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RUSSWURM, JOHN SUMNER (1793-1860) PAPERS, 1786-1914

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INTRODUCTION

This collection is centered around the papers of John Sumner Russwurm (1793-1860) of Murfreesboro (Rutherford County), Tennessee, farmer; merchant; veteran of the Creek War; and Inspector General during the tenure of Governor William Carroll. The John S. Russwurm papers were a gift to the Manuscript Section of the Tennessee State Library and Archives by Mrs. J.T. Wade of Columbia, Tennessee.

The materials in this collection measure 1.26 linear feet. There are no restrictions on the materials.

Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the John Sumner Russwurm papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The John Sumner Russwurm papers, containing approximately 900 items and one volume, span the years 1786-1914. Most of them, however, are dated in the first half of the nineteenth century. The collection is composed of correspondence; accounts; biographical data; genealogical data; legal documents (agreements, bills of sale, depositions, promissory notes, and powers of attorney); wills and estate papers; land records pension data; clippings; funeral notices; a proclamation concerning Porter Female Academy in Williamson County, Tennessee; the constitution of and a membership certificate in the Sons of Temperance; and some religious writings.

A large part of the collection is made up of John S. Russworm's incoming correspondence. These letters contain information about business matters, land, and Whig politics. Russwurm was apparently interested in moving from Tennessee, for several of the letters include reports on life and conditions in the frontier regions of Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, and California. Such letters offer some insight into migration patterns of early American pioneer families. Many of the letters are from prominent Whig politicians to whom John S. Russwurm, himself a Whig, had applied for aid in his suit to obtain a pension for his mother, Eleanor Sumner Russwurm Creamer of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on the basis of his father's service during the Revolutionary War. Among Russworm's correspondents were John Bell, Newton Cannon, Robert Looney Caruthers, Ephraim Hubbard Foster, Meredith Poindexter Gentry, Spencer Jarnagin, Charles Ready, and Christopher Harris Williams. In addition to reports on the progress of the pension claim, their letters offer information about Whig politics in Tennessee and in the nation. For example, in his letters to Russwurm, John Bell expresses anger at opposition from Tennessee Whigs.

Correspondence between the Russwurms and their related families, especially the Clarks, Martins, and Sumners, makes up another large part of this collection. Twenty of these letters were written by Mary (Jackey) Sumner Blount, widow of Thomas Blount of Tarboro, North Carolina, and sister-in-law of William, John Grey, and Willie Blount, to her first cousin, John S. Russwurm. Nineteen of the letters were written by her to her brother, Thomas Edward Sumner. Mrs. Blount's letters, covering the years 1811-1822, contain much material about her attitude toward Negroes and her desire for the emancipation of her own and her brother's slaves. Since John S. Russwurm served as her attorney after her brother's death, Mary S. Blount's letters to him deal with her brother's estate and other business and legal matters.

Included in the Russwurm family correspondence are six letters written by Martin Clark; twenty-five by Samuel Clark; and seven by William Clark, all brothers of John S. Russwurm's wife, Sarah (Sally) Martin Clark. The letters from Samuel Clark are of special interest since he immigrated to Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana, where he bought a plantation and owned slaves. His letters tell about life and conditions in the Red River section of Louisiana from 1831-1859 when that region was a part of the Southern frontier. Martin Clark, like his brother Samuel, left Tennessee and moved to the Southwest to improve his fortune. His letters, dated 1839 and 1840, were written from Austin, Texas, where he ran a tavern, while his later letters were written after he returned to Tennessee and resumed his career as a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Unlike his two brothers, William Clark did not venture away from his native state, and his letters, dated from 1842-1859, were all written from various Tennessee counties.

In the Russwurm family correspondence there are seven letters from John S. Russwurm's mother to her son. Mrs. Creamer, the sister of Revolutionary General Jethro Sumner, wrote during 1822-1850 about the progress of her pension claim and about her first husband, William Alexander Russwurm, a German who fought under her brother in the American Revolution. Another Russwurm whose correspondence is in this collection is Francis Edward Russwurm, son of John Russwurm, son of John Russwurm and first cousin of John S. Russwurm. His letters contain information about his life as a teacher in Dekalb, Texas, in 1839 and about the government and conditions in California in 1857.

Four of the most interesting letters in the Russwurm papers are from John Brown Russwurm, the son of John S. Russwurm's uncle by a Jamaican Negro. When John Brown's father married a white woman in Maine, the boy was brought to live with them and treated by his stepmother as a member of the family. He graduated from Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine, in 1826, making him one of the first Negro graduates of an American college. In 1829 John B. Russwurm emigrated to Liberia to become that country's first superintendent of public schools and to engage in trade. He was later appointed governor of the Maryland Colony at Cape Palmas, established under the auspices of the Maryland Colonization Society. He was the first Negro to be appointed governor of that colony, or of any colony in Liberia, and held the post until his death in 1851. Addressed to his half brother, Francis Edward Russwurm, and to his cousin, John S. Russwurm, John B. Russwurm's letters (1819-1835) tell about statehood for Maine, his education and plans for the future, and conditions in Liberia. Two other letters in the collection – written by James H. Blanchard, Mrs. Russwurm's son by her second marriage, and by James Hall, John B. Russwurm's predecessor as Governor of the Maryland Colony – contain additional information about John Brown Russwurm.

