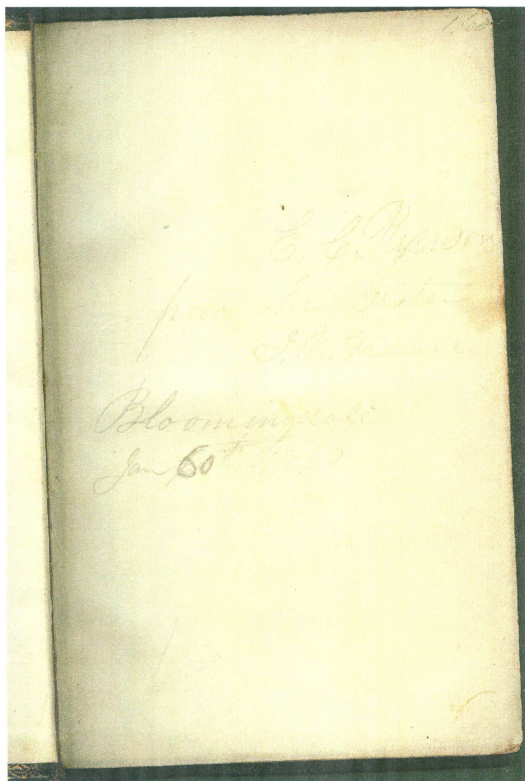


The Mystery Bible!

The Hayes family vacationed at Higgins Beach, Maine every August. On their way there in 1958, they stopped along the way at a **barn sale in Vermont** where young Jim spent 75 cents on an old kerosene lamp and his mother, Virginia, found a nice old Bible, printed in N.Y. in 1854. The elegant but aging Bible remained in the family until it came into the possession of her twin granddaughters, Terri Gassaway and Sherri Barnes. After some sleuthing on the internet, the girls connected with the Ryerse-Ryerson Family Association and graciously returned the old Bible to our family at Christmas 2011.



The challenge became to discover the original Ryerson owner. The only clues were the badly fading names written in pencil inside the cover.



E. C. Ryerson
from her sister
J. R. Greene
Bloomington
Jan 6th 1860

From a search of the 1916 Ryerson Genealogy we finally found **Eliza Catherine Ryerson**, her sister **Jane R**, an older sister **Mary Ann** and their brother **MARTIN JOHN**.

Mary Ann Ryerson, b. June 6, 1807; d. Jan. 26, 1876, unmarried.

Jane R. Ryerson, b. June 22, 1810; June 30, 1890; m. June 1, 1836 Nathan A. Green who died Sept. 26, 1839, three years after their marriage, no children.

MARTIN JOHN RYERSON, b. Oct. 21, 1814; July 30, 1889.

Eliza Catherine, b. May 24, 1820; d. May 8, 1883, unmarried.

They were the children of **JOHN M. RYERSON** b. Dec. 1, 1782; d. June 8, 1820 and his wife **Clarissa** who he married March 2, 1806.

And guess who their grandparents were!!!

The Great Ironmaster, MARTIN J. RYERSON and his wife 'Vrouche!'

Martin J. Ryerson and his new bride took up house-keeping in the Yellow Cottage (intersection of the Hamburg-Paterson Tpk and Wanaque Ave, opposite the Maine Monument in Pompton Lakes, N.J.) The Yellow Cottage or the Yellow Tavern - was later rented to Joseph Curtis who ran it as a house of public entertainment during the Revolution. Lots of history there but that's another story!





Martin J. Ryerson



Sophronia "Vrouche"
(Van Winkels) Ryerson

The Ironmaster **Martin J. Ryerson** and his wife 'Vrouche' were the parents of **John M. Ryerson** (1782-1820) and the grandparents of **Martin John Ryerson** and his three sisters, Mary Ann, Jane R. and Eliza Catherine, the recipient of the Mystery Bible!

Martin J. Ryerson was to become an able ironmaster and a man of great enterprise. He began buying mines and forges and furnaces until he had acquired most of the mining region in Pompton, including stores, mountain land, wood land and water rights. He added to his acres and mines until he was by far the largest individual land owner in the county! Despite the number of enterprises, he ran his ironworks in an efficient and exceedingly profitable manner.

