

JOSEPH CUSNO

THE SICILIAN IMMIGRANT

AND

THE JAYS OF BEDFORD

The story of Joseph Cusno is one that embraces the American dream and a dream that this enterprising man realized beyond all expectations when he became a household servant at John Jay's farm in Bedford. His journey from Sicily to America eventually brought him a long association with three generations of the Jay family and a home and family of his own. To understand the world that he entered, we must begin with John Jay's own retirement in 1801 to his Bedford farm after a long and distinguished career as a public official. By 1798 Jay, then governor of New York, had determined to retire to his farm in Bedford, which he acquired through inheritance and purchase. A cottage on the property was occupied by his farm manager, Maj. Lyons, and was converted into a three-story house with a piazza overlooking the country side. It was not as grand as Mount Vernon or Monticello, but was comfortable with a simple elegance and quiet reserve and ultimately proved to be home to the Jay family for more than 150 years. In May of 1801 Jay wrote to Maj. Lyons "It often gives me pleasure to reflect on Good Will & friendly attachment (sic) - which I have uniformly experienced from the Town in which I expect and hope to pass the Remainder of my life."ⁱ Jay moved into the house in the spring of 1801 with his seventeen year old daughter, Anne, known as Nancy. Jay's wife, Sarah, was in poor health and did not take up residence in the house until later that year. John and Sarah had anticipated retirement at the farm in Bedford for some time when Jay

wrote to her in 1795 "...much of our lives is spent. A few years of leisure and tranquility are very desirable. Whether they will fall to our lot, cannot be known...If they come, let us enjoy them: if not, let us be resigned."ⁱⁱ However, Sarah died in May of 1802 and Jay was left a widower until his death in 1829. After Sarah's death John wrote "My time passes as agreeably as (all circumstances considered) I could Reasonably expect: so that I am not only content with but thankful for my Situation."ⁱⁱⁱ

Jay took great comfort and pleasure in his family. He was a devoted father to his children often signing his letters to them "your very affectionate Father, John Jay." His eldest daughter, Maria, lived in Albany with her husband, Gouldsborough Banyer. A son, Peter Augustus, was an attorney in New York city and acted as John Jay's agent there often seeing to the purchase of goods for the house in Bedford and tending to the properties owned by the Jays in New York city. The other son, William, was continuing his education as was the Jay's youngest daughter, Sarah Louisa.

The daily running of his farm demanded much of Jay's time as attested in his meticulous account ledgers. The running of the house he left to his daughter, Nancy, who never married and continued as mistress of the house until John Jay's death. The farm and the house required a staff of servants and Jay was not insensitive to their needs when he wrote to his wife upon his arrival at the house in Bedford in May of 1801 "The Servants are all well and satisfied - I imagine they all found things better than they expected."^{iv}

The number of household servants varied over the years according to census reports from

four to twelve people, freemen and slaves. The Jay household probably consisted of a cook, parlor maid, and various other household servants. It is not known if there were any personal servants such as a maid, valet or butler but we do know that the Jay's employed a waiter and one waiter in particular - Joseph Cusno. It was in this house and with this family that Joseph Cusno spent the better part of his life with devoted service to John Jay, his son William Jay and his grandson, John Jay II and their families.

The first mention of Joseph Cusno in the Jay household was in January of 1813 when William Jay wrote to his father, John Jay, that he had hired a waiter - "I have however engaged for you a Mulatto Man who will I hope prove a good Servant. He was born in Sicily & (sic) when 8 years old was brought over to this Country 12 years ago by Lieut. Izard of Philadelphia & (sic) has remained until lately in Mr. Izard's family as a waiter. ...His price is \$10 pr (sic) month or \$100 pr (sic) year. He has agreed to do whatever you please & (sic) to Sleep with whoever you please. ...His name is John".^v The first entry for Joseph Cusno in John Jay's account ledger is for February 27, 1813 "To Joseph Cusno (by Chester) on account of Wages 5 Dolr (sic)".^{vi} The entries continue for many years usually at the rate of \$10 per month or \$100 per year which is the price that Joseph had asked for and was not an inconsiderable salary for the period. When Jay entered Joseph's name in the account book, he often underlined the name. Jay underlined the name of another servant, Peter Blake, his coachman. Other servants were listed in his account book by first name, if at all. The positions of waiter and coachman were considered to be skilled positions and perhaps this is why Jay treated these entries

differently. Further evidence of Joseph's stature as a waiter and his intention to stay in the employ of John Jay came the next year when Jay wrote to his son Peter - "Cusno's Bond for \$750 was paid off last week".^{vii} Joseph also bought property, a small stone house and lot, from John Jay for \$71.00^{viii} in the Cantitoe section of Bedford and is located just south of what is now Route 22 on Girdle Ridge Road. Bedford Town Maps of the period note a house and lot at the location with the name *J. Cusno*. The property was a short walk to the Jay residence and must have been very convenient for Joseph.

