

# THE SEARCH FOR HIRAM PIPES

*This paper was written by John Hawkins of Lenoir, N. Carolina and presented by him to several genealogical groups. Written, revised in August 2010 by him and provided here with his permission.*

There are two givens that all of us who have done family history for more than a week have learned. The first is sooner or later we'll hit a brick wall, which is, of course, an ancestor whose origins cannot be determined. The second is that some well-meaning family member will tell you the story of the beginnings of the family progenitor. Regardless of the evidence or the lack thereof, the teller passes it along as gospel truth.

My brick wall is my third great-grandfather, Hiram Pipes. The Pipes family has its share of stories of his origins. While I know that probably not another person in this room is interested in the genealogy of the Pipes family, perhaps when I share some of our stories and some possible explanations you can apply the same principles to your family stories in an attempt to prove the story's validity, and maybe even penetrate that brick wall.

First I am going to ask you to accept with me the premise that behind most family legends lies a germ of truth. Sometimes when we look between the lines of the public records we find an element of truth in some of the stories.

I'll begin with three stories about the origin of Hiram Pipes.

First, from the widow of the Rev. J. C. Pipes, a descendant of Hiram's son, Riley: "Hiram Pipes immigrated to the United States, probably soon after the Revolutionary War. He came from England. He was married to Elizabeth Ellison of Germany before leaving Europe. He and his wife were among the first settlers on Dugger Creek which empties into Elk Creek at what is now Darby Post Office."

Second, from Miss Minnie Day who descends from Hiram's daughter, Rebecca, wife of Samuel Day: "Great Grandfather Hiram Pipes was a bound boy in a family of Ellisons. When he married a daughter of the home, her people disinherited her (feeling their superior social standing). Pretty soon the Ellisons moved away from here to some place in Tennessee."

At least those two stories use the same surname for his spouse. I'm surprised she wasn't either an Indian princess or of royal blood.

Third, my branch of the family tells that the ancestor was a child found on the doorstep by an elderly and prosperous but childless couple named Pipes living on Dugger Creek in Wilkes County who reared the child as their own and made him their heir. When he became old enough, they allowed him to choose his own surname, and because of his respect and his appreciation for them he chose their name, Pipes. A variation on the story is that the child on the door step was crying so loudly that they said he had a strong set of pipes and that is how he got his name.

In the next few minutes I am going to explain and perhaps prove or disprove some of the stories, and I'll speculate on some of the others. I'll tell you up front that the story about the "strong set of Pipes" is so ridiculous I will not mention it again.

Let me state before I go farther that the spelling of the name Allison with an A and the name Ellison with an E are used interchangeably for the same family in the public records. You'll hear that name several times in this presentation.

Our first step is to look at the public records to determine what we can about the ancestor. When William Allison makes his will in 1809, Hiram Pipes is one of the witnesses. This is the earliest extant record in public records of the name Hiram Pipes, who would have been about 25 years of age. Six years later in 1815, Hiram Pipes is shown on the muster roll of Captain Carlton's Company detached from Wilkes County as part of the War of 1812. A marriage bond dated 5 November 1816 to Elizabeth Morris is recorded in Wilkes County.

In 1818 Hiram Pipes purchased land in Wilkes County on Beaver Creek near the Allison family. In 1825 he sold his Beaver Creek land when he received a land grant on Dugger Creek near where it empties into Elk Creek, and from this time onward the records support the family tradition that the family lived on Dugger Creek.

The 1850 census lists Hiram Pipes' birthplace as Surry County, North Carolina. In the 1880 census returns, all of the surviving children state that both their parents were born in North Carolina, which seems to debunk the England and Germany story.

Now we are moving into things a bit more complicated.

Hiram Pipes is the only Pipes who is the head of a household in the North Carolina census returns in 1820, 1830, and 1840. In 1850, the first time the census names each individual, he is head of a household on Dugger Creek with his eight unmarried children living with him. There is some evidence that his wife died about 1833. His oldest son, Thomas, who just happens to be my ancestor, is living next door with a wife and three children. Hiram's oldest child, a daughter, is married and living in Ashe County. This is the last census on which Hiram Pipes appears, and records indicate he died about 1855. All of his children except one are married by 1860 and can be found in the census returns in Caldwell, Wilkes, and Watauga counties.

There are no Pipeses listed as head of the household in the North Carolina Census for 1800 or 1810. More than likely Hiram is a hidden statistic in the William Allison household in 1810, but where he is in 1800 is not known.

The only North Carolina census return with a Pipes householder other than the ones which show Hiram is the 1790 census showing John Pipes (a.k.a. Captain John Pipes) living in the Salisbury district of Surry County. No person of the surname is found in the 1785 North Carolina State Census which we all know is grossly incomplete. No census returns for any year show an elderly childless couple named Pipes who could have found the child on the doorstep and gave him their name. It doesn't seem likely that they would have been missed by every census enumerator.

