

“Mollie Barnes is my name ...”: a New England Daughter Identified

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For over one hundred years Averill family researchers have made use of Clara Avery's massive early 20th century compendium of data which attempted to identify members of all branches of the family descended from William Averill of Ipswich, Essex Co., Mass.¹ Some branches remain as difficult to trace today as they were then and the wilderness of frontier 18th century New England still jealously guards its secrets.

The task we assigned ourselves was to discover the life of one of our foremothers who was **identified by name in Clara Avery's genealogy but whose background was only guessed at, her parentage unknown.** This woman was Mollie Barnes, wife of Samuel Averill of Westminster, Vt. at the time of the Revolutionary War. A record of her marriage has never been found. Her name has come down to us because, as a girl, she had inscribed a poem inside her Bible² which read:

“Mollie Barnes is my name,
English is my nation,
Concord is my dwelling place,
Christ is my salvation.”

She is also memorialized in the names of a daughter and a granddaughter, both named Molly Barnes Averill.³ The surname Barnes was also given as a middle name to another granddaughter, Zeruah Barnes Pinney.⁴

Although we launched our search with next to nothing to go on we were determined to start from scratch doing our own research in the primary sources as well as using already published work. As it turns out, others have come to many of the same conclusions, but more often than not, their findings have been undocumented.⁵ As far as we have been able to determine, this is the first time that the story of Mollie Barnes' family has been presented in print comprehensively and fully referenced.

¹ *The Averell-Averill-Avery Family* by Clara A. Avery, Chicago, 19__-??, viewable online at Ancestry.com. [Avery]

² The Bible must have been passed down by a branch of the family but we have been unable to locate its present owner. It was discussed in detail in Avery, p. 302.

³ Avery, pp. 301 (confusing wording in which “Barnes” looks like a place), 431 & 427

⁴ Avery, p. 431

⁵ Ancestry.com Public Member Trees & FamilySearch patron submissions

The poem in the Bible was the subject of discussion in the Dec. 15, 1900 edition of *The Congregationalist*¹. As reported by Clara Avery, a noted antiquarian Mr. George Tolman of Concord, Mass., responded to that article saying that he thought Mollie's surname might have been "Barron" and that the two names were possibly interchangeable. He also appeared to have no doubt that "Concord" was a reference to his own home town.² However, a follow-up search for the birth of a Mollie or Mary Barnes in Concord, Mass. yielded nothing.

In addition to her surname, its possible alternate, and the name of the town in which Mollie had at least grown up, we had one other clue that originated in *American Ancestry, Vol. IV* published in 1889 which stated that Mollie's father was "Major Barnes, commander Connecticut river fort, King Philip's War".³ The details are clearly incorrect as any man who fought in King Philip's War (1675-78) could not have been alive as late as the 1750s when Mollie must have been born. But we decided to accept a nugget of what we hoped was truth from the article's suggestion and thought it probable that Mollie's father, or a more distant ancestor, had served in a military force.

From these leads, and other facts concerning the family detailed below, we developed the following criteria to identify Mollie's parents:

- 1) their child-rearing years included the 1750s;
- 2) they, or someone amongst their family members or associates, had connections with Vermont, preferably Windham, Windsor or Orange counties;
- 3) they lived in Concord, Mass. during the 1760s/early 1770s;
- 4) the husband or one of his forebears had a military record, possibly in the Connecticut River area and possibly as an officer;
- 5) they had a close family member, possibly a daughter, a sister, a mother or an aunt whose name was Zeruah/Zerviah.

The following gives further details, point by point, for the establishment of these criteria:

- 1) Articles on the history of Westminster, Vermont found in the *Historical Gazetteer of Vermont*⁴, *History of Eastern Vermont*⁵ and *History of the Town of Northfield*⁶ suggest that Mollie Barnes' husband Samuel Averill was not born until after the Averill family's migration to Vermont in the early 1750s. According to these sources his father John arrived in Vermont ca. 1751 with only one son, Asa. This is supported by Samuel's age of 70-80 years given in the 1830 census⁷. From that we can assume that Mollie, too, was born in the

¹ Cong

² Avery, p. 302

³ AA, p. 200

⁴ Hem., cit. in Avery, p. 183

⁵ Hall, p. 61

⁶ HTN, p. 278

⁷ 1830C, Brookfield, Orange Co., Vt.

1750s. The birth in 1777 of their son Samuel Averill, Jr.¹, thought to have been the couple's first child, agrees with that assumption. Samuel Jr.'s birth in Vermont is supported by his 1850 census record².

- 2) As Samuel Averill (Sr.) was born in Vermont and appears to have lived his early life there it was reasonable to suppose that he may have met his future wife there. This meant that the Barnes family we were seeking very likely at least had connections with Vermont if they didn't actually live there. In addition, Samuel was in a Vermont regiment³ during the Revolutionary War when their son was born further underscoring his continuing Vermont residence after his marriage.
- 3) The reference to Concord, Mass. being Mollie's "dwelling place" has already been discussed. As a "control" we also checked vital records for other towns in New England called "Concord" and none yielded the birth of anyone who could have been Mollie Barnes.
- 4) The reference to at least one of Mollie's forefathers serving as an officer in King Philip's War has already been touched upon. Our subsequent searches of the various lists of soldiers and officers who served at that time did not unearth a single Barnes of that sort of rank in the Connecticut River theatre. Perhaps the editor of *American Ancestry* had meant a later conflict with the Indians, notably the "French and Indian Wars". It is not only possible but likely that Mollie's father would have been involved in those conflicts (1740s-early 1760s).
- 5) According to Clara Avery, Mollie and Samuel had a granddaughter named Zeruah Barnes (Pinney) Holt with whom Clara was apparently in personal contact. Mrs. Holt wrote that she was named for her mother who was Molly Barnes (Averill) Pinney, daughter of Samuel and Mollie.⁴ She wrote this comment in relationship particularly to the name Barnes but it occurred to us that perhaps she had also received the name of a family member actually named Zeruah Barnes. This name would have had to have come down from her grandmother's generation. We assumed that, if that was the case, the postulated "Zeruah Barnes" would have been close enough to have had a very special relationship with Zeruah Pinney's mother, the daughter of Samuel and Mollie. Perhaps she was Mollie's sister and therefore may have been Zeruah's mother's favourite aunt.

Soon we had two sets of "Prime Suspects" for the parents of Mollie Barnes, and an "honourable mention" for a third:

1. Joseph and Sarah (Melvin) Barnes of Concord, Massachusetts

This couple was discovered in Concord at the beginning of our research but the list of children did not include a Mollie or Mary. Later, when searching the vital records of surrounding towns the same couple was discovered in Groton, Mass. with a daughter Molley, born in 1755. This couple meets 4 of our 5 criteria.

