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DATE: 23 November 2017

REPORT TO: Witter Research Group

SUBJECT: **Samuel Witter, War of 1812: Grayson County, Kentucky, Research**

VARIANTS: Wedder, Weider, Weiter, Widder, Widdow, Wieter, Wither, Witt (+ "s" at end of each)

BACKGROUND: One Samuel Witter (aka Witer), a millwright said to have been born in Pennsylvania about 1784, enlisted on 4 April 1814 in the 17th U.S. Cavalry, a Kentucky unit. He was recruited (place unknown) by "Lt. Hackley," then served under Capt. B. W. Sanders and Lieut. R. M. Ewing. He was discharged at Chillicothe, Ohio, on 7 June 1815.¹ In 1820, he received a patent for bounty land in Monroe County, Arkansas; but I have found no evidence of his presence there.²

The most viable candidate for this soldier seems to be this Samuel Witter (aka Witters) of Beckinridge County. Known facts at this point are as follows;

- 1810 census: Breckinridge County, Kentucky
- 1820 census: Grayson County, Kentucky
- 1830 census: Ohio County, Kentucky
- 1840 census: Marion County, Illinois. He took out federal land in Marion County in 1833 (also adjacent Clay County in 1837 which he immediately sold), petitioned the legislature to build a toll bridge on his Marion land and operated it from 1836 to at least 1840. He has not been found after the 1842 sale of his Marion land. In 1850 his son Lapsley Witter was enumerated in Ohio County, from which he migrated to Arkansas, Missouri, Texas, and then Yakima County, Washington.
- Key associates and/or neighbors in the Ohio-Breckinridge-Grayson area include *Henry Eidson, Lapsley Hall, Reuben Huff, and Lewis Huff*.³

Logan County research has yielded no proof of Samuel Witter's presence there during the relevant time frame. One Samuel Whiders or Whidens is taxed in 1812 tax (only), for 200 acres on Drake's Creek. A *Mary Widdows* married *Isaac Morris* there in 1811 and a *Peter Widdow* is taxed there in 1813.⁴

¹ See E. S. Mills, "Samuel Witter, 17th U.S. Infantry, War of 1812, Enlistment Record: An Analysis," report to Witter Research Group, 11 October 2013; and Mills, "Samuel Witter's Fellow Soldiers, Lt. Benjamin W. Sanders's Co., 17th U.S. Regiment, War of 1812," report to Witter Research Group, 20 February 2012, updated 17 October 2017; both archived at E. S. Mills, *Historic Pathways* (<https://www.historicpathways.com>) under the "Research" tab.

² See E. S. Mills, "Samuel Witter (1787–1876) and the War of 1812," report to Witter Research Group, 15 January 2012, updated 17 October 2017; and Mills, "Samuel Witter's Arkansas Bounty Land, War of 1812," report to Witter Research Group, 11 October 2013; both archived at *Historic Pathways* under the "Research" tab.

³ Mills, "Samuel Witter (1787–1876) and the War of 1812," 21–28.

⁴ See E. S. Mills, "Samuel Witter, War of 1812: Logan County, Kentucky, Research, report to Witter Research Group, 23 November 2017; archived at *Historic Pathways* under the Research" tab.

Breckinridge County records place Witter there in 1810 and 1811, with legal suits extending until 1812, although he is not on the tax roll of 1812. The first 1810 document in Breckinridge (13 March) states that Samuel is a millwright and **a resident of Ohio County.**

ASSOCIATES: **Crask:** This Samuel Witter supposedly married Rebecca Crask, daughter of Vincent Crask of Grayson. Various online trees place the marriage before 1810. The birth pattern of their children suggests that they married after Witter returned from war (1815 or later) with the first child born about 1819.⁵ No evidence is offered for the wife's identity.

Cravens: Thomas Cravens was enlisted by Lt. Hackley one day after Samuel and served with Samuel in Sanders's Co. of the 17th. The site of his recruitment should have been within a one-day's ride of Samuel's location.

