

Snedens Landing, the section of Palisades, New York that is closest to the Hudson River, is named after the family that ran the ferry across the river from the 1740s to the early 1900s. By 1745 Robert Sneden, his wife Mary (or Molly) and several children were living in a house by the river.

However, when my mother Alice Haagensen published her book *Palisades and Snedens Landing* in 1986 she included genealogies for two Sneden families, the Snedens of the Landing and the Snedens of the Field. The possibility that the Snedens might actually be one family occurred to her, as it has to many people. However three of her informants, Elizabeth Fox Finck, Mildred Rippey and Mrs. Van Blarcom, all told her that "there was no connection between the two branches." These were influential women in the community, two of them with roots in Palisades going back to the 18th century, and perhaps she gave undue weight to their statements.

Howard Durie, whose research Alice Haagensen respected, already thought that there was enough evidence to conclude that the two branches were related through Samuel Sneden, Robert and Molly's youngest son. Howard Durie commented in a letter to Margaret Lane, which Margaret sent to Alice: "I do believe that she [Alice Haagensen] put too much stock in ...what was reported by local residents to the effect that it was common local knowledge that this branch of the family had no connection with the others. Now really, she should have been smarter than to fall for that! [Next to this statement in the letter Alice Haagensen wrote "YES."]

Since that time more research has been done, especially by Pat Wardell, a Sneden descendant. Like all the other Sneden boys except John, Samuel was a Tory who left Palisades at the beginning of the Revolutionary War. A document dated October 13, 1773 (Coates manuscripts) records the fact that a Flora McDonald was apprenticed to Samuel, suggesting that he was already married and had his own household by that date. At some point early in the war Samuel left Palisades for New York with his family. When the British left New York in 1783 Samuel and his family sailed for Nova Scotia. According to Sabine's "Loyalists of the American Revolution," Samuel was accompanied by his family of four persons, (one of whom was probably his brother William), and was granted a town lot. The family settled in Shelburne, Nova Scotia, with many other Tory refugees. Samuel Sneden, ship carpenter, is listed on the Town Assessment Lists for Shelburne, Nova Scotia for 1786, 1787 (in 1787 as "Sniden, Samuel," Hammond Street #534) and 1790 (in 1790 as Saml Snedding). According to records of the Shelburne Historical Society, Samuel Sneden, ship carpenter, was taxed in 1788 and 1789 at the rate of 7 shillings six pence each year.

Samuel Sneden remained in touch with his family in Palisades. In a letter dated May 23, 1784, Samuel wrote to his mother "Mary Sneden living at the Upper Shipyard in New York," announcing the birth of a daughter to be called Mary after his mother and wife, and mentioning brother Dennis and "little Sam Sneden, shoemaker." (Coates manuscripts). On July 14, 1788, he executed a power of attorney to Dennis and to Mary Sneden, his mother, of New York City. His brother William gave a similar power of attorney on September 10, 1787, both of which were made for the purpose of giving Mary and Dennis the authority to execute a deed to brother John, dated December 20 1788. This deed conveyed to John the two-tenths shares of Samuel and William in the land formerly owned by their father along the Hudson River at the Landing, containing 120 acres, for the sum of 120 pounds. (Budke Manuscript Collection, New York Public Library).

The Sneden family was lucky. The property of many Tories was confiscated by the patriots. It's possible that John Sneden, who was married to Ellison Lawrence, a member of the patriot Lawrence family, was able to protect the Sneden property from confiscation.

In 1795 or a little earlier a young man named Samuel Sneden arrived in Palisades from Nova Scotia. He soon married Elisabeth Concklin of Rockleigh, probably early in 1796, since their first child was born in November of that year. With him came a brother named Benjamin, born 1773, and a sister named Mary, born 1784. The Federal census of 1800 shows a Mary Sneden, aged over 45 years old, living in a house next to Dennis Sneden at the Landing with two young men and one young woman aged 16 to 26. Pat Wardell has theories about who these young men might be. Benjamin was too old (27), and Samuel Jr. was already married by then, but there could have been another son in the family. It is unlikely that there were two unknown sons because Samuel Sneden arrived in Nova Scotia with only four other people (his wife Mary, Benjamin, Samuel Jr. and either his brother William or another child). A son born after 1784 (Mary's birthdate) would have been younger than 16 when the census was taken in 1800.

Common sense suggests that young Samuel Sneden was the son of the Samuel Sneden who had left New York after the Revolutionary War and gone to Nova Scotia. Samuel Sneden Sr.'s wife was named Mary, as well as his daughter, born in 1784, and one son was named Samuel, according to the letter of 1784. In 1800 Samuel's wife Mary Sneden was living at the landing next to Dennis Sneden and John Sneden, probably her brothers-in-law. Her mother-in-law Molly Sneden was living with Dennis. However Alice Haagensen listened to the village elders mentioned earlier and ignored these facts.

