



The Real James Durham

An analysis of three related individuals named James Durham that have been intermixed or misidentified within the Thomas Durham family of Nelson County Virginia, Casey County Kentucky, Randolph County Missouri and beyond.

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INTRODUCTION

Recycling family names like James, John, William, etc., is great but it does cause confusion among researchers, particularly those who are not careful. This is sometimes compounded by the necessity of record keepers such as clerks to use the terms senior and junior to identify two people with the same name. One has to be careful here because it may not denote father and son and is sometimes used for an uncle and a nephew, as is the case here, or in some rare cases, people not related at all. Another serious mistake, and perhaps the worse, often made in genealogy is identifying the wrong ancestors.

DNA and Y-DNA in particular, has proven to be a very useful tool in identifying related families and perhaps more importantly, non-related families. I will cover the origin of this Durham family in The Thomas Durham File due to be published in 2022, but briefly this analysis covers three James Durham generations and begins in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia on the north fork of the Tye river where Thomas Durham moved to with his step-father John Durham circa 1761.

The First James Durham

1. **James Durham** number one, was born in 1766 on the north fork of the Tye river in Amherst County Virginia. This area is on the eastern side of the Blue Ridge Mountains and became Nelson County in 1807. James was the son of Thomas Durham and the brother of David Milton Durham and Isaac Durham, who were also born on the north fork of the Tye river in 1768 and 1772 respectfully. We do not know who James Durham's mother was but his father Thomas re-married the widow Mary Fitzgerald circa 1790. James married Catherine "Caty" Fitzgerald, daughter of his stepmother Mary in 1793.

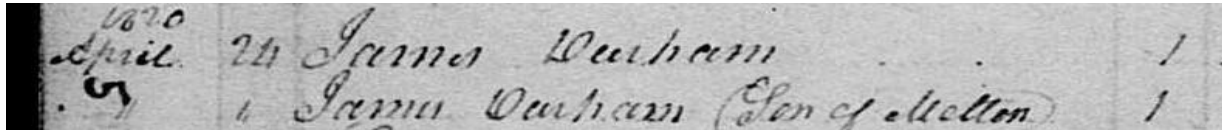
Mary Fitzgerald was also the mother of Bartlett Fitzgerald who married Maskey Coleman, sister of Jane Coleman who married David Milton Durham. James and Caty were in their late twenties when they married and although Caty had a daughter named Matilda "Tildy" Fitzgerald when they married, they did not have any known children of their own. James later owned land next to his father Thomas on the north fork and he and Caty remained in Amherst/Nelson County and died there circa 1833. The identity of Caty Fitzgerald and her daughter Tildy has also been misunderstood, and I covered that mystery in "The Catherine and Matilda Fitzgerald Brief" published as a pdf file in 2020. That brief and this one can both be found at the nealmanor.com library.

Thomas Durham is on the Amherst County Virginia tax list in 1782, when the tax list began, and in 1787 James Durham is added to the list, as a son of Thomas, when he became 21. Beginning in 1820, the tax records for Nelson County, which was previously Amherst County, show two James Durhams. Records sometimes refer to the two James' as Senior and Junior but the records also reveal the true identity of the younger James Durham as being the son of Milton Durham; enter James Durham number two.



The Second James Durham

2. **James Durham** number two was born in Amherst County Virginia in 1798/99 on the north fork of the Tye River. He was the son of David Milton Durham and Jane Coleman. His parents moved to Casey County Kentucky when he was an infant but James moved back to what was then Nelson County, when he was probably a teenager. He most likely lived with his Uncle James (James number one) and Aunt Caty Fitzgerald Durham. He first appears on the 1820 tax list for Nelson County when he would have just turned 21 and would not have been on the list before that. So it is difficult to tell when he actually returned to Nelson County. What the tax records do tell us, as shown below, is that one of these James Durhams was the son of Milton Durham or David Milton Durham. On other tax records, David Milton Durham was listed as “Davy” or “Milton”, and a son of Thomas Durham.



