

The Mystery of Elizabeth Woodward

A [letter written Jan 23, 1896 by Emma White Woodward](#) for her father, Andrew Jackson Woodward, relaying what A J Woodward knew of their family history mentions an ancestor who came from England to Jamestown. A J Woodward believed that this ancestor was the father of Pleasants Woodward (not named in the letter, but proven to be Christopher Woodward of Wake Co, NC). Andrew Jackson Woodward certainly had the wrong ancestor in mind as Jamestown had been abandoned well before Pleasants Woodward's birth. Plus we know that Pleasants' father Christopher Woodward lived in Nansemond Co, VA prior to his arrival in NC. From Emma's 1896 letter:

"Pa's grandfather was Pleasant Woodward, he moved from Jamestown Va to Wake Co about 14 miles from Raleigh. If there is a family record it is probable Bourbon Smith had it, he died at Oxford NC but I suppose his family reside there - if not in their possession there was a sister Samantha Smith who married Mr Currie and lived at Scotland Neck NC perhaps she had an old family record - Pa's great grandfather Woodward came from England and settled at Jamestown Va."

Although Andrew Jackson Woodward was confused as to the exact ancestor involved, it's important that he remembered hearing of some ancestor who had moved from England to Jamestown. There was an earlier Christopher Woodward who did arrive in Jamestown in 1620, and he was very likely the ancestor that Andrew Jackson Woodward had heard of.

Another mention of an ancestor who settled at Jamestown can be found in the following article which was written when Newton W. Utley and his mother Sallie Ann Holland Utley were still living. It's not known who provided the information for this biography.

Memorial Record of Western Kentucky, Lewis Publishing Company, 1904, pp 515-520

HON. NEWTON W. UTLEY. *Kentucky has ever been distinguished for the marked ability of the representatives of her bench and bar. In the early days of the republic her sons left their impress upon the judicial history of the nation, and since that time they have figured conspicuously in public affairs as well as representatives of the great profession which stands as the stern conservator of justice and right. Winning fame at this bar where so many distinguished men have practiced, Hon. Newton Willard Utley has already exerted an influence upon the life of the state that will be felt for all time, and has engraved his name indelibly on the pages of its annals in connection with service that has been prompted by the most unfaltering loyalty and devotion to the best interests of the common wealth.*

Born upon a farm in Marshall county, Kentucky, May 12, 1860, he has spent almost his entire life in this state and now makes his home in Eddyville. His parents were William Washington and Sallie Ann (Holland) Utley. His paternal grandparents were Merrill and Elizabeth (Woodward) Utley, both natives of North Carolina, and the progenitor of the family in America was an Englishman who came to the colony of Virginia with the Jamestown settlers. It was about 1820 when Merrill Utley removed to Kentucky, locating in what is now Marshall county, where he entered from the government a tract of land that still remains in possession of the family, being now owned by our subject and occupied by his mother, who has occupied the same house for over sixty years.

William W. Utley was born in North Carolina in 1818, and was therefore quite young when brought by his parents to this state, where his remaining days were passed. After reaching mature years he wedded Miss Sallie Ann Holland, who was born in Lyon county, Kentucky, in

1820, a daughter of John and Catherine (Parrent) Holland, representatives of old Kentucky families. Her father was one of the pioneer settlers on the Jackson Purchase, and one of the first members of the Methodist church of that locality. He assisted in organizing a church of that denomination at his own home, and his residence was the meeting place of the congregation for several years. He lived to pass the age of four score years, and he had five sons, all of whom are yet living with one exception. The daughter became Mrs. W. W. Utley and the mother of our subject. At the time of his marriage the father took his bride to the old family homestead in Marshall county, and there he carried on farming throughout the remainder of his days. To him and his wife were born nine children. Mr. Utley belonged to the Baptist church, and his wife has been a life-long member of the Methodist church. He died on the old homestead in 1878, and there she still resides, a venerable lady who has the highest respect of all who know her.

