

Joseph Wilson (c. 1790-1856)

In 1783 there were 4 counties in what is now TN: Davidson, Washington, Robertson and Sullivan. Previously the whole area had been considered a part of North Carolina. When TN became a state in 1796, the area now called Overton County was a part of Sumner County; it was part of Smith County from 1799 and Jackson County from 1801. Overton County itself was established in 1806 and at one time included part of the territory that eventually became Fentress, Clay, Pickett, and Putnam counties. Fentress County was created in 1823. Much of the area had been in the hands of the Cherokees up to that time, for whom it was a winter hunting ground. Many of the early records of these counties have been partially or entirely destroyed. Since 1837 the county seat of Overton has been Livingston. The Overton County courthouse was burned in April of 1865 and most of the records were lost. The county seat of Fentress is Jamestown. The Fentress County records were destroyed in 1904.

To summarize:

1793 Overton area in Sumner Co. North Carolina

1796 Overton area in Sumner Co. Tennessee

1799 Overton area in Smith Co.

1801 Overton area in Jackson Co.

1806 Overton Co. est. (areas now in Fentress, Clay, Pickett, Putnam and Overton)

1823 Fentress Co. established.

1837 Livingston becomes county seat of Overton.

1865 Overton Co. courthouse burned.

1904 Fentress Co. records destroyed.

1790

I have suggested that Joseph Wilson is the son of John “the Patriarch” Wilson (c. 1756 to 1836) based on circumstantial geographical, chronological “fit” plus similarity of names of family and associates.¹ Joseph was born between 1790 and 1800,² apparently in NC.³

¹ See notes on John the Patriarch.

² The 1830 Fentress Co., Dist. 9 Census lists Joseph Wilson as 30-40 years old, thus b. between 1790 and 1800. The 1840 Fentress County, TN Census lists Joseph “Wilson” as age 40-49, thus b. between 1791 and 1800. The 1850 Overton County census lists his age of 50—thus b. 1800. But this latter information may have come from his 2nd wife Fanny, who didn’t know where he was born and may not have known his exact age.

³ Arcenia Wilson Atkinson, Joseph’s daughter, says in the 1880 Fentress County census that her father was b. in NC. Berry Wilson, Joseph’s son, says the same in the same census. In the same census Moses’ father is listed as b. SC—apparently a mistake for NC. John the Patriarch seems to have been living either in Greene County or Robertson County during the decade 1790 to 1800. Either of these would have been considered a part of NC until 1796 when TN was made a state.

Since TN was considered a part of NC until 1796, his birthplace, perhaps Greene County, would likely be listed as NC if he was b. before that year.⁴

A series of land records provide what appears to be a link between Joseph and Moses Wilson and John Wilson the Patriarch. Note the following:

1. In 1810 William Harp (Earp) has land “on both sides of Piles Turnpike Road on the mountain [Buck Mountain?] and at the divide between the waters of Clear Fork and Obeys River.”⁵ The divide runs N-S approximately along the modern York Highway (Highway 127). This places William Earp in the same general area as the Wilsons of Glenobey and Bill’s Creek.
2. In 1813 John Cook has 13 acres “on the waters of Obeys River and on Piles Turnpike Road.” The chain carriers for the survey of this land are William Earp (Harp) and Archibald Hays.⁶ On Oct. 25, 1825 this land was assigned by John Cook to Robert Wilson. This shows geographical ties between Archibald Hays (almost certainly Celia Hays’ father, thus Moses Wilson’s father-in-law), William Earp/Harp, and Robert Wilson (Joseph Wilson’s brother, or, more likely, cousin).
3. William Lee: William appears in the 1820 Jackson County Census. He served in the War of 1812 in Captain Moses Davis' Company, under General Daugherty. He appears to have left Fentress County and immigrated to MO in the 1840s where he became a judge.⁷ The names of William Lee’s children, given in the Newton County, Shoal Creek, MO census of 1850 (shown below), make the association with the Wilsons very likely: *Abner* (30, b. TN), *Wilson* (28, b. TN), *James* (16, b. TN), *Houston* (13, b. TN) and *Luke* (11, b. TN). Wilson Lee has a son named John Wilson Lee (b. 1867). William and his wife were b. NC; this fits with the Wilson-Lee chronology.

⁴ See section on John the Patriarch for connections with the Wilsons of Maryland, VA, East TN, and Middle TN. There was a Joseph Wilson among the earliest settlers in Sumner County and an “Archie Wilson” who was killed in the battle at Zeigler’s Station in 1792. Only Joseph and a 12 year old son escaped; his wife and six children (one named Moses) were captured by the Indians. The similarity of names and the chronological and geographical “fit” are worth further study though at this point no connections with this family have been made. If there are connections, this Joseph would be from a generation earlier than “our” Joseph. Note also the following: A John Wilson received a large Revolutionary War land grant in KY, assigned to his son John, Jr. in 1783. He had served for 3 years as an officer in the VA Continental Line. A connection has not been established, however.

See: <http://apps.sos.ky.gov/land/military/revwar/> and <http://www.sumnertn.org/archives/Stockmarksandbrands.htm>

⁵ Overton County Survey Entry 734, Oct. 22, 1810. Piles Turnpike: Conrad Pyle opened a turnpike about the year 1820. It crossed Morgan and Fentress Counties, probably along the old Tennessee Path, and intersected the Gordon Road at or near Monroe, in Overton County.

⁶ S#750 4-1-1813. E#1447 Feb. 1, 1813, recorded 7/8/1813

⁷ Source: <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=:50751&id=I5757386>

570	570	William Lee	60 7/8	James	600	W. Lee
		Elizabeth	53 1/2			
		Abner	51 7/8	James	100	James
		Wilson	38			
		William	19			
		James	16			
		Marston	13			
		Lyle	11			
		Maryanna Delett	11 1/2			Bliss

4. The *Fentress County Entry Book* (#566; April 27, 1831) records 14 acres for William Lee. We know that Abner Lee, partner of John Wilson (whom we suggest is the Patriarch) in Jackson County, had a son William, b. 1801 in Jackson County. William Lee is listed as a head of household in the 1820 Jackson County Census. This William (b. 1790; thus contemporary with Joseph Wilson) named his first son Abner and his second Wilson (according to the 1850 Census). The land mentioned in the 1831 Entry Book seems to be very near some of the Wilsons in Fentress County: The line of the tract is described “Early Albertson line . . . inc . . . the Wilson Tract originally taken by virtue of a warrant in the name of Cook.” Thus it is the same parcel as described above, now in Fentress County (est 1823). This record ties the land mentioned above to a son of Abner Lee (if both William Lees are the same person; the conflicting dates of birth are a problem)—and thus provides strong circumstantial evidence that the association of Abner Lee and John Wilson the Patriarch in Jackson County is continued with their sons (?) William Lee and Richard (and presumably Joseph) in Overton/Fentress County.



The cabin of Conrad Pile

5. The 1820 Overton County Census has a John Wilson and Conrad Pile on the same page (7). This is probably the area around Pall Mall near where Pile lived. On another page in the same census we find Robert Wilson, Jesse Wilson, William Wilson, Early Albertson, “Zoral” Stephens” (married, we think, to Celia Hays Wilson’s aunt), George Beaty (married to Joseph Wilson’s sister). This is likely the Poplar Cove/Boatland area.

The following may have been Joseph’s siblings or close relatives:

1. Robert Wilson, b. 1785 in VA, d. between 1850-1860.⁸
2. Jesse Wilson, b. 1788 in NC.⁹

⁸ Based on information in the 1850 census.

⁹ Not a sibling; Jesse Wilson’s father was named Moses.

3. Lydia Ann Wilson, b. about 1789 in NC (thus possibly TN), d. between 1837-1840 in Fentress County, TN.
4. John, Jr. or "Dee" Wilson, b. about 1780 in NC (thus possibly TN), d. between 1825 and 1830 in Overton County, TN.
5. William Wilson, b. 1802 in TN, d. after 1853 in MO.
6. Andrew Wilson, b. 1805 in TN.
7. Jacob Wilson, b. 1813 in TN, d. after 1880.

JACKSON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

1790-1807

If Joseph's siblings included some or all of those listed above, it seems probable that the family was in Jackson County by 1802, about the time the county was formed.¹⁰ Several related events occurred about this time, including the marriages of John Dee (1805 or 1806), Robert (1807), and Lydia Ann (1809). Large tracts of land in Overton County were sold by a John Wilson in 1807—likely the Patriarch. In 1808 Moses (not yet identified, but might be “our” Moses’ namesake) and Jesse Wilson surveyed land in Overton County. Jesse was married in the same year.¹¹

Lydia Ann Wilson's husband George Beaty (b. 1785) was born and raised in PA, then NC. He and his brothers settled along the East fork of the Obey River near Boatland around 1800-1810.¹² The Beatys became a prominent family in the area. In 1806 the area where they had settled became a part of Overton County, and in 1823, a part of Fentress County.