- 1) They had children throughout the 1750s;
- 2) They had connections with Vermont through the Melvin family;

¹ The Averill-Kibbey Family Bible in the possession of Bunny Averill [AKFB]

² 1850C, Persia, Cattaraugus Co., N.Y., #195

³ He was pro. the private Samuel Averill who enlisted Aug. 21, 1776 in Capt. Elkanah Day's co. under Maj. Joab Hoisington [*Tuttle*, p. 641]; his Vermont Pension Certificate is cited in Avery, pp. 301, 998

⁴ Avery, pp. 431-432

- 3) The Melvin connection was Sarah's half-uncle Eleazer, the commander of 18 men who made an unsuccessful foray toward Crown Point from Fort Dummer just south of Westminster, Vt. in 1748.¹ Joseph Barnes himself may have had a military career if the following record pertains to him:

"Joseph Barnes appears on a list of officers in the 'Old French War' 1754-1763 who had land granted them for their services. The list was published in the Columbian Centinel, Boston, Sat. Apr. 27, 1816 encouraging them or their heirs to come forward for information."²

- 4) This couple lived in Concord or its neighbouring communities for their entire married lives. Joseph Barnes died in 1759.³ Mollie, who was born in 1755, would have been 4 years old. Her mother, who was born in 1716⁴, would have been only 43 and may have remarried. Possibly Mollie and her siblings were brought up in Concord by her mother and possible step-father. Alternatively, she may have been assigned to a family member or other towns person who acted as guardian. This person cannot have been Eleazer, the family's Vermont connection, because he died the year before Mollie was born⁵. Another possibility is that she lived with one of her elder siblings the earliest of whom was Joseph, Jr., age 17 when Mollie was born.

The entire list of the children of Joseph and Sarah (Melvin) Barnes is as follows:⁶

Joseph Barns and Sarah Melvin: married in Concord, Mar. 18, 1735/6 by Justice Flint

Joseph Barns, b. Mar. 16, 1736/7, Acton, Mass.⁷
Sarah Barns, b. July 25, 1738, Acton, Mass.
John Barns, b. Sept. 8, 1740, Acton, Mass.
Hannah Barns, b. Apr. 29, 1742, Acton, Mass.
Jonathan Barns, b. May 19, 1744, Concord, Mass.
Josiah Barns, b. June 11, 1746, Concord, Mass.
Betty Barns, b. July 29, 1748, Acton, Mass.
Lucy Barns, b. May 14, 1750, Acton, Mass.
Mar[e]y Barns, b. & d. Apr. 21, 1754, Groton, Mass.
Molley Barns, b. Apr. 9, 1755, Groton, Mass.
Amos Barns, b. Jan. 9, 1757, Groton, Mass.
Rebeckah Barns, b. June 15, 1759, Concord, Mass.

Acton was separated politically from Concord in 1735 and formed Concord's western boundary. Joseph's probate records would later reveal that his home had been in South Acton and that he had been a housewright. The fact that the family lived temporarily in Groton in the mid-1750s may have been due to employment opportunities in his trade. Mollie's birth having occurred while they were there would be why any record of it was not found where expected.

¹ Melvin, pp. 242-246; We suspect that the family member from whom *American Ancestry* solicited the family background had heard of Capt. Eleazer Melvin's sojourn at Fort Dummer. Perhaps, over time, it was this man, a more distant relative of Mollie, who was transformed into her "father", "Major Barnes".

² NEHGR, Vol. 77, p. 239

³ #1109

⁴ CVR; spelling of her surname was "Meluen" in her birth record

⁵ Melvin, p. 245

⁶ ACR, CVR, GVR

⁷ The four children born to a Joseph and Sarah Barns in Concord between 1764 and 1772 were the children of this Joseph, Joseph Barns, Jr., who also married a Sarah, maiden name unknown. Their children were: Joseph Barns, b. Apr. 26, 1764; Hannah Barns, b. Mar. 3, 1766; Asa Barns, b. June 3, 1769; and Phenias Barns, b. Jan. 10, 1772. [CVR] This family played a significant role in the development of the town of Sharon, N.H. While still living in Concord Sarah received compensation from the town for taking in orphans and other needy children. In Sharon she was known as "Granny Barnes" and is said to have taken her spinning on horseback to Boston to sell. [Sliptown, p. 99] Their daughter Hannah married William Taggart, son of one of the area's earliest residents. [HTP, p. 306] Many of their descendants still live in the region.

- 5) There is no immediate connection with anyone named Zeruah/Zerviah Barnes.

2. Nathaniel and Anna (Allen) Barnes of Killingly, Connecticut

This couple was discovered in the Barbour Collection of Connecticut Vital Records at Ancestry.com after we became interested in some connection with a woman named Zeruah/Zerviah Barnes. This couple also meets 4 of our 5 criteria:

- 1) Their children were born between 1753 and 1771, the eldest being Mary.
- 2) Residents of the town of Killingly, Ct. were instrumental in the settlement of Windham Co., Vermont.¹ In addition, Samuel Averill's great-uncle Paul was a resident of Killingly, his son Paul having been born in Topsfield the same year as Samuel's father John. The two young men were likely well acquainted.
- 3) There is no immediate connection with Concord, Mass. Could Mollie's reference have indicated that "Concord" was simply a spiritual "dwelling place"?
- 4) Nathaniel Barnes was a Revolutionary War soldier in Capt. Crosby's co., 1776, from Thompson (northern Killingly).²
- 5) Their fifth child, b. June 11, 1769, was named Zerviah Barnes.³

3. The Barnes Families of Marlborough and Brookfield, Mass.

At the beginning of our research we kept running into large Barnes contingents in Marlborough and Brookfield, Mass. which were loaded with individuals of the same names that we were looking for: Josephs, Sarahs, Mollie/Marys and Zerviahs. Some of them even went to Orange Co., Vt. so were high on our list of suspects for a long time. We now believe there was no familial connection at all between them and our Barnes family. (See below.)

Couple #1, Joseph and Sarah (Melvin) Barnes, captured our complete interest when we happened upon a most surprising revelation concerning Samuel Averill, the husband of the Mollie Barnes we had been seeking.

The Samuel Averill Marriage Mystery

Having located a Barnes family in Concord, Mass. that fit almost every bill we wanted to find out how this family could possibly have come into contact with the Averills. Suffice it to say, we were flabbergasted when we found the following *two* entries printed one after another in the Vital Records of Acton, Mass.⁴

¹ Hem, Vol. V, p. 564

² DAR online search, p. 401

³ The complete list of their children is as follows, from the Vital Records of Killingly, Barbour Collection database, Ancestry.com: Mary Barnes, b. Apr. 29, 1753; Judea Barnes (dau.), b. Oct. 26, 1763; Thomas Barnes, b. Aug. 1, 1765; Anne Barnes, b. July 2, 1768; Zerviah Barnes, b. June 11, 1769; Billie Barnes (son), b. Aug. 1, 1771. The family disappears from the Killingly vital records after 1771 but Nathaniel was still there in 1776 as seen by his Revolutionary War service (see footnote #2 above).

⁴ ACR

“AVERILL, John of Wes[t]minster, N.Y. [N.Y. written in pencil], and Olive Easterbrooks of Concord, Oct. 5, 1777.* [Averill [i]ll written in later hand above y crossed out] of Westminster, N.Y., and Olive Easterbrok of Concord, C.R.1]

“Samuel of Westminster, Vt. [Vt. written in pencil], and Sarah Chamberlin of A., Feb. 27, 1781 [1 written over 0].* [Samuel of Westminster, Vt., Feb. 27, 1781, C.R.1]” (brackets original)

The first entry is certainly the marriage of our Samuel Averill’s brother.¹ Clara Avery had stated that John’s wife’s name was Olive Estabrook but did not give a date or place for their marriage. It is clear that she had never seen the entry in the Acton VRs. If she had she would have seen the entry for Samuel’s marriage to Sarah Chamberlin which she evidently did not.

Realizing that we were now faced with a serious re-write of the entire chapter on this family in Clara Avery’s book we knew we had to perform our due genealogical diligence and make absolutely sure that no other Samuel Averill with the remotest connection to Westminster, Vt. could have been the man who married Sarah Chamberlin.

