

*Foreword by William Wood, grandfather  
Kane's father and* A LETTER

from

MRS. THOMAS MORRIS  
to her nephew  
THE HON. JUDGE JOHN K. KANE  
regarding the  
KANE and KENT FAMILIES

*which good William Wood printed.*



A LETTER

From Mrs. Thomas Morris, born Sarah Kane, daughter-in-law of the celebrated financier of the Revolution, Robert Morris, to her nephew, the Honourable John K. Kane, Judge of the District Court of the United States for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania, containing many facts of family history, interesting to the descendants of John Kane and his wife Sybil Kent, now residing in the United States, England and Australia, especially those relating to the adventures and sufferings of members of the family who were Loyalists at the time of the Revolution, printed from the original in possession of the widow of Major-General Thomas L. Kane, and with her permission by her father.

William Wood

4 West 18th Street

New York



## FIRST PART.

The following letter from Mrs. Thomas Morris to her nephew Judge Kane, I found amongst great numbers of family records, during a recent visit to my daughter, Mrs. T. L. Kane, at Kane, Pennsylvania.

John Kane, or originally O'Kane, the immigrating ancestor of the well-known Kane family, in New York, Philadelphia, Albany, Boston, etc., came to this country in 1752, and was then a young man of eighteen. The family tradition is that he was shipped off to New York with a cargo of linen to pay for his maintenance on his arrival, in order to get him out of the way as a claimant of the Shane's Castle property, now held by Lord O'Neill. After his arrival here he dropped the "O" from his name, probably from the prejudice then existing against the Irish, and which had not entirely ceased for many years afterwards, and possibly, also, to enable him the more easily to win the hand of Miss Sybil Kent, the daughter of the Rev'd Elisha Kent, then a Congregational minister, but subsequently a Presbyterian. Her brother Moss Kent was the father of the distinguished Chancellor Kent.

At the time of the Revolution the Kents were Whigs, but Mr. John Kane was a decided Tory and Loyalist. His father, Bernard O'Kane, was a Roman Catholic, and in spite of penal laws kept a Roman Catholic chaplain. However, he sent his son John when a boy over to England to be educated, where he appears to have abandoned the ancient faith of his family and grew up a bigoted Episcopalian, so that he never would enter his father-in-law's "Conventicle", as

*Rev. ELISHA KENT'S,*



he called it, or believe that others than Episcopalians could be saved unless by "the uncovenanted mercies", with the one exception of his wife Sybil. He was a well-educated man and is said to have won the esteem of the Rev's Elisha Kent by an apt quotation from Horace.

Mary Kent, a sister of Sybil, married Malcolm Morrison, a Scotsman, and also a Loyalist, and a third sister married Major Grant, of the British Army, who fell at the storming of Fort Montgomery. John Kane, Malcolm Morrison and Major Grant had fine estates contiguous to one another in the Dover Valley, Dutchess County, New York, which were all forfeited by the Act of the Legislature of New York, on account of their being Loyalists. John Kane's property was called by him "Sharvog<sup>N</sup>hes", after a place in Ireland owned by his maternal uncle Charles O'Hara, and now forming part of Lord O'Neill's Shane's Castle property. I have had Mrs. Thomas Morris's letter printed, with the intention of giving copies to descendants of John Kane and Sybil Kent, whose addresses I can ascertain.

The eldest son of that marriage was John Kane, of New York, who married Maria Codwise, and their youngest daughter, Harriet Amelia Kane, was married to me 15th September, 1830, and hence my interest in the family history.

That Mrs. Robert Morris, mother-in-law of Mrs. Thomas Morris, as well as her celebrated husband, was highly esteemed by those whose esteem was worth having, is clearly shown by the following letter addressed to her by General and Mrs. Washington, copied from a book entitled "Eminent Philadelphians", page 717.



"Mount Vernon, Sept. 21st, 1799.

"Our dear Madam;

"We never learned with certainty until we had the pleasure  
"of seeing Mr. White since his return from Frederick that you were  
"in Winchester.

"We hope it is unnecessary to repeat in this place how  
"happy we should be to see you and Miss Morris under our roof, for  
"as long a stay as you shall find convenient before your return to  
"Philadelphia, for be assured we ever have and do still retain the  
"most affectionate regard for you, Mr. Morris and the family.

"With highest esteem and best wishes for the health and  
"happiness of the family you are in, we are, dear madam, your most  
"obedient and very humble servants,

"G. Washington,

"Martha Washington."

I think it was in the spring or summer of 1856 that we  
had the pleasure of entertaining at dinner, at my then residence,  
5 West 16th Street, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Morris and her brother, Mr.  
James Kane, of Albany. The party was a very interesting one, owing  
to the reminiscences of the social life of New York and Albany, at  
the end of the last and beginning of the present century, common  
to all three of our venerable guests. My second wife, born Margaret  
Lawrence, and who was a grand niece of Mrs. Thomas Morris, presided  
at table on that occasion.

At the same house I very frequently entertained Dr. Elisha  
Kent Kane, U.S. Navy, the celebrated Arctic explorer and elder brother  
of Major-General T. L. Kane.

Sarah Kane B Oct. 1, 1778  
D. Dec. 13, 1853  
March 1799 Married Thomas Morris  
Son of Robert Morris

x Abigail Kane born Feb'y 1, 1765 d. Aug. 8, 1801  
married in 1785 Dr. John Prescott Lawrence  
Lawrence of Ft. Edward, N.Y.



The British Government presented a very handsome silver service to Dr. Kane through the then British consul, Anthony Barclay. By an odd coincidence the ancestors of both gentlemen had been on the losing side at the time of the Revolution. Sir Henry Bulwer (afterwards Lord Dalling and Bulwer), British Minister to the U. States, was present at the presentation of the silver service to Dr. Kane.

