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Phillips DNA News

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Please submit news articles or ideas for articles to the editor. Questions about Genetic Genealogy can always be sent to the editor.

Project News

This month, we begin a new occasional feature in our newsletter: reviews of books that offer information on one or more branches of the Phillips family. These reviews are offered to tell readers which books might be of value by providing information on particular individuals. They are not intended to describe the literary quality of the book. Usually they will offer no guidance as to the accuracy of the book's information. We hope other readers will submit reviews of books they come across in the course of their research.

Some Ancient Landowners in Saint Martin's Parish, Hanover County, Virginia,

by Norine Campbell Gregory. New Papyrus Company, Inc., 2001.

Reviewed by Sally Phillips, Phillips Family DNA Group 32

This book should be required reading for St. Martin's Parish researchers. Gregory offers detailed analysis of a multitude of records to create chains of ownership for a number of Hanover County tracts. The chains of ownership offer clues to generations of families. While the book does not cover all of St. Martin's Parish, it is invaluable for the detailed information it records for many families and lands. Much of the text is in the form of facts and details gathered through years of research. Such notes may prove helpful in linking random, apparently unrelated facts. The families of Edmonds, Terry, Williams, Gilchrist, Saxon, Harris, Overton, Pettus, Hinde, Winston, and Smith are discussed. The families of George Phillips of Family Group 32 and Richard Phillips and Catherine Smith are included.

Bad Frank Phillips of Hatfield-McCoy Fame

Compiled by Nancy Kiser, Phillips Family DNA Group 8



Frank Phillips

When the Hatfield and McCoy feud blasted back into American public consciousness with a widely watched television miniseries on the History channel last month, several members of our Phillips DNA Project asked me if we had DNA tested any descendants of “bad” Frank Phillips, the deputy sheriff who was hired by the McCoys to pursue Hatfields and bring them to justice. The answer is yes, kit number 111382, and the Y-DNA of that participant matches the Y-DNA of my Phillips family, which is Phillips Family DNA Group 8. We have also tested several other descendants of Frank’s great-grandparents, Zachariah and Elizabeth (Charles) Phillips and their Y-DNA also matches Group 8. Here is a quote from an email sent to me several years ago by the descendant of Frank Phillips:

“My Phillips line goes back to Pike County, KY, and prior to that was Orange County, NC, from the mid 1700's. This Phillips line included "Bad" Frank Phillips, the Deputy Sheriff who is credited for ending the Hatfield-McCoy Feud in Pike County, KY and Mingo County, WV. Frank was my GG Grandfather. Frank had an affair with Eva McCoy, which is my line, so I am also a McCoy descendant.”

The following information is from a Federal nomination form for the Hatfield-McCoy Feud Historic District:

In August 1887, General Simon Bolivar Buckner was inaugurated governor of Kentucky and fulfilled a campaign promise to seek justice for the McCoys. A requisition was issued to the West Virginia Secretary of State for the apprehension of Anderson (Devil Anse) Hatfield. A \$500 reward was also offered. Buckner appointed Pike County deputy sheriff Franklin (Frank) Phillips to receive the prisoners, but no answer from West Virginia was forthcoming.

As the year 1887 came to a close, tension mounted. Detectives swarmed the area hoping to collect the reward money offered for the Hatfield fugitives, forcing Devil Anse to leave his home on Peter Creek to seek safer quarters on Main Island Creek. The Hatfields finally decided on a course of action that they thought would bring an end to the harassment - the killing of Randall McCoy.

On New Year's Day of 1888, several members of the Hatfield clan, led by Jim Vance and Anse's son Cap, made a raid on the McCoy home. Randall escaped, but other members of his family did not. His daughter Allifair (also spelled Alafair) and his son Calvin were killed and his wife Sarah was beaten into unconsciousness. His house and all the outbuildings were burned to the ground.