1809

Lydia and George were said to have married in 1809 in Overton County. They were to become the parents of “Tinker Dave Beaty” of Civil War fame. If Lydia is indeed John the Patriarch's daughter, she was living close enough to the Beatys at this time to facilitate meeting and marrying George.¹³ We know that a John Wilson owned land before 1807 (the year he is recorded as selling it) about six miles northwest of Boatland on the Obey River of the Cumberland.¹⁴ And the 1820 Overton Census mentioned above shows that several of the Wilsons were living near George Beaty in that year.

¹⁰ See documentation under John the Patriarch.

¹¹ If Lydia Ann Wilson Beaty (c. 1789-btw 1837-43) is Joseph Wilson's sister (see below) and if she was indeed born in Glenobey, TN in 1798, as some have claimed (Jill Franklin Hicks, *Our Beaty Ancestors* (Muncie, IN), p. 10), then it would follow that Joseph's father settled in what became Fentress County, TN while it was still Indian territory. Lydia Ann was indeed born between 1790 and 1800, according to the 1830 Fentress County census. It is hardly possible that she was born in the Glenobey/Boatland area, however. This area was Indian land until 1803 when it became part of Jackson County. She was rather probably born in the same place Joseph was, i.e. wherever the family was located prior to its move to Jackson County.

¹² <http://www.jackmasters.net/beaty.html>

¹³ See a discussion of this land in section on John the Patriarch.

¹⁴ George Beaty appears in the 1840 Fentress Co. Census: 02001001/011. He is thus 50-60 years old, and his spouse seems no longer to be living. He later married Betsy Hays (b. 1798). “Geo.” and “Betsy Baty” appear in the 1850 District 1, Fentress Co. Census. He is 65, born in PA; she is 52, born in TN. They have 3 children. Living next to them is [Andrew] Jackson Stephens. Jackson Stephens appears another time in the same census in District 2. Living with him in this reference is “Rule Hays” 16 years old; son of Jackson's great aunt Susan Hays. Jackson Stephens' wife is Charlotte Beaty, Lydia Ann Wilson Beaty's daughter. There is some Hays-Wilson-Beaty web here, but I'm still uncertain as to its entire nature.

Joseph later bought land in the Boatland/Glenobey area adjacent to the Beaty family. It is entirely plausible that in doing this he was acquiring a tract near the home of his sister Lydia. George and Lydia Ann are buried in the Lacy Cemetery, a very short distance from the site of Joseph Wilson's land in Fentress County, 1 mile SE of Boatland.¹⁵

*Graves of Lydia Ann Wilson and George Beaty
in the Lacy Cemetery, near Boatland, Fentress County*



1810

Joseph is said to have married in 1810 in what was then Overton County, TN, but later Fentress County. Some traditions say his wife was named Mary or Martha Love (b. 1787, Wilson County, TN; said to have d. 1831);¹⁶ others say her name was Elizabeth. He seems to have been married two and probably three times, so both names may be correct. Unfortunately, 1810 census figures for the area are non-existent. There is an 8 year gap between Joseph's first child, Arcenia (1811) and his second, Moses (1819). This may indicate a first marriage in 1810 and a second marriage around 1818. If the tradition is correct that Arcenia was born in the "Martha Washington Community" in what became Fentress County in 1843¹⁷ we would need to place Joseph in this area by 1810, but for various reasons this birthplace is doubtful.¹⁸

Joseph's other children were born after 1818: Moses (1819), Naomi (1820), Berry (1821), Jesse (1822) and George (1823). Given the fact that Joseph can be documented in Jackson County in 1812 (see below), Arcenia would likely have been born there rather than in Fentress County—if her birth date as recorded is correct. It may be significant that Joseph named a son by his second or third wife Fanny, b. 1838, Lewis—the name of Arcenia's husband.¹⁹

¹⁵ The following document from Overton County may be relevant if it refers to a brother or close relative of John Wilson the Patriarch: "Power of Attorney John Love to George Wilson 700 Acres, Tract granted by John Love to George Wilson of Bourbon County, State of Kentucky Jun 1791, on the south side of hinkstow fork a branch of hickory which tract of land was patented to the said Dirty. Reg. Feb 20, 1809. John Love (seal). B. Totten, clk. Wit. Thos. M. Connell, B. Totten."¹⁵ So far no connection between this Wilson and this Love can be made beyond the business arrangement, though it does suggest a "Love" owned property in Overton County at the same time as did the family of John the Patriarch.

¹⁶ But see <http://www.jenforum.net/wilson/messages/12208.html> which seems to show this Martha Love is the wife of a different Joseph Wilson, who was a "lunatic."

¹⁷ This community is located near Clarkrange and Highway 127 in an area where Joseph owned considerable land in the 1830s and probably earlier (see below). One of the roads in this community is called "Wilson Road" today.

¹⁸ <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=SHOW&db=bruceyork&recno=250049>

¹⁹ Note also that she and her husband named one of their sons, b. 1841, Francis Marion. One source says her full name was Rachel Arcenia Wilson: <http://searches2.rootsweb.com/th/read/TNFENTRE/2000-03/0952797005> Named for her aunt Rachel Wilson Copeland?

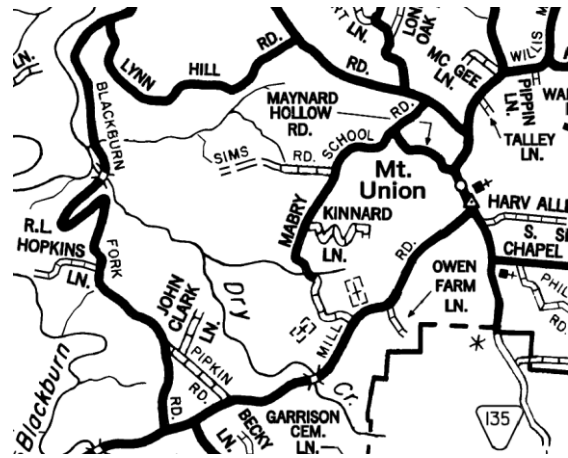
1810-11

There is a fascinating, but unfortunately undated, reference to Joseph's children Arcenia and Berry in the *Autobiography of A. E. Wright*.²⁰ Their names appear in a long list of persons baptized by immersion by this Methodist preacher. The mode may indicate that they were adults at the time of their baptism. Lydia Beaty, another daughter, appears on the list as baptized by pouring (as an adult). William Lee is also on the list of adult pourings, as are many other Beatys, Yorks, Stephens, Choates, etc.—all members of the same community as the Fentress County Wilsons. Wright was b. 1826 near where the Wilsons lived and most of the baptisms listed above probably occurred in the 1840's or even later, after the Civil War.

Location of Joseph Wilson's land in Jackson County. Note "Kinnard Lane" near Dry Creek of Blackburn Fork. This is probably the exact location.

1812

Joseph was living in Jackson County in 1812, the year in which he sold the land where he was living to Burkett Kinnard [Kinnard].²¹ The deed notes "15 acres . . . water of Roaring River . . . to include where Joseph Wilson now lives. 12 Nov 1812." Modern maps show a "Kinnard Lane" just north of Dry Creek and east of the confluence of Dry Creek and Blackburn Fork, near Highway 135. This must mark the location of Joseph's land, situated in Jackson County between modern highways 56 and 111, a mile or so west of the town of Mount Union and the present Putnam and Overton County lines. He would have been 22 years old at the time.²²



²⁰ J. C. Wright, *Autobiography of Rev. A. B. Wright of Holston Conference, M.E. Church, Prepared by his son, Rev. J.C. Wright* (1896: Cranston & Curts, Cincinnati), p. 425.

²¹ "Beket Kinnard" appears in the Jackson County, TN Census for 1830, as does Abner Lee, further possible corroboration that the John Wilson who partnered with Abner Lee in Jackson County was the father of Joseph (see in Lee notes), who thus had some relationship with Kinnard in Jackson County.

