

Private number.

W.E.B.

History of Blackledge Family



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The name was "Blackleach", with many ways of spelling the last syllable, up to about the year 1700 and probably originated in Scotland.

(1) A "Huan" Blackleach was a Bishop and died in England in 1510.

(2) A Nicholas B. was a "Doctor of Physic" to King Henry 8th who reigned 1509 to 1547.

(3) A John B. (son of Nicholas B.) married Janette Fleetwood, daughter of Baron Fleetwood, Newton, England.

(4) They had a son William, Chancelor of the diocese of Gloucester, who married Mary Kentish, June 23rd, 1570.

(5) Abraham Blackleach ("Gentleman") son of William London, married Gertrude Elton of Ledbury. Died Nov. 30, 1639.

(6) Aubry Blackleach, "son and heir apparent" of William B. was a student at Grey's Inn, March 18th, 1605.

(7) A John "Blackledge" and a daughter, Mary, born 1684, lived in Herwick, England.

Many other names could be mentioned showing that the family was numerous in England. (See Note 9.)

The Family in America

(1) JOHN BLACKLEACH, Senior, settled in Salem, Mass., about the year 1630. Took the "oath of freeman" May 6th, 1634. Known as a "merchant" and a "Gentleman of Estate." Member of General Court of Mass., in 1636, in which year he was granted 900 acres of land. His wife was Elizabeth Bacon, daughter of Robert Bacon, a mariner of London. The records show that he had nine children. The eldest, John, junior, was born in England, 1626. As the second child was not born until 1636 the presumption is that this son John was the child of a wife who died in England. The other children were born as follows: 1636-1637-1639-1641-1643-1644-1648-1651.

He moved to Boston, then to Hartford and Weathersfield, (Conn.) where he died Aug. 23, 1683. His wife died July 20, 1683. His life was full of important events. (Set Note 9.)

(2) JOHN BLACKLEACH, Junior, born in England, 1626, son of John B. Senior, was always known as "captain" because much of his life was spent as a skipper on various ships plying between Eng-

land and New York. He lived first in Salem, Mass., then in Boston and Hartford, Conn. Finally in Weathersfield, Conn., where he died Sept. 7, 1703, aged 77 years. His second wife died at the same place in June, 1708. In 1664 he was "town constable" of Hartford. About 1654 he married Elizabeth Webb, a daughter of Henry Webb of Boston. Three (3) children were born of this union: Richard (1655) died 1731; Elizabeth (1659); John (1660), died 1700. In Hartford he married his second wife, Elizabeth Herbert (1667). There is a record of three children by the second marriage: Phillip, Mary and William. The daughter, Elizabeth, married a Harris of Boston. The daughter, Mary, married (1) Thomas Welles, (2) John Olcott, (3) Joseph Wadsworth, who preserved the charter of Hartford in the tree which became famous as the "Charter Oak."

Capt. John B. owned several "Ketches" (ships) at different times and traded between New York and England. This fact was probably the reason for his son, Philip, marrying and settling in New York. His last will was dated Sept. 3, 1703 and was probated at Hartford, Conn., on Sept. 24, 1703. The writer of these notes has a certified copy of his will, which is too lengthy to include here. Indicating that while he was at sea his wife had borne the care of his children and had cared for his estate he devised all to her. The names of his children are not given in the will except that of Elizabeth Harris of Boston to whom he had advanced 500 pounds which he asked to be taken into account on the death of his widow. The will (now well over 200 years old) was quaint, but well worded and interesting.

(3) JOHN BLACKLEACH (the 3rd), born 1660 in Connecticut, son of John B. Junior. Died 1770. Lived and died at Farmington. Left at least two children. Elizabeth, born 1693 and John the 4th born 1695. His wife's name was Susanna Hooker, who died at about the time of her husband's death and while he was "at sea." Her estate is mentioned as consisting of 145 pounds and was given over by order of court to John Olcott and Samuel Hooker as guardians of a little son, John, aged 2½ years.

(4) PHILLIP BLACKLIDGE (Senior). At this point the name changed and during the transformation was spelled "lidg," "lege," and "lige" or "lig."

Phillip B. (Senior) was born about the year 1689. He was probably the son of "Capt." John Blackleach (Junior) or he may have been the son of John B. the 3rd. If a son of the former, his father would have been about 63 years old when he was born and if a son of the latter his father would have been about 29 years old. The New Jersey records say that he was the son of "Capt." John Blackleach who was born in England in 1626.