Hall: Lapsley Hall is said to have married a sister of Rebecca (Crask) Witter; Samuel and Rebecca named a son Lapsley Hall Witter.

Huff: Reuben Huff lived adjacent to Samuel Witter on 1810 census of Breckinridge. Lewis Huff was a close neighbor in 1830.

Matthews: George Matthews was a near neighbor in 1830 Ohio County.

May: Samuel Witter in 1811, Breckinridge, paid taxes on 100 acres along Rough Creek [now Rough River] patented to William May. One William May was also found as a landowner in Logan Co.

LIMITATIONS: This block of research is limited to pre-1840 Grayson County resources microfilmed and then digitized by the Family History Library, Salt Lake City. For the associates, I am capturing only nutshells of their documents in this initial survey.

All online records were accessed 25–29 October 2017, unless otherwise stated.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Samuel's time frame:

This initial survey of Grayson County resources places Samuel there on 1816–1821 tax rolls.

Samuel's land:

In 1817 and 1819, Samuel paid tax on 200 acres on Rough Creek, said to be patented to William May.

In 1816 and 1818, Samuel paid tax on 200 acres on Rough Creek, said to be patented to P. Phillips.

It would appear that 100 acres of the land was previously taxed to him in Breckinridge in 1811, with the other 100 being acquired from Philips after he returned from war. Deeds appear not to survive for Grayson in this period.

⁵ See E. S. Mills, "Samuel Witter (1784?–1849?); Wives Rebecca Crask (1794?–1826?) & Synthianna [—?—]: Research Notes," a working document last updated 23 November 2017; archived at *Historic Pathways* under the "Research" tab. This collection of research notes contains a number of records from Kentucky and Illinois that support the widely asserted (but undocumented) identity of Samuel's first wife as Rebecca Crask, likely sister of Joseph Crask. The Witter-Crask marriage apparently occurred *ca.* 1818 here in Grayson Co., whose marriage records are destroyed.

After 1821, Samuel is taxed on this land in Ohio County, where it is variously said to be on Rough Creek and Pipe Run. The land appears to lie along the plug that juts out from Ohio's eastern boundary at the point where Ohio, Breckinridge, and Grayson abut. Additional boundary changes in the mid-1800s places this site in the southwest corner of modern Breckinridge.

Possible Witter kin:

A landless Peter "Widows" (a phonetic spelling often seen among Pennsylvania-born Witters who retained a German accent) appears here in 1815 and 1816. The 1816 tax roll places him 1 listing from Samuel Witter. This man appears to be the Peter Widows who (1) was taxed in Logan Co. 1813–14, about the time Samuel was recruited by a U.S. military officer stationed in Logan; and (2) moved before 1820 to White Co., Ill., where he is enumerated between two fellow migrants from Ohio County (one of whom, Richard Atterberry, returned to Ohio Co. and lived 2 houses from Samuel Witter in 1830).⁶

Crask kin:

Sarah Crask, supposedly the widow of Vincent Crask and mother of (1) Joseph Crask; (2) Rebecca Crask (first wife of Samuel Witter), and (3) Fanny Crask (wife of Stout Atterbury,⁷ appears on the 1812 and 1813 tax rolls, charged with 100 acres, 3d class, on Pleasant Run, patented to John Sanders.

Joseph Crask makes his first appearance in 1821, taxed on that same land. He paid tax in Grayson through 1823, then in 1824 shifts to the Ohio County tax rolls where his land is again situated near Samuel Witter.⁸

In 1820, about the time that Joseph Crask came of age and took over the widow Crask's 100 acres, Samuel's taxable 200 acres dropped to 100 acres, plus an added 12 acres whose acquisition is not explained.

Problems encountered:

The Family History Library offers virtually no original records for early Grayson County other than the tax rolls. Apparently local records from the earliest decades have been destroyed. FHL's catalog shows the following start dates for other record groups from the county:

Court Orders	1906
Deeds:	1896
Marriages:	1856

⁶ See Mills, "Samuel Witter, War of 1812: Logan County, Kentucky, Research, pp. 4–5.

