

THE NEELYS
OF
NEELYTOWN, NEW YORK



Neelytown Church and Surrounding Community,
Orange County, 1798

R. Eden Martin

For my family

THE NEELYS
OF
NEELYTOWN, NEW YORK

R. Eden Martin

Chicago
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PREFACE

Three decades ago, in the middle 1980s, I tried to unravel the early history of my Martin family before they came in 1817 to what was then the Territory of Illinois. My Grandfather, I.J. Martin, in his 80's had written from memory a family history, recounting what he had been told about his ancestors in Virginia and Kentucky. The first Martin ancestor he knew about was named John Martin. John's wife was known as Sarah, and her last name was Scott; and family tradition suggested that she was somehow related to the family of the great general Winfield Scott, a Virginian. The oldest son of John and Sarah – James Scott Martin – had married a girl whose last name was “Figley.” She turned out to be Mary Jane (Jennie) Feagle. James Scott and Jennie had several children, including two sons: John and Joel Feagle.

A sister of James Scott – Jane Martin – had married one Charles Neely. Charles and Jane had a daughter named Ann.

John (son of James Scott and Jennie) married Ann (daughter of Jane and Charles Neely). Marriages of first cousins in frontier communities were not uncommon. This marriage between John and Ann produced a son – John Neely Martin – my great-grandfather.

John Neely Martin married his cousin, Rachel Elvina Martin -- a daughter of Joel Feagle Martin. Their marriage produced my Grandfather -- I.J. Martin.

I.J. thus had four grandparents:

On his father's side:

John Martin (son of James Scott Martin and Jennie Feagle);

Ann Neely (daughter of Charles Neely and Jane Martin);

On his mother's side:

Joel Feagle Martin (another son of James Scott Martin and Jennie Feagle);

Elizabeth Clements (or Clement).)

I devoted much of the little free time I had for several years in transcribing Grandfather I.J.'s family history memorandum and researching the details of the family's history in Kentucky, which, when they settled there in the late 1770's, was part of the State of Virginia. Research disclosed that for several years after the fall of 1797, the family had lived in Logan County in southwestern Kentucky. The early John Martin's wife was named Isabella, not Sarah. They and their adult children lived near each other, as well as near other Neelys.

However, research did not disclose where the Martins had been before 1797, when daughter Jane married Charles Neely. According to Grandfather's family history, they had lived somewhere in central Kentucky, not far from the Kentucky river. There had been several different John Martins in Kentucky during the years of the Revolution and the Indian Wars. I was able to eliminate some of them based on the reported names of their spouses. But finding the "right" John Martin before 1797 remained elusive.

I organized my material and published it for the family and a few libraries, *Fragments of Martin Family History*, Chicago, 1990; and I hoped that the next few years might bring a little more free time and an opportunity to put a light on the pre-1797 period. There seemed to be two significant leads: the fact that old John's wife's last name was reportedly "Scott"; and the fact that the Martins and Neelys had settled so near each other in Logan County in 1797 when Charles Neely married Jane Martin. Perhaps they had been close to each other before 1797. One promising fact was that Martins (including a John) and Neelys had appeared in abundance in southwest Virginia near Roanoke at about the right time. If I could find Scotts with the right names, or Neelys with the right names living next door to a John Martin, perhaps such leads would bear fruit.

As the years passed, I did not entirely give up family history research; but I did not have an opportunity to renew the search seriously until after I retired from an active law practice (in 2005) and work with a civic organization in Chicago (at the end of 2010). I then picked up the threads of research into the Scotts and the Neelys.

Despite a few tantalizing suggestions, research into the Scotts led nowhere. I came away from it with the suspicion that the family legend of a connection between the Martins and General Winfield Scott's family was just that – a legend – based, perhaps, on nothing more than the fact that “Sarah” Scott and the Winfield Scotts had been Virginians. Grandfather I.J. had written that James Scott Martin once joked about General Scott, the Whig candidate for President in 1852, saying, “If I had known that no one else was going to vote for Cousin Winfield, I would have voted for him myself.” (*Fragments*, at 100.) Out of such jesting, legends of family history may grow.

Research into the Neelys was more promising. I found a family headed by Major James Neely living in Nelson and later Washington Counties in central Kentucky. One of the young Neelys in Washington County was named Charles. It turned out that living nearby was a family headed by a John Martin, with children of roughly the “right” ages. Unfortunately, this candidate John apparently did not own land of his own, so his wife was not identified on any land transfers. But they were living near the Neelys; and they left central Kentucky and showed up in Logan County just before the marriage of Jane Martin and Charles Neely in the fall of 1797.

Moreover, research uncovered land litigation confirming that Charles was a son of Major James. Also, another son of Major James – David Neely – was living next to his brother Charles and in close proximity to the John Martin family near Russellville in Logan County. So there was little doubt that we had the “right” family of Neelys. The evidence that we had the “right” family of John Martins was more circumstantial, but there appeared to be no other John Martin family in the Nelson-Washington county area. How else could we explain the fact that the “right” John Martin family showed up in Logan County at the same time and next door to the “right” Neelys – and that the daughter of the one family married the son of the other?

I organized and summarized the results of this new research in another book, *More Fragments of Martin Family History*, Chicago, 2014. The earlier 1990 book had cast new light on the related Martins and Neelys in the post-1797 era and in Logan County. The 2014 book cast similarly-new light on these related

families in the pre-1797 era in Central Kentucky. We could now be reasonably sure that the father of Charles Neely was Major James. But what about the period and places before that?

The 2014 book had summarized what little we knew about a family of Neelys who had lived in or near Neelytown, a community in Ulster County, New York during the early and mid-18th century. It seemed likely that this is where the family of Major James Neely had come from. During the 1880 census, a daughter of Charles Neely stated that her father Charles had been born in New York.

Could we uncover more about the predecessors of Charles Neely in New York?

A leading compilation related to the Neelys had been published by Louise Y. Neely: *Neely and Martin Descendants*, Dallas, 1982. It was based in part on the research of Grace Renshaw, a Memphis researcher who had previously published *Neely Narrative*, Memphis, 1976. These two works set forth two conflicting theories:

First, Renshaw wrote about three brothers who came to New York named Robert, William and John. “Our first documented ancestor,” she wrote, was a James Neely who married Jane Grimes in Philadelphia in 1740, and later showed up in Augusta County, Virginia. Renshaw did not venture to guess which of the three brothers was James’ predecessor.

Second, Louise Neely believed that our first identifiable predecessor was a Charles Neely who came with his wife from Ireland and landed in New York in 1757-58. One of the sons of this “Charles the Immigrant” was Charles Neely II – and he was (she believed) the husband of Jane Martin. Louise likewise did not connect her earliest candidate (“Charles the Immigrant”) with any particular one of the three brothers Neely who had come to New York more than 30 years before the “Immigrant’s” arrival in 1757-58. Indeed, she did not connect him with the earlier residents of “Neelytown” in any way.

It now appears pretty clear that neither the James Neely who married Jane Grimes in Philadelphia nor “Charles the Immigrant” was an ancestor of our Charles Neely (who married Jane Martin in Kentucky in 1797). The James Neely who married Jane Grimes and showed up later in Augusta County was in a different DNA group than Major James (father of our Charles); and Charles II (son of “Charles the Immigrant”) was evidently killed by Indians before 1797, and, in any event, was not linked in any way to the family of Major James Neely,

the father of our Charles. Descendants of James and Jane Grimes Neely moved from Augusta County, Virginia, to Tennessee – not Kentucky.

A third theory had been developed over four decades by Dr. James Lawler, an indefatigable Neely family researcher. He believed Major James Neely was a son of Robert Neely, one of the three brothers who had showed up in the early years in Neelytown. His research and theories were passed on by him to Marie Davis Wiles and Earl Harrison Davis, who published a summary of their research – based heavily on Lawler’s work – in *Neely, 200 Years in America, Descendants of James and Ann Neely, and Edward and Susanna Goldsmith Neely*, 1974. However, neither Lawler nor Wiles/Davis believed that Major James was the father of Charles, who still remained outside the family trees of the Orange County, N.Y. Neelys.

Research since 2014 has shed new light on the ancestry of our Charles Neely.

The 2014 *More Fragments* set forth the comprehensive evidence that Charles Neely’s father was Major James Neely, and that this family had come from near Neelytown. I will not repeat the analysis of that evidence here; it is available in the book and on my family history web site, edenmartin.com.

That leaves several question: Who was the wife of Major James – and mother of Charles? Who were the parents of Major James Neely? And were they part of the Neelytown group in New York?

Several sources, including Dr. James Lawler, say that the wife of Major James was named Ann, and that her maiden name was Wallace, suggesting that she might have been related to the family of the famous Scots leader. I have found no evidence to support these claims; and I now suspect that the notion that Major James’ wife was named “Ann” is based on the fact that an “Ann” Neely appeared in 1793 as a purchaser of land on Cartwright’s Creek in Washington County, Kentucky, near where Major James and other Neelys lived. But that Ann Neely was a widow of Isaac Neely who died in the spring of 1790. (*More Fragments*, at 135.)

As to the parents and grandparents of Major James, a few internet sites assert that (1) the parents of Major James were an earlier James Neely and his wife Jean, and that (2) the father of that earlier James was William Neely (b. circa 1690) – one of a supposed early trio of Neelytown brothers. However, these sites do not disclose the sources for these two findings. I’ve been able to find no evidence that the wife of the senior James was named “Jean.” Without

references to early documents (wills, deeds, etc.) or histories (such as the several histories of Orange County), one may not rely with confidence on such lists. Repetition does not increase reliability.

That, of course, does not make such listed relationships wrong. I believe the evidence now points to the likelihood that the father of Major James was the earlier James Neely – let's call him James, Sr. I know of no evidence that the earlier James' father was William Neely – or, for that matter, either of the other two supposed three early brothers of Neelytown.

Another unsupported assumption, originated perhaps in the unpublished volume by Wiles/Davis, Neely, *200 Years in America* (1974), is that the brother of Major James Neely – Edward Neely – moved from the New Windsor area in Orange County, New York, to Washington County, Kentucky, near the home of Major James. In fact, Edward Neely died in New Windsor, 1815, leaving his wife Margaret. However, two of their sons, Edward II and Richard, evidently moved to Logan County in the first decade of the 19th Century and lived near their cousins, the children of Major James.

The work done by earlier generations of Neely family researchers has been very useful, particularly as to the family relationships among generations in the post-1800 period. I think they would agree with the proposition that all such work should be regarded as preliminary and tentative – subject to correction or amplification by later researchers. Recent research by James C. Neely based on DNA evidence has already cast new light on groupings of related Neelys in America and their possible origins in Europe.

So – what do we know (or think is likely to be true) about the Neelys of Ulster (later Orange) County, New York? That's what this little book is about.

Chapter 1

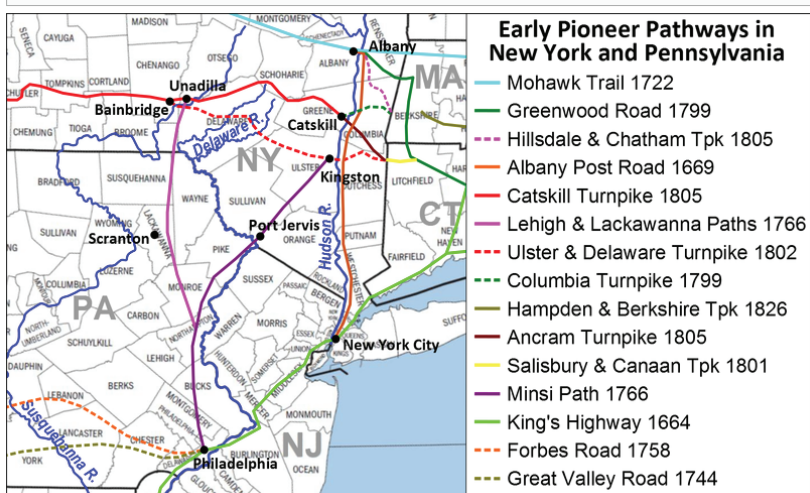
NEELYTOWN, NEW YORK

Early in the 18th century a group of Neelys settled in what was then Ulster County, New York, north of West Point and just west of the Hudson River. The community came to be known as “Neelytown.” In 1798 the area where Neelytown was located was carved out of Ulster County and transferred to Orange County, just to the south of Ulster.

The Neelys were Scotch-Irish – lowland Scots who had migrated from Scotland to Northern Ireland beginning in the early 1600’s, and then to America. The great expert on the “peopling” of North America, Bernard Bailyn, in *Voyagers to the West*, New York, 1986, explained that while the English chiefly populated the central colonies – Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia – over 80% of the Scots settled initially in New York and North Carolina. (*Id.*, at 205). Also, unlike the English, about half of the Scots traveled in mature family groups. (*Id.*, at 137, 224.) “These were families sufficiently prosperous or well connected to have managed their transportation and resettlement without resorting to bonded servitude.” (*Id.*, 224.) The main pathways were the rivers; and the two primary ways of getting to the opening areas of New York were via the Delaware and Hudson rivers. (*Id.*, at 581.)

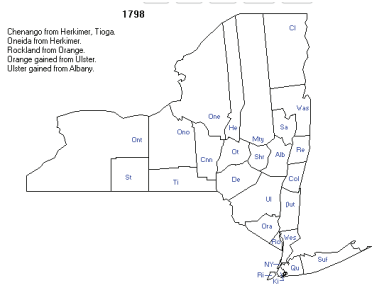
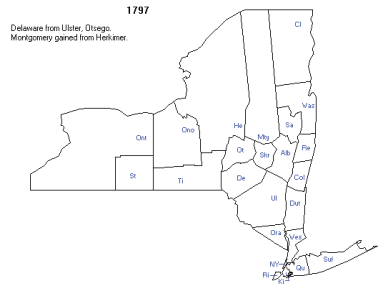
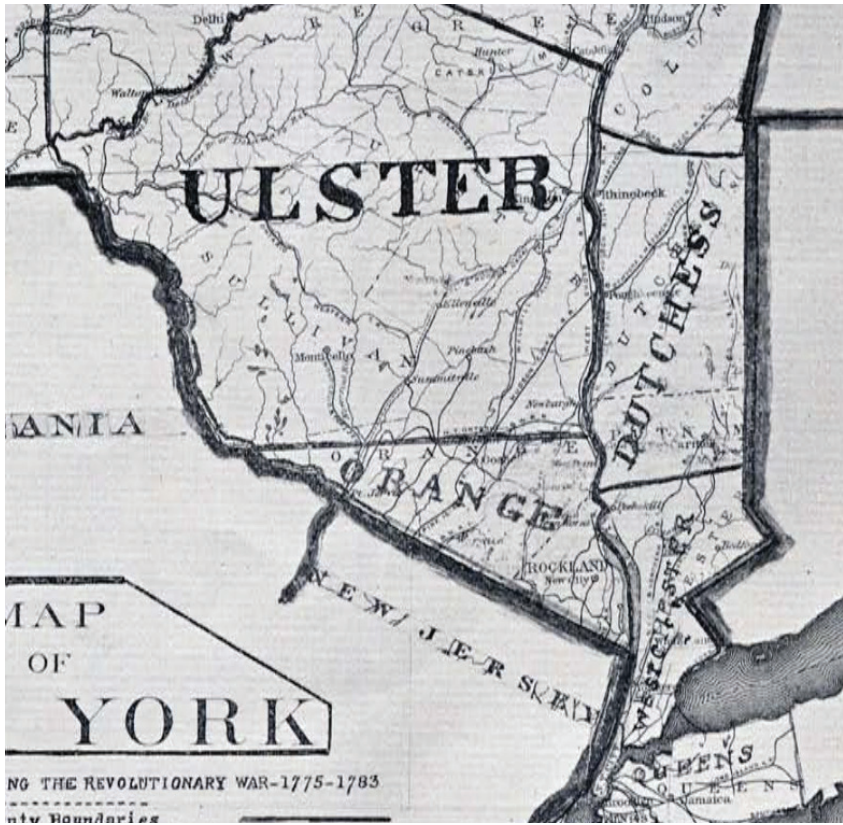
According to one scholar, James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish, A Social History* (Chapel Hill, 1962), these immigrants came to America in several waves – the first of which occurred in 1717-18: “This first movement, so significant as a path-opener, had as its immediate cause the years of drought; but it was the opinion of Archbishop King and Dean Swift that not even the dire effects of bad crops and high prices would have been enough to make the people move if they had not had the added goad of rack-renting” – the practice of raising rents on land after the period of a lease had expired and renting to the highest bidder.

According to Leyburn, “For the entire fifty-eight years of the Great Migration, the large majority of Scotch-Irish made their entry to America [via the Delaware River ports] through Philadelphia or Chester or New Castle.” The map below shows that immigrants could have traveled from Philadelphia via the Delaware north to Port Jervis, in western Orange County, N.Y. The fact that at least some of “our” Neelys were first in Westchester County, then farther North along the Hudson River in Ulster/Orange Counties, suggests that they probably came to America via the port of New York. (Charles Clinton, who settled in Ulster County, New York, brought his small colony from Ireland to America in 1729 via Cape Cod.)



Size of this preview: 800 x 479 pixels. Other resolution: 1.752 x 1.049 pixels.

A 19th century map of New York during the Revolutionary war period 1775-1783 shows the approximate boundaries of Ulster and Orange counties before the transfer of the southern slice of Ulster to Orange. Neelytown did not appear on this map, but was in fact located in that later-transferred southern slice of Ulster county – below the letter “E” in “Ulster.



The two maps above – from 1797 and 1798 – show the effect of the transfer of territory from southern Ulster to Orange County in 1798. Ulster and Orange Counties appear just above New York City and to the west of the Hudson.

The earliest map I have found of the area that included Neelytown is a map of the town of Montgomery, Orange County, January 24, 1798, by David Gallatian and W. H. Smith. (Identifier: NYSA_A0273078_360. Repository New York State Archives.) The map is oriented with south to the left, north to the right.

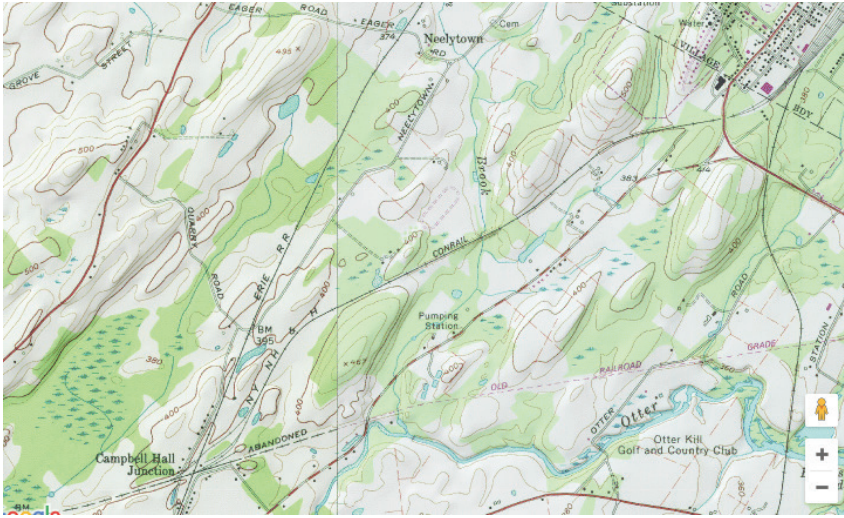


A portion of the Montgomery map is reproduced below in detail; it shows Walkill River on the top, Good Will Church on the lower right, and – to the left – the Neelytown Church, with the home of W. Trimbale nearby. The homes of the W. Eagers, Sr. and Jr., appear just south of the Neelytown Church.



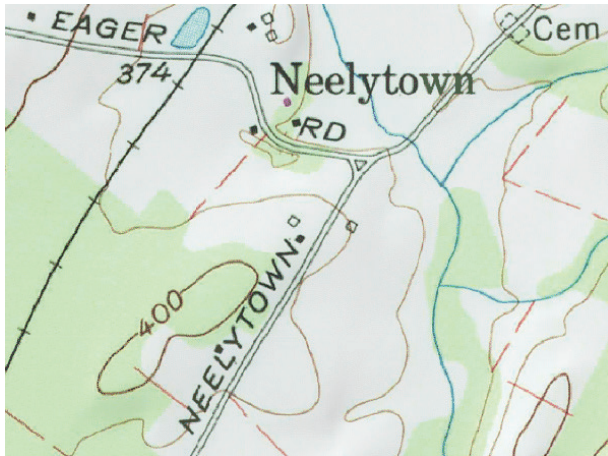
Detail of 1798 map of Montgomery (south on the left; north on the right). The residence of W. Trimble appears just north of Neelytown Church.

A short distance “below” the Neelytown Church – i.e., to the east and slightly north of it – appears the residence of C. Clinton . Charles Clinton, 1690-1773, was born in Ireland and came to America in 1729. After a difficult trip he and his family settled in Ulster County in 1731, in an area called Little Britain. One of his sons was James Clinton, 1736-1812, Revolutionary War general and father of Dewitt Clinton, later Governor of New York. Another of his sons was George Clinton, 1739-1812, Governor of New York for 21 years, 1777-1795, 1801-04, and Vice President of the United States, 1805-12, under Presidents Jefferson and Madison.



A modern topographical map shows Campbell Hall at the lower left, and Neelytown in the upper center of the map, the two connected by “Neelytown road.”

A more detailed view of the Neelytown location shows it to be at the intersection of “Eager road,” running east and west, and the “Neelytown road,” running north and south. The Neelytown cemetery appears a few yards to the northeast of Neelytown itself.



Detail: modern topographical map showing Neelytown. Neelytown Church cemetery in upper right – on west side of the road.



Neelytown – Google maps

Neelytown was centered near the intersection of Eager and Neelytown roads, as well as Beaverdam Brook.

In the early 18th Century, the precinct which included Neelytown was known as Shawangunk. The Ruttenber/Clark *History of Orange County* confirms that Neelytown was “about two miles” northeast of Campbell Hall. (Ruttenber/Clark, at 657.) The site where Neelytown was located appears near the intersection of Eager road and Neelytown road, though according to the early histories of the place, the settlement – and the Neelys – spread out in all directions from that center. The local historian Eager described the entire settlement as comprising “about four miles square.”

Today, the little village of Maybrook appears about a mile to the east of the site where Neelytown used to be. The Neelytown road still runs several

miles north-south, roughly paralleling Beaverdam Brook, from an intersection on the north with Goodwill Road, on the outskirts of what is now Montgomery, southward – through the Eager road intersection, to Campbell Hall. Just south of Campbell Hall on a modern map is the little village of Hamptonburgh.

