

Ancestors of Stephen Tefft, Late of Jewett City, Connecticut

By Lee Gazlay
Mystic, Connecticut
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Introduction

My wife, Peggy Jean Gazlay (née Krupowski), is a descendant of John H. Tefft¹ (1844-1916) of Jewett City, New London County, Connecticut, through her mother, Jean Victoria Krupowski (née Tefft). Through our genealogical research over the years, John's descendants are well known. According to John's obituary, he was "the last of twelve brothers and sisters and was born 72 years ago in Jewett City, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Tefft."²

We have long suspected that John H. Tefft's ancestry connected to one of the numerous Tefft families in Rhode Island. Rev. Charles H. W. Stocking, D.D., describes the Tefft family origins in this country in his 1904 book The Tefft Ancestry:³

"The first persons of the name in America were William and John Tefte, or Tefft, the former of whom settled in Boston not later than 1635, and the latter in Portsmouth, R.I. It is probable that these brothers were accompanied by a sister Sara."

The Tefft Ancestry documents William's only child, a daughter, and over 1,100 of John's male and female descendants. Many Tefft individuals and families are found in vital records (i.e., birth, marriage, death, etc.), probate, land, military and U.S. Federal Census records, wills, newspapers, and genealogical works. Unfortunately, our John H. Tefft's ancestors are not cited in any published or unpublished genealogies, and other records provide only fragments about John's father, Stephen Tefft.

U.S. Federal Census records⁴ starting in 1880 show the birthplace for each person's parents. The census entries for John H. Tefft show his parents' birthplaces as Connecticut (1880 and 1910), and Rhode Island (1900). This ambiguity in the census records, plus our suspicions regarding John's family origins, gave us incentive to search for Stephen Tefft and family in Connecticut and Rhode Island.



After extensive research, documented herein, we believe we have identified John's father, Stephen Tefft, as the son of Ezekiel Tefft and his wife Amie (or Amy) Willcox (or Wilcox) of Richmond, Washington County, Rhode Island, and later of Smyrna, Chenango County, New York. Although this conclusion is not 100% certain, the records we consulted,⁵ taken together, provide a convincing case for this assertion. Assuming our findings are correct, we can therefore trace our Tefft family to John Tefte, or Tefft who immigrated from England around 1635 and settled in Portsmouth, Rhode Island.

¹ The surname is spelled in various records as Tefft, Teft, Tift, Tifft, Tefte, and rarely, Taft and Tuft, not to mention aberrations such as Feft. For simplicity, we use the spelling "Tefft" throughout this document, except when referring to an individual whose preferred spelling is known, or when citing a specific record.

² The Day, New London, Connecticut, Obituary, John H. Tefft, published on 5 January 1916.

³ The Tefft Ancestry, comprising many hitherto unpublished records of descendants of John Tefft of Portsmouth, Rhode Island. Compiled and edited by Rev. Charles H. W. Stocking, D.D. The Lakeside Press, 1904.

⁴ All U.S. Federal Census records cited in this document were found at familysearch.org unless otherwise noted.

⁵ The majority of the records we cite are admittedly secondary sources (i.e., other than birth-marriage-death records), so our findings do not constitute proof by genealogical standards. However, we believe we achieved our goal to identify the likeliest parents of Stephen Tefft and to eliminate other potential ancestral families.

[illegible]

9 August 1910 – “Frank Teft of Lakewood, R.I., who has been visiting his brother William of Otrobando avenue, has returned home.”⁹ This appears to be an error and is believed to in fact

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refer John. We have not found a William Tefft in Norwich in this period that could be related to either Frank (Francis) or John.

8 September 1913 – Norwich Town – “Mr. and Mrs. Henry McLaughlin and family of Jewett City were recent guest of Mr. and Mrs. Tefft of Sturtevant street.”¹⁰ Mrs. McLaughlin is the sister of John’s (second) wife, Jeanette Groves. The Teffts moved several times between 1909 and 1916.

8 September 1913 – Norwich Town – “Mr. and Mrs. Tefft of Sturtevant street recently entertained Mrs. Hutchins of Springfield, Mass., and Francis Tefft orf [sic] Lakewood, N.J. [sic, Francis lived in Lakewood, R.I., not N.J.].”¹¹ Mrs. Hutchins [sic, Hutchinson] is Mrs. Tefft’s sister.

5 June 1916 – Norwich – “The death of John H. Tefft occurred Friday morning at his home on West Town street, Norwich, after a weeks illness with bronchial pneumonia...”¹²

From the above articles, it seems certain that John had a brother who, separate research shows, was Francis Dayton Tift (1838-1915). Francis apparently preferred to spell his surname Tift. Francis’ obituary, excerpts quoted below, provided several pertinent facts:

“The death of Francis Dayton Tift, formerly a resident of this city [Norwich], occurred on Sunday at his home in Lakewood, Providence. Mr. Tift was 77 and was born in Jewett City, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Stephen Tift. His father was a native of North Stonington and his mother’s maiden name was Wilcox... Mr. Tift was the last of his family but he is survived by his second wife, who was Nellie Buckley... The only close relative of the deceased besides his wife is a nephew. F. P. Perkins, of Montville.”¹³

The author of Francis’ obituary apparently was unaware that his brother John was still living, and that John had several children and grandchildren that would have been “close relatives” of Francis. Also, with Francis having numerous siblings (most not yet identified), one would expect that they would have had children, and therefore Francis would likely have many nieces and nephews. We conclude that Francis must have been largely out of touch with the rest of his family other than John. Francis’ obituary mentions that he worked in Jewett City, Baltic, and Norwich, that he spent a year in Kansas, and that he resided in Providence, R.I., for the last 20 years of his life. Indeed, U.S. Federal Census record show him in Griswold (1850, as a 13 year old [although he was actually 12 at the time] living with William and Betsy Withie, relationship to Francis unknown, if any); Franklin, New London County, Connecticut (1860, with his first wife Anna); Norwich (1870, also with Anna and their three children); Prairie View, Phillips County, Kansas (1880, for the last time with Anna, and two children, one having died previously); and Warwick, Kent County, Rhode Island (1905 and 1915, with his second wife Nellie).

Two other records provide supporting information. First, Rhode Island Marriages, 1724-1916, lists Frank Dayton Tift, age 54, son of Stephen Tift and Susan Wilcox, married to Nellie Buckley, age 38, daughter of Edward Buckley and Ann Lonyan [sic, Lougan], on 22 November 1892 in Cranston, Providence County, Rhode Island. Second, the Register of Deaths in the Town of Warwick, Rhode Island, lists Francis Dayton Tift, died 28 November 1915 in Lakewood, age 77 years 9 months, born in Connecticut, parents Stephen and Susan (surname not listed).

It’s notable that Francis was not found by name with his parents in any U.S. Federal Census records. What about John?

¹⁰ Norwich Bulletin, Norwich, Connecticut, 8 September 1913.

¹¹ Norwich Bulletin, Norwich, Connecticut, 8 September 1913.

¹² The Day, New London, Connecticut, 5 June 1916.

¹³ Norwich Bulletin, Norwich, Connecticut, Obituary of Francis Dayton Tift, published 29 November 1915.

Stephen and John Tefft in the 1850-60 U.S. Federal Census

Although several John Teffts appear in 1850-1860 U.S. Federal Census records in Connecticut and nearby Rhode Island, there is no doubt as to which Census records show our John Tefft, his parents, and two younger siblings.

1. 1850 U.S. Federal Census, Griswold, New London County, Connecticut: family of Stephen Tift, age 57 (real estate valued at \$300); Rebecca Tift, age 43; John L. Tift, age 6; George C. Tift, age 5; and Neland P. Tift, age 11/12 (i.e., 11 months old). This is the only family group in 1850 that includes a father named Stephen and a son named John. John's middle initial in this Census, and the mother being named Rebecca, were earlier thought to cast doubt as to whether this is the right John Tefft. However, Rebecca's last will and testament,¹⁴ made on 4 September 1877, bequeaths her property to her son John H. Tift, her daughter-in-law Ellen Tift, and two of her granddaughters, Anna D. Tift and Luella M. Tift, all positively identified as our John Tefft, his first wife, and two of their children, respectively.
2. 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Griswold (Jewett City post office), New London County, Connecticut: family of Stephen Tefft, age 67 (real estate valued at \$700); Rebecca Tefft, age 54; and Neelan Tefft, age 10, all born in Connecticut. This is the same family as in the 1850 Census, except John and George are not included (we believe that George Tefft died in infancy, as no further record has been found for him).
3. 1860 U.S. Federal Census, Griswold (Jewett City post office): William Withey, age 76 (real estate valued at \$2,000); John Tift, age 16, both born in Connecticut. This is almost certainly the same William Withie that Francis was found with in the 1850 Census, and, we believe, this is our John Tefft, with his parents and brother in the above 1860 Census entry. Again, no relationship has been found between William Withey and the Teffts, but finding two brothers (Francis and John) enumerated with William Withey in consecutive census records seems highly coincidental.

Figure 2. shows the location of Stephen Tefft's farm, and, nearby, William Withey's farm, where both John and Francis apparently lived and/or worked as teenagers at different times. Stephen's farm site is currently named Twin Maples Farm, and it is not known if the present owners have any connection to the Tefft family.

From the records found so far, it seems certain that Stephen was married at least twice, first to Susan Wilcox, and second to Rebecca, whose maiden name has not been determined. Rebecca is the mother of our John and his brothers George C. (b. circa 1845-??) and Neelan (1849-1873), the latter of whose parents are named in his register of death. Francis (1838-1915) is John's half-brother, the product of their common father, Stephen, and his first wife Susan Wilcox.

¹⁴ Last Will and Testament, Rebecca Tift, 4 September 1877. Copy found online and provided by Shirley (née Chapel) Smith.

