

Sarah Maria Johns (1839 – 1929)
George William Bleecker (1824 – 1895)

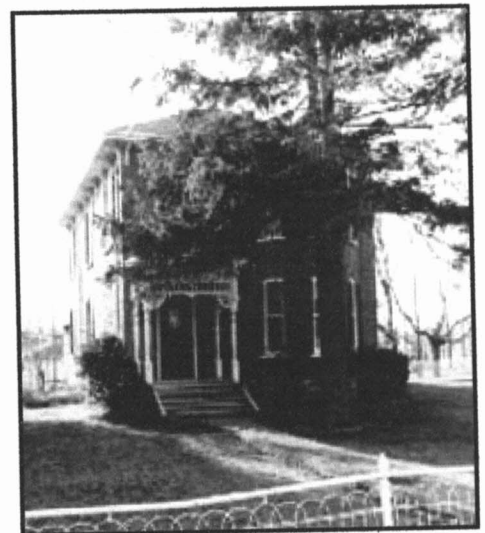
The eldest daughter of Bartholomew and Annabel Johns was born on 8th April, 1839 at the home of her grandparents, north of the village of Marmora. When she was a small child the family moved to her father's property in the Beaver Creek area of North Marmora. In 1856, at the age of 17, Sarah Maria Johns was married to George Bleecker, fifteen years her senior. George had come to the village of Marmora about 1851 with two wagonloads of goods to start a store.



The Marmora Foundry "old company house"
Renovated by George B. Bleecker in 1887

In 1857 George bought the old Iron Works "company house" which had been originally built as a manager's house, but later used by the Marmora Foundry Company as an office and hotel. It was there that George and Sarah kept a hotel until about 1869. Their first five children were born there.

Bleecker Home¹



George built a new home for them and then opened another store on the eastside of Forsythe Street. Some time after that he built a brick building on the western side of the street for the store that he occupied until his death. During those later years the old "company house" was rented to small industrial tenants, as the hotel business had diminished.

While being in business in Marmora George Bleecker had been active on the township council, holding the office of treasurer from 1867. In 1887 George and Sarah's son George, Jr. married and renovated the old company house, and moved it closer to Forsythe Street. In the mid-20th century it was a doctor's home and office.²

Both Sarah and George came from Loyalist roots. Sarah's great-grandfather, Lieutenant Solomon Johns, had served during the Revolutionary War with the King's Rangers. George's great-grandfather, John Bleecker, came to Upper Canada with his mother and sister from Albany, New York, after the war. He went to the Bay of Quinte area with the survey parties in 1783. John's sister, Lucretia Bleecker, had married Henry Finkle – and their daughter Maria married Solomon Johns, Jr., great uncle of Sarah Johns. John Bleecker had established a trading post at Port Trent (now Trenton) on the eastside of the river. He married Catharine Meyers, a daughter of the infamous Loyalist spy, Captain John Walter Meyers, who had settled in Belleville after the war. John and Catharine Bleecker had a son whom they named George. It is his grandson George William Bleecker who married Sarah Maria Johns.

¹ Photographs this page were obtained from website of Marmora Historical Foundation

² "Some Interesting Early Marmora History", pub. Marmora Herald, 29 May, 1947

George and Sarah Bleecker had ten children. Sadly, two died in infancy. George passed away in 1895, while Sarah lived until 1929. The family monument in the Marmora Protestant Cemetery bears witness to their family members buried there. Their stories have been told in various articles and obituaries printed in the Marmora Herald over a period of years, which are reprinted here to record the history of this family.

"From Herald Files of Former Years"
 (Marmora Herald, 1907 - 1908)

02 May 1907: Mrs. S. M. Bleecker returned on Monday from Sydney where she was at tending the funeral of the late Geo. Ketcheson.

 23 July 1908: Mr. Carl Bleecker who has been attending Harvard University, returned home last week. He was successful in passing his 3rd year examinations.

Mr. Roy Bleecker, son of Mr. and Mrs. C. B. Bleecker, has accepted a good position in Marshfield, Oregon.

