

WILLIAM G. COUNTS

Submitted by David Tucker

William G. Counts was born on April 21, 1821 to Philip Counts and Julia Ann Gose. His Kentucky Death Certificate #9087 states that he was born in Lee County, Virginia. It is certainly possible that the Counts family was living in Lee County at the time of his birth but this might also be an error on the part of the informant. In 1820 the Philip Counts family is shown in the Russell County, Virginia federal census records. By 1830 the family is shown in census records of Scott County, Virginia.

Over the years a great deal of erroneous information has been printed regarding this William Counts, son of Philip and Julia Ann. That information has principally concerned the following areas:

1. HIS MIDDLE INITIAL.

Many researchers show his middle initial as “D” instead of “G”. To resolve this issue a search was made of all census records from 1850 through 1910. There was not one William D. Counts shown in Carter County during that time frame but there were several census records showing him as William G. Counts. Next a search was made of the deed indexes for Carter County and no William D. could be found. His Kentucky Death Certificate shows his middle initial as “G” and not “D”. His Will written in 1897 and amended in 1914 shows in name as William G. Counts. I suspect that this could be a simple typing error made and posted somewhere in the past and then perpetuated by others who failed to do their own research. Although it is speculative on my part I suspect his middle name might be “Gose” for his mothers family.

2. HIS FIRST WIFE.

I do not know where it originated that his first wife was Mary Roe but it has been perpetuated by a number of people on the World Connect Project. The first record of her is in the 1850 census of Carter County as Mary E. The death certificate of their eldest daughter, Sarah Ann Counts Boggs gives her mothers maiden name as Elisabeth Gost (a common spelling for Gose). The 1852 Carter County Birth Records for their son John shows her name as Elizabeth Gose. The 1853 Carter County Birth records for a female infant shows her name as Mary Gose. I have not found any death certificates for their sons, John and Christopher. Not one record indicates that his first wife was a “Roe”. It should be noted that the “Gose” name is common to Russell County, Virginia and that the maiden name of William’s mother was Julia Ann Gose. It would not surprise me if William married a cousin. Mary E. Counts died on February 14, 1867 and is buried in the William Counts Farm Cemetery at Leon, Carter County, Kentucky.

3. NUMBER OF CHILDREN.

Most researchers indicate that William G. Counts and Mary E. had four children when in fact they are known to have at least five. An infant female (no name) was born to them in 1853 and died one day later. This error is relatively minor since only four children are known to have lived to maturity; they were, Sarah, John W., Christopher C. and James Robert. It is also possible that there were other children who died at a young age between census records and time periods not covered by the Birth Records of Carter County. It should also be noted that on the World Connect Project many people show them with a son Barnett born about 1846. I am not sure where this first got started but I have never found a Barnett mentioned in their family and the 1850 census shows that they were married within the year.

4. DATE OF HIS FIRST MARRIAGE.

Several researchers have shown them married after 1850 but they are listed in the 1850 census of Carter County as husband and wife and the census states that they were married within the year. Since the census was taken on August 23rd they would have been married sometime between August 23, 1849 and August 23, 1850. The Gose family was not a Carter County family at that time. They were primarily located in Russell County, Virginia and some researchers show Mary Elizabeth Gose being born in Russell County. I suspect that they may have been married in Virginia and had just moved to Carter County, possibly in late 1849. Research in the tax records, if they exist, might provide some additional data on this subject.

5. DATE OF HIS SECOND MARRIAGE.

One source on the World Connect Project shows his second marriage to Mary Eleanor Littleton Huntsman as occurring on August 8, 1874. I have not been able to confirm this marriage date at this time. In the 1900 census both William and Mary state that they have been married 20 years which would put the marriage at about 1880. This simply needs to be verified if possible in the Carter County marriage records.

6. CHILDREN BY HIS SECOND MARRIAGE.

Some sources show that William G. Counts and Mary E. Littleton had a daughter together, about 1875. Her name was given as Nora E. Counts. This is not correct. The 1880 census of Carter County, Kentucky does show 5 year old Nora E. Counts but she is listed as the grand daughter of William and not his daughter. Note also that William's son John, 27 years of age, is also living in the family and is shown as married although no wife is shown for him. Additional information shown under John's name will show that Nora E. was the daughter of John and Martha E. Cox. Note also that in the 1900 census William's wife Nellie states that she has 0 children and that 0 are living. Earlier census records show that she and John Huntsman also had no children. Other questions surrounding Nora E. Counts and whether or not she is John's daughter surface in the 1910 census. In the 1910 census John and his wife state that they have been married 25 years (about 1885) and she states that she has had only four children and all four are living. All four are living with them or next door. They also state that each has been married only one time. So at this point we have completely conflicting statements. It seems likely that in 1910 John's wife

was the one who supplied information on the family to the census enumerator. She conveniently left out the fact that her husband had previously been married.