The brutality of the killings caused great public outcry and pressure was put to bear on Pike County officials to see that the Hatfields were arrested. Frank Phillips led a posse across the Tug, in hopes of capturing a few of the Hatfields and spotted Jim Vance and Cap Hatfield. Phillips killed Vance, but Cap was able to make an escape. Other raids into West Virginia followed and Phillips was able to round up a considerable number of the Hatfield clan. West Virginia countered by offering rewards for Phillips and his posse.

Phillips, a gunfighter and hard drinker, was a man of dubious reputation. Sworn in as deputy sheriff in June 1887, he was relentless in his pursuit of the Hatfields and was one of the few men Devil Anse is known to have feared. Although ousted in his job as deputy sheriff by sheriff Basil Hatfield after less than one year, Phillips remained determined to bring the Hatfields to trial. As fortune would have it, Nancy McCoy left Johnse Hatfield (the son of Devil Anse) in 1888 and went to live with Phillips, whom she married in 1895. They lived in Phelps and are buried in a nearby graveyard. Phillips died as a result of a shooting in 1898.

Frank Phillips was the grandson of Jessie Phillips and Nancy Bishop Keene. His parents were William Phillips and Mary King. A woman named Betty Phillips-Howard wrote a story about Jessie and Nancy (Bishop) Phillips of Pike County, KY, for our newsletter back in May of 2008. Betty lived in Pikeville, Kentucky, and she conducted and taught genealogy research for over 40 years. She is an expert on the Hatfield-McCoy feud of Pike County, Kentucky and Mingo County, West Virginia, and Betty has a somewhat different opinion of Frank Phillips. Here is a reprisal of part of her story:

Jessie Phillips was born in Orange County, North Carolina about 1811. He was a son of Zachariah Phillips and Elizabeth Charles. Jessie probably had few memories of North Carolina because his family left there when he was very young. I think his father, Zachariah Phillips, was traveling with Jessie's grandfather George Charles and maybe the family of his granddad's sister, Sarah Charles, who was married to Samuel James. The men may have come first to Russell County, Virginia and returned to North Carolina to get their wives and families. It is not known if they traveled in a small group or as a large family group but it is known the men seem to have arrived in Russell County, Virginia, by 1813 when they signed legal documents for each other. Jessie's brother Thompson Phillips was born in North Carolina in 1815 but his next sibling was born in Floyd County, Kentucky about 1819. Thus Jessie was a lad of about four years old and his family was on the move. They did not stay long in Russell County, Virginia, because no siblings were born there. They were in Floyd County, now Pike County, Kentucky, by 1819.

By 1816-1825, they all were out of Virginia and in Pike and Floyd County, Kentucky. They did not settle close to each other. Thus, their descendants do not realize they have a kinship relationship. Jessie's dad Zachariah settled on Upper John's Creek where Jessie grew to adulthood. His grandfather George Charles and one son settled on Raccoon Creek while three sons and a daughter settled on Blackberry Creek in Pike County. Sarah Charles James died while the family was in Russell County, VA, but her widower and children settled on Brushy Creek on the Floyd County side. Jessie was about eight when his family arrived in Pike County about 1819. We have no record of him again until 1832.

Jessie Phillips married Nancy Keene 13th July 1832 in Pike County, Kentucky. Nancy's maiden name was Bishop. Her parents were George and Annie Booth Bishop. She was a widow with five Keene children. She was born about 1801 in Virginia. Thus Nancy was about 11 years older than her husband. They settled on Upper John's Creek where their children were born. They did not have a large family as most couples did in those days. Perhaps Nancy reached the end of her childbearing years when her last child was born in 1843-1844.

The six children I have been able to find for Jessie and Nancy Bishop Keene Phillips are:

William Phillips was born in 1835

John C. Phillips was born in 1836

Sarah Phillips was born in 1839

Franklin Phillips was born in 1841

Tabetha Jane Phillips was born in 1843

Patterson Phillips was born in 1844

I think Patterson may have died very young. Four of the remaining five children will suffer during the Civil War. Families will be left fatherless and children will be orphans. The families will change and things will never be the same for some of them.

