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SUBJECT: Parentage of **Gracie Luvicy Williams** (1830–1917), Wife of Francis M. Gatlin; Daughter of Neal Williams (c1795–c1863) & Wife Mary “Polly” Sessums (c1800–aft. 1880): A Proof Argument

One known record offers direct evidence (an explicit statement of fact) identifying the maiden name of Luvicy, wife of Francis M. Gatlin. In the mid-twentieth century, their granddaughter Margaret Beatrice “Maggie” Gatlin, wife of Odis Anthony, used the index page from a photo album to pen a family record:¹

Dan’s & Kathy’s family

My parents married Aug. 19, 1890

Cicero Warren (C. W.) Gatlin, born 5/4?/1867

Rosetta (Ford) Gatlin Born 8/13/1870

~~Married~~ Odis parents

Fredrick Layton Anthony

Sarah Jane (Dickerson) Anthony

My grandparents

Francis Marion Gatlin

Louvicie (**Williams**) Gatlin

No original record has been found with direct evidence for the identity of Luvicy’s parents. She married prior to the 1850 census, the first U.S. census to name children within each household. Birth records were not maintained in her society.



¹ “Mimis Notes,” image posted 24 November 2017 by kmadkins77, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/mediaui-viewer/collection/1030/tree/71173579/person/292345674498/media/9357d288-d103-4938-b4c1-faef9ea35fd2> : downloaded 20 February 2022), attached to profile of “Margaret Beatrice (MiMi) Gatlin, in user-contributed tree “David Adkins.” Luvicy’s first name, Gracie, appears in the death certificate of her son Edward, wherein his son Oscar identified his grandmother as “Gracie Leviste” [Luvicy] with no surname. See Kaufman Co., TX, Death Certificates, vol. 43:386; imaged *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-99VW-F5FK>) > digital film 7609210 > image 1033. A plethora of online trees assign her the first name *Elizabeth* citing no evidence other than an undocumented memorial at *Find A Grave* (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/73707804/elizabeth-louvice-gatlin> : accessed 20 February 2022), “Elizabeth Louvice ‘Levicy’ Williams Gatlin,” created 21 July 2011 by Amber D. Gatlin-Jenkins; no tombstone is imaged or transcribed.

Marriage records of the county in which she married have been destroyed for years surrounding her marriage.²

In the absence of reliable direct evidence, a convincing body of indirect evidence for Luvicy's birth family can still be assembled by identifying and studying the cluster of Williamses connected to her in her lifetime. Direct evidence exists to prove that **Thomas Williams** (b. c1827; died 1858–60), **John Williams** (b. c1825; d. 1862), **Jacob N. Williams** (b. c1834–35; died after 1880), and **Penny Williams** (b. c1831; d. 1870–80; married to the nephew of Luvicy's husband), were children of **Neal Williams** and his wife Mary "Polly" Sessums, who married in Lawrence County, Mississippi, in January 1820.³ Luvicy's connections with this cluster—with no discoverable connection to any other Williams cluster—attest that she was also born of Neal and Polly Williams.

The foundational document for Luvicy is her Civil War widow's pension application, filed in Johnson County, Texas, December 1900, stating that she had married Francis M. Gatlin in **Attala County, Mississippi, in 1849**.⁴ The following builds upon that foundation:

- The 1830 and 1840 census households of **Neal Williams** carry two females in her age bracket (b. 1830–35).⁵
- The **Neal Williams** household was enumerated in Attala Co. in 1845 and 1850, showing their continued residence there through the time of her marriage. Neal's 1850 household is missing one of the 1840 female children in Luvicy's age bracket.⁶
- The 1850 census places **Luvicy and Francis M. Gatlin** three pages from her proposed parents (in a county that required 183 pages) and six houses from **Thomas Williams**. The newlywed Luvicy and Francis are also next door to his brother William W. Gatlin whose household has a 14-year-old son Jeremiah.⁷ This clustering of kin is typical of their society.
- About 1853–54, Jeremiah Gatlin married **Penny Williams**, the second of the two females born 1830–35 to Neal and Polly.⁸

² "Attala County, Mississippi, Genealogy," *FamilySearch Research Wiki* (https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/Attala_County,_Mississippi_Genealogy#Record_Loss).

