

## Physician of the Flour City:

An investigation into the life of Gerard Arink,  
his wife, Ellen Mary Kemp, and the experience of  
the immigrant in Rochester



Geneva Steinbacher  
November 8, 2002

Mount Hope cemetery is the final resting place for Rochesterians from all walks of life, faiths, and cultures going back to and even beyond the cemetery's 1838 founding. Mount Hope's municipal nature often created odd, seemingly random placements, juxtaposing the affluent American and the immigrant. Just outside the impressive and no doubt expensive High Victorian Gothic red Medina sandstone mausoleum of Lewis H. Morgan, with its unorthodox declaration: "Non Hic Summus," or in translation, "We Are Not Here," lie two less grandiose graves, with a simple inscription of faith: "Nihil Sine Deo," or "Nothing Without God." Only the rich and the educated of the time would have had the understanding of Latin seen here, setting these three graves apart from most of the others in the cemetery. Though the grave markers are similar in placement and language, the difference between them lies in the persons entombed within. Lewis H. Morgan was the father of anthropology and a prominent Rochesterian (Reisem, 30). The occupants of the two graves also contributed much to the community of Rochester and were therefore known well among the city's citizens. Actions, however, could do little at that time to change the common and unquestioned public division between those of American and English ancestry and those of foreign descent. Public perceptions prevented the foreigner from rising high in Rochester society, but not from gaining the respect of the community. To understand the situation of the immigrant in nineteenth century Rochester, one need only look to the graves of Dr. Gerard Arink and his wife, Ellen Mary Kemp, as a doorway.

For over forty years, Dr. Gerard Arink treated the people of Rochester. He witnessed influenza, typhoid, and cholera come and go continually. His knowledge of medicine was due in large part to his life before immigrating to the United States. On

July 8, 1813 in Kampen, Holland, Gerhardus Arink was a born as the 6th child of Gerhardus Arink and Maria Wilhelmina Elbers, who married in Kampen 22 July 1795 (Arink, #217). He attended the University of Holland and the medical school at Leyden University, graduating cum Laude from both institutions (Paul Arink, #293). Arink followed the trend of the time, as throughout the 1880s, many Dutch emigrated to other places. In 1848, at the age of 35 and having concluded his medical and pharmaceutical training, Arink left Holland alone through the port of Rotterdam to Liverpool, England and then, probably on to Canada. He arrived in Rochester, NY no later than 1851, as this year marks the first appearance of Arink in the Rochester Directories as a physician and boarder at Blossom's Hotel. By 1853, he was still boarding, but he was out of the hotel living at 107 ½ Main at the corner of Main and North (Rochester Directory). 1855 was a banner year for Arink, as it marks his acceptance by the Rochester medical community and the publication of his medical handbook, Manual for the Medical Practitioner, Including Medical and Pharmaceutical Instructions and 541 Prescriptions. This book gives some insight into the character of Arink, as he dedicated the book to his brother and wrote a brief introduction to the work. The dedication, which indicates a continued relationship with the Arink family that remained in Holland, reads as follows:

“TO  
MY FIRST TEACHER AND BROTHER  
H.D. ARINK  
IN  
KROMMENIE, HOLLAND  
AS  
A MARK OF RESPECT  
AND AS  
AN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT  
OF  
HIS NUMEROUS KIND OFFICES  
THIS WORK

IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED  
BY  
THE AUTHOR  
(Manual, 2)”

It is clear that Gerard Arink’s family clearly influenced his career choice in a positive way. Furthermore, the spirit of healing Gerard Arink believes his brother embodies seems to be present in Gerard’s own introduction, which reads:

“If the work should in any way diminish the amount of human suffering, or augment the sum of human knowledge, the time and labor employed in its preparation will not have been spent in vain.

