

# TURNPIKE TALES

by Jim Ford

## **"TURNPIKE TALES" #13**

*(Historical items from the "Madison Bouckville Antique Week" region)*

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The Madison-Bouckville area has been rich in history from the arrival of the first settlers to the present day. As an addition to the website, we have decided to share some of that history in order that the patrons who travel to the Madison-Bouckville Show will have a better understanding of our truly unique region.

### **GEN. ERASTUS CLEVELAND – PIONEER AND PATRIOT – PART 2**

Erastus Cleaveland married Rebecca Berry, of Southwick, Massachusetts, in January of 1795. When the couple first met in 1792, he must have made a favorable impression on Rebecca's parents as well. In 1796, on the suggestion of Mr. Cleaveland, the Berry's and their son headed west to the area of Madison and bought Lot #36 for what has been recorded as the sum of \$25.00. This purchase became the area which grew into the Village of Madison. In fact, John Berry has been credited over the years as being the "Father of Madison."

As the Cleaveland business pursuits grew, so did his family. Over a span of years from 1795-1821, Erastus and Rebecca Cleaveland would have 12 children. As with many families of that time period, not all of the children reached adulthood. Their first child, Daniel, was born in October of 1795 and died 19 days later. Two other children, Henry and Harriet, died at 50 days and 4 days respectively.

If our information concerning the approximate date for the building of Mr. Cleaveland's brick home on South St. in Madison is correct, five of his children would have been born in the original log home near the Oriskany Creek and the remaining seven in the brick home.

Here is a listing of the Cleaveland children with birth and death dates –

Daniel Cleaveland	10-17-1795	11-15-1795
Phoebe Cleaveland	2-13-1797	11-29-1869
Daniel Cleaveland	10-22-1799	5-20-1867 (It was not considered unusual at this time to use the name that had been given to a previously deceased child.)
Lucetta Cleaveland	11-21-1801	9-16-1888
Benjamin Franklin Cleaveland	3-1-1804	1-25-1852
Mary Ann Cleaveland	4-19-1806	9-20-1851
Eliza Cleaveland	7-14-1809	2-7-1883
Henry Cleaveland	5-15-1810	8-3-1810
Jeanette Cleaveland	1-11-1812	7-31-1884
Harriet Newell Cleaveland	7-20-1814	7-24-1814
Julie Ann Maria Cleaveland	1-26-1817	6-8-1906
Samuel Gold Cleaveland	6-20-1821	2-22-1889

The surviving children all seemed to do quite well in later life. Benjamin became a doctor, Jeanette married a merchant from New York City and Phoebe married Dr. Samuel W. Gold of New York City.

Erastus Cleaveland was not only involved with his business pursuits but entered other fields of endeavor as well. In 1806, when the Town of Madison was still a portion of the Town of Hamilton, Cleaveland was the Justice of the Peace. He was also a shareholder and Director of the Third Great Western Turnpike (later named the Cherry Valley Turnpike and ultimately U.S. Rt. 20) and held the post for 41 years.

Following the formation of the Town of Madison as a separate entity, Cleaveland was elected as the first Supervisor of the Township. Seven months later he was elected President of the Board of Supervisors of Madison County. At this time, in 1807, he also represented Madison County in the New York State Assembly.

In 1807 Erastus Cleaveland became the co-founder of the Madison County detachment of the New York State Militia. He held the rank of 2nd Major when the War of 1812 broke out. In 1808 he was again appointed Justice of the Peace for the township, as well as receiving a promotion to the rank of Lt. Colonel of Militia and an appointment as a Judge for the Court of Common Pleas.

The year 1812 saw Cleaveland as Commander of the 65th Regiment, New York State Militia at Oswego. Later in the war, he again led his troops north. This time they were stationed at Sackett's Harbor. He had by then received the rank of Colonel. He had thus served in two campaigns during the war. On April 20, 1820 Cleaveland received a promotion to Brigadier General of Militia, in command of the 35th Regiment of Infantry.

Cleaveland led the movement to establish a County Poor House, was appointed Commissioner of Loans and in 1833 was once more elected to the New York State Assembly. In this capacity he led the fight for funding the proposed Chenango Canal. In addition to all of these accomplishments, he was one of the organizers of the Madison County Agricultural Society and a member of the Hamilton Masonic Lodge.

This is certainly an enviable record and proof of a life of service to his community. Erastus Cleaveland died on January 23, 1858 at the home of his son, Samuel. He was 87 years old. His wife, Rebecca, died on April 5, 1862 at 88 years old. Both are buried in the Madison Village Cemetery. Although we rarely hear the family name in our area anymore, the legacy of an early settler and businessman certainly lives on.