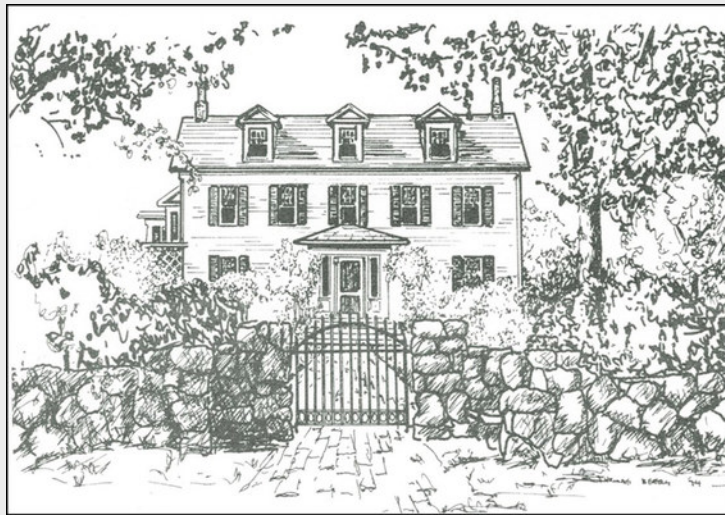


The Robson, Allen and Ruf Families



**A Gorham Story of Family Friendship and
Thanksgiving Tradition**

Robson-Allen-Ruf
A Gorham Story of Family Friendship and
Thanksgiving Tradition



William A. Allen III
*with remembrances from **Reverend Dr. Louis F. Ruf** and **Anna Suydam Allen***

2025

William A Allen III

ISBN:

Website: wwaa3.net

Credits: Book Design: William Allen III, Editor: Will Allen IV

Additional Research: Susan Allen Anagnost

For Dad



Table of Contents

Chapter 1 – Allen Family History – 1756-1853	1
Chapter 2 – Robson Family History – 1788-1853	6
Chapter 3 – Thanksgiving at Spring Farm – 1853-1939	14
Chapter 4 – Thanksgiving at Spring Farm – 1940-2011	56
References	68

The intent of this book is to trace the story of Dr. James H. and Phebe Allen and John and Isabella Robson and how they and their families came together beginning in 1853 to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday at Spring Farm in the Town of Gorham, NY, a tradition that continued through the generations for 158 years.

The book quotes extensively from “Thanksgiving at Spring Farm – A Tribute” (1955) by Reverend Dr. Louis F. Ruf and “Memories” (1940) by Anna Suydam Allen to tell the story of how the bond between the two families grew over time and how they established and carried on this extraordinary tradition.

A Gorham Story of Family Friendship and Thanksgiving Tradition

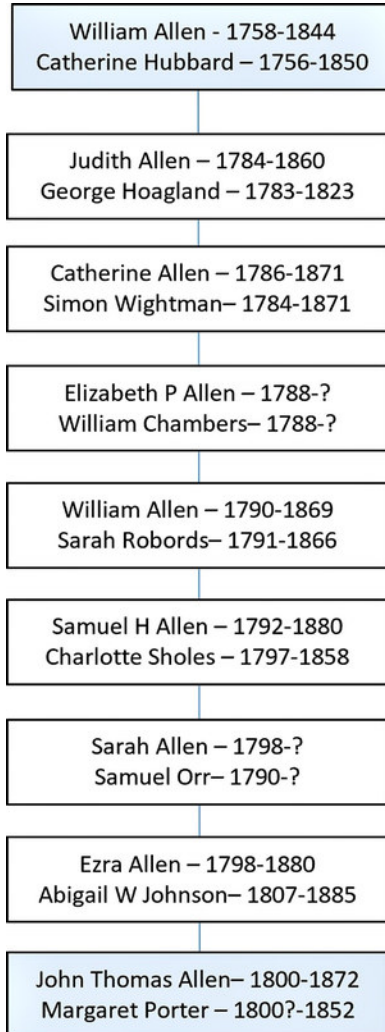


Reverend Louis Ruf: *“For some years, when the hunting season opened, a wise old cock pheasant came out of the wheat stubble to take refuge in the garden hedges at Spring Farm, where no hunters were allowed. Long before the pheasant found security there, that homestead had afforded shelter from the anxieties, burdens and cares of life to successive generations of friends who gave and shared its hospitality.”*



Chapter 1 - Allen Family History - 1758-1853

Allen Family History (1756-1853)



Persons highlighted in blue have a direct ancestral link to Dr. James H. Allen

To date, the earliest identified direct Allen ancestor of Dr. James H. Allen and all who followed him is William Allen, who was born in eastern Massachusetts/Rhode Island/ Connecticut circa the late 1750's. Further research is needed to identify William's parents and other earlier ancestors. Almost certainly they originally came from England or Scotland.

During and after the Revolutionary War, the State of New York moved to confiscate Loyalist estates in the Hudson and Mohawk River valleys. Much of this land was purchased by speculators who made it available for sale or lease to new settlers. It was during the Revolutionary War that William moved to the Amsterdam, NY area, just west of Albany, perhaps attracted by the availability of this land. He served in the 3rd regiment of the New York Tryon County militia in support of the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War.

William married Catherine Hubbard circa 1781. Catherine was born in Boston, MA in 1756 (and was the Great, Great, Great Granddaughter of Roger Williams, pioneering advocate for religious freedom, separation of church and state, and individual liberty in the American colonies as well as founder of the Providence Colony in what is now Rhode Island). Beginning in 1784, William and Catherine had seven children: Judith, Catherine, William, Samuel, Elizabeth, Sarah, and the youngest, John, born in 1800. The 1790 US Census lists William's occupation as farmer.



Allen Family History (1756-1853)

Perhaps enticed by new turnpikes, taverns and mills built by land speculators in the central and western New York frontier, most of William and Catherine Allen's children and their families began moving to the Avoca, Bath and Howard, NY area of the southern Finger Lakes region in the period between 1810 and 1820 to take up farming. The first to settle in Avoca, NY was their son William. From the *Historical Gazetteer* of Steuben County (1891): "In March 1810, William Allen [and most likely his family including wife Sarah Robords and daughter Phebe Lloyd Allen*], settled on the farm owned by John Lyman, and Alexander Shults.." As an indication of what frontier life was like at the time, the *Historical Gazetteer* continues: "Charles Robords settled on what is known as Robord's Hill in 1814. He had a family of fourteen children, and the eldest was not old enough to be of much assistance to his father, when the family located here. After their arrival, the principal food of the family consisted of bear and deer meat with a small allowance of corn. Their clothing was of the pelts of the bear and deer, tanned by the Indian method, generally with the hair on." Charles Robords was most likely a relative of William Allen's wife Sarah.

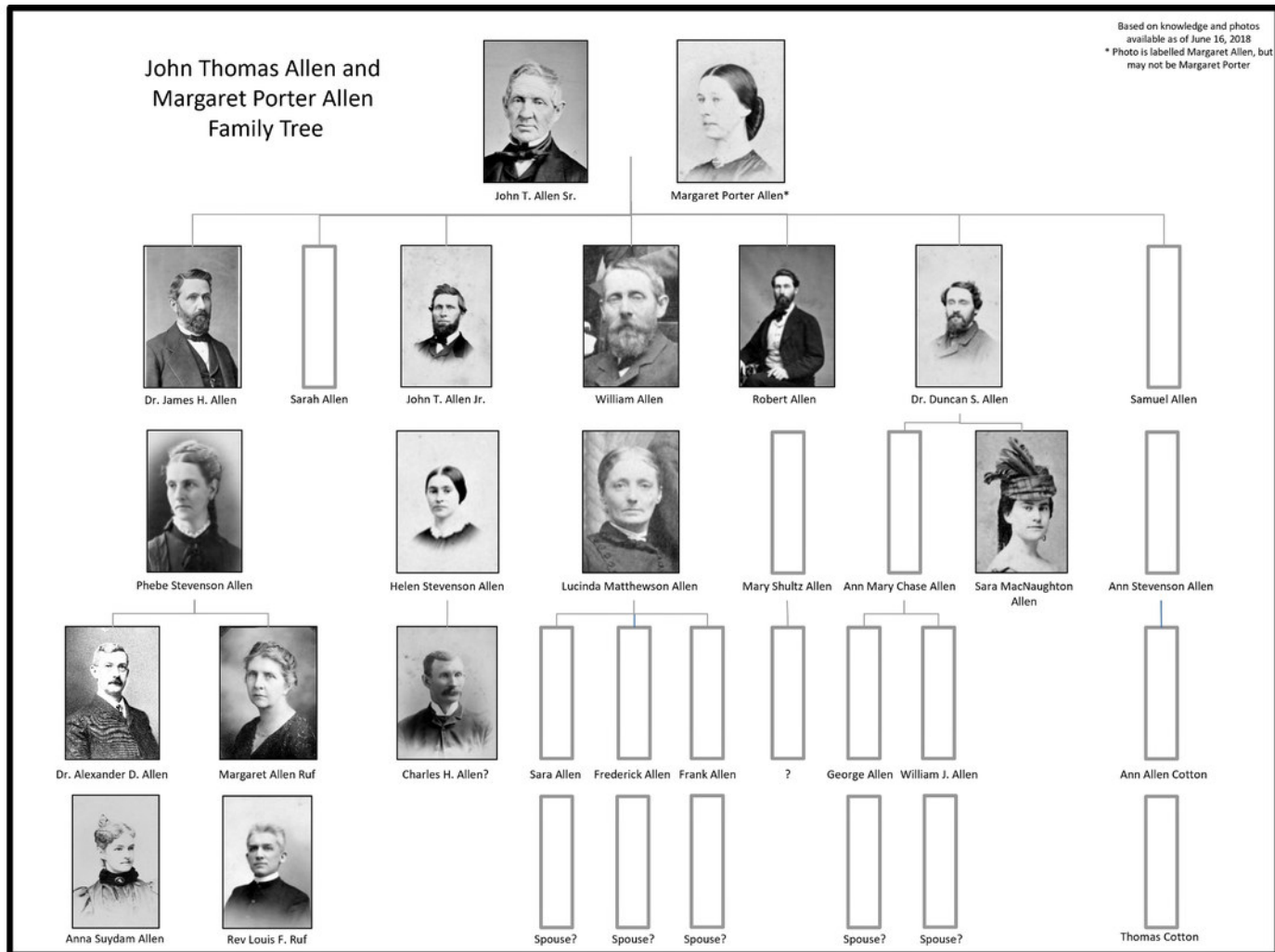
William Allen's brother, Samuel, was a soldier in the War of 1812. In 1813, after serving in the Army, he travelled from Amsterdam N.Y. to Howard on foot with just a change of clothes and an ax. Sometime after this he married Charlotte Sholes. The families of George and Judith (Allen) Hoagland, and Simon and Catherine (Allen) Wightman soon followed William and Samuel to the Avoca, Bath and Howard, NY area.



* Phebe Lloyd Allen later married David Stevenson and they had children Helen and Phebe Stevenson.

Allen Family History (1756-1853)

Along with his parents, John Allen Sr. remained in Amsterdam, or nearby Hagamans Mills, and married Margaret Porter (of Watertown, NY, born circa 1800) in the early 1820's. According to the US Census, John Allen was a farmer who resided with his wife in Hagamans Mills in Montgomery County, NY. Hagaman is approximately 38 miles west of Albany, along the Mohawk River. They had seven children—John Jr., James, William, Robert, Duncan, Samuel and Sarah. James Henry Allen was born on March 9, 1830 in Hagamans Mills, NY.



Allen Family History (1756-1853)

Hagamans Mills April 8th 1853

Dear brother

I received your letter in due time and will write you a few lines in reply. Our sale was on Tuesday there was a great many there although the day was stormy our property sold very well. Sold all our stock, John Whitcher bought our packed colts. Our best sheep brought \$4.55 - a piece we thought it would be better to sell than be troubled moving them, our oxen brought \$92. We will not get started for Sturben as soon as we expected to, but the team will probably start some time next week. The roads are very bad here now, they will get through the early part of week after next I have to be very busy settling business here. Our sales amounted to about eight hundred dollars, I think we will get the team started by the middle of next week, I may be there myself by next week, I therefore might have directed my correspondents to write me at Avoca so if any letters come for me at Avoca you just lay them one side until I get there. It is possible there may come by next Saturday, if so you keep it until it arrives, the mail starts here last Saturday night, Mr. Stevenson preached here and came here Saturday afternoon next home Sunday after church. She thinks of going home with Eliza and father and I think when they go which will be some time next week after next they are to send her word when they start

With the passing of his parents, William (1844) and Catherine (1850), and his wife, Margaret (1852), John Allen Sr. was encouraged by his siblings to move to the Avoca, NY area. After James Henry Allen graduated from Albany Medical College in 1853, he helped his father sell family farm goods in Hagamans Mills. In April of that year, they moved to Avoca, NY with James' younger siblings: Robert, William and Duncan. They settled near John's brothers and sisters and his son John Jr.

Letter from Dr. James H. Allen to his brother John T. Allen Jr. written just prior to the move to Avoca, NY - dated April 8, 1853 - Hagamans Mills, NY

I have no time to write more now I am very busy, but hope to see you soon & may be able to all your business as ever J. H. Allen

48/1853/112
JH

We had some corn in the ear and it sold for 39 cents for a bushel of ears, oats for 40 1/2 and another lot for 46 and the remainder for 43 cents per bushel. We had about 4 tons of Hay and it brought \$15.65 - cents per ton, I have settled about \$600, dollars worth of bills and have only got about \$60, in money, most all give notes due next January J. H. Allen

A large, two-story white house with a prominent porch and a gabled roof. The house is surrounded by lush greenery, including trees and bushes. The scene is set on a well-maintained lawn. The text "Chapter 2 - Robson Family History - 1788-1853" is overlaid on the image in a bold, black, serif font.

Chapter 2 - Robson Family History - 1788-1853

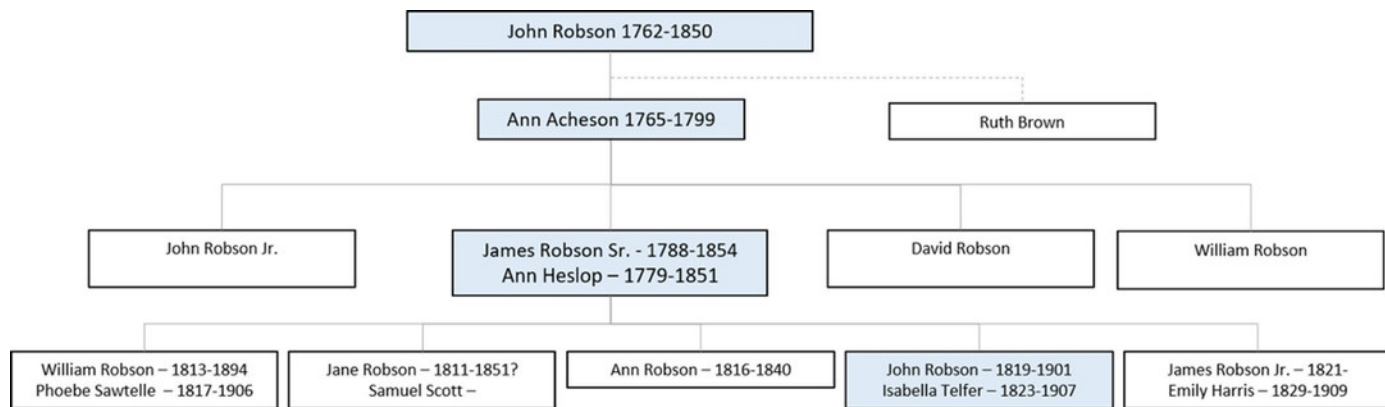
Robson Family History 1788-1853

John Robson (1762-1850) of Northumberland, England married Ann Acheson (1765-1799), Northumberland, England, in the 1780's. Their oldest child was James Robson Sr., who was born in 1788. Ann Acheson passed away in 1799. John Robson remarried to Ruth Brown, also of Northumberland, England, in 1800.