²² *Building Neighborhoods, from Early Land Records of Tennessee, Jackson County, TN:* 28 19 9424. Kinnard bought several tracts in this area on Roaring River during 1812, 1813, and beyond:

1. In 1812 (Nov 12) Berket Kinnard gets 27 acs "on the west fork of Roaring R . . . adj John Richmond . . . to incl John Clair's old improvement." "West Fork"=Blackburn's Fork.
2. In the same year (Nov 12), he gets 60 acs "Blackburn's F of Roaring R . . . above spring formerly used by Thomas Wilkerson . . . to inclu said Wilkerson's old improvement."
3. In 1813 he gets 20 acs "Blackburn's fork of Roaring R ... near Benjamin Blackburn's 134 ac tract"

"BLACKBURN, BENJAMIN, postmaster of Blackburn Springs, 1806-18; settled at the head of Blackburn Fork of Roaring River about 1798; built a house near the Fort Blount branch road, west of the Cherokee Line in Mero District,

1816

Joseph Wilson is said to appear in the tax records of Jackson County, TN, paying taxes there on May 9, 1816 (at the age of 26) and again on February 26, 1819.²³ If this is correct, it probably means he continued to reside there from 1812 to 1819.

1819

There is a reference to “a small field called Joseph Wilson’s” located on the “Dry branch of Roaring River” in a deed of Alexander Rutledge dated February 25, 1819.²⁴ This reference suggests but does not prove that the field no longer belongs to Joseph. This “Dry Branch of Roaring River” seems to be the Dry Creek on the accompanying map, the same property, or a portion there of, that Joseph sold to Kinnard in 1812.

1820

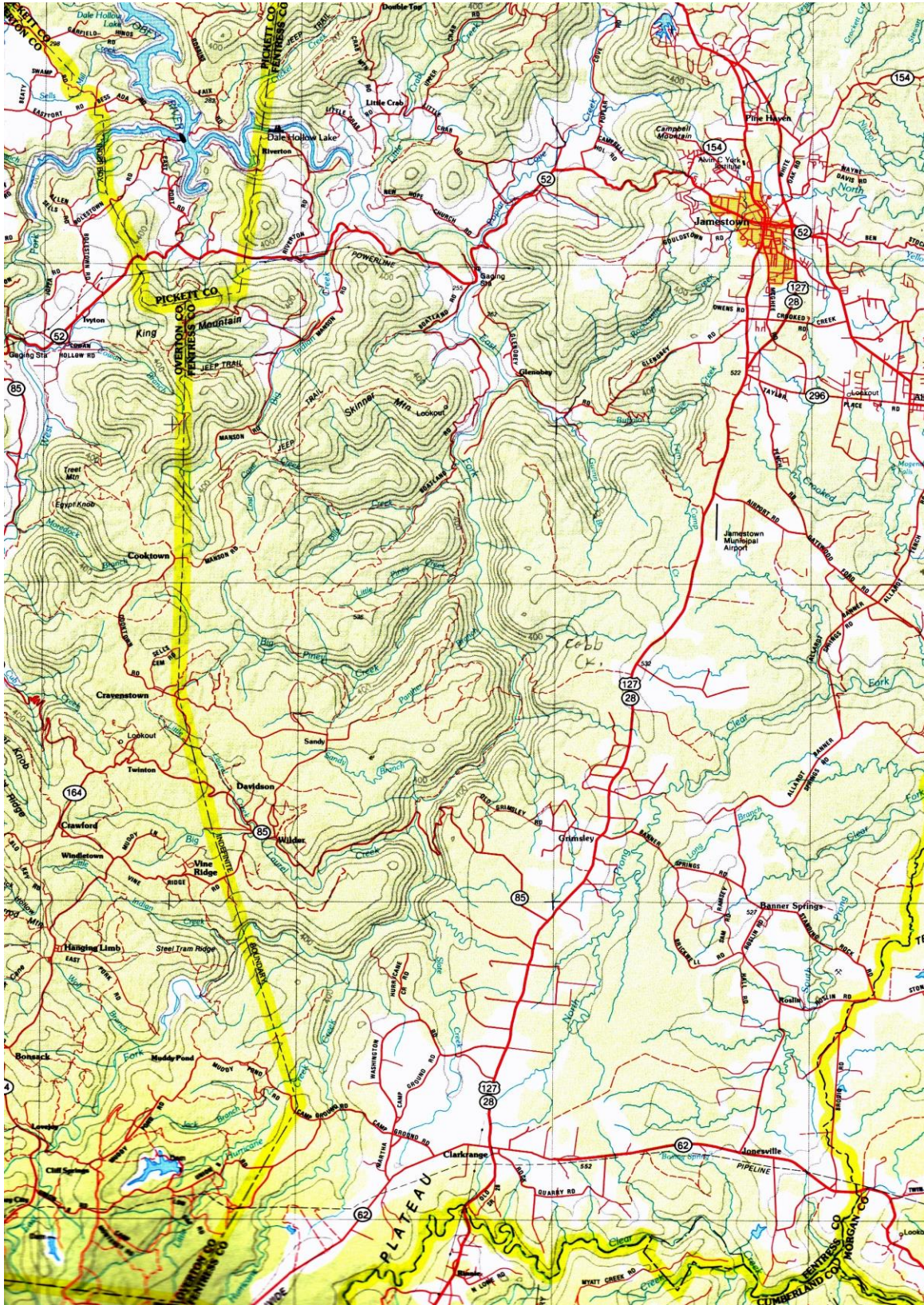
If Joseph was still residing in Jackson County in 1820 we could conclude that the children listed above were all born there. Unfortunately Joseph does not appear in the 1820 Census in either Overton or Jackson Counties. He may have been missed, or he may not have fully established his own household yet, being “in transit” in the year of the census. There are a number of Wilsons listed in the 1820 Census for both Jackson and Overton and some of these are no doubt Joseph’s relatives (see elsewhere).

where he and his wife operated an ordinary for several years, during which time they entertained, among other notable guests, Bishop Francis Asbury, of the Methodist Church.”

²³ <http://www.covingtonwilson.com/d3458.html#P3458> and <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=bruceyork&id=I9922&style=TEXT>

²⁴ Deed 31 320 20795, Alexander Rutledge, 5 acres. Several deeds are documented in the Jackson County Deed Book for land belonging to an Alexander Rutledge on the north side of Roaring River near a Thomas Gore in 1813-16. <http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/GORE/2004-07/1090361055>. Alexander Rutledge appears in the 1820 Jackson County Census.

FENTRESS COUNTY, TENNESSEE



1823

Fentress County was formed in 1823 from lands in the eastern part of Overton County in addition to parts of Morgan, and White counties. Two additional sons, George and Henry, were b. to Joseph about this time.

In about 1825 Mark Twain's father, John M. Clemens and his wife Jane Lampton Clemens, moved to Gainesboro in Jackson County, and in 1827 to Jamestown, Fentress County. Clemens served as an attorney, circuit court clerk, and county commissioner. According to Samuel Clemens his brother Orion was b. in Jamestown in 1825. John Clemens was postmaster in Pall Mall 1832-1835 when he moved the family to MO where his son Samuel (Mark Twain) was born in 1835. The Clemens family owned land in Fentress County for many years, and Clemens signed several of the land deeds. There seems to be little question that the Wilsons (and probably the Hays) and the Clemens would have known each other.

Celia Hays was b. in 1827, and was thus very nearly contemporary with Mark Twain's brother Orion Clemens. William Hays, whom I have suggested is Celia's grandfather, is listed in the 1830 Fentress County Censes (aged 60-70), living next door to Thomas Stephens and his spouse (both aged 80-90). It seems plausible that Thomas Stephens is the father of Zorobabel Stephens, who married Susannah Hays, the daughter of William Hays (see discussion of the Stephens regarding Celia's Native American roots.) John M. Clemens appears on the same page as the Hays and Stephens families in the 1830 Census, indicating that his family and theirs' were neighbors at that time.

Mark Twain's impression of the citizens of Fentress County, and thus presumably of the Wilsons and Hays in the 1820's is found in his autobiographical notes about his brother Orion: "Orion's boyhood was spent in that little log hamlet of Jamestown up there among the 'knobs'—so called—of east Tennessee, among a very sparse population of primitives who were as ignorant of the outside world and as unconscious of it as were the other wild animals that inhabited the forest around."

