

February 25, 1938

My dear Professor Belyea:

I trust you will forgive the long delay in answering your letter which contained information about John Marston Scribner. We appreciate the trouble you took in this matter, and your letter will be placed with his biographical material.

Our college library does not own Roscoe's History of Schoharie County, which is the one we quoted. May I suggest that you might get this from the State library, Education Building, Albany?

The old college books are kept in one safe; the door jammed, and for a time could not be opened. That and the press of work are my excuse for not answering your letter more promptly. But here are the subjects and marks, so far as we can decipher the record of John Scribner. There are no marks for the freshman year; then we find:-

1st term, 1930-31
Tacitus - 40
Graeca Maj. 30
Logic 95

2nd term, 1930-31
Algebra -- 90
Graeca Maj. 75
Tacitus 75

3rd term, 1930-31
Rhetoric --95
Plane Geometry - 75
Graeca Maj. - 60

1st term, 1931-32
Conic Sections - 70
Geom. & Trig. - 80
Greek - 85

2nd term, 1931-32
Cicero - 50
Application of trig. - 70
? (possibly mechanics
or math.) - 85

3rd term, 1931-32
Political economy - 60
Natural Philosophy 80

In the first term of 1932-33 he is marked 100 in calculus, Kames, and optics, and after that there are no marks given. You may know that Kames is the textbook so much used by Dr. Nott.

If you have further questions, we shall be glad to try to answer; and we will reserve for Mr. Scribner the niche you suggest.

Sincerely yours,

Professor Harold C. Belyea
Syracuse University
Syracuse, N. Y.

Secretary to Mr. Waldron

C. N. Waldron

2/9/38.

I am inclined to think that you ought to dust off a niche in your local Hall of Fame and get ready a place for John Marston Scribner. After one hundred years his name and log rule are still going strong and long will continue to do so while we measure our lumber in board feet.

May I thank you for your prompt and courteous attention to our original inquiry?

Yours very truly,

HAROLD CAHILL BELYEA
Associate Professor of Forest Management

M



DEPARTMENT OF FOREST MANAGEMENT

JOSEPH S. ILLICK
CARLYN C. DELAVAN
HAROLD C. BELYEA
JOHN C. SAMMI

THE NEW YORK STATE COLLEGE OF FORESTRY
AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY

SAMUEL N. SPRING, DEAN

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

February 9, 1938

Mr. C. N. Waldron
Graduate Council
Union College
Schenectady, N. Y.

My dear Mr. Waldron:-

I am writing to you in place of Robert Sheldon. Sheldon's original inquiry to you was at my suggestion. He is a graduate student with me and his problem has to do with the scaling of logs.

The original inquiry arose out of the fact that John Marston Scribner back in 1846 invented the log rule which bears his name. It has been used in every state in the Union and is still in common use today. A log rule is a tabulated device for measuring the number of board feet contained in logs of different lengths and diameters. A slight modification of Scribner's Rule has been adopted as the official log rule of the United States Forest Service. On the whole, I think John Marston Scribner deserves more fame than perhaps has been accorded him.

Since receiving your letter, and partly with the help it contained, we have learned quite a lot about Mr. Scribner. We have learned that his father, Samuel Scribner, was born August 8, 1774 and died Nov. 8, 1844. His mother, Catherine Marston, was born Sept. 29, 1774 and died November 26, 1856. Samuel Scribner and Catherine Marston were married Nov. 2, 1796. They had ten children of which John Marston Scribner was the sixth. John Marston Scribner married Ann Eliza Swart of Schoharie on Jan. 17, 1837. They had five children. Ann Eliza Scribner was born Jan. 21, 1807 and lived until October 5, 1891. John Marston Scribner died at Middleburgh, N. Y. Dec. 20, 1880. I am hoping to get in touch with one of his grandchildren and would expect to expand this record further.

I think in the above I have given you a few points with which to expand your record. There are one or two points where I still lack some essential material.

I have not been able to find the "History of Schoharie County" of which you speak. In fact, I have not been able to find any history of Schoharie County in either our University or city libraries. Is there a copy of this book in the library of Union College? Would it be possible either to have the Union College library lend me this book or arrange a loan through our own College library? Is there any record of his scholastic work while at Union College? I am particularly interested here in his excellence in mathematics.

✓ by Wm E. Roscoe

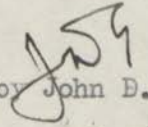
May 7, 1953.

John M. ~~Guthrie~~^{Scribner}-1833.

The Journal of Forestry, official publication of the Society of American Foresters, in its May, 1953 issue, has an interesting article "A Postscript on the Lost Identity of Doyle and Scribner" by Harold C. Belyea, State University of N.Y., College of Forestry. Doyle and Scribner were inventors of the Doyle and Scribner Rules for Measuring Logs, still in use. Considerable biographical data is given in the article on John Marston Scribner, class of 1833 (1805-1880). Scribner prepared for college at the old New Paltz Academy (now a State Teachers College), entering Union in 1830. After graduation (specializing in mathematics), he graduated in 1836 from the Theological Seminary at New Brunswick, N.J., his first charge being with the Old Fort Church at Schoharie, serving there from 1836 to 1839, later as pastor of the First Reformed Church of Walden, until 1841. Later he served as principal and teacher of mathematics at the Auburn Female Seminary. While at Auburn ~~that~~ he wrote his Practical Mensuration, published in 1844.

Prof. Belyea's theory of a clergyman becoming a specialist in log measures was probably based on his early woods work on his father's Vermont farm, and his insistence on mathematical precision in all things.

