
Merging Identities Properly: Jonathan Tucker Demonstrates the Technique

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Merging identities from different sources can provide the key to solving complex genealogical problems—when done properly—and it may be the single most useful technique for extending lineages accurately. The challenge lies in learning the guidelines that ensure accuracy and the standards that justify acceptance of an identity merger.

Errors in genealogical compilations often have a common root: an assumption that records containing the same name designate the same person. The erroneously fused identities then lead to a false lineage. Examples of this mistake appear not only in the work of neophytes, but also in scholarly genealogical literature.¹ Because the problem is so common, genealogical educators continually warn novices to avoid the error of assuming that any name refers to one person only.²

The same-name—same-person blunder commonly occurs when researchers use names alone as the basis for identifying ancestors and extending lineages. That mistake is easy to understand because *name* is an integral part of anyone's identity. Names also provide valuable clues for locating ancestral records. Moreover, experienced researchers seem to use successfully the very technique novices are warned to avoid: consolidating different records of individuals with the same name to establish identity and extend lineages. In fact, merging identities from different sources can provide the key to solving complex genealogical problems —

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1. In scholarly genealogical literature, authors regularly correct same-name—same-person errors made elsewhere by other authors. See, for example, Margaret R. Amundson, "Rebutting Direct Evidence with Indirect Evidence: The Identity of Sarah (Taliaferro) Lewis of Virginia," *NGS Quarterly* 87 (September 1999): 217–40; and David Kendall Martin, "Two Samuel and Hannah Hutchinses of Massachusetts and Maine," *The American Genealogist [TAG]* 73 (July 1998): 172–75.

2. Helen F. M. Leary, "Is This the Same Man or Another One with the Same Name?" (lecture, NGS annual conference, Denver, May 1998), audiocassette recording available as DEN98-F144 (Hobart, Indiana: Repeat Performance, 1998), with printed matter of the same title published in *Rocky Mountain Rendezvous: National Genealogical Society, 1998 Conference in the States, Program Syllabus* (Arlington Virginia: NGS, 1998): 354–57; and Elizabeth Shown Mills, "The Identity Crisis: Right Name, Wrong Man? Wrong Name, Right Man?" (lecture, NGS annual conference, Valley Forge, audiocassette recording available as VFP-F135 (Hobart, Indiana: Repeat Performance, 1997), with printed matter of the same title published in *Pennsylvania, Cradle of a Nation: National Genealogical Society, 1997 Conference in the States, Program Syllabus* (Arlington: NGS, 1997), 315–17.

when done properly—and it may be the single most useful technique for extending lineages accurately. The challenge lies in learning the guidelines that ensure accuracy and the standards that justify acceptance of an identity merger.

In almost all cases—whether the results are correct or not—researchers have followed three steps. They

- begin with a particular forebear and known information about that person;
- locate records that seem—directly or indirectly—to identify that ancestor’s parents or appear to show that he or she was someone’s offspring; and
- merge the newly found information with the details previously known, to add a new generation to the lineage.

Careful researchers also go far beyond this. They not only consider the information a record offers but also pay particular attention to the *concept of identity*,³ which involves two crucial tests: (A) Is research on this person complete enough to ensure that the identity is unambiguous? (B) Do the evaluation and conclusion meet all five elements of the Genealogical Proof Standard? These elements are

1. a reasonably exhaustive search;
2. reliable sources, completely and accurately cited;
3. sound analysis and correlation of evidence;
4. a convincing rebuttal of contradictory evidence;
5. a carefully reasoned conclusion.⁴

Criteria 1 and 4 are especially crucial to the accurate merging of identities. To be more explicit:

1. The researcher must consult *all* records with a possible bearing on the identity. A search that is not “reasonably exhaustive” does not rule out the existence of information contradicting the premature conclusion. Thus, a merger based upon an incomplete search must remain tentative. Moreover, to ensure that the search is sufficiently exhaustive, researchers should remember that various records may refer to the same person by different names.⁵

3. The GENTECH Lexicon Project refers to the concept of identity as *persona*; see “Genealogical Data Model: Request for Comments [1998],” 60; online <www.gentech.org/lexicon/description_GENTECH_Data_Model_1.0.pdf>.

