



MARY QUEAL BEYER.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FRENCH FAMILY.¹

BY MARY QUEAL BEYER.

There are two kinds of people in every family, those who are interested in the genealogy of the family and those who are not. I belong to the former class. I have searched diligently for facts which might add to those already in my possession in regard to the French family, to which I belong, and in a measure have been successful. Some of my information has come down to me as a heritage from past generations, by tradition, from newspaper accounts, and some I have gathered from old letters which are indeed links in a chain binding us to the past. I have been through the cemeteries of the east, stood by the graves of my ancestors and visited the houses they occupied, feeling that I was on sacred ground. I have searched the histories of Cambridge, Billerica and Dunstable, Mass., for knowledge of this family, and I hope what I have compiled will be of value and help to others. None of us wish to be forgotten, and it is right we should ever hold in remembrance those who have gone before. It behooves those of us who are here, and those who are to come after, to do our best, and thus make our part of history what it should be.

First Generation.

Thomas French, the elder, of Weathersfield, County Essex, England, died 1599. In his will mentions wife Bridget, three children, and grandson, John, son of Thomas, and gives to poor of Halstead, Essex; of West Wrattling, Cambridge, Snettisham, Norfolk; Little Birdfield and Arkesden, Essex.

¹All quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are from Fox, "History of the Old Township of Dunstable."

- I. Thomas, m. Anne.
- II. Mary, m. John Collin.
- III. Elizabeth, m. John Meade.

Second Generation.

Thomas² French, (*Thomas*¹) of Halstead, County Essex, died Jan. 27, 1613, leaving wife, Anne, six sons and several daughters.

- I. Thomas, m. a Miss Wood.
- II. John.
- III. Edward.
- IV. Robert.
- V. William.
- VI. Francis, and several daughters.

Third Generation.

Thomas³ French, (*Thomas*² *Thomas*¹) of Halstead, County Essex, married a daughter of Wood.

- I. William, b. Mar. 15, 1603, m. Elizabeth.
- II. Francis, bap. June 29, 1606.
- III. Jerrymya, bap. Nov. 21, 1607.

Fourth Generation.

His son, Lieut. William⁴ French (*Thomas*³ *Thomas*² *Thomas*¹) came from England in the ship "Defence" commanded by Thomas Bostacke of London, in October, 1635. With him were many who were afterwards inhabitants of Cambridge, among them being Harlakenden and Shepard. Harlakenden was a prominent man in Cambridge. John Shepard became their pastor. Among the reasons which swayed him to come to New England, Mr. Shepard in his Autobiography gives the following:

Divers people in Old England of my dear friends desired me to go to New England there to live together, and I saw divers families of my Christian friends who were resolved thither to go with me. Accordingly in the beginning of the winter 1634 we started. (They embarked at Harwick.) We were driven back by stress of weather and the voyage was abandoned. But about August 10, 1635, we

again embarked in the ship "Defence" and so the Lord after many sad storms and wearisome days and many longings to see the shore brought us to the sight of it upon October 2, 1635, and upon Oct. 3, we landed at Boston.

Rev. Hooker's company (who had preceded them) were removing to Hartford, and they occupied their lands and houses, which Mr. Shepard bought. William French was born in Halstead, Essex county, England, March 15, 1603. He married Elizabeth about 1623. She died March 31, 1668. The children of William and Elizabeth French were:

I. Francis, born in England about 1624. Came with his father in the "Defence;" removed to Milford, Conn. about 1650, and four years later was one of the first settlers in Derby, Conn. He married April 10, 1661, Lydia Bonnell, of Milford, and died Feb. 14, 1681. His widow died April 1, 1708. They had nine children.

II. Elizabeth, born in England, 1629, married Robert Ellis of Dedham.

III. Mary, born in England, 1633, baptized in England between two and three years of age, at her father's joyning. Married Nathaniel Dunker.

IV. John, born in England, 1635. Married first, June 21, 1659, Abigail Coggan, daughter of Henry of Barnstable; she died April 5, 1662, and he married second, July 3, 1663, Hannah Burrage, daughter of John of Charlestown; she died July 7, 1667, and he married third, January 14, 1668, Mary Rogers, daughter of John; she died June 16, 1677, and he married fourth, Jan. 16, 1677-8 (?), Mary, probably daughter of Francis Littlefield of Woburn, and widow of John Kittredge of Billerica; she died in 1719. He died October, 1712. He was a corporal in the militia; wounded by the Indians in assault at Quaboag in 1675. He was often in the town's service. He was the father of nine children; the oldest, Hannah, born in Billerica, Jan. 20, 1644, married Aug. 3, 1685, to John Kittredge, and had five children, being the progenitor of a long line of medical men through her sons John and Jacob. Simeon, the grandson of John, was the father of eight sons, all physicians.