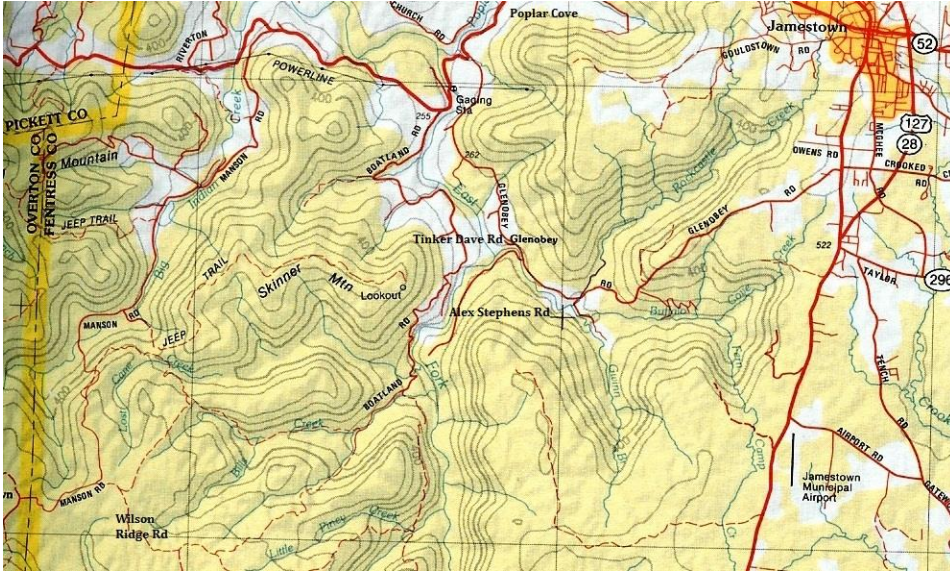
1826

Joseph is definitely documented in Fentress County in 1826. In January of 1826 a tract belonging to William Robertson²⁵ is described as being located on "Clear Fork . . . E of Joseph Wilson tract."²⁶ A family tradition claims that "Joseph Wilson had a track of land

²⁵ William Robertson's name appears on the roster of the 1st Regiment of Col. Edward Bradley's TN Volunteer Militia (Infantry), Capt. John Kennedy's Company, War of 1812. This group, raised in Monroe, TN, were in service from 4 October 1813 to 28 December, 1813. Several Beatys and Copelands are in the roster. Source: <http://www.rootsweb.com/~tnoverto/docs/1812war.htm>

²⁶ Wanda Sewell Hatfield, *Entry Books of Fentress County, Tennessee Volumes A, B, & C 1824-1901* (Signal Mountain, TN: Mountain Press, 1990), Entry # 179, dated 1/16/26. The Clear Fork rises on the Cumberland Plateau in southern Fentress County. It is composed of two major components, the North Prong and the South Prong, and numerous smaller tributaries. The North Prong drains an area adjacent to and east of U.S. Highway 127. The South Prong is slightly further east; it and its tributaries form an important portion of the border between Fentress County and

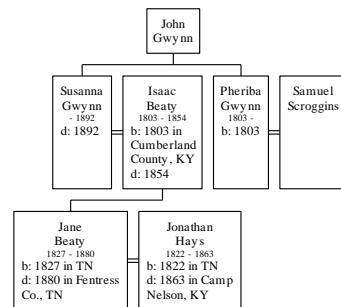
on the south side of Clear Creek [Clear Fork?] that was apparently divided among his children.”²⁷ This seems to be describing land in the Martha Washington-Clarkrange area in the southern part of the county. Note that this is the area identified by the family of Arcenia Wilson as being where she originated (see above).



*Note on the map at left
Wilson Ridge
Road,
Boatland
Road, Bills
Creek, Alex
Stephens
Road and
Tinker Dave
Road*

But in August, 1826, Samuel Scroggins registered land located on the “East Fork of Oby . . . NW boundary of a farm occupied by Joseph Willson.”²⁸ This seems to describe land near Boatland/Glenobey, where we know Joseph lived at some point (see below). Samuel Scroggins was married to Pheriba Gwynn (b. 1803), whose sister Susanna was married to Isaac Beaty.²⁹ A daughter of Isaac and Susanna, married Jonathan Hays, Celia Hays Wilson’s (daughter-in-law of Joseph, wife of Moses) brother.³⁰ “Gwynn Branch” feeds into

Descendants of John Gwynn



Morgan County. Modern maps of Clarkrange have a “Clear Fork Road” E of Highway 127 that becomes Martha Washington Road W of the highway; Wilson Road leads N off of Martha Washington Road. Thus Joseph’s land appears to be W of Highway 127 where the roads are now located.

²⁷ Linda Wilson: covingt@ix.netcom.com; <http://www.tngenweb.org/cumberland/queries/cumbq-97.htm>

²⁸ Hatfield, Entry #250, dated 8/18/26. The Clear Fork on modern maps is 5 or 6 miles east of the East Fork of the Oby, across Highway 127, and is not a tributary of the Oby. See also <http://wc.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=bruceyork&id=I9925>

²⁹ A deed dated 1839 has Isaac as a neighbor of Joseph Wilson (see below).

³⁰ Five of Isaac and Susanna’s sons died in service (Union) during the Civil War. <http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~bp2000/fentress/isaac.htm>

Buffalo Cove Creek just east of Joseph Wilson’s lands. Thus we see the complex interactions between the Beaty, Wilson, and Hays families in Fentress County.³¹ In the same year (1826), John Wilson is living on Hurricane Creek near Isaac Taylor’s 6 acre tract (Entry 221).

Approximate location of Joseph Wilson’s land near Boatland.

1828

Joseph purchased 50 acres “lying on the Waters of Bills Creek at the first forks of the Creek above East Fork of Obids River” on February 12, 1828...”³² This land is easily located. It is very near the farm of his sister and brother-in-law, Lydia Ann Wilson and George Beaty (see photograph), some miles north of Joseph’s land at Clarkrange.



The land is *very* isolated, far back in the mountains. It is very near a tract used in 1817 by Davey Crockett for hunting, the remains of whose cabin are said to still be seen there.

1829

In April, 1829, two of Joseph’s brothers, John Wilson and William Wilson, along with Zorababel Stephens (Celia Hays Wilson’s uncle-in-law), partnered in entering 50 acres on the East Fork, “inc coal bank on East side of river.”³³

1830

George Beaty			2	2		1				2	1	1	1	
Sally Franklin	2									1	1	1	1	
John Beaty			1			1				1	1	1	1	1
Joseph Wilson	3	2				1				1	1	1	1	

³¹ John Willson appears in the *Fentress County Entry Book* twice in 1826 (4/26)—once for 50 acres “waters of Graham’s Creek”, and once for 25 acres “Hurricane Creek . . . where said Willson now lives.” Hurricane Creek is a tributary of the East Fork of the Obey, a short distance (6-8 miles) SW of Cobb Creek. This is probably Joseph’s brother.

³² Hatfield, Entry # 340, dated 2/12/28.

³³ Fentress County Entry Book #426.

The 1830 Fentress County Census lists Joseph Wilson and his spouse, both 30-39 years old.³⁴

1. 3 sons under 5 (George, William Henry, Jesse)
2. 2 sons 5-9 (Berry, Moses)
3. 1 female 5-9 (Naomi?)
4. 1 female 10-14 (Arcenia?)

The family is listed as living quite close to George and Lydia Ann Wilson Beaty and to John Beaty. This suggests they are actually living on Bill's Creek at this time, rather than the Clarkrange location. The map above locates an "Alex Stephens Rd" between Tinker Dave Beaty Road and Wilson Ridge Road. Alexander Stephens was the son of George Washington Stephens, who was the son of Burton Stephens and the grandson of Zorabable and Susanna Hays Stephens. This seems to point to the fact that the Beattys, the Stephens, and the family of Joseph Wilson were close neighbors living along what is now known as Boatland Road.

Joseph's first (or second) wife seems to have died in 1830 or 1831, just after the census, leaving him a widower with 7 children. Note that the last child of this marriage, Henry, was born in 1825.

1831

Something of the historical context in Fentress County can be seen in an article first appearing in the *Nashville Herald* and reprinted in the *Salem (Massachusetts) Gazette*, dated 8/12/1831 (Vol. IX, Issue 64, p.2) entitled "Witchcraft" (see appendix).

1832

Around 1832 Joseph married a much younger woman named "Fanny" (Frances Key). She would have been about 18 or 19 years old, about the same age as his oldest children, and he about 42 years old. There are many Keys buried in the Choate Cemetery in the immediate vicinity of Joseph Wilson's Boatland area land, so we may presume that Fanny was a neighbor girl who caught his eye. She was most likely a member of the Key family who had come from VA and settled around the Clarkrange area about 1810. According to later census information, Fanny was born about 1814 in VA. Joseph and Fanny had 6 children in the 1830's and 1840's, all apparently born in Fentress County:³⁵

³⁴The younger John Wilson (30-40) lives very near Austin Choat, who was involved in land acquisition with Joseph Wilson (see below), and also near William Beaty and David Beaty. The older John Wilson (50-60), likely Joseph's brother, also lives near several Choats. He has 11 children in his household, many quite young, and the oldest woman (his spouse?) is 40-50. There are also 4 slaves, making a household total of 17!

