

# Children of Samuel<sup>4</sup> #26 Watson: Daniel<sup>5</sup> Watson

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This article is part of a larger family history, **The WATSON Family of West Greenwich, Rhode Island**, which can be found via these links to [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#).

A branch of the Watson family of Rhode Island settled in West Greenwich and lived there for nearly one hundred years. The patriarch of this branch was Samuel, designated #7 in *The American Family of John Watson of the Narragansett Country, Rhode Island*.

## Daniel<sup>5</sup> Watson, son of Samuel #26 Watson

Daniel<sup>5</sup> WATSON (Samuel<sup>4</sup>, Samuel<sup>3</sup>, Samuel<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>) was born circa 1779-80 in West Greenwich, Rhode Island, the second son of Samuel #26 and Abiah (Young) Watson.

Yes, we've seen this photo of Daniel Watson's gravestone at Find A Grave, where it's written in stone that he was born on December 29, 1775. We believe that date is off by four or five years.

We know about Daniel by way of his sister Alice Watson's deposition of December 28, 1836, made in support of her mother's application for a widow's pension (**emphasis added**):



I Alice Watson of Voluntown in the County of Windham in the State of Connecticut aged fifty one years do testify and say that I am the chi[ld] of Samuel and Abiah Watson, that I have had three brothers older than myself all being born as I have always understood, after the marriage of my said parents. My eldest brother Hazzard died in August 1822 aged 43 years and would have been fifty eight years old had he now been living, **my second brother lives in the State of New York in Stephentown and is fifty six years old at this time**, that I have always understood my father and mother were married during the war of the Revolution in the year 1778 and further the deponent saith not –

(signed) Alice Watson

State of Connecticut  
Windham County/Voluntown **December 28th 1836**

(To see a digitized copy of Alice Watson's 1836 deposition, click [here](#).)

Since we know that Daniel's older brother Hazzard Watson was born in autumn of 1778, we figure Daniel's birth would have occurred a year or two after that. If the December 29th date is correct, Alice could have been giving her deposition the day before Daniel's fifty-seventh birthday. Census data lead us to think that Daniel likely was born in December **1780**.

## Daniel<sup>5</sup> Watson in the Rhode Island and Connecticut Censuses

Daniel Watson does not appear by name in the records of his hometown, West Greenwich, though his presence is noted in the census headcount. The Rhode Island census of 1782 recorded two males under age 16 – Hazzard and Daniel – in Samuel Watson's household. Both the 1790 and 1800 censuses indicate that Samuel's oldest sons still resided at home.

The 1810 census for Exeter, immediately to the south of West Greenwich, lists a number of Watson households, one of them for a "Dan'l," shown below in an annotated excerpt.

Note: This 1810 census listing was done *alphabetically* – which means these people did not necessarily reside next to or even near each other. In this excerpt, those with surnames beginning with the letter W are grouped together.

Beth Watson	1	"	"	"	1	1	"	"	"	1	"
John Watson	3	1	1	"	"	1	"	1	"	"	"
Jurat Watson	3	"	"	1	"	"	"	"	1	"	"
Dani <sup>l</sup> Watson	"	"	"	1	"	3	"	1	"	"	"
Thos Wilcox	1	1	1	"	"	1	"	1	"	"	"
Wm Wilcox	1	"	"	"	1	"	"	1	"	1	"
Thos Wilson	2	"	"	1	"	2	"	"	1	"	"
Nich <sup>l</sup> Watson	"	"	"	"	1	"	"	"	"	1	"
Elijah Wilson	"	2	1	"	1	1	"	"	"	1	"
Nash Wilson	1	"	1	"	"	1	"	3	"	1	"
Mary Wilson	"	"	"	"	"	1	"	"	"	1	1
Rebecca Wilson	"	"	"	2	"	"	"	"	"	1	"
Wm Wilson	1	"	"	1	"	3	"	"	1	"	"
1) Jhaboa Watson	1	"	"	1	"	"	"	"	"	1	"

Is this Daniel<sup>5</sup> Watson? We don't know for certain, but it could be. Daniel and his wife had mostly daughters. This enumeration, showing three females under the age of 10, fits with what we have gathered on Daniel and his family.

Daniel Watson's daughter Mary Ann was born in Connecticut in April 1820. We found an 1820 census listing for Daniel Watson in Preston, New London county, CT, whose household matches the composition of his family by that time (five girls, one boy, two parents), with the apparent loss of one of the daughters enumerated in the 1810 census.

## Daniel<sup>5</sup> Watson's Wife

Daniel Watson's wife was Elizabeth, also known as Betsy. We learn that Elizabeth's maiden name was *Wilcox* from a brief biography of their son, John A. Watson, in "History of the Town of Conewango":

"John A. WATSON, son of Daniel and Elizabeth (WILCOX) WATSON, early settlers in Ellington, Chautauqua county, was born in Rensselaer county, Oct. 29, 1831, came to Conewango from Ellington in 1879, and is now a wood mechanic and farmer residing in Rutledge. He married, Oct. 13, 1856, Fidelia WOODMANSEE, by whom he has had children as follows: John S., Daniel, Permelia, and Mattie M. Daniel WATSON [John's son] married Kate F., daughter of Chauncey and Eliza (ELLSWORTH) HALL. They conduct a millinery store in Conewango."

But others give Elizabeth's maiden name as *Stone*, without citing any source for that. Until we have better or more information, we will assume that Daniel Watson's wife was a WILCOX.

Elizabeth Watson's gravestone gives her date of birth as October 29, 1783. If that year is correct, Elizabeth gave birth to her son John on her 48th birthday. Since the vast majority of women reach the end of their childbearing years around age 42, we think it more likely that Elizabeth was born circa 1788-89.

If this birth year discrepancy isn't sufficiently unnerving, consider that Elizabeth's gravestone gives her year of death as **1863** – but she appears in the **1865** NY state census, apparently alive.

The 1850 and 1860 federal censuses list Elizabeth's birth place as Rhode Island, in agreement with the New York state census of 1855.

It appears that Daniel and Elizabeth Watson had daughters born in 1808 and late in 1809. Taking into account the number of children in the 1810 census as discussed above, we may guess that Daniel and Elizabeth wed circa 1805.

## **Daniel<sup>5</sup> Watson in the New York Census, 1830 – 1860**

### **1830**

The 1830 census for Stephentown, Rensselaer county, NY, lists only one Watson household, that of Daniel. His household in that census year included one male aged 10 through 14 (a son) and one male aged 40 through 49 (Daniel). The females included one girl aged 10 through 14 (a daughter) and one female aged 40 through 49 (Elizabeth).

We expected to find *three or four* young daughters living under Daniel's roof in 1830, given what we've learned about the birth years of his children. But there are only those two youngsters, a boy and a girl, both aged 10 through 14.

This wasn't the only time we found inexplicable census data for Daniel and his family.

### **1840**

Daniel and his family were still living in Stephentown in 1840. Their household had swelled again to a total of eight persons. There were three males: One aged 5 through 9; one aged 30 through 39; and one aged 60 through 69 (Daniel). And there were five females: Two aged 10 through 14; two aged 15 through 19; and one aged 50 through 59 (Elizabeth).

The age of the young boy in this 1840 enumeration – 5 through 9 – fits perfectly with what we know about John A. Watson, whose bio in *History of the Town of Conewango* says he “was born in Rensselaer county, Oct. 29, 1831.”

The four females under age 20 – where were most of them in 1830? And that adult male, aged 30 through 39, isn't the right age to be the son listed in 1830.

1850

Around 1843, Daniel and Elizabeth Watson moved to Ellington, Chautauqua county, NY.

The 1850 census shows them living with daughters Lucy and Mary, and a ten-year-old boy named Myron D. Watson. The "400" written on Mary A. Watson's listing indicates "Value of Real Estate owned." Daniel may have headed the household, but Mary owned the house.

8	21572225	Daniel Watson	70	M		Farmer		R. P.
9		Elizabeth "	65	F				"
10		Lucy "	19	F				N. Y.
11		Myron D.	10	M				"
12		Mary "	36	F			400	"
13	21587720	Elizabeth "	61	M				"

1855

The New York state census of 1855 is where we learn that Daniel and Elizabeth Watson had been residents of Ellington for twelve years (hence our remark in the above section).

Of particular note in this census listing: Daniel Watson's age is given as 80, even though he was listed as 70 in the federal census five years earlier. This age inflation is maintained in all subsequent censuses in which Daniel appears. The faulty family arithmetic carries over with Elizabeth being listed as 72 years old in 1855. She was, in fact, about eight years younger than Daniel. When you start with the wrong number, adjusting for the spouse won't yield the right answer. Little wonder that people think Daniel was born in 1775 and Elizabeth in 1783.

