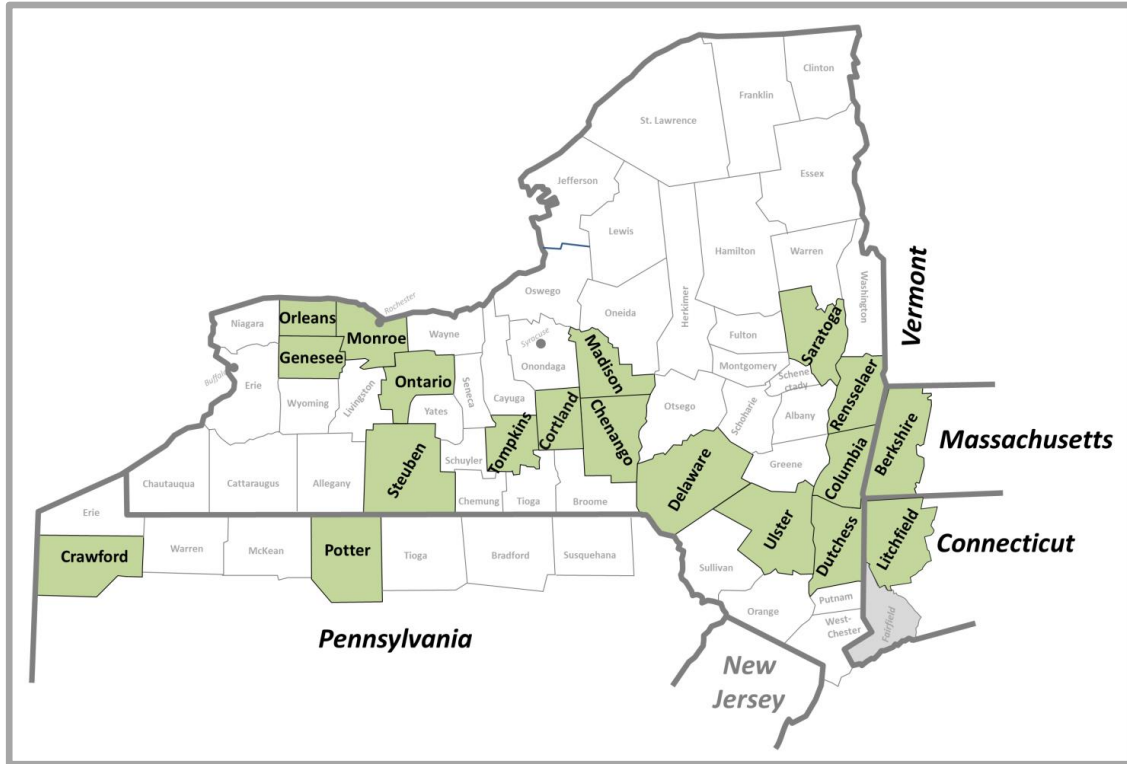


Migrations: Early 1800's



This section will discuss the initial wave of migrations, as Knickerbockers moved westward in search of cheaper land.

There were never many people named Knickerbocker. Even in Dutchess County, the Knickerbockers made up only a small fraction of the population. This became even more true as individual Knickerbocker families moved west.

The map above only includes the area around New York State. There were also Knickerbocker families that moved even farther west, particularly to Michigan. Those migrations to the “western territories” will be discussed later.

Nineteen Counties, as examples of the Initial Migration

The map above includes 19 highlighted counties, ranging from Berkshire Massachusetts in the east, to Crawford County Pennsylvania in the west.

In the 1850 census, these 19 counties had a total of ??? residents with the last name Knickerbocker. This represents ??? % of all Knickerbockers in the 1850 census.

The above map might give the impression that the Knickerbocker migration was slow and sequential, as people moved from Ulster County, to Delaware County, to Chenango County, and so on. This is not how the migration happened. Instead, individual families moved as the western counties were opened for development. We will highlight a few specific cases.

