



KNOW YOUR ROOTS

A Family That Doesn't Know Its Past Doesn't Understand Itself

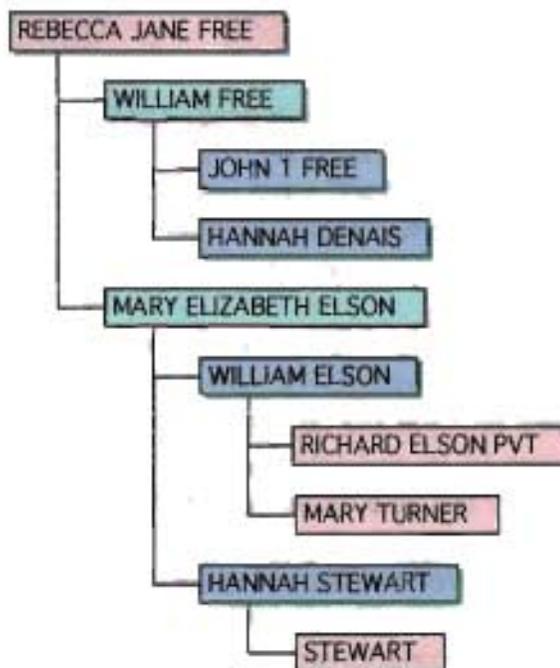
Mary Durland, Author/Researcher

VOLUME III NUMBER 2

FREE/ELSON

MAY 1998

REBECCA JANE FREE MOTHER OF HARRY ELSON DURLAND AND HER FAMILY



WILLIAM FREE IS HER FATHER
MARY ELIZABETH ELSON IS HER MOTHER
WILLIAM ELSON IS HER GRANDFATHER
RICHARD ELSON IS HER GREAT GRANDFATHER

ARE THESE THE SAME MAN?



The photo on the right has a date. On the frame on the left scroll, it reads 76. On the overlapping scroll it reads 61. Also this picture on the right is a tintype which appeared in the late 1860s and were made well into the 20th century. The picture on the left is an ambrotype which is a positive image on glass and a much older process. This was in use from 1855 to about 1865. The tintype replaced the ambrotype.

Here is the mystery. The subject on the left looks to be much older and is clean shaven. The one on the right has a beard and seems to be younger but tintypes actually came into being in the late 1860s. Yet the dates 76 and 61 can only be construed to mean 1776 and 1861 because of the patriotic motifs. The flags and the shields, must signify the year of Independence and the year of the beginning of the Civil War

Ambrotypes were the older of the two methods so why would the older man have his picture taken the old way and the younger man have his picture taken the new way? It seems the age relationship is reversed.

This is more of the mystery surrounding William Free, Rebecca Free's father. I believe the one on the left is Rebecca's father. The one on the right has the same identifying features, the mouth, the hair part, the nose and the piercing eyes, but what is so puzzling is the type of photo and the years they were taken. Dating old photographs is a guessing game for the amateur. Do you think they are the same man at different times of his life?

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

James YOUNGS Durland married Rebecca Free. They had four children: Charles FREE, Oscar CRANE, George Robert, Harry ELSON.

Every name in the family was a genealogist's dream.

First, father, James YOUNGS, had a family second name. The chore was to find the YOUNGS ancestor that James was named for.

The children were easier. Charles was given the maiden name of his mother FREE. Oscar was given the maiden name of his grandmother, Mary Ann CRANE. George, who died as a child, was given the name of his grandfather, ROBERT Durland. The last child, Harry, was given the maiden name of his maternal grandmother, ELSON.

This practice helps to identify families when researching family links.