William, the oldest child of Jessie Phillips and Nancy Bishop Phillips, was born in 1835. He married Mary King, a daughter of Franklin King and Eleanor "Nellie" Williamson King.

The children of William and Mary King Phillips were:

Sarah Jane Phillips, born 12 June 1855

Pricy Phillips, born 15 January 1858

John Phillips, born 20 Oct 1859

Franklin Phillips, born 28 July 1861 (Editor's note: this was "bad" Frank Phillips)

Polly Phillips, born 25 March 1863

A story has been told in the Phillips family about William that is absolutely false. It was even printed in an area newspaper many years ago. The untrue story says that Rebel Bill Smith took William Phillips from his home at the time of the Civil War to act as a guide through the mountains. William Phillips was never seen again. The truth is WILLIAM PHILLIPS WAS A UNION SOLDIER. He enlisted in the 39th Regiment, Company "H" on Sept 1, 1863 and mustered in on 29th Oct 1863. Mustering in with him that day were several men that I have been able to place on the Tug Valley before the War. These men included John Charles, George Charles, Moses Charles, James Charles, John Dotson, Henry Daniels, George Estep and Oliver Adkins. The Charles men were cousins to William Phillips.

Why did this young man leave his family on Upper John's Creek and join with these Tug Valley men and join the Union army? The answer might be because many of his relatives were Union supporters. Lewis King was the leader of a home guard group on Upper John's Creek. Lewis King was married to Mary Phillips, a sister to Jessie Phillips and thus an aunt to William Phillips. Lewis King drove either 600 or 900 horses into Pikeville for Col. Dils to have and use for his 39th. He probably did not have a bill of sale for these horses and left very angry Confederates in the path behind him. He also did not drive or herd this many horses by himself. Who helped him? I would guess and say it was family, neighbors and men who would join the 39th Kentucky when it was formed. I could probably name several of these men but will not because it could never be proven.

It should also be noted that Mary King, the wife of William Phillips, was a niece to Lewis King. Lewis King was a brother to her dad, Franklin King. Thus the children of Lewis and Mary Phillips King were first cousins to both William Phillips and his wife Mary King Phillips. These King relatives of William Phillips and his wife, Mary King, made a name for themselves in the 39th. A son of Lewis King, William King, was a Captain in the 39th and the man in charge in Company "H". A son-in-law of Lewis King, Richard Denny Coleman who was married to Nancy King, a first cousin to both William Phillips and his wife, was a first lieutenant in Company "H". Another soldier, Andrew Breeding, was married to Elizabeth King, another daughter of Lewis King. He was a Sergeant also in the 39th, Company "H". Lewis King was an old man entirely too old to be a soldier but he joined the 39th also. Also two brothers to Mary King Phillips were in the 39th. Franklin King joined Company "H" but Samuel King joined Company "E".

The first of January in 1864 was bitter cold. It was so cold the big Sandy River was frozen. The 39th company "H" sought shelter in a schoolhouse near Turman's Ferry, which is in Boyd County. There were about 75 men in this building trying to keep warm. A Confederate group of 175 men attacked them. It was a total disaster for the 39th. According to the Adjutant General Report Richard, Denny Coleman, married to Nancy King, lost his life. Several men were listed as captured and supposed to be dead. William Phillips was one of these men. However, his military record shows he was marched to Richmond, Virginia, and taken to a Confederate Prison called Belle Isle Prison Camp where he contracted smallpox. In his file where his family applied for a pension, Mary King tells that a soldier friend that had been at the prison told her he saw William Phillips in the prison and he was very sick with smallpox. His military record shows he was taken to Howard Grove General Hospital where he died from smallpox. He was buried first in the hospital cemetery but later his remains were moved to Richmond National Cemetery.