After the Revolutionary War, much of the land in the western New York frontier began to be bought by speculators looking to attract new settlers to sell parcels to. Among these was a syndicate headed by Oliver Phelps and Nathaniel Gorham. This syndicate purchased lands between Seneca Lake and the Genesee River. A large portion of this land was then sold to Robert Morris, who sold it to an English syndicate headed by Sir William Pulteney in 1791.

English and Scottish immigrants began to arrive in Ontario County in the late 1790s and early 1800s. Many came from Northumberland, England near the Scottish border, attracted by the good soil and milder climate. They settled primarily in the Town of Seneca.* Among these settlers were John and Ruth Robson, who immigrated between 1806 and 1820.

According to the 1820 and 1830 U.S. Census, they were then living in the nearby town of Gorham, N.Y. In the 1830s, they moved to Blood's Corners (now Atlanta) near North Cohocton, NY. North Cohocton is located in the Finger Lakes region of New York State about ten miles south and west of Canandaigua Lake and 25 miles from Gorham, NY. They lived there the rest of their lives.

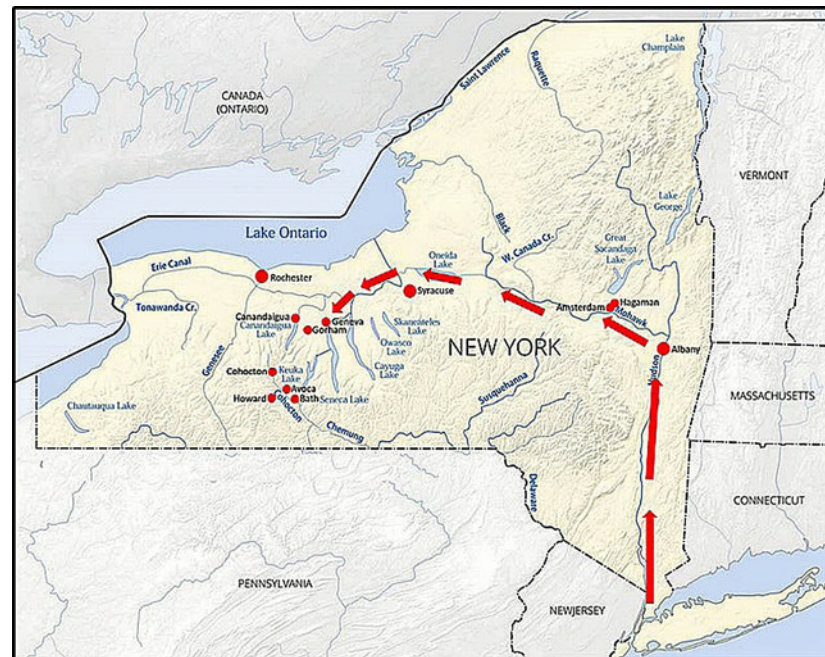
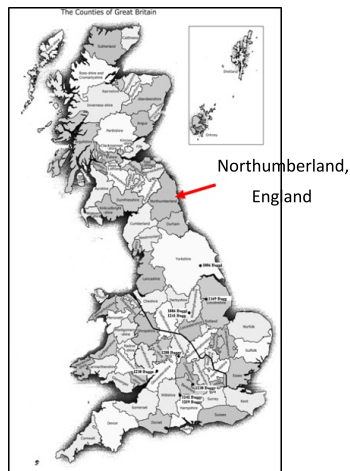


Persons highlighted in blue have a direct
ancestral link to John Robson of Spring Farm

* The Town of Seneca in the late 1790s and early 1800s included what is now the Town and City of Geneva as well as the area to the west of the Town of Geneva between the towns of Hopewell and Gorham that it is now comprised of.

Robson Family History 1788-1853

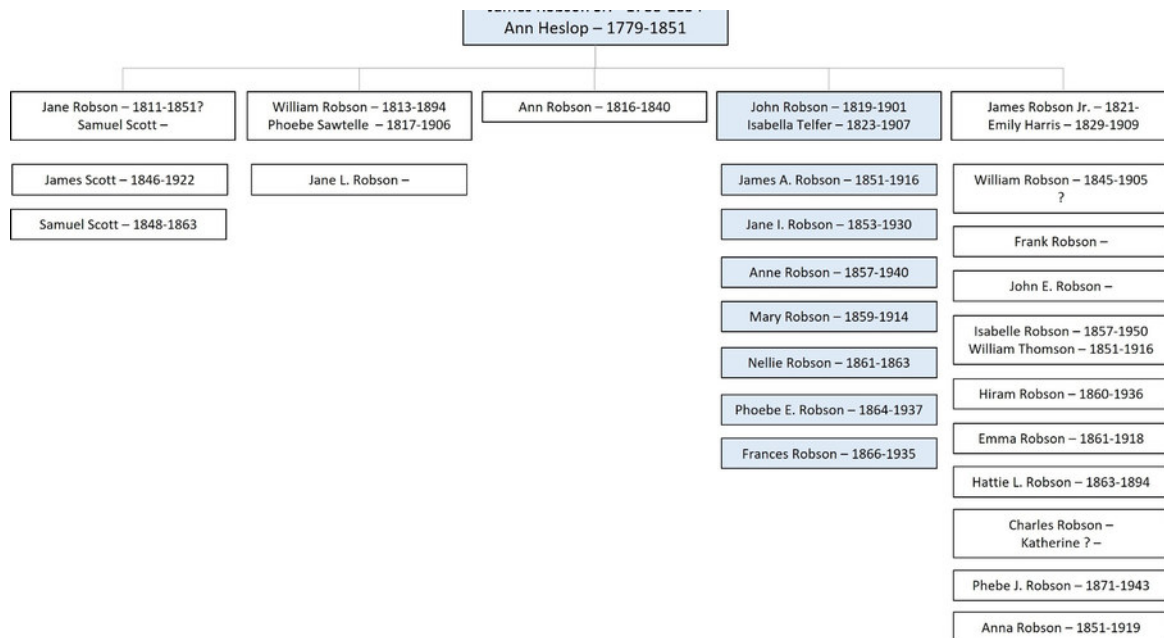
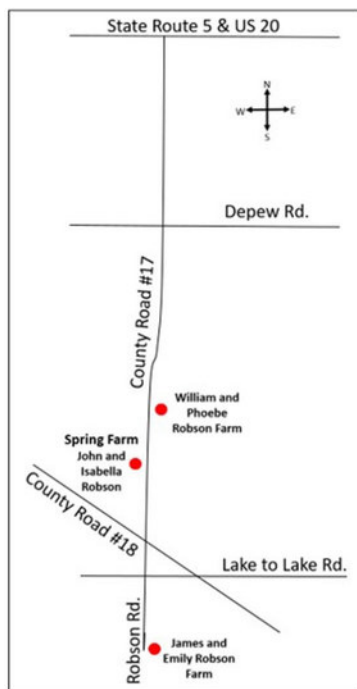
John's son, from his first marriage, James Robson Sr. married Ann Heslop in the early 1800s. James Sr., Ann and their four children—Jane (born in 1811), William (born in 1814), Ann (born in 1816), and John (born in 1819)—immigrated to the United States in 1820. They arrived in New York City on July 28 aboard the ship the “Evergreen”. They then most likely followed the same route that other Northumberland immigrants had taken by travelling up the Hudson River, then west on the Mohawk River, possibly using the first section of the Erie Canal (the first 15 miles, from Utica to Rome NY), which opened in 1819, and then over land to and across Oneida Lake and on to Ontario County.



Robson Family History 1788-1853

The 1820 US Census shows James and Ann and family living in the Town of Gorham where their fifth child, James Jr., was born on August 6th of 1821. They would remain in Gorham for the rest of their lives. James's father, John Sr., and his brother, John Jr., were also living in the town of Gorham at this time. The first evidence of a Robson property purchase in the town of Gorham is a deed dated March 28, 1829. There are several other deeds listed in the next few years to the Robson family. By 1850, James and Ann Robson had acquired 800 acres of land. They most likely built the Spring Farm house in the 1830s. James also owned a gristmill in Avoca, N.Y. By all accounts, he was a very successful farmer.

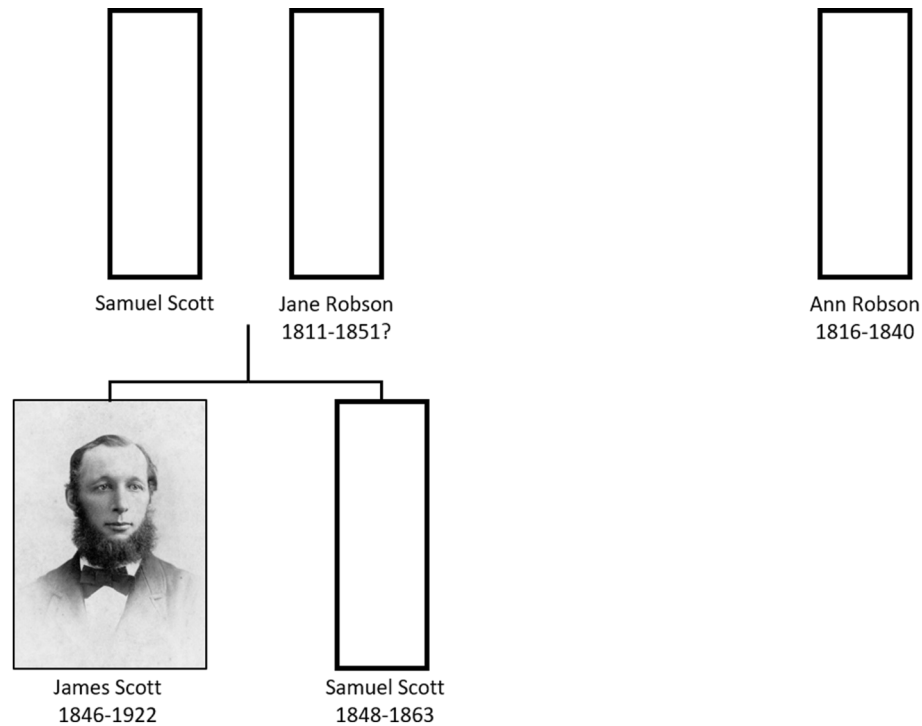
Ann Robson (wife of James Sr.) passed away in 1851. Several references state that James Robson Sr. was killed in 1854, either in Gorham, or in Avoca. There are no details. In his will, James divided his property between his three sons, giving each several hundred acres.



Persons highlighted in blue have a direct ancestral link to, or are descendants of John Robson of Spring Farm

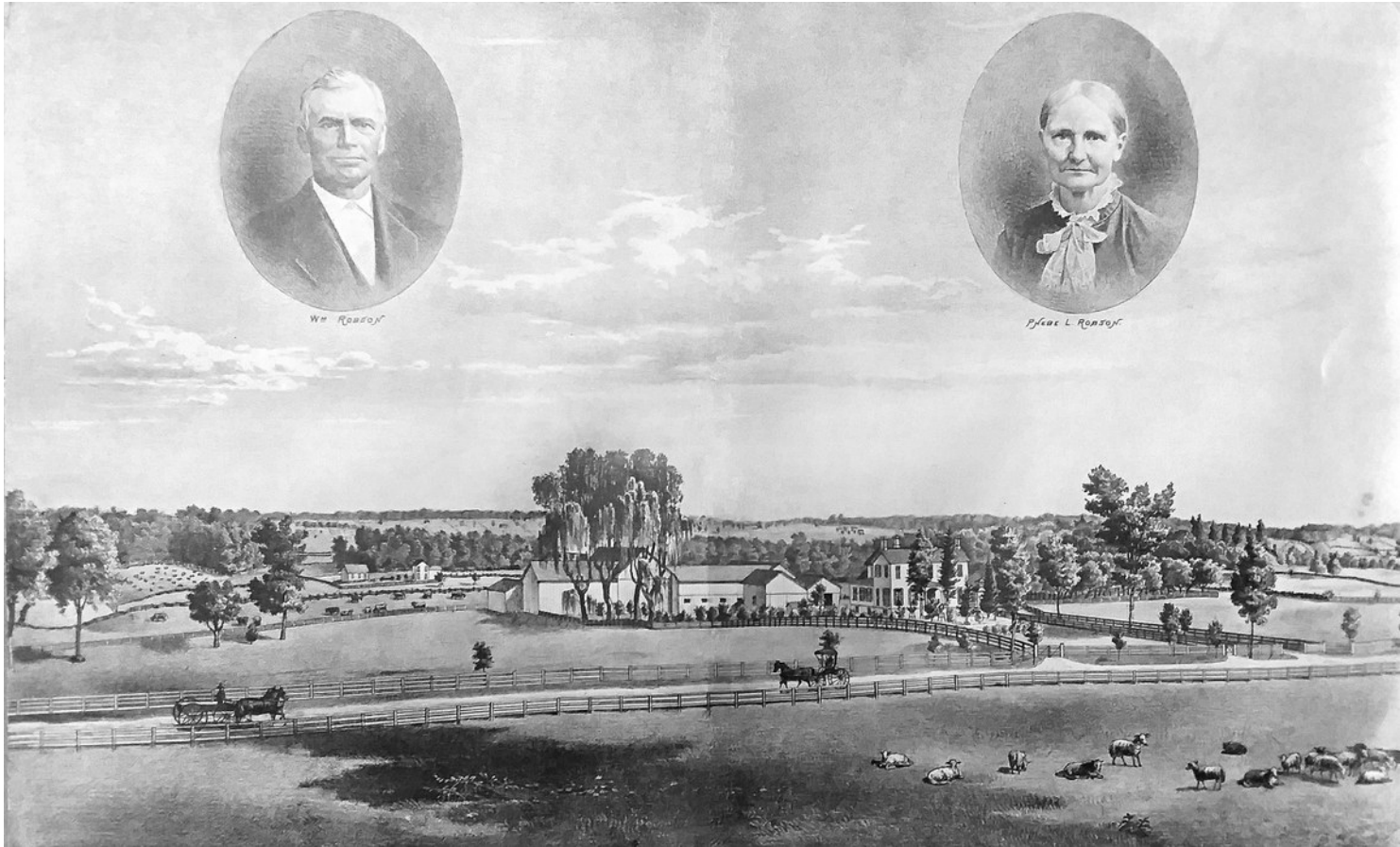
Robson Family History 1788-1853

James and Ann Robson's daughter, Ann, was unmarried. She passed away in 1840 at the age of 24. Jane, their oldest child, married Samuel Scott, and they most likely resided in Canada. After Jane's passing in 1851, their sons, James and Samuel, lived in Gorham and were looked after by James and Ann.



Robson Family History 1788-1853

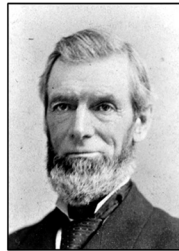
William Robson, the oldest son, married Phoebe Sawtelle in the early 1840's. They did not have any children, but they did adopt a daughter, Jane Louise Robson, when they were in their late fifties (1860s-1870s). William and Phoebe lived at 4145 Robson Rd. (now County Rd. 17).



Robson Family History 1788-1853

The second oldest son, John Robson, married Isabella Telfer of London, Ontario, Canada in 1849. Isabella was the daughter of Adam and Jane Telfer, who had made the voyage to America from Northumberland in 1819, first settling in the Town of Seneca, Ontario County, NY. After a few years, they moved on to London, Ontario, Canada. They most likely knew James Sr. and Ann Robson from Northumberland and from their time in the Town of Seneca. William and possibly David Robson, brothers of James Sr., also lived in London, Ontario.

