

The history of John Martineau  
by Mason Larkin

I am going to tell you the story of the life of my great, great, great, great grandfather John Martineau.

John Martineau was born on 22 of March 1793 on Staten Island. He continued to live there as a young boy. When he was fourteen years old he was apprenticed to be a hatter, but he did not like the trade. His new career and situation with his family was frustrating to him so he decided to board a ship bound for England. He had no money so he snuck aboard as a stowaway. He arrived in England without friends or money. He got a place as a helper to an instrument maker named Mr. Varley, who educated him in his trade. While working with Mr. Varley he learned a lot and he soon fell in love with his daughter Jane whom he ended up marrying, soon after they had two children.

His wife Jane shortly died after they were married, she died of an epidemic that swept through the area which they lived. He was left alone with two children to raise. He then met Sarah Hawkins, she was the widow of a Captain in the Royal Navy. They had two children together, Julia and Lucretia.

Returning to the U.S. he landed at Baltimore while the yellow fever was active and his wife died of the disease leaving him with four children to raise by himself. He felt sad and that he came back to America to make a better life for his family, and had lost his wife to the Yellow Fever. He went back to school during this time to become a doctor and surgeon. He then met Eliza Mears and they were married in Elbridge, Onondaga Co. New York in 1824.

He loved to make drawings and sketches of ancient ruins and other ideas of invention. He got a job as a civil engineer and was employed by President Andrew Jackson on the great Delaware Breakwater.

He also laid out a ship canal around Mussel Shoals on the Tennessee River. He laid out and constructed the first railroad in the U.S. from Amberboy to several hundred miles west.

He then got a job down in Alabama. While he was there he started another canal, but lost the job because he struck quicksand in his excavation.

He got frustrated with that line of work and decided to put one of his sketches to work. He invented the horse power threshing machine, which helped the farmers a lot, it really modernized the industry at that time.

He also invented the Turbine Water Wheel. He secured both patents signed by President Andrew Jackson. His last working project was laying out and constructing the Croton River water works system for supplying New York City with water.

John Martineau was six feet two inches tall. He was a good sized man, kind and gentle in his manners. He enjoyed his life. He loved his family and was glad his inventions became so helpful to his generation.

I had fun learning about my great, great, great, great, great grandfather John Martineau. I have learned from him. I hope that if I face hard times in my life that I can move forward and still accomplish positive things.