

George May of Brocks Gap



Recent photo of the George May cabin in Rockingham County, Virginia. Originally on 131 acres. Listed on the 1813 tax records as being on Bennett's Run, 31 miles from the courthouse.

A Research Study of George May Ireland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia

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c. 2021, Keith May, Bergton, VA

Forward

Years ago, when Vergie Lantz published her book on the George May family, I was completely fascinated with the committed time and energy such a publication took. My copy became well-worn, as I spent many hours closely reading the book. I found the details interesting as I learned more and more about our May Family ancestors and the lives they lived.

Thanks to Vergie's dedicated research, I met distant cousin, Enrique May. Enrique had spent countless hours of his free time meticulously ordering and scrutinizing the George May Family lineage. In the 1700s to 1800s there were many George Mays living in proximity and Enrique had a talent for sifting through these details. Enrique's work broadened our knowledge by greatly expanding, complementing, and questioning prior compiled information.

It was through the encouragement of Enrique that many May males have professionally tested our Y Chromosome DNA to establish George May's DNA. This DNA information demonstrated to be a great asset in both connecting us with other descendants and establishing George May's country of origin. Enrique was the first to unexpectedly suggest that our George May was not German but instead Irish! Additional evidence has since proven Enrique's theory correct.

In another serendipitous occasion, I met new Brocks Gap resident, Diane Langston. Diane retired as a librarian but is now a genealogist working on her certification. I politely inquired if she would be willing to tackle researching the confusing and complicated origins of our George May, and after a bit of coaxing, thankfully she agreed.

The following document is the result of several years of significant dedicated effort and research. Diane's thorough work has contributed some amazing facts and now stands alone as the best guide of the life of George May of Brocks Gap, Virginia. Although Diane Langston is the sole author of this publication, it likely would not have been possible without the groundbreaking efforts by Vergie Lantz and later additional research by Enrique May. Thank you, Diane, Enrique, and posthumously Vergie, for making this publication a reality.

Thanks also to my brother Bob May for creating the George May Website. Future updates, additions, and possible modifications to this document will be posted on the George May of Brocks Gap, Virginia website: www.GeorgeMayFamily.com

Keith May

Introduction

The George May family of Brocks Gap, Rockingham County, Virginia has been researched previously. Years ago Lewis Harvey Yankey and Lonzo Dove took notes on the families of Rockingham County. Patricia Turner Ritchie summarized their notes of the May family in the book *Brocks Gap Miscellaneous Research* (Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, Dayton VA, 1992). A few years later, Vergie Ruth Carr Lantz published a 606-page book *Descendants of George May of Virginia* (Bridgewater Beacon Press, Bridgewater VA, 1997). This is a phenomenal book that details George May descendants all the way to the present time.

But, over the last 20 years, genealogical research has changed. The amount of records that can be accessed remotely, instant contact of relatives through social media, and genetic DNA projects have been game-changers in genealogy. So, even though records are scarce and often non-existent for early Shenandoah Valley inhabitants, new data and analysis has dramatically changed what we know about George May.

There are early “facts” about George May that 20 years ago seemed indisputable:

- 1) George May moved to Brocks Gap in Rockingham County from Loudoun County, Virginia.
- 2) George May was German, possibly even a German Hessian soldier.
- 3) George May was born 1755 and married Martha Magdalene Houghman in 1777.

NONE OF THESE STATEMENTS ARE TRUE!

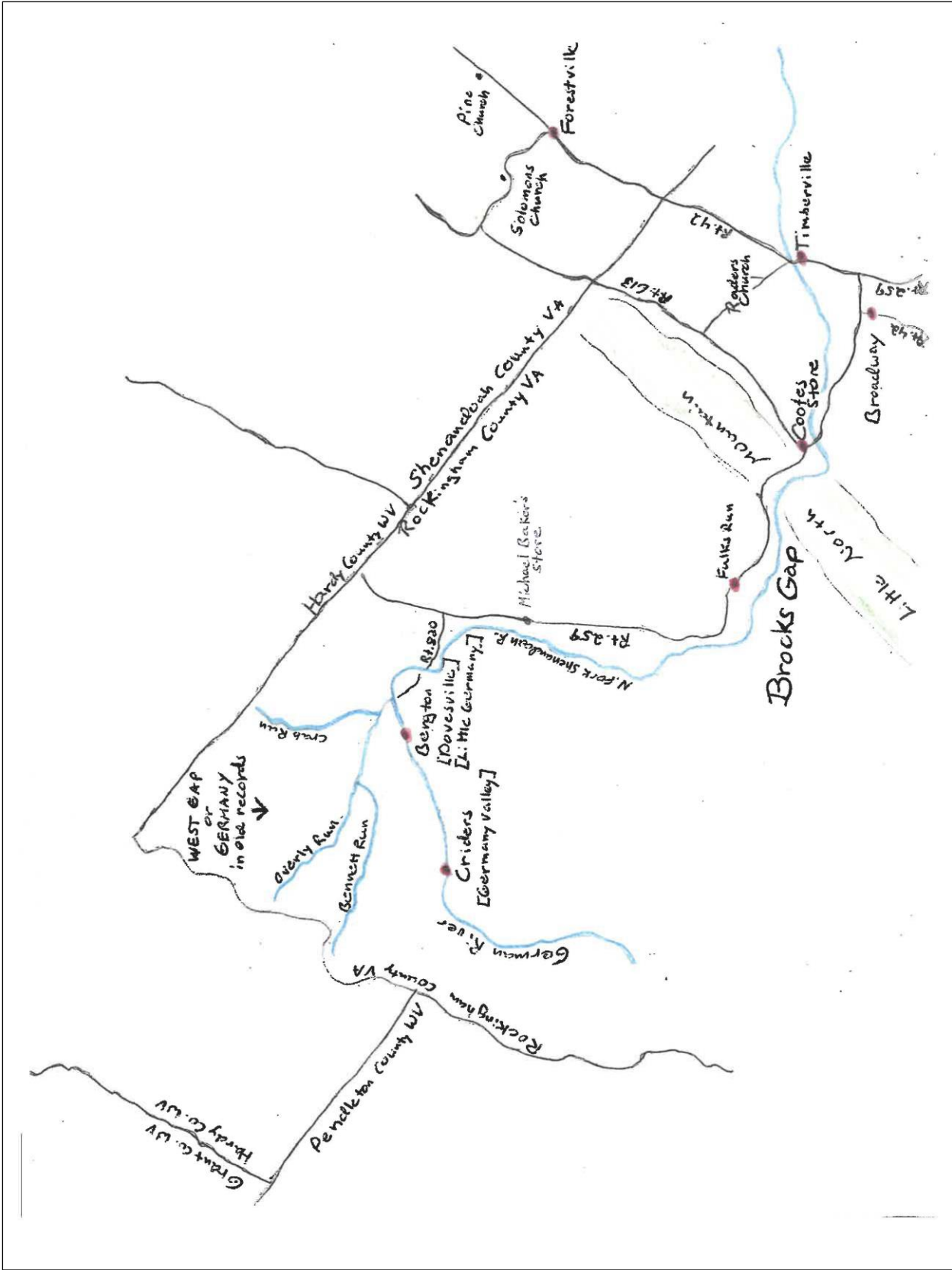
This report knits the newly researched data into a readable narrative. A companion research notebook was compiled for Keith because it is important for research to be easily replicated and allows for researchers in the future to apply new found data to what was known in the past. Many of the documents are attached to an online Ancestry tree. This tree was kept private while research was ongoing. It is now open to the public. Suggestions and corrections are welcome and appreciated. <https://www.ancestry.com/> “George May of Rockingham County, Virginia (Scots-Irish Group)”.

Diane Langston

Timeline for George May of Brocks Gap, Rockingham County, Virginia

1755-1758	Ireland	George May born in Ireland, probably Ulster region
1766-1772		Magdalena born in Pennsylvania
1771-1775	Pennsylvania	George May sailed from Ireland to Pennsylvania
19 Apr 1775	Revolutionary War starts	
July 1776	America declares independence	
1777	Lancaster County, Pennsylvania	A George May signs Oath of Allegiance in Lancaster Co PA.
1779		George May is married (Not listed in census list of single men)
1779-1782	Strasburg, Lancaster County Pennsylvania	George May is living in Strasburg, Lancaster Co PA
1781		Daughter Mary "Molly" May born in Lancaster Co PA
19 Oct 1781	Lord Cornwallis surrenders to Gen. Washington in Yorktown VA	
ab.1782		Son George May born
3 Sep 1783	Treaty officially ends the American Revolution	
1783	Manchester Township, York County, Pennsylvania	George May with a household of 3 inhabitants living in Manchester Township, York Co PA
ab.1783		Son Daniel May born
ab.1784		Son John May born
7 Nov 1785		Son James May born
Fall 1786		George May counted for 1787 tax in Manchester, York County PA
2 Apr 1787	Shenandoah County, Virginia	George May in Shenandoah County, Virginia
ab.1789		Son Andrew May born
19 Sep 1790		Son Jacob May born
15 Nov 1792		Son Joseph May born
1794		Son Abraham May born

1797	Rockingham County, Virginia	George May moves to Brocks Gap
1 Mar 1798		Son Isaac May born
2 Feb 1799		Son Samuel May born
17 Dec 1799		Son Henry May born
4 Jun 1801		Daughter Mary marries Adam Disponey
17 Aug 1801		Daughter Elizabeth May born
1802		George May has 131 acres surveyed
3 Sep 1802		George May's 1 st grandchild born: John Dispennet/Disponey
16 Dec 1803		Son John marries Elizabeth Tusing
1804		George May purchases the 131 acres
13 Jan 1806		Son Andrew May marries Susanna Summers
4 May 1806		Son Benjamin May born
2 Dec 1806		Son George May marries Catherine Cook
11 Dec 1807		Son James May marries Catherine Tusing
1810		George May enumerated in 1810 U.S. Census for Rockingham Co VA
16 Aug 1811		Son Andrew May marries Polly Sonifrank
18 Jun 1812	Start of the War of 1812	
1814		Sons enter War of 1812: Andrew, Jacob, Joseph, & Abraham.
1815		George May dies
28 Dec 1815		Son Samuel May marries Eve Harless in Alleghany, Maryland
1816		Magdalena May dies



George May of Brocks Gap, Rockingham County, Virginia

From Ireland to Pennsylvania

George May was born in Ireland¹ most likely between the years 1755 and 1758.² The May Family Y-DNA project also confirms that George was from a Celtic heritage, and not German as many previous researchers had believed.³ At the time of George's likely immigration to the American colonies (1771-1775)⁴, the main immigrants from Ireland were Scots-Irish coming from the Ulster area. The Scots-Irish joined the hordes of Germans that were making their way to a land of freedom and opportunity.

The Irish in the Ulster province (Northern Ireland) were mainly of Scottish ancestry. In the early 1600's, England and King James I had come up with a plan to remove some of the defiant Scottish people from lands in Scotland and put them in the northern area of Ireland as a buffer against the Catholic Irish. These lowland, Protestant Scots settled for several generations in Ulster which included the counties of Antrim, Armagh, Down, Fermanagh, Londonderry (Colerain), Tyrone [all now in Northern Ireland, UK], Cavan, Donegal, and Monaghan [now part of the Republic of Ireland]. These Scots in Ireland were mainly Presbyterian. They too suffered intolerance from the Church of England. In the early 1700's Presbyterians were forbidden to keep schools; marriages by their clergy were declared invalid; and no position of authority higher than petty constable was allowed. These were only a few of the punitive enactments from the English government.

By 1719 the Scottish-descended people in Ulster, Ireland had had enough. Families and sometimes whole Presbyterian congregations pulled up stakes and sailed for America. The main ports in Ulster had shipping ties to ports in Newcastle, Delaware and Philadelphia,⁵ and so that is where the majority of Ulster Scots landed. In America these immigrants were referred to at the time as Irish and later as Scots-Irish. Eighteenth century Pennsylvania was a teeming cauldron of nationalities that interacted before making their way west or south in search of land. German immigrants were enumerated because they were foreigners in the English colony. Immigrants from Ireland or Scotland did not have to be naturalized because they were English citizens. Because of this, we know a lot more about the newly arriving German families than the Scots-Irish.

Although immigrants from Ireland sailed anytime from 1719 until the start of the American Revolution, there were waves of immigration during certain time periods. There was a lull

¹ 1880 U.S. Census for son Henry May, Rockingham Co VA

² 1810 U.S. Census for George May, Rockingham Co VA; Pennsylvania Septennial Census 1779, Strasburg, Lancaster County, PA, page 526.

³ <https://www.familytreedna.com/groups/may/about>

⁴ Leyburn, James G. *The Scotch-Irish A Social History*. NC Press, 1962. Summarized: <http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~mcclell2/homepage/migrate.htm>

⁵ https://www.jstor.org/stable/25516172?seq=2#metadata_info_tab_contents

between 1755 and 1771. George May most likely came between 1771 and 1775. The Ulster area of Ireland had by 1770 become desperately poor, subsisting on potatoes, oat bread, and milk. The small farms were being subdivided until the tracts were too small for families to make a living. Then in 1771 the lease on a large estate in county Antrim and other counties expired and new rents on small farmers were raised so high that many were unable to pay and were evicted. Resentful Irish farmers acted on their resentment and set out for America. Over the next three years it is estimated that nearly 30 thousand Ulster Irish left the land they and their ancestors had lived on for many generations.⁶

Although most pre-Revolutionary War immigrants from Ireland were of Scottish heritage, not all were. There were some English, Quakers, or Catholic Irish moving to America, some voluntarily, some as prisoners or indentured servants.⁷ Because George May doesn't seem to have any May family traveling with him, a wider range of possibilities should be considered.