In 1665 New York State was divided into twelve counties – including Ulster and Orange. But as settlement expanded north and west from New York City, civil government came first to Orange County – the southern of the two counties, nearest to New York. The organization of Ulster County came a little later, beginning in 1709. Taxes seem to have been assessed within Shawangunk precinct during the period 1714-15. (Ruttenber/Clark, at 19.)

* * *

Several histories of Orange County were compiled or written during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Though Neelytown was in Ulster County for roughly 8 decades, its origins are covered in these histories of Orange County.

The first such history was by Samuel Eager, son of an early settler of the area (after whom the Eager road was named). *An Outline History of Orange County*, Samuel W. Eager, Newburgh, 1846. Eager reported, at 46:

In like manner the eastern portion of Montgomery, as it was before the erection of Hamptonburgh, was settled by Irish emigrants, who located in the extensive neighborhood called Neelytown, and its vicinity,—among whom were the Blakes, Eagers, Neeleys, Barbers, Booths, and others. This was at an early period and more than one hundred years since. The now town of Crawford, and perhaps at a period nearly as early, was settled by Irish emigrants, among whom were the Crawfords, Johnstons, Elders, Hills and others. The Irish continued to keep up a scattering emigration to various localities in the County, and contributed quite their proportion to the general mass of population and labor of settling a new country.

Neelytown.—This place was settled before 1741 and by emigrants from Ireland. In that year William Eager, the great-grandfather of the writer, made a purchase of several hundred acres and located it; a part of which is still in the possession of his descendents of the fourth generation from him. When he came, he found, at least, two settlers there before him—Mr. John Neely and Charles Booth—both snugly seated in their new habitations. At the first organization of the town in 1768 we find the name of William Eager the second, (son of the first settler of the name) on the records as overseer of the poor. The family of Neely gave name to the settlement, and, at this day, the name has run out in all that vicinity. This portion of the town is a body of fine land, and well adapted to grass and grain. Through the central portion of the settlement runs the Beaver Dam Brook, a never failing stream fed wholly by springs, but, lying low, furnishes no water power. Along this are the natural meadows extending in one unbroken glade from just south of the Goodwill or Walkill Meeting house to Campbell Hall on the Otter Kill. This settlement was of large extent, reaching from the Goodwill meeting house at the north down to Campbell Hall at the south; and from the Walkill, near Capt. James McBride's on the west, to the west line of the town of New Windsor, about four miles square.

Some of the early settlers of the town, now recollected, were, Little John Neely, Grandy John Neely, Chas. Booth, his sons Charles and George, Wm. Eager, his sons Willam and Thomas, Jas. Houston, Patrick Barber, John Blake, Alex. Tremble, James M cCobb, Rob't Monell, Teunis Van Orsdell, Gideon Pelton, Robert Sutter, Rev. Robert Annan, James McBride, William Jackson, Jas. Jackson, Dr. Clinton, Col. John Nicholdson, and James Barkley.

These old settlers, of different religious creeds, with others of the established church, in about 1765 joined their temporal means for spiritual benefit, built what was called the *Neelytown Church*, and called the Rev. Robert Annan to be their pastor. The church was *Associate Reformed Presbyterian*, a more particular history of which we will lay before the reader in this paper. In old times, when churches were few and the population sparse, a congregation covered a large extent of territory. Within the recollection of the writer, Messrs. Shaw, McWilliams, Mrs. Wilson and others from Scotchtown;

Eager dated the settlement of the Neelytown community by reference to his own family's arrival in 1741, when the Eager's "found Mr. Neely on the farm now owned and occupied by Mrs. Mary Tremble... at the north end of the Tamarack Swamp, beside a beautiful spring of clear water." (Eager, at 256):

With the reader's permission we return to Neelytown.— We establish the date of this settlement by the age of William Eager, the second son of the first settler of that name. He was born on the ocean while his parents were coming to the country, and died in 1813, aged 85. When the family arrived they went into Westchester county and remained there for thirteen years, when they removed to Neelytown. If William had lived till 1846, he would have been 118 years old, which taken from 1846 leaves 1728, the year of arrival. Subtract the 13 years spent in Westchester and it leaves 105 years, which taken from 1846 gives 1741, the year the family came to the place. When they came, they found Mr. Neely on the farm now owned and occupied by Mrs. Mary Tremble and Mr. Charles Booth, at the north end of the Tamarack Swamp, beside a beautiful spring of clear water. When these two individuals came we do not know—probably but a few years before. The Booths are English; the Neelys and Eagers, Irish.

So, the founder John Neely lived on the farm "now" – 1846 – owned and occupied by Mrs. Mary "Tremble."

The Neely family initially were part of a congregation that formed the Good Will Church, roughly two miles north of the center of the Neelytown community. Later, a church was formed at Neelytown itself "about 1765" and became known as the "Neelytown Church." (Eager, at 321):

ASSOCIATE REFORMED CHURCH OF NEELYTOWN.

This congregation was formed before the Revolution, in about 1765. The meeting house was erected about the same time and called "Neelytown Church," from a family by the name of Neely living in the vicinity, who were early settlers. The Rev. Robert Annan, of the Associate Presbytery of Pennsylvania, was the first pastor—in connection with the Little Britain congregation as a united charge—to whom he preached for many years with great acceptance. It was during his ministry between these congregations that the union was formed between the Associate Presbyterians of Pennsylvania and New York, and the united body assumed

A road connected the Neelytown community with New Windsor, to the east (Eager, at 620):

ref Dunning of Scotentown, Orange county.

The old public highway leading from Neelytown to New Windsor, ran centrally through the whole town, and along and in the vicinity of it, were the families of the Woods, Youngs, Cross, King, Morrison, Dill, Smith, Man Neely, Beattie, Burnet, Nicholson, Monell, Denniston, McClaughry, Humphrey, Galloway, Parshal, Crawford, Belknap, Clinton, Falls, Mulliner, and many other early settlers whose descendents are still numerous in the town and county.

The second history of the county was *History of Orange County, New York*, compiled by E.M. Rutenber and L.H. Clark, Philadelphia, 1881. Rutenber also wrote a *History of the Town of New Windsor*, Orange County, Newburgh, 1911. (The “town” of New Windsor, east of Neelytown, referred to the township – not just the village of that same name.)

The compilers of the 1881 volume described Neelytown as “a fine body of land and well adapted to grass and grain. Through the central portion of the settlement runs the Beaverdam Creek. Along this are the natural meadows, extending in one unbroken glade from just south of the Goodwill meeting-house at the north down to Campbell Hall on the south, and from the Wallkill on the west to the line of New Windsor on the east.” (at 374):

Neelytown was settled at an early date. Wm. Eager, some time about 1728–29, purchased a tract and located upon it, a part of which remained in the hands of his descendants of the fourth generation.

The Neelys, Booths, and others were in the neighborhood either then or soon after, as shown above and in the church records below. Neelytown is a fine body of land and well adapted to grass and grain. Through the central portion of the settlement runs the Beaverdam Creek. Along this are the natural meadows, extending in one unbroken glade from just south of the Goodwill meeting-house at the north down to Campbell Hall on the south, and from the Wallkill on the west to the line of New Windsor on the east.

A general statement of early settlers on this territory would include Little John Neely, Grandy John Neely, Charles Booth (his sons Charles and George), Wm. Eager (his sons William and Thomas), James Houston, Patrick Barber, John Blake, Alexander Tremble, James McCobb, Robert Monell, Teunis Van Orsdell, Gideon Pelton, Robert Sutter, Rev. Robert Annan, James McBride, William Jackson, James Jackson, Dr. Chas. Clinton, Col. John Nicholson, James Barkley.

Ruttenber/Clark added that Neelytown was “the old and well-known neighborhood on both sides of the town line, – Montgomery and Hamptonburgh.” (at 655.)

The third was *The History of Orange County, New York*, edited by Russel Headley, Middletown, N.Y., 1908. The chapter on the town of Montgomery was written by David A. Morrison. The settlement of Neelytown was part of the original patent of land to Thomas Noxon in 1720, consisting of 2000 acres, which according to Morrison was located originally in the precinct of Shawangun, in Ulster County, where it remained until 1743, when it became part of the Wallkill precinct. Wallkill precinct was divided into two parts in 1772 – Wallkill and Hanover; and in 1782 the Hanover precinct (likely because of its association with the English crown) was renamed the precinct of Montgomery. Morrison has this to say about the origins of Neelytown (at 305):

The Neelytown section adjoins the Goodwill neighborhood on the south, and was so called from a large and influential family which appears to have been active in bringing in the early settlers, but whose name has entirely disappeared from the community. It was settled before 1726. In that year the names of John Neely and Thomas Neely appear as actual settlers. At that time Charles Booth who purchased 1,000 acres of land had built his first house near where Mr. William Conning lived in later years—his two sons, Charles and George Booth, were with him. A defective list of freeholders made in 1728 contains the name of Alexander Neely. William and Robert Neely were witnesses to a will in 1731, and the name of John Neely, Jr., is seen in an old record. William Eager with his sons, William and Thomas, came to Neelytown in 1741. He built a log house where the residence of Mr. Samuel W. Eager now stands. His second house was of stone and was situated a short distance south of the first and built before the Revolution. His descendants are very numerous and are widely scattered. Samuel W. Eager, Orange County's first historian, was one of them. Other early settlers in this section were James McCobb, who located at a very early date on the Sherwood farm, now “Nestledown”; William Jackson, James Jackson, James Houston, William Young, Captain Alexander Trimble, 1764; Patrick Barber, 1764; Captain James McBride and Rev. Robert Annan, 1765.

Information about Neelytown is also contained in a history of the Goodwill Church. *The Goodwill Memorial, The First One Hundred and Fifty Years*, Montgomery, Orange County, N.Y., James M. Dickson, Newburgh, 1880, at 11 et seq:

In 1683, the counties of Orange and Ulster were organized, with somewhat indefinite limits, but with "Murderer's Creek" and a line running thence westward as the dividing line. In 1709, when the Palatines settled at Quassaick (afterwards Newburgh), the territory immediately north of Murderer's creek, constituting the southern part of Ulster county, had no civil organization. Shortly after, or about 1714, the precinct of the Highlands and that of Shawangunk were erected, by order of the court. The former embraced, substantially, the territory now included in the towns of Newburgh and New Windsor ; the latter, the boundaries of which were somewhat indefinite, extended back over this whole region, from which, by the act of Dec. 17th, 1743, the precinct of Wallkill was erected.

A few years later we find this whole region claimed by patentees, who were generally connected in some manner with the government, very few of whom ever became actual residents here. Taking our stand at the point where the Goodwill Church was afterwards built, we are within the limits of the patent to James Smith, Secretary of the Province of New Jersey, dated Dec. 15th, 1722. This tract was a somewhat irregular strip extending from a point about half a mile east of the village of Montgomery to the Colden property (afterwards Coldenham). The northern boundary of our parsonage farm is on a line with the northern limit of Smith's patent.

To the south of this, extending through what is now termed Neelytown, Thomas Noxon owned by letters patent dated May 28th, 1720, two thousand acres. Immediately east of this — extending from the Smith tract in a southerly direction — was Patrick McKnight's two thousand acres, patent

dated April 9th, 1719; and to the east of this again were the patents of Patrick Hume, dated Nov. 29th, 1721, Cornelius Low & Co., dated March 17th, 1720, and Phineas McIntosh, dated April 9th, 1719. North of James Smith's patent was that of Archibald Kennedy, dated April 9th, 1719; and north of that again the patent of James Alexander, dated April 9th, 1719 — while to the west of Noxon's patent was a five thousand acre tract extending beyond the Wallkill, granted by letters patent dated July 17th, 1720, to Francis Harrison, Oliver Schuvler and Allan Jarratt. ...

We return to "the people of Wallkill." Their incoming we may date from about 1724-5, but as we attempt to trace it we are met with the difficulty that the early deeds of their lands were not recorded at the time they were executed and but few of them were recorded afterwards. These few, however, are invaluable as guides.

From them we learn that on the 4th of May, 1721, *Thomas Neely*, of Westchester county, purchased from Patrick McKnight two hundred acres of land, and about the same time or a little later, the exact date not ascertained, *Samuel Neely* purchased from Thomas Noxon four hundred acres. Among the witnesses whose names appear on McKnight's deed to *Thomas Neely*, we find that of John McNeal. The Neelys were still in Westchester County. When they came here we cannot definitely ascertain; but from the above, in connection with what follows, we can hardly fail to recognize in them and John McNeal, with the patentees, the men who were specially active in bringing in the colony.

On the 5th of July, 1726, John Davis bought fifty acres from Phineas McIntosh, on which he had already erected his dwelling, and in connection with this purchase we meet with the names of James Gambell, *John Neely and Thomas Neely*, apparently as actual settlers. The year following, John Humphrey purchased land in the western part of what is now known as Little Britain. In this year also, according to family tradition, Archibald, James and Robert Hunter came to the precinct. The former purchased two hundred acres of land

from James Alexander—including the farm now occupied by Henry Suydam. In 1728, Cadwallader Colden occupied land in the region still known as Coldenham. In 1729, Peter Mullender and Robert Burnet bought land near that of John Humphrey, though from an old tax list of the precinct both Humphrey and Mullender appear to have been within its limits as early as 1724-5. A manifestly defective list of freeholders in the precincts of the Highlands and of Shawangunk, made in 1728, contain the names of *Alexander Neely* and John Mackneel (McNeal), Jr., with others not mentioned above, who, no doubt, belonged to “the people of Wallkill.” These are but hints at the incoming population.

According to church tradition, before the current Goodwill Church building was constructed, there was a rude building, probably built of logs. Then the “first structure” was built in 1735; a deed of a highway in that year refers to “the meeting house, now erecting near the settlement of Adam Graham.” The next church building was erected in 1765; it is – with subsequent remodeling – the “main framework of the present structure.”

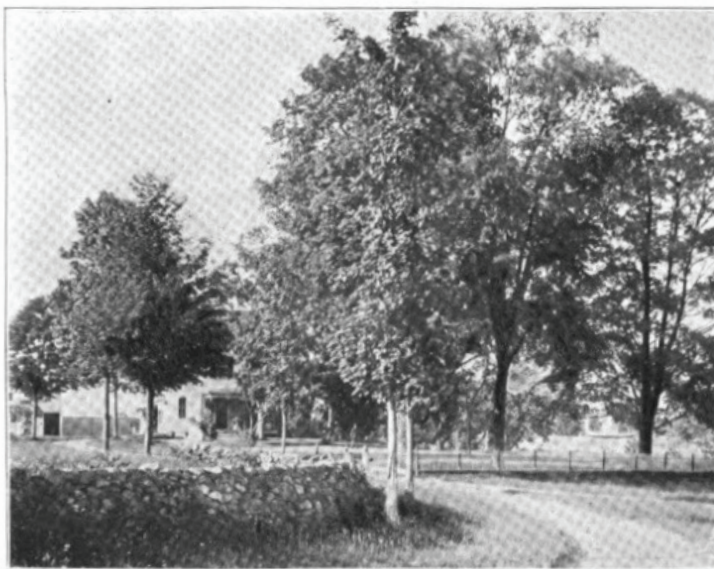
John Neely and others in his family were members of the congregation of the Goodwill Church for several decades, until the “Neelytown” church was built in the community that bore their name. So far as I know, no pictures of the Neelytown Church survive. The cemetery adjacent to the old church still survives; but it has only one Neely grave marker – for John Neely, died February 9, 1811, 32 years and 9 days. Only a few stones go back to the late 18th century – and none of those bear the name Neely. *Cemeteries of Town of Hamptonburgh*, Orange County Genealogical Society, Goshen, 1980.

Below is a picture of the Goodwill Church and parsonage as they appeared in the late 19th century.

GOODWILL

REV. J. H. THOMPSON

The Goodwill Church, the Hadden stone house and the Downs house, form a group of the most ancient landmarks of a large portion of the Wallkill Valley. The church was taken under the care of the Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1720, and is, after Goshen Presbyterian Church, the oldest of any denomination in the county. The Hadden house was built at or about the same time as the founding of the church, and the Downs house soon after, not later than 1735. These houses served not only as dwellings, but as forts as well. Today they stand about equal distance from the church, on either side, like gray and weather-beaten sentries that did their duty in a by-gone age, in protecting the house of worship and “God’s Acre” from becoming the scene of conflict and of blood. One can not but regret that there is no record of the deeds of heroism enacted within those walls.



GOODWILL CHURCH AND PARSONAGE, GOODWILL, N. Y.
REV. J. H. THOMPSON PASTOR.

Here is a picture of the Goodwill Church as it appears today:



When the Neelys arrived in Ulster county, it was largely unsettled frontier. Indians lived nearby, and violent flare-ups were frequent throughout much of the 18th century. A small Indian village was once located where the Eagers later developed their farm. The period 1746-1748 was a period of great alarm throughout both Ulster and Orange Counties. And as the French and Indian War got underway in mid-century, New Windsor and the entire Wallkill Valley became the scene of much Indian fighting, as recounted in the early histories.

The best evidence of the seriousness of the Indian threat lies in the stone defensive structures built by the colonists for their residences and the lists of militiamen that appear in the colonial records for 1738 and later. The Hadden House, near Goodwill church, was one of those structures.



OLD STONE HADDEN HOUSE, NEAR GOODWILL CHURCH

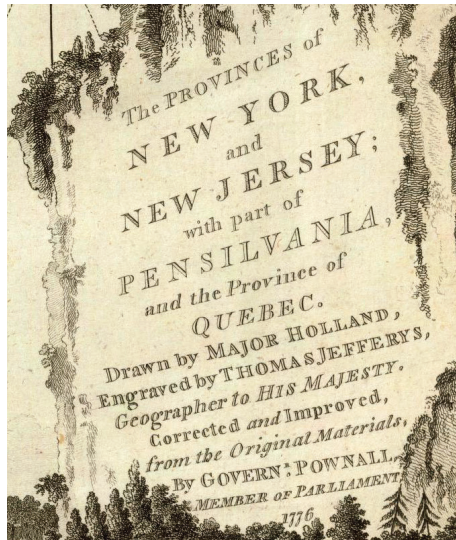
Erected during the Revolutionary War, and used by the early settlers as a defence from Indian attacks.

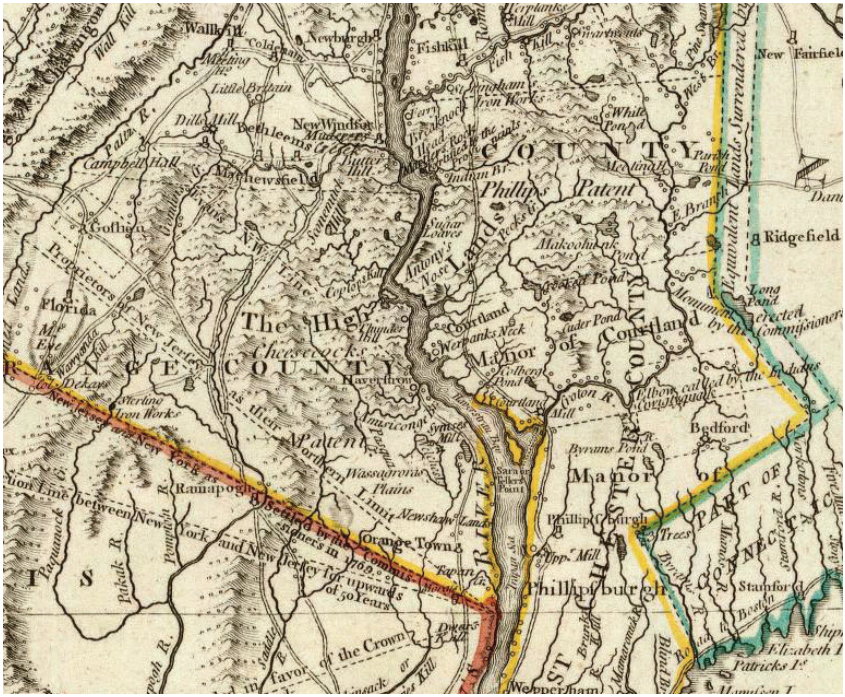
Built in 1760 and in the Hadden family since 1800

Chapter 2

EARLY MAPS OF ULSTER AND ORANGE COUNTIES

The first map of New York showing Ulster and Orange Counties that I have been able to find is an English map that dates back to 1776. It was drawn by a Major Holland and published in London by Governor Pownall:





The Holland map, 1776



Detail from 1776 map

A detailed view of the relevant portion of the 1776 map shows Campbell Hall, which was just south of Neelytown – but does not list Neelytown itself. On the other hand, it does list Dills Mill, which is roughly where Neelytown was located, and is of interest because of the close connection between the Neelys and the Dills, as will appear below. This 1776 map shows a road connecting Campbell Hall and a “Meeting H.” to the north – probably the Goodwill Church. The town of Wallkill became Montgomery.

A map of the Province of New York compiled by order of William Tryon and drawn in part by Claude J. Sauthier, also published in London 1776, shows the boundary line that then existed between Ulster and Orange Counties, making clear that Wallkill and New Windsor at that time were on the Ulster side of the dividing line.



Detail, Sauthier map, 1776, showing New Windsor north of the dividing line between Ulster and Orange Counties

A few years later, probably in 1783, a cartographer named Simeon De Witt, 1756-1834, drew a military topographic map entitled: “Sketch of the Country about New Windsor, and the roads intersecting it, with names of the principal inhabitants.” This map – though faded and indistinct – shows roads, some buildings and a few owners’ names, streams and landforms. It does not extend west far enough to cover the area of Neelytown, though it does show “Little Britain.”

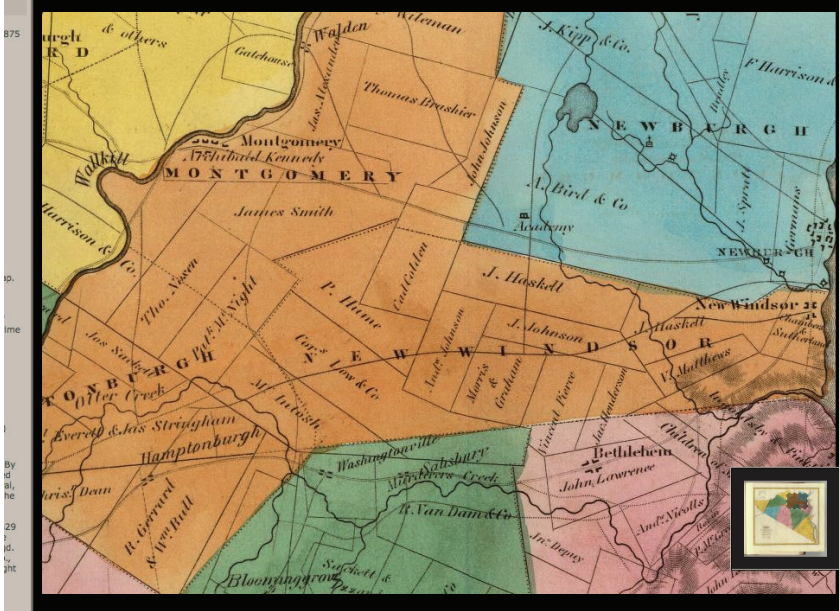
A map of the town of Montgomery made in 1798 (left to right is south to north), shows the Neelytown community on the lower left. More about this map later.



