

CHARLES and CORNELIA ADELINE SMYTH

PREFACE

This is the story of my maternal American great-great grandparents Charles Smyth and Cornelia Kane. Charles first married Margaret Fryer and had eight children before Margaret died. Similarly, Cornelia first married Rev. Paschal Strong and had four children before Paschal died. Charles and Cornelia were approaching middle age when they met, married and produced two more children, including my great grandfather, John Kane Smyth who emigrated to Australia. Their position in my mother’s family tree is shown on the next page, and their families are shown in the appendices.

Their story covers the period from the end of the American War of Independence, through the War of 1812 and the first decades of the Industrial Revolution, all of which impacted their lives significantly. Geographically, their story covers New York State north into Québec and Canada, and the development of trading routes from New York City into Western New York and the Great Lakes.

A comment about pronunciation of the name ‘Smyth’. Some people pronounce the name with a short ‘i’ (as in myth or spit) and others with a long ‘i’ (as in scythe or spite). My grandmother Mary Grant Whiting née Smyth always used the long sound, presumably because that is how she was taught by her American father, John Kane Smyth. To my admittedly incomplete knowledge, so do my living Australian cousins who bear the name. When witnessing his brother Terence’s burial in 1799, Charles (aged 17) signed his name “Smythe” indicating he pronounced it with a long ‘i’; some newspaper advertisements spelled his name “Smythe” and some of Charles’ grandchildren formally adopted the “Smythe” spelling. Charles’ father Patrick usually signed his name “Smyth”¹. I have an Irish-born friend named Smyth who insists on using the short ‘i’ pronunciation. When I asked him why, he said that only Englishmen, or Irishmen with English pretensions use the long sound. Although Irish usage may have changed in the last 250 years, Charles’ father Patrick Smyth certainly belonged in the second category and remained a proud loyalist until his death.

In researching their story, I visited New York State to get a feel for the environment and challenges they faced, and to find relevant documents in State and County archives. The early history of the Kane family in America has been recorded by Cornelia’s aunt Elizabeth Sarah ‘Sally’ Kane Morris (1778-1853), by her niece Elizabeth Dennistoun Wood Kane (1836-1909) and by her cousin John Kintzing Kane (1795-1858). The early history of the Smyth family is less well-recorded although recently, Ross D. Petty has written a thoroughly researched history of his 4x great grandfather Patrick Smyth, Charles’ father. Additional information comes from contemporary newspaper articles, county archives and other sources which are referenced in footnotes.

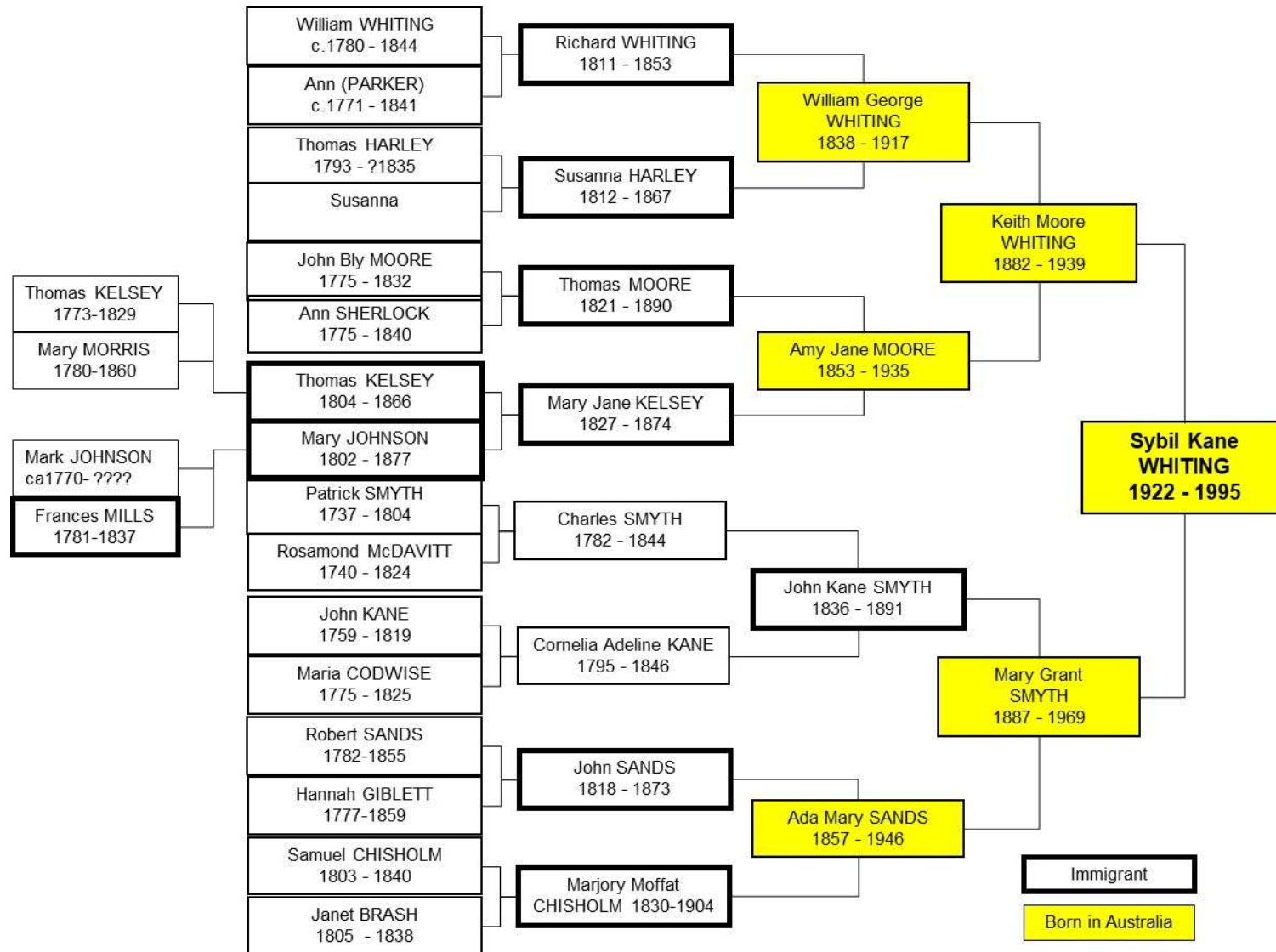
Andrew G Connor

Perth 2025

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¹ One court record is signed “Patt Smith” but the script is unusual and may have been penned by Patt’s clerk.

MY MOTHER'S ANCESTORS



CHARLES SMYTH

CHARLES' CHILDHOOD

Charles Smyth was born in New York City on 3 Aug 1782, as his parents Patrick ‘Patt’ and Rosamond (McDavitt) Smyth² and their young family were taking refuge there, having been evicted from their comfortable home at Fort Edward, New York State by American rebels and their Native American allies. New York City was occupied by the British Army and was subject to martial law under Commander-in-Chief Sir Guy Carleton.³

By the time Charles was born, Britain had ceased fighting in America and planned to recognise American independence. Charles had three older siblings: Rosamond⁴ (born ca 1774), Patrick junior (born 1775) and Catherine (born 1778). The Smyths were better off than many of the refugees, having been granted a house in New York City and a small stipend as acknowledgement of Patt’s losses and his contribution to the loyalist cause. Along with the thousands of other loyalist refugees sheltering in New York City at that time, Patt and his family were hoping that the peace terms would allow them to return home, but this did not happen. The Americans were not in a conciliatory mood and, fearing reprisals, in August 1783 around Charles’ first birthday, Britain gave the order to evacuate refugees from New York City.

Patt sailed from New York aboard the *Grace* on 9 September 1783, one of the last ships to escape, and arrived at Québec (City) on 9 October⁵. Soon afterwards, General Frederick Haldimand the Governor of Québec sent him to Sorel with 132 other loyalist settlers. This alone would have doubled Sorel’s population, but Haldimand added 300 more families to winter in Sorel on their way to Kingston in 1784. Patt had to leave his family behind in New York because one (or more) of them was too ill to travel. Unlike Patt, the women and children were regarded as non-combatants and were fairly safe from persecution.

REFUGE IN SOREL

Sorel sits on the south shore of the Saint Lawrence River at the mouth of the Richelieu River. In 1784 it was a small settlement of about 100 houses at the northern end of the trading route from Albany via Lake Champlain to Québec and was populated largely by French Catholic timbermen, ship builders, farmers, fur traders, and Native Americans. Having put the village of Sorel to the torch in August 1760 during the Seven Years War and taking the Province of Québec from the French in 1763⁶, the British now identified Sorel as a strategic military asset. In 1781, The British Government purchased the land from the French seignury for £3000, strengthened the old French fort (*Fort Richelieu*) which had been designed to protect settlers from aggressive Native American tribes, and built a Governor’s Manor (retreat) on the

² ‘Rosamond’ is sometimes spelt ‘Rosamund’, but I have used the former because that is how she wrote it.

³ Petty, Ross D. 2020 “Patrick Smyth: From Privateer to Justice of the Peace, to Loyalist Intelligence Courier.” Annual Journal of the Washington County Historical Society. 2020. pp 33-34.

⁴ Records of Rosamond are scarce. She should not be confused with Rosamond Smyth, daughter of Thomas Smyth, born 1787. She may be Patt’s daughter from his previous marriage to Mary Mackey.

⁵ UK American Loyalist Claims 1776-1785 for Patrick Smyth. Ancestry.com.

⁶ Quebec became a British Colony after the Treaty of Paris on 7 October 1763

riverbank, south of town. After 1783, the British Government decided to transplant loyalist refugees and military pensioners there.



View of Sorel from the West ca 1784 by James Peachey. From the left is the old mill, then military barracks and storehouse, the steeple of the Roman Catholic chapel, then the village.

That first winter in Sorel for Patt, alone and relying on the British Government for food rations, clothing and shelter, must have been very difficult. After two letters from Patt to Governor Haldimand requesting help to bring his family out of New York, Patt and his family were reunited in about July 1784 by which time Rosamond must have given birth to their fifth child, Mary Smyth.

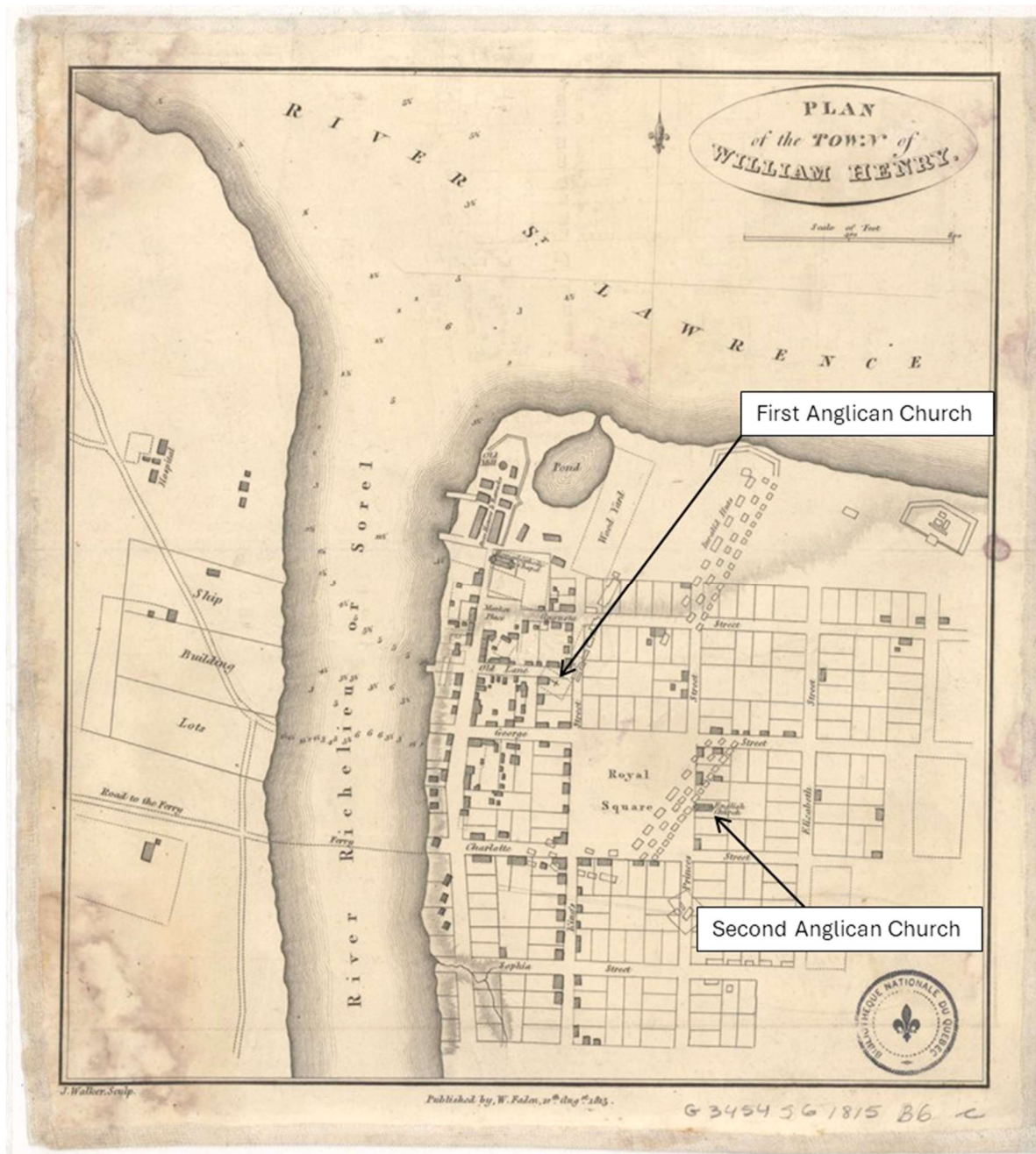
Patt Smyth was granted a military pension for the rank of Captain, 700 acres of land for himself and 400 acres for his family. However, Patt had been a merchant, tavern keeper, county clerk, postmaster, coroner, bush lawyer and Justice of the Peace at Fort Edward and, although he had cleared and cultivated some of his land at Fort Edward, his primary occupation was not farming. At Sorel, they had no slaves, no agricultural tools and few animals. Besides, the soil around Sorel was sandy and poor according to knowledgeable settlers. The main industry in the town was shipbuilding. Patt and other townspeople lobbied Governor Haldimand to establish a “normal” (i.e. British) civic town with its own local governance, institutions and businesses, rather than a military town.

There was plenty of timber for building, but the town did not thrive under military rule as Governor Haldimand hoped. Until September 1786, the Sorel loyalists survived largely upon Government rations, supplemented with whatever food they could grow, fish they could catch or animals they could hunt. What food there was to buy was expensive and unaffordable for some inhabitants. Milk was four pence a quart and butter a shilling a pound⁷.

Sorel was renamed William Henry by the British in honour of the visit by Prince William Henry (younger brother of King George III) in September 1787. The Smyth family may have seen the Prince briefly on his way to and from the Governor’s Manor. This event was important for gaining royal assent to establish a town and receive resources necessary to build it. The 1815

⁷ Vokey, Edward P, 1959. *“The 175th Anniversary History of the Parish of Christ Church, Sorel, Quebec”*

map of the town⁸ (below) faithfully follows the 1787 plan seen by the Prince and shows some of the original buildings. Surrounding land was granted in small 60 acre lots to encourage denser population, and each of these grants also entitled the owner to a town lot, which was decided by ballot⁹. The balance of any land entitlement could be selected elsewhere in British Canada. Children of loyalists had to attain their majority before qualifying for their land entitlements.



⁸ J Walker, engraver. 1815 "Plan of the Town of William Henry". W. Faden (publ). Bibliotheque Nationale de Quebec

⁹ "The Loyalists of Sorel." The Loyalist Gazette. Vol 23 No.1 June 1985 pp6-7

When the first Anglican missionary Reverend John Doty arrived in 1784, not long after Patt's family, the civilian population of Sorel was 316, spread over about 50 families¹⁰. Building an Anglican Church was a high priority for Rev. Doty and the loyalist community, and a house was converted into a church on 25 December 1785. Up until then, he held Anglican services initially in the Roman Catholic Chapel and then in a modified military barrack house¹¹. The Smyths joined the congregation of the first Anglican mission in Quebec.