From federal census records, it is known that Joseph married a woman named Millicent who was born in New York about the time he entered the Jay's employ. The 1850 census lists Joseph as age 53 and a farm laborer by profession with real property valued at \$350 and a personal worth of \$100. Other census reports list his profession as waiter. His wife, Millicent, a/k/a Millie, was listed as age 63 along with a 27 year old son, Edward, whose profession was a rope maker and a 23 year old daughter Sally. Edward was listed separately in the census with a wife named Sarah Shelley age 24 and a daughter, Louisa age 7 and a son named George age 5. It should be noted that Joseph, his wife, children and grandchildren are listed in the census as mulatto. Whether Joseph was of racially mixed origin or simply had a Neapolitan complexion is not known and his wife's ancestry is unknown as well. However, in the 1880 census Joseph and his family are listed as white. The racial criteria for the federal census was changed after the Civil War having been challenged for African Americans.

By 1860 Edward's family continued to expand with daughters Angeline age 7, Ella age 3 and William E. age 2. Louisa is not listed and may have died. Edward's profession is now listed as farmer whereas he was previously listed as a rope maker. Rope making thrived as a local industry in the Bedford Hills area until the invention in mid-century of a machine to make ropes, precipitating the decline of hand made ropes.^{ix} By the 1870 census, Edward and his family are no longer listed under Bedford in the federal census and what became of them is not known.

It would seem that Joseph had settled comfortably into the role of waiter to the Jay family with a house and family of his own. However, in 1818 he wanted to contact his family in Sicily and he asked John Jay to write a letter to his son Peter with details of Joseph's strange life and journey to America. It was hoped that through either the American or British consul in Sicily, Joseph's family could be found and news of his new life in America would be conveyed to them "that they may know that he is alive, and where he is"^x as Jay explained in the letter. Jay continued with Joseph's life story when Joseph said that his given name was "Carmello" but he was later called "Joseph" by an American naval officer who hired him and brought him to America. He was born in the Kingdom of the Two Sicilies, consisting of Sicily and Naples, around 1795-1797 in the city of Gergenti which is Sicilian for Agrigento. He spoke of a palace of the Bishop that is next to a church and a passageway that allowed the bishop to go from his residence directly into the church, bypassing the street. His father was a mason named Luke Cusno who was one of three brothers. Joseph was an only child when his mother died. When

his father remarried, Joseph did not like the treatment by his stepmother and he left his home when he was about ten years old. He made his way by logging and later was employed by a blind musician who he led about. A year later he left the musician near the city of Syracuse and “went to that City”.^{xi} This would have been during the First Barbary War (1801-1805) in which the United States was involved in a conflict with the Bey of Tunis, the Dey of Algiers, the Bashaw of Tripoli and the Sultan of Morocco. For centuries these Islamic states on the north coast of Africa, known as the Barbary Coast, had demanded payments or “tributes” from the non-Islamic world for protection for their merchant vessels in the Mediterranean from Barbary pirates who often seized vessels and held the crews for ransom. Even nations such as England and France were forced to pay tribute. The Americans also paid huge sums to the Barbary states but as the U.S. navy grew, the Americans became reluctant to continue paying tribute and hostilities erupted in 1801. By 1803 a U.S. Naval squadron under the command of Capt. Edward Preble established a blockade off the coast of Tripoli using the port of Syracuse in Sicily as a base of operations. Syracuse was considered an ideal port for the U.S. Navy due to its proximity to the Barbary coast. The presence of the U.S. Navy in the city was no doubt a powerful boost to the local economy of the once-powerful city-state. The novelist, Washington Irving, when in Sicily wrote of Syracuse during the First Barbary War that “...it was dangerous for the Americans to walk the streets at night”^{xii} and spoke of being trailed by beggars after dark. It is not known what Joseph did while in Syracuse, but it was against this backdrop that he met and was employed by Midshipman Ralph Izard, Jr. of the U.S. Navy^{xiii} and began an association that would dramatically change

