

CHAPTER 6

JOHN AND JULIA

John Bell (1804-1888) and Julia Ann Glasgow (1811-1890)

Farming for Love and Profit

William and Mary Gilmore Bell were in Schuyler, New York, northwest of Albany when their fourth and last son arrived January 19, 1804. Still following Ulster-Scot tradition, they named him “John” after William’s paternal grandfather (*cf. Chp 1*).¹ He was ten when they relocated to Mentz in Cayuga County, and in his mid-twenties when he became enamored of Julia Ann Glasgow. She was in her late teens and had come to town with her parents, Robert and Betsy, who farmed 115 miles to the northeast in Lewis County’s Town of Martinsburg. Thirty years earlier, John’s parents and hers had all migrated to New York from Ireland’s County Tyrone, staying in Montgomery County a few years before moving on: the Bells to Schuyler, and the Glasgows to Martinsburg, where Julia was born in 1811. The Glasgows’ later excursion to Mentz then offered the two families’ Irish-born elders a chance to reminisce, and their younger offspring a chance to meet. It must have gone well because John and Julia married on August 24, 1831.²

John was farming with his father at the time, while also serving with his brother, Will Jr., in the 13th Cavalry, where he soon advanced from lieutenant to major. They and their older brothers, Tom and Sam, all were involved in politics, too, with John as the lone Democrat. Later on, Sam served in the State Assembly while John, Will and Tom became justices of the peace, arbitrating local civil and criminal matters – John in Throop, Will Jr. in Montezuma, and Tom in Aurelius.

Farming, however, was the primary occupation of all four and, as Sam’s later bankruptcy made clear, it required the same shrewdness as any other business (*cf. Chp 4*). In that respect, John, in partnership with Julia, might have been the shrewdest in the family. Within a few years of marrying, they had more property and a larger operation overall than John’s father or any one brother – and, apart from Sam’s brief foray into mega farming, that remained true decade after decade. Their land holdings peaked in 1852 when they owned four distinct farms: McDonald Road (*cf. Map 6A, “John Bell”, center top*), the two tenant farms across from there (*linked “J. Bell”, center top*), and the Bell family homestead, which they had just bought from John’s father that year (*“J. Bell”, lower right*). All their children were born during their years on McDonald Road – the lane meandering from top left to center right on the map – and they could walk from there to the Mentz Church, where they and their extended family worshipped for decades (*cf. “M.E. Ch”*). They usually rented out their tenant farms to single men and younger couples, which came to include some of their own children. The “W^{III} Bell” on the map (*upper center*) was John’s brother, Will Jr., and “R. Bell” and “M. Bell” were Will’s sons, Robert and Milo (*cf. Chps 5 and 7*).



Map 6A – Town of Mentz (part) 1853

Husbands in that era usually had charge of family finances, including land transactions. Map 6A reflected that by naming every farm, save one, after an adult male listed on the deed; but females could own land, as well, either individually or together with others – spouses, siblings, whomever. To sell land he co-owned with his wife, a husband (specifically) needed his wife’s uncoerced approval. The deed in that case included a boilerplate sentence saying the oversight official – a justice of the peace, for example – had conducted a private interview with the wife, in which she confirmed that she was consenting to the sale “free from fear or compulsion.” Several of John and Julia’s land sales included that statement, meaning: (a) Julia co-owned a lot of their land and (b) she had an ongoing say in their financial affairs. She had some measure of power.

The dashed lines on Map 6A mark the boundaries of areas called “lots” that surveyors still use to pinpoint and define tracts of land. Every deed identifies the lot, town (i.e., township) and county of the parcel in question. In 1853, the vertical line at the center of Map 6A marked the boundary between Lot 91 (*top left*) and Lot 92 (*top right*) plus the boundary between Lot 1 (*center left*) and Lots 2 and 3 (*center right and lower right*). Then, in 1859, the same vertical line also became the boundary separating the newly formed towns of Montezuma (*to the left*) and Throop (*to the right*), both of which the County had cleaved from the much larger Town of Mentz. Everyone simply woke up in a new town one morning without having moved an inch.

Cast of Characters – Chapter 6

m = year married dv = year divorced ca. = approximately

John Bell	(1804-1888)	m (1831)	Julia Ann Glasgow	(1811-1890)
❖ Nancy Bell	(1832-1859)		Never married and died of tuberculosis	
❖ George W. Bell	(1836-1919)	m (1859)	Mary E. Glasgow	(1836-1902)
• Gertrude Ann Bell	(1860-1942)	m (1882)	Willard S. Wethey	(1860-1953)
✓ George E. Wethey	(1884-1967)	m (1907)	Emma Philbrick	(1884-1915)
○ Erma C. Wethey	(1907-1967)			
○ Ernest Wethey	(1911-1992)			
Then George E. Wethey		m (1920)	Margaret Gilbert Ellis	(1879-1963)
✓ Howard E. Wethey	(1888-1973)	m (1933)	Lois Marshall	(1900-1990)
✓ Edna Wethey	(1893-1973)	m (ca.1930-35)	George S. Corfield	(1895-1970)
✓ Inez Bell Wethey	(1895-1989)		Never Married	
• Ella Julia Bell	(1864-1923)	m (1886)	Jay W. Fowler	(1858-1931)
✓ Leslie W. Fowler	(1888-____)			
✓ Louis G. Fowler	(1890-____)			
• Katheryn May Bell (Var: Cassie, Katie)	(1870-1938)	m (1892)	David D. Wiggins (Immigrated from England in 1870)	(1864-1942)
✓ D. Llewellyn Wiggins	(1899-1979)	m (ca. 1935)	Elsie H. _____	(1896-1982)
• Lyman C. Bell	(1871-1953)	m (1893) dv (ca. 1905)	Lillian Atwater	(1871-1907)
Then Lyman C. Bell		m (1905)	Evelyn L. Keeler	(1882-1983)
❖ Ann Elizabeth Bell	(1838-1915)	m (1880)	John Barlow	(1860-1916)
❖ Mary Jane Bell	(1840-1918)	m (1862)	Joseph Wright	(1827-1897) ³
• Anna B. Wright	(1863-1943)	m	Fay W. Elliott	(1857-1932)
• Howard J. Wright	(1869-1941)	m (1901)	Harriet W. Fitchpatrick	(ca.1880-____)
• Elizabeth (Libbie) Wright	(1867-1956)		Never married	
• Lewis Cass Wright	(1870-1950)	m (1912)	Eva Mabel Green	(1880-____)
• Mary Wright	(1873-____)	m (1901) dv (1906)	Perley Johnson	(1873-____)
✓ Anna Marion Johnson	(1902-____)		Born in Oconto, Wisconsin	
✓ Howard Lewis Johnson	(1905-____)		Born in Michigan	

❖ John Wesley Bell	(1843-1915)	m (1869)	Maggie Wallace	(1846-1889)
• Pearl J. Bell	(1871-1945)	m (1919)	Francis J. Keenan	(1869-1936)
• Edna Persus Bell	(1875-1946)			
❖ Andrew Jackson Bell	(1847-1874)	m (1869)	Phoebe M. Shear	(1851-1903)
• Frederick W. Bell	(1872-1968)	m (1894)	Anna Belle Pierce	(1877-1965)
✓ Myrnicce Loos Bell	(1894-1972)	m (1924) dv(1942)	Vera Estelle High	(ca. 1899-____)
○ Myrnicce Bell, II	(1925-2009)	m (1951)	Dorothy Davis	____-____
○ Barbara A. Bell	(1928-2012)	m/dv____	_____	____-____
○ Then Barbara A. Bell		m _____	Leland Jones, M.D.	(1920-2008)
Then Myrnicce Loos Bell		m (1960)	Dorothy Dotson Milne	(1906-1987)
❖ Ethan Allen Bell	(1850-1937)	m (1876)	Azelia Wallace	(1850-1923)
• Thurman Bell	(1881-1881)		Died in infancy	
• Charles George Bell	(1883-1973)	m (1914)	Edith May Hodges	(1896-1980)
("Charlie")				
✓ Raymond Lester Bell	(1915-1998)	m	Barbara C. Gabriel	(1920-2011)
✓ Mildred Azelia Bell	(1916-2003)	m (1936)	Herbert Pratt	(1913-1972)
✓ Ethan Allen Bell II	(1919-2005)	m (1949)	Flora Marie Hitchcock	(1917-2009)
• Edith M. Bell	(1886-1973)	m (1914)	Merrill Charles Seitz	(1893-1937)
✓ Irma Lucille Seitz	(1915-2000)	m _____ dv(1946)	_____ Pratt	____-____
Then Irma Seitz Pratt		m (1947) dv(1955)	James Walter Jaskow	(1914-1993)
Then Irma Seitz Jaskow		m (1956)	Herbert C. Dean	(1907-1988)
✓ Ethan Lawrence Seitz	(1918-1918)		Died at age 1 month, eight days	
✓ Ruth Geraldine Seitz	(1920-1991)	m (1940)	Stanley Hargett	(1915-1994)

Julia was just 19 when she married, but took part in almost every property sale from the outset and had primary responsibility for both household and farmyard chores: raising chickens for eggs and meat, tending a garden, using primitive appliances to prepare meals of homegrown foods, weaving cloth, making and laundering bedding and clothing, and perpetually cleaning. She also bore at least seven children over an eighteen-year period: Nancy (1832), George (1836), Ann (1838), Mary Jane (1840), John (1842), Andrew (1847), and Ethan (1850). Once they arrived, Julia had charge of their social and spiritual development, and even introduced them to music. Their daughter Ann, for one, became the organist at the Mentz Church, churning out Wesleyan tunes on a small pump organ. Julia herself taught Sunday school there.

Their daughters' names appear to have honored other family members. Julia had a sister Nancy, her own middle name was Ann, her mother was an Elizabeth, and John's mother was Mary, but all those names, as well as "Jane", also were popular at the time. For the boys, they abandoned traditional Ulster-Scot naming patterns in favor of the emerging trend of honoring religious and political figures from history (which, in America, was still rather brief at the time). They dubbed their first son "George W." in tribute either to George Washington or to the revered Methodist evangelist George Whitefield (the initial stood for one of those surnames), and they baptized the next one "John Wesley" after the founder of Methodism. John Sr. was an active Democrat, so their third son became Andrew Jackson Bell in honor of the first Democrat to become president – no doubt spurring jibes from John's three Whig-Republican brothers. Ethan Allen, after whom they named their youngest, had gained renown as a fierce advocate for his home territory of Vermont. Then, in the War of Independence, his Green Mountain Boys helped colonial forces take Fort Ticonderoga from the British. After the war, though, political wrangling delayed Vermont's admission to statehood, so Allen joined a failed effort to make it part of Canada – a less-than-patriotic gesture. He was heroic and famous, but also vain, brash and controversial, and one wonders how much John and Julia really knew about him. Perhaps they admired his audacity.

Their five eldest children walked to School House No. 4, a wee wooden affair in a copse 200 yards south of their McDonald Road farm; but then the family moved and the younger children, from Mary Jane to Ethan, might have shifted to School House No. 5 a few miles east. The move came soon after February 25, 1852, when John bought the house, outbuildings and 93 acres of his parents' 1814 homestead farm for \$5,580. The



next April, he paid another \$5,580 for the remaining 115 acres. William Sr. in turn bought 16½ acres from John and Julia plus a nearby house from the Hulse family, where he moved with his second wife, Margaret (the sister of John's mother, Mary, who had died twenty years earlier). After settling in at the homestead, John and Julia continued to rent out the two tenant farms, but sold off other land: eleven acres to their neighbor Hannon Wrightmyer, 49 to John Fiero (Phero), and the bulk of the McDonald Road farm to Levi Crispell. Fiero and Crispell pop up again later. *(Photo: S.H. No. 4, ca. 1935; see also Map 6A: "S.H. No. 4", upper left, and "S.H. No. 5", center right, plus "J. Bell", lower right, and "J. Hulse" center right)*

A few years after their move, John and Julia's eldest child, Nancy, fell ill and lingered awhile before dying in 1859 at age 27. She had never married, but all her siblings eventually did, and five became parents. Those with children had an average of three, less than half the average for the prior generation. "The Toiling of the Bells" (*below*) reviews their lives and those of their offspring. Chapter 9 includes details about Mary Jane's adventures in New York and Michigan.