Newton W. Utley was reared upon a farm in his native county, and was educated in the district schools until such a time as he provided for himself better educational privileges. His own labor supplied him with the means which enabled him to enter Vanderbilt University, at Nashville, Tennessee, and he found it necessary to work upon the grounds of the institution at night in order to secure the necessary text books. The elemental strength of his character was thus manifested. Necessity is the great spur to labor, and when supplemented by a laudable ambition forms the sure foundation upon which to build success. He not only continued his course to graduation, but won the three honors of his class, thus making a record which has hardly been equaled in the history of the first institution of learning in the south.

In 1880, immediately following his graduation, Mr. Utley entered the ministry, and was sent by the Methodist Episcopal church, South, to Japan, to enter the mission field. He entered upon what was known as a self-sustaining mission; that is, there was no support provided for him by the church. He labored there untiringly in the interest of the church, and his efforts were far-reaching, bringing to the people of that field the benefits of the gospel and of faith in Christianity. In 1890 he had married Miss Mary S. Childers, of Eddyville, Kentucky, and while they were residing in Japan two of their children were born; Newton Willard and Francis Stacker, while since their return Merrill Holland, born in Eddyville, has been added to the family.

Because of the continued ill health of his wife, Mr. Utley left the mission field and returned to his native land, taking up his residence in Eddyville in 1896. He now turned his attention to the law, which he had studied previous to pursuing his university course, and in 1897 he was admitted to the bar, since which time he has risen to a position of distinction among the ablest lawyers of the state. His preparation of cases is most thorough and exhaustive; he seems almost intuitively to grasp the strong points of law and fact, while in his briefs and arguments the authorities are cited so extensively and the facts and reasoning thereon are presented so cogently and unanswerably as to leave no doubt as to the correctness of his position or his conclusions. No detail seems to escape him; every point is given its due prominence, and the cause is argued with such skill, ability and power that he rarely fails to gain the verdict desired.

Mr. Utley is a man of strong intellect, clear insight and of marked oratorical power, and these qualities naturally render him a leader of men and a director of public opinion. In 1899 he was elected a member of the Kentucky senate on the Democratic ticket, and he entered upon a brilliant legislative career, becoming a leader in the senate chamber and accomplishing many parliamentary and strategic results. A contemporary publication has given the following account of his political career:

"During the first session of Senator Utley's term the memorable contest of Goebel versus Taylor for the governorship of Kentucky, came before the assemble. On account of his high legal attainments and parliamentary skill, Senator Goebel made Senator Utley one of his advisers. Just as the contest committees were about to finish their work and report to the

assembly for final action, Senator Goebel was shot by an assassin. Thus cruelly wounded, he designated Senator Utley to act in his stead as president pro tem of the senate, which also made him ex-officio chairman of the steering committee. The chairmanship of this committee is the most important and the most delicate position in which a member of the party can serve. Every phase of legislation and every tactic of party policy must be determined by the chairman. The hours that elapsed between the wounding of Senator Goebel and his inauguration as governor were the most vital in the history of Kentucky. The least error or the slightest indiscretion would have precipitated war in the capital and lost the governorship to the Democrats. Though this trying ordeal Senator Utley laid his trained hand on the helm of the state and without the slightest variation from the line of duty, inducted the dying leader into the governorship of Kentucky and thereby reclaimed a victory for his party and saved the good name of the state."

Senator Utley has declined political honors, and yet undoubtedly a brilliant political future awaits him. He has been spoken of as the candidate of his party for Congress, and such a man would prove a force in the national halls of legislation. His strength of character, his intellectuality, his thorough understanding of public questions, his devotion to the general good and his fidelity to the right as he sees it well [sic] entitle him to the leadership of men and make him worthy their confidence and trust. He is an active member of the Methodist Episcopal church and his private life is an exemplification of the traits of character which are always found in the true and, therefore, the really great, citizens. With his family he occupies a beautiful home at Eddyville, overlooking the Cumberland river, and is found there to be a most genial and companionable host.

