

CAPTAIN JAMES REYNOLDS, ESQ.

by
Robert Newel Reynolds

FROM GREENWICH TO PEEKSKILL TO DUTCHESS COUNTY

This is the story of the third generation of our American Reynolds ancestors. If there is one constant in the ten generations which make up the history of my lineage, in this great country we call America, it is that no more than two direct line progenitors lived their entire lives in the same place. John "The Emigrant" was born in England, immigrated to Massachusetts and then moved to two different locations in Connecticut; his son John² was born in Wethersfield and lived his life in Stamford-Greenwich, where he died; now we come to James the son of John².

James was born in Greenwich, Connecticut in **1674**. As we study James' life we will see that his growing up years and most of his productive years were accomplished at Greenwich. But before his life was through he divided his property and other assets and removed to lands "up the Hudson" where he died at the record setting age of 93 at Amenia, Dutchess County, New York on 14 February, 1767.

James' life was not only long but it was full of many worthy accomplishments including service to his church, his family, his country and his local community. It is gratifying that we have enough records of his life that we can draw a significant picture of who this large and handsome man was. But, it is also sad that James is the last of his line for several generations who left us a legacy of written artifacts relating to his life and children. For the generations to follow up until that of my very own father there is a line of five descendant generations with very little remaining of their own handwriting other than some signatures on legal documents—nothing in the way of a diary, a will, a poem, a wish or a blessing for their posterity! We must however say thanks to good fortune that we have enough cumulative evidence to piece their lives and many of their respective children's lives together to form the interesting ties that link us directly to James, his father and grandfather.

In putting this story of James together for my Family History Library, I decided early on that I wanted to include all of the known written records regarding his life and whereabouts. To begin with we will see the work of Cuyler Reynolds, an early twentieth century genealogist and descendant of James.¹ As we look at Cuyler's work we should keep in mind the historical setting of James' life. James was born at a time when English Rule strongly influenced the lives of the

¹Reynolds, Cuyler, *Genealogical and Family History of Southern New York and the Hudson River Valley*, Vol. I, New York, Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1914.

New England colonists. Like his father and grandfather, James' life was that of a faithful Puritan. During the course of his 93 years he would see unprecedented changes in land distribution and use; in the loyalty and autonomy of clergyman--when they could and could not be hired at any cost; and in opportunities for civic duty and even more importantly there was the "Train Band" or local militia, and he became it's Captain—a title that meant more even than that of Esquire which deservedly came with his Justice of the Peace duties. Overriding everything else, perhaps, was the political realities that marked early colonial history including the French and Indian War. He would witness family members going off to do battle—sons and nephews and probably others—and a few who never returned or when they did had injuries that shortened their lives.²

Although, when James died in 1767 the Revolutionary War had not begun, he would have been perceptively in tune with events of the day leading up to it; and he would have pondered the changes attending his religious convictions. When as a youth all of his family were Congregationalists and the chapel of the "Church of the Second Society" was as close as next door, he now observed family and children developing new ties or no church at all to attend in the area they called the East or Great Nine Partners Patent. We are left to wonder about the sureness of the Puritan convictions of this 93 year old James. For sure, his many progeny were in position to witness and participate in the "Burn" that was about to take place across upstate New York over the next fifty years.

CUYLER REYNOLDS' GENEALOGICAL WORK REGARDING JAMES

First, we will review a little of Cuyler's relic history relating to James' father John Reynolds, (Second) Son of John "The Emigrant." It reads:³

The first entry on the first page of the first book of deeds in Greenwich, February 1, 1663, records the purchase from Angell Heusted of sixteen acres of land on the west side of the Myanos river, by John Ronalds, of Greenwich. This purchase was augmented by five pieces of land which Jonathan Ronalds had purchased of Richard Vowles, December 15, 1665, and transferred on the same day to his "brother John Ronalds."

On October 24, 1669, John was made freeman of Greenwich.

² It is believed that the Jeremiah Reynolds from Connecticut who served in the French and Indian War was James son and our direct progenitor.

³ Cuyler Reynolds, Page 402.

On July 18, 1670, William Grimes left all his "lands to ye disposal of Joseph Mead, John Renals and Eliphalet Jones to be disposed of by them in such a waye as they shall judge meet for ye inlarging of ye town of Greenwich by accommodating such inhabitant or inhabitants as shall be admitted into ye town in an orderly way, provided they bee such men as ye afore sd Mead, Renols & Tones shall bee desirable for ye promoting of church & commonwealth." This William Grimes had on January 7, 1666, been fined for swearing and Jonathan Renolds had gone from Greenwich to Stamford to appear against him. It was not until March 7, 1694, that it was decided to dispose of the land "for ye use of a ministrie and if no ministrie be in ye place ye profit of sd land and meadow shall go to helpe maintain such as shall be employed in teaching children to reade."

In 1669 John was appointed one of a committee of five to purchase from the few remaining Indians living about the west end of the town, the Horseneck tract three miles to-the west of "Old Greenwich," from which it was separated by the Myanos river. The original settlers remained for the most part in the homelots at Old Greenwich and Horse-neck, now Greenwich, was largely settled by their children, who styled themselves as the "27 Proprietors of 1672." Among these Jonathan Reynolds ranked second and his brother John was the twenty-second among the proprietors.

By the Greenwich inventory of 1688 it appears that the number of "Inhabitants" had increased to fifty, among them was John Reynolds, who was the wealthiest man. It would appear that his homelot adjoined the Church of the Second Society, for on November 28, 1694, he was appointed "to supervise the building of a meeting house which is next to his own house." His name constantly appears in the Greenwich Records up to the time of his death. John was appointed justice of the peace for Fairfield county, February 24, 1687, and King's Commissioner, 1690-97.

His will, recorded in Fairfield, Connecticut, dated April 21, 1699, and a codicil dated November 8, 1701, mentions his wife, Judah, and children John, Judah (or Judith), **James**, Mary, Jonathan, Joshua and David. At the time of his death in 1701 he was the wealthiest "Inhabitant" of Greenwich. The widow was appointed administratrix and the inventory was taken prior to December 17, 1701, when it was filed. The three distributors were all of Stamford. Joshua, the son of the deceased, chose his brother, John Reynolds, as guardian, while David chose Joseph Knapp as guardian. **To James was given land next to Gearsham Lockwood.** Joshua received land next to Jno. Heusted, and David land next to Joseph Ferris and Ephraim Palmer. The widow, his son John, and son-in-law

Samuel Betts, were appointed overseers. The daughter, Mary, had already received her portion.

