

Memoirs from Eldred, New York, 1800–1950

Book 1

# The Mill on Halfway Brook

Stories of Families Who Settled Near Halfway Brook  
in the Town of Highland, New York  
1800–1880



you must write  
now if she has  
for me father  
and you must be  
down as you can I am  
the children are all  
more I must

Mary A. Eldred

from your affection  
Sister  
P. M. Austin

Louise Elizabeth Smith





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Halfway Brook in the Town of Highland, New York

1800-1880

Louise Elizabeth Smith

HALFWAY BROOK



Photo: Gary Smith.

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<http://halfwaybrook.com>: Halfway Brook community  
blog, on-going projects, resources

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Other books by Louise Elizabeth Smith:  
*Grandma and Me*, and *Aida Austin's 1881 Diary*

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### Chapter 3

## Life in Lumberland

### 1825 to 1831

*The work of most people in the area was related in some way to lumbering. Each lumbering company had its small community of employees, most of whom lived in make-shift tenements, and some did not have a garden. But all received wages which left no surplus at the end of the year.—John W. Johnston, Reminiscences.*



Delaware River View. Photo: Gary Smith.

The sound of sawmills ripping through huge logs to make planks could be heard throughout Lumberland.

Not all of the timber from the area went to local sawmills. A considerable amount of logs sent to the Delaware River by way of the nearest stream were made into rafts and floated to market.

Lumbermen and farmers lived in simple, small homes with no insulation. Barns usually stood across the road from the houses.

Lumbermen also farmed, and their oxen were used for both occupations. Vegetables, rye, corn, buckwheat, and some fruit trees were grown, as well as grain and hay for the stock. Meat and milk came from the cattle, which were free to roam. Chickens provided both meat and eggs.

Fish and eel were plentiful in the Delaware River. The Van Tuyl, Middaugh, Hooker, and other families kept a barrel of salted eels in the winter. Each child was given a boiled eel and four buckwheat pancakes for dinner. Other families in the area ate rye bread spread with butter or pork grease.

Many wild animals, including bears, roamed the forest in the

1820s. Years later, Jacob Stage's wife, Martha Carmichael, told a story about her grandmother as a young mother. The menfolk had gone some distance to hunt and left Grandmother alone with her children in a recently built house with only a curtain for a door.

When a bear appeared at the door wanting something to eat, Grandmother hid the children under the bed, and beat off the bear with anything she could grab. From then on, Martha's grandmother refused to stay alone when the men were away. Do you blame her?

Getting food and necessities for living was quite challenging in Lumberland's early days. Needed items were purchased from the Village of Newburgh, about sixty miles from Lumberland. The round trip on the Newburgh-Cochecton Turnpike took a week.

Farm produce, cattle, and wood products were transported from Newburgh west on the Turnpike. Items the settlers wanted to sell were sent to Newburgh, and from there transported by boat to New York City, another 67 or so miles away.

A bit later, but still early on, food and dry goods came





*The Tri-States—New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania—meet at Port Jervis (originally Carpenter's Point), New York. Postcard in Mary Briggs Austin Collection.*

from Carpenter's Point (Port Jervis), roughly 20 miles away. At Carpenter's Point, grain could be ground into flour. In the winter, when the Delaware River was frozen, goods were hauled from Carpenter's Point to Lumberland over the ice.

In 1825, a school was started for children who lived near The River settlement in the Town of Lumberland. Sears Gardner was the Town Supervisor, and James Eldred was the Town Clerk, Commissioner of Highways, and Town Marshall.

The community felt they needed a school. As was done in those times, a subscription paper was circulated to see if there was enough interest to start a school. John W. Johnston tells about the school in his *Reminiscences*.

Francis Quick circulated the subscription document on both sides of the Delaware River—from the Van Tuyl property near Handsome Eddy, northwest four miles to the Johnston family's home, near The River.

School would be held for three months of the year at a time, every week day, and on alternate Saturdays. People were to add their signatures and the number

of children they were responsible for if they were committed to supporting the school.

Nine parents signed up a total of 28 students. The Francis Quick family and the Van Tuyl family (Daniel and Rebecca), each had five children. The Calvin Crane family had four, as did Jane Johnston, the widowed mother of John W. Johnston. The Levi Middaugh family had three. So did James and Almira Hooker. Daniel Pool had two children.