John Knickerbocker and his brother Bartholomew

Twelve Heads of Households in 1850 census:

Madison Co NY: Harley (son of John)

Hiram (son of John)

John (son of Bartholomew)

Possibly Wm (married to Harriet), son of Hiram?

Possibly William (whose wife was also named Harriet), son of Harmon?

Cortland Co NY: Harry (son of John)

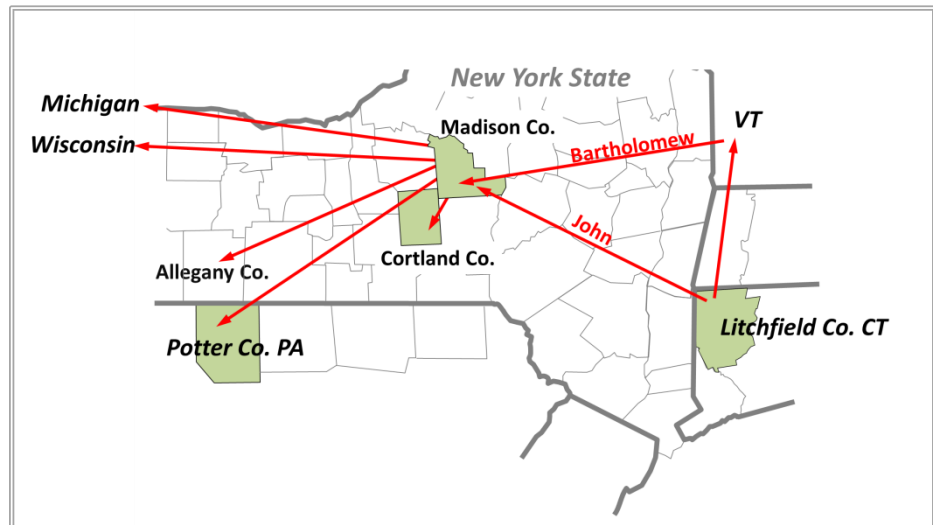
Allegany Co NY: Harman (son of John)

Potter Co PA: Peter (son of John)

Oliver, Amasa, Hiram, and Henry (sons of Peter)

Madison County New York was home to multiple Knickerbockers in the mid 1800's.

The majority of Knickerbockers in Madison County were descended from two brothers, John and Bartholomew Knickerbocker, from Litchfield County Connecticut.



John Knickerbocker married Lydia Jackson in Connecticut in 1785. The family moved to Eaton, Madison County in 1803. (To be more precise: they bought land in Chenango County, just before Madison County was spun off.) John had 5 sons, all of whom married and had sons of their own.

John's oldest son Harmon was born in Connecticut, but moved to Madison County with his parents. Harmon later moved to Allegany County, and then to Cattaraugus County. Harmon left only a few "Knickerbocker" descendants, via his son George. George spent most of his life in New York City, as a dry goods salesman. There are still a small number of "Knickerbockers" from this line.

John's middle sons were the founder of much larger lines of Knickerbockers:

Madison County: John's son Harley was born in Connecticut, but moved to Madison County with his parents. He left Madison County NY around 1816, but returned in about 1822. Harley and his second wife had a large family, and founded a long-time Knickerbocker line in Madison County.

Potter County: The first Knickerbocker documented to live in Potter County was Harley. Harley was the first schoolteacher in Potter County in 1816, and shows up in the 1820 census. However, Harley left Potter County after his first wife died. It was Harley's brother Peter who left a lasting mark in Potter County.

There is a lot of mis-information about Peter on sites like Ancestry and Findagrave, but the facts are clear. Four different census records (1850, 1860, 1870, and 1875) all show that Peter was born in Connecticut. Land records show that Peter bought land in Madison County, from his father, in 1810. Baptism records prove that Peter's

daughter Melissa was born in Madison County NY in 1819. Thus the Peter Knickerbocker who lived in Potter County can only be the son of John Knickerbocker. All of John's sons were born in Connecticut, but came to Madison County in the early 1800's.

