

FURTHER NOTES ON PHELPS

Louis F. Giles

This effort began as an attempt to determine the parents of Priscilla Phelps who married Dennis Griffith on 28 October 1810, in Anne Arundel County.¹ Several genealogies of the Griffith family have identified Priscilla Phelps as the wife of Dennis Griffith, yet none have identified her parents.² A great deal of research on the Phelps family of Anne Arundel County was published by Robert Barnes in the *Maryland Genealogical Society Bulletin*.³ As a result of this effort, additional information can be correlated to the Barnes article, and the numbering scheme below, is based upon that used in the article.

Although Priscilla's parents still have not been definitively identified, there is some evidence presented suggesting their identity. Based upon a process of elimination, using known Phelps descendants, as well as geographical location, it appears that Priscilla Phelps may have been the daughter of Walter and Margaret Chaney Phelps of Severn in Anne Arundel County.

Charles Phelps (9) Family

Charles Phelps (9), son of Walter (1) and Elizabeth Phelps, was born on 17 October 1699 and married Susannah Stephens on 9 December 1723. Church records identify one child of Charles and Susannah - Zebulon, born 25 May 1731.⁴ I have been unable to find any other mention of either Elizabeth or Zebulon Phelps and it may be that they were both deceased by 1739 when Charles, identified as a carpenter, sold 60 acres of *Phelps' Choice* to William Anderson.⁵ Charles (9) and his late brother John's (4) widow, Susannah Meek Phelps, had received equal 100 acre shares of *Phelps' Choice* (located near the

¹Baltimore County Circuit Court Marriage Index (1800-1811), MSA.

²See, for example, R.R. Griffith, *Griffith Genealogy*, (Baltimore, 1892); Griffith Family Committee, *Charles Robert Griffith of Anne Arundel County* (privately published), MHS.

³Robert Barnes, "The Phelps Family", *Maryland Genealogical Society Bulletin*, Vol. 34, No. 4, pp. 364-378, MHS.

⁴*Ibid.*

⁵Anne Arundel Land Records, RD3, fol. 150, MSA.

FURTHER NOTES ON PHELPS

Patuxent Great Fork) from Walter Phelps (2) in 1724.⁶ The 1739 deed makes no mention of any wife of Charles.

Charles must have remarried by 1747 as wife Margaret is referenced in the deed of sale of the remaining acreage of *Phelps' Choice*.⁷ Also, in 1747, Charles patented the 50 acre *Phelps His Fancy* on the east side of Severn Run and moved to this location.⁸ John (4) Phelps' son, John (4a), received the nearby tract *Mistake in Friendship* in his mother's will in 1766.⁹ In 1757, Charles Phelps, at 'the head of Severn,' reported a strayed gelding in the *Maryland Gazette*.¹⁰

Charles and Margaret had a least one child, Walter Phelps. Two pieces of evidence point to this fact. First, a Walter and Margaret Phelps are identified in the land records as selling *Phelps His Fancy* in 1787,¹¹ the land descending to Walter from his father. Also, the 1820 Census for Anne Arundel County lists Walter as the "son of Charles." It is likely that Charles Phelps died around 1770. St. Anne's Vestry Minutes note that Charles, being poor, was provided £30 in January 1770. Wife Margaret was provided £30 in March 1772, possibly indicating Charles was, by then, deceased.¹²

Walter Phelps (9a) married Margaret Chaney by Anne Arundel County Marriage License dated 10 March 1781.¹³ Walter was born about 1750 and died about 1828 in Severn. In 1783, he was listed in Severn Hundred living near, or with, Greenbury Pumphrey on *Mistake in Friendship*, the land inherited in 1766 by his cousin John (4a) Phelps.¹⁴ In 1799, Walter Phelps purchased 200 acre *Batchelor's Chance* located on Long Bridge Branch (now Saw Mill Branch) of the Patapsco River.¹⁵ In 1811, Walter and Margaret Phelps sold

⁶Anne Arundel Land Records, SY1, fol. 48, MSA.