⁷ For the Atterbury-Crask marriage, see [Unidentified register], p. 52, 9 Dec. 1824; imaged as "Kentucky, County Marriage Records, 1783–1965," *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>), Ohio Co., 1807–1871 > image 201 of 591. Numerous online trees provide the other details above without evidence. Contemporary records abstracted and discussed in the above-cited Research Notes for Samuel and Rebecca do support this identifications of Rebecca Crask. For sample trees, see

- Annette Brauer, "Grogan/Mobley/Brauer ... Tree," *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/1213896/person/13921549848/facts>), "Lapsley Hall Witter."
- PatriciaBrown76, Walter T. Farlow Tree," *Ancestry* (<http://ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/21297284/person/20001395575/facts> : accessed 16 June 2015), "Abraham P. 'Abe' Witter."
- Joan Fleming, "Family Tree of Tim and Sue," *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/66473132/person/34148816530/facts>), "Samuel J. Witter." This tree (like many others) erroneously gives Samuel a middle initial, misses his move from Kentucky to Illinois, and assigns to him the death of a younger Samuel *Water* that occurred 6 May 1846 in Washington County, Kentucky.
- Trudy Heren, "Bork-Heren Family," *Ancestry* (<https://222.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/69367150/person/30196002415/facts>).

⁸ See E. S. Mills, "Samuel Witter, War of 1812: Ohio County, Kentucky, Research," in progress November 2017, report to Witter Research Group.

Probates: 1896
 Wills: 1856

One work published by the Grayson County Historical Society offers court minutes or abstracts from 23 July 1810 to 28 April 1814.⁹ A copy of the book was ordered from the society; it yielded nothing of relevance to this project.

RESEARCH NOTES

—TAX ROLLS—

1810

Tax rolls¹⁰

Cover: "Commissioners Book for the year 1810 for Grayson County. White Titheables: 350. Black Titheables: 34."

Atterberry: David, Josiah, James, Charles, Michael, Melchizedick, Israel, Nathan (all Rough Cr)
 Crask: No
 Cravens: No
 Eidson: No
 Hall: William
 Huff: No
 Matthews: George
 May: No (but John Yates owns land on Bear Creek, patented to George May)
 Witter: No

COMMENT:

David Atterberry and George Matthews, in 1830, are Samuel Witter's neighbors in Ohio County. Other individuals from Ohio County's tax rolls of 1815 or so forward also show on this Grayson County roll; example: Peter Storm, Edward Shain [not to be confused with Edward Shown], Thomas Taylor, Van Meters, etc.

21 DECEMBER 1811

Tax rolls¹¹

Atterberry: Charles, Isaiah, Thomas, James, James Junr., Nathan, Michael, Melchezedick, Zacheus (all Rough Cr)
 Crask: No
 Cravens: No

⁹ Nancy Y. Robinson, *The First Grayson County, Kentucky, County Court Record Book, July 23, 1810 to April 28, 1814* (Leitchfield, Ky.: Grayson County Historical Society, 2005), 332 pp. FHL catalog no. 976.9842 P2.

¹⁰ Grayson County, Ky., "Tax Books 1810–1831, 1833–1834, 1836–1845," *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/007834439?cat=155619>), particularly image 6 (Atterberry) and 20 (Yates-May), no specific month or day shown; imaged from microfilm 8001, now digital film no. 007834439.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, particularly 23 (cover), 25 (Atterberry), 38 (Yates-May), certified 21 December 1811.

Eidson: No
 Hall: Benjamin, Levi, William
 Huff: No
 Matthews: George
 May: No (but John Yates owns land on Bear Creek, patented to George May)
 Witter: No

COMMENT:

David Atterberry, who appears 1830 in Ohio, 7 houses from Samuel Witter, has dropped from Grayson's roll.