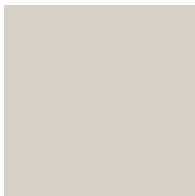
G. ARINK

Rochester, December, 1854 (3)”

The publication of this book of “leechings and bleedings” style medicine marks several changes in Arink’s life in Rochester. After this point in time, he is no longer listed as Gerhardus anywhere. After this point, he will always be referred to as Gerard, Jerard, or even Gerald in documentation. Also, though he is from Holland, Arink is assigned as physician to the German population of the city, as he probably was educated in their language through his extensive education. This is the segment of the population that he treated until the end of his life. He had found a place in the medical community of Rochester and in 1857 he was listed as Arink, Gerard M.D., physician, and surgeon, a more impressive title than he had yet received (Rochester Directory).

The remainder of Arink’s life centers around his career, marriage, and a trip to Europe, a very long endeavor at the time. In 1859, Arink was appointed City physician, actually as one of two physicians for the German community (City Elections). In 1861 he ran the city dispensary from a house on Palmer’s block at 7 East Ave. The listing is much the same for the next four years, until 1866, when Arink disappears from the

directory (Rochester Directory). As it turns out, however, the fifty-two year old doctor had married the forty-nine year old Ellen Mary Kemp and took his bride to Europe on their honeymoon. Passenger lists show the two of them returning to the United States on September 18<sup>th</sup>, 1865 from Glasgow on the *Cella*, whose captain was Edward Billinge (Germany). Arink traveled back to Holland for the summer, where he studied cholera and wrote an article on the stages of the disease. This article was published in the Union and Advertiser in January of 1866 and reveals the he himself experienced a severe attack of Cholera while there (Cholera). After returning to Rochester, the couple resided at the intersection of Andrews Street and Franklin Street, which was 35 Andrew in 1868, 182 Andrews in 1884, and in 1904, at the time of Ellen Mary Kemp's death, 248 Andrews. The city grew so rapidly that the streets were renumbered twice while they lived in that house. Their property occupied an oddly shaped triangle formed by the converging streets (New York; New York Street Maps). On this property were two wooden structures, one a house, the other, a medical practice.



The intersection of Andrews Street and Franklin Street (New York Maps)



The present day intersection of Andrews Street and Franklin Street. This building was erected shortly after Ellen Mary Arink's death.

In 1869, Arink was finally asked to be a part of the Monroe County Medical Society, which had existed since 1821. Arink could be found at their meetings on the second Wednesday of May, August, November, and February at 10 o'clock pm through 1881. It appears that in 1881 Arink left the society and medicine altogether, but returned the next year. Arink continued to practice medicine until his death on August 28, 1886. The troubling part is that his cause of death as listed in the Mount Hope Internment Records is "Senile Decay" (Mt. Hope). Perhaps he had actually given up medicine in any authentic sense in 1881. His obituary reads:

"On Saturday afternoon, the death of Gerald Arink occurred at his residence, corner of Andrews and Franklin St. The deceased was one of the oldest physicians of this city. He was born in 1813 at Kampen, Holland and was graduated with high honors from the universities of Leyden and Holland. Besides attending to his professional duties, the deceased wrote a hand book on medicine and frequently contributed articles to several medical journals in this country. Funeral services were held 11 o'clock this morning at the First Presbyterian Church"

Gerard Arink was laid to rest on August 30<sup>th</sup>, 1886 at the age of 73 (Mt. Hope).

His headstone reads:

In Memory  
Of Gerard Arink  
Born in Kampen. Holland  
July 8. 1813,  
Died in Rochester. N.Y.  
Aug. 28. 1886

Thanks be to God, which giveth  
us the Victory, through Our Lord Jesus Christ.  
I Cor. 15-57.

Nihil Sine Deo

The epitaphs place a strong emphasis on the declaration of faith in God. "Thanks be to God" and "Nothing Without God" leave little doubt as to the place God held in

Arink's life. Moreover, the image of Jesus Christ in the I Corinthian passage associates the image of divine resurrection with Arink. Victory is a kind of metonymy for the eternal life in heaven as promised by Jesus Christ. This image of spiritual immortality through conquest is part of Lifton's idea that for one to deny death, one must have a belief that death can be conquered and, therefore, transcended (Lifton, 20).

