

# COOK FAMILY ORGANIZATION

## PROJECT SUMMARY

[CookCook2008October/0807]

6 November 2008

### OBJECTIVES

- Identify the parentage and ancestry of William Cook of Berkshire County, Massachusetts

### RESULTS

Research on the ancestry of William Cook (1780 – 1840) of Hancock, Berkshire County, Massachusetts, has come to the conclusion that he and his brothers Abiel and Job were probably the sons of Abiel Cook of Tiverton, Rhode Island; Hancock, Massachusetts, and Stephentown, New York. The case is circumstantial, but based on compelling evidence.

- Abiel Cook of Stephentown, Rensselaer County, New York; Hancock, Berkshire County, Massachusetts; and Tiverton, Newport County, Rhode Island, was married to Susanna Cole, daughter of William Cole and Elizabeth Luther
- William Cole died at Hancock, Massachusetts in 1804. William Cook was married to Lucy Chapman at Hancock just a year later.
- William Cole was listed in Shaker death records, implying he was a Shaker, at least later in life.
- William Cole's daughter Sebia married Perez Wheaton, brother of the Shaker Noah Wheaton who mistreated Betty Cook, daughter of Abiel Cook, at Hancock in 1784/1785.
- The young man for whom Betty Cook had feelings deemed improper by the Shakers was the son of Noah Wheaton. While there was no real blood relationship between Elizabeth Cook and Noah Wheaton, his son might be considered a sort of cousin to her and thus her feelings towards him may have been construed as more improper.

The fact that Abiel Cook had a son named after himself (Abiel) and a son named after his father (Job) and that he had three daughters named after his wife Susannah, his mother (Ann) and mother-in-law (Elizabeth/Betty) makes it logical that he would also have a son named after his father-in-law – William Cole – and it is proposed that this is William Cook, born 6 September 1780.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- If anything remains to be done before accepting this connection, it is to try and identify Job Cook, the son of Abiel Cook who was supposed to have died at sea. There are, however, few resources to check in this regard.
- For the time being, Abiel Cook and Susanna Cole are being listed as the probable parents of William Cook, and their parents are also being listed to illustrate the naming pattern mentioned above. Once this connection has been accepted, both the Cook and the Cole lines can be traced back in existing genealogies. The Cook line behind Abiel Cook as presented in by Jane Fletcher Fiske's *Thomas Cooke of Rhode Island* should be considered reliable, leaving the ancestries of the wives in each generation to be traced.

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## RESEARCH REPORT

[Cook2008October/0807]

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Research on the ancestry of William Cook (1780 – 1840) of Hancock, Berkshire County, Massachusetts, has come to the conclusion that he and his brothers Abiel and Job were probably the sons of Abiel Cook of Tiverton, Rhode; Hancock, Massachusetts, and Stephentown, New York. The case is circumstantial, but based on compelling evidence.

In the last research session, information was developed that Abiel Cook of Hancock, Massachusetts and Stephentown, New York was the same person as Abiel Cook of Tiverton, Rhode Island, a Revolutionary War soldier who died in Stephentown, New York in 1807 and whose widow Ann applied for pension based on his service. This Abiel Cook was written up in the genealogy *Thomas Cooke of Rhode Island: A Genealogy of Thomas Cooke alias Butcher of Netherbury, Dorsetshire, England, who came to Taunton, Massachusetts in 1637 and Settled in Portsmouth, Rhode Island in 1643*, by Jane Fletcher Fiske. She gives his place of death as “probably” at Hoosick, New York in 1807.

According to Mrs. Fiske, this Abiel Cook married first, at Dartmouth, Massachusetts, to a Susannah Cole of Freetown, Bristol County, Massachusetts, on 2 August 1766. By her he had three daughters before 1773 when he was warned out of Warren, Bristol County, Rhode Island. One of the daughters was a Betty, whom Mrs. Fiske assigned an approximate birth date of 1770.

This daughter Betty corresponds in name and approximate age to the Betty Cook, daughter of Abiel Cook of Hancock, Massachusetts who was ill-treated by the Shaker Noah Wheaton in 1784. The fact that Abiel Cook lived at Hancock in the 1780s is significant because the ancestor William Cook was married at Hancock to Lucy Chapman in 1805.

