

Research Question: Who was the father of Margaret (Newlin) Joseph, born around 1825 in Smithfield, Ohio and died on 13 February 1901 in Inverness, Ohio?¹

Background: Margaret (Newlin) Joseph was my third great-grandmother. She was first enumerated at age 26 in 1850, when she lived with the William Price family in Smithfield, Jefferson County, Ohio. She lived there until shortly after the 1860 census; on 5 July 1860, she married Moses Ross Joseph, a widower with four children at home. Most online family trees suggest that Margaret's father was James Newlin born in 1776 in Pennsylvania to Elijah and Ann (McGrew) Newlin, but no documents directly corroborate that relationship. Those same family trees suggest Margaret had one brother, James Plummer Newlin. My research suggests that 1776 James Newlin was her father, and that Margaret and James P. had at least four other siblings, including a half-sister. The siblings have helped support the argument that 1776 James Newlin was her father.

1) Citation
Columbiana County, Ohio, Record of Deaths, vol. 3 (1886-1903): 117, 1901 entry for Margaret (Newlin) Joseph; Probate Court, Lisbon; digital image, FamilySearch (www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSO-G9ZR-V9C1-J : viewed 20 January 2024).
2) Source - Original / Derivative / Authored and describe
Derivative. The entries are written in the same hand, based on information provided by a person with either firsthand knowledge of the event (her physician or clergyman) or a person who obtained that information from the physician or clergyman (the tax assessor).
3a) Information Item(s) related to research question
3b) Informant - name or hypothesize the informant and describe relationship to research subject
3c) Information Type - primary, secondary, or undetermined and describe
3a) The death registry entry states Margaret's birth location was Smithfield, Ohio, and provides an implied birth year of 1825, providing information about where and when to search for her father.
3b) The identity of the informant is unknown but was likely either Margaret's physician or clergyman who reported the information to the probate court, or the same to local tax assessor, who then reported it to the probate court.
3c) If provided by a physician, the information type is primary as to the date, place, and cause of Margaret's death, because the physician would have that knowledge, and if the court record came from the tax assessor, the tax assessor would have obtained that information from the physician. However, her age and place of birth is likely secondary information; the physician may have obtained those facts from Margaret or her husband. If the death information was provided by a clergyman, it may be secondary information unless the clergyman was in attendance during her death.

¹ A year after she died, Inverness reverted to Highlandtown. Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Highlandtown,_Ohio : viewed 20 January 2024), "Highlandtown, Ohio," rev. 23:28, 28 February 2021.

4) Evidence - Direct / Indirect / Negative and describe

Indirect. The death registry does not provide any direct information about Margaret Joseph's father, but it does provide information that helps identify where he likely lived around the time of her birth

5) Analysis

Background: In 1856, Ohio passed a law that required "physicians, surgeons, and midwives to keep a registry of all the births and deaths" they "professionally attended."² They were then required to "deposit in the county clerk's office" a copy of the registry by 15 March of each year.³ The law contained a backstop: tax assessors were also required to "ascertain and record" all births, marriages, and deaths that happened in their townships, making "strict inquiry" of heads of household and using the registries of the clergymen, physicians, surgeons and midwives to obtain the information.⁴ The information was to be returned to the court of common pleas.⁵ Similar laws were in effect when Margaret died, with more frequent reporting required.⁶ A person who failed to comply, either through neglect or refusal, could be fined ten dollars for each offense.⁷

Source: Although image 291 of 639 indicates the entirety of Volume 3 is a "poor copy," the images are legible. The page with Margaret's information is not grainy. The records were kept at the probate court, as required by law, suggesting reliability. Margaret's death was probably recorded contemporaneously by her physician and reported to the probate court either the next month (March), or the next year by the tax assessor. The information within the source is consistent with other entries, although some of the other pages contain more parental information.

Information: The information in the record book was copied from either the physician's own records or the tax assessor's collection of the same information, which raises the possibility of errors. The physician was likely a reliable reporter, as was a clergyman, although the clergyman probably did not have firsthand knowledge of the cause of death and may not have had firsthand knowledge of the date of death.

