Loomis Family History

by

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Many noted Authors, Biographers, Historians, and Folklorist have dramatized the "Loomis Family History." Much of their research has never been published and what has, for the most part has been incomplete and definitely inaccurate.

From the files of the Waterville Times - A report of the Prison Association made to the Legislature in 1865 "Loomis Family History". This was written by Amos Cummings for the New York Sun in 1877 and later reprinted in many upstate journals. It checks well with the records of Oneida and Madison Counties.

With these published accounts, I have, as historian of the Town of Sangerfield, compiled the following history.

Readers of early history will remember that during the period when the following history was being made, the country was wild and unsettled. Flooded with counterfeit money, robberies and horse stealing were common crimes, when this family, whose destiny it was to go down in history as the famous "Loomis Gang of the Nine Mile Swamp". A story that rivals the most exciting tales of the Old Wild West.

The Man from Vermont

George Washington Loomis Sr. was born in Connecticut in 1777, he was a descendent of Joseph Loomis of Windsor Conn. who came from England in 1638, he raised a large family that with their many descendants won distinction in the fields of law, medicine, ministry, science, and education.

George Washington Loomis came to Oneida County in 1802 from Vermont. He was 25 years old, 5 feet 10 inches tall, muscular and weighed 180 pounds. He settled in Sangerfield Township near the Madison County line where he bought 385 acres covering a high knob in the former County. After clearing the land he built a substantial farm house on the side of a hill overlooking the Chenango Valley. The Chenango River at this point is a mere brook filled with speckled trout and watering a large pine and cedar swamp that chokes the valley below the site of where the Old Mansion once stood. This swamp fills much space in the annals of the Loomis family, stolen horses and other plunder were hidden in it and it was a never-failing avenue of escape when the gang was hard pressed by constables.

The swamp has never been cleared up and extends from Sangerfield Center to Hubbardsville, Madison County, a distance of nine miles in length and originally averaged a mile in width containing...
more than 7,000 acres of land, the growth is so thick and impenetrable that few men in the town can
traverse it with confidence.

Two sisters and two brothers, Walter and Willard followed George W. Loomis to Oneida County. The
brothers were at first quartered on the farm. One of the sisters married Dr. Preston, a reputable
physician of Sangerfield Center. The other became the wife of Prentiss, a dealer in counterfeit money.

When he came to Oneida County, Loomis was reputed to be worth several thousand dollars. As
before stated, the country was wild and unsettled and the inhabitants regarded him as a valuable asset
to the town. He was well educated, smart, industrious and a good farmer. He drove fine horses and
raised the best stock in the country. Genial and obliging to a fault he became popular and his advise
was sought by his neighbors.

The Mother of the Loomis Family

Mallet, a Frenchman lived at Sangerfield Center and had been an officer in the French Revolutionary
Army. He had embezzled money belonging to the State and fled to this country. His wife was dead
but he had a daughter, Rhoda, a beautiful and accomplished girl who taught school and was the belle
of the ballroom but she had a fiery temper. One day the sheriff of the county tried to crawl into
Mallett's window to arrest him for debt. Rhoda disputed his passage and finally knocked him over
with a fire shovel. Loomis saw the whole transaction and openly expressed his admirations. The
sheriff asked him for aid and Loomis just laughed at him. "A girl that will fight for father will fight
for husband", he said. "I am going to marry that girl". He did so and none too soon for in 1812 her
father was convicted of perjury and sent to state prison. Before this however, Loomis had a narrow
escape from a similar fate. The country was flooded with counterfeit money and it was rumored that
his house was a rendezvous of the counterfeiters. In 1810, Loomis, his brother Willard, his sister's
husband Prentiss and two pals Howard and Reynolds, were arrested and charged with passing
counterfeit money. All but Loomis were indicted and landed in state prison. Loomis had passed a bad
$100 bill on a Captain Leonard. He escaped punishment by buying up the Captain before the Grand
Jury was in session.

While associated with counterfeiters, Loomis did not neglect his farm. It was productive and was
made doubly so by his wife who had a rare tact and resource, she bent every thing toward the
accumulation of money.

The house became the resort of suspicious persons, stolen horses were occasionally traced to its
vicinity, steers, hogs, and fowls mysteriously disappeared from outlying farms. The neighbors had no
proof of anything wrong at the Loomis Mansion, however a few of them began to have their
suspicions. Loomis maintained a fair reputation, he religiously paid his debts and his word was as
good as bond, added to his sociability and obliging manners averted suspicion and he pursued his evil
course unmolested. There were no unwelcome guests at his farm house. His wife was charming and
agreeable, his children bright and engaging and his table well supplied.

The Loomis Children
George Washington Loomis reared four girls and six boys, William W., Washington W., Grove L., Wheeler, Amos (Plumb), and Hiram Denio, were born in the order named. The girls were Calista, Charlotte, Cornelia and Lucia. The girls were Episcopalians. Calista, the oldest, married a lawyer of note in Whitestown and died leaving a girl and a boy. Maria, the daughter, after an adventurous life, is said to have been a private detective in Pinkerton's detective bureau. Lucia married a respectable farmer of Sangerfield. Charlotte became the wife of a member of the firm of J. Bride & Co., Merchants of New York City. She died about 1868 leaving three children. Cornelia, the brightest of all the girls, remained an old maid, spending the later years of her life with her mother and brother Denio in Hastings, Oswego County. The girls were plump, pretty, lively and gay and fitted to adorn any rank of society. Charlotte and Lucia played the piano and were fine musicians.

The boys received a common school education. They were all good looking and well built. Wash was unusually bright and according to an old schoolmaster, was an apt scholar and had keen perceptive faculties. He read a man at a glance, courteous and polite, he was a general favorite. He was generous to a fault, told a good story and always kept his word. He took the popular side of every question and had a remarkable presence of mind. His eyes never betrayed his thoughts. He had dark blue eyes, black curly hair, regular features and full black beard and mustache. Many said that he bore a remarkable resemblance to J. Wilke Booth. His schoolmaster said he was well behaved, a keen observer of human nature and seemed endowed with magnetic power. Few could resist the fascination of his manners and conversation. Officer Filkins said that in ten minutes conversation he could turn an enemy into a friend. He was a born diplomatist. He never resorted to physical force when his ends could be obtained in any other way. Among Wash's brothers and sisters his word was law. He dressed with exquisite neatness, sported the finest turnout in the country, attended all rural dances and festivals and was a general favorite with the fair sex. He gleaned a theoretical knowledge of the law while a student in Judge Eldred's office in Hamilton but his practical knowledge was obtained in an entirely different school. His intuition saw the best way out of a scrape and always had the nerve to follow it.

**Grove Loomis**

Grove was next to Wash in importance. He was nearly six feet tall, well developed and almost perfect in manly beauty. He was the most aggressive of all the brothers but lacked the tact and diplomacy of Wash. He kept fine foxhounds and had a taste for hunting and fishing. There was no better horseman or judge of horseflesh in the country. His love for horses was inherited from his father and grew into a passion. He kept none but blooded stock and when pressed sailed over the country on horseback without regard to roads or fences. The finest horse stood in the barnyard night and day, saddled and bridled, ready for use at a moment's warning. In early times they were the Kentucky Hunter stock but later changed to Black Hawk and Morgan stock. Wash owned a one-eyed hunter said to have been the sire of Flora Temple. Grove owned Flying Cloud, a well known Black Hawk Stallion for which he said he was once offered $6,000.

Marvelous stories have been told about a mare known as the California mare. It was reported that Wash had brought her from the Pacific and he had been pictured as threading through swamps, jumping creeks and leaping fences with her at midnight and in the early morning hours. The truth is she was a big coarse brown mare balky and awkward. Wash used her a great deal because he could not get any work out of her on the farm. He swapped a horse for her in the town of Vernon.

William Loomis, the older brother, seems to have been cut out for a plodding farmer. He had no mental activity and was controlled by the younger and brighter members of the family. He moved to a
farm near Verona. His disposition was soured but he was industrious and his farm showed care and attention.

Wheeler, the fourth brother, went to Canada where he was driven through fear of the law. It is known however that he revisited the old homestead and was credited with sending many a stolen horse from the land of snow.

Denio and Plumb were physically the smallest ones in the family. They were not as artful and cunning and lacked the coolness and courage of Wash and Grove. There was no dependence to be placed upon their word of honor and in a pinch they showed the white feather. Denio later moved to Hastings, Oswego County.

The Family at Home

The farmhouse was sightly and commodious and the family lived in fine style. The table was covered with silver and while all were industrious the was no lack of servants. The girls dressed fashionably and the service of dressmakers was frequently required. the table was well supplied with meat, fowls and vegetables. Strangers and acquaintances were always hospitably received and though none of the boys were moderate drinkers the best whiskey was as free as water. The dooryard was shaded with sugar maples and commanded a ten mile view of the Chenango Valley. The barnyard was on the opposite side of the road toward the swamp. A grove of sugar maples covered the steep brow of the hill back of the house and there was a lane through the maples to a cabin on top of the hill occupied by Negroes and others who worked on the farm.

A relative of the family said that the Old Lady was quick tempered and at times was very devout spending hours reading the Scriptures. She frequently boasted how many times she had read through the Bible. One of her sons-in-law said she set her face against all wrongdoing but this did not agree with accounts given by the neighbors. They accused her of inciting young visitors to crime. They were led to the house by Wash who invited them to ride behind his fast horses, and studied their characters. If they were given to vice or dissipation. The attraction was blooming girls who had been brought to the mansion as servants on promise of good wages and started upon an infamous career. If they were given to drink the best liquors were set before them. At night the teams were harnessed and the whole party sped away on a lark. The young fellows were on the road to crime before they knew it. When they were about to leave the house, the Old Lady would place a hand on their arms and say "now don't come back without stealing something if its nothing but a 'jackknife'". The first time they might return with the carcass of a sheep or lamb or a tub of butter. Their cleverness and skill was praised and the fruits of their plunder were placed upon the table. There were generally from three to half a dozen young men from seventeen to twenty years old about the house. Sometimes they served as pickets and gave timely warning of the approach of strangers and officers of the law. The most of the thieving and barn burning was done by these young rascals. The Loomises, acting as receivers and disposers of the stolen goods. They did the planning and their young pals carried out the work.

Constable Henry Keith

Certain it is that numerous thefts and burglaries were committed in Madison and Oneida Counties and the family was suspected of being concerned in them. Constable Henry Keith visited the mansion as
early as 1836 bearing a search warrant. He was spotted by the pickets and was treated with utmost
politeness but returned unsuccessful. Keith told some amusing stories of his subsequent adventures.
He had a warrant for Wheeler on a charge of assault and battery and visited the house after dark. The
pickets gave the alarm and the doors were closed. The old lady and Cornelia assured him that Wheeler
was not in the house and refused admittance. He had no authority to break open the doors and had he
done so without finding his man he would have been punished through the family influence to the full
extent of the law. He resorted to strategy. He rubbed some mud on the shoulder on one of his posse
who knocked at the door and asked for help. The old lady took a light and surveyed the new comer
through the window. He said he was a traveler who had been thrown from his wagon and badly hurt,
the mud on his shoulder apparently bore him out and kind-hearted old lady told him if he would come
in she would run some camphor on his bruises and give him some whiskey. The door was opened and
Keith and party rushed in and searched from garret to cellar. As they were descending the stairs near
the sitting room Cornelia told them to look out for the paint. The stairs were boarded up at the sides
and the boards were covered with fresh blue paint. Keiths keen eye detected an uneven crack at the
bottom of one of the boards. He stooped and pulled out the board and there stood Wheeler confused
and sheepish. The warrant was served and he was bundled off to the office of a Justice.

