

Section 2:

The Ancestors of Helen Cooke Sayles Brundage

This section tells the story of Helen's family and includes the surnames of Sayles, Jones, Rockwell, Ward, and Armstrong, among others. It covers a period of time roughly from the American Revolution until about 1900, although there are some mentions of the early immigrant families from the 17th Century.

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Section 2

John Walker 1760-?

Hilletje Goes 1762-?

Daniel Rockwell 1787-1847

Clarinda Ward 1788-1848

Thomas Sayles 1754-1835

Prudence Brown 1754-1849

John Jones 1774-1846

Lois Sanger 1775-1815

Abel Fiske Jones 1801-1885

Sarah Searles Rockwell 1814-1857

Augustus Sayles 1780-1848

Polly Walker 1783-1866



Abel Fiske Jones



Sarah Searles Rockwell Jones

Albert Phineas Sayles 1825-1871

Susan Jane Jones 1832-1916



Susan Jane Jones Sayles



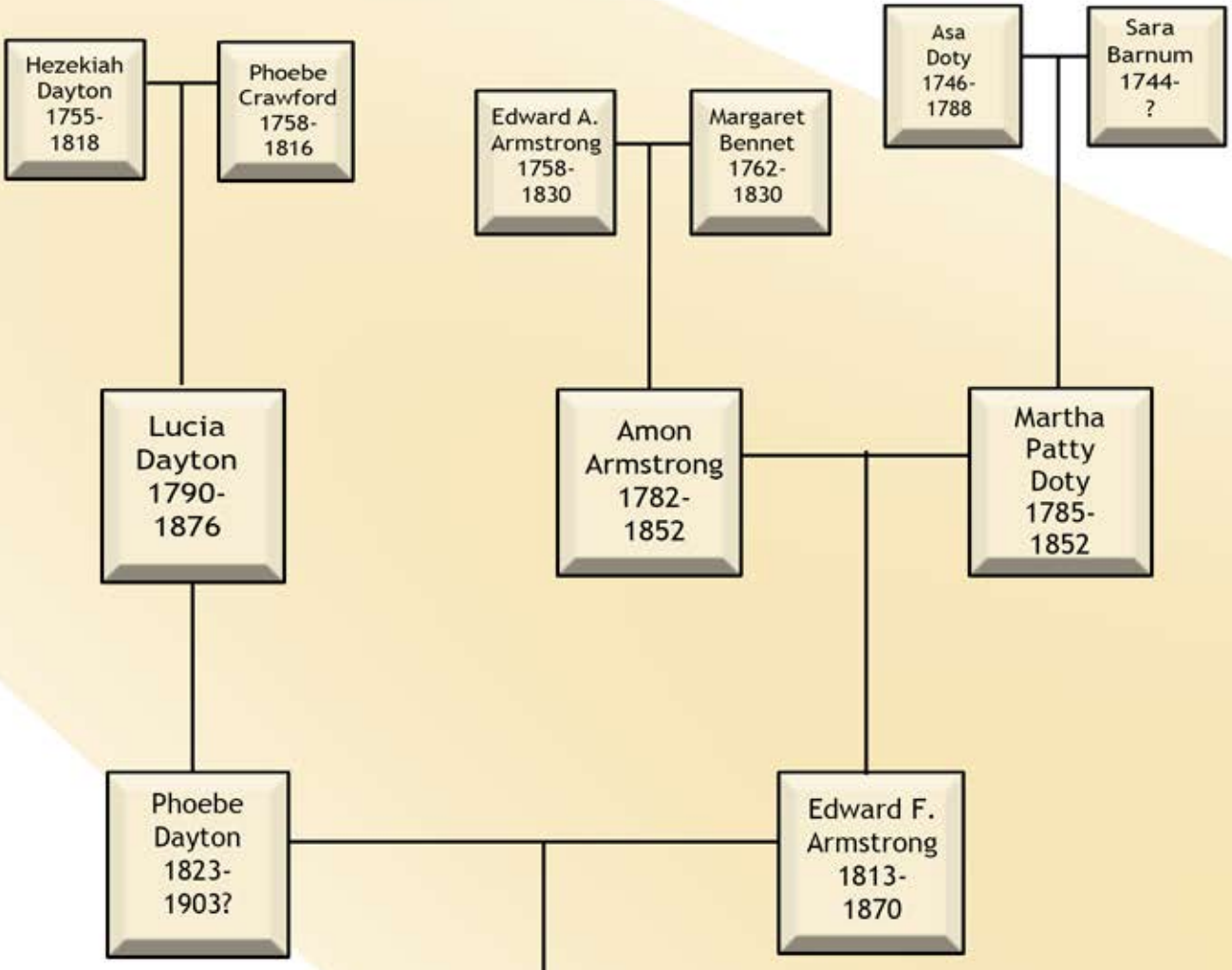
Albert Phineas Sayles

Edward Ridell Sayles 1852-1927



Edward Ridell Sayles, Helen's Father

The Family of Helen Cooke Sayles





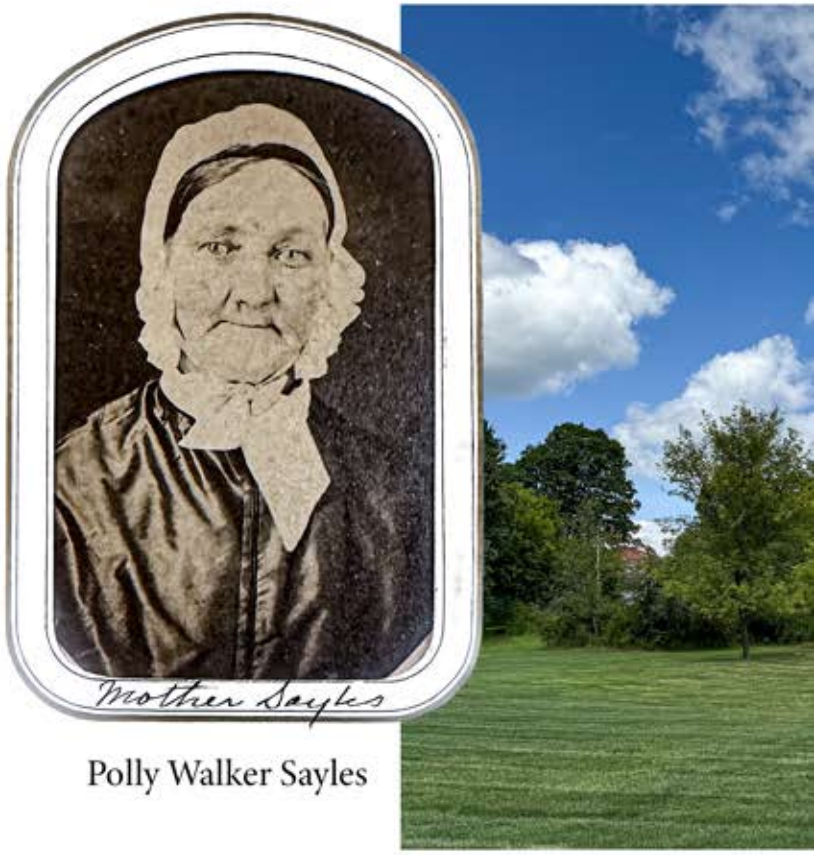


Mary Lavancha Armstrong Sayles, Helen's Mother

Helen's great grandparents include Augustus and Polly Walker Sayles. Augustus Sayles (1780-1848) was born in Smithfield, Rhode Island to Thomas Sayles (1754-1835) and Prudence Brown (1754-1849). His family had lived in Smithfield as far back as 1654. Augustus' grandfather, John Sayles, was a Colonel in the Rhode Island Militia during the Revolutionary War and served as Assistant Governor of Rhode Island from 1774-1782.

