

Holcomb, Beers and Pearce Ancestors

Rushville, New York

My grandmother Ruth Lois Waterman married John Irving Pearce, Jr. in 1923. As a teenager I didn't pay much attention to her stories of ancient ancestors. Fifty years later I have dimly remembered stories and a handful of old photos to weave together this side of the family tree.

How the Holcombs got from Connecticut to New York State

One version of the story goes like this. In the late 1700s, Frederick Winthrop of Windsor, Connecticut, studied an Ontario County (NY) map and decided Canandaigua Lake would be a delightful place. He purchased 300 acres of land and gave it to his only daughter Rebecca, wife of Roderick Holcomb.

Roderick Holcomb (1764-1852) and Rebecca Winthrop (1770-1862) had 14 or 15 children. Mr. Holcomb prevailed on his oldest son, Winthrop, to go out and see the land. Winthrop, age 23, set off in 1812 and hiked 300 miles in nine days from Connecticut to the property on Canandaigua Lake where he cleared two acres, sowed wheat and then headed back home. Winthrop returned in March 1813, cleared more land and built a log cabin at Cook's Point.



Over time, the Holcomb parents and most of the Holcomb children moved to Ontario County.

(Roderick) Judson Holcomb (1804-1881) was one of the first Holcomb children to arrive after his pioneering brother Winthrop. The photo to the left was taken by his son-in-law A. E. Beers.

Judson married Hester Ann Grimes, the daughter of Paul Grimes (1782-1847) who operated a mill in Naples. One of the first children of this marriage was **Christiana Holcomb** (1827-1904).

Judson Holcomb 1804-1881
A.E. Beers, Photographer

The Beers Family also came from Connecticut

The Beers ancestors arrived in New England in 1635. Fast forward to the 1820s when Nehemiah Beers (1781-1857) and his wife Anna moved from Fairfield County, Connecticut, to Middlesex, Yates County, New York and commenced to farm.

One of their children was **Alanson E. Beers** (1823-1880), born at the family farm on Bare Hill. Alanson married Christiana Holcomb in 1847.

The Family of Alanson E. Beers and Christiana Holcomb, Rushville, NY



Beers Home, Rushville, NY

Deeds and historic maps of the Village of Rushville locate the A.E. Beers property off of Gilbert Street on what is today known as Union Street.

The reverse of the photo reads: *(Beers) Aunt Christia's home in Rushville, NY.* Is this photo of the Beers' home?

Alanson was a well-known photographer with a studio in Rushville. Alanson and Christiana had four children:

Hester Ann Beers 1848-1891
Clarence M. Beers 1850-1929
William C. Beers 1857-
Frank Edgar Beers 1867-1941

1876 Advertisement

A.E. Beers, Photographer. All the new styles of Photographs taken. Dealer in Picture Frame, stereoscopes and views. Copying and enlarging a specialty. 3d story, over Catlin & Wisewell's store.

The End Notes has a small gallery of Beers photos gathered from the internet.



His last sickness was very violent from the first and of less than a week in duration. His disease was typhoid pneumonia, occasioning frequent seasons of delirium. He death was peaceful.

The citizens of Rushville and acquaintances, share with the breaved family a sense of the loss they sustain, deeply sympathizing with them in the bereavement.

J.H.R.

Christiana Holcomb Beers was equally lauded by her community in the November 23, 1904 issue of *The Naples News* (Naples, NY).

The death of this much beloved woman occurred at her home in Rushville, Nov. 15th. She had reached the age of 77 years. She is univerally mourned because of her lovely character and many good deeds.

Mrs. Beers was the daughter of Judson and Hester Ann Holcomb and was born in Naples. She married Alanson Beers in 1847 at the age of 20 years. Her early married life was spent on Bare Hill, in Middlesex, but in 1862 the family moved to Rushville, where she has since lived. Four children were given them, three sons and one daughter Hettie who died in 1891. During all of her declining years she had been devotedly cared for by her son F.E. Beers who dwelt with her.

Her life had been one of many vicessitudes, much of joy, much of sorrow, yet borne with marked Christian grace and fortitude. Her sweet forgetfulness of self and solicitude for others can never be forgotten. She was one of the pioneers in the Methodist church at Rushville and its welfare was very dear to her.