On reaching adulthood, George, Ann, John Wesley, Andrew and Ethan all joined with their parents in buying, selling, and renting land within the family (a common practice), and then, on October 27, 1880, Ann (rather than her brothers) bought the remaining 130 acres of the homestead farm. She was 42 at the time, had lived with her parents all her life, and had just married a farmer named John Barlow earlier that year. She paid \$5,000 for the house and land, but the deed read more like a rental agreement. It included "...the express condition that...John Bell excepts, reserves and shall continue in and have absolute control and possession of [the] lands during the term of his natural life in the same manner and to as full an extent as if [the] deed had not been executed." The Barlows, that is, paid a hefty sum to provide labor, while John Sr. retained control of the farm – and neither he nor Julia was leaving. The terms reflect John and Julia's reluctance to entrust the farm's management entirely to Ann's groom, John Barlow, who was just 20 years old and inexperienced in running a farm that size. They were covering their asse(t)s.

The arrangement lasted until September 13, 1883, when Ann sold the same 130 acres back to her mother for \$3,000 – just 60% of what she herself had paid only three years earlier. The deed lists only Julia as the buyer, and yet, three years later (December 17, 1886), John Sr. sold the farm on his own, with no reference whatever to the "fear or compulsion" sentence. It's confusing, as is the selling price of "one dollar and other valuable considerations". The latter included a mortgage that Julia alone provided through an Auburn broker named Charles B. Nichols. Backing the mortgage would enable John and her to: 1) retain some control over the property and 2) earn interest on the loan. The details are on page 308 of Cayuga County's mortgage liber 109.

The buyer, Melvina Weston, was a long-time family acquaintance. The Bell, Gilmore and Weston clans had joined in building the Mentz Church sixty years earlier and had remained intertwined ever since. In 1870, for instance, John and Julia's son, Andrew, had married Melvina's niece, Phoebe, whom she and her husband, Reuben, had reared from age five (*cf. "Andrew", below*). The Westons had since retired and were living in Auburn, so Melvina might have bought the Bell homestead as an investment; but something went awry from the get-go and, on January 8, 1887, just three weeks after acquiring the deed, Melvina filed a lawsuit.

The suit named Julia, the Barlows, and Charles Nichols (the broker) as defendants – everyone except John – so the dispute must have centered on the mortgage. The only court document online for now is the final ruling, which said the property "might be sold without material injury to the parties interested." It then ordered the County Sheriff to sell it at auction on the courthouse steps "to raise the amount due to the plaintiff for principle, interest and costs." On the second day of March, two brothers named Kane bought it there for \$4,030, whereupon Melvina signed

over the deed and, apparently, paid off the mortgage. It marked the first time in 73 years that no one in the Bell clan owned, occupied or had a claim of any kind on the original homestead.

Ann, who was close to fifty at that point and never had lived apart from her parents, then moved with her still-young hubby, John Barlow, to the village of Montezuma, while her parents moved in with George and his family. John and Julia knew George's home well, in part, because it was their old farm on McDonald Road, which George had bought from the Crispells twenty years earlier. After more than a half century of marriage, the family elders passed their last years in the same house where they had spent their first twenty together – the one where they had set their course in life and welcomed all their children into the world.

John died there October 6, 1888, at age 84, having become both the longest-lived and last surviving son of William and Mary Gilmore Bell. His father, who had lived to be 88, had the longest life span in the family, followed by John (84), Sam (83), Tom (82), and Will Jr. (79). His mother, Mary Gilmore Bell, had been the first to go, dying at age 65 in 1832, the year after John and Julia married. For reasons unknown, it was almost a month before John's obituary appeared in *The Weekly Auburnian* on November 2, 1888. The original errors are included here.

BELL—John Bell died on Saturday, Oct. 6th, 1888, at the residence of his son, G. W. Bell, in his 86th (*sic*) year. Mr. Bell was born in the town of Schuyler, Herkimer County, N.Y., January 4th, 1804, and lived there until he was 10 years old, when he came with his parents to Cayuga County, NY, settling in the town of Brutus, afterwards Mentz, now Throop. He was the son of William and Mary Bell. The county was then all woods, there being but few houses in Auburn, then known as Hardenburgs corners. He lived to see the land cleared. He and his father owned the same farm for 73 years. August 24, 1831, he was united in marriage with Julia A. Glasgow of Lewis Co. NY. The result of their union was four sons and three daughters; one son and one daughter having gone before him. He leaves an aged wife, after living together 57 years, fourteen grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. His death was caused by heart trouble. He has been a sufferer for a great many years. He was the youngest of four brothers, outliving all of them. He was a hardworking, honest man in all his dealings. In politics he was a Democrat, and a great worker in his town for the party. In the day of military, he took an active part. His health failing him he went to live with his son where he died.

A year and a half later, Julia died, too, after suffering either a heart attack or a stroke at age seventy-eight (her “79th year”). Her obituary (*below*) says she was born in Lewis County, which is true, but then adds, “...and her parents moved to Cayuga County”, which is *not* true. Both she and her younger sister, Nancy, who also was born in Lewis County, married farmers from Mentz in the 1830s, but their parents, Robert and Betsy Glasgow, went on farming in Lewis County and eventually died there. The weight of the evidence is that: 1) their family came to Mentz on a visit, 2) the two daughters found love and married there, and 3) the parents went home. Nancy and her husband, Benjamin Rood, later moved to Michigan. Every other Glasgow known to have migrated to Cayuga County from 1820 through 1840 (the decades before and after Julia's wedding) came directly from Ireland, not Lewis County, and all were around the same age as Julia. Among those, only George's father-in-law – another Robert Glasgow – remained in Cayuga County permanently. All the others, like Nancy, soon moved on to Michigan. (*cf. Endnote #2*).

Sunday last, Feb. 2, after a brief sickness Mrs. Julia Bell, widow of the late John Bell, died of paralysis, at the residence of her son George, in the 79th year of her age. Mrs. Bell was born in Lewis county, N. Y., Sept. 7, 1811, and her parents moved to Cayuga county, and located in the original town of Mentz, where she was united in marriage to John Bell, and after a long life of toil and labor her husband weary and exhausted fell asleep, about one year ago, and left the wife of his youth, the companion of more than half a century to tarry a few months alone, and then she closed her eyes to the scenes of earth and bid her children "good-bye." She leaves three sons, George W., John H., Ethan A. Bell, two daughters, Mrs. Wright of Michigan, Mrs. Ann Barlow, and a large circle of friends to cherish her memory. But why mourn her death? She is now happy, in that better world beyond the grave. She is young and happy, who would call her back? She united in early life with the M. E. church at Mentz and for many years has been faithful, earnest and true to her profession and her works do follow her. Her funeral services were held at the residence of her son George, Wednesday, Rev. R. Townsend, her pastor, preached an appropriate sermon and then they laid her body down to rest, while her spirit is home with her Saviour.

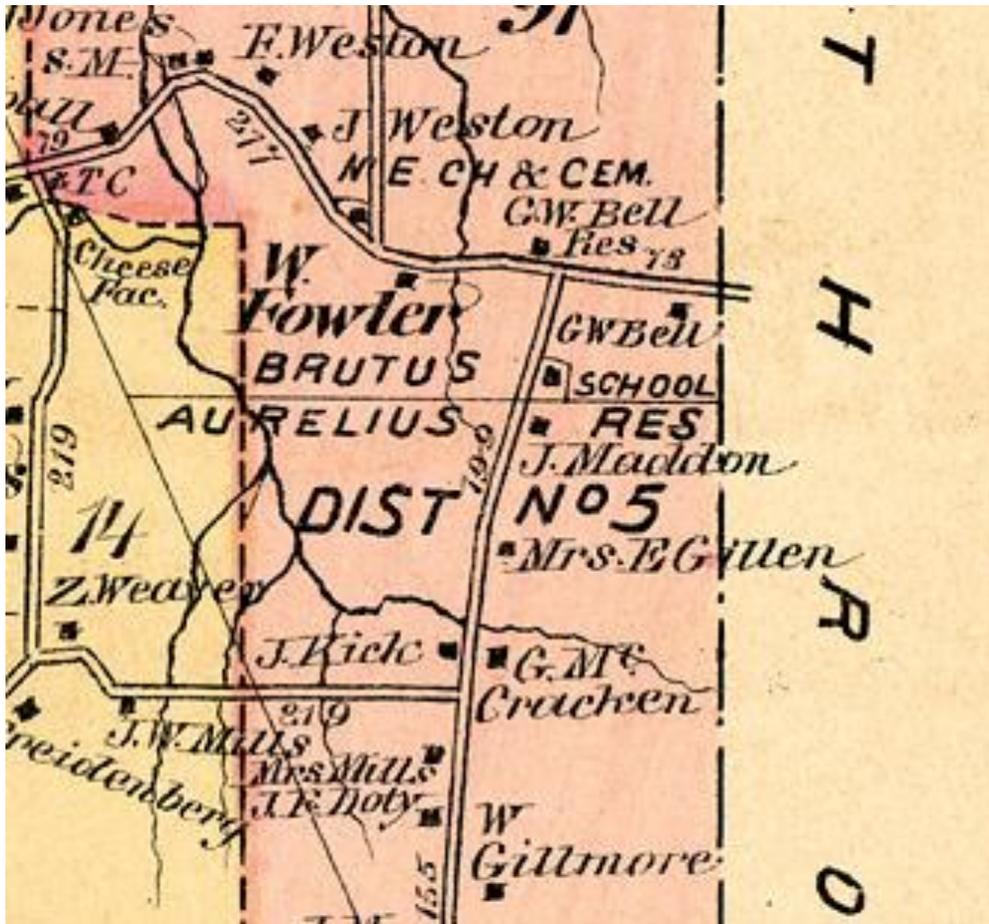
The Toiling of the Bells

Nancy: Julia named their first child after her younger sister, but things didn't turn out as they'd all hoped. The younger Nancy was in her early twenties and unmarried when she fell ill with "scrofula and consumption" (*cf. 1860 U.S. Census Mortality Schedule*). Scrofula is a bacterial infection that causes swelling and grotesque lesions on lymph nodes in the neck. Consumption, now called "tuberculosis", comes from the same bacteria as scrofula, but affects the lungs. Victims typically died within a few months, but Nancy struggled three years before succumbing in August 1859 at 27. After a service at home, they took her to the Mentz Church cemetery.

George: In contrast to Nancy, George lived into his eighties, becoming a devoted husband and father, prominent farmer, and committed church leader. He married his second cousin, Mary E. Glasgow, the same year his sister died (1859). The ceremony would have been a quiet affair held at the home of Mary's parents. Her mother, Eliza Jane Gilmore, was a first cousin of George's father, John, and grew up on the first farm south of the Bell homestead. Mary's father, Robert Glasgow, had the same name as Julia's father and, like him, came from County Tyrone, Ireland, but their exact relationship is unclear for now (*cf. Endnote 2*).

George and Mary rented his parents' tenant farm on the west until the mid-1860s, then bought his boyhood home (the McDonald Road farm) from the Crispells and moved across the road. Between December 1867 and October 1874, they also traded ownership of the fields directly south of the road with George's parents and siblings at least 13 times (*cf. "G.W. Bell", Map 6B, below*). Figuring out who owned exactly what at any given moment is akin to solving a Rubik's cube in the dark. George and Mary, in any event, tripled their net worth in the 1860s while also starting a family. Their first two children, Gertrude "Gertie" Ann and Ella Julia, arrived at the tenant farm in 1860 and 1864, respectively. After they moved across the road, a third daughter, Kathryn, showed up in 1870, and their only son, Lyman, came a year later. (*cf. U.S. Census*)

The Civil War was well underway when George registered for the draft in 1863, but the army never called him to serve – apparently, because he was a married farmer with one small child at home and another on the way. He instead became deeply involved in the Mentz Church, where his parents, siblings, and most other close relatives were still active, and he remained a devout Christian the rest of his life. His language and behavior, in fact, came to have an evangelical tone that set him apart from others in his extended family, although it wasn't extreme for 19th century rural Methodists. He was just more enthusiastic than most. The congregation's 1882 directory listed him as both a leader of its temperance efforts and the "Superintendent of the Sunday School Missionary Society", while Mary and Gertie taught Sunday school. He and Mary also did their part to support their pastor, although the congregation's approach to pastoral remuneration was a bit haphazard. During the last week of 1883, the *Cayuga County Independent* carried this notice about a December 28 fundraiser at George and Mary's tenant ("tenement") farm across the road: "Friday evening this week there will be a donation party and oyster supper at the tenement house of George W. Bell, for the benefit of Rev. J.C. Hitchcock; all invited."



