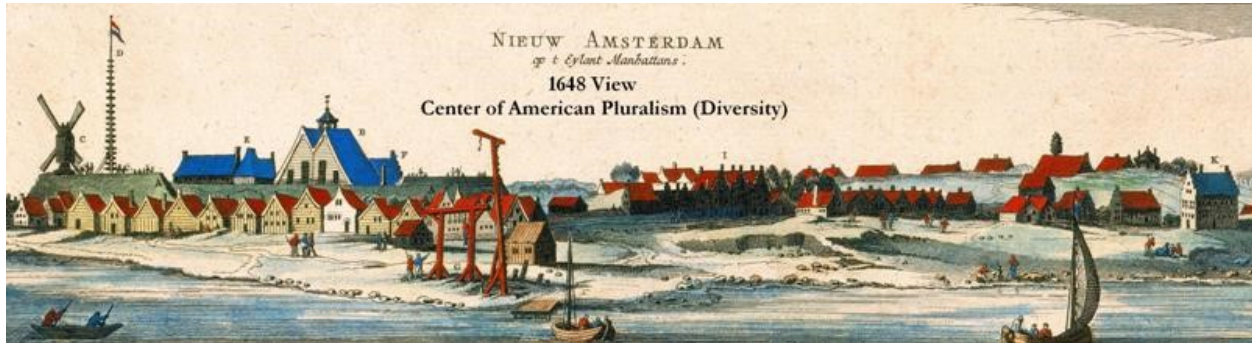
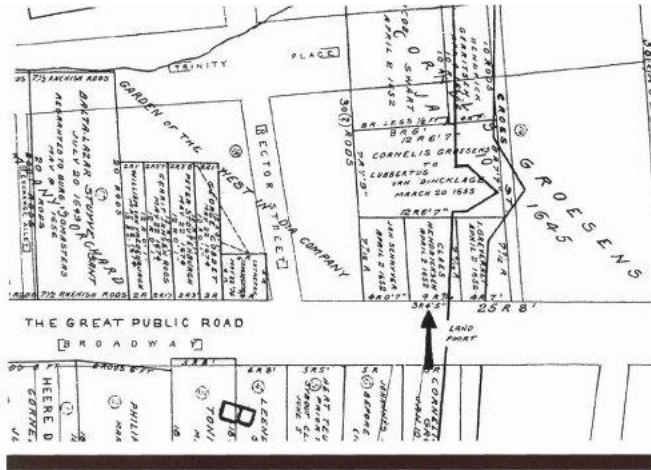


Back to the Roots
Troupsburg, NY & Austinburg, PA
September 2018

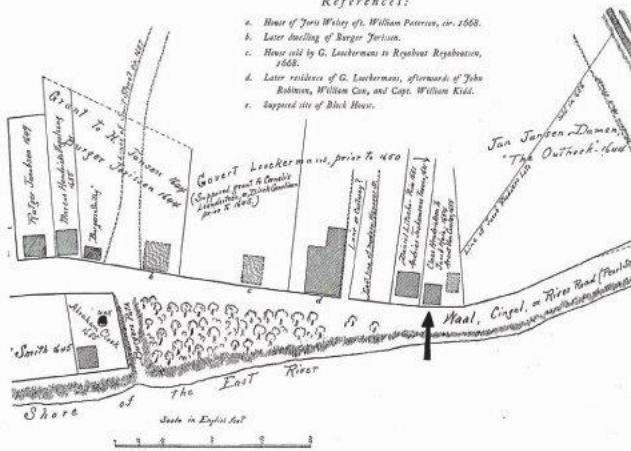


The earliest Schoonover—Claus Van Schoonhoven—clomped in his wooden shoes onto these shores in 1652 when New Amsterdam, the future New York, looked like this.

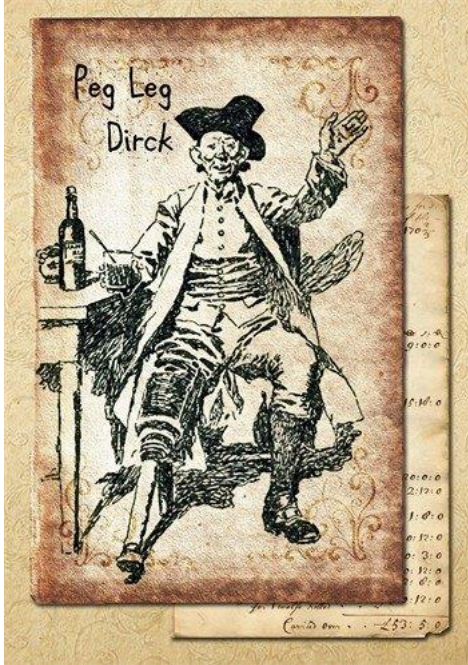


References:

- a. House of Jeroen Wibley of G. Willem Petersen, cir. 1668.
- b. Later dwelling of Burger Jeroen.
- c. House sold by G. Leckermaen to Roghbat Reysboven, 1663.
- d. Later residence of G. Leckermaen, afterwards of Joke Robbman, Willem Cox, and Capt. Willem Kild.
- e. Supposed site of Black House.