John and Isabella lived at Spring Farm, the family homestead, at 4226 Robson Rd. (County Rd 17). They had seven children: James A., Jane, Mary (Mollie), Phoebe, Anne, Frances (Fanny) and Nellie (died at age 1).



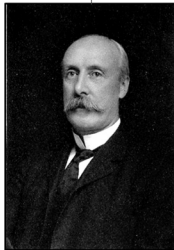
John Robson
1819–1901



Isabella Telfer
1823–1907



Spring Farm



James Robson
1851–1916



Jane Robson
1853–1930



Anne Robson
1857–1940



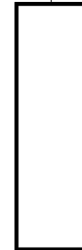
Mary "Mollie"
Robson
1859–1914



Phoebe Robson
1864–1937



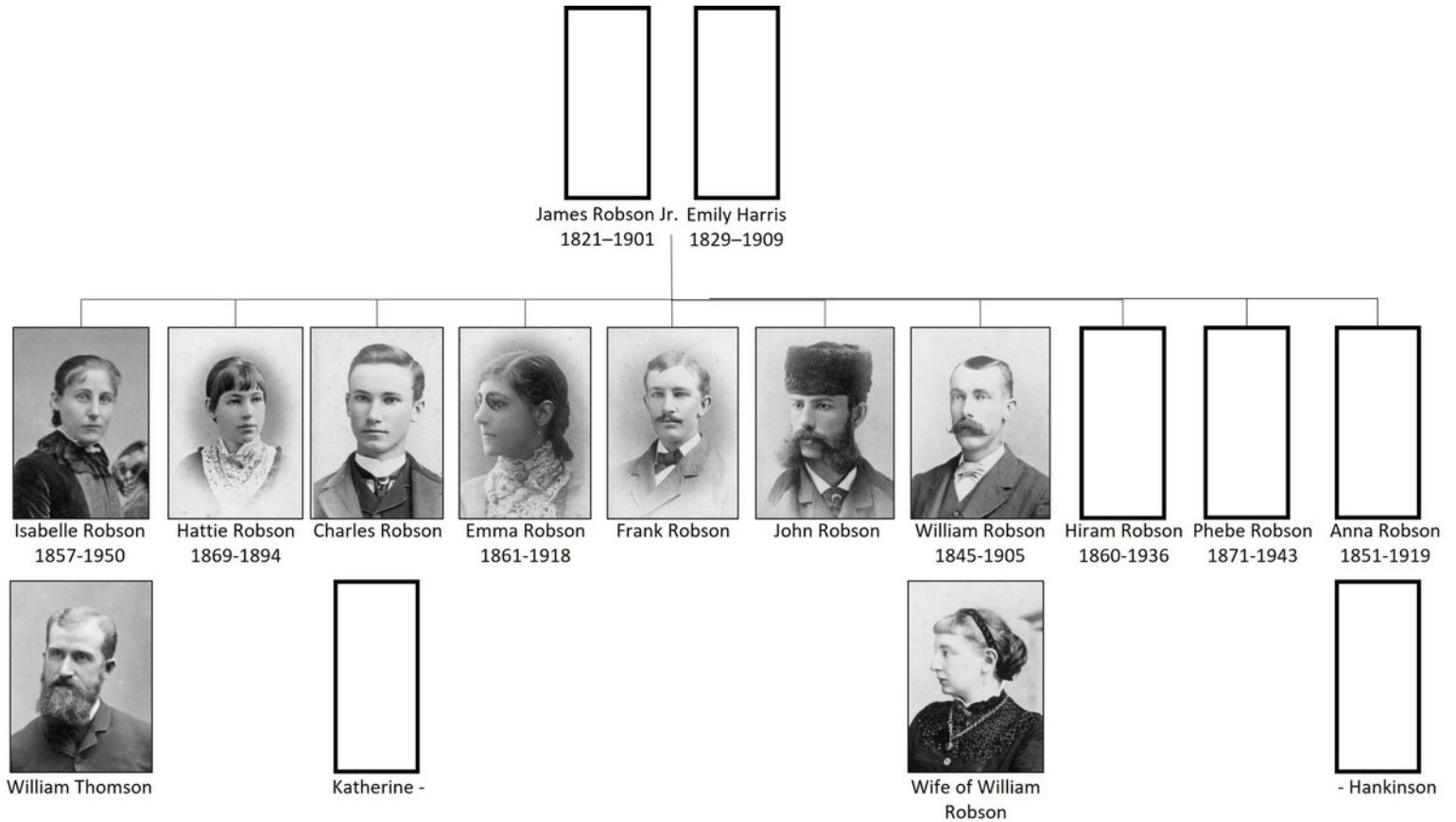
Frances "Fanny"
Robson
1866–1935

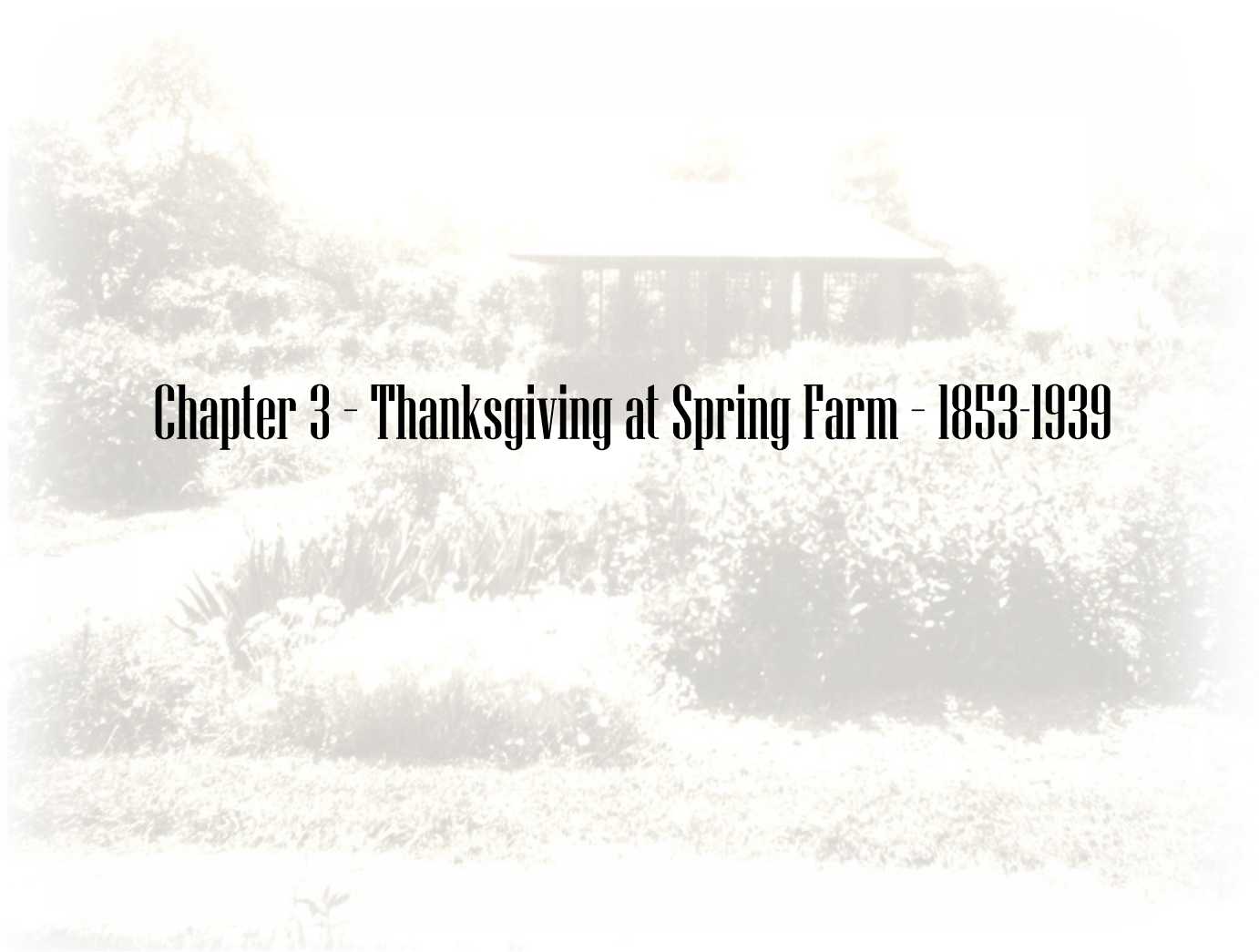


Nellie Robson
1861–1863

Robson Family History 1788-1853

The youngest son, James Jr., married Emily Harris of Dutchess County, NY in 1848. They had ten children: William, Frank, John, Isabelle, Hiram, Emma, Hattie, Charles and Phebe. James, Anna and Emily Robson lived at 4579 Robson Rd. (County Road #17 becomes Robson Road to the south of Lake to Lake Road).

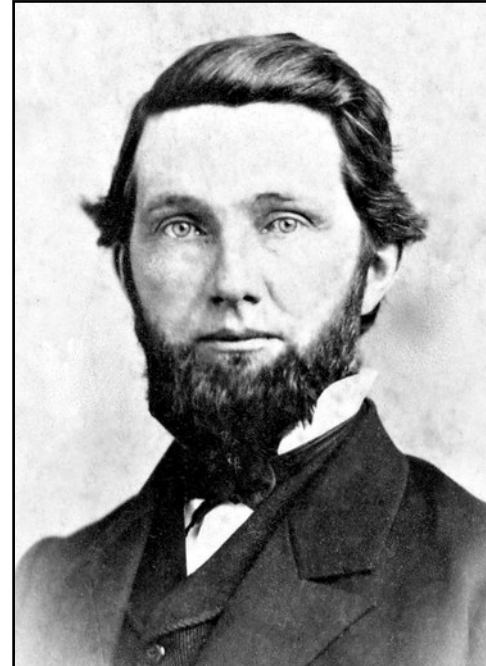




Chapter 3 - Thanksgiving at Spring Farm - 1853-1939

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

How did Dr. James H. Allen end up in Gorham, Ontario County, NY, about 40 miles north of Avoca? Rev. Louis Ruf: *“It was back in 1853 that a young physician, recently come to Gorham [Bethel], Ontario County, faced a lonely holiday far from home and family, among strangers not yet transformed to friends. [He had come to this place on the advice of the preceptor * with whom he had “read medicine”, before taking his degree at the Albany Medical College. Threatened with tuberculosis, he had been told: “Settle in a marshy country, buy a jug of whiskey and a horse and ride for several hours every day”.]”*



Dr. James H. Allen
1830-1896

*This was Dr. William Chambers, who was married to Eliza P. Allen. Eliza was the daughter of William and Catherine Allen and sister of John T. Allen Sr. (father of James H.). Therefore, Dr. Chambers was the Uncle of Dr. James H. Allen.

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

What's not clear is how, or if, Dr. Chambers knew of Gorham (there was a town of Gorham at the time, but the village within it was known as Bethel until 1856). His wife's brothers and sisters had settled in Bath, Avoca and Howard, NY, approximately 40 miles to the south of Gorham, so he was familiar with that area. One possibility is as follows: Though James Robson Sr. lived and farmed at Spring Farm in Gorham, he also owned a gristmill in Avoca, NY. The many Allen families who lived near Avoca were farmers in that area. They may have met Robson through the gristmill business, so Dr. Chambers or Dr. James H. Allen may have met James Robson through their relatives. Robson may have suggested that James H. settle in the town of Gorham (a town with a marshy area nearby (Potter's Swamp)) to become the town doctor.

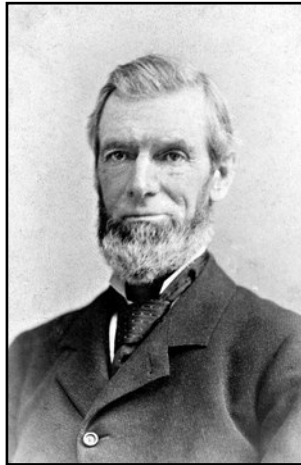


Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

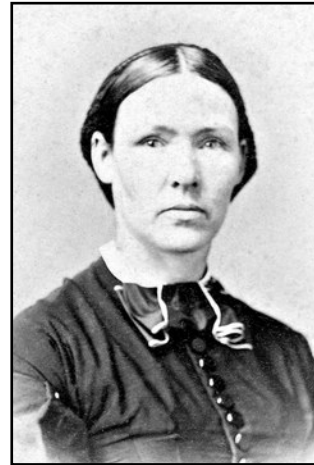
In any event, Dr. Allen moved to Gorham later in 1853 to begin his medical practice there. It was at that time that he met John and Isabella Robson, who also lived at Spring Farm with John's father, James Sr. Anna Allen: *"They seemed to approve of each other at once and this wonderful friendship began— Then there was peace in the World. Mr. Robson's first gift was a horse with food for it. This was the beginning of almost constant gifts between them for very little money passed between the families ever. Farm products went one way, medical care the other, with no bookkeeping."*

Dr. Allen was invited to Thanksgiving dinner at Spring Farm that year. Rev. Louis Ruf: *"On that Thanksgiving morning, young James H. Allen, M.D. rode his horse over the dirt roads, up the ridge which lies between Canandaigua and Seneca Lakes, to spend a happy day with John and Isabel Robson, their son James A., and baby Jane."*

Thus began the tradition of the Robsons and Allens celebrating Thanksgiving together at Spring Farm that would last for 86 years.



John Robson
1819-1901



Isabella Telfer
1823-1907

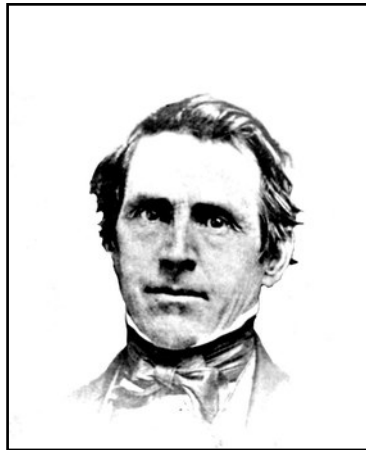
Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)



Phebe Elizabeth Stevenson
1833-1896

Reverend Louis Ruf: *“The friendship between the young men, farmer and doctor, ripened into a most unusual bond of fellowship and affection, unbroken while life lasted. When the next Thanksgiving came, Dr. Allen was asked to bring his beautiful bride, Phebe Elizabeth Stevenson,* to Spring Farm for dinner. She was welcomed so graciously that all sense of being a newcomer speedily disappeared.”*

According to the 1850 US Census, Phebe was living with her father, David, and stepmother,* Sarah (Olmsted) Stevenson, in Canandaigua in the early 1850s. James most likely had met Phebe either in Hagaman or in Avoca, NY. There is evidence that the Stevensons, or their relatives and ancestors, lived at one time in Amsterdam or Hagaman and also in Howard, near Avoca. Dr. James H. Allen and Phebe Elizabeth Stevenson were married on March 16, 1854 in Avoca, NY.



David Stevenson
1804-1873

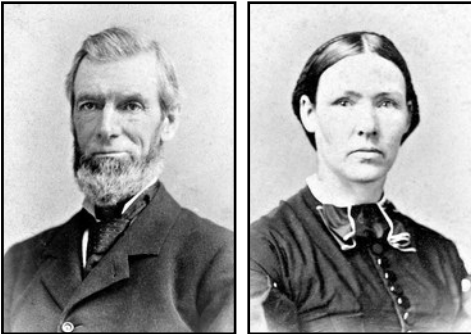


Sarah Maria Olmsted
1805-1880

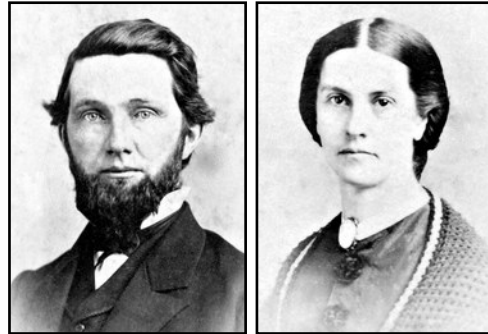
*According to family records listed in the David and Sarah Stevenson Bible, Phebe Elizabeth Stevenson's mother was Phebe Lloyd Allen, first wife of David Stevenson. Phebe L. was the daughter of William and Sarah (Robords) Allen of Avoca, NY. She was born April 13, 1810 and passed away on June 17, 1833, six weeks after giving birth to Phebe E. on May 3, 1833. David Stevenson then married Sarah M. Olmsted in March of 1834.