She was skilled as a nurse and her soothing presence in the homes of the sick and afflicted made her especially endearing to the community. The emulated her Master and went about doing good and truly merited his approval. "Well done though good and faithful servant."



This photo is of the Beers' daughter **Hester (Hattie) Ann Beers** (1848-1891). She married James Monroe Pearce in 1867.

Reverse reads "Mrs. Hester Beers Pearce"
1st husband - James Monroe Pearce
2nd husband - George Myers

The Pearce Family came from Rhode Island

The *Pearce Genealogy* by Frederick Clifton Pierce, 1888, provides this Pearce line starting in England in 972. I'll fast-forward to the pioneer Michael Pearce of Yates County.

In 1789, Arnold Potter of Rhode Island purchased 42,230 acres in Yates County. This tract was destined to become the townships of Middlesex and Potter. He encouraged his friends back home to come west and by 1790 Michael Pearce/Pierce and his brother-in-law John Walford were engaged in the backbreaking work of homesteading. The story goes that Mr. Potter engaged Michael Pearce and others to survey his new purchase. Cash poor but land rich, Potter paid his surveyors with lots of their choice. Michael Pearce's tract included 400 acres.

Michael Pearce first built a log cabin. In 1808 he put up a frame house. Reportedly it was two and a half stories and contained a center chimney, six fireplaces and a smoke house. The property remained in the family until the mid 1950s and reportedly the house was still standing in 1989.

As a "town father," Pearce held the posts of justice of the peace and assessor. When Michael's sister Lucy Walford died in 1791, he purchased a coffin in Penn Yan and transported it home on a wheelbarrow--15 miles. On a canoe trip to a mill across Canandaigua Lake, he took along a feather bed to barter for mill goods. Michael was talked into operating the first post office in the area. The stage stopped by once a week with a packet of letters. The Pearce home hosted Methodist church services. A room in the house was set aside especially for lodging traveling ministers. Up to 40 people were entertained overnight during the Quarterly Meetings. A select school was taught in the house by Michael's son Asa.

In old age, Michael was awarded a Revolutionary War pension for his service on land and sea back in Rhode Island. A monument in the Pine Corners Cemetery honors the Pearce family and a bronze marker recognizes Michael's Revolutionary War service.



1855 map - Job Pierce current owner of the Pearce Homestead

Of Michael's seven children, John 1794-1824 married Candace Case. They had three children before John died a untimely death: "He was dragged by a horse, with the halter around his waist, which caused his death." The first child of this marriage was Daniel C. Pearce.

Daniel C. Pearce (1818-1889) and Sarah A. Fisher (1818-1884) married January 21, 1841. Daniel was a long-time tailor in Rushville. Their children are John, James, Mary, Guy and Frank.

The second child, **James Monroe Pearce** (1844-1907) was born in Rushville. During the Civil War, James served in the 26th New York Light Artillery. He enlisted on September 3, 1864 and mustered out July 12, 1865 in Mobile, Alabama. At the time of enlistment, he was described as 5" 7", blue eyes, brown hair, occupation as a clerk.

The Family of James Monroe Pearce and Hester Ann Beers

James and Hester (Hettie) Ann Beers married April 2, 1867 (according to an ancestry.com member username eggshorton).

In the 1870 Rushville census, the young couple and their two-year-old son John Irving Pearce, known as Irving, are living in the Beers household.

By the 1875 New York State Census for Rushville, James M. Pearce is absent and Hettie and little Irving are still living in the Beers household. The marriage did not last. Hettie divorced James for adultery. The divorce was granted October 28, 1875. A stipulation of the divorce was that Hettie could remarry at any time but James could not remarry until Hettie had died.

In the 1880 census, 12 year old Irving is living in Rushville with his grandmother Christiana Holcomb Beers. Alanson Beers had died in March of 1880, just prior to the census.

