

Who was the father of Marilla Baird Hamilton (1818-1901)?

Submitted by Mary Ferm

The Story:

The following family story was given to me by my grandmother, Nettie Murray MacGinitie*:

"We have it that Rebecca Baird Hamilton married a man named English, but as he was no good to her, her father went and brought her home. She took her maiden name and our grandmother, who was her baby, went by the name of Hamilton. It is reported that English had a violent temper and was not responsible."

A McGinitie cousin had a similar story, with the husband's name as "*McCruishon*." The DAR application of Marilla's daughter, Nancy, gives Marilla's father's name as "*Robert McQuiston*."

Rebecca's baby, Marilla Baird Hamilton, was born 16 May 1818, Indiana Co, PA, when Rebecca was 29.

This retention of the Hamilton name has caused some confusion among descendants who had not known this story, and who assumed Marilla Baird Hamilton was the daughter of a Hamilton. I have been able to verify much of this story, although not the existence of a husband, surnamed English.

The Paper Trail:

Rebecca never married (again, or at all?). Rebecca had no other known children, and for most of her adult life, lived with her parents and then her daughter, Marilla Baird Hamilton and her husband John Parrish McGinitie.

In the 1830 census, Rebecca's father, William Hamilton, is shown with 1 female age 40 and under 50, when Rebecca would have been 42 and her sister, Nancy age 41. Either Rebecca or her unmarried sister, Nancy (age 41) was likely this female. Another unmarried sister, Peggy, age 38 is likely the female age 30, under 40. Rebecca's future son-in-law, indexed as "John P M Ginley" was age 17, living alone, and even that young was listed as a head of household in Centre Twp, Indiana Co, PA. So Rebecca was not yet with John McGinitie.

Rebecca's father, William Hamilton, left a bequest for her in his 1831 will, and he died in 1839 when Rebecca was age 50.

Her father's will reads: "*I do__ and bequeath fifty Dollars to each of my three Daughters, Rebecca, Peggy and Nancy, to be paid by my son Thomas Hamilton when they get married or think proper to leave____. I do further will and bequeath to my three*

daughters above mentioned each of their own bedd, Bureau, saddle and where likewise to Rebecka and Nancy the Loom and _____ and the privledge of the shop to work in... my three daughters, is to have the privledge of the house to live in with their Mother."
(Will proved 20 July 1839, Indiana Co, PA.)

There are no known marriage records for Rebecca's two sisters, Peggy and Nancy.

The baby, Marilla Baird Hamilton married John Parrish McGinitie in 1836, Indiana Co, PA.

In 1840, when Rebecca was age 51, John "McGinnety's" household in Clarion, Armstrong Co, PA, included a female age 50-59.

In 1850 Rebecca B. Hamilton, age 62 was enumerated in the Greenville, Clarion Co, PA household of John P. McGinity, age 37, blacksmith. Her daughter, Marilla was listed as age 32.

In 1860, Rebecca Hamilton, age 73, was enumerated in the Monroe Twp, Clarion Co, PA household of John P. McGinity age 46, blacksmith. Her daughter, Marilla was listed as age 42.

Rebecca Hamilton died in 1866, probably Clarion Co, PA.

The Indiana County, Pennsylvania Court Case:

In 2000, Sonya Barclay, a grad student studying illegitimacy in early Pennsylvania posted a query on Rootsweb asking for information on any of the women involved in Indiana County illegitimacy cases she listed, including one for Rebecca Hamilton in 1818-19. In exchange for my sharing of the family story, she was willing to share photocopies of 4 pages of the court record involving Rebecca.

Included in the papers were: bonds given for appearance in court, names of jury, names of witnesses, and fines on the defendant, William McQuilkin. The result of the suit was that:

"William M. Quilkin (was to) pay a fine of two dollars to the Commonwealth and costs of prosecution that he pay fourteen dollars for lying in exp__ and twenty seven dollars from the birth of the child (viz) the 16th day of May last until the sixteenth day of February last and at the rate of nine dollars quarterly being three dollars per month for four years and three months if the child so long live and give security to indemnify the township of Center."

According to her 25 Mar 1901 obituary, Marilla Baird Hamilton was born on May 16, 1818. The 1818 court record was proof to me that William McQuilkin was her father. In fact, I feel more certain of her father's identity than I am of the father of almost anyone

else in my family tree, given all the witnesses in court. If her mother's marriage to Mr. English actually happened, Marilla was not his daughter.

It's interesting that Rebecca's father, William Hamilton, a fairly well- to- do farmer, justice of the peace for many years, who gave his bond on the condition of the appearance of his daughter in court, felt a need sue McQuilkin, and rounded up a bunch of witnesses.

Eleven years later, the 1830 next neighbor of John P M Ginley (age 17) was William "McQuilkew" age 40, under 50, in Centre Twp, Indiana Co, PA, likely this same man or a relative. Did Marilla meet her husband while visiting her father?

DNA Matching:

My Dad, Walter MacGinitie*, has a 31 cM autosomal DNA match across 2 segments to "P.K." on Ancestry DNA. How wonderful that the account manager has posted an extensive tree, which includes a "William McQuilkin" b 1778 Martinsville, VA, d 1869 Blairsville, Indiana Co, PA. According to the tree, this William McQuilkin married a Cynthia Meyson (b c 1779, PA, d Oct 1849 Indiana Co, PA), and had a son Robert Meyson McQuilkin (b 1820 Blairsville, PA).

Ancestry estimates a 4th to 6th cousin relationship between the test taker and my Dad. I calculate a 3rd cousin once removed relationship, but there would be a further dilution of shared DNA because they descend from two different partners of William McQuilkin. A descendant of William McQuilkin's sister shares a 21 cM autosomal match with my Dad.

I find it amazing that DNA is helping to confirm parentage of a child born in 1818. I am now convinced that William McQuilkin is my direct ancestor, and I have a whole new line of ancestors to research!

**The MacGinitie surname changed spelling over time. I have kept the spellings as used in the written records.*