
Searching for Greens at the Time of Peter Robinson

By Alison Hare, CG

*Language that appears precise and transparent can actually mask meaning.
Unlocking the truth in perplexing documents requires scrupulous attention to the full
range of genealogical standards.*

Two references to a son, two distinct clues to his identity. John Green's petition for land in Upper Canada's Huntley Township was bursting with genealogical promise. Clearly worded and legibly penned, it planted a figurative finger firmly on the map, marking the spot where the son would be found. Auguring equally well for an open-and-shut identification, the petition disclosed that John's son had immigrated to Canada with a well-known and well-documented group of settlers. The petition's failure to mention the son's name seemed a minor inconvenience. Thus begins a memorable lesson about how historical documents can mislead and baffle researchers, especially when they fail to probe deeply.

THE PROBLEM

The scene is set "at the time" of the Peter Robinson settlers.¹ Brought to Canada from County Cork, Ireland, in 1823, these 571 men, women, and children have been known ever since by the name of the official who supervised their relocation. Acting for the British government, the Honorable Peter Robinson arranged free passage, provisions, and land for the settlers.² The liberally funded program offered escape from poverty, famine, and civil disturbances in Ireland. Though he wanted to, John Green was unable to accompany the group. "His son," however, came out "at that time" to Canada. John later immigrated on his own and on 9 July 1836 petitioned to purchase one hundred acres of land in Huntley Township, a property of interest to him because it lay "in the immediate vicinity of his sons location."³ What was the son's name?

© Alison Hare, CG; 80 Valley Ridge Street, Ottawa, Ontario, K2E 7W4; alison.hare@sympatico.ca. Ms. Hare specializes in Ontario research and is particularly interested in settlement of the Ottawa Valley. She is a descendant of Peter Robinson settler Busteel Green.

1. John Green petition, 1836, Upper Canada Land Petitions, vol. 212, G bundle 20, no. 6, RG 1-L3, Library and Archives Canada (LAC), Ottawa, Ontario; LAC microfilm C-2035.

2. Report, Peter Robinson to Robert Wilmot-Horton, British under-secretary of state for the colonies, 2 April 1824, manuscript, Colonial Office, Original Correspondence, Secretary of State CO 384/12, pp. 125-47 (handwritten), The National Archives (TNA), Kew, U.K.; LAC microfilm B-885.

3. John Green petition, 1836, Upper Canada Land Petitions, vol. 212, G bundle 20, no. 6.

THE PROPERTY

The petition identified the desired property as the east half of Lot 22 in Concession 10.⁴ John presented his request in person, giving officials the opportunity to question him and determine that he actually meant the eastern portion of Lot 21. Another party had applied to purchase the same lot but John would be allowed to buy it if he could demonstrate that it was unimproved and unoccupied.⁵ With that, John seemingly disappeared from Huntley. Neither the 1842 nor the 1851 census enumerated him in the township.⁶ If more was to be learned about him, the Peter Robinson settlers presented the next best angle of inquiry.

THE PETER ROBINSON SETTLERS

In all, ten Greens came to Canada in 1823 with Peter Robinson, six of them men:

- John, age thirty-two years,
- Thomas, age thirty years,
- Busted, age twenty-five years,
- John, age twenty-three years,
- William, age twenty-two years,
- George, age twenty years.⁷

All were from the County Cork village of Castletownroche.⁸ Once in Upper Canada, all six settled in Pakenham Township, wives and sisters among them.⁹ They apparently comprised two sets of brothers—the younger John, William, and George in one; the older John, Thomas, and Busted in the other—distinguished by religion and kinship ties.

4. Townships in Ontario are typically rectangular and were laid out in strips called concessions, which were then subdivided into lots originally containing two hundred acres each. See Fawne Stratford-Devai and Ruth Burkholder, *Ontario Land Registry Office Records: A Guide* (Campbellville, Ont.: Global Heritage Press, 2003), 7.

5. John Green petition, 1836, Upper Canada Land Petitions, vol. 212, G bundle 20, no. 6. Many years later the patent for the property was issued to Martin Grace. See Huntley Twp., Carleton Co. Abstract Index to Deeds A:447, Archives of Ontario (AO), Toronto, Ontario.

