
Identifying the Family of John Isaac Rippey of Clark County, Kentucky

By Davis W. Simpson

On September 3rd, 1850, William C. Sympson, a 51-year-old farmer and pro tem census taker, approached a small farmhouse in District 2 of Clark County, Kentucky. Whether he found someone in the house to answer his questions or he had to ask a neighbor, William recorded the following details about home's three inhabitants:¹

1. Sarah Rippey, 67, female, owned real estate valued at \$600, born in Virginia, could not read or write
2. Elizabeth Rippey, 40, female, born in Kentucky
3. John I Rippey, 5, male, born in Kentucky

This was the first documentation of five-year-old John Isaac Rippey's existence. The census record directly stated his age and birthplace, but it also implied a relationship between him and the two women in the house: a mother and grandmother? However, at this time and place, women married and took the surname of their husband. Had that meant that Elizabeth Rippey was the daughter-in-law of Sarah Rippey? What had happened to Elizabeth's husband?

This paper intends to prove that John Isaac Rippey of District 2, Clark County, Kentucky was the biological son of Elizabeth Rippey of the same place, who was the daughter of Samuel Rippey and Sarah Vance out of Virginia.

This proof relied on the the contributions of Gayle Culpepper, who provided both her insights and the DNA test results of herself and several relatives, without which a detailed genetic analysis would not have been possible.

THE RIPPEY FAMILY OF CLARK COUNTY, KENTUCKY

Sarah Rippey was the matriarch of the tiny household where John lived in 1850. A May 19th, 1853 land indenture described Sarah Rippey selling 10 acres to Gilkerson Rippey for \$100 on account of the love and affection that she held for him as her son.² Sarah died very soon afterward and her last will and testament, presented in June 1853, named Gilkerson Rippey as her executor.³

Going backwards in time, Sarah Rippey appeared on the 1840 Census in Clark County, Kentucky as head of the following household:

¹ 1850 United States Federal Census, Clark, Kentucky, population schedule, District 2, Roll M432_196, Page 30B, Image 488, Sarah Rippey, Elizabeth Rippey, John I Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, roll 1009

² Clark County Kentucky Deeds, 1793-1902, Vol 36, pg. 421 Clark County (Kentucky) Court of the County Clerk and Court of the Quarter Sessions, browsable images, Film # 008191834, Familysearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSLX-J98N-N?i=216&cat=426412> : accessed 29 Mar 2019)

³ Clark County Kentucky Order Book, book #12, page 568, 28 June 1853, image provided by Clark County Public Library 19 March 2019, index available online <http://www.clarkbooks.org/localhistory/probate/r>

Census Demographic Category	Count
Free White Females 15 thru 19	1
Free White Females 50 thru 59	1
No. White Persons over 20 What cannot Read and Write	1
Free White Persons Under 20	1
Total Free White Persons	2
Total All Persons - Free White, Free Colored, Slaves	2

Source: 1840 United States Federal Census, Clark, Kentucky, population schedule, Page 261, Sarah Rippey,; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M704, roll 580, record group 29

Was Elizabeth the female 15 thru 19 in this household, with an estimated birth year between 1821 and 1825? If so, her age was not consistent with later census records for Elizabeth Rippey:

Census Year	Age	Estimate Birth Year	Birth Place
1850	40	1810	Kentucky
1860	47	1813	Kentucky
1870	58	1812	Virginia
1880	68	1812	East Virginia
1900	88	1812	Virginia

Sources: 1850 United States Federal Census, Clark, Kentucky, population schedule, District 2, Roll M432_196, Page 30B, Image 488, Elizabeth Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, roll 1009. Also, 1860 United States Federal Census, Clark, Kentucky, population schedule, District 2, Roll M653_362, Page 865, FHL File 803362, Elizabeth Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M653, roll 1438. Also, 1870 United States Federal Census, Clark, Kentucky, population schedule, Precinct 5, Roll M593_456, Page 99A, FHL File 545955, Elizabeth Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M593, roll 1761. Also, 1900 United States Federal Census, Woods, Oklahoma, population schedule, Galena, Page 3, Enum District 0228, FHL microfilm 1241343, Elizabeth Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication T623, roll 1854.

If the female age 15 thru 19 was Elizabeth then the census taker had not simply marked the wrong box for her age but had her age consistently wrong in several categories, marking her as under 20. However, her age may have been reported incorrectly by whomever provided the information.

Sarah's son, Gilkerson Rippey, also appeared in Clark County, Kentucky on the 1840 U.S. Census⁴ He was marked as 20 thru 29 years with one other person in his household, a female age 15 thru 19. This was likely the same Gilkerson Rippey in the 1853 records as there was no other evidence of another man with that name at this time.

