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Untangling Identities to Reunite Mrs. Daniel Smith of Putnam County, West Virginia with the Right Father

Resolving Conflicting Direct Evidence with Direct, Indirect, and Negative Evidence

by Kelley Conner Lear

Self-published family histories, and online trees often contain unsupported claims. In this case, a court-created record certainly casts doubt on those claims and prompts a closer look at assumptions when it comes to preferred sources and reliability.¹ Resolving conflicts and weighing credibility required resolving an inconsistent use of names, tracking a mother, scrutinizing family records, and perusing two men—one who seemed to not exist and another who left few records of his existence. The results refute a single, but crucial fact reported when Miss Jane Beckett married Daniel P. Smith in Putnam County, Virginia. Although she appeared together with her father in just one record during their lifetimes, this farmer's wife reclaims a united identity, and the correct father.

MEET MISS BECKETT

Jane Beckett first appeared in Putnam County, Virginia on 4 November 1860.² Her birth allegedly took place in the county in 1841, despite its creation in 1848. Daniel Smith provided the information, possibly not recalling when the county gained its identity.³ On the same day, someone, although unidentified, reported Jane's parents as George and Sarah Beckett.⁴

© 2024, Kelley Conner Lear. All online records were searched 14 October 2024. The surname Beckett sometimes appears as Becket. Beckett will be used unless quoting a source. The Commonwealth of Virginia passed a law requiring county clerks to maintain registers of births, marriages, and deaths beginning 1 January 1854. See Commonwealth of Virginia, "An Act concerning the registration of births, marriages, and deaths," *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia Passed in 1852–3* (Richmond: William F. Ritchie Public Printer, 1853), 40–3; imaged, *HathiTrust*

(<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nyp.33433007047818&view=1up&seq=46&skin=2021&q1=Birth>). Some counties have marriage records that predate this law. The Virginia counties included in this case study became part of West Virginia when it gained statehood in 1863. "[West] Virginia" will be used when referencing records created before 1863 for clarity on their geographic and physical location(s).

1. Thomas Jones, "The Perils of Source Snobbery," *On Board: Newsletter of the Board for Certification of Genealogists* (May 2012), 9–10, 15. Also, Elizabeth Shown Mills, "Sources," *Evidence Explained, Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace*, Fourth Ed. (Baltimore, Md.: Genealogical Publishing, 2024), 28–9.

2. Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Marriage Record, Vol. B: 31, Daniel P. Smith- Jane Beckett, marriage license, certificate, and minister's return, 4 November 1860; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33HT-D897-324>), IGN 004227540, image 309 of 548. For negative findings for a Jane Beckett prior to this date, see "1860 United States Federal Census," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7667>). Also, "United States Census, 1850," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8054>). Search for: Jane Beckett born between 1838–1843 living in Putnam, Cabell, and neighboring Mason, Lincoln, or Kanawha Counties in Virginia. All of these counties became part of West Virginia in 1863. For West Virginia statehood, see U.S. National Archives, *National Archives Catalog*, database with images (<https://catalog.archives.gov/id/299813>), NAID 299813: U.S. Congress, 37th Congress, 3rd session (1862) "Act of December 31, 1862, Public Law 37–4, 12 STAT 633, which admitted the state of West Virginia into the Union," 2 images; citing Enrolled Acts and Resolutions of Congress, Record Group 11: General Records of the United States Government, National Archives.

3. For birthplace and year, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Marriage Record, Vol. B: 31, Daniel P. Smith- Jane Beckett, marriage license, certificate, and minister's return, 4 November 1860; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33HT-D897-324>), IGN 004227540, image 309 of 548. Daniel P. Smith was the informant. For Putnam County, see Commonwealth of Virginia, "New Counties—Putnam," *Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia*, (Richmond: Samuel Shephard, 1848), 34; imaged, *HathiTrust* (<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101018299253&view=1up&seq=38&q1>). Putnam became a county in 1848, so Jane was certainly not born in the county. It's possible she was born in eastern Cabell County which later became part of Putnam.

4. [Putnam County, [West] Virginia], Register of Marriages, illegible page no., entry 38, Daniel P. Smith-Jane Beckett, 4 November 1860; imaged, "West Virginia Vital Statistics," *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9Z5-F131>), IGN 007499359, image 51 of 354. The left-hand page of the register should include bride and the groom's names but is missing in this copy. The copy is in poor condition and appears incomplete. It differs from the volume held in the County Clerk's Office in Winfield. See Putnam County, West

The following July, Jane gave birth to a baby girl. Jane and Daniel's unnamed daughter lived for one month and died in August 1861.⁵ But by October 1862, a son arrived for Daniel Smith and his wife, Virginia (Beckett) Smith.⁶ Did Jane die after giving birth to the couple's baby girl? Did Daniel then marry another woman with the same maiden name as his first wife? Or were Jane and Virginia one and the same?

Did Daniel Remarry?

While Daniel Smith's wife in 1860 and 1862 shared a surname, their first names suggest the possibility of unique identities. Daniel's first two children arrived fifteen months apart—more than enough time for Jane's death, and a new marriage for Daniel.⁷ And although possibly less likely, Jane and Daniel may have divorced.

But between 1860 and 1862, no Jane Smith died in Putnam County, or any neighboring county in western Virginia.⁸ Nor did any Daniel Smith marry during this time.⁹ And neither Jane nor Daniel petitioned for a divorce.¹⁰

Virginia, Register of Marriages, 1853–1882, unnumbered page, entry 38, Daniel P. Smith-Jane Beckett, 4 November 1860; County Clerk's Office, Winfield. The pages of this register have been laminated but are intact and holds both pages. Also see U.S. Work Projects Administration [WPA], *Putnam County, West Virginia, births, marriages, wills and inventories (1846–1900); copied from Winfield Courthouse records* (West Virginia: WPA, 1936), 215; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-89KM-4WDH>), IGN 007617961, image 382 of 1151. This is a filming of an original typescript. It has significant bleed through but provides a transcription of both pages of the register.

5. Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Deaths, No. 1: 16, entry 3, [female] Smith —, 1 August 1861; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-69YW-QV1>), IGN 004228469, image 52 of 407. Bartley Smith, the baby's grandfather, reported the death. For negative findings for baby's birth, see Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Births, Vol. 1, search for Smith 1860–61; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-63N9-F6N>), IGN 004228468. Page-by-page search for female Smith born between 1860 and 1861.