 25 March 1909: Mrs. S. M. Bleecker, who has been in Chicago for the past two years, arrived home yesterday.

 16 June, 1910: Mrs. S. M. Bleecker, who has been visiting in Chicago and other places in the U.S., returned home on Saturday.

 29 June 1916: Mr. Roy Bleecker, who has been in Montana for some time, arrived in town on Monday for a couple of weeks visit with his parents, Capt. and Mrs. C. A. Bleecker. On his return to the States he will go to Portland, Oregon.

 03 August 1916: Mrs. S. M. Bleecker, who has been visiting her son at Spokane, Wash., and Portland, Oregon, for the past year, returned to Marmora last week.

Mrs. Mary J. Bowen, predeceased her just one month ago on February 23rd. Although Mrs. Bleecker had been seriously ill for several weeks, no fatal results were anticipated until Monday forenoon when hemorrhage of the bowels set in. Dr. Bingham, an eminent specialist of Toronto, was hastily summoned, but when he arrived Monday evening he found she was beyond human aid and she passed away as above stated.

Deceased came to Marmora as a little girl and has lived here ever since and during that time was one of its most popular residents, and her death has caused a feeling of sadness and regret throughout the village. She was an active member of St. Paul's church having been organist for a number of years and her services will be much missed by the congregation, though not more than her kind and winning personality. Being an accomplished pianist and a gifted singer she was prominent in social and musical circles, and her death will be felt as a personal loss by many.

She leaves two sons, George and McLaren, to mourn her loss. They have the sympathy of the whole village in this double bereavement, especially as it breaks up the home.

The funeral took place on Thursday afternoon, service being conducted at the house by Rev. C. M. Harris, and interment taking place in Marmora cemetery. A large number of relatives and friends were in attendance, quite a number being present from out of town. The following relatives were present from out of town:

Mrs. S. M. Bleecker, Chicago; Mr. Fraser Bowen, Grand Rapids; Mr. Mack and Miss Pearl McAlden, Frankford; Mr. Joe Chishom, Roslin; Mr. Harry Simpson, Toronto.

There were a large number of floral offerings, among them being the following: Mr. and Mrs. Kirkegaard, Cross; Mr. J. W. Pearce, Basket; Mr. and Mrs. H. R. Pearce, Basket; Mr. and Mrs. Jas. Parker, Spray; St. Paul's Choir, Crescent; Deloro M & R. Co. Staff, Wreath; Mr. Willis, Wreath.

(Marmora Herald, 25 March 1909)

OBITUARIES

CROSSED THE DARK RIVER

MRS. ELIZABETH M. BLEECKER

Passes Away on Tuesday afternoon
 After about six weeks' illness of typhoid fever Mrs. Elizabeth M. Bleecker, widow of the late George B. Bleecker, passed to the great majority on Tuesday afternoon, March 23rd, aged 41 years. Her mother, the late

WILLIAM FREDERICK BLEECKER

Marmora lost one of its best known citizens last Monday in the person of William Frederick Bleecker, who passed away at the age of 43 years. Death was due to Chronic Cholangitis but he was only confined to his bed for two weeks. He leaves a widow, formerly Miss Annie McWilliams, and two daughters, Dora and Thelma, both at home. He is also survived by his mother, three brothers, Chas. A., of Marmora, Bert, of Spokane, and Frank, of Seattle, Wash.; also one sister, Mrs. Malloy, of Chicago. The funeral was conducted by Rev. C. M. Harris and was under the auspices of Marmora Lodge A.O.U.W.

(Marmora Herald, 20 October 1910)

MRS. S. M. BLEECKER

Last Sunday evening Mrs. Sarah M. Bleecker passed away in a Toronto hospital, where she had been for some time. Had she lived another couple of months she would have been ninety years old. In spite of her age she was remarkably active until about three years ago, when she suffered a paralytic stroke. Since that time she had been confined to her bed.

The late Mrs. Bleecker was born in a log house on what has for years been known as the Hilton farm. Her parents were the late B. Johns and his wife, whose maiden name was Annabel Chisholm. While she was quite young they moved to the Jas. E. Bailey farm³, living in the stone house, which still stands on the farm.

