

Edward Sammons & Harriet O'Connor
(1820) (1821)

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My grandfather, Charles Sammons (1873-1955), had a family whose past was a mystery at best. His children all remember that they were never to ask what happened to him. Consequently, no one ever knew anything.

It turns out that he had an extensive family, many of whom lived in the Towanda area. His father was William Henry Sammons (1848-1924) who had his origins in New York State, in Dutchess County where he was the son of Edward Sammons (b.1820) and Harriet O'Connor (b.1821), my great great grandparents.

Sammons was a well-known name in Montgomery County, New York. Several had served the country during the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812 and the Civil War. Sampson Sammons (b.1722) and three of his sons were taken prisoner in the Revolutionary War. His wife and daughters were left destitute after their home and farm were destroyed. He would survive and have 14 descendants serve in the Union army during the Civil War including Simeon Sammons (b.1811). Many were prominent in local affairs beginning in the mid 1700s. For further information, see the Montgomery County Historical Society.

Edward Sammons and Harriet O'Connor lived in the area of East Fishkill, New York. It was a farming region with many apple orchards and cider mills. When the railroad arrived, a major depot was built at Hopewell Junction but this would occur after the 1860s. Formal documents for vital records are not completely available for this place and era so other sources were used. Two of the local papers of that era were the Poughkeepsie Journal (PJ) and the Poughkeepsie Eagle (PE). Both of them reported that Edward and Harriet were married on October 27, 1841 in Fishkill by the Rev. A. Underwood. He was 21 and she was 20 at the time. The PJ reported it on November 3, 1841 and the PE reported it on October 30, 1841. The papers reported it as:

Sammons & O'Connor wedding announcement
By the Rev.A. Underwood, on the 27th ult.,
Mr. Reward (by PJ) Sammon, (Edward by PE)
to
Miss Harriet Cornor,
both of Fishkill.

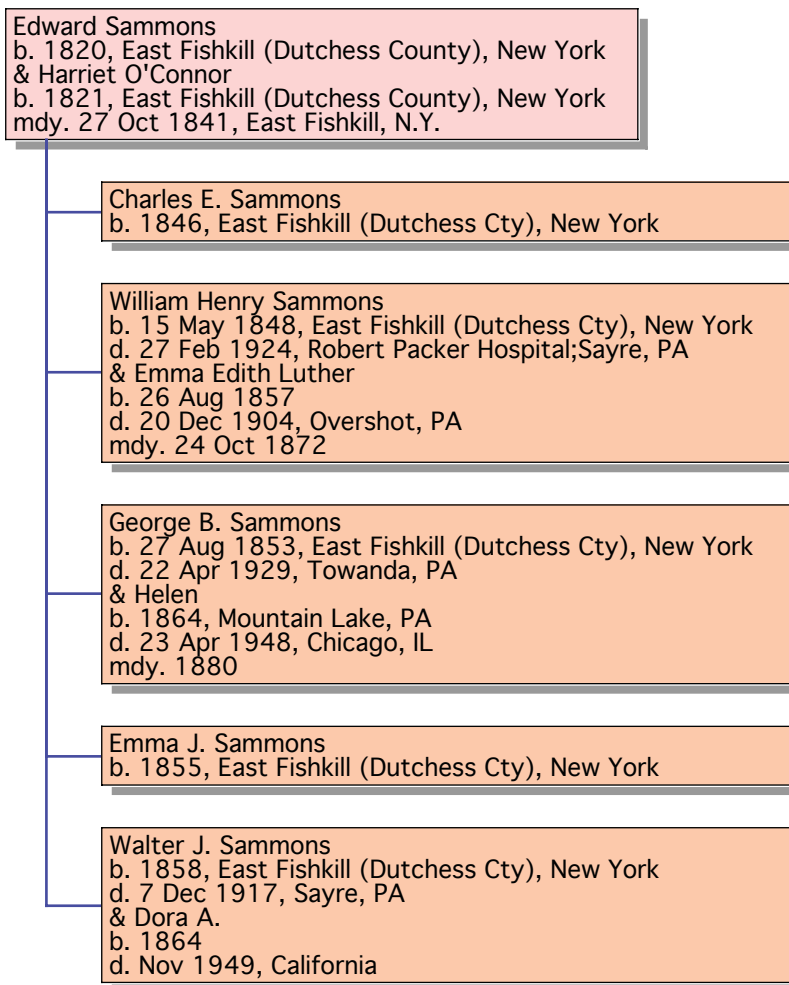
There were errors with the spelling of both names. It is unlikely that Edward and Harriet knew of the errors because neither of them could read. This marriage information was captured