Another illuminating aspect of the Russwurm papers is the material relating to efforts by Thomas Edward Sumner, son of General Jethro Sumner and first cousin of John S. Russwurm, to emancipate his slaves. In his will, probated in Williamson County in 1820, Sumner did emancipate all his slaves, heft $5,000 to the Pennsylvania Abolition Society for the purchase of land, tools, etc., for their use; and willed land and money to his wife and sister on condition that they not interfere with the emancipation. A Xerox copy of this will is included in the John S. Russwurm papers.

Before his death in 1819, Russwurm Thomas Edward Sumner attempted to emancipate his slaves by petitioning the Tennessee Legislature. John Summerville of Nashville, Sumner's attorney, reports on his progress in obtaining signatures on the petition in two letters dated during May and June, 1819. Explaining Andrew Jackson's refusal to sign, Summerville outlines the general's views in regard to the emancipation of slaves. The other twenty-four letters from Summerville to his client deal with the latter's business affairs, thereby containing material about the financial situation right before and during the Panic of 1819.

The John S. Russwurm papers are an excellent source for genealogical data, particularly for the Russwurm, Sumner, Martin, and Clark families. A Xerox copy of records from the Russwurm family Bible contains births, marriages, and deaths for John S. and Sarah Martin Clark Russwurm; their twelve children; Virginia Martin Clark Sayers, Sarah Russwurm's mother; and some members of Mrs. Sayers's family. In the

genealogical data are obituaries of the following persons: John S. Russwurm, Virginia Sawyers Russwurm Gordon, Thomas Edward Sumner Russwurm, Virginia Martin Clark Sawyers, William Martin, Almira Russwurm Ridley, Sarah (Sallie) Russwurm Miles, Sallie Russwurm Dismukes, Eugenia Rosalind Russwurm, Martin Clark, William Martin Russwurm Stockird, Florence Lorelle Wetmore Russwurm, John Willard Russwurm, William M. Bell, Caswell M. Miles, Sara Stockard, and Mrs. E.S. Bouldin. These obituaries, along with the Russwurm Bible, contain much information on the Russwurm, Martin, Clark, Marlin, Stockird, Ridley, Dismukes, Miles, Gordon, Ridley, Bouldin, and Smith families.

The biographical material in this collection consists of handwritten copies of data about John S. Russwurm; Thomas Edward Sumner; and William Martin, Revolutionary officer and uncle of John S. Russwurm's wife. This biographical material is an additional source for studies of the Clark, Martin, Russwurm, and Sumner families.

Other items of interest are some estate papers of Thomas Blount, William Gardner, and Robert Rodgers and a handwritten copy of William Hughlett's will. There are thirteen bills of sale recording transfers of slaves between 1821 and 1836. Pension data in the collection consists of acts and bills relating to Revolutionary War Veterans proposed and/or passed between 1836 and 1855. Most of the remaining Russwurm papers are legal documents, land records, and accounts.

An addition to the John S. Russwurm papers consists of two letters written by Sam Houston to John S. Russwurm in late 1846 and early 1847; Russwurm's commission as a Lieutenant Colonel Commandant in the 44th Regiment, Tennessee Militia; a paper signed by Zachary Taylor, Millard Rillmore, John Quincy Adams, Daniel Webster, James K. Polk, Albert Gallatin, and Henry Clay, which acknowledges Russwurm's contribution of $1.00 toward the erection of the Washington Monument; an invitation to Mrs. Russwurm to attend a ball held in Nashville in 1825 to honor the Marquis de Lafayette; and a promissory note outlining the conditions under which J. Clough and Co. hired six slaves from John Lytle in 1836. Donor: Mrs. Percy Jarratt, granddaughter of John S. Russwurm, Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

A second addition to this collection is made up of three photographs of portraits of John S. Russwurm; his wife, Sarah Martin (Clark) Russwurm; and his mother, Eleanor (Sumner) Russwurm Creamer. The photographs were given by Mrs. William Walkup, Smyrna, Tennessee.

A third addition to the Russwurm papers includes a letter dated December 31, 1856, which was probably written by Eugenia Rosalind Russwurm and a poem copied from the *Christian Advocate* and sent to Thomas Edward Sumner Russwurm. Ac. No. 71-28.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Sumner Russwurm

1793	January 29 – Born on St. John Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, son of William Alexander and Eleanor Sumner Russwurm
1793	Immigrated to Tennessee in early life; settled in Williamson County; later moved to Murfreesboro in Rutherford County, where he engaged in farming and mercantile business
1817	December 25 – Married Sarah (Sally) Martin Clark (1799-1867), daughter of Samuel and Virginia Martin Clark and descendant of George Rogers and William Clark. They had twelve children, eight daughters and four sons
1813	Lieutenant in Creek War
	Became member of Governor William Carroll's staff, holding position of Inspector General the entire time Carroll was in office
1821	Prominent in the Masonic Fraternity
1848	Became member of the Sons of Temperance
1860	Died January 17; buried in Old City Cemetery with full Masonic Honors