247	Team	358	269	John L. Benson	32	M		Chromaya	1	2	Shawmuck
				Mary A. Benson	32	F	Wife	Coast	1	12	
			270	Daniel Watson	80	M		Abode Island	1	12	of Seneca
				Betsy Watson	72	F	Wife	" "	1	12	
				Lucy Watson	25	F	Daugh	Seneca		12	
				John Watson	23	M	Son	" "		12	Lab. M.
				Myron Delmar	15	M	Gr. Son	" "		12	

Daniel and his family are shown to be living in the same house as John L. and Mary A. Benson. Daniel's daughter Mary Ann – the one listed in the 1850 census as owning real estate – had gotten married in the intervening years. The Bensons are enumerated first in this state census, followed by the household of Daniel and Betsy, their daughter Lucy, son John, and fifteen-year-old grandson Myron Delmar – who in 1850 was recorded as Myron D. Watson.

In 1860 Daniel and Elizabeth were still in Ellington, but they were residing in two different households. Elizabeth continued to live with Mary and John Benson, their daughter and son-in-law. Daniel now lived with Permelia and Norman King, another daughter and son-in-law.

One can only guess what conditions brought about this arrangement, which persisted until both Daniel and Elizabeth passed away. Since Daniel Watson was the parent who got moved to a different residence, probably he was the one with some “issue.”

## Daniel<sup>5</sup> and Elizabeth Watson’s Children

The New York state census for 1865 preserves an interesting detail: Elizabeth Watson was said to be the parent of eleven children (column 11, in the census excerpt shown below).

Name of every person whose usual place of abode was in the Family on the 1st day of June, 1865. <small>Include as in the family those absent in the army and navy.</small>	Age.	Sex.	White, black or mulatto. Color	Relation to the head of the family.	In what county of this state, or in what other state, or foreign country born.	Of how many children the parent.	Number of times married.	Now married.	Now widowed.	Single.
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
John B Benson	42	M			Chautauque	2	1	1		
Mary B Benson	43	W		Wife	Conny	2	1	1		
Jane B Benson	8	M		Child	Chautauque					
Margaret Benson	2 1/2	W		Child						
Elizabeth Watson	31	W		Wife	Westland N.Y.	11	1	1		

Thanks to probate documents generated by Norman and Permelia (Watson) King, we can put names to ten of Daniel and Elizabeth’s eleven children.

1. DAUGHTER, under age 10 in the 1810 census; probably died before 1820.
2. EUNICE M.<sup>6</sup> was born on or around July 4, 1808, in Rhode Island. Eunice married Lemuel BENTLEY, born on or around June 25, 1812, in Chautauqua county, NY, the son of Joshua Bentley, Jr., and his wife Sally Thomas.

Lemuel and Eunice lived in Conewango, Cattaraugus county, NY. They had at least three children (surname BENTLEY): sons Henry, Emory, and Norman. Eunice and Lemuel died within five days of each other: Eunice on February 20, 1892; Lemuel on the 25th. They are buried in Little Clear Creek Cemetery, Conewango, Cattaraugus co., NY.

3. RUTH CAROLINE<sup>6</sup> was born circa 1809 (possibly in the month of November) in Rhode Island. She married James John BENTLEY, born circa 1808 in Rensselaer county, NY, the son of John and Ruth Bentley. (James was a distant cousin of Eunice Watson's husband Lemuel.)

James and Ruth lived in Ellington, Chautauqua county, NY. They had at least seven children (surname BENTLEY): Frances Adelaide; James Leander; Noah Jerome; Phebe Laura; Mary Elizabeth; John Franklin; and Gordon, who we find only in the 1860 census. James J. Bentley died on August 6, 1876. He is buried in Little Clear Creek Cemetery in Conewango, Cattaraugus county, NY. Ruth Caroline (Watson) Bentley died, intestate, on March 17, 1884. She also is buried in Little Clear Creek Cemetery.

4. PHEBE L. was born on April 21, 1814, and died on April 20, 1834 (*one day before her 20th birthday*). These dates are taken from Phebe's headstone in Clear Creek Cemetery.

Phebe's headstone resembles the headstones placed for her parents Daniel and Elizabeth. Might it be a commemorative marker for a cherished sister who died not in Ellington but in Stephentown? We ask this question because Daniel and Elizabeth continued to live in Stephentown until about 1843. Some researchers say (*without citing any sources*) that Ruth Caroline Watson married James J. Bentley as early as 1832. If Ruth and James made their home in Ellington, it's possible that Phebe came to visit or live for a time with them – and died there.

5. HARVEY G.<sup>6</sup> was born circa 1815, most likely in Rhode Island. (Harvey was the *male aged 10 through 14* enumerated in Daniel Watson's household in 1830.) He married Esther, born in April 1818 in Berlin, Rensselaer co., NY. Esther's maiden name *may have been* CRANDALL.

Harvey and Esther may have wed circa 1842: The 1855 NY state census notes that Harvey had been resident in Berlin for thirteen years. Given that Harvey's father Daniel left Stephentown around 1843 to live in Ellington, Daniel's move may have correlated with Harvey's marriage and moving out.

Per census data, Harvey and Esther Watson had five children (surname WATSON): Sally Ann; Susan L.; Huldah G.; Daniel G.; and Nancy A.

Harvey and his family lived in Berlin, Rensselaer county, NY. Their dwelling house was located on the east side of what is now Miller Road, at the foot of present-day Black River Pond. (That pond was formed when, much later, the Civilian Conservation Corps dammed the Black River.)

Harvey G. Watson died on November 13, 1886. His wife Esther lived quite a bit longer. In the 1900 census she was enumerated in Stephentown, living in the household of her son Daniel and daughter-in-law Mary E. Esther Watson passed away on May 21, 1902,

at 84 years of age. For more information on where Harvey and Esther lived and where they are buried, please see the [Appendix](#).

6. PERMELIA L. was born January 4, 1816, in Rhode Island. She married Norman KING. Norman was born July 23, 1813, in Hancock, Berkshire county, MA, the son of Ward King and his wife “Sary” (whose maiden name *may have been* Sarah Walker). In federal and state census records between 1850 and 1870, Permelia and Norman were enumerated in Ellington, Chautauqua county, NY. By 1875, they were living in Cherry Creek, just north of Ellington.

As best we can tell, Norman and Permelia King did not have children together.

Norman died on May 26, 1876. He was buried in plot 27, Cherry Creek Central Cemetery (also known as Highland Cemetery), in Cherry Creek, Chautauqua county, NY. Permelia L. (Watson) King died on December 1, 1879. She was laid to rest in plot 27 with her husband Norman, where they share a headstone.

7. MARY ANN<sup>6</sup> was born on April 6, 1820 (if her gravestone data is correct), likely in Preston, New London county, Connecticut. Mary Ann married John L. BENSON, born July 28, 1822, in Chenango county, New York.

In 1850 Mary Ann was living in Ellington, Chautauqua county, NY, in a household that included both of her parents. John L. Benson was living in Ellington at the same time, in the household of John D. and Alice Benson, who likely were his parents. By 1855, John and Mary Ann were married; they continued to live in Ellington.

Per census data, John and Mary Ann had two children (surname BENSON): son James B., and daughter Georgianna.

Mary Ann (Watson) Benson died on July 28, 1884, little more than two months after receiving her part of the sale of her sister Permelia King’s property in Cherry Creek. Mary Ann is buried in Little Clear Creek Cemetery in Conewango, Cattaraugus co., NY. John L. Benson died on April 5, 1889. He, too, is buried in Little Clear Creek Cemetery.

8. ANN LOUISA<sup>6</sup> was born in February 1822 in Rensselaer county, NY, probably in Stephentown. In some records she appears as “Ann L.” but more often she went by her middle name, Louisa, which we will use here.

Louisa married Mason ANDREWS, who was born in Massachusetts. They had two children (surname ANDREWS): George M. (who died relatively young); and Lucinda L., known as Lucy. Daughter Lucy married three times – first to John W. Turney, with whom she had children; second to Linus Le Barron; and third to Refine W. Hartman.

Mason Andrews’ year of birth, as implied by census records, ranges widely from 1809 to 1822. His Find A Grave memorial gives his date of death as August 17, **1891** – yet he



appears, *apparently alive*, with Louisa in Ellington, NY, in the **1892** NY state census. Perhaps we can trust the *New York, Death Index, 1852 – 1956*, which says that Mason G. Andrews died in Ellington, NY, on August 17, **1894** (death certificate # 33313).

Ann Louisa (Watson) Andrews died in 1903. She and Mason are buried in Valley View Cemetery in Ellington, Chautauqua county, NY.

9. ESTHER M.<sup>6</sup> was born in June 1827 in Stephentown, Rensselaer county, NY. On July 4, 1852, in New Lebanon, Columbia county, NY, Esther married Sylvester BUTLER, Jr., born on April 20, 1829, in Pittsfield, Berkshire county, MA, the son of Sylvester Butler, Sr., and his wife Huldah Stoddard. At the time of their marriage, both Esther and Sylvester, Jr., were residents of Pittsfield, which is where they made their home.

Sylvester and Esther had five children (surname BUTLER): Ella Lois (who died young); Milton H.; Henry; Eli; and Edward Samuel.