12 OCTOBER 1812Tax rolls¹²

Atterberry: Charles, **David**, Isaiah, Thomas, James, James Junr., Jonathan, Nathan, Michael, Melchezedick, Zacheus (all Rough Cr)
 Crask: Sarah, 100a 3d class, Pleasant Run; entered, surveyed, patented by John Sanders; 2 horses, no white males 21+
 Cravens: No
 Eidson: No
 Hall: Benjamin, Levi, William
 Huff: No
 Matthews: George; no land now
 May: No
 Odle: No
 Witter: No

8 DECEMBER 1813Tax rolls¹³

Atterberry: (I'm not continuing to identify all, but am watching for the appearance of Richard, who also was Samuel Witter's 1830 neighbor in Ohio Co., 5 houses from David A.)
 Crask: Sarah, 100a 3d class, Pleasant Run; entered, surveyed, patented by John Sanders; 2 horses, no white males 21+
 Cravens: No
 Eidson: No
 Hall: Benjamin, Levi, William
 Huff: No
 Matthews: Only Matthews is Hopkins; George is gone.
 May: No
 Odle: No
 Witter: No

COMMENT:

There are also Sebastians on Rough Creek, as later in Ohio.

7 DECEMBER 1814Tax rolls¹⁴

¹² Ibid., certified 12 October.

¹³ Ibid., particularly 63 (Crask), certified 5 August.

Atterberry: No Richard.
 Crask: **No**
 Cravens: No
 Eidson: No
 Hall: No new names
 Huff: No
 Matthews: No George
 May: No
 Odle: No
 Witter: No

COMMENT:

Sarah Crask is missing. I read all pages for her land (100a 3d class, Pleasant Run, patented to John Sanders) and found only one possibility: Jesse Wilson had 100a 3d class, on Pleasant Run, but patentee wasn't shown but other Wilson held land patented there to John Sanders. Checking the prior year, however, I see that Jesse Wilson was also taxed on that tract in 1813 and it does say that John Sanders was the patentee.

Going forward, if I pursue the Crasks, I should consider Wilson as possible kin to Sarah. (Note: various online trees do assert that Sarah was daughter of Joseph Wilson.¹⁵)

6 DECEMBER 1815Tax rolls¹⁶

Atterberry: No Richard.
 Crask: **No**
 Cravens: No
 Eidson: No
 Hall: No name of interest
 Huff: No
 Matthews: No George
 May: No
 Odle: No
Widdows: Peter, 0 land, 1 white male 21+, 1 horse, \$.25

11 AUGUST 1816Tax rolls¹⁷

Atterberry: No Richard.
 Crask: **No**
 Cravens: No
 Eidson: No
 Hall: No name of interest

¹⁴ Ibid., certified 7 December 1814.

¹⁵ For example see Patrick Allen Thomas, *My Genealogy Home Page* (<http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/t/h/o/Patric-A-Thomas/WEBSITE-0001/UHP-0232.html> : 10 November 2011), for "Vincent Crask (b. 04 Apr 1767, d. 06 Nov 1805," undocumented data.

¹⁶ Grayson County, Ky., "Tax Books 1810–1831, 1833–1834, 1836–1845," especially image 121 (Widdows), certified 6 December 1815.

¹⁷ Ibid., especially 143 (Widows, Witters), no certification date.

Huff: No
 Matthews: No George
 May: No
 Odle: No
Widows: **Peter**, 0 land, 1 white male 21+, 2 horses, \$.75
 [skip 2]
Witters: **Samuel**, 200a 3d class, Grayson Co., Rough Creek; entered, surveyed, patented by P. Philips; 1 male 21+, 0 horse, \$2 acre, \$700 total value.