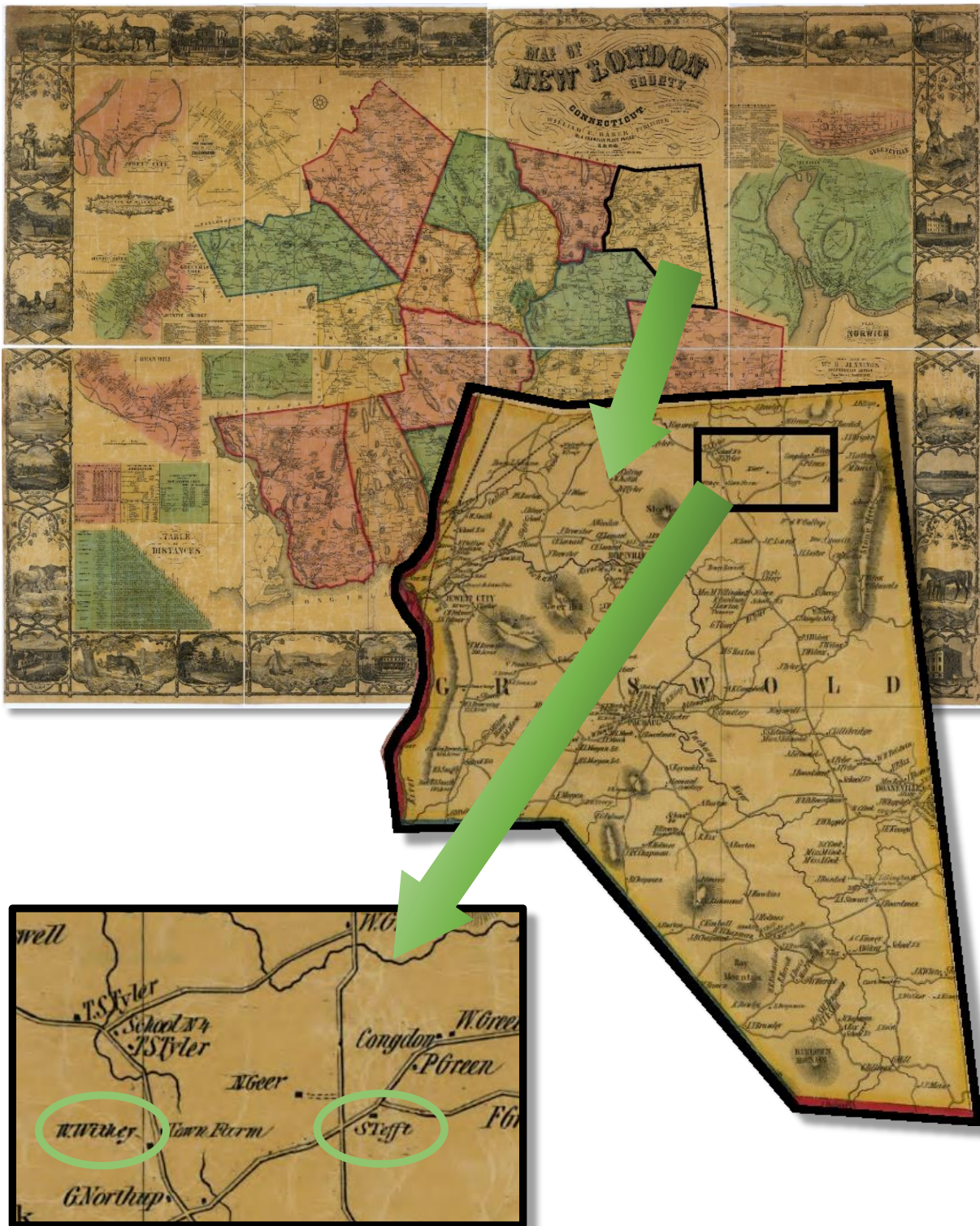


Figure 2. Tefft and Withey Farms in Griswold, New London County, Connecticut

Stephen Tefft and Susan Wilcox

Information about Stephen and Susan Tefft is scarce. The following items are what we have found in various documents, other than census records, related to who we believe is our Stephen Tefft.

1. Military records show a Private Stephen Tift in the 30 Regiment (Randall's) Connecticut Militia, War of 1812.¹⁵ He is undoubtedly the same Private Stephen Tift who is a member of the Sixth Company, 30th Regiment, 3rd Brigade under Wm. Randall, lieutenant-colonel, commandant, in early 1813.¹⁶
2. The Norwich Bulletin, on each Memorial Day in the early 1900s, listed local veterans who served in various wars. The lists include, under War of 1812, the name of Stephen Tift among the soldier's graves in the town of Griswold, Jewett City Cemetery.¹⁷ This aligns with the military records discussed above.
3. Stephen's grave is apparently unmarked, as we have been unable to find his grave in a physical search of the Jewett City (Lower) Cemetery.
4. A Stephen Tift and a Susan Tift are listed among the 37 constituent members that organized the Jewett City Baptist Church on 13 September 1840. We believe these are Francis' parents and John's father.
5. A Stephen Tift of Griswold, Connecticut, is listed in the Hartford Daily Courant as having filed for bankruptcy on 27 August 1842.¹⁸ It may be that he suffered financial difficulties following the death of, or divorce from, his first wife Susan, possibly between September 1840 and August 1842, resulting in his bankruptcy filing.
6. Stephen's death is recorded as 4 January 1866, age 76 years, in Griswold.¹⁹ His exact birth date is not known. His age as recorded in the 1850 and 1860 census records suggest his birth in the range of 1792-3. However, his death record, if accurate, puts his birth date in the range of 5 January 1789 to 4 January 1790. Without definitive evidence of Stephen's birth date, we regard his birth year as circa 1790.



Figure 3. Jewett City Cemetery.

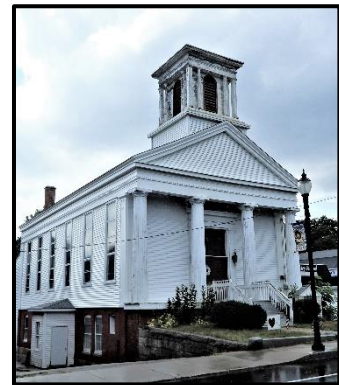


Figure 4. Jewett City Baptist Church.

¹⁵ United States War of 1812 Index to Service Records, 1812-1815. Available at www.familysearch.org.

¹⁶ History of New London County, Connecticut, compiled under the supervision of D. Hamilton Hurd. Philadelphia: J. W. Lewis and Co., 1882. Page 634.

¹⁷ Norwich Bulletin, Norwich, Connecticut, 27 May 1909 (and similarly in other years).

¹⁸ Hartford Daily Courant, Hartford, Connecticut, 27 August 1842, pg. 2. ProQuest Historical Newspapers.

¹⁹ The Charles R. Hale Collection of Connecticut Cemetery Inscriptions, Newspaper Marriage and Death Notices, ca. 1750-1865, and the Veterans' Death Index. Stephen Tefft died 4 January 1866 in Griswold, Connecticut, age 76.

Below we present our reasoning and process of elimination for identifying our Stephen Tefft in each census year working from 1840 back to 1810. To reduce the tedium somewhat in the discussion below, we include census images only for our Stephen Tefft's entry, but we show a summary table for all Stephen Teffts we found in the census records. Our Stephen Tefft's tables are shown in blue, while others are shown in gray.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
1 Male	Under 5	1835 – 1840	= Edward (b.c. 1837 in CT)
1 Male	20 – 30	1810 – 1820	= Stephen R. (b.c. 1810 in RI)
1 Female	20 – 30	1810 – 1820	= Mary (b.c. 1813 in CT)

Table 2. Summary of 1840 U.S. Federal Census showing the family of Stephen R. Tift of Norwich, CT.

- Stephen G. Tefft in South Kingston, Washington County, Rhode Island. This is almost certainly Stephen G. Tefft (1781-1865), son of Gardner Tefft and his wife Waity (née Eldred). His family in the 1840 census is summarized in Table 3, with the children inferred from other records. This Stephen lived in South Kingston (South Kingstown) for most, if not all, of his life. He and his family members are found in birth, marriage, death, and other census records, including the 1850 U.S. Federal Census for Rhode Island. This is not our Stephen Tefft.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
1 Male	Under 5	1835 – 1840	= Stephen (b.c. 1835)
1 Male	5 – 10	1830 – 1835	= Elisha (b.c. 1832)
1 Male	10 – 15	1825 – 1830	= Robert (b.c. 1827)
2 Males	15 – 20	1820 – 1825	= James H. (b.c. 1823) = Gardner E. (b.c. 1825)
1 Male	50 – 60	1780 – 1790	= Stephen (b.c. 1781)
1 Female	Under 5	1835 – 1840	= Abby (b.c. 1839)
1 Female	10 – 15	1825 – 1830	= ?
1 Female	20 – 30	1810 – 1820	= ?
1 Female	40 – 50	1790 – 1800	= Dianna (b.c. 1799)

Table 3. Summary of 1840 U.S. Census showing the family of Stephen G. Tefft of South Kingston, RI

1830 U.S. Federal Census

One Stephen Tefft is listed in the 1830 U.S. Federal Census in Connecticut, and one in Rhode Island.

- Stephen Tift in Preston, Connecticut (the next town to the south of Griswold). We believe this is our Stephen's family, shown in Figure 6 and summarized in Table 4. The children are unidentified at present.