James Durham number two married Lorinda Taylor in Nelson County on 12 February 1821. The marriage bond says James Durham Jr. and L. Taylor with James Durham Sr. as providing security. This record clearly confuses the issue but when viewed in conjunction with other records it is clear Sr. and Jr. refers to Uncle and Nephew in this case. Other records also tell us that the L. was for Lorinda. James and Lorinda returned to Casey County probably in 1827 since he is on the 1828 tax list for Casey County and no longer on the Nelson County list. One should also note that the death certificate for Isaac Warner Durham, gives his parents as James Durham and Lorinda Taylor as can be seen in Attachment B.

Children of James Durham and Lorinda Taylor:

1. Jane Coleman Durham born 1822 m. 1st cousin James “Kentucky Jim” Durham.
2. Catherine Durham born 1824
3. Serena Durham born 1830
4. Isaiah Durham born 1831 also served in the 8th Ky Cav.
5. Lorinda Durham born 1833
6. Isaac Warner Durham born 1835 also served in the 8th Ky Cav.
7. Malissa Frances Durham born 1837
8. John Thomas Durham born 1841 m. Emily Wright
9. Sarah A. Durham 1845

Please note that James Durham and Lorinda Taylor had a daughter named Jane Coleman Durham who married James “Kentucky Jim” Durham; enter James Durham number three.



The Third James Durham



3. **James Durham** number three, aka “Kentucky Jim”, was the son of Thomas Durham and Mary “Polly” Smith. He was born circa 1824 in Casey County Kentucky and moved with his parents to Randolph County Missouri. James number three didn’t like Missouri, or at least preferred Kentucky so he moved back to Casey County and hence the nickname “Ky Jim”. Much, if not all the confusion with James number three, and his wife Jane Coleman Durham, who was also his first cousin, has to do with mis-identifying James number two as James number three’s father, instead of James number two actually being Jane Coleman Durham’s father. In other words, James Durham number three, aka Ky Jim, was the son of Thomas Durham and James’ wife Jane Coleman Durham was the daughter of

James Durham number two, who was a brother to Thomas Durham. To hopefully clarify this a bit, perhaps we need to first establish that James Durham number three was the son of Thomas Durham.

What we know about David Milton Durham’s son Thomas is that he was born circa 1800 in Casey County Kentucky. He married Mary “Polly” Smith on 4 August 1823 in Casey County. Mary died between 1837 when her daughter Paulina was born and 1847 when Thomas remarried Barbara A. Brown in Randolph County Missouri on 20 August 1847. Based primarily on census records, we know Thomas and Mary had the following children:

1. (James Durham born circa 1824)
2. David M. Durham born 1830
3. Thomas Shelton Durham born 1832
4. Elizabeth Durham born 1834
5. Paulina Durham born 1836.

The key to identifying James “Ky Jim” Durham as a son of Thomas Durham is with Thomas’ son Thomas Shelton Durham. He was listed as “insane” on the census records and lived most of his life with his father and after his mother died, with his step-mother Barbara A. Brown Durham. Thomas Durham can be seen living with his step-mother Barbara Durham during the 1860 and 1870 census records as can be seen in Attachment A. Family history states that after Thomas’ step-mother died, James “Ky Jim” went to Missouri and brought his brother back to Kentucky to live with him. There are two records to show that this family story is absolutely true.

First, the 1880 census for James Durham and his wife Jane, show a Thomas Durham age 48 living with them and he is identified as a “brother” to the head-of-household; James Durham. So, the Thomas S. Durham who was previously living with Barbara Durham in Missouri, and with

Thomas Durham and Barbara before that, is now living with James and Jane Durham in Casey County and is identified as James' brother.