"Ville View",
Charlotte Court House, Va.


(Sent by John D. Guthrie- 1902)

1833 JOHN M. SCRIBNER.

At the Classis of Schoharie met at Middleburgh
April 19, 1881 "An appropriate minute was made in
reference to the death of Rev. John M. Scribner.

FROM: Schoharie Patriot
May 5, 1881.

Union Alumnus Versatile Inventor

By RAY BYRNE

The inventor of the log rule, John Marston Scribner, although not a native, spent many years in Middleburg and played an important part in its industry during the last century. Scribner's rule has been used in every state of the Union and is still in common use today after more than 100 years. A log rule is a tabulated device for measuring the number of board feet contained in logs of different lengths and diameters. A slight modification of Scribner's has been adopted as the official log rule of the U.S. Forest Service. Apparently, as long as lumber is measured in board feet, Scribner's name and log rule will continue to be known.



Ray Byrne

Scribner was also noted for attainments in mathematics and published several books, among which were "Mensuration," "Engineer's Pocket Tablebook," "Mechanic's Companion," and "The Ready Reckoner." William E. Roscoe in his "History of Schoharie County," states that the first edition of Scribner's "Engineer's and Mechanic's Companion," appeared in 1845 and was in such wide demand that it passed through 14 editions.

★ ★ ★

Born in Washington, Orange County, Vermont, in 1805, Scribner was graduated from Union College in 1833. It was his original intention to become a minister and in consequence entered New Brunswick Theological Seminary and was graduated in 1836. He continued in the ministry for three years and then, on account of his scholastic attainments and superior abilities, he was called to take charge of the Auburn Female School. The sedentary life of a minister and a teacher proved harmful to his health and, after going from Auburn to take charge of the Rochester Female School, he left these fields.

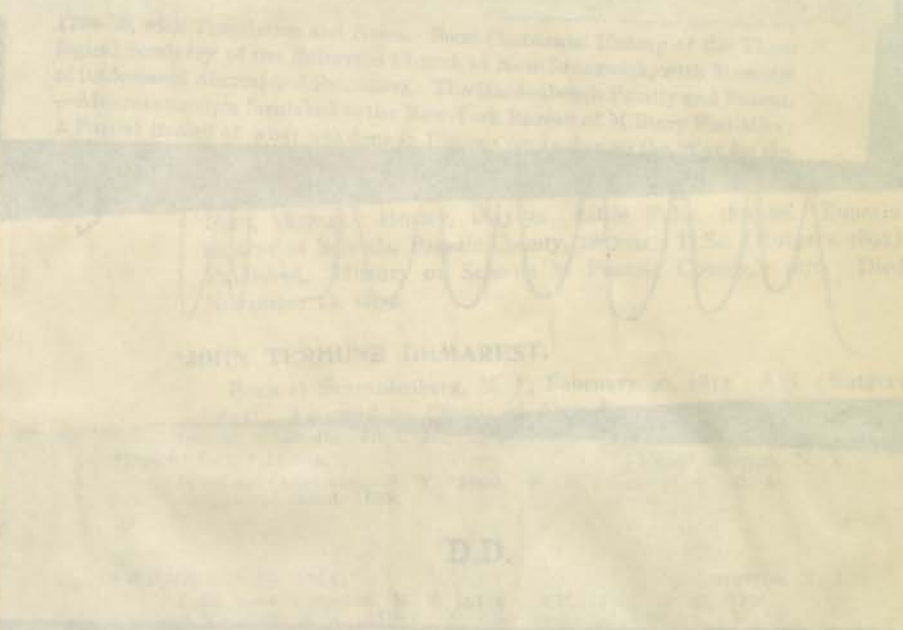
In 1855, Scribner came to Middleburg and purchased what was known as Boyd's Mill. He enlarged and developed the grist mill and later erected a paper mill on the same site. Later he bought a mill at Richmondville, where he also manufactured paper made of straw. Made in large sheets and of rather thick texture, the paper was used by grocers for wrapping parcels. Displaced in common use some years later after a process of manufacturing paper of a finer texture from wood pulp was developed, there are residents of Schoharie County who still have some of the great sheets of yellow straw paper from Scribner's as well as other old mills, which afforded a market for the wheat and rye straw raised by farmers in the valley.

★ ★ ★

Scribner also was considered an authority on geology and wrote many articles for publications. He opened and developed several stone quarries, the flagstones from which were sold throughout the state for sidewalk purposes. He was active in the organization of the now defunct Middleburg & Schoharie Railroad and gave active supervision in the engineering features of that undertaking. His son, John M. Scribner Jr., passed his youth at the Scribner homestead near the Reformed Church Middleburg and, after graduation from Union College, entered a law office in New York City and became one of the best known lawyers of that city. John Jr., in 1887, donated a horse-drawn hook and ladder truck to the Village of Middleburg and the Scribner Hook and Ladder Company was named in his honor. The truck cost \$520 and was manufactured by Ramsey & Co. of Seneca Falls. Until comparatively recent years it was preserved as an antique.

The senior Scribner was the grandfather of William S. Dunn of Schoharie, former assemblyman and assistant commissioner of agriculture of New York State, and the great-grandfather of Mrs. Anita Girdwood of Middleburg.

A newspaper in 1933, commenting on the project for the erection of a Hall of Fame in Schenectady, stated that John M. Scribner Sr. should have a place in it for the invention of his log rule.



JOHN MARSTON SCRIBNER

D.D.

