



Hamilton family on a hillside near Daybrook, WV (from left) — FRONT: Harry Kimble “Johnny,” Ruie Mae (behind Johnny), Bettie Ann; ON ELBOWS: Marshall (in front) and Delmar “Coon;” BACK: Lucy Tennant, James Simpson (Ruie’s husband), Arrey Etta Wilson (Melva’s first wife), Melva Kenneth “Jack,” Jake and Clovis Dent. Folks are laughing, because Bettie was looking away in the previous frame. The photo (colorized) was taken by Luella Mae Mitchell in 1942. She may have been dating Johnny at the time. Luella and Jake married in 1944.

My search for Betty Jane, Charles Kay and Barbara Joy

By Gerry Lynn Hamilton

Jan. 13, 2024

In 2008 at age 60, I became seriously interested in my family tree. That is when I first learned my uncle Melva Kenneth “Jack” Hamilton had a second wife, and they had two children. An aunt and two first cousins that I never knew about!

My mother Luella Mae (Mitchell) Hamilton, age 91, was showing me some photos she had taken in 1942 on a hillside near Daybrook, WV. These included family group photos with my paternal grandmother Lucy (Tennant) Hamilton, my father Jake and seven of his siblings.

The group photo included Jack and his first wife. Mom said she thought her name was Airy (my spelling). I thought that was an odd name, but Mom’s memory was very sharp even in her final days. The name turned out to be Arrey Etta Wilson.

Mom said Jack, his second wife and their two children visited Coudersport, Potter Co., PA, where three of Jack's brothers settled. These were my father Jake, Harry K. and Marshall. I concluded the visit would be about 1949 based on the following timeline.

- Arrey died 20 Mar 1946 at the age of 38.
- Jack remarried perhaps in 1946 or 1947.
- Jack died 3 Mar 1950 at the age of 44.

So two children would have been born in 1947 or 1948, and perhaps the family would wait until the youngest child was maybe about a year old before traveling to Coudersport — 1949. The year had to be before Jack died. Mom said she thought the wife's name was Betty and the children's names were Charles Kay and Barbara Joy.

When I was I going through some memorabilia from my father's funeral, I found a card signed "Barbara Joy and Charles Kay Hamilton." The card had been attached to funeral flowers, and the names had to be the children of Jack and Betty. Mom's memory was correct.

Later I found a funeral card for Jack's funeral. The card provided the name Betty Dulaney. So now I wondered: Who was Betty? We had no information about her parents and not much about the two children.

I searched all of the online records I could find looking for variations of Betty and Elizabeth Dulaney. The search included US census reports for Whitely Twp., Green Co., PA, where Jack and Arrey were living in 1940, and surrounding townships and counties. I could not find any useful information.

For lack of a better choice, I finally settled on a person I discovered during my first census search. My best guess is that our Betty Dulaney was a neighbor of Melva and Arrey Hamilton. She was born 18 Nov 1924, daughter of Charles and Ola Dulaney. In the 1940 US Census, this Dulaney household was No. 1 in the Whitely Twp. enumeration. Melva and Arrey lived in Household No. 6. Perhaps Betty and Jack knew each other from church or community events.



"Jack" and Arrey (Wilson) Hamilton.
This photo (colorized) was also taken by Luella Mitchell in 1942.

This Betty Dulaney would have been about 20 when Arrey died in 1946. Melva was 40. I noted the age difference, which was perhaps not typical.

Social Security records for this Betty presented one problem with my theory. The records indicate two marriages, but none to a Hamilton. She was Bettie Jane Dulaney in Dec 1942, Betty Jane Taylor in May 1955, Betty Jane Carpenter in Aug 1966 and Betty J. Carpenter on 18 Apr 1992. I still did not have a better option, so I continued researching this Betty Jane. Chronologically, there was time for a marriage that would have lasted from sometime after Arrey died in 1945 until Jack died in 1950.

I found a Florida divorce record. Betty J. Taylor and Paul E. Taylor divorced in Apr 1964 in Duval Co., FL. Finally, I found a death record: Betty Jane Taylor, age 67, died 14 Mar 1992 at Highlands, FL. She was born 29 Nov 1924.

In 2015, I visited the Cornerstone Genealogical Society in Waynesburg, PA. I found a document regarding Jack's estate. The document was signed Betty J. Hamilton, which supported the middle name Jane from the Social Security record.