6. J. M. Robinson, transcr., *1842 Census, Canada West, Carleton County* (Ottawa: Ottawa Branch, Ontario Genealogical Society, 2000). Robinson was permitted access to the original census return when preparing this publication, the legibility of the microfilm copy being poor. Also, 1851 Canada West census, personal schedule, Carleton Co., Huntley Twp., enumeration district (ED) 6, pp. 1–103; LAC microfilm C-11,716. While there are three John Greens in Huntley, two are children and the sole adult is a younger man.

7. *Stakesby* passenger list, 8 July 1823, Peter Robinson Papers, MG 24-B74; LAC microfilm M-141. Peter Robinson used the designations Senior and Junior for the elder and younger John Green. Busted appears on the *Stakesby* list as “Bustard” but his name is otherwise spelled Busted or Busted.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Schedule of location of 1823 emigrants, Peter Robinson Papers; LAC microfilm M-140.

John, William, and George Green

John, William, and George were Roman Catholic. Evidence that all three men were sons of William Green and Mary Connor or O'Connor seems to rule out a connection with John Green of Huntley. Marriage records tie two of them to these parents, and a land petition supplies indirect evidence linking the third:

- William, son of William Green and the late Mary Connor, married Elizabeth Connor on 5 February 1826 at St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church in Perth, Ontario.¹⁰ In recording the marriage, the priest took the unusual step of noting William's residence. The location given—Lot 26 in Concession 6 of Pakenham—is the same property granted to William Green, the Peter Robinson settler.¹¹
- George Green, son of William Green and Mary O'Connor, married Elizabeth Green, daughter of John Green and Margaret Tarrant, on 4 November 1827, also at St. John the Baptist Church. Both groom and bride were from Pakenham. John and Rose Green were among the witnesses.¹²
- John Green was already married when he arrived in Canada.¹³ However, in 1839 he petitioned the Crown about a Pakenham property on which he said his "brother George Green" had been settled by Peter Robinson. George had died six years earlier, leaving an orphaned daughter for whom John was hoping to secure ownership of the property.¹⁴

John, Thomas, and Busted Green

John, Thomas, and Busted Green were Anglican. Although the three men apparently married in Canada—Thomas twice—only a record of John's marriage, in 1824, can be found, and it names no parents. The three men's long pattern of association, oral tradition, common use of the unusual name Busted, and indirect evidence from a newspaper announcement two generations later support the hypothesis that they were brothers:

- John, Thomas, and Busted settled on adjoining properties in Pakenham Township.¹⁵ When the swampy ground mocked their farming efforts, the three men relocated. John and Thomas settled near each other on richer farmland

10. Green-Connor marriage record, St. John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church parish register, Liber 2 (1825–27): 22, Perth, Ont.; LAC microfilm M-3197.

11. William was first located on Lot 1, Con. 6, but switched to Lot 26, Pakenham. See William Green petition, 1839, Upper Canada Land Petitions, vol. 241, H bundle 22, no.10; LAC microfilm C-2097.

12. Green-Green marriage record, St. John the Baptist parish register, Liber 2 (1825–27): 75.

13. John is listed with wife Rose in the schedule of location of 1823 emigrants, Peter Robinson Papers.

14. John Green Junior petition, 1839, Upper Canada Land Petitions, vol. 214, G bundle 22, no. 51; LAC microfilm C-2036.

15. Schedule of location of 1823 emigrants, Peter Robinson Papers.

in nearby Fitzroy Township—John on the east half of Lot 3, Concession 2, Thomas on the north half of Lot 1, Concession 3.¹⁶ Busted eventually left the area but John and Thomas lived as neighbors for the rest of their lives.¹⁷