Map 6B – George and Mary Bell Farms – Town of Montezuma – 1875

As an extension of his faith, George also became involved early on in Tent No. 43 of the Independent Order of Rechabites, a parachurch organization advocating total abstention from alcohol. The 1894 “History of Cayuga County” says it was “reputed to be a useful temperance organization,” which reads as if the author had doubts. Tent No. 43 had 60 members in 1894 and held meetings every Saturday night – great fun, no doubt. George had the role of “Shepherd” that year, designed evidently to steer others away from demon rum and such. For more on the Rechabites, see “Mary Bell McKone” in Chapter 8, “Descendants of Will, Jr. and Sally”.

Gertie Bell married Willard S. Wethey at her parents’ home on April 19, 1882, with the pastor of each family co-officiating. The news account says 70 guests were present, so the ceremony must have been out in the house yard. Willard lived in Port Byron at the time and eventually worked for the railroad. Four years later, Gertie’s sister, Ella, married a farmer named Jay Fowler, whose parents had come from England. Those two marriages, in turn, made room for John and Julia to move in with George and Mary in 1887. The third sister, Katheryn, who also went by “Cassie” and “Katie”, then married an English-born teacher named David Wiggins in late August of 1892. The *Auburn Argus* later listed some of their wedding gifts, providing a glimpse of what people gave newlyweds in that era, while also showing that at least some members of the extended Bell clan remained in touch even after moving elsewhere (*cf. below*).

At the Wiggins and Bell nuptials last week the following gifts were presented by the persons whose names appear:

David D. Wiggins, Throop, to bride, \$28.85 in gold.
Thomas Wiggins, \$50 cash.
Mrs. Valentine Wiggins, set dessert spoons.
John Wiggins, pickle castor.
Mrs. Clara Stokes, set silver butter plates.
Mr. and Mrs. Thos. Skillett, decorated chamber set.
James Wiggins, parlor lamp.
Mr. and Mrs. Josiah Gailey. Weedsport. Counterpane and copy of Our Home.
Mrs. Mary B. Gilmore, Marseilles counterpane.
Mrs. Ann G. Sinclair, [illegible]
Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Macy and Mrs. C.P. Weston, silver cake basket
Mr. Chas. Bunn and Miss Josie White, silver berry dish.
Mr. and Mrs. Horatio Mack, set silver knives and forks.
Miss Belle Gilmore, china plates.
Miss Jennie Wright, set of silver fruit knives.
Mr. and Mrs. S.R. Glasgow, Rochester lamp.
Mr. J. Bruce Glasgow, silver napkin rings.
Mr. John C. Glasgow, copy of Health, Wealth and Happiness.
Mr. Robert Glasgow, \$3 cash.
Rev. O.N. Hinman and wife, water set.
Mr. and Mrs. John Barlow, table cloth and napkins.
Mr. Fred W. Bell, Damask quilt.
Mr. and Mrs. Ethan A. Bell, pickle castor.
Mrs. Rainey and Mrs. Fitzsimmons of Hillsdale, Mich., silver fruit dish.
Master Clare Fitzsimmons, Thoughts for Companions.
Robby and Belle Sinclair, breakfast castor.
Mr. and Mrs. W.S. Wethey, Syracuse, silver set of spoons.
D.A. White, M.D., silver cake basket.
S.C. Marquisee, clothier, Port Byron, silver butter dish.
Mr. and Mrs. J.W. Fowler, parlor lamp.
Mr. and Mrs. J.S. Post, Throop, carving set.
Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Beach. bible stand.
Miss Nellie Radford. towels.
Mr. and Mrs. J.S. Atwater and daughter, picture and easel.

(Auburn Argus, September 2, 1892, exactly as printed)

Relationships (not included in news article):

- Thomas Wiggins – brother of the groom
- Mrs. Valentine Wiggins – mother of the groom
- John Wiggins – brother of the groom
- Clara Stokes – sister of the groom
- James Wiggins – possibly a cousin of the groom
- Emma and Thomas Skillett – sister and brother-in-law of the groom
- Mary B. Gilmore – first cousin of bride's father, George; eldest daughter of Thomas and Ann Bell
- Ann G[ilmore] Sinclair – bride's 2nd cousin; eldest daughter of Mary Bell and John Gilmore, Jr.
- [Jane] Jennie Wright – bride's second cousin; eldest daughter of John and Nancy Gilmore Wright
- Mr. & Mrs. S.R. Glasgow [Smith and Eleanor] – bride's maternal uncle and aunt

- Bruce Glasgow – bride’s first cousin; son of Smith and Eleanor
- Mr. and Mrs. William Beach [Mary E. Glasgow] – bride’s first cousin; dau of Smith and Eleanor
- John C. Glasgow – relationship unknown, but possibly an Irish-born great-uncle in Michigan
- Robert Glasgow – bride’s maternal grandfather
- Mr. and Mrs. John Barlow [Ann Bell] – bride’s paternal aunt and uncle (*cf. below*)
- Fred W. Bell – bride’s first cousin by late paternal uncle, Andrew Bell (*cf. below*)
- Mr. and Mrs. Ethan Bell – bride’s paternal uncle and aunt (*cf. below*)
- Mrs. Rainey and Mrs. Fitzsimmons – second cousins of bride’s father, George (*cf. Chp 9*)
- Clare Fitzsimmons – bride’s third cousin (*cf. Chp 9*)
- Robby and Belle Sinclair [brother and sister] – bride’s third cousins (*cf. Chp 9*)
- Mr. and Mrs. W.S. Wethey [Gertie Bell] – bride’s sister and brother-in-law
- D.W. White, M.D. – local physician; might have attended Kate’s birth
- Miss Nellie Radford – bride’s third cousin; dau. of Helen Gilmore + Orlando Radford (*cf. Chp 9*)

Gift Descriptions (not included in news article):

- Pickle castors were decorative, yet functional, Victorian era containers for serving pickles (obviously). Ornate silver frames with fanciful figures (such as flowers, shrubs, cherubs and animals) held sometimes elaborate, hand blown glass jars.
- Breakfast castors had silver-plated or sterling silver bases similar to pickle castors, but held a few different decorative bottles and jars at once and often revolved. They sat at the center of the dinner table and contained such things as salt, pepper, sugar, vinegar, oil, and mustard.
- Rochester lamps came from the Rochester (N.Y.) Lamp Company and, along with the parlor lamp on the list, were oil burning. Most sat on tables, but some attached to ceilings or walls.
- A chamber set included a large, decorative china pitcher and a matching bowl to use on a dresser or table for personal cleansing in the era before indoor plumbing and bathroom sinks.

On June 21, 1893, ten months after Katie’s wedding, her brother Lyman married Lillian “Lillie” Betsey Atwater; but they separated by 1900 and Lillie moved in with her mother, who, as it happened, had separated from her own husband – a stable family all around. After divorcing Lyman (*ca. 1905*), Lillie changed her name back to Atwater and began working as a nurse at the Sisters of Charity Hospital in Buffalo, but then, on January 25, 1907, died at the hospital at age 35. Her funeral was in nearby Amherst, New York, with burial at Auburn’s Fort Hill Cemetery.

Lyman, a teacher at the Port Byron Free Academy, had roomed with Gertie’s family during the separation, then married Evelyn “Eva” Keeler in 1905 and moved to Syracuse, where he worked as a mail clerk. Six years later, they moved (for some long-lost reason) 1,900 miles northwest to a tiny burg called Davidson (2011 pop. 1,025), a railroad stop halfway between Saskatoon and Regina in Saskatchewan, Canada (the native country of Eva’s parents). Just five years earlier, Davidson had achieved the majestic status of a “town” (as opposed, perhaps, to a “signpost”). After 39 years, doing whatever people did there, Lyman and Eva moved west to Calgary over in Alberta, where he died in 1953 at age 81. Eva was 101 when she died thirty years later.

Back in bustling Cayuga County, George and Mary had retired by April 10, 1900, and moved in with Gertie and her family near Port Byron, a few miles to the northeast. The Census identified the Wetheys’ property as a farm, but Willard, in fact, was a “train man” for the railroad. The

household that year (1900) included ten people: Willard, Gertie, their four children, Willard's 79-year old father Erastus (really), George and Mary (who were each 69), and a thirty-year old farmhand named Edward Moody. Farms of that era had no indoor plumbing, which, for this family especially, must have been a real treat in the winter as, one by one, ten people, young and old, trudged along the snowy path to the unheated outhouse and the Sears Roebuck catalogue.

Mary died in 1902 and, as of 1907, George was living with Katie's family at 13 Adams Street in Auburn. It's a good bet she and David were still using some of their wedding gifts from 1892 (*cf. above*). The 1915 state census, in turn, showed George had returned to Gertie's house (the 1917 Auburn City Directory says he had 'removed' to Port Byron). He might also have stayed with Ella's family at some point, but he was back in Auburn with Katie when he died November 18, 1919. His obituary named all three daughters while making no mention whatever of Lyman, who had wandered off to the Canadian wilds eight years earlier. By contrast, when Gertie died in 1942, her obituary made no mention of her two by-then deceased sisters, but said Lyman was living in Saskatchewan. Perhaps Davidson had mail service by then – telephones even.

George and Mary had spent most of their lives right across the field from the Mentz Church, where they were deeply involved, and in sight of its cemetery, where many loved ones lay buried; but when Mary died in 1902, George "laid her to rest" in Port Byron's Mount Pleasant Cemetery, more than four miles from the Mentz Church. It was close, however, to where they had been living with Gertie and Willard and, eventually, it came to include George, Gertie, Willard, and 38 members of Willard's extended family – the Wetheys. Ella, Katie, and their respective families are all at the Fort Hill Cemetery in Auburn, while Lyman and Eva (on the chance you're ever in the neighborhood) are at Calgary's Queens Park Cemetery and Mausoleum, sixty miles east of Banff National Park. Gertie and Willard's gravestone has yet to appear online.



Port Byron Couple Observes 60th Wedding Anniversary



April April 19, 1942

PORT BYRON.—Mr. and Mrs. Willard S. Wethey celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary Sunday at their home here by holding open house for their friends from 3 to 4 p. m.

With them for the occasion were their four children, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, denoting four generations of the Wethey family.

Mrs. Wethey, the former Gertrude A. Bell of Montezuma, will be 82 years old in September. Her husband, who celebrated his 82d birthday in January, is a retired New York Central railroad trainman.

Mr. Wethey left railroading 12 years ago, after more than 40 years of service, during which he made runs with such crack flyers as the 20th Century, Empire State express and the Southwestern limited.

The Wetheys are enjoying good health. With exception of a few years they have always lived in the town of Mentz and have made many friends.

The family party Sunday consisted of their two sons, Howard of Port Byron and George E. Wethey of Weedsport; two daughters, Edna and Inez; two grandchildren, Ernest and Erma Wethey, and two great-grandchildren, Janice and Joan Wethey, all of Port Byron.

Ann: As noted earlier, George's younger sister, Ann (also recorded as "Anne", "Anna" and "Annie"), lived on the homestead farm with John and Julia until her late forties. When she married John Barlow in 1880, he moved there as well. It's clear she was older than Barlow, but decade after decade, their answers to age-related questions on the U.S. Census were – to be kind – bizarrely untruthful. Assuming Ann (the one most likely to be home) supplied the responses, she seems almost randomly to have portrayed their age difference as anywhere from zero to 10 years when, in fact, the gap was more than 20 years. Census records from her childhood (when her parents answered the questions), along with the inscription on her tombstone, put her birth year at 1838. John's 1916 obituary, in turn, said he was 56 when he died, meaning he was born in 1859 or 1860 (one census indicates 1860). Ann, therefore, was more than twice his age when they married, and the census deceptions imply she found that embarrassing. The irony is that all her family members, neighbors and friends either knew their ages already or could make a fair guess. The only people deceived were the census enumerators.

After six years on the homestead farm, they moved to the village of Montezuma, where John worked with boilers and heavy machinery as a stationary engineer. They were still just a few miles from the Mentz Church, so Ann was able to go on playing the organ there and teaching Sunday school (*Auburn Citizen August 22, 1915*). They later relocated to Auburn and, in 1898, were at 31 Wall Street, directly across from the 25-foot high, quarter-mile long north wall of the Auburn State Prison – hence, the imaginative street name (*photo*). The vista was unique at the time, although living directly behind a big-box store today would be similar. Ann’s cousin Lavinia Bell Albro had lived down the street with her family 23 years earlier, but managed to escape (*cf. Chp. 8*). The Barlows would soon follow suit, and who could blame them? They moved twice more before settling in 1904 at 14 Perrine Street, where they took out a mortgage and remained the rest of their lives. The view across the street there featured lawns, houses and trees, maybe a picket fence or two.