Figure 6. 1830 U.S. Census, Preston, New London County, Connecticut, showing the family of Stephen Tift

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
1 Male	10 – 15	1815 – 1820	= ?
1 Male	15 – 20	1810 – 1815	= ?
1 Male	30 – 40	1790 - 1800	= Stephen (b.c. 1790)
2 Females	Under 5	1825 – 1830	= ? = ?
3 Females	5 – 10	1820 – 1825	= ? = ? = ?
1 Female	15 – 20	1810 – 1815	= ?
1 Female	30 – 40	1790 – 1800	= Susan

Table 4. Summary of 1830 U.S. Federal Census showing the family of Stephen Tift in Preston, CT

- Stephen Tefft in North Kingstown, Washington County, Rhode Island. His family composition is shown in Table 5 and is significantly different than what we would expect. The head of household, probably the male age 50-60, is too old to be our Stephen Tefft.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
1 Male	Under 5	1825 – 1830	= ?
1 Male	10 – 15	1815 – 1820	= ?
1 Male	20 – 30	1800 – 1810	= ?
1 Male	50 – 60	1770 – 1780	= Stephen
1 Female	10 – 15	1815 – 1820	= ?
1 Female	15 – 20	1810 – 1815	= ?
1 Female	20 – 30	1800 – 1800	= ?
1 Female	40 – 50	1780 – 1790	= ?
1 Female	50 – 60	1770 – 1780	= ?

Table 5. Summary of 1830 U.S. Federal Census showing the family of Stephen Tefft of North Kingstown, RI

- Stephen Tift in South Kingstown, Washington County, Rhode Island. His family composition is summarized in Table 6. This resembles family of Stephen G. Tefft as previously described.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
1 Male	Under 5	1825 – 1830	= ?
3 Males	5 – 10	1820 – 1825	= ? = ? = ?
1 Male	40 – 50	1780 – 1790	= Stephen
1 Female	Under 5	1825 – 1830	= ?
1 Female	10 – 15	1815 – 1820	= ?
1 Female	20 – 30	1800 – 1810	= ?

Table 6. Summary of 1830 U.S. Federal Census showing the family of Stephen Tift of South Kingstown, RI

1820 U.S. Federal Census

The 1820 U.S. Federal Census shows three families with heads of household named Stephen Tefft.

1. Stephen E. Tift in Thompson, Windham County, Connecticut. The family is shown in Table 7. Separate research indicates this Stephen E. Tift (1795-?) is the son of Israel Tefft and his wife Ruth Eddy.²⁰ Both of his daughters died in their teens, and are buried in Cedar Grove Cemetery, New London, Connecticut. This is not our Stephen Tefft.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
1 Male	16 – 26	1794 – 1804	= ?
1 Male	26 – 45	1775 – 1794	= Stephen E.
2 Females	Under 10	1810 – 1820	= Harriet N. = Sarah E.
2 Females	16 – 26	1794 – 1804	= Sarah H. (wife) = ?

Table 7. Summary of 1820 U.S. Federal Census showing the family of Stephen E. Tift of Thompson, CT

2. Stephen Tefft in South Kingstown, Washington County, Rhode Island. The family is shown in Table 8. This is likely the family of Stephen G. Tefft, as previously discussed.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
1 Male	26 – 45	1775 – 1794	= Stephen (b.c. 1881)
2 Females	Under 10	1810 – 1820	= ? = ?
1 Female	10 – 16	1804 – 1810	= ?
3 Females	26 – 45	1775 – 1794	= ? = ? = ?

Table 8. Summary of 1820 U.S. Federal Census showing the family of Stephen Tefft of South Kingstown, RI

3. Stephen Tift in Hopkinton, Washington County, Rhode Island. The family is shown in Figure 7 and summarized in Table 9. Hopkinton is across the border from North Stonington where Stephen was supposedly born, according to Francis' obituary. The family composition matches what we would expect. We believe this is our Stephen, age about 30 years, and his family.

Names of Heads of Families.	Free White Males.						Free White Females.					
	Free white males under ten years.	Free white males of ten and under sixteen.	Free white males between sixteen and twenty.	Free white males of twenty and under twenty-five, including heads of families.	Free white males of twenty-five and under thirty, including heads of families.	Free white males of thirty-five and upwards, including heads of families.	Free white females under ten years of age.	Free white females of ten and under sixteen.	Free white females of sixteen and under twenty, including heads of families.	Free white females of twenty and under thirty, including heads of families.	Free white females of thirty-five and upwards, including heads of families.	
	to 10	to 16	to 16	to 20	to 25	45, &c.	to 10	to 16	to 20	to 25	45, &c.	
Stephen Tift	2	2										

Figure 7. 1820 U.S. Census, Hopkinton, RI, showing the family of Stephen Tift.

²⁰ Many researchers list the son of Israel Tefft and Ruth Eddy as Stephen Eddy Tefft (1813-1904). However, that Stephen Tefft was born in Newport, Herkimer, New York, the son of William Tefft, according to the History of the Original Town of Concord, by Erasmus Briggs. Rochester, New York, Union and Advertiser's Print, 1883, page 501. Also, that Israel Tefft was born in Rhode Island and died in 1801 in Thompson, Connecticut, 12 years before that Stephen Eddy Tefft was born. Although the names are similar, Stephen Eddy Tefft of New York is apparently unrelated to Stephen E. Tefft in Thompson, Connecticut.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
2 Males	Under 10	1810 – 1820	= ? = ?
3 Males	10 – 16	1804 – 1810	= ? = ? = ?
1 Male	26 – 45	1775 – 1794	= Stephen (b.c. 1790)
1 Female	26 – 45	1775 – 1794	= Susan

Table 9. Summary of 1820 U.S. Federal Census showing the family of Stephen Tlfft of Hopkinton, RI

1810 U.S. Federal Census

There are no listings for a Stephen Tefft in Connecticut in the 1810 U.S. Federal Census. For Rhode Island, the following two heads of household are found:

1. Stephen Tefft in Richmond, Washington County, Rhode Island. The family is shown Figure 8 and summarized in Table 10. Richmond Town is adjacent to Hopkinton Town, so in the same vicinity as where Stephen was found in the 1820 Census. The family composition seems about what we would expect for Stephen's young family. We believe this is our Stephen's family, although the age group for Susan differs from later census records.

Names of Heads of Families	Free white Males					Free white Females				
	Under ten years of age	Ten years and under sixteen	Between sixteen and twenty years	Twenty years and over, including heads of families	Forty five years and over, including heads of families	Under ten years of age	Ten years and under sixteen	Between sixteen and twenty years	Twenty years and over, including heads of families	Forty five years and over, including heads of families
Stephen Tefft	3		1							

Figure 8. 1810 U.S. Census, Richmond, RI, showing the family of Stephen Tefft.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
3 Males	Under 10	1800 – 1810	= ? = ? = ?
1 Male	16 – 26	1784 – 1794	= Stephen (b.c. 1790)
1 Female	26 – 45	1765 – 1784	= Susan?

Table 10. Summary of 1810 U.S. Federal Census showing the family of Stephen Tefft in Richmond, RI

2. Stephen Tift in North Kingstown, Washington County, Rhode Island. The family is shown in Table 11, and the family composition is different than what we would expect. We don't think our Stephen lived in North Kingstown.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
1 Male	16 – 26	1784 – 1794	= ?
1 Male	26 – 45	1765 – 1794	= Stephen
1 Female	Under 10	1800 – 1810	= ?
1 Female	16 – 26	1784 – 1794	= ?
1 Female	26 – 45	1765 – 1794	= ?
1 Female	Over 45	1765 & earlier	= ?
1 Person	All other free persons		= ?

Table 11. Summary of 1810 U.S. Federal Census showing the family of Stephen Tift of North Kingstown, RI

Summary of U.S. Federal Census Records for Stephen Tefft

Assuming that we have correctly identified our Stephen Tefft in the above census records, he apparently was raised in Rhode Island and moved to Connecticut sometime between 1820 and 1830. Table 12 summarizes Stephen's family across these census records. The children are numbered in apparent birth order. Their age progression is highly consistent from one census year to the next, with the exception of one female in 1830 (possibly a relative visiting the family).

1810 Richmond, RI	1820 Hopkinton, RI	1830 Preston, CT	1840 Lisbon, CT	Inferred Individual
			1 Male 0 – 5	#12 = Francis (b.1838)
			1 Male 5 – 10	#11 = ?
	2 Males 0 – 10	1 Male 10 – 15		#5 = ?
		1 Male 15 – 20		#4 = ?
3 Males 0 – 10	3 Males 10 – 16			#1 = ? #2 = ? #3 = ?
1 Male 10 – 26	1 Male 16 – 43	1 Male 30 – 40	1 Male 40 – 50	= Stephen (b.c. 1790)
		2 Females 0 – 5	2 Females 10 – 15	#9 = ? #10 = ?
		3 Females 5 – 10		#6 = ? #7 = ? #8 = ?
		1 Female 15 – 20		= visiting relative?
1 Female 26 – 45	1 Female 16 – 45	1 Female 30 – 40	1 Female 40 – 50	= Susan

Table 12. Summary of the Family of Stephen Tefft across 1810-1840 U.S. Federal Census Records.

