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SUBJECT: Reassembling the Family of John & Rhoda Williams, Pioneers of Lawrence County, Mississippi: A Proof Argument

John Williams of Lawrence County's White Sand community brought his family from North Carolina in the 18-teens.<sup>1</sup> He last appears on record in Lawrence's 1850 census, where he is said to be eighty-three. The female in the "wife's position" in that household entry, Rhoda, is said to be seventy. They shared their home with a young widow Elizabeth Bridges and five Bridges children,<sup>2</sup> implying that Elizabeth might be a daughter of John and Rhoda who died shortly thereafter. An estate was opened for John before October 1852, the date on which one Joel Williams directed William Williams, the administrator of John's estate, to "pay over to S. B. Petitfils a proportional part of one tenth of said estate." Joel further described that as "all my interest in said Estate."<sup>3</sup>

The records that would have been created in the administration of John's estate do not appear to survive.<sup>4</sup> The county's deed books do survive (although they have been copied and recopied, with errors introduced) but nothing more on the disposition of John's estate has been found therein.

One tenth share. That one piece of information reveals that the John Williams estate had ten heirs.<sup>5</sup> One

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<sup>1</sup> For abstracts, transcriptions, and/or images of all known records created by John in Mississippi, see E. S. Mills, "Williams & Associates of Lawrence County, Mississippi, 1814–1860," report to file, 31 July 2021 (updated 30 September 2022), 105 pp.; archived online at Mills, *Historic Pathways* (<https://www.historicpathways.com/download/Williams-LawrenceCoMS.pdf>).

<sup>2</sup> 1850 U.S. census, Lawrence Co., population schedule, p. 406, dwelling/family 121/121.

<sup>3</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book E: 478; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 008201845 > image 598.

<sup>4</sup> Surviving probate records (loose papers) have been imaged and are available online, across several dozen rolls of digital film; for a gateway to these records, see *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/301898>). The records are not indexed and the numbered "boxes" and "case numbers" are not logically organized. I have visually scanned the ca.200,000 images in search of the John Williams probate file and did not find it. The bound probate volumes, in which "selected" probate documents were recorded, do not seem to have survived for that time frame. Many case files are scattered over multiple film; some are imaged twice in different parts of the same film.

<sup>5</sup> If Rhoda were still alive, she would have held a one-third share, that being the widow's allotment under common law unless the deceased husband made a will that directed otherwise or unless she took legal action to renounce her "widow's third" in favor of a child's part. No evidence of such has been found; and family tradition contends that she predeceased John, dying in September 1851, after which he died in December. See, for example, their *Find A Grave Memorials* (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/108831396/rhoda-ann-williams> and <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/108831350/john-holley-williams>) created by Shirley Fortenberry Ramshur, 20 April 2013, citing burial in the "Old Williams Cemetery"; no images or documentation supplied.

I've found no evidence for the above assignment of the middle name "Holley" to John. One "J. H." Williams appears on the Lawrence Co. tax rolls of the 1840s, but he was part of the Crooked Creek Williamses; the 1842 roll reveals his fuller name as *James H.*, not *John H.*; see "Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687>) > Browse > Lawrence > County tax rolls 1831–1846, Box 3697 > (1842) image 377. John of White Sand also had two grandsons who used the middle initial "H," but John never used a middle name or initial in any known record.

might logically propose that three of those heirs were Elizabeth Bridges (who shared John’s home when she was a propertyless widow with children to support), William Williams (who administered the elderly man’s estate), and Joel Williams (who explicitly said that he held an “interest” in the estate, being one-tenth of it).

Propositions for relationships, of course, demand supporting evidence. If this proposition is correct, then seven other heirs remain to be identified. The purpose of this paper is to present evidence that reassembles the heirs of John Williams—the children he produced by his wife or wives.<sup>6</sup>

This paper presents the evidence in four parts:

Part One	Land Evidence .....	page 4
Part Two	Census Evidence .....	page 9
Part Three	Direct Evidence of Kinships.....	page 11
Part Four	Reassembling All Evidence for Children of John Williams:	
	1. <b>Neal Williams</b> (b. c1795; d. after January 1863) .....	page 12
	2. <b>Catharine Williams</b> (c1797–aft 1880) <b>m. James Shannon</b> .....	page 13
	3. <b>Daniel Williams</b> (b. c1799; died 29 December 1862) .....	page 14
	4. <b>Mary Williams</b> (b. c1801; d. after 1860) <b>m. Joel Polk</b> .....	page 15
	5. <b>William Williams</b> (b. c1805; d. c1854) .....	page 16
	6. <b>Robert Williams</b> (b. c1807; d. aft. 30 September 1876) .....	page 18
	7. <b>Isaac Williams</b> (b. 22 March 1809; d. 4 November 1903) .....	page 19
	8. <b>Nathan Williams</b> (b. c1811; d. aft. 1843) .....	page 20
	9. <b>Joel Williams</b> (b. March 1813; d. aft. 14 June 1900) .....	page 22
	10. <b>Elizabeth Williams</b> (b. c1815; d. aft. 14 June 1900) <b>m. Jeremiah Bridges</b> .....	page 22

A page-by-page reading of all court, deed, land patent, marriage, probate, and tax records that have survived for Lawrence County reveals three clusters of Williamses who settled Lawrence during its first decade. The first cluster was headed by a James Williams who settled at **Crooked Creek** by 1816.<sup>7</sup> The second was headed by William Williams who took out his first land at **Topisaw** in 1819.<sup>8</sup> The third was headed by John Williams of this paper, who took out his first land at **White Sand** on 3 March 1826,<sup>9</sup> but had been taxed a poll since 1815. A few random other individuals of the Williams surname weave in and out of the records, but had no association with any of these three clusters.

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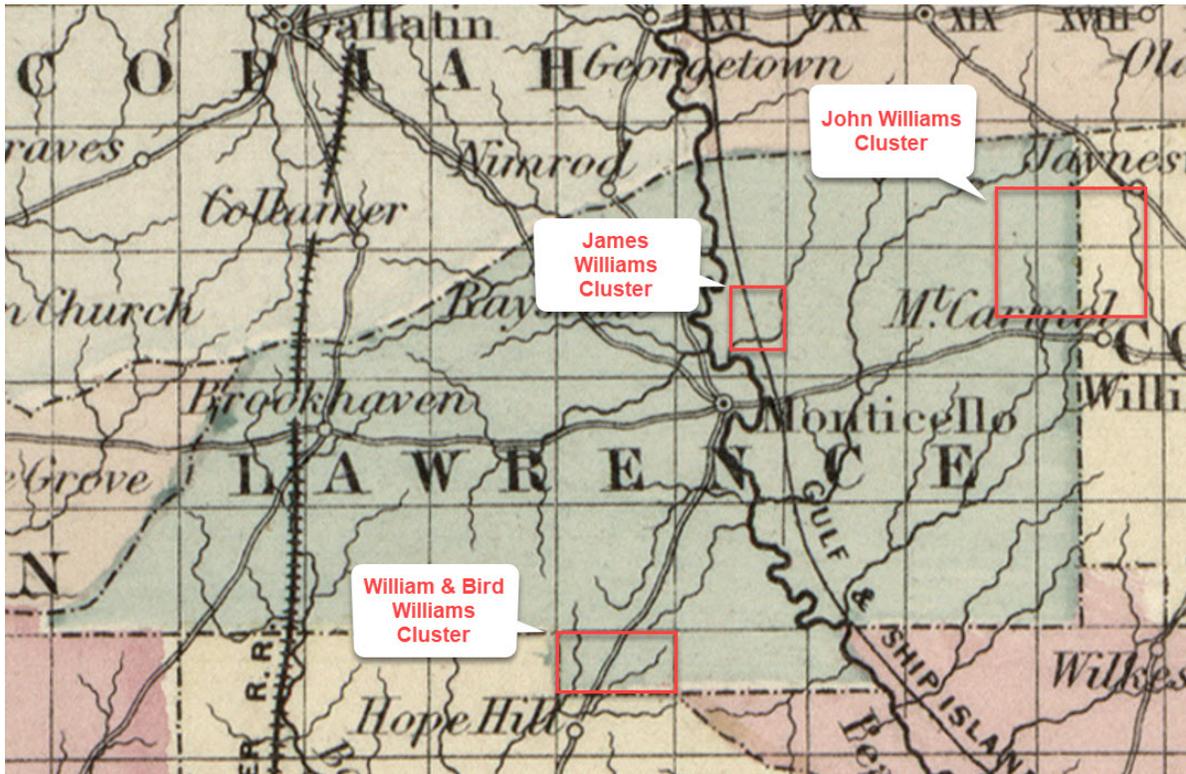
<sup>6</sup> Genealogical accounts, on line and in print, assert that John married Rhoda (or Rhoda Ann) Strickland and that she was the mother of all his children. No evidence is offered. That belief may be correct. However, all that is *proved* at this point is that he shared his home in 1850 with Rhoda. John executed no known document that names his wife and sold no land in Mississippi—an action that, under Mississippi law, would have required a wife’s relinquishment of her dower right.

<sup>7</sup> Lawrence Co., “Tract Book Original Entry 1,” p. 95; imaged, *FamilySearch* digital film 007849159 > image 259.

<sup>8</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, “Search Documents by Type,” *General Land Office Records* (<https://glorerecords.blm.gov/search/default.aspx> : 18 June 2021), query for “Williams,” in the Mississippi counties of Jefferson Davis (formerly Lawrence), Lawrence, and Marion (parent of Lawrence). No entries are recorded for Marion prior to the time Lawrence was created.

<sup>9</sup> “United States Bureau of Land Management ... Tract Books, 1800–c.1955,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-89W3-146D> : 2 February 2022) > Mississippi > Vol M7 > image 112 (original page 106).

**Map 1**  
**Three Williams Clusters in Old Lawrence County<sup>10</sup>**



<sup>10</sup> Snipped from Anthony Finley, *Mississippi* (Philadelphia: Anthony Finley, 1836); imaged, *David Rumsey Map Collection* (<https://www.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/detail/RUMSEY~8~1~320866~90090030:28--Mississippi> : 2 October 2021).

