

## *Chapter 1*

# YOUTH IN RURAL NEW JERSEY AND NEW YORK

### ANCESTRY AND HERITAGE

*W*illiam Wines Phelps descended from a remarkable ancestry going back several generations in colonial America. His male ancestors were noted Puritan community leaders, and when the American Revolution began in 1776, his forebears were known for their patriotism in service of their new nation. His female progenitors, like nearly all women of the era, were merely noted as wives of their husbands relegated to child-rearing and household duties.

Phelps spent the first few years of his life in Dover, New Jersey. He was the first of four children born to Enon Phelps and Mehitabel Goldsmith Phelps in Dover before they moved to central New York State. Eventually they would have twelve children, six boys and six girls.

Dover is located in Hanover Township, Morris County, in the central part of the picturesque northern highlands of New Jersey about twenty-five miles west-northwest of Manhattan Island.<sup>1</sup> The uneven and hilly Morris County region contained vast iron resources. Iron mining and forging with its companion industry of charcoal making (for the forges) engaged all the early settlers of Dover and most of the surrounding Morris County residents. Phelps's grandfather Elijah Phelps lived there with his family from 1754, when the community sprang into commercial importance. The Phelpses remained in Dover until sometime in the 1760s.

Once the Revolutionary War started, New Jersey witnessed more than a third of all the war's battles and skirmishes on its soil. Morris County became the headquarters of General George Washington's army between 1777 and 1780. Washington used the Morris Hills and the Watchung Mountains to screen his army and mask his movements

from the British in New York and to protect himself against repeated attacks from that direction.

Joel Phelps, uncle of W. W. Phelps, served under heroic General William Winds, Dover's most prominent citizen, during the Revolution. Joel decided to live in Dover following the hostilities in 1783 because of his fondness for General Winds. Joel had also lived in Dover for several years as a child. Joel induced his younger brother Enon, W. W. Phelps's father, to settle in Dover as well.

## MIDDLE NAME "WINES"

Young William Wines Phelps was named after this General William Winds, whose surname at birth in 1727 was Wines and who died in October 1789, more than two years before W. W. Phelps's birth in 1792. Winds changed the spelling of his name but continued to pronounce it with a long *i*. W. W. Phelps listened eagerly in his youth to stories about this famous General Winds.

Winds was a wealthy landholding farmer and was well respected in the community for his previous political and military exploits. General Winds had served as a fearless captain of the New Jersey brigade in 1758 during the French and Indian War. In 1765 he was named a justice of the peace by the English crown. That same year, he openly used his position to defy the British Stamp Act. Winds was known for his religious fervor in praying in a loud voice for American freedom and being of enormous and strong stature. He was elected in 1775 to the Continental Congress, which authorized the various colonies to establish militia units to fight against the British. New Jersey officials selected Winds as a colonel of the "1st New Jersey Regiment." After equipping his troops, Winds led them in battle to subdue and capture Tories on Long Island. He then led them in the famous "Northern Expedition" to fight at Lake George, Fort Ticonderoga, and Crown Point near Lake Champlain. Later Winds became a brigadier general and was known for his "stentorian voice" as he set up fortifications in New Jersey. Eventually Winds led his battalion to northern New Jersey and drove the British out of Piscataway. His troops defended New York's Hudson River Valley, where he set up a fort known as "New Winds."<sup>2</sup>

General Winds was connected in significant ways to W. W. Phelps's mother, Mehitabel Goldsmith Phelps.<sup>3</sup> The Goldsmith and Wines families lived in the same village—Southold, Long Island, New York—in the first half of the 1700s. Mehitabel's father, Josiah Goldsmith, and her brother Joel fought under General Winds. Josiah served as Winds's aide-de-camp.

Mehitabel Goldsmith was born September 10, 1775, just as the Revolution was getting under way, in Rockaway, Morris County, New Jersey. Sometime in her youth, she developed a "strong attachment" to General Winds. In some historical records, Mehitabel is identified as Winds's niece, yet no familial relationship exists in the records.