Stephen Tefft in Other Records

The 1889 book History of Washington and Kent Counties, Rhode Island, by J. C. Cole, provides an interesting discussion of a factory in Wyoming, Washington County, Rhode Island, a village within the town of Richmond on the border with the town of Hopkinton. Wyoming is shown in Figure 9.²¹

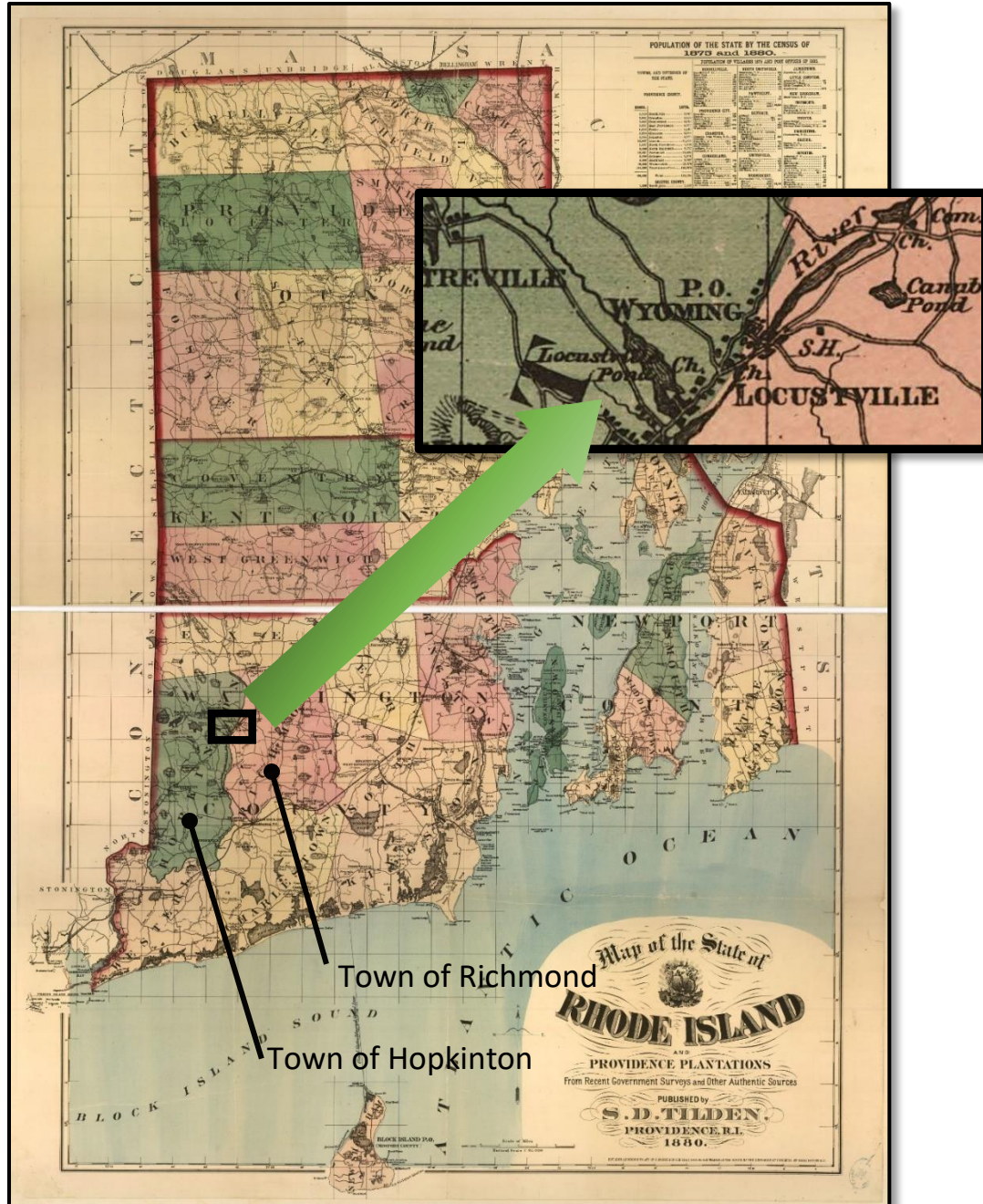


Figure 9. Wyoming, Rhode Island, location of The Brothers' Cotton Manufacturing Company

²¹ History of Washington and Kent Counties, Rhode Island. J. R. Cole. New York: W. W. Preston & Co. 1889. Page 718. Other publications provide a similar account.

Wyoming.—This little village is situated on the Richmond side of the river and on the former site of the Brand Iron Works, built by Samuel Brand, who resided in an old house west of W. F. Segar's store, and gave name to the place. There was also a grist mill in the place. Mr. Brand then owned the land now occupied by the village of Wyoming.

June 1st, 1814, a company was organized here for the purpose of erecting a factory, the name being The Brothers' Cotton Manufacturing Company, consisting of Ezekiel Tefft, Samuel Tefft, Nathan Lillibridge, Stephen Tefft and Nathan Tefft. The factory erected by the Brothers' Manufacturing Company was burned about 1862. It was then owned by Pardon Olney and Lewis C. Kenyon. The fire caught from the whipper. The factory had a capacity for, and was running, thirty-six looms. Mr. Olney also had a factory on the other side of the stream, which was burned December 10th, 1875.

Could this be our Stephen Tefft? And are all of these Teffts actually brothers as the name of the company suggests?

Heads of household in U.S. Federal Census records in 1810 and 1820 for Richmond and nearby Hopkinton, Rhode Island, include at least two Ezekiel Teffts, two Samuel Teffts, one Stephen Tefft (our Stephen, as previously shown in 1810 and 1820), and no Nathan Teffts. Other than these individuals living within the same or adjacent towns, the relationships among them, if any, are not evident from these census records.

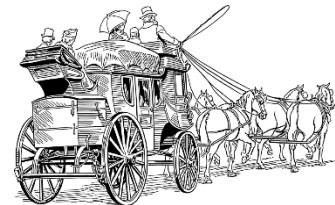


A book written in 1905 provides a possible, and we think likely, explanation of the relationships of several Teffts individuals that is consistent with the account of The Brother's Cotton Manufacturing Company and with what we found in the census records.

Early Years in Smyrna, and Our First Old Home Week, by George Albert Munson²² is a quaint bio-history of the village of Smyrna, Chenango County, New York. It includes biographies, photos, and stories of the earliest settlers of Smyrna from the Oneida Indian tribe and Joseph Porter and wife, the first English settlers arriving in 1792, to Old Home Week in 1904 as a reunion of old citizens, friends, and neighbors. Figure 10 shows the location of Smyrna, New York.

The book discusses the arrival, chronologically, of each of the early settlers and their families in Smyrna. On page 66 we find the following paragraph:

Ezekiel Tefft and Amy Willcox Tefft, his wife, came to Smyrna January 1, 1822, the former having been born in Rhode Island about the middle of the eighteenth century, and the latter in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1764, coming to America with her parents. Their children were Susan, who died while very young; Stephen; Nathan, who followed a sea-faring life and was a mate on a privateer in the war of 1812, the last ever heard of him when he sailed for the British coast in 1815; Hulda, who became the wife of Gardner James, spending the most of her life in Smyrna, and where she died at an advanced age in the early seventies, and Ezekiel, who came up country about the year 1822, but moved to Ohio in 1830.



²² Early Years in Smyrna and Our First Old Home Week, by George Albert Munson. Chenango Union Presses, 1905. Exact facsimile, First Reprint Edition: June 4, 1997 by RSG Publishing, Bainbridge, New York. Available at books.google.com.

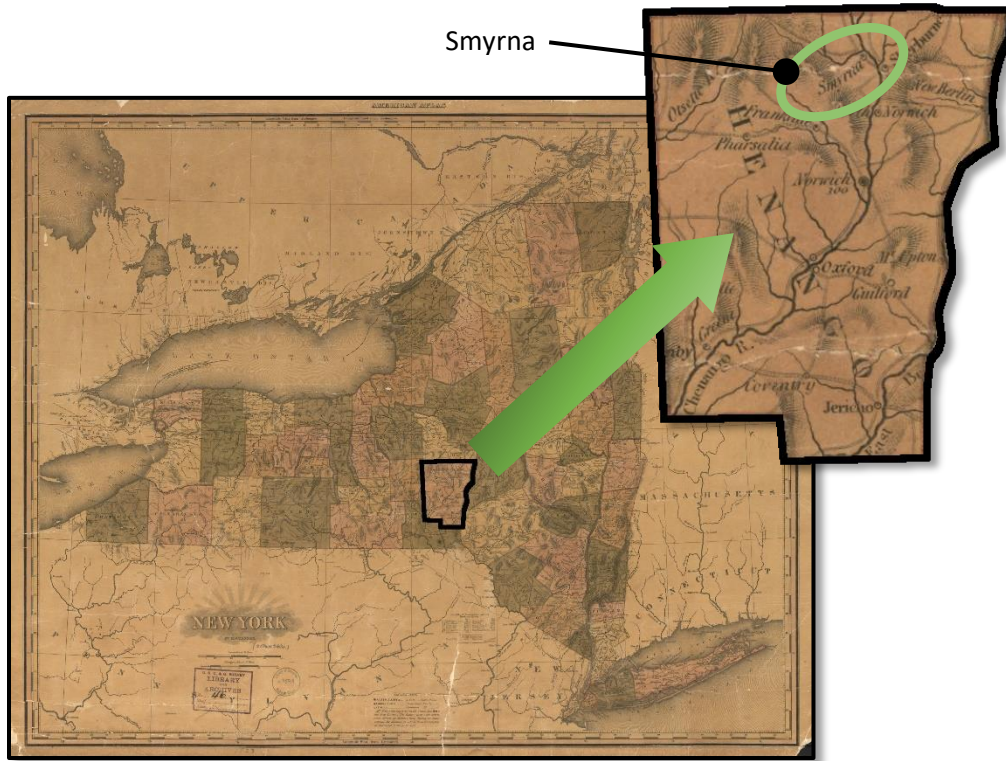


Figure 10. Smyrna, Chenango County, New York, where Ezekiel Tefft and family settled.

Three further paragraphs in the book discuss Ezekiel and Amy's two other children, Rowland B. Tefft, presumably arriving in Smyrna with his parents, and later moving with his own family to Michigan; and Samuel Tefft, who arrived in Smyrna in 1820, married, and reared a large family in Smyrna and nearby.

The four Tefft men named as founders of The Brother's Cotton Manufacturing Company appear to match members of the Tefft family described in Smyrna.