1798 Map of Montgomery, Orange County

Subsequent maps appearing in 1795, 1804, 1814, and 1845 show New Windsor but likewise do not show a town or settlement of “Neelytown.” Apparently the place was never large enough to warrant separate cartographic notice.

Portions of maps of Orange County by Burr, 1829 and 1840, show the townships of Montgomery and Hamptonburgh, and also the original land patents to Messrs. Noxon, McNight, and Hume, portions of which were acquired by various Neelys.

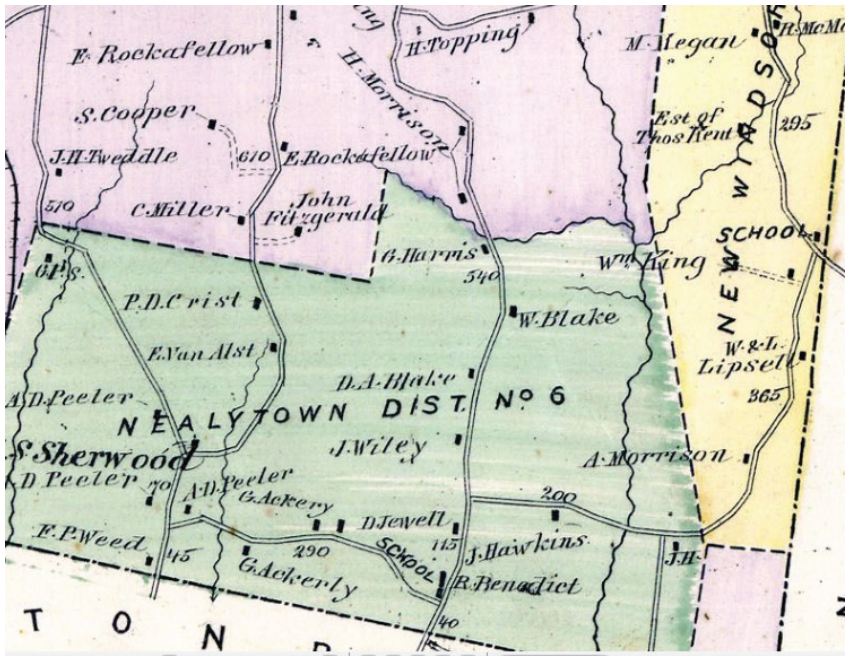


Burr, 1829



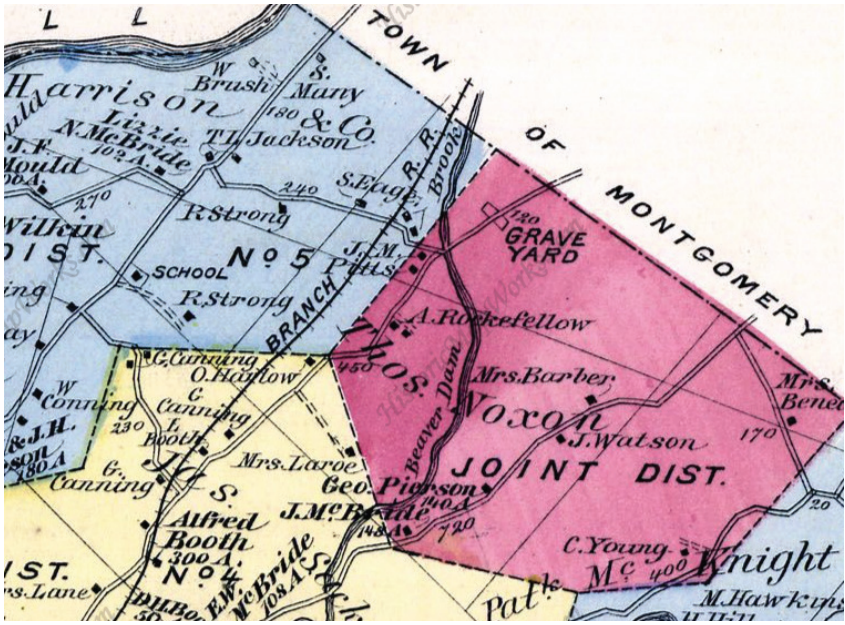
Burr, 1840

An 1875 map of Orange County, published by Andreas, Baskin & Burr, shows the townships of Montgomery, Hamptonburgh, and New Windsor. Montgomery contains the area of “Neelytown” district. No Neelys appear on the map in 1875 (though “E. Rockefeller” does).



Detail 1875 Map

Just south of Montgomery township and the “Neelytown district” was Hamptonburgh township, which contained the Noxon patent land (in red), including the intersection of Eager and Neelytown roads and the old Neelytown church graveyard. Again, no Neely names appear on this 1875 map (though “A. Rockefeller” does).



Hamptonburgh Township. Neelytown "Grave Yard" at top

Chapter 3

THE PROBABLE
LOCATION OF THE
HOME OF JOHN NEELY

In the passage quoted earlier from Eager's *Outline History of Orange County*, the historian—a descendant of the early settler, William Eager—reported (at 46, 254): that Neelytown was a “body of fine land,” and that, “Through the central portion of the settlement runs the Beaver Dam Brook ...” Neelytown reached “from the Goodwill meeting house at the north down to Campbell Hall at the south; and from the Walkill, near Capt. James McBride’s on the west, to the west line of the town of New Windsor, about four miles square.”

Eager added that when his ancestor William Eager arrived, about 1741 (at 256): “*they found Mr. Neely on the farm now owned and occupied by Mrs. Mary Tremble ... at the north end of the Tamarack Swamp, beside a beautiful spring of clear water.*” Here is the key passage (forgive the repetition):

With the reader's permission we return to Neelytown.— We establish the date of this settlement by the age of William Eager, the second son of the first settler of that name. He was born on the ocean while his parents were coming to the country, and died in 1813, aged 85. When the family arrived they went into Westchester county and remained there for thirteen years, when they removed to Neelytown. If William had lived till 1846, he would have been 118 years old, which taken from 1846 leaves 1728, the year of arrival. Subtract the 13 years spent in Westchester and it leaves 105 years, which taken from 1846 gives 1741, the year the family came to the place. When they came, they found Mr. Neely on the farm now owned and occupied by Mrs. Mary Tremble and Mr. Charles Booth, at the north end of the Tamarack Swamp, beside a beautiful spring of clear water. When these two individuals came we do not know—probably but a few years before. The Booths are English; the Neelys and Eagers, Irish.

“The farm now owned and occupied by . . .” “Now” would have been roughly 1846, when Eager’s history was published.

So what farm was owned and occupied by Mary “Tremble” in 1846?

The name was almost certainly “Trimble” – not “Tremble.” When John Neely – likely John Neely, Jr. – wrote his will in March 1781, it was witnessed by Alexander Trimble and John Trimble. Eager reported that Captain Alexander Trimble was a settler in the Neelytown area (at 305). Alexander Trimble married Sarah McClaughry, daughter of another pioneer family, on April 11, 1754.

Alexander and Sarah Trimble “lived about two miles south of Goodwill Church.” Headley, *History of Orange County*, at 309.

Captain Alexander Trimble, 1726-1785, and Sarah, according to Trimble family archives in the Clements library at the University of Michigan, had nine children:

Isabella b 1755

John b 1757

George b 1760, d 1797 – married Mary McCobb (1765-1851)

William b 1763

Jane b 1765

Alexander b 1767 –

Elizabeth b 1770 (married Samuel Hunter, son of Robert Hunter and Ann Neely – a daughter of James Neely, Sr.)

Sarah b 1773

Timothy b 1810

So – Alexander’s son George, b 1760, married Mary McCobb. A book by local historians Robert Eurich and Robert Williams, *Old Houses of Hanover: Historic Sites of the Town of Montgomery, Orange County, N.Y.*, 1994, includes a description of the Trimble Farm site on Neelytown Road:

Alexander Trimble’s eighteenth century dwelling has not survived, nor has its Greek Revival era replacement. But complete records of an auction held on the farm in 1785 remain intact.

Alexander Trimble came to America from Ireland in 1749. He established a farm on Neelytown Road just north of the old Neelytown church and graveyard. Trimble died in 1785. His son-in-law, Peter Hill, served as his estate executor.

* * *

After Alexander Trimble died in 1785, his household furnishings and farm equipment were sold at auction, but not the house. A record of the auction survives, and is summarized in Robert Eurich’s article, “What Am I Bid?” in the *Orange County Historical Society Journal*, No. 19, November 1990. William Trimble was the most successful bidder by far at the auction. William was almost certainly one of the sons of Alexander Trimble – and brother of George Trimble, who at that time was living in Clinton County in upstate New York.

In writing about the 1785 Trimble auction, Eurich mused about an auction almost two centuries later – the 1979 auction of furnishings of the old Samuel Eager homestead, not far from the old Trimble farm. He wrote: If in 1979 those attending the Eager auction had “stepped out from under the auctioneer’s tent, into the rain, to the rear of the gray house, the old Trimble farm could be seen across the fields.” (at 27.)

George Trimble, like his father, Captain Alexander, had served in the army during the Revolution. Some time after the war ended, George Trimble and his wife moved from Orange County to Clinton County in upstate New

York. He died there in January 1797, and his widow Mary then returned to her old home county – Orange. She applied for a pension in January 1851. The pension records contain her affidavit and declarations of supporting witnesses. They lay out these facts: Mary married George Trimble in Orange County on October 31, 1788, in Goshen; her husband George had served in the Revolution; after the war, he moved to Clinton County, where he died in January 1797. The thrust of the declarations was to establish that George Trimble had served in the military, and that Mary was his widow. But they also affirm that after George died, Mary “removed back from said County of Clinton to the town of Montgomery, where she now resides.” Andrew Young, a member of the Young family in Orange County, affirmed that following George’s death, Mary moved back to her former home “some few weeks after the death of her husband [January 1797] ... and that she has resided there ever since.”

The 1830 federal census reported that Mary Trimble was the head of a household in Montgomery, Orange County. The household included one female between 15 and 20, and another between 50 and 60. In 1846, when Eager’s history appeared, this Mary Trimble would have been between 65 and 75 years old.

When Mary Trimble moved back to her former Orange County home in early 1797, her father in law – Alexander Trimble – was already several years deceased, having died in 1785.

Mary Trimble died in 1851. She rests in the Neelytown Cemetery, near where she had lived.

Mary McCobb Trimble

Memorial

Photos

Flowers

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Birth: unknown
Death: Sep. 10, 1851

wife of George Trimble

Burial:
[Neelytown Cemetery](#)
Neelytown
Orange County
New York, USA

Created by: [Marty in Goshen NY](#)
Record added: Jun 17, 2010
Find A Grave Memorial# 53806245



Added by: [Marty in Goshen NY](#)



Cemetery Photo

Added by: [Marty in Goshen NY](#)

The 1798 map (remember: left to right is south to north) of Montgomery pictured in Chapter I, *supra*, not only shows the settlement of Neelytown and the location of the Neelytown Church. It also appears to show – adjacent to the church – the residence of “W. Trimble.” The “W” likely stands for William, the son of Alexander who purchased most of his possessions at the 1785 auction. (On Sept 19, 1793, “Wm. Trimble” of Montgomery, Ulster County, posted a reward in the Poughkeepsie Journal for return of a black mare “stolen from the pasture of the subscriber”)



According to the chapter on the Town of Montgomery in Headley’s *History of Orange County*, which appeared in 1908, Alexander Trimble “lived about two miles south of Goodwill Church on the farm now owned and occupied by Mr. George VanAlst.” (at 309):

taken prisoner at the capture of Fort **Montgomery**; he lived at Ward's Bridge and afterwards built and lived in the house on Bridge street now owned by the estate of the late Jonathan M. Morrison.

Alexander **Trimble** was quarter-master of the Second **Ulster** Regiment in the War of the Revolution, and also a member of the Committee of Safety; he lived about two miles south of Goodwill Church on the **farm** now owned and occupied by Mr. George VanAlst.

Johannes Moul (Mould), who lived about two miles north of **Montgomery**, where his great-great-grandson, Mr. John D. Mould, now lives, was a sergeant in the French and Indian War, and with his son, Johannes Moul, Jr., and his brother, Christopher Moul, were privates in Colonel McClaughry's Regiment in the Revolution. These three patriots also evinced their patriotism by loaning money to the Government when it was urgently needed to equip the army for the capture of Cornwallis.

James Milliken, a member of the Committee of Safety, lived on the east side of the Walkkill, where Mr. Harvey N. Smith now resides, was captain of one of the Hanover companies, and was killed at Fort **Montgomery**.

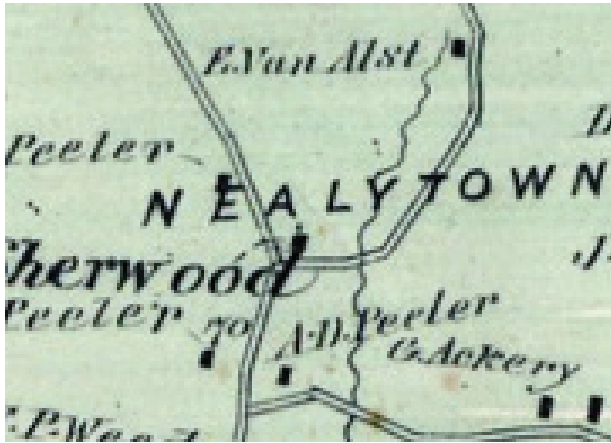
Hendricus Van Keuren was a veteran of the French and Indian War, who served throughout the Revolution as Captain, and according to family tradition, gratuitously lived on what is known as the Downs **farm**, between **Montgomery** and Goodwill church.

John Nicholas was Colonel of the Third **N. Y.** Regiment of the Conti-

So: (1) in 1798, a W. Trimble lived next door to the Neelytown Church; (2) Alexander Trimble, who died in 1785, had lived nearby, on the farm later – 1908 – owned and occupied by George VanAlst; and (3) Mary Trimble is the key to determining where John Neely, the old Founder, had been living when the Eagers arrived in the area in 1741.

Bergoon and Jane VanAlst had several sons: Ebenezer, Charles, and Daniel. The eldest – Ebenezer – purchased an estate in 1849 in Orange County: “one hundred and fifty acres in extent and in point of improvement one of the best in this locality.” (*Portrait and Biographical Record of Orange County*, 1895 at 256.)

A farm belonging to Ebenezer VanAlst appears on the 1875 map of Orange County, portions of which are reproduced above (*supra*, at 30.) “E. Van Alst’s” farm appears on the west side of Neelytown road in the “Nealytown District” of Montgomery, perhaps a mile or two north of the intersection of Eager road and Neelytown road, located near the head of a small stream.



Detail: 1875 map

Ebenezer had a son named George. George VanAlst died in January 1939, age 75. He had lived “all his life on a farm on Neelytown road.” His obituary appeared in the local newspaper:

Middletown.

George Van Alst

MONTGOMERY — George Van Alst, charter member and past master of Montgomery Grange, died last night at his home on the Neelytown road after two months of illness. He was seventy-five.

Funeral services will be held tomorrow afternoon in the Brick Church, with the Rev. Harry S. Dunning officiating. Interment will be in the Brick Church cemetery.

Mr. Van Alst was born and had lived all his life on a farm on Neelytown road. He was a son of Ebenezer and Eve Mould Van Alst. His wife, the former Mary H. Wisner, died in 1921. He was a member of the Brick Church and of the Dutch Arms.

Mr. Van Alst leaves a daughter, Phoebe M., at home; a sister, Mrs. Ella Miller; and several nieces and nephews.

The farm on which George VanAlst lived all his life – probably the farm acquired by his father, Ebenezer, in 1849 – might have been lived on before that by old Captain Alexander Trimble (died 1785).

But – again – the question for us is where Mary Trimble lived in the mid 1840s. That’s where the Eagers found John Neely living in 1741.

An 1850 map of Orange County provides the answer. It shows the Neelytown area in detail, marking the names of the owners of particular farms. Here is the relevant detail from that map:

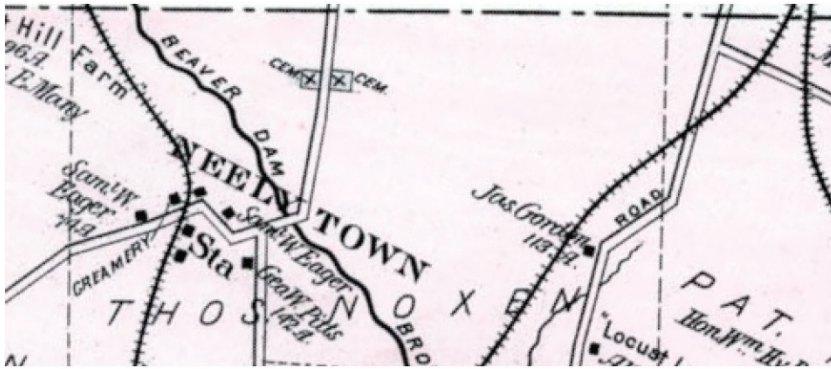


Detail from 1850 map of Orange County, N.Y.

At the lower left, we see the Eager residences, with Eager road intersecting the Neelytown road. The diagonal line with dashes marks the division between Montgomery township (to the north) and Hamptonburg (to the south). Immediately to the northeast of the intersection of Eager and Neelytown roads – at the dividing line between Montgomery and Hamptonburg – are three dots, apparently signifying the Neelytown church and cemetery, and possibly the old W. Trimble home. A little further to the northeast we find the farm of “M Trimble,” with three dots, probably signifying three buildings. A stone’s throw to the west of Mary’s house passes the Beaver Dam Brook. Three farms to the north, on a branching road and on the other side of the brook, is a farm identified as belonging to “Van Alst.”

Here is the way the same area appeared in the 1903 Atlas of Orange County (Montgomery on top, Hamptonburg on the bottom):





In this 1903 atlas, the farm identified 50 years earlier with Mary Trimble appears to be owned by George Van Alst – 150 acres. Remember: Ebenezer VanAlst purchased his farm in 1849 – 150 acres. Mary Trimble died in 1851 – apparently having sold her farm not long before her death. And Alexander Trimble, who died in 1785, had lived on the farm later owned by George Van Alst.

It fits. John Neely, the founder – to Alexander Trimble – to George and Mary Trimble – to Ebenezer, and then George Van Alst.

* * *

When the Eagers arrived in the area in 1741 they found the Neelytown settlement: “Through the central portion of the settlement runs the Beaver Dam Brook, a never failing stream fed wholly by springs” They also “found Mr. Neely on the farm now [1846] owned and occupied by Mrs. Mary Tremble and Mr. Charles Booth, at the north end of the Tamarack Swamp, beside a beautiful spring of clear water.” (Eager, at 256.)

The 1903 Atlas still shows a branch of the brook passing through what must have been old John Neely’s back yard.

Chapter 4

TRACES OF EARLY NEELYS IN ULSTER AND ORANGE COUNTIES

A. The Early Histories

Thanks to the early histories of Orange County and the Goodwill Church, we have already met with the names of several early Neely landholders or settlers.

The earliest reported presence of the Neelys in what became Orange County comes from a list in the files of the Orange County Historical Society in Goshen, N.Y. That document lists three of the Neelys as Freeholders of “Shawengough, 1714-15.” Shawangunk later became part of the township of Montgomery:

Freeholders of Shawengough, 1714-15

Capt. Jacobus Bruyn	Josua Smedes	Hendrick Krans*
James Spennik	Jeronimus Mingus*	John Williams
Capt. Zagharias Hoffman	Cornelius Schoonmaker	Edward Gatehouse*
Cornelius Cool*	Thomas Mackolm	Calcb Knapp, Senr. & Jr.
Benjamin Smedes	John ter Willige	--- Galatie*
Henry Wileman (atty.)*	Christoffel Moul*	Alexander Neely *
Abraham Schutt	Hendrik Decker	Jeronimus Weller*
John North	Samuel Neely*	Johannis Decker
Jacob Decker	Mattys Slimmer*	John Howard
George Andrew	Israel Rogers*	Coll. Cortlandt
Evert ter Willige	Hendrick Newkerk*	
John MacKneel*	John Neely*	

However, this 1714-15 OCGS list looks suspiciously like a list made in 1728 by the Sheriff of Shawengongh for purposes of selecting a jury. See *Documentary History of the State of New York*, Vol. 3, at 586. The 1728 list is reproduced below. The names are the same, though the order is different. The 1714-15 list is inconsistent with the early histories and the “official” *Documentary History of the State*. My hunch is that it relates to the 1728 time period – not 13 years earlier.

The early histories report the presence of Neelys in the 1720s and thereafter:

Thomas Neely, “of Westchester County,” purchaser 1721 and “actual settler” 1726

Samuel Neely, “about the same time or a little later” purchaser of 400 acres from Thomas Noxon; freeholder 1728

John Neely, “actual settler” 1726, freeholder 1728

Alexander Neely, freeholder 1728

William Neely – 1731, witness to a will

Robert Neely – 1731, witness to a will (apparently the same will)

John Neely, Jr. – “seen in an old record.”

Eager’s history recites that when William Eager arrived in 1741, “he found, at least, two settlers there before him – Mr. John Neely and Charles Booth.” (Eager, at 254.) Eager thus suggests that John Neely had priority among the other Neely names. His text also suggests that by the time Eager arrived in 1741, the other first-generation Neelys – Thomas, Alexander, and perhaps Samuel – may have moved on or died.

A sketch of the famous Clinton family by Charles B. Moore, in the *New York Genealogical and Biographical Record*, quarterly, 1882, recites that the Clintons decided in the early 1730s to settle in Ulster County; and that John Neely – described as “the founder of Neelytown” (p. 9) – had come “from Ireland about the same time” as Clinton.

Eager also recites that both the Eager and Neely families were in Westchester County, New York, before arriving in Ulster County. Westchester County lies just north of New York City. It would have been a natural stopping or pausing point for immigrants arriving in New York – an intermediate point on the way further north or west.