⁷Anne Arundel Land Records, RB3, fol. 8, MSA.

⁸Maryland Land Office (Patent Record), TI4, fol. 603, MSA.

⁹Maryland Prerogative Court, Liber 35, fol. 251, MSA.

¹⁰Karen Green, *The Maryland Gazette*, 1727-1761, p. 195.

¹¹Anne Arundel Land Records, NH2, fol. 542, MSA.

¹²St. Anne's Vestry Proceedings, Vol. 2 (1767-1818), pp. 36,43, MHS.

¹³Gaius M. Brumbaugh, *Maryland Records*, 2:462, MSA.

¹⁴Assessment List of Anne Arundel County, 1783, MSA.

¹⁵Anne Arundel Land Records, NH9, fol. 656, MSA.

Batchelor's Chance and moved with their sons to the adjacent tract *Addition to Timber Ridge*.¹⁶ Walter and sons Richard (9a1) and James (9a2) are listed sequentially in the 1810 Census for Anne Arundel County. Shortly after the death of his wife in 1817, son James deeded the approximately 140 acre *Addition to Timber Ridge* to his parents, Walter and Margaret, for life, and then to James' sons, Walter, Ebenezer and Joshua.¹⁷ Margaret Chaney Phelps, wife of Walter Phelps (9a), listed her age as between 80 and 90 in the 1830 Census for Anne Arundel County and died shortly thereafter.

The following two children of Walter (9a) and Margaret Chaney Phelps can be positively identified: Richard (9a1) (born about 1783) and James (9a2) (born about 1785). Another likely child was Priscilla Phelps (born about 1794). Several data points lead to this suggestion. First, marriage records for Richard and James Phelps appear in the Baltimore County Circuit Court marriage records, unlike most marriage records of the Phelps family of this period which are recorded in the Anne Arundel County records. Richard Phelps married Charlotte Stewart on 1 January 1806 and James Phelps married Susannah Stewart on 7 January 1806.¹⁸ The marriage of Priscilla Phelps to Dennis Griffith on 28 October 1810 is also included in these records. The ministers associated with the marriages are of the Methodist Protestant faith and it is likely that the location of the family within the Severn Circuit is responsible for these records appearing in the Baltimore Circuit Court. Other Phelps relatives appear to be located further south in the Patuxent Forks and South River areas.

Priscilla Phelps Griffith died on 2 December 1838.¹⁹ Census records for 1820 and 1830 place her year of birth between 1790 and 1794. Although the 1810 Census record for Walter Phelps shows no daughter in this age bracket, the record for son Richard does show a female of age 10-16. This is certainly too old for any daughter of Richard, thus it may be that his sister Priscilla was with him at the time of the census, placing her of age 16 or 17 at the time of marriage. Finally, the 1820 Census for Dennis Griffith lists one female of age 16-26 and one female aged 26-45. Again, Dennis and Priscilla had no daughter of this age

and it may be that Priscilla, now of age 26, was listed in both age groups. This would match an age of 16 in the 1810 Census and be consistent with a listed age of 30-40 in the 1830 Census.

Additionally, the Walter Phelps and the Robert Griffith (father of Dennis) families were close neighbors geographically at the time of Dennis and Priscilla's marriage in 1810. The Griffith's resided in Severn on the parcel of land called *Partnership* while the Phelps resided on nearby *Batchelor's Chance*. Finally, it is also of note that Allen Griffith, eldest son of Dennis and Priscilla Phelps Griffith, named two of his children Walter and Margaret, possibly after their maternal grandparents. Another child was named Richard, possibly named for Priscilla's brother. The children of Priscilla Phelps and Dennis Griffith are listed in R. R. Griffith's *Griffith Genealogy*.

