

Gillespys in Shawangunk

Beekman Patent Lot No. 2

By Mary Ann Schaefer

Boulder, Colorado

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Introduction

I recently just learned about the Gerarrd Beekman patent of 3000 acres,¹ which is where early Gillespy families lived. I learned that the Beekman Patent initially had six long lots, which at first I had been plotting like this:



Using the satellite map, you can see these lot boundaries somewhat based on where many present-day fence lines and tree lines are located. But this layout of the lots was simply not working while trying to locate John Gillespy's mill, which supposedly was located on the southwest corner of Lot No. 6. Finally finally finally, I realized the whole Beekman Patent needs to move up one grid point. So basically, Lot No. 1 is *north* of Bruyn Turnpike (BT) and Lot No. 2 is south of BT and so on. Now the southern most border of Beekman Patent fits perfectly for the location description of John's mill.

So now we know that Lot No. 2, where the Gillespys lived, was located south of what is now called the Bruyn Turnpike. But in many of the deeds that pertain to this area, we find reference to the Newburgh-Sullivan (N-S) Turnpike as a boundary line between the Beekman lots. I found a description of the N-S in the History of Orange County, pp. [112-113](#), and [here](#) is the act to incorporate the company. The eastern part of the N-S was also known by the Newburgh-Shawangunk Plank Road from Newburgh to Walkill, which is today Route 300, and west of Walkill, the road was later called the Old Bruyn Turnpike. We should note that the N-S was different from the Newburgh-Cocheton road which had been built earlier (1801 I think). This latter road, today Route 17K, was the main road used for traveling to and from Sullivan County.

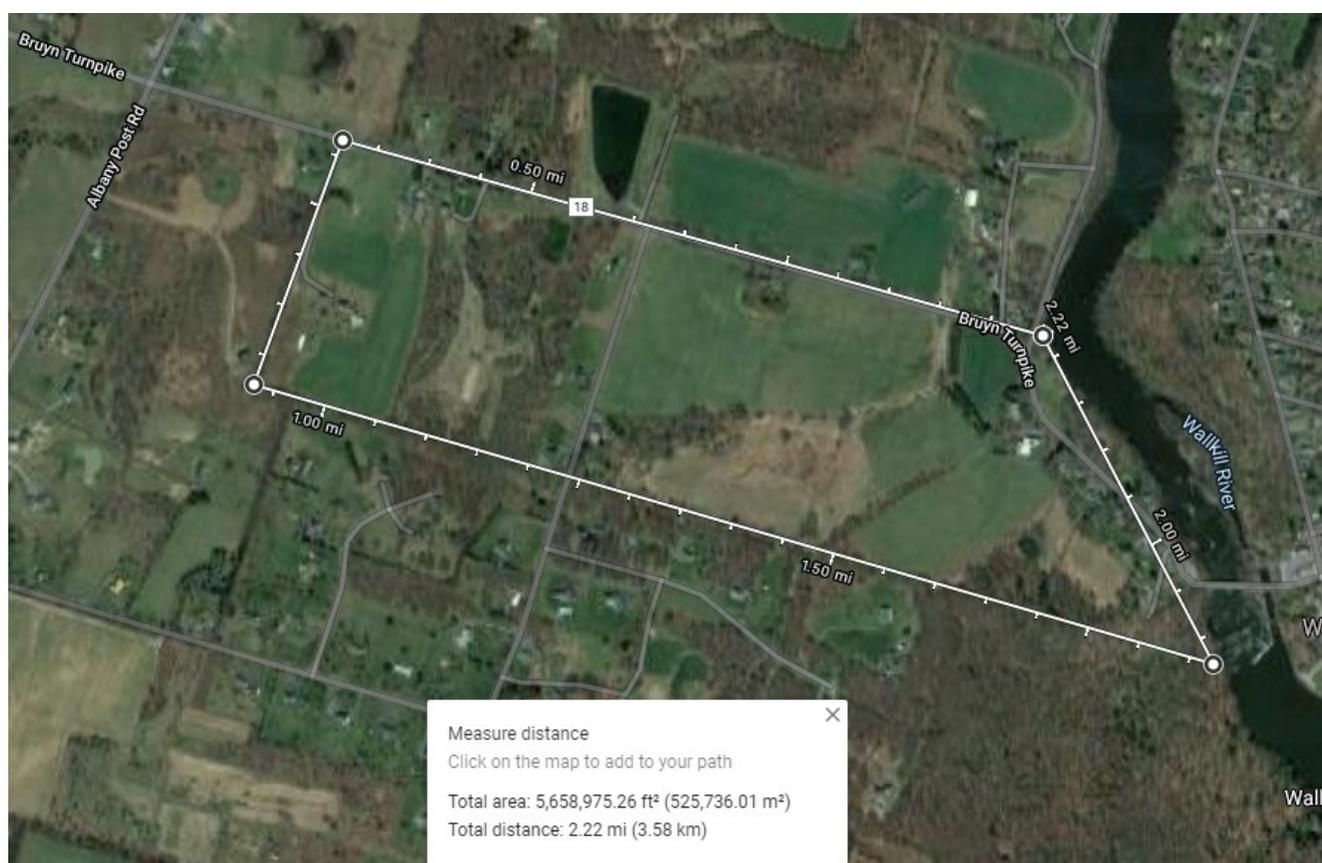
Finally, the two deeds we have (dated 1770 and 1797) that place Gillespys on Beekman Lot No. 2, both refer to the whole of Lot No. 2 being divided into fourths. Each fourth was 129.74 acres, making the total acreage for all of Lot No. 2 519 acres, more or less. This article attempts to locate each of these fourths of Beekman Lot No. 2.