6. West Virginia delayed birth certificate no. 18342, John Henry Smith, 10 October 1862; Division of Vital Statistics, Department of Health, Charleston; imaged, "Birth Records," *West Virginia Archives and History* (<https://dachs-image-proxy.digital-relativity.workers.dev/?film=4017240&frame=00697>). John reported his mother as Virginia Beckett. Also, John Henry Smith, SS no. 233–24–3663, 19 April 1938, "Application for Account Number," (Form SS–5); Social Security Administration, Baltimore, Maryland. John identified his mother as Virginia Beckett.

7. Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Deaths, No. 1, 1853–1897: 16, entry 3, [female] Smith —, 1 August 1861; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-69YW-QV1>), IGN 004228469, image 52 of 407. Also, West Virginia delayed birth certificate no. 18342, John Henry Smith, 10 October 1862; Division of Vital Statistics, Department of Health, Charleston; imaged, "Birth Records," *West Virginia Archives and History* (<https://dachs-image-proxy.digital-relativity.workers.dev/?film=4017240&frame=00697>).

8. For negative findings for a death, see Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Deaths, No. 1, 1853–1897, page-by-page search for Jane Smith from 1860–62; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-69YW-QV1>), IGN 004228469, image 52 of 407. Also, "Death Records," database with images, *West Virginia Archives and History* (<https://wvculture.org/vital-records-interactive>). Search for Jane Smith death +/- three years from 1861 with no results for any county. For negative finding for an obituary for Jane Smith, see, "Putnam County (W.Va.) Democrat, Jan 20, 1911 thru Dec 24, 1915,"; imaged, microfilm roll 3; Putnam County Main Library, Teays Valley. Also, "The Irrepressible (Winfield, W.Va.), Jan 5, 1911 thru Jan 30, 1913,"; imaged, unnumbered microfilm roll; Putnam County Main Library, Teays Valley.

9. For negative findings for a marriage, see "Marriage Records," database with images, *West Virginia Archives and History* (<https://wvculture.org/vital-records-interactive>). Search for Daniel Smith in 1860 +/- 3 years, all counties. Search set to "Similar." Also, Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Marriages, 1853–1882, page-by-page search for Daniel P. Smith; County Clerk's Office, Winfield.

10. For negative findings for divorce, see Putnam County, West Virginia, General Index, Chancery Orders, Direct, No. 2, M–Z, search for Smith; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L9VR-FQ7H>), IGN 007616627. Search for Daniel, D.P., Jane Smith. Also, Commonwealth of Virginia, "Chap. 122—An ACT prescribing general regulations to govern applications for divorces a vinculo matrimonii, and divorcing Robert Moran from his wife Lydia," *Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia*, (Richmond: Samuel Shephard, 1848), 165–7; imaged, *HathiTrust* (<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101018299253&view=1up&seq=173&q1>). In 1848, most divorce proceedings were transferred from the state legislature to county circuit superior and chancery courts.

A CLOSER LOOK AT A HUSBAND AND FATHER

Daniel Pleasant Smith—or “Ples” to family and friends—claimed his birth took place in Putnam County in about 1840, but his father’s residence suggests he was born in Kanawha County, Virginia.¹¹ Daniel remained in Putnam County from the time of its creation in 1848 until just before his death in 1929.¹² Between 1861 and 1900, he fathered ten known children:¹³

- 1861 - Baby Girl Smith¹⁴
- 1862 - John Henry Smith¹⁵
- 1864 - William A. Smith¹⁶
- 1867 - America Adeline “Adda” Smith¹⁷
- 1869 - Lena Smith¹⁸

11. For Daniel’s claimed birthplace and year, see Putnam County, West Virginia, Marriage Record, Vol. B: 31, Daniel P. Smith-Jane Beckett, marriage license, certificate, and minister’s return, 4 November 1860; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-D897-324>), IGN 004227540, image 309 of 548. For Daniel’s father, see Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Marriages, 1853–1882, unnumbered page, entry 38, Daniel P. Smith-Jane Beckett, 4 November 1860; County Clerk’s Office, Winfield. For Daniel’s father’s residence, see 1840 U.S. census, Kanawha County, Virginia, p. 6 (stamped), line 25, Bartlett Smith; imaged, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8057/images/4409705_00015). For Putnam’s creation from Kanawha, Cabell, and Mason counties, see Commonwealth of Virginia, “New Counties—Putnam,” *Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia*, (Richmond: Samuel Shephard, 1848), 34; imaged, *HathiTrust* (<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=njp.32101018299253&view=1up&seq=38&q1=Putnam>). For Bartley Smith’s residence in Putnam County at its creation, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1848 List of Daniel B. Washington, p. 20, Bartlet Smith; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CS7S-M9RH-C>), IGN 007856291, image 132 of 743. For Daniel’s nickname, see James Smith ([ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Hurricane, West Virginia), interview by Kelley Conner Lear, 24 September 2023; audio and transcript privately held by Lear [1046 N. VIRGINIA AVE. NE,] Atlanta, Georgia, 2023. As told to James Smith by his grandfather, Lewis Smith, son of John Henry Smith, Daniel P. Smith’s son.

12. For Daniel’s residence in 1850 and 1920 as examples, see 1850 U.S. census, Putnam County, Virginia, population schedule, District 46, p. 312B (stamped), dwelling 634, family 656, Daniel P. Smith in household of Bartley Smith; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/16091829:8054>). Also, 1920 U.S. census, Putnam County, West Virginia, population schedule, Teays Valley District, enumeration district (ED) 113, p. 7A (stamped), dwelling 78, family 78, Daniel P. Smith; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/37719943:6061>).

13. For number of children born to his wife, see 1910 U.S. census, Putnam County, West Virginia, population schedule, Teays Valley District, enumeration district (ED) 167, p. 2B (penned), family 32, Virginia Smith; imaged, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7884/images/4455051_00657). Also, 1900 U.S. census, Putnam County, West Virginia, population schedule, Teaye’s [sic] Valley, sheet 9 (penned), dwelling 152, family 153, Jennie Smith; imaged, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7602/images/4123465_00062). The 1900 census reported eleven children, and the 1910 census reported ten. Only ten were located in birth or death records in Putnam County.

14. Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Register of Deaths, No. 1: 16, Smith —, 1 August 1861; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-69YW-QV1>), IGN 004228469, image 52 of 407.

15. West Virginia delayed birth certificate no. 18342, John Henry Smith, 10 October 1862; Division of Vital Statistics, Department of Health, Charleston; imaged, “Birth Records,” *West Virginia Archives and History* (<https://dach-image-proxy.digital-relativity.workers.dev/?film=4017240&frame=00697>).

16. West Virginia death certificate no. 7609 (1928), William A. Smith, 26 June 1928; Department of Health, Division of Vital Statistics, Charleston; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9T2-KW38-R>), IGN 004256246, image 1642 of 3062. For negative findings for birth, see Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Births, Vol. 1, 1853–1890, page-by-page search for Smith male born 1863–64; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-63N9-F6N>), IGN 004228468. This register has significant fading. The original was also examined in the County Clerk’s Office at the courthouse, Winfield.

17. Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Births, Vol. 1: 69, America A. Smith, 3 February 1867; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-63N9-814>), IGN 004228468, image 121 of 559. This register has significant fading. The volume was also examined in the County Clerk’s Office at the courthouse, Winfield. For full name, see 1880 U.S. census, Putnam County, West Virginia, population schedule, Teays Valley District, enumeration district (ED) 113, p. 103C (stamped), dwelling 189, family 189, America A. Smith in household of D.P. Smith; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/6742/images/4244697-00411>). Also, Putnam County, West Virginia, Marriage Licenses No. 2: 262, Charles S. Leadmon-Adaline Smith, 9 August 1888; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-6Q6S-35L>), IGN 004227542, image 397 of 788. Adda was certainly a nickname for America Adaline (Smith) Leadmon.

18. West Virginia death certificate no. 011102 (1956), Lena Miller, 3 September 1956; Department of Health, Division of Vital Statistics, Charleston; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9T2-2SJL-L>), IGN 004258297, image 2113 of

- 1872 - Sarah A. Smith¹⁹
- 1875 - Perlina Elizabeth Smith²⁰
- 1877 - Baby Boy Smith²¹
- 1880 - Baby Boy Smith²²
- 1884 - Baby Girl Smith²³

A Wife of Many Names

After Daniel Smith's 1860 marriage, no known record mentions "Jane Beckett" again, see Table 1. And at Perlina Smith's birth in 1875, Daniel Smith gave the baby's mother's name as Virginia Smith. But just over a year later when Perlina died, the baby's mother reported the death and identified herself as Jane, not Virginia.²⁴ When Daniel died in 1929, his grandson identified Virginia Beckett as Daniel's wife, not Jane.²⁵

A chronological comparison of the names used interchangeably by herself, her husband, children, grandchildren, and in-laws reveal the woman known as Jane, Virginia, and Jennie from 1860 until her death, Virginia "Jane" (Beckett) Smith, was one woman. The two names may represent a first and middle name. And although less common, it's possible Virginia used Jane as a nickname, see Table 1 for timeline.²⁶

LOOKING FOR JANE'S FATHER

Online trees and self-published family histories claim James Beckett as Daniel Pleasant Smith's father-in-law.²⁷ In 1893, when Sarah Beckett—Daniel's reported mother-in-law—died, Virginia Smith identified Sarah's husband as James Beckett.²⁸ However, on the day Virginia married, someone informed a court

3021. For negative findings for birth, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Birth Index, H-Z, 1853–1968, page-by-page search for Lena Smith; County Clerk's Office, Winfield.

19. Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Births, Vol. 1: 96, entry 30, Sarah A. Smith, 1 April 1872; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-63N9-8NF>), IGN 004228468, image 148 of 559.

20. Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Births, Vol. 1: 119, entry 21, Perlina E. Smith, 6 March 1875; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-63N9-8SW>), IGN 004228468, image 171 of 559. For full name, see Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Deaths, No. 1: 42, entry 24, Elizabeth P. Smith, 21 December 1876; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-69YW-98D>), IGN 004228469, image 78 of 407. This was certainly Perlina E. Smith, one-year, eight months, and fifteen days old at her death.

21. Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Births, Vol. 1: 134, entry 5, Smith —, November 1877; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-63N9-XP8>), IGN 004228468, image 186 of 559.

22. Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Births, Vol. 1: 159, entry 3, Smith, September 1880; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-63N9-8TK>), IGN 004228468, image 211 of 559.

23. Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Births, Vol. 1: 174, entry 10, Smith —, October 1884; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-63N9-6PS>), IGN 004228468, image 246 of 559.

24. Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Births, Vol. 1: 119, entry 21, Perlina E. Smith, 6 March 1875; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-63N9-8SW>), IGN 004228468, image 171 of 559. Also, Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Deaths, No. 1: 42, entry 24, Elizabeth P. Smith, 21 December 1876; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-69YW-98D>), IGN 004228469, image 78 of 407.

25. West Virginia death certificate no. 14110 (1929), Daniel Pleasant Smith, 5 October 1929; ; imaged, "Death records," *West Virginia Archives and History* (<https://dachs-image-proxy.digital-relativity.workers.dev/?film=1953474&frame=02143>).

26. Christine Rose, comp., *Nicknames Past and Present*, 5th Ed. (San Jose, Cal.: Christine Rose, 2007), 9, 18.

27. Christos Christou, Jr. and John Barnhouser, comp., *The Descendants of Richard Beckett (c. 1740–1804)*, (Baltimore, Md.: Self-published, 1994), 6–7, 15. Also for example of trees, see "Public Member Trees," database, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree>), "Charlotte Peebles family tree," by "CPeebles53" profile for James Edwin Jr Beckett (1810–1857).

28. For Sarah Beckett as Daniel's mother-in-law, see 1880 U.S. census, Putnam County, West Virginia, population schedule, Teayse's Valley District, enumeration district (ED) 113, p. 103C (stamped), dwelling 189, family 189, America A. Smith in household of D.P. Smith; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/6742/images/4244697-00411>). For Sarah Beckett's death record, see Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Deaths, No. 1: 87 (First District), entry 2, Sarah Beckett, 27 July 1893; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-69YW-MKM>), IGN 004228469, image 120 of 407.

