

**A Study of Men
Named James Gillespie
Early Ulster & Orange Counties, NY
1730-1820**

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Revisions:

Update About Geography (counties included)

Update/Redo to Revolutionary Records

Update to Land Records (Ulster deeds); added mortgage records

Added new section, Local and Family Histories

Update to Intro and Court Records

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Introduction

The name of James has been prominent in my Gillespie family. Three generations after leaving Armagh, Northern Ireland were filled with men named James, including my ggg-grandfather James, 1810-1899, who emigrated from Ireland and lived the rest of his life in the region of Quebec, James H. Gillespie, 1845-1931, who served in the Michigan Calvary in the Civil War and then pioneered in Colorado, and James Stuart Gillespie, 1879-1935, or Uncle Jimmy, who was beloved for his sense of humor and deeply mourned when he died suddenly in an accident while driving a new-fangled contraption called an automobile.

My real interest, however, in tracking men named James Gillespie stems from a 2010 discovery of another branch of our Gillespie family, those who came from the first marriage of John Gillespie and Jane Woods. Specifically we know about two Gillespie sisters who married two Greer brothers, and their families came to the area of Dutchess and Orange counties just before the War of 1812. They lived in New York for two decades before migrating west in the early 1830s to pioneer in Michigan Territory. It was in early Michigan records that we discovered another James Gillespie. According to the 1850 census of Bloomfield, Oakland, Michigan, this James Gillespie was 78 years old, born in Ireland, and was living with an 11-year-old female named Margaret who had been born in Michigan. He also appeared as a witness on an 1845 deed involving James and Jane Greer, and beyond that, we have no idea who this James was.

My search for understanding the identity of this James Gillespie presumed that he came to Michigan from the area of Orange County, New York as did the other Gillespie/Greer pioneers. But of course, anybody looking for Gillespie's in Orange County during that time period is in for some overwhelm – there were dozens of Gillespie families in that area whose history stretches back before the American Revolution. I made a valiant attempt to sort through the Gillespie families looking for a connection.¹ But in the end, I concluded that this James Gillespie, like the Greer's, arrived in America much later than the Revolution. This James was probably the non-naturalized person enumerated in Fishkill in 1820 and in Newburgh in 1830. I can only surmise that Margaret Gillespie was his granddaughter, but if so, what happened to the rest of her family? A question for another day.

That brings me to the present. I still don't know how the James Gillespie found in early Michigan relates to my family. I tend to think he was a first cousin of the Gillespie women who married Greer's because he was around their same age, slightly older. But attempts to learn the identity of this James Gillespie are still important in understanding the big picture of the original Gillespie family in Armagh and presumably Scotland before that. We cannot forget the first James Gillespie to be found in Michigan Territory, or stop wondering where he came from or how he got there.

Even so, if I think I know that my Michigan James Gillespie was not part of the Orange County, NY Gillespie clans, why continue on with this effort to catalog Gillespie's in early New York? Partly because of the investment I've already made, partly because of continued curiosity, and mostly because a recent and small DNA match suggesting that I do indeed have some family connection to the pre-Revolution American Gillespie's. And, it would seem, somebody named James Gillespie was at the heart of them all.

This article covers my research into who those men named James Gillespy/Gillespie might have been, and how they might have related to each other and other Gillespy's in the area. I am not writing about

¹ *Case Studies of Gillespie Families in Dutchess & Orange, New York*, MA Schaefer, 2012

any definitive discovery – this is a research report. I hope it reaches other researchers and that our shared viewpoints can further broaden the understanding of our Gillespie family history.

See also [Updated Case Studies Of Gillespy/Gillespie Families](#) In Early Ulster/Orange/Dutchess, New York; MA Schaefer; 31 March 2020

A Word about Geography

The history of New York's jurisdictional lines is complicated even on a good research day. It's easy to forget which lines changed on which dates, and even then, maybe the records ended up some place else altogether. [Here](#) is a cheat sheet I use frequently to remind me about the evolution of Walkill to Hanover to Montgomery. I also like to use the [Interactive Map of New York County Formation History](#). Refer also to the sticky note on my desk that says, “Getting lost is on the way to getting found.”

With that said, the bulk of my initial research has covered Ulster, Orange, and Dutchess counties. But the net has been expanding as I learn more. Most recently, I have added Sullivan, Rensselaer, and New York counties, and the counties of Rockland and Columbia also have some minor interest. Onondaga and Cayuga counties have come up in relation to bounty lands awarded to Gillespie's.

A Word about Surname Spelling

In the course of my searching for genealogical records, I always use the blessed wildcard, the asterisk character, when searching online. Most of my searches for Gillespie look like this: **g*l*sp*** and occasionally **g*l*sb***. These search strings seem to catch most spelling variations of the Gillespie surname: Gillespy, Gillaspy, Galasby, Glasby, etc., etc. I notice that most of the very early spellings in New York end with “y”, and after 1800 the spelling often changed to the “ie” ending. For purposes of this article, I use varied spellings, depending on the context. For anybody interested, the traditional spelling of the surname in my own family is Gillespie.

Pre-Revolution Records

These are the earliest records I can find which name Gillespie individuals in the New York area.

- 1738 Ulster Militia.² The Gillespy names of Thomas, **James**, and Patrick³ were recorded.
- 1763 enlisted in Capt. James Clinton's company to guard the western frontiers of Ulster and Orange counties; Lieutenants included William Stewart, Alexander Denniston, Matthew Smedes, and James McNeal. **James** was age 24 (b abt 1739), born in Ireland, came from Capt. Neely's militia. In the same company was Samuel Gillespy, age 19 (b 1744), born in Ulster, came from Capt. Graham's militia.⁴
- 1768-1778 Orange County, Montgomery/Crawford residents included John and **James** Gillespy.⁵

Revolutionary Records

The following records are not military service records, but they are nevertheless related to the Revolution:

- 1775 Pledge, Mamakating Precinct.^{6 7 8 9} The Gillespy men who signed the pledge were John, George, David, and either Thomas or **James**.¹⁰
- 1778 Association of Exempts, Ulster County, Hanover Precinct^{11 12} These men were either under 55, and had previously served and had not been recalled, or were between 50-55 years. **James Gillespy** signed such a list three times (he could write, not just a mark signature).
- 1779 Petition for a force to protect the frontier, Mamakating Precinct, signed by **James**, John, and David Gillespy.¹³

2 *History of Orange County, New York*, Russell Headley, Middletown, NY, 1908, pp 54-55.

