

# Case Studies of Gillespie Families in Dutchess & Orange, New York 1800-1830

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October 12, 2012

This article is meant to accompany another article I wrote, *Background for Researching Michigan Greer & Gillespie Families in Orange & Dutchess Counties, New York, 1800-1830*. While the previous article discusses “positive” details of my research, meaning those details that can be or might be based on educated speculation, directly associated with my family group, this article discusses the “negative” results of my research, which is to say, here are all the rocks I have turned over and none of my family group have been found hiding underneath. Nevertheless, this “negative” strategy is a method I learned from doing Sudoku puzzles, which is to say one can often figure out what something is by figuring out what it is not. Sometimes it's a simple process of elimination.

This article therefore summarizes my “negative” research done to date for Gillespie families found in Dutchess and Orange counties in New York during 1800-1830, and a similar summary can be found in a separate article I wrote for the Greer family. The sources I have searched include federal and state census', probate records, deed records, gravestone records, as well as online family trees and databases. It should be noted there are two record types where I have not spent a lot of time: immigration (passenger lists or naturalization records), or military records. It remains a BIG question in my mind how the Greer and Gillespie families of my branch got along in the new world as it appears they were arriving on the cusp of the War of 1812, which to my understanding was a defining war for our country. How would Scot-Irish families be regarded, coming as they did from the British Isles? Were they required to sign an oath of allegiance? Were they regarded as aliens and deported as such (meaning they emigrated a second time)? There is much about this time period that I cannot easily associate with my NY Greer-Gillespie's, so it's an ongoing question as I do my research.

The research and case studies presented in this article are a work in progress, which I admit is not complete at this point. I furthermore cannot testify that there are not erroneous statements to be found herein. Nevertheless I hope that other researchers might read these articles and see clues or associations based on their experience or knowledge about these or related families who lived in these regions (Dutchess and Orange) during these times (1800-1830).

## What I'm Looking For

To quickly summarize from my previous article, I am looking for the surname GILLESPIE (variant spellings can include GILLASPIE, GILLISPIE, GILLESPIY, GILLASPIY, GALASPIY, GLASPIE). Specifically I am interested in finding two Greer couples where the Greer's were brothers and who were both married to Gillespie sisters, their marriages probably occurring back in Ireland, thought to be County Armagh. One such couple has been identified as James Greer and Jane Gillespie Greer, who probably arrived in New York area between 1806-1812, and lived in the Pleasant Valley area of Dutchess County where they attended the Pleasant Valley Presbyterian church and had several children christened there. I have not been able to yet identify the second Greer-Gillespie couple, but believe the

second Gillespie sister's name was Nancy (known to be a sister of Jane), who was first married to a Greer, maybe named Robert, although we're not sure who that person was or if he was a brother of James Greer.

I believe these particular Greer-Gillespie families lived first in Dutchess County in the 1810-1825 time frame, and then they moved across the river to Orange County before migrating to Michigan around 1832. Two other Gillespie names from this branch are confirmed to have resided from New York before migrating to Michigan: Elizabeth Gillespie (1787-1857) and Thomas Gillespie (born in NY in 1816, married Ellen McClung in MI). Other Gillespie's who arrived in Michigan and are tied to my family and who may or may not have resided in NY previous to MI were: **James Gillespie** (b. 1772 Ireland), **Thomas Gillespie** (1777-1859), **Isabella Gillespie** (1813-1891), and **Mary Ann Gillespie** (b. 1818 Ireland).

I feel I must make note of a family that might be related, but which I have excluded for the time being from my research, and that is any family with the surname SMITH. We know without doubt that one of the Gillespie daughters from the second marriage of John Gillespie, Sarah, married John Smith and had at least one child in Armagh, Ireland before emigrating to Quebec. The children of the first marriage had already emigrated to America by then, but there is no reason not to think that Smith families from the Armagh region might not also have been emigrating to America. It's been rather difficult for me to ignore Smith names when I see them in Orange County, and in fact there are plenty. There is even a deed record in Orange County between a James Gillespie and a Jacob D. Smith. Were they family? This article does not even pretend to address this extra layer of complexity in possible family connections in my branch.

Finally, in my work to identify and catalog each Gillespie family who appeared in Dutchess and Orange counties during the 1800-1830 time-frame, it would seem almost all of them are connected to families who arrived earlier than 1800. What I am looking for, however, are the Gillespie families who were new to the scene starting around 1800. Whether any newly arriving Gillespie families were related to those Gillespie's who arrived before 1800 is a different question I think. My strategy has been to first see if I can identify any Gillespie families who were relatively new to the scene in the 1800-1830 time frame.

## Limiting the Focus

In Dutchess County, there were not that many Gillespie names to investigate, so I present here what I found. In Orange County, however, the story is quite different as many, many Gillespie names appear. Rather than elaborate on each Gillespie name found in Orange County between 1800 and 1830, in this article I am going to focus on the names I believe have the most possibility of connecting with my branch. For the sake of brevity in a discussion of Gillespie's in Orange County, I am eliminating all Gillespie names EXCEPT John, James, and Robert, as well as any women's names (of which there were two: Sarah and Polly). There are two reasons for this:

- Even though not presented here, I have cataloged all other Gillespie names appearing in Orange County (any exceptions will be noted).
- Many of the early male names in my Michigan family include John, James, and Robert, and nowhere in my branch can be found names like Samuel, Matthew, Stephen, David, Abraham, or Cyrenius. William, however, is a name that can be found in my branch, but not until two

generations after settling in Michigan. In addition, careful analysis of the William's found in the Pine Bush Gillespie group has not revealed any clues that might infer a connection between Pine Bush and Michigan. As always, I admit that connections might nevertheless exist even if I don't currently know what they are.

So with this limited focus stated, let me summarize my understanding of the Orange County Gillespie group who will only be referred to in passing in this article.

## Pine Bush Gillespie's

Probably the most documented family of Gillespie's in the Ulster/Orange County, NY area are the Samuel Gillespie family who I will simply refer to as the Pine Bush Gillespie's. When I say Samuel Gillespie, I refer to the Samuel Gillespie born 23 Sep 1742 in Ulster, NY and died 17 Sep 1815 in Montgomery, NY. This Samuel served in the Revolution, married Esther Rainey and they had 12 children born in NY from 1770-1781: William, Anne (Allen), Mary (Douglas), Stephen, Susannah (Milspaugh), Samuel, Nathaniel, Joseph S., Abraham, David, Matthew, and Esther (Stewart).