This marriage did not endure. Following their divorce in 1870, Sylvester moved to Ohio. Esther moved to Cherry Creek, Chautauqua county, NY, just north of Ellington. Per census records, her occupation in those years was “milliner.”

In the 1900 census Esther was enumerated in Jamestown, in southern Chautauqua county, living with her son Henry and his family. Esther M. (Watson) Butler died on December 31, 1900. She is buried in Cherry Creek Central Cemetery, in Cherry Creek, Chautauqua county, NY.

To learn more about Esther and her family, see [her section](#) in “Family Stories,” below.

10. LUCY P. was born circa 1830. She appears with her parents in the 1850 federal census, aged 19; and then again in the 1855 NY state census, age 25. Lucy died on June 21, 1856. Her gravestone in Little Clear Creek Cemetery says she was 26 years old at the time of her death.

11. JOHN ANDREW<sup>6</sup> was born on October 29, 1831, in Rensselaer county, NY, probably in Stephentown. The 1850 census shows him at age 19 living in the household of his brother Harvey G. Watson in Berlin. By 1855, John was living in Ellington, Chautauqua county, NY.

On October 13, 1856, John married Polly Fidelia Woodmansee, born September 1837 in Onondaga county, NY, the daughter of Varnum Woodmansee and his wife Polly Christian. John’s wife used her middle name, Fidelia.

John and Fidelia had four children (surname WATSON): John Spencer; Daniel B.; Ada Permelia; and Mattie M. They made their home in Ellington until 1879, when they moved a few miles east to Conewango. There, they lived in the section known as Rutledge, where he made his living as a farmer and wood mechanic. (In 1860, John’s occupation was listed as “master carpenter.”)

John A. Watson died in 1911. He is buried in Rutledge Cemetery, in Conewango, Cattaraugus county, NY. His wife Fidelia outlived him by many years: She passed away in 1930. Fidelia (Woodmansee) Watson also is buried in Rutledge Cemetery.

## Family Stories

Census and other records can reveal interesting patterns. We found a few stories in the data for Daniel and Elizabeth Watson's children.

### Mary Ann

It appears that Mary Ann Watson had an out-of-wedlock child, a son, in June of 1840.

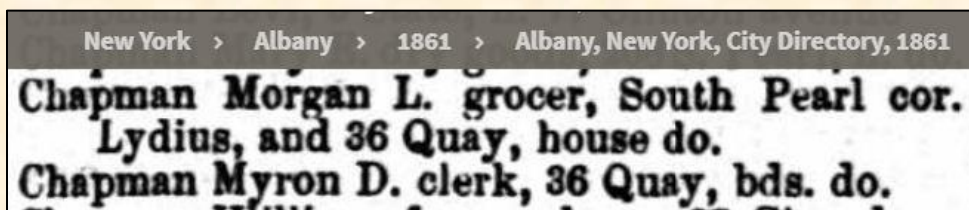
The 1850 census that enumerated Daniel and Elizabeth Watson shows them living with daughters Lucy and Mary, and a ten-year-old boy named Myron D. Watson.

The New York state census of 1855 shows Mary Ann Watson now married to John L. Benson. Living with them, but recorded as their own household, were Mary Ann's parents Daniel and Betsy; her sister Lucy and brother John; and Daniel's fifteen-year-old grandson Myron Delmar, whose name was written as though Delmar was his surname. This young man is the same person who in 1850 was recorded as Myron D. Watson.

By 1860 Mary Ann and John Benson had a three-year-old son, James M. Benson. *Delmar*, now twenty years old, still resided with them, only now his surname was recorded as *Benson*.

And then Myron Delmar *Watson / Benson* drops out of the census record. In his place, Myron D. *Chapman* appears.

We first found Myron D. Chapman in an Albany, NY, city directory for 1863, realizing later that he is listed in Albany as early as 1861. In 1863, "Miron" D. Chapman was included in the Civil War draft registration. All of these records show that he was living at 36 Quay Street. Myron, at age 23, was unmarried and working as a clerk. The *very next name* on that draft registration page, Alonzo Chapman, age 27, caught our eye. He lived at 36 Quay Street, too. Turns out, both Myron and Alonzo worked as clerks for Morgan L. Chapman, whose grocery store was located at 36 Quay.



Morgan L. Chapman, born December 1, 1811, in Stephentown, Rensselaer co., NY, was the youngest of Oliver and Betsey (Gardiner)

Chapman's ten children. Oliver Chapman's household was enumerated in Stephentown in 1840, the same year that Myron was born (in Rensselaer co., likely Stephentown).

This is pretty good circumstantial evidence for Morgan L. Chapman being Myron's father.

More about Morgan L. Chapman: On February 15, 1847, at age 35, he married Addie Eliza Baldwin, the daughter of Erastus and Mary (Reed) Baldwin. They show up in the census for Albany, Albany county, NY, with one child, daughter Mary Eugenia.

We haven't figured out the nature of Alonzo Chapman's relationship to Morgan, but we're guessing that they were family.

The 1870 census shows Myron D. Chapman back in Ellington, Chautauqua co., NY, with a wife named Harriet M. (maiden name unknown). They lived right next door to Myron's mother and stepfather, "Marianne" and John L. Benson.

355	367	Benson John L	47	m	ov	Harness Maker	2000	650
		Marianne	30	f	ov	Keeping House		
		James	13	m	ov	At Home		
		Georgianne	7	f	ov	At Home		
356	368	Chapman Myron	30	m	ov	Merchant	100	3000
		Harriett M	31	f	ov	Keeping House		
		Smith Rufus	26	m	ov	Work on farm		

Armed with a practical education – and perhaps bolstered by the acknowledgement of his father – Myron D. Chapman went on to have a successful career as a local merchant (“dry goods and groceries”) in the Clear Creek community of Ellington, NY. As early as 1873, Myron was appointed postmaster of the Clear Creek P.O., a position he held for many years. He also served as a Justice of the Peace.

Myron and “Hattie” had at least one child, daughter Fanny B. Chapman. Harriet M. Chapman died in 1896. On September 8, 1898, in Rising Sun, Randolph township, Ohio county, Indiana, Myron married, second, a woman named Kate A. Jelley.

When Myron died in 1913, he was buried with his first wife, with whom he shares a headstone, in Little Clear Creek Cemetery in Conewango, Cattaraugus co., NY. Myron's second wife Kate (Jelley) Chapman died in Ellington, NY, on May 21, 1917. We don't know where she is buried.

## Esther

Esther Watson was on her own in early adulthood. The 1850 census records her, at age 22, living in a boarding house run by widow Clarissa Bagg in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. Only the male boarders are listed with their occupations; the weavers, dyers, and carders may have worked at the local Pontoosuc woolen mill. Likely the female boarders were mill workers, too.

We wonder why Esther Watson and Sylvester Butler, both Pittsfield residents, chose to get married across the state line in nearby New Lebanon, NY. The bigger question may be why Sylvester's parents' names are included in the record of their marriage, but the names of Esther's parents are missing. Didn't Sylvester know who Esther's parents were?

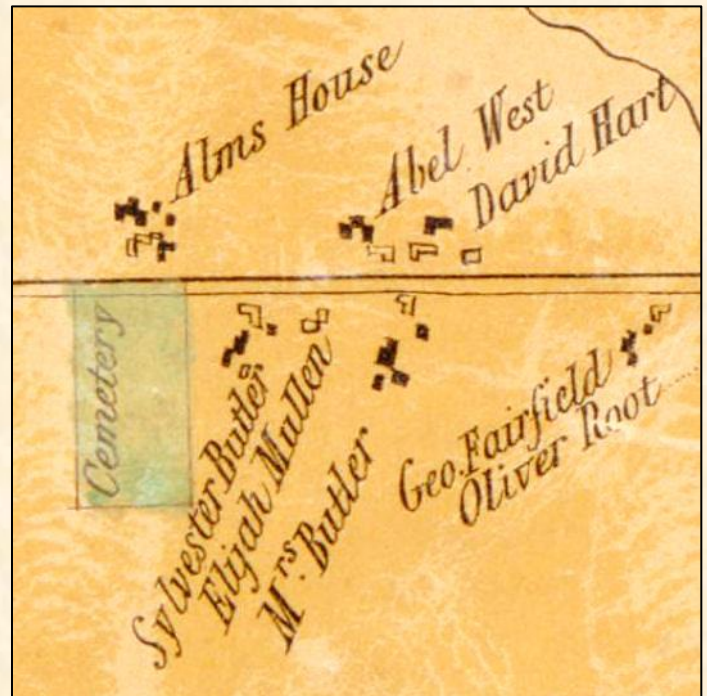
## The Butler House

Per a brief biography of their youngest son, Sylvester and Esther made their home in the same Pittsfield house where Sylvester was born. We learn from the 1892 obituary for Sylvester's brother Dudley that their father, Sylvester, Sr., built that house.