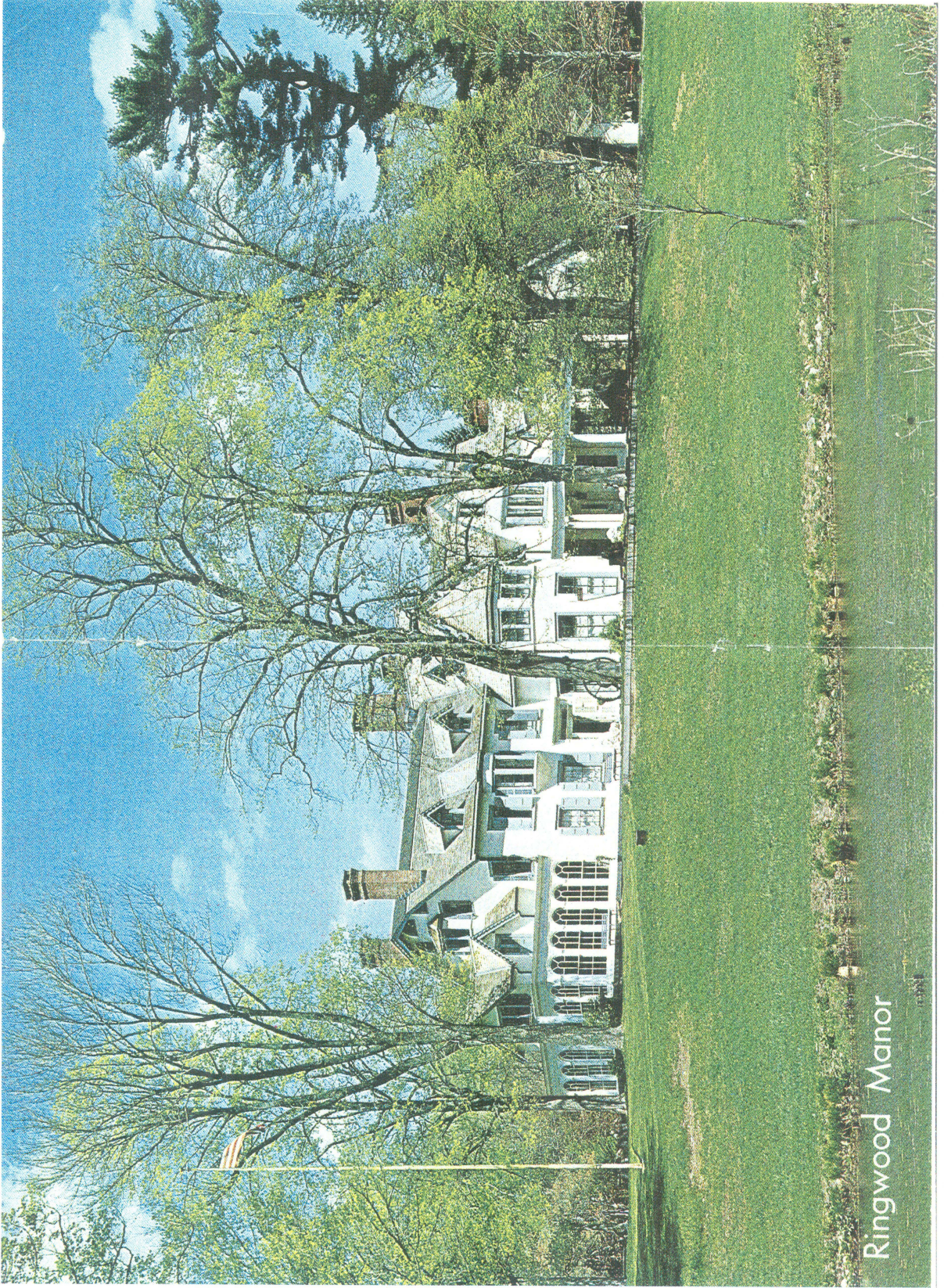
On March 18, 1807, **Martin J. Ryerson** purchased the **Ringwood** Ironworks containing 6838 acres and the Long Pond works containing 5975 acres and in September of the same year he acquired half of the Charlotteburg Ironworks...3000 acres.

With the sale of **Ringwood** to Ryerson, it at last came into strong capable hands. Experienced as an ironmaster and already successfully operating the Pompton works, he opened a number of new mines and increased the flow of ore. Through efficient planning and the utilization of all resources to their utmost, he turned Ringwood into a thriving operation. Year after year he turned out iron of an excellent quality and at great profit.



Soon after **Martin J. Ryerson** acquired the Ringwood estate, he built a new house and moved his family there at its completion.