Patrick and Rosamond continued adding to their family at Sorel with the births of Terence (1787), Eliza Montague (1789), Robert (1790-1790), Harriet Eliza (1792) and William Bayard (1794), known as Bayard. The eldest boys Patrick Jr and Charles would have had to shoulder responsibility at a young age, to help support the family. The family's assets in New York had largely been confiscated by the rebels and, from 1787 onwards, Patrick petitioned the British Government to compensate him for his losses. This was a slow process and little compensation (except for land) was granted in Patrick's lifetime.

Before he turned twelve, Charles would have learned the necessary skills for his survival in Sorel. These would have included how to ride, saddle, harness and care for a horse, and manage other livestock; how to gather and chop wood and perhaps to build things with timber; how to cultivate and grow vegetables in a family garden during the summer growing season; how to load, prime, fire and clean a firearm, and perhaps how to fish. Sorel is a cold place. Average maximum temperatures are below freezing from December to March, and the rivers freeze over making travel by boat impossible. Charles may have learned to skate. Firewood for heating and cooking was essential, but fire was also a significant risk in a town built entirely of timber. Lighting would have been by oil lamps and candles.

With a small population, Charles and his family would have recognised almost everyone else in town. Although his Protestant parents probably discouraged him from fraternising with Sorel's population of French Catholics, meeting them and talking to them would have been unavoidable, so it is likely that Charles and his siblings learned to speak French fluently. Sorel was also where Charles developed his fascination with river boats of all shapes and sizes, which carried cargoes of many kinds and stopped at Sorel on their way up or downriver during the season. There was also a shipbuilding industry on the Western shore of the Richelieu River which may have given Charles an interest in boat design and construction.

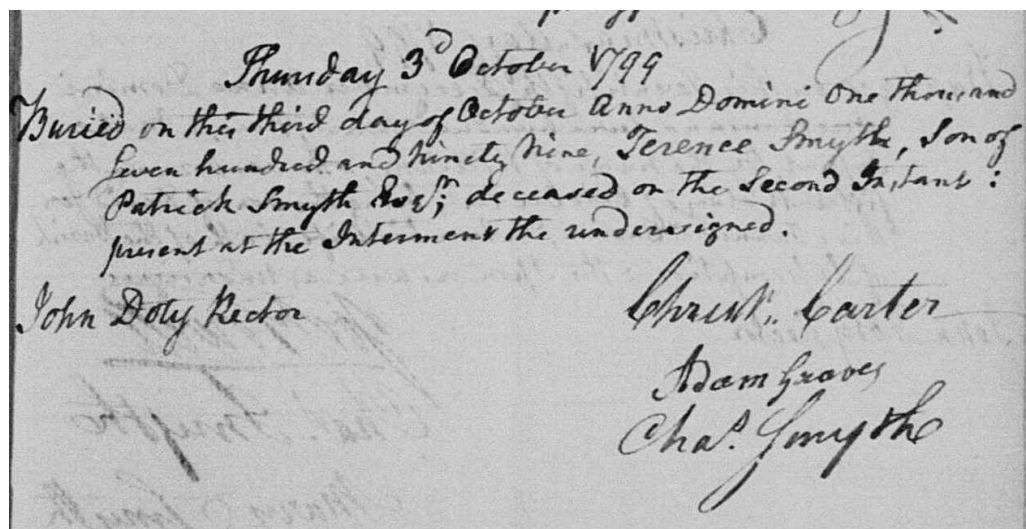
Charles (7) and his brother Terence (2) were baptised by Reverend Doty at Christ's Church William Henry (formerly Sorel) on 28 March 1790¹². Their baptisms took place in the old (1785) church building which was later demolished to make way for the new town plan. It is strange that Mary Smyth was not baptised at the same time, and in fact, there are no baptism records for any of Patrick and Rosamond's daughters. Perhaps Rosamond did not share Patrick's faith and wished her daughters to follow a different path, although they all were eventually married in Anglican ceremonies. A new Anglican Christ's Church was completed on 3 October 1790, built of wood on a stone foundation on the east side of Royal Square. A Protestant school was also opened in 1790 where the Smyth children would have been taught by Mr Alex Bisset.

¹⁰ Haldiman Papers C1475 Image pp111 1784 Muster

¹¹ Vokey, Edward P, 1959. "*The 175th Anniversary History of the Parish of Christ Church, Sorel, Quebec*"

¹² Baptismal Register of Christ's Church William Henry (formerly Sorel). 1789-1790. In "Canada, Québec, registres des églises protestantes, 1763-1967." Images. *FamilySearch*. <http://FamilySearch.org> : 3 December 2024. Archives Nationales du Québec-Montréal, Sainte-Foy (Quebec National Library and Archives, Sainte-Foy).

Charles Smyth aged 17, witnessed his brother Terence's burial in Sorel on 3 October 1799. It is a confident signature, indicating a high level of education.¹³ His sisters Mary and Eliza Montague Smyth also witnessed other events and signed the registers with confident hands.



Extract from the Burial Register of Christ's Church, Sorel

After Terence's death, and as they reached their majority and became eligible to take up their land grants, several of the Smyth children decided to move to Kingston (previously Cataraqui). Kingston was about 210 miles upriver from Sorel on the north bank of the St Lawrence where it exits Lake Ontario. Compared to Sorel, Kingston was truly British, had a larger catchment for trade goods and was more attractive to the Smyths with their particular experience and skills. Charles' brother Patrick Smyth Jr purchased a pew in St George's Church Kingston on 6 December 1802¹⁴. Charles' sister Catherine Smyth married Captain Henry Murney at Kingston on 5 January 1803¹⁵. Henry Murney had arrived from England in 1793¹⁶ to captain an important sailing vessel, the *Simcoe*, on the Lake Ontario¹⁷. He was also a ship carpenter and in 1801 he built and owned his own vessel of red cedar, the *Prince Edward*, and became a successful and important resident of Kingston. He was 23 years older than Charles Smyth and, as will become clearer later, must have been a major influence on the direction of Charles' career.

Charles may have had ambitions to move to Kingston also, but his father Patrick, who had been attempting to sell some land assets near Fort Edward that had escaped confiscation, prevailed on Charles to go to Albany and sell what he could. Patrick himself would not have been welcomed in Albany, even 20 years after the revolution. Patrick had initially entrusted this task to an agent, John Taylor of Albany¹⁸, but for some reason he abandoned this plan.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid. p 70

¹⁵ Young, A.H. (Ed) "The Parish Register of Kingston, Upper Canada, 1785-1811". The British Whig Publishing Company Ltd 1921. p 143

¹⁶ "Quebec Canada Notarial Records 1637-1937." Ancestry.com for Henry Murney

¹⁷ McLeod, Susanna. "Murney a towering figure of early Kingston" Kingston Whig-Standard. 19 Mar 2013

¹⁸ Albany Centinel. 17 Sep 1802

Perhaps the agent's commission was too high, or acting as an agent for a loyalist was still regarded by New Yorkers as treasonous.



Cataraqui (Kingston) in August 1783 by James Peachey



Topographic relief image of parts of New York State and Canada.

MOVE TO ALBANY, NEW YORK

Charles probably had not travelled to the United States since he left New York City as a one-year-old child. Before continuing with Charles' story, it is useful to understand a little about the geography of north-east USA and Canada, and the obstacles that faced people wishing to travel and trade at that time.

There are two main routes from New York City through the Appalachian Mountain Chain. These were well known and used by Native Americans long before Europeans arrived. Both start with the Hudson River, which is saline as far north as Poughkeepsie and is still tidal at Albany. This 145-mile stretch of the Hudson is navigable by sail, but navigation is made difficult by variable winds, shifting sand bars and floating logs.

Just north of Albany at Troy, the Mohawk River enters from the west. Upstream of this confluence, both rivers have stretches of rapids and some major falls which meant that people and cargo had to be carried to the next navigable stretch of water. For Native Americans with birchbark canoes this was relatively easy, but for European traders, this involved setting up storehouses and staging posts along the routes with teamsters and wagons to load, haul and unload goods across the "portages" or "carries". Going north from Albany, there were several short carries before a major one beginning at Fort Edward. Patt Smyth and Cornelia's father and uncles (the "Kane Brothers") had stores there, and Patt would have done a roaring trade as a tavern keeper. Goods were hauled by wagon 23 miles from Fort Edward across the drainage divide to Whitehall at the southern end of Lake Champlain. From there, goods and people could sail all the way down the lake and the Richelieu River to Sorel. Whether this was a cheaper route than travelling around the coast is questionable.

The Mohawk River had many more carries and staging posts, but it had the advantages of a shorter distance to Lake Ontario, and it opened the west of New York State for trade and settlement. In the 1790s, the Kane Brothers established a chain of stores between Albany and Oswego along the Mohawk Valley.



Cohoes Falls on the lower Mohawk River (2025), a major obstacle to early navigation.

Overlaying these geographic obstacles are the seasons. Most winters, the rivers and lakes freeze over, so sailing is impossible between November and April. Merchants needed storehouses large enough to hold six months of dry bulk supplies. Travelling on muddy roads through melting snow and across ice in horse-drawn sleds and sleighs during winter was arduous and sometimes dangerous.

By February 1803, Charles was in Albany¹⁹. He may have travelled via Kingston to attend sister Catherine’s wedding, see his siblings and reconnoitre Kingston as a future home. Armed with his father’s Power of Attorney, Charles began disposing of the Smyth family lands in New York State which had not been confiscated after the Revolution. Between February 1803 and June 1805, Charles managed to lease and/or sell seven properties south and east of Fort Edward on Patt’s behalf to Robert Smart, James Rogers and Philip Schuyler.²⁰

During the period of the above sales, Charles’ father Patrick Smyth died at Sorel on 23 April 1804, and was buried two days later²¹. Charles is unlikely to have attended the burial. There is no record of a will, but Rosamond continued making claims for compensation from the British Government as his widow. While transacting business in Albany on behalf of his father during 1803, Charles met Margaret Fryer.

CHARLES’ FIRST MARRIAGE, TO MARGARET FRYER

The Fryer family emigrated to Albany from England in the early 1700s and were part of a small community of weavers who established their businesses and homes there. Margaret Fryer was born in Albany on 7 June 1785, the daughter of Isaac I Fryer and Catherina Van Wie. Margaret was the third generation of Albany-born Fryers living in the family home on South Pearl Street (between Hudson and Division Streets). She appears to have been an only child, as Isaac did not name any others in his will.²²

Margaret’s father Isaac and his several brothers were active in Albany community organisations and in town, county and state politics. From 1804 to 1808, Isaac was an assessor for the Town of Watervliet, which adjoined Albany city to the north. Isaac went on to become a Justice of the Peace and then an alderman for Albany city from 1815-1820. Over time, the Fryer family accumulated several town lots in Albany.

The Fryer family attended St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in Albany (established 1715), and this is probably where Margaret Fryer met Charles Smyth. Until 1802, St Peter’s was situated in the centre of what is now State Street but, in that year, the church exchanged its land for a lot on the corner of State and Lodge Streets and built a new church which opened in 1803.

¹⁹ There is a newspaper report in April 1803 of a Charles Smyth entering into partnership with James Byrne to extend James Byrne’s long-standing auctioneer’s business in New York City. The partnership was named “*Byrne and Smyth*” and dissolved on 1 April 1805. This is a different Charles Smyth.

²⁰ Petty, Ross D. op. cit. p 43, citing records on microfilm roll 595 in the Washington County Archives.

²¹ Baptismal Register of Christ’s Church William Henry (formerly Sorel). Op. cit. 1809

²² “New York, Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999” Isaac Freyer, 1831. Ancestry.com.

Charles Smith (sic) aged 21 and Margaret Fryer aged 18 were married there on 12 November 1803 by Rev. Frederic Beasley²³. St. Peter's is still on that site, but it was rebuilt after 1859.



St Peter's Episcopal Church, Albany. 1803-1859

After their marriage, Charles' occupation for the next six years is undocumented. He does not appear in Albany city directories or newspaper advertisements until 1813. It is possible that he joined one or more of the businesses run by Margaret's father Isaac Fryer and his brothers. These included silver smith, grocer, painter and tobacconist. In 1808, Charles sold a cup and patten to St George's Church in Kingston for £15²⁴ so perhaps he was connected to the Fryer's silver smithing business. The Fryers were respected community members and businessmen in Albany and being associated with them would have opened doors for Charles. It was not long before he became involved in political meetings and, in March 1807, he was secretary of the committee to elect Stephen Van Rensselaer as the Republican representative for Watervliet in the New York State Assembly. His father-in-law Isaac Fryer was a member of the

²³ St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Albany New York. Church Register 1756-1883. 1941. Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah. DGS 7854428 Image 267.

²⁴ Young, A.H. Op. cit. p 29

general committee²⁵. Isaac's brothers were members of the local Militia forces and Charles also joined up, as an ensign in John Lansing's battalion²⁶.

Charles and Margaret soon began a family. Their first child Catherine (after Margaret's mother) was born in 1804 and was baptised at St Peter's on 19 November that year²⁷. Catherine's exact date of birth is unknown and there are no other records of her, so perhaps she died in infancy. She is not mentioned in her grandfather Fryer's will dated 1831. Their second child Isaac Fryer Smyth (after Margaret's father) was born on 14 May 1806.

Two events during 1807 were to have profound impacts on the Smyth family's future. The first was the imposition of trade embargoes by British Orders in Council, prohibiting any trade with France and its allies by Great Britain, its allies or neutral countries. The British required all shipping to be inspected at British ports or by British Navy ships to ensure compliance. The British Navy set up blockades at many ports, including New York City and along the Canadian border. Over the next five years, the British confiscated many American ships, their cargoes and sometimes, their crews. Many merchants (including the Kane Brothers) lost trade and became insolvent, and the supply of imported goods to inland America gradually dried up. Eventually, America could stand it no longer and declared war on Great Britain on 18 June 1812, so beginning the *War of 1812*.

The second event was introduction of the first steam-driven boat on the Hudson River. Up until 1807, goods and people travelled the Hudson on hundreds of wooden, shallow-draft sailing vessels, modified from *sloops* of Dutch design. Each Hudson sloop carried about 125 tons of cargo or 25-30 passengers and usually took a week to travel between New York City and Albany, depending upon unpredictable winds, currents, sandbars and tides etc. The steamboat was designed and built by Robert Fulton, backed by lawyer, politician, diplomat and United States Founding Father Robert R Livingston. It was named the *North River Steamboat of Clermont* (later just the *Clermont*). Its first voyage from New York to Albany took 32 hours, and the return 30 hours excluding stops at Livingston's home at Clermont²⁸. Charles would have been one of many Albany residents gathered on Quay Street to witness its arrival on that first voyage and recognised it as the future of inland navigation. However, Robert Livingston had convinced the New York State Legislature to grant him exclusive rights of steam navigation in New York State for twenty years.

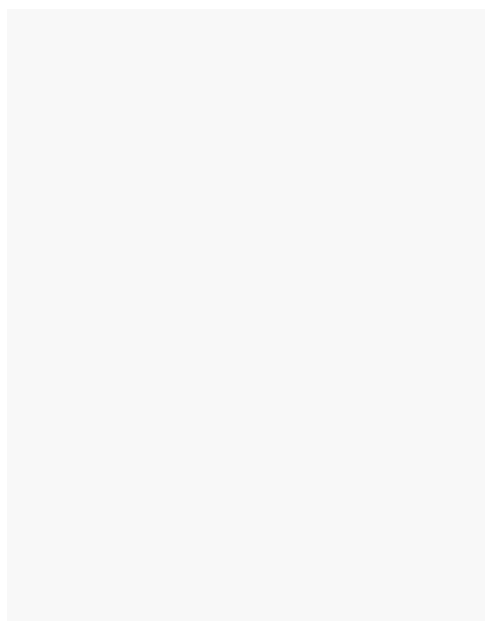
The practicality and benefits of steam navigation were immediately clear to all, and it was not long before carpetbaggers started looking for legal and technical means to circumvent Fulton and Livingston's exclusive steam navigation rights in New York State. For Charles however, the arrival of the *Clermont* seeded in him an idea for steam navigation on the Great Lakes.

