Center / Senter / Centers Family Bible and Family Research

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June 22, 2019

Your correspondence to the Barren County Historical Society made its way to me, so I will attempt to respond in writing what my research and DNA testing of multiple William Fletcher Centers descendants have proven.

Some things to consider and comments on items mentioned in your letter:

1) Willis Center probably did not change the spelling. If he could not read or write, he could not spell and therefore the person recording his information spelled it as they thought it should be spelled.

2) Bio of William Brown indicates Elizabeth Childress was the wife of Willis Center/Senter.

WILLIAM ALLEN BROWN
Biographical Sketch written by E. Scott Brown dated 14 Nov. 1897
Transcribed and Submitted by Anna Brown Hunt bethtx50@iwon.com

William Allen Brown was born in Allen Co. Ky. on 22nd day of April 1820 at the Old Orchard on part of a 400 acre survey…….

Allsey Brown, father of the subject of this sketch, was married on day of 18 to Miss Nancy Terrell Childress who was born in South Carolina on the day of 17 and who was living with old Harry Collins in Allen Co. Ky. then Warren Co Ky. until near the time when she and Allsey married. She was a sister to WILLIS CENTER'S wife, ELIZABETH & came to Ky. on foot, leading a horse, which carried such goods as they brought. She had a brother BARTHOLOMEW CHILDRESS who lived in Mobile Ala & was at our time Sheriff (sic)* of his County. Said Nancy came from Georgia here.

3) There is no indication from primary documents that Willis’ name was Stephen. Many researchers confuse Willis Center of Allen Co., KY, with Willis S. Senter of Roane Co., TN.

4) There is no paper trail or evidence to connect the parents given on the death certificates of Robert Wesley Center, Virginia Center Ashford Stipes, William Fletcher Center, and Willis Marion Senter. These people are either full or half-siblings b. 1846-1855 in Allen County, KY. The fact that each of these death certificates have no continuity in parental names is a huge clue to the fact that the informant either did not know, or wanted to hide the parental information.

I will not reiterate the information you already have. The mystery of the parents of William Fletcher Center therefore, after over 60 years of search by various descendants, is best resolved via DNA.

Prior to the 1920s when legal adoption became the mode of childcare, orphaned or children not able to be cared for by a parent(s), were sent to live with relatives or neighbors. This is the case of the Allen County Center children.

In the Allen County, Ky, 1860 census, the following are found as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Parents as stated on D.C.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>William Fletcher Center</td>
<td>Anderson McReynolds</td>
<td>f. William Center m. unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Mc. Center</td>
<td>Thomas Ashford</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Wesley Center</td>
<td>R.M. Spillman</td>
<td>f. Gilford Center m. Elizabeth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>McReynolds Virginia Center Stipes</td>
<td>Thomas Ashford</td>
<td>f. Thomas Ashford m. Mary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willis Marion Center</td>
<td>A.C. Alexander</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5) Guilford Center was never married to Elizabeth McReynolds, as stated on the death certificate of Robert Wesley Center. Guilford married Sarah Hatler, September 1839 in Allen County, KY, and is shown as his wife in the 1850 and 1860 census of Sumner Co., TN and Washington Co, AR. Guilford/Guilford Center was in Sumner Co TN by 1846, making it a long trek back to Allen County to have an affair while having children with Sarah prior to Robert’s birth, and therefore improbable that could have occurred.

6) Willis M. Center:
   MICROFILM of ALLEN CO KY VITAL STATISTICS
   1855, Nov 29, CENTERS, Frances M., male, illegitimate, M. Elizabeth SENTERS, Pleasant Hill
   * The name Frances was changed either to Willis or an error occurred in recording the information*

   The location of Willis’ birth at Pleasant Hill supports the land plat of Willis Center’s land near Alsy Brown. The Browns are buried at Pleasant Hill Methodist Church cemetery between Scottsville and Holland. I believe the Centers’ are also buried there in unmarked graves or with unreadable headstones.

