



KNOW YOUR ROOTS

Mary Durland, Author/Researcher

Volume II Issue 2

FREE-ELSON

JUNE 1997

THE FREE - ELSON CONNECTION

Mary Durland Kauss - Jane Kidder - Martha Mitzi Griffith - Joan Larkin - All are daughters of Harry Elson Durland. His relation to the FREE - ELSON connection can be seen in the pedigree chart below.

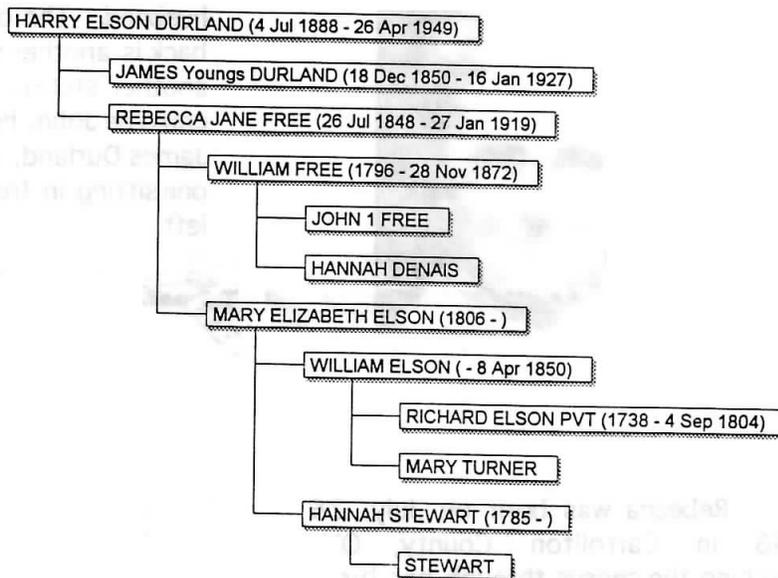


TABLE OF CONTENTS OF THE FREE-ELSON NEWSLETTER*

1. REBECCA AND HER RELATION TO THE FAMILY
2. SOME HISTORY OF THE EARLY PENNSYLVANIA GERMANS
3. A STEWART DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN ROYALTY
4. WHO WAS SCOTCH IRISH-THE ELSONS, THE STEWARTS, OR BOTH?
5. MARY'S MESSAGES - PERSONAL NOTES

*Note names on pedigree chart

REBECCA JANE FREE

A PHOTO STORY

This is a story about a little known ancestor, Rebecca Jane Free. She was the daughter of William Free and Mary Elizabeth Elson.



There is very little known of her life until the family took up residence in Clay County. However, there she married James Youngs Durland on January 2, 1872 who was two years younger than she.

The picture below is a grouping of the Free family. On the left in the back row is her sister Alwida and her husband. The one in the middle in the back is another sister and in front of her another sister. The couple on the right could be John, her brother, and his wife. James Durland, Rebecca's husband is the one sitting in front and Rebecca is on the left.

Rebecca was born on July 26, 1848 in Carrollton County, Ohio. Searching the census through her birth, it was discovered she was the youngest of nine children. Of her siblings, four were males and five were females.

Farmers who needed family members to help on the farm often had big families. Rebecca's father was a farmer whose family fit that pattern.

Nothing is known of her life in Ohio where she was born. The family moved from Ohio to a farm in Jersey County, Illinois where it is believed her mother died.

Selling the farm in Jersey County, Illinois, William bought another in Clay County, Illinois and it is there that Rebecca spent the rest of her life.



It is on record that one niece remembered Rebecca herself as having long auburn hair which she brushed faithfully every night.

Another niece said everyone loved Aunt Becky because she was always so cheerful. This evidently was her philosophy because she chose to quote it in a pamphlet of the Ladies Aid Society of her church.