William Phillips left a widow and five young children. It was necessary for her to appear in Court to gain custody of her children and to oversee any estate they were entitled to receive. It would appear that her father, Franklin King, was deceased because the man helping her was her father-in-law, Jessie Phillips. He appears in Court with her and two other men are helping her also. These men are Thompson Phillips, the brother of Jessie Phillips, and Col. John Dils. They signed the bond necessary for her to continue action in court.

Family tradition says that Mary King Phillips was sick and Jessie and Nancy Phillips took this young widow and her children into their home. Mary died in 1867. Now these children were really orphans. Their grandfather Jessie Phillips appears in Court to get custody of the children. Who else could? Their King grandparents have disappeared from public records and are thought to be deceased. Once again Thompson Phillips and Col. John Dils are signing bonds and helping Jessie Phillips get custody of his grandchildren. He and Nancy were not young but they took on this responsibility. Also they had a daughter with two children who had also lost her husband in the Civil War.

The guardianship of the children changed again. Jessie Phillips resigned as guardian of his grandchildren and asked that Col. Dils be appointed guardian. Orland Bowles helped Col. Dils with his guardianship. The date Jessie resigned was 17 August 1868. Why did he do this? Family tradition says his wife, Nancy, the grandmother of the children was very ill. Also, it has been told that their home burned and the children needed a place to stay while Jessie Phillips found a new home.

Many authors on the Hatfield and McCoy Feud make a big issue of Jessie Phillips giving the guardianship of his grandson, Frank Phillips, to Col. Dils. Their purpose seems to be to tarnish the name of Frank Phillips. They never tell that Frank Phillips was all of six years old when Col. Dils became his guardian. Nor do they tell that Col. Dils had guardianship of ALL of the children of the deceased soldier William Phillips and his deceased wife Mary. They also do not tell of the education that Frank Phillips acquired while he was in custody of Col. Dils. Frank Phillips was educated far beyond most people living in that time period in Pike County. Col. Dils reported to the Court often as required by law on all five of these children. These records are available in the Court Order Books in the Pike County Court House. For proof of the education of Frank Phillips, see his handwritten will in the Pike County Court Will Book.

Phillips Family Story

Of Neighbors and Genealogy

By Rex Phillips, Phillips Family DNA Group 3

One of the side benefits of genealogy is learning a little history, a little geography and something called "Migration Patterns". As I studied my Phillips line I became aware of the significance that neighbors played in determining who they married and where they migrated.

Because early transportation methods limited many activities and opportunities for contact, neighboring families depended upon one another and became close. We also find that marriages were more or less limited to parties living within close proximity to one another. Thus neighbors often became family through marriage. Still it was somewhat surprising to find that these close relationships remained for several generations and influenced many decisions relative to migration.

My documented Earliest Known Ancestor was Joseph Phillips who died in Brunswick County, Virginia in 1777. One of four sons, William (my GGGG grandfather), married a Nancy James. He died in Brunswick in 1805 and circa 1815 his widow migrated to Rutherford County, Tennessee, along with her James siblings and her mother. Also going to Rutherford County at or near the same time were several other Brunswick County families who were either related in some way, or neighbors to Nancy or her siblings.

John and Sterling Phillips, other sons of Joseph of Brunswick, migrated to Laurens County, South Carolina, in the early 1800's. Benjamin Wesson, a neighbor from Brunswick County, also

migrated there about the same time. John's adjacent neighbors in the 1820 census were John Jones, Sr. and Jr. in two households on one side and two families of Whittens on the other side.

John married Angelico Jones, daughter of John and Lucy Whitmore Jones. Whitmore Jones, Angelico's brother, married Elizabeth Duncan and Angelico's sister, Jane Jones, married a brother of Elizabeth Duncan. In circa 1822, John and Angelico, Whitmore and Elizabeth (Duncan) Jones and Jane (Jones) Duncan and her husband all migrated to Lauderdale County, Alabama.