We know that George May lived in Pennsylvania for some years. Daughter Mary "Molly" May's son Joseph Dispennet said in the 1880 census that his mother was born in Pennsylvania.⁸ In a Virginia Chancery Case,⁹ George May's son Jacob was called as a witness and Jacob Nehs was called to give deposition on Jacob May's character. Jacob Nehs said he had known Jacob May all of Jacob May's life. He had known Jacob's father in Pennsylvania and had lived near him in Shenandoah County until he [George May] moved 15 miles away to Brocks Gap.

Although George May presumably landed at a Philadelphia port, he is absent from any known records in the city. Extensive searches have been made of records from old Philadelphia County, of which a large portion became Montgomery County in 1784. Using clues from a possible family connection¹⁰ and friend connection,¹¹ searches were made in surrounding Pennsylvania counties.

Following an old Indian path and subsequent small settler paths, the independent state of Pennsylvania surveyed and constructed the Strasburg Road in 1772-3.¹² This road led from Philadelphia through West Chester and ended in Strasburg in Lancaster County. Undoubtedly this contributed to George May settling in Lancaster, in or before 1779.

⁶ Leyburn, James G. *The Scotch-Irish, A Social History*. University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, c. 1962. Abstracted at <http://homepages.rootsweb.com/~mcclell2/homepage/migrate.htm>

⁷ Betit, Kyle. "Colonial Scots-Irish Immigrants: The Irish Records" *The Irish At Home and Abroad*. volume 2 #1, 1994/1995. Reprinted in https://electricScotland.com/history/america/scots_irish.htm.

⁸ 1880 Miami Co, IN census for Joseph Disponnet

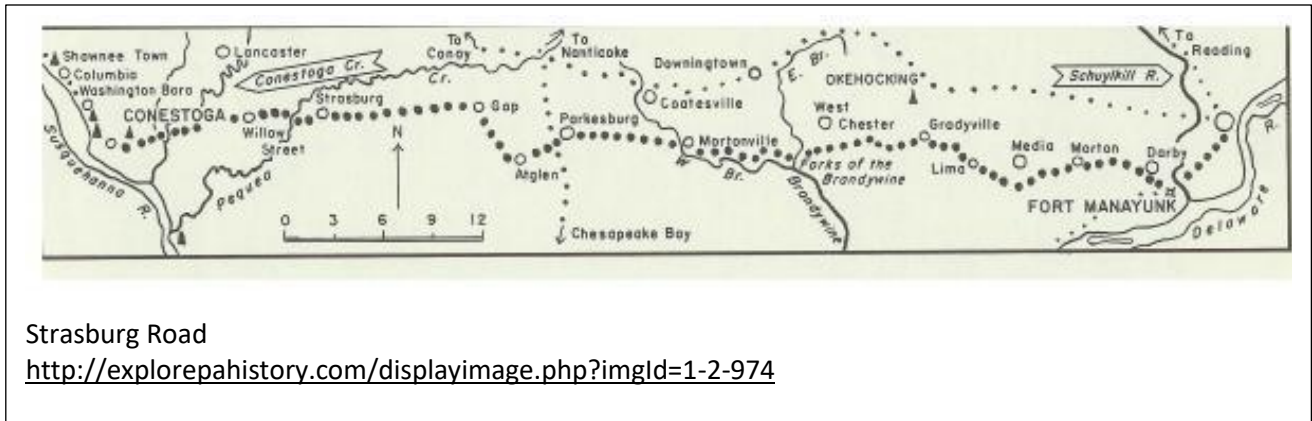
⁹ Chancery Case 1820-018 Augusta County Bowman vs Bowman

https://www.lva.virginia.gov/chancery/case_detail.asp?CFN=015-1820-018 concerning the will of John Bowman Sr. of Rockingham Co VA. Jacob May is called to testify because he was one of two witnesses for the will of John Bowman. Jacob was living on the John Bowman Jr. farm and was asked by him to witness his father's will. In the 156-page chancery case, Jacob May is mentioned on pages 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 26, 27 30-32, 34-36, 39. On page 19, Jacob Niece gives testimony on Jacob May's character and how he knows him. Jacob May signed his name so he was literate. Jacob May's age is given as 27 on court date January 22, 1817. Jacob May's age also given as 27 on 22 Nov 1819. Jacob Niece's testimony (age 79) was given on court date June 1817.

¹⁰ DNA match to descendant of John May of York Co PA and Crawford Co PA

¹¹ Jacob Nehs of Shenandoah County, York Co PA, Montgomery Co PA, see footnote 9

¹² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Strasburg_Road



George May was in the 1779 census¹³ of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in the Strasburg Township. George is listed as having no acres of land, no horses, and no sheep. He does have one cow. Family members were not enumerated in this township count. To be counted, George most likely had to be age 21 or older. He is also presumed to be married since “Freemen” (unmarried adult men) were listed separately. This places his birth as 1758 or earlier. George was the only May listed in Strasburg Township. He paid taxes again in 1780 in Strasburg.¹⁴ He had 1 horse, 2 cows, 0 sheep, no land, no mills, and no money.

George was living in Lancaster County¹⁵ during the height of the American Revolution. When the British invaded Philadelphia the Continental Congress moved to Lancaster County and then on to York County. The founding Quakers of Pennsylvania were pacifist, but not the Irish. The Scots-Irish had no love of the British government and formed a large part of the local militia companies. Lancaster residents who weren’t joining and training in rifle companies were supplying the war. The fertile soil produced large amounts of grain. The iron forges were turning out guns, including the first Pennsylvania Rifle (later called the Kentucky Rifle when it made its way into the Ohio Valley). Craftsmen were building wagons and other transportation aids for the American army. In 1777 men from the Strasburg Township were part of the 7th Battalion and in 1780 were part of the 1st Battalion of the Lancaster County Militia.

There is no record in the Pennsylvania Archives or National Archives of George May joining the army or local militia. But, he is possibly the George May that voluntarily took the Oath of Allegiance and Fidelity in Lancaster, Pennsylvania in 1777¹⁶. The next Pennsylvania tax list was for 1782¹⁷. George May is still living in Strasburg Township in Lancaster County. He has acquired no land, and only has one cow.

¹³ Pennsylvania Septennial Census 1779, Strasburg, Lancaster County, PA, page 526.
¹⁴ Pennsylvania Tax and Exoneration 1768-1801, page 205 (image 44) of online record on Ancestry.com
¹⁵ See “Separating the George May men of Pennsylvania” essay in the appendix
¹⁶ <https://www.co.lancaster.pa.us/986/Oaths-of-Allegiance-Index-1777-1789>
¹⁷ Pennsylvania state tax 1782, Strasburg Township, Lancaster County, PA, page 710.

Land was not readily available to the new immigrants in eastern Pennsylvania.¹⁸ Scots-Irish and German families continued to move in search of land they could own. Sometime in 1782-1783, George made his move along the Great Wagon Road to neighboring York County and settled in the Manchester Township. Here we get more information from the 1783 tax list.¹⁹ George May is listed as having no land, no house, no barn, but has three inhabitants in his family. He and his family were likely living with someone else and/or leasing a farm. The enumeration was assembled and presented in alphabetical order, which doesn't allow researchers to investigate neighbors as potential family or friends. We know George May and family were still in Manchester Township, York Co PA in 1786.²⁰ No numbers for family members were given, and he still had no land or horses, but he was holding on to that cow. In the fall of 1786, census takers visited everyone to make a state tax count for 1787. At this time George was without land, horse, or cow.²¹ Taxes were collected in the spring, but were George and family even in Manchester?

From Pennsylvania to Virginia

On April 2, 1787, George May is enumerated in Shenandoah County, Virginia.²²

The Shenandoah Valley of Virginia was a beautiful area, located between the Blue Ridge and Alleghany mountains. An old



Indian trail became a wagon trail which became the Great Wagon Road. The Great Wagon Road started in Philadelphia, went through Lancaster and York, crossed the Potomac River, and entered the Shenandoah Valley and joined with the old Indian road (Route 11). Germans and Scots-Irish poured into this area, many settling in, and others continuing their journey south into the Carolinas, Kentucky, or Georgia. Although ethnic groups often kept to themselves early

¹⁸ Fullerton, James N. "Squatters in Early Western Pennsylvania," <https://journals.psu.edu/> "Migration of the Scotch Irish from Ulster to Western North Carolina". digitalheritage.org. Western Carolina University. <https://digitalheritage.org/2011/12/the-migration-of-the-scotch-irish-from-ulster-to-western-north-carolina/>

¹⁹ Pennsylvania, Tax and Exonerations, 1783, Manchester Township, York County, PA, archive roll #343.

²⁰ Pennsylvania, Tax and Exonerations, 1786, Manchester Township, York County, PA, archive roll #343

²¹ Pennsylvania, Tax and Exonerations, 1787, Manchester Township, York County, PA, archive roll #343

²² Shenandoah County, VA Personal Property Tax 1787, Tax List A; April 2, 1787.

on, it only took necessity (selling and buying goods, finding a wife) or common ground (fighting the English) to have all the immigrants start to meld into Americans.

Rader Church in Timberville is a great example of necessity. In 1765, neither the German Reformed Lutherans nor the Scots-Irish Presbyterians around the Timberville area of Rockingham County (close to Shenandoah County) had the resources to build a church structure. So, a man from each group gave land for Rader Church.²³ In the later years, Rader Church was solidly Lutheran and most of its surviving early records are in German.²⁴ But, with church choices limited, Rader Church was probably convenient for the George May family. Although George was born in Ireland, he probably lived close to Germans in Pennsylvania and Shenandoah County, and his wife Magdalena is believed to be German. At least five of their sons married girls from German families. Son John had two of his children baptized at Rader. Son Isaac²⁵ raised his family in this church. George's daughter Molly, was married by Rev. Ferdinand Lair (Lehr) whose daughter was baptized in Rader Church. If the records of Rader Church were complete, we might fill in some of the missing information on George May and his family.²⁶

When did George make the move from Shenandoah County to Rockingham County? We know he was still in Shenandoah County in 1796.²⁷ He was enumerated the same day as his friend from Pennsylvania, Jacob Nehs/Neece. George is absent from the 1797 Shenandoah tax lists. He cannot be located in the 1797 Personal Property tax for Rockingham either. Did he move at a time that caused him to be uncounted in both locations? In 1798, George May is enumerated in Rockingham County on April 28th. We know from Jacob Nehs' court deposition that George moved to the Brocks Gap area. Why did George move to the neighboring county? Was the land already cleared? Some Valley settlers ignored or were unaware of the laws in Virginia. Some settlers believed if you cleared, cultivated, and built a cabin, you had rights to the land.²⁸ It wasn't until 1802 that George May had 131 acres in the Brocks Gap area surveyed.²⁹ Then in 1804, George May bought the 131 acres from John Gratton. This deed was burned as were

²³ Stirewalt, Jerome. *A Brief History of Rader's Lutheran Church near Timberville*. Henkel & Co, New Market, VA, 1922, pp 8-9.

²⁴ https://books.google.com/books/about/A_Brief_History_of_Rader_s_Lutheran_Chur.html?id=-3_TAAAAMAAJ. Rader was a general church meeting house until about 1813 when the church joined the Lutheran Synod of NC, but it didn't get a regular pastor until 1829.

²⁵ https://sites.rootsweb.com/~varockin/HRHS/cem/raders1_4.htm

²⁶ <https://www.worldcat.org/title/record-book-of-the-rader-lutheran-church-timberville-virginia-1762-1889-with-interruptions-sic/oclc/23203214> , No digitized copy currently available. Can be viewed at Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, Dayton VA or at library listed on this internet link.

²⁷ Shenandoah County VA 1796 Tax page 23, Familysearch.org film # 007856300, image 808.

²⁸ <http://www.virginiaplaces.org/settleland/headright.html>

²⁹ *Rockingham County Survey Book B*, page 83 for 100 acres; page 89 for 31 acres.

many Rockingham County records, but the 1829 land transaction from Joseph May to James May confirms this transaction.³⁰ John Gratton owned several parcels of land and may not have lived on this one.

It is not known if the old log home that the George May family lived in at Brocks Gap was built by George or if the structure was there before he bought the land in 1804. There is a date carved inside the house of 1781, but it is not known if that date is significant to the house construction.



Photo by Enrique B. May IV

Wife and Family

It is not known when and where George May married. It is most likely that he married twice. For the 1779 tax in Strasburg, PA, George was not listed with the Freeman, so he was most likely married. From the 1810 Rockingham Co VA census we know that George's wife Magdalena was age 26-44. This puts her birth year as 1766 to 1784. If Magdalena was born as early as 1766, she would have been 13 years old in 1779. It is possible but not likely that she was George's wife at this time. An even bigger factor would be Magdalena's age at the birth of her last son. If she was George's only wife, then she would have been 40 years old when Benjamin was born. Again, not impossible, but even in the 21st century women in their 40's rarely conceive and carry a baby to term.³¹

It is possible that George's first wife died shortly after the birth of their son, James on 7 Nov 1785 in Manchester Township, York County, PA. James' 1863 death record in Rockingham Co VA leaves the line for "mother" blank. Following 1785 there is a gap of four years until Andrew's 1789 birth in Shenandoah County, VA. Judging by the 1787 enumeration of George in Shenandoah County tax list and the birth of Andrew in 1789, George probably married Magdalena in Shenandoah County. But, a thorough search of the surviving original marriage bonds of Shenandoah turns up no record of a marriage for George. The marriage records of close-by Rockingham County, VA were also searched and no record of the marriage found.

A Pennsylvania marriage to Magdalena cannot be ruled out. The other puzzling question is who took care of the five toddler/infant May children on the move to Virginia? That would be a hard feat for two parents, much less a single father. Since many immigrants made the ocean journey with family and friends, their movements within America followed the same pattern. George

³⁰ Rockingham County VA Deed Book 8, p.547, 2 May 1829.