Mary (Polly) Walker (1783-1866), was born to John Walker (1760-?) and Hilletje Goes (1762-?) in Kinderhook, New York and baptized in a Dutch Reformed Church.

They were married August 10, 1802 in Whitestown, Oneida County, New York near Utica. Their first child was born there, but they moved frequently and their other children were born in a number of other towns. They had thirteen children but only ten survived childhood. There were seven sons and three daughters: Scott W. (1803), Welcome B. (1805), Sarah Ann (1806), Dr. Julius A. (1809), Franklin (1815), Mary Ann (1816), Lydia S. (1817), Thomas (1821), Douglas (1823), and Albert Phineas (1825). Albert was Helen's grandfather.



Polly Walker Sayles



These photos from the Geauga County Archives depict buildings from the time of Augustus Sayles. Above is the original Town Hall and below is St. Edward Church, built in 1841.



Connecticut Western Reserve

The Northwest Territory was a United States territory created by Congress in 1787. Ultimately, the States of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, and Wisconsin were organized from this territory. To form the Federal territory, the States of Virginia, New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts abandoned the claims they had made to this land. Connecticut did not abandon all claims as it withheld land in Northeast Ohio, which became known as New Connecticut, or the Connecticut Western Reserve.

The State of Connecticut gave a portion of this land to people who had lost property in the American Revolution, and then sold the remainder to the Connecticut Land Company in 1795. Surveyors were sent to lay out townships, and the City of Cleveland was founded as the capital of New Connecticut.

Sayles Family Moves to Ohio


Augustus Sayles built his house on this hill in 1823.

Augustus was a millwright - a craftsman who installs and maintains equipment in water-powered mills. The nature of his profession meant that the family moved numerous times as Augustus was engaged on new projects. During the first two decades of the 19th century, they lived in several towns in New York: Cazenovia and Manlius (both near Syracuse), and Chautauqua (near Lake Erie).

But in the 1820s, work drew the family west to Ohio. Augustus first travelled to Parkman, Ohio (Geauga County) in 1820, and his family followed a year later. With the arrival of his family, Augustus bought about one acre of land in "great lot 19" from Samuel Parkman, the town founder.

About 1822, Augustus formed a partnership with Judge Noah Hoyt and Ebenezer White to build a large forge on the Grand River that flows through Parkman. After completion, Augustus withdrew from the partnership, likely selling his ownership interest and leaving the running of the ongoing business to the partners.

In 1823, Augustus built a house in Parkman where the family lived until 1827 when it was sold. Helen's grandfather, Albert, was born in this house in 1825. In 1827, Augustus purchased another house in the same lot 19, where they lived until 1838, when they moved briefly to Nelson or Garrettsville, Ohio (Portage County). Soon thereafter, Augustus and Polly returned to Parkman with their children, where they stayed for the rest of their lives. The History of Geauga County describes Augustus Sayles as "a man of very industrious habits, and proficient in his particular calling, of quiet and retiring manners, and a valued citizen."

Augustus died in 1848 at the age of 68 in Parkman. Polly lived for almost two more decades, passing in 1866 at the age of 83. She died in Bristol, Ohio (Trumbull County), at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Sarah Ann Hillman. Based on Find-a-Grave (findagrave.com), Augustus and Polly are buried at the Parkman-Bundsburg Gates Cemetery, a family cemetery. This cemetery is on private land and during a 2024 visit to the area, we were unable to locate or access it. The Geauga County archives has burial records for the Parkman-Bundsburg Gates Cemetery, but these burial records do not include Augustus or Polly as being buried there.

The tract of land that became Parkman Township was purchased in 1797 from the Connecticut Land Company by Samuel Parkman of Boston, Massachusetts. Mr. Parkman also owned a township in Maine, which he also named after himself. The land was first settled by his nephew, Robert Parkman, of Cayuga County, New York, who arrived with his family in 1804. They traveled from Cayuga overland to Buffalo, New York, and thence by passage on a sloop across Lake Erie to the mouth of the Grand River. The settlement was located to take advantage of the water power of this river. The first homes were one-room log cabins with dirt floors, but they soon built a saw-mill to construct board homes. A grist-mill followed the next year. Millwrights were recruited, mainly from Pennsylvania, to build and service the mills.

The towns of Norton and Freedom, where the Rockwell and Jones families settled, were also within the Connecticut Western Reserve.

Helen's great, great grandfather, Daniel Rockwell (1787-1847), and his twin brother, Chester, were born in Lanesborough, Massachusetts. Daniel's immigrant ancestors were William and Susannah Rockwell who travelled on the second ship to arrive in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1630. This ship carried the entire Congregation of a church that established itself at Dorchester, Massachusetts. William was a deacon of that church.

The Rockwell family later settled in Ridgefield (Norwalk), Connecticut around 1660 and generations lived there until 1764 when John and Hannah Scott Rockwell (Daniel's grandparents) moved to Lanesboro, Massachusetts. Daniel's father, Jeremiah, served in the Revolutionary War at Bunker Hill, Dorchester, and Saratoga. Jeremiah and his wife, Hannah Stearns, lived in Lanesboro until 1789 when they moved to Cornwall, Vermont, to be close to other family members.

Helen's great, great grandmother, Clarinda Ward (1788-1847/48), was born in Cornwall, Vermont to William Ward (1752-1818) and Mary (Polly) Tilden (1759-1820).

Daniel and Clarinda married in 1808 and settled in the Parishville, New York vicinity, with Daniel initially working as a shoemaker. He later decided to study for the ministry, and in about 1820, they returned to Cornwall, Vermont, where he studied theology under Rev. Jeremiah Bushnell. Daniel was ordained in the Congregational Church in 1824.

Daniel and Clarinda had eight children: one son, Loyal Mason (1823), and seven daughters – Fidelia (1809), Sarah Searles (1814), Alsina Jane (1816), Clarinda (Clara) Ward (1818), Harriet Emeline (1820), Lucy Ortentia (Tenny) (1826), and Mary (1832). Sarah Searles Rockwell (1814-1857) was Helen's great grandmother. She was born at Parishville, New York.

Daniel served as pastor at Morristown, Vermont from 1824 to 1831, and then at four other churches in Vermont until 1835. Daniel and Clarinda then moved west to Freedom, Ohio, where he pastored a church, staying until 1839. Some of their children came with them to Ohio, while others remained in Vermont.