There are differing accounts about the parents of this Samuel. Some say his father was named David Gillespie, but most say his father was Samuel Gillespie, Sr. who came from County Armagh, Ireland between 1690-1715. Samuel had a sister, Elizabeth, who was married to Robert Hunter. There was in fact a Samuel Gillespie Sr. who died in 1815 in Montgomery, NY and is buried at the Pine Bush Cemetery. His will mentions brothers Matthew (m. Jane Neely) and William who apparently died in 1813 before his brother and without issue. And here is one more clue. Several undocumented accounts say that Samuel had one more brother named **James Gillespie<sup>1</sup>**, which is very much of interest to me but for which no evidence has surfaced that indicates any connections.

The Pine Bush family is interesting because a) they occupied Ulster/Orange County, NY where my Michigan pioneers were supposed to have originated from before migrating, b) the Rainey and Crawford surnames (among others) associated with the Pine Bush Gillespie's can also be associated with Greer's, c) County Armagh, Ireland is the point of origin of my branch of Gillespie.

However, after three years of research, I have not found one connection beyond the generalities just mentioned between this family group and my Gillespie branch. In particular I have looked for Pine Bush Gillespie's who might have been relations of my missing Gillespie's: Elizabeth, James, Thomas Sr., Thomas Jr., Isabella, and Mary Ann. The first three of these names were born in the 1770s in Ireland, and the Pine Bush Gillespie's were well settled in Ulster/Orange county by that time. Next, I have been through every male descendant of Samuel and Esther Gillespie, and don't find one occurrence of the name Isabella or Thomas. Finally, Mary Ann Gillespie, wife of Henry P. Sloat, was supposedly born in Ireland, but I believe she might have had connections to the Pine Bush family by virtue of the fact that she named a son Renwick. However, any actual connection, if it exists, has not yet been found.

## Gillespie Background

Before getting into details about my Gillespie research, I want to share the context within which I work. Like most genealogists, I find myself always balancing what I know with what has been passed

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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that this James Gillespie, if he existed, would have been born roughly around 1739. So if he is connected to my branch, I might be looking for a descendant of his. The rub is that the older James Gillespie who showed up in Michigan in 1850 was born in Ireland.

down in stories. In this case, what I know about my Gillespie family group is that I am descended from the John Gillespie's marriage to his second wife, Sarah Woods. The children from that marriage: Sarah, Robert, James, and Alexander, all emigrated to Quebec in the 1837-1847 time frame, and my ggg-grandfather Robert moved his family to Michigan in 1855, where as they say, the rest is history. But we have recently determined that children from John Gillespie's first marriage (wife unknown) arrived in Michigan by way of NY at least 20 years earlier – those children being Elizabeth, Nancy, and Jane Gillespie Greer, all of whom have become the focus of my research.

The next thing I can say definitively about the family group I am working with is that the oldest child of John Gillespie's first marriage who we know about is Nancy Gillespie, who was born about 1780. That would mean her father, John Gillespie was born about 1760. The Gillespie Family Record, however, tells us this about John Gillespie:

**John Gillespie, a farmer and a weaver, whose father came from Glasgow, Scotland, was well-known in the county and was instrumental in raising a company of volunteers for Lord Charlemont in the Rebellion of 1798. Born in 1780, John Gillespie lived to the great age of 100.**

Well, the 1780 birth date cannot be correct if the oldest child of John Gillespie was born in 1780. What it suggests to me, however, is that perhaps the father John Gillespie, born around 1760, also had a son named John Gillespie, who could have been born in 1780 (perhaps he and Nancy were twins?). Perhaps John Gillespie, Jr. remained behind in Ireland, or perhaps he too emigrated. For this reason, I always keep an eye open for the name John Gillespie in my NY research.

Secondly, we know that John Gillespie had a son named Thomas who remained behind in Ireland. We know this because of deed records found in Michigan pertaining to the inheritance of Elizabeth Gillespie's land. A deed dated 1860 transfers land from Thomas Gillespie of Cavanacaw, Armagh, Ireland to John Robert Slater, the son of Mary Greer Slater. The document was apparently executed by George Cochran, an Armagh solicitor. If nothing else, this document ties the children of John Gillespie's first marriage, specifically Elizabeth, Nancy, Jane, and Thomas, to County Armagh.

## **A Word About Naming Patterns**

Before I launch into documentary evidence, I will also share analysis I have done on Scot-Irish naming patterns. While I understand that such a pattern may or may not have been applied, I nevertheless present my analysis here.

John M. Greer and Isabella Gillespie Greer had 15 children in Michigan from 1834-1859 in this order: James Henry, Mary G., John Jr., Charles L., Eliza Jane, Isabelle, Emily (Emma), Nancy (Nellie), Robert, Thomas, Joseph W., George W., Adaline, Flora, and Edward.

Here is one summary of traditional Scot-Irish naming patterns I found from an internet source:

- 1st Son named after Fathers Father
- 2nd Son named after Mothers Father
- 3rd Son named after the Father
- 4th Son named after Father's eldest brother
- 5th Son named after 2nd oldest brother or mother's eldest brother

1st Daughter named after Mothers Mother  
2nd Daughter named after Fathers Mother  
3rd Daughter named after Mother  
4th Daughter named after Mothers eldest sister  
5th Daughter named after 2nd oldest sister or Fathers eldest sister

I have used this information to attempt a guess at who Isabella's parents might have been. So here's how it works out for the children of John and Isabella Greer:

- first son was named James Henry and should be named for father's father. John M. Greer's father was named James. Check.
- first daughter was named Mary and should be named for mother's mother. We might guess that Isabella's mother's name was Mary.
- second son was named John and should be named for mother's father. Again we might guess that Isabella's father's name was John. This one is tricky as I have often assumed John Jr. was named after his father.
- second daughter was named Eliza Jane and should be named for father's mother. John M. Greer's mother was named Jane, we might surmise Eliza Jane.
- third son was named Charles, and should be named after the father. This does not work in this case. So far, I don't know anybody named Charles on either side, so this one is a bit of a mystery.
- third daughter was named Isabella and should be named after the mother. Check.
- fourth son was named Robert, and should be after father's eldest brother. This might be the brother who also married a Gillespie sister, namely Nancy.
- fourth daughter was named Emily (Emma) and should be after mother's eldest sister.
- fifth son was named Thomas, and could be after mother's eldest brother.
- and so on.