3 I don't know who Patrick Gillespy was; the name Patrick does not appear anywhere in my Gillespie family tree.

4 *New York Colonial Muster Rolls 1664-1775*, Volume 2, pp 736-737.

5 *History of Orange County, New York with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches*, Vol. 1, E.M. Ruttenber & L.H. Clark, Philadelphia, 1881; p. 375.

6 It should be noted that the signers of the pledge in the precincts of Hanover, Walkill, and Shawangunk "are not of record." I'm not sure what that means – either never recorded or lost, either way, we don't know.

7 *History of Sullivan County*, James Eldridge Quinlan, Liberty, NY 1873, pp 411-413.

8 *History of Ulster County, New York*, ed Alphonso T. Clearwater, Kingston, NY, 1907, pp 140-141.

9 *History of Ulster County, New York with Illustrations and Biographical Sketches*, Nathaniel Bartlett Sylvester, 1880, p 75.

10 I would have to see the actual document, but I tend to think it's at least possible that the name of Thomas could have been mistranscribed, especially knowing the old handwriting. Because the name of James shows up so many times in the Revolutionary rolls, and not that of Thomas, I tend to think that James was the one who signed the Pledge.

11 *Public Papers of George Clinton, First Governor of New York*, Vol III, pp. [498-499](#)

12 *Public Papers of George Clinton, First Governor of New York*, Vol IV, pp. [125-126](#)

13 *Public Papers of George Clinton, First Governor of New York*, Vol IV, pp. [562-563](#)

According to *New York in the Revolution*,¹⁴ New York military forces were divided into three classes:

- The Line, the regiments under General George Washington
- The Levies, the drafts from different militia units which could be called upon to serve outside the state for their entire term
- The Militia, which could be called to serve outside the state for up to three months at a time.

I will briefly cover each class and mention whether we believe any men named James Gillespy were associated.

Some of the discussion in this section refers to abstracted rolls which can be found in Appendix A. I believe most of those records pertain to those who served in the Line.

¹⁴ *New York in the Revolution as a Colony and a State*, edited by James A Roberts, Comptroller, Second Edition, Albany, NY, 1898

The Line^{15 16 17}

The New York Line was assigned a quota of four infantry regiments for 1777 (1st-4th), increased to five infantry regiments for 1778–1779 (5th), and reduced to 2 infantry regiments for 1781 and 1783 (the 3rd was consolidated with the 1st, and the 4th and 5th were consolidated with the 2nd).

The New York Line

[New York Line - 1ST Regiment](#) - Col. Goose Van Schaick, Lt. Col. Cornelius Van Dyck

[New York Line - 2ND Regiment](#) - Col. Goose Van Schaick, Col. Philip Van Cortland, Lt. Col. Peter Regnier, Lt. Col. Robert Cochran, Lt. Col. Frederick Weisseniels

[New York Line - 3RD Regiment](#) - Col. James Clinton, Col. Peter Gansevoort, Lt. Col. James Bruyn

[New York Line - 4TH Regiment](#) - Col. James Holmes, Col. Henry B. Livingston, Lt. Col. Pierre Regnier, Lt. Col. Frederick Weisenfels

[New York Line - 5TH Regiment](#) - Col. Lewis Duboys, Lt. Col. James S. Bruyn, Lt. Col. Marinus Willett

[New York Line - Additional Regiment](#) (Battalion) - Col. James Livingston, Lt. Col. Richard Livingston

[New York Line - Congress Regiment](#) - Col. Edward Antil

[New York Line - Additional Corps, Green Mountain Boys](#) - Col. Ethan Allen, Col. Seth Warner

[New York Line - Additional Corps](#) - Col. Oliver Spencer

[New York Line - Additional Corps](#) - Col. Moses Hazen

[New York Line - Artillery, 2ND Regiment](#) - Col. John Lamb

[New York Line - Artillery, 3RD Regiment](#)

[New York Line - Provincial Artillery](#) - Captain Alexander Hamilton's Train

[New York Line - Artillery Regiments](#) - (Not identified) Lt. Col. Ebenezer Stevens

[New York Line - Cavalry, 2ND Regiment Light Dragons](#) - Col. Sheldon

[New York Line - Cavalry, 4TH Regiment Light Dragons](#) - Col. Moylan

[New York Line - Cavalry Regiments](#), (Not identified) Capt. Jeromimus Hoogland

[New York Line - Artificers](#) - Lt. Col. Luther Baldwin

[New York Line - Miners](#) - (Not identified) Capt. James Gilliland, Capt. Jonathan Lawrence

It should be noted that all regiments were disbanded by November 1783, after the [Treaty of Paris](#).

According to the rolls I studied in Appendix A, the units of three captains stand out as those where men named James Gillespy served: Benjamin Walker, James Stewart, and Henry Dubois. Here is what I can find relating to those captains:

- Benjamin Walker was assigned to Company 6 in the 4th Regiment on 21 Nov 1776. A **James Galasby** served in Walker's company from Feb 1777 until Feb 1780 when he died. Note that

15 <http://www.americanwars.org/american-revolution-new-york.htm>

16 <https://revolutionarywar.us/continental-army/newyork/>

17 [List of Continental Army Units, 1777-1784](#), wikipedia, access 17 Oct 2019.

the name of this James was most consistently spelled GLASBY, but a few cases of other spellings like Gillasby.