CONTAINER LIST

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2. Russwurm, John S. – Incoming – Cannon - Fowler
3. Russwurm, John S. – Incoming – Gentry - Jarnagin
4. Russwurm, John S. – Incoming – King – Mordecai, M.
5. Russwurm, John S. – Incoming – Newman - Rutledge
6. Russwurm, John S. – Incoming – Shaffer - Topp
7. Russwurm, John S. – Incoming – Wade- Zollicoffer
8. Russwurm, John S. – Outgoing – n.d. and 1822-1839
9. Summerville, John, to Thomas Edward Sumner, 1817-1819
10. General – Author unknown and Cantrell - Fox
11. General – Hall - Scales
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2. Correspondence – Family – Blount, Mary (Jackey) Sumner, to John S. Russwurm, n.d. and 1819-1822
3. Correspondence – Family – Blount, Mary (Jackey) Sumner, to Thomas E. Sumner, n.d. and 1811-1819
4. Correspondence – Family – Camden – Clark, Samuel
5. Correspondence – Family – Clark, William – Gordon, Willie B.
6. Correspondence – Family – Hughes – Russwurm, Francis Edward
7. Correspondence – Family – Russwurm, John B. – Williams

Microfilm Reel # 2

8. Biographical Data – Martin, William; John Sumner Russwurm; Thomas Edward Sumner; Joseph Martin
9. Genealogical Data – Bible records and obituaries – Russwurm and related families
10. Genealogical Data – Shannon and Taylor families
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3. Legal Documents – Agreements, notices, etc. – Russwurm, John S., n.d. and 1817-1851
4. Legal Documents – Agreements, judgments, summons, etc. – General, n.d. and 1810-1855

5. Legal Documents – Bills of sale, 1821-1836, re: slaves
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11. Legal Documents – Powers of attorney, n.d. and 1817-1827
12. Legal Documents – Promissory notes and protests, 1818-1852
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14. Legal Documents – Wills and estate papers – Sumner, Thomas Edward, 1819-1846
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16. Pension Data – Acts, bills, etc., 1836-1855
17. Photographs
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19. Sons of Temperance – Constitution and membership certificate
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21. Newspaper clipping – re: Capture of John A. Murrell

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This is a name index for the correspondence of the Russwurm and related families with other members of the family, together with the dates of the letters and information regarding their contents. Unless otherwise indicated, the letters are addressed to John Sumner Russwurm. The figures in parentheses immediately following the name denote the number of letters, if more than one. The last numbers refer to the boxes and folder in which the material is to be found.

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Marlin, J.E. (John Edward ?), grandson of John S. Russwurm, to Eugenia Rosalind Russwurm (2), 1905, 1913, re: family data, 2-6

Martin, William, uncle of John S. Russwurm's wife, 1842, re: business; family news, 2-6

Orr, Mary Leonora Russwurm (6), to Eugenia Rosalind Russwurm and to aunts, 1872-1885, re: death of William Alexander Russwurm; conditions in Independence (Tate Co.), Mississippi; family news, 2-6

Russwurm, Alexander, nephew of John S. Russwurm (2), n.d. and 1844, re: family data; father's death; Irish Potato Famine, 2-6

Russwurm, Ellen, to Eugenia Rosalind Russwurm, 1905 (?), re: sympathy over death of Mary Leonora Russwurm Stockird, 2-6

Russwurm, Francis Edward, cousin of John S. Russwurm (3), to John S. Russwurm; to Thomas Edward Sumner Russwurm; and to his brother, 1839-1857, re: Dekalb, Texas; life of a teacher; Campo Seco, California; government in California, 2-6

Russwurm, John Brown, cousin of John S. Russwurm (4), to John S. Russwurm and to his half-brother, Francis Edward Russwurm, 1819-1835, re: statehood for Maine; personal data; business; Liberia, 2-7

Russwurm, John S., to Sarah (Sally) Martin Clark Russwurm, 1859, re: Hurricane Springs, Franklin Co., Tennessee, 2-7

Russwurm, Laura, granddaughter of John S. Russwurm, to Eugenia Rosalind Russwurm, n.d., re: family news, 2-7

Russwurm, Mary Leonora, daughter of John S. Russwurm (3), to her mother Sarah (Sally) Martin Clark Russwurm; to her niece, Alice Gordon; and to her sister, Eugenia Rosalind Russwurm, 1852-1860, re: travels; death of Martin Clark; John S. Russwurm's death, 2-7

Russwurm, Samuel Clark, son of John S. Russwurm (3), to his father; to his sister, Laura Jane Russwurm; and to his sister, Mary Leonora Russwurm, 1858-1861, re: Mississippi; secession; civil war, 2-7

Russwurm, Sarah (Sally) Martin Clark, to Samuel Clark Russwurm, 1860, re: family data, 2-7

Russwurm, William Alexander, son of John S. Russwurm (4), to Virginia Martin Clark Sawyers; to Sarah (Sally) Martin Clark Russwurm; and to his father, n.d., and 1851-1854, re: family news, 2-7

Smith, Robert H., son-in-law of John S. Russwrum, 1846, re: declining health of Eleanor Russwurm Smith, 2-7

Sumner, Thomas Edward, first cousin of John S. Russwurm, 1819, re: religion, 2-7

Williams, Alice, relative to Eugenia Rosalind Russwurm, 1913, re: family news, 2-7

Williams, Olive G., relative to Eugenia Rosalind Russwurm (3), 1897-1914, re: Russwurm and Sumner families; flood in Troy, Ohio, 2-7