TABLE 1.
Chronological Comparison of the Names Used by
Daniel Pleasant Smith's (1840–1929) Spouse^a

YEAR	NAME	RECORD TYPE	INFORMANT
1860	Jane Beckett	Marriage License and Return	Daniel Smith ^b
1861	Jane Smith	Death Register for Daughter	Daniel's father, Bartley ^c
1862	Virginia Beckett	Delayed Birth Certificate	Daniel's son, John ^d
1862	Virginia Beckett	Social Security Application	Daniel's son, John ^e
1864	Jinnie Beckett	Death Certificate for Son	Daniel's grandson, William ^f
1867	Jane Smith	Birth Register for Daughter	Daniel's wife, Jane ^g
1869	Virginia Beckett	Death Certificate for Daughter	Daniel's granddaughter, Eunice ^h
1870	Jane Smith	U.S. Census	Unknown ⁱ
1872	Jane Smith	Birth Register for Daughter	Daniel's father, Bartley ^j
1875	Virginia Smith	Birth Register for Daughter	Daniel Smith ^k
1876	Jane Smith	Death Register for Daughter	Daniel's wife, Jane ^l
1877	Jane Smith	Birth Register for Son	Daniel's wife, Jane ^m
1880	Virginia Smith	Birth Register for Son	Daniel Smith ⁿ
1880	Jane Smith	U.S. Census	Unknown ^o
1884	Jane Smith	Birth Register for Daughter	Daniel Smith ^p
1900	Jennie Smith	U.S. Census	Unknown ^q
1910	Virginia Smith	U.S. Census	Unknown ^r
1912	Virginia Smith	Tombstone	Unknown ^s

All online records searched 14 October 2024. Census records accessed at Ancestry.

a. For middle name, see W.Va. death certificate no. 14110 (1929), Daniel Pleasant Smith, 5 October 1929; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 004256278, image 2143 of 3049.

b. Putnam County, [W.] Va., Marriage Record, Vol. B: 31, Daniel P. Smith–Jane Beckett, marriage license, certificate, and minister's return, 4 November 1860; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 004227540, image 309 of 548.

c. Putnam County, [W.] Va., Register of Deaths, No. 1: 16, Smith —, 1 August 1861; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 004228469, image 52 of 407.

d. W.Va. delayed birth certificate no. 18342, John Henry Smith, 10 October 1862; Division of Vital Statistics, Department of Health, Charleston; imaged, *West Virginia Archives and History* (<https://wvulture.org>).

e. John Henry Smith, SS no. 233–24–3663, 19 April 1938, “Application for Account Number,” (Form SS–5); Social Security Administration, Baltimore, Md.

f. W.Va. death certificate no. 7609 (1928), William A. Smith, 26 June 1928; Department of Health, Division of Vital Statistics, Charleston; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 004256246, image 1642 of 3062. As reported in 1928.

g. Putnam County, W.Va., Register of Births, Vol. 1: 69, America A. Smith, 3 February 1867; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 004228468, image 121 of 559.

h. W.Va. death certificate no. 011102 (1956), Lena Miller, 3 September 1956; Department of Health, Division of Vital Statistics, Charleston; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 004258297, image 2113 of 3021. As reported in 1956.

For Eunice as granddaughter, see Eunice M. Erwin, SS no. 234–74–4703, 22 June 1963, “Application for Account Number,” (Form SS–5); Social Security Administration, Baltimore, Md.

i. 1870 U.S. census, Grant District, Putnam County, W.Va., population schedule, Winfield Post Office,

p. 283B (stamped), dwelling 35, family 55, Jane Smith. j. Putnam County, W.Va., Register of Births, Vol. 1: 96, entry 30, Sarah A. Smith, 1 April 1872; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 004228468, image 148 of 559.

k. Putnam County, W.Va., Register of Births, Vol. 1: 119, entry 21, Perlina E. Smith, 6 March 1875; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 004228468, image 171 of 559.

l. Putnam County, W.Va., Register of Deaths, No. 1: 42, entry 24, Elizabeth P. Smith, 21 December 1876; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 004228469, image 78 of 407.

m. Putnam County, W.Va., Register of Births, Vol. 1: 134, entry 5, Smith —, November 1877; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 004228468, image 186 of 559.

n. Putnam County, W.Va., Register of Births, Vol. 1: 159, entry 3, Smith, September 1880; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 004228468, image 211 of 559.

o. 1880 U.S. census, Putnam County, W.Va., population schedule, Teayse's Valley District, enumeration district (ED) 113, p. 103C (stamped), dwelling 189, family 189, Jane Smith.

p. Putnam County, W.Va., Register of Births, Vol. 1: 174, entry 10, Smith —, October 1884; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 004228468, image 246 of 559.

q. 1880 U.S. census, Putnam County, W.Va., population schedule, Teayse's [sic] Valley District, enumeration district (ED) 113, p. 103C (stamped), dwelling 189, family 189, Jennie Smith.

r. 1910 U.S. census, Putnam County, W.Va., population schedule, Teays Valley District, enumeration district (ED) 167, p. 2B (penned), family 32, Virginia Smith.

s. *Findagrave*, database with images, (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/40973986/virginia-jane-smith>), “Virginia Jane Beckett Smith” (1842–1912), memorial and tombstone image by “Mary Barker”; citing Peach Ridge Cemetery, Hurricane, Putnam County, W.Va.

official her parents were “Geo. & Sarah Beckett.”²⁹ Had Sarah Beckett married a man named George before or after a marriage to James Beckett? Were George and James one man? Who was Virginia’s father?

George Beckett?

At the time of Jane Beckett’s marriage, no George Beckett appeared in Putnam County or any nearby counties.³⁰ And while many Beckett families resided in neighboring Cabell County, none seemed to include a George.³¹ Additionally, no George Beckett married, divorced or died in the preceding twenty years in Cabell, Putnam, or Kanawha Counties.³² In fact, from 1840 to 1860 just three men about the right age to be Jane’s claimed father, George Beckett, appeared in or around western Virginia.³³ They were:

- George Beckett of Jefferson County, Kentucky
- George Beckett of Monroe County, Ohio

29. Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Marriages, 1853–1882, unnumbered page, entry 38, Daniel P. Smith-Jane Beckett, 4 November 1860; County Clerk’s Office, Winfield.

