamin. He was baptized on September 11, 1802. (See the church discussion below.)

**C** Benjamin died in 1808 and was buried in the Knickerbocker Burial Ground in Pine Plains.

---

We will pause to discuss a church record from 1802. This illustrates why church records are so useful. This also illustrates the close connections between the various Knickerbocker families who lived near Pine Plains.

The Gallatin Dutch Reformed Church performed nine baptisms on September 11, 1802. The original record is shown here. The first column is the child. The second column is the parents. The third column is the sponsors.

On this particular day the church was full of Knickerbockers, as indicated by the red stars.

One of the baptisms was an infant named Benjamin Knickerbocker. The father was Benjamin D. Knickerbocker. The sponsor was Benjamin Knickerbocker Junior.

The good news is that some branches of the Knickerbocker family were regular church goers. Many of the church records still exist.

Child	Parents	Sponsors
Thomas 27 Aug	Jacob Patrick	Mo. Patrick
Peter 21 June	Gertruy Kilmer	Christine Gager
Benjamin 18.5 July	Peter G. Snyder	Johannes Dings
Hugh 12.2 July	Hannah Miller	Anna Mary Dings
Benjamin 12.2 July	Benjamin Knickerbocker	Christine Smith
Dolly 8 Aug	Hugh Knickerbocker	Rachel Schram
Isaac 16 July	Benjamin D. Knickerbocker	Sarah Rhea
Joanna 16 June	Philip Knickerbocker	Anna Maria Dings
James 24 June	James Knickerbocker	Christine Smith

It is also helpful that baptism records often included the maiden name of the mother. In this example, the parents column shows us that Benjamin Knickerbocker Junior was married to Christine Smith; Hugh Knickerbocker was married to Rachel Schram; and Benjamin D. Knickerbocker was married to Sarah Rhea. (If parents weren't married, the word "illegitimate" would appear.)

A warning: the sponsors column must be handled carefully because sponsors weren't necessarily married to each other. Even if the sponsors were married, the "Syn H V" or "his wife" labels were often left out. (Look carefully at the third column above. Benjamin Junior's wife Christine Smith does not have Syn HV next to her name. Neither does Philip Knickerbocker's wife Anna Maria Dings.)

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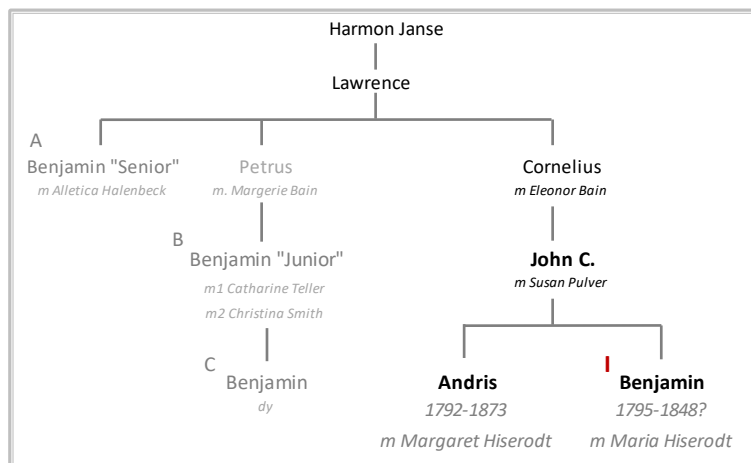
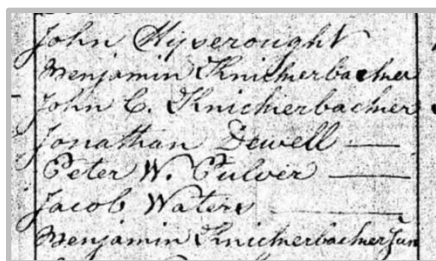
## I: Benjamin, son of John C.

Now we will discuss yet another Benjamin Knickerbocker who once lived near the Knickerbocker Burial Ground. This is Benjamin (son of John C).

In the paragraphs below we will briefly introduce Benjamin. The majority of his discussion is in Chapter 3, because this "Benjamin" was one of the four who moved to western New York.

John C. Knickerbocker was the son of Cornelius and the grandson of Lawrence. When Cornelius died, John inherited his father's land, including ownership of the burial ground.

John shows up in multiple records, including the 1800 census. John lived near Benjamin Senior. (John and Benjamin Senior were probably across the street from each other.) Nearby were other local families, including Hiserodts and Pulvers.



John and his wife Susan Pulver had a large family.

For today, we will only mention two of John's sons: Andris and Benjamin.

Andris Knickerbocker was interested in family history. Late in life, Andris reminisced about his life, and somebody took notes. This can be found on knic.com in *Knickerbockers of Pine Plains*, and also in *Michigan Bible Records and Genealogical Notes, Part 2* on Ancestry. Andris stated that he was born in Pine Plains, and that John and Susan had six sons: "Peter, Cornelius, Andris (myself) Benjamin, Walter, and John."

In a separate document, Andris gave a statement while trying to clean up the messy probate process for his parents John and Susan. In 1845, Andris said that his brother Benjamin was residing in Yates County.

See Chapter 3 for a discussion of I Benjamin's life in western New York.

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### Isaac Hunting's *Little Nine Partners*

Isaac Hunting's book *Little Nine Partners* mentions the Knickerbocker family many times.

It is clear that Mr. Hunting's book was mostly based on oral histories that he gathered from his neighbors. It is obvious that Hunting never reviewed Dutch Reformed Church records. It also appears that Mr. Hunting didn't spend much time visiting the local cemeteries.

Mr. Hunting made surprising mistakes regarding the Knickerbockers. On the one hand Mr. Hunting could name the thirteen children of Hugh Knickerbocker and his wife Rachel. On the other hand, he was wrong about Rachel's maiden name ... which was readily available via church records.

Shown below is a sampling of Mr. Hunting's statements about the Knickerbockers, along with a reality check:

<u>Statements from Little Nine Partners</u>	<u>Commentary</u>
Lawrence had a son Peter who married Margaret Bain and settled near Mount Ross.	True
Peter had sons Philip, Lawrence, Peter, Benjamin, James, John, Hugh and daughters Elisabeth and Margaret.	True
Hugh, son of Peter, married Rachel <b>Stickle</b>	False One word is wrong. This should say "Schram" instead of "Stickle." See church records.
Hugh and his wife Rachel had sons, Peter, John, Valentine, Hugh, Frederick, Benjamin, William, Henry and daughters Elisabeth, Mary, Margaret, Nancy and Adaline, thirteen in all.	True
James, son of Peter, married Maria Dennis and are the <b>parents</b> of the late Jonas Knickerbocker of the village	False One word is wrong. This should say "grandparents" instead of "parents". (Jonas was the son of Peter D. Knickerbocker and Mericca Miller. See church records.)
Benjamin, son of Peter, had a son <b>Benjamin</b> who was the father of Henry B. Knickerbocker a successful farmer now living about three miles east of the village	False One word is wrong. This should say "Henry" instead of "Benjamin."

I had always assumed that Mr. Hunting knew that Peter and Margerie had a son Benjamin, who then also had a son Benjamin. Unfortunately I always thought that a different "Benjamin Junior" was the son of "Benjamin Senior". This threw me off track, because it meant there was yet another mysterious "Benjamin" floating around the Pine Plains area.

In retrospect: As illustrated by the examples above, Mr. Hunting was right about many things. Some of his mistakes could often be corrected by changing a single word.

In the last item above, Mr. Hunting's book could be corrected by changing a single word, and replacing the word "Benjamin" with the word "Henry".

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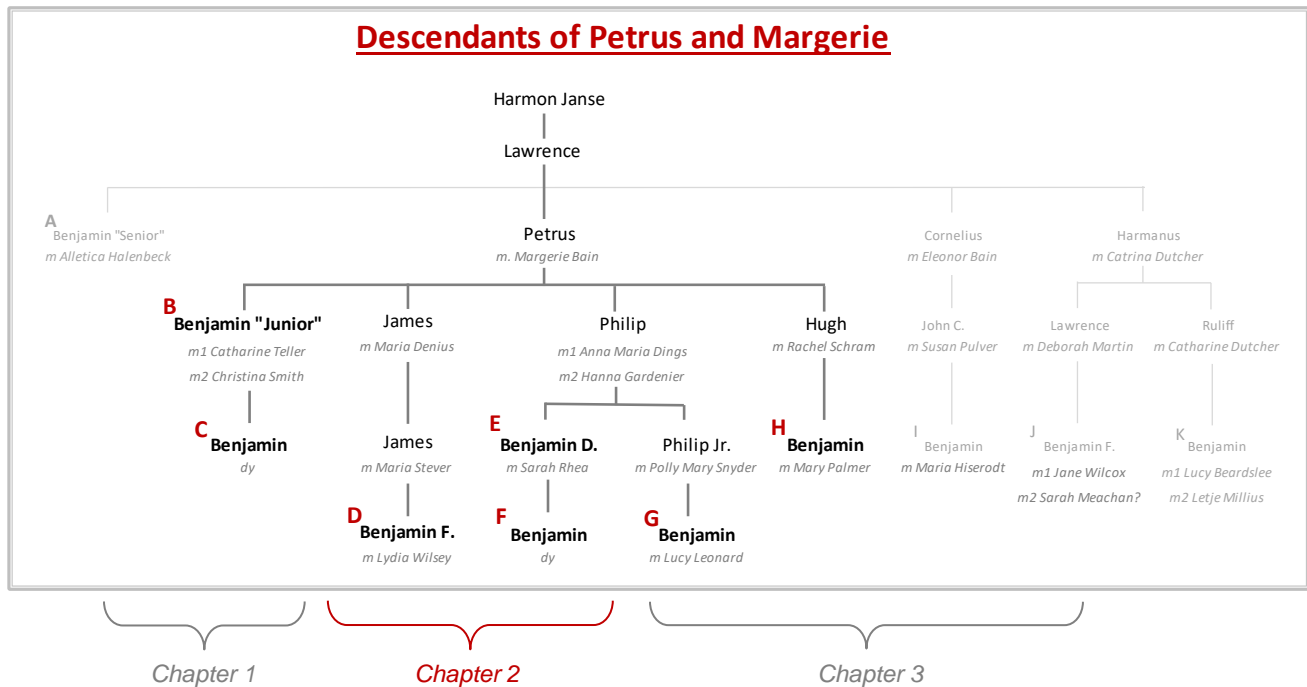
## **Chapter 2:** **Columbia County NY and Nearby Areas**

*Petrus Knickerbocker and his wife Margerie Bain had several descendants named Benjamin Knickerbocker.*

*While assembling this document, it was hard to come up with a logical sequence of discussions. The descendants of Petrus and Margerie wound up being split across three chapters.*

*Chapter 1 already mentioned Peter Knickerbocker and Margerie Bain many times. Parts of that discussion were complicated, and covered **B** Benjamin Junior and **C** Benjamin (son of Benjamin).*

*Chapter 2 is much simpler, dealing with the middle part of the tree. We will tell three simple stories: **D** Benjamin (son of James); **E** Benjamin (son of Philip), and **F** Benjamin (son of Benjamin). These three men stayed in the Columbia County area for their entire lives.*



*Peter and Margerie had other descendants who moved westward. In Chapter 3 we will discuss **G** Benjamin (son of Philip Jr) and **H** Benjamin (son of Hugh), who were part of the western migration.*



## D. Benjamin, son of James Knickerbocker and Maria Stever

Benjamin Knickerbocker (1821-1918) was the son of James Knickerbocker (1791-1849) and his wife Maria Stever.

This Benjamin is easy to trace.

In 1849, Benjamin purchased part of the estate of his father, James Knickerbocker, deceased. The deed mentions the dower rights of Maria Knickerbocker. (Columbia County land records, book ZZ, page 599.)

In the 1850 census, Benjamin was living with his mother in Copake, Columbia County.

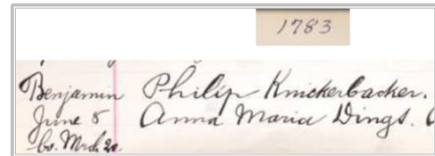
By the 1860 census, Benjamin was living with his wife Lydia [Wiltse] and a son named James.

**D** Benjamin (son of James) led a simple life and is not part of the complex puzzle that is discussed later.

## E. Benjamin, son of Philip Knickerbocker Senior

Benjamin D. Knickerbocker (1783-1845) was the son of Philip Knickerbocker and Anna Maria Dings.

The baptism record for Benjamin still exists.

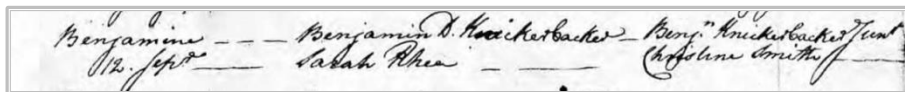


Benjamin married Sarah Ray, the daughter of Hue Ray. Benjamin and his wife Sarah had at least 11 children. There are many church records that still exist. **E** Benjamin is rarely confused with the other men, so we will not discuss him in any detail.

## F. Benjamin, son of Benjamin Knickerbocker and Sarah Ray

Benjamin Knickerbocker and his wife Sarah Ray Knickerbocker had a son named Benjamin, 1802-1803. Benjamin died young.

The baptism record for this Benjamin was shown earlier, as part of a discussion about church records. We will show this again, too:



The tombstone of **F** Benjamin was reported in *Gravestone Inscriptions of the Boston Corners Cemetery, Boston Corners, Union Cemetery, Ancram, Old Cemetery, Ancram, Vedder Church Cemetery, Gallatinville, Niver Cemetery, Craryville, Martindale Cemetery, Martindale : all in Columbia County, N. Y.* by Minnie Cohen (1939):

KNICKERBACKER, Benjamin D., April 25, 1845, 62-1-5

KNICKERBACKER, Sarah Rea, his wife, Jan. --, 1860, 76-7-18. (stone broken where date should be)

**KNICKERBACKER, Benjamin, son of Benjamin D., Sept. 16, 1803, 1 y. 4 d.**

## G. Benjamin, son of Philip Knickerbocker Junior

Benjamin, son of Philip Junior, led a simple life. He spent his entire adult life in Parma, Monroe County, New York.

Unfortunately there are many family trees on Ancestry that contain misinformation about this man.

We have shifted the detailed discussion of **G** Benjamin into Chapter 3.

## H. Benjamin, son of Hugh

This man also led a fairly simple life, again except for the fact that he moved to Western New York. He spent much of his adult life in Riga, Monroe County, New York.