¹ [Hunter & Gillespy Homesteads](#) in Shawangunk, Ulster, NY; MA Schaefer; 12 April 2020; p 3.

1770 Gillespy to Bevier – #1

“all that easternmost half or moiety of all that lott and premises.... lying on the west side of the Walkill in the precinct of Shawangunk joyning to the south of a lot of law now x / belonging to George Grahams....beginning at the west bank of the Walkill at the division line between a lot of land now in the possession of George Grahams and the said James Gillespy from thence southerly on the stream of the Walkill as it runs to the north east corner of lot of land now in possession of Dirk Rosa, also on the said bank of said Walkill then containing the full breath (breadth) of the whole lot called Lot No. 2 westward until it contains the full quantity of 129 and $\frac{3}{4}$ acre of land or one-fourth part of the whole lot called No. 2 in a certain division made of the whole patent under which the said premises lyeth together...”

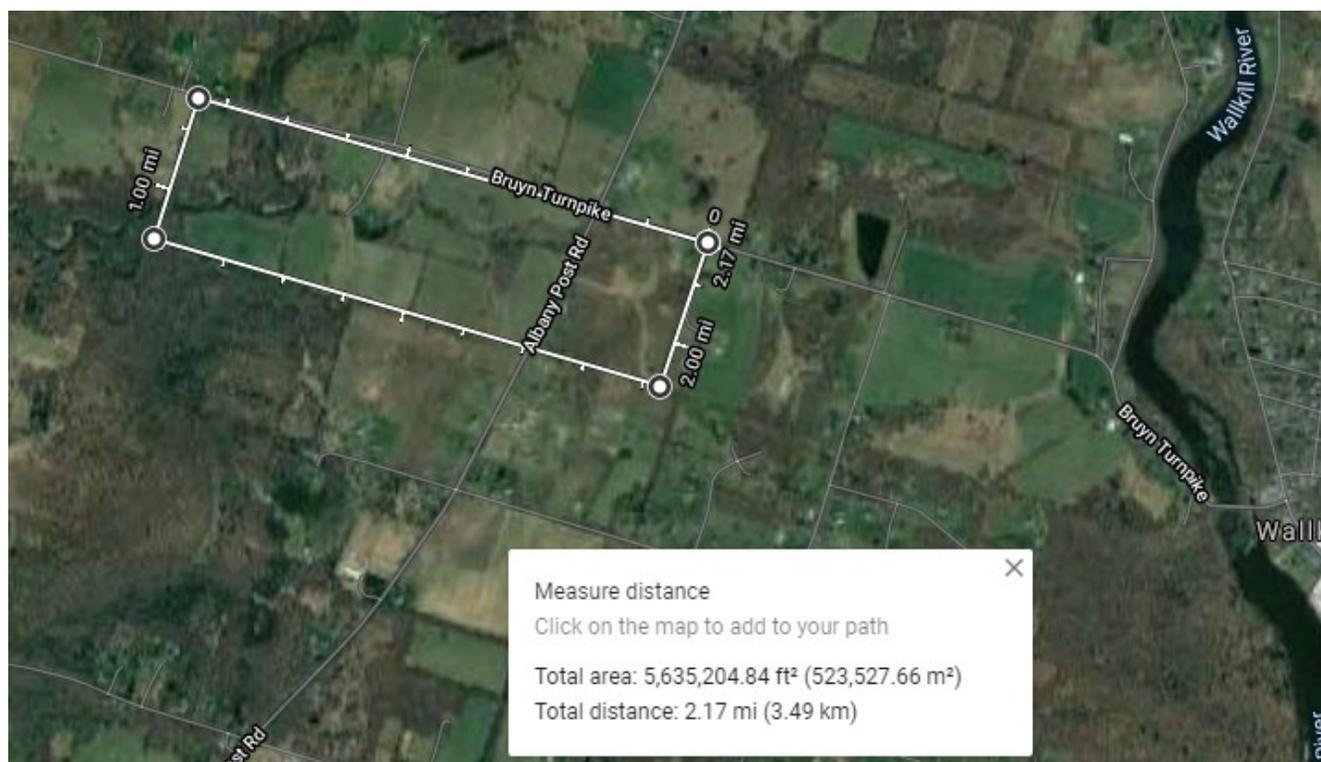
There are no exact measurements on the land description of this deed, but we know that 129.75 acres is 5,651,910 sf. So here is my best guess – the area on the map approximates the desired total.