Peter had a large family, and thus was the founder of the long-time Knickerbocker line in the Potter County area. Other descendants of Peter moved west, to Iowa and beyond. (The Knickerbocker Lodge in Big Bear California was founded by a descendant of Peter's.)

Cincinnati, Cortland County: Harry was born in Connecticut, but moved to Madison County with his parents in the early 1800's. Harry later moved to Cincinnati in Cortland County. He was the founder of the Knickerbocker line that is still in Cincinnati. (The Knickerbocker Country Club in Cincinnati was founded by Harry's great grandson.) Cincinnati is still a small town, with a population of only about 1,000 people, but is one of the few towns west of the Hudson River that has six generations of Knickerbockers in its cemeteries.

John's youngest son was Hiram. Hiram eventually moved to Calhoun County Michigan, but it appears there are no living "Knickerbockers" who are descended from Hiram.

Bartholomew Knickerbocker

Bartholomew's family is not as well documented as his brother John's.

Bartholomew and John were both sons of Harmon Knickerbocker and Thankful Hogeboom.

Bartholomew was still young when his father Harmon died. Thankful then married Stephen Pangborn. Bartholomew moved to Vermont, with his mother and stepfather, in about 1790. Bartholomew was in the 1800 census in Vermont, but did not remain in Vermont for long. He was in Nelson, Madison County by 1820. (Nelson is just west of Eaton.)

Bartholomew's son John was living in Eaton, Madison County by 1830. (Bartholomew's son John, and Bartholomew's brother John, were both in the 1830 census for Eaton.)

Bartholomew's son John moved to Wisconsin in about 1850. He founded a line of Knickerbockers in the Appleton, Outagamie Wisconsin.

The fate of Bartholomew's other children is less clear.

Hugh Knickerbocker and Rachel Schram

Eight Heads of Households in 1850 census:

Calhoun Co MI: William

Dutchess Co NY: Hugh (in Stanford)

Genesee Co NY: Peter H. (in Elba)

Hiram (in Elba; son of Peter, and grandson of Hugh)

Hiram (in Batavia; son of John, and grandson of Hugh. His first name was actually Myron.)

Monroe Co NY: Valentine (in Riga)

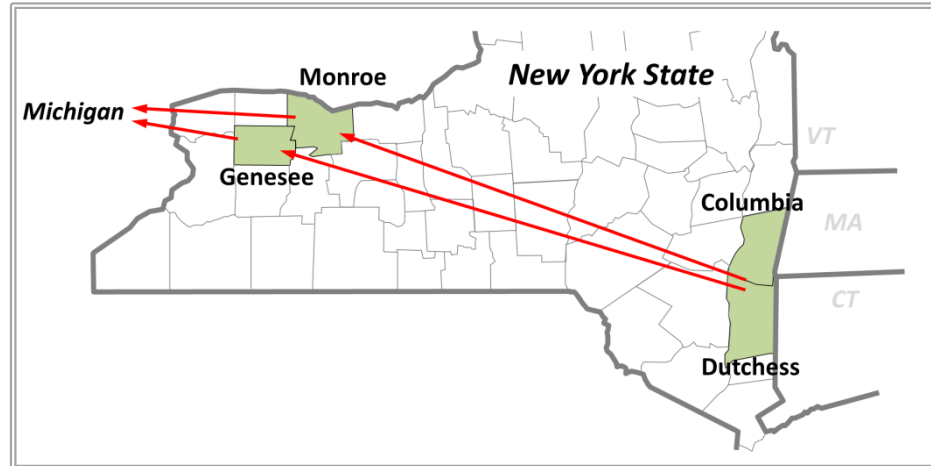
Benjamin (in Riga)

Henry (in Chili)

The family of Hugh Knickerbocker and Rachel Schram is mentioned in many genealogies, going back to the late 1800's. It is also included in many family trees on Ancestry and other sites.