William Wood.



New York, Oct. 6th, 1851.

237 10th Street

My Dear Nephew!--

I will, with pleasure, try to give you my early reminiscences, although I am afraid they will be very meagre. My father was undoubtedly "Ultra Tory", ultra church man, and ultra in his ideas of family discipline. I have heard that a shrewd old Quaker said to him one day (after he had been showing off his sons), "Friend Kane, thee must have worn out a deal of hickory upon those boys." This was said admiringly and approvingly, showing the love of the high-handed measure of that day.

The progress of freedom and free inquiry since that time is illustrated by an anecdote I heard lately of a very little boy, whose mother was preparing to chastise him, prefacing it by the quotation, "My Son, Solomon says, spare the rod and spoil the child." The little fellow blubbered out, "Solomon did not say so; he said, spoil the rod and spare the child." This was certainly a free translation. I do not know when my father "came into the Lines", as it was called, or whether either of my brothers accompanied him. I was born on the 31st of October, 1778, at the time General Washington's headquarters was at my father's house, in Dutchess County, not far from the borders of Connecticut. My mother (who used to say she was always a Whig at heart), "came into the Lines" with her family when I was about two years old. On her journey she stopped at a friend's house for the night, and I heard her relate (as a proof of my precocious talent and wonderful theological knowledge), that I was awakened from the sleep of the cradle by an elder sister with the question, "who led Israel into Canaan?" and I unhesitatingly and



SYBIL KENT ~~K~~ MRS JOHN KANE LIVED  
AT NEWTOWN LANDING, L.I.

distinctly replied, "Caleb and Dotua (Joshua)." This nearly settles the important question of my age \*(Cousin Tom wished me to be minute).

<sup>space here</sup> <sup>space here</sup>  
H My first recollections are of living in a large house at Newtown Landing, on Long Island, a place belonging to Mrs. Franklin, afterwards the mother-in-law of Dewitt Clinton. General Skinner, of the British Army, had his head-quarters there. ~~I~~ I recollect seeing at this place my uncle, Barney Kane. He was a Captain in the British Army, a remarkably handsome man, who stuttered terribly, from whom we have all, more or less, inherited a hesitation in speech. My youngest sister, Susan (named, I believe, after Miss Susan Delancy), was born at this place. She died at the age of ten years. My next distinct recollections are of embarking in a large vessel for Nova Scotia. My mother had with her thirteen children and one grandchild, <sup>MARTHA, GILBERT</sup> for My eldest sister, Mrs. <sup>MALCOLM</sup> Livingstone, and child, were of the number. My father, at the same time, sailed for England to present his claims on the Government for his confiscated property, etc., etc. We had a prosperous voyage as far as the Bay of Fundy, when a terrible snow storm commenced, and we were driven back to Cape Cod, and all expected to be lost. The live stock, some five cows, belonging to my mother, and a superb grey horse of my brother John's, were thrown overboard. We, however, arrived at last at Annapolis Royal. The ground and mountains around were covered with snow, and the weather was intensely cold. My aunt, Mrs. <sup>MALCOLM</sup> Morrison, must have emigrated some time before, for we were all most hospitably received into her house. ~~The~~ The next step of my most judicious and active mother, was to dispatch her two eldest sons, John and Charles, into the country to look out for a temporary residence for her family. They succeeded in finding a large, rough-looking frame house, about five miles up the Annapolis  
\*Subsequently Major General Thomas L. Kane.



river. A gondola was hired, and all our goods and chattels stowed on board. My two brothers and our two slaves (old Cato and young Cato by name), undertook, with a strong flood tide, to navigate the precious cargo to our new place of residence. When the ebb commenced they fastened their great clumsy boat to the shore, and went to a house near-by for a night's lodging; but in the morning neither cargo nor boat were to be seen. The frightened voyagers believe they had floated out to sea. However, they divided themselves in two parties, taking different sides of the river, and went carefully along its margin examining every nook and inlet, when, to their inexpressible joy, the gondola and all its contents, were found safely nestled in a sheltered little bay. How our good and precious mother praised and thanked Providence for this special mercy. All the provisions, clothing and money of the family had been embarked on board.

My next recollections are of a pleasant society, scattered within a few miles of us, consisting of educated, respectable emigrant Tory families, "poor and proud". Aunt Morrison<sup>\*</sup> and Aunt Grant's<sup>\*</sup> families were in our neighborhood. Our young gentlemen used to build pretty bush houses on sunny or shaded lawns, where music and tea drinkings appeared to my childish imagination as the perfection of enjoyment. Our old family tutor, Stephen Gamm, joined us, and we used to meet in a small Church or Meeting-house to study or recite lessons. The boys studied Latin and read Chief Justice Smyth's history of New York. The girls read the Spectator and the Rambler, but I devoted myself so earnestly to Cinderella and other fairy stories, that Mr. Gamm told my mother "I studied too hard", and I was taken from school and sent to my Aunt Grant's, to be amused with change of scene, but where my heart nearly broke with home-sickness,

SYBIL KENT KANE'S  
 X SISTER, Lucy KENT, had married  
 Charles Cullen whose  
 estate was also Revolutionary  
 confiscated by Committee 7.