The problem in identifying William Cook (and his brothers Abiel and Job) as a son of Abiel Cook of Hancock is that Abiel Cook of Hancock was living in Stephentown, Rensselaer County, New York in 1790 and did not have enough sons under the age of 16 to accommodate William. Indeed, he had only one son under 16 when he should have had

two. Abiel Cook had married for a second time in 1785 to an Anna Lee at Hoosick now Stephentown, Rensselaer (then Albany) County, New York and had two sons by 1790:

- Philemon, born 1786
- Joseph, born 1789

It is known that Philemon Cook lived to adulthood, for he gave an affidavit in his mother’s Revolutionary War pension application.<sup>1</sup> (Document 1) He was likely the son under 16 living with Abiel Cook in 1790. It was thought that William, Abiel, and Job Cook, being sons of Abiel Cook’s first marriage, may have been living with maternal relatives in 1790. Joseph Cook, born 1789, could have died by 1790 – except that he seems to have been accounted for in the 1800 census as one of the two sons age 10 to 16 enumerated with Abiel Cook in Stephentown. (Document 22, Report of 26 March 2008) Pre 1850 censuses list only the name of the head of the household by name and its constituent members by age and gender categories so there is some flexibility in accounting for who should and should not have been enumerated in a given census year. Children could be living with relatives and by 1800, William Cook was old enough to be living elsewhere and working.

The 1782 Census of Tiverton, Rhode Island, however, showed an Abiel Cook with the enough males in the right age categories (three under 15) to include William and his brothers Job and Abiel. (Document 11, Report of 8 September 2008)

Further research, however, demonstrated that this Abiel Cook was a different individual than the Revolutionary War Pensioner. The 1790 Census of Tiverton showed the following family (Document 2):

Locality		1790 Tiverton, Newport County, Rhode Island				
Page	Head of Family	Free White Males 16 and Over	Free White Males Under 16	Free White Females	All Other Free Persons	Slaves
361	Abiel Cook	1	4	2	3	

<sup>1</sup> Curiously, Philemon Cook said that his father Abiel Cook died at Williamstown, Massachusetts in 1807 – thus creating further confusion with the other Abiel Cook married to Margaret Krieger who was living there in 1801 when they deeded land together. Williamstown is just over the border from Stephentown.

At first glance, this census would seem to support the idea that Abiel Cook of Tiverton did have enough sons in 1790 to accommodate two of his sons by a first wife and two by his second wife – except that Abiel Cook the Revolutionary War Pensioner was already in New York by 1785 and in Hancock, Massachusetts by 1784.

Previous research had already disclosed an Abiel Cook of Williamstown, Massachusetts who could have been confused with Abiel Cook the Revolutionary War Pensioner, so care needed to be taken to not assume that there was only one Abiel Cook in Tiverton.

Published Newport, Rhode Island Court files disclosed that in November of 1783, Gideon Almy and John Almy of Tiverton sued Abiel or Abial Cook of Tiverton for possession of a schooner. (Document 3) Reference back to Jane Fiske's genealogy *Thomas Cooke of Rhode Island* showed that there was indeed another Abiel Cook of Tiverton. (Document 4)

This Abiel (of Abial) Cook was born about 1719 at Tiverton and died there in 1808. This man had a somewhat unsavory reputation, a long standing feud with the Almy family, and is more likely to be the Abiel Cook involved in the 1783 lawsuit with that family.

Fiske's book also indicates that it was this Abiel or Abial Cook who was listed as 50 to 60 years old in Tiverton in the Rhode Island military census of 1777. The whereabouts of the younger Abiel Cook in 1777 are not known, but Fiske's book indicates that he was moving around in the 1770s. It is known that he was a resident of Tiverton during his military service from November 1775 to February 1779, but it is not known when he moved to New York.

He married Susanna Cole of Freetown at Dartmouth in 1766 and was warned out of Warren, Rhode Island in 1773. (See Document 8, Report of 8 September 2008). Susanna Cole was the daughter of William Cole and Elizabeth Luther of Swansea, Bristol County, Massachusetts, born 28 January 1742. William Cole and Susanna Luther were married 12 November 1741 at Swansea, had three children born there, then one child at Freetown, then three children at Warren, Bristol County, Rhode Island. (Document 5).

