

Rathbun-Rathbone-Rathburn
**FAMILY
HISTORIAN**



Aaron Rathbone
Born 1572—Engraving 1616

Devoted to
the perpetuity of
our common heritage
an honorable
Name.

Earliest Family Picture Found In Rare 1616 Surveying Book

The picture of Aaron Rathborne (Rathbone) which appears on our front cover is the oldest known likeness of anyone bearing our family name.

It was published in 1616 in London as the frontispiece of Aaron's four-part volume *The Surveyor in Foure Books*.

The ancient volume, found today only in rare book collections, is one of the earliest books ever written on the art of surveying.

Aaron described himself in the preface as "Aaron Rathborne, Gentleman, practitioner in the Mathematiques . . . from my lodging at the house of M. Roger Burgis against Salisburie-house-gate in the Strand this sixth day of November, 1616."

Surrounding the engraved likeness of Aaron are the Latin words "Qui In Me Vivit Pro Me Mortuus Est. Anno Salutis Nostri 1616." Latin scholars who have analyzed the words express some puzzlement, but agree they would translate roughly "Who lives for me will die with me. We welcome the year 1616."

Engraved over his picture is "Aa Rathborne - Eta fue 44" (his name and age) making his birth date about 1572.

It is likely he personally spelled his name Rathbone, but the printer misspelled it Rathborne, as our name today is so often misspelled.

Little is known of this early and distant cousin except what can be found in his book and in three other contemporary references found in early English archives. These references indicate that he worked throughout England, al-

though he lived (at least in 1616) in London.

In sum, all we know about Aaron is that he was born about 1572, was well educated, worked throughout England as a surveyor as early as 1608, lived in London and published his book there in 1616, and died sometime after 1622.

His picture gives us some idea of what our early English cousins looked like.

Letter From the Editor

The past few months have brought the sad news of the deaths of three of our charter members—Mrs. Willford (Marjorie) Taylor, Mrs. Henry (Lila) Glomstad and Mrs. Clair (Betty Jo) Baker. We extend our heartfelt condolences to their families. Their obituaries appear elsewhere in the issue.

We are still receiving a few subscription renewals, but as of press time our total 1982 membership stands at about 240—compared to our final 1981 total of 267. This is a good percentage, and we are pleased, although we are sorry to lose even a few of our charter members.

This issue continues the story of Benjamin Rathbun, the famous, and tragic, builder of Buffalo. Other articles feature the Rathbuns of Springfield, New York and two Rathbone "queens." The genealogical section continues the fourth generation of our family in America.

A number of you have asked how else you can help our ongoing efforts to update the family tree. In addition to sending your own family records, there is another way you can help: Visit the libraries and historical societies in your area, and on your travels. Ask to see any material on Rathbuns, Rathbones and Rathburns, and obtain copies or transcribe the information.

Many libraries and societies have obituaries, clipping files, unpublished records such as births, deaths and marriages, military records, and some have compilations of gravestone information. All of this is most helpful to us.

If you like to browse in cemeteries (your editor does), look for the graves of family members, and write down the data you find. If the names or dates are difficult to read, write down what it looks like or what it could be. If you send us such data, be sure to mention the cemetery location, and name if possible.

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In response to an appeal from the Block Island Historical Society, our association has donated \$270—one dollar for each of our first-year members—toward the Society's fund to establish a Historical Museum.

We made the contribution "in memory of our ancestors, John and Margaret Rathbun, who were among the island's first settlers."

Accompanying the \$270 check was a list of the 270 members of the Rathbun Family Association who were first-year subscribers to our magazine.

One Century, Three Generations Apart

Rathbone Girls Were 'Queens'

Two beautiful young Rathbone women, a century apart, have reigned as "Queens" for their communities' annual celebrations.

Last year, Rachelle Rathbone was chosen as Monrovia Day Queen in her home city of Monrovia, Calif., and was first runner-up in the 1981 Miss Southern California Pageant.

A century earlier, in 1880, Marie Louise Alice Rathbone was Queen of Carnival for the New Orleans Mardi Gras celebration, and was considered one of the most beautiful young women in the city.

Rachelle, 18, is the daughter of Robert Cameron Rathbone and Betty June (Kirkeby) Rathbone, and the granddaughter of Cameron Robert⁸ Rathbone (Francis⁷ John⁶ William⁵ Wait⁴ Joshua³ John²⁻¹).

Marie Louise Alice, known simply as Alice, was born in 1859, daughter of Henry Alanson⁶ Rathbone (Samuel⁵ John⁴ Joshua³ John²⁻¹).

Rachelle was officially crowned early in March 1981, as Monrovia Days Queen at the city's annual Coronation Ball, surrounded by her "Court" of princesses.

Escorted by her father, she led off the dancing which climaxed a festive evening of dining, dancing and partying.

During the ensuing year, Rachelle and her Royal Court participated in a busy schedule of activities, ranging from a Queen's Breakfast to a circus, rock festival, parade and modeling shows.

For her high school graduation in June, Rachelle's parents hosted a gala party attended by more than 70 relatives and friends. The party also marked the Rathbones' 35th wedding anniversary and Mrs. Rathbone's birthday. The parents then sent Rachelle to Europe for a month's tour as a graduation present.

During the summer, the Monrovia Kiwanis Club sponsored Rachelle as an entrant in the Miss Southern California Pageant, in which she placed second.

In the fall, she enrolled at Citrus College, where she is working toward a degree in psychology. This spring, her year as Monrovia Queen ended when she formally crowned her successor to the title.

Alice Rathbone was selected in February 1880 by the New Orleans Mardi Gras Committee for the coveted title, "Queen of Carnival." She was then a 21-year-old debutante.

With a court of several "Maids of Carnival," she reigned over the entire Mardi Gras celebration that year, wearing a jeweled crown, necklace and bracelets given her as gifts by the committee.

At the height of the festivities, she appeared on a balcony in downtown New Orleans as the traditional parade passed in review. When the float bearing the "King of Carnival" reached the balcony, it stopped and the King raised a toast to "Queen Alice."

She then reigned over a series of gala balls and other events, where New Orleans residents ate, drank and made merry in preparation for the Lenten period of fasting and sobriety.

Three years later, Alice married William Phelps Eno, a wealthy New Yorker,

who was to become the "Father of Traffic Regulations."

He and Alice lived in New York, and nearby Connecticut, and became increasingly frustrated with the increasing problem of traffic jams caused by the growing number of horse-drawn carriages. In 1900, Eno wrote an article suggesting ways of coping with the problem, including creation of a mounted police traffic division, an idea which was approved by New York City police.

He then published a brochure of recommendations which was to become the world's first "traffic code." He printed 100,000 copies at his own expense, and made them available to New York and other cities.

The ideas in his brochure eventually spread throughout the world, and he became an international consultant on traffic problems. He advised city officials throughout the United States and in Europe.

He and Alice had no children, and after her death in 1911 at the age of 52, he established the Eno Foundation, which still exists, to study traffic problems. He later expanded its studies to include noise and water pollution.



Rachelle Rathbone



Alice Rathbone

Benjamin Rathbun's Empire Collapses in Forgery Scandal

In our last issue, we covered the early life of Benjamin⁶ Rathbun (Moses⁵ John⁴ Joshua³ John²⁻¹) from his birth in 1790 through his early years as a hotelkeeper and merchant, and to his spectacular career as a builder and financier in Buffalo during the 1820s and mid 1830s.

By 1836, he had built up an amazingly complex commercial empire which employed more than 2,000 men, with a daily payroll exceeding \$10,000. Not surprisingly, Benjamin had been called the John Jacob Astor of Buffalo, and had a financial net worth of nearly \$3 million. At age 46, he was at the peak of a career that might have gone on to see him accumulate one of America's greatest fortunes.

But we ended the first section of our story by pointing out that events were already in motion which would shatter Benjamin Rathbun's financial empire and send him to prison for forgery.

Early 1836 found Benjamin Rathbun riding the crest of success and prosperity. His extensive network of banks, retail stores, machine shops, stage-coach lines, sawmills, brickyards, warehouses, quarries and construction crews—with 2,000 to 2,500 employees—was operating smoothly and efficiently under the guidance of nearly 100 loyal and trusted top-level subordinates.

The key to Rathbun's success was a complex financing operation directed by his brother, Lyman Rathbun, who possessed, according to Benjamin, "extraordinary financial powers."

"So confident was I of his superior ability . . . that I had for a long period of time given up the active direction, control and management of my finances to him," Benjamin later wrote.

Benjamin had no reason to doubt his brother's ability and loyalty in that rosy spring of 1836. Money was scarce but Benjamin Rathbun's credit was so good that his personal notes were used fre-

The story of Benjamin Rathbun proved too long to cover even in two installments. The final section, encompassing his conviction, imprisonment and life after prison, will be published in our next issue.

quently and confidently as currency in Buffalo and surrounding areas.

To raise cash from bankers in New York City and other financial centers, Benjamin had only to sign a note, and obtain the co-endorsement of other reputable Buffalo businessmen. With Rathbun's reputation, other merchants were happy to co-sign his notes, especially since his operations were bringing prosperity to the city and increasing the value of their investments.