Chart I

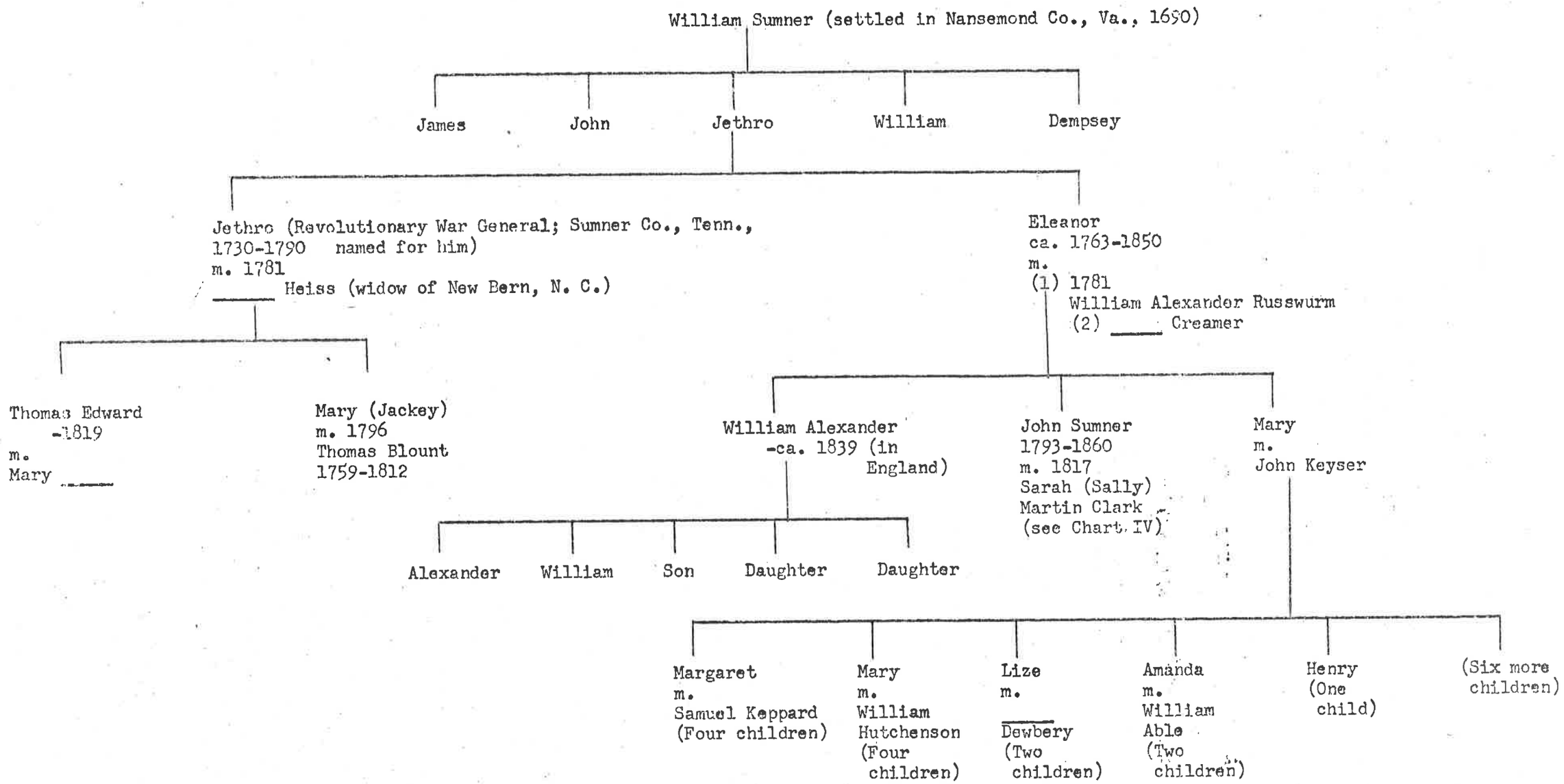

William Sumner (settled in Nansemond Co., Va., 1690)
James
John
Jethro
William
Dempsey
Jethro (Revolutionary War General; Sumner Co., Tenn., 1730-1790 named for him)
m. 1781
_____ Heiss (widow of New Bern, N. C.)
Eleanor
ca. 1763-1850
m.
(1) 1781
William Alexander Russwurm
(2) _____ Creamer
Thomas Edward
-1819
m.
Mary _____
Mary (Jackey)
m. 1796
Thomas Blount
1759-1812
William Alexander
-ca. 1839 (in England)
John Sumner
1793-1860
m. 1817
Sarah (Sally)
Martin Clark
(see Chart IV)
Mary
m.
John Keyser
Alexander
William
Son
Daughter
Daughter
Margaret
m.
Samuel Keppard
(Four children)
Mary
m.
William
Hutchenson
(Four children)
Lize
m.
_____
Dewbery
(Two children)
Amanda
m.
William
Able
(Two children)
Henry
(One child)
(Six more children)

Chart II.

