

Evidence Analysis

Research Question: Who was the wife of Curtis Haywood Guy Jr., who was born in Grenada, Mississippi, in April 1842 and died in June 1909 in Memphis, Tennessee?

1909 Last Will and Testament for Curtis Haywood Guy

1) Citation
Grenada County, Mississippi, Chancery Clerk, Will Record, vol B, pp 87-88, will of C.H. Guy, written 28 November 1904; digital image, <i>FamilySearch</i> (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-89Q8-GJM9 : accessed 23 January 2024), images 193-194 of 332, film 886730, DGS 5818352.
2) Source – Original / Derivative / Authored and describe
This is an official recorded copy of the last will written and signed by Curtis Guy in November 1904. A clerk recorded the will into a book during probate in June 1909, making this a derivative source .
3a) Information Item(s) related to research question 3b) Informant – name or hypothesize the informant and describe the relationship to the research subject 3c) Information Type – primary, secondary, or undetermined and describe
a) Information item – The document names Mary Trimble Guy as the wife of the testator, Curtis Guy. b) The informant is the creator and testator of the will – Curtis Guy c) Curtis Guy provided primary information regarding his relationships, property, and possessions when he wrote this will.
4) Evidence – Direct / Indirect / Negative and describe
Mary Trimble Guy is named in this document as Curtis Guy’s wife, so this is direct evidence because it answers the research question.
5) Analysis
Background Information Grenada County, Mississippi, lies towards the state's western side and was created in 1870 from the surrounding counties of Yalobusha, Tallahatchie, Carroll, Choctaw, Webster, and Montgomery. It is 449 square miles and, in 1910, had a population of 15,727. <i>Records availability:</i> Probate record-keeping began in 1870. There is no known record loss.
Source Analysis <i>Purpose:</i> The purpose of a will is to control the distribution of assets and real estate after an individual’s death. <i>Legal requirements/procedure:</i> Anyone who wanted to craft a valid will likely had to be at least 18 years old and of a sound mind. The testator was required to sign the will or could direct another person to sign in his place. Furthermore, “if not wholly written and subscribed by

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himself or herself, it shall be attested by two (2) or more credible witnesses in the presence of the testator...”¹

After the testator died, the will was presented to the probate court. Part of the validation process entailed the court clerk copying the will into the courthouse’s record book as the official record. The court then oversaw the estate administration following the will's instructions.

Financial implications: Curtis Guy Jr. left everything to his wife, Mary Trimble Guy. If she remarried or upon her death, their children would inherit/share the property and estate. Mary and Curtis Guy’s son from his first marriage, C.S. Guy, were named executors. Curtis wrote, “[No] Bond be required of them or either of them and that they be relieved of accounting or reporting to any Court.” There is no mention of scheduled payments or debts that must be paid.

Format/condition/legibility: The will was copied into a bound book in ink. The book’s page numbers are pre-printed and in numerical order. The wills do not appear to be in any chronological order. There are no tears or unusual markings on the pages.

The handwriting on the page is legible. The clerk who recorded this document seems to have taken care when copying, as there are few strikethroughs, no smudges, or rewritten words to indicate mistakes. The clerk wrote the word ‘and’ on a diagonal every time the word was used. It is unclear why.

This source was viewed on FamilySearch as a digitalized image. The image is clear and readable.

Provenance/chain of custody: The will was written by Curtis Guy, who signed and dated it before two witnesses, A.B. Boyd and A.S. Bill, in November 1904. It is presumed that it was kept in a safe place, untouched, until Curtis died in 1909, and it was presented to the court. This statement is supported by the fact that Curtis Haywood Guy appointed his son, C.S. Guy, one of the executors of his will. However, C.S. Guy’s last will, which named his father as executor, was proven in a probate court on 17 December 1907, over a year before Curtis Haywood Guy died.² His son’s death should have caused Curtis to rewrite his own will to exclude his deceased son, but that did not occur.

Reliability: The source's reliability is excellent because of the primary information from an identified informant.

Information Analysis

Curtis Haywood Guy was the will's creator, making him the informant. He had primary knowledge of his relationship with Mary Trimble Guy. There seems to be no influence regarding the accuracy of the information in the will, especially considering that two witnesses attested that Curtis was of sound mind. The accuracy of the information provided by Curtis Guy is very solid.

