

From: William Reid

To: J. A. & Janice Reid (E-mail); Jamie; Len; Dan Johnson; Mary Johnson; Nancy L Starr

Sent: Sun, Aug 8, 2021 9:32 am

Subject: making the case for the Warren Co Johnsons

Greetings everyone...Hope everybody is doing well. I'll warn you now...this is long!!!

A few general thoughts. The information I've presented below is the evidence I've gathered supporting the possible Reid/Johns(t)on Warren Co. Connection.

If this connection is accurate, it opens the door into the when and where for the Reids and those Johns(t)ons with known roots in the counties of Warren and Halifax.

It includes Jaime Johnson and Alan (Ira) Johnston as it is understood that their families trace back to this area but quite possibly Winfred, Dan and Clayton Johnson as well all owing to our shared number of Private Variants.

For our other matches, we may not be able to bridge the missing generation(s) for Dan, Nancy and Mary or determine if those missing generation(s) somehow trace back to the Warren/Halifax Co. NC area. Although I do feel that Nancy's ancestor, Duke Johnson and his known background puts him within arms reach of the Warren/Halifax county area and probably does link back to that area too. Once again, the Ydna would seem to support that.

Further afield are those Johnson lines that abruptly end in either Tennessee or Kentucky. What's really interesting though are the birth years for these earliest known ancestors of Dan, Winfred and to a lesser extent, Nancy.

Dan= George Johnson 1842 TN

Nancy= Duke Johnson 1818 NC (Orange/Alamance CO)

Mary= James Wilson Johnson 1825 KY

All 3 births are close enough in time to the births of JAB and William Reid (1830 and 1829 respectively) to be considered concurrent generational events.

I guess what I'm trying to get at is that in 2 out of the 3 cases, George and James's families were probably already established in their respective states (TN and KY). It's hard to imagine that both families were residents of Warren/Halifax Co; picked up and relocated in time to have these earliest known ancestors in other states. But I guess it's possible....anyone have any thoughts...?

Their presence there in those states at those times seems to imply an earlier separation from what we're calling the Warren/Halifax Johnson branch. But in some cases, our shared Private Variants would suggest otherwise. Jim and Winfred share a common ancestor 133 years ago for instance which is after all of the birth years shown above.

Jamie Johnson was kind enough to take a look for evidence on GedMatch the other day that would help verify the Haplogroup for William Johnston (Johnston Manuscript). He was able to track down a single "private user" who claimed that William Johnston (and

therefore all his descendants) were from the Haplogroup L1. While I didn't specifically mention this Haplogroup in the earlier email, it is another one of those Haplogroups that are typically associated with Scotland/Scottish ancestry.

As Jaime rightly pointed out, we are either not related to William Johnston or this private user has the wrong haplogroup designation!

If you've taken the time to even poke through that Manuscript, you'd know that there are a boat-load of William Johnson descendants out there.

Is it reasonable to assume that there should be multiple Gedmatch users who descend from William Johnston...? And that some of them are basing their claim to William Johnston on Y DNA tests and not autosomal?

I mean, if there were 4,5 GedMatch users all claiming that William Johnston's Haplogroup is L1 then we have to accept that as Gospel. We can then turn our attention to some other Johnson branch.

So I feel this is inconclusive at best. What else is new?

Warren County Reids/Johns(t)ons

DISCLAIMER: The relationships with our Reid ancestors is based on the evidence that we presently have.

As I mentioned earlier, the Reid/Johns(t)on connection had its most recent high point in Warren Co from 1830-1860. But it's possible that it existed generations before this time frame...depending on what improbable scenario you're willing to believe that my creative mind can come up with.

THE PLAYERS

Eaton Willis Reid (1778-1857) my 3x GGF, Len's 2x GGF

William Reid (1829-1908) Len's GGF, my 2x G Uncle

JAB Reid (1830-1875) my 2x GGF, Len's Great Grand Uncle

Abraham Johnston (1720-1791)

John "Jack" Pittman Johnston (1795-1884)

Mrs. Andrew Jackson Johnston (1823-1903) AKA Elizabeth C Shearin

Willis Johnston (~1832-1864)

Elizabeth Alston (1809-after 1860)

Nancy London (~1834-?)

James Harvey Johnston (1854-?)

While researching my Reid family these past several years, I started noticing both STR and BigY Johnson matches from FTDNA, several of which traced back to

Warren/Halifax Co NC. In particular, Alan (Ira) Johnston and Jaime Johnson. I began to look for any documentation that referenced Johnsons that supported these DNA testing results.