We have also shifted the discussion of **H** Benjamin into Chapter 3.



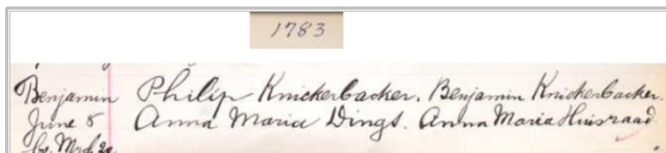
We will pause to discuss yet another confusing baptism record.

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### Who were the sponsors at this 1783 baptism?

Philip Knickerbocker was the son of Petrus Knickerbocker and Marjorie Bain. Philip was the brother of the man we are calling **B** Benjamin Junior. Philip's wife was Anna Maria Dings.

Philip's son **E** Benjamin was baptized in 1783. We already showed a cropped portion of this baptism record. Now we will focus on the sponsors: Benjamin Knickerbocker and Anna Maria Hiserodt.

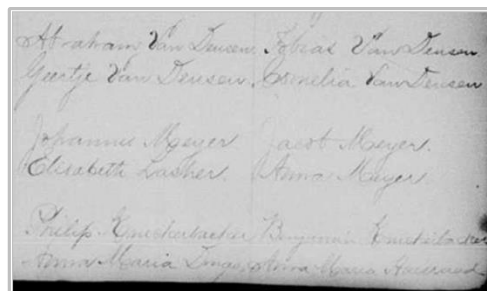


The male sponsor was probably **B** Benjamin, the brother of Philip. Benjamin was 30 years old in 1783, and as far as we know, he was not yet married.

The female sponsor Anna Maria Hiseradt was probably not Benjamin's wife. We base this on the style used by the specific church scribe in Linlithgo in 1783.

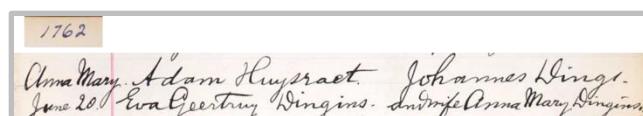
The best transcription of Linlithgo church records is from Ada Smith, and is available on FamilySearch. Here we are showing only a tiny part of the key pages.

During this time period, the church scribe did not write down the maiden names of the female sponsor. For example, in the excerpt to the right, the top two sponsoring couples share the same last name. This is true throughout this section of Linlithgo record: the vast majority of sponsors were shown with the same last name. This church scribe did not follow more common practice of showing the sponsor's maiden name with the "Syn H Vr" label.



In these pages of church records, Benjamin Knickerbocker and Anna Maria Hiserodt are the exception. They do not have the same last name. This suggests that they were not married.

Anna Maria Hiseradt might have been the niece of Anna Maria Dings. She might be this person, who was baptized in 1762 in Linlithgo. Her mother was Eva Dings. Notice that once again the scribe did not give the maiden name of the female sponsor.

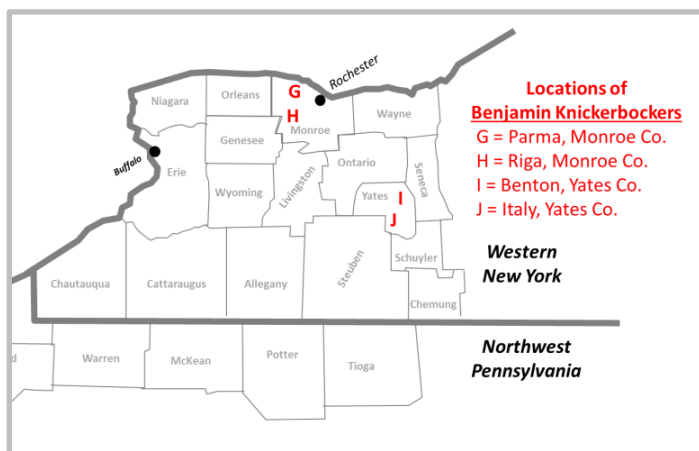
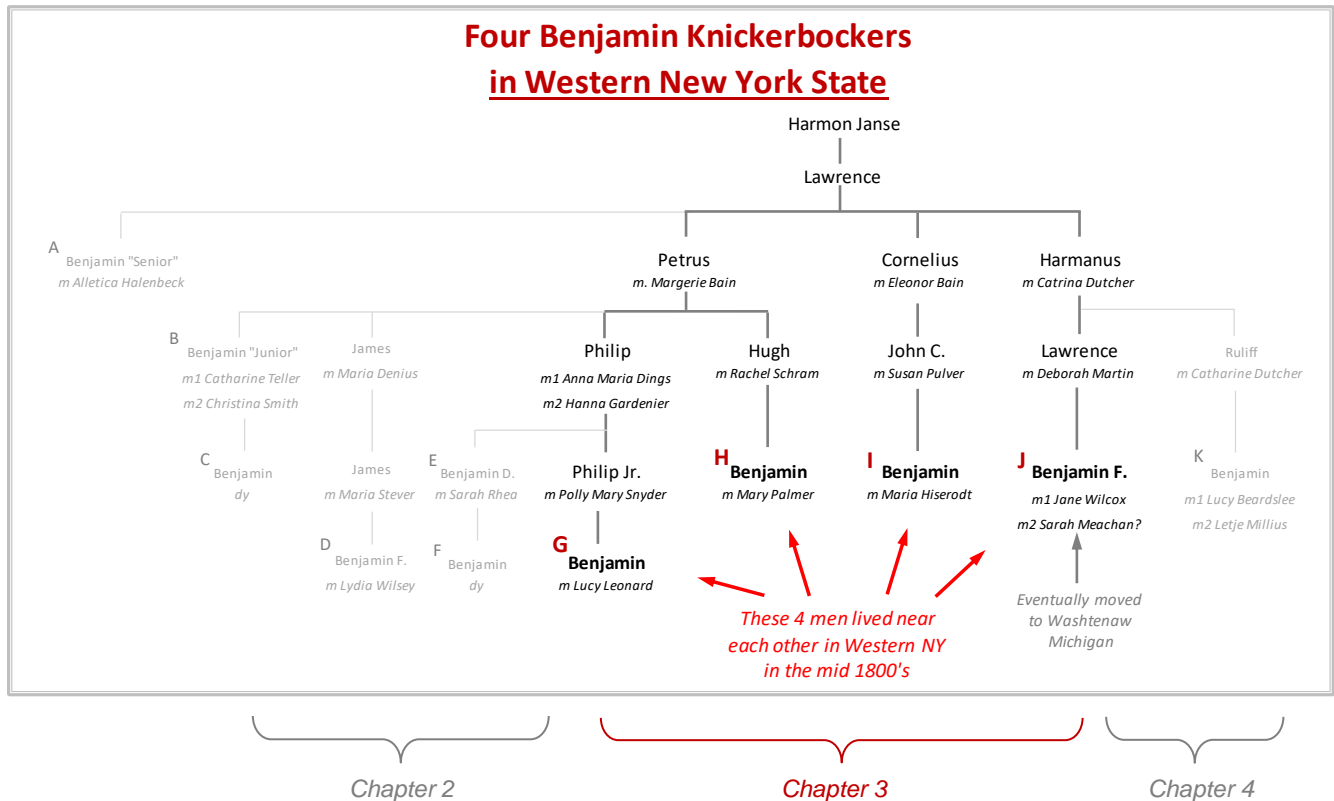


(Our ancestors kept re-using the same first names. This is a major issue. As discussed later, **I** Benjamin Knickerbocker of Pine Plains married a woman named Maria Hiserodt, who was also born in the 1790's. The Pine Plains couple "Benjamin Knickerbocker and Maria Hiserodt" were not even born when the baptism was witnessed by "Benjamin Knickerbocker and Anna Maria Hiserodt.")

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## Chapter 3: Western New York State

Now things get more complicated. The next 30 pages discuss the four Benjamin Knickerbockers who lived in western New York State in the mid 1800's.



Western New York had an abundance of cheap farm land during the early 1800's. This prompted a large westward migration. Among those who migrated were numerous Knickerbockers.

Apparently by coincidence, four "Benjamin Knickerbockers" wound up within about a 75 mile radius in the years around 1840.

As described later, we know exactly where each man lived.

Here are the census locations for these four Benjamins:

**Census Records for Benjamin Knickerbocker in Western NY State**

	1820 (US)	1830 (US)	1835 (NY)	1840 (US)	1845 (NY)	1850 (US)	1855 (NY)	1860 (US)	1865 (NY)	1870 (US)	1875 (NY)	1880 (US)
<b>G</b> son of Philip	Not HOH (age 14)	Parma, Monroe NY	census lost	Parma, Monroe NY	census lost	Parma, Monroe NY	Parma, Monroe NY	Parma, Monroe NY	Parma, Monroe NY	Parma, Monroe NY	Parma, Monroe NY	Parma, Monroe NY
<b>H</b> son of Hugh	Not HOH (age 12)	not found	census lost	Riga, Monroe NY	census lost	Riga, Monroe NY	Riga, Monroe NY	Coldwater, Branch MI	Was not in NYS	Algansee, Branch MI	Was not in NYS	Dead? (age 82)
<b>I</b> son of John	Wayne, Steuben Co, NY	Benton, Yates Co, NY	Benton, Yates Co, NY	not found	census lost	Dead or divorced? (age 55)						
<b>J</b> son of Lawrence	Gorham, Ontario Co, NY	not found	Italy, Yates Co, NY	not found	Italy, Yates Co, NY	Sylvan, Washtenaw Co, MI	Was not in NYS	Dead? (age 73)				

The yellow cells in this table represent important gaps in the data. As always, we hope that new data becomes available soon.

Person **G**, Benjamin (the son of Phillip) has a very simple story. His home was in Parma, Monroe County.

Person **H**, Benjamin (the son of Hugh) is next. His home was in Riga, Monroe County, until his first wife died. Benjamin and his son Frederick then moved to Branch County, Michigan.

Person **I**, Benjamin (the son of John) has a more complicated story. This is the Benjamin that wound up in Benton, Yates County.

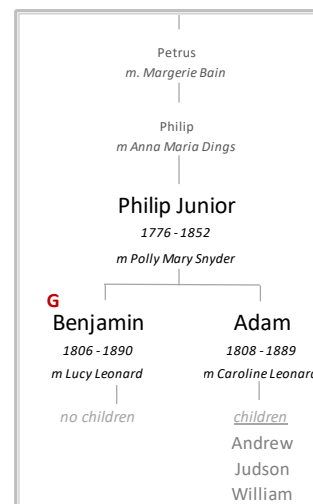
Finally we will discuss person **J**, Benjamin (son of Lawrence). He who lived in several different places, including the town of Italy in Yates County. He then moved to Washtenaw, Michigan.

## G. Benjamin, son of Philip Knickerbocker Junior

The Benjamin Knickerbocker who lived in Parma, New York, was the son of Philip Knickerbocker Junior and his wife Polly Mary Snyder.

We will devote two pages to this discussion. We need to show just enough information to prove Benjamin (son of Philip Junior) is not the man who wound up in Washtenaw, Michigan.

(There are many family trees on Ancestry and elsewhere that claim that this is the Benjamin Knickerbocker who went to Michigan. Those trees are incorrect.)



### Landmarks of Monroe County NY with Biography and Family History 1895

Knickerbocker, Benjamin, was born in Saratoga county and came to Parma in 1823. He was a cabinetmaker and painter, and started a chair factory at the Corners many years ago. His wife was Lucy A. Leonard, born in Saratoga county in 1808. Adam Knickerbocker was born in Dutchess county in 1808 and came to Parma in 1830. He was connected for many years with the old Gulf mill, being a miller by occupation. He died in Orleans county, August 4, 1889. His wife was Caroline Leonard, and their children were Andrew, Judson, and William, of whom only Judson survives. Adam Knickerbocker was, like his brother, an energetic and home-loving man, much respected by his townsmen. Judson Knickerbocker was born June 12, 1833. He was brought up to the mercantile business, and for thirty years was connected with a large dry goods house in Rochester, and occupied a like position in New York city eighteen years. In 1891 Judson became a resident of Parma, and for the past two years has been in business at the Corners. He was also appointed postmaster in 1894. He married Helen M. Howes, by whom he had three children: James H., an artist of the American Press Association of New York city; Carrie, wife of T. H. Patterson, of Austin, Pa.; and Frank, an employee of the Blue Line office in Rochester. Nathaniel Leonard was born in Newburgh, N. Y., in 1775, and his wife, Fanny, was born in Middletown, Conn., in 1784. They came to Parma in 1828, and both died in the town. Mr. Leonard in 1857 and his wife in 1869. Their children were Lucy Ann, Caroline, and William.

We will start this story using an excerpt from an 1895 history of Monroe County.

According to this biography:

- Benjamin and Adam were brothers, and were born in Saratoga County.
- Adam was born in 1808.
- Adam had a son named Andrew.

These old histories often contained mistakes. In this case, though, we can easily confirm the important details.

Census records confirm that Benjamin arrived in Parma before 1830, and was still there in every census through 1880.

Shown here are 2 key census records.

The first is from 1850, when Benjamin and Lucy were alone in a household. (It appears that they never had children)

The second is from 1875, when Benjamin's nephew Andrew was also in the household.

1850 Census, Parma, Monroe County, New York

Benjamin Knickerbocker	43	m		Painter
Lucy A. " "	41	f		

1875 NY Census, Parma, Monroe County, New York

Benjamin Knickerbocker	62	m		
Lucy Knickerbocker	67	f		do. do.
Andrew Knickerbocker	44	m		shipper

Land records confirm that Adam arrived sometime before 1837. (In 1837, Adam when bought land from Benjamin.)

Shown here is the 1850 census entry for Adam, who was 42 years old, showing that he was born about 1808. Adam's household in 1850 included Andrew. This is the same person who, in 1875, was living with his uncle Benjamin.

1850 Census, Gaines, Orleans County, New York

Adam Knickerbocker	42	m		J Miller
Caroline	36	f		
Andrew	15	m		
Judson	16	m		
Wm	14	m		

Thus, we can confirm that Adam and Benjamin were brothers.

An 1852 property owner's map, available on the Library of Congress website, shows that B Knickerbocker lived in Parma Center.

1855 NY Census:  
Parma, Monroe Co.

Benjamin Knickerbocker	49	m		Saratoga
------------------------	----	---	--	----------

Gaines, Orleans Co.