4. Board for Certification of Genealogists, *The BCG Genealogical Standards Manual* (Orem, Utah: Ancestry Publishing, 2000), 1.

5. See, for example, two articles by the present author: “Howerton to Overton: Documenting a Name Change,” *NGS Quarterly* 78 (September 1990): 169–81, which shows that the identities of seemingly separate men, John Howerton and John Overton, are one and the same; and “A Name Switch and a Double Dose of Joneses: Weighing Evidence to Identify Charles R. Jones,” *NGS Quarterly* 84 (March 1996): 5–16, which provides evidence to merge the identities of Charles R. Jones of Jackson County, Florida, and Robert Jones of Caroline County, Virginia, amid details that seemingly conflict. For examples of proof cases in which ancestors used multiple surnames with no visible or audible similarity, see Diane Renner Walsh, “One Family, Two Surnames: The Hunt Alias Malloy Family of Illinois and Missouri,” *NGS Quarterly* 86 (June 1998): 94–115; and Elizabeth Shown Mills, “The Search for Margaret Ball: Building Steps over a Brick-Wall Research Problem,” *NGS Quarterly* 77 (March 1989): 43–65.

4. Unresolved contradictions cannot coexist with a conclusion. The information must be consistent, particularly in terms of associates, chronology, and location for the person being identified. When contradictions exist, an evaluation of the quality of each piece of evidence may support a plausible explanation for the inconsistency. If not, the identity question must remain open.

To illustrate both the principles and their application, this paper offers a typical example—a man with a not-particularly common name and a set of military records that *seems* to logically connect a young soldier to an older pensioner via a bridge of documents beginning in the town of his birth and ending in the place of his death. As this case shows, identities often are not as clear-cut as they superficially seem.

CASE STUDY:

JONATHAN TUCKER

Records created by and about one Jonathan Tucker of Cayuga County, New York, seem to create a clear and consistent identity for him. Starting with an 1851 letter written by his son to the U.S. pension office, one can use the detail from each document to lead to the next until the trail splits between the New Hampshire towns of Weare (formerly Hailestown) and Kingston. He created no records that even hint at his parents or his birthplace. However, two seemingly plausible but contradictory theories are in print or in circulation—both apparently based on the premise *the name's the same*.

JONATHAN TUCKER: CAYUGA COUNTY, NEW YORK

In 1851 Ebenezer “Eben” L. Tucker wrote the U.S. pension office regarding a stipend formerly given to his father Jonathan, who died in 1822. He recounted the older man’s 1783 army discharge, mentioned his marriage soon after, and stated that his father was “one of the early pioneers of western New York, now Auburn.”⁶ Census data confirm that Jonathan settled in Cayuga County at an early date. That name appears on the decennial censuses of Cayuga in 1800, 1810, and 1820, with a residence centering in the town of Aurelius and its village of Auburn.⁷ This is the only Jonathan Tucker head-of-household on those returns and a correlation of the data across those years suggests that he had four sons and two daughters—consistent with information in Ebenezer’s informative letter.

6. Letter, Ebn L. Tucker, Hartland, New York, to J. E. Heath, Pension and Bounty Commissioner, 25 April 1851; in Jonathan Tucker file, no. S42525, *Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files*; microcopy M804 (Washington: National Archives and Records Administration [NARA]), roll 2420. Ebenezer’s death record—the only other document that identifies his parents—cites them only as Jonathan and Abigail Tucker; see Van Buren County, Michigan, Record of Deaths B:189, County Clerk’s Office, Paw Paw.

7. 1800 U.S. census, Cayuga County, New York, town of Aurelius, p. 706; NARA microcopy T32, roll 28. 1810 U.S. census, Cayuga County, town of Aurelius, village of Auburn, p. 38; NARA T252, roll 31. 1820 U.S. census, Cayuga County, p. 28; NARA T33, roll 68.

