

THE WILLIAMSON FAMILY

There are some who claim that the family of Williamson is of Scandinavian origin. How this claim could be made in the face of the existing evidence is not understandable. It is true that the suffix "son" denoting descent, is a Scandinavian custom; however many other Celtic family names have this suffix:

Johnston (originally Celtic MacShane)

Anderson (originally Celtic MacAndrews)

Davidson (originally Celtic MacDhais) etc.

The Williamson family is of Scots-Celtic origin. The original form of the name was Mac Giolla (son of the disciple). The name "Giolla" was the Celtic form of William. "Mac" means "son or descendant of".

The Giolla or William from whom the name is taken was the second son of Angus Du (1180-1229) or "Dark Angus". This Angus had one son, Kay. He in turn had two sons. The elder took his father's name and called himself MacKay and it is from him that the clan MacKay (also MacCoy) takes its name. Second son of Kay was Giolla - his son was MacGiolla and founded the family.

In the XIII Century, when it became customary to Anglicize Celtic names the "Mac" became "son" and the Giolla became William. Also following the English custom of denoting descent (taken from the Scandinavian Daves and Angles) the son was used as a suffix instead of a prefix. Thus the name has been Williamson since the first of the XIII Century. The family is and has been always a sept of the clan MacKay.

One of the earliest Gaelic Charters extant was issued by Donald, Lord of the Isles, to Brian Vicar MacKay Williamson in 1408 for lands upon the Island of Harris to replace the family estate in Peebleshire destroyed by the English and confiscated by the Keiths.

John Williamson held land in the Burgn (shire) of Peebles in 1317 and Adam in 1343 rendered the accounts of the Burgn to the Lord Chamberlain. John Williamson sat in the Scottish Parliament in 1366 and William Williamson in 1575-76 and 1582-1584; James in 1511 and another James Williamson in 1550.

A branch of the family migrated to England in the XVI Century and settled in Northampton, Lincoln and Nottingham.

At the battle of Boyne (1695) the Williamsons were "out" with the clan MacKay. Upon James II and his royal forces being defeated by the English, the Williamsons fled into Ulster in Northern Ireland. They did not long remain there but soon migrated, with many others of the so-called, Scotch-Irish to Pennsylvania.

Nor did they long remain in Pennsylvania for they soon joined the great Scotch-Irish migration southward 1760-1780 and settled in the Piedmont section of the Carolinas.

Among these Scotch-Irish migrants was James Williamson, Sr. (1713-1806) who was a planter and Revolutionary soldier. He settled in the York District of South Carolina.

"WILLIAMSON"

Between the years 1763 and 1780, about 140 families located in the Bethesda Settlement in York District, South Carolina, 8 miles from the Catawba River. Among the families who came was that of James Williamson, Sr. (1713-1806), Planter, Patriot American Revolution.

Sons of James Williamson, Sr.

1. John Williamson
2. Adam Williamson
3. Samuel Williamson
4. George Williamson
5. James Williamson, Jr.

These Williamsons came from Scotland to the North of Ireland, soon after the victory of King William at the Boyne, and later immigrated from Ireland by way of Pennsylvania into South Carolina.

Children of Samuel Williamson (1759-1815, Planter Soldier in American Revolution married Ann Starr 1759-1806)

1. Reverend John Williamson, married Elizabeth Doby

Children

1. Sarah Ann Caldwell
2. Jane Hope
3. John Williamson
4. Jo Doby Williamson
5. Mary A. Stitt

2. James Starr Williamson married Jane McHecklin

Children

1. Mary McH. Williamson
2. Samuel E. Williamson
3. John Williamson

4. Betty Roseborough
  5. James C. Williamson
  6. Arthur N. Williamson
  7. Dr. Sen Z. Williamson
  8. Dr. W. Leland Williamson
  9. Josie R. Freeman
  10. Sarah C. Humphries
  11. Mattie Pasley
3. Reverend Samuel Williamson (1795-1882, married Jane Adams)

Children

1. Eliza Ann Doby
  2. James Adams Williamson
  3. Mary E. Wilson
  4. Jane Williamson
  5. John S. Williamson
  6. Martha Williamson
  7. Mattie Magill
4. Arthur Starr Williamson (1796-1870, removed to Panola and Marshall Counties, Mississippi 1846 - large planter, married first Caroline McNeil, married second Mary A. Meek (1820-1862, widow of Henry McGehee)