- The 5th New York Regiment was authorized later in 1776 and organized early in 1777. In 1781, both the 4th and 5th Regiments were consolidated into the 2nd Regiment. Captains in the 5th Regiment included James Stewart and Henry S. Dubois. Which Gillespy's were part of the 5th NY regiment?¹⁸ **James Galasby, James Galaspie**, and Robert Gillaspy. Note that from the rolls, James' surname was most consistently spelled Gillespy. Further note that the story of Robert Gillaspy may turn out to be connected to our understanding of men named James; see the next section, [Land Records](#).

What does all this mean?

- There were two men named James Gillespy who served in the 4th regiment, a **James and James Jr.**, but the distinction between them was made only once, in 1779 when it appears that Jr. was providing ammunition to the unit rather than fighting. The other James, not listed in that particular 1779 pay roll, served in the company of Benjamin Walker from 1777-1780 before he died.
- In the 5th NY Regiment there could have been two men named James Gillespy, maybe one served with Capt. Stewart and one served with Henry Dubois. However, it looks to me that Henry Dubois took over Stewart's company when the 5th Regiment got consolidated with the 2nd Regiment, so it's possible that one man named James Gillespy served both captains. This topic is still being researched. See also the [Militia](#) section.

¹⁸ "The New York Line - 5th Regiment", American Wars, americanwars.org, access 17 Oct 2019.

The Levies

The New York Levies

[The New York Levies - Col. John Harper](#)

[The New York Levies - Colonel Frederick Weisseniels](#)

[The New York Levies - Colonel William Malcom](#)

[The New York Levies - Colonel Lewis Dubois](#), Lt. Col. Brinton Paine

[The New York Levies - Colonel Morris Graham](#), Lt. Col. Benjamin Birdsall, Lt. Col. Henry Livingston

[The New York Levies - Colonel Albert Pawling](#)

[The New York Levies - Colonel Marinus Willett](#), Lt. Colonel John McKinstry

[The New York Levies - Independant Corp of 1,000 Men](#)

The New York Line And The Levies

[Enlisted Men \(not identified by Regiments\)](#)

Weissenfels: **James Gillespey**, David Glasby

Pawling: David and John Galasby

Enlisted – Unidentified Regiment: David Gillospie

The Militia

We must furthermore keep in mind the militia.

“The Militia was called out when wanted; kept as long as wanted, and the soldiers then sent to their homes. Sometimes a regiment or part of a regiment would be called out half a dozen times in the course of a year, and for half a dozen days at a time, and again it might not be needed in an entire year. Officers and men seem to have served in different organizations almost indiscriminately. At one call, they were in one regiment or company, and at another call, at a different regiment or company. It is, therefore, very difficult to keep trace of them on the different pay-rolls or “pay books” as they were sometimes called. Nepotism, or family influence, was most marked, and some regiments contained as many as five and seven officers of the same family.”¹⁹

Ulster County Militia:

[Ulster County Militia - 1ST Regiment](#) - Col. Johannes Snyder

[Ulster County Militia - 2ND Regiment](#) - Col. James McClaghry, Lt. Col. Jacob Newkirk

[Ulster County Militia - 3RD Regiment](#) - Col. Levi Pawling, Col. John Cantine, Lt. Col. Jacob Hoornbeek

[Ulster County Militia - 4TH Regiment](#) - Col. Johannes Hardenburgh, Lt. Col. Jonathan Elmendorph, Lt. Col. Johannis Janson

[Ulster County Militia - Independant Company](#) - Capt. Samuel Clark

[Ulster County Militia - Light Horse](#) - Capt. Salisbury

[Ulster County Militia - Rangers](#) - Capt. Isaac Belknap

Dutchess County Militia:

6th Regiment: James Gellaspay, L03, 146²⁰

Here is a summary of those Gillespie's who served with the [Ulster militia](#);

1. No Gillespy's
2. Pvts Matthew, David, John
3. Pvts: Matthew, David, George
4. Major John, Lt. Samuel, Pvts: David, George, John, **James, and James Jr.**

It should be noted that I found a number of records dated as late as 1785, which didn't make sense to me if the war was declared over in 1783. Then I found the following information²¹ which explains why I found several payroll records dating past 1783 when the war ended:

19 NY in the Revolution, pp 10-11.

20 DH research.

21 NY in the Revolution, same Intro.

was \$20 per month; a sergeant's pay was \$30 per month; a corporal's pay was \$7 1-3 per month; a private's pay was \$6 2-3 per month.

Nor was this, by any means, always in money. It was sometimes in State notes and sometimes in authority to "impress" articles or animals under supervision of some designated officer, who should give a receipt, in the name of the State, to the impressee. As late as 1784, the large majority of the soldiers were still unpaid for their services in 1776-7-8-9-80-81-82. On April 27 of 1874, the legislature passed "An act for the settlement of the pay of the Levies and Militia for their services in the late war." This statute provided that abstracts and pay-rolls of the different regiments and separate commands should be certified by the State auditor; he deducting for advances made to officers or privates by "impressing" or otherwise, and an allowance be made for the depreciation of the pay of such as had been in captivity, for the time they were in captivity. Upon receipt of these accounts from the auditor, the treasurer of the State was required to issue to persons, to whom pay should appear to be due, or to their legal representatives, certificates of indebtedness bearing five per cent. interest, and such certificates should be receivable for purchases of forfeited estates, or in payment for waste or "unappropriated lands," taxes, etc. Officers could not "throw up or quit" their commissions until they had served fifteen years.

All slaves killed in the service were to be paid for. In time of invasion, any slave,

Aha. Indeed, many of those later records specify a certificate number next to each name. It's amazing how long so many soldiers fought without being paid. They wanted freedom no matter the cost.

Pensioners

Finally with regard to Revolutionary pension applications, there was apparently an application made by a **James Gillespie**,²² but I have not located such a record, and consider that such a document might not have survived. The loss of this record is a real shame because it would likely answer so many questions.

We do, however, have an application made by an Andrew Gillespie of Lansingburgh, Rensselaer, NY in 1832 which might have relevance. This application stated that Andrew was born in Shawangunk in 1763, which is definitely an area of direct interest in our study. Furthermore, an Andrew was enumerated in Troy in 1800 next to a James Gillespie who was older. These two pieces of evidence suggest that James and Andrew were related. More research is in process.