“Sylvester [Sr.], father of the deceased, built the old red house so familiar to many of the older people of Pittsfield, just east of the little burying ground formerly the church yard of the first Methodist church in Pittsfield, and the old place has been in the family until two years ago when, owing to ill health and age creeping on, Mr. Butler sold out and moved to his cottage on the Stearnsville Road.”

The Butler house stood on the south side of West Street, half a mile west of Churchill Street. The “little burying ground” is still there, and it's called [West Part Cemetery](#). An 1855 map of Pittsfield shows Sylvester Butler's name immediately east of the cemetery.

The location of the Alms House, shown on the north side of West Street, directly across from the small cemetery, is where Berkshire Community College stands today. That Alms House, where the poor of the town lived, proved useful in cross-referencing census records for 1855, 1860, and 1865. Sylvester and Esther Butler lived in close proximity to people listed as “paupers.”



## The Butler Children; Life in Pittsfield

Sylvester's and Esther's first child was a daughter, born in Pittsfield on June 25, 1854. Her birth record does not include her forenames, but her death record does: She was **Ella Lois**. The 1855 MA state census shows one-year-old Ella L. Butler living with her parents and her father's parents, Huldah and Sylvester Butler, Sr. They were enumerated right after the family of Elijah Mullen, whose name appears on the 1855 map next door to Sylvester Butler.

By 1860, Huldah and Sylvester, Sr., were living in Springfield, MA, in the household of their daughter Mary and her husband Samuel R. Crane. Sylvester and Esther had sole occupancy of the old homestead on West Street; they were enumerated immediately before Elijah Mullen, and immediately after a list of town paupers. In this census year, the Butler children were listed as *Alice*, age 6; **Milton**, age 3; and *James*, age “3/12.”

We know that *Alice* was really Ella. We suspect this disparity lies with the fact that nicknames for both – Alcy, Elsie – sound alike.

Sylvester's father, Sylvester Butler, Sr., died in Springfield on the 4th of April the following year. In his will, Sylvester, Sr. named his eldest son Dudley E. Butler to be his executor. Dudley declined to act in that capacity; "L. H. Gamwell" (probably Lorenzo H. Gamwell, a Pittsfield lawyer) handled the probate of Sylvester Butler, Sr.'s estate.

The 1865 MA state census shows the Butler family enumerated immediately before the folks at the "poor house," now run by John Warner. While this tells us that Sylvester, Esther, and their children continued to occupy the old family home, it does not reveal whether Sylvester, Jr. now owned it.

Daughter Ella is missing from this census: She died in Pittsfield on November 24, 1863, at the age of 9 years, 5 months. Sylvester's and Esther's household now included three sons: Milton, age 8; **Henry**, age 6: and **Eli**, age 2. If Henry was six years old in 1865, where was he in 1860? We think Henry is likely the same person as the infant *James* counted in the 1860 census.

1879	Sylvester Butler	36	M
	Esther Butler	37	F.
	Milton Butler	8	M.
	Henry Butler	6	M.
	Eli Butler	2	M.
	Fanny Oakley	22	F.

There was one other person living with the Butler family in 1865 – **Fanny Oakley**, age 22. Her role or occupation in the Butler household is not described in that census.

Esther's listing in the 1900 census notes that she was the mother of four children, three of whom were then living. If we were using

only census records to account for Sylvester's and Esther's children, we would consider the family complete with the names of Ella (deceased); Milton; Henry; and Eli. But now we wonder if someone other than Esther herself supplied that information – because she had a *fifth* child, one we cannot locate in the census until 1900.

His name was **Edward Samuel**, born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, on March 4, 1865. Edward S. Butler's death record gives the names of his parents as Sylvester Butler and "Ester" Watson.

Why doesn't Edward show up in the 1865 state census? That census specifically asks for "The Name of every Person whose normal place of abode on the first day of May, 1865, was in this family." The Butler family was enumerated in *June* of that year.

### Fanny Oakley

Frances "Fanny" Oakley, born in February 1842 (per the 1900 census) was the daughter of Andrew Jackson Oakley and his wife Elvira Burlingame (or Burlingham).

Fanny is shown living with her parents and siblings in the 1850 and 1855 censuses in Pittsfield. In 1860, seventeen-year-old Fanny was living with and working as a domestic servant for Abel and Matilda West, an old couple who lived across the street from Sylvester and Esther Butler. (Abel West's name is on the Pittsfield map excerpt shown above.)

We don't know when Fanny left her elderly employers' household, though we wonder if the death of Fanny's father on January 12, 1862, had something to do with it.

*The Pittsfield (MA) Sun* newspaper ran an article on Thurs., January 16, 1862, page 3:

FOUND DEAD. – A man named Andrew J. Oakley, aged 47 years, who was born in New Lebanon N. Y., but has been for many years a resident of Pittsfield, was found lying upon his face, dead, in the alley near the Store of Mr. John Feeley, on North Street, on Sunday morning last. The deceased was an intemperate man and subject to *[epileptic]* fits. From evidence elicited before the Jury of Inquest, it appeared that Oakley was seen about the village between 11 and 12 o'clock on Saturday night, apparently sober, and the verdict of the Jury was – “that the deceased came to his death in consequence of the exposure resulting from falling in a fit, or intoxication.”

Another such article, published in *The Berkshire County Eagle* on the same day, noted also that “Oakley left a wife and children in indigent circumstances.”

*The Pittsfield Sun* reported on Abel West's health on Thursday, September 3, 1863:

Abel West, Esq., one of our most aged citizens, has been alarmingly ill for some days, but we are happy to learn is convalescent, and will probably soon be in his usual health.

When the 1865 MA state census was taken, Abel and Matilda West's 52-year-old daughter Harriet was living with them. We'd guess that Abel, 84, and Matilda, 83, required more help at that point than Fanny could give them. Matilda died in 1866; Abel celebrated his 90th birthday before he died in 1871.

### **Esther Divorces Sylvester on Grounds of Adultery**

We learn from the local Pittsfield newspaper that Esther left Sylvester on January 27, 1866, having discovered he had been unfaithful to her. *The Pittsfield Sun* ran the following item on February 17, 1870:

To the Honorable the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court, next to be holden at Pittsfield, within and for our County of Berkshire, on the second Tuesday of May next.

The Libel of ESTHER M. BUTLER of Pittsfield, in said County of Berkshire, against Sylvester Butler, late of Pittsfield and now of parts unknown.

Respectfully represents, that the said Esther M. Butler and the said Sylvester Butler were lawfully married to one another, her name before marriage being Esther M. Watson, on the fourth day of July, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and fifty-two, at New Lebanon, in the State of New York. And that your libellant and the said Sylvester Butler lived together as husband and wife in this Commonwealth after their said marriage until on the twenty-seventh day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-six, when your libellant left the said Sylvester Butler on discovering the adulteries hereinafter to be mentioned. And your libellant says, that heretofore, to wit, on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and sixty-six, the said Sylvester Butler, at Pittsfield, in said County of Berkshire, committed the crime of adultery with one Fanny Oakley; and heretofore, to wit, on the tenth day of July, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and sixty-six, he committed the crime of adultery with the said Fanny Oakley, at said Pittsfield; and that he has committed various other adulteries with the said Fanny Oakley at various other times and places to your libellant unknown, and which your libellant cannot here more particularly specify.

Wherefore your libellant prays that the bond of marriage between her and the said Sylvester Butler may be dissolved and for such further and other relief as to this Honorable Court may seem just,

To the Honorable the Justices of the Supreme Judicial Court, next to be holden at Pittsfield, within and for our County of Berkshire, on the second Tuesday of May next.

**T**HE Libel of ESTHER M. BUTLER of Pittsfield, in said County of Berkshire, against Sylvester Butler, late of said Pittsfield, and now of parts unknown.

Respectfully represents, that the said Esther M. Butler and the said Sylvester Butler were lawfully married to one another, her name before marriage being Esther M. Watson, on the fourth day of July, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and fifty-two, at New Lebanon, in the State of New York. And that your libellant and the said Sylvester Butler lived together as husband and wife in this Commonwealth after their said marriage until on the twenty-seventh day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-six, when your libellant left the said Sylvester Butler on discovering the adulteries hereinafter to be mentioned. And your libellant says, that heretofore, to wit, on the first day of January, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and sixty-six, the said Sylvester Butler, at Pittsfield, in said County of Berkshire, committed the crime of adultery with one Fanny Oakley; and heretofore, to wit, on the tenth day of July, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and sixty-six, he committed the crime of adultery with the said Fanny Oakley, at said Pittsfield; and that he has committed various other adulteries with the said Fanny Oakley at various other times and places to your libellant unknown, and which your libellant cannot here more particularly specify.

Wherefore your libellant prays that the bond of marriage between her and the said Sylvester Butler may be dissolved, and for such further and other relief as to this Honorable Court may seem just.

Dated at said Pittsfield, this twelfth day of February, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and seventy.

ESTHER M. BUTLER.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.  
BERKSHIRE, SS.

Supreme Judicial Court, Clerk's Office, at Lenox,  
February 12th, 1870.