A 1912 Syracuse paper revealed John’s virtuous character in a story about a lightning strike at an Auburn house: “John Barlow, engineer in Koenig’s brewery, about fifty yards from the house, saw from a window the lightning descend upon the roof. Crying that the house was afire, he rushed out of the engine room and into the Wagner house. Barlow found the woman lying on the floor. He partly aroused her. Mr. Wagner, who works in the brewery, went into the house a moment later. His wife slowly regained consciousness.” (*The Post-Standard, Syracuse, NY May 22, 1912*)

Apart from his heroics, what leaps from the story (for social historians) is that John worked in a brewery. Ann’s family was thoroughly Methodist and several relatives had been active in the Temperance Movement for decades. The words “Methodist” and “Temperance”, in fact, had become nearly synonymous. Her brother George was preaching self-restraint with virtually every breath and Prohibition was just up the road – and here was John, a Methodist and spouse of a church organist, helping to brew beer. The Auburn papers would have carried the story, too, after which attending church would have been as awkward for the Barlows’ as their age gap. Even so, they seem never to have lost favor with Ann’s family.

She died three years later, on August 22, 1915, and George’s daughter, Gertie Bell Wethey (*cf. photo, above*), hosted the funeral at her home in Port Byron, where widowed George was living at the time. John died a year after that, at age 56, and Pastor C.C. Roszell of Auburn’s First M.E. (i.e., Methodist Episcopal) Church led the funeral at the Newkirk funeral home in the city. They laid him beside Ann then, not at the Mentz Church, but in Port Byron’s Mount Pleasant Cemetery, where alcohol-free George would soon join them.



Mary Jane: John and Julia’s fourth child married her Irish-born second cousin, Joseph (Joe) Wright, in 1862 and they soon joined other Bell, Gilmore and Wright kin in moving to Adams Township in Hillsdale County, Michigan. Some years later, her aunt, Nancy Glasgow Rood, also moved there and attended the village Methodist church with the Wrights and several other Bell kin. Mary Jane and Joe had five children – three girls and two boys – before he died in 1897. She moved then to the nearby city of Hillsdale, where she died in 1918 at age seventy-seven. The cause of death, like that of her mother, was “paralysis of the heart” (i.e., a heart attack). For more on Mary Jane and the Wrights, see Chapter 9, “The Gilmores and Wrights”.³

John Wesley: John W (to distinguish him from his father) was twenty when, like George, he registered for the Civil War draft in June 1863; but *unlike* George, he served with Company F of New York’s 114th Infantry Regiment, engaging in several fierce battles in Louisiana and Virginia. He returned home as a corporal and, by 1868, was renting 80 acres immediately south of his parents’ place. It was part of the 1809 homestead of his great-uncle, Samuel Gilmore, whose son, Dewitt, had since come to own it. John W paid the rent with a portion of his crops, but also paid his father \$2,000 to buy 55 acres along the north side of the Bell homestead. Sixty-four year old John Sr., meanwhile, was still cultivating 170 acres between John W’s two parcels (*Cayuga County Business Directory – Throop*; see also: *Map 6C, 1859 Throop*, below: “Bell” and “Sam’l Gilmore”); note also other Bells, Gilmores, and Wrights in the vicinity).



Map 6C: 1859 Throop (Montezuma on the left)

In September 1869, he married Maggie Wallace (b 1846), and they had two daughters, Pearl J. (b 1871) and Edna Persus (b 1875). They were farming in Throop when the girls were born and then Fleming in 1880, but by 1885 had moved to Auburn, where John was selling real estate. Then, Maggie died at age 43 on September 13, 1889, and they buried her at the Soule Cemetery in Sennett, immediately north-east of Auburn’s downtown. Her September 19 obituary in Auburn’s *Weekly News and Democrat* says she was a sister of Azelia (Zelia) Wallace, who, by then, had married John’s younger brother, Ethan (cf. “Ethan Allen”, below):

The many friends of Mrs. **Maggie Wallace Bell**, wife of John Bell, were pained to hear of her death at her late residence in Auburn Friday last. In the 43rd year of her age. She leaves a husband, two daughters, a mother, two sisters, Mrs. B. Lasher, Mrs. Ethan A. Bell, and a brother, James Wallace and a large circle of friends to mourn her death.



John worked as a delivery clerk after that, and Pearl as a “seamstress”, while Edna remained at their home at 7 Steel Street, south of downtown. The day after Thanksgiving, another paper carried this item about a party for their next-door neighbor: “Charles Cady, Miss Pearl Bell, and Mrs. Breese were the committee who arranged the surprise party that called on D.M. Buckley at 9 Steel Street last night. The visitors arranged for music and had a nearby barn illuminated and comfortably arranged for dancing which was enjoyed until a late hour. Refreshments were served during the evening and a pleasant time was enjoyed by the entire party” (*Auburn Bulletin*, November 22, 1889; *1890 Auburn City Directory*). Having a barn “comfortably arranged for dancing” is a sure sign no Baptists were involved. Not many Methodists either.

Nine months along (August 17, 1890), Pearl married one of the other two party organizers, Charles Cady. He was 23 and Pearl, 19 (despite claiming to be 21 on the license). The marriage, however, was doomed. Within two years, Charles was boarding at 46 Franklin Street while Pearl was across the way at No. 67 ... with her father. She also was going by ‘Bell’ again. It was 18 years before a census revealed she had given birth, lost the child, and divorced Cady. No details have yet surfaced. (cf. *1890 New York State Marriage Index*, *1910 U.S. Census*)

Pearl, John and Edna were back sharing a flat at 22 Cayuga Street as of 1900, and she was the only one with a job, working as a shirtwaist cutter. Shirtwaists were button-down women’s blouses popular at the turn of the century. They were available in a variety of colors and styles and became both a symbol and a means of independence for women, as Pearl and thousands of others moved from home to factory to earn money producing them. The work, though, was highly regulated, tedious and often dangerous. In 1911, a fire at New York’s Triangle Shirtwaist Factory killed 154 workers, the vast majority of them, women.



By 1905, Pearl had ditched life in the factory to assume a more traditional female role: live-in housekeeper for a middle-aged bachelor (*a la* Mrs. Hudson to Sherlock Holmes). Her employer, Edward Purser, lived in a modest house at No. 6 Seminary Street, near Auburn's downtown. The arrangement must have suited them both because Pearl stayed on at least fifteen years. Her father and sister lived a few blocks away, she had other relatives and friends nearby, and even her cousin from Utica, Lew Wallace, stopped in now and then (*per the Auburn Bulletin*). Pearl was also active at the First Methodist Church, a short walk from the house. In 1915, Purser took in a boarder named Daniel Coughlin, who was the same age as Pearl. He was an Irish saloonkeeper and she, a mature, sober Methodist, so there clearly was no hanky-panky in the pantry.

Pearl made the most of her limited options, but her father, John, had spiraled downward in the late 1880s and never recovered. Beginning in October 1888, his father, wife, and mother all died within sixteen months, and then Pearl married, gave birth, lost her child and divorced by early 1892. John had worked only sporadically after that: as a delivery clerk, butcher and night watchman. He was deaf, unemployed and still rooming with, by then, middle-aged Edna when he died December 12, 1915. Pearl then arranged his service, with burial next to Maggie at the Soule Cemetery. Edna, for her part, had always been in the shadows, and after John's death, she disappeared from public records altogether, remaining hidden for the next fifteen years. No documents are at hand to prove it, but her earlier pattern and the timing of her disappearance strongly suggest she entered an institution of some kind, and that her sister arranged it (*cf. below*).

Pearl herself began seeing Frank Keenan, who owned the Keenan Monument Works and might have provided her parents' grave marker (*cf. photo, above*). They married in 1919, settled at 24 Liberty Street by the mid-1920s, and brought Edna to live with them in 1930. Pearl kept the company books and engaged customers, while Frank fashioned and placed the markers and monuments. Then, on November 14, 1936, a hit-and-run driver struck Frank a block from their home and he died two days later. Edna, apparently, was either ill or unable to cope, so instead of holding the funeral at home, as people still did on occasion, Pearl asked Frank's nephew to host it at his house, 70 North Street, the former site of the monument business. She also omitted Edna from the list of survivors, which seems odd, given that Edna had been sharing their home for the past six years. It only adds to the mystery surrounding Edna's condition.

Frank J. Keenan Dies, No Trace of Hit and Run Driver

Monument Maker, Struck While Crossing North Street, Succumbs to Injuries

Police Ask All Possible Aid in Search for Motorist

Frank J. Keenan, 54, of 24 Liberty Street, who was struck by a hit and run driver in the rain early Saturday morning in North Street, near Curtis Place, died about 4 o'clock this morning at the City Hospital as the result of the injuries he suffered. Police have very little information to work on in their search for the driver of the machine involved, and they are seeking anyone who was near the scene of the accident. An autopsy performed this morning at the hospital showed that the victim suffered a fractured pelvis and an injury in his brain. Dr. A.F. Hodgman, Cayuga coroner stated that the pelvis injury was the direct cause of death.

According to what information the police could get concerning the accident, Mr. Keenan was walking from the west side of North toward the east curb. The car, as far as could be ascertained, was being driven southward and the driver of the machine did not make any effort to stop. Mr. Keenan was hurled some distance. His oxford shoes were found nearly 40 feet from where he laid on the road. Passersby found the injured man and the hospital was notified.

Police were given a description of the hit and run car and a license number. However, the police are greatly handicapped in their work of finding the car, as the information was incomplete. Chief Chester J. Bills today requested the two persons who were near the scene to report to headquarters at the earliest moment as their information is greatly needed in the investigation.

Mr. Keenan was well known in the city. For many years he conducted a monument business, latterly in Clark Street. He was associated with his father, the late John C. Keenan, and on the death of his father took over the business. He was a member of Holy Family Church and the Holy Name Society of that church.

Because of illness in the family, the funeral services will be held at the home of a nephew, Dewey Bennett, 70 North Street at 8:30 o'clock Wednesday morning. At 9 o'clock services will be conducted in Holy Family Church and burial will be in St. Joseph's Cemetery. Members of the Holy Name Society will meet tomorrow evening at 70 North Street, to conduct services.

Surviving Mr. Keenan are his wife, Mrs. Pearl B. Keenan; two sisters, Mrs. Maria Bennett and Mrs. Jeremiah Graney of this city, and several nieces and nephews.

(The Auburn Citizen-Advertiser, November 16, 1936)

Pearl had managed the Monument Works for years, but business declined after Frank's death. When she fell behind on her mortgage, the Auburn Savings Bank foreclosed on her house, so she and Edna moved, first, to 64 East Genesee (cf. 1940 advertisement, right) and, then, to 1½ Owasco Street. They were still there on July 14, 1945, when Pearl died. She already had added both Edna's name and her own to the family gravestone (cf. above), but no one ever added the dates, which implies Edna, the surviving sister, was incapable of arranging it for Pearl. Yet, someone who knew Pearl well submitted her detailed obituary to the *Citizen-Advertiser*.



Mrs. Pearl B. Keenan, widow of Frank J. Keenan, died late Wednesday afternoon at her home, 1½ Owasco Street, following a seven months illness. Mrs. Keenan was born in Throop, but had lived in Auburn for 50 years. For 30 years Mrs. Keenan, with her husband, conducted a monument business in this city, and for the past 20 years, she continued the same business.

Mrs. Keenan is survived by one sister, Miss Edna P. Bell of Auburn, and several cousins. She was an active member of the Loyal Workers Class of First Methodist Church. Funeral Services will be held at 2 o'clock Friday afternoon at Langham's Funeral Home, 91 East Genesee Street, with Rev. Warren G. Odom, pastor of First Methodist Church, officiating. Burial will be in Soule Cemetery. Friends may call at the funeral home from 3 to 5 this afternoon and from 7 to 9 this evening.

Edna remained in their apartment after Pearl's death, but while riding a bus 15 months later, she herself died. The *Evening Leader* of Corning, New York, ran the story on Thursday, October 3, 1946. As a matter of accuracy, she was 71 at the time, not 65 as the article suggests.