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

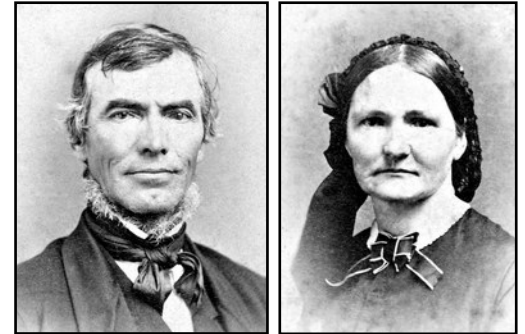
Rev. Louis Ruf: *“Thus began a family association which grew stronger as the years passed and the Thanksgiving table grew larger. About it gathered Uncle William and Aunt Phoebe (Robson), Dr. James and his Phebe, John and Isabella and all the children as they came along.”*



John and Isabella Robson



Dr. James and Phebe Allen



William and Phoebe (Sawtelle) Robson

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Reverend Louis Ruf: *“Very often there were high chairs for the new babies as they came to join little James, the five Robson girls, Alexander Allen and, last of all, his little sister, Margaret, to complete the second generation.”*



James A. Robson
1851-1916



Jane Robson
1853-1930



Alexander D. Allen
1856-1934



Anne Robson
1857-1940



Mary (Mollie) Robson
1859-1914



Phoebe Robson
(1864-1937) on left
Frances (Fanny) Robson
(1866-1935) on right



Margaret E. Allen
1868-1947

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Reverend Louis Ruf: *"As the peaceful years passed, the families always gathered together for Thanksgiving at the farm and, on Christmas, in the Allen home."*



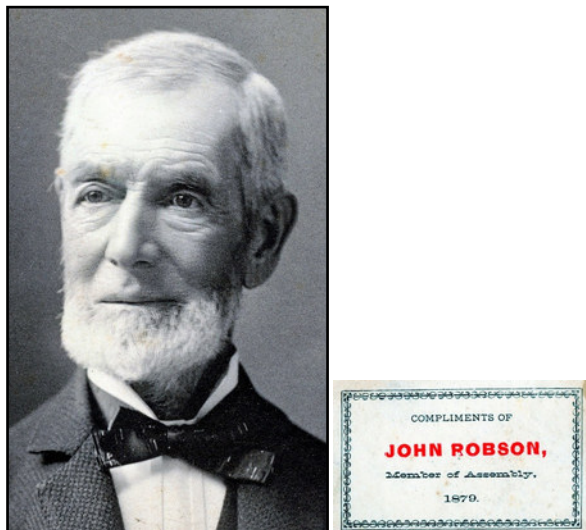
Spring Farm – Home of John and Isabella Robson and family –
4226 County Rd. 17, Canandaigua, NY



Home of James and Phebe Allen and family – 2696 NY
Route 245 (Main St.), Gorham, NY

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Reverend Louis Ruf: *"The two fathers were not of the same political faith, yet during the stormy years before and during the Civil War, neither party spirit nor strife on the battlefields marred their close fellowship."*



John Robson was born in Northumberland, England, June 2, 1819, a son of James and Ann Robson. He was educated in Canandaigua Academy and, in 1849, married Isabella Telfer, a native of London, Ontario, Canada. Mr. Robson and wife had seven children: James A., Jane T., Ann, Mary, Nellie (died at age of 1), Phoebe E. and Fannie M. Mr. Robson was a general farmer and owned 270 acres of the old homestead, on which he made many improvements. He was a Republican and served as town assessor for three years and supervisor on the county board for five years. In 1878, Mr. Robson was elected a member of the New York State Assembly representing the first or eastern district of Ontario County during the 1879 session. He and his family were members of the Presbyterian church at Gorham.



James Henry Allen, M.D., was a son of John T. Allen Sr. and Margaret Porter. John was a native of Hagaman, Montgomery County, NY, who came to Steuben County and there lived and died. James H. was born in Hagaman, Montgomery County, NY on March 3, 1830. He was educated at Albany Medical College, Albany, NY and, in 1853, came to Gorham in Ontario County, NY where he had a very successful practice. In 1854, Dr. Allen married Phebe E. Stevenson in Steuben County, NY. Dr. Allen and wife had two children, Dr. Alexander D. and Margaret E. Dr. Allen was a member of the Ontario Medical Society, New York State Medical Society and the Democratic Party. He and his family were members of the Presbyterian church at Gorham.

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Dr. James and Phebe Allen and Family



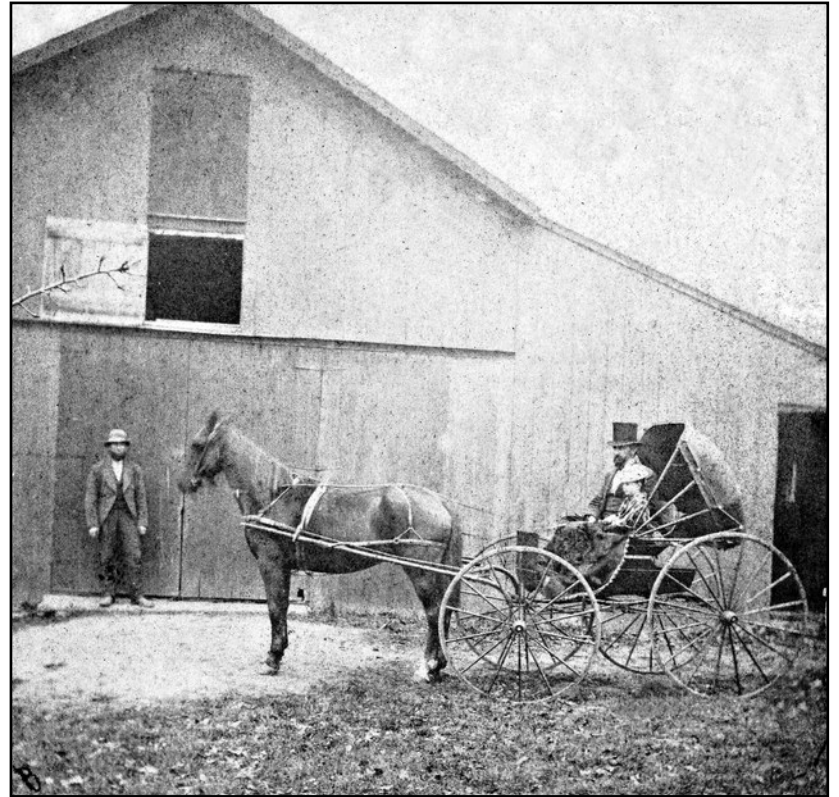
Dr. James and Phebe Allen



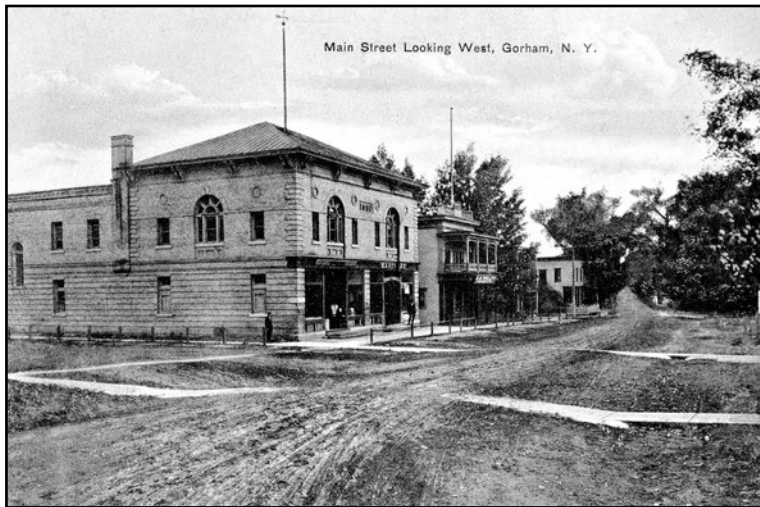
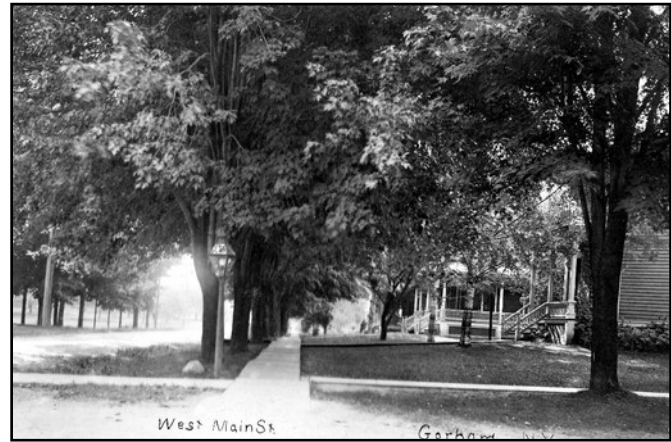
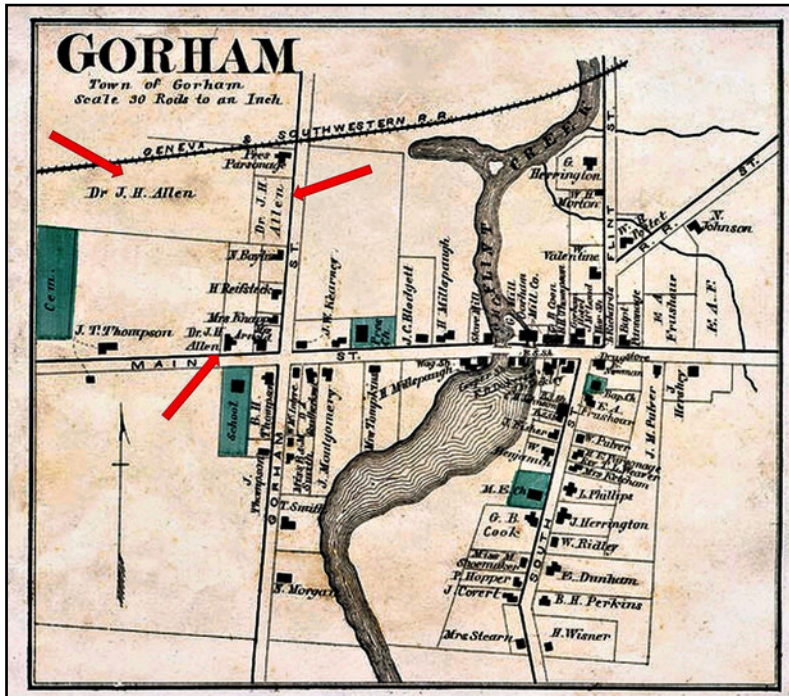
Alexander D. Allen and Carlo



Margaret E. Allen



Dr. James Allen with his daughter, Margaret Elizabeth, going for a ride circa the mid 1870s (by the barn behind their Gorham home).



Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Relatives of Dr. James H. Allen Who Also Lived in Ontario County, NY

Two of Dr. James H. Allen's brothers, John T. Allen Jr. and Dr. Duncan Stewart Allen, eventually moved to Ontario County. John T. Allen Jr. (1827-1911) married Helen Stevenson (1830-1896), older sister of Phebe E. and oldest child of David Stevenson and Phebe L. Allen. John's occupation was farming. The couple lived in Avoca, NY. Later in life, they moved to Gorham and lived on Kearney St. (now Kearney Rd.) around the corner from Dr. James and Phebe Allen. Dr. Duncan Allen (1839-1916) graduated from Albany Medical College on December 26, 1865. He and his first wife, Ann Chase (1841-1886), settled in the Town of Geneva just 5 miles from Gorham (Number 9 Road, Town of Geneva, NY). They had two sons. After Ann died at the age of 45, Duncan married Sarah MacNaughton (1843-1906).



John Thomas Allen Jr.



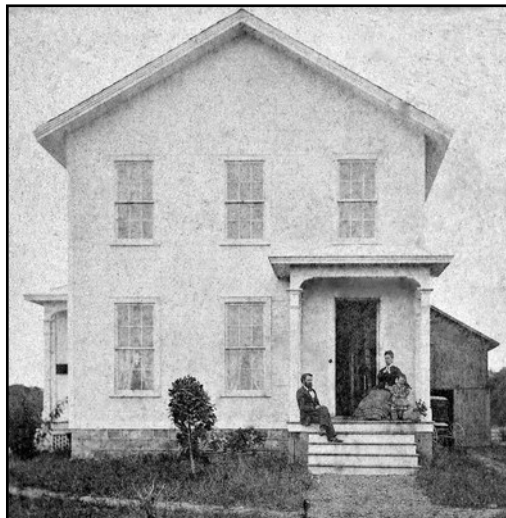
Helen Stevenson



Dr. Duncan Stewart Allen



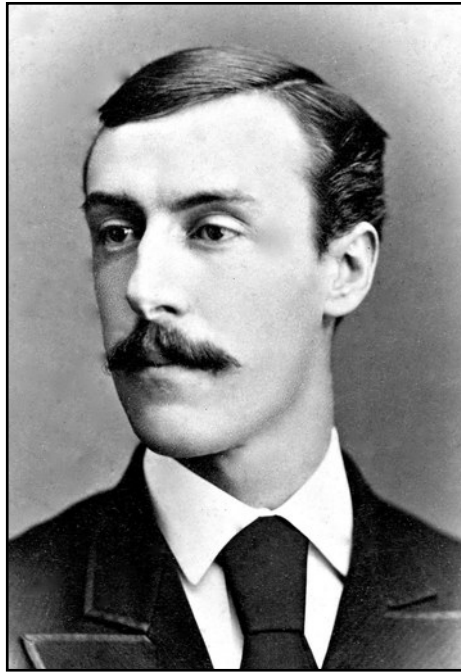
Sara MacNaughton



Home of Dr. Duncan Stewart Allen, Number 9 Road, Town of Geneva, NY. Most likely, that is Dr. Allen seated at left with his wife Ann and child at right. Circa 1870s-early 1880s.