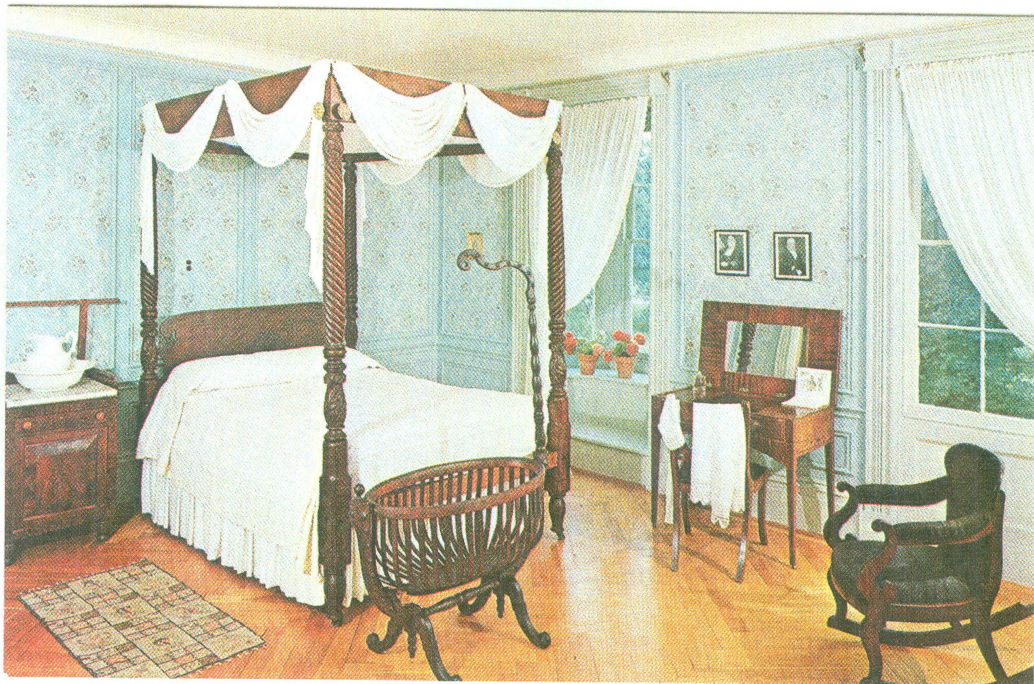
That house is the west end of the present Manor House. His oldest son, **John Martin Ryerson**, his wife and 4 children also resided at Ringwood where he was associated with his father in the iron business. In 1820, however he met an untimely death at the early age of 38. His widow and children then moved back to the Yellow Cottage.



Ringwood Manor



Grand Hall



Ryerson Bedroom



*Martin J. Ryerson portrait over fireplace
Ryerson Parlors*



The Ringwood Manor House where the ironmasters made their home is located on a picturesque site of beautiful gardens and rolling lawns. It is seasonally open to the public and is a must if you are sight-seeing in the area. It is also the birthplace of **Martin John Ryerson** and his three sisters, Mary Ann, Jane R. and **ELIZA CATHERINE**, the owner of our Mystery Bible!

Ringwood Manor today has 78 rooms, many open to the public and containing many of the original furnishings of the later owners, the Coopers and the Hewitts who made large additions to the original Ryerson home as you can see in the picture. Later descendants gave the richly historic park to the State of New Jersey. The gun and trophy room, the Ryerson parlors, Peter Cooper's bedroom, the early English dining room, the music room with hand-painted seascapes are among many surprises in this historic home. The grounds of Ringwood's 579 acres also hold a section of an enormous iron chain, its links two feet long...made at Ringwood for the Continentals as a barrier against British ships sailing up the Hudson.