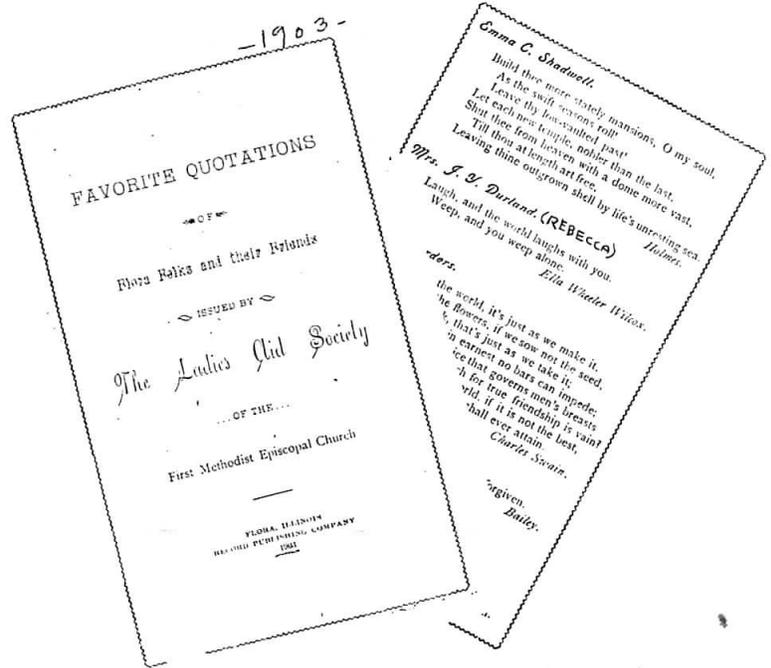
She gave birth to four sons: Charles, Oscar, George, and Harry. George died at age six before Harry was born.

In the photo below on the left is Oscar, on the right, Charles, Harry in the middle, James, the father, left front and Rebecca, right front.



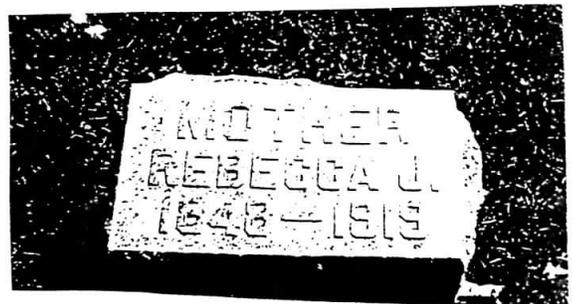
Many questions can be raised surrounding these sons. There is a picture of George in a tartan plaid skirt. Rebecca's grandmother was a Stewart. Was this because she wanted to perpetuate the Scotch heritage? Yet the tartan was not that of a Stewart.

There are pictures of her son Harry four or five years old in a skirt. Was that the style of the day for young boys? Maybe not because she also kept her youngest son Harry, who had beautiful strawberry blond hair in long curls. These are questions that don't have answers.



Her obituary published upon her death give more insight into her character. "Mrs. . Durland (Rebecca) was a devout Christian. Very early in life she acknowledged her belief in God and devoted her life to the highest standard of religious principals. She was for many years a member of the Methodist church, and also identified herself with the different charitable organizations connected with the church to which she was ever ready and willing to give substantial support. No-one ever appealed to her in the interest of a worthy cause in vain."

On January 27, 1919, she died at age seventy after a long illness.



A LITTLE HISTORY ABOUT THE EARLY GERMAN PENNSYLVANIANS



Next to the name of William in his handwritten note found in the Dorland book by Cremer, is the word German. According to the census records William Free was born in 1796 in Pennsylvania. Therefore, his parents must have been some of the early Germans who migrated to Pennsylvania during the 1700s.

Because he traveled westward to Ohio and eventually to Illinois, his family is not found in the Mennonite records which became the large German settlement in Lancaster.

Nor does his family seem to be part of any other religious group.

Nevertheless, since he identifies himself as German and he was born in Pennsylvania, his German family must have been a part of Pennsylvania's colonial America.

To succeed in this area in the 1700s, German immigrants knew they needed among other things: 1, plenty of land made easy to get from the natives, 2, a fair efficient land office to give individual settlers a chance to get good land; 3, a means of financing purchases; and 4, security for their property from the French and Indian threat, from fraud, and foreclosure. Naturalization was a critical issue to achieving these goals.

As discussed in a previous newsletter, the parentage of William has not been ascertained. However we do know from his records that land figured greatly in William's future. Wherever he went he bought land.

Hundreds of ships came into the harbor of Philadelphia in the 1700s. It was the largest city in North America and one of the largest in the British empire. All the passengers had a long and arduous passage. Many experienced death, exploitation, hunger and thirst, and almost all experienced storms, sickness, and weeks or months of boredom.

Even those who escaped the perils of the voyage and even those who escaped the increasingly abusive indentured servant system or even those who had come with some wealth who already had family, all had been through an extremely exhausting experience.

All of the above was the legacy that the forefathers of William Free handed down to him. As yet, who these forefathers were is not known. What is known from the note of William's, is that he had several siblings, that he was German, and that he was born in Pennsylvania in 1796.

