

ELY HARRIS
AND
LUCRETIA RANSOM
Of Connecticut, New York, and Ontario

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FIRST GENERATION

1. ELY HARRIS was born at Saybrook, CT 5 Nov. 1755, the son of Asa 3 Harris (Asa 2, James 1 of New London, CT) and his wife Anne/Ann/Anna Ely (Daniel 3, William 2, Richard 1 of Lyme, CT). <1.><2.><3.> Ely (variantly spelled as "Eli" and pronounced "Eee' lee") died near Ingersoll, Oxford Co., Ont. 18 Apr. 1813 (G.S.). He married, probably at Colchester, CT say 1774, LUCRETIA RANSOM, born there 5 June 175(?), the daughter of Peleg and Sarah (Rogers) Ransom of Colchester <4.>. The exact year of Lucretia's birth is illegible in the Colchester vital records. As her brother, Harris Ransom, was born 18 Aug. 1755, a birthdate in 1754 would be consistent with Lucretia's date of death on 18 Feb. 1836 in her 82nd year (G.S.). Ely and Lucretia are buried in Harris Street Cemetery, which is located south of Ingersoll.

The Ransom genealogy does not list the mother of Lucretia (Ransom) Harris, the wife of Peleg Ransom <5.>. However, an early Connecticut litigation provides that information. Peleg Ransom and Sarah his wife, John Dodge Jr. and Lydia his wife, which John Dodge Jr. is son of Mr. John Dodge, all of Colchester, versus Jordan Rogers of Branford and Peter, Nathaniel, Josiah, Ebenezer and Timothy Rogers, all of New London, demanded partition of three pieces of land and a mansion house in New London, Great Neck, as per writ dated Dec. 20, 1749. The case had been continued from February session last. The defendants defaulted, found for the plaintiffs. <6.> All were heirs of William Rogers of New London, deceased. Rogers (p. 73-74) lists Lydia Rogers, born 1729, (who married John Dodge, 2d) and Sarah Rogers, with no date of birth, who married a Ransom, as daughters of William 3 Rogers (James 2-1) and his wife, Elizabeth 4 Harris (Peter 3, Gabriel 2, Walter 1). <7.>

Ely grew up in Saybrook, where his father's name appears as a customer on the ledger of merchant and cousin James Harris between 1729 and 1743, when that ledger ends. <8.> And his father Asa was "of Saybrook" in 1753 when he sold his share of the land which had passed to him, his brother, and his two sisters from their mother. <9.> Three of Asa's children were baptized in Saybrook: Mary in 1750, ELY in 1755, and Alpheus in 1757. <10.> The family joined the Harris migration from Connecticut to Kings Co., Nova Scotia before 29 May 1761, when Asa received a grant of land in Horton. <11.> Unfortunately, Asa soon died in Nova Scotia, frozen to death in a snowstorm 24 Jan. 1762, when Ely was less than seven years old. <12.> The widowed mother must have returned shortly thereafter to her native Connecticut with her children. On 5 April 1763 Mrs. Anne Harris, residence not given, was appointed guardian to her son Champlin on his choice (indicating that he was age 14 or over) and to her four minor children: ELEY (sic), Alpheus, Betty (sic) and Lucy. <13.>

Ely Harris and Lucretia Ransom must have married at age 18 or before, an unusually early age. Perhaps this was because he had no father in the home to insist that he contribute his labors until the age of 21. And perhaps his mother was remarried to Clement Daniels about this time.

Eli Harris was a private in Captain Amos Jones' militia (20th Company, 12th Regiment) in 1774, just prior to the Revolution. There

is no record of Revolutionary War service for him in Colchester as there is for his brothers, Ebenezer and Champlin Harris. Ely signed the oath of loyalty to the new state government on 2 Dec. 1777, and he was admitted as a voter 9 April 1781. The town of Colchester paid him for boarding Clement Daniels and wife (his mother and step-father), town paupers, for the year 1788. <14.>