The town tax list of Greenwich in 1701-02 contains the following of the name: Mr. John Renalls, 93 pounds; Sargent Jonathan Renalls, 22 pounds; Joseph, Jr., 52 pounds; Jonathan, Jr., 27 pounds; John, Jr., 72 pounds; Ebenezer, 44 pounds; **James, 46 pounds**; John, Sr., 71 pounds.

On February 4, 1701-02, the town made another distribution of land; eighteen acres were allotted to "Mr. Renalds deceased." He was the largest landholder in Greenwich at the time of his death, and this land was distributed among his sons, who, in 1706, sold to one another the various portions which their "honored father, Mr. John Renals deceased" had obtained from the many distributions of town land, with the evident intention of concentrating their individual holdings.

Judah, the wife of John, was probably the daughter of John Palmer, one of the early settlers of Greenwich. In the settlement of his estate recorded at Fairfield, Connecticut, the heirs of Judah Reynolds appear with William, Ephraim, James and Joseph Palmer. John Palmer is stated to have "died many years ago." This bears the entry "due August, 1716," an addition was made to the inventory on April 17, 1778.

Her mother's name was Judah, who was married after the death of John Palmer to Jeffery Ferris, one of the two purchasers of Greenwich Point, July 18, 1640, whose will, executed January 6, 1664, recorded in Fairfield, mentions his wife, "Judy," who was his third wife. She receipted for her dower May 6, 1667, as "Judah Bowers, lately widow Ferris, sometime wife to Jeffery Ferris." Ferris left ten pounds apiece to the four "boies" of his wife, evidently the William, Ephraim, James and Joseph Palmer above mentioned.

This is still further confirmed by the will of Ephraim Palmer above mentioned, who died August 19, 1684, and whose will is filed at Fairfield in book 1675-1689, page 140. The inventory was taken by John Reynolds; John Bowers was the administrator, and mentions his daughter Judith, aged 11 years. If the above relationship is correct, John Reynolds would have been the brother-in-law of Ephraim Palmer, John Bowers would have been his stepfather, and his daughter, Judith, born in 1673, would have been named for his sister Judith, wife of John Reynolds, or for his mother.

The will of John Bowers, of Greenwich, drawn March 16, 1693-94, gives property "that was her mother's to his daughter-in-law, Mrs. Judah Reynolds," and again speaks of his "daughter Judah Reynolds and son Mr. John Ronalds."

In Colonial times the stepchildren were received into the family and referred to as sons and daughters, thus in a deed dated April 8, 1675, and recorded at Greenwich in Vol. A., p. 64, John Bowers gives land bounded by that of John Renalds to his son "Ephraim Palmer."

Judah, the wife of "Mr. John Ronalds," had her first child as early as 1670. As Susanna Lockwood, the second wife of Jeffery Ferris, did not die until December 23, 1660, she could not have been a daughter of Jeffery Ferris by his third marriage. Since Jeffery Ferris did not die until May 31, 1666, it is still less possible that she could have been a daughter of John Bowers. We are forced, therefore, to conclude that Judah Reynolds was the daughter of Judah by a marriage previous to that to Jeffery Ferris, and the Palmer records above quoted make us consider the conclusion warranted that her father was John Palmer.

John Bowers married, after the death of Judah, Hannah Knapp, widow of Joshua Knapp, the parents of Ruth, born 1667, who married John Reynolds, son of Jonathan, and of Joseph Knapp, who married Elizabeth, daughter of Jonathan Reynolds.

John Reynolds and his wife, Judah Palmer, had the following children:

1. John, born about 1670. 2. Judith, born about 1672. 3. **James, born 1674.** 4. Mary. 5. Jonathan, 1682. 6. Joshua, born about 1686, and 7. David, born about 1689.

Note: Cuyler Reynolds includes accounts of John² and Judah's children, but I have included only the following account of James' brother John.³ It is apparent that these two sons of John and Judah had high regard for each other.

John³—John²—John¹

1. John was known as "The Cooper," and was born about 1670. He received from his father in 1695 his house and homelot at Horseneck. He died in December, 1732, and left a will in which he **appointed his brother James** and his son-in-law, Samuel Mills, as his executors. He left the-following children: 1. Peter, born about 1695. 2. Judith, b. about 1697. 3. David, b. about 1699. 4. Lydia and 5. Ruth.

Cuyler Reynolds' genealogical account of the life of Captain James Reynolds, Esquire.

James—John—John

James Reynolds, son of John and his wife Judah, was born in Greenwich, in 1674. and on May 10, 1697, together with several others of "ye young men belonging to the towne," received an allotment of a homelot at Horseneck (three acres at Horseneck and ten between the Two Brothers' Brooks).

Up to 1703 all town meetings had been held at Greenwich Old Towne, but in that year it was determined to hold half of them at Horse-neck, which was rapidly outgrowing in importance the older settlement, and James was one -of those who signed the petition to the General Assembly. In 1705 the town was divided into two societies, and he was appointed selectman (Dec. 31, 1705) to the Second Society on "ye West side of Myanos River."

In the Common Place Book at Greenwich is the entry: "Nov. 1, 1706. Recorded unto James Renals his ear mark which is a cross upon ye top ye neer ear and two half pennies under ye side of ye same ear."