A Nora Counts Sammons did have a daughter Blanche in 1913 in Greenup County. Census records indicate that she married a Clarence Salmons/Sammons in the latter part of the 1890's. A Nora Sammons, born about 1875 did die in Boyd County in 1963 and may be the same as Nora Counts born about 1875. Her death certificate might confirm her parents. The name is actually Salmons but is shown in many records as Sammons.

1850 Federal Census

Carter County, Kentucky

District No. 1

August 23, 1850

225/225

William Counts	29 (1821)	Farmer	RE\$1000	VA.	Married in Year
Mary E.	23((1827)			VA.	Married in Year

Although William G. Counts indicates a \$1,000 worth of real estate in the 1850 census the first land purchase I have found for him is on January 14, 1852. The Deed Book Index for Carter County shows that on that date he purchased from John Vincent and wife 242 acres on Little Sandy. It is shown as recorded in Deed Book 6, page 52.

1860 Federal Census

Carter County, Kentucky

July 25, 1860

Grayson Post Office

840/760

William Counts	39 (1821)	Farmer	RE\$1500	PE\$1114	VA.
Mary E.	33 (1827)	Weaver			VA.
Sarah A.	9 (1851)		Attending School		KY.
John W.	8 (1852)		Attending School		KY.
Christopher C.	3 (1857)				KY.
B. Barnett	13 (1847)		Attending School		OH.

1870 Federal Census

Carter County, Kentucky

August 2, 1870

Precinct No. 6, Grayson Post Office

133/125

William Counts	48 (1822)	Farmer	RE\$2500	PE\$1350	VA.
Sarah	19 (1851)	K. House			KY.
John	17 (1853)	Farmer	Attended sch. in yr.		KY.
Christopher	13 (1857)	Farmer	Attended sch. in yr.		KY.

Robert 8 (1862)
KY.

Polly Mullins 9 (1861) KY.

On December 15, 1873 Wm. G. Counts purchased 40 acres from Ed. F. Dulin, etal on Little Fork. It is recorded in Deed Book F, page 181.

On November 7, 1874 William G. Counts purchased 160 acres on Little Sandy from William S. Smith and wife. It is recorded in Deed Book F, page 424.

On April 3, 1880 he bought land on Everman's Creek from Margrat Maddicks, etal.

On July 15, 1818 he bought land on Everman's Creek from Nancy Smith.

On July 31, 1881 he bought land on Everman's Creek from William F. Jacob's.

On Aug. 2, 1881 he bought land on Everman's Creek from Mary Huntsman, etal.

On July 26, 1881 he bought land on Everman's Creek from Clinton Vaughn & W.

On May 27, 1882 he bought land on Everman's Creek from Andrew Eversole & W.

On December 9, 1884 William & W. sold to his son Christopher Counts, Jr. 164 acres on Sugar Camp Branch.

On December 28, 1886 Wm. G. & W. sold to his son John W. Counts 140 acres on Wolf Creek.

These are the only property sales shown in the Carter County Deed Books for William G. Counts but he did transfer property to his son James' wife and children in his Will.

There is no mention in the Deed Index of the amount of land purchased. Mary Huntsman was William G. Counts second wife and all of these purchases might have been releases to an estate.

1880 Federal Census

Carter County, Kentucky

Precinct No. 5, June 25, 1880

389/389

Wm. G. Counts	Head	59 (1821) Md.	Farmer	VA.	VA.	VA.
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Eleanor	Wife	51 (1829) Md.	K. House	KY.	KY.	KY.
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John W.	Son	27 (1853) Md.	Farm Labor	KY.	VA.	VA.
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Christopher	Son	23 (1857) S	Farm Labor	KY.	VA.	VA.
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Robert	Son	18 (1862) S	Farm Labor	KY.	VA.	
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VA.

Nora E.	G. Dau.	5 (1875) S		KY.	KY.	KY.
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J. W. Steward	Hired	35 (1845) Wd.	Farm Labor	KY.	TN.	KY.
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Rebecca I. Steward	Serv.	14 (1866) S.	K. House	KY.	TN.	KY.
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Note that John is shown as married but no wife is shown. Since John W. is shown as

married and it is known that Christopher and Robert are still single then Nora E. must be John's child.

1900 Federal Census
Carter County, Kentucky
Maddox Precinct
June 20, 1900
274/276

Wm. G. Counts	Head	79 (April 1821)	Md. 20 yr.	VA.	VA.	VA.
Nellie	Wife	70 (Mar. 1830)	Md. 20 yr.	KY.	VA.	VA.
Sarah	G.Dau.	14 (Mar. 1886)		KY.	KY.	KY.
Carrie M.	G.Dau.	12 (Sept. 1887)		KY.	KY.	KY.
Genoa	G.Dau.	10 (Dec. 1889)		KY.	KY.	KY.
Julia	G.Dau.	7 (Aug. 1892)		KY.	KY.	KY.
Hattie	G.Dau.	4 (Sept. 1895)		KY.	KY.	KY.
Jennie	D in L	31 (July 1868)	Wd. 5/5	KY.	VA.	VA.