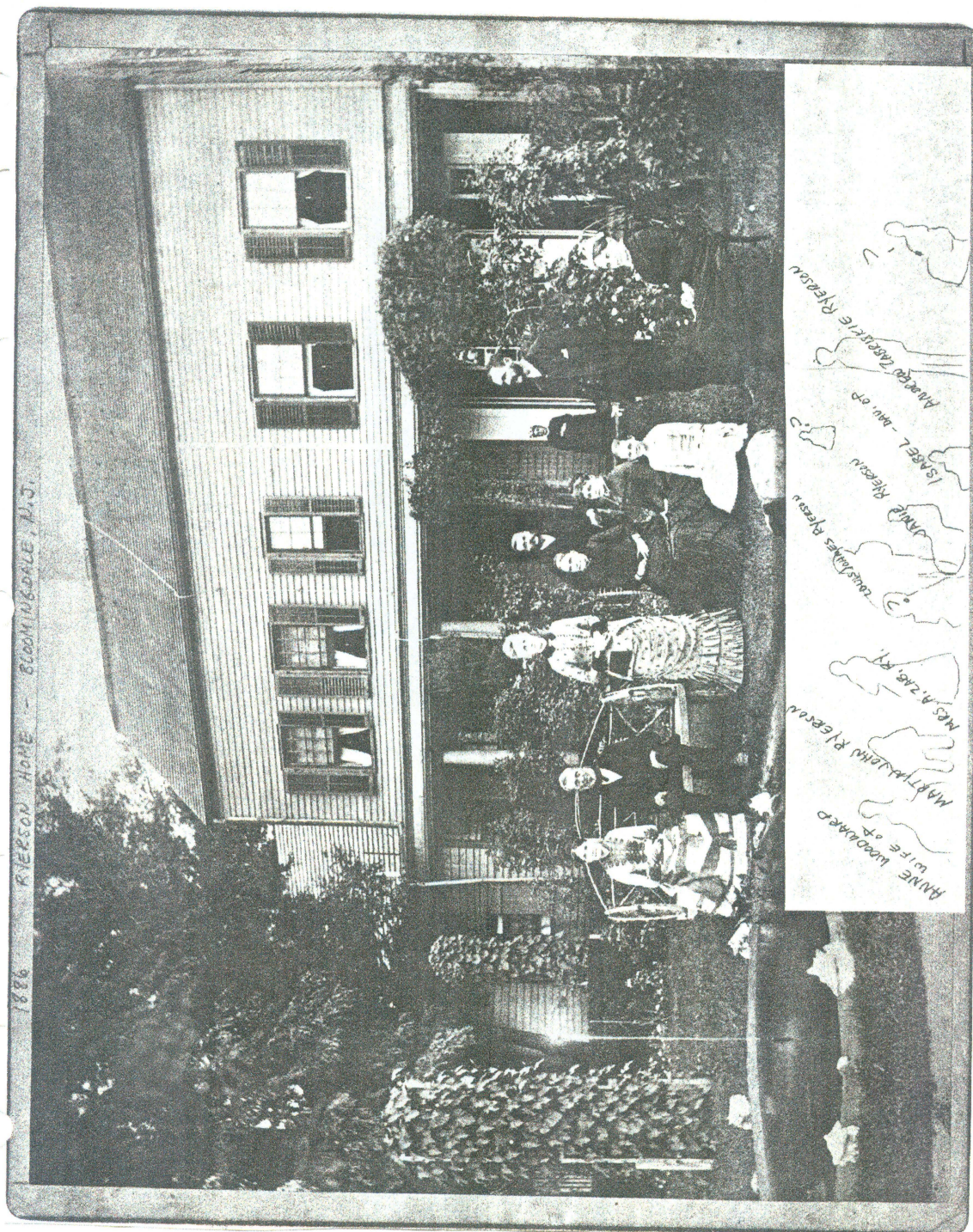
The Ironmaster, Martin J. Ryerson continued to operate the Ringwood Ironworks with the help of his two younger sons, **Jacob and Peter**, until his death in 1838. The era of prosperity did not last long after Ryerson's death. His sons who inherited the properties were not as successful as their father and were soon in debt. In 1842 the Ringwood land was listed for Sheriffs sale but buyers were scarce. After a period of 10 years, all of Ringwood, including the land was finally sold for \$100,000 to Peter Cooper, the noted New York industrialist and financier. It is said that the \$100,000 was sufficient only to pay back taxes. When the Ringwood property was sold, the amount of ore that had been mined on this old and valuable property is estimated at between 300,000 to 500,000 tons, but there were still tremendous quantities unmined.