The pension file that contains this letter opens with Jonathan's 1818 application for aid and provides enough detail to reconstruct a skeletal framework of his life. His initial affidavit identifies him as a resident of Aurelius, names his wife as Abigail, and reports that he was discharged at Albany, New York.⁸ The index to the 1790 New York census obligingly offers only one Jonathan Tucker—an Albany County male whose household details are compatible with that of a young husband and father.⁹ Jonathan also recounted his service between 1779 and 1783 in "New Hampshire Troops," claiming a partial disability "by reason of a rheumatick complaint which attends me."¹⁰ He secured the pension and received biannual payments beginning 2 April 1818 and ending 1 March 1822.¹¹ An affidavit regarding his death states that he was employed as a teamster by Samuel Cumpston.¹² The local newspaper reports that on 13 July 1822, while "returning from Albany with a loaded wagon," he died "at Pratt's Tavern, twelve miles this side [i.e., west] of Albany . . . [of] an inflammation on the lungs."¹³ Jonathan's death notice and his affidavit for his pension agree that he was born about 1761–62.¹⁴

The compiled service records for the Revolutionary War appear to offer two Jonathan Tuckers among New Hampshire troops, but only one viable candidate for the pensioner. Thirty-four cards for that man document the service described in the pension application of Jonathan of Cayuga. He enlisted in the Third New Hampshire Regiment in June 1779 for the duration of the war and transferred to the Second Regiment in 1781.¹⁵ These service summaries also verify two statements made in Ebenezer's 1851 letter: that Jonathan fell ill with the "King's Evil"¹⁶ and that he was subsequently hospitalized at Albany.

8. Affidavit of Jonathan Tucker dated 2 April 1818, Jonathan Tucker pension file, no. S42525, NARA M804, roll 2420.

9. 1790 U.S. census, Albany County, New York, Rensselaerwyck Town, p. 265; NARA T637, roll 6.

10. Affidavit of Jonathan Tucker, 2 April 1818, Jonathan Tucker pension file, no. S42525, NARA M804, roll 2420.

11. Jonathan Tucker, "Revolutionary War Pensions under Act of 1818: 1818–32," vol. A:191; *Ledgers of Payments, 1818–1872, to U.S. Pensioners under Acts of 1818 through 1858, from Records of the Third Auditor of the Treasury*, NARA T718, roll 1.

12. Affidavit of Samuel Cumpston, 23 October 1822, in final payment papers related to the pension of Jonathan Tucker, New York Agency, Fourth Quarter 1822 (Act of 18 March 1818); RG 217, NARA.

13. "Deaths, 1816–1824, from *Auburn Gazette* and *Cayuga Republican*, both Published Wednesdays in Auburn, New York," *Tree Talks* 7 (September 1967): 132, provides a transcription of Jonathan's death notice from the *Cayuga Republican*, 17 July 1822. The same death date is reported by Jonathan's son, referring to a family Bible, in his 1851 letter to the pension office.

14. The *Cayuga Republican*, on 17 July 1822, reported that Jonathan died at the age of 60 years. In his own affidavit of 6 July 1820, Jonathan testified that he was "aged 58 years."

15. Jonathan Tucker, Private, New Hampshire Second Regiment, roll 519 (18 cards); New Hampshire Second (Tash's) Regiment, roll 523 (one card); New Hampshire Third Regiment, roll 531 (fourteen cards); New Hampshire, Kelley's Regiment, roll 545 (two cards); all in *Compiled Service Records of Soldiers Who Served in the American Army during the Revolutionary War*, NARA microcopy M881. The thirty-fifth card extracts a muster and payroll dated 23 October 1776 for officers and soldiers of New Hampshire's Second Regiment who were joining the Continental Army in New York. The date is too early to be Jonathan of Cayuga, and the service that Jonathan reported in his pension application does not match.

16. The so-called "king's evil" was scrofula, a tubercular swelling of the lymph glands in the neck, named from the ancient belief that the sovereign's touch would cure it; see *Encyclopaedia Britannica Online*, <www.britannica.com> for keywords "Encyclopedia" and "king's evil."