1797 Gillespy to Gillespy – #2

UC deed OO-325, 1797, William Gillespy Jr to Matthew Gillespy: “being the western most half or moiety of a certain lot formerly devised to James Gillespy on the west side of the Walkill being also part of Lot No. 2 within the tract granted by patent to Rip Van Dam and others the lot hereby granted Beginning at the division line between a lot formerly belonging to Gorge Gillespy and so extending with the full breadth of the whole lot Number Two eastward until it contains the full quantity of 129 ³/₄ acres or the one fourth part of the said whole lot No. 2 of the division of the said patent or tract.”

Now, here is my estimation of William's 129.75 acres:



This lot belonged to Matthew Gillespy for only a few months because he died in December, 1797. However, this lot contains the 30 acres described in the 1827 [will of Dirk Roosa Jr](#) as "adjoining the state road and Newburgh and Sullivan Turnpike Road formerly belonging to Matthew Gillespie." The Roosa's must have come into possession of this property after Matthew Gillespy's death.

There are several points to consider here.

- The first is that Matthew Gillespy does not appear to be one of the original Gillespy owners of Beekman Lot 2 – he bought into it much later. I'm not sure what that is telling us at this point, still processing.
- Secondly, the 1779 tax assessment of Shawangunk showed only one Gillespy, William, and he was assessed for only 78 acres. Where were the other 64.8 acres? Maybe William was leasing

some of his property? At this point, I don't have an exact explanation for why William was taxed for only 78 acres in 1779.

- Finally, the 1797 deed tells us that William had the western most half or moiety of a certain lot formerly devised to James Gillespy. I am taking this to mean James Gillespy Sr., the one who died in 1749. I think that James Sr. owned all the 259.5 acres from just west of the Dwaar Kill on present-day Bruyn Turnpike all the way east to the Walkill. When he died in 1749, I'm guessing that his family continued to live on this entire acreage, and when James Jr. became of age (or his mother remarried), James Jr. came into ownership of the eastern 129.75 acres. I'm guessing William, possibly the oldest son of James Sr., retained possession of the west side when his mother died. Given that he was taxed there in 1779, I believe William stayed in residence on this property until he sold it in 1797. But what was the relationship between William and Matthew? This question remains open.