   A family bible of Willis M. Senter of Carter County, OK, formerly in the possession of his son Perry D. Senter, provides a note that Dick Alexander of Allen County, KY. raised him. Dick may be a nickname for Amzie C. Alexander shown as a neighbor of Willis Center in various county court road documents. I have been unable to locate the current owner of Willis M. Senter’s bible as Perry Senter died in 1975. (Note: Bible found in 2020 and images on file at the WKU Library)

   ALLEN CO KY DAY BOOK 1826-1837 (Jackson) pg. 35, 126 & 144
   Jan 1827  Willis CENTER appointed overseer for the road leading from Scottville to Carthage (TN)
   June 1828  Whereas John Gatewood of Allen Co KY has this day represented to the county court of the county
   aforesaid that there is a large neighborhood in the eastern part of said county have no carriage way
   and no convenient bridle way either to their meeting house or courthouse, where upon it is
   order by
   the court that Hugh Brown,, Also Brown, Amsy C. ALEXANDER, Willis CENTER and
   William Holder or
   any three of whom being first sworn be appointed viewers to view and mark a road
   beginning at
   Sulser (the rest omitted due to length of document, but included to show Alexander and
   Center as
   neighbors)
   Mar 1830 Willis CENTER and Amsy Alexander sworn as jurors
   Mar/Apr Term 1830. Willis CENTER resigns as overseer of public road, and James Alexander is sworn
   in his place.
   Jan Term 1832 On the application of Burtin Brown ordered that Amzie C. ALEXANDER and W.
   ALEXANDER, Willis
   CENTER, and Alsy Brown ...do view an alteration in the Carthage road.

8) I have known for many years that Thomas and Mary Richey Ashford married in 1844 Sumner Co, TN, therefore eliminating them as parents of any Center children. I had conveyed that to Jeanetta several times, but it probably did not connect.

7) Ancestry DNA evidence of Jeanetta provides the following that is also supported by your DNA and
DNA of other descendants of William Fletcher Centers including Judy Dies, Sharon Tabor, Marion
Jeanetta and your DNA results
06/19/2018 Ancestry DNA Matches
8.1cms match to Greg Campbell, descendant of Jonathan Sentell son Samuel:
10.6cms to L.P. descendant of Jonathan Sentell son William;
10cms to Julie Gonzales descendant of William and Richard Sentell sons of Jonathan
Sentell;
9.1cms to Yvonne Wyche descendant of John Edward Sentell, grandson of Jonathan
Sentell

05/23/2019 Ancestry DNA match to
Nina Mills 17.1cms a descendant of William & Nancy Stephens Sentell, son of Jonathan
Sentell

11/2/2015 Ancestry DNA
Sharon Tabor matches TO and Ann44, both direct descendants of Johnathan Sentell via his
son
William Sentell
05/17/2019 Sharon Tabor shares 13cm across 2 segments with Ancestry member LisaJo a descendant of
Jonathan
Sentell via son William Sentell

6/21/2019 Jeanetta’s Ancestry DNA matches to
David Wick 28cms 2 segments descendant of James & Mary Phipps McReynolds via John
McReynolds, brother to William McReynolds of Allen County, KY
Martha Larkin 66cms 4 segments descendant of William and Lavina Brackin Hatler
McReynolds
Lisa Morgan 106cms 6 segments descendant of William and Lavina Brackin Hatler
McReynolds
T.H. 47cms 3segments to descendant of James and Susannah Anderson McReynolds’
daughter Rachel
McReynolds
4 Matches between 29-40cms to numerous Phipps descendants, but not sure of the
connections at
this time (7/24/2020 Note: Mary Phipps 1802-1894 was the wife of James J. McReynolds,
father of
William McReynolds and grandfather of William Fletcher Centers)