³⁵ She is named, as are the children, in the 1850 Census (see below). Notice, however, that Joseph's children by Fanny are all said to be born in Overton County. The birth place indicated may be incorrect; there is no reason to think they had moved from Fentress County, and reason to think they had not (see below).

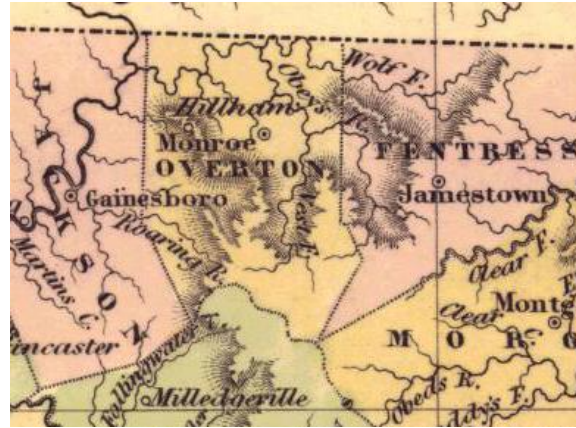
1. Elizabeth, born 1833 (named for Joseph's first wife?)
2. William H., born 1833³⁶
3. Nancy, born 1835
4. Sarah, born 1837
5. Lewis, born 1838³⁷ (named for Arcenia's husband, Lewis Atkinson?)
6. Edward, born 1840

1833

Joseph Wilson is listed on the 1833 Fentress County Tax list along with John, Reuben, Robert, and William Wilson. William is conceivably Joseph's eldest son or (more likely) his brother, Robert his brother, and John a relative of some sort.³⁸

A son born supposedly born in this year was named William Hayes Wilson, suggesting a connection with the Hayes family, from which came Moses Wilson's spouse, Celia Hayes. Documentation for this person has not yet been found (see appendix on Joseph's children).

*East and West Forks, Obey's River,
Fentress and Overton Counties*



The 1833 “enumeration of the free male inhabitants of Fentress County” has Robt' Wilson, Will Wilson, Joseph Wilson, and John Wilson. As noted elsewhere, John the husband of Rachel Copeland, was apparently dead by this time, so the John who is listed seems to be the “other” younger John (see discussion under Patriarch).

1834

Joseph was involved in some major land acquisitions in 1834. On October 23, he and Austin Choate³⁹ purchased 500 acres on the “. . . waters of Cobb Creek . . . East Fork . .

³⁶ William Hayes Wilson served in the Confederate Army.
Source: <http://www.tennessee.gov/tsla/history/military/pen278.htm>

³⁷ This may be the Lewis Wilson mentioned on a death list in Davidson County in 1912.

³⁸ <http://www.rootsweb.com/~tnfentre/docs/1833tw.htm>

³⁹ This is probably the Austin Choate, b. 1786, Ludenberg, Pittsylvania County, VA (<http://wc.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=jk4&id=I3661>), or the one of the same name b. 1795 in NC (d. 1847) (<http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~bp2000/jeremiah.htm>). In the 1820 Fentress County Census Austin lives among Stephens, Wilsons and Beatys. A son, Austin Burger Choate (b. 1815) was a member of Tinker Dave Beaty's band, and thus belonged to Moses Wilson's generation. His death notice appeared in a local newspaper: “Austin Choate, a former Union soldier, well known in this county, died suddenly last Monday night. He was about 60 years of age.” Source: <http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/CHOATE/2001-01/0979765158>

.”⁴⁰ Cobb Creek enters the East Fork from the east, about five miles south of Boatland/Glenobey. It crosses Highway 28 (127) about 10 miles south of Jamestown and lies about half way between Boatland and the Martha Washington Community. In the same year he purchased 500 acres on the East Fork of the Obey River, located “W line of old Houser tract on what is now called Three Springs.”⁴¹ These tracts are located a short distance north of the Martha Washington Community and may represent an enlargement of the property already owned by Joseph. His daughter Arcenia Wilson Atkinson had a daughter, Martha Ann, said to have been b. in the Martha Washington Community in 1835; perhaps she was still living on the family lands there?

Joseph’s farm in 1835 is said to be mentioned in an article in the 1995 National Genealogical Society Quarterly (p. 273).

1836

Daughter Nancy born.

1837

Daughter Sarah born.

Three land grants are recorded for Joseph Wilson in 1837. They are:

1. 500 acres, Mountain District, Book J, p. 29, Grant 5472, with Austin Choate, map #457. This seems to be the grant listed above in 1834.
2. 50 acres, Mountain District, Book J, p. 37, Grant 5483. This seems to be the grant listed above dated 1828.
3. 500 acres, Mountain District, Book J, p. 41, Grant 491. This seems to be the grant listed above dated 1834.⁴²

1838

Another son, Lewis, is born.

1839

A property acquired by Thomas Cooper⁴³ and Thomas Beaty entered on March 29, 1839, is described as being located “s side of Obeds River . . . Thomas Beaty line . . . Thomas Cooper line . . . Franklins’ line . . . Hill’s line . . . Isaac Beaty line . . . Albertson line . . .

⁴⁰ Hatfield, Entry #652, dated 10/23/34.

⁴¹ Hatfield, entry #657, dated 12/22/34. The East Fork, of course, lies in Fentress County.

⁴² Barbara, Byron, and Samuel Sistler, *Tennessee Land Grants: Surnames W-Z* (Nashville, 1998), p. 62.

⁴³ He was a veteran of the Revolutionary War.

husband of Rachel Wilson. Why she is listed separately remains to be worked out. Note the presence of an elderly woman (aged 70-80) in this household—most likely either John II's mother or the mother of his spouse.

In the *Fentress County Deed Book D*, p. 243, we find “George F. Beaty to George W. Taylor; Dec. 7, 1840 sold 50 acres for \$40 dollars” "on the waters of Obeds River" "including the Wilson improvement;" signed George F. Beaty. Registered Aug. 31, 1848.”⁴⁵ As noted below, this may reflect Joseph's move to Overton County and his leaving his farm next to the Beatys for them to dispose of for him.

1841

Joseph's son Moses Wilson married Celia Hays in 1841. Moses' sister Oma (Naomi) married Celia's brother Archibald B. Hayes, Jr., probably about 1846 (see below for more on A. B. Hays). I have suggested that Celia may have been raised in the home of her grandfather, William Hays (b. about 1765, d. after 1830), who appears in the 1830 Fentress County Census (see under Celia Hays). Some family traditions claim that Celia had Cherokee Indian blood. This is not entirely implausible. The Indians were not removed from the area until 1830 and many were thought to have evaded the removal and continued to live in the mountains until at least 1846, some adopting English names to assist in making them inconspicuous. The prevalence of high cheek bones, dark eyes and dark hair among the locals indicates that some Indian bloodlines had been mixed with the settlers.⁴⁶ A surviving photograph of Celia exhibits these physical characteristics (see photo under “Moses Wilson.”) Her mother might have been a Native American, or her father may have been Native American—she taking her father's family name as her own, or one or more of her grandparents may have been Native American (see discussion elsewhere).

⁴⁵ The entire Deed Book D is on-line at <http://listsearches.rootsweb.com/th/read/TNFENTRE/2004-08/1093956981>

⁴⁶ See the “Mohawk Valley Document” quoted above.

OVERTON COUNTY. TENNESSEE

Joseph seems to have moved from Fentress County to Overton County around the time of Moses and Celia's marriage. It is important to realize that this is only a short move—something like 10 miles to the southwest. Moses' brother Berry and Julia Ann Beaty married in the same year (1841).

1842-44

Joseph was involved in a lawsuit in 1842, having co-signed for someone who did not pay their \$125 debt to the Bank. The *Fentress County Minutes Book, 1842-44* has the following: "Joseph Wilson, William McClelland,⁴⁷ Robert Boles, and John B. McCormack⁴⁸ if found in Fentress County personally to be and appear before the Judge of the Circuit Court for the County of Fentress to be held at the Court House in Jamestown on 3rd Monday in June next, then and there to answer the President and Director of the Bank of Tn of a plea that they render to them \$125.00 to which they owe and from them unjustly detain to their damages \$50.00."⁴⁹ Robert Boles, who lived in the Boatland area, was a relative of Joseph, a grandson of Joseph's sister Lida A. Wilson Beaty (see details elsewhere). The suit was settled for around \$10.