At another time, Keith had a warrant for the arrest of Salem Loucks, one of the Loomis' negroes,
charged with stealing a horse. The posse surrounded the house after dark and Keith suspected that the
negro was hidden in the garret. The back doors were locked, Cornelia planted herself on the front
doors step and the old lady forbade the men to enter the house. Keith was afraid that the darky would
escape to the swamp and kept a careful watch upon the doors and windows. While he was at the back
of the house prospecting near the woodshed, some of the boys in front shouted that the negro was
escaping. Two had come out of the house with a black man between them and were crossing the road
toward the barnyard. Keith ran after them and the girls blew out his lantern. His posse closed around
the trio and it was a long time before the constable found a match and relighted his lantern. Then he
discovered that the girls were escorting a strange negro. Salem meanwhile had slipped out of a side
window and was safe in the Swamp.

**The Big Search**

The first clearly authentic legal scrape involving the boys was in September 1848. Allen Abbey had a
country dance at Brookfield, and Grove and Wash got a crowd of Hop Pickers together and drove
over in a wagon filled with clubs. They entered the ballroom without tickets, insisted on dancing, and
wound up in a bloody fight in which several heads were broken and Abby was nearly killed. Wash
was indicted for assault with intent to kill and brought before James N. Ney, then County Judge and
afterward United States Senator from Nevada. Ney admitted him to bail and repeatedly postponed the
trial. Soon after old Dan Douglas of Sangerfield Center had Wash indicted for stealing a saddle and
bridle. Things became so hot that Wash was force to skip his bail and put for California.

What is known as "The Big Search" occurred in 1849. Burglaries were of nightly occurrence, clothes
lines were robbed, farmers lost their sheep and horses, and there was a multitude of petty thefts. A
large crowd drove up to the Loomis house in sleighs and made a thorough search of the premises.
They found a great store of goods, including log chains, umbrellas, whiffletrees, neck yokes, buffalo
robes and almost every conceivable variety of articles. Square holes covered with boards and filled
with stolen goods were discovered in a haymow. Much of the property was taken to Waterville and identified.

A guard was left at the house but were frightened by the brothers who confined them in a room and spent the night burning and destroying the goods that remained. Some of the family were arrested but conviction seemed impossible. While all were satisfied that they were a family of thieves, no one could identify the one who stole the goods. Tangible evidence against William was unearthed, and he served a short time in jail but all the others escaped.

Wash remained in California several years and at one time it was reported that he had been hanged by a vigilance committee. In his absence old Douglas died, and Abbey froze to death so that it was impossible to convict him on either indictment.

Wash returned from California before the death of his father. His return is said to have been hastened by a dispute with a man named Burns over some pasture land. There were high words, "Are you fixed?" asked Burns, "I am," Wash replied, "All set," said Burns, "lets go out and settle it". They drew their revolvers and went out but on the way Wash tried to settle the dispute by shooting Burns in the side. The wound was a slight one but Wash's treachery told upon the community. They gave chase with a rope and he escaped into a canyon and was followed by a friend on horseback. Wash rode the pony over two hundred miles pursued by Burn's comrades. It was even asserted that they tracked him to New York State.

The Wygart Mare

While Wash was gone, William was indicted for stealing what was known as the Wygart Mare. The evidence against William seemed conclusive, he was seen with the mare and the animal was found on the Loomis farm. Wygart and the best judges of horses in the country fully identified her. The Loomises pretended and proved by respectable witnesses that they bought her of a man named Bush. The people, however, were confident there could be no mistake. For once one of the gang was caught "Dead to Rites". Dr. Preston, his uncle, said "Bill, I have told you there would be an end to your halter, they have got you this time". William answered "you wait, I have got the books at home to tell exactly where the Wygart mare is". On the day of the trial the real Wygart mare ran up the lane leading to the Wygart barnyard. She was brought over to Morrisville, where court was in session and resembled the mare taken from the Loomis farm so closely, that her owner could not detect the difference. She had really been stolen by some of the gang and run down into Pennsylvania. Grove Loomis recovered her in time to prevent his brothers conviction. Ruben Wygart was a wealthy farmer at the time of the trial. When the mare was produced and another so exactly like it that it was almost impossible for Mr. Wygart to identify his own property. This led to a series of suits by the Loomises that eventually ended in Wygart's ruin and to escape further persecution at their hands, he, with his family, left for the west in a boxcar along with what little remained of their possessions.

Soon after Wash's return from California a negro was killed upon the Loomis farm. An Irishman employed by the Loomises disemboweled him with a scythe. The family said it was an accident and a coroners jury agreed with them. However, many people believed that the negro was killed because he had a glib tongue and excited suspicion by his remarks.
The constable who gave the gang the most trouble and finally destroyed them was James L. Filkins, a blacksmith. He said that he first became acquainted with the Loomises in 1856. He was 21 years old and worked for Joseph Avery, a wagon maker of North Brookfield. The father of the Loomis family was one of Avery's customers and Filkins describes him as a genial old fellow who was always joking with the young folks and twitting them of their love affairs. In the fall his pockets were filled with fruit which he distributed liberally. Filkins related, "I first saw Wash Loomis at Laban Alby's hotel. Alby was a colored man and he dunned Wash for twenty five cents. Wash borrowed the money of me promising to repay it the next day and he kept his word. About this time I remember that Bill Loomis was arrested on the charge of passing a counterfeit bill on a peddler. The peddler swore positively to the bill, but through some hocus-pocus engineered by Wash, Bill escaped. Wash was a genius. He would train a witness in manufactured evidence until he actually made him believe that he was telling the truth.

Filkins worked at his trade until 1856. In March of 1858 he was elected Town Constable of Brookfield, Madison County. The whole country was over-awed by the Loomis gang and very few officers tried to serve warrants against them. The new constable began an active campaign. He told some amusing stories about their doings before his election. He said that Cornelia and the boys were at a ball in Brookfield and some of the rural Belles missed their muffs and made bitter complaints. A few of these muffs were afterwards found in the Loomis Mansion and it was understood that Cornelia had entered the dressing room at the ball, drawn them over her legs and carried them off.

George Washington Loomis died February 26, 1856 aged 73 years old and the boys were left to their own resources.

In 1857, a stranger called on Russell Crumb of North Brookfield and said he had heard that Crumb had a yoke of cattle to sell. Crumb showed the steers and asked $360 for them. The stranger paid the money and started to drive them away. Crumb claimed the yoke did not go with the cattle but the stranger said he must have it to drive the cattle. After wrangling for some time the stranger gave Crumb $2 for the yoke and drove off with the cattle. That night at the general store, Crumb, in high spirits, told of the big deal he had made that day selling his oxen to some stranger from the city who had an effeminate appearance and his hands were remarkable small and white. The next day Crumb tried to bank the money at Waterville, the cashier threw out all but $2 dollars asserting that it was counterfeit. Crumb returned home, tracked the cattle to the Loomis farm and found them grazing in the meadow. The boys said they had given a stranger $150 for them. Crumb replevened the oxen but the boys gave bonds and retained them. The case never came to trial and Crumb lost his yoke of oxen. One of the gang afterward said that the stranger who bought the cattle of Crumb was Cornelia Loomis dressed in men's clothing. It is said that it was not unusual for the girls to array themselves in male attire and travel about the County but no effort to assist him in regaining his oxen was made. Generally the family was on the best of terms with their neighbors. A man of moderate circumstances bought a small farm near them. He called upon them, said he was a poor man with a small quantity of stock and hoped that he could squeeze through life with trouble with his neighbors. Wash assured him that he would look out for his interest. Not long afterward the man lost his best horse. He reminded Wash of his promise. Wash said that he knew nothing about his horse but if possible he would find it. Some of the gang had stolen the animal without Wash's knowledge, ran it off to Canada and sold it. It cost Wash $300 to regain and return the horse. Another neighbor, friendly to the Loomises, lost a brand new harness. He told of his loss to Grove who seemed astonished but promised to do what he could for him. On the following morning the harness was found hanging on the rack from which it had been stolen.
In June 1858 so many sheep were stolen from the farmers, that they organized a party and began to follow the clues that led to the Loomis farm. The boys became alarmed and joined the farmers saying that they had also lost sheep and trailed a drove to the farm of Jeremiah Clark in the town of Hamilton. The party went to Clarks place and found many of the missing sheep. The Loomises gathered the sheep that they claimed and drove them off after a severe fight with Clark, who told the farmers that the boys had sold him the whole flock. Clark charged Wash, Grove, and Plumb with highway robbery and they were indicted. The three men retaliated by putting Clark under arrest for stealing the sheep. They manipulated the law to suit themselves. The indictment for highway robbery was never tried but Clark was sent to State Prison.

Filkins was one of the Constables who served the warrant for arrest of the charge of highway robbery. It was his first service. With seven men he surrounded the house early in the morning. Plumb tried to reach the swamp through the tall grass but Filkins out ran him, jumped upon his back and handcuffed his. This unusual treatment alarmed Plumb and he shouted murder. The constable threatened to brain him if he did not shut up and Plumb said he was afraid of him. Long Sile Clark, one of the gang for whose apprehensions constable Keith had a warrant for reached the swamp. Filkins said he counted fourteen different men and around the house, all spruce young fellows. Plumb was the only one captured. They took him to Keith's hotel in Brookfield. He was not there an hour before Grove rode up mounted on the California mare. A short club was slung from his wrist and he was armed with two revolvers. He demanded Plum's release. Keith stepped into the house and Grove, after a moments hesitation, dashed away. He afterward said that he was afraid that Keith had gone to saddle a famous horse that was more than a match for the California mare. That night Plumb was put to bed on the upper floor handcuffed to a special officer. In the morning the window was open and he was gone, he had slipped his handcuffs. In September following, they were indicted. The bench warrants sent to Filkins urging an immediate arrest and charged with letters from the Sheriff and District Attorney not to let the net slip through his fingers. Filkins reached the house early in the morning with two men. It was snowing. He saw Wash, Grove and Plumb in the barnyard. They espied him and were rushing for their horses. Grove mounted a trained horse without saddle or bridle and put through the woods over the face of the hill back of the house. Plumb got into the swamp but Wash unwittingly ran into Filkins and was taken to Morrisville where he was quickly bailed. On November 15, 1858 Filkins made a third attempt to capture the gang. He approached the mansion at 5 am with nine men. The constable and one of his assistants were mounted. In the first flush of the morning they saw a mounted sentinel in the road. he turned his horse and fled. It was Plumb. Filkins gave chase and shots were exchanged and the sentinel was wounded. Plumb ran into the posse on foot headed by Ephriam Conger who had come up from the opposite direction. He turned short and Conger fired at him. The shot broke the leg of the horse and it fell to the ground. In an instant Plumb was on his feet and off for the swamp. They tracked him some distance through the snow stained by his blood but he made his escape. In the confusion Grove and others of the gang became alarmed and got away without trouble. Grove and Plumb then quit the country and did not return until Clark was imprisoned and matters were satisfactorily arranged. On their return Plumb wanted the Grand Jury to indict Filkins for an attempt at murder. When the work of the jury was done one of the jury men said: "Filkins, we came very near indicting you for not killing Plumb". "The only apology I can make" said Filkins, "it was so early in the morning I could not see very well".