Benjamin was devoting most of his time to land development, both in Buffalo and in the new city of Niagara Falls, 12 miles to the north, which Benjamin and several other investors had surveyed and platted in May. A public sale of lots to prospective investors and settlers, scheduled for August 2, was expected to raise at least \$300,000.



Benjamin Rathbun

Courtesy of the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, including the Buffalo Savings Bank/Roy Nagle Collection.

In Buffalo, work had already started on the foundations for one of Benjamin's most ambitious projects—an entire city block on which he was planning a \$700,000 development. It was a forerunner of today's "shopping mall." Each of the four fronts facing the streets would be lined with stores and shops. Also planned were a hotel, bank, post office, merchants' exchange and offices for doctors, lawyers and other professionals. In the center would be a paved courtyard. Rising over the entire block would be a colonnaded tower with a dome 222 feet high.

In his spare time, if indeed he had much, Rathbun was serving as Buffalo's unofficial one-man Chamber of Commerce. He later wrote:

"Much more of my time was necessarily taken up by my attention to strangers from New York and elsewhere who were daily referred to me for information on subjects of improvements, worth of lots, costs of blocks of buildings, etc., all of which I felt a deep interest in, as I held so much real estate. . . ."

In 1835, brother Lyman had hired, without Benjamin's knowledge, their two young nephews—Rathbun Allen (son of their sister, Rhoda), and Lyman Rathbun Howlett (son of their sister, Mary).

Allen was in his early 20s, while Howlett was still in his middle or late teens. They served their uncle as messengers, couriers and assistants in other ways, but Howlett soon displayed a unique ability that was to play a vital role in Benjamin Rathbun's downfall—he was adept at forging the signatures of others.

Lyman Rathbun, in managing the complex financial affairs of his brother, was responsible for seeing that all notes signed by Benjamin were paid on or before their due dates. This was vital to retain their credit rating.

Benjamin's first hint of trouble came in May 1836, when Lyman informed him that he had been unable to get funds to New York City in time to pay off a large

number of notes due that month. The overdue notes were "protested" (formally declared in default) by the New York bankers.

"This created quite an uneasiness with my brother, staggered Mr. Janes (his New York financial agent), created some timidity in the mind of my newly appointed cashier of the Patterson (New Jersey) Bank, and for a time shook the confidence of my New York friends," Benjamin wrote.

"I discovered that my brother was laboring under intense anxiety and appeared to be alarmed. . . ."

At Lyman's request, Benjamin personally wrote to the major endorser of the overdue notes, assuring him of payment, while Lyman promised to visit each of the other endorsers and assure them that funds were on the way to New York to redeem the notes. If not redeemed, of course, all of the co-endorsers would have been liable.

Benjamin apparently assumed that the problem had been solved, but he soon learned that an even worse crisis was at hand.

On June 14, 1836, Benjamin was approached on the street by "a friend and highly respected gentleman" who expressed fear that "there was something going on wrong in my money matters that I knew nothing about."

Benjamin went immediately to his brother, and asked about the rumor he had just heard, but "getting no direct or satisfactory answer, I made up my mind to go directly to New York where the error was supposed to exist."

He left by stage on the morning of June 20 and reported that "from all I was able to learn without creating alarm . . . my paper (debts) was out for a much greater amount than I had any previous knowledge of."

Benjamin, realizing the extent of the problem, went straight to his New York legal advisor and asked him to arrange a loan of \$500,000—the amount Benjamin had decided would be needed to survive what he recognized as a major crisis.

He visited his bank in New Jersey, and returned to Buffalo by way of Montreal, stopping at his new Canadian bank. With the assets of these banks, and his Granville (Ohio) bank, plus the \$500,000 loan, he felt sure he could redeem all his notes and remain solvent.

Meanwhile, however, events were gathering steam beyond his control. Rumors that Rathbun might be in serious trouble had sent shock waves throughout the Buffalo financial community, where Rathbun's immense operations were literally the backbone of the city's economy.

Many merchants had loaned him money, accepting his promissory notes, co-endorsed by other businessmen, as security. Many others had willingly co-endorsed Rathbun's notes, feeling certain of his solvency.

Notices of default soon came pouring in from New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Cincinnati and other banking centers. From Philadelphia, Nicholas Biddle, president of the United States Bank, sent an overdue \$50,000 Rathbun note endorsed with the names of several Buffalo businessmen.

"Now what to do," Benjamin agonized. "What course to take—or what was my duty to do—was a very important matter. Here was a struggle indescribable. None ever equalled it in the whole period of my life."

Benjamin, still unaware, returned to Buffalo from his eastern trip on July 8, 1836 and two days later he knew the worst. A Batavia businessman called on him at home, and ". . . informed me that his name had been forged as an endorser of a \$5,000 note."

"I was perfectly confounded," Benjamin wrote, "it being the first knowledge that I had of the fact that forgeries had been committed on any of my paper."

Benjamin asked Lyman for \$5,000 in cash, with which he paid off the Batavia man on the spot.

"Now what to do," Benjamin agonized. "What course to take—or what was my duty to do—was a very important matter. Here was a struggle indescribable. None ever equalled it in the whole period of my life. I have had many, very hard and severe struggles in my business experience, but nothing ever presented itself in this shape."

He decided to "be silent on the subject" until he could conclude arrangements for the \$500,000 loan. He had decided, in modern terms, to "stonewall."

Significantly, he did not tell Lyman what he now knew.

On July 30, his New York agent arrived with word that the \$500,000 loan was ready as soon as "satisfactory security" could be arranged. This meant the endorsement of other businessmen, but word of the forgeries had already spread among the city's leading merchants and financiers.

A group of them sent word that they would co-sign for the loan only if Benjamin would assign all his property over to them in event of default.

Benjamin reluctantly agreed, still hoping to stave off disaster. He pinned his hopes on the Niagara Falls lot sales on August 2. The \$300,000 he expected to raise then, plus the \$500,000 loan, he thought, would see him through the crisis.

The sale opened as advertised on

August 2, and continued on August 3. He sent word to his Buffalo business associates that he wanted to meet with them that night, and warned "unless the loan was accomplished that night, I would stop business and . . . my doors would close that night for the last time . . . and bring to a final close this immense business on which the employment and prospects of so many depended."

But it was too late. Although the businessmen involved had agreed to keep the matter secret, one of them had talked, and the word spread throughout Buffalo that Rathbun's notes were worthless. Panic gripped the city.

"I was advised and urged by friends not to return to Buffalo, that my personal safety was in jeopardy and that my only safety was immediate flight," Benjamin wrote.

Still convinced, however, that he could negotiate the loan and make good his notes, Benjamin returned to Buffalo that evening, August 3.

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Benjamin

(continued from page 21)

"I was arrested immediately on my arrival at my office door and imprisoned without going to my dwelling place," he related.

In the local jail (which he had built for the city!) he found his brother Lyman already under arrest.

As they sat in the jail those hot days in August, Benjamin questioned his brother and later wrote out a lengthy manuscript, outlining what he learned and what he realized had happened. Throughout, he firmly denied knowing anything about the forgeries.

He pressed his brother for an explanation of "the real facts in regard to all this mysterious business of alleged forgeries."

"These enquiries for a time seemed to be nearly useless, as they were answered, if at all, with such caution and in such a guarded manner that it always gave me pain to broach the subject. . . . I waited, and again urged him. But it seemed that when his mind was called to the subject the horror pierced his soul."

Benjamin did learn that Lyman had protected both their nephews. He had advised Howlett to leave the city before he could be arrested, and had sent word to Allen, on an errand in Ohio, not to return.

"This business (the forgeries) commenced in a very small way, when I was absent . . . to save the protest of some important paper at a time when some timidity existed as to my ability to meet my engagements," Benjamin wrote.

After that, Lyman apparently resorted to forgery with ever-increasing frequency when other notes were overdue.

"Before he (Lyman) was aware of it," Benjamin wrote, "the amount thus used got beyond his control. The situation . . . compelled him to pay or renew (the debts) when due at whatever interest the holders were disposed to ask. Money getting scarcer, higher interest was paid until the amount had got to be alarming. Still, he saw no other way but to go onward, for he . . . saw distinctly that one step backward was ruin."

The amount had truly "got to be alarming." As Rathbun's rejected notes kept pouring into the city with demands for payment from the alleged endorsers,

the total was found to be over \$1,500,000!

Lyman, himself, did the original forgeries, Benjamin learned during those bitter August days in the Buffalo jail, but later prevailed upon Rathbun Allen to help. Later, the other nephew, Lyman Rathbun Howlett, was let into the plot, and proved to be the best forger of the three.

"The boy took hold of that part with the most astonishing skill," Benjamin quoted his brother. "He (Lyman) was perfectly astonished at the boy's skill and imitation," calling him "the most extraordinary young man that he ever knew. . . ."

"He would imitate any man's handwriting and in some instances where he was familiar with the hand he could imitate it so exactly that it would be extremely difficult if not impossible for the person whose writing it resembled to detect it himself."