X Sarah Kent, Sybil's sister, had married  
 Lt. Alexander Grant of 42d Highlanders  
 X Mary Kent had married Malcolm Morrison  
 whose place was confiscated by the Revolution  
 -1783 shortly after John Kane's. They left Nova Scotia  
 went to England like Palanoy



that most acute of all childish sufferings. Mr. Gamm used to delight and astonish the young people by spouting Shakespere and Plato-- "Thou reasonest well". I learned in process of time to love Bible stories, Pilgrim's Progress, Paradise Lost and Thomson's Seasons, and many odd volumes of a dilapidated library, among which was the volume of Clarissa Harlowe, over which I shed oceans of tears, and strange to say, one volume of Rousseau's Eloise. We became acquainted with Dr. Lawrence, <sup>X John Prescott Lawrence of Mass. family</sup> a most amiable and excellent young Boston physician, who had served, during the war, in the British Naval Hospital, and was an exile like ourselves. My sister, <sup>(ABIGAIL)</sup> Abbey, <sup>(2)</sup> was an intelligent, cultured young person, who sang ballads sweetly. They fell in love with each other and married. Our good cousin, Mrs. Wetherill, is one of the daughters of that marriage. ¶ In my childish rambles over the fields and woods, I frequently met with the remains of old huts, overgrown with weeds, and sometimes with old apple trees, which, I was told, belonged to the old French settlers. This I imagined then, must have been after the flood; but I have since learned they were called the "Arcadians", who had been barbarously expelled by the English on taking possession of the country by treaty from the French. Nova Scotia had been called "Arcadia". You have probably read Longfellow's beautiful and truthful poem on that subject. ¶ <sup>(4)</sup> Shortly after our war with England, in 1812, Mr. Fulton and Mr. Morris built the first two steamboats at New Orleans for the Mississippi, called the Etna and the Vesuvius. My nephew, Charles Kane Lawrence, was sent down to command one of them. His wife, a remarkably intelligent woman, told me that she had once made a visit to the Arcadians, who were settled on the western bank of the Mississippi, a most primitive looking people;

X Dr. John Prescott Lawrence, son of Rev. William Lawrence of Lincoln, Mass. and Love-nee Adams, only daughter of John and Love-nee Adams \*

2. ABIGAIL KANE <sup>8.</sup> BORN

3. ROBERT FULTON AND HER HUSBAND THOMAS MORRIS

AND NO. —

is the family  
cont'd on back.  
(over) of page



old men with long cues and small three-cornered hats; grandmothers in ancient costume, dancing out of doors with their children, all looking as they might have looked two hundred years ago, but extremely kind and hospitable. <sup>II</sup> To return to my narrative. Our excellent, managing mother turned out all her seven sons to working a farm, from the produce of which, assisted by remittances from my father, we lived in great comfort and abundance. After a few years--say three or four--my brothers, John and Charles, grew tired of agriculture and their limited prospects, and resolved to seek their fortunes in some other sphere. I well remember the family councils and discussions that took place on this subject. My father used to write from England and urge my elder brothers, John and Charles, to enter the British Army and Navy, as he thought he had sufficient influence with men in power to promote them in that line, but my mother strongly objected. <sup>III</sup> One morning (after spending the night, as she has since said, in prayer and anxious thoughts) she sketched to them a plan of returning to the United States, to New York.-- "Go, my sons," she said, "to your father's old commercial friends, they know he was always an honest man--ask them to credit you to a small amount, look out for a good situation, and commence business,-- I will draw on your father to fit you out for the enterprise." <sup>IV</sup> The plan was approved and adopted. They arrived in New York and called on Franklin, Robinson & Co., stated their views, were kindly treated, received credit to a limited amount, went into the country--Fort Edward, I think--and in a quarter of the time granted them, returned with the cash, paid off every shilling and opened a large account



with the house; they then wrote home the most encouraging letters, and requested that my brother James, then a fine handsome boy of fourteen, should be dispatched forthwith to them. <sup>2</sup> You have asked who were the pioneers of the family in their return from exile? I have mentioned John, Charles and James; the next that followed, I think, were your father Elisha, and brother Oliver. Elias remained at home some time longer. He was a "mighty hunter" as my mother used to call him,--moose and deer were furnished by him in abundance, whilst wild geese, turkeys, pheasants "and such small deer" were never wanting. Archibald was the last to leave home.

<sup>1</sup> Within two or three years after our arrival in Nova Scotia occurred a domestic tragedy, which, in the "dark backward and abyss of time", stands out in terrible relief. Mrs. Grant, my mother's youngest sister, the widow of Major Grant, who fell at the storming of Fort Montgomery, embarked with her only son, a handsome youth of fifteen or sixteen, and Mr. Chandeler, an old gentleman, his son and daughter, from Annapolis to cross the Bay of Fundy (that terrible bay whose tide rises 60 feet) to meet the British Commissioneries at St. Johns to adjust with them their various claims on the British government, for confiscations and losses sustained by them as Loyalists.--During a tremendous snow storm their vessel was driven on the cliffs of the opposite shore and they and the passengers escaped to land by climbing along a rope stretched from the bowsprit to the shore, and after clambering up broken precipices, they reached a tableland. <sup>2</sup> The two ladies were so exhausted that the men made for them a bed on the snow with pine branches and covered them as well as they could with their coats, and then joined in tramping



around them in a ring to keep themselves from freezing, and when warm would kneel down and put the poor ladies' feet in their bosoms; thus they kept life in all until daylight; they then divided into parties, the strong ones taking the lead. Old Mr. Chandeler and his daughter followed on through deep snow, piercing winds and bright sun (young Chandeler was drowned in attempting to land). Robert Grant and his mother travelled on all day together, until she became so exhausted that she said, "My son, I can go no farther, I must lie down and die." He had cheered and supported her as long as he was able. He then broke down branches of spruce and pine, made her a sort of bed and laid her on it, took off his coat and covered her, placed himself by her side with her head on his arm, and both fell asleep. The baying of a wolf awakened him, and his mother lay dead in his arms. <sup>2</sup> He roused himself, covered her with snow to protect her from wild beasts, marked the spot and set off alone under a waning moon, to find his way to the nearest settlement. Within about two miles he met men with sledges coming in quest of them. He was so frozen that he was placed in a bath of cold water, and thus his life was preserved. The men followed his track and first found Mrs. Grant, then a little distance Miss Chandeler sitting up dead in the snow. They traced her steps to the brink of the precipice down which her father had fallen eighty feet, the birds of prey showing the spot. I shall never forget the Sunday morning when the news arrived! My mother took her sleigh and went first to tell the Chandler family. The daughter became for a short time insane, and my three young cousins, the Grants, were all but distracted. The finale of this family was,