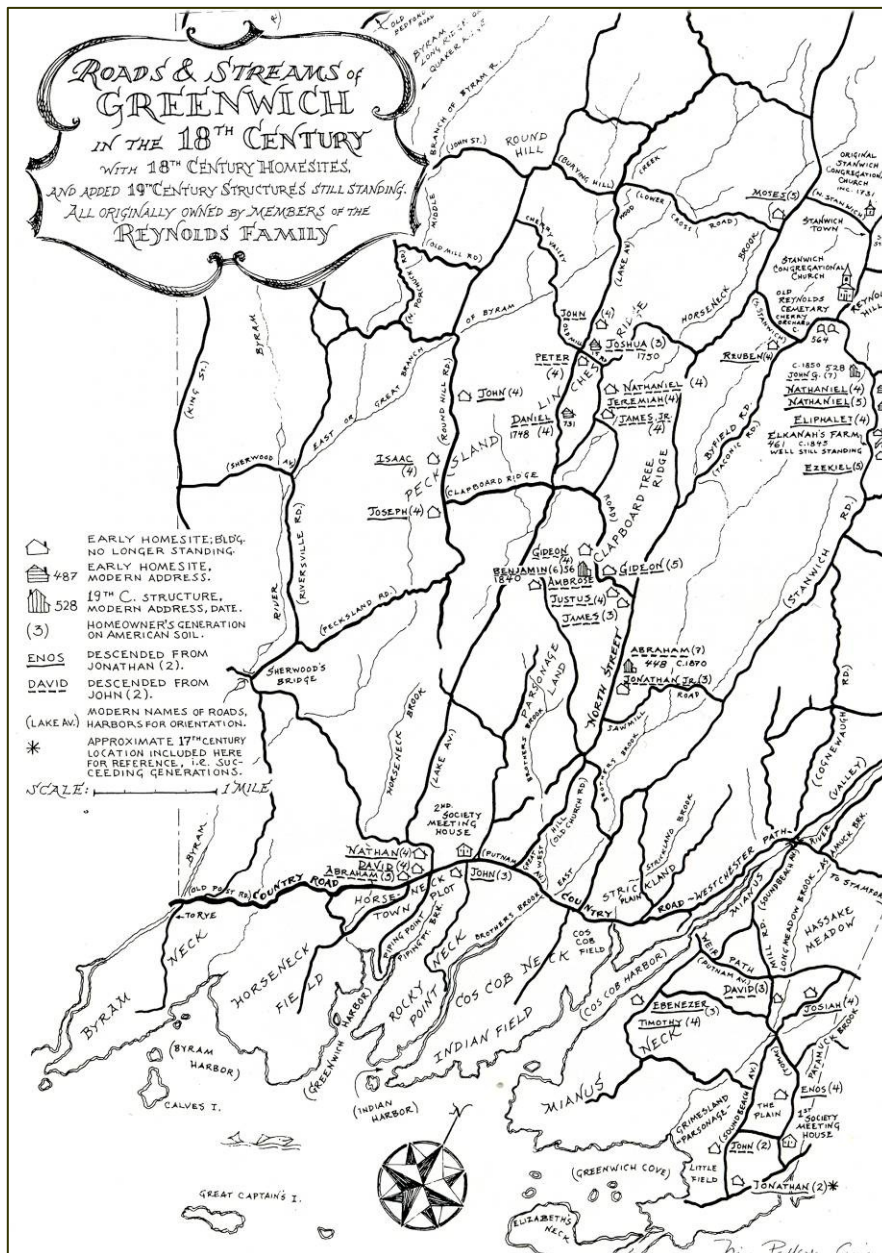
James was elected Lieutenant of the train band,⁴ May 14, 1719, and Captain May 9, 1728. He was the deputy from Greenwich to the General Assembly, 1721-24, and 1727-38, and justice of the peace of Fairfield County, 1735-1741. Beginning with 1723 he was for many years the moderator of the Second Society. The last record of him in the books of the Society is dated December 7, 1750.

That James Reynolds was a very large land holder is made apparent from the many deeds recorded in Greenwich. As early as April 21, 1706, he obtained by grant of the town eight acres at Clap-board-tree-ridge, a hill lying about a mile and a half back of Greenwich. This was increased by purchase from his brother John, December 2, 1712, and other grants November, 1707 and 1712, until he owned a large tract.

On March 14, 1710, he sold to Edward Avery "a piece of ground in Horseneck, my homelot of 14 acres with present dwelling, house barn and orchard bounded on the east by a highway, southerly and westerly by ye highway and northerly by ye land of Ebenezer Mead and common land."

⁴ The local militia.

On May 10, 1736, he deeded his "well beloved and dutiful son Gideon Reynolds" a very large tract of land on Clap-board-tree ridge, and augmented it with another granted February 21st. 1743. On April 29, 1738, he deeded part of his "homelot in Greenwich to his loving and dutiful son Justus." **On September 24, 1748, he gave his son Jeremiah fifty acres.**



Map of 18th Century lands owned and developed by our Reynolds ancestors in Greenwich, Connecticut. A close-up view will disclose the location of the fifty acres that James gave to his son Jeremiah, our direct progenitor. Jeremiah sold his birthright to his brother James and reinvested his assets in New York property. This map is from Ray and Stewart and modified in Photoshop.

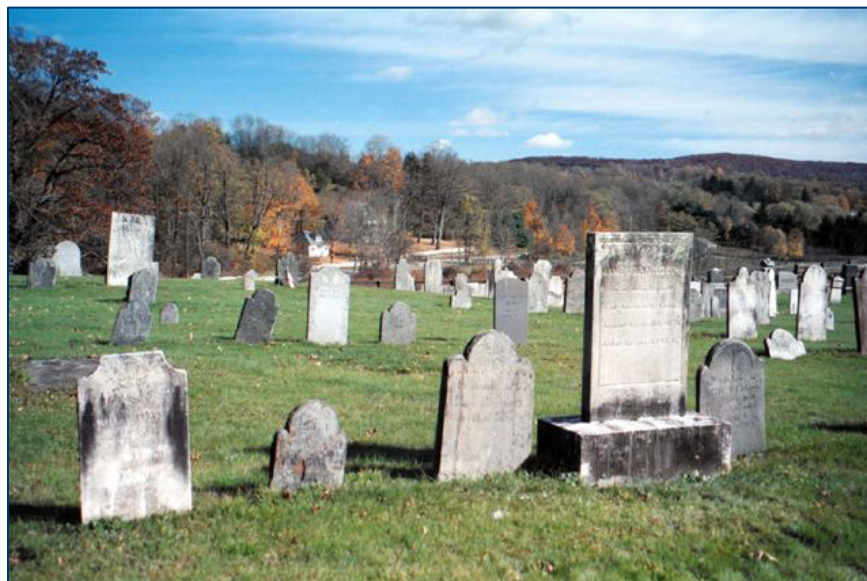
On February 17, 1748-49, he gave his son, James Jr., his house and orchard on Clap-board-tree-ridge. This house, a large gambrel structure surrounded by enormous box trees, was still standing in 1897, and was owned by the descendants of Gideon Reynolds. On March 4, 1752, he deeded his lands on the Indian Fields to his sons James Jr. and Gideon, both of Greenwich. On March 24, 1752, he gave his lands at North Castle to his son James Jr.

