

## GETMAN REUNION

**Watertown, NY  
August 12-13-14**

A special group rate has been arranged at of \$124.00 plus tax at the Holiday Inn Express, Watertown, NY <http://www.hiexpress.com/watertownny>. We expect to visit Sackets Harbor State Park on Saturday <http://www.parks.ny.gov/historic-sites/7/history.aspx> Plans for Friday and Saturday evenings have not yet been set up. Suggestions for quality places to meet and eat as a group are requested.



## Purple Heart

The Morning Herald, Gloversville and Johnstown  
Friday, May 11, 1945

Aa Ephratah young man, who entered service with a draft group from District 389 (Johnstown and the towns) has been awarded the Purple Heart after being wounded during the invasion of the Philippines.

He is T/5 Leonard B. Polmateer, aged 21, son of Mr. and Mrs. Clyde Polmateer of that village, ten miles west of town.

He was wounded January 18 of this year, during the landing on Leyte. but has practically recovered, he said in a letter received Wednesday. He is sending the award to his parents.

Polmateer also took part in the Easter Sunday invasion on Okinawa in the Ryuku Islands and is still stationed there with the 718th Amphibious Tractor Battalion.

He entered service in January, 1943, received his training at Fort Knox and Camp Campbell, Kentucky, also at Fort Ord, Cal., then started overseas in September of last year.

Leonard Polmateer (GFG A) 1923-1982 was the great-grandson of Phoebe Getman (GFG A 46) 1817-1848 and Henry Soules b. abt 1816. He was the son of Nettie Kneeskern (GFG - A) 1896-1975 and Clyde Polmateer 1891-1962.

Do you know of additional Getman descendants who are Purple Heart Recipients?

If so send us their information and we can start an appropriate memorial listing on the web site.

## Send us your family stories.

Wayne Getman  
c/o  
wayget@ntcnet.com

## Getman Genealogy Book Available

A book covering the first six generations of Getmans, starting with Caspar is now available. Included in the book are the known descendants of all of the family lines, including daughters.

500 pages in length on 8 ½ x 11 paper this represents countless hours of research by our predecessors as well as input from many current researchers. Printing costs are high so the print run is small.

The book will be available at a price of \$42.00 per copy plus shipping, of \$5.00 each. Copies purchased or picked up at the reunion will not have a shipping charge.

Orders with payment should be sent to: Wayne Getman, 2672 Newport Road, Poland, NY, 13431. Checks should be made payable to Wayne Getman.

## Getman News From The Past

### **The Getman Family**

The history of this family is Interwoven with the history of Montgomery county, from Revolutionary times till now and the family is spread over a goodly section of the western end of the county, in St. Johnsville, Canajoharie, Fort Plain, Fonda, Tribes Hill, Johnstown. N. Y. and other towns and villages. A genealogy of the family would show them to have entered in most every walk of life, farmers, merchants, lawyers and businessmen of all professions, thereby giving a good cross section of the history of the Mohawk valley.

(Saint Johnsville, New York, ENTERPRISE AND NEWS, Wednesday, February 19, 1936)

### **Plowing Brings up a Big Surprise**

The Morning Herald  
Gloversville and Johnstown, NY  
Monday, November 20, 1922

Complete mystery surrounds the unearthing of a human skeleton Saturday afternoon on the farm of Manley Shutts near Stone Arabia in the town of Palatine, Montgomery county. Sheriff Seelye Hodge, his deputies and state troopers are working on the case, but the mystery seems only to deepen as they delve deeper into the case.

Charles Kneeskern discovered the skeleton while ploughing on the Shutts farm, the plow striking the skull of the skeleton and bringing it into sight. When Mr. Kneeskern saw that the plow had unearthed a skeleton he communicated with Sheriff Hodge at Fonda, the sheriff, going immediately to the scene. District Attorney M. J. Herrick and Coroner Boughton, together with state troopers were also summoned.

The skeleton, in perfect condition, was found beneath a little more than two feet of earth and resting on a slate foundation. A large rock, weighing approximately thirty pounds was found across the skeleton and the skull had been resting on a large piece of slate. The leg bones were twisted in an upward position.

According to the officials now investigating the case, it is believed that the man whose bones were found, was murdered, as no such articles as buttons, pieces of clothing, pocket-knife, watch chain, rings or coins were found with the bones, tending to indicate that the man was stripped of his clothing and valuables and hurriedly buried.

Sheriff Hodge announced last evening, that the skeleton had been where found, for many years and that the authorities were working on the supposition that the skeleton might be that of a man named Beach, who completely disappeared about fifteen years ago. The man Beach, as near as could be ascertained last evening, disappeared about the time of the installing of the hydro-electric system through the town of Palatine and that since that time, no word

or trace of the man has been received or found. Mr. Beach has been missing for about the same number of years as the skeleton is believed to have reposed where found, thus accounting for the theory that the bones might be those of Mr. Beach.