Unfortunately, almost everybody gets this family wrong. We will therefore take some extra time here to document this family, and will include some of the key data.

Six sons of Hugh and Rachel moved to western New York starting in the 1820's and 1830's. The link between these six sons can be obtained by working backwards, starting with the youngest son, William, who died in Calhoun County Michigan. It also helps to look at one of the grandsons, Myron Knickerbocker, who also died in Calhoun County, Michigan.



William, John, and Peter H. Knickerbocker

Two brief biographies of William were included in Calhoun County histories. They document that (a) William was the son of Hugh and Rachel; (b) Rachel died in 1858; (c) William had a brother named John who died in Genesee County in about 1829; (d) William's oldest brother, Peter, served in the war of 1812.

These biographies match data from other sources.

For example, there is no doubt that Rachel Knickerbocker (nee Schram) was still alive in 1850. She was living with son William in Michigan for the 1850 census. Many genealogy sites incorrectly claim that Rachel died in 1811. They do this only so they can claim that Hugh's second wife was Rebecca Stickle. This is wrong, and is caused by confusion over two different men named Hugh Knickerbocker.

John Knickerbocker's fate is confirmed by the biography of son Myron, which gives John's date of death as October 2, 1829. Given the date of death, it is possible to find the probate records. John did not leave a will, but the probate records of John Knickerbocker of Elba, Genesee County mention Peter H. Knickerbocker.

The identity of Peter H. Knickerbocker is proven by a combination of bible records and baptism records.

In 1876, the widow of Peter H. Knickerbocker of Elba NY applied for a pension based on Peter's service in the war of 1812. This agrees with the statement from William Knickerbocker's biography that his oldest brother Peter served in 1812. As part of her pension application, she provided a family bible. The family bible of Peter H. Knickerbocker of Elba shows that he was born on July 15, 1788.

Baptism records in Dutchess County show that Hugh Knickerbocker and Rachel Schram had a son Petrus, who was born July 15, 1788. This exactly matches the birth date from the bible record of Peter H. Knickerbocker.

A published history of Genesee County states that Peter H. Knickerbocker arrived in about 1825. Land records show that Peter H. Knickerbocker bought property in Elba in 1832. Census records show that Peter H. Knickerbocker was in every census for Genesee County from 1830 until his death in 1875. Census records for his children show that the oldest children were born in Dutchess County.

When woven together, these and other records show clearly that William, John, and Peter H. Knickerbocker were sons of Hugh Knickerbocker and Rachel Schram.

Valentine and Henry Knickerbocker

Hugh's sons Valentine and Henry are linked via baptism records and land records.

Baptism records in Dutchess County show that Hugh and Rachel had a son named Valentin, who was born in 1797.

In 1833, Valentine Knickerbocker of Riga, Monroe County NY sold land to Henry and William Knickerbocker. The 1850 census records for Riga and Chili, Monroe County show that Valentine was 52, and Henry was 37. This matches the ages of Hugh's sons.

In the 1850 census, Henry's wife was named Emily.

Benjamin

In 1846, Benjamin Knickerbocker bought property in Riga, Monroe County from Henry and his wife Emily. The 1850 census records for Riga show that Benjamin was 42, matching the expected age for Hugh's son Benjamin.

Hugh Junior

For documentation on Hugh Junior, see the biography of his son Edwin Knickerbocker, in the Commemorative Biographical Record of Dutchess County, published in 1897. Hugh remained in the area near Stanford, Dutchess County.

Frederick

Unlike his brothers, Frederick is very hard to trace. He was baptized August 8 1804, the son of Hue Knickerbocker and Rachel Schram. His birth year lines up with the Frederick Knickerbocker who was Onondaga County in 1840, and Broome County in 1850. However, the man who lived in Broome County in 1850 gave his birth location as Connecticut. This is a mismatch.