Adam Knickerbocker	42	m		Saratoga
--------------------	----	---	--	----------

Thanks to the 1855 New York State Census, we can also confirm that Adam and Benjamin were born in Saratoga County.

We know that Saratoga County was the base for the family of Philip Knickerbocker and his wife. For example, they were in the 1850 census in Saratoga County.

1850 Census, Saratoga Springs, Saratoga Co.

Philip Knickerbocker	77	m		J Farmer
Polly	67	f		

1808

Benjamin Knickerbocker	Philip Knickerbocker	Leticia Knickerbocker
Adam Knickerbocker	Philip Knickerbocker	Leticia Knickerbocker
Adam Knickerbocker	Philip Knickerbocker	Leticia Knickerbocker

Now we will go back to 1808, to show the baptism record for Adam Knickerbocker.

Adam was the son of Philip Knickerbocker Junior and Polly Snyder.

This above image is available on Ancestry, but there is an interesting twist. Due to a transcription error, Ancestry claims that this is the baptism record for Benjamin. Ancestry is wrong. This record is for Adam, born in 1808.

Nobody has found the church record for Benjamin, but, ironically, we'd rather have Adam's. "Benjamin Knickerbocker" was a common name, but "Adam Knickerbocker" was not.

To summarize: We have confirmed that Adam Knickerbocker and Benjamin Knickerbocker were brothers. We have also shown that their parents were Philip Knickerbocker Junior and Polly Snyder.

## H. Benjamin, son of Hugh Knickerbocker and Rachel Schram

The Benjamin Knickerbocker who lived in Riga, Monroe County, New York was the son of Hugh Knickerbocker and Rachel Schram. Details about Hugh's family can be found in the report "Hugh Knickerbocker and Rachel Schram."

We will devote two pages to this discussion. Once again, our objective here is to show just enough information to prove that Benjamin (son of Hugh) is not the man who wound up in Washtenaw, Michigan.

### Benjamin's Link to William Knickerbocker (son of Hugh and Rachel)

Hugh Knickerbocker and Rachel Schram had sons named Peter, John, Valentine, Hugh, Frederick, Benjamin, Henry, and William. Several of these boys left Dutchess County and moved to western New York State.

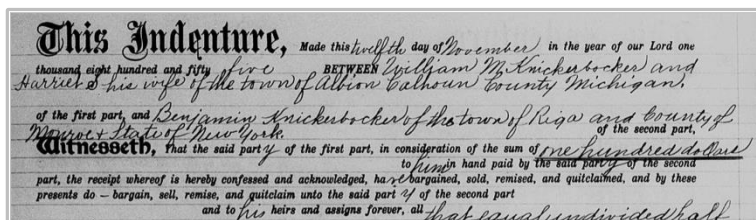
*History of Calhoun County Michigan,  
with Illustrations (1877)*

#### William M. Knickerbocker

The subject of this sketch claims his descent from the Pine Plains branch of the family, where he was born August 29, 1811, being the twelfth of a family of thirteen children. His father, Hugh Knickerbocker, was born July 30, 1761, and his mother, Rachel Schram, December 1, 1760.

One of the sons, William M. Knickerbocker, later moved to Calhoun County Michigan. William's mother Rachel joined him in Michigan sometime before the 1850 census. Biographies of William Knickerbocker can be found in two books, *History of Calhoun County Michigan* (1877), and *Portrait Biographical Album of Calhoun County Michigan* (1891). William's wife was named Harriet.

In November, 1855, William Knickerbocker and his wife Harriet sold land in Riga New York to Benjamin Knickerbocker of Riga, Monroe County, New York. (Monroe Co, 125, p 285.)



### Benjamin's Link to Henry Knickerbocker (son of Hugh and Rachel)

Hugh and Rachel had another son named Henry. Henry's life is not as well documented as William's, but Henry still plays a role in our story.

In 1833, Henry and William Knickerbocker bought land in Monroe County from Valentine Knickerbocker. In 1846, Henry Knickerbocker of Riga sold property to Benjamin Knickerbocker.

These deeds do not mention the relationships between Valentine, Henry, William, and Benjamin, but is hard to offer any explanation other than that these are four of the sons of Hugh Knickerbocker and Rachel Schram.



(Two of Hugh's other sons, John and Peter H., were nearby in western New York. See the report "Hugh Knickerbocker and Rachel Schram."

Benjamin was born in about 1807. Census records show a Benjamin Knickerbocker in Riga in 1840, 1850, and 1855. The 1855 census shows Dutchess County as his birth location.

In both 1850 and 1855, Benjamin's household included a son Frederick. Frederick died in Allegan County, Michigan in 1915. Frederick's obituary says that he lived in Churchville New York (a crossroads within Riga township) until the Civil War. During the war, Frederick served in the Michigan militia.

In both 1850 and 1855, Benjamin's wife was named Mary. Her maiden name was shown as Mary Palmer on son Frederick's death certificate.

The 1852 property owner's map available from the Library of Congress shows that "R Knickerbocker" lived on the edge of Churchville at the intersection of today's Routes 32 and 36. We know that this is Benjamin because the neighbor's names match the 1855 census.

Mary [Palmer] Knickerbocker died on August 22, 1855. She is buried in Creekside Cemetery in Churchville.

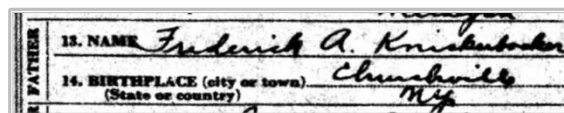
### **Benjamin's movements after the death of wife Mary Palmer**

Benjamin moved to Coldwater, Branch County, Michigan sometime before 1860. His son Frederick joined him in Michigan.

Benjamin married a woman named Phebe [Wilcox] James. This was Phebe's second marriage. She already had three daughters from her first marriage: Angenette, Mary, and Ida James. The three girls were called "Knickerbocker" in the 1860 census, but they can be traced back to their biological father, Alexander James.

In 1861, Benjamin Knickerbocker and Frederick Knickerbocker enlisted at Coldwater Michigan. Benjamin served until 1864.

Frederick's records are the glue that holds this story together. Multiple records list the names of his parents, and Michigan death records show that the Frederick in Michigan was born in Churchville.



Benjamin and Phebe apparently separated sometime in the 1860's. By 1870, Phebe was back to using "James" as her last name.

In 1898, Phebe filed for a widow's pension, based on Benjamin's service.

## **Yates County, New York**

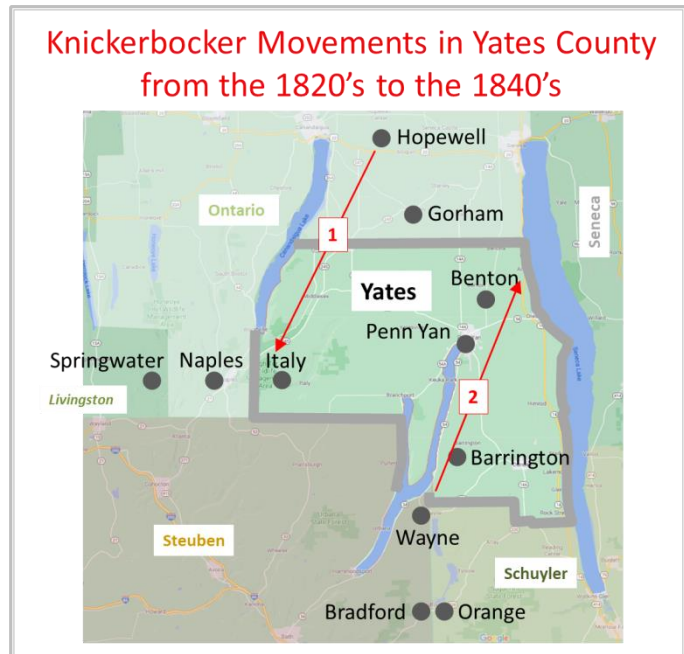
*For the next several pages we will discuss Yates County and its surroundings.*

*Here is a map of the area. We have highlighted eleven towns using gray dots. Each town is mentioned later.*

*This map shows today's towns and county lines.*

*This map has changed over the years.*

*For example, Springwater and Italy were once part of Naples; Barrington was once part of Wayne; Orange was once part of Bradford; and Hopewell was once part of Gorham.*



*Local geography plays a role in our story. This area has many steep hills and deep valleys. Travel routes follow the natural contours of the land. Travelers try to avoid crossing the steep hills, especially in winter.*

*There are two red arrows on this map, indicating two easy journeys. Today these would be nice routes for a bike ride or a winery tour. To our ancestors – and the Native Americans who preceded them – these routes would have been obvious and heavily used.*

*These two arrows are routes taken by various Knickerbockers in this area.*

*Migration route 1 heads south from Hopewell to Naples. This is an easy journey along the Canandaigua Lake watershed. This was the route taken by Benjamin (son of Lawrence) and some of his cousins.*

*Migration route 2 travels north from Wayne to Benton. This is an easy journey along the Keuka Lake watershed. This route was travelled by Benjamin (son of John).*

*Both Benjamins will be discussed in detail.*



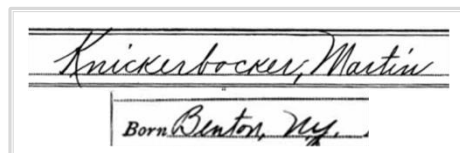
## Two Benjamin Knickerbockers were in Yates County

Now we will take a deep dive into the two Benjamin Knickerbockers who lived in Yates County.

We have numerous records for these two men. This page shows a few teasers. Later pages will show the details.

### Two teasers

Military records show that a man named Martin Knickerbocker was born in Benton New York in 1840. Other records show that his father's name was Benjamin.



Military records show that a man named Francis Knickerbocker was also born in Yates County. A brief biography of Francis says that he was born "near Naples New York" in 1835, and that his father's name was Benjamin.

*Biography Of Francis B. Knickerbocker By H. H. Raby (1976)*

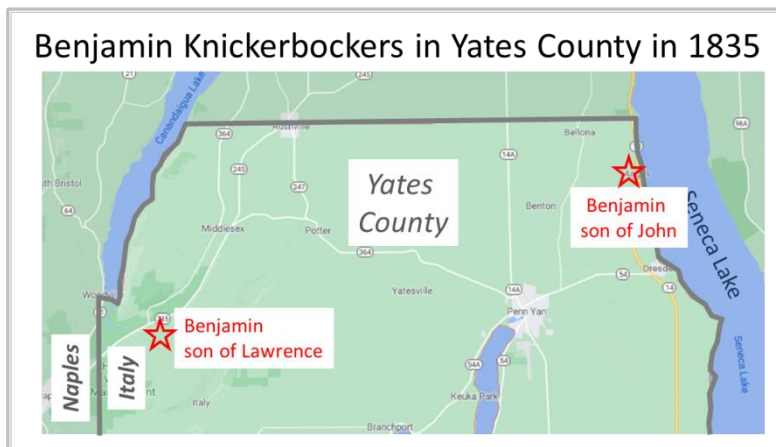
**Francis was born in near Naples, New York, on the 7th day Of July, 1835.** When he was a lad of some 10 years, he came to Michigan with his parents.  
His father Benjamin took up land .....

### Census records match the two teasers

The New York State Census shows that there were two men named Benjamin Knickerbocker in Yates County 1835. The locations of the two Benjamins fits perfectly with the two teasers shown above.

One of the Benjamins was in the northeast corner of the county. He lived along what is now called Route 14. He was in the township of Benton.

The other Benjamin was at the southwest edge of the county. He lived along today's Route 245. He was close to the Naples town line.



We will discuss the identities of these two Benjamin Knickerbockers.

## I. Benjamin, son of John C.

*Benjamin was the brother of Andris Knickerbocker*

We will focus here on the Benjamin Knickerbocker who grew up in Pine Plains and later moved to Yates County. He wound up on the eastern edge of the township of Benton.

We already mentioned Benjamin's early life in Chapter 1. Now we will discuss his adult years.

In the census table shown earlier, we claimed that the man in Benton, Yates County was the son of John.

Benjamin  
son of John

1820 (US)	1830 (US)	1835 (NY)
Wayne, Steuben Co, NY	<b>Benton, Yates Co, NY</b>	<b>Benton, Yates Co, NY</b>

Over the next 12 pages, we will show the proof.

### Importance of the name Andris

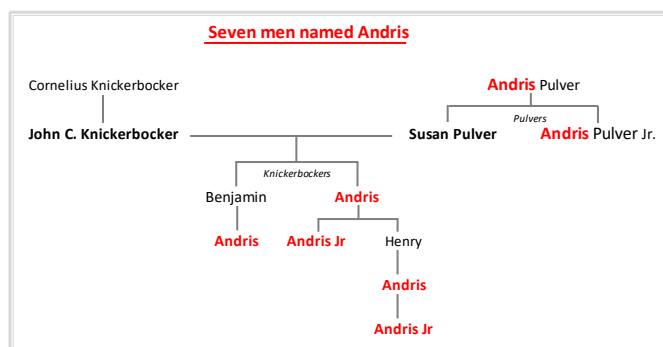
The name “Andris” will be mentioned many times in the following pages.

In Chapter 1 we briefly mentioned Andris Knickerbocker, the brother of Benjamin. In this section we will mention the name “Andris” several times.

Many family trees pretend that “Andris” and “Andrew” were interchangeable. This is wrong.

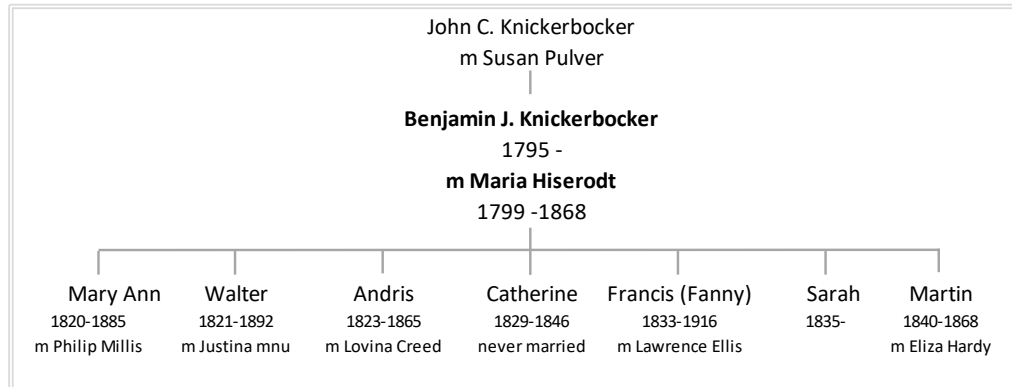
Susan Pulver's father and brother were both named Andris Pulver.

