



The Fox Hunters of Daybrook

Enhanced version of original photo posted on a private Facebook group. The men are (from left): Stacy Chisler, William Fleming "Bill" Hamilton, Learnie D. Moore, Clyde Willis Wilson and Charley Hamilton.

Genealogist discovers treasured photograph

By Gerry Lynn Hamilton

May 16, 2022

Nobody in my extended family had a picture of my paternal grandfather, as far as I know. We do now and here is the story about the photo of William Fleming "Bill" Hamilton. As a bonus, we also have a photo of Bill's younger brother Charley.

In 1976, a six-page circular on sale at the Daybrook Fair featured a number of old photos including the Fox Hunters. The photo caption identified the five men on horseback: Stace Chisler, Bill Hamilton, Learney [sic] Moore, Clyde Wilson, Charlie [sic] Hamilton. (The Daybrook Fair in West Virginia is officially the Clay Dist. Fair.)

The surnames of the five men have deep roots in Monongalia Co., WV, and Greene Co., PA.

In 1981, my half second cousin Dan Shane of Morgantown, WV, inherited a copy of the circular along with a bunch of papers that belonged to his maternal grandfather Ira Burl Shane. Dan is a serious genealogist with an extensive collection of photographs and other materials. Looking through his collection years later, he came across the circular again. In June 2020, Dan sent me a scan of the Fox Hunters photo.

The names in the caption did not prove the Hamiltons in the photo were my grandfather Bill Hamilton and his brother Charley, but the possibility was enough to merit some serious research. The available evidence provides very strong support for the identities of these five men.

The evidence

US Census reports for Clay Dist., Monongalia Co., WV, include all five names for 1910. The census district includes Daybrook and Days Run Road, and all five men lived on Days Run. In 1920, all five were still living in the Clay Dist.; two on Days Run. Learnie Moore lived on nearby Jakes Run. Census reports did not give streets for the others.

There are many Bill Hamiltons in the world, and one name alone does not link the name to an identity. All five names together in the Daybrook area at the same time provides a solid basis for the identities to go with all five names of the Fox Hunters.

Based on the apparent ages of the five men in the photo and the actual birth dates in the census reports and one later clue, the photo can be dated at 1918 give or take a year or two. Selective Service registration cards add details, including physical descriptions.

Based on two obituaries, Fox hunting was a sport for some folks in Monongalia Co. There was a fox hunting club in Daybrook.

Now that the identities of the men seemed certain, the next challenge was getting good images of the men's faces.



*FOX HUNTERS: Left to right—Stace Chisler, Bill Hamilton
Learney Moore, Clyde Wilson, Charlie Hamilton.*

1976 circular: Dan Shane of Morgantown, WV, provided this scan of the published Fox Hunters photo. Note the crease running through the faces of three of the men.

The pictures

Dan Shane's copy of the circular had been folded during storage. The resulting crease runs across the picture and distorts three of the five faces. Dan said our distant cousin Bonnie (Higgins) Wilson also had a copy of the 1976 circular.

Early in July 2020, I got in touch with Bonnie, who has thousands of old pictures. On Aug. 4, 2020, she sent a scan of the Fox Hunters photo. Most likely her copy was stored flat, because there is no distortion.

Bonnie wrote: "I kept looking and looking and finally found that I had scanned it into my computer! Last place I looked, of course."

Using scans from Dan and Bonnie and a combination of Microsoft Picture Manager, Microsoft PhotoDraw (1990s software) and the online app MyHeritage Photo Enhancer, I was able to produce good-looking pictures of the men. The app did most of the work, and those final results were stunning.

Because computer algorithms control the Photo Enhancer process, the end result for a successful enhancement may not be an accurate image. Starting with reasonably good pictures is likely to produce more accurate enhanced results.

The published photo has another problem. To print on a printing press, a photo must be converted to a pattern of dots called a halftone screen, which degrades quality, especially for enlargements. That the app was able to produce anything from the screened photo is quite remarkable. (Today's printing process still uses dots, but the resolution is much, much better.)



Note the dot structure in this 500 percent enlargement of Bill Hamilton's face.

Surprise discovery

On Feb. 10, 2019, Seth Lemley of Blacksville, WV, posted 21 old photos on the private Facebook group Richard/Elizabeth Haught Tennant Descendants. He was looking for help with the identifications. One of those photos showed five men on horseback.