Neither Sarah Rippey nor Gilkerson Rippey appeared on the 1830 or 1820 U.S. Censuses, nor had anyone with the Rippey surname in Clark County, Kentucky, or in any adjacent county. However, Sarah Rippey appeared on a February 2nd, 1813 administration record for the estate of the late Samuel Rippey, waiving her rights as administratrix in favor of David Rippey and John Vance.⁵ She then appeared on an August 22nd, 1814 record, which named her the guardian of William Vance, Mary, and Elizabeth, orphans.⁶ In this legal context, the term orphan meant that the children had lost their father. Records for November 27th and December 25th of the same year described the appraisal of Samuel Rippey's estate and the allotment of dower to Sarah.⁷

The guardianship record showed that Sarah and her husband, Samuel, had daughter named Elizabeth, along with two other children. It also introduced the name Vance into evidence, William's middle name. Interestingly, the court record had not mentioned Gilkerson Rippey, whom Sarah later described as her son in the 1853 land indenture.

Indeed, Gilkerson's age on the 1850, 1860 and 1870 censuses put his estimated birth year about 1818⁸ and the person who reported his death in 1874 estimated his age *about* 60, which placed his birth year about 1814. Gilkerson was very unlikely to have been the son of Samuel.

Sarah likely had not remarried by 1820 since she conducted business transactions under her own name. On January 21st, 1820, Sally Rippey paid Ambrose Crim \$1 and loaned him \$90.82 in receipt of a deed of land, which she would hold until January 1st, 1821. On that date, if Ambrose had not repaid her the loan with interest then she was free to sell the land.⁹

This evidence shows that Sarah probably adopted Gilkerson. While this had not directly related to the status of John Isaac, it had shown that there were other Rippey family members in the vicinity and that Sarah may have been willing to adopt them.

⁴ 1840 United States Federal Census, Clark, Kentucky, population schedule, Page 261, Gilkerson Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M704, roll 580, record group 29.

⁵ Clark County Kentucky Order Book, book #5, page 147, 27 December 1813, image provided by Clark County Public Library 19 March 2019, index available online <http://www.clarkbooks.org/localhistory/probate/r> .

⁶ Clark County Kentucky Order Book, book #5, page 288, 22 August 1814, image provided by Clark County Public Library 19 March 2019, index available online <http://www.clarkbooks.org/localhistory/probate/r> .

⁷ Clark County Kentucky Order Book, book #5, page 289-311, 27 November 1815 to 26 February 1816, images provided by Clark County Public Library 19 March 2019, index available online <http://www.clarkbooks.org/localhistory/probate/r> .

⁸ 1850 United States Federal Census, Clark, Kentucky, population schedule, District 1, Roll M432_196, Page 49B, Image 526, Gilkerson Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, roll 1009. Also, 1860 United States Federal Census, Clark, Kentucky, population schedule, District 1, Roll M653_362, Page 928, FHL Film 803362, Gilkerson Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M653, roll 1438. Also, 1870 United States Federal Census, Clark, Kentucky, population schedule, Goodes, Roll M593_456, Page 23A, FHL Film 54955, Gilkerson Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication T132, roll 13.

⁹ Clark County Kentucky Deeds, 1793-1902, Vol 16, pg. 275 Clark County (Kentucky) Court of the County Clerk and Court of the Quarter Sessions, browsable images, Film # 008191834, Familysearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSLX-JC4S?i=463&cat=426412> : accessed 29 Mar 2019).

William V. Rippey wed Nancy Crim on March 16, 1826¹⁰ and Mary Rippey wed George Jones on September 3, 1826.¹¹ By 1830, both William and Mary relocated with their respective families to Boone County, Missouri.¹² William then moved on to Schuyler County, Missouri¹³ where he lived a productive life and was remembered in a local history book: "William was the son of Samuel Rippey and Sarah Vance. He married Nancy Randall Crim on March 14, 1826, at Clark County, Kentucky. Children: Gibson Crim, Samuel Enock, Elizabeth, William Henry, Mary Ann, Martha Jane, John Rice, Catherine DuBois, Jennie Lind."¹⁴

This secondary source confirms:

- William was the son of Sarah Rippey
- William's father and Sarah's husband was Samuel Rippey
- Sarah's maiden name was Vance

There was no marriage record for Elizabeth in Kentucky or any other document. There were marriage records for two women named Elizabeth Rippey in Indiana in 1831 and 1836, but these were the daughters of Joseph Rippey and David Rippey. If Elizabeth from the Clark County orphan record never married then she could be the same Elizabeth Rippey who lived in Sarah's 1850 household.

