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Sencabaughs of Prince Edward Island

The Lost Children of Jacob Sencabaugh

by Kathie Sencabaugh

As genealogists, amateur or professional, we are all accustomed to encountering stumbling blocks. In tracing ancestral lines, we are stopped by a male ancestor who appears to have materialized, full-grown, out of nowhere; or by a female ancestor identified on her gravestone only as "his beloved wife Mary." In tracing descendant lines, we encounter many children whose existence is supported by baptismal or census records, and who subsequently disappear into the selfsame black hole of oblivion from which their mysterious ancestors apparently emerged. These are indeed frustrating situations. Yet perhaps most maddening of all is to encounter one single mention of an individual, linked neither to parents nor to spouse nor to children, but bearing our surname, and to have no idea of his or her place in the family tree.

This situation occurs not once, but twice, in the family of Jacob Sencabaugh of Prince Edward Island (PEI). In one case, a short death notice provides the only reference to Benjamin Sencabaugh of Lot 61. In the second case, an otherwise unidentified Agnes Sencabaugh witnesses the marriage of one of Jacob's daughters. Neither one of these two individuals appears in any other records. The puzzle is further compounded by the baptismal record of David Benjamin Sencabaugh. This article centers on the family of Jacob Sencabaugh, fifth son of William Sencabaugh the Loyalist of PEI, and summarizes the current state of research on the identity of Benjamin Sencabaugh, David Benjamin Sencabaugh, and Agnes Sencabaugh.

The Family of Jacob Sencabaugh

We know less about the life and death of Jacob Sencabaugh than of most of his broth-

ers. Baptismal records state that he was born 31 August 1800, in Murray Harbour, PEI, to William Sencabaugh and his wife Ruhamah.¹ On 5 March 1825 he married Charlotte Dixon (or *Dickson*, as it is sometimes spelled), born in Scotland ca. 1802.² Early baptismal records exist for five children of this couple, as follows:

- Jacob Sensebo (sic), born 4 December 1827, baptized 29 January 1828³
- Ruhamah Sencabaugh, born 19 May 1832, baptized 9 February 1833
- Charlotte Sencabaugh, born 28 June 1835, baptized 14 September 1837⁴
- Henrietta Sencabaugh, born 27 January 1838, baptized 18 October 1838¹
- Elizabeth Horton Sencabaugh,⁵ born 1 June 1840, baptized 4 April 1841

In addition to these five, an apparent sixth child, William, met an untimely end; *The Royal Gazette*, 6 January 1848, reported that "Last week William Sencabaugh, son of Mr. Jacob Sencabaugh of Murray Harbour, was accidentally killed by the falling of a tree..." As yet we have found no baptismal record for this child, and, regrettably, the newspaper gave no further details as to his age. (It should be noted, however, that

is no further record. It is entirely possible that the William who was killed by the falling tree was Benjamin's son, not Jacob's.)

Jacob was the only one of William's ten children to move to Lot 61, in the area of Gaspereaux, where, somewhere near the time of his marriage in 1825, he leased 58 acres. We find Jacob enumerated in the 1841 Census in Lot 61, with a household of nine persons, eight born in PEI, one in Scotland. Religion of all was designated as Church of Scotland. The household consisted of one male age 45-60 (Jacob), one female 16-45 (his wife, Charlotte Dixon, born 1802), one male under 16, and 6 females under 16. Matching the census records to the baptismal records, it seems most likely that the male under 16 was either the son Jacob, above, of whom there are no records after his baptism, or the unfortunate William; and four of the females under 16 can be accounted for by Ruhamah, Charlotte, Henrietta, and Elizabeth, above. A fifth daughter - in fact, the oldest of Jacob's daughters - was Mary Ann, whose relationship to this family was documented with the discovery of her marriage announcement in the

Royal Gazette.⁶ This leaves possibly one additional daughter unaccounted for, although, because the census tallies included all residents of the household, including relatives, lodgers, and hired help, this last young girl was not necessarily Jacob's daughter.

In 1859, Jacob's daughter Elizabeth married David Hugh Logan of Georgetown; and on 6 February 1860, his daughter Ruhamah married Henry Baker Moore, of Lot 61. We again find Jacob and his family counted in the census of Lot 61 in 1861, but by this time his household consisted of only seven persons, two married and five

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