A key point is that the Smyrna book provides an account for each of Ezekiel and Amie's children *except Stephen*. The implication is that Stephen did not go to Smyrna, New York, with the rest of the family, but that he most likely stayed behind in Rhode Island. This correlates with our earlier analysis of census records for Stephen Tefft. Also, Ezekiel and each of his children who went to Smyrna can be found in New York records (including post-1820 census and vital records), but there is no record of Ezekiel and Amie's son Stephen in New York.²³

Another book provides a similar account of the family. Portrait and Biographical Record for Saginaw and Bay Counties, Michigan²⁴ includes a biographical sketch of Charles R. Tefft, son of Rowland Tefft and grandson of Ezekiel Tefft. The first paragraph of his sketch is presented below.

²³ A Stephen Tifft (1793-1872) and his wife Suzannah appear in several U.S. Census Records in New York State (including some of the same years that our Stephen Tefft appears in census records in Connecticut). Despite the similarity of their names with our Stephen Tefft and his first wife Susan, the New York couple is apparently unrelated to ours. That Stephen was born in Herkimer County, New York, and lived in New York all his life (mainly Jefferson and Oswego Counties). Findagrave.com shows that he is the son of Caleb Tifft (1769-1843) and his wife Susannah.

²⁴ Portrait and Biographical Record for Saginaw and Bay Counties, Michigan. Chicago Biographical Publishing Co., 1892. Pages 811-812. Available at books.google.com.

Charles R. Tefft. Our subject was born in Smyrna, Chenango County, N. Y., December 11, 1839. He was a son of Rowland and Lucy Bee Tefft. Rowland Tefft was a son of Ezekiel Tefft, who was born near Providence, R.I. His parents emigrated from Glasgow, Scotland, where they were engaged in a cotton manufactory and made settlement in the United States. Ezekiel married Anna Wilcox who bore him a family of five sons and two daughters, whose names are as follows: Stephen, Nathan, Susan, Hulda, Ezekiel, Samuel and Rowland. Our subject's grandparents died in New York. They were sturdy Scotch people, with the best of principles and were of the stock that the States delight in welcoming to the best that they possess. They were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Their advent into New York was made in 1822.

Charles may have provided the information in his biographical sketch, so the information should be reliable, although the sketch contains a few errors compared to the Smyrna book (and other sources), such Ezekiel's wife's name (Anna versus Amy) and their birth place (the bio indicates Scotland for both parents versus Rhode Island for Ezekiel as stated in Smyrna). One other notable difference is the order of Ezekiel and Amie's children, specifically, where Susan appears in the list. Susan died while very young, according to Smyrna, and her birth could be anywhere in the range of 1785 (when her parents married) to 1793 (when Hulda was born, assuming she was older than Susan). Otherwise, the birth dates for Hulda, Ezekiel, Samuel, and Rowland are known from other records, and both Smyrna and Charles' biography show those children in birth order, so it is presumed that Stephen and Nathan are also shown in birth order. Charles' bio was written a decade before Smyrna, but considering the errors for Amy's name and Ezekiel's birthplace, the Smyrna book is probably more accurate regarding birth order.



Findings from other researchers that include abstracts of wills and land records (not shown here) identifies that Ezekiel Tefft (b.c. 1760-?), the head of the family in the Smyrna book, is the son of Ezekiel Tefft (1728-1811) and his second wife Eunice (Chapman?) (1730-1814). The couple also had a son Samuel Tefft (b.c. 1756-?). The elder Ezekiel also had two children by his first wife, Patience Potter (1730-1803): Marcy (1751-1829) and Hezekiah (1753-1822). Figure 11 shows the elder Ezekiel's children and grand-children, based on additional research from multiple sources, not cited in this paper.

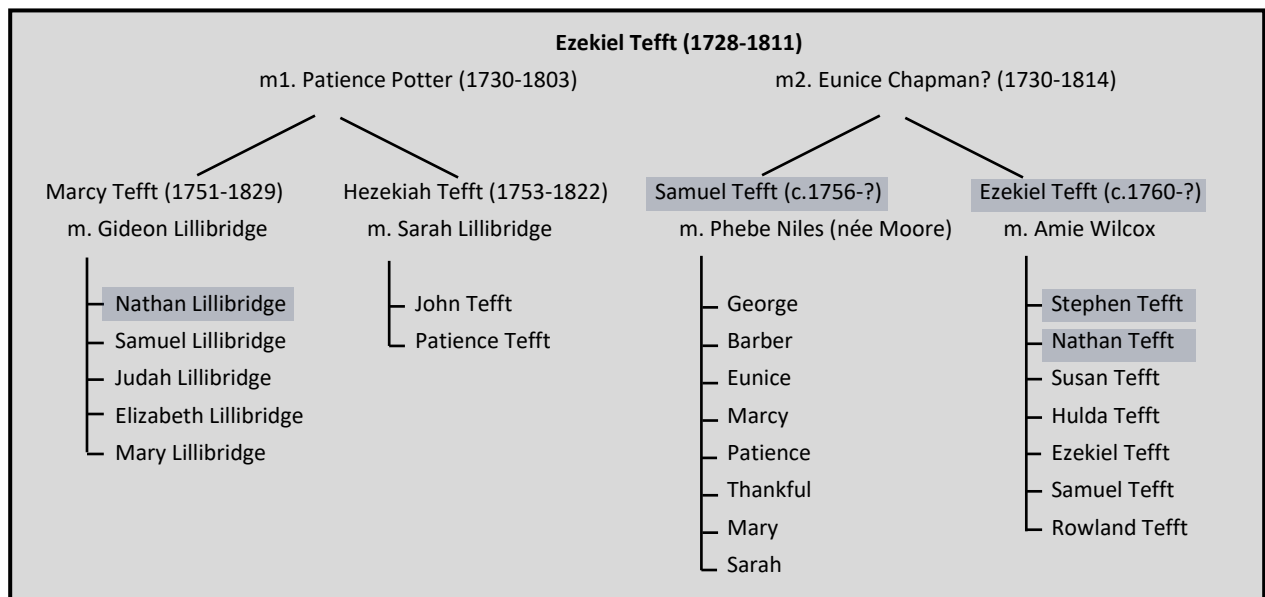
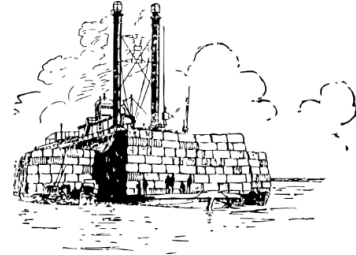


Figure 11. Descendants of Ezekiel Tefft (1728-1811).

It appears, then, that the Brother's Cotton Manufacturing Company was formed in Wyoming, Rhode Island, by Ezekiel and his brother Samuel, Ezekiel's sons Stephen and Nathan, and Samuel and Ezekiel's nephew Nathan Lillibridge (son of Ezekiel's half-sister Marcy), all highlighted in Figure 11.

A different account of the Brother's Cotton Manufacturing Company, cited in an online source that apparently is no longer available,²⁵ indicates that it was formed by three Tefft brothers: Ezekiel, Stephen, and Nathan; a supposed cousin, Samuel; and a supposed brother-in-law, Nathan Lillibridge. Ezekiel, younger brother of Stephen and Nathan, would have been about 14-15 years old in 1814 and unlikely to have been party to the formation of a business at such a young age. Also, of Stephen and Nathan's sisters, Susan apparently died young (per Smyrna), and Hulda did not marry a Nathan Lillibridge, so he could not have been a brother-in-law. We discount this version, as the author apparently was unaware of the relationships among the founders of the Brother's Cotton Manufacturing Company.



Another much more recent source²⁶ provides a somewhat different origin of the Brother's mill.

"In 1809, Ezekiel Tefft built a mill to be called Brothers Cotton Manufacturing Company on the property [i.e., Brand's Iron Works], not far from an already existing carding mill. In 1833 it was leased to John Olney. Two years later, Olney bought the lot of Nathan Lillibridge."

This undoubtedly refers to Stephen and Nathan's father Ezekiel. Unfortunately, the article does not cite a source for the 1809 date, five years before other accounts of the Brother's mill.

²⁵ www.streetplum.com/tefftfamily.html. Although this site provided a highly detailed description of the Tefft family from the immigrant John Tefft to the third Ezekiel Tefft and his relatives, the Tefft information is apparently no longer available on the website and generates an error message. Only fragments of the cached text can still be viewed in a Google search.

²⁶ "Tracing the Origins of the Wyoming Dam," by Kelly Sullivan, article appearing in The Chariho Times, 30 September 2016. Available online at ricentral.com.

Ezekiel Tefft and Family

Ezekiel Tefft, father of Stephen, Nathan, and the other five children, was married in Richmond, Washington County, Rhode Island, as recorded in Arnold's Rhode Island Vital Records:²⁷

Tefft, Ezekiel, of Ezekiel, and Amie Wilcox, of Stephen; married by Thomas Tefft, Justice, Oct. 13, 1785.

We looked for Ezekiel and other related Teffts in U.S. Census records starting in Rhode Island with the 1790 U. S. Federal Census, hoping that the census records will show consistency with the accounts of the family's migration to New York in the Smyrna book and in Charles R. Tefft's biographical sketch.

1790 U.S. Federal Census

An act on 1 March 1790 (1 Stat. 101) provided for the taking of the first census of the United States. The provisions of the act were extended on 5 July 1790 (1 Stat. 129) to include Rhode Island after it ratified the U. S. Constitution on 29 May 1790, the last of the original thirteen colonies to ratify. The census count was taken as of 2 August 1790, so individuals born before that date in 1790 would have been included in the count.



Among the heads of household with surnames Tefft and similar, we find only two Ezekiel Teffts in all of Rhode Island, both in Richmond. There are 14 other Tefft heads of household in Richmond, and, surprisingly, none in Hopkinton.