COMMENT:

Prior to the war, Samuel had 100 acres along the Breckinridge-Grayson line, which appears not to have been taxed during his military service. Upon his return, he appears to have acquired another 100 acres, possibly financed by the bounty he received at discharge. In his absence, was the land farmed by Peter? Peter, in 1810, was in Clark County, Kentucky, and in 1813 was taxed in Logan County. By 1820, Peter is in White County, Illinois.¹⁸

20 NOVEMBER 1817Tax rolls¹⁹

Atterberry: No Richard.
 Crask: **No**
 Cravens: No
 Eidson: No
 Hall: No name of interest
 Huff: No
 Matthews: No George
 May: No
 Odle: No
Widows: No
Witters: **Samuel**, 200a 3d class, Grayson Co., Rough Creek; entered, **entered by May** (no survey/patent data); 1 male 21+, 0 horse, \$700 total value.

COMMENT:

In adjacent Breckinridge Co., 1811 (but only 1811), Witter was taxed on 100 acres, 3d class, Rough Creek, patented to **Wm. May**.

1818Tax rolls²⁰

Atterberry: No Richard.
 Crask: **No**
 Cravens: No

¹⁸ **1810** U.S. census, Clark Co., Ky., p. 675 (penned), **Peter Widows**, 1 male 26–44, 1 female 26–44, 1 female 10–15. 2 females –10 2 males –10, all white. Clark is east central Kentucky, on eastern border of Fayette Co. **1820** U.S. census, White Co., Ill., Waconteby Twp., **Peter Widows**, 1 male 45+, 2 males, 26–44, 3 females 16–25, 4 males 10–15, 1 male 0–10, all white, living next door to **Richard “Arterbury”** (1 male 26–44, 1 female 26–44, 1 male 10–15, 1 female 0–10, 3 males 0–10) and 7 houses from **Jesse Cravens**. White Co. is the parent county of Jefferson/Hamilton and Wayne Cos., where Samuel Witter’s children settled. See also See E. S. Mills, “Samuel Witter, War of 1812: Logan County, Kentucky, Research, report to Witter Research Group, 23 November 2017; archived at *Historic Pathways* under the Research” tab.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, particularly image 165, certified 20 November.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, particularly image 188, examined 17 March 1819.

Eidson: No
 Hall: No name of interest
 Huff: No
 Matthews: No George
 May: No
 Odle: No
Widows: No
Witters: **Samuel**, 200a 3d class, Grayson Co., Rough Creek; entered by **Stephen May**, surveyed/patented by **Will. May**; 1 male 21+, 1 horse, \$2 per acre; \$840 total value.

1819Tax rolls²¹

Atterberry: No Richard.
 Crask: **No**
 Cravens: No
 Eidson: No
 Hall: No name of interest
 Huff: No
 Matthews: No
 May: No
 Odle: No
Widows: No
Witters: **Sam**¹, 200a 3d class, Grayson Co., Rough Creek; entered/survey/patent by **P. Philips**; 1 male 21+, 0 horse, \$450 total value.

1820Tax roll²²

Atterberry: No Richard.
 Crask: **No**
 Cravens: No
 Eidson: No
 Hall: No name of interest
 Huff: No
 Matthews: No
 May: No
 Odle: No
Widows: No
Witters: **Samuel, 12 a, 2d class, 1 white male 21+, 2 horses** : consecutive
"Same" 100a 2d class, Rough Creek, \$480 total value : entries

COMMENT:

In 1820 Samuel Witter is enumerated here in Grayson, but the census is semi-alphabetized by first letter of surname. Therefore, his neighbors are not overtly identifiable.

²¹ Ibid., especially image 214 (Witters), examined 8 May 1820; 664 white males over 21.

²² Ibid., especially image 241 (Witters), certified 5 October 1820, examined 29 June 1821.

1821Tax rolls ²³

Atterberry: No Richard.
 Crask: **Joseph**, 100a, Grayson Co., Pleasant Run, 1 male 21+, 2 horses, \$2 per acre, \$610 total value
 Cravens: No
 Eidson: No
 Hall: No name of interest
 Huff: No
 Matthews: No
 May: No
 Odle: No
Widows: No
Witters: **Samuel**, 12 a, 2nd class, Pleasant Run, 1 white male 21+, 2 horses, \$2 per acre, \$175 total value

COMMENT:

Samuel has disposed of his 100 acres. The 12-acre tract that he acquired above is located on Pleasant Run, where the Crasks held their land.