The Nicholas Morris family and David Quick's family each had one. It was agreed that there was enough support for a school.

The school house was built southwest of Hugh Quick's home on a level piece of land surrounded by trees and a nearby spring of water.

With the help of their axes and oxen teams, the men and boys built a 16-foot square log schoolhouse in eight days. The walls were 7-feet high. Three walls each had a window. The fourth wall had a huge chimney and fireplace. The door had a wooden latch and string. There was even a place to hang hats and bonnets.

The teacher had a chair, and students sat on wooden slabs with legs made from saplings.

School opened on the first day of August, 1825. Miss Fannie Hooker, 51, was the teacher. Aunt Fannie, as she was called, taught for \$10 a month, and boarded at homes of the her students. She was the sister of James T. Hooker, husband of Almira Austin.

Miss Hooker was quite tall

## Eel Weir



*Eel weir near Pond Eddy, New York. Photo: Cynthia Leavenworth Bellingier.*

Eels are born in saltwater, but migrate to fresh water where they live before returning to the sea to spawn.

To the left is an eel weir/trap (two stone walls that form a "V") in the Delaware River near Pond Eddy. The eels run the Delaware River from the end of September though October.

*Eels are funneled into the V-shape and then drop down into a wire cage under the water (where you see the wooden contraption.) After being scooped up and put into burlap bags, the eels are cleaned and then smoked.—David Leavenworth, September 2009. 🐟*



## Lord & Taylor Department Store

**L**ord & Taylor, based in New York City, New York, is the oldest upscale, luxury department store chain in the United States.

Lord & Taylor began in New York in 1826 as a small dry goods store owned by cousins Samuel Lord and George Washington Taylor, immigrants to New York. They located their store near the North River waterfront in New York's Greenwich Village.

The store later moved to a place uptown on the Ladies' Mile, which catered to the wealthier clientele of the "carriage trade."

Lord & Taylor became a major fashion retailer, and the first major store on Fifth Avenue, New York City.

*Note: George Washington Taylor was the step-brother of Elizabeth Lazerlier Van Pelt, my great-great-grandmother. 🐾*

with large black eyes and a strong loud voice. She wrote poorly, but was a fluent reader and a good speller. She mainly used *Noah Webster's Spelling Book*, and the *New Testament* as a reader, as they were available to most of the students.

In winter, the fathers cut the trees and took the logs to the schoolhouse. The larger boys cut and prepared the wood for the fireplace, and the stronger girls helped to carry it in. The older girls scrubbed the school house on alternate Friday evenings when there was no school the following day. The younger children often stayed and played while the older girls worked.

The children walked to school in summer heat, spring rains,



*Ice gorge in the Delaware River at Hancock, N.Y., 50 miles northwest of Eldred, N.Y. Postcard is in the collection of Mary Briggs Austin.*

and wintry blasts, often with the same clothing. One little fellow, who traveled two miles to school, wore a muslin shirt with collar, coat, vest and pants, stockings and cowhide shoes, a hat, and a little mantle made of a single piece of cloth for his shoulders. His two sisters were similarly dressed.

The summer of 1826, Aunt Fannie left. Dick Manning taught that fall. Apparently Mr. Manning's teaching was not up to expectation. The school session was postponed until winter, when an older man, Mr. Furman taught for two weeks, then left for an offer he thought was better.

After a few years, the building was no longer used as a school,

as it was difficult to get to and too far away. In mild weather, however, the building was used for religious meetings where David Hickok preached and Levi Middaugh and Francis Quick exhorted and prayed. Eventually, the old schoolhouse rotted and fell down.

By 1826, the area where the Eldred family had settled was known as Halfway Brook Village, but was usually called *the Village*. Letters to the area were addressed to "Lumberland."

In February, a year after his wife Polly had died, James Eldred, 48, married Hannah Hickok, 37. Hannah, daughter of Asa and Hester Hinman Hickok, was my great-great-grandmother.



*Delaware River. Photo by Aida Austin in the collection of Mary Briggs Austin.*



The Delaware River at Barryville, New York. Postcard courtesy of Mary Briggs Austin.