About this time Grove was indicted for passing counterfeit money in Oneida County. The Loomis boys learned that District Attorney Munger carried in his pocketbook the twelve ten-dollar counterfeit bills which had been taken from Grove and which were to be used as evidence against him. Before the trial, the District Attorney was met on the street after midnight and robbed of these bills. Without them the indictment could not be sustained and Grove escaped punishment.
Filkins was made a Deputy Sheriff in April, 1855. He made so many raids upon the gang that they determined to punish him. In may 1860 they went to Higginsville, Oneida County and got a warrant from Justice Samuel Marsh for the arrest of Filkins and party on a charge of assault and battery. It was claimed that the offence was committed while the officer was endeavoring to make an arrest at the Loomis house. Filkins stood in his shop when Denio rode up with a Madison County officer, a friend of the Loomises, and served the warrant. Denio wanted to iron Filkins but the officer would not consent. They drove to a cross road in North Brookfield where they met Wash, Plumb and William. They had Filkins' old posse in a wagon. The prisoners were shackled. Filkins demanded that they should be taken before a magistrate of his own County where he could be admitted to bail according to law. Wash said that the law did not accord this privilege and Filkins insisted that it did. He had taken off his coat and refused to go with the party unless they proceeded according to law. Wash proposed a compromise. Filkins consented to go with them to ascertain the law in the case. He got into the wagon and Plumb planted himself behind and gave him much abuse. After appealing to the constable for protection, Filkins threatened to knock Plumb out of the wagon if he did not hold his tongue. The driver started to cross a plank road and take a road leading to the Loomis Homestead. Filkins sprang from the wagon and accused Wash of bad faith. Grove drew out a blackjack and advanced on him and Plumb pulled up a fence stake and prepared to take him from the rear. Filkins then drew a revolver and there was a second compromise. The party drove to Waterville and it was ascertained that Filkins had a right to an examination before a Madison County magistrate. Wash lamented over the decision, "Jim" he said "I'd rather give you the best horse I've got than to have you go back home this way." True to his word however he released Filkins who went home. That night as he was about to go to bed, there was a knock at his door. Whose there," he said. "Kit" was the answer, "Open the door quick. I want to see you". Recognizing the voice of Christopher Mason, one of his posse who had been captured by the Loomises, and thinking that he had escaped, Filkins opened the door. There was a rush of feet. In an instant he was knocked down and handcuffed and the Loomis party stood over him in glee. He was taken over to the homestead and was run through to Higginsville, a distance of forty miles. They reached Oneida at 8 AM. Filkins got into the office of lawyer Shoecraft who made the Loomises show their warrant and accompanied him before the magistrate. There the Loomises swore out four or five more warrants. Meantime Filkins's friends had trailed him down from Madison County. He gave bail and was released. The case was never presented to the Grand Jury. Filkins then had the Loomises indicted in Madison County for assault and battery. Judge Mason quashed all but one of the indictments on the grounds that Wash alone struck him when they dragged him from his home that night.

**Filkins Moves to Oneida County**

The jury found Wash guilty but the Judge, ignoring the verdict, fined him only $25. Disgusted with the result Filkins moved into Oneida County. His reputation had preceded him. He was nominated for constable by both parties and despite the efforts of the Loomises, was elected by a large majority. He said he accepted the nomination for constable on the promise of the people to stand by him in his efforts to uproot the gang. At that time he said he could name seventy persons in the Town of Sangerfield alone who either affiliated with the Loomises or stood ready to harbor or bail them. Many were land holders and nearly all were of fair standing in the community.

Filkins was elected in March 1862 and when Plumb heard of it he swore that if Filkins ever came on the premises to arrest him he would shoot him. Wash made money during the war by forcing the most worthless of the gang into the army and taking their bounty money. He knew their runways and scared them into enlistment by stories that Filkins was after them.
In 1862 there was a sad tragedy in the Loomis Mansion. In 1854 Wash had formed an intimacy with Anna Wright, a beautiful girl of German descent, who lived with him in the mansion and took an active part in the management of the farm. She was shot and killed by a man whose name was Mott, a member of the gang. A coroner's inquest proved that Mott was near the mantel cleaning the barrel of a gun, the stock of which had been removed and the barrels were capped and loaded. As Anna was passing he dropped the barrels into the fireplace and one of the barrels was discharged. The shot entered the girl's thigh severing one of the arteries of the leg. She lingered several days and died, leaving Wash a son, Grove. Filkins said that Mott entered the army soon afterwards and told a comrade that Plumb and Denio promised him $50 to kill the girl as they were jealous of her influence with Wash. Mott said they cheated him out of the money.

Plumb's threats against Filkins led the latter to get out a peace warrant. The warrant was served with one held by officer Beardslee. Plumb made an effort to escape but was caught by Albert Root, one of Beardslee's posse, and later a dentist in Hamilton. Plumb was taken to Waterville and was promptly bailed. He then got out a warrant against young Root charging him with drawing a revolver and threatening his life. He claimed that Root did not properly belong to the posse and Beardslee for some reason refused to swear that he did. Two trained witnesses swore in Plumb's favor and the law kept Root from the stand. Plumb however swore to too much, he knew the revolver was loaded when it was pointed at him. The revolver was then produced and when loaded, the points of the bullets could not be seen and Root was discharged.

There were numerous petty thefts in 1862. Messrs. Montgomery and Eastman drove up to the American Hotel in Waterville one evening about dusk. A few minutes later they missed a valuable skunk skin robe. The landlord had seen old Beebe and several members of the gang in the streets. Montgomery made the remark that it was a dark night but it might be lighter before they got home. Old man Beebe lived over the hill a mile from the Loomises. His son Lavergue was one of the most daring and active of the gang. That night the Beebe barn was burned. The old man rode over to the Montgomery place and accused the young man of setting fire to his barn. Montgomery kicked him out of his yard and that was the end of it. While the barn was burning, one of the clapboards fell off and out dropped a store of revolvers stolen from G.W. Tallman, a Government contractor in Utica. About the same time a shoe store in Hubbardsville and a tailor in Leonardsville were robbed. Filkins visited the Loomis place with a search warrant. The gang had become so bold and had burned so many barns belonging to persons who had taken part against them that the residents were frightened and Filkins found it impossible to raise a posse. He went to the farm alone and found Wash at home. The house was searched and scores of saddles were found. Also among the things Filkins found a half dozen of Tallman's revolvers, a lot of new shoes, and Montgomery's skunk skin robe. Whips and blankets were found including some of the goods stolen from Leonardsville. Wash was caught trying to secret the robe and Filkins arrested him. Wash submitted after a protest and Filkins took him before Justice Church in Waterville, who said, "Why do you bring the infernal scoundrel before me. Why don't you hang him?" The Justice held him and during the examination the Leonardsville tailor saw one of his coats on the back of a spectator, who proved to be George Peckham who Filkins said was one of the gang living in Hamilton. Peckham said he had bought the coat of Hon(John?) Hall, another member of the fraternity. Wash was indicted but never put on trial.

A farmer by the name of Brown missed some sheep and got out a search warrant. Filkins visited the Loomises to look for them on the day Wash was bailed. As he neared the house, plumb and Denio mounted their horses and prepared to get away. "You need not run" said the constable, "I have not got a warrant for you". Wash received him with the utmost politeness and ordered the sheep driven up to the yard so that Mr. Brown could see them. Brown identified his sheep and Wash said, "There's a dam
sight of wickedness and crime in this County, now John Hall probably stole those sheep and put them in our flock to cast suspicion upon us." Grove backed up Wash and told Brown to ask any neighbors who had lost sheep to come up and look their flock over. Brown took his sheep and made no further complaint.

Filkins' Life Threatened

Up to July 1863, Filkins visited the Loomis place on business every week. Scores of indictments were found against the Loomises. At midnight on July 22, 1863 there was a knocking at the door of the Filkins house in Waterville. His life had been so often threatened that he observed the utmost caution. His wife was attending a sick child. Seizing a revolver Filkins approached a kitchen window and asked what was wanted. A voice replied, "I am Mr. Clark's hired man. Last evening as I came by Vandee's and saw Jack Vandee at home. He asked me to come up here and let you know." Vandee was a noted Loomis rascal whom Filkins had long tried to arrest. Satisfied that the voice was that of Plumb Loomis, the officer stepped back and was in the act of cocking his revolver when a double barrel shotgun loaded with slugs and pieces of nails was discharged through the window. Filkins was shot in the right arm and left hand. His hands dropped, the wife screamed, "James are you hit?", he replied, "I'm wounded", and she heard the blood pattering on the floor. He started for the bedroom when two more shots were fired through the bedroom window. The blinds were shattered and the lower part of the sash torn out. The bedroom door was filled with buckshot and there were fourteen shot holes in the mantel. Seven buckshot and forty small shot had riddled the bed curtains. Filkins became faint from the loss of blood. The neighbors were aroused and his assailants retreated.--the floor was covered with blood hundreds of persons visited the house on the next day.-- (the Filkins home stood at the corner of Stafford Avenue and Bacon Street east in Waterville - demolished in 1959)

Filkins exhibited the following letter which he received two months before the attempt on his life and there was much excitement. J.Filkins --Dear Sir:- As a friend to you and all mankind I set down to forewarn you of danger, the gang has offered one of their associates a good sum of money to kill you at some convenient time, and he says he doubts whether they will pay him if he should do so. He is daring and a bold robber. I dare not sign my name. Early the next morning Filkins requested an officer to go up to Beebe's and look for a double barreled shot gun that had recently been discharged. The public terror was so great that no one would leave town. When he got well, he dug out enough evidence to secure indictments against Plumb, Wash, Lavergne and Ezra Beebe and Thomas Mott.

In May 1865, he went to the office of the District Attorney to see what had become of the skunk skin robe indictment. He found that an Attorney for the public and withdrawn the suit and that the same course had been taken with the indictments for attempted murder. Filkins said he asked Hiram T. Jenkins and District Attorney the cause for this action and Jenkins replied "well Sheriff Crocker came to me in the December term of court saying that it was his last term, and he had an agreement with the Loomises to see them clear of everything before he went out of office. He wanted to make his word good and asked me to help him".

About this time Wheeler Loomis was arrested for assaulting the daughter of a respectable farmer. He was taken before Justice Ira B. Crandall of South Brookfield and was bound over. Bail was given. On the following night the justice's docket was stolen. The thieves did not find the bail bonds because the Justice had mailed them to the County Court House. Wheeler jumped his bail but when the authorities
threatened to come upon the brothers for the amount of the bonds, he came forward and pleaded not guilty to the indictment. D.C. Pomeroy, his council, requested a postponement of the trial. Judge Mason, a brother of Joseph Mason who at the time was Congressman, denied the request. One of the other brothers pleaded not guilty to an indictment and was about to be forced to trial. During the controversy, both brothers ran out of the court room and sprang into a cutter driven by Dan Greer. They had not gone many miles before they were overhauled and brought back. Meantime the Judge had discharged the jury and the cases went over. He declined however to admit Wheeler to bail. Wheeler later was taken before Judge Leroy Morgan of Syracuse, on a writ of habeas corpus, and the Judge took bail for his reappearance. An industrious farmer was influenced to go upon his bond. Wheeler fled to Canada and the farmer was force to pay his forfeit. He did so and then committed suicide. In Canada, Wheeler took the name of Theodore Goodenough and over-looked the interests of the family at that end.