Subsequently, other Phillips, Whittens, Wessons and Ducketts of Laurens County, South Carolina, migrated to the tri-county area of Lauderdale County, Alabama, Wayne County, Tennessee and Tishimingo County, Mississippi. One of Joseph Phillips' daughters, Martha "Patsy" Phillips, married a Jesse Kelly in Brunswick County, Virginia in 1787. Their descendants migrated to Madison County, Alabama, near Lauderdale County, as did some others of the Wesson line.

I have determined that there were at least a dozen marriages between the Wesson and Phillips families and a few Whitten - Phillips marriages as well.

Following is a transcription of an 1824 letter co-written by John and Angelico Jones Phillips and Whitmore and Elizabeth Duncan Jones to John Phillips' son John, Jr. and John Duncan, Elizabeth's father and to friend Benjamin Wesson. A post script was added to the letter by Thomas Moore Phillips (son of Sterling Phillips) and wife Mary. The letter illustrates how families and neighbors continue to influence migration patterns by extolling the quality and low cost of land in their new surroundings.

Copy of a letter written in 1824 by James Duncan's daughter, Elizabeth Duncan Jones, and her husband, Whitmore Jones, and Angelico and John Phillips when they lived in Lauderdale County, Alabama, to Joseph Duncan, Elizabeth's brother, and to John and Angelico's son John, Jr., as well as friend Benjamin Wesson.

The copy consists of four pages, but probably is only two pages, used on both sides. One page presumably is the sheet with an address to the receiver: "to John Phillips or Benjamin Wesson, South Carolina, Laurens Co, District, Dunklins Valley, Florence A, Jan 19th". (A large number was written on this side - "25"). On the reverse of the above sheet was "Joseph Duncan". The body of the letter was written on one sheet, using both sides of the paper.

*Alabama Lauderdale County
January 16, 1824*

Dear Brother and Sister

This morning I set down myself to try to write a letter to you, to inform you that we are all well at this time and we are very glad to hear that sickness has abated with you all in that

country. We heard shaking news from there a while back by the way of letters. We hear of very few deaths in this County. One or two old people with inward complaints. It is a healthy part of the world I believe. We would be very glad you were all here and as well satisfied as we are. This letter is to Benjamin Wesson as well as to you. We give our best love and well wishes to him and all his family. We are sorry that we cannot get news of any of our friends or old neighbors coming to this Country. I believe we have turnips plenty for six or seven families. More than we shall want ourselves that I perceived for. My friend, here is land of all qualities to be had upon good terms. We wish to be remembered to old Mr. Wesson and Johnson Wesson and all their family. We do wish to be remembered to all our relatives and old neighbors, not leaving out any. Tell Joseph Jones I sent him a letter last September and have not gotten an answer from him as yet. I was at town 3 or 4 times a week before Christmas with the wagons and checked the office every day but could get no letter from him by this time. There may be one for me. I sent our old father Duncan (Jo) letter long since that. I do not know that he even got it or not, tho I received a letter from him about New Year which gave us great satisfaction that sickness had abated and about old Mr (?) letting some of his negroes free. We heard of his death by Mrs. (?) letter. I want you to take this letter to Jo. Duncan and let him see it. I want him to collect the money as quick as possible and pay himself well for fixing our poor little sons' graves besides other troubles that he will be at (blank) the money and send it by the first opportunity. There is old Capt Boben (Roben?) Martin in union about the Cherokees, a near neighbor of mine I expect will be there till Spring. A safe hand; to send by; John Robertson is settling close by me. He and wife wishes remembrance to our father Duncan and Mary Duncan. The children are well and hearty. Franklin and Jackson are great playmates, so I conclude my friends.
/s/ John Phillips, Angelico Phillips, Whitmore Jones, Elizabeth Jones.

"N B We, Thomas and Polly Phillips send our best respects to you and all the family. We can inform you that we are well through mercy and hope these lines will find you the same. We would be very glad to see you all. My father's family is well - he has sold his land - he made four or five hundred dollars by buying and selling. He has a great piece of land in view. We are all in a tolerable way to get along. Give our respects to all inquiring friends. Time is short. Paper is gone. Farewell to Benjamin Wesson."