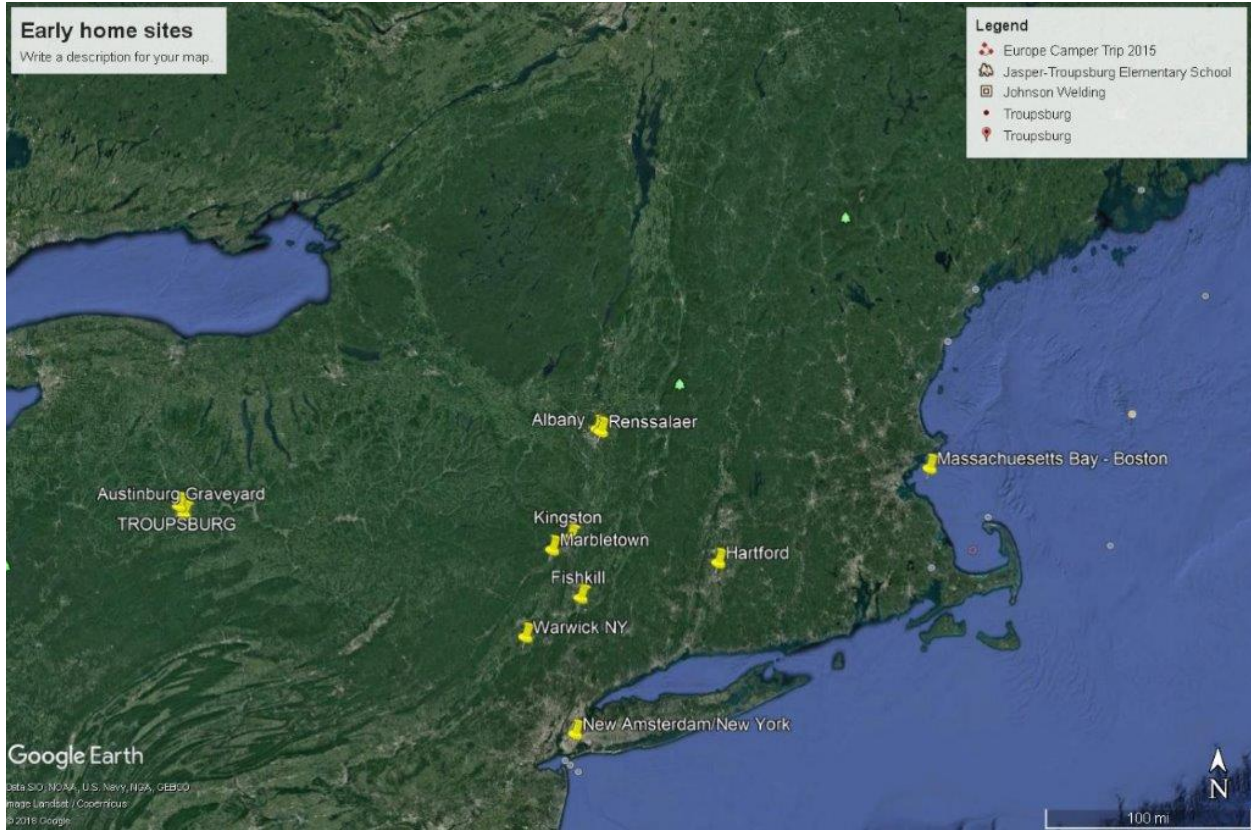
An early developer, one of the plots (top) he owned is where Trinity Church stands today at the head of Wall Street.