V. Sarah, b. 1638; d. young.

VI. Jacob, born at Cambridge, March 16, 1640; lived in Billerica on the "east road" near his brother John's. His house was one of the "garrisons" of 1675, and was probably the same venerable brick-lined building which was occupied by James Fletcher in 1875, a cut of which is given in Hazen's "History of Billerica." He was a sergeant in the militia. He married first, Sept. 20, 1665, Mary Champney, daughter of Richard Champney, ruling elder of Cambridge Church. She died April 1, 1681, and he married second, July 30, 1685, Mary Convers of Woburn, who died June 18, 1686, and he married third, Mary ———, who was drowned June 9, 1709. He married fourth, Ruth ———, who died Nov. 6, 1730. He died May 20, 1713. He was the father of ten children.

VII. Hannah, born April 12, 1641; died June 20, 1642.

VIII. Hannah, second, born Feb. 16, 1644; married John Brackett, Sept. 6, 1661; had nine children; died May 9, 1674.

IX. Samuel, born Dec. 3, 1645; died July 15, 1646.

X. Samuel, second, born about 1648, married Sarah Cummings. The date of his death or that of his wife is not known.

XI. Mary, second, born April 3, 1670; married Nathaniel Dunklin.

XII. Sarah, second, born Oct. 29, 1671; married Joseph Crosby of Billerica, May 6, 1691. Had twelve children.

XIII. Abigail, born April 14, 1673; died April 13, 1674.

XIV. Hannah, third, born Jan. 25, 1676; married John Childs of Watertown.

Four of the children were born in England. He had ten children by his first wife.

May 6, 1669, he married Mary, daughter of Thomas Lathrop and widow of John Stearns of Billerica, and by her had four children. He died Nov. 20, 1681, aged 78 years.

He was a tailor by trade and was lieutenant in the militia and afterwards made captain. He settled in Cambridge and resided on the westerly side of Dunster Street, about midway

between Harvard Square and Mount Auburn Street, which estate he bought in 1639 and sold to William Barrett, June 10, 1656.

About 1653 he moved to Billerica. He was chosen to sit in the Deacon's seat in 1659; commissioner to establish the country rates the same year; one of the first selectmen, 1660, and served nine years; committee to examine children and servants in reading, religion and catechism in 1661. He was one of the original proprietors and earliest settlers of Billerica, and was the first deputy or representative of that town in general court at Boston in 1660. Evidence of his activity in the cause of Indian instruction is found in a letter written by him to his "godly friend" in England, published in London in the famous tract, "Strength out of weakness," and afterwards re-published in the Massachusetts Historical Society Collections¹ in which he gives a detailed account of the testimony of an Indian convert. The tract was "printed by M. Simons for John Blague and Samuel Howes and to be sold at their shop in Pope's Head Alley" in 1652. He writes to his "godly friend:"

The best news I can write from New England is, the Lord is indeed converting the Indians and for the refreshment of your heart and the hearts of all godly with you I have sent you the relation of one Indian of two years' profession that I took from his own mouth by an interpreter because he cannot speak or understand one word of English.

Part of his will copied from the original at Cambridge is as follows:

Estate to be divided to ye widdow one third part of ye whole, and to ye three children, ye remainder $\frac{2}{3}$ eququally.

The widow $\frac{1}{3}$ part.....	60£-14-10
Mary french	40£-10-0
Sarah	40£-10-0
Hannah	40£-10-0

182£-04-10

¹3d Ser., Vol. IV, pp. 149-196.

Mary ye eldest daughter of the homestead 22 A of upland, lowland and swamp land, with half ye dwelling house and half ye barn (the east end of both.) Also lands 80£ 20s. and debts amounting to 40£-10 (witness.)

MARY CROSBY,
MARY DUNKLIN,
HANNAH CHILD X (her mark).

Part of deed—Know ye that I, Wm. French of Cambridge in the Co. of Middlesex in New England, Taylor, ffor and in consideration of fifty pounds sterling (etc.) my now mansion house scittuated in Cambridge before named.

1656 William French—and a seale.

Elizabeth " her X mark and a seale annexed.

Deed was acknowledged by Wm. French and Elizabeth his wife xth of 4th mo. 1656. (He writes his name Lt. Wm. ffrench.)

He also made a deed of land sold in Billerica to John Parker, in which he speaks of Elizabeth, his beloved wife.

Fifth Generation.

Samuel⁵ French (*William*,⁴ *Thomas*,³ *Thomas*,² *Thomas*¹), the tenth child of William and Elizabeth French was born in Cambridge, Mass., about 1648. He removed to Billerica and thence to Dunstable. He married Sarah, daughter of John Cummings, Sen., Dec. 24, 1682. She was born Jan. 27, 1661. The following are the children of Samuel and Sarah (Cummings) French:

- I. Sarah, b. Feb. 7, 1684.
- II. Samuel, b. Sept. 10, 1685; d. Nov. 4, 1727.
- III. Joseph, b. March 10, 1687.
- IV. John, b. May 6, 1691.
- V. Ebenezer, b. April 7, 1693; killed by Indians Sept. 5, 1724, at Naticook Brook, N. H. Had a son Ebenezer, born Oct. 27, 1723.
- VI. Richard, b. April 8, 1695.
- VII. Alice, b. Nov. 20, 1698.
- VIII. Jonathan, b. Feb. 1, 1704.