³ Lawrence Co., MS, Marriage Book 1: 33; Office of the Circuit Court, Monticello. For abstracts, transcriptions, and/or images of all known records created by and about Neal and Polly, see Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Neal Williams (c1795–aft.1863) & Spouse Mary 'Polly' Sessums (c1800–aft. 1880): Research Notes," 57 pp., last updated 20 September 2022; archived at Mills, *Historic Pathways* (<https://www.historicpathways.com/download/WilliamsNealMarySessumsResearchNotes.pdf>).

⁴ "Alabama, Texas and Virginia, U.S., Confederate Pensions, 1884–1958," database with images, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1677/images/32241_1220701439_2214-00430 : accessed 13 December 2020), application of Mrs. Luvicy Gatlin (Widow of Francis M. Gatlin), 7 June 1900, Johnson Co., TX. Luvicy gave her age as 71. She was, more precisely, 'in her 71st year' according to the birth month and year given for her on the 1900 census (May 1830); see U.S. census, Johnson Co., TX, population schedule, dwelling 14, family 15 (Newton N. Gatlin household); *Ancestry's* indexing misreads her name as "Louisa." Given that most documents created about Luvicy spell her name in various ways, this paper uses the spelling given in her pension application.

⁵ 1830 U.S. census, Simpson Co., MS, p. 186, line 24. 1840 U.S. census, Newton Co., Miss., p. 142, line 17.

⁶ 1845: "Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-9PWR-SVL> : accessed 28 July 2022) > Attala > State census returns 1845 > image 19. 1850: U.S., census, Attala Co., pop. sch., p. 166 verso, dwell. 1110, fam. 1113, Neal Williams (indexed as "Noal" at *Ancestry*).

⁷ 1850 U.S. census, Attala Co., MS, pop. sch., p. 169, dwell./fam. 1162/1166 (Thos. Williams) and 169 verso, dwell./fam. 1158/1172 (F. M. Gatlin); also p. 170, dwell. 1177, fam. 1181 (Wm. W. Gatlin 37, Elizabeth 37, Jeremiah 14, etc.).

⁸ Attala Co.'s loss of marriage records covers also the time frame of this second Gatlin-Williams marriage. The date of the marriage is extrapolated from the age of their eldest child on the next census found for them: Hardy L., aged 15 (i.e., born 2 June 1854–1 June 1855). See 1870 U.S. census, Holmes Co., MS, pop. sch., Richland P.O., stamped p. 131, dwell./fam. 134/143. Penny and Jeremiah are omitted from the 1860 enumeration.

- In December 1854, **Neal Williams** took out land across the county line in Madison, at the corner where Attala, Madison, and Leake abut.⁹ The other members of the Williams and Gatlin families also left Attala.
- In February 1858, **Thomas Williams** and his brother **John Williams** appeared before a chancery court in Madison Co. to report that “their father **Neill Williams**” was no longer mentally capable of managing his affairs.¹⁰ This document provides direct evidence of parentage for Thomas and John. It is the last record found for Thomas in any county or state.
- By 1860, Neal’s son **John Williams** had moved across the county line into Leake, where he bought a farm adjacent to **Jacob N. Williams**.¹¹ Jacob’s placement in the Neal Williams family is made by the 1850 census on which he is the youngest male still at home.¹²
- When **Luvicy** and Francis M. Gatlin left Attala, they moved to Jones Co., settling into a house next door to his brother Mitchel Gatlin who had out-migrated from Attala between the 1845 state census and the 1850 federal census.¹³ Both brothers would go to war in 1861; only Francis returned.
- **Neal Williams** was still alive in January 1863 when the county board of Madison included his name on a list of citizens who were to be reimbursed for provisions given to the wives and children whom soldiers had left behind. Neal was specifically paid \$27.50 for “**furnishing Mrs. Gatlin 227 lbs. pork.**” Given that Luvicy and Francis had moved further south to live with Gatlin kin in Jones Co., the “Mrs. Gatlin” of 1863 Madison Co., for whom Neal was paid, would be his daughter Penny, wife of Jeremiah Gatlin.
- Returning from war without his brother, Francis Gatlin moved **Luvicy** and their children to adjacent Wayne Co., where he sought work as a house carpenter.¹⁴ They did not stay.
- In the 1870s, the war-torn remains of **Neal William’s family** consolidated in Leake County. The son **Solomon**, who had settled his new bride adjacent to Neal and Polly in Madison Co. after his 1859 marriage,¹⁵ did not survive Confederate service.¹⁶ The widowed Polly moved into the Leake Co. home of her brother Thomas Sessums.¹⁷ Neal and Polly’s **daughter Penny** and husband Jeremiah Gatlin had also died, leaving orphans who were scattered among Leake Co. kin.¹⁸ Neal and Polly’s son **John**