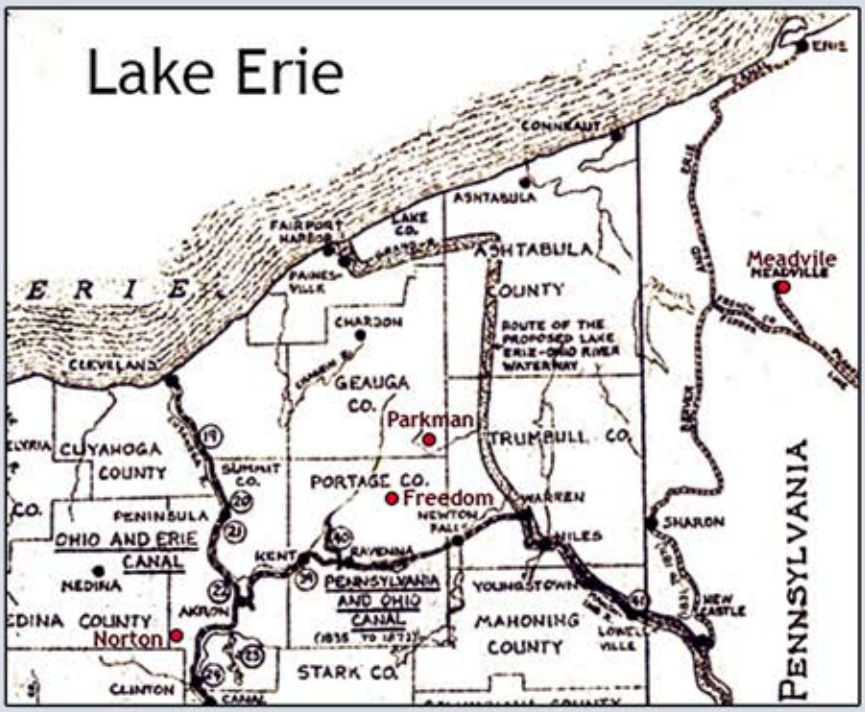
Helen's great grandfather, Abel Fiske Jones (1801-1885), was born in Rochester, Vermont. His immigrant ancestor was Lewis Jones (?-1684) who came from Ipswich, England in 1635 together with his brother, Gregory. Lewis settled in Watertown Farms, Massachusetts, moved to Roxbury, then back to Watertown in 1650. His wife was named Ann Stone. Several generations of the Jones family lived in the Watertown/Weston Massachusetts region. John Jones (father of Abel Fiske and Isaac Walker) was born there on March 4, 1774.



Northeastern Ohio and Northwestern Pennsylvania were criss-crossed with canals. Construction of these waterways began in 1825 and continued for the ensuing 20 years. They were a major factor in the development of this region, providing easy transportation for settlers and for goods going to market. The canals connected with Lake Erie to the north. On Lake Erie, one could go east to Buffalo and transfer to the Erie Canal across New York State. Alternatively one could go west to Detroit and then north through Lake Huron and south through Lake Michigan to end up at Milwaukee or Chicago. It was a long way around to Chicago, but much faster at that time than the overland route.

Abel's mother, Lois Sanger (1775-1815) was the daughter of Isaac Sanger (1740-1780) of Uxbridge, Massachusets and Croydon, New Hampshire. Isaac served in the American Revolution in 1777. The record is not clear as to whether his unit went to Fort Ticonderoga, New York or Charlestown, Massachusetts. Lois' mother was Susanna Davis (1740-1824) of Milford, Massachusetts.

John Jones and Lois Sanger were married on May 24, 1798. They initially lived in Alstead, New Hampshire, where their first child, Mehitable (Hetty),



Map of the canals of NE Ohio and NW Pennsylvania with the towns where our ancestors lived

was born in 1799. They then moved to Rochester, Vermont, where Abel Fiske was born in 1801. His younger siblings were Susan W. (1803), Mary C. (1805), Isaac W. (1806), Lois (1808), John (1809), Eunice (1811), and Nancy (1813).

Abel's mother, Lois, died on February 5, 1815 in Morrisville, Vermont. John then married Lucinda Sparhawk (?-1846) and they had an additional four daughters as well as one son who died in infancy. John and Lucinda moved to Norton, Ohio at some point before 1837, when they were visited by Abel and Isaac.

Abel Fiske Jones and Sarah Searles Rockwell married in Morristown, Vermont in 1831. The Jones and Rockwell families were also joined when Sarah's sister, Alsina Jane Rockwell, and Abel's brother, Isaac Walker Jones, married in 1835. Abel and Sarah had five children: Susan Jane (1832), Mary Ortentia (1834), John (1836) who died at age 4 at Elk Grove, Mark Morse (1837), and Clara Harriet (1841). Susan Jane was Helen's grandmother.

While their parents had all moved to Ohio, Abel and Sarah stayed in Morristown, Vermont until 1837 when they decided to migrate to Elk Grove, Illinois. Abel and Sarah, and Alsina and Isaac made the journey, together with Abel and Sarah's three children. Alsina and Isaac's children were all born in Elk Grove.

The Jones brothers' father was living in Norton, Ohio and the group visited him on their way to Illinois. They also visited the Rockwell parents in Freedom, OH on that trip. This journey is detailed in autobiographies written by Susan Jane and Mary Ortentia Jones, which are transcribed into "The Rockwell-Jones Families in America 1630-1961", and also included in the Appendix to this book.

While only five years old, Susan had a good memory of their trip. She recalls traveling in a large covered wagon pulled by four strong horses from her home in Vermont to Buffalo, New York, then on a steamer to Cleveland, Ohio, where they broke the journey to visit Grandpa Jones in Norton, Ohio and the Rockwell grandparents in Freedom, Ohio. While in Freedom, they may have been there at the time of Sarah's sister, Clara's, marriage to C.O. Arnold. Clara and C.O. were later instrumental in introducing Susan to her future husband in Meadville, Pennsylvania.

After leaving Freedom, Ohio, the Jones families traveled overland west through swampy Indiana. They got stuck in the mud there, but eventually were pulled out by oxen. They traveled through Chicago when it was a small town of 3,000. There was no bridge and they crossed the Chicago River on a rope ferry.



Abel's sister, Mehitable (called Aunt Hetty in Susan's autobiography), her husband Deacon Mark Morse, and three of their four children had previously moved to Elk Grove, secured farmland, and built a log house. The Abel and Isaac Jones families stayed with them until they could get settled. The lots of land owned by Mark Morse were located in Section 22 of Elk Grove Township, which today is traversed by Interstate 90.

Susan writes that in Elk Grove the settlement was simple and primitive but all worked together to make a comfortable, happy life. They valued their faith, and music was an important part of everyday life. Her father, Abel, was the singing teacher and led the choir.

Other family members also moved to Elk Grove. Sarah's parents, Daniel and Clarinda Rockwell, moved there in 1839 and Daniel became the pastor for the community. Sarah's sister, Harriet Rockwell, married Clark Gould and they took up residence in Elk Grove in 1842. The land all these families settled was west of the Morse property and located in a forested area with a creek running through it. The area was topographically different from the surrounding prairie. The prairie land periodically caught fire and the wildfire would rage for miles, burning everything in sight. Settlers in the mid-west went to great effort to protect themselves, their homes, and their livestock from wildfire. The creek and adjacent forest land in Elk Grove created a natural firebreak, which provided some protection from fire for the settlers. However, it did provide mosquito breeding ground and malaria was common.

In 1843, Abel and Sarah came down with malaria and were quite ill. While they were convalescing, Sarah's parents returned from a temporary pastorate in Whiteside County to Elk Grove to help out until Abel and Sarah were fully recovered.