Samuel moved with his father to Billerica and thence to Dunstable, being one of the pioneers of that town. His name appears as one of the members of the church in that place on the occasion of the building of a new church. From the "History of Dunstable" we learn that "Deacon French who came from Billerica to Dunstable and built the house still standing close to the state line, was probably the first inn-keeper of the town and at the town meeting held May 23, 1732, among other bills, the following appears, and by vote of the meeting was allowed and ordered paid to the heirs:

The town of Dunstable, Dr. to Samuel French, dec'd.	
1725 to dining the selectmen and meals....	£0- 8-0
1726 in dining the selectmen, 6 and meals..	0- 6-0
for Rhum and Cyder had for selectmen at	
Wm. Frenchs	0-12-6
Going about to take the invoice 4 days	-16-0
Total	£ 2- 2-6

The first church of Dunstable was composed of seven members, one of them being Samuel French, who is mentioned as head of family, and contributed to "wood rate" (salary of preacher) £17-2-2, and 19 cords of wood. Samuel French, who helped form garrisons, was one of the soldiers stationed at Queens Garrisons for protection against Indian attacks, for Dunstable, being an outlying frontier in the wilderness, was peculiarly exposed to the Indians, the Wamesit Indians being on the east, and the Pennacooks on the north. Most of the inhabitants left the town and went to Concord, Billerica and Boston. In 1684 a new meeting house was built and the church reorganized, consisting of six men, one of them Samuel French. Samuel's son John was the father of Ebenezer French of Revolutionary memory.

During King William's war in 1689, an attack on Dunstable was intended, but was averted by information given by two friendly Indians, and companies were sent in defense of the town. On the evening of Sept. 2, 1691, the Indians suddenly appeared and murdered five inhabitants of Dun-

stable and on the 28th, two more. In April, 1697, the celebrated heroine, Mrs. Hannah Dustin, on her way to Boston from Contocook, N. H., where she had, with Mary Neff and a boy, taken the scalps of ten Indians, passed through the town in a canoe. She was the woman who was taken captive at Haverhill, Mass., and escaped by killing her captors at the mouth of the Contocook River in Concord, N. H. This was considered one of the most remarkable and heroic exploits on record.

In point of population, Dunstable was at this time the smallest town in the province, and but for the indomitable perseverance and courage of Maj. Jonathan Tyng, Lieut. Samuel French and three others, must have been again abandoned.

Another garrison was established for the defense of Dunstable and manned Dec. 25, 1702, by a company of soldiers one of whom was Samuel French. On the night of the 3d of July, 1706, a party of 270 Mohawk Indians suddenly assaulted a garrison house in which Capt. Pearson of Rowley and 20 of his troopers, who had been ranging the woods, were posted. The company was taken by surprise, for the door had been left open and no watch appointed. Mr. and Mrs. Cummings had gone out to milk; Mrs. Cummings was shot dead, and her husband shot through the arm but escaped to the woods. After a bloody fight they retreated. This was the garrison house of John Cummings where Samuel French and his family were garrisoned. The few families lived in garrison houses; that is, houses surrounded with palisades, or a wall of stone or timber rising to the roof. Through this wall there was a gate made of plank and secured with iron bolts. Port holes were made in various places, and the underbrush was cleared away from the vicinity of the garrison in order that the approach of the enemy might be seen. Those were terrible times, but peace was at length insured by the treaty of Utrecht, April 11, 1713, the doors of the garrisons of Dunstable were thrown open and general prosperity began. Hostilities were again resumed in 1724—during which time Lieut. Ebenezer French, son of Samuel French, was killed by the Indians. Eight of the dead were buried in one grave, among them Ebenezer French.



John French house, Dunstable, Mass. Built about 1720.

Their gravestone, which still stands, is marked "*Memento Mori*. Here lies the body of Mr. Thomas Lund who departed this life Sept. 5, 1724, in the 42d year of his age. This man with seven more that lies in this grave was slew all in a day by the Indians."

In the adventures of the French War in 1775, in which John Stark commenced his career in connection with the men of Dunstable, the names of Lovewell, Blanchard, French, etc., are prominent.

There are five Frenches mentioned in the battle of Bunker Hill, Eleazer, who had an arm shot off, picked it up and bore it as a trophy from the field; and Samuel, Jonathan, William and Jonas, brothers of another family, did good service on that eventful day. The former discharged his gun with deliberate aim sixteen times. He was a shoemaker by trade, served through the war and died at Dunstable at an advanced age. Lieut. Ebenezer French, son of Samuel,³ was also at Bunker Hill. His bullet moulds which are of brass and will form 24 bullets of different sizes at one casting, the camp kettle and musket, are in the possession of Wm. L. French of Dunstable.