In 1856 deceased was married to George W. Bleecker, who predeceased her about thirty-three years ago. All their married life they resided in what is now Marmora Village, although for years the place was known as "The Works", and the Village has only been incorporated for about twenty-five years. Until the time of his death Mr. Bleecker played a very important part in the business and municipal affairs of the community, and few women were as widely known and as highly esteemed as Mrs. Bleecker. In recent years "Grandma Bleecker", as she was called by nearly all who knew her, held a unique place in the affection of the people of Marmora.

The late Mrs. Bleecker is survived by one daughter and three sons. They are Mrs.

³ The Jas. E. Bailey farm referred to was the original farm of Bartholomew Johns.

Mulloy, of Los Angeles, Cal., Charles, of Marmora, Gilbert and Frank, of Spokane, Wash. She is also survived by one sister, Mrs. Walker, of Victoria, B.C., and two brothers, Murchison Johns, of Allandale, Ont., and Alex. Johns, who resides in the Southern States.

Mr. C. A. Bleecker and Mr. F. R. Wells went to Toronto, Sunday night and brought the remains down on the 3:36 train Tuesday morning. The funeral was held yesterday afternoon, service being conducted in St. Paul's church by Rev. A. B. Caldwell. Interment was made in Marmora Protestant cemetery.

(Marmora Herald, 21 February 1929)

JOHN GILBERT BLEECKER

On June 9th, 1872, a son was born to the late Mr. and Mrs. George W. Bleecker and he was named John Gilbert. He grew up in Marmora and received his public school education here. Later he attended High School in Madoc and then the Horological Institute in Toronto. Graduating from there he conducted a business for a short time in Athens and Gananoque.

In 1896 the late John Gilbert Bleecker purchased the jewellery business of John Abbott in Marmora and he carried on the business here for about ten years. In the spring of 1906 he went to Seattle, Wash., where he remained for a short time. He then went to Spokane, Wash., where [he] joined a large jewellery firm and he remained with them ever since. A short time ago he was taken ill with pneumonia and passed away early Tuesday morning of this week.

As a boy and man the deceased was very popular in Marmora and some of the older residents still remember him with the most kindly feelings. He is survived by a son and daughter, two brothers Chas. A. of Marmora, and Frank, of Spokane, and one sister Mrs. Mulloy, of Chicago. The deceased paid his last visit to Marmora about ten years ago before the illness and death of his mother.

(Marmora Herald, 09 March 1933)

CAPT. CHARLES A. BLEECKER

After several months of failing health Capt. Charles A. Bleecker passed away at his home in the village Tuesday morning, March 13th, aged 87 years. He was a son of the late Mr. and Mrs. George Bleecker and was born in the residence now owned by Dr. H. Crawford. It is one of the oldest buildings in

Marmora, and was first a log building, then a frame house and for many years a fine brick residence.

Almost from the earliest days of the village the Bleekers played an important part in its business and municipal life. When Marmora township was first organized the late George Bleecker was appointed its first treasurer and he was succeeded by his son, Chas. A. Bleecker, who has held it ever since. It is unique record for father and son to hold a municipal office for upwards of 90 years.

In 1902, when Marmora was incorporated as a village and separate municipality, C. A. Bleecker was appointed its first treasurer and has held the office ever since, as well as that of township treasurer. He has also held the office ever since, as well as that of tax collector, at various times.

When Marmora village purchased the local electric lighting system and became one of the municipalities in the Ontario Hydro Electric system Mr. Bleecker was appointed secretary-treasurer and manager by the local Commission and has also held that office ever since.

He was also secretary-treasurer of Marmora Agricultural Society for a number of years and a trustee of Marmora Protestant Cemetery Board.

In the early days of the village the late George Bleecker carried on a general store business in the building now occupied by Fred Lee as a harness shop. In those days there were no railroads in this part of the country and not even a good wagon road. All goods had to be hauled from Belleville and a trip to the city was quite an event. His sons George, Charles and Fred assisted with the business, an important part of which was furnishing supplies for the big lumber camps. "The Bleecker boys" as they were called in those days, were widely known and very popular.