his life. Ralph D. Izard, Jr. was born February 26, 1785 in Charleston, South Carolina into a politically and socially prominent family. His father, Ralph Izard, served as a delegate to the Continental Congress, was a U.S. Senator and President pro tempore of the United States Senate. He married the former Alice De Lancey of New York city and they had 13 children. Ralph Izard, Jr. entered the navy and was appointed Midshipman on October 2, 1799. While stationed in Syracuse as the commander of a gunboat, he wrote to his mother that he found Syracuse so "...detestable that he had not set his foot on shore for six weeks."^{xiv} Some how, though, he met Joseph Cusno and employed him. From Joseph's account of the story, Izard probably Anglicized Joseph's first name to "Joseph" since Joseph stated that he was named "Carmello". Joseph went by several versions of his last name, but that is another part of his story. Izard corresponded often with his mother during his naval career, but none of the letters shed any light on how or when he met Joseph and what type of work Joseph was hired to perform.^{xv} One thing is certain, Midshipman Ralph Izard, Jr. became a naval war hero during his tour of duty at Syracuse with his participation in the burning of the U.S. frigate *Philadelphia* in February of 1804. The *Philadelphia* had run aground while patrolling Tripoli harbor and the captain, officers and crew were taken hostage. Rather than have the ship refitted for combat by the Tripolitans, Lt. Stephen Decatur devised a plan to enter Tripoli harbor in a ketch at night and in disguise for the purpose of setting the *Philadelphia* on fire. The raid consisted of volunteers, including 19 year old Midshipman Ralph Izard, Jr. As a member of the party of fifteen men who boarded the *Philadelphia*, Izard described the attack - "We set fire to her and in less than fifteen minutes from the time we first boarded

her the flames were bursting out of her port.”^{xvi} The raid was a complete success with the *Philadelphia* having been burned and denied to the enemy as it drifted in the harbor and ran aground under the walls of the Bashaw’s palace overlooking the harbor. Decatur and the volunteers returned to Syracuse two days later as national heroes. When news of the raid reached British Admiral Horatio Nelson on board his flagship *Victory*, he called the raid “the most bold and daring act of the age.”^{xvii} As testament to the memory and heroism of Ralph Izard, Jr. the World War II destroyer, *Izard*, was launched and named on August 8, 1942 and was sponsored by Lt. Izard’s great-granddaughter, Mrs. Robert E. Lee III. The *Izard* served in the Pacific during World War II, including the battle of Iwo Jima and received 10 battle stars for service.

The First Barbary War produced some of America’s first military heroes since the Revolutionary War. In 1804, Master Commandant Richard Somers lost his life in an attack on Tripoli harbor. Several towns were named after MC Somers, including the town of Somers, New York. The U.S. Marine Corps distinguished itself in the Battle of Derna when a mixed force of United States Marines and foreign mercenaries marched across the desert from Alexandria, Egypt and captured the Tripolitan city of Derna, turning the tide of the war for the Americans. This was the first time in America’s history that the U.S. flag had been raised in victory on foreign soil during war time. The event is memorialized in the Marines’ Hymn - “the shores of Tripoli”.

Joseph’s story continued with his journey to Charleston South Carolina with

Midshipman Izard in March of 1806.^{xviii} Izard was promoted to Lieutenant in January of 1807 and resigned from the navy on April 28, 1810. He established himself as a plantation owner in South Carolina overseeing 300 slaves. The family had land holdings in Savannah and Pennsylvania and maintained an elegant house on Broad Street, the fashionable section of Charleston. During this time, Joseph Cusno was in the employ of Ralph Izard as a waiter when Izard and his family were living in Philadelphia while he oversaw family business interests in that city. In 1813 Joseph came to the attention of William Jay who brought him into the Jay family's staff of servants. Joseph entered the Jay household as an experienced waiter. Archival material is scant as to what duties he had to perform, but a book published in 1827 by Robert Roberts, "*Robert's Guide for Butlers & Other Household Staff*", was certainly the standard for any servant in a well to do household such as the Jay's. Roberts and his wife were household servants in England before coming to work in the Boston area. In 1825 he worked for Christopher Gore of Gore Place, a magnificent federal house outside Waltham Massachusetts. Gore was a governor of Massachusetts and U.S. Senator and was a commissioner under John Jay to the Jay Treaty negotiations in Britain. Roberts outlines all the duties of a household servant in copious detail from setting the candles in the morning, setting the table for each meal, including the laying of the cloth and setting out the table service on the dining table and sideboard to the actual serving of the food during the meal. One such instruction for clearing the table from Robert's book is "You should never take a dish from the table with the knife and fork in it, as it is very dangerous; if the knife or fork should fall off, it might perhaps stick in your foot, or, on the other hand, it will dirty