The house at Dunstable, built by John French, son of Samuel French, contained about five rooms. Only the frame of the original structure remains, having been reroofed and patched up with old boards. This house was built on land deeded to John French by his father, Samuel French.

We find interesting accounts of some customs of Dunstable at that time. Dancing at weddings was forbidden. In 1666 William Walker was imprisoned a month "for courting a maid without the leave of her parents." In 1675 "there is manifest pride appearing in our streets" and also "superstitious ribbands used to tie up and decorate the hair." These things were forbidden under severe penalties; the men were forbidden to "keep Christmas" because it was a "Popish custom."

Samuel French died about 1729 or 1730.

Sixth Generation.

Joseph⁶ French (*Samuel*,⁵ *William*,⁴ *Thomas*,³ *Thomas*,² *Thomas*¹), third son of Samuel and Sarah (Cummings) French, was born in Dunstable, March 10, 1687. He married Elizabeth, daughter of John Cummings, Jr. She was born March 10, 1687. Their children were:

- I. (Capt.) Joseph, b. July 28, 1713; d. April 21, 1776.
- II. Elizabeth, b. 1715.
- III. Sampson, b. July 28, 1717.
- IV. Josiah, b. Feb. 24, 1723; d. Jan. 28, 1742.
- V. Thomas, b. June 29, 1724.
- VI. Benjamin, b. July 6, 1726.
- VII. Samuel, b. July 14, 1728; d. Jan. 11, 1730.
- VIII. Samuel 2d, b. Aug. 10, 1730.

Tradition speaks of two other sons, David and Ebenezer, the latter of whom, according to the tradition, kept a tavern in the valley of the Merrimac, and while trading with the Indians for furs, upon refusing them more rum when they had already drunk freely, was murdered by them.

It was Elizabeth (Cummings) French's grandmother, Hannah (Kingsley) Cummings, who was killed by the Indians July 3, 1706. She was known as "Goody" Cummings.

Col. Joseph French's house was eight rods north of the state line after the change in the boundary lines. He owned a large tract of land consisting of 500 or more acres.

May 20, 1725, the following petition was addressed to the Governor and Council of Massachusetts:

The Petition of the Selectmen of Dunstable Humbly Sheweth: That whereas your Honors hath found it necessary to order Col. Tyng and his men into the woods, on the sad occasion of Capt. Lovewell's defeat, we are extremely exposed and weak, by reason of so many of our fighting men being cut off last summer, and so many killed now in the Province's service. We would beg leave to represent to your Honors our case as very sad and distressing having so many soldiers drawn out, and our inhabitants reduced to so small a number by the war. Several families have removed, and more are under such discouragement, not daring to carry on their planting or any other business, that they fully design it. We hope your

Honors will take our deplorable circumstances into your compassionate consideration, and order such measures to be taken for our defence and support, until our men return, as you in your wisdom shall think fit. And your Petitioners, as in duty bound will, ever pray.

SAMUEL FRENCH,	} Selectmen.
JOSEPH SNOW,	
JOSEPH FRENCH,	
JOHN LOVEWELL,	
JOHN FRENCH,	
JOHN CUMMINGS,	
JOHN CUMMINGS, JR.	
NATH'L CUMMINGS,	
JONATHAN CUMMINGS,	
JONATHAN COMBS.	

John Lovewell also sent in a petition at the same time for help to defend his garrison or he must leave it to the enemy. The petitions were granted. A guard of twenty-five soldiers was posted in town. Companies of scouts scoured the villages the whole summer and autumn, but no enemy appeared. With Joseph, a Mohawk, as a guide, and Nessa Gawney for an interpreter, they ranged as far as Pennacook, but except killing a moose and a bear between Dunstable and Pennacook, they found nothing.

Joseph French was on March 31, 1719, chosen to make coffins "where there be need for the year ensuing." Friendly Indians still lived here and this singular vote may have referred to them, as we find a charge made by him not long after "for Jacob Indians coffin 7s."

The selectmen and other persons in the employment of the town at this period charged 5s per day for their services.

Joseph French died intestate, leaving a large estate to be divided among his children.

Seventh Generation.

"January 16, 1717, voted in Dunstable that Henry Farwell and Sarg't. Cummings are to endeavor to get a minister as soon as they can, and see after Mr. Weld's place (the old parsonage) to buy it if it be to be had. Also Joseph French was to entertain the minister." French lived at the first house on the main road northerly of the state line.

This is where Sampson⁷ French, (*Joseph,⁶ Samuel,⁵ William,⁴ Thomas,³ Thomas,² Thomas¹*), was born July 28, 1717. I have found but little pertaining to his history. He married and had five sons, Sampson French, Jr., being born Sept. 15, 1742. His other sons were David, Jonathan, Aaron and Daniel. His wife died in 1743 and he remarried.

In 1768 he moved with his family to Southwick, Mass., and died there in 1785, aged 68 years.

Eighth Generation.