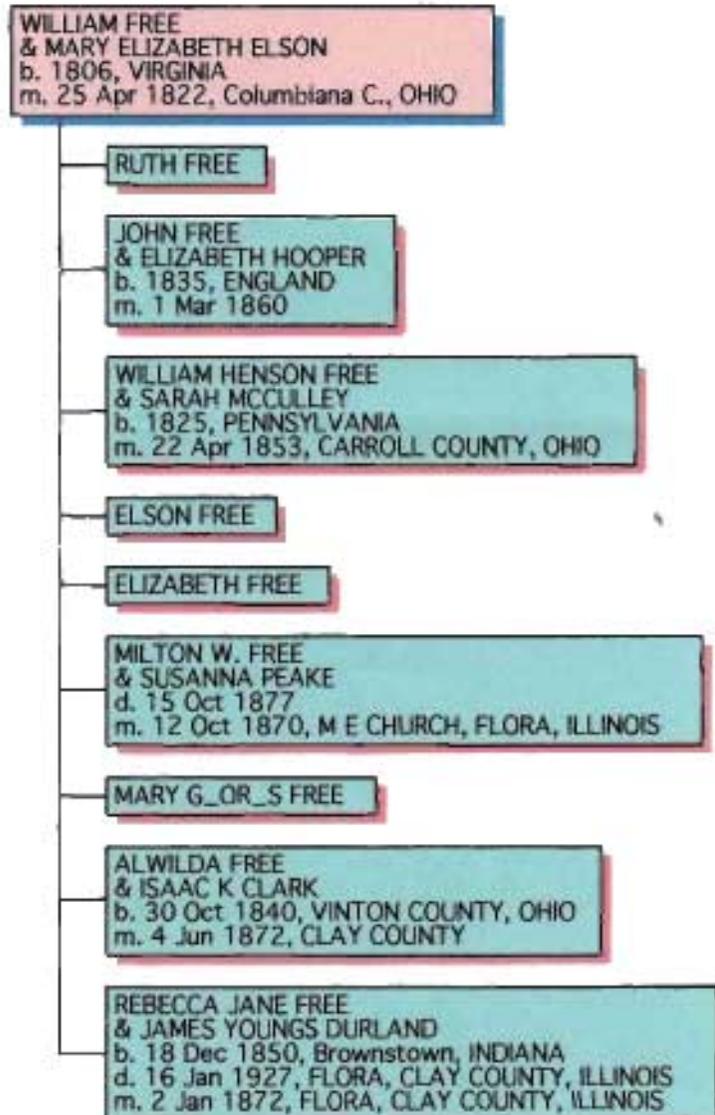
Take for instance the family of William Free, Rebecca's father. Here we have a few clues but not as many as with the aforementioned family.

We know where the Elson name came from, William's wife. The first child RUTH is a stickler though but I'm on the way to prove that name. Research has yet to authenticate her relationship to someone in a past family.

JOHN is easier. It seems that John was always the name of the first son born in other Free families. Although I do not know for sure the father of William I have found several John first born in other Free families.

The next male, WILLIAM HENSON, of course was named

after his father and here we have another family name, Henson. As yet, the relationship of Henson eludes me. I haven't found a family Henson but I am still researching.



ELSON of course was named after his mother. The same is true of ELIZABETH. But the next

three escape me. The parents must have just liked the names.

However, as you can see the practice of naming children

WILLIAM ELSON
& HANNAH STEWART
b. 14 Feb 1785 VIRGINIA
d. 22 Feb 1856

MARY ELIZABETH ELSON
& WILLIAM FREE
b. 1796 PENNSYLVANIA
d. 28 Nov 1872 FLORA CLAY COUNTY ILLINOIS
m. 25 Apr 1822 Columbiana Co. OHIO

HENSON ELSON
& ELIZABETH CAHILL
m. 3 Feb 1846 TUSCARONOS OHIO

JOHN ELSON
& MARGARET R
m. OHIO

WILLIAM ELSON
& REBECCA L. BROWN
m. 7 Dec 1843 CARROLL COUNTY OHIO

THOMAS ELSON
& ANN BAKER
m. 3 May 1823 Columbiana Co. OHIO

STEWART ELSON
& OLIVIA JANE PRIER
m. 1852 CARROLL OHIO

TURNER ELSON

HANNAH ELSON

CHARLES ELSON

after someone in the family was not only a family practice but also a form of a genealogical record.