Second, when James Durham applied for a pension in 1887 for his service in the 8th Kentucky Calvary, he stated that he had a brother who was a state charge that couldn't be left alone for any extended period of time and that he died last October. According to family history, Thomas climbed into a potato box in October of 1886 and suffocated when he could not open the lid to get out. A tragic story to be sure but it corroborates Ky Jim's story and family history.

What is obviously clear and substantiated then, is that James "Ky Jim" Durham had a brother named Thomas Durham. Since the records clearly establish this Thomas as a son of Thomas Durham, what then becomes fact is, as brothers James and Thomas are both sons of Thomas Durham and Mary Smith. More to the point, James "Ky Jim" Durham was a son of Thomas Durham.

Now that we know that James number three, aka Ky Jim, was the son of Thomas Durham, the next question involving the identity of his wife Jane C. Durham and the 1870 census becomes much easier to answer. Actually, we have already answered the question of who Jane C. Durham's father was in describing James number two above, so it might be useful for the reader to review that before continuing. When you look at the 1870 census for James Durham and Jane Durham you see that they have a James Durham age 74, living with them. The question then, at least for some, is was this James the father of James? Or perhaps the father of Jane? Now that we know that James' father was Thomas, this James was obviously Jane C. Durham's father and the one family history says Jane put in an old folk's home.

20	200220	Durham James	45	7/10	Farmer	300	300	"					
21		Jane	48	7/10	Keeping House			"					1
22		Martha	15	7/10				"					1
23		James	74	7/10	VC			"					

So, we know from family stories that Jane and her sisters, Serena and Lorinda, took care of their parents when they got old. Jane became terminally ill and bed ridden, however, and could no longer care for her father and when she could not get her sisters to take him, she put him in an "old folks" home where he can be seen living in the 1880 census. He is listed as being a pauper and sick with old age. In addition to the census records verifying this story, Ky Jim also said in his pension application mentioned above, that his wife was blind and has been confined to her bed for over two years. So, the family stories appear to be true and as this story goes, James' daughter Lorinda did take her father in and cared for him before he died sometime after the 1880 census was taken.

CONCLUSION

The information and analysis presented here clearly establishes and creates a preponderance of evidence for the following:

1. The James Durham who was born circa 1798, and was a son of David Milton Durham and Jane Coleman, married Lorinda Taylor in Nelson County Virginia in 1821.
2. Jane Coleman Durham who was born circa 1822 in Virginia was the daughter of James Durham and Lorinda Taylor. She married James "Ky Jim" Durham.
3. James "Ky Jim" Durham was the son of Thomas Durham, son of David Milton Durham and Jane Coleman.

Other issues can be added to this list but these are the three primary issues of interest.

ATTACHMENT A

1850 Randolph County Missouri Census

1	982	993	Thomas Durham	45 M	Farmer	✓	100	Kentucky	✓
2			Barbara A	32 F				DO	✓
3			Shelton	19 M	Farmer	✓	75	DO	✓
4			Elizabeth	17 F				DO	✓
5			Paulina	13 F				DO	✓
6			Reuben C	1/2 M				Missouri	

1860 Randolph County Missouri Census – shows Thomas Durham’s children by Barbara A. Brown and then Thomas’ son Thomas S. Durham by his first wife Mary Smith. It also states that Thomas S. Durham is “insane” which probably meant he was retarded or perhaps autistic. Difficult to determine what was meant by insane but Thomas obviously had mental issues and was a patient of the state or as his brother James said, “was a state charge”.