There were several such Samuels, eight in total, some who spelled the name “Averill” most of the time and others who spelled it “Avery”. There was so much variation that we regarded the spellings as substantially interchangeable. We spent many months on this research detour developing a *curriculum vitae* for each individual. (See Appendix A.) Two, we discovered, owned land in and around Windham Co., Vt. but never lived there. Another lived in nearby Windsor Co. but didn’t move there until after the date concerned and after his marriage to someone else. He appeared to have no interests in Windham Co. Three were far too young. One turned out to represent the latter portion of our own Samuel’s life and the only other contender, the most serious of the bunch, was shown verifiably to have been married to someone else during the time in question. That left our Samuel of Westminster as the sole possibility for the husband of Sarah Chamberlin.

The implications of this for our study of Mollie Barnes and the children purported to be hers were enormous. Although there is no record of the event she must have died between February 1777 (the birth of her son Samuel Averill, Jr.) and Feb. 1781 when her husband married Sarah Chamberlin. In that case, there would have been time for her to have only one or two, maybe even three, of the seven daughters credited to her and all the others must have been daughters of Sarah.

Also, it was a revelation to us that the marriages of John and Samuel took place in Acton, Mass. and *not* in Vermont which reminded us that family migrations were not always of the “he went west and was never heard from again” variety. The Averill family must have been back and forth between Vermont and eastern/central Massachusetts a great deal. We discovered, that quite late in his life, their father Capt. John Averill returned briefly to his hometown of Topsfield, Mass. in order to testify at a hearing.² What this meant for our search for the Barnes family was that we could remove the criterion requiring a connection with Vermont. It turns out that it was the Averills instead who had a continuing connection not only with Massachusetts

¹ Westminster was claimed by both New York and Vermont at various times in its history. It is the same town referenced in both entries.

² THS, pp. 41-42

but with the very town in which the Barnes family had been resident for many years! If Samuel's second marriage had occurred in Massachusetts then perhaps his first had taken place there also.

Clues from the Lives of Mollie's Siblings

By this point we were feeling very confident that we had, in fact, found the birth and parentage of our Mollie Barnes and our research began to focus on her siblings in hopes that their lives might shed more light on Mollie's early life and the lives of her parents. Most of the girls were tough to identify but in short order we were fairly certain that we had found the eldest brother Joseph, Jr. in Sharon, N.H., brother Josiah who stayed in Concord, Mass. for his entire life, and brother Amos in, of all places, the *other* Concord that had interested us from the beginning. We found him enlisting for Revolutionary War service from Concord, N.H. and a search of later census records as well as his pension file confirmed that he was born in Massachusetts in exactly the year of Mollie's brother's birth.¹ We felt we had a positive ID. It turned out we'd hit the mother lode but more of that later. At this juncture, in a convoluted sort of way, it was brother John who was on centre stage.

John Barnes, the Hazeltons, and the probate records of Joseph Barnes

The background for our discovery of John is as follows: In the course of our research we had amassed a large collection of references to people of possible interest to us many of which had been pushed to a back burner. One such person was a man in Grand Isle Co., Vermont named Melvin Barnes who was referenced many times in the *Historical Gazetteer of Vermont*. We thought this would have been the sort of name one would expect for a grandson of Joseph and Sarah (Melvin) Barnes. But Melvin was born in Wethersfield, Connecticut and there didn't appear to be any connection between our Barnes family and Connecticut. In fact, except for our interest in the family from Killingly, we were trying our best to stay clear of Connecticut lest we confuse ourselves with the enormous New Haven Barnes family with which we did not appear to have any connection. So Melvin Barnes went to the bottom of the pile.

In the meantime, we had ordered a microfilm of Joseph's probate documents, and while waiting for it to arrive we had delved into Joseph's possible origins. If he was married in 1735 we figured that he must have been born around, say, 1715. His birth record did not appear in Concord or in any neighbouring towns but we did find a likely candidate in Bradford, Essex Co. who was born in 1713². There was no further record of Joseph in Essex Co. so it is likely that he went somewhere else but there is no proof that Concord was his destination. He did have a younger sister Sarah born in 1714 and she provided us with a marriage record in Bradford having wedded Richard Hazelton/Hazeldine/Hasleton/Hesselton/Heaselton in 1730³. Sarah and Richard dropped out of the Bradford records immediately after their marriage. Since Sarah would have been Mollie's aunt if her brother Joseph was the man we were seeking we decided to see where she and Richard had gone. The answer was Concord, N.H.!

¹ pension docs., file W.21,640

² BVR

³ BVR

William B. Lapham in his *Genealogical Sketches of Robert and John Hazelton and Some of Their Descendants* says that Richard's parents had moved from Bradford to Chester, N.H. where his father was one of the original proprietors. After their marriage it is possible that Richard and Sarah went to Chester before moving on to Concord where they are found later¹. However, Lapham makes a mistake when he says that Richard Hazelton's wife was "Sarah Hall". His source was probably the *History of Concord* [N.H.] by Nathaniel Bouton who also gives her name as Sarah Hall². Neither author gives a source for his information so the Bradford VRs trump them both and they are clear that Sarah's maiden name was Barnes. The name of her youngest son, Barnes Hesselton/Hazelton, would appear to prove the point. Both authors may have confused two different Richard Hazeltons, one being the son of the couple in question who *did* marry a Hall but her name was Hepzibah³.

We decided to check out this family in greater detail. That's when a database search for Richard 's surname popped up with the name John Hesselton Barnes in Wethersfield, Ct. We clicked the link presented and up popped a page from an article by Henry R. Stiles in his *Families of Ancient Wethersfield, Connecticut*. There were John Hesselton Barnes and his *brother* Melvin with parents John and Esther (Blinn) Barnes along with a fairly lengthy history of this family beginning with the father of this latter John who was also called "John".

Mr. Stiles' informant for the following (except for the vital events in Wethersfield which appear in the town's VRs) was Ervilla (Goodrich) Tuttle of Hornellsville, NY, a great-great-granddaughter of the elder "John Barnes" below. The list of his children presented in the article (see below) is identical (except for those left out) to the list of children of Joseph and Sarah (Melvin) Barnes of Acton, Groton, and Concord, Massachusetts. Therefore, we believe that the elder "John" was actually our *Joseph* and that his name was one of the pieces of information that may have gotten confused over the course of the intervening generations.

The senior "John" Barnes was described as follows:

"b. England, 1708; immigrated to America 1730; m. a Hesselton of Boston; served as a soldier at Quebec under Gen. Wolfe; d. at Quebec 'of hepatic consumption' after its surrender to the Br., in 1762."⁴

On the surface this certainly didn't sound very much like what we knew for sure about our Joseph. For example, we knew our Joseph had died in 1759. But when we were able to look at the probate documents themselves we learned that he had probably died in the late summer or early fall as the probate packet began on Oct. 22 of that year. This meant that he *could* have been in Quebec with Wolfe at the time of the famous battle on the Plains of Abraham on Thurs., Sept. 13. Wolfe was killed in that battle so if Barnes was in Quebec with Gen. Wolfe it would have had to have been the 1759 campaign to which the author referred. Another possibility is that he was with Gen. Wolfe, not at Quebec but at Louisbourg in 1745, and that the events had been telescoped in the family's memory. Details given below show that there appears to be no doubt

¹ Lapham, pp. 24, 27

² Bouton, p. 709

³ NEHGR, Vol. 92, p. 282

⁴ FAW, p. 46

that the “younger” John, the man who married Esther Blinn, was in Quebec in 1762 but did not die there.