The service file consistently reports that Jonathan “came for” the town of Hailestown (renamed Weare¹⁷), enabling that Hillsboro County town to meet a recruitment quota. One muster roll specifies that Jonathan “belong[ed] to the town of Kingston,”¹⁸ in Hillsboro’s neighboring county, Rockingham. The conclusion that Jonathan was not a legal resident of Weare is confirmed by town minutes of 1 May 1782, when inhabitants voted *not* “to make up Jonathan Tucker[’s] bounty to him as good as it was when he enlisted as a soldier for said town.”¹⁹

Beyond this, records on this Jonathan are scant. His probate file—the only one for a nineteenth-century Tucker in Cayuga County²⁰—itemizes a very modest estate, all personal property.²¹ He held no land, there or elsewhere, which might stem from an inheritance and thereby point to a birth family. No other U.S. or New York records hint of parentage or origin; and none of his few known associates seem to have New Hampshire roots. Furthermore, no neighbors of the Jonathan of Albany in 1790 lived in Cayuga County in 1800, a situation commonly found when similar names in disparate locations actually treat the same person.

Other fundamental research techniques yielded equally fruitless results. Knowing the maiden name of Jonathan’s wife should point to his associates and origins. However, New York did not create civil marriage records in the 1780s, when Jonathan and Abigail wed; and the scope of possibilities for a church record made a search impractical. Similarly, the names of Jonathan’s children might suggest names of relatives; but the one known name, Ebenezer, led nowhere and neither his probate file nor Ebenezer’s letter cites other children. Like the estate record, the pension’s final-payment voucher names only his widow as an heir.²²

JONATHAN TUCKER OF KINGSTON, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Genealogical literature offers an expansive compilation on Kingston families of the Revolutionary era, and the work includes a relevant biography whose details

17. Elmer Munson Hunt, *New Hampshire Town Names and Whence They Came* (Peterborough, New Hampshire: William H. Bauhan, 1970), 118.

18. Jonathan Tucker, Compiled Service Records, citing Second New Hampshire Regiment’s payroll of 14 February 1781, NARA M881; also Isaac Weare Hammond, *Rolls and Documents Relating to Soldiers in the Revolutionary War*, vols. 3–4 of *The State of New Hampshire: Rolls of the Soldiers in the Revolutionary War*, 4 vols., being nos. 14–17 of *New Hampshire Provincial and State Papers* (Manchester, New Hampshire: J. B. Clarke, 1885–89), 3:231.

19. State’s Copy of Records of Weare, 1:268, microcopy 0,015,340, Family History Library (FHL), Salt Lake City, Utah. The identification here is from the title page of the filmed volume; FHL catalogs it as “Town records, 1749–1858” and attributes custody to the New Hampshire State Library, Concord.

20. General Index to Surrogate’s Records, 1799–1919, volume S–Z, Cayuga County Surrogate’s Office, Auburn.

21. Jonathan Tucker probate file, Box 5, Cayuga County Surrogate’s Office. The file contains only an inventory and a letter of administration. The latter was recorded in Probate Record D:120. One of the appraisers of the estate was a Samuel Tucker, who was not a known resident of Cayuga County and possibly was one of Jonathan’s unnamed sons. New York probate records often include petitions for letters of administration which name all heirs, but the jacket of Jonathan’s file contains the notation “Pet. for L. A. not found.”

22. Final payment papers related to the pension of Jonathan Tucker.

it attributes, directly or indirectly, to town records and state or federal pensions:

JONATHAN TUCKER, b Kingston, NH 29 July 1751 son of Benjamin & Judith (Thuriel) Tucker (KTR): d Auburn, NY 13 Jul 1822 (NHPR 88:28): m Abigail —, d St. Lawrence Co, NY 15 Nov 1827 . . . [continues with other data from his federal pension file].²³

The genealogical conclusion implied here reflects a typical consolidation of records to extend a lineage. Kingston's town records report the birth of child but do not reveal his fate. The pension and military service records of a man of the same name mention Kingston but do not name his parents. The conclusion that these records refer to the same individual—and the implicit merger of identities—seems plausible because

- the name is the same in both records;
- the chronology is compatible (i.e., the Jonathan of the birth record is of proper age to have served in the Revolution and received a pension in 1818); and
- both records state or imply a residence in Kingston.