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Curtis directly names Mary Trimble Guy as his wife, which answers the research question. This is likely an accurate answer, given his knowledge of his relationships.

¹ “2020 Mississippi Code, Title 91 - Trusts and Estates, Chapter 5 - Wills and Testaments, § 91-5-1. Who may execute; signature; attestation,” *Justia Law* (<https://law.justia.com/codes/mississippi/2020/title-91/chapter-5/section-91-5-1> : accessed 20 January 2024).

² Grenada County, Mississippi, Chancery Clerk, Will Record, vol B, pp 79-80, will of C.S. Guy, proven 17 December 1907; digital image, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9Q8-GNXM?i=188&cc=2036959> : accessed 23 January 2024), images 189-190 of 332, film 886730, DGS 5818352.

1900 Census – Grenada, Mississippi

1) Citation
1900 U.S. census, Grenada County, Mississippi, population schedule, Beat 5, enumeration district (ED) 41, sheet 16B (stamped, 16 handwritten), dwelling 309, family 304, line 72, Curtis Guy household; digital image, <i>Ancestry</i> (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7602/images/4119871_00284?pId=27712495 : accessed 18 January 2024), image 32 of 51.
2) Source – Original / Derivative / Authored and describe
The census is considered an original record copy . The original enumeration sheets were microfilmed in the 1940s and destroyed afterward, so the microfilm and, later, the digitalized images are as close to the original as possible.
3a) Information Item(s) related to research question 3b) Informant – name or hypothesize the informant and describe the relationship to the research subject 3c) Information Type – primary, secondary, or undetermined and describe
a) Information item – On 22 June 1900, the Curtis Guy household in Beat 5, Grenada County, Mississippi, was enumerated as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curt – White, Male, born March 1843, age 57, married 23 years, born Mississippi, father born North Carolina, mother born North Carolina, farmer• Mollie – Wife, White, Female, born Dec 1856, age 43, married 23 years, nine children born, seven children living, born Mississippi, father born Alabama, mother born NC• Shelly – Son, White, Male, born Nov 1877, age 21, single, born Mississippi, father born Mississippi, mother born Mississippi• Linn T. – Son, White, Male, born March 1881, age 19, single, born MS, father born MS, mother born MS• Mary – Daughter, White, Female, June 1883, age 17, single, born MS, father born MS, mother born MS• Rebecca – Daughter, White, Female, July 1886, age 13, single, born MS, father born MS, mother born MS• Trimble – Daughter, White, Female, September 1890, age 9, single, born MS, father born MS, mother born MS• Fannie – Daughter, White, Female, December 1896, age 3, single, born MS, father born MS, mother born MS
The relevant information item for this source is that Mollie Guy was listed as Curtis Guy's wife in 1900. It is unclear if this Mollie is the same woman named in Curtis' will.

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- b) Even though there is **no named informant** for the census, Curtis or Molly was likely the informant because the birth month and year asked on the 1900 census would not have been information the children would have known about their siblings. The older children were born too close together to know that information for each other, but perhaps they would know about the younger children in the family. Neighbors would not usually know such details. Mollie and Curtis would be the only ones who could provide birth specificities.
- c) There is no known informant; therefore, the information type is **undeterminable**.

4) Evidence – Direct / Indirect / Negative and describe

Mollie Guy is enumerated as Curtis' wife. The evidence is **direct** because it answers the question regarding who Curtis' wife was.

5) Analysis

Background Information

Grenada County, Mississippi, lies towards the state's western side and was created in 1870 from the surrounding counties of Yalobusha, Tallahatchie, Carroll, Choctaw, Webster, and Montgomery. It is 449 square miles and, in 1900, had a population of 14,112.³

Source Analysis

Purpose: The main objective of the census is to count the population of the United States and obtain demographic information about its inhabitants, including their occupation, immigration status, and literacy level. The gathered data was then utilized to decide the allocation of government resources based on the size and makeup of the population.

The 1900 census is the only one that reported people's birth month and year. It was also the first time the number of years married, the number of children born to mother, and the number still living were asked. In addition, questions were recorded regarding an immigrant's naturalization process and how long they had been in the country. Finally, the 1900 census was one of the first censuses to ask whether a home or farm was owned or rented and whether the owned property was free of mortgage.

Legal requirements: Citizens were required, by law, to answer the enumerator's questions.