Phillip was doubtless born in Connecticut. A record shows that he went to New York City in 1709 and married (Nov. 29, 1710) one Willempe Conwell. In some records the name was spelled in Dutch

and has no resemblance to "Conwell." *See Note 16.*

Four children were born in New York, Annatie, (1713), Zachariah, (1718), and Phillip (1720). One record tells us that Philip B. moved to Elizabethtown, N. J., in 1721 and another that he moved there early in the year 1723. Four (4) more children were born there, Catherine, (1730), and Jacob (1735). Sarah (1740) and Benjamin, (1743) all the above dates may apply to dates of baptism instead of birth.

All of the Blacklidges now living in New York city and New Jersey are descendents of this Benjamin Blacklidge who lived to a good old age and became very prominent in all of the affairs of Bergen County, (N. J.) See Note 13.

Philip Blacklidge is supposed to have died in June, 1761. The writer has a certified copy of his last will. He died at Elizabeth, N. J. His will was dated April 1st, 1749, and was probated at Trenton, on July 11th, 1761.

In the will and its proof the name is spelled in four different ways, viz: "ledge" "lidg," "ledg" and "lidge." In signing the will himself he spells the last syllable "lidg." If he died in June, 1761, and assuming that he was 21 years old when he married (Nov. 29, 1710), he was probably about 72 years of age. Thus he was born about 1689. In his will he names his wife and all his seven (7) living children, giving to each child a nominal sum and to his widow all the residue of his estate. He names the widow as his executrix. The formal portion of the will is similar to the will of "Capt." Blackleach and he followed the latter's idea of willing all to his widow. (See Note No. 8.)

(5) PHILLIP BLACKLIDGE (Junior) son of Philip (Senior) was born in New York on the 17th day of February, 1720, and is named in his father's will (1749) where he is given "5 shillings." He of course, went with his parents to Elizabethtown, N. J., "early in 1723." Beyond this nothing is known of him.

(6) ICHABOD BLACKLIDGE. We have it from the pen of his own son (Richard) that Ichabod was the son of Phillip Blacklidge "one of the first settlers of Elizabethtown, Sussex County, New Jersey." He was born there on the 1st day of January, 1745. He was doubtless a child of Phillip, named in number five (5) above. At the date of his birth this Phillip would have been about 25 years old.

He married Susana Woodruff, April 26, 1768. Served as a private in the Revolution of 1776 at a time when he must have been about 30 years old. ~~He served in a New Jersey company of which one Joseph Morris was captain. Was granted a pension in 1818, while living in Pulaski County, Ky., where he died Sept., 1829. Some time prior to 1788 he moved to North Carolina and settled on the Yadkin river. The U. S. census of 1790 shows that he lived in North Carolina and had a family of seven children. I do not know just what year he moved to Kentucky. The records show that he entered government land there in 1807. He was over 84 years old when he died and the~~

June 15: 1829 according to Benjamin Department.

+ See also note 18

names of his children are as follows: *x see note 17-*

- (1) Jacob, born Aug. 17, 1770.
- (2) Nancy (married John May). *+ see note 15*
- (3) John (married Minah Newby.)
- (4) Hannah. (No record of age or marriage).
- (5) James, born 1782, married Milly Jones.
- (6) Polly. (~~No record~~) *M. Henry Wagner Mch 29. 1807*
- (7) Richard (married Betsy Clark, Feb. 22, 1810.) *(see note 19)*

Nancy lived and died in Kentucky. Some of her people still live at Somerset, Ky. I have no record of the families of John, Hannah and Polly. James went to Alabama where he died about the year 1857. Richard came to Indiana, living in Rush County a short time, then in Tippecanoe County, where he died in 1857. Is buried at a small town called Dayton. He was father of 13 children. The youngest Woodruff died as late as 1917 at Frankfort, Ind. A grandchild of James B. at this time (1921) is still living at Mansfield, Ill. (Piatt County). Her name is Martha Blagg. The writer has her picture and several letters from her concerning her family. She was born in 1848. In my correspondence with her she sent a number of old letters written about 1850 to 1855 by Richard B. to his brother, James, then living in Alabama. Richard at that time lived at Dayton, Indiana. These old letters are of much interest and real historical value, but are too lengthy to include in these notes.

(7) JACOB BLACKLIDGE, son of Ichabod, born Aug. 17, 1770 in N. J., married Charlotte Neville in 1795. She was born February 28, 1772. Went with his father to North Carolina, thence to Lincoln County, Ky. (where he was married). From there he moved to Pulaski County, Ky. In 1811 he and family moved to Franklin County, Ind., and settled near the town of Metamora. In 1832 he moved to Rush County, Ind., where he remained only a few years. The family then moved back to Franklin County, where he and his wife lived until their death. He died at the home of his son, Harvey Blacklidge on the 13th of Dec. 1849, aged 79 years. The children of Jacob were as follows:

(1) James, born Nov. 8, 1796, died Jan. 27, 1842. Buried in old Ebenezer grave yard, in Franklin County, Ind. He was the father of Richard B. and the latter was the father of James C. and Wm. E. Blacklidge of Kokomo, Ind. Jas. B. founded the Brookville family, and died near that town. His wife's name was Sarah Manwaring. They had six children; two boys and four girls, all dead. The widow survived James many years and ran what was called the "Manwaring Tavern" on the old Brookville and Indianapolis pike about three miles north of Brookville. She is also buried in Ebenezer grave yard.