Morrisville Courthouse Burned

In September 1864, the brothers deemed it necessary to clear themselves of certain indictments in Madison County, on which they feared to stand trial. After entering the engine house in Morrisville and cutting the hose they fired the Court House and it was burned to the ground. Wash was in town when the fire occurred and took his turn at the brake of the engine. He seemed utterly astonished when someone told him that the hose had been cut and said: "It's dam outrageous and I would like to help hang the man who did it". Afterward, fancying that the indictments might have been destroyed, Wash and his counsel called for a copy of certain indictments, and the copy was given. Wash then learned that the indictments had been removed to the office of the Country Clerk before the Court House was burned as this was a fire proof building. In the same week, it was broken into and indictments, deeds and mortgages burned in a stove that stood in the office.

Every indictment against the brothers was destroyed and as the time limit had expired, new indictments could not be procured. Among the papers burned was an indictment against one of the local citizens. Wash afterwards called on him and told him his assessment for the work was $100. The man borrowed the money and gladly paid him.

Meantime similar indictments were pressing the brothers in Oneida County. The District Attorney's office was rifled, and all his papers including the indictments were carried off. The District Attorney is said to have paid Wash $250 for the return of the papers other than the indictments. They were afterward found mixed with leaves in the dooryard and returned to him. Hundreds of indictments were found against the family but except in one instance, no conviction was effected. At one time thirty-eight indictments were pending in which Filkins was a material witness but hardly one of them was brought to trial. Their success in destroying the indictments made the gang bolder. Robberies were of nightly occurrence and Filkins found the brothers operating far south in Delaware County. He took a stolen horse from Grove in that county and Grove had him arrested for stealing the horse. He was a witness in one of Beebe's trials for stealing and the old man had him arrested for perjury. When he was discharged it was getting dark and his lawyer did not dare ride back home with him.

Ephriam Conger took an active part in reclaiming a wagon stolen by the gang, the next night his barn was burned. Maurice Terry made disrespectful comments on the Loomis family and on the following night his barn was ablaze. No one who meddled with the family in any way was safe.
A meeting was held in the Baptist Church in North Brookfield to devise measures for protection. A committee on organization was appointed. At the next meeting by-laws were passed making anyone who paid a dollar a member of the organization. Wash and Grove gravely appeared and were very much interested in the organization, saying that they were afraid of the thieves and wanted to become members. They planked down their dollars and crushed the life out of the association.

Mrs. Phoebe Crandall Murdered

H.D. Crandall and his wife Phoebe, both aged about 75, lived alone on their farm in the southeast corner of the town of Brookfield, Madison County. One dismal night in 1864 they were aroused by two men who had gained an entrance to the house and promptly demanded the old man's money. It appears the old gentleman had $3,000 secreted between the bed ticks. Although disguised he saw one of the men was a renegade nephew. Mrs. Crandall gave up some money she had and told her husband he had better get his. He started as to do so but instead he got a club, which he called his headache stick and struck at Belfield, but the blow went wide of the mark and the robbers opened fire on the aged couple. Some time later the old man came too and found that his wife was dead. He went to brothers, G.W. Crandall, near by, and was so covered with blood and dirt that he was not recognized.

The murderers left without the money and fled the country, but Belfield was arrested in California and was brought to Madison County for trial. On May 8, 1877, at Morrisville the trial was commenced. Mr. Crandall was placed on the stand. He was tall and straight although nearly 88 years of age and the bullet hole made by the robbers on his cheek could be plainly seen. He made a good witness and recognized the prisoner by his eyes and said he had no doubt but what he was the guilty one. The counsel for the defence made a point that the old man's age would affect his eyesight.

A reward of $1,500 was offered for the conviction of the murderers. the defence boldly insinuated that Nellie Smith has fallen under the influence of the men who were endeavoring to get the reward through the alleged knowledge that Nell had of the affiliation with the Loomis Gang. She was ready to swear that she heard Belfield and party giving Cornelia the particulars of the murder of Mrs. Crandall, but the court ruled that testimony out on the ground that she was not in the room at the time the conversation occurred. Testimony proved that Belfield was a member of the Famous Loomis Gang. The trial lasted nearly two weeks and the jury for some reason failed to convict and Belfield was acquitted. District Attorney John E. Smith prosecuted the case and Milton Delano of Canastota was the Sheriff. The case was of such importance that the New York papers had special correspondents at the trial. The Herald sent Edward Duffy, the New York Sun sent Amos J. Cummings, who wrote, I think, the best history of the Loomis Family ever published, and to him I am indebted for a part of this family history.

The Prison Association Report

A report of the Prison Association, made to the Legislature in 1865, says that the family had grown rich by thieving. Their children are educated in the best and most expensive seminaries. They dress genteelly, their manners are polished and they appear to good advantage in society. They rule the counties of Oneida, Oswego, Madison, Otsego, Chenango, Schoharie, Delaware, and Sullivan with a rod of iron. They have numerous well trained confederates in all these counties who are ready by day or night at a moments warning to ride off in any direction for the sake of plunder or for the
concealment or protection of associates who are in danger of falling into the hands of the law. These men have been indicted times without number in the above named counties, but none of them have been convicted, nor have any of them been in jail for a longer time than was sufficient for a bondsman to arrive at the prison. There are farmers apparently respectable who belong to the gang and share in the profits. Whenever bail is needed, substantial farmers come forward and sign the bonds without regard to the amount of penalty. The family exerts a great political influence and are always ready to reward their friends and punish their enemies, both at the primary conventions and at the polls. Although they have been repeatedly indicted, the number of their indictments bears but small ratio to the number of their depredations. It usually happens that anyone who is particularly active in bringing any of the gang to justice has his barn or dwelling burned or horses are missing from the stable or his sheep or cattle from the pasture. These things have been done so often that cautious men are careful how they intermeddle by seeking to bring the members of the gang to justice. If a man so intermeddling happens to have a mortgage on his property, it is very soon foreclosed. If he has political aspirations, thousands of unseen obstacles interpose to prevent the fulfillment of his hopes. If he is a trader his customers fall off. If he is a physician, malpractice in imputed to him or other stories are circulated to his discredit and at length matters come to such a pass that his only recourse is to quit the county. All who make themselves conspicuous as opponents of the family are in some way made to feel the effect of a thousand blighting and malign influences which paralyze their energies and blast their hopes of success. Although the law has been powerless when exerted against the gang, they have been in the habit of using its energies with great effect against those who stood in their path. We are told with great circumstantiality, by men worthy of confidence, of numerous instances in which under their skillful manipulations, the forms of law were used to punish innocence and shield robbery.

Wash Loomis Murdered

At 1 A.M. October 29, 1865, fourteen persons were asleep in the Loomis Mansion. There was a knock at the back door. Wash was called out and murdered. His body was found behind some barrels in the wood-shed. Grove was the next victim. He was badly beaten and covered with cat sacks and blankets which were afterwards saturated with kerosene and fired. His sister Cornelia saved his life by throwing the burning bags and blankets in the fireplace. The room was ablaze. A fire had also been started in the wood-box. The women with the help of five or six men supposed to belong to the Loomis Gang succeeded in quenching the flames in the kitchen. A minute afterward hay and straw stacks with the barn were ablaze and many valuable horses perished in their stalls. Flying Cloud a well known Black Hawk stallion that Grove had been offered $6,000 for, Wash's one-eyed Hunter said to have been the sire of Flora Temple also the California Mare. The back of Wash's head was smashed in and his face so disfigured that it was almost impossible to recognize him. He lived in an unconscious state until the following when he died. Dr. Erastus Munger - Coroner- holds inquest November 2, 1865.

Coroner's Inquest - Plumb Testifies

I Amos P. Loomis reside in Sangerfield with my mother Rhoda Loomis. I am the brother of W.G. Loomis deceased. I was away from home last Monday from about 4 P.M. until 7 or 8 in the evening. Besides the members of the family there was a man there that is called George. I don't know his other name, a clock fixer. He was there in the afternoon and evening. He was there when I returned and he stayed there that night. I do not know where his home is. He slept in the kitchen chamber adjoining...
mine. Bixby sleeps in that chamber, he was there when I got back and had supper when I did. There
was a boy with him they call Frank, not Frank Kent. They came together and went to bed together.
George had been there two or three times before during the fall and summer. He was here a week or
two before. They went to bed at half-past nine or ten, went together from the back kitchen. They went
through the middle kitchen to go upstairs. I lighted them to the top of the stairs and showed them
where to sleep. Don't recollect as Bixby was present while these men were in the kitchen. I lodged in
a room in the southeast corner of the house upstairs. I went to bed at ten or half-past. I passed through
Bixby's room on going to bed. George, the clock fixer, is 35 or 40 years old, black or dark hair, no
whiskers or moustache, about an average height, weight 140 or 150 pounds, about a medium figure.
Frank was 18 or over.

I went to sleep perhaps three-quarters of an hour after I went to bed and was awakened about 2
o'clock by the cry of Grove and the women. George came into my room about the time I struck the
floor and said "they are killing Grove down below". I said to him "who or what", he said "it is Filkins,
haven't you heard him?" Denio was in bed with me. He did not get up at this time. I said to George,
"run down stairs", he said "no, I durst not". About that time, I was dressing, George had on his pants,
his coat on his arm and shoes in his hand. I went down into the middle kitchen going down by the
front stairs. Cornelia was then trying to open the door into the back kitchen. She had got it open a
little way. She said "don't come this way any further, they will kill you". I started further that way
when the Smith girl said, "go back, they are killing Grove". I started to go back and as I was going I
looked around. Cornelia had got the door open about two feet. I heard some one of whom I had a
glimpse, and whose voice sounded like Filkins say "it's no place for a woman here", "Keep back or I
will shoot you or kill you". Cornelia then said, "Grove is dead, the house is on fire, run as fast as you
can".

I ran for the front door and met Denio coming downstairs with a pair of rubbers in his hand. He had
his clothes on. We went into the front yard. Denio said "let's go this way"(north). I ran directly to Mr.
Edward Mason's house across-lots. I went to Mason's bedroom window and waked him, told him the
house was all on fire. I then turned and ran back and when just back of Terry's I discovered the barn
on fire. I here met Denio, who was coming towards Mason's. I went on to the hill and called the
negro, whose name is Dick Louck. Denio remained while I was gone. We remained here some time
and heard the women cry "murder" and other cries. After a while we went back to Mason's. About
four o'clock I went home. I left Denio at Mason's. I found Grove and Wash lying in the north-east
room. I picked up the barrel of a revolver on the kitchen floor before day-light. It was said that
another part had been found to it. I after-wards saw the other part. I left it with Bixby. I think I had
seen Filkins have it at different times. He had shot at me with it the year before. I recognized the
marks on one end of the barrel and the hammer having a small piece broken off the side. I think
Lawrence Beebe had it before Filkins had it. I noticed the mark on the end of the pistol at the time Mr.
Beebe's boy had it. Think the hammer was not broken at that time. I think the piece was broken off the
hammer when I saw it in Filkins possession. I think I saw it was broken. I never saw a pistol like it
before. The peculiarity was that it had a white handle. There was no other peculiarity about it. I never
saw a pistol with an ivory handle before.