- Busted witnessed John's marriage in 1824.¹⁸
- John's grandson Merville Green affirmed that John, Thomas, and Busted were brothers.¹⁹ Merville's father was given Busted as a middle name based on the relationship.²⁰ The family surely would have remembered and remarked on the uncommon name and its history. Thomas also used the name for one of his sons.²¹
- An 1897 newspaper announcement describes the marriage of Jennie Green, a daughter of Michael Green, to Alf Dulmage, at the Ottawa Valley home of the bride's father. Her cousin Miss Barnet assisted the bride.²² Jennie's father, Michael, was a son of Peter Robinson settler Thomas Green.²³ Miss Barnet was a granddaughter of Busted, making the bride and her bridesmaid second cousins.²⁴

Could John, Thomas, and Busted be sons of John Green? Although residents of Fitzroy, the two eldest brothers lived near the Huntley border. Thomas's property lay eight lots due north of the land for which John had petitioned. Thomas's brother John was two lots farther north and one concession to the west. Either could be considered "in the immediate vicinity." Both also appeared present in the area at the right time. Thomas received the patent for his Fitzroy

16. John Green and Thomas Green households, in Robinson, transcr., *1842 Census, Canada West*, entries F2-33 and F2-62.

17. Thomas Green and John Green households, 1851 Canada West census, personal sch., Carleton Co., Fitzroy Twp., ED 5, pp. 25 and 29; LAC microfilm C-11,716. John and Thomas are also enumerated in Fitzroy in 1861 and 1871, the agricultural schedules in these years placing them on or near the same properties they occupied earlier. See John Green and Thomas Green entries, 1861 Canada West census, agricultural sch., Carleton Co., Fitzroy Twp., ED 2, pp. 1-2; LAC microfilm C-1013. Also, Thomas Green and John Green entries, 1871 census of Canada, agricultural sch. no 4, Ontario, Carleton Co., Fitzroy, dist. 78, subdist. 1, division 3, pp. 1-2; LAC microfilm C-10,016.

18. Green-Mulshin marriage record, St. James Anglican Church parish register 1:4, Perth, Ont., Register 45 at Archives of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa, Ottawa, Ont.

19. Merville Green, personal communication, April 1986. The youngest son of John's youngest son, Merville was born twenty-five years after the death of his grandfather but lived all his life on the Green homestead in Fitzroy.

20. *Ibid.*

21. William Bustard Green baptism record, 2 March 1851, Pakenham and Fitzroy parish register (1842-1865): 107; Register 15 at Archives of the Anglican Diocese of Ottawa.

22. "Local News," *Renfrew Mercury* (Renfrew, Ont.), 1 January 1897, page 1, col. 5.

23. Michael Green, age twenty-two, born in Fitzroy to Thomas Green and Margaret Andrews, married Mary Ann Moorcraft, 28 August 1861. See Green-Moorcraft marriage record, Lanark Co. Marriage Register (1858-69): 10, AO; LAC microfilm M-5497.

24. Jane Green, daughter of Busted Green and Jane Craig, married Alexander Barnet, 11 November 1867. See Barnet-Green marriage record, Renfrew County marriage register 2 (1858-69): 27, AO; LAC microfilm M-5497. Alexander and Jane's youngest three daughters were all single at the time of the Green-Dulmage wedding. See Alex Barnet household, 1901 census of Canada, personal sch., Ontario, Renfrew South, Town of Renfrew, dist. 11, subdist. M, division 1, p. 19, line 46; LAC microfilm T-6494.

property on 13 May 1836.²⁵ John cannot be placed on his land until 1842, but he lived somewhere in Fitzroy in the early 1830s.²⁶

The presence of two Peter Robinson settlers near John Green in Huntley introduced an unexpected problem. The 1836 petitioner implied he had one son in the vicinity. If so, too many candidates competed for the single position. After expressing his disappointment at not being part of the Peter Robinson emigration, John stated: "Your Petitioners son however came out at that time to Canada." The singular reference is unmistakable. However, John's assertion that the Huntley property was "in the immediate vicinity of his sons location" is ambiguous. By today's standards the phrase is imperfectly punctuated. If John had one son, the phrase should refer to his son's location. If he had several sons, it should be his sons' location. However, inattention to punctuation and shifting standards was typical of the time. All things considered, John probably had one son.