30. For negative findings, see “1860 United States Federal Census,” database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7667>). Search for surname Beckett living in or near Putnam County. Ancestry search settings set to “broad.” Also, “United States Census, 1860,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1473181>). Search for surname Beckett living in or neighboring Putnam County. The only George Beckett in Virginia at the time was a twenty-five-year-old black male. See 1860 U.S. census, Elizabeth City County, Virginia, population schedule, Fox Hall District, p. 57 (penned), dwelling 403, family 412, George Beckett in household of Isaiah Sisco; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GBSN-CM3>), IGN 005171707, image 41 of 95. Also, “Full-Text Search,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/full-text>). Search of keywords: “George Beckett,” place: “Virginia,” years: 1800–1900.

31. “1860 United States Federal Census,” database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7667>). For example, see 1860 U.S. census, Cabell County, Virginia, population schedule, p. 193 (penned), dwelling 1316, family 1274, Andrew L. Beckett; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/33682293:7667>). Also, 1860 U.S. census, Cabell County, Virginia, population schedule, p. 193 (penned), dwelling 1317, family 1275, Charles Beckett; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/33682293:7667>). Also, “Virginia Land Patents and Grants,” database with images, *Library of Virginia* (<https://lva-virginia.libguides.com/land-grants>). A search for George Beckett returned no results.

32. Virginia counties were not required to record births, marriages, and deaths until 11 April 1853. However, some extant records of marriages are available in Cabell and Kanawha Counties prior to this date. For negative findings for marriage, see “Marriage Records,” database with images, *West Virginia Archives and History* (<https://wvculture.org/vital-records-interactive>). Search terms: George, Geo, and G. Beckett [search type set to “Similar”], as well as surname Beckett, all West Virginia counties for years 1810–1845. Also, Cabell County, Index to Old Marriage Records, Vol. 1, 1809–1891, page-by-page search of “B” section, beginning on page 9 for George Beckett; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-99Z5-FXST>), IGN 007499384. Also, Carrie Eldridge, *Marriages, 1809–1850, Cabell County, Virginia* (Chesapeake, Ohio: self-published, 1988). For negative findings for death, see Carrie Eldridge, *Cabell Cemeteries, Cabell County, Virginia, Vols. 1–3* (Chesapeake, Ohio: self-published, 1990–92). Also, Upper Vandalia Historical Society, *Putnam County Cemeteries* (Poca, W.Va.: Upper Vandalia Historical Society, 1990). Also, Upper Vandalia Historical Society, *Putnam County Cemeteries Addendum* (Poca, W.Va.: Upper Vandalia Historical Society, 2001). Search of both volumes for George Beckett in survey of over 255 Putnam County cemeteries. Also, Kentucky-Ohio-West Virginia Genealogical Society Library, “Beckett Cemeteries,” 1992; folder: “Beckett,” vertical files; KYOWVA Library, Huntington, W.Va. For negative findings for a divorce, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, General Index Chancery Orders, No. 1, A–L, page-by-page search for George Beckett in section B, forename G; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L9VR-FQFL>), IGN 007616627, image 20 of 647. Also, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Law Orders, 1831–41, page-by-page search for Beckett; Circuit Court Office, Huntington. Also, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Law Orders, 1841–54, page-by-page search for Beckett; Circuit Court Office, Huntington. Also, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Chancery Court Orders, Vol. 1 [1854–60], page-by-page search for Beckett; Circuit Court Office, Huntington. Also, Kanawha County, [West] Virginia, Chancery Record, Vol. 1, search of internal index for Beckett; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C34Z-K92P-S>), IGN 008613937. Also, Vol. 2; IGN 008613722. Also, Vol. 3; IGN 008613723.

33. “1860 United States Federal Census,” database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7667>). Also, “1850 United States Federal Census,” database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8054>). Also, “1840 United States Federal Census,” database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8057>). Search for George and Geo Beckett with birthyears from 1795–1820. Other George Becketts were located but eliminated based on age. Virginia’s father would likely have been born around 1820 or earlier to be the right age to have a daughter born in about 1842. Also, “Full-Text Search,” *FamilySearch Labs* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/full-text>). Search for keywords “George Beckett” from 1820–60 in what is now West Virginia. Only eleven entries were returned, and three of those were misread by OCR and did not include the surname Beckett. Viable candidates were included in analysis.

➤ George Beckett of Hamilton County, Ohio

George Beckett of Jefferson County, Kentucky

Jefferson County lies in northwestern Kentucky outside Louisville and about 260 miles from Putnam County.³⁴ In 1860, George Beckett—a thirty-eight-year-old native of England—lived near the Middletown Post Office with his wife Ann (Temple) Beckett, who he married in 1844 a few years after Jane Beckett's birth.³⁵

This George Beckett arrived in New York City in 1840 to train for the ministry.³⁶ After leaving New York, he lived in Kentucky and Tennessee. Rev. George Beckett reportedly left only a widow and son when he died in 1907.³⁷ This man's arrival in United States in 1840, his marriage in Logan County, Kentucky in 1844, and leaving only "one son," John eliminates him as a candidate for Jane's father.³⁸

George N. Beckett of Monroe County, Ohio

Founded in 1815, Monroe County sat just across the Ohio River from Wetzel and Tyler Counties of Virginia.³⁹ Nearly 150 miles separated Putnam County from Malaga in Monroe County—where this George Beckett lived—but the Ohio River made a day-long journey between the two possible.⁴⁰ However, in 1850, the thirty-eight-year-old Ohio native lived with his twenty-nine-year-old wife, Margaret, and an eight-year-old son, John.⁴¹

George Beckett and Margaret Clingan wed in 1838.⁴² Although George purchased and sold property in Monongalia County, Virginia, he resided in Monroe County since at least 1835, years before Jane

34. For distance, see David H. Burr, *Map of Kentucky & Tennessee exhibiting the post offices, post roads, canals, railroads &c.* (London: John Arrowsmith, 1839); imaged, *Library of Congress* (<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g3950.r002240>). For routes, see Carrie Eldridge, *An Atlas of Appalachian Trails to the Ohio River* (Huntington, West Virginia: CDM Printing, 1998), 25, 29. Via James River and Kanawha Turnpike and Guyandotte Trail, now U.S. Routes 60, and 460, respectively.