Stiles’ article went on to list the children of the elder “John” Barnes:

“Children: Joseph, Josiah, John b. Concord, Mass. Sept. 19, 1740, Amos, 3 daughters

“John (Jr.): b. Concord, Mass., Sept. 19, 1740; was a soldier, with his father, under Wolfe at Quebec; and while there made and figured a powder-horn, dated Quebec, Dec. 20, 1762. After his return home, 1763, he went to Htfd., to visit a sister (wife of Nicholas Brown) and there he prob. met with Esther Blin, of Weth., whom he m. Feb. 23, 1764, and of whom her son Aziel has left this description written in his 85th yr.”¹

The Acton Vital Records say that John Barnes, son of Joseph and Sarah, was born Sept. 8, 1740. There was no one of this name recorded in Concord itself. Stiles continues (square brackets ours):

“John Barnes early entered the army, upon the opening of the War of the Revol., and, as sergeant, served for 5 yrs.; after its close, he rem. 1787, to Benson, Vt. [via Williamstown, Mass.; Hem., Vol. III, p. 408], and d. there, 16 May, 1790, ‘from the fatigues of the war’. His account book, from 1764 to ‘87, is still in possession of his desc’td, containing the names of many of the Weth. residents during that period, and with the signatures of both parties, where settlements were effected. He was a ‘general mechanic’, and his entries are for all kinds of work, from making a coffin to mending a chaise, from articles of furniture to squares of window sashes. In July and August, 1776, there are many charges for mending gunstocks. ... there are items in the contra-credit column of articles for family use, as shoes for ‘Edmund’ and ‘Melvin’ and ‘a pair of shoes for my wife’. ...”²

Later in the article is a reference to the workshop of “Grandfather John”.

We collected a good deal of data about the children of John and Esther but for the purposes of this article it will suffice to give the following from Stiles:³ (square brackets ours)

1. John Barnes b. Monday, June 10, bp. Oct. 20, 1765, Wethersfield, Ct.; d. Old Jersey Prison Ship, July or Aug. 1782; [he was apparently one of 22 men captured by the British from the Wethersfield vessel Gen. Greene and died in N.Y. while still a prisoner. Among the 22 were two members of the Blinn family, Hezekiah and his son Zerah. Hezekiah was very likely John’s uncle.]⁴

¹ FAW, p. 46

² FAW, p. 47

³ FAW, pp. 48-49, citing Wethersfield Records with baptisms from Stepney Church Records. The birth records minus the days of the week are also given in NEHGR, Vol. 16, p. 21.

⁴ Stepney Church Records as emailed to us by Helen Barnes, Oct. 5, 2011. Stepney was a village in Wethersfield later known as Rocky Hill. Information on the Gen. Greene can be found on Hough’s List, website of “American War of Independence at Sea”. The ship was a 16-gun brigantine with 100 men under the command of Capt. Gideon Olmstead, Apr. 1782, captured in May 1782 by the British ship of war “Virginia” and sent into New York. According to *History of Maritime Connecticut During the American Revolution, 1775-1783* by Louis F. Middlebrook, The Essex Institute, Salem, Mass., 1925, p. 95 “John Burns”, Hezekiah Blinn & his son Jerah were amongst 9 men from Rocky Hill on board this vessel who died in captivity. *John Huntley of Lyme, Connecticut and His Descendants* by Ivy Huntley Horn, 1953 (typescript), p. 43 says “Some of these American seamen died in prison ships in New York, and some came home in the flag of truce, ‘Jersey’ and some died on the way home.” Perhaps John was amongst the men in this latter group. [research by Helen Barnes]

2. Aziel Barnes b. Friday, Aug. 21, 1767; bp. Sept. 27, 1767, Wethersfield, Ct.; [liv. for a time in Williamstown, Mass. bef. rem. to Benson, Vt. with his parents, 1768-87]¹; m. Eleanor Cooley, June 14, 1792; [taxed on properties in Chester, Hampden Co., Middlefield, Northwich and Montgomery, Hampshire Co., Mass., 1798]²; [liv. in Montgomery, Hampshire Co., Mass., age 26-44, w/ 3 females under 10 & 1 female 26-44 (pre. his wife), 1800]³; [liv. in Benson, Vt., 1830, age 60-70]⁴; d. Sept. 19, 1857, Hornellsville, N.Y.; he was a builder and the birthplaces of his children [Williamstown, Mass., Norwich, Mass., Montgomery, Mass., Burlington, Vt., Benson, Vt.]⁵ indicate some of the places where he had contracts

3. Edmund Barnes b. Wednesday, Jan. 17, 1770; bp. Apr. 1, 1770, Wethersfield, Ct.; d. 1779, Mar. 23 after an operation to remove a kidney stone (Mar. 3), 10th yr. of his age

4. Melvin Barnes b. Friday, May 8, bp. July 26, 1772, Wethersfield, Ct.; [would have gone to Mass. and later, Vermont with his parents, ca. 1786-87; liv. in South Hero, Franklin Co., Vt., the male age 26-44, w/ 2 males under 10, 1 male 16-25, 1 female under 10 and 1 female 16-25 (pre. his wife), 1800⁶; liv. in South Hero, Franklin Co., Vt., the male age 26-44 w/ 3 males under 10, 1 male 16-25, 2 females under 10, 1 female 10-15, 1 female 26-44 (pre. his wife), 1810⁷; d. intestate, 1829, Chautauqua Co., N.Y.⁸. Evidently he went to live with his son Cullen Barnes in his latter years.]

5. Anson Barnes b. Saturday, 4, bp. 7 March, 1775, Wethersfield, Ct.; d. 1793

6. Edmund Barnes b. Thursday, Dec. 2, 1779, Wethersfield, Ct.; [physician in Benson, Vt., 1812-1816 after which he rem. to Leroy, N.Y.]⁹

7. John Hesselton (Hazeltine, S.C.R.) Barnes b. Wednesday, Aug. 7 bp. Nov. 3, 1782, Wethersfield, Ct.; d. 1828

A search of the immediate forebears of Esther Blinn did not reveal anyone with the surname Hesselton/Hazeltine and we believe that this name may have been a reference to the Essex Co. family of that name to which we have already referred and into which there had been at least one marriage by a member of the Barnes family. It is hoped that further research will be able to prove the connection that we believe there was. (See Appendix B.)

The study that we had made of John Barnes made it quite clear to us that we were looking at Mollie's brother. There appeared to be little doubt that *his* father was indeed not a senior "John" as recalled by Stiles' informant, but none other than *Joseph* Barnes, husband of Sarah Melvin and father of the long list of children that had been born in Acton, Concord and Groton, Massachusetts. If so, he apparently *had* been a soldier in the French and Indian War, possibly serving with Wolfe but also possibly in another of the campaigns of the summer/fall of 1759

¹ Hem, Vol. III, p. 408; John Barnes and his son Aziel are also referenced on p. 458 of *History of Rutland County, Vermont* by H.P. Smith & W.S. Rann, D. Mason, Syracuse, N.Y., 1886 as having gone to Benson "originally from Wethersfield, Ct."

² Mass. Direct Tax, 1798, database at AmericanAncestors.org

³ 1800C

⁴ 1830C

⁵ FAW, p. 48

⁶ 1800C

⁷ 1810C

⁸ admin. granted to Cullen Barnes, July 15, 1829: AbWAG, Vol. O ½, p. 90

⁹ Hem, Vol. III, p. 414

during which he contracted the illness called 'hepatic consumption` which led to his death. (See Appendix C.)