**LAND EVIDENCE**

Identifying all land purchases by the John Williams Cluster at White Sand—via patents from the federal government, deeds from other Lawrence County residents, and state-level tax records—provides a solid foundation on which to reconstruct the family. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the lands they acquired. The first table is arranged by individual, then chronologically to summarize each person’s land expansions. The second table is arranged by the legal location of the land (section, township, and range), to more explicitly show the clusters.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 1**  
**Land Acquisitions in Old Lawrence County by John Williams and Proposed Children:**  
(Arranged by Individual)

1.	John Williams	<b>3/3/1826</b>	E½ NW¼	S29	T9N R18W
2.	John Williams	12/21/1833	NW¼ SW¼	S29	T9N R18W
3.	John Williams	11/24/1836	NW¼ NE¼	S29	T9N R18W
4.	John Williams	11/24/1836	E½ SW¼	S20	T9N R18W
5.	John Williams	1846 tax roll	15a in SW NW	S29	T9N R18W [James Shannon held remainder]
6.	John Williams	1846 tax roll	W½ NE¼	S20	T9N R18W
7.	James Shannon	<b>3/3/1826</b>	E½ SE¼	S30	T9N R18W [married 1822 Catherine Williams]
8.	James Shannon	7/20/1835	SE¼	S25	T9N R19W
9.	James Shannon	7/20/1835	SE¼ NE¼	S25	T9N R19W
10.	James Shannon	7/20/1835	Part NW¼	S30	T9N R18W   John Williams witnessed purchase]
11.	James Shannon	7/20/1835	SE¼ NE¼	S30	T9N R18W
12.	James Shannon	1846 tax roll	S½	S29	T9N R18W
13.	James Shannon	1846 tax roll	pt of SW NW	S29	T9N R18W [John Williams held remainder]
14.	James Shannon	1846 tax roll	E½ NE¼	S30	T9N R18W
15.	James Shannon	1846 tax roll	SE¼ SW¼	S30	T9N R18W
16.	James Shannon	1846 tax roll	W½ SW¼	S30	T9N R18W
17.	James Shannon	1846 tax roll	W½ NE¼	S25	T9N R19W
18.	Daniel Williams	<b>2/11/1828</b>	SE¼	S2	T8N R19W
19.	Daniel Williams	1846	SW¼	S2	T8N R19W
20.	Daniel Williams	1847	SE¼ NW¼	S11	T8N R19W
21.	Isaac Williams	<b>1/23/1834</b>	E½ SW¼	S36	T9N R19W [adj. to land Joel Polk got same day]
22.	Isaac Williams	11/20/1835	SE¼ SE¼	S35	T9N R19W
23.	Isaac Williams	1/5/1841	W½ SW¼	S36	T9N R19W
24.	Isaac Williams	c1845–46	S½ SW¼	S24	T6N R20W
25.	Isaac Williams	c1845–46	NW¼ NE¼	S1	T8N R19W
26.	Isaac Williams	c1845–46	SW¼ SE¼	S36	T9N R18W
27.	Isaac Williams	1846 tax roll	SW¼	S36	T9N R19W
28.	“Williams & Polk”	1846 tax roll	E½ NE¼	S1	T8N R19W
29.	“Williams & Polk”	1846 tax roll	E½ SE¼	S1	T8N R19W
30.	Isaac Williams	9/22/1854	W½ SW¼	S6	T8N R18W [¼ mile from Eliz. (Williams) Bridges]
31.	Isaac Williams	9/22/1854	N½ S½	S35	T9N R19W
32.	Isaac Williams	9/22/1854	NW¼ SE¼	S36	T9N R19W

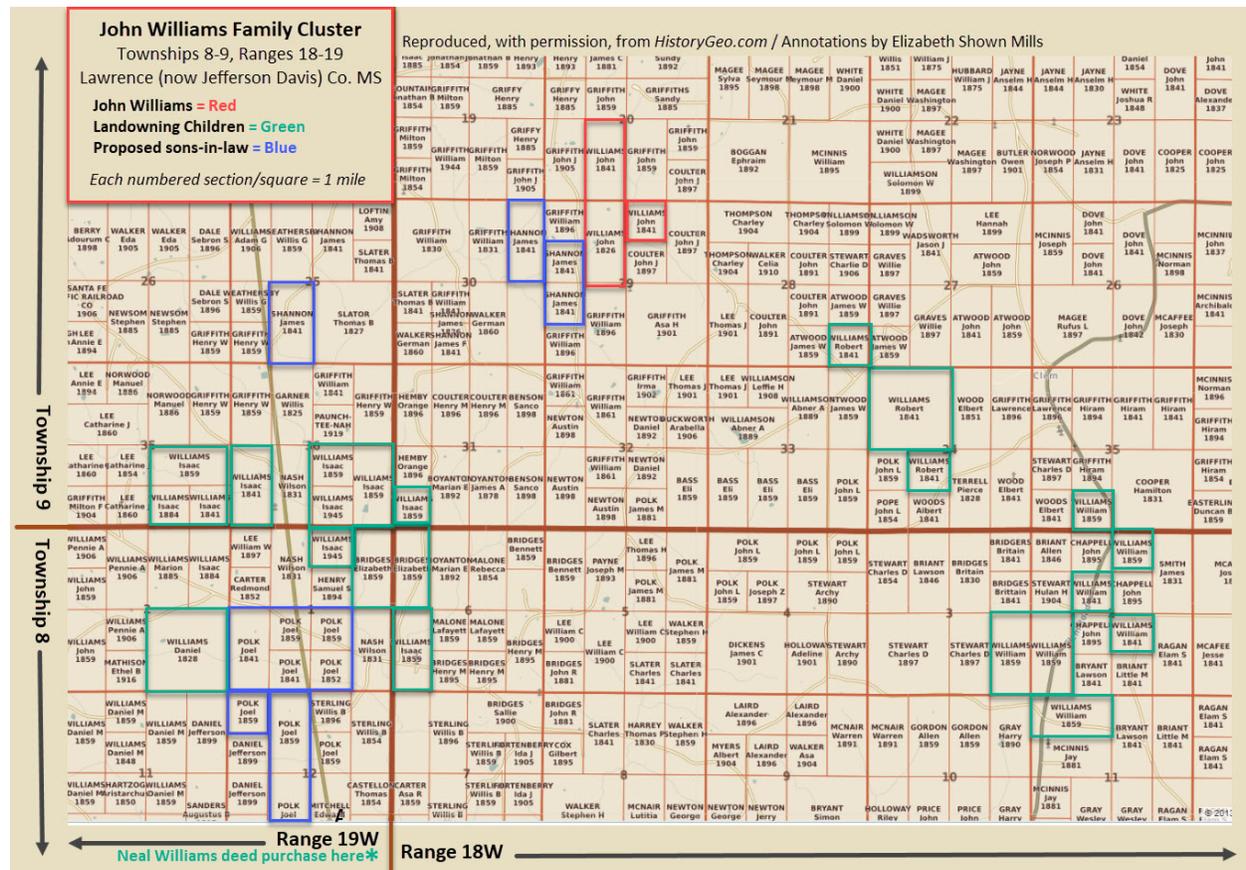
<sup>11</sup> Extracted from the previously cited report “Williams & Associates of Lawrence County, Miss.,” where each deed and tract book entry is completely detailed and documented.

33. Isaac Williams	1/17/1855	W½ SE¼	S30	T9N R18W
34. Isaac Williams	1/17/1855	NW¼	S30	T9N R18W   ½ mile or so from John Williams]
35. Isaac Williams	1/17/1855	NE¼ SW¼	S30	T9N R18W
36. Isaac Williams	12/25/1857	NW¼ SW¼	S30	T9N R18W
37. Isaac Williams	12/25/1857	SE¼ SW¼	S30	T9N R18W
38. Isaac Williams	5/2/1859	E½ SE¼	S36	T9N R19W
39. Joel Polk	<b>1/23/1834</b>	E½ SW¼	S1	T8N R19W [adj. to land Isaac Wms got same day]
40. Joel Polk	1/23/1834	E½ NW¼	S1	T8N R19W
41. Joel Polk	7/17/1835	SE¼ SW¼	S1	T8N R19W
42. Joel Polk	10/3/1835	W½ SW¼	S1	T8N R19W
43. Joel Polk	1846 tax list	E½ NW¼	S1	T8N R19W
44. "Williams & Polk"	1846 tax roll	E½ NE¼	S1	T8N R19W [sold part to Isaac Williams 1854]
45. "Williams & Polk"	1846 tax roll	E½ SE¼	S1	T8N R19W
46. Joel Polk	9/27/1852	W½ SE¼	S12	T8N R19W
47. Joel Polk	9/27/1854	SW¼ NE¼	S12	T8N R19W
48. Joel Polk	3/22/1854	NE¼ SW¼	S1	T8N R19W
49. Joel Polk	10/11/1854	NW¼ NW¼	S12	T8N R19W
50. Joel Polk	11/1857	SW¼ NE¼	S1	T8N R19W [adj. Elizabeth (Williams) Bridges]
51. Neal Williams	<b>1835–1838</b>	E½ NE¼	S13	T8N R19W [sold to Robert Williams, 1838]
52. Robert Williams	<b>10/3/1835</b>	W½ SW¼	S1	T8N R19W
53. Robert Williams	11/11/1835	NW¼	S24	T9N R18W
54. Robert Williams	sold 10/26/37	NW¼	S14	T7N R19W
55. Robert Williams	1/5/1841	SE¼ SE¼	S28	T9N R18W
56. Robert Williams	1/5/1841	NE¼ SW¼	S34	T9N R18W
57. Robert Williams	1/5/1841	NW¼	S34	T9N R18W
58. Robert Williams	1846 tax roll	E½ NW¼	S5	T8N R18W
59. Robert Williams	1846 tax roll	S½ SE¼	S5	T8N R18W
60. Robert Williams	1848 tax roll	all	S6	T8N R18W
61. Robert Williams	1848 tax roll	NE¼	S7	T8N R18W
62. Robert Williams	1848 tax roll	N½ NW¼	S7	T8N R18W
63. Robert Williams	1846 tax roll	W½ NE¼	S8	T8N R18W
64. Robert Williams	12/29/1851	W½ of NW¼	S26	T8N R19W
65. Robert Williams	12/29/1851	E½	S27	T8N R19W
66. William Williams	<b>11/20/1835</b>	NW¼ SE¼	S2	T8N R18W [resident of adj. Covington Co.]
67. William Williams	10/21/1836	SE¼ NW¼	S2	T8N R18W
68. William Williams	9/20/1854	NE¼ W½ SW¼	S2	T8N R18W
69. William Williams	9/20/1854	E½ SE¼	S3	T8N R18W
70. William Williams	1/3/1855	N½ NW ¼	S11	T7N R18W
71. Britain Bridges	12/1/1830	W½ NE¼	S3	T8N R18W [father-in-law of Rbt & Eliz Wms]
72. Brittain Bridges	1/5/1841	SE¼ NE¼	S3	T8N R18W
73. Elizabeth Bridges	<b>12/1852</b>	E½ NE¼	S1	T8N R19W [adj. Joel Polk & Isaac Williams]
74. Elizabeth Bridges	10/1854	W½ NW¼	S6	T8N R18W [adj. Joel Polk]
75. Joel Williams	8/10/1858	NE ¼ NE ¼	S29	T9N R18W
76. Joel Williams	8/10/1858	W½ SE¼   SE¼ NW¼   NE¼ SE¼	S20	T9N R18W   adj. John Williams' homestead 

When platted, the lands of each member of this cluster are often contiguous or adjacent and never more than a mile and half from parent or sibling. All are ten to fifty miles from the other Williams landowners.