the carpet, which is a very disagreeable thing, and is sure to give dissatisfaction to the lady of the family.”^{xix} His instructions also addressed the personal demeanor and dress of the servant at all times and even proper behavior when taking meals with other servants and the extinguishing of the lamps and shutting the house at the end of the day. Whether Joseph was required to adhere to such a strict pattern of behavior is not known but Roberts did address this issue of variations in standards from household to household when he wrote “...for it is the duty of every servant to comply with his employer’s wishes , and to conform to his rules, even if he knows them to be imperfect.”^{xx} Whether Joseph considered the Jays’ household standards to be imperfect is not known but he must have been very content for he continued working at the house in Bedford for the rest of his life. An attorney and diarist of the period, Henry Van der Lyn was one of the many guests at the Jay house and his overnight stay in July of 1826 gives us a clear picture of John Jay and his family and why Joseph may have stayed at the farm for so many years. “...at 12 o’clock arrived at Gov. Jay’s. He sat on his Piazza in a large arm chair, took us very cordially by the hand & (sic) invited us into his sitting parlour (sic), where his Daughter’s Miss Jay [Nancy] & (sic) Mrs. Banyer [Maria] & (sic) his Daughter in law Mrs. Jay [presumably William’s wife Augusta] soon appeared. He is 80 years old looks thin & (sic) infirm, but has his memory hearing & (sic) understanding.....He must have been a pattern of polite hospitality as He (sic) yet evinced at his great age the most particular attention to us. His manners are mild & (sic) gentle. After the cloth was removed at dinner, He (sic) did us the honor to drink to our health & (sic) soon after withdrew a short distance from the table & (sic) his servant brot (sic) him, his long pipe,

which He (sic) smoked once. He offered us Segars & (sic) and the ladies kindly pressed us to smoke, saying they were used to the flavour (sic) of the smoke, which we thus urged could not decline. There were no Gentlemen at the table but us & (sic) the Governor, & (sic) the ladies politely remained in the room after dinner out of respect to us. ...The Ladies in their successful efforts to entertain us by their diversified & (sic) agreeable conversation, evinced that unaffected address which is only acquired by an early intercourse with the best society.”^{xxi}

Most of Joseph’s work as a waiter would have been in the dining room where the Jays took their meals. The main meal, dinner, was usually served in the middle of the day. Afternoon tea was probably served in the front parlor, across the hall from the dining room. The dining room furniture made for John Jay and his wife consisted of three tables and 24 chairs to accommodate not only his large family but the numerous friends and notables who visited the Jay farm. Before each meal, Joseph and the other servants had to move the furniture and place a baize crumb cloth over the carpeting as protection from any crumbs inadvertently dropped from the table, and then put the furniture on top of the crumb cloth. Joseph must have also spent a good deal of his time in the pantry that was next to the dining room. The pantry would have held the Jay family export porcelain imported from China with dark floral sprays, and a chain and dog-tooth border with the Jay “JJ” initials embossed in gold in the center, along with Mrs. Jay’s elegant cocoa set, crystal and other serving pieces. Joseph must have spent many hours setting the table for meals and plating and serving the food. Some of the food served would

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undoubtedly included lobster from New York harbor and oysters from the Jay family estate in Rye that were favorites of John Jay along with fine wine and Madeira. When war with England broke out in 1812, John Jay wrote to his son, Peter Augustus Jay in New York city “Get from Lorillard a Keg of about 25 or 30 lb (sic) of mild smoking Tobacco for me - Brandy I fear will be scarce, and ours runs low - procure a Demijohn of the best - I am more anxious to secure than to receive it speedily.”^{xxii} A favorite cake of Nancy Jay was Honey Cake, which Joseph may have served for dessert or possibly tea, and which John Jay took the time to send the recipe to his daughter-in-law, Mary Clarkson Jay, in one of his letters.^{xxiii}