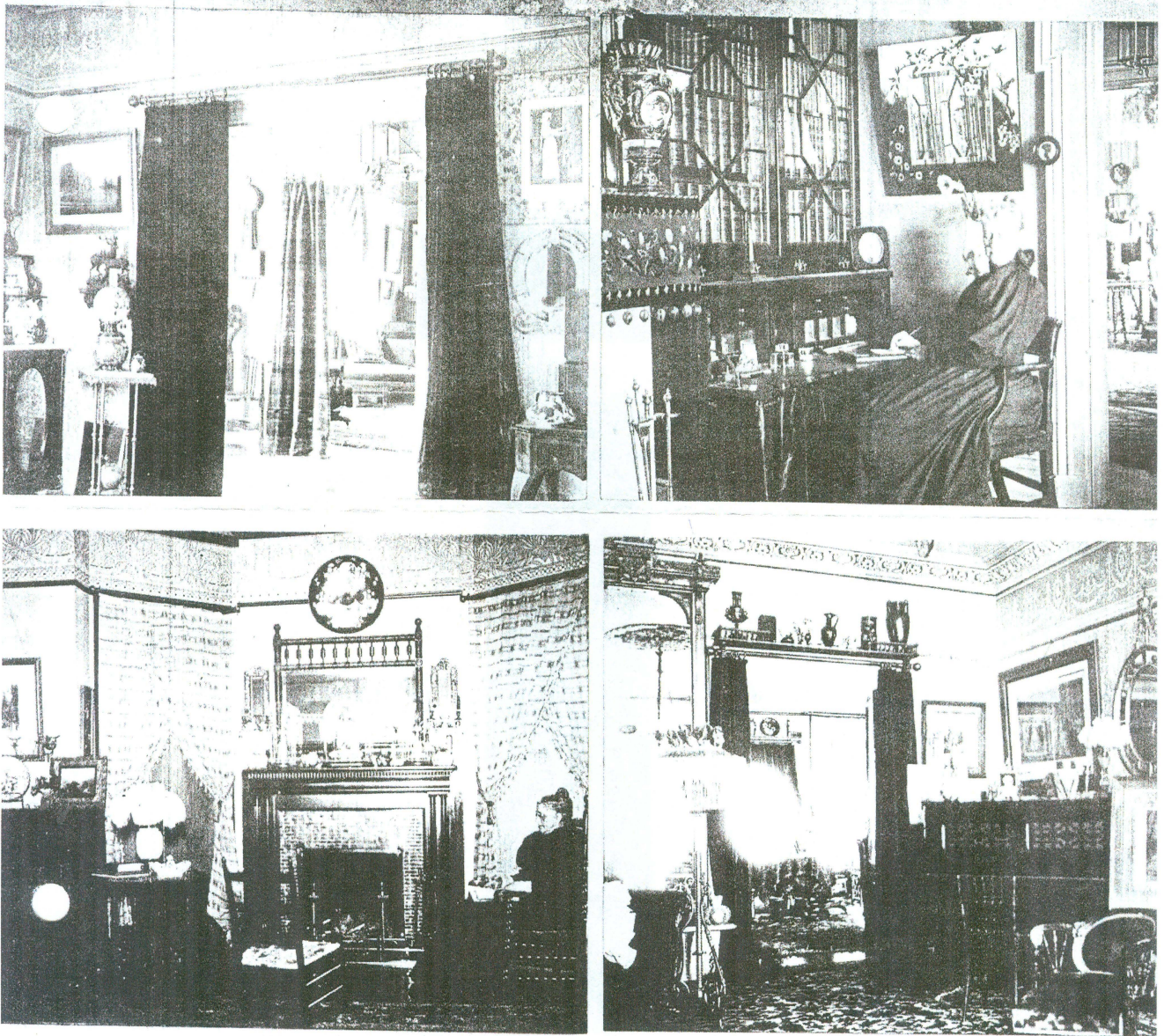
The Next Generation

After his grandfather's death, the **Honorable Martin John Ryerson** (1814-1889) (Eliza's brother) was for a long time engaged in the manufacture of wrought or charcoal iron upon property inherited from his grandfather and namesake, **Martin J. Ryerson**, the Ringwood ironmaster. He inherited the farms, lands, stores, worker homes, saw and grist mills of the Bloomingdale Forge as well as a large interest in many of the area iron mines. He eventually bought up the rights of the other grandchildren, becoming sole owner and proprietor. The forge continued to use Ringwood ore, principally because provision had been made in his grandfather's will that he would have the "full right and privilege of taking any quantity of ore from the Ringwood Great Furnace tract for any works now erected or which may hereafter be erected by them, with the full right of free ingress and egress at all times with carts, wagons and teams, servants, agents and laborers to dig for and take away the said ore."

In 1855 Martin John Ryerson made 255 tons of bars and faggot iron for shafts and boiler plates from Ringwood ore. Besides running the forge, he built his house there and operated a sawmill, a gristmill and a store. He also developed a fine quarry of granite resembling Scotch granite and later a lumbago mine on his place at Bloomingdale.

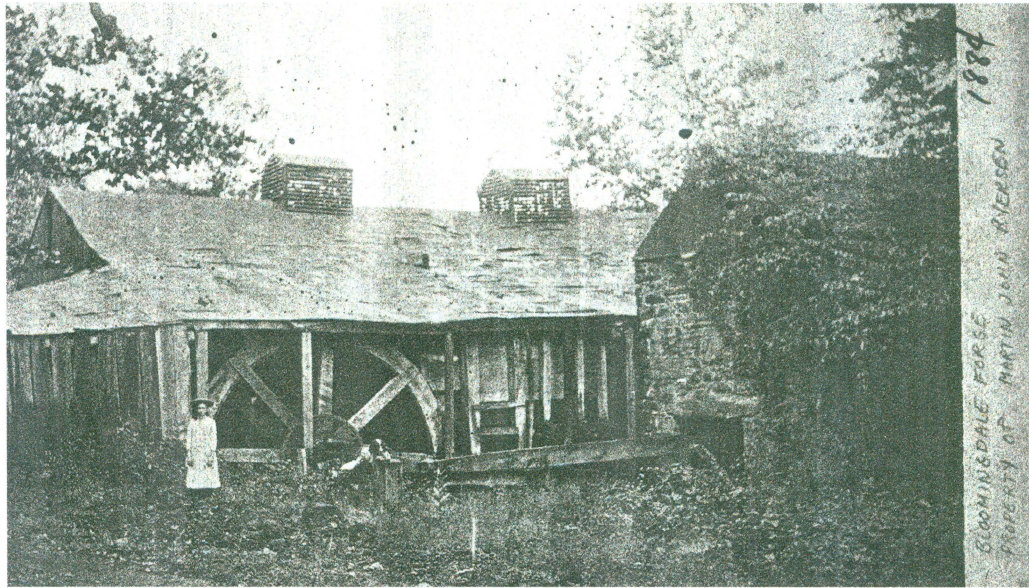
Martin John Ryerson and his family lived in this house in Bloomingdale. That included his wife, his 2 sons and 1 daughter.....and his **THREE SISTERS!!** We could not identify which sister was which and so they are marked with a question mark. Look closely at the lady sitting at far right. Is that **Eliza Catherine**? She has a book on her lap! Could we DARE imagine that it might be the Mystery Bible??