UNION ALUM

... by Mr. ... "A Manual ..."
You and your friends are cordially invited to attend this exhibit, which will be held until the end of April.

A conference on "Outstanding ..."
... the evening of March 7 under the auspices of the Associated Academic Professionals of New York State. We hope you will find it worthwhile in how far-reaching the scope of the college is here to a great variety of organizations. As we write this, we remember that the New York State ...

CLASS OF 1833

JOHN M. SCRIBNER

Pastor of the First Reformed Dutch church of Walden, N. Y., July, 1839 until resignation about two years later.

History of Orange Co., N. Y.
Ruttenber & Clark

SCRIBNER, JOHN M. U.C. 1833, N.B.S. 1836, I. Cl. of Ulster, 1836; Schoharie, 1836-9, Walden, 1839-42, Prin. Female Sem., Auburn, 1842-4, Prin. Female Sem., Rochester, 1844-6, supplied Schoharie Mt. and North-Blenheim, 1847-8, w. c.—
Publications: The Ready Reckoner. *died 1881.*

*JOHN M. SCRIBNER. *Class of 1836.*

Born, 1810 (?). A.B. (Union, 1833). Licensed by Classis of Ulster, 1836. Schoharie, 1836-39. Walden, 1839-42. Principal, Female Seminary, Auburn, N. Y., 1842-44. Principal, Female Seminary, Rochester, 1844-46. *Died, 1881. From: New Brun-
swick Acad. Ann. cat. 1784-1911.*

1836.

A.M.

*JOHN M. SCRIBNER,

Middleburgh, N. Y. *Ann. M.*

Born, 1810 (?). A.B. (Union, 1833). A.M. (Union, 1836). N. *1836 Rutgers*
B. Sem., 1836. Clergyman, R. C. A. Teacher, Died, 1881.

Rutgers Cat. p. 337

*JOHN M. SCRIBNER

Born at Washington, Vt., March 17, 1805. A.B. (Union, 1833). Licensed by Classis of Ulster, 1836. Schoharie, N. Y., 1836-39. Walden, N. Y., 1839-42. Principal, Female Seminary, Auburn, N. Y., 1842-44. Principal, Female Seminary, Rochester, N. Y., 1844-46. Died January 10, 1881.

Page 76

THE New York State College of Forestry calls to our attention the fact that John Marston Scribner of the class of 1833 invented the log rule which bears his name. We quote from Professor Harold C. Belyea's letter: "It has been used in every state in the Union and is still in common use today. A log rule is a tabulated device for measuring the number of board feet contained in logs of different lengths and diameters. A slight modification of Scribner's Rule has been adopted as the official log rule of the United States Forest Service. I am inclined to think that you ought to dust off a niche in your local Hall of Fame and get ready a place for John Marston Scribner. After one hundred years his name and log rule are still going strong and will continue to do so while we measure our lumber in board feet." *U.A.M. Apr. 1938*

Scribner, John M. U.C. 1833, N.B.S. 1836, I. Cl. of Ulster, 1836; Schoharie, 1836-9, Walden, 1839-42, Prin. Female Sem., Auburn, 1842-4, Prin. Female Sem., Rochester, 1844-6, supplied Schoharie, Mt. and North Blenheim, 1847-8, w. c. Died 1881.
PUBLICATION: "The Ready Reckoner."

JOHN M. SCRIBNER, 1833, of Washington, Vt., was a member of the Adelpic Society.
Adelpic Catalogue 1830 (Died: 1881)

1833

The following is taken from Roscoe's "History of Schoharie",
page 215.

re
J. M. SCRIBNER purchased the Boyd mill property and built a large
grist and paper mill in 1855. In justice to worth, we cannot pass by
without giving notice of Mr. Scribner as he was as talented a business
man as the County ever claimed. He was born in the town of Washington,
Orange County, Vermont, in 1805, and graduated at Union College in 1833.
He studied for the ministry and attended the New Brunswick Theological
Seminary, from which he graduated in 1836. His first charge was at the
Schoharie Reformed Church and Gallupville, where he labored from 1836
to 1839. He removed to Walden Orange County, in the latter year and
remained three years. Finding a broad field for usefulness which was
more congenial to his health and taste, he took charge of the Auburn
Female Seminary, and after of the Rochester Female School and returned
to Middleburgh in 1845, and engaged his mind upon Mathematics, in which
branch of science he proved himself ^{without} a superior. His work on "Mensuration"
the "Ready Reckoner", "Scribner's Engineers' and Mechanics' Companion",
"Engineers' Pocket ^{Table} ~~Table~~-book", and other mathematical works, have
gained for him an enviable and enduring reputation as a superior math-
ematician. The first edition of his "Engineers' and Mechanics' Com-
panion," appeared in 1845, and to give an idea of the value of the
work we will here state that the fourteenth edition was published in
1866. Mr. Scribner was a thorough business man possessing the qualities
to originate and drive an enterprise to the advantage of the community.
He was a terse ^{Terse} writer, active and practical thinker, and in all his re-
lations with the business world he based every act upon principles of
right and honesty. During his last years he was engaged in the man-
ufacture of straw paper, having leased the "Richmondville mill"
for a term of years, and carried the enterprise on with success. He

was one of the originators of the Schoharie Valley Railroad and long a director of the same. His death occurred December 20, 1880, after a short illness. The Classis of Schoharie held a meeting at Middleburgh on the 22nd of December, and passed ~~an~~ appropriate resolutions expressive of his worth and the loss of the church and community in his death. //

1833

Aug '55

To J. M. Scribner

of the Class that graduated at Union College, in the year 1833

(or, if deceased, to the friend or relative who knew him best :)

SIR,—

It is the aim of the subscriber, in collecting the information asked for by the following questions, to obtain materials for a concise Biographical Catalogue of the Trustees, Presidents, Professors and Tutors of Union College;—of those who have received Honorary Degrees from it, and of all who have ever entered that Institution, whether Graduates or not.

