

THE SAMMONS LINE  
Forward

I'm sorry that I didn't record Jeanne's family line before her father, Bill Sammons, died. It's important that we gather family information and stories before the older family members leave us.

When I was courting Jeanne, Bill told me about his family. He had traced his history back to before the Revolutionary War and had two very old family bibles in which were recorded the births, deaths and marriages of his line. After his death all of this material was lost.

Bill told me of your kin who fought during the Revolutionary War in the Mohawk Valley and of those who were captured and taken to Canada. He talked of the town of Sammonsville named after them and of the Sammons graveyard that he had visited.

About 35 years later a book was published by Aderondack Books, Nicholas Stoner and The Sammons Boys or a Tale of the Mohawk Valley, by D. R. Williams in which these and other accounts of your ancestors appeared.



The Sammons Home (rebuilt), Fonda-Johnstown Road, N. Y. S. Plaque in front reads: *Burned during Revolution and Sampson Sammons and his three sons taken prisoner. Jacob and Frederick were taken to Canada but escaped after much suffering.*

The first of your Sammons ancestors we know of is Sampson Sammons. He was a farmer whose farm was just above the Mohawk River between Caughnawage and Jamestown, New York. Sampson, (born 12-4-1722), had married Rachael Schoomaker and later in 1767 they moved to Montgomery, New York.

Your Grandfather Sampson is said to be the first man west of the Hudson River at whom a shot was fired at the start of the Revolutionary War.

In 1775 Sampson was the President of the Mohawk District Committee of Safety which served under the General Committee of Safety of the Continental Congress. Members of these committees were risking their lives whenever they met.

At their meetings, they had planned to assemble an army (The Minute Men) to defend the Mohawk Valley from the troops of the Crown.

Sampson became an ensign in the New York Militia, Captain Fonda's Company, and later was a colonel in the army. He fought in the Battle of Klock's Field and the tragic battle of Oriskany.

At the Battle of Oriskany (August, 1777), Sampson and his son Jacob were with General Herkimer and 800 men who were on their way to attack the British, Hessian and Indian Troops under Colonel Berry St. Leger who had laid siege to Fort Sanwix in order to open the northern door into the Valley. As they advanced they were ambushed in a marshy ravine. Herkimer was shot but lived. Our troops held fast until Colonel Willett left the fort with his 200 men and helped drive off the enemy. In all, we lost 200 men, two members of Grandfather Sampson's Committee of Safety died there.

The "first shot" story is as follows: The Crown's Sheriff, Alexander White, had arrested John Fonda, a member of the Safety Committee, and held him in the Jamestown jail. Your Grandfather took 50 men there and released him without incident. They then went to the Sheriff's house to take him captive. When they arrived there they demanded his surrender. White, from a second story window, asked "Is that you Sampson?". "Yes" replied Sampson. With that, the Sheriff fired his pistol at him. The bullet whizzed past Sampson's head. This has been called the first shot fired west of the Hudson River in the war. Sampson's

men returned the fire and White was slightly wounded in the chest. The door was broken in and he was taken captive. Just at that time the signal gun was fired in Jamestown. Knowing that Sir John Johnson, the King's man who ruled the area, could muster 500 Tories in a short time, the men dispersed.

On May 21, 1780, Sir John Johnson, who had fled to Canada, returned to the Mohawk Valley with a force of British and Brant's Indians. One of his objectives was to kill or take the Whig leaders captive. When he reached Jamestown, he surrounded Sampson's house and took him and his three sons prisoners. The house was then burned and 7 horses were taken. Sir John then took a large number of other Whigs captive and started back to Canada.

Sampson escaped before the troops left the country and his son Tom was smuggled out of the group of prisoners by a Mrs. Hare when the troops stopped at Johnson Hall. The other two sons, Friedrich and Jacob, escaped two years later while being held on an island in the St. Lawrence River near Montreal.

After the war, Tom, whose arm had been shattered in this war, was elected to the House of Representatives. His best known speech was made in February 1810 approving the President's dismissal of the British Minister, Mr. Jackson, to show our displeasure of the way the British were taking seamen from our ships and impressing them into the British Navy. Also of the British attack on our frigate Chesapeake for the same reason.

A number of congressmen were afraid that the President's Act would cause a war (which came about in 1812), and that Britain being as strong as she was, would win and take the United States as a colony again.



Sammons Family Monument and Graveyard,  
near Sammonsville.

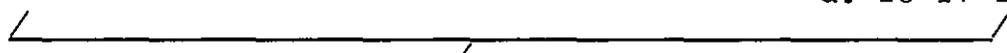
Your ancestor Tom's speech was called "The Spirit of '76" and was printed in the papers throughout the states. This helped form the people behind President James Madison and once again we presented a united front against King George.

