

Some information on the
Dick, Kennedy, Sherman, Lamphier, And Meeker Families
of
New York State's Finger Lake Region And Rochester, New York
1845-1989

Christina Dick and Michael Kennedy Family

Christina Dick, immigrant ancestor, was born in Scotland. Family legend has it that Grandma Dick, as she was called, eloped with the under-gardener and moved to America for a better life.

According to the June 1900 US Census for Dansville, Livingston County, New York, Christina Dick was born in Scotland in Dec 1829. She immigrated to America in 1845. Christina Dick, listed as mother-in-law, was living with her married daughter Nessie (her correct name was Jeanette Kennedy), age 42, born in New Jersey in May 1858. Jeanette's husband was Michael Kennedy, age 45, born July 1854 in New Jersey. Michael and Jeanette had been married for 24 years. Their children were: Eleanor Kennedy, age 19, born in Delaware in July of 1880, James D., age 17, born Aug. 1882 in New Jersey, and Walter William., age 14, born March 1886 in New York. Clarissa Dick and the Kennedy family lived at 31 Washington St. in Dansville, NY. Michael Kennedy rented the house. Michael Kennedy worked for a paper manufacturer. His daughter Eleanor Kennedy was a music teacher. Walter and James Kennedy were at school. Occupations of those living in the area were: teamster, laundress, day laborer, servant, housekeeper, and salesman, suggesting the Kennedys lived in a blue collar neighborhood.

After the 1900 Census, Christina Dick disappears from the family record, as does Michael Kennedy. "Grandma" Clarissa Dick probably died, and family tradition indicates that Michael Kennedy left Dansville and that Michael and Jeanette Kennedy were divorced.

At some point after 1900, Eleanor Kennedy married and the Kennedy family moved to Rochester, NY.

Keeler Family

Michael and Jeanette's daughter Eleanor Kennedy married Dr. Grant Keeler and they lived at 17 Gardiner Park in Rochester, NY. They had one son, John Grant Keeler. Dr. Keeler's mother was Anne W. Keeler. Dr. Keeler had a sister, Imogene Keeler, and a brother, James F. Keeler, and a married sister, Mrs. Ben Pettengill; there was a brother-in-law, Ben Pettengill, of Holley, NY. This information is taken from an obituary in a Rochester paper dated April 17, 1930, which lists the death of Dr. Keeler and that he was buried at Albion, NY.

Kennedy, Sherman and Lamphier Family

About 1906, or late as 1909, Jeanette Kennedy's son (Eleanor and James D. Kennedy's brother) Walter William Kennedy married Alice Francis Sherman. Alice Francis Sherman was born in Prattsburg NY in June of 1886. Alice and Walter William may have met in Dansville when Alice was on a book selling tour. After their marriage, Alice and Walter William Kennedy lived in Dansville, NY. Alice gave piano lessons and was took part in plays, while William worked and attended night school.

Alice Francis Sherman's parents were Sarah Lamphier and William Sherman. They married at Prattsburg, NY in 1873 and made their home in Prattsburg. William Sherman was probably a farmer. He died April, 1920. Sarah Lamphier was born in Camden, NY on May 8, 1856. Her parents were Samuel and Elizabeth Lamphier. Judging from her one remaining written letter, Sarah had had only a limited education and had spent her life in raising nine children with limited financial resources. Sarah Lamphier Sherman died in 1938 at the home of her daughter Blanche Ainsworth Pierce in Pulteney, NY. Sarah Sherman belonged to the Prattsburg Presbyterian Church. William and Sarah Sherman and their daughter Blanche and her son George Ainsworth are buried in the Prattsburg Rural Cemetery outside of Prattsburg.

More on the Sherman Family

Sarah and William Sherman had 9 children: Fred, Minnie, Harry, Elwood, Lawrence, Myron, Walter, Blanche, and Alice

Minnie: 1887-1910. She married Ray Hollister.

Myron: his children were Ruth, Harold, and Margaret

Walter: 1881-1953. He lived in Baltimore and was also buried in the Prattsburg Rural Cemetery.

Harry: 1889-1924. He served in World War I in the 41st Div 162 Infantry. He was survived by his wife, May.

Fred: 1884-1909. He died in Prattsburg, but had been employed in Rochester.

Blanche: (She preferred to be called Betty) 1891-1970. Blanche married William Ainsworth. They had 2 sons, George, and Arthur. George was a veteran of WWII. Arthur received his PhD. From the University of Lucerne in Switzerland and lived in Switzerland. An academic and scholar, Arthur taught political science at the university level. Blanche and her first husband William Ainsworth were divorced and Blanche married Ben Pierce. In the 1940's Blanche and Ben operated tourist cabins near Painted Post, NY. They usually spent their winters near Tavares, Florida.

Lawrence: Served in WW I and received the Purple Heart. He and his family lived in Baltimore, Md.

Elwood: Served in WW I. He lived in New York City and may have been with the Pinkerton Detective Agency.