Even though I don't take this information as solid evidence, when looking for the origins of Isabella Gillespie, I consider that her parents might have been named **John** and **Mary**, and she might have had siblings named **Emily** (Emma) and **Thomas**. And certainly, I always keep an eye peeled for the name Charles!

## **A. Gillespie's in Dutchess County**

I did not find the Gillespie surname prevalent in Dutchess County during the 1800-1830 time frame. There are, however, two cases of note, which follow. In addition, there were some deed records during my time period for a George Gillespie which I have not yet investigated.

### ***A.1 Alexander Gillespie of Clinton***

This name jumps out at me because it is another male name that appears repeatedly in my branch, including that of my gg-grandfather. Here's what I found of this particular Alexander Gillespie:

He was found in the same church records as those of the Grier's – the Pleasant Valley Presbyterian Church. As early as 17 Feb 1810, there is a record of accepting into the church an Alexander Gillespie from the Associated Reformed Church in New York (assume city?). It looks like he was dismissed in

1822 because he was returning to NYC<sup>2</sup>, although there is some uncertainty about the reason for dismissal in my notes. Alexander Galaspie was enumerated in Clinton, Dutchess, NY in the 1820 census with one male over 45, one female 26-44, one male and one female 10-15, and one male under 10.

The only other Gillespie mentioned in the Pleasant Valley church records was a Mary Gillespie in 1812, with no remarks.

Additionally, there is one Grantee deed for Alexander Gillespie dated 1818, and a Grantor deed with his name dated 1827. I still need to look up these records.

## ***A.2 John Gillespie of Poughkeepsie***

A will was recorded for a John Gillespie of Poughkeepsie on 25 May 1833. It leaves a house in Bloomfield, Essex, New Jersey to his beloved wife Esther, and asks that any other properties in New York be sold at auction with proceeds going to his daughter, Margaret – who is apparently at that time under the age of 21 as he makes stipulations about what should happen if she marries before 21. There is a mention of other conditions upon which things should be divided equally among his brothers and sisters, though they are not named. Finally, the executors were James Fort and John Bodden.

There is one grantee deed for John Gillespie in 1832, and one grantor deed for him in 1833, both of which I must still look up.

## **B. Gillespie's in Orange County**

### ***A Word About Locale***

First let me speak to the county boundaries as they apply to this research. Both Orange and Ulster Counties were originally established in 1683. In 1798, the southern-most towns of Ulster were ceded to Orange County.

Next I should speak of towns, which in New York refers to what I would call a township. A town in New York covers an area comprised of villages, sometimes also called hamlets.

During my research, I was organizing the Gillespie families by census town, and could not help notice the proliferation of Gillespie's found in Montgomery pre-1830, and no Gillespie's found in Crawford until 1830. This is because the town of Crawford was originally part of the town of Montgomery, which was settled around 1740. The town of Crawford became separate from the town of Montgomery in 1823 and includes the village (or hamlet) of Pine Bush, which was formerly called Crawford.

Yeah, I know, confusing.

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<sup>2</sup> Early Records of Presbyterian Church of Pleasant Valley, New York 1792-1905 transcribed and indexed by Arthur C. M. Kelly.

## B.1 John Gillespie Case Studies

The John Gillespie I am looking for is hypothetical. As stated earlier, there *might* have been another sibling from John Gillespie's first marriage who was named John, and I hypothesize his birth date would have been around 1780. If there was a John Gillespie of this age range, did he also emigrate to the NY area with other Greer-Gillespie relations? We don't know, but I always look.

This section covers five John Gillespie's I have identified and studied, two of whom could possibly be the same person. So far, I don't find these individuals connect to my Gillespie branch.

### B.1.1 John Gillespie of Montgomery, 1746-1821

I have not found much documentary evidence about this John Gillespie, but from pieces found on the internet along with very recent correspondence from one of his descendants, here are some clues about him:

- He was born around 1746, place unknown. His parents were thought to be Neil Gillaspay & Mary Van Winkle, and his grandparents Neil Gillaspay & Mary McLiphener who came to NYC in 1739 from Isle of Islay, Argyll Shire Scotland with Captain Campbell.
- He married Sarah McCreery (or McCreary), a marriage date was found of 6 Aug 1779 in Montgomery (then Ulster), NY.
- John & Sarah had seven children, 2 daughters and 5 sons, whose names are uncertain, but three possible names include Rebecca (no dates) and John, b. 1 Oct 1779 in Montgomery (very soon after marriage if dates are correct), and Joseph, b. 1782 who would later marry Hannah Sears. This information comes from an undocumented family tree on ancestry, but also a Joseph Gillespie descendant.
- He died 27 Aug 1821 in Orange, NY. This is consistent with:
  - John Gillespie found in 1800, 1810, 1820 census of Montgomery, but no John's found in 1830 while Sarah Gillespie suddenly appears in Crawford in 1830 and 1840 census.
  - 1821 probate record (letters of administration) found for John Gillespie of Montgomery, wife is Sarah and friend Alpheus Demick.
- He served in the Revolution - I think this because there was a Sarah Gillespie in Crawford in 1830 and 1840 census, and in 1841 Revolutionary Pensioner census – she was in her 90's. Also pension information was found on Fold3, which states he served three short enlistments with the 2nd Ulster Militia, 2nd Wallkill Company of Captain William Faulkner.

This case is a subject for more investigation. This couple is probably too old to have had children in 1813, which is the birth date of Isabella Gillespie whose parents I am looking for, but any male children of this John and Sarah Gillespie might have been parents to Isabella. Hmmm.

As a final note, there was a James B. Gillespie who was a son of Joseph Gillespie & Hannah Sears, and a grandson of this John and Sarah Gillespie. James B. Gillespie married Mary Ann Hayes in Montgomery in 1835, which is too late to consider them as connections to my branch. Nevertheless, I mention the connection in my attempt to account for each James Gillespie of the general time and place.