Susan and her husband John named their son Andris, and the name persisted within their Knickerbocker descendants.



In the history of the Knickerbocker family, we have never found any other line of Knickerbockers that used the names Andris / Andres / Andrus. See the *Knickerbockers of Pine Plains* for more details.

## **Benjamin's children**



Shown here is the family of Benjamin Knickerbocker .

The basis for this tree is discussed on the following pages.

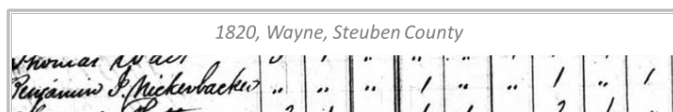
It appears that Benjamin named two of his sons in honor of his brothers Walter and Andris.

## **Chronological List of Records for Benjamin**

### **1820: Benjamin was in "Steuben County"**

The first record for Benjamin in western New York is the 1820 census.

Benjamin J. Knickerbocker was in "Wayne, Steuben County."



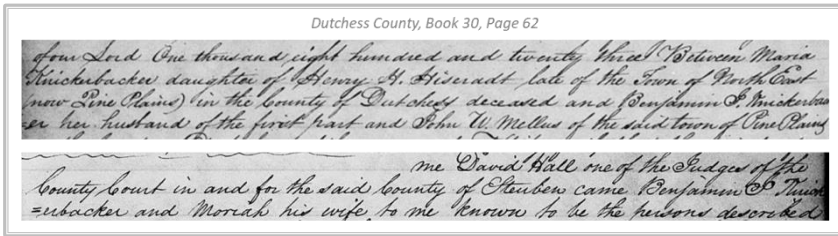
The census showed two adults were aged 16 to 25. The household had 1 female under 10 (Mary Ann?).

The fact that there was a child in the house means Benjamin J. Knickerbocker was probably born sometime between 1795 and 1800.

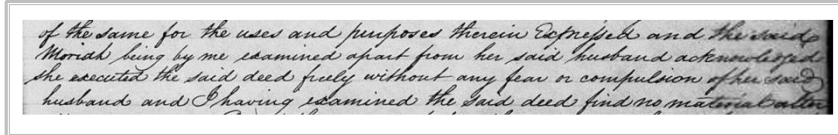
We believe that Benjamin was living in the area that is now called Barrington.

Several of Benjamin's neighbors from "Wayne, Steuben County" in the 1820 census were in Barrington, Yates County in the 1830 census. We don't think that each of these neighbors physically moved to the new county and then bought adjacent properties. Instead, we believe they were already living in the area that was part of the Steuben-to-Yates land transfer in the 1820's.

**1823: Deed signed in “Steuben County.”**



In May of 1823, Benjamin and his wife Maria sold land that she inherited from her father, Henry Hiserodt. To sign the deed, Benjamin and his wife appeared before a judge in Steuben County.

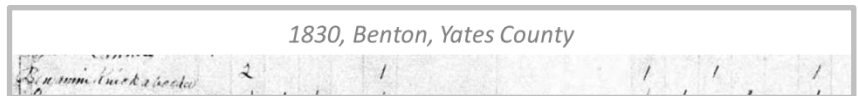


The judge interviewed Maria separately to assure that she agreed with the sale. This language was typical when a married couple sold land.

### 1830: Benjamin was in Benton, Yates County

By 1830, it appears that Benjamin physically moved about 15 miles north, to Benton, Yates County.

The family had two adults, aged 30 to 39. This fits with Benjamin being born around 1795.



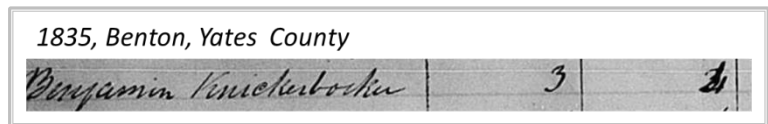
There were two males aged 5 to 9 (Walter and Andris?), along with 1 female under 5 (Catherine), and 1 female 10-14 (Mary Ann?).

Unfortunately, I have never found any deeds in Yates County for anyone named Benjamin Knickerbocker.

### 1835: Benjamin was in Benton, Yates County

In the New York state census of 1835, there is a Benjamin in Benton. (We got lucky here. The vast majority of the 1835 state census results were lost.)

The family had 3 males (Benjamin, Walter, and Andris?). There were 4 females. (Mariah, Mary Ann, Catherine, and Francis?)



This census did not record the age of the male head of household. The family had 1 married female who was under the age of 45. (Mariah.) 1 female had been born within the last year. (Francis?).

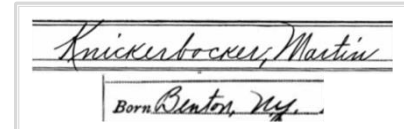
The census asked many questions related to agriculture. Benjamin owned 2 cows, 1 horse, and 2 hogs. Benjamin was not a wealthy man.

#### **1840: Benjamin is not found in the census**

Despite searching Yates census records one page at a time, I have never found Benjamin in the 1840 census.

#### **1840: Martin Knickerbocker was born in Benton**

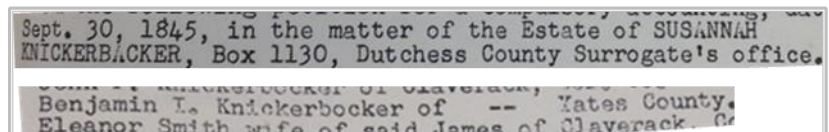
Martin's military record shows that he was born in Benton, but does not list the names of his parents.



#### **1845: Andris stated that Benjamin was in Yates County**

In 1845, Benjamin's brother Andris tried to clear up the probate for his parent's estate.

The 1845 probate records state that Benjamin was in Yates County.



At some point, somebody needs to request Box 1130 from the Dutchess County Surrogate Office, to see if the original record contains any further information about Benjamin.

Unfortunately, 1845 state census results for Benton have been lost.

#### **1846: Benjamin disappears from all records**

There are no further records of Benjamin.

For example, there is no record of his death or burial.

## **Records for Benjamin's Wife and Children**

We have outlined several key events for Benjamin. Now we can use additional records to identify his family members.

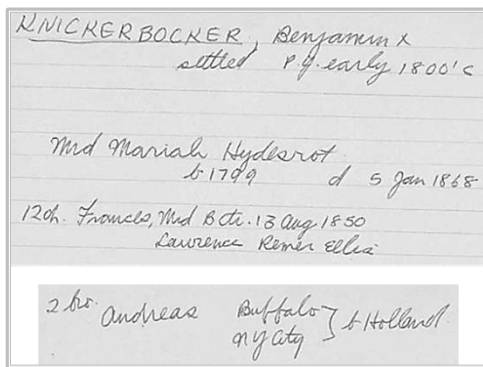
Our focus is on clarifying the life of Benjamin Knickerbocker. We will not provide many biographical details of his children. (This report is already very long.)

### **Swann Vital Records for Yates County**

Now we will turn to a collection called "Swann Vital Records." The term "Vital Records" is a bit of an exaggeration. This is an informal collection of index cards and newspaper articles that summarize information from various the town historians, including Frank Swann.

There are several pertinent records in the Swann collection.

We will start two index cards.



According to the top index card, Benjamin Knickerbocker settled in Penn Yann in the early 1800's.

Benjamin's wife was Mariah Hydesrot, who was born in 1799, and died on 5 January 1868.

Benjamin also had a daughter Frances who married Lawrence Ellis.

Benjamin had a brother Andreas who was listed as being in Buffalo.

(Benjamin's brother Andris was actually in Oakfield, which is 40 miles east of Buffalo.)

The hints contained in these two index cards are useful in assembling other puzzle pieces.

## **Mariah, wife of Benjamin**

Mariah [Hiserodt] Knickerbocker died in Clinton County, Michigan on 5 January 1868.

To the Hon. Secretary of State of Michigan:									
Return of Deaths Recorded in the County of <i>Clinton</i>									
<i>Feb</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>1868</i>	<i>Wm. May Scott</i>	<i>Widow</i>	<i>64</i>				
<i>Jan</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>"</i>	<i>Mariah Knickerbocker</i>	<i>Widow</i>	<i>64</i>				

Maria was buried in St Johns Cemetery. The cemetery is close to the line that separates Clinton County from Iona County. The cemetery is also near Hubbardston, which straddles the county line.

1850 Census for Bradford, Steuben Co.

98	Mariah Knickerbocker	51	F
	Maria do	10	M
	Maria do	20	M
	Maria do	20	F
	Maria do	8	M
	Maria do	6	F
	Maria do	3	M
	Maria do	0:1	F

In 1850, Maria was in Bradford, Steuben County. (Benjamin Knickerbocker was gone by 1850.)

Mariah was living next door to Walter Knickerbocker. We will discuss Walter later.

In 1860, Maria was in the newly formed Schuyler County. She was in Orange (which had once been part of Bradford, Steuben County).

Maria was four houses from Walter Knickerbocker.

This census record, from June 1860, shows Martin Knickerbocker living with Mariah. We'll discuss Martin later.

### 1860 Census for Orange, Schuyler Co.

83	Martin Knickerbocker	39	M
	Austina	35	F
	Louis	18	M
	Mary	16	F
	John	12	M
	Catharine	11	F
	Sarah	9	F
	Henry	1	M
87	Mariah Knickerbocker	60	F
	Martin	18	M

**Mary Knickerbocker Millis, the daughter of Benjamin and Mariah**

Near the Michigan grave of Mariah Knickerbocker, we find Mary Ann Millis, the wife of Philip Millis. Mary is easy to trace.

The death certificate of daughter Helen shows that Helen was born in Walworth County, Wisconsin. It also shows that Mary's maiden name was Knickerbocker.

ARIZONA STATE BOARD OF HEALTH		STANDARD CER
		State 1
3. FULL NAME		Helen Klida Hyde
(a) Residence, No.		Marana, Arizona.
9. BIRTHPLACE (city or town) (State or country)		Walworth County Wisconsin
10. NAME OF FATHER		Philip Millis
11. BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (State or country)		Unknown (city or town)
12. MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER		Mary Ann Knickerbocker
13. BIRTHDATE AND AGE OF MOTHER		

1850 Census for Wisconsin

in Walworth County, Wis.	
Philip Knickerbocker	24
Mary Ann Knickerbocker	18
John Knickerbocker	12
Charles Knickerbocker	7
Anna Knickerbocker	5
William Knickerbocker	3
Elizabeth Knickerbocker	1

The Village of Andover in the County of Jefferson

Andreas Knickerbocker	24
Mary Ann Knickerbocker	18
John Knickerbocker	12
Charles Knickerbocker	7
Anna Knickerbocker	5
William Knickerbocker	3
Elizabeth Knickerbocker	1

In 1850, when Mary lived in Wisconsin, she was about 10 miles from the family of a man named Andris Knickerbocker.

Mary moved to Michigan in about 1855. (She was in Clinton County for the 1860 census.)

Mary had a son named Hiram.

Hiram E. Millis	White	Clinton County Mich	24	Yates County N.Y.
Emma E. Enoch	"	Clinton " "	18	Yates County N.Y.

When Hiram Millis of Clinton County Michigan got married, he listed his birth place as Yates County, New York.

Thus, Mary [Knickerbocker] Millis had roots in Yates County, and was buried in the same Clinton County cemetery as Maria Knickerbocker.



### Francis Knickerbocker Ellis, the daughter of Benjamin and Mariah

Francis [Knickerbocker] Ellis was married to Lawrence Remer Ellis. Francis and Lawrence were mentioned in the Yates County Records that were shown earlier.

Francis is buried in Hubbardston, Iona County, Michigan.

The Swann Vital Records say this about Lawrence Remer Ellis:

Jacob and Mary Ellis, had 7 children, among them  
Lawrence Remer, mrd. Miss Knickerbocker  
Moved to Iona, Michigan.

1860 Census for Hubbardston

Lawrence R. Ellis	33	m
Fanny	28	f
Henetta	6	"
Charles L.	4	m
George	1	"

Francis and Lawrence are easy to trace in census records.

It appears they arrived in Hubbardston in around 1856.

### Andris Knickerbocker, the son of Benjamin and Mariah

Andris Knickerbocker in Wisconsin in 1850. His occupation was listed as "Sawyer" which means he worked in a saw mill.

By 1860, Andris Knickerbocker had moved back east. He was in Tioga County, Pennsylvania, which is just south of the NY state line. He was now listed as a foreman in a saw mill.

1860 Census for Chatham, Tioga County, PA

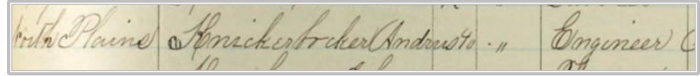
Tr 46	Andris Knickerbocker	31	m	Foreman in Saw Mill	700	200	"
	Lavinia	37	f				"
	Emma	18	f				"
	James	16	m				"
	Lucretia	11	f				His
	Esther	5	f				T.G.
	Charles	3	m				"
	Elizabeth	40	f				Pa
	Simons Oakley	23	m	Foreman in Saw Mill			T.G.
	Jesse Spence	29	m	Sawyer			"
	Martin Knickerbocker	17	m	"			"
	Elmer Jackson	18	f				Pa
	Jeannette Bailey	16	f				"

Andris' household in 1860 was complicated. It appears that his own family was listed first, including his daughter Lucretia who was born in Wisconsin.

Next are a series of people who apparently worked in the saw mill.

Among those listed in this census was Martin Knickerbocker, age 17, who was a sawyer.

In 1863, Andris registered for the Civil War draft. He was living in North Plains, Michigan, the township that contains the village of Hubbardston.



We don't know when or where Andris died, but his widow Lovina was still in the Hubbardston area in 1870.

### **Martin Knickerbocker, a descendant of Benjamin J. Knickerbocker**

As we have shown, in 1860, Andris (son of Benjamin and Mariah) was just south of the New York State line, in Tioga County, Pennsylvania. One of the boarders was a man named Martin Knickerbocker. On the census sheet shown earlier, Andris and his wife were listed at the top, along with several young Knickerbockers. However, Martin Knickerbocker was listed lower, with other boarders.

Martin Knickerbocker was only 17 years younger than Andris. Martin and Andris were probably siblings rather than father and son.

