

Who was Cornelia Laraway?

Genealogy Search by Colden Baxter from Idaho

November 13, 2013 - by John Kelly

Ginny had forwarded a website inquiry from a man in Idaho, Colden Baxter, who read some of our historical pieces, particularly mine touching on Laraway Hollow. He is a Laraway descendant who was doing some family genealogy, and I had a good chat with him on the phone. He was in Millbrook NY doing some research in his field which, interestingly, is rivers and river ichthyology. He is not a Laraway and I think is descended from the family of Cornelia Laraway, Joseph Laraway's wife.

He indicated that the name Laraway comes from the French *LeRoi* and that the family was French Canadian; he claimed to have followed it back to the 16th century in Europe. The original locus in our region was Prattsville, where the family ran the Laraway Inn [still standing] from 1784. It was founded by John Laraway's son Martinus Laraway who knew Zaddock Pratt as a neighbor. John may well have been the original settler during the revolution. Joseph Laraway, one of the family who worked the Inn, apparently came to Beaverkill and appears in a marriage record from there in 1845 when he married Cornelia.

Baxter has been frustrated in not being able to find Cornelia's maiden name - tho he suspects it may have been VanLoon - even her obituary from 1915 didn't give it. She and Joe both died in Beaverkill. He'd love any clues regarding Cornelia.

I think this goes some way in establishing Joe Laraway - who supposedly had 9 children - as the original settler of the Hollow. I had assumed from the Abe Laraway Civil War Soldier tombstone in the churchyard that our place stemmed from the Civil War era, but this pushes it all back to the 1840s - which ties in with the theory that Hazel's and my place, as other hillside farms, was used to keep horses for the tanneries which began to flourish around then. I pointed out that in addition to Abe's stone, I had seen at the back left hand corner of the cemetery a marker for Joe Laraway. [Last time I looked, I couldn't find it.] Baxter wasn't much interested in Abe, however, and suspected that he was a younger brother or nephew of Joe. I told him that on our front porch there are the carved initials J L, and he went thru a variety of family members who could have done it.

That's all I got that touched on Beaverkill. The family turned up later in the still pretty remote hills bordering the Delaware River on the north in the Hancock region, and Baxter said he had visited a grandfather there. He was, of course, familiar with the Beaverkill but had not been to the town. I encouraged him strongly to take a trip up the Valley, to the Hollow, and the church, but he's leaving for Idaho and had to convince the family to go up there with him today. I hope he makes it. *best jhk*