Alice Francis Sherman: At about the age of 6, Alice was sent from her family home in Prattsburg to live with her Aunt, who was probably her mother Sarah's sister, in Bath NY. The reason for this was so Alice could get an education with finances provided by her perhaps well-to-do aunt. The June 1900 Census for Bath NY lists Alice Anderson, head of household, born June 1864, and her niece, Alice Sherman, living in Bath at 144 Liberty St. Alice Sherman did graduate, with honors, from Haverline High School in Bath. While in school she had studied piano, and later gave private music lessons.

About 1906 (or 09), Walter William Kennedy and Alice Francis Sherman married. The couple moved to the Kennedy family home in Dansville. The US 1910 April Census lists W. Walter Kennedy, head of house, 24, clerk at dry goods store, and his wife, Alice F., renting a house at 27 West Ave. Boarding with them was Alice A. Francis, age 41, divorced. A question arises: was this Alice Alide Francis, who were Sherman cousins. Alice Alide Francis was the daughter of John Francis and she married John

Havemeyer, a wealthy sugar merchant. John Francis was Minister to Greece in 1871. Charles S. Francis was also Ambassador to Austria Hungary 1906-1910. In later years, Alice's son Walter Elwood Kennedy remembers that as a child he and his mother visited a rich relations home at Ardslely-on-Hudson on the Hudson River and this might have been the Havemeyer connection.

Sometime before 1910, Walter William and Alice Kennedy, and Alice A. Francis moved to Rochester, as the 1920 US census for Rochester lists them as living at 16 Savannah St. Walter William and Alice Kennedy now had a son, Walter Elwood, born Sept 1916, and 3 years old. Walter Elwood Kennedy remembered that his mother Alice used to play organ at the George Eastman House. The Eastman House has no records of Alice playing organ, but perhaps she only played occasionally. Walter accompanied his mother to the Eastman House.

Sometime around 1920, Walter William and Alice Francis Sherman Kennedy divorced. Walter William Kennedy then lived with his mother Jeanette Kennedy, and possibly his brother James, and the Keelers at 17 Gardiner Park, Rochester.

The Meeker Family

After her divorce from Walter William Kennedy, which may have been in Chicago, where Alice was working at the time, Alice married Denton Cooper Meeker, whose family may have come from Lodi, NY. Denton Meeker may have had a sister named Mary. The Meekers moved to Brooklyn, NY. Denton was a bricklayer and a union man and probably found work in New York. Alice's young son Walter went with them. The Meekers had several Brooklyn addresses; one of them was 168 Midwood St. The Meekers were active in the city's social life. Walter was also active and belonged to the Lenox Road Cadets, and the Tilden High Track Team. Walter graduated from Tilden High—his name was listed in the Yearbook as Walter K. Meeker—and he then got a job with a New York City bank.

About 1936, Walter returned to Rochester to be re-united with the Kennedy family, and he apparently changed his name back to Kennedy. There was a note on the social page of a Rochester newspaper proclaiming that Mrs Grant Keeler (Eleanor Kennedy), Walter William Kennedy and his brother James D. Kennedy, and their mother Jeanette Kennedy, along with Walter E. Kennedy, son of Walter William Kennedy, had dinner at the home of James D. Kennedy.

After 1937, Walter E. Kennedy lived the rest of his life in Rochester. Walter was with the United States Army Reserves, where he achieved the rank of Major. He served at Camp Drum, NY, and Camp Blanding, Fla. In the 1940's and 50's, he may have been associated with the Secret Service. He was active with the American Legion and the Coast Guard Auxiliary. His career included many types of jobs; including Inspector for the NY State Department of Agriculture, Placement Officer for the Rochester Business Institute, and purchasing agent for several Rochester businesses. He retired in 1978 as an expeditor from Xerox. He died in 1989, and was interred in the Chili Road Cemetery.

Walter Kennedy's father, Walter William Kennedy Sr., sometime after 1937 moved to San Francisco, re-married, and lived on 421 Leavenworth St. The building on Leavenworth is still standing as of 2011. Mr. Kennedy may have served as resident manager of the building. The last family photo of Mr. Kennedy was taken in 1937 with his mother Jeanette Kennedy at Niagara Falls, NY. It is possible that Mr. Kennedy had re-married by that time and was spending his honeymoon at the honeymoon capital of Niagara Falls, and then moved west. Who Mr. Kennedy married is unknown. His mother, Jeanette Kennedy, was still living in Rochester until after 1940. Walter William Kennedy died in San Francisco in 1947.

Alice and Denton Meeker moved from Brooklyn in the early 1940's and lived near Hammondsport, NY where Alice was a plane spotter during the war. They then moved to Rochester and made their home in Rochester until their deaths. Alice was active with the Eastern Star, Red Cross, and other charitable organizations. Alice died in 1967. Denton died at age 86 in 1970.

Sources: US Census Data, Rochester Newspapers, Sherman Family Photo books and documents, Kennedy family letters and documents, and personal communications with the family

4 January 2013

The author may be contacted through Wallace.Venable@mail.wvu.edu