²⁵ Republican Crisis 23 March 1807.

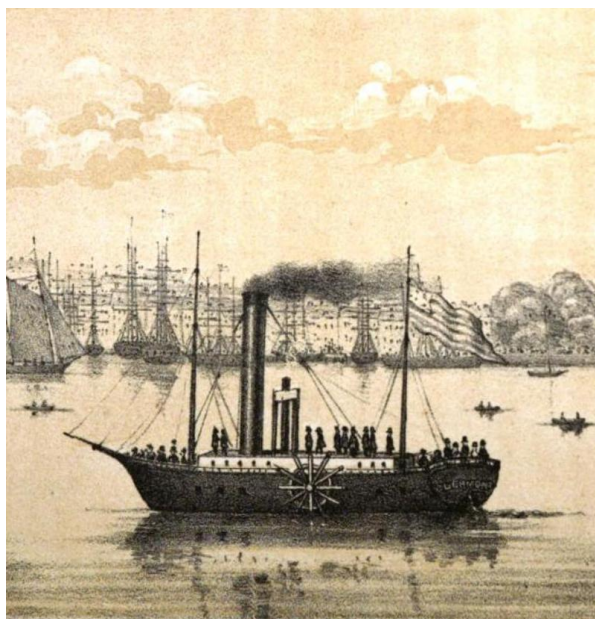
²⁶ Hastings, Hugh. Report of the State Historian. New York 1806 p. 849 in “New York, United States Records” Family Search images, DGS 8650828, image 439

²⁷ St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Albany New York. Church Register 1756-1883. 1941. Op. cit. DGS 7854428 Image 253.

²⁸ Republican Watch-Tower 25 August 1807. Letter from Robert Fulton to the Editor of the American Citizen dated 20 Aug 1807



A Hudson River sloop ca 1880²⁹



The Clermont on her maiden voyage 1807³⁰

Charles and Margaret's third child Charles Smyth Junior was born in Albany on 6 October 1808 and baptised at St Peter's on 3 November 1808³¹. Before Charles junior reached his first birthday, Charles and his family relocated to Kingston.

MOVE TO KINGSTON, CANADA

The reasons for the family's move to Kingston were probably three-fold. Firstly, Charles' brothers and sisters were now all settled in Kingston, and his mother Rosamond was getting older (55). Secondly, the lands promised to Patrick Smyth as a loyalist had never been granted because the British administration had mislaid the various petitions and accompanying support documents and, thirdly, Charles was seeking a change of career.

Charles immediately set about preparing a new petition to Francis Gore, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Upper Canada, explaining their situation and including as many supporting documents as the family could find. He concluded; *“Your Memorialist, intending permanently to reside in this province and being informed that your Excellency is actuated by a laudable desire to promote the welfare of that class of His Majesty's Subjects of which his father was a distinguished member, has ventured to approach your Excellency and referring to the Vouchers accompanying this memorial, humbly to solicit that your Excellency will be pleased to order him the same portion of the vacant lands of the crown as has been heretofore granted to the sons of U. E. Loyalists, or such other relief in the premises as in your Excellency's Wisdom may be deemed proper.*

And, as in duty bound, your Memorialist will ever pray.

Charles Smyth

Kingston, 2nd January 1810³²

²⁹ Hudson River Maritime Museum archive.

³⁰ Reigart, J.F. “The Life of Robert Fulton” C.G. Henderson & Company. 1856

³¹ St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Albany New York. Church Register 1756-1883. 1941. Op. cit. DGS 7854428 Image 260.

³² “Upper Canada, British North America records,” images, FamilySearch DGS 008631411 Image 418.

Charles' petition was granted and on 27 February 1810³³, twenty-seven years after the end of the Revolutionary War, Patrick Smyth's name was placed on the list of United Empire Loyalists. In consequence, his eldest son Patrick Smyth Junior was granted 1000 acres in the Township of Camden 300 miles WSW of Kingston. On 18 August 1810, Charles was granted 200 acres at South Crosby about thirty miles NE of Kingston³⁴. After such a long delay in having their claim recognised, most of the crown land near Kingston had already been distributed. Charles' sisters Catherine, Mary and Eliza were also granted 200 acres each.³⁵

Charles' ambition however was to become a shipper, so the land grant at South Crosby was of little use to him except as an asset which he could sell, lease, or use as collateral to borrow money. He had ideas about a fleet of trading ships up and down the St Lawrence and Great Lakes, eventually using steamboats and, to achieve his ambitions, he needed access to the waterfront at Kingston. To this end, Charles approached the holders of water lots in Kingston to purchase or lease an area for a wharf but he found that he could not purchase a water lot *"without paying therefore a most exorbitant price – nor can a Wharf or Store be hired for any consideration, the Proprietors of the major part of the said Water Lots suffering them to remain vacant and unimproved"*³⁶. On 25 June and again on 6 November 1810, Charles applied for a Water Lot at the north-east corner of the Market Square, but his petition was refused on 20 November *"as this lot may possibly interfere with the convenience of the market"*³⁷. This decision would have been a great disappointment to him.

During this period, Charles and Margaret's fourth child George Montague Smyth was born in Kingston and baptised at St George's Church on 25 September 1810 with Charles' brother W. Bayard Smyth and brother-in-law Henry Murney as the child's sponsors. Unfortunately, George died the following year and was buried in Kingston on 21 April 1811³⁸.

On 7 July 1811, Charles was granted a 1/5-acre Town Lot in Kingston between Grave and Store Streets³⁹. By this date however, the British trade embargoes were curtailing trade with the United States, threatening Charles' livelihood. There was a build-up of naval and military forces along the Canada-U.S. border. The British began raising militia units and formed an alliance with the Native American nations under their leader Tecumseh. Charles' elder brother Patrick Smyth Jr joined the First Regiment of Frontenac Militia as a Lieutenant in a Flank Company⁴⁰. By February 1812 it was becoming clear that war between British Canada and the United States was inevitable and that Kingston could become a battlefield. Charles was forced to declare his allegiance and decide between staying with his mother and siblings in British Kingston or moving back to the United States. He decided to move his family back to the relative safety and more stable trading conditions at Albany, a decision which led to unreconcilable difference between Charles and his brother Patrick, and maybe other family members in Kingston. Patrick Smyth Jr died at Kingston in 1823 and in his will dated 10 June

³³ "Upper Canada, British North America records," images, FamilySearch DGS 008631411 Image 429.

³⁴ "Ontario Canada Records" Images, FamilySearch DGS 008346089 Image 234

³⁵ "Ontario, Ontario, Canada records," images, FamilySearch DGS 008126217 image 480

³⁶ "Upper Canada, British North America records," images, FamilySearch DGS 008631416 Image 676.

³⁷ "Upper Canada, British North America records," images, FamilySearch DGS 008631416 Image 674.

³⁸ Young, A.H. Op. cit. pp 136 and 163

³⁹ "Kingston, Frontenac, Upper Canada, British Colonial America records." Images, FamilySearch DGS 008346856 Image 473

⁴⁰ "Essa Township, Simcoe, Canada West, British North America records," images, FamilySearch DGS 008265731 image 1138

1822, he specifically excluded his brother Charles Smyth and his heirs forever from holding an interest in, or inheriting, any of Patrick’s assets⁴¹.

In early 1812 Charles began calling in his debts⁴² and selling his assets in Kingston⁴³. By the time the United States declared war on Great Britain on 18 June 1812, Charles and his family were back in Albany. Charles’ fears of war along the border proved correct. Trade was brought to a standstill on the Great Lakes and St Lawrence. In July 1812, the British attacked the American shipbuilding centre of Sackets Harbour and in August they captured Detroit; the Americans attacked Kingston in November 1812; and the British again attacked Sackets Harbour in May 1813. After two years of fighting with neither side gaining anything, the war was settled by signing the Treaty of Ghent on 24 December 1814, and the US-Canadian border returned to its pre-war position, with some important exceptions.

RETURN TO ALBANY

In Albany, Charles, Margaret and their family moved into one of the Fryer family’s houses at 78 Hudson Street. There is a record in the baptismal register of St Peter’s that Catherine Smyth, daughter of Charles and Margaret was born on 29 November 1814, and baptised on 11 January 1815⁴⁴. This tends to confirm that their first child, also Catherine, died in infancy. The second child Catherine also disappears from the records after 1815 and is not mentioned in her grandfather Fryer’s 1831 will⁴⁵, so perhaps she also died in infancy. However, their next child Patrick Smyth was born in Albany on 15 May 1815 according to information on his grave marker⁴⁶. While six months between births is theoretically possible, especially in these days of advanced post-natal care, it seems unlikely in 1815 so one of these birth dates, probably Patrick’s, is in error. Patrick’s name does not appear in the baptismal registers of St Peter’s. Charles became a vestryman at St Peter’s in 1815.

While Charles had been away in Canada, Messrs Fulton and Livingston had not been idle. Fulton continued to make improvements to the *Clermont* as they gained experience in steamboat operation and navigation. A regular steamboat service was established between New York City and Albany, with at least three additional ships (the *Car of Neptune*, *Raritan* and *Paragon*) operating on the Hudson⁴⁷. Two competitor steamboats managed to circumvent Fulton and Livingston’s monopoly of New York navigation. One-way passage times reduced to 18 hours and owners of sloops found it very difficult to compete, except on price and maybe cargo capacity, with most passenger traffic preferring the steamboat option.

To meet the competition from steam, some of the best sloops and captains on the Hudson established a shipping line, along with several merchants in Albany. These vessels would provide a regular service between the Lent Basin in New York City and Albany for freight and

⁴¹ “Ontario, Canada Records” Images, FamilySearch. DGS 8484812 images 219- 221

⁴² Kingston Gazette 3 Mar1812

⁴³ Kingston Gazette 28 Apr 1812

⁴⁴ St. Peter’s Episcopal Church, Albany New York. Church Register 1756-1883. 1941. Op. cit. DGS 7854428 Image 364.

⁴⁵ “New York Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999” Ancestry.com 2014. For Isaac Fryer

⁴⁶ “U.S. Find A Grave Index, 1600-current”. via Ancestry.com.

⁴⁷ Knox, Thomas W. “The Life of Robert Fulton and a History of Steam Navigation” G.P. Putnam’s Sons 1900 pp128-131

passengers, and the merchants undertook to receive goods at Albany into fireproof stores and/or forward them to destinations in Western New York or Canada⁴⁸. In June 1814, Charles Smythe (sic) was one of these merchants, and on 29 March 1814 he bought a large storehouse with dockage and wharfage rights on the waterfront at 65 Quay Street Albany for the purpose⁴⁹.

As trade recovered after the end of the War of 1812, business improved for Charles and his association of Albany merchants. The fleet of sloops grew from three to five vessels and New York departures from once to twice per week⁵⁰. Charles had sufficient funds in 1815 to lend \$431.81 for 18 months to his mother-in-law's family⁵¹; buy 200 acres of land in the township of Portland or Elmsley (about 40 miles NE of Kingston) from James Talmage for £37 10s⁵², and be the target of a robbery at his Quay Street storehouse which netted “a considerable sum of money”⁵³. Why Charles purchased land in Canada after having sold land there in 1811-12 is a mystery, unless it had timber reserves.

THE ONTARIO

In mid-1815, Charles gathered a group of businessmen and politicians to help realise his dream of steam navigation on the Great Lakes. His partners were Joseph C Yates (who had been married to Maria Kane and later became the seventh Governor of New York); Thomas C. Duane and David Boyd, all of Schenectady. Rather than try to break the monopoly held by Fulton and Livingston, they approached the Livingstons and the executors of Fulton's estate⁵⁴. Charles and his partners secured an agreement from Fulton and Livingston to allow them to build, test and operate a steamboat on the rougher waters of Lake Ontario. The agreement gave them the sole right to operate one steamboat only on any one route until the proceeds should exceed twenty percent. On 19 December 1815, Charles and his associates, now including Eri Lusher of Genesee, John I. DeGraff and Abraham van Santvoord both of Schenectady, advertised their intention to apply to the New York State Legislature for an Act to incorporate themselves at Schenectady as the *Lake Ontario Steam Boat Company* with a capital of \$200,000⁵⁵. The Agreement with Fulton and Livingston was executed on 16 January 1816⁵⁶, and the petition for incorporation was referred to the Legislature on 8 February⁵⁷.

Unfortunately, the Legislature did not grant their petition but, with the temporary financial support of Fulton's estate and a promise from the U.S. Navy to sell them timber from the Navy shipbuilding supplies at Sackets Harbour, the partners decided to start building a steamboat, the *Ontario*. They reapplied to the Legislature for incorporation in July 1816, at which time Charles' partners were Eri Lusher, Abraham van Santvoord and Rufus Brown⁵⁸. The petition

⁴⁸ The Albany Argus, 5 Aug 1814.

⁴⁹ “Albany, New York, United States Records.” Images. FamilySearch. DGS 007138195 Image 404

⁵⁰ The Albany Argus, 7 Mar 1815

⁵¹ “Albany, New York, United States Records.” Images. FamilySearch. DGS 007121125 Image 558

⁵² “Frontenac, Ontario, Canada Records”. Images FamilySearch. DGS 008637499 Image 91

⁵³ The Albany Argus, 3 Nov 1815

⁵⁴ Robert Fulton died 24 Feb 1815

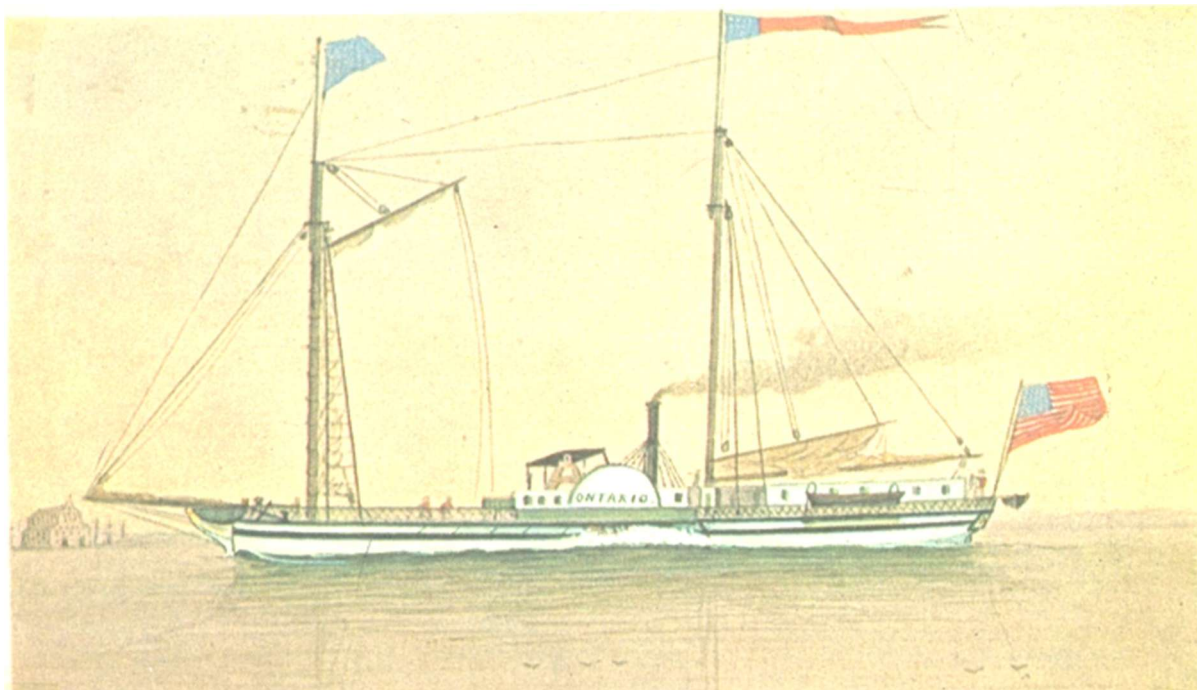
⁵⁵ Albany Argus 22 Dec 1815

⁵⁶ Palmer, Richard F. “*First Steamboat on the Great Lakes*”. Inland Seas, Volume 44, No. 1, Spring 1988

⁵⁷ Albany Advertiser 14 Feb 1816

⁵⁸ Albany Argus 8 Jul 1816

was read in November 1816 but again refused. The grounds for refusal have been variously given as concern over the legality of granting a monopoly, and the risk of encouraging trade along the St Lawrence at the expense of the Hudson River. By this time, the boat building was well advanced.