Joseph may have also appreciated and no doubt benefited from the Jays’ abiding interest and concern for their staff. John Jay evidenced a particular concern for a slave and servant named Zelpha when he wrote “Zelpha was to have been with Mrs. Watkins until she should be 25 years of age - She will be of that age in May next...Zelpha will then be free, and we shall engage her in our service and at the same Wages.”^{xxiv} Nancy Jay took the time and effort to take a servant to New Jersey to see her sister knowing that the two had not seen each other in many years^{xxv} and when Peter Blake, the Jay coachman and his family who lived above the carriage house were all ill, William Jay and his sister, Maria drove themselves to Rye in a gig so as not to impose on Peter Blake.^{xxvi} The Jays also remembered their loyal and faithful servants in their Wills with devises of land, and granting of annuities and burial plots but that is another chapter in Joseph’s story.

Joseph seemed to have settled into an agreeable lifestyle in Bedford, but he was mindful

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of his former life in Sicily for in 1819, Peter Augustus Jay's wife, Mary Rutherford Clarkson Jay, wrote to her husband from Bedford "Jos (sic) the Servant here, wishes to know if you ever had an opportunity of forwarding a letter (he gave you) to Sicily for him."^{xxvii} A year later, Peter Augustus Jay had an answer to Joseph's search for his

family,

"I wrote to Maria by the Wagon and mentioned the contents of a letter I had received from Palermo concerning the Inquiries made for the family of Jo (sic), which I am sorry to find have been unavailing."^{xxviii} How Joseph received this news is not known but he continued, uneventfully, with his duties until 1828 when a significant event occurred in his life. When Joseph came into John Jay's household in 1813, Jay loaned him \$750 to buy a piece of land with a house on it and the next year the loan was paid off but no deed was executed giving title to Joseph. On December 15, 1828 a deed for the property that included about ¼ acre of land, a house and a garden, was executed giving Joseph title to the land. John Jay, in his lawyerly-like and thorough manner, stated the various transfers of the piece of land so that Joseph would have clear title without any legal encumbrances. The document states that in 1815 Joseph Cusno purchased the land from Annanias Wescott, but Joseph, being an immigrant, could not own land or have executed a deed for the land. The deed also states that John Jay took out a deed in his name until such time as Joseph Cusno would be legally able to receive a deed for the property. Joseph was an alien at that time and not entitled to own land until he became a naturalized citizen. On April 21, 1825 the New York state legislature enacted a law that made provision for a

resident alien to buy, own and sell real property. Joseph would have had to execute a deposition of intent to own real property. His deposition would

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have included his name, residence and the date and place of the deposition. It might also have included his country of origin and occupation. The deposition would have been filed locally and transferred by the local official for registration and filing in Albany with the office of the Secretary of State. Joseph's rights concerning his ownership of the property would expire in six years after the deposition was filed. No doubt the new state law may have prompted John Jay and Joseph to execute the deed. John Jay's execution of the deed is interesting and warrants discussion. The document was executed in the presence of John Jay's son, William, and his daughter, Maria Jay Banyer but John Jay did not sign the deed but made his "mark" on the document. Ever mindful of due execution of a legal document, Jay had the following sentence inserted in the deed "John Jay in consequence of an injury to his right hand executed the above instrument by affixing his mark thereto in the presence of Maria Banyer and William Jay."^{xxix} In the spring of 1827 John Jay, while handling a piece of firewood, injured his right hand which became infected and swollen within a few days. As Jay was unable to write, his son, William, wrote most of Jay's correspondence for him and explained what happened as a result of the accident "In the spring of last year a slight injury received in his right hand was succeeded by violent inflammation and gangreen (sic) - The ulcer was healed after the lapse of some months but not until it had caused a stiffness in the joints of some of his fingers, which still render him unable to use a pen - His health has not lately undergone much alteration. A general debility unaccompanied however by acute pain, confines

him to the house and sometimes to his room.”^{xxx} Jay recovered from the injury to his hand only to have his health deteriorate. He died on May 17, 1829. He was buried in the