Young Howlett, according to Lyman, was worth six men to him. Benjamin commented that he had only considered the nephew to be "a very remarkable, smart, active young man."

It is difficult, in retrospect, to determine whether Benjamin was really the unsuspecting victim of his brother's actions, or whether he was actually aware of the forgeries.

In his manuscript, Benjamin says he was so busy with his many complicated building and development plans that he gave full financial control to Lyman, even giving him signed notes, with amounts and dates left blank. These were the early notes to which Lyman forged the names of co-endorsers, and filled in ever-growing amounts of money. Eventually, he had young Howlett even forge Benjamin's name, fearing that Benjamin would become suspicious at signing too many notes.

Although Benjamin blamed Lyman and the nephews for the forgeries, he took pains in his written account to praise his brother as an "extraordinary man" and to absolve him from any evil intent.

"... what ever he had done, I have faith . . . that he never intended wrong to anyone, or that any person should suffer . . .," Benjamin stated.

Benjamin did emphasize that when Lyman "first commenced the control and

management of the financial department . . . I told him everything depended on the correct, prompt and thorough attention to all payments. . . ."

Early in September 1836, the businessmen to whom Benjamin had assigned his assets advertised his estate for sale at public auction to pay off Rathbun's debts. The newspaper advertisement listed the items to be sold, giving a fascinating overview of Benjamin's immense holdings.

Included were more than a million board feet of lumber, nearly two million brick, hundreds of cords of cut stone, a thousand bushels of lime and sand for mortar, large quantities of metals, leather and paint, and many workmen's tools.



Promissory notes for \$1, \$2 and \$3 signed by Benjamin Rathbun in 1835 and '36. Courtesy of Richmond J. Rathbone of Bloomfield Hills, Mich.

In his stables were more than 200 horses, "long considered superior to any in the country," about 35 stagecoaches, two "splendid omnibuses," and nearly 100 other carriages, wagons, sleighs and carts.

In his warehouses were nearly 15,000 bushels of corn, 1,000 barrels of salt, 1,000 bushels of coal, and huge amounts of groceries and dry goods.

The total value of these and other items of "personal property" was estimated at \$854,500. His real estate and other holdings, not listed in the advertisements, were valued at more than

\$2,200,000, making his net worth over \$3,000,000.

The task of settling the huge estate and paying off all of Rathbun's debts fell primarily upon Joseph Clary, his lawyer and cousin-by-marriage. One of Clary's first acts was to pay the back wages due to Rathbun's estimated 2,500 employees, who were threatening to riot unless they were paid. (It ultimately took Clary six years to settle the estate, and he died a few weeks later, reportedly due in part to the intense pressure of the assignment.)

Benjamin, anxious to make certain his estate was properly settled, petitioned to be released on bail to assist in the work, but was turned down.

On August 31, 1836, Benjamin wrote to his major creditors, appealing to them to help obtain his release to protect their interests.

Benjamin Rathbun's credit was so good that his personal notes were used frequently and confidently as currency in Buffalo and surrounding areas.

As a result, a committee of influential New York City bankers, who had sizeable claims on Rathbun's property, came to Buffalo and exerted enough pressure to have him released under \$60,000 bond on September 24.

Benjamin was allowed his freedom only a week, and was then returned to the jail under close confinement.

"I have never given the least occasion for suspicion that I had any desire to escape," he wrote. "Still, I am watched . . . more rigidly than any other prisoner in this jail."

His brother, Lyman, was also temporarily released on bond, as was their nephew, Rathbun Allen, who had been arrested, reportedly in New Orleans and brought back to Buffalo. Allen's bond was set at \$14,000.

After Benjamin's return to jail, his brother visited him occasionally, but Benjamin complained: ". . . he came to the prison but seldom. I suppose these visits were less frequent in conse-

quence of my constantly urging him to make the statement (absolving Benjamin) whenever I saw him."

In October 1836, Benjamin, Lyman and young Rathbun Allen were formally indicted on three counts of forgery by a grand jury in nearby Genesee County, where many of the forged notes had been passed. Benjamin was specifically charged with forging the names of 11 men on three notes of \$5,000 each, and with passing the notes while knowing they bore forged signatures.

Lyman and young Allen were apparently returned to jail about this time, and the three languished in jail to await trial, which was scheduled for the following March.

Meanwhile, an Erie County grand jury had indicted Benjamin on 13 counts of forgery in the city of Buffalo, and that trial was set for January 1837.

On December 3, Lyman Rathbun somehow managed to escape from jail. He obtained some money, possibly from his wife, and rode off with a former employee who had obtained two horses and was waiting for him in an alley. A \$2,000 reward was posted for Lyman's capture.

Benjamin's lawyers immediately asked for a postponement of the January trial on the grounds that Lyman was to have been their principal witness. The court granted a delay until July.

On March 27, 1837, Benjamin was put in irons and taken by stage to Batavia in Genesee County for trial on the first indictments. His attorneys produced a series of witnesses, including several of Rathbun's former employees and a number of his business associates, including all but one of the men whose names had been forged. They all agreed that Benjamin had taken no active role in financial matters and most likely had no knowledge of the forgeries.

On April 4, the jury announced that it was hopelessly divided — seven for conviction and five for acquittal. The judge dismissed the jurors, but delayed setting a new trial date pending outcome of the charges in Erie County. Benjamin was returned to the Buffalo jail to face trial in July, only to have it put off for a year due to a crowded court calendar. He spent the entire year of 1837 in jail after appeals for his release on bond were refused.

Meanwhile, in early 1837, Lyman Rathbun was located in Texas, then an independent republic, where he was out of American jurisdiction. It is possible that Lyman sent word to Benjamin where he was located, for Benjamin's lawyers, with court permission, commissioned an agent in Texas to obtain a statement from Lyman exonerating his brother in the forgeries.

The lawyers' agent worked fast enough to have a letter from Lyman by the time Benjamin's trial in Buffalo opened in July, 1838. Nine of the original 13 charges had been dropped, and the prosecution focused on efforts to convince the jury that Benjamin had forged three notes of \$2,000 each.

Lyman's letter stated explicitly that Benjamin "was entirely ignorant of there being anything wrong with the notes."

The Buffalo jury was evidently impressed by Lyman's letter, and on July 6 found Benjamin not guilty.

He must have been elated. He now faced only the second trial in Genesee County, and he must have been optimistic that he would again be acquitted.

Benjamin's hopes were dashed. His nephew, Rathbun Allen, depressed after nearly two years in jail, had agreed to turn state's evidence and testify against his uncle in return for his own freedom.

To be continued

The three daughters of Mrs. Helen M. Rathbun of Cranston, R.I., can claim more Rathbun blood than any of us. She is the daughter of 99-year-old Ernest Rathbun and his wife Eola. Due to an ancestral cousin marriage, Helen is a "double" Rathbun by birth. She also married a Rathbun. Her husband, who died in 1975, was Edward B.¹⁰ Rathbun (George⁹ Raymond⁸ Amy⁷ Olney⁶ Joshua⁵ Anthony⁴ Samuel³ Thomas² John¹). Her daughters—Ella May Lamoureux, Mary Ethel Champlin and Dorothy Eola Hutchins—thus descend from two of the five sons of the immigrant John Rathbun of Block Island.

Springfield Rathbuns Still Live In Town Founded by Ancestors

Among the many Rathbuns who joined the huge wave of western migration after the Revolutionary War was Benjamin Rathbun, whose descendants still live, two centuries later, in the same area where he settled—near Springfield in Otsego County, N.Y.

Benjamin was born January 12, 1747, in Colchester, Conn., the son of Benjamin³ Rathbun (Joseph² John¹) and Mary Cahoon. He was married there in October 1771, to Huldah Williams, a descendant of John Howland of *Mayflower* fame and of Bishop Richard Howland who preached the funeral sermon of Mary Queen of Scots in 1587.

Benjamin and Huldah gave her maiden name to their first son, born in 1772. They named him Williams Rathbun, starting a tradition which has been continued to this day. A second son, Daniel, was born in 1774 on the eve of the Revolutionary War.

Benjamin, then in his mid-twenties, served as a private in the Colonial Army during the war. Family tradition relates that he became seriously ill while serving early in the war somewhere in New York State and sent word home. His father went to New York, found his ailing son and brought him home, but then contracted his son's disease himself and died in July 1777. The illness was described only as a "fever."

Benjamin Jr. presented an inventory of his father's estate to the local court in September 1777.

The following August, Connecticut authorities called for volunteers to join a militia regiment which was to be sent to Rhode Island to join Continental forces planning an attack on Newport, then held by more than 4,000 British and Hessian troops. Benjamin enlisted August 3 in a company commanded by Captain Seth W. Holmes, and marched to join Major General John Sullivan's Continental army outside Newport.

On August 11, the Americans began their siege of Newport, but Naval help promised by their French allies failed to materialize, and after several minor skir-

mishes along Narraganset Bay, the Americans failed to take the city. When British reinforcements entered Newport by sea on September 1, the campaign was called off, and the Connecticut troops were sent home. Benjamin Rathbun was discharged on September 14. He may have had other service, but there are no surviving records.