³¹ <https://www.webmd.com/baby/pregnant-after-35#1>

likely made the decision to move to Virginia because family or friends were moving. Somewhere in the list of names in Manchester Township, Pennsylvania in 1785 and the 1787 list of inhabitants of Shenandoah County Virginia, there are clues to George's marriage.

There are at least two other possibilities to explain the break in children. There was a high percentage of infant mortality in the eighteenth century. By 1800 over 46 of every 100 children born in the United States died before age 5.³² Also, it is known that men sometimes went in search of land before bringing the family. George could have left his wife and children in York County while he traveled 170 miles to scope out the Shenandoah Valley.

From the 1880 census records for sons Henry³³ and Benjamin³⁴ we know Magdalena was born in Pennsylvania. Her name was common in German families and she is most likely first-generation born American. The largest wave of Germans to Pennsylvania occurred 1749-1754, but Germantown, Pennsylvania had been established in 1683. So, it is possible Magdalena's grandparents had been in America for years before she was born.

How many children did George May have? Early researchers said 15 children, but looking back through the surviving records, there is no mention of 15 children. Fourteen children are listed in the 1829 land transaction of Joseph May to James May. Children listed: George, John, Molly, Daniel, Andrew, James, Jacob, Joseph, Abraham, Samuel, Isaac, Elizabeth, Henry, and Benjamin.³⁵ The early researchers attributed Adam May to this family. If he was a son, Adam would have died before his father died in 1815 because no mention of Adam shows up in land transactions. In addition, a descendant of Adam May of Rockingham County took the Y-DNA test and did not match descendants of George May.

Separating the George Mays

The first record we have of George May living in Virginia is the 1787 tax list of Shenandoah County, Virginia.³⁶ Earlier researchers had placed George May in Loudoun County, VA with land transactions with Henry Haughman. From the Revolutionary War Pension application of George May³⁷ we know that the Loudoun County George May was German, moved to Loudoun as a young boy, and moved to Tennessee where he married and had children. So linking any sources of Loudoun County to the Rockingham County George May is incorrect.

Living in Shenandoah County can also be substantiated by Andrew's son Jacob in the 1880 census that states his dad's birthplace was Shenandoah County.³⁸ Also the tombstone of

³² <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1041693/united-states-all-time-child-mortality-rate/>

³³ 1880 U.S. Census, Rockingham County VA

³⁴ 1880 U.S. Census, Pike, Clark Co OH

³⁵ *Rockingham County VA Burnt Deed Book 8* pp547-549, Joseph & Sarah May to James May.

³⁶ 1787 Shenandoah County tax list (see appendix)

³⁷ George May pension S38928 : <https://revwarapps.org/s38928.pdf>

³⁸ 1880 U.S. Census, Plains, Rockingham County VA

George's son Jacob³⁹ states that he (Jacob) was born in Shenandoah County, VA. The final confirmation comes from George's son Joseph in his Nelson County marriage license which states Joseph was born in Shenandoah County.⁴⁰

It is from Joseph's marriage license that Magdalena is confirmed to have been George May's wife sometime before 1792. Magdalena's maiden name is not known. It is not known when and how researchers came up with the name Haughman unless they made the conclusion when they erroneously linked to the George May in Loudoun, which had land transactions with Henry Haughman, who had a daughter Martha. No records can be found in Rockingham County that have Magdalena's name as Martha. In the book *Old Tenth Legion Marriages*⁴¹, Mary May's marriage record to Adam Dispony states that consent was given by Geo. and Martha May. When the marriage bond record was viewed for this research, the bond only had George May listed and mother's line was blank.

Four separate May families can be found in Rockingham County in the late 1700s and early 1800s. In fact, one of those families has a "George May" which highly confuses the untangling of family trees. An earlier researcher said that George and Magdalena May were sponsors in 1812 for a baptism of a child of Adam and Elizabeth Bott May's at Frieden's Lutheran Church, 25 miles away from Brocks Gap. This led to the conclusion that the families were connected. But, when the record⁴² was revisited it only says "Georg May and wf." Not likely this was George and Magdalena. It may have been George May Jr. whose wife was from a German family; or possibly, Adam May's half-brother George may have lived briefly in Rockingham County. See the *May Families of Rockingham County, Virginia* chart in the Appendix which briefly outlines the families. See also the essay *Separating the George May Men of Pennsylvania*.

³⁹ Jacob May tombstone link: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/11579577/jacob-may>

⁴⁰ Joseph May marriage license, Nelson Co VA, 19 Oct 1858 to Nancy Carroll

⁴¹ Strickler, Harry M., compiler. *Old Tenth Legion Marriages. Marriages in Rockingham County, Virginia From 1778 to 1816. Taken from the marriage bonds.* Joseph K. Ruebush Co, Dayton, VA, 1928, page 48. FHL Film # 007579045, image 31.

⁴² https://sites.rootsweb.com/~varockin/FriedensRecords/Friedens_059.htm

Everyday Life and End-of-Life

What was life like for the George May family? Although it may be stereotypical, the early Scots-Irish are depicted as restless, adventurous, rebellious, hardy, self-reliant, clever, and inventive. They were also thought to be great at improvising and quite willing to fight. They would dance all night after a wedding and get drunk at funerals. There were, of course, some staunch Presbyterians that were solemn and pious in their religious beliefs. There is no evidence that George regularly attended church. There is evidence that the family liked their liquor. From Michael Baker's store account book from March 4, 1804 to Sept 1808, George May and his sons were in the store 22 times; eleven of those visits involved the purchase of whiskey or brandy. Other items purchased included salt, clothing, a knife, and gun supplies. Michael Baker also allowed people to trade work for items. George's son James May was able to trade a day of hoeing corn for a pint of whisky and 4 ½ days haymaking for a comb. Son Andrew May was able to work 17 days for cash.⁴³

Farming was the main occupation for the lowland Scots in Scotland, in their forced relocation in Ulster Ireland, and then in America. Considering that George spent the last years of his life living on 131 acres in an isolated area of Rockingham County, it is assumed he spent most of his life farming. Of his sons still living at the time of the 1850 census, two were listed as farmers (Jacob in Ohio and Samuel in Hardy Co). Four sons (Daniel, James, Henry, and Benjamin) were listed as a "laborer" and probably were working on a farm (1860 census for 3 surviving sons James, Henry, and Benjamin had each listed as farm laborer or farmer). Son Joseph was a miller and son Abraham was a carpenter.

⁴³ Kyger, M. Ellsworth, transcriber. *Michael Baker Store Account Book. Brocks Gap, Rockingham County Virginia 1804-1825*. Typed and Indexed by Patricia T. Ritchie. Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, Dayton VA 1993.

George May of Brocks Gap died in 1815 in Rockingham County, Virginia. He was probably age 57-60. George died without a will. Administration of estate was presented in court on 16 May 1815.⁴⁴ Magdalena May widow of George May relinquished her right of administration and James May was granted the task. Before George's estate could be settled his wife Magdalena died in 1816. James May was again named the executor and provided bond 21 May 1816.⁴⁵ It is assumed the estate was settled without problems. Some of the children died shortly after their father (George, John, Andrew), some moved to other Virginia counties (Abraham, Joseph, Samuel), and others moved out of state (Molly, Jacob, Elizabeth, and Benjamin all went to the Ohio Valley). James, Isaac, Daniel, and Henry stayed in the area.



The May family cemetery near the George May cabin, Criders community, Brocks Gap area, Rockingham County, Virginia.

[photo by Enrique B. May IV]

⁴⁴ Rockingham County VA Minute Book 8, p.80.

⁴⁵ Rockingham County VA Minute Book 8, p.243.

George May was Irish born, but truly lived the American dream. He was able to live and work freely, owned a gun, and bought land. His grandchildren numbered 105+ and great-grandchildren 374+! George May leaves a legacy of thousands of descendants spread over America from coast to coast.

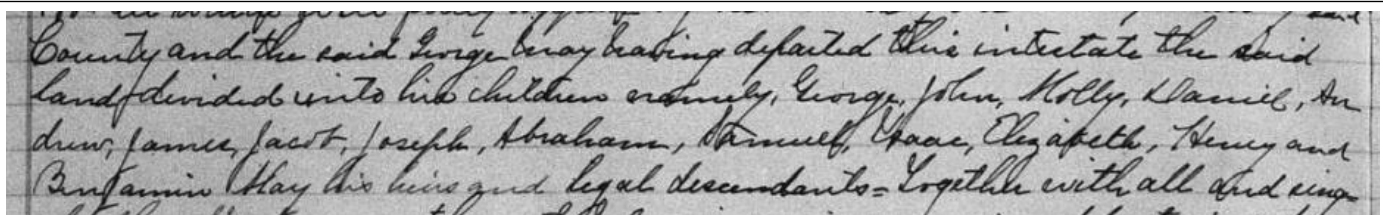


Descendants of George May gather at May home site
27 April 2019 during the Brocks Gap Heritage Days.

Children of George May

The information on each of the children of George May is intended as a quick summary. The children have not been as extensively researched as their father and there may be additional sources that would change the given information. New information on the children and their families was being added up until the printing of this booklet. Check the Ancestry.com tree or the website www.georgemayfamily.com for up-to-date information. If you have documents, (especially Family Bibles or private papers), that might enhance, add new facts, or change the information, please share!

At the end of some biographies, there are comments on the information presented in *Descendants of George May of Virginia*. This is not to be taken as a criticism. More information comes to light every day, and there are sure to be mistakes in this work as well.

A snippet of a handwritten document, likely a deed or will, listing the children of George May. The text is written in cursive and includes the names: George, John, Molly, Daniel, Andrew, James, Jacob, Joseph, Abraham, Samuel, Isaac, Elizabeth, Henry, and Benjamin. The text also mentions that these are his heirs and legal descendants.

Fourteen children listed.

Rockingham County VA Deed Book 8, pp547-548. Familysearch.org FHC film# 8357591, images 647-648.

Mary May

Mary “Molly” May was born about 1781 in Pennsylvania⁴⁶ probably Strasburg, Lancaster County. As a toddler, she would have made the move to York County, Pennsylvania. Mary most likely moved to Shenandoah County, Virginia with her father in 1787. She was listed as “Mary May” in her 4 June 1801 Rockingham County VA marriage record to Adam Disponey.⁴⁷ Adam was a widower (married 1st Eve Hester). Around 1807, Adam and Mary moved to Fairfield County, Ohio. Mary and Adam had 12 children; Adam had one daughter from 1st marriage. Mary was listed as “Molly” in the 1829 land transaction with her siblings.⁴⁸ As a widow, she sold her portion of her father’s land in 1840 to her brother James.⁴⁹ Mary died 12 Feb 1846 in Licking County, Ohio.⁵⁰ She is buried in the cemetery on the Dispennet family farm.

Children of Mary and Adam Dispennet:

- A. Catherine (1798-) Adam’s daughter with wife Eve Hester
- B. John (1802-1884) m. Delilah Stephenson. Ten children.
- C. Jacob (1804-1872) m. Margaret McCall. Ten children.
- D. Elizabeth (1806-1860) m. Zebidee Huffman. Four children.
- E. Sarah (1808-1883) (possibly married William Burnside)
- F. Joseph (1809-1885) m. Mary T. Ross. Six children
- G. Margaret Ann (1811-1852) m. Andrew Mackey Clements. At least 4 children.
- H. David (1813-1864) m. Elizabeth Stephenson. Two children.
- I. Mary “Polly” (1815-1875)
m. John Wise. Nine children
- J. Abraham (1817-1900) m.
Ann Frances Wright. Five
children
- K. Rachel (1819-)
- L. George (1821-) m. Nancy J.
Tiffany. One daughter.
- M. Noah (1823-1867)



⁴⁶ Son Disponnets’s 1880 census record lists PA as her birth state.

⁴⁷ Wayland, John. Virginia Valley Records 1795-1805. “Marriages in Rockingham County” from the clerk’s office in Harrisonburg. Strasburg VA, 1930, p.13; FamilySearch.org film # 7579045, images 31 & 92.

⁴⁸ Rockingham County VA Burnt Deed Book 8 pp547-549, Joseph & Sarah May to James May.

⁴⁹ Rockingham County VA Deed Book 16, pp497-498, Mary Dispennet to James May

⁵⁰ Death date from tombstone on Findagrave

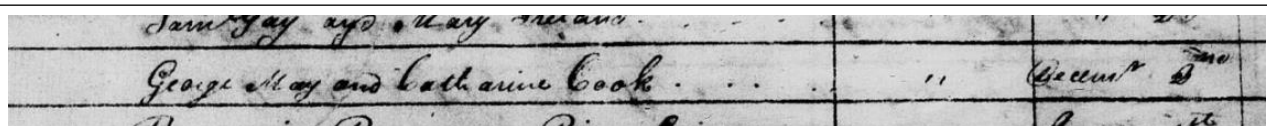
George May, Jr.

Even less is known about George May, Jr. than of his father. George Jr is estimated to be born about late 1782 to very early 1783, probably in Strasburg, Lancaster Co PA. He most likely moved with his father in the spring of 1787 from York County, Pennsylvania to Shenandoah County, Virginia. When his father bought land in Rockingham County in 1804, George Jr would have been around the age of 21. Men in Rockingham County were charged with Personal Property tax when their age was over 21. George May Sr was charged with tax on three sons age 16-21 in 1804. In 1805 George May Sr. is listed with two sons age 16-21 and listed for the first time is George May Junr. This indicates George turned 22 in 1805. Although the use of "Junior" did not necessarily indicate a son during this time period, the other Rockingham County May families don't fit the timeframe.