Sampson⁸ French, Jr., (*Sampson,⁷ Joseph,⁶ Samuel,⁵ William,⁴ Thomas,³ Thomas,² Thomas¹*), was born in Dunstable, Mass., Sept. 15, 1742. He married Lusannah Root, who was born in September, 1752. I copy from a letter received from my cousin's wife, Mrs. Seward French, of Binghamton, N. Y., the following:

"We have recently visited the graves of Seward's great-great-grandfather, Samson French, and his wife, who are buried at Wilcox cemetery. Her name is spelt 'Lusannah' on the stone, a very plain 'L', instead of Susannah as we had all supposed." Upon receipt of this letter I looked at "A Catalogue of the Descendants of Samson and Lusannah French" and found that the name I had always read as Susannah was indeed Lusannah. I also made another discovery, that the name Sampson in this record was spelled Samson. I knew that the spelling of the name had been changed, but supposed it had been changed in the next generation when my grandfather was named Samson.

They had a numerous family—thirteen children, eight of whom grew to manhood and womanhood. Their children were:

- I. Josiah, b. Dec. 22, 1768.
- II. Thomas, b. Feb. 13, 1773.
- III. Clement, b. Sept. 20, 1783; m. Elizabeth Hawks.
- IV. Sarah, b. Nov. 15; m. Nathaniel Lee.
- V. Submit, m. Phineas Tuttle.
- VI. Clarisa, m. Harry Merchant.

VII. Charlotte, m. Ezra Williams; d. in Washington D. C., about 1853, in the 59th year of her age.

VIII. Lucy, m. Michael Tuttle.

Sampson moved from Massachusetts to Broome county, New York, and settled on a farm in Chenango, now known as Glen Castle, which is about six miles north of Binghamton. He was a man fond of hunting and fishing; was tall, with a fair skin and light hair: a man of more than ordinary ability, with a hot temper, and sometimes expressed his feelings with more vigor than elegance.

When he was a boy he was bound out, and not liking his place, enlisted in the army as a soldier in the "Old French War", when sixteen years of age, serving in two campaigns. During a portion of the time he was engaged under General Amherst in reducing the walls of Louisburg. The later portion of his time as a soldier he was engaged in boating on the Mohawk, carrying supplies to the soldiers at Fort Stanwix. At the end of about four years he returned to his home in Dunstable. I had searched the record of the soldiers of the Revolution for a direct line to myself, and found over three hundred by the name of French who had been in the war of the Revolution, but none that I could claim as my direct ancestor. I wrote to S. H. French, Amsterdam, N. Y., who is a great-grandson of Sampson, Jr., asking him for information concerning the early history. I copy from his reply:

You ask about the military history of our mutual ancestor, born 1742. In 1776 he was about 34 years old, his son Thomas about three years old, and his son Clement not yet born. Sampson was the only one who could have taken part in the Revolution, and he did not for the reason he was at heart a Tory. He did not take up either side actively but said he thought the war a mistake and King George's government good enough. My father told me he was drafted twice and each time furnished a substitute, which he could have done as he had considerable property. Some one ought to have punched this particular Sampson in those days, but he was six feet tall and had a red-hot temper, so he escaped. But there is something to be said for our Sampson. As we look at it now, a man to be patriotic in 1776 must be willing to help destroy the regular government. In 1861 it was considered patriotic to support and defend the regular govern-

ment. My own experience leads me to think that serving in the army as a soldier intensifies and renders more permanent a man's attachment to and respect for, a regular government. Now our Sampson enlisted in the British army under Gen. Amherst and served in the war between England and France before the Revolution. Perhaps this experience helped color his later opinions.

Lusannah French, wife of Samson French, Jr., died in 1829, aged 77 years. Samson had her buried on the farm, and requested to be buried beside her. He died in 1833 aged 91 years. They were married when Lusannah was fifteen years old, she having been born in September, 1752, hence was ten years younger than her husband. When the farm was sold, the remains of Samson and Lusannah were taken up and buried in the Wilcox burying-ground near Castle Creek, Broome county, New York, about four miles from the Samson French farm.

Binghamton was incorporated as a village April 2, 1813, made a town April 3, 1855, and a city April 9, 1867. It was here that the Frenches and others in that locality in the earlier days, got their mail and went to "meeting." Some things pertaining to the early history of the county may be of interest here.

So far as can be determined by records and traditions, the first white man to appear in this part of the country was Conrad Weiser, an Indian interpreter. He was on his way from the lower settlements to attend a council of the great and powerful Iroquois, or Five Nations, at Onondaga, and passed up the Susquehanna its entire length from Chesapeake Bay on foot. What a journey it must have been, alone through the untrodden wilderness of giant forest in the midst of winter, beside the lonely river. It is recorded that he reached Tioga (now Athens), March 29, 1737. The first school in this valley was taught in 1778 by Col. William Ross.

The first saw mill in Broome county was built in 1788 on Castle Creek, by a son of Samson French. The first grist mill was built on Fitch's Creek in Kirkwood in 1790.