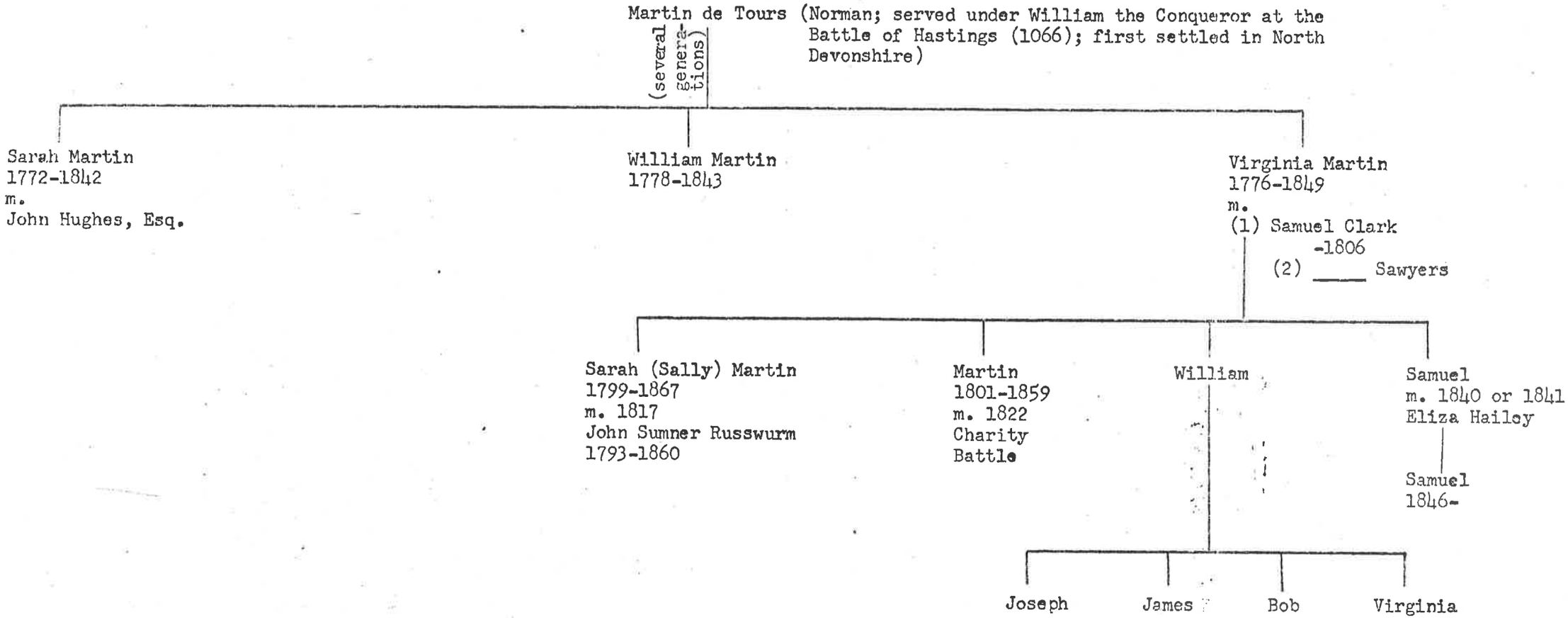

Martin de Tours (Norman; served under William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings (1066); first settled in North Devonshire)
(several generations)
Sarah Martin
1772-1842
m.
John Hughes, Esq.
William Martin
1778-1843
Virginia Martin
1776-1849
m.
(1) Samuel Clark
-1806
(2) ____ Sawyers
Sarah (Sally) Martin
1799-1867
m. 1817
John Sumner Russwurm
1793-1860
Martin
1801-1859
m. 1822
Charity
Battle
William
Samuel
m. 1840 or 1841
Eliza Hailey
Samuel
1846-
Joseph
James
Bob
Virginia

Chart III.

Sir John Clark (settled in York Co., Va., 1645)
1614- (born in England)
m.
Elizabeth Steed (daughter of William Steed)

Samuel Clark (either elder brother or uncle of George Rogers Clark and William Clark)
m.
Virginia Martin (sister of General William Martin)
1776-1849

- Sarah (Sally) Martin
  1799-1867
  m. 1817
  John Sumner Russwurm
  1793-1860
- Martin
  1801-1859
  m. 1822
  Charity
  Battle
- William
  m.
  Ann Beck
  - Joseph
  - James
  - Virginia
  - Bob
- Samuel
  m. 1840 or 1841
  Eliza Hailey
  - Samuel
    1846-