Great-Great-Grandfather James Eldred probably met Hannah and her parents at the Congregational Church which had been held in his home.

Hannah was most likely well acquainted with the Eldred children: Sarah Carmichael, 21, and married with children; Abraham Mulford, 20; Charles Cotesworth, 18; Eliza, 15; and Maria, 10. (Grandmother in the Eldred-Austin cousin letters refers to Hannah Hickok Eldred.)

The Congregational Church of Narrow Falls now met in the schoolhouse in the Village.

Rev. Stephen Sergeant had left for a Presbyterian Church (and also seems to have sold his land). The Congregational Church had no pastor for six years. Deacons James Eldred and Alexander Carmichael helped direct the congregation during this difficult time. James Eldred described the church situation in this letter:

*About twenty of its members have been excommunicated. Sixteen of which were for intemperance.*

*Our Pastor Rev'd Stephen Sergeant has approached the church and told us we were not established under the government of God's Word, and has gone to the Presbyterians.*

*Some who we looked to as Fathers in Israel and Mothers, also, have had no regard to their obligations and teach others to regard it not, (and united themselves to the Methodist people).*

*Others have sickened and gone as we hope from the evils to come, others have moved out of the country, others have taken letters of dismission and joined to other churches in Christian order.—James Eldred letter.*

In September 1827, James Eldred's daughter, Eliza Eldred, almost 17, married James Keen



Eliza Eldred, daughter of James Eldred and wife of James K. Gardner. Melva Austin Barney Collection.



## D&H Canal



*Child leading mules near Rosendale, New York, on the Hudson part of the Delaware and Hudson Canal. The mules are eating from woven baskets.*



*The barge has just left Lock No. 9, north of New Paltz, New York, on the Delaware and Hudson Canal.*



*After leaving Lock No. 8, the barge loaded with firewood continues northeast towards Rosendale, New York. The man on the left is steering the barge. The mules towing the barge are in the distance on the towpath. The above photos taken by William or John Crabtree in the late 1800s are courtesy of The Century House Historical Society.*

The Delaware and Hudson Canal opened in October 1828. It had taken 2,500 men and 200 teams of horses three years to dig and blast through 108 miles of wilderness to connect the Delaware and the Hudson River.

The canal began at Rondout Creek near Kingston and went through several areas, including the Neversink River Valley on its way to Port Jervis on the Delaware River.

The canal then ran northwest on the New York side of the Delaware River, crossing into Pennsylvania at Lackawaxen and on to Honesdale.

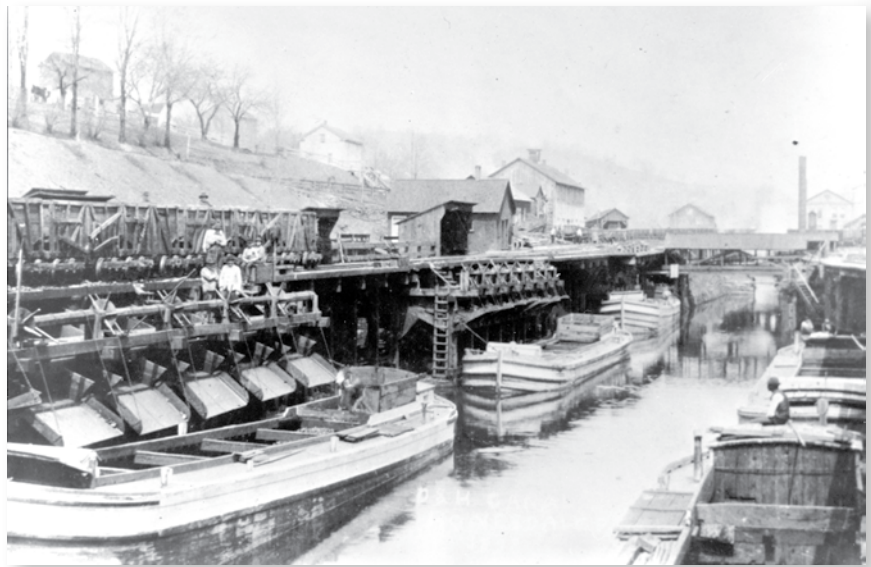
The canal was divided into three sections for operational purposes:

the Lackawaxen: from Honesdale to the Delaware; the Delaware: along the river from there to Port Jervis; and the Neversink: from Port Jervis to Kingston.