Plausibility aside, the conclusion that the pensioner Jonathan Tucker was the Kingston child born to Benjamin and Judith fails to meet the Genealogical Proof Standard. At least three aspects have been overlooked:

- Documentation is weak. The pension detail is attributed to a specific source, but it is a derivative. The birth record carries only rough documentation, and the biographical note does not mention the use of any other records that might link Jonathan of Cayuga to the child of Benjamin and Judith. As a result, consumers can only assume that the merger is based on *the name's the same*.
- Research was not reasonably exhaustive. Indeed, overlooked evidence both supports and weakens the biographer's conclusion. Benjamin appears to have lived his entire life in Kingston; and town records document his birth, marriage, and burial. Yet they offer nothing on his children aside from birth registrations and one infant's death.²⁴ Benjamin did not own land in the county and did not leave an estate to probate.²⁵ The lack of records for his children serves as negative evidence supporting a conclusion that his son Jonathan enlisted in the army and settled in New York. On

23. Kathleen E. Hosier, *Kingston, New Hampshire: Early Families, Patriots, & Soldiers* (Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books, 1993), 389. According to the book's reference list, KTR refers to "Town Records of Kingston, NH (microfilm of original records);" and NHPR refers to "*New Hampshire Pension Records* by Mrs. Amos Draper 101 vols. (DAR Lib 1918–1933)." For an excellent critique of this Kingston compilation, see George Freeman Sanborn Jr.'s review, *NGS Quarterly* 83 (March 1995): 64–65.

24. State's Copy of Records of Kingston, 1:635; 2:537, 538; typescript, FHL microcopies 0,015,191 and 0,015,192. In addition to the town records stating birth data for five children of Benjamin and his wife, as well as the death of one of them in childhood, baptismal records exist for the two youngest daughters. See "An Abstract of the Kingston Church Records of Kingston, New Hampshire," typescript (1947), 41, FHL microcopy 0,015,563, item 8.

25. The only estate file for a Benjamin Tucker before 1870 clearly refers to a different man, a resident of Poplin who died sixteen years after the Benjamin who married Judith. This second man's widow and children do not match those of the Benjamin connected to Jonathan. See Benjamin Tucker of Poplin, 1807 file, no. 7788, Estate Packets, Old Series, 1770–1870, Rockingham County Probate Court, Exeter.

the other hand, New Hampshire birth-record indexes²⁶ reveal a Jonathan Tucker born to different parents elsewhere in the state, one whose birth date is more compatible with that of the pensioner.²⁷

- Conflict exists between the mentioned sources, although the compiler neither notes the conflict nor resolves it. Jonathan's age in his pension application indicates that he was born in 1761–62, ten or eleven years after the Kingston birthdate.

The identity merger in this case fails to meet the Genealogical Proof Standard, but is it incorrect? Only a more thorough search can answer that question.²⁸

JONATHAN TUCKER OF HAWKE, NEW HAMPSHIRE

For many years, a plausible but not fully convincing argument has circulated to merge the identity of Jonathan Tucker of Cayuga with a Jonathan Tucker born to Joseph and Susannah "Susey" [—?—] Tucker of Hawke (now Danville), a town that adjoined Kingston.²⁹ Specifically, the facts are these:

- Jonathan of Cayuga was born about 1761–62, a close fit to the 19 March 1763 birth date registered for Jonathan of Hawke.³⁰ (The birth probably occurred elsewhere, however.³¹)
- Jonathan of Cayuga named a son *Ebenezer*. The Jonathan born in Hawke had a paternal uncle and grandfather of that name.³²

26. Index to Births to 1900, Box 331, New Hampshire Bureau of Vital Statistics, Concord; Index to Early Town Records, New Hampshire Secretary of State's Office, Concord (for Tuckers, also see FHL microcopies 0,015,041 and 0,015,042); and FHL's International Genealogical Index™.

27. [State's Copy] Danville, New Hampshire, Town Records, 1 (1760–1837): 395; FHL microcopy 0,015,113.

28. The Kingston compilation not only fails to prove that Benjamin and Judith were the parents of the pensioner Jonathan but also errs in several details about him that are not essential to the present argument.