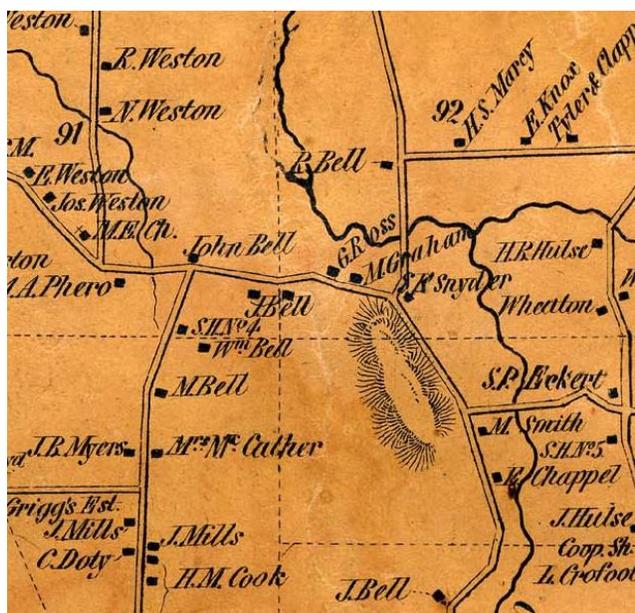
A woman identified as Miss Edna P. Bell, about 65 years of age of 1 Owasco street, Auburn, died suddenly at 7:30, p. m. Wednesday on the Bath Veterans Administration Center bus which was en route to the Veterans Home. It is believed that Miss Bell was on her way to visit a veteran stationed there. The body was taken from the bus at the termination of its run to the Fagan Funeral Home and will be removed to Auburn today. County Coroner James J. Sanford investigated and issued a verdict of death from natural causes.

The speculation that she was "on her way to visit a veteran" is the only hint anywhere that Edna might have had a life outside her nuclear family, and there's no real evidence of it. Pearl's obituary had referenced marriage, work, friends, relatives (including Edna) and church involvement, but Edna's, in the October 7 *Citizen-Advertiser*, said nothing at all about relationships or activities: no deceased parents or sister, no friends and no church. She was, and remains, an enigma.

Funeral of Miss Edna Bell: Funeral services for Miss Edna P. Bell of 1 Owasco Street were held at 2:30 o'clock on Saturday afternoon at the funeral home of Rolling & Rolling in Owasco Street. Rev. Robert S. Stansfield, pastor of First Baptist Church, officiated. There were many flowers. Burial was in the family plot in Soule Cemetery.

Andrew Jackson: Democrats of the 19th century revered President Andrew Jackson as a fierce advocate for democracy and the “common man”, so in 1847, two years after Jackson’s death, John, an active Democrat, named their third son after him, and Julia went along with it. Yet, beneath the hype, two facts about Jackson stand out for historians: 1) he owned slaves until the day he died, and 2) he considered Native Americans sub-human and both promoted and enforced the Indian Removal Act that drove them from their ancestral homelands, resulting in thousands of deaths. John had been a Party member for years, and both he and Julia could read, so they knew all that when their son came along. There’s no telling how the son himself felt about it, but at 23, he was going by the more rakish “A.J.” (cf. *1870 Census*). We’re going with “Andrew”.

As a small boy, Andrew could see School House No. 4 in a copse across the field from their McDonald Road farm (cf. **Map 6D**, 1853, right). His older siblings all attended there, but he himself probably did not because, when he was five, his family moved to his grandparents’ homestead farm (cf. “J.Bell”, bottom), which was a bit closer to S.H. No. 5 (lower right). Still, if his middle siblings, Mary Jane and John W, continued at S.H. No. 4, then he and his brother, Ethan, might have gone there, too. In 1859, in any event, the new farm and S.H. No. 5 became part of the new town of Throop, while S.H. No. 4 became part of Montezuma.



In December 1867, 20 year-old Andrew and his brother George each put in \$1,000 to buy their parents’ west tenant farm, which George’s family had recently vacated. There’s no way to prove it, but Andrew might then have rented George’s half and farmed the entire plot. Eleven months later, though, he sold his half to George – which, as it happened, was about when he began courting Phoebe M. Shear. Her first name (pronounced *Fee’bee*) honored her maternal grandmother, who spelled it “Phebe”, and though “Phoebe” was common at the time, census enumerators usually mangled it, either switching the ‘o’ and the ‘e’ or just omitting the ‘o’, as her grandmother had. One enumerator tried “Pheby” and another wrote “Febie”. Literacy was at low ebb.

Over in Phelps, thirty miles west of Auburn, her father, Henry Shear, had been a widowed farmer with three children when he married Caroline Couch from Kelloggsville in 1850. Phoebe arrived in September the following year, thus becoming “Phoebe from Phelps”. Then Caroline died in 1856, leaving middle-aged and twice-widowed Henry-the-farmer with a five-year old daughter to rear. He opted instead to send her off to Caroline’s sister, Melvina Couch Weston – the same Melvina (how many could there be?) who later entered the conflicted real estate deal with John and Julia. For Henry, it was the obvious solution: Phoebe’s middle name was “Melvina”.

Aunt Melvina and her husband, Reuben, had no children of their own and farmed near other Westons on what eventually became Old Mentz Church Road. The church itself was a quarter-mile to the south (*cf. Map 6D*). The Bells and Westons alike had been involved in organizing and sustaining it, and it's all but certain that's where Phoebe and Andrew came to know and grow fond of one another – flirting during the hymns and so forth.

She was no more than 18 when they married, and Andrew, in his early twenties. By June 1870, they were renting the upper flat of No. 5 Lewis Street in Auburn (*cf. photo*), with the family of a young “bonnet bleacher” named Morse living below.⁵ Urbanized Auburn offered a certain seclusion, where the newlyweds could bask in their honeymoon glow a good five miles from the prying eyes of their families, if not the family downstairs. The question isn't why they moved there, but how they afforded it.



The 1870 Census listed Andrew as a farmer, but – like a cowboy without cows – he was a farmer without a farm. That changed in December when he bought some of the same land from George they had shared two years before. He and Phoebe then bought and sold parcels another half dozen times in three years, including the field he had gazed across to School House No. 4 as a young boy (*cf. Map 6D*). By the spring of 1871, they owned 60 acres and probably occupied the west tenant house – now owned by George – so they could raise crops that summer. What they grew is open to question. The next spring (1872), they sold 15 of their 60 acres to Andrew's sister and brother, Ann and Ethan, leaving themselves a manageable farm and \$1,068 to pay off debts. Organizing their money was crucial because (surprise!) a baby was on the way. Phoebe gave birth to a son on June 18, 1872, and they named him Frederick Weston Bell.

Then things went awry. Andrew's uncle, Will, Jr., had retired from farming and was living with his second wife, Mary, over in the village of Montezuma. They had taken to investing their substantial nest egg in farmland around the area, and it appears Andrew and Phoebe asked them to buy their 45 acres as a short-term investment, which they did that fall (1872). Andrew and Phoebe then reclaimed the parcel the following spring, repaying William and Mary with interest, and then, two weeks later, re-sold the same 45 acres – the only property they owned at that point – to his brother George. By the spring of 1873, they were out of farming for good and living with baby Frederick at 13 John Street in Auburn. Christmas came and then the New Year, and on January 25, 1874, Andrew up and died.

Auburn Daily Advertiser January 26, 1874

BELL.—In this city, Sunday, January 25, 1874, Andrew J. Bell, in the 27th year of his age. Funeral will take place from No. 13 John street, Wednesday, at 10 o'clock A. M. The remains will be taken to the old Mentz meeting house, where the funeral services will be had. The remains will be interred in the Old Mentz Burying Ground

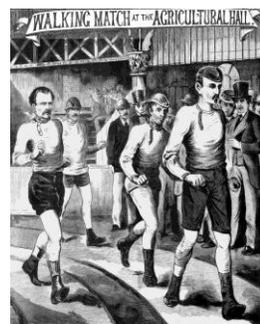
Apart from the newspaper, the only references to his demise are his tombstone and various city directories, in which Phoebe came to list herself as his widow. They held one service in the city and one in the country so mourners wouldn't have to travel far in the cold. Then they buried him beside his sister Nancy in the "Old Mentz" churchyard, just across the field from where he was born and within sight of the only farmland he ever owned – most of it, more than once.

Shortly after the funeral, Phoebe and Fred moved in with Melvina and Reuben, who had retired from farming and were living a few blocks away at 14 Fulton Street. Another of Phoebe's maternal aunts, 65-year old Electa Couch, moved in with the others later that year. Phoebe and Aunt Electa, with Fred in tow, then took rooms together on Market Street for a short time before moving to 27 E. Genesee. Five years later (1880), they went in together to buy a house at 22 Dill Street, which has long since disappeared.



To forestall gossipy speculation about her having a child and no husband, Phoebe often listed herself in city directories only as Andrew's widow, but, in 1879, added that she was a "milliner", a maker and/or seller of women's hats, which virtually all women wore whenever they went out. She wouldn't have inherited much, so she needed to work, and the ongoing demand for stylish women's hats ensured a reliable, if modest, income. While she was off earning money (assuming she worked outside their home), Aunt Electa kept house and looked after Fred.

Life perked up in early September 1882, when they sold the Dill Street "premises" for \$2,500 and bought a house at 172 State Street for the same price. Phoebe listed herself as Andrew's widow again in the 1883 city directory, but also became involved that year with Prussian-born Fred Loos (b 1847), who had been running a "hair dressing parlor" downtown since arriving from Germany in 1863. The parlor was in the same building as the Auburn Savings Bank at 93 Genesee Street – some years on the floor above and others in the basement below. When on the lower level, he also offered private bathing facilities, a familiar service in cities before homes had indoor plumbing. In fact, Loos must have bathed there himself, because there were no *en suite* bathrooms in any of the residential hotels where he had lived – the Osborne House, St. James, and European. Referring to himself as a "tonsorial artist", he also was involved in several organizations and activities around town, including "pedestrianism", i.e. race walking (*cf. illustration*).



By 1884, Loos had married Phoebe and moved into the house on State Street. It had no bathroom, either, but it came with a kitchen and ready-made family. From that point on, a regular challenge for Phoebe and Aunt Electa (apart from sharing the privy out back with a man) was to clarify who they meant when saying the name "Fred". To avoid confusion, we're calling the elder one "Loos". Local papers described him as "genial" – having a warm and cheerful manner – which must have helped in bonding with 11 year-old Fred, to whom he became a stepfather.

Loos then went on running his hair parlor, and Phoebe might have worked for pay, too. She and Electa, who was in her mid-seventies by then, also kept house. Like most boys, Fred left school after the 8th grade to begin wage labor, although he got a late start because he repeated the seventh or eighth grade. By 1889, he had joined the rest of the household in getting his name into the city directory: first as a mechanic and, then, a machinist. (*The Evening Auburnian*, July 22, 1884; *Auburn Bulletin*, July 20, 1887; 1888 *Auburn City Directory*)

Phoebe had involved Fred in the larger Bell clan from the day he was born, so Aunt Melvina's 1887 lawsuit had little, if any, effect on those relationships. At age 20, he gave a damask quilt as a wedding gift to his cousin, Katie Bell, and her groom, David (*cf. George*), and a news item in October 1897 said he and his uncle, John Barlow (one of the lawsuit targets), had visited Montezuma together. Phoebe had known the Bells since age five, married Andrew at eighteen and given birth to Fred at twenty, all of which made her an honored member of the family. Fred, as Andrew's only child, had an even more elevated place in their hearts.

He came to have an elevated place in someone else's heart, too. On December 2, 1893, then 21-year old Fred married 16-year old Anna Belle Pierce in Syracuse, whereupon she became "Anna Belle Bell" ... whose mother-in-law was Phoebe from Phelps. Her background remains hidden, but that year's city directory listed a dressmaker named "Belle Pierce" as a boarder at 170 State, right next to Fred's house. A year earlier, she had lived up the street. The newlyweds waited six months before posting this cryptic announcement in the *Auburn Argus* of June 8, 1894:

The marriage of Fred W. Bell and Miss Anna B. Pierce, both of Auburn, which was consummated in Syracuse last December, is just made public.

Travelling 30 miles to Syracuse to marry and then delaying the announcement implies they eloped and kept it a secret. That enabled Anna to finish high school, which she did right as the notice appeared. Well into the 20th century, schools commonly expelled female students who married for fear they'd create a distraction – as if raging hormones didn't already do that. By the time she graduated, though, Anna was three months pregnant, so announcing they already had been married six months was more than just happy news. It was an assertion of moral propriety.