To get the anthracite from the Wurts brothers' mine in the Moosic Mountains near Carbondale to the canal at Honesdale, the canal company built a gravity railroad. The state of Pennsylvania authorized its construction on April 8, 1826.

On August 8, 1829, the D&H's first locomotive, the Stourbridge Lion, made history as the first locomotive to run on rails in the United States.

—[www.en.wikipedia.org](http://www.en.wikipedia.org). 🐾



*Railroad cars transfer their loads of anthracite (hard) coal to D&H Canal boats in Honesdale, Pennsylvania. Source: Delaware and Hudson Railroad and Canal, by Wayne County Historical Society. Reproduction number HAER PA,64-HOND, 3-1.*

Gardner, 22, son of Sears and Mary K. Gardner. The year before, James K. Gardner had started manufacturing wheelbarrows.

In 1827, James Eldred was Inspector of Schools and Town Clerk (until 1832) for Lumberland.

In December of 1827, my great-grandmother, Mary Ann

Eldred, the future wife of William Henry Austin, was born to James and Hannah Hickok Eldred in Halfway Brook Village, Town of Lumberland, Sullivan County, New York.

The Town of Lumberland, especially The River settlement on the Delaware River, was a very busy place from 1826 to 1828.

The Delaware and Hudson Canal, which would play a vital part in the growth of the communities along or near the Delaware River, was being built, and new job opportunities were opening up. The area would no longer be supported solely by the lumber industry. Places for lodging and food would be needed for the workers and the



travelers on the canal.

The 108-mile long Delaware and Hudson Canal went from Honesdale, Pennsylvania, near the Delaware River, to Kingston, New York, near the Hudson River.

The first canal boats loaded with coal arrived at the Hudson River in November 1828. From then until 1899, barges carried anthracite coal from the Moosic Mountains of Northeastern Pennsylvania mines to the coal markets of New York City, by way of the Delaware and Hudson Rivers.

Mr. Johnston recalled watching the first canal boat:

*On a pleasant October evening of 1828, when a child of about five years of age, I stood beside the towpath held by my mother's hand, and looked upon the first boat that passed up the canal on its journey to Honesdale for a load of coal.*

*After the lapse of more than seventy years, I can picture to my fancy the marks and features of the horse that towed the pioneer boat—a light sorrel of medium size, compact in form, having a narrow white strip in the face and white forward feet.*

—Johnston, pp. 125–6.



Barryville, the old Gristmill. Postcard is in the collection of Mary Briggs Austin.

In the Town of Lumberland, the canal went some 17 miles—from the Mongaup River to a point close to the junction of the Delaware and Lackawaxen Rivers. Originally there were eleven locks, but it was increased to fourteen.

*By means of aqueducts it crossed four principal streams—the Mongaup, the Pond Eddy Brook, the Halfway Brook, and the Beaver Brook... To each and every lock, a dwelling house was erected for the use of the lock-tender, and located beside the towpath and central part of the*

*lock, if the ground permitted.*  
—Johnston, p. 19.

The person (often a boy aged 12 to 16) who led the mules pulling barges along the towpath, was paid three dollars a month. This included walking 15-20 miles a day, pumping out the barges, and tending the animals.

At first, it took a week to go the entire length of the canal. The canal was closed on Sunday, and in the winter when the water froze up or was likely to.

A number of new towns sprang up. The Town (township) of Cocheton was formed from the Town (township) of Bethel on March 25, 1828. Cocheton (the Town) included the villages of Cocheton, Cocheton Center, and Tylertown.

Carpenter's Point, renamed Port Jervis in 1827, became a main port on the D&H Canal. John B. Jervis, for whom Port Jervis was named, was a Delaware and Hudson Canal engineer.

A blacksmith shop, a gristmill, and a broom handle factory were established at The River settlement shortly after 1828.



Pond behind the Barryville Gristmill. Postcard is in the collection of Mary Briggs Austin.

Later a glass factory opened which made molded glass.