that Helen, the eldest, became very religious, and after a time married a respectable young farmer, fell into consumption and died. The second, Elizabeth (a very pretty girl), married the only surviving son of the Chandeler's, and went with her husband and Mrs. Chanderler to Halifax, where I think, Miss Chanderler (who was not young) married Judge Halliburton (who had lost an eye). I am under the impression he was in some way related to "Sam Slick". Robert and his youngest sister, Lucy, came to this country. He graduated at Yale College about 1792, went to Savannah, and died of consumption. Lucy lived at Lansingburgh, under the care of Uncle Moss Kent, and died also of consumption. Thus, I believe, the whole family are extinct! It is a little remarkable that one day a short time ago, old Mr. Bell, \*Isaac Bell, now 84 years of age, whom I have known for years, said to me, "I remember the shipwreck of your aunt. I was a lad on a fishing excursion, and was at the house when she was brought in". To return to my family narrative: The next vivid impression I have is of the unexpected arrival of your father<sup>x</sup> in Nova Scotia to escort his mother and three young sisters to the United States. My sister Maria (afterwards Mrs. Judge Yates<sup>xx</sup>), was already here with Mrs. Livingston. My mother exclaimed, on hearing his tale, "it is enough--my sons are yet alive, I will go and see them before I die." Thus have I brought my story almost within your own recollection. The wonderful prosperity of your father and all your uncles for many years, until commercial disasters brought on by the Embargo, Orders in Council, \* Father of Commissioner Isaac Bell.

xx Joseph C. Yates, 2d wife  
5th. Governor of  
New York state.  
Died at 21 on birth of  
daughter 12.  
who married John Keyes Paige  
at one time

ELISHA  
x This would be SYBIL'S son AND  
the writer's brother and later  
father of John K. Kane of  
Philadelphia to whom this  
letter was addressed.  
Mayor of Albany.



(Thomas Morris)

Berlin and Milan Decrees. You must still remember my husband was so mixed up with them in pecuniary matters, that the ruin of one was the ruin of all. I am the last of that generation. The second generation have reached, and some of them have passed their maturity. ~~The third.~~ I look on with hope and anxiety. They ought to roll back the ebbing tide; nothing of good is permanently lost; the energy and worth of those who are gone will, I trust, revive in the third or fourth generation. I have a little grandson, the son of my youngest daughter, a descendant also of the Stark of Bennington, who is to my imagination full of promise.

When I look back to the year 1792, the year in which we returned from Nova Scotia, when I was thirteen years old, and recall the progress that has been made in the moral, literary, scientific and political world under my own eyes, what will not the next 60 years produce. "The sunset of life gives us mystical lore!" I married in May, 1799, and went on horseback from Utica to Canandaigua, through a country so new that scarcely a road was cut open; and now, in 1851, my son William, and a grandson, Robert Morris Van den Heuvel, have just returned from finishing a Railroad from New York to Lake Erie. This served as a measure to all the other great wants that have occurred. <sup>27</sup> You say that you were present at my wedding in Schenectady and can just remember that event! I spent a gay summer among the then brilliant Livingston's at the Manor, on the North river. <sup>XX</sup> Old Mrs. Judge Livingston, the mother of Chancellor Livingston and Edward Livingston, the Jurist of New Orleans, was then living in the most hospitable style, surrounded by the most remarkable family circle within twenty miles that was ever known in this country.

John Stark the Brig-General of militia Aug. 16, 1777 near Bennington, Vt. in Amer. Revolution defeated 2 detachments of Burgoyne's Army and led to his defeat, perhaps the turning point of the war.

XX



Mrs. Gen'l Lewis, Mrs. Gen'l Montgomery, Mrs. Gen'l Armstrong and others; all people with large fortunes and living in splendid style, with fine daughters about my own age. This was the opening of a new world to me. All these people intimate friends of my husband and his family, and they received me with the greatest cordiality and kindness. After spending the greater part of the summer with these charming people, at their beautiful and highly-cultivated place, we returned to Schenectady, and in the month of September started from my father's house for my Western home. ¶ We commenced our journey in a carriage with two fine horses. At Utica we dismissed our carriage, and mounted our horses --a servant leading a pack horse, on which was placed my dressing case--and a few changes of clothes and a small basket of provisions. I was a capital rider and had had a beautiful spirited horse, given to me by my brother Elias (one he had himself been used to ride as one of the "troop" of horses, ~~Popet~~, by name)--I love to recall it all, and we dashed into the wilderness with high spirits. ¶ After travelling about 20 miles, more or less, we came upon the most picturesque little village that ever was seen. The Indian reservation, called the Oneida Castle--\* it seemed to be a holiday among them--numbers of young Indians on little ponies were scampering about the plain, among large and beautiful groups of pine trees, looking, I thought, like wild Arabs.