Land Records

Albany deeds and mortgages: no deeds found involving a James Gillespie

- Mortgage 11-16, Sept 1796, involves **James Gillespie** of Saratoga, NY. This James is thought to belong to a different family group.²³

Rensselaer deeds and mortgages: no deeds found for a James Gillespie

- Mortgage 3-160, 9 Oct 1801, **James Gilaspie** of Lansingburgh leant to Isaac Blower and John Beagle, lot #21 on King St. It should be noted that on 3 Dec 1803, James Gillespie ran an ad in

22 D. Hart research, L07, 272 (NY in the Revolution)

23 D. Hart research, email dated 2019, " "

the Lansingburgh Gazette saying that the mortgagors had defaulted, and the mortgaged property would go up for sale in June 1804.

Ulster deeds:

- KK-479, 7 May 1788, **James Gillespy** of Montgomery Precinct from David Stout of New Windsor, 50 ac lying in Little Britain.
- KK-232, 23 May 1788, **James Gillespy** and wife Mary of Montgomery Precinct to David Stout, two lots of land, one given by patent in 1786 to Hercules Brown, and the other granted to Samuel Heath and Frank Morris in 1736.
- OO-325, 9 Jun 1797, William Gillespy Jr and wife Martha of Shawangunk to Matthew Gillespy of NYC, then Montgomery, land on the west side of the Walkill that was formerly devised to **James Gillespy**, close to a lot formerly of Gorge Gillespy.

Ulster mortgages:

- 5-362, 31 July 1790, **James Gillespy** of New Windsor, farmer, mortgaged the 50 acres in Little Britain to John Blake Jr. of Montgomery. The mortgage was paid on 11 May 1794 by John McMickle (or John M Mickle?). Without more information, I presume that James vacated the property.

Orange deeds:

My Note: These deeds involve James Gillespie 1774-1817 who married Mary Moffat and lived in Goshen.

- J-81, 6 May 1805, Daniel and David Milspaugh and **James Gillespie** and Jacob D. Smith, purchase of land that was part of the Edmendorff Tract
- 35-51, 1805, Milspaughs and Gillespie (and Mary his wife) sold their share to Jacob D Smith

Orange mortgages:

- F-9, 1805, **Jame Gillespie** of Goshen mortgaged 100 acres to Dr. Seward; a lot in "Great Island." As far as I can tell, Great Island refers to turnpike company.

Bounty Lands:²⁴

- Wm Gillaspee, sgt in 1st NY Reg got lot #39 in Marcellus, 600 ac in 1790²⁵
- **James Gillespy**, NY. 4th NY Reg under Walker, listed among the dead. Sep 1790. 600 acres to Heirs. This land was in Marcellus in Onondaga county, lot #34.²⁶ Patent delivered 7 Jul 1790 to **C.C. Schoonmaker** for W. Gillaspy, adm.²⁷ Given that C. C. Schoonmaker was from the Shawangunk area, W. Gillsapy was probably William Gillespy 1737-1813 who was enumerated in Shawangunk in 1790. Recent evidence shows that Sgt. William Gillespy who also received bounty lands in Marcellus was also the administrator of James Gillespie's estate.

24 *Revolutionary War Bounty Land Grants: Awarded by State Governments*, L.W. Brockstruck, 1996, p 200. See also my article reporting finds at that the NY State Archives in 2012; *Case Studies of Gillespie Families in Dutchess & Orange, New York, 1800-1830*, MA Schaefer, 2012, p 13.

25 *The Balloting Book and Other Documents relating to Military Bounty Lands in the state of NY*, Albany, 1825, p 28

26 Ibid, p 70

27 Ibid, p 162

- Robert Gillespie. 16 Aug 1807. 200 Acres to representatives **James**, Samuel, William, John, Barbara, Matthew, Jane, Ann, Polly, Olive, Burr, and **James Gillespie Jr.** This land was in Sterling, Cayuga county, lot #51.²⁸

Onondaga Deeds:

- E-51. 20 Nov 1795, William Wallace and wife Elizabeth, and Margaret Gillespy, all of Ulster county, sold 2/5 or 200 acres in Marcellus which had been granted to **James Gillespy**, late a soldier of the Revolution. Elizabeth was a Gillespy.
- B-224. 1798, John Gillespy and wife Sarah, and Adam Libolt and wife Hannah, all of Montgomery, Orange, New York, sold 2/5 or 200 acres in Marcellus, lot #34, patent granted in 1790 to **James Gillespy**, deceased. William Hunter and Ann Gillespy signed as witnesses. Note that Hannah was a Gillespy.

What does all this land data tell us? Here are my thoughts:

- The 1788 Ulster deeds between **James Gillespy** and David Stout give us the name of this James' wife, Mary. The 1790 mortgage referring to the same property tells us that this James was living in New Windsor in 1790 and he was a farmer.
- The 1797 Ulster deed, OO-325, is intriguing. Aside from the grantor and grantee and how they were related is the fact that the land in question was previously devised to **James Gillespy**. No record has been located telling us when James Gillespy acquired the land or how the oldest son of Samuel Gillespy came to be in its possession.
- The 1790 grant of bounty lands to **James Gillespy** is better than intriguing. It confirms that the man who served in Walker's company (4th Regiment) and who died in 1780 definitely had ties back to Ulster/Orange county. The Onondaga deeds indicate that we have identified four heirs of that particular James Gillespy: John (wife Sarah), Margaret, Elizabeth (Wallace), and Hannah (Lebolt). Who was the fifth heir? There were two Gillespy's living in Marcellus beginning in 1810: David and Henry (the latter was probably David's son who later went to Michigan). Most trees indicate that David was the man who married Abigail Mapes in Goshen in 1781, and after some study, I think it reasonable to consider that a David Gillespy was the fifth heir of James Gillespy.