Mr. Johnston tells about the store that Mr. Forgerson kept at what would soon be called Barryville:

*Forgerson kept the only store in the region, cleared land, ground a little feed, and sawed a little lumber for customers. In 1830, he built a dwelling house still continuing his mercantile business in the old store.*

Gardner Forgerson had been an agent in George D. Wickham's Ten Mile River lumbering operation. In 1828, Forgerson bought Wickham's property at The River settlement (Barryville), and built a home for his family there two years later.

James K. Gardner and his wife Eliza would have a son Stephen St. John Gardner, who would live on Forgerson's property and whose house would have part of Mr. Forgerson's original structure.

Lumberland still bustled with activity after the D&H Canal was completed. The River settlement at the mouth of Halfway Brook resonated with the sounds of a thriving community at work. You might call the cacophony—*The Work Symphony*.

Axes chopped, saws buzzed, trees fell, saw blades whirled, logs floated in rafts down the river, and canal workers walked along the river path shouting to the mules pulling the canal boats as people passed by.

Cart wheels thudded along the rough paths, horse hooves clopped, and merchants sold their wares in a sing-song voice.

Oxen plowed gardens with an occasional shout from the farmer as various barnyard animals clucked, neighed, or oinked.



Glass Factory Pond. Postcard is in the collection of Mary Briggs Austin.

## Sherman B. Leavenworth

*I always heard from Dad (Clinton Leavenworth) that Sherman B. came from Connecticut into Eldred through Monticello with the Hurd family in covered wagons. They came with the Hardenburgh Lumber Company from Connecticut.*  
—Linda Leavenworth Bohs.

From several sources I have pieced together a possible scenario from several sources of the early years of my great-great-grandfather, Sherman Buckley Leavenworth.

About 1828, Sherman B., age 20, moved from Connecticut to Sullivan County in New York, with the Hurd family in a covered wagon. The men worked for a Connecticut Lumber Company that would be lumbering in the New York area.

There are records of a Hurd family marrying into the Leavenworth family, so perhaps the Leavenworths moved with the Hurd family who were relatives.

Elias Leavenworth (not a direct relative) wrote, *A Genealogy of the Leavenworth Family in the United States*. Towards the end of the book, a Sherman Leavenworth is mentioned as living near Monticello.

Ten miles west of Monticello is the town of Bethel, New York,

where several Hurd families had settled by 1810. The town, *Hurd Settlement*, four miles north of Bethel, is on modern maps.

Is it possible that Sherman Leavenworth, mentioned in the *Leavenworth Book*, lived near Bethel or the Hurd Settlement, and "Monticello" was referring to Monticello and the nearby area?

In the 1830 census of Bethel, a Truman S. Leavenworth was listed as living in Bethel, 12 miles north of what was then Halfway Brook Village. Truman's household consisted of one female and two males, all between the ages of 20 and 30.

Our Sherman B. would be 22 in 1830. Could Truman be his brother, and Sherman lived with him?

By 1840, Sherman Buckley Leavenworth was in Halfway Brook Village as he was listed in the 1840 census of Lumberland. 🌿

Not all the sounds were raucous or loud. Children laughed as they played hide and seek. Women baked, gardened, sewed, made bread, knitted, washed clothes, sang lullabies to their

babies, and made huge meals to feed hardworking husbands and growing children, who were hopefully helping out by getting water from the well or firewood for cooking and keeping warm.

There were conflicts on the waterways. Timber from the area being rafted down the Delaware River to Philadelphia for the ship building industry interfered at times with the progress of the canal boats. Soon aqueducts would alleviate the problem.

The D&H Canal would play an important part in shipping the bluestone that was accidentally discovered some twelve miles north of Port Jervis, around 1835, by "Uncle Steve" Griffin, who was rattlesnake hunting. That was the story told in the March 1889 issue of the *New York Times*.

Though plentiful in the area, it would be another 30 years before the bluestone on either side of the Delaware River became curbs and sidewalks for New York City.

About 1828, Sears and Mary K. Gardner left Pond Eddy and moved to the east side of Halfway Brook Village, to property they owned north of Village Road near Halfway Brook. Sears Gardner may have owned the property with Abraham Mulford Eldred at first. It would later be owned by C.C.P. Eldred.