After the war, as so often happens, the economy of the newly independent United States was wracked by inflation. By the end of 1780, the value of the Continental Dollar had dropped to one cent. In anger and frustration, many war

They named their first son Williams Rathbun, starting a tradition which has continued to this day.

veterans decided to "pull up stakes" and seek cheap land and a new life in the wilderness west of the Hudson River in New York State.

About 1788, Benjamin Rathbun struck out for the "west," probably leaving his wife and four young sons in Colchester until he could prepare a new home for them. He purchased a large tract of land—reportedly 1,300 acres—in the fertile Susquehanna River Valley about 40 miles west of Albany, just south of the Mohawk River and near Otsego Lake, the source of the Susquehanna.

Tradition says that when he arrived to look over his newly acquired land, he found a sparkling spring beside which he ate his lunch. That same spring was to serve as the family's water supply for nearly 200 years.

Although tradition says he bought 1,300 acres, the only surviving land records show him buying 400 acres in 1788 for 200 pounds. He obviously owned other land in the area, however, for nine years later he sold 266 acres of another

tract for 798 pounds. Land then, as in our day, was a profitable investment.

Benjamin probably built a log cabin on his land before returning to Colchester for his family. They no doubt returned in a covered wagon, drawn by oxen, carrying the basic items they would need to set up housekeeping on the frontier.

They probably traveled northwesterly through Connecticut, passing through Hartford, the state capital, and then on to the New York State border and through Albany west to their new home.

Benjamin had chosen well. It was a beautiful, lush area, with tree-covered hills, sparkling lakes and plentiful springs and streams. The local waterways abounded with fish, the forests were well stocked with game, and flocks of ducks, loons and gulls were common.

The virgin soil was a farmer's delight—deep, rich, black loam which did not need tilling. The early settlers simply raked it clear, scattered their seed and harrowed it in by dragging branches over the ground.

But it was not an idyllic life. There were Indians in the nearby forests, and bears, wolves and mountain lions still roamed the area. The winters were harsh and cold. One writer has said: "Stout hearts and unwavering courage were necessary for those who forged their way into the new lands."

The Rathbuns and other early settlers lived in log cabins, usually of two rooms. Their major needs, aside from food, were heat and light—both provided by huge fireplaces and an ample supply of logs from the surrounding forests.

Bread was baked in the fireplace, from homeground grain, along with slabs of meat under which were placed pans to catch the drippings.

Most of the furniture was hand-made except for treasured heirlooms which had been brought from Connecticut. Fireplace benches were made by sawing logs in half lengthwise, fitting the round side with short legs, and turning the flat side up for seating.

The men spent their days clearing

and fencing the lands, planting and reaping the crops, putting up barns and storage sheds, and cutting wood to heat their homes in the long, cold winter.

The women made soap, candles and maple sugar; knitted clothing from their own wool; churned butter; made cheese, and prepared meals for their hungry families.

The early pioneers were not too busy, however, to think about education and religion.

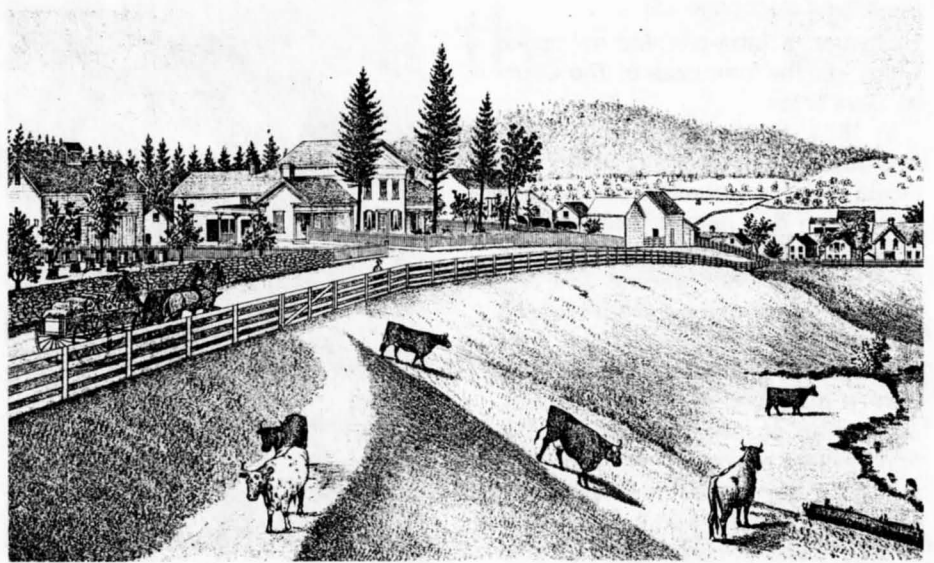
Benjamin Rathbun, by 1796 the father of nine children, apparently built a school on his land. In 1797, when Springfield Township was officially incorporated and wards established, the line for Ward 16 ran "to Benjamin Rathbun's schoolhouse." He was one of the leaders in a drive to establish the Cherry Valley Academy, which was incorporated in 1796 with Benjamin as one of the trustees.

A Baptist church was built in what became known as Middle Village, near the Rathbun home. The church also served as the town meeting house. At the first town meeting in 1797, Benjamin was elected as one of three fence viewers and as pathmaster for his ward. He was responsible for making sure his ward residents contributed a total of 120 days of work each year to keep the roads passable—which meant clearing them of brush and fallen trees, and of snow in the winter. In his fence-viewing role, he helped mediate disputes over property boundaries.

In 1800, Benjamin was appointed to a committee by the town council to fence in the local burying ground "with cedar posts and boards nailed thereon—with a decent gate." The cost came to \$86.55, which was paid to Rathbun's committee from the township poor fund. They must have done a good job; nearly 50 years later, the town appropriated \$50 to again "repair the old burying ground and see that the walls are laid up (in a) substantial manner."

Benjamin and Huldah lived for more than 30 years in Springfield, and watched the area grow into a flourishing farm community. He died in 1819, aged 72. Huldah died five years later, also aged 72.

Four of their six sons—Williams, Daniel, Benjamin Jr. and Artemas—remained in the Springfield area. Joel,



The farm and home (left) of Levant W. Rathbun, as pictured in an 1878 history of Otsego County. The house is still standing, somewhat altered, and is still occupied by a descendant. At the extreme right is another Rathbun home, later occupied by Levant's son, George. He was the father of Oliver N. Rathbun, one of our members, who was born there 87 years ago. At its left is the old family gristmill, and barely visible beyond it is the sawmill. All of the land in the picture was part of Benjamin Rathbun's 1,300-acre purchase in 1788. His home was located to the right of the picture at the foot of a tree-covered hill. Just over the hill is the head of Otsego Lake, source of the Susquehanna River.

who became a doctor and was a surgeon in the War of 1812, and Selden moved further west as young men to Oneida County, N.Y. Benjamin Jr. became a prosperous farmer and a pillar of the Springfield Presbyterian Church, serving as ruling elder from 1835 until his death 19 years later in 1854. He bequeathed \$12,000 to various religious organizations and donated the parsonage and grounds to the Springfield Presbyterians.

Huldah, eldest of Benjamin and Huldah's three daughters, married Robert Rogers. They both died when their home burned in 1838. Electa married Elezer Perry and moved to Oswego County, N.Y. Clarissa, the youngest daughter, died unmarried in 1860 at Springfield.

Williams Rathbun, who as eldest son inherited the family farm, was married about 1797 to Jemima Green, a cousin of the famed Rhode Island General Nathanael Green.

They replaced the original log home, expanded over the years, with a large frame dwelling which they named the Green House in honor of Jemima's fam-

ily. It had a center hall so large that teams of horses or oxen could be driven into it, hauling logs for the many fireplaces needed to heat the house in winter.

Jemima (Green) Rathbun died in 1843, and Williams was married again the following year to Mary Green, undoubtedly a relative of his first wife. He died five years later, and the family farm and home again descended to the eldest son, Williams Rathbun Jr., born in 1800. There were eight other children, including two sons who both died childless—Menzo Rathbun, who died aged 27 "from the bursting of a gun," and Stephen Green Rathbun, who became a lawyer and died unmarried at age 44.

Williams Rathbun Jr. was educated at Albany and became a prominent and influential farmer and civic leader. He held many local offices, including that of township supervisor, school inspector, and later superintendent of schools. He was also president for several years of the Otsego County Agricultural Society, and wrote numerous articles for *The*

(continued on page 26)

(continued from page 25)

Cultivator, a farm-oriented magazine which was the forerunner of *The Country Gentleman*.

In 1821, he married Mary Chargo, who descendants say was part Mohawk Indian. They temporarily broke the family tradition and named their first son Jacob Chargo Rathbun in honor of Mary's father. Their second and only other son was named Levant Williams Rathbun.

A history of Otsego County, published in 1878, described Williams Rathbun Jr. as "a man of great energy and uprightness of character. He was possessed of high social qualities, genial and courteous, and won the esteem of all who came in contact with him. In business he was highly successful. . ."

The reference to a business apparently was to a sawmill which he built on Shadow Brook near his home.

