

The Saga of William P. Moore

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My maternal Great-Grandfather Farmer Moore was born in 1835 in Jackson County, Tennessee. He lived most of his life in Bolivar, Missouri, where he was a brick mason, as were most of his sons, including my grandfather, Fredrick L. Moore. Early in my research on Farmer, I checked with Ancestry.com, and most of the family trees for Farmer had Farmer's father as William T. Moore, born in 1774. That seemed odd to me because William would have been 61 years old when Farmer was born, but every tree I checked had William T. as his father.

Farmer Moore's death certificate from the state of Missouri listed his father as William P. Moore. I contacted one of the most prominent Farmer family trees and told the tree's author about my find. The tree owner, however, was not convinced for he had gotten his information from Farmer's Civil War records. I kept on doing more research and found an 1850 U. S. Census record for Franklin County, Alabama, that listed a Wm. P. Moore and his family which included a Farmer Moore, age 14. Plus, William P. was listed as a brick mason. This William P. Moore was born in 1807. I also checked the census records for Tennessee for the years 1830 and 1840, and, sure enough, there was William P. Moore in Jackson County with the information I needed to show that Farmer was born between 1830 and 1840. I had pretty solid proof of the identity of Farmer's father.

I again contacted the "Moore expert" about my findings, and he still wasn't convinced. Understandably, this guy had put a lot of work into Farmer's family tree and traced William T. Moore's ancestors back into the 1600s, so he was not going to give up easily.

My final piece of evidence of William P.'s fatherhood came from DNA analysis. I had the Y chromosomal DNA of a male Moore cousin analyzed by Family Tree DNA. In the list of Moores provided by FTDNA, there was the name of a man with DNA markers almost identical to my cousin's markers. I contacted him, and he traced his ancestors to an individual who was common to both of our trees.

By this time, my "Moore expert" friend had at least started a new family tree on Ancestry.com that had Farmer's correct father, although he kept his erroneous tree on the website. I started contacting other Moore genealogists on Ancestry.com who had the wrong father in their Farmer Moore trees even though they had a picture of

Farmer Moore's death certificate! Gradually, people started to correct their family trees, and William T. Moore faded away.

With further research, I found that the families of both Farmer and William P. were living in Bolivar, Missouri, in 1860 according to the U. S. Census. In 1862, Farmer Moore joined the Confederate Army, but in 1863 he was captured in the Battle at Vicksburg, Missouri. Farmer Moore was immediately paroled, and he returned to Bolivar where he built brick buildings until his death in 1912.

The story of William P. Moore is not yet complete. The last documentation I have for William P. is the name "**W. P. Moore**" on a list indicating support for the Union, published between 1861 and 1864, and called "Men's Loyalty Oath Signatures" for Bolivar. After that period he disappeared. His wife, Naoma Moore, was listed in a "1863 Tax Assessors Book - Polk County, Missouri," the county where Bolivar is located. Her personal property was only \$6.00. William P. was not listed.

I don't yet know what happened to William P. or Naoma Moore. I do know that times were difficult in Missouri during the Civil War. Parts of the state supported the Union, and other parts supported the Confederates. I have heard that the Union supporters would automatically shoot anyone suspected of being pro-Confederate. William P. was in his early 50s and vulnerable to suspicions from both sides. He and Naoma may have left the state, or they may have been killed. I am trying to find their fate, and the saga of William P. Moore continues.