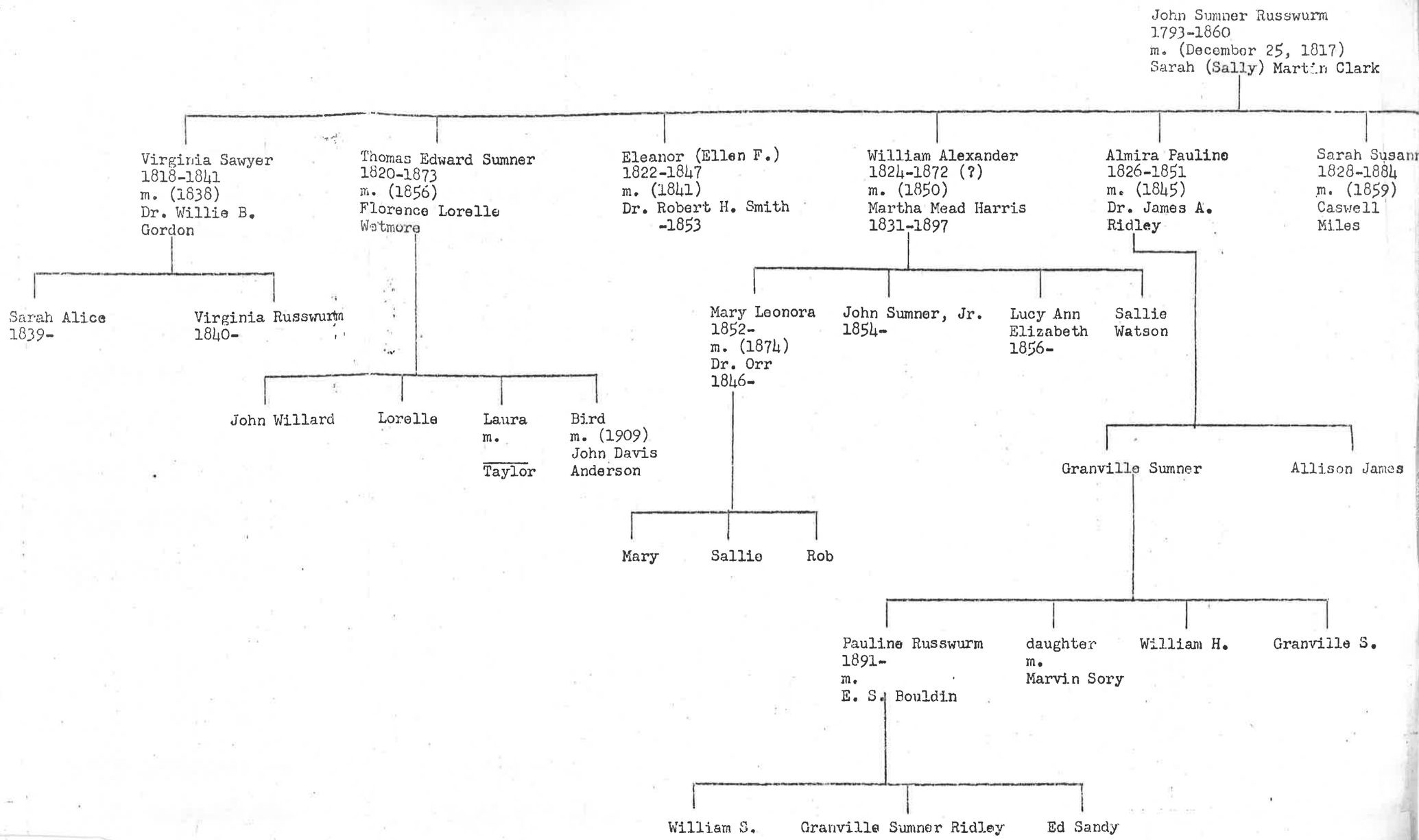

John Sumner Russwurm
1793-1860
m. (December 25, 1817)
Sarah (Sally) Martin Clark
Virginia Sawyer
1818-1841
m. (1838)
Dr. Willie B.
Gordon
Thomas Edward Sumner
1820-1873
m. (1856)
Florence Lorelle
Wetmore
Eleanor (Ellen F.)
1822-1847
m. (1841)
Dr. Robert H. Smith
-1853
William Alexander
1824-1872 (?)
m. (1850)
Martha Mead Harris
1831-1897
Almira Pauline
1826-1851
m. (1845)
Dr. James A.
Ridley
Sarah Susann
1828-1884
m. (1859)
Caswell
Miles
Sarah Alice
1839-
Virginia Russwurm
1840-
John Willard
Lorelle
Laura
m.
Taylor
Bird
m. (1909)
John Davis
Anderson
Mary Leonora
1852-
m. (1874)
Dr. Orr
1846-
John Sumner, Jr.
1854-
Lucy Ann
Elizabeth
1856-
Sallie
Watson
Mary
Sallie
Rob
Granville Sumner
Allison James
Pauline Russwurm
1891-
m.
E. S. Bouldin
daughter
m.
Marvin Sory
William H.
Granville S.
William S.
Granville Sumner Ridley
Ed Sandy

Chart IV.

- Martin Clark 1830-1832
- Mary Leonora 1833-1905 m. (1869) James E. Stockird
  - Sam R.
  - J. E. -1871
  - daughter m. W. I. Gresham
  - Nora
- Eugenia Rosalind 1835-1916 (never married)
- Samuel Clark 1837-1866 m. (1858) Virginia C. Green
- Laura Jane 1839-1905 m. (1868) Edward Riley Marlin 1833-1888
  - Sarah Elizabeth 1869- m. (1893) Jerre M. Fly
    - Sarah Marlin 1894-
    - Jerre Moore 1897-
  - John Edward 1871- m. (1907) Eva Simmons
    - Annie Laura 1908-
  - Rosalind Virginia 1873-
  - William Russwurm 1876-
  - Lockie Lee 1879- m. (1908) Austin W. Potter
    - Laura Virginia 1909-
  - Laura Viola 1879- m. (1907) Ben F. Tyer
    - Laura Mary 1908-
- Anne Lockie Adaline 1843-1902 m. (1) (1868) William Fletcher Stockird 1844-1869 (2) (1872) Z.T. Dismukes 1846-
  - Son (died in infancy)
  - Sallie Russwurm 1876-1896

Chart V.