25 NOVEMBER 1822Tax rolls ²⁴

Crask: **Joseph**, 100a, Grayson Co., **Rough; entered/surveyed/patented by Sanders;** 1 male 21+, 1 horse, \$360 total value; 0 children 4-14.
Widows: No
Witters: **No**

24 OCTOBER 1823Tax rolls ²⁵

Crask: **Joseph**, 100a, Grayson Co., **Pleasant Run;** entered/surveyed/patented by J. Sanders; 1 male 21+, 4 horse, \$500.
Widows: No
Witters: **No**

21 NOVEMBER 1824Tax rolls ²⁶

Crask: No
 Widows: No
 Witters: No

COMMENT:

In 1830, both Joseph Crask and Samuel Witter are in Hartford District of adjacent Ohio County.

25 SEPTEMBER 1825Tax rolls ²⁷

²³ Ibid., especially image 251 (Crask), 269 (Witters), examined 4 February 1822.

²⁴ Ibid., especially image 278 (Crask), certified 25 November 1822.

²⁵ Ibid., especially image 306 (Crask), certified 24 October 1823.

²⁶ Ibid., no certification or examination dates; a few names were illegible in both the C's and the W's.

Crask: No
 Widows: No
 Witters: No

1 OCTOBER 1826Tax rolls²⁸

Crask: No
 Witter: No

1827Tax rolls²⁹

Crask: No
 Witter: No

COMMENT:

From 1828–30, Samuel Witter was taxed in adjacent Ohio County, where he is enumerated on the 1830 census. He then drops from Ohio County records. By 1833 he was in Marion County, Illinois. I will continue to check 1831–35 for Grayson to eliminate the possibility that he might have resided there during that 1830–33 hiatus from the records.

1 NOVEMBER 1831Tax rolls³⁰

Crask: No
 Witter: Jeremiah Senr., 6 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres, 3d class, Rock Creek, entered/surveyed/patented by **May**; 1 white male 21+ [the "1" seems to be blacked out], 1 horse, \$50 value.

COMMENT:

This should be Jeremiah Whitten Sr.; Jeremiah Whitten Jr. appears several lines above.

1832

COMMENT:

No tax book is filmed.

23 MAY 1833Tax rolls³¹

Crask: No
 Witter: No entry

19 JUNE 1834Tax rolls³²

²⁷ Ibid., certified 25 September 1825.

²⁸ Ibid., certified 1 October 1826.

²⁹ Ibid., no dates specified.

³⁰ Ibid., particularly 524 (Witter/Whitten) certified 1 November 1831.

³¹ Ibid., certified 23 May 1826.

Crask: No
Witter: No entry

1835

COMMENT:
No tax book filmed.

—COURT ORDERS—

COMMENT:

- FHL's catalog has court orders from 1906. The first volume of county court orders appears to have survived, but is not filmed. See next bullet.
- FHL has a catalog entry for

Nancy Y. Robinson, *The First Grayson County, Kentucky, County Court Record Book, July 23, 1810 to April 28, 1814* (Leitchfield, Ky.: Grayson County Historical Society, 2005), 332 pp. FHL catalog no. 976.9842 P2.

I have ordered a copy of this volume from the society. It yielded no data relevant to this search.

—DEEDS—

COMMENT:

FHL's catalog shows that Grayson County deeds begin in 1896.

—PROBATES—

COMMENT:

FHL's catalog shows that Grayson County wills begin in 1856; probate records begin in 1896.

—VITAL RECORDS—

COMMENT:

FHL's catalog shows that Grayson County marriages begin in 1856. Some individuals have published marriage books that account for marriages as early as 1852—a date too late for this project.

³² Ibid., certified 19 June 1834.