If I had to pick a spot where the James Gillespy Sr. homestead might have been, it would be here:

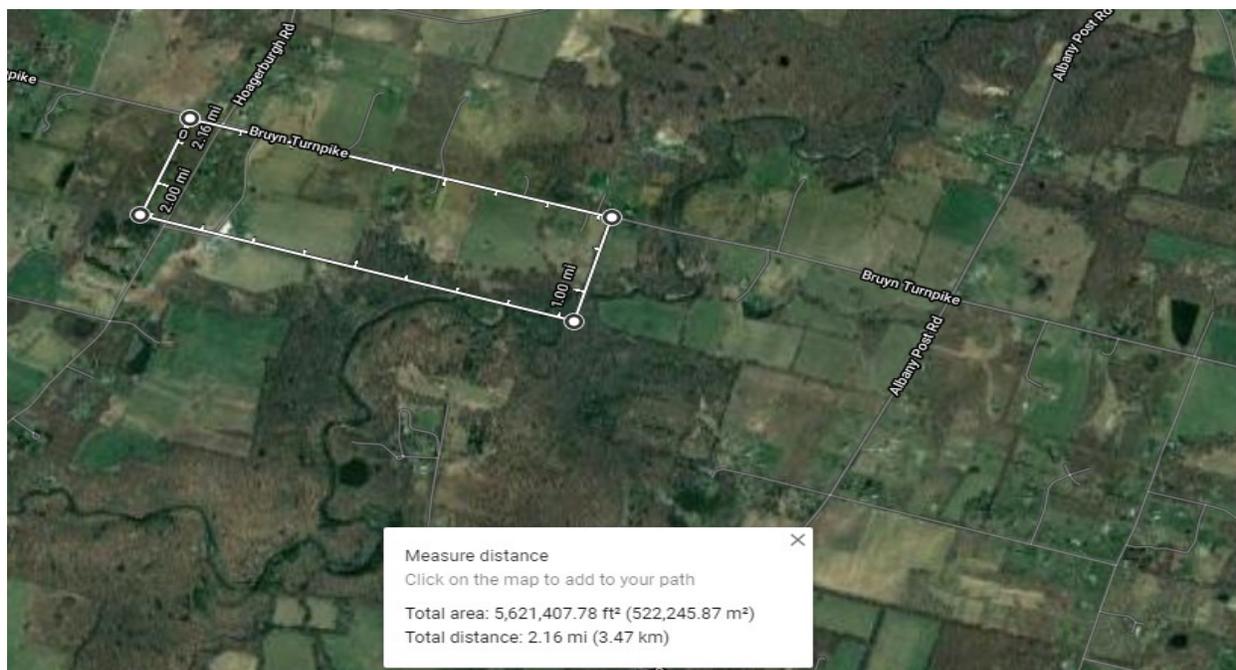


Lot of George Gillespy – #3

The 1797 deed also tells us that William's property (#2) began:

at the division line between a lot formerly belonging to Gorge Gillespy

and William's land went eastward from there. Since both deeds tell us that Lot No 2 was divided into fourths, we might guess that George had the next 129.75 acres to the west of William. Let's see what that looks like:



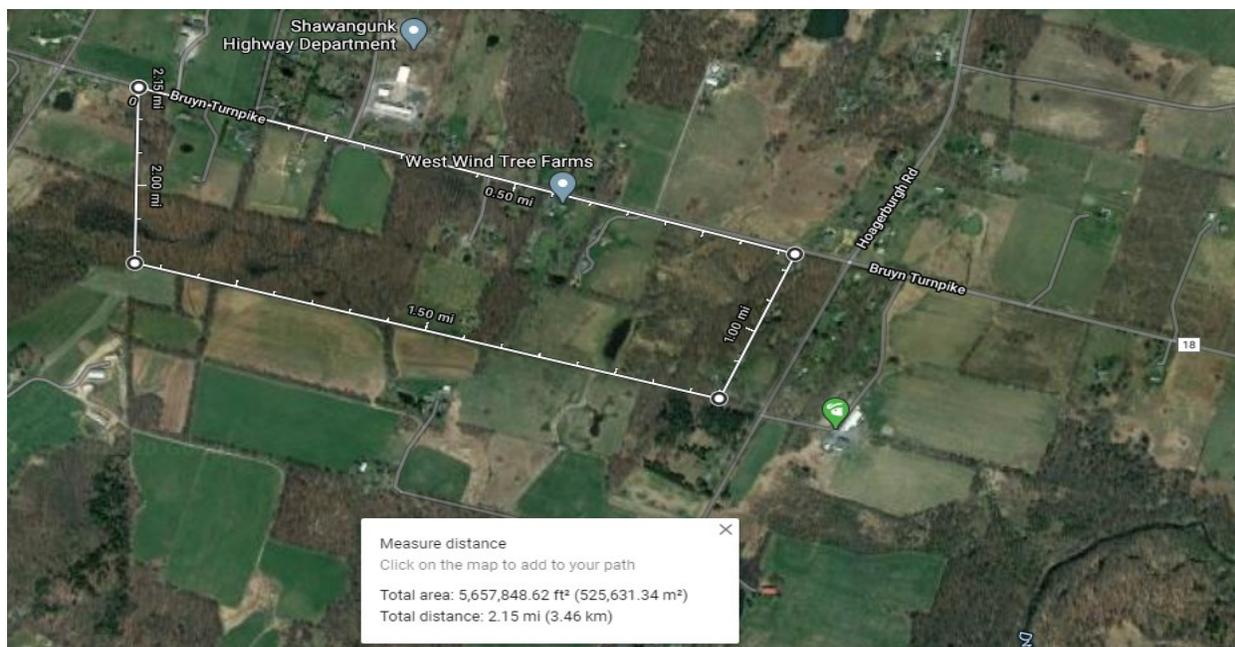
I was surprised to find this lot goes past Hoagerburgh Rd on the west. Nevertheless, the area of this lot is 129.5 acres, the same area size as the previous divisions on Lot No. 2 for William and James Jr..