In the Stiles article John's move to Connecticut was said to have been occasioned by a visit to a sister, a Mrs. Nicholas Brown. We figured, and rightly so as it turned out, that this must have been Hannah. We found a marriage record¹ for the couple in Charlestown, Mass. in December 1759 the intention² for which clearly identified the bride as Hannah Barnes of Concord. The birth of their first child Ruth occurring in 1761.³ Sometime shortly after this the couple moved to Hartford. More about them shortly.

Meanwhile, the microfilm copy of Joseph Barnes' probate package arrived. It was quite lengthy but gave us no clue as to the date or manner of his death except that it occurred before Oct. 22, 1759 when the probate records commenced. If Joseph had been born in 1713 he was cut down in the prime of his life at the age of 46 leaving behind a mountain of debt and an estate that was declared insolvent. In the normal course of life he would likely have been able to pay off what he owed, but dying as he did, as the result of war, he never had the chance.

The probate packet concentrated entirely on Joseph's debt, the value and sale of his assets and the dispersal of the realized cash to his creditors. Sarah's widow's portion included a part of their house with a small plot of land for a garden.

*"Then we proceeded to Sett off to Sarah Barns the Deceased's widow for her Thirds Dureing Life the Loure front Room in the Dwelling House with one full third part of the Cellar under it with Liberty of comeing to the oven in the Back Room and the free use of said oven so often as She Shall have Need as all so to come to and free Liberty to use the well as She Needs all so Liberty to Pass and Reepass from the Highway to the Garden here after Described where it will be Least Damage to the Two thirds and we Resarve Liberty for the owner of the Two Thirds to Pass and Reepass through the Front Room to the Celler and Chambers ..."*⁴

We can only speculate on the nature of Sarah's immediate future. There is no mention of her children by name in the documents nor is there any discussion of guardianships. Presumably, Sarah continued to live in her home in South Acton with all her children under the conditions above described. But by 1762 her "dower" had reverted back to the estate and the court ordered its sale on February 18 of that year. The sale to Josiah Wheeler was completed on April 12.

Why would Sarah no longer have had need of her dower which she had the right to keep? The most logical reasons are that she either died or remarried but no evidence has been found for either possibility. Did she go to live with a relative? Were the children taken individually to live with various family members? We do have some evidence for this as the following will show but Mollie's whereabouts after the age of four is still a mystery. Sarah herself simply disappears.

¹ CharVR, Dec. 29, 1759

² CharVR, Dec. 8, 1759

³ ChCh, bp. Jan. 11, 1761

⁴ #1109; widow's dower, Feb. 24, 1761, Ent. Lib. 47, p. 70 [or 10; difficult to read]

Amos Barnes and His Family's Journal

Mollie's brother Amos, who has been mentioned already, was only two years old when his father died but we were able to soon learn that he had gone to live with one of his Melvin uncles in New Hampshire at the age of six. In fact, Amos' whole life was presented to us on a silver platter by one of his descendants, Helen Barnes of Phippsburg, Maine. We stumbled on Helen while at a very demoralized point 18 months into our research when we had run out of ideas. In desperation we went against our policy of searching for clues on internet genealogical networking sites and had a look at Ancestry.com's Public Member Trees. On the first click of the mouse up popped Helen's scans of pages of a "journal" that had been kept by members of Amos' family containing vital records and other details including references to his father Joseph having died in the French War.¹ After eating a good slice of "crow pie" we contacted Helen and our research team has been a trio ever since.

Helen had looked at records we had not seen yet such as the town records of Acton where Joseph had not only been a house builder but also the builder of the meeting hall after Acton had been separated from Concord. She has a photograph of a painting of that meeting hall that hangs today on a wall in Acton's present church.

The *Amos Barnes Family Journal* yielded some interesting information particularly, oddly enough, because some of it was obviously wrong. For example, on one page the name of Joseph's wife Sarah Melvin was originally written as Sarah Boynton, "Boynton" being crossed out and replaced with the name "Melvin" in a small hand above the crossed out portion. As it happens, the mother of the Joseph Barnes we had found in Bradford, Mass., born in 1713 was Hannah Boynton. It was looking as though one of the *Journal's* compilers had confused Joseph's wife's maiden name with his mother's. But the *Journal* maintained, similarly to the story passed down in the Connecticut family, that Joseph had been born in England (the *Journal* specifies Manchester) in 1694 (John's family had said 1708), emigrated at age 18 and taken up residence in America, or in Concord itself, in 1728. However, we became suspicious that the later generations of compilers of the *Journal* had combined two Josephs, father and son, into one. Indeed, the name of Hannah Boynton's husband, the father of the Joseph and Sarah born in Bradford, Mass. in 1713 and 1714, was Joseph Barnes.²

Although we have no proof, we now believe that the elder Joseph, Joseph "I", was the immigrant and husband of Hannah Boynton. If he had been born in 1694 he would have been 12 years younger than his wife³ which seems unusual. Perhaps 1694, a significant date remembered many decades later, was actually the year of Joseph I's immigration at age 18. This would yield a birth year of 1676 making him six years older than Hannah Boynton when he married her. Our speculation is that it was their son Joseph "II" who was born in 1713 in Bradford, went to Concord as a young man, married Sarah Melvin and fathered the long list of children found in the records including our Mollie. (See Appendix B.)

¹ ABJ2

² BVR; marriage record of Joseph Barnes & Hannah Boynton, Dec. 8, 1712, referenced also as the parents of the two children in their respective birth records

³ Hannah Boynton was b. Feb. 7, 1682, Bradford, Mass. [BVR]

The *Amos Barnes Journal* contained a wealth of other information, oftentimes erroneous, but always supplying us with clues and ideas of which we had not previously thought. For example, Joseph (II) of Concord is said to have had a wife named Phebe Ames prior to his marriage to Sarah Melvin who is given credit for all but two of Sarah's children! So far we have found no evidence of a Joseph Barnes anywhere marrying a woman of this name and it certainly wasn't our Joseph. But how does a phantom achieve such a place in a family's memory? Is there a grain of truth here that we have not yet uncovered?

Amos himself enlisted in the Continental Army from Concord, N.H. and became a veteran of the battles of Bunker Hill, Trenton, Valley Forge and service in the Indian country.¹ After the War he returned to New Hampshire and made his life there settling in Conway². On May 29, 1818 he gave testimony, long after the fact, in support of Gen. Israel Putnam's actions at Bunker Hill which had been called into question by General Dearborn.

"Amos Barnes, of [Conway], swears that he was in Captain Abbott's company, in Stark's regiment. 'When we arrived at Charlestown Neck, we passed Gerrish's regiment. Colonel Stark marched in front, over the neck, and I was the third man from him. Captain Abbott marched next to Colonel Stark, and no other officer. ... When we got on to the top of the hill, I saw one or two field-pieces which had ceased firing. Putnam was on his horse near them, and when we passed him he urged Colonel Stark to urge on his men as fast as possible. We marched down the hill, by the redoubt, and after firing fifteen or twenty minutes, as nearly as I can recollect, at this distance of time, Major McClearly ordered us to retreat. I continued in service till 1777; and in 1778 entered again and continued till 1780, and never in my life heard a word said [against] the military character of General Putnam, till I saw General Dearborn's statement. Amos Barnes"³

As well as serving in the Revolutionary War Amos was a lieutenant in the War of 1812 and the uniform he wore during that conflict remained in his family for generations. Like so many men of those days, in spite of his service to his country and his hard work to provide for his family, documents relating to his military pension show that he was in dire financial circumstances near the end of his life due to infirmity⁴. At that time he lived with his son Amos and when he died he was buried in the cemetery in No. Conway the land for which he had given to the First Congregational Church⁵.