She gave birth November 29, 1894 to a son they dubbed Myrnice (rhymes with 'furnace') Loos Bell, thereby condemning him to a lifetime of spelling his name for everyone else. The 1905 Census listed him as "Merst". His middle name, of course, honored Fred Loos, but the inspiration for "Myrnice" is long lost. He might have been the first Cayuga County native ever to acquire it. In fact, over the next century, fewer than five families anywhere in America, in any given year, bestowed that name on their unsuspecting sons. Yet, just three years after Myrnice Loos Bell entered the world, another Auburn couple named their son "Myrnice Loos Titus". We have no idea why. In time, each of those Myrnices passed the name on to a child of his own, like passing the torch ... or the family curse.

Aunt Electa died at age 88 on July 19, 1897, leaving her modest estate to Phoebe and the younger Fred.⁶ After a service in the State Street house they processed southeast to Kelloggsville and interred her alongside Phoebe's grandparents and other Couch relatives. Fred and Anna already had moved elsewhere, so upon returning, Phoebe and Loos were alone in their house for the first time in their thirteen-year marriage. The adjustment was harder for Phoebe.

Electa had been the third Couch sister, after Caroline and Melvina, to serve as Phoebe's mother figure, and the one most involved in her life as an adult. Following Andrew's death, she had provided companionship and childcare so Phoebe could earn a living, and then stuck around as Loos expanded Phoebe's world. Two years into their marriage, an Auburn paper said, "Mr. and Mrs. Fred Loos have returned from a visit to Washington, D.C. While there, they visited General Abbott and family." (*Auburn Daily Advertiser, October 29, 1886*) For Phoebe, who had never travelled more than thirty miles from her birthplace, it had been a wondrous experience; but then life had become normal again, with daily responsibilities in unspectacular Auburn – and Electa had been there to help her get through.

Now Electa was dead, Fred and Anna had married and moved on, and Loos was pursuing a wide range of interests outside while Phoebe focused on housework and visiting now-widowed Aunt Melvina a few blocks away. Phoebe's name only appeared in the news when she was celebrating Melvina's birthday or taking her on visits to see others. Although the Wall M.E. Church was a few blocks away, no record has surfaced to show Phoebe was involved there. She might have gone to horse and pedestrian races with Loos now and then, and enjoyed the company of neighbors and other friends, but for the most part, her life was low-key.

Loos, by contrast, was active in both the Elks' Club and the German Democratic Phalanx. The Elks promoted "charity, justice, brotherly love and fidelity" while the Phalanx provided camaraderie and mutual support among German immigrants. As a competitor in "pedestrian" races (i.e., speed walking), he also would have known both Will Hoagland (Auburn's "world champion pedestrian") and Hoagland's brother-in-law, W.H. Bell, a first cousin of Andrew. Loos later invested in racehorses and was a familiar figure at tracks in the area. At the close of the 19th century, he left barbering for a while to open a saloon over on North Street, then moved to managing the poolroom at the Osborne House – Auburn's once gloried hotel. He might also have been involved in a church of some kind – Lutheran perhaps – but his saloon and pool hall enterprises, along with gambling on horses, make one thing abundantly clear: he was no Methodist.

Everything changed on Wednesday, August 26, 1903, when quiet, unobtrusive Phoebe died of causes unknown. They held her service there at the house on State Street the following Saturday, amid "beautiful and profuse" floral tributes, before heading over to the Fort Hill Cemetery. She had been just 52, exactly twice the age Andrew had been at the time of his death in 1874.

The State Street house then went to Fred and Anna, and two years later (1905), Loos headed to St. Joseph, Missouri, to be near his newly widowed sister, Charlotte Loos Gernandt, and brother,

Ferdinand, who himself was a barber. He was a month shy of his 65th birthday when he died there at his sister's home on July 28, 1910. She and other family members then had his body returned to Auburn, where Fred and Anna, along with Loos's impressive array of old friends, held a funeral and buried him next to Phoebe. His Will, filed in Auburn in 1905, referred to Fred Bell as his "step-son" and named him sole beneficiary and executor of his estate. Comparing Phoebe's obituary to his illustrates their difference in social status. (*cf. also Endnote 7*)

FUNERAL OF MRS. LOOS.

The funeral of Mrs. Fred Loos was held this afternoon at her late home, and was largely attended by sympathizing friends. The floral tributes were beautiful and profuse, some being sent from Lima, Ohio, St. Joseph, Mo. and Rochester.

The family have the sympathy of a host of friends in their bereavement. Burial was made in Fort Hill.

FUNERAL OF LATE FRED LOOS

The funeral of the late Fred Loos, who died on Thursday in St. Joseph, Mo., where he has resided for the past decade, was held here yesterday afternoon from the Tallman undertaking parlors in Clark street in the presence of so many friends and fellow members of the Elks fraternity that all could not be accommodated inside the building. The service was conducted by Rev. Arnold S. Yantis, chaplain for the Elks, and there were vocal numbers by the Elks' quartette composed of Messrs. M. A. Hanlon, Joseph Kilmer, Nelson L. Drummond and Allan D. Stout. The Elks attended in a body, over 100 being present. The bearers were E. J. Jewhurst, C. Delos Stokes, William H. Hotchkiss, John Kaiser, Henry Mott and Henry W. Brixius.

The remains, followed by the members of the Elks and many friends, were taken to Fort Hill cemetery where the Elks' ritual was followed in the committal services. There were many beautiful floral tributes.

The St. Joseph News and Times of Friday last contained the following:

The St. Joseph News and Times of Friday last contained the following:

"Fred Loos, 65 years old, a barber, died of heart trouble at 7:30 o'clock last night at the home of his sister, Mrs. William Germandt, 309 North Seventeenth street.

"Dr. W. F. Schmid, the attending physician, said that death was superinduced by the extreme heat.

"Loos had been in bad health for some time, and had not been at work. He was employed in the Hotel Robidoux shop and yesterday morning he went there to be shaved. While conversing with his associates he complained of feeling distressed.

"About 5 o'clock in the afternoon Loos, who had been sitting in the yard at his sister's home, went to the house to get a drink. It was noticed that he staggered as he walked, and he was assisted to his room. He rapidly became worse and the physician was called, but death soon followed.

"Loos had been in St. Joseph about five years. He is survived by a brother and one sister, Valentine Loos, of Germany, and Mrs. Germandt.

"The body will be taken to Auburn, N. Y., for burial, leaving here at 6:50 o'clock this evening. He was a widower and his wife is buried at Auburn."

Fred and Anna had moved around some by then. They were with his family on State Street when their son Myrnicie arrived in 1894, but then Fred became a prison supervisor and they moved to 160½ Seymour. Four years later, they were living on Castle Street in Geneva, 30 miles to the west, where Fred managed the local Sennett Creamery, selling things like eggs, butter, and cheese. It was part of a chain centered in Auburn’s suburb of Sennett, with other outlets in Auburn and Rochester. After a couple of years, though, Fred’s creamery in Geneva went bust.

Returning to Auburn by 1902, they found a flat at 79 Seymour Street (up the street from their former place) and Fred resumed his job as a gas fitter and plumber. After Phoebe died in 1903, they moved to the house on

Fred W. Bell, for the past three years with the Citizens' Light & Power Company, has purchased the interest of W. H. Burtless in the Sennett Creamery Company at the corner of North and Market streets.

State Street, and two years later, they took another shot at a Sennett Creamery franchise, buying the one at 42 North Street. Fred became a licensed “milkman” and the 1906 directory listed him as the proprietor. By the time the directory came out, though, they already had closed and sold out to the rival Auburn Creamery. As if failing twice weren’t enough, the new owner sued both Fred and Anna, along with their lawyer L.K.R. Laird and even Laird’s wife, claiming the quit-claim deed executed by Laird and acknowledged by the Bells was fraudulent. The newspapers never explained the allegation or revealed the outcome, but did say Fred and Anna already had lost a judgment of \$557.18 concerning the dairy products themselves. Auburn had more than 30,000 residents by then, affording some anonymity, but there was no hiding from reports like that. (*cf. News clipping: Auburn Citizen, October 19, 1905*)

The bleakness continued the following year, when Fred’s former employer, the Auburn Gas Company, secured a \$10.13 judgment against him for unpaid bills (the equivalent of \$2,800 today). That showed up in the papers, too. Finishing off his legal adventures, the County Court named him to its November 1907 panel of trial jurors. At least he was familiar with the system by then. The next year, Auburn’s City Directory listed Fred with no address, saying only that he had “removed to California”.

In truth, he, Anna and Myrnicie had “removed” to Florida, finding their way to an unincorporated area on Biscayne Bay, called “Lemon City” in celebration of its chief product. The City of Miami soon annexed it and, after thriving for most of the 20th century, it became an economically depressed neighborhood in the twenty-first. In 1895, though, a year before Miami’s incorporation and thirteen before the Bells’ arrival, it was still full of promise. It had 300 residents that year, along with two hotels, three general stores, a barbershop, real estate office, bakery, sponge warehouse, a few saloons, a restaurant, blacksmith shop, livery stable, post office, sawmill and photo studio – which was a lot of enterprise for a population that small. After Fred, Anna and Myrnicie showed up in 1908, it also had precisely three residents named Bell.

The 1910 Census identifies Fred as a farmer, which is odd because he’d been a city boy all his life and there’s no record of him ever having worked in that field (so to speak). The census

enumerator also managed to spell “Myrnicce” with an ‘e’ instead of a ‘y’, rename Anna Belle “Isabel” and make her five years younger than she was, so accuracy wasn’t a strong point. Given their locale, labeling Fred a “farmer” probably meant he was a fruit grower. They were doing well enough, in any event, to afford a trip back to Auburn for Loos’s funeral that year (1910), prompting this awkward and cryptic note in the *Auburn Citizen* of June 15:

**Mr. and Mrs. Fred W. Bell and son
of Maimi, Florida, formerly of this
city, are the guests of friends in this
city.**

Back in Florida, Fred listed himself as a “trucker” in the 1916 Lemon City Directory, hauling his own produce, no doubt. Myrnicce, meanwhile, had left school after the ninth grade to enter the exciting field of “towel supplies”. He and his parents were still the only Bells in Lemon City’s directory and among just a few in Miami *per se*. That changed dramatically following World War I, when other northerners flocked there to begin life anew.

Myrnicce was twenty-two and eligible for the draft when the U.S. entered the war in 1917. His draft card said he had grey eyes and dark brown hair, and characterized his physique as “short” and “stout”. The tables in use at the time defined “short” as less than 5’6”, and “stout” as north of 150 pounds, so he might have been anything from muscle bound to morbidly obese. He had moved on from “towel supplies” by then to become “proprietor” of a café called the Bell-Jar Coffee Company, and he applied for a deferment based on his “business and occupation”. The Army, however, decided running a café wasn’t critical to the war effort, and he was in uniform by October 6, 1917. The following June, he headed to Europe as a private with the 124th Infantry, and returned as a sergeant a year later. His transport, the U.S.S. Mongolia, arrived in Hoboken, New Jersey, from Brest, France, July 30, 1919. There’s no indication he suffered any battle wounds, so whatever his physique when he went in, it was probably better when he came out.

His father, meanwhile, had become a “retail merchant”, having either founded or acquired the Columbia Tire Company in Lemon City. He was the owner, but listed himself in city directories of the 1920s as the treasurer. Myrnicce appeared soon afterward as the secretary and general manager. Fred and Anna lived on Elmira, then 68th Street, while the business was at 122-124 NW 1st Street – a double lot that must have included a service garage, storefront and offices. The Miami-Dade Cultural Center now occupies the site, including the Miami Art Museum and main branch of the Public Library – a bit larger than the tire store.

From the 1920s through 1940s, Miami’s population increased by an average of 56,000 people every five years, and the Bells’ tire business expanded along with it. It did so well that, in 1927, Fred and Anna built a 4,200 square foot home at 5932 Sixth Street N.E., valued at \$20,000 – almost five times that of the average home in Florida. They also went on a cruise that year, returning to Miami from Nassau, Bahamas, on July 12 aboard the SS. M.V. Ena K. (*U.S. Immigration Authorities*). Two years later, the stock market crashed and, by 1940, the value of their house

had dropped by exactly half to \$10,000. By 2019, though, it had become a southern Florida classic, listing for almost two million dollars. (*cf. photo, below*)

Anna died in Dade County in September 1965 at the age of 88, and Fred followed in January 1968 at age 95. Despite the failure of their dairy business 60 years earlier and the later challenges of the Great Depression, they had moved forward and lived well. Their names have yet to surface on cemetery search sites, so they might have opted for cremation.