**U**PON [the foregoing Libel, — ORDERED, that the libellant notify the Libellee to appear at the Supreme Judicial Court, next to be holden at Pittsfield, within and for the County of Berkshire, on the second Tuesday of May next, by causing an attested copy of said Libel, and of this Order thereon, to be published in The Pittsfield Sun, a newspaper printed in said Pittsfield, once a week, three weeks successively, the last publication thereof to be thirty days at least before the second Tuesday of May next, that he may then and there appear, and shew cause, if any he has, why the prayer of said Libel should not be granted.

HENRY W. TAFT, Clerk.

A true Copy of the Libel and Order thereon.  
3w22 Attest, HENRY W. TAFT, Clerk.

Dated at said Pittsfield, this twelfth day of February, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and seventy.

ESTHER M. BUTLER

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS.  
BERKSHIRE, SS.

Supreme Judicial Court, Clerk's Office, at Lenox,

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Upon the foregoing Libel, —ORDERED, that the libellant notify the Libellee to appear at the Supreme Judicial Court, next to be holden at Pittsfield, within and for the County of Berkshire, on the second Tuesday of May next, by causing an attested copy of said Libel, and of this Order thereon, to be published in The Pittsfield Sun, a newspaper printed in said Pittsfield, once a week, three weeks successively, the last publication thereof to be thirty days at least before the second Tuesday of May next, that he may then and there appear, and shew cause, if any he has, why the prayer of said Libel should not be granted.

HENRY W. TAFT, *Clerk*

A true Copy of the Libel and Order thereon.

3w22

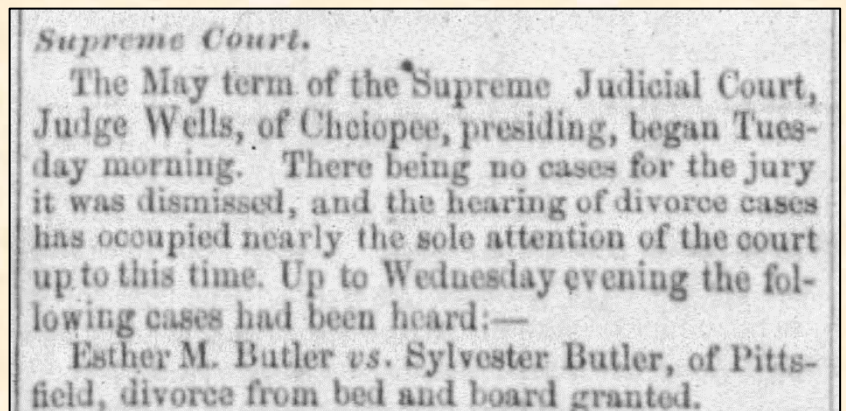
Attest,

HENRY W. TAFT, *Clerk*

We do not find Esther, Sylvester, the Butler children, or Fanny Oakley in the 1870 census.

What happened in the four years between when Esther left her husband and when she sued for divorce? Based on what is given in this newspaper item (and its duplicates, published in successive weeks), all we know for sure is that, as of mid-February 1870, Esther was still “of Pittsfield,” and Sylvester’s whereabouts were unknown.

*The Berkshire County Eagle* reported on Thursday, May 12, 1870, that Esther got her divorce: “Esther M. Butler vs. Sylvester Butler, of Pittsfield, divorce from bed and board granted.” (We understand this to be the equivalent of a legal separation.)



*Supreme Court.*  
The May term of the Supreme Judicial Court, Judge Wells, of Choiopee, presiding, began Tuesday morning. There being no cases for the jury it was dismissed, and the hearing of divorce cases has occupied nearly the sole attention of the court up to this time. Up to Wednesday evening the following cases had been heard:—  
Esther M. Butler vs. Sylvester Butler, of Pittsfield, divorce from bed and board granted.

Another item, from *The Pittsfield Sun* on June 7, 1870, indicates that Esther was pursuing an absolute divorce – the complete legal dissolution of her marriage to Sylvester.



On May 18, 1871, *The Berkshire County Eagle* reported that Esther had been granted an absolute divorce. This item noted that Sylvester Butler was “of Adams,” a town in Berkshire county about fifteen miles northeast of Pittsfield.

Esther M. Butler vs. Sylvester Butler, of Adams, absolute divorce granted.

### After the Divorce

By 1875, Esther was residing in Cherry Creek, Chautauqua county, NY. That year’s NY state census notes that she lived in a frame house, valued at \$300. She got a mark in Column 19, “Owner of land,” suggesting that Esther owned the property where she now lived.

We do not know the particulars of Esther’s divorce settlement, but it seems that she obtained the means to build a new life for herself. In 1875 and in subsequent census years, Esther is listed as a *milliner* – someone who “designs, makes, trims, or sells women's hats” (per the Merriam-Webster dictionary [online](#)). And it looks like Esther didn’t labor in someone else’s shop; rather, she ran her own millinery business.

The Butler homestead apparently passed into the hands of Dudley Ely Butler, Sylvester’s older brother. An 1876 annotated map of Pittsfield shows “D. E. Butler” written in the same location once labeled with Sylvester Butler’s name. Dudley’s obituary mentions that he sold the old family house circa 1890.

What happened with the Butler children?

According to Edward S. Butler’s biography in *A History of Williams County, Ohio*, “In 1873 Sylvester Butler brought his family to Ohio and located at Berea, near Cleveland, and later at Cleveland.” Since Esther was living alone in 1875, we can guess that Sylvester took their sons with him to Ohio.

The 1880 census places Sylvester Butler in Brunswick, Medina county, Ohio, ten miles south of Berea. His household included his *wife* Fanny; and sons Henry, age 20, and Eli, age 17. We do not find son Eli in census or other records after this; he simply disappears.

Son Edward, who would have been 15 years old in 1880, was not enumerated with either Sylvester or Esther. We don’t find him anywhere in the 1880 census (please see [note](#) in Resources section). But we learn from Edward’s bio, referenced earlier, that he “grew to manhood at his home in Berea, where he received a substantial and practical education.”

The reason we don’t find son Milton living with his father and stepmother in 1880 is because he was living with Esther. Milton made Cherry Creek his home, too, and married a local woman, Julia Beverly, in 1884.

*The Dunkirk (NY) Evening Observer* newspaper reported, on November 6, 1883, a bit of a boom in new house construction in Cherry Creek. The article included that “Mrs. E. M. Butler

and L. G. Sheffield are completing foundations and receiving material for new dwelling houses on South Division Street.” Esther was building a new house.

The 1892 NY state census shows Esther, still in Cherry Creek, still in the millinery business, living alone. By this time, son Henry also lived in Cherry Creek, with his wife Florence (Wells) Butler and their six-year-old son Clifford. Milton and Julia were living about seventeen miles away in Little Valley, Cattaraugus county, NY, with their two young daughters, Artensie and Esther. By 1900 Milton and family would be back in Cherry Creek.

Sylvester Butler died at age 70 in Cleveland, Cuyahoga county, Ohio, on May 16, 1899. He is buried in Lake View Cemetery in Cleveland.

In 1900 widow Fanny Butler was enumerated in Cleveland, living at 53 Beulah Street. She was a household of one, in a dwelling where a family of four adults also resided. The columns for “Mother of how many children” and “Number of these children living” were filled with zeroes for Fanny. We have not found Fanny in the 1910 census.

Fanny (Oakley) Butler died at age 76 in Cleveland, Cuyahoga county, Ohio, on March 15, 1918. She also is buried in Lake View Cemetery in Cleveland.

By 1900, Esther was living in Jamestown, Chautauqua county, NY, in the household of her son Henry and his family. Esther M. (Watson) Butler died at age 73 on December 31, 1900. She was laid to rest in plot 167 in Cherry Creek Central Cemetery, Cherry Creek, Chautauqua county, NY – the same plot where her sons Milton and Henry are interred.

Esther died in the same year her son Edward finally appeared in the census.

A review of census records tells us that Edward S. Butler remained in Ohio. We don’t know if he ever came east to see his mother and brothers in New York (though we hope he did).

Edward’s biography in *A History of Williams County, Ohio*, contains a lot of information. We present the entire thing, below. Items we know to be inaccurate are formatted in red type, with corrections following.