We cannot positively identify the father of Martin Knickerbocker, but he was clearly from this line.

Moving forward, we can easily trace Martin Knickerbocker's fate. He enlisted in the Union Army at Elmira, New York, which is just north of Tioga County, PA. Martin wound up being a patient in the Union hospital near Louisville, Kentucky. He married Eliza Hardy, one of the nurses. He and his wife moved just across the state line to Madison County, Indiana. (This was her hometown.)

Martin's war records show that he was born in Benton, New York.

A handwritten military record card for Martin Knickerbocker. The card is titled 'Knickerbocker, Martin' and has the number '762' in the top right corner. It contains sections for 'ENLISTED', 'WHERE', 'DATE', 'PLACE', 'REASON', 'HOW', 'WHERE', 'DATE', 'PLACE', 'REASON', and 'EXPLANATION'. The card is filled with handwritten information, including dates and locations. At the bottom, there is a section for 'BORN' with details about Martin's birth and physical characteristics.

Martin died in 1868. In his will, Martin Knickerbocker of Indiana mentioned owning property in Tioga County.

### **Walter Knickerbocker, the son of Benjamin and Mariah**

Walter Knickerbocker (1820-1892) was almost certainly a son of Benjamin and Maria.

Walter apparently thought of himself as a Yates County native. For example, Walter reported in the 1855, 65, and 75 census that he was born in "Yates County." (A minor detail: this is technically impossible, since Yates County didn't exist when Walter was born.)

1850, Bradford, Steuben County				
98	Walter Knickerbocker	6-1	7	
	Maria do	10	m	
100	Walter do	30	m	J Farmer
	Esther do	20	f	
	Levi do	8	m	
	Mary do	6	f	
	John do	3	m	
	Catherine do	0-1	f	

In 1850, Walter lived next to Maria Knickerbocker.

In 1855, Walter was 3 houses from Maria. In 1860, Walter was 6 houses from Maria.

Walter Knickerbocker remained in Schuyler County when the rest of his family went to Michigan.

At some point, though, some of Walter's descendants spent time in Michigan. Walter's grandson, Henry Ward Knickerbocker (1892-1984) was born in Michigan before returning to Schuyler County NY.

This report will not attempt to trace Walter's children.

### **Catherine Knickerbocker, possibly a daughter of Benjamin**

There is another Knickerbocker in Yates County who is probably part of Benjamin's line.

The only thing we have is an obituary from Findagrave. (Thanks, Kathleen Oster.)

*Northern Christian Advocate – 1846*

*Catherine Knickerbocker died in Benton, Yates Co., at the house of Caleb Legg, March 11, 1846, aged 17 years and 2 months. The disease that terminated fatally, was supposed to be a partial inflammation about the head; and which deprived its victim of consciousness for a portion of the time*

We do not know why a young lady named "Knickerbocker" was living with Caleb Legg. The Swann Vital Records show that Caleb Legg was married to Elizabeth Henderson in December, 1828, in Milo, Yates County. Census records show that Caleb was born in about 1806.

Since Catherine was only 17, and living with a family that wasn't made up of Knickerbockers, it is possible that her father had already died. This would fit with Benjamin Knickerbocker.

### **Sarah Knickerbocker, possibly a daughter of Benjamin**

In the 1850 census there was a 16 year old female named Sarah Knickerbocker living in the township of Milo, Yates County. (The township of Milo included the town of Penn Yan.)

Sarah was a single teenager, living with the family of Alpha Wright. Alpha was a minister at a local church.

This fits with our story of Benjamin Knickerbocker.

### **Summary for Benjamin (son of John C)**

We are about to close our discussion of Benjamin (son of John C).

We have shown that Benjamin Knickerbocker was born in about 1795.

Benjamin once lived in the area along the Steuben County / Yates County line, then migrated north to Benton. Benjamin's wife and some of his children – including his son Andris – eventually wound up in the Hubbardston Michigan area.

We have shown that there were young Knickerbockers who left scattered records in Benton and the Yates County area. Two stragglers remained in Benton area: Sarah and Catherine, who were young single females. This is consistent with a catastrophic family event, circa 1846. This could be either Benjamin dying, or Benjamin divorcing his wife.

Unfortunately the last record for Benjamin is from 1845, when Benjamin's brother Andris stated that Benjamin was still in Yates County.

It is possible that Benjamin died sometime between 1845 and 1850. It is also possible that something else happened. Divorce was very rare in those times, but we cannot rule it out.

Although we do not know when Benjamin died, there is no doubt that the Benjamin in Benton was the son of John C. Knickerbocker.

### Where did Benjamin (son of John) live?

Figuring out where Benjamin lived seemed hopeless at first because Benjamin apparently never owned any land in Yates County. We got lucky, though, thanks to the names of Benjamin's neighbors.

#### Names in the 1835 Census Listing

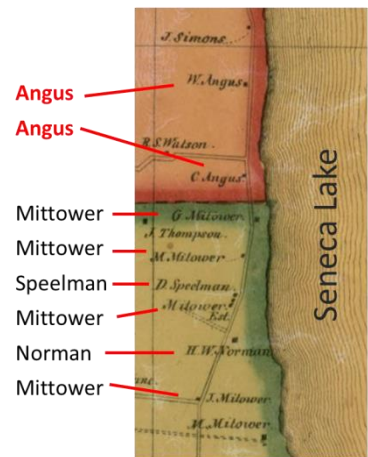
John Mittower	Mittower
John Norman	Norman
John L Norman	Norman
Solomon Norman	Norman
Solomon Norman	Norman
Joshua Bashford	Mittower
Ann Maish Mittower	Mittower
George Ardry	
Robert Norman	Norman
Benjamin Knickerbocker	<b>Knickerbocker</b>
Richard Graves	
Robert Clark	
Charles Angus	<b>Angus</b>
Benjamin Runyan	
Walter Angus	<b>Angus</b>
David Speelman	Speelman

In 1835, Benjamin's neighbors included Charles Angus and Walter Angus. These are well known names in Yates County. In fact, there is now a crossroads known as "Angus."

The Library of Congress has a property owner's map for Yates County in 1855. It is easy to match Benjamin's neighbors in 1835 to the property owners in 1855.

Benjamin is not on this map. He was long gone by 1855, and apparently never owned any property in Yates County.

#### 1855 Map of Property Owners

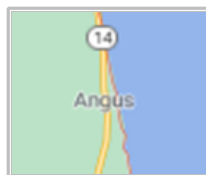


Benjamin was 20 houses from Walter Angus in the 1830 census, and 5 houses from Walter Angus in 1835.



Benjamin lived along what is now called Route 14, close to the crossroads that is now called "Angus."

We showed a fancy map earlier, with red star to show Benjamin's location. If you look closely, you will see that the red star is hiding the word "Angus."



Shown here is a close-up of the same area, copied directly from Google Maps.

This is the area where Benjamin lived.

## J. Benjamin Knickerbocker of Ontario Co, Yates Co, and Michigan

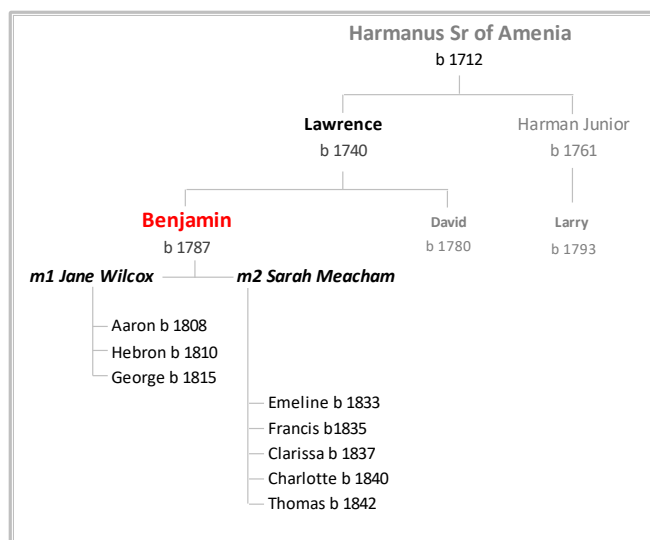
Now we will discuss the **J** Benjamin (son of Lawrence).

Benjamin's story is complex for two reasons.

One complication is that Benjamin moved frequently. He was in the Yates County census in 1835 and 1845, but then moved to Michigan.

**Benjamin**  
son of Lawrence

1820 (US)	1835 (NY)	1845 (NY)	1850 (US)
Gorham, Ontario Co, NY	<b>Italy, Yates Co, NY</b>	<b>Italy, Yates Co, NY</b>	Sylvan, Washtenaw Co, MI



Another complication is that Benjamin was married twice, and raised two families.

His first family, with Jane Wilcox, lived in western New York state.

His second family, with Sarah Meacham, started out in Yates County New York, but then moved to Michigan.

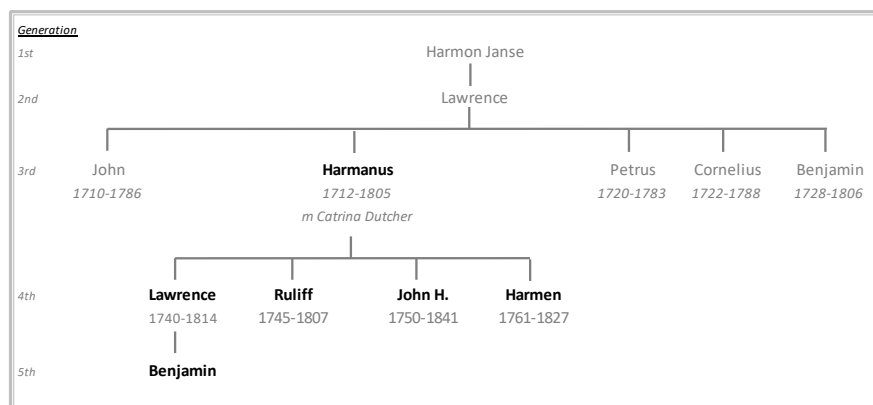
This story will be told in chronological order. The story is broken into four parts, based on the four places that Benjamin lived:

	<u>Location</u>	<u>Approx. Timeframe</u>
Part 1	Amenia, Dutchess County, New York	1780's to 1806
Part 2	Ontario County, New York	1806 to 1830
Part 3	Italy, Yates County, New York	1830 to 1845
Part 4	Washtenaw County, Michigan	1845 –

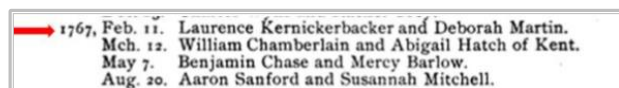
## Part 1: Benjamin in Amenia, Dutchess County, NY

Benjamin was born and raised in Amenia, New York.

The patriarch of the Amenia family was Harmanus Knickerbocker. Benjamin was a grandson of Harmanus.



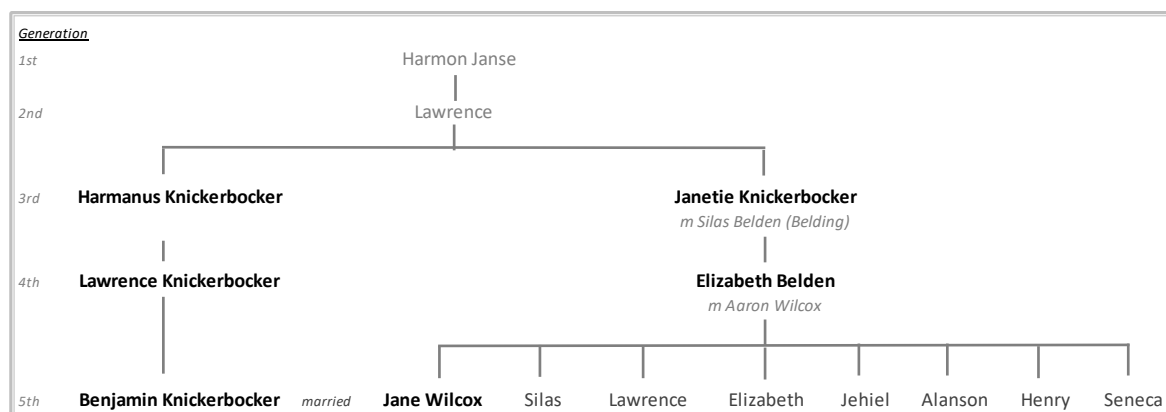
There are only a few records of interest in Amenia. For example, there is a record of the marriage of Benjamin's parents.



Records for the South Amenia Church  
 NYGB&R, Volumes 33 & 34

Unfortunately we do not have a marriage record for Benjamin Knickerbocker and his wife. Van Alstyne's report in NYGBR stated that Benjamin's wife was Jane Wilcox. She was also a Knickerbocker descendant, and can also be found in Van Alstyne. The marriage was in about 1806.

Jane's family tree looks like this:



Jane's father was named Aaron. Jane might have named her oldest son Aaron in honor of her father. Jane Wilcox had brothers named Silas and Lawrence, who will be mentioned again later.



The Dover Road cemetery in Amenia contains several Knickerbocker graves:

*Dover Road Cemetery, Amenia NY  
Burying Grounds of Sharon, Connecticut, Amenia and  
North East, New York (1903)*

KNICKERBACKER, s. of Benjamin, d. March 6, 1807, ae. 3 mos.  
KNICKERBACKER, Mrs. Catharine, wife of Hermanus, d. April 30, 1771,  
ae. 5— yrs.  
KNICKERBACKER, Mrs. Catharine, d. Sept. 4, 1772, in her 19th yr.  
KNICKERBACKER, Catharine, wife of Mr. Ruliff, d. Dec. 26, 1792, ae. 51.  
KNICKERBACKER, Elizabeth, wife of Herman, d. Sept. 6, 1805, ae. 77.  
KNICKERBACKER, Herman, d. Aug. 19, 1805, ae. 93.  
KNICKERBACKER, Ruliff, d. June 28, 1807, ae. 62.  
KNICKERBACKER, Samson, s. of Lawrence and Mary, d. July 8, 1793, in  
his 5th yr.

The 1807 grave marked "s. of Benjamin" is probably a reference to our Benjamin. If his son died in 1807, then Benjamins birth before was before about 1787.

## Part 2: Benjamin in Ontario County, NY

Land records for 1807 show that Lawrence Knickerbocker bought property in the area that was later known as Gorham, Ontario County.