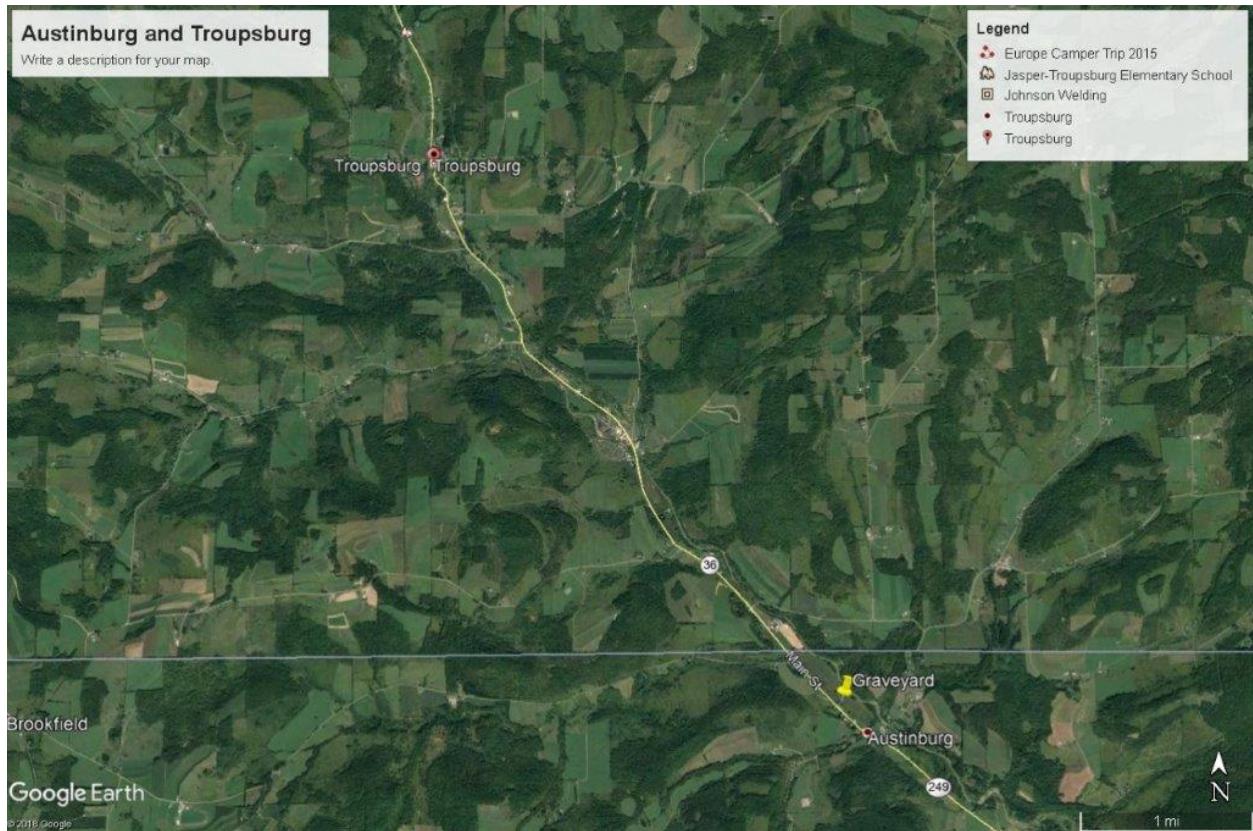


But I'm not really a Schoonover, not by DNA. Claus' son Hendrick married a feisty gal named Debra Davids who had a roll in the hay in Kingston with Peg Leg Dirck Van Vliet (he lost his leg in an accidental shooting during a drunken New Years of 1678 when he was 17). The resulting bastard, Nick, was born in 1685. Peg Leg stumped away, she divorced Hank the Cuckold, remarried, but raised Nick the Bastard as a Schoonover. I descend from him, as do approx. 20% of Schoonovers. Those who descend on the Bastard Line take a humorous pride in it.

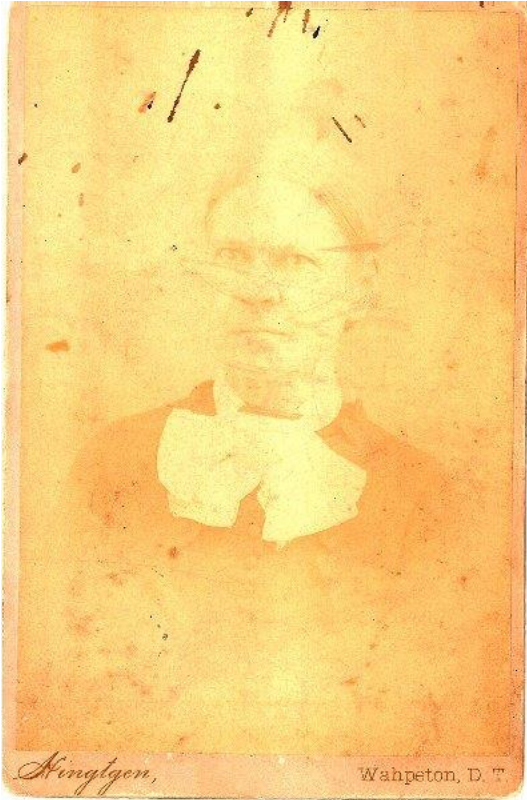


Nick the Bastard's grandsons Revolutionary War vet Chris and his younger brother—my gggggreat-grandfather Richard I—homesteaded in Troupsburg in upstate New York, just north of the Pennsylvania border, in about 1805. (Note the denuded hills; the second industry, after furs in the beginning, was lumbering.)





It, and nearby Austinburg, PA, have been the longest, continuously occupied staging areas of my branch since.



It was from here in 1857 Richard I's grandson, William "Blacksmith Bill" Leonard I, at 23 with his 18-year-old bride Almira Grinnolds, rolled west in their covered wagon in the Great Migration. First to Minnesota, then Missouri in 1870. And obviously, a visit to Wahpeton, Dakota Territory, in the late 19th century to visit her hell raising son Wm. Leonard II, a veteran of the Spanish-American War and a participant in the Battle of Manila in 1898.



The Austinburg Pioneer Cemetery is littered with family. Attending the reunion: all fifth and sixth cousins. L-R: Host Richard Ray, Irene (nee Schoonover) Slater, Jacob Schoonover, Harold Schoonover, Stan Schoonover (Irene and Jacob's grand-pappy) and Don Strohmier, descending from a Schoonover daughter. Me on my knee.



The most important grave is of our common ggggreat-grandfather Richard I, and his second wife Sally (though she's not my DNA granny). He was probably born in Warwick, NJ, and on Sept. 17, 1768 but died here Dec. 8, 1847 at the grand age, for then, of 79. He was a boy living with his parents in Warwick when his older brother Chris, at 18, was recruited into the Revolutionary Army (and wounded). In 1790 Richard was married to first wife Jemima Bailey and we know they were still in Warwick, because they were threatened with excommunication from the Baptist Church due to non-attendance. They had six brats, the second my ggggreat-grand-dad Richard II. (Yes, popular name in the family.) He was listed on census records as a blacksmith, but he was also a farmer. He taught many of his sons the trade.