**Map 2<sup>12</sup>**  
**John Williams Family Cluster – Townships 8–9 North, Ranges 18–19 West**

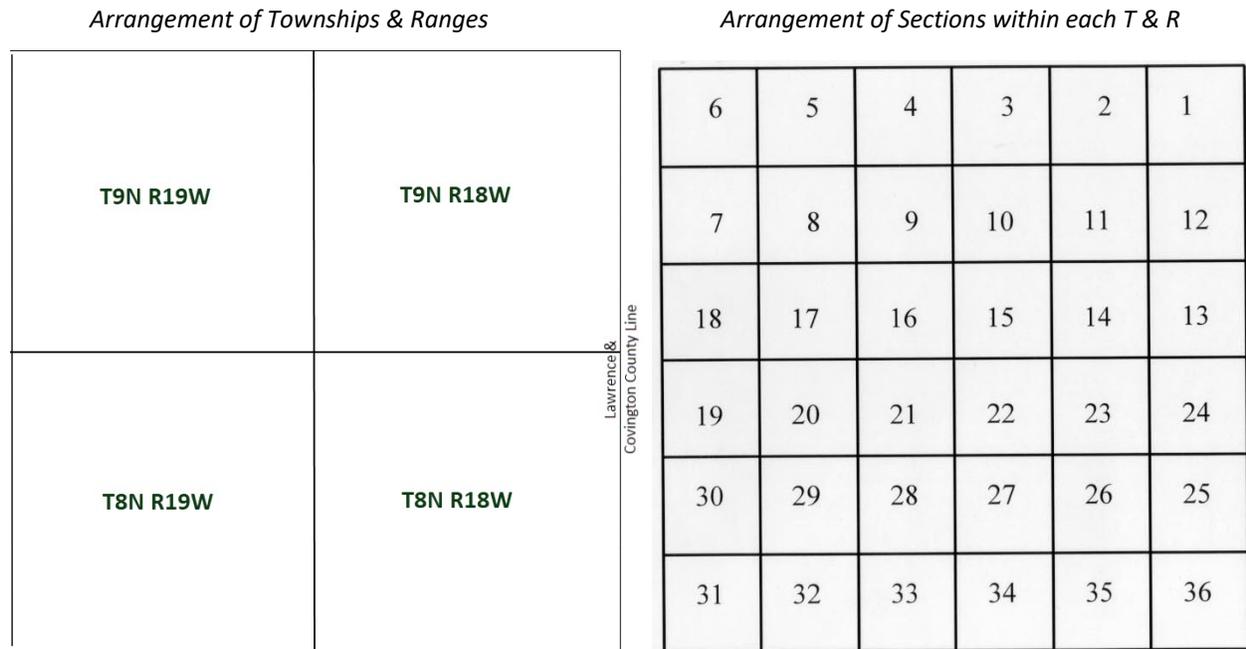
*Note:*  
 The dark brick-red lines that cross in lower left of map are division lines between the two townships and the two ranges



**Table 2**, below, organizes these lands by their section, township, and range, to better demonstrate the clusters.

<sup>12</sup> Reproduced from the previously cited report "Williams & Associates of Lawrence County, Miss."

**Table 2**  
**Land Acquisitions in Old Lawrence County by John Williams and Proposed Children:**  
 (Arranged by Township, Range, Section)



**T9N R18W:**  
**John, Isaac, Joel, Robert Williams**  
**& James Shannon**

John Williams	11/24/1836	E½ SW¼	S20	
John Williams	1846 tax roll	W½ NE¼	S20	
Joel Williams	8/10/1858	W½ SE¼		
	8/10/1858	SE¼ NW¼		S20
	8/10/1858	NE¼ SE¼		
Robert Williams	11/11/1835	NW¼	S24	
Robert Williams	1/5/1841	SE¼ SE¼	S28	
James Shannon	1846 tax roll	pt of SW NW	S29	[John Williams had remainder]
John Williams	3/3/1826	E½ NW¼	S29	
John Williams	12/21/1833	NW¼ SW¼	S29	
John Williams	11/24/1836	NW¼ NE¼	S29	
John Williams	1846 tax roll	15a in SW NW	S29	[James Shannon held the remainder]
James Shannon	1846 tax roll	S½	S29	
James Shannon	3/3/1826	E½ SE¼	S30	
James Shannon	1846 tax roll	E½ NE¼	S30	
James Shannon	1846 tax roll	SE¼ SW¼	S30	[Later claimed by Isaac Williams]
James Shannon	7/20/1835	Part NW¼	S30	
James Shannon	7/20/1835	SE¼ NE¼	S30	John Williams witnessed the purchase]
James Shannon	1846 tax roll	W½ SW¼	S30	

Isaac Williams	1/17/1855	W½ SE¼	S30	
Isaac Williams	1/17/1855	NW¼	S30	
Isaac Williams	1/17/1855	NE¼ SW¼	S30	
Isaac Williams	12/25/1857	NW¼ SW¼	S30	
Isaac Williams	12/25/1857	SE¼ SW¼	S30	[formerly claimed by James Shannon]
Robert Williams	1/5/1841	NE¼ SW¼	S34	
Robert Williams	1/5/1841	NW¼	S34	

**T8N R18W:**

**Daniel, Isaac, and Robert Williams  
Elizabeth (Williams) Bridges  
& (father-in-law) Brittain Bridges**

William Williams	11/20/1835	NW¼ SE¼	S2	
William Williams	10/21/1836	SE¼ NW¼	S2	
William Williams	9/20/1854	NE¼ W½ SW¼	S2	
William Williams	9/20/1854	E½ SE¼	S3	
Brittain Bridges	12/1/1830	W½ NE¼	S3	[father-in-law of Robert & Elizabeth Williams]
Brittain Bridges	1/5/1841	SE¼ NE¼	S3	
Robert Williams	1846 tax roll	E½ NW¼	S5	
Robert Williams	1846 tax roll	S½ SE¼	S5	
Elizabeth Bridges	10/1854	W½ NW¼	S6	
Isaac Williams	9/22/1854	W½ SW¼	S6	
Robert Williams	1848 tax roll	all	S6	
Robert Williams	1848 tax roll	NE¼	S7	
Robert Williams	1848 tax roll	N½ NW¼	S7	
Robert Williams	1846 tax roll	W½ NE¼	S8	
William Williams	1/3/1855	N½ NW¼	S11	

**T9N R19W**

**Isaac Williams &  
James Shannon**

Isaac Williams	c1845–46	S½ SW¼	S24	
James Shannon	7/20/1835	SE¼	S25	
James Shannon	7/20/1835	SE¼ NE¼	S25	[John Williams witnessed purchase]
James Shannon	1846 tax roll	W½ NE¼	S25	
James Shannon	1846 tax roll	SE¼	S25	
Isaac Williams	11/20/1835	SE¼ SE¼	S35	
Isaac Williams	9/22/1854	N½ S½	S35	
Isaac Williams	1/23/1834	E½ SW¼	S36	[adjoined land Joel Polk bought same day]
Isaac Williams	1/5/1841	W½ SW¼	S36	
Isaac Williams	1846 tax roll	SW¼	S36	
Isaac Williams	5/2/1859	E½ SE¼	S36	
Isaac Williams	c1845–46	SW¼ SE¼	S36	
Isaac Williams	9/22/1854	NW¼ SE¼	S36	

**T8N R19W**

**Daniel, Isaac, Neal, Robert Williams,  
Joel Polk &**

**Elizabeth (Williams) Bridges**

Elizabeth Bridges	12/1852	E½ NE¼	S1	
Robert Williams	10/3/1835	W½ SW¼	S1	
Joel Polk	1/23/1834	E½ SW¼	S1	[adjoined land Isaac Williams bought same day]
Joel Polk	1/23/1834	E½ NW¼	S1	
Joel Polk	7/17/1835	SE¼ SW¼	S1	
Joel Polk	10/3/1835	W½ SW¼	S1	
Joel Polk	1846 tax list	E½ NW¼	S1	
“Williams & Polk”	1846 tax roll	E½ NE¼	S1	
“Williams & Polk”	1846 tax roll	E½ SE¼	S1	
Isaac Williams	c1845–46	NW¼ NE¼	S1	
Joel Polk	3/22/1854	NE¼ SW¼	S1	
Joel Polk	11/1857	SW¼ NE¼	S1	
Daniel Williams	1846	SW¼	S2	
Daniel Williams	2/11/1828	SE¼	S2	
Daniel Williams	1847	SE¼ NW¼	S11	
Joel Polk	9/27/1852	W½ SE¼	S12	
Joel Polk	10/11/1854	NW¼ NW¼	S12	
Joel Polk	3/2/1854	SW¼ NE¼	S12	
Joel Polk	10/11/1854	NW¼	S13	
Neal Williams	1835–1838	E½ NE¼	S13	[sold to Robert Williams]
Robert Williams	12/29/1851	W½ of NW¼	S26	
Robert Williams	12/29/1851	E½	S27	

**CENSUS EVIDENCE**

Reconstructing John’s family also requires one further foundation: an assembly of the basic census data that documents the gender and age group of each person in John’s household from his first appearance as an adult head-of-family:

**1800<sup>13</sup>**

<b>John Williams</b>	1 wh male	26–45	1 wh female	26–45	3 enslaved persons
	3 wh males	0–10	1 wh female	0–10	9 total

**1810<sup>14</sup>**

<b>John Williams</b>	1 wh male	45+	1 wh female	26–45	2 enslaved persons
	2 wh males	10–15	2 wh females	0–9	12 total
	4 wh males	0–10			

**1820<sup>15</sup>**

<b>John Williams</b>	1 wh male	45+	1 wh female	45+	1 enslaved person
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<sup>13</sup> 1800 U.S. census, Sampson Co., NC, p. 528 (stamped), 700 (penned), line 8, two houses from Hezekiah Williams of same age bracket.

<sup>14</sup> 1810 U.S. census, Sampson Co., NC, p. 161 (stamped), 476 (penned), line 8, two houses from a younger Harman “Stricklin.”

<sup>15</sup> 1820 U.S. census, Lawrence Co., 70, Township 9, line 2.

1 wh male	16–25	2 wh females	10–15	11 total
1 wh male	16–18	1 wh female	0–10	
1 wh male	10–15			
4 wh males	0–10			

COMMENT:

John’s proposed son Neal is not included in this 1820 household. He married in January 1820, with John as his bondsman<sup>16</sup> and appears to be included in the census household of his in-laws.<sup>17</sup>

**1830<sup>18</sup>**

<b>John Williams</b>	1 wh male	70–80	1 wh female	40–50	3 enslaved persons
	1 wh male	20–30	1 white female	15–20	10 total persons
	2 wh males	15–20			
	1 white male	10–15			

COMMENT:

John’s household has lost two young adult males and two young adult females. Only one new Williams household appears in the White Sand area: Daniel (aged 30–40).<sup>19</sup>

**1840<sup>20</sup>**

<b>John Williams</b>	1 wh male	70–80	1 wh female	50–60	11 enslaved persons
	1 wh male	20–30			14 total persons

COMMENT:

Also enumerated consecutively with John: **Daniel** (aged 40–50), **Isaac** (30–40), **Robert** (30–40). All were landowners at White Sand, within one-to-two miles of John, as shown on Map 2.

**1850<sup>21</sup>**

121/121	<b>Williams, Jno.</b>	83	m	farmer	\$215	NC
	<b>Rhoda</b>	70	f			NC
	Bridges, Elizabeth	35	f			<b>NC</b>
	John	13	m			MS
	Elijah	11	m			MS
	Elizabeth	9	f			MS
	Madison	7	m			MS
	Miram	6	f			MS

<sup>16</sup> Lawrence Co., Marriage Book 1: 33; Office of the Circuit Clerk, Monticello. This register is not imaged online.