The article states that Merrill Utley and his wife Elizabeth Woodward were both natives of NC. Merrill Utley was actually from Wake Co, NC. His sister Elizabeth Utley had married [James Woodward](#). Another sister Winifred Woodward (d by 1804) had married Pleasants Woodward, James Woodward's brother. Merrill Utley, Elizabeth Utley, Winifred Utley as well as a brother Jacob Utley (Jr) were four of the children of Jacob Utley Sr and wife Phoebe (Sanders?) of Wake Co, NC. James Woodward and Pleasants Woodward also had a sister named Elizabeth Woodward. These Woodward siblings were three of the children of [Christopher Woodward](#) of Wake Co, NC.

However, Merrill Utley's wife could not have been Elizabeth Woodward as stated in this article. His wife as proven by a Wake Co marriage bond dated Dec 8, 1800 with Jacob Utley (Jr) bondsman was Winifred Jones, apparently a daughter of William Jones and Mary Matthews, born before their marriage in Wake Co, bond dated Feb 15, 1783, Christopher Woodward bondsman. She was named as Winifred Matthews in William Jones' will, but assumed the name Jones in later records. Merrill Utley died about 1837 in Calloway Co, KY. The 1840 Calloway Co census p 96 lists Winney Utley age 50-60 (b 1780-1790) living alone in the household following James Gohene. James Gohene (or Goheen) had married Merrill Utley's daughter Elizabeth Utley. So this was certainly Winifred Matthews/Jones, Merrill's widow. Since Winifred Matthews/Jones survived her husband, Elizabeth Woodward could not have been a second wife.

Although the marriage bond for Merrill Utley and Winifred lists her name as Jones, she was actually born a Matthews but later used the name Jones. William Jones left his will in Wake Co dated March 7, 1800, recorded May 1, 1800. He named wife Mary, her children Winifred Matthews & Reddick Matthews and their children Sytha Jones, Young Jones, Etheldred Jones, and Anderson Jones. Extrs Samuel Northington, Andrew Peddy, Jacob Roland; wits Lewis Bledsoe, David Jones, Lewis Jones.

The will by itself leaves the impression that Mary was previously married to a Mr Matthews, and Winifred Matthews and Reddick Matthews were children by that marriage. But the following record [posted by Lori Addison](#) proves something very different:

Divorces & Separations from Petitions to the North Carolina General Assembly from 1779.

MATTHEWS, Mabel and husband, Reddick. Petition of Mabel MATTHEWS of Wake County sheweth that about three years past she intermarried with Reddick MATTHEWS of said county, commonly

known by the name of Reddick JONES, he being an illegitimate son of William JONES, deceased, of same county. At the time of her marriage with said Reddick, your petitioner had acquired a small portion of property through her own industry. Within a very short time after her said marriage, said Reddick had squandered all the property she had and even broke open her chest to procure what money she had concealed therein to prevent him entirely reducing her to beggary - all of which he spent in Drinking & Rioting, in which dissipated course he continued until having contracted debts, he finally absconded and is now living in Tennessee or some other part of the western country. Your petitioner further states that whatever she can now acquire is continually taken from her to pay the debts of her said husband, contracted before his departure." She prays an act to secure her in such property as she may hereafter acquire. (GASR Nov.-Dec. 1807, Box 3: folder "Petitions-Divorce, etc.") Committee of Divorce and Alimony, to whom the petition of Mabel MATTHEWS was referred, are of opinion that the clemency of the Legislature ought to be extended to [her] relief and recommend the bill be passed. (GASR Nov.-Dec. 1807, Box 2 folder "SCR".) Bill to secure persons therein mentioned such property as they may hereafter acquire: Mabel MATTHEWS of Wake County, wife of Reddick . . . Read third time and passed. (GASR Nov.-Dec. 1807, Box 2: folder "SB 10 Dec.") Published in N. C. Laws, 1807, p. 39.