Mary Ellen Kemp's history is a bit harder to understand. During her married life, she was referred to in the context of her husband and her charitable work (United States 1870, 189 and Sixteenth). However, because the first half of her life occurred with her still living with her family, it is possible to determine the movements of Ellen Mary Kemp before her marriage through the Kemp family records, and after through her own death records. Ellen Mary's father and mother, Robert Kemp and Phebe Snody, married young. Ellen was the third child and third daughter, born in Poole, Dorset, England on May 8, 1816, when her mother was just nineteen (Mt. Hope; Kemp & Snody, 1). The Kemp family had seven children in England then immigrated to New York. The eighth child, Simon Kemp, was born June 16, 1819 in Haverstraw, Rockland County, NY, just outside New York City (Kemp & Snody, 1). Therefore, the Kemp family left England sometime in the three year span between mid 1816 and mid 1819, most likely arriving at New York City, when Ellen Mary Kemp was, at most, three years old.



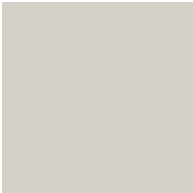
Haverstraw, NY (New York Maps)

The 1830 Census places the family at Sodus, Wayne County, NY. At this point, the Kemps may have been in Sodus for a time, or they may simply have been passing through, as the Kemp family eventually made its way west across the state (Kemp & Snody, 1).



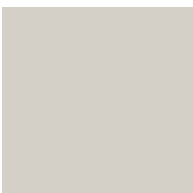
Sodus, Wayne County, NY (New York Maps)

In 1831, however, a ninth child, John, was born much later in life than the other children to Phebe Kemp. Perhaps the Kemp family was lured upstate by the canal boom, as they turn sharply northward. John Kemp is born March 2, 1831 in Gaines, NY, just Northwest of Rochester.



Gaines, NY

By 1847, the family had moved further west and south to Kane County, Illinois. Ellen Mary Kemp's father, Robert Kemp died in Kane County on February 4, 1847. After his death, Phoebe moved the family back to Sodus, NY. It appears Phebe Kemp settled there, as died in Sodus on February 23, 1883. The eighth son, Simon, came from Sodus, Wayne County, NY to Ridgeway, Orleans County.



Ridgeway, Orleans County, NY

In 1884 he moved to Gaines, Orleans County, NY, which was a busy and important village on the Ridge Road. It had the first academy West of Niagara River. Simon conducted a leather and cobbler shop in Gaines from 1847 to 1871. His brother, John Kemp probably came to try his hand at business also, as he died in Gaines on December 7, 1863. Simon Kemp raised his own branch of the Kemp family in Gaines, dying there on July 19, 1902, leaving behind his wife Margaret, his married daughter, Anna, and her three children (Kemp & Snody, 1).

It would seem that Ellen Mary Kemp went with her brothers to Gaines and did not meet Gerard Arink until the Kemp family returned to New York, or at the earliest, 1847. After meeting then marrying Arink, Ellen Mary Arink lived out the rest of her life in their triangular house at the corner of Andrews and Franklin. The main focus of her public life was the Industrial School of Rochester. This institution took in children who were poor and educated them in the rugged professions in a boarding school. In January, 1865 Mr. Elisha Hathaway wrote a letter to Mrs. G Arink regarding his ideas for raising money for the school (True Way). In January, 1873, Ellen M. Arink authored the sixteenth annual report of the Industrial School of Rochester, which included a summary of the recent establishment of a "Day Nursery." Ellen Mary Arink's report is quite verbose and often is eloquent, as well (Sixteenth). Her language is sophisticated, mature and emotive, though there is no record of her having received a formal education. She, like her husband, frequently references God in her writing. Perhaps her education came from one or both of her parents and was shaped by their shared faith. Though she was the corresponding secretary of the board of the school, it is also possible that Gerard Arink had a hand in the authoring of the report. The 1900 Census shows that she was living at

248 Andrews Street with her husband, that she had given birth to no children, and that she and both her parents were born in England. Even here, after the death of her husband, she is listed as Mrs. Gerard Arink (United States 1900, 5). On October 22, 1904, Ellen Mary Arink died at the age of 88 in her home of “Acute Laryngitis” (Mt. Hope; Record of Deaths). Her stone reads as follows:

In Memory  
Of  
ELLEN MARY KEMP  
Wife of  
Gerard Arink  
Born in Poole, Dorset. England  
on May 8, 1816  
Died October 22, 1904

I shall be sanctified when I  
awake with Thy likeness  
Psa. 17-15.