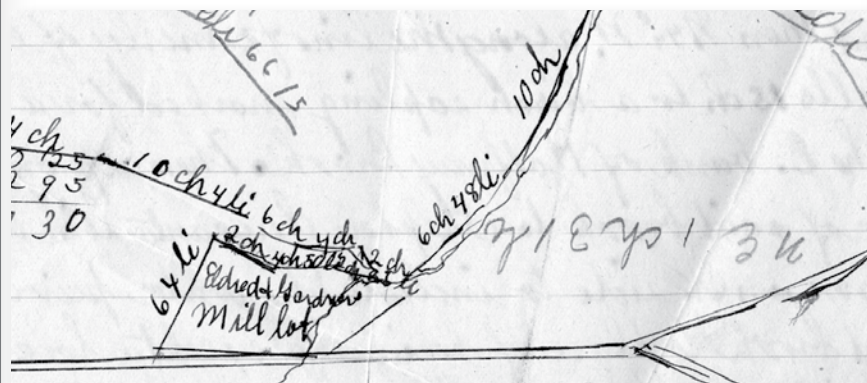
Sears and Mary K. Gardner's daughter, Letitia (Letty) Gardner, married Ethel B. Sergeant, son of Stephen and Anna Sergeant, in October of 1828.

In the late 1820s, there was still not a good way to travel on land. Whether you walked or rode a horse, the roads were rough and through the wilderness.

Whether by foot, horseback, canal or all three, Doctor Perkins left Poughkeepsie, New York, in 1829, and managed to arrive in Lumberland, where he would be the only physician for over 300 square miles.

Fortunately, the people were usually healthy, according to Mr. Johnston in his *Reminiscences*,

## Eldred-Gardner Sawmill



Map on copy of June 1828 land deed from John Wells to Sears Gardner. Melva Austin Barney Collection.

The above map on a copy of the June 1828 land deed from John Wells to Sears Gardner, shows an Eldred-Gardner Mill lot where Sears and Mary K. Gardner lived at one time. Abraham Mulford Eldred may have been co-owner at first.

The property was near Halfway Brook, north of what is now Proctor Road, just before the "Y" in the road to Highland Lake, and was later owned by C.C.P. Eldred. In 1851, the Post Office was in the home of C.C.P., which was on this property.

*Commencing on west line of lot 21 in 7th div. of Minisink Patent, S. 47 degrees E., 4 chains to sandstones E. side of main road leading up the Halfway Brook. Containing 49 acres. —excerpt from John Wells deed to Sears Gardner, 1829.*

### Rod, chain, links, and furlongs

A rod equals 16.5 feet or 25 links. One chain equals 4 rods.

The rod, a measurement of medieval times, was still used in the mid-1800s.

An acre in medieval times was one chain or four rods (ox goads) long, by one furlong (in the UK, ten chains).

A furlong was "one plough's furrow long" or the length of a furrow that could be a plowed by a plough team without resting.

The length of the furlong and the acre vary regionally, due to different soil types. In England the acre was 4,840 square yards, but in Scotland it was 6,150 square yards, and in Ireland, 7,840 square yards. 🐾

where he describes the good Doctor Perkins.

Doc Perkins used five or six prescriptions to treat disease. He did not like the home remedies or superstitious notions that prevailed at the time.

Doc Perkins first boarded at Robert Land's house at Beaver Brook, four miles back from the river and canal. The fun loving, agreeable doctor always wore a suit of heavy winter clothes, and traveled on horseback without a

padded saddle or coated stirrups.

Mr. Johnston described the travels of Doctor Perkins:

*Thus for 24 years, he traveled many thousands of miles over the rough highways, the narrow timber roads, the cow paths; over hills and through valleys, through dark, dense wildernesses and groves of lofty timber, during night and day, amid sunshine and storm, cold and heat.*



## Where They Lived in 1830

### Town of Lumberland

According to the 1830 Census, there were 926 people in the Town of Lumberland. This included 427 children under age 14, six people in their 70s, three in their 80s, but no one in their 90s.

Sears and Mary K. Gardner had five in their home, ages 9 to 29. Their daughter Mary Gardner married Benjamin C. Austin, (from the other Austin family in town), in 1830, sometime after the census was taken.