### B.1.2 John Gillespie of Crawford, 1725-1823

I have a copy of a DAR application with the following information:

GILLESPIE, JOHN

Ancestor #: A044822

Service: NEW YORK Rank: CAPTAIN

Birth: 1725 WALLKILL-PRCT NEW YORK

Death: 1823 CRAWFORD NEW YORK

Service Description: **1) 4TH REGT**

Spouse: Mary Graham

Application says he had 6 sons, all of whom also fought in the Revolution, Robert was one, taken prisoner at Fort Montgomery Oct 6, 1777 where he died. John also had at least one daughter, Margaret, who married Samuel Crawford, also a Revolutionary soldier.

This John Gillespie is interesting, if only because he lived to be 98 years old! Again there are all kinds of questions. If both this John Gillespie and the A.1 John were alive in 1820, they should both show up in the 1820 census, but I find only one, which I have associated with the A.1 John, which admittedly might be wrong. Or because of his advanced age, perhaps this John was enumerated in the household of one of his children – but who were his children besides Margaret and Robert?

I should make note that this DAR application is the only documentation I have found so far for this John Gillespie. If he did die in Orange County, I've not found a probate record, which seems a bit strange. Also, what about church records? One might guess that if he was indeed married to a Graham, there would church records at Graham Presbyterian Church. I need to do more looking.

If this John Gillespie and Mary Graham Gillespie really did exist (I question whether they are not somehow mixed up with different persons), they fit the naming pattern for Isabella's parents.

### B.1.3 Major John Gillespie of Saugerties, NY, 1741-1810

This John Gillespie might be the one who appears in the **1790 census of New Windsor**, although the following B.14 John Gillespie case might also be that person. Nevertheless this John Gillespie and his son John both appear in the 1800-1810 census of Kingston, Ulster, NY (Saugerties is a village in the town of Kingston). This John Gillespie was a veteran of the Revolution and died in Saugerties in 1810.

I include extended information about this John as an end-note<sup>1</sup> in an effort to sort out the John Gillespie's who served in the Revolution. That information includes varying references to the Fourth Ulster Militia, and the fact that this John was apparently promoted from captain to major. Was there more than one Captain John Gillespie or is the DAR application for the B.1.2 John Gillespie case (and its quoted source) incorrect (or misinterpreted)?

One additional note here is that some online family trees have listed the parents of this John Gillespie to be John Gillespie and Elizabeth Wilkins. I note this because the Wilkin name is connected to the Moffat name, which is connected to the B.2.2 James Gillespie case.

### B.1.4 John M. Gillespie of Newburgh, NY, died 1810

A probate record for this John Gillespie was found which names his widow as Polly. John Gillespie was enumerated in Newburgh in the 1800 census and Polly appears in the 1810 census with four very



small children. It might be noted that Polly is a nickname for Mary, and so possibly, this John and Mary qualify as parents of Isabella. I can only think that Polly moved or remarried quickly as I don't find any guardianship papers for her young children. This couple ranks high on my interest list.

Additional Notes: There was a John Gillespie enumerated in the 1790 census of New Windsor, which is close to Newburgh. In 1791 & 1792, he is listed as being one of three commissioners of highways. And in 1781, a Matthew Gillespie was listed as an assessor.

I also found a tax assessment list in 1801 for Newburgh:<sup>3</sup>

Occupants: Gillespy John

Owners: Ester Howell

Real Estate Doll: 500

Personal Estate Doll: 100

Taxes to be Paid thereon

Doll 4 Cts 56

### B.1.5 John Denormandie Gillespie

This person is notable simply by virtue of his middle name, and in fact I've seen some information, including his father's will (George Gillespie 1725-1781), which refers to him simply as Denormandie. That being said, I can't seem to find much of anything about where or when this person was born or died, only that he married Susanna Bedford in 1785, where is unknown, although her parents were supposedly Joseph and Ann (Cuyler) Bedford of Philadelphia. John D. and Susanna had a son, George Denormandie Gillespie, in 1819 in Goshen, NY. The son George D. Gillespie, would grow up to be a Protestant Episcopal bishop in western Michigan, which is not near the area of Michigan where my Greer-Gillespie families settled.

It does not appear to me this family was enumerated in Goshen in the 1820 census, or anywhere else in Orange County from what I can tell. However, the only remaining clue about this person comes from the will of his mother, Harriet Elizabeth Gillespie of Clinton, Dutchess, NY made 3 Jun 1801. It makes reference to brother named **James Gillespie**, which of course can be added as a name of interest in my case studies. The will, however, seems strange to me. Here is my abstract of what it says:

- to son James Gillespie \$50 for purchase of a ring to be worn for my sake being assured that he knows and must approve of the reason I have for making the following distribution of my property
- to niece Rebecca, the daughter of my sister Louisa \$1250
- to servant Rosetta \$100
- all the rest goes to 2 sons:
  - John DeNormandie Gillespie
  - George Gillespie
- further mention of relation and friend John Bard

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<sup>3</sup> <http://jafath.com/historicdocs/assess1.htm>

John DeNormandie Gillespie was named the executor this estate on 27 Oct 1801. There are Orange County grantor deeds from John D. and Sarah Gillespie in both 1819 and 1825, the latter of which was sold to David and Anna Hunt.

## B.2 James Gillespie Case Studies

The James Gillespie I am looking for showed up in the 1850 census of Bloomfield, Michigan was living in close proximity to the other Greer-Gillespie pioneers in my branch. He was born around 1772, being 78 years old at the time of that census. Curiously he had an 11-year-old girl named Margaret, born in Michigan in his household. I have not been able to account for either of these persons before or after this census.

However, because of his age, this James Gillespie is of a generation that precedes that of two other of my missing characters: Isabella, born 1813 in Ireland or NY, and Thomas Jr. born 1816 in NY. The death certificate for Thomas Jr. in 1899 lists the father as James Gillespie. Maybe the one seen in the 1850 Michigan census?