He had seven kids with much younger Sally, who lived to be 90, dying in 1888.



This is how I found their headstones in 2001, his broken at the base. I drove an odyssey that fall, retracing the migration route of my ancestors westward from New Amsterdam.



With no tools in the '73 Westfalia, I resent the stone as best I could, and left wild flowers.



We reuniting bastards called ourselves the Class of 1728 because we descend from one particular hot and heavy orgasm that June or July between Nick the Bastard and his recently

married third wife Weyntjen De Lange. This breakfast at Schoonover Café in nearby Westfield includes spouses. Half the group have university degrees up to a Ph.D candidate.



On that earlier visit in 2001, I stopped at this café and met the owner, Ken, who is a relative. Naturally, we gave him our business this year. And he makes a helluva fine bacon and eggs.



And we go back a lot further, of course. I've done two DNA tests through the Family Tree Maker/Genographic Project and the results are fascinating in not only shining light on one's deep ancestry—but connecting one with living relatives.



On that first visit in 2001, I met Bob and Lillian, a Schoonover married to a Schoonover. Yes, we go to family weddings to meet girls. They were a wealth of information.



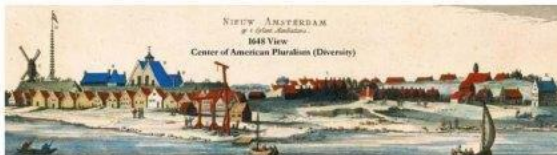
This trip, I visited them here to pay respects. Bob was a journalist and Lill a nurse during WW-II in the Pacific Theatre working in hospital wards of ships involved in all those bloody battles from Iwo Jima to Okinawa, with Kamikaze planes everywhere. She retired as a Lieutenant Commander. I kept in touch for years. Having no children, they virtually adopted me.



It was Lill's brother Hugh who died in 1997 at 90 who was a major family researcher and source for me, tying me into Troupsburg in his meticulously researched geneo books. Pre-internet, I would put together 50 query letters at a time and mail them to "William and/or Leonard Schoonovers" all over the US. I had the very good luck to hit on all the major Schoonover researchers, and was sent all their books. Geneo research today is a snap with the internet and resources like ancestry.com and Family Tree Maker. I started in 1968, spending thousands of dollars, hours and miles.

**Westward
From
New
Amsterdam**
The Schoonover Epic:

**Thirteen Generations: One Branch,
One Tree, One Forest**



**by Jason Schoonover with extended
families by Mary Frances Schoonover**

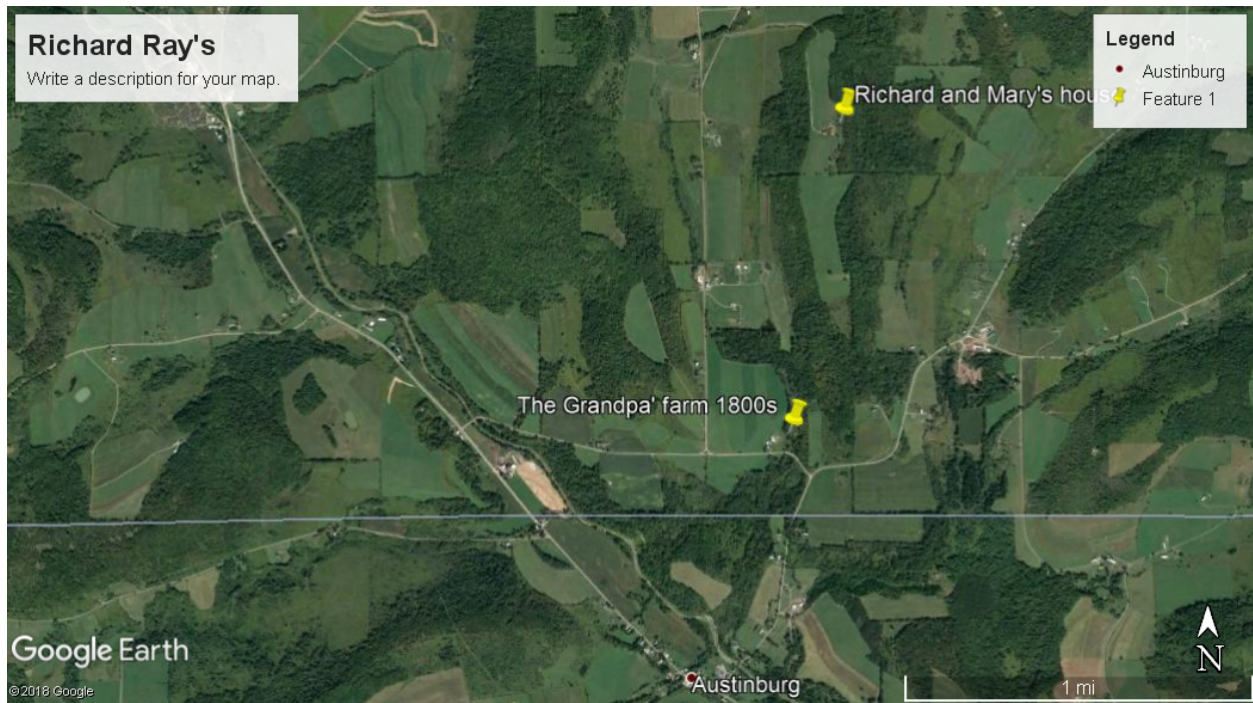
It all went into the massive, 1000-page-plus geneo book I wrote. It's sold both through my website at www.jasonschoonover.com and through the Schoonover Family website at <http://sites.google.com/site/schoonoversinamerica/> for \$25US by Dropbox or \$28 for a DVD by mail. The first half is a rich source for Schoonovers both legit and bastard—and, actually, because I laid in the historic backdrop to give their lives context, of value to all researchers of whatever name.



