

SAMUEL MILES HOPKINS
FOUNDER OF THE VILLAGE OF MOSCOW
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Samuel Miles Hopkins was a lawyer and gentleman farmer. When legal work in New York City failed to support his lifestyle, he came to the Genesee Valley to make his fortune with land. He had previously speculated on land in the Southern Tier and Ontario. He moved to Geneseo, then Mt. Morris and finally Leicester. Old Leicester was a thriving hamlet located on Jones Bridge Road (Allegheny Road). In August of 1814 Samuel Miles Hopkins was building a large public house in Old Leicester and due to a disagreement, he created the rival Village of Moscow. He established the Moscow Academy in 1817. He was a one-time member of Congress (1813-1814) and State Senator (1821-1822).

He built a grand federal house and attempted to make his fortune raising sheep, hemp, and wheat. The price of land and produce fell after 1814 and his fortunes also fell. He was a highly principled man who frequently made poor business decisions. "I undertook charity causes and fought them...with perseverance for years."

In the spring of 1822 he sold his land, settled his debts, sold his home to Col. Cuyler, and went to Albany to practice law. He was given several important appointments; he was one of three State Prison Commissioners. He wrote an essay on State prison punishment, built the new Sing Sing prison, and established Auburn prison discipline reforms. In 1831 Samuel Hopkins and his family moved to Geneva. He extensively corresponded with scholars and reformers and was fond of debating temperance reform. Samuel Miles Hopkins died October 8, 1837 and was buried in the Washington Street Cemetery.