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REPORT TO: Cooksey Research Group
SUBJECT: Possibility to Pursue:
Were John & Judith [—?—] Watts the Parents of Zilpha [—?—] Price Cooksey?

BACKGROUND: The Prevailing Theory—And the Reasons Why It Appears Groundless

For decades, Cooksey genealogists have circulated a basic, undated, package of material created by the late J. L. Cooksey of Texas, wherein he asserts that Zilpha (aka Zilphy) was the daughter of one James Rayburn and wife Mahulda Barfoot (various spellings) and attributes the information to two sources:

1. “Dorothy Crandall who resides at 2301 54th street in Lubbock, Texas ... informed me [*J. L. does not say when*] that ... John C. Cooksey married Zelpha Rayburn on 8 Jan., 1809. She also revealed that Zelpha had been married to Zachariah Price and had two sons before her marriage to John C. Cooksey. Zelpha's mother was Makuldak (Huldy) Burfoot and her father was James Rayburn. Huldy was a Choctaw Indian.” (Cooksey, p. “i” recto)
2. “James W. Cooksey is the son of John C. Cooksey and Zelpha Rayburn. Zelpha was the daughter of James Rayburn and Makuldak, (Huldy), Burfoot. ‘Huldy’ was the daughter of Mike Burfoot. Mukuldak died on Sept. 24, 1845. James Rayburn died on Sept. 14, 1845. Mike Burfoot died on March 1854. . . . The bible spelling of Rayburn is Raeburn.” (Cooksey, p. “6”)

The Bible to which J. L. Cooksey refers is that of his ancestor, Zilpha’s youngest son James William Cooksey. J. L. does not state the whereabouts of the Bible, but his packet includes poor-quality photocopies of the Bible’s ‘family pages’---photocopies on which he silently inserted his own entries for the family of a prominent modern Cooksey with whom he had been corresponding.

The Bible entries do not support the above assertions. However, they reveal the apparent basis upon which both J. L. and Ms. Crandall leaped to a conclusion: The sole references to the names *Rayburn* and *Burfoot* appear on the page of “Death” entries. The following extract shows the context:

Column 1

William Cooksey departed this life March the 28, 1828¹
Elizabeth Cooksey died May the 3 1857
Judy Lizbeth Cooksey died August the 12 ad 1857
Zilphia Cooksey died June the 24 1857

Column 2

James Rabern sc _ departed this life September the 14 1845
Huldy Rabern departed this life September the 24 1845
Michael Miller died this 8th of September AD 1847
Miles Burfoot departed this life March the 15 185_ [?]
Watts Cooksey died this the 12th of July AD 1862
Adlee buler [beeler?] Cooksey died this the 10 of _____

1. This entry, made some 12–15 years after William’s death, errs on the year of death; 1829 is more likely. As shown by William Cooksey’s pension application, he was still alive in September–October 1828 when he filed for a pension; his attorney filed a subsequent document in June 1829, but William did not participate in that filing. See William Cuksey/Cucksey (Pvt., Shadrack Wright’s Co., 1st Regt., Ga. Cont’l. Line), pension application 1278 (and widow’s application R20354); digital images, *Footnote.com* (<http://www.footnote.com> : downloaded 30 August 2008); imaged from *Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant*

The following is obvious from the actual Bible data:

- “Huldy” is *not* identified as a Burfoot or Barfoot.
- “Huldy” is *not* identified as the wife of James “Rabern”

Mrs. Crandall and J. L.’s assertions about Huldy apparently rest upon the following ‘line of reasoning’:

- James and Huldy’s deaths are recorded consecutively, they died 10 days apart, and they are the only Rayburn/Rabern entries in the Bible; therefore, they are likely a ‘couple.’
- The entry for Miles Barfoot is the only other Bible entry for a person of unknown identity; therefore, he was likely a kinsman of the also-unidentified Raberns. (“Michael Miller,” whose entry intervenes between Huldy Rabern and Miles Burfoot, is believed to be father of J. W. Cooksey’s wife Elizabeth Miller.)
- Consequently, many Cooksey ‘family trees’ posted online, assert that Mahulda “Huldy” Barfoot was the daughter of Miles Barfoot (whose given name is misrendered by J. L. Cooksey as “Mike”).
- Huldy’s conversion into “Makulka” is a misrendition of the Biblical *Mahulda*—one apparently inspired by the Indian tradition carried down by most Mississippi Barfoots.²

However:

- The Miles Barfoot—aka Barfield, Barefield, etc.) of this entry was born 1770–1780—making him the same age as his alleged granddaughter Zilpha. Miles did marry in the Choctaw Nation, before 1838, which seems to be the basis for the flawed line of reason that “Makulka,” mother of Zilpha, was Choctaw.²
- The assertion that “Makulka ‘Huldy’ Barfield” was a Choctaw (a tribe centered in Mississippi and extreme western Alabama) is illogical, given the births of Zilpha and her children in eastern Georgia (Creek country) prior to the family’s removal to Mississippi.
- All efforts to find an adult couple named James and Huldy Rabern/Rayburn in Mississippi, Georgia, Tennessee or Alabama, who might have died in 1845, have proved fruitless.
- The record of the alleged marriage of “Zelpha Rayborn” to “John C. Cooksey” on 8 January 1809 is actually a license (no return) issued to “Zilpha Price” and “Jno. Cooksey” (no middle initial).³

A closer analysis of the photocopied Bible spotlights other points relevant to the issue:

- The name “James Rabern” actually appears as “James Rabern [*smear spot*] sc_”. The photocopy cuts off the last part of the last word, leaving only the left half of the second letter.
- Heretofore, genealogists have ignored the ink that is smeared, assumed that the “sc_” was meant to be “se,” and interpreted the entry as “James Rabern *senr.*”
- The portion of the second letter that remains could just as easily be the left half of an *o*. Thus, “James Rabern sc_” might should be read as “James Rabern son.” Or, considering the smear that exists in the space between “Rabern” and “sc_” the entry could be read as “James Rabern’s son.”

Application Files, microfilm publication M804 (Washington, D.C.: National Archives, [n.d.]), specific roll not cited at *Footnote.com*. The widow’s application linked to William’s file is erroneously connected. That woman was the widow of a different man.

2. Miles, an Indian countryman, apparently was missed by census takers in all years but one; see 1840 U.S. census, Neshoba Co., Miss., p. 216, line 8; National Archives microfilm publication M704, roll 132.

On 10 October 1838, “Miles Barfield [*sic*] “of the Choctaw Natiem [*sic*], west of the Mississippi River now, but formally [formerly] a citizen of Holmes County, Mississippi,” gave power of attorney to William G. Herrin of Carroll Co., Miss., to sell the Choctaw reserve in Holmes Co., that he had received under the treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek; see Holmes Co. Deed Book D: 144–45. He qualified for the land, apparently, as a white with an Indian spouse. By 1840 he was back in Mississippi, where he and a presumed brother John were enumerated in Neshoba Co., just across the line from the Newton Co. residences of the Cookseys and Boyds, with whom his offspring intermarried. On 27 February 1841, Miles received a federal patent to nearby land in Lauderdale Co., adjacent to both Newton and Neshoba—specifically, aliquot part 13, sect. 4, township 8N, range 17 E; see *Bureau of Land Management: Land Patent Search* (<http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov>), image copy of patent 25150, Accession/Serial No. 1320_100.

3. Tattall Co., Ga. Marriage Book 1 [Typescript], p. 2; microfilm copy, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

Samuel Alexander	b. 7 October 1811 , Ga.; m. Cynthia Ann Odom ¹⁰
Zilpha	b. 1812–13 , Ga.; m. Thomas William Sessums/Sessions
Katherine	b. 7 June 1816 , Ga.; m. David Gill ¹¹

By William Cooksey:

James William	16 November 1819 , Miss.; m. Elizabeth Miller & Louisa Parker ¹²
Elizabeth	b. 1821 , Miss.; m. Shadrack Odom

Clues to Zilpha's birth family lie in the details of five circumstances:

- Her first known appearance on record.
- The financial assistance she received when John Price sued her for divorce.
- Her relocation in a new county about the time of the divorce.
- Her removal to a distant state; and her choice of families to settle among there.
- The names she gave her sons and daughters; and the names they gave their own offspring.

First known appearance(s)

Zilpha first appears on record in Montgomery County, Georgia, 1799, being sued for divorce by a new husband John Price. The brief notations for that suit, found in the county docket book, report that the suit was dropped shortly thereafter¹³—presumably because of the impending birth of Cader, who would be named for John Price's father.