While here this time Su and I were guests of their nephew Richard Ray and Mary Schoonover, seen here taking my fix of our ggggrand-father's and Sally's headstones and upgrading them for posterity. Gawd, they had to drive two hours, to the top of New York state at Rochester airport on Lake Ontario, to pick us up. Then drive back to the bottom.



They live with a view of Pennsylvania's hills from their fabulous 200-acre hideaway. They retired back home only three years ago.



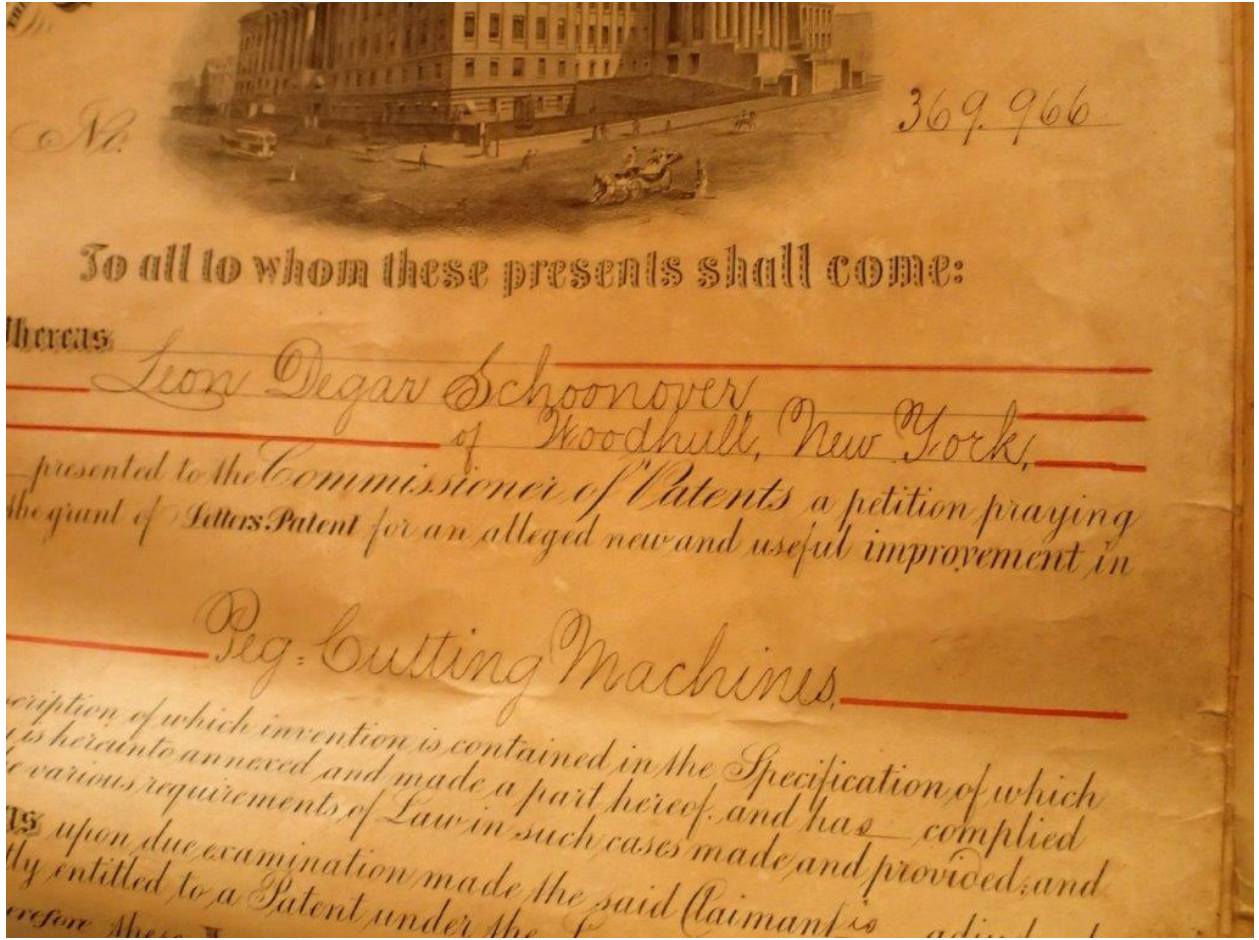
They have a Versailles-like view north and south, the property surrounded by trees—AND their land borders on the grandparents'!



Richard Ray actually descends from both Revolutionary Soldier Chris and Richard. As I say, we Schoonovers only marry outside the family if our gals are already married up. Here he holds his gggrandfather Grinold's rifle used in the Civil War to pop off rebs. How's that for a great family heirloom!