The children of Richard D. (9a1) and Charlotte (also recorded as Charity) Stewart Phelps were:²⁰

Nelson (b. ca. 1812, d. 16 Aug. 1898), m. 1. Ellen Benson, 2. Elizabeth Shipley;
Andrew J. (ca. 1818), m. Mary Ann Benson;
Richard D. (ca. 1825), m. 1. Martha Benson, 2. Julia Chaney;
Margaret, m. Edward Anderson;
Susan, m. Joshua Anderson;
Ann, m. John Hawkins;
Mary, m. Eden Benson

Richard Phelps died 7 September 1855 and Charlotte, his wife, died 29 April 1851.

The children of James (9a2) and Susannah Stewart Phelps were:²¹

Walter (b. ca. 1810, d. ca. 1831);
Ebenezer (ca. 1813), m. Margaret Mewshaw;
Joshua (b. ca. 1815, d. ca. 1841)

Susannah Phelps likely died by 1818, as on 6 January 1818 James

¹⁶Anne Arundel Land Records, NH16, fol. 594, MSA.

¹⁷Anne Arundel Land Records, WSG4, fol. 472, MSA.

¹⁸Baltimore County Circuit Court Marriage Records (1800-1811), MSA.

¹⁹See note 2.

²⁰Anne Arundel County Circuit Court (Equity Records), NHG5, fol. 205, MSA.

²¹17 MD 120, Maryland Court of Appeals.

married Elizabeth Lawrenson.²²

The children of James (9a2) and Elizabeth Lawrenson Phelps were:²³

James (b. ca. 1819, d. 16 August 1898), m. 1. Elizabeth Stinchcomb, 2. Martha Mewshaw;
Hannah (ca. 1821);
Nelson (ca. 1823);
Richard (ca. 1825), m. Harriet Sappington;
Elizabeth (ca. 1826);
Ellen (ca. 1827);
Charles (b. ca. 1828, d. 28 October 1879);
William (b. ca. 1830, d. 10 March 1865);
Austen (ca. 1833);
Ann (ca. 1835)

James Phelps died in 1847, owning over 700 acres of land in the Severn area.

John Phelps (4) Family

John Phelps (4) son of Walter (1) had issue Mary (25) and John (4a) before his death by 1725, when Susannah Meek Phelps married William Anderson. John Jr. married Priscilla --- by 1759 when he sold a portion of *Mistake in Friendship* received from his mother Susannah Anderson to Nathan Pumphrey.²⁴ John and his sister Mary Phelps Howard are mentioned in their mother's will in 1766.²⁵ John and Priscilla appear to have relocated to Frederick County by 1768.²⁶ No issue of John and Priscilla have been identified, although it may be that the Eli Phelps identified in the 1790 census for Frederick County is a son of John and Priscilla.

Walter Phelps (10) Family

²²Baltimore County Circuit Court Marriage Records (1812-1821), MSA.

²³See Note 21.

²⁴Anne Arundel Land Records, BB2, fol. 207, MSA.

²⁵See Note 9.

²⁶Anne Arundel Land Records, IJB2, fol. 73, MSA.

I believe it may be that the George Phelps (18) identified in the records as a son of Walter (2) and Rose Bazil Phelps was misidentified and was instead the son of Walter (10) and Mary Bazil Phelps. A birth date of 4 July 1730 for George (30) Phelps fits the time frame of the birth of Walter (10) Phelps' son George and would have been at least six years after the birth of Walter (20) and Rose Phelps last child.

There is evidence to suggest that Isaiah Phelps (27) and John Phelps (29), sons of Walter (10) Phelps, are the same individual. As noted, Isaiah was not mentioned in his fathers' will which was proved March 1764, yet in a 1765 deed, Walter's sons Isaiah (of Prince George's, County), George and Joseph dispose of the remainder of the land inherited from their father.²⁷

It appears that George (30), son of Walter (10), married Deborah --- and had issue Robert (30a), George (30b), Deborah (30c) and Mary (30d). This determination is based principally upon land records and the geographic location of this line of the Phelps family. George Sr. was deceased by 1776. Robert (30a), in his 1799 will, left his entire estate to his brother George then residing in Frederick County. George Phelps (30b) married Emma Peirce in 1795 and both are listed in the 1850 Frederick County Census, George of age 80, placing his birth around 1770, and Emma, age 79.