That such a work would be interesting and useful to the Alumni, will not be denied; but whether it be practicable, will depend chiefly upon the ready aid which they shall impart. This circular will be sent to every Graduate whose residence is known, (or, if deceased, to some near connection,) and it is confidently expected that no one will neglect to return it in due time, with as full information as circumstances will allow:—some of the questions, indeed, it may not be possible to answer with certainty; others not at all: still, it is hoped that no important facts will be withheld because of their fewness.

Death has removed the twenty-four original Trustees, the first three Presidents, the early Professors and Tutors, and from eight hundred to one thousand of the Alumni of the College. Doubtless their friends and descendants will cheerfully contribute such information as may be necessary to illustrate the lives and services of the departed.

The subscriber desires every aid that may help to throw light upon the personal history of those concerned:—Obituary Notices; Biographical Sketches, Epitaphs, Funeral Sermons, Newspaper Notices of election to important offices or stations, Business Cards and Advertisements; also, copies of their Literary Works, Addresses, Sermons, Essays, Newspapers, engraved Portraits, &c.; all of which will be deposited and preserved in an Alcove of the College Library, to be set apart for "Graduates' Works."

He also requests that all future changes affecting the answers which shall be given, be made known to him from time to time:—especially the deaths of Graduates, and that the usual obituary notices or funeral sermons published on such occasions, be sent with the announcements, as it is his purpose to publish these deaths hereafter once a year.

JONATHAN PEARSON, Librarian.

UNION COLLEGE,
SCHENECTADY, N. Y. }

SPECIMENS OF BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES FOR THE PROPOSED CATALOGUE.

John Glidden Brown was born in Quinnebeck, N. Y., May 2, 1800; parents, James and Elizabeth (Glidden) Brown, who moved to Epsom, N. Y., in 1806. He was prepared for College at Helderbergh High School, under the instruction of Rev. Moses Johnson, and entered Union College Jan. 1817. He studied law with Hon. Septimus H. Smith, of Great Falls; was admitted to the bar in 1821; and commenced the practice of law in Albany, with James S. Van Hoesen, Esq. In 1830 he moved to New-York City, which, thereafter, became his residence. He was Member of N. Y. Assembly 1832-5; State Senator 1836-8; Member of Congress 1839-41; and Judge of the Superior Court 1842-6. He died June 30, 1849, of cholera, aged 49 years. Besides occasional speeches, orations and opinions, he wrote a work on constitutional law, and edited the N. Y. State Papers. He received the Degree of L. L. D. from Hamilton College in 1846.

Joseph Henshaw Luther was born in Hanover, Mass., June 1, 1798; parents, Joseph and Madeline (Henshaw) Luther; prepared for College at Yorkville Academy, John Almy, Esq., Principal; and entered Union College Sept. 1814. He taught, 1818-20, in East Philadelphia, (Penn.) High School; graduated at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1823; and was ordained Sept. 25, 1823, at Marbletown, N. Y.; and was Pastor of the Presbyterian Church till 1825. He was Pastor of the 1st Congregational Church of Haselton, Conn., 1825-30; Professor of Rhetoric in Erie College 1831-40; retired on account of ill health, and now resides in Philadelphia, Pa. He has published six sermons on various occasions; a series of lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres, and the "Communicant's Companion." He received the Degree of D. D. from the Hudson University in 1842.

Thomas Pennington Radway was born Feb. 23, 1778, in Benton, N. Y.; parents, John Harmony and Mary (Pennington) Radway; was prepared for College at High Holme School, Rev. Hanover Kelton, Principal; entered Union College Sept. 1795; taught a few months in Suncook, Mass., in 1799; studied medicine with Dr. Jonas Phisic and Dr. Abram Potecar, of Camerville; attended medical lectures at the College of Surgeons and Physicians, and was admitted to, and commenced the practice of medicine in La Rhine, in 1806. He was Surgeon in the Army 1813-15, and returned to practice at Oldbury in 1815, where he has since resided. He lectured in the Fairhaven Medical School on Anatomy and Physiology, 1830-5, and has published several articles in the New-York Medical Review, and two larger works on the "Functions of the Brain," and on "Gunshot Wounds."

- N. B. 1. Let the answers to the following questions be as full and *authentic* as possible: but when doubtful let them be marked thus (?).
- 2. When the person is deceased let some near relative or friend fill out the blanks to the best of his knowledge; if he have but *one fact*, let that be sent.
- 3. Let as much time be taken as may be found necessary for this purpose, and no more.
- 4. In case this sheet be not sufficient to contain all the facts to be sent, add another of the *same size*, if possible, leaving an inner margin of not less than one inch for binding.
- 5. In cases where no answers to this circular shall be returned, the editor will be obliged to publish such names without any biographical notices, or to rely upon information, gathered from other sources, and, therefore, not always *authentic*.

UCLaA1833scribner-j-0010

INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR THE FOREGOING SKETCHES.