The library at Ringwood Manor holds a fragile old photo album with many pictures of the rooms in the Ryerson's Bloomingdale home. Here are just a few. The ladies in these pictures are not identified but maybe we're looking at **Eliza Catherine**! And look at all those books.....could her Bible be on a shelf or maybe on that table by the lamp? YES, that might be it!

Note: Eliza's Bible measures only 5" X 8" X 2"



Bloomingdale was still active in 1879 but by 1882 **Martin John Ryerson** had shut down the forge. Ironmaking was not his only interest. In 1848 he was elected state senator and became the one person most responsible for bringing the N.J. Midland Railway to Bloomingdale after many years of effort.

He was a man of wide reading and superior intelligence. He represented Pompton Twp. on the board of chosen freeholders throughout the 1850's and early 60's. Fond of history and of genealogical research he was for years a member of the New Jersey Historical Society and of the Holland Society. He was especially proud of his Dutch ancestry and the history of the Ryerson family who came from Amsterdam, Holland in 1640.



His obituary from a 1889 New York newspaper gives a fascinating look at this man....and by association, his 3 sisters, Mary Ann, Jane and **Eliza Catherine** who lived in the Bloomingdale house and shared all of the events of their brother's life.

We quote:

"He was a gentleman of the old school, very dignified in carriage, of a commanding appearance and very cordial and entertaining in all his manners.

The New York obituary continues:

"It was a great treat to meet him at his house and nothing afforded him more pleasure than to show his friends through his house and barns. His family owned at one time the largest tract of land held by one house in New Jersey, and for value, such as ore, timber, water power and farming lands, could not be beat. The Ringwood tract itself was an immense estate. He owned at one time it is said, 7000 acres in Morris County alone. During the days of blast furnaces and before railroads were built, the Ryerson's mule teams hauling ore from Ringwood to Bloomingdale were the wonder of the road.

The family owned slaves and rode in state carriages. The carriage houses contain some strange vehicles which never fail to attract attention when seen upon the road. In those days they were *grand*!

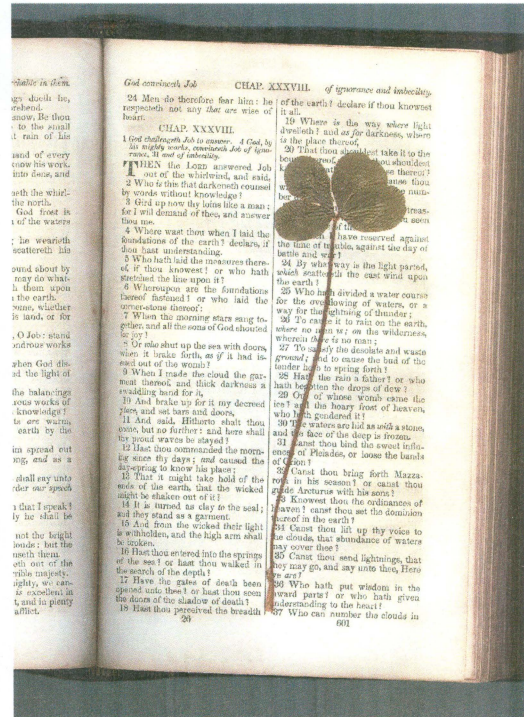
It will be many a long day before we can boast a citizen who can draw to our village men of such prominence as did Mr. Ryerson. The visit of Horace Greeley and the ride through historic Pompton in the family coach drawn by four pure white mules raised on the farm is only one example.

It is said that he cut a splendid figure mounted on a horse as he rode over the fields to look after his men."

ELIZA CATHERINE'S BIBLE

Eliza saved short snips of ribbon – a pink one and a red one – in her Bible along with a four leaf clover!

It also holds several news clippings including the obituary of her nephew, Louis Johnes Ryerson, shown on the next page.