EDWARD S. BUTLER, a prominent citizen and well-known marble and granite dealer of Montpelier, Williams county, O., is a representative of the same branch of the Butler family that numbers among its distinguished members Gen. B. F. Butler of Civil War fame. He was born in Pittsfield, Mass., on March 4, 1865, in the same house in which his father, Sylvester Butler, and his **grandfather, Dudley Butler**, were born. In 1873 Sylvester Butler brought his family to Ohio and located at Berea, near Cleveland, and later at Cleveland. By occupation he was a civil engineer as well as a carpenter, both of which avocations he plied diligently for some years. He married Miss **Ellen** Watson, a native of New York State and the **daughter of John Watson**. **Both** died in Cleveland, the former in **1898** and the latter in **1901**. Edward S. Butler

grew to manhood at his home in Berea, where he received a substantial and practical education. After the family removed to Cleveland he learned the marble and granite business and afterwards followed that trade in many different states. In 1896 he came to Montpelier and opened up a marble establishment, beginning in a very small way. By dint of close application to business and high-class workmanship he has succeeded in building up an extensive and profitable trade, and today is the proprietor of the largest marble establishment in Montpelier. All kinds of stone, granite and marble are skillfully fashioned and shaped for the market. Mr. Butler stands high in Masonry, being a member of the Montpelier Blue Lodge and the Bryan Chapter. His choice for a helpmeet in life's journey was Miss Clara Strawser, the daughter of Philip Strawser of Montpelier. To this marriage two children have been born, Carlton and Margaret Maude. Mr. and Mrs. Butler are actively identified with the Methodist Episcopal church.

#### Corrections to the above:

**Dudley Butler** was an older brother to Edward's father Sylvester, making him Edward's **uncle**, *not grandfather*.

Edward's father Sylvester married Miss **Esther** Watson (*not Ellen*, which we suspect was a transcription error). Esther was the **sister** (*not daughter*) of John Watson.

The line about how "**Both** [of Edward's parents] died in Cleveland, the former in **1898** and the latter in **1901**" not only contains errors; it glosses over Sylvester's marriage to Fanny Oakley after Esther divorced him. Sylvester died in Cleveland in **1899**, *not 1898*. Esther died **in NY** on the *very last day* of **1900** – which may be why Edward remembered it as being **1901**, because that's when he learned of it. Edward's stepmother Fanny died in Cleveland in 1918.

#### **Permelia**

Permelia (Watson) King not only took care of her father Daniel in his last years; she apparently also raised one of her nieces.

Phebe Laura Bentley, born circa 1847, was the child of James J. and Ruth (Watson) Bentley. She went by her middle name, Laura, which is what we will use here. Laura, age 3, appears with her family of origin in the 1850 census in Ellington, Chautauqua county, NY.

In the 1855 New York state census, 8-year-old Laura shows up twice – once with her parents and siblings; and again in the household of Norman and Permelia (Watson) King, where she was listed as Laura *King*. Her *Relation to the head of the family* was written as *adopted*.

While we doubt that Laura's Aunt Permelia and Uncle Norman King formally adopted her, they seem to have given her a home. In the 1860 census she was still living with them, though this time she was listed as Laurie Bentley (now 13 years old).

We do not find Laura in the 1865 New York state census.

Laurie Bentley shows up again in the 1870 census. Now 23 years old, she was living with Permelia and Norman King, and her grandfather Daniel Watson.

We have no idea why or how this alternative living arrangement came about. Given that Permelia doesn't appear to have had any children of her own, perhaps she enjoyed a special relationship with Laura. Somehow that turned into fifteen or more years of "staying over" at the Kings' house.

More about Phebe Laura Bentley: Laura married, circa 1871, Albert H. King of Gerry, Chautauqua county, NY, the son of Orin P. and Jerusha (Hurd) King. Phebe Laura King is mentioned in the wills of both Norman and Permelia (Watson) King, as well as in documents relating to the estate of her mother, Ruth C. (Watson) Bentley.

### **Leaving Eunice Out of the Wills**

Norman King's last will and testament, dated December 1, 1873, mentions Permelia's siblings by name, and his own siblings generically. Remarkably, it also made provision, in case of the Watson siblings' decease, for their *daughters* to inherit those shares. (We have added **bold** emphasis to parts of the two transcriptions, below.)

After all my lawful debts are paid and discharged, I give and bequeath and devise to my wife Permelia L. King all my Real and Personal Property of every description absolutely for her to sell and convey a part or the whole of said Property as she may think desirable or for the best interest of herself during her natural life; and at the time of the decease of my said wife, in case there shall be property left, I give and bequeath one half part of the same to **Mary Ann Benson, Louisa Andrews, Ester [sic] M. Butler, Ruth C. Bentley, Phebe Louisa [sic] King, John A. Watson, and Henry [sic] G. Watson** share and share alike, but in case of the decease of either of the seven Legatees last name[d] then I direct that the property be paid **to the daughters of said deceased** share and share alike. And the other half part I give and bequeath **to my Brothers and sisters** equally or in case of the decease of either of said Brothers or sisters the one share to be equally divided between the heirs of deceased Brothers or Sister.

Norman King died in 1876. Permelia's will, dated September 2, 1879, echoed Norman's:

After all my lawful debts are paid and discharged, I give and bequeath to **Harvey G. Watson, Ruth C. Bentley, Mary Ann Benson, Louisa Andrews, Phebe**

**Laura King, Ester [sic] M. Butler, and John A. Watson** all my Real and Personal Property of every name and nature that I may own at my decease, except what is hereinafter named and reserved to them and there [sic] heirs forever, to share and share alike as tenants in common. And in case any of the aforesaid parties shall not be living at that time, I desire that there [sic] share shall go to there [sic] heirs at law the same as it would of [sic] you to them.

I give to Permelia Watson [John A. Watson's daughter] 6 small and 2 large silver spoons.

I desire that my ear rings be left in my ears at my death.

After Permelia's death on December 1, 1879, her executor, John A. Watson, provided a list of Permelia's "heirs and next of kin." That list includes a name not appearing in Norman's or Permelia's wills – *Eunice Bentley*, Permelia's oldest surviving sister.

*lates to Real and Personal Estate. That the following named persons are all heirs and next of kin of the said deceased, with their places of residence and ages, as nearly as can be ascertained, viz:*

*Said deceased left her surviving,*

<i>John A. Watson</i>	<i>Souwango</i>	<i>Catt. Co.</i>	<i>N. Y.</i>	<i>full age</i>
<i>Eunice Bentley</i>	"	"	"	"
<i>Mary A. Benson</i>	<i>Ellington</i>	<i>Whart</i>	"	"
<i>Louis Anderson</i>	"	"	"	"
<i>Ruth B. Bentley</i>	"	"	"	"
<i>Esther H. Butler</i>	<i>Cherry Creek</i>	"	"	"
<i>Pheba L. King</i>	<i>Gerby</i>	"	"	"
<i>Harvey G. Watson</i>	<i>Steventown</i>	<i>Russelair</i>	"	"

Note, in the above, that Louisa Andrews' name got mis-copied as "Louis Anderson." And Harvey G. Watson's place of residence was given as "Steventown." Misspelling aside, it's noteworthy because Harvey had lived in the town of Berlin, not Stepentown, for many years.

When the Watson siblings – and niece/"adopted daughter" Phebe Laura King – liquidated the King property, the newspaper notice of the sale reflected the list of people named in Permelia (Watson) King's will. Eunice (Watson) Bentley was not among them.

Why leave out Eunice? We wish we knew.

The 1873 date of Norman's will correlates with the year Esther (Watson) Butler's ex-husband moved to Ohio, taking their kids with him. By 1875, Norman and Permelia King were living in Cherry Creek, which is where Esther relocated also. Norman's provision for the Watson siblings' *daughters* was, perhaps, an acknowledgment of how disadvantaged in life women could be. Maybe Eunice was the only Watson sibling who didn't lend Esther a helping hand – and Norman and Permelia decided to exclude her when they made their bequests. (Also: Eunice had no daughters.)

## **Daniel<sup>5</sup> and Elizabeth's Final Years**

Before 1860, Daniel Watson went to live with daughter and son-in-law Permelia and Norman King, while Elizabeth continued to reside with daughter Mary and son-in-law John Benson.

### **1865**

In the New York state census for 1865, it was just the three of them – Permelia, Norman, and Daniel – living together in Ellington. John A. Watson lived nearby; he and his family were enumerated on the very next page.

Elizabeth Watson appears, very much alive, in this same 1865 census, despite what her gravestone says – that she died in 1863. (We suspect that Elizabeth's and Daniel's gravestones were made and installed, long after their deaths, by people with good intentions and faulty memories.)

Living in Mary Ann and John Benson's household, Elizabeth Watson had the opportunity to know and enjoy the Benson children. In census year 1865, James was eight years old, and Georgianna was a newborn. Ruth and James Bentley lived very close by, with three of their young-adult children – Jerome, Mary, and Frank – still at home.

After this, Elizabeth Watson disappears from the census record, indicating that she passed away sometime after the NY state census was taken in June 1865, and before the 1870 census. While we dispute the *year* of her death as given on her gravestone, we have no reason to reject the rest – that she died on the 21st day of September. Elizabeth (Wilcox) Watson was buried in Clear Creek Cemetery, Ellington, Chautauqua county, NY.

### **1870**

Daniel Watson's last appearance in the census record is in 1870. Still living with Permelia and Norman King in Ellington, he had the additional company of his granddaughter Laura Bentley.

Daniel's gravestone tells us that he died on April 24, 1872. He was buried in Clear Creek Cemetery, Ellington, Chautauqua county, NY, joining his wife and daughters who had preceded him in death.