Earlier researchers said the 2 Dec 1806 marriage to Catherine Cook was for the Brocks Gap George May Jr. In the 1810 census of Rockingham County, there are two George May's. The younger one is listed as Male age 26-44, putting his birth year as 1766-1784. His wife is listed as age 16-25, which fits with an 1806 marriage that required father's permission for daughter to marry (under age 21). In 1810 there are three children living with them. One boy is age 10-15 making him born 1795-1800. No guess on who this could be – farm laborer or younger brother? Also listed are a boy and a girl under the age of 10. It is believed that George May died in 1818. His marriage and death are corroborated by the listing of Caty May in the northwestern part of Rockingham County for the Personal Property Tax of 1819. Women were not listed unless they were widowed or had no adult males living in the household.

Children of George and Catherine Cook May: [most names are from other researchers, no proof found]

- A. UNKNOWN GIRL (b. abt. 1807)
- B. William May (b. 1814-) m. Christina Michael, 21 Mar 1842 Rockingham Co VA. Five children.
- C. Sarah Margaret May (b. 1816-) m. Michael May Dec 1835 (son of Thomas May and Catherine Emerich May). Moved to TN by 1842. Thomas had 10 children from 1st marriage to Marie Catherine Detamor. Sarah and Thomas had 10 children.
- D. Samuel May (1818-1892Mo) m. Eliza Jane Burns. Ten children.



Rockingham County VA Marriages, FHC film # 7579045, image 105

From the process of elimination, names of three possible sons are listed below. There is no proof at this time. DNA evidence does prove that John May of Maysville, Hardy Co WV is from the George May of Brocks Gap family. Old stories said Maysville was founded by brothers John and Henry May. Absolutely no "Henry May" can be found in records. Tax records of Hardy County shows that a John, Aaron, and George May all lived near each other in Hardy Co in 1834 and 1835.⁵¹ John and Aaron lived long and died in this area. George only lived there in 1835 and 1836.

- E. John May (1808-1895) m. Catherine Souder. Five children. [Census records indicate a son in this age range. Previously John had been placed as a son of John, but disproved by church baptism records, so placed here as a possibility]
- F. George (abt.1810-)
- G. Aaron "Henry" (1812-1859) m1) Mary Roby; m2) Sarah Feaster. 14 children

[In *Descendants of George May of Virginia*, Lantz only has two children attributed to George May Jr.: George III and William. She said George III married Lydia Boyers on 15 Aug 1822, but a son of George Jr. and Catherine Cook (if born after 1806 marriage) would not likely have been old enough to be this George. Lantz has Aaron May as a son of Henry and Catherine Sydes May and Henry being a son of George. This is incorrect. The Henry May that married Catherine Sydes/Sykes was the son of Thomas May and a different family. Henry and Catherine did not have a son named Aaron.]

⁵¹ *Hardy County [VA] Personal Property Tax Book, 1834A*. FHC film # 7849135, image 456.

Daniel May

Daniel May was born 5 Aug 1783⁵² in Pennsylvania, either Lancaster or York county. He most likely moved with his father at age 3 1/2 to Shenandoah County, Virginia in 1787. He married Susanna Summers on 13 Jan 1806 in Shenandoah County⁵³. Trying to confirm Daniel and Susanna's children is difficult. They married in 1806 and by the 1810 census they have a boy and girl both under the age of 10. It is Mary May's death certificate that indicates that her parents were Daniel & Susan. But, there are a lot of years between 1810 and 1822. George and Jacob were found in church records.⁵⁴ The problem is a second "George May" that appears to belong to this family.* Daniel was listed in the 1810 & 1820 censuses as a resident of Shenandoah County. He cannot be located in the 1830 or 1840 censuses. He is living in Rockingham County in 1850, a widower with daughter Mary. Daniel's occupation is listed as Laborer.

Children of Daniel and Susanna May:

- A. UNKNOWN SON (b. abt. 1807-)
- B. UNKNOWN DAUGHTER (b. abt. 1809-)
- C. George May (b or bap 27 Nov 1811⁵⁵-) [possibly died young and name re-used]
- D. Jacob May (6 Mar 1814⁵⁶-16 Mar 1898)
- E. UNKNOWN SON (b. abt. 1817)
- F. Mary Margaret May (bap. 10 Mar 1822-d.1880)⁵⁷. Never married.
- G. George May (1823-aft 1900)* m. Mary Lambert. One daughter: Frances Jane May**

*A George May was born in August of 1823 (according to 1900 census). The year of 1823 narrows the possibilities of his father. George lived in the northwestern part of Rockingham County, so it is probable that he is in the "George May of Brocks Gap" family of May's. Looking at the sons of original George May and by using the process of elimination, none of these fit:

- George May Jr died about 1818
- John May died about 1817
- James May had a son George born 1811 (married Priscilla Lantz). This son's death record says his father is James.
- Andrew May's first wife died in 1821 and he didn't marry second wife until 1825
- Jacob, Joseph, Abraham, Samuel and Benjamin left the county
- Isaac's children were named in a chancery suit
- Henry didn't get married until 1828.

That leaves Daniel May. There are examples of families reusing important family names when a child dies. – BUT THIS IS ONLY SPECULATION AND DOES REMAIN UNPROVEN.

⁵² Rockingham County VA Death Register, death 5 Dec 1857, age 74 years 5 months. Person giving information said Daniel was born in Brocks Gap, but that is not possible.

⁵³ Shenandoah County Marriages, familysearch.org film #33930, page 146

⁵⁴ Old Pine Church (St. Mary Pine Church), Shenandoah County VA

⁵⁵ Old Pine Church (St. Mary Pine Church), Shenandoah County VA

⁵⁶ Old Pine Church (St. Mary Pine Church), Shenandoah County VA

⁵⁷ Kelley, Arthur Pierson. 200 Years in the Shenandoah Valley. "St.Mary Pine Church Baptisms"

**Frances Jane May was listed as a young girl living with George & Mary May in 1850 and 1860. In 1870 she is listed as a young woman still with George & Mary but also with a young George May listed. When Frances died her son George said she was the daughter of George Ettinger and Mary Lambert and the widow of George P. May. Frances was never married to a May, she was born a May. Her son George knew he was illegitimate because on his marriage license to Mary Knapp in 1885⁵⁸ he said his father was a Friedmon and his mother Frances May.

[In *Descendants of George May of Virginia*, Lantz has Daniel married to Eliza. The Daniel May that married Eliza Bateman was from the Adam May family. The six children Lantz attributed to Daniel were the children of Daniel and Eliza and most are buried with him in the cemetery at Mt. Crawford Methodist Church. Also, Jacob May was listed as a child of Andrew & Polly May. See Andrew's page for more information.]

⁵⁸Rockingham County VA Marriages, familysearch.org film# 33497, p.284.

John May

John May of Brocks Gap was born about 1784, probably in Manchester Township, York County, Pennsylvania. As a toddler, he would have moved to Shenandoah County, Virginia with his father. John married Elizabeth Tusing in Shenandoah County on 16 Dec 1803. In the 1810 census of Shenandoah County, John is listed with three boys and two girls all under the age of 10. He died sometime in 1817 because his widow is charged with the Personal Property tax in 1817⁵⁹. His widow Elizabeth May is listed in the 1820 Rockingham County census as Head of Household with a boy and a girl ages 10-15, and a boy and a girl under the ages of 10. At least four of her children appeared to have died young.

It is from daughter Catherine's marriage to John Crist that we have the confirmation that her father was John May and that he had died. An autosomal DNA match of a descendant of Catherine May Crist to a May in Ireland confirms that her father John was in the George May of Brocks Gap family. We know John and Elizabeth had Ann and Andrew because both were baptized at Rader Church in Timberville.⁶⁰ William was added as a son based on the 1880 census that has him listed as "Uncle" and living with Anna Crist Ritchie, daughter of John and Catherine (May) Crist. These children and more were confirmed with the records of Davidsburg Church in New Market which listed the John and Elizabeth family and noted that the first four children had been baptized at the Solomon Church in Forrestville.⁶¹

Children of John and Elizabeth Tusing May:

- A. Catherine Elizabeth (b or bap 23 Aug 1804-d.1874) m. John Crist. Five children.
- B. Samuel (b or bap 20 Apr 1806-)
- C. Jacob (b or bap 15 Jan 1808-)
- D. Anna Maria (abt. 1809)
- E. William/Wilhelm (1813-) m. Mary "Polly" Bull/Butt. Four children.
- F. Anna "Nancy" (b or bap 27 Mar 1814-)
- G. Andrew (25 Mar 1818)

[In *Descendants of George May of Virginia*, Lantz erroneously has John May married to Catherine Souder on page 20 and then correctly notes on page 27 that John May Jr. married Catherine Souder, but John May (Jr.) does not belong to this family. John & Elizabeth's children were listed in church records.⁶² The other children on page 20 are also incorrect. Ananias, Frances, and Harriet are the children of John and Catherine Eustler May. On page 27, John May Jr's children include a William D. May born 1858. The 1860 and 1870 censuses do NOT show a William living with John May Jr.]

⁵⁹ *Rockingham County VA Personal Property Tax 1817*. familysearch.org FHC film # 7895954

⁶⁰ <https://www.worldcat.org/title/record-book-of-the-rader-lutheran-church-timberville-virginia-1762-1889-with-interruptions-sic/oclc/23203214> , No digitized copy currently available. Can be viewed at Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, Dayton VA or at a library listed on this internet link.

⁶¹ *Davidsburg Church Baptisms 1785-1845 New Market*. Trans. by John Stewart & Klaus Wust. Shenandoah History, 1983

⁶² *Davidsburg Church Baptisms 1785-1845, New Market Virginia*. Translated by John Stewart and Klaus Wust. Shenandoah History, Edinburg VA, 1983. *Record Book of the Rader Lutheran Church, Timberville Virginia 1762-1889*.

James May

James May was born 7 Nov 1785, probably in Manchester Township, York County, Pennsylvania. George May moved in the spring of 1787 to Shenandoah County, Virginia. It is presumed that his children came at the same time, but they could have been brought later. James moved with his father to Brock's Gap in Rockingham County in 1797, and helped him farm the 131 acres. James was a frequent visitor to Michael Baker's store which was located near the intersection of Route 259 and 921. Store accounts have James buying whisky, lead, powder, a comb, a yard of silk cloth, awls, brandy, and a penknife. James traded for some items by hoeing corn and haymaking.

James married twice. He first married Catherine Tusing on 11 Dec 1807 in Shenandoah County. Catherine was the sister to Elizabeth Tusing who married James' brother John four years earlier. James and Catherine had five children. After Catherine died, James married Sarah Shaver on 15 Aug 1839 in Rockingham County. They had six children.

James was listed in the census records as a farm laborer. He was the son that was tasked with settling the estate of his father and his mother/stepmother Magdalena. James purchased several of his siblings inherited property and purchased more land in the Brocks Gap area. James died 20 Oct 1863 of "General Disability"⁶³ and was buried in the May Family cemetery in Criders, Rockingham County, Virginia. His death certificate listed his father, but his mother's name was left blank.

George May land that was inherited by his children and then sold to James May:

- 1822 Daniel May to James May, Rockingham Co Deed Book 5, p.360
- 1826 Henry Crider [Elizabeth May Crider] to James May, Book 7, p.149
- 1829 Joseph May to James May, Book 8, p.557/9
- 1834 Benjamin May to James May, Book 11, p.473
- 1843 Mary [May] Dispennett to James May, Book 16, p.497

Additional land surveys by James May:

- 1808 100 acres, Germany River, Brock Gap, next to George May line. Survey Book A, page 474
- 1829 Survey of 31 and 19 acres on Germany River, Brocks Gap. Survey Book B, page 215
- 1837 Survey of land, 37 and 15 acres on Germany River, Brocks Gap. Survey Book B, page 275

⁶³ *Rockingham County VA Death Register*. FHC film# 4037228, image 163.

Children of James May: [1st 5 by wife Catherine Tusing; last 6 by wife Sarah Shaver

- A. George (25 Sep 1811- 27 Oct 1875) m. Priscilla Lantz. At least five children.
- B. UNKNOWN DAUGHTER (1813-)
- C. Jacob (1820-1898) m1) Mary Groves; 2) Sarah Elizabeth Davis. Seven children.
- D. Ellen (1826-)
- E. Pauline (1828-)
- F. Mary Ann (1840-)
- G. Rebecca (1842-)
- H. Hannah (1845-1927) m. Samuel Washington May [descendant of Samuel May]. One son.
- I. James Elias (1846-1920) m. Hanna Crider. Five children.
- J. Mary (1856-)
- K. Enos W. (1858-)

Andrew May

Andrew May was born about the year 1789 in Shenandoah County, Virginia.⁶⁴ He was called “Andy”⁶⁵ and he was described as having a light complexion, blue eyes, dark hair, and stood at a height of five foot and 6-8 inches.⁶⁶ He was married twice. First to Mary “Polly” Sonifrank on 16 Aug 1811 in Rockingham County. Mary died 8 June 1821. Andrew then married Margaret “Peggy” Smith on 18 July 1825 in Rockingham County.⁶⁷ Peggy already had a child out-of-wedlock with Joshua Wells Custer named Joshua Wells Custer, Jr. She and Andrew had at least one child together. It is questionable if Christina was born within 9 months of Andrew’s death. Five years after Andrew died, Peggy had George Washington, but she had not re-married and the child was given the surname of May.

Andrew enlisted in the War of 1812 in April of 1814 and was discharged in July. He served in Capt. John W. Bayless’ Company of Virginia Militia. It is noted in his service record that he was substituting for Anthony Huffman.⁶⁸ On 22 March 1824, Andrew had 33 acres surveyed along the Germany River, Brocks Gap. This land met at James May’s corner. Then on 25 August 1829, Andrew had 30 acres surveyed in Brocks Gap, next to Henry Crider line and James May corner.⁶⁹ Andrew didn’t get to farm his land very long because on 30 September 1829⁷⁰, he died and was buried in the Smith Family Cemetery.