Louis Johnes Ryerson

POMPTON PLAINS, Dec. 9.—Another of the town's old residents, Louis Johnes Ryerson, is dead at his home here. Mr. Ryerson was the son of Martin John and Mary A. Concklin Ryerson, and was born in Bloomingdale in 1850. His mother, a Morristown woman, was a great-granddaughter of Rev. Dr. Timothy Johnes of Revolutionary fame. He was graduated from Rutgers in 1872, studied law in New York City and later was admitted to the bar in New Jersey. He was in the office of the late Vice President Garret A. Hobart for a time and then opened an office of his own in Paterson. Some years later ill health compelled him to abandon active business life. Mr. Ryerson was the author of "The Ryerson Family in America." In 1888 he married Miss Jane R. Roome of New York City and she with a daughter, Louise, survives him.

arel Grove Cemetery.

Hymeneal

Eadie Gregory

The marriage of Miss Beatrice Gregory, of Lincoln Park, daughter of Admiral Luther Gregory, of Washington, D. C., to William Eadie, of Lincoln Park, took place at the parsonage of the Second Presbyterian Church, of Paterson, Tuesday evening, December 4, by the Rev. Alvin C. Sawtelle. The attendants were Mrs. George Riker, sister of the groom, and George W. Riker, both of Lincoln Park. The ceremony was followed by a reception at the time of George Riker for the bridal party and members of the immediate families. After a brief trip, Mr. and Mrs. Eadie will reside in Pequannock.

VanNess—At Pompton Plains, N. J., on July 19, 1926, Elizabeth, wife of Wallace VanNess, in her 68th year. Relatives and friends are invited to attend the funeral on Thursday, July 22, from her residence, Pompton Plains, at 2:30 o'clock P. M. Interment in Pompton Plains.

JACOBUS—Suddenly, on Wednesday, June 27, 1923, Norman E. Jacobus, in his 40th year. Relatives and friends are invited to attend funeral services on Saturday, June 30, at 2:30 P. M., at his residence, 220 Little street, Belleville. Interment in Ridgewood Cemetery.

It took a bright light and a magnifying glass to discover that **ELIZA CATHERINE** had also made tiny notations in the margins of her Bible. Barely visible, we found dates and the name - Mr. Gaston written in fading pencil on 35 different pages - beside special passages of scripture. They undoubtedly noted her favorite sermons given by the pastor of the **Pompton Lakes (Dutch Reformed) Church** where the family attended. **Rev. John Gaston** served that congregation for 10 years from 1852 through 1862.

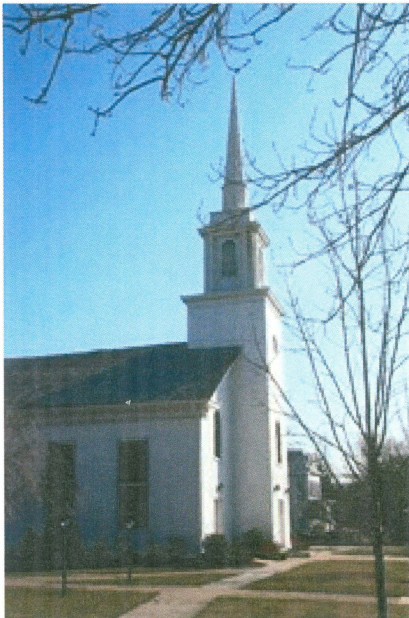
One especially poignant notation: Funeral of **P. Meads** child - March 6 by Mr. G. beside the verse - I Peter 1:24, 25 *"For all flesh is as grass and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withereth and the flower thereof falleth away; But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."*

On page 1199, Eliza wrote - Mr. Gaston farewell sermon - July 1862. II Corinthians 13: 11, *"Finally brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."*

Eliza Catherine's grandfather, Martin J. Ryerson, gave an acre of land and \$300 for material to build this church. He and his wife also gave the bell and the elegant communion set. The Church at Pompton was dedicated October 16, 1814.

Eliza Catherine and nearly all members of the Ryerson family were buried in the Ryerson Vault behind the Pompton Church. The (2012) web page of the congregation explains that the church has been expanded several times, including extending the sanctuary. Below the sanctuary are headstones of those who were buried in the location where the newer part of the sanctuary is located. Behind the church is the church cemetery containing many old headstones.

Pompton Reformed Church History *(located at the corner of Ringwood Avenue and the Hamburg Turnpike)*



The local scene in the early 1800's is one of a quiet, peaceful country village. Most of the land is divided into farms, many stretching from river to river. A dirt lane arched over by maples and elms leads from the furnace at the lower end of the little community to the grist mill at the other end. Five or six houses, including the Yellow Cottage Tavern, are located along the main. There is also a store, located near the furnace, and a small school house.