County records indicate that John Price and Cader Price Sr. had been in the county for several years prior but suggest that Zilpha and John had not married until about 1798.¹⁴ *Because marriages typically occurred in the county in which the bride lived, the odds are great that Zilpha's family was also in Montgomery County.*

The marriage did not last. Only two of Zilpha's children used the Price surname, those born in 1800 and 1802. All subsequent children used the name Cooksey. Montgomery County's court records are sparse for most of that decade; but in January 1809 John Cooksey would obtain a license in adjacent Tattnall, to marry Zilpha (as

10. Harold Graham, "Reverend Cader Price," *Newton County, Mississippi, Historical & Genealogical Society* (http://www.nchgs.org/html/rev_cader_price_famly.html : updated [n.d.] 2010) provides this date but does not identify its source.

11. "Rayborn Family Genealogy Forum," *GenForum* (<http://genforum.genealogy.com/raborn> : accessed 1 June 2008), "Raburn of Amite MS — Zelipha, Tabitha, Burrell, James, and Mark," posted 18 February by Kelly Parks; documentation is still needed.

12. As entered by James William Cooksey in his family Bible.

13. "Montgomery County Appearance Docket, March Term 1799," unnumbered p. 3 (a double-wide page): "John Price vs. Zilphy Price, Divorce, 1799." John's attorney was "Caldwell." Zilpha's was "Flournoy." Flournoy's and Caldwell's first names have not been identified—a necessary prerequisite to potentially discovering their legal files. Sabrina J. Murray, abstractor, *Tattnall County, Georgia, Loose Papers*, vol. 1, 1801–1845 (Homerville, Ga.: Huxford Genealogical Society, 2005), has no Caldwell and only one reference to anyone named Flournoy prior to 1832: this attorney who, in 1802, was also identified only by his last name.

The strongest possibility for Flournoy seems to be Peter F. Flournoy of Hancock County, where Cader Price had outstanding court suits in this period; Flournoy's in-laws, the Burts, also appear in various Montgomery-Tattnall records. (The Burt-Flournoy kinships are ones I have already pursued as part of my children's Morse-Hanson line with whom they interacted ca. 1829–30s in Talbot County, Ga.) For references to John Price's court suits in Hancock County, see "Montgomery County Appearance Docket, May 1795–April 1803," unnumbered p. 2 (double-wide page), FHL microfilm 159,033.

14. No actual marriage record survives. The first known child was born 8 January 1800, as previously shown. Several records suggest that the marriage occurred about September 1798. Two years before, John Price had been given land by his father; on 25 September 1798, his father took back that land and gave his son a smaller tract. Zilpha was not a party to the document by which John granted the title back to his father—as she should have been if they were already married. Meanwhile, on 15 September 1798, Cader Price paid for a marriage license, according to a short list created by the county court. That list apparently reflects fees collected. No record of the license or a bond seems to survive, by which we might identify the parties being married; but Cader died shortly afterwards, with no evidence of a wife. Apparently, he was the surety who paid the license and bond for his son John and Zilpha, and the marriage was likely performed by a j.p. in the wake of the deeds by which the property issues were settled.

See (1) Montgomery Co., Ga., Deed Book "E&F": 37–38, 186–88; (2) the bundle labeled "Montgomery County Marriage Licenses, Inventories, and Wills, 1796–1798," loose sheet 4, for the inventory and appraisement of Cader's estate, listed as item 25; and (3) the unnumbered sheet labeled "List of Marriage Licenses beginning March 22, 1796," which list only male names. Sources (2) and (3) are accessible as Family History Library microfilm 159,033.

“Zilpha Price”). The marriage was not actually solemnized—apparently because Zilpha, as a divorcee deemed at fault, would not have been able to remarry under Georgia law.¹⁵

Zilpha’s source of financial assistance

The brief divorce notes that survive show that Zilpha had her own attorney, a fact that raises three issues:

- Wives of that time and place were *feme covert*s, with no independent property or income unless legal measures had been taken to establish those privileges. No such records were recorded for Zilpha and John Price.
- Aggrieved husbands who sued their wives for divorce, alleging fault on the part of the wife, did not pay for a second attorney to defend the wife against the divorce being sought.
- Zilpha would have the funds to pay an attorney only if someone funded her defense.

Two possibilities exist for the source of Zilpha's financial aid:

- If she did have a paramour, he might have paid the bill. However, in the region in which Zilpha lived (Montgomery and later Tattnall counties) contemporary court records are rife with charges of adultery against couples; and no such charges were filed against Zilpha and anyone else.
- More commonly, when a husband sued a wife for divorce, the legal expenses were paid by the wife's family, who had a vested interest in defending her (and their) honor.