As far as could be ascertained last evening, Mr. Beach had no relatives in this vicinity, although Fort Plain officials stated that it was believed that he resided in the vicinity of Canajoharie at the time he disappeared.

Sheriff Hodge, together with the district attorney and coroner and with the aid of the state troopers, will continue the investigation today, when it is expected that a further search will be made of the ground where the skeleton was found in the hope that some clue may be unearthed which will tend to clear up the mystery which surrounds the finding of the skeleton.

Charles Kneeskern (GFG A) 1889 – 1967 is the great-grandson of Phoebe Getman (GFG A 46) 1817 – 1848 and Henry Soules b. abt. 1816. He married Minnie Palmateer 1882 – 1963. He would have been 33 years of age at the time of this discovery.

### **Ann Odd Fire**

The Johnstown Daily Republican, NY  
Wednesday, June 30, 1897

The habit of putting new milk cans too near a building to dry is not a good one, as only last week Wednesday the cheese house of Solomon Gray became ignited from the heat of the sun striking on a can cover, but luckily, ere the fire had done much damage, it died out, as the siding was hemlock.

Solomon Gray (GFG – A 443) 1831- 1905, was a son of Elizabeth Getman (GFG A – 142) b. 1805 and Samuel Gray b. 1801. Solomon married Anna C Nellis (GFG – A) 1832 – 1891, granddaughter of Mary Getman (GFG – A 29) 1797 – 1865 and John W. Nellis, 1783 – 1873.

# A MURDER IN COLUMBIA CENTER

Syracuse Journal, NY  
June 28, 1924

Herkimer, N. Y., June 28 – John Henry House, 67, will be charged with first degree murder and in all probability die in the electric chair, for the murder of his fifth wife, Harriet A. House, 66, in Columbia Center, Thursday. The Grand Jury will not go into session until November, delaying the trial until winter, but general indications are that house will pay the death penalty.

Mrs. House was murdered with a butcher knife. Her head had nearly been severed by the deep slashes, some of them being from three to five inches in length. The body was found by Jacob Shaul, in whom home she was working as housekeeper since separation from her husband recently.

House was taken to the Herkimer county jail soon after the murder had been discovered by Deputy Sheriff Ralph Cross (?). He confessed immediately, declaring he had killed his fifth wife in self-defense. Displays No Regrets

“No sir! I’m not sorry I killed her. I’d do it again if I had the chance. She came after me with a butcher knife, but I wasn’t afraid. I got hold of the knife and cut her in the back of the neck first, then in the throat.”

“I left her kicking and bleeding on the floor.” He said “but I didn’t know she was dead until I heard them tell in on the phone.”

House returned to his home after murdering his wife, sat at his party phone and listened to the conversations of his neighbors, according to the story he told the sheriff.

An autopsy on the body of Mrs. House was held Friday morning at the Whiter undertaking parlors at Ilion. It was revealed by Dr. Merton S. Brown, Columbia Center, and Dr. Harry Halliwell, Ilion, that the knife had severed the woman’s windpipe and several prominent arteries. An inquest was scheduled for Saturday afternoon.

Had Five Wives

House divorced his first wife, Cora Firman, after she had left him. His second wife, Eva Hadcock, died from child birth. His third wife was found hanging to a hook behind the parlor door and his fourth wife divorced him. His matrimonial ventures came to an end Thursday when he murdered his fifth wife in cold blood.

The much married man advertised for housekeepers consistently. He never failed to ask them to marry him. His fifth wife Mrs. Harriet Schmoll (?), was living in Clinton when she read this advertisement for a housekeeper.

After their marriage Mrs. House led an unhappy existence, it was proven in the separation action. She told of how House vented his anger on her at the slightest pretext.

“We were a couple of old people and I thought we could take some contentment together,” Mrs. House said, “but I soon found out otherwise.”

After the separation Mrs. House went as housekeeper to the Shaul home. House visited her on three or four occasions and each time had an argument with his wife, Shaul testified. According to his story, Mrs. Shaul referred to his visits as “that brute has come again to make trouble.”

Didn’t Seem Angry

Mrs. Ina Hotaling, a friend and neighbor, had visited Mrs. House a short time before the murder took place and was the last person to see her alive. She said there was no indication that House was angry when she saw him in the yard.

It is believed that House came to the Shaul home about 3:15 p. m. Thursday. As he told the story his wife attacked him following an argument, the murder taking place at 3:30 o’clock.

Shaul returned home about 6 p. m. and found the body of Mrs. House lying on the kitchen floor in a pool of blood. She had been literally hacked to death.

House told the story of his life after he had been jailed. He said he had graduated from the Utica Business College in 1882 and was once a Sunday school superintendent. He served 11 months as attendant in the Utica State Hospital, and was secretary of the Cemetery Association and held other offices.

He is just the opposite of his wife in stature. He stands six feet in his stocking feet and weighs 185 pounds. His wife weighed less than 115 pounds.