(from *Hopeful Journeys, German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717-1775* by Aaron Spencer Fogleman)

19. This anonymous, anti-Franklin political cartoon, which appeared in Philadelphia in 1765, depicts some of the activities and excitement when many Germans and others took to the streets of the largest city in British North America. Note the crowd of Germans in the background waiting to vote at the steps of the courthouse. The angel proclaims, "The Germans are Victorious." (Courtesy of the Library Company of Philadelphia.)

THE NAME OF STEWART DOESN'T ALWAYS MEAN ROYALTY

Referring to the Free Elson tree on page 1, one can see a Stewart in the family tree. Not much research has been done in the U. S. to ascertain the lineage of Hannah Stewart who was the wife of William Elson. Historically, the name of Stewart is originally from Scotland.

Therefore if the name began in Scotland, Hannah must have been a descendant of the Stewarts in Scotland whose family eventually found its way to Ireland and thus became referred to as Scotch-Irish.

Scotch-Irish in the U. S. refers to those who migrated from Ireland in the early 1700s keeping their Scotch heritage intact.

Hannah was Rebecca Free's grandmother and it is known that Rebecca carried on the legacy of the Scottish tradition.

Traveling back in time to the origin of the name it is interesting to note that the name Stewart comes from the Old English meaning house. From this beginning it became not only the name of kings but one of the most famous occupational names in Scotland.

In Medieval times it was a position under the Crown of great importance and honor, both in the administrative and military sphere. It is known that Walter Fitz-Alan, a Norman knight, was created a Great Steward of Scotland by David I during the 13th century. From that time, kinsman taking the name Stewart established fleets and conquered lands, always in the name of Stewart. The "d" became a "t".

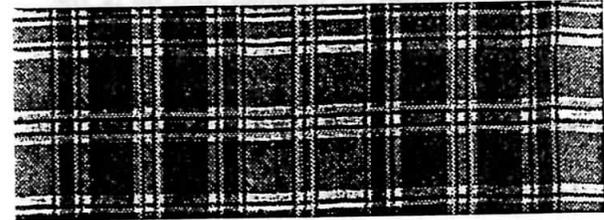
There were Royal descendants which include Mary Queen of Scots, Bonnie Prince Charlie and many other lesser Stewarts or Stewards which adopted the name.

The name Stuart evolved when French became important diplomatically. There was no "w" in the French language. Thus the name became Stuart.

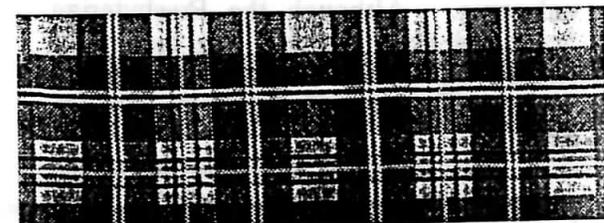
Not all Stewarts are related to royalty. The name still remains an occupational position derived from a hereditary past. There are many Stewarts today and for that reason the line is difficult to research. Hannah Stewart's family is one of those which is a challenge. She could be from a steward as an occupation or from a Stewart, an illustrious name of the past.



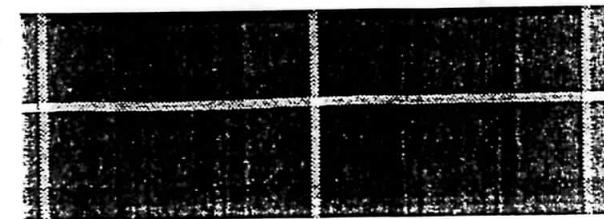
Modern Royal Stewart



Modern Stewart of Argyll



Modern Prince Charles Stewart



Modern Stewart of Ross

WHICH ANCESTOR IS SCOTCH-IRISH, ELSON OR STEWART OR BOTH?

The controversy continues. Which ancestor is the Scotch-Irish one? A previous newsletter discussed the qualities of being Scotch-Irish. The very name over the years has been the subject of much discussion with the Scottish groups and the Irish groups. Sometimes the arguments become quite heated.

Today, in the genealogy records of this family there is also controversy but no arguments. The controversy swirls around the name Elson.

Again to quote from the handwritten note of the Free family, it states "mother Scotch-Irish" Mother is Elizabeth Elson. Hence the question in the title. Is Elson Scotch-Irish.

Nowhere in any of the family research is found the name Elson in the historical records of the Scotch-Irish in Ireland.

Yet in all the records of the name Elson there is only one Elson. William Elson was born in Virginia and he is the family Elson. He was born in the Scotch-Irish settlement in Augusta County, Virginia.