35. 1860 U.S. census, Jefferson County, Kentucky, population schedule, District 2, p. 1057 (penned), dwelling 840, family 798, George Beckett; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/39674726:7667>). Also, Logan County, Kentucky, Marriage Record Book 1: 24, entry 55, George Beckett-Ann E. Temple, 22 October 1844; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L9S7-35C6>), IGN 004261740, image 99 of 375.

36. "New York Passenger Lists, 1820-1891," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:QVRO-MYS8>), entry for George Beckett, age 22, arrived 12 October 1840 on *St. Lawrence* in New York City. Also, "The Rev. George Beckett," *The New York Times*, 15 December 1907, p. 13, col. 4; imaged, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/20530497>).

37. 1880 U.S. census, Maury County, Tennessee, population schedule, Columbia, enumeration district (ED) 163, p. 244C (stamped), dwelling 193, family 243, Dr. Geo. Beckett; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/9852149:6742>). Also, "The Rev. George Beckett," *The New York Times*, 15 December 1907, p. 13, col. 4; imaged, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/20530497>). Still living in 1907, Virginia would have been mentioned if she was this man's daughter.

38. For John as only surviving child, see "The Rev. George Beckett," *The New York Times*, 15 December 1907, p. 13, col. 4; imaged, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/20530497>). For John as son of George, see "U.S. Passport Applications, 1795-1925," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/40426%3A1174>), entry for John Temples Beckett, passport application no. 15945; citing "Passport Applications, January 2, 1906-March 31, 1925," microfilm roll 1558; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

39. For county creation, see "History," *Monroe County Ohio* (https://www.monroecountyohio.net/residents/about_us/index.php). For location, see John B. Noll, *Map of Monroe County, Ohio* (Cincinnati: Ehrgott, Forbriger & Co., 1869); imaged, *Library of Congress* (<https://www.loc.gov/resource/g4083m.la000655>).

40. For distance, see David H. Burr, *Map of Virginia, Maryland and Delaware Exhibiting Post Offices, Post Roads, Canals, Railroads, &c.* (London: John Arrowsmith, 1839); imaged, *David Rumsey Map Collection* (<http://www.davidrumsey.com/maps3250.html>). For river access, see *Atlas of the Ohio River* (Nashville, Tennessee: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1914), particularly chart nos. 33 and 79; imaged, *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Digital Library* (<https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p16021coll10/id/9576>), images 40 and 85 of 278.

41. 1850 U.S. census, Monroe County, Ohio, population schedule, Malaga, District 107, p. 245B (stamped), dwelling 212, family 212, household of George Beckett; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/15941844:8054>). For Margaret as George's wife and John's mother, see "Mrs. Margaret Beckett," *Cambridge (Ohio) Jeffersonian*, 7 February 1901, p. 3, col. 4; imaged, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/35985694>).

42. For marriage date, see "Mrs. Margaret Beckett," *Cambridge (Ohio) Jeffersonian*, 7 February 1901, p. 3, col. 4; imaged, *Newspapers.com* (<https://www.newspapers.com/image/35985694>). In 1867 a courthouse fire caused significant record loss. See *History of Monroe County, Ohio, Containing a Condensed History of the County, Biographical Sketches, General Statistics, Miscellaneous Matters, and Etc.* (Chicago: H.H.

Beckett's 1838–1842 birth in Virginia.⁴³ Therefore, this George Beckett also seems an unlikely father for Jane.

George Beckett of Hamilton County, Ohio

In 1860 George and Lucinda (Schriner) Beckett lived in Cincinnati, Hamilton County. The couple probably married in 1843.⁴⁴ George remained in Ohio until at least 1862 when he mustered out of service in the Cincinnati Reserve Infantry.⁴⁵ While a previous marriage for this George seems possible, a divorce between he and Sarah (Paul) Beckett would have taken place prior to 1843. No George Beckett petitioned for divorce in either Hamilton or Belmont County, Ohio.⁴⁶ Additionally, Jane's father's birth allegedly took place in Virginia, not Ohio as this George claimed.⁴⁷ It seems improbable this George Beckett fathered Jane Beckett of Cabell and Putnam Counties.

Hardesty, 1882), 208. For negative findings for marriage record, see Ruth Dougherty Hogue, *Reconstructed Marriage Records of Monroe County, Ohio, 1803–1867* (Woodsfield, Ohio: Monroe County Chapter of the Ohio Genealogical Society, 2005). Search for Beckett marriage. For Margaret as George's wife in 1840, see Marion County, Ohio, Deed Book 1: 167–8, George N. and Margaret Beckett to John Turner, deed of sale, 9 March 1840; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L92H-G98L7>), IGN 004022313, image 99 of 535.

43. For George's residence in Monroe, and purchase of land in Virginia, see Monongalia County, [West] Virginia, "Old Deed Books" [unnumbered]: 54–5, John Beckett to George N. Beckett, deed of sale, 9 December 1835; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C37R-59DY-B>), IGN 008588375, image 42 of 345. "...George N. Beckett of the County & State aforesaid [Monroe County, Ohio] ..." For George's sale of the same land, see Monongalia County, [West] Virginia, "Old Deed Books" [unnumbered]: 56, George N. Beckett to John A. Guseman, deed of sale, 26 January 1836. For George's continued residence in Marion, see Marion County, Ohio, Deed Book 1: 167–8, George N. and Margaret Beckett to John Turner, deed of sale, 9 March 1840; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L92H-G98L7>), IGN 004022313, image 99 of 535. Also, Bureau of Land Management, "Land Patent Search," database with images, *General Land Office Records* (https://glorerecords.blm.gov/details/patent/default.aspx?accession=OH1100_262&docClass=STA&sid=qtgqzejv.bcp), entry for George N. Beckett (Monroe County, Ohio), certificate no. 3299 (1837). This patent is for the land George and Margaret sold in 1840. For an example of Virginia (Beckett) Smith's birth in Virginia, see 1880 U.S. census, Putnam County, West Virginia, population schedule, Teayse's Valley District, enumeration district (ED) 113, p. 103C (stamped), dwelling 189, family 189, D.P. Smith; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/6742/images/4244697-00411>).