## AGED MAN TAKES OWN LIFE

Newspaper Article  
unsourced

Herkimer County Man, Accused of Murdering Wife, Hangs Himself in Cell.

Herkimer, July 10.—John Henry House, aged 78 years, who was held in the Herkimer county Jail here on a charge of wife murder, hanged himself in his cell during the night. House, who had been married five times, was alleged to have killed his wife at their home in Columbia Center, July 3. John Henry House, 67, under indictment in Herkimer County for the murder of his wife, Mrs. Harriet Schmall. House, a former Baldwinsville woman, committed suicide in his cell in the Herkimer County Jail sometime Wednesday night of last week. The body was found hanging from the cell ceiling early Thursday morning by Jail attendants who were carrying food to the

prisoners. The indictment against House charged that on the morning of June 26 he slashed the throat of his wife with either a knife or a razor. He stoutly maintained that he had killed his wife in self-defense after she attacked him with a carving knife. This explanation was never accepted by the authorities, who continued their search for a razor they believed he had used.

John Henry House was a Getman descendant in three lines b. 1857 (GFG A 120ba / C 236a / VIII he was; 1 - great grandson of Maria Getman b. 1786 (GFG A 22) who married Andreas Miller; 2 - a great-great-grandson of Marie Margaretha Getman b. 1761 (GFG C 4) who married Gershom Skinner); and great grandson of Maria Getman b. 1786; and 3 - a great-great-great grandson of Catherine Getman b. 1737 (GFG VIII) who married Johannes Shoemaker. He was also married 5 times. 2 ended in divorce and the other 3 died.

## **You Think You Had a Hard Time Starting Your Car**

The Morning Herald  
Gloversville and Johnstown, NY  
Wednesday, October 4, 1939

EPHRATAH ... Henry Gray who resides with his brother, Eugene Gray was injured last week when a car he was cranking slipped off the block and the front wheel passed over his body. He is at the Nathan Littauer hospital under the care of Dr. Gilmore.

BTW. Henry was 75 years of age at the time. Henry Gray and Eugene (GFG - A 923 / A and A 924 / A) 1864- 1940, were grandsons of Elizabeth Getman (GFG A - 142) b. 1805 and Samuel Gray b. 1801, and, great-grandsons of Mary Getman (GFG - A 29) 1797 - 1865 and John W. Nellis, 1783 - 1873.

## **St. J. Native Develops New Test System**

Courier-Standard-Enterprise, Fort Plain, NY  
Feb. 11, 1975

DAYTON, OHIO — A new concept in testing has been developed in the midwest by an educator, who is a St. Johnsville native.

Dr. William M. Gray, assistant professor of education at the University of Dayton, devised a test to answer the needs created by individualized instruction. According to a publication entitled "Campus Report", the educator's solution is to use individualized testing.

Dr. Gray a graduate of St. Johnsville High School, is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Melvin Gray, 20 West Liberty street.

The publication is designed for the university faculty, staff and students. The article featuring the local native was entitled "New Tests Developed Here".

The test designed by Dr. Gray, is administered like any other test, with the difference being that, unlike IQ and achievement tests, it considers the kind of thinking processes of which a student is capable, as well as the kind of which he isn't capable.

Dr. Gray noted that his test helps determine what logical processes the student is capable of using and the type of thinking in which he can engage. This in turn allows the teacher to tailor the curriculum to fit the student and build on what that student is capable of learning.

He noted that other standardized tests differ in that they reveal where a student falls within a spectrum of other students. The educator said, "it shows nothing about what a kid can do about his strengths, how he's organizing his world and how he's looking at it."

The new testing procedure has been administered to over 500 students and has been found to be over 75 percent successful. That success is measured by random interviews in which the student is asked to reconstruct the thinking process he used to arrive at his answer. "The important factor in this test is not "be right answer but the reasoning process the student uses to attain the right answer", the doctor stated.

He said that in several instances the interviews have resulted in revision of the tests. In one instance a question involving a proportion problem was asked, and students reported reducing a fraction to one twenty-fifth, assuming that it amounted to 25 percent of the whole. Some of those same students, probably intuitively, nevertheless marked the correct answer. The question is in the process of revision so that it can deal only with logical concepts and not mathematical skills. The test attempts to assess abilities and not acquired skills.

Dr. Gray said, "with the exception of a fourth grade level ability to read standard English, the test is expected to be free of bias, unlike many standard tests which use materials based on individual experience.

Dr. Gray has conducted his study for the last six years in cooperation with Biological Sciences Curriculum Study of Denver, Colo., who administered the tests in junior high school classrooms throughout the country.

Theoretically, the test could effect classroom instruction. Teachers who cooperated in the project haven't been told the test results since the program is still experimental, the one exception being a school where the professor's wife, Mary Ann, teaches

The doctor is presently in the process of revising the test.

William M Gray (GFG - A) is a great-great-great grandson of Elizabeth Getman (GFG A - 142) b. 1805 - 1899 and Samuel Gray, b. 1801.