Uncle Justus and Polly Hickok had three children under 10.

James T. and Almira Austin Hooker had six children under 19, one person under 20, one under 50, and one under 80 years old.

Laurence Ingraham had three under 15, and possibly his mother or mother-in-law, age 60 or over.

The Daniel Van Tuyl and Daniel Owens families were also listed.

Alexander Carmichael and his wife had four children under 15.

Elnathan Corey had a full house of nine. Robert Land and his wife had five children under 15.

Gardner Forgerson and his wife had four children under 10, and six others from 16 to 39. In the next chapter, Gardner Forgerson helps out the new Congregational Church pastor, Felix Kyte.

The LaBarr family still lived in Beaver Brook and included Gordon Ransom LaBarr who was around 10.

Jacob Stage was not yet 30.

Stephen and Anna Sergeant had three sons at home—Stephen, 20, Thomas L., 17, and Isaac C., 15.

Their son Ethel Sergeant and his wife Letty Gardner lived next door with their 1-year-old. Ethel and Letty's son Alvah Sergeant was born

in Beaver Brook, in June 1831. Alvah Sergeant would have a son who would marry a daughter of Harriet Covert born in September 1831, to William and Anna Covert in South Lebanon.

Harriet Covert would marry George Clark, son of Wilmot and Mary Van Auken Clark. George Clark's brother Mahlon Irvin Clark, 3, would marry Laura Austin.

John Bishop and his wife Julia had a son under 5. John's father Stephen and possibly some brothers lived in Lumberland. John plays an unexpected part in our story.

Thomas W. Clark, husband of Phebe Hazen, and father of George Case Clark, died in Mongaup, in 1829. Phebe married Moses Myers. They would be the parents of Abel Sprague Myers, a grandfather or great-grandfather to some of the people we will meet in this book.

Other families included Solomon Hurd, Robert Many, Daniel, Samuel and William Wells, and John Wheeler.

### Not in Lumberland Leavenworth Family

Truman S. Leavenworth and three Hurd families were listed in the 1830 Census of Bethel, New York.

Three people were listed as living with Truman Leavenworth—one female and two males between the

ages of 20 and 30. Was Sherman B. Leavenworth, 22, one of the men listed in Truman's household?

A Gideon Leavenworth lived in Middlebury, New Haven, Connecticut.

### Austin Family

The Austin family lived in Somers, Westchester County, New York. Ralph (Rolf in this census), 46, and Fanny Knapp Austin, 42, William Henry, 6, Ann Mary, 3, James H., 9, Caroline, 13, Emma Eliza, 15 (Emma died in October), Augustus A., 20, and Samuel Knapp, 22. The census shows another young man in his twenties.

Ralph and Almira's father, Joshua Austin had died July 1828.

### Hickok Family

Asa and Esther Hickok, and son David H. and his wife and family were in Warren Township, Bradford County, Pennsylvania, in the 1830 Census.

### Myers Family

Martin David Myers, 15, lived in New Jersey with his parents David and Elizabeth Myer, and seven siblings.

### Van Pelt Family

Elizabeth Lazerlier Van Pelt, and children, Peter, 20, Maria, 17, and Jane Ann, 15, lived in New York City. Elizabeth's mother, Mary Webber Lazerlier Taylor, was 66. 🐾



Delaware River near Barryville. Photo: Mary Briggs Austin.

Doc Perkins charged 25 cents for a visit to the village or the area nearby, with the option to pay or not. A visit to Ten Mile River from Barryville (11 miles through the

woods), was 75 cents. One family of five children and a mother, he contracted for \$5 a year. Some families never paid the doctor, though he had called on them

for 18 years.—*Johnston*, pp. 340, 342–3.

You may remember that in the early 1800s, Solon Cooper and Levi Middaugh ran the first

store in Pond Eddy. Mr. Cooper mysteriously disappeared in 1830. Thus ended the Middaugh and Cooper store.

The Congregational Church was still struggling without a preacher in 1830 when circuit riding preachers from the Methodist Episcopal Church, began teaching in villages on both sides of the Delaware River in the tri-state area of New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey.