But there is no Elson in Ulster, Ireland where the Scotch-Irish emigrated from. This is the area in northern Ireland in which today the name Scotch-Irish is unknown. Although the Presbyterian Scots did not have the long history of suffering at the hands of the English, the Scots of Ulster had not great love for the British

By the time the migration to the colonies came about some of the Scots had been in Ireland four or more generations.

The chronicles of the Virginia scotch-Irish settlement covers the period from 1745. Richard Elson who could be the father of William fought in the American Revolution.

So why would William's daughter Elizabeth be known to be Scotch-Irish when, in the days past, the

ethnicity of the family was determined by the father?

Also in the handwritten note was the statement, "Grandma Elson was Miss Hannah Stewart." Historically the name Stewart is Scotch. Did Hannah's family emigrate to the colonies from Ulster, Ireland as a group of Scotch-Irish or did her family emigrate from Scotland?

If the name Elson is not Scotch-Irish what is it? Some genealogists have suggested Scandinavian. The mystery is that if it is not Scotch-Irish why did the family think it was?

Or let's consider that it is really a shortened form of a Scotch-Irish name. This is mind boggling and too much to consider for a family genealogist. who has several other mysteries to unravel.

HANDWRITTEN NOTE WHICH WAS LOOSE IN THE DORLAND BOOK BY
CREMER

<i>BIRTHS</i>	
<i>ELIZABETH W. FREE</i>	<i>SEPTEMBER 6, 1835</i>
<i>MILTON W. FREE</i>	<i>OCTOBER 14, 1837</i>
<i>MARY S. FREE</i>	<i>AUGUST 27, 1841</i>
<i>ALWILDAM. FREE</i>	<i>JANUARY 8, 1844</i>
<i>REBECCA J. FREE</i>	<i>JULY 26, 1848</i>
<i>HANNAH FREE ROBINS</i>	
<i>NANCY FREE WENS</i>	
<i>JANE FREE TURNER</i>	
<i>ELIZABETH FREE WAY</i>	
<i>JOHN FREE</i>	
<i>ELIJA FREE</i>	
<i>MORDECAI FREE</i>	
<i>WILLIAM FREE</i>	<i>GERMAN</i>
	<i>MOTHER SCOTCH IRISH</i>
<i>GRANDMA ELSON WAS MISS HANNAH STEWART</i>	

NOTES FROM MARY

After much thought, I have come to the conclusion that this note was written by William, father of Rebecca. It was probably placed in the Dorland book as a record of his family. The names below the births are Rebecca's siblings who were at home. It does not include brother John and those that lived in other areas or who were deceased. I believe the other list is the names of the siblings of William.

MARY'S MESSAGES

In the schedule of the newsletters the Free-Elson issue was to be sent to you in May. However, as most of you know I was on an extended trip to Germany covering most of the month. It was very strenuous particularly the trip home so I needed a bit of R&R. I apologize for the delay.

I'm hoping to get the Schueneman-Greitenevert Newsletter out as planned in August barring any emergencies which might occur.

The Kuhnert-Wiggenhorn issue will be in November but late because I'm planning to go to the Salt Lake Mormon library in November. Carl Kuhnert remains an enigma. I may have a lead if I can connect him to this person but there are many more details that I need.

To keep you abreast of kin on the Free-Elson branch, I saw Grace Durland, wife of Charles Durland who lives in Oregon. She was in San Antonio visiting her son who lives close by. I had hoped that she would be able to tell me some family legends about Rebecca Free but she remembered nothing.

I also talked with Geraldine McKone in California, who is descendant from Alwilda Free, Rebecca's sister. Sad to say she had a slight stroke and is finding the road to recovery very slow. She helped me with the pictures for the story on Rebecca Free.

I think I have an ambrotype (picture on glass) of Rebecca's mother but I'm afraid to subject it

to the bright light of a copy machine. Some day I will find someone who can make a sketch of it so I can include it in a future newsletter.

I finally decided to go ahead with the DAR application because there is a patriot of the Revolution on the Elson side that I would like to research. I have been accepted as a potential member so I am entitled to send for his records or anyone else's records who might be a forefather.

In checking with the probate records of William Free and comparing his signature, I have come to the conclusion that the handwritten note of the Free Family was written by William not by Rebecca. I hope that I am correct.

The story about the Stewart name came from my trip to Scotland in 1996. I will pursue the family of Hannah Stewart soon.

The short pedigree tree on page 1 should enable everyone to identify the names included in this issue. As my research becomes more detailed these names will appear again and again