On 3 Mar. 1783 Peleg Ransom deeded three acres in Witch Meadow to his daughter Lucretia, "wife of Eli Harris." On 21 Feb. 1786 Ely Harris "of Colchester" bought 10 acres in the Township of Colchester in the Parish of New Salem from David Chapman of Chatham, and on 31 Jan. 1787 Eli Harris bought three acres adjacent to his own in New Salem Parish from Ichabod Chapman of Colchester. He (and not his nephew Eli Harris, born 1764, son of Asa) was listed as a taxpayer in Salem Parish, Colchester, in 1787-8 by Taintor. <15.> On 30 Apr. 1790 Ely and Lucretia Harris "of Chatham" sold 16 acres in Colchester to Bond Bigelow. The deed was signed "Ely Harris" and Lucretia signed by her mark. (Colchester Deeds, 10:376; 11:103,201; 13:93.) On 19 Jan. 1789 Ely Harris "of Colchester" bought 40 acres and 10 rods in Chatham (now East Hampton) from Ebenezer and George Harding, and sold this property "with the buildings thereon standing" to William Welch on 27 May 1793 (East Hampton Deeds, 5:165; 8:62).

With few resources available in 1878, Morgan confused this Ely, born 1755, and the Eli, born 1764. Finding no information on this Ely, Morgan stated that he "probably died young." <8.> In addition, Rogers stated in 1902 (p. 49) that Ely's mother was Mary 4 Rogers (Samuel 3-2, James 1) and repeated the statement that Ely "prob. d. young." The situation was partially clarified by the publication of the Harris family Bible record in 1939. <1.>

In 1790 the household of Ely Harris appears in Chatham (now East Hampton), Middlesex County, CT (p. 81) with one male over age 16, seven males under age 16 and two females. In 1791 he was a member of the School Committee in Chatham (East Hampton Town Records). Where Ely and Lucretia lived between 1793 and 1798 is unknown.

In 1798 "Ely" Harris is listed as ensign of a new militia company in Otsego Co., NY under Captain Asa Fisk. On 29 March 1803 his rank was listed as "vice" under Solomon Fisk, ensign, in Lt. Col. Commandant Francis Henry's Regiment, and "Eli" Harris had "moved" by that date. <16.> Eli Harris appears in the 1800 census of Otsego Co. (p.14) near son Ariel and brother Asa with a household containing two males under 10, three males 10-16, two males 16-26, and one male over 45; two females under 10, one female 16-26 and one female over 45 years of age. No land records were found for Ely Harris in Otsego Co., which he left about 1802, to join the early settlement of Oxford Co., Ont., taking most of his family with him. The married children: sons Ariel, Alvan and Daniel Harris and daughter Lucretia (Harris) Hill remained in Otsego County at that time.

Supposedly, Ely and his sons journeyed from New York to Oxford County by horseback in 1803. "... He alighted a short distance south of the present site of the town of Ingersoll, and thrusting his cane into the rich loam said to the boys, "We will stay here"...." <17.> Pioneer settlers usually made the journey by a wagon pulled by oxen with the family cow following behind. Early New York trails became mere Indian trails in Ontario. Upon arrival, there were the customary pioneer tasks: building shelter for the family, clearing the trees and

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pulling stumps, tilling the soil, then planting and harvesting the crops. Oxford County was opened to American immigrants in the 1790's despite the potential effect of their political beliefs. The Americans were not welcomed by Ontario's Loyalists, whose memories of the Revolutionary War- and the trials that they had suffered- were not forgotten. Settlement of Oxford County began in 1798, and by 1817 the population of the entire county was 530 with only 76 inhabited houses, no place of worship, one Baptist minister, one grist mill and two sawmills. <18.>

Ely Harris, "yeoman" "of Oxford," first appears in Oxford County land records on 22 Oct. 1810 when he bought 100 acres in lot 19, Concession 3. The deed was signed by Ely Harris in the presence of Elijah Harris. On 24 Oct. 1810 Charles Ingersoll, merchant of Queenstown, sold 200 acres in lot 19, Concession 2 to Ely Harris "of Oxford Twp." The deed was witnessed by Cyrus Summer of the District of Niagara, physician, and Elijah Harris of Oxford, yeoman, and registered 20 Nov. 1810 on the oath of Elijah Harris. Then on 13 Dec. 1810 Thomas Horner, Esq. of Burford Township, Oxford County, sold 40 acres in lot 18, Concession 1 to Ely Harris. (Oxford County Memorials (deeds), 304, 305, 312.)