29. Hunt, *New Hampshire Town Names*, 165. The change did not occur until 1836, considerably after this family's residency there.

30. Danville Town Records, 1:395. The other children's births recorded for Joseph and Susey were as follows: Joseph, 26 December 1764; Deborah, 16 June 1767; Henry, 25 October 1769; Samuel, 12 March 1772; Hannah, 24 September 1775; and Susey, 27 May 1777.

31. Although the birth registrations of these children are in Hawke, the older ones were probably born elsewhere. All the entries appear together, apparently recorded after 27 May 1777. In addition, "Joseph Tucker and his wife Susannah and their children" were warned "to depart from Residing or Dwelling in any Part of this Parish" of Kensington, New Hampshire, on 26 September 1768, suggesting that they had not long been in town. See Warnings out of Town, 2 (East Kingston–Litchfield): 161, New Hampshire Historical Society; this 5-volume series of "warnings out" covers the entire state. For an explanation of the practice and the resulting records, see Ann S. Lainhart, "Records of the Poor in Pre-Twentieth-Century New England," *NGS Quarterly* 81 (December 1993): 257–69. Joseph secured permission to settle in Hawke by 1773, when he was named a "tything" man there; see Danville Town Records, 1:79.

Joseph's older children may have been born in Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, given that (1) his death record reports his own birth there; and (2) his brother Ebenezer was said to be "of Hampton Falls" when Ebenezer wed in Hawke on 22 December 1768. For Joseph's death, see "Death Records of Rev. John Page," manuscript, 1764–1781, entries chronological by date; New Hampshire State Library, Concord. For Ebenezer's marriage, see David Webster Hoyt, "Hawke (Now Danville), N. H., Church Records Kept by Rev. John Page," *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 58 (April 1904): 121.

32. The will of the older Ebenezer Tucker of Hawke, dated 4 May 1776 and proved 29 May 1776, names a daughter and three sons: Hannah, wife of William Row, Joseph (who was to receive his father's Hawke property and serve as executor), Jacob, and Ebenezer. Joseph died in Hawke the following year. Twelve years later, the

- Jonathan of Cayuga's estate was appraised by one Samuel Tucker. Jonathan of Hawke had a brother Samuel, nine years his junior.³³
- The head of the Hawke family, Joseph Tucker, died there on 29 September 1777.³⁴ The family structure collapsed, and by 1782 his younger children were supported by various families whom the town reimbursed.³⁵ Under these circumstances, his teenaged son Jonathan could have become itinerant, lost his residency status in Hawke, and ended up as a Weare recruit in 1779. The breakup of his family also could have contributed to Jonathan's decision to remain in New York after his discharge, rather than return to his native New Hampshire.
- Like Jonathan of Cayuga, the Hawke family had a Kingston link. In 1782, one John Eastman of Kingston posted bond to be the guardian of "Joseph Tucker, a Minor upward of fourteen years of age,_{p1} Son of Joseph Tucker late of Hawke."³⁶ This younger Joseph, who would have been seventeen according to his birth registration in Hawke, was the son next in age to Jonathan.³⁷
- Hawke records hold no records for Jonathan Tucker, son of Joseph, subsequent to his birth—not church, cemetery, or town records; nor deeds nor probate records in Rockingham County. This, too, serves as negative evidence supporting the likelihood that he left the area, as did Private Jonathan Tucker of the Weare troops.³⁸

ANALYSIS

The known facts for Jonathan of Hawke approach the Genealogical Proof Standard in all of its five requirements:

1. the search of New York and New Hampshire records was reasonably exhaustive;
2. the sources are sound and appropriately identified (cited);
3. the evidence has been evaluated, correlated, and shown to be consistent in terms of chronology and location; and
4. the facts are *nearly* free of conflict, the only discrepancy being a one- to two-year difference in date between the birth record for Jonathan of Weare and late-life records created by Jonathan of Cayuga. Such discrepancies in age are common in records used by genealogists working on this place and time.

court appointed Ebenezer Tucker of Andover, New Hampshire, administrator de bonis non of the older Ebenezer's estate and subsequently declared it insolvent; see Rockingham County Probate Records, Estate Packets—Old Series, 1770–1870, numbers 4241 and 5430.