1. Ezekiel Tift in Richmond, Rhode Island. This is Ezekiel Tefft (1728-1811), father of Ezekiel (c.1760 - ?). His wife Eunice (c.1730-1814) is likely one of the three females. Identification of the second male and the other two females is uncertain. Ezekiel's daughter Marcy and her family are found in South Kingstown in their own census entry. His son Hezekiah was also married with children at the time and are found in Richmond in a separate entry. There are two Samuel Tifts as heads of household in Richmond (Samuel and Samuel Jr.), but neither family seems to match Ezekiel's son Samuel's, which would probably include only himself and his wife (their first child, George, was born in 1790 and might or might not have been recorded in this census). It may be that Samuel and his wife were living with his father Ezekiel at the time, accounting for two of the three unknown individuals. The family is summarized in Table 13.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
2 Males	16 and upward	1874 and earlier	= Ezekiel (b. 1728) = ??
3 Females	(any age)	Any birth year	= Eunice (b.c.1730) = ?? = ??

Table 13. Summary of 1790 U.S. Census showing the family of Ezekiel Tift of Richmond, R.I.

2. Ezekiel Tift Jun. in Richmond, Rhode Island. This is Ezekiel Tefft (b.c.1760 - ?). We infer that this census shows Ezekiel, his wife Amie (Amy), and his eldest two sons, Stephen and Nathan. This suggests that the boys were born either in 1790 (before August 2nd when the census was taken)

²⁷ Arnold's Rhode Island Vital Records through 1850, compiled by James N. Arnold. Volume 5, Part VI, Richmond, Marriages, page 19. The Arnold collection is an index to vital records.

or before 1790. As we previously surmised, we believe Stephen is the eldest son, with Nathan as next-oldest, but we also regard Nathan's birth year as circa 1790, the same as Stephen's. This does not mean we believe they were twins, but that is a possibility. The family is summarized in Table 14. We think that daughter Susan was the eldest child and died before the 1790 census.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
1 Males	16 and upward	1874 and earlier	= Ezekiel (b.c. 1760)
2 Males	Under 16	1874 and later	= Stephen (b.c. 1790) = Nathan (b.c. 1790)
1 Female	(any age)	Any birth year	= Amie (b.c. 1764)

Table 14. Summary of 1790 U.S. Census showing the family of Ezekiel Tift, Jun., of Richmond, R.I.

1800 U.S. Federal Census

Fifteen Tefft heads of household are listed in Richmond, and four are listed in Hopkinton. The two Ezekiel Teffts, the only ones in all of Rhode Island in this census, are shown below.

1. Ezekiel Tefft in Richmond, Rhode Island. This is believed to be the elder Ezekiel with his wife Eunice and an unidentified female, shown in Table 15.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
1 Male	45 and upward	1854 and earlier	= Ezekiel (b. 1728)
1 Female	10 – 25	1875 – 1800	= ??
1 Female	45 and upward	1854 and earlier	= Eunice (b.c. 1730)

Table 15. Summary of 1800 U.S. Census showing the family of Ezekiel Tefft in Richmond, R.I.

2. Ezekiel Tefft Jr. in Richmond, Rhode Island. This is Ezekiel, son of the above Ezekiel, and father of Stephen and his siblings, including the third generation Ezekiel. All of the individuals enumerated in this census are accounted for as members of Ezekiel's family, summarized in Table 16.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
1 Male	Under 10	1790 – 1800	= Ezekiel (b. 1799)
2 Males	10 – 16	1784 – 1790	= Stephen (b.c. 1790) = Nathan (b.c. 1790)
1 Male	26 – 45	1755 – 1784	= Ezekiel (b.c. 1760)
1 Female	Under 10	1790 – 1800	= Hulda (b. 1793)
1 Female	26 – 45	1755 – 1784	= Amie (b.c. 1764)

Table 16. Summary of 1800 U.S. Census showing the family of Ezekiel Tefft Jr. in Richmond, R.I.

1810 U.S. Federal Census

In this census we find eleven Tefft heads of household in Richmond, and two in Hopkinton. Of these, one Ezekiel appears in each of these towns. No other Ezekiel Teffts appear in this census anywhere else in Rhode Island.

1. Ezekiel Tefft in Richmond, Rhode Island. This is the elder Ezekiel (b. 1728), and his second wife Eunice. This would be the last census before Ezekiel's death in 1811. Their census entry is summarized in Table 17.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
1 Male	45 and upward	1765 and earlier	= Ezekiel (b. 1728)
1 Female	45 and upward	1765 and earlier	= Eunice (b.c. 1730)

Table 17. Summary of 1810 U.S. Census showing the family of Ezekiel Tefft in Richmond, R.I.

2. Ezekiel Tefft Jr. in Hopkinton, Rhode Island. This is Ezekiel (b.c. 1760), father of Stephen, et al. His wife Amie is undoubtedly the female age 45 and over. Their five youngest children are inferred as shown in Table 18. This leaves 2 males age 16-26, and one female age 10-16 unidentified. We do not think Stephen is one of the unidentified males, since he is found in a separate entry in the 1810 census as previously discussed. It seems likely that these unidentified children are other relatives and not children of Ezekiel and Amie since they were not enumerated in Ezekiel's 1790 or 1800 census entries.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
3 Males	Under 10	After 1800	= Ezekiel (b. 1799) = Samuel (b. 1804) = Rowland (b. 1807)
3 Males	16 – 26	1784 – 1794	= Nathan (b.c. 1790) = ?? = ??
1 Male	45 and upward	1765 and earlier	= Ezekiel (b.c. 1760)
1 Female	10 – 16	1794 – 1800	= ??
1 Female	16 – 26	1784 - 1794	= Hulda (b. 1793)
1 Female	45 and upward	1765 and earlier	= Amie (b.c. 1764)

Table 18. Summary of 1810 U.S. Census showing the family of Ezekiel Tefft Jr. in Hopkinton, R.I.

1820 U.S. Federal Census

In this census we find 12 heads of household named Tefft in Richmond, and four in Hopkinton. Among these are two Ezekiels. We believe they are Ezekiel (b.c. 1760) and his son (b. 1799). Both of their households include known family members and several unidentified individuals.

1. Ezekiel Tift in Richmond, Rhode Island. This is Stephen and Nathan's father. Table 19 shows the family, which includes Ezekiel's wife Amie and their youngest two sons. The two females under 10 years old are unidentified.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
2 Males	10 – 16	1804 – 1810	= Samuel (b. 1804) = Rowland (b. 1807)
1 Male	45 and upward	1775 and earlier	= Ezekiel (b.c. 1760)
2 Females	10 and under	1810 – 1820	= ? = ?
1 Female	45 and upward	1775 and earlier	= Amie (b.c. 1764)

Table 19. Summary of 1820 U.S. Census showing the family of Ezekiel Tift. in Richmond, R.I.

2. Ezekiel Tift, Jr., in Richmond, Rhode Island. This is Ezekiel and Amie's son and his wife Marcy, shown in Table 20. The three females are unidentified. His youngest known children were Palmer (b.c. 1820), William (b.c. 1821), Hulda (b.c. 1823), and Gardner (b.c. 1824), so only Palmer could have appeared in the 1820 census. If the unidentified females are Ezekiel's children, then they probably died young, and are not reflected in vital or other records.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
1 Male	16 – 26	1794 – 1804	= Ezekiel (b. 1799)
2 Females	10 and under	1810 – 1820	= ? = ?
1 Female	10 – 16	1804 – 1810	= ?
1 Female	16 – 26	1794 – 1804	= Marcy (b. 1802)

Table 20. Summary of 1820 U.S. Census showing the family of Ezekiel Tift Jr. in Richmond, R.I.

1830 U. S. Census

There are no heads of household named Ezekiel Tefft in Rhode Island in the 1830 census. This agrees with the Smyrna book that describes Ezekiel and his family moving to New York in 1822. In that state, we find only two Ezekiel Teffts.

1. Ezekiel Tefft in Smyrna, Chenango County, New York. This is the father of Stephen, Nathan, and the others. His family, shown in Table 21, consists of Ezekiel, his wife Amie, and their youngest child Rowland. It appears that Amie was tabulated in the wrong age group, or her age was mis-reported to the census taker.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
1 Male	20 – 30	1800 – 1810	= Rowland (b. 1807)
1 Male	60 – 70	1760 – 1770	= Ezekiel (b.c. 1760)
1 Female	70 – 80	1750 – 1760	= Amie (?) (b.c. 1764)

Table 21. Summary of 1830 U.S. Census showing the family of Ezekiel Tefft. in Smyrna, N.Y.

2. Ezekiel Tift Jur. in Smyrna, New York. This is the son of Ezekiel and Amie. His family is summarized in Table 22. One young male and one elder female are unidentified. Their first son Palmer may have been living on his own at the time.

Number and Sex	Age Group	Birth Years	Individual Inferred
2 Males	Under 5	1825 – 1830	= Loren (b. 1829) = ?
2 Males	5 – 10	1820 – 1825	= William (b. 1821) = Gardner (b. 1824)
1 Male	30 – 40	1790 – 1800	= Ezekiel (b. 1799)
1 Female	10 – 15	1815 – 1820	= Hulda (b. 1823)
1 Female	20 – 30	1800 – 1810	= Marcy (b. 1802)
1 Female	30 – 40	1790 – 1800	= ?

Table 22. Summary of 1830 U.S. Census showing the family of Ezekiel Tift Jur. in Smyrna, N.Y.

Summary of U.S. Federal Census Records for Ezekiel Tefft

U.S. Federal Census records support the account in Smyrna regarding Ezekiel Tefft (b.c. 1760-?) and his family. He married Amie Wilcox and together they raised at least seven children in Rhode Island, and moved with their four youngest children to Smyrna, Chenango County, New York, in the 1820s.