44. For George and Lucinda's marriage, see Belmont County, Ohio, Marriage Records, Vol. 5: 488, marriage license no. 224 (1843), George Becket-Lucinda Srinier [sic], 5 December 1843; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:9392-9132-V1>), IGN 004016300, image 551 of 568. Although issued a license, a return was not recorded in this volume. 1860 U.S. census, Hamilton County, Ohio, population schedule, Cincinnati, Ward 5, p. 455A (stamped), dwelling 531, family 737, George Beckett; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/43886659:7667>).

45. For residence, see Compiled Military Service Record, George Beckett, Pvt., Co. A, 2nd Regiment, Cincinnati Reserve Infantry; Carded Records, Volunteer Organizations, Civil War; Record Group 94: Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s–1917; National Archives, Washington, D.C. George mustered out on 4 October 1862. For George and Lucinda in same household, see 1860 U.S. census, Hamilton County, Ohio, population schedule, Cincinnati, Ward 5, p. 455A (stamped), dwelling 531, family 737, George Beckett; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/43886659:7667>).

46. For negative findings, see Belmont County, Ohio, Supreme Court Journal, 1820–51, search for Beckett; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L92C-6XPQ?i=225&cat=476276>), IGN 004022583. This volume contains an internal index but is marked "incomplete." A page-by-page search of 1840–43 returned no results for Beckett. Also, Belmont County, Ohio, Chancery Records, Vol. 5, search for Beckett; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-L92C-DKH3>), IGN 004022543. George Beckett and Lucinda Schriner were issued their marriage license in Belmont. The Hamilton County Courthouse burned in 1849, and again in 1884. Some records survive. See Jason Alexander, Manager of Central Services Division, Hamilton County Clerk of Courts, *A Brief History of Hamilton County's Various Courthouses* (Cincinnati: Hamilton County Clerk of Courts, 2022); PDF, "History of Hamilton County Courthouses," *Hamilton County Court Clerk* (<https://www.courtclerk.org/hamilton-county-clerk-of-courts-history/>). For negative findings in Hamilton County, see Jeffrey G. Herbert, *Index of Hamilton County, Ohio, Reported Court Records, 1841–1869* (Cincinnati: Hamilton County Chapter, Ohio Genealogical Society (2017). Search for George or Sarah Beckett.

47. For an example of Virginia's father's birth in Virginia, see 1880 U.S. census, Putnam County, West Virginia, population schedule, Teayse's [sic] Valley District, enumeration district (ED) 113, p. 103C (stamped), dwelling 189, family 189, Jane Smith; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/6742/images/4244697-00411>). Also, 1910 U.S. census, Putnam County, West Virginia, population schedule, Teays Valley District, enumeration district (ED) 167, p. 2B (penned), family 32, Virginia Smith; imaged, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7884/images/4455051_00657).

None of the George Becketts living in the region near western Virginia appear to be the reported father of Jane Beckett. In fact, only six white men named George Beckett near the right age to be Jane's father lived in the United States from 1840 and 1860—none claiming a Virginia nativity.⁴⁸ If a George Beckett from Virginia fathered Jane Beckett, he left little evidence, but James Beckett's wife, Sarah (Paul) Beckett, and her father, George Paul, certainly did. Could this George be the source of a conflated identity?

A MOTHER'S PATH TO PUTNAM COUNTY

Sarah Paul was likely born in Virginia around 10 May 1810.⁴⁹ Thirteen years earlier, Sarah's father, George Paul, lived in Greenbrier County, Virginia where he wed his wife, Jane Kilpatrick.⁵⁰ George and Jane Paul became some of the first residents of Monroe County, Virginia when the county formed in 1799.⁵¹ While it's possible the Paul family may have known a George Beckett while in Greenbrier or Monroe County, no man by the name appears in the area around the time the Pauls resided there.⁵²

48. "1840 United States Federal Census," database with images, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8057>). "1850 United States Federal Census," database with images, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8054>). Also, "1860 United States Federal Census," database with images, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7667>). All census searched for George and Geo Beckett with birthyears 1790–1822, born in Virginia. For examples of Virginia's ethnicity, and her father's Virginia birth, see 1880 U.S. census, Putnam County, West Virginia, population schedule, Teayse's [sic] Valley District, enumeration district (ED) 113, p. 103C (stamped), dwelling 189, family 189, Jane Smith; imaged, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/6742/images/4244697-00411>). Also, 1910 U.S. census, Putnam County, West Virginia, population schedule, Teays Valley District, enumeration district (ED) 167, p. 2B (penned), family 32, Virginia Smith; imaged, Ancestry (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7884/images/4455051_00657).

49. For specific day of birth, Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Deaths, No. 1: 87 (First District), entry 2, Sarah Beckett, 27 July 1893; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33HY-69YW-MKM>), IGN 004228469, image 120 of 407. Sarah's daughter reported her mother's age at death. For approximate year reported by Sarah, see General Affidavit, 30 July 1891, Sarah Beckett, widow's pension, service of James T. Paul (Pvt., Co. G, 11th Reg., W.Va. Infantry, also Co. D, 10th W.Va. Vols.), pension no. 510,104; Case Files of Approved Pension Applications..., 1861–1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Record Group 15: Records of the Department of Veteran's Affairs; National Archives, Washington, D.C. In 1891, Sarah (Paul) Beckett reported she was eighty years old in 1891 which would make her birthyear 1811. For likely 1810 birth, see 1810 U.S. census, Kanawha County, Virginia, population schedule, p. 137, George Paul; imaged, Ancestry (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7613/images/4433173_00413). Also, 1850 U.S. census, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 10, p. 43B (stamped), dwelling 598, family 618, household of James Becket; imaged, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8054/images/4191115-00092>). Also, 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 850 (penned), dwelling 214, family 193, S. Beckett; imaged, Ancestry (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7667/images/4298868_00444). Sarah's birth was more often reported as 1810.

50. Greenbrier County, [West] Virginia, Marriage Records, Vol. 1A: 113, George Paul-Jane Kilpatrick, 1797; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33HT-6XQQ-FHM>), IGN 004130778, image 50 of 411.