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through a WPA project of the 1930's. Old and decaying newspapers were canvassed to capture vital records before the papers irrevocably decayed. When they recorded this marriage, they made an error in their names by calling them: "Mr. Reward Sammon to Miss Harriet Cornor, both of Fishkill". The Eagle is no longer in business and the local Fishkill librarian provided this information to me on November 13, 2000.

Edward and Harriet had five children:

- Charles E., M (1846-)



- William Henry, M (1848-1924)
- George B., M (1853-1929)
- Emma J., F (1855-)
- Walter J., M (1858-1917)

According to the census of 1860 in Dutchess County, New York, in the town of East Fishkill, Edward Sammons and Harriet O'Connor were listed with their five children at that time. Edward appears as a 40-year old laborer with Harriet being 39 and the five children are listed as: Charles

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age 14, William age 12, George age 7, Emma age 5, and Walter age 2. William is my great grandfather and the father of Charles Sammons, my mother's father. It is likely that my own grandfather, Charles, was named for his uncle Charles who was 14 at the time of that census.

From this information I've been able to determine that Edward Sammons was a laborer who was born in 1820 (eleven years after the birth of Abraham Lincoln). His wife Harriet O'Connor, age 39, was born in 1821. At that time, they all resided in New York State and it is likely that they were born there, although further research will have to be done. At the time of their births, the president was James Monroe.

All of their children were born in New York State in Dutchess County in the town of East Fishkill. Charles was born in 1846 and Emma in 1855. It is likely that Emma moved to Pennsylvania with her brothers George and Walter because she is listed on the 1880 census in that region. Other than this information, we have no further records on either Charles or Emma.

The 1880 census records Ed Sammons, age 60, as a farm laborer. He is either widowed or divorced at that time. He indicated that he was born in New York State and so were both of his parents. There is no further information about Harriet O'Connor Sammons. If she were deceased, she would have died before age 39.

William Henry, George B., and Walter all moved to Bradford County, Pennsylvania where they all married girls from the Burlington Mountain area.

William Henry married Emma Edith Luther, circa 1872, and they had two children: Charles (my grandfather) and Vespacious, known as "Uncle Vet." At his death in 1924, William Henry was listed as a widower, so we don't know if he had remarried or not. It turns out that Emma Luther Sammons divorced William in 1877 and it was reported in the local paper on September 6, 1877. William's death certificate indicates that he died of gangrenous genitalis with complications of uremia.

After their divorce, Emma Edith married Franklin Granger, a Civil War veteran, and they had two children together-- Enoch and Mabel. Franklin was born in 1845 and died March 19, 1916. After the divorce, William Henry moved to Waverly, New York where he was listed as a janitor for the Lehigh Valley Railroad.

George B. Sammons was born August 27, 1853 and died April 22, 1929. He married Helen ?? who was born in 1864 and died April 23, 1948. In an article written in the Towanda Daily Review on April 23, 1929, George was well remembered. According to that article, he was born in Poughkeepsie, New York in 1853 and he and wife, Helen, came to Towanda after they were married in 1880. I suspect that he was really from East Fishkill and used the reference to Poughkeepsie because it was a bigger and more well-known city. For more than 35 years, he was a janitor of the high school there and became acquainted with thousands of youngsters, practically all of who remember

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him. It was noted that he had a cheery word for everyone and, because of his sunny disposition, he held friends by the score.

In the 1880 census of Burlington Township (Bradford County, Pa.), George is listed as a 23 year old “bark peeler” along with a brother Walter and sister Annie who was 15 at that time. Their name was misspelled as Simons rather than Sammons on that set of records. This was not uncommon as the census was conducted by different people every ten years and they would not know the details about any residents.