Andrew May’s children: [only 2 confirmed; one by wife Polly and one by wife Peggy].

- A. Joseph (1821-1899) m. Sarah Alice Caplinger. Four children.
- B. Mary Ann “Polly” (1828-1913) m. Oliver Dove. Eleven children.
- C. *Christina (1831-) m. James J. Cook. Three children.*
- D. *George Washington May (1834-1898) m 1) Anna Margaret Ritchie; 2) Amanda Layman. Six children.*

[In *Descendants of George May of Virginia* on page 20, Andrew is listed as having died around 1839. This is disproved by the pension file in the National Archives. Lantz also attributes five children to Andrew. The 1820 census shows that Andrew May and his wife had no children, so Jacob, born 6 Mar 1814, could not have been their child. Jacob was actually a child of Daniel as proved by church records. Polly died at the birth of their son Joseph in 1821. In addition to George Washington May, Lantz has a George May listed as a son of Andrew, but with no dates and no further information.]

⁶⁴ 1880 Census for Jacob May, Rockingham County, VA; 1811 Personal Property Tax Rockingham County VA

⁶⁵ Kyger, M. Ellsworth, transcriber. *Michael Baker Store Account Book. Brocks Gap, Rockingham County Virginia 1804-1825*. Typed and Indexed by Patricia T. Ritchie. Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, Dayton VA 1993

⁶⁶ War of 1812 Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files, www.fold3.com

⁶⁷ Familysearch.org film # 33497, page 133

⁶⁸ War of 1812 Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files, www.fold3.com

⁶⁹ Rockingham County Survey Book B, page 213.

⁷⁰ War of 1812 Pension and Bounty Land Warrant Application Files, fold3.com, widow’s pension file for Andrew May

Jacob May

Jacob May was born 19 Sep 1790⁷¹ in Shenandoah County, Virginia. He enlisted in the War of 1812 in Shenandoah County, serving from Aug 1814 to Dec 1814. He was a Private in Capt. Reuben Moore's Company of the Virginia Militia. After the war, he was living in Rockingham County and there he married Sally Orebaugh on 2 July 1818. Jacob was working on the Bowman farm in 1819. He was called to witness a new will of John Bowman, Senior. This led to Jacob being called to court to testify when the will was contested. The Chancery Suit also gives us information about George May from Jacob Nehs, who was called to give a deposition confirming Jacob May's character. It is from this testimony that we learn that George May had moved from Pennsylvania to Shenandoah Co VA and lived there until moving to Brocks Gap.⁷²

By 1833 Jacob and his family had moved to Ohio where he farmed⁷³. Jacob was literate and could sign his name as evidenced by his War of 1812 pension application.⁷⁴ Even though he moved away, Jacob obviously talked about Virginia to his children. His tombstone in Terre Haute, Ohio states that he was born in Shenandoah County, VA. Jacob and Sally lived in Mad River, near Terre Haute, Champaign County, Ohio. After 1860, Jacob moved to Patterson, Hardin County, Ohio. When he died on 7 August 1875, he was taken back to Terre Haute for burial in the cemetery.

Jacob and Sally had eight children, most born in Virginia before moving to Ohio.

- A. Isaac (1820-1886) m. Matilda Sifers. Four children.
- B. Noah W. (1822-1886) m. Margaret Ann Weaver. Five children.
- C. Jacob (1824-)
- D. Mary (1826-1870) m. Shem Neese (a gr-grandson of Jacob Nehs of Shenandoah Co). Six children
- E. William (1827-1869)
- F. Lydia Ann (1830-1924) m. John Idle. Three children, only one survived to adulthood.
- G. Benjamin (1832-1894) m. Margaret Zerkle. Seven children.
- H. David Lemuel (1839-1918) m. Sarah Ann Baughman. Six children.



⁷¹ Fold3.com, War of 1812 pension app for Jacob May, page 21. His children put a different date on his tombstone.

⁷² Chancery Case 1820-018 Augusta County Bowman vs Bowman

https://www.lva.virginia.gov/chancery/case_detail.asp?CFN=015-1820-018 concerning the will of John Bowman Sr. of Rockingham Co VA. Jacob May is called to testify because he was one of two witnesses for the will of John Bowman. Jacob was living on the John Bowman Jr. farm and was asked by him to witness his father's will. In the 156-page chancery case, Jacob May is mentioned on pages 12, 15, 17, 18, 19, 26, 27 30-32, 34-36, 39. On page 19, Jacob Niece gives testimony on Jacob May's character and how he knows him. Jacob May signed his name so he was literate. Jacob May's age is given as 27 on court date January 22, 1817. Jacob May's age was also given as 27 on 22 Nov 1819. Jacob Niece's testimony (age 79) was given on court date June 1817.

⁷³ 1850 & 1860 U.S. Census, Champaign OH

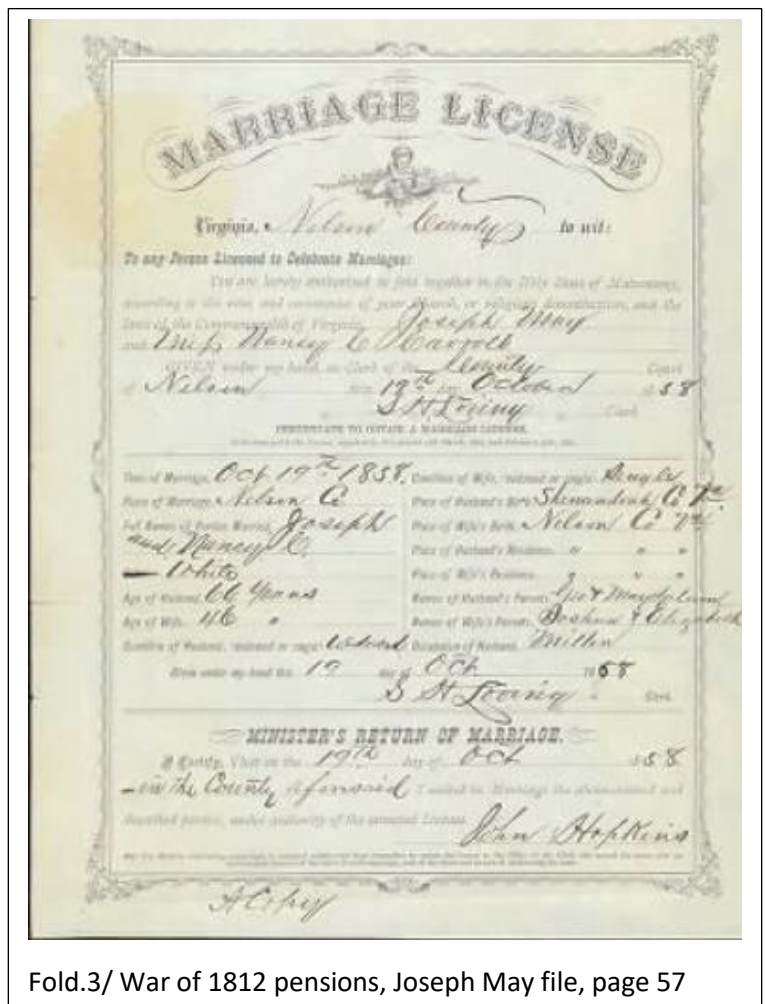
⁷⁴ <https://www.fold3.com/image/320606140>

Joseph May

Joseph May was born 5 Nov 1792 in Shenandoah County Virginia. This was stated on his third marriage license. Joseph was drafted in Shenandoah County in the War of 1812. He served as a Private in Capt. Sloan's company of the Virginia Militia. He entered July 1814 and was discharged Feb 1815.⁷⁵ Joseph married first Mary Lutz on 13 Oct 1817 in Shenandoah County. They had five children. Joseph married second 2 Dec 1826 to Sarah Sechrist. They had eight children. The family moved to Augusta, Botetourt, Rockbridge, and then around 1843 to Nelson County which is where Sarah died abt. 1854⁷⁶. Joseph then married Nancy Carroll on 19 Nov 1858 in Nelson County, VA⁷⁷. This late-in-life marriage occurred at a time when marriage licenses were more informative. We learn Joseph's birth date and place and that his father and mother were George and Magdalena. In Nelson County, Joseph was a farmer and miller.

Children of Joseph May (1st 5 by wife Mary Lutz; last 8 by wife Sarah Sechrist)

- A. William O. (1818-)
- B. Leanna (1820-) m. Josiah Calhoun
- C. Joseph, Jr. (1821-)
- D. Suzanna (1822-1914) Had a son by a Mr. Houston. Son: William David May.
- E. Zephaniah (1824-1868) m. Martha J. Hill. Seven children.
- F. Junes Melchie (1827-1887) m. Rachel Ellis. Four children.
- G. Mary V. (1820-1857)
- H. Wyatt Josiah (1833-1931) m. Elizabeth Martin. Fifteen children.
- I. Elizabeth Jane (1836-) m. Robert Walker Olds. Six children.
- J. James Marion (1840-) m. Lucy Monroe. One child.
- K. George Preston (1843-1914) m. 1) H. A. Roberts 2) J. W. Carroll. Five children.
- L. Mary Jane (1845-) m. Calhoun
- M. Robert Henry (1846-) m. Sarah Elizabeth Drinkard. Three children.



Fold.3/ War of 1812 pensions, Joseph May file, page 57

⁷⁵ <https://www.fold3.com/image/320606562?terms=war.joseph.may.1812.of>

⁷⁶ Birth records of Josiah, Elizabeth, James, and George indicate a variety of residences.

⁷⁷ Page 57 War of 1812 Pension Files - Fold3

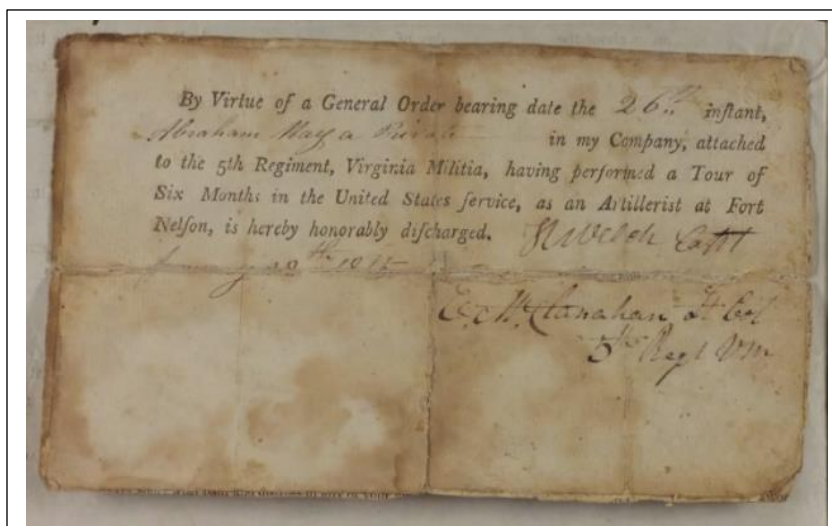
Abraham May

Abraham May was born between April and Dec of 1794, most likely in Shenandoah County. He was drafted in the War of 1812 in June of 1814 in Rockingham County. He served in Capt. Welch's Company of the Virginia Militia.⁷⁸ He had moved to New Hope, Augusta County by 1820 where he married Sarah "Sally" Long on 20 Jan 1820. He and Sally had at least seven children. Abraham was listed in the census records as a carpenter. Because Abraham moved out of Rockingham and his parents died before he married and had children, he appears not to have maintained contact with family or talked about them. When he died 28 Aug 1878 in New Hope, Augusta County, his (unidentified) son gave information for the death register and the son said Abraham's parents were unknown.⁷⁹

Children of Abraham and Sally May:

- A. Elizabeth (1821-1891) Unmarried
- B. John L. (1824-) m. Margaret America Chittum. John was committed to Western State Hospital where he died. One daughter.
- C. William H. (1828-) m. Nancy Jane Lovegrove. Six children.
- D. George W. (1830-1920) m. Ann Elizabeth Propst. Eleven children.
- E. Catherine Nancy (1833-1905) m. James H. Aldhizer. Three children.
- F. Mary J. (1835-1860) m. James W. Bull. Two children. Mary died in childbirth.
- G. Margaret (1837-1927) m. Christopher Columbus Hoover. Seven children.

[Descendants of George May of Virginia, page 20, did not have Sarah's maiden name, the marriage record, or any information on any children other than an Isaac, of which no information has been found and whose birth year of 1866 does not seem possible for Abraham.]