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Reverend Louis Ruf: *“All too soon the children became Young Folks. Jimmy, as his father called him to the end of his days, went off in 1869 for four years at Yale, where his unusual stature and scholarship made him an outstanding member of the class of '73. Alex Allen went first to the famous Canandaigua Academy and then to Syracuse University Medical School.”*



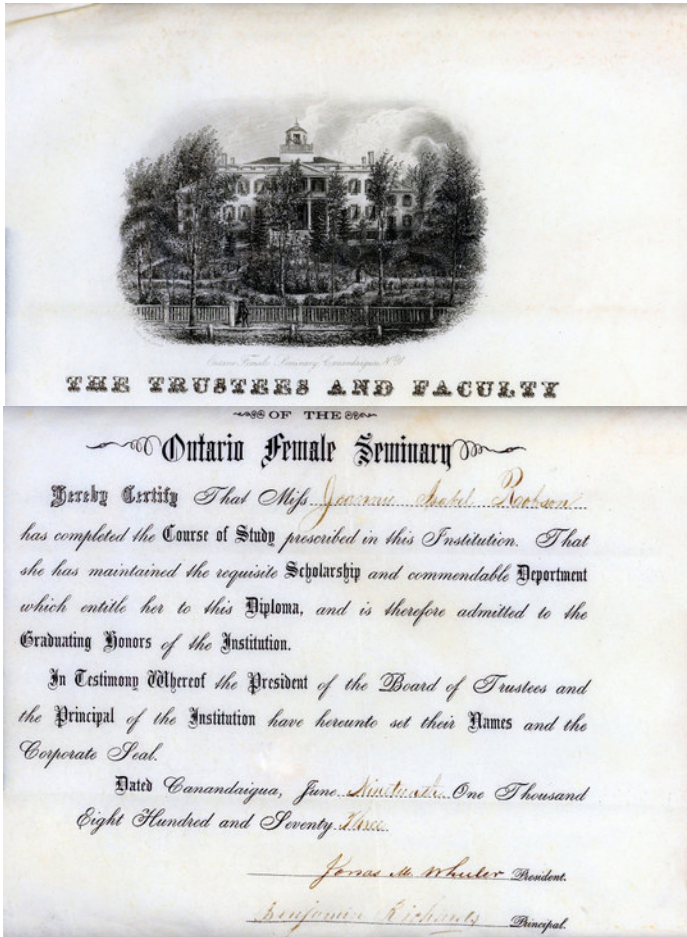
James A. Robson



Alexander D. Allen

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Reverend Louis Ruf: "Jane and Anne made their way to seminaries for young ladies;"



Jane Robson



Anne Robson

Canandaigua's early history includes the founding in 1825 of the Ontario Female Seminary. It was one of the first women's private schools in western New York. It is older than Buffalo Seminary, which was founded in 1851. The Ontario Female Seminary closed in 1875. The school was situated on a 7-acre property and housed 311 students as of 1857. Its course of study included religious, intellectual, physical, social and ornamental instruction.

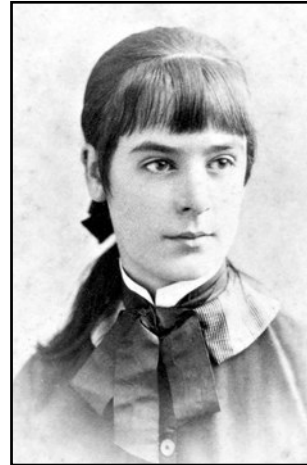
Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Reverend Louis Ruf: *"The other Robson girls in turn went off to college, and Fannie took the Doctor's pet, Maggie, with her to Ingham University at Leroy."*



Ingham University

Ingham University in LeRoy, New York, was the first women's college in New York State and the first chartered women's university (1857) in the United States. It was founded in 1835 as the Attica (NY) Female Seminary by Mariette and Emily E. Ingham, who moved the school to Le Roy in 1837. After financial difficulties, the college closed in 1892 and its property was sold at auction in 1895.



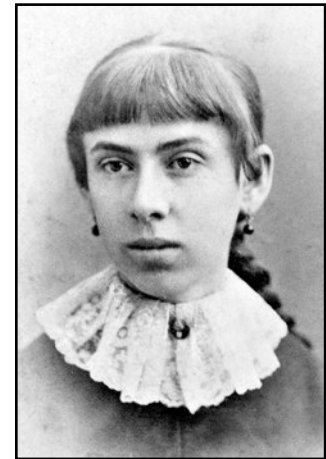
Frances (Fanny) Robson



Margaret E. Allen

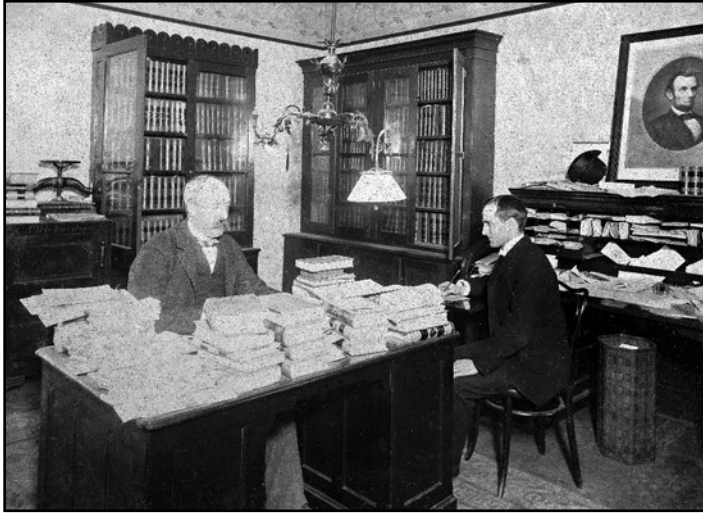


Mary (Mollie) Robson



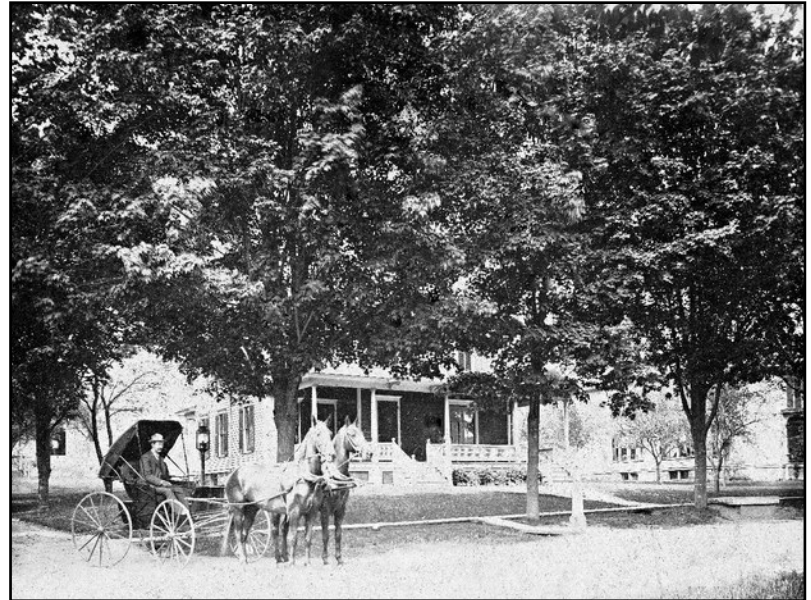
Phoebe E. Robson

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

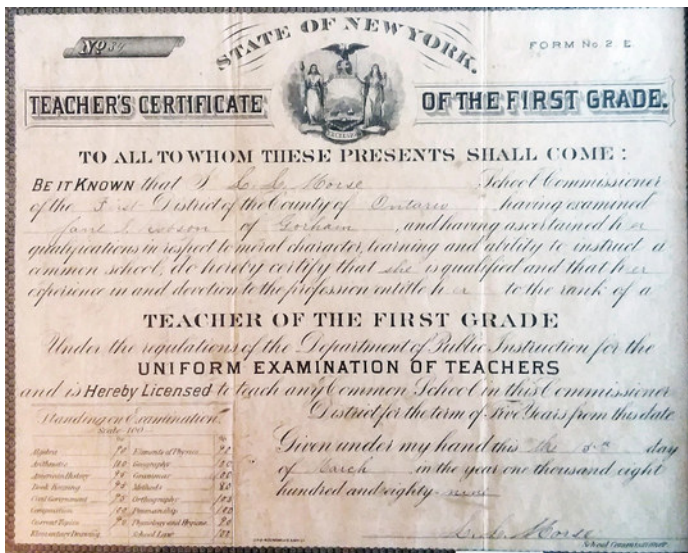


James A. Robson, on left, in his law office in Canandaigua, NY.

Reverend Louis Ruf: “The first and second generations grew increasingly intimate. James began a distinguished law career in Canandaigua, which finally led to a place on the New York Supreme Court bench. Jane began the many years of teaching in the nearby school district—and so successful was she that it became widely known as ‘Jane’s College.’ Alexander Allen joined his father in practicing medicine in Ontario County.”



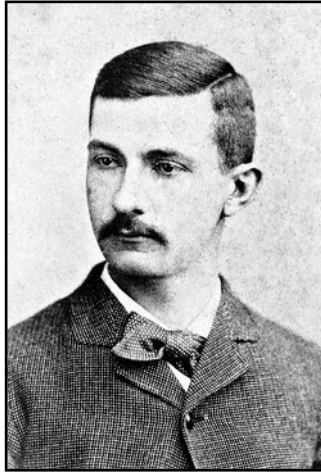
Dr. Alexander D. Allen outside the family home in Gorham, NY. - 1900



New York State Teaching Certificate of the First Grade - Jane Robson - 1889

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Reverend Louis Ruf: "Then, in 1883, after an exciting and spectacular courtship*, he [Alexander Allen] brought as his bride a famous beauty, Anna Suydam, of Geneva, to join the company."



Dr. Alexander D. Allen



Anna T. Suydam



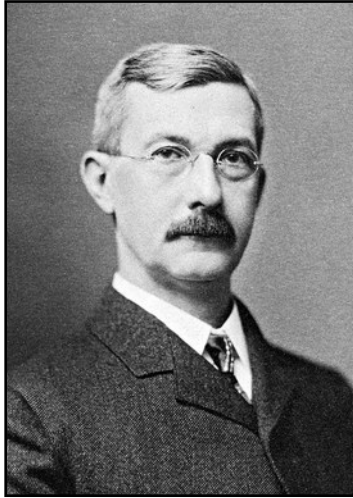
From *The Buffalo Courier*:

A Bit of Romance In Ontario

A letter from Geneva, Ontario County, to the *Buffalo Courier* tells this interesting little story.

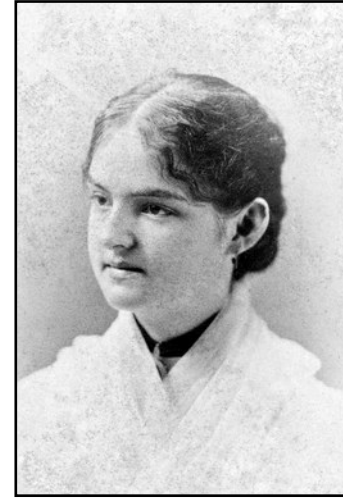
"Probably some of your readers will remember a sensation which occurred in Geneva a little more than a year ago. Aristocratic Trinity Church was filled in every seat, the expectant crowd awaiting a ceremony which is ever replete with interest to people of a marriageable age. The bridegroom and minister were in attendance, the bride arrived with her attendants, but at the very threshold of the church door, and as the organ pealed the first strains of the grand wedding march, the bride fell in a dead faint in her father's arms. Nor could she be rallied by the application of the usual restoratives. Rumor at the time had it that the heart of the bride-elect was not then given with her promised hand to the waiting and expectant bridegroom and that the cause of her swoon was the encountering glance of the man whom she really did love and who was officiating as one of the ushers. The wedding was indefinitely postponed. Now comes the denouement in the announcement of the marriage on February 14, 1883 of the parties referred to - Alexander D. Allen, M.D. of Gorham N.Y. and Annie T., youngest daughter of H. L. Suydam."

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)



Dr. Alexander Duncan Allen

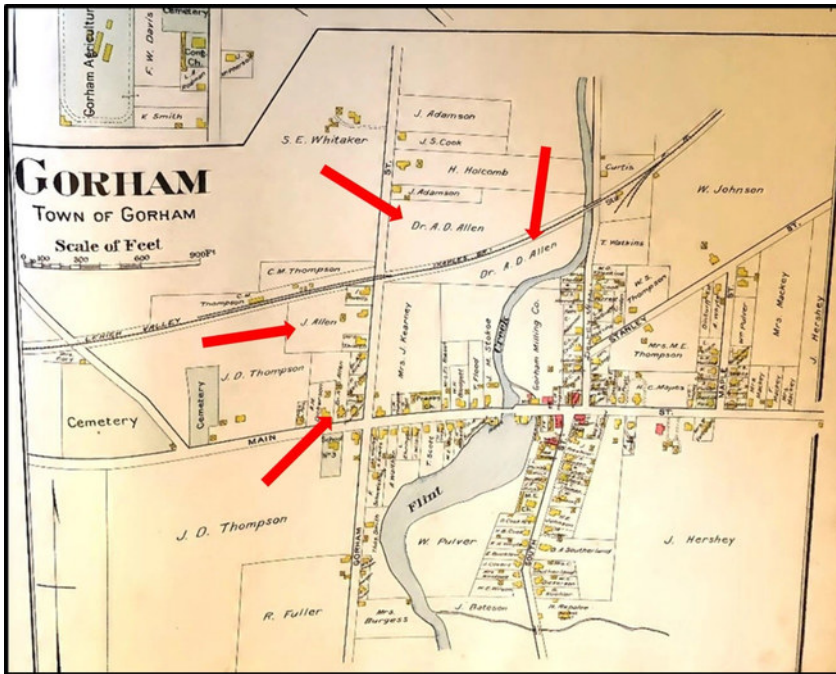
Dr. Alexander Duncan Allen was the son of Dr. James H. and Phebe Allen and was born in Gorham, NY on May 12, 1856. He attended district school in Gorham and then the Canandaigua Academy in Canandaigua, NY. He then attended Syracuse University Medical College* in 1877 and graduated in 1880. He went in to the practice of medicine in Gorham with his father starting in 1880. He was Supervisor of Gorham for five years in succession and was chairman of the board in 1891-92. Dr. Allen was a member of the Ontario County Medical Society. Dr. Allen died in 1934.



Anna Suydam Allen

Anna Tamblingson Suydam was the daughter of Hiram Lloyd Suydam and Elizabeth Hayward Suydam and was born in Geneva, NY on May 12, 1858. She was one of five children. Anna attended the Classical and Union School in Geneva. She possessed a fine soprano voice and in her youth was known for her singing and acting ability. When her father passed away in 1898, she took over management of his International Hotel in downtown Geneva, eventually selling it in the early 1900s. During World War I, Anna volunteered with the Red Cross. Dr. and Mrs. Allen had four children: James S., Elizabeth H., William A. and Lloyd F. Anna passed away in 1941.

*The Syracuse University College of Medicine traces its ancestry to September 15, 1834, when Geneva Medical College was founded as a department of Geneva (now Hobart) College. GMC held its first classes in February 1835. In 1849, it graduated Elizabeth Blackwell, the first woman to earn a regular MD. In 1871, Hobart disbanded GMC, and its assets were sold to Dean John Towler. As a private citizen, Towler donated these materials to the new Syracuse University on condition that the trustees immediately establish an AMA-approved medical school. Thus, the Syracuse University College of Medicine came into being on December 4, 1871. In the 1870s, the SU College of Medicine was (along with Harvard, the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Michigan) among the first to institute a graded medical instruction program, with definite pre-clinical and clinical years. In the 1890s, it was again (along with Johns Hopkins, Harvard, Penn and a few others) among the first in America to organize its curriculum with intense scientific and, especially, laboratory training for students in the first two years and rigorous clinical training on rounds thereafter. SU sold the medical school in 1950 to the new State University of New York Upstate Medical Center in Syracuse, where it remains today.



Map of the village of Gorham with arrows showing three properties belonging to Dr. Alexander Allen and one belonging to John T. Allen, brother of Dr. James H. Allen



Left to right - Dr. Alexander, unidentified, Anna Allen, and unidentified outside their first home at 2692 NY Route 245 (Main St.) in Gorham



Dr. Alexander and Anna Allen outside their home at 2696 NY Route 245 (Main St.) in Gorham.