Zilpha’s relocation at time of divorce

Young women with small children, when widowed or divorced, typically moved near relatives for support. On 5 December 1801, part of Montgomery County was split off to create the new county of Tattnall. John Price’s farm remained in Montgomery County. Zilpha made her first appearance as a *sole feme* in Tattnall County, during the May 1803–1 March 1804 registration period for the 1805 Georgia Land Lottery.¹⁶ The implication is that Zilpha’s family lived in that part of Montgomery which was cut off to create Tattnall and she had settled with them after the divorce.

In short, three separate circumstances suggest that Zilpha’s birth family was there in the Montgomery-Tattnall area: her marriage in Montgomery, her access to funds to defend herself against the divorce suit, and her decision to live in Tattnall rather than Montgomery, after the county division.

Zilpha's removal to a distant state & choice of families to settle among

In 1818, Zilpha's common-law husband John Cooksey and his father William sold the last of their Georgia land.¹⁷ Apparently, they were preparing for a removal to South Mississippi, where William Cooksey Jr. had gone

15. Tattnall Marriage Book 1 [Typescript]: 2. No minister or official filed a return, as required when the ceremony was performed. For the prevailing divorce law, see *Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, Passed at Louisville in November and December, 1806* (Louisville, Ga.: Ambrose Day, Printer, 1806), 17; OCR edition online at University of Georgia, *Galileo: Georgia Legislative Documents* (<http://neptune3.galib.uga.edu/ssp/cgi-bin/legis-idx.pl?sessionid=7f000001&type=law&byte=950416>).

16. Virginia S. Wood and Ralph V. Wood, compilers, *1805 Georgia Land Lottery* (Cambridge, Mass.: Greenwood Press, 1964), 281.

17. William Cooksey to Thomas Collier, deed, 6 January 1818, Laurens Co., Ga. Deed Book G:24–25; and John Cooksey to Ambrose Perry, deed, 18 March 1818, Laurens Co. Deed Book H: 23. William and John had left Tattnall for the new county of Laurens about late 1809, the period they drop out of Tattnall records. The fact that this occurred shortly after the unsuccessful marriage attempt of John and Zilpha may be due to the fact that Tattnall courts were vigorously prosecuting couples who lived together outside of a legal marriage. In September 1810, John bought land in Laurens, his only known tract of land, with William as witness; see Laurens Co. Deed Book E:78. In the meanwhile, two Cooksey females, apparent daughters of William, married in Montgomery and Tattnall: Mary Cooksey to Robert Watson on 23 April 1810 (Montgomery County); and Letitia Cooksey, to the county justice John Daugherty, before 5 August 1811. For the latter, see Tattnall Co., Ga., “Inferior Court Sitting for Ordinary Purposes, 1805–1839,” unpaginated minutes for 5 August 1811, which identify Letitia’s husband only by surname; and the proof argument for his identity on pp. 25–26 of Mills, “William Cooksey II (ca. 1745–1829),” dated 10 July 2010.

as a single man after his 1815 discharge from service in the War of 1812.¹⁸ No trace of John has yet been found in Mississippi.

The older William Cooksey (but not John) first appears as a taxpayer in Covington County, Mississippi, in 1819.¹⁹ The 1820 census of Covington places the older William as the head of a household that corresponds, in age and gender, to Zilpha and her children. That census places the household in the following neighborhood sequence:²⁰

p. 17

Mary Leggett	[Widow Benjamin, née Mary Watts, daughter of John Watts Sr. and Judith] ²¹
Norvell Robertson	[of Washington and Warren Counties, Georgia; his daughter Rhoda married James Easterling, whose sister married Reuben Watts, son of John Watts Sr. and Judith] ²²
Reuben Watts	[son of John Watts Sr. and Judith; he married Katherine Easterling]
Abram Lott	[married <i>Zilpha</i> Wiggins, daughter of Jesse Wiggins and Barbara/Barsheba Watts, the daughter of John Watts Sr. and Judith]
Absolom Lott	[father of Abram Lott, above, and Philip Lott and Elizabeth Lott Watts, below]
Jesse Wiggins	[husband of Barbara/Barsheba Watts, daughter of John Watts Sr. and Judith]
Philip Lott	[married Mary Wiggins, daughter of Jesse Wiggins and Barsheba/Barbara Watts]
Thomas Watts, Esq.	[married Elizabeth Lott, daughter of Absalom, above]
James Nelson	[<i>a single man, no land, possibly overseer for Thomas Watts, Esq.</i>]
William Cooksey	