The John Pipes household in 1790 consists of 3 white males over 16, 1 male under 16, 6 females and no slaves. Now in the best of all possible worlds, given the knowledge that Hiram was born in Surry County, that male under 16 should be Hiram Pipes who, according to later

census records, was born about 1784. However neither life nor genealogical research is that simple.

Thanks to the research of Elizabeth Ellsberry, who published a couple of books, and Bob Pipes, who maintains a great Pipes website, and other researchers, we know quite a bit about Captain John Pipes of the 1790 census. In 1777 in New Jersey he married his second wife, Mary Morris, and he left a will in 1821 in Kentucky, naming the children of his second marriage, none of whom is named Hiram. Incidentally the will ignores at least three children who are known to have been born in a first marriage to a woman named Jemima Harriman. A study of the second marriage indicates that John had four daughters and one son, Nathaniel, born between 1780 and 1790, so Nathaniel is the male who is under 16. While most of John's children have family names, keep in mind that no son of this second marriage is named for himself.

By closely examining the Surry County records, we can find another point to consider. From 1780 until 1783, a definite designation is given to John Pipes Senior and John Pipes Junior. In 1783, John Pipes Senior, age early 70s, with a young second wife, whose name is Priscilla (probably Priscilla Bowling), sold his land in Surry County. This man with his wife and three young daughters is found in 1790 and in 1800 in Spartanburg County, South Carolina where his will is probated in 1804 and Priscilla dies there about 1814. Incidentally his will also ignores the children of his first marriage.

From 1783 until 1789, the Surry County records refer only to John Pipes with no Junior or Senior designation. In 1789, the separation again appears when John Pipes Junior is a chain carrier for a land grant surveyed for John Pipes Senior. Captain John Pipes would have been about 50 years of age by this time, but he could have a son named John from his first marriage who would be about 23—an age more likely to be the chain carrier.

The 1790 tax list shows Captain John Pipes with the 250 acres that had been surveyed the previous year, and two white polls. So he had a taxable in his household, the son by his first marriage, who was the aforementioned chain bearer, and one of the males over 16 in the 1790 census. (Incidentally the second male over 16 is unknown.) We have been dealing with three generations of men named John Pipes instead of two as we originally thought. After the elder John Pipes moved to South Carolina about 1783, there would be no need to separate the men named John as Senior and Junior until the younger man named John came of age or perhaps appeared or re-appeared in North Carolina.

How does this John Pipes whom we think is the third generation with the same name fit into the story?

Again we go to the public records. In 1795, Sarah Pipes, "relict [widow] of Isaac Southard," appears in court in Surry County with John Pipes (no Junior or Senior) to show why the children of Isaac Southard should not be bound out. An earlier connection with the Southard family is found when Isaac Southard leaves a will dated 27 November 1790 witnessed by John Pipes (again no Junior or Senior designation—and this is the one time I think we need to blame clerical error). Southard left real property consisting of 200 acres to his wife, whose first name is not given.

John Pipes Senior helped make an appraisal of the estate dated 1 August 1791 and in 1792 Sarah Southard appears on the tax lists with 200 acres of land. In 1794, Sarah Pipes paid the tax on the same 200 acres. Capt. John Pipes with his 250 acres is the only Pipes listed on the

1793 tax list, and there is no listing at all for the 200 acres that Sarah Southard paid taxes for in 1792 and for which Sarah Pipes paid taxes in 1794.

The John Pipes in court in 1795 must have been the one we have been calling Captain John Pipes and he is probably the John Pipes who witnessed Isaac Southard's will. He would also be the John Pipes Senior who made an appraisal of the estate in 1791. There is no need to identify Senior or Junior in 1795 because the younger John Pipes is no longer in North Carolina.

In 1797, about two years after the last Pipes family had left North Carolina, Sarah Pipes, along with several other children of Samuel Carter granted a power of attorney to Reuben Shores. This Power of Attorney identifies Sarah as a daughter of Samuel Carter and his unknown first wife. Incidentally Samuel's second wife, Sarah's stepmother, whom he married about 1771, was Susanna Pipes, sister of Captain John Pipes, and daughter of the elder John Pipes, and his first wife Susanna Hathaway.

Sarah Carter Southard married a Pipes as her second husband, or she would not have been listed as Sarah Pipes on at least three records—too many to blame a clerical error. The only two known adult males named Pipes in Surry County between 1789 and 1795 are Capt. John Pipes, who has a wife, and the John Pipes Junior, who was the chain carrier in 1789, probably the poll on the tax list of 1790 and a statistic in the 1790 census.

Temporarily the scene shifts away from North Carolina. Bob Pipes furnishes information that a man named John Pipes appears in Greene County, Pennsylvania, in 1793 one year before Sarah Pipes' name first appears as a property owner in Surry County. A Greene County history indicates that he is a brother of Joseph Pipes, a long-time resident of the county, and there is ample proof that Joseph is the son of Capt. John Pipes and his first wife, Jemima Harriman.

