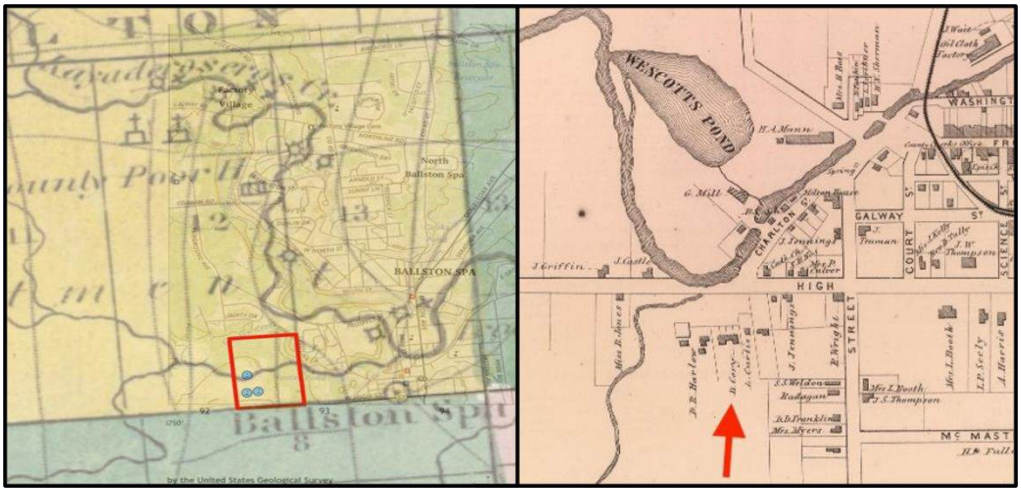
This Week in Saratoga County History

Ballston Spa's Cory Castle

Submitted by David A. Cory November 4, 2026

David A. Cory is a retired diagnostic radiologist currently living in Colorado. He has a longstanding interest in genealogy and history, and is a second cousin six times removed of David Cory, the namesake of Cory Castle.



Boarding House on Cory Farm ca 1805 *Cory Castle on West High Steet 1866*

Well before the village of Ballston Spa was incorporated in 1807, several boarding houses or hotels had been built to accommodate visitors seeking the alleged health benefits of its mineral water springs. Stephen Howe White built a small house in Ballston in 1799 which he expanded into a boarding house in 1801. In 1802 he added an east wing, and in 1807, a west wing. Writing in 1858, Ballston lawyer John C. Booth noted that White's hotel "became a popular and leading house of entertainment." White's other business concern was a clothier's works which included a shop and two fulling mills for cleansing woolen cloth.

In October 1808, Stephen H. and Charlotte (Tiffany) White were traveling to Connecticut to visit friends when Stephen was stricken with what one newspaper described as "a painful and distressing inflammatory complaint of the bowels" at Sheffield, Massachusetts. After an illness of eight days, Stephen died, but not before writing a will which gave his widow Charlotte his "large and convenient dwelling house." She successfully continued operation of the boarding house, and Stephen's brother James took over the clothier's business.

Charlotte had been about ten years older than her late husband, and there was an even larger age gap with her second husband. On 6 May 1818, Charlotte, then about fifty-five, married David

Cory, age thirty-one. The day before the wedding, the couple signed a deed in which Charlotte renounced any spousal rights she would have to David's estate, and she granted one third of her own estate to David. She also drafted a will on the same day which insured David would be the sole owner of her boarding house upon her death.

David Cory was no stranger to the hospitality business, as his parents, David and Jemima (Ross) Cory had a boarding house on the farm in Milton which the senior Cory had bought in 1795. Survey coordinates in the deed for the purchase indicates a lot of about 105 acres. The property is highlighted on the 1829 Burr map, which was crossed by Gordon Creek. The current site of the school complex on West High Street in Milton was built on the southwest corner of the farm.

David Cory the father died in 1809 and David the son inherited most of the property. When the son sold it in 1837, he retained ownership of and access to a small burying ground on the farm. It is likely that David and Jemima were buried there, but their graves were later relocated to the Ballston Spa Village Cemetery. The gravestones of identical design were probably carved for their reinternment.

David Cory's name became attached to Charlotte White's boarding house soon after their marriage. The *Connecticut Gazette* of 28 October 1818 reported that 500 guests had stayed at David Cory's house in Ballston Spa that season.

When Charlotte died in 1829, David Cory became sole proprietor of the boarding house. In his 1907 *Centennial history of the village of Ballston Spa*, Edward F. Grose wrote, "Mr. White died quite suddenly in 1808, and his widow kept the house for many years. Mrs. White married David Cory, and after her death, Mr. Cory changed the house into tenements – the term used to denote an apartment or room leased to a tenant - and it became known as "Cory Castle."

In her will, Charlotte bequeathed to her niece Juda Tiffany $100 "provided she lives with me and remains faithful during my lifetime." Otherwise, she would receive $50. It seems likely that Juda complied by living in the Cory household, and less than five months after her aunt's death, Juda married David Cory. One can only speculate about the family dynamics that led to the marriage. Perhaps before her death Charlotte, who was beyond child-bearing age when she married David, encouraged him to marry Juda to provide him with heirs. In any case, Juda did become the mother of two sons, David and Eliakim.

An 1864 directory of Ballston Spa lists David Cory, farmer, owning a house on High Street near Charlton Street, with E.T. (his son Eliakim) Cory listed as living at the same address. An 1866 map confirms a large building with east and west wings, fitting the description of the boarding house originally built by Stephen White, was at that location. David died the same year the map was published.

David's widow Juda died in 1869, and her sons and their wives sold Cory Castle in 1870. In 1873 the building burned down. In a rare instance of the term being used in a legal document, a foundation wall of "Cory Castle" was used as a landmark in an 1875 deed in which a portion of the former Cory property was sold. The foundation walls would have been the last vestiges in Ballston Spa of Cory Castle and the namesake family. David and both his wives had died, and the sons David and Eliakim were living in Rochester, where David was a partner in the paper business Alling and Cory, and Eliakim was a clerk in the firm's store.