According to the Daily Review on Tuesday, April 23, 1929, “George B. Sammons, one of Towanda's oldest and most widely known residents, died at 10:45 o'clock last night at his home on Bridge Street. He had been in poor health all winter and on Friday last suffered a slight shock.

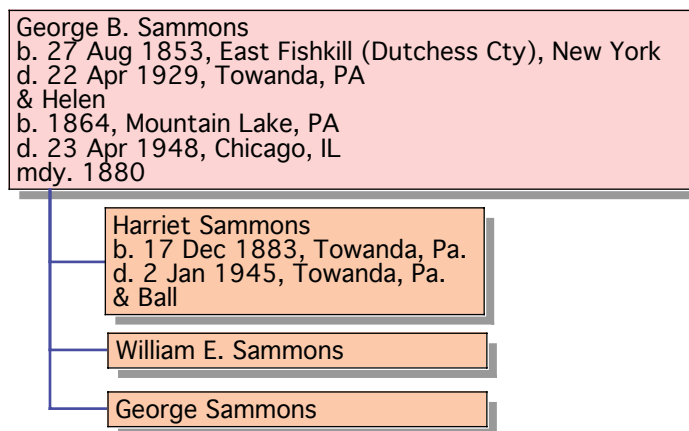
Mr. Sammons was born at Poughkeepsie, N.Y. in 1853. In 1880, he and Mrs. Sammons were married and came to Towanda where they have resided ever since. For more than 35 years, he was janitor of the high school here and in that way became acquainted with thousands of youngsters, practically all of who remember him. Because of that, there are probably very few men better known in Towanda. In recent years, he has been more or less retired.

He always had a cheery word for everyone and because of his sunny disposition, made and held friends by the score.

Mr. Sammons is survived by his wife; one daughter, Mrs. Harriet Ball of Towanda; and two sons, William E. of Chicago and George Jr. of Hazleton.

Funeral services will be held Thursday afternoon at 3 o'clock. Burial will be in Oak Hill cemetery”.

His cause of death is listed as general arteriosclerosis with contributory chronic nephritis (4 years) and uremia (14 days). His wife reported his death.



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Helen Sammons was born in 1864 in Mountain Lake, PA. and died in Chicago on April 23, 1948. She was a lifelong resident of Bradford County, Pa. and had lived in Towanda since her marriage to George in 1880. She had gone to live with her son William after her daughter's death (Mrs. Harriet Sammons Ball) in January 1945.

George and Helen had three children. Harriet Sammons Ball was born on December 17, 1883 and lived until January 2, 1946. She was a well-known teacher in the Towanda school system. They also had two sons: William E. who is listed as having lived in Chicago, New York; and George who was listed in several different cities, among them being Hazleton, PA. Harriet, William and George would be first cousins to my grandfather, Charlie Sammons.

Another brother, Walter J. Sammons, also lived in the Towanda area. He married Dora A. ?? In the 1880 census of Burlington Township (Bradford County, Pa.), Walter is listed as a 20 year old "bark peeler" along with a brother George B. and Annie. As reported in the local paper of December 10, 1917, Walter J. Sammons died at his home on Keystone Avenue in Sayre, Pa. on Friday (12/7/1917). He was survived by his widow Dora and his son Lee. He moved to Sayre from North Waverly about one year earlier. His funeral was held at his home at 2pm on Sunday and was officiated by the Baptist pastor (Rev. J.E.Mile).

Walter J. Sammons
b. 1858, East Fishkill (Dutchess Cty), New York
d. 7 Dec 1917, Sayre, PA
& Dora A.
b. 1864
d. Nov 1949, California

Lee E. Sammons
b. 1888
d. 16 Apr 1942, Alameda, CA

His wife Dora signed his death certificate. He was a machinist who was born in 1858 and died December 7, 1917. The cause of death was Valvulus Disease contributed by Bright's disease. Walter and Dora had a son, Lee E., who was another cousin of my grandfather. Walter, Dora, Lee, George, and William are all buried at the Tioga Point Cemetery in Athens, PA.

So, it seems that my grandfather had numerous relatives in the Towanda area. None of my aunts and uncles or my mother was aware of this and may have had interactions with people who were blood kin and did not know it.