There was other Rippey family in the county. David Rippey, whom the court had appointed administrator of the estate of Samuel Rippey, died about 1815 in Clark County and left behind a widow and several children.¹⁵ On November 27th, 1815, the court had appointed David Rippey's wife, Elizabeth, to be the guardian of four of their children Eliza, Samuel Vance, James David, and Mary Jane.¹⁶ The court also had appointed Joseph Tate to be the guardian of three other Rippey children: John, Joseph, and Mathew.¹⁷

There were other mentions of the family in the county over following few years. A December 23rd, 1815 newspaper article in the Winchester Gazette made the case that John Rippey, a minor son of David Rippey, had not stolen a horse from Jane T. Vance but the horse had been a gift from her.¹⁸ Also, an 1824

¹⁰ Kentucky, County Marriage Records, 1793-1911, page 216, William Rappy and Nancy Crim, 15 March 1826; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing Marriage Records. Kentucky Marriages. Madison County Courthouse, Richmond, Kentucky.

¹¹ Kentucky, County Marriage Records, 1793-1911, page 216, George Jones and Mary Rippey, 3 September 1826; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing Marriage Records. Kentucky Marriages. Madison County Courthouse, Richmond, Kentucky.

¹² 1830 United States Federal Census, Boone County, Missouri, population schedule, Columbia, Series M19, Roll 73, Page 93, William Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M19, roll 201, record group 29. Also, 1830 United States Federal Census, Boone County, Missouri, population schedule, Columbia, Series M19, Roll 73, Page 94, George Jones; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M19, roll 201, record group 29

¹³ 1850 United States Federal Census, Schuyler, Missouri, population schedule, District 91, Roll M432_419, Page 91B, Image 186, Wm V Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, roll 1009

¹⁴ Swanson, Arthur Malcom, and George Washington Ford. *History of Schuyler County Missouri*. Walsworth , 1975.

¹⁵ Clark County Kentucky Order Book, book #5, page 288, 27 November 1815, image provided by Clark County Public Library 19 March 2019, index available online <http://www.clarkbooks.org/localhistory/probate/>

¹⁶ Clark County Kentucky Order Book, book #5, page 288, 27 November 1815, image provided by Clark County Public Library 19 March 2019, index available online <http://www.clarkbooks.org/localhistory/probate/>

¹⁷ Clark County Kentucky Order Book, book #5, page 288, 27 November 1815, image provided by Clark County Public Library 19 March 2019, index available online <http://www.clarkbooks.org/localhistory/probate/>

¹⁸ Joseph Yeates "Take Notice," *Winchester Advertiser*, 30 December 1815, page 3, col 5, image copy, GenealogyBank (<http://genealogybank.com> : access 15 March 2019), Newspaper Archives Section

land indenture¹⁹ mentioned Elizabeth Rippey, Samuel V. Rippey, Mathew Rippey, John Rippey, Mary J. Rippey, Joseph Rippey, and James D. Rippey, legal heirs of David Rippey.

There was one last Rippey found in the county. The Kentucky Bible Society in Lexington, Kentucky delivered texts to Daniel Rippey of Clark County in 1814 for distribution.²⁰ However, there were no further records of him in the county.

The 1850 U.S. Census had stated that Sarah was born in Virginia so the search shifted there.

THE RIPPEY FAMILY OF BERKELEY COUNTY, VIRGINIA

A search revealed a marriage record in Berkeley County, Virginia, where David Rippey married Elizabeth Vance on March 10th, 1806.²¹ This was certainly a strong candidate to be the same David Rippey who died in Clark County in 1815, whose wife was Elizabeth. A search for additional Rippey records in Berkeley County located several census records.

David Reppy appeared on the 1810 census in Berkeley County, Virginia also with family that aligned neatly with the orphan court record of 1815.

Census Demographic Category	Count	Possible Correlating Name
Free White Males Under 10	2	James, Samuel
Free White Males 10 Thru 15	1	John
Free White Males Over 45	1	David
Free White Female Under 10	1	Mary Jane
Free White Female 10 Thru 15	1	Eliza
Free White Female 26 Thru 44	2	Elizabeth Vance, Jane T Vance (?)