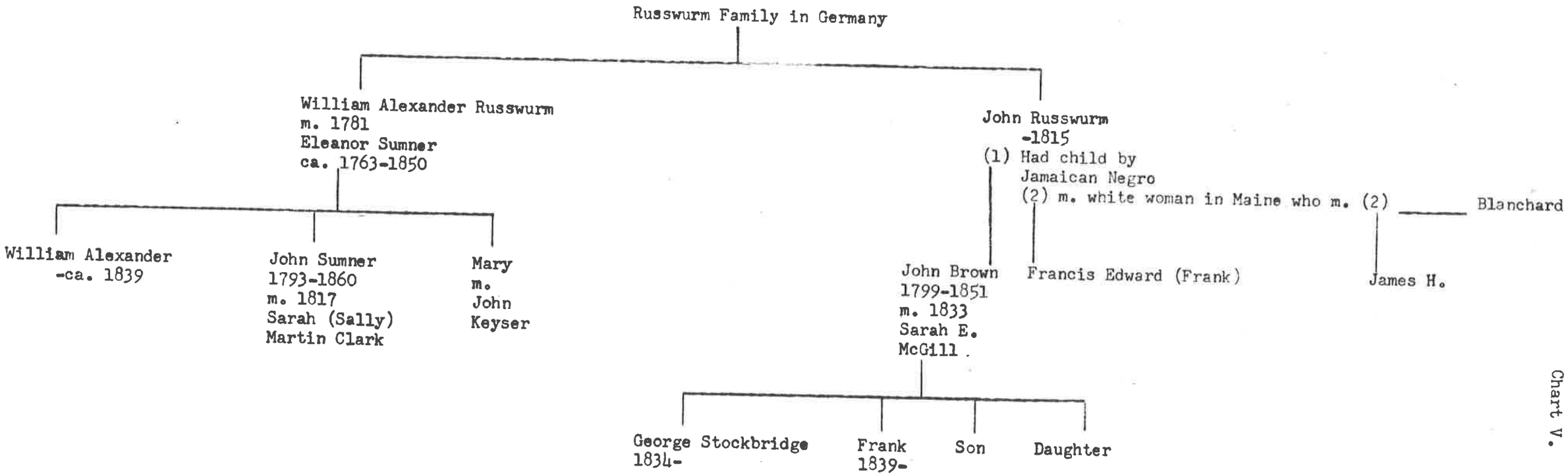

Russwurm Family in Germany
William Alexander Russwurm
m. 1781
Eleanor Sumner
ca. 1763-1850
John Russwurm
-1815
(1) Had child by
Jamaican Negro
(2) m. white woman in Maine who m. (2) _____ Blanchard
William Alexander
-ca. 1839
John Sumner
1793-1860
m. 1817
Sarah (Sally)
Martin Clark
Mary
m.
John
Keyser
John Brown
1799-1851
m. 1833
Sarah E.
McGill
Francis Edward (Frank)
James H.
George Stockbridge
1834-
Frank
1839-
Son
Daughter

Chart VI.