33. Jonathan Tucker probate file, Box 5, Cayuga County; Danville Town Records, 1:395.

34. "Death Records of Rev. John Page," previously cited. Also see *Vital Records of Danville, N.H. (Formerly Hawke): 1760–1886* (Danville: Hawke Historical Society, 1979), which incorporates the Rev. Page's records. The entry for Joseph states (without identifying the specific source) that he was the "husband of Susey Tucker." The original John Page register also carries this identification.

35. Danville Town Records, 2:799–800, 803–4, 807–8, 812.

36. Joseph Tucker's Guardianship, Rockingham County Probate Records, Estate Packets—Old Series, 1770–1870, number 4860.

37. Danville Town Records, 1:395.

38. Jonathan Tucker, Private, Second New Hampshire Regiment's payroll dated 14 February 1781, NARA M881; also Hammond, *Rolls and Documents Relating to Soldiers in the Revolutionary War*, 3:231. Joseph may have remained in Kingston through the war and after, given that one Joseph Tucker paid taxes in Kingston in 1790; see State's Copy of Records of Kingston, 2:611.

5. The conclusion is persuasive and appears to be soundly reasoned.

However, a conclusion that Jonathan of Cayuga was the son of Joseph and Susannah Tucker of Hawke, New Hampshire, should still be tentative because

- the argument presents no record of the Cayuga County Jonathan that links him directly or indirectly to Hawke;
- it offers for the Cayuga County Jonathan no known associates with Hawke connections;
- it does not counter the published and seemingly plausible allegation that Jonathan of Kingston was the Cayuga pensioner; and
- the differences in birth years between the Cayuga and Hawke Jonathans could indicate different identities.

Without resolving these issues, any conclusion that Jonathan of Cayuga was the son of Joseph and Susannah Tucker of Hawke would also be premature.

RESOLUTION

Recent technology provides a new tool whose use resolves the remaining doubts. The Family History Library™ offers an online version of its Ancestral File® database, with an interface that allows one to mine for records of a couple even when one of their surnames is unknown. Searching for a Jonathan Tucker with a wife Abigail yielded a reference to an Albany-connected Jonathan married to one Abigail Cook.³⁹ Correspondence with the individual who contributed the information⁴⁰ and a modicum of additional research produced the following data:

- The 1800 will of Lambert Cook in Rensselaer County, New York (formed in 1791 from Albany County,⁴¹ where Jonathan Tucker was enumerated in 1790), names Cook's daughter Abigail and her husband Jonathan Tucker.⁴²
- In 1790 Lambert Cook was living in Stephentown,⁴³ adjacent to Rensselaerwyck, the site of Jonathan Tucker's residence that year.⁴⁴
- Abigail, daughter of Lambert Cook, was born 25 January 1761.⁴⁵ By comparison,

39. The author thanks the Tucker researcher Brenda Byrum of Collinsville, Oklahoma, for this discovery.

40. Barbara Pink of The Dalles, Oregon.

41. Arthur James Weise, *History of the Seventeen Towns of Rensselaer County from the Colonization of the Manor of Rensselaerwyck to the Present Time* (Troy, New York: J. M. Francis & Tucker, 1880), 7.

42. Lambert Cook will, dated 6 December 1800, proved 27 June 1801, Rensselaer County Surrogate's Record 1:304-9, Surrogate's Office, Troy.

43. 1790 U.S. census, Albany County, Stephentown, p. 285. Stephentown fell into Rensselaer after the latter was cut from Albany County in 1791; see J. H. French, *Gazetteer of the State of New York* (1860; reprint, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1983), 552.

44. 1790 U.S. census, Albany County, Rensselaerwyck, p. 265.

45. Lucius Barnes Barbour and Lucius A. Barbour, "Barbour Collection of Connecticut Vital Records prior to 1850," bound transcripts, 1925, Connecticut State Library, Hartford, citing "Goshen Births-Marriages-Deaths: 1739-1854, Volumes 1 and 2 of Vital Records and Book of Marriages"; available as FHL microcopy 0,002,970.