Source: 1810 United States Federal Census, Berkeley, Virginia, population schedule, Roll 66, Page 540, Image 00540, David Reppy; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M252, roll 71. Also, Clark County Kentucky Order Book, book #5, page 288, 27 November 1815, image provided by Clark County Public Library 19 March 2019, index available online <http://www.clarkbooks.org/localhistory/probate/r>. Also, Clark County Kentucky Deeds, 1793-1902, Vol 20, pg. 396-398, Clark County (Kentucky) Court of the County Clerk and Court of the Quarter Sessions, browsable images, Film # 008191813, Familysearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSLX-JNDS?i=208&cat=426412> : accessed 25 Mar 2019).

¹⁹ Clark County Kentucky Deeds, 1793-1902, Vol 20, pg. 396-398, Clark County (Kentucky) Court of the County Clerk and Court of the Quarter Sessions, browsable images, Film # 008191813, Familysearch

(<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSLX-JNDS?i=208&cat=426412> : accessed 25 Mar 2019)

²⁰ Ebenezer Sharpe, "third Report of the Kentucky Bible Society," *Western Monitor*, 7 October 1814, page 4, col 2, image copy, GenealogyBank (<http://genealogybank.com> : access 15 March 2019), Newspaper Archives Section

²¹ Marriage Records of Berkeley County, Virginia 1781-1854, online database, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> - accessed 15 March 2019)

There was a Samuel Rippy on the same page of that census.²² While the census had not listed members of the household, the household ages and counts also aligned with the Clark County records which identified William, Mary, and Elizabeth.

Table 4 1810 Census for Household of Samuel Rippey Aligned with Clark County Records		
Census Demographic Category	Count	Possible Correlating Name
Free White Male Under 10	1	William Vance
Free White Male 26 Thru 44	1	Samuel
Free White Female Under 10	1	Elizabeth
Free White Female 10 Thru 15	1	Mary
Free White Female 16 Thru 25	1	Sarah Vance

Sources: 1810 United States Federal Census, Berkeley, Virginia, population schedule, Roll 66, Page 540, Image 00540, Samuel Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M252, roll 71. Also, Clark County Kentucky Order Book, book #5, page 288, 22 August 1814, image provided by Clark County Public Library 19 March 2019, index available online <http://www.clarkbooks.org/localhistory/probate/r>.

If the female under 10 was Elizabeth, that would mean that she was born in 1810 or earlier, which was consistent with the 1810 census but not later records. It would also mean that she was born in Virginia, which was consistent with the 1880 and 1900 census but not earlier records. However, discrepancies of this sort were quite common at this time and place.

On the same page of that 1810 census, there was also a Matthew Rippey, older than 45, who appeared right next to David and Samuel.²³

According to correspondence from Don C. Wood, President of the Berkeley County Historical Society, to John Hughes, who posted the information on his site²⁴, the 1810 land books showed the following men:

1. David Rippey, 212 acres
2. Mathew Rippey, 310 acres
3. Samuel Rippey, 230 acres

²² 1810 United States Federal Census, Berkeley, Virginia, population schedule, Roll 66, Page 540, Image 00540, Samuel Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M252, roll 71

²³ 1810 United States Federal Census, Berkeley, Virginia, population schedule, Roll 66, Page 540, Image 00540, Matthew Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M252, roll 71

²⁴ Wood, Don, C., Berkeley County Historical Society, Martinsburg, West Virginia, obtained from <http://www.geocities.ws/Heartland/Hills/3374/Rippey/RippeyInAmericaBook/BerkeleyCountyVA.htm> : accessed 27 March 2019

The only Rippey who remained in Berkeley County, Virginia for the 1820 census was a Matthew Rippey.²⁵ The absence of David and Samuel in 1820 suggested both brothers and their family had moved on. A Mathew Rippey died 1822 in Berkeley County and left behind a will written in 1809 but amended twice afterwards.²⁶ In this original 1809 will, Matthew listed his many children, with David listed first and Samuel listed last, which, if listed in order of age, was consistent with the age disparity on the 1810 census. Mathew had not mentioned them again in his 1817 and 1822 supplementaries.

There was also a land transaction record dated 26 April 1813 for a Matthew Rippey Jr. of Middleton, the location of the 1820 census record. The suffix of Jr. suggested this might be a son of the Matthew who died in 1822. This Matthew also had a relationship with David and Samuel:

"Samuel Rippey and Sarah, his wife, Clark Co., Kentucky, to Matthew Rippey, Jr. of Berkeley County for \$500, ½ lot No. 23 in Middletown situated on Mountain Street and adjoining Lot No. 22."²⁷

This placed Samuel and Sarah in Clark County, Kentucky in 1813 and provided a direct link between them and the Rippey family of Berkeley County, Virginia. It was likely that David and Samuel were brothers and likely that Sarah and Elizabeth were related as well, possibly sisters or cousins. The 1824 indenture showed that several of David Rippey's children received property, but none of these children appear on the 1830 U.S. Census for the county.