In theory John's unnamed son might have come to Canada with a second group of Peter Robinson settlers in 1825, but no Greens came in the second group.²⁷ Alternatively, might "at the time" and "at that time" each refer to a time period or separate migration rather than with a specific group? Rather than coming to Canada with the Peter Robinson settlers, could John's son have arrived about the same time? Could he have immigrated about the same time as the Peter Robinson settlers but not as a member of the group? These possibilities suggested further research.

PHILIP GREEN

An extended survey of local sources led to another Green in Huntley. Although not a Peter Robinson settler, Philip Green was among numerous Catholic inhabitants of Huntley who in 1834 petitioned regarding a clergyman for their new church.²⁸ St. Michael's church stood two concessions east and six lots south of John Green's desired property. Philip was not enumerated in Huntley in 1842 or 1851, apparently never petitioned for land, and was not recorded as a landowner in the township's northwest corner.²⁹ Four baptismal records, however, connect him to Huntley:

25. North half of Lot 1, Con. 3, Fitzroy Twp. Abstract Index to Deeds A:84, AO.

26. John Green household in Robinson, transcr., *1842 Census, Canada West*, entry F2-33. The 1851 census indicates that John's first three children were born in Pakenham between 1825 and 1829, the remainder in Fitzroy starting in 1833. See John Green household, 1851 Canada West census, Carleton Co., Fitzroy Twp., ED 5, p. 29.

27. Return of emigrants embarked at Cork 1825, Peter Robinson Papers; LAC microfilm M-140.

28. Petition of the Roman Catholic inhabitants of Huntley, 16 January 1834, Upper Canada Sundries, RG 5, A 1, vol. 137, pp. 74950-52; LAC microfilm C-6881.

29. The 1842 census finding is based on Robinson, transcr., *1842 Census, Canada West, Carleton County*. The 1851 finding is based on a page-by-page search of the microfilmed original. The search for a petition was made in the Upper Canada Land Petitions collection at LAC. The author also made a page-by-page search of the abstract index to Huntley deeds for concessions 9-12, lots 16-27.

- Philip, son of Philip Green and Hanora McCarty, baptized 11 January 1835. Sponsors: Michael Cronan and Esther Boyle.³⁰
- Bridget, daughter of Timothy Kennedy and Mary Kieff, baptized 11 January 1835. Sponsors: Philip Green and Catherine Bressneham.³¹
- Martin, son of John Russell and Honora Quinlan, baptized 18 May 1838. Sponsors: Phillip Green and Mary Cronan.³²
- Christopher, son of Phillip Green and Honora McCarthy, baptized 17 January 1841. Sponsors: Francis Colton and Esther Manion.³³

A visiting priest from Bytown (later Ottawa) performed the first two baptisms, the second two took place at St. Michael's. Spanning 1835 to 1841, the events connect Philip to Huntley at the time John Green petitioned for land there. Philip's precise residence is uncertain, but other participants in the baptisms lived strikingly close to the lot John Green wanted: Timothy Kennedy was only one half lot away; Michael Cronan, Francis Colton, and John Russell moved about but were generally within a five-lot radius.³⁴ If Philip lived in the tight circle of these associates, he was closer to John Green than any Green who came to Canada with Peter Robinson.

Following a common migration path, Philip moved up the Ottawa Valley from Huntley to Renfrew County in the 1840s and was recorded in the first enumeration of Algona Township in 1861.³⁵ He resided in Algona until his death on 4 April 1890.³⁶ Philip Green, a Catholic, was born about 1804 in Ireland.³⁷ He and his wife Honora had one daughter, Mary, and five sons who

30. Philip Green baptism record, Notre Dame Cathedral parish register (1829–1847), p. 223, Ottawa, Ont.; microfilm 1,301,761, Family History Library (FHL), Salt Lake City, Utah.

31. Bridget Kennedy baptism record, Notre Dame Cathedral parish register (1829–1847), p. 222.

32. Martin Russell baptism record, St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church parish register (1837–1859), entry 38, Corkery, Ont.; FHL microfilm 1,304,512.