Joseph, Jr., Jonathan, Josiah and sisters Betty, Lucy and Rebeckah

Joseph, Jr. has been mentioned in a footnote on p. 4. It is also an interesting fact that even at the young age of 22 he was listed as one of his father's creditors in the 1759 probate documents.⁶ His brother Jonathan is known to us only through his military service and was living in Concord at the time of his enlistment in the Revolutionary War⁷. Josiah lived in Concord all his

¹ pension docs., file W.21,640; HGEF, p. 176; ABJ2

² Amos' migration to No. Conway, N.H. was a natural transition as farmers from Concord, N.H. had grazed their cattle and sheep in the Conway "intervals" for years, herding them back to Concord at the end of each season. [Helen Barnes]

³ LIP, pp. 373-374

⁴ pension docs., file W.21,640

⁵ Helen Barnes

⁶ #1109; Joseph Barnes's Creditor's Claims, Sept. 7, 1761; This is unlikely but could this creditor be Joseph "II"'s own, now very elderly father of whom we have no knowledge after 1714?

⁷ SAR, app. of Alonzo Barnes

life and was involved with his brother Amos in several joint real estate transactions¹. None of these brothers provided any clues regarding their parents or their sister Mollie. No information at all was discovered about sisters Betty, Lucy or Rebeckah leaving Hannah as the only sister who provided a definite link with the Concord Barnes family. We will now return to her fascinating story.

Hannah Barnes

Hannah was possibly the earliest of the Barnes children to be married. Joseph, Jr. was probably not married until 1762 or 1763 (see footnote on p. 4) and we know nothing about the eldest daughter Sarah except that she was possibly married. Born in 1742 Hannah was married in December 1759 at the age of 17 just weeks after the probate process had begun on her father's estate. Her husband Nicholas Brown was a veteran of the Nova Scotia campaign of 1755 having served there at the age of 18 in Capt. Osgood's company². Not long after the baptism of their daughter Ruth in early 1761 (see footnote 3, p. 11) the family moved to Hartford, Connecticut where they had a further three children (see below) and where they received a visit from Hannah's brother John in the mid 1760s as mentioned above.

As far as we know the Barnes family as a whole espoused the American cause in the Revolution as evidenced by the Revolutionary War service records of Joseph, Jr., John, Jonathan, Josiah, Amos and Samuel Averill, Mollie's husband³. But Hannah's husband Nicholas Brown did not. In the early summer of 1777 he fled across the British lines making his way to New York City which remained a British stronghold until the very end of the War. The *Public Records of Connecticut* and other sources contain several references to his defection:

[1777] "Nicholas Brown of Hartford went over to the enemy in New York and left his wife Hannah and four children. she was given liberty to follow him with her children to New York at her own pleasure and expense."⁴

Evidently Hannah's plight had been the subject of discussion at a meeting held on July 10:

"Whereas Nicholas Brown of Hartford hath lately gone over to the enemy in New York and left his wife Hannah and four children ..."⁵

In reality the "liberty" Hannah was given took some time to be made good. Initially only she and her eldest daughter Ruth, age 16, were allowed to go, she being required to leave her three youngest children behind. Nothing is said in the records about who became responsible for the welfare of the young children after Hannah's departure but it was Nicholas' brother Jacob who petitioned to have the children allowed to go to their parents in New York⁶. Here is the text of

¹ MMD102, pp. 518-519; RDMid1; RDMid2

² *Charlestown Genealogies and Estates*, information communicated by Helen Barnes

³ SAR, app. of Alonzo Barnes (Joseph, Jr. & Jonathan); HAW (John); MSS, p. 642 (Josiah); pension docs., file W.21,640 (Amos); Vermont Pension Certificate, cit. in Avery, pp. 301, 998; Tuttle, p. 641 (Samuel Averill)

⁴ CQ, p. 145; CM, Vol. 4, p. 145

⁵ records of meeting, Lebanon, Ct., July 10, 1777; CT, p. 347

⁶ The foregoing information was received in an email from Helen Barnes, Oct. 22, 2011.

the deposition given by the captain of the vessel which transported Hannah and Ruth to Long Island:

"Fairfield, July 23, 1777

"Capt. Eliphalet Thorp declares and says That the last Sabbath Day he sailed from Fairfield with a Flag of Truce, in Order to transport Mrs. Hannah and Miss Brown, Wife and Daughter of Nicholas Brown, to Hemstead, on Long-Island, and arrived there on Monday and was there informed by an officer and a Justice of the Peace, that they had strict Orders not to permit any Flag to be received any where on the Island, and advised me to proceed to the Scorpion Man of War, which lay at New City-Island, which I accordingly did, and when I got on Board of her, Capt. Brown, the Captain of her, told me that I must immediately turn back and carry the Women with me, for that he could not receive them: and he then gave me a Copy of Lord Howe's Orders respecting Flags of Truce, and further added, that if any more came, he should seize and treat them as Spies. Upon which I was immediately obliged to return and bring back the Women. As Witness my Hand in Fairfield, this 23d Day of July, 1777. Eliphalet Thorp."¹

Another source, unfortunately dated incorrectly, gives some different details and somewhat paraphrases the signed account:

"Fairfield, July 3, '77. Capt. Thorpe says. 'I sailed from Guilford last Sabbath day, with a flag of truce to transport Mrs. Hannah and Miss Ruth, wife and daughter of Nicholas Brown, to [North] Hempstead, on Long Island, and arrived there on Monday; and was informed by an officer and justice of the peace that they had strict orders not to permit any flag to be received any where on the Island, and advised me to proceed to the sloop Scorpion, Capt. Brown, who said I must immediately return back and carry the women with me; and added, if any more came he should treat them as spies.'"²

The editor goes on to give the text of Capt. Brown's orders issued by the commander-in-chief of the British forces:

"Scorpion, [*] off New City Island.

"No flags of truce are in future to pass between Connecticut and Long Island, without the special license of the General commanding his Majesty's forces, nor any correspondence by letter or otherwise permitted. Flags of truce are in future to be consigned to New York only.

"By order of Viscount Howe,

"PHILIP BROWN."³

So back to Connecticut went Hannah and Ruth. At some point Hannah must have obtained the required license and made a successful passage to New York. The family's circumstances are mentioned again in the Connecticut records four years later when the younger children were allowed to leave as well.

"that Nicholas Brown an inhabitant of said town about four years ago went into New York, leaving one son named Nicholas and two daughters named Hannah and Cynthia, all minors, and that they are desirous to go to their father at said New York: Resolved, that they, the said Nicholas, Hannah and Cynthia, be permitted to go in a flag of truce to New York at their own

¹ Connecticut Courant, July 28, 1777, Hartford, Ct., p. 2, iss. 653. The same article was published on Aug. 9, 1777 in the Providence Gazette, p. 4, vol. XIV.