- I. Name. *John Marston Scribner*
[Let this be written plainly and the middle names in full.]
- II. Names of both Parents; thus:— *Samuel and Catharine (Marston) Scribner*
[John and Elizabeth (Smith) Johnson.]
- III. Birth Place. *Washington Orange Co. Vermont.* Birth Day and Year. *March 17th 1808*
- IV. Various residences and dates; thus:— *Schoharie 1836-9. Walden 1839-41*
[Pittsfield, Mass., 1814-24; Albany, N. Y., 1824-30; New-York City, 1830-54.]
Auburn 1841-3. Rochester 1843-6. Middleburgh 1846-55—
- V. At what Academy or Academies prepared for College, with Principals and dates; thus:— *New-Paltz.*
[Albany Academy, Benjamin Allen, L. L. D., 1815-17.]
Principal. Thomas C. McLurdy, 1829-30—
- VI. At what College he graduated, and when. *Union 1838*
- VII. The occupation he followed after leaving college before studying his profession; thus:— *Clergyman 1836*
[Teaching, Washington, D. C., 1847-48, or Merchant's Clerk, New-York City, 1849-51.]
— 1840
- VIII. The profession he studied; where; with whom; when; thus:— *Divinity, New Brunswick N. J.*
[Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary, 1829-5 or Law in Albany, N. Y., with Hon. Harmanus Bleecker, 1840-2.]
1833-6
- IX. Where he has practised his profession, with dates; and in case he be a clergyman, mention the denomination to which he belongs; thus:— *Reformed Dutch, Schoharie 1836-9. Walden 1839-41*
[Epis., Somerville, N. J., 1827-30; Pres., Albany, N. Y., 1830-5; New-York City, 1835-54.]
- X. The other occupations he has followed; when and where; thus:— *Farmer & Manufacturer 1848-55*
[Merchant, Rochester, N. Y., 1829-35; or Farmer, Genesee, N. Y., 1835-54; or Manufacturer, Schoharie, N. Y., 1841-48; or Professor, teacher, banker, editor, &c.]

XI. The important offices he has held, with dates; thus:—
[Surrogate of Jefferson Co., N. Y., 1839-41 and 1845-7; Member of Congress, 21st district, N. Y., 1841-43; Member of Assembly, of N. Y., 1821-4, &c., &c.]

XII. The Literary or Scientific Works he has written or edited., *Engineer & Mechanic's Companion*
[Copies are solicited for the "Graduates Alcove" in College Library.] *Engineer's Pocket Table Book & the Ready Reckoner, & Numeration of Superficies & Solids.*

XIII. The names of his relatives who graduated at Union College.

XIV. The literary, professional, or honorary titles he received; from whence, with dates; thus:—
[M. D., from Albany Medical College 1845; or L.L. D., Amherst College, 1850, &c.]

XV. Is there an engraved portrait of him?
[One or two copies, together with his autograph, are solicited for College Library.]

XVI. The date, circumstances, and place of his death.
[Send any printed notice, biographical sketch, funeral sermon, &c. In many instances more space will be required to answer this and the three following questions, in which case add an additional sheet.]

1833.
 Obituary.
 J. M. Scribner, January 10, 1881, aged 75 years. C. Feb. 1881.

XVII. General information respecting character, services, success, interesting passages and events in his life, &c.

XVIII. Some account of his pedigree and family ; its original seat in this or the old country, &c., &c.

XIX. List of such graduates as may not be *widely* known ; their residences, professions, dates of deaths, &c. ; the name and residence, also, of some near friend of the deceased, that further information may be sought for ; thus :—

[John Orton Smith, Banker, Chicopee, Mass., died 1848. His brother, Joseph H. Smith, resides in Springfield, Mass.]

CLASS OF 1833

JOHN M. SCRIBNER

Purchased the Boyd Mill property and built a large grist mill in 1855. In justice to worth, we cannot pass by without giving notice of Mr. Scribner as he was as talented a business man as the county ever claimed. He was born in the town of Washington, Orange Co., Vt., in 1805. He studied for the ministry and attended the New Brunswick Theological Seminary, from which he graduated in 1836. His first charge was at the Schoharie Reformed Church and Gallupville, where he labored from 1836 to 1839. He removed to Walden, Orange Co., in the latter year and remained three years. Finding a broad field for usefulness which was more congenial to his health and taste, he took charge of the Auburn Female Seminary and after of the Rochester Female School and returned to Middleburgh in 1845, and engaged his mind upon mathematics, in which branch of science he proved himself without a superior. His work on "Mensuration," the "Ready Reckoner," "Scribner's Engineers' and Mechanics' Companion," "Engineers' Pocket Table-Book," and other Mathematical works, have gained for him an enviable and enduring reputation as a superior mathematician. The first edition of his "Engineers' and Mechanics' Companion" appeared in 1845, and to give an idea of the value of the work, we will here state that the 14th edition was published in 1866. Mr. Scribner was a thorough business man possessing the qualities to originate and drive an enterprise to the advantage of the community. He was a terse writer, active and practical thinker, and in all his relations with business would he base every act upon principles of right and honesty. During his last years he was engaged in the manufacture of straw paper, having leased the "Richmondville mill" for a term of years and carried the enterprise on with success. He was one of the originators of the Schoharie Valley Railroad and long a director of the same. His death occurred December 30, 1880, after a short illness. The Clasis of Schoharie held a meeting at Middleburgh on 22nd of December, and passed appropriate resolutions expressive of his death, and the loss of the church and community in his death.

History of Schoharie County, N. Y. p. 214
William E. Roscoe
D. Mason & Co.,
Syracuse 1882.