33. Christopher Green baptism record, St. Michael's parish register (1837–1859), entry 125.

34. Timothy Kennedy received the patent for the east half of Lot 21, Con. 11, in 1836. See Huntley Township, Carleton Co. Abstract Index to Deeds A:496. Michael Cronan received the patent for the west half of Lot 18, Con. 10, in 1836. See Huntley Township, Carleton Co. Abstract Index to Deeds A:440. In 1840 he occupied the east half of Lot 20, Con. 12. See Michael Cronan entry, Inspection and Valuation Returns for the Bathurst District, by Francis Allan, 1840, RG 1-95-3, vol. 4, no pagination, AO; microfilm MS482, reel 1. Francis Colton purchased the east half of Lot 17, Con. 10, in 1837 and sold it in 1839. See Huntley Township, Carleton Co. Abstract Index to Deeds, A:438. In 1842 he purchased the west half of Lot 26, Con. 11. See *ibid.*, 506. In 1833 John Russell occupied the east half of Lot 21, Con. 12. See John Russell entry, Inspection and Valuation Returns for the Bathurst District Inspection Return, 1833, RG 1-95-3, vol. 3, no pagination. In 1840 he held the east half of Lot 18, Con. 11. See John Russell entry, Bathurst District Inspection Report, 1840. From 1838 to 1841 he also owned the west half of Lot 23, Con. 11. See Huntley Township, Carleton Co. Abstract Index to Deeds, A:500.

35. Philip Green household, 1861 Canada West census, personal sch., Renfrew Co., Algona Twp., ED 21, p. 1, line 4; LAC microfilm C-1070.

36. Philip Green record, Ontario civil death registration 015364 (1890), AO; FHL microfilm 1,853,534.

37. Philip Green household, 1861 Canada West census, personal sch., Renfrew Co., Algona Twp., ED 21, p. 1, line 4. Also, Philip Green household, 1871 census of Canada, personal sch., Ontario, Renfrew North, Algona Twp., dist. 82, subdist. H, p. 9, fam. 28; LAC microfilm C-10,022. Also, Philip Green household, 1881 census of Canada, personal sch., Ontario, Renfrew Co., Algona South, dist. 114, subdist. B, p. 15, fam. 55; LAC microfilm C-13,234.

survived to adulthood: John, Philip, Michael, Christopher, and George.³⁸ An obituary for Christopher describes his father as one of the pioneers of Algona and says the family had moved from Huntley when Christopher, born in 1840, was a young boy.³⁹ Christopher's siblings Philip, Mary, and Michael also were born in Huntley, and John, the eldest, in Pakenham.⁴⁰

No known record in Algona names Philip's parents, but church records identify his sisters:

- Elizabeth Green, daughter of John Green and Margaret Tarrant, married George Green of Pakenham, son of William Green and Mary O'Connor, on 4 November 1827.⁴¹ George Green was the Peter Robinson settler.
- Margaret Green, daughter of John Green and Margaret Terrant, married Peter Ryan on 11 January 1829. Both bride and groom were residents of Wolford, a township now in Grenville County.⁴² Three days after this marriage and at the same church, John Green and Barbara Green sponsored the baptism of Philip and Honora Green's son John.⁴³
- Barbara Green, daughter of John Green and Margaret Torrot, married Martin Roche on 26 November 1832.⁴⁴

Like Philip Green, Barbara and Martin Roche eventually settled in Algona Township.⁴⁵ When Philip's daughter died near Algona on 14 January 1921, her cousin, M. Roche of Killaloe, registered the death.⁴⁶ "M. Roche" was Martin, the son of Martin and Barbara (née Green) Roche.⁴⁷ If Philip's daughter and Barbara's son were first cousins, then Philip and Barbara were siblings. Barbara was a daughter of John Green; Philip's father, therefore, also was John Green.

38. Michael Green obituary, in *Genealogical Extracts from The Eganville Leader, 1902–1913* (Renfrew, Ont.: Juniper Books, 1990), 80.

39. Christopher Green obituary, in *Death Notices & Obituaries from The Eganville Leader, 1922–1927* (Renfrew, Ont.: Juniper Books, 1991), 16. The obituary claims that Christopher was born in 1839 but his baptismal record says he was born 18 December 1840. See Christopher Green baptism record, St. Michael's parish register (1837–1859), entry 125.