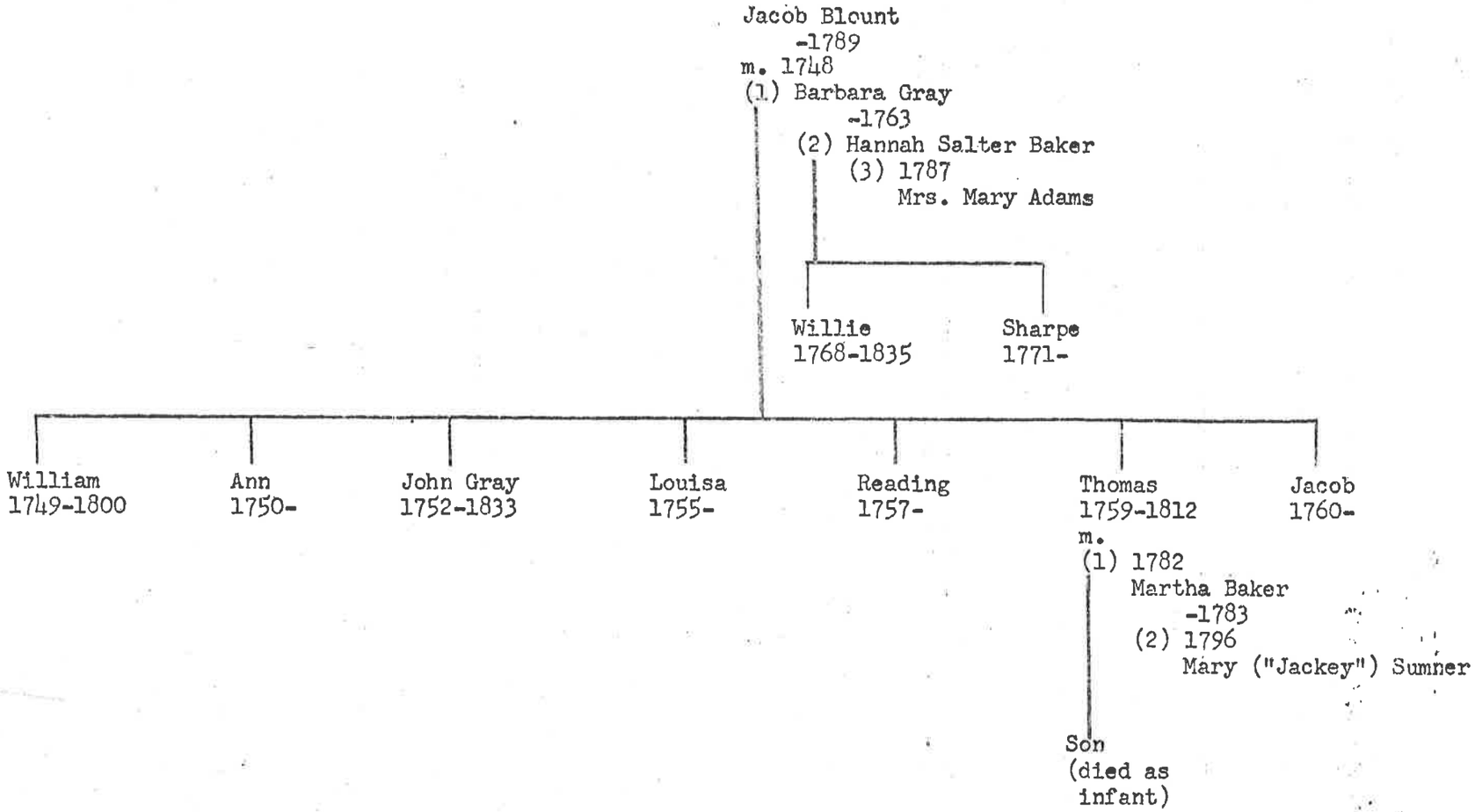
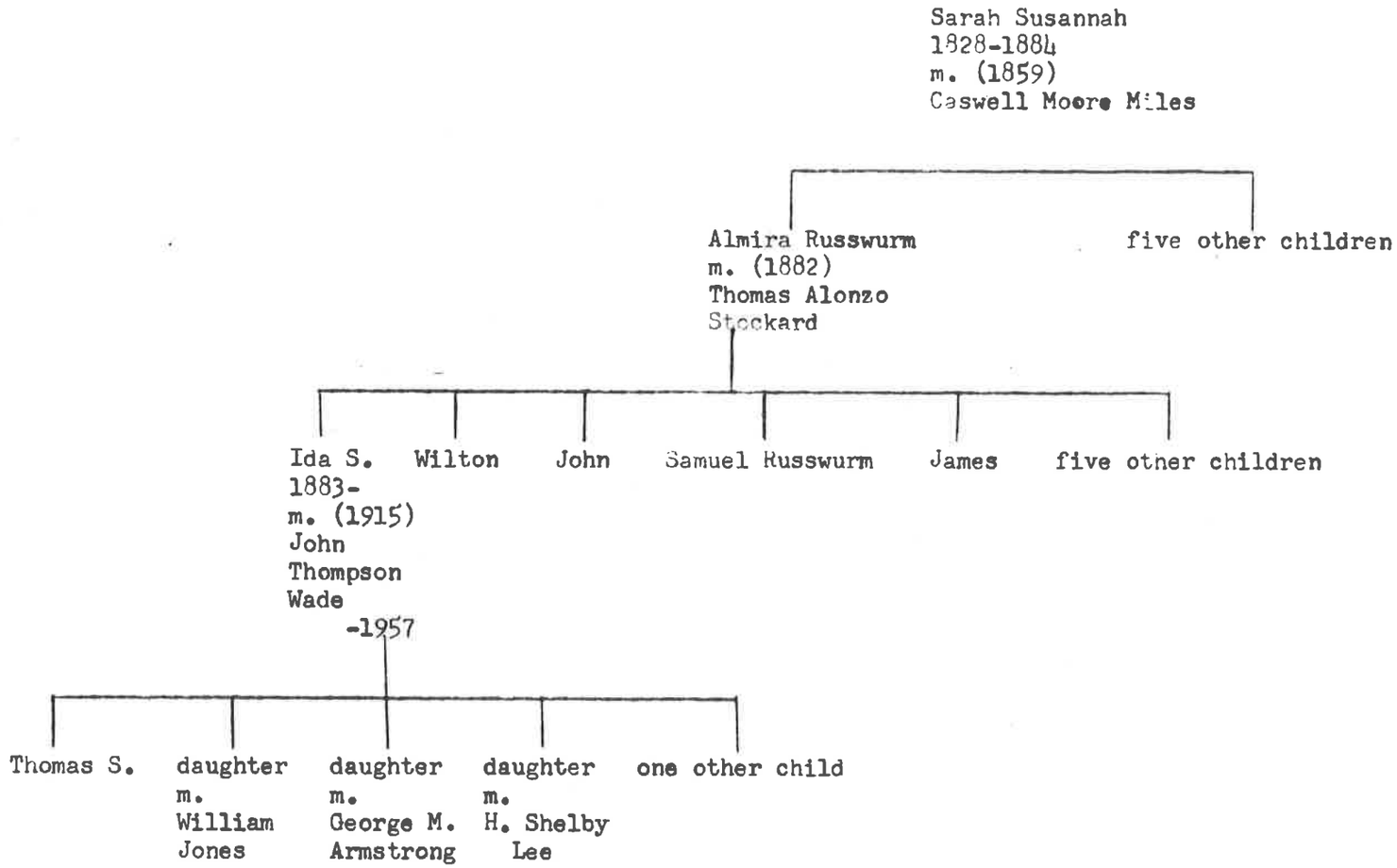

Jacob Blount
-1789
m. 1748
(1) Barbara Gray
-1763
(2) Hannah Salter Baker
(3) 1787
Mrs. Mary Adams
Willie
1768-1835
Sharpe
1771-
William
1749-1800
Ann
1750-
John Gray
1752-1833
Louisa
1755-
Reading
1757-
Thomas
1759-1812
m.
(1) 1782
Martha Baker
-1783
(2) 1796
Mary ("Jackey") Sumner
Jacob
1760-
Son
(died as
infant)

Chart VII.


Sarah Susannah
1828-1884
m. (1859)
Caswell Moore Miles
Almira Russwurm
m. (1882)
Thomas Alonzo
Stockard
five other children
Ida S.
1883-
m. (1915)
John
Thompson
Wade
-1957
Wilton
John
Samuel Russwurm
James
five other children
Thomas S.
daughter
m.
William
Jones
daughter
m.
George M.
Armstrong
daughter
m.
H. Shelby
Lee
one other child