

School and Wedding Bells Rang for Susan Cleveland Yeomans By Dorothy French

The ringing of a school bell would normally not be something of interest in the Walworth community....but it changed forever the life of a young woman. That woman was Susan Sophia Cleveland, and her ringing of the bell at an appointed hour was music to the ears of Lucien Theron Yeomans because it meant she had accepted his marriage proposal. Susan was born September 2, 1843, in Fayetteville, New York, one of five daughters and four sons of Richard (a Presbyterian minister) and his wife, Ann (Neal) Cleveland. One of her brothers was Grover, a Buffalo assistant district attorney. He managed to save enough out of his \$10 a week pay to send Susan to college, a gesture gratefully appreciated. Susan was educated at the Houghton Seminary, Clinton, NY, and the Ingham University, later known as the Elmira College for Women.

After college, Susan taught at the East Bloomfield Academy for several years. Learning of a school principal position available at the Walworth Academy, Susan successfully applied for the job and moved to Walworth in 1866. There she met Lucien and a romance began to develop, followed by his proposal of marriage.



Susan: 1860's



Susan 1880



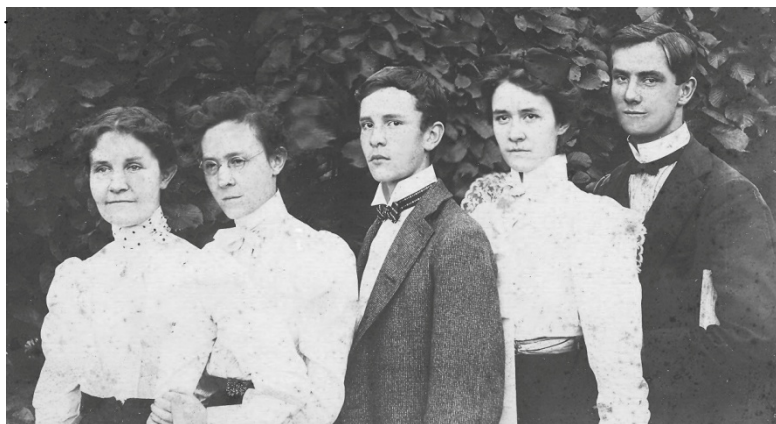
Susan: 1930



Lucien T.: 1920

There is a discrepancy in the date of their marriage. Local records indicate the marriage occurred in 1873. However, the 1880 United States Census lists the marriage year as 1868. Upon her marriage, Susan became the wife of the Honorable Lucien Theron Yeomans, a Republican State Assemblyman (1872 – 1873) and prominent local businessman. The Yeomans of Walworth were successful land owners and apple growers and operated a nursery business. In addition, Lucien's father, Theron Gilbert Yeomans, was one of the first to import Holstein-Friesian stock from Holland to America in 1879.

Between 1883 and 1885, Grover was Governor of New York State, and a rising star in the Democratic Party. In the early 1890's he spent Thanksgiving with Lucien, Susan and their five children: Ellen Louise (also known as Nellie), born 1869; Anna Gertrude, born 1871; May Cleveland, born 1874; Lucien Ingraham, born 1878; and Theron Grover, born 1885.



**Left to right: Undated Photo of Children of
Lucien T. and Susan C. Yeomans**

Ellen (aka Nellie): married Charles W. Hamilton. Housewife.

Anna: PhD, professor at New York University. Wife of Professor Joseph A. Reed.

Theron: Medical Doctor

May: Married Charles H. Rodgers; housewife

Lucien I. Industrial engineer

According to a 1884 newspaper story, Lucien's position in the Republican Party did not change Susan's natural impulse. "When her husband sent a banner bearing the legend 'Blaine and Logan' to the top of the 'liberty pole' in their dooryard, Susan immediately caused to be erected alongside a second 'liberty pole' and just as high. From it she floated a banner bearing the inscription, 'Cleveland and Hendricks.' People came miles to see the anomaly, some to cheer Grover's militant sister." Grover and Thomas Hendricks narrowly won the presidential election but were defeated in the 1888 election.



**Top: 3634 High Street Walworth
Home of Lucien & Susan Yeomans
Now owned by Mr. & Mrs Daniel Miles**

Political differences were temporarily put aside when Anna and Nellie chose June 10, 1891 as their double wedding day. The wedding would be held at their parents' home at 3634 High Street in the Walworth hamlet. Lucien would give dark-haired Nellie in marriage, and Uncle Grover would escort blonde Anna.

The two brides, clad in white silk bridal gowns, came down the great circular staircase as the wedding music peeled forth at high noon. His wedding gifts to his nieces were twin traveling clocks from Tiffany's in New York. Three years earlier, President Cleveland had married Frances Folsom in the White House; she did not accompany him to Walworth in 1891.

The day of the wedding was unbearably hot. Uncle Grover and his bulk suffered through the heat as best he could. A newspaper clipping, written by Arch Merrill and titled "The Two Brides Were Beautiful - - But Guests Watched the Fat Man." appeared in an area newspaper on November 30, 1947. Because Grover was a guest of his sister and brother-in-law, he abided by the rules of the temperance household. However, as soon as possible, he departed for "somewhere east of

Walworth, where there are deserving Democrats and a man can quench a thirst." Grover won the nomination again in 1892 with Adlai Stevenson I as his vice-presidential running mate. They successfully ran against the incumbent Republican president, Benjamin Harrison; Whitelaw Reid was the vice-presidential candidate. In 1893 New York State Governor Roswell P. Flower appointed Susan a director of the Newark, New York, Custodial Asylum, a position she held until 1905. Lucien Theron was the manager of T. G. Yeomans and Sons from about 1870 until the business was sold in 1905. In 1901, because of Lucien's health, he and Susan made their first trip to California where they had relatives. After disposal of all of their Walworth interests in 1905, he and Susan moved to Long Beach, California. Lucien died February 5, 1906, in Long Beach.

After her husband's death, Susan moved to Brooklyn where she lived with her daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Charles H. (May) Rodgers. She continued her charity and temperance work, serving on the New York City visiting committee of the State Board of Charities. On her 95th birthday all five of her children were present to help her celebrate; this was the first time in 20 years they were all together. Susan passed away two months later.



Susan Cleveland Yeomans died November 4, 1938, in Brooklyn, New York, at age 95 - the sole survivor of her siblings. Her claim to fame is not as the sister of a United States President, but as a teacher, principal, wife, mother, anti-suffragist, member of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and a Democrat. Lucien died February 5, 1906 in Long Beach, California; he was born December 1, 1840. They are buried in Palmyra, New York.

Left: Photo taken prior to February 1906.
Lucien and Susan in California



Words on Yeomans Tombstone
Palmyra, New York Cemetery

Lucien T., son of T. G. & L. A. Yeomans
Born Dec. 1, 1840
Died Feb. 5, 1906

Susan S. Cleveland, his wife
Born Sept. 2, 1843
Died Nov. 4, 1930

Lucien I. Yeomans, their son
Born Apr. 3, 1878
Died Aug. 16, 1954



Editor's Note: Information for this story was obtained from data at the Walworth Historical Society, genealogy records of the Yeomans family, the internet, Grover Cleveland Birthplace Memorial Association, and Donna Huntley Stalker (great-great-great niece of Lucien T. Yeomans). In 1985 Mr. and Mrs. Clifford (Emily) Huntley donated an area - known as Yeomans' Park in honor of Clifford's great-grandfather, Theron G. Yeomans - for a museum. A ground-breaking ceremony was held July 10, 1988, at the corner of High and Academy Streets. One year later - on September 18, 1989 - our museum was dedicated at the group's first meeting.