Sometime in the 1780s, an unfortunate incident between Winds and Mehitabel affected the remainder of her life. Winds asked young Mehitabel to fulfill an errand on his horse. The fiery and temperamental horse, which Winds was easily able to control when he rode him, reared and threw the young woman on her back. In a Winds biographical

sketch is the following: “The fall made her [Mehitabel] a cripple for life. During her tedious illness he watched over her with untiring care and tenderness, and, at his death [in 1789], left her a legacy amounting to one-twentieth of his whole estate.”<sup>4</sup>

In his will, Winds actually bequeathed his estate to his wife Ruhamah, and upon her death various portions were to go to specific individuals, including Mehitabel. Winds and his wife were left childless, so his will indicates his desire to grant portions of his estate to various nephews and nieces who verifiably belonged to his family line. Mehitabel was the last person named, thus hinting that she might be his niece.

While living with his brother Joel, Enon Phelps became acquainted with teenager Mehitabel. Enon courted Mehitabel and married her in 1790 or 1791. Enon was about twenty-four and Mehitabel about sixteen at the time of their marriage. They cared for Ruhamah in her advanced age. She died in 1802 and named Enon as executor of her estate and recipient of most of her fortune.<sup>5</sup>

Mehitabel gave birth to William Wines Phelps on February 17, 1792. Most parents did not give their children a middle name at that time. Only two of William’s eleven siblings likewise received a middle name.

## LIFE IN NEW JERSEY

It is difficult to decipher what the economic situation of the young Enon Phelps family was during the 1790s. Family members left no extant diaries or reminiscences of this period. Most male heads of household also owned land or worked as tenants on several acres. From public records we learn that Enon Phelps gradually worked more acres than those he owned himself.<sup>6</sup> In 1796 Enon invested in central New York property and was awaiting the day when he could move his family to Homer, New York.

In this early postwar period, Dover had approximately 300 inhabitants and Hanover Township approximately 2,500.<sup>7</sup> A majority of Hanover Township residents were Quakers, although there was a large Presbyterian following as well.<sup>8</sup> The Phelps family attended church with the Presbyterians along with their friend and charge Ruhamah Winds. Presbyterianism was connected with New England and Long Island Puritanism. In the 1790s, many residents in Hanover were unchurched, meaning they did not belong specifically to any church. Whether the Phelpses belonged to a church or not, Bible reading was part of their daily routine, as William later attested.<sup>9</sup>

The extent of young William’s schooling in Dover remains a complete mystery. Throughout his journalism career, Phelps evidenced a keen mind and an impressive command of the English language, history, geography, literature, other languages, theology, and various sciences. Phelps never referred to his schooling in any extant records except his brief mention of *not* being trained at Dartmouth or Yale. But where did he obtain his learning? After his death in 1872, his wife Sally informed the compilers of *The Phelps Family of America* that he had “a common school education.”<sup>10</sup>

A “common school” had existed in Dover since 1776, but there are no pupil records dating to the eighteenth century.<sup>11</sup> If Phelps attended, he would have started at age six or seven, or in 1798 or 1799. Another distinct possibility is that Phelps, the oldest child of

parents who were close friends of the prominent and wealthy Winds family, could have received private tutoring in his or the Winds's home. Such tutoring for the well-to-do often occurred in that era.

Three additional children were born to Enon and Mehitabel in Dover: Benjamin in 1794, Elijah in 1796, and Ruhamah (named after Ruhamah Winds) in 1799.<sup>12</sup> Other siblings to William would follow in New York.

## LIFE IN CORTLAND COUNTY, NEW YORK

In 1800 Enon moved his family to Homer Township, New York, to virgin forest land that only in the previous decade had become available for settlement as the "Military Tract." Enon and members of his family lived at least part-time in southern Onondaga County, New York, from 1796 to 1800, before their move to the hundred-acre property they purchased in Homer in 1800.<sup>13</sup>

At the close of the Revolutionary War, most of New York State, within its present boundaries, was unsettled. This included Homer Township, Onondaga County (later Cortland County following a subdivision), where Phelps and his family would reside. Before the war, only a few scattered settlements existed westward beyond the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys. These few colonies disappeared in the border warfare during the Revolution, leaving the interior of New York empty of white settlers. The various Iroquois tribes occupied all of western and central New York State. Four of the six Iroquois Indian nations sided with the British during the War of Independence. Since they had become the enemy in the eyes of the patriots, these Indians following the Revolution lost any previous legitimate claim to their lands, which soon were designated "bounty lands" in the "Military Tract" for Revolutionary War veterans. For the most part, the Iroquois had abandoned these open tracts by 1790.