¶ I was pretty well exhausted by my day's ride, but not at all willing to enter a wigwam for the night. My husband urged me to turn aside about two miles and ask the hospitality of a family of Quakers, who in some manner had the care of the Indians, but this I strenuously refused, and we hurried on in the deep dark swamp, where we were nearly mired. I clung to my saddle in silence. My husband sent on

*This  
x Oneida Indian "CASTLE"*



the servant to the "hotel" at which we were to stop, to request that some one might be sent out with a lantern to meet us, and after a wearisome hour I saw a dim light approaching like a will-o-wisp. By it we were guided through almost unfathomable sloughs till we reached our resting place.<sup>91</sup> This was a log hut, with a small unfinished room of pine boards, claiming the honour to be the "Lady's Chamber". Into this I was ushered through crowds of rough-looking travellers, who were drinking in the outer room. A poor, overworked, broken-down-looking woman came to inquire "what I would have for supper". I asked for a quart of milk and a small clean vessel, in which I could make chocolate. A bright fire was burning in my forlorn-looking apartment. I soon stripped off my muddy riding dress, hung it to dry, dressed myself in a clean night gown, spread my table with cold tongue, crackers, etc., etc., and as fine a pitcher of French chocolate as ever "Delmonico's" has since produced. The next morning, with renewed strength and spirits, we again mounted our horses and through dense forests, "made our uncouth way"--still gay enough to make a jest of all our mishaps. In this manner we travelled on our four days and arrived at last at Canandaigua.<sup>92</sup> It was twilight as we stopped at our own gate. A man-servant received us most respectfully and welcomed us home. The house was lighted up, a handsome supper ready, and different servants came in on various pretenses to get a good look at the "new lady"! I felt very strange and embarrassed, as if I had intruded into a bachelor's establishment, and thought I never should have the courage to assume the mistress. The next morning



I found the house was handsome and well furnished. I walked out with my husband to see the garden and the "ground". Everything looked new and unfinished. The court-yard in front was bare of trees, and only partly covered with fine grass. A portion of the space seemed newly filled up, and young oats were growing, to make it look green--evidently a hasty preparation for the bride. A fine broad gravel walk, however, led up to the house. A large yard in the rear, full of stumps, through which I made my way to a really fine garden abounding in every sort of vegetable, and the most delicious peaches I ever tasted; but, then, it was surrounded by a rough post and rail fence! My vision vanished! This, then, was my home! Everything was yet to be done. I felt powerless. I had no true conception of the realities of a new country. <sup>21</sup> I heard the sound of the axe at a short distance and asked what it was! My husband said it was a man cutting down trees in the back part of the lot. "Oh, stop him; you have already cut down too many!" He very good-naturedly ordered a boy to go and tell the man to leave off chopping. This revived me a little. I felt then that my wishes were to be attended to. <sup>22</sup> We visited the farm yard. The cows looked upon me as a stranger--there was no sympathy between us. I suspect my husband saw I had lost my animation, and he asked me if I would not like to look over the library and arrange the books in the new book case in my bed-room. I eagerly replied, "Oh, yes!" that is just what I should like. He said he was going out for a little while to call on his neighbours, and ordered a servant to bring all the books from a certain case in his office to my room. I sat



down on the carpet, while basketful after basketful was tumbled down around me. <sup>7</sup> I have sometimes heard it asked (at least, in those days): "of what use is a love of literature to women!" I sat there full three hours without stirring, feasting and refreshing my heart and soul. All my early and best beloved friends were around me. I would read now a paragraph, and now pages with insatiable delight. Shakespere and all the poets were there. "Gibbon's Rise and Fall", which I had never read, but would now have time for. A superb folio of La Fontaine's Fables, in French, with fine engravings, were there. Now I would study French with my husband-- oh, what delightful enjoyment before me! I was in the highest spirits--all my visions were restored. And thus commenced my married life. <sup>7</sup> Many illusions have vanished, but my love of books has been a well-spring of life to me--enabling me to breast disappointments and sorrows--to cheer the hours and beguile the weariness of sickness, and now to relieve and enliven the monotony of age. <sup>7</sup> Canandaigua was then in its transition state. The first respectable inhabitants were just beginning to build themselves good and handsome houses; but their first log huts were still standing, and when I walked out among them everybody would apologize for the newness and roughness of the place and talk of the improvement of next year. The society was good--many educated sensible men and amiable women were among them, and they all treated me with the utmost kindness and distinction. I resided there only five years, but I became so attached to the place and the people that it has always appeared to me the largest and most important part of my life--such is the value of a first strong local attachment. <sup>7</sup> During those five years a turnpike road had been made from Albany to Canandaigua, and a bridge of planks across the Cayuga. <sup>73</sup>

\* The writer great aunt "Sally" Morris is now in 1851  
 She was Born Oct. 31, 1778 Married May 27, 1799  
 to Thomas Morris, son of Robert Morris  
 Died Dec 13, 1853



*Anthony Barclay  
British Consul in N.Y.*

Lake of a mile long. Railroads and telegraphs were not thought of. My husband had been settled in the country since '91 or '92, owned a great deal of valuable land, was member of the Legislature and the State Senator and of Congress, and if we had remained there we should now, in all probability, been people of large fortune; but in an evil hour my brothers persuaded Mr. Morris to move to New York. Your Uncle Archie Kane had settled in St. Domingo, and had unbounded plans and visions. If this rambling letter should be tedious to you, you must remember \*Cousin Tom asked me for some of my early reminiscences, and I have been led by a good-natured wish to give your son some account of our family, which no one now but myself has the power to do.

Your affectionate aunt,

Sally Morris

\* \* \* \* \*

I remember seeing on the banks of the Annapolis river, a new clearing where stood a log hut, round which they were burning logs and brush wood, and a person at work, who was as black as a charcoal, and I was told it was Major Barclay, who afterwards became the British Consul here, and whose son is still the British Consul.--- A number of half-pay British officers settled there after the war of our independence; and I have lately seen in the papers that geologists think (from the formation) that gold will be found in the Valley of the Annapolis river.