Reddick Jones m Mavel Wiggins, bond dated Sept 4, 1804 Wake Co, NC, Jesse Jones & Wm Utley bm.

The 1800 marriage bond for Merrill Utley and Winifred Matthews/Jones - with Jacob Utley (Jr) bondsman - also gave Winifred's name as Jones rather than Matthews, so it appears likely that she like her brother Reddick Matthews/Jones was a daughter born to William Jones and Mary Matthews, but born prior to their 1783 marriage. Reddick Matthews/Jones and Winifred Matthews/Jones' brother Etheldred Jones (not the same as Capt Etheldred Jones) married Winifred Woodward, bond dated Feb 28, 1818 Wake Co, daughter of Pleasants Woodward and Winifred Utley, and granddaughter of Christopher Woodward - who was the bondsman for the 1783 marriage of William Jones and Mary Matthews. Their sister Sytha Jones (as named in William Jones' will) became the wife of Jacob Utley (Jr). The March 29, 1805 Wake Co marriage bond recorded her name as Scythia Jones. Merrill Utley was the bondsman.

So these Jones, Utleys, and Woodwards were very closely connected in Wake Co.

Merrill Utley and wife Winifred Matthews/Jones had moved to Logan Co, KY between 1805 and 1807. It's not clear whether [James Woodward](#) moved to Logan Co with Merrill Utley or possibly joined him there soon afterward, but the two men can be found together in Logan Co in 1807.

Logan Co. Ky Deed Bk B pg 85 Deed Abstracts 1792-1813

Indenture 27 Feb 1807 Amos West and wife Frances West, one part and Morrel Utley other part, tract on head branches of Spring Creek Waters of Red River, being 200 acres.
Wit. Richard Wilkins, [James Woodward](#)

James Woodward's brother [Richard Woodward](#) had settled just across the Red River in Robertson Co, TN at about the same time. Needham Green and wife China Woodward (daughter of Pleasants Woodward and Winifred Utley) were apparently in Robertson Co, TN too as Needham Green appeared as a member of a road crew in the court minutes.

[no date at top of page, entry begins on a previous page not copied, after Jan 1809 but before Nov 1811]

Baynard, Thos. Haynes, William Gilbert, Jas- Gilbert, John Gilbert, [James Eubanks](#), Obediah [Chirm?/Chism?], James Martin, Joshua Thurman Elijah Eubanks, Martin Eubanks, Saml Spearman, Abraham Martin, John Biggs, Saml [Wookey?], David [Lugler?], Jutsing Forrester, Jno Forister, Joel Forester, John Hight, Jonathan Forister, Ivan L Armstrong David Groves, Thomas Haynes, Dudley Payne, John Hazlet, Saml Spearman Jonathan Noble Warren Payne _?_ Thos. Williams, John Young, [Needham Green](#), William Martin Pleasant Boles James Host [Lulicom?] Sase [Richard Woodard](#), Jonathan Noble, Wm T. Payne James Yates, John Sumerville Gideon Payne clean [several unreadable words] and that Saml. Pearson oversee the said road -
Book 2, p 393 Robertson Co, TN Court Minutes

Merrill Utley and James Woodward remained close for the remainder of their lives. Both left Logan/Simpson Co and settled on Jackson Purchase land in Caldwell Co, KY by 1820. Both were listed on the Calloway Co, KY census in 1830, but this was not the result of a move. Their land simply fell into the newly created county. Neither were listed on the 1840 census. Merrill Utley had died. No proof of James Woodward's death has been found.

So how did it happen that this article named Merrill Utley's wife as Elizabeth Woodward, a native of NC - **and** stated that "the progenitor of the family in America was an Englishman who came to the colony of Virginia with the Jamestown settlers"? No Utley records have been found associated with Jamestown, but there is a record of an early Christopher Woodward arriving in Jamestown in 1620. This agrees with Andrew Jackson Woodward's knowledge of an early Woodward ancestor who moved from England to Jamestown.