Working backward from 1850, I should find this James in previous U.S. census', if we assume that he was associated with my Orange County family group and he migrated from NY with them. Sadly, I must report that I cannot find any James Gillespie in U.S. census records of New York from 1800-1840. So maybe this James Gillespie a) arrived in U.S. shortly before appearing on 1850 census, although the girl he was living with was supposedly born in Michigan around 1839 – who did she belong to and was James a surviving grandfather? or b) arrived by way of Canada rather than New York. Since children from the first marriage of John Gillespie were living in Quebec in 1850, just maybe this James came to Michigan by way of Canada.

So even though I have a sinking feeling that the James Gillespie I seek did not in fact reside in New York prior to Greer-Gillespie migration to Michigan in the early 1830's, I still include here the research I have done about those with that name during that time.

### B.2.1 Captain James Gillespie

First I want to talk about one or more characters referred to as Captain James Gillespie. Here is what I've been able to piece together about them from internet sources, but let me say up front that it does not appear to me that either one of the Capt. James Gillespie characters has connections to either New York or Michigan.

First there was a Capt. James Gillespie who fought in the Revolutionary War and was later elected to Congress. This nice write-up is found on findagrave:

Birth: c. 1747                      Death: Jan. 11, 1805

US Congressman. Elected to represent North Carolina's 5th District in the US House of Representatives, he served four terms, from 1793 to 1799 and from 1803 until his death. There is some dispute over when and where Gillespie was born. Most sources claim Kenansville, North Carolina as his birthplace, while others assert he came to the colonies from County Monaghan, Ireland. His family owned extensive acreage in the Cape Fear region and was prominent in local affairs. During the Revolutionary War he was a Captain in the State Militia **[what state?, my note]** before entering politics, becoming a member of the State Constitutional Convention (1776), the State House of Commons (1779 to 1783), and the State Senate (1784 to 1786). Gillespie was first elected to Congress

as an Anti-Administration candidate but subsequently switched to the Republican Party. He died in Washington, DC shortly before completing his last term and was buried at the now-defunct Presbyterian Cemetery in Georgetown. In 1893 his remains were reinterred at Congressional Cemetery, where there is also a cenotaph in his memory (Range 31, Site 58). (bio by: Robert Edwards)

Given the dates mentioned, this information can't apply to my James Gillespie who was found on the 1850 census in Michigan.

Second there was a Capt. James Gillespie who fought in the War of 1812. His supposed vitals are b. 17 Jan 1771 in Ireland and d. 17 Nov. 1848 in Pine Bluff, AR, father William Gillespie and mother Isabella Houston (this is very tempting for me as a source of the name Isabella in my tree), married three women starting with Margaret "Patsy" Houston, and fathered 17 children, all of them in Tennessee. As much as I have tried to make this family "fit" mine because this James was born in the right time and place, and because of the rare occurrence of the name Isabella, I have yet to find any connection between this family and Gillespie families found in either New York or Michigan.

### B.2.2 James Gillespie & Mary Moffat of Goshen

This James is probably the one enumerated in Goshen in 1810 and his widow Mary appears in the same place in 1820. This James Gillespie died in 1817, and probate records show his wife was Mary, and his children were Sally, Eliza, Delila, Samuel, Martinus, and John, all born roughly between 1800-1812. We don't know how old James was, but the vital dates for his wife Mary are 1781-1825, so we might guess that James was born around the same time period. Because he had a son named Samuel, we might guess that this James is somehow related to either or both Samuel Gillespie Sr. & Jr. The origins of this James are worth more investigation.

### B.2.3 James Gillespie, Father of Matthew

An 1810 probate record, letter of administration, to Matthew Gillespie, son of James Gillespie of the town of Montgomery. While I find, curiously, no James Gillespie ever enumerated in Montgomery, there was a Matthew Gillespie enumerated there in 1800. The only James born into the Samuel Gillespie JR Pine Bush family group was James McCurdy Gillespie, born in 1810. So if this James Gillespie is related to the Pine Bush Gillespie's at all, he might be the phantom brother of Samuel Jr. who was purportedly named James and about whom we really know nothing. It would be great to learn more about this James Gillespie too.

### B.2.5 James Gillespie, Odds and Ends

1. Here is are some OC deeds I have not yet looked up:

Grantee

1805, James Gillespy, J-81

Grantee

James Gillespy & wife to Jacob D. Smith, 35-51 (not sure of year)

2. There was a James Gillespie in Hurley, Ulster, NY whose vital dates appear to be 1755-1809. It might be noted there were Sloat families in New Hurley, and there was a Sarah Gillespie b. abt 1790 who married a Cornelius Sloat in that region.

3. There were two James Gillespie's living in Troy, Rensselaer, NY in 1800, along with a Joseph and Matthew Gillespie. I haven't yet made any attempt to figure out these families.
4. See A.5 John DeNormandie Gillespie. We know from his mother's will in 1801 that John had a brother named James Gillespie who did not inherit any of the family property. We know very little about this John DeNormandie, only that he was apparently living in Goshen in 1819. Perhaps his brother James was also somewhere in the Orange County vicinity.
5. There were not that many James Gillespie's who can be counted in Orange County during the 1800-1830 time frame, so I backed up a little and looked at the 1790 census. Note that \*if\* my James Gillespie was in the Orange County region in 1790, he would have been about 19 years old. I consider each of the James Gillespie's I did find in 1790 Orange County to be "unplaced" yet in my case studies. Here are the locations where James Gillespie's could be found in 1790 Orange County:

**Montgomery**, total 6, 2 males, 4 females, enumerated next to Samuel Crawford. Not sure this is B.2.2 James Gillespie case because that couple didn't start having children until 1800 (I think).

**Walkill**, total 4, 1 male under 16, 1 male over, and 2 females, enumerated next to William Campbell, also notice other name of Stephen Sears. This James might have ties to the B.1.1 John Gillespie case, since that line has ties to both Campbell's and Sears.

**New Windsor**, total 7, 3 males under 16, 1 male over 16, 3 females. The only other familiar name I recognize is Moffat. Many Belknap names. It should be noted that John & Matthew Gillespie as well as James Grier were also enumerated in New Windsor in 1790, a location close to Newburgh where a John M. Gillespie died in 1810.