<sup>17</sup> 1820 U.S. census, Lawrence Co., p. 64, Township 8, line 34 (Jacob Sessims).

<sup>18</sup> 1830 U.S. census, Lawrence Co., p. 67 (stamped), line 2; the census is semi-alphabetized.

<sup>19</sup> As will be shown in this paper:

- The other “missing” young adult male in 1830 was William, who had settled nearby but across the county line in Covington, adjacent to Brittain Bridges, whose son Jeremiah married John Williams’s conventionally proved daughter Elizabeth and whose daughter Clarissa married Elizabeth’s proposed brother Robert.
- The two “missing” young adult females in 1830 would be Catherine and Mary, both of whom wed in the 1820s.
- The one young female still at home in 1830 would be Elizabeth, who would marry in 1835.

<sup>20</sup> 1840 U.S. census, Lawrence Co., p. 76 (stamped), line 19; the census is semi-alphabetized.

<sup>21</sup> 1850 U.S. census, Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 406, dwell./fam. 121.

## DIRECT EVIDENCE OF KINSHIPS

My page-by-page reading of all surviving local records yielded three critical documents that accomplish the following:

- Two documents explicitly name children or heirs.
- One document provides direct evidence of a sibling relationship between two Williamses in the White Sand cluster.
- Two of the documents also offered indirect evidence (a suggestion to be developed) for other heirs of John and siblings of the proved children/heirs.

### Joel Williams as heir of John Williams

On 22 October 1862, Joel executed the following document:

“I **Joel Williams** of the County of Lawrence in the State of Mississippi, one of the heirs of the Estate of **John Williams** of the County and State aforesaid lately deceased, have this day, for value received, bargained and sold unto Simeon B. Petitfils all my interest in said Estate and hereby authorise the administrator (**William Williams**) to pay over unto the said Simeon B. Petitfils a proportional part of **one tenth of said estate**, and ... this shall be considered a regular and bona fide transfer of all my interest in said Estate. Given under my hand and seal this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of October AD 1852. [Signed] **Joel Williams** {seal}.”<sup>22</sup>

### Elizabeth “Betsy” as daughter of John Williams

In September 1835, Jeremiah Bridges of Lawrence County took out a license to marry “**Betsy Williams**.” John Williams gave consent for the underaged Betsy, citing her as his daughter.<sup>23</sup>

In order to obtain a license, Jeremiah had to post a bond affirming that the pending marriage complied with the requirements of Mississippi’s marital laws. He was also required to supply a surety—a cosigner who agreed to pay the bond’s stipulated penalty in the event that a violation of the law was later discovered and Jeremiah was unable to pay. That close friend or family member who served as his surety was **Nathan Williams**. The bride “Betsy” was the widowed **Elizabeth Bridges** for whom John Williams provided a home in 1850.

### Isaac Williams as brother of Daniel Williams

A probate record created during the Civil War identifies kinship between two of the males at White Sand who came to adulthood in the 1820–40 period and acquired lands surrounding John:

“Petition of **Isaac Williams** in the matter of the Estate of **Daniel Williams**, deceased [who] departed this life ... the 29<sup>th</sup> day of December A. D. 1862. ... **Your petitioner (being a brother) & all the children who are at home (some being in the Army) being willing that he should administer ... said estate ...**” requests that he be appointed.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Lawrence Co., MS, Deed Book E: 478; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 008201845 > image 598.

<sup>23</sup> Lawrence Co., Marriage Book 2: 152; Office of the Circuit Clerk, Monticello.

<sup>24</sup> Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 20, case 5560; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632815 > images 1721–1858, especially 1723 (petition for administration), 1725 (petition for sale).

## REASSEMBLING ALL EVIDENCE FOR CHILDREN OF JOHN WILLIAMS

The land locations and interactions that occurred between all the Williamses at White Sand—gleaned from court, deed, land patent, marriage, probate, and tax records—enable us to piece together the following profiles to establish, beyond reasonable doubt, the identities of John’s ten children and heirs.<sup>25</sup>

### 1. Neal Williams

Born 1795 in North Carolina,<sup>26</sup> Neal would be one of the two males aged 10–15 in John’s 1810 North Carolina household. He married January 1820 in Lawrence Co., Mary “Polly” Sessums, with **John Williams** as bondsman. He and Polly settled amid her family and appear rarely in Lawrence. He was taxed in adjacent Simpson Co. with the Sessumses in 1828 and 1832 and enumerated next door to Polly’s father in 1830.<sup>27</sup> In 1835 and 1838 he created two records in Lawrence County that place him again in John Williams cluster at White Sand:

Sep 1835: Neal bought from Allen Sterlings 80 acres described as the E½ of NE¼ S13 T8 R19W. Witnesses were W. B. Sterling and **Joel Polk** (See Child 4 below, for Polk as a husband of Neal’s proposed sister **Mary**). The justice of the peace who drafted the document was the White Sand settler **James Shannon** (see Child 2 below for Shannon, as husband of **Catherine Williams**).<sup>28</sup>

Neal was taxed on this land only once in Lawrence Co., three months before he sold it—suggesting that he was an absentee landowner, paying his tax from his county of residence.<sup>29</sup>

Dec 1838: Neal sold that tract to **Robert Williams** (See Child 6, below).

Neal and Polly named their first son **John**. The name of their first daughter is unknown; she lived to adulthood but died before censuses recorded the names of wives and children. Their other children bear names of Polly’s own parents and siblings. The name **Rhoda** appears conspicuously among Neal and Polly’s granddaughters.<sup>30</sup>

### 2. Catherine Williams

Born, say 1797, in North Carolina,<sup>31</sup> Catherine bore the name of John’s mother.<sup>32</sup> She married the Irish

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<sup>25</sup> These individuals have not been found in any surviving church records; and surviving cemetery markers are rare. All died before death records were maintained by the state of Mississippi, thereby eliminating the possibility of a record type that commonly named parents.

<sup>26</sup> 1850 U.S. census, Attala Co., MS, pop. sch., T15 R8E, p. 328 (stamped), dwell./fam. 1110/1113 (age 56—i.e., b. 2 June 1793–1 June 1794). **1860** U.S. census, Madison Co., MS, pop. sch., Canton p.o., p. 74 (penned), dwell./fam. 533/531 (age 64, b. 2 June 1795–1 June 1796).

<sup>27</sup> For all known documents created by and about Neal, see E. S. Mills, “Neal Williams (c1795–aft.1863) & Spouse Mary “Polly” Sessums (c1800–aft.1880): Research Notes,” last updated 15 August 2022; archived at Mills, *Historic Pathways* (<https://www.historicpathways.com/download/WilliamsNealMarySessumsResearchNotes.pdf>).

<sup>28</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book C, 1830–1840: 38–39; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8134328 > image 558.

<sup>29</sup> “Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687>) > Browse > Lawrence > County tax rolls 1831–1846, Box 3697 > 1837; images 185–209 (1838 Assessment 2), p. 24 particularly.

<sup>30</sup> See the previously cited “Neal Williams (c1795–aft.1863) & Spouse Mary ‘Polly’ Sessums (c1800–aft.1880): Research Notes.”

<sup>31</sup> Federal censuses provide wildly varying ages for Catherine. **1850** Jasper Co., MS, pop. sch., p. 56, dwell./fam. 376 cites her age as 55 (i.e., born 2 July 1794–1 June 1795). **1880** Lauderdale Co., MS., pop. sch., Meridian, ED 90, p. 70, dwell. 529, fam. 776

immigrant **James Shannon** in July 1822 with **Daniel Williams** (Child 3) as bondsman.<sup>33</sup> Numerous records subsequently connect James Shannon to John Williams and John's other proposed children.

Feb 1826: Shannon witnessed the bill of sale when **John Williams** bought an enslaved male.<sup>34</sup>

Mar 1826: Shannon and **John Williams** went together to the Augusta Land Office (a c200-mile round trip) to buy **adjacent** tracts of land in S29–30 T9 R18, Lawrence Co.<sup>35</sup>

Feb 1827: Shannon was the officiating J.P. when **John Williams** bought an enslaved woman, with **Isaac Williams** (Child 7) as witness.<sup>36</sup>

Jan 1834: Shannon was again the J.P. used when **Joel Polk** (husband of Child 4) bought land adjacent to **Daniel Williams** (Child 3); on same day **Isaac Williams** (Child 7, the conventionally proved brother of Daniel) bought adjacent land from same buyer.<sup>37</sup>

July 1835: James Shannon and **John Williams** witnessed the sale of land by William Griffith to Thomas B. Slater.<sup>38</sup>

July 1835: James Shannon bought four additional tracts of land, a half-mile from **John Williams** on the east and just over a half-mile from **Isaac Williams** (Child 7) on his southwest. **John Williams** witnessed the sale.<sup>39</sup>

Feb 1841: James Shannon and **John Williams** were appointed to inquire into the sanity of Thomas B. Slater of nearby Silver Creek.<sup>40</sup>

1841 The unalphabetized state census places the Shannons in this cluster of consecutive households: **Daniel Williams** (Child 3), **Joel "Poke"** (Child 4), **Isach Williams** (Child 7), Isach Hainsworth, **James Shannon** (Child 2), William Griffith, **John Williams**, **Joel Williams** (Child 9), Daniel Malone, Lewis Bridges, Charles Slater, Efrom "Poke," Franklin Hale, **Robert Williams** (Child 6).<sup>41</sup>

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cites her age as 78 (b. 2 June 1801–1 June 1802). Both place her birth in North Carolina. She has not been found on the censuses of 1860–70. The 1830 and 1840 censuses, on which she was a "young" wife, place her birth at 1800–10. See **1830** Lawrence Co., p. 63 (stamped), line 5. **1840** Lawrence Co. p. 80 (stamped), line 8. The household data for John Williams in 1800, 1810, and 1820 suggest her birth was indeed before 1800 and that, as a bride, she presented herself as younger than she actually was. She apparently bore only two children in nearly thirty years of marriage.

<sup>32</sup> See "Heirs of Catherine Williams" to Reden Hare, 5 January 1824; Sampson Co., NC, Deed Book 19: 116; and "Heirs of Catherine Williams" to Robert Co. Butler, 5 January 1824, Deed Book 21: 494. The cited heirs were (in the order cited), John Williams, Sally McLaren, Catharine Matthis, Richard Williams, James Butler, Alexander Williams, William Williams, and Minsant Howard." Catherine was explicitly said to be a residence of Sampson at the time of her death. No places of residence were stated for any of her heirs who thereby sold her property.

<sup>33</sup> Lawrence Co., Marriage Book 1: 109.

<sup>34</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Record B, 1826–1830: 22–23; imaged, *FamilySearch* digital film 8134328 > images 273–74.

<sup>35</sup> "United States Bureau of Land Management ... Tract Books, 1800–c.1955," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-99W3-14PT> : 2 February 2022) > Mississippi > Vol M7 > image 112 (original page 106).

<sup>36</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Record B: 24; imaged, *FamilySearch* digital film 8134328 > image 274.

<sup>37</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book C: 213–16; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8134328 > images 649–51.

<sup>38</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Record C: 37–38; imaged, *FamilySearch* digital film 8134328 > images 557–58.

<sup>39</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Record C: 35–36; FHL microfilm 8134328 > images 556–57.