Another is this marvelous model of a peg cutting machine made by Richard Ray's great-grandfather, shoemaker Leon Degar, to demonstrate his 1887 US patent.



Leon was born n 1851 and married Sarah George.



I said the Austinburg Pioneer Cemetery was loaded with family. First and foremost, there's Richard I and Sally. Here with descendants. The lady is Julia Schoonover Coleman, Richard Ray's sister.



The largest stone in the whole place was Richard I's grandson through Daniel (yes, another) Richard. Keeping up with our proud tradition of marrying within the family, his wife Sophronia was his great-uncle Chris's daughter. We figure this breeds thoroughbreds.



They had three children die, their small headstones in a net row next to theirs.





The family was into lumbering, farm implements, merchandising and the local post office. The Austinburg business was passed down by this point, 1905, to their son Richard P.



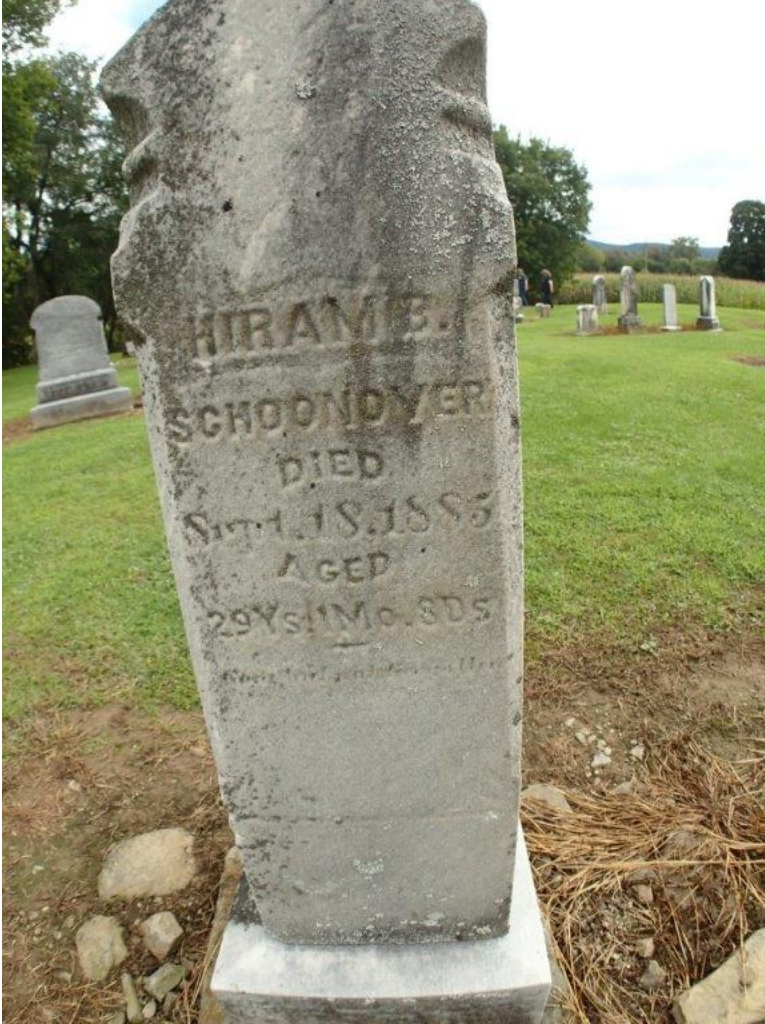
Richard P. also inherited his parents' large home about that same time. It was torn down sometime in the last 20 years or so.



Richard II's son Daniel's first wife. She was only 25. Their son is the Richard that married Sophronia. Confused? Of course. If you temporarily forget anyone's name in this family, just call him Richard. You'll probably be right.



Grandpa Richard I's eldest son Frederick's first wife.



This lad of Richard P. and Sophronia made it to 29. Accident?



The cemetery is also the final home of many Grinolds, Almira's family. My gggrandmother who rolled west in 1857. The flag indicates one was a Civil War veteran, quite possibly the one whose rifle was passed down to Richard Ray.