On March 28, 2022, Dan Shane joined the Facebook group, and he began looking through the photos on the website. When he saw the five men on horseback, genealogist Dan Shane immediately knew the significance of this discovery. This was an original picture of the Fox Hunters. Later that day, Dan sent me a note along with the image posted by Seth. *This find is a treasure for the descendants of William Fleming Hamilton.*

The original photo was a picture postcard and, almost certainly, taken by a professional photographer. Seth noted that a code on the back indicated the photo was dated between 1907 and 1918, which is a clue that was not available at the beginning of this story. Seth is another serious genealogist who spends a good deal of his free time researching genealogy and visiting old cemeteries.



Four faces of Bill Hamilton: These images were created with automatic photo enhancing software. The two on the left were based on the halftone image printed in the circular. The two on the right were based on the original continuous-tone TIFF image from Seth Lemley and likely to be the most accurate. The last photo was automatically repaired, enhanced and colorized.

If the code is correct, then the clue forms a basis for dating the photo. Seth and I agree that the date would have to be at the end of the coded time range, because of the young ages of Stace and Clyde. We both like 1918, when Stace was 19 and Clyde was 20 (estimated ages).

The photo shows no leaves on the trees and no snow on the ground, so the photo could have been taken in early spring or late fall. To estimate the ages, if a man's birth month was in the second half of the year, his age was calculated from 1918. Otherwise the age was counted from 1917.

The story has one more twist. Bonnie Wilson is the administrator for the private Facebook group. When she sent me her scan of the published Fox Hunters photo in 2020, she did not register that the original was posted on her website 18 month earlier.

Seth Lemley acquired the Fox Hunters original from his Grand Aunt Emma Jane Lemley (1931-2013). Seth said she went by Jane, and her mother was Bertha May Moore (1895-1980). Learnie D. Moore, the man in the middle of the Fox Hunters photo, was Bertha's brother.

(Seth said Learnie used that spelling on his marriage license, and that spelling is on his tombstone.)

Learnie, Stace Chisler and Clyde Wilson are first cousins as grandsons of Alpheus Wilson and Sarah Moore. The Hamilton brothers are distant cousins of the grandsons. Below is a summary of the pedigree of the Wilson grandsons.

Three children of Alpheus Wilson (1842-1941) and Sarah Moore (1843-1912)

- Minnie Wilson married Joseph Chisler. Stace Chisler was their son.
- Lucinda Ellen Wilson married Simon Moore. Learnie D. Moore was their son.
- Stephen Wilson married Nora Piles. Clyde Willis Wilson was their son.

Seth confirmed the identities of the three grandsons. He wrote in a Facebook post: "I had little hope of ever putting names to these men. I have another pic of Alph's grandkids and can pick out these fellas, but I never would have connected that on my own."

As it turns out, Seth and I are distant cousins, as he is related to my paternal grandmother Lucy Tennant, who married Bill Hamilton.

In fact, everyone mentioned in this article has a place on the very large Tennant-Haught family tree, which has a complex web of family relationships. For example, my Family Tree Maker software tells me that Alph's wife Sarah Moore is my first cousin three generations older. Our most recent common ancestors are Adam Tennant (1784-1878) and Catherine Moore (1791-1870).

Charley had one son Herbert Waldo, whose obituary stated that he was an avid fox hunter. Perhaps he was following in his father's footsteps. Herbert married Mabel Elzena Tennant, who was born in 1920. When she died in 1992, her obituary said: "She was also associated with Daybrook Home makers Association, formerly the Fox hunters Club." Perhaps the wives served as a ladies auxiliary for the club.

Charley had three daughters. His oldest daughter Martha Blendine Hamilton (1915-2002) married Orville Wayne Eddy. In 1957, their daughter Peggy Lou (1939-) married Jerry Kyle Chisler (1938-2011), who was a nephew of Stacy Chisler.

(Charles Hamilton used "Charley" throughout his adult life — on his WWI and WWII draft registration cards and his Social Security records. His headstone bears the name "Charley." His headstone shows a birth year of 1894, but records differ: WWI draft card, 1893; WWII draft card, 1892; Social Security, 1892.)

I was not surprised to learn that Stace had a place in my Hamilton family tree along with Learnie Moore and Clyde Wilson.

On April 1, 2022, Seth sent me a 21.2MB TIFF image, which is perhaps the highest quality digital image available. (TIFF is Tag Image File Format, which was established to set a standard.) Starting with the TIFF, I was able to produce good photos of all five men. The following pages contain their individual photos and mini biographies. ■



1965 senior photo
(colorized)

About the author

I grew up in Coudersport, Potter Co., PA, where I graduated from high school in 1965. Then I attended Penn State. My long newspaper career began with my high school newspaper and The Potter Enterprise in Coudersport. Later I worked as an editor for Pennsylvania daily newspapers in Altoona, State College and York, and then 32 years as general manager of Collegian Inc., publisher of The Daily Collegian at Penn State.