On 2 Feb. 1811 Ely Harris conveyed the 40 acres in lot 18, Concession 1 (which he had just purchased in December) "to Daniel Harris late of the United States, yeoman," for "the natural affection said Ely Harris has & holds towards the sd. Daniel Harris his son." The witnesses were James P. Harris and Elisha Harris, both yeomen of Oxford. The Deed of Gift was signed by Daniel Harris in the presence of Elisha Harris. On 6 Dec. 1811 Ely Harris of Oxford Township conveyed 50 acres in lot 19, Conc. 2 by Deed of Gift to Elisha Harris "whereby said Ely Harris for & in consideration of the natural love & affection" ... "and for the better maintenance support & livelihood of him the said Elisha Harris," witnessed by Gilbert Harris, yeoman, and Elijah Harris, labourer, both of Oxford. (Oxford County Memorials (deeds), 364, 459.)

Then on 13 Feb. 1812 Ely Harris of Oxford Township, yeoman, conveyed 80 acres in lot 19, Concession 2 to "Lucretia Hill dau/o said Ely Harris" ... "in consideration of natural love and affection ... and also for the better maintenance support and livelihood of the sd. Lucretia Hill," witnessed by Gilbert Harris of Oxford, yeoman. This memorial "is hereby required to be registered ... by me William Hill the husband & guardian of the sd. Lucretia Hill." This was signed by William Hill in the presence of Gilbert Harris and Samuel Lewis, and it was registered 7 June 1814 on the oath of Gilbert Harris. (Oxford County Memorial (deed), 461.)

Ely Harris appears in "Oxford upon the Thames" (as Oxford Township was called at that time) as assessor in 1811 and 1812. On the 1812 assessment roll Ely is listed with 120 acres of land, 60 acres of it cultivated, with no horses but with four oxen and six cows. <18.> Ely Harris, with sons Gilbert and Elisha, signed the oath of allegiance to their new country on 11 Jan. 1812 <20.> as a result of the threat of war between England and the United States.

Ely Harris died intestate, and Gilbert Harris "as nearest of kin at that time" petitioned on behalf of the estate. The inventory, listing personal goods and effects but no property, was signed by Gilbert, James P. and Daniel Harris. <21.> Ely was buried on his farm

and later moved to the burying ground of the Second Regular Baptist Church of West Oxford, now called Harris Street Cemetery, south of Ingersoll. Lucretia was widowed for almost 13 years. One can only guess that she lived with one of her children during that time. This Harris family was Baptist, the religious faith practiced by their early Rogers ancestors in New London.

No single record provides this family group, which is constructed from numerous sources and circumstantial evidence. Descendant Rev. Alex Harris remarked at a 1910 Harris family reunion that "The Harris' though physically small of stature were characteristically persistent in holding their own opinions, especially on moral or religious matters and lacking perhaps a keen sense of wit were persevering in the accumulation of wealth." <17.>

Children, (HARRIS) first nine, at least, born Connecticut:

- 2.+ i. ARIEL, b. say 1775.
- 3.+ ii. DANIEL, b. 31 Mar. 1776, "second son."
- 4.+ iii. ALVAN, b. 1778/9.
- 5.+ iv. ELIJAH.
- 6.+ v. LUCRETIA.
- 7.+ vi. JAMES P., b. 1785.
- 8.+ vii. ELISHA, b. 15 Mar. 1787.
- 9.+ viii. GILBERT, b. 1780-1789.
- 10.+ ix. SARAH, b. CT ca. 1793.
- 11.+ x. JOHN, b. NY 21 June 1795.
- xi. DAUGHTER, b. 1790-1800, prob. the ELIZA HARRIS who m. Oxford Co., Ont. 27 May 1832, by C. Ingersoll, J. P. of Ingersoll, CROWIN SWEENIE, both "of Oxford." The witnesses were James Harris, Peter Hagle and Wm. Hill, a son and two sons-in-law of Ely and Lucretia Harris. (London District Marr., 1: 55.) Sweenie is not an Oxford Co. name, and it was not found again in any of the extant records.

