

Bledsoe Holder (abt 1789 -1861) composed May 2012 by Mary Urban (marylu@urbans.us)

Accepted as facts:

1. Bledsoe Holder' old stone in the Grayson Co. TX Georgetown Cemetery gave his birth as 20 Dec 1783 and his death as 14 Aug 1862. His new stone has his death as 14 Aug 1861. A memorial stone in the Fairview Cemetery in Denison, Grayson, TX gives his birth year as 1789.
2. We have not found a Bledsoe Holder listed in 1810 census anywhere.
3. Bledsow [sic] Holder is listed on the Franklin Co. TN Tax and Voter Registration List for 1812, along with 2 Johns, Moses, Tassy, Martin and Solomon Holder.
4. From the Carthage Gazette dated Jun 16, 1815 of Smith Co. TN, under the heading "Franklin County Taken Up" (about the 4th listing out of a lot of listings): "Taken up by Bledsoe Holder, Norwood's Creek, a brown filly, 3 yrs. old, branded with the figure 8 on the rear shoulder and buttock; appraised to \$18.00" At the end of those listings was: E. Floyd Ranger June 2, 1815. Norwood's Creek runs mostly south, slightly east from Winchester toward the Sinking Cove District.
5. Bledsoe Holder was named the administrator for a Martin Holder's estate in 1823 in Jackson County, AL, but no relationship is specified. A Sally Holder is listed as buyer of dresser, bed and furniture, a cow, hogs, stove, etc. so it seems likely that she was the widow. We don't know Martin's age, although he was also listed in the 1812 Franklin Co. TN tax list, so was an adult at that time. Bledsoe named a son Martin Austin. Other buyers at the estate sale included John Holder Sr., Mark Holder and Edom Holder.
6. 1830 Jackson Co. AL: Bledsoe Holder age 20-30 [sic]; 2 males 0-5; 2 males 5-10; 1 male 10-15; 1 female 20-30 [sic]; 1 female 5-10 [Who is this female?] 2 females 10-15 [Samantha and Amanda]
7. Land records in the Huntsville Land Office show Bledsoe Holder purchasing 38.25 acres of Section 12 (#2422) and 76.81 acres of Section 19 (#2415) on July 8, 1830, and 38.67 acres of Section 18 on 20 June 1832 (#4980), but he probably had been living in that area for ten or more years, as his children list Alabama as their state of birth.
8. The Mount Gilead Baptist Church of Christ at Forks of Crow Creek dismissed Bledsoe and Elizabeth Holder by letter in Oct 1837.
9. In the US Land Office, Springfield, MO for the period Feb 1838 to Feb 1839 (Vol 5 p 661), Bledsoe Holder purchased 80 acres of land in Section 10, Township 31, Range 24 (Polk County).
10. 1840 Polk Co. MO: B. Holder age 40-50; 1 female 30-40; 2 males 0-5; 4 males 5-10; 2 males 10-15; 2 males 15-20; 2 females 20-30 [Who is the 2nd one? Since Amanda was married, one would be widowed Samantha, with her little son William January]

11. 1850 Polk Co. MO: (House #90) Bledsoe Holder age 56 born VA; Elizabeth 46 SC; John C. 21 AL; Moses F. 17 AL; Jackson A. 16 AL; Benjamin B. 10 AL; and Burtan A. 7 MO.
12. Bledsoe Holder was highest bidder for 320 acres of University Lands dated May 12, 1859 (Certificate #220) in Grayson Co. TX, which he had paid for by Feb 1863.
13. 1860 Grayson Co. TX: (House #1004) B. Holder age 70 born TN; Elizabeth 66 TN; Barton A. 18 MO.
14. Grayson County TX records show W. L. Holder filing probate papers 30 Aug 1861 for Bledsoe Holder who died intestate. Inventory and appraisal was filed 11 Oct 1861.