Let's try another family and you can draw your own conclusions. Remember ELSON was Rebecca's mother's name.

William Elson (not to be confused with William Free) had a large family. Here we have MARY again. She must have been named after someone!

The next is HENSON and we saw that name before so the relationship must be on the Elson side and not the Free side.

Following is JOHN but he is not the first born. Evidently, that tradition of the first male being John did not hold in the Elson family as it did in the Free family.

Then WILLIAM after the father. THOMAS is another break with tradition but it could be a former family member.

STEWART follows after his mother's family name.

We now come to TURNER. Well, Richard Elson, our Revolutionary Patriot had a wife named Mary TURNER. That clears up both Turner and Mary.

HANNAH is after her mother but I am not sure that CHARLES was a son or a grandson. I need to find his birth data to clear that up and that has not been done.

Now you see the genealogist's delight with families that have naming patterns. In some ways this is continued today. All in Elvera's and Harry's family were named after family or friends but not all of the succeeding generations continued with the practice so only the genealogist's records remain.

MILTON FREE, SOLDIER OF THE CIVIL WAR



For a long time this tintype was a complete enigma. Who was this soldier and how did he figure in the family? Those questions were answered by a Free cousin who had sent for the military records of her grandmother's brother, Milton W. Free. He is Rebecca's brother also and the only one that I know of that was in the Civil War.

That makes him an uncle to Harry Durland and from there you can count back to great uncle, to great great uncle to great, great, great uncle depending on your generation.

This tintype was included with the other tintypes of the Free family.

Milton W. Free was born on the 14 day of October 1837. He was the third son of William and

Mary Free and one of their nine children. From his records which are quite detailed, he lists his occupation as a farmer.

This means that he followed in the footsteps of his father until he enlisted on 16th day of April, 1861 and was assigned as a Private to the infantry of Company F in the 14th Regiment of Illinois.

He was discharged honorably at the end of his service as a Corporal, the 18th day of June, 1864 at Springfield, Illinois.

His papers include his request for a pension for many disabilities. Among them were bronchitis and severe injuries to his feet which were covered with calluses, sores, and bruises.

In an affidavit by a comrade, who wrote "these injuries occurred by the continuous hard marching during General Grant's endeavors to gain the rear of Vicksburg in the winter of 62-63. His feet were so sore, the man so lame, that it was only by great efforts and in extreme pain that he and kept up with the Company.

"During the fighting around Vicksburg in the following summer (1863) he contracted some affection of the head caused by the almost constant firing of heavy guns on the line of support. He complained of continuous headache and disagreeable sensations.

"Also while in Winter Quarters in the rear of Vicksburg during the Winter of 1863-4, claimant was again taken down with a fever and some affection of the throat caused by insufficient shelter & inclement weather.

"He had severe paroxysms of coughing and was wasted by fever-morose & depressed... disabilities were contracted up to a few days before his discharge, when he left with Sherman's Army advancing on Atlanta. Claimant was at this time very low and scarcely able to leave his quarters."

This was written by William H. Elson, a member of the claimant's Company.

Milton did receive a pension of \$15.00 a month and as he reapplied obviously for more funds, his pension was approved

for \$30.00 a month commencing on October 14, 1912.

By this time Milton had moved to Nye, Beaver County, Oklahoma.

Before that on October 10, 1870, in Flora, IL. He had married Sue Peak who was dead when he signed the pension form May 4, 1898.

He had two children: Charles E. Free born August 17, 1873 and Hattie E. Free, born May 26, 1877. His wife died on October 15, 1877.

On March 25th 1916, there is a letter to the Department of the Interior signed by Mary S. Free, his sister, telling of his death on December 27th, 1915.

"He had been failing for a long time but the end came suddenly. Age 78 yrs 2 mo. 11 days"

From his obituary in the Southern Illinois Record of Flora, IL. We know that he had another child William Edwin who was killed in the St. Louis cyclone of March 26, 1896.