Going to mill meant something to the early settlers of this county, for it was no light undertaking. These journeys were

for many years the chief business that took them away from home.

At Tioga Point (now Athens, Pa.), were Shepherd's mills, a distance of forty miles from the site of Binghamton. The only other mills within reach were at Wattles Ferry, seventy miles up the Susquehanna. Both these mills were visited by pioneers of this section, and jaunts were made, occupying from a week to a fortnight, the grain being transported in canoes on the river. In these early days much of the corn was pounded (after the manner of the Indians), by means of a mortar made by hollowing out the top of a stump and with a heavy pestle attached to a spring pole over the mortar. Thus was corn converted into Indian meal and samp. It was sometimes boiled whole and eaten with milk and maple sugar.

With the growth of population of this locality, came increased demands for milling facilities, and the construction of "Old Rock Bottom" dam, furnished excellent water power, and a number of mills were built.

The first store was opened in Binghamton in 1801. The goods were brought overland from Catskill on the Hudson at a cost of \$3.00 per hundred pounds.

As early as 1806 a turnpike was built along the Susquehanna River from Otsego county to Chenango Forks (now Binghamton.) The road was constructed four rods wide with toll gates every ten miles. The rates of toll were:

For a score of sheep or hogs.....	8c
For a score of cattle, horses or mules.....	4c
Horse and rider	4c
Horse led or driven	4c
Sulky, chair or chaise, one horse.....	12½c
Cart, one horse.....	6¼c
Chariot, coach, coachee or phaeton.....	20c
Stage or other four-wheel carriage, two horses, mules or oxen	12½c
Each additional mule, horse or ox.....	3c
Cart, two horses	12½c
Sleigh or sled, two horses.....	6¼c

From 1835 to 1845 the average expenses per year for superintendence of the poor affairs of Broome county were \$166.09. Not many poor in those days. In 1846 groceries sold in Binghamton about as follows:

- Wheat flour, 2½c per pound.
- Corn meal, 1c.
- Codfish, a first article, 3¾c.
- Saleratus, 6c.
- Brown sugar, 7 to 10c.
- Molasses, 3 shillings to 3 shillings and five cents per gal.
- Whiskey, 19 and 20c per gal.

In 1846 the salary of the district attorney of Broome county was fixed by the legislature at \$250. The same official now gets \$1,250.00.

Ninth Generation.

Thomas⁹ French, (*Samson*,⁸ *Jr.*, *Sampson*,⁷ *Joseph*,⁶ *Samuel*,⁵ *William*,⁴ *Thomas*,³ *Thomas*,² *Thomas*¹), son of Samson and Lusannah, was born in Southwick, Mass., Feb. 3, 1773; he married Polly Hiscock, by whom he had four sons and four daughters, as follows:

- I. Maryetta, m. David Stever.
- II. Samson, m. Elizabeth Seaward.
- III. Nancy, m. Philo Ferris.
- IV. Polly, m. Marcena McIntyre.
- V. Hiram, m. Amanda Waterman.
- VI. Thomas, m. Polly Temple.
- VII. Chancy, m. Catherine Bishop.
- VIII. Harriet, m. Edwin Lee.

I do not know how many of the children were born in Southwick, but know that Chancy was born in Tyringham, Mass., and Harriet in Decatur, Otsego county, N. Y.

Thomas French was brought up a farmer, but subsequently learned the cloth dressing business, which he pursued many years in Otsego county, and from there, about the year 1826, he moved to Glen Castle, Broome county. Here

he purchased a farm of nearly two hundred acres, pretty well covered with timber, and reconstructed a grist mill and saw mill which was situated on Castle Creek which ran through the farm. He also added cloth dressing and dyeing to the establishment.

When Thomas first moved to Glen Castle he lived in what is known as the "old mill house" which was built in 1810, and is still standing, occupied by Mr. George Johnson.

In 1830 Thomas built a house south of the mill house, and when completed moved to his new home which faced the west. "It has had some things about it changed, remodeled inside, a room or two having been added, but the place still remains the same. You go into a large room which was formerly the kitchen, from which the fireplace has been removed. There is the pantry with its old-fashioned latches, the narrow little hall which leads to upstairs," etc. I remember spending a night in this house in 1856 and my great-grandfather (Thomas French) holding me on his knee, and of a short clay pipe which he was smoking.

Thomas was quite successful in business and acquired quite a fortune for those days. One piece of his property had a fine grove of trees on it, and it is said that certain persons wanted to hold a camp-meeting in this grove, but were afraid he would refuse, as it was well known he did not believe in camp-meetings or anything of that sort. Finally gaining courage to ask, they were surprised to receive a ready assent, providing they would not cut living trees. He afterward gave the site on which to build the Methodist church in Glen Castle and attended services there. His wife, Polly, died in 1839, after an illness lasting six years. In 1843 he married a second wife, Mary, widow of Reed Broekway of Lisle, N. Y., with whom he lived seventeen years. He died August 21, 1861, aged 88 years, and is buried by the side of Polly, his first wife, in Glen Castle cemetery, where many of the French family are buried.