*Anthony Barclay British Consul in New York about 1857*  
\*\* presented the British Govt. Silver Service to Dr. Elisha Kent Kane, U.S.N. for his Arctic search for British Sir John Franklin and his crew lost in far north.

\* Subsequently Major General Thomas L. Kane of Kane, Pa The future creator of Pennsylvania's famous Civil War Bucktail Regiment was then a small rather frail Philadelphian age 29 (B. 1/26/1822)



## SECOND PART.

In November, 1790, Robert Morris, of Philadelphia, bought of <sup>Gorham</sup> Ghoram and Phelps, "Twelve hundred thousand acres of land" in Genesee County, which he afterwards sold through his agent, Temple Franklin (a son of Dr. Franklin) to Sir Puttney, for 75 thousand pounds sterling. Shortly after, he also purchased of the State of Massachusetts, four millions of acres, west of the Genesee river, which he sold to the Holland Land Company at a very considerable advance, he binding himself to extinguish the Indian title. In '92 or '93 a treaty was held by Col. Timothy Pickering with the "Six Nations" on the part of our Government for various purposes, and this (the extinction of the English title) among them. My husband, Thomas Morris, attended on his father's part. The business was accomplished; the title was extinguished, chiefly by settling on the chiefs and their families valuable annuities. My husband determined to settle in Genesee County, and chose Canandaigua as the place of his residence, on account of its superior class of settlers. He built the second frame house (Mrs. Phelps had built the first) between Utica and Lake Erie. It was then a very expensive undertaking, owing to the difficulty of obtaining materials. It is still standing and is a handsome residence. Mr. Morris had been educated in France, where he had spent 7 years. He had studied law in New York under Mr. Harrison, a distinguished lawyer of that day, and he was chosen a member of the Legislature of the County of Ontario, when scarcely 21. Canandaigua became in time



a beautiful place; the soil and climate were very favorable to fruit. Mr. Morris had a first rate European gardener, and from his garden the finest grafted fruit was liberally supplied to whoever would take the trouble to cultivate it; in consequence the whole country became full of fine fruit, peaches in particular. <sup>Now</sup> In the summer of 1797 three French gentlemen called on him, who proved to be "Louis Philippe", Duke of Orleans (afterwards King of France) and his two younger brothers. They brought a short letter of introduction, written on a scrap of paper, from Mr. Baring, now Lord Ashburton, who had met these gentlemen in the woods on their way to Niagara falls. They were really destitute of money, their clothes torn and boots worn out. My husband (this was two years before his marriage) received them of course with the utmost hospitality, supplied all their wants and, as he had a capital French cook, feasted them in the best manner he was able. After fishing in the Canandaigua Lake and seeing the country in the neighborhood, my husband mounted them on fresh horses and all went to visit the "Falls of the Genesee river", the place where the city of Rochester now stands; then it was perfect wilderness. <sup>2</sup> Forty years afterwards my husband and myself visited it together. Rows of gigantic flour mills stretched along the banks of the river where Louis Philippe and himself had seen only an Indian woman pounding corn in a mortar! <sup>2</sup> I married in May, 1799. You say, my dear nephew, you can just remember being present at the wedding with your father. My first visit to Albany was in December, '99, on our way to the Legislature; as we were crossing the Cayuga Lake on the ice, we met a party coming up and asked the



news. The reply was, "General Washington is dead", and we swiftly passed each other. <sup>2</sup> My first interview with my father-in-law, "Robert Morris", was in the prison in Walnut street, Philadelphia. You know that extensive land speculation had been his ruin! I shall never forget the impression he made on me as he held me in his arms, the tears rolling down his venerable face, as he said: "This is a sorry place to receive you in, my daughter!" My husband and mother-in-law were very much affected, and during the winter Mrs. Morris and myself every day, storm or shine, dined with him, and he was always kind and so cheerful. I often thought

"Stone walls do not a prison make,  
Nor iron bars a cage,  
Minds innocent and quiet take  
That for an hermitage."

<sup>2</sup> How often have I since wished that I had not then been so diffident, or so ignorant of American History and so foolishly ashamed of my ignorance that I feared to ask questions; how much information I might have derived from him! How many invaluable anecdotes; for it was always agreeable to him to be communicative, and he loved to encourage me in every way; whenever I spoke of a book that was interesting, he made a memorandum of it and asked his son Henry to get it for him, and often when a new work would be brought in, with uncut leaves, he would playfully throw it to me and say: "There, Sally, you will read it through whilst I am drinking my tea." <sup>3</sup> My husband was then in Congress, and the roads were so bad, and I, having an infant, could not accompany him further than Philadelphia. All the fashionable people in the city called on me, out of respect to Mr. Morris' family, and invited me to evening and dinner parties, particularly the beautiful and celebrated Mrs. Bingham; but I being a



perfect stranger to everybody and my husband absent, used to decline them whenever I could, much to the annoyance of Mrs. Morris, but my kind father-in-law, wishing to see me happy in my own way, would say to me quietly, looking over his spectacles: "My daughter, if you would rather stay at home with us old people and read your book, do you stay at home." I felt very grateful for this indulgent spirit. Mrs. Morris was exacting,--she wanted to make me very, very happy, but then it was after her own pattern.