The meaning of the epitaph is direct and simple. At the resurrection, she will, like her husband, be among the righteous who awake in the grace of God. The message is less militaristic, focusing not on victory, but on being sanctified and in the presence of God. The message is a more personal one than Gerard Arink’s as it focuses on the experience of the individual. Lifton describes this concept of the “covenant with God” as one of the main modes of denying death and creating a symbolic immortality (Lifton, 20).

By the end of their lives, Ellen Mary Kemp and Gerard Arink, despite having come from opposite immigrant experiences, together had realized not the rags to riches success of the immigrant’s dream, but a more real success derived from public respect and physical comfort, rather than privileged circumstance and great wealth. Ellen Mary Kemp’s immigrant experience was marked primarily by travel of her wandering family as they sought prosperity throughout New York and the Midwest. She, like the rest of her

family, found that prosperity in upstate New York. Through her marriage to Gerard Arink, Ellen Mary Kemp found her place in America and the community of Rochester as the wife of a physician who served that community and as a charitable, Christian woman. Gerard Arink owed much of his position to the education he received in Holland. When Arink first arrived in America, he could speak English fluently, was hardly destitute, and far from lacking in skills. Immigrating to America after having already achieved a high level of education, experience, and many personal connections was, however, no small sacrifice. Yet the rewards that Arink cultivated were most likely worth that sacrifice, as he did find a place for himself and progressed as far as his nationality would allow. He rose professionally in Rochester throughout his life, being elected to city medical positions and asked to join the Monroe County Medical Society. Arink witnessed his practice grow over his forty years in Rochester, allowing him to live in prosperity, comfort, and moderate wealth as an esteemed physician. By most standards, and perhaps by the grace of God, the Arinks found the promise of America in Rochester, New York.







- Arink, Gerard. Manual for the Medical Practitioner, Including Medical and Pharmaceutical Instructions, and 541 Prescriptions. Rochester, NY: Darrow & Brother, Publishers. 1855.
- , Gerard. "The Cholera -- Nature of the Disease -- Some Practical Suggestions." Union and Advertiser. 20 Jan. 1866: 2-3.
- Arink, Paul. "Descendants of Geert Aringh." <http://paularink.com/> Nov. 3, 2002.
- "City Elections." Union and Advertiser. 5 April. 1859: 3-3.
- "Germany to America, 1850-1874." <http://www.geneaology.com/> Nov. 5, 2002.
- Lifton, Robert Jay. The Broken Connection: On Death and the Continuity of Life. New York: Basic Books, Inc., 1983.
- Mount Hope Internment Records. Book 4. CD-ROM.
- New York Maps. <http://www.mapquest.com/maps/> Nov. 5, 2002.
- "Record of Deaths." Democrat and Chronicle. Oct. 20, 1904: 6-2.
- Reisem, Richard O. Mount Hope: Rochester, New York: America's First Municipal Victorian Cemetery. Rochester, NY: Printing Methods, Inc. 1994.
- "Kemp, Robert & Snody, Phebe."  
<http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/g/a/l/Lynda-Galbiati-VALPARAISO/WEBSITE-0001/UHP-0085.html/> November 5, 2002.
- Rochester Directory. Rochester, NY: Various Publishers. 1849-1904.
- "Sixteenth Annual Report of the Industrial School of Rochester." Union and Advertiser. Jan. 6, 1873: 2-6.
- Street Map of Rochester, New York. Map. New York: Government publication, 1850, 1870, &1900.
- "The True Way to Become Rich." Union and Advertiser. Jan. 31, 1865: 2-3.
- United States. Census Office. Census Microfilm Records: New York 1900 : New York, Monroe County, Roll 1074 Book 1.
- United States. Census Office. Census Microfilm Records: New York 1870 : New York, MONROE, Roll 969 Book 1.