In order to draw any conclusions about relationships from this bounty land division, we have to try to understand the line of succession. This was about the only thing I could find on the topic:

"The Estates of all Persons dying intestate who have Neither the Relations of Children Brothers or Sisters or their Children Uncles or Aunts or their Children for want of such heires shall, Elapse to the King Provided always that Such Elapsing shall not hinder the Lawful Clayme of any such Relations afore mentioned, if it be made appeare upon Oath to the Court within one Year and Six weeks."²⁹

- It seems to me that if James had any children living in 1790, the bounty land would have gone to them exclusively. Given the presumed ages of the heirs, it doesn't appear the heirs were James' children.

²⁸ Ibid, p 79

²⁹ *The colonial laws of New York from the year 1664 to ...* v.1. New York (State), p 9

- John, born 1746, and David, born 1755, were definitely of an older generation, and indeed they served in the Revolution themselves – sometimes together. So it seems reasonable to think that they were James' brothers.
- It's hard to guess how old Margaret Gillespie was, as I've found no trace of her before or after this record. At the moment, I am presuming she was an unmarried sister of James.
- Elizabeth and Hanna were, I believe, from a younger generation, probably born in the late 1760s or 1770s. I say this because they were just getting married and having children in the 1790s. So how were they related to James? I believe that Elizabeth and Hanna were daughters of a different brother of James, also deceased by 1790. We might even be talking about two additional brothers.

There is preponderance of the name George in David's line, and unfortunately, except for one, we don't know who John's children were in order to look for clues of family names. However, the Revolutionary records do show that George, like John, James, and David, signed the 1775 Pledge in Mamakating, and the muster rolls show that George did serve, sometimes in the same company as David or John. I've seen some suggestion on the internet that George was an early settler of Kentucky. If that is so, then George might have died there, leaving children behind in Ulster. Aside from a passing mention in an Ulster deed, I have found no other trace of George in Orange/Ulster counties after the war.

- So what about the 1807 grant of bounty lands to the representatives of Robert Gillespy? According to my recent research,³⁰ Robert Gillespy was captured at Ft. Montgomery in 1777,³¹ and he subsequently died in British prison. In 1806, his heirs applied to the legislature for bounty land,³² and in 1807 the bounty land was granted in Sterling, a place in Cayuga county on Lake Ontario. I think we have to presume that the names listed as representatives were alive as of 1806 – they did, after all, petition the legislature. So 28 years after Robert's death, who were his heirs? I submit that they were probably not his children. Could they be siblings?

Remember the story that Robert Gillespy was one of six sons who served in the Revolution?³³ If there is any credence to that story, then considering the male names listed as Robert's representatives, namely James, Samuel, William, John, Matthew, and Burr, the first five names definitely appear in the military rolls of NY companies. Were they Robert's brothers?

Among the men I've recently been studying in Ulster/Orange, we've established that William, Samuel, and Matthew were brothers. Matthew died in 1797, and some evidence exists³⁴ to say that his children were **James**, John, Matthew, Barbara, Jane, Ann, and Polly (probably Mary). That leaves Olive, Burr, and **James Gillespie Jr.** I postulate that one of the two heirs named James was Robert's brother, and Olive and Burr were children of another brother, deceased.

30 *Updated Case Studies of Gillespy/Gillespie Families in Early Ulster/Orange/Dutchess, NY*, MA Schaefer, April 2020, p. 25.

31 Prisoners taken at Fort Montgomery and Fort Clinton, see <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/33419/33419-h/33419-h.htm> and <http://cdm16923.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16923coll7/id/16>.

32 *Journal of the Assembly of the State of New York*, Twenty-Seventh Session, Albany, 31 Jan 1804, p. 161

33 *Updated Case Studies of Gillespy/Gillespie Families in Early Ulster/Orange/Dutchess, NY*, MA Schaefer, April 2020, p. 25.

34 See next section, Court Records.

So! I think the case of Robert Gillespy's bounty lands could be pivotal, and I wonder if any additional documentation can be found about the petitioners. If at least some of these men can be identified as brothers, then we have a greatly expanded view of this Gillespy family.

Update Note: Recent evidence³⁵ shows that William Gillespie of Newburgh, Orange, New York and his wife, Mary, sold their one-fourth interest in Sterling log #51 which had been granted to the heirs of Robert Gillespie. This tells us that Robert's land was devised between four heirs, and I speculate the other three were Samuel, James, and Matthew (deceased 1797, so his seven heirs). More research is in process.

Court Records

I will start this section by saying that more research is pending.³⁶ I haven't seen any actual court proceedings, only reports that resulted from such proceedings. However, assuming those reports have some degree of accuracy and reliability, I think it's important to include this data in this study.

In 1814, there was a complicated law suit, *Jackson, ex dem. Gillespy & others v Woolsey, Supreme Court of New York*, which involved the Gillespy's and the land of James Neely Sr., the father of Jane Neely who married Matthew Gillespy. In the case reporting,³⁸ we learn many interesting genealogical details, but for our purposes, the following points are noteworthy:

- Jane Neely's children were named in the proceedings as Barbara (an adult), and infants (assume minors) named as John, **James**, Matthew, Jane, Ann, and Mary).³⁹
- Much later in the case comes the mention that James Gillespy was the son of one of the plaintiff's lessors and grandson of Matthew Gillespy (1742-1797).⁴⁰ Apparently James had access to Matthew's papers after his death – a point that seemed to be evidence in the case. It should be noted that Matthew Gillespy was in the 1797 directory of New York City,⁴¹ and lived on East Rutgers which was in the South Ward. Perhaps the James Gillespie living in the South Ward in NYC in 1790 was the son of Matthew. Perhaps James the Lessor's Son was a different individual from the “infant” named James in this case?

35 Seneca deeds O-307.

36 I believe the case was heard at the Court of Common Pleas, probably Ulster county, but maybe Orange County, after death of Matthew Gillespy in Dec. 1797. I'm looking for where to locate more court records. More to the point in considering when the dispute started, is were all these named names still alive when the Supreme Court case ended?

37 Ex demissione (abbreviated ex dem.) is Legal Latin meaning "upon the demise"—where "demise" is used in its sense meaning "lease" or "transfer". The phrase formed part of the title of the old action of ejectment

38 [*Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Supreme Court of Judicature...in the State of New York*](#), Volume 11, pp 446-457.