The *Documentary History of the State of New York*, Volume 3, reproduces a list of “freeholders” for the precinct of Shawengongh in 1728. The list had been prepared by the Sheriff “soe that a special jury be struck thereout” to try a

lawsuit. He wrote, "I have accordingly taken all the care to not forgitt any of the Freeholders to the best of my Nollege . . ." A note in the text next to the names of the three Neelys states that these "are known to have been freeholders in the present town of Montgomery, which was then and until 1743 included in the precinct of Shawangunk." (at 586):

<i>The freeholders for Shawengunk —</i>			
Capt Jacobus Bruyn	Hendrik Decker	James Spennik	Christoffel Moul
Capt Zagharias Hofman	Mattys Sliimmer	Cornelius Cool	Samuel Neely
Benjamin Smeles	Hendrik Newkerk	Henry Wileman Attorney	Israel Rogers
Abraham Schutt	Hendrik Krans	at Law	John Neely
Jacob Decker	Edward Gatehouse	John North	John Williams
Evert ter Willige	Galatie	George Andrew	Caleb Knap Senr
Josua Smeles	Jeronimus Weller	John Mackneel	Caleb Knap Junr
Cornelius Schoonmaker	Johannis Decker	Jeronimus Mingus	Alexander Neely
John ter Willige	John howard	Thomas Mackoim	Coll Cortlandt

The 1728 list includes Samuel, John and Alexander Neely.

The name of the precinct, for anyone curious, has an odd pronunciation (at 379):

The name "Shawangunk," besides being difficult to pronounce, has given rise to controversy and speculation regarding its origin and signification. The commonly accepted pronunciation is "Shong-um." In Mather's "Geology of New York," the meaning of the word is given as "the place of white rocks." Others claim it to be "South Mountain," "South Water," "swift current, or strong stream," "Mink River," "the place of leeks," etc. The origin is unquestionably Indian.

Other (or duplicate) names which appear in the early histories without reference to particular years include:

Little John Neely
 Grandy John Neely ("Grandfather"?)
 Henry Man Neely

Ruttenber/Clark reported these names "on the town record" of Montgomery "from 1768 to 1778" (at 375-76):

Little John Neely
 Thomas Neely
 Grandy John Neely
 Henry Neely
 Wm. Neely
 Henry Neely (name appears twice)

B. Early Military Records.

Lists of military units from Ulster County up to 1715 yield no Neely names. However a list of Ulster militia “of the Wall A Kill” in 1738 under the command of Captain John Byard, lists these familiar names (*History of Ulster County*, Clearwater, 1907, at 100-101):

James Glispy
Thomas Glispy
Patrick Galasby
James McNeill
John McNeill Senior
Thomas Neils
Robert Neils
John Neils
Mathew Neils
John Neily ju’r

The Gillespies (or Gillespys) are a family closely related to the Neelys both in New York and later in Logan County, Kentucky. My guess is that men listed with the name of “Neils” and “Neily” could have been the same men who used the name “Neely.” John, Thomas, Robert, Matthew, and John Jr. were all Neely family names. The scribe botched the Gillespie name, suggesting that he might have botched others. True, he did distinguish between “Neils” and “Neily.” But the presence of John “Neily ju’r” suggests the existence of a John Neely senior; and if that’s not “John Neils,” then where is John senior? Though there is no unanimity, for what it is worth my guess is that the “Neils” men were Neelys. Men with these first names do not appear as “Neills” in other early county records. And if these were not Neelys, why were the “real” Neelys with these first names – men who were clearly living there – not serving in the militia?

If “Neils” equals “Neely,” then this 1738 cluster of related militiamen probably included (1) the 1726 “actual settler” and “founder,” John Neely, (2) the 1721 purchaser and 1726 “actual settler,” Thomas Neely, and (3) several other family members — Robert, Matthew and John, Junior.

In a different company of Ulster militia “of the Highland” apparently that same year, 1738, under the command of Capt. Thos. Ellison, appeared:

James “Nealy”

The precinct of the Highlands covered territory a few miles east of Wallkill and included the township of New Windsor. A fair inference is that James Neely's farm was located to the east of Neelytown, probably near the Little Britain settlement, on the road from Wallkill to the town of New Windsor.

C. Early Ulster County Land Records.

Ulster County land records and wills provide further useful information about the Neelys. First, the land records:

As spelled out in the Dickson history of the Goodwill Church, ownership rights to land originated in the initial patents granted by the royal governor. Here is a list of the original patents in Ulster County:

FIRST SETTLEMENTS AND SETTLERS.	37
26. Thomas Noxon, 2000 acres, May 28th, 1720.	
27. William Huddleston, 2000 acres, June 2d, 1720.	
28. Vincent Matthews, 800 acres, June 17th, 1720.	
29. Richard Van Dam, 1000 acres, June 30th, 1720.	
30. Francis Harrison, Oliver Schuyler, and Allen Jarratt, 5000 acres, July 7th, 1720.	
31. Phillip Schuyler, Johannes Lansing, Jr., Henry Wileman, and Jacobus Bruyn, 8000 acres, July 7th, 1720.	
32. Patrick MacGregorie, two tracts, 660 acres, Aug. 6th, 1720.	
33. Mary Ingoldsby and her daughter, Mary Pinhorne, and Mary Pinhorne and Wm. Pinhorne, her children, two tracts, 5360 acres, Aug. 11th, 1720.	
34. Jacobus Kipp, John Cruger, Phillip Cortland, David Provost, Oliver Schuyler, and John Schuyler, 7000 acres, Oct. 17th, 1720.	
35. Lewis Morris and Vincent Pearce, two tracts, 1000 acres each, July 21st, 1721.	
36. John Haskell, 2000 acres, August 24th, 1721.	
37. Patrick Hume, 2000 acres, Nov. 29th, 1721.	

Two of the most relevant of these patents for our purposes were the Noxon and Hume patents (*History of Orange County*, Headly, at 37):

(1) the patent of May 28, 1720, to Thomas Noxon for 2000 acres “lying in the county of Ulster, within the bounds of Evans’ vacated patent.” A certificate of December 10, 1736, describes the tract as “beginning at the most westerly corner of Shawangunk kill of a tract of land called Pecannsink.” An historical atlas of Orange County shows that the Thomas Noxon patent land covered both sides of Beaver Dam creek, which flowed through the Neelytown community.

(2) the patent of November 29, 1721, of 2000 acres to Patrick Hume, the northern boundary of which marked the southern boundary of Wallkill precinct.

The Ruttenber/Clark history quotes (at 370-371) Dickson's history of the Goodwill Church for the proposition that the Noxon patent was located south of the church parsonage, "extending through what is now termed Neelytown." On May 4, 1721, Thomas Neely "of Westchester County, purchased 200 acres from Patrick McKnight; and "about the same time" Samuel Neely "purchased from Thomas Noxon 400 acres."

According to an Ulster County deed book (vol. DD start at page 322), "Robert Neely of Ulster County bought land from Thomas Noxon. May 25, 1731. Ulster County, province of New York. (The land bordered the property of Samuel Neely.)"

Thus, we find three early acquisitions: (1) in 1721 by Thomas Neely from Patrick McKnight, (2) "about the same time" by Samuel Neely from Thomas Noxon, and (3); a decade later, in 1731 by Robert Neely from Thomas Noxon; and Samuel's and Robert's properties bordered each other.

This timing suggests that the early buyers, Thomas, Samuel and "Founder" John, may have been brothers; and that Robert (along with John, Jr.) might have been one of a younger generation. For reasons that appear below (including Robert's will), I think the odds are that John, Sr. was the father of John, Jr., Robert, and his brother William.

Also, on April 21, 1735, Cornelius Low and "and company" sold 200 acres of land in nearby New Windsor to one James Neely. (Indenture of October 15, 1804, Edward Neely Jr. and Elizabeth to Frederich Weblin.) The James Neely who bought land in 1735 (at the age of about 34) would thus be the right age to be a brother of John, Jr., Robert, and William.

Several years later, part of the land covered by the second patent – the Hume patent – was sold by a relative of Hume, James Ludlow (or Lithgow) to James Neely and Henry Man Neely. The apparent year of that purchase was 1749 (Headley, at 382; see also Ruttenber/Clark, at 20):

distinguished clergyman.

Hume Patent.—James Gembell and John Humphrey purchased, in 1724, 300 acres of the patent to Patrick Hume, and divided the same equally between them, April 6, 1730. Gembell sold to Patrick Byrn, March 12, 1744, and Humphrey sold to Patrick McClaughry, Feb. 22, 1769. One-half of the remainder of the patent (850 acres) was sold by James Lithgow, nephew of the patentee, to James Neelly, Henry Man Neelly, William Young, and Patrick McClaughry, March 6, 1749, and the same parties purchased the remaining half (850 acres) from Hannah Lithgow, widow, and John Nicholas, of Philadelphia, April, 1750. June 19, 1757, William Young sold to Samuel Sly 233 acres, now known as the Sly homestead. The Gembell and Humphrey portion of the patent was sold to William Telford and Samuel Falls.

John Johnston, Jr.'s, Patent.—This patent was transferred to Cadwallader Colden on the date of its issue. A branch of the Belknap family settled on it about 1750.

Van Dam Patent.—The patent to Richard Van Dam

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James and Henry Man Neely thus acquired their land from the same seller at the same time – in two chunks. Their land shared a common boundary. And they apparently disposed of it at the same time – as will appear below. These facts suggest that these two Neelys were related, probably brothers.

D. Wills and Estates

Reports of Neely family relationships, probably based on early work of Dr. James Lawler and the Wiles/Davis book, and in any event distributed through Ancestry.com and the internet, have focused on three supposed Neely brothers: Robert, William, and John. These three brothers were reportedly descended from one Rufus Neely, born in County Tyrone, Ireland, about 1657. Information about these three brothers seems to be derived principally from two wills – authored by Robert and William.

A list of Neely wills administered in Ulster and nearby counties has been published; and several Neelys were mentioned in other wills.

MYNDERSE, MYNDERT	SCHENECTADY (1763)	1-AN-19
NEATE, WILLIAM	LONDON, ENGLAND (1784)	1-AN-13
NEELY, JOHN	HANOVER, ULSTER, NY (1781)	1-AN-17
NEELY, ROBERT	NEELY TOWN, ULSTER, NY (1756)	1-AN-6
NEELY, SAMUEL	OBLONG, DUTCHESS, NY (1786)	1-AN-22
NEELY, THOMAS	WALKKILL, ULSTER, NY (1787)	1-AN-19
NEELY, WILLIAM (CAPT)	WALKKILL, ULSTER, NY (1770)	1-AN-11
NELSON, JOHN JR.	PHILADELPHIA, PHILADELPHIA, PA (1763)	1-AN-9

1. John Neely, Sr.

John Neely was identified as a settler in 1726 and a freeholder in 1728, and he was treated as the founder of the community by the historian Eager. The historian of the Clinton family wrote the Clinton's settled in or near the village of Little Britain, which was "on the line between New Windsor and Neelytown," that Clinton's house was "strongly built," "treated as a frontier post" and "fortified as a security for himself and neighbors, especially against Indians." "John Neely, the founder of Neelytown, came from Ireland about the same time" as the Clintons. (*Sketch of the Clinton Family*, 1882, at 9.)

A list of Elders in the Goodwill Church from its Organization includes five names at the head of the list, with the note: "Inducted into Office. Not definitely known but all previous to 1770." The second name was that of John Neely, with the note that he "ceased to act ... subsequent to 1770." No other Neelys appear on the list, though Robert Hunter was identified as an early Elder.

The Rutenber/Clark description of Neelytown quoted above lists "early settlers" including "Little John Neely" and "Grandy John Neely." One might guess that "Grandy" referred to "Grandfather," that Grandy John was John, Senior, and that "Little John" was John, Jr. Headley's *History* reports that "the name of John Neely, Jr." is seen in an old record.

John Neely, "Senr" was a witness to Robert Neely's will in 1756.

Also, John Neely and Elizabeth Neely witnessed the will of David Dill in 1759, only three years after Robert's will. These are likely John Neely, Sr., and his wife. It's the only trace of evidence I've seen indicating his wife's name was Elizabeth.

Shortly before that, apparently in 1755, both John Neely and Robert Neely were identified in the will of John Smith of Ulster County. It identifies John Neely as one of the Executors, along with Smith's wife Isabel and daughter Mary; and it identifies Robert Neely as a witness.

SMITH, John, of Ulster Co., yeoman. Wife Isabel, sons James, John, da. Mary, grandson Robert Smith. Real and personal estate. Executors the wife, da. Mary, John Neely and James Barkley. Witnesses Robert Neely, James Morison, farmer, and John Moffat. At date of proof Mary Smith is wife of Robert Calwall of Ulster Co., farmer.

We know of no family connection between the Neelys and the Smiths, though they were neighbors. The fact that John was named executor and Robert a witness might suggest that John was the senior of the two.

To complicate matters even further, there was another John Smith, who died in 1763. Here is a summary of his will.

SMITH, John, of Ulster Co. Wife Mary, son William, bro. James Smith and nephew John Robert, son of bro. James. Land at Shangunk, personal estate. Executors John Neely jun., John Davidson and the wife. Witnesses Samuel King of New Windsor Prect., yeoman, Margaret Davidson of Wallkil Prect., widow, and Jenet Miller.

So here we have another John Smith, also of Ulster County, but married to Mary. He had a brother James Smith and an Executor, “John Neely Junior.” (James Smith submitted an affidavit in support of Mary Trimble’s petition for a pension.) One possible solution to this puzzle would have the first John Smith – the one with John Neely *Non-Junior* as his Executor – as the elder John Smith; which would make the second John Smith – the one with Executor John Neely *Junior* – as the next generation John Smith.

Back to what we’ve been told about the first Ulster County John Neely. A few summaries of supposed Neely family history – both in print and on the internet – suggest that our old John I arrived in 1716 with a load of political prisoners from Preston, England, citing *The Ship Passenger Lists, 1538-1825*, edited by Carl Boyer, 1979. The Boyer publication has been cited for the proposition that our John Neely was one of a group of rebel prisoners transported into the province of Maryland in the ship the Good Speed on the 18th day of October, 1716. A note in the Boyer list says they were mostly Scots, taken “in the late Rebellion at Preston, and imported in the Ship the Good Speed, of Liverpoole, whereof Arthur Smith is Commander . . .” One of the convicts was George Hodgson. The purchaser of his contract was “John Nelly.”

There are a few problems with the claim that our John Neely was one of these imported prisoners:

First, John “Nele” – or Neely – was apparently not among the prisoners. Nele was apparently the purchaser of Hodgson’s contract in Maryland. Another source says the purchaser was John “Nely.”

Second, nothing connects this John “Nele” or “Nelty” with our Ulster County New York John Neely. Identity of names would not make the connection; a faint similarity of names makes such a supposed connection even more tenuous.

Third, why would an upstate New Yorker be buying labor contracts in Maryland?

Fourth, if a fourth were needed, the rebellion at Preston was a Jacobite rising in support of the claims of James Stuart, the “Pretender,” against the Hanoverian Protestants who occupied the English throne. The Jacobites were mostly Catholic. If John “Nele” had been among the transported prisoners, he would likely have been a Catholic. The Ulster Neelys were Presbyterians.

2. Robert Neely

Robert Neely first appeared as a witness to a deed in 1731. William Neely appeared as a witness on the same deed – suggesting, in this early period where there may have been few available witnesses – that the two were related, perhaps brothers.

Also, on May 24, 1731, Thomas Noxon transferred land (for what appears to be an annual rent payment) to Robert “Neally” or “Nealey” (Ulster Deeds, DD-EE, at 324.) The land description states that it shares a common corner with land owned by Samuel Nealy.

Robert reportedly married Isabella Graham, likely a daughter of John Graham, who came to Little Britain, Ulster/Orange County, from Northern Ireland. William Graham was described as a leader in the Goodwill Church. The Neelytown church was reportedly erected on Graham land in 1735 though the deed for the ground was not executed to the trustees until 1741. Dickson, *The Goodwill Memorial*, at 21, 28.

(Dickson’s *The Goodwill Memorial* states at 28 that Robert Neely married Barbara Young, and that their son Matthew married Isabella Graham. This matching has been repeated in many website family trees. But Robert’s will states that his wife’s name was Isabella. I think it likely that Dickson somehow got the names of the wives mismatched. This is supported by Ruttenber’s *History of the Town of New Windsor*, at 148, where it was reported that “Barbara Young [daughter of John and Mary Young] married Matthew Neely, son of Robert Neely (who married Isabella, sister to Adam Graham), of Montgomery.”)

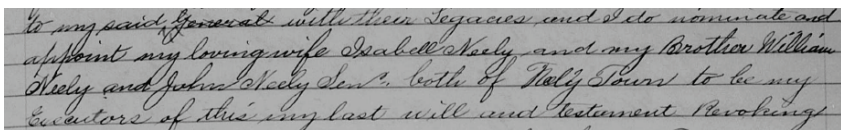
Robert’s will was made in 1756. It has been widely summarized as

referring to two brothers – William and John. These summaries do not reflect the actual text of the will as it appears in court records. Here is the actual text of the pertinent portion:

I will and order that my whole real and personal Estate be sold at the first favorable opportunity after my decease by the direction of my Exect. hereafter mentioned and that such moneys arising therefrom be Equally shared and divided among and between **my Loving Wife Isabell Neely** and **my five Children Addam Neely William Neely David Neely Matthew Neely and Mary Neely** to be share and share alike and I will that their respective portions be paid unto them respectively **as they shall respectively attain the age of twenty one years or marry** and in Case any of my said five Children sh'd happen to die before they attain that age then and in such case I leave and bequeath the portion or share of any said Residuary Estate of such Child or Children so dying unto and among the survivor and survivor of them equally to be divided share and share alike. Item and in order to bring up, Educate, and Maintain my younger Children and improve the Legacies hereby given them for their best advantage, I desire, will order and direct that my Executors or survivors of them, after the payment of my debts Funeral Expences and the Legacy to my wife to put out at Interest from time to time and that out of the Interest thereof my said children be brought up and educated until their respective Legacies shall become due unto them as herein before is Directed and the surplus of such Interest if any shall be paid in equal proportion to my said children with their Legacies and I do nominate and appoint my loving wife Isabell Neely and my Brother William Neely and John Neely Senr, both of Neely Town to be my Executors of this my last will and testament. (Underscoring added.)

The will was dated “this seventeenth day of September in the twenty-ninth year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George the second ... and in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and fifty six ... Robert Neely.”

Here is a picture of the important reference by Robert to William and John Senior:



To my said Executors with their Legacies and I do nominate and appoint my loving wife Isabell Neely and my Brother William Neely and John Neely Senr. both of Neely Town to be my Executors of this my last will and testament (Underscoring)

It seems clear that the reference is to “my Brother William Neely and John Neely Senr” – with the word “Brother” in the singular – no “s” at the end. It is possible of course that the clerk mis-transcribed the original will, which so far as I know no longer exists. But based on the clerk’s transcription, Robert was referring to his Brother William – and separately to John Neely Senr.

Based on the priority that John Neely, Sr. seems to have had in the Neelytown community, including (1) the fact that both the historian Eager and the historian of the Clinton family regarded him as the “founder,” (2) the fact that John Neely acquired land and was identified as a “freeholder” several years before Robert or William acquired land, and (3) the fact that John was an early elder in the Goodwill Church – as well as the only Neely to serve in that role, Robert’s will seems to me to add weight to the hypothesis that John “Senr” was the father of a family that included Robert, William, John, Jr., and perhaps Matthew and Samuel (whose property was adjacent to Robert’s). (So why did Robert not list John Junior or Matthew or Samuel as a brother – as he did William? The simple answer might well be: he needed only one of them to serve as an Executor.)

Robert’s listing of his five children suggests that he may have listed the sons first and daughter last. The children had not yet attained the age of 21 when the will was executed in September 1756 – which means that the “Matthew” listed in the 1738 militia record was a different person – likely a brother of Robert.

Robert Neely’s Wife, Isabell

Robert’s wife Isabell died six years after Robert – in 1762. She had remarried John Simpson following Robert’s death in 1756 and was living in Goshen, south of Neelytown, in Orange County. Here is a report of her will:

Page 3.—In the name of God, Amen. I, ISABELLA SIMPSON, of Goshen, in Orange County, widow of John Simpson, being now sick and weak. I leave to my son, Matthew Neeley, £50 when of age or married, And my executors are to put him to any trade he chooses for 4 years. I also leave him 2 pots, a Trammel, soup dish, $\frac{1}{2}$ dozen plates, bedstead and bedding, and a desk. I leave to my granddaughter, Isabella Neeley, daughter of Thomas Neeley, £10 and a little round table. To my daughter, Mary Neeley, wife of Thomas Neeley, my riding horse and saddle, a cow, and my wearing apparell, and a new spinning wheel. All the rest of my estate I leave to my son, Matthew Neeley, and my grandchildren, the children of Thomas Neeley. I make my trusty friend, Arthur Beatty, executor. Dated October 26, 1762.

Witnesses, Donald Cameron, Thomas Neeley, Archibald Beatty. Proved in Orange County, before John Gale, Surrogate, February 14, 1763.

Mary "Neeley" (daughter of Robert and Isabella) was thus by 1763 a wife of Thomas Neeley, no doubt a cousin. Thomas Neeley was one of the witnesses to Isabell's will.

Thomas obviously was not a son of Robert — he was married to Robert's daughter Mary. And Thomas was not a son of Robert's brother William, as will appear below.

So who was Thomas' father?

Perhaps the early "actual settler" Thomas — who purchased 40 years earlier, back in 1721. Or the other "actual settler" and "founder" — John Neely, Senior.

Isabella's 1762 will makes it clear that her son Matthew was not yet of age or married. Matthew later married Barbara Young, a daughter of John Young.

3. William Neely

A William Neely of Wallkil Precinct, Ulster County, left a will dated November 5, 1769, executed November 7, 1770.

ABSTRACTS OF WILLS—LIBER 27.

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Page 448.—In the name of God, Amen. "I, WILLIAM NEELEY, Captain, of Ulster County, Precinct of Walkkill." I leave to my wife 10 bushels of wheat and corn yearly during her life. And 2 cows and calves, and a fat hog, yearly, and 3 sheep, and a furnished room and fire place, and all necessary furniture, and £10, to be paid her when she demands it. After her death, they are to be given to such of her children as she thinks proper. And she is to have half a bushel of flax seed sowed every year. I leave to my daughter Sarah £30, and a bed, and the large cupboard, which stands in the large upper room, and two cows, "3 years old, going on 4," "and all other things she can find of her own property." I leave to my daughter Martha, wife of Benjamin Haines, £1, and £10 to her son, John Haines, and £10 to her son, William Haines, and £10 to her daughter Elizabeth, when she is of age. I leave to my daughter, Elizabeth Harlow, £10. To my three grandchildren, William Harrold, Henry Harrold, and Elizabeth Harrold, £10. I leave to my son, William Neeley, all the rest of my goods and chattels, and all my message lands and tenements, and I make him and my trusty friend, James M. Cobb, merchant, executors. Dated, November 1, 1769.

Witnesses, William Young, Thomas Neeley, William Stewart. Proved, November 7, 1770.

This will of William “Neeley” does not prove that he is the brother referred to in Robert Neely’s will of a few years earlier; but the fact that they lived in the same county and their deaths occurred within a few years of each other strongly suggests it.

William’s will tells us that he was a Captain in the militia, a resident of Ulster County, precinct of Wallkill, and that his children include:

Wife – unnamed
Daughter Sarah
Martha Haines, married to Benjamin Haines
Elizabeth Harlow (or Harrold)
Son William Neeley

Thomas Neeley was identified as a witness to William’s will, but not as a child of William. He was likely the same Thomas Neeley who was a witness to the will of Isabella Neely Simpson in 1763.

4. Two Samuels Neely

Samuel Neely, it will be remembered, was an early purchaser of land from the patentee Thomas Noxon (about 1721) and one of the early (1728) “freeholders for Shawangungh.”

Samuel Neely was thus one of the first Neely settlers in the Neelytown area. Samuel Neely acquired 400 acres from Thomas Noxon, one of the original patentees, “about the same time” – 1721 – that Thomas Neely acquired 200 acres from an unidentified seller. Ten years later, in 1731, Robert Neely also acquired land from Noxon, and that land bordered on Samuel’s property.

Another, younger Samuel Neely reportedly married Antje Bevier sometime in the 1760’s. He signed the Articles of Association, Northeast Precinct, in July 1775; and he earned land bounty rights for militia service from Dutchess County, sixth regiment, during the Revolutionary War.

This Samuel Neely who married in the 1760’s and served in the militia in the 1770’s is surely not the same Samuel Neely who acquired land 40+ years earlier, back in 1721. He would have had to be an adult to purchase that land – 21 or more – putting his birth year at 1700 or earlier.

A web site asserts that Antje Bevier was born in 1745 in Ulster County, and died 1826 in Dutchess County, N.Y. It says her father was Jacobus Bevier and her mother Antjen Freer Bevier.

A Bevier web site says that the spouse of Antje Bevier, born 1745, was “Samuel Neely, born 1738, Wallkill, Ulster County, died March 1786.” This second Samuel – let’s call him Samuel the Younger (the records don’t call him “Sam Jr.”) – left a will, executed in Dutchess County in 1786. The will identified him as “of the Oblong, Dutchess Co.” He refers in it to his “aged mother Ginnet McMullen, sons Elexander and John, daughters Anna, Ginnet, Mary and Rachel,” and to a brother, William Neely, who needed to be supported because he was “dumb and non compos mentis.” This “aged mother Ginnet McMullen” was thus likely the widow of one of the early-generation Neelys – perhaps an Alexander or John – who remarried a man named McMullen after the death of her husband. To date, however, research has failed to uncover any evidence of marriage of an earlier Neely to “Ginnet” (or “Janet” or Jeanette.)

Jacob Bevier’s will of February 18, 1775 – he was the father of Antje, wife of Samuel the Younger – confirms that his daughter Antje was the “wife of Samuel Neely.” It also reports that Jacob’s own wife, mother of Antje, was also named Antje. She could also have been the “aged mother Ginnet” Samuel the Younger referred to in his will.

John Neely, Jr.’s will (immediately below) refers to his brother Matthew, and to a son named Samuel.

5. John Neely, Jr. Will 1781.

John Neely of Hanover Precinct, Ulster County, New York, made a will on March 26, 1781. It was probated in New York County, August 17, 1781. Source: Original Wills Folder AN-17; also recorded New York Co., NY Vol. 33 page 369.

In the name of God, Amen, March 26, 1781. I John Neely, of Hanover Precinct, Ulster County, being sick. My executors are to collect all money due to me. If it should please God that my daughter, Sarah Wilkens, should be left a widow, I leave her L 200, to be paid L 50 a year by my executors for four years. But if her husband, James Wilkens, should outlive her, I leave her nothing more than she has already had. All the rest of my estate, real and personal, I leave to my daughter, Mary Neely. If my said daughter Mary should have a male child it is to be called John Neely. But if she should have no issue, then I leave all my real estate to Samuel Neely, son of my brother Matthew. And if he has a son, it shall be called John Neely, and all the lands shall

descend to him. And further, as there is a prospect of my daughter Mary marrying Andrew Wilson, if she dies before him, without issue, he is to have one-half of the movables, and my daughter Mary may leave the other part to any of the blood relatives of the family of Neely. I make my daughter Mary and Andrew Wilson, executors. Witnesses were Alexander Trimble, John Trimble, Patrick Barber, Esq.

From this will of John Neely we learn that:

No widow is mentioned.

No sons mentioned.

Daughter Sarah, married to James Wilkens. (Possibly Wilkins.)

Daughter Mary Neely, with a “prospect” that she may marry Andrew Wilson.

John has a brother, Matthew – with son Samuel.

The testator, John Neely, was anxious to assure that he would have a namesake. He attempted to pressure his daughter Mary to name a future son “John Neely.” If Mary had no issue, then he left his real estate to his nephew Samuel with a direction that he name a son “John Neely.”

This testator John Neely (1781 will) – with an unmarried daughter – was clearly not the old founder of Neelytown. It seems likely that he was the “John Jr.” or “Little John” mentioned in the histories as an early settler.

Another, still younger John Neely lived in Neelytown. In the Neelytown cemetery is the grave of “John Neely died 2-9-1811, age 32 y 9d.” So he was born in 1779. Orange County Genealogical Society, *Cemeteries of Hamptonburgh*, N.Y., 1980. Perhaps “nephew Samuel” (mentioned two paragraphs above) had come through, naming an infant son after his uncle, John Neely.

To complicate matters, there was another John Neely in the nearby town of Minisink. He reportedly had a farm there by 1789. He had a wife, Ester, and family of children: John, Abraham, David, and Marvin Floyd. He left a family cemetery called the “Neely Cemetery” in the town. We do not know his linkages with the Neelytown Neelys.

6. Thomas Neely

We first met a Thomas Neely “of Westchester County,” identified as a land purchaser in 1721 and “actual settler” in 1726.

A Thomas Neely left a will, dated August 2, 1785, filed March 7, 1787.

Calendar of Wills. 287

NEELY, Thomas, of Wallkil Prect., Ulster Co.
Wife Margaret, daughters Rebecca, Jean and Alener, sons
Thomas, John and Daniel, da. Margaret. Real and per-
sonal estate. Executors the wife, son John and John
Monell. Witnesses Thomas Borland, yeoman, and Charles
Borland,

(John and Daniel and Jane Walker (sister?) apparently transferred some of the family land to Samuel Miller in November, 1788.)

It would strain at least slightly the imagination to suppose that the Thomas Neely who was old enough to purchase 200 acres 66 years earlier – in May 1721 – was the same person who left this land to his family in 1787.

It’s easier to imagine that this second Thomas was the Thomas who appears (as Neils) in the militia in 1738 with possible brothers: Robert, John, and Matthew.

From the 1785 will we learn that Thomas Neely (call him Thomas II) left the following family:

Wife Margaret
Daughter Rebecca
Daughter Jean
Daughter Alener (Eleanor)
Son Thomas – let’s call him Thomas III
Son John
Son Daniel
Daughter Margaret

(It appears that he listed them in order of age.)

We have come across another Thomas Neely, however. A man by that name reportedly married Mary Neely, the daughter of the prominent Robert Neely. Robert had listed a daughter Mary in his will. And his widow, Isabella, (later also widow of John Simpson) in her will of 1762 referred to both her son Matthew Neeley and “my daughter, Mary Neeley, wife of Thomas Neeley.”

So who was the father of this Thomas Neely (husband of Mary)? He could not have been Robert, obviously. William Neely, the brother of Robert, did not name a son Robert. By process of elimination we might suppose that this Thomas (husband of Mary) was a son of either John, Sr. or perhaps the early Thomas (purchaser in 1721), though perhaps it is significant that this later Thomas was not referred to as “Thomas, Jr.”

7. Alexander Neely

Unlike the other Neelys listed immediately above, Alexander Neely – apparently one of the earliest in the family to arrive – did not leave a will. He or some other Alexander died intestate apparently in 1757, with a wife, Isabella. Ulster Co., N.Y., Probate Records, Surrogate’s Office, New York, at 157.

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and as much real estate as they think proper to pay debts and funeral charges. To my only son (*) *John* all the rest of my estate, real and personal; if he dies under age, then I give the same to *John* (*) *Helms*, son of *Amos* (*) *Helms*, of New York. My brother-in-law, *Cornelius Tiebout*, of the *Out Ward*, of New York, and *Hendrick Van Vlack*, of New York, merchant, and *Charles Clinton*, of Ulster Co., Esq., appointed executors. Witnessed by *John Thompson*, storekeeper, *John Kennon*, *Frederick* (*) *Melche*. Signed *C. R. Hertell*. Proved Dec. 22, 1756.

Letters of Administration, Liber I. (not verified).

BARTON, ROGER, Ulster Co., intestate.

Adm. granted, March 18, 1757, to *Joshua Bishop*.

NEELEY, ALEXANDER, Ulster Co., intestate.

Adm. granted, June 3, 1757/8, to wife *Isabella*.

Chapter 5

TRACES OF MID-CENTURY NEELYS — FOLLOWING THE FIRST SETTLERS

No sharp line divides the first generation of Neelys to come to Ulster from those who came “later.” But it seems useful to deal separately – and perhaps hypothetically – with those who came *after* the group who made their appearance in the 1720s and 1730s.

Appearances during the 1720s:

The first batch – those who appear in the 1720’s – included:

John, Senior, the “founder” and one of the 1728 freeholders of Shawangongh; perhaps “Grandy” John.

Samuel Neely – another 1728 freeholder

Alexander Neely – another 1728 freeholder

Thomas Neely – “of Westchester County,” purchased 200 acres in 1721.

Appearances during the 1730s:

Robert Neely and William Neely – brothers; witnessed deeds in 1731; also Robert bought land in 1731 bordering Samuel Neely’s property.

James Neely purchased land in New Windsor, east of Neelytown, on April 21, 1735, from Cornelius Low “and company.”

Other early settlers included “Little John” Neely, perhaps John Jr.

Also, the 1738 Militia list includes several men named “Neils.” As indicated above, my guess is that their names were “Neely.” Other family history experts, including Jim Neely, remain unconvinced. If these Neils were in fact “Neelys” – then the family included:

John Sr.
Thomas
Robert
Matthew
John, Jr.

James “Neely” was also listed in 1738 in a muster roll of militia, but in a company from the precinct of the Highlands, east of the Neelytown community. (Ruttenber/Clark, at 46.) The Highlands included the town of New Windsor.

Appearances during the 1740s:

The Goodwill Church was located about 2-3 miles north of the intersection of Eager and Neelytown roads, and south of the present village of Montgomery. We do not know when the church as a congregation was first formed, but we are told that it was “taken under the care of the Presbytery of Philadelphia in 1729.” (Note by Rev. J.H. Thompson, quoted above, who added that the Goodwill church was the second oldest in the county.)

The first church structure was apparently built on land owned by William Graham in 1735, though the deed of the ground on which the church was built was dated November 9, 1741. Dickson, *The Goodwill Memorial*, at 21, 28. The Goodwill church, sometimes referred to as the Wallkill church, maintained a session book used by the clerks and treasurers of the church. In it the following names appear:

Matthew Neely, signed in the 1740s
John Neely made payments 1744 through 1755

James Neely, April 26, 1747, through 1750

William Neely, 1749 through 1751

Robert Neely, 1749/50.

A separate “list of elders” of the Goodwill church lists John Neely second on a long list, with a note that he had been “inducted into office ... previous to 1770,” and that he “ceased to act ... subsequent to 1770.”

The Goodwill church was the church of the Neely family, or many of them, until about 1769. In that year, William Eager conveyed half an acre of land to trustees for the construction of a new church near his home, which became known as the Neelytown church. It was located on the west side of Neelytown road, and a cemetery was created adjacent to the church. The 1769 deed recited that the purchase was made and the building of the meeting house “hath been begun, and is to be erected and finished by the voluntary contributions of diverse well-disposed persons ...” Rev. Robert Annan was the first pastor. The construction of the new Neelytown church in 1769 explains why John Neely “ceased to act” as elder of the Goodwill Church “subsequent to 1770.”

One may also guess that Neelys who died prior to 1769 (such as Robert Neely) were buried in the Goodwill church cemetery, while those who died after 1770 were buried in the cemetery next to the Neelytown church.

The 1749-50 Land transfers – James and Henry Man Neely.

In his history Samuel Eager reported that along the old public highway leading from Neelytown to New Windsor were several families, including that of “Man Neely.” (Eager, at 620.)

In 1749 James and Henry Man Neely (along with William Young and Patrick McClaughry) acquired – together and at the same time – 850 acres of land from the original Hume patent; and the following year the same parties acquired together another 850 acres. My guess is that James and Henry Man were brothers.

A quarter century later, in 1774, Patrick McClaughry left a will disposing of his interest in that land. He left one parcel to his grandson Alexander McClaughry – “all that certain piece or parcel of land ... in New Windsor ... part of the land released to me by William Young, Henry Maneely and James Neely ... and bounded ... westwardly by the land of the said Henry Maneely” He left to his sons and sons-in-law “as tenants in common in fee simple, all

that lott of land situate in ... New Windsor ... containing 140 acres which was released to me ... by the said William Young, Henry Maneely and James Neely lying north of the farm whereon the said John Finley now lives.”

So – the land acquired by Henry Man Neely and James Neely together had been disposed of together – “released” – to one of the four original purchasers.

Appearances in Wills – the Families of Robert and William Neely:

The next generations may have included:

Samuel Neely II – married Antje Bevier in 1768.

Robert married Isabella; their children – mentioned in his 1763 will:

Adam

William

David

Matthew

Mary

William’s children – mentioned in his 1769 will:

Sarah

Martha Hains

Elizabeth Harlow

William Neely II

Thomas Neely – married to Mary (daughter of Robert/Isabella); mentioned as Executor of William’s estate in 1769. Witnessed Isabella’s will in 1762. Died 1787?

The Revolutionary War Years – the 1770s:

The Ulster County militia performed service during the French and Indian War – 1756-63; but lists of militia members during these years, no doubt incomplete, do not show any Neelys. “Provincial and Revolutionary Military Organizations,” 1885, by E.M. Ruttenber, in *Historical Society of Newburgh Bay and the Highlands*, Newburgh, 1894, at p. 10.

The 1770’s bring us into the decade of the Revolution. Rutenberg’s *History of the Town of New Windsor*, 1911 at p. 58 contains a list of those men who in May 1775 signed a resolution to support “the rights and liberties of Amer-

ica" against England. The movement to enlist signatures was apparently led by James Clinton. Many familiar names appear on it, including: Henry "McNeeley, Jr.", and "Henerry McNeeley."

In *New York in the Revolution*, the following list appears of The Militia – Ulster County, Second Regiment:

Ulster County Militia — Second Regiment

COLONEL JAMES McCLAGHRY	ADJUTANT GEORGE DENNISTON
LIEUTENANT COLONEL JACOB NEWKIRK	QUARTER MASTER PETER CRANCE
MAJOR MOSES PHILLIPS	QUARTER MASTER EVINS WHARRY

CAPT. DAVID CRAWFORD	LIEUT. SAMUEL ARTHUR	LIEUT. HENRY NEELY
" ABRAHAM CUDDEBACK	" JOHN BARBER	" MATTHEW NEELY
" MATTHEW DuBOIS	" ALEXANDER BEATTY	" JONATHAN OWEN
" WILLIAM FAULKNER	" JAMES BURNET	" WILLIAM ROSA
" MATTISE FELTER	" ROBERT COOK	" ISAAC SHULTZ
" JAMES HUMPHREY	" DAVID CORWIN	" HENRY SMITH
" JOHN HUNTER	" DAVID CURRING	" JOHN WILKINS
" MATTHEW JANSEN	" JOHN DUNNING	" SILAS WOOD
" JAMES McBRIDE	" JOHN ENGLISH	ENSIGN ROBERT BURNET
" ANDREW MILLER	" JAMES FAULKNER	" EDWARD BURNS
" JOHN NEWKIRK	" STEPHEN HARLOW	" TIMOTHY COLEMAN
" JOHN NICHOLS	" JAMES HUNTER	" SAMUEL DUPIE
" LEONARD D. NICOLL	" WILLIAM JELLET	" ARCHAELE McBRIDE
" DAVID OSTRANDER	" JAMES KERNAGHAN	" ANDREW NEELY
" WILLIAM TILLFORD	" ALEXANDER KIDD	" JOSEPH SEARS
" BENJAMIN VAIL	" SAMUEL KING	" JOSHUA SEERS
" ISAIAH VAIL	" EDWARD McNEAL	" TUNIS VANORSDALE
" HENRY VAN KEUREN	" JOHN L. MOFFATT	" SAMUEL WETHERLO
" SAMUEL WATKINS	" DAVID MONNELL	

ADDITIONAL NAME ON STATE TREASURER'S PAY BOOKS

LIEUT. JAMES McCLAUGHREY

ENLISTED MEN

Abrahams John	Bealy John	Belknap Isaac, Jr.	Bodine Lewiss
Adams Chestor	Beatty Archibald	Belknap Jeduthan	Bodle Samuel
Adecock William	Beatty James	Belknap Jonathan	Bodle William
Atherston Joel	Beatty Thomas	Belknap Jonathan, Jr.	Boides Robart, Jr.
Badle William	Beatty William	Belknap Thomas, Jr.	Bookstaver Frederick
Baily John	Beaty Alexander	Bell Mathew	Bookstaver Jacob, Sr.
Barber John	Beaty Arthur	Bennet Benjamin	Bookstaver Jacob, Jr.
Barber Timothy	Beaty John	Bennet John	Booth John
Barkley Thomas	Beaty Robert	Biram Asa	Booth Thomas
Barton Elijah	Belknap Benjamin	Black James	Boreland Charles
Bayard James	Belknap David	Black John	Boreland Thomas
Baylis Nehemiah	Belknap Isaac	Blizzard Oliver	Boyd James

McKee Thomas	Morrison James
McKessock Thomas	Morrison John
McLoy William	Mould Christopher
McMaster James	Neal Mal'h
McMichel John	Neely Edward
McMillian Mathew	Neely John
McMunn John	Neely John, Jr.
McNeas Clark	Neely Thomas
Mc Neas George	Newkirk Adam
McNeely David	Newkirk Hendrick
McNes Daniel	Newman Scuder
McNish Clark	Newton Robbart
McSwaney Daniel	Nichols William
Mains Francis	Nicholson Daniel
Mandevil Cornelius	Nicholson Thomas
Mandevil David	Nickoll William, Sr.
Mandevil John	Nikols Nathan
Mapes Henry	Nobel Jabes
Mapes Samuel	Obrien John
Mapes Smith	Oliver David
Mapes William	Oliver Thomas
Marshall David	Outerman Stephen
Martin Charles	Overton James
Martin John	Owen Amasa
Mathers Ebenezer	Owen David
Mathers James	Owen Eleazer
Matthews Amasa	Owen Jonathan, Jr.
Meloy James	Owen Joshua
Miller Edward	Owen Nathaniel
Miller Elias	Owen Oliver
Miller John	Owen Solomon

To summarize, for Ulster County, Second Regiment, among the Lieutenants appear the names:

Henry Neely
Matthew Neely

As an Ensign appears the name:

Andrew Neely

And among the enlisted men are:

Edward Neely
John Neely
John Neely, Jr.
Thomas Neely

(The “John Martin” who appears in the list above, below the name Charles Martin, may have been the “Captain John Martin” who was prominent in the early history of Kentucky. Information about this man appears in Lyman C. Draper’s unpublished manuscript biography of Daniel Boone, at p. 486. (R.E. Martin, Fragments of Martin Family History, 1990, at 34.) Draper wrote that the John Martin associated with Boone “was born near Goshen, Orange County, N.Y., in the year 1736. He served one year in the New York provincials

on the Northern frontier during the French War and saw active service in the field. Early in 1775, he went down the Ohio with Capt. John Hinkston” Captain John helped defend Logan Station and built Martin’s Station, near the present town of Paris. He later settled in Lincoln County where he died in 1821. His wife was named Nancy, and he had a son, John L. Martin. He is *not* the John Martin who married Isabella Scott and lived in Logan County from 1797-1817 and whose daughter married Charles Neely in Logan in 1797.)

In July 1772, a company of Foot Militia commanded by Captain William Faulkner included:

Thos. Neely Jr.

Separately, for the Orange County Militia, Fourth Regiment (the boundary lines of the two counties had not yet been adjusted), we find among the enlisted men:

Edward “Nely”

John “Nely”

Ruttenber’s *History of New Windsor* also sets forth a list of those soldiers who were in service during a period of 300 days from December 1776 to May 1778, during which the regiment “lost in killed, wounded and prisoners, thirty-nine members, as follows.” Included in that list was Henry M. Neely.

Orange County Militia — Fourth Regiment

COLONEL JOHN HATHORN	ADJUTANT JOHN BARBER	
LIEUT. COL. JOSEPH HASBROUCK	ADJUTANT NATHANIEL FINCH	
LIEUT. COL. HENRY WISNER	ADJUTANT GEORGE LUCKEY	
MAJOR WILLIAM BLANE	QUARTER MASTER JEREMIAH CURTIS	
MAJOR MOSES PHILLIPS	QUARTER MASTER PHILIP KINGSLAND	
MAJOR JOHN POPPINO	QUARTER MASTER JOHN J. LOW	
MAJOR ADRIAN WYNKOOP	CHAPLAIN REV. JOHN CLOSE	
CAPT. RICHARD BAILEY	LIEUT. DAVID CRAWFORD	LIEUT. THOMAS SMITH
“ PETER BERTHOLF	“ JOSEPH CROFFORT	“ JACOB TERWILLEGAR
“ EVERETT BOGARDUS	“ JOHN DEBOW	“ GEORGE VANCE
“ CHARLES BROADHEAD	“ MARTIN DECKER	“ BENJAMIN VEAL
“ STEPHEN CASE	“ JACOB DENNING	“ FREDERICK WESTBROOK
“ JACOB CONKELIN	“ JAMES DENTON	“ JOHN WILKIN
“ MATTIS FELTER	“ HENRY DOBBINS	“ THOMAS WISNER
“ SAMUEL JONES	“ THOMAS EAGLES	“ ALEXANDER WOOD
“ JOHN LITTLE	“ JAMES FARNER	“ JOHN WOOD
“ JAMES MCBRIDE	“ SOLOMON FINCH	“ JOSEPH WOOD
“ DAVID McCAMLY	“ ISAAC FOWLER	“ JEAHS WRIGHT
“ SETH MARVIN	“ WILLIAM GILLET	ENSIGN JOHN BENEDICT
“ CORNELIUS MASTERS	“ DAVID GUE	“ HENRY BERTHOLF
“ ANDREW MILLER	“ ISAAC HARDENBERGH	“ ISAAC BURRANS
“ JOHN MINTHORN	“ JOSEPH HASBROUCK, JR.	“ JOHN BURNET
“ NEWKIRK	“ MARTIN HOMMELL	“ DANIEL CLARK
“ JOHN NICOLE	“ JOHN HOWELL	“ WILLIAM CRIST
“ EBENEZER OWENS	“ MATTHEW HUNTER	“ MOSES DEPUY
“ SILAS PERSON	“ ROBERT HUNTER	“ NATHANIEL DUROIS
“ JOHN SAYRES	“ JOSEPH JEWELL	“ ELIJAH FENTON
“ COLVILL SHEPARD	“ JOHN JOHNSTON	“ JONATHAN HALLACK
“ ARTHUR SMITH	“ JACOB LAWRENCE	“ RICHARD JOHNSON
“ BARDOWINE TARPENING	“ EDWARD McNEAL	“ CHARLES KNAPP
“ WILLIAM TILFORD	“ HENRY NEELY	“ WILLIAM MILLER
“ ISAIAH VAIL	“ JOHANNIS NIERSON	“ ANDREW NELY
“ CHRISTIVER VAN DUZER	“ DAVID OSTRANDER	“ LEONARD NICOLE
“ HENDRICK VAN KEUREN	“ JONATHAN OWEN	“ JACOB ROSECRANSE
“ ISAIAH VEAL	“ SILAS ROBISON	“ ROBERT THOMPSON
“ SAMUEL WATKINS	“ PETER ROOSA	“ DANIEL VAIL
“ WOODHULL	“ HEMAN ROWLEE	“ SAMUEL WETHERLOW
LIEUT. ALEXANDER BATY	“ THOMAS SAYRES	“ MARTIN WYANS
“ BENJAMIN COOLEY	“ HENRY SMITH	

Melborn Robert	Nely John
Merritt Thomas	Newberry Edy
Mewttin David	Newkirk Jacob
Michels William	Newkirk Samuel
Mieler Jacob	Newson Robert
Milbourn Andrew	Nichold Benjamin
Milchpough Jacob	Nicoll William
Miligan John	Nicolson Jon
Miliken Alexander	Niels Benjamin
Millar Jacobus	Nilliken Alexander
Millar John	Nolton Daniel
Millen John	NonneBrook Benjamin
Miller Alexander	Noris James
Miller Andrew	Noris Shadrac
Miller David	Odle Jesse
Miller Edward	Odle John
Miller James	Odle Stephen
Miller John	Oldrige Daniel
Miller Joshua	Oldrige Robert
Miller Peter	Oliver Samuel
Miller Zebelin	Oosterhoudt Exekiel
Mills Jonathan	Oosterhout Kryne
Milsbaugh Jacob	Orsborn Daniel
Milshepough Matthew	Orsborn Israel
Milspagh Benjamin	Ostrander Daniel
Milspagh Jacob	Ostrander Henry
Milspah Mathu	Ostrander John
Mink Chrs., Jr.	Palmer Jonth'n
Minthorn Nathaniel	Papono John
Mitchell John	Papono William
Moer Robert	Parker Benjamin
Moffet John	Parlaman Johannis
Moore Thomas	Parshal David
Moore William	Parshall John
More George	Paterson Joseph
Morehouse Josua	Patterson Alexander
Morgan Thomas	Peach Jacob
Morisson Daniel	Percy David
Morphet John	Persen Johannis
Morrall William	Peshamis John
Morris Duncim	Pifer Adam
Morris John	Pifer Fedreck
Morrison Richard	Pilgrum Morris
Morrison William	Pine Josh
Morrisson John	Plantiss Andrew
Mouir John	Planton Andrew
Mountain Nehemiah	Platt George
Mulborn John	Plumsted Nathaniel
Munnil James	Polhamus Cornelius
Murdock James	Polly Hugh
Myer Eph	Poppino Daniel
Myer Ephraim	Poppino William
Myer Peter L.	Post Garrit
Myer William	Post Henry
Myer William, Jr.	Post Jacobus, Jr.
Myers Chr'st	Post Martin
Myers John	Posts Garrot
Myers Michel	Potter Aron
Neal Josiah	Potter Edward
Nely Edword	Powers James

Baptisms in the 1770s.

The list of baptisms at the Good Will Presbyterian Church – with names of parents followed by the names of children, and dates of baptism – begins in 1770. A similar list may have been made for the Neelytown Church, but I have not found it.

EARLY SETTLERS

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PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH AT GOOD WILL, ORANGE COUNTY, N. Y.

(Continued)

Baptisms	
Names of parents are followed by names of the children and the dates of baptism.	
1770.	Hill, Dr. John —Mary, July 20.
McElwain, David—Robert, Oct. 22.	Jaggar, — —David, Aug. 25.
Gillespie, Matthew— John , Nov. 7.	McMunn, James—James, Sept. 22.
Watson, William—Jane, Nov. 7.	Galloway, John —George, Sept. 29.
Milliken, John —Hugh, Nov. 13.	Summerral, William—Elizabeth, Oct. 13.
Neilly, Henry—Reuben, Dec. 9.	Niewkirk, Henry—James, Oct. 27.
Barclay, Samuel—Mary, Dec. 9.	Frey, James—Gershom, Oct. 27.
Fitzgerald, Jeremiah—Joseph, Dec. 11.	Van — —, Dec. 10.
Barret, John — John , Dec. 11.	1772.
1771.	Houston, James—Samuel, Apr. 19.
Robinson, Mary — Elenor Gillespy, Jan. 6.	Miller, William—Zebulon, Apr. 19.
Caldwell, James—James, Jan. 9.	Parks, Arthur — William Arthur, Apr. 19.
Neiukirk, Johannes—James, Jan. 23.	Crawford, Robert—Solomon, Apr. 19
Douglass, James—Joseph, Feb. 1.	Crawford, James—Martha, Apr. 19.
Weller, Loudywick—Elizabeth, Feb. 1.	Hunter, Robert — Esther, Thomas , Apr. 19.
Neilly, James, Jr.—Edward, Feb. 3.	Smith, George—Margate, May 17.
Conkling, Higgins— John Seargent, Feb. 3.	Crage, John — Margaret , May 17.
Constable, — — John , Feb. 5.	Neely , Henry—Elizabeth, June 15.
Deck, Thomas —Christian, Feb. 19.	Lawrence, Jacob—Mary, June 15.
Kidd, Alexander, Jr. — Alexander, Mar. 3.	Millspah, Benjamin—Susanna, June 18.
Barclay, William—Mary, Mar. 8.	Neely , Edward—Richard, June 18.
Lenington, Timothy—Hannah, Mar. 8.	Graham, John —Andrew, June 20.
Gillespie, John —Elizabeth, Mar. 21.	Kidd, Robert—Andrew, July 19.
Hunter, Robert, Sr.—Joseph, Mar. 21	Milikan, Hugh—Nancy, July 19.
Monell , Robert—Mary, Apr. 7.	White, James—James, Sept. 20.
White, Samuel—Agnes, Apr. 9.	Miliken, James—William, Sept. 20.
Falconer, James—Sarah and Mary, Apr. 9.	Campbell, Alexander — Alexander, Sept. 20.
Rhea, Matthew—Robert, Apr. 14.	Graham, William—David, Sept. 27.
Gillespie, Daniel — Catherine, Apr. 14.	Dill, Robert—James, Sept. 27.
Kidd, James—Margret, Apr. 15.	Harris, — —Martha, Sept. 27.
Harris, John —Phebe, Apr. 21.	Beachman, Dr.—Cathrine and Elizabeth, twins, Sept. 27.
Decker, Johannes—Jacob Hasbrouk, Apr. 21.	Veneurra, Hendrick—Hannah, Nov 14.
Smith, Samuel—Jane, Apr. 28.	Colwell, James—Mary Dec. 7.
Comfort, John —Daniel, May 9.	1773.
Weir, William—James, May 9.	Wilson, Alexander—Cathern, Jan. 3.
Dill, Caleb—Caleb, June 16.	Elting, Peter J. and Anna—Peter Grosbeck, June 13, 1779, b Apr. 29, 1779.
	Miller, John , Jr.— John , Jan. 16, 1780.
	Decker, John and Hannah—Joseph,

- Apr. 15, 1881.
 1796.
 Barkly, Esther—Hannah, Sept. 18.
 Hunter, David and **Margaret**—
 David, Oct. 2.
 Harris, Charles and Sarah—Maria,
 Oct. 2.
 Harris, David and **Margaret**—Sarah,
 Oct. 14.
 Hunter, Joseph and Jane—Ann,
 Oct. 30.
 Weller, Henry and Anna—Imily,
 Dec. 4.
 Lowe, James and Martha —, Dec. 4.
 Griggs, Samuel and Mary—Charles,
 Dec. 11.
 1797.
Neely, Abraham and Hannah—
 Hannah, Jan. 22.
 Peck, William and Susannah
 —Susannah, Jan. 29.
 Hart, James and Helena—Elizabeth,
 Feb. 5.
 Winfield, Elias and Mary—Edwin,
 Feb. 8.
 Barber, Joseph and Jane—Jane,
 Feb. 8.
 McClain, **John** and Hannah
 —George, June.
 Lien, Isaac and Rebecca—Eliza
 Maria, June.
 William, Hugh and **Margaret**
 —Robert, June.
 Harris, **John** and Mehitable—
 Emelia, June.
 Scot, **John** and Elizabeth—**John**,
 June.
 Barkley, James and Mary—James,
 June 15.
 Hanna, **John** and Anna—James,
 June 17.
 Decker, Jacob—Elizabeth, June 17.
 Hamelton, Alexander and Mehit-
 able, July 2.
 Docherty, Peter and Jane—Sally,
 July 2.
 Goldsmith, **John** and Catherine
 —Sarah, Aug. 27.
 Dickenson, William and Elizabeth
 —Mathias, Aug. 27.
 Barkly, Samuel and Agnes—An-
 drew, Sept. 3.
 Sligh, William and Agnes—Mariah,
 Sept. 3.
 Van Curen, Benjamin and
 Elizabeth, Mary, Oct. 8.
 1798.
 Dill, Caleb and Elizabeth—Robert,
 Feb. 4.
 Houston, James—Edward McNeel.
 Snader, Jacob and Susanna— — —
 Feb. 4.
 Sears, James and **Margaret**
 —Elizabeth, Feb. 11.
 Houston, William and Susanna
 —Anna, Feb. 11.
 Beaty, **Thomas** and Martha—Wil-
 liam Clark, April.
 Barkley, **Thomas** and Sarah—
Thomas, Apr. 21.
 Arbuckle, **John** and Barbara—
 James, Apr. 21.
 Miller, James and Frances—
 Catherine, May 12.
 Miller, William and Hannah—
 Mary, May 12.
 Decker, George—Cornelius, May 12.
 Decker, Jacob and Elizabeth—**John**,
 May 12.
 Munnell, James and Mary—James
 Miller, May 12.
 McCay, **John** and Rachel—Hiram,
 May 12.
 Pelton, Samuel and Catherine
 —Christopher Mole, May 12.
 Crist, **John** and Mary—Sally
 Trimble, May 12.
 1799.
 Brown, Josiah and Elizabeth
 —Sophia, Feb. 2.
 Low, James and Martha—William,
 Feb. 2.
 Hill, William and Magdalen—Mary,
 Feb. 10.
 Haite, James and Leah—Samuel
 Fowler, Mar. 10.
 Crawford, Moses and Eleanor—
 Matilda, Mar. 10.
 Sears, Samuel—Sarah, Mar. 10.
 McCuen, **John** and **Margaret**—
 Mary, Mar. 10.
 (To be continued)

Among the names of baptizing parents are:

Henry “Neilly”

James “Neilly” Junior [Implies the existence of James Senior; an early appearance of the father of “our” Charles Neely, married Jane Martin in Logan County in 1797.]

Edward Neely

Abraham Neely and Hannah

New Windsor Office Holders, 1760s-90s.

Lists of office holders for the town of New Windsor, east of Neelytown, also reveal the presence of Neelys:

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TOWN OF NEW-WINDSOR.

Samuel Brewster, George Denniston, James Humphrey, Assessors;
 Alexander Denniston, Constable and Collector;
 Judah Harlow and Capt. James Clinton, Overseers of the Roads;
 David Crawford and John Nicoll, Overseers of the Poor;
 Andrew Crawford and William Lawrence, Fence Viewers.
 Then adjourned to the house of Joseph Belknap:
 1769. The Road Districts and Road Masters were:—
 John Galloway, Overseer, from William Mulliner's to the precinct line
 westerly;
 James Denniston, from Wm. Mulliner's to the top of Snake Hill;
 Theophilus Corwin, from the top of Snake Hill through New Windsor to
 Hudson's River, and up Goshen road as far as the road that leads off to Ar-
 thur's Mill, and to take all the inhabitants on the North side of Murderer's
 Creek, as high as they are to work;
 Samuel Arthur, at the creek and the rest of the road upwards, and to take
 the remainder of the inhabitants left therein.

From 1763 to 1770, the following persons held office:—

James Humphrey,	George Denniston,	Samuel Brewster,
Alex. Denniston,	James Clinton,	Judah Harlow,
John Nicoll,	Alexander Crawford,	David Crawford,
Isaac Hodge,	David Humphrey,	William Lawrence,
Ch. McCallister,	Leonard Nicoll,	Hezekiah White,
Silas Wood,	John Yelverton,	John Arthur,
Andrew Crawford,	Robert Buchanan,	Robert Casrkadan,
Moses Fowler,	John Nicholson,	Edward Falls,
Alexander Falls,	Thomas King,	Jonathan Parshall,
William Edmiston,	Robert Boyd,	Isaac Nicoll,
John Monell,	John Ellison,	Francis Mandevill,
James Jackson,	Patrick McClaughrey,	James Neely,
Nathan Smith,	Samuel Sly,	Arthur Beaty,
John Galloway,	Charles Clinton,	Reuben Weed,
Samuel Arthur,	James McClaurey,	James Denniston,
Samuel Logan,	Walter McMickle,	George Clinton,
James Denniston,	Isaac Shultz,	Wm. Jackson,
James Faulkner,	Neal McArthur,	Edward Neely,
Nathaniel Boyd,	Thomas Ellison,	Wm. Mulliner,
James Neely, jun.,	Henry Man Neely,	Wm. Ellison,
John Beaty,		

On the above list of New Windsor office holders for the period 1763 to 1770 appear:

James Neely
 James Neely, Junior
 Henry Man Neely
 Edward Neely

A significant fact is that we now have two James Neelys – Sr. and Jr; father and son. Four of the listed Neelys were residents of New Windsor, which was located several miles east of Neelytown. Presumably these four Neelys were related. We know that James, Sr. and Henry Man had purchased property together many years before; and that James, Jr. (“Major”) and Edward, Jr. later show up in Kentucky in Logan/Simpson counties with their families.

Ruttenber’s *History of the Town of New Windsor*, Newburgh, 1911, provided lists persons holding civil positions in the town (62, 161 et seq.):

James Neely, overseer of roads, 1767
Edward Neely, fence viewer, 1771
James Neely, overseer of the poor, 1773
Edward Neely, fence viewer, 1773
Henry MacNeely, overseer of the poor, 1775
Edward Neely, fence viewer, 1780
Edward Neely, assessor, 1782
Edward Neely, assessor, 1783
Edward Neely, assessor, 1784
Abraham Neely, Commissioner of Highways, 1786
Abraham Neely, fence viewer 1787
Edward Neely, Collector, 1788
Edward Neely, Commissioner of Highways, 1789
David McNeely, Constable, 1789
Abraham Neely, assessor, 1792

A list of New Windsor Precinct Records, 1792-1828 (Volume Two, Part I), continues for 1792:

John Sly – 1792, highway master for “the road leading past Henry McNeely’s.”
Abraham Neely, commissioner for by laws, 1792
Benjamin VanKeuren – 1799 – path master for “the cross road leading past the Widow M. Neely’s.” (Perhaps “Widow Man Neely”?)

Ruttenber’s list suggests but does not compel the conclusion that James Neely, Jr. left the New Windsor area sometime after 1773 while Edward remained behind – an hypothesis entirely consistent with what we know of the timing of James’ appearance in Kentucky. See generally, *More Fragments of Martin Family History*, 2014.

Chapter 6

JAMES NEELY AND HIS POSSIBLE RELATIONS

A. James Neely, Sr., c 1701 to 1791.

We know from the Gillespie land litigation (described below) that James Neely, Sr. was born about 1701. If James, Sr. was part of the so-called “first wave” of Scotch-Irish immigrants in the period 1718-19, then James, Sr. was born in Northern Ireland and came to America as a young man.

We also know that James Neely acquired 200 acres of land in New Windsor from Cornelius Low in April 1735. Many years later James transferred part of this land to his son Edward Sr., who in turn transferred it to Edward Jr. Edward Sr. mortgaged it for 107 pounds in October 1794; the mortgage described the property as adjacent to “the east side of the road that leads from McIntoshes mill to Hudsons River.” Edward Jr. later mortgaged it for \$250 in December 1803; the mortgage described the property as adjacent to that of John Morrison.

“East side of the road” The road from McIntosh’s mill (later Otterville) to the Hudson River is a primarily west-east road through the heart

of New Windsor. But there is one place where the road takes a bend to the south before straightening out toward east again: where “J. Vankeuren’s” farm appeared on the 1850 map of the county. (See below, at 84.)

James “Neely” is likely the same James “Nealy” who appeared on the militia list for 1738 in the precinct of the Highlands. The Highlands constituted the precinct several miles east of Neelytown and included New Windsor, where later traces of Neelys appear frequently.

In 1747 James Neely, Sr. makes another appearance. We have already referred to the Goodwill Presbyterian Church session book used by the clerks and treasurers of the church from 1737-1799. In it the following names appear:

Matthew Neely, signed in the 1740s
John Neely made payments 1744 through 1755
James Neely, April 26, 1747 through 1750
William Neely, 1749 through 1751
Robert Neely, 1749/50.

One possible incomplete alignment of these names is: Robert and William were brothers. Matthew was likely another brother of Robert (who named a son Matthew). John, who began making payments in 1744, was likely not John, Jr. – but rather old John, the “founder” and second elder of the Church, father of Robert and William. James was not identified as a brother in the wills of either Robert or William, but that doesn’t mean he wasn’t one.

In 1749 James Neely, Sr. and Henry Man Neely (sometimes “Maneely” or “M. Neely”) appear together as purchasers of land. Ruttenber/Clark reports this land transaction (at 215):

Hume Patent. – James Gembell and John Humphrey purchased, in 1724, 300 acres of the patent to Patrick Hume, and divided the same equally between them, April 6, 1730. Gembell sold to Patrick Byrn, March 12, 1744, and Humphrey sold to Patrick McClaughry, Feb. 22, 1769. One-half of the remainder of the patent (850 acres) was sold by James Lithgow, nephew of the patentee, to James Neelly, Henry Man Neelly, William Young, and Patrick McClaughry, March 6, 1749, and the same parties purchased the remaining half (850 acres) from Hannah Lithgow, widow, and John Nicholas, of Philadelphia, April, 1750. June 10, 1757, William Young sold to Samuel Sly 233 acres, now known as the Sly homestead. The Gembell and Humphrey portion of the patent was sold to William Telford and Samuel Falls.

The first part of the transaction – a purchase by four men, including James Neely and Henry Man Neely – occurred in 1749. A follow-up acquisition of related land by the same four purchasers occurred in 1750. The total was 1700 acres.

Patrick McClaughry was one of those who bought a chunk of this Lithgow land. A quarter century later, in 1774, he disposed of it by will to his heirs – including John McClaughry – and described the land this way:

"in fee simple." – "To my Grandson Alexander McClaughry all that certain piece or parcel of land" "in New Windsor" "part of the land released to me by William Young Henry Maneely and James Neely & bounded Northerly by the land of Cadwallader Colden Westwardly by the land of the said Henry Maneely, Easterly by the land of John Finley and southerly by the land of Samuel Sly," "in fee simple." – "To my said sons John McClaughry & James McClaughry and my sons in law John Finley and George Denniston" "as Tenants in common in Fee simple, All that Lott of land situate in" New Windsor "containing 140 acres which was released to me" "by the said William Young, Henry Maneely and James Neely lying North of the Farm whereon the said John Finley now lives." "To son James" "in fee simple All the residue of my Farm" "in Little Britain" "now in the occupation of John Morrison" "bounded Northerly by the land of Robert Carskadan deceased, Easterly by the land of Sarah Tremble Southerly by the land of Thomas Crawford and the High Way and Westerly by the land of Samuel Boyd and Hugh Umphrey." – Resi-

Thus:

To grandson Alexander McClaughry the land in New Windsor part of the land released to me by William Young, Henry Maneely and James Neely bounded Westwardly by the land of the said Henry Maneely ...

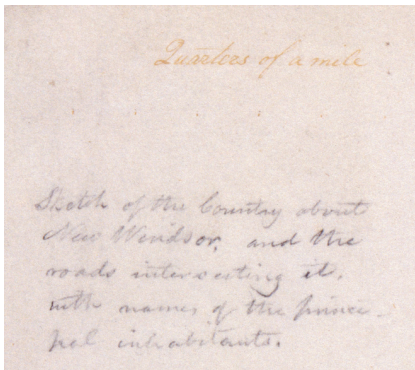
To sons John and James McClaughry and sons in law ... a lot of 140 acres in New Windsor which was released to me by the said William Young, Henry Maneely and James Neely lying north of the farm whereon the said John Finley now lives “

To son James, residue of farm in Little Britain now in the occupation of John Morrison ... (Edward Neely II, son of Edward I and grandson of James Neely, later reportedly married Elizabeth Morrison, probably a sister of John Morrison.)

These joint acquisitions and dispositions of land by James Neely and Henry Man Neely support the hypothesis that James and Henry Man were related – probably brothers. Further support comes from the fact that these two Neelys apparently lived near each other – east of, and somewhat apart from –

the main family settlement in Neelytown. Eager reported that Man Neely lived along or near the highway from Neelytown to New Windsor; and both James and Henry Man served as officials in the town of New Windsor.