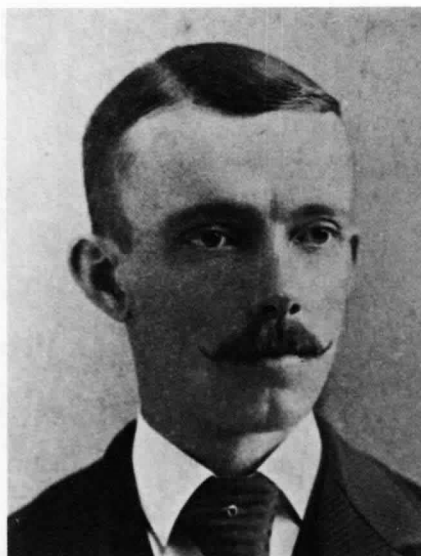
When Williams Jr. died in 1852, six years after his wife, he willed the family farm to his eldest son, Jacob, and stipulated that it should go to Jacob's eldest son upon Jacob's death.

Jacob had already moved into the old "Green House" and taken over operation of the farm several years earlier. He was living there, with his unmarried sister, Augusta, as his housekeeper, when the house was destroyed by fire in the late 1840s. The two had gone to the county fair at Cooperstown, leaving a hired girl in charge. They returned to find it burned to the ground. Jacob built a new home, still standing today, which was to be the family homestead for the next three generations.

Jacob and his brother, Levant, took over the sawmill established by their father, and Jacob also opened a cider mill. Levant became the operator of a grist mill, where neighbors brought their oats, wheat and corn to be ground into flour, meal and cattle feed.

In 1853, Jacob married his second cousin, Frances M.⁷ Rathbun (Alden⁶ Joel⁵ Benjamin⁴⁻³ Joseph² John¹), a great-granddaughter of the old pioneer Benjamin Rathbun. Jacob and Frances returned to the old family tradition, naming their first son Williams and giving him the middle name of Alden in honor of Frances' father.

Frances died in 1869, leaving two young sons—Williams, aged four, and



Williams Alden Rathbun
1865-1926

Joel Francis only a few weeks old. In 1872, Jacob married Sarah Teffield, but died in 1874, aged 51, leaving his second wife to raise the boys.

Williams Alden Rathbun (1865-1926) married Minnie Schubert in 1894 and had four children. Their oldest son, Williams Alden Rathbun II (1895-1957), married Alice Mabel Myers, who is still living in Springfield. Their only son, Williams Alden Rathbun III (one of our members) married Virginia Ann Marr, and their first son, Williams Alden Rathbun IV, now 21, also lives in Springfield near the land purchased by his great-great-great-great-grandfather nearly 200 years ago.

Jacob's brother, Levant (1824-1913), used the Rathbone spelling of the name, although his descendants returned to the Rathbun spelling. He was a prominent civic leader, serving as town assessor for 15 years, superintendent of the poor for three years, and township supervisor for two terms in 1870-1872.

Levant Williams Rathbone married Lavina Van Dusen (1825-1895) by whom he had eight children, five of whom lived to maturity—Herbert Williams, Duncan Levant, Henry Worthington, George Brinton and Ella Louise.

George B. Rathbun followed in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, and became an active leader in Springfield. He served as township supervisor in 1900.



Levant Williams Rathbone
1824-1913

The large frame home Levant built probably in the 1850s was occupied for some years by his son, Henry, but has been the home for the past 60 years of George's son, Dean O. Rathbun, now 83.

Dean's brother, Oliver N. Rathbun, 87, is one of our charter subscribers and an active genealogist. He has worked for many years on the history of the family of Wyckoff/Wikoff, which was the maiden name of both his mother and wife. He has compiled the names of more than 30,000 Wyckoff descendants on index cards and assisted in the recent publication of the third edition of *The Wyckoff Family in America*.

Oliver and Dean Rathbun are the oldest of the many descendants of the pioneers, Benjamin and Huldah Rathbun, still living in the Springfield area.

The 1878 Otsego County History commented on the Rathbun family members in the town's history:

"The Rathbun family have filled a very important part in the history of the town of Springfield, and have marked the family name indelibly upon it."

We offer thanks to subscribers Oliver N. Rathbun, Mrs. Williams Alden Rathbun II and Mrs. Beatrice St. Onge, all descendants of Benjamin and Huldah Rathbun, for their help in gathering information and pictures for our story

Genealogy: The Fourth Generation in America

See Correction 02-4 p 61

11. JOSHUA⁴ RATHBUN (Joshua³ John²⁻¹), born May 17, 1722 or 1723, at Block Island; married May 4, 1742, at Charlestown, R.I., **Dorcas Wells, born Sept. 17, 1721, daughter of James Wells.** They lived for a time in various Rhode Island towns (Charlestown, Westerly, Newport and South Kingston) but finally moved to Stonington, Conn., the home of his father, where for many years Joshua operated the family mill at Stonington Point. He was known as "Joshua of the Windmill." He and Dorcas became Quakers, and raised their children in that faith. At one time he owned a slave and had problems with the Quaker church as a result. Quaker records relate that he died July 14, 1801, "of a very distressing disorder in his stomach which he endured with much fortitude and resignation and which terminated his life the evening of the same day." Dorcas died April 5, 1809.

CHILDREN

JOSHUA, born Aug. 11, 1743; married Sarah Borden.

MARTHA, born June 27, 1746; married Nathan Sheffield May 1, 1763.

DORCAS WELLS, born Feb. 28, 1749; married Maxon Lewis.

ACORS, born May 4, 1751; married Lydia Robinson.

SARAH, born Sept. 9, 1753; married George Thurston.

MARY, born March 6, 1756; died in 1773.

ANNA, born July 30, 1760; married Joseph Lawton.

12. VALENTINE WIGHTMAN⁴ RATHBUN (Joshua³ John²⁻¹), born Dec. 23, 1724, at Stonington; married there Aug. 1, 1744, Tabitha Brown, born Nov. 23, 1727, daughter

of Humphrey and Tabitha (Holdridge) Brown. The story of his life was presented in detail in our last two issues. Valentine W. Rathbun died in February 1814, at Marcellus, Onondaga County, N.Y. He willed his farm, his Susquehanna lands and all his personal property to his son, Saxton, who was to support him and Tabitha until their deaths. Token bequests of \$1 each were made to his other surviving children, and the heirs of those who had died. Tabitha died sometime after he made his will in 1808.

CHILDREN

MARY, born March 28, 1745; either she or Content may have married a Niles. Valentine's will mentions "the heirs of my deceased daughter Niles."

JOSHUA, born June 25, 1746; married (1) Elizabeth Hall; (2) Ann Sears.

SUSANNAH, born May 5, 1748; married William Fellows Nov. 8, 1767.

CONTENT, born July 24, 1750; possibly married a Niles.

EUNICE, born May 23, 1752; married Ezekiel Goodrich Dec. 23, 1770.

DANIEL, born April 11, 1754; married (1) LUCY; (2) Sabra Holman.

VALENTINE, born April 26, 1756; married Sylvia Lusk.

CYNTHIA, born March 20, 1758; married Rufus Cogswell.

REUBEN, born May 11, 1760; married Elizabeth Deming.

SAXTON, born July 11, 1762; married Esther Cook.

JAMES, born in 1764; married (1) Ruth Langworthy; (2) Margaret Ashley.

BENJAMIN, born June 5, 1766; married Anna Robinson.

13. JOHN⁴ RATHBONE (Joshua³ John²⁻¹), born June 26, 1729, at Stonington, Conn., and married there Jan. 8, 1751, Content Brown, born Aug. 31, 1733, daughter of Humphrey and Tabitha (Holdridge) Brown. He was a Baptist minister for 75 years. His life and career were outlined in our first issue, January 1981. He was one of the first to adopt the Rathbone spelling. Rev. John Rathbone died Aug. 2, 1826, at Willington, Conn., aged 97 years. Content died Sept. 30, 1804, at Ashford, Conn.

CHILDREN

JOHN, born Oct. 20, 1751; married (1) Eunice Wells; (2) Mary Sheffield.

MARTHA, born Aug. 7, 1753; married Wheeler Douglas.

DANIEL, born July 14, 1755; died young.

PRUDENCE, born Jan. 31, 1757; married Samuel Satterlee.

MARIAN, born Feb. 27, 1759; married Jonathan Weston.

VALENTINE W., born May 13, 1761; married Hepsibah Carpenter.

DAVID, born May 29, 1763; married Nancy Wales.

JOSEPH AVERY, born June 16, 1765; married (1) Abigail Topliff; (2) Priscilla Stewart.

AARON, born July 25, 1770; married (1) Sally Copp; (2) Eliza Chesebrough.

MOSES (twin), born July 25, 1770; married (1) Patience James; (2) Charlotte Moore; (3) Roxanna Bates.

EDWARD, born Nov. 1, 1773; died young.

SAMUEL, born July 1, 1776; married Mary Turner.

CONTENT, born March 26, 1778; died July 30, 1779, at Ashford, Conn.