In 1802, while I resided in Canandaigua, I visited the Falls of Niagara in company with Judge and Mrs. Penfield from this city. It was then a great undertaking for ladies. I took a seat in their light wagon, while the Judge and my husband accompanied us on horseback. I remember that journey with special pleasure; the roads were very rough, but I had got pretty well used to such. Our first night's lodging was at the widow Barry's, who, with her two sisters, all middle age women, kept a tavern on the banks of the Genesee river. Their dwelling was a cluster of log huts, looking on the outside low and as if built for pigeons, but the cleanest and most comfortable looking place within I ever saw, and our fare the best of everything. The banks of the clear, rapid river, were fringed with wood to the water's edge. <sup>2</sup> The next day our journey was through a succession of beautiful, small praries, that had the all appearance of English Parks; clusters of fine large trees scattered in picturesque groups over gently undulating ground, would lead one almost irresistibly to expect to see fine castles or elegant country seats. When I expressed my surprise and admiration of the scenery, and wondered it had not been appropriated by some one of taste and wealth, I was told that the land was worthless, having been so often burnt over by the Indians



for hunting grounds that it could not be cultivated. This I have since learned was a mistake, as the soil, after being turned up to some depth, was found to be rich and well adapted to agriculture. There was, however, no water on these praries, but they were always surrounded by streams. One of these prairies was seven miles across--just large enough for a fine park--and I presume water in abundance could have been found by digging.<sup>7</sup> We expected to have passed our second night at Mr. Eli<sup>cut</sup>ut's house. He was the surveyor of Holland Company's lands, through which we were then passing. He had often been entertained at my husband's house, with all his assistants; but when we drove to his door (a shabby-looking two-story house) and sent in our names, we received for answer that Mr. Eli<sup>cut</sup>ut was sick and could not be seen. No offer to invite us in, or any refreshment proposed. On enquiring for the nearest tavern, we were told "there was none within twelve miles", but if we hurried on, we might reach it in time to pass the night. My husband was very indignant at this inhospitality; so we left the new settlement of Batavia, consisting of a few half finished log huts and a saw mill.<sup>8</sup> The sun was about two hours high as we plunged into the unbroken forest, and as soon as it set we were involved in the "blackness of darkness". We drove as carefully as possible, but every instant were in danger of being upset. I had an infant of five or six months old (your poor cousin Sally), who proved a good traveller, as she never woke during the night. The gentlemen tried to explore our way, but finding it impossible, dismounted and tried to find some stones with their hands, with which to strike a light. Oh, for a few matches then! But such a magical improvement had not then been invented; they are among the blessings of modern days. At last we concluded to unharness our horses



and compose ourselves in quiet for the night. The gentlemen crowded into the carriage, and after passing 'round a bottle of wine in the dark, for each to take a drink, conversation gradually declined, until we all began to nod, and at last to sleep, when we were suddenly and fearfully roused by the driver springing on our wagon and shouting a Bear! a Bear! We could hear the heavy tread of an animal near us, and after a terrible fright, the gentlemen ascertained it was only one of the horses which had broken loose and was smelling at a bag of oats on which the driver had rested his head. ¶ After this interlude the party generally dropped to sleep again, all but myself, who had been so completely awakened and excited that I continued to listen with intense interest, through the remainder of the night, to the various sounds of the forest, the distant baying of the wolves, the mournful cry of the owls, the falling of dead limbs, the dropping of twigs, nuts and dried leaves, the chirping of numerous insects, and the thousand indescribable sounds heard in the profound stillness and darkness, were like spirit voices in my ear. Then the gradual hushing of these sounds which "showed the matin to be near", the new and cheerful tones of morning, the first notes of birds; even the first shaking of their wings as they left their nests, the first rays of light that stole through our dense and leafy canopy, all has left an ineffaceable impression on my memory. We arrived at last at the tavern, and after an uncomfortable breakfast, lay down to sleep for an hour or two. ¶ Again we commenced our journey with faded spirits and weary frames. Silently, and oppressed with heat and dust, we dragged along the sandy road, when suddenly turning a corner, the most glorious sight burst upon our view. Lake Erie expanded before



us. Further than my eye could extend, like Xenophon's soldiers, I exclaimed, "the Sea! the Sea!" Somehow it was perfectly unexpected to me. The boundless future seemed opening before me like a vision. There was then but one house on the spot where the city of Buffalo now stands.<sup>7</sup> We crossed the Niagara river at Black Rock, and soon I felt myself in a foreign land. Instead of recently built log huts, old stone farm houses of French origin met my eye, thinly scattered along the road, and fatigue parties of soldiers (the first real soldiers I had ever seen) were resting on the grass. We stopped at the village of Chippewa, where was a most comfortable hotel. The sound of Niagara Falls, like distant thunder, was heard, and a column of spray rising to the clouds could be seen. We were too much fatigued to look about us that evening. The roll-call, as it was a Garrison Town, was a novelty to me.<sup>7</sup> The next morning, after a good breakfast, we equipped ourselves for "the Falls". We drove about two miles, and then walked to the bank of the river. I must say my feeling was disappointment. They looked like an immense mill-dam. There was then great difficulty in descending the banks. I had to climb down almost the face of a precipice, clinging to grape vines and shrubs, with here and there the rounds of some broken and perpendicular ladder, to put my feet on. When I reached the bottom, I found myself about three quarters of a mile below the falls, and had to make my way up by climbing over rocks that had fallen from above. They were slippery with spray, and I was dripping wet when I reached the front of the Falls.<sup>7</sup> Then the sublimity of the scene and the exertion I had made, caused me to tremble like in an ague fit. The earth around evidently shuddered.