Looking east on Main St. in Gorham

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

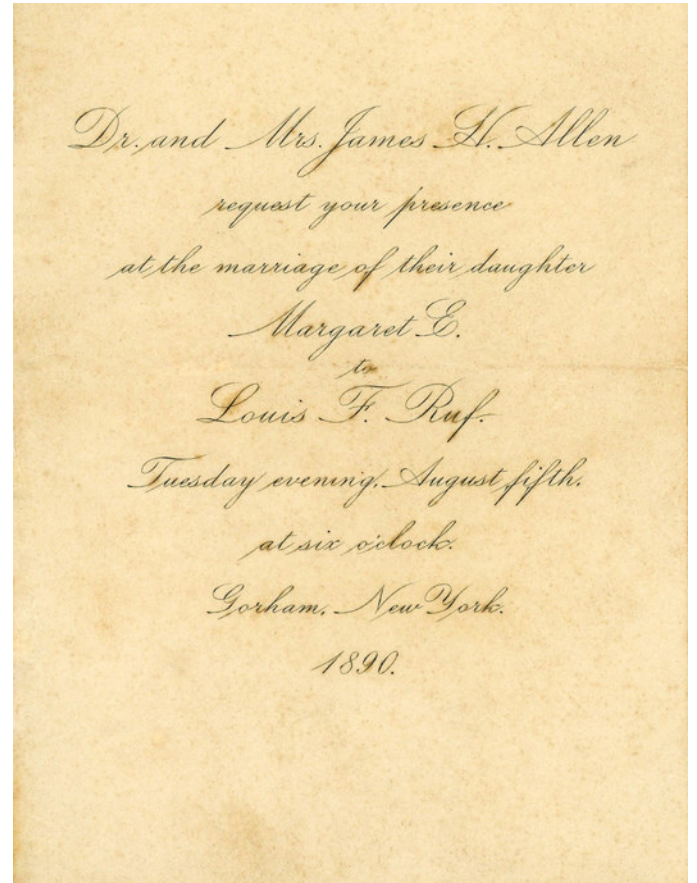
Reverend Louis Ruf: *"In 1890, Margaret Allen brought with her the young preacher she had chosen as her husband, whom she first saw when he came to preach at Gorham, at the suggestion of John E. Robson [son of James Jr. and Emily (Harris) Robson] of Honeoye Falls, NY."*



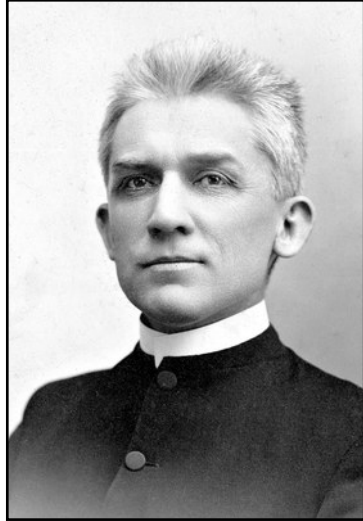
Rev. Dr. Louis Frederick Ruf



Margaret Elizabeth Allen



Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)



Reverend Dr. Louis Ruf

Reverend Dr. Louis Frederick Ruf was born in Freehold, NJ in 1865. He was a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Rutgers University, graduating in 1885. At the end of his sophomore year at Rutgers, he spent the summer as a draftsman in Thomas Edison's New York City office. He later attended Auburn Theological Seminary in Auburn, NY. He was ordained into the Presbyterian ministry in Pittsford, NY in 1889. In 1890, he married Margaret Elizabeth Allen of Gorham, NY. Reverend Ruf served as minister in Pittsford until 1894, when he went on to the Presbyterian Church in Watkins Glen, NY. Several years later, he was transferred to Olean, NY and then to Cleveland, OH in 1912. He remained in Cleveland until his retirement in 1947. Reverend Ruf died on October 1, 1964 at the age of 99.



Margaret Allen Ruf

Margaret Elizabeth Allen was the daughter of Dr. James H. and Phebe (Stevenson) Allen and was born in Gorham, NY in 1868. She attended Ingham University in Leroy, NY in the late 1880s. Louis and Margaret Ruf had six children, Margaret, Dorothy, Louis Jr., Mary, James, and William. Margaret passed away in 1947.

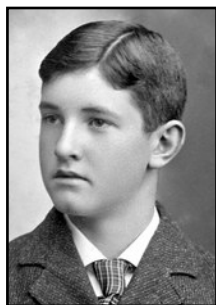
Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

The Third Generation - Allen

Reverend Louis Ruf: *"The third generation began to arrive. James Stevenson Allen appeared in 1884, to be followed by Bessie, Willie and Lloyd, in due time;"*



Elizabeth Hayward Allen
1885-1976



James Stevenson Allen
1884-1974



Margaret Ruf
1891-1976



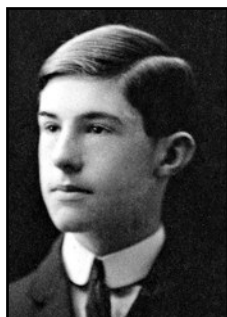
Dorothy Ruf
1894-1990



Louis Ruf, Jr.
1898-1973



Lloyd Frederick Allen
1890-1985



William Alexander Allen Sr.
1888-1967



Mary E. Ruf
1903-1996



James Ruf
1905-1992



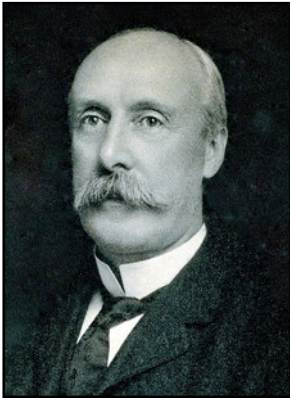
William A. Ruf
1912-2005

The Third Generation - Ruf

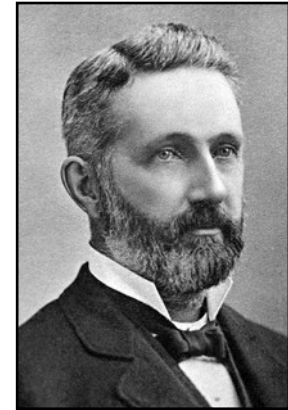
Reverend Louis Ruf: *"and Margaret, Dorothy, Louis Jr., Mary, James and Billy Ruf followed their cousins to enlarge the company."*

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Reverend Louis Ruf: *“As a result, two tables were needed for the annual reunion: all the children at one, under the watchful eye of the Judge, who saw to it that plates were kept full; the older folks at the other table, where Mr. Robson or Doctor James took turns carving the big turkeys.”*



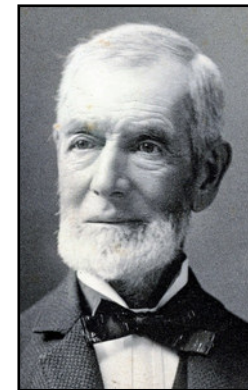
Judge James A. Robson



Dr. James H. Allen



Spring Farm raised turkeys in the front yard – photo circa 1905-1912



John Robson

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)



Isabella Robson

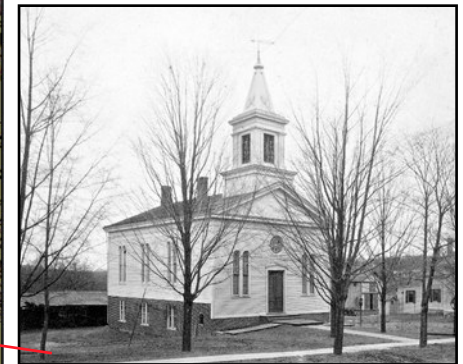
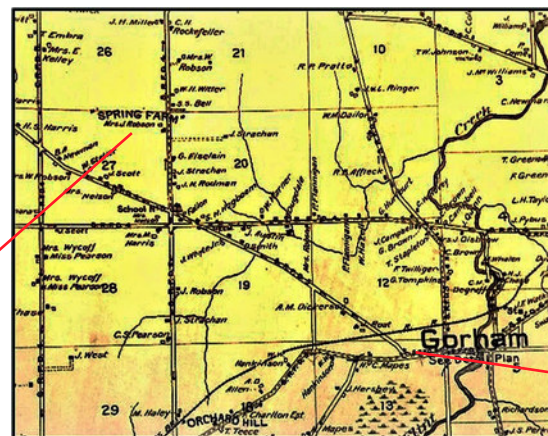
Anna Allen: *“Dr. Allen’s family looked forward to Thanksgiving all the year, speaking of Spring Farm as ‘Up where it’s Thanksgiving.’ We usually went in Mr. Charles Cook’s big bob-sleigh with jingling bells and piled with straw and blankets after attending the service at the Presbyterian Church where the Robson men and Dr. Allen were Elders as long as they lived. The music of the happy voices, young and old, and the jingling bells made the time seem short to the hospitable door where smiling faces and happy voices made us welcome. We were ushered to an upper room where Mother Robson, the perfect mother, waited to unwrap the newest baby, for whom there was always a special welcome. Fresh ribbons were always on the family high chair, for a baby in those days was a delight, a Child of Love.”*



Left to Right in front: Anna, William Sr., Elizabeth Allen
James S. Allen in rear,
Christmas 1888



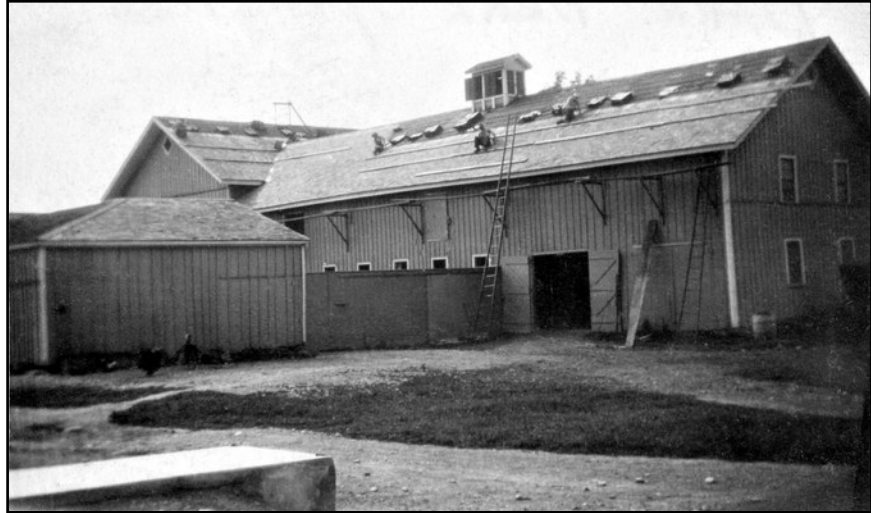
Spring Farm



Gorham Presbyterian Church

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Anna Allen: “The whole house glowed with friendliness and happiness everywhere. Appetites whetted with odors were soon satisfied when we were taken to the dining room and shown the tables loaded with eatables that only Mother Robson could prepare. The dinner, which consisted of everything home-made, began with yellow tomato soup, an original recipe, then two turkeys were brought in. I recall one weighing 40 pounds carved by Mr. John Robson, the other weighing 36 pounds carved by Dr. James H. Allen. There were always four vegetables prepared to perfection, lettuce and marvelous celery all home grown, as were the turkeys in those days. The salad was served with this course. Then what the youngsters were waiting for, Mother Robson’s pumpkin and mince pies, which cannot be described. Then home-made ice cream, cakes, perfect fruits of all kinds with nuts and raisins, nothing lacking that could be conceived. But the Spirit of it was worth it all.”



The “Home” barn behind the house (looking northwest from near the kitchen door). It burned down on October 18, 1917.

“After dinner, the elders proceeded to the parlor and the young people to the barn to be weighed where they had been weighed before the meal. The menu of the meal was changed but little during the wonderful eighty-six years.”

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)



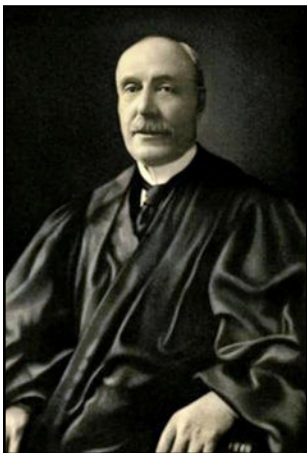
In the mid 1890s: Reverend Louis Ruf: *“For almost forty years the circle remained unbroken. Then the young folks, grown old together, slipped away. Dr. James had quickly followed his beloved Phebe to the land where the great Physician heals all manner of hurts. John soon followed his friend; Isabella tarried awhile, insisting that the Spring Farm gathering be continued. But when she too followed, all the first generation had crossed the line to that other country where there is no parting, but from whose bourne no traveler returns.”*

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

In the early 1900s - With the strong bond between the second generation of Robsons and Allens, there was little question that the Thanksgiving tradition that was started by their parents would continue. James, Jane, Ann, Mary, Frances and Phoebe Robson cordially hosted Dr. Alex and Anna Allen and Louis and Margaret Ruf and their families each year. The Allens still lived in Gorham, but, between 1890 and 1912, the Rufs lived in Pittsford, Watkins Glen and Olean, NY, where Louis served as a Presbyterian minister. In 1912, Louis was transferred to a Cleveland, OH church, where he remained as minister until he retired in 1947. Due to the distance, the Rufs attended the Thanksgiving celebrations less frequently during this period.



Front



Judge James A. Robson



Robson Sisters: Back Left to Right:
Frances and Phoebe, Front Left to
Right: Mollie, Jane, Anne



Back

Postcard with a photo of the Spring Farm house sent by Judge James Robson to Reverend Louis Ruf inviting he and Margaret and their family to Spring Farm for Thanksgiving-1910

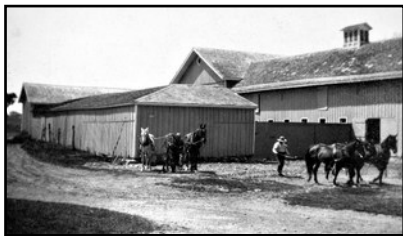
Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)



Unidentified Robson sister on horse drawn hay mower



Logging after an ice storm, "the final cut"



Home barn: "The afternoon starts"



*Jane Robson (1853-1930) was the second oldest child of John and Isabella Robson. She attended the Ontario Female Seminary in Canandaigua, NY and taught in the Gorham, NY schools for about 25 years, retiring in 1907. (Photos on this page were most likely taken by Jane.)

The Journal of Jane Robson*

Among the papers preserved at Spring Farm was a 4" by 6 1/2" journal kept by Jane Robson titled "Record of Events on Spring Farm, July 4, 1907 to November 4, 1922." The journal has a single line entry for nearly every day during this fifteen year period. It provides, in shorthand form, a description of life on the farm. The entries for each day describe the farming activity taking place, usually the weather for the day, and often the social activities that went on. By this time, the first Thanksgiving generation had passed away. The five Robson sisters, Jane, Anne, Mary, Frances and Phoebe lived at the farm and continued the farming business established by the previous two generations. Judge James Robson, although home quite often, was serving on the New York State Appellate Court in Rochester at this time.

The journal chronicles day-to-day activities of plowing, planting, and harvesting of a variety of crops, dealing with hired help and maintaining barns, equipment and tenant houses.

The journal also shows that the sisters, among many other things, experienced their first automobile rides, saw a flying machine at a local fair, traveled throughout the Great Lakes and northeastern U.S., attended numerous concerts in Rochester featuring many nationally and world famous musicians, held many dinner parties, oversaw the extensive remodeling of the Spring Farm house and the installation of the gardens and landscaping, held many Red Cross meetings during WW1, purchased their first automobile and voted for the first time in the 1920 election.



Anne Robson with Wullie



Frances Robson feeding "Benjy"



Sewing party on the side porch



Frances, Molly and Phoebe Robson



Farm workers Richard, Jim and Louis pitching hay

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Mary Ruf (age 9) at Spring Farm –1912



With Judge James Robson and three Robson sisters and her mother, Margaret Ruf, on right at the Bell house



On "Black Beauty"



On the side porch – her apron was made by Anna Allen



With "Black Beauty," driving a wagon

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Spring Farm House Remodeling – 1912-1913



Front Porch



Spring Farm House before Remodeling –

The house was originally built in the 1830's in the Federal style and was characterized by a wraparound porch that extended across the front and around the south side of the house. The back section of the house was only one story and had no basement. The Summer Kitchen building was located to the south of the house in what looks like a barnyard where the formal gardens would eventually be. The front yard was open with what appears to be a metal fence near the road. A large barn was in the rear of the house and slightly to the north and west.



