

## **Rebecca J. Rainwater's maiden name – McDaniel, McDonald, or McPherson?**

*by Susan Chance-Rainwater*

Rebecca Rainwater, wife of William C. Rainwater of Butler and Muhlenberg Co, Kentucky, is reported under three different maiden names in three different records.

Son William's birth record gives her maiden name as McPherson. Daughter Nancy's death cert gives her maiden name as McDonald, but her birth record says McDaniel.

Assuming that the later census records are correct, Rebecca was born c.1829 in Tennessee. This means she should be findable in the 1850 census.

Doing a search for Rebecca, born in Tennessee, with a birthdate of 1829 +/- 2 years, I found the following:

McPherson or McFerson = 0

McDaniel = 2

McDonald = 1

First up is Rebecca Canady/Kennedy of Calloway Co, KY, wife of A B McDaniel. She died in 1899 and was never married to anyone except A B McDaniel. So she's clearly out.

Second up is Rebecca McDonald of Scott Co, TN, McDonald by marriage. She was married three times – to Samuel/Sterling McDonald, Hugh Holdaway, and John Gosnell. So she's also out.

Third up is Rebecca McDaniel of Coffee Co, TN, daughter of William McDaniel and Margaret Carlisle. I would like this family better if they had moved to Kentucky by 1860 or lived in a border county near Logan Co, KY.

That left the following possibilities: She was not recorded at all in the 1850 census OR she was not recorded as Rebecca – maybe just initials OR none of the maiden names we have are correct – including the possibility that any one of them is a surname from a previous marriage.

So I looked for marriage records in Logan, Muhlenberg, and Butler Counties – all counties associated with this family. Then I went to the map. If Rebecca was born in Tennessee and there was no evidence that her family had moved to Kentucky, might the marriage actually be in Tennessee? Could William have married someone from across the county line? If William was in Logan County – what Tennessee county did it border?

## **Robertson County: 20 May 1950 W W Rainwater m Rebecca Jane McDaniel [487]**

I had completely overlooked this record for a couple of reasons. First, I was looking for W C Rainwater and this record was for W W Rainwater. Second, I was looking for a marriage in 1851, because William appears to be single in 1850. But if the census record was wrong? Maybe Rebecca just wasn't recorded (mother-in-law problems?).

Having eliminated every other possibility for who this marriage might belong to (other W Rainwaters, in other words), my suspicion is that the Robertson County marriage is the right one. And this means Rebecca's maiden name is indeed McDaniel. And the side effect is that the 1850C household of George and Rebecca McDaniel in Robertson County probably represent her brother and mother.

### **SOURCES**

1850-1880 federal census

Kentucky, Birth Records, 1847-1911, Ancestry.com database

487: 35,000 Tennessee Marriage Records and Bonds, 1783-1870, Vol. 3, O-Z, Rev. Silas Emmett Lucas Jr. and Ella Lee Sheffield, publ. 1981, Southern Historical Press, Easley, SC

504: Kentucky Births, Marriage and Death Databases, 1911-1999 Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, CD-ROM series

1550: Butler Co., KY Birth Records, 1852-1859, Anita Estes, USGenWeb transcription

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

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