

The Children of James Rainwater, ca 1735-post 1790, Surry Co., NC

by Susan Chance-Rainwater

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James Rainwater, son of John Rainwater and Mary Fussell, was born in North Carolina. His parents were married in or before 1735. In 1754, he served in the Granville Co., NC militia – something which under normal circumstances he would not have done before the age of 16. We therefore place the year of his birth between 1735 and 1738.

Little is known of James Rainwater. He left no marriage record, no will, no family Bible. All that is known of him comes from property records, militia records and the occasional service on a jury (see [Evidence for Early Rainwaters, prior to 1800](#)). As I have assembled these lists, it has become apparent that the children of two different families have been routinely confused with one another – that is, the children of James Rainwater of North Carolina, and James Rainwater of Sevier Co., Tennessee.

The difficulty for many researchers is that James is the link from their provable ancestors to John Rainwater and Mary Fussell. So far, none has been able to satisfactorily prove the names of James's children. What we have is a tradition of these children, with nothing on which to base it. Over the years I have collected a number of lists of James Rainwater's children. I don't reproduce them here to humiliate the originators but to illustrate the thorny problem of proving descent from James. Just to further complicate things, the existence of many of the individuals on these lists is not in question – merely the identity of their parents.

THE LISTS

Roscoe Rainwater's List

This is the list that was passed down in our branch of the family, in Roscoe Rainwater's "[Here's the Plan of the Rainwater Clan](#)".

- Solomon, 1765-1814
- Elizabeth, 1769-1850
- William, 1774-1825
- Miles, 1787-1826

- John
- Moses

Bob Schimmel & Coy B. Hodge's List

- Solomon, 1758-1814
- Elizabeth, 1760-1850
- James, Jr., born 1766
- Moses, born 1767
- Sesame, born 1769
- Ann, born 1772
- William, 1774-1825
- Catherine, born 1774
- John, died 1790
- Abraham, born 1784
- Miles

The Whaley-Fussell List

This list was derived from Deborah R. Whaley's book called "[*Fussells-n-Families*](#)", with the additional note that the information was supplied by Terrell, Charles and Lyle Rainwater and is the source for the list of James's children used in Lynn Fussell's "*The Descendants of Nicholas Fussell, c. 1600–c. 1660*".

- Solomon, born 1758
- Elizabeth, born 1760
- William, born 1761
- Abraham, born 1763
- Miles, born 1765
- John, born 1765
- Moses, born 1767
- Sesame, born 1769
- Ann, born 1772
- Catherine, born 1774
- James, Jr., born 1766

Jim and Gail Tabor's List

As an interesting twist, the Tabors dispute the conventional wisdom that William migrated to Kentucky around 1810. Rather, they indicate he settled in Alabama. This appears to refer to the

William Rainwater who served in the War of 1812, not the William who ended up in Pulaski Co, KY. Their website is now offline.

- John, born ca 1752
- Solomon, 1758-1814
- James, born ca 1766
- William, 1774-1855
- Abraham, born 1784

Don Webber's List

This list comes from Don Webber's "[*Genealogy of the Rainwater Family*](#)".

- Solomon, 1765-1814
- Elizabeth, 1769-1850
- William, 1774-1825
- Abraham, born 1784
- Miles, 1787-1826

Terry E. Davis's List

- Moses
- Solomon, 1765-1814
- Elizabeth, 1769-1850
- William, 1774-1825
- Abraham, born 1784
- Miles, 1787-1826
- John, born 1788

The LDS Family Search List

If you do a search at the LDS website (now offline) for James Rainwater and Catherine Regan/Reagan, this is one of the lists you will get. The composition of this list is unusual, since unlike the other seven, it doesn't include Solomon or William. This list clearly refers to the family of [James Rainwater and Charity Fowler of Sevier Co., TN.](#)

- James R. Rainwater, 1811-1894
- Sesame Rainwater, born ca 1813
- Moses Rainwater, born ca 1815
- Ann Rainwater, born ca 1817
- Catherine Rainwater, born ca 1818

- John Berry Rainwater, 1820-1910

Eloise Groover Lovell's List

This list comes from Eloise Groover Lovell's 1983 publication, "[*The Richard Phillips Family History, 1791-1983*](#)."

- Solomon Rainwater, 1765-1814
- James Rainwater, b. ca 1766
- Moses Rainwater
- Elizabeth Rainwater, ca 1769-post-1850
- John Rainwater
- Miles Rainwater, ca 1878-1826
- William Rainwater, 1774-1825
- Abraham Rainwater, b. ca 1784

Thelma Sargent's list

This list was came to us in a [packet of research notes](#) of Thelma Sargent.

- William Rainwater
- James Rainwater
- Abraham Rainwater
- 3 unnamed daughters

R. H. Folmar & Walter Terrell Rainwater, Jr.'s list

This list is drawn from the highly suspect [Folmar Chart](#). It's likely that this early list created in the 1950s or 60s, has influenced the composition of many of the later lists.

- Abraham
- Patsy
- Solomon, 1765-1815
- James, born 1766
- John
- William, 1774-1823
- Moses

Points to Ponder

The percentage of each names' appearing in these 10 lists

- William, 91%
- Solomon, 82%
- Abraham, 82%
- John, 73%
- Elizabeth, 64%
- Miles, 64%
- James, Jr., 64%
- Moses, 64%
- Ann, 27%
- Catherine, 27%
- Sesame, 27%
- unknown daughters, 18%
- Patsy, 9%
- John Berry Rainwater, 9%

Individuals whose existence can be independently documented

- Solomon: Anderson Co., SC land and probate records
- William: 1825 will, family Bible, 1820 Pulaski Co., KY census records
- Elizabeth: 1850 Pulaski Co., KY census
- Abraham: 1810 Pulaski Co., KY census, Surry Co., NC court records, Russell Co., KY court records
- Miles: Baptist church records
- Moses: Sevier Co., TN 1830 and 1832 census indexes, Johnson Co., TN tax list
- James: There are at least four individuals who fit the age requirements. These are James who married Catherine McCall (TN), James who married Charity Fowler (TN), James the blacksmith (GA) and James the preacher (GA).
- John: Crawford Co., AR 1850 census
- The daughters listed as Sesame, Ann and Catherine are almost certainly the children of [James Rainwater and Charity Fowler](#), although Sesame is actually a son – Sissum or Cessum.

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