40. For Philip and Mary, see *Death Notices & Obituaries from The Eganville Leader, 1914–1921* (Renfrew, Ont.: Juniper Books, 1990), 5 and 80, respectively. For Michael, see *Genealogical Extracts from The Eganville Leader, 1902–1913*, 80.

41. Green-Green marriage record, St. John the Baptist parish register, Liber 2 (1825–1827): 75.

42. Green-Ryan marriage record, St. John the Baptist parish register, Liber 3, vol. 1 (1828–29): 37.

43. John Green baptism record, St. John the Baptist parish register, Liber 3, vol. 1 (1828–29): 50.

44. Green-Roche marriage record, St. John the Baptist parish register, Liber 3, vol. 2 (1830–32): 137.

45. In 1861 Barbara and Martin Roche were enumerated two households away from Philip's household. See Martin Roche household, 1861 Canada West census, personal sch., Renfrew Co., Algona Twp., ED 21, p. 1, line 14; LAC microfilm C-1070.

46. Mary George death record, Ontario civil death registration 02886 (1921); FHL microfilm 1,863,544.

47. Martin Roche death record, Ontario civil death registration 028441 (1922); FHL microfilm 1,907,009. Martin had two siblings whose first names also begin with "M" but Michael lived at Cormac, Ont., and Margaret, an unmarried female, was an unlikely informant in this male-dominated era. For Michael's residence, see Margaret Roche obituary, in *Death Notices & Obituaries from The Eganville Leader, 1914–1921*, 6.

Philip's connection to Huntley and the evidence that his father's name was John identify him as the 1836 petitioner's son. To date, no trace of Philip had been found in early land records. Unlike other settlers of that era, had he never jockeyed for ownership of property? A broader search in Ontario's Township Papers, beyond the Huntley property for which John Green applied, yielded startling results.

JOHN GREEN JUNIOR

An 1833 letter by Philip Green and an 1834 letter by John Green provide accounts of Philip's early struggles to obtain land and direct evidence that Philip was John's son. The two men wrote to Peter Robinson to secure title to the east half of Huntley's Lot 23, Concession 11, where Philip and his aged parents were living—two lots north and one concession west of the lot for which the father later petitioned. Philip confirmed he had immigrated to Canada after the Peter Robinson settlers, arriving with his wife, father, mother, and sisters in 1826.⁴⁸ He did not name his father but John named Philip as his son.⁴⁹ The two letters also disclose that a second son had come to Canada. With no ambiguity about the time of arrival, Philip said his brother had come to Canada "with" Peter Robinson and had been settled by him in Pakenham.⁵⁰ John concurred: "Your Honor brought John Green (another son of mine) here in 1823."⁵¹

The crooked paths of genealogical research are legendary, but in this instance they came full circle. The possibility that John Green had a son among the Peter Robinson settlers had been considered and ruled out. The dilemma appeared again, however, with the helpful difference that this time John named the son. But two Peter Robinson settlers were named John Green. Which was the elder John's son and Philip's brother?

Evidence favored the younger man. Often called John Green Junior, this settler and his wife, Rose, were the only Peter Robinson Greens who remained in Pakenham, where John died in 1850.⁵² John Green Junior signed Philip's 1833 letter as a character witness.⁵³ John Junior's long residence in Pakenham also dovetailed with the 1834 letter in which the elder John said his son John "had the misfortune to have remained" in his original location. Philip settled

48. Letter, Philip Green to Peter Robinson, 5 October 1833, east half of Lot 23, Con. 11, Huntley, Township Papers, RG 1-58; AO microfilm MS 658, reel 213.

49. Letter, John Green to Peter Robinson, 4 March 1834, east half of Lot 23, Con. 11, Huntley, Township Papers.

50. Letter, Philip Green to Peter Robinson, 1833, Township Papers.

51. Letter, John Green to Peter Robinson, 1834, Township Papers.

52. John Green tombstone, St. Peter Celestine's Indian Hill Cemetery, Lot 6, Con. 9, Pakenham; viewed and photographed by the author in 1985.