From the distribution of his property it is apparent that he intended moving from Greenwich to New York State, where he was probably interested in the Nine Partners Patent. He figures in the Greenwich tax lists as late as 1761, and in deeds describes himself as of Greenwich in 1759-61-62.

Nevertheless, his granddaughter Anna Palmer, daughter of Nathaniel Reynolds, deeded, October 1, 1760, land on Clap-board-tree-ridge, "in said Greenwich, which was given to her by her honored grandfather James Reynolds formerly of said Greenwich but now of Dutchess in the Province of New York" (Greenwich Deeds, vol. VIII).

James, in a deed dated August, 1761, describes himself as of Peekskill, in the county of Westchester. James died February 14, 1767, at Amenia, Dutchess County, N. Y., and was buried in the Amenia City (Smithfield) graveyard, where his stone still exists. Family tradition states that he was visiting his son James, who is also buried there. A letter written in 1848 states that "he was large and made a fine appearance."

This is a photo of the Smithfield burial ground near Amenia, New York taken by Glenn G. Reynolds M.D. in October 2004. Captain James Reynolds gravestone is the tall one on the right. Later in this section you will see a close-up of this stone with the inscription.



From a deed signed December 22, 1731, by Captain James Reynolds and his wife Sarah, it appears that she was the daughter of Mary Hobby, who married, November 18, 1686 (Stamford Records, p. 118), Stephen Holmes (b. Jan. 14, 1664-65, at Stamford, d. May 15, 1710, Greenwich). The deed (Greenwich, vol. A, p. 131) covers "part of lot or right of land that was given by John Hobby of Greenwich, deceased, unto his daughter Mary and her children, and I, Sarah Renyalls, am one of the children of ye said Mary Holmes." The said land was granted to her by her honored father John Hobby "Dec. 22, Anno Dom., 1731." The latter was on the voters' list of Greenwich as early as 1658, and the inventory of his estate, April 24, 1707, mentions "dau. Mary Holmes, wife of Stephen Holmes." John Hobby was the son of John Hobby, one of the seven original proprietors of Greenwich (1664).

Stephen Holmes, b. Jan. 14. 1664-5, in Stamford (Stamford Records, p. 76), d. May 15, 1710, in Greenwich (Stamford Records, p. 143), was the son of John Holmes, b. 1635, d. July 6, 1703 (Stamford Records, p. 113), and Rachel Waterbury, who removed to Bedford. Westchester County, N. Y., in 1680. They were married at Stamford, Dec. 3, 1659 (Stamford Records, p. 76). Rachel Waterbury was the daughter of John Waterbury, who died at Stamford 3-15-1658 (Stamford Records, p. 20). John Holmes receipted on behalf of his wife "Rachel out of ye estate of her deceased father John Waterbury 10-12m-1668" (Stamford Records, p. 68).

The Common Place Book at Greenwich gives the births of four of James' children: "Sarah Renalds ye daughter of James Renalds was born (?) 25, 1698. James Renalds son of James Renalds b. July 6, 1700. Nathaniel Renalds son of James, b. Feb. 20, 1702-3. Mary Renalds, dau. of James b. Feb. 9, 1704-5. That he was the father of Gideon, Justus and **Jeremiah**, appears from the deeds of gifts already quoted.

James had the following children, though whether they were all by Sarah Holmes is not known:

1. Sarah, b. 1698, subsequent history unknown.
2. James—James—John—John.

James, b. July 6, 1700, d. June 2, 1773, buried at Amenia City (Smithfield), Dutchess county, N. Y., m. at Greenwich, May 24, 1731, Phebe Fowler, and had the following children, all born in Greenwich: 1. Mary, b. June 30, 1732, 2. Phebe, b. June 27, 1734, 3. Sarah, b. Sept. 5, 1736, 4. Rebecca, b. Oct. 27, 1738, 5. Jemima, b. Feb. 9, 1741, 6. Hepzibah, b. Sept. 18, 1744, 7. James, b. Jan. 5, 1746, was in the war of revolution in the Connecticut forces, 8. Justus, b. Apr. 2, 1748, was in war of revolution in Connecticut

forces, d. and buried at Amenia. N. Y., 9. William, b. Jan. 18, 1751, m. Rhoda, d. Nov. 24, 1813, and was buried at Amenia City, N. Y., and had: 1. Justus, d. 1793 at Amenia, N. Y., and probably others. 10. Sophia, b. Sept. 25, 1754, 11. Dorcas, b. Sept. 9, 1756.

3. Nathaniel—James—John—John

The descendants of Nathaniel, the third child of James, son of John, the son of John the emigrant, are given special treatment over several pages by Cuyler Reynolds as he was of that lineage. Facts not repeated here.

4. Mary, b. Feb. 9, 1744-5, entry of her birth the only record.

5. Gideon—James—John—John

Gideon, the fifth child of James, the son of John, the son of John the emigrant, was born in 1706, was a member of the Connecticut legislature, and married Bethia-----. He d. in 1769, leaving a will dated Oct 23, 1765. He had eleven children; details not recorded here.

6. Justus—James—John—John

James had a sixth child, Justus, b 1708, d. 1747, m. Apr. 23, 1737, Elizabeth, dau of Richard Sackett, and had at Greenwich 10 children by two wives.

7. **Jeremiah**—James—John—John

James had "a seventh child, **Jeremiah**,
b. about 1711, m. a dau. of Peter Brown and
d. in 1769, he had: 1. David, b. about 1741, and⁵.....

Thus ends the treatment by Cuyler Reynolds of our ancestor James. Later the known information about James life from the works of Ray and Stewart will add considerable to our perception of the conditions and way of life these early colonists experienced. Their research into things relating to the lives of our early Reynolds family is remarkable.

The work of Marion Reynolds covers much of the same ground as already outlined here. He does provide some additional information related to James activity in his civic and church affairs i.e., in 1705, Greenwich was divided into two societies, and he was appointed Selectman, Dec. 31. 1705 to the Second Society on "ye west sd. of Myanos River." James was elected Lieutenant of the Horseneck Train Band Militia, May 14, 1719, and Captain May 9, 1728. He was the representative from Greenwich to the General Assembly, 1721-24; 1727-28. Also Justice of Peace of Fairfield County, 1733-41. Beginning with 1723 he was Moderator of the Second or West Society, 1723, 1724, 1725, 1731, 1734, 1739-40.