Children by first marriage

1. Julia Williamson
2. Ann Amelia Williamson
3. Dr. Samuel Williamson
4. Dr. A. A. Williamson
5. John Starr Williamson

## Children by second marriage

6. Florence S. Williamson (1849-1862)
  7. Irene C. Williamson (1853-1859)
  8. Chalmers Meeh Williamson (1856-1918)
  - \* 9. James Gaston Williamson (1857-1939)
  10. Mary Henri Williamson
5. Dr. Searider Williamson married Harried Stewart

## Children

1. Jane Williamson
  2. Mary Williamson
  3. Samuel Williamson
  4. Reverend James L. Williamson
  5. Arthur Carlstadt Williamson
6. Ann Williamson married (Jonathan Orr) *John Hanna Orr  
son of Capt James Orr & Emily  
Hanna*

## Children

1. J. Harvey Orr
  2. Mrs. David Parks, Charlotte, North Carolina
7. Martha Williamson married Samuel Steel

## Children

1. Harvey Steel
  2. Samuel Steel
  3. Margaret Ann Rowell
8. Rachel Williamson married Jonathan Orr

## Children

1. Ann Stett
2. Samuel Orr
3. Rebecca Stett
4. Mary Emmons
5. Martha Severs

6. Emily Orr

7. John N. Orr

9. Dorcas Williamson married Ethelwin Sadler

Children

1. Seonora Robinson

2. Samuel C. Sadler

3. Augustus Sadler

4. Cicero Sadler

5. Marceles Sadler

10. Matilda Williamson married John E. Stitt

Children

1. Martha Ann Sherrill

2. James Leander Stitt

3. Samuel Williamson Stitt

4. Ann Amelia Stitt

"PROCEEDINGS OF A CELEBRATION OF  
HUCK'S DEFEAT, AT BRATTONSVILLE, YORK DISTRICT,  
SOUTH CAROLINE, July 12, 1839."

The original minutes of the above proceedings are on file at the Home Office of the Daughters of American Revolution in Washington, D. C. A printed copy is in possession of Mrs. Elise Williamson Phifer, 145 Battle Hill Place, Jackson, Mississippi.

The printed copy contains an Oration delivered on the occasion from which the following extracts are taken, to-wit:

"Some time during the month of June, 1780, a party of the Whigs from this (Brattonsville) neighborhood, under the command of Col. Bratton, Major Wynn, and Captain McClure, learning that a body of Tories were assembled at Mobley's meetinghouse, in Fairfield District, attacked and defeated them. The report of this Tory disaster being conveyed to Rocky Mount, and the great complaint of the boldness of the Whigs was the immediate cause, that Captain Huck was sent to this neighborhood, - the object was to inflict vengeance on these daring Whigs who thus braved the British power.

On the 12th day of July, 1780, the battle was fought, we have assembled to commemorate. Huck's army was defeated and routed and himself slain on the battlefield. He lies buried where he fell, and his dead soldiers sleep around him. For victory, he met with defeat, - for triumph, death. In number the army of the enemy was greatly superior to that of the Whigs. The latter consisted of only seventy-five men, whilst the former amounted to four hundred British calvary, and a considerable body of Tories, all well mounted. Thus the odds were great and fearful; but the Whigs, animated by a sense all was dear, fearlessly attacked the few, - resolved on victory, or the grave. Nobly did they sustain the cause of their country on that memorial day, - manfully did they battle for their



country's rights, gratefully, proudly should we remember their deeds, and commemorate their services. No sculptured marble or monymental stone points us to this battle field, and tells of the exploits and triumphs of the man, who gained the glorious victory; but they are not forgotten, - this everlasting hill is their proud monument, the liberties we enjoy, the chronicle of their glory. Who would not rather be the victor on such a field than to have gained those at Agincourt and Cressy? They were fought for empty fame, - this for liberty and political existance.

The evening preceding the battle, Huck arrived at the house of Col. Bratton, and demanded of Mrs. Bratton where her husband was. She replied that he was in Sumpter's army. He then proposed to her that if she would get her husband to come in and join the Royalists, he should have a commission in the royal service. She, with heroic firmness, answered that she preferred his remaining and dying in Sumpter's army. For this patriotic boldness a soldier of Huck attempted to take her life, and she was only saved by the interference of the officer second in command. It was at the house of Col. Bratton that Huck captured the three men, James McRandle, Thomas Clendenis, and Robert Bratton, who with John Moore, who had been captured during the day, were confined in a crip until released by John Moore, Jr., during the engagement.

