

## **DETERMINING THE IDENTITY OF NANCY J RAINWATER OF MUHLENBERG CO, KENTUCKY**

*by Susan Chance-Rainwater, May 2019, #2900*

There are two problems surrounding Nancy J Rainwater. The first is the identity of her parents and the second is who, if anyone, she married. These problems are related.

### **PROBLEM 1**

There are two schools of thought on Nancy's parents.

**Option A:** Nancy's parents are William C. Rainwater and his wife Rebecca McDaniel.

**Option B:** Nancy's parents are Rebecca McDonald and Lewis Lacey. It's not clear whether Rebecca, in this theory, is identical to Rebecca McDaniel Rainwater, widow of William C. Rainwater, or is a separate person. Rebecca McDaniel Rainwater's 2nd husband was James Lewis Lacey, so you can see the confusion.

### **PROBLEM 2**

There are also two schools of thought regarding Nancy's spouse.

**Option A:** She married Bartley Rainwater Sr.

**Option B:** She didn't marry at all.

### **PROBLEM 3**

This would mean Nancy's children were:

**Option A:** Bartley Sr.'s

**Option B:** Illegitimate, father unidentified

## **EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE PROPOSITION THAT SHE IS NANCY RAINWATER BY BIRTH**

1. Nancy's Butler Co, KY birth record shows both parents' names (listed as William C. Rainwater & Rebecca J. McDaniel), and gives a birth date of 29 Sep 1853.
2. Nancy is listed as a daughter in William and Rebecca's 1860 census household & Rebecca's 1880 census household.
3. Nancy's name and date of birth is listed in her mother's 1863 Civil War Widow's pension application.
4. Nancy listed as sister, not sister-in-law, in the 1900 census household of her half-sister Lakie.
5. Nancy's death cert lists her mother's name as Rebecca McDonald and father as Louis Lacey, but based on date, her step-father could not be her father. Rebecca Rainwater married James Lewis Lacey in 1868, 15 years after Nancy's birth. Also, this couple (McDonald-Lacey) is absent from other records.

## **EVIDENCE OPPOSING THE PROPOSITION THAT SHE IS NANCY RAINWATER BY BIRTH**

1. The birthdate listed on her tombstone, 28 Dec 1853, does not match the 29 Sep 1853 date in her birth record.
2. She is listed as blind in 1880C, which means she would likely not have married.

## **EVIDENCE SUPPORTING THE PROPOSITION THAT SHE IS NANCY RAINWATER BY MARRIAGE**

1. Son Bartley's death certificate and many of his other records call him Bartley Rainwater, Jr., which presupposes a Bartley Rainwater, Sr.
2. Nancy Rainwater's death certificate says her parents were Louis Lacey and Rebecca McDonald, though this information was supplied by Bartley, Jr.

## **EVIDENCE OPPOSING THE PROPOSITION THAT SHE IS NANCY RAINWATER BY MARRIAGE**

1. Total lack of evidence for Bartley Rainwater, Sr.
2. Lack of census evidence for Nancy J Lacey or her family in census records.
3. Nancy is listed as "single," not widowed or divorced on the death certificate, which information was supplied by Bartley, Jr.

## **EVIDENCE GAPS**

These questions could be solved by the following:

1. A birth record for Nancy Lacey with the date shown on her tombstone (28 Dec 1853)
2. A marriage record for any Nancy and Bartley Rainwater, Sr.
3. Any direct evidence of Bartley Rainwater, Sr.
4. Rosella Rainwater's death certificate (Rosella was Bartley, Jr.'s sister)

## **MY CONCLUSION**

- **1A – her parents were William C Rainwater and Rebecca McDaniel**
- **3B – her children were illegitimate**

My current conclusion is that Nancy J. Rainwater was the daughter of William C. Rainwater and Rebecca McDaniel. This seems perfectly clear from Rebecca's pension application.

In 1888 and 1890 respectively, Nancy bore two children out of wedlock, Bartley and Rosella Rainwater, who as illegitimate children carried their mother's surname instead of their father's. Upon his mother's death, Bartley gave mistaken information for his mother's death certificate, possibly in an attempt to patch up his own illegitimacy, or because he simply didn't know the right names.

## **SOURCES**

1850-1940 Federal Census Records

Kentucky Birth Records, Ancestry.com

Kentucky Death Records, Ancestry.com

Kentucky County Marriage Records, 1783-1965, Ancestry.com

290: Glidie Rainwater Mobley (Lacey marriage date)

1975: Death certificate #09502; Nancy Jane Rainwaters, 15 Apr 1927; Muhlenberg Co., KY

2312: Findagrave.com

2796: Pension application of Rebecca J. McDaniels Rainwaters, 1862, #93288, widow of William C Rainwaters

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