We could not hear ourselves speak. A sense, almost of annihilation came over me. Power! infinite power! was all I was sensible of. The wind and the spray so beat in my face that I had to walk backwards when near the great sheet; and as to having been under it, as I thought I had, I was assured by the spectators I had not been even at the edge. Humbly thankful was I when I found myself safely back again at my hotel. ¶ The next day we ventured on Table Rock, and with fear and trembling I crept on my hands and knees to the edge and looked over. "It was a fearful and dizzy height." A marked fissure in the rock showed us the danger. Sick with awe and excitement I drew back. I have been told that this overhanging mass has since fallen, and nearly carried with it a party of travellers. ¶ I staid a week in Canada and visited Newark, as it was called. The Supreme Court was sitting there at that time. Chief Justice Powell was very polite to me and insisted upon giving up his room to me, as it was the best in the hotel, which I earnestly refused, until he declared he expected to leave the next day, which, however, he did not, while we remained. ¶ My husband was well acquainted with many of the principal people of Upper Canada. We dined at Mr. Hamilton's at Queenstown, afterwards the scene of the fearful battle between our country and England. Newark was burnt and Buffalo. This "Border War" was a terrible affair. We must hope and pray it may never be renewed. ¶ We visited our Fort on the other side of the river, then commanded by Major Riverdi, whose accomplished widow you must remember, as after the death of her husband, she opened a ladies' boarding-school in Philadelphia, and your sister, Alida was among her earliest pupils.



*Note: Be sure to put  
new paragraph here and new page.*

While I resided in Canandaigua (which was only about five years) I became acquainted with a number of remarkable Indians. Brant, the Mohawk chief, was the most striking. He was rather a small man, very grave and silent, but courteous in manner. I remember one morning after he had breakfasted with us, he presented me with a pair of beautiful, highly-ornamented Indian moquasines. Farmer's brother was a tall, dignified-looking man. One day, after he and several other chiefs had dined with us, he asked to be allowed to give me and my little Mary a name. There were some few ceremonies which I forgot, and "tissioneries", squaw and papoose received some unpronounceable name; "tissionee", which means "always ready", was the Indian name given to Mr. Morris at the time of the Indian treaty. "Red Jacket", famous as an orator, I heard deliver a speech in our Court House on the subject of some Indian having been arrested for murder of a white man by our civil official. His manner was graceful and impressive, but as the speech was awkwardly translated, sentence by sentence, it was not interesting.

The "Young King", with whom, from his title, I had associated some ideas of chivalry, breakfasted with me one morning in the absence of my husband, and I was sadly shocked on his taking leave that he stretched his hand and asked me for six pence, as he said his horse would be hungry. The Indians in general were a degraded race, particularly the women. I recollect one day in travelling near Cayuga, I met an Indian woman leading a horse--a papoose on her back, the warrior's gun in her arms, and drunken husband seated on the horse with his arms folded, quite with an air of importance!) while the poor squaw was picking her way through the

*\* Add a note here on Red Jacket from Pioneer Profiles p. 40  
by Arch Merrill*



mud. <sup>9</sup> I also became acquainted with Indiana <sup>\*</sup>Wilkinson, famous as the foundress of a new religious sect somewhat like the Mormons. She had been indicted for blasphemy, and was tried at Canandaigua before Judge Lewis, one of the Judges of the Supreme Court, and acquitted. I had heard a good deal of her and had a curiosity to see what sort of a person she was, and I asked her to dinner. She was a fine-looking woman, dressed with some pretension in a black silk robe and waistcoat--something like a clergyman--her black hair, turned somewhat back from a broad forehead and hanging in short curls on the neck--but she was embarrassed and illiterate in her language and awkward in manner. After walking about my house she remarked "it was not Heaven after all". <sup>7</sup> She had accumulated a large property for her sect, or church, as she called it, both of which were dispersed after her death. Her settlement, I think, was at the head of Cayuga <sup>\*\*</sup>Lake, where she lived very hospitably. <sup>7</sup> We were in the habit of seeing many strangers of distinction, who generally brought letters of introduction to my husband. I recollect a short visit from Prince Ruspoli, grand master of the Knights of Malta, and in a few days from Lord Selkirk on his journey to visit a settlement he was forming in Canada--far to the north. He struck me as a reserved, diffident young man, almost austere in his dress, with heavy dusty shoes tied with leather thongs; but, then, to support his aristocratic pretences, he had a dandy servant, who laid out his toilet like a lady's. <sup>7</sup> In travelling from Utica to Canandaigua I had several times to cover over my head with a cloak and wrap it round an infant in arms and be driven on a full run through flames and

*\* Name according to Arch Merrill's book  
Pioneer Profiles was JEMIMA*

28. *\*\* She first lived near Seneca Lake  
then overlooking "Crooked Lake" or Keuka.*



smoke, where a new settler was clearing up his farm and burning logs and brushwood--and one time some men were cutting down trees to build a log hut. while women and children were sheltered under some boards, leaning on the board, uprooted stump of a tree, which formed quite a good gable to their temporary dwelling, a fire, burning gipsy fashion out of doors, over which their dinner was cooking, and all looked busy and cheerful. <sup>D</sup> Perhaps the next time I would pass the same place I would see a good log house, a barn, a field of wheat that almost concealed the black stumps. The next improvement would find it converted into a decent tavern, with a pine board room for company, an active and obliging landlady who generally gave us good bread, ham and eggs, perhaps a boiled chicken, killed after our arrival, and tolerable tea and coffee. In this way the whole of the roadside was settled. It is now one of the finest and richest countries in this State, through which the great canal runs from Lake Ontario to Albany, and two direct railroads from the Lakes to New York--all has been done since I went on horseback in the Autumn of 1799, from Utica to Canandaigua. <sup>D</sup> James Wadsworth, who went into that country when my husband did, died lately a millionaire; and my most excellent friend, Mr. Greig, who settled in Canandaigua in 1800, is perhaps not far behind him.

"I am not old! I cannot be old!  
Though three score years and ten  
Have wasted away--like a tale that is told.  
The lives of other men!  
A dream, a dream! it is all a dream!  
A strange, sad dream--good sooth,  
For old as I am,--and old as I seem--  
My heart is full of youth."

Your affectionate aunt,

Sarah Morris.

New York  
237 Tenth Street  
June 25th, 1852



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