

## **SOME DESCENDANTS OF DAVID “LONESOME DAVE” WILLIAMS**

**By Anita L. Aliff Williams**

David “Lonesome Dave” Williams was born about 1776, probably in Montgomery County, Virginia, which is in present Giles County, Virginia. His father, Jeremiah, owned land on Doe Creek, in Giles County.

As a young man, David “Lonesome Dave” and his brother John S. decided to move further west with a group of people who were going into Tennessee. David fell in love with young Elizabeth “Besty” McGriff, and they were married on November 16, 1801, in Knox County, Tennessee. Betsy’s father, Thomas, and grandfather, John, were with a group of people from the New River area. The McGriff family did not stay in Tennessee, but moved on to Harrison Township, Preble County, Ohio.

According to Johnston’s History of the Middle New River Settlements (pages 42-44), Thomas, the father of Elizabeth “Betsy,” along with two Snidow boys, Jacob and Theopolus, were captured on Sunday, August 7, 1774. A band of Shawnee Indians came up the Tug River, crossed over, went down Wolf Creek to the New River, proceeding to Sinking Creek in Craig County, Virginia. There they attacked and killed three Lybrook children, a young woman by the name of Scott, and Mrs. Snidow’s two little girls. Thomas McGriff and Jacob Snidow escaped their captors on the third day near Pipestem, in Summers County, Virginia. Theopoulus Snidow was taken north of the Ohio River. He managed to return home years later, only to die of pulmonary.

John S. Williams apparently married about the same time to Mary “Polly” Griffith. Each of the two brothers had a son born in Tennessee. David named his son John, and John S. named his son David. The Williams families moved on to Ohio; and each had a child born there. Thomas was born to David, and Susannah was born to John S.

Not finding the life they wanted, they return to present-day Giles County. John S. remained in Giles County, raising a large family who still inhabit the area.

David wanted a more remote area. Land was available on Upper Paint Creek, which during the time 1810 to 1824 was Giles County, becoming Logan County, then Fayette County, and present-day Raleigh County in 1850.

David purchased 500 acres sometime before 1856. I believe that David was living in present-day Raleigh County about 1812, having settled on Sims Branch of Upper Paint Creek. When my mother was a child, she said that the remains of a cabin were still visible on land that belonged to her grandfather Amos Williams. Settlement of approximately 36,000 acres on Upper Paint Creek was legally tied up in the courts of Rockbridge County, Virginia, for years. I think that is the reason that “Lonesome Dave” did not have a title until later in his life.

According to a deed, dated April 3, 1856, "Whereas David Williams became the purchaser of a portion of Lot #3 it being that portion lying west of Paint Creek supposed to contain five hundred acres and he the said David Williams having directed a deed to be made to Mattison Williams to contain two hundred acres to be the more or less and bounded as follows, beginning at two spruce pines on Laurel Branch thence with the back or patent line to Dickson Branch thence down Dickson Branch to Paint Creek to the Sweeney's line then with this line to the beginning." Most of this land is still within the Williams family.

"Lonesome Dave" and "Besty" Williams had at least eight sons and five daughters. The sons were:

- John Williams was born in Tennessee.
- Thomas Williams was born in Ohio.

The following sons were born in Virginia.

- Patrick Williams.
- Lewis Williams.
- James Williams.
- **Henry Williams.** See below.
- Allen Williams.
- Wilson Williams.

The daughters were:

- Mary Williams married first John Lafferty and then Martin Phillips.
- Sarah Williams married Moses Bradshaw.
- Margaret "Peggy" Williams married John Hale.
- Malinda Williams married Irvin Stover.
- Elizabeth Williams married Andrew Burgess.

### **Henry Williams**

Henry Williams, son of "Lonesome Dave" married Jane Stover on March 24, 1842, in Fayette County, Virginia. Jane was the daughter of John and Nancy Harper Stover. Jane was the granddaughter of Jacob and Sarah McGhee Stover. Henry and Jane lived on Clear Creek of Coal River and received land from Jane's father. Henry and Jane were probably buried at the Workman's Creek Cemetery. They were the parents of ten children:

- Ballard Williams.
- Stephen Williams.
- Nancy Williams who married Skelton Short.
- **Amos Williams.** See below.
  