South Side Yard – looking north with Summer Kitchen on right

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Spring Farm House Remodeling – 1912-1913



Spring Farm House Remodeling – The remodeled house design was done by Lloyd P. Adams, an architect from Geneva, NY. Key characteristics of the design were a separate porch for the front door, three dormer windows on the front of the house and a wider side porch. Also, the footprint of the back section of the house was expanded with a second floor added above and a full basement added beneath. Also added to the house at this time were indoor plumbing (with 2 ½ baths), a steam heating system and its own electric generating plant. Construction began in July of 1912 and completed in March of 1913.



Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Spring Farm Garden and Landscaping Installation – 1914-1917

The grounds at Spring Farm were designed by landscape architect John Handrahan. Handrahan, who had been an assistant to Boston landscape architect Ernest Bowditch, is best known for his work with Mary Clark Thompson in realizing her vision for the gardens at her Sonnenberg Estate in Canandaigua, NY. The Spring Farm grounds featured a stone wall with iron gates, brick sidewalks, circular drive, a stone well, a variety of trees and shrubs, formal gardens with crushed stone pathways and a stone, brick and wood tea house. The gardens were removed in the 1940s.

The Grounds



Circular Drive – looking east



Brick front Walk with Gate



Driveway with Gates – looking northeast



Stone Well by Side Porch



Brick front walk – looking east



Driveway Entrance

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Spring Farm Garden and Landscaping Installation – 1914-1917

The Gardens



East Bed of the Gardens – looking north



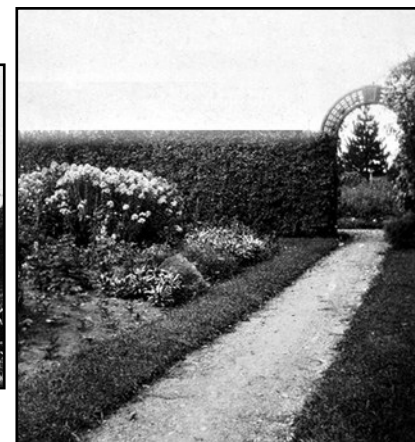
West Bed of Gardens in front with Tea House – looking south



Gardens with Summer Kitchen in rear center and the Ice House behind – looking west and north from the Tea House



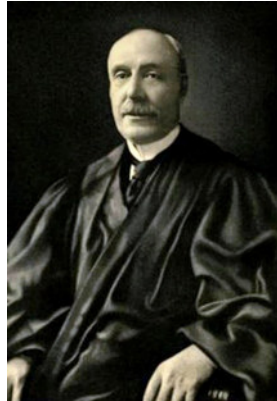
Tea House – looking east



Gardens with lattice arch – looking west

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Anna Allen: *"Time and death brought changes inevitable but those who were left 'Carried on.' Mollie Robson had died in 1914, the first of the second generation to pass away. 'The death of the dear and honored Judge, in 1916, made us stop and wonder.'"*



Judge James Adams Robson

James A. Robson was the son of John and Isabella Robson and was born in Gorham, Ontario County, NY on January 1, 1851. He attended the district school of Gorham until 1865, then he was a student for one year at the Haveling high school at Bath, NY and the Canandaigua Academy in 1867-68. He then matriculated at Yale University, from which he was graduated in 1873 with a degree in Justice of the Bachelor of Arts. He then took up his legal studies in the Law School of Columbia University, New York City, graduating from that institution in 1876 with a degree of Bachelor of Law. He immediately established himself in practice of his profession in Canandaigua and was successfully engaged in it until 1903, when he was appointed justice of the Supreme Court of New York for the Seventh District, filling the vacancy occasioned by the death of the Hon. William H. Adams. In 1904, Mr. Robson was elected for a full fourteen year term. January 8, 1907, he was appointed justice of the Appellate Division, Fourth Department. He always supported Republican principles. Mr. Robson never married. James A. Robson died on February 1, 1916.

APPELLATE COURT JUSTICE DIES AT SPRING FARM HOME

James A. Robson, associate justice of the Appellate Division of Supreme Court, Fourth Department, died yesterday morning at his home, Spring Farm, near Canandaigua. Justice Robson was well known in Rochester, where his court held all its sessions. Justice Robson had been a sufferer from jaundice for some time and just before Christmas was obliged to step down from the bench. Though he had been confined to his home for nearly seven weeks, the news of Justice Robson's death was received yesterday with surprise.

JUSTICE JAMES A. ROBSON.

Born in Gorham, Ontario County, on January 1, 1851, Justice Robson had just passed his 65th year. He was graduated from Yale University in 1873, and in 1876 he completed a law course at Columbia University. From 1876 until 1903 he practiced law in Canandaigua, and on October 19, 1903, he was appointed a justice of the Supreme Court to succeed William H. Adams, deceased.

Justice Robson was elected for a full term of fourteen years in November, 1904. On January 8, 1907, he was appointed associate justice of the Fourth Department of the Appellate Division. He was redesignated for the same position in January, 1912. He leaves four sisters, the Misses Jane, Phoebe, Anne and Frances Robson. The funeral will take place from the home on Friday afternoon at 2 o'clock.

"The death of Justice Robson is a great loss to the state and a deep bereavement to a host of friends," said Justice Arthur E. Sutherland yesterday when informed of Justice Robson's death. Justice Nathaniel Foote, who sat with Justice Robson on the Appellate bench, said: "Justice Robson was a tower of strength in the courts of the state." "His was one of the grandest characters I have ever had the privilege of knowing," said Philetus Chamberlain in speaking from an acquaintance of thirty years. "He had one of the best legal minds, and was the strongest man in equity cases who ever has sat on the bench of this district."

ROBSON FUNERAL

Services for Dead Jurist at His Home at Spring Farm Largely Attended.

The funeral of James A. Robson, justice of the Appellate Court, Fourth Division, took place yesterday afternoon at 2 o'clock from the home at Spring Farm, near Canandaigua. Rev. Dr. John McColl, pastor of Gorham Presbyterian Church, officiated, assisted by Rev. Louis F. Ruf of Cleveland, Ohio, a friend of the family for many years. The bearers were William Witter, Melvin Nelson, Charles Thompson, D. W. Marks, S. Eddy Whitaker and William Mead, all of Gorham. Burial was made in the family lot in the Gorham Cemetery.

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Anna Allen: "Then Anne came to Dr. A. D. Allen for conference and they decided we should continue the Thanksgiving Dinners as long as any of us lived, all furnishing help."



Dr. Alexander D. Allen



Anne Robson

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)



Left to Right: Frances Robson, William Allen Sr., John Ferguson, Elizabeth Allen Ferguson, Anna Suydam Allen, Dr. Alexander D. Allen in the Allen's Gorham home.



Front Back
Christmas Dinner Place Card - 1914

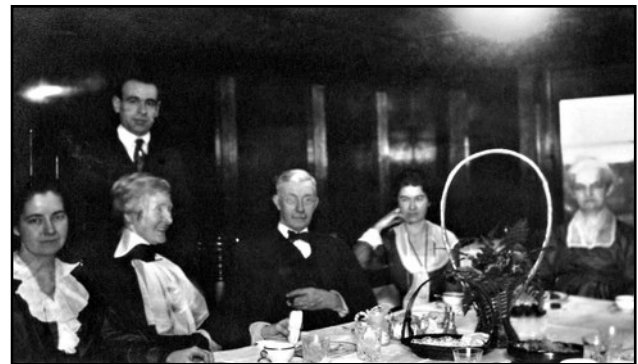
Anna Allen: *“By this time, Christmas Day was for many years celebrated at the home of Dr. A. D. Allen by the same gathering with the addition of the Presbyterian Pastor and his wife then in Gorham, but with regret that Rev. L. F. Ruf’s family could not be present.”*

From the journal of Jane Robson: One thing that is clear from the journal is the very close relationship the Robsons had with the Allens and Rufs. In addition to the yearly Thanksgiving celebrations, Christmas dinner was held at the Allens home in Gorham. The Robsons then would host a dinner on New Year’s Day. Beginning in the late 1910s, the New Year’s dinner was hosted by Elizabeth (Allen) and John Ferguson in their home in Geneva, NY. Dr. and Mrs. Allen would often host a dinner on their wedding anniversary, February 14th. There were many other dinners and visits during each year. James, William, Lloyd and Elizabeth were referred to as the “children.”

Though the Rufs had moved away, they would still attend the Thanksgiving dinner when they could. Every summer, Margaret Ruf and usually some of her children would visit the Robsons for several days, most likely travelling from their nearby summer cottage at Sodus Bay, NY. The journal also notes that some of the Robson sisters visited Sodus Bay on at least two occasions.



Left to Right: Frances Robson, Anne Robson, William Allen Sr., Anna Suydam Allen, Dr. Alexander D. Allen, John Ferguson, Elizabeth Allen Ferguson – circa 1917-18



Seated Left to Right: Elizabeth Allen Ferguson, Anne Robson, Dr. Alexander D. Allen, Hazel Hulburd Allen, Anna Suydam Allen; Standing: John Ferguson

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Reverend Louis Ruf: *“After so long a time, it was unthinkable that Thanksgiving could be, apart from the Spring Farm reunion, although one year it was omitted—those tragic years of the first World War, when little James and Lloyd, grown to manhood, both went overseas as medical officers in the American Army; and Louis Jr., at the end of high school, enlisted with a group of other boys and began a stretch of service in the Navy.”*

Anna Allen: *“James and Lloyd Allen were ‘Over There’ from the beginning to the end of the war. They returned with honor, Dr. James was a Lieutenant Colonel and Dr. Lloyd with a War Cross and a Croix de Guerre Citation from General Petain for unusual bravery. On each of their home-comings the Robson family gave a special Thanksgiving Dinner, which accounts for the two dinners not held the regular Thanksgiving Day. Therefore, there were three Thanksgiving Dinners that year.”*



Lloyd F. and James S. Allen



Major James S. Allen, MD
83rd “Ohio” Division



Lieutenant Lloyd F. Allen, MD
42nd “Rainbow” Division



Louis Ruf Jr.

The Third Generation - Allen



Dr. James S. Allen

Dr. Allen was born in Gorham, NY on January 28, 1884, the oldest child of Dr. Alexander and Anna Allen. He attended Geneva High School and graduated from Syracuse University Medical College, Syracuse NY in 1908. He served with the 83rd Division in WW1. Dr. Allen married Jessie Hislop of Auburn NY in 1920. They had one child, Jane Agnes. Dr. Allen had a medical practice in Geneva and served as Geneva School Physician for many years. He was President of the Geneva City Board of Health for 35 years among other activities. He passed away in 1974 at the age of 90.



Elizabeth Allen Ferguson

Ms. Allen was born in Gorham, NY on December 18, 1885, the second child of Dr. Alexander and Anna Allen. She attended Geneva High School and graduated from Elmira College, Elmira, NY circa 1908. Ms. Allen married John Ferguson of Gorham, NY in 1911. They lived in Geneva, NY. They had no children. Elizabeth volunteered with the Red Cross in both WW1 and WW2. She passed away in 1976 at the age of 90.



William A. Allen Sr.

Mr. Allen was born in Gorham, NY on July 31, 1888, the third child of Dr. Alexander and Anna Allen. He attended Geneva High School and graduated from Syracuse University, Syracuse NY in 1912. Mr. Allen married Rheta Rothrock of Geneva, NY in 1926. They had two children, William Jr. and Barbara. Mr. Allen entered the banking business in 1912 at the National Bank of Geneva. He later became Secretary-Treasurer and ultimately Vice President of the Geneva Savings Bank. He passed away in 1967 at the age of 79.



Dr. Lloyd F. Allen

Dr. Allen was born in Gorham, NY on October 7, 1890, the youngest child of Dr. Alexander and Anna Allen. He attended Geneva High School and graduated from Syracuse University in 1913 and the Syracuse Medical College, Syracuse NY in 1916. He served in medical units in both WW1 and WW2. Dr. Allen married Hazel Hulburt of Rochester, NY in 1919. They had three children, Elizabeth Anne, Alexander, and Katherine. Dr. Allen had a medical practice in Pittsford, NY. He passed away in 1985 at the age of 95.

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Reverend Louis Ruf: *"The war over, the Spring Farm gathering was renewed, with added members as the third generation brought them. Jessie Hislop came as Dr. Jim's bride, bringing great joy and swift sorrow, when all too soon she was taken, leaving her year-old little Jane to comfort a lonely heart.*

And so the fourth generation began, and continued when Dr. Lloyd and his sweet summer sweetheart, Hazel Hulburd, came and Bette Anne, Sandy and Katie joined the company.

Bill Allen brought Rheta (Rothrock), and in time they came with Barbara and little Billy Junior."

From 1912 to 1947 - Reverend Louis Ruf: *"Distance often kept the Ruf folks from regular attendance, until Margaret began her long teaching service in Rochester. Later, Bill, with Bette Weir, came back from California and his World War II Army service, bringing Betsy, and later Carolyn, who helped swell the ranks of the fourth generation."*



Dr. James and Jessie Allen



Dr. Lloyd and Hazel Allen



William and Rheta Allen



Margaret Ruf



William and Elizabeth Ruf



Dr. James S. Allen with his daughter Jane Agnes Allen - 1921



Left to right: Dr. Lloyd, Elizabeth Anne, Hazel, Katherine and Alex (Sandy) Allen



Barbara and William (Jr.) Allen



The fourth generation - Ruf - Left to right: James and John (Nick) Ruf, Ann MacDonald, Rev. Louis Ruf, Betsy Ruf, Carolyn Ruf, Mary MacDonald: missing: George Ruf, Louis Ruf III, and Janice Ruf

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Anna Allen: *"Because of the death of Dr. James S. Allen's lovely wife, who was Miss Jessie Grey Hislop, it became necessary for Dr. and Mrs. A. D. Allen to move to Geneva to keep a home for him and his baby Jane, after which all family gatherings were held at the home of Dr. James S. Allen in Geneva, New York."*



Left to Right: Anna, Jane, Alex (Sandy), Dr. Alexander and Elizabeth Anne Allen in the back yard at 502 South Main St, Geneva NY - 1923



502 South Main St, Geneva NY



Fourth Generation – Allen - Left to right: Alex (Sandy), Elizabeth Anne, William Jr., Barbara and Jane Allen behind 502 South Main St. – 1930, missing is Katherine Allen who was born in 1934.