Huck and his officers slept that night in Williamson's house. His troops lay encamped around it. A road, enclosed in a lane, passed the door, and sentineals were posted along the road. The guard kept negligent watch, and the troops lay in fancied security, undreaming of tomorrow's scenes, unknowing that they were already marked for defeat and death. On that same day, Col. Bratton, with one hundred and seventy-five men, principally his neighbors, left Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, under the conviction that some royal force would shortly

visit their neighborhood to avenge the defeat of the Tories at Modley's meeting-house. During the march about fifty of the men dropped off, and thus only seventy-five were left to attack the enemy. With this force Col. Bratton arrived that night near their encampment, intelligence of their having passed up, and their number having been received during the day. After concealing their horses in the swamp, the Whigs impatiently awaited the dawning of the day to commence the attack. At length it came, and with it victory. One half of the men, led by Col. Bratton and Captain Moffit, came up the land; the other half commanded by Captain McClure of Chester, a brave and daring officer, were sent around to come down the land. Thus the enemy were enclosed, and speedily routed and conquered. When the attack, Huck and his officers were in bed, and were aroused from their slumbers by the sound of the American guns. Huck quickly mounted his horses and attempted to rally his men. This he several times effected; but all of his efforts were unavailing; the determined spirit of the Whigs carried all before them, and so soon as Huck fell his men threw down their arms and fled. Huck, Col. Ferguson, of the British Army; and thirty or forty men lay dead upon the field, or were wounded unto death. How many perished in the woods is not known, the rest escaped. Of the Whig ranks, only one was killed. The rest, though in the thickest and hottest of the fight, escaped unscathed, to fight other battles and do more service for their beloved country. The Battle is believed to have lasted one hour; and it is well recollected as having been said by some of the actors in the glorious scene, that the waters of the spring below us, that now gush forth so clear and transparent, were on that occasion completely crimsoned with the blood of the Tories and British soldiery."

"There were others in this battle whose services I would gladly recite, but where every man did his duty, it is difficult to discriminate. I could tell you of the five brave Williamsons, all brothers, one of whom, Samuel Williamson, killed the first man that was killed on that day, a sentinal who was asleep on duty. Williamson was left with the sentinal for the purpose of dispatching him so soon as the firing commenced at the house."

In this pamphlet are printed the toasts which were given at this celegration, including the following:

"The Memory of James Williamson, Sr., and his five sons, John, Adam, Samuel, George, and James. The father was too old to take the field in the days of the American Revolution, but he made a present to his country of his five gallant sons, an offering more precious than treasure, of more value than gold. The first man who fell in this battle was killed by Samuel Williamson. Here, and elsewhere, the sons proved themselves brave soldiers and fearless patriots; they were always to be found in the front fight."

"State of Mississippi)

Panola County

Before me, J. S. Carlton, Clerk of the Circuit Court in and for the said County and State, this day personally appeared Samuel Z. Williamson, to me well known, who being by me first duly sworn, on his oath doth say:

That he was present at the above celebration at Brattonsville, York District, South Carolina, on the 12th day of July, 1839. That at said time he was 15 years of age, and a son of James S. Williamson, who was himself a son of Samuel Williamson, mentioned in Toast No. 20, in the foregoing pages. That the said Samuel Williamson was his grandfather, and James Williamson, Sr., mentioned in said toast was his great grandfather. Affiant further makes oath that he

was married on the 14th day of December, 1859, at Bailey Springs, State of Alabama, to Mary Herring Ellis, and that as the fruits of said marriage he has now living seven daughters, to-wit:

Cora, (now Mrs. W. C. Rodgers of Nashville, Ark.), Mattie Lee (now Mrs. E. R. Weaver, Hoppsassa, Fla.), Mary (now Mrs. D. C. Semmes, Grenada, Miss.), Hewlett (now Mrs. J. C. Reynolds, Knoxville, Tenn.), Mrs. W. E. Boothe, Sardis, Miss.), Nona (now Mrs. E. W. Wood, Leland, Miss.).

Affiant further states that he was born near Brattonsville, York District, South Carolina, August 2nd, 1824, and that his father, James S. Williamson, who was a son of the Samuel Williamson, mentioned in the said toast 20, moved to the State of Mississippi with his family in 1848.