I heard men talking in front of the barn when Denio and I came out of the front door. I saw no light at
that time with them. The pistol I have spoken of was a five-shooter. There were shots in it. I found the
cylinder of the pistol about half an hour after I found the barrel. The girl found the cylinder.

Question by Dr. Munger- "Did you show me the handle and barrel of the pistol Tuesday about 11
o'clock" A- "I think I did". Q- "Did you at that time have the cylinder?" A- "I think I did, in my
pocket". Q- "Did you tell me at that time that the cylinder had not been found?" A- "I can't say, don't
remember. Q- "Do you remember of my asking you to let me take it into my possession?" A- "I do".
Q- Do you remember what you told me?" A- "I do not, I do not know where George and Frank went,
have not seen them since. George stayed there over-night a month or six weeks ago. I think Bixby
lived with us. Bixby has not worked for us before. When George was there before, he slept in the
same room. Bixby has all the while occupied that room since he lived with us. Bixby and George
were not acquainted. I don't know where Bixby's home is. Don't think Bixby knew yesterday or day
before that the cylinder has been found.

Cornelia Loomis Testifies

I reside in Sangerfield with my mother Rhoda Loomis, was there last Monday night, I then saw some
men who made an assault on my brother Grove Loomis. I recognized one of them to be James Filkins,
have been acquainted with him several years. I don't think he had any light in his hand, I saw two
other men but can't describe them. He was in no ways disguised. I was not in the room but at the door.
The room was very light from the burning clothes. I was so near to him I could have reached him with
my hand. I know a portion of a revolver being found there. I have seen that pistol, have seen the
whole of it. I have examined it particularly. The handle was of white ivory. The tube I found myself,
picked it from the floor, did not observe any thing particular about the handle, except that it was an
ivory handle. Pistol barrel and handle was then produced by Mr. Pomeroy from his breeches pocket. I
think this is the same pistol barrel that I picked up. I should think this handle was the one I saw there.
The cylinder was found by itself and after the others were found on the morning of Tuesday about
daylight. The barrel was found in the back kitchen on the floor, between the table that stood under the
window and stove that stood on the hearth. I know that the breech was found near the cook stove on
the floor. I saw Mr. Bixby pick it up and lay it on the cook stove. Don't know who found the cylinder,
but saw Plumb first have it. Mr. Bixby had the barrel and breech in his hand the last I knew of it until
now. I did not hear Washington's voice that night, but heard him go across the floor. I recognized his
step. I expected he would knock at my door as he usually did. He was intending to start for Utica
about two o'clock.

Mrs. Rhoda M. Loomis - Sworn and Testifies

I am the mother of George Washington Loomis deceased. The last I saw of him alive was between 12
and 1 o'clock Tuesday. He was at home Monday evening, he was setting in the back kitchen. It was
about 9 o'clock at the time. I went to bed at 9 o'clock. There was in the house, Mr. Bixby, Eli Tilby,
Frank Kant, John Stover, Amos Plumb Loomis, Denio Loomis, My grandson Charles Loomis,
Cornelia Loomis, Louisa Gates, Elizabeth Calkins and Nellie Smith. Grove was not at home at the
time. The next I saw of Washington was about 3 o'clock that night. He was under the wood-shed. Two
men were fetching him into the house. He was covered all over with blood and was insensible. He
never spoke after I saw him.

About five minutes after the clock struck two, I heard someone passing my window at the south end
of the house. They seemed to speak at Washington's window. I heard a thump on his window then the
outside west door open. I heard Washington open his door and walking along towards the back
kitchen, through the middle kitchen. I knew it was from his walk and his manner of spitting. I think I
then dropped into a drouse. I think I was awakened in a few minutes by a screaming, and ----O, I
can't describe it. It seemed to be in the back kitchen. I got up and partly dressed me and went into the
north room where I met Cornelia. I said "What is the matter, Cornelia?" I went along with her into the
back kitchen and there I saw Grove lying on the floor on his back, dead as I supposed. He had a bag
of oats under his head which was on fire. Cornelia took it away and we extinguished the fire. The next
I discovered Louisa Gates had hold of a coat which was all on fire. She was going towards the door as
if to throw it out and Cornelia caught it from her and threw it into the fire-place. I went to the fire-
place to take it and she said "Mother, don't take it out, it is a kerosene". Grove got up. His head was
bloody, his face swollen and his eye black. He said they jumped on him. He complained of pain in his
head and stomach. After some time, Mr. Mason and the other neighbors came.

I don't know who remained with Grove during this time. None of my sons were present at the fire that
I saw. Inquiry was then made for my sons and we went about finding them. We first found
Washington in the wood-house, back of the platform on which the stove stands. He was brought to the
north room and laid on a bed on the floor. Grove was at that time lying on the floor in the same room.
Soon after Plumb came in. I asked him where Denio was and he said he would be in soon. He soon
came. This was the first time I had seen these boys since I went to bed.

Grove L. Loomis Sworn and Testifies

I came home on Monday evening about 11 o'clock. I had been absent since morning. I had been to
Madison, Bouckville and Pine Woods, and also at Mr. Samuel Bridges, about three miles north from
Solsville. I left Bridges at about 9 o'clock in the evening. I stopped at Palmer's in Solsville and fed my
horse. I was there about an hour and came from there directly home. When I got home I found
Cornelia and Elizabeth Calkins up. I put my horse out in the barn that is burned. I did not have a light
nor a lighted cigar nor any fire. When I got to the house I got something to eat and went to bed,
leaving them up. My room is upstairs, in the north side of the house. I went to sleep.

I was awakened by Mr. Filkins rapping on the door of my room and calling me, this was 1 or 2
o'clock. It was Filkins's voice. He said he wanted to see me, to have me get up. I said "I will be there
in a moment". I got up and dressed. While dressing he called me twice more. He said he was in a
hurry and couldn't wait. I opened the door and went out. Filkins was standing close to the door. He did
not say what he wanted. He took me by the collar. I said, "I will go with you Mr. Filkins. He said, "I
know you will", and handled me rather roughly at first. Then we walked down stairs. Two or three
men were standing near the head of the chamber stairs. They stepped aside and let us go down first.
They had guns in their hands. Filkins had no gun but had a lighted candle in a candle-stick. One of the
others I think had a lantern. They followed us down stairs into the middle kitchen. He still held on to
my collar. I said "Let me see Washington for a moment," we were near his bed-room. I started to go
towards the door and he pulled me back by the collar roughly and said to me, "he is not there, go with
me and I will take care of you." We then walked into the back kitchen and the others followed and
closed the door behind them. Filkins walked on along towards the north-east outside door of the
kitchen. He stepped along to my overcoat which was hanging up near the door and felt in the pockets
and said, "Plumb, where are my hand-cuffs?", I said, "Mr. Filkins, you don't need any hand-cuffs, I
will go with you", He said, "I think you will". He was feeling in his own pockets when he asked
where the hand-cuffs were. Instantly he struck me six or eight times on the head as fast and hard as he
could. I staggered against the side of the room. He said, "Plumb, knock him down". They then struck
me two or three times. I did not fall. He then struck me five or eight times with a sling shot. He had a
revolver which he fired at me, which missed. The charge passed into the fireplace. He then struck me
twice with the revolver which broke in two pieces. I then fell and he jumped on me, on my side and
stomach. Others kicked me at the same time on my head and neck.
Filkins then said, "Plumb, he is dead, let's burn him up". At that he and the others pulled down two or three coats and put them on me, also a bag of oats and a fur collar, then some camphine or something out of a bottle over me and set fire to it. It burned very quick. They then went out of the door into the woodhouse. I saw nothing more of them. I cannot identify any of the other men with him. I was conscious during all this time.

Immediately after they went out, my sister and Nellie Smith came into the room and pulled away the burning clothes. I then got up and went about the room for about a minute till I heard the cry of fire and saw the light of the blaze. I then came out of the north end door and went up to the shanty where my horse was for the purpose of cutting his halter. I found no fire and did not let him out.

I then came down by the north east corner of the house and sat down. Two or three came and got me and brought me into the house. Mr. Filkins was not disguised, neither were the others. They had nothing over their faces. One had black whiskers. Filkins made no attempt at secrecy as to himself. The reason I went was that I supposed, as an officer, he had come to arrest me. While they were assaulting me, I screamed murder a number of times. I made no resistance except to put up my hands. The man with whiskers was a large man. I did not hear either of them speak except Filkins. The lantern was a small one.

Louise Gates Testifies

I reside in Utica. I have been residing at the Loomises in Sangerfield since the latter of August last. I was there last Monday. I was there during the evening and night. I don't know of any other persons being there that evening except members of the family. I retired at nine or half-past. I don't know that anybody slept in the house but the family. I slept in the bedroom directly south of the middle kitchen. Mrs. Loomis slept in a room adjoining, east of the one I occupied.

I went to sleep soon after I retired. I was awakened about two o'clock by a rap on the bedroom window of the room I occupied and someone called, "Wash". Wash arose, went to the window and said, "What do you want?". The voice at the window said, "Come to the back door, I want to speak to you a minute". Wash turned around, opened the door and went out. Then, pretty quick I heard footsteps in the middle kitchen. They were not the footsteps of Wash. Somebody came to the bedroom door and Wash followed him and said, "Filkins, I don't want you in here. Come out there is nothing there you want". Filkins came into the room, had a lighted candle in his hand and he looked under the bed, then held the light up and looked in my face. He then turned and went to the door and said, "No, there is nothing here but a woman"; then he said, "Wash, I want you". Wash said, "Well", turned around and walked with Filkins to the back kitchen door, which they shut. The bedroom door was still open. Then I heard a dreadful jar that shook the house all over. Somebody then opened the back kitchen door, passed thru the middle kitchen and went upstairs. This was immediately after the jar. I heard footsteps and noises up stairs, and in four or five minutes I heard them coming down stairs. Then I heard Grove say, "Filkins, I want to go and see Wash a minute". Filkins said, "You can't see Wash, he is not there". They then took Grove out into the back kitchen and shut the door after them.

That was the last I heard until I heard Grove screaming. This was right after they shut the door. I got up before this and went to the kitchen door and tried to open it but it was tight. Someone was holding it. There was no way to fasten it. Then I went back to my room and screamed and tried to put my clothes on. While I was putting my clothes on, I heard someone go to the back kitchen door and try to open it. Then someone spoke but I did not understand what was said. When I got my clothes on, I
came out and met Cornelia Loomis about the middle of the kitchen. She said, "They are killing Grove". Then I said, "Oh dear, they have taken Washington and I know they have killed him". Then I went to the back kitchen door and opened it and saw Grove on the floor. His coat was in a blaze, but not a very large blaze and a black overcoat had been thrown on him which was in a blaze. I took the overcoat and ran to the north east door with it. Cornelia followed and took it away from me and said, "Girl, you will set the house afire and yourself", and threw it into the fireplace. Then I heard them asking for spirits for Grove. I then went back to my room to get a bottle of liquor that was on the stand. When I got there I looked out the window and saw that the barns were all on fire. I forgot the liquor and came back into the middle kitchen and told that the barns were all on fire and said, "Oh Wash is killed, Wash is killed, why don't you look for Wash". Then I went through the back kitchen to the back door. I did not see Grove there and said, "Why don't you look for Wash? Can't you go and find Wash?" Nobody gave me any answer and I went back of the wood-house and looked on some boards to see if I could see him. I did not find him and went back into the house and met Cornelia. She said "Why don't you go up to Mr. Welch's and tell him that they have killed the boys and the barn is on fire?" Then I went out into the road and went by the barn, about half way up to Mr. Welch's and turned around to come back, and cried, "Where is Wash? Why don't they find Wash?"