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family cemetery in Rye, not far from the house where he grew up. In his Will, he provided for his family, a bequest of \$200 to a deserving local widow or orphan of his family’s choosing and \$200 to his servants James Roe and Peter Blake. To Joseph Cusno he left a small house in Bedford that he had recently purchased from Henry Robertson who owned land along Beaver Dam and in Cantitoe near Joseph’s house. Jay never explained why he wanted the new house for Joseph and his family nor is it certain that Joseph and his family took up residence in the house. There are no recorded deeds from Henry Robertson to John Jay or from the Estate of John Jay to Joseph Cusno for the property but deeds and mortgages for property in the same general area refer to property in the name of Joseph Cusno which suggests that a transfer was made to Joseph but the document was not filed with the Westchester County Clerk - a not uncommon practice for the period. The Cantitoe property that Joseph bought in 1815, and that Jay ultimately deeded to Joseph in 1828, remained in Joseph’s name for the rest of his life and presumably it is where Joseph lived with his wife and family.

When Joseph was deeded his house and land in 1828 and executed an alien deposition entitling him to own land, the law stipulated that the right to own land would expire in six years if the alien did not file a petition for citizenship. On September 22, 1834, almost six years after John Jay executed a deed in 1828 transferring title to Joseph in the

Cantitoe property, Joseph became an American citizen . The process of naturalization was not a complicated one for Joseph. The first federal naturalization law in the United States was passed in 1790 and provided that aliens who were free and white and of good

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character could apply for citizenship after a residency of two years in the United States and one year in the state in which they were living. Once those qualifications had been met, they could file for a petition and take an oath of allegiance. In 1795 the law was amended to require a five year residency in the United States and two years in the state of residence.

Joseph took his oath in the Court of Common Pleas before Judge William Jay and Judge Benjamin Isaacs. William Jay was a Westchester County judge and sat in the Court of Common Pleas. Benjamin Isaacs was a town judge in Bedford, and Westchester County assemblyman among other positions he held while running a local farm and store. The Certificate of Naturalization was filed the next day by Westchester County Clerk Nathaniel Bates. It is interesting to note that the name on the Certificate was *Joseph Cozino*. Joseph had gone by the name of Cusno and when he asked John Jay to write to his family in 1818, he said that his father's name was Luke Cusno. Now that he was an American citizen, he used the name of Cozino and that name appears on the Certificate of Naturalization. Joseph's reason for his change of name is not known, but one final and significant change was to be made to his name.

Joseph, now an American citizen, continued to work for the Jay family. After John Jay died, the Bedford farm passed to William Jay and then to John Jay II. On September 10, 1880 at the age of 83 Joseph Cusno died. John Jay's son, William, who died in 1858, made bequests in his Will to Joseph and to Zilpah Montgomery, another servant and a

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former slave - "I leave to Zilpah Montgomery and to Joseph Cuzino an annuity of \$100 per annum each for life. Zilpah has lived in my own and my father's family for more than 60 years and Joseph for more than 40 years. They have been faithful honest domestics and it is my wish that each be interred in my burial plot in the Bedford churchyard and that proper grave stones be placed over their remains; and all at the expense of my estate."^{xxxix} William Jay's wishes were carried out faithfully by his son John Jay II, who now owned the Bedford farm, and the Executors of William's estate. Zilpah Montgomery died on January 13, 1872 and she is buried in the Jay family plot in the churchyard of St. Matthews Church in Bedford along with two other Jay family servants - Ann McFarland who died in 1891 and was a nurse for John Jay II and a woman named Agnes (time and the elements have eroded the inscription on her gravestone) who worked for William Jay and his family and died in 1913. In another part of the cemetery lies Joseph Cozzino. He is buried alongside his wife, Millicent who died in 1877. The following is inscribed on his gravestone:

*Joseph Cozzino
Born at
Gergenti Sicily
Died September 10, 1880
Aged 83 Years
This stone is erected by*

*the Executors of Judge William
Jay in pursuance of a pro
vision in his Will to com
memorate Joseph Cozzino's
faithful service to the fam
ily of Chief Justice John Jay
and his descendants at Bed
ford for more than 60 years.*

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Joseph Cusno was a remarkable person, obviously hard working, enterprising and with solid core values and a determination to find a better life for himself. He had the extraordinary good fortune to meet Ralph Izard, Jr. and ultimately came to the attention of the Jays. John Jay must have thought highly of Joseph to extend an opportunity to him

to purchase a house and lot nearby and to have bequeathed another house to Joseph in his Will and take the time to go through the legal process to allow Joseph to own property that set Joseph on the path to U.S. citizenship. William Jay surely had a high regard for Joseph as well to assist in his naturalization and remember him so generously in his Will. John Jay II undoubtedly shared the same opinion of Joseph for it appears that Joseph died in the service of John Jay II and he saw that the provisions of his father's Will were faithfully executed with regard to Joseph's final resting place.