Bazil Phelps (15)

The unborn child listed in the will of Bazil Phelps was Absolute Phelps.²⁸

William Phelps (20) Family

As noted by Barnes, we know the following sons of William were alive in 1796: William, John, Richard, Joseph, Joshua and Jacob. I have found no records that provide definitive information regarding any children of these brothers. Census records for 1800 and 1810 indicate that at least Jacob and Joseph had children.

²⁷Anne Arundel Land Records, BB3, fol. 332, MSA.

²⁸Anne Arundel Orphans Court Proceedings, (1795-1805), ACC #4802, p. 58, MSA.

← Could our James have been here?

There is reason to believe that the Joseph Phelps of Annapolis was not the Joseph (44) son of William (20) Phelps, but may have been a brother of Ezekial Phelps and thus a son of Isaiah. Joseph Phelps, of Annapolis, listed his age as 35 in a 1799 militia list for Annapolis placing his birth in 1764.²⁹ This is consistent with later census records. Joseph (44) the son of William appears in the 1800 and 1810 census living near his brothers William and Jacob, near Patuxent Forge in Anne Arundel County, and was born in 1754.

Joseph, of Annapolis, married Catherine Thompson by Anne Arundel County Marriage License dated 8 August 1801 and died in 1833. In his wife Catherine's will of 1838, she lists their children Ann Catherine, Mary and Julia. It is unknown if Joseph had any male heirs, however, it is curious that a Joseph Phelps, shoemaker, shows up in the 1850 Census in Annapolis. Census records for 1810, 1820 and 1830 show a number of male children living with Joseph, however records indicate he was a shoemaker and continually employed young apprentices, thus making it difficult to determine the family's children by Census records.

Joseph (44), of William, married Sophia Taylor and had died by 1820 when wife Sophia appears in the Census. Based on census records, it appears that Joseph and Sophia had several children, however it is difficult to determine who they were.

Cora DuLaney, in her book *Anderson of the Great Forks of the Patuxent*, indicates that Captain Richard Phelps of the Revolution had issue Richard Phelps who married, first Sarah Anderson in 1822, and second Delila Chaney; and Susan Phelps, who married Joshua Anderson.³⁰ However, as noted previously in this article, the Susan Phelps who married Joshua Anderson was the daughter of Richard Phelps, son of Walter and Margaret Phelps. The Richard Phelps identified by Mrs. DuLaney as the son of Captain Richard, had issue Joshua, Edward Jackson, Thomas, Miranda, and Mary Amanda. This Richard Phelps is listed in the 1850 and 1860 Census for Anne Arundel County living in the Patuxent Forge area, which would be consistent with the location of the William Phelps (20) farm. His age in 1850 is

listed as 52 and wife Delila as 53. I have been unable to locate a Captain Richard Phelps of the Revolutionary War, although a Captain Richard Phelps did command a company from Elk Ridge in the War of 1812. If this were the Richard Phelps (43), son of William (20), he would have been about sixty years of age. Captain Richard Phelps may have been the son of Walter Phelps as he would have been about thirty years of age at that time, or alternatively, may have been a grandson of William (20) Phelps.

It may be that the Richard Phelps listed by Mrs. DuLaney as the son of Captain Richard was the son of Jacob (46) and Parthenia Phelps. An age in 1850 of 52 for Richard corresponds nicely with the birth of Jacob and Parthenia's son Richard (46). Adding further credibility to this is the fact that Thomas, son of Richard, named a daughter Parthenia, possibly after his grandmother.³¹

Based on Census listings and geographical data, it is likely that at least Elijah, George, William, Jacob, Joseph and Cammel Phelps were grandsons of William Phelps (20), but who their fathers were is unknown.

²⁹F. Edward Wright, *Maryland Militia War of 1812*, Vol 4, p. 1.

³⁰Cora Anderson DuLaney, *The Andersons from the Great Fork of the Patuxent*, (Odenton, MD:1948).

³¹*Ibid.*