As a young man Mr. Bleecker learned the tailoring trade and became an expert. For years he conducted a tailor shop in connection with the Bleecker store and enjoyed a large patronage. Some years after the death of their father the sons sold the business to the late J. W. Pearce.

The late C. A. Bleecker always took a keen interest in military matters. Year after year he took a company to Barrie Field Camp near Kingston, and was frequently complimented on the smart appearance of his men and the manner in which they were trained.

He attained the rank of Captain with the old 49th Regiment and was in command of a company of the 155th Battalion, Canadian Infantry, when it was mobilized during the first World War. One of his greatest disappointments was when he was refused permission to accompany the Battalion overseas for active service. His fine work as recruiting officer during the war was perhaps of even greater service to Canada.

After the C. P. Railway line was constructed from Montreal to Toronto the late Fred Bleecker was appointed local ticket agent for Marmora. Before automobiles became numerous there was a lot of passenger traffic from Marmora, Deloro and district and the office did a thriving ticket business. On the death of his brother C. A. Bleecker was appointed agent and he also took over the insurance business.

Over 59 years ago Chas. A. Bleecker was united in marriage to Cora A. Powers, and soon after they erected the fine brick residence on Madoc street in which they have since resided. In 1936 they celebrated their golden wedding anniversary and a host of friends joined in extending best wishes and congratulations. Devoted to each other they found happiness and satisfaction in working together in both home and office. They were also among the first to build a summer home at Crowe Lake and they loved their summers there. Both Mr. and Mrs. Bleecker had the faculty of making and keeping friends.

Besides his wife he leaves a family of two sons, Roy, of Portland, Oregon and Major Howard Bleecker, of Camp Borden. He is also survived by one brother, Frank, of LeMasa, California and one sister, Mrs. Minnie Muloy, of San Francisco, Cal. Miss Miriam Savage, who has been a member of the household for several years was like a daughter to the deceased.

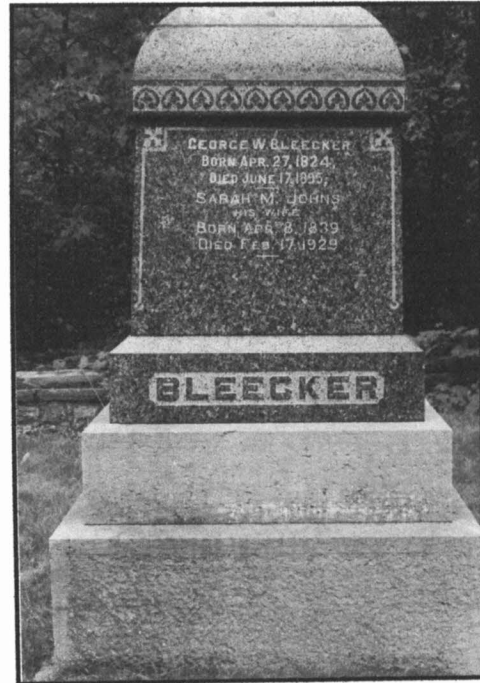
The funeral was held this forenoon under the auspices of Marmora Lodge A.F. and A.M. No. 222, of which Mr. Bleecker was a life member. In 1944 he was presented with a special jewel as a member of the Craft for fifty years. He was also a member of Springbrook I.O.O.F. Lodge. In religion he was for many years a member of St. Paul's Anglican Church and a Conservative in politics. Some years ago he was made an honorary member of Marmora Branch No. 237 of the Canadian Legion.