There is much that we do not know of Joseph Cusno for there are long periods of his life that are undocumented. We do know that Joseph Cusno was determined to have a better life which he found through the beneficence of the Jays of Bedford. The Jays, in turn, extended Joseph the chance to partake of the American experience which he openly embraced. Such was the extraordinary life of Joseph Cusno - American.

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- ⁱ John Jay to Major Samuel Lyons , 15 March,1801, Columbia University, Butler Rare Book and Manuscript Library, John Jay Collection.
 - ⁱⁱ *John Jay*, Walter Stahr, New York, Hambledon and London, 2005, p.365.
 - ⁱⁱⁱ John Jay to William Pitt Beers, 26 November, 1802, Columbia University.
 - ^{iv} John Jay to Sarah Livingston Jay, 17 May, 1801, Columbia University.
 - ^v William Jay to John Jay, 29 January, 1813, Columbia University.
 - ^{vi} John Jay's Account Book, 1813-1829, John Jay Homestead State Historic Site, John Jay Homestead Archives, Katonah, NY.
 - ^{vii} John Jay to Peter Augustus Jay, 10 May, 1814, New York Public Library.
 - ^{viii} John Jay Ledger Book, p.42, John Jay Homestead State Historic Site.
 - ^{ix} *History of Westchester County, NY*, Alvah P. French, New York and Chicago, Lewis Historical Publishing Co. Inc., 1925, vol. II, p.645.
 - ^x John Jay to Peter Augustus Jay, 16 November,1818, Columbia University.
 - ^{xi} Ibid.
 - ^{xii} *Stephen Decatur - American Naval Hero 1779-1820*, Robert J. Allison, Boston, University of Massachusetts Press, 2005, p.44.

^{xiii} John Jay to Peter Augustus Jay, 16 November, 1818, Columbia University.

^{xiv} *Six Frigates The Epic History of the Founding of the U.S. Navy*, Ian Toll, New York and London, W.W. Norton & Company, 2006, p.214.

^{xv} Izard Family Papers 1801-1861, South Carolina Historical Society.

^{xvi} *History of the US Navy 1775-1941*, Robert W. Love, Stackpole Books, Harrisburg, PA, 1992, p.80.

^{xvii} *A Rage for Glory - The Life of Com. Stephen Decatur, USN*, James T. De Kay, New York, Free Press, 2004, p. 15.

^{xviii} John Jay to Peter Augustus Jay, 16 November, 1818, Columbia University.

^{xix} *Roberts' Guide for Butlers & other Household Staff*, Robert Roberts, Munroe and Francis, Boston and New York, 1827, p.50.

^{xx} Ibid, p. 68.

^{xxi} Van der Lyn Papers, vol. 1, p.91, New York Historical Society.

^{xxii} John Jay to Peter Augustus Jay, 13 October, 1812, Columbia University.

^{xxiii} John Jay to Peter Augustus Jay, 10 November, 1812, Columbia University.

^{xxiv} John Jay to Peter Augustus Jay, 12 March, 1817, Columbia University.

^{xxv} John Jay to Sarah Louisa Jay, 4, May 1813, Columbia University.

^{xxvi} John Jay to Peter Augustus Jay, 5 October, 1819, Columbia University.

^{xxvii} Mary Rutherford Clarkson Jay to Peter Augustus Jay, 17 May, 1819, Columbia University.

xxviii Peter Augustus Jay to Mary Rutherford Clarkson Jay, 10 May, 1820, Columbia University.

xxix Deed, John Jay to Joseph Cusno, , December 15, 1828, recorded in the Office of the Westchester County Clerk on December 20, 1828, Liber 33, Pages 313-314.

xxx John Jay to Richard Peters, 20 June, 1828, Columbia University.

xxxi *Last Will and Testament*, William Jay, dated 1 July, 1858.

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