Further research into census records for New York, Ohio, and Michigan, along with other online records, confirm the accounts of Ezekiel Tefft's four youngest children:

1. Hulda married Gardner James and settled in Smyrna. They had one child, Hannah.
2. Ezekiel, Jr., married Mercy Wilber and moved to Ohio. They had six children: Palmer, William, Hulda, Gardner, Loren Palmer, and Nathan.
3. Samuel married Julia Ann Brown and settled in Smyrna, raising five children: Valentine, Flora, Cornelia, Lorenzo, and Nathan.
4. Rowland married Lucy Bills, with whom he had six children: Arethusa, Emily, her twin Henry, Charles B., R. Dexter, and John G. They remained in Smyrna for several decades before moving to Michigan.

Ezekiel and Amie's son Stephen appears to be accounted for as a member of Ezekiel's family in the 1790 and 1800 census records. However, Stephen is not found in any New York records. This supports our belief that our Stephen is Ezekiel and Amie's son, and that he stayed behind in Rhode Island and later Connecticut when Ezekiel's family moved to New York. It is possible, although we think less likely, that some other fate befell their son Stephen, and that our Stephen and his family have yet to be identified.

Known and Possible Children of Stephen Tefft

Both John H. Tefft's and Francis Dayton Tefft's obituaries, and the 20 July 1909 article in the Norwich Bulletin (previously cited), all attest to Stephen having had a large family, apparently from twelve to as many as seventeen children. We have firmly identified the following as Stephen Tefft's children:

1. Francis Dayton Tift (1838 – 1915).
2. John H. Tefft (1844 – 1916).
3. George C. Tefft (c.1845 – before 1850).
4. Neelan Tefft (1849 – 1873).

Several individuals with surname Tefft have been found in various records who may possibly be children of Stephen Tefft. These are people whose birth dates range from 1805 (when Stephen would have been at least 15 years old) to 1838 (when Francis was born), with birth places in southeast Connecticut or southwest Rhode Island, and either of the following:

1. Individuals whose parents have not been identified, and other Teffts have been ruled out as parents; or
2. Individuals whose father is listed as Stephen Tefft.

Stephen R. Tift

A Stephen R. Tift is found in Norwich in the U.S. Census records for 1840 (as previously discussed), 1850 and 1860. His wife's name is Mary (b.c. 1813) and their children are Edward (b.c. 1837) and Isabella (b.c. 1842) (later married to Walter S. Smith). Stephen's age in the census records correlates with his birth circa 1810 to 1814. His birthplace is shown as Rhode Island in the 1850 census, and Connecticut in the 1860 census. The Registration of Deaths in the Town of Norwich from 1 January 1865 lists his death date as 26 November 1865, age 52, and shows his birthplace as Norwich. He is listed in Findagrave.com as buried in Norwich City Cemetery. His age at death in the Register correlates to a birth date of about 1813. This would place him as child #4, in the 1810 – 1815 range of births in the 1820 and 1830 census records. We think he is a possible child of our Stephen Tefft, although his birthplace of Norwich wouldn't match with where our Stephen was living, as indicated in census records.

Matilda Tift

Matilda Tift was married at least three times. In the records for her second and third marriages, Matilda's parents are listed as Stephen Tift and Susan (no last name given), her birthplace is listed as Voluntown, Connecticut, and her age correlates to a birth year of 1819. Census records show her age such that her birth year could be in the range of 1815-1820. Her spouses were:

1. Nelson Rouse, born c.1808-10, married on 24 September 1837 in Griswold, Connecticut. They had at least seven children as shown in the U.S. Federal Census for the years 1850 and 1860.
2. Simmons Cole, born c.1822, married on 13 February 1869 in Glocester, Providence, Rhode Island. Matilda is listed as a widow in this marriage record.
3. Henry D. Williams, born c.1813, married on 11 April 1872 in Glocester, Providence, Rhode Island. Matilda is again listed as a widow in this marriage record. They divorced before 1880, as the 1880 U.S. Federal Census shows Henry living alone in Foster, Providence, Rhode Island, and divorced.

Matilda's fate has not been determined. She has not been found in census records after 1860, nor in marriage records after 1872, nor in any death or other records.

The first three daughters of Stephen Tefft as shown earlier in the 1830 census record would have been born between 1820 and 1825 (shown in the category of age 5 – 10 years). None of the three are shown in the expected age group in the 1840 census (i.e., age 15 – 20). The likely disposition of these

daughters is that each either married, or died, before 1840. Assuming Matilda's birth year of 1819 is correct as listed derived from marriage records, then she does not fit in the age group for the daughters in 1830. However, recognizing that all of these records may be imprecise regarding people's age, coupled with Matilda's parents being shown as Stephen and Susan Tift in two marriage records, and her birth in both of those records as Voluntown, we think it's likely that Matilda was a child of our Stephen Tefft.

Sarah A. Tift

A Sarah A. Tift is listed in the Charles R. Hale Collection²⁸ as:

Chapman, Sarah A. Tift, wife of Nathan L., died Aug. 4, 1870, age 45 yrs.

This would make her birth c.1825. The 1860 and 1870 U.S. Federal Census records for Voluntown and Preston, Connecticut, respectively, show the Chapman family: Nathan, Sarah, and son Norman J., all born in Connecticut. Sarah's age in those census records correlates to a birth year of about 1825. Both Nathan and Sarah are buried in Preston Cemetery. Sarah apparently has two gravestones. The older marker indicates she was the wife of Nathan L. Chapman and that she died on 4 August 1870, age 45 years. The newer marker indicates "wife of N. L. Chapman, 1835 – 1870;" the birth date is believed to be incorrect. Her parents have not been determined. She could be one of Stephen Tefft's daughters, born in either 1820 – 1825, or 1825 – 1830.

Betsey Tift

A Betsey Tift is listed in Connecticut Vital Records Prior to 1850 as marrying James N. Eccleston 4 July 1844 in Griswold, New London County, Connecticut. James' surname is spelled Eccleston, Eggleston, and Ecclestone in various records. James and Betsey are found in the 1850 and 1860 census records living in North Stonington, Connecticut. They apparently had at least seven children. James is found in the 1870 census in North Stonington with his youngest four children and possibly his father, but Betsey is not in that census. Betsey's age in the 1850 and 1860 census correlates to a birth year of c. 1827-28. She could be one of Stephen Tefft's daughters, born in the age groups in the 1830 and 1840 censuses that correspond to birth years between 1825 and 1830.

Joseph A. Tift

A Joseph A. Tefft is listed in the Death Register for the Town of Westerly, Rhode Island for the Year Ending 31 December 1903. The Register indicates he died on 16 January 1903, age 70 years, 8 months, 10 days. His birthplace is listed as Griswold, Connecticut, and that his parents are Stephen and Mary W. Tift. Findagrave.com lists his burial in Oak Grove Cemetery, Hopkinton, Rhode Island, and his wife as Martha (née Briggs), buried in the same cemetery. U.S. Federal Census records show the couple in 1860 (with six-year-old daughter Adonirdia, who is not shown in subsequent records), 1880, and 1900 (which shows that they were married for 48 years, and had one child, no longer living). The 1870 census lists Joseph by himself. We have not found Joseph in the 1850 census, nor have we found a marriage record for Joseph Tift and Martha Briggs around 1851-52. If Joseph is a son of our Stephen Tefft, then the mother named for Joseph, Mary W. Tift, is either another wife (previous to Susan who was named as Francis' mother in 1838), or Mary is another name for Susan. If Matilda Tift is a daughter of Stephen Tefft, as discussed above, and her mother Susan is the same mother as Francis', then this would suggest that Mary W. is also known as Susan. Even with the complication of Joseph's mother's name, we think

²⁸ The Charles R. Hale Collection of Connecticut Cemetery Inscriptions, Newspaper Marriage and Death Notices, ca. 1750-1865, and the Veterans' Death Index.

this Joseph A. Tift is possibly a son of Stephen. He would fit in as child #11, in the 1830 – 1835 range of births as indicated in the 1840 census.

Table 23 shows Stephen's known and possible children, based our research and analysis of U. S. Federal census and other records.

Child # and Sex	Birth Date Range	Census Records	Name and Birth/Death Dates
Wife (presumed): Susan Wilcox			
#1 Male	1804 – 1810	1810, 1820	= ?
#2 Male	1804 – 1810	1810, 1820	= ?
#3 Male	1804 – 1810	1810, 1820	= ?
#4 Male	1810 – 1815	1820, 1830	= Possible: Stephen R. Tift (?1813 – 1865)
#5 Male	1815 – 1820	1820, 1830	= ?
#6 Female	1820 – 1825	1830	= Possible: Matilda (Tift) Rouse/Cole/Williams (c.1819–?)
#7 Female	1820 – 1825	1830	= Possible: Sarah A. (Tift) Chapman (c.1825 – ?)
#8 Female	1820 – 1825	1830	= ?
#9 Female	1825 – 1830	1830, 1840	= Possible: Betsey (Tift) Eccleston (1828 – ?)
#10 Female	1825 – 1830	1830, 1840	= ?
#11 Male	1830 – 1835	1840	= Possible: Joseph A. Tift (1832 – 1903)
#12 Male	1835 – 1840	1840...1910	= Francis Dayton Tift (1838 – 1915)
Wife: Rebecca _____			
#13 Male	1843 – 1844	1850...1910	= John H. Tefft (1844 – 1916)
#14 Male	1844 – 1845	1850	= George C. Tefft (c.1845 – before 1850)
#15 Male	1849 – 1850	1850, 1860	= Neelan Tefft (1849 – 1873)

Table 23. Stephen Tefft's Known and Possible Children.