There would be zero DNA connection to descendants of any McReynolds, and especially that of William
and Lavina Brackin Hatler McReynolds, unless William McReynolds was the father of William Fletcher
Centers. The DNA matches of Jeanetta shows relationships between 2nd and 3rd cousins with McReynolds
and Phipps descendants which would be shared great and 2great-grandparents – William and James
McReynolds and Mary Phipps McReynolds. William McReynolds was a nephew to Anderson
McReynolds who was named in the 1851 court apprenticeship of William Centers. Apparently, William
McReynolds and his former sister-in-law Elizabeth Center had children while he was also having children
with his wife, Lavina. The mystery will remain as to why he married Lavina rather than Elizabeth.

DNA evidence supports:
1) William Fletcher Center was a McReynolds
2) Willis Center as a descendant of Jonathan Sentell/Senter who died in Edgefield Co, SC in 1799. Jonathan’s oldest son was named Sterling/Starling, and his grandson was named Guilford/Gilford. Gilford was the son of William Senter/Sentell who served in the Revolutionary War and fought at the Battle of Guilford, Greensboro, NC. I have found only two Center/Senter/Sentell families in the U.S. that used the given names of Startling/Sterling and Guilford/Gilford – the SC branch and the descendants of Willis Center of Kentucky.
3) The presumed father/uncle of Willis Center b. 1786 is Buckner Center/Certain/Centell of Warren Co NC., and that his parents were Jonathan Sentell b. VA d. SC and an unknown first wife. There is no paper trail to support that theory other than DNA. Freeman Senter of Sumner Co., TN, is connected to Buckner via records in Warren Co, NC. Willis does not fit into the ages as a child or grandchild of Jonathan Sentell by his wife Ann. (7/24/2020 Note: Further study has indicated no DNA connection to descendants of Freeman Senter of Sumner Co TN. Willis Center is most probably the son of Rev. War soldier William Sentell/Senter of Edgefield Co SC/Henderson Co NC and therefore more likely to use the surnames of Guilford and Sterling)

I know you and Jeanetta are looking for tangible paper documents to prove William Fletcher Center’s parents. Unfortunately, it does not exist. Scientific evidence is the only means of answering that question.

Your Cousin (Lois’ granddaughter),
Sharon Tabor
Bowling Green, KY 42101

One of the family mysteries was my paternal grandmother’s grandfather: who was the father of William Fletcher Center? After 15 years of research and 5 years digging through DNA, I found the answer, although my grandmother’s 1st cousins (in their 90s) are still looking for the paper trail.

Willis Marion Senter was born in Allen County KY. He was the illegitimate son of Elizabeth Center/Senter, daughter of Willis Senter/Center b. 1786 NC, d. abut May 1858 Allen County, KY. According to the bio of Willis Center’s great-nephew, Willis and his wife walked from SC to KY sometime between 1800-1810. My great-great-grandfather was William Fletcher Center 1846-1925 Allen County, KY. William “Bill” was the illegitimate son of Elizabeth Center and William McReynolds, proven via DNA. Elizabeth Center had 7 children. Whether they were full or half siblings, I do not know. What I do know is that Willis Marion Center, b. 1855 KY – d. 1920 OK was one of those children.

Elizabeth’s children:

1) William b. 1846 was raised by Anderson McReynolds (his father’s uncle) and remained in Allen Co., Ky.
2) James b. 1848 and Virginia b. 1852 were reared by Thomas and Mary Ashford, and James’ descendants use that surname in Barren Co, KY. James was killed by revenuers in 1879.
3) Virginia Center/Ashford Stipes remained in Allen Co KY and had no children.
4) Robert Wesley Center b. 1849 was raised by R.M. Spillman family and moved to Logan County, KY.
5) Jesse b. 1864 d. before 1910 – I do not know what happened to his daughter.

6) Anthony Center b. 1859. I do not know what happened to him.