The Ontario at Sackets Harbour in 1826, as drawn by Captain James Van Cleve⁵⁹

The *Ontario's* design was based on an existing Fulton steamboat, the *Seahorse*, operating on Long Island Sound. It was 110 feet long, 24 feet wide and 8½ feet deep with displacement of 237 tons. It was ready to sail by 2 April 1817 but the ice at Sackets Harbour was still two feet thick and they had to wait until 16 April to begin the maiden voyage under Captain Francis Mallaby U.S.N. It was the first steamboat to navigate on the Great Lakes so the town of Sackets Harbour with its brass band came out to see her off. The maiden voyage did not go well because, after leaving Genesee on the way to Niagara, a violent storm and heavy seas caused the drive shafts of the paddle wheels to dislodge from their bearings and the paddle wheels hit the wheel housing causing damage to both. They returned immediately to Sackets Harbour under sail and repaired the design flaw⁶⁰. Charles would almost certainly have been on board, who, along with his 50% partner Eri Lusher, now owned the Fulton and Livingston rights to sail on the Great Lakes.

The plan was to establish a regular summer schedule for the *Ontario* to carry freight and passengers between Lewiston on the Niagara River to Ogdensburg on the St Lawrence, with stops along the American shore at Genesee, Pultneyville, Oswego and Sackets Harbour⁶¹. Charles sold his 50% interest in the *Ontario* to his partner Eri Lusher on 27 Feb 1818⁶², less

⁵⁹ Curry, Frederick C. "St Lawrence Steamboat Days." Inland Seas Journal Winter 1951, Great Lakes Historical Society.

⁶⁰ Van Cleve, James. "Early Steamboating Reminiscences from The *Ontario*, Martha Ogden and United States." Oswego Palladium 4 Apr 1876

⁶¹ Buffalo Gazette April 1816

⁶² Albany Argus 6 Mar 1818

than a year after launching it. Perhaps Eri's offer was too good to refuse or, more likely, Charles realised that New York City remained the centre of most North American trade. While passengers enjoyed the opportunity to travel in comfort along the Great Lakes and St Lawrence, most freight was sent overland, south through Albany to New York City. Charles decided to focus his business efforts along the more lucrative southern trade routes.



Lake Ontario and the St Lawrence

During the building of the *Ontario*, on 22 May 1816 Charles gifted half of his town lot in Kingston and the house thereon to his mother Rosamond Smyth until her death, and to sister Eliza until her death or marriage, whichever came first⁶³. Henry Murney and W. Bayard Smyth witnessed the transfer. This probably signalled that Charles had given up any short-term plans of moving to Canada, and that the bad blood with his brother Patrick persisted.

Back in Albany, the Smyth family moved residence to 27 Steuben Street, but Charles maintained his store at 65 Quay Street and ran his freight business from there. Along with five other Albany businesses, he set up a new freight line, named the *Western Line*, with six sloops carrying freight and passengers between New York City and Albany twice a week each way during the sailing season⁶⁴. They promised to transport and deliver property of any description to any part of the United States or Canada. They also accepted merchandise and country produce at their riverside warehouses to be sold on commission.

⁶³ "Frontenac, Ontario, Canada records" Images FamilySearch. DGS008637499 Image 238

⁶⁴ Albany Argus 18 Mar 1817

CANALS

In 1792, the *Western Inland Lock Navigation Company* was incorporated in New York to construct locks and canals by-passing rocky sections of the Mohawk River and to charge tolls for using the facilities. Some of the Kane Brothers were early Directors of this company. Funds were loaned by the State and by banks, but this company did not have sufficient financial backing to improve the most difficult sections of the river, such as Cohoes Falls. In 1810, the New York legislature established a commission to survey the present condition of inland navigation and consider what further improvements ought to be made⁶⁵. DeWitt Clinton was a member of this commission, from which the Erie Canal was conceived. After seven years of designing, planning and analysis, on 15 April 1817, the New York State Legislature under now Governor DeWitt Clinton approved construction of the Erie and Champlain Canals. These would remove all the carries between Albany west to Niagara and north to Sorel, a massive engineering challenge. It was sometimes nicknamed "Clinton's Folly". When completed, the Erie Canal would be 363 miles long, 40 feet wide and 4 feet deep with 50 locks and several aqueducts. Costs would be recovered through tolls.⁶⁶

The decision of New York State Legislature to fund a major canal development from Niagara to Albany promised great benefits for Charles' business through higher expected tonnages and lower costs of freight. Charles' decision to focus on the trading routes from New York to the Great Lakes appeared vindicated. In 1818, Charles was advertising freight from New York City to Detroit and Sandusky Ohio on Lake Erie for \$4.50/cwt if they used the *Western Line* from New York to Albany⁶⁷. He also offered freight from New York City to Pittsburgh Pennsylvania at less than \$6.00/cwt by using the *Western Line*, then overland from Black Rock (Buffalo) to Olean on the headwaters of the Allegheny River⁶⁸. By the end of 1818, Charles was offering freight to Pittsburgh at \$5.00/cwt which was competitive with, and faster than direct overland routes from New York to Pittsburgh through the Appalachians⁶⁹. To satisfy the growth in freight volume, Charles leased Eri Lusher's storehouse in Schenectady.

ROUTE No.	From	Mode of Conveyance.	Probable Time	Highest price per cwt.
ROUTE No. 1. Via Hamilton, (Olean.)	From New York to Albany,	in sloops,	five days,	Dolls. 0 50
	" Albany to Olean,	waggon,	twenty days,	4 00
	" Olean to Pittsburgh,	barges, arks, &c.	five to 8 days,	0 50
			30 to 32 days	Dolls. 5 00
ROUTE No. 2. Via Erie, Pennsylvania.	From New York to Albany,	in sloops,	five days,	Dolls. 0 50
	" Albany to Black Rock,	waggon,	fifteen days,	3 75
	" Black Rock to Pittsburgh,	lake and river,	twelve days,	1 50
			32 days	Dolls. 5 75
ROUTE No. 3. Via Erie, by water from Schenectady [6 months credit without interest on this route.]	From New York to Albany,	in sloops,	five days,	Dolls. 0 50
	" Albany to Oswego,	waggon and boat,	fifteen days,	2 00
	" Oswego to B. Rock, including Portage at Lewiston,	lake and land carriage,	eight days,	1 00
	" Black Rock to Pittsburgh,	lake and river,	twelve days,	1 50
ROUTE No. 4. Via Sackett's Harbor.	From New York to Albany,	in sloops,	five days,	Dolls. 0 50
	" Albany to Sackett's Harbor,	waggon,	ten days,	2 50
	" S. Harbor to B. Rock, including portage at Lewiston,	lake and land carriage,	eight days,	1 00
	" Black Rock to Pittsburgh,	lake and river,	twelve days,	1 50
			35 days	Dolls. 5 50

Charles Smyth's table of freight charges to Pittsburgh by various routes⁷⁰

⁶⁵ The Columbian 27 Mar 1810

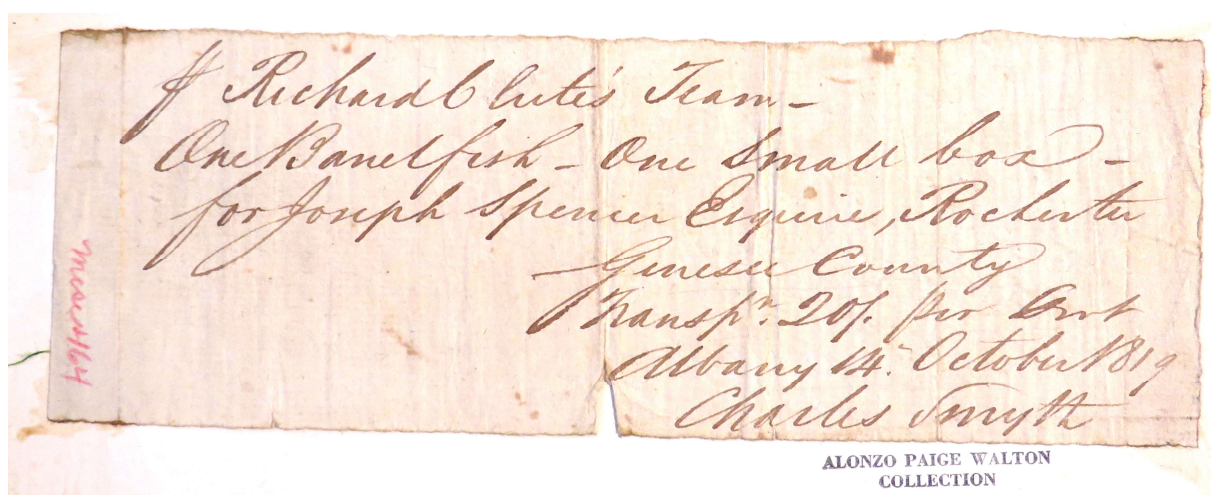
⁶⁶ [The Erie Canal: A New York Venture Helped Shape North Carolina - Moving North Carolina](#)

⁶⁷ Albany Argus 3 February 1818

⁶⁸ Albany Argus 13 February 1818

⁶⁹ Albany Argus 17 November 1818

⁷⁰ Albany Argus 20 November 1818



Freight note signed by Charles Smyth

Between 1817 and 1820, Charles' freight business grew in volume, but strong competition meant that margins were squeezed, and his business struggled to make a profit. In partnership with a Mr Willard, he dabbled in Albany real estate to supplement his income from freight. Charles also acted as an agent for some real estate sales in Canada, and with his brother Bayard, was witness to a deed of sale in Canada so he must have visited there occasionally.

Charles' three sons were attending the Albany Academy; Isaac (14) and Charles Jr (11) won school prizes in August 1820.⁷¹ On 3 November 1819 Margaret and Charles' fourth son, Henry Murney Smyth was born. Henry was baptised at St Peter's Albany on 4 April 1820⁷². Charles obviously had great respect for his brother-in-law Captain Henry Murney and was probably inspired by him to follow a career in shipping and shipbuilding.

CARLETON ISLAND

During his real estate dealings, in October 1820 Charles took an opportunity to purchase 500 acres on the western half of Carleton Island from Jacob and Margrit (Watson) Ten Broeck for \$3000 payable in five annual instalments.⁷³ Carleton Island is situated at the source of the St Lawrence River where it leaves Lake Ontario and is the closest point (ten miles) between the United States and Kingston, Upper Canada. This would have been one reason for Charles' interest, given that his 66-year-old mother Rosamond and his siblings still lived at Kingston, but the island also had good limestone soils, some timber and a proven harbour for transshipping goods from river to lake and vice versa.

⁷¹ New York Statesman 1 August 1820

⁷² St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Albany New York. Church Register 1756-1883. 1941. Op. cit. DGS 7854428 Image 384.

⁷³ "Jefferson, New York, United States records". Images. FamilySearch. DGS 007178970 image 105



Carleton Island location

Carleton Island used to be called Deer or Buck Island. Traditionally, it had been an Iroquois, then French, then British military post, with a substantial fort (Fort Haldimand) established at its south-western end. It was an important naval shipbuilding base for Britain during the Revolutionary War. At the end of the war, the island and fort were ceded to the United States under the Jay Treaty of 1796. The British removed their people, facilities and activities to Kingston, leaving behind a small military garrison to protect the barracks from fire and plunder, and several civilian loyalists. The island was still occupied by people loyal to Britain during the War of 1812, but the British garrison was captured early in the war by a small band of Americans who ransacked the fort and burnt the buildings. After the war, under the 1814 Treaty of Ghent the border returned to its pre-war position except for some forts claimed by the Americans. Carleton Island and Fort Haldimand were inadvertently omitted from the list of forts claimed. The island had no government and developed a reputation as a base for smuggling activity across the U.S.- Canada border. On 28 March 1817 the island was incorporated into Jefferson County, New York by Act of the New York State Legislature.

In June 1820, Charles announced that he had dissociated himself from the *Western Line* of sloops and opened a freight agency at 54 Pine Street New York City, managed by Jacob Shumway who would take orders for freight forwarding to anywhere in New York or Canada.⁷⁴ The family moved back to Margaret's parents' house at 77 North Market Street Albany while Charles went to Carleton Island to establish a freight and trading post. Following the purchase however, a problem with the title was identified. Apparently, the original title was granted to William Richardson for his revolutionary services. He sold his title to Mathew Watson in 1786 but at that time, the Island was still held by the British, so the sale was not recognised in New

⁷⁴ The New York Evening Post 19 June 1820

York State⁷⁵. Charles had to apply to the New York State Legislature to remedy this anomaly, which it did by passing An Act for the Relief of Charles Smyth on 2 March 1821, stating;

*Be it enacted by the People of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, That it shall be lawful for the commissioners of the land office, to grant by letters patent to Charles Smyth, his heirs and assigns, five hundred acres of land to be laid off on the southwestern side of Carleton Island, in the river St Lawrence, by a line as nearly at right angles with the general course of the island as may be, in satisfaction of the claim of said Charles Smyth as an assignee of a certificate of bounty lands originally issued to William Richardson, and located on said island, in which letters patent shall be inserted a proviso, that if it shall so happen, that upon settlement of the boundary line between the United States and the province of Canada, the premises here granted shall not fall within the jurisdiction of this state, then the grant shall be deemed utterly void, and the said Charles Smyth shall have no claim upon the people of this state, on account of the failure of his title.*⁷⁶

Clearly, the New York Legislators were uncertain about which country had jurisdiction over Carleton Island; however, it appointed Charles as the Postmaster for Carleton Island⁷⁷. Charles took the risk. He and his family moved to Carleton Island in June 1821 where he had established a Post Office, wharf, warehouse and other buildings, and his enterprise was well received locally. Mail was delivered from Albany to Carleton Island twice a week and Canadian mail forwarded to Kingston for distribution⁷⁸. Charles began trading commercially and his business grew rapidly. Charles purchased the remainder of the island in 1821, bringing his holding to about 1274 acres.

On 10 August 1821, the Collector of Customs for the Port of Kingston, Mr C.A. Hagerman, acting on orders (he said) of the Provincial Executive in the belief that Carleton Island was Canadian territory, raided Carleton Island with an armed force and confiscated all dutiable items in Charles' store, including 136 kegs of tobacco valued at \$4000 which were on consignment for a New York merchant, and 50 chests of tea⁷⁹. Not wishing to aggravate an international incident, Charles did not resist but immediately went to Kingston to try and have his goods restored. He was assured by magistrates in Kingston that Carleton Island was American land since 1783, despite the subsequent British military presence there. On 14 August, Charles wrote to New York Governor DeWitt Clinton, explaining his situation and seeking some clarity about his rights⁸⁰.

Governor Clinton passed the matter on to the U.S. Secretary of State John Quincy Adams in Washington on 10 September, who discussed the matter with President James Munroe. They decided to write a letter to the British Ambassador in Washington, Stratford Canning, but we don't know the contents of this letter. We know that the British ambassador then wrote to the Provincial Government in Upper Canada, because his letter was forwarded on 18 December

⁷⁵ Durant S.W. and Pierce H.B. “History of Jefferson County, New York.” L.H. Everts & Co, Philadelphia 1878 pp 315-316

⁷⁶ Laws of the State of New York. CHAP LXXV An Act for the Relief of Charles Smyth dated March 2nd, 1821

⁷⁷ List of Deputy US Postmasters. Images. FamilySearch DGS 004218762 image 72

⁷⁸ Republican Chronicle 4 July 1821

⁷⁹ Lyons Republican 31 August 1821

⁸⁰ Letter from Charles Smyth to DeWitt Clinton. “United States Records”, Images FamilySearch DGS 008877241 images 524-528

from Quebec to Sir Peregrine Maitland GCB, the lieutenant governor of Upper Canada in York (now Toronto), but we don't know what it said. Meanwhile, Adams replied to Clinton as follows:

*“His Excellency Dewitt Clinton
Governor of the State of New York*

*Department of State
Washington 21 Nov. 1821*

Sir, I have the honour, by direction of the President of the United States of enclosing herewith confidentially a copy of a Letter from the Department to the minister of his Britannic Majesty residing here, in relation to the seizure of certain Tobacco made in August last by the officers of the Customs at Kingston in upper Canada, upon Carleton Island. The President has preferred this course to that of authorizing forcible resistance, in case of any recurrence of similar molestation to the inhabitants of the Island from various considerations, which he hopes will be satisfactory to you, and to the State of New York, whose immediate interests are concerned in these transactions.