Note: On the 1900 census William shows that he has been married 50 years but this is marked out and 20 is inserted. Nellie also gives 20 years and states that she has 0 children/0 living. This would indicate that they had no children together and that they were married about 1880. It would also seem to confirm that his first marriage was about 50 years earlier, in 1849/50. His sons John W. and Chris C. are living just 2 or 3 houses away.

WILLIAM G. COUNTS
WILL BOOK 2
PAGE 246

This February the 23rd 1897

Know all men by these presents, that:

I William G. Counts do hereby make my last Will and Testament on Earth, first of all I Will to Feeby Jane Counts widow of James R. Counts and his and her children, Sarah Alice Counts and Cora M. and Jenoh (?) Julley E. and Hattie E. Counts. The 5 children of Feeby Jane and James R. Counts The home farm which I now own and now live on near Leon, Ky. and all the personal property and farming implements on hand at my decease. And also the household goods and kitchen furniture. I also will to my dear beloved Wife a living out of the same property during her life.

Wm G Counts

Attest:

John Littleton
Wat Pope

This August the 17th 1914

I William G. Counts, of Leon Ky.

Desire to amend my Will which I made the 23rd day of February 1897. First I desire that Sarah Alice Counts have her part to include her house where she now lives, and also Jenoh M. to have her house and her part where she now lives because they built same at their own expense.

**Wm G Counts
his X mark**

Attest:

**G. W. Littleton
T. J. Littleton**

**State of Kentucky
County of Carter**

I Arthur Jarvis, Clerk of the Carter County Court, certify that the forgoing instrument of writing was produced in open court and offered for probate and the same being established as the last Will and Testament of Wm Counts deceased and ordered to be recorded as such, which is done accordingly.

Witness my hand this the 16th day of June 1919.

**Arthur Jarvis, Clerk
By Ella Jarvis, D C**

William G. Counts Kentucky Death Certificate #9087 gives his date of birth as April 24, 1821 in Lee County, Virginia. His father is shown as Phillip Counts and his mother as Julia Gose. His death certificate further states that he is widowed and that he died on March 29, 1919 at 97 years, 11 months and 5 days of age. The cause of death is given as senility. He was buried on March 3, 1919 in the Counts Cemetery. His place of death is given as Hitchens, Carter County, Kentucky.

WILLIAM COUNTS FARM CEMETERY

Leon, Kentucky

Cecil Kitchen	February 16, 1887	December 21, 1963
Hattie Kitchen	September 1895	June 9, 1932
Mary E. Counts	July 23, 1829	February 14, 1867
William G. Counts	NO MARKER	
John M. Counts	NO MARKER (Note: error, middle initial is actually a "W".)	
Christopher C. Counts	NO MARKER	
Martha Cox Counts	NO DATES	Wife of John

(Note: Martha Cox Counts was John's first wife. (It appears that some of this information was supplied by someone since many of them indicate stones with no

dates.) Kentucky Death Certificates show that many of the unmarked graves belong to the grandchildren of William G. Counts.

William, John and Christopher do not have any stone markers according to the person that did this cemetery. They must have known from their own personal knowledge that they were buried at this location. It is also interesting to note that most of the family does not have Kentucky Death Certificates even though some of them died after they were required in Kentucky.

**Known Children of
William G. Counts and Mary E. Gose**

1. SARAH ANN COUNTS, was born May 21, 1851 according to her Kentucky Death Certificate #21685. Since her parents were living in Carter County in the 1850 census she was undoubtedly born there although her death certificate gives her place of birth as Russell County, Virginia. Her fathers name is given as William G. Counts, born in Russell County, Virginia and her mother as Elizabeth Gost, also born in Russell County, Virginia. At the time of her death she is a widow. Her date of death is given as August 17, 1917. The Marriage Records of Carter County, Book 1838, page 300 show that Sarah A. Counts and Ephraim Boggs were married on December 27, 1871. According to their Death Certificates Ephraim is buried at Boggs Farm Cemetery and Sarah is buried in the Boggs Cemetery, presumably these are the same cemetery.