Willis b. 1855 was raised by Amzie & his son Beverly (Dick?) Alexander and left KY traveling to Montague Co., TX, then to Carter Co., OK. The following is what I have on Willis Marion: MICROFILM of ALLEN CO KY VITAL STATISTICS

1855, Nov 29, CENTERS, Frances M., male, illegitimate, M. Elizabeth SENTERS, Pleasant Hill

* his name was either changed to Willis or an error occurred in recording the information*

1860 ALLEN CO KY CENSUS

26 1403 1383 Alexander A C 64 M. Farmer 2,500 2,500 NC . . .


28 1403 1383 Alexander B W 22 M. Farming . 250 Ky . . .


30 1403 1383 Center Willis 4 F . . . Ky

1870 ALLEN CO KY CENSUS

CENTER, Willis M. 14 M (worker in woolen mill), living with ALEXANDER, Beverly 34 M, Louza W. 27, Rather C. 4, Janes E. 6 Ida M. 2, Elizabeth 70 VA, WHITNEY, Jerry W. 23

*Amzie Alexander was a neighbor to Willis Center, Sr for many years (see notes for Willis). Neighbors or relatives were more likely to take in children than strangers.*

In order to find my William’s father, I had to trace as many of his siblings/half-siblings as possible. Of Elizabeth’s 7 children and her sister Martha’s 3 children (all illegitimate), none who had death certificates had the same information for their parents. My father was very irritated when he received a copy of his ggrandfather’s death certificate; he knew his grandfather had falsified the document.
Dear Jane,

This is for you and for your mom.

I was putting things away.

Best, [Signature]
These are the only relations that Avery knows about of his Father's People.

Willa Marion Senter was Avery's Father, and Dick Alexander raised him.

Jinnie was a sister of Mr. Senter, and she married a man named Sykes.

Less Senter was a nephew, one of his Brothers Son's. He used to stay with Mr. Mr. Senter when they lived at Montague, Texas.
Joe Satin  Ardmore Okla
Peg D Ardmore
Sarah Ellen Wapanatok Okla
Avery bund Satin Southern Farm okla territory
Sarah Elizabeth Higgin Farm South Georgia

Bird McKinley Perrigen Ft. Smith Ark.
Theresa Emily Chester Ft. Smith Ark.
Joel Blood and Rachel Lourl Married Nov 16 1834
parents of Joel Freeman Blood born May 3 1837

William Bracken and Harriet Bealmear Married 1840
parents of Mary Elizabeth Bracken Mar 20 1843

Joel Freeman Blood and Mary Elizabeth Bracken Married March 17 1861
parents of Elizabeth Estelle Blood Oct 21 1861

Wilkie Marion Sexton born Dec 29 1855
3 boys and 1 sister
no information on parents

Wilkie Marion Sexton and Elizabeth Estelle Blood Married Aug 22 1882
5 boys and 1 girl

parents of Avery Leon Sexton - born Sept 3 1895

James Washington Higfield & Annie Rebecca Singman
parents of Sarah Elizabeth Higfield Jan 7 1894
3 boys & 4 girls

Avery L Sexton & Sarah E Higfield Married 1915
parents of Perry D Sexton & 3 girls born July 28 1916

Perry D Sexton and Sarah Ellen Shxeyen married July 18 1938
3 boys 2 girls
Joseph Stephen Sexton born Feb 22 1946

Joseph S. Sexton and Deanna Marie Mountjoy Married Feb 1 1969
Perry Duke Sexton born Feb 10 1973
This Bible was given to Rachel Lund as a bridal present by her father on Nov. 16th 1834.

It was then given to her son Joel Farm Blood (after his death Aug. 12th 1872).

It was given to his oldest child Elizabeth Estella Blood.