Immediately after his discharge, Myrnice had stayed at the YMCA, then bought a house on 37th Street and married Vera Estelle High in 1924. Five years later, they moved to 2064 Prairie Avenue in Miami Beach, a home that's now valued at more than three million (*cf. bottom photo*). They had two children, Myrnice Jr. (Myrnie) and Barbara Ann, but divorced in 1942. Myrnice was forty-eight at that point, and nine years passed before he married Dorothy May Dotson Milne, who, like him obviously, had been through it before. They died in 1972 and 1987 respectively, and now lie next to Dorothy's parents in a Newark, Ohio, cemetery.



Fred and Anna Bell home – Miami, FL



Myrnice and Vera Bell home – Miami Beach, FL

Ethan Allen: Ethan, the youngest of John and Julia’s brood, came along in 1850. The first farmland he owned appears to have been the 15¼ acres he and his sister Ann bought from their brother Andrew in 1872 (*cf. “Andrew”*). They paid \$70 per acre and, two years later, sold it to their brother, George, for the same amount. What they did with it in the meantime is anyone’s guess. Both Ethan and Ann lived with John and Julia well into adulthood and each brought his/her spouse to live at the homestead farm. Ethan’s wife, Azelia “Zelia” Wallace, whom he married in 1876, was a younger sister of Maggie Wallace, who had married his elder brother, John Wesley (*cf. above*).

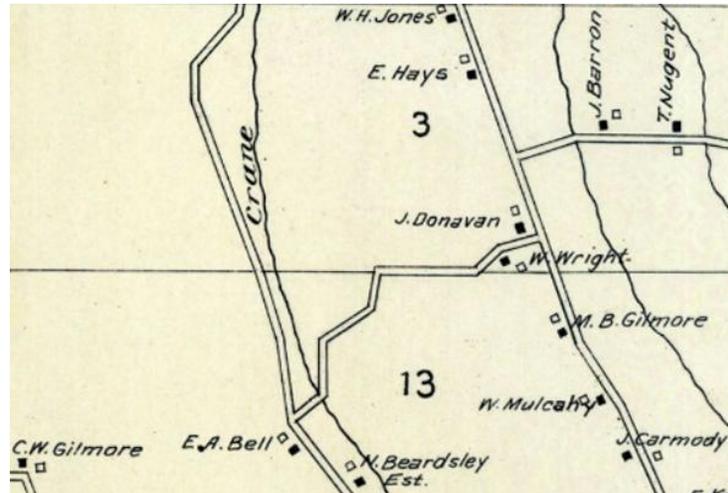
Around the time he married, Ethan bought 11 acres at the western end of the family homestead and also rented 135 acres from his father’s cousin, Dewitt, who had come to own the Gilmore homestead immediately south of the Bells (*cf. Map 6A on p. 2, plus Chp 8*). By 1880, Ethan was tilling more acreage than most neighbors, including Dewitt, and had a substantial investment in implements and livestock, owning seven horses, for example, compared to Dewitt’s three. The parcel he rented from Dewitt had an estimated value of \$100 per acre, but the cost to Ethan was a set percentage of whatever he produced – and he produced a lot. He also paid \$150 in wages to farm hands on a gross income of \$1,692. By comparison, David Manro down the road had a gross income of \$2,139, the highest in the neighborhood, but he also had twice the livestock to feed and shelter, hence more expenses. (*Source: New York Non-Population Census, June 1880*)

Zelia gave birth to their first child, Thurman, that summer of 1880, but he doesn’t appear on any census. He arrived after the enumerator came by in June, and died September 1. Whether by a coincidence of timing or as a way to escape their grief, Zelia and Ethan picked up and moved by the end of the month, heading to a sixty-acre farm on the far side of Batavia, some 90 miles to the west. They also transferred their membership from the Mentz Church and never returned there (*Rev. William Benger, Mentz Church Annual Report, 1882*). Then, just a year later, they sold the Batavia farm for \$5,500 (*cf. The Progressive Batavian, January 5, 1883*) and headed back – not to a farm, but to Auburn, where they rented a flat at 52 Elizabeth Street and Ethan landed a job as an assistant undertaker. Like most undertakers, this one also made furniture, as noted in this advertisement on the back cover of Auburn’s 1883 City Directory:

H.P. BENDER & CO.
FURNISHING
UNDERTAKERS!
5 State St.,
AUBURN, N.Y.

Within a few months, Zelia delivered their second child, a boy they named Charles George, whom everyone came to call “Charlie”. Then, in October, Ethan left the lively world of undertaking to buy a farm, paying the then-hefty sum of \$9,200. It was immediately south of Dewitt’s place on what had become “Bell Road” (*cf. “E.A. Bell”, lower left on Map 6D, below*). Dewitt’s brother, Charles Wesley Gilmore, farmed across the field to the west and, just to the north, Rice Road zigzagged east over to present-day Northrup Road, where Ethan’s Gilmore and Wright

cousins worked their own ancestral homesteads (*cf. Chp 9*). Rice Road now extends west from Northrup only as far as the 90-degree bend on Map 6D, but the remnants of its wandering path down to Bell Road (now Donovan) remain visible in satellite photos. Three years after moving in, Ethan and Zelia welcomed their third and last child, Edith M., who arrived two days before Christmas 1886. Her middle initial might have stood for “Mary”, the name of Zelia’s mother.



Map 6D – 1904 Throop (Donovan, Rice and Northrup Roads)

When they first returned from Batavia, they had attended Auburn’s First M.E. Church and then transferred to the Wall M.E. Church by the prison. After moving to the farm, they transferred again – not to the Mentz Church where Ethan’s birth family attended, but to the Fosterville M.E. Church, about the same distance to the southwest as the Mentz Church was to the northwest. Their son Charlie became a full member there in 1897, and Edith, in 1902. Then, in 1906, they all transferred to the Wall Church (*Directory of Fosterville M.E. Church, 1906*). For an entire family to switch churches after 20 years while staying in the same home would be noteworthy in any case, but the context here adds weight to the issue. Churches play an important role in the lives of rural folk, and before the advent of motorized transportation and electronic mass media, the role was all encompassing. They offered moral grounding, purpose, community, and things to do in an isolated environment. It could take a while to reach them on foot or by horse and buggy, and reaching a far more distant one required real motivation – especially in winter. The Wall Church was eight miles from the Bells’ farm, five times farther than Fosterville. Buggies and carriages travelled 8-10 miles per hour, so instead of taking 12 minutes to reach their church of 20 years, they were now travelling about an hour each way to a new one. Something significant had happened. We just don’t know what.

Charlie and Edith were still living with their parents in 1910, as was Zelia’s 85-year old mother, Mary Wallace. Under “Employment” on that year’s census, the enumerator listed Ethan as an employer and Charlie as a farm laborer, but wrote “None” for Zelia and Edith, and left Mary’s blank. It was the prevailing view of female roles at the time. Unlike planting and reaping, the work allotted to women (cooking, cleaning, childrearing, chicken wrangling, etc.) brought little or no cash into the household and so, in the eyes of men at least, didn’t count as “employment”.

Zelia's mother died in 1912 and, in 1914, Edith married on February 6 and Charlie, on October 26. Their spouses then moved onto the farm with them, as Zelia had when she married Ethan. Edith's groom was Merrill Charles Seitz and Charlie's bride was Edith May Hodges, so there were now two couples in the house with the names Charles and Edith. It worked out because Merrill used his first name and Charlie's bride went by "Edith May". Another twist was that Merrill was 20 and his bride Edith 27 – the same ages Edith's great-grandparents, William Bell and Mary Gilmore, had been when they married in Ireland more than a century earlier. Her grandparents, John and Julia, had been more typical at 27 and 19 respectively. Her aunt, Ann Bell, on the other hand, was 42 when she married 20-year old John Barlow. Limited social options tempered social norms (*cf. Chp 1 and "Anne", above*)

The Citizen October 28, 1914

Hodges—Bell

A very pretty wedding took place at noon today when Miss Edith Hodges, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Hodges of Aurelius, was married at the home of her parents to Charles Bell, son of Mr. and Mrs. Ethan Bell of Throop. Rev. G. E. Campbell of Wall Street M. E. Church of this city performed the ceremony. About 40 guests were present from Auburn, Syracuse, Oneida, Medina and Throop.

To the strains of the Lohengrin wedding march played by Miss Bernetta Nagell the couple passed into the parlor where the ceremony was performed. The bride was attended by Mrs. Edith Feitz and M. C. Feitz acted as best man.

The bride was charming in a gown of white crepe de chene trimmed with blue. She carried a bridal bouquet of white roses. The bridesmaid was attired in old rose crepe de chene and carried pink rosebuds.

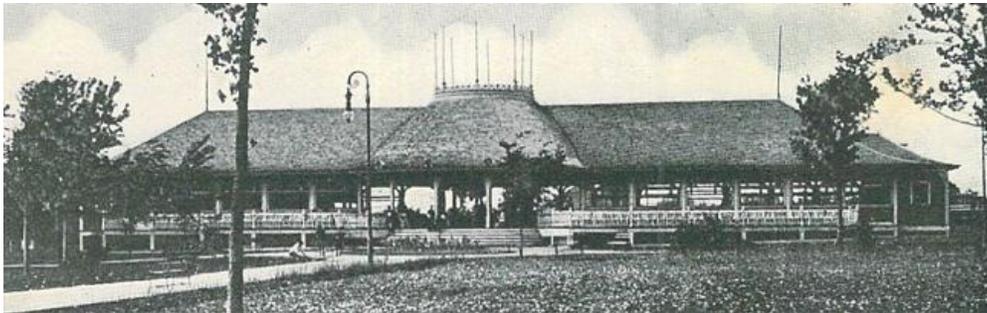
Immediately following the ceremony the couple left for parts unknown. After November 15 they will be at home to their many friends at their newly furnished home in Throop.

Ethan and Zelia retired from farming sometime between 1915 and 1920 and moved to 76 Nelson Street in Auburn, but kept their post office box (no.11) in Throopsville. Zelia was 73 when she died at home on March 18, 1923 and, following her funeral at the Newkirk "Home for Services" in Auburn, they buried her at the Fort Hill Cemetery. Ethan then went back to the farm and lived with Charlie, Edith May and their children until his own death at 86 in 1937. The pastor from Wall Street Methodist then officiated at his funeral and his burial next to Zelia at Fort Hill. Three of his six pallbearers were nephews by Zelia's sister, Maria Wallace Lasher.



A Closing Note

On the chance these stories have failed to convey the abiding love and interconnectedness of the people described, you may find it worthwhile to read the news clipping (*below*) about the 1905 “Bell Family Reunion” at Lakeside Park, overlooking Owasco Lake on Auburn’s southeast side. They were so organized, they elected officers, and so Methodist, they joked about not dancing at the affair. Their last names included Bell, Wiggins, Wethey, Wright, Fowler, Gilmore, Sinclair, Keeler, and Barlow. The photos here show the pavilion and lakeside park about the time they gathered, while the article below describes the event and lists the attendees, many of whom you now know. Someone, somewhere, probably has a worn, dust-covered album stored away with a group photo from the event. With luck, we might even see it someday.



Bell Family Reunion.

The second annual reunion of the Bell family was held at Lakeside park on Saturday, August 19.

All present were in the best of spirits and enjoyed themselves to the utmost. After a bountiful collation, to which all did justice, the following officers were elected: President, Mrs. E. A. Bell; secretary, Mrs. D. D. Wiggins; historian, L. C. Bell; Committee on arrangements, E. A. Bell, J. W. Fowler, W. S. Wethey.

The strong wind preventing the usual boatrips and the religious training too strong for dancing to be indulged in, reminiscences were exchanged until a late hour when the party disbanded, thoroughly satisfied with the day spent together.

Among those present were Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Bell, Mr. Charles Bell, Miss Edith Bell, Mr. and Mrs. J. W. Fowler, Messrs Leslie Fowler, Lewis Fowler, Mrs. Mary B. Gilmore, Robert Sinclair, jr., Mr. and Mrs. William Wright, Miss May Wright, of Throop; G. W. Bell, L. C. Bell, Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Wethey, Howard E. Wethey, Misses Edna and Inez Wethey, of Port Byron; Mr. and Mrs. D. D. Wiggins, Llewellyn Wiggins, Miss Evelyn Keeler; Mr. and Mrs. John Barlow, J. W. Bell, Miss Pearl Bell, Miss Echna Bell, William Fowler, of Auburn.