## **Summary**

Daniel<sup>5</sup> Watson, the son of Samuel<sup>4</sup> Watson and Abiah Young, was born in West Greenwich, Rhode Island, likely in December 1780. Circa 1805, Daniel married Elizabeth "Betsy" Wilcox, who was born circa 1788-89, likely in Rhode Island. They had eleven children together.

Daniel and Elizabeth Watson made their home first in Rhode Island, likely in Exeter; and then in Preston, New London county, Connecticut. After 1820 they removed to Stephentown, Rensselaer county, New York, where they were enumerated in 1830 and 1840.

Around 1843, Daniel and Elizabeth Watson moved to the town of Ellington in Chautauqua county, NY. A number of their daughters lived with their own families in or near that town. Later on, Daniel's and Elizabeth's son John and daughter Esther moved to the same area.

The 1860 census shows Daniel and Elizabeth living in two separate households in Ellington, each being hosted by a different daughter and son-in-law. As far as we know, this arrangement continued throughout their final years. Elizabeth died between 1865 and 1870. Daniel died in 1872. They are both buried in Clear Creek Cemetery, Ellington, Chautauqua county, NY.

Stories about several of Daniel's and Elizabeth's daughters reveal them to be strong and capable women. (Adjectives like *resilient*, *creative*, and *tough-minded* also occur to us.)

## Appendix

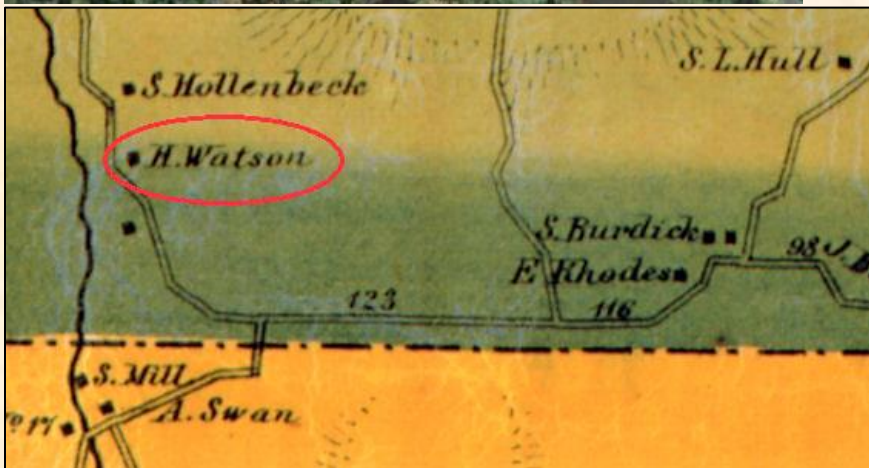


### Watson Cemetery in Berlin, Rensselaer county, NY

As mentioned earlier, Harvey G.<sup>6</sup> Watson died on November 13, 1886. His age at death apparently was noted on his headstone as 74, which computes to a birth year of ~1812. Harvey's age as given in census records does *not* track with that year.

Harvey and his wife Esther are buried in what a Berlin town historian has identified as a family cemetery – a section of Harvey's own property that was set off for burials.

It's referred to as Watson Cemetery, described as being "West of Miller Rd. near CCC Dam."



In the aerial view map, obtained via [Google Maps](#), the dam is clearly visible at the foot of what is now Black River Pond. It used to be simply the Black River, which shows up in an old annotated county map for Berlin, NY. "H. Watson" is marked for a dwelling

house along the east side of what is now Miller Road in southern Berlin, just north of Stephentown.

Watson cemetery in Berlin, NY, is not represented at the Find A Grave web site. We don't know if any of its gravestones are still intact and/or visible. Besides Harvey G.<sup>6</sup> Watson and his wife Esther, there is (or was) a marked burial for their daughter "Sarah E.," who appears in census records as *Sally Ann*. Data gleaned from Sarah's gravestone notes that she was the wife of Valentine Goodermote (who went on to marry again). Sarah (Watson) Goodermote was 45 years, four months, and two days old when she died on August 22, 1888.

Information on the burial sites of Harvey G.<sup>6</sup> Watson, his wife Esther, and daughter Sarah was obtained via the *Rensselaer Co., NYGenWeb* web site, <https://rensselaer.nygenweb.net/> (see also <http://sites.rootsweb.com/~nyrensse/cemw4.htm>).

## Resources

[Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com), our favorite source for census records, including:

Daniel Watson (*indexed as "Danl Walion"*) in the 1810 US federal census:

Year: 1810; Census Place: Exeter, Washington, Rhode Island; Roll: 59; Page: 69; Image: 00144; Family History Library Film: 0281233 Source Information: Ancestry.com. *1810 United States Federal Census* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010. Images reproduced by FamilySearch. Original data: Third Census of the United States, 1810. (NARA microfilm publication M252, 71 rolls). Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

*U.S., Appointments of U. S. Postmasters, 1832-1971* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010. This collection was indexed by Ancestry World Archives Project contributors. Original data: *Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1832-1971*. NARA Microfilm Publication, M841, 145 rolls. Records of the Post Office Department, Record Group Number 28. Washington, D.C.: National Archives.

*Massachusetts, Town and Vital Records, 1620-1988* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011. Original data: Town and City Clerks of Massachusetts. *Massachusetts Vital and Town Records*. Provo, UT: Holbrook Research Institute (Jay and Delene Holbrook).

*Probate Records, 1811-1901; Index, 1811-1962*; Author: *New York. Surrogate's Court (Chautauqua County)*; Probate Place: *Chautauqua, New York*. Notes: *Record of Wills, Vol 0005-0006, 1870-1878*.



*New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015. Original data: New York County, District and Probate Courts.

*New York, County Marriage Records, 1847-1849, 1907-1936* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016. Original data: Marriage Records. New York Marriages. Various New York County Clerk offices.

*New York, Death Index, 1852-1956* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2017. Original data: New York Department of Health; Albany, NY; *NY State Death Index*.

*U.S., Civil War Draft Registrations Records, 1863-1865* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010. Original data: National Archives and Records Administration (NARA); Washington, D.C.; *Consolidated Lists of Civil War Draft Registration Records (Provost Marshal General's Bureau; Consolidated Enrollment Lists, 1863-1865)*; Record Group: 110, *Records of the Provost Marshal General's Bureau (Civil War)*; Collection Name: *Consolidated Enrollment Lists, 1863-1865 (Civil War Union Draft Records)*; NAI: 4213514; Archive Volume Number: 1 of 3.

*The Chapman family, or, The descendants of Robert Chapman : one of the first settlers of Say-Brook, Conn.* Section: *Descendants in the line of Robert Chapman, JR., the second son of Robert Chapman the settler*, pg. 115. [database on-line]. Provo, UT: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2005. Original data: Chapman, F. W. *The Chapman family, or, The descendants of Robert Chapman : one of the first settlers of Say-Brook, Conn. : with genealogical notes of William Chapman who settled in New London, Conn., Edward Chapman who settled at Windsor Conn., John Chapman of Stonington, Conn., and Rev. Benjamin Chapman of Southington, Conn.* Hartford: Printed by Case, Tiffany and Co., 1854.

OLIVER CHAPMAN, son of Caleb Chapman, born February 15, 1764, married Betsey Gardiner, in the year 1790, and had, by her, ten children. Residence Stephentown, New York. Is a farmer.

CHILDREN.

1364. Mary,	born August	31, 1792.
1365. John,	" March	25, 1794.
1366. Ann,	" April	2, 1796.
1367. Sylvester,	" February	3, 1798.
1368. Betsey,	" December	8, 1800.
1369. Oliver W.,	" September	2, 1802.
1370. Catharine,	" April	20, 1805.
1371. Clark,	" October	5, 1807.
1372. Ralph,	" October	8, 1809.
1374. Morgan L.,	" December	1, 1811.

"United States, New York Land Records, 1630-1975," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:CSZV-3K6Z> : 20 May 2020), Lucy L. Lebarron, 1900.

The Rhode Island Census of 1782, transcribed by the late Katharine U. Waterman of North Scituate, RI, and published in the *New England Historic and Genealogical Register*. Data for West Greenwich are found in the January 1975 issue, vol. 129, no. 1, pages 57 – 62.

We used the [Tombstone Birthday Calculator](#) to calculate birth dates for:

Eunice (Watson) Bentley

Eunice Watson's husband Lemuel Bentley

Mary Ann (Watson) Benson

Information on the families of Lemuel and James J. Bentley was gleaned from this web site:

<http://sites.rootsweb.com/~nychauta/Families/Bentley1.htm>

“History of the Town of Conewango,” chap. XXII, p. 523, *The Historical Gazetteer and Biographical Memorial of Cattaraugus Co. NY*, William Adams, editor (Syracuse, NY: Lyman, Horton & Co., Limited, 1893); The biography of John A. Watson in this county history, quoted in the Appendix, may be found on this [web page](#) and again on this [other web page](#).