Besides the principle of obtaining from the resort to force, where its results may be expected from amicable representations, he thinks that in the present instance, special reasons occur to recommend the latter. The Island in question appearing from the papers enclosed in your letter, to have been in actual possession of the Canadian Government, until the War of 1812, and to have been taken by us during that war. An article in the Treaty of Ghent stipulates the mutual restoration of the places captured during the War, with an exception in which this Island is not included, and if the British authorities have not demanded the Restoration of Carleton Island in fulfilment of this engagement, it may be presumed to have been from the unwillingness to incur the expence of erecting new buildings, in lieu of those which had been destroyed during the War, while it might be expected, that the Report of the Commissioners would shortly assign the jurisdiction and property at once to the United States.

Believing that if the demand had been formally made on the part of Great Britain to restore the Island conformably to the stipulations of the Treaty, good faith would have required a compliance with it, the President would not feel himself justified, in resorting at this stage of negotiation upon the subject, to a forcible maintenance of the controverted jurisdiction. He trusts that the rights of the United States, and of the State of New York will be not less effectively maintained, by the course which he has concluded to pursue.

*I have the honour to be, with great Respect, Sir, your very humble and obedient Servant
John Quincy Adams.⁸¹*

The Federal Government clearly believed that Canada had a strong case, and that they should wait for the Report of the Commissioners after which, *in the fullness of time*⁸², Carleton Island would no doubt be declared American.⁸³ However, it would be many years before the boundary was unequivocally agreed and surveyed, with Carleton Island clearly within the United States. The Boundary Commission still exists and became permanent in 1925.

⁸¹ “United States Records” Images. FamilySearch DGS 008886052 image 128

⁸² Thanks to Sir Humphrey from “Yes, Minister” BBC.

⁸³ Columbian Centinel 17 August 1822

By the start of 1822, Carleton Island was beginning to thrive with a population of 150-200 people. As well as the Post Office, there was a school and schoolmaster-cum-JP (Professor Shumway), a tavern, four dwelling houses, four stores, and sometimes ten or fifteen lumber vessels anchored in the bays⁸⁴. There was a small cemetery on the island with oak grave-markers, a relic of the wars, but no church. The nearest Episcopal Church in the U.S. had just been established at Oswego on the southern shore of Lake Ontario, 50 miles away. The Smyth family may have been parishioners there, rather than at St George's Kingston, travelling to Oswego by steamboat. On 22 February 1822, Margaret Smyth was born, probably at Carleton Island, but there is no record of her baptism at St Peter's Albany, St George's Kingston or in Oswego. In the 1822 Albany business Directory, Charles Smyth was listed at the Fryer's residence, and in April he sold his warehouse on Quay Street, Albany to his long-term business associates in the *Western Line*, Satterlee and Co.⁸⁵

The Collector for Cape Vincent, New York refused initially to get involved in the border dispute but, in November 1822 on his own initiative, he placed a Deputy Collector on Carleton Island. Charles was left stranded with no U.S. support and Mr Hagerman, the Collector from Kingston, continued his heavy-handed treatment of Carleton Island *“at one time threatening to come over with a party of Military to dispossess your Petitioner, and at all times denouncing as liable to sue and condemnation if ever afterwards found within a British post, every Vessel presenting to enter your Petitioner's Harbors without first reporting to the Custom House at Kingston.”*⁸⁶ Shippers therefore avoided Carleton Island.

By January 1823, Charles realised that the U.S. and New York State Governments would not support him and that Canada would not concede anything until the King ratified the Report of the Boundary Commission. He was becoming frustrated and desperate. While wintering in Albany, he sent another petition to the New York State Assembly and Senate via the congressman for Jefferson County, Micah Sterling⁸⁷, with a covering letter.⁸⁸ In the Petition Charles said; *“Your Petitioner has been subject to very serious losses and unless he can obtain relief from your Honorable body, will be compelled to abandon his purchase altogether. As from the present situation of the said Island, [your petitioner] can neither procure permanent and respectable settlers, nor pursue with safety a fair and open trade with either side of the St Lawrence. [Your petitioner] most humbly approaches your Honorable Body and in referring to the Documents which company this Petition, prays that such relief and future protection may be attended to him as in your wisdom shall seem meet.”*

This was just the beginning of a bad year for Charles. Two of his siblings died in Kingston; Mary (Smyth) Grant in January and Patrick Smyth Jr in October. Charles' wife Margaret Fryer Smyth died on 11 September 1823 at Carleton Island, of bilious fever.⁸⁹ There is a headstone for Margaret, her father and daughter at the Riverside Cemetery in Oswego, which reads:

⁸⁴ Durant S.W. and Pierce H.B. “History of Jefferson County, New York.” Op. cit.

⁸⁵ Ontario Repository 17 September 1821

⁸⁶ “United States Records”, images, FamilySearch. DGS 008877244 Image 274

⁸⁷ “United States Records”, images, FamilySearch. DGS 008877244 Images 273-278

⁸⁸ “United States Records”, images, FamilySearch. DGS 008877244 Images 271-272

⁸⁹ Kingston Chronicle 19 Sep 1823. Bilious fever could have been hepatitis, or possibly yellow fever.

In Memory of
ISAAC I FRYER
who departed this life
May 10th 1831 aged 68
years 5 mths and 2 days:
of his daughter MARGARET
wife of CHARLES SMYTH
who departed this life
at Carleton Island
Sept 23rd 1823 aged 38
Years 3 mths and 4 days:
and of his grand-daughter
MARGARET SMYTH
Who departed this life
Dec^r 30th 1830:
and with him is here interred
aged 8yrs 10 mths and 8 days.

However, they were almost certainly buried in Albany. Isaac's grand-daughter Margaret's funeral departed from Isaac Fryer's house in North Market Street, Albany on 1 January 1831. Isaac signed his will at Albany on 5 May 1831, five days before he died. Also, there are records that the remains of Isaac Fryer, his daughter Margaret and grand-daughter Margaret were removed from the State Street Burial Ground of St Peter's Episcopal Church, Albany to the Albany Rural Burial Ground at Menands in 1866⁹⁰. The headstone at Oswego may have been the original one from Albany or is a duplicate, placed there by Charles and Margaret's son Charles Smyth Jr who was living in Oswego in 1866.

Charles was 41 when his first wife died; his children Isaac Smyth was 17, Charles Jr 14, Patrick 8, Henry 3 and Margaret 1. He probably needed some support and decided to move nearer to the Fryer family in Albany, to the Skinner Mansion House. Charles was very bitter about his treatment over Carleton Island. Eventually, the tobacco was returned to its owner, but Charles never received anything for the loss of his business and livelihood and, of course, he had debts to pay. He abandoned his venture; the buildings and other improvements there soon fell into decay and squatters moved in. He still held the land because no-one else was interested in buying insecure title. In 1828 he offered to sell Carleton Island to the State Government, but they were not interested in bailing him out⁹¹. Charles' appointment as Postmaster of Carleton Island was discontinued on 17 May 1834.⁹² The landholdings were eventually surveyed by the New York State Surveyor in 1825, 1833 and 1834 and Charles was registered as the purchaser. He used the land as security against loans he borrowed totalling \$4,500 in 1835 and 1836⁹³, and he continued to petition governments to compensate him for his losses,

⁹⁰ "U.S. Find a Grave Index 1600s – current". Database and images Memorial ID [91238210](#), citing "Proceedings of the Common Council and the Various Religious Corporations of the City of Albany Relative to the State Street Burial Grounds, Albany, NY Common Council".

⁹¹ "United States records," images, FamilySearch DGS 101688741 image 249

⁹² The National Archives; Washington, DC; Record of Appointment of Postmasters, 1832-Sept. 30, 1971; Records of the Post Office Department; Record Group Number: 28; Series: M841; Roll Number: 88

⁹³ "Jefferson, New York, United States records," images, FamilySearch. DGS 007176573 images 253-256

writing to the U.S. President Martin Van Buren on 17 April 1838⁹⁴ and to the Canadian Provincial Government in August 1841⁹⁵, neither of which offered any recompense.

BACK TO ALBANY

By 1824, the Champlain Canal had been completed and opened, and the Erie Canal was well advanced with several stages open for business. The other major development was that the monopoly on steam navigation in New York State held by Fulton and Livingston since 1807 was overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court ruling on 2 March 1824 in the case of *Gibbons v. Ogden*⁹⁶. By this date, Charles Smyth, now in Albany, had announced himself back in the business of forwarding freight anywhere in the U.S., serving his customers as "*a faithful and disinterested agent*" unlinked to any line of sloops⁹⁷. He sold some property in Elmsley, Canada and Canandaigua, New York to help finance his new venture.

A year later, Charles announced that for the 1825 season, he would be using the powerful steam ship *Henry Eckford* on the Hudson, towing two sloops with freight⁹⁸. In January 1825, Charles Smyth with brothers James E. and John Mowatt of New York City announced that they intended to apply to the New York Legislature to establish the *Western Inland Transportation Company*, with a capital of \$100,000 to operate the freight business. Their application was refused on the grounds that it would be detrimental to the shippers of Albany County, but a similar petition followed it into the Legislature seeking to establish the *Dutchess and Orange Steam Boat Company*. With some effective lobbying, this application was successful, being apparently unassociated with Albany County. The proponents of the two applications negotiated to merge their interests into the *Dutchess and Orange Steam Boat Company* and attracted numerous New York investors, but the Mowatt brothers held most of the shares. Rumours of possible corruption associated with the process of passing the legislation were the subject of a Legislative Committee review which reported in 1826.⁹⁹ No evidence of corruption was found, but the Legislature was put on notice regarding potential conflicts of interest when dealing with future applications to establish public companies in New York.

Charles' mother Rosamond Smyth died at Kingston during the winter of 1824-25 – an exact date cannot be found. She was buried at the Cataraqui Cemetery, Kingston and her epitaph states:

"Erected over the remains, and in memory of Rosamond McDavitt, relict of Patrick Smyth, an U.E. Loyalist; who self-banished because of her religion from the land of her nativity, was soon driven, because of her allegiance, from the land of her adoption. 'She sought tranquility in a sister Province, where the ashes of her husband repose, and departed this life among her

⁹⁴ "United States records," images, FamilySearch. DGS 008877270 images 198-199.

⁹⁵ Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada. 1842 p340

⁹⁶ Decree in *Gibbons v. Ogden*; 3/2/1824; Engrossed Minutes, 2/1790 - 6/7/1954; Records of the Supreme Court of the United States, Record Group 267; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

⁹⁷ Rochester Telegraph 10 February 1824

⁹⁸ Geneva Gazette 1 January 1825

⁹⁹ Schenectady Cabinet 15 March 1826

descendants, a distinguished example of conjugal fidelity, maternal tenderness, and Christian faith.”¹⁰⁰

Charles two younger sisters had died previously, Harriet in 1815 and Eliza in 1820, so Charles’ house in Kingston was unoccupied. He decided to lease it to his brother Bayard and family.

The Erie Canal was completed in October 1825, so it was open for the 1826 season and attracted increased freight movement. In the first year of operation, 2,000 boats, 9,000 horses, and 8,000 men were involved in canal transportation.¹⁰¹ The steam boat *Henry Eckford* operated as planned in 1825 and 1826, and the *Dutchess and Orange Steam Boat Company* increased its capacity to six towed boats. Voyages from New York to Albany were completed in 22 hours, and passenger fares were as low as \$1 aboard the towed sloops.¹⁰² The company added another steam boat, *The Sun* for the 1826 season.¹⁰³ However, on 13 June 1826 the board of the *Dutchess and Orange Steam Boat Company* unanimously appointed James Keeler as their agent in Albany “in place of Charles Smyth, removed.”¹⁰⁴ The emphasis is theirs, and it means Charles relocated from Albany, not that he was dismissed for some other reason.

MOVE TO NEW YORK CITY

In 1826, Charles’ eldest sons Isaac and Charles Jr turned 20 and 18 respectively, and Charles decided he should introduce them to his business. Charles’ was living at 71 Pearl Street New York City, and his business was at 82 Cortlandt Street. He remained a freight agent for the *Dutchess and Orange Steam Boat Company* – the *Henry Eckford* departed from a berth at the bottom of Cortlandt Street. Charles Jr remained in Albany and, together, they entered a barging business on the Erie Canal, the *Franklin Line*,¹⁰⁵ in partnership with James Field of Rochester. They also acted as agents for the Canada Company of London, which was promoting emigration from Britain and Ireland to take up land in Canada.^{106,107} This involved arranging passages from Liverpool to New York and then transportation inland to Canada.

In early 1829, Charles had to go to the Rochester area to sort out problems with his partners in the *Franklin Line*, but by July 1829, he was back in New York City living at 81 Cortlandt Street.¹⁰⁸ Isaac his son was at 82 Cortlandt Street and Charles Jr in Albany. During this three-year period 1826-1829, Charles met a widow, Cornelia Adeline Kane Strong, living nearby at 123 Fulton Street New York City.

¹⁰⁰ Petty, Ross D. op. cit. p45, citing a letter from Henry Murney Smyth to James H Morris on 21 Nov 1883.

¹⁰¹ [The Erie Canal: A New York Venture Helped Shape North Carolina - Moving North Carolina](#)

¹⁰² Ithaca Journal 5 October 1825

¹⁰³ Richmond Enquirer 4 November 1825

¹⁰⁴ Troy Sentinel 20 June 1826

¹⁰⁵ The Album 29 April 1828

¹⁰⁶ The U.E. Loyalist 5 April 1828

¹⁰⁷ Selection of Reports and Papers of the House of Commons 1836. Minutes of Evidence before the Select Committee on Emigration from the United Kingdom. 1827 p439

¹⁰⁸ “Manhattan New York City Directory 1829-1830”. Ancestry.com



Lower Manhattan, New York City, 1811, showing relevant locations

CORNELIA ADELINE KANE

CORNELIA’S FAMILY

Cornelia was born in New York City on 15 July 1795 and baptised at the Dutch Reformed Church on 6 September 1795.¹⁰⁹ She was the eldest child of John Kane Junior and Maria Codwise who had been married on 20 November 1793 at the same church.

The Kane family was of Irish descent, originally O’Kane or O’Cahan from County Antrim. John’s father (also John) was a linen merchant who emigrated to New York City in 1752 and dropped the “O” from his surname.¹¹⁰ He married Sybil Kent in 1756. In 1763 he purchased a 1576-acre estate in Dutchess County New York, and settled there soon afterwards, establishing a store at Fredericksburg, (now Patterson).¹¹¹ He had been educated in England and was an “ultra-Tory”, siding with the loyalists during the Revolutionary War and had to flee from New York to Nova Scotia in 1783 with his large family, where they struggled to survive. Under New York State law¹¹², his estates were confiscated, he was banished from New York State and could be summarily executed if found there again.

Cornelia’s father John Kane Junior was the eldest son. After American independence, in about 1790 John Jr and his six younger brothers, Charles, James, Oliver, Elisha, Elias and Archibald (the “Kane Brothers”) returned to New York and established a network of trading posts stretching from Albany north to the St Lawrence, and west to the Great Lakes. Using the Hudson and Mohawk River valleys for transport, they sold goods to and from New York City and had trade links with Europe and the West Indies. There were also five sisters who survived to adulthood, Martha, Abigail, Maria, Sibella and Elizabeth (“Sally”), all of whom married into aristocratic American families (e.g. Van Rensselaer, Livingston) and had large families themselves. In total, Cornelia had 57 Kane first cousins, spread around New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island states. It seems that the Kane family were close in business and leisure, corresponded regularly, and visited each other often during the summer months, travelling up and down the Hudson River in one of the many sloops which plied the waterway. In the early years, the Kane brothers ran their business as a partnership for the benefit and support of the whole family, including their sisters¹¹³. These close family ties no doubt arose because of their shared ordeals during and after the Revolutionary War.

