

Jacob TenEyck

By Douglas H. Shepard, 2013

Jacob **TenEyck** was born on 8 December 1785 in Albany County NY to Hendrick and Margrietje (**Douw**) **TenEyck**, Jr., the youngest of their seven children. He was still in Albany as of the 1810 Census, although the *History of Chenango and Madison Counties* claims that he was “engaged in mercantile business about 1804 or ‘05” in Cazenovia. Indeed the online resource, “Our Country and its People: A Descriptive and Biographical Record of Madison County, New York” (1899), reports that he “removed from Albany to Cazenovia about the year 1807, when only twelve years of age [although in 1807 he was actually 22] and found employment in the pioneer store managed by Samuel **Forman**. . . . In the year following his arrival in Cazenovia he purchased the stately mansion, which was then incomplete, built by Mr. **Forman**, which he finished and occupied, and which has ever since remained in the family.”

Another section of the Madison County history has a more plausible scenario. Jacob **TenEyck** moved to Cazenovia in 1797 (when he was twelve), worked in the store of Samuel S. **Forman** “six or eight years” (until he was 21), and then set up on his own until about 1830. **Forman** had come to Cazenovia in 1793 as an employee of the Holland Land Company, started a general store, and continued it on his own for many years.

The store that **TenEyck** opened in 1804 or 1805 added the young clerk Walter **Smith** in 1815. He was born in Wethersfield CT on 23 March 1800 and apprenticed to **TenEyck** when he was 15. After some four years, **Smith** apparently showed such promise that **TenEyck** offered to have **Smith** find a store of his own in another community, with **TenEyck** bankrolling the venture to the extent of \$10,000. What **Smith** found in 1819 was the store and ashery of Joseph and Ralph **Plumb** in Fredonia. It became Walter **Smith** & Co., which lasted for six years.

In 1824 **Smith** joined with George A. **French** to open a store in Sinclairville. In 1825 the firm expanded, adding Joy **Handy** to create **French, Handy & Co**. That may have been done in order to transfer the day-to-day operation of the business to **Handy** while **Smith** and **French** expanded elsewhere. It was 1826 when **Smith** sold his Fredonia property, and with George **French**, moved to Dunkirk, where **Smith** bought a half-interest in the holdings of the Dunkirk Land Co. and established the Buffalo & Erie Union Line, a freight wagon service running to Warren PA.

It was in 1830 that Jacob **TenEyck**'s name reappears, the year when he is said to have “retired” from business in Cazenovia. Walter **Smith** sold him the Sinclairville property, three parcels in east Sheridan, one in west Sheridan and one

in Laona. In 1835 **TenEyck** added property in Stockton and in the same year, separately from Walter **Smith** and from George A. **French**, parcels in Shumla.

In February 1836 **TenEyck** sold the lots from Walter **Smith** and George A. **French** to a J. H. **TenEyck** of Albany. From 1836 on, in spite or because of the bank panic of 1837, Jacob **TenEyck** continued to acquire property in Dunkirk from Walter **Smith** and from mortgage sales through 1841. It was in 1837, when the bank panic was in full swing, that the real estate boom in Dunkirk collapsed, and that is when Jacob **TenEyck** of Cazenovia bought what was called Lot 9 on Swan Street (according to the **Johnson** map) from J. & E. **Kingsley**. In 1838 he acquired Blocks 95 and 135, and Lots 34, 36, 38 and 40 on Swan Street and Lots 33, 35, 37 and 39 on Canary Street from Walter **Smith**. In 1839 he added the southwest half of Block 455 from Walter **Smith**. Several of these parcels are in the area later called Dutch Hill, and now called Academy Heights. 1841 saw the last of his local involvement, when he bought at a Master in Chancery sale the half interest in Lots 3, 5 and 7 Center Street (Central Avenue).

At that point he seems to have really retired. In 1853 he was visiting Savannah GA with his wife and daughter Elizabeth when they contracted yellow fever. His wife died on 3 May. He and his daughter followed on 6 May 1853. Their son, Henry **TenEyck**, continued to live in Cazenovia until his own death in 1884.