More recently Pat Wardell discovered proof that Samuel himself also returned to the United States and died here in 1795. The proof is in a receipt signed by his

son, Benjamin Sneden, and is printed in Judd, Jacob, editor, *Correspondence of the Van Cortlandt Family of Cortlandt Manor 1815-1848*, Tarrytown, NY, Sleepy Hollow Press, (Van Cortlandt Family Papers, Vol. IV), 1981, p. 408-410

John Sneden [of modern times] summarizes Pat Wardell's discoveries. "By 1795 Samuel and his two eldest sons, Benjamin and Samuel, had returned to New York. In that year, Samuel and his sons Benjamin and Samuel were engaged for about 6 months in building a sloop, the *Success*, in Westchester Co., NY at the mouth of the Croton River, for Philip Van Cortlandt and Jacob Acker. Also engaged in this work were Lawrence Sneden and John Sneden, Jr., probably the sons of John Sneden. On 14 Nov 1795 Benjamin Sneden signed a receipt: 'Received Novr. 14th. 1795. of Philip Van Cortlandt Twenty Five Pounds Inful for 21-1/2 Days work of my Father and 26 Days of my Brother and my Self before the Decease of my Father.'"

The entries are below:

[June 22, 1795]

Received at Croton June 22^d, 1795 of Philip Van Cortlandt Seventy Dollars on Account of Self and printices work on the Vessle at Acker -

Samuel Sneden

Received at Croton June 22^d, 1795 of Philip Van Cortlandt Nine Pounds. 12/6 Infull. Of 19½ Days work at 10/ per day -

Lawrence Sneden

[November 8, 1795]

Received November 8th, 1795 of Philip Van Cortlandt Five Pounds Two Shillings and Six pence Infull. for my Work on the Sloop Success -

Lawrence Sneden

Received November 8th, 1795 of Philip Van Cortlandt Fourteen Pounds five Shillings Infull. for 28½ Days Work on the Sloop Success -

Samuel Sneden, Jun'r

Received November 8th, 1795 of Philip Van Cortlandt Thirty Two Pounds Infull. for 64 Days Work at the Sloop Success -

John Sneden, Jun'r

Received November 8th, 1795 of Philip Van Cortlandt Twelve Pounds Seven Shillings and six pence Infull. for 24¾ Days Work on the Sloop Success -

Benjamin Sneden

[November 14, 1795]

Received November 14th, 1795 of Philip Van Cortlandt Twenty Five Pounds Infull. for 21½ Days Work of my Father and 26 Days of my Brother and my Self before the Decease of my Father -

Benjamin Sneden

also, Received 20 Shillings being a Ballance due on getting the Timber -

Benjamin Sneden

[November 21, 1795]

DISTRICT OF New York the twenty-first day of November 1795 I, Benjamin Sneden Master Carpenter of Orange County in the State of New York do certify, That the Sloop named the *Success* was built under my Direction, at the mouth of Croton River during the year seventeen hundred and ninety-Five for Philip Van Cortlandt and Jacob Acker.

That the said Sloop is flat built, has one deck one mast is Forty two feet Keel in length, Sixteen feet Beam in breadth, and four feet, Three In= in depth, and of Twenty Nine Tons.

As Witness my Hand, the Day and Year aforesaid -

Benjamin Sneden

[Endorsed]

*Benjⁿ Snedens, Certificate
as Master Carpenter
of Sloop Success. 1795"*

John Sneden continues: "What we have here is Benjamin Sneden, who avers that he's living in Orange County (the Landing?) as a Master Carpenter, building a ship across the Hudson with his father Samuel and brother Samuel Jr. AND, part of his team are John Sneden Jr. and Lawrence Sneden, who surely are his cousins, the sons of his Uncle John 'the Patriot.' [NOTE: Doesn't look like there's any animosity between the 'Landing' and the 'Field' Snedens here.] And that Samuel Sneden Sr. died between June 22 and November 14, 1795.

"With his father's death, Benjamin would go on to establish his own shipbuilding business in Brooklyn - a few years later, I guess; I'm not sure when he moved there and started his own family. We know that his brother Samuel Jr. stayed in the Landing area and married Elizabeth Conklin the following year (1796), becoming the progenitor of the so-called 'Field' Snedens.

"We know that John 'Boss' Sneden, Jr. would have been age 25 in 1795 and not yet married. If he was working for his cousin Benjamin on this project, would

that mean he had not yet started his own shipyard in Piermont? ... It suddenly dawns on me that Samuel Sneden Sr. was a shipbuilder and it would be logical for him to pass on skills to his sons, and son Benjamin seems to have really excelled! John Sneden Sr. (the patriot) ran the ferry, but I don't think he was a shipbuilder ... Just maybe John Jr. was learning his shipbuilding skills from his Uncle Samuel Sr. and cousin Benjamin.

"In any event, I don't think there can be any doubt about the relationship between the Snedens of the Landing and the Snedens of the Field. And, back then, I can't see any sense of animosity - what with them all marrying into each other's families - Sneden/Lawrence/Conklin/Brouwer/Gesner etc., etc., etc., and so many of them all being buried in the same Palisades Cemetery.

"As far as the older, long-time residents of Palisades 'knowing' (that's Alice Haagensen's use of the quotation marks) that there was no relationship, I tend to believe that there was perhaps another reason some had some hard feelings (for whatever reason) for some of the Field Snedens and didn't want to acknowledge that there could be any sort of connection to those of the Landing. And I think we've seen that it appears to have had little to do with 'patriotism.' Well, that's all water under the bridge now (or should it be - 'water out of the slot?")

It now seems inescapable, as a result of the excellent research done by Pat Wardell, that the two Sneden families were really one. Pat has worked for more than 30 years on a Sneden genealogy which can be seen at the Palisades Free Library. It is a fascinating document that includes many details about the lives of the early Snedens.