1842-3

Joseph Wilson served on a grand jury of "good and lawful men" in Fentress County for several cases in 1842-3.⁵⁰ In 1843 he served on the jury in the "Marsha Millsap's Case" State of Tennessee vs. William M. Bledsoe. The charge was libel, apparently because Bledsoe had called Millsap a witch.⁵¹ Given the popular belief in witches in these parts (see above and appendix) this charge was rather serious. Joseph was called to work on a road "from Wm. Boswells Spring branch to the three forks of the West fork of Obids River" in 1843.⁵² Since the latter is located in Overton County, it may be that the move from Fentress to District 9 in the SE corner of Overton County on the West Fork of the Obey River took place sometime during 1843.

1844-48

⁴⁷ McClelland served as sheriff of Fentress County in 1828.

⁴⁸ In 1835 he was Attorney General in Fentress County.

⁴⁹ <http://wc.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=bruceyork&id=I9925>

⁵⁰ *Records of Fentress County, Minute Book Vol. 1*, p. 335.

⁵¹ Minute Book, Circuit Court Record, Fentress County, June term of the Circuit Court, 1843, p. 356.

⁵² *County Court Minutes*, p. 49. William Boswell (b. before 1810) was married first to Anna Copeland and then to Nancy Thompson. He was living in Overton County by at least 1838. Source: <http://wc.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=elc1234&id=I11815>

Joseph Wilson is mentioned in the Overton County, Tennessee County Court Minutes (Feb. 1844-Nov. 1849), pp. 49, 78, 167. This may have to do with the problem noted above.

As already noted, the Fentress County *Deed Book D* (p. 243) has the following: “George F. Beaty to George W. Taylor; Dec. 7, 1840 sold 50 acres for \$40 dollars ‘on the waters of Obeds River’ ‘including the Wilson improvement;’ signed by George F. Beaty, registered Aug. 31, 1848.”⁵³ George is the husband of Lydia Ann Wilson Beaty, sister of Joseph and daughter of the patriarch. This transaction probably indicates that when Joseph moved to Overton County he turned his property in the Boatland area over to the Beatys when he left, and that the “Wilson improvement” refers to his farm.

1846

In 1846 Joseph’s daughter Naomi married A. B. Hays, the brother of Celia Hays Wilson. A very large land acquisition (5000 acres) in Fentress County dated the same year carries the names B. B. Ray, A. B. Hays, and Wm. R. Campbell. It is located “beginning . . . Neck of the Horseshoe pond.”⁵⁴ Despite the location of this land, Ray may be documented in Overton County in 1840, appearing in the Overton County census for that year (aged 30-40), so A. B. Hays may have been there as well. He may have moved from Fentress to Overton County about the same time as Moses and Celia. He was certainly in Overton County by 1850 (see below).

Joseph sold 50 acres “on Billey’s Creek” in Fentress County to Jefferson York on February 16, 1846. He signed with an “x”.⁵⁵

1847

In June, 1847, two of Joseph’s sons, Berry and Jesse, sold land to John Conaster in Fentress County.⁵⁶

1850

The 1850 Overton County 9th District Census is very helpful in establishing dates and relationships. Joseph is listed as being 50 years old, unable to read and write, and owning real estate worth \$350. Interestingly, his birthplace is listed as “unknown”—suggesting that Fanny or someone else not knowing his birthplace provided the information for the census-taker. She is listed as aged 36, born in VA. The children are Elizabeth (17),

⁵³ <http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/BP2000/2004-08/1093738355>

⁵⁴ Hatfield, Entry # 887, dated 6/4/46.

⁵⁵ Fentress County Deed Book F, p. 170.

⁵⁶ Fentress County Deed Book C, p. 218.

Nancy (15), Sarah (13), Lewis (12), Edward (10), and William (7).⁵⁷ Thus all the children of Joseph's first marriage are gone from the home by this time. The first daughter born to Joseph and Fanny is named Elizabeth—perhaps in memory of Joseph's first wife, but also possibly named for Fanny's mother (see below). Elizabeth's birth year (1833) suggests the date of Joseph's second marriage to Fanny occurred about 1832.

14	889	870	Joseph Wilson	50 m		1	350	unmarried		1
15			Fanny	36 f				W. A.		
16			Elizabeth	7 f				stem		
17			Nancy	15 f				"		
18			Sarah	13 f				"		
19			Lewis	12 m				"		
20			Edward	10 m				"		
21			Wm	7 m				"		

$$\begin{array}{r} 1582 \\ \hline 1662 \\ \hline 164 \end{array}$$

The farm next to Joseph's (75 acres) belongs to Archibald Hayes, a 34 year old farmer. His wife is Oma (Joseph's daughter Naomi), age 30, and their children Lida A. (2) and Wilson (1). It seems very plausible that this "Lida A." is named for "Lydia Ann" Wilson Beaty, the mother of "Tinker Dave" Beaty, who was in turn the brother of Julia, Asberry Wilson's wife. This provides further evidence that Lydia Ann Wilson Beaty was Joseph's sister. Living next to Archibald is Joseph's son Berry Wilson (28) and his wife Julie Beaty Wilson (25), with their children Oma (7), George (4), Nancy (3), and David (1). Next to them is Moses Wilson (age 30; farmer, 300 acres, b. TN). His wife Cela [Hayes—Archibald Hayes, Jr.s' sister] (24) and children Rebecca (6), Archibald Wilson (4), Permila (2), and George (10 months). Both Moses and Cela are listed as unable to read and write.

Thus in 1850 this "Wilson settlement" of over 750 acres consisted of the following farms, in geographical order:

1. Moses Wilson and Celia Hayes
2. Berry Wilson, Moses' brother⁵⁸

⁵⁷ It is curious that the youngest son is named William, since Joseph was said by some to have had a much older son named William as well, born c. 1815. The documentation is stronger for the younger William, since he is mentioned by name in the 1850 census. Also, his middle name, Hayes, suggests a relationship with the Hays family, more likely in the 1850s than in 1815 (the census does not give his middle name). I am inclined to think that the earlier William H. Wilson is a phantom, or is confused with a *brother* of Joseph.

⁵⁸Note on Asberry: Born 1821, d. 1885, buried Mt. Union Cemetery, Fentress, TN. Married Julia Beaty (b. 1828 in TN). Eleven children including a Naomi (Oma; born 1843) and a Joseph. The family of Asberry left Overton Co. between 1860 and 1864. Asberry and Julia are listed in the 1880 Fentress Co. Census, but not in the 1860 Census there. This might indicate that because of Union sympathies during the Civil War the family left the area during the conflict. Many of Asberry's children have Wilson or Hays family names, including Naomi, George, John, Joseph, and William. Asberry rode with Tinker Dave Beaty (apparently his wife's father) in the Civil War. Dale Welch of Monterey is a descendant. Welch writes historical articles for the local newspaper in Putnam County. Tinker Dave b. 1817, led a group of independent fighters loyal to the Union. He is said to be the son of George (b. 1785) and Lydia Ann Wilson [Beaty] and is buried near them in Lacy Cemetery, Fentress Count, TN. David Beaty lived on the East Fork of the Obey River near Boatland quite near Joseph Wilson's place on "Bill's Creek" just south of Boatland. See extensive research on Asberry and pictures elsewhere. See map: comptroller.state.tn.us/lg/map/fentress/certified.pdf.

3. Archibald Hayes, Jr., Moses brother-in-law (married Moses' sister Oma), and brother of Moses' wife Celia
4. Joseph Wilson, the father of Moses, Berry, and Oma.

Joseph's purported brother (or cousin) Robert is listed in the 1850 Census living in District 2, Fentress County, b. 1785 in VA. He is a miller (probably meaning a saw mill). District 2 is the Boatland area. Another possible brother, Jacob, is also in this census, b. 1813. His place of birth seems to read "Tenn" but is smudged. His wife is Dolly, b. 1817 in VA.

In the same year (1850) Moses Wilson was granted 600 acres in Overton County on the waters of the West Fork of Obey River, from a survey dated 15 May, 1850, next to a survey made in the name of John Wilson (i.e. the one described above, i.e. John III), from whom he bought a similar 600 acre grant in the same year. The family thus controlled very large "Wilson Estates" in Overton County. It is not clear yet whether this grant to Moses was the land listed in the 1850 census or in addition to it. If the latter, the family now controlled over 1200 acres.⁵⁹

Joseph had by now also accumulated a considerable estate in Overton County:

1850 Agricultural Records Overton County - Joseph Wilson

30 acres improved
 500 acres unimproved (JFW Note: this is probably the land on Cobb Creek mentioned above)
 \$500 cash value of farm
 \$15 cash value of farm machinery
 2 milk cows
 1 other cattle
 20 swine
 \$100 value of livestock
 300 bushes Indian corn
 11 lbs wool
 2 bushel bean/peas
 10 bushel potatoes
 18 bushel sweet potatoes
 50 lbs butter

For Tinker Dave's story and Berry's name see: http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~bp2000/tinker_dave.htm and <http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~bp2000/fentress/tinkerdave.htm> and <http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~bp2000/fentress/davidsr.htm> <http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/TNFENTRE/1999-07/0932938923>

⁵⁹ <http://apps.sos.ky.gov/land/military/revwar/Revdetail.asp?Type=v&warrant=4309.0> Note this entry for 2/11/1857 for 2,000 acres: "path from Robert Whited's to Piney . . . path that leads to Jefferson Stephens'." Don't know what this means. (Entry book ABC, p. 65).