Scribner, John M., 1833

10/17/1854

"..on account of his venerable age and wig as...the butt and jest of the younger boys. ..minister for a time at Schoharie, where he married-- published one or two small compilations for engineers, etc., finally went into the manufacture of paper at Middleburgh, where he now resides."

Pearson Diaries V.4, p.707



DEPARTMENT OF FOREST MANAGEMENT
JOSEPH S. ILLICK
CARLYN C. DELAVAN
HAROLD C. BELYEA
JOHN C. SAMMI

THE NEW YORK STATE COLLEGE OF FORESTRY
AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
SAMUEL N. SPRING, DEAN

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

January 4, 1938

Registrar
Union College
Schenectady, N. Y.

Dear Sir:

I am interested in one Rev. J. M. Scribner because of his work in developing the Scribner Log Rule. It is a means by which one determines the board foot content of a log.

I have found that he attended Union and was given an A. B. in 1833.

He was licensed by several classis in Eastern New York soon after graduation and then went on to be principal of seminaries in Auburn and Rochester. He died in 1881.

If you could contribute additional data, such as the date and place of his birth, his parents, whom he married and the like I would be grateful.

I realize that 1833 is a long while ago, but I am confident that you have preserved such records.

Yours truly,

T. Robert Sheldon
T. Robert Sheldon

January 13, 1938

My dear Mr. Sheldon:

John Marston Scribner was born March 17, 1805, at Washington, Orange Co., Vermont. He was the son of Samuel and Catharine Marston Scribner. He was prepared for college at New Paltz Academy and was graduated from Union College in 1833 with the degree of Bachelor of Arts.

These facts are from a record sheet which he filled out in 1855. He adds that he attended the New Brunswick Theological Seminary, 1833-6, was in the Reformed Dutch pastorate in Schoharie 1838-9, and Walden 1839-41; and that he was a "farmer and manufacturer," 1848-55.

The History of Schoharie County says that he "took charge of the Auburn Female Seminary and after of the Rochester Female School and returned to Middleburgh in 1845, and engaged his mind upon mathematics." They then list his mathematical and engineering works, which you probably know of. It appears that during his latter years he was engaged in the manufacture of straw paper at the Richmondville mill, and that he was one of the originators of the Schoharie Valley Railroad and a director of it.

There is no reference to wife or children. In a letter written in 1837 to a friend at Union he says: "I expect to commence housekeeping in April next. I suppose you know where my personage is...."

I should be much interested to hear what you have discovered about Mr. Scribner and the invention you mention. Any material you can send will be added to his biographical record here.

Sincerely yours,

Mr. T. Robert Sheldon
Syracuse University
Syracuse, N. Y.

C. N. Waldron



File in
Scribner
folder
1833

DEPARTMENT OF FOREST MANAGEMENT
JOSEPH S. ILLICK
CARLYN C. DELAVAN
HAROLD C. BELYEA
JOHN C. SAMMI

THE NEW YORK STATE COLLEGE OF FORESTRY
AT SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY
SAMUEL N. SPRING, DEAN

SYRACUSE, NEW YORK

April 4, 1938.

Mr. C. N. Waldren,
Graduate Council,
Union College,
Schenectady, N.Y.

My dear Mr. Waldren:

Under separate cover I am sending you a copy of a portrait of John Marston Scribner of the class of 1833. I am sending this to you for your files or whatever use you may wish to put it, as a very slight expression of my appreciation of the unfailing courtesy, kindly helpfulness and gratifying promptness with which my several inquiries at your office have been met.

This portrait of Mr. Scribner was taken in Middleburgh, N.Y., probably in 1878, just about a year before his death. I obtained the original photograph from the Rev. Dr. W. H. S. Demarest, President Emeritus of the New Brunswick Theological Seminary of New Brunswick. It was obtained in 1893 from Mr. Scribner's family. At that time Dr. Demarest was pastor of the First Reformed Church of Walden, N.Y. In 1893 the church at Walden celebrated the 55th anniversary of its founding. As a part of that anniversary celebration there was issued a history of the church including biographical sketches and portraits of all of its five pastors including that of Mr. Scribner, who was the first pastor of the church. I have at hand a copy of that history and there is no doubt but that this is the portrait which was used. Dr. Demarest has kindly loaned it to me and I have had a permanent reproduction made, the original negative of which is filed in the Department of Forest Management, New York State College of Forestry, Syracuse, N.Y.

A somewhat bigger enlargement of this photograph has been framed and is to be hung in the Library of the New York State College of Forestry, which we judge a fitting place to preserve the memory and the likeness of the man who invented the Scribner Log Rule. Beneath the portrait there is this inscription:

"JOHN MARSTON SCRIBNER
Born in Washington, Vt., 1805, Died in Middleburgh, N.Y., in 1880.
A graduate of Union College of the Class of 1833.
Clergyman, Teacher, Author, Mathematician, Scientist
in 1846 he originated and published the Scribner Log Rule."

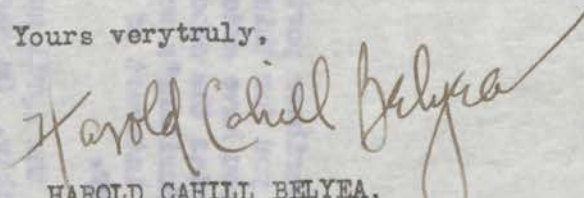
We still think John Marston Scribner was quite a man. If we could take all of the lumber that has been cut in the United States since 1846 and put it in one big pile, it would make a solid pile about one mile square on the base and extend upwards about thirteen miles. About 60 percent of this lumber was measured by the Scribner Log Rule, or one of its direct derivatives. That would make a pile of wood one mile square on the base and nearly eight miles tall and that's quite a monument for any man. Apart from this mere material

Mr. C. N. Waldren, 2

phase of size, his influence on the lumber business in all parts of the country through like use of his log rule was very great.