⁵ We know from sources other than Cuyler Reynolds that Jeremiah had three sons, David, Jeremiah, and Shubal.

Marion Reynolds⁶ also recorded that on December 13, 1745, in White Plains deed records we read, James Reynolds, Justus Bush, Jabez Mead and Isaac Holmes give up to James Delaney, Esq., et al., by virtue of a patent dated 1701 called the East Patent. This was in Westchester County, New York. In further reference, Marion Reynolds states: James probably married twice. In that case, the first four children, all recorded in the Greenwich Common-Place Book, were by the first wife whose name we do not know. This supposition is strengthened when we remember that Sarah Holmes, his second wife, was apparently not yet twelve when James' first child (Sarah) was born.

Items of Interest regarding James from the work of Ray and Stewart⁷

Regarding James service to the Train Band or Militia:

The Colony of Connecticut had to be continually alert to danger from potential or real enemies — from disgruntled Indians and from France with its aggressive explorers and traders in North America and an ambitious Louis XIV on the throne in Europe.

The Ludlow Code had placed responsibility for protecting towns upon the selectmen, who had to make sure a sufficient number of "good firelock muskets," as well as an adequate supply of ammunition, were stocked in a secure building. Train bands, the local militia from which no adult male between sixteen and sixty was exempt, were organized by all the towns, and these bands were required to drill routinely.

In 1690 just after the first of a long series of wars between England and France began, Mr. John Reynolds (James father) became the colony-appointed commander of Greenwich's train band. He was reappointed for a half-dozen years, until he was sent to the General Assembly in Hartford in 1696.

When the first war with France ended in 1697, Greenwich had escaped any damage or real danger. Just at its end, however, 120 men from Greenwich and nearby towns were alerted to march to New York, if need be.

The following year, 1698, Hartford ordered the town to obtain a broader range of weapons for the train band. A few years later, in 1702, a second war, Queen Anne's War, began; it lasted almost a dozen years. These were really wars for European dominance, but England's American colonies paid heavily for the rivalry between

⁶ Marion Reynolds, History and Descendants of John and Sarah Reynolds, page 51.

⁷ Ray and Stewart, Loyal to the Land, Chapter 4.

their mother country and France. Moreover, as the colonists observed France's Indian allies terrorizing backwoods English colonists, and as successful campaigns were turned upside-down by peace treaties worked out by European diplomats, they began to question the causes and the results of these wars.

In 1711, during Queen Anne's War, Joseph Reynolds (cousin of James) became involved in a planned expedition against Canada. Governor Gurden Saltonstall and his council reimbursed soldiers in this campaign for sundry expenses, and Joseph was given the munificent sum of ten shillings.

*Although a quarter-century of peace followed, the colony saw no reason to stop its military drill. In 1722 **James Reignolds** was both a deputy and a lieutenant. Two years later, he was put in charge of the train band on the west side of the Mianus and eventually became its captain.*

On hiring a blacksmith:

*In colonial times blacksmiths shod both horses and oxen. Blacksmiths were treated generously. In 1696 one Thomas Bullis, a New York man, received a home lot and five acres of outland when he set up his forge in Horseneck. When an opportunity arose in 1717 to acquire a skilled blacksmith east of the Mianus, five men in the Reynolds family — Joshua, Ebenezer, Jonathan, **James**, and John Senr. — along with several Meads, Knapps, Lockwoods and others, as proprietors, saw fit to give him four acres for his establishment.*

Shrewd and honorable too...

Of all the third generation cousins James was the most bold in action and daring in speculation. He was a farmer, but one who evaluated land for its potential. It was his name more than those of his brothers and cousins that appeared as a party to land transactions in the town records — even though ten pages of these transactions are missing for the period during which he was most actively engaged in buying and selling property. Of the Reynolds males in this generation, James was the most active in town government. And it is he alone whose tombstone bears the honorific "Esquire" after his name. In a generation where the males were long-lived, he held the family record. His ninety-three years spanned almost a century, one that brought great change to New England economic life.

The first mention of James in the land records is an entry dated May 1697. As one of the young men in town having insufficient land of his own, he received a three-

acre home lot at Horseneck and ten acres of upland between Two Brothers Brook.⁸ Not quite three years later, he purchased Joseph Close's homelot and added that land to his Horseneck property. Losing no time, he acquired ten acres at Clapboard Tree Ridge in 1702, and five years later fleshed out that property with thirty-three and one-half additional acres. Many land transactions were internal and involved other members of the family. James acquired six acres next to his brother John at Finches pound ridge, and bought land that was the third part of his father's right from his brother Jonathan in Birum Neck.

Although he bought and sold land at a marathon pace, James hoarded the land he acquired at Clabord ridge. Clapboard Ridge, the modern designation for this part of Greenwich, explains his motivation. The virgin stands of tall, straight, mature trees that covered the ridge were eminently suitable for hewing into clapboards. Clapboards had been exported by New Englanders to a responsive market in the mother country as early as the 1620s, and the demand had not diminished by century's end. A new market had opened in New England itself as the settlers began to abandon their simple wattle and daub cabins for more handsome wooden structures James, ever the businessman, took advantage of this trend. In 1717, he and three other investors set up a sawmill along Byrum River, not far from the raw materials at Clabord ridge.

The most astonishing transaction to which James was party was the sale of six and one-half acres of land at Clabord ridge to the Governor and Company of the English Colony of Connecticut in 1733. The colonial government paid James £50 in true bills of the Colony for this tract. At the same time, the Governor and Company purchased a ten and one-half acre tract at West Ridge from Peter Ferris, ten acres at Round Hill from Timothy Mead, twelve acres known as Butler's lott from Charles Knapp and eighteen acres at Timamons Ridge from John Brush. Each man was paid £50 for his land.⁹ James, with a sharp eye for a bargain, parted with the least amount of land, but got more for each acre!

⁸ Two Brothers Brook, also called Brothers' Brook and said to be named after Jonathan and John Reynolds, has a west branch and an east branch. Land between the two branches was distributed in the late 1600s.

⁹ CPB 1761—1754, 117—118, 208, 210. Precisely why the colonial government purchased this land is open to speculation. The answer may lie in an enactment of 1733, wherein the legislature voted funds to two men who had developed a scheme for procuring masts for His Majesty's Government. The Greenwich purchases were uncleared land and might have been suitable for this purpose. PRC Vol. VIII, 478-479.

