

John S. **Russell** and family
By Douglas H. Shepard, 2000

John S. **Russell** was born ca. 1837. According to a former schoolmate at the “old red school house” in Laona, Oscar **Langford**, he was “one of the brightest scholars” there. “He afterwards became a lawyer and astronomer in Fredonia.” He attended the Fredonia Academy for five terms in 1855-58. At the time of the 1855 Census he was living with his (widowed?) mother, Jenett C. **Russell** and younger brother, Stephen. John was “farming,” but by 1860 he was a “Lawyer’s Clerk.”

In 1863 he and Academy classmate Albert H. **Judson** had formed the firm of **Russell and Judson** with the office over **Miner’s** Bank at Center and West Main Street. At the 1865 Census he was a boarder at C.B. **Shaw’s** hotel while **Judson** boarded nearby with the H. R. **Bond** family. In 1866, at Mayville, **Russell** married Ellen Mary **Morris**, daughter of Lorenzo and Fanny E. (**Strong**) **Morris**. By 1870 they were living with **Russell’s** in-laws. Child’s 1873 Gazetteer shows **Russell** as a partner in **Morris’s** law firm at 55 Main Street, today’s 8 West Main Street.

The 1875 Census shows **Russell** and his wife still living with Lorenzo **Morris**. Around 1877 their only child, Lorenzo **Morris Russell**, was born. In The *Fredonia Censor* of 14 March 1923, in a tribute to F. B. **Palmer**, there is a reference to “**Morris Russell**” as a child “with undeveloped limbs, but with a rarely bright mind.”

By the time of the 1880 Census, John S. **Russell** has disappeared from the records. Ellen and her son are still living with her father, but **Russell** is not recorded and his name never appears in the records thereafter. When his grandfather, Thomas W. **Bull’s**, estate was being settled in September 1893, **Russell** was listed as “address unknown.” Although the 1904 Directory refers to Ellen M. **Russell** as his widow, there is no record of his death, and the term is not repeated in later listings. Ellen and her son continued to live at the home on East Main Street until their deaths, his in 1918, hers in 1923.