51. For residence, see Monroe County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1799 List of William Vawter, p. 13, George Paul, 13 April 1799; imaged, FamilySearch, (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CS73-S9BR-H>), IGN 007857028, image 18 of 1190. Also, Greenbrier County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1798 List A, List of William Vawter, p. 13, George Paul, 21 April 1798; imaged, FamilySearch, (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSQ2-3S3L-Q>), IGN 007849126, image 359 of 891. For county boundary changes, see Samuel Shepherd, "An ACT for dividing the county of Greenbrier," *The Statutes at Large of Virginia, from October 1792, to December 1806, Inclusive*, Vol. II (Richmond: Samuel Shepherd, 1835), 168–9; imaged, HathiTrust (<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.35112104867314&seq=174>).

52. For negative findings in Monroe County, see Monroe County, [West] Virginia, General Index to Marriage Records from 1799–1965, Vol. 1, page-by-page search for Beckett prior to 1842; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9BF-WQNM-X>), IGN 00721354. Also, Monroe County, [West] Virginia, Loose Marriage Records [1830–1837]; image-by-image search for Beckett prior to 1842; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33HT-DC74-MRQ>), IGN 004233541. Monroe County, [West] Virginia, Loose Marriage Records [1837–1846]; image-by-image search for Beckett prior to 1842; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33HT-6QX7-B9Q>), IGN 004233542. Also, "Marriage Records," database with images, West Virginia Archives and History (<https://wvculture.org/vital-records-interactive>). Search for Beckett, Becket, and Bicket in all counties 1840 +/- 5 years. The only known George Beckett to marry in Monroe County married in 1893. Also, "Search Death Records," West Virginia Archives and History (<https://wvculture.org/vital-records-interactive>). Search for Beckett, Becket, and Bicket. Also, "Full-Text Search," database with images, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/full-text>). Search of keywords: "George Beckett," place: "Greenbrier County, Virginia," all years.

A Brief Journey Westward

George Paul and his family settled in Kanawha County, Virginia between 1807 and 1810. Two girls under age ten—one of them certainly Sarah—lived with George in his 1810 home.⁵³ Although county names and boundaries changed, George and his extended family, including a few brothers, settled and remained in the area that eventually became Putnam County.⁵⁴ By 1850, two years after Putnam's creation, George and Jane Paul, resided with Howard Kennard in the southern area of the county near Buff's Creek, a branch of Big Hurricane Creek.⁵⁵ The Kennard's also neighbored George's son, Joseph Paul.⁵⁶

In June the same year, Sarah (Paul) Beckett shared a home on the Cabell-Putnam County border with James Beckett. The home included four children: William, eighteen; Virginia, eleven; America, six; and Tabitha, two. All the children shared a Beckett surname.⁵⁷

53. 1810 U.S. census, Kanawha County, Virginia, population schedule, p. 137, George Paul; imaged, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7613/images/4433173_00413). Also, Kanawha County, West Virginia, Personal Property Tax List, 1810, p. 14, George Paul; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSQK-5996-3>), IGN 007849142, image 145 of 773. This was George Paul's first known appearance in Kanawha County. For last appearance in Monroe, see Monroe County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1807 List of Joseph Alderson, p. 17, George Paul, 1 May 1807; imaged, *FamilySearch*, (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CS73-S9BXJ>), IGN 007857028, image 150 of 1190. For negative evidence of George Paul in Monroe, see Monroe County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1809 List of David Graham, page-by-page search for George Paul; imaged, *FamilySearch*, (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CS73-S9B8-W>), IGN 007857028. Note, Virginia did not levy personal property taxes in 1808, see "An Act to amend the several Acts prescribing the mode of ascertaining the Taxable Property within the Commonwealth, and for Collecting the Public Revenue, and for other purposes," A Collection of All Such Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia of a Public and Permanent Nature as Have Passed Since the Session of 1801, Vol. II (Richmond: Samuel Pleasants Jr., 1808), p. 161, particularly section 1; imaged, *HathiTrust* (<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uva.x004440829&view=1up&seq=195&q1=195>).

54. For residence, see 1830 U.S. census, Kanawha County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, p. 209 (penned), George Paul; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/844169:8058>). Also, 1850 U.S. census, Putnam County, Virginia, population schedule, District 46, p. 316A (stamped), dwelling 686, family 710, George and Jane Paul in household of Howard Kennard; imaged, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8054/images/4206393_00301). For negative findings in 1820 census, see "1820 United States Census," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GYYK-38BW>) > Virginia > Kanawha. Also, "1820 United States Census," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33SQ-GYYY-VLR>) > Virginia > Cabell. These censuses are arranged roughly alphabetically. A page-by-page search was conducted. While George does not appear recorded in the 1820 census in Kanawha or Cabell counties, he appears on Kanawha County on tax lists in 1811, and 1813–1820, see Kanawha County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1811–1830, entries arranged chronologically, all years read for all entries for George Beckett; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSQK-599Z-T>), IGN 007849142. For creation of Cabell County, see "An act for dividing the County of Kanawha [sic]," *Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia* (Richmond: Samuel Pleasants Jr., 1808), pp. 44–5; imaged, *HathiTrust* (<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.a0001942408&seq=141&q1=Kenawha>). For George Paul's brothers, see Greenbrier County, [West] Virginia, Court Orders Vol. 2: 209, John and Sarah Siers, John Paul, Isaac Paul, George Paul, Daniel Paul, Jesse Paul, Mary Paul, John and Frances Elison and Elizabeth Paul v. Hugh Paul, 8 September 1798; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-89V1-S9MS-7>), IGN 007617374, image 135 of 953. As an example of George's siblings nearby, see Kanawha County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1815 List of Matthew McCown, p. 9, entries for Daniel, George, and Hugh Paul, 22 May 1815; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSQK-599Q-2>), IGN 007849142, image 245 of 773.

55. For residence, see 1850 U.S. census, Putnam County, Virginia, population schedule, District 46, p. 316A (stamped), dwelling 686, family 710, George and Jane Paul in household of Howard Kennard; imaged, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8054/images/4206393_00301). Although the Kennards did not own property, their neighbor, Brice Paul did. See Virginia State Land Office, Land Office Grants, Brice Paul, 30 November 1838; imaged, *Library of Virginia* (https://lva.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01LVA_INST/altrmk/alma990008052480205756); citing Land Office Grants no. 89, 1838–1839, reel 155, p. 552.

56. For Joseph Paul as George's son, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Register of Deaths, Vol. 1: 1 entry 29, George Paul [sