The Sawyers of England, New England and Canada

Our Sawyer ancestors may be the first in our family tree to come to America, settling in Massachusetts less than twenty years after the pilgrims landed there. But after the British lost the American colonies, our Sawyer line left for Canada.

Samuel Sawyer married Ellen McNeil. Their daughter Carrie married Joseph Wasson. This makes us direct descendants of Samuel Sawyer and his ancestors.

Samuel Sawyer was born to John[4] and Hannah[4] Sawyer in the Eastern Townships area of Québec, Canada. When I visited Québec in 2012, I found the Sawyer farm and the cemetery where they were buried. But I hit a roadblock when it came to finding their ancestors. Others working their way through that Sawyer line seemed to hit the same roadblock that I did.

A handful of online researchers have since posted comparable family research that takes the Sawyer line back to Thomas[1] and Mary Prescott[2] Sawyer. This line of the family started out in early colonial Massachusetts, then was in Connecticut for some generations, and finally spent a short time in Washington County, New York before leaving the American colonies for British-controlled Canada after the British lost the American Revolutionary War.

Much of that research is well-documented – colonial records have been collected and published in book form and some prominent families got extra attention. I reviewed all the supporting evidence for several generations of Sawyers and did not find any significant problems. Much of the work I found also aligns well with my own research around John[4] and Hannah[4] Sawyer and their children.

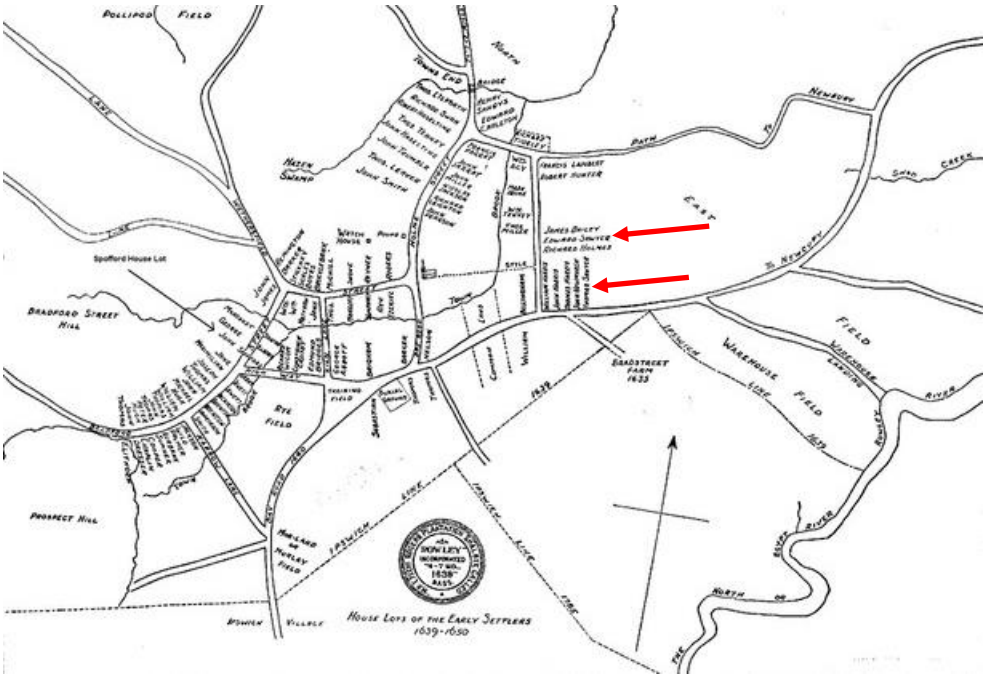
But I don't have a birth record for John Sawyer[4], and I have some open questions about why John Sawyer[4]'s parents, Moses[4] and Elizabeth Sawyer, moved from Connecticut to New York. So, I am not 100% sold that this tree is correct, specifically around the history of Moses[4] and Elizabeth Sawyer. But at this time, I have not found any comparably good research or even just errant records that contradict this, although I did come across more than a few dubious claims and examples of bad research that I had to weed out when preparing this working hypothesis.

Generations 1 & 2 – Unknown Sawyers and their Possible Children

Our earliest known Sawyer ancestor was Thomas Sawyer[1], who is believed to have emigrated from England to Massachusetts in about 1636, and was living in Rowley, Massachusetts by 1639.

A number of sources suggest that his parents back in England were John Sawyer and Agnes Sharp, and that Thomas[1] emigrated to Massachusetts with brothers Edward and William, leaving Lincolnshire, England on a ship commanded by a Captain Parker. However, none of this has been solidly documented, although information in his 1678 Oath of Allegiance suggests that William may have been John and Agnes Sawyer's son.

DNA evidence from descendants suggests that there may be a connection between Thomas[1] and William. Thomas[1] and Edward settled in Rowley, Massachusetts at about the same time. They also lived near each other in Rowley, and William lived in adjacent Newberry, Massachusetts.



Map of the house lots for early settlers of Rowley, Massachusetts, 1639-1650, including Thomas Sawyer[1] and, just to the north, Edward Sawyer.

The evidence thus suggests some possibilities, but it is by no means conclusive.

Children

Possible children of John Sawyer and Agnes Sharp include the following:

- Edward Sawyer, born about 1608, in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, England
- William Sawyer, born November 17, 1613, in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, England
- Thomas Sawyer[1], born about August 1616, in Sowerby Bridge, Halifax, Yorkshire, England

We are direct descendants of Thomas Sawyer[1].

If Edward, William and Thomas[1] were indeed siblings as described, then there may have been as many as five additional siblings.

Generations 1 & 2 – John Prescott[1] and Mary Gawkroger[1] (Platt) and their Children
We are direct descendants of John Prescott[1] and Mary Gawkroger[1].

Births
John Prescott[1]'s parents and his date and location of birth are unknown, other than he was born in England.

Mary Gawkroger[1]'s surname is sometimes listed as Platts or Gawkroger-Platts. Platts appears to have been the name of where they were from. That said, there seems to be some confusion over who her parents were, although the general Gawkroger line has been traced back for at least another five generations in England.

What seems to be the most commonly used information regarding her birth is that Mary[1] was born February 7, 1607 to Abraham Gawkroger and Martha Riley at Sowerby (near Sowerby Bridge), Yorkshire, England.

Marriage
John Prescott[1] and Mary Gawkroger[1] were married in England, likely in Wigan, Lancashire in 1629.

It is believed that John[1] and Mary[1] Prescott left England in 1637 to avoid persecution for their religious beliefs. They initially settled in Watertown, Massachusetts. John Prescott[1] was a blacksmith by trade. Daniel Pierce was a blacksmith in Watertown, but he left Watertown in 1638. The Prescotts may have rented Pierce's three-acre homestall and upland for some time before they purchased it in 1642.

In 1643, John[1] and Mary[1] joined the Nashaway Company to purchase and settle the remote Nashaway Plantation, where John[1] became one of the founders of Lancaster, Massachusetts, which tradition holds was named after the city in England where he was born.

They left Watertown in 1645. After settling in what became Lancaster, John Prescott[1] also became a farmer and a millwright. As a blacksmith, he created his own suit of armor, which he sometimes wore in Lancaster, especially when dealing with the local Native Americans in general and during the Indian Wars, a.k.a. King Philip's War.

By the time he died, John Prescott[1] was one of the richest and most powerful men in Massachusetts. He owned about 700 acres of land, and had given land and a mill to his son Jonas.

Children

John[1] and Mary[1] Prescott had about 13 children. Up to eight children apparently were born in England, but only four of these lived long enough to emigrate to Massachusetts with their parents. The other five were born in Massachusetts. Their children included the following:

- Mary Prescott[2], baptized February 24, 1629, in Sowerby (near Sowerby Bridge), Yorkshire, England
- Unnamed Prescott, buried on March 7, 1631, in Sowerby (near Sowerby Bridge), Yorkshire, England
- Martha Prescott, baptized March 11, 1631, in Sowerby (near Sowerby Bridge), Yorkshire, England
- Unnamed Prescott, born January 1, 1633 and died two days later, in Sowerby (near Sowerby Bridge), Yorkshire, England
- Unnamed Prescott, born and died before 1634, in Sowerby (near Sowerby Bridge), Yorkshire, England; I am skeptical of this "birth" unless it was very premature, given the dates of the previous and following births, and the fact that it was not included in some official sources
- John Prescott[2], baptized April 1, 1634, in Sowerby (near Sowerby Bridge), Yorkshire, England
- Unnamed Prescott, born and died before April 1, 1634, in Sowerby (near Sowerby Bridge), Yorkshire, England; a twin to John Prescott[2]
- Sarah Prescott, born April 16, 1637, in Sowerby (near Sowerby Bridge), Yorkshire, England
- Hannah Prescott, born April 16, 1639, in Watertown, Massachusetts
- Lydia Prescott, born August 15, 1641, in Watertown, Massachusetts
- Jonathan Prescott, born in 1643, in Watertown, Massachusetts
- Joseph Prescott, born in 1645, in Lancaster, Massachusetts (some sources suggest that Joseph was not part of this family)
- Jonas Prescott, born June 30, 1648, in Lancaster, Massachusetts

We are direct descendants of John[1] and Mary[1] Prescott's daughter Mary[2].

FIRST GENERATION IN AMERICA.

In the account of the lineal ancestry of the Prescott emigrants that came from Old to New England, as given in the introduction, it is to be seen that John Prescott, who came to Boston and Watertown in 1640, was the fourth generation from James of Standish (of 1564). But as the object of the following memorial is to furnish a record of the emigrants and their descendants only, we shall consider each as the first generation of their respective races or descendants.

First, of the descendants of John (109-v.) and Mary (Platts) Prescott, who had issue as follows:

110—i. MARY, bap. Feb. 24, 1630.
ii. MARTHA, bap. at Sowerby March 11, 1632; m. John Rugg 1655; resided at Lancaster. She d. Jan. 24, 1656.
iii. JOHN, JR., bap. at Sowerby April 1, 1635; m. Sarah —— of Lancaster Nov. 11, 1668.
iv. SARAH, bap. at Sowerby 1637; m. Richard Wheeler of Lancaster Aug. 2, 1658.
v. HANNAH, bap. 1639. She m. John Rugg as second wife May 4, 1660, who had for his first wife her sister Martha.
111—vi. LYDIA, b. Aug. 15, 1641.
vii. JONATHAN, (?) b. about 1643.
viii. JOSEPH, (?) b. about 1645 or 1646 (?).
112—ix. JONAS, b. June, 1648.

From The Ancestors of the John Lowe Family Circle and Their Descendants

John[1] and Mary[1] Prescott's son Jonathan's descendants include President George H.W. Bush, President George W. Bush, Governor Jeb Bush and Senator Prescott Bush.

- For more about our family connection to the Bush family, see The Wassons and the Presidents Bush.

Other notable descendants of John[1] and Mary[1] Prescott include Col. William Prescott, chief in command at the Battle of Bunker Hill, Samuel Prescott, who completed Paul Revere's Midnight Ride, historian William H. Prescott, poet Robert Frost, and actor Katherine Hepburn.

Deaths and Burials

John Prescott[1] died December 20, 1681 in Lancaster, Massachusetts. Mary Gawkroger Prescott[1] died October 20, 1688 in Lancaster, Massachusetts. John[1] and Mary[1] were buried in the Old Settlers Burial Yard in Lancaster, Massachusetts.

Markers for John Prescott[1] (left) and his wife Mary[1] (right), Lancaster, Massachusetts

Research Notes

Some sources suggest that John[1] and Mary[1] Prescott first emigrated to Barbados before moving to Massachusetts. However, the 1638 records associated with that move are in conflict with records showing that John Prescott[1] received a distribution of land in Watertown, Massachusetts in June 1637. It is now generally accepted that John[1] and Mary[1] left England and headed directly to Massachusetts.

The Prescott Ancestry Myth

Past genealogy researchers concluded that John Prescott[1] was the son of Ralph Prescott of Lancashire, England, notably as published in The Prescott Memorial (1870). Ralph Prescott's family was prominent and wealthy, so his ancestry had also been researched and documented. Genealogist Frederick Lewis Weis, for example, had taken the Prescott line back to medieval royalty and the upper classes of the time in his book series Ancestral Roots and Magna Carta Sureties and other writings. These included figures such as Charlemagne, Alfred the Great of England, King Louis IV of France, King Edward I of England, King David I of Scotland and others. This information became widely available online and continues to rank high in search results for John Prescott[1]. For that reason, it continues to be widely copied and shared.

However, a paper published in 1992 in a much more obscure source, the quarterly newsletter Prescotts Unlimited, disproved the connection between our John Prescott[1] and Ralph Prescott. Adell T. Prescott and others examined parish records, land records, marriage settlements, wills, documents from legal proceedings and other sources. They found that although Ralph Prescott indeed had a son named John, his son John never left the area where his father lived to move to Yorkshire, England, let alone to migrate to Massachusetts.

Marriage and birth records for his children put our John Prescott[1] in Yorkshire, England before he and his family emigrated. There was no birth record for him there, however. Some believe that Lancaster, Massachusetts was named for his birthplace in England, but only one of three relevant parishes there have birth records that go back far enough to include his estimated birth year, and his birth was not recorded in that parish's registry.

So, at this point our John Prescott[1]'s birth or baptism date and the names of his parents are unknown.

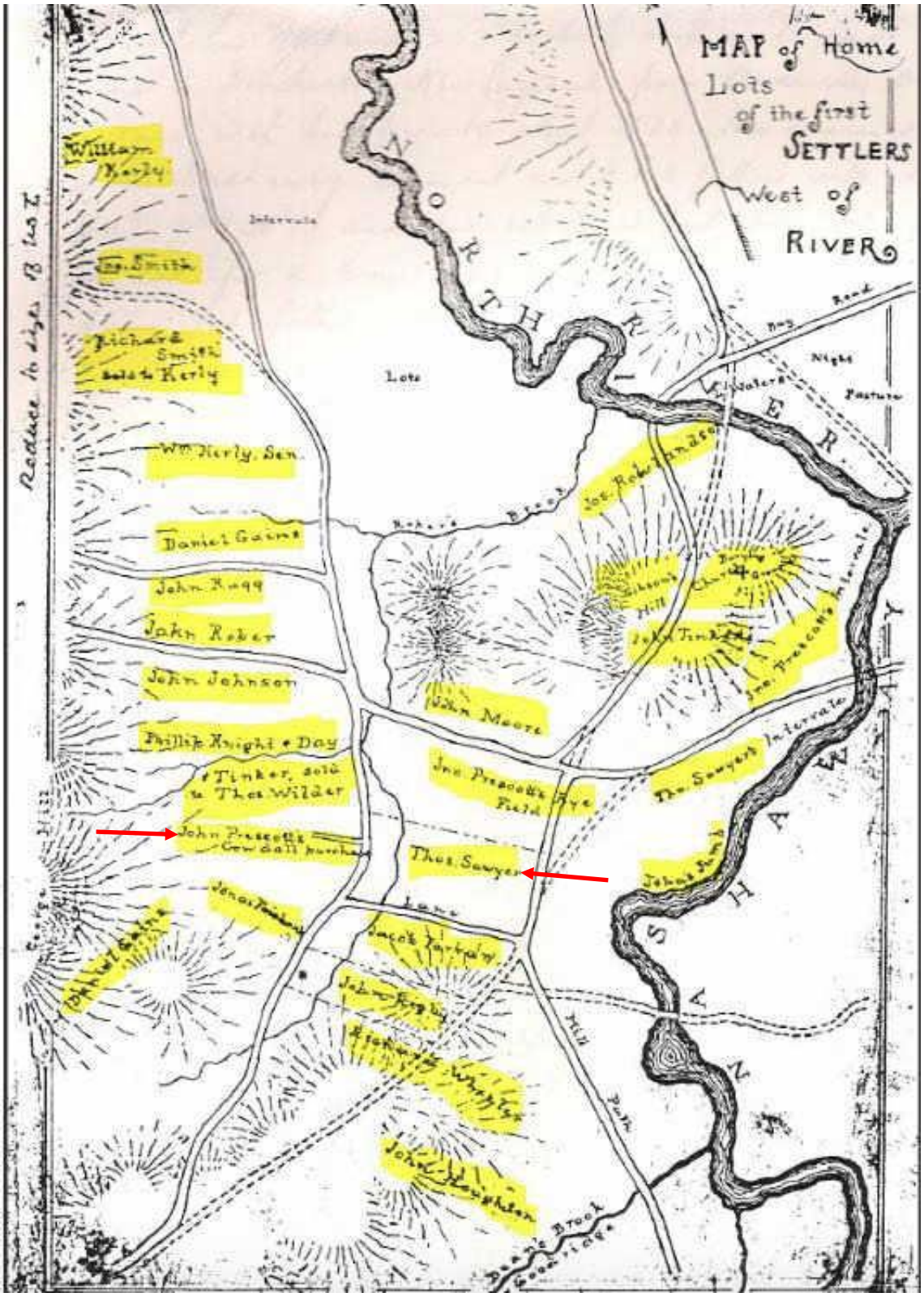
Generations 2 & 3 – Thomas Sawyer[1] and Mary Prescott[2] and their Children

We are direct descendants of Thomas Sawyer[1] and Mary Prescott[2].

Marriage

Sources differ as to when and where Thomas Sawyer[1] married Mary Prescott[2]. Some suggest that they were married in 1646 in Rowley, Massachusetts, and then they moved to Lancaster. Others suggest that they married in Lancaster in 1648, which seems to be more likely, given when the Prescotts moved there. In any case, Thomas Sawyer[1] is believed to have been one of the community's first six settlers, arriving in Lancaster in 1647. Thomas[1] was a farmer and a builder – he and his father-in-law built a number of mills in the area. His father-in-law also taught him the blacksmith trade. Over the next 25 years, the couple had 13 children.

The Sawyers lived next to Mary[2]'s parents in Lancaster, and one of the town's garrisons was established on the Sawyers' property. This proved to be lifesaving during the First Indian War, a.k.a. King Philip's War.



This map shows the original lots laid out in Lancaster, Massachusetts, including those for John[1] and Mary[1] Prescott and Thomas[1] and Mary[2] Prescott Sawyer.

King Philip was Metacom, the Wampanoag chief who decided to end an alliance with the New England colonists after colonists committed numerous violations of their treaty. The situation escalated, and from 1675-1678 the Wampanoag retaliated with raids on frontier homesteads and villages, provoking a response from the colonial militia. The Native Americans initially pushed colonists back toward the coast, but they were eventually overwhelmed by the militia. By the end of the war, the Wampanoags and their Narragansett allies had been nearly destroyed. It is believed that this was the deadliest war in colonial New England.

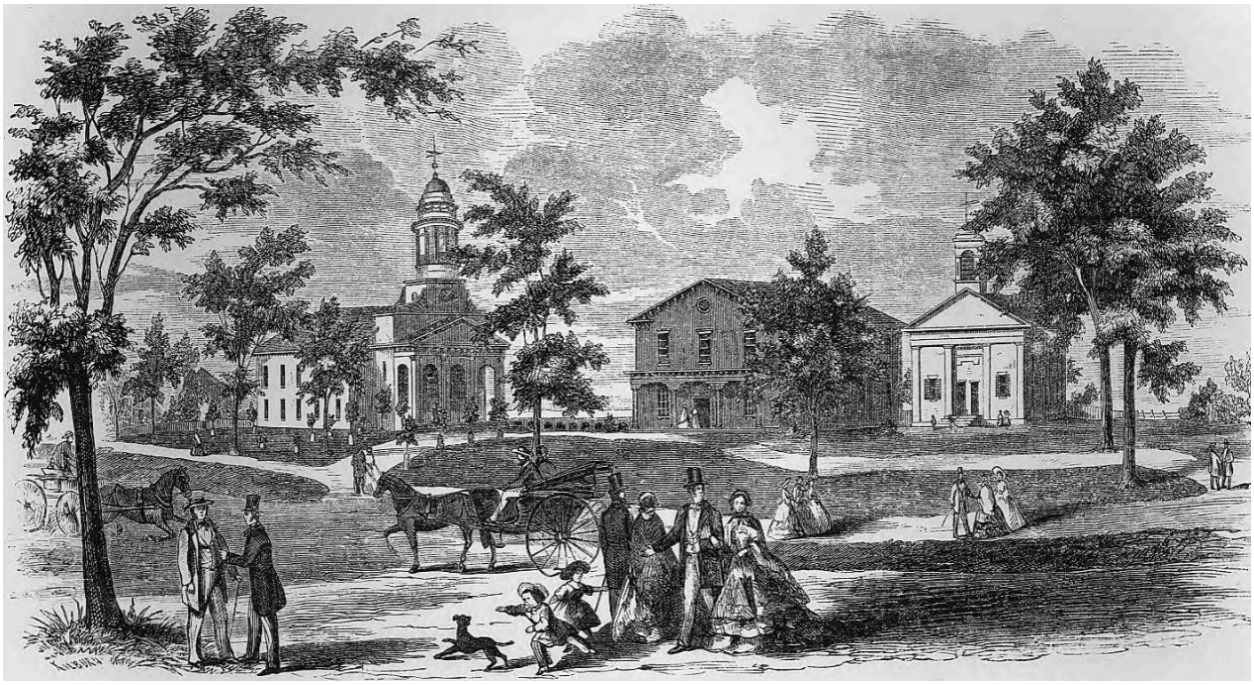
Historians also believe that this war marked the beginning of the development of an independent American identity as the colonists dealt with this conflict without any support from the mother country.

A representation of Metacom a.k.a. King Philip (left); King Philip's War (right)

Early in the war, 400 Native Americans attacked their first targeted town – Lancaster. They effectively destroyed the town, killing or taking as hostages as many as 50 people. Among the dead were members of the Prescott and Sawyer families. The settlers abandoned Lancaster. After the war, John Prescott[1] got permission to rebuild the town, and returned in 1679.

The Second Indian War, a.k.a. King William's War, was fought between New France and New England colonists and their Native American allies from 1689 to 1697. Lancaster was attacked in September 1697. The town's minister and 20 residents were killed in that attack.

This marker identifies the site of the garrison on the Sawyer property in Lancaster. It reads: "Site of Thomas Sawyer's Garrison-House. Between the Massacre of February 10, 1676, and the abandonment of the town, the inhabitants took refuge in the Stevens (Willard) and Sawyer Garrisons."



Lancaster in the 1800s

Thomas Sawyer[1] remained a prominent figure in his community for the rest of his life, holding a number of positions in the community over the years.

Children

Thomas[1] and Mary[2] Sawyer had about 13 children, although two died very young or perhaps were stillborn. Their children included the following:

- Thomas Sawyer[2], born July 2, 1649, in Lancaster, Massachusetts
- Ephraim Sawyer, born January 16, 1651, in Lancaster, Massachusetts
- Mary Sawyer[3], born January 4, 1653, in Lancaster, Massachusetts
- Elizabeth Sawyer, born January 7, 1654, and died very young, in Lancaster, Massachusetts
- Joshua Sawyer, born March 13, 1655, in Lancaster, Massachusetts
- James Cornet Sawyer, born March 22, 1657, in Lancaster, Massachusetts
- Caleb Sawyer, born April 2, 1659, in Lancaster, Massachusetts
- John Sawyer[1], born April 6, 1661, in Lancaster, Massachusetts
- Elizabeth Sawyer, born January 5, 1663, in Lancaster, Massachusetts
- Deborah Sawyer, born and died July 17, 1666, in Lancaster, Massachusetts
- Nathaniel Sawyer, born November 24, 1670, in Lancaster, Massachusetts
- Hannah Sawyer[1], born November 24, 1670, but may not have survived
- Martha Sawyer, born August 10, 1673, in Lancaster, Massachusetts

We are direct descendants of Thomas[1] and Mary[2] Sawyer's son John[1].

SECOND GENERATION.

110-i. MARY PRESCOTT, baptized at Sowerby in the parish of Halifax in Yorkshire, England, Feb. 24, 1630; married Thomas Sawyer of Lancaster 1648; lived at Lancaster.

Issue of Mary (Prescott) (110-i.) and Thomas Sawyer:

i. THOMAS, b. July 2, 1649; m. 1st, Oct. 11, 1670, Sarah ——; she d. March 2, 1672, leaving one child, Mary. He m. 2d, Nov. 21, 1672, Hannah ——.
ii. EPHRAIM, b. Jan. 16, 1651; killed by the Indians at Prescott's garrison Feb., 1676, when Lancaster was destroyed by the Indians.
iii. MARY, b. Jan. 4, 1653.
iv. JOSHUA, b. March 13, 1655.
v. JAMES, b. March 22, 1657.
vi. CALEB, b. April 2, 1659.
vii. JOHN, b. April 6, 1661.
viii. ELIZABETH, b. Jan. 6, 1664.
ix. DEBORAH, b. 1666; d. July 16, 1666.
113—x. NATHANIEL, b. Nov. 24, 1670.
xi. MARTHA, b. Aug. 10, 1673.

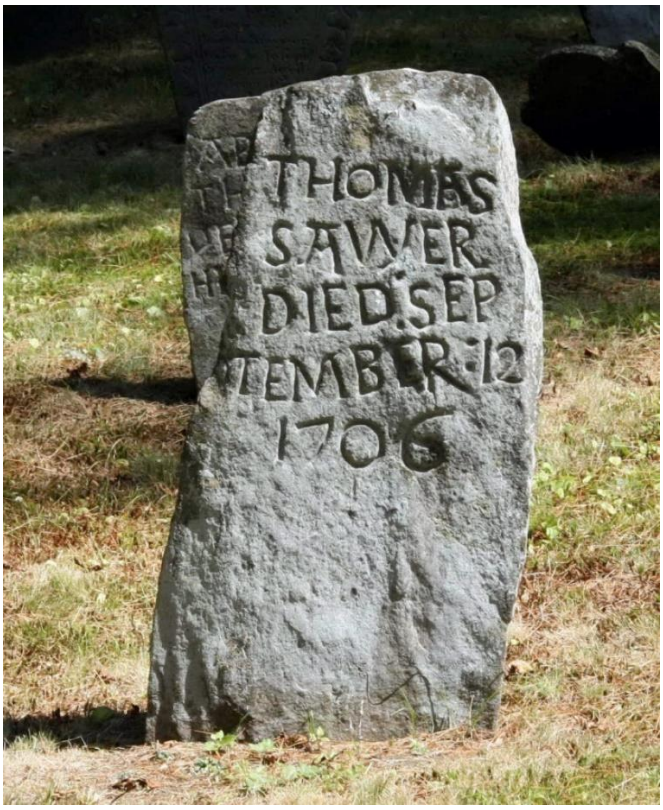
From The Ancestors of the John Lowe Family Circle and Their Descendants

On February 10, 1676, Thomas[1] and Mary[2] Sawyer's son Ephraim was killed by Native Americans during the First Indian War's siege at Lancaster during King Philip's War. Also killed that day were Mary[2]'s sister Sarah's husband Richard Wheeler, sister Lydia's husband Jonas Fairbank and Lydia's son. Mary[2]'s sister Hannah was killed in the Second Indian War's siege at Lancaster in September 1697.

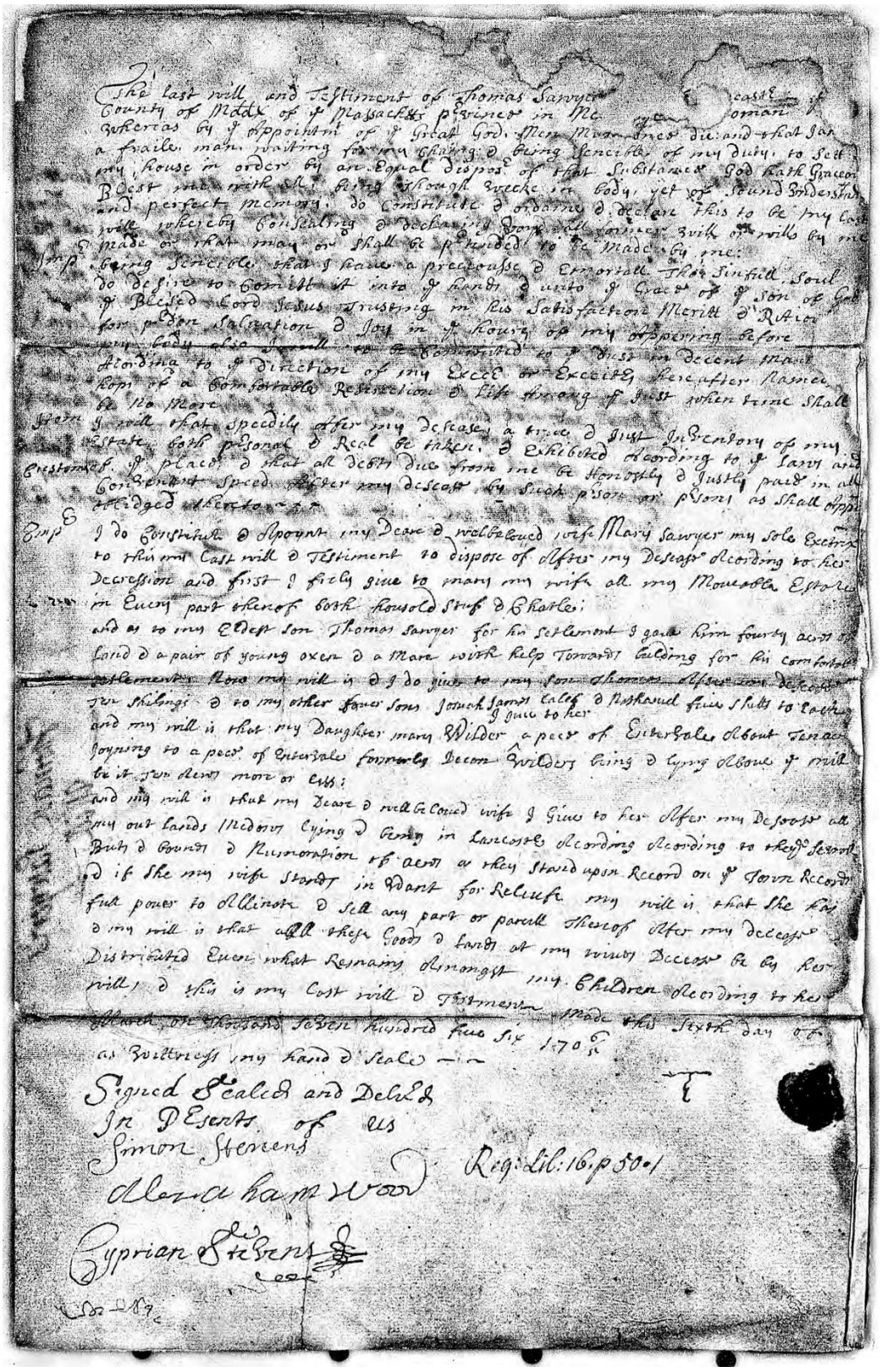
In 1708, Thomas[1] and Mary[2] Sawyer's son Thomas[2], 58, his son Elias, 21, and neighbor John Bigelow were captured by Native Americans, and were taken to Canada. The freedom of the younger men was quickly negotiated when Thomas[2] offered to build a mill for the French there, but the Native Americans decided to put Thomas[2] to death. He was already tied to a stake when a friar appeared and told the Natives that he held the key to Purgatory, and he'd open the gate if they didn't release their prisoner at once. The superstitious Natives complied and turned Thomas[2] over to the French. The Sawyers and Bigelow completed the mill and returned to Lancaster.

Deaths and Burials

Thomas[1] and Mary[2] Sawyer lived in Lancaster the rest of their lives. Thomas[1] died September 12, 1706. Mary[2] died in April 1716. Both were buried in the Old Settlers Burial Yard in Lancaster, Massachusetts.



Grave marker for Thomas Sawyer[1], Lancaster, Massachusetts



The last will and testament of Thomas Sawyer[1]. As property in his name kept turning up, Thomas Sawyer[1]'s will was not fully resolved until 1740, more than 30 years after his death.

Research Notes

Some research suggests that Thomas[1] and Mary[2] Sawyer had only six children, and the six did not include our ancestor/their son John[1]. If this were true, then our tree would stop with John Sawyer[1] and would not include any of the Prescotts. One source I came across was a handwritten list of the names of their then-living children, but only through 1659. The second was Thomas Sawyer[1]'s, Sr.'s will – he outlived a number of his children, including John[1]. Only surviving children were named. Researchers who came across only one of those sources might reasonably conclude that Thomas[1] and Mary[2] Sawyer only had six children.

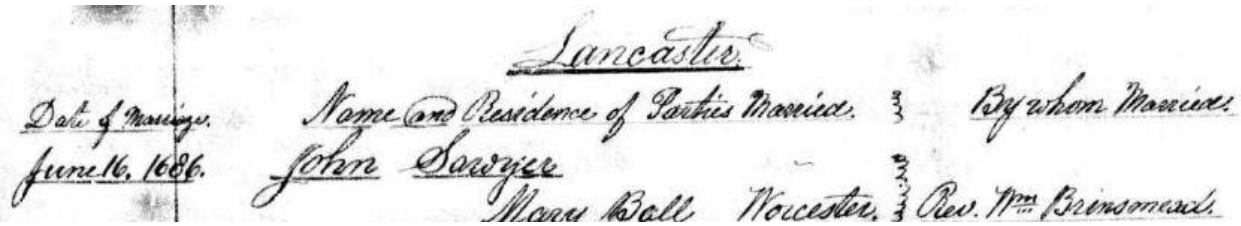
The New England Historical and Genealogical Register has a section of Lancaster, Massachusetts records that provide the dates of a number of births, marriages and deaths, including several dates associated with the children of Thomas[1] and Mary[2] Sawyer. I noticed that its dates were generally two months off of what I found in posted research. Then I recalled that the calendar system changed in the 1700s. In the 1600s, the year started in March, so, for example, the sixth month of the year was August, not June. This had to be accounted for when converting month numbers to month names.

Generations 3 & 4 – John Sawyer[1] and Mary Ball[4] and their Children

We are direct descendants of John Sawyer[1] and Mary Ball[4].

Marriage

John Sawyer[1] and Mary Ball[4] were married in Lancaster, Worcester County, Massachusetts on June 16, 1686. They started their family in Lancaster, but by 1690 they had moved to Connecticut.



Lancaster.

Date of Marriage.	Name and Residence of Parties Married.		By whom Married.
June 16, 1686.	John Sawyer		
	Mary Ball	Worcester.	Rev. Wm Brimsmeade.

"June 16, 1686. John Sawyer, Mary Ball, Worcester, Rev Wm Brimsmeade" [sic]

There is some dispute among researchers over his wife's maiden name. Some say that she was Mary Ball, the daughter of John Ball, born in Lancaster on October 29, 1667. However, there is no such record. Others suggest that she may have really been Mary Bull, possible daughter of Isaac Bull. The above image was a hand-written copy, not the original documentation, which according to some online postings said "Mary Bull" instead of "Mary Ball". Worth noting, though, is that "Ball" was used as the middle name for at least one of the Sawyer children.

Thomas Sawyer[1] gave his son John[1] 20 acres, recorded January 4, 1692:

> "I, Thomas SAWYER Sen[ior] of…Lancaster…with ye…consent of Mary my beloved wife…confirme unto my beloved son John SAWYER of the town…aforesaid twenty acres of Second Division upland…in…Lancaster." [sic]

John[1] and Mary[4] Sawyer, however, soon moved to Connecticut. They were living in Saybrook, Connecticut, when, according to a land record dated February 22, 1697, a Jonathan Hudson of nearby Lyme sold property in Lyme to John[1] for 33 pounds sterling.

Children

John[1] and Mary[4] had about eleven children, including the following:

- Edward Sawyer, born March 30, 1687, in Lancaster, Massachusetts
- Jacob Sawyer, born in 1689, in Lancaster, Massachusetts
- Moses Ball Sawyer[1], born in 1690, in Lancaster, Massachusetts
- Joseph Sawyer, born in 1692, in Lancaster, Massachusetts or Saybrook, Connecticut
- George Wade Sawyer, born in 1693, in Lancaster, Massachusetts or Saybrook, Connecticut
- Elizabeth Sawyer, born in 1694, in Lancaster, Massachusetts or Saybrook, Connecticut
- Isaac Sawyer, born in 1695, in Lancaster, Massachusetts or Saybrook, Connecticut
- Mercy Sawyer, born in 1695, in Lancaster, Massachusetts or Saybrook, Connecticut
- James Sawyer, born in 1696, in Saybrook, Connecticut
- John Sawyer[2], born in 1699, in Lyme, Connecticut
- Oliver Sawyer, born in 1700, in Lyme, Connecticut

We are direct descendants of John[1] and Mary[4] Sawyer's son Moses Ball Sawyer[1].

Deaths and Burials

Although some research reports that John Sawyer[1] died in 1705 in Lyme, Connecticut, court probate documents show that he died in 1699. His widow Mary[4] eventually remarried, to William Sterling. She died February 27, 1750 in Hebron, Tolland County, Connecticut.

Son Moses Ball Sawyer[1] inherited a house in Lyme and 7 pounds 10 shillings as his share of his father's estate.

Research Notes

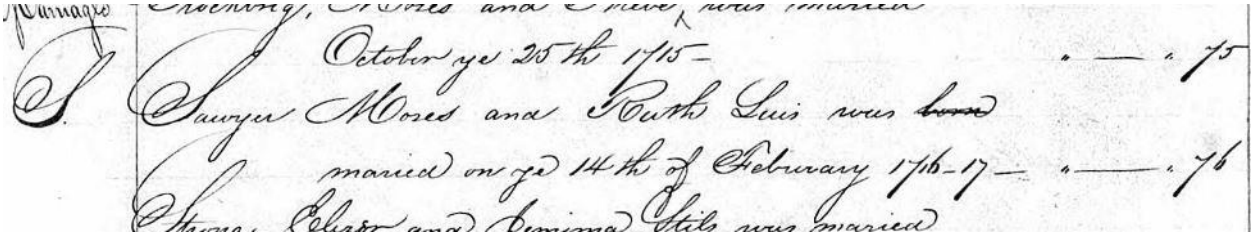
There was a Mary Ball born to a John Ball and Elizabeth Pierce, who is sometimes identified as this Mary Ball by some researchers. But that Mary Ball was born much earlier. In that version, her mother became violently insane, so Mary and her siblings were taken in by other families. Mary eventually became the second wife of the man who took her in after his first wife died. John Ball remarried, and he, his second wife and their three children were killed on February 10, 1676 when Native Americans attacked Lancaster during the First Indian War.

Generations 4 & 5 – Moses Ball Sawyer[1] and Ruth Lewis and their Children

We are direct descendants of Moses Ball Sawyer[1] and Ruth Lewis.

Marriage

Moses Ball Sawyer[1] and Ruth Lewis were married February 14, 1716 in Hebron, Tolland County, Connecticut.


October ye 25 th 1715 — 75
Sawyer Moses and Ruth Lewis was ~~born~~
married on ye 14 th of February 1716-17 — 76

"Sawyer, Moses and Ruth Lewis was married on the 14th of February 1716-17" [sic] The year notation was due to this being copied at a later date, and depending on the calendar used, that February was the last month of 1716 or the second month of 1717.

Ruth Lewis was the daughter of a Thomas Lewis. She was born January 1, 1695 in Middleton, Middlesex County, Connecticut. Thomas Lewis has been connected to at least two different families, so I am not able to take this line back further with any confidence at this point.

Children

Moses[1] and Ruth Sawyer had eight children, including the following:

- Ruth Sawyer, born November 28, 1717, in Hebron, Connecticut
- Sarah Sawyer, born February 2, 1720, in Hebron, Connecticut
- Nathan Sawyer, born March 1, 1721, in Hebron, Connecticut
- Thomas Sawyer[3], born and died on March 24, 1724, in Hebron, Connecticut
- Moses Sawyer[2], born December 19, 1725 and died July 30 1727, in Hebron, Connecticut
- Moses Sawyer[3], born April 11, 1728, in Hebron, Connecticut
- John Sawyer[3], born March 31, 1731 and died June 4, 1731, in Hebron, Connecticut
- Mary Sawyer[5], born March 31, 1731, in Hebron, Connecticut

We are direct descendants of Moses[1] and Ruth Sawyer's second son Moses[3].

From Hebron Town Records.

Sawyer.

Children of Moses Sawyer who m. Feb. 14, 1716-7, Ruth Luis.

Ruth, b. Nov. 28, 1717.
Sarah, b. Feb. 2, 1720.
Nathan, b. Mar. 1, 1721.
Child, b. Mar. 24, 1724.
Moses, b. Dec. 19, 1725, died.

Moses, b. April 11, 1728.
John, b. Mar. 31, 1731, died. } Twins.
Mary, b. Mar. 31, 1731. }

From The Descendants of John Mack of Lyme, Conn.

Deaths and Burials

Moses Ball Sawyer[1] died February 7, 1732 in Hebron, Connecticut. I am not certain of when his widow Ruth died.

Because Moses[1] died when he had young children, Ruth's father Thomas Lewis was appointed guardian of their children Sarah, Nathan, Moses[3] and Mary[5]. Thomas lived in Colchester, Connecticut at the time, which was just to the south of Hebron, and just to the north of East Haddam, Connecticut, where young Moses[3] would eventually settle and start his family.

Sawyer, Moses, Hebron. Invt. £150. Taken 29 February, 1731-2, by John Taylor and Samuel Waters.

Court Record, Page 63—4 April, 1732: Adms. granted to Thomas Lewis of Colchester.

Page 72—27 June, 1732: This Court appoint Thomas Lewis of Colchester to be guardian to the children of Moses Sawyer, viz., to Sarah, age 11 years, to Nathan 9 years, Moses 4, and Mary Sawyer, one year old. Recog., £200.

Page 105—5 February, 1733-4: Thomas Lewis, Adms., exhibited an account of his Adms: Paid debts amounting to the sum of £28-05-03. Which account is accepted and allowed, and there remains yet due from the estate the sum of £5-17-00.

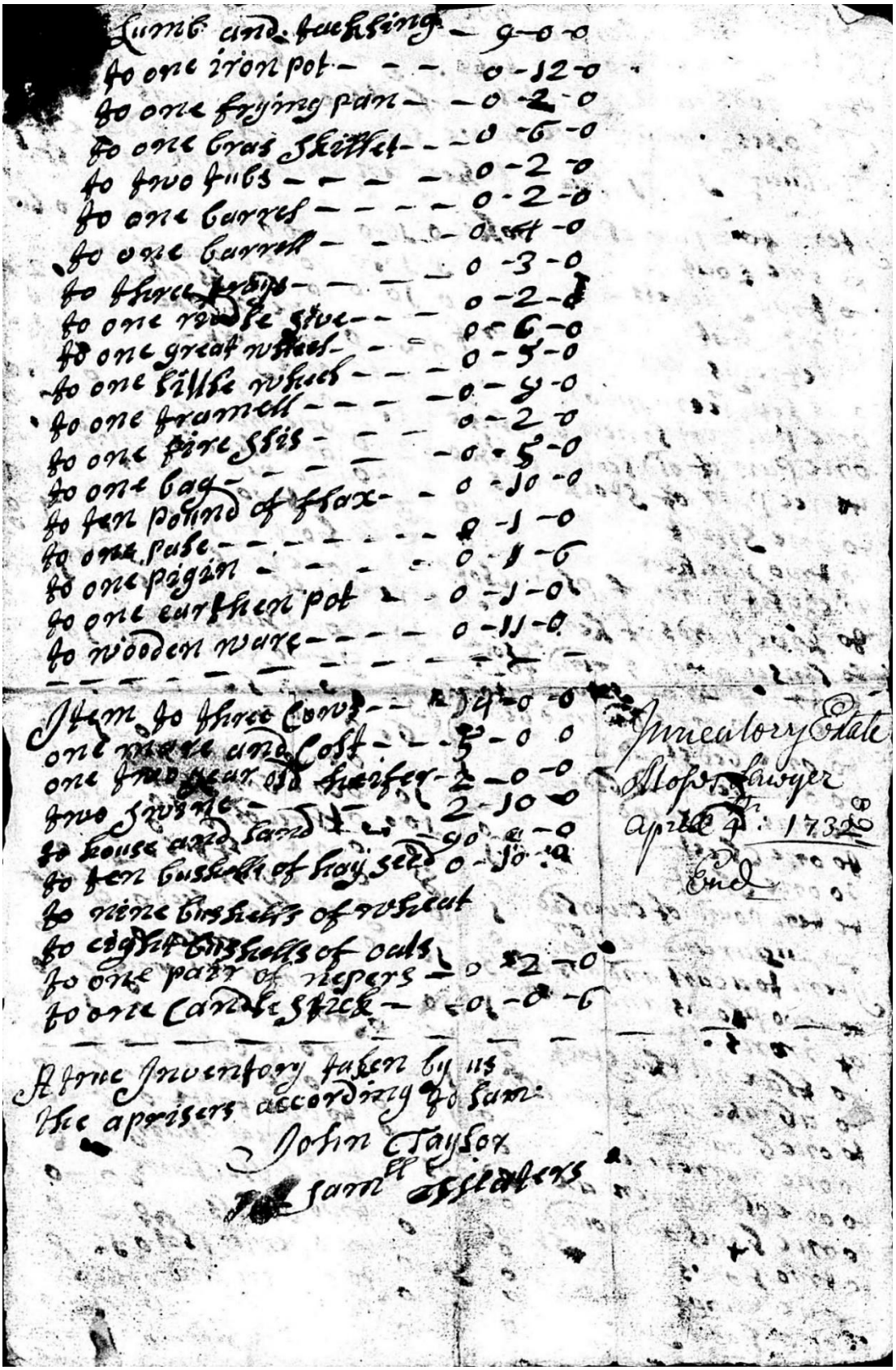
The court appointed Thomas Lewis as guardian. From A Digest of the Early Connecticut Probate Records: Hartford District, 1729-1750.

As part of the processing of Moses Ball Sawyer[1]'s estate, an inventory of his belongings was produced. It provides some insight into the lives of some of our ancestors in the early 1700s.

We the subscribers who desired by the widow
Ruth Sawyer for to take an Inventory and apprize
the goods and Chattels of the late deceased
Moses Sawyer we have hereunto the 29 daye of
February 1731 have taken an Inventory as follow

Item to a parcel of books - 0 - 16 - 0
to one Coat - - - 1 - 10 - 0
to two Jackets - - - 0 - 10 - 0
to one hat and one pair of
mettens - - - - 0 - 6 - 0
one leather apron - - 0 - 0 - 6
one pair of linen breches 0 - 4 - 0
one pair of old leather breches 0 - 2 - 0
three pair of stockings - 0 - 7 - 0
to one Shirt - - - - - 0 - 3 - 0
to two hankers - - - - 0 - 5 - 0
to eight yards of plain cloth
to five yards of kersey - 3 - 4 - 0
to linsey woolsey and flow 2 - 10 - 0
to two pair of silver buttons 2 - 2 - 8
Item to one bed and bedding 3 - 0
to one bedstead - - 4 - 6 - 0
to one bed and bedding - 1 - 0 - 0
to one bedstead - - 2 - 10 - 0
to one Chest - - - 0 - 10 - 0
to one Chest - - - 1 - 0 - 0
to ten pound of cheese 0 - 8 - 0
to sugar and molasses 1 - 0 - 0
Item to a cart and wheels 0 - 3 - 0
to two plows and a pair
of irons - - - - 3 - 10 - 0
to flax in the stack - 1 - 10 - 0
to a brake and some plume 1 - 5 - 0
to one broad ax - - - 0 12 0
to one narrow ax - - 0 - 9 - 0
to one old narrow ax and ads - 0 - 6 - 0
to one hoes and round shave 0 - 5 - 0
to two hoes - - - 0 - 9 - 0
to one Shave - - - 0 - 6 - 0
to one hand saw - - 0 - 2 - 0
to one stub sythe 0 6 0
one broad chisell 0 - 2 - 0
one inches bett chisell 0 2 - 0
one ox yoke - - 0 - 6 - 0
one fork - - 0 - 4 - 0
one sword - - 0 - 5 - 0
one sled - - 0 - 7 - 0
one draught chain 0 12 - 0
one cleevis and pin 0 - 4 - 0
one pair of belles rings
to two wedges 0 - 4 - 0
hors tackling - 0 - 6 - 0
one bridle and sadel - 10 - 0
sythe and tackling 0 - 6 - 0
one huckill 0 - 10 - 0
two steels - 0 - 3 - 0
one hamer 0 - 3 - 0
one pair of compasses
- - - 0 - 1 - 0
two small tools - 9 - 0
one bar [illegible] - 3 - 0
three old bar 0 - 3 - 0
one half tub 0 - 1 - 0
one bushell and half
of flax seed 0 - 8 - 0
to one razor 0 - 2 - 0
to powder horns 0 - 6 - 0
to one bell - 0 - 1 - 0
to one bell - 0 - 9 - 0
to one bell - 0 - 6 - 0
to one table - 0 - 6 - 0
one great chair 0 - 3 - 0
two little chairs 0 - 2 - 0
two bolters - 0 2 - 0
two pewter plat 0 - 16 - 0
to one cup and other
pewter - - - 0 - 4 - 0
one old iron pot 0 - 10 - 0

Inventory of Moses Ball Sawyer[1]'s estate, first page



Lumber and tackling — 9-0-0
to one iron pot — — — 0-12-0
to one frying pan — — 0-2-0
to one brass skillet — — 0-6-0
to two tubs — — — — 0-2-0
to one barrel — — — — 0-2-0
to one barrell — — — 0-4-0
to three tubs — — — — 0-3-0
to one round stve — — 0-2-0
to one great wheel — — 0-6-0
to one little wheel — — — 0-5-0
to one framell — — — — 0-4-0
to one fire shis — — — 0-2-0
to one bag — — — — 0-5-0
to ten pound of flax — — 0-10-0
to one pube — — — — — 0-1-0
to one pigin — — — — 0-1-6
to one earthen pot — — 0-1-0
to wooden ware — — — 0-11-0
— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —
Item to three cows — — 24-0-0
one mare and colt — — 5-0-0
one two year old heifer — 2-0-0
two swine — — — 2-10-0
to house and land — — 90-0-0
to ten bushell of hay seed 0-10-0
to nine bushells of wheat
to eight bushells of oats
to one pair of nipers — 0-2-0
to one candle stick — — 0-0-6
— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —
A true Inventory taken by us
the apraisers according to Sam:
John Clayson
Sam[ll] Scales

Inventory Estate
Moses Sawyer
April 4 : 1732
End

Inventory of Moses Ball Sawyer[1]'s estate, second page

Generations 5 & 6 – Moses Sawyer^{3} and Hannah Unknown^{2} and their Children
We are direct descendants of Moses Sawyer^{3} and his wife Hannah^{2}.

Marriage
I have not turned up a marriage record for Moses Sawyer^{3} and his wife Hannah^{2}. I found her first name through the birth record for their son Moses^{4}.

At some point, the family moved to East Haddam, Middlesex County, Connecticut. A cousin through Moses^{3}'s uncle Jacob was living in East Haddam at about the same time.

Children
Moses^{3} and Hannah^{2} Sawyer had at least one child:

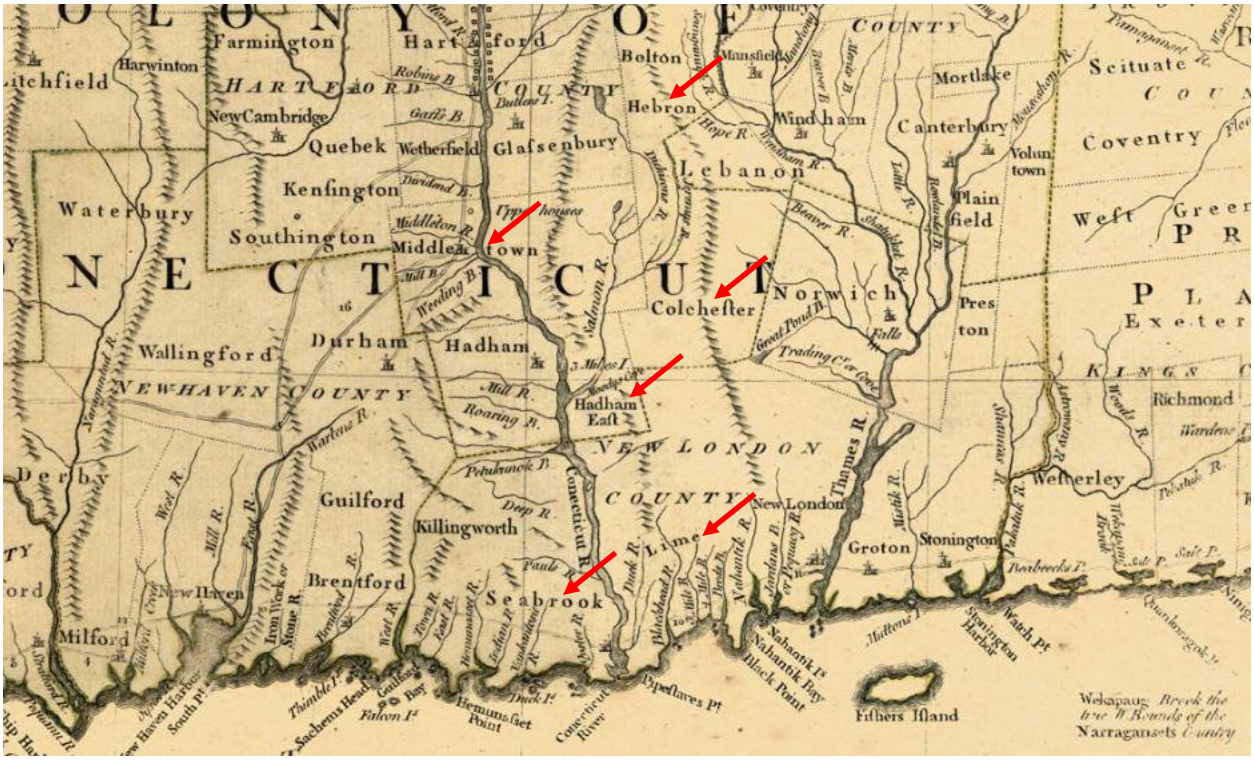
- Moses Sawyer^{4}, born May 16, 1752, in East Haddam, Connecticut

We are direct descendants of Moses^{3} and Hannah^{2}'s son Moses^{4}.

Deaths and Burials
Some research puts Moses Sawyer^{3}'s death in 1799, but I have not found satisfactory supporting evidence. I do not know when Hannah Sawyer^{2} died, or where they were buried.

Research Notes
Some research includes a second son named Noadiah Sawyer. I am skeptical of the existence of Noadiah. The East Haddam Vital Records source that lists the birth of son Moses^{4} in 1752 did not list any other births to Moses^{3} and Hannah^{2} Sawyer. There was, however, a Noadiah Sawyer born about 1760 who served in the American Revolutionary War.

There was a Dr. Moses Sawyer born in 1756 in Massachusetts to a different Moses and Hannah Sawyer. Dr. Sawyer also married a woman named Hannah – Hannah Little. Dr. Sawyer died in 1799 in Essex County, Massachusetts. Records associated with Dr. Sawyer are sometimes attributed to both our Generation 5 Moses Sawyer^{3} and Generation 6 Moses Sawyer^{4}. This may be where the 1799 death date for our Moses Sawyer^{3} comes from.



Connecticut in 1794, including Saybrook (Seabrook), Lyme (Lime), Hebron, Middleton (Middletown), Colchester and East Haddam (Hadham East). It is only about 17 miles from Saybrook to Hebron.

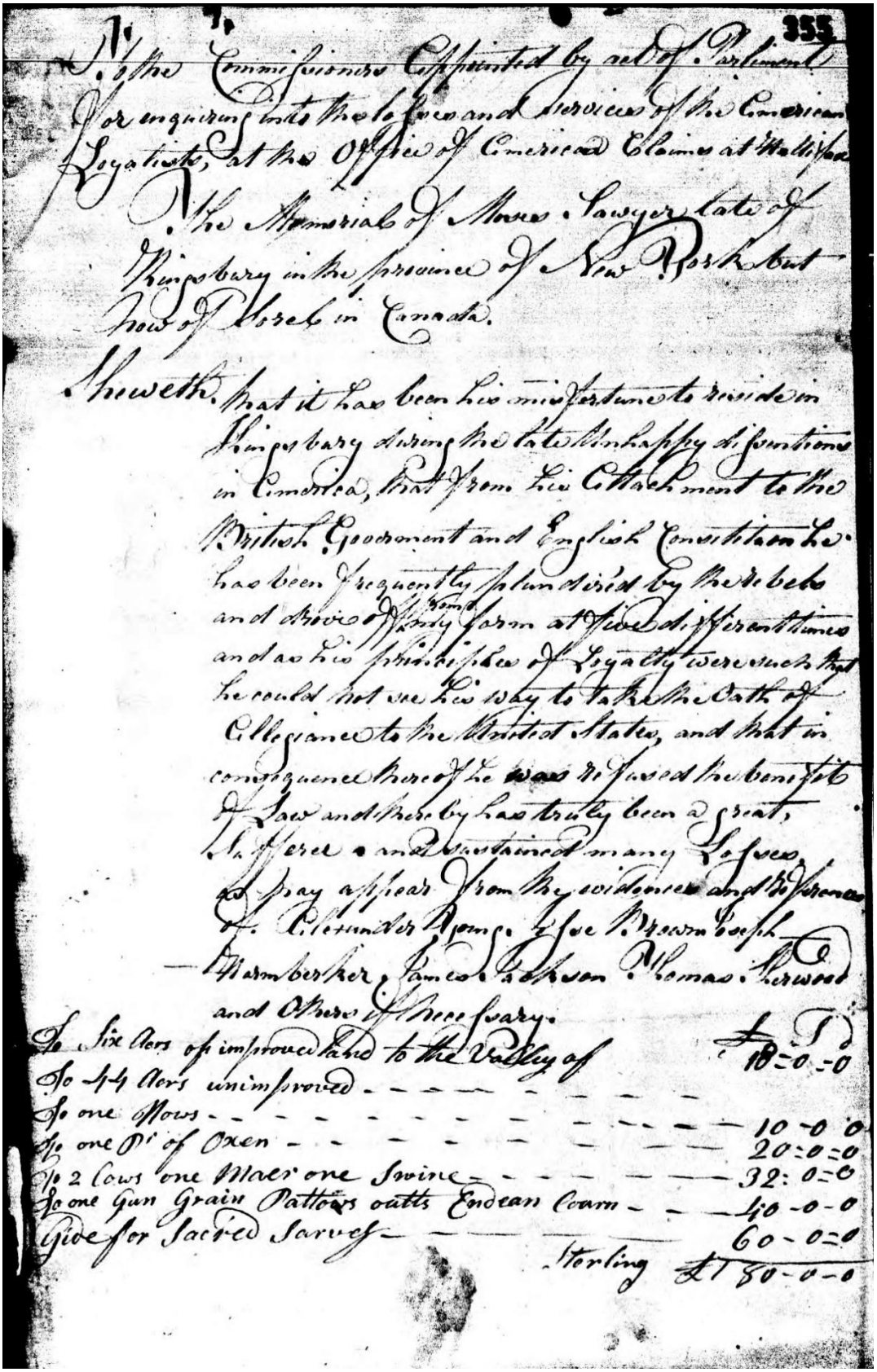
Generations 6 & 7 – Moses Sawyer[4] and Elizabeth Cline and their Children
We are direct descendants of Moses Sawyer[4] and Elizabeth Cline.

Marriage
I have not turned up a marriage record for Moses Sawyer[4] and his wife Elizabeth Cline. I found her name through other family records.

At some point, Moses[4] and Elizabeth Sawyer left East Haddam, Connecticut, and in July 1783 they settled in Kingsbury, Washington County, New York.

In 1784, Moses[4] and Elizabeth Sawyer moved from Kingsbury to Sorel, Pierre-De Saurel area of Québec, Canada. As part of the aftermath of the American victory in the American Revolutionary War, Moses Sawyer[4] was unwilling to sign a loyalty oath to the newly independent American colonies. Moses[4] and his family were among numerous British loyalists who abandoned life in the American colonies and moved to Canada, many settling in what is now the Eastern Townships region of Québec.

The British Parliament passed an act that allowed Loyalists moving to Québec to submit claims for reimbursement from the British government for the property that they abandoned in the United States. Moses Sawyer[4] submitted such a claim for 180 pounds sterling in February 1786. His abandoned property included 50 acres of land, a pair of oxen, two cows, a mare, a swine, oats and corn.



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To the Commissioners Appointed by act of Parliament for enquiring into the losses and services of the American Loyalists, at the Office of American Claims at Halifax

The Memorial of Moses Sawyer late of Kingsbury in the province of New York but now of Lorch in Canada.

Sheweth, that it has been his misfortune to reside in Kingsbury during the late unhappy disputions in America, that from his attachment to the British Government and English Constitution he has been frequently plundered by the Rebels and driven from home at five different times and as his principles of Loyalty were such that he could not see his way to take the Oath of Allegiance to the United States, and that in consequence thereof he was deprived the benefit of law and thereby has truly been a great sufferer and sustained many losses as may appear from the evidence and References of Alexander Ross, Jesse Brown Joseph Wambercker, James Jackson, Thomas Sherwood and others if necessary.

	£	S	D
To Six Acres of improved land to the Valley of	18	0	0
To 44 Acres unimproved - - - - - - - - - -			
To one Mows - - - - - - - - - - - - - -	10	0	0
To one Pr of Oxen - - - - - - - - - - -	20	0	0
To 2 Cows one Mare one Swine - - - - - - -	32	0	0
To one Gun Grain Pattoes oatts Endean Corn - - -	40	0	0
Give for Sacred Survey - - - - - - -	60	0	0
Sterling	£180	0	0

Moses Sawyer[4]'s petition for reimbursement from the British government, first page

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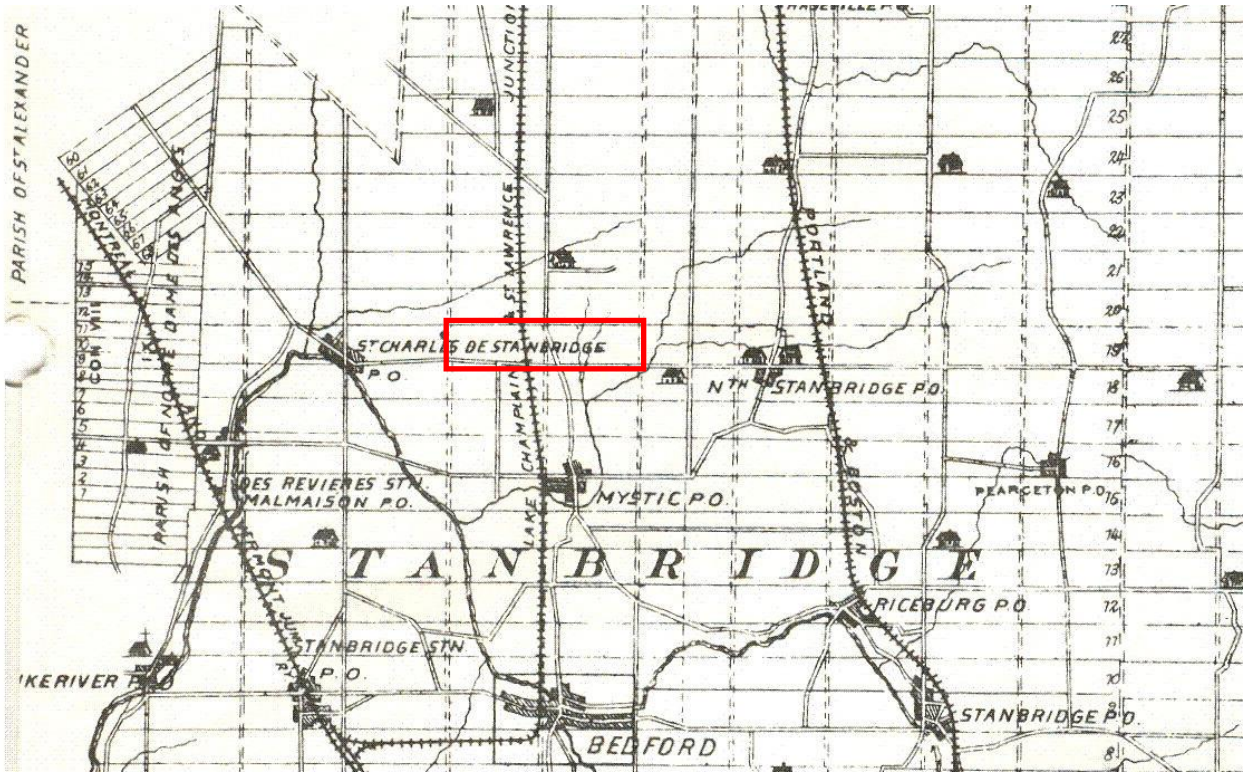
Moses Sawyer late of Kingsbury in the Province of New York but now of Sorel in Canada maketh Oath, and saith, that he was not in the Kingdom of Great Britain or Ireland between the 15th July 1783 and the 25 March 1784. and this deponent saith, that he was utterly incapable of preferring or delivering to the Commissioners appointed by act of parliament passed in the twenty third year of the Reign of his present Majesty entitled an Act for appointing Commissioners to enquire into the losses and services of all such persons who have suffered in their rights and properties and professions during the late unhappy dissentions in America in consequence of their loyalty to his Majesty, and attachment to the British Government, or at their Office any memorial, claim or request for aid or relief on account of this deponent to losses during the late unhappy dissensions in America, within the time allowed by the said Act for the receiving of such claims by reason that this deponent during all such times viz. between 15 July 1783 and the 25 March 1784. lived or resided at Kingsbury in the state of New York. and this deponent further saith that he never heard of the said Act being passed which prevented his making and transmitting his claim to the aforesaid Commissioners within the before mentioned period allowed for the receiving of such claims —

his
Moses X Sway
mark

Taken before me at Sorel
this 25th day of February 1786.

Moses Sawyer[4]'s petition for reimbursement from the British government, second page

The Sawyer family lived in the Upper Yamaska area from the time they arrived until no later than 1806, when they moved to Stanbridge, north of Mystic. Their son John[4] had settled in Stanbridge, as that was where his earliest children reportedly were born. Some of John[4]'s siblings lived on different farms in Stanbridge.



The Sawyers lived at Lot 19, Concessions 3 and 4, in Stanbridge, just north of Mystic. In the 1825 Canada Census, son John[4] owned 500 acres in Concession 4, marked in red.

View of the road from the south as it bisects the John Sawyer Farm, 2012

View from the southeast of the John Sawyer farm, 2012

Children

Moses[4] and Elizabeth Sawyer had six children, including the following:

- John Sawyer[4], born December 24, 1777, likely in Connecticut or New York
- Philip Sawyer, born in 1780, likely in Connecticut or New York
- Hannah Sawyer[3], born in 1784, likely in New York or Québec, Canada
- Catherine Sawyer, born in 1786, in Yamaska, Pierre-De Saurel, Québec, Canada
- Sarah Sawyer, born November 16, 1787, in St. Hyacinthe, Pierre-De Saurel, Québec, Canada
- Ann Sawyer, born March 16, 1790, in Sorel, Pierre-De Saurel, Québec, Canada

We are direct descendants of Moses[4] and Elizabeth Sawyer's son John[4].

Deaths and Burials

I do not know when Moses[4] and Elizabeth Sawyer died or where they were buried. I did not find markers for them in the Stone Cemetery where their son John[4] and a number of other Sawyer family members were buried.

Historical information posted at the Mystic Church, just to the south of the Sawyer farm, reported that the earliest people to settle in the area came in the late 1790s from the United States, some because they wanted to live under British rule, and some seeking virgin farmland. Early settlers were buried in unmarked graves at a cemetery where they later built the church.

Church services were originally held in local homes and then in the local schoolhouse. The Mystic Church was built next to the cemetery in 1882 by the Methodists. At about that time, a granite boulder was installed with the inscription "In Memory of the Early Settlers".

Given this history and the cemetery's proximity to the Sawyer farm, and I suspect that Moses[4] and Elizabeth Sawyer were possibly buried in this cemetery. More recent markers include surnames Bockus, Creller, Grenier, Clow and Boomhower, families related to us through marriage to our distant Sawyer cousins.

The Mystic Church and its cemetery

Questions about Moses Sawyer[4] and his Grandchildren

At about the same time that our Moses[4] and Elizabeth Sawyer would have been in Washington County, New York, there was another Moses Sawyer living in the county who held land there in the 1780s and 1790s, and who appeared in the 1790 U.S. Census. Some researchers have combined the records for both men into a single Moses Sawyer, but that would have our Moses Sawyer[4] living in New York at the same time that he was petitioning Canadian authorities for compensation for property in New York that he abandoned when he moved to Québec.

One Moses Sawyer stayed in New York, and the other left for Canada in 1784 out of loyalty to the British crown. This does raise an interesting question. Is it the Moses Sawyer who left for Canada who descended from the generations above, or is it the Washington County landowner? Most researchers seem convinced that our Moses Sawyer[4] descended from the generations above. They presumably have information that I have not yet come across online in my own research (e.g., family bibles, documents from other sources).

There was also separately a John Sawyer, an Elias Sawyer and a David Sawyer on the Washington County, New York tax rolls in 1799.

I have not yet found a connection between these other Sawyers and our Sawyer line.

A second question I have is what motivated the Sawyers to move from Connecticut to New York after so many generations? Moving, of course, is not unheard of, and this part of New York is not far from Connecticut. This Sawyer line previously moved from Massachusetts to Connecticut, after all, and there was family in East Haddam, Connecticut. This gives me another reason to wonder whether there is a connection between the two Moses Sawyers.

However, given what happened in 1784, and I suspect that this move had something to do with the American Revolutionary War, which was underway at the time of their move. These Sawyers were Loyalists, and Loyalists were often persecuted, and sometimes subjected to mob violence. As a result, Loyalists often moved to British-held areas. Fort Edward, in today's Washington County area, had been captured by the British in 1777. This may have motivated the Sawyers' move in 1783 as the war was winding down.

I also have another observation. When some of John[4] and Hannah[4] Sawyer's children moved back to the United States, they headed for Washington County, New York, this about 60 years after the family left Washington County for Canada. Did they have family ties in the county? They may have if the two Moses Sawyers were related in some way.

Generations 7 & 8 – John Sawyer[4] and Hannah Unknown[4] and their Children
We are direct descendants of John Sawyer[4] and his wife Hannah[4].

Marriage
John Sawyer[4] and his wife Hannah[4] were married in about 1803 in Québec.

I don't know Hannah[4]'s maiden name. The 1851 Canada Census suggests that she was born in about 1785 in Québec, although two of her children reported in the 1880 U.S. Census that she was born in New York. She was living with son Joseph, his wife Mary Anne[6] and their three children in 1851. Her marker in Stone Cemetery says that she was 77 years old when she died in 1862, also putting her birth year at about 1785.

Children
John[4] and Hannah[4] Sawyer may have had about 11 children, including the following:

- Elizabeth Sawyer, born about 1801, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec
- Charlotte Sawyer, born about 1804, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec
- William Edward Sawyer, born about 1808, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec
- Moses Sawyer[5], born about 1811, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec
- Sarah "Sally" Sawyer, born about 1814, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec
- Joseph Sawyer, born June 14, 1816, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec
- Eli T. Sawyer, born August 7, 1822, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec
- John Nelson Sawyer[5], born about 1824, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec
- Almeda Sawyer, born about 1825, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec
- Samuel Sawyer, March 14, 1829, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec
- Gilbert Sawyer, March 23, 1831, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec

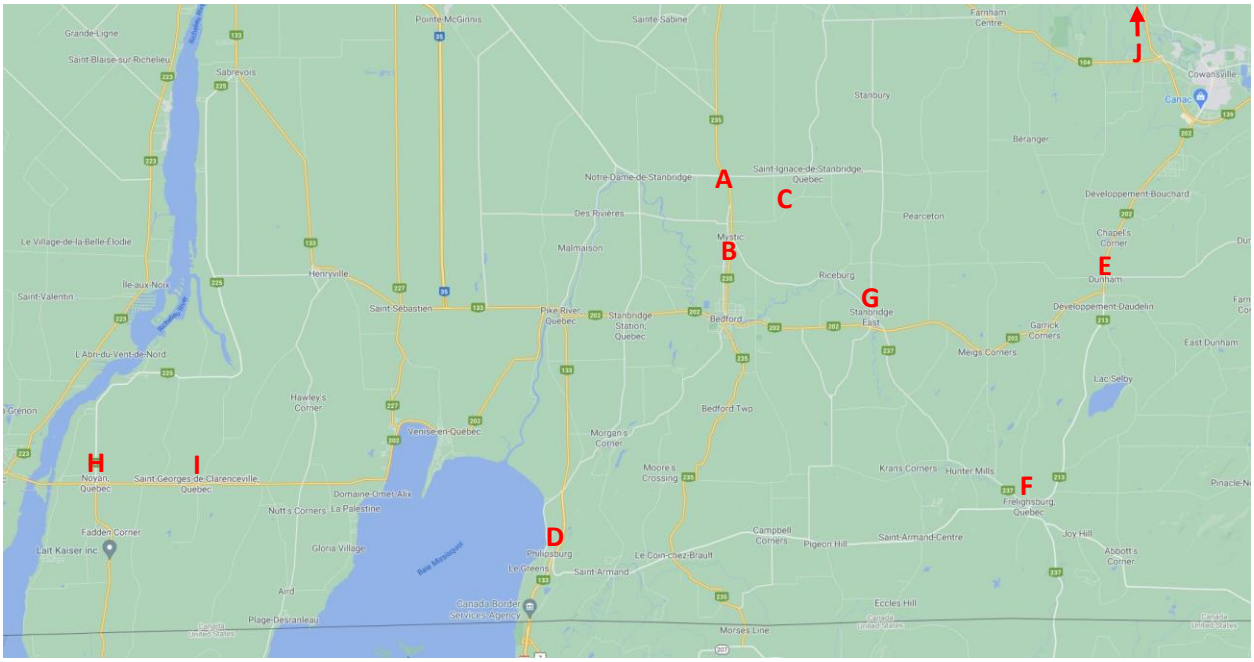
We are direct descendants of John[4] and Hannah[4] Sawyer's son Samuel.

Six of their children ended up moving to the United States, some of them specifically to Washington County, New York, from which their grandparents Moses[4] and Elizabeth Sawyer emigrated to Canada.

Deaths and Burials
John Sawyer[4] died February 9, 1836. Hannah Sawyer[4] died January 12, 1862. Both John[4] and Hannah[4] were buried in Stone Cemetery, St.-Ignace-de-Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec. Stone Cemetery, also known as North Stanbridge Cemetery, is a small cemetery that includes a large Sawyer family plot. At least four of their children and their spouses, and some of their grandchildren were also buried there.

Markers for John Sawyer[4] (left) and Hannah Sawyer[4] (right), Stone Cemetery, near Stanbridge, Québec.

Stone Cemetery, St.-Ignace-de-Stanbridge, Québec, was named for the family that established it in 1827. A number of Sawyers, their spouses and children have been buried here.



Map of the Missisquoi County area of the Eastern Townships, including the John Sawyer farm (A), the cemetery at Mystic Church (B), Stone Cemetery a.k.a. North Stanbridge Cemetery (C), Philipsburg (D), Dunham (E), Saint-Armand East, now Frelighsburg (F), Stanbridge East (G), Noyan (H), Clarenceville (I), and Granby (J)

Research Notes

There were a handful of other Sawyers living in Stanbridge when John Sawyer[4] was living there, including Philip Sawyer, likely his brother. In nearby Clarenceville lived a David Sawyer, whose father was Isaac Sawyer of Hebron, Connecticut, where our Sawyer line lived a few generations back. In nearby Dunham, there lived another John Sawyer as well as a Gordon Sawyer.

Some research suggests that oldest daughter Elizabeth was born in 1797, which would have made her mother about 12 years old at the time. However, Canadian census records suggest that she was actually born between 1800 and 1802. That still makes her mother rather young – and apparently unmarried – to start having children. But Elizabeth herself married Philip Traver in 1817, at about 15-17 years old (Philip was about 22 years old at the time).

I thought perhaps that Elizabeth was not part of this Sawyer family. However, in the 1851 Canada Census, her would-be brother William, his wife Abigail and their daughter Laura Ann were living with or next door to Philip and Elizabeth Traver, which certainly suggests that they may have been related in some way. There was a notarized transaction between Philip Traver and Gilbert Sawyer. Philip and Elizabeth Traver were also buried in Stone Cemetery, St.-Ignace-de-Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec with several Sawyer family members.

It is possible that second daughter Charlotte also has been mis-assigned to John[4] and Hannah[4] Sawyer. The available records primarily put her in nearby Dunham, but there was a second John Sawyer living in the Dunham area.

Some researchers suggest that there is another daughter, Catherine, who was born about 1804 and died in 1888. The only information I found that possibly connected her to our family was a notarized transaction she had with a Joseph Sawyer. John[4] and Hannah[4] Sawyer had a son named Joseph.

One researcher suggests that our Sawyers did not move to the Stanbridge area until as late at 1806, which if true would support the idea that Elizabeth, Charlotte and Catherine belong to other Sawyer lines.

Because of all the possible Sawyer fathers living in the area, most researchers looking into John[4] and Hannah[4] Sawyer's family in Stanbridge acknowledge some degree of uncertainty about their earliest possible children.

Elizabeth Sawyer (John^4 and Hannah^4 Sawyer's daughter)
Elizabeth Sawyer married Philip Traver on March 13, 1818, in Philipsburg, St. Armand, Missisquoi, Québec.

Philip and Elizabeth spent their lives in the Stanbridge area, where Philip was a farmer.

I have not determined how many children they may have had, although they did have at least one child, a son named Andrew.

Elizabeth died July 27, 1888 in Missisquoi, Québec, and was buried in Stone Cemetery, St.-Ignace-de-Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec. Markers were first recorded in 1887, but only the dates and ages on the Traver marker were visible in June 2004. The Traver marker could no longer be located by 2011.

Charlotte Sawyer (John^4 and Hannah^4 Sawyer's daughter)
Charlotte Sawyer married Henry Hart Ross on April 9, 1820, in Dunham, Missisquoi, Québec.

Henry and Charlotte spent their lives in the Dunham area, where Henry was a farmer.

Henry and Charlotte had about three or four children, but due to differences in research, I am confident in the name of only one of them:

- John Ross, born April 10, 1839, in Dunham, Missisquoi, Québec

John Ross died when he was only 13 years old and was buried next to his parents.

Charlotte died June 22, 1839, just two months after her son John was born. She was buried in All Saints Anglican Church Cemetery, in Dunham, Missisquoi, Québec.

Markers for Charlotte Sawyer Ross and her son John, All Saints Anglican Church Cemetery

William Edward Sawyer (John[4] and Hannah[4] Sawyer's son)

William Sawyer married American-born Abigail West. The date and location are not known at this time.

For a while, William and Abigail lived in Stanbridge. At the time of the 1851 Canada Census, they were living with or next to Philip and Elizabeth Sawyer Traver in Stanbridge.

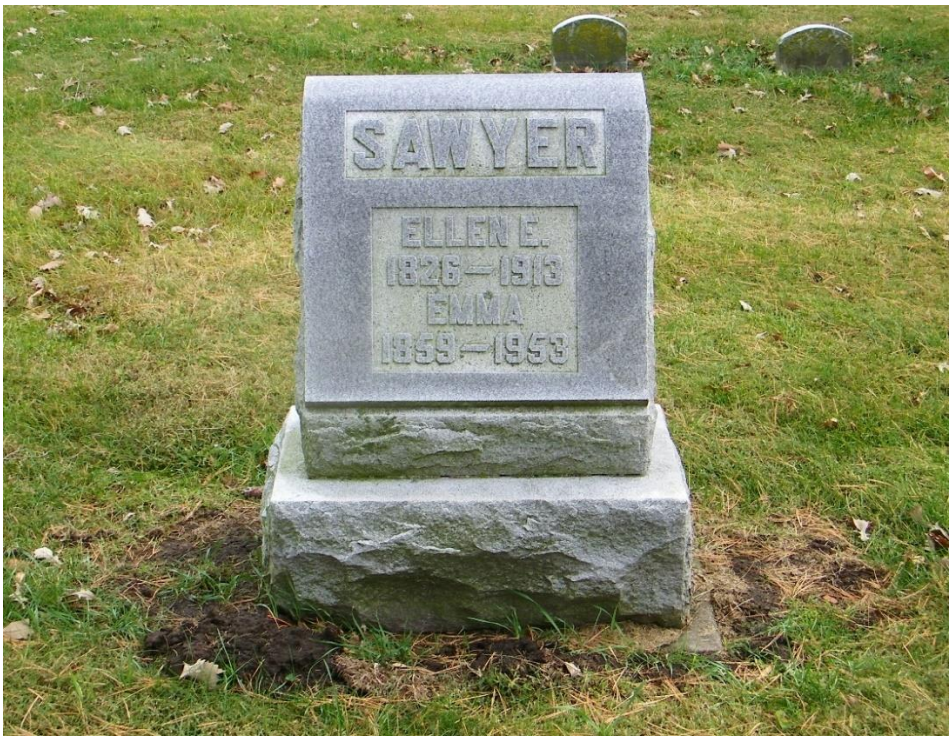
William and Abigail had one daughter:

- Laura Ann Sawyer, born August 21, 1839, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec.

Laura married William Hernon in Milton, Vermont in 1859.

William and Abigail Sawyer may have been living around Milton, Vermont by the late 1850s, based on where their daughter Laura got married and started her family. They moved to Jones County, Iowa by 1865, as did her daughter and her family.

Abigail Sawyer died in 1867. William Sawyer died January 14, 1869 in Wyoming, Iowa. He was buried in an unmarked grave in a family plot owned by his brother and sister-in-law Eli and Ellen Vosburg Sawyer, in Wyoming Cemetery, Wyoming, Iowa. His wife Abigail was buried elsewhere in the cemetery.



William Sawyer was buried in an unmarked grave in a plot owned by his brother Eli and sister-in-law Ellen in Wyoming Cemetery. Eli was buried in Florida with his second wife.

Moses Sawyer[5] (John[4] and Hannah[4] Sawyer's son)

Moses Sawyer[5] married Jane Crother on March 27, 1838, in St. Armand East, Missisquoi, Québec. Jane was born about 1817 in Canada.

Moses[5] and Jane Sawyer remained in the Stanbridge area, where Moses[5] was a farmer.

Some research suggests that Moses Sawyer[5] may have participated in the Lower Canada Rebellion. The rebellion started in part because of the belief that the English elite abused their political power over both English and French people in Lower Canada (Québec), the end result was the combination of Lower Canada and Upper Canada (Ontario) provinces into a single province of Canada, effectively a victory for the English elite at the time. Some historians suggest that this is an example of what might have happened had the American Revolutionary War failed.

Moses[5] and Jane had at least one child, a daughter Caroline:

- Caroline Sawyer, born November 9, 1850, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec

Caroline died at age seven, and was buried in the Stone Cemetery, St.-Ignace-de-Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec, near her parents.

Some research identifies a handful of additional children, but there is a contradiction. One version seems to come from an 1851 Canada Census record that would suggest that the family moved to Leeds, Ontario and then back to Stanbridge. Without further supporting evidence, I do not have enough confidence in that research to use it, although the ages for family members Moses[5], Jane and Caroline are reasonably good fits. A second version feels like a better fit for a Stanbridge-dwelling family, but it does not include any supporting evidence.

Moses Sawyer[5] died September 20, 1874, and was buried in Stone Cemetery, St.-Ignace-de-Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec.

Markers for Moses Sawyer (left) and his daughter Caroline (right), Stone Cemetery

Sarah Sawyer (John[4] and Hannah[4] Sawyer's daughter)

Sarah Sawyer married George Skakel on February 4, 1833, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec. George was born about March 1812 in Québec.

George and Sarah Skakel lived in the Stanbridge area where George was a farmer.

George and Sarah had at least one child, a son John:

- John Skakel, born about May 16, 1836

John died at age five, and was buried in the Stone Cemetery, St.-Ignace-de-Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec, near his parents.

Sarah Sawyer died before 1871, and was buried in the Stone Cemetery, St.-Ignace-de-Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec, in a now-unmarked grave next to her husband.

Marker for George Skakel, Stone Cemetery

Joseph Sawyer (John[4] and Hannah[4] Sawyer's son)

Joseph Sawyer married Mary Ann Hauver[6] on July 8, 1839, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec. Mary[6] was born about July 1814, in Québec.

Joseph and Mary[6] Sawyer spent their lives in the Stanbridge area, where Joseph was a farmer.

Joseph and Mary[6] had at least five children, including the following:

- Robert Sawyer, born December 21, 1840, in Stanbridge East, Missisquoi, Québec
- Lydia Sawyer, born in about 1841, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec
- Ellen Sawyer, born April 21, 1844, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec
- Caroline Sawyer, born June 9, 1847, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec
- Lucinda Sawyer, born in about 1852, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec

The next generation of their descendants remained in the area.

Joseph Sawyer died on April 28, 1908, in Stanbridge. Mary Sawyer[6] died November 21, 1893, also in Stanbridge. Joseph, Mary[6], and at least three of their children and their spouses were buried in Stone Cemetery, St.-Ignace-de-Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec.

Markers for Mary (left) and Joseph (right) Sawyer, Stone Cemetery

Eli T. Sawyer (John[4] and Hannah[4] Sawyer's son)

Eli Sawyer married Ellen Vosburg on March 25, 1847, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec. Ellen was born in January 8, 1825 in North Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec.

Eli and Ellen lived in the Stanbridge, where Eli was a farmer, for about the first 10 years of their marriage, where they started their family. In 1858, they moved to Jones County, Iowa, where Eli continued to farm. There they had two more children.

Eli T. Sawyer

Eli and Ellen Sawyer had six children, including the following:

- Cecelia Sawyer, born in about 1848, in Stanbridge East, Missisquoi, Québec
- Calvin Elwyn Sawyer, born in about 1850, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec
- Tressa Sawyer, born in about 1853, in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec
- Unnamed Sawyer, born in January 1858, but died a month later, in Shefford, Québec
- Emma Sawyer, born in about 1860, in Jones County, Iowa
- Eva Sawyer, born in about 1863, in Jones County, Iowa

Calvin died in Iowa when he was about 10 years old.

During the Civil War, Eli Sawyer enlisted in the U.S. Army on August 14, 1862 as an 8th corporal, and began his service the following month. He was mustered out on November 23, 1863 after he was disabled with a spinal injury.

- For more about Eli Sawyer's Civil War service, see Our Ancestors in the Civil War.

On September 13, 1870, Eli Sawyer was granted U.S. Patent No. 107,294 for an "improvement in marking attachment to corn-planters".

By about 1883, Eli sold their Jones County farm, and he and Ellen moved to Florida. But things did not go well for them in Florida, and Ellen left him in 1885, returning to Jones County.

Eli then married Idella Hall in Georgia in 1886 when he was 64 and Idella was about 21. They settled in Florida, where they had three children, the youngest just five years old when Eli died at age 85.

Eli and Idella's children included the following:

- Eli T. Sawyer, born December 1892, in Joppa Lodge, Florida
- John Johnson Sawyer[6], born November 1899, in Joppa Lodge, Florida
- Adelbert Puterbaugh Sawyer, born December 14, 1902, in Joppa Lodge, Florida

Only Adelbert survived to adulthood. He spent his life in Florida.

Eli Sawyer died June 7, 1908. He was buried in Metta Rose Cemetery, in Lafayette, Florida.

Marker for Eli Sawyer, Metta Rose Cemetery

After Eli died, both Ellen and Idella applied for his Civil War soldier widow's pension benefits. It turned out that Eli and Ellen had never gotten divorced, so legally Ellen was his widow. Idella contested Ellen's claim, saying that word had reached Florida that Ellen had died, so Eli had been presenting himself as a widower when he met and married Idella.

John Nelson Sawyer^5 (John^4 and Hannah^4 Sawyer's son)

John Sawyer^5 married Melinda Flagg in about 1843 in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec. Melinda was born February 27, 1825, in Noyan, Missisquoi, Québec, and was raised in nearby Clarenceville.

John^5 and Melinda Sawyer began their married life and started their family in the area, where John^5 worked as a bailiff, but in about 1851 they moved to St. Lawrence County, New York, where they had more children, and John^5 worked as a cobbler.

Some research suggests that John Nelson Sawyer^5 may have participated in the Lower Canada Rebellion with his brother Moses^5.

John[5] and Melinda had at least nine children, including the following:

- Mary Ann Sawyer[7], born February 4, 1844, in Clarenceville, Missisquoi, Québec
- Ira Samuel Sawyer, born October 31, 1845, in Clarenceville, Missisquoi, Québec
- Elizabeth Amanda Sawyer, born May 29, 1848, in Clarenceville, Missisquoi, Québec
- Robert Sawyer, born in about 1849, in Clarenceville, Missisquoi, Québec
- Edwin Sawyer, born in about 1857, in New York
- Lydia Sawyer, born in about 1859, in New York
- Sarah Ann Sawyer, born in about 1861, in New York
- Christine Arrilla Sawyer, born in about 1863, in New York
- John Sawyer[7], born in about 1867, in New York

John Sawyer[5] died in 1908 in De Kalb, New York. He and his wife Melinda were buried in Hermon Cemetery, in nearby Hermon, New York.

Marker for John and Melinda Sawyer, Hermon Cemetery

Almeda Sawyer (John[4] and Hannah[4] Sawyer's daughter)
Almeda Sawyer never married.

By 1850, she was living in Fort Ann, Washington County, New York, not far from her brother Samuel. Almeda was working there as a domestic. She remained in New York for several years, but moved to Jones County, Iowa by the 1870s, where at least two of her brothers still lived at the time.

Some research suggests that Almeda Sawyer died at the Jones County Home (poor house) at age 73. A transcribed list of Jones County Home residents indicates that Almeda entered the home on June 16, 1895 at age 60 and died there on November 14, 1898. The 60 may be a typo, as she turned 70 in 1895 and would have been 73 in 1898.

But according to a probate document, Almeda Sawyer actually died in November 1904, almost 80 years old at the time. She died without a will. Her niece Eva Sawyer Brainard was appointed administrator of her estate, but this oddly occurred in January 1911. If she had indeed died at the county home, it may have taken some time to track down next of kin.

The Jones County Home (poor house), Anamosa, Iowa

One source suggested that Almeda Sawyer was buried in an unmarked grave next to her brother William in Wyoming Cemetery, Wyoming, Iowa. Eva's mother Ellen (sister-in-law of William and Almeda Sawyer through Ellen's husband Eli Sawyer) and Eva's sister Emma were also buried in that Sawyer family plot. However, published Jones County cemetery records do not mention her.

Research Notes

There was another Almeda Sawyer living in Jones County, Iowa whose time there overlapped with the Almeda Sawyer in our line. This other Almeda Sawyer was living on Main Street in Wyoming, Iowa and working as a housekeeper there in the 1880 U.S. Census. She was only 40 at the time, and her birth location information also does not match.

Documented information on both Almeda Sawyers is quite limited in Jones County. With two Almeda Sawyers, it is possible that some information about one has been assigned to the other.

Old Fort Ann Town Hall

Samuel Sawyer (John[4] and Hannah[4] Sawyer's son)

Samuel Sawyer moved to Washington County, New York by 1850, first settling in Fort Ann and then Fort Edward. He married Ellen McNeil in the late 1850s.

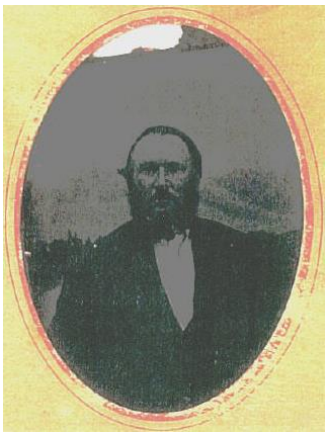
We are direct descendants of Samuel Sawyer and Ellen McNeil.

- For more about Samuel Sawyer and Ellen McNeil in the United States, see Samuel and Ellen Sawyer.

The Smyth House in Fort Edward was the first tavern and is the oldest house in Fort Edward. It was built using timber salvaged from the original Fort Edward. In the American Revolutionary War, Fort Edward was located at a strategic point along the Hudson River, and changed hands between British and American control a couple times during the war. Both sides used the Smyth House as their area headquarters at some point. And, yes, George Washington did sleep here.

Gilbert Sawyer (John^4 and Hannah^4 Sawyer's son)

Gilbert Sawyer married Adline Creller on August 10, 1854, in St. Armand East, Missisquoi, Québec. Adline was born September 7, 1834 in Stanbridge, Missisquoi, Québec.



Gilbert Sawyer

Also in 1854, Gilbert Sawyer had briefly moved to Kingsbury, Washington County, New York, close to his brother Samuel and sister Almeda.

Gilbert and Adline Sawyer began their married life and started their family in Granby, Shefford, Québec, where Gilbert was a farmer. In the mid-1860s, Gilbert and Adline moved their family to Jones County, Iowa, where by this time brothers Eli, William and possibly Samuel and sister Almeda were all living.

A decade later, they were living in Decatur County, Iowa, where the last of their children were born.

Gilbert and Adline's marriage was rocky as they separated and reunited several times. Finally, Adline left for Seattle to live with her daughter Ida, and Gilbert moved to Oklahoma, Indian Territory. In Oklahoma, Gilbert became an itinerant preacher, spreading the Gospel as he rode on horseback throughout the pioneer settlements of the territory.

Gilbert and Adline Sawyer had ten children, including the following:

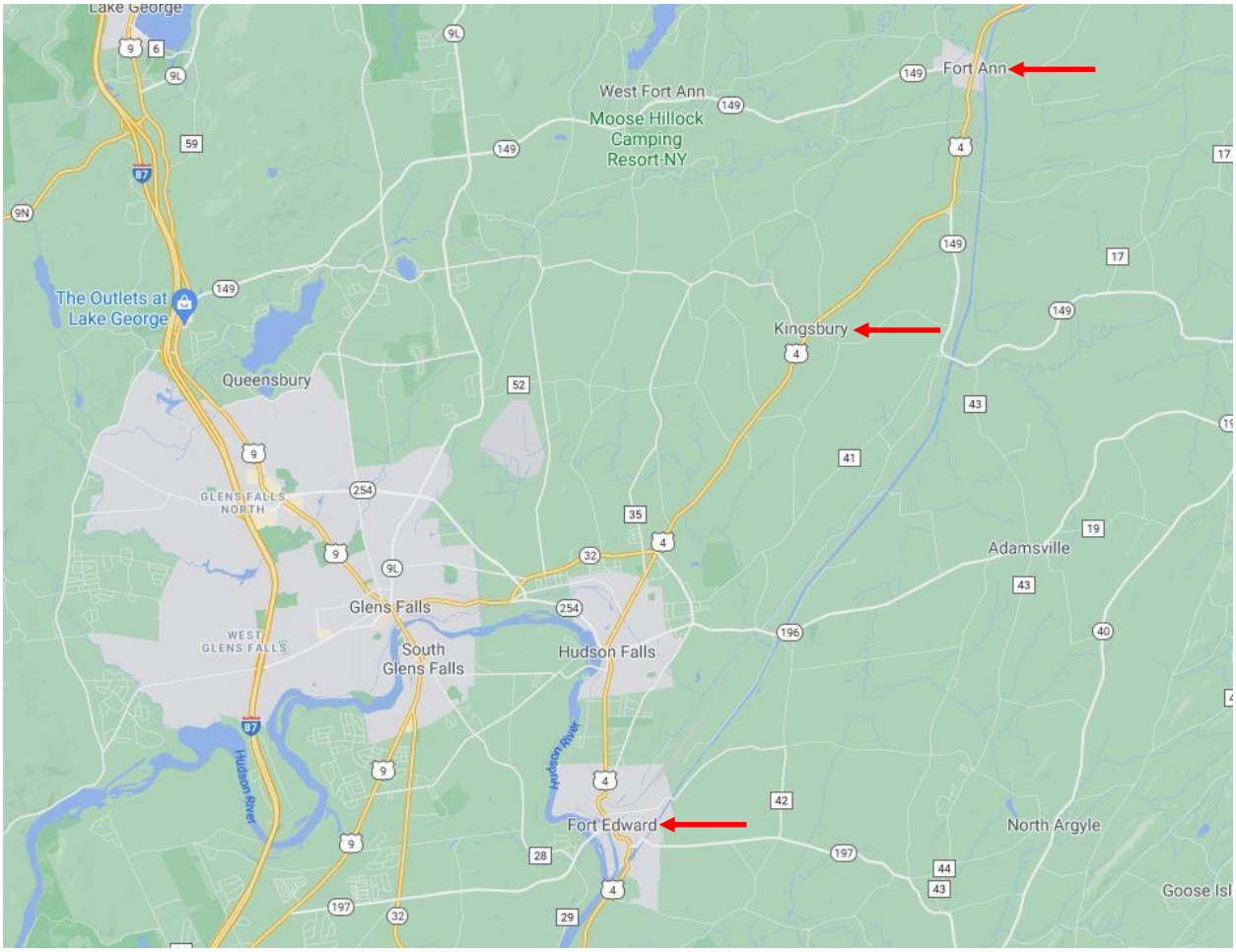
- Florence Imelda Sawyer, born April 26, 1856, in Granby, Shefford, Québec
- Ida A. Sawyer, born January 8, 1858, in Granby, Shefford, Québec
- Jane Ann Sawyer, born in 1862, in Granby, Shefford, Québec
- John Rufus Sawyer[8], born in about 1865, in Granby, Shefford, Québec
- Jessie M. Sawyer, born in about 1868, in Jones County, Iowa
- Hannah Elizabeth Sawyer[5], born in about November 1869, in Jones County, Iowa
- Harriet Elizabeth Sawyer, born in about 1870, in Jones County, Iowa
- Hiram Gilbert Sawyer, born September 11, 1871, in Jones County, Iowa
- Mary Agnes Sawyer[8], born in about 1873, in Jones County, Iowa
- Ivan Monroe Sawyer, born October 11, 1878, in Decatur County, Iowa

Gilbert died August 10, 1901 at the home of his daughter Mary Agnes[8] in Ardmore, Oklahoma after a lengthy illness. He was buried in South Cemetery, now Rose Hill Cemetery, in Ardmore.

Timeline of the Sawyers' Return to the United States

Moses Sawyer[4] was a Loyalist during the American Revolutionary War. After the war, he moved his family from Kingsbury, Washington County, New York to the Eastern Townships region of Québec.

Six of his grandchildren through his son John[4] eventually moved back to the United States, including three who initially returned to Washington County, New York.



Kingsbury, Fort Ann and Fort Edward, all in Washington County, New York. Fort Edward and Fort Ann are only about 12 miles apart.

Grandson Eli Sawyer was the first of five Sawyer siblings to settle in Jones County, Iowa, that occurring in 1858. Within about ten years, three of his brothers – William, Samuel and Gilbert – had joined him there. His sister Almeda joined her brothers in Jones County at some point, although I do not know the date. Brother John[5] is the only one of the siblings who moved to the United States but who never lived in Jones County.

The following timeline summarizes the migration of six Sawyer siblings from Canada to the United States, five of whom ended up in Jones County, Iowa:

< 1850	Samuel and Almeda Sawyer leave Canada, and settle in Fort Ann, Washington County, New York.
1851	John Sawyer[5], his wife Melinda and their children leave Canada, and settle in St. Lawrence County, New York. John[5] and Melinda spent the rest of their lives in St. Lawrence County.
1854	Gilbert Sawyer leaves Canada, and settles in Kingsbury, Washington County, New York, the town that his grandfather left 70 years earlier. He returns to Canada sometime during or after 1855.
1858	Eli Sawyer, his wife Ellen and their children leave Canada, and settle in Jones County, Iowa.
Abt. 1859	William Sawyer, his wife Abigail and daughter Laura leave Canada, and settle in Milton, Vermont.
1860	Samuel Sawyer and his wife Ellen are now living in Fort Edward, Washington County, New York.
1863-1865	Samuel Sawyer is hospitalized in Washington, DC; his wife Ellen continues to live in Fort Edward, Washington County, New York for a while, and then moves to Brooklyn, Kings County, New York, where her brother James had also moved.
<=1865	William and Abigail Sawyer and their daughter Laura and her family leave Vermont, and settle in Jones County, Iowa. All spend the rest of their lives in Iowa.
>1865, <1868	Gilbert Sawyer, his wife Adline and their children leave Canada, and settle in Jones County, Iowa.
>1865, <1870	Samuel Sawyer, his wife Ellen and their children leave New York or Washington, D.C., and settle in Jones County, Iowa.
1870	Eli, Samuel and Gilbert Sawyer are all living in Madison Township, Jones County, Iowa with their families. William died in 1869. Almeda Sawyer may be in Jones County by now, too, but she does not appear in census records either in New York or in Iowa. Samuel and Almeda spent the rest of their lives in Iowa.
1880	Gilbert Sawyer, his wife Adline and their children are living in Decatur County, Iowa. At some point in the 1880s, Gilbert and Adline separate, with Gilbert moving to Oklahoma and Adline moving to Seattle, Washington, each where they live the rest of their lives.
1883	Eli and Ellen Sawyer move to Florida. After two years, they separate. Ellen returns to Jones County, whereas Eli remains in Florida, each where they live the rest of their lives.
Abt. 1896	Samuel and Ellen Sawyer separate, and Samuel moves to Audubon, Iowa, where he dies weeks later.

Prepared by Mark David Wasson
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