Although this Elizabeth Woodward couldn't have been Merrill Utley's wife, she must have existed, and whoever provided the information for this article remembered her in association with Merrill Utley's family. Merrill's mother was not a Woodward, his wife was not a Woodward, and none of his children married a Woodward. So how did Merrill's family have any knowledge of this Elizabeth Woodward **and** the Jamestown history behind the Woodwards?

When [Christopher Woodward](#) of Wake Co died in 1785, several of his children were underage and required guardians - including a daughter Elizabeth Woodward.

Dec 6, 1785 Jacob Utley appointed guardian of Elizabeth Woodward, orphan of Christopher Woodward; signed by Silas Green, John Norris. From Christopher Woodward estate file at NC Archives.

This was Jacob Utley Sr, father of Merrill Utley (m Winifred Matthews/Jones), Winifred Utley (m Pleasants Woodward), Elizabeth Utley (m James Woodward), and Jacob Utley Jr (m Scythia/Sytha Jones). Jacob Utley Sr died 1796/97. His widow Phoebe died 1804/5. Both left wills naming the same children or the husbands of those children. From Phoebe Utley's will, it's obvious that she was the mother of all the children and there could not have been another wife. However, there are LDS submissions that name an Elizabeth Woodward as Jacob Utley Sr's wife - with a marriage date of Dec 6, 1785. This date is exactly the same as the date of the guardian record. No marriage bond or Bible record has ever been found to document the marriage of **any** Jacob Utley to Elizabeth Woodward.

No records for Christopher Woodward's daughter Elizabeth have been found in Wake Co after this 1785 guardian record. An Eliza. Woodward did purchase a chest at the Christopher Woodward estate sale, but it's not clear if she was the daughter Elizabeth Woodward or an older Elizabeth Woodward, possibly an unidentified wife of one of Christopher Woodward's older sons. But we do know that Christopher Woodward's daughter Elizabeth must have been closely associated with Jacob Utley Sr's family. Orphans did not **have** to live with their guardians although they sometimes did.

1810 Logan Co, KY census:

Murrel Utley 1 1 0 1 1 - 2 1 1 1 1 - 0 4 ([p 166](#))

(1M 0-9, 1M 10-15, 1M 26-44, 1M 45+, 2F 0-9, 1F 10-15, 1F 16-25, 1F 26-44, 1F 45+, 4 slaves)

James Woodward 2 1 0 1 1 - 2 1 0 1 0 - 0 0 ([p 175](#))

(2M 0-9, 1M 10-15, 1M 26-44, 1M 45+, 2F 0-9, 1F 10-15, 1F 26-44)

Who were the M and F 45+ listed on Merrill's census? They could not have been Merrill's parents as both had died well before 1810. The M could not have been Winifred's father William Jones as he too was dead. No record for the death of Winifred's mother Mary Matthews Jones has been found. Could this F 45+ have been the Elizabeth Woodward that the Utley family seems to have remembered in association with Merrill's family?

1820 Caldwell Co, KY

Merrill Utley p 57

1 1 0 0 1 0 - 1 1 0 1 1 - 0 3

1M 0-9, 1M 10-15, 1M 26-44, 1F 0-9, 1F 10-15, 1F 26-44, 1F 45+, 3 slaves

(Merrill Utley and wife Winifred Matthews/Jones would still have been in the 26-44 age frame. There is still an unexplained F 45+.)

listed right after Merrill:

Jacob Utley p 57

0 1 0 0 0 1 - 0 1 2 1 0 - 0 1

1M 10-15, 1M 45+, 1F 10-15, 2F 16-25, 1F 26-44, 1 slave

(This was Merrill's brother Jacob Utley Jr and wife Scythia/Sytha Jones, Winifred Matthews/Jones' sister.)