Tenth Generation.

Samson¹⁰ French (*Thomas,⁹ Samson,⁸ Jr., Sampson,⁷ Joseph,⁶ Samuel,⁵ William,⁴ Thomas,³ Thomas,² Thomas¹*), oldest son of Thomas and Polly (Hiscock) French, was born in Southwick, Mass., Jan. 19, 1796. When fourteen years of age, he removed with his parents from Tyringham, Mass., to Decatur, Otsego county, N. Y., where he worked on the farm with his father and also learned the business of dyeing and fulling cloth. He was married March 3, 1818, to Elizabeth Seaward, who was born in Decatur, Feb. 7, 1798. They began house-keeping in Cherry Valley (where the Indian massacre occurred in April, 1780), and lived there for two years. Then they moved to Decatur, living there three years, going thence to Glen Castle, Broome county, where they lived until 1826, when they returned to Decatur, Otsego county, and Samson's father, Thomas, moved to Glen Castle. The children of Samson and Elizabeth French were:

I. James Thomas, b. Cherry Valley, Jan. 29, 1819; m. Calphurna Treat in Decatur; d. April 19, 1867.

II. Lucy Oletha French, b. Decatur, Feb. 16, 1821; m. Rev. Atchison Queal of Worcester, N. Y., Apr. 9, 1845; d. Des Moines, Iowa, March 15, 1885.

III. Stephen Henry French, b. Decatur, Dec. 30, 1822; d. Apr. 18, 1823.

IV. A son, b. Chenango, Apr. 21, 1825; d. Oct. 18, 1825.

V. John Seaward French, b. Chenango, Oct. 19; m. Susan Barfoot of Peoria, Ill.; d. at Wayne, Neb., Dec. 23, 1904.

VI. Mary French, b. Decatur, Dec. 6, 1829; m. in Morrow Co., Ohio, to Dr. N. M. Smith; d. Jan. 28, 1908.

VII. Oscar L. R. French, b. Decatur, May 7, 1832; m. Mary Clevenger of Morrow Co., Ohio, Nov. 15, 1855; she died Feb. 17, 1856. He married second, Cidney Ellen Keech of Westchester, Pa., and d. in Johnsville, Ohio, March 26, 1896.

VIII. Martin, b. Decatur, June 29, 1837; m. 1877, Belle Chamberlain of Ames, Iowa, and d. Aug. 1, 1900, at Ames Iowa.

IX. Marvin, b. Decatur, June 29, 1837; d. Aug. 16, 1839.

X. Alva C. French b. Decatur, Apr. 15, 1839; m. Lydia Elder of Morrow Co., Ohio.

XI. Calvin Day French, b. Decatur, May 8, 1842; m. Libbie Jones of Clarksville, N. Y.

Samson bought a farm on the Decatur road between the villages of Worcester and Decatur, where he operated a fulling mill and dyeing establishment in addition to farming. The house is still standing on the farm where Samson lived, and where seven of his children were born. No changes have been made in this building, but new siding and a slate roof replace those originally used. My mother, Lucy French, was married in this house, April 9, 1845. As the sons of Samson and Elizabeth grew up, they were taught industry and frugality, working on the farm summers and in winter attending school in the "French" schoolhouse which is still in use and is of much historic interest.

It is a matter of record that on the 5th of February, 1842, there was a big rain which so raised the streams as to take away the bridges and mill dams. The stream which comes from Decatur (now known as Decatur creek) "took away all the bridges thereon, a part of Samson French's mill dam and many other dams and some out buildings were washed away."

In 1841 (James) Thomas French went to Cattaraugus county. He taught school during the winter and in the spring of 1842 went to Ohio. "He was in Cincinnati and other points on the Ohio river but his health was not good, prospects were poor and money scarce." He returned to Decatur, Aug. 11, 1842. It proved that he was the advance guard of the French family, for not long after his return the Ohio "bee was buzzing" in my grandfather's "bunnit." Some of the relatives of my grandmother moved to Ohio, and glowing accounts were sent back from time to time about the riches of the country; land was cheap and most of it was heavily timbered. Finally in 1847, my grandfather, with all his family excepting Thomas and Lucy (my mother), moved

to Ohio. Thomas having married and his wife having no curiosity to see the west, much less to live there, and my mother having married a Methodist preacher and he feeling that his work was in that part of the moral heritage they two remained in York state.

Grandfather bought a farm in Washington township, Morrow county, about a mile north of Smith's Mills, at which place they received their mail for a number of years. The improvements on this farm consisted of a log cabin with one room and a shed kitchen, a small barn and an orchard of about a dozen apple trees, planted by a man who was known as Johnny Appleaseed, he having earned this title on account of his going through the country in an early day planting apple seeds.