Chain of custody: The information for a household, as told to an enumerator, was written down on individual schedules. After enumeration was complete, the enumerators submitted the originals to their supervisors for verification. Once verified, the original sources were submitted to the Census Bureau. In the 1940s, the census originals were microfilmed and then destroyed.

Time-lapse: Enumeration for the 1900 census began on 1 June 1900. The Curtis Guy family was enumerated on 22 June 1900.

Format/condition/legibility: This census page is loose paper. The digitalized image from Ancestry is clear. The handwriting is legible but slightly sloppy, and numerous code markings are in the name and relationship columns. There are no strikethroughs or anything that looks like an error in writing.

³ "Grenada County, Mississippi Genealogy," *FamilySearch* (https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Grenada_County,_Mississippi_Genealogy : accessed 20 January 2024).

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Reliability: The reliability of this record is good. It appears the enumerator was very careful when taking down the information for this official government record, but human error must be considered once copying information is introduced.

Information Analysis

Even though it is very likely either Curtis or his wife, Mollie, were the informants for the record, given how much they would know about the specifics of their family, there is no known informant, so the information is undeterminable.

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The research question asks who Curtis' wife was. This document provides direct information that Mollie Guy is his wife. Since no known informant exists, more research must be done to corroborate this evidence.

Evidence Analysis

1891 Memoirs of Mississippi

1) Citation
<p><i>Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Mississippi: Embracing an Authentic and Comprehensive Account of the Chief Events in the History of the State and a Record of the Lives of Many of the Most Worthy and Illustrious Families and Individuals</i>, two volumes (Chicago, IL: Goodspeed Publishing Co., 1891), 1:832-833; digitalized, <i>Google Books</i> (https://www.google.com/books/edition/Biographical_and_Historical_Memoirs_of_M/G-pEAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1 : accessed 18 January 2024).</p>
2) Source – Original / Derivative / Authored and describe
<p>The book, published in 1891, is a biographical compilation of prominent families and individuals in Mississippi. The author likely utilized multiple sources, including oral histories and family bibles from profiled people. These sources were combined into a narrative with added commentary, making this an authored narrative.</p>
3a) Information Item(s) related to research question 3b) Informant – name or hypothesize the informant and describe the relationship to the research subject 3c) Information Type – primary, secondary, or undetermined and describe
<p>a) Item #1 – Curtis H. Guy (Jr) married Ione Thomas. Item #2 – After Ione’s death, Curtis married his second wife, Miss Mary Trimble. b) There is no named informant for this book. The featured individuals likely gave their biographical information as there are specific dates and births and other information regarding the multi-generational family that was unknown or found in public records. c) There is no known informant or author, which makes it undeterminable.</p>
4) Evidence – Direct / Indirect / Negative and describe
<p>The two information items that name two women as his wives are direct evidence because they each answer the research question.</p>
5) Analysis
<p>Source Analysis</p> <p><i>Purpose:</i> Historical and biographical books are created to document local, prominent families and their influences and contributions to their community. These books aim to preserve heritage and ancestry while offering insights into the area’s cultural, social, and historical aspects.</p> <p><i>Legal requirements:</i> It seems unlikely this book was subject to any legal requirements in its creation or its existence beyond copyright laws.</p> <p><i>Format/Condition/Legibility:</i> These are online images from a published two-volume set that was photocopied and later digitalized. The images are clear and free from any markings.</p> <p>The book is divided into chapters with illustrations, maps, and a table of contents. The print is difficult to read without magnification. Pages are numbered.</p>

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Setting: Likely, the author or compiler of the book conducted interviews with living family members in their homes to gather information about their family history. There's also the possibility that the featured individuals traveled to meet with the interviewer.

Source reliability: This book contains a plethora of historical and biographical information regarding the events and people that shaped the communities of Mississippi in the 1800s, but there is no author or compiler named and no cited sources for where the information came from. While there is a high possibility that the information came from personal and public records, there is no way of telling how many people the information passed through before being included in the book. The author's commentary further cements this as an authored narrative.

Information Analysis

Those featured in the book likely provided their autobiographical information, or biographical information was shared by family members who knew the subject, which means many people participated as informants in the creation of this book. However, the information is undeterminable since we do not even know the author's name.

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Two women, Ione Pink Thomas, and Mary Trimble, are named as being married to Curtis Guy Jr., directly answering the research question. Because there is no source for this information and no known informant, more research would have to be done to confirm that these two women were married to Curtis.