<https://chatauqua.nygenweb.net/CEMETERY/Clcreek.html>

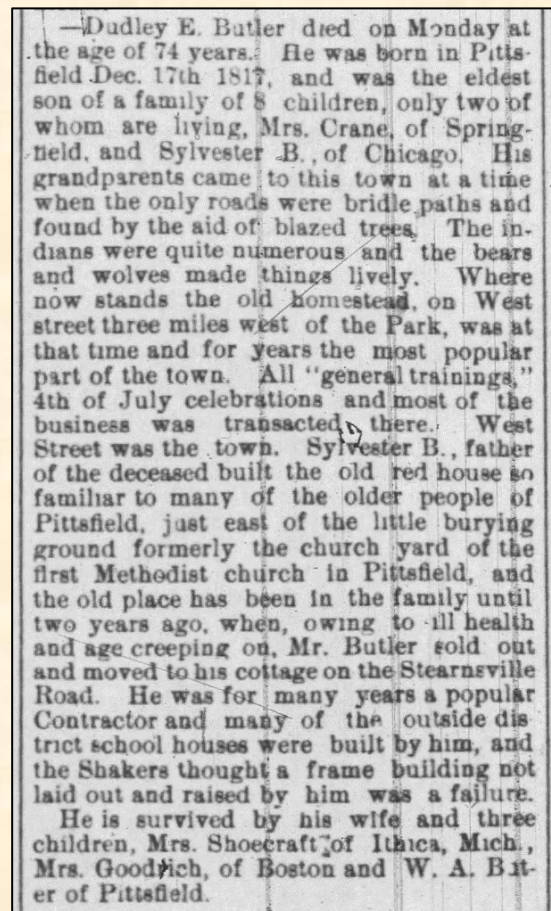
<https://milltour.org/pontoosuc-woolen-mill/>

In Dudley E. Butler's obituary in *The Pittsfield (MA) Sun* newspaper, February 25, 1892, page 5 (shown at right), we see the names of his father and brother written as “Sylvester B.” Neither of them had a middle initial. Likely someone inserted B where the generational suffixes Sr. and Jr. belonged.

Woodford, E. M. (1855) *Map of the town of Pittsfield, Berkshire County, Mass.* Philadelphia, Richard Clark. [Map] Retrieved from the Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/gm70002591/>. Library of Congress Geography and Map Division Washington, D.C. 20540-4650 Digital Id: <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.gmd/g3764p.ct006159>

Edward S. Butler's bio was taken from page 317 of “A History of Williams County, Ohio,” Part 2, by William Henry Shinn, Madison, WI: 1905, Northwestern Historical Assoc.; retrieved via

[https://archive.org/stream/countyofwilliams02shin/countyofwilliams02shin\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/countyofwilliams02shin/countyofwilliams02shin_djvu.txt)



—Dudley E. Butler died on Monday at the age of 74 years. He was born in Pittsfield Dec. 17th 1817, and was the eldest son of a family of 8 children, only two of whom are living, Mrs. Crane, of Springfield, and Sylvester B. of Chicago. His grandparents came to this town at a time when the only roads were bridle paths and found by the aid of blazed trees. The Indians were quite numerous and the bears and wolves made things lively. Where now stands the old homestead, on West street three miles west of the Park, was at that time and for years the most popular part of the town. All "general trainings," 4th of July celebrations and most of the business was transacted there. West Street was the town. Sylvester B., father of the deceased built the old red house so familiar to many of the older people of Pittsfield, just east of the little burying ground formerly the church yard of the first Methodist church in Pittsfield, and the old place has been in the family until two years ago, when, owing to ill health and age creeping on, Mr. Butler sold out and moved to his cottage on the Stearnsville Road. He was for many years a popular Contractor and many of the outside district school houses were built by him, and the Shakers thought a frame building not laid out and raised by him was a failure. He is survived by his wife and three children, Mrs. Shoecraft of Ithaca, Mich., Mrs. Goodrich, of Boston and W. A. Butler of Pittsfield.

We thank Edward S. Butler's great-grandson Mark Butler for posting Edward's death record with his [Butler-Burkhead](#) family tree at Ancestry.com. Without that record, we never would have known that Sylvester and Esther (Watson) Butler had a fifth child.

Regarding Edward S. Butler's absence from the 1880 census, Mark Butler wrote:

“In an interview in 1990, my grandmother, Marie Butler, states that her father-in-law Edward Butler left home at the age of 14. She did not know the reason why. That is why he did not show up on the census at the age of 15.”

### Memorials at [Find A Grave](#):

Little Clear Creek Cemetery (also known as Clear Creek Cemetery), Conewango, Cattaraugus County, New York: <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/65103/little-clear-creek-cemetery>

**Daniel<sup>5</sup> Watson**'s Find A Grave memorial:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11505057/daniel-watson>

**Elizabeth (Wilcox) Watson**'s Find A Grave memorial:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11505066/elizabeth-watson>

**Phebe L. Watson**'s Find A Grave memorial:

[https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11505072/phebe-l\\_-watson](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11505072/phebe-l_-watson)

**Lucy P. Watson**'s Find A Grave memorial:

[https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11505075/lucy-p\\_-watson](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11505075/lucy-p_-watson)

(stone is fallen over; it doesn't look new[er] like Phebe's)

**Mary Ann (Watson) Benson**'s Find A Grave memorial:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11436160/mary-ann-benson>

Mary Ann's husband **John L. Benson**'s Find A Grave memorial:

[https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11436156/john-l\\_-benson](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11436156/john-l_-benson)

**Myron D. Chapman**'s Find A Grave memorial:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/91185129/myron-d-chapman>

**Ruth Caroline (Watson) Bentley**'s Find A Grave memorial:

[https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11452056/ruth-c\\_-bentley](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11452056/ruth-c_-bentley)

Ruth's year of death is given here as 1883; one of her probate documents says 1884

Ruth's husband **James J. Bentley**'s Find A Grave memorial:

[https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11452044/james-j\\_-bentley](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11452044/james-j_-bentley)

**Frances Adelaide (Bentley) Lilley**, James & Ruth Bentley's daughter, is buried in Brighton City Cemetery, Brighton, Macoupin co., IL. Her memorial includes extended (unsourced) family info:  
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/149246865/francis-adelaide-lilley>

**Eunice M. (Watson) Bentley's** Find A Grave memorial:  
[https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11452049/eunice-m\\_-bentley](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11452049/eunice-m_-bentley)

Eunice's husband **Lemuel Bentley's** Find A Grave memorial:  
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11452047/lemuel-bentley>



Rutledge Cemetery, Conewango, Cattaraugus county, New York  
<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/2133485/rutledge-cemetery>

**John A. Watson's** Find A Grave memorial:  
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11254331/john-a-watson>

As of this writing, John A. Watson's memorial has an erroneous note attached to it. He was *not* the "husband of Katie." John's son Daniel B. was the husband of Kate (Hall) Watson.

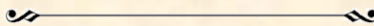
John A. Watson's wife **Fidelia (Woodmansee) Watson's** Find A Grave memorial:  
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11254329/fidelia-watson>

John A. Watson's son **Daniel B. Watson's** Find A Grave memorial:  
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11254327/daniel-b-watson>

Daniel B. Watson's wife **Kate (Hall) Watson's** Find A Grave memorial:  
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11254333/kate-watson>

John A. Watson's daughter **Permelia (Watson) Ferrier's** Find A Grave memorial:  
<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11253380/permelia-ferrier>

Permelia (Watson) Ferrier's husband **Heman H. Ferrier's** Find A Grave memorial:  
[https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11253379/heman-h\\_-ferrier](https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11253379/heman-h_-ferrier)



Cherry Creek Central Cemetery (also known as Highland Cem.), Cherry Creek, Chautauqua co., NY <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/1820078/cherry-creek-central-cemetery>

**Permelia L. (Watson) King**'s Find A Grave memorial:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/15595142/permelia-king> (no photo or other info)

Permelia L. (Watson) King's husband **Norman King**'s Find A Grave memorial:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/15595138/normin-king> (no photo or other info)

We obtained dates of birth and death for Norman and Permelia L. (Watson) King from photos of their gravestone taken by Tammy Nickerson Austin, who posted them at Ancestry.com.

**Esther M. (Watson) Butler**'s Find A Grave memorial:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/15594272/esther-m-butler>



Valley View Cemetery, Ellington, Chautauqua county, NY

<https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/66587/valley-view-cemetery>

**Ann Louisa (Watson) Andrews**' Find A Grave memorial:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/123168253/ann-andrews>

Ann Louisa (Watson) Andrews' husband **Mason J. Andrews**' Find A Grave memorial:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/123168211/mason-j-andrews>

NOTE: The information given for both Mason Andrews and his wife Ann Louisa at their Find A Grave memorials seems off to us. There is no gravestone photo for either of them, so we can't compare the posted info with whatever may be carved onto their stones.

Mason and Louisa's son **George Andrews**' Find A Grave memorial:

<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/123168285/george-andrews>