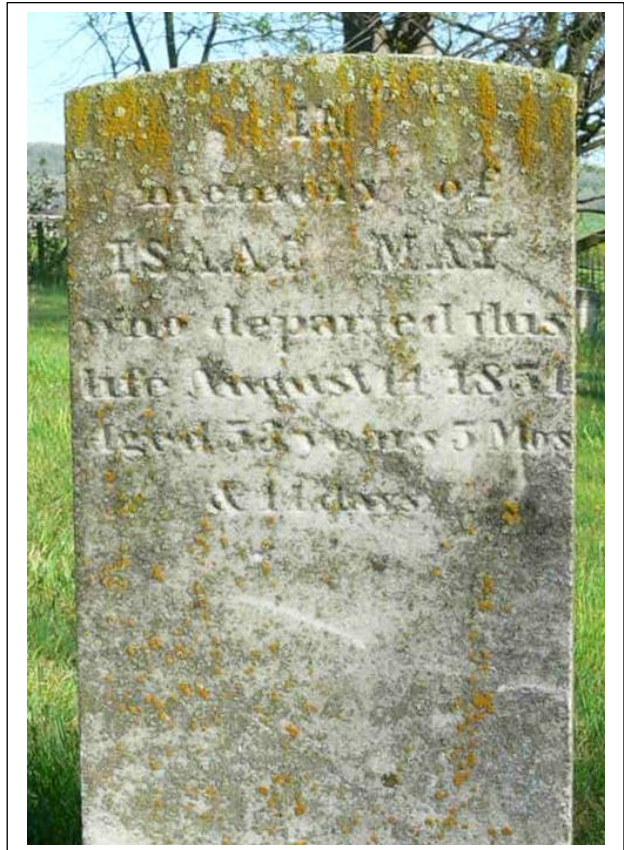
"Discharge paper of Abraham May," National Archives. War of 1812, Abraham May pension application file.
<https://www.fold3.com/image/320610495>

⁷⁸ Fold3.com, War of 1812, Abraham May pension file

⁷⁹ Augusta County VA Death Register. Familysearch.org, FHC film #7578827, image 569 for Abraham May

Isaac May

Isaac May was born 1 March 1798, in Rockingham County. He married about 1820 to Mary Elizabeth “Polly” Miller. In February of 1847 Isaac went with Siram P. Henkel to Page County to see how mills there were framed. In March, Isaac and his son Strother helped cut timber for Mr. Henkel’s mill. In August, Isaac and his sons Strother and Israel started framing for the mill. Isaac continued to help with construction through January of 1848.⁸⁰ In the 1850 census for Rockingham County he is listed as a farmer. Isaac died 14 Aug 1851 and is buried in Rader Church cemetery, Timberville. Because Isaac died without a will and his estate ended up in court, we have names for his eight children.⁸¹



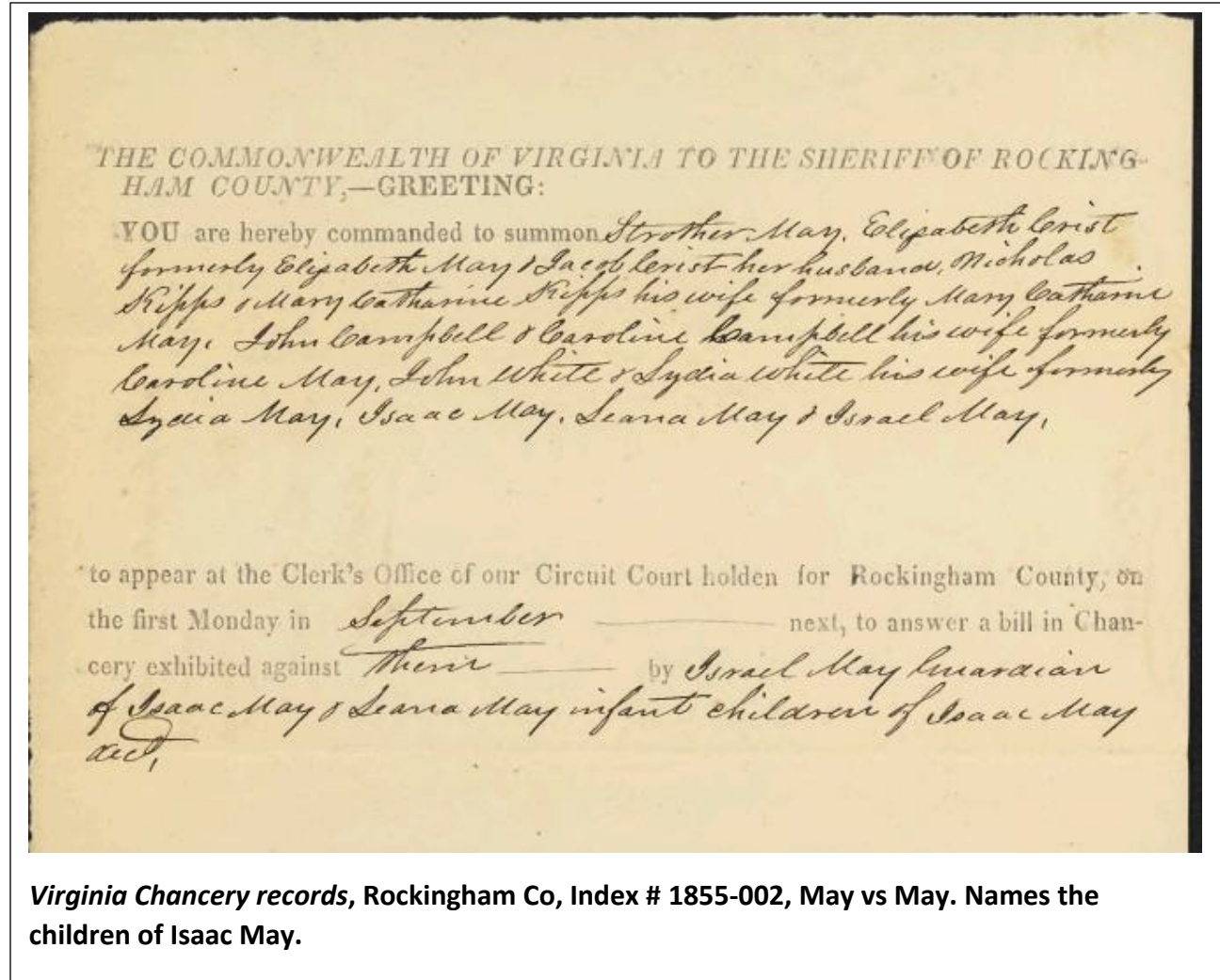
Children of Isaac and Polly May:

- A. Strother (1821-1898) Strother May has been placed in assorted families but the court case confirms that he was a son of Isaac and Polly. Married Mary Catherine Shenk. Eleven children.
- B. Elizabeth (1824-) m. 1) Jacob Crist, 2) Albert Flemming. Twelve children.
- C. Mary Catherine (1825-1878) m. Nicholas Kipps. Nine children.
- D. Israel (1826-1860) m. Rebecca Coffmann. Two girls.
- E. Caroline (1828-1860) m. John Campbell. Six children.
- F. Lydia (1830-1907) m. John White. Nine children
- G. Isaac M. (1832-1862) m. Samantha Kendall. Two sons (one died without issue; other had 1 child that died without issue)
- H. Leannah (1838-1900) m. Samuel Weatherholtz. Ten children.

⁸⁰ Henkel, Siram P. *A General Memorandum Book*. In “Plain Mill” by Mildred Renalds Wittig, from *Mills of Rockingham County, Virginia, Volume II*. Compiled by Janet and Earl Downs, typed by Pat Turner Ritchie. Harrisonburg VA: Harrisonburg Rockingham Historical Society, 1998.

⁸¹ https://www.lva.virginia.gov/chancery/full_case_detail.asp?CFN=165-1855-002#img

[Descendants of George May of Virginia, page 20-21 has children as Israel, Rebecca, Isaac, Leannah, and James, with no explanation of why James was included, nor any other information on him. Strother (page 22 and 34) is erroneously placed as son of George III.]



Virginia Chancery records, Rockingham Co, Index # 1855-002, May vs May. Names the children of Isaac May.

Samuel May

Samuel May was born 2 Feb 1799 in Rockingham County. He married 28 Dec 1815 to Eve Harless. Samuel was only 16 years old. Eve was older by seven years. Maybe his age is why they went to Alleghany County, Maryland to be married? By 1820 they were living in Hardy County, (West) Virginia. Over the next 24 years, they had at least 11 children. In the 1850 census, Samuel was listed as a farmer.⁸²

Eve died in 1852. Samuel died four years later on 15 Feb 1856. His passing was recorded in the newspaper – “On the 15th inst., near Crab Run, Hardy County, Mr. Samuel MAY, aged 57 years and 18 days. The dec’d was a member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, and a kind and obliging neighbor. His loss is deeply felt by his surviving children and the community.”⁸³ Samuel did not leave a will so his estate was in probate 6 Dec 1858 and required an inventory and selling of all items. It is interesting to note that a Family Bible was listed on the inventory and that it was purchased by Jacob May.⁸⁴

Children of Samuel and Eve May:

- A. Isaac Harless (1816-1869) m. 1)Christina Piles; 2)Sarah Heavener. Four children from each.
- B. Jacob W. (1819-1895) m. Sally Snyder. Seven children.
- C. Elizabeth (1820-1892) m. William Halterman. Two children.
- D. Sarah “Sally” (1822-1885) m. Isaac Dove. Two children.
- E. Mahaliah (1823-1910) m. Michael Himes. Two children who both died young.
- F. Joseph (1825-)
- G. Catherine (1827-1885) m. Oliver See
- H. Marian (1828-)
- I. Susannah (1830-1899) m. George See
- J. James M. (1833-1900) m. Catherine Moyers. Eight children.
- K. Samuel William (1839-1845)

*Bill of appraisement of the personal property
of Samuel May Dec^d March 13: 1856.*

	\$	etc.	
1/2 quantity of Long Saws	500	1 set milk pail & soap fat:	1 00
" Windmill & wheel Van	500	Bacon	18 50
1 Butting Box	1 25	Wool 1500 lbs	15 00
1 Plow for S. Horses	2 00	1 wooden clock	2 50
2 Hay forks & a shovel	75	1 Bureau	10 00
3 Ph. Horse Gears	6 00	1 Family Bible	1 00
1 Barrel of Bran	50	1 set of chairs	1 50

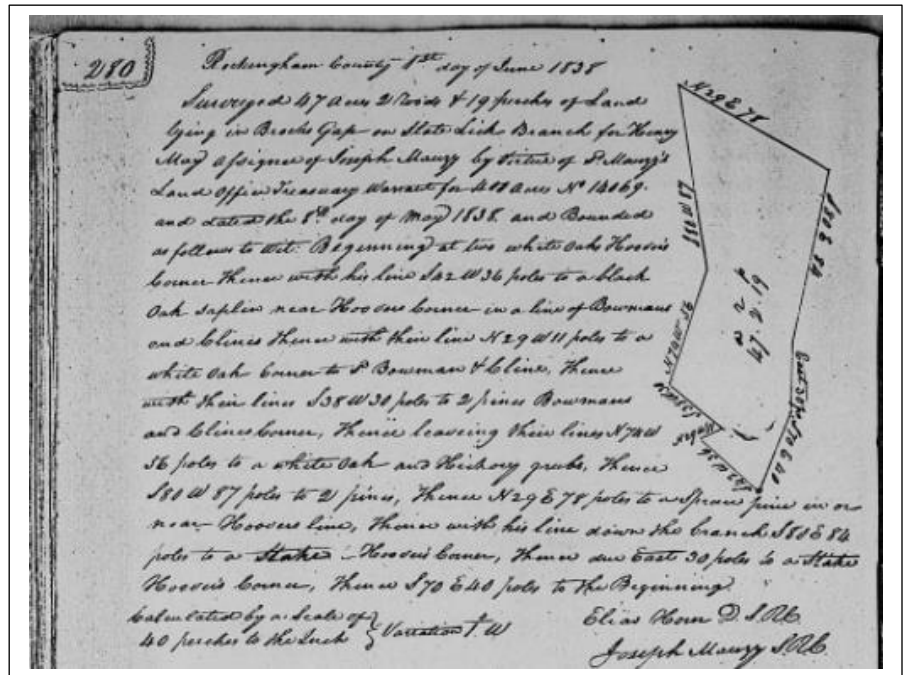
⁸² 1850 US Census Hardy County VA, district 23.

⁸³ Boyd-Bragg, Dorothy A. *Death Notices from Extant Issues of the Rockingham Register*. Harrisonburg-Rockingham Historical Society, Dayton VA, 2010, page 179. *Rockingham Register* for 22 Feb 1856 (Friday) p.2, column 8.

⁸⁴ Hardy County WV Wills vol. 10, pp.88-93, 264

Henry May

Henry May was born 17 Dec 1799 in Rockingham County⁸⁵. Henry married 25 March 1828 to Elizabeth Greenwood.⁸⁶ On 1 June 1838, Henry had 47 acres surveyed in Brocks Gap on the Slate Lick Branch.⁸⁷ In the 1880 census, the question was asked about where your father and mother were born. Henry states that his father was born in Ireland and his mother in Pennsylvania. Y-DNA tests confirm that George May's descendants match DNA of others from Ireland. In the census of 1860 and 1870 Henry's occupation is listed as farm laborer. Henry died 24 July 1884 in Rockingham County, Virginia of "old age."⁸⁸ The information for the death register was given by his son Benjamin, who stated that Henry's parents' names were unknown.



Children of Henry and Elizabeth May:

- A. Rachel (1828-) m. Daniel Fridley. Eight children.
- B. Mahala Jane (1832-1900) unmarried for birth of 1st four children (son John. H. said father was Isaac Fridley); m. Henry VanPelt, six more children.
- C. Elizabeth (1834-) m1) George Hume; m2) Jacob Donovan. Eight children (7 by 1st)
- D. Anthony (1837-)
- E. Benjamin Franklin (1843-1923) m. Rhoda A.
- F. James Henry (1845-1912) m. Sarah Bridges.

[*Descendants of George May of Virginia*, p.18, has this Henry mixed up with Henry May (m.to Caty Sykes/Sites), the son of Thomas and Catherine Emerich May. Henry, son of Thomas, moved to Vigo Co IN after 1830. On p.22 the listed Henry Jr. is George May's son Henry. Did not find any information yet showing a daughter named Hannah. The daughter Julia Ann is actually Rachel's daughter.]

⁸⁵ Rockingham County VA Death Register, Central District, 1884 for Henry May

⁸⁶ Virginia Select Marriages 1785-1940, Familysearch.org film #33497, p.143.