ELIZABETH RIPPEY

Samuel Rippey and Sarah Vance had a daughter named Elizabeth who never married so the Elizabeth in the 1850 household could have been her. Also, Samuel and Sarah only had one son, who had married and moved out of Kentucky so Elizabeth could not have been his widow. David Rippey had a daughter named Elizabeth but she moved to Indiana and married there. However, David Rippey had sons. Could Elizabeth from the 1850 household been the wife of one of them?

On July 11th, 1860, mere months from the start of the Civil War, 39-year-old Willis F. Sphar, a prosperous, slave-owning farmer, who would join the Confederate Army in 1862, recorded the following about the Rippey household.

1. Elizabeth Rippey, 47, female, farmer, owned real estate valued at \$600 and personal property
2. valued at \$410, born in Kentucky
3. John I Rippey, 15, male, farmer, born in Kentucky

Sarah had died in 1853, leaving behind the tiny family of Elizabeth and John. Five years later, a little more than three months after the end of the Civil War, on August 14th, 1865. John wed Mary Jane Barnes, the oldest daughter of Israel Barnes and Elizabeth Ecton from Virginia. Unfortunately, the marriage record does not record the names of parents.

In 1870, after the U.S. Civil War, the family lived in the same house, with Elizabeth still head of household:

²⁵ 1820 United States Federal Census, Berkeley, Virginia, population schedule, Middletown, Roll M33_129, Page 93, Image 106, Matthew Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M33, roll 142

²⁶ Wills; Author: West Virginia. County Court (Berkeley County); Probate Place: Berkeley, West Virginia, page 469; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 25 Mar 2019), citing West Virginia County, District and Probate Courts.

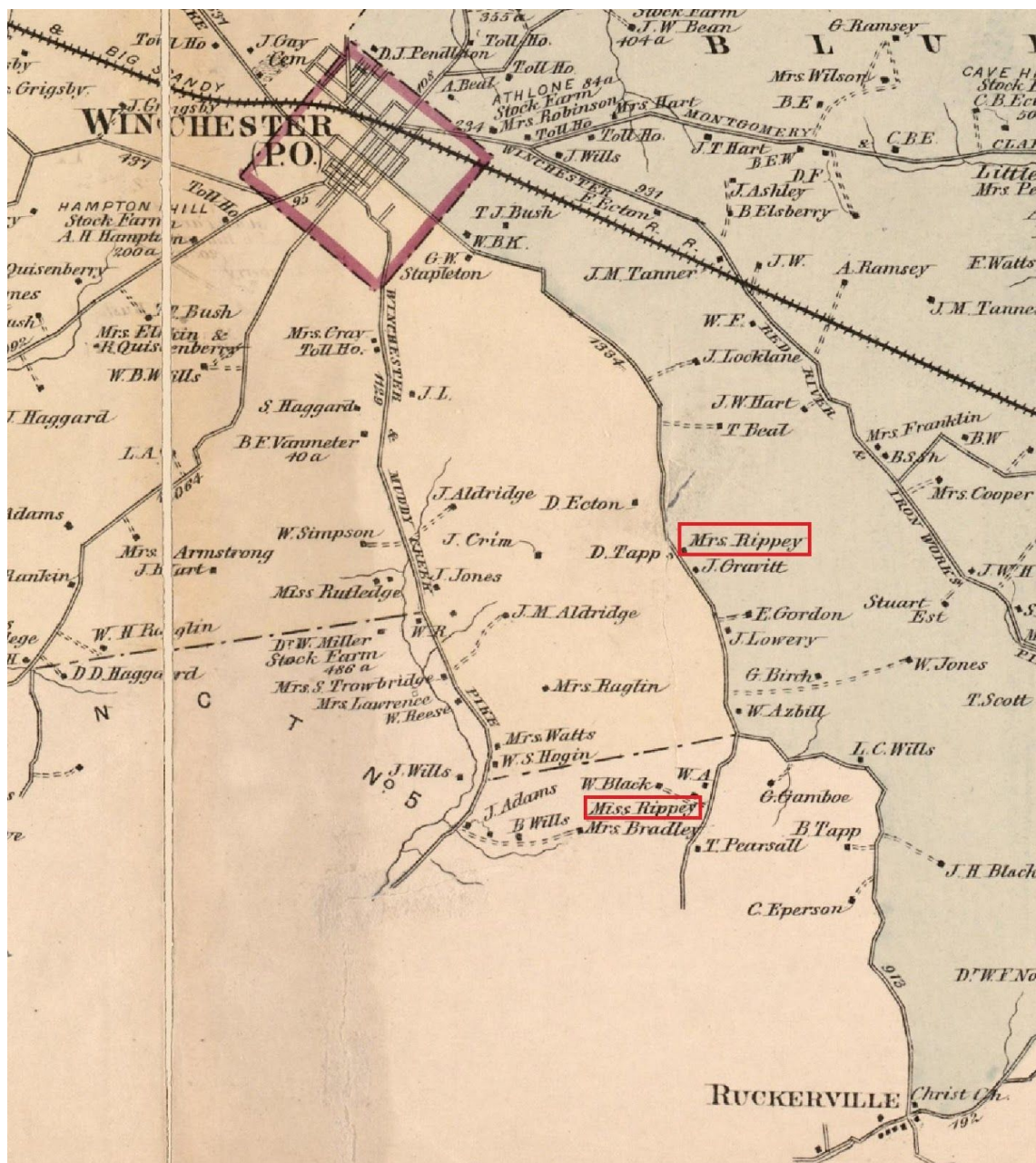
²⁷ Wood, Don, C., Berkeley County Historical Society, Martinsburg, West Virginia, book 25, page 198, 26 April 2013, obtained from <http://www.geocities.ws/Heartland/Hills/3374/Rippee/RippeelnAmericaBook/BerkeleyCountyVA.htm> : accessed 15 March 2019