William and Susanna (Luther) Cole's entry in the LDS Ancestral File™ indicates that he was born 4 October 1719 in Swansea and died 17 October 1804 at "Shaker

Village,” Berkshire County, Massachusetts. (Document 6) “Shaker Village” is Hancock. It would seem, then Abiel Cook’s move to Hancock may have been prompted by his father-in-law’s move there – or vice versa. Further Shaker connections are revealed in the fact that William Cole’s daughter Sebia Cole married Perez Wheaton, son of Samuel Wheaton and Prudence Salisbury. (Document 8) Perez Wheaton was born 13 July 1750 at Swansea. The name Wheaton is significant. It was Noah Wheaton of the Shakers who subjected Betty Cook to “punishment” in 1784. Perez Wheaton had an older brother Noah Wheaton, born 21 February 1744 at Swansea. (Document 9)

Is Noah Wheaton, born 1744, the same person as Noah Wheaton, the Shaker? Noah Wheaton the Shaker, at that time living in New Lebanon, Columbia County, New York (another Shaker community) gave a testimony in 1808 concerning the miraculous cure of a dislocated ankle in 1780. At the time he gave this testimony, he was 64 years old – putting his date of birth at about 1744 – corresponding to the birth of Noah Wheaton, son of Samuel Wheaton and Prudence Salisbury. He also stated that this miracle occurred shortly after he converted to Shakerism, which helps to determine when the Coles and Wheatons moved from Rhode Island to Hancock. This information comes from a book called *Shakerism Unmasked or the History of the Shakers*. (Document 10)

The same book offered a new angle on the incident between Noah Wheaton and Betty Cook:

- “Noah Wheaton, a man of eminence in the Society, whipped a girl, by the name of Elizabeth Cook, in a very inhuman manner.”
- “ ‘A. Cook,’ the girl’s father on hearing of this conduct, demanded satisfaction of Wheaton, by a process of law.”
- “It appears, from facts, that N. Wheaton was an Elder or superior of a family [*in the Shaker sense of the word*]<sup>2</sup> of persons a greater part of whom were his own family, and that this young woman [*Elizabeth Cook*] who was eighteen years of age, was under his clerical authority. He had a son to whom this young woman became partial, and in this, she observed every principle of chastity.”

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<sup>2</sup> Explanation and emphasis added by Gordon L. Remington.

Elizabeth Cook eventually went to Noah Wheaton and confessed her feelings towards his son, which were sinful in the eyes of the Shakers. This was the cause of her being ill treated by Wheaton.

There are some more implications to the story. Noah Wheaton was the brother-in-law of Elizabeth Cook's aunt Sebia Cole. While there was no real blood relationship between Elizabeth Cook and Noah Wheaton, his son might be considered a sort of cousin to her and thus her feelings towards him may have been construed as more improper.

There are also some chronological implications to the story. Elizabeth Cook's age at the time of the ill treatment is given 18 years, and since the event took place in 1784 or 1785, this puts her date of birth at about 1766 to 1767. She would thus have been the eldest daughter of Abiel Cook. Her date of birth has been adjusted on the Abiel Cook family group record.

Noah Wheaton was a Shaker, and his father-in-law William Cole was supposed to have died at Hancock Shaker village in 1804. Shaker records show the death of William Cole, age 85, on 17 October 1804. This implies that William Cole was indeed a Shaker, at least at one time. (Document 11)

William Cole is found in the 1790 census of Hancock, Massachusetts as follows (Document 12):

Locality		1790 Hancock, Berkshire County, Massachusetts				
Page	Head of Family	Free White Males 16 and Over	Free White Males Under 16	Free White Females	All Other Free Persons	Slaves
	Nathan Cole	3	2	6		
	William Cole	1	1	1		
	Betty Cole	1		2		

William Cole was not found on the 1800 Census of Hancock. If he was living with the Shakers in 1800, he may not have been listed as head of his own household. The male under 16 could have been one of his Cook grandsons – even William Cook, born 1780.

There is no probate record for William Cole in Berkshire County, nor are there any deeds. Again, if he were living among the Shakers, he may have not owned property.