⁸⁷ Rockingham County Survey Records 1814-1945, Book B, page 280.

⁸⁸ Rockingham County VA Death Register, Central District, 1884.

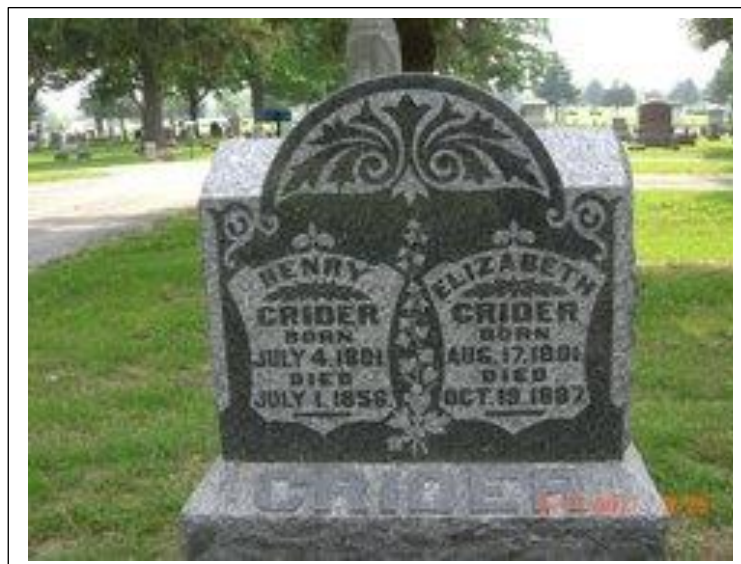
Elizabeth May

Elizabeth May was born 17 Aug 1801 in Rockingham County, VA. She married Henry Crider 18 Mar 1818 in Rockingham. In January of 1826, Elizabeth and Henry sold her share of her father's land to her brother James May.⁸⁹

Elizabeth and Henry moved between 1830 and 1834 to Clark County, Ohio. By 1840 they are living in Menard County, Illinois. Elizabeth and Henry apparently had no children of their own as shown by the census records of 1830 and 1840. But, in 1850 they were raising two girls, Margaret and Nancy. Elizabeth was widowed by 1860. She continued to live with Nancy and her family and was referred to as "grandmother." Elizabeth May Crider died 19 Oct 1887 and is buried next to Henry in the Rose Hill Cemetery, Menard County, Illinois.⁹⁰

672	Henry Crider	54	M
	Elizabeth	49	F
	Margaret	13	"
	Nancy	11	"

Menard County, IL, 1850 Census



⁸⁹ Rockingham County VA Burnt Deed Book 7, page 149. None of the record survives.

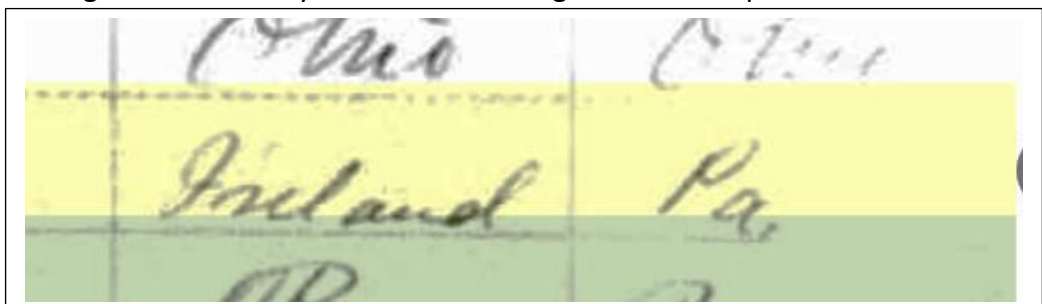
⁹⁰ <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/69922853/elizabeth-crider>

Benjamin May

Benjamin was the last born, 4 May 1806.⁹¹ Whether there were other infants between him and Elizabeth that did not survive is not known. Benjamin's parents died when he was still a minor. It was common practice in early America to "bind out" children to learn a trade. Orphans often show up in court records when they got bound out to a family to learn a trade in exchange for food and shelter. In 1817 in Shenandoah County court records there is the following - "Benjamin May orphan of George May, bound to Christopher Heckle to learn the business of farming. He is 11 years old May 4 last." Benjamin was eligible to receive his inheritance in 1827. He sold his portion of his father's property in 1834 to his brother James.⁹² At the time, Benjamin was living in Champaign County, Ohio. His brother-in-law Henry Crider of Clark County OH acted as his agent and attorney.

Benjamin married Elizabeth Tizer on 6 Sep 1832 in Clark County, Ohio. In the 1850 and 1860 census, he was farming and living in Greene County. He and Elizabeth had seven children. Benjamin was still alive in 1880⁹³ where the census asks for his father and mother's birthplace. Benjamin confirms George's birth country as Ireland and Magdalena's birthplace as

Pennsylvania. In the 1880 census, Benjamin was listed as a widower and a servant/farm laborer on the Joshua Rust farm.



1880 census for Clark Co OH; columns where Benjamin May identifies where his father and mother were born.

Children of Benjamin and Elizabeth Tizer May:

- A. Eliza (1833-)
- B. Susannah (1836-)
- C. Henry (1840-)
- D. Sarah (1841-1927) m. James Ladley Husted. Nine children.
- E. Margaret (1846-) m. John William Collier. Six children.
- F. Rebecca (1850-1935)
- G. John (1852-)

[There was no information on Benjamin or family in *Descendants of George May of Virginia*.]

⁹¹ *Shenandoah County Virginia Minute Book 1816-1822*, 4 Nov 1817. Transcription available at http://www.vagenweb.org/shenandoah/bly_1816_1821.html

⁹² *Rockingham County VA Burnt Deed Book 10*, pp473-474. 22 Sep 1834. Benjamin May to James May.

⁹³ 1880 U.S. Census, Pike, Clark Co OH.

May Family Y-DNA

DNA testing has had a huge impact on untangling family trees that have been tied together by assumptions. George May was friends with German families, married a girl with probable German ancestry, and had the same name as one or more German “George May’s” living during the same time period in Pennsylvania and Virginia. Historian Dr. John Wayland estimated that 70% of the residents of Rockingham in the early twentieth century had German names.⁹⁴ So, it is understandable that early family researchers believed George May of Brocks Gap to be German. But, German ancestry has been discredited by DNA testing. The Y-DNA tests of descendants of four different nineteenth century May families prove that George May was not related to the Shenandoah Valley settlers from Germany.

The May Family Y-DNA Surname project at FamilyTreeDNA⁹⁵ has helped group May men into distinct Haplogroups (ancient families). This company is the only one that further breaks down the results and identifies Short Tandem Repeats (STR - a repeating pattern of nucleotides) at specific locations on the Y-Chromosome strand. If two men of the same last name have matching STR numbers at 34 of 37 locations on the Y-DNA strand, then they probably share a common ancestor within the last 500 years.

The descendants of George May of Brocks Gap are in the Haplogroup R-M269, which is a common ancient family for western Europeans. Further testing has narrowed the Haplogroup to R-L21 and deep testing has established the subclade Haplogroup as R-BY23395. Sorting by Haplogroup and then looking at the STR numbers, a specific group of nine men can be confident that they all descend from a common ancestor in Ireland from 500+- years ago.⁹⁶

Putting the descendants of George May on a chart allows us to determine his Y-DNA Chromosome STR pattern. The Y- DNA will be passed down unchanged from father to son. Mutations (changes) occur infrequently, but once a mutation has occurred in the STR pattern, that change is passed down to the next generation.

George May had 12 sons. Descendants from six have been tested. All closely match with only a few mutations having occurred somewhere within the last 200 years.

⁹⁴ Wayland, John W. *A History of Rockingham County, Virginia*. Harrisonburg VA: C. J. Carrier Co, 1972, p.236. Available online at www.familysearch.org

⁹⁵ The results have not been sorted, but you can see the participants (at least those that have set their privacy controls to allow viewing by the public. <https://www.familytreedna.com/public/May/default.aspx?section=ycolored> Also, more information at <http://www.richmark.com/q/maytree/May-Reconstruction.html>

⁹⁶ For readers with a scientific background, you can see a more in-depth report on the R-BY23395 test results for a May participant at <https://www.ytree.net/SNPinfoForPerson.php?personID=5994>

From George May's son	Participant	Results for first 37 markers on Y-Chromosome
George Jr. (?)	C. William May Jr. (kit 929739)	NO mutations from George May to William. Sets a baseline comparison.
James	Keith May (kit 3227)	Mutation on marker 34
Samuel to James to Henry B.	Zintis May (kit 1596)	Mutation on marker 6, 34
Samuel to James to Robert Lee	Jeff May (kit 188375)	Mutation on marker 30
Daniel	Dwight May (kit 547098)	Mutation on marker 34
Joseph	Jonathan May (kit 925095)	NO mutations from George May to Jonathan. Sets a baseline comparison.
Abraham	Charles May (kit 275503)	Mutation on marker 29

DNA Connection to Ireland

DNA matches outside of George May's descendants are exciting and have led to the confirmation of roots in Ireland.

Farthest back ancestor	Participant	Results for first 37 markers on Y-Chromosome
John May, b.1753 Ireland, died Crawford Co PA	David Keith May (kit 456237)	Same as baseline George May descendants except for a mutation on marker 36
William May, b.1768 Belfast, County Down, Ireland	Richard Mansel May (Kit 30223, deceased)	Same as baseline George May descendants except a mutation on marker 36
Thomas May, b.1810 Antrim or Derry, Ireland	Peter William May (kit 172462)	Same as baseline George May descendants except for mutations on markers 12, 32, 36

With all three of the May men (that are NOT descended from George May of Brocks Gap) having the mutation on marker 36, it is possible when more diverse participants are included, it will be determined that George May had the mutation on marker 36 (which got passed to all his descendants).

David Keith May's family tree

John May was born about 1753 in Ireland. He reportedly immigrated in his teens to America. He married Nancy Work about the time the American Revolution started. According to his obituary, John was one of the first to take up arms and join the cause for liberty. John and his family were thought to have settled in York County, Pennsylvania for about 30 years. A John May was enumerated in 1790 in Warrington Township, York County, and 1800 in Monaghan Township, York County. About 1804 John May and his family made their way to western Pennsylvania to Fairfield Township in Crawford County, PA. John May died 2 Jan 1826 and was buried in Conneaut Cemetery. His children were: Hugh (1776), William, Mary, Elizabeth, John, Ann, Sarah, George, Isabella, and Thomas (1801). They also had an infant named George that was born and died in 1784. It was apparently an important name since it was used again for the son born in 1797.⁹⁷

From Immigrant John May to DNA Participant David Keith May:
John May (b.abt.1753 Ireland-d.1826 Crawford Co PA). m. Nancy Work. Eleven children.
William May (23 Nov 1778 PA- 23 Oct 1854 Venango Co PA) m.Sarah Burchfield. Six children.
James Reed May (9 May1812 CrawfordCoPA-18 Sep1873 in UnionCoOH) m.Mary Moore. 6 ch
George W. May (9 May 1848 PA)m. Hannah Ann Morey. Ten children.
Floyd Fay May (8 May 1889 Union Co OH-8 Jun 1964 Ottawa OH) m.Alma Belle Three ch
Orville Fay May (10Sep1918 in Price CO, WI-7Nov2013 Lee CO, FL)m.Viola May Seitz. 4 ch.
David Keith May - Y-DNA 1 mutation from the descendants of George May of Brocks Gap

This DNA match is very intriguing. John May emigrated from Ireland around the same time as George May of Brocks Gap. Both John and George were living in Pennsylvania from about 1775 to 1786, and specifically both lived in York County, Pennsylvania, overlapping from 1783-1786. But, they were not living in the same township in York County, and no records have been found tying them together. It is not known if they were brothers, cousins, or distant cousins.

Richard Mansel May's family tree

William May was born about 1768 in Belfast, County Down, Ireland. He married Elizabeth Blackmore 30 Oct 1797 in Taunton, Somerset, England. William and Elizabeth came to America with their five children on 21 Aug 1820 on the *Orion*, landing in New York. William was listed on the passenger log as being born in Ireland. In 1850 William was living in Beaver County, PA with his son John. Both were listed as having been born in Ireland. William's five children were: John, Mary, Richard, Robert, and Sarah.

John May was born in 1805 in Ireland, according to the 1850 census of Beaver County, PA. John May was a farmer with a property value in 1850 of \$13,000. He married Ellen Ferguson and had at least eight children: William, Ann Eliza, John H.A., Susan, Columbus, James W., Clarence, and Ida, born 1855. Cannot find the family in the 1860 census. [There are two John May's in Beaver Co PA, both born about the same time – don't get confused!]

⁹⁷ This information was obtained from a McCarter family webpage (http://www.mccarterfamily.com/tharppage/stories/johnandnancy_may.htm). The sourced information is credited to have mostly come from Randy May of Carlsbad, CA. Information on John May also from an 1885 history of Crawford County (<https://www.yoset.org/history/1885/Fairfield.html>)

Clarence May was born 24 August 1852 in Pennsylvania. (1900 census, findagrave.com). His death certificate identifies his father as John May and his mother as Ellen Ferguson. The information supplied for the death certificate was given by Columbus May. Clarence first appears in the Beaver Falls, PA 1870 census as a wagon maker apprentice living with Samuel Shandle, wagon maker. Clarence married Juliett and by 1880 had three children: Henry A., age 4, Mary E, age 2, and an infant daughter born Jan 1880. When he died 20 Aug 1913, a newspaper obituary said he was survived by one son Harry of Pittsburg.