It is supposed to be handed down to the descendants of Rachel Lund and her husband Joel Blood.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Record</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Marriages</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel Blood and Rachel Lund were married Nov 16th 1834</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Bracken and Harriet Realmore were married Nov 29th 1840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel Freeman Blood and Mary Elizabeth Bracken were married March 17th 1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stella C. Blood to Willis M. Senter 27th of August 1882</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willis Ward Senter and Martha Ellen Oxford were married October 31 1936</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albie Senter and Viola Jackson were married August 16, 1903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avery L. Senter and Sarah Highnight were married Dec. 12 1915</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lois Senter and Will Speed were married on April 30 1911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alvin Brooks Senter and Bertha Frances Stephie were married Jan 25 1923</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIRTHS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel Blood born Oct. 2nd, 1867.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rachel Lund born Nov. 17th, 1867.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joel Freeman Blood born May 5th, 1857.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth Estella Blood born Oct. 21st, 1861</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lyman Peabody Blood born August 30th, 1862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Elizabeth Blood born Oct. 12th, 1864</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Freeman Blood born August 11th, 1867</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emma Irene Blood born November 10th, 1869</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lettie Annie Blood born February 6th, 1872</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAMILY RECORD.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>BIRTHS.</td>
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<tr>
<td>William Bracken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born Apr. 3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph I. Calman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born June 10th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Ann Bracken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born Dec. 21st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1841.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Elizabeth Bracken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born Feb. 20th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1843.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Henry Bracken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born June 1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1849.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susan Levina Bracken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born Dec. 8th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1852.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose M. Thomas Bracken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born Oct 7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Samuel Bracken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born Oct 11th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1856.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William M. Senter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born Dec. 17th</td>
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<tr>
<td>1856.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Willis Ward Senter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born June 14th</td>
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<tr>
<td>1853.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abigayl Wayne Senter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born Jan. 6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1853.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mary Lois Senter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born July 6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1871.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avery Lund Senter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born Sept. 3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1893.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alton Blood Senter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born Aug 24th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alvin Brook Senter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born June 19th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1909.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FAMILY RECORD.

DEATHS.

Rachel L. Blood
Died July 8th, 1870

Lois Blood
Died Sept 7th, 1853

Lyman Peabody Blood
Died November 4th, 1862

William Freeman Blood
Died Sept 25th, 1869

Joel Freeman Blood
Aug 12th, 1872

Little Susie Blood
Oct 20th, 1872

Mary & Blood Schiff
Died June 21, 1938

DEATHS.

W. M. Senter
Died Nov 23, 1910

Alton Blood Senter
Died Feb 26th, 1899

Estella Elizabeth Senter
Died Jan 7th, 1960

Addie Wayne Senter
Died May 30th, 1955

Sarah Senter
Died April 20, 1947

Avery Land Senter
August 26, 1973

Alvin Brooks Senter
Died June 17, 1987
Mrs. Sarah E. Senter

Funeral services for Mrs. Sarah E. Senter, 73, a lifelong resident of Ardmore, will be at 2 p.m. Saturday at First Orthodox Baptist Church. The Rev. Edgar Carlisle, Yukon, will officiate. Burial will be in Hillcrest cemetery.

Mrs. Senter, who resided at 316 H NE, was born Jan. 7, 1894, at Ardmore. She died Thursday at her home. She was married here to Avery L Senter Dec. 12, 1915. She was a member of First Orthodox Church, the Gay 'Nineties Club, of which she was president, Navy Mothers, and Golden Hour Sunday School Class, which she also served as president.

Survivors include the widower, a son, Perry D., Anchorage, Alaska; three daughters, Mrs. Ruth Whitten, Dallas, Mrs. Marie Pittman, Ardmore, and Mrs. Norma Pittman, Grand Prairie, Tex.; three sisters, Mrs. Lillie Watson, Oklahoma City, Mrs. Lottie Bell, Dallas, and Mrs. Lavada Conger, Bridgeport, Tex.; a brother, Bryant Hignight, Ardmore; 12 grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.

Bettes Funeral THome is in charge of arrangements.
Perry Duke Senter with family bible