⁹ “United States Bureau of Land Management, Tract Books, 1800–c. 1955,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-99W3-477K> : accessed 19 July 2021) > Mississippi > Vol. C3 > image 143, being original page 140.

¹⁰ Madison Co., MS, Chancery Cause 915, “Neill” Williams; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 005818715 > images 646 through 650.

¹¹ 1860 U.S. census, Leake Co., MS, pop. sch., post office: Carthage, p. 82, dwells./fams. 532 and 533.

¹² 1850 U.S. census, Attala Co., Miss., pop. sch., p. 328, dwell. 1110, fam. 1113, Neal Williams, Mary 42 ... Jacob 16.

¹³ 1860 U.S. census, Jones Co., MS, pop. sch., Ellisville, p. 60, dwells./fams. 392–393. 1850 U.S., census, Jones Co., pop. sch., p. 133 verso, dwell./fam. 288. 1845: “Mississippi, U.S., State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951,” database with images, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/61949/images/FS_004822261_00044 : accessed 27 July 2021) > Attala > State census returns 1845 > image 9.

¹⁴ 1870 U.S. census, Wayne Co., MS, pop. sch., Waynesboro, Township 9, p. 58, dwell./fam. 22.

¹⁵ 1860 U.S. census, Madison Co., MS, pop. sch., p.o.: Canton, p. 74, dwell./fam 533/531 (N. Williams 64, Mary 57, Sarah 17) and 534/532 (Solomon Williams 23, Ellen 17). Also “Mississippi, U.S., Compiled Marriage Index, 1776–1935,” database, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7842/> : accessed 20 June 2021), Solomon Williams and Ellen Fisher, July 1859.

¹⁶ “Civil War Service Records (CMSR)–Confederate,” database with images, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/79420042> : accessed 6 July 2021) and eleven subsequent images for Solomon D. Williams, Co. G., 21st Miss. Inf.; the muster of March–April 1864 reports that he was “Supposed dead.” No further record has been found for him.

¹⁷ 1880 U.S. census, Leake Co., MS, pop. sch., Beat 4, ED 51, (penciled) p. 35, unnumbered dwellings and households.

¹⁸ For example, see 1880 U.S. census, Leake Co., pop. sch., Beat 3, ED 50, pp. 14–15 (penned), dwell./fam. 140, “Mollie” Gatlin living as “cousin,” with Leon McNeal 28, and wife Sarah 29, three houses from Luvicy and Francis’s newly married son

Williams (who had lived next door to his **brother Jacob N.** in 1860) had also died in Confederate service,¹⁹ and John's widow Jenette had followed Sessums kin to Texas. (In 1874, her daughter Dicie married in Johnson Co., where the widowed Luvicy filed for her pension in 1900).²⁰ Jenette's departure from Leake Co., left a vacant home next door to Jacob. Luvicy and Francis returned then to Leake to farm there with **Jacob**.²¹

- In 1879, Luvicy's son Edward Gatlin married Jacob's daughter Matilda.²² The 1880 census places the young couple adjacent to both sets of parents:²³

197/202 F. M. Gatlin 50, **Levicy** 50 & unmarried children

198/203 **J. N. Williams** 45, wife Mary

199/204 **Edward Gatlin** 23, **Matilda** 19 wife, and "aunt" Martha Gatlin 56 [sister of Francis M.].

- As a clan, most of the interrelated Gatlins, Williamses, and Sessumses left Leake County for Texas between Leake's tax rolls of 1884 and 1886.²⁴ For them and many neighboring families impoverished by the war, living in a region in which all good lands had been taken, the vast lands of Texas presented an opportunity to begin again.