In 1794 the entire central and western area of New York was opened for settlement. A veritable flood of settlers, including the Enon Phelps family, flocked to this portion of the state over the next twenty years. This part of the United States was especially attractive because land was inexpensive and fertile; there was a vast variety of wildlife, game, and fish; and compared to elsewhere, the climate was less severe in winter and not so warm in summer. New York became exceptionally attractive to New Englanders. According to New England custom, numerous townships were laid out. Each was given a classical name of a Roman or Greek philosopher or general such as Hannibal, Brutus, Cato, Cicero, Pompey, Romulus, Solon, Cincinnatus, and Homer. It was in Homer that the Phelps eventually obtained their land.<sup>14</sup>

Why did Enon leave New Jersey? For one thing, he possessed the pioneering spirit felt by so many fellow Americans at the time, the same spirit that certainly had motivated the migrations of his own father, Elijah. Furthermore, Enon saw the chance to improve his economic condition. Likely, John Miller, a pioneer in Homer Township in 1792 and earlier from New Jersey, convinced his friend Enon that opportunities existed in Homer. Miller's lot was close to Enon's eventual acreage in Homer.<sup>15</sup> In 1795 Enon officially purchased his lot in Homer Township in Onondaga County in central New York State from

former governor George Clinton. Enon went to Homer in 1796 and started building a log cabin and clearing his new land. He went more than once to Homer before moving his family completely there in 1800. Enon returned to Morris County, New Jersey, in 1802 briefly to preside over Ruhamah Winds's estate.

Before 1800, when the Phelps arrived in Homer, no more than a hundred settlers had come to the township. Excluding the small plots cleared by the pioneering settlers and a few Indian trails, the town of Homer was filled with dense forestation, primarily oak. Indeed, most of central and western New York was forested at this time. Clearing some of the land for planting was the most arduous undertaking for any new settler. Another principal difficulty for newcomers was the absence of roads, mills, and markets.

The Phelps family was warmly welcomed upon arrival. A local historian of Cortland County noted that "if a new house was to be raised for one of them, notice was given to all within a circuit of perhaps, a dozen miles, resulting in the gathering of as many men . . . and before night . . . the newcomer's dwelling was ready for his occupancy."<sup>16</sup>

Enon's lot was located on a ridge three miles east of the small Homer Village across both the west and east branches of the Tioughnioga River. Their property, the whole hundred acres of lot 50, was in the far southeast corner of Homer Township. The Tioughnioga, which split just four miles southwest of the Phelps property, was the principal waterway of the region and joined the Chenango River to become a tributary of the significant Susquehanna River to the south. The entire region is filled with ridges and valleys carved out by rivers and streams.<sup>17</sup>

In the first few years, the Phelps family, as well as other farmers, had infrequent contact with their "neighbors," as illustrated by this story recorded in a local history:

Mr. [John] Miller, on lot 56, (where T. Mason Loring now resides) was desirous of opening better means of communication with his neighbor [Enon] Phelps; he accordingly started for the purpose of locating a road by "blazing" trees—making what was early called a bridle-path. Leaving the valley, he proceeded [uphill], as he supposed, in the direction of Mr. Phelps's house; he made good progress, finding the route a very feasible one. Pushing on as fast as the brush and his labor marking the trees would admit, he finally emerged from the forest into a clearing. His astonishment may be imagined on finding himself not more than half a mile from the place where he left the valley, and but a short distance from the ground now occupied as a burying-ground. He made a second attempt, but again failed utterly. Procuring a compass, his third effort at road making was successful.<sup>18</sup>

Situated as they were in the far reaches of the township, the Phelps family remained mostly separate from others in Homer as well as from other parts of the county. Their nearest neighbors were likewise farmers. One of the residents in the East River vicinity was John Keep, who later served as the first Cortland County judge. Mr. Keep was a kind and devout man who held religious services in his home and who made a "poor-house" for the indigent. The Phelps likely benefited frequently from his generosity and may have worshipped in his home.<sup>19</sup>