Upon returning to the U.S.A., long after the Revolution and John’s sentence of banishment and death had been overturned, Cornelia’s Kane grandparents John and Sybil lived in Albany, Schenectady and Red Hook with their children and visited New York City occasionally. In contrast, her Codwise grandparents George and Anna Maria Van Rantz lived a few blocks

¹⁰⁹ “U.S., Dutch Reformed Church Records in Selected States, 1639-2000” Ancestry.com

¹¹⁰ Wood, Elizabeth Dennistoun. “The Story of John Kane of Dutchess County”. J.B. Lippincott Company 1921. p43

¹¹¹ Coldham, Peter Wilson. “American Migrations 1765-1799: The lives, times, and families of colonial Americans who remained loyal to the British Crown before, during and after the Revolutionary War, as related in their own words and through their correspondence”. Baltimore, MD, USA: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2000.

¹¹² New York State Legislature. “An Act for the Forfeiture and Sale of the Estates of Persons who have adhered to the Enemies of this State, and for declaring the Sovereignty of the People of this State, in respect to all Property within the same.” Passed 22 October 1779

¹¹³ Letter from Sally Morris to her nephew John Kintzing Kane. 6 Oct 1851. Orange County California Genealogical Society. Record No 241566

away at 341 Pearl Street, New York City so Cornelia would have seen a lot of them during her childhood. The Codwise family were of Dutch ancestry, also merchants, and had plantation estates on the island of St Croix in the West Indies. Unlike the Kanes however, the Codwise family sided with the rebels during the Revolution and so retained their fortunes after American independence. Cornelia had five Codwise uncles (George Junior, Christopher, Luke, James and David) and two Codwise aunts (Elizabeth and Cornelia B). George Jr and Christopher managed the Codwise merchant business in New York City, David was a lawyer in New York, while Luke and James managed the estates in St Croix. David Codwise married Cornelia's first cousin, Martha 'Patty' Livingston, forging another link between the Kane and Codwise families. Cornelia had altogether 39 Codwise first cousins.

GROWING UP IN MANHATTAN

The Kane family lived at 277 Pearl Street, Manhattan. The property was three storeys high with a 25-foot frontage on Pearl Street and ran all the way back (200 feet) to Cliff Street.¹¹⁴ John's store in 1795 was at 162 Pearl Street¹¹⁵ but in 1799 he moved it to the rear of 277 Pearl Street.¹¹⁶ The Kanes needed a large house because they went on to have a large family. Following Cornelia, John and Maria had Oliver Grenville (1797), Maria Antoinette (1798), Elizabeth Caroline (1800), John Van Rensselaer (1801), Emily Augusta (1803), Georgiana Maria (1806), Charlotte Matilda (1807), Harriet Amelia (1809) and James Archibald (1811). Only James did not survive to adulthood. It's likely that Maria had one or more servants to help her raise the family and maintain the household and, in those years, the family could afford it.

Cornelia was well-educated. Although none of Cornelia's letters have survived, Cornelia's sister Maria Antoinette Kane was a prolific letter-writer, well-educated and very religious, so Cornelia would have been the same. The children may have had a private tutor, but New York City had several excellent schools, where young ladies were taught English, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, needlework, music, drawing, dancing and romance languages.¹¹⁷ John Kane's family were strong churchgoers. John's mother Sybil Kent Kane was the daughter of a Presbyterian clergyman, but John Jr and his family, led by Maria with her Dutch ancestry, were members of the Reformed Dutch Church. The Kane men were pragmatic about which church they followed. Cornelia would have attended Sunday School and bible classes.

In September 1805 (Cornelia was ten) a yellow fever epidemic hit New York City and John and family moved about three miles north to Greenwich Village,¹¹⁸ at the corner of East Bank and Union Streets, which allegedly had a safer water supply. At that time, the link between yellow fever and mosquitoes was unrecognised, although swampy areas seemed more prone to outbreaks. In 1807, John moved the family back to 277 Pearl Street,¹¹⁹ the epidemic having

¹¹⁴ New York Columbian 19 December 1817 and Mercantile Advertiser 23 January 1818

¹¹⁵ Minerva 23 May 1796

¹¹⁶ Commercial Advertiser 3 May 1799

¹¹⁷ e.g. American Citizen 3 June 1801. Mrs Finlay's School at 63 William Street, near the Reformed Dutch Church.

¹¹⁸ American Citizen 18 September 1805

¹¹⁹ New York Gazette and General Advertiser. 2 January 1807

passed (for now), but business for the years 1805-1808 was badly affected as customers abandoned the city and shipping avoided it. In 1808 his business address was 176 Pearl Street.

Cornelia's grandmother Anna Maria (Van Ranst) Codwise died at her home at 341 Pearl Street in August 1805.¹²⁰ Cornelia's Kane grandparents died in 1806 (Sybil) and 1808 (John) at Red Hook, Dutchess County, where their daughter (Cornelia's aunt) Martha Kane Livingston lived. Cornelia's grandfather George Codwise Senior died in 1814 aged 80¹²¹, and the funeral departed from the Kane's residence 277 Pearl Street on 20 October.¹²²

CORNELIA'S FIRST MARRIAGE, TO PASCHAL STRONG

The Kane and Codwise families belonged to the Reformed Dutch Church and attended their nearest church in Nassau Street, between Cedar and Liberty Streets, referred to as the 'Middle' church. This is probably where Cornelia met a young man named Paschal Neilson Strong. The Strong family lived at 186 Fulton Street, not far from the Kanes, Codwises and the church.

Paschal was born on 16 February 1793 at Setauket, Long Island, New York. He was the eldest of nine children born to Joseph and Margaret Strong of which only five survived to adulthood. Joseph Strong was an attorney and counsellor at law in New York City after graduating from Yale in 1798.



The 'Middle' Reformed Dutch Church,
Nassau Street, New York City

Paschal attended Columbia College, the precursor of Columbia University, where he met fellow student George van Ranst Codwise, Cornelia's first cousin. They graduated Bachelor of Arts together in August 1810, both aged seventeen.¹²³ After graduating top of his year in 1810, Paschal went on to study Divinity at Columbia. With his friend John Knox, he was ordained a minister on 14 July 1816 into the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Churches of New York City, at the 'Middle' Church in Nassau Street.¹²⁴ The day afterwards, Rev. Paschal Neilson Strong (23) married Cornelia Adeline Kane (21) at the same Church.¹²⁵ Paschal and Cornelia

¹²⁰ New York Gazette 28 August 1805

¹²¹ “New York, New York, U.S., Vital Records, Births 1847-1897, Marriages 1847-1903, Deaths 1798-1900” Ancestry.com

¹²² Commercial Advertiser 19 October 1814

¹²³ Columbian 10 August 1810

¹²⁴ Columbian 15 July 1816

¹²⁵ “U.S., Dutch Reformed Church Records in Selected States, 1639-2000” Ancestry.com

were probably courting for quite some time, just waiting for Paschal to finish his studies and be ordained.



Miniature of “Cornelia Adeline Strong née Kane. Died October 12th, 1846”¹²⁶.

Cornelia and Paschal wasted no time starting a family. Their first child, Cornelia Kane Strong, was born in 1817 at Albany, probably where Paschal was doing missionary work. Caroline Mills Strong was born in October 1818 but died of “infantile flux” aged ten months at Staten Island, maybe in the Quarantine hospital, on 24 August 1819.¹²⁷ Paschal Neilson Strong Junior

¹²⁶ According to writing on the back. Artist unknown. Courtesy of Jane (Whiting) Bellward.

¹²⁷ “New York, New York, U.S., Vital Records” Deaths Register: Manhattan 1816-1820. Ancestry.com

was born on 30 June 1820, and Joseph Montgomery Strong was born on 6 February 1822, both in Manhattan.¹²⁸

Paschal preached at all four of the Collegiate Reformed Dutch Churches in New York City. He was a member of the New York and the United Foreign Missionary Societies, the Young Men’s Missionary Society of New York, the Auxiliary New York Bible Society and a Life Member of the American Bible Society.¹²⁹ As part of his work in the New York Missionary Society, Paschal travelled as far as Buffalo to spread the gospel among the Native American tribes.¹³⁰ Letters were sent to him in Saratoga (New York), so he travelled widely during summer months. By all accounts, he was quite an orator in the pulpit. In November 1817, Paschal officiated at the marriage of Cornelia’s sister Maria to John Hone Jr in New York City¹³¹ and in May 1818 he did the same for Cornelia’s sister Elizabeth’s marriage to Philo L Mills.¹³²

In 1817 Cornelia’s father John Kane was declared insolvent.¹³³ The insolvency was the culmination of difficulties in maintaining secure international trade during the Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815) and especially the War of 1812. American merchant ships and cargoes (and sometimes crewmen) were regularly confiscated by French, Spanish, Dutch and later, British navies and privateers. Added to this was excessive issue of paper currency by merchant banks and the U.S. Treasury, unsupported by bullion reserves. This period saw the Kane Brothers’ partnership gradually disintegrate, thus removing one source of financial support for Cornelia and Paschal. In January 1818, 277 Pearl Street was sold to pay John’s creditors.¹³⁴ Not long afterwards, John and his son Oliver Grenville Kane started another merchant business J. and O.G. Kane which was run from 175 Pearl Street, a few blocks south of the old family home. By this date, Cornelia and Paschal were living with the Strong family in Fulton Street.

Cornelia’s father John Kane died suddenly in New York City on 20 April 1819, aged 58. His obituary in the New York Gazette reads as follows; *“It is a painful duty to record in our obituary notice the death of Mr. John Kane, an old and respectable merchant of this city. He left his house yesterday morning in usual health, attended to his business, returned home at breakfast, was suddenly seized with apoplexy, and in a few hours he was numbered with the dead. His death will be deeply and sensibly deplored by that class of the mercantile community in which he so long held a conspicuous situation. As a member of the religious communion to which he was attached his loss will be felt in a peculiar manner. Exemplary in his life, upright in his deportment, amiable in his manners, industrious, although unfortunate as a merchant; the poor did not escape his compassionate regard; and when basking in the sunshine of prosperity, he did not forget the men of small business, but assiduously endeavoured to promote their interest, when called upon, by every means in his power. Just resuming business at an advanced age of life, with prospects highly flattering, he is taken by the all-wise Disposer*

¹²⁸ Dwight, Benjamin W. “A History of the Descendants of Elder John Strong of Northampton, Mass.” 1871 Vol I, p672

¹²⁹ Commercial Advertiser 30 October 1820

¹³⁰ Evening Post 26 December 1820

¹³¹ Spectator 18 Nov 1817

¹³² Commercial Advertiser 26 May 1818

¹³³ National Advocate 21 October 1817

¹³⁴ The New York Columbian 19 December 1817

*of events from time to eternity. In common with his numerous and highly respectable family of children and relatives, we feel a deep regret and a sincere sympathy."*¹³⁵

City living had its dangers. On 19 April 1821, Paschal's mother Margaret Strong died of consumption (tuberculosis) at 186 Fulton Street New York City.¹³⁶ Cornelia and Paschal were living at 123 Fulton Street. Consumption was a leading cause of death in early 19th century cities worldwide. For example, a small sample of 300 deaths from the Manhattan Death Register for 1824-1826 shows that consumption caused 31% of them. Whole families died and it was thought that the disease was caused by some inherent family characteristic. It was not regarded as contagious. When pleurisy, lung inflammation, pneumonia and influenza are added, the death toll from respiratory diseases rises to 40%. Yellow fever was another major killer. In 1822 there was a severe outbreak of yellow fever in New York City. Many people died and were buried in mass graves in what is now Washington Square Park, and people fled the city (lower Manhattan). Paschal, who had just become a Trustee of Columbia College¹³⁷, delivered a sermon on "The Pestilence, a Punishment for Public Sins" at the Middle Reformed Dutch Church on 17 November 1822 after the epidemic had passed. Paschal attributed the epidemic to God's wrath, brought upon the city because of

"the public contempt which this city, as such, has affixed to God's Sabbath, to God's ministry, to God's ordinances",

"the inordinate appetite for gain,"

"that love of pleasure, that spirit of dissipation, that general profligacy of morals," and

*"a spirit of political feeling at war with the authority of God."*¹³⁸

Tragedy continued to follow Cornelia's family. Her mother Maria Codwise Kane died on 17 April 1824 aged 49 at Paschal and Cornelia's house, 123 Fulton Street of "inflammation of the lungs"¹³⁹. Perhaps this was a misdiagnosis of consumption because, later that year, Paschal himself was diagnosed with consumption. With help from the Codwise family, he sailed to St Croix, West Indies to convalesce in a warmer climate with fresh air. Unfortunately, he did not recover and died there on 7 April 1825, aged 32. He is buried in the cemetery of St. Paul's Anglican Church at Fredericksted, St. Croix.¹⁴⁰ *"His ministry was brief, but brilliant, popular, and powerful. He was an eloquent preacher, a fine classical and exegetical scholar, evangelical in sentiment, and characterized by deep personal piety and faithful pastoral service."*¹⁴¹

Cornelia was left a widow, caring for four children aged between three and eight years old. She would have been supported financially by both the Kane and Codwise families as far as

¹³⁵ Cherry Valley Gazette 4 May 1819

¹³⁶ Evening Post 19 April 1821

¹³⁷ "U.S., College Student Lists, 1763-1924" Columbia College. 1826. Ancestry.com

¹³⁸ Strong, Paschal N, "The Pestilence; a Punishment for Public Sins." H Sage, New York 1822

¹³⁹ "New York, New York, U.S., Vital Records, Births 1847-1897, Marriages 1847-1903, Deaths 1798-1900" Ancestry.com

¹⁴⁰ Emerson, Edward Bliss. "The Caribbean Journals and Letters, 1831-1834"

<http://edicionesdigitales.info/biblioteca/Emerson.pdf>

¹⁴¹ McLintock, James and Strong, John. Eds. *"The Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature"*. Haper and Brothers; NY; 1880

possible, but their fortunes had been ravaged by many years of war, multiple epidemics and financial crises. Her church congregation would have provided spiritual support. Cornelia sold Paschal's library of theological books and in 1826, started to take in boarders to help support the family. In the 1826-1827 New York Directory, William R Swift and John Humphrys, both merchants, were boarding at 123 Fulton Street and it was still listed as a boarding house in the 1829-1830 directory. During this period 1826-1829, Cornelia met a widower, Charles Smyth, living nearby at 81 Cortlandt Street New York City.

CHARLES AND CORNELIA

RE-MARRIAGE AND RETURN TO ALBANY

We don't know exactly how Cornelia Strong met her future second husband Charles Smyth. During his business career, Charles would have met Cornelia's uncles James Kane at Albany and Charles Kane at Schenectady and probably undertook to transport and deliver cargoes for the Kane Brothers. One of the uncles may have introduced Charles to Cornelia. The Reformed Dutch Church in New York City was a possible meeting place, although Charles was nominally Anglican, which became Episcopal after the American Revolution. Another meeting place could have been a local school in New York City, possibly attached to the Church although New York City had many private and public schools to choose from. Charles' youngest children Henry (b.1819) and Margaret (b.1822) were the same ages as Cornelia's children Paschal (b.1820) and Joseph (b.1822) who lived nearby.

Charles was thirteen years older than Cornelia, but they had people, experiences and interests in common and must have been attracted to each other. They were married on 8 October 1829 at the Reformed Dutch Church on Nassau Street by Cornelia and Paschal Strong's great friend Rev. John Knox. This was just a week after Charles' eldest son Isaac Smyth was married to Frances Ward in Hartford, Connecticut.

Not long after their marriage, Charles and Cornelia moved to Albany. It could be that Charles' imminent removal was what precipitated his proposal, and the marriage. Cornelia's eldest daughter Cornelia, and Charles' youngest daughter Margaret accompanied them, but the younger boys Patrick (14) and Henry Smyth (10), and Paschal (9) and Montgomery Strong (7) may have stayed in New York at boarding school. Records of their education cannot be found.