## B.3 Robert Gillespie Case Studies

I am not looking for any particular Robert Gillespie. I research this name because it is common in my family branch (my ggg-grandfather's name), and because it is *not* common in the Pine Bush branch.

Among the Pine Bush Gillespie's, there was only one descendant named Robert, who was a son of Abraham Gillespie and Mary Crawford. According to Portraits and Bios of Orange County, this Robert became a supervisor of Crawford although I am not certain of either the dates of this Robert's life nor his community service in Crawford. Because Abraham's children were born between 1812 and 1830, I assume their son Robert came to adulthood some time later than the time period I am researching.

### B.3.1 Robert Gillespie (1774-1857) & Leah Crans

This is probably the Robert enumerated in the 1810, 1820, and 1825 census of Walkill. Several additional records for their children are recorded in the Dutch Reformed Church of Montgomery (verify). Without knowing the exact birth order, children born generally 1796-1813 included Andrew, Caty Ann, Susan (John Smith), Parmelia (William Smith), Amanda (Daily), Alanson, Mary (van Buskirk), and Jonathan, the last of these apparently dying before his father. Leah died in 1814 and is buried at the Brick Church in Montgomery. Robert was apparently living in Hartford, PA with his daughter Mary's family when his will was written.

There was a Robert Gillespie family in Montgomery in 1800, but I'm not sure that family is the same as this one, mostly because of some older children, who might have been in fact another young couple

who was somehow related. It can be noted there were Smith's and Sear's enumerated on the same sheet.

The question always arises, where did this person come from? Is he associated with Gillespie's already in New York or was he another new immigrant on the scene? We're still not sure.

### B.3.2 Robert Gillespie & Julia (born abt 1806)

My best guess is that this Robert is the one found on the 1840 census of Montgomery (2 adults 20-29, and 1 female under 5, and 1 male 5-9), and on the 1850 census of Walkill, he is a blacksmith, and his apparent children include: Jacob, Mary, Justina, and Sarah J. Who were this Robert's parents and who was Julia?

### B.3.3 Robert Gillespie of Sterling

While visiting the New York State Archives in September, 2012, one of the archivists suggested that I check the index for state land patents. Even though I kept telling him that my people did not arrive early enough to be getting land from the government, I decided to check anyway. There were two 1790 records for Gillaspys, James and Joseph, who were given land in places I did not recognize (Marcellus & Hector, respectively). But then came a record for Robert Gillespie, deceased. The deed (or whatever this record is properly called) was dated August 16, 1807 and was for a military tract in the township of Sterling. Never heard of that, right? After checking the gazateer, NY has three places called Sterling - one in Herkimer County (no idea about that one), one in Cayuga County but that was established in 1812, after this transaction, and the other was part of Warwick township (called Sterling Works) in Orange County! This place is right on the New Jersey line, and qualifies as a possible location where pre-Michigan Gillespie's might have lived.

In any case, there were 12 legal representatives named in the 1807 state land patent: Ann (who I presume to be the wife as she was named separately), **James, James Jr.**, Jane, **John**, Matthew, Olive, Polly (probably Mary, my notation), Samuel, William, Burr, and Barbara - all Gillespie's, and their relationship is not noted.

As a final note on this topic, this patent leads me to believe there was a Robert Gillespie who served in the Revolutionary War. The only applicable reference<sup>4</sup> I have found so far refers to one of three companies of militia organized Ulster County, one commanded by Capt. Isaac Belknap of Newburgh on 7 Oct 1776, which included the name of Robert Gillespy.

So this may or may not be a viable clue. I've not yet found any deed records in Orange County that I can tie to this group, so perhaps my selection of Sterling in Orange County was not correct. I nevertheless include this data here as yet another stone turned over.

### B.3.4 Robert Gillespie, Odds and Ends

There is one Orange County Grantor deed I need to look up:

Robert Gillespie to ??, 65-379, date uncertain.

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4 Pioneer Families of Orange County, New York by Martha and Bill Reamy.

## Conclusion

Does this study give me any better idea where the Michigan Gillespie's who identified themselves as "being of Orange County, New York" came from? I have to say barely. If the only male names I have to trace are **James and Thomas Gillespie**, then the only census where they appear before Michigan is in Newburgh in 1830. And I'm not even convinced about the James Gillespie who appears there. Here is the makeup of that household in 1830:

1 male 40-49

1 female 5-9

1 female, 15-19

one of these persons is not naturalized

Firstly, it appears this household is indeed new to the scene, which is a criterion I was looking for. But the fact that only one member is not naturalized implies that the other two are? Hmmmm. Secondly, the age is not quite right for the James Gillespie who appeared in Michigan in 1850. That James would be about 58 in 1830, which does not quite fit this household, even though it's possible that age ranges were not recorded on the census accurately. In addition, I do not find an older James Gillespie appearing in Michigan with the other pioneers in the 1840 census – so where did he go? Or did he not go to Michigan? Finally, if I am looking for a James Gillespie who could have been a father of Thomas Gillespie Jr. born 1816 in New York, this household does not fit the bill either. Sigh.

However, I still keep this James in consideration because of the sudden appearance of another Gillespie name in 1830 Newburgh census which did not previously appear on any census of the area:<sup>5</sup>

Thomas Gillespie:

1 male 40-49

1 female 40-49

1 male, 10-14

The exact same household makeup for a Thomas Gillespie showed up in Southfield, Michigan in the 1840 census. So there are two things to note: 1) Thomas must have been married to Nancy Gillespie Greer by 1830. Are there any records of that marriage happening in the U.S., even in NY?, and 2) who is the young male? He might be of child of Nancy's by her previous marriage, which would mean he is a GREER. If he was a child of Thomas and Nancy and had the surname GILLESPIE, he did not survive because when Thomas was declared incompetent in 1855, the probate records say he had only a niece and nephew surviving at that time as heirs.

So where was the person who started all this research, **Elizabeth Gillespie**? It does not appear that she was enumerated by herself, so I would suspect she was part of another household. I don't know the makeup of the Joseph Greer household in the 1825 census, and in the 1830 census of Joseph's household in Michigan, it does not appear that Elizabeth was living with him (I consider Joseph Greer because he "vouched" for Elizabeth Gillespie on the 1831 deed record). Neither does it appear that anybody of Elizabeth's age range could be found in the household of James Grier whom I have speculated was residing in Montgomery in 1830.

