

Alleged Female Forger,

**JENNIE M. SWETLAND WELL KNOWN IN THIS CITY,
WHERE SHE FORMERLY RESIDED**

Miss Jennie M. Swetland, who has been arrested at Kalamazoo, Mich., on a charge of forgery, is well known in this city. She is a daughter of the late COL. Swetland, who resided some fifteen or twenty years since on New Jersey Avenue, near B street southeast. She was a pretty and intelligent little girl. After the death of her father, who left the family without means, her mother obtained employment in one of the departments, and during her illness, Miss Jennie was the substitute in her place. About ten years ago or more, she went to Michigan, where she had relatives, and finally was employed in the office of the clerk of the court. It is alleged that it has been her custom when mortgages were left at the office to be released, to forge an assignment and then sell the mortgage and that she even sold some of these papers to her uncle, who had befriended her, and that by her actions he is a ruined man.

Summary

Jennie Mott Swetland (1859-1936), or Hattie Jean Mott Sweetland, as she was known later, was a twenty-nine-year-old clerk in the Kalamazoo County's Register of Deeds working in the Abstract Office. In 1888, she was arrested for filing falsified deeds and forging signatures. She came from a prominent Troy, New York family. Her father, Silas H. Swetland (1827-1871), was a lawyer who had been a Colonel in the New York State Militia in the Civil War and was appointed by the Governor of New York as the military agent for the state and sent to Washington D. C. in 1862. Jennie was educated in Washington, and after her father died, her mother, Mary A. (Mott) Swetland (1835-1875), worked as a clerk in the U. S. Treasury until 1874. At seventeen, Jennie seems to have replaced her mother as a clerk at the Treasury when her mother became ill. In about 1878, she moved to Michigan to live with family and eventually began work as a clerk in the office of Kalamazoo County's Register of Deeds. She ultimately pleaded guilty to forgery that scammed over \$10,000 out of her marks, including her Uncle Perry Sherman. She served two years in the Detroit House of Corrections for her crime. After her release from prison, she moved to Wisconsin. In 1892, she married a Physician from Chicago and lived happily ever after. What happened to the money she stole remains a mystery, as well as what became of the missing pages from the 1835 Book of Deeds that she may or may not have stolen.