Further research is needed to confirm or refute the association of the above individuals as Stephen Tefft's possible children, and to identify his other children.

Issues

Despite the care and diligence in researching and analyzing the records as outlined above, there are several issues that may cast doubt as to the identification of our Stephen Tefft as the son of Ezekiel and Amie (Wilcox) Tefft. The same is true regarding our identification of several of Stephen's children.

1. Associating our Stephen Tefft with Ezekiel Tefft and his family is not directly supported by evidence. It is based on the following:
 - a. The Smyrna book account names a Stephen as a son of Ezekiel and the book provides no other account of that Stephen.
 - b. Our Stephen Tefft is not found in New York records.
 - c. Census records in Rhode Island for Ezekiel provide a male child in the right age group.
2. The Ezekiel Tefft that we have identified probably as Stephen's father may have had more than the seven children indicated in Smyrna and in Charles Tefft's biographical sketch. This is based on the 1810 and 1820 census records that show several unidentified young individuals (not necessarily children or other relatives). If those were Ezekiel and Amie's children, and they died young (as did Ezekiel's daughter Susan as stated in Smyrna), it's possible that their son Stephen also died young, and that Ezekiel's surviving children didn't know Stephen's fate.
3. The assertion in Francis' obituary that Stephen was born in North Stonington is not verified in any records. North Stonington was a part of Stonington until 1807 when the State Assembly made it a separate town. Before then, town clerks made no distinction between the two locales with regard to record keeping (although inhabitants called it North Stonington long before 1807).²⁹ A few Tefft families are found in the Stonington area in the late 1700s and early 1800s, but none are known to have had a child named Stephen. If Stephen is indeed the son of Ezekiel, then it's more likely Stephen was born in either Richmond or Hopkinton, Rhode Island. The census records for Stephen's son John show that his father was born in either Connecticut or Rhode Island.
4. Stephen had at least two wives. Certain is that his last wife was Rebecca. His apparent wife Susan, identified in the records for his son Francis, is fairly certain, and seems to be supported by finding the names Stephen and Susan Tift as founding members of the Jewett City Baptist Church. Also, Matilda's parents are specifically named as Stephen and Susan Tefft. However, the records for Joseph A. Tift indicate his mother as Mary W., casting doubt as to his relationship.
5. Stephen joined Lieutenant Colonel William Randall's Connecticut regiment in the War of 1812 which would be consistent with Stephen's supposed birth in North Stonington, but he was apparently living in Rhode Island at the time of the war, as indicated by the 1810 and 1820 U.S. Census records, so why wouldn't he join a Rhode Island regiment? Lt.Col. Randall formed his regiment from his home, built by his great-grandfather, John Randall II, located in North Stonington on the Norwich-Westerly Road, now known as Route 2 (the historic John Randall House still stands). It could be that Stephen or his family were acquainted with William Randall. The John Randall House, shown in Figure 12,³⁰ is only about 12 miles from Richmond, and closer than that to Hopkinton.



Figure 12. The John Randall House.
U.S. National Register of Historic Places

²⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Stonington,_Connecticut.

³⁰ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Randall_House.

6. The individuals we found as Stephen's possible children were born in places that may or may not correlate with where Stephen was thought to be living at the time.
 - a. Stephen R. Tift was born c.1813 in Norwich whereas Stephen was apparently living in Rhode Island at the time.
 - b. Matilda Tift was born c.1819 in Voluntown, whereas our Stephen was apparently living in Hopkinton, Rhode Island at the time, although Voluntown is across the border from Hopkinton. Also, Matilda's estimated birth date doesn't strictly fit with the age groups in the census records.
 - c. Sarah A. Tift was born c.1825, born in Connecticut. Stephen apparently moved to Connecticut sometime between 1820 and 1830 as indicated by those census records, so this doesn't rule out Sarah as Stephen's daughter.
 - d. Betsey Tift was born c.1827-18, born in Connecticut and married in Griswold in 1844. This correlates with where Stephen was living at the time.
 - e. Joseph A. Tift was born 1832 in Griswold. This correlates with where Stephen was living at the time.

Conclusion

Despite the issues outlined above, we believe our research supports the conclusion that Stephen Tefft, father of our ancestor John H. Tefft, is most likely the son of Ezekiel Tefft and his wife Amie Wilcox of Richmond, Washington County, Rhode Island.



Based on this conclusion, John H. Tefft's ancestry can be traced to his immigrant ancestor, John Teffe or Tefft, as shown in Figure 13, based on the findings in numerous documents, not cited in this paper.

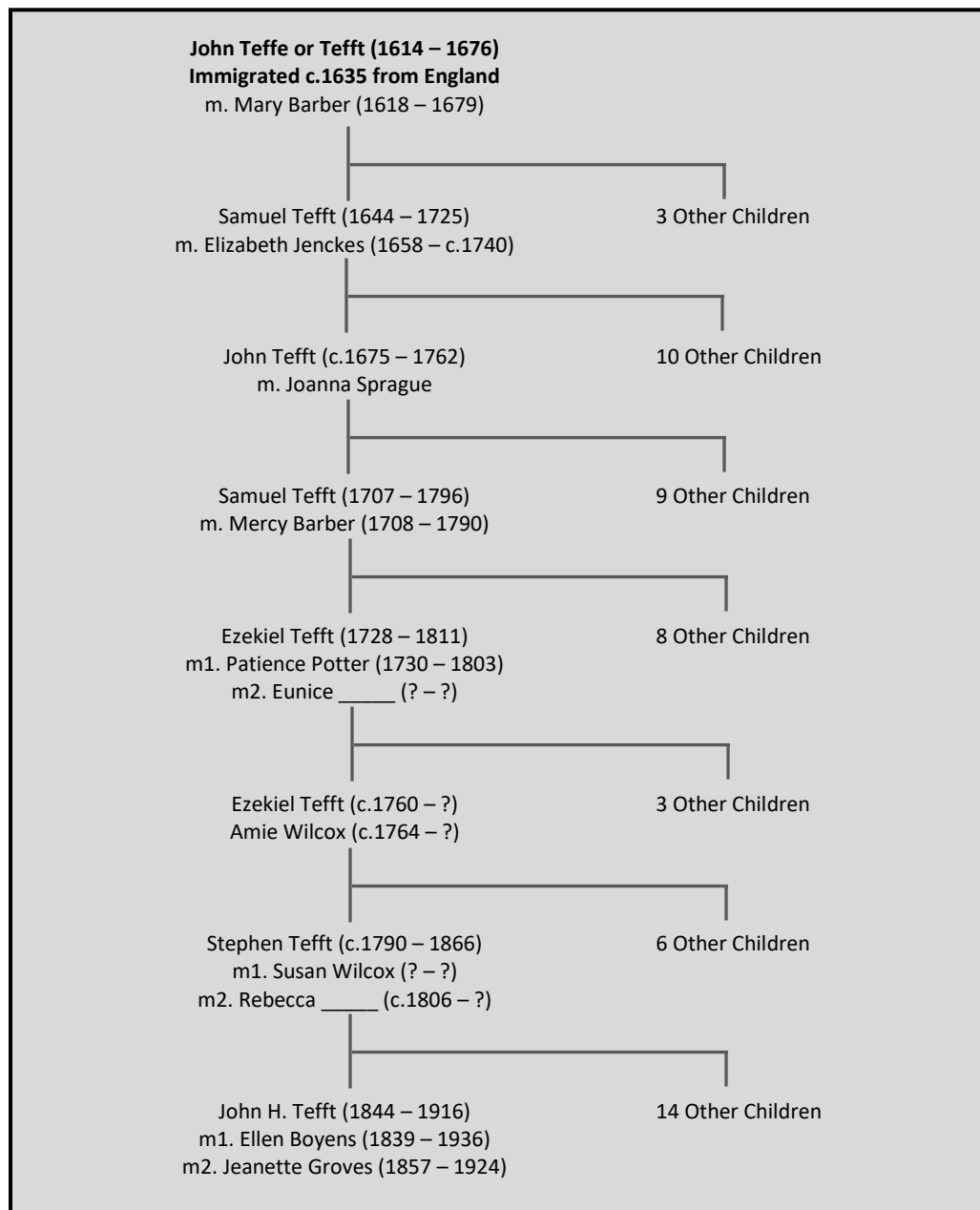


Figure 13. Ancestors of John H. Tefft (1844 - 1916)

Areas for Future Research

In our endeavor to identify the ancestors of John H. Tefft and his father Stephen Tefft, we focused on records related to Connecticut (New London County, Connecticut, and to a lesser extent, Windham County), Rhode Island (primarily parts of Washington County), and New York (mainly Chenango County). In the course of our research, we found an absence of evidence in other parts of those states about the Tefft individuals we sought. However, we are keenly aware that the absence of records is not proof that an individual did not live in other regions. We will be looking beyond the counties and states we already researched for any data that either supports or contradicts our present findings.

Our focus in the research documented in this paper was on John H. Tefft and his father's paternal ancestors. We think there is more to be learned by researching John's mother's ancestors, and Francis' mother's ancestors. Stephen Tefft's earlier (probably first) wife, Susan Wilcox, apparently came from Rhode Island, and certainly there are numerous Wilcox families there, so this is a topic of future work. We have found little about Stephen's last wife, Rebecca (whose last name is not known), although her last will and testament provides further avenues to explore.

Most of our recent research has been using available on-line resources. Undoubtedly, there is more to be discovered by visiting local repositories, such as town clerks, historical societies, and libraries.

Finally, other researchers may have uncovered information that augments our research, and we are hoping that they will share their findings on our Tefft and related families.

We invite comments, corrections, and additions to our research to confirm, enhance, or disprove our discoveries and conclusions. Go to our website at www.gazlayfamilyhistory.org/contact.php to leave comments.