Harry (AKA Henry) Albert May was born 1876 in Rochester Co PA (1920 census, son Frank's birth certificate). He married Elizabeth Bellingham. Harry and Elizabeth had five known children: Harry M., Edith F., Frank W., Clyde C., and Ruth E. May. The WWI draft registration card identified his exact birth date as 7 Oct 1876 and gave the middle name of Albert. By 1920 Pittsburgh PA census, Elizabeth had died and Harry soon followed on 24 Nov 1921 of acute alcoholism. His father was listed as Clarence on the death certificate.

Harry Mansel May was born in Pittsburg on 6 Jan 1904. He married Maxine Williams on 14 June 1930 in Cuyahoga County Ohio. He was already an engineer. His parents were identified on the marriage certificate as Henry A. May and Elizabeth Bellingham. In the 1940 census for Cleveland OH, Harry and Maxine had two sons: Richard age 3 and Robert age 1. Harry Mansel May died 10 Oct 1996 and is buried in Knox, TN.

Richard Mansel May was born 13 Dec 1936 in Ohio. He married Judith Ann Hoefle 22 Sep 1956 in San Mateo, CA. They had five children. He died 6 Oct 2008 in Contra Costa, CA. Richard was a Y-DNA participant in the FamilyTreeDNA May family surname project. His Y-DNA matches baseline descendants of George May of Brocks Gap with only one mutation for the first 37 marker locations.

Peter William May's Family Tree

Thomas May was born about 1810 maybe Antrim or Londonderry, Ireland. He married Anna Belle. No other information is known. One son was Robert.

Robert May was possibly born in Antrim County Ireland. He married 4 Feb 1867 to Martha Williams at Ahaghill, Ballymena, County Antrim. They had two sons: Robert & Thomas James. Martha died in 1872. Robert married second to Ellen Sarah Starrett on 1 Oct 1873 in Churchtown, Magherafelt, Tamlaght O'Crilly, County Derry. They had 9 children. They were living 1901 and 1911 in Garvagh, Londonderry. Robert died 8 May 1924 in Bellury, Desertaghill, County Derry, Ireland

John "Paddy" May was born 25 Oct 1884 in Edenbane, Desertaghill, County Derry, Ireland. He sailed out of Southampton England on 11 Apr 1903 to Southern Rhodesia. He married Marie Louise Germaine Lemestre on 5 Jan 1914 in Gatooma. Four children. John died 1 Aug 1954 in Makwiro, Southern Rhodesia.

Patrick Maxwell May was born 3 Nov 1916 in Gatooma, S. Rhodesia. He married Irene Gertrude Young and had seven children. He died Apr 2004 in Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa.

Peter William May is a Y-DNA participant in May Family Y-DNA Project. He has moved from Africa back to his ancestral home of Ireland. He has three mutation differences from the two George May of Brocks Gap descendants that form the baseline comparison for the family.⁹⁸

AUTOSOMAL DNA

Autosomal DNA is the first 22 pairs of chromosomes in humans. Each child inherits half of their autosomal (atDNA) chromosomes from each parent. Their siblings will also get 50% from each parent, but it is a random mixing and matching and selection of chromosomes for each child, so siblings can have very different genes. By the time you get back to your great-great-great-grandparent, you may only have about 3% of their atDNA. This is why it is so important for many people to test, even siblings.

Using autosomal DNA, an astounding connection was made when Peter May who currently lives in Ireland (and has no ancestors living in the USA) had a atDNA match to a descendant of George May's granddaughter Catherine May Crist, thereby confirming her connection to the correct May family in Rockingham and proving George May's Irish roots.

All descendants of George May are encouraged to test, but especially those whose ancestors quickly moved out of Rockingham County and didn't have a chance to marry distant cousins or marry members of the other May families living in Rockingham County. Some examples of connections to be aware of when using atDNA:

- George May's granddaughter Sarah married Michael May, a son of Thomas and Catherine Emerich May, who were German. So Susan May and Michael May's descendants could have DNA matches to both Irish May's and German May's.
- Hannah May (dau. of James, gr.dau.of George) m. Samuel Washington May (son of Isaac, gr.son of Samuel, g-gr son of George). A descendant could have a higher percentage of matching DNA with distant May relatives.
- Christina Alice May m. Levi Armstrong May. Christina's ancestors were Silas, George & Priscilla, James, George. Levi's ancestors were Jacob & S.E. Davis, James, George. A descendant could have a higher percentage of matching DNA with distant May relatives.

MORE DNA PARTICIPANTS NEEDED

The more people who submit DNA samples, the better chance researcher have to analyze and draw conclusions. Men with the surname of May are encouraged to participate, by signing up through the May Family DNA project at www.familytreedna.com. Please order a Y-DNA 37-marker test or more. All May descendants, men and women, are encouraged to participate in the autosomal DNA program at Ancestry www.ancestry.com Please contact Keith May for more information or to inform him you are participating.

⁹⁸ Information from Jenny McLeod-May family tree on Ancestry and email conversations from Peter and Jenny May to Keith May

Separating the George May men of Pennsylvania

There are many, many George May men that appear in 18th century Pennsylvania records. So how do we separate and find the George May that moved to Rockingham County, Virginia? If there is no direct evidence, than logic and the process of elimination should be used. Clues are often obtained from identifying family and friends in one location and finding them nearby in a previous location.

Since no direct evidence has been found to prove that the George May of Strasburg Township, Lancaster County Pennsylvania and Manchester Township, York County, Pennsylvania is the same man to move to Shenandoah County and Rockingham County, Virginia, presented here is the process used to come to this conclusion.

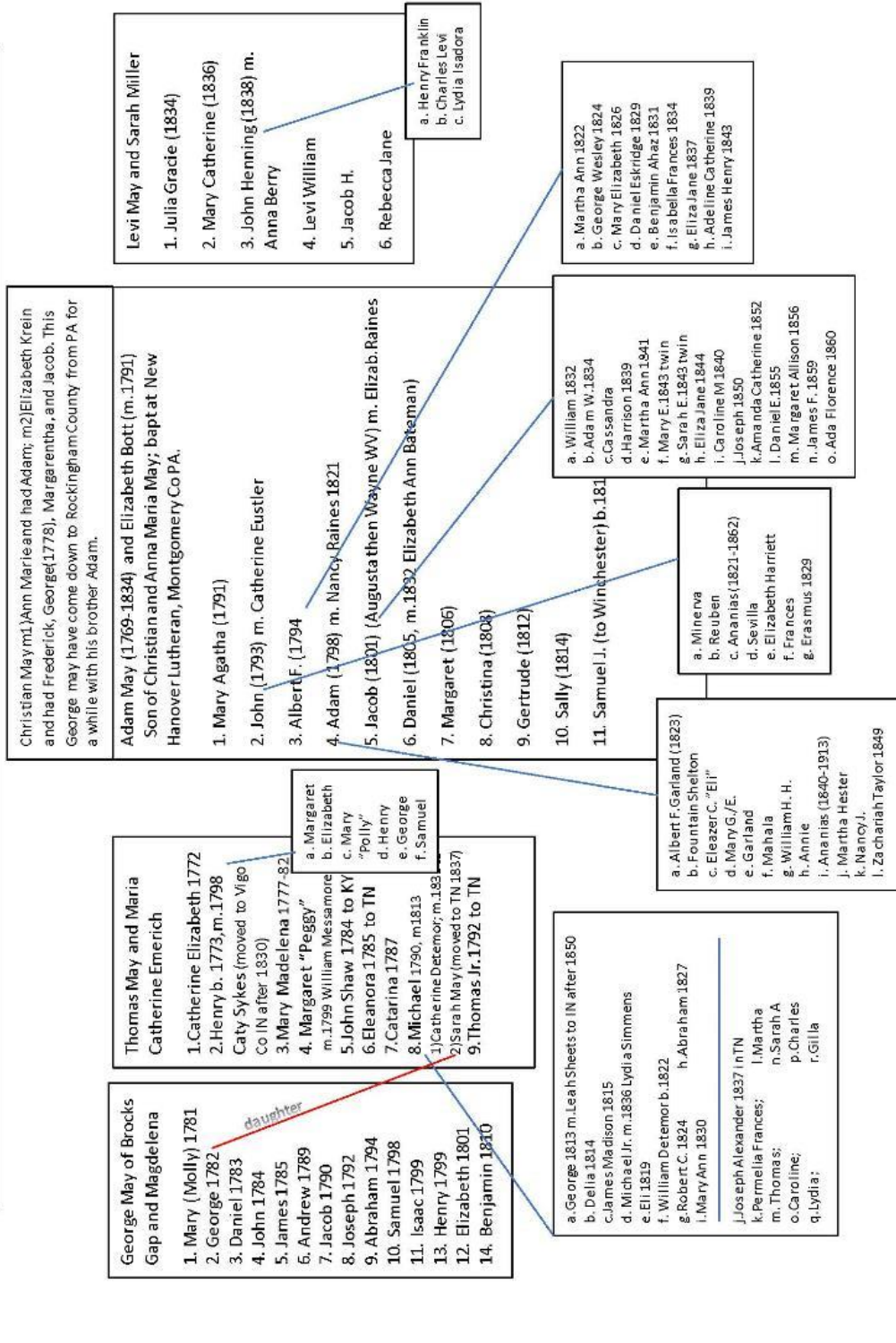
Eliminating other George May's

1. One George May that is commonly confused with the George May of Brocks Gap is the George May that lived in Loudoun County, Virginia during the American Revolution. He applied for a Revolutionary War pension in 1818 and he stated that he was born in Germany about 1742, moved with his family to America when he was about 11 years old (1753), went with his family to Loudoun County VA, and entered the American Revolution in that county. He moved to Jefferson TN about 1800, was married to Rachel, and had 7 children. He is documented in the May family of Leonhard May of the Nekar Valley in Germany and other members of his family were in Loudoun at the same time.
2. Another George May commonly and mistakenly fused with George May of Brocks Gap is the George May born 1 Oct 1758 and baptized in the First Reformed Congregation of Lancaster Co PA. His parents were Leonard May and Anna Christine Schuch who emigrated from Germany and applied for naturalization in Lancaster Co PA. The Brocks Gap George May is proved to be born in Ireland, not America-born to German parents. There are apparently several Leonard May families and they have family trees showing they moved to either Berks or Bedford County, Pennsylvania or Berkley County, Virginia.
3. George May, son of Killian and Anna Catherine, was born about 1757 in Pennsylvania. He can be tracked to Berks County PA where he served as an officer in the American Revolution. Tax records place him in Berks County 1780 to 1789. He died in Berks County and has a will on file. This is the May family of Langendiebach, Near Hanau, Germany.
4. In 1777-78, men of the age of 18 or older in Pennsylvania had to sign an oath of allegiance to Pennsylvania. In Lancaster County, the only May men to sign were Cassimore May (a German only briefly in Lancaster Co, went to TN), Alexander May (born Armagh, Ireland), John May (possibly Alexander's son who was born 1760 in PA), and two signings from George May (signed twice or two George Mays?). None of the previous German family of May's living in Lancaster were still there. There is only one George May enumerated in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in 1779. All others had already moved out. When a George May moved to neighboring York County PA in 1783, he was the only George May listed and there was no longer a George May in Lancaster County PA.
5. Y-DNA tests confirm that there were four distinct unrelated May families in Rockingham County, VA: George May, Thomas May, Adam May, and Levi May. [See chart of *May Families of Rockingham County, Virginia*.]

Tracing backward to find George May of Brocks Gap

1. We know that the George May of Brocks Gap had come from Pennsylvania to Shenandoah County VA before moving to Rockingham County VA. This evidence comes from the Virginia Chancery Case deposition that Jacob Nehs gave in support of Jacob May's character. Jacob Nehs said he had known Jacob May's father in Pennsylvania and that he [George] had lived near him in Shenandoah County before moving to Brocks Gap. Tracking Jacob Nehs led to his location in York County PA in 1783 in the same township [Manchester] as a George May.
2. Y-DNA evidence ties descendants of George May of Brocks Gap, Rockingham County VA to descendants of John May of Crawford County PA. Family trees say John was born in Ireland, came to Pennsylvania shortly before the American Revolution and, that he lived in Warrington Township, York County PA before moving out to Crawford County, Pennsylvania. John May was in Warrington tax records for 1779-1789. It is not known if George and John were brothers or cousins, but the Y-DNA proves they are kin and documentary evidence places their birthplace as Ireland, and circumstantial evidence pointing to both living in York County, Pennsylvania during the same time period.

MAY FAMILIES OF ROCKINGHAM COUNTY, VIRGINIA IN THE LATE 1700S AND EARLY 1800S



Still seeking answers for **What We Don't Know**

Any additional research that answers any of these questions should be forwarded to Keith at Keith.May@cottonwood.com. The information in this report will be updated with documented evidence on www.georgemayfamily.com.

1. Where in Ireland did George May live?
2. Who were George May's parents?
3. What year did George May arrive in the American Colonies?
4. Did George May immigrate with family members or meet up with John May or others that had already arrived?
5. What is George May's connection to John May and other DNA matches from Ireland?
6. Was Magdalena George's only wife or second wife? If 2nd, who was first?
7. What is Magdalena's surname?
8. What is George May's connection to the Nehs/Neece family?
9. Why did son Andrew May substitute for Anthony Huffman in the War of 1812?
10. Some grandchildren of George May are still unidentified. Some names of May's in the records have yet to be assigned to a family. Need to clear these up.

Y-DNA needed from DIRECT MALE DESCENDANTS OF:

1. Aaron May of Hardy/Grant Co WV
2. George Washington May, son of Margaret Smith May
3. The rest of George May's sons: Henry, Benjamin, Jacob, John, Andrew, and Isaac May
4. Additional descendants of George May Jr. and Daniel May to confirm recent changes.
5. More May men in Ireland

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