Left to right: Alex (Sandy), Elizabeth Anne and Jane Allen with Dr. Alexander D. Allen at 502 South Main St. - 1923

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)

Through the 1930's, Jane, Phoebe and Frances (Fanny) Robson passed away. Louis Ruf: *"The second generation were the old folks now, their days passing like a weaver's shuttle. In 1934, Dr. Alex found rest after his years of healing work and felt for himself the touch of the seamless dress which had helped him often at beds of pain."*

Anna Allen: *"The Thanksgiving gatherings continued until 1939. We knew Anne, the last of the Robsons, could not be with us long. We went through the day and when the time for parting came each one shook Anne's hand and smiling said, 'Just another beautiful Thanksgiving Day to remember. What a nice time we had.' I added, 'Remember Christmas is coming,' to which Anne replied, 'I'll be there,'" and she was."*



Anne Robson in the living room at Spring Farm

Anna Allen: *"This last Christmas (1939) was our dear Anne's last appearance. She came a frail, delicate, little lady brought by her faithful caretaker Curtin. Although frail, she sat erect through the gay dinner and after dinner, wanting no help, she found her favorite chair and seemed interested in the gaieties of the young people until Curtin came for her. At the door there were only smiling faces, when she turned and bravely said, 'Good Night - Merry Christmas' and was taken by Curtin to her dear home. She was a dear, brave, loyal person."*

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1853-1939)



Reverend Louis Ruf: *“When Anne, last of the Robson family, was laid to rest on the quiet hillside where the others slept near their friends, she bequeathed the dear place [Spring Farm] to the three sons of her friend, Dr. A.D. Allen, that they of the third generation might in turn carry on.”*

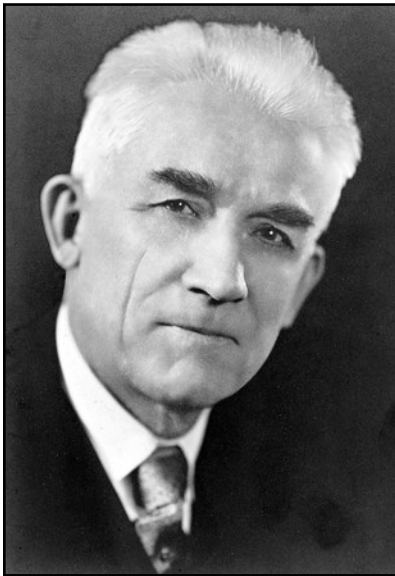
Anna Allen: *“We are most thankful for the beautiful memories around that home and most happy that she willed the Allen family to ‘Carry On.’”*

A photograph of a paved driveway leading to a gated entrance at Spring Farm. The driveway is light-colored and curves towards a black metal gate. The gate is flanked by stone pillars and is set against a backdrop of dense green trees and bushes. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Chapter 4 - Thanksgiving at Spring Farm - 1940-2011

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1940-2011)

As the 1940s began, only Anna Allen and Margaret and Louis Ruf of the second generation were left; and all too soon Anna was gone from those who loved her.



Reverend Dr. Louis F. Ruf



Margaret A. Ruf



Anna S. Allen

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1940-2011)

Reverend Louis Ruf: *“When the fourth generation had passed from childhood and youth to maturity, the world plunged again into war, bringing tragedy and grief to millions, and our group did not escape. Dr. Lloyd was called again to serve overseas; and Sandy, his son, was numbered among those fliers whose wings, alas, carried so many out over the sea of Eternity, ‘never more to meet us here.’ Billy Ruf left his teaching to give four years of service with the Army”* William Allen Jr. joined the Navy on graduating high school in 1945.

Soon after the war, Margaret Ruf passed, leaving only Louis from the second generation.



Lt. Col. Lloyd F. Allen, M.D.,
19th General Hospital Unit



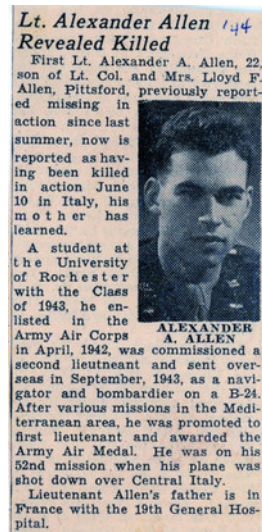
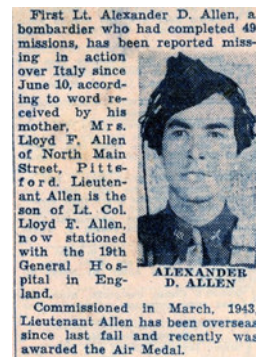
1st Lt. Alexander D. Allen
379th AAF Bomber Squadron



William Ruf



William A. Allen Jr.



Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1940-2011)

Since 1940, succeeding generations of Allens and Rufs followed Anne Robson's wish that the Thanksgiving tradition "carry on" at Spring Farm. For many years, Spring Farm remained unoccupied. The sons of Alexander and Anna Allen, James, Lloyd and William, along with William Jr., maintained the house and property.



Dr. James S. Allen



William A. Allen Sr.



Dr. Lloyd F. Allen



William Allen Jr

William Allen Jr., in addition to many other activities, devoted a great deal of time to maintaining the Spring Farm house and grounds throughout his adult life. He did it because he enjoyed it (it was his primary hobby) and because he loved the family history and Thanksgiving tradition associated with Spring Farm. It's safe to say that without his lifetime of efforts the Thanksgiving celebration would not have continued for anywhere near as long as it did.



William A. Allen Sr. - 1945

Farm Scenes - 1945 - 1951



William Allen Sr. and William Allen Jr. - near the Spring Barn, ¼ mile east of the Spring Farm house (across County Rd. #17) - 1951



Dr. James S. Allen - near the Spring Barn, ¼ mile east of the Spring Farm house (across County Rd. #17)



Left to right - William Allen Jr., Arlene Rothrock, William Allen Sr. and Henry McIntyre on tractor



Left to right - William Allen Sr., Arlene Rothrock, Dr. James Allen and Henry McIntyre on tractor, near the Spring Barn

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1940-2011)

In November of each year, William and his wife, Rheta Rothrock Allen, would move to Spring Farm on the weekend prior to Thanksgiving. With help from Dr. James S. Allen and their children, they graciously hosted the extended Allen and Ruf families for the holiday festivities.

The Thanksgiving menu remained virtually unchanged from earlier days. James and William Allen would be sure to plant yellow tomatoes in the Spring Farm gardens, each year, for the traditional Thanksgiving soup.



In the kitchen: left to right: Rheta Allen, Pearl Francisco (caretaker)



1950 - Dinner – one of at least two tables



Soups on! The first course

Thanksgiving was a big production and even more so before any of the Allens lived at the farm full time. For forty plus years, Rheta Allen oversaw and coordinated the tasks required to make the day and week go smoothly. These included having family members (and sometimes hired help) assist in cleaning the house, making beds, washing dishes and polishing silver, ironing tablecloths, setting up tables and preparing food for the Thanksgiving dinner. Attendance averaged well over 20 people each year, and there was usually a full house of overnight and sometimes multi-night guests. All was accomplished year in and year out with her kind and generous spirit always on display.

The “dinner bell” that was traditionally rung to call everyone to the table for the Thanksgiving meal.



Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1940-2011)

The 1950's



Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1940-2011)

1958



Wagon ride to the
Spring Barn



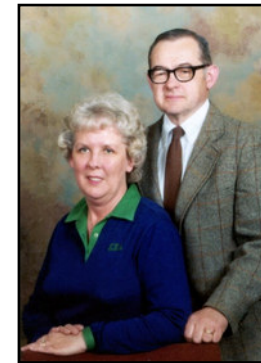
The Spring Barn

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1940-2011)

As time went on through the 1960's and 1970's, many in the younger generations began to move away from the central New York area. Though now widely scattered, family members would make an extra effort to return each year. Though most of the meal was prepared at Spring Farm, visiting relatives would bring dishes to pass, including a second turkey, and help to prepare and serve the meal. There were sometimes as many as thirty-one relatives in attendance. Though not everyone could come every year, many made the trip from places like Massachusetts, Maine, Canada, Ohio, Florida, North Carolina, Virginia, California, Illinois and more.

In 1964, at the age of 99, Reverend Dr. Louis Ruf, the last of the 2nd generation, passed away.

1960's



Elsa and William Allen Jr.

1970's



In 1976, William Allen Jr. and his wife Elsa Helleland Allen moved to Spring Farm to maintain and renovate the house and grounds.

Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1940-2011)

Through 1980's and 1990's, and into the 2000's, William Jr. and Elsa Allen along with Barbara (Allen) Jones of the fourth generation continued to host Thanksgiving. Year after year members of the third and fourth generations as well as many of the fifth generation and their children continued to attend. All pitched in to help prepare and serve the meal.



From the Brighton-Pittsford Post – Pittsford, N.Y. - November 1983 – pictured - Betty Anne (Allen) Crichton

A Thanksgiving Tradition For 130 Years...

By Cindy Loomis
For many families, the holidays are a time of tradition. But how many families can claim a tradition of almost 130 years?
For the Allen family, it all began in the early 1850's. Dr. James Allen, a bachelor, was invited to share Thanksgiving dinner with the John Robsons at Spring Farm, the family home. The friendship grew. Dr. Allen and his bride were invited for the next

Thanksgiving, and the following year Dr. and Mrs. Allen and son Alexander Duncan Allen were invited.
The three Allens and their daughter, Margaret, continued to spend Thanksgiving at Spring Farm. Margaret later married Dr. Louis F. Ruf, who served as minister of the Pittsford First Presbyterian Church. Alexander married and had four children – Dr. James, William, Dr. Lloyd, and Elizabeth Allen Furguson.

They also spent Thanksgiving with the Robsons at Spring Farm.
The Robsons' children never married, and upon their death, Spring Farm was inherited by James, William, and Lloyd.
William, son of William, presently lives at Spring Farm.
Dr. Lloyd Allen moved to Pittsford in 1919 to practice

medicine; he didn't completely stop practicing until 10 years ago. Dr. Allen celebrated his 90th birthday Oct. 7.

Dr. Allen's daughter is Mrs. William Crichton, who is also secretary at Christ Episcopal Church. She and her family live on Calkins Rd. in Pittsford.

Mrs. Crichton said that

anywhere from 19 to 35 members of the Allen and Ruf families gather for dinner. "Anyone who is within striking range comes," she said. Although there were servants to prepare and serve the dinner in Robson's day, all contribute toward the meal now. It takes two 20 to 25 pound turkeys to feed the clan.

The menu has remained essentially the same through the years, with all the traditional foods served. One

very Allen tradition in the menu is yellow tomato soup -- soup made from yellow tomatoes grown on the farm.
The farm was originally about 1,000 acres. It is now about 300 acres, most of it farmed by a tenant farmer.

(Continued on Page 3)

MRS. WILLIAM Crichton and relatives have celebrated almost 130 Thanksgivings at Spring Farm. She is holding a picture of the house.



Thanksgiving

(Continued from Page 1)

The house, Mrs. Crichton guesses, is about 200 years old. "It was well-established when my great-grandfather first went to dinner," she said. Thanksgiving is the only time of the year the whole family gathers at Spring Farm. Next year the tradition will continue.

THE BRIGHTON-PITTSFORD POST



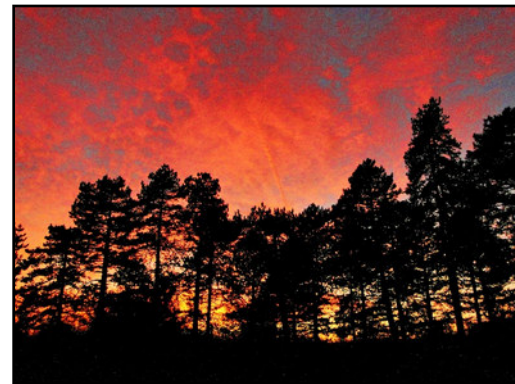
Thanksgiving at Spring Farm (1940-2011)

2011

In the 2000's, the 4th generation carried on as the younger generations had, for the most part, moved away from the area. Still, many from the fifth, sixth, and seventh generations were able to return.



Then, with William Allen Jr.'s passing in 2012, the 2011 Thanksgiving celebration became the last one the family held at Spring Farm. There the tradition ended after 158 years. From the first gathering until the last, the tradition started by John and Isabella Robson and Dr. James and Phebe Allen and continued by their children was marked by friendship and familial camaraderie that was passed down through seven generations. A blessing for us all.



Sunset – Thanksgiving Day, November 24, 2011

Reverend Dr. Louis Ruf: *"May the faith cherished by the men and women who began this wonderful fellowship continue in the lives of those who follow, and so guide them that they too may say: 'Surely goodness and mercy have followed us all the days of life and we shall dwell in the House of the Lord forever.'*
The Quaker poet, Whittier, long ago wrote the story of such human hopes and memories in the familiar lines of Snowbound:"

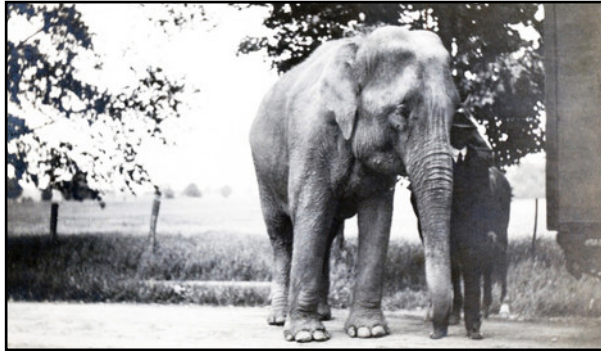
*"Henceforward, listen as we will,
The voices of that hearth are still;
Look where we may, the wide earth o'er
Those lighted faces smile no more.
We tread the paths their feet have worn,
We sit beneath their orchard trees,
We hear, like them, the hum of bees
And rustle of the bladed corn;
We turn the pages that they read,
Their written words we linger o'er,
But in the sun they cast no shade,
No voice is heard, no sign is made,
No step is on the conscious floor.
Yet Love will dream, and Faith will trust,
That somehow, somewhere, meet we must*

** * * * **

*For Life is ever lord of Death,
And Love can never lose its own."*

References

- Memories – Anna Suydam Allen – 1940
Thanksgiving at Spring Farm – A Tribute – Rev. Dr. Louis F. Ruf – 1955
- 10,000 Vital Records of Western New York
A History of New York State – Ellis/Frost/Syrett/Carman, revised edition – 1967
A History of the Town of Seneca – Rodney S. Lightfoote - 1989
Allen and Ruf family history notes – William A. Ruf
American Gardens (1890-1930) – Acanthus Press 2006
Ancestry.com
Archive.org – Internet Archive
Archive of photos and papers from Spring Farm
Batie Family History-Emigration to Ontario (Canada) – 1990s
Buffalo Courier-1883 – “A Bit of Romance in Ontario”
Children of John Thomas Allen and Margaret Porter-Genealogy-March 15, 1961
Descendants of Simon Ray-Genealogy
Descendants of Charles and Barbara Jones – October 31, 2010
Dr. James H. Allen and Phebe S. Allen Family History-draft-William Allen Jr.-2010
Family Record in the Holy Bible belonging to David and Sarah Stevenson - 1872
Familysearch.org
Findagrave.com
Geneva Gazette-1851
Geneva Courier
History of Ontario County NY – 1788-1876
History of Ontario County – Aldrich/Conover – 1893
History of Ontario County NY and its People – 1911
- Landmarks of Steuben County, NY - Hon. Harlo Hakes
Letter from Aunt Elvie to Helen (and Phebe) Stevenson– Dec 21, 1848
Letter from Eliza P. Allen to John T. Allen Jr.- March 10, 1849
Letter from James H. Allen to John T. Allen Jr. – April 1, 1851
Letter from Dr. James H. Allen to John T. Allen Jr.-April 8, 1853
Letter and photos from Mary Ruf Swan to William Allen Jr.–January 27, 1986
New York in the Revolution as Colony and State - Volume 1 - Office of the State Comptroller
NYGENWEB.net
Ontario County, NY Atlas – 1874
Ontario County, NY Atlas – 1904
Record of Events on Spring Farm-Daily Journal – July 4, 1907 – November 4, 1922 – Jane Robson
Robson Family of Gorham-Triumph and Tragedy-G. Henry, Historian, Gorham, NY-2013
Roger Williams and the Creation of the American Soul - John M. Barry
Sonnenberg.org
Telfer Family – Pamphlet – 1928
Thanksgiving - Betty Hallenbeck – circa 1972
Thanksgiving notes 1961-1988 – Rheta Allen
Thanksgiving Photos-1982 - Peter Hallenbeck
US Census Records
Venard-Van Antwerp, etc Genealogy - Compiled by Daniel Venard
William and Catherine Allen Genealogy
Will of Anne Robson - 1940
Will of James Robson Sr.-1852



On the road, in front of the Spring Farm house,
“elephant visited us,” June 17, 1917 – journal
entry and photo by Jane Robson

2025 - WWAA

WWAA