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(continued from page 27)

14. DANIEL⁴ RATHBUN (Joshua³ John²⁻¹), born Feb. 27, 1731, (not Feb. 16, 1731, as earlier reported) at Stonington, Conn., and married May 4, 1758, at Middletown, Conn., Sarah Higbee, born March 24, 1739, daughter of John and Sarah (Canda) Higbee. Daniel moved in the early 1760s to Berkshire County, Mass., where he operated one of the first fulling mills in Great Barrington. He was moderator of the town meeting there in March 1766. He later lived in nearby Richmond. He was a deacon in the Baptist Church and was occasionally called upon to preach. About 1804, he and his wife moved to Milton, in Saratoga County, N.Y., to live with their son, Valentine. Deacon Daniel Rathbun died at Milton Jan. 17, 1823, aged nearly 92, and his wife died there Aug. 5, 1835, aged 97. We are planning a special story on his long and interesting life.

CHILDREN

DANIEL, born Feb. 27, 1759; married Ann Redington.

SARAH, born Aug. 29, 1760; married (1) Joseph Maine; (2) John Gordon; (3) W. Councilman.

LOIS, born Aug. 6, 1762; died unmarried May 4, 1787.

PHILANDER, born Jan. 24, 1764; married Nancy Clark.

HULDAH, born March 6, 1766; married Samuel Whittlesey Oct. 17, 1787.

VALENTINE W., born March 17, 1768; married Love Redington.

RUBY, born Dec. 29, 1769; married Jonas Allen Feb. 22, 1800.

JOHN ZACHEUS, born Dec. 21, 1771; married Celia Tobey.

LYDIA, born Feb. 28, 1774; married Silas Wood.

WILLIAM, born March 7, 1776; married Irene Niles.

SOLOMON, born May 21, 1778; married Lucy A. Beebe.

ABIGAIL, born Nov. 14, 1779; married Hopedill Beecher June 5, 1800.

MERCY LOIS, born Dec. 19, 1786; died Aug. 30, 1787.

15. JACOB⁴ RATHBUN (Joshua³ John²⁻¹), born Nov. 4, 1732, at Stonington, Conn. He married June 24, 1753, at Preston, Conn., Lydia Burton, born March 18, 1734, daughter of Jacob and Mary (Herrick) Starkweather Burton. Jacob Rathbun enlisted April 10, 1755, as a drummer in Major Robert Dennison's 3rd Connecticut Company during the French and Indian War, and was killed in action Sept. 8, 1755, barely three months after the birth of his second child. Cooley erroneously reported that he was killed in 1778 during the Revolutionary War. Nothing more is known of his widow, Lydia (Burton) Rathbun.

CHILDREN

JACOB, born Oct. 21, 1753; served under Colonel Benedict Arnold in his famous 1775 expedition to Canada during the Revolution, and presumably died shortly thereafter. The July 3, 1778, death date attributed to Jacob Sr. by Cooley may actually be the death date of Jacob Jr.

LYDIA, born May 30, 1755; no further information.

16. JOB⁴ RATHBUN (Joshua³ John²⁻¹), born (?) Jan. 2, 1736, in Stonington, Conn. (Cooley says Job was a twin with Martha, born Jan. 2, 1736, but in an 1804 pamphlet, Job himself says he was born in 1734. Stonington records show the name of Martha's twin as Joshua, although there already was a brother Joshua. It is a puzzle that may never be solved.) Job married Dec. 7, 1758, Abigail Russell, born about 1740, daughter of Jonathan and Mehitable (Wolcott) Russell. Job served in the French and Indian War under Lt. Col. David Whitney, and later moved to Canaan, Conn. He underwent a religious "experience" in 1769, and became a Baptist minister. Job left Canaan sometime after 1810 for Poultney, Vt., where he died July 11, 1821.

Abigail (Russell) Rathbun is possibly the Mrs. Rathbun whose death May 22, 1807, aged 67, is reported in the records of the South Canaan Congregational Church.

CHILDREN

MARTHA, born March 4, 1760; married Solomon Cleveland Dec. 8, 1779.

JOSIAH, born Feb. 5, 1762; married Catherine Fitch.

SOLOMON, born March 3, 1764; married Eunice Fuller.

ABIGAIL, born March 20, 1766; no further information, dead by 1821.

SARAH, born about 1768; married _____ Newell.

JOB, born April 11, 1770; no further information, dead by 1821.

RUSSELL, born March 18, 1772; married (1) Marilla _____; (2) Lucy _____.

JOHN, born April 9, 1774; married Dorcas Gillette.

LUCY, born about 1780; married Martin Gillette.

GEORGE WHITEFIELD, born Oct. 28, 1782; married Nancy Bentley.

MEHITABLE, born July 25, 1784; married _____ Powers.

17. AMOS⁴ RATHBUN (Joshua³ John²⁻¹), born Jan. 25, 1738, at Stonington, Conn., and married about 1761 Martha Robinson, born Sept. 28, 1745, daughter of Edward and Martha Robinson. Amos served in the French and Indian War under Captains John Baldwin and Daniel Cone, in the Connecticut regiments of Colonels Christopher Avery and Jonathan Trumbull. He moved from Stonington to Richmond, Mass., about 1765, and at the outbreak of the Revolutionary War was named captain of the First Richmond Company in Colonel Benjamin Simonds' Second Berkshire Regiment. He joined the Shaker Society in 1780, and remained a Shaker for the rest of his life. His wife refused to join the Society, and went to live with their oldest son, Amos Rathbun Jr. She died on May 17, 1788, of consumption. Amos Sr. became a teaching elder of the Shakers and died July 24, 1817, in the Shaker village at Hancock, Mass.

CHILDREN

AMOS, born Jan. 31, 1762; married Mary Williams.

MARTHA, born about 1764; married (1) John Baker; (2) Malachi Sanford in 1788.

HEPSEBY, born about 1766; married Stephen Grummond.

CONTENT, born about 1768; married Judah R. Spencer in October 1788.

MARY, born about 1770; married Ezra Sanford.

JOSHUA, born April 26, 1773; married Diadama Crippen.

ANNA, born about 1775; married Augustus Chidsey Feb. 12, 1794.

EDWARD, born June 10, 1776; married Anna Fuller.

LUCY, born about 1779; married Dyer Carver.

Subscriber Jean Bollig has called our attention to discrepancies in the birthdates of several early-generation Rathbuns. The dates differ in Cooley's *Rathbone Genealogy* and Arnold's *Vital Records of Rhode Island*. Assuming that Arnold's records are more accurate, the following changes should be made in our earlier genealogical sections:

Vol. 1, No. 2, page 29—Joshua³ Rathbun (John²⁻¹), born Feb. 9, 1696.

Vol. 1, No. 3, page 44—John³ Rathbun (John²⁻¹), born Dec. 23, 1693.

Vol. 1, No. 3, page 45—Benjamin³ Rathbun (John²⁻¹), born Feb. 17, 1701; Thomas³ Rathbun (John²⁻¹), born March 2, 1709.

Vol. 1, No. 4, page 61—John³ Rathbun (William² John¹), born Jan. 9, 1684.

Vol. 1, No. 4, page 62—Joseph³ Rathbun (Joseph² John¹) born Oct. 4, 1707; Benjamin³ Rathbun (Joseph² John¹), born Feb. 26, 1710.

Vol. 2, No. 1, page 13—John⁴ Rathbun (Jonathan³ John²⁻¹) born Jan. 1, 1715.

18. WAIT⁴ RATHBONE (Joshua³ John²⁻¹), born Aug. 18, 1744, in Stonington, Conn., and married there May 22, 1768, Susannah Dodge, born Nov. 12, 1747, daughter of Joseph and Mary Dodge. She died Nov. 22, 1777, and he married again on Feb. 18, 1778, Mary (Brown) Palmer, born Jan. 11, 1749, daughter of Samuel and Phoebe (Wilbur) Brown, and widow of William Palmer. Wait, who changed the spelling of his name from Rathbun to Rathbone late in life, was a ship owner in Stonington during the Revolutionary War period. About 1789, he moved to Troy, N.Y., where he owned a boarding house and tavern. He died Nov. 14, 1832, at the home of his son, William, in Bergen County, N.J. Mary died there Oct. 10, 1834. We are planning a separate story on Wait Rathbone's life.

CHILDREN

By Susannah Dodge

MARY C., born April 4, 1770; married William Willard.

WAIT, born July 10, 1773; married (1) Betsey Barr; (2) Elizabeth Frances. CARP

SUSAN (twin), born July 10, 1773; died young.

RHODA, born March 14, 1776; married Lewis McDonald.

By Mary (Brown) Palmer

SUSANNAH, born March 6, 1779; married (1) Moses S. Curtis; (2) Cornelius Heermans.

DELIA JULIA, born Sept. 6, 1781; died May 8, 1791, at Troy, N.Y.

WILLIAM PALMER, born Sept. 21, 1782; married Martha Valteau.

SAMUEL BROWN, born Nov. 19, 1786; attended West Point Academy, graduated in 1803 and was commissioned a lieutenant in the U.S. Army. He died Dec. 8, 1812, from wounds suffered in the American attack on Queenstown Heights in the War of 1812.