This Indenture made the seventh day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seven, between Oliver Phelps of Saratoga in the county of Ontario and state of New York, by Victor Bromm his attorney, of the first part, and Lawrence Knickerbocker of Lincoln in the county and state aforesaid of the second part, witnesseth that the said party of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of sixteen hundred dollars to him in hand paid by the said party of the second part, the receipt whereof is hereby confessed and acknowledged hath granted, bargained, sold, remised, released, aliened

Ontario County  
Book 12, page 177

Benjamin was about 20 when his father moved to Ontario County. Benjamin remained in Ontario County until about 1825.

**1808: Benjamin received land from his father**

In 1808, Lawrence subdivided his land. He sold land to his children Benjamin, David, Lawrence Jr, and Mary, for 1 penny each. The deed with Benjamin is shown here. The deed specifically mentions that Benjamin was the son of Lawrence.

These Indenture made the nineteenth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seven between Lawrence Krichenbacher of Lincoln township called Gorham in Orleans county of the first part and Benjamin Krichenbacher son of the said Lawrence of the same place of the second part witnesses that the said party of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of one cent and of natural love and affection the said cent being to him in hand paid by the said party of the second part the receipt whereof is hereby confessed and acknowledged. Hath given

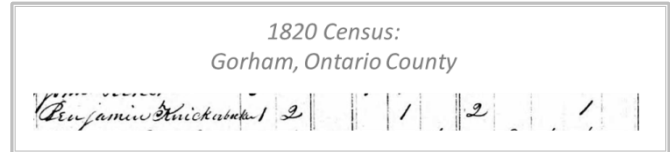
Ontario County  
Book 13, page 413

The above deed from 1808 suggests that Benjamin was an adult and could legally own land. This means that he was born before about 1787.

### **1820: Benjamin was in the census in Ontario County**

In the 1820 census there was a Benjamin Knickerbocker in Gorham, Ontario County. (Gorham was a very large township in 1820. Hopewell split off from Gorham in 1823.)

Benjamin and his wife had 2 children over the age of 10, which suggests that Benjamin was born in 1788 or earlier.



The household had 4 males (one under 10; two age 10-15, one age 26-44) and 3 females (two under 10, one age 26-44). The children of Benjamin and Jane have not been clearly identified.

#### Who were the sons in the 1820 Census?

*There are three Knickerbocker men who seem to fit perfectly into Benjamin and Jane's family.*

*The first was Aaron Knickerbocker (1808-1881), who may have been named after Jane's father. When Aaron died in Wayne County, Michigan, his death certificate listed his parents as David Knickerbocker and Jane W. Knickerbocker. David was Benjamin's brother. David left many very clear records. David's wife was named Diadama, not Jane. Perhaps David adopted Benjamin's sons after Benjamin divorced Jane Wilcox, and Jane moved to Perinton to be close to her siblings. If so, Jane W Knickerbocker was Aaron's biological mother, and David was his adopted father.*

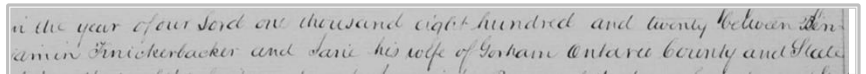
*Benjamin's two other sons were probably Hebron Knickerbocker (1810-1865) and George Knickerbocker (1815-1874). Hebron led a complex life, apparently featuring at least one divorce. Census records show that George helped raise Hebron's son after Hebron's marriage fell apart.*

*Aaron, Hebron, and George all had some ties to Perinton (near where their mother Jane was eventually buried). Hebron later had ties to Naples and Springwater.*

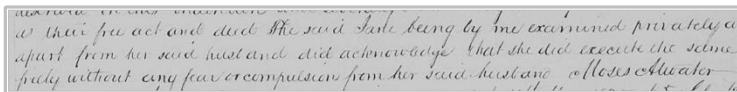
### **1820: Benjamin and Jane sold land in Ontario County**

In May 9, 1820, Benjamin and his wife Jane "of Gorham" sold land in Ontario County. They received \$1,300.

Ontario County  
Book 35, page 436



This deed included typical language to confirm that Jane – a married woman – had not been intimidated by her husband:



*the said Jane being by me examined privately apart from her said husband did acknowledge that she did execute [the deed] freely without any fear*

### **1820 to 1823: Benjamin's land deals in Erie County**

After 1820, the life of Benjamin Knickerbocker became more complicated, and the records are harder to interpret.

Benjamin Knickerbocker of Ontario County was involved in a strange set of land deals in Erie County. The sequence started on May 9, 1820, which was the same day that Benjamin and Jane sold their Ontario County property.

The table below summarizes the sequence of deeds.

Deed number 1 was the sale of Benjamin and Jane's property in Ontario County. (This is the same deed that was mentioned earlier.) Deed number 2 was on the same day, and was also with Jeremiah Brower. In effect, Benjamin exchanged properties with Jeremiah.

		<u>Seller</u>	<u>Buyer</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Property Description</u>	<u>Reference</u>
		<b><u>Ontario County</u></b>				
1	9 May 1820	Benjamin Knickerbocker & wife Jane of Gorham	Jeremiah Brower of Gorham	\$1,300	Benjamin's property in Ontario County	L35 p436
		<b><u>Erie County</u></b>				
2	9 May 1820	Jeremiah Brower of Gorham	Benjamin Knickerbocker of Gorham	\$1,300	150 acres; west part of Lot 54 in the 8th township, 8 <sup>th</sup> range	L7 p106
3	24 Jan 1823	Benjamin Knickerbocker of Hopewell	James Moor of Hopewell	\$600	Identical description	L7 p107
4	29 Jan 1823	James Moor of Hopewell	Silas Wilcox of Perinton	\$600	Identical description	L7 p108

Deeds number 2, 3, and 4 are in Erie County. These deeds involve exactly the same property.

Deeds number 2 and 3 show that Benjamin Knickerbocker made a very bad investment. He paid \$1,300 for the 150 acre property, then sold it three years later for \$600.

Deeds number 3 and 4 are very strange. James Moor was a neighbor from Hopewell. Here, James Moor was acting as a middleman. James Moor bought land from Benjamin Knickerbocker, then sold exactly the same property, for exactly the same price, five days later. James Moor sold the property to Silas Wilcox, Benjamin's brother in law. Why would Benjamin Knickerbocker use a middleman to sell property to his own brother-in-law?

In Deed 3, Benjamin sold land. This deed does not mention Benjamin's wife. This is a little odd. In theory, the county clerk should have mentioned Jane, and interviewed her separately. However, it seems like sometimes the county clerks were careless. Deed 3 – all by itself – does not prove that Benjamin had divorced Jane before 1823.

### **1821 and 1825: Jane's land deals in Erie County**

Jane Knickerbocker was also involved in land deals in Erie County. The deals were with Jane's brothers, Larry Wilcox and Silas Wilcox. In 1821, Jane was "of Gorham." By 1825, she was "of Perinton".

<u>Date</u>	<u>Seller</u>	<u>Buyer</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Property Description</u>	<u>Reference</u>
21 Nov 1821	Larry Wilcox and Laura Wilcox of Perinton	<b>Jane Knickerbocker of Gorham</b>	\$400	50 acres; west [east?] part of Lot 54 in the 8 <sup>th</sup> range	L9 p196
3 Nov 1825	<b>Jane Knickerbocker of Perinton</b>	Silas Wilcox of Perinton	\$200	50 acres; best [east?] part of Lot 54 in the 8 <sup>th</sup> township, 8 <sup>th</sup> range	L9 P195

In 1821, Jane bought land from Larry Wilcox. The deed includes typical language showing that Larry's wife Laura was interviewed separately to make sure that Laura agreed with the sale.

In 1825, Jane sold the land to Silas Wilcox. The 1825 deed does not mention Benjamin Knickerbocker. This is very odd. Wives had fewer rights than husbands. The 1821 deed gave Laura Wilcox the right to veto the sale, but the 1825 deed completely ignored Benjamin Knickerbocker.

This is further evidence that Jane and Benjamin were divorced.

### **Jane's 1841 deed related to her grandfather's land**

The last deed that I can find for Jane Knickerbocker was in 1841. This deed was related to property once owned by Jane's maternal grandfather, Silas Belden. (Dutchess, L69, p596.)

Once again, this deed suggests that Benjamin was out of the picture, either by death or divorce.

In exchange for 25 dollars, Jane Knickerbocker and Larry Wilcox agreed to forego their rights to the Belden land. Both Jane Knickerbocker and Larry Wilcox were "of Perinton."

The county clerk went out of his way to mention that Larry Wilcox was married. The county clerk interviewed Laura Wilcox separately to assure that she agreed with the sale.

The county clerk did not mention Jane Knickerbocker's husband.

(One page earlier in the Dutchess land records is a similar transaction involving Silas Wilcox and Jehial Wilcox of Erie County. The Wilcox men waived their rights to the Belden land for \$25. Each of their wives was interviewed by the Erie County clerk to assure that the wives agreed with the sale.)

To summarize the various deeds: The 1823 deeds in Erie County suggest – but do not prove – that Benjamin had already divorced Jane. Jane's 1825 land sale supports the view that Benjamin was out of the picture sometime before 1825. Jane's 1841 deed tells the same story.

### **Part 3: Benjamin Knickerbocker in Italy, Yates County, New York**

Now we will shift to Yates County.

We will show that a man named Benjamin Knickerbocker was in Italy from before 1835 until after 1845. We will show that Benjamin lived near the western edge of Italy. We will also show that the man in Italy was connected to the Knickerbockers of Hopewell.

We will also discuss Benjamin's second family in Yates County.



We will begin this section with a chronological list of events that are tied to Yates County.

#### **1835: Son Francis was born in Yates County “near Naples”**

Benjamin had a son Francis who was born in 1835. Military records show that he was born in Yates County.

Francis's biography says that Francis was born “near Naples.”

We will discuss Francis in more detail in Part 4.

*Biography Of Francis B. Knickerbocker By Harry Holmes Raby (1976).*

Francis was born in near Naples, New York, on the 7th day Of July, 1835. When he was a lad of some 10 years, he came to Michigan with his parents and family.

#### **1835: Benjamin and Larrey Knickerbocker were in Italy**

Benjamin was in Yates County for the 1835 state census. (We are lucky. The vast majority of the 1835 state census results were lost. Yates County is one of the few areas where the records survived.)

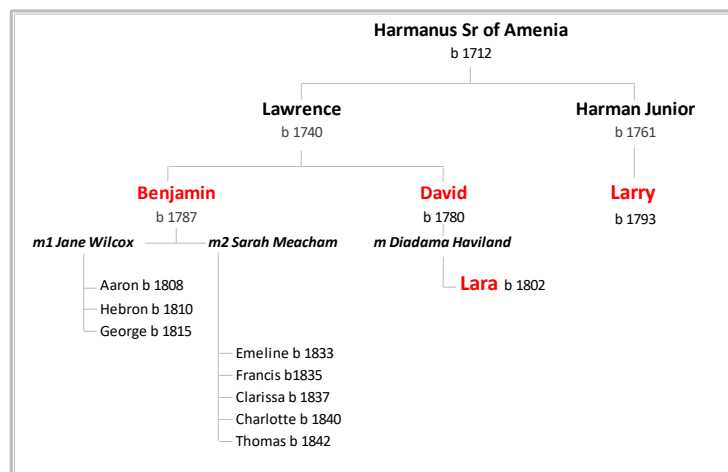
1835, Italy, Yates County

THE NAME OF THE HEAD OF EACH FAMILY.	The number of male persons in the family, (the name of whose head is in the first column,) including his head, if male.	The number of female persons in the same family, including his head, if female.
Benjamin Knickerbocker	2	3
Larrey Knickerbocker	6	2

The family had 2 males. One of the males was born within the prior 12 months. (This fits with Benjamin and his son Francis. We know that Francis was born in 1835.)

The family had 3 females. We can account for two of them: the wife Sarah, and daughter Emeline. We can't identify the third female.

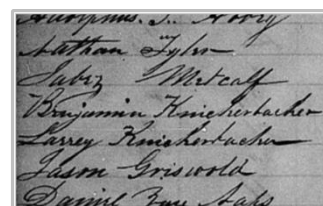
Benjamin was not a rich man. The census sheet shows that he owned 2 cows, 1 horse, and 1 hog. (Larry owned 5 cows, 5 horses, and 1 hog.)



Benjamin's neighbor "Larrey" Knickerbocker was either Benjamin's nephew Lara or his cousin Larry. These are the only two Knickerbockers in this era who used a shortened version of Lawrence. In either case we know that the Benjamin in Italy had a neighbor who was descended from the Hopewell families.

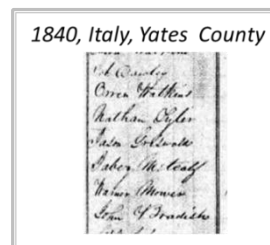
(5 years later, in the 1840 census, Larry was in Naples, and Lara was in Du Page County.)

In 1835, Benjamin had a neighbor with a unique name: Jabez Metcalf. Other neighbors included Jason Griswold. We will mention these neighbors again later.



### 1840: Benjamin is missing from the census

Benjamin is not listed in the 1840 census. His name is not listed anywhere in Yates County. And, more specifically, Benjamin is not listed on the page that has Jabez Metcalf and Jason Griswold. This is surprising. We suspect that Benjamin was still living there, but was missed by the census taker.



### 1840: Daughter Charlotte was born in Yates County

Benjamin's daughter Charlotte was born on April 10, 1840, in Yates County.

Name	Charlotte Knickerbocker Pixley
Birth Date	10 Apr 1840
Birthplace	Yates, New York
Father's Name	Benjamin Knickerbocker
Mother's Name	Sarah Meachim
Death Date	13 Apr 1929
Death Place	Chicago, Cook, Illinois
Spouse's Name	Moses Pixley

### 1840: Hebron Knickerbocker was in Italy

Hebron Knickerbocker was probably a son of Benjamin Knickerbocker and Jane Wilcox. In the 1840 census, Hebron was living in Italy. However, Hebron was not on the same census page as Jabez Metcalf. (In 1840, we believe that Hebron lived about a mile south of the area where Benjamin lived.) Hebron soon left Italy, and moved to Springwater.

### **1842: Son Thomas was born in Yates County**

Benjamin's son Thomas was born in 1842 in Yates County.

3 FULL NAME	Thomas M. Knickerbocker
6 DATE OF BIRTH (Month, day and year)	September, 8th, 1842.
9 BIRTHPLACE (city or town) (State or County)	Yates Co., New York.
10 NAME OF FATHER	Benjamin Knickerbocker
12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER	Emeline Mersham.