In 1783 Simeon Dewitt drew a sketch of the country “about New Windsor and roads and names.” It is preserved in the New York Historical Society Museum. The sketch reaches from the settlement of New Windsor west only as far as Little Britain – Neelytown is a few miles farther west. The sketch does not show the homes of either James or Henry Man Neely, but it does show the property of “Jn. McClaghry” perhaps a quarter-mile west of Little Britain. John was one of the owners of property “released” to his father Patrick by James and Henry Man Neely.



Detail: 1783 Dewitt Sketch of area “about New Windsor.”
Farm of Jn McClaghry, west of Little Britain

* * *

Reviewing other traces of either James or Henry Man Neely in the records we find the following:

- “James Neely,” “James Neely, jun.” and Henry Man Neely” were all listed as persons who held office in New Windsor sometime “from 1763 to 1770. It’s fair to assume that the first James was father to the second – the “junior.”
- James Neely served as overseer of roads in 1767, and as overseer of the poor in 1773.
- James “Neilly” Junior caused a son, Edward, to be baptized February 3, 1770.
- Henry Neely caused a daughter, Margaret, to be baptized May 17, 1770.
- Edward Neely caused a son, Richard, to be baptized June 18, 1770.
- Henry Neely appeared as a Lieutenant in the Ulster County, Second Regiment during the Revolution.
- Henry Man Neely served as overseer of the poor in 1775.
- Henry M. Neely was on the list of militia members “killed, wounded and prisoners” during 1777 and 1778. (We can eliminate the “killed” alternative.)
- Henry Neely witnessed will of Caleb Dill II in the late 1780’s (see below).

We do not know the name of the wife of James Neely, Sr. According to various web sites she was named Jean, but no evidence has turned up to support that first name.

In addition to James Jr., James Sr. and his wife had several children whose names appear to be reliably documented (though not necessarily their ages or marriage years):

- Ann Neely – c.1742-1817, md 1759 Robert Hunter, died in Walden, Orange, New York.

[Robert Hunter’s first marriage had been to Elizabeth Anne Gillespie. After the first wife died in 1756, Robert Hunter married Ann Neely in 1759; they reportedly had 10 children. Two of them were baptized at Goodwill Church on April 19, 1772. Hunter’s will, dated November 22, 1775, was probated in 1783. In it he refers to his “loving wife Anne” and to “her father, James Neely.” Edward Neely – Ann’s brother – was a witness to the 1775 will; Edward was described as “of the

precinct of New Windsor, farmer.”]

Children of Ann Neely and Robert Hunter:

John Hunter, died 1789

Stephen

Joseph

James

– Edward Neely – c.1740-1816, md 1761 Anne (or Anna) Goldsmith. See *More Fragments of Martin Family History*, 2014. Their son Richard was baptized in Goodwill Church, June 18, 1772. Died New Windsor, 1815; widow named Margaret.

[Anne Goldsmith was a daughter of Richard Goldsmith, 1711-1781, who married Susanna Haines, c1725 - ___). Richard’s will of 1781 identifies his children: Benjamin, Richard, Jr., Susannah (married Henry Wisner), Abigail (married John Sears), and Anne, born ca 1741, (married Edward Neely.)]

Children of Edward and Anne Goldsmith Neely:

Richard, born 1772

Edward

Jane – married John T. Morrison; granddaughter

_____ daughter, married Samuel Gibbons

– Major James Neely – c.1744-1822. See *More Fragments . . .* “James Neilly, Jr.” caused his son Edward to be baptized in Goodwill Church, February 3, 1771.

– Jane Neely – c.1748-1788, md 1768 Matthew Gillespie (died 1797), later md. his brother William Gillespie.

- Barbara
- John – baptized in Goodwill Church, November 7, 1770.
- James
- Matthew
- Jane
- Ann
- Mary

– John Neely – 1750, md 1770 Barbara Gillespie

The reference to the two Gillespie marriages brings us to a complex piece of land litigation that played out in Orange County in 1813-1814.

It appears that James Neely had disposed of his land by transferring part of it to his son, Edward Sr. (who mortgaged it in 1794) and part to his daughter Jane Gillespie. The litigation relates to the latter portion.

The Gillespie family was prominent in Ulster – later Orange – County; and they were snarled up with the Neelys. Samuel Gillespie, 1742-1815, was born and died there. His will mentions two brothers: Matthew (died 1797) and William (died 1813). Also, as noted above, one of Samuel Gillespie’s sisters, Elizabeth, married Robert Hunter (who later married Ann Neely); and another of Samuel’s sisters, Barbara, married John Neely (b. c 1750). William Gillespie was executor of the estate of John Hunter, Robert’s son, in 1789.

The 1790 census for New Windsor, Ulster County, NY includes the following:

	-----Free White -----			Other	Slaves	Page
	Males		Females			
	16 & Over	Under 16				
Gibson, William	1	1	2	1	0	180
Gillispie, James	1	3	3	0	0	180
Gillispie, John	7	2	3	0	0	180
Gillispie, Matthew	5	1	5	0	0	181

Matthew appears as head of a household. William does not. Matthew’s household includes five males 16 and over.

Jackson, ex dem. Gillespy and others, against Woolsey, Supreme Court of the State of New York, 1814, at 446, was a suit, an action of ejectment, involving a dispute over a farm, which had belonged to James Neely, deceased. The statement of facts relates that: “James Neely lived on the farm in question until a few years before his death, which was in 1791, at the age of about 90.” So James would not have been on the farm as part of Matthew’s household in 1790.

OF THE STATE OF NEW-YORK. 446

It was proved, on the part of the plaintiff, that *James Neely* lived on the farm in question, until a few years before his death, which was in 1791, at the age of about 90: that *William Gillespy*, who married *Jane*, a daughter of *Neely*, lived, at the same time, upon the farm, and worked it, and maintained *Neely* and his wife, which he acknowledged, to one witness, he was bound to do; and after *Neely* and his wife left the farm, that *Gillespy* paid their board until their death; and that it was understood that, after their death, the farm was to go to *Jane Gillespy*.

NEW-YORK
 October, 1814
 JACKSON
 v.
 WOOLSEY.

Thus, James Neely, Sr., the owner of the farm, had lived from about 1701 to 1791.

The facts established that James Neely deeded the property in 1771 to his daughter “Jane Gillespy.” Jane was at that time married to Matthew Gillespy. The Neely’s well-known neighbor George Clinton prepared the deed. James, Sr. declared to his family in 1771 that “it was as good a deed as George Clinton could write.” The deed was then signed by James, Sr. and “his wife.” The consideration for the deed to Jane was that Jane and Matthew would work the farm and take care of old James Neely and his wife during their lifetimes. At the time the deed was signed, Jane and Matthew agreed as a condition to the bond that they would pay other members of the family 100 pounds, and also pay off 60 pounds of debt of James Neely.

It appears that Jane and Matthew held up their end of the bargain, and took care of James, Sr. and his wife. After James, Sr. and his wife left the farm, Gillespy “paid their board until their death, and that it was understood that, after their death, the farm was to go to Jane Gillespy.”

–Jane Gillespy was initially married to Matthew Gillespy. At some point she married his brother, William.

– Jane died in 1788.

– old James Neely, Sr. died in 1791.

– Matthew then obtained the deed, which had been held with other family papers; he instituted proceedings to “partition” the property interests that had been deeded to Jane among her children. These children were (1) by her first marriage, Barbara Gillespy (who had married John Neely); and (2) infant children by her second marriage to William – John, James, Matthew, Jane, Ann and Mary.

– In the partition proceedings, the Commissioners found the deed to Jane to be good and split up her interests among her heirs. They also authorized that the farm be sold to Matthew Gillespy as the highest bidder – for 600 pounds.

– Matthew Gillespy entered into a contract to sell the farm to Benjamin Van Keuren.

– Matthew Gillespy died in 1797.

- Other members of the Neely family then brought suit, taking the position that the deed by James Neely, Sr. back in 1771 was not effective, that the property had not passed to Jane or Matthew Gillespy, and that therefore it could not have passed to Benjamin Van Keuren.
- The Court ruled for the defendants, holding that the contract had been valid, that Jane and Matthew had fulfilled their part of the bargain, that title had passed to Jane, and then by sale to Matthew, and then to Van Keuren.

* * *

The decision of the court tells us several things of interest. It gives us the approximate birth year of James, Sr. as well as the year of his death, 1791. It tells us the names of two of his daughters – Ann (married Robert Hunter), and Jane (married the Gillespy brothers). James, Sr. and his wife lived on the farm until a few years before his death; and “Gillespy paid their board until their death.” We do not know where James spent those few years – almost certainly with some other relatives. It could have been with his son Edward, who remained in New Windsor long after brother James, Jr. had left for Kentucky. Edward’s sons did not relocate to Kentucky until 1804-05.

We also know that James Sr.’s farm was acquired by Benjamin Van Keuren. Benjamin was the son of Hendricus Van Keuren and his wife Annatje. Hendricus Van Keuren served in the Revolution and, “lived on what is known as the Downs farm, between Montgomery and Goodwill church.” “The Van Keuren Stone house, now generally known as the Downs House, about a mile west of Goodwill church, on the road to Montgomery, was built in part by Hendricus Van Keuren in 1768, and in part by a previous owner, probably John McNeal.” Headley, *History of Orange County*, 1908, at 309. Eurich and Williams, in *Old Houses of Hanover*, 1994, report (30-31) that Henry Van Keuren purchased one of the first houses in the area, traditionally built in 1729 by John McNeal, and enlarged it in 1768. Hendrickus, “of New Paltz,” left a will dated March 29, 1785 leaving his estate to his wife Catharine for her widowhood, and then to his son Benjamin and the children of his deceased “eldest son Hendrickus.”

Benjamin, son of Hendricus, was reportedly born June 16, 1765, in Shawagunk, and died June 20, 1847, in Orange County. He was a member of the Goodwill Church in Montgomery. In 1832, he and his wife Elizabeth were

among the group that established a new church – the Presbyterian Church of Montgomery. However, Benjamin is buried in Goodwill Cemetery. The cemetery record says he died June 20, 1842, age 82 years. His first wife was Mary Miller, 1774-1795. With her he had one son – Miller, born 1795. (Mother died in childbirth?) His second wife, Elizabeth Morris Waugh, 1772-1845, also rests in the cemetery. They reportedly had two sons – Daniel, b c. 1800, and Henry, b. 1811-1865 – and four daughters.

Here is the relevant part of the Van Keuren family tree, prepared by the family’s modern genealogical expert, Van Curen:

2. BENJAMIN⁷ VAN KEUREN (HENDRICUS⁶, BENJAMIN⁵, TIERK MATTHYSSEN⁴, MATTHYS³ MATTHYSSEN, MATHLIS JANSEN² VAN CEULEN, JAN JANSEN¹) was born June 16, 1765 in Shawangunk, New York, and died June 20, 1847 in Goodwill, Orange County, New York. He married (1) MARY MILLER April 21, 1790 in Goodwill, New York, daughter of SAMUEL MILLER. She was born 1770 in Montgomery, Orange, New York, and died October 30, 1795 in Goodwill, Orange County, New York. He married (2) ELIZABETH WAUGH 1797 in Orange County, New York. She was born 1772, and died May 09, 1845 in Goodwill, Orange Co, New York.

Child of BENJAMIN VAN KEUREN and MARY MILLER is:

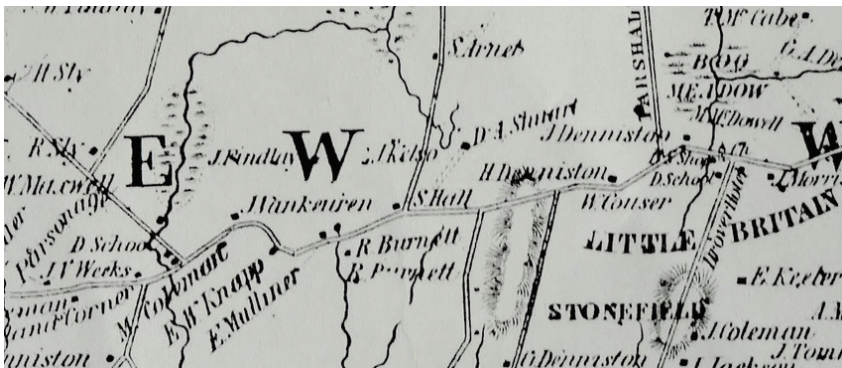
7. i. MILLER⁸ VAN KEUREN, b. October 1795, Montgomery, New York; d. June 14, 1883, Hamptonburgh, New York.

Children of BENJAMIN VAN KEUREN and ELIZABETH WAUGH are:

- ii. MARY⁸ VAN KEUREN, b. October 08, 1798, Goodwill, New York; m. HIRAM SLOAT, November 17, 1830, Pine Bush, Orange County, New York.
- iii. DANIEL VAN KEUREN, b. Abt. 1800, Goodwill, Orange County, New York; m. ANNA ELIZA FISHER; b. 1798, New York; d. February 09, 1859, Goodwill, Orange County, New York.
- 8. iv. SARAH VAN KEUREN, b. Abt. 1805, Orange County, New York; d. November 08, 1875, Goshen, New York.
- v. EASTER VAN KEUREN, b. January 10, 1808, Goodwill, New York; d. April 06, 1836, Goodwill, New York.
- vi. JANE VAN KEUREN, b. February 25, 1810, Goodwill, New York; d. September 17, 1887, Goodwill, Orange County, New York; m. ABRAHAM MACE, December 01, 1850, Montgomery, New York; b. 1798, New York.
- 9. vii. HENRY JOHNSON VAN KEUREN, b. April 05, 1811, Goodwill, New York; d. February 20, 1865, Goodwill, Orange Co, New York.

James, Sr’s farm – which was acquired by Benjamin Van Keuren from Matthew Gillespy in the mid-1790’s – was apparently located just north of the road connecting Neelytown and Little Britain.

The 1850 map of Orange County identifying the owners of particular farms appeared three years after the death of Benjamin in 1847. It shows, just west of the settlement of Little Britain, a farm owned by “JVanKeuren.” It is on the road connecting Neelytown (to the west) and New Windsor (to the east), 2-3 miles west of the encampment of the American army during 1782-83.



Detail: 1850 Map of Orange County

It will be noted that this “JVanKeuren” farm appears to be very near – if not at the same location – as the land originally acquired by James and Henry Man Neely in 1749-1750, part of which they released to Patrick McClaughry, who left part of it in 1774 to one of his heirs, John “McCloughry.” (See 1783 Dewitt Sketch, *supra*.) Mary Trimble, who lived on the farm where old John Neely had once lived, was a granddaughter of Patrick McClaughry.

Perhaps “JVanKeuren” was Henry Johnson Van Keuren (1812-1865) – son of Benjamin, who purchased the old James Neely farm from Matthew Gillespy so many years before. He is buried in Goodwill Cemetery. However, Henry Johnson’s daughter Martha was reportedly born in New Hurley in the fall of 1851 – H.J. may not have been the “J” living on the New Windsor road in 1850. “J” might also have been James Van Keuren, son of Henry (born 1787), brother of Benjamin (born 1765).

Twenty-five years later – in 1875 – the farm had passed to another generation of Van Keurens: “D. Van Keuren” and “E.C. Van Keuren.” Daniel Van Keuren (1854-1875) was a son of Henry Johnson Van Keuren – and a grandson of Benjamin, who purchased the old James Neely farm in the 1790’s. “E.C.” is a mystery. Maybe a printer’s goof.



Detail: 1875 Map

We are left with the question: Who was the father of James Neely, Sr.?

There's no evidence that it was Robert Neely, the early settler and one of two or three brothers. James may well have been older than Robert – or at least his contemporary. Robert named his children in his will, and James does not appear on the list.

There's also no evidence that it was Robert's brother William Neely, whose will lists a son William II, but no James. (Thomas Neely was a witness, but not named as a son either.)

That leaves as a possibility the “founder” – old John Neely, Sr. We have no will for old John – no list of children. If (as the testimony stated) James, Sr. was born about 1701, and if old John were his father, that would push back the year of old John's birth at least to something in the range of 1680 if not earlier.

Another possibility – albeit remote in light what appears to be solid evidence of James, Sr.'s birth around 1701 and the fact that he first appears in 1735 – is that James, Sr. was born in Ireland, married there and had a family, and came with his young family to the colonies some years after the first generation (that of Founder John Neely, Sr., Thomas, Samuel and Alexander) had made their appearance. We have the statement of Kentucky Historian Perrin to the effect that James Neely, Jr. (Major James) was born in Ireland and emigrated to the colonies – which, if true, would have occurred when James Jr. was very young.

Too many “perhaphses” – but better to live with them than fill the void with guesses that are wrong.

B. Henry Man Neely

We have not much information about Henry Man Neely – who is likely the same person as Henry “Maneely” – and “M. Neely” – and perhaps even “MacNelly.”

The “middle name” of “Man” – or the prefix “Ma” preceding Neely – is puzzling. The other Neelys in Orange County did not have middle names. A few other people with the name “Maneely” or “Maneilly” can be found in American or Irish records, as can men with names spelled “M'Nealey” or “M'Neally.” In the 18th century and earlier, the essential thing about language and names was the sound – not the way that sound was transferred to paper. Many people could not read or write their own language; and perhaps fewer Scotch-Irish could

read or write in English. The spelling of names thus depended on the accident of which English recorder or clerk was writing in English the unfamiliar Gaelic name he heard. Thus, we find different spellings of the same name. One possibility is that Henry was “Mac Neely” – perhaps pronounced something like “MkNEEly” for son of Neely – and a town clerk or militia recruiter wrote it “Maneely.” In any event, it seems likely that James and “Henry Man” were of the same Neely family.

Henry Man Neely was married at least twice. We do not know the name of his first wife. The Ruttenber *History of New Windsor* reports (at 104) that Henry “MaNeely” married Sarah Burnet, that she was his second wife, and that they had two sons – David and Robert – and a daughter, Ruth.

[The Burnets – pronounced with the accent on the first syllable – were a well-known family in “Little Britain,” the community near New Windsor. Robert Burnet, 1701 - , had purchased 200 acres in New Windsor in 1729 not far from the Clintons. One of Robert’s daughters was Sarah, 1745-?, who married Henry Man Neely. From the *Orange County Post*, April 23, 1970.]

Henry Man Neely was the joint purchaser of land in 1749 and 1750 with James Neely; and later they had land – perhaps this land – with a common boundary. It thus seems likely that Henry Man Neely and James were brothers.

“Henry Man Neely” was listed as an office holder in New Windsor between 1763 and 1770. He is likely the Henry “MacNeely” who appeared in New Windsor in 1775 as overseer of the poor.

In May 1775 two men in New Windsor who signed the resolution to support the rights and liberties of America were “Henerry McNeeley” and “Henry McNeely, Jr.” These were likely Henry Man Neely, Senior and Junior – father and son.

Then we have “Henry M. Neely” who was one of the wounded or captured during the war between 1776 and 1778. Even if Henry Man Neely were a much younger brother of James, Sr., that would have made him quite an old soldier to be taking part in the fighting. Perhaps the wounded or captured soldier was Henry Man Neely, Jr. – son of Henry Man, Sr., and nephew of old James, Sr.

The 1790 federal census for Ulster County, New Windsor, reported:

McMunn, James	4	1	2	0	0	181
McNeely, Henry	5	1	5	0	0	181
McNeely, John	1	2	3	0	0	181
Miller, Edward	1	1	6	0	0	181
Miller, Phillips	2	1	2	0	0	181
Mills, Daniel	1	0	1	0	0	181
Mills, Jacob	4	2	7	0	0	180
Mills, John	1	3	4	0	0	181
Moffat, William	1	1	4	0	1	180
Moffatt, Isaac	1	5	4	0	0	180
Moffatt, Margaret	1	3	3	1	0	180
Morrell, Joseph	2	0	4	0	0	180
Morrison, John	1	6	5	0	0	180
Mucklerath, John	2	0	4	0	0	180
Mucklierath, James	1	1	2	0	0	180
Neelly, Abraham	1	2	2	0	3	181
Neelly, Edward	3	2	4	0	0	181
Nichols, Fanny	0	1	1	0	1	180

C. James Neely, Jr. (son of James Sr.): “Major James” of Kentucky – and his Family.

Such information as I have found relating to James Neely, Jr. – son of James Sr. of New Windsor – is set forth in *More Fragments of Martin Family History*, 2014, at 127 et seq., and need not be repeated here.

D. Edward Neely, Sr. (son of James Sr.) and his Family.

Until recently it has been incorrectly assumed that Edward Sr. moved to Kentucky in the first decade of the 19th Century along with his sons, Edward Jr. and Richard. (See Wiles/Davis, *Neely, 200 Years in America*, at 96; *More Fragments of Martin Family History*, 2014, at 144.) Edward Neely, Sr. was reportedly married to Anne (Anna) Goldsmith in 1761. Their sons included both Edward Jr. and Richard. The father and both sons were farmers in New Windsor during 1799-1804:

Orange > 1799 > New Windsor

NAME	PROPERTY	VALUE		PERSONAL		TAXES
		Real	Personal	Real	Personal	
Monell Joseph	House & Lot	1252	50	135	1	39
Monell Daniel				20		2
Moore James	House & Farm	7400		878	8	27
Mains Francis	d ^o	3315	50	299	3	51
M ^o Connell John	d ^o	2383	75	239	2	52
M ^o Coy Amnariad	d ^o	108		02		15
M ^o Dowell James	d ^o	1611	25	203	2	1
M ^o Dowell Matthew	d ^o			40		4
Nicholson Andrew	d ^o	1000		122	1	72
Neely Edward Jun ^r	Farm	437	50	97		33
Neely Edward	House & Farm	1833		175	2	3
Nelson Henry				30		3
Neely Richard	d ^o	225		20		24
Nichols Joseph & Sam ^l	d ^o	1497	30	219	1	18
Nichols Wm D.	d ^o	2020		330	4	95
N. L. H. G. L.						

It is now clear that when Edward Jr. and Richard moved to Kentucky, Edward Sr. stayed behind, in New Windsor. The census of 1810 shows Edward Neely still in Orange County. More important, Edward Neely, Sr. died in New Windsor in 1815. His will referred to his wife Margaret, his daughter Jane, married to John Morrison, a granddaughter Elizabeth Morrison, and another daughter (perhaps married to Samuel Gibbons). My assumption – not documented – is that his first wife, Anne Goldsmith Neely, died, and that he remarried Margaret _____. Sons Edward Jr. and Richard were not mentioned in the will; they had probably received advance gifts before they left for Kentucky.