The early Yankee settlers of Homer Township often encountered the howl of the wolf, the growl of the bear, and the frightful scream of the great northern panther. The Phelps, as all others, erected fences around their small homes to keep the dangerous predators away. New settlers were subjected to many inconveniences after they arrived at their new homes—"having no floors to their dwellings, save such as were constructed from split logs; using blocks for chairs, poles tied at the ends with bark for bedsteads, and bark for bed cords; chips for plates, paper for windows, sap troughs for cradles." Generally, the first crop of grain grown by the primitive settlers was a half acre of corn, followed the next year by wheat. The Phelps were able to use a new mill constructed in Homer Village in 1798.<sup>20</sup>

The daily food for early settlers like the Phelps was of necessity quite plain. "Corn bread, made of the coarse pounded meal, with occasionally a change to wheat, with pork as a standard meat, except when it gave way to venison procured of the Indians, was the usual order." Hundreds of great maple trees, however, furnished maple sugar of the best kind.<sup>21</sup>

At first the Homer region was remote from the main thoroughfares of travel and commerce in New York. Not until the 1805–1810 period were large tracts of forested land cleared in Cortland County and the Homer region improved. Then it became widely known that this land consisted of excellent soil suitable for growing many agricultural products. A state road established between Ithaca and Albany, known as the "Albany Turnpike," ran through the villages of Cortland and Homer.

The climate of the Homer vicinity is characterized by great variability. Owing to its significantly higher altitude than the valleys farther west in New York, Cortland County's climate reflects colder winters and a shorter growing season. Summers are definitely more pleasant.<sup>22</sup>

The family of Enon and Mehitabel Phelps grew steadily and rapidly in Homer. Anna was born in 1801, Orin in 1803, Mary in 1806, Ruth in 1808, Enon Wilson in 1811, Joshua in 1813, Jonathan Horton in 1816, and Eliza in 1820. This brought the number of children to twelve, six sons and six daughters. None died in childbirth, which was uncommon in that period. The oldest, William, was already married when his youngest brother and sister were born. Even though Mehitabel was physically disabled from her accident as a teenager, she nevertheless followed the custom of the day: "Women in all classes of society married early and became the mothers of large families."<sup>23</sup> With certainty it can also be assumed that the boys in the Phelps family were granted more educational opportunities than the girls, that being the rule of society at that time.

The Phelps family had settled in a religiously and educationally oriented community. Nearly every family in Cortland County was originally from New England, and they brought numerous values from their Puritan forebears with them. According to a local historian, "Homer was really a piece of New England set down in the Tioughnioga Valley." A familiar saying in that period was "If you want to settle among religionists, go to Homer." The earliest settlers in Homer held religious services in their homes. The Sabbath was strictly kept in Homer, beginning Saturday evening at sundown. "Not to



go to church on Sunday was unthinkable, and even to walk or ride for pleasure on that day was a sin." The "First Religious Society of Homer" was formed in 1798 out of all of Homer's inhabitants. This society was nondenominational for several years since Homer's residents came from Congregational, Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist backgrounds. No single denomination held sway. However, many arguments ensued among the adherents of the various denominations, and within a few years each denomination had its individual society and meetinghouse.<sup>24</sup>

William later reminisced that he had studied the Bible since he was a child but had not become a "professor" (one who professed allegiance) to any specific religious society.<sup>25</sup> Since the Phelps family at first were so isolated and separated by thick forestation from Homer Village three miles away in the river valley, they likely observed their Sabbath at home in the beginning. William was well versed in the holy scriptures in his adulthood, and he loved singing hymns, including "morning hymns" and "evening hymns" that would have been sung in the home. All this indicates that the Phelps family regularly read the Bible and sang hymns at home.

The Phelps family became more partial to the Baptist society. Records from the Solon First Baptist Church indicated that one of William's sisters, Ruhamah, who was seven years his junior, joined the Solon First Baptist Church through baptism in 1816. Another sister, Eliza, also joined the society.<sup>26</sup> When William visited his family in 1841, after many years of being away from them, he noted that the religious ones among them were attending the Baptist congregation.<sup>27</sup> They likely attended church at the thriving Baptist congregation in McGrawville, where many of the Phelps family were later buried.<sup>28</sup> McGrawville was only three miles south of the Phelps property and—after a new road, part of it called "Phelps Road," was completed—was much more accessible than Homer Village. Furthermore, the Keep, Miller, and Crandall families, some of the closest neighbors of the Phelps family, were devout Baptist lay leaders. As a teenager and young adult, William probably attended numerous Baptist services in the Keep home, in the village of Cortland (where the first Baptist meetinghouse was constructed), and in McGrawville.