Now the scene shifts back to North Carolina. Keep in mind that Hiram Pipes was born about 1784, which would have been at least eight years prior to the time we think that Sarah Carter married her Pipes husband.

By 1801, Sarah Carter Southard Pipes had married her third husband, Raleigh Poe. There's no record of a divorce from John or of his death, but John Pipes would have been missing from Surry County for about seven years and could be considered legally dead which would free her to marry again.

In 1802 in Wilkes County, a man named Hiram Carter was bound to James Brown, next door neighbor of William Allison. At the next term of court, Hiram Carter appeared and had the binding revoked. He apparently convinced the court he could support himself perhaps because he was working on William Allison's huge farm.

The only two times Hiram Carter appears in the Wilkes County records are in 1802. He does not fit into any of the Carter families who are in the county at that time. Among these Carter families is a brother of Sarah and that could be how Hiram Carter came to Wilkes County. After Hiram Carter disappears, Hiram Pipes appears in the same neighborhood. It's a broad leap based as much on intuition as anything else that the two—Hiram Carter and Hiram Pipes—are the same person.

The following scenario, somewhat imaginative, begins to develop. We have to keep in mind that the Carters, the Southards, and the Pipes were also interconnected in New Jersey prior to coming to North Carolina.

Hiram Carter could be a natural son of Sarah Carter. His father might be John Pipes, Junior the son of Captain John. Both John and Sarah would have been in their teens at the time of Hiram's birth. While women often got married at an early age, John Pipes might have been considered too young or perhaps unwilling to be forced into a "shotgun wedding." I speculate that he may have gone to South Carolina with his grandfather who left about 1783 which would have been about the same time Sarah learned she was pregnant. He may have stayed there for a few years returning by 1789 when he would have been of age, and Sarah was safely married to Isaac Southard.

Hiram Carter learned at some point that his natural father was a Pipes, so as an adult decided to use his rightful name. This would explain the story that he chose his surname name. Stories about foundlings on the door step are often used to attempt to explain away illegitimate births.

An additional clue for what it's worth is that Hiram's first two children, a son and a daughter, were named for his wife's parents, but his third child and second daughter was named—you guessed it—Sarah. He also had a son named John, but he did not name a child after himself or after his wife.

There is evidence that young Sarah Carter married the older widower Isaac Southard who died about 1791. After Southard's death she and John, now in their twenties, may have married, perhaps in late 1792 or early 1793, maybe under pressure from both their families, to "legitimize" their son. Perhaps John deserted her, going to Pennsylvania, where he had a brother, assumed the status of "single man," eventually married, and had a family there.

We have moved from the realm of factual information into speculation, but speculation based on some facts. It has given the researchers something to work toward, and we may have even started some new family legends for genealogists of the future to prove or disprove.

Before I conclude, I need to clear up the story of Hiram's marriage that supposedly met with disapproval. Remember the marriage bond giving the bride's name as Elizabeth Morris, but the family stories say he married Elizabeth Ellison?

When William Allison wrote his will in 1809, he named all his heirs which included a granddaughter, Betsy Morris. In 1821 when the will was contested, all the heirs of William Allison are again named, and the following statement is important: "A son Thomas Allison died before the said William Allison and left one daughter, Betsy, married to Hiram Pipes."

There were two men named Thomas Allison, cousins, in Wilkes County who could possibly be her father. One married Cassandra Byrd and the other married Ama Morphew. Betsy named her oldest daughter Ama, so is logical that Betsy is the daughter of the Thomas who married Ama Morphew. There is sufficient evidence to rule out Thomas Allison and Cassandra Byrd as Betsy's parents.

Also the widow Ama Morphew Allison married as her second husband Ephraim Norris, and they moved to Tennessee. There is some evidence that Ama's second marriage may not have

been viewed favorably by her family which fits the story that Elizabeth's family moved away, but it may not have been her marriage that met with disapproval, but her mother's second marriage. As for being disinherited, it would have been Thomas' daughter, Betsy, not his widow, who would have inherited Thomas part of William Allison's estate, and she did inherit.

But that still doesn't explain how Betsy had the Morris name on her marriage bond. The late Allan Poe did some research into the Calloway family where a daughter named Frances married a Mr. Morris and had three sons. One son married but died shortly after his marriage, and his widow later married Hiram Pipes. Mr. Poe had proof, but he unfortunately he died before he would give it to me in writing. Incidentally this Morris family is the same one to which Mary Morris, second wife of Capt. John Pipes, belongs.

So Hiram did marry not a daughter of William Allison but a granddaughter, and she had previously been married to a Morris, bringing the family story and the public records into agreement. And Hiram was not bound to William Allison, but more-than-likely employed by Allison when he had his binding to James Brown revoked.

I know that with all I have told you, you are thoroughly confused, but the good news is there is no quiz. If there is a point to this diatribe, it is "Do not rule out the family stories." Examine them in the light of the records, looking between the lines. You might find a little bit of truth there that might help you penetrate the brick wall.