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<sup>5</sup> It should be noted, however, that James and Thomas are not enumerated on the same sheet of the Newburgh census, which carries some implication they might not be related.

Neither does it appear that Elizabeth was living with the James or Thomas Gillespie who were found in Newburgh in 1830. Elizabeth would have been 43 in 1830. She married and divorced rather quickly after arriving in Michigan, but was she always single before that time? I haven't found any evidence to confirm any thoughts about Elizabeth's marital status, but here are a couple records which might be applicable:

- In the Vital Records of the Presbyterian Church of Pleasant Valley 1793-1947, where several children of James and Jane Grier were baptized, I also found a record on 1 May 1814 where the following were confirmed: Nancy Grier and Elizabeth Grier. I have already speculated about another church record christening a child of Robert & Nancy Grier around the same time, but perhaps the sister who married a Greer was really Elizabeth?! Unfortunately, there is a subsequent record that says Elizabeth Greer was given a letter to remove to an independent church in NYC (Parle St.?). Still, this idea is new for me to consider – that Elizabeth was the second Gillespie sister to marry a Greer.
- In the Early Records of the Presbyterian Church of Goshen, there was a record of Elizabeth Gillaspie marrying Jonathan Estill on 20 Feb 1798. I have found no other evidence that either my Greer or Gillespie families were in Orange County at that early date.

So the whereabouts of Elizabeth Gillespie before Michigan in the 1840 census remains a mystery. What remains still is only her Michigan land patent which says she was “of Orange County, NY”.

And the other Gillespie names I've been looking for?

**Isabella Gillespie**, b. 1813 in either Ireland or NY, d. 1891 presumably in MI. All of this research has revealed the given name of Isabella only once: Joseph I. Gillespie, born abt 1819 and died in 1857 in Montgomery left a probate record that identified his wife as Justina Sears, his brother as Jacob, and his children as Mary E., Isabella, Arlington, and Ida Catherine. The birth date for this Isabella was 19 Jul 1846, which is too late to consider her for my family. But it does imply that somebody in the family before her might have had the name Isabella. I am guessing that this Joseph I. Gillespie was a descendant of Joseph Gillespie and Hannah Sears, mentioned in the B.1.1 John Gillespie case. In any case, this Isabella Gillespie was only 19 when she married John Greer in Michigan (by some family accounts she was only 16), and began a long life acquiring lots of land and children!

**Thomas Gillespie Jr.**, b. 8 Jul 1816 in NY, m. Ellen McClung, d. 1899 in MI, his death certificate names James Gillespie as his father. This Thomas Gillespie would have been only 14 years in 1830, which is presumably about the time he arrived in MI. It's worth noting that the earliest census where we can place this Thomas is 1850 in White Lake, MI. While White Lake is only 20 miles from Bloomfield township (which contained Southfield in the early times), but it is nevertheless a different location from where the main pioneers I know about settled. This might also use some more investigation. The only other clue we have of this Thomas' origins is the fact that his death certificate lists James Gillespie as his father, which of course may or may not be correct. However, I realize I have been assuming that the James Gillespie I search for is the same James Gillespie who appeared in the 1850 census of MI, born in 1772 in Ireland. What if Thomas' father was a different James Gillespie? The only one that looks like a candidate of those I've researched would be B.2.3 James Gillespie, Father of Matthew, and there are several other early James Gillespie's who are still unaccounted for. Again, more investigation could be in order.

**Mary Ann Gillespie**, b. 1818 Ireland, m. Henry P. Sloat, children all born in MI were James Renwick, Ellen Phebe, and Polhemus. As stated earlier, I think this Gillespie has the closest ties to the Pine Bush

Gillespie's because she named her first son James Renwick (Renwick Gillespie, 1825-1904, son of Abraham Gillespie & Mary Crawford, m. Carloline Augusta Smith in 1851. The fact that her husband Henry became the guardian for the elderly Thomas Gillespie when he was declared incompetent in 1855 suggests to me that she had some familial ties to him. Perhaps she is the niece who mentioned in the probate records?

And finally as pertains to Gillespie's, I have hoped to find some kind of marriage record between Thomas Gillespie and Nancy Grier/Greer. It's entirely possible this second marriage of Nancy's did not occur in the U. S. It seems likely that Nancy was in New York when her daughter Mary Greer was born. But perhaps she returned to Ireland when her Greer husband died and returned to America later with her second husband, Thomas. Again, I have simply have no evidence.

As for a plan for where to go from here:

- I have considered widening the search for Grier-Gillespie families to include New York City, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. But this idea does not change that the early records in Michigan clearly point to Orange County, New York.
- I would like to give more attention to immigration and naturalization records. To this point, I've not spent much time with such records because they don't seem to yield any more information than a name, and without a way to connect a name, the result is only still a guess. Nevertheless, maybe there is still something more substantial to find.

Please contact Mary Ann Schaefer at [genealogist@gmail.com](mailto:genealogist@gmail.com) with comments or questions. My family tree with source documentation is available on [ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com) and soon to be on [rootsweb](http://rootsweb.com). Updated research information can be found at my website [www.yesteryours.net/gillidx.html](http://www.yesteryours.net/gillidx.html), which also provides a link to my research blog.