I retired in 2010. State College has been my home for many years. My hobbies include genealogy, and I am the current president of the annual Mitchell Reunion.

My father Jake Hamilton grew up in Daybrook, WV.

Note: Please feel free to contact me about any corrections, changes or additional information — gjhamilton48@gmail.com. Also you can contact Seth Lemley at sethlemley@yahoo.com if you have any information or questions.

Key: estimated age in 1918 enclosed in brackets; b=born, d=died, m=married.



William Fleming “Bill” Hamilton [36]

b 11 Jun 1882, Daybrook, Monongalia Co., WV

d 5 May 1947 (age 64), Weston, Lewis Co., WV

son of Daniel Lodden “Lodd” Hamilton (1861-1948) and Martha S. Shriver (1866-1939)

descendant of Henry Hamilton (1742-1828) and Elizabeth Powell Fry (1742-1833);

and Richard Tennant (1744-1822) and Elizabeth Haught (1748-1830)

m Lucy Tennant 5 Feb 1905, Daybrook;

b 1885, **d** 1954; both parents descend from the Tennant and Haught line

They had 12 children; Lucy had one son from a previous relationship

WWI draft registration 12 Sep 1918

Employer in 1918: pumper for W.A. Carver

Place of Employment: Clarksburg, WV

Description: short, stout, blue eyes, brown hair

US Census (listed age, home occupation)

1910: ?, Days Run, Clay Dist., laborer, odd jobs

1920: 38, Days Run, Clay Dist., pumper, oil

1930: 46, Clay Dist., tool dresser, oil field

1940: 58, Clay Dist., unable to work, out of work 52 weeks

Bill’s children and stepson settled in West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Alabama, Georgia and Florida. Surviving descendants remain in those states plus New York and South Carolina and elsewhere throughout the United States. Many of those descendants are living in Monongalia Co., WV; Greene Co., PA; and Potter Co., PA.

Photo portrait: William Fleming Hamilton on horseback circa 1918 (photo enhanced).



Stacy “Stace” Chisler [19]

b 14 Jan 1899, Monongalia Co., WV

d 5 May 1971 (age 72), Monongalia Co., WV

son of Joseph Connor Chisler and Minnie Alice Wilson

m Ethel Moore 1917 Monongalia Co., WV

They had seven children

WWII draft registration 16 Feb 1942

Stated “none” for middle name (no “e” in first name)

Employer in 1942: Monongalia Co. Board of Education, Morgantown, WV

Place of employment: Daybrook, Fairview RD 2

Description: approx. 5’-10”, 160 pounds, gray eyes, brown hair, dark complexion

US Census (listed age, home, occupation)

1910: 11, Days Run, Clay Dist.

1920: 21, Days Run, Clay Dist., laborer, oil field

1930: 31, Clay Dist., truck driver, oil field

1940: 41, Clay Dist., bus driver, county schools

1950: 51, Clay Dist., bus driver, board of ed.

Both photos were cropped and enlarged from the original TIFF. The image on the right was manually touched up to remove white marks on the face, and then automatically repaired and enhanced.

Key: estimated age in 1918 enclosed in brackets; b=born, d=died, m=married.



Both photos were cropped and enlarged from the original TIFF. The image on the right was automatically repaired and enhanced. Note the Photo Enhancer watermark in the lower left corner. If the image is cropped after processing, the watermark can be removed if the watermark is on the deleted portion.

Learnie D. Moore [24]

b 9 Sep 1893, Days Run, Clay Dist., Monongalia Co., WV
d 12 Aug 1983 (age 89), Waynesburg, Greene Co., PA

son of Simon Peter Moore and Lucinda Ellen Wilson

m1 Grace Delma Hughes 1916 Monongalia Co., WV (1886-1939), she was a widow with a son

They had four children

m2 Irma Dell Tennant (1906-1992)

WWI draft registration

5 Jun 1917, Monongalia Co., WV

Employer: Pittsburgh and W. Va. Gas Co.

Place of employment: Daybrook, WV

Description: medium, stout, blue eyes, dark hair

US Census (listed age, home, occupation)

1910: 17, Days Run, Clay Dist., farm laborer, wholesale produce

1920: 26, Jakes Run, Clay Dist., well operator, oil field

1930: 38, Franklin Twp., Greene Co., PA, tool dresser, gas co.

1940: 46, Franklin Twp., Greene Co., PA, tool dresser, People's Gas Co.; widowed

1950: 56, cleaning out tools, gas co.