1. Harris Bible in NEHR, 93 (1939):298. 2. MORGAN. 3. Moses S. Beach & Rev. William Ely, D.D., The Ely Ancestry (New York; 1902). 4. Colchester VR, 1:88. 5. Wyllis Cadwell Ransom, Historical Outline of the Ransom Family of America, & Genealogical Record of the Colchester, Conn. Branch (Ann Arbor, MI; 1903), No. 11. 6. New London County Court of June, 1750, Case No. 25, at the Connecticut State Library, Hartford. 7. Mansfield, CT, Deeds, 3:838; NYGBR 51 (1920):300. 8. MORGAN, 36. 9. New London Deeds, 17:9. 10. The Vital Records of Saybrook Colony 1635-1860 ... (Old Saybrook, 1985), 389, 390, 391. 11. Arthur Wentworth Hamilton Eaton, The History of Kings County, Nova Scotia (Salem, MA; 1910), 73. 12. NEHR, 97 (1943):394. 13. New London Probate District, Connecticut State Library File No. 2436. 14. Colchester Town Records. 15. MORGAN, 47; and Charles M. Taintor, Extracts from the Records of Colchester, with Some Transcripts from the Recording of Michael Taintor of "Brainford" (Hartford, CT; 1864), 155. 16. MILITARY MIN OF NY, 1: 418, 677. 17. "Harris Picnic" in "Tillsonburg Liberal Newspaper," Tillsonburg, Ont., Sept. 8, 1910. 18. OXFORD GAZ, 143-4. 19. OXFORD GAZ, 141, 143. 20. OATHS OF ALLEGIANCE. 21. Darryl Bonk, Wills of Oxford County 1805 to 1870, (Woodstock, Ont.; 1980), No. 8; and research of Oxford County probate records at the Ontario Archives in Toronto by descendant William E.

7. REV. JAMES P. HARRIS was born in Connecticut (census) in 1785 and died in Oxford Co., Ont. 15 Sept. 1858 (G.S.), the son of Ely and Lucretia (Ransom) Harris. He married about 1810 LAURA (Lorainy) JANES. She was born in the United States, possibly South Hero, VT in 1791 and died in Oxford Co. 11 Mar. 1873, age 81 years, 9 months (G.S.), the daughter of Heman and Abigail (Burdick) Janes of Vermont and Oxford Co., Ont. <1.>. James P. and Lorainy are buried in Harris Street Cemetery next to his parents.

On 7 Apr. 1807 James P. Harris, yeoman "of Oxford," bought 50 acres in lot 19, Concession 1 (Oxford Co. Memorial 166). The council of the Baptist church convened 5 Oct. 1809. "Brothers James and Elisha Harris came forward and offered themselves to this church and were received. Zachariah Burtch was chosen Deacon of this church and James Harris, clerk." <2.>

James Harris was commissioned a lieutenant 14 July 1812 in the 1st Regiment of the Oxford Militia. This regiment was engaged at Detroit on 12 Aug. 1812 and at Fort Erie on 28 Nov. 1812. (It is ironic to note that James fought at Erie on the British side while his cousin Asa P. Harris (Asa 5-4-3-2, James 1), a native of Erie Co., NY, fought there as a captain on the American side.) James is also listed as a lieutenant on the roll of Capt. Curtis' Company between 8 and 24 Jan. 1814. Then he appears as a private on the muster roll of volunteers from the 1st Regiment of the Oxford Militia, commanded by Lt. William Teeple, on the expedition taking and conveying prisoners from Oxford to Burlington between 17 and 23 Dec. 1814. <3.>

James P. Harris is listed on the 1812 assessment roll of "Oxford upon the Thames" with 50 acres of land, 39 acres uncultivated, with one horse and two cows. By the 1824 assessment roll he had 200 acres of land, 145 acres uncultivated, in lot 19, Concession 1 of West Oxford Township. <4.>

James Harris preached for the Free Communion Baptist church, was received into their fellowship, and in October, 1822 he was ordained. These early ministers received no salary, and they had an occupation in addition to preaching. They were often paid with clothing. As one of the pioneer ministers of Oxford County in the early days of its history, his district extended from Ingersoll through East and West Oxford Townships and Burford Township on to Brantford Township when the district was practically a wilderness. <5.>

James Harris Sr. is listed in the 1851 census of West Oxford as a yeoman with his wife, daughter Samantha, granddaughter Melinda and grandson Miles, living in a one family, one-story frame house. Listed on the same page are James Harris (Jr.), Elisha Harris, age 65, Gilbert Harris, age 39, Daniel Harris (Jr.), age 46 and Daniel Harris Senr., age 76. These early Harris families were close-knit, most living in the townships of West Oxford and Dereham in Oxford County.