Hettie's mother Christiana Holcomb Beers had a sister Elvira who married Edgar Knickerbocker and lived in Jackson, Michigan. Mr. Knickerbocker died in 1878; A.E. Beers died in 1880. The widowed sisters Elvira and Christiana combined their households in Jackson for the next decade or so. It was in Jackson County on June 20, 1882, that Hettie married her second husband George A. Myers who worked with his father Orville Myers in the family clothing store.

Hester Ann Beers Pearce/Myers died October 2, 1891 at the home of her daughter-in-law's mother Harriet B. Adams, 194 East 25th Street, Chicago, Illinois, at age 42, debilitated from hepatitis. Irving Pearce had brought his mother to Chicago just prior to his marriage. Hester died seven months after the March 11, 1891 marriage of her only child to Frances Emma Adams. Hester is buried in Jackson, Michigan.

And what of James Monroe Pearce? After he and Hettie divorced, James is found in 1880 living in Syracuse with his parents. On October 29, 1885 he married Margaret D. Parkhurst and lived with her family in Clockville, Madison County, New York. They had one child, Mable Alice Pearce (1887-1972; married William Lea Schultz 1886-1951).

James Pearce, a farmer who with his wife and daughter, Miss Matel, resided on a farm a little more than a mile out of the village, met with an accident July 3 that proved fatal. Mr. Pearce was in Canastota and had just got into his wagon, preparatory to starting for home, when he was seized with an attack of dizziness and fell from his wagon head foremost to the ground. He was picked up and taken to the Twogood House where he was attended by Dr. Ash. It was decided to remove him to a Syracuse hospital as soon as his condition would permit, but he died early the following evening. Coroner Brooks was called and decided that death was caused by a broken neck. The funeral was held at the house of a relative of the family, Sunday, in Canastota, and burial was made here in the village cemetery. Like all mortals, Jim had faults, but unlike many men, he was universally liked and respected and his word could always be relied upon. He was a kind and indulgent father and loyal and true to his friends.

During his time in the Civil War, James contracted malaria and he was beset by other physical ailments, including vertigo. He applied for a Civil War pension in 1891 and was awarded \$8 per month.

James died July 4, 1907, and his widow applied for a pension. This process was complicated by the fact that, contrary to his divorce decree, James married Margaret before Hettie died in 1891. The Government finally deemed Margaret's marriage to be a common law marriage and she received pension.

Oddly, James' son John Irving Pearce had died only a month before, June 3, 1907.

July 12, 1907 *Madison County Times*
Clockville News

END NOTES



Written on the back of this photo is *Grandmother Holcomb's House, Rushville, NY*. Do you remember this old homestead at Rushville. This is an identification problem. There are two candidates for "Grandmother Holcomb" and neither lived in Rushville!

Roderick Holcomb 1764-1852
+ Rebecca Winthrop 1771-1862


In the 1850 census, Roderick and Rebecca lived in South Bristol. In 1855 the widow Rebecca lived in Naples with her daughter Electa Holcomb James and probably another family member in 1860; I don't know where these people lived. Reportedly Roderick built a home at Holcomb Point (aka Cook's Point) on Canandaigua Lake in South Bristol. Roderick's will, a spot check of deeds, and historic maps point toward a residence in the vicinity of Cook's Point in South Bristol.



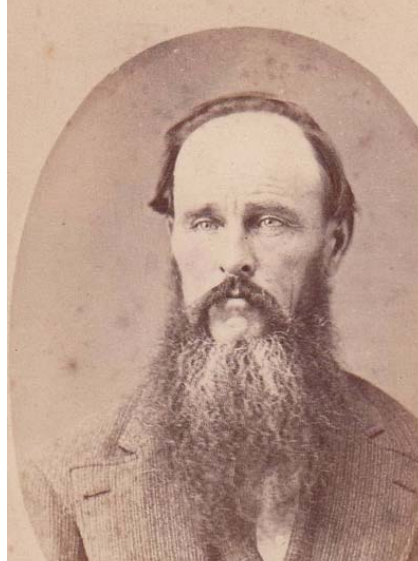
Judson Holcomb 1804-1881 (son of the above, father of Christiana Holcomb Beers)
+ Hester Ann Grimes 1809-1848

Hester died in 1848 in Naples. Judson and most of his children moved to Michigan by the mid 1850s. Coordinating deeds (specifically Ontario Co 103/131, 1853, Holcomb to John J. Hill) and historic maps (1852/1874/1904) reveals a house marked Holcomb on the south edge of Naples Village, just north of the corner of Hunts Hollow Road/Clark Street and South Main Street.