In 1844, Abel and Sarah purchased 40 acres of land and built a one-room log cabin. Over time, they built a larger home and expanded the land to 100 acres. According to Susan Jane Jones' autobiography, the cabin was one room with a chamber above reached by ladder. Her mother, Sarah Rockwell, "covered the log walls with newspapers which she had carefully preserved, pasting them on smoothly". The newspaper wallpaper was the story of Uncle Tom's Cabin, arranged in sequence so one could read the story on the wall. Uncle Tom's Cabin began as a serial published in the abolitionist newspaper, *The National Era*, and ran from June 5, 1851 to April 1, 1852. It was published in book form in 1852 and was an instant bestseller. In Mary O. Page's autobiography, she says that *The National Era* was a



In 2024, we visited the Elk Grove Historical Museum, and they shared with us this amazing picture they use with childrens' tour groups to show what an early settler's house looks like. These are our ancestors! (See Frontispiece for enlargement) That house was located on the 40-acre tract of land that Abel Fiske Jones acquired in the spring of 1844.



In August, 2024, we visited Busse Woods, a park in Elk Grove, Illinois. The farms of our ancestors accounted for a good bit of the green area on this map. It was nice to be able to walk the land where they lived.



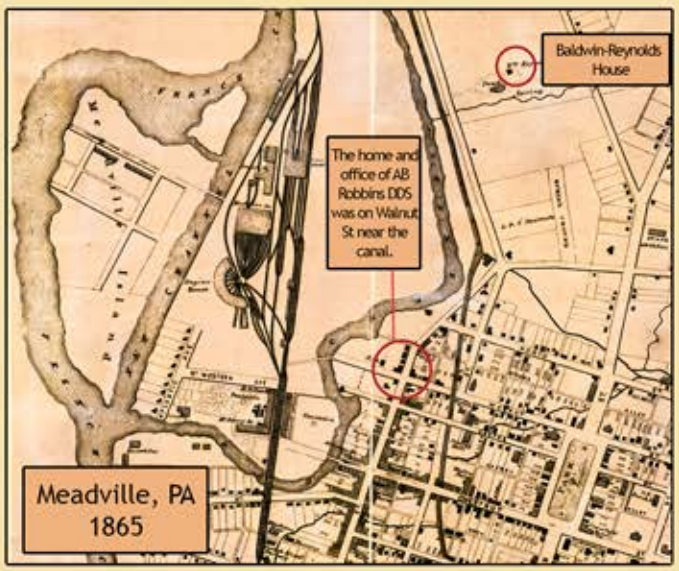
Elk Grove Township was initially settled in 1834 by pioneer New England farmers. The first settlers were the Meacham brothers, who came from Vermont. The township took it's name from the huge grove that is now the Ned Brown Forest Preserve, also known as the Busse Woods. The open prairie areas tended to be marshy, but, over the years, the farmers drained much of the area around the future site of Elk Grove Village. No railroad traversed this part of the country and it remained very rural up until World War II. During the war, a little town developed near a Douglas manufacturing plant and airfield for C-54 military transports. This facility eventually became O'Hare Airport.

favorite of Sarah's "who cheerfully sold her best cheeses at six cents per pound to pay for her paper". Reportedly, it was a favorite because the paper, in addition to supporting abolition, also championed better rights for women.

In her autobiography, Susan wrote that education was important to these settlers from New England, even for girls. A school was built early and the children attended school for three months in the summer and three months in the winter. The custom of "sending out" was traditional in New England. This meant apprenticing adolescents to another family to learn skills that were not available at home. Thus, it was not unusual that, later on, Susan was sent to her Aunt Clara's home at age sixteen.

Daniel and Clarinda Rockwell both died in the winter of 1847-48. Their son, Loyal, died 3 years later at age 28. All three were initially buried on the Elk Grove farm of their daughter, Alsina Jane, and her husband, Isaac. The land where they were buried is now (2024) part of the Busse Woods (Ned Brown Forest Preserve) in Elk Grove Township, Illinois. When we visited the Elk Grove Historical Museum in 2024, we were told that the development of the park involved a large volume of earthmoving. A local researcher, looking into the records of the Elk Grove Cemetery, has located a Jones family plot in that cemetery to which they may have been moved.

Meadville, Pennsylvania



Originally settled in 1788 by David Mead and his party, the site was chosen for its location at the confluence of the Cussewago and French Creeks about 40 miles south of Erie, Pennsylvania. At that time, new settlers were arriving to claim a land bounty as payment for their service during the Revolutionary War. The community flourished with the development of the French Creek Feeder Canal in 1827-34 which connected to the Beaver and Erie Canal, enabling easy transportation to Lake Erie. The canals were short-lived, but positioned the town to play an important role in rail transportation when the Atlantic & Great Western Railroad was completed into Meadville in 1862. It was incorporated as a City in 1866. The economy was based on logging, agriculture, and iron production.

Baldwin Reynolds House

Educational opportunities on the frontier of 1840s Elk Grove, Illinois were limited. In her 1905 autobiography, Susan Jane Jones writes of school sessions in the winter and summer, but she also writes of spending the summer working in other people's houses starting when she was 12. Despite the need for everyone to work, education was still important to the family and when she was 16, she went to live with her aunt and uncle in Meadville, Pennsylvania to attend school for a year. While not clear if it was the school she attended, the Meadville Female Seminary was housed in the pictured home during this period — the home was built for Supreme Court Justice Henry Baldwin, but he died before moving in. Of Meadville, Susan wrote "the advantages of the home, school, church and society were so superior to any I had ever had before, my eyes and ears were ready to take them in like a hungry child…."



Helen's paternal grandparents, Albert Phineas Sayles (1825-1871) and Susan Jane Jones (1832-1916) met in 1848 in Meadville, Pennsylvania, one of the oldest towns in Northwestern Pennsylvania. When they met, Susan was living in Meadville for one year, staying with her aunt and uncle – her mother's sister, Clara, and Clara's husband C. O. Arnold. She came to Meadville to further her education by attending The Academy of Young Ladies.

Mr. Arnold ran a wholesale marble business with a large territory and employed Albert Sayles as a stone cutter. At the same time, Albert was learning dentistry with local dentist, Dr. A. B. Robbins. The Arnolds left Meadville the following year and Albert devoted himself full-time to dentistry.

After her year in Meadville, Susan and Albert conducted a long-distance romance while they both continued their education. She returned to Elk Grove for a short time and then went to stay for a while with her mother's sister, Lucy Ortensia (Aunt Tenny), in Chicago. Aunt Tenny's husband had recently passed away, and Susan came to help with Aunt Tenny's dressmaking business. Susan then left Chicago and completed two more years of school at the Waukegan Academy in Waukegan, Illinois while Albert continued training as a dentist.

Susan and Albert were married in 1851 at 25 Quincy Street, Chicago -- Aunt Tenny's home. Aunt Tenny moved away before the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 destroyed their house. The property was later the site of the Chicago Federal Building.

As newlyweds, Susan and Albert initially boarded with Dr. and Mrs. Robbins in Meadville, where Albert continued to practice dentistry. Soon though, they rented a five room house in Meadville, where Edward Ridell, their first son, was born in 1852.