Then:

Stephen Dumfries
 William Wells/Webb? [married Mary Watts, 7 August 1809, Tattnall Co. (Marriage Book 1, p. 2)
 Jeremiah Scarbrough
 James Tate
 Peter Coulter
 Francis Williamson
 Daniel McIntyre
 William Miles

18. No known document actually states that William E. Cooksey of Lawrence and Greene Cos., Miss., was a son of William Cooksey who settled in Covington Co., Miss.; this is part of the undocumented “tradition” set forth by most Cooksey researchers. However, as reported in Mills, “Tattnall ... Loose Papers,” 29 October 2009, two legal records of the 1810–11 period refer to the older William as “William Cooksey, *Senr.*,” implying the existence of a William Cooksey, *Junr.* in his area. While *Senr.* and *Junr.* in that time period were used synonymously with *the elder* and *the younger*, rather than *father* and *son*, no other Cookseys have been placed contemporaneously in that region. (For abstracts of the two documents, see Murray, *Tattnall County*, 57, 63.)

William’s son is believed to be the William Cooksey who saw War of 1812 service in Capt. Shadrack Atkinson’s Georgia militia; married Flora McPherson in Lawrence Co., Miss., in May 1816; and later filed for a War of 1812 pension from Russell Co., Ala. He also appeared as a tithable with no land on the Lawrence County tax roll of 1818, but had relocated to Greene Co., Miss., by the 1820 census; see 1820 U.S. census, Greene Co., Miss., p. 52 (penned), line 31; NA M33, roll 57. Also War of 1812 Pension Applications WC-23158 and SC-19476, William E. Cooksey, as cited in Virgil D. White, transcriber, *Index to War of 1812 Pension Files*, 2 vols. (Waynesboro, Tenn.: National Historical Publishing Co., 1992), 1:459. According to Judy Swaim Kratovil, *Index to War of 1812 Service Records for Volunteer Soldiers from Georgia* (Atlanta, Ga.: P.p., 1986), 33, William’s service was in Chambers’s 1st Regt., Georgia Militia. I have ordered William’s files from the National Archives, but have not yet received them.

19. Tax data reported to me by Kelly Parks; I have not yet studied the rolls.

20. 1820 U.S. census, Covington Co., Miss., p. 17, line 42, William Cooksey; NA M33, roll 58. Unless otherwise cited, the bracketed information identifying the individuals and their marriages are from the Watts and Lott genealogies cited in n. 33.

21. [Anonymous], *Genealogy of the Cummins: Family Database Informations* (<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~cummingsofscgen/Genealogy%20of%20the%20Cummins/src3.htm> : accessed 25 June 2009), for Source Reference NIO-2795 through NIO-2864, citing entries from the Bible of Mary and Benjamin’s son Andrew Jackson Leggett; while the compiler is unidentified, person no. 1 in this genealogy is a still-living person named John Daniel Simonson. Numerous sources assert that Judith’s maiden name was Rawls; however, they offer no evidence for that identity.

22. Norvell Robertson Chapter, Daughters of the American Revolution, *Norvell Robertson* (<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~msnredar/NorvellRobertson.html> : accessed 8 March 2010).

The Lott-Cooksey neighborhood appears to be split at this point—something typically done when a census taker veered off onto a side road—with the remainder of the neighborhood appearing on p. 21:

Joseph Price	[father-in-law of Zilpha's son Cader Price, who married his cousin]
Cader Price	[son of Zilpha; living with a second young adult male, apparently his brother Reuben]
James Taylor	[from Tattnall-Montgomery; got passport with John Lott Sr. 1809] ²³
Luke Norris	
William Toney	
Amos Edmundson	
John Graves Jr.	
Daniel McCarter	
Robert Williams	
<i>John Watts</i>	[John Watts Sr. with wife Judith; father of the several Wattses on p. 17]

I have not found a connection yet between Cooksey and the “neighbors” listed after him, the Wellses excepted. **However, significant connections exist with the Watts family that glues this neighborhood together—**connections that fall into three types: naming patterns, residential patterns, and migration patterns.