DOCUMENTATION

I have run across only 2 examples of Reids who created a Last Will and Testament during the 1800s... my 3x GGF, Eaton Willis, was one of those two.

As these things go, Eaton's will was brief. It mentioned his daughter Martha and his nephew, Thomas Reid. (they were 1st cousins) and my 2x GGF JAB. Reid.

I couldn't understand why Eaton Willis's Will (drafted and probated Jan. 1857) included a reference to a John Johnson being in possession of half of his household and kitchen furniture or who this John Johnson was. (see the attached will). I've entertained all kinds of crazy scenarios over the past several years as to why Eaton Willis might have done this and who this John Johnson might have been. Until earlier this week I had little idea as to why and who.

Now, I think I know who John Johnson was and maybe why Eaton Willis loaned him half of his household possessions.

Enter William Reid

Part of my research included trying to figure out how William Reid fit into the Reid family. Until recently I thought he was JAB Reid's half brother; having shared the same father, Eaton Willis. Now, I'm not so sure.

What made things difficult tracking William Reid's whereabouts was I couldn't find any reference to him for the first 30 years of his life. The earliest documentation the Reids have for William Reid is a receipt for goods purchased at a local Warren Co store in 1854. The bill was added to Bynum Reid's account. (think JAB Reid...his supposed half-brother)

The second reference for William Reid was the **1860 Warren Co Census report** (see attached) in which he is listed as an "Overseer" within JAB Reid's household.

Later, I would learn that William Reid (who would go on to marry Sally Robinson) named two of his sons Hunt Johnson Reid and Frank Johnson Reid. As a reminder, this is the branch that Len Reid descends from.

So, just to recap...William Reid has been persona non grata for 30 years and in 1860 became the "Overseer" in JAB Reids household...

btw...William Reid does not appear in the 1850 Warren Co census report within Eaton Willis's household.

THE BROADER JOHNSTON FAMILY

With the help of Jaime, Ancestry and FamilySearch.Org I was able to piece together what would eventually be known as Abraham Johnston's Halifax/Warren Co family. (this is hopefully the same Abraham Johnston as found on page 9 of the William Johnston manuscript)

As it relates to the Warren Co. Reids, Abraham's son Sterling Johnston (B:1770) was of most importance to me. Sterling had several sons that in time would acquire land in Eastern Warren Co and live in close proximity to where the old Reid property was located. Two of those sons were:

John Pittman Johnston

Andrew Jackson Johnston

As a result of my correspondence with Jaime Johnson, (who is the only known Johnson to date who's family traces back to Abraham Johnson...although it's safe to say Alan (Ira) Johnston also traces back to Sterling) I was able to further develop a good understanding of this branch of the Johnston family.

It got to the point though where there were too many people to keep track of and their relationship to one another, so to help me keep things sorted, I created a series of maps.

The first map is actually from the Warren Co Govt. website. It is a GIS map. It is entitled, **reid cemetery and homestead adjoining johnsons and newell properties. (see attached)** How's that for originality...?

This is pretty cool stuff...In the map you can see the original configuration of the Reid property. The property is bisected by Jesse Shearin Rd.(the text of which is hard to make out). The property remained in Reid hands from about 1818 to the 1960s. The only thing remaining in the Reid name is the Reid cemetery which is a separate legal property.

On the Eastern flank of the Reid land was the property of Andrew Jackson Johnston (B: 1822). If you read Eaton Willis's will, he specifically mentions Mrs Andrew Jackson (A J) Johnston as living next to the Reid property. Andrew Jackson Johnston died two years before Eaton in 1855.

Both the map and the will were nice pieces of evidence as they helped me visualize/understand just how close the Reids and Johnstons lived to each other. (btw, Andrew Jackson Johnston was a son of Sterling Johnston and his 2nd wife.)

Upon looking at the same **1860 Warren Co Census report** more recently, I made what I consider to be another important discovery. (at least to my way of thinking). JAB Reid's family is listed on page 70 of the report.

It was while searching through the pages adjacent to page 70 that I realized on page 69 of the same report there was a listing for John Pittman Johnston and family. John Johnston's family continues on to page 70 at the top. The very next family on page 70 is JAB Reid (William) and family.