The obituary went on to say he was engaged in the stock business in Nye City, Oklahoma. Since he was a farmer it can be assumed this would mean live stock.

His funeral was held at the residence of James Durland with interment in Elmwood cemetery.

RICHARD ELSON, PVT REVOLUTIONARY WAR

RICHARD ELSON PVT
& MARY TURNER
d. aft 1818
m. bef 1768

ARCHIBALD HENSON ELSON
& MARY COMLY

WILLIAM ELSON
& HANNAH STEWART
b. 14 Feb 1785, VIRGINIA
d. 22 Feb 1856

RICHARD TURNER ELSON
& ANN CORNELIUS

JOHN HARRIS ELSON
& MARGARET WIGGINS

RUTH ELSON
& WILLIAM BAXTER

SARA ELSON
& BAXTER EDMUND

This is one of our Revolutionary ancestors who is listed in the DAR book. I wanted to include him because there will be more on his family as I go deeper into the Elson name.

According to the DAR, he was born in 1738 in Prince Georges County in Maryland. However, the first mention I have found of him was in a Maryland Will book.

His mother's will says only that her name was Joanna Elson, midwife. She died the 23 July 1774 and her will is probated 27 November 1774.

To her son Archabald Elson she leaves tract "Turkey Flight Enlarged." 167 acres so we know he was the eldest. To daughters Rachel Davis and Mary Elson, wife of Richard Elson, wearing apparel, equally.

To 3 children Archabald, Richard Elson and Rachel Davis, residue of personal estate equally

There will be more on Joanna, and more on Archabald but this will serve as an introduction to our Revolutionary Patriot, Richard Elson

His Revolutionary military records his serving in the Fourth Battalion, Eighth Company, Washington County Militia. He died after 1818.

MARYLAND CALENDAR OF WILLS

1774-1777



MARY'S MESSAGES



This newsletter was written primarily to acquaint all the subscribers of Know Your Roots to the family of Rebecca Free, the mother of Harry Durland. So many times the birth names of the females get lost in the shuffle and the descendants don't realize that these female names are just as important as the male counterparts. In the past issues, there have been stories on the Frees, the Stewarts, and now the Elsons. In the future, more and more stories will be written about the distaff sides of the family as opposed to the spears sides. I hope that these women as well as the men will be household names and recognizable by all.

I tried various types of printing fonts in this issue. I need to compare and see which I like the best.

Scanning the tintypes and ambrotypes presented a big problem because they were so dark. With the tintypes, there is no problem exposing it to a strong light, but with the ambrotype photographed on glass, the figure fades under strong light. Therefore, I will probably never expose it again. Milton Free is a tintype. Tintypes will not fade.

My thanks to everyone and their prayers helping Christine after the birth of her twins. The babies, Hunter and Logan, are fine but Christine as you know had a very tough time and we were't sure at one time if she would make it. Once again, my sister Mitzi spread the word for prayers and even requested her choir of 200 to pray. Joan and her family prayed and prayed. No

doubt these prayers were instrumental in Christine passing her crisis. I am eternally grateful.

Anne Cuda said that she called her parish priest to pray and as a consequence he offered up his mass the next day for her recovery.

To Janet, who kept all of us apprised of the this disease by email and telephone calls, I send my eternal gratitude. Janet and Joan went to California to help with the babies and so to John, Janet's husband, I give a special thank-you for making it possible.

There is power in prayer and power in family.

The information on Milton Free was sent to me by a second cousin, Geraldine McKone, who lives in Santa Barbara, California. Her grandmother was Alwilda Free, Rebecca's sister. She is the one who sent me Milton's military records and his obituary from Flora. We sort of made plans to go to Oklahoma together but they never materialized. She is also writing a book for her grandchildren but Alwilda's husband and his descendants sent her off in another direction.

I had done quite a bit of research before I received the information of Richard Elson from the DAR. I'm still waiting for my number. All my papers have been submitted.

I'm rushing to get this off before I go to California for Mother's Day. Happy Day to all the Mothers in the family.