Thanking you again.

Yours very truly,



HAROLD CAHILL BELYEA,
Associate Professor of Forest Management.

R

April 12, 1938

Dear Mr. Belyea:

The copy of the Scribner portrait has arrived. I am indebted to you for this, as well as for the information you have added to our records. The picture explains the scholarly nature and solidity of Mr. Scribner's work, and must at once attract the interest of anyone who may look in the folder.

I am sending you the April number of the Union Alumni Monthly. On page 185 you will find a note quoting your opinion on the inventor of the log rule.

Sincerely yours,

Professor Harold C. Belyea
N. Y. S. College of Forestry
Syracuse, N. Y.

Schoharie Feb 8th 1884

Dear Brother

This will inform you that I have just received your letter declining my request to preach the dedicatory sermon of our new church. I consider your reasons satisfactory & now express my regret that Providence is preventing you from those labors which are to you & every other faithful & enlightened minister so pleasant & delightful. May the smiles of a gracious Providence soon restore you to perfect health & enable you to go on & see the work of the Lord prosper in your hands. I was exceedingly sorry that I could not see you in Callip when I was there but hope that the months & days are few before I may have the pleasure seeing my brother friend & Professor, and enjoying his excellent company for at least a few hours. Should you come into this region of country you must not fail to give me a call. I expect to commence house-keeping in April next. — I suppose you know where my Parsonage is & I assure you again I shall feel myself highly honoured to entertain you at any time.

Please give my best respects to "Prof. Savage" and all others who may have the curiosity or interest to enquire after me. I thank you for the compliment which

you paid me respecting the favourable reports
in circulation respecting my success & the prospect of
my future usefulness in that employment of which
the poet has justly observed

"No state on earth affords the place,
"Of equal honour or disgrace"

If I know my own heart very I have a much
stronger desire to be useful than great, though
good talents & great attainments in human know-
-ledge are very desirable. In my own view (as in
this I hope I am not vain) my prospects are much
more flattering than I expected ever to see them
when I left College. I shall be happy to hear from
you at any time & shall be obliged to you for any
good word in my favour. I mention this for some-
-times one word does a great deal of good to a young
man who is just entering upon a life of honour &
usefulness.

In haste I am truly Yours.

J. M. Scribner

P.S. I should now apply to your father to come & ded-
-icate our house if I had not recently heard that his health
is feeble. If however he is able to come & willing so to do
after hearing you state the subject to him, he may consider
this as a short & polite invitation, made through you, to
come at such time as may suit him best. If then I do not
hear from him in the course of ten days I will take it for granted that he cannot come. I should be very much pleased
if he could.

P.S.
-icate a
in books

Rev. J. A. Yates
Union College

Rev. Scribner
Nov. 1837
Class 1833



1833-JOHN M. SCRIBNER

Boyd's mill property finally fell into the hands of a Vermonter, John M. Scribner, who built a grist and paper mill according to Roscoe. John M. Scribner was a graduate of Union College and New Brunswick Theological Seminary and was pastor at the Schoharie Dutch Reformed Church for three years. Therafter he became principal of certain female academies at Auburn and Rochester. He returned to Schoharie County in 1850, locating at Middleburgh in the paper manufacturing industry (having leased the "Richmondville Mill") In his early years he wrote and published several works, including the "Ready Reckoner," for he was a good mathematician. He was described as a man who had the desire to see his whole community blessed with prosperity, and as one who worked assiduously for the instruction and betterment of the masses. Mr. Scribner was a backer of the Schoharie Valley Railroad. He died at Middleburgh in 1880.--

FROM:-Schoharie County in
Legend and History
Elizabeth Taylor
Schoharie 1846.

LOG RULE INVENTED BY JOHN M. SCRIBNER STILL IN COMMON USE

BEEKMAN GIVES BRIEF REVIEW OF PROMINENT MIDDLEBURGH MAN — CONDUCTED PAPER MILLS HERE — ONCE A MINISTER

(Letter to The News from former County Judge Dow Beekman.)

A few weeks ago one of the Schenectady papers commenting upon the project for the erection of a Hall of Fame in Schenectady, editorially stated that John M. Scribner Sr., should have a place in the Hall of Fame of that city. The matter is again emphasized in the April issue of the Union College Alumni Monthly which contains the following item:

"The New York State College of Forestry calls our attention to the fact that John Marston Scribner of the class of 1833 invented the log rule which bears his name. We quote from Professor Harold C. Belyea's letter: 'It has been used in every State in the Union and is still in common use today. A log rule is a tabulated device for measuring the number of board feet contained in logs of different lengths and diameters. A slight modification of Scribner's rule has been adopted as the official log rule of the United States Forest Service. I am inclined to think that you ought to dust off a niche in your local Hall of Fame and get ready a place for John Marston Scribner. After one hundred years his name and log rule are still going strong and will continue to do so while we measure our lumber by board feet.'

The present generation have but little knowledge of the prominent part which Mr. Scribner played in the industry of this town during the last century and therefore I take the liberty to present to your readers the following facts in relation to a truly remarkable man.