Susan's parents, Abel and Sarah, lived in Elk Grove until 1853 when they sold their farm and moved to Chicago, buying a house at 89 S. Peoria Street, between Madison and Monroe. They joined the First Congregational Church of Chicago in January, 1853. Abel was working as a lumber dealer.

Later in 1853, Susan and baby Edward visited her parents, while Albert went with Dr. Robbins on a camping trip to the Lake Superior region. During this trip, Albert contracted "western fever" (malaria) and did not fully recover for two years.

Waukegan Academy

Susan and her sister, Mary, attended the Waukegan Academy in Waukegan, Illinois for two years between 1849 and 1851. Susan stayed with a young couple, working five hours a day for her board.



The Academy was established in 1846, holding classes in the basement of the county courthouse before the school building was constructed in 1848. The school was founded by Henry Hatch of Vermont, with the financial backing of Reverend David Root, a prominent New England abolitionist who supported the teaching of those ideals. Reverend Root transferred ownership of the school to Beloit College in 1855 under the condition that it continue to hire a professor of theology who had abolitionist principles.

In 1855, Susan and Albert moved to Chicago, living with Susan's parents who had enlarged their home to welcome family members. Albert opened a dental office at 58 West Randolph between Canal and Clinton Streets. (That location is now the Ogilvie Transportation Center – a commuter rail terminal in downtown Chicago.)

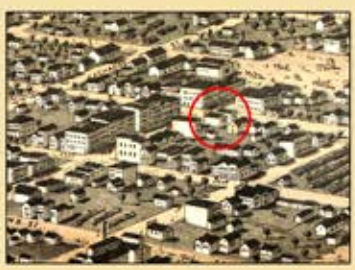
Susan's mother, Sarah, died in 1857 at the age of 43 and is buried in the Elk Grove Cemetery, Elk Grove Village, Section B, Row 8, Grave #5, where only a footstone remains.

Susan and Albert's home in Lyons, Iowa was built in 1858. The photo was in Susan's collection passed down to her great, great grandaughter, Suzanne Talbot. Across the street from their home is St Irenaeus Catholic Church. Construction of the church started in 1861. The map is a drawing by A. Ruger in 1868. For the full map use the QR code below.









Albert's dental office was on the second floor of this building on the northeast corner of Fourth and Main Streets (Now Garfield and Main) in Lyons.

Bird's eye view of the city of Lyons, Clinton County, Iowa, 1868, Map in the Library of Congress

After two years in Chicago, Albert had developed a chronic cough and was told to move West, as the climate did not agree with him. Shortly after Susan's mother died in 1857, Susan, Albert, and 5-year-old Edward, as well as Susan's sister, Mary, and Mary's husband, Frank Page, moved to Lyons, Iowa. Susan's sister, Clara, and brother, Mark, with their families, also settled in Lyons at a later date.

Albert and Susan built a house in Lyons during their first year there. The residence was listed in the city directory as "w s Fifth between 4th & 5th Avenues," and Albert's Will includes lots #7&8 on that block. These references correspond to a present day address of 2728 Roosevelt Street, on the corner of 28th Avenue. The current house at this location was built in 1900, but there are other houses on the block that would have existed when they lived there.

Albert and Frank Page established Page & Sayles Lumber Mill, a business that, unfortunately, failed within 18 months due to a financial panic. Albert then opened a dental office, in a second floor office space located at the northeast corner of Fourth and Main Streets in Lyons. (In 2024, the streets are Garfield and Main.) Frank took a position as a traveling salesman with J.H. Potts, a Lyons businessman who ran a family jewelry store, which was founded in1854 and open until at least 1951 – then, the oldest jewelry store in Iowa. The Potts family also had an optometrist office and interest in two lumber companies, which is where Frank was working. This was an era of periodic financial panics, including one in 1857-58, leading to the closure of banks and businesses, including the Page & Sayles Lumber Mill. But the dental office flourished, as Albert was the only dentist in town.

Albert and Susan's second son, Harold Fiske (Harry) was born in 1858 and their daughter, Sara Rockwell, in 1869. In 1863, they adopted a 13-year old girl, Emma Morris, who was an older sister to their natural children. They also opened their home to other children in need. Ida Sayles, niece of Albert, was born in 1855 and orphaned at age eight. She lived with them for seven years. Alvin and Mary Clark, school aged cousins of their children, stayed with them for one winter to attend school in Lyons, which was not available in their rural Ohio home.

Move to Lyons, Iowa

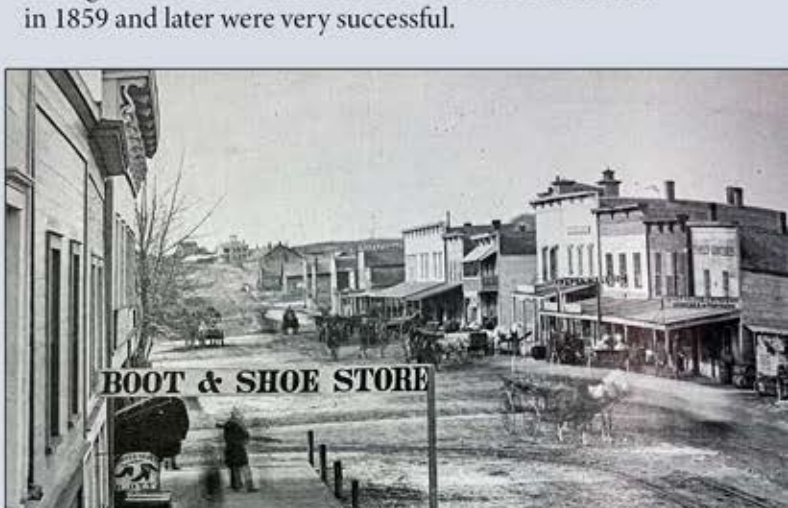
Albert's health later deteriorated and he took on a partner in the dental practice, R. S. Rathburn. Albert developed a cough and intermittent fevers in 1869 and passed away on February 24, 1871 at the age of 45, possibly from tuberculosis. He was buried in Oakland Cemetery (Block 10, Lot 8, Space 5&6). The cemetery has a current address of 406-466 N. Stockwell Lane, Clinton, Iowa.

Albert's Will left his property to Susan and detailed his real estate holdings in Clinton County, Iowa as follows:

- Lots #7&8, Block #4, Range #5 in Buells Addition in Lyons City. This was the location of their residence built in 1858, as discussed above.
- Lot #12, Block #4, Range #4 in Buells Addition in Lyons City. Today, this lot has a house on the East Side of Roosevelt Street between 27th and 28th Avenues, built in 1900. It is across the street from their residence.
- Blocks #27&28 in Deeds Addition in Lyons City. These blocks are Southwest of Lyons, and were possibly purchased for a farm or investment. In 2024, these blocks were sparsely developed, with houses built around 1960.

According to records of the First Congregational Church of Chicago, Susan's father, Abel Fiske Jones, who was then retired, and her step-mother, Harriet, moved to Lyons in January 1872. Abel had remarried prior to 1860 and continued to live in Chicago. Two factors may have led to the move to Lyons at that time. One being that, due to the Great Chicago Fire of October 8-9, 1871, which left 90,000 people homeless, it was a profitable time to sell the house and perhaps not a great time to live in Chicago. The second being Albert's death and a need to assist his daughter. Abel and Harriet lived in Lyons until their respective deaths in 1885 and 1894 when they were also buried in Oakland Cemetery.