five more entries, then

James Woodard p 57

0 1 0 0 0 1 - 1 1 3 1 0 - 0 1

1M 10-15, 1M 45+, 1F 0-9, 1F 10-15, 3F 16-25, 1F 26-44, 1 slave

1830 Calloway Co, KY

Merril Utley p 193

males 0 0 1 1 0 0 0 1 1M 10-14, 1M 15-20, 1M 50-60 (Merrill Utley b 1770-1780)

females 0 1 1 0 0 0 1 1F 5-9, 1F 10-24, 1F 40-50 (Winifred Matthews/Jones b 1780-90)

James Woodard p 200

males 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 1M 60-70 (James Woodward b 1760-1770)

females 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 1 1F 60-70

Joan Brink's book on the Utley family gives Merrill Utley's wife as "Winnifred Jones <Elizabeth>" Ms. Brink used the brackets to indicate differing or conflicting records for names, dates, or places that had been found. She gives a birth date for Winnifred Jones as 10 Feb 1784 in Wake Co. Her source for this was a family group sheet prepared by Francis Mae Baker in custody of Mormon Genealogical Library, Sumner, Washington - not exactly the most reliable of sources. I have no idea how Francis Mae Baker acquired this birth date for Merrill Utley's wife or whether or not it's reliable. From the way Ms. Brink presented this family, it's impossible to tell if the Baker group sheet gave Merrill's wife's name as Winifred Jones or Elizabeth, so we don't even know whose date of birth this was supposed to be. But 10 Feb 1784 could not possibly be the birth date for Winifred Matthews/Jones. The 1800 will of William Jones of Wake Co named Winifred as Winifred Matthews, and it's clear she was born before William Jones married Mary Matthews. Since the date of the William Jones and Mary Matthews' marriage bond was Feb 15, 1783, Winifred Matthews must have been born prior to this marriage date - but the birth date given by Ms. Brink is a year after the marriage. Did the date come from a reliable record? It agrees with Merrill Utley's wife's age on the 1830 census, but it could not be Winifred Matthews/Jones' true date of birth. Was there a family record kept that listed Winifred's birth later than it really was to try to disguise her apparent illegitimate birth?

Another possible explanation for the Elizabeth Woodward who was remembered by the Utley family...

It has been assumed that Merrill Utley's sister, Elizabeth Utley, wife of James Woodward, had died by 1804 when her mother [Phoebe Utley](#) wrote her will. Near the end of the will, when Phoebe named all her children, she named sons-in-law James Woodward and Pleasants Woodward but not their wives, Elizabeth Utley and Winifred Utley. However, she also named son-in-law Powell Farrar rather than his wife Phoebe (Utley) Farrar. This daughter was obviously still living as Phoebe Farrar had been named as an heir earlier in the will. Phoebe Utley did not name all her living children as heirs in the first part of the will - only some of them. The other children were mentioned in the latter part of the will, but in the case of married daughters, Phoebe named their husbands instead. Pleasants Woodward's wife Winifred Utley had apparently died prior to 1804, but Powell Farrar's wife Phoebe (Utley) Farrar was still very much alive. So it's possible that James Woodward's wife Elizabeth Utley was still living too, but, like some of her living siblings, wasn't mentioned in the first part of the will. Since James Woodward and Merrill Utley both moved to Logan Co, KY at about the same time, and then later moved on together to Caldwell/Calloway Co, KY, this suggests that Merrill's sister Elizabeth (Utley)

Woodward had not died. Could she have been the Elizabeth Woodward that Merrill Utley's family remembered? Did someone confuse Merrill's sister with his wife?

To me, this seems a more likely explanation, but neither case can be proven. We are just very fortunate that this mix-up occurred and someone remembered the family history about the Englishman who settled at Jamestown.

Additions and corrections are welcome! Contact [Frances Cullom Harper](#) .

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