During the 25th Congress, H.R. 515 (a bill) was presented and passed which payed Frederich Sammons a pension of eight dollars a month during his natural life.

The Sammons Tree is as follows:

Sampson Sammons  
b. 12-4-1722

Rachael Schoomaker  
b. 1718, Ulster Co.  
d. 10-17-1795



seven daughters  
and  
JACOB

a Lieutenant, Mohawk Battalion  
Tryon Militia  
d. 12-20-1866

THOMAS  
b. 1762  
d. 11-1836

FREDERICH  
b. 7-1760  
d. 11-18-1838

Frederich had a family but we know only of his son, Jacob, who was a Lieutenant in the War of 1812.

The other boys must have had families too, but without Bill Sammons records, we have lost the connection between the above part of the tree and Edmond E. Sammons wo we'll talk about next.

IN a letter from Bess Sammons (George Sammons wife), she states, "Grandpa told me that the Sammons came from Peervill, New York,, on the Hudson River to an area in Pennsylvania known as Mt. Lake". In a letter from Dot (Jeanne's sister) she states "My cousin found, in the Mt. Lake cemetary outside of Bareington PA, the graves of Edmond E. Sammons, born 4-1814, died 5-1885, and Harriet Sammons, his wife, born 1824, died 1872.

These, I suppose, were Jeanne's Great Grandfather and Great Grandmother. The birth date is right as my Great Grandfather Phillip Staggs was born in 1810. Too, you note that her first name carried on. Bill Sammons sister is named Harriet. However, death records were not kept by Bradford County until 1893, so I was unable to trace them back from that source.

The Sammons Tree then is:

Edmond E. Sammons . . . . .	.Harriet Sammons
b. April, 1814	b. 1824
d. May, 1885	d. 1872
/	/
George Sammons . . . . .	.Helen Carl
	d. ca 1946 Age 82
/	/
William Edward Sammons . . . . .	.Amy Matilda Larson
b. August 7, 1883	b. December 22, 1885
d. February 13, 1967	d. February 24, 1979
/	/
Jeanne Wanda Sammons . . . . .	.Harold W. Staggs
b. March 24, 1917	
d. June 20, 1959, Sacramento, CA	

George E. Sammons and Helen Carl moved to Towanda, Pennsylvania and bought a farm. George was a carpenter and his farm was only a side line. They had three children, Harriet, George and Bill. Harriet became a school teacher when she was sixteen, never married and died in Towanda. Bill and George, as boys worked the farm and sold milk in tin pails at five cents a quart to the towns people. Bill told me of how, when the circus came to town, his father would build a table near the circus and his mother would make sandwiches and lemonade to sell there.

George started to work for the town druggist, so, one spring, his father took him out of high school and sent him to the Philadelphia College of Pharmacy. After he finished college, George worked as a Pharmacist in Athens, Pennsylvania.

The family built a large house on Bridge Street in Towanda and "took in" boys from the country who were going to high school. These boys would go home for the weekend and bring their next

2 Battalion, (Colonel Wempel.) N.Y. Militia.  
*S* Samson Sammons  
 Ensign

Appears as shown below on a  
 Receipt Roll\*  
 under the following heading:

"We the undermentioned Persons do acknowledge to have Received from Gerard Bancker, Esq., Treasurer, Certificates the Number and Amount set opposite to our Names & hands, of Jellis Fonda, Capt. of the Exempts in the late War.

(Revolutionary War.)

Roll dated *Montgomery*

*May*, 1785.  
 Samson Sammons Ensign  
 26692 1. 1. 8  
 26671 1. 9. 4  
 26706 1. 6. 4  
 26767 1. 8  
 26379 4. 12. 8  
 26444 3. 13. 4  
 26483 2. 18. 8  
 26532 3. 7. 7  
 26574 3. 13. 4  
 26604 3. 9. 4

Jess. Kew, Fonda.

\* From copy made in the R. & P. Office, War Dept., in Oct., 1866, of an original record borrowed from the State of New York.—R. & P., 43,712.

Number of records:  
 12 *Cottrell*  
 (615)

2 Battalion, (Colonel Wempel.) N.Y. Militia.  
*S* Jacob Sammons

Appears as shown below on a  
 Receipt Roll\*  
 under the following heading:

"We the undermentioned Persons do acknowledge to have Received from Gerard Bancker, Esq., Treasurer, Certificates the Number and Amount set opposite to our Names & hands, of Jellis Fonda, Capt. of the Exempts in the late War.

(Revolutionary War.)