As public servant:

James was a diligent worker in the town's behalf. Over the span of his adult years, he was surveyor of highways at Horseneck, fence viewer on the west side of the Mianus River, sealer of weights and measures, collector of the town rate and selectman. In his later years he served as moderator of the town meeting, keeping law and order when contention threatened to disrupt the decision-making process. For over thirty years he was one of "his majestes Justices of ye Peace in and for sd county of Fairfield," a position which entitled him to use the respectful titles of Mr. and Esquire. He chose instead Captain, the highest military rank he achieved.

As a father:

In his private life he was husband to two wives and father to seven children. The name of James' first wife is unknown; that of his second was Sarah Holmes. Since Sarah Holmes was born in 1686 and was a mere twelve years of age when James' first child was born in 1698, it is generally accepted that she was his second wife. If we assume twenty as the typical marriage age for females, Sarah Holmes married about 1705/06. James' four oldest children, Sarah, James, Nathaniel and Mary, were therefore children of the first marriage. The three youngest children were named Gideon, Justus, and Jeremiah, names not previously associated with the Reynolds family. One assumes James indulged his young wife and allowed her to select names that pleased her!

Time changes everything:

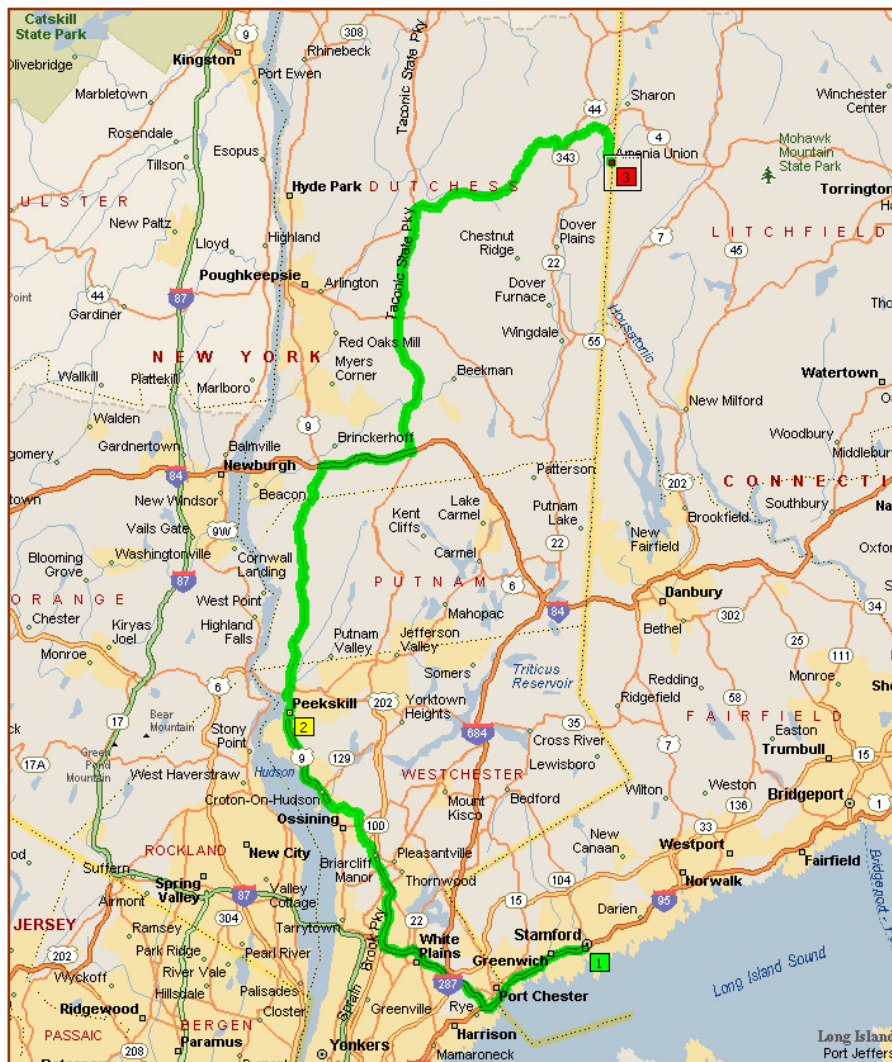
The last decades of the seventeenth century found Greenwich settlers spreading considerably beyond the original Sound Beach area. Beginning in 1703 town meetings were held alternately on the east side and west side of the Mianus. In 1708 it was voted to have two signposts to warn town meetings, one at Horseneck and one "upon ye oak tree between William Rundalls and Thomas Marshalls at ye old town." It was thought that these two locations, in addition to ten days' notice, should be sufficient to apprise inhabitants of a forthcoming meeting. Although the town was now widely spread out, its population was still rather small. A nineteenth-century Greenwich historian has calculated that even in 1715 there were only seventy-seven families in the entire town.

However, the old, closely knit settlement of simple farmer-settlers was changing. As land became less available and more expensive, younger men looked for new frontiers. When James' older cousin Ebenezer died, his sons shared in the distribution of his Greenwich properties. His married daughters, Deborah, Abigail,