(2) John Blacklidge second child of Jacob. Born Aug. 25, 1800. Died in Rush County. He founded the Rush County family.

(3) Harvey, the 3rd child was born Sept. 17, 1802. Died in

Metamora. . Founded the Metamoro family. One of his sons was killed in the civil war of 1861-4.

(4) Joel, the 4th child of Jacob. Born June 11, 1806. Died in Anderson, Ind. Founded the Anderson family. He married Christian Newhouse.

(5) Drucilla B., the 5th child born March 11, 1810, married Orville Gordon and lived and died in Metamora, Ind.

(6) Alvin B., the 6th child. Born April 15, 1814. His family is scattered through the West.

My father and mother both knew this Jacob Blacklidge, who often visited with them in their early married life. They described him as a man of rugged type, frank and honorable. He was married Nov. 30, 1795.

I conclude the ancestral line with this data concerning Jacob B. and his family for the sake of brevity, and because all information concerning the family tree since the time of Jacob is easily accessible to all who may care to obtain it.

Notes

(1) The Blackleach name is entirely extinct in this country. The name is still found in Scotland, however.

(2) Blackledges (spelled "ledge") are found in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Iowa, California and Indianapolis. In my opinion they all come from a family that settled in Pennsylvania at a much later date than the date of the arrival of John Blackleach in New England. There is no evidence that they ever spelled the name Blackleach. My brother, James C., on occasion of two visits to London found the name "Blackledge." One A. E. Blackledge wrote me several letters in regard to his family. He understood that some of his ancestors settled in America about 120 years ago. If these Blackledges are connected in any way with the old Blackleach family I have never been able to discover the fact. It is possible that the lines meet back in old England, where the name Blackleach may have evolved into Blacklidge or Blackledge as it did in America.

My opinion, however, is that the new way of spelling the name in America began in New York. The letter "i" was there used in spelling the last syllable in several ways. It is the Dutch way. Some of the descendants of the old New England Blackleach families, it is true, spell the name with an "e." All of the Benjamin B. family do. But I have never found any of the Pennsylvania family that use the letter "i."

(3) A Richard Blacklidge lived in North Carolina in 1798, and was involved in a law suit that got into the Supreme Court of the U. S. Scotland is the only place where I have heard of the name Blackleach at present. The family was once numerous and conspicuous in New

England. Many of them were sea-faring men. A volumn in the Newberry library, Chicago, listed as containing an extensive history of the activities of the family in New England disappeared. So it would seem that the half has not been told, although much has been found in other records.

(4) In 1638 in all Massachusetts there were only 37 ploughs. And because John Blackleach (Senior) had only 300 acres, not enough to maintain a plough he was granted more land to further his endeavors in plowing.

(5) It is recorded that John B. (senior) was fined 30 pounds for slandering the authorities of Weathersfield. The judge said he would have imposed a fine of 100 pounds but for the fact that Blackleach had an uncontrollable temper.

(6) His will was written in 1671 in Boston, but his estate was settled at Hartford and Weathersfield.

(7) A Richard B. was an attorney in Hartford, 1707, and was advisor to the General Assembly. There was a Richard (possibly the same one) who was spoken of as a "Merchant of Stratford", having the title of "gentleman." He also dealt in slaves from the West Indies contending that it was better to bring the black man to Christianity than to take Christianity to the black man in his native home.

(8) When John Blackleach (Senior) landed in Salem, Mass., he was only 138 years behind Columbus, only 23 years behind the first permanent English settlement at Jamestown. The Pilgrim Fathers only beat him ten years and as Salem is not far from Plymouth he doubtless had a personal acquaintance with nearly all of that little band of 102 people. Only four years before this old salt landed in Salem Peter Minuet bought the whole of Manhatan Island for a few trinkets worth, about \$24 and founded a Dutch colony, known as New Amsterdam. Such a place as Boston was not known until 1630. Hartford had been settled only about seven years before and the first house in Salem was only about four years old. The first church was built in Salem in 1634 at a date when John Blackleach is reported as being an active merchant in that town. He probably helped to build this church.