Susan and Albert moved to Lyons at a time of accelerated growth in eastern Iowa due to the building of the first bridge across the Mississippi River in 1856. It was a railway bridge crossing from Rock Island, Illinois to Davenport, Iowa for the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway. Prior to 1856, the only way to cross the river was by ferry. This railway bridge and others subsequently built helped spur development all across eastern Iowa. When we visited the Sawmill Museum in Lyons, we learned that Albert and Frank just had poor timing for their new business. The sawmills that started in 1859 and later were very successful.



The town of Lyons (named after the French city of Lyon) was established in 1837. The neighboring town of Clinton was initially platted in 1836 as the "Town of New Yourk" and renamed Clinton in 1855. In 1869, the river towns of Clinton and Lyons competed to become the county seat and Clinton won the election. Over time, the towns grew together and eventually merged as Clinton. This merger resulted in the street names and numbers being changed in January 1927. The towns are now one and the historical Lyons downtown is demarcated as "Lyons Historic District."



Lyons, Iowa, 1860

Edward Sayles' Family



Albert P. Sayles, Edward's father

Edward Ridell Sayles
About 1868





Edward's mother, Susan Jane Jones Sayles, and sister, Sara Rockwell Sayles, about 1871



Emma Morris, about 1880



Edward's brother, Harry, and adopted sister, Ida Sayles, about 1863



Edward (r) with his brother, Harold Fiske (Harry), about 1875



Edward with his adopted sister, Emma Morris, about 1863

Helen's father, Edward Ridell ("E.R."), was five years old when his family moved to Lyons, Iowa. He attended the local Lyons public schools. As there was no high school in Lyons, in 1867, when Edward was 15 years old, he went to Grinnell, Iowa to attend the preparatory program at Iowa College (now Grinnell College). He was accompanied by his older adopted sister, Emma Morris, during his second year. Edward received the Sargent medal at Iowa College in 1868 and was a member of the Chrestomathian Society, a men's literary society. His education was interrupted in 1870-71 by the illness and death of his father, and he did not return until the Fall of 1872. His delay in returning may also have been due to the fact that one of the two buildings at Iowa College was destroyed by fire in 1871.

While at home in Lyons in between periods of study at Grinnell, Edward worked at the Clinton County Courthouse and the abstract office. When he saved enough money, he returned to Iowa College in 1872. While he had been in the preparatory program when he first attended, upon his return, he enrolled in the regular College in the "Collegiate Course", focusing on classical studies as opposed to the scientific track. He was one of the editors of the College News Letter in 1874, first president of the State Oratorical Association, organized in 1874, and was a delegate to the Interstate Oratorical Association at Indianapolis in 1875. In the fall of 1874, he entered the junior class at Iowa College, and became a member of the Irving Institute. However, due to his own illness, he had to withdraw in 1875 without graduating.

One of his classmates in the preparatory program was Frederic Magoun, who was presumably the son of the Rev. George Magoun, Div.D, Iowa College President from 1864 to 1884. Edward (and his parents) would have also known the Magouns from living in Lyons, where the Rev. Magoun was a pastor from 1860 until at least 1862. In about 1873, Edwards' mother, Susan, two years a widow, spent several months living in Grinnell and taking care of the home and family of the Rev. Magoun while he and his wife traveled to New England on college business. While there, she met the Rev. Darius E. Jones, a Congregational minister, who was originally from Carroll, New York. After a short courtship, they married and moved to Davenport, Iowa. From 1876 through 1881 they lived at 333 East 14th Street.

Iowa College, Artist's Concept



The plan for the establishment of Iowa College came out of a meeting of a group of 12 students at Andover Theological Seminary (Congregational) in Massachusetts in 1843. Once graduated, these ministers traveled to Davenport, Iowa and first offered courses there in 1850. The college's abolitionist stance did not fare well in Davenport and as a result, in 1859, the college accepted a generous offer from the abolitionist minister, Josiah B. Grinnell, to move the college west to the community he had founded four years earlier. Although less than 100 people lived there at the time, Grinnell hoped that its prime location at the intersection of two railroads would spur development. This drawing is an artist concept of the first three buildings on the campus, although they were never all standing at once as a fire destroyed East College before Central College was constructed. A tornado destroyed the remaining two buildings in 1882; however, they were rebuilt rapidly. Iowa College was renamed "Grinnell College" in 1909.

After leaving Iowa College, Edward read for the law with Judge Aylett R. Cotton in Lyons. Reading for the law under a practitioner or Judge was a typical method of studying to become a lawyer at this time. On May 22, 1876, Edward was admitted to the bar in the district court of Iowa, and he practiced in Lyons, in partnership with Judge Cotton, until 1881. During that time, he served a term as mayor of Lyons. An 1877 newspaper article mentioned that E.R. Sayles was a member of the Lyons Congregational Church Choir.

The Armstrongs come from a very large, powerful and war-like clan that was located on the Cumbrian border of England in the 13th through early 17th centuries. In about 1610, the clan leader, Archibald, was executed, leading to the clan's dispersion. Many of the families sought a new home in Northern Ireland.

Helen's mother, Mary Armstrong descended from the immigrant, Richard Armstrong (1723-1823) (Helen's great, great, great grandfather), who was born in County Monaghan, Northern Ireland. At about age 25 he emigrated to America, where he married Abigail Douglas (1728-1813) in 1748. They settled in Bedford, Westchester County, New York, north of New York City. There they raised a family of 10 children. Their second son, Edward A. Armstrong, born in Bedford on December 8, 1758, was Helen's great, great grandfather.

Prior to the first U.S. Census of 1790, Richard and Abigail, with five of their children, migrated up the Hudson River to Ballston, New York, north of Albany. Richard died there in 1823 at the age of 100.

On January 1, 1780, at age 22, Edward enlisted in the Westchester County Militia to fight in the American Revolution. He was assigned to a company commanded by Captain William Mookian and on January 27, 1780, he marched with this Company and joined that of Captain Nathan Hull to attack the British troops at Morristown, New Jersey. During that battle he was wounded and subsequently was awarded a yearly pension of $36.

In 1781, Edward married Margaret Bennet (1762-1830). They were living in Westchester County in 1790 according to the Federal census, where he worked as a farmer. They continued to live there until his death in 1830 and her death about the same time. Edward and Margaret had three sons: Amon, Elisha, and Dorcas. Amon would be Helen's great grandfather.

Helen's great grandmother, Martha Doty (1785-1852), known by her middle name, Patty, was born in Sharon, Connecticut on August 2, 1785. Her parent's were Ensign Asa Doty and Sara Barnum. Ensign Doty served in the 17th Regiment in the Albany County (NY) Militia in the Revolutionary War. He traces his ancestry back to Edward Doty, who emigrated on the Mayflower and resided in Plymouth, Massachusetts.