1. Elizabeth Rippey, 58, female, born in Virginia, real estate valued at \$700
2. John J. Rippey, 25, female, born in Kentucky, personal estate valued at \$600
3. Mary J. Rippey, 24, female, born in Kentucky
4. William G., 4, male, born in Kentucky
5. Elizabeth, 2, female, born in Kentucky
6. James W, 8/12, male, born in Kentucky
7. Beverly Johnson, 12, male, black, farm laborer, born in Kentucky

In 1877, a mapping survey order by Congress was completed of Clark County and showed a “Miss Rippey” living next to W. Black and Mrs. Bradley, which corresponds to the James W. Black and Elizabeth Bradley from the 1870 Census.²⁸ There was also a “Mrs. Rippey” on the map as well, who was the 2nd wife and widow of Gilkerson Rippey, who had died in 1874.²⁹

²⁸ 1870 United States Federal Census, Clark, Kentucky, population schedule, Precinct 5, Roll M593_456, Page 99A, FHL File 545955, Elizabeth Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication M593, roll 1761

²⁹ Kentucky, Death Records, 1852-1965. Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives; Frankfort, Kentucky, Description: Film 994032: Clay, Clinton, Crittenden, Cumberland, obtained from Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com> : access April 1, 2019), original source: Kentucky. Kentucky Birth, Marriage and Death Records – Microfilm (1852-1910). Microfilm rolls #994027-994058. Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort, Kentucky



The description of Elizabeth as “Miss Rippey” while Gilkerson’s widow was “Mrs. Rippey” indicated that Elizabeth had never been married so she was not the widow of a Rippey man. The Elizabeth Rippey in the 1850 household was the daughter of Samuel and Sarah.

JOHN ISAAC RIPPEY

Elizabeth Rippey was certainly John’s mother, as she lived with him her entire life and the 1880 and 1900 censuses described her relationship to him as “mother”.³⁰ However, for 1845 Kentucky it was

³⁰ 1880 United States Federal Census, Reno, Kansas, population schedule, Albion Township, Roll 394, Page 544A, Enum District 296, Elizabeth Rippey; digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication T9, roll 1454, RG 29. Also, 1900 United States Federal Census, Woods, Oklahoma, population schedule, Galena, Page 3, Enum District 0228, FHL microfilm 1241343, Elizabeth Rippey; digital

unusual for a respectable, 35-year-old, unmarried woman living with her mother to suddenly have a child. Moreover, Sarah Rippey had adopted a son in the past, which raised the question: was John Elizabeth's biological son?

DNA

There were numerous descendants of John Isaac Rippey who had taken DNA tests. Unsurprisingly, the oldest generation of testers, John's great-grandchildren, provided the most matches for an analysis. For this analysis, they were compared to matches who descended from various children of Matthew Rippey, the father of Samuel Rippey.

Since DNA among third or fourth cousins is highly variable, it was insufficient to only examine the average shared centimorgans (cM) between the matches. Instead, then number of matches among their descendants was considered. One or two strong matches among a hundred descendants is a statistical fluke. For example, David Rippey had at least three children who had families of their own but there were only two DNA matches among their descendants, both from their youngest son James David Rippey.