19	246	247	Barbara A Durham	49 F	Farmer	✓	600	280	Kentucky	✓
20			Reuben	10 M				Missouri	✓	
21			Marion E	8 F				do		
22			E. Charles W	6 M				do		
23			Peter F R	4 M				do		
24			Thomas S Durham	27 M		✓		Kentucky	✓	

1870 Randolph County Missouri Census

1	60	59	Durham Barbara	47 F	W. Keppin house			Ky.	✓
2			Reuben	19 M	works on farm			Mo.	✓
3			M. E.	17 F				Mo.	✓
4			Charles W	15 M				Mo.	✓
5			Peter F R	12 M				Mo.	✓
6			Thomas S	38 M	works on farm			Ky.	✓

1880 Casey County Kentucky Census

273	273	Durham James	7 F	56	Wife	✓	Farmer	✓	Kentucky	Mo.	Mo.
		Jane	7 F	56	Wife	✓	Keeping house	✓	Virginia	Mo.	Mo.
		Martha	7 F	53	Daughter	✓	at home	✓	Missouri	Ky.	Mo.
		James	7 M	48	Brother	✓		✓	Kentucky	Mo.	Mo.
276	276	Thomas S Durham	27 M	27		✓	School Teacher	✓	Missouri	Ky.	Mo.

ATTACHMENT B

FORM V 8 1-100M 2-29-12

Commonwealth of Kentucky
STATE BOARD OF HEALTH
BUREAU OF VITAL STATISTICS
CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

File No. **28207**

1 PLACE OF DEATH

County Shelby

Vot. Pot. Shelbyville No. 4

Ino. Town

City

Registration District No. 685

Primary Registration District No. 6678

(No. St., Ward)

Registered No.

[If death occurred in a hospital or institution, give its NAME instead of street and number.]

3 FULL NAME Isaac W. Durham

PERSONAL AND STATISTICAL PARTICULARS

3 SEX male 4 COLOR OR RACE white 5 SINGLE, MARRIED, WIDOWED, OR DIVORCED widower
(Write the word)

6 DATE OF BIRTH July 7, 1836
(Month) (Day) (Year)

7 AGE 85 yrs. 7 mos. 27 ds. IF LESS than 1 day... hrs. or... min.?

8 OCCUPATION (a) Trade, profession, or particular kind of work farmer (b) General nature of industry business or establishment in which employed (or employer)

9 BIRTHPLACE (State or country) Pa.

10 NAME OF FATHER James Durham

11 BIRTHPLACE OF FATHER (State or country) Pa.

12 MAIDEN NAME OF MOTHER Parinda Taylor

13 BIRTHPLACE OF MOTHER (State or country) Va.

14 THE ABOVE IS TRUE TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE

(Informant) Isaac W. Durham

(Address) MaKenney

15 Filed 29 1919 REGISTRAR

MEDICAL CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

16 DATE OF DEATH Oct 4, 1919
(Month) (Day) (Year)

17 I HEREBY CERTIFY, That I attended deceased from June 6, 1919, to Oct 4, 1919, that I last saw him alive on Sept 27, 1919, and that death occurred on the date stated above at 8:30 a.m. The CAUSE OF DEATH* was as follows:

Senility

(Duration) ... yrs. ... mos. ... ds.

Contributory (SECONDARY) Diarrhoea chronic

(Signed) J. H. Smith, M. D.

Oct 4, 1919 (Address) MaKenney

*State the DISEASE CAUSING DEATH, or, in deaths from VIOLENT CAUSES state (1) MEANS OF INJURY; and (2) whether ACCIDENTAL, SUICIDAL, or HOMICIDAL.

18 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE (FOR HOSPITALS, INSTITUTIONS, TRANSIENTS OR RECENT RESIDENTS)

At place of death ... yrs. ... mos. ... ds. In the State ... yrs. ... mos. ... ds.

Where was disease contracted, if not at place of death?

Former or usual residence

19 PLACE OF BURIAL OR REMOVAL MaKenney DATE OF BURIAL Oct 5, 1919

20 UNDERTAKER Robt. P. Pritchard ADDRESS Yosunite

WRITE PLAINLY, WITH UNFADING INK--THIS IS A PERMANENT RECORD. Every item of information should be carefully supplied. AGE should be stated EXACTLY. PHYSICIANS should state CAUSE OF DEATH in plain terms, so that it may be properly certified. Exact statement of OCCUPATION is very important. See instructions on back of certificate.