Meanwhile, who was George Gillespy? We don't know much about him. At this point, we believe he was likely the one who died in 1787. He definitely showed up in the Colden Store records (1767-1768), so we know a man of this name was in the area at that time. But there was no George Gillespy assessed in Shawangunk in 1779, only William. I'm not sure what to make of that. If this George was the same person as the one who died in 1787, he had moved from Shawangunk by 1779. Or possibly this was a different George Gillespie who either died or moved west. We don't know. We only know that if this one-fourth of Beekman Lot No. 2 once belonged entirely to George Gillespy, George was not there in 1779, and more study of the tax assessments is necessary in order to determine who was occupying this property at that time.

Finally, we need to consider that George Gillespy might not have owned this entire one-fourth of Lot 2. He might have owned just the eastern parts that bordered with William's one-fourth.

Last Lot – #4

Extending west from the lot that might have belonged to George Gillespy, here is my estimation of the last one-fourth of Beekman Lot No. 2 containing the last 129.75 acres:



Note: I had assumed that present-day Drexel Rd. was the western boundary of the Beekman Patent, but I quickly determined that if that were so, the area of this fourth of the Lot No. 2 would be too much. Then I found the deed to part of Lot No. 3 just south (Ulster Deed [II-346](#), Roosa to Crispell, 1767) and the western boundary of the patent was described there. Then it was easy to match that western boundary for Lot No. 2 as shown in this map. This boundary also makes more sense to me because now it lines up perfectly with the southwest corner of the Lot No. 6 where Capt. John Gillespy built his grist mill.

But who lived on the last fourth of Lot No. 6? I turned to the 1779 tax assessment of Shawangunk to look for clues, looking up deeds for all the names listed around William Gillespy. Not far from William was Matthew Decker who was assessed for 216 acres. I subsequently found two deeds that tell this story:

- LI-433, 3 November 1782. Magdalena, widow of Matthew Decker,² to her son, Matthew Jr. It describes that Matthew Sr. wrote his will 24 Feb 1774 before Matthew Jr. was born (apparently around 1779). The will of Matthew Sr. had bequeathed one-fourth of his estate to his wife, Magdalena, and she was in turn making sure that estate went to her youngest son, Matthew Jr. The deed was witnessed by John Graham and Cornelius Bruyn.
- 23-572, 1819. Matthew M. Decker got into some debt with Siah Robinson that he couldn't pay, and so the sheriff was selling Decker's lands to pay his debts. One of those lands was described as:

² This Matthew Decker was apparently married to Magdalena Bevier, see [this family tree](#).

bounded easterly by Hoagerburgh Rd, south by land of A. Roosa and John Crispell, west by lands of the heirs of Jacobus Aldoof and Evert Terwilliger, north by the Newburgh and Sullivan turnpike road, containing 100 ac of land more or less.

This sounds a lot like part of our last fourth of Lot No. 2, 100 of the 129.5 acres we are looking for. Now we have to determine when Matthew Decker Sr. acquired this property and from whom. Until then, I think we have to consider that this one-fourth of Lot No. 2 was never owned by a Gillespy. More research is needed.