Roll dated *Montgomery*

*May*, 1785.  
 Jacob Sammons  
 for Ensign  
 26661 1. 0. 11. 8  
 26627 1. 17. 0

Jess. Kew, Fonda.

\* From copy made in the R. & P. Office, War Dept., in Oct., 1866, of an original record borrowed from the State of New York.—R. & P., 43,712.

Number of records:  
 12 *Cottrell*  
 (615) Copyist.

*S* Frederick Sammons  
 20447  
 of Exempt Co in the State of New York who was a private in the Continental Army by Captain *Sam* in the Continental Army in the New York Service for 2 years.

Survived on the roll of New York at the rate of 1/2 Dollars or Cents per an to commence on the 24th day of March, 1831.

Certificate of Pension of the 5 day of Oct. 1834 and sent to *Thos. Sammons* Prussia.

Amount to the first March 1834 of 300.00  
 Pension allowance ending Sept 1834. 400.00

\$400.00  
 Revolutionary Claim  
 Paid June 7, 1832

Recorded by *J. L. Williams* Co.  
 Book *E* of *H* Page *86*

Left to right. Ensign Sammons pay record. Jacob Sammons pay record and Sgt. Frederick Sammons record of his New York pension. Note that payment of the first two items are in pounds and the third in dollars. Frederick also received a U.S. pension of \$96.00 a year.

New-York 7043

Mary Sammons  
 widow of Thomas Sammons

who was a pensioner under the Act of 7 June  
 and who died on the 20 Nov<sup>r</sup> 1835 -  
 of Mott's Co in the State of N. York  
 who was a private in the  
 commanded by Captain of  
 the State Troops - live for 13 mo & 8 days

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Inscribed on the Roll of Albany, N. York  
 at the rate of 44 - Dollars 21 -  
 Cents per annum, to commence on the 1st d<sup>y</sup>  
 of March, 1836.

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Certificate of Pension issued the 28 - day  
 February 1843 - and sent to H<sup>on</sup>. J. S.  
 H. R.

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Amount to the 1st of  
 Semiannual allowances ending

\$221.05

[Act July 7, 1838

Recorded by  
 Book A - Vol. 2 - Page 103 - Cler

New York 20520

Thomas Sammons  
 of Mott's Co in the State of N. Y.  
 who was a private in the Company command  
 by Captain Veeder of the Regt command  
 by Lt Fisher in the State Troops  
 live for

13 mo: 8 days -

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Inscribed on the Roll of N. Y.  
 at the rate of 44 Dollars 21 Cents per ann<sup>o</sup>  
 to commence on the 1st day of March, 1836.

Certificate of Pension issued the 17 day of Sept<sup>r</sup>  
 1833 and sent to  
 Pensioner's Application, Mott's Co  
 Amount to the 1st of Sept<sup>r</sup> 1833 - 115.50  
 Semiannual allowance ending 34 - 22 11

\$ 132 65

Regulation's Clause  
 Act June 7, 1832

Recorded by W. Francisco Cler  
 Book C. Vol. 1 - Page 86

Thomas Sammons widow, Mary, received a pension of \$44.21 per year. The same amount that Thomas received as his pension before his death.

The following statement was made by Uncle Frederick to show his military history at the time he applied for a Revolutionary War pension. It tells us a lot doesn't it?

The Minute Men were well named, note that Frederick was called out often and for as little as one days' duty to as long as almost eight months. The duty varied from "hunting Troys" to duty at a blockhouse and fighting major battles.

At the time Frederick served under General Arnold ( seven months starting August 3, 1777), Arnold was considered to be one of our bravest leaders. It was later in time, (1780), that he became a traitor.

We all know of the Battle of Ticonderoga. In January of 1777 Frederick was there under the command of Colonel Cox.

I think our country's history becomes more interesting when we think of our kin who took part in its making.

Accidental Service

Montgomery County, Pa.

Personally appeared before me the undersigned a Justice of the Peace in and for the town of Johnstown in said County Frederick Semmon who being duly sworn deposed and said that at the time he made his declaration for a prisoner he did not know that it was necessary to state the <sup>time of</sup> service position and being a Prisoner of War 2 years & 4 months did not think it necessary but being requested he will verify with pleasure and since that time has recollects some things which he has left his memory in his declaration he finds no material mistake except some things which he in the first version he did on guard at Capt. Wemple's he ought to be one tour of 6 days under Capt. Fisher at <sup>some</sup> <sup>time</sup> <sup>in</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>month</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>June</sup> <sup>1864</sup> and since he has said I think he was correct in the time I shall now make a statement in a Tabular form which I shall present to the Court