ENDNOTES – Chapter 6

¹ Official documents appear to be in conflict as to John's birthplace, but one of them either is in error or is referring to another person of the same name. John and/or Julia identified his birthplace as Herkimer County on three separate New York State Census reports (1855, 1865, and 1875), and his obituary adds the detail that it was Herkimer County's Town of Schuyler. On the other hand, the Register of Deaths for the Town of Montezuma (where John died), includes a "John Bell" whom it says was born in Oneida County's Town of Deerfield (<http://web.archive.org/web/20020215005729/http://www.rootsweb.com/~nycayuga/vitalrecords/modeath.htm>). That record, however, lists a different mother, Abigail Herrington, and a different date of death from what we know with certainty to be the mother and the death date of the John Bell discussed here. It is far more probable that the person who completed the Town's Register of Deaths erred in recording John's information than that all the other records concerning him are wrong. Another example of such errors is the Michigan death certificate of John's daughter, Mary Jane Wright, which lists his name as "John W. Bell", when he, in fact, had no middle name or initial; it was instead his son (Mary Jane's brother), John Wesley Bell, who used that initial.

² Although Julia often (perhaps always) included her middle name "Ann" in her signature, we're leaving it off in most references here for the sake of simplicity and clarity. To identify her birth family, though we need to keep her full name in mind and also link several bits of seemingly unrelated data. The reliability and precision of the data vary and, in some cases, require interpretation and speculation. The evidence and reasoning underlying the assertion that Julia's parents were Robert and Elizabeth "Betsy" Glasgow of Lewis County, New York, include the following:

- **Obituary:** Julia's obituary says she was born September 7, 1811, in Lewis County, New York, and that "her parents later moved to Cayuga County and settled in the Town of Mentz." Other sources, including U.S. Census reports, confirm her birth in Lewis County within that timeframe, but there is no evidence supporting the contention that her parents ever moved to Cayuga County. In fact, there is nothing to show that anyone who could have been her parent ever had permanent residence there. *Sources: 1890 Obituary for Julia Glasgow Bell, U.S. Census reports, New York Census reports, Church records, Cayuga County Deeds, Cayuga County Maps, Cayuga County Biographies, Cayuga County Atlases, Find-A-Grave, and newspapers.*
- **Parents:** Multiple sources show just one family named "Glasgow" (or variations of that spelling) residing in Lewis County, New York, during the first half of the 19th century: Robert Glasgow (1769-1858), his wife Elizabeth "Betsy" Glasgow (1775-1867), their children, daughters-in-law, and direct descendants. Of those, only Robert and Betsy were of sufficient age to be Julia's parents. The 1810 U.S. Census lists Robert as a Lewis County resident that year and other records indicate he had some role in the military there during the War of 1812. Post-1840 records clarify that Betsy had been his wife during that earlier period and had resided with him.

Martinsburg, the village nearest the Glasgows' Lewis County farm, is some 115 miles from Auburn, and the completion of the first segment of the Erie Canal in 1820 would have facilitated travel between those areas. There is abundant evidence that Robert and Betsy remained residents of Lewis County from 1810 onward, but none has yet surfaced to support the statement in Julia's obituary that they (or any other Glasgows old enough to be her parents) later moved to Mentz or anywhere else in Cayuga County.

Tax and baptismal records show the Glasgows were in Montgomery County before moving to Lewis County. They baptized their son, John, at the Reformed Church of

Caughnawaga in Fonda on March 18, 1803, and paid taxes in Canajoharie (a dozen miles from there) the same year. Two years earlier, the Bells had baptized their third son, Will Jr., near a place called Warrenbush (that no longer exists as such), about ten miles from Fonda, and twenty from Canajoharie. No maps have yet surfaced showing the exact location of either family's home during those years. *Sources: U.S. Census; Find-A-Grave; Reformed Church of Caughnawaga, Baptisms, 1797-1823 (per Archives of the Reformed Church in America, New Brunswick, New Jersey, as recorded on Ancestry.com); 1803 Tax Assessment Rolls of Real and Personal Estates, 1799-1804 – Canajoharie, Montgomery County, New York; Tombstone Inscription at Martinsburg Cemetery (Martinsburg, Lewis County, New York); Tombstone Inscription at Lowville Rural Cemetery (Lowville, Lewis County, New York; 1875 New York State Census); Index of Awards on Claims of the Soldiers of the War of 1812.*

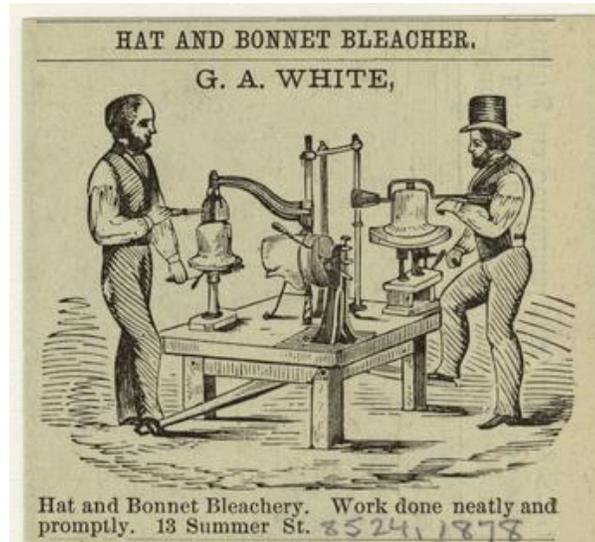
- **Siblings:** U.S. Census records for 1810, 1820, and 1830 (in combination with later census reports, baptismal records, cemetery records, and newspaper accounts) indicate that Robert and Betsy had at least two sons, John (b 1803? NY) and William (b 1806 NY), as well as four daughters: Margaret (b 1795 Ireland), an unidentified second daughter (b 1801-1810 NY), an unnamed third daughter (b 1810-1820 NY) whom I believe was Julia (b 1811 NY), and Nancy Esther (b 1815 NY). The 1865 New York State Census, in fact, notes that Betsy Glasgow (who was 90 years old at that point) had given birth to **11 children**. If true, most of those children remain unidentified and must have died at or soon after birth. The Glasgows' second son, William, later married Elizabeth Archer and they had four children. They named their third child, "Esther Ann" – the middle names of William's sister, Nancy (Esther), and of Julia (Ann) Glasgow Bell. Elizabeth, however, also had a sister named Julia Ann (1819-1893), so she and William each might have chosen the middle name of one sibling of their own – William choosing "Esther" and Elizabeth choosing "Ann". Esther was not a popular name otherwise.
- **Census Format:** U.S. Census records for 1800 through 1840 list only the name of the person designated as "head of household". The enumerators aggregated all other household members according to sex and age, e.g., "# females aged 6 to 10 years" or "# males aged 11 to 15 years". To discern the exact names and birthdates of individual family members, one has to cross-reference the census data from those years with a host of other records, such as baptisms, death certificates, grave markers, biographies, news clippings and later census records. Beginning in 1850, the Census began to include each household member's name, age, and relationship to the "head". Some later editions also listed the number of years a couple had been married and the number of children, if any, a woman had born.
- **Census Error:** The 1830 U.S. Census says the Glasgow household included a male, aged 15 through 19 (i.e., born in the period 1811 through 1815), but not a female. That, however, is inconsistent with prior census reports. My contention is that the enumerator inserted a '1' in the wrong place on the form (i.e., next to "males – 15 thru 19" instead of "females – 15 thru 19") and that the family member in question was, in fact, Julia, who was 19 at the time (b 1811), and who married John Bell the following year. There is no corresponding record, moreover, of anyone other than Julia having been born in Lewis County with the name Glasgow during that five-year period, 1811-1815. Elizabeth Archer (1811-1874) later married the Glasgow's son, William, and thereby became a "Glasgow" born in 1811, but she was still an Archer and living with her parents at the time of the 1830 Census.

- Nancy Glasgow and Mary Jane Bell:** In 1839, Robert and Betsy Glasgow's youngest daughter, Nancy, married Benjamin F. (B.F.) Rood, who was farming near John and Julia Glasgow Bell in the Town of Mentz. Nancy bore two children there before they moved to Burlington, Michigan, southwest of Jackson, in 1844. Twenty years later, they relocated to Wheatland Township in Hillsdale County. Wheatland was immediately east of Adams Township, where John and Julia's daughter, Mary Jane Bell Wright, her husband and several cousins moved in the 1850s and 1860s (*cf. Chp 8, "The Gilmores and the Wrights"*). Upon retiring from active farming, Nancy and B.F. moved to the village of North Adams (pop. less than 400) in Adams Township, a mile from Mary Jane's farm. Nancy and Mary Jane almost certainly attended the same M.E. church in North Adams (there was only one), but the church records were later destroyed in a fire. *Sources: U.S. Census, Michigan Death Certificates, and Find-A-Grave. Nancy Glasgow Rood's death certificate confirms that her parents were Robert and Elizabeth Glasgow of New York.*
- Other Cayuga County Glasgows:** In addition to Julia and Nancy, at least four people named Glasgow (3 males and a female) moved to Cayuga County in the 1830s: Robert (b 1809), William (b 1811), Eliza (1814), and John (b 1814). All four were natives of County Tyrone, Ireland, and the three men, at least, all came from Cookstown, where the Lewis County Glasgows had lived and which is just a few miles from where John Bell's parents were born. William Glasgow arrived in Cayuga County in 1833, Robert in 1835, and John in 1839. Eliza apparently arrived with Robert in 1835.

 - William and John were brothers and Robert and Eliza seem to have been brother and sister. William and Eliza then married in Cayuga County on August 4, 1836, which suggests they were no closer than second cousins.
 - None of the four could have been Julia's siblings because their parents all were in Ireland when Julia was born in America. John and Jane Glasgow, the parents of William and John, didn't arrive in America until 1849, when Julia was 38 years old. Similarly, both Robert (who was two years older than Julia) and Eliza (who was three years younger than Julia) spent their entire childhoods in Ireland, and it's absurd to imagine their parents sailed to America for Julia's birth and then sailed back without her to give birth to Eliza. Robert's daughter, Mary E., moreover, eventually married Julia's son, George (*cf. "George", above*). As with Eliza and William, Mary Glasgow and George Bell could be no closer than second cousins, so Robert and Julia might have been cousins, but could not have been siblings. *Sources: U.S. Census, "Find-A-Grave", Obituary of William Glasgow (1897), and "John Glasgow" in History of Hillsdale County, Michigan (undated)*
- Namesake:** The year after they married, William and Eliza Glasgow (*cf., right*) moved to Niagara County, New York, and from there to Hillsdale County, Michigan, where Eliza soon gave birth to three sons. When their first daughter arrived in 1852, they named her **Julia Ann**. The only Julia Ann known to have been in their sphere up to that point was Julia Ann Glasgow Bell, which supports the notion they were at least close to one another and probably related. NOTE: Some posts on Ancestry.com claim Robert and Betsy Glasgow of Lewis County were Eliza's parents. However, multiple U.S. Census reports and other historical documents make clear that Robert and Betsy were farming in New York before, during, and after Eliza's birth in Ireland in 1814, so she could not have been their daughter. There's a good chance, though, that she was their niece and Julia Glasgow Bell's cousin. (*Portrait: Eliza Glasgow, ca. 1880*)



- 3 John and Julia's daughter, Mary Jane Wright, eventually married and moved to southern Michigan with her husband and several other relatives, which led to her birth family's story appearing in Portrait and Biographical Album of Hillsdale County, Michigan, Chicago: Chapman Brothers, 1888, pp. 850-851
- 4 1875 County Atlas of Cayuga, New York, "From Recent & Actual Surveys And Records - Under The Superintendence Of F.W. Beers"
- 5 A newspaper illustration from 1878 showing hat and bonnet bleachers at work. Source unknown.



6

DEATH OF ELECTA COUCH.

Miss Electa Couch died at the residence of her niece, Mrs. Fred Loos, in State street, last night, in the eighty-ninth year of her age. Miss Couch was familiar to very many residents of the city, being affectionately known as "Aunt Electa." She was the daughter of Captain Joel Couch, one of the earliest settlers of the section, who took up his residence in the town of Niles in the early part of the century, coming here from Saratoga. She was one of 12 children and was born in Niles. She was an estimable old lady and was held in sincere affection by every one who knew her. She is survived by a brother, James, living in Ohio, and Mrs. Melvina Weston of 14 Fulton street, a sister. Funeral services will be held at the residence of Mrs. Loos, No. 172 State street, Wednesday at 9 a. m. Burial will be at Kelloggsville.