Residential & Migration Patterns

- John Watts Sr. and family—and their future Lott in-laws—resided in Montgomery County, Georgia, at the time that Zilpha married John Price of Montgomery.²⁴
- John Watts Sr. and family—and their future Lott in-laws—were cut away into Tattnall at the same time that William Cooksey’s Montgomery County land was cut away into that new county. Like Cooksey, their land lay along the Tattnall–Montgomery line.²⁵
- John Watts Sr. and sons Thomas and Reuben, like Zilpha, registered in Tattnall 1803–4, for the 1805 land lottery.²⁶
- In 1808, the Watts lived on Tattnall land purchased that year by Daniel Daughtry, whose putative brother John Daughtry married Lettice Cooksey ca. 1811.²⁷
- John Watts Sr. and his extended family left Tattnall for South Mississippi in 1816²⁸—about the same time as William Cooksey Jr.
- Both Abram Lott and William Cooksey [Jr.] make their first Mississippi appearances on the 1818 tax list of Lawrence County, where William Jr. had married in May 1816. From there, Abram would move to Covington County where he would live six houses from the older William Cooksey.²⁹

In the next generations, the Watts and Cookseys would continue to migrate together:

- About 1829, the widowed Zilpha Cooksey and her Price sons relocated to Rankin County, Mississippi—as did a widowed Celie Watts and her son Haden, who married Julianna *Barfield* before the 1830 census.³⁰

23. According to Cooksey descendant Annelies Mouring (annelies@mourings.com; e-mail 9-9-2010), James Taylor’s daughter Winnie married Samuel Cooksey’s son Elias. For the 11 Nov. 1807 passport, see Dorothy Williams Potter, *Passports of Southeastern Pioneers* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1982), 222.

24. For example, see Montgomery Co. Deed Book "C & G": 323; "E&F": 175.

25. Tattnall Inferior Court Minutes, 1805–1839, especially July 1806 term.

26. Woods and Woods, *1805 Georgia Land Lottery*, 368. John Sr. is identified there as a Revolutionary War soldier.

27. Tattnall Deeds, Old Book C: 233–34. For the chain of evidence that identifies Lettice’s husband, see Mills, “William Cooksey II (ca. 1745–1829),” dated 10 July 2010, pp. 25–26.

28. Tattnall Superior Court Minutes show them dropping out of the jury lists by late 1816.

29. Lawrence County tax roll abstracts by Kelly Parks. The Lawrence County “William Cooksey” of 1818 is identifiable as the son William because he was assessed only on one poll. Mississippi law in that era set the maximum poll age at 50; for the father William to have fought in the Revolution, he should have been well past that age in 1818. For the law, see A. Hutchinson, *Code of Mississippi, being an Analytical Compilation of the Public and General Statutes of the Territory and State ... from 1798 to 1848* (Jackson: Price and Fall, State Printers, acting for the compiler, 1848), 1.

30. 1830 U.S. census, Rankin Co., Miss., p. 163 (penned), line 1 (Zilpha Cooksey); p. 168, “P” section, line 3 (John Parks [husband of Nancy Cooksey], line 4 (Reuben Price), line 7 (“Michager” [Cader] Price); and p. 171, line 3 (Heyden Watts). This

- By 1840, Zilpha, her Price sons, and Haden Watts had moved again, settling as neighbors in Newton County, Mississippi.³¹
- In 1853, Haden Watts moved his family to Williamson County, Texas, together with his putative uncles Moses Hansby (husband of Katherine Watts, daughter of John Watts Sr. and Judith).³²
- About 1859–60, Haden’s son John Watts of Texas, would return to Mississippi to marry Faitha Rayburn, daughter of Lettice Cooksey Rayburn; after her death, he would marry a second granddaughter of Zilpha: Mahulda Cooksey, daughter of James William Cooksey.³³

Naming patterns

Names carried by the Cookseys, from Zilpha down through her grandchildren are inordinately duplicated within the Watts family. Thus far, I have found no genealogy of the Watts that provides documentation for all the children in this family unit, but most present **John Watts** and **Judith** with 15 or so children.³⁴

In the list that follows, the key given names are presented in boldface.