² Joseph R. Swan, *The Revised Statutes of the State of Ohio of a General Nature*, in force August 1, 1860 (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1870), 1411 "An Act to provide for the registration of births, marriages and deaths in Ohio," ; digital image, Google Books (https://books.google.com/books?id=V7swAQAAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false : viewed 20 January 2024). Most sources state that Ohio did not require death records until 1867; because it is irrelevant to the research question, I have not researched this conflict between the earlier statute and the research aids. For an example of a research aid providing the 1867 date, see "Vital Records at the Archives & Library of the Ohio History Collection," Ohio History Connection (<https://ohiohistory.libguides.com/c.php?g=707334&p=5024306> : viewed 20 January 2024).

³ Swan, *Revised States of the State of Ohio* [1870], 1411.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1411-1412.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 1412.

⁶ Florian Giauque, *The Revised Statutes of the State of Ohio in force January 1, 1890* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke & Co., 1894), 1581-1582, §§ 6395, 6396; digital image, Google Books (https://books.google.com/books?id=ypozAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false : viewed 20 January 2024).

⁷ *Ibid.*

Evidence: The death registry entry provides two key pieces of evidence to help determine the identity of Margaret's father: a year (1825) and a location (Smithfield, Jefferson County, Ohio), allowing a more focused search for a man with a name like Newlin in that time and place.

1) Citation

Newland, Robert E. and Newland, Leon L., *The Newland (Newlon) Family* (Bedford, Indiana: 1946), pp. 5-8, 10, 12, 69; images, Ancestry.com (www.ancestry.com/search/collections/29869/ : accessed 21 January 2024).

2) Source - Original / Derivative / Authored and describe

Authored. Robert E. Newland and Leon L. Newland consulted records and used their discretion to decide which information to include.

3a) Information Item(s) related to research question

3b) Informant - name or hypothesize the informant and describe relationship to research subject

3c) Information Type - primary, secondary, or undetermined and describe

3a) There are two main pieces of information relevant to the research question: first, the varied spellings of the name "Newlin" (the spelling adopted by Margaret and her siblings, which the authors state was used by the descendants of their branch of the family); second, a potential name for her father, James Newlin, born in 1776, who married Ann Lytle. The pamphlet also provides clues as to family given names and others who may have resided in Ohio at times adjacent to the research subjects, including the likely father of Margaret: James Newlin of Steubenville, Ohio, who married Nancy Jack.⁸

3b) The authors relied on a variety of sources to describe the different spellings of "Newlin." To identify families, they relied on records like a family bible, court records, and other family papers. The identities of the informants are therefore unknown.

3c) The information in the book is undetermined because we do not know who provided it.

4) Evidence - Direct / Indirect / Negative and describe

The information about the Newlin name is indirect evidence that helps identify pertinent records. The names of the Newlin descendants are also indirect evidence because the names themselves do not precisely answer the research question.

5) Analysis

Background: The pamphlet was written by Newland descendants, with the cooperation of other descendants.⁹ The stated purpose was to "record, insofar as possible, the genealogy and history of the descendants of William and Hannah (Benson) Newland" of Chester County, Pennsylvania.¹⁰

The authors examined a family bible as part of their research and noted that the bible had been edited by Mark and Charles Kerr in 1795. That indicates the edition of the bible, not the persons who completed the family tree.¹¹ However, the publication year of the bible does suggest that the Elijah and Ann (McGrew) Newland family tree they examined may have been

⁸ Newland & Newland, *The Newland (Newlon) Family*, 69.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 72.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹ *The Holy Bible*, Mark Kerr and Charles Kerr, editors (Edinburgh: Mark and Charles Kerr, His Majesty's Printers, 1789); digital images, Internet Archive (<https://archive.org/details/holybiblecontain00kerr/> : viewed 21 January 2024).

completed by someone with contemporaneous knowledge of at least some of the facts within it.