(Marmora Herald, 15 March 1945)

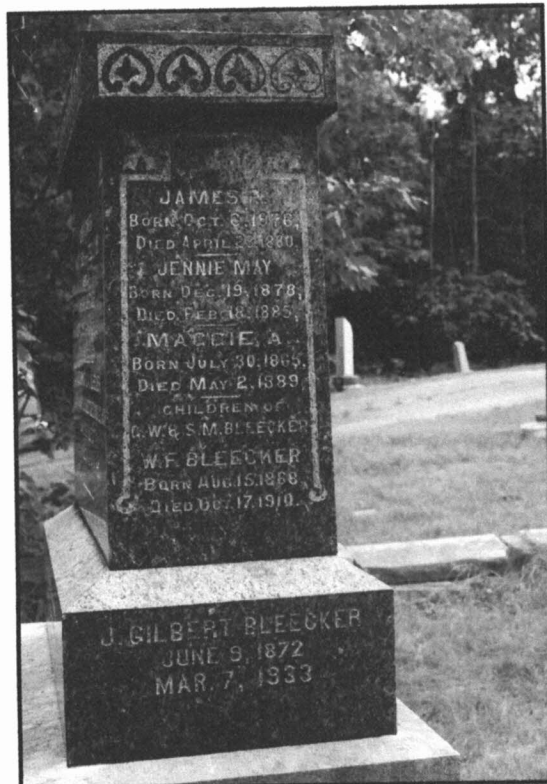
Bleecker Monument at Marmora Protestant Cemetery

GEORGE W. BLEECKER
 BORN APR. 27, 1824,
 DIED JUNE 17, 1895,

 SARAH M. JOHNS
 HIS WIFE
 BORN APR. 8, 1839
 DIED FEB. 17, 1929



Front Side of Monument



Left Side of Monument

JAMES R.
 BORN OCT. 8, 1876,
 DIED APRIL 28, 1880

JENNIE MAY
 BORN DEC. 19, 1878,
 DIED, FEB. 18, 1885,

MAGGIE A.
 BORN JULY 30, 1865,
 DIED MAY 2, 1889

CHILDREN OF
 G. W. & S. M. BLEECKER

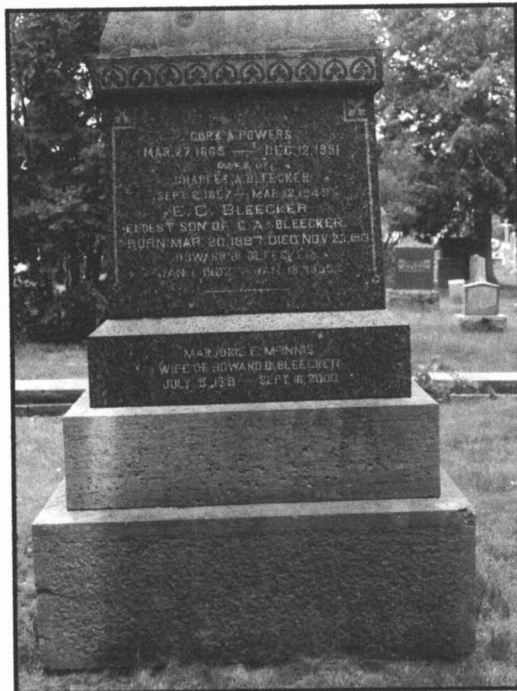
W. F. BLEECKER
 BORN AUG. 15, 1868
 DIED OCT. 17, 1910.

J. GILBERT BLEECKER
 JUNE 9, 1872
 MAR. 7, 1933

C. B. BLEECKER
BORN FEB. 18, 1861
DIED JULY 10, 1903.
E. M. WATERHOUSE
HIS WIFE
BORN FEB. 6, 1909



Right Side of Monument



Back Side of Monument

CORA A. POWERS
MAR. 27, 1865 - DEC. 12, 1951
WIFE OF
CHARLES A. BLEECKER
SEPT. 2, 1857 - MAR. 12, 1945
E. C. BLEECKER
ELDEST SON OF C. A. BLEECKER,
BORN MAR. 20, 1887 DIED NOV. 23, 1913
HOWARD B. BLEECKER
JAN 1, 1902 JAN. 18, 1995

MARJORIE E. McINNIS
WIFE OF HOWARD B. BLEECKER
JULY 9, 1918 ---- SEPT. 16, 2000