Table 5 DNA Matches Among Descendants of Matthew Rippey		
Children of Matthew Rippey	Matches with descendants	Avg. shared cM
Samuel Rippey (excluding Elizabeth)	15	19.5
David Rippey	2	18.5
Jane Rippey	3	21.5
Mary Rippey	2	8.5
Elizabeth Rippey	2	15
Joseph Rippey	2	10
Gilkerson Rippey*	2	18.5
Notes: Gilkerson was not a son of Matthew Rippey, his parentage unknown. Sources: Ancestry.com DNA		

The testers showed many matches with descendants of Samuel and Sarah's two children, William and Mary. Although, Gilkerson was not the descendant of Samuel, he was clearly a biological relative, possibly related through a Rippey or Vance cousin.

Although the shared centimorgans seem roughly equivalent among the descendants of different siblings, the sample sizes were much smaller. The sheer number of Rippey matches with the descendants of Samuel and Sarah would indicate a much closer relationship with them than with any of the other children.

However, the absence of DNA matches could be explained by other factors, such as some lines having more daughters, which were harder for many family historians to trace, or descendants moving to

image, Ancestry.com (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 15 Mar 2019), citing National Archives Microfilm Publication T623, roll 1854

regions where DNA testing was less popular today. Even considering that, the large disparity in matches between the descendants of Samuel and the descendants of the other children strongly suggest that the testers were more closely related to him.

The testers had not shown any closer relationships between the matches descended from William, Mary, or Gilkerson, which suggested none was the parent of John. The only child of Samuel and Sarah that would have no other lines to compare against was Elizabeth.

CASE FOR ADOPTION

Sarah and Samuel had three children, all listed in the orphan record: Samuel, Mary, and Elizabeth. There was also Gilkerson Rippey, who was likely Sarah's adopted son. If Elizabeth had not been John's biological mother, could it have been one of them?

Two of Samuel and Sarah's children, William and Mary, moved to Missouri before 1830 so it's unlikely that either were John's parents. Moreover, both were financially secure with other children about John's age.³¹

Gilkerson Rippey had several children beginning in 1843, including a son, William David Rippey, in 1845, about the same year that John Isaac Rippey was born.³² It was possible that Gilkerson and his wife, Sarah Black, had twin sons and gave one of them. Supporting that possibility was that John Isaac Rippey named his oldest son William Gilkerson Rippey.³³ However, while that suggested a close relationship, it doesn't prove a father-son relationship.

Evidence that contradicted this possibility was the DNA testing. The testers had far more DNA matches with descendants of both William and Mary than with those of Gilkerson's descendants. Also, Gilkerson owned land and slaves and was unlikely to have been suffering economic hardship, especially severe enough that Sarah and Elizabeth would have provided a better home.

However, the children of David Rippey were in Clark County, Kentucky in 1815. Could one of them been John's parent or grandparent?

After David Rippey's death, the family moved to Washington County, Indiana, where records of four of the children were found: three marrying and having children, one never marrying and appearing on census records under her maiden name.³⁴ By 1845, all these children were older and established and not likely to adopt out one of their children.³⁵ Mary Jane Rippey, David and Elizabeth's youngest daughter was

³¹ 1850 United States Federal Census, District 91, Schuyler, Missouri; Roll: M432_419; Page: 91B; Image: 186, Wm. V Rippey, digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 16 May 2019), citing Seventh Census of the United States, 1850; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, 1009 rolls); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C. Also, 1850 United States Federal Census, District 59, Monroe, Missouri; Roll: M432_407; Page: 97B; Image: 200, George Jones and Mary Jones, digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 16 May 2019), citing Seventh Census of the United States, 1850; (National Archives Microfilm Publication M432, 1009 rolls); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

³² 1850 United States Federal Census, Clark, Kentucky, Gilkerson Rippey (n8).

³³ 1930 United States Federal Census, Shawnee, Pottawatomie, Oklahoma; Page: 13A; Enumeration District: 0052; FHL microfilm: 2341662, William Gilkerson [Rippey], digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 16 May 2019), citing United States of America, Bureau of the Census. Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930. Washington, D.C.

³⁴ 1820 United States Federal Census, Washington, Indiana; Page: 214; NARA Roll: M33_14; Image: 322, Elizabeth Rippey, digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 16 May 2019), citing Fourth Census of the United States, 1820. (NARA microfilm publication M33, 142 rolls). Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D.C.