Both photos were cropped and enlarged from the original TIFF. The original has a diagonal white mark through the upper lip and a bit of white on his left side of the lower lip. On the first pass through Photo Enhancer, the whiteness was interpreted as teeth showing through a slightly parted left side of his lips. To address the problem, the unmodified original was touched up manually and then automatically repaired and enhanced.

Clyde Willis Wilson [20]

b 25 Jul 1897, Daybrook, Monongalia Co., WV
d 4 Jan 1979 (age 81) Mannington, Marion Co., WV

son of Stephen Nelson Wilson and Nora Olive Britton

m Ida Okle Owens 1920, Monongalia Co., WV

They had three children

WWI draft card 24 Aug 1918, Morgantown, WV

Employer: S.N. Wilson

Place of Employment: Fairview RD2, WV

Description: grey eyes, light brown hair

WWII draft card 16 Feb 1942, Mannington, WV

Employer: Carnegie Natural Gas Co.

Place of employment: Underwood, Marion Co., WV

Description: gray eyes, brown hair, light complexion

US Census (listed age, home, occupation)

1910: 13, Days Run, Clay Dist.

1920: 22, Clay Dist., laborer, oil field

1930: 32, Clay Dist., tool dresser, oil field

1940: 42, Farmington, Marion Co., WV, fireman, gas company

1950: 52, Mannington, Marion Co., WV, engineer, natural gas

Key: estimated age in 1918 enclosed in brackets; b=born, d=died, m=married.



Both photos were cropped and enlarged from the original TIFF. The original has white marks on the face and neck. These were fixed automatically on the first pass through Photo Enhancer as the image was automatically repaired and enhanced. The final version was corrected, which lightened the image. Some flecks of white remain in the hair and the background. The flecks could have been manually eliminated.

Charles “Charley” Hamilton [26]

b 8 Dec 1892, Daybrook, Monongalia Co., WV

d 11 Nov 1965, Monongalia Co., WV

son of Daniel Lodden “Lodd” Hamilton (1861-1948) and Martha S. Shriver (1866-1939)

m Sarah Pearl Devine 1914, Monongalia, WV

They had four children

WWI draft card 5 Jun 1917, Monongalia Co., WV

Self-employed farmer at Daybrook

Description: med. ht., stout, *blue eyes*, brown hair

WWII draft card 27 Apr 1942, Mannington, Marion Co., WV

Stated “none” for middle name

Employer: Philadelphia Oil Co., Clarksburg, WV

Place of employment: Fairview RD2, Monongalia Co., WV

Description: approx. 5’-5”, 132 pounds, *brown eyes*, gray hair, light complexion, mole on left side of neck

US Census (listed age, home, occupation)

1910: 15, Days Run, Clay Dist., laborer, home farm

1920: 26, Days Run, Clay Dist., laborer, farm

1930: 34, Clay Dist., pumper, oil field; widowed, living in home of his parents with two children

1940: 49, Clay Dist., WV, pumper, oil field; widowed

1950: 58, Clay Dist., pumper, oil field; widowed, living in home of Wayne and Blendine (Hamilton) Eddy.

From Orlando Stone Soup (Nov. 21, 2008), a blog by Donna G. that recounts stories about Orlando, WV:

The scent of the fox was in the air. The bonfire on the ridge was burning bright and the dogs were straining at their leashes and raring to joust with the crafty Reynard [fox]. The baying of the fox hounds filled the air and could be heard for miles in the cold, crisp air on the ridge ... as Bud Hamilton’s pack was loosed on the scent. The whole star-lit night was alive with the excitement of the sounds of the hunt.

Bud Hamilton and his friends loved a sport that dated back to Europe, but had developed into a traditional American pastime

Bud was Richard Francis “Frank” Hamilton (1885-1938), a younger brother of William Fleming “Bill” Hamilton.

From Mountains of Music, a book about traditional West Virginia music © 1999 Board of Trustees of the University of Illinois, John Lilly, ed.:

I grew up on a typical West Virginia farm — it was hilly as the devil! It was halfway between Blacksville and Daybrook, four miles to either place ...

Spoken by musician Worley Gardener (b 1919) in Monongalia Co. He played at the 1936 fox hunters reunion in Daybrook.



The Fox Hunters of Daybrook

The original high-quality TIFF version of this picture postcard was provided by Seth Lemley of Blacksville, WV. The photo had hairline scratches and other imperfections. This version was processed using the MyHeritage online app Photo Enhancer, which includes options to repair, enhance and colorize. Each step was automatic and quick. The men are (from left): Stacy Chisler, William Fleming "Bill" Hamilton, Learnie D. Moore, Clyde Willis Wilson and Charley Hamilton.