Then I went back to the house and went and sat in the bedroom and cried. I don't know how long I stayed there.

The first I noticed was when some one said, "Come out here, quick, with a light. Mr. Bixby has found Wash". Someone said to me, "Get the straw tick off your bed and have it in the north room to lay him on." I got it and got the bed clothes and then went into the north room and that was the first I saw of Grove after I saw him in the kitchen. I went and sat on the straw bed, where they had Wash and looked at him a few minutes. I stayed with Wash most of the time, after this, till he died.

I had seen Mr. Filkins many time prior to that night, so that I knew him well. I had a perfect view of him by the light. He had a tallow candle in a candle-stick when he came into the room. I think the candle-stick was one that belonged in the house.

This was while I was dressing myself, I heard no reply to the call, I saw a man thru the window, there was no light out of doors, I can't say whether there was a light in my bedroom just then, I know I lit one while I was dressing, can't say whether it was a light or a dark night, it was light enough for me to see the man and his form. When Grove screamed, he said "Murder, Murder," I don't recollect hearing the report of a pistol. Then I went in the back kitchen. I thought I smelt the smell of camphine. When I took the coat from off Grove no one else was in the room but Cornelia. I have not heard that any strangers stayed in the house that night, have not heard any of the folks say any such thing. I don't think it would be likely for any such stranger to stay in the house and I not know it. Cornelia told me that she put the black overcoat onto Grove to smother the fire. There was no fur collar nor anything else buttoned on to the coat that I took off. I saw the oat bag but it was not under his body. From the time my bedroom door was opened it was not shut at any time till after I dressed. I picked up a sling shot on the back steps after daylight the next morning, it was by the northeast door. It was on the stone step. It was not quite as large as a hen's egg and had a string to it about ten inches long with a loop at the end. I gave it to Cornelia, I can't say it was bloody, may have seen it once, I have seen a broken Pistol said to have been picked up there, The breech was white. When I saw Grove on the floor I think he was perfectly unconscious.

Lorenzo D. Bixby Testifies

Lorenzo D. Bixby Testifies
I have been stopping at the Loomises since the seventh of September last. I have been there in the employ of Washington Loomis. I as a mason by trade. I have been engaged at Loomises at my trade most of the time. I was there the whole of (Monday, October 31, 1865) last and evening and spent the night there. I am acquainted with George Washington Loomis. He was at home that evening. I spent most of the evening in his company at the house. I went to bed about ten o'clock by their time. He went out of the room about five or ten minutes before me, saying he was going to bed. We had been sitting in the back kitchen. I think Denio Loomis, Plumb Loomis, Nellie Smith, Louisa Gates, Elizabeth Calkins and John Stower were present at times during the evening.

I think Mrs. Loomis and Cornelia were in once or twice in the course of the evening. I do not know as any other persons were present any of the time. The next I saw of Washington was about two o'clock in the morning in the wood-shed. About fourteen feet from the door leading form the kitchen to the wood-house. He was lying on his side with his arm under his head. He did not speak. I did not hear him speak any after that. He did not appear conscious. He made no noise but breathed heavily. I assisted in carrying him in, I think Mr. Mason helped me. Someone else assisted but I can't say who. I laid awake about an hour after I went to bed. I slept in the kitchen chamber over the room they call the middle kitchen. Stairs lead from the middle kitchen to the kitchen chamber. There were two beds in the room. No one slept in the bed with me. Two other men slept in the other bed in my room. I did not know them. They were there when I went to bed. I had seen one of them before that day, the other I had not seen till I went to bed. I had seen one at the barn that day about three of four o'clock, but had not seen him at the house. I saw him for about five minutes in the afternoon and was down to dinner, I think not to tea. I understood he was there on a horse trade. Don't know as where he was last Monday after I saw him at the barn until I saw him in bed. He could not get to that room without passing through the kitchen where I was. I don't know what that mans name was nor where he lived. think I have seen him once or twice before at Loomises. The other man I know nothing about. The last I saw of either of them they were in bed that was about two o'clock. The man I had seen before was about 5 feet 11 inches tall, spare and was 32 or 35 years old, would weigh 150 or 160 pounds, thick black hair, think he did not have whiskers, think light moustache and dark clothes. All I know of the other man was what I saw by lantern light. He had sandy complexion, sandy whiskers and moustache, and younger than the other. I left the room while they were in bed, About the time I was getting my clothes on, the tallest spoke and said the house was on fire. I said where? He said; "Don't you see it through the window? I then rushed down stairs. I can't say whether they were getting up or not. The tallest one was at my elbow. I have not heard since that night of who those men were, nor what their business was, nor where they resided. After going to bed I was awakened about two o'clock, the first sound I heard was footsteps on the stone slabs in front of the woodshed. This was immediately after I awoke. The next I heard was the voice which I thought was that of Washington Loomis. He said "boys" in his usual tone. The next sound was a heavy fall on what I called the back kitchen floor. This was perhaps a minute after I heard the walking. It was immediately after I heard Wash say "Boys". I then heard heavy boots tramp on the kitchen stairs coming up into the room where I was. I then saw a light at the head of the stairs. I raised my head and saw three men standing at the head of the stairs. Two of them stopped and the other came directly to the bed where I slept and held a lantern down near my face. I said "What do you want?" he said "Ugh" and then stepped to he door of the room where I slept and said "Grove". I heard Grove's voice say "Yes". He then turned around and held his light to the face of the man that lay next to the alley on the other bed. He then held the lantern by the face of the other man in the bed and changed what I took to be a revolver from his right hand to his left hand and rapped on the door again with his right hand and said "Grove". The same voice from within said "Yes". In a moment I heard the door unbolted and Grove came into the room where we were. The man at the door said "Well Grove, I have come to see you the night". I suppose I know who that man was. He is a man who has been represented to me as James Filkins. Grove said "Yes,
allright". Grove closed the door and walked right out of the room and down the stairs. Filkins walked directly by the side of Loomis. The other two men had no light. I did not recognize either of the other men. Neither of the others had anything in their hands that I saw. I did not see Filkins have anything but the light and the revolver. One of the men was five feet ten or eleven inches high, had very black whiskers which covered his face considerable, and about twenty five or thirty years old, would weigh 175 or 180 pounds and had on dark clothing. He did not seem to be bundled up. I don't know if I should recognize him if I should see him. The other man was smaller and younger.

I remained in bed and heard a sharp crack like the report of a pistol in the back kitchen, as I should judge, I heard Grove's voice halloo "Oh God, they have shot me, Murder." I then sprang out of bed and commenced dressing myself. I heard heavy sounds below like pounding upon something. I heard rattling like that of the griddle and hearth of the stove. I looked out of the window and saw a man come out of the woodshed and go south around the corner of the house. I don't know who he was - he had no light. I then went directly down stairs into the back kitchen. While I was dressing Cornelia came into the room and said "They have killed Wash and they are killing Grove". No other person came into my room or left it, except those I have mentioned until I left it. I went down into the back kitchen and saw Grove lying on the floor. The room was filled with smoke and smelt strong of camphine and burning wool. I went up to Grove, took hold of his arm and raised it up, saw the breech of a revolver lying on the floor, picked it up and laid it on the stove hearth, raised Grove up and assisted to carry him into the north room. When I first went down into the back kitchen, Cornelia was there and I think Nellie Smith and I think one or two others were there. The only light was that of the fireplace. After carrying Grove into the other room, I heard the cry that the barn was on fire. I had not heard of the barn being on fire before that. I had heard the house was on fire while I was in my room. I started to go to the barn and stopped on the way, took some shingles and fire out of the woodbox. I then went to the barn and found the barn doors open about ten inches. The inside was on fire. I cut the halters of two horses and tried to cut others, but it was too hot. Saw no one about the road or barn till I got to the barn. Soon after I got to the barn Frank Kent came, also Mrs. Loomis, Cornelia and John Stower and they were inquiring have you seen Washington, Plumb or Denio, I told them I had not. I went to searching and finally found some one under the woodshed on the ground. I stepped into the kitchen and got a light and found that it was Washington. I continued my search for the other boys, saw Plumb about an hour after, near the house, and about an hour after that saw Denio at Mr. Mason's. When I helped carry Grove into the other room he could not help himself but seemed conscious. From the time Grove went with Filkins until I got into the kitchen was about five minutes. I found bricks under the woodshed near Washington that were bloody and others between there and the door, bricks were there before the affray, one brick seemed to have been dropped into the blood, another was lying in a dry place had blood on the corners. I think Mr. Filkins is a man about 40 or 45 years old, sandy complexion, sandy hair bordering on red, face very badly pock-marked, about five feet eight or ten inches high, will weigh 150 or 160 pounds, think he was not disguised, had on a dark colored coat, had on hat, the lantern he had was tin, I think glass on one side, of oblong shape, the narrow diameter of which was two and one half or three inches, the longest was about four inches. I do not remember of having heard a description of Filkins or of ever having given one before.

John C. Mason Sworn

I was at home last Monday night, was called up in the night by my father, about half past two. He said "Loomis's buildings are on fire", went to the Loomis's soon after I got there Nellie Smith came to the barn and said to me, We want you to come to the house and see Grove. He is pounded most to death." I went up to the house and found him at the Northeast corner near the dooryard fence. I told him to go
into the house and I would try and get a doctor. He turned and started to the Northeast door. He walked, think Nellie had hold of his arm. Soon I went into the house and saw Grove on a bed in the Northeast room. Then heard someone call for a light in the woodshed. Went to the woodshed and found Wash lying on a pile of shingles. Mr. Welsh, Mr. Bixby and myself carried him into the same room with Grove. In a few minutes I went home, did not see Filkins that night, did not hear anyone pass my house after bed time.

Eli Tilby Sworn

The main point of his testimony being that he did not see Filkins there that night as it was very dark.

George Carlile Sworn

Carlile swore that James L. Filkins was in his shop Monday evening before the murder and inquired for kerosene having none witness gave him some lamp oil in a vile.

Charles Hubbard Sworn

Hubbard swore to finding a pair of hand-cuffs on the farm of Issac Terry about half a mile from the Loomis house, in the direction of Waterville.

Drs. G.W. Cleveland and Media Preston were sworn, but as their testimony was wholly of a medical nature, we omit it.

Daniel C. Pomeroy Sworn

I received the breech and barrel of the pistol. I have presented here on Wednesday night, at Mrs. Loomis's house, about 12 or 1 o'clock at night, from the witness Bixby, who was sworn here. I received the cylinder from Plumb Loomis Thursday afternoon. It is in the same condition as when I received it, with the exception of some marks put upon it by another person in my presence, for the purpose of identification. The cylinder presented has five chambers, three of then loaded and capped and two empty.