³⁵ Iowa, Marriage Records, 1880-1940, Iowa Department of Public Health; Des Moines, Iowa; Series Title: Iowa Marriage Records, 1880-1922; Record Type: Textual Records, Elizabeth Rippey and James Davis, digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 16 May 2019), citing Iowa Department of Public Health. Iowa Marriage Records, 1880-1922. Textual Records. State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, Iowa. Iowa Department of Public Health. Iowa Marriage Records, 1923-37. Microfilm. Record Group 048. State Historical Society of Iowa,

30 and unmarried³⁶ and it's conceivable that if she became pregnant that she would have sent the son back to Kentucky but why to a widowed aunt and her daughter instead of a more secure relative, some of whom lived in Indiana.

Of the oldest 3 children, a Joseph Rippey was married several times in Fleming County, Kentucky from 1823 to 1829, making him a possible candidate to be the father of Gilkerson. However, there were no other records of any of these brothers in Kentucky to suggest they settled more permanently there. There were other Rippey family members in Indiana, Virginia, Missouri, and other states but there was no evidence that any of them would send away an infant to live with a widowed in law and her daughter so far away in Kentucky.

CASE FOR BIOLOGICAL SON

John Isaac could simply be the son of Elizabeth, as the records indicate. Perhaps she married late in life and her husband left her, so she reverted to her maiden name. Or perhaps she had an out-of-wedlock relationship or was the victim of sexual assault. Ultimately, the case for John Rippey having been the child of Elizabeth is the lack of evidence to the contrary. The DNA evidence supports that John was a Rippey and that Sarah and Samuel were closer relations than any of Samuel's siblings, yet Samuel and Sarah had no other children in the vicinity. Now were their other children, William and Mary, likely have needed to adopt a child out, being financially secure and having other children about John's age.

CONCLUSIONS

Elizabeth Rippey in the 1850 household of Sarah Rippey was the daughter of Sarah Vance and her husband Samuel Rippey. There was abundant direct evidence that Sarah Rippey of Clark County on the 1850 census was Sarah Vance who married Samuel Rippey and had three children, William, Mary, and Elizabeth, including:

- 1) Probate records for Samuel Rippey
- 2) Orphan court records for William, Mary, and Elizabeth
- 3) Land records between her and Samuel with Matthew Rippey of Berkeley County, Virginia

The evidence that Elizabeth Rippey on the 1850 U.S. Census was Sarah's daughter and not her daughter-in-law or another relation was indirect:

- 1) Sarah had a daughter named Elizabeth of the same age, born in the same state
- 2) There was no marriage record for Elizabeth Rippey in Kentucky
- 3) Sarah only had one daughter-in-law, Nancy Crim
- 4) There were no marriage records for any other Rippey male in Kentucky to an Elizabeth
- 5) Elizabeth Rippey was identified on the 1877 land map as "Miss Rippey" while Gilkerson's widow was identified as "Mrs. Rippey"

Des Moines, Iowa. Also, Indiana, Marriages, 1810-2001, Indiana, Marriages, 1810-2001 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2014. Original data: Indiana, Marriages, 1810-2001. Salt Lake City, Utah: FamilySearch, 2013, James Rippey and Sarah Ann Barker, digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 16 May 2019). Also, Indiana, Marriage Index, 1806-1861 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015, Samuel V Rippey and Martha Sweeney, online index, Ancestry.com, citing Indiana Marriages Database through 1850. Indiana State Library. <http://www.in.gov/library/genealogy.htm>: accessed 3 July 2014.

³⁶ 1870 United States Federal Census, Dodge, Guthrie, Iowa; Roll: M593_393; Page: 201B; Family History Library Film: 545892, Mary J Rupy, digital image, Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 16 May 2019), citing 1870 U.S. census, population schedules. NARA microfilm publication M593, 1,761 rolls. Washington, D.C.

John Isaac Rippey was the biological son of Elizabeth Rippey of the 1850 census record in Clark County, Kentucky. The DNA testers had far more matches with descendants of Samuel Rippey b. abt. 1780 in Berkeley County, Virginia, than any of his siblings. Moreover, there was no hint of a closer relationship with descendants of either Samuel and Sarah's children, William and Mary, that would point to one of them being a direct ancestor. Likewise, descendants of Gilkerson were not closer matches but were arguably more distant relations.

Since there was no evidence of any other children of Samuel and Sarah, that makes it likely that Elizabeth was John Isaac's biological mother. Also, the paper trail does not suggest any other candidates in the vicinity would choose to give their child to a widowed woman and her single daughter.