	months	days
1864 Jan 6 <sup>th</sup> to Feb 1 <sup>st</sup> served under Capt. Wemple & Fisher	1	26
served under Capt. John Davis at camp of flats	—	9
do — — — do hunting Troop	—	10
not ordered by Col. Fisher hunting Troop	—	2
not under the command of Maj. Blawie in pursuit of a band of Tories	—	3
1877 Jan 1 <sup>st</sup> Marched to Tecumseh under the command of Col. Cox in Capt. Dingle's Co.	3	—
about the middle of Feb went with Woodworth on a scout by order of Col. Fisher	—	6
May by order of Col. Fisher was a scout with Keoman & Tracy	—	5
July 4 <sup>th</sup> by order of Lieut. Col. Keenan was a scout with Keoman & Keanyers	—	7
by order of Col. Fisher was a scout from Christian town to <sup>the</sup> <sup>front</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>line</sup> <sup>at</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>time</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>battle</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>Gettysburg</sup> and was continued that <sup>time</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>day</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>the</sup> <sup>battle</sup> <sup>of</sup> <sup>Gettysburg</sup>	—	29
in that service until the day of Aug 1 <sup>st</sup>	—	—
the whole service of Col. Fisher's Regt. marched to the Oregon Battle and ordered on account as stated in my Declaration & was retired from the service in a Comp. of Volunteers commanded by Capt. Lander which was sent with the Army commanded by Genl. Sherman	7	6
Sept there was a detachment of our Regiment ordered to the station commanded by Lieut. Col. Keenan served in Capt. Keenan's Co.	1	2
		<hr/> 7 26



weeks' food with them when they came back. Mrs. Sammons would then cook it for them. After her husband died, she ran her home as a boarding house for teachers from the high school. Grandfather Bill's mother couldn't read or write but she saw to it that each of her children received an education.

Bill moved to Chicago and worked as a draftsman for the Chicago Surface Lines. He then went to the University of Illinois for two years before he returned to Chicago, and there was licenses as a structural engineer. On October 14, 1909, he married Amy Matilda Larson. Amy's mother, Matilda, and her father, Jonas (each died 1916), came from Sweden. Amy was one of ten children: Hulda, Elmer (U.S. Navy, WWII), Robert, Clarence, Florance, Edna, Julia, Mable and Kenneth.

Bill was a very quiet man who was known in Chicago as both a good engineer and a fine baseball player. He spent his time designing homes (our house in Cassville was designed for us by him), playing poker and the ponies. Bill saved about everything, old racing forms, stamps, newspapers, and a car. As for the car: Bill tried to sell it but no one would pay him what he thought was a good price. So what can a man do but take it apart and store it in the basement? It was there when he died. Amy was the boss of the house except when Bill would put his foot down, about once a year. When that time came, Bill would say "Amy, shut up! We'll do it my way". With that, Amy would, to my disbelief, turn into a marshmallow.

She was the best poker player I ever met. The four of us, Bill, Amy, Jeanne and I would play whenever we got together and I've always wondered if she used marked cards or E.S.P., in either case she always won. Jeanne took after her mother and was usually a winner, too.



Matilda Larson  
1823 ---- 1883

Bill and Amy had two children: Jeanne and Dorothy. Dot was born October 12, 1911 and married Frank Speidel, who was a civil engineer. They had two boys, Richard William, born December 27, 1936, who married Barbara who had three children by her first marriage, and Jeffery John, who was born June 12, 1941, and had three children, John, Suellyn and David by his first wife, one, Jeffery Frank, by his second, and his third wife had an adopted child, David.

Jeanne, the most wonderful girl of my generation, and I met when we were in high school. She was not only beautiful, but very intelligent as well as a fine horsewoman and ice skater. When she was in college, she won several blue ribbons at horse shows.

Our homes were about two blocks apart and we would walk to school (two miles) rather than spend six cents to ride the trolley: This may have been young love, but when the snow was deep it was downright foolish.

After high school we waited for six years for my last year in college before we married. She had taken a job in a plant that made torpedos, saving her money to buy a car that we would



Helen Sammons



Amy Sammons



Larson Family  
Grandfather Jonas and Grandmother Matilda  
center top



Grandfather Bill and  
Grandmother Amy Sammons  
Frank and Dot Speidel

need in our practice.

We married the summer of my last year in school so that we could meet wherever we would go into practice. That place was Miland, Missouri.

Wherever we went, Jeanne made lots of friends. She was always helping people and doing something for the neighborhood. After her death a bell was erected in a Girl Scout camp east of Sacramento in her memory by the other Scoutleaders in the area.

Her children were her greatest love. She never raised her hand or voice to them no matter how bad her health was. I'm sure that her children have become the fine people they are in great part because of Jeanne's calm, loving ways.