Discussion of name, birth year and place:

According to testimony given before the Committee on Indian Affairs by Milton Evan Holder in 1907, his grandfather's name was Isaac Bledsoe Holder. That is the only reference I have found to a first name of Isaac. Bledsoe did have a grandson named Isaac Bledsoe, so Milton may have assumed his grandfather was named exactly the same as this brother. I think just about everyone did have two first names, so his first name might well have been Isaac. It seems that others in the family went by their middle names, except sometimes official documents gave either initials or first names. When Bledsoe was selling land in 1834 in Jackson Co. AL, his name was given as Bledsoe Holder Jr. but I don't know of any older Bledsoe. I have never found an initial associated with Bledsoe's name.

Bledsoe Holder was born, according to his old gravestone in the Georgetown Cemetery near Pottsboro in Grayson Co. TX, 20 Dec 1783, although the 1840 Polk Co. MO census has him in the 40-50 age range; the 1850 census gives his age as 56 and the 1860 as age 70, and so I am thinking the memorial stone in Fairview Cemetery in Denison, Grayson Co. TX which gives it as 1789 is probably the correct date. (It is possible for a 9 to be read as a 3). Since his probate papers are dated 1861, he must have died that year, rather than in 1862, so his death date was changed on the new stone erected in 2003.

The 1850 Polk Co. MO census states he was born in VA and wife Elizabeth in SC, son John C. 21 in AL; the 1860 Grayson Co. TX census gives TN for both. I believe that VA is more logical than TN, but if Bledsoe is the son of John Holder and Agnes Bledsoe, then he was born in Surry Co. NC, as this couple were there from 1780 till 1795. The earliest we see Bledsoe named in a record is in TN on the 1812 Franklin Co. TN Tax and Voter Registration List, along with 5 other Holder men, but in 1810 there were none in that locality.

Discussion of census:

1830 shows 8 children for Bledsoe and wife (5 males and 3 females), so I conclude that they were probably married about 15 years earlier, and that the age range reported for the parents is not accurate, but should be more like 30-40. This would correlate with their ages in later census reports.

1840 census shows Bledsoe and wife with 10 males 20 or younger, and 2 females 20-30. Since Amanda is married by then, I don't know who the other female is in this age category. One of the males may have been Lemuel, a son who reportedly died shortly after the family moved to Missouri.

1850 census shows Virginia as state of birth for Bledsoe and South Carolina for wife Elizabeth, with all the children born in Alabama except the youngest, Burtan A. who was born in Missouri.

1860 census shows B. and Elizabeth in Grayson Co. TX with only son Barton A. age 18, still at home. Several of their married children remained in MO when they moved to Texas in about 1858 or 9.

Discussion of Possible Parents and Siblings:

Because of his given name of Bledsoe, many researchers believe him to be the son of John Holder who married Agnes Bledsoe. We know very little about this couple, and have no definitive list of their children. If we are following the right John Holder in the census, then he had a very large family (about 13 children).

Since there are several John Holders of about the same age, they are hard to distinguish from one another in some records. For example, the will of Davis Holder of Pittsylvania Co. VA lists among his heirs a son John, but which one?? There is the John who married Anne about 1770 and who died in abt 1796 in Sampson Co. NC, the John N. who married Elizabeth Jennings and Martha Caldwell in Pittsylvania Co. VA and died in 1863 in White Co. TN, and the John who married Agnes Bledsoe and died aft 1830 in Jackson Co. AL.

It seems from proximity of residence, and family tradition, that Bledsoe was related in some way to the Solomon Holder who died in Franklin Co. TN in about 1843, having come from Surry Co. NC after 1790 and before 1812. Based on proximity, it is also speculated that Bledsoe's brothers may have included Thomas M. Holder born abt 1780 (wife Nancy) of Jackson Co. AL who died before 1850, and Moses born abt 1785 (wife Margaret/Sarah) who also died before 1850 in Jackson Co. AL. Additional possibilities are Martin Holder who died in 1823 in Jackson Co. AL; Tassy Holder who died before Aug 1836 in Jackson Co. AL when his heirs sold property to Mark Holder; Mark Holder who died before 1860 in Franklin Co. TN; and Joshua Holder who died 1878 in Jackson Co. AL.

Bledsoe's Wife and Children

Bledsoe married Elizabeth "Betsy" Stewart in about 1815, probably in Franklin Co. TN or what would become Jackson Co. AL but no record has been found. They had at least these children:

Amanda B. Holder b Jan 1816 AL, d Jan 1907 MO, md William James Bray in abt 1836, 6 children.