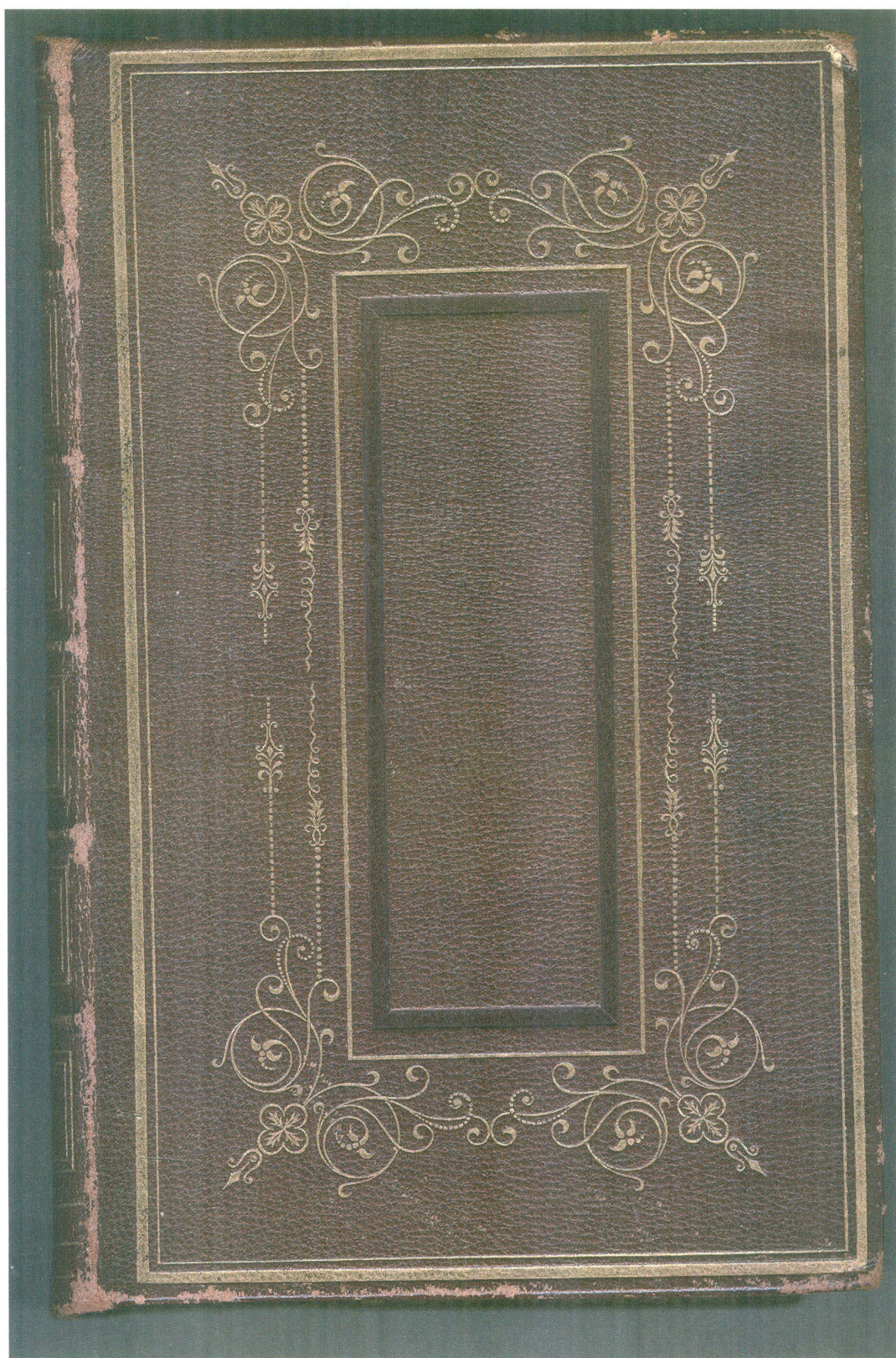
In the year 1812 or shortly before, men from Pompton Lakes decided that they should have a church of their own, having previously attended the Pompton Plains Church. According to records, the following agreement was reached and circulated for subscriptions: "We the subscribers being desirous to build a meeting house, in the neighborhood of Pompton, on an acre of ground, next and by east, of Pompton School House adjoining the Turnpike Road, for the purpose of holding divine worship, according to the truths of the Dutch Reformed Church in America, except as to language which is to be altogether English, It is further understood, that when the meeting

house is finished, the Pews will be set up at public vendue, and sold to the highest bidder, and if any subscriber purchases a pew, the amount of his subscription to be set off as so much paid on the purchase - February, 1812."

Eliza's notations found on pages 724, 762, 783, 846, 849, 1138, 1114, 1107, 1100, 1088, 1016, 1027, 1071, 1075, 1095, 1152, 1165, 1166, 1169, 1183, 1188, 1191, 1193, 1199, 1201, 1203, 1206, 1218, 1232, 1226, 1250, 1253, 1258, 1263, 1281.

Sincere gratitude extended to Sherri and Terri for their kind gift to the Ryerson Family.

Copy of this story sent to Bill & Eliza Ryerson



Donated to library - Ringwood Manor