Jonathan Tucker's pension affidavit of 6 July 1820 states that his wife Abigail was "aged 61 years"—thus born 1758–9.⁴⁶

- Lambert Cook's will also identified another Tucker son-in-law: Henry, married to Cook's daughter Mindwell.⁴⁷
- Henry Tucker's Rensselaer County will, dated 14 March 1842 and proved 20 March 1843, names (among other heirs) his wife Mindwell.⁴⁸
- A gravestone record for Henry Tucker, husband of Mindwell Cook, shows that he was born 15 October 1769 and died 19 January 1843.⁴⁹ That date of birth differs by just one digit—ten days—from the registered 25 October 1769 birth date of Henry Tucker, brother of Jonathan Tucker of Hawke.⁵⁰

The quality and consistency of these Cook-Tucker sources support four mergers of identity—each one reinforcing the other:

ABIGAIL, WIFE OF JONATHAN TUCKER
ABIGAIL, DAUGHTER OF LAMBERT COOK

The geographic proximity of Lambert Cook to Jonathan Tucker in 1790 and the fairly close agreement of the birth date of Cook's daughter, Abigail Tucker, to the approximate birth year of Jonathan Tucker's wife both justify merging these two Abigails.⁵¹

HENRY TUCKER OF GRAVESTONE
HENRY TUCKER OF LAMBERT COOK'S WILL

The identity of the Henry Tucker of the gravestone record can be merged with that of the son-in-law of Lambert Cook because Mindwell Tucker is named as a daughter in Lambert Cook's will and as wife in Henry Tucker's will and cemetery record and because the dates of Henry Tucker's will are compatible with the death date on his gravestone.

JONATHAN TUCKER OF COOK'S WILL
JONATHAN TUCKER OF HAWKE

HENRY TUCKER OF COOK'S WILL
HENRY TUCKER OF HAWKE

The identities of the two Tucker sons-in-law named in the Cook will can be merged with the identities of the two Tucker brothers named in Hawke birth registrations. The Hawke birth records for these brothers show a nearly perfect date match for Henry's tombstone and a reasonably close match for Jonathan's pension records.

46. Jonathan Tucker pension file, no. S42525, NARA M804, roll 2420.

47. Rensselaer County Surrogate's Records, 1:304–9.

48. Rensselaer County Surrogate's Records, 33:344.

49. [Don Radz and Clare Radz], "Cemetery Records, New York State, Rensselaer County, Town of Nassau," 84; FHL microcopy 2,133,553, item 3. Henry and Mindwell are buried in the Marvin/Tucker Cemetery. The transcription is alphabetical, with Mindwell listed under her maiden name but shown as Henry's wife. The compilers do not indicate whether the two graves are contiguous.

50. Danville Town Records, 1:395.

51. Abigail's identity merger also is supported by an undocumented compiled genealogy showing that her maternal uncle settled in the same Cayuga County township as Jonathan Tucker; see Elisha S. Loomis, *Descendants of Joseph Loomis in America and His Antecedents in the Old World* (Berea, Ohio: E. S. Loomis, 1908), 163, 204.

These identity mergers link the pensioner Jonathan Tucker securely to Hawke, New Hampshire—the final piece of evidence needed to conclude that the Revolutionary War pensioner was the Jonathan whom Joseph and Susannah Tucker registered in Hawke. The evidence persuasively rules out the possibility that the Cayuga County pensioner was the Jonathan born to Benjamin and Judith Tucker of Weare—an identity merger that did not meet the Genealogical Proof Standard to begin with. Completion of the more exhaustive search and resolution of the conflicting evidence fulfill all five elements of the Genealogical Proof Standard. The results support merging the identity of Jonathan Tucker of Cayuga County, New York, with that of the child in the Hawke, New Hampshire, birth record; and Jonathan's descendants can now count Joseph and Susannah Tucker of Hawke among their ancestors.

Most genealogical research involves consolidating information from various records to create an ancestral identity. However, one must *accurately* merge those identities before one can add a generation to a family line. When each identity merger meets the Genealogical Proof Standard, present and future family members—as well as historians with an interest in that individual—can have confidence that the conclusions are correct and the lineage is accurate.