### **1845: Benjamin was in Italy (with the same neighbors)**

Benjamin was in Italy again in the 1845 state census. His neighbors again included Jabez Metcalf.

Benjamin Knickerbocker  
John W. Moore  
Coastus T. Clark  
Jabez Metcalf  
Patty Griswold

1845, Italy, Yates County

Benjamin Knickerbocker 3 4

Benjamin's household contained 3 males (Francis, Thomas, and Benjamin?). There were 4 females (Emeline, Clarissa, Charlotte, and Sarah?).

### **1846: Benjamin moved to Michigan**

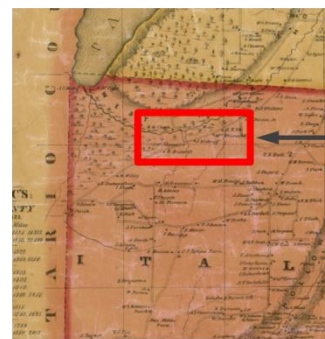
Benjamin is not found in any Yates County records after 1845.

We know that son Francis Knickerbocker said that the family moved to Michigan when Francis was about 10 (i.e. in around 1845).

### **Where did Benjamin (son of Lawrence) live?**

Benjamin had the same neighbors in 1835 and 1845. Benjamin's neighbors are easy to follow in census records.

The Library of Congress website has a property owner's map for Yates County in 1855. Benjamin's neighbors were still in Italy, just south of the lake. They were at today's intersection of Sunnyside Road and Route 245.



1855 Map Shows Benjamins' Old Neighbors



J W Moore J Metcalf Griswold widow

Benjamin is not on this map  
because he had already left the area.



#### **Part 4: Benjamin Knickerbocker of Washtenaw, Michigan**

In 1850, there was a man named Benjamin “Knicker” in the census for Washtenaw County, Michigan.

Benjamin Knicker	63
Sarah Knicker	51
Francis Knicker	17
Emeline Knicker	17
Clarissa Knicker	13
Charlotte Knicker	8
Thomas Knicker	10

A portion of the census is shown here.

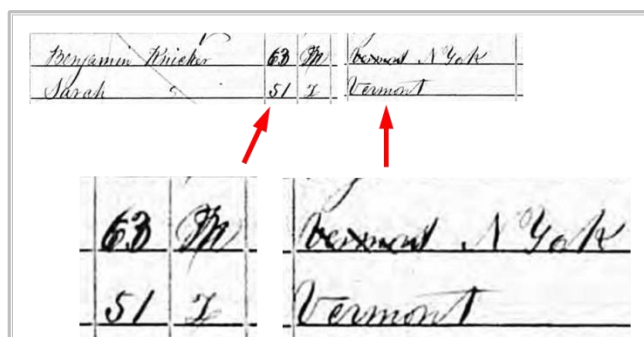
There were 3 males and 4 females in the household in 1850. This exactly matches the 1845 results from Yates County.

We have already shown that Francis, Charlotte, and Thomas were born in Yates County. (Emeline and Clarissa were born in New York State, but we do not have specific locations.)

Benjamin was living with Sarah Knicker. She was 51, and was born in Vermont. We know from her children’s records that she was Sarah Emeline Meacham. She was born in Vermont. The spelling of her maiden name varied.

The 1850 census taker’s entries are interesting. At first, the census taker accidentally wrote Sarah’s information in Benjamin’s boxes. She was a 51 year old female born in Vermont.

The census taker caught the mistake and corrected it. Benjamin’s entries are 63 scribbled over 51; M scribbled over F; and N York next to a crossed-out Vermont.



Benjamin was born about 1787, and Sarah was born in about 1799. This was an unusually large age gap. Furthermore, the children are much younger than Benjamin. The children’s ages are more consistent with Sarah’s age.

In general, there are three possible explanations for these sorts of census records: (1) The husband stayed single until his mid-30’s; (2) the husband had a previous wife who died, or (3) the husband had a previous wife but was divorced.

In this case, the census entries are consistent with Benjamin divorcing his first wife.

### **Benjamin's son Francis**

Benjamin's journey is partially described in a biography of Benjamin's son Francis. The biography is available on Ancestry and on knic.com.

The biography says that Francis was born in July 1835 "near Naples, New York."

*Biography Of Francis B. Knickerbocker By Harry Holmes Raby (1976).*

Francis was born in near Naples, New York, on the 7th day Of July, 1835. When he was a lad of some 10 years, he came to Michigan with his parents and family. There was a brother Thomas, and a sister called Lot, and perhaps there were other children whose names have been forgotten, or they may have remained in New York state. The father, Benjamin, took-up land about a mile east of the Fishville school, and likely Francis went to school there as a boy. As he grew older, Francis probably helped his father and the neighboring farmers clear land and do farm work.

Military records show that Francis was born in Yates County, but don't name a specific town. As already shown, Benjamin was in Italy, Yates County in 1835 and 1845. Benjamin was about 2 miles from the Naples town line.

The biography says that Benjamin lived about a mile east of the Fishville school. This would have placed Benjamin near the border between Jackson and Washtenaw counties. Benjamin must have been renting a farm; there is no sign of Benjamin in any of the local land records.

### **Summary for Benjamin (son of Lawrence)**

We have shown various events in Benjamin's life.

Benjamin's early story – as the son of Lawrence – is the easy part.

Benjamin's life was more complicated in the 1820's, for example when he made some odd real estate transactions without his wife being listed on the deeds.

In 1835, Benjamin was in Italy, living next to "Larrey" Knickerbocker. This was either Benjamin's nephew or his cousin. Either way, it connects the man in Italy to the Knickerbockers of Hopewell.

Benjamin Knickerbocker was still in Italy in 1845. He then moved to Washtenaw County Michigan. His family composition in 1845 in Italy exactly matches his family composition in 1850 in Michigan.

The brief biography of Benjamin's son Francis Knickerbocker is an important piece of the story. Military records show that Francis was born in Yates County, and Francis's biography says that Francis was born "near Naples." By tracing Benjamin's neighbors in the census, we have shown that Benjamin lived in Italy, Yates County, about 2 miles from the Naples line.

All of the pieces fit. Benjamin (son of Lawrence) was the man who moved from Yates County, New York to Washtenaw County, Michigan.

## Two Ships Passing in the Night

We have discussed the two Benjamin Knickerbockers who lived in Yates County.

These two men lived near each other for large parts of their lives.

In the years around 1800, the two Benjamins were in Dutchess County, and were 20 miles apart. Both men soon moved west, along with many other settlers. After the long move, the two Benjamins were still only separated by 25 miles. By 1835, both men had again shifted their locations. One man drifted south to Italy. The other drifted north to Benton. They were still about 25 miles apart.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Location of Benjamin son of John</u>	<u>Location of Benjamin son of Lawrence</u>	<u>Distance between the two Benjamins</u>
<b>1800</b>	<b>Pine Plains</b>	<b>Amenia</b>	<b>20 miles</b>
1810	Pine Plains	Hopewell	240 miles
<b>1820</b>	<b>Barrington</b>	<b>Hopewell</b>	<b>25 miles</b>
<b>1835</b>	<b>Benton</b>	<b>Italy</b>	<b>25 miles</b>
1845	Benton?	Washtenaw MI	420 miles

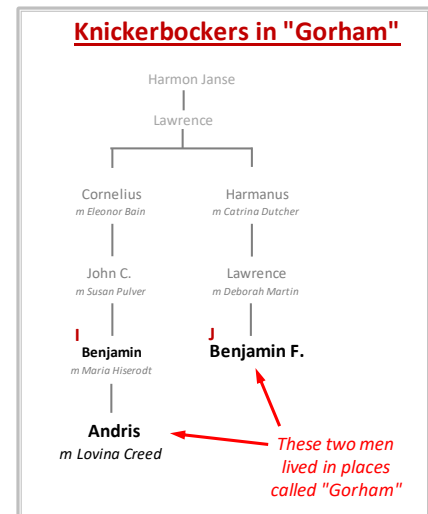
All of the moves seem coincidental. We don't see any evidence that they or their families ever interacted.

There is another set of records that shows the proximity of these lines of Knickerbockers: in 1846, Andris Knickerbocker and his wife Lavina bought land in Gorham, Ontario County. This continued the general northward migration that his father Benjamin (son of John) had begun.

Thus, by 1846, Andris Knickerbocker was only about 8 miles from Hopewell, which had originally been part of Gorham.

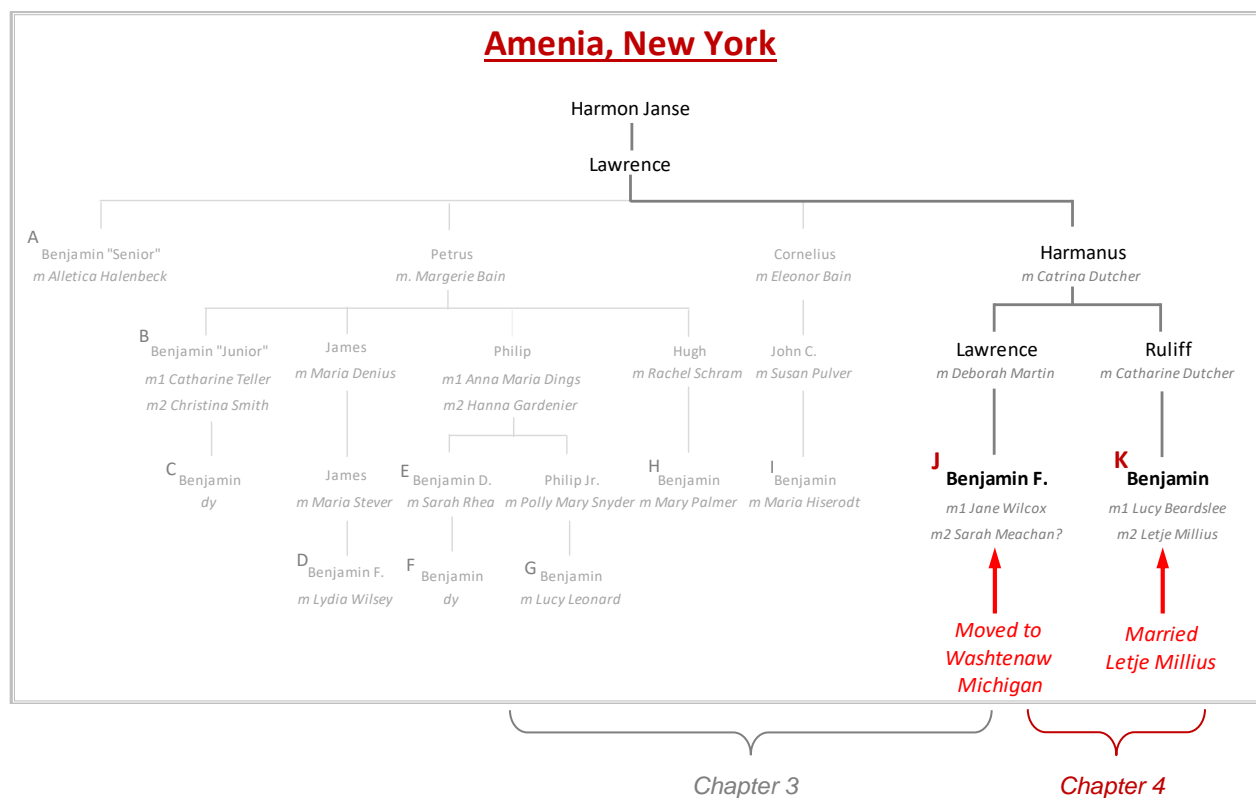
This appears to be a pure coincidence. By the late 1840's, the Knickerbockers who helped settle the original Gorham area were gone.

Andris's stay in Gorham was brief. Andris worked in the sawmill industry, and apparently moved frequently. Andris and Lovina sold their land in 1849, and were in Wisconsin in 1850.



## **Chapter 4:** **Amenia, New York**

We are in the home stretch. *Amenia* is the last region that we will discuss. We will present important details here. A longer version of this story can be found the documents “Knickerbockers in *Amenia* NY” and in the follow-up “Ruliff Knickerbocker of *Amenia* NY.”



*Benjamin* (son of Lawrence) and *Benjamin* (son of Ruliff) were both born in *Amenia*, within a few hundred yards of the intersection of Butts Hollow Road and Route 22.

The *Benjamin Knickerbockers* from *Amenia* led chaotic lives. For example, both apparently went through divorces at a time when divorce was rare. Some of the other chaotic events in the *Amenia* families are mentioned in “Knickerbockers in *Amenia*.”

We have already discussed **J** Benjamin Knickerbocker (son of Lawrence). Chapter 4 is focused on **K** Benjamin (son of Ruliff).

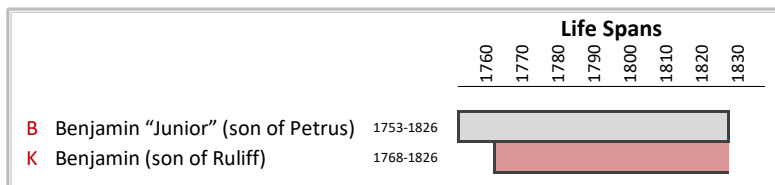
## K. Benjamin, the son of Ruliff

Benjamin (son of Ruliff) led a very complicated life. We will present a summary of Benjamin's story here. For more details on both Ruliff and Benjamin, see *Ruliff Knickerbocker of Amenia New York* on knic.com.

This section has two separate objectives.

One objective is simple: we want clear up confusion between **B** Benjamin Junior (son of Petrus) and **K** Benjamin (son of Ruliff).

As mentioned earlier, **B** Benjamin Junior and **K** Benjamin (son of Ruliff) had very similar lifespans. Many family trees have confused the two men.



The second objective is more difficult: to explain the complex chain of events that occurred during the life of Benjamin (son of Ruliff).

The paragraphs below will emphasize a few key events that occurred during Benjamin's life. The events are listed in chronological order.