How this all impacts the identification of William Cook (1780 – 1840) of Hancock, Massachusetts as the son of Abiel Cook of Hancock, Massachusetts and Stephentown, New York is based on residence and naming patterns.

The fact that William Cook was “of Hancock” when he married Lucy Chapman on 19 December 1805 has been noted as significant in that Abiel Cook was resident in Hancock in 1784/1785 when he took Noah Wheaton to court for the ill-treatment of his daughter Betty. Abiel Cook moved on to Stephentown, New York by 1790 and died there in 1807, so his connection to Hancock at the time William Cook married in 1805 was over twenty years old. It is true, however, that Hancock borders on Stephentown, so he was not that far away.

The fact that William Cole, Abiel Cook’s father-in-law and who would be William Cook’s maternal grandfather, died in Hancock in 1804 – a year before William Cook married Lucy Chapman there – narrows the chronological gap between Abiel Cook’s association with Hancock and William Cook’s marriage.

The names of William Cook’s proposed grandparents are also a factor. Abiel Cook of Tiverton and Hancock was the son of Job Cook and Ann Bennett. Susanna Cole, Abiel Cook’s wife, was the daughter of William Cole and Elizabeth Luther.

It is known that Abiel Cook had daughters Ann and Betty (also called Elizabeth) who bore the names of their grandmothers. He also had a daughter Susanna, probably named after his wife Susanna Cole. The LDS descendants of William Cook performed Temple Work for two of William Cook’s brothers – Job Cook and Abiel (Byle) Cook. Job Cook has not been documented. He supposedly went to sea and was never heard from again. It is fortunate family remembered him and did Temple Work for him, as his first name is significant in the theory being proposed.

William Cook’s other brother Abiel Cook has been traced and two censuses are key in determining his age.

In 1820, as Abiel Cook, he was enumerated in Penfield, Monroe County, New York as age 26 to 45. This age puts his date of birth at 1774 to 1784. (Document 13)

In 1830, as Abial Cook, he was enumerated in Penfield, Monroe County, New York as age 50 to 60. This age puts his date of birth at 1769 to 1780. (Document 14) Combining the two census ages puts his date of birth at 1774 to 1780. He has been listed on the family group record as born “about 1784,” but on the strengths of the two censuses, his date of birth has been revised to about 1775. It is clear that he was born after the 1773 warning out of Abiel Cook from Warren, but before 1780.

Job Cook’s date of birth remains approximate, but since he was a son of Abiel Cook’s first marriage, he had to have been born before 1785. For the time being and until his date of birth can be documented, he has been assigned a date of birth of about 1777 and placed between Abiel Cook and William Cook.

The fact that Abiel Cook had a son named after himself (Abiel) and a son named after his father (Job) and that he had three daughters named after his wife Susannah, his mother (Ann) and mother-in-law (Elizabeth/Betty) makes it logical that he would also have a son named after his father-in-law – William Cole – and it is proposed that this is William Cook, born 6 September 1780.

Based on naming and residence patterns, the circumstantial evidence supports the identification of William Cook (1780 – 1840) of Hancock, Massachusetts as the son of Abiel Cook of Hancock, Massachusetts and Stephentown, New York. The only “negative” factors in this identification are that Abiel Cook’s 1790 and 1800 censuses don’t include all the sons he should have had living with him, but since he was on his second marriage, the sons from his first marriage could have been living with relatives of his first wife. It is known that his father-in-law William Cole lived in Hancock and there may have been other relatives with whom he could have been living. It is also possible that the sons from the first marriage lived among the Shakers at the time of the two censuses.

If anything remains to be done before accepting this connection, it is to try and identify Job Cook, the son of Abiel Cook who was supposed to have died at sea. There are, however, few resources to check in this regard.

For the time being, Abiel Cook and Susanna Cole are being listed as the probable parents of William Cook, and their parents are also being listed to illustrate the naming pattern mentioned above. Once this connection has been accepted, both the Cook and the

Cole lines can be traced back in existing genealogies. The Cook line behind Abiel Cook as presented in by Jane Fletcher Fiske's *Thomas Cooke of Rhode Island* should be considered reliable, leaving the ancestries of the wives in each generation to be traced.

It has been a pleasure researching and documenting your family history. We look forward to continuing, according to your direction.

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Professional Genealogist

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