SOPHIA (twin), born Nov. 19, 1786; married Orange Ferris.

ELIZABETH MARIA, born Feb. 28, 1789; died in 1790 at Troy.

19. JOSHUA⁴ RATHBUN (Benjamin³ John²⁻¹), born about 1733 at Exeter, R.I. and married there Jan. 3, 1755, Amy Aylesworth, born about 1735, daughter of Robert and Ann (Davis) Aylesworth. He was admitted a freeman of East Greenwich, R.I., on April 30, 1754, and in 1768 received from his father, "for love" 50 acres in Exeter. By 1777, he had moved to Cambridge, Washington County, N.Y., where he was elected that year as overseer of roads. He appears there in the federal censuses of 1790 and 1800 and presumably died between 1800 and 1810.

The death date of Amy (Aylesworth) Rathbun is also unknown. Census records indicate they had a number of children, but only the births of two daughters are recorded in Rhode Island.

CHILDREN

THANKFUL, born Nov. 29, 1755; no further information.

MERCY, born Feb. 25, 1758; no further information.

?JEDEDIAH, a possible son; in Washington County, N.Y., in the 1810 census.

?FREDERICK, a possible son; died in Seneca County, N.Y., in 1810.

20. BENJAMIN⁴ RATHBUN (Benjamin³ John²⁻¹), born about 1735 at Exeter, R.I. In 1761, he and his father were among the Exeter residents assigned to care for Ten Rod Road from Brushy Creek to the Connecticut-Rhode Island line. On Oct. 13, 1770, he received from his father "for love" 25 acres in Exeter. The 1774 Rhode Island census shows him in Exeter with a family of eight, including a male under 16, presumably a son. In 1776, a resident of Hopkinton, R.I., he signed a pledge of loyalty to the revolutionary government.

In 1790, he was in Stillwater, Albany County, N.Y., and in 1800 at Chester, Washington County, N.Y. Nothing is known about his wife or children.

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21. NATHANIEL⁴ RATHBUN (Nathaniel³ John²⁻¹), born about 1726 at Exeter, R.I. He was married about 1747 to Mary _____, born in July 1730, parentage unknown. They moved to adjacent West Greenwich, by 1756, when he signed a petition asking for a division of the military district so that militia members would not have so far to travel. They were still there when the 1774 and 1782 censuses were taken, but apparently moved soon thereafter to Stockbridge, in Berkshire County, Mass., where they appear in the 1790 census. Nathaniel died June 8, 1810, at Stockbridge, aged 84. His wife died March 2, 1825, aged 95.

CHILDREN

SAMUEL, born in 1748; married Hannah _____.

?JOSHUA, born about 1750; married Alice _____.

SEVERAL OTHERS, names unknown.

HANNA MAR JOSEPH HOWE
MOLLY MAR NATHAN⁽⁵⁾ RICE

22. THOMAS⁴ RATHBUN (Thomas³ John²⁻¹), born Dec. 5, 1736, at Exeter, married in neighboring Charlestown on June 20, 1757, Ruth Clark, born May 20, 1733, daughter of Thomas and Bridget (Barber) Clark. He was an ensign in the West Greenwich militia in 1756, and captain in 1769, and appears in the West Greenwich censuses for 1774 and 1782. He apparently died in 1800, for on December 5 that year, his widow Ruth and Jeffrey Hazard were named administrators "for the estate of Capt. Thomas Rathbun." Ruth later moved to Chenango County, N.Y., where several of their children lived, and died there on Oct. 6, 1819.

CHILDREN

ELIZABETH, born about 1759; married Paris⁵ Rathbun (Gideon⁴ John³⁻²⁻¹).

RUTH, born January 1761; married Simeon Gates Nov. 24, 1779.

HANNAH, born about 1763; married Joseph Bly Nov. 4, 1782.

AMOS, born Aug. 1, 1767; married (1) Mercy Matteson; (2) Anna Colt.

OLIVE, born about 1769; married Job Bly April 8, 1790.

CHARITY, born about 1771; married Remington Kenyon.

JUDITH, born Oct. 25, 1775; married Jonathan⁵ Rathbun (John⁴⁻³⁻²⁻¹).

?ANOTHER DAUGHTER, name unknown, who married William Bly.

23. SIMEON⁴ RATHBUN (Thomas³ John²⁻¹), born May 10, 1745, at Exeter, R.I., and married Oct. 26, 1769, at Richmond, R.I., Anne Russell, born Dec. 10, 1750, possible daughter of Joseph and Sarah Russell. Simeon received 31 acres in 1768 from his father "for love," and remained in Exeter until 1803, when he moved to Norwich, Chenango County, N.Y. After his death there in the winter of 1805-6, his widow returned to Rhode Island and died in Exeter on Jan. 5, 1832.

CHILDREN

THOMAS, born Oct. 19, 1771; married Eunice Greene.

ANNA, born Sept. 26, 1774; married Henry Barber Nov. 1, 1792.

CHARITY (twin), born Sept. 26, 1774; married James Gorton.

MARY, born Jan. 7, 1778; married George Knapp Dec. 25, 1799.

OLIVE, born Feb. 10, 1780; married (1) James Lewis Oct. 18, 1798; (2) Newman⁵ Rathbun (Gideon⁴ John³⁻²⁻¹).

RUSSELL, born Jan. 20, 1782; married Lucy Ann Nestley.

SIMEON, born Sept. 14, 1784; married Ruby Hopkins.

NATHAN, born May 17, 1788; married Urania Hopkins.

EUNICE, born Feb. 5, 1790; married Amos Bates April 6, 1809.

24. NATHAN⁴ RATHBUN (Thomas³ John²⁻¹), born May 25, 1753, at Exeter. He married March 26, 1775, at Foster, R.I., Robie Hopkins, born July 12, 1756, daughter of Nicholas Hopkins. She died in the late 1790s, and Nathan married on Sept. 15, 1805, Sarah (Blivin) Dalton, born March 18, 1783, daughter of Samuel and Polly (Warden) Blivin and widow of _____ Dalton. Nathan served in the Revolutionary Army for various periods throughout the war, and was pensioned in 1831. Nathan lived most of his life in Exeter, where he was a justice of the peace for many years. In middle life, he studied medicine, and became a practicing physician. He moved in the 1820s to Hopkinton, R.I., where he died April 27, 1841. Sarah died July 28, 1878, aged 95.

CHILDREN

By Robie Hopkins

ROBIE HOPKINS, born July 12, 1776; married Jonathan Wilcox Jan. 1, 1792.

By Sarah (Blivin) Dalton

NATHAN DODGE, born Feb. 12, 1807; married Bridget Hakes.

CHARITY D., born May 28, 1809; married Frederick Olin July 14, 1828.

MARY A., born Sept. 29, 1811; married Clark Champlin May 6, 1832.

JOHN HOPKINS, born Oct. 4, 1814; married (1) Sarah Burnham; (2) Fanny Sears.

BERIAH SAFFORD, born Nov. 8, 1819; married (1) Phoebe Colburn; (2) Martha Colburn; (3) Eliza Thompson.

ELIAS RANSOM, born July 8, 1823; married Phoebe Healy.

With this issue, we continue the fourth generation of our family in America, listing only the male lines in the interest of space. Each male member is numbered within his generation, beginning with the eldest son of the eldest son.

Queries

WANTED — Information on Anna Allen who married Robert⁵ Rathbun (Jeremiah⁴ Joseph³⁻² John¹). Where and when was she born; who were her parents? When and where did she die? Their son, Robert, married Hannah Warner. Where? When? When did Hannah die?

WANTED — Information on Almeron/Alminer Rathbun, born about 1811 in New York; living at Milford, Decatur County, Indiana, by 1835, when he married Jane Martin. They had at least three daughters — Nancy, Angeline and Amanda. Who were his parents; when and where did he die?

WANTED — Information on Horace Rathbun, born about 1829 in New York, and was living in Sanilac Co., Michigan, by 1867. He married (1) Elizabeth _____ and possibly (2) Sarah _____. He had children named John, Martha, Mary, Joseph, Myron, Annie and possibly Earl and Glenn.

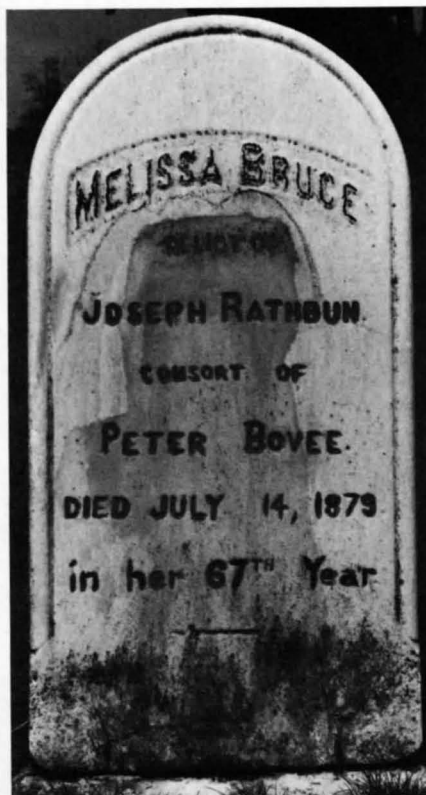
Answers

• Vol. 1, No. 1—Samuel Rathburn, born Aug. 23, 1826 (probably 1832), who married Eliza Ann Curtis, is the son of Joseph⁶ Rathbun (Samuel⁵ Anthony⁴ Samuel³ Thomas² John¹). See picture on this page.