As the crow flies, Rushville and Naples are 14 miles apart.




A.E. Beers, Photographer, Rushville, New York

		
<p>Girls with matching dresses - Civil War era. Source: Pinterest.</p>	<p>Louisa Fake - 1860 Louisa Arnold (1840-1928) married Orrin L. Fake. They are buried in Gorham Cemetery.</p>	<p>William Marks (1814-1879) ran a funeral home in Naples. An ardent abolitionist, Marks used his hearse to transport runaway slaves along the underground railroad. He married a daughter of Roderick & Rebecca Winthrop Holcomb.</p>

		
<p>1870s portrait of an African American woman. Source: Smithsonian's Anacostia Community Museum</p>	<p>Mrs. Alvin Mead, 1870s Source: LangdonRoad.com</p>	<p>Mr. Alvin Mead, 1870s Source: LangdonRoad.com</p>

A.E. Beers, Photographer, Rushville, New York

		
<p>Ezra Miller, circa 1870 Source: LangdonRoad.com</p>	<p>Unidentified person from Haight Family mystery photos at mysteryancestors.com.</p>	<p>Helen M. Blodgett Source: Flickr</p>

		
<p>Sisters Source: Flickr</p>	<p>Two young men - Civil War era Source: Flickr</p>	

Holcomb - Beers - Pearce

1 Judson Holcomb b: Dec 5, 1804 in CT d: Jul 1, 1881 in Athens, MI Age at death: 76 Burial: Old Burg Cem, Athens, MI

.. +Hester Ann Grimes b: Dec 1809 in Hartford, CT d: Nov 17, 1848 in Naples, NY Age at death: 38 est. Burial: Fairview Cem, Naples, NY

..... 2 Christiana Holcomb b: 1827 d: Nov 15, 1904 in Rushville, NY Age at death: 77 est. Burial: Rushville Village Cem, Gorham, NY

..... +Alanson E. Beers b: Jun 23, 1823 in Middlesex, NY m: 1847 d: Mar 16, 1880 in Rushville, NY Age at death: 56 Burial: Rushville Village Cem, Gorham, NY

..... 3 Hester Ann Beers b: 1848 d: Oct 2, 1891 in Chicago, IL Age at death: 43 est. Burial: Jackson, MI

..... +James Monroe Pearce b: Oct 27, 1844 in Rushville, NY m: Apr 2, 1867 d: Jul 4, 1907 in Canastota, NY Age at death: 62 Burial: Clockville Cem, NY

..... 4 John Irving Pearce b: 1867 in Rushville, NY d: Jun 3, 1907 in Chicago, IL Age at death: 40 est. Burial: Rose Hill Cem, Chicago, IL

..... +Frances Emma Adams b: Oct 12, 1871 in Grand Rapids, MI m: Mar 11, 1891 in Chicago, IL d: Oct 23, 1949 in Bennington, VT Age at death: 78 Burial: Village Cemetery, Peru, VT

..... 5 Madeline Pearce b: Jan 16, 1893 d: Jan 16, 1893 Age at death: 0

..... 5 John Irving Pearce, Jr. b: Jul 7, 1897 in Chicago, IL d: Dec 2, 1976 in Clearwater, FL Age at death: 79

..... +Ruth Lois Waterman b: Feb 7, 1901 in Brooklyn, NY m: Sep 29, 1923 in New York City, NY d: Apr 8, 1982 in Clearwater, FL Age at death: 81

..... *2nd Husband of Hester Ann Beers:

..... +George A. Myers b: 1860 in Springport, MI m: Jun 20, 1882 in Sandstone, Jackson Co, MI

..... 3 Clarence M. Beers b: 1850 d: 1929 Age at death: 79 est.

..... 3 William C. Beers b: 1857

..... 3 Frank Edgar Beers b: 1867 d: 1941 Age at death: 74 est.