² Onder, pp. 167-168

³ *ibid.*

expense or that of their friends – that is to say, that they go to Fairfield and be under the direction of Brig. General Silliman ...”¹

The reunited Nicholas Brown family would make their way to Nova Scotia in 1783 during the evacuation of Loyalist colonists at the end of the Revolutionary War. Nicholas had early on become a member of the “Loyalists Associated for the purpose of removing and settling at Port Roseway in Nova Scotia” his name appearing 15th on a roster which, by Mar. 27, 1783, held a listing of over 400 families. The Brown family consisted of Nicholas, Hannah, two servants and seven children indicating that they probably had had another three children born to them in New York. No record of the births has yet been found.²

In the spring of 1783 New York was awash in British evacuees including disbanded troops and Sir Guy Carleton was faced with the task of moving roughly 30,000 people out of the city to Great Britain or other British possessions. Unable to concern himself with them further he urged the Port Roseway Associates to depart on April 1. The last we hear of them in New York was on April 12 at an Association meeting. They landed on the dark, rocky shores of Port Roseway on May 4, 1783.³

The Port Roseway (now Shelburne) community was a disaster. Nothing was as it had been promised including the quality and quantity of land allotted to each settler. By July 1 they had begun to build their houses and scratch out their gardens and they must have begun to build a road as well. During the summer the disbanded British troops were sent to Port Roseway and in December all the remaining New York Loyalists descended on the fledgling community as well. Rather than the cohesive, central town the Associates had envisioned, by 1784 the settlers were scattered up and down the Nova Scotia coast by virtue of the sheer numbers of people, most of whom were never originally intended to be there.

It is unclear what happened to the family of Nicholas Brown after their arrival at Port Roseway. In fact, there is little to indicate what happened to anyone.

“Although the lists of 1784 show 50 acre lots in the township of Shelburne [including an allotment to Nicholas Brown] there is no proof that these ever were possessed by the Associates. The Registry of Deeds in Shelburne supplies no clue to what happened to the lands. Certainly the men to whom they were supposed to have been assigned did not dispose of them nor did their descendants own them at any time. There are records of the transfer of small house lots from one to another or to newcomers but the mystery of the fifty acres remains unsolved.”⁴

The new governor took over the town and laid it out according to his own plan forcing many settlers out to more barren areas. Only those settlers who were favourites of the government or who had served in the British forces prospered. Many of the others stayed in Shelburne only a short time. The Browns may have stayed, they may have moved on to New Brunswick or

¹ CT, Vol. 3, 1922, p. 228

² NEHGR, Vol. 117, p. 13

³ PRD. This source applies to this and all subsequent information about Port Roseway.

⁴ PRD.

elsewhere in Canada, or they may have returned to New England after the recent turmoil had died down.¹

As a dutiful wife Hannah became the only member of our Barnes family who is known to have been on the Loyalist side of the chasm that divided so many communities during those tumultuous years. Her own feelings on the matter will remain unknown but, whatever they were, she supported her husband in his convictions and made a new life with him wherever it was that their future took them.

..... and back to Mollie

After all our study we were not able to discover any reference to Mollie by name in any primary source other than the record of her birth in Groton in 1755. We can assume her whereabouts, at home in South Acton with her parents, up until the time of her father's death in 1759. Her childhood and her teenage years must have been spent in or around Concord, Mass. according to the only source we have for that information, penned in her own hand inside her Bible. Where she and Samuel Averill met remains unknown but we now believe it was probably in Massachusetts and not in Vermont as we had earlier supposed.

Sadly, the evidence has shown that Mollie's life was shorter than we had thought, her husband's remarriage early in 1781 proving that she must have died prior to that year. As a sequel to this article the following account details our findings with regards to Samuel Averill's marital career and his equally prodigious longevity.

The Four Wives of Samuel I

Mollie's husband Samuel Averill turned out to be no less a mystery than Mollie herself nor had he been an easy research subject for Clara Avery a century ago. His life from beginning to end as reported in her book was fraught with question marks and unsubstantiated statements some of which we were able to resolve through the study of the women who became his wives.

Clara suggested that Samuel had had two wives but the name of the second she reported as "Mrs. Washburn, widow of a Rev. soldier"². We believe that, indeed, Samuel Averill had a wife by this name but we now know that she was his third wife, not his second. We know that his second wife, and probably the mother of most of his daughters, was Sarah Chamberlin of Acton, Mass. whom he married in February, 1781. Therefore, it is Sarah who, unnamed, would have been one of the six females in Samuel's home in Westminster, Vt. in the 1790 census taken in Vermont in 1791. When or where she died is not known but it is possible, and quite likely, that she had died before the next census in 1800.³

¹ The records also show that a Nicholas Brown was granted a tract in Birch Town, a settlement to the southwest of Port Roseway/Shelburne which was famous as Canada's first black township. It is known that white settlers moved in on this community and our Nicholas and his family may have been amongst them. [PANS, p. 79]

² Avery, p. 301

³ Our suspicion is that Sarah was still alive at least at the time when the family moved to Plymouth, Windsor Co., Vt. sometime before 1800. She may even have had family members living there. The Chamberlin/Chamberlain family featured somewhat

We were lucky enough to run across a Vermont genealogical website that included a database of death notices published in the *Danville North Star*.¹ In this database we found the following from August, 1830:

“Maria Averill, wife of Samuel, Brookfield”

Our Samuel was reported by Clara Avery as having lived the latter part of his life in Brookfield, Vt. If this Samuel was ours then we thought we might have found Mrs. Washburn’s first name. As it turns out this is very probably the case.

At this juncture we allowed ourselves a peek at a genealogical networking site.² On GenForum we found information about a Mariah _____, the second wife of James Washburn of Woodstock, Vt. who was left a widow in 1797 after which time there was no further information. Our inquiries led us to researcher Lynda Talkington who shared with us all she knew of James, Mariah, their children and several other possibly related members of the Washburn family. James had, indeed, been a soldier in the Revolutionary War having fought in Massachusetts regiments from his hometown of Brookfield, Mass. in 1775 and 1777.³ He moved his family to Woodstock, Vermont, where other relatives were already living, sometime during the latter years of the War. Lynda’s information contained nothing about any connection with the Averill family but she knew that Mariah was still a relatively young woman when she was widowed and that a second marriage was therefore likely.

Woodstock was not far, either from Plymouth where Samuel was living from at least 1800 to 1820, or from Brookfield, Vt. where he had gone by 1830, probably to live with a daughter. We have no proof whatsoever that Mariah (_____) Washburn became the Mrs. Washburn known to Clara Avery or the Maria Averill of the *Danville North Star Death Notices* but she fits the bill perfectly and we are happy to tentatively identify her as Samuel’s third wife.⁴

prominently in that town and were responsible for the “old Chamberlain cider and sawmills” located in Plymouth. [Wind, p. 392] We did not discover Sarah’s parentage so her relationship to this family, if any, is not known.

¹ www.nekg-vt.com/news-danville-northstar-d-1807-32.htm

² This was actually the first of the two times we did this. It was the success we experienced discovering Lynda Talkington and the information she had to share that encouraged us to research in this way a second time resulting in our discovery of Helen Barnes and Amos Barnes’ family journal.

³ WAW, p. 6; MSSRW, p. 665

⁴ In the fall of 2012, after completing this article but prior to publication, we received another reply to the query which Lynda Talkington had, earlier, answered. The reply came from Jonathan Moren, a descendant of James Washburn and his first wife, who knew of a Bible containing the information that Mariah had died at the home of her daughter Sabra (Washburn) Howe in 1830 and that she had married Samuel Averill in 1797. From Lynda’s information we knew she had a daughter Sabra so our identification appears to have been confirmed. However, we would like to see this Bible entry for ourselves and we are actively seeking its whereabouts. Jonathan also informed us later that he had information sent to him by another relative that Mariah’s maiden name was Fuller. Not long afterwards we heard from a descendant of Mariah herself, Sandy Howe Dean, who confirmed that she had long thought Mariah to have been Mariah Fuller, half-sister to James Washburn’s close friend Ichabod Churchill. See pp. 40-41 for source details.

Mariah had been married to James Washburn in Woodstock shortly after the death of his first wife in 1785 and the couple had four children, the youngest of whom was only two years old at the time of James' death in 1797¹.