• Vol. 1, No. 2—Lucy E. Rathbone, who married Nathan Sage about 1820 in Norwich or Gilbertsville, N.Y., is probably the daughter of Russell⁵ Rathbun (Job⁴ Joshua³ John²⁻¹).

• Vol. 1, No. 3—Hannah Rathbun, born in the 1790s, who married David Austin, is probably Hannah Perry Rathbun, born Aug. 11, 1791, the daughter of James⁵ Rathbun (Thomas⁴ Ebenezer³ William² John¹).

• Vol. 2, No. 1—Artemus Martin⁶ Rathbun (Hubbard⁵ Job⁴ Benjamin³ Joseph² John¹) died "near Pontiac, Michigan", date unknown, according to his widow, Caroline, when she applied for a pension on the basis of his Civil War service.



Old Tombstone Solves Mystery

Mr. and Mrs. Gaal Rathburn of Johnstown, N.Y., solved a long-standing mystery with the discovery of this tombstone in a local cemetery. For many years, they could not figure out the parentage of Gaal's great-grandfather, Samuel Rathbun, who died in 1916 aged almost 90. Trying to trace him through a known sister, they found that the mother's name was Melissa. The tombstone showed that her maiden name was Melissa Bruce, that her husband was Joseph Rathbun, and that she later married Peter Bovee. Joseph Rathbun was a son of Samuel⁵ Rathbun (Anthony⁴ Samuel³ Thomas² John¹) and his first wife, Mary Reynolds. When they found the gravestone, Mrs. Rathburn wrote, "I felt just like Alex Haley when he found his Kunta Kinte."

People

David H. Rathbun of Flat Rock, Mich., one of our charter subscribers, has been promoted to assistant vice president, lending division, of American Federal Savings in Southfield, Mich. He is a son of Keith⁹ Rathbun (Howard⁸ Valentine⁷ Horace⁶ William⁵ Daniel⁴ Joshua³ John²⁻¹). David is married to the former Judy Gose.

Bryce Rathbun, who retired in 1979 as superintendent of schools in California's Standard School District, received a letter in December 1981 which says something about government efficiency. It was dated July 20, 1979, from Mary Berry, acting U.S. Commissioner of Education, thanking Rathbun for his years of service on behalf of President Carter, who went out of office in January 1981.

Corrections

• Vol. One, Issue Three, page 43—The correct ancestry of Richard⁸ Rathbun of Cazenovia, N.Y., is: (Harrison⁷ Abiather⁶ Amos⁵ Thomas⁴⁻³ John²⁻¹).

• Vol. Two, Issue One, page 16—The correct ancestry of Edith Rathbun¹⁰ Roberts is (Henry⁹ Charles⁸ William⁷ Alfred⁶ Wait⁵⁻⁴ Joshua³ John²⁻¹).

Roland Rathbun, a charter subscriber from Ballston Spa, N.Y., has called our attention to an historical oddity. The first elected mayor of Albany, N.Y., (and also the last appointed mayor) was Jared Lewis⁶ Rathbone (Samuel⁵ Joshua⁴ Jonathan³ John²⁻¹). In that first election, in 1841, Rathbone's losing opponent was Erastus Corning. Today, 140 years later, the present mayor of Albany is also named Erastus Corning.

Obituaries

DIED — Jan. 10, 1982, Betty Jo (Nordstedt) Baker, 51, of Kelseyville, Calif., one of our charter members. She was a great-great-granddaughter of Caroline Amanda⁷ Rathbun (James⁶ Thomas⁵⁻⁴ Ebenezer³ William² John¹) and John C. Leigh. She is survived by her husband, Clair Baker, four daughters and a grandson. Mr. Baker is also a Rathbun descendant.

DIED — Oct. 1, 1981, Velna Thomson Brown, 88, in Pineville, La. She was the widow of Dr. J.C. Brown, a grandson of Thomas W. Rathbone (Jonathan⁵ Coggeshall⁴ Abraham³ Samuel² John¹). Her son, Dr. C. Jay Brown, is one of our subscribers.

DIED — Nov. 19, 1981, in Bethesda, Md., Mrs. Willford (Marjorie) Taylor, aged 85. She was the last survivor of seven children of Charles Amory and Carrie (Dyer) Rathbun. Charles was the son of William⁷ Rathbun (Alfred⁶ Wait⁵⁻⁴ Joshua³ John²⁻¹). Mrs. Taylor, one of our charter members, is survived by her husband, two sons, two grandchildren and several great-grandchildren.

DIED — Nov. 19, 1981, in Two Rivers, Wisc., Mrs. Lila Glomstad, 77, one of our charter subscribers. She was the daughter of Jeremiah and Anna Cecelia (Rathbun) Watkins, and a granddaughter of William⁷ Rathbun (Thomas⁶⁻⁵⁻⁴ Ebenezer³ William² John¹) and Celia Cole. Mrs. Glomstad studied at the University of Minnesota, and then taught English for 37 years in Minnesota and Wisconsin. She is survived by her husband, Henry; a son, David; two sisters, and a grandson.

DIED — Oct. 6, 1981, Mary S. (Rathbun) Hobday, 88, of Taunton, Mass. Mrs. Hobday was the widow of Edward O. Hobday and the daughter of Charles⁸ Rathbun (Seneca⁷ John⁶ Joseph⁵ Joshua⁴ John³⁻²⁻¹) and Ella Sweet. She is survived by three sons, four daughters, 14 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren — and two brothers, Ernest, who will be 100 next June, and Frank, 96, both of Cranston, R.I.

Newest Subscribers

Dr. C. Jay Brown
Pineville, La.

Mrs. John Duncan
Camano Island, Wash.

Carolyn Rathburn Gott
North Little Rock, Ark.

Mrs. Ann Haymaker
Yuma, Ariz.

Mrs. Frances Higgins
Burnsville, N.C.

Mrs. Cyril Hladik
Hennessey, Okla.

Phara (Rathbun) Holdredge
Olathe, Kan.

James Rathbun Horchner
Summitt, N.J.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Magley
Bird City, Kan.

Raymond B. Martin
Cherry Hill, N.J.

Mr. and Mrs. David Rathbone*
Austin, Texas

**Mistakenly listed as Mr. & Mrs.
Charles Rathbone in our last issue.*

Glen A. Rathbone
San Luis Obispo, Calif.

Mortimer A. Rathbone
Tecumseh, Neb.

Tom G. Rathbone
Sunnyvale, Calif.

Fred and Shirley Rathbun
Littleton, Colo.

Harry J. Rathbun
Grand Bend, Kan.

Irma A. Rathbun
Decatur, Mich.

Mrs. Ruth Rathbun
Whittier, Calif.

Mrs. Nancy Schleppenbach
Duluth, Minn.

James R. Wallace
Columbus, Ohio

Mrs. R. D. Weatherford
Phoenix, Ariz.

Dorothy (Rathbun) Wegelin
Santa Ana, Calif.

Barbara (Rathburn) Wilson
Ontario, Calif.

Births

BORN — July 11, 1981, in Mt. Vernon, Wash., Jennifer Lee Strickland, daughter of David A. and Jean Marie (Uitto) Strickland. Jean is the daughter of Mrs. Phyllis J. Cuevas, a granddaughter of Blanche Mae⁸ (Rathbun) Kaess (William⁷ Alfred⁶⁻⁵ Job⁴ Benjamin³ Joseph² John¹). Mrs. Cuevas is one of our members.

BORN — Dec. 31, 1981, in Tucson, Ariz., to Donald F. and Susan (Farmer) Rathbun, a daughter, Jessica Michele Rathbun. Donald, 27, who is in the Navy, is the son of the late George⁹ Rathbun (William⁸ Jonathan⁷ Thomas⁶⁻⁵⁻⁴ Ebenezer³ William² John¹) and Velma Scott Sherwood.

BORN — Oct. 23, 1981, in Cranston, R.I., Alexis Charles Anderson, son of William and Beverly (Rathbun) Anderson. Mrs. Anderson is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Arnold C. Rathbun and the granddaughter of Ernest⁹ Rathbun (Charles⁸ Seneca⁷ John⁶ Joseph⁵ Joshua⁴ John³⁻²⁻¹) and Eola May King, who are among our members.

BORN — July 10, 1981, in San Jose, Calif., Melody Renee Rathbun, daughter of Malcom¹⁰ Rathbun (George⁹ William⁸ Jonathan⁷ Thomas⁶⁻⁵⁻⁴ Ebenezer³ William² John¹) and Valerie (DeGrasse) Rathbun. They have two other daughters, Amber Jean, born Sept. 24, 1978, and Kathleen, born Dec. 21, 1979.