\$30 value of home made items
 \$30 value of livestock sold

25 Sep 1850 Agricultural Records

100 acres improved land
 100 acres unimproved land
 \$450.00 cash value of farm
 \$8.00 value of farm machinery
 1 horse
 2 milk cows
 2 other cattle
 15 swine
 \$100.00 value in livestock
 Produced: 400 bushes of Indian corn
 30 pounds of wool
 20 bushel of sweet potatoes
 12 bushel of wheat
 75 pounds of butter
 \$25.00 home made items sold
 \$35.00 livestock sold

The two listings are presumably from two different districts in the county.

1856

The evidence that Joseph died in early 1856 is decisive.

1. An inventory of his estate may be found on microfilm in the Overton County records. Various family members purchased items from the estate.
 - a. "Berry Wilson" is mentioned as a buyer 11 times.
 - b. "Joseph Wilson" appears as a buyer 5 times. Moses Wilson had a son named Joseph but he would have been too young to be buying at auction. This is more likely Joseph, son of Jesse the brother of "our" Joseph (b. 1822), his nephew.
 - c. "Salley Wilson" bought a cow and calf. She is probably the wife of George Wilson, Moses' brother.
 - d. "Nancy Wilson" also bought a cow and calf. This might be Joseph's brother (or cousin) Robert's widow Nancy, now about 60 years old. Or, more likely, Joseph's daughter by Fanny, b. 1834.
 - e. "William Wilson."
 - f. "Pickney Hays." This is certainly the brother of Moses Wilson's wife Celia Hays, now about 22 years old.

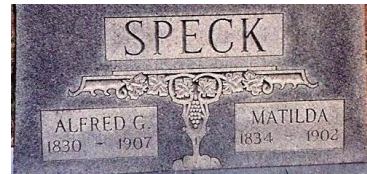
- g. Other names appearing as buyers are: G. C. Christian, Joseph Looper (buried in Three Forks/Speck Cemetery), Jack Ray, A. G. Speck (see transaction with Naomi Wilson below; buried in Oakley Cemetery), Anderson Key (probably the father of Goolsby Key—see below). These people mostly live a short distance west of Clarkrange between there and Wilson Hollow.

The full document reads as follows:

“The following is a true full and complete inventory and account of sales of all the personal property which has come to the hands or possession of Adam Deck the administration of the estate of Joseph Wilson, deceased. The property was sold at the residence of the deceased on the 4th day of April 1856, on a credit of 12 months. It is as follows to wit. Berry Wilson 1 rifle gun \$10.00 Berry Wilson 1 shot bag ____ \$.60 Joseph Wilson 1 yoke oxen \$10.00 G. C. Christian 1 yoke oxen \$37.25 Berry Wilson 1 sorrel coat \$16.25 Joseph Wilson 1 large gray coat \$31.00 Salley Wilson 1 cow and calf \$ 1.00 paid Nancy Wilson 1 cow and calf \$ 1.00 paid Moses Wilson 6 shoats \$ 5.05 paid Joseph Looper 1 Boar al_____ \$ 4.00 paid Berry Wilson 1 saw \$.25 Berry Wilson 1 auger \$.30 William Wilson 1 1/2 inch auger \$.20 paid Jack Ray 1 6 _____ auger \$.60 paid Berry Wilson 2 chisels \$.20 A. G. Speck 1 pr compases \$.25 paid A. G. Speck 3 Setts Butts & screws \$.50 paid Berry Wilson 1 set chairs or chains \$.70 Pickney Hays 1 clevis \$.25 Berry Wilson 1 plow \$ 1.00 Moses Wilson 1 log chain \$.85 Berry Wilson 1 singletree \$.35 Moses Wilson 1 mattock \$.25 Berry Wilson 1 large wedge \$.50 Anderson Key 1 Raw hide \$.50 Berry Wilson 1 plow \$.20 Moses Wilson 1 Stock \$.15 Moses Wilson 1 grindstone \$ 1.60 Wm. Looper 1 Sow and 5 Pigs \$ 5.00 Joseph Wilson 1 Sow and 4 Pigs \$ 5.00 Joseph Wilson 1 Sow and 6 Pigs \$ 7.00 The widdaw 10 Shoats \$ 10.00 Sworn to and subscribed before me Adam Deck Adm \$141.85 William M. Pickett, Clk.”⁶⁰

According to the 1860 Overton County Census, Moses and Celia Wilson had a son in 1858 whom they named Joseph L. Wilson. He was their first child born after Joseph’s death, and was apparently named after him.

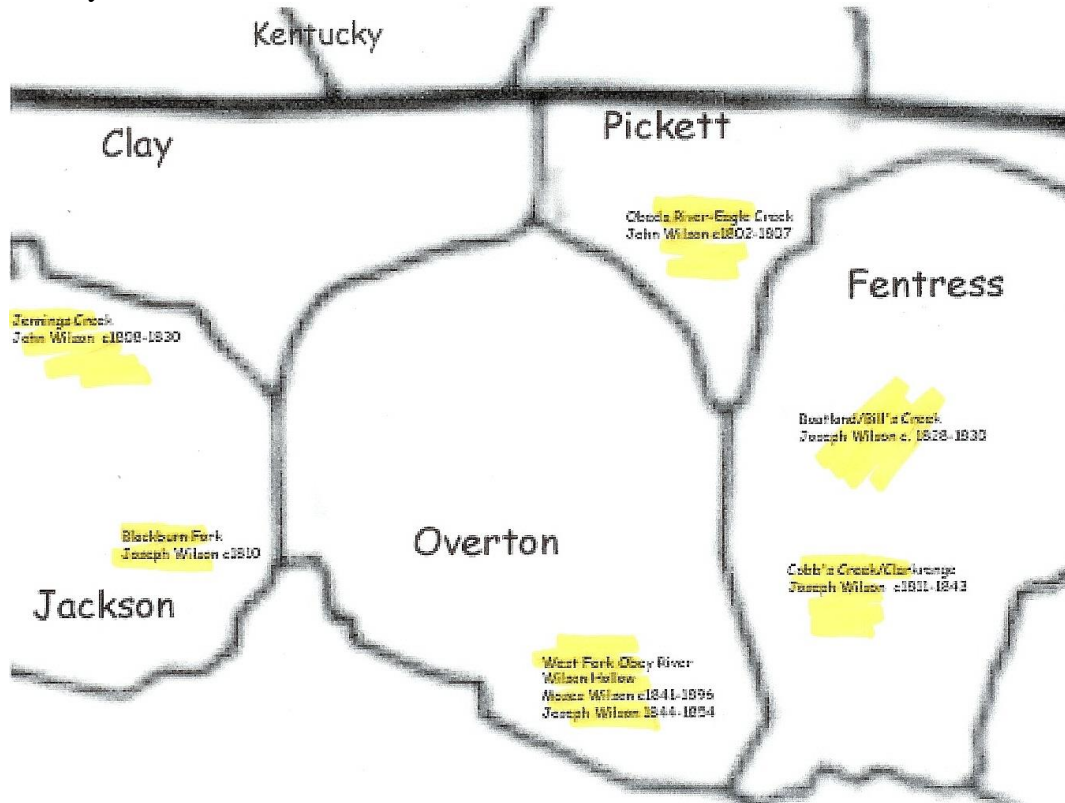
The following document appears in the *Overton County Deed Book N* (page 374): “Archibald Hays, and Neomy Hays, formerly Wilson, being lawful heirs of Joseph Wilson decd, sold A. G. Speck for and in consideration of the sum of \$10.00 paid, 14 and six-fourteenths acres on the West fork of Obed’s River. Interest claim and etc. that we have in and to the dower of the widow of said Wilson, decd. 10 October 1856. Signed A. B. Hays, Neomy (X) Hays. Witnesses, Jas. A. Richardson, G. W. Speck.”⁶¹ This sale is probably connected to their leaving for AR (see below).



⁶⁰ <http://wc.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=bruceyork&id=I9927>

Joseph Wilson's grave is unknown, but it is quite possible that he was buried in what is now called the Moses Wilson Cemetery in Wilson Hollow. Many Wilsons are buried there and there are a number of unmarked graves. He may, in fact, have been the first buried there.