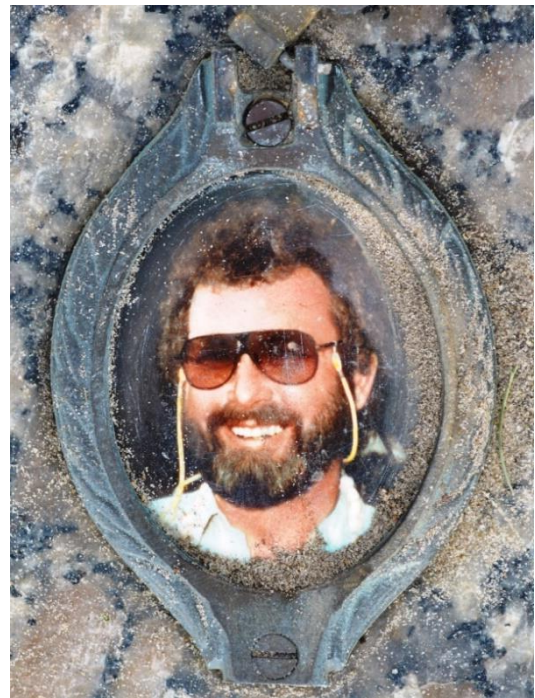
Also in 2015, I visited the Greene Co. courthouse twice to search the records of marriage license applications. I did not find any records for either Melva Hamilton or any Betty Dulaney. This also presented a possible problem with my theory.

From time to time, I searched online for any information I could find that might solve the mystery. During those searches I came across a Charles Kay Hamilton living in Hawaii and a Charles Kay Hamilton buried in Orange Park, FL. However, I had no information that would connect either man to my family.

On 28 Sep 2017, I was searching old newspapers using newspapers.com. I found an obituary for Charles Kay Hamilton in Hawaii. Immediately, I thought this could be the answer. He died in 1991 at 43, which put his date of birth at about 1948, which would work. Then I read the place of birth: Waynesburg, PA. He was buried in Orange Park, FL.

The Charles Kay I found in Hawaii and the Charles Kay I found in Florida were the same person.

This had to be my Charles Kay Hamilton, and I felt a twinge of sadness upon learning of his death at an early age. I have found that I develop a connection with the people I research. Perhaps that comes from learning something about their lives.



Charles Kay Hamilton (photo on headstone, Orange Park, FL)

I kept reading. Survivors included his mother “Mary Jane Carpenter.” *Mary* had to be a mistake. I recognized the surname Carpenter, which matched one of the married names from Betty Jane’s Social Security records. Then I saw brothers “Lynn Taylor” and “Bruce Taylor,” I recognized the Taylor surname from the Social Security records.

Finally, I noted the surviving sister Barbara Goodlette. This had to be Barbara Joy Hamilton. I believed I had found my first cousins. If we ever met, we were too young to remember.

My long-shot theory about Betty Jane Dulaney of Whitely Twp., Greene Co., was proving to be correct.

For the rest of that day, I continued researching as I tried to find Barbara Joy. I didn’t turn up anything in Hawaii. Florida seemed like the next place to search. I found a Barbara Goodlette, but she would have been born much earlier than my Barbara Joy.

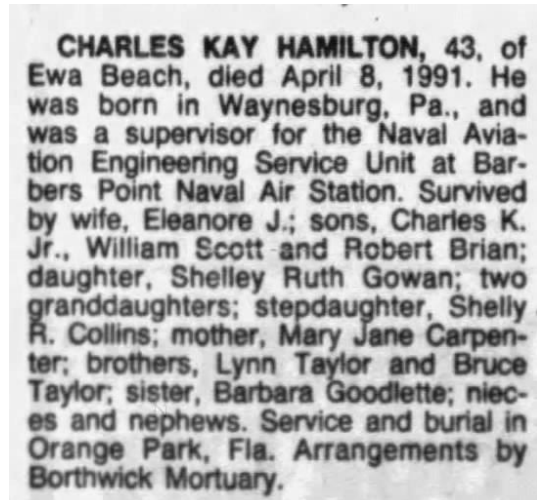
Eventually, I found a US Public Records Index entry for Barbara J. Goodlette. Sometimes these online records include a birth date, and this one did — Dec. 31, 1948. That birth date would work.

I found a marriage record for Barbara Joy Hamilton, who was married 20 Sep 1980 in Collier Co., FL. The record did not include the name of her spouse. Later I found another marriage record for Barbara Joy “Lhote” to John Dudley Goodlette on 20 Sep 1980 in Collier Co. With these two records, I had convincing evidence and the name Lhote.

As I continued, I found a Georgia marriage record for Barbara Joy and Harold E. L’hote Sr., who were married 7 Aug 1963 in Valdosta, GA. They were divorced in 1976 in Berkshire Co., MA. A newspaper clipping reported: “The mother has custody of their two minor children.”

By about 8 p.m., I was certain I had found Barbara Joy, my first cousin. I found what might have been a business e-mail address for her. I sent an e-mail message with the subject line “Melva K. Hamilton was my uncle.” The note concluded: “I am writing to ask if you are the Barbara Joy Hamilton I am looking for.” I didn’t know if the e-mail address was still valid.

The next morning, much to my surprise, I got an answer: “You found her.”