<sup>40</sup> Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 3, case 5071, Estate of William Weathersley (case label: Weathersby), includes documents for Weathersley's guardianship of Thomas B. Slater; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632820 > images 2246–2522, particularly 2255 for the *non compos mentis* proceedings.

<sup>41</sup> "Mississippi, U.S., State and Territorial Census Collection, 1792–1866," database with images, *Ancestry* ([https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1125/images/v229\\_2-0368](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1125/images/v229_2-0368) : accessed 5 July 2021) > 1841 Lawrence Co. > image 14, lines 13–14.

1843: James Shannon, **John Williams**, **Nathan Williams** (Child 8), and **Daniel Williams** (Child 3) all owed notes to the estate of Thomas B. Slater—an estate for which **Nathan Williams** had been overseer in 1841.<sup>42</sup>

Between 1846 and 1849, James and Catherine moved to Jasper County, Mississippi, leaving part of their land in the possession of their daughter and son-in-law Mary Ann and Patrick Malada. In August 1849, James deeded the land to Mary Ann “for natural love and affection,” without Catherine’s participation.<sup>43</sup> In 1851, apparently after James’ death and after Mary Ann sold the land, Catherine relinquished her dower right to the land to clear the title.<sup>44</sup> She is last on record in 1880, living in the Meridian home of the 55-year-old attorney James J. Shannon. Her relationship to the younger James J. is not stated, but his age places his birth three years after her marriage to James Sr.<sup>45</sup>

### 3. Daniel Williams

Born c1799 in North Carolina,<sup>46</sup> Daniel had four children before the first census on which he is named, 1830. No marriage record appears for him in Lawrence County and his wife is not named in any document. Like William (Child 5) and Robert (Child 6), he likely wed in adjacent Covington County, where William made his home. Daniel’s activities also associate him repeatedly with the John Williams cluster of White Sand:

July 1822: Daniel served as surety for marriage bond of **Catherine Williams** (Child 2) to James Shannon.<sup>47</sup>

Feb 1828: Daniel patented land in S2 T8N R19W.<sup>48</sup> The younger **Robert Williams** (Child 6), **Isaac Williams** (Child 7, his conventionally proved brother), and **Elizabeth Bridges** (Child 10, John’s conventionally proved daughter) would cluster around him there.

Apr 1836: Daniel mortgaged one tract of his land to **William Williams** (Child 5). William brought the deed to the courthouse for recording in 1854—eighteen years later—after the debt was not paid.<sup>49</sup>

1839–43: Daniel and **William Williams** (Child 5) were sued for debt by William Weathersley. Their proposed brother-in-law **Joel Polk** (no. 4) was their surety.<sup>50</sup> (**John Williams** also associated

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<sup>42</sup> Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 3, case 5071, Estate of William Weathersley (case label: Weathersby) includes documents for Weathersley’s guardianship of Thomas B. Slater; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632820 > images 1170–1446, with Slater documents beginning at 1228. For Williamses, see specifically images 1246 (list of debtors), 1301–4 (estate sale), 1325–27 (inventory), 1331 (undated list naming Shannon), 1343–46 (29 August 1843 list), 2308 (Nathan Williams as overseer).

<sup>43</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book E: 334–35; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8201845 > image 524–25. Mary Ann’s birth c1820 suggests that she was not Catherine’s daughter.

<sup>44</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book E: 335–36; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8201845 > image 525. Also Deed Book E: 341–42, image 529.

<sup>45</sup> 1880 U.S. census, Lauderdale Co., MS, pop. sch., Meridian, ED 90, p. 70, dwell. 529, fam. 776.

<sup>46</sup> Censuses also vary widely in reporting Daniel’s age, but agree that he was born in NC. **1830**: age 30–40; see Lawrence Co., p. 67 (stamped), line 25. **1840**: age 40–50; see Lawrence Co., p. 76 (stamped), line 20. **1850**: 55 (i.e., born 2 June 1794–1 June 1795); see Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 438 verso, dwell./fam. 587/587. **1860**: age 60 (i.e., born 2 June 1799–1 June 1800); see Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 36, dwell. 239, fam. 238.

<sup>47</sup> Lawrence Co., Marriage Book 1: 109.

<sup>48</sup> “United States Bureau of Land Management ... Tract Books, 1800–c.1955,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L9W3-1455 : 2 February 2022>) > Mississippi > Vol M7 > image 148 (original page 141).

<sup>49</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book C: 66–67; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8134328 > image 573.

<sup>50</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book D: 354–55; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8201845 > image 211. Also D: 239–41, images 143–44.

- with Weathersley; in 1843 he witnessed Weathersley's purchase of land at a sheriff's sale in Monticello, the county seat.<sup>51</sup>
- 1841 The unalphabetized state census places Daniel in this cluster of consecutive households: **Daniel Williams** (Child 3), **Joel "Poke"** (Child 4), **Isach Williams** (Child 7), Isach Hainsworth, **James Shannon** (Child 2), William Griffith, **John Williams**, **Joel Williams** (Child 9), Daniel Malone, Lewis Bridges, Charles Slater, Efrom "Poke," Franklin Hale, **Robert Williams**.<sup>52</sup>
- 1841–43: Daniel, **John Williams**, **Nathan Williams** (Child 8) and **James Shannon** (Child 2) owed debts to estate of Thos. B. Slater, whose overseer in 1841 had been **Nathan Williams**.<sup>53</sup>
- Apr 1843: Daniel, **Robert Williams** (Child 6), and **Jeremiah Bridges** (husband of John Williams's daughter **Elizabeth Williams**, Child 10), attended the estate sale of Thomas B. Slater and purchased goods.<sup>54</sup>
- Nov 1855: Daniel signed a promissory note with his sureties being **Isaac Williams** (Child 7, his conventionally proved brother) and D. M. Williams (his conventionally proved son).<sup>55</sup>
- Dec 1862: Daniel died; one week later, "**brother**" **Isaac Williams** filed a petition to administer Daniel's estate, specifically citing their relationship.<sup>56</sup>

The children named for Daniel in his probate file included **John, William, Isaac, Catherine, and Mary**<sup>57</sup>—i.e., the name of his proposed father, one proved brother, and three of his reassembled siblings.

#### 4. Mary Williams

Born c1801 in North Carolina,<sup>58</sup> Mary married **Joel Polk** about 1823; they had four children born before 1830.<sup>59</sup> No marriage record has been found for the couple. Mary's position in the John Williams family is argued by four factors: (1) the extent and nature of the interaction between her husband and her proposed brothers; (2) her and Joel's settlement of land adjacent to her proposed brothers, brother-in-law, and sister; (3) the fact that her birthplace and period of birth is compatible with the known residence of John Williams; and (4) the fact that four of her six Polk children bore the names of her proposed siblings. In brief:

- Jan 1834: **Joel Polk** bought land in S1 T8 R19 **adjacent to** his proposed brother in-law **Daniel Williams** (Child 3), with Daniel as witness and proposed brother-in-law **James Shannon** (see Child 2) as J.P. His proposed brother-in-law **Isaac Williams** (Child 7) bought adjacent land, same day, from same seller.

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<sup>51</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book D: 244–45; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8201845 > images 145–46.

<sup>52</sup> "Mississippi, U.S., State and Territorial Census Collection, 1792–1866," database with images, *Ancestry* ([https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1125/images/v229\\_2-0368](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1125/images/v229_2-0368) : accessed 5 July 2021) > 1841 Lawrence Co. > image 14, lines 13–14.

<sup>53</sup> Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 3, case 5071, Estate of William Weathersley (case label: Weathersby) includes documents for Weathersley's guardianship of Thomas B. Slater; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632820 > images 1170–1446. For Williamses, see specifically images 1246 (list of debtors), 1301–4 (estate sale), 1325–27 (inventory), 1331 (undated list naming Shannon), 1343–46 (29 August 1843 list).

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, particularly 1301–4 for the 1843 probate sale.

<sup>55</sup> For Isaac as Daniel's brother and Daniel M. (aka Daniel Mc) as Daniel's son, see Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 20, case 5560, Daniel Williams Estate; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632807 > images 1721–1858.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, especially 1723 (petition for administration).

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, images 1721–1858.

<sup>58</sup> 1850 U.S. census, Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 405 verso, dwell./fam. 112 (age 49—i.e., b. 2 June 1800–1 June 1801). **1860** U.S. census, Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 33–34, dwell./fam. 232 (age 59).

<sup>59</sup> The Joel Polk household has not been found in 1830. **1840** U.S. census, Lawrence Co., p. 73, line 19, credits them with 3 females and 1 male born 1825–30, 3 females born 1830–35, and 3 males born 1835–40.

- Mar 1839: Joel cosigned for a debt owed by **Daniel Williams** (Child 3) and **William Williams** (Child 5).<sup>60</sup>
- 1841: The unalphabetized state census shows the Joel “Poke” household sandwiched between **Daniel Williams** (Child 3) and “**Isach**” **Williams** (Child 7), two households from **James Shannon** (husband of Child 2) who was two doors from **John Williams** and **Joel Williams** (Child 9).<sup>61</sup> (The previous 1840 federal census is semi-alphabetized, destroying proximity clues.)
- 1846: Joel owned two tracts of land jointly with “**Williams**” (no first name assigned on tax roll), adjacent to his home place.<sup>62</sup>
- 1850: The U.S. census places the Polks next door to **Isaac Williams** (Child 7).<sup>63</sup>
- 1853: Joel witnessed when **Isaac Williams** (Child 7) made a deed of gift to his daughter Icy Walker.<sup>64</sup>
- Oct 1854: Joel and his proposed sister-in-law, the widowed **Elizabeth (Williams) Bridges** (Child 10) went to the land office on the same day and purchased adjacent tracts—or, more likely, Joel went alone and transacted Elizabeth’s business for her.<sup>65</sup>
- Aug 1860: **Isaac Polk**, who was enumerated in Joel and Mary’s 1850 home as a twelve-year-old, was in 1860 living, as overseer, in the Covington Co. home of the widow of **William Williams** (Child 5).<sup>66</sup>
- 1866: Amid **Isaac Williams**’ administration of the estate of his “brother **Daniel Williams**” (Child 3), **Joel Polk** notified authorities that he personally had posted the required public notices for the sale of Daniel’s goods.<sup>67</sup>

No probate has been found for Joel and Mary Polk. On the 1850 and 1860 censuses, four of the six children in their home bore names of Mary’s proposed siblings: **Elizabeth**, **Catharine**, **Isaac**, and **Joel** (the latter also being the name of the children’s father).

## 5. William Williams

Born c1805 in North Carolina,<sup>68</sup> William married about 1828, apparently in adjacent Covington Co., whose courthouse records for that era are destroyed. He was enumerated on the 1830 census of Covington with a female aged 20–30, a male child 0–5, and an unidentified male 10–15 (likely one of his brothers, or hers). Their next-door-neighbor on the unalphabetized census was “Britain” Bridges,<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book D: 354–55; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8201845 > image 211.

<sup>61</sup> “Mississippi, U.S., State and Territorial Census Collection, 1792–1866,” database with images, *Ancestry* ([https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1125/images/v229\\_2-0367](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1125/images/v229_2-0367) : accessed 5 July 2021) > 1841 Lawrence Co. > image 13, lines 26–30.