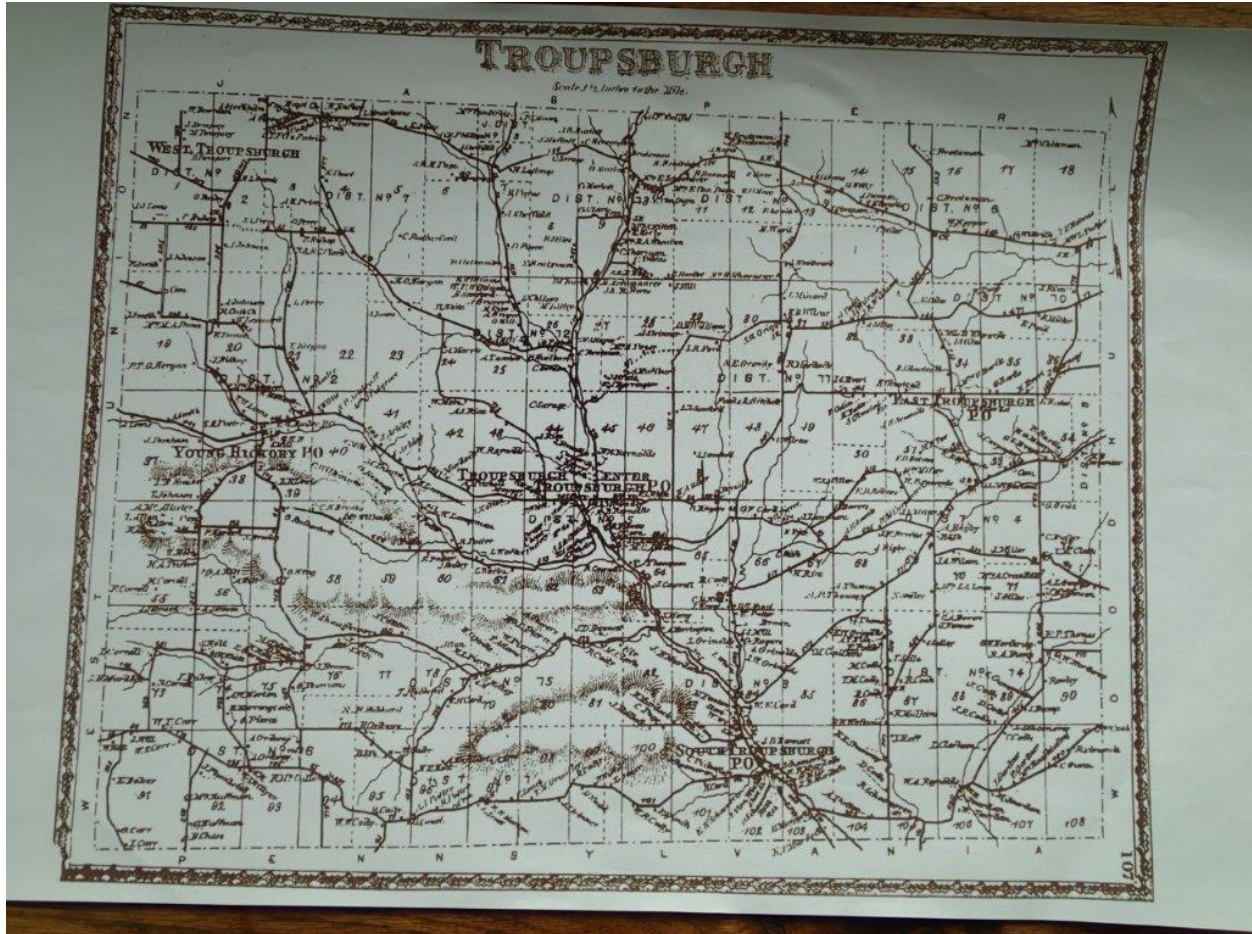
There's several other Schoonovers in the cemetery that I don't have space in this Blah Blah for, sorry. Don Strohmer is an extremely dedicated and diligent family genealogist, spending hours a day.



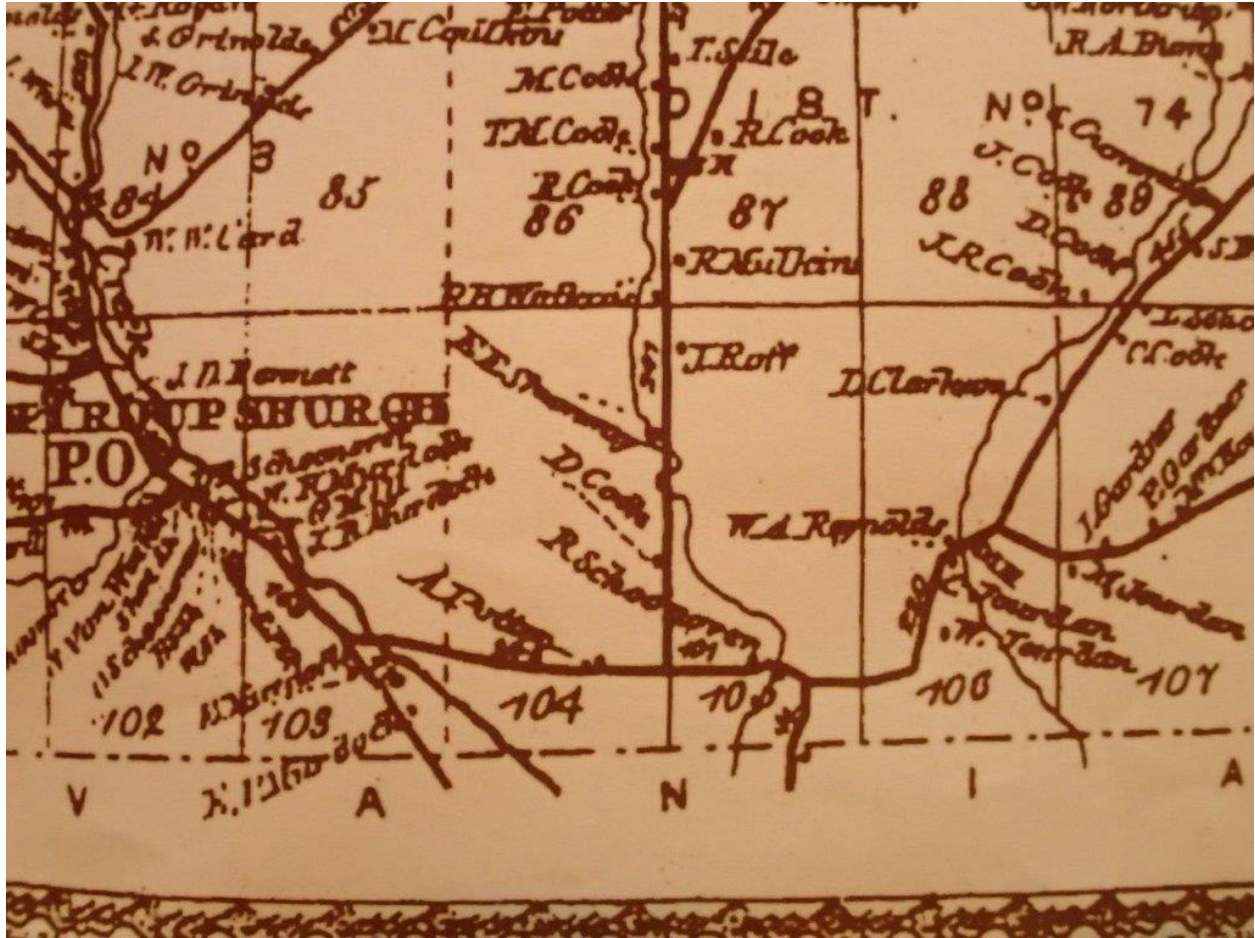
We also checked out several other cemeteries. A Civil War cannon decorates one.