In his will, dated 5 Sept. 1858, James Harris Sr., age 73 years, named his wife Lorainy, sons Gilbert, William and James Harris, Jr., and daughters Emily Harris alias Quartermas and Samantha Harris alias Elliott. Brother John Harris and son James Harris Jr. were named executors. <6.>

Children (HARRIS), probably born Oxford Co., Ont.:

45.+ i. GILBERT, b. Nov., 1812.

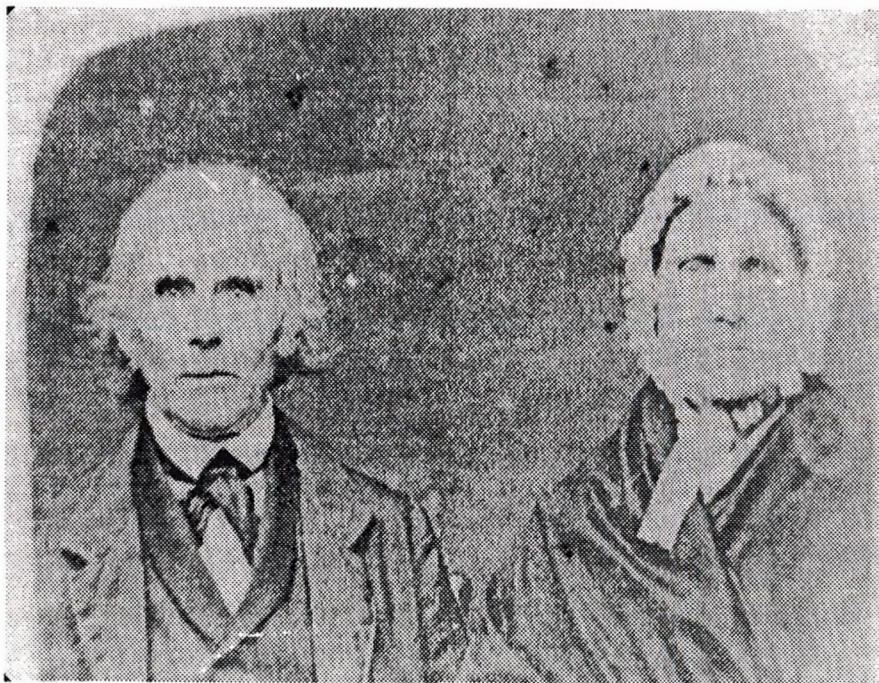
46.+ ii. REUBEN, b. Sept., 1814.

iii. ESTHER, b. 22 Apr. 1816; m. JAMES D. HARRIS (See No. 15).

- 47.+ iv. WILLIAM, b. 6 Feb. 1818.
48.+ v. EMILY, b. 11 Apr. 1820.
49.+ vi. JAMES JR., b. 21 Aug. 1823.
50.+ vii. SAMANTHA, b. 6 June 1833.

REFERENCES:

1. Rev. Frederic Janes, The Janes Family (New York, 1868), 177; and Dr. Reba Neighbors Collins, History of the Janes-Peek Family (Edmond, OK, 1975), 135. 2. AXE & THE WHEEL. 3. BURFORD HIST, 218, 246, 248. 4. OXFORD GAZ, 143, 147. 5. SR obituary of daughter Samantha, 11 Aug. 1908. 6. Oxford Co. PR, Will No. 9.



REV. JAMES P. HARRIS AND WIFE LORAINY JANES

49. JAMES HARRIS, JR. was born in Oxford Co., Ont. about 1824 and died in West Oxford Twp. 1 June 1885 in his 61st year (G.S.), the son of Rev. James P. and Lorainy (Janes) Harris (No. 7). He married first 6 Jan. 1848 JULIA RANNEY. The witnesses were Homer Ranney and Warren Harris. <1.>. She was born in Vermont (census) about 1824 and died at Salford, Oxford Co. <2.>, 2 Apr. 1880, age 56 (G.S.), the daughter of Hiram and Lydia (Chase) Ranney of Westminster, VT and Hagle's Corners, Oxford Co. <3.>. He married second within nine months Mrs. ELIZABETH JANE (TRIGGERSON) WILSON of London <4.>. She was born in Ontario about 1842 and died in West Oxford 20 Oct. 1890 <5.>. James Jr. and his first wife are buried in Harris Street Cemetery.

