

On Monday Night, the 12th, at Corlears-Hook, of the prevailing fever, Mrs. Mary Smith, daughter of Thomas Ivers.

One only aim her pious soul possest,
Heaven saw the purpose and the saint was blest!
With blameless steps & o' humble paths she trod,
"Now with the poor in spirit, rests with God."

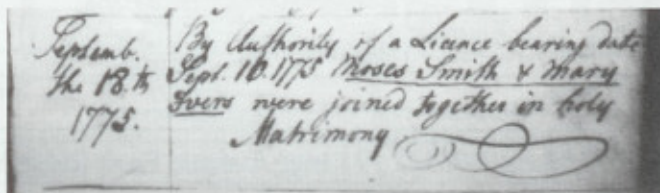
The records show that over 200 people died of Yellow Fever that year.

Now we knew that the letter we had was, indeed, a very significant item. But what of Mary's life? Whom had she married? Did she have children? Where was she living when she says in her letter - "If you should not come up soon beg you will write..." Where was up? And which "Mr. Smith", among hundreds of Smiths, had she married?

The answer to this would be found by following a "hunch" - a very unscientific way of researching history may we add.

At first, knowing that she was a New York City girl, we thought she might have married William Smith, a prominent attorney there. This was a real possibility in our minds because the "Mr. Gilbert Livingston" mentioned in her letter was a business

associate of William Smith. This proved to be the wrong Smith. Another dead end... and then we had a "hunch"... could she have married a "Smith" from "Smithtown" in Suffolk County, New York (part of present day Long Island)? By searching records of the Long Island Historical and Genealogical Society we were able to establish that Mary Ivers had married Moses Smith on September 17, 1775 (see picture).



They would go on to have seven children: Elizabeth Mary (perhaps named for sister Betsy?), Daniel, Thomas William, Louis, Maria, John Henry and Hannah Ivers (named for Mary's mother). Moses Smith was a patriot and is listed as having served in a militia. Quite possibly Mary wrote her letter from Smithtown while pregnant with her first child Elizabeth, whose exact 1776 birth date we have not been able to establish at this writing. Nor do we know what Moses did for a living. He died January 22, 1790.

We turn now to sister "Betsy". We learned that she

To
Miss Betsy Ivers
At
New York

January 12, 1776

Dear Sister,

I wrote you a few days ago by Mr. Gilbert Livingston which I hope you have Received and have and to which I must refer you, as have only time to inform you that I am exceedingly Sorry it is like to be such distressing times with you at New York, I should be verry happy if you and the rest of the family were here together will all our things. I beg if the times will admit you'll send me the things I wrote for—hope you and the rest of the family may get out of Town Safe—If you should not come up soon beg you to write me how you all do and where you are going to and whether you have moved you{r} family out of Town—don't fail to write soon if you don't Come—Mr. Smith joins me in best Regards to you Dady momy Kiah(Hezekiah) and his wife Nancy and her husband and all friends—I am

Dear Sister affectionately yours, Mary Smith

P.S. Please to deliver the inclosed letters and come up soon.

(This letter was transcribed by Society Trustee Helen Whalen and Regina Haring.)