John Pittman Johnston also lived further down Jesse Shearin Rd just beyond A J Johnston and was Eaton's neighbor. Further research indicated that his property was East of Eaton's (see **Warren Halifax Co map** attached).

This is a super important map as it illustrates not only the location of the Reids, Mrs AJ Johnston, and John Pittman Johnston properties but also John's father Sterling's homestead in neighboring Halifax Co. and it gives you an idea where the Henry Alston family lived to the South in Warren Co; the importance of which I'll touch on in a moment. John Johnston and Andrew Jackson Johnston are half brothers and basically lived alongside each other.

The Federal government revamped that 1860 census by adding 2 columns related to the value of personal estate and value of real estate. Take a moment and compare the values found for both John P Johnston and JAB Reid.

I'll save you the time looking up what \$45,000 in personal value would be worth in today's money....1.47 million. JAB Reid's \$300 would be less than \$10K.

David and Goliath here folks...! I think that's important to the overall dynamic.

But in the late 1820s/early 1830s, John Pittman Johnston was dealing with Eaton Willis Read who probably had even less money than his son and could exact his influence upon him.

I believe that the John Johnston that Eaton was referring to in his will was John Pittman Johnston. I have searched for other possible candidates but have not found one.

But this doesn't answer the why!

Furthermore, I'm inclined to believe that it was John Pittman Johnston that had a relationship with Eaton Willis's 2nd wife, Harriet Newell Read, the result of which produced William Reid. Recall that Len mentioned earlier the family rumor that his GGF William Read was really a Johnson and then adopted into a Reid household. I've shown evidence supporting that idea here.

Maybe, Eaton acting out of some moral sense of obligation, provided William Read half of his household belongings (or maybe he received an ultimatum from John Pittman Johnston to provide William with such) and those items were kept somewhere on John Johnson's property.

Eaton Willis would not permit his wife's love child in his house. This very well may explain why William's whereabouts are unaccounted for for nearly 30 years. Only after Eaton Willis's death in 1857 does William take his place in JAB Reid's household.

JOHN P JOHNSTON/ALSTON CONNECTION...?

Alan (Ira) Johnston's earliest known ancestor is Willis Johnston (B:1832). Willis is Alan's 3x GGF.

Willis's mother was Elizabeth G Alston (B: 1810). Willis and Elizabeth were born in the Fishing Creek District of Warren County which is located just south of where the Reids and Johnstons lived. Just for the sake of discussion, Elizabeth's father was Col. Henry Alston (B:1780).

Elizabeth Alston had Willis out of wedlock to an FNU Johnston. She was about 22 years old.

I searched for both marriage and Bastardy Bonds in Warren and Halifax counties. No such document exists.

Col. Henry Alston was a very wealthy person...as were all the Alstons in Warren Co. From a Socio-economic perspective, whoever this Johnston was that had the relationship with Elizabeth Alston, he was dealing with someone who was more than his equal.

THE EVIDENCE POINTING TO A JOHNSTON

Some time after Willis Johnston was born (1832), Col. Henry Alston and family moved to Lumpkin Co. GA. He and his family appear in the 1840-1860 censuses for the county.

In the 1850 census, Elizabeth and Willis (who is 18 years of age at this point) are listed as part of Henry Alstons household. Elizabeth is specifically referred to as Elizabeth Alston.

Around 1852, Willis married Nancy London and in 1853 their first child was born. His name was James Harvey Johnston (Alan's 2x GGF).

What's interesting about the name is that John Pittman Johnston's wife's maiden name is Harvey. Coincidence? or was Elizabeth trying to make a point?

In the 1860 census, Henry Alston is again listed with his family (his first wife died during the past 10 years and he remarried) but Elizabeth is listed separately from her father and her name is shown as Elizabeth Johnston.

Lastly, Henry died in 1861 and in his Will bequeaths a slave woman to his daughter, Elizabeth Johnston. Willis volunteered for the War but contracted an illness and succumbed to it in 1862.

So, this evidence is much more circumstantial and if we didn't have the Y dna proof it would be a stretch. But we have the Y dna and for that reason we can say with almost certainty that the same Johnston branch was responsible for producing Willis Johnston. Who are the suspects? Well, for my money I'd say John Pittman Johnston, John was 37 years old in 1832, Elizabeth, 22 years old. John's half brother, Andrew Jackson was only 10 years old so I think he could be eliminated from consideration.

And there ya go boys and girls....you are up to date as to what I believe to be the Reid/Johnston connection in Warren Co. NC.