Smith's Mills consisted of a saw mill and grist mill operated by the Smith brothers, the post-office being in the grist mill. There was also a blacksmith shop owned by Harvey Wood "a good blacksmith." Mt. Gilead, the county seat, was about six miles from the home of my grandfather. Two miles northeast of their home was West Point, where there was a store and one or two houses. The first summer they were in Ohio my aunt, Mary French, was sent to this place with a basket of eggs which she was to exchange for sugar. She went on horseback, her father giving her explicit directions to follow as she had never been to the place. After riding for a long time and not seeing the town, she overtook a man walking, and asked him if he could tell her how much farther she must go to reach West Point. Imagine her surprise when she found she had passed through the place nearly two miles back and had not recognized it as "the town."

My grandfather was a lover of good horses and I have heard him say "the grass never grows under my horses' feet for I drive fast in winter to get out of the cold and in summer to make a breeze."

In 1854 he planned a frame house, but after getting the logs to the mill and having the lumber ready, he found that forty acres adjoining his land could be purchased, so he sold his lumber and secured the land for about \$600. In 1856

this forty acres was purchased by my father for \$1,000. On account of failing health, he was obliged to leave the ministry, and had removed with his family to Ohio, where he died, July 6, 1859.

Samson French being a good farmer, cleared his land and fenced it with rails made from the hickory and oak trees which grew on the farm, all of this being accomplished by the help of his sons. The house which he planned was not built until 1857, and the following is the article of agreement between my grandfather and the "carpenter and joiner."

An Article of Agreement between Samson French of Morrow Co., State of Ohio, and Adam Sell of Morrow Co., State of Ohio, for the building of a house by said Sell for said French, made this 27th day of Feb., 1857. Samson French agrees to furnish all the building material, shingles, a foundation ready to lay the timbers upon, to board the workmen while laboring in construction of said house, also furnish all panel doors and the window sash. Adam Sell agrees to do the carpenter and joiner work of the house, to be 34 feet long and 24 feet wide double sealed, partitioned below as follows: A sitting room in the northeast corner, a bedroom in the southwest corner, a recess for a bed at the southwest side of the sitting room, a clothes press directly south of bed recess accessible from the southwest corner bedroom. A kitchen in the northwest corner and south of the kitchen a bedroom, buttry and stairway. The cellar accessible from the buttry also by a door near the southwest corner of the house from the outside, the cellar doors to be batten doors. The upper part or chamber to be partitioned into four rooms. The doors above are to be batten doors, there is to be one east, one west, and one north outside door. There is to be four north, four east, (two above and two below) two or three south and three west (two above and one below) windows. Said Sell is to hang all the doors, fit all the window sash, make all the batten doors inside stairways, case the bed recess, fire place, put on the mop boards, chair railings, etc. In short to finish the carpenter and joiner work of the house in a substantial workmanlike manner by the tenth day of Oct., 1857. For which Samson French agrees to pay Adam Sell \$135.00, one-half to be paid when the work is done, the other half in two months from that time. We hereby bind ourselves to fulfill our parts of the above agreement respectively by the signature of our names.

SAMSON FRENCH *
ADAM S. SELL.¹

Dated Feb. 27, 1857.

¹Adam Sell enlisted in the civil war and died in Libby Prison.

The house was not built exactly as the above plan. There were two bed rooms opening from the "sitting room" instead of a "bed recess and clothes press," and there were three rooms upstairs instead of four, the front room having a recess and clothes press at the north and one at the south side of the room. They built a wood house across the west side of the house which was afterwards finished as kitchen and bedroom.

On April 11, 1861, occurred the death of my grandfather, Samson French, and on August 24th following, that of my grandmother, Elizabeth French. Of their immediate family but two remain, Alva C. French living at St. James, Ohio, and Calvin D. French, living in Binghamton, N. Y. Of the French family living in Iowa at the present time, are Dr. L. H. French,¹ who came from Glen Castle, N. Y., more than half a century ago, and who now lives at 318 East Sixth St., Davenport, Iowa. His daughter, Mrs. Nellie French Whittaker, living at 140 College Ave., Davenport, is a member of the Iowa Society of Colonial Dames. Mrs. Helen French Alderman, daughter of Chauncey French of Glen Castle, N. Y., and cousin of L. H. French, resides in Anamosa, Iowa, where she has lived since 1862. Judson Alderman, her husband, who is still living, came from Castle Creek, N. Y.

Bayard T. French, son of Oscar L. R. and Cidney Ellen French, a member of the firm of John H. Queal and Co., lumbermen, is living at Hawarden, Iowa, and his brother, Samson D. French, who is one of the auditors of the same lumber company, lives at Algona, Iowa. Mrs. Belle French, widow of Martin French, is living in Ames, Iowa, and Katherine French Kresinger, daughter of Calvin and Libbie French, at No. 816 Buchanan Street, Des Moines, Iowa. I am the daughter of Lucy French Queal, and live at 1027 Des Moines Street, Des Moines, Iowa.

¹Died Sept. 19, 1910.

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