There were several family events that year. Charles' first grandchild James Ward Smyth was born at Hartford Connecticut on 19 July 1830. Charles' youngest child and only surviving daughter Margaret died aged eight at Albany on 30 December 1830. Margaret's funeral departed from her grandfather Isaac Fryer's house in North Market Street for the St Peter's graveyard.¹⁴² Five months later, Isaac Fryer died at his home in Albany aged 69 and was buried with his daughter Margaret Fryer and granddaughter Margaret Smyth. In his will dated 6 May 1831 (four days before his death) and signed with a very unsteady hand, Isaac left all his real and personal assets to his wife Catherine and after her death, the residual to his four surviving grandchildren, Isaac, Charles Jr, Patrick and Henry Smyth.¹⁴³ His assets included several parcels of land on the (then) outskirts of Albany which were eventually sold long after Catherine's death in 1850 and the proceeds distributed to his heirs in 1869.¹⁴⁴

Charles Smyth Junior married Catherine H Colt on 13 June 1831 at Palmyra, a village on the Erie Canal near Rochester. Charles and Cornelia's first child Mary Grant 'Molly' Smyth was born on 26 July 1831 at Albany.

¹⁴² "10,000 Vital Records of Eastern New York, 1777-1834" No 8038 Margaret Smith. Ancestry.com

¹⁴³ "New York, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1659-1999" for Isaac Fryer. Ancestry.com

¹⁴⁴ "Albany, New York, United States records," images, FamilySearch. DGS 008729508, images 589-609



These two images are purported to be Charles Smyth and Cornelia Smyth with their daughter Molly¹⁴⁵. If correct, the date would be about 1832-3 judging by Molly's age. At this date however, the daguerreotype process was in its infancy.

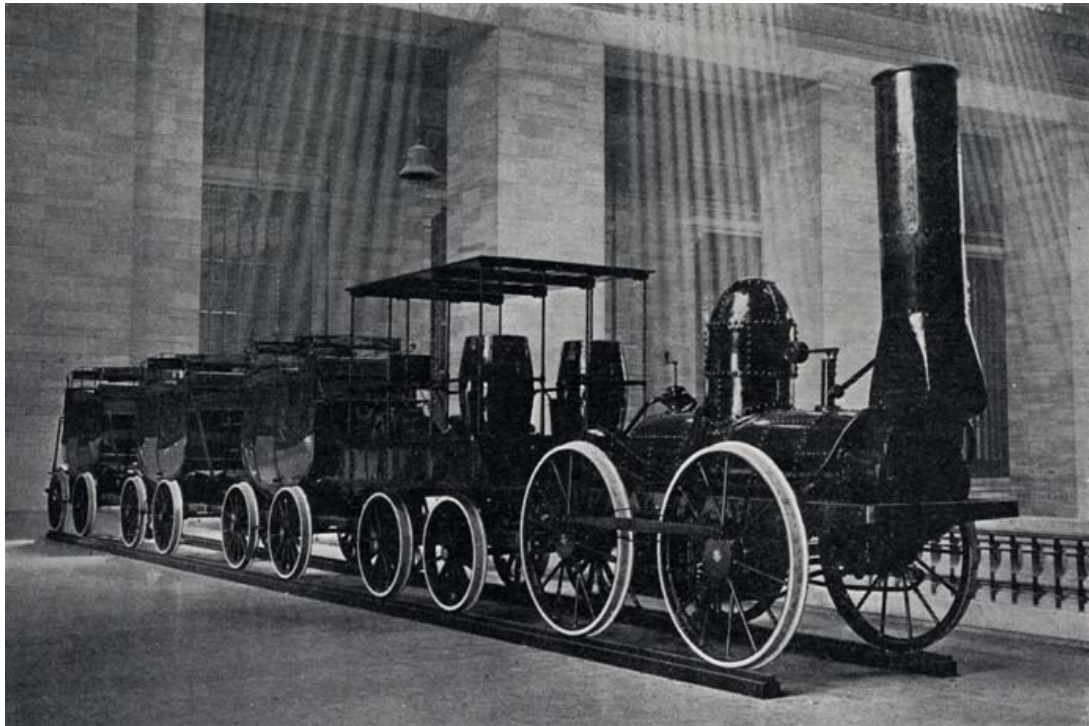
In 1830, Charles resurrected the *Western Transportation Company* which had a fleet of fifteen canal barges operating on the Erie Canal between Albany and Buffalo. Charles became the company agent in Albany, Isaac was the agent in New York City at Cortlandt Street, and they appointed an agent in Buffalo N.Y.¹⁴⁶ His company was one of many offering transport on the New York canal system, and steam technology was once again overtaking them, this time on rails. On 13 August 1831, The Mohawk and Hudson Rail Road ran the first regularly scheduled rail service on the eleven mile straight between Albany on the Hudson River and Schenectady on the Mohawk River, effectively bypassing the steepest and most challenging section of the Erie Canal, a rise of 226 feet over 30 miles with 24 locks.¹⁴⁷ The rail road was limited, by regulation and design, to carry passenger only and the one-way fare was fifty cents. It would be decades before railways had the capability and approval to carry freight on inclines all year round, and replace canal boats completely, but this was the forerunner of the New York Central Railroad. A line from Schenectady to Utica was opened in 1836, and from Utica to Syracuse

¹⁴⁵ Supplied by Jane (Whiting) Bellward. The frame containing the images is stamped lower left "Williamson, Brooklyn N.Y." which dates it to the 1850s. Unlike Williamson's other portraits, the images do not fit the frame or mount, so the frame is probably not original.

¹⁴⁶ Williams, Edwin. "New York Annual Register" 1830 p129 and 1832 p246

¹⁴⁷ [The Erie Canal: A New York Venture Helped Shape North Carolina - Moving North Carolina](#) "Profile of the Grand Erie Canal" 1832 diagram

in 1839, connecting all the settlements along the Mohawk Valley and cutting passenger travel times dramatically.



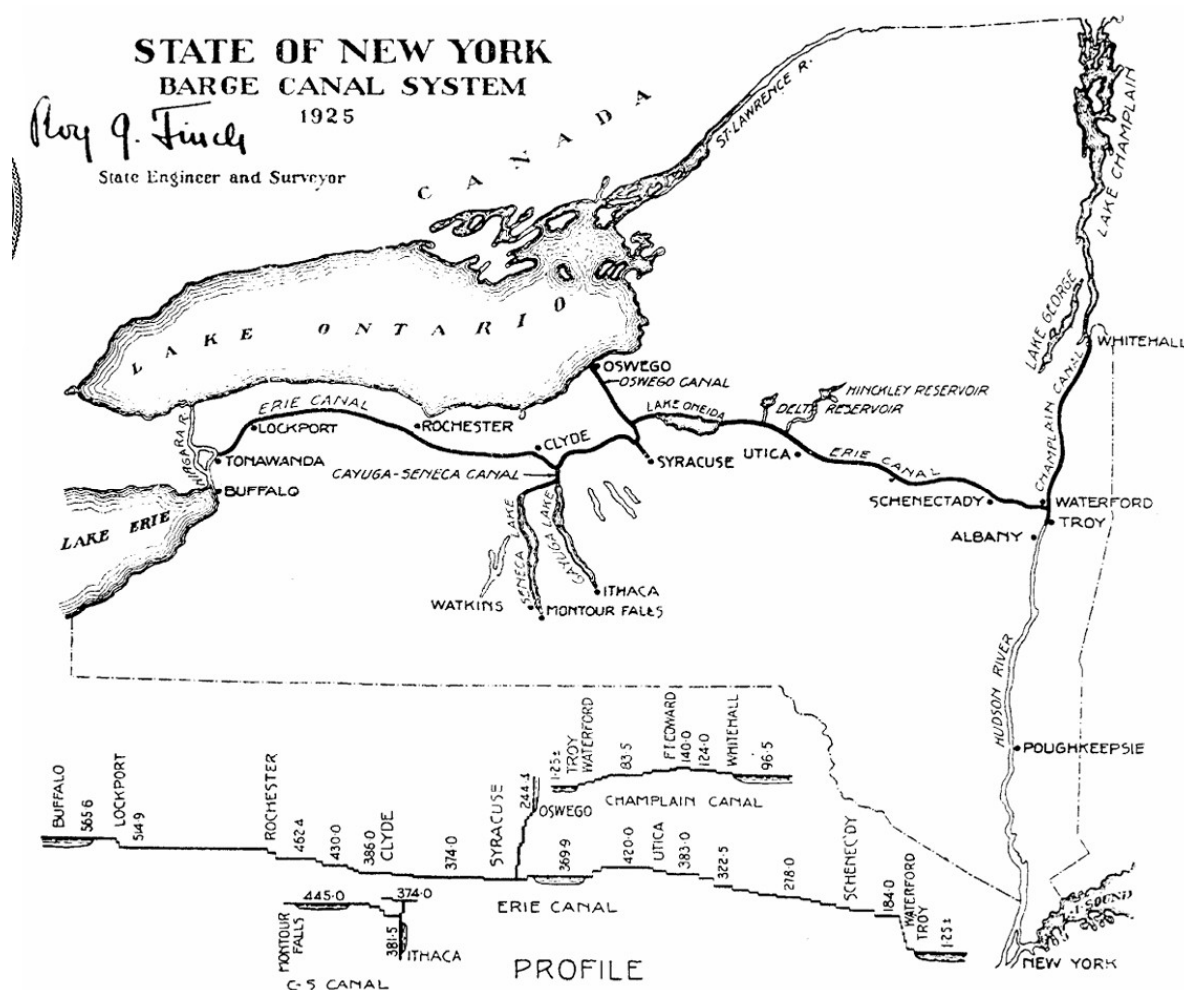
The DeWitt Clinton train of the Mohawk and Hudson Line, 1831.
(On display at Grand Central Station, New York)

Charles and his sons continued operating the *Western Transportation Line* until 1836, when Charles senior began handing over the business to his sons. Charles Junior and his young family moved to Oswego, closer to Catherine's family, while Isaac remained in New York City. They formed the *Lake and River Line*, with Isaac at 119 Broad Street New York City, Nathaniel Davis at 68 Quay Street Albany and Charles Smyth Jr at Oswego. Patrick Smyth joined the company in 1839, based in Oswego.¹⁴⁸ Charles Junior's brother-in-law Judah Colt was their agent in Cleveland, Ohio. During the season, this line offered daily freight services between New York and Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and Indiana via the Great Lakes and Welland Canal.¹⁴⁹ Cargoes loaded on 60-ton Lake Boats were hauled by steamboats along the Hudson and by horse teams along the Erie Canal, so that goods did not have to be transhipped to lake-going vessels at Oswego.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Cleveland Daily Herald 1 May 1839

¹⁴⁹ The Welland Canal, connecting Lakes Ontario and Erie, is West of the Niagara River in Canada and was opened on 30 November 1829.

¹⁵⁰ Cleveland Herald 18 June 1836



151

Charles and Cornelia decided to support a new Episcopal church, St Paul's, being established at the southern end of Albany township. Charles became a vestryman at St Paul's in 1835¹⁵². Cornelia's eldest child Cornelia Kane Strong married William Wallace Forsyth at St Paul's Episcopal Church, Albany on 8 September 1836. William Forsyth was the son of a doctor from Albany, educated at Amherst College Massachusetts and returned to Albany to become a merchant and attorney.

As detailed below, Charles took out several short-term loans during 1835-1840, using his land on Carleton Island as security. The purpose of these loans is unknown but, given they were all less than \$5000 and were repaid quickly, it is possible that he took several opportunities to purchase cargoes and sell them profitably soon afterwards. Charles and Cornelia borrowed \$1500 on 20 April 1835 from lawyer James King of Albany. The loan was to be repaid on demand, with interest, and was secured by a bond of \$3000 penalty for non-payment and a mortgage over the Western 500-acre grant on Carleton Island. The loan was repaid, and mortgage was discharged, date unknown.

¹⁵¹ Finch, Roy G. "The Story of the New York State Canals" 1925. State of New York.

¹⁵² "[Grain, Once Scattered](#)" Rambles on the History of St. Paul's Church in the City of Albany

Charles and Cornelia borrowed \$3000 on 10 May 1836 from Nathaniel F. Waring of Brooklyn, which became the subject of disputes over the next several years. The loan was to be repaid over five years in semi-annual instalments with 7% p.a. interest, and was secured by a bond of \$6000 penalty for non-payment and a mortgage over the Western 500-acre grant on Carleton Island. Waring changed the term from "five years" to "on demand", and (allegedly) the Smyths agreed.¹⁵³

On 14 November 1836, Charles used the same piece of land as security against a loan of \$5000 from his new step son-in-law William Forsyth.¹⁵⁴ This suggests that the debt owed to Nathaniel F. Waring had been repaid quickly and the mortgage discharged. What Charles intended to do with the money is not recorded, but if not repaid in five years with interest, Charles promised to pay a penalty of \$10,000 as well as the mortgage. The debt to William Forsyth was repaid and the mortgage discharged in May 1837¹⁵⁵, so Charles must have used the money quickly and productively, as he seems to have done with his other borrowings.

In June 1837, The Long Island Insurance Company (LIIC) of Brooklyn served a Bill of Complaint against Charles Smyth et al, the others being Cornelia A. Smyth, Nathaniel F. and Henry Waring. The subject of the Bill is not recorded, but court records show that the Warings did not attend the court to defend themselves and an order was made that the charge against them be taken as confessed. This is strange because Henry Waring was a Commissioner of the LIIC upon its listing in 1833, although he did not become a director. On 27 January 1838, William W Forsyth was also listed as a defendant and because he did not attend court, the charge against him was also taken as confessed.

On the same day, Charles and Cornelia A. Smyth and Henry Waring were ordered to produce witnesses in their defence before a judge within forty days.¹⁵⁶ The case was eventually heard by a Vice Chancellor and judgement was given on 28 December 1842, in favour of the Long Island Insurance Company, which had been assigned the original bond and mortgage given by Charles and Cornelia to the Warings, as payment for services. The reasoning was that the Warings varied the repayment conditions from "five years" to "on demand" *after* Charles and Cornelia had executed the deed. The charges against Charles and Cornelia were dismissed with costs against the Warings. Henry Waring appealed this judgement, and the appeal was heard by the New York State Chancellor at Albany on 15 September 1843. The judgement was not changed, except that the original complainant (LIIC) and Charles and Cornelia's costs of the appeal were to be paid by the Warings.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵³ "Jefferson, New York, United States records," images, FamilySearch DGS 007178976 images 261-262

¹⁵⁴ "Jefferson, New York, United States records," images, FamilySearch DGS 007178976 image 356

¹⁵⁵ "Jefferson, New York, United States records," images, FamilySearch DGS 007178978 image 258

¹⁵⁶ "New York City, New York, United States records," images, FamilySearch. DGS 008579433 image 533

¹⁵⁷ "New York City, New York, United States records," images, FamilySearch. DGS 008729754 images 477-478

RETIREMENT

Charles (54) and Cornelia (41) had a late child. John Kane Smyth (my great-grandfather) was born at Albany on 16 February 1836, and he was baptised at St Paul's on 5 May.

Charles formally retired from his freight forwarding business on 11 September 1837¹⁵⁸ in the midst of his court battle with the Long Island Insurance Company. A month later, Charles loaned money to his sons Charles Jr and Isaac to continue financing the business, secured against their shares of property inherited from their grandfather Isaac Fryer. The loans were repaid in October 1843, and the mortgages were discharged.¹⁵⁹

My impression is that Charles found retirement difficult. He may have been a grumpy father and grandfather with little patience for very young children. For most of his life he had been restless, moving from one venture to another, but not always at his own choosing. He was quite bitter about some of these forced changes of direction. As described earlier, he spent time in retirement trying to recover losses from the Carleton Island venture by petitioning the New York, American and Canadian governments, and by liquidating land assets.

After St Paul's Episcopal Church was forced to move premises to the old Albany Theatre on South Pearl Street, on 1 March 1841 Charles bought a pew in the new Church for \$225 and annual rent of \$22.50 to help finance its modification. Less than a year later however, Charles wrote to St Paul's complaining that *"When I purchased the pew in your Church, I was assured that a window would be opened at the north end of it. At present on a cloudy day or when an assemblage of darkly dressed persons are in front of us, you might as well attempt to read in a coal-hole. The pew will no longer answer us and I therefore return your deed on which I have paid my first instalment. You will probably be of my opinion that some portion of it may be & ought to be refunded to me."*¹⁶⁰ Lighting in the Church and in homes at that time was by lamps and candles.