39 Take Note! These names all appear in the petition for Robert Gillespie's bounty land! (Mary = Polly).

40 Ibid Supreme Court Proceedings, p 447 & 453.

41 *Longworth's American Almanac: New York Register and City Directory*, 1797; familysearch.org; access 19 Oct 2019.

Census Records

Here are the federal census records for 1790 and 1800 that pertain to men named James Gillespy. It should be noted there was a boundary shift in 1798 where parts of Ulster county were shifted to Orange county. For our purposes, Shawangunk remained in Ulster, Montgomery shifted from Ulster to Orange, and New Windsor remained in Orange.

In the following table, the first three columns focus on the central Ulster/Orange areas where we first find enumeration of any James Gillespy. Note that I group Shawangunk (S) and Walkill (W) together because they are roughly two miles apart. Montgomery is another 15 miles south of Walkill. The last column shows the enumeration of Troy in Rensselaer county. Troy is about 100 miles north along the Hudson River.

SHAWANGUNK/ WALKILL	MONTGOMERY	NEW WINDSOR/ NEWBURGH	TROY
1790, William (S) 1737-1813	1790, Samuel 1742-1815	1790 John 1741-1810 (Capt/Major)	
1790, James (W) 1-1-2-0-0 next to Campbell & McVaughn	1790, James 2-0-4-0-0 next to Samuel Crawford, lots of Millspaugh, Robert Hunter Wm Wallace on same sheet (supposedly 2 of them?)	1790 James 1-3-3-0-0	
1790, David (W) 1755-1831	1790, John 1746-1821	1790 Matthew ~1743-1797	
	1800, John	1800, John	1800, James Sr. > 45, next to Andrew
	1800, William		1800, James Jr. > 45, F > 45 & 2 younger Fs
	1800, William Jr.		1800, Joseph
	1800, Samuel		1800, Matthew
	1800, Robert		1800, Andrew
	1800, Matthew		

Census Discussion

I have to say that the ongoing inability to place which James was living where in 1790 continues to highlight a basic problem with the research about men named James Gillespie who lived in the Ulster/Orange area in 1790. A separate article exploring the nature of this difficulty is forthcoming. In the mean time, the speculations articulated here should be take with a grain of salt.

1790

Note: James of Goshen who married Mary Moffat was probably not old enough in 1790 to be a Head of Household (in my view), although his birth year of ~1774 is unconfirmed. Where was he?

Also note that 1790 was the year that most bounty lands were granted. Also note that the 1790 schedule for Walkill was actually dated 3 Jan 1791.

James in 1790 Walkill

1-1-2-0-0

next to Campbell & McVaughn

This could be James II (see [General Discussion](#)) who was a “Jr” in 1779, but in 1790 was probably a “Sr.” If, as speculated, James II was born in the 1730s, then he would have been roughly 55 years old in 1790, and I'm guessing he was likely the father of David, John, and James III-4th.⁴² He could be the one referred to in the deed from Wm. Jr. to Matthew in 1797 (UC OO-325).

Note: The only other Gillespy in Walkill was David, who probably later moved to Marcellus – the heir and probably the brother of James who served in the 4th Regiment and died in 1780. I am speculating that James who was also living in Walkill in 1790 was their father.

James in 1790 Montgomery

2-0-4-0-0

next to Samuel Crawford, lots of Millspaugh, Robert Hunter

- a) This could be the James who served in the 5th Regiment in the Revolution, brother of Robert who died in the Revolution, on of the petitioners for Robert's bounty land.
- b) Maybe this is James of Goshen? Hard to tell since we don't know his birth year more exactly, but he definitely had a lifetime of connections with Millspaugh.
- c) Maybe this is the James of Hurley?

Note: Other Gillespie's in Montgomery were Samuel (d 1815) and John (d 1821).

James in 1790 New Windsor

1-3-3-0-0

This is the James who had a wife named Mary and who purchased property in New Britain in 1788. Because this location is near the river, this person might be one of the older James Gillespie's later enumerated in Troy whose sons were boatmen. That James had a son named Matthew, so he might also have been the one who d. in Montgomery in 1810 (administrator was son, Matthew).

⁴² See section [General Discussion](#) for my labels for James III.

James in 1790 New York City, South Ward

1-0-1-0-0

Matthew Gillespie who died in 1797 (NYC) supposedly had a son named James. Court records indicated that James had access to his father's papers, which I presume were in NYC. It's possible that Matthew's son, James, also lived in NYC.

1800

We went from four James Gillespie's in 1790 (Walkill, Montgomery, New Windsor, and NYC) to three in 1800 (one in Hurley, two in Troy). What does that mean? I think it means that one of the 1790 James Gillespie's either died or moved away. If the other three were the same individuals enumerated in 1790, then they relocated. But we must also consider that any of the three James Gillespie's in 1800 might be newly arrived (from another state or from abroad).

James in 1800 Hurley

1-0-0-1-0

1-1-0-0-1

1 F > 45, 2 kids < 10, the older M is < 45

In my previous research about James of Hurley/Rochester, I missed this James Gillespy in 1800! Given that James of Rochester advertised to sell his business because of illness in his family,⁴³ I think we might surmise that this James outlived Elizabeth Brown who died in 1809, and that James subsequently resided in Rochester⁴⁴ after 1810. Using the various censuses from 1800-1830, I am estimating that this James was born about 1760-65, so he could very well fit into the Ulster/Orange Gillespy clans. One good question would be to determine if James of Hurley/Rochester served in the Revolution. Is there any other indication that James of Hurley/Rochester had origins in Ulster/Orange?

James in 1800 Troy

There were two James Gillespie's enumerated in Troy in 1800:

- 1 M > 45; no other household members, enumerated next to Andrew Gillespy
- 1 M > 45, 1 F > 45, 1 F 10-15, 1 F 16-25

A good amount of study has gone into who these James Gillespie's might have been. Taken together with clues found in Troy tax records and a Sullivan family history, we can probably say with some confidence that at least one of these James Gillespie's was the same man enumerated in New Windsor in 1790.