Helen's great grandfather, Amon or Amos Armstrong, was born in Westchester County, New York on March 8, 1782. He and Patty were married around 1805. Their first child, Sally Ann (Sarah), was born in Allegany County, in Western New York in 1806. In the 1810 census they were living in Otego, Otsego County, New York. Then they moved to Duanesburg near Schenectady, New York, living there in 1820. In the 1830 census, they lived in the village of Freedom, Cattaraugus County New York, south of Buffalo. In 1832 they bought farmland in Mercer County, Pennsylvania, from the government land agent. The farm was located near the small village of Hendersonville and about 25 miles south of Meadville. Amon continued to live there and work as a farmer until his death in 1852. Amon and Patty had ten children: Sarah (1806), Gideon (1808), Asa (1810), Edward F. (1812), Hiram (1814), Margaret (1817), Lewis (1819), Horace (1821), Elizabeth (1824), and Patty (1825). Most of his children settled in Mercer County,



The settlement that was to become Elmira started after the end of the American Revolution. A village called "Newtown" was formed in 1792 and it's name changed to Elmira in 1808. Elmira served as a transportation hub during the 19th century, connecting the Great Lakes ports of Rochester and Buffalo with eastern commercial centers, such as Albany and New York City, via the canal system and the railroads.

Before 1849, transportation was via waterways. The Chemung Canal connecting Seneca Lake to the Chemung River was completed in 1831. People traveling to Chicago would have loaded on a canal boat at Elmira which led to Watkins Glen at the southern tip of Seneca Lake. At the northern end of the lake they would have picked up the Cayuga and Seneca Canal, which was completed in 1830. This would have taken them to the Erie canal near Cayuga. From there they traveled west to Buffalo and took a steamer on the Great Lakes.



By the Canal, Elmira 1860

The New York and Erie Railroad was finished through Elmira in 1849, giving the area a New York City to Buffalo Route. Transportation connections made the city a prime location for an Army training and muster camp during the American Civil War. In May of 1864, the training camp was converted to a prison camp which held up to 12,000 Confederate soldiers before it was closed in 1865.

Pennsylvania, however Edward chose to remain in New York.

Helen's grandfather, Edward F. Armstrong (1812-1870) was most likely born in Otego or Duanesburg, towns west of Schenectady, in New York. While census records indicate that he was born in Pennsylvania, this may be incorrect because other records indicate that his family did not move to Pennsylvania until 1832.

Helen's grandmother, Phoebe Dayton [1823-1903(?)], was possibly born in Butternuts (now Morris), Otsego County, New York because her mother, Lucia (Lucy) Dayton, was listed as living there in 1820. Lucia was born in New York in 1790 to Hezekiah Dayton (1755-1818) and Phoebe Crawford (1758-1816). We were unable to find a record of Phoebe Dayton's father.

Edward and Phoebe were married around 1840 and their first daughter, Sarah Ann (Sally) was born in 1842. In 1850 they were living in Smithfield, Bradford County, Pennsylvania, where Edward was working as a farmer. By 1856 they had moved thirty miles north to Elmira, Chemung County, New York, and Edward was employed as a currier (one who finishes leather).

Their second daughter, Mary Lavancha Armstrong was born in Elmira in 1856. Lavancha does not appear to be a family name, but a name signifying grace, elegance, charm and beauty. The family was still in Elmira for the 1860 census when Mary was 4 years old. Her sister, Sally, aged 18 and her grandmother, Lucy Dayton, age 65, were also in the household.

In November 1862, Edward was mustered as a private into the 17th Pennsylvania Regiment of Cavalry at Camp McClellan near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. He joined up at Towanda, Pennsylvania, which is about 35 miles south of Elmira. No further information has been discovered about his Civil War Service. Nor has information been discovered about the event of his death in 1870, which is known only by an inscription on the family memorial headstone in Hendersonville, Pennsylvania.

Helen's mother, Mary, was 14 years old when her father died in 1870. When she was 4, in 1860, she was living with her parents, sister and grandmother, but the trail is cold as to what happened to her between the 1860 and 1880 censuses. In the census of 1870, there is a 14-year-old girl named Mary Armstrong in the Orphans Home in Washington, D.C. However, that girl is listed as being born in D.C., so is unlikely to be Helen's mother. The 1870 census also shows another 14-year-old Mary Armstrong living in Shelby, New York, in Orleans County, who, like our Mary, was born in New York. The Mary in Shelby is listed as attending school and living with an older woman, also named Mary Armstrong, who is listed as age 46, close to Phoebe's age. The older Mary Armstrong is listed as employed as a washer woman. It is possible that the name included for the older woman was incorrectly listed and should have been Phoebe, but Orleans County is over 200 miles from Elmira, and it is not clear why they would have relocated so far. In those years, Mary may have lived with her mother or her sister or another relative, but we have no documentation. Her grandparents had died, but she had many aunts, uncles, and cousins in Mercer County, Pennsylvania where she may have lived.

Mary's sister, Sarah Ann (Sally) lived in Elmira her whole life and worked as a dressmaker. She never married and she died in 1897 at the home of Mrs. W.A.(Hannah) Armstrong. Her mother, Phoebe, may have remarried to a man named Ambrose Armstrong and stayed in the Elmira area. This is not completely clear; it may have been another woman named Phoebe. The census shows that a Phoebe Armstrong was living as a boarder in Horseheads, NY, near Elmira, in 1900, and was listed as a widow. The Phoebe married to Ambrose Armstrong died in 1903 per Find-A-Grave Index.



Mary Lavancha Armstrong, about 1876

In the 1880 census, we find Mary again – she is now living with the family of Joseph and Helen Shepard at 60 Twenty Third Street in Chicago. Joseph and Helen had one child at home, a daughter, Mollie. Joseph was employed by the Chicago Police Department as the Assistant Secretary and became the Secretary in 1883. This was an administrative position second only to the Superintendent of Police. Mary was employed as a schoolteacher. Mr. Shepard had previously worked as a conductor on the Rock Island Railroad and as a messenger for American Express between Chicago and St. Louis. Due to this work, he was undoubtedly knowledgeable of the Mississippi riverfront towns, including Lyons, where Edward R. Sayles was living. He may also have been acquainted with some of Susan Jones Sayles' relatives in Chicago. Mary's move to Chicago and her living with the Shepard family may explain how she met Edward R. Sayles.

Edward R. Sayles and Mary Armstrong were married in Chicago on April 14, 1881. Earlier that year, Edward had moved from Lyons to Guthrie Center, Iowa, in the far western part of the state. This move was due to contacts he had made in Lyons and opportunities that presented themselves in moving to a developing area. Specifically, Edward arrived at Guthrie Center in January 1881 to engage in banking, with the financial backing of two partners, Mr. Thomas Calderwood of Lyons, Iowa and James H. Barnum of Clinton, Iowa. Edward was a co-founder and the Cashier of the Citizens Bank, which was located in buildings known as the Calderwood Block and later the Lemmon Block.



Edward Ridell Sayles, photograph from the book, *Progressive Men of Iowa 1899*



Mary's Bridal Portrait

After the wedding, Edward and Mary returned to Guthrie Center to raise their family. They had two children. Their daughter, Helen Cooke Sayles, was born in 1882 and son, Albert Ennis, came along in 1885.

In about 1890, when Helen was 8 and Albert, 5, Mary developed tuberculosis symptoms and was informed by her doctor that she had only about two years to live. Mary took the two children with her to Colorado Springs, where they lived a "rugged, outdoor life" for about a year and drove the tuberculosis into remission. From her granddaughter, Mary Jeannette's, biographical sketch of Helen, Mary "faced this situation with a two-fold plan: first, to take every possible measure to cure her disease; and, second, to teach Helen to be independent, to think and do for herself, and to stand on her own feet in any situation. On both counts the plan succeeded." In August 1891, the Guthrie Center newspaper reported that E.R. Sayles had received a photograph of Miss Helen Sayles riding on a burro near Green Mountain Falls, Colorado.