S. Z. Williamson

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 30th day of March, 1910.

J. S. Carlton, Circuit Clerk.

Names of Samuel Williamson's five sons, viz:

1. Rev. John Williamson
2. James Starr Williamson
3. Rev. Samuel Williamson
4. Dr. Leander Zenis Williamson
5. Arthur Starr Williamson\*

- Father of:
1. Chalmers Meek Williamson,
  2. James Gaston Williamson
  3. Mary Henry Williamson
  4. Anna Williamson Strickland
  5. Dr. A. A. Williamson
  6. Dr. Samuel M. Williamson
  7. John Starr Williamson

## Daughters of Samuel Williamson:

1. Anna Orr
2. Rachel Orr
3. Martha Steel
4. Dorcas Sadler
5. Matilda Stitt

JAMES WILLIAMSON: B 1713; d 1806; planter; resided in York District,  
South Carolina; M \_\_\_\_\_

## Issue:

1. John Williamson
2. Adam Williamson
3. Samuel Williamson: m Ann Starr
4. George Williamson
5. James Williamson

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SAMUEL WILLIAMSON: b \_\_\_\_\_; d 8 Oct 1815; Revolutionary Soldier;  
resided in York district, South Carolina; planter; ruling elder in the Presbyterian  
Church; m Ann Starr who was b \_\_\_\_\_, and d 30 Aug 1806

## Issue:

1. Rev. John Williamson: m Elizabeth Doby
2. James Starr Williamson: m Jane McHickland
3. Rev. Samuel Williamson; m Jane Adams
4. ARTHUR STARR WILLIAMSON: m twice
  - 1st Anna McNeal
  - 2nd Mrs. McGehee, nee Mary Meek

5. Dr. L. Z. Williamson: m Harriett Stewart
6. Ann Williamson: m Jonathan Orr
7. Rachael Williamson: m \_\_\_\_\_ Orr
8. Martha Williamson: m Sam Steel
9. Dorcas Williamson: m Ethelwin Sadler
10. Matilda Williamson: m John E. Stitt

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ARTHUR STARR WILLIAMSON: b \_\_\_\_\_ 1797 in York district, South Carolina; removed to Panola and Marshall counties, Mississippi, circa 1840 or 1850; planter, died 1869; m twice

1st Anna McNeal:

Issue:

1. Anna Williamson: m Jacob Strickland
2. Dr. Samuel McNeal Williamson, M.D.: Captain of Company F, 12th Regiment of Infantry, Confederate States Army; m twice, 1st \_\_\_\_\_, 2nd \_\_\_\_\_ Brown.
4. John Starr Williamson: Confederate soldier

2nd Mrs. McGehee, whose maiden name was Mary Meek, she died 1862.

At the time of her second marriage she had two daughters, Mary McGehee and Hattie McGehee, and two sons, Willie McGehee, who died while yet a boy at school, and Jack Henry McGehee, who was killed while serving in the Confederate Army.

Issue:

1. CHALMERS MEEK WILLIAMSON: m twice
  - 1st CORINNE MILLER
  - 2nd Mary Robinson

2. James Gaston Williamson: Lawyer; m Lulu Jackson
3. Mary Henri Williamson: m Charles L. McCain

(1857 to 1939)

JAMES GASTON WILLIAMSON: m Lulu Jackson

Issue

1. Lamar Williamson: m Lillian Phillips 1st  
Charlotte Daniel, 2nd
2. Adrian Williamson 1892: m Catherine Montgomery
3. Corinne Williamson--died in infancy

LAMAR WILLIAMSON b 1887, married twice, 1st Lillian Phillips, d October 15, 1931

Issue:

1. Martha Williamson, b 1912, m John Albert Riggs, Jr.
2. James Gaston Williamson, b 1914, m Wrenetta Worthen
3. William Phillips Williamson, b 1916, m Katherine McLay
4. Lamar Williamson, Jr., b 1926, m Ruthmary Bliss

2nd Marriage, Charlotte Daniel, 1932, no issue

MARTHA WILLIAMSON m John Albert Riggs, Jr., 1933

Issue:

1. John Albert Riggs, III, b 1934, m Lila Keith
2. Lillian Riggs, b 1936, m Hayes C. McClerkin
3. Lelie Riggs, b 1936, m Robert G. Cress
4. Lamar Williamson Riggs, b 1939