Samantha Ann Holder b abt 1818 AL, d abt 1923 TX, md 1)Benj. Looney, 2)John Looney Jr., 11 children total.

William Lawson Holder b abt 1821 AL, d 1876 Grayson Co. TX, md Mary Ann Looney, 11 children.

Martin Austin Holder b Mar 1824 AL, d 1889 MO, md Mary J. Kirby and Elizabeth Jane Leeper, 16 children.

James Lewis Holder b abt 1825 AL d 1863 Grayson Co. TX, md Sarah A. Looney, 9 children.

Lemuel Holder b maybe abt 1827 AL, d between 1840-1850 Polk Co. MO.

John Charles Holder b abt 1829 AL, d bef 1900 Greene Co. MO, md Elizabeth Coats, 8 children.

Moses Franklin Holder b Feb 1833 Jackson Co. AL, d 1887 Greene Co. MO, md Elizabeth Jones, 3 children.

Jackson Argile Holder b abt 1834 Jackson Co. AL, d 1913 Grayson Co. TX, md Lucinda J. Claypool, 5 children.

Benjamin Benton Holder b abt 1837 Jackson Co. AL, d abt 1905 OK, md Mary, 6 children.

Burton A. Holder b abt 1842 Polk Co. MO, d aft 1920 TX, md Nellie Campbell, 6 children.

The family story is that Elizabeth Stewart was the daughter of George Passwater Stewart and his part-Chickasaw Indian wife, Anna Colbert. We estimate her birth as about 1795 and she died in the late 1870s but we don't know exactly when, nor where she is buried. She reportedly lived with family in OK after Bledsoe's death in 1861. Grayson Co. TX is just below the TX-OK border and their homestead was in the northern part of Grayson Co., so not far from OK. Some of her married children lived in OK and some in TX.

To recap their residences:

Bledsoe Holder is first seen in 1812 in the Franklin Co. TN Tax and Voter Registration List. He was probably born in VA or NC. He officially bought land in Jackson Co. AL in 1830 but his children were born there, starting in 1815, so they were probably part of the group of whites living on Indian lands north of the Tennessee River prior to the US purchase of that area which opened it for sale.

In about 1838 the family moved to Polk Co. MO, stopping there after travelling with the Indians who were being moved west to reservations in Oklahoma Territory. The story is that William January Looney, born abt 1837, was carried by his widowed mother, Samantha Holder Looney, in a basket of wool as they left the Indian lands [in Alabama] and moved toward resettlement in Oklahoma. The family stayed in MO about 20 years, until their move to Grayson Co. TX in about 1858, where Bledsoe acquired 320 acres of land and died in August 1861. Several married children remained in the Dade, Greene and Polk counties area of Missouri; some family moved into southern Oklahoma, but my line through William Lawson stayed in Grayson Co. TX.

What we think we know about John and Agnes:

1780 John Holder and wife Agnes were in Surry Co. North Carolina where John had several acres of land surveyed; the chain carriers were Moses Bledsoe and Nathaniel Stewart.

1786 Census for Surry Co. NC lists John, Lewis and Joseph Holder, plus Stewarts and Bledsoes.

1790 Surry Co. NC census (p 7) lists John Holder with 1 male 16 and older, 4 males under 16, and 2 females. In this county at this time were Solomon, Joseph, and James Holder. [Solomon and Joseph are brothers]

1790 Joseph Holder witnessed deed when Nathaniel Stewart and wife Mary Bledsoe sold land in Surry Co. NC.

1795 Surry Co. NC Deeds p 169 dated 4 Feb 1795 John Holder sold to Cornelius Keith Jr. for 100 pounds, 100 acres on Stewarts Creek adjoining Virginia line. Witnesses Hugh Armstrong, Edward Stewart, Martha Armstrong. Signed John (X) Holder and Agnes (X) Holder.

1795 April, John Holder and wife Agnes bought land in Greenville, SC, with Edward Stewart and Moses Bledsoe as witnesses.

1800 Greenville Co. SC census shows a John Holder on line 156 with 3 males and 2 females under 10; 2 males and 1 female 10-16; 1 male 16-26 and 1 male over 45; also 1 female 26-45. Nearby were Moses Bledsoe and several Stewart families.