James Jr., among the first to build a cheese factory as early as 1865 in the Ingersoll area, learned to make cheese from his mother-in-law. It was the cooperation of Harris, Galloway and Ranney that produced the "Big Cheese" in 1866. It took 35 tons of milk to make a cheese six feet ten inches in diameter, and required six horses to haul it to the Ingersoll rail station. It was displayed in Saratoga at the New York State Fair and in England at the London Exposition. It served its purpose of promoting Canada's foreign cheese market. <6.> In 1872 he built the lovely Victorian mansion at a cost of \$5,000, which still stands as Elmhurst Inn overlooking M-C 401. In 1882 he built the Salford cheese factory just south of the village, with an output at one time of 300 tons of cheese. He also planted an early apple orchard behind Elmhurst.

"Mr. Harris was a modest, unassuming man, and yet his aim was to lead in his profession as a dairyman." "His beautiful grounds and residence will long remain as one of these monuments to his memory" <7.>

The will of James Harris of West Oxford, dated 7 July 1884, names wife Elizabeth Jane; sons Judd and Eugene Harris; nephew Miles Harris; daughters Minnie Harris, Laura McKee and Lydia Davis; and Samantha Elliott, wife of John S. Elliott <8.>.

The will of Elizabeth Jane Harris of West Oxford, dated 30 Sept. 1890, names step-son Judd C. Harris and step-daughter Minnie A. Harris, sister Amelia Coulter, father John Triggerson and brother John Triggerson <9.>.

Litigation on 8 May 1891 reveals the names of the heirs of James Harris Jr. and those of his second wife: plaintiffs Eugene J. Harris, Laura McKee, Lydia Davis, beneficiaries, in addition to two trustees of James' estate and the second wife's executor versus defendants Judd C. Harris and Minnie Harris; and infants under 21 years of age: George, Mildred and Harris McKee; Maud, Eugene, Carrie and Ada Davis; Correine Elizabeth Harris; David and Annie Miller; Willie Heart; and Mary Jane Coulter. <10.>

Children (HARRIS), born West Oxford Twp., Oxford Co., Ont.:

- 232.+ i. LYDIA ASENATH, b. ca. 1853/4 (censuses) or 1856 (G.S.).
- 233.+ ii. LAURA ELINOR, b. 1855.
- iii. EUGENE JAMES, b. 1857 and d. Ingersoll 18 Aug. 1926, unm.
He was a graduate of McMaster University in 1898 and a Baptist minister in Ontario and Canada West. Buried Harris St. cem.
- 234.+ iv. JUDD CHARLES, b. 26 Apr. 1859.
- 235. v. MINNIE A., b. ca. 1864; m. after 1891 WILLIAM CRAIG and had two daughters. Of Toronto in 1924.

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REFERENCES:

1. Brock District Marriages, 1839-1858, 93.
2. Funeral card sent by descendant Jean Harvey of Brandon, Manitoba.
3. Charles Collard Adams, Middletown Upper Houses (New York, 1908), 245-6.
4. SR, 3 Dec. 1880.
5. IC obituary, 23 Oct. 1890.
6. AXE & THE WHEEL.
7. SR obituary, 12 June 1885.
8. Oxford Co. General Register, No. 98065, Book K, No. 3506.
9. Oxford Co. PR, 8:78.
10. Oxford Co. General Register, No. 1497.

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*James Harris of the Township of Saugey by publication of James Ranney
West Oxford Brock District Durham the 6th of March - James Harris
and Julia Ranney of the Town Brock District
Ship of Durham Brock Dist*

MARRIAGE RECORD OF JAMES HARRIS AND JULIA RANNEY

Died

HARRIS.—At Salford, on Friday morning, April 2,
JULIA, wife of James Harris, in her 36th year.

The Funeral

Friends will meet at the residence
of her mother, Mrs. L. Ranney, Sal-
ford, on Sunday, 4th inst., at 11 a.m.,
and thence proceed to her late resi-
dence, West Oxford, where funeral
services will be held at 1 p.m.

Friends and Acquaintances are
invited to attend.

APRIL 2nd, 1880.