Source: The imaged copy appears to have been acquired from a personal collection because pages 57-58 have handwritten annotations, and page 72 has a continuation of those notes. The authors' thanks at the conclusion of the pamphlet state they spent twenty years researching the family.

Information: Because the information is of an undetermined type, it can only be treated as clues and should not be accepted as fact. The authors did not use citations, so it is somewhat difficult to replicate their findings. I asked the Historical Society of Pennsylvania whether they had the Elijah and Ann (McGrew) Newland bible cited to in the pamphlet (page 12) and they did not have it. It might be held by the Westmoreland County Historical Society, which does not seem to have an online catalog.

Evidence: The Newland pamphlet represents twenty years of research with the goal of identifying the parents of William and Hannah (Benson) Newland, the grandparents of 1776 James Newlin. While not supported by citations, the work appears solid to the extent I have tested the statements. Exploration of the other James Newlins listed in the pamphlet who were of the right age to have children in Ohio around the first two decades of 1800 ruled them out as candidates.

1) Citation

1880 U.S. census, Belmont County, Ohio, pop. schedule, Richland Township, ED 30, p. 24 (handwritten), dwelling 226, family 235, James P. Newlin; digital image, FamilySearch (www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GYB4-97TB : viewed 20 January 2024), citing NARA microfilm publication T9, roll 995.

2) Source - Original / Derivative / Authored and describe

Derivative. Census records are considered duplicate originals but are not "originals" in the formal sense of the term. (EE 1.25; Mills NGSQ article in assignment)

3a) Information Item(s) related to research question

3b) Informant - name or hypothesize the informant and describe relationship to research subject

3c) Information Type - primary, secondary, or undetermined and describe

3a) The census data provides information about the birthplace of Margaret's possible father, and potentially places him in Ohio at about the time of James P.'s birth (implied birth year of 1817).

3b) The informant could have been a neighbor, but was more likely James P., his wife, or either of their children because their children were adults in this census. James Plummer Newlin is a probable brother of Margaret (Newlin) Joseph, and probably had knowledge of their parents' birth locations.

3c) Primary as to the location of the family; assuming it was not a neighbor, both the person reporting that information and the enumerator would have that knowledge. Secondary as to the birthplaces of James P. Newlin's parents and James P.'s age because neither James P. Newlin, his children, nor his wife would have firsthand knowledge of that information.

4) Evidence - Direct / Indirect / Negative and describe

Indirect. The census data provides information about the potential birthplaces of Margaret's father.

5) Analysis

Background: The 1880 census was taken by enumerators hired by the supervisors of the census, rather than the marshals previously used.¹² The supervisors and the superintendent of the census were all presidential appointees.¹³ The numerators were required to personally visit each house and family in their assigned areas, and obtain the required information from "the head of such family, or of the member there of deemed most credibly and worth of trust."¹⁴ However, if no one was available, the enumerator could seek the information from the closest neighbors.¹⁵

Source: The digital image of the census is considered a duplicate original. The information is as accurate as it could be, depending on the informant. As an original record, created close in time to the events it recorded, it is a preferred source.

Information: The document is legible, but a bit faded. The digital image on FamilySearch is much easier to read than the image on Ancestry. The information could have been provided by any one of the four residents of the household, as they were all adults, or a neighbor. The person who provided the names of the household would have firsthand knowledge about who lived there, and perhaps firsthand knowledge of their occupations. The ages, birthplaces, and birthplaces of their parents would be secondhand knowledge (unless James or Mary Newlin provided the information; then it would be firsthand knowledge about their own children).

Evidence: The census provides several pieces of information that could be helpful in identifying Margaret's father: James P. was a farmer, which might indicate his father's occupation. He was born around 1817 in Ohio, which places his parents in the state at that time. And the census indicates his parents may have been born in Pennsylvania and Ireland. Other probable siblings' census information corroborates this reporting.

¹² "1880 Overview," United States Census Bureau (https://www.census.gov/history/www/through_the_decades/overview/1880.html?CID=CBSM+History : viewed 21 January 2024).

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.