2. JOHN W. COUNTS, was according to the Carter County Birth Records born on October 6, 1852 to William Counts and Elisabeth Gose. Cinderilla Rice was the midwife. The 1860 census shows him as 8 and the 1870 census shows him as 17. In the 1870 census records the William G. Counts family is living in Precinct #6, Dwelling #133. Just 8 houses away in Dwelling #141 is the William and Belle Cox family including their 11 year old daughter Martha. Both households were enumerated on August 2nd. The 1880 census of Carter shows the William G. Counts family and William's son John W. is living in the household. He is shown as 27 years of age and married although no wife is shown for him. Also in the family is 5 year old Nora E. Counts and she is shown as the grand daughter of William G. Counts. Since William's other two sons are still single Nora can only be explained as the daughter of John. In the same census the William Cox family is now found in Hillsboro, Voting Precinct #4, of Fleming County and the last member of his family is a 21 year old daughter, Martha E. Counts, shown as widowed/divorced. The William G. Counts Farm Cemetery in Leon, Carter County, Kentucky indicates that Martha Cox Counts, wife of John is buried there. This raises the question of whether or not they were divorced or just separated at the time of her death. Although this information is circumstantial it is strong circumstantial evidence that John W. Counts married Martha E. Cox when she was about 15 years of age and that Nora E. Counts is their daughter. Nora later married Clarence Salmons also shown as Sammons in many records. A Salmons family was living directly next door to the William Cox family in the 1870 census and in 1880 nine year old Clarence

Salmons was living just 8 houses away from the William G. Counts family. A Nora E. Sammons of the right age died in 1963 in Boyd County and may be the same person as Nora E. Counts. Her Kentucky Death Certificate might further resolve this question.

In the 1900 census of Maddox, Carter County, Kentucky John W. and his wife Mary E. are shown to have been married 15 years or about 1885. Death records on their children show that her maiden name was Jesse. Living next door is the family of his brother Chris and four houses away is the household of William G. Counts.

In the 1910 census of Carter County, Maddox Precinct, John and Mary are shown with their children, Gordon, Roy and Atha. Their married son Leonard is living next door. (An obituary shows that Atha's full name was Atha Beatrice Counts and that she married Virgil Brammell.)

In the 1920 census of Carter County Mary is shown as a widow indicating that John died sometime between 1910 and 1920 although there does not appear to be a Kentucky Death Certificate for him. They had four children based on the census records; Leonard, Gordon, Roy and Atha.

John is shown as buried in the William G. Counts Farm Cemetery at Leon with no dates.

3. FEMALE INFANT, according to Carter County Birth Records on December 6, 1853 an infant girl (not named) was born to William Counts and Elizabeth Gose. Elizabeth Smith was the midwife. Carter County Death Records show that she died the following day on December 7.

4. CHRISTOPHER C. COUNTS, is shown as 3 years old in the 1860 census, 13 years old in the 1870 census and 23 years old in the 1880 census. In each he is living at home with the William G. Counts family and listed as son.

The 1900 census of Carter County shows Chris C. Counts and his wife Fanny. They have been married 19 years (about 1881) and she has had two children, Harry born in January 1884 and Jackson born in February 1888. Her Kentucky Death Record shows that her maiden name was Jesse. The 1900 census also shows Chris was born in March of 1857. It also appears from the census records that John W. and Christopher C. Counts married sisters.

In the 1910 census of Carter County Chris C. Counts and his wife Fanny are listed with their two sons, Harry and William J. Each has been married only one time. Fanny states that she has had 4 children with only 2 living.

In the 1920 Census Fanny is living with her son Harry's family and is shown as a widow indicating that Christopher died between 1910 and 1920. Also living in the household is Fanny's 90 year old mother Rachael Jesse.

Christopher C. Counts was buried in the William G. Counts Farm Cemetery at Leon and Fanny's Kentucky Death Certificate states that she was buried in Leon and presumably beside Christopher.

5. JAMES ROBERT COUNTS, the 1870 and 1880 census records for the William G. Counts family both indicate that James Robert Counts was born in 1862. He is called Robert in both census' but the his father's Will gives his name as James R. Counts. The 1900 census (shown above) shows James Robert Counts wife Jennie and their five daughters living with William G. and Nellie Counts. Based on the fact that their eldest daughter Sarah was born in March of 1886 it seems likely that James Robert and Jennie were married about 1885. According to Jennie's Kentucky Death Certificate Jennie was born on July 6, 1867 to John Riggs and Della Tackett. Although I have not seen their marriage record their last daughter Hattie was born in September 1895. This means she was conceived about January of 1895. William G. Counts Will was written on February 23, 1897 so James Robert died between those dates. About 1911 Jennie remarried George Washington Sammons. She died on June 5, 1932 and was buried in the Counts Cemetery at Leon according to her death certificate. This would also indicate that James Robert Counts was also buried there although his grave does not have a marked stone.

The five daughters of James Robert Counts and Phebe Jennie Riggs were; Sarah, Carrie M., Genoa, Julia and Hattie. I know that Hattie married Cecil Kitchen and Genoa married John Henry Lemaster. Julia married Michael Willis Rice. Carrie Myrtle married a Kiser. It appears that Sarah married James McKee.