<sup>62</sup> “Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687>) > Browse > Lawrence > County tax rolls 1831–1846, Box 3697 > images 406–501.

<sup>63</sup> 1850 U.S. census, Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 405, dwell./fam. 112 (Joel and Mary Polk), dwell./fam. 113 (Isaac Williams).

<sup>64</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book E: 478; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 008201845 > image 600.

<sup>65</sup> “United States Bureau of Land Management ... Tract Books, 1800–c.1955,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-89W3-1WTV> : 2 February 2022) > Mississippi > Vol M7 > image 150 (original page 143, for Joel). Also image 97 (original page 91, for Elizabeth).

<sup>66</sup> 1860 U.S. census, Covington Co., pop. sch., p. 22, p.o. Williamsburg, dwell./family 146.

<sup>67</sup> Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 20, case 5560, Daniel Williams Estate; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632815 > images 1721–1858, especially 1797.

<sup>68</sup> 1850 U.S. census, Covington Co., pop. sch., stamped p. 306 *verso*, dwell./fam. 270 (age 45—i.e., b. 2 June 1804–1 June 1805). All other censuses place his birth 1800–10. **1830** U.S. census, Covington Co., p. 138 (penned), line 23. **1840** U.S. census, Covington Co., stamped p. 144 *verso*, line 22 (semi-alphabetic arrangement).

<sup>69</sup> 1830 U.S. census, Covington Co., p. 138 (penciled), lines 22 (“Briton” Bridges) and 23 (William Williams).

whose daughter Clarissa would marry **Robert Williams** (Child 7), and whose son Jeremiah Bridges would marry **Elizabeth Williams** (Child 10). William, a minister, died in Covington Co. in January 1860, of pneumonia.<sup>70</sup>

Although William Williams is enumerated as a resident of Covington County through the census of 1850 and his widow is enumerated there in 1860, he was frequently in adjacent Lawrence County. Each time, he was in the presence of one or more of the John Williams cluster:

- Nov 1835: William went to Augusta Land office with **Isaac Williams** (Child 7), a c200-mile round trip, where the two bought tracts less than a mile apart in Lawrence Co.<sup>71</sup>
- Apr 1836: **Daniel Williams** (Child 3), gave William a mortgage on 160 acres. After 18 years, the debt unpaid, William took the mortgage to the courthouse to have it recorded as a legal transfer to himself.<sup>72</sup>
- Aug 1836: William witnessed Lawrence Co. deeds for **Robert Williams** (Child 6) and Robert's father-in-law Brittain Bridges.<sup>73</sup>
- Nov 1836: William, although a resident of Covington Co., again purchased 40 acres of raw government land in Lawrence—this time less than a mile from **Robert Williams** (Child 6).<sup>74</sup>
- Mar 1839: William and **Daniel Williams** (Child 3) were sued jointly for a debt incurred by Daniel with William as his surety. When Daniel's land was seized to satisfy judgment, William (again a stated resident of Covington Co.) bought it at Sheriff's sale.<sup>75</sup>
- Nov 1842: William Williams and **Isaac Williams** (Child 7) served as commissioners settling the estate of William Griffith, for whom **Isaac Williams** and **John Williams** had been appointed previously to take the inventory.<sup>76</sup>
- Apr 1843: William Williams was sued jointly with **Daniel Williams** (Child 3); their surety was **Joel Polk** (husband of Mary, Child 4).<sup>77</sup>
- Bef 1849: William Williams purchased three acres in Lawrence Co. from Charles Slater for the use of Harmony Church, according to a 1849 deed by **Robert Williams** (Child 6).<sup>78</sup>
- Oct 1852: William Williams is named as administrator of estate of **John Williams**, when **Joel Williams** (Child 9) sold his one-tenth share.<sup>79</sup>

William died before the 1860 census on which his widow Rebecca headed his Covington Co. household. Sharing Rebecca's home that year was **Isaac Polk**, 23, "overseer,"<sup>80</sup> who had been enumerated in 1850

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<sup>70</sup> 1860 U.S. census, Covington Co., MS, mortality schedule, page not stated; "U.S., Federal Census Mortality Schedules Index, 1850–1880," *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/297942:3530?tid=71173579&pid=292311961633&hid=1032467864349> : accessed 4 July 2022).

<sup>71</sup> "United States Bureau of Land Management ... Tract Books, 1800–c.1955," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L9W3-14CT> : 2 February 2022) > Mississippi > Vol M7 > image 96 (original p. 90) and image 166 (original p.157).

<sup>72</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book C: 66–67; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8134328 > image 573.

<sup>73</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book C: 182–83; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8134328 > image 634.

<sup>74</sup> "United States Bureau of Land Management ... Tract Books, 1800–c.1955," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-99W3-1HSM> : 2 February 2022) > Mississippi > Vol M7 > image 96 (original p. 90).

<sup>75</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book D: 354–55; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8201845 > image 211.

<sup>76</sup> Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 2, case 5036, mislabeled as "Guffutidecd" [Griffith, dec'd.]; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632820 > images 29–40, specifically image 31 (bond), 37 & 39 (inventory).

<sup>77</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book D: 239–41; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8201845 > images 143–44.

<sup>78</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book E: 80; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8201845 > image 392.

<sup>79</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book E: 478; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8201845 > image 598.

<sup>80</sup> 1860 U.S. census, Covington Co., pop. sch., p. 22, p.o. Williamsburg, dwell./family 146.

as a 12-year-old in the home of **Joel Polk** and wife **Mary** (Child 4).<sup>81</sup> Covington’s probate records are destroyed for this era. The children cited for William in his census households of 1850 and 1860 included the names of his reassembled siblings and parents: **Rhoda Ann, John Isaac, and Mary**.

## 6. Robert Williams

Born about 1807 in North Carolina,<sup>82</sup> Robert wed Clarissa Bridges, daughter of Brittain Bridges, as documented by Brittain’s deeds and estate records. No record of the marriage has been found; at the time they wed (about 1829–30), her parents resided adjacent to **William Williams** (Child 5) in Covington County,<sup>83</sup> whose courthouse records for the era have been destroyed. Their marriage is dated from the birth of their son William B., whose census ages place his birth at 1829–30.<sup>84</sup> As with the other members of the John Williams cluster at White Sand, Robert’s interactions connect him firmly into the cluster—with no connections to any other Williamses of the region.

Sep 1835: Robert Williams’ wife’s brother Jeremiah Bridges married **Elizabeth “Betsy” Williams** (Child 10) with consent of her father **John Williams**; bondsman was **Nathan Williams** (Child 8).<sup>85</sup>

Oct 1835: Robert Williams went to the Augusta land office with **Joel Polk** (husband of Child 4), buying land with consecutive receipt numbers. Robert chose land in S28, just east of **John Williams’** land in S29.<sup>86</sup>

Aug 1836: Robert bought land with **William Williams** (Child 5) as witness.<sup>87</sup>

Dec 1838: Robert bought from absentee-owner **Neal Williams** (Child 1) the land Neal had purchased in 1835 with **Joel Polk** (husband of Child 4) as witness.<sup>88</sup> The land lay just a bit more than mile from **Joel Polk**.

1841 The unalphabetized state census places Robert in this cluster of consecutive households: **Daniel Williams** (Child 3), **“Joel Poke”** (Child 4), **Isach Williams** (Child 7), Isach Hainsworth, **James Shannon** (Child 2), William Griffith, **John Williams, Joel Williams** (Child 9), Daniel Malone, Lewis Bridges, Charles Slater, Efrom “Poke,” Franklin Hale, **Robert Williams**.<sup>89</sup>

Apr 1843: Robert, **Daniel Williams** (Child 3) and **Jeremiah Bridges** (husband of Child 10) all bought goods from estate sale of Thomas B. Slater,<sup>90</sup> for whom **Nathan Williams** (Child 8) had been overseer in 1841.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> 1850 U.S. census, Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 405 verso, dwell./fam. 112 (Joel & Mary Polk).

<sup>82</sup> The federal censuses cite his age with reasonable consistency. **1850**: Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 410, dwell./fam. 182, age 43 (i.e., born 2 June 1806–1 June 1807. **1860** Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 13 (upper left corner), dwell./fam. 89, age 52 (b. 2 June 1807–1 June 1808).

<sup>83</sup> 1830 U.S. census, Covington Co., p. 138 (penciled), lines 22 (“Briton” Bridges) and 23 (William Williams).

<sup>84</sup> 1850 Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 410, dwell./fam. 182. **1860** Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 12 (upper right corner), dwell./fam. 83.

<sup>85</sup> Lawrence Co., Marriage Book 2: 155.

<sup>86</sup> “United States Bureau of Land Management ... Tract Books, 1800–c.1955,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L9W3-14N2 : 2 February 2022>) > Mississippi > Vol M7 > image 111 (original page 105), Robert Williams, Receipt 2285; *ibid.* image 148 (original page 141), Joel Polk, receipt 2286; both on 3 October.

<sup>87</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book C: 183; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8134328 > image 634.

<sup>88</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book D: 536–37; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8201845 > image 304.

<sup>89</sup> “Mississippi, U.S., State and Territorial Census Collection, 1792–1866,” database with images, *Ancestry* ([https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1125/images/v229\\_2-0368](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1125/images/v229_2-0368) : accessed 5 July 2021) > 1841 Lawrence Co. > image 14, lines 13–14.

<sup>90</sup> Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 3, case 5071, Estate of William Weathersley (labeled as Weathersby), includes documents for Weathersley’s guardianship of Thomas B. Slater; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632820 > images 1170–1446, particularly 1301–4 for the 1843 probate sale.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, particularly image 2308.

- Sep 1854: **William Williams** “of Covington” (Child 5) purchased land in S35 T9N R18W, a mile from **Robert’s** land in S34.<sup>92</sup>
- May 1859 **William Williams** “of Covington” (Child 5) patented land in S3, T8N R18W, a mile from **Robert’s** land in S34 T9N R18W<sup>93</sup>
- 1877: Robert and Clarissa, are cited as still living as of 30 September 1876, being residents of Lincoln County, Mississippi, in guardianship proceedings for minor heirs of Clarissa’s father.<sup>94</sup>

No probate record has been found for Robert and Clarissa. The 1850 and 1860 censuses name ten children in their households—eight of whom bore the names of Robert’s proposed parents, himself, and his proposed siblings: **William B., Elizabeth, Mary, Ann, Rhoda, Robert, John** and **Nathan** Williams.

## 7. Isaac Williams

Born 22 March 1809, North Carolina,<sup>95</sup> Isaac married about 1832–33, **Mary Fontaine Griffith**.<sup>96</sup> No marriage record has been found; the time frame of the marriage is approximated from the birth of their first known child, c1833–34. Isaac died 4 November 1903 and is buried with Mary in the Old Williams Cemetery<sup>97</sup> created in the Southeast corner of the first tract patented to **John Williams** in 1826 (S29, T9N R18W), modern Jefferson Davis County.<sup>98</sup>

- Feb 1827: Isaac witnessed **John Williams’s** purchase of an enslaved woman. The justice of the peace they chose to notarize the bill of sale was **James Shannon**<sup>99</sup> who had married **Catherine Williams** (Child 2) in 1822.
- Aug 1833 Isaac made his first appearance on the Lawrence Co. tax roll, added between **John Williams** and **Daniel Williams**<sup>100</sup> (Child 3), whom Isaac called “brother” in 1863.
- Jan 1834: Isaac and **Joel Polk** (husband of Child 4) bought adjacent tracts of land from the same seller, on the same day, with Isaac’s conventionally proved brother **Daniel Williams** (Child 3) as witness and proposed brother-in-law **James Shannon** (husband of Child 2) as

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<sup>92</sup> “United States Bureau of Land Management ... Tract Books, 1800–c.1955,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-99W3-1HSM : 2 February 2022>) > Mississippi > Vol M7 > image 96 (original page 90).

<sup>93</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, “Search Documents by Type,” *General Land Office Records* (<https://gloreCORDS.blm.gov/search/default.aspx> : 18 June 2021), query for “Williams,” in the Mississippi counties of Jefferson Davis (formerly Lawrence), Lawrence, and Marion.

<sup>94</sup> Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 29, case 5509, Brittain Bridges Estate; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632825 > images 1302–1363, particularly 1344–1346; also images 2354–2415.

<sup>95</sup> Tombstone image at *Find A Grave* (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/41686489/isaac-williams>), “Isaac Williams” memorial created 7 September 2009 by Ann Berry McNair, tombstone image by Tamatha Howard Castle. The U.S. censuses all agree that he was born between 2 June 1808 and 1 June 1809. **1850** Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 405, dwell./fam. 113, Isaac Williams 41, *living next door to Joel and Mary Polk*. **1860** Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p.o. Monticello, p. 35, dwell. 237, fam. 236, Isaac Williams 51, *living next door to the widowed Elizabeth (Williams) Bridges*. **1880** Lawrence Co., pop. sch., Beat 4, ED 121, p. 335, dwell./fam.293, Isaac Williams, 71.

<sup>96</sup> *Find A Grave* (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/41686649/mary-fontaine-williams>), “Mary Fontaine ‘Polly’ Griffith Williams” memorial created 7 September 2009 by Ann Berry McNair, with tombstone image by Tamatha Howard Castle.

<sup>97</sup> Tombstone image at *Find A Grave* (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/41686489/isaac-williams>), “Isaac Williams” memorial created 7 September 2009 by Ann Berry McNair, tombstone image by Tamatha Howard Castle.

<sup>98</sup> Gregory A. Boyd, *Family Maps of Jefferson Davis County, Mississippi* (Norman, OK: Arphax Publishing Co., 2007), 62, marks the location of the “Old Williams Cemetery.”

<sup>99</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Record B: 24; imaged, *FamilySearch* digital film 8134328 > image 274.

<sup>100</sup> “Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687>) > Browse > Lawrence > County tax rolls 1831–1846, Box 3697 > images 24–43.

J.P.<sup>101</sup>

- Nov 1835: Isaac and **William Williams** (Child 5) made the c200-mile round trip to the land office at Augusta, buying adjacent tracts of land.<sup>102</sup>
- July 1841: Isaac and **John Williams** were appointed to appraise the estate of William Griffith.<sup>103</sup>
- Nov 1842: Isaac and **William Williams** (Child 5) filed an account of the Griffith estate.<sup>104</sup>
- June 1850: The census enumerated Isaac and family next door to **Joel & Mary Polk** (Child 4).<sup>105</sup>
- Feb 1853: Isaac and wife made deed of gift to daughter Icy F. Walker, with **Joel Polk** as witness.<sup>106</sup>
- May 1854: Isaac bought land from **Joel Polk** and wife Mary (Child 4).
- Nov 1855: Isaac cosigned promissory note for **Daniel Williams** (Child 3)<sup>107</sup> whom Isaac called “brother” in 1863.
- June 1860: The census enumerated Isaac next door to the widowed **Elizabeth (Williams) Bridges** (Child 10). **Daniel Williams** (Child 3) lived adjacent to Elizabeth on the other side.<sup>108</sup>
- 1863: Isaac requested administration of the estate of “brother” **Daniel Williams** (Child 3).<sup>109</sup>

Isaac’s children, as implied by the 1850 and 1860 censuses, included sons **John H.** and **William**.

## 8. Nathan Williams

Born c1811, Nathan’s birthplace is unstated in surviving records. He first appeared on a Lawrence County tax roll in 1835, coupled with another first-time taxpayer, **Joel Williams** (Child 9), who claimed a March 1813 birth on the census of 1900, although other censuses place his birth between 1812 and 1819. An evaluation of all known evidence suggest that Nathan was the elder. He would continue to appear in Lawrence County records through 1843, being taxed for himself and one or two enslaved people, but never land. He was consistently taxed in the John Williams cluster at White Sand<sup>110</sup> and was cited as a debtor in an 1843 estate transaction, but has been found on no subsequent record.

- Aug 1835 Nathan Williams served as bondsman for the marriage of **Joel Williams** (Child 9) and Laura McLemore<sup>111</sup>
- Sep 1835: Nathan Williams served as bondsman for the marriage of Jeremiah Bridges to **Elizabeth**

<sup>101</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book C: 213–16; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8134328 > images 649–51.

<sup>102</sup> “United States Bureau of Land Management ... Tract Books, 1800–c.1955,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-99W3-1HSM : 2 February 2022>) > Mississippi > Vol M7 > image 96 (original page 90, for William) and image 166 (original page 157, for Isaac).

<sup>103</sup> Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 2, case 5036, mislabeled as “Guffutidecd” [Griffith, dec’d]; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632820 > images 29–40, specifically image 31 (bond).

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, images 37 & 39 (inventory).

<sup>105</sup> 1850 U.S. census, Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 405, dwell./fam. 113 (Isaac Williams) and dwell./fam. 112 (Joel & Mary Polk).

<sup>106</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book E: 478; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8201845 > image 600.

<sup>107</sup> Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 20, case 5560, Daniel Williams Estate; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632807 > images 1721–1858, especially 1741.

<sup>108</sup> 1860 U.S. census, Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p.o. Monticello, p. 35, dwell. 237, fam. 236 (Isaac Williams), 238/238 (Elizabeth Bridges), 239/239 (Daniel Williams).

<sup>109</sup> Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 20, case 5560, Daniel Williams Estate; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632815 > images 1721–1858, especially 1723 (petition for administration), 1725 (petition for sale)

<sup>110</sup> “Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687>) > Browse > Lawrence > County tax rolls 1831–1846, Box 3697 > **1836**: images 131–33; **1838**: images 172–73; **1839**: images 248–49; **1840**: images 275; **1841**: image 302; **1842**: image 357. Nathan is missing from the 1842 roll although his name was drawn for jury duty that September; see Lawrence Co., “Minutes, Probate Court B, 1836–1840,” p. 227; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 5831893 > image 144.

<sup>111</sup> Lawrence Co., Marriage Book 2: 152.

- 1840: **“Betsy” Williams** (Child 10); **John Williams** gave permission for his “daughter” to wed.<sup>112</sup> Nathan is likely the male 20–29 in the household of **John Williams** 70–80 and female 50–60.<sup>113</sup>
- 1842: As **“N. Williams,”** Nathan is cited in the annual account of the guardianship of Thomas B. Slater, who had been found *non compos mentis* by an 1836 special jury to which **John Williams** was appointed. **“J. Williams”** is also cited in the annual account for providing “bagging, rope & Negroes Shoes” to the Slater estate. **Daniel Williams** (Child 3) was a creditor of the Slater estate in 1843.<sup>114</sup>
- 1843: Nathan appears to be the white male poll taxed to **John Williams** at White Sand.<sup>115</sup> John, himself, was long past poll age. All other proposed sons, all married at this time, are accounted for on the rolls.
- Aug 1843 Nathan Williams, **John Williams**, and **James Shannon** (husband of proposed Child 2) owed small notes to Slater’s estate.<sup>116</sup>

One issue remains unresolved with Nathan: his disappearance from the records after 1843. If that disappearance was due to his death there in Lawrence, without heirs, then he would not represent one of the ten shares divided among heirs in 1852. In that case, an additional child and heir remains unidentified. However, if Nathan left Lawrence Co. for Louisiana or Texas, as many Lawrence residents did in that decade, his share may have been held waiting his return, then eventually distributed. No subsequent records have been found for John’s estate. Those records also seem to have “disappeared” from the courthouse prior to the 1980s, considering that they are not mentioned in a rudimentary history of John’s family published in 1988 by a couple who said they had been researching the Williamses for many years.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Lawrence Co., Marriage Book 2: 155.

<sup>113</sup> 1840 U.S. census, Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 76, line 19, consecutively with Daniel, Isaac, and Robert Williams.

<sup>114</sup> Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 3, case 5071, Estate of William Weathersley (case label: Weathersby), includes documents for Weathersley’s guardianship of Thomas B. Slater; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632820 > images 2246–2522, particularly 2306–9 for the 1842 annual account and 1240–46 for the 1843 annual guardianship.

<sup>115</sup> “Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687>) > Browse > Lawrence > County tax rolls 1831–1846, Box 3697 > **1843**: image 377.

<sup>116</sup> Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 3, case 5071, Estate of William Weathersley (case label: Weathersby) includes documents for Weathersley’s guardianship of Thomas B. Slater; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632820 > images 1170–1446. For Williamses, see specifically images 1246 (list of debtors), 1301–4 (estate sale), 1325–27 (inventory), 1331 (undated list naming Shannon), 1343–46 (29 August 1843 list).

<sup>117</sup> Mary E. and Elias S. Sandel Sr., *The Williams Family in Lawrence County, Covington County, Lincoln County, Covich County, Mississippi, with Allied families of Jordan, Boyington, and Bridges* (N.P.: Privately printed, 1988). The Sandels included random documents from Brittain Bridges’s estate papers but none from John or Daniel Williams’s estate files or from the complicated Weathersley-Slater estate in which the Williamses participated. Their p. 50 refers to “Estate papers of John Holly Williams, Sr.” but the one and only citation is to Deed Book E, where Joel sold his inheritance to Simon Petitfils.

The Sandels mistakenly propose (p. 17) that Rhoda was born in 1790—although the 1850 census states her age as 70 and other censuses are consistent. They state that Rhoda was “either a Strickland or a Slater,” and that her mother was said to be named “Holly Strickland.” They also proposed six children for “John Holly” Williams (p. 20): Neal, Elizabeth, Daniel, Isaac, Joel, and “Robert Nathan”—the latter double-name merging two separate individuals. On p. 26 they declare a seventh son *John H.*, but provide no evidence for him, other than stating he was on the 1840 census. (No John H. Williams is enumerated in 1840—the only similar names are “John Williams” and “James H.” Williams.) On pp. 27 and 29, the Sandels propose an eighth child, William, stating that “Rev. William Williams [who] performed a wedding ceremony in Covington County in [on] May 26<sup>th</sup>, 1817 [was] the son of John Holly Williams b. 1767 and Rhoda Strickland” (despite the census placement of William’s birth at 1805). Numerous other individuals from the Crooked Creek and Topisaw Williamses are also randomly proposed as children because they were “the right age.” Page 95 states “Mary ‘Polly’ Williams was born 1800 N.C. married Joel Polk, b. 1795, S.C.” but presents no evidence for Mrs. Polk’s maiden identity—only the statement: “There is some

## 9. Joel Williams

Born March 1813 in North Carolina,<sup>118</sup> Joel first appeared on a Lawrence County tax roll in 1835, coupled with another first-time taxpayer, **Nathan Williams** (Child 8). In August 1835, Joel married Laura McLemore, with **Nathan Williams** as bondsman.<sup>119</sup>

Joel's placement as a son and heir of **John Williams** is solidified by the 1852 deed in which he sold his one-tenth share of his inheritance from John's estate.<sup>120</sup> During John's lifetime, censuses enumerate Joel next door to John. After John's death, Joel moved to Smith County, MS, but returned in 1858 and bought land adjacent to his father's old farm. Post-war, he would leave Lawrence County permanently.