43 Ulster Gazette, Tuesday, Oct 04, 1808 Kingston, NY, Vol: IX, Issue: 548, Page: 4; access 19 Oct 2019, genealogybank.com

44 Parts of Rochester were used to create the Towns of Middletown in 1798 (now in Delaware County), Neversink in 1798 (now in Sullivan County), Wawarsing in 1806, and Gardiner in 1853.

Tax Records

The following Gillespie names were found in Troy from 1799-1803 followed by valuations of their real estate/personal property.

- 1799:
 - Joseph 200/12
 - **James** 300/32
- 1800:
 - Joseph 150/50
 - **James** 300/30
 - Matthew 100/0
- 1801:
 - Joseph 250/50
 - **James** 150/50
 - also taxed in Petersburg 40/0, noted “in Troy”
 - Petersburg is about 25 miles east of Troy, probably less than 5 miles from Vermont border, 15 miles to Bennington, Vermont
 - Matthew 150/25
- 1802:
 - Joseph 200/25
 - **James** 750/50
 - Matthew 125/25
- 1803:
 - Joseph 200/25
 - **James Jr** 150/50
 - Matthew 125/25
 - **James Sr** 7.5/0

We can see that by 1803 there were two men named James Gillespie in the same place at the same time. The Sr/Jr designation tells us, naturally, that one James was older than the other, but in this era, that was usually all it meant. In other words, the two men might have been father and son, but they could just as easily have been uncle and nephew, or related in some other way altogether, or even not related at all. One man was simply older than the other, and by how many years, we cannot say. But we can

say in this case that both men named James Gillespie living in Troy in 1800 were over 45 years old, and so born before 1755.

Local and Family Histories

Two history books have recently come to light:⁴⁵

1. *Royce and Gillespie Family Book*, by Mary Royce Patton, published privately 1962. Pages 46-47 give the early history of William Gillespie who had moved to Bethel, Sullivan, New York from New York City in 1811. It describes the parents of William as being **James Gillespie** and Mary Brown Bannerman. The book further describes that James was the son of Joseph Gillespie who came to New York in 1752 when James was 12 (born in 1740). James lived in New York and married the widow Mary Bannerman when he was 37 (1777). This James Gillespie reportedly died in 1825, but the author speculates that James probably died before 1812 when the William Gillespie family (including his mother, Mary) moved from New York City to Sullivan county.
2. *Commemorative Biographical Record of Northeastern Pennsylvania including the counties of Susquehanna, Wayne, Pike, and Monroe*, published by J.H. Beers & Co, Chicago, 1900. Page 484 describes Caroline Foster, wife of Almon Sweet. According to this description, Caroline was born in Lansingburgh, Rensselaer, New York, in 1821 and her parents were John Foster and Susan Gillespie. Susan was described as a native of Orange County, New York and a daughter of **James Gillespie**.

It probably goes without saying, but I will say it any way. While these local and family histories have tremendous value, they are also undocumented sources. Almost all of them have some incorrect information, so it's always a matter of sifting through to find the nuggets that might have some truth.

Newspapers

Here are some notes from searches at GenealogyBank for men named James Gillespie

- 1801 insolvent James, merchant, NYC
- 1803 post rider between Saratoga and Lansingburgh
- 1803 sold Lansingburgh property that was defaulted
- 1811 insolvent James in NYC – same or different guy?
- 1815 tailor looking for an apprentice, NYC
- [Maritime advertisements](#). This is a new and continuing area of research. There were men named James who were sailors, but tying them to any family tree is difficult at best.

45 Many thanks to D. Hart, another long-time Gillespie researcher.

Other Record Sets

I have found a few records in the following categories, but my search in these areas has not been exhaustive:

- Probate Records
- Church Records – not many exist for these areas during this time.
- Vital Records and Graves – to my knowledge none exist unless recorded somewhere in a Bible. I don't think we know of any gravestone in the New York area for any James Gillespie.

General Discussion

I have been considering the big picture of Gillespy's in Ulster/Orange in two ways. The first way is linearly, by timeline. Starting with the Pre-Revolution and Revolutionary records, we could be considering at least five individuals with the name James Gillespy who lived in Ulster county between 1738-1800:

- **James-I** – born before 1720, assuming that he would have been at least 18 to serve in the Ulster militia in 1738. I also believe he was the person listed in the 1778 Association of Exempts as a person over 50.
- **James-II** – born between 1734-1739 in Ireland. If he was the son of James I, he was a small child when he arrived in America. I think the 24-year-old in the 1763 record and the 42-year-old in a 1776 record (see Appendix) could well have been the same person. He was probably also the person referred to as James Jr. in the 1779 pay roll who provided ammunition, being the only James Gillespy noted at that time, and knowing that James I who was older was still alive the year previous (Exempts). Perhaps James II might have been the person in 1790 Walkill.
- **James-III** – born probably mid-1740s-early 1760s. There were at least two men named James Gillespy who were Privates in the Revolution:
 - **James-III-4th** who served in the 4th Regiment - Line, died in 1780, and his heirs were granted land in Marcellus, NY in 1790.
 - **James-III-5th** who served in the 5th Regiment - Line, which was folded in to the 2nd Regiment in 1781. We are still trying to determine if the man in the 5th Regiment can be associated with any of the men named James Gillespy still in the Ulster/Orange area in 1790. If the second Private James stayed in the Ulster/Orange area after the war, perhaps it was he who was in 1790 Montgomery?
- **James-IV** – born 1770s. This generation includes James Gillespy of Goshen, and there could well have been others, including James of NYC, who was apparently a son of Matthew Gillespy.

The second way I've been considering the Gillespy picture is by locale, specifically separating those who can be associated with Mamkating Precinct, and those associated with Hanover Precinct. Here are my thoughts on that approach:

- **Mamakating:** After the record of Gillespy's in the Walkill militia in 1738, most of the early records point to Mamkating. But even so, there was an example of cross-over – James Gillespy who was exempt in 1778 was noted as part of Hanover Precinct.