Education was a rich tradition of New Englanders. Most of the first settlers had gone to school, and they wanted their children to have the same benefits. The first school in all of Onondaga County (before the creation of Cortland County) was constructed in Homer Village in 1798. William and his younger siblings did not attend this school because of the difficulty of getting to and from the village during the winter. Instead they attended the smaller district school located on the east branch of the Tioughnioga River less than a mile from their home. According to a local history, "in the early 1800's the school district of East Homer contained four families which numbered fifty living children, indicating that the East Homer Valley reared children as well as bears."<sup>29</sup>

## WILLIAM'S EDUCATION

Phelps manifested a strong educational background as he later entered his leadership career in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He knew some Greek, Latin, and Hebrew and was acquainted with the classics. He demonstrated considerable

knowledge of world history and geography and had a working knowledge of the law. As an editor, his grammar and spelling were superb, far above that of the average person. He became a well-known poet in the Mormon Church. He was a teacher and compiler of schoolbooks for little children. Phelps was a talented surveyor and topographical engineer. He conducted meteorological experiments throughout his life. Where did he gain all this education and experience? Did his knowledge and skills come from formal institutions, or was it all self-tutoring?

He may have picked up some of the rudiments of his knowledge and experience in common schools in Morris County, New Jersey, and Homer Township, New York, although his refined skills likely were developed elsewhere. Homer led other similarly sparsely populated areas in educational pursuits; it was one of the first smaller communities to establish an academy, called Cortland Academy (named after the county). But in 1819, the year of the academy's founding, Phelps was married and living in Washington County, Ohio, and could not have been a beneficiary of an upgraded educational system in his home community.

The location of Phelps's advanced education may have been in Canandaigua, a thriving community situated at the northern tip of Canandaigua Lake about sixty-five miles northwest of Homer. In 1788 Canandaigua became the headquarters for the emerging Phelps and Gorham Purchase tracts. Soon the village became famed for its educational facilities. Nathaniel Gorham and Oliver Phelps, the region's founders and leading citizens, set aside funds in 1791 for an "Academy or Seminary of learning." In 1795 the Canandaigua Academy was formally incorporated and steps were taken by subscription to raise the funds needed to erect the Academy building, which opened for use in 1804 when Phelps would have completed any possible common school education in Homer. Phelps's father, Enon, was remotely related to Oliver Phelps, who was also one of the trustees, and perhaps negotiated to have his oldest son, who showed a gift for learning, attend the new academy. Trustees of the Canandaigua Academy established a fund to help pay for the education of those with limited family resources. The majority of the students at the academy were boarding students. A local history stated, "Canandaigua Academy at once took a position as a leading educational institution and under a succession of able principals rendered a service to the *young men in this part of the State* of incalculable benefit and that enabled many of them to attain high places in the world of business and politics."<sup>30</sup> Canandaigua boasted the first and also the best academy in all of western New York. Phelps gravitated to Canandaigua in his adult life, where he practiced his chosen fields of printing and journalism and may have even apprenticed. He may have come to Canandaigua because of his previous intimate knowledge of the community and its people. His attendance at Canandaigua Academy, however, cannot be proved, since extant student records date back only to 1831.

Phelps loved books and used quotations from them extensively in his newspaper career. How could he have obtained so many books on so many subjects? He definitely would have used all extant libraries. But there were no libraries in Cortland County during Phelps's youth. Logically, his access to a multiplicity of books would have been



much greater in Canandaigua and at Canandaigua Academy than anywhere in Cortland County.