The following map summarizes the geography of the life of Joseph Wilson in Middle Tennessee, highlighting the places where he may have lived: first in what is now Pickett County, then in Jackson County, then what is now Fentress County, and finally Overton County.

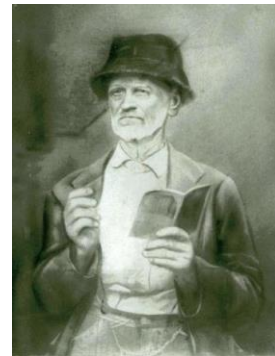


1860

Joseph Wilson's family may be traced as follows in the next census after his death, on the eve of the Civil War:

Goolsby Key

1. Joseph's widow Francis Wilson, aged 48, b. VA, is living with "Goolsbersy" Key (33) and his family in District 9, Overton County in the 1860 Overton County Census. Since her maiden name was Key, this is likely a relative. I don't find her children in TN in this census. Also in the



⁶¹ Edythe Rucker Whitley, *Overton County, Tennessee Genealogical Records* (Baltimore, 1977), p. 23.

1860 Overton County Census are Highly F. and Elizabeth Key, both aged 65. They are listed as b. TN but this may not be correct. They might be Francis' parents, and this might account for Francis and Joseph naming their first daughter together Elizabeth (see above).

2. Moses Wilson (41) is listed in District 9, Overton County, together with Celia (33) and 10 of their children.
3. Naomi Wilson Hays (44 *sic*) and her husband "A. B." (Archibald Bedford) Hays (47) have moved to AR and are listed in the Wallace Township, Benton County Census. Their children are listed as Lydia (13), Wilson (12), Joseph (9), Pinkney (6), William (3), and Sarah (1 month).
4. There is a Berry Wilson (40) living with a John Williams in District 2, Robertson County, TN. No other members of his family are listed. Is this "our" Berry?
5. Jesse Wilson (b. 1822), Joseph's son, married to Sarah, also appears in the 1860 Census of Wallace Township, Benton County, AR. In 1870 he and Sarah appear in the Monticello, Johnson Co., KS Census.
6. There is a George W. Wilson (36), married to Sarah (27) in District 1, Putnam County, TN. Is this "our" George? (I doubt it).
7. Henry Wilson is said to have lived near the Windle Community in Overton County and moved to KY.⁶² So far I have not found him in the 1860 Census.
8. "W. H." (William Hayes) Wilson (b. 1833) is listed with his wife Manerva and their children in Dist. 2, Overton Co., in the 1860 Census.

1870

Ten years later:

1. Francis Wilson: don't find her.
2. Moses Wilson: don't find him.
3. Naomi Hays Wilson: don't find her or Archibald
4. Berry Wilson: don't find him or Julia
5. Jesse Wilson: he and Sarah are in the Monticello, Johnson County, KS Census.
6. George Wilson: a George Wilson (52), spouse Sarah (47) are listed in the District 3, Fentress County Census. Their children Nancy (15), Daniel (12), Eli (12) and Bettie (5) are b. KY as is Sarah. Their last child, Tennessee (3) is b. TN. This suggests that he was living in KY from at least 1855 to 1867.
7. Henry Wilson: not much to go on. There are several Henrys b. c. 1823 in TN.

⁶² <http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/TNFENTRE/1999-07/0933392710>

8. William H.: don't find him.

APPENDIX: WITCHCRAFT IN FENTRESS COUNTY

From the Nashville (Tenn.) Herald.

WITCHCRAFT. Notwithstanding we live in a most enlightened age, the superstitions of earlier and ruder times are not entirely eradicated, as appears from the following facts communicated to us by a correspondent who says they are unquestionable.

It appears that during last autumn several young ladies residing in Fentress county, in this state, were strangely affected with jerks and tremblings, and various other "ills that flesh is heir to," which were attributed to the influence of *witchcraft*. After several months of suffering, all recovered except one. Miss Rebecca French, a maiden of forty. She was so much affected that frequent consultations were held amongst the *witch doctors* of the neighborhood, who found all their skill unavailing. Amongst these doctors, were Isaac Taylor and Pleasant Taylor, both celebrated for their skill in putting witches to flight; many a one had they sent sweeping through the air upon broomsticks. They were unremitting in their attentions, but the fortunate lady still suffered under the "malign influence" of *witchcraft*.

About the first of January last, a man by the name of Stout went to the house of Esquire French, the father of the lady, having with him a rope made of *Buckeye splits*. As soon as he appeared, the jerks and tremblings of the unfortunate Rebecca returned with great violence; she called for the buckeye rope, which Stout at first declined parting with, but being apprehensive of some personal injury if he longer refused, at length yielded to her request; the rope was tied round the waist of Rebecca, when, wonderful to tell! she obtained immediate relief! Here was proof positive that Stout was a witch, and upon consultation among the friends of the bewildered damsel, it was determined that if Stout could be prevailed upon to take the patient by the hand, and pronounce certain mysterious words, a cure would be effected for ninety nine years.

Stout, however, had left the house, and in order to procure his attendance, one Charles Staunton filed an account before Esquire French; a bail warrant was issued and placed in the hands of a constable, who with a posse of five armed men, arrested Stout and took him before Esquire French for trial, where many of the neighbors assembled to await the issue. The pains of the patient increasing on the appearance of Stout, each individual in the house was requested to take Rebecca by the hand and pronounce the words—"May the Great God of heaven, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bless you. They did so, but without the desired effect, Stout at the time standing near the door absorbed in the contemplation of his own situation.—Rebecca at length exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Stout, bless me, I know you can relieve me." Stout stood unmoved: the father united his entreaties with those of his daughter, but to no purpose, until several rifles were presented, and his life threatened; he then advanced, took Rebecca by the hand, and no sooner were the mystic words pronounced than the patient was herself again, to the astonishment of all present, who were firmly convinced that Stout had dealings with the "evil One."

From this circumstance, several suits at law originated—Rebecca procured a war-

rant against Stout on the charge of *witchcraft*, and Stout took out a warrant against Isaac Taylor, Pleasant Taylor, Charles Staunton and others. All parties prepared for trial. They travelled twenty-five miles to the house of a magistrate through deep snow; the magistrate, after two days patient investigation, decided that Stout being a wizard, could be in no danger from mortal hands, but held him to bail, at the suit of Rebecca, in the sum of \$2000. Stout appeared at February term of Fentress county court, but Rebecca not appearing to prosecute, he was discharged, and at the following term it was decreed that Rebecca should pay the costs, from which an appeal was taken in the nature of a writ of error to the Circuit court.

At the May term of the county court, Isaac Taylor appeared and filed his plea of not guilty on the complaint of Stout. The case was submitted to a jury, to whom all the facts connected with the transaction were detailed by Stout on the part of the State. J. French, Esq. being introduced on the part of the defendant, deposed that no further violence was used towards Stout at his house, than an attempt to knock him down with a chair, that he had never believed in *witchcraft* until his daughter had been so *badly bewitched*; that he had no doubt of its reality, and there (pointing to Stout) stands the *very old sinner*. Pleasant Taylor being also under examination, stated his firm belief in *witchcraft*, and in proof asserted that he "shot a deer with its *right side* towards him; that it fell at the crack of the gun, and when he examined the carcass, he found the ball had entered the *left side*, and lodged against the skin of the *right side*; from this circumstance he was convinced of the influence of some evil spirit. The case being argued by learned counsel, the jury found Taylor guilty, from which an appeal was taken to the circuit court, where the matter now rests.

SALEM GAZETTE
8/12/1831

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Muriel Wilson Thu Mar 27 19:40:04 1997.

Moses WILSON and Jesse WILSON surveyed land in Overton County in 1808. Jesse was still there in 1820 living near a Robert WILSON and William WILSON. Jesse moved to McNairy Co Tn about 1827 and was in that county census in 1830. Have not located Moses WILSON in the 1820 census, but he was in Madison Co TN in 1830 census. Would appreciate any info on Moses or Jesse (Jessee) WILSON.

In the Entry Book 1824-1901 Fentress Co Austin CHOATE 10-8-1826 150 acres North side of Crooked Creek Austin CHOATE 5-12-1830 75 acres W side of Obeds River...to a conditional line made by David Crockett & David Beaty & William Beaty...where Jacob CHOATE now lives

Joseph WILSON & Austin CHOATE 10-23-1834 500 acres.....
waters of Cobb Creek...East Fork

Source: <http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/tnfentre/2000-11/0974612473>

IMPORTANT: see for details on Joseph: <http://covingtonwilson.com/d3458.html>