1830 Jackson Co. AL census (p 40) lists a John Holder in the 80-90 age range, with a male 20-30 and one 30-40; a female in the 60-70 age range, one 15-20 and 1 20-30. Other nearby Holders were Thomas 50-60; Moses 40-50; and two younger men, Bledsoe and Joshua both in the 20-30 range (other sources indicate Bledsoe was older than that).

When the land office was opened at Huntsville, AL in 1831, a John and Bledsoe Holder received patents on land in Township 1S R7E, in section 19, and Tassy and John in section 24 of Township 1S R6E, which is adjacent to section 19 where John and Bledsoe owned. I think they had been living on this land prior to this time, but went through the legal process when it was opened for sale.

Discussion of DNA results

Bledsoe's DNA results (#47 in Holder DNA Project) match these 5 submissions at the 37 marker level:

Jesse Holder #37 b abt 1785 VA, md abt 1805 KY, died Nov 1863 in Bienville Parish, LA, wife unknown. He reportedly moved from Virginia to Warren Co. KY about 1804; his older children report being born there about 1805-1813. Jesse appears on the Warren Co. Tax List for 1806, so I'm thinking that was the year he turned 21, and had his own household. DNA through son Elisha Garrison Holder born 1813 Warren Co. KY who md Mary Neal .

H. Hawkins Holder #55 b abt 1802 and died 1869, both in Jackson Co. AL, believed son of Thomas M. and Nancy Holder; wife Melissa Ann Carr. DNA through son John Oliver Holder b 1842 Jackson Co. AL who md Martha Frances Gary.

Thomas M. Holder #60 b abt 1780 NC, died after 1840 Jackson Co. AL, wife Nancy. DNA through son Bennett Holder b abt 1803 who md Sarah Goins or Going.

James Winston Holder #68 b abt 1820 AL, died after 1880 in Jackson Co. AL, wife Margaret Suitor. Possibly a son of Joshua. DNA through son Elbert Joshua Holder b 1865 Jackson Co. AL, who md Amanda Jane Scott.

Jesse Holder #80 b abt 1750 SC, died aft 16 July 1798 Laurens Co., SC, wife Mary Langston. DNA through son Willis Holder b 1789, d Jasper Co. MS, who md Elizabeth Sims.

Bledsoe's #47 test matches these 7 submissions at 37 markers with only 1 marker difference (all differences are at a rapidly changing marker):

Solomon Holder #08 b abt 1770 VA or NC or SC, died bef Feb 1843 Franklin Co. TN, wife Sarah; brother Joseph. DNA through son Alfred b abt 1797 who md Mary Polly Evans.

Luke Holder #09 b abt 1725 VA, died 1798 Clark Co. KY, wife unknown, father of Col. John Holder. DNA through son John Holder b abt 1753 who md Frances Callaway.

Wilson Holder #22 b abt 1814 SC, died abt 1865 TX, wife Rebecca Muse; son of Solomon #08. DNA through son Thomas Dolphus Holder b 1855 who md Sarah Hampton Henson.

Bledsoe #45 same ancestor as #47; the submitters are 2nd cousins once removed, both through Bledsoe's son William Lawson Holder b abt 1821 who md Mary Ann Looney. This really surprised me, and made me think that 1 rapidly changing marker might mislead us.

Jesse Holder #54 b 1829 LA, died 1920 LA, wife Eliza Jane Cawley. DNA through son James Monroe Holder b 1876 LA who md Mary Nettie Waters.

Malachi Holder #72 b 1802 NC, died 1866 AL, wife Colen Pope, believed son of Jesse and Ann Holder of Sampson Co. NC. DNA through son William McGee Holder b 1855 Randolph Co. AL who md Frances Kirby.

William Holder #82 b abt 1811 AL, died 1875 AL, wife Nancy Smith; may be son of Thomas M. and Nancy. DNA through son Joseph H. Holder b 1847 Jackson Co. AL who md Julia A. Summers.

Speculation about relationships: I'm not ready to say anything here, but would like to figure out something spectacular and reasonable ;o