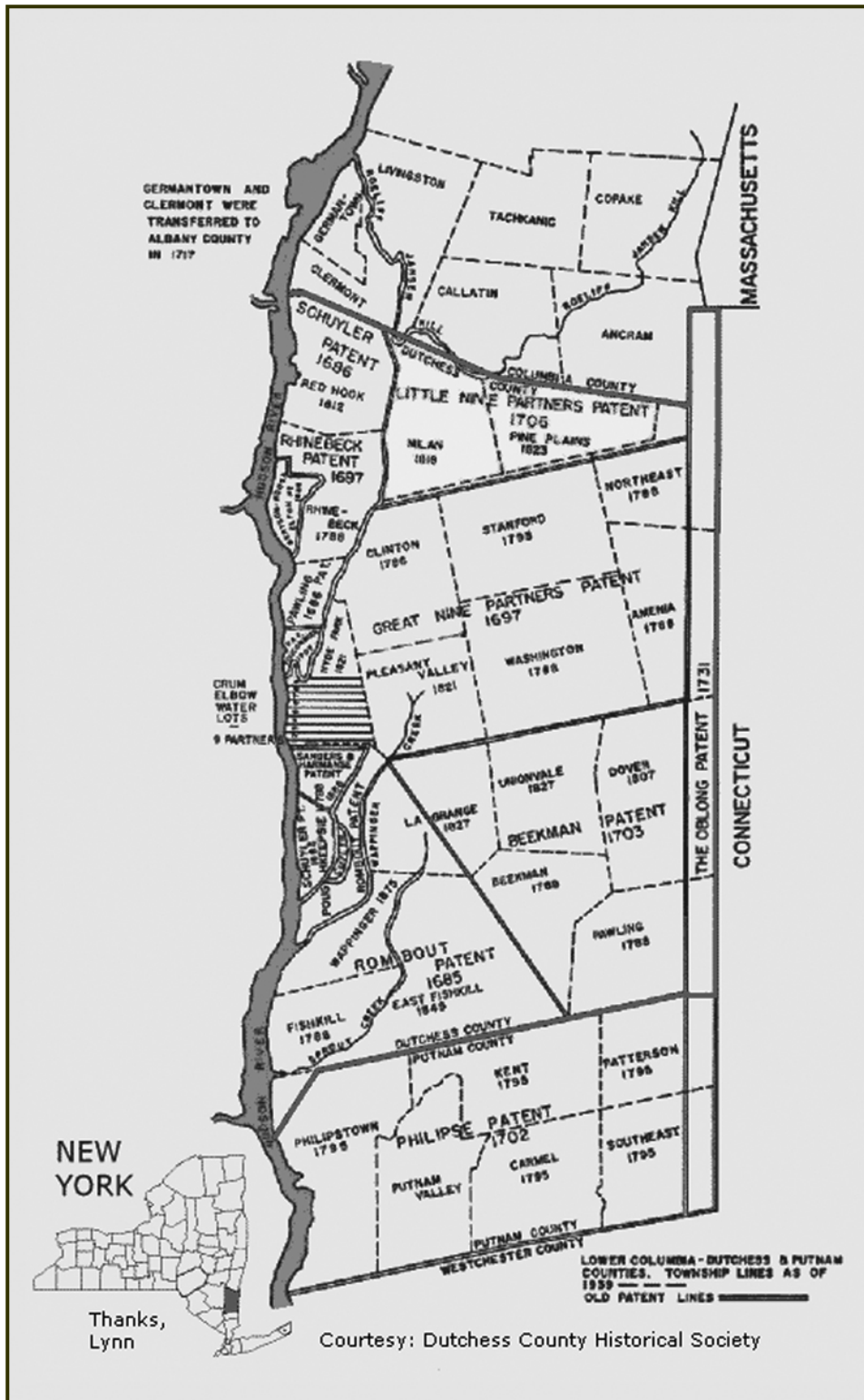
and Rebecca and Lidiah, an unmarried daughter who nurtured him in his old age, received all of his rights of land in "ye Fore Mile, so called, in the province of New York." When James' cousin Joseph died in Greenwich, his nine children removed to Crum Elbow in Dutchess County.

The families of James younger brothers moved north. Joshua's son, Daniel, moved to Cortland Manor (Westchester County where James had land), as did David's son, David.

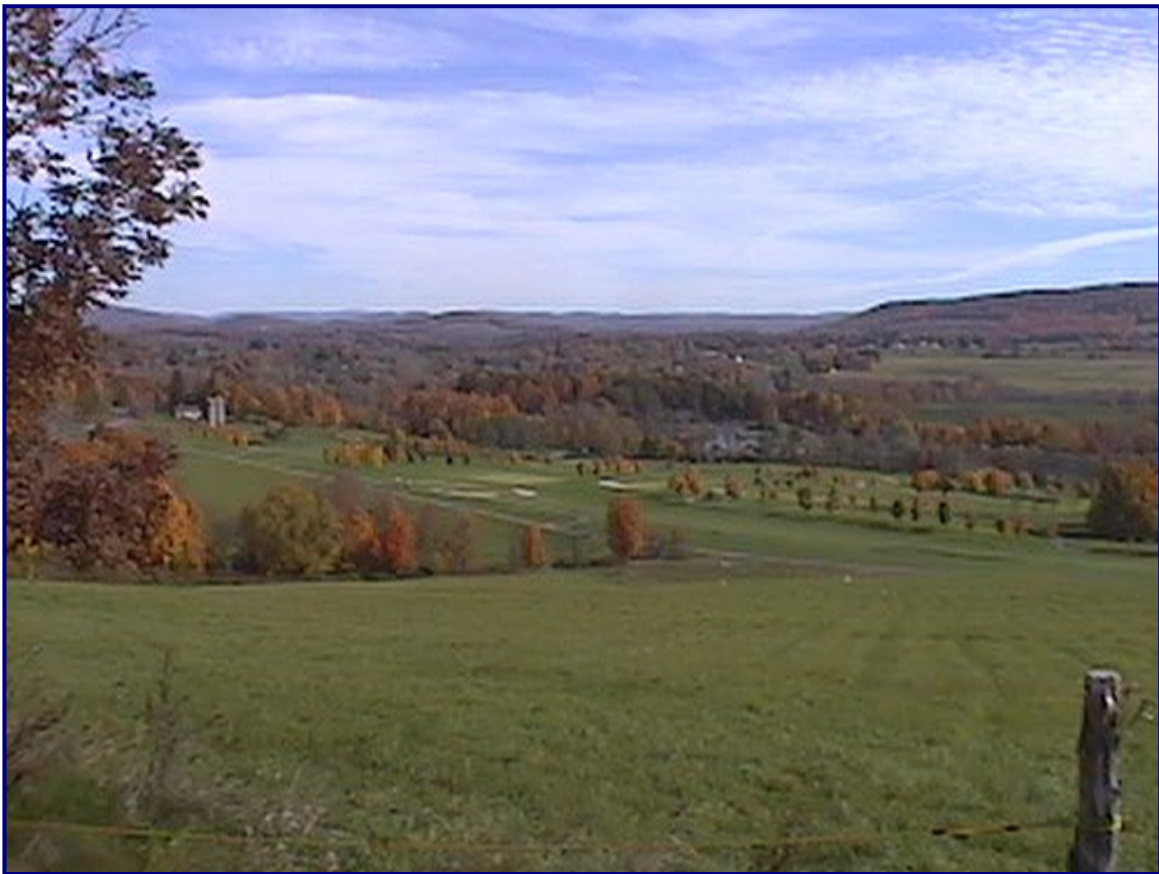
James, was a one-fourth owner of the East Patent, a large tract in Westchester County. During the last three decades of his life James witnessed the movement of most of his close family away from Greenwich. By the mid-1700s the dispersal of the family was under way, and the magnet that drew them was New York Province.