Meanwhile, the Enon Phelps family continued to live in Homer Township. A county history reported that Enon cleared all of his one hundred acres of trees and was the first in the town of Homer to plant an apple orchard.<sup>31</sup> Town meetings were held annually every spring. One of the principal items of business was the assignment of “highway workers” who would help construct roads through the township. Every year Enon received his allotted time for assisting in road construction. In the years 1805, 1806, 1812, and 1815, Enon was appointed as “pathmaster” for a district in the township. Benjamin Phelps, William’s brother, later served as pathmaster in 1820.<sup>32</sup> In 1814 a new road, the Homer and Cayuga Turnpike Road, was started. It ran close to the Phelps farm and went into the village of Cortland. From that point on, the Phelps family could more easily travel to Cortland than to Homer. The present-day “Phelps Road” leads toward McGraw (formerly McGrawville) and Cortland. Conceivably, Enon and his sons helped construct that road.

Homer Township continued to grow rapidly from 1805 to 1815. In 1808 a bitter fight took place to separate the southern part of Onondaga County, where Homer was located, into its own county. The state legislature granted the request of those in Homer and neighboring towns, and Cortland County was formed on April 8, 1808. Homer Township had three thousand inhabitants in 1810, with Homer Village being the largest of the villages. Gradually Cortland Village, the county seat, outstripped Homer in size and became the much larger of the two. Both villages were in Homer Township until 1829, when the southern half was divided off and given the name of Cortlandville.

Phelps left exceptionally little information with his family and with the Mormon people about his growing-up years in East Homer, McGrawville, Cortland, and possibly Canandaigua. As evidenced by his thrift, intellectual pursuits, piety, and industry during his Mormon years, Phelps obviously benefited greatly from the training of his parents, various educators, and other adults. No doubt he was a hard worker on the farm in the spring, summer, and fall months. Phelps was a devoted student of the wide world around him whenever he could take the opportunity.

In 1812, when Phelps reached twenty years of age, western New York was rocked by an event of international proportions: the War of 1812, which pitted the rising country, the United States, against its former parent, Great Britain.

## NOTES

1. My information on Dover, Hanover Township, Morris County, New Jersey, comes from Edmund D. Halsey, *History of Morris County, New Jersey* (New York: W. W. Munsell, 1882); *Inventory of the County Archives of New Jersey, No. 14, Morris County* (Newark, NJ: Historical Records Survey, 1937); Harriet Stryker-Rodda, ed., *Some Early Records of Morris County, New Jersey, 1740–1799* (New Orleans: Polyanthos, 1975); Charles D. Platt, *Dover Dates: A Bicentennial History of Dover, New Jersey* (Morristown, NJ: Jerseyman, 1922); and Jessica C. Schoeffler, *Morristown Parade, 1715–1965* (n.p., 1967).