Luvicy (Williams) Gatlin died 26 September 1917 at the home of her son Edward in Henderson County.²⁵ No registration of her death—a type of record that normally would name her parents—has been found. When her son Edward died in 1942, his son Oscar supplied the information and identified Edward's parents as "Francis Gatlin" and "**Gracie Leviste**"—i.e., Gracie **Luvicy**, with no surname.²⁶ When her youngest son Newton Nathiel Gatlin died in 1925, as a widower in Los Angeles, California, his birthplace

"M.S." (Major Slade) and wife "E" (Elmyra Elizabeth Odom). For the Gatlin-Odom marriage, see Leake Co., Miss., Marriage Book F: 127; imaged, *FamilySearch* digital film 00724347 < image 73.

¹⁹ "Civil War Service Records (CMSR)—Confederate," database with images, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/83128445> : accessed 6 July 2021) and six subsequent images, for John Williams, Co. E, 28th Miss. Reg.; the muster roll of November-December 1862 cites his death in the Ringgold (Ga.) Hospital.

See **1850** U.S. census, Attala Co., Miss., pop. sch., p. 328, dwell. 1110, fam. 1113, Neal Williams (indexed as "Noal" at *Ancestry*), Mary 42 ... Jacob 16. For Luvicy and Jacob in **1880**, see Leake Co., Miss., pop. sch., Beat 2 ED 49, p.23, dwell./fam. 197/202 (F. M. Gatlin 50, wife Levicy 50 next door to J[acob]. N. Williams).

²⁰ **1870** U.S. census, McLennon Co., TX, "West of the Brazos river," p. 149 (stamped), dwell. 639, fam. 629. By 1874, the widowed Jenette had settled her brood in Johnson Co., where her daughter Dicie married that year. (Johnson is the county in which Luvicy filed for a widow's pension in 1900. For Jenette's and Dicie's 1874 residence in Johnson see "Texas, U.S. Select County Marriage Records, 1837–1965," database, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/925464516:9168> : accessed 4 June 2020), Dicie V. Williams to Cregg J. Wren.

Extensive documentation exists for this family in Texas and Oklahoma because John and Jenette's daughter Dicie and son James A. J. Williams, along with offspring of Polly Williams' brothers Redding and Thomas Sessums, filed some 86 claims with the Dawes Commission, alleging Choctaw ancestry. As a starting point, see Choc. MCR 184, John Sessums claimant, "Dawes Packets," database with images, *Fold3* (<https://www.fold3.com/image/54726775>).

²¹ **1880** Leake Co., Miss., pop. sch., Beat 2 ED 49, p.23, dwell./fam. 197/202.

²² Leake Co., Miss., Marriage Book F: 127; imaged, *FamilySearch* digital film 00724347 < image 73. The marriage registration makes a copying error, calling her "M.A." rather than "M. R." Edward and his brother Major Slade took out bonds on the same day, with Slade's new father-in-law Samuel Odom serving as bondsman for both marriages.

²³ 1880 U.S. census, Leake Co., Miss., pop. sch., Beat 2, ED 49, p. 23, for three adjacent households, dwellings 197–99 and families 202–4.

²⁴ "Mississippi, State Archives, various Records, 1820–1951," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-95HV-C8X> > Browse > Leake < County tax rolls 1881–1886, Box 3701.

²⁵ "Alabama, Texas and Virginia, U.S., Confederate Pensions, 1884–1958," database with images, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1677/images/32241_1220701439_2214-00441 : accessed 13 December 2020), pension file: Mrs. Luvicy Gatlin (Widow of Francis M. Gatlin), Application for Mortuary Warrant by "E. Gatlin" 13 Oct. 1917.

²⁶ Kaufman Co., TX, death certificates, vol. 43:386; imaged *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-99VW-F5FK>) > digital film 7609210 > image 1033.

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was cited as Mississippi, but no parents were named.²⁷ Similar death certificates for her other children have not been located.

²⁷ "California, U.S., County Birth and Death Records, 1849–1994," database with images, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/60240/images/MM9.3.1_2FTH-1961-29338-19177-14 : downloaded 2 June 2022) > Los Angeles, Los Angeles > Death certificates 1925 No 6300–8460, specifically no. 6585.