Mr. Grace and Mr. Street preached every two weeks in the Town of Lumberland. Visits were made during the day, and services were held at night.

It is quite possible that Sherman Buckley Leavenworth, my great-great-grandfather, lived in the town of Bethel some 11-1/2 miles away from Halfway Brook, by 1830. By 1835 (see *Chapter Five*), Sherman B. and his wife Charlotte Ingram, from Scotchtown, New York, lived in Halfway Brook Village.

James Eldred and his family lived south of Village/Proctor Road. One source said that James

built a store around 1830. By 1830, James had built the Eldred Homestead which replaced the original log cabin.

*The Eldred Homestead, (no longer in existence), was built by James Eldred and operated by him. It was used as a tavern at one time, and known as Temperance Tavern.*

*It was still there when I lived in Eldred—a few hundred feet back from what is now the main road, and as far as I know was the first permanent building in Eldred. (An old sign was found in the attic referring to such.)*  
—Melva Austin Barney.

There were many temperance groups in New York in the 1830s, so it would not be a surprise to have an inn in town that did not serve alcoholic beverages.

One room of the Eldred Homestead/tavern was used for the Lumberland Post Office when James became Postmaster on October 5, 1831.

By 1831, The River settlement

had its own Post Office named after William T. Barry, the Post Master General. The town was then called Barryville, although it continued to be referred to as The River.

In 1832, the good doctor Perkins married Comelia Dabron, and they moved into the old Hickok farmhouse, two miles from Barryville.

By 1832, James Eldred and Hannah Hickok had been married six years, and their daughter, Mary Ann Eldred, was 5 years old.

Zophar and Sarah Eldred Carmichael, 27, had at least three children. The youngest was Lewis Carmichael born in 1831. The family eventually lived in Wallkill on the Carmichael family farm.

Abraham Mulford Eldred, 26, had purchased several large tracts of land, and was lumbering and farming. Uncle Mulford, as he was called, was also active in government. He had been elected constable of Lumberland in 1830, and was also the collector of taxes, and inspector of schools in 1830, 1832, 1834. He was single until about 1838.

In 1832, Charles (C.C.P.) Eldred, 24, a farmer and lumber dealer, was not yet married.

Eliza Eldred Gardner was 22, and had been married five years to James Keen Gardner. Eliza and James K. had Charles, 2, and baby Chauncey, who died in August. The family would soon move to Beaver Brook where James K. would be a supervisor for a lumbering company.

In two years Phebe Maria Eldred, 16, would marry Augustus Alonzo Austin, whose whereabouts in 1832 are unknown. Perhaps only Phebe Maria, 16, and Mary Ann, 4, lived at home with James and Hannah Eldred in 1832. 🍁



Delaware River at Barryville, fall 2008. Photo: Mary Briggs Austin.

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## The Mill on Halfway Brook

Stories of Families Who Settled Near Halfway Brook in the  
Town of Highland, New York, 1800 to 1880

**A**t the end of 1815, James and Polly Eldred and their family arrived in the Town of Lumberland and settled on two acres with a log cabin and a sawmill near Halfway Brook. The Eldred property—four miles from the Delaware River—later became the southeast corner of Halfway Brook Village which is now Eldred, in the Town of Highland, New York.

*The Mill on Halfway Brook* tells of the Eldred, Austin, Myers, and Leavenworth families, their neighbors, friends, and kinsfolk that settled in what was once the Town of Lumberland, in the villages of Halfway Brook (Eldred), The River (Barryville), Ten Mile River (Tusten), and South Lebanon (Glen Spey).

The narrative weaves vignettes of townsfolk, preachers, churches, regional and national events with historical information, land documents, censuses, an 1875 biography, Congregational and Methodist Church records, over 300 photos and postcards, old and new maps, and at least 200 family letters (1845–1880).

*The Mill on Halfway Brook* is fully indexed with names of over 900 people, places, and events. It is the first in the series, *Memoirs from Eldred, New York, 1800–1950*.

### About the Author

Louise Elizabeth Smith holds a bachelor's degree in music education from Western Michigan University, and a master's degree in elementary education from Eastern Michigan University. After thirty years of experience in education, Louise now enjoys researching the history of her family. Louise and her husband Gary reside in Cave Creek, Arizona.

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