We must pause over the daughter Jane, married to John Morrison, and the granddaughter Elizabeth. In 1804 Edward Sr. had agreed to post a bond with New Windsor by which he would become responsible for the costs of bringing up and educating “a certain bastard child born of the body of Jane Neely single woman of the town of New Windsor which John T. Morrison ... is the reputed father” The child’s name was Elizabeth; she was “about two” in March 1804. Based on the will and the 1810 census, it seems clear that John Morrison married the mother, Jane, sometime after 1804.

Edward Jr. and his wife Elizabeth and family moved from New Windsor to Logan County, Kentucky, in late 1804 or early 1805. (Wiles/Davis state that Elizabeth’s name before marriage was Morrison – which, if correct, would make her a likely sister of Edward Jr.’s brother-in-law John Morrison.) As they were leaving New York, Edward, Jr. transferred a parcel of land in New Wind-

sor to Frederick Weblin for \$2500. The indenture describes the land as “part ... of a tract formerly granted to Cornelius Low and company and is the southwest-erly half of 200 acres ... conveyed by ... Low ... to *James Neely, grandfather of the said Edward Neely Junior* ... on the 21st day of April 1735 ...” The description states that the land shares a common line with John Morrison’s land.

This 1804 indenture of Edward Jr. cinches up certain facts:

1. James Neely, Sr. acquired land in New Windsor as early as April 1735 – his earliest confirmed (so far) appearance in what was then Ulster County.
2. James Sr. was father of James Jr. (“Major”) and Edward Sr., who were thus brothers, as long supposed. It is thus highly likely that the two brothers were born in New York rather than Northern Ireland or Scotland, as supposed by Wiles/Davis.
3. For Martin descendants, James Sr. is confirmed as grandfather of Charles Neely, who married Jane Martin in Logan County in 1797.

E. The Neelys and the Dills.

The attentive (or perhaps retentive) reader might remember that the Dills Mill appeared on the 1776 Holland map in the same location where Neelytown later appeared. There were many connections between Neelys and members of the Dill family during the period of the Revolution; and they line up in a way that suggests that three of the Neelys – Mary, Henry, and Abraham – might have been siblings. (Here I distinguish between the younger “Henry” and the older “Henry Man.”) Though we cannot be sure, it seems likely that the father of these three Neelys was Henry Man Neely.

The connections between the Dill’s and Neelys boggle the mind:

- A. Caleb Dill II – marriage to Mary Neely. Caleb’s will, 1786, was witnessed by Henry Neely and Abraham Neely – which suggests that Mary might have been a sister of these two related witnesses.
- B. Robert Dill (Caleb II’s brother) – had a daughter Hannah, who married Captain Abraham Neely. (In 1905 Dr. George Barnes of New York City sought information from the pension office about Abraham; in the process he asserted that Abraham was a brother of Henry Neely.)

- C. David Dill (another brother) – his will in 1759 was witnessed by John Neely, Sr. and Elizabeth Neely.
- D. John Dill (still another brother) – his will 1788 witnessed by Abraham Neely; refers to money due him to be collected by “Hennery Neely and John Dill, son of my brother Caleb deceased, whome I constitute and appoint to be my Executors.”

Let’s take Mary Neely first:

1. Mary Neely – 1734-1828, md. 1756 Caleb Dill, II. I initially thought this was the Mary, daughter of Robert/Isabell Neely; but that cannot be – that Mary (daughter of Robert) married a Thomas Neely. Caleb II’s marriage to a “Mary Neely” seems well documented.

2. Henry Neely – reportedly 1743-1802; either Henry Man Neely, Jr. or just plain Henry, without the “Man” middle name. It may be that he dropped the “Man” at some point.

Henry caused to be baptized a son Reuben in Goodwill Church, December 9, 1770. Reuben lived his life in the neighborhood and is buried in the Goodwill Church cemetery – the only Neely, to my knowledge, who rests there. He and David Dill were unsuccessful candidates for the New York Assembly in 1804. Reuben was a “supervisor” of the township or precinct of Montgomery from 1803-1810, and an incorporator of the Newburgh and Cohecton turnpike in 1809, a toll road between the village of Montgomery and Deerpark. (It dissolved in 1817, never having become profitable.)

Henry and Abraham Neely witnessed the Will of Caleb Dill II in 1786 and Henry was Executor of the will of Caleb’s brother John Dill in 1788. This Henry Neely is listed in a DAR listing as follows: 1743-1802, [too young to have purchased land with James, Sr. in 1749/50]; served as lieutenant in the militia of Ulster and Orange counties; died in Fairfield, NY. Separately, a family history of the Nelsons shows that Susanna Nelson, daughter of Reuben Nelson, was born October 13, 1751, in Dutchess County, which explains how the name “Reuben” entered the Neely family.

3. Captain Abraham Neely, c. 1744-1822

Abraham Neely was likely a brother of Mary and Henry. Abraham married Hannah Dill, daughter of Robert – one of the Dill brothers. He also witnessed Caleb II’s will, as did Henry Neely. And a later Dill descendant, Dr.

George Barnes, asserted in a request to the pension office that Abraham and “Henry Neely” were brothers.

Abraham Neely in May 1773 purchased land in Windsor from Egbert Durnond for 142 pounds.

According to the United States Pension Office, responding to a request for information by J. Ralph Neely, Abraham Neely entered the service in 1778 at the request of Governor George Clinton, and received a lieutenant’s commission. He enlisted a company and on March 26, 1777, was commissioned lieutenant in Colonel Malcolm’s Regiment. On June 16, 1779 he was commissioned captain to rank from October 10, 1778, and served as such officer in Colonel Oliver Spencer’s Regiment. He was at Valley Forge, and in the battle of Monmouth, where he was wounded; and he served until 1781 when he resigned his commission. He was allowed a pension from March 12, 1787 on account of disability resulting from his wound. He died February 24, 1822.

According to an affidavit submitted by John Dill, Hannah’s brother, to the pension office, Abraham married November 22, 1785 at Shawangunk, Ulster County, Hannah Dill. Hannah was born January 30, 1763. She was allowed a pension on her application of January 7, 1840, at which time she was a resident of Venice, Cayuga County, New York.

Hannah Dill was a daughter of Robert Dill. Abraham and “Henry Neely” were witnesses to the wills of Robert’s brothers Caleb Dill II and John Dill. Abraham and Hannah then moved to Herkimer County, N.Y.

An obituary for Captain Abraham Neely in the newspaper “People’s Friend,” printed in Little Falls, Herkimer County, reports that he died Sunday, February 24, 1822 at age 77 – which means he was born in 1744.

A squib on a Dill family website summarizes what a family researcher had learned about Hannah’s husband. It says that Captain Abraham Neely, born 1745 and died 1822, was a “son of John Neely of Neelytown, N.Y.” and a “brother of Henry Man Neely & Mary Neely, wife of 2014.” It adds that Abraham purchased a farm of 105 acres in New Windsor in 1779.

HANNAH DILL (dau. of 2013), b. Jan. 30, 1763--d. June 17, 1845. Was living in Venice, Cayuga Co., N.Y. in 1840. Pensioned on Certificate #1259 in 1843 issued under the Act of March 3, 1843, paid from the Albany, N.Y. Agency.
Married @ Shawangunk, Ulster Co., N.Y. on Nov. 22, 1785 by to
CAPTAIN ABRAHAM NEELY, b. Sept ..., 1745 in the Wallkill Precinct, Ulster Co., N.Y. (now Montgomery Tp., Orange Co.)--d. Feb. 24, 1822 in Herkimer Co., N.Y.,
son of John Neely of Neelytown, N.Y., b.....17....-d.....17...., m.....
to b.....17....-d.....17....
Brother of Henry Man Neely & Mary Neely, wife of 2014.
Purchased a Farm of 105 Acres located in the New Windsor Precinct, Ulster (now Orange) Co., N.Y. @ Sheriff's Sale April 1, 1773 for \$ 142 current money of N.Y.

Let's peel apart this Dill squib. It says:

- a. Abraham was a son of John Neely of Neelytown;
- b. Abraham was a brother of Henry Man Neely and Mary Neely

As to the first point, ... which John Neely? Old John, Sr. – the Founder? It is possible, but the squib provides no evidence. John was a settler as early as 1726. He is probably the father of Robert, who bought property in 1731 – making his birth year at least back in 1710 if not earlier – which would have shoved old John's birth year back at least 20 or so years before that, say c 1690 if not earlier. But even if those were accurate guesses, he could have fathered Captain Abraham in 1745.

Here's a straw in the wind: The sons of Abraham Neely and Hannah, as reported in web sites, were:

Caleb, b 1789
John, b 1791
Robert, b 1793
Samuel, b 1795
Abram, b 1797
James, b 1802

The normal naming pattern among Scotch-Irish families in colonial times was: (a) first son – for father's father; (b) second son, for mother's father; (c) third son, for his father; and (d) fourth son, for his father's eldest brother. Hannah's Dill's grandfather was Caleb Dill I; and her father was Robert Dill. So it looks like they did not follow the traditional pattern; instead (assuming the reported family tree was accurate), they went: (a) mother's grandfather, (b).....; and (c) mother's father. If they treated Abraham's (the father's) side the same way, then "John" Neely was Abe's grandfather Neely, and (b) "Samuel" was his father.

Could be. As we know, Samuel was a family name. One of the early settlers of Neelytown was a Samuel. The naming pattern used by Abraham and Hannah Dill Neely for their sons would suggest – if Abraham's father was the early settler Samuel – that early Samuel was a son of John Neely.

There was another, younger Samuel, who internet sources say was born in 1738, married Antje Bevier, and that died in March 1786, leaving a will that identified him as "of the Oblong, Dutchess Co." Dutchess County was adjacent to Ulster and Orange counties, to the east. But he was too young to be the father of Captain Abraham.

How about Henry Man Neely – the supposed brother of Abraham? Henry Man acquired property back in 1749 (with James, Sr.). If he did so at age 21, that would put his birth year back to c. 1728, if not earlier. That would create a gap in their birth years of at least 17 years. And what about James, Sr., with whom Henry Man purchased property in 1749? Was he also a brother? We're pretty sure he was born around 1701 – which would make a gap in birth years of about 44 years between James, Sr. and Captain Abraham.

Perhaps the John Neely referred to in the Dill squib was John, Jr. But the John Neely who made his will on March 26, 1781 (*supra*) identified no sons, has an unmarried daughter, and frets about the possibility that he will leave no male in his line called “John Neely.” It seems unlikely that this John (whom I've labeled “Jr.”) was the father of brothers Abraham and Henry Man. It also seems unlikely that this John, Jr. was their brother: he mentions his brother Matthew in his 1781 will, but no other brothers.

As to the second point – that Henry Man Neely and Abraham were brothers – it is also unsupported. My guess is that the researcher who wrote the squib may not have realized that the “Henry Neely” who joined Abraham as a witness or executor on the two Dill wills was a different person than Henry MAN Neely. Henry Man was almost certainly an earlier generation Neely: a co-purchaser of land with James Neely back in 1749 – while Henry Jr. was reportedly born in 1743, and Captain Abraham in 1744/1745.

It appears to me that the (likely) siblings Mary, Henry (no-Man), and Abraham were not children of a John, but rather of Henry Man Neely. James, Sr. and Henry Man – likely brothers – were both listed as office-holders in New Windsor for several years, as were James Sr.'s sons – James Jr. and Edward. So was Henry Neely, who baptized a son, Reuben, in Goodwill Church on December 9, 1770.

Perhaps further research will sort this tangle out and correct the errors and omissions that are no doubt embedded in this summary of possible “facts” and analysis.

F. Samuel Neely of the Oblong, 1738-1786.

“Samuel Neely” appears in the histories as an early settler in the Neely-town area. That early Samuel is dealt with in the chapter on the early Neelys.

There was another Samuel, who internet sources say was born in 1738, married Antje Bevier, and died in March 1786, leaving a will that identified him as “of the Oblong, Dutchess Co.” Dutchess county was adjacent to Ulster and

Orange counties, to the east. The “oblong” was a long narrow strip of land claimed by both Connecticut and New York State which ultimately became part of Dutchess County.

“Antye” Neely – “wife of Mr. Samuel Neely and her infant, age 40” – is buried in Spencer’s Corners Cemetery in Dutchess County, New York. Her date of death was reportedly 1785.

Some internet sites place Samuel on the Neely family tree as a son of James Neely, Sr., which would make him a brother of Major James and Edward. But I know of no evidence to support that placement.

Chapter 7

AN ATTEMPT AT
RECAPITULATION

What should we make of these fragments and hints? History is not a science like physics or chemistry, let alone a body of knowledge like mathematics built on logic rather than facts. It is a stitching together of bits and pieces of evidence to construct partial pictures of reality that have some probability of being true, and of inferring connections and causal relations among those fragments. It is about eliminating possibilities that don't make sense or don't fit with what we believe more likely to be true. What is left must pass for history, at least until someone with more or more-solid facts comes along and puts together pictures which seems more likely or hang together better.

A brief starts with a summary of the facts or supposed facts, and moves on to the argument.

According to R.J. Dickson's history of the *Scotch-Irish Emigration to America from Northern Ireland*, the "first phase" took place in the period 1718-1720. The Neelys who came to Ulster (later Orange) County, N.Y., appear to have been part of that first phase. Families tended to travel in groups back then, for defense and support. The concentration of Neelys in one relatively small area of New York and the timing of their appearances strongly suggests to me that they were related.

John Neely – “founder,” settler in 1726; freeholder in 1728. “Elder” in the Goodwill Church shortly after it was built, and the only Neely listed as serving in that role.

Thomas Neely — purchaser in 1721 from Patrick McKnight; came to Ulster from Westchester County. Not listed on the 1728 freeholders list. Died 1787 in Wallkill.

Samuel Neely — purchaser “about the same time” as Thomas Neely [1721], freeholder in 1728. Purchased from the patentee, Thomas Noxon.

Alexander Neely — freeholder in 1728. Died 1757; estate administered by his wife Isabella.

The Neely family (or at least Thomas) had been in Westchester County before arriving in Ulster/Orange County. It looks like they arrived in New York City in the second decade of the 18th century, and moved up the Hudson.

John Neely (we have called him John, Sr. or Founder John) was an early landowner in Neelytown – apparently earlier than either Robert or William – and was regarded by historians and contemporaries as the “founder” of Neelytown. He was probably “Grandy” John – signifying that there were grandchildren. He lived about two miles south of where the Goodwill Church was built, on Beaverdam brook, “beside a beautiful spring of clear water.” His wife was likely named “Elizabeth.”

In 1741 the ancestor of the historian Samuel Eager named only two settlers he found there before him: John Neely and Charles Booth. But there were also obviously other Neelys there in 1741. Why name just John? Suggests to me that John Neely was the senior one, the one with priority — the head of the Neely family.

The Clintons, who came in the early 1730’s, found John Neely — “the founder of Neelytown.” Again, this characterization by the Clinton historian suggests that John, Sr. stood apart from the others.

Next appearances:

Robert and William — witness will in 1731. Robert bought land from Thomas Noxon next to Samuel Neely’s land.

John, Jr. — son of the founder.

Thomas — there were several Thomases. In addition to the land purchaser in 1721, another younger Thomas married Robert's daughter Mary; probably the same one who witnessed Uncle William's will and mother-in-law Isabell's will. He could not have been a son of Robert, and was not named as a son of William.

James — a figure of central interest for the descendants of his sons, James Jr. and Edward. Born about 1701. Purchased land from Cornelius Low in New Windsor in April 1735.

The 1738 list of militia for Ulster County for the "Wall A Kill" includes:

Thomas Neils
Robert Neils
John Neils
Mathew Neils
John Neily ju'r

In that same year, 1738, James "Nealy" appears in a different company of militia for Ulster County, in the "Highland" group commanded by Capt. Thos. Ellison. The Highlands included the town of New Windsor, a few miles east of Neelytown.

The same Neely names show up on the list of members of the Goodwill Presbyterian Church during the mid 1740s:

John - "made payments 1744 through 1755." Listed as the second "elder" of the church, and "ceased to act ... subsequent to 1770," when the Neelytown church was built.

Matthew — "signed in the 1740s."

James - 1747 through 1750; so even if James lived in or near New Windsor, he went to the same church as the other Neelys during those years.

William — 1749 through 1751.

Robert — 1749/50.

If those are facts — or the closest we can get to the facts — what do they suggest about possible relationships?

1. Reports have circulated for decades to the effect that there were originally three Neely brothers in Ulster (later Orange) County: Robert, William, and John. Based on a close inspection of the transcript of Robert's will,

it now appears clear that Robert and William were brothers but John “Senr” was not. Robert Neely identified “John Neely Senr” in 1756 not as a brother but as one of his executors. It seems to me likely that this John Neely, Sr. (the “founder”) was the father of Robert and his brother William.

2. The virtually simultaneous appearances of John, Samuel, Alexander (died 1757) and Thomas Neely (died 1787) strongly suggests that they were related. James (born 1701, bought property in 1735, lived nearby in New Windsor) is almost certainly a part of this web of family relationships.

3. The fact that Robert bought land in 1731 adjacent to that of Samuel’s suggests that the two of them were closely related. Son/father would be a possibility — but so would brother/brother. Because John Sr. is given priority as “the” settler — the “founder” — “elder” of the church — my guess is that the early Samuel was not the father, but rather the brother of Robert, William, John Jr., and (perhaps) Thomas. And (perhaps) James. Based on John Jr.’s 1781 will, we should add Matthew, the 1738 militia-man, as well. They had large families back then.

4. The men listed in the 1738 militia rolls for Wallkill as “Neils” were likely (in my view) our “Neelys.” John Sr. was pretty clearly father of John, Jr. And later he would later be executor of Robert’s will. He was likely father of the other two Neely militia-men — Thomas and Matthew — as well.

Where was William, brother of Robert, in 1738 — old enough to be a witness to a will in 1731? But not old enough to be in the militia in 1738? As Casey Stengel used to say, “Whom knows!”

Where was Samuel in 1738? Maybe dead. He doesn’t make an appearance after the early 1730s. There was a younger Samuel Neely — married Ante Bevier in the 1760s. He wasn’t referred to in the books or records as “Junior.” Maybe that’s because his father had died, and he didn’t need the “Junior” to avoid confusion

5. James Neely — our James, Sr. (grandson of Charles, who married Jane Martin) — was almost certainly part of the larger Neely family group. He was born about 1701, so could have been either a brother or son of John Sr. He purchased property in 1735 and again in 1749. He lived in New Windsor, a short distance east of the Wallkill or Neelytown group.

6. In 1749 James, Sr. purchased land together with Henry Man Neely, which suggests to me that they were brothers. If James makes the brothers list, so should Henry Man. (Where does the middle name “Man” come from? Could

that have been a transcription error at some point in the deep past – one that was repeated over and over in subsequent summaries?)

7. How long did old Founder John live? He was executor of Robert's will in 1756. But not brother William's will in 1769. If he died some time in the middle – around 1760 — and if he had been born about 1680 and came to the colonies with his young family around 1718 or so — that would fit. He would have died an 80-year-old man after bringing his family to the new world, generating lots of sons, and founding a new settlement that was named after him.

* * *

A few pieces of the picture seem to fit — but it's far from a complete or coherent picture of overall family relationships. At this point, after many years of scratching around the fragmentary debris of local history from 200-300 years ago, I doubt that we'll ever know what these relationships were for sure.

I also doubt that we'll stop looking.

* * *

The old Neelytown Church, near where old John Neely and others in his family lived, is gone. The cemetery next to where the church used to be, on Neelytown Road, is still there; but a listing of those interred there contains no names of Neelys. Perhaps the old stones wore away or were broken up.



Addendum

BEFORE AMERICA?

The early histories report that the Neelys were Irish. They were Presbyterians. Thus, we can be confident that they were Scotch-Irish and that they came from Northern Ireland – Protestant Ireland.

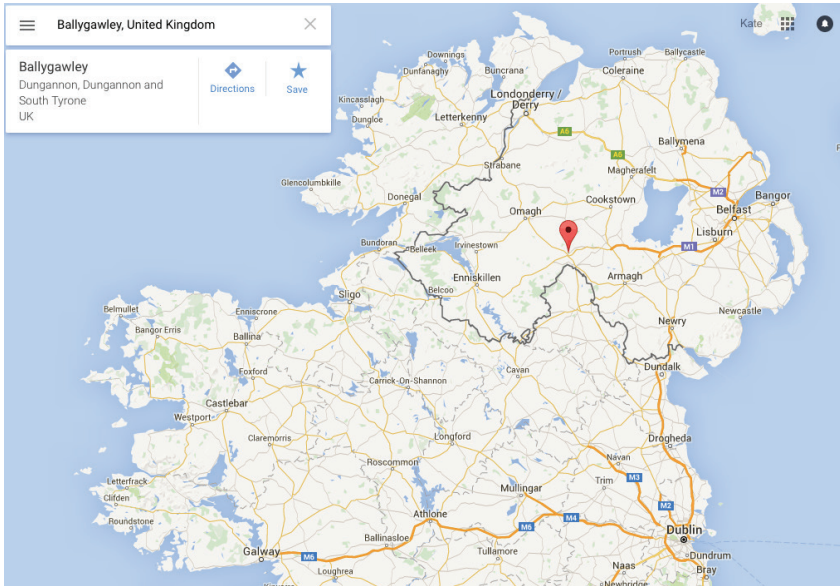
James R. Neely, the family historian, has done more work on the early history of the Neely family than anyone else I know. An expert on DNA and its genealogical uses, he is preparing a book that will lay out the evidence and alternatives. In the meantime, one possible origin is Glencull, near Ballygawley, a village in County Tyrone, where a John Neely and his brother William were granted lands in the mid 17th century for their military service. (According to an advertisement printed in Ulster, a William “Nealy” was still in Ballygawley in 1767, acting as agent for a ship-owner recruiting passengers wishing to sail to America.) Another possible area of origin is Londonderry.

An unverified (by me) web site reports that John “Seige” Neely, 1657-c 1690 in Ballygawley was father of: John “Original Laird” Neely, Robert Neely, and Thomas Neely. (James R. Neely gave the two John’s these nicknames to distinguish them from each other.) John “Seige” reportedly had two brothers: Michael Neely and Rufus Neely.

According to the web site, Rufus Neely, 1660-1756, was reportedly the father of Robert, William, John and James. The web site says John Neely, son of Rufus, “emigrated to America.”

Perhaps. It would be exhilarating to establish a link back to our British roots.

On the other hand, James R. Neely is not the source of these purported facts; and I know of no original record or report drawn from a record showing that such a Rufus Neely ever even existed.



So we push back, “boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past,” until all we see is mist.