## End Notes

iRegarding John Gillespie of Saugerties, the following information was found on rootsweb:

- \* Name: John GILLESPY
- \* Given Name: John
- \* Surname: Gillespy
- \* Sex: M
- \* Birth: 22 Aug 1741 in Glasgow, Scotland or at Sea 1
- \* Death: 5 Jan 1810 in Saugerties, Ulster Co. NY
- \* Burial: Mountain View Cemetery, Saugerties, Ulster Co. NY
- \* Change Date: 23 Jun 2003
- \* Note: According to "The Early History of Saugerties 1660-1825" by Brink (Major) John Gillespy was of the **Fourth Ulster Militia**. He was early left an orphan and reared by an aunt (**his mother's sister Mrs. Martha Hunter**) in New Windsor, (then Ulster Co.) NY. He volunteered in the French and Indian War & served in the English Navy on the vessel "Harlequin". He was engaged in one fight at sea, which lasted "nine glasses," (half-hour glasses were used to tell time). After the war with the French, he served as Justice of the Peace until the Revolution. Upon joining the **Fourth Ulster Militia** in the early summer of 1776, he went with the regiment to assist in the defense of New York City. The regiment also participated in the battle of Harlem Heights and in other engagements in the vicinity of New York City. During the summer of 1777 the regiment helped defend the passes of the Highlands of the Hudson. In October of that year they came to the relief of Kingston, NY. On October 16, 1777, Major Gillespy was distributing rations to his men, about eight miles from Kingston, when smoke from the burning town became visible. They rushed to the scene but arrived too late. The British were already retiring to their vessels off Rondout. After the Revolution Major Gillespy removed to Saugerties where he died Jan. 5th, 1810, age 69 years. During his whole residence in Saugerties, he was engaged in the business of a tanner, and his home was the constant resort of members of his old regiment to whom his hand and purse were ever open, to so great an extent that he suffered much in financial depletion.

Father: John GILLESPY(IE) b: Abt 1716 in Glasgow, Scotland

Mother: Elizabeth WILKINS b: Abt 1718 in Scotland

Marriage 1 Magdalena SMEDES b: 13 Jul 1742 in Ulster Co. NY

- \* Married: 22 Mar 1766 in Shawagunk Dutch Reform Church, Ulster Co. NY

Children

1. John I. GILLESPY b: 18 Feb 1773 in New Windsor, (Then Ulster Co. now Orange) NY
2. Matthew GILLESPY b: 12 Feb 1767 in Shawagunk, Ulster Co. NY
3. Benjamin GILLESPY b: 13 Apr 1769 in Ulster Co. NY
4. Elizabeth GILLESPY b: 27 Feb 1771 in NY
5. Jason W (1) GILLESPY b: 7 Jun 1775 in NY
6. Jason GILLESPY b: 18 Oct 1777 in NY
7. Rachel GILLESPY b: 2 Jan 1780 in NY
8. Job GILLESPY b: 25 Feb 1783 in NY

Sources:

- 1.
2. Author: Benjamin Myer Brink

Title: Olde Ulster: a historical and genealogical magazine

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Note: A historical and genealogical magazine published by the editor Fenjamin Myer Brink, Kingston, NY from 1905 through 1914

Repository:

Here is the article from the Olde Ulster magazine:

Olde Ulster: An Historical and Genealogical Magazine, Volume 7 By Benjamin Myer Brink

Article contributed by John M. Taylor

I certify that Magdaline Smedes wife of John Gillespy is a member in full communion of the Reformed Protestant Dutch Church at Shawangunk Sound in the faith & exemplary in her walk & Conversation as far as we know she therefore recommended as such to the church of Christ where she now Dwells & to all the Privileges attention & fellowship due to those who walk worthy their holy profession. That the Lord may continue to bless her and the church to which this certificate shall be shown in our sincere prayer. Given at Shawangunk. April 16 1792, Moses Freligh.

John Gillespy, above referred to, was a **captain and major in the War of the Revolution.** He was the son of John and Elizabeth Gillespy, who were born in Glasgow, Scotland, as were also their children John and Jennie. In **1741 the parents of John and Jennie** sailed to the New World. Upon their settling in America the spelling of the name was changed in the termination from "pie" to "py" to distinguish this family from others, and the most of the descendants have continued to use the changed spelling.

A short time after reaching this country both the father and mother died, and the children, John and Jennie, were taken by their **mother's sister, Martha Hunter to the vicinity of New Windsor,** in what was then the lower part of Ulster county but is now in Orange county, New York. Here John Gillespy remained until he had partly acquired the trade of cooper. He enlisted in the war between France and England, and fought in the man-of-war "Harlequin" in an engagement which lasted for "nine glasses" before the enemy surrendered.

John Gillespy was born in Glasgow, Scotland, 22nd Aug 1741. He was enlisted 11th May 1761, by Captain Ray and was mustered into his company. That company was composed of troops from Albany, Ulster, and Dutchess counties (see NY Historical Society Collections, pub 1891). After the war John Gillespy finished acquiring his trade and later bought a grist mill near Shawangunk, Ulster county, in partnership with Matthew Smedes, whose sister, Magdalena, John married 7th April 1766.

Eager's History of Orange County published in 1846 states that there is a place in the town of Montgomery which was called "John Glispie's Mill" between the years 1768-1777. The town of Montgomery extended at that time from Shawangunk to New Windsor.

Upon the outbreak of the revolution, John Gillespy once again heeded the call to arms. He signed the "articles of association". Later he was one of the New Windsor regiment which gave so many fighting men to the service (Olde Ulster, Vol. VII, page 49). Headley's History of Orange County states that John Gillespy was **captain of one of the five companies from Hanover.** Hanover was in the second

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(southern) district of Ulster county, which included New Windsor, Hanover, Walkill and Shawangunk. The regiment was under the command of General George Clinton. ...

John Gillespy was stationed with his company at Fort Montgomery early in 1777.

Soon after that time he was **commissioned a major**. He lost much money by paying his soldiers from his own pocket. After the war he moved to New Windsor just south of Newburgh. There he had a cooperage, a mill, owned the sloop "Bets" and was a justice of the peace. He later owned a mill in Schaghticoke to which his son Benjamin succeeded. His health beginning to fail Major John Gillespy went to Saugerties, bought a small place near his son and died there 5 Jan 1809 - his wife Magdalena died 22 Mar 1825.

Jennie the sister of John is said to have married and moved to New York City. Her husband's family name was Taylor.

John and Magdalena's children:

Matthew - b. 12 Feb 1767, d 6 Nov 1791, drowned

Benjamin, b Apr 1769, d 19 Jan 1802 Waterford, NY, m. Matilda Close 14 Nov 1793

Elizabeth 27 Feb 1771, m Abraham Fiero M. D.,

John I, b. 18 Feb 1773, m Wyntje Myer, d 20 Sep 1852      captain in war of 1812

Jason, b 13 Oct 1777, d 11 Mar 1810, Troy

Rachel , b 2 Jan 1780

Job, b 25 Feb 1783, d 1847, m Sarah Ransom      also served in war of 1812