Mr. Scribner was born in the Town of Washington, Orange County, Vermont, in 1805. He graduated from Union College in the year 1833. It was his original intention to become a minister of the Gospel. In consequence he entered New Brunswick Theological Seminary and graduated in 1838. He continued in the ministry for three years and then on account of his scholastic attainments and superior abilities, he was called to take charge of the Auburn Female Seminary and thereafter was in charge of the Rochester Female School. The sedentary life of a minister and teacher was detrimental to his health and he thereafter engaged in business for which his practical mind eminently fitted him. What was known as Boyd's Mill in 1855 was purchased by Mr. Scribner. He enlarged and developed the grist mill and also erected a paper mill on the same site near the present residence of William Jarkovsky. Later he came into possession of a mill at Richmondville where he also manufactured paper made of straw. This paper was used by grocers for the purpose of wrapping up their parcels. It was made in large sheets, being of rather thick texture. It was displaced in common use later after science had discovered a process of manufacturing paper of finer texture from wood pulp. In my boyhood days I well remember Jacob Neville and George W. Dodge laying great sheets of yellow straw paper upon the counter and wrapping up great bundles of clothing, sugar and groceries. The same kind of paper was manufactured by Lewis Fox on the bank of the stream at the end of what we now call Baker Avenue. These paper mills afforded a first class market for the wheat and rye straw raised by the farmers in this valley.

Mr. Scribner was also noted for his attainments in mathematics and was famous in that branch of learning. Among his books which he published were his works entitled "Measurement," "Engineer's Pocket Tabulation," "The Mechanic's Companion," and "The Ready Reckoner." William E. Roscoe in his History of Schoharie

County states that the first edition of Mr. Scribner's "Engineer's and Mechanic's Companion" appeared in 1845 and was in such wide demand that it passed through 14 editions. Charles Keeler, who was connected with the "Creek Lumber Company" in this village and who is now well remembered by the people of this town, stated to me a short time before his death that he was familiar with the "Ready Reckoner" and that it was still used by lumbermen. Squire C. West, who for many years ran the mill and lumber shop on Railroad Avenue, was likewise familiar with the "Ready Reckoner."

Mr. Scribner likewise was considered an authority on geology and wrote many articles for learned publications on that branch of science. He opened and developed several stone quarries, the flag stones from which were sold throughout this State for sidewalk purposes.

Mr. Scribner also was among the active men who originated and organized the Middleburgh and Schoharie Railroad and gave active supervision to the engineering features of that undertaking besides lending liberally of his credit to the railroad company at a time when the company needed money to pay the contractor who was grading the road and laying the rails. The contractor having halted his work until Mr. Scribner and a few others produced the cash and received notes issued by the railroad company.

Those of us who knew Mr. Scribner stood in awe of him on account of his great learning and impressive manners. He was a man of large frame, tall, with broad shoulders, his massive head being covered with thick grey hair. However, I gratefully remember while some of the young boys of my age who went to school opposite his residence, were rather afraid of Mr. Scribner on account of glib knowledge of how some of the luscious fruit from his orchard disappeared, I succeeded in winning his kindness and attention by being interested in his conversation when he talked of geology and as he expressed it, "the story of the rocks," as I would sit on a bench by his side under a tree in his door-yard, and he would explain how the Appalachian Mountains on the east and the Rocky Mountains on the west were formed, when the earth began to cool and how the different layers of rock which we see on both sides of the valley were formed in the different geologic ages and how the glaciers at one time covered our hillsides and valleys. In fact, I believe I learned more geology from Mr. Scribner than I did from my college professors.

Mr. Scribner's son, John M. Scribner Jr., passed his youth at the old Scribner homestead near the Reformed Church and after graduating from Union College entered a law office in New York City and became one of the greatest lawyers of that city, noted for his learning and skill in trying negligence cases and was the attorney for some of the greatest corporations in New York State. The senior John M. Scribner was the grandfather of Hon. William S. Dunn, Mrs. Guy

Wroman and Mrs. William B. Verance and the great granddaughter of Mrs. Anita H. ... now residing in Middleburgh.

The Middleburgh News
June 16, 1938

CLASS OF 1833

JOHN M. SCRIBNER

U.C. 1833, N.B.S. 1836, l. Cl. of Ulster, 1836; Schoharie 1836-9, Walden, 1839-42, Prin. Female Sem., Auburn, 1842-4, Prin. Female Sem., Rochester, 1844-6, supplied Schoharie, Mt. and North Blenheim, 1847-8, w. c. Died 1881.

PUBLICATION: "The Ready Reckoner."

Manual of the Reformed Church in America p. 714
Corwin
1628-1902

Reverend John M. Scribner of the class of 1833 at Union, graduated here in 1836. He was born, I think in 1810 and died in 1881. Can you tell me the place of his birth and the date with month and day, also the place of his death and the month and day of his death? I have no record of his occupation from 1846-1881. Have you anything on this period of his life?

*Oct 1933.
New Brunswick
Theol. Sem.*

CLASS OF 1833.

JOHN M. SCRIBNER.

On the 10th of August, 1839, the Rev. John M. Scribner was installed pastor of the congregation, who resigned his charge on the 5th of April, 1841,-----

Hist. of Orange Co. N. Y.
Samuel W. Eager,
Newburgh, N. Y.
1846-7.

p. 327

1833 JOHN M. SCRIBNER.

DIED:- In Middleburgh on Sabbath evening, October 1st.,
Samuel, youngest son of Rev. John M. and Ann Eliza
Scribner, aged 2 years, 1 month and 14 days.

FROM: Schoharie Republican
October 10, 1848

John Marston Scribner

A.B.
1833
~~1839~~

John Marston Scribner ¹⁸³³ F. B.