Obituary [Honolulu (HI) Star-Advertiser 13 Apr 1991 Sat Main Edition p22]

We exchanged e-mail messages and shared information. She had very few details about the Hamilton side of her family. I didn't know anything about her. I did learn that the first Barbara Goodlette I discovered was Barbara Joy's mother-in-law. I know we enjoyed the notes we exchanged.

Barb provided some information about her brother Charles Kay. He was living in Hawaii, and he had just remarried about a week before he died from a massive heart attack.

During our e-mail conversations, I learned more details about Betty Jane, who went by "BJ." During Arrey's illness, BJ was a caretaker for Arrey.

After Melva died, Betty married Paul E. Taylor in the early 1950s. Their first son Lynn Eugene was born 10 Nov 1952 in Waynesburg. Their second son Bruce Fredrik was born 19 Sep 1956 in Florida. Betty and Paul divorced in Apr 1964 in Duval Co., FL.

Then Betty married Jack Carpenter about Aug 1966. Most likely Betty and Jack divorced perhaps on 1 Oct 1991 in Polk Co., FL. Betty died six months later.

After Barb's first grandchild was born on Jan 6, 1982, Barb invited her mother for a visit in Pittsfield, MA. They settled in a hotel for five days with the grandchild. Barb asked BJ to talk about her life.

"On our second night, my



MR. AND MRS. DUDLEY GOODLETTE
... the former Barbara L' Hote.

Dudley Goodlette, Barbara L' Hote Recite Vows

Barbara Joy L'Hote and John Dudley Goodlette were married September 20 in a private ceremony. The Hon. Hugh Hayes officiated.

Later that day, a reception was held at the Naples Depot in honor of the couple.

THE BRIDE IS the daughter of Mrs. Betty J. Carpenter of Bartow and the groom is the son of Mrs. R.H. Goodlette of Naples.

Matron of honor was Jo Ann Savickus of Chicago, Ill. Best man was Richard H. Goodlette Jr. of Naples, brother of the groom.

THE BRIDE is a graduate of Pittsfield High School in Pittsfield, Mass. and attended Berkshire Community College, also in Pittsfield.

The groom graduated from Naples High School, Eastern Kentucky University and the University of Florida College of Law. He is a partner in the Naples law firm of Schryver, Hagaman, Goodlette and Aaron.

AFTER A BRIEF honeymoon in the Panama Canal zone, the couple will live in Naples.

[The Naples (FL) Daily News 21 Sep 1980 Sun p47]

Mom shared with me how much she loved and lost.” Barb wrote. “We cried together as she re-lived her life,” Barb wrote. “My Mom was very lonely ... very inside her box.” Barb said, “I learned so much in the five days I so treasure.”

Betty Jane (Hamilton) Carpenter died 10 years later.

The story has one more twist. In April 2022, I discovered why I was never able to find a marriage license application for Melva and Betty at the Greene Co. courthouse. On Nov. 8, 1946, their marriage license was granted at the Potter Co. courthouse in Coudersport, PA. They had been visiting Melva’s brothers, who had settled in Coudersport. Perhaps Melva proposed during the visit. The license date suggests the couple married later that month.

The notice was published by The Potter Enterprise on Nov. 21, 1946. (Marriage licenses granted in any Pennsylvania county are good throughout the state.)

So my decade-long search was successful. I found Betty Jane, Charles Kay and Barbara Joy.



Dudley and Barbara Goodlette attending a community theatre event in 2014 [Florida Weekly, Naples Edition 23 Jan 2014]

**Betty Jane
(BJ) Carpenter**

Betty Jane (BJ) Carpenter of Golden Gate, died April 9, 1992. She was a member of the First Christian Church and "Our Place."

She is survived by her sons, Bruce Taylor of Naples and Lynn Taylor of Kentucky; and one daughter, Barbara Goodlette of Naples. She also was the grandmother of Tracy Taylor of Naples, and Jenny Corcoran of Massachusetts and Harold L'Hote of New Mexico; two

great-grandchildren, Paige Corcoran and Josh Corcoran.

Memorial services will be held Saturday, April 11th at the First Christian Church, 1789 Mandarin Road at 11:00 a.m. The Rev. Susan Diamond, officiating.

The family suggests contributions be made to the American Cancer Society, Collier County Unit, 975 Creech Road, Naples, Fla. 33940.

The Earl G. Hodges Funeral Chapel is in charge of arrangements.

Obituary [The Naples (FL) Daily News 11 Apr 1992 p18]

(Note: The MyHeritage watermarks on some photos indicate the photo was enhanced and perhaps colorized using MyHeritage Photo Enhancer, an online software product. A watermark does not necessarily appear on all enhanced photos.) ■

About the author



1965 high school senior (colorized)

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, which celebrated a 100th anniversary reunion in July 2023.

Comments, corrections and additional information are always welcome. Contact glhamilton48@gmail.com.