(9) In St. John's grave yard in Elizabeth, New Jersey is an old stone bearing this inscription: "Here lyes ye body of Philip Blacklieg. Dec'd Augt. ye 31st, 1753 in ye 66th year of his age." We do not know just where to place this Philip. It is possible and not improbable that he was the Phillip Blacklidge mentioned in Number 4, Page 2, above. According to the date on his grave stone, he was born in 1687. This date practically agrees with the birth date of Philip (Senior). But if he is the same person his will was not probated for eight years after his death. The date of the will, however, was April 5th, 1749, four years before the date of the death of the Philip whose grave stone was found. In the same old grave yard are found

several other stones of interest to the family. One inscription says: "Near this stone lies that which is mortal of John Blackledge, who departed this life July 19th, 1799, aged 37 years." His wife was buried by his side, Sept. 19th, 1827.

(10) The old English family had a coat of arms. The same was used by John Blackleach (the 1st) of Salem, Mass. This fact lends strength to the supposition that John B. was the son of Abraham B. who died in 1639. I have a few photographs of the sketch of this coats of arms as drawn by Mrs. Hinrichs.

(11) Jacob was the oldest and Richard the youngest of the children of Ichabod B. They were the two who settled in Indiana when the latter was a territory and from them came all the Indiana family.

(12) Mrs. Hinrichs of Chicago is a direct descendent of Ichabod Blackledge and to her I am indebted for very much of the data and information comprising this sketch of the family. She found that the name was spelled in some twenty different ways. This association owes her a vote of thanks for the labor and time which she has expended in looking up old records of the family.

(13) Several years ago the writer met a Peter J. Blackledge in New York, who was a direct descendant of Benjamin Blackledge. The interview resulted in my securing a sketch of his ancestors. The two lines converged and met at Philip Blackledge, who was the common ancestor of the Indiana, New Jersey and New York Blackledges. This Peter J. B. was an old man at the time I met him and is probably dead. He possessed many of the physical features common to the family. Was a man of robust build and had many of the mannerisms of the Blackledge people. *All note 20 page 11.*

(14) The name is found down along the centuries that have gone and in many instances it has been impossible to determine the relationship. One of the name broke into congress. We find a Samuel and a Thomas in an early day in the South. Whence they came or whither they went we know not. Once an army officer by the name Blackledge whiled away his time in writing a little booklet which became standard authority on the game of poker. We hear of a horrifying adventure of a young Blackledge who was cast off at sea and suffered untold hardships. Many incidents of the family name could be related. But space forbids.

The family was hardy and long-lived. The wonder is that it has almost become extinct. Once the name was prominent and a detailed history of the family in New England would be extremely interesting to the now small numbers remaining.

Certain characteristics have been found common to the name. In features there has always been a strong family resemblance. High

cheek bones, tall and bony with prominent ears and blonde complexion prevail. Hospitality was dominant with most of them.

An unassuming and modest disposition common to the family rather than lack of ability has made it impossible to find in its history many prominent men or women. But it requires no straining of the imagination to believe that the descendents of the old sailor, John Blackleach, who landed on the wild coast of New England nearly 300 years ago were honest, industrious and typical pioneers. They have done their part in contributing to human advancement in America, and constituted an energetic and active race of people that helped put into civilization all that is worth retaining.

[1921]

W. E. Blackledge, Kokomo, Ind.

Note 15. A certain Nancy B. married a man named Green Bryan of Craven Co. N. C. She was born in 1777.

Note 16. Later investigation. Wilenpe was a Holland maid. Married (1) one Michael Bonnell (New York) Oct. 9. 1705; one child born Aug. 1706. Then as a widow she married Philip "Blacklite" Nov. 29. 1710. See letter on file from Mrs. Hinrichs.

Note 17. Mrs. Hinrichs from investigation in Newberg Library found that one child died Feby. 22 - 1773. This child was 4 yrs old and was doubtless their first born. Probably named Benjamin.

Note 18. Letter from War Dep. says "Ichabod" Blackledge appears on a record of New Jersey troops and as belonging to Capt. Hall's Co. This record was made by a commission convened May 7 - 1778. and is doubtless correct. So it would seem that the company had 2 Captains or Ichabod was in two different companies.

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(10)

Note 19 = Written on fly leaf of an old book
(published May 1 - 1774) I copied the following
words: "My great grandfather was one of those
who escaped out of the great earthquake in Port
Royal Jamaica July 7 - 1692 as I have been
informed. My grand father whose name was
Phillip was among the first settlers of E.
Elizabethtown Sussex County Jersey. My father
Ichabod was born there on Jan. 1st 1745, - and
at age of 22 married my mother Susana
Woodruff from which was born, Jacob. Ben-
jamin, Nancy. John, Hannah, James, Polly
and myself, Richard Blackledge. I was born
in 1788. This book has been in the family 49
years and I design it for my youngest son
Woodruff. Aug. 20. 1843. R. Blackledge"

(20)

(11)