Cornelia's first grandchild Emily Hone Forsyth was born at Albany in 1838. By 1840, the family was living in Ward 5 (north of State Street, between Eagle Street and the River), and consisted of Charles (58), Cornelia (45), Molly (9), John (4) and an unknown female aged 15-19, possibly a maid or nanny.¹⁶¹ Two more grandchildren were born at Albany; Sarah Seymour 'Zaidee' Forsyth (1841) and Russell Forsyth (1842). They also lived in Albany Ward 5 so Cornelia and Charles would have seen them often and had a chance to shape them.

Charles must have visited Kingston in 1840 to see his brother Bayard and arrange for him to stay in Charles' Kingston house. He sold the town lot and house in Kingston for £515 in 1840, subject to his brother Bayard Smyth maintaining use of the property until his lease expired on 16 July 1845.¹⁶² He also met the heirs of Colonel Ebenezer Jessup who had been leader of a Loyalist Militia Corps during the Revolutionary War and was a friend of his father Patrick Smyth

¹⁵⁸ Oswego Palladium 27 September 1837

¹⁵⁹ "New York, Land Records, 1630-1975", *FamilySearch*

¹⁶⁰ Grain, Once Scattered" *ibid.* Letter dated 8 January 1842

¹⁶¹ "1840 United States Federal Census" *Ancestry.com*

¹⁶² "Frontenac, Ontario, Canada records," images, *FamilySearch*. DGS 008637507 images 207-208

at Sorel. Charles promised to help Ebenezer's heirs receive land they were entitled to, but never received, by writing to the Governor of Canada Sir Richard Downes Jackson.¹⁶³

Charles Smyth's name appeared in the list of bankrupts for the Northern District of New York on 13 February 1842,¹⁶⁴ but there are no supplementary records to confirm if this was our Charles Smyth, or the names of his creditors. This may have been result of action taken by the Long Island Insurance Company, prior to the court hearing their complaint against Charles Smyth et al. later that year.

Charles' brother W. Bayard Smyth died at Kingston on 26 June 1843 aged 49, leaving a wife and three daughters. On 7 December 1843, Charles assigned lots 4 to 8 on Carleton Island to Edward and Edward R Satterlee, but there is no record of the consideration paid to Charles, if indeed there was one.¹⁶⁵

Charles Smyth died on 6 February 1844 at Albany, aged 61. He was buried at the State Street Burial Ground (St Peter's) but, in common with his first wife Margaret Fryer, his remains were reinterred at the Albany Rural Cemetery, Menands in 1866. However, his headstone was relocated to the Riverside Cemetery in Oswego, probably by his son Charles Junior. The simple inscription reads;

CHARLES SMYTH
Died Feb 6th 1844
Aged 61 Years

Charles wrote his will on the day before his death and left everything to his wife Cornelia, who was also his executrix. William Forsyth was one of the witnesses to the will and no doubt helped Cornelia through the administration process. Their children Molly (12) and John (6) were still at school, probably at the Albany Academy where Charles' older children had been educated.

Cornelia also lost several of her sisters during the 1840s. Charlotte Kane Heyworth died in 1842, Elizabeth Kane Mills in 1843 and her youngest sister Harriet Amelia Kane Wood on 17 April 1846. Harriet's husband William Wood later played a major role in helping his nephew John Kane Smyth start a career and a branch of the family in Australia.¹⁶⁶

In April 1845, Henry Waring again lodged a Bill of Complaint against Cornelia A Smyth. This Bill was dismissed, but a similar Bill was re-submitted on 16 October. This time, Cornelia's co-defendants were named as Abijah Mann Junior, Abraham Nottlebohm and William Nottlebohm, William Scott, George Riblet and William Langshore.¹⁶⁷ Abijah Mann Jr was a Counsellor of Law from Brooklyn, the Brothers Nottlebohm from Belgium were money lenders to merchants, and the other defendants may have been tenants on Charles' land at Carleton Island. This case, after some extensions, was due to be heard in early 1846, but there is no record of it.

The delay in hearing the case may have arisen because in 1846 Cornelia became ill and could not attend court. Cornelia died at Albany on 12 October 1846 aged 51. There is no record of

¹⁶³ "Upper Canada, British North America records," images, FamilySearch. DGS 008631426 images 335-339

¹⁶⁴ The New York Herald 13 February 1842

¹⁶⁵ "Jefferson, New York, United States records," images, FamilySearch. DGS 007178620 image 208

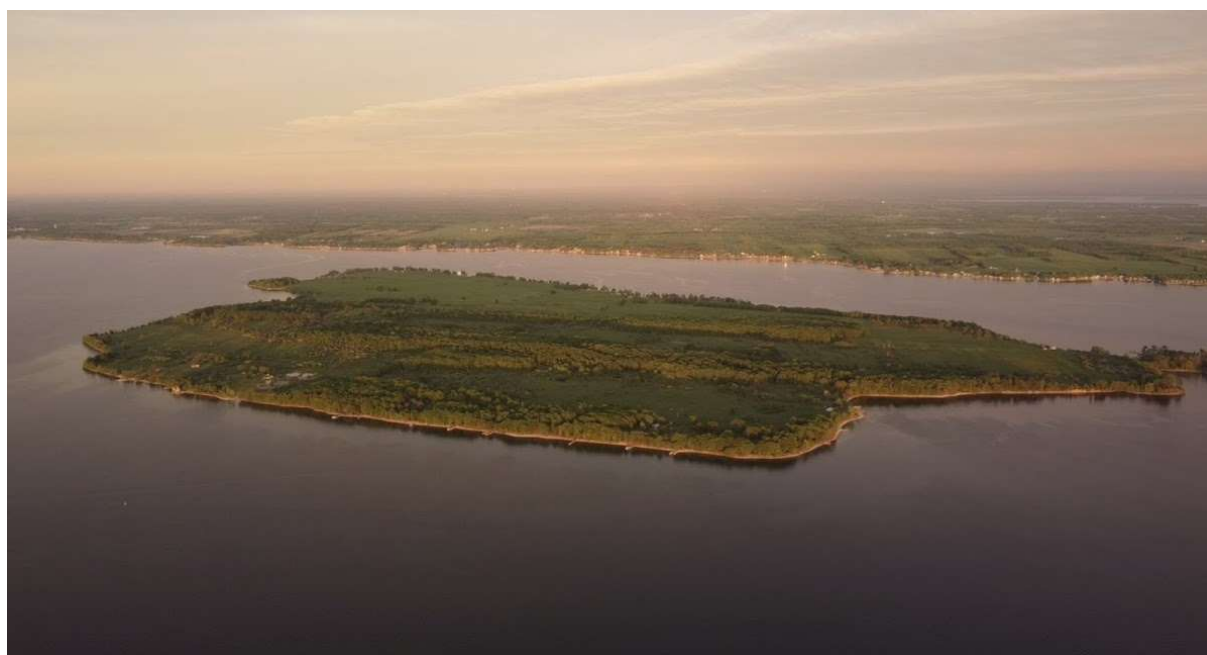
¹⁶⁶ Connor, A.G. "John Kane and Ada Mary Smyth" 2018. connorhistory.com

¹⁶⁷ "New York City, New York, United States records," images, FamilySearch. DGS 008139591 image 40.

where she was buried, or of a will. Her two young children Molly (15) and John (9) were taken in by Cornelia's eldest daughter Cornelia Forsyth and her young family. The court proceedings and Carleton Island became William Forsyth's concern, as guardian of Cornelia's heirs at law.

On 6 February 1848, the Jefferson County sheriff seized and sold the 500-acre grant in the Western half of Carleton Island to Abijah Mann Jr for \$3300¹⁶⁸ to pay two writs of Fieri Facias obtained by Abraham and William Notlebohm against Cornelia and three of Charles' Terre Tenants. How the Brothers Notlebohm came to be complainants instead of co-defendants is not clear, but perhaps they bought Henry Waring's interest in the original complaint, and they had some arrangement with Abijah Mann.

In April 1846, William Forsyth purchased Lots 1 to 8 on the Eastern half of Carleton Island totalling 772 acres from the Satterlee brothers for \$1500. On 9 May 1853, William Forsyth re-sold Lots 1 to 8 on Carleton Island, to Joseph Blain of New York for \$3218.47, pursuant to an agreement with Edward Blain (deceased) dated 11 April 1848.¹⁶⁹ This marked the end of the Smyth association with Carleton Island. Today, Carleton Island is a holiday retreat for about 35 families, who travel there by private boat and have holiday homes around its coastline. Ocean-going cargo vessels up to 740 feet length and 78 feet beam, now pass just to the north of the island along the St Lawrence Seaway. Charles' vision for the island and a St Lawrence trading route was way ahead of its time.



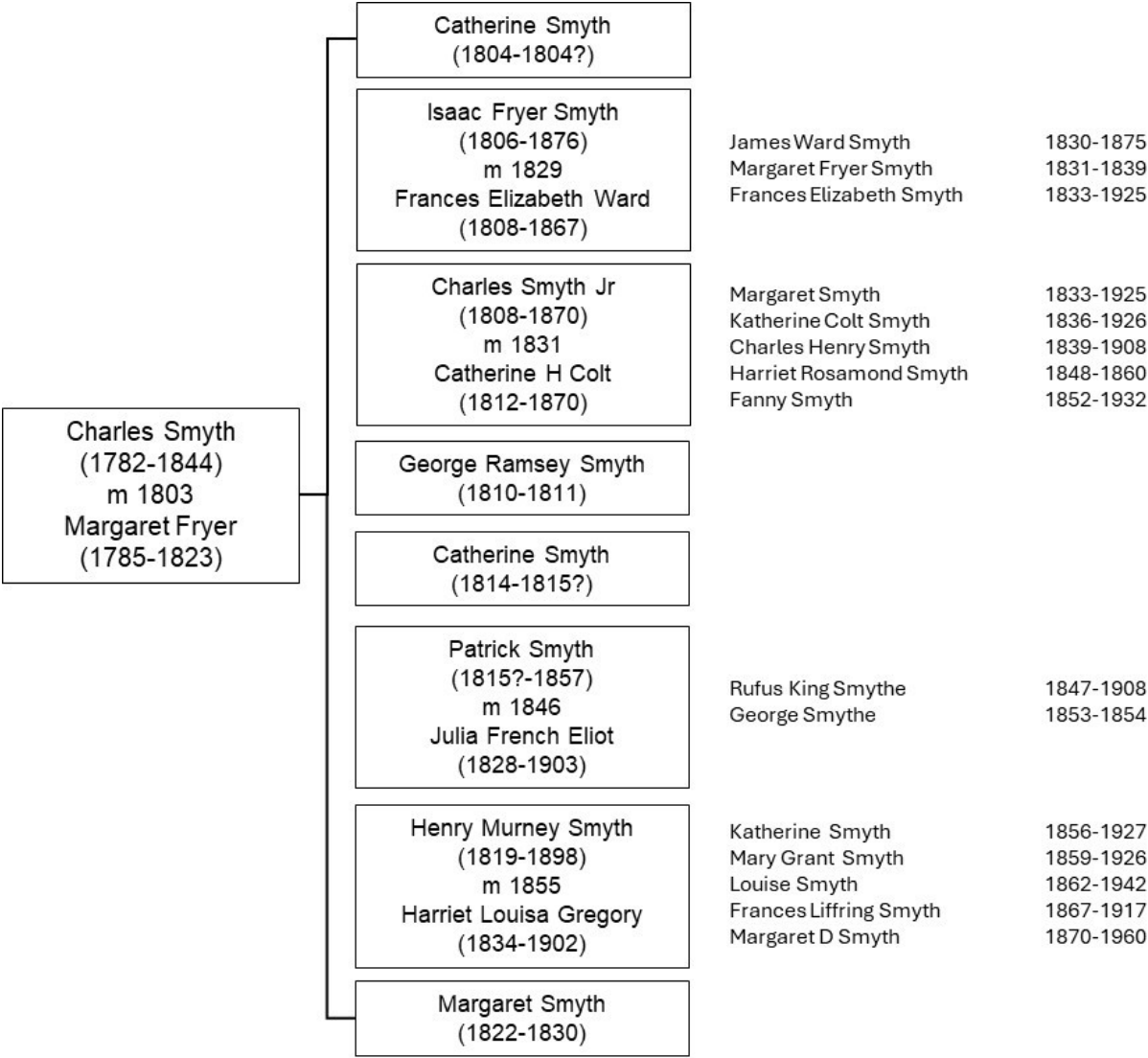
Carleton Island, and the American shore

¹⁶⁸ "Jefferson, New York, United States records," images, FamilySearch. DGS 007176785 image 162

¹⁶⁹ "Jefferson, New York, United States records," images, FamilySearch. DGS 007178620 image 208

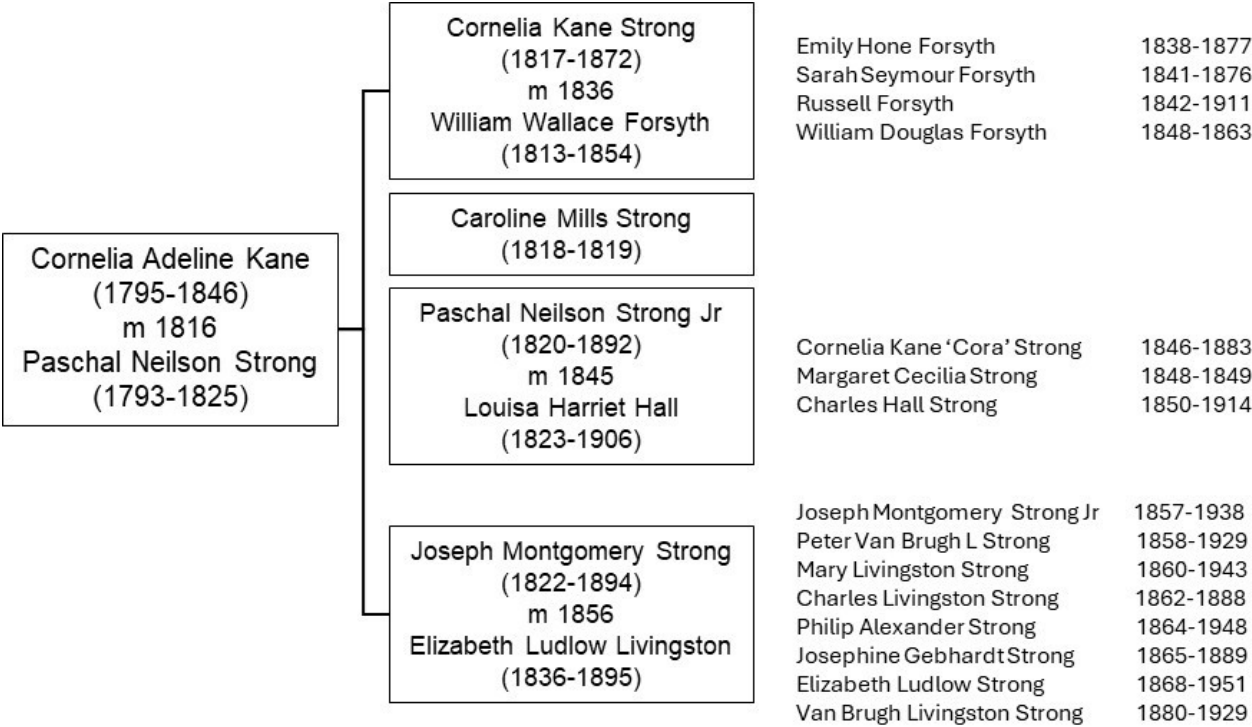
APPENDIX 1.

FAMILY OF CHARLES SMYTH AND MARGARET FRYER



APPENDIX 2.

FAMILY OF CORNELIA ADELINE KANE AND PASCHAL NEILSON STRONG



APPENDIX 3.

FAMILY OF CHARLES SMYTH AND CORNELIA ADELINE STRONG