On this map the Stamford-Greenwich, Ct. area is (1); James next home at Peekskill in Westchester County is (2); and the area where his son James lived where he died is (3) on the New York side of the line. Amenia is almost on the border of Connecticut and New York state. The Smithfield burial ground is about four miles north and west of Amenia in a rural setting.

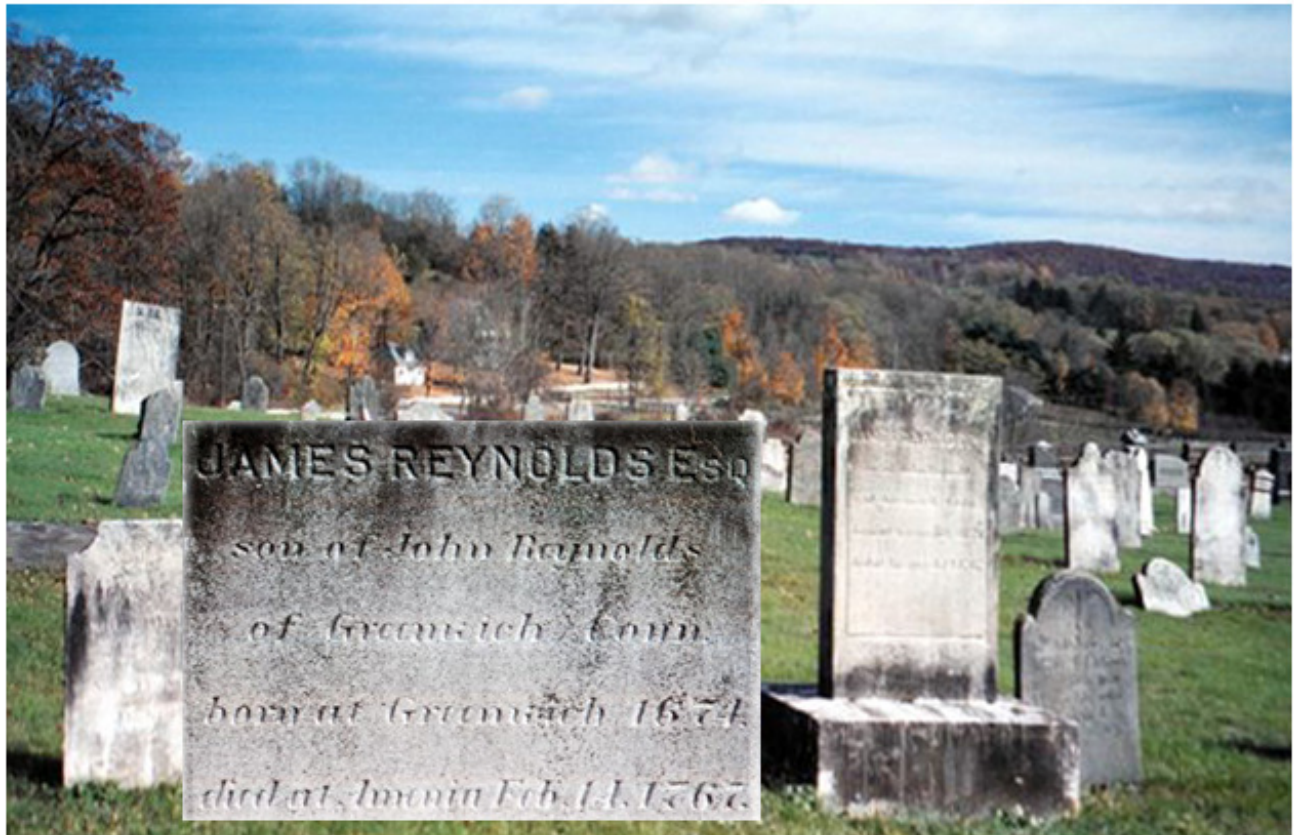


This map illustrates the many patents that served to draw new generations of Americans further west into the "wilderness" prior to the Revolutionary War and for some time afterwards. On this map the 9 Partners Patent, where our ancestor Jeremiah and his wife Jemima procured land after selling their property in Greenwich appears as a hatched area. Actually, the patents were lined out one after the other. It is here that Jeremiah Jr. grew up and went off to serve in the War along with his brother Shubal.



View of Amenia, New York—the area where James Reynolds died at age ninety-three. This is Dutchess County where our two Jeremiah generations made history immediately preceding and during the American Revolutionary War. Photo from Dutchess County website.

The death of Captain James Reynolds, Esquire in 1767 closes the chapter on our Puritan Colonial ancestors in America. Some 130 or so years elapsed since John the emigrant set sail for his new home in "the land of the free." The fact that James had such deep roots and accomplished so much at Greenwich and then had the courage to pick up and move in his later life says much about the character of this man. Whatever his motives were regarding his well established skills in dealing with real-estate we will never know. Did he want to witness his progeny succeed as he had done? Was the lure of new wilderness land so strong in his bosom he just couldn't stay put? Or was it all about family? And what about the church? When James moved "up the Hudson" he sure didn't take The Second Society with him; and round about in every vale there was springing up new churches. Some were saying this and some were saying that, but all were saying "come follow me, my way is best!" Makes you wonder what the old fellow thought about it all as he looked back over his ninety-three years. Sure wish I could ask him a question or two. Maybe later! Sure do hope so.



In the above photo the grave inscription for JAMES REYNOLDS ESQ. was expanded from that on the actual grave marker which is the tall high one just to the right of the inscription. I made this photo from two snapshots provided to me by Glenn Reynolds M.D. who took the pictures in October 2004. James Reynolds Esq. is Warren Ford Reynolds great-great-grandfather.

This is the Smithfield Burying Ground, Dutchess County, New York. The burying ground at Smithfield (near Amenia) is quite old, many of the inscriptions being nearly illegible. The stone to the side of James is his son James Jr.

Postscript: It took about 130 years and four full generations for our family to go from Watertown to Amenia; in the ensuing 100 years we will witness the next three generations move all the way from Amenia to the "Valley in the Mountains."