53. Letter, Philip Green to Peter Robinson, 1833, Township Papers. John Junior's signature on this document matches the signature on John's 1839 petition on behalf of the orphan Mary. See John Green Junior, 1839, Upper Canada Land Petitions, vol. 214, G bundle 22, no. 51.

on a nearby lot until complications arose over its ownership, after which he “dreaded” to remain there, especially as the lot also turned out to be worthless. “That part of the County has been abandoned by all the settlers save my unfortunate son Jonny who could get Land no where else,” the senior John lamented to Peter Robinson.⁵⁴

The words of John Junior himself contradict what might otherwise be an obvious conclusion. Petitioning the Crown in 1839, John Junior had stated unequivocally that he was a brother of George Green and uncle to George’s orphaned daughter, Mary.⁵⁵ This links him in turn to William Green, who, like George, was identified at the time of marriage as a son of William Green and Mary Connor (or O’Connor). Evaluated side by side, John Senior’s statement that his son was John and John Junior’s statement that he was a brother of George are equally credible. Both statements come from original sources and both Johns should be trusted to identify other family members. But John Junior could not be a son of both William and John.

Excluding John Junior’s statement that George was his brother, compelling evidence supports the composition of the senior John’s family:

- John’s 1834 letter identifies Philip as his son.
- John’s 1834 letter names a second son, John, of Pakenham.
- Indirect evidence shows that Philip’s sister was Barbara.
- Marriage records show that Barbara had two sisters, Margaret and Elizabeth.
- Elizabeth married Peter Robinson settler George Green.

If the junior John and Elizabeth were brother and sister, the only way George could also be a sibling is in the impossible event that Elizabeth had married her own brother. John’s reference to his brother George apparently identified his brother-in-law. The contemporary meaning of “brother” included a sister’s husband, a wife’s brother, or the spouse of a wife’s sister.⁵⁶ Recognizing these earlier meanings of kinship terminology, the remaining evidence points uniformly to one conclusion: John Green Senior had two sons, John Junior and Philip. The younger John’s statement that he was the uncle of the orphaned Mary held true through his relationship to Mary’s mother.⁵⁷

54. Letter, John Green to Peter Robinson, 1834, Township Papers.

55. John Green Junior petition, 1839, Upper Canada Land Petitions, vol. 214, G bundle 22, no. 51.

56. Donald Lines Jacobus, “Interpreting Genealogical Records,” in Milton Rubincam, ed., *Genealogical Research: Methods and Sources*, 2 vols. (Washington, D.C.: American Society of Genealogists, 1960, 1971), 1:21.

57. If John’s only connection to Mary was through his sister Elizabeth, then he was Mary’s maternal uncle. However, John and George Green probably were also brothers-in-law through John’s marriage to Rose, whose maiden name was also Green. A full discussion of the evidence exceeds the scope of this study but numerous connections link Rose Green to the Peter Robinson settlers who were children of William Green and Mary O’Connor. The connections span Rose’s life in Canada, from her first son’s baptism through her burial.

CONCLUSION

Philip and John's letters in the Township Papers unlocked the secrets of John Green's troublesome 1836 petition. The petition's two references to a son had long been thought to apply to one individual. Not so. Each reference pertained to a different son. The son who had come "at that time" to Canada was John. The son in the immediate vicinity of the property in Huntley was Philip. A few easy pen strokes seamlessly merged two sons into one. Exhaustive research, diligent analysis, and resolution of conflicting evidence restored their individual identities.

As this study twice demonstrates, accurate interpretation requires thorough examination and understanding of the records. John Junior's use of the word "brother" underscores the need to interpret relationship terms in context and to corroborate the evidence. The deceptive reality of John's father's 1836 petition dramatizes another point about the hazards of written communication. Clarity in writing can be elusive. Writers who lose the struggle for clear expression often leave a wake of tell-tale awkward phrases and convoluted sentences. But language that appears precise and transparent can just as easily mask meaning. Thus it was with John Green's 1836 petition for land in Huntley Township. Unlocking the truth in such documents requires scrupulous attention to the full range of genealogical standards.