Mariah was initially taken in by her husband's second cousin Seth Washburn and his wife Elizabeth who had migrated to Woodstock at least as early as 1780.² Seth received compensation in the administration of James' estate for "keeping the Widow & Cow etc."³ In 1802 Mariah Washburn was mentioned as a creditor to the estate of Seth Washburn⁴ so it is after this date that she was married to Samuel Averill and would have gone to live in his home in Plymouth, Vt.

The Samuel Averill family has not be found in the 1810 census but by 1820 they had relocated to Brookfield. As mentioned, Mariah's death was reported there in 1830. Even though he was pushing 80 years of age it appears that Samuel married one final time. We came to this conclusion while identifying all the Samuels Averill/Avery who had possible connections with Westminster, Vt. (See Appendix A.)

Amongst those on our list we had one whose life we could document from his early days in the 1750s up to his residence in late middle-age in Plymouth, Vt. in 1820 and who was said by Clara Avery to have died in Brookfield ca. 1825. This was the man she had identified, as did we, with our ancestor Samuel who had first married Mollie Barnes.⁵ However, we found another Samuel Averill in 1830⁶ and 1840⁷ in Brookfield, in his 70s and 80s respectively with no information on his earlier life. We realized that what we had found were actually two portions of the life of the same man. This being the case it would appear that the statement we had found in *American Ancestry, Vol. IV*⁸ which claimed our Samuel had died at age 96 was probably correct and that Clara's unsubstantiated information about his death in 1825 was erroneous.

Having given Samuel back the fullness of his days we were astonished to also find evidence of a final marriage to a woman young enough to have been his daughter. In fact, our discovery

¹ Information from Lynda Talkington including scans of James' probate documents from Windsor County probate which she emailed to us, June 24, 2011. Estimation of the date of James' migration to Woodstock is from his son Levi's obituary in the Vermont Standard, also communicated to us by Lynda Talkington in an email, Aug. 26, 2012. The obituary states that Levi was brought to Vermont "in his mother's arms." He was born in 1778.

² Seth appeared in a Vermont regiment on an alarm list in October of that year. [RSRW, p. 280]. That the two men were second cousins is established by compiling information from Middleborough, Mass. Vital Records, Bridgewater Vital Records, *Historical Sketches of the Town of Leicester, Massachusetts* by Emory Washburn, John Wilson and son, Boston, 1860 and *Washburn* by Warren Azro Washburn, D.E. Washburn, Felchville, Vt., 1904, p. 6. Both men were descended from James Washburn of Bridgewater, Mass. as follows: James; James; Ruben; Seth (m. Elizabeth Dunbar) & James; Gideon; Abraham; James (m. 1stly, Ruth Rice & 2ndly Mariah _____).

³ Probate documents of the estate of James Washburn, cited above.

⁴ Hartford District, Windsor Co., Vt., Probate Records, Vol. 3, pp. 45-46, FHL microfilm #0029160, cited on the website of John A. Maltby

⁵ Avery, pp. 301-302

⁶ 1830C, Brookfield, Vt.

⁷ It will be made clear in the continuing narrative that Samuel was not found by name in the Brookfield 1840 census but it is clear that an individual that we did find enumerated there was the same person we had found so named in 1830.

⁸ AA, p. 200

was made while researching the lives of Samuel's daughters and in the 1850 census in Brookfield we found a Sarah Averill, age 72 living in the home of a Moses Sanborn and his wife Sarah. This 72-year-old Sarah could not have been Samuel's daughter Sarah as the latter would have gone by her husband's name of Hebard (see the attached genealogical chart with complete references to sort out all these Sarahs!). In addition, the 72-year-old Sarah had been born in Massachusetts. Who was this woman?

As this elderly Sarah was living in the home of Moses and Sarah Sanborn we could assume that she was a relative of this couple in some way. She certainly was. Her relationship became pivotal to our research. Sarah Sanborn, Moses' wife, turns out to have been Sarah Elmina Coburn, daughter of Samuel Averill's daughter Hannah and her husband Jonas Coburn (again, see the genealogical chart for complete references). The Coburn family had come to Randolph, Vermont from Chelmsford, Mass. in 1794. Jonas had a sister Sarah who was born in Chelmsford in 1779 and who, in the *Coburn Genealogy*¹ was said to have married a Samuel Averill but not to have had any children. As this Sarah Coburn would have been only 15 when the family moved from Chelmsford to Randolph, Vt. it was probable that her marriage to Samuel was a Vermont event. It appeared then that it was this Sarah, born in Massachusetts and an Averill by marriage, who was living during her widowhood in 1850 in the home of her niece Sarah (Coburn) Sanborn who was the daughter of her brother Jonas.

But as we worked backwards to try to find this woman's whereabouts in 1840 we were struck by the correlation of her 1850 census information with data we had seen before. In 1840 in the home of Moses Sanborn was an elderly gentleman, age 80-89. Since Moses Sanborn's wife was Samuel Averill's granddaughter it was more than likely that this gentleman was Samuel Averill. His age group was perfect for that tentative identification.² Also living in the home was a female age 50-59 who is almost certainly the Sarah Averill enumerated with the family again ten years later.³

From the evidence we concluded that the Sarah Averill who was living with the Moses Sanborn family in 1850 (and probably also in 1840) was the former Sarah Coburn, sister of Jonas, who remained a maiden lady into at least her early 50s. We believe that sometime after the death of Mariah (____) (Washburn) Averill in 1830 she married Samuel, the elderly widower, having gotten to know him through her own close relationship to his daughter Hannah's family.⁴

¹ GDEC, p. 39

² It is important to note that the 1840 census recorded the names of Revolutionary War veterans. The name of Samuel Averill was not listed as such in this census record. There may be a plausible reason for this but his absence from being listed is a concern that must be noted in making this identification. So far, it is the only "fly in the ointment" that we have been able to find that negatively impacts our theory.

³ In 1840 the Moses Sanborn family was enumerated three families after that of Jonas Coburn, Moses' parents-in-law, which included Samuel's daughter Hannah.

⁴ Elderly men marrying much younger women is, of course, not unheard of, either in the 19th century or today. In fact, Samuel's own brother Asa, at age 83, married 53-year-old widow Elizabeth Wall as his 3rd wife. (reported in the New Hampshire Sentinel, June 15, 1819)

Sarah (Coburn) Averill died on Oct. 14, 1857 in Brookfield at the age of 79¹ while the date of Samuel's passing remains unknown. He did not appear in the 1850 census so he must have died during the 1840s at that previously mentioned age of 96.

Conclusion

As researchers we are happy to have come this far but will continue to be watchful for new facts as they emerge. We are certain that somewhere out there in a dusty attic or a damp basement rests information from descendants of Samuel's daughters that will help to shed the light of truth on their families' origins. We are also certain that one of these domestic repositories is currently home to the precious Bible in which Mollie Barnes introduced herself to us two and a half centuries ago.

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About the Authors

Karen is a musician and retired music teacher living in Kelowna, British Columbia. She has maintained a passionate interest in family history since childhood.

Bunny's family is her heart; without family we have nothing. She is passionate about preserving the memory of those who have passed on and spends her free time photographing gravestones in the local cemetery in Erie Pennsylvania. She researches the lives of those buried there and has posted submissions at Find-a-Grave and at paintedhills.org.

Karen and Bunny "met" in the late 1990s through the Enchanted Mountains website (now paintedhills.org) which they had each accessed while working on separate projects. They have been researching together ever since. This is their first publication. It has been a great adventure ... if history class could have been this much fun!

¹ VVR