2. *Biographical Encyclopedia of New Jersey of the Nineteenth Century* (Philadelphia: Galaxy Publishing, 1877), s.v. "Winds, General William," 482–85; "The Revolutionary Campground at Plainfield, New Jersey," Green Brook Historical Society, <http://www.gbhsnj.org/misc/camp-ground>.
3. I am indebted to my one-time research assistant Frank F. Judd Jr., previously a resident of Morris County, New Jersey, for researching the life of William Winds (Wines) and his connection to the Goldsmiths and the Phelps in Morris County.
4. *Biographical Encyclopedia of New Jersey of the Nineteenth Century*, 483.
5. "Calendar of Wills—1801–1805," in *Documents Relating to the Colonial, Revolutionary and Post-Revolutionary History of the State of New Jersey* (Trenton, NJ: MacCrellish and Quigley, 1946), 10:511. The last will and testament of Ruhamah Winds is also digitally reproduced in [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com).
6. Stryker-Rodda, *Some Early Records of Morris County*, 193.
7. Unfortunately, the 1790 and 1800 New Jersey census records have long since been nonexistent because they were burned in the War of 1812. Platt, *Dover Dates*, 28, indicates that 173 persons traded at the Dover Store in the 1790s. In 1793 a statewide census was taken of all eligible males between the ages of eighteen and forty-five to determine manpower potential and to organize those listed into militia bodies. Enon Phelps was listed as one of 516 men from Hanover Township in the militia census. See James S. Norton, *New Jersey in 1793: An Abstract and Index to the 1793 Militia Census of the State of New Jersey* (n.p., 1973), 237.
8. Platt, *Dover Dates*, 28; Norton, *New Jersey in 1793*, 237.
9. W. W. Phelps, "Letter No. 4," *M&A* 1, no. 5 (February 1835): 65.
10. Oliver Seymour Phelps and Andrew T. Servin, *The Phelps Family of America, and Their English Ancestors* (Pittsfield, MA: Eagle Publishing, 1899), 1:650.
11. Platt, *Dover Dates*, 134–35.
12. Phelps and Servin, *Phelps Family of America*, 1:373.
13. H. P. Smith, ed., *History of Cortland County* (Syracuse: D. Mason, 1885), 188–89, indicates that Enon Phelps had moved to the area in 1796. The obituary of one of Enon's sons, Benjamin, stated that he had lived in Truxton Township to the northeast of Homer Township for a year before the family's move to Homer in 1800 (information obtained from obituary file in Cortland County Historical Society, Cortland, New York). In 1900, the 100th anniversary of the Phelps' settling of their land in Homer Township, it was stated that the family had lived in the area since 1797. "Reunion of the Phelps Family," *Cortland Democrat*, September 19, 1900, 3.
14. Information on the Military Tract and the acquiring of Indian lands in central and western New York was drawn from Alexander C. Flick, ed., *History of the State of New York* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1934), 4:20–22, 5:144–48; D. W. Meinig, "Geography of Expansion, 1785–1855," in *Geography of New York State*, ed. John R. Thompson (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1966), 140–44; Smith, *History of Cortland County*, 48–54; H. C. Goodwin, *Pioneer History, or, Cortland County and the Border Wars of New York* (New York: A. B. Burdick, 1859), 103–11; *Combination Atlas Map of Cortland County, New York* (Philadelphia: Everts, Ensign & Everts, 1876), 17; Bertha Eveleth Blodgett, *Stories of Cortland County*, 2nd ed. (Cortland, NY: Cortland County Historical Society, 1975), 34–42; Hamilton Child, comp., *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Cortland County, N.Y., for 1869* (Syracuse: Journal Office, 1869), 67–68; "The Military Tract: A Bit of Early History of Cortland County, New York," *American Monthly Magazine* 40, no. 4 (April 1912): 193–95.
15. Smith, *History of Cortland County*, 186, 238, 250–51.
16. Smith, *History of Cortland County*, 64.

17. Smith, *History of Cortland County*, 63, 85. I have visited Cortland County on a number of occasions and have witnessed the beautiful, wooded ridgelines and valleys, including those at or near the Phelps property.
18. Smith, *History of Cortland County*, 189.
19. Blodgett, *Stories of Cortland County*, 86–87, 136–37.
20. Goodwin, *Pioneer History*, 138–42; Blodgett, *Stories of Cortland County*, 85–88. The quotation comes from Goodwin, 142.
21. Smith, *History of Cortland County*, 65.
22. Goodwin, *Pioneer History*, 119–21.
23. Flick, *History of the State of New York*, 4:285.
24. Blodgett, *Stories of Cortland County*, 115–19; Child, *Gazetteer and Business Directory of Cortland*, 77–78.
25. Phelps, “Letter No. 4,” 65; W. W. Phelps, “Letter No. 7,” *M&A* 1, no. 8 (May 1835): 115.
26. “Solon, New York, First Baptist Church Records, 1807–1822,” located in the Cortland County Historical Society, Cortland, New York.
27. W. W. Phelps (Homer, New York) to Sally Phelps (Kirtland, Ohio), June 21, 1841, in WWPP and at the CHL.
28. “Records of the McGraw Rural Cemetery,” located in the Cortland County Historical Society and the McGraw Historical Society. I have visited these graves.
29. Blodgett, *Stories of Cortland County*, 87.
30. Charles F. Milliken, *A History of Ontario County, New York and Its People* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing, 1911), 280–82; emphasis added.
31. Smith, *History of Cortland County*, 189.
32. “Miscellaneous Records of Homer, New York, 1794–1860,” Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah, [https://ldsgenealogy.com/cgi-bin/FHL2-NY.cgi?340281\\_Miscellaneous\\_records\\_of\\_Homer,\\_New\\_York,\\_1794-1860](https://ldsgenealogy.com/cgi-bin/FHL2-NY.cgi?340281_Miscellaneous_records_of_Homer,_New_York,_1794-1860).