One of the vets planted here is a William Schoonover, though I don't think he's a bastard, the poor bastard. However, one of Richard II's sons, Richard Bailey, fought in some 30 battles and campaigns, including the siege of Atlanta and Sherman's march to the sea and somehow survived although 305 in his regiment didn't. The 1870 census shows his mother Eunice Potter living with him in Fillmore Co., Minnesota. He learned the blacksmith trade from his dad too, and lived til 1909, spitting out some 10 kids.



Troupsburg is actually spread over a large area. This 1880 map is about 7.8 miles on a side. Austinburg is off the bottom a quarter of an inch on the main north-south road. But if you look carefully on the bottom right of this map...



...you'll see 'R Schoonover.' That was both Richard I's homestead and, after he croaked in 1847, Richard II's, the blacksmith. If you look to the top left you'll see the names 'Grinold.'



Both roads they founded, Grinnold and Schoonover. Within courtin' distance. Musta run outta Schoonover girls.



There were two farmsteads for the Grinolds. One was here, obliterated by jungle. Note the slightly different spelling.



The other down Grinnold Road a few hundred yards holds the remains of a barn, left, lying in a heap. This barn stood when I was here last. I suspect the overgrown site was Almira's because her parents abandoned their farmstead to roll west with the kids. It was too hilly to be good farmland.



Me beside the Schoonover Road sign with the family site of Richard I, II and Hiram visible at the other end of this road and gully, just on the other side of the creek. Er, crick, to spik US country.



This was the family farm through three generations in the 1800s to the 1920s. Though with different buildings of course. Sounds my two gg-something-grandparents would have heard: the soft babble of the brook, and crickets. Those beautiful sounds magically connected me with them across the generations and years.



We 4X4ed up to this view of the family farm. Grand view. All this would have been cleared by horse and hand by the ancestors.



Blacksmith Richard II was married to Eunice Potter. Their family is well represented in the Pioneer Cemetery as well.



Potters live in the house at left, undoubtedly distant relatives. And in several other houses in a row actually.



Richard Ray and Mary live at the top of the hill. Not over it.



He took me for a 4X4 ride and walk into the back lot of the bordering grand-parents' land. They would have trapped, logged and hunted on this steep gully side, useless for anything else. Eroding Devonian limestone forms a wide band across upstate New York; one sees flatstone fences everywhere.



On that earlier trip in 2001 in my VW camper I was struck with how beautiful the countryside was. And is.



In some ways it was even more bucolic in 1905 when I think this shot was snapped. All these farms are Schoonover farms, both legit and bastard. Today, only the barn stands and it's been turned.



Incredibly, the same view today.



Troupsburg has gone from a population high in 1880 of 2,500...



...to 1,300 today.



Few of the old buildings remain...



...though this is one.



This is Richard Ray's granddad LeLand's place, circa 1905. Leland's dad was the cobbler, Leon.



And today. Out of nostalgia, Richard Ray has re-roofed and re-sided it, keeping it up.



Several neighbors are Amish. This laid back, friendly carpenter uses, to power his drill, a tiny gas motor.



They eschew electricity; note the clothes on the line. I had to bring some home country maple syrup home and did.





And got a peek inside while I waited for the healthy looking young lady in her 1840s dress to fetch me a jug for \$12. Note the handmade rockers.



Mary has one. They're form fitting and very comfortable.



This stone building in nearby Woodhull is now an excellent café where we took a break. And where we'll take a break from this too long Blah Blah.



Since we have so many ancestors pushing up flowers here, we'll finish with some of them. Many, many thanks to Richard Ray and Mary for their tremendous hospitality and a fabulous once-in-a-lifetime experience! And Don, Stan et al—GREAT meeting you. And we wouldn't have except for that one hot and sweaty evening in 1728....