- 1841: On the unindexed state census, Joel Williams is enumerated immediately after his father **John Williams**.<sup>121</sup>
- 1845: The state census, on which entries are arranged by first letter of the surname, places Joel in a cluster of Williamses, separate from other Williamses in the county. In sequence, that cluster is **Joel Williams, John Williams, Isaac Williams, Robert Williams, Daniel Williams**.<sup>122</sup>
- Oct 1852: Joel sold his one-tenth interest in **John Williams'** estate, noting that **William Williams** (Child 5) was administrator.<sup>123</sup>
- 1858: As a resident of Smith County, Mississippi, Joel bought Lawrence County land adjacent to his parental homeplace in Lawrence, in sections 20 and 29, T9N R18W.<sup>124</sup> The 1860 census shows that he returned temporarily to Lawrence to live.<sup>125</sup>
- 1863–66: Joel was a creditor of the estate of **Daniel Williams** (Child 3) administered by Daniel's "brother" **Isaac Williams** (Child 7).<sup>126</sup>

The 1850–1900 censuses identify thirteen children for Joel, including six bearing names from the John Williams cluster: **Anna J., John H., Rhoda A., William R., Mary E (C?), and Catherine**, as well as **Joel**.

## 10. Elizabeth Williams

Born 1812–15, in North Carolina,<sup>127</sup> Elizabeth's position in the family of John and Rhoda Williams is

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speculation that Mary 'Polly' may have been a daughter of John Holly Williams." Catherine and James Shannon are not discussed at all.

<sup>118</sup> 1900 U.S. census, Claiborne Co., MS, pop. sch., Beat 5, ED 169, Sheet 8A, dwell./fam. 152/153. Most other censuses are inconsistent. **1850** Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 404, dwell./fam. 99, places his birth between 2 June 1812 and 1 June 1813. **1860** Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 62, p.o. Monticello, dwell. 403, fam. 404, places his birth between 2 June 1814 and 1 June 1815. **1870** Jasper Co., MS, pop. sch., p. 519 (stamped), Center Beat, p.o. Paulding, dwell. 423, fam. 421, places his birth between 2 June 1818 and 1 June 1819. **1880** Copiah Co., MS, pop. sch., Beat 1, Martinsville Precinct, ED 17, p. 45 (penned), dwell. 384, fam. 396, places his birth between 2 June 1812 and 1 June 1813.

<sup>119</sup> Lawrence Co., Marriage Book 2: 152.

<sup>120</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book E: 477–78; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8201845 > image 598.

<sup>121</sup> "Mississippi, U.S., State and Territorial Census Collection, 1792–1866," database with images, *Ancestry* ([https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1125/images/v229\\_2-0368](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/1125/images/v229_2-0368) : accessed 5 July 2021) > 1841 Lawrence Co. > image 14, lines 1–14.

<sup>122</sup> "Mississippi, State Archives, Various Records, 1820–1951," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1919687>) > Browse > Lawrence > State census returns 1845 < image 22.

<sup>123</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book E: 478; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8201845 > image 598.

<sup>124</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book G: 286–87; imaged, *FamilySearch* digital film 8134329 > image 650.

<sup>125</sup> 1860 U.S. census, Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 62, dwell. 403, fam. 404.

<sup>126</sup> Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 20, case 5560, Daniel Williams Estate; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632815 > images 1721–1858, especially 1765–66.

<sup>127</sup> The fact that John Williams gave permission for his daughter "Betsy" to marry in August 1835 implies that she was underage—i.e., born after 17 September 1814. The 1850–1880 federal censuses variously state a birth between 2 June 1812

documented by the permission that **John Williams** gave in September 1835 for his “daughter Betsy Williams” to marry **Jeremiah Bridges**. **Nathan Williams** (Child 8) served as bondsman.<sup>128</sup> Several subsequent actions and events connect her to other individual members of the John Williams clusters:

- c1828     **Robert Williams** (Child 6) married Clarissa Bridges, sister of Jeremiah, and daughter of Brittain Bridges.<sup>129</sup>
- 1830:     **William Williams** (Child 5), the 1853 administrator of **John Williams’** estate, lived in adjacent Covington County, next door to the Brittain Bridges family.<sup>130</sup>
- 1843:     Elizabeth’s husband Jeremiah Bridges attended the estate sale of Thomas B. Slater with **Daniel Williams** (Child 3) and **Robert Williams** (Child 6). **Nathan Williams** (Child 8) had been Slater’s overseer in 1841; **John Williams** provided “bagging, rope, and Negro shoes” to Slater’s estate in 1843; **John Williams**, **Nathan Williams**, and **James Shannon** (proposed husband of Child 2) were all creditors of the estate in 1843.<sup>131</sup>
- 1845:     State census: Elizabeth and children appear to be tallied in **John Williams’s** household.
- 1850:     Elizabeth and children are all enumerated with **John and Rhoda Williams**.
- Dec 1852: Elizabeth Bridges entered a tract of raw government land (E½ NE¼ S1 T8N R19W).<sup>132</sup> It lay adjacent to, contiguous to, or no more than one-fourth mile from several other tracts of family land: (1) land that **Isaac Williams** (Child 7) and **Joel Polk** (husband of Child 4), both purchased on 23 January 1834,<sup>133</sup> land **Isaac Williams** (Child 7) had entered with Choctaw Script in April 1845,<sup>134</sup> and land that **Joel Polk** (Child 4) took out in July and October 1835, 1 November 1850, and 22 March 1854.<sup>135</sup> Elizabeth’s land lay a bit more than a mile north of the land **Neal Williams** (Child 1) bought in 1835 and sold in

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and 1 June 1815. Her 1900 census entry states that she was born March 1814, which means she would not have needed parental permission to marry in September 1835. Her November 1900 tombstone cites her birth on 13 March 1813. See **1850** Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 405 verso, dwell./fam. 121, Jno. Williams household. **1860** Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 923, p.o. Monticello, dwell. 238, fam. 237, Elisabeth Bridges household, *sharing home with “D. M. Williams 32 [Daniel Mc Williams, son of Daniel], living adjacent to Isaac Williams, proved brother of Daniel.* **1870** Lawrence Co., pop. sch., p. 154, T7 R18W, dwell./fam. 1209, home of daughter and son-in-law T. H. and M. L. Lee, misidentified as “E. Lee [rather than E. Bridges], 56, female, b. NC. **1880** Lawrence Co., pop. sch., Beat 4, ED 121, p. 37, dwell./fam. 239, as “Mother-in-Law Elizabeth Bridges, 65,” in home of James A. and Elizabeth Boyington, 3 households from Thomas H. and Mary L. Lee. **1900** Lawrence Co., pop. sch., Beat 4, ED 70, sheet 15A, dwell. 206, fam. 207, “Elizabeth Bridges M-in-law” in home of Thomas H. and Mariam M. Lee. *Find A Grave* (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/51599217/elizabeth-bridges>), “Elizabeth ‘Betsy’ Williams Bridges” memorial, created 25 April 2010 by Ann Berry McNair, with tombstone photo by “C. Jones.”

<sup>128</sup> Lawrence Co., Marriage Book 2: 155.

<sup>129</sup> For Elizabeth and Robert’s spouses being children of Brittain Bridges, see Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 29, case 5509, estates of Brittain Bridges and widow Lydia “Liddie”; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632825 > images 1302–1363; also images 2354–2415.

<sup>130</sup> 1830 U.S. census, Covington Co., p. 138 (penciled), lines 22 (“Briton” Bridges) and 23 (William Williams).

<sup>131</sup> Lawrence Co., Chancery Court Cases, Box 3, case 5071, Estate of William Weathersley (labeled “Weathersby”), includes documents for Weathersley’s guardianship of Thomas B. Slater; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8632820 > images 2246–2522, particularly 2306–9 for the 1842 annual account and 1240–46 for the 1843 annual guardianship, 1301–4 (estate sale), 1325–27 (inventory), 1331 (undated list naming Shannon) and 1343–46 (29 August 1843 list).

<sup>132</sup> “United States Bureau of Land Management ... Tract Books, 1800–c.1955,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L9W3-14SS : 2 February 2022>) > Mississippi > Vol M7 > image 148 (original page 141).

<sup>133</sup> Lawrence Co., Deed Book C: 213–16; imaged *FamilySearch* digital film 8134328 > images 649–51.

<sup>134</sup> U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, “Search Documents by Type,” *General Land Office Records* (<https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=1119591&docClass=SER&sid=g2afpduq.ekc#patentDetailsTabIndex=1> : 18 June 2021).

<sup>135</sup> “United States Bureau of Land Management ... Tract Books, 1800–c.1955,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L9W3-14SS : 2 February 2022>) > Mississippi > Vol M7 > image 148 (original page 141).

1838 to **Robert Williams** (Child 6).

Oct 1854: **Joel Polk** went to the land office with **Elizabeth Bridges**—or (more likely) he went alone and transacted business for both of them. Joel that day took out land in S12, T8N R19W, the section contiguous to Elizabeth’s land in W½ NW¼ S6 T8N R18W.<sup>136</sup> The land taken out for Elizabeth lay one-quarter mile from land that **Isaac Williams** (Child 7) had taken out three weeks earlier.<sup>137</sup>

#### SUMMARY

Two known documents specifically identify children and heirs of John Williams. In 1835, he gave permission for his “daughter Betsy Williams” to marry. In 1852, one-tenth share of John’s estate was sold by one heir, Joel Williams, who identified William Williams as the estate’s administrator. A third document specifically identifies kinships between two other members of the White Sand Williamses: Daniel Williams died in 1862, after which Isaac Williams requested administration of Daniel’s estate, calling Daniel his “brother.” Association and geographic settlement patterns—beyond reasonable doubt—identify Isaac, Daniel, William, Betsy, Joel, and five other White Sand Williamses (Neal, Catherine, Mary, Robert, and Nathan) as the remaining children and heirs of John Williams. The extent to which granddaughters of John were named Rhoda also implies that Rhoda was likely the mother of most (if not all) of John’s children, as opposed to being a late-life wife.

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<sup>136</sup> “United States Bureau of Land Management ... Tract Books, 1800–c.1955,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9W3-14TT> : 2 February 2022) > Mississippi > Vol M7 > image 97 (original page 91, Elizabeth Bridges) and image 150 (original page 143, Joel Polk)

<sup>137</sup> “United States Bureau of Land Management ... Tract Books, 1800–c.1955,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9W3-14TT> : 2 February 2022) > Mississippi > Vol M7 > image 97 (original page 91).