- **Hanover:** I've tried to separate this group because this is where Major John⁴⁶ and Lt. Samuel were associated. I try to consider the story that there was a Samuel Gillespy Sr. who came with Robert Hunter, and perhaps that Gillespy family group was separate from the James Gillespy family group who apparently lived farther west. So, for example, we know that William, Samuel, and Matthew were brothers, and maybe we could place them in the Hanover Precinct and say their progenitor was Samuel-I (b abt 1720). Then we can say James-I was the progenitor of the Mamaking Precinct families, and he had sons James, John, and David (at least).

But honestly, there was still cross-over from the Hanover group back to Mamkating. Samuel Gillespy, age 19, was part of a 1763 militia to protect the western frontier. There were also several later cases of family members from Samuel Gillespy's family who had dealings in Mamkating. That could be coincidence because we're certainly not talking about great distance between the two locations. But it's enough to give pause.

In the end, I think both approaches incorporating the consideration of time and place have their benefits in considering these Gillespy individuals and families in early New York. Obviously, research continues.

Finally, I think the bounty land records are key in sorting out the Gillespie family groups in early New York, at least two of them. On the one hand, I have been seriously considering that James-I could have been the progenitor of seven sons, namely James, John, David, George, William, Matthew, and Samuel. But the bounty land grants to James and Robert apparently went to different heirs, suggesting to me two distinct family groups:

- The bounty land in Marcellus went to the heirs of James Gillespie who served in the 4th Regiment and died in 1780. In this round of research, I determine that James' heirs were his siblings, or the children of his siblings: Margaret, John, David, and probably George. Also of note, Sgt. William Gillespie of the NY 1st Regiment was apparently the administrator of James' estate. We're not sure how William might have been related to James, but I consider that William might have been James' first cousin.
- The bounty land in Sterling went to the heirs of Robert Gillespie who served in the 5th Regiment and died in 1778. More research is in process on this point, but of the 12 Gillespie names listed as heirs, the names of William, Matthew, Samuel, are listed – names of those shown to be siblings by other records (wills of William and Samuel). So maybe James-I and Samuel-I (if he existed) were brothers and their families lived in the same general regions for many decades?

So many questions remain. So much research to come.

⁴⁶ Major John Gillespy who married Magdalena Smedes is a subject for another day. At the moment, we can't say there was a familial tie between Major John and all the other Pine Bush Gillespie's.

Appendix A. James Gillespy in Revolutionary Rolls^{47 48}

Note: Highlights indicate where a James Gillespy was serving in two different companies during the same time frame, indicating, of course, two different individuals.

1770s

Aside from the first two records where I am unsure of ranks, all these following records indicate that James Gillespy served as a Private.

- Aug 75, \$\$ due to Capt Danl Denton Co, 3rd Regiment of Clinton's forces
- Sep 75, Elias Hasbrouck Co: James J Gillespy, also Wm Gillespy Jr
- Aug 76, Capt John J Graham's Co, names/ages/profession, includes William ae 24, ulster, laborer, also James ae 42, ulster, laborer, and George ae 21, ulster, laborer
- Nov 76 (indexed under 28 Apr 77) – looks like Jason Gillespy to me
- Feb 77, Benj Walker⁴⁹'s Co, Glasby
- Feb 77, Benj Walker's Co, note that James was sick in Pennsylvania
- Apr 77, Capt. James Stewart in Lewis Dubois regiment⁵⁰ (next to Benj Rea?)
- Jan 78, Benj Walker's Co, Glasby
- Feb 78, Benj Walker's company, Gelaspie
- Feb 78, James Stewart Co, Gillasby
- Mar 78, Benj Walker's company, Glasby
- May 78, Benj Walker's Co, Glasby
- Jun 78, Benj Walker Co, Glasby
- Jul 78, Benj Walker Co, Glasby
- Aug 78, Capt James Stewart co
- Aug 78, Benj Walker Co, Glasby
- Sep 78, James Stewart Co
- Sep 78, Benj Walker Co, Glasby
- Oct 78, James Stewart's company: Gillaspy

47 *United States Revolutionary War Rolls, 1775-1783*, digital images, familysearch.org; NOTE: these are the original rosters and pay records.

48 *U.S. Compiled Revolutionary War Military Service Records, 1775-1773*, digital images, ancestry.com; NOTE: These images are cards with names, nothing more – not useful. More complete compiled cards are organized by regiment, found on Fold3.

49 *Register of The Empire State Society of the Sons of the American Revolution*; 1899; p 565.

50 Dates hard to read, looks like mustered 1776, appointed 1777, service March-April 1778.

- Oct 78, Benj Walker's company: GLASBY
- Jan 79, Capt. James Stewart in Lewis Dubois regiment, Gillsapy
- Jan-Feb 79, Benj Walker, Glasby
- Mar-Apr 79, Theodosius Fowler Co, Glasby, looks like same men from Walker's Co.
- May 79, Capt Fowler, 4th NY Reg., Glasby
- Jul 79, list of pay due, company not stated – John & David Gillespy near John McCreary; also names of James Graham and Samuel Crawford; farther down some other note for **James Gillespy Jr.**, who was also paid (I think for ammuniton)
- Oct 79, Benj Walker Co, Glasby
- Nov 79, Benj. Walker Co, 4th NY Batallion – note of sick in hospital

1780s

- Jan 80, James Stewart
- Feb 80, Benj Walker Co – James Glasby died 11 Feb 1780
- Apr 80, Capt James Stewart
- May 80, James Stewart Co
- Aug 80, James Stewart Co
- Sep 80, James Stewart Co
- Jan 81, Henry Dubois Co
- Jun 81, no company listed, looks like pay
- Jan 82, Henry Dubois Co
- Feb 82, Henry Dubois Co
- Apr 82, Henry Dubois Co
- May 82, Henry Dubois Co (7th Co in 2nd NY Regiment)
- Jul 82, Henry Dubois Co
- Sep 82, Capt Henry Dubois