- Eliza Williams married William F Workman.

- John Williams.
- Alethia Williams married Andrew Wriston.
- Sanford Williams.
- Whitten Williams.
- Alice Williams died soon after she married John R. Dunbar.

### **Amos Williams**

Amos Williams, born December 22, 1847, to Henry and Jane, found love on the other side of Spruce Mountain. Amos and Martha Louise "Mattie" Fezell were married December 31, 1873, in Raleigh County. "Mattie" came to present-day Cirtsville with her parents, William E. and Cynthia Steagall Fezell, about 1860 from Franklin County, Virginia.

In 1874, Madison Williams sold 52 acres on Paint Creek to Martha L "Mattie" Williams (Book C, Page 359). In 1888, Madison Williams sold eight acres to M. L. "Mattie" Williams (Book J, Page 275). Some of the 60 acres was divided between three of Amos's great grandchildren who are also the great-great-great-grandchildren of Madison Williams.

According to family tradition and an article in the Raleigh County, West Virginia, history book written by Jim Wood, while clearing some land in 1877, Amos found an earthen jar with gold and silver coins in it. Amos used the money to start a grocery store, which he ran for a number of years.



**Picture taken at the Amos Williams Home Place**

Left to right. Children seated are Vivian Williams, Louise "Coots" Williams, Madeline Williams, Arvella Williams, Jack Williams, and Gladys Gilliam. Seated on the porch are Amos Williams, Martha Louise "Mattie" (Fezell) Williams, and Elvira Susan Virginia (Fezell) Romine. Standing are Henry Gilliam, Margaret Gilliam, and Edgar Gilliam, Don Williams, Garnet Louise (Gilliam) Williams, Gene Williams, Nora Stevens (housekeeper for Amos and Mattie), Mary Stevens (sister to Nora Stevens), Hallie Williams, Mae Fezell, Ray Williams, Henry Williams, Paul Gilliam, Almeda (Williams) Carper, Emery Maynor (son of Joseph W. "Buck" Maynor and Mary Elizabeth (Fezell) Maynor, Minnie Jane (Williams) Gilliam, and Sidney Gilliam.

Amos and “Mattie” had children:

- Rebecca Mae Williams was born November 5, 1874. She married her first cousin Frank Feazell.

- Almedia Williams, born October 7, 1876, married John Carper on February 3, 1892. This family migrated to Promise, Oregon, in the early 1900’s.

- William “Henry” Williams was born October 12, 1878. He married Minnie Humphrey.

- Minnie “Jane” Williams was born September 11, 1880. She married Sidney M. Gilliam May 7, 1902.

- **Edgar “Ray” Williams**, son of Amos and Martha, was born August 19, 1896, at Cirtsville. Sixteen years separates Ray from his brother and sisters. As a young boy, Ray fell from the porch of his father’s grocery store and received a knot on his brow, which never went away. “Don’t slam the door” was probably the first words I remember him saying to me and the other grandchildren.

Ray married Hallie Williams on May 16, 1915, in Fayette County. Hallie was the daughter of Thomas Green Williams and Eliza Susan (Cottle) Williams. Thomas was the son of Isaac Granville Williams. (See picture on this page of Thomas Green Williams.) Granville was the son of Madison Williams, sometimes spelled Mattison in the records. Madison was the son of Andrew Williams who was the son of Jeremiah Williams.



**Thomas Green Williams  
Father of Hallie Williams**

Four children were born to Ray and Hallie:

- James Ray Williams was born June 1, 1916. He married Catherine Treadway and lived in the Kingston, Pax, and Cirtsville areas before moving to Ajo, Arizona.

- Vivian Williams, born April 10, 1920, married Jack Moore. They lived in the Pax area until her death.

- Madeline Williams born November 11, 1921, married Hosmer Scott first and Woodrow K Aliff second. She lived in the Pax area, then Logan County, before moving back to the home place at Cirtsville.

- Louise "Coots" Williams married William Pete Mobley and lived in the Mount Hope area of Fayette County.