1. **Catherine** Watts, born c. 1770; married Moses Hornsby
2. **Thomas** Watts, born c. 1771; married Elizabeth Lott, Tattnall County, Ga.
Children included:
Reuben and John B. Watts who named dtrs: **Elizabeth, Catherine, and Rhoda Bartlett S. Watts** b. 1817, m. **Dicy** Lott.
3. Keziah Watts, born c1772.
4. Barsheba/Barbara Watts born 9 February 1775; died 28 May 1845; married Jesse Wiggins Jr., 1793, Georgia
Children included: Zilpha, Rhoda
5. **Elizabeth** Watts, born c. 1778.
6. Lucy Watts born c. 1780 [*No further trace of “Lucy,” whose birth period matches Zilpha*]
7. **Dacey** Watts born 1781; died aft. 1860 in MS; married Nathan Lott ca. 1800 in Georgia
Children included: Catherine, Judith, Reuben (m. Rayburn)
Sarah, who married William **Hinton** Powell
8. **Reuben** Watts born 24 November 1784; m. Patsy Lee and Katherine Easterling
Children included: Judith; Sarah m. Absalom Lott, had **Calvin, Catherine**
9. Benton Watts born ca. 1786–88; m. Celia?
*Child (supposedly): Haden Watts, b. c. 1810, Ga., children included **Dacey***
10. Mary Watts born ca. 1790; married **Benjamin Leggett**
11. Eleanor “Nellie” Watts born ca. 1794.
12. **Amelia “Amy”** Watts born 1795; d. 18 June 1862.; married Th. Jeff. Aultman, 11 Aug 1810 in Ga.
Children included: Catherine, Judith, Sarah, Elizabeth
13. **Rhoda** Watts born ca. 1796 in GA; married Mark **Rayborn**, 1818, Lawr. Co. Miss. (M.B. 1:41)
*Child: Calvin Rayburn, b. c. 1810, Ga., children included **Dacey***
14. **Sarah** Watts born ca. 1798
15. **John** Watts born ca. 1799 [some believe him to be a grandson]

census rearranges households into semi-alphabetical order by first letter of surname. While it is possible to get a semblance of proximity or distance among households with a common alpha letter (as with Price and Parks), the arrangement makes it impossible to determine the proximity of “Heyden” Watts to the Cooksey-Parks-Price cluster. Juliana Barfield’s parents are unknown.

31. 1840 U.S. census, Newton Co., Miss., p. 142, carries a dense cluster of Cookseys, Parks, Haden Watts, and the families that would become their in-laws: Odoms, Boyds, Johnsons, Grahams, Hollingsworths, Millers, etc.

32. See, for example, the source-cited transactions detailed in Janet Ivey Huffman, “WATTS: GA MS TX,” forum message, 19 February 2002 13:47:20, in *WATTS-LArchives* (<http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/WATTS/2002-02-1014144440>). See also 1850 U.S. census, Houston Co., Tex., pop. sch., p. 183-B, dwell./fam. 597, for Haden, his family, and his mother Celie.

33. Huffman, as cited above; also Huffman, “In Reply to: Re: Makuldak Barefoot, Burfoot, Barfoot m. James Rayburn by kelly parks,” 21 September 2008 at 11:01:21, in Rayburn Family Genealogy Forum (<http://genforum.com/rayburn/messages/1359.html>).

34. Perhaps the best of these is J. C. Barron, *Descendants of John Lott* (<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~jcbarron/lott/lott0001.htm>): last accessed 30 August 2010; a significant percentage of his work is cited to original records or published abstracts thereof. Some specific lines of descent through “Aimy,” Barbara, Reuben, and Rhoda are detailed in DAR lineage files accessible via *DAR Genealogical Research Databases: Ancestor Search* (http://services.dar.org/public/dar_research/search_adb/default.cfm).

The following table compares the names of these Watts children of John and Judith to the names Zilpha gave her children—and to the grandchildren of each line:

John & Judith WATTS' Alleged Children	Zilpha COOKSEY's Children	John & Judith WATTS' Grandchildren ←hypothetical 1st cousins→ once removed	Zilpha COOKSEY's Grandchildren
	Zilpha	Judith (several times) Zilpha (dau. of Barsh. Watts)	Judy (1st dau. of J. W. Cooksey) Zilpha (several times) Watts (1st son of J.W. Cooksey)
Catherine	Catherine	Catherine (several times) Bartlett Watts (s. of Th. Watts)	Catherine (several times) Bartlett Watts (s. of Saml Cooksey)
Thomas		Thomas (several times)	Thomas (s. of Elizabeth Cooksey) Thomas (s. of Nancy Parks) Thomas (s. of Letitia Cooksey)
Keziah Barsheba/Barbara		Rhoda (d. of Barsheba)	Rhoda (1st dau. of Eliz. Cooksey)
Elizabeth "Lucy"	Elizabeth	Elizabeth (sev. times)	Elizabeth (several times)
Dicey		Dicey	Dicey (1st dau. of S. Cooksey)
Reuben	Reuben	Reuben (several times)	Reuben (several times)
Benton		Haden (named dtr. Dicey)	Haden (s. of Zilpha Cooksey Sessums)
Mary		Elizabeth (d. of Mary) Nancy (d. of Mary)	
Nellie (Eleanor) Amelia "Amy"	Nancy		Emily "Emma" (dau of S. Cooksey) Emily "Emma" (dau. of J. Cooksey)
Rhoda		Rhoda (d. of Barsheba) Calvin (son of Rhoda Watts) Calvin (gs of Reuben Watts)	Rhoda (1st dau. of Eliz. Cooksey) Calvin (son of Eliz. Cooksey Odom)
Sarah		Sarah (d. of Dicey Watts) m. Wm. Hinton Powell Sarah (d. of Reuben Watts)	Sarah Hinton (1st dau. of Lettice Cooksey Raburn) Sarah (dau. of J. W. Cooksey)
John		Margaret , b. 1819 (dau. of Dicey Watts)	Margaret (alleged middle name of Elizabeth C., b. 1821 to Zilpha) Margaret (dau. of Saml. Cooksey) Margaret (dau. of Lettice C. Raburn)
	<i>Non -Watts names:</i> Cader (for grandfather, Cader Price) Letitia (for Lettice Cooksey, daughter of William Sr.) John (for John Cooksey, son of William Sr.) Samuel Alex. (for ??) ³⁵ J. Wm. (for Wm Cooksey Sr.)		

35. Given that parents usually gave sons and daughters the names of their own parents and grandparents and given that one Samuel Alexander lived in Washington County at the time that William Cooksey married and lived there, the possibility should be considered that Samuel Alexander might have been John C. Cooksey's maternal grandfather. The use of the common name Thomas among Zilpha's grandchildren could also have been influenced by the marriage of her daughter to William Thomas Sessums.

SUMMATION

Naming patterns, migration patterns, and associational patterns are all critical tools for ‘proving’ identity and kinship. Naming patterns alone can be misleading—especially when working with common given names such as John, Thomas, William, Elizabeth, Mary, and Sarah. Patterns are far more significant when working with less-common names of the time and place, including surnames used as given names. The most-significant parallels between the Cookseys and the Watts are these:

Zilpha Cooksey’s choice of names for her two Price sons:

- she named 1st son after her husband's father.
- She named 2nd son Reuben, a name not found in the Price family—suggesting strongly that she chose the name for a kinsman of her own. It was, as we have seen, the name of the brother closest in age to her if she was, indeed, the child of John Watts Sr. and wife Judith.

The name Zilpha:

- Barsheba/Barbara Watts, sister of Reuben Watts, named a daughter *Zilpha*—a very uncommon name in her society and one not yet found in her husband’s family. Why did she choose this name, if not for a sister?

Zilpha Cooksey’s choice of names for daughters:

- 1st proved daughter, Catherine: the name of her proposed oldest sister.
- 2nd proved daughter, Letitia “Lettice”: the name of John Cooksey’s oldest sister.
- 3d proved daughter, Elizabeth: again, the name of Reuben and Catherine Watt’s sister.

Distinctly Watts names given by Zilpha’s children to their offspring:

- Son J. W. Cooksey named first son *Watts/Wattes* Cooksey.
- Son Samuel named a son *Bartlett Watts*: the name of Samuel’s proposed first cousin, Bartlett Watts, son of Thomas Watts.
- Son J. W. named first daughter *Judith*: the name of his proposed grandmother, Judith [—?—] Watts.
- Son Samuel named a daughter *Dicy*: the name of yet another sister of Reuben, Catherine, and Elizabeth Watts.

These and several other names which Zilpha’s children gave to their offspring are found over and again within the Watts family: including the less-common Rhoda and Calvin, as well as the common Elizabeth, John, Sarah, Thomas, and William, etc.

Given the extremely large family of children produced by John Watts Sr. and his wife Judith, the immediate question is this: *Where might Zilpha fit into their family?* One obvious slot exists: Their child “Lucy” is said to have been born about 1780, the same time frame as Zilpha “Zilphy” Cooksey. Research to date has turned up no evidence of an adult “Lucy” within this Watts family and no perpetuation of the name “Lucy” by her fourteen siblings.

Coupled with the migration and associational patterns, the parallelism of the names in the two family lines warrant a thorough study of this set of Watts. The hypothesis to pursue is this:

Could “Lucy” Watts, born ca. 1780, for whom no further evidence has been presented by other researchers, be our Zilpha “Zilphy” [—?—] Price Cooksey, born ca. 1780?