The Jury Returns a Verdict

After considering the evidence of the sworn testimony of the various witnesses, the jury returned the following verdict: that according to the testimony given, George W. Loomis came to his death by the hands of three or more persons and that one of those persons was James L. Filkins.
The Funeral of Wash Loomis

The funeral of Wash Loomis took place at the Congregational Church at Sangerfield Center. The attendance was large and a very appropriate and impressive sermon on the path of the transgressor lead only to Hell was preached by Rev. Mr. Marshall of Madison.

Meantime, William Loomis swore out a warrant before Justice G. W. Cleveland of Waterville, charging Filkins with the murder of his brother Wash. Filkins was arrested and at the request of the prosecution, the examination was postponed two days, Filkins being discharged on his own recognizance. The same counsel appeared for the Loomises who had acted for them during the inquest. On November 6th, Filkins again appeared before Justice Cleveland. Loomis's counsel, Mr. Lamb again asked for a postponement until the eighth. This was granted. On the eighth, neither Loomis nor the subpoenaed witnesses appeared. The complainant instead of serving the subpoenas had put them in his pocket and gone to his home in Verona. The real design was manifested, the Grand Jury was to meet on the 13th, the object was to throw the case over so as to put Filkins in jail until the February court. Lawyer White told the justice that the District Attorney had given instructions to postpone the case. The justice however issued new subpoenas directing immediate service. Plumb Loomis appeared at 4 o'clock and wanted the case postponed until Lawyer Pomeroy came. He said he had telegraphed for him. The court held they could not control his actions and issued attachments for the witnesses. Later in the day, Lorenzo D. Bixby, who slept in the house on the night of the murder, was caught and put on the stand. In the morning the prosecution examined Nathan Gates who swore that Filkins had asked him to assist in cleaning out the Loomises. With this testimony, Mr. White then rested the case for the people. The prisoners counsel insisted that all the witnesses for the prosecution be examined. The court sustained him. White then withdrew from the case.

Filkins Shot Again

On June 9, 1866, Filkins went to the Loomis Mansion to capture some horse thieves. He was accompanied by Constables Sanford and Hibbard and Deputy Sheriff Conger with their posses. They had warrants for several persons hiding in the house. They got there at daybreak, Old Mrs. Loomis was at the back door feeding ducks. She screamed "Here's Filkins and a lot of men". The officers rushed into the house. They found a strong party of men intrenched in the garret. One Alford, a noted outlaw stood at the head of the stairs with a gun. Conger and Filkins started up the stairs. Alford shouted, "Back damn you or I'll shoot you through". Conger fearlessly shoved ahead and Alford struck him with the gun making an ugly wound. Filkins drew his revolver and fired. Alford struck Conger a second time. Filkins again opened a fusillade and the two officers fell back. At the foot of the stairs they met a stranger who said that he came from Canada on the preceding night. He was handcuffed and taken into the dooryard. The party in the garret opened fire from the windows and shot the prisoner in the shoulder. Mr. Lord, one of the Sheriff's posse was also wounded. Conger and party started for re-enforcements and one of the gang came out with a repeating rifle and started for the swamp. Filkins pursued him and was shot in the arm. The disabling of Filkins paralyzed his party and all of the scoundrels escaped including the Canadian.

On the next day the District Attorney fixed the trial was postponed. The district Attorney then called a special term of the court for trial. The 27th of August was the specified day. It was afterward discovered that there was no legal authority for such actions and as no one appeared the case went over to the next regular term.
The second attempt to kill Filkins aroused the public beyond restraint. Deputy Conger returned to Morrisville. One of the Judges threw some documents before the Sheriff and told him it was his duty to serve them on the Loomises at all hazards. After the Judge retired the Sheriff took a revolver from a nook in the wall and said this is the only document I will serve on the Loomises. A Vigilante Committee was organized. They resolved to burn the Loomis Mansion and hang every person found within it. The Sheriff and a strong posse went to the place early on Sunday morning June 17, 1866, to serve half a dozen warrants.

He was followed by over sixty persons well armed. The house was surrounded before daybreak and the inmates were warned to make no resistance. most of the family were handcuffed, the house was searched. Silks, satins, furs, dress goods and other stolen property were found. While the Sheriff was searching the barns and outhouses, the Vigilantes fired the house and it was burned to the ground with all its contents. Cornelia and the old lady tried to save some of the valuables but they were taken from them and thrown into the flames. All the outbuildings but the negro shanty on the hill were destroyed. The only things saved were a valuable horse belonging to Grove, and some beds for the old lady and Cornelia, who retired to the shanty on the hill. Those who were caught in the house were Grove, Plumb, Rhoda, Loomis, the mother, Cornelia, a son of Wheeler, John Stoner, John Smith, Elizabeth Calkins, Adelaide Glazier (who later became Plumb's wife), Hester Crandall and Nellie Smith. Plumb and John Stoner were hanged to the limb of a sugar maple in front of the house to exhort a confession. Plumb was hanged twice, after being revived with much difficulty, he promised to tell all he knew and lead a honest life if his life was spared. He said that Maurice Terry's barn and Ephriam Conger's buildings were burned by Tom Mott, and that he and his brothers paid him to do it. He declared that Mott was the man who shot Filkins the second time. He was taken to Morrisville Jail, convicted of stealing, fined $100 and sent to jail for ninety days. The family afterward sued the county for $22,000 damages and recovered $1,000. Plumb said that Francis Kernin was one of their counsel.

The Filkins Trial

Filkins's trial was set down for the term of court held in Rome in June, 1867. Attorney-General Martindale and District Attorney Jenkins appeared for the prosecution. Roscoe Conkling for the defense (This famous trial was next to the last criminal case Senator Conkling handled. The reader may remember Mr. Conkling was U.S. Senator for fourteen years and built up a party machine in upstate New York during the Grant Administration which was fully as powerful as the Tammany machine in N.Y. City). Mr. Conkling moved to set the indictment aside on the ground that it was not legally found, and that the paper purporting to be and indictment was unlawfully obtained from the Grand Jury. Affidavits from several jurors were then read, setting forth that the affidavits of George Jones and Charles Bird, two principal witnesses were produced and read before them instead of being themselves produced as witnesses. They objected to the affidavits, but they were advised as though the makers of them were present and sworn. It was shown that Jones and Bird were on the streets of Rome when and after the indictments were found. An affidavit was then read denying that, he Jones, had ever made the affidavit that was read before the Grand Jury and adding that he did not see Filkins at the Loomis murder as stated in the alleged affidavit read before the Grand Jury. Mr. Conkling's motion was opposed by Gen. Martindale on the ground that the prisoner having pleaded to the indict, the motion to quash or set aside could not be entertained. Mr. Conkling made an elaborate argument detailing the facts as above given, and dwelling especially upon the fact that the only evidence against the prisoner was that given by the Loomis Family alone, and that the Grand Jury would have failed to find an indictment without the affidavit of Jones and Bird. He closed as follows: The conclusion has been forced upon us that the instrumentalities of public justice have been seized upon and perverted,
not only to bring one man to trial by forbidden means but also to suppress the truth in other respects, and to screen the guilty and the favored. The law has, it is believed, a remedy for this, and although it may not concern the defendants to be tried upon a valid indictment rather that upon this it is fit and wholesome that such things be done decently and in order. The Judges after consultation set the indictments aside. No effort was made to secure a new indictment.

Filkins' Version of the Murder

When Filkins was asked his theory of the murder, he said that Richard Lucks, one of the Loomis Negroes, told him that Jones and Bird killed Wash. They came there with a fine turnout that they had stolen in Vermont. They gave Wash the wagon and harness, and wanted him to give them $75 for the horse. He told them that his negro had seen Filkins spotting them, and refused to purchase the animal. Jones went to the negroes shanty and asked Lucks where he saw Filkins, the negro replied that he had not seen him at all. Jones then returned to the house and accused Wash of trying to swindle him out of the horse "You thought, he said, that we would get scared and run away and you would get the horse for nothing", Jones then threatened to cut the throat of the horse and leave the carcass on the farm. He was about to put his threat into execution when Grove appeared and offered him $30 for the animal, which was worth $300. "Give us $35 said Jones and take us to the nearest railroad station and we will close the bargain". Grove said he would have to run the horse to the next station before he could get the money. Jones and Bird agreed to wait. Grove returned after midnight without the horse and without the money. A fight took place in which Wash was killed and Grove sent to the verge of the grave. When Eph. Conger and William V. Durfee were replied that he thought it very plausible. After Wash's death the gang went to pieces. Grove retired to a small farm on the edge of the Swamp, east of the river bridge, on the road to Stockwell. Plumb remained on the homestead.

Washington Loomis' Son

Anna or (Hanna Wright) a former resident of Higginsville claimed to be the lawful wife of Washington Loomis, a claim which Wash did not dispute and which so far as known was founded on fact. As will be remembered this lady received a so-called accidental gun shot wound, from which she died leaving an infant son, who was not yet one year old, named Grove E. Loomis. For the first two years of his life nothing of importance transpired but the death of his mother. During the absence of his father he committed some trivial act of childish mischief for which he received a severe whipping from one of his uncles. That brought about the turning point in the child's career, for no sooner had Wash returned home and learned the particulars he proceeded to give his offending brother a beating he richly deserved. The father then took his son and placed him in the hands of Richard and Lydia Gorton (whose home was east of Bailey Lake near Kelley's Corners), for their adoption and protection, making a request that they rear him in ignorance of his parentage, and to teach him to call them father and mother promising at the same time to aid and assist them in providing for the child, which promise he faithfully and satisfactorily fulfilled up to the time of his death. After the death of the boy's father, the Loomis family endeavored to regain possession of the child in various ways, by flattery and otherwise. As when Wash died he possessed property values at from $8,000 to $10,000 including two shares in the old Homestead, besides personal property, which would become the boy's when he reached the age of twenty-one. The only object the Loomises had in seeking to recover the boy was that they might at the same time come into possession of his property. Thus matters drifted until the winter of 1875, three days before Grove Jr. would have reached the age of fourteen, when by
law he could choose his own guardian. It was generally understood it was the boy's intention to appoint Mrs. Gorton, his adopted Mother to whom he had become much attached.

Cornelia applied at the Surrogates office in Clinton and by falsely representing the matter, got appointed a legal guardian for the boy until he arrived at fourteen years of age. Cornelia then with two of her brothers, Grove and Plumb, and a stranger whom they represented to be an officer, went to the home of the now widowed Mrs. Gorton while she and the boy were at dinner and demanded him. The boy ran to his adopted mother and in tears entreated her protection, begging her not to let them take him away. Mrs. Gorton did her best to prevent the abduction of the boy, but she and boy were overpowered and they finally succeeded in getting him into the sleigh, disregarding his appeals to allow him to remain where he was. After the Loomises departed with the boy, Mrs. Gorton went to her neighbors for help and soon residents of the community started in pursuit of the abductors but in vain. They were tracked through the Swamp and to Pratt's Hollow in Madison County, where it appears Grove jr. had visited relatives of Mrs. Gorton some time before and knowing where he was, he escaped from his captors and took off as fast as he could run for the home of Mrs. Gorton's brother, but they soon caught up with him and here ended all definite trace of the unfortunate boy. The Loomises however said that at Pratts Hollow he was taken aboard the Midland Railroad and accompanied by Cornelia was taken to Denio Loomis' who resided at Central Square in Oswego County. The reason given by the boy's abductors for taking him away was that he was being reared in ignorance and vice, was not properly clothed or cared for and that they wished to educate and make a man of him while the real facts were that the boy was, owing to the peculiar circumstances of the case, receiving more than ordinary attention, and attended a week day and Sabbath schools regularly, winter and summer ever since he had been of sufficient age, a fact which was verified by neighbors in the vicinity. The school house was about thirty or forty rods from the Gorton Residence.