Motz Opera House 2024



Guthrie County Courthouse, 1883-1963

A Partnership of Calderwood, Barnum and Sayles erected a brick building at the northwest corner of State and Fifth Streets in Guthrie Center, and established the Citizen's Bank there in June 1881. Edward R. Sayles was named the Cashier and the capital of the bank was $25,000, thought to be solidly founded. That site now has a modern building housing the Guthrie County State Bank.

Another notable event of 1881 was the opening of the J.E. Motz Opera House, which was still standing in 2024. A new courthouse was built by J.E. Motz in 1883, after the original structure burned in 1882, but that impressive building was also destroyed by fire in 1963.



Liza Jane

Guthrie Center was a developing town when Edward and Mary Sayles moved there in 1881. The first railroad line into Guthrie Center had just been completed in 1880, with a big celebration of that event occurring in the town on August 19, 1880. The line into Guthrie Center was a branch of the Rock Island Railroad and ran from Menlo, Iowa. The train was called the "Liza Jane". She made two daily trips to Guthrie Center, carrying mail, express parcels, and freight and returned carrying hogs, cattle, and grain for market. Passengers rode both ways.

Edward continued to work as Cashier of the bank for five years. In 1884 he was the City Treasurer of Guthrie Center and a member of the City Council. He resumed active practice of the law in 1886. He also founded an abstract company, Guthrie County Law and Abstract Company, which still exists as Guthrie County Abstract Company. His law practice, the predecessor firm to the current Bruner, Bruner, Reinhart, & Morton, involved largely trial work in the district court. He also served a term as mayor of Guthrie Center in 1890. He was active in his church, First Presbyterian Church of Guthrie Center, where he served as an elder and as superintendent of the Sunday School.

Edward was a member of the Bower Camp of the Modern Woodmen of America, a fraternal benefit society, which now sells various investment and insurance products. It was founded by J. C. Root in 1883 in Lyons, Iowa and is located today in nearby Rock Island, Illinois. In 1907, Modern Woodmen built a tuberculosis sanatorium in Colorado Springs, which provided free treatment to more than 12,000 members from 1909 to 1947. That city was famous as the place to go for TB cures and was where Mary found her cure in 1890.

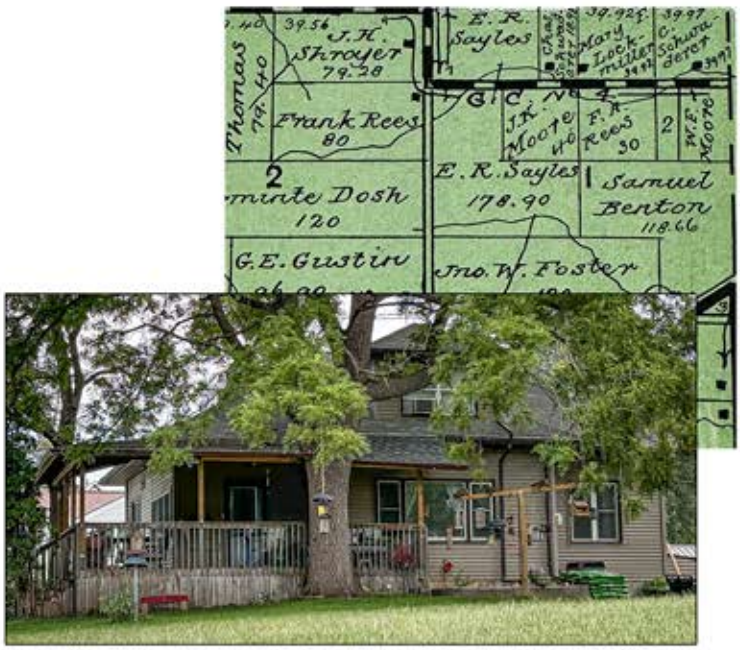
Helen and Albert attended public school in Guthrie Center and Helen graduated from Guthrie Center High School in 1900. That fall, Helen and a friend, Cara Weld, headed to Iowa College at Grinnell where her father had attended.

After high school, Helen's brother, Albert, worked as a salesman in Des Moines, Iowa and then moved to Grand Junction, Colorado, where he worked as an electrician. He died there in 1910 at the age of 25 of typhoid fever. He left a wife, Amelia, and two small children, Edward and Alberta (who was not yet born when he died).

From an old diary found in the Guthrie Center library, written by the wife of Edward's law partner, we know that Edward and Mary received a telegram on Friday, May 6, 1910 letting them know that Albert had died that morning. That diary also recorded that arrangements were made at Stuart Mortuary the following Monday. Albert's body arrived on the morning train from Menlo on Tuesday, and the funeral was held that same day. Albert was buried in Union Cemetery, Guthrie Center.

Edward and Mary lived at 500 Twelfth Street, Valley Township, Guthrie County. The house was on the corner of Twelfth and Bluff Streets. From newspaper articles, we know that their residence was destroyed by fire in April 1913. Edward, Mary, and a grandchild were in the home and were able to get out without injury. They were able to save some household goods but were helpless to save the house because the town of Guthrie Center had not installed adequate water mains to that section of town.

Insurance did not cover the full cost to rebuild. The replacement structure was probably smaller than the original house since the children were gone and funds were tight. This aligns with the size of the current (2024) house that is located on that lot.



Living History Farms





The building where Edward Sayles practiced law and ran an abstract company transferred to his law partner when he retired. That building stayed with the law firm and abstract company as they grew and changed. In 1983, the successor abstract company donated the building, including the original abstract safe Edward used, to Living History Farms in Urbandale, Iowa outside of Des Moines. Living History Farms brings history to life by recreating historical environments, including a recreated 1876 Iowa town called Walnut Hill. The building Edward practiced in was restored and serves as the example of a law office in that fictional town. The interpretive material at the exhibit indicates that during the late 1800s in a small town, a lawyer could not specialize, but would offer a wide range of services. The lawyer would have handled contracts, real estate, taxes, loans, and some civil and criminal case work. The lawyer may also have researched abstracts, which detail the ownership of a piece of land. Edward did all of these.

After her second husband, Rev. Darius Jones, died in 1881, Edward's mother, Susan, apparently moved back and forth between her children. Edward's siblings, Harold Fiske Sayles and Sara Gilpin, were both living in the Chicago area and were accomplished musicians and music teachers. Susan was living in Chicago and visited Guthrie Center for Helen's high school graduation in 1900. In the 1910 census she was listed as living in Guthrie Center. In 1911 her daughter, Sara and Sara's husband, Thomas Gilpin, moved to Philadelphia and Susan moved with them to live at 5443 Locust Street. She died there in 1916 at the age of 85 and was buried next to Albert at Oakland Cemetery in Clinton, Iowa. (Block 10, Lot 8, Spaces 5 and 6.)





"Dr. A.P. Sayles
Born
Aug. 14, 1825
Died
Feb. 24, 1871"





"Susan
Jones
Wife of
Dr. Sayles
1832-1916"