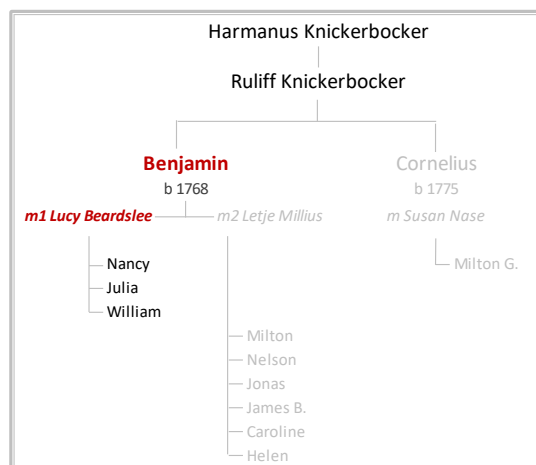
### 1799: Benjamin Knickerbocker deserted his wife

Benjamin holds the dubious distinction of being the earliest known divorce for anyone named Knickerbocker.

Benjamin married Lucy Beardslee on October 6, 1790, in Amenia. Benjamin abandoned her in 1799.

Lucy claimed that Benjamin was living in wedlock with another woman. This must have been a scandal in a small town like Amenia.

Lucy and Benjamin had three children together: Nancy, Julia, and William.



The divorce filing is shown here.

We don't know exactly what happened between Benjamin and Lucy. The only thing that we have is the statement that Lucy made in court in 1810.

To the honorable Superior Court to be holden for Litchfield in for the County of Litchfield on the first Tuesday of February next, the petition of Lucy Knickerbocker of Kent in said county humbly showed that on the 6 day of October 1790 she was lawfully married to Benjamin Knickerbocker then of Amenia in the State of New York with whom she lived in the due performance of the duties by the marriage covenant on her part enjoined to be performed, until on or about the 1 day of Janry 1799 when the said Benjamin willfully deserted the petitioner & hath ever since totally neglected the petitioner, & hath neither lived with her, nor provided anything for her support, the petitioner also states that ever since the said Benjamin deserted the petitioner as aforesaid he hath lived in adultery with another woman. The petitioner therefore prays your honors to grant her a Bill of divorce & release her from all obligations she is under to

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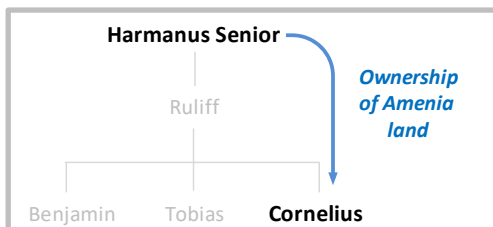
The 1<sup>st</sup> day of Janry 1810  
Lucy Knickerbocker

The court tried to serve a subpoena to Benjamin Knickerbocker. The sheriff reported that Benjamin was living in North East, Dutchess County. (At that time, North East was a large area. Pine Plains didn't formally split off from North East until 1823.)

### **1802: Benjamin's grandfather Harmanus finalized his will**

Harmanus Knickerbocker Senior (1712-1805) was the founder of the Amenia families.

Harmanus Senior signed his final will and testament in 1802, in the middle of Benjamin's issues with his first wife.



In his will, Harmanus gave control over part of his Amenia farm to his grandson Cornelius. Ruliff did not get control of any part of the Knickerbocker farm.

Harmanus Senior bypassed his son Ruliff, and Ruliff's oldest son Benjamin. We suspect this was due, in part, to Ruliff and Benjamin leading scandalous lives. (Ruliff apparently fathered an illegitimate child, and Benjamin deserted his wife. See *Knickerbockers in Amenia*.)

### **1807: Benjamin's father Ruliff died**

Ruliff died in June, 1807. Ruliff's son Cornelius became the patriarch of the Amenias family.

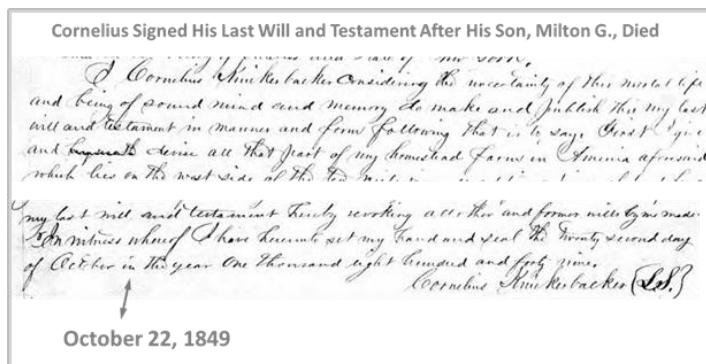
### **1832 - 1849: Cornelius's family died**

During the 1810's and 1820's, Cornelius was probably a happy man. His joy wouldn't last. Cornelius's wife died in 1832. His son Myron died in 1841. His son Milton G. Knickerbocker died on August 4, 1849.

### **1849: Cornelius Knickerbocker finalized his will**

Cornelius's son Milton G. Knickerbocker died in August of 1849. The date is important.

Cornelius updated his will in October of 1849. This was after the death of his son.



### **1850: Cornelius died, and left part of his farm to Milton Knickerbocker**

Cornelius Knickerbocker died in September 1850. As per his will, his land was divided into two parcels.

The smaller parcels went to Charles and Platt Knickerbocker, sons of Cornelius' brother Tobias.

The larger portion of Cornelius's land went to a man named Milton Knickerbocker.



Shown below is the critical piece of Cornelius' will.

First I give and devise all that part of my homestead farm in Amenia aforesaid which lies

[...lengthy description of the location...]

to have and to hold the above parts of said homestead farm **to the said Milton Knickerbocker** his heirs and assigns forever except as above excepted and reserved upon condition that he pay within eighteen months after my decease to each of **his brothers Jonas Knickerbocker and James Knickerbocker** three hundred dollars.

The first time that Cornelius mentioned Milton Knickerbocker, he was called "the said Milton Knickerbocker."

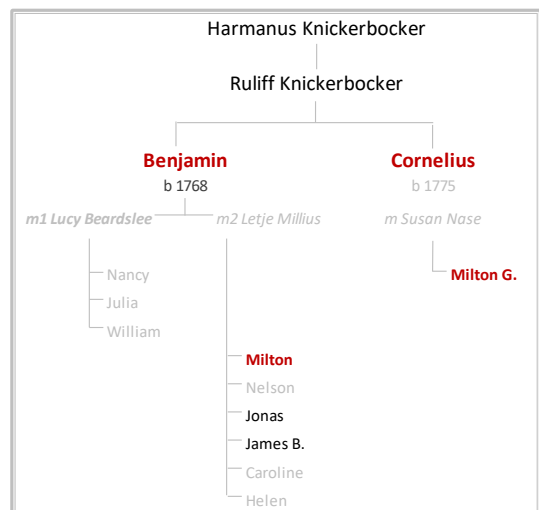
Notice that the will does not say "my son Milton." Also notice that the will refers to Jonas and James as "his brothers."

Many people – including Van Alstyne – assumed that "Milton" was the son of Cornelius, despite the fact that the will had such strange wording.

The wording seems strange to us, but the wording was perfectly clear to Cornelius's executors. The executors knew that Cornelius' son, Milton G. Knickerbocker, was already dead when Cornelius signed his will.

Cornelius was referring to Milton, Jonas, and James Knickerbocker, the sons of Benjamin Knickerbocker.

We can prove this by looking at events that happened in 1851 and 1857.



### 1851: Milton Knickerbocker sold his inheritance

In March of 1851, Milton Knickerbocker sold the land that he had inherited from Cornelius.

The key phrase in the deed is "Milton Knickerbocker and Getta his wife of Providence, Luzerne County in the state of Pennsylvania."

The lands that Milton sold were left to him by Cornelius Knickerbocker.

and being in the aforesaid town of Luzerne. Owned and occupied at the time of his death by Benjamin Knickerbocker now deceased, and by him devised to the said Milton Knickerbocker by his last will and testament dated October 22<sup>nd</sup> 1857.

1850 Census, Providence, Luzerne, PA		
	Gertrude Knickerbocker	42
Helen	Helen " "	36
	John " "	18
	James " "	15
	Harriet " "	8
Letty	Letty Knickerbocker	75
	John Mott	23
	Harriet " "	18
	John " "	14
	James B. " "	13
	George " "	10
	Elizabeth " "	8
	John " "	3
	John B. Knickerbocker	18
Milton	Milton Knickerbocker	16
	John " "	14
	John " "	12

Milton Knickerbocker and his wife Gertrude were in the 1850 census in Providence, Luzerne, PA.

Just above Milton was an elderly lady named Letty Knickerbocker

In this census record, Lette was 75 years old, and living with the family of Helen Kilmer.

Helen Kilmer's death certificate shows that she was the daughter of Lette Knickerbocker and Benj Knickerbocker.

### 1857: James Knickerbocker received his \$300

According to the will of Cornelius Knickerbocker, Milton Knickerbocker was supposed to pay \$300 to his brother, James Knickerbocker.

We don't know exactly when James received his money. However, we know that the \$300 payment was recorded in Dutchess County records in April, 1857.

The documentation shows that this was James B. Knickerbocker. The witness for the transaction was a judge in La Salle County, Illinois.

hereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal April 1<sup>st</sup> 1857. James B. Knickerbocker in presence of Geo. S. Fisher. Notary, State of Illinois, LaSalle County, S. J. George.

### The Past and Present of La Salle County, Illinois (1877)

**KNICKERBOCKER J. B.** Farmer; Sec. 16; P. O. Danway; born in Columbia Co., N. Y., Feb. 5, 1812; at 14 years, left with care of mother and three young sisters; farmed often for 6 cents a day; hoed corn 11 days for 44 cents; employed as a machinist 10 years; bought 11 acres of land in 1839, for \$1,350, and lost it; married Feb. 14, 1841, to Catherine Latimer; she was born in Columbia Co., N. Y., May 3, 1821; came to this Co. 1845; Republican; Baptist; bought and now owns 480 acres of land, valued at \$21,700; first winter here "open;" ploughed in Jan.; found chicken eggs March 12; has sold corn for 12 cents; wheat for 18 cents, and no sale for oats; have had seven children, lost two; Township Treasurer 23 years; School Director and Trustee; in early days, examined teachers.

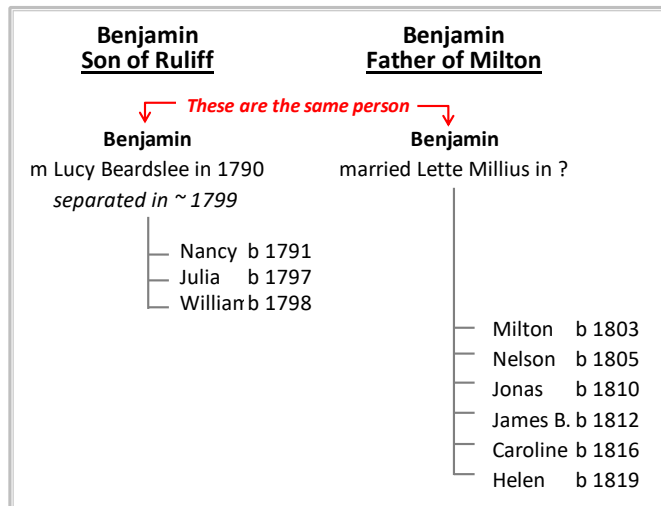
James B. Knickerbocker of La Salle County is easy to trace. For example, shown here is his biography from a local history:

According to James biography, he was born in 1812, but lost his father at age 14 (i.e. in about 1826).

Shown here are the two families of Benjamin Knickerbocker. We have highlighted the key dates.

Notice that the birth dates of the children do not overlap.

Under the laws at that time, Milton might have been considered a bastard, with no right to any of Benjamin's property. Cornelius didn't care. Milton inherited the family farm. Cornelius might actually have been very clever. It seems strange that Cornelius never mentioned Benjamin in his will. However, this might have been intentional. Cornelius sidestepped any issues related to Benjamin's marriages or Benjamin's oldest children by giving his farm directly to Milton.



### **Summary for Benjamin (son of Ruliff)**

In the last few pages, we have summarized the story of Benjamin (son of Ruliff). The story is complicated.

The most important facts are very clear. Milton Knickerbocker of Luzerne, PA was the largest single heir of Cornelius Knickerbocker. Milton shared his good fortune with his brother James B. Knickerbocker of La Salle County, Illinois.

This only makes sense if Benjamin (husband of Lette Milius) was the same person as Benjamin (husband of Lucy).

*Benjamin (son of Ruliff) was apparently a scoundrel. He might have taken after his father Ruliff, who apparently fathered an illegitimate son. (See The Knickerbockers in Amenia.)*

*Earlier we discussed Benjamin (son of Lawrence), who was the cousin of Benjamin (son of Ruliff). Both men were born in Amenia. And both men may have been scoundrels.*

## **Mysteries**

Even after all of this work, we still have one more Benjamin to worry about.

### **Benjamin Knickerbocker in Chemung County in 1850**

In 1850 there was a Benjamin Knickerbocker in Southport, Chemung County, N.Y. Southport is just south of Elmira, near the Pennsylvania state line.

This mystery Benjamin was 54. His female companion, Betsey Knickerbocker, age 50, was either Benjamin's wife or sister.

Benjamin in Southport in 1850 was roughly the same age as Benjamin (son of John), but this might be a coincidence. It might also be a coincidence that Andris Knickerbocker moved back from Wisconsin to Tioga County, Pennsylvania, 50 miles from Southport, sometime in the 1850's. (See page 41.)

If the Benjamin in Southport wasn't the son of John, then who was he? Southport was never a hot spot for Knickerbockers but was within striking distance of a number of family lines.

<b><u>Knickerbocker Line</u></b>	<b><u>Which son of Lawrence?</u></b>	<b><u>Towns</u></b>	<b><u>Distance from Southport</u></b>
Amenia Knickerbockers	Harmanus	Ithaca, NY	35 miles
		Naples, NY	65 miles
Pine Plains Knickerbockers	Cornelius	Benton, NY	55 miles
Salisbury CT Knickerbockers	John	Cayuta, Chemung Co	20 miles
		Athens PA & Barton NY	25 miles
		Cameron, NY	40 miles

Southport's largest and nearest group of Knickerbockers were descendants of the Salisbury CT family of John Knickerbocker. John's son Solomon had children all over the area. In the 1840's and 1850's descendants of John were in Cayuta, which was then part of Chemung County. They were also in Barton, Tioga County, and Athens, Bradford County PA. John also had a grandson, also named Solomon, in Cameron, Steuben County. (See *The Knickerbockers of Smithville Flats*.)

So far, we cannot identify the man in Southport New York in 1850. Unfortunately he disappeared after 1850. Fortunately there is no evidence that he played any role in the complex puzzle described in this report.

As always: More research is needed.

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