Orlando Stetson Esq. a Justice of the Peace and M. B. Crossett a Constable went to the home of Grove L. Loomis and informed him that when the facts of the case became known, public opinion would be strong against him in consequence of the outrage he had been a party to that his person and property, as well as that of the Loomis family might be endangered, and that the best thing that he could do was to return the boy to Mrs. Gorton where he belonged. As the result of this interview, Grove went at once to the Sheriff's office and sought the protection of the county, stating he had been threatened with being mobbed. A Deputy Sheriff was sent at once to the scene of the trouble, and after making a careful investigations of the facts in the case, visited the Loomises, and told them that they need have no fear of their property, as no harm was intended, but as far as he could learn unless the boy was at once restored to Mrs. Gorton there would be trouble, and although the county could protect property and reimburse the same if destroyed under the circumstances, still it had no particular jurisdiction over the person and advised them to act accordingly.

Parties made arrangements to visit Denio Loomis to see if the boy was being held there, but had to postpone the trip owing to the railroad being blockaded by snow. Speculation on the subject of the boy's destiny was that he had been taken to Canada. Others thought Vermont, still others that he had been taken to the sea coast and had already or soon would be sent out of the country to some distant place from which he would not be able to return. Later it was learned that Grove Jr. was being held at the home of his Uncle William Loomis in Higginsville. Council was taken with Justice Henry T. Utley of Waterville. All means were sought for a legal way to bring Grove back. Someone remembered that Grove had fought with a boy at school by the name of Owen Sweeney. After much persuading, Terrance Sweeney, father of Owen, swore out a warrant for Groves arrest. Sheriff Filkins armed with the warrant went to Higginsville. Cornelia, to keep the boy from running away, had hidden his clothes and refused to turn them over to Filkins, who started to take blankets from a bed to
wrap around the boy. Cornelia then produced the clothes and the lad was taken home to Mrs. Gorton. The Loomis Family caused them no more trouble. Grove E. Loomis lived an industrious respected and simple life in and around Stockwell where he died in 1937 and is buried beside his wife, Mary Luce Loomis, in the Stockwell Cemetery, leaving no children.

The Lone Green Goods Man

Grove Loomis Collins was the son of Asa and Lucia Loomis Collins and a grandson of George Washington Loomis Sr. In his younger days he was well dressed, and rather good looking, educated and with coolness and nerve that marked him as an unusual man. Early in life he started on his criminal career, a career that differed somewhat from that of the old Loomis gang. He advertised in newspapers and magazines. His mail he collected from a number of different Post Offices, using his own name and at times two other fictitious names at the same office. It is said that at one time he had three separate mail boxes at the Stockwell Post Office from which he received more than all others combined. At the same time he received mail from other offices, as Sangerfield Center and North Brookfield. A sample of his advertisements read like this "MONEY" I want a few shrewd people in each locality to make from dollars, thousands of dollars quietly, new methods, starting key from G. L. Collins. Addresses given of different Post Offices in the locality where he was operating. In reply to letters from nibblers at the Lone Mans bait, saying that the writer "would be on shortly with cash to talk business out of dollars" Collins, in cleverly worded letters would write, "You will have to come out and give us a clear idea of what you are looking for, have you a little cash for a good business? A small amount, say $100, will do to start with, but the lowest we will talk real business with you on is $100. Please enclose all letter we may have written you so that we may recollect you". As a delicate hint of the nature of the business he intended to discuss with such as cared to (come on), the Lone Man put in each of his letters a green silk thread. Collins was first arrested by Postoffice Inspectors when he received his mail at the Postoffice at Stockwell in September 1898. He served eighteen months in the Elmira Reformatory, arrested at Fort Erie, Canada in September 1900 and served eighteen months in the Toronto Penitentiary. Other arrests were made at North Brookfield, served one year in Auburn. He was arrested at Linden for operating a green goods game through the mails. He was indicted at Trenton by the United States Grand Jury, secured $2,500 bail and promptly skipped. United States Judge Lansing issued a bench warrant for him but although the Postoffice Inspectors hunted high and low they could not get a trace of him. Later they heard that he had been arrested in Ottawa, Canada on the same charge and had made a daring escape with another prisoner. After that they were informed by Asa Collins of Linden, the Lone Mans father, that he had been killed in an accident. The father even went so far as to take out letters of administration on Grove Collins' estate and his family went into mourning for his supposed death. Wanted by two governments, announced to have been killed in escaping from a Canadian prison, Collins led Postoffice Inspectors a chase for more than a year, in which nearly every state in the union was traversed. He had served three terms in prison, jumped heavy bail and escaped from the penitentiary, but the "Lone Green Goods Man's hunger for his old game lead him with his characteristic nerve to advertise in the papers signing his name, G. L. Collins, 123 East Thirty First Street, New York City. The Ad came to the notice of Inspector McClusky who had Collins' record of wanted for jail breaking and on charges of victimizing hundreds of people all over the country. McClusky notified the Postoffice Inspectors and with McConville, Cortelyon and Boyle went to the address given and caught Collins busy with his correspondence. They arrested him, put nippers on his wrists in case of accident and searched the room. The Lone Man was well dressed. He took his arrest with the coolness and nerve that had always marked him as an unusual man. In several notebooks, filled from cover to cover in neat handwriting,
were 30,000 addresses of people from New York to San Francisco and from New Orleans to Chicago. A plentiful supply of the green silk threads were found, enough to enclose in all the letters of he 30,000 addresses he had secured. There were found also a number of letters from New York Stock Brokers showing that Collins' had played the market heavily and had been a big looser. Collins' table was covered with letters from suckers ready to take the bait offered by him. After serving a stiff prison sentence, he came back to his run down farm in Tinker Hollow (a part of the old Loomis farm) where he spent his last days. He had made fortunes out of his "Green Goods Game", and lost them in stock gambling on Wall and Lasalle Streets and died a poor broken old man. Grove L. Collins died July 14, 1905.

After the death of Wash, the family went to pieces. Grove Sr. retired to a small farm on the cross road through the Swamp leading to Stockwell, just east of the Loomis Bridge. Plumb with his family, his mother and Cornelia remained on the home farm, living in a cabin on the hill that was once occupied by negroes and others who worked on the farm. Everything went to rack and ruin, the blackened cellar of the old home and the rusting farm implements told the story of the retribution. Plumb was at law continuously over something or other for years wasting a good share of his wealth. Some hold that although he had sinned, he had also been much sinned against. It is seriously and confidentially stated that one of the foreclosures he fought so stubbornly was on a real estate mortgage given to secure a person who had consented to go bail for him in some original suit that went against him provided the bondsman was secured as indicated. Mr. Loomis appeared at the time appointed and of course the mortgage should have been rendered void, the object for which it was given having been accomplished, but those who claim to know say that, that very mortgage on the decease of the holder passed down as one of the assets of the estate and years after was foreclosed. It is said there was nothing in the mortgage that showed it was for money actually loaned, although it was really only for the purpose stated. If this is true and many other such cases were, Mr. Loomis had good reason for fighting in the courts.

The George W. Loomis Home Farm Sold

The George W. Loomis home farm of 220 acres was sold on partition sale in the City of Rome. The partition suit was brought by Grove L. Collins, a grandson of George W. Loomis, against William P. Loomis and twenty three others. The bidding was started at $10 an acre and was steadily raised till $15.025 an acre was reached. This bid being made by A.B. Rice of Hamilton. Referee Briggs struck off the farm to Mr. Rice at $15.025 an acre or $3,305.50 for the farm. A few minutes later Mr. Rice sold his bid to Morris E. Mason who became the owner of the Loomis farm.

In the meantime, Grove Loomis Sr. had purchased a home in Stockwell on Frog Park Road. Plumb later moved to the small farm in the swamp where Grove Sr. had moved from. Here Plumb resided during the remainder of his life. His mother Rhoda Mallett Loomis and sister Cornelia M. Loomis, went to live. I have reason to believe that the Loomises knew most if not all members of the Vigilance committee. Plumb has been quoted as saying that he was hanged by Ephriam Conger and Asa Stone, a son of the Sheriff. He declared that the house was plundered before it was burned. He said that the mob brought a keg of powder with them and wanted to lock the whole family into a room and burn them alive. They stole $585 in money from his sister and carried off $386 belonging to the Crandall girl. There were no papers served on the Loomises at the time, and the Sheriff went back on the hill when his son and Eph Conger put the rope around my neck.

A.H. Webers Clothing store in the Candee Block was burglarized on October 17, 1890 with $400 worth of clothing and other articles were taken. Chief Dagwell of Utica accompanied by Detective Cleveland, Deputies McElwine, Burke and William H. Jones, Chief of Police Driscoll, Constables
John St. John and Peter Kilmurry. Prisoners taken were Charles Hamilton of New York City, leader of the gang, Hone Gustin who lived in Tinker Hollow, and Chris Autis were taken with much plunder along with A. H. Weber's clothing were taken from an old hay barn on the Morris Mason farm.

From The Waterville Times, dated Thursday January 22, 1880, The Syracuse Herald speaks of "Denio Loomis, a leading member of a gang of outlaws, is dead, and Central New York, especially Oswego County breathes more freely. The Loomis Family has been a terror to the inhabitants of this section for years, and as they die off one by one, the people feel relieved".

GEORGE WASHINGTON LOOMIS 1777--1851 Died in Town of Sangerfield

RHODA MALLETT LOOMIS 1793--1887 Died at Hastings N.Y., October 8 was buried Oct. 11, in Sangerfield Cemetery by the Rev. J.W. Hyde, Rector of Grace Church, Waterville.

CORNELIA M. LOOMIS 1821--1893 Died at Hastings, N.Y. Oct. 27. Was buried in Sangerfield Cemetery by the Rector, F.B. Cossitt of Grace Church, Waterville. Rhoda and Cornelia are listed as Baptised, Confirmed and Communicants of Grace Church.

WASHINGTON LOOMIS 1865 Was killed by a Vigilance Committee, October 29, 1865.

GROVE LOOMIS SR. 1877

AMOS P. LOOMIS (PLUMB) 1903 Died Aug. 26, about 70 years old.

The body of Wheeler Loomis, the last of the famous family was brought to Waterville, March 23, 1911, the funeral was held at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Frank Roberts, on Hanover Street, Internment made in Sangerfield Cemetery. Wheeler Loomis was the fifth child in a family of ten children, and was about 80 years of age. The greater part of his life was spent in Canada, where he died at Alexandria on March 20, 1911. He left several children, his wife had been dead for some years. At the time of the famous raid, October 29, 1869, Wheeler Loomis was in Canada, therefore was not mixed up in the events of that date.

GROVE LOOMIS JR. 1861--1937 Stockwell Cemetery no children

MARY L. LUCE his wife 1824--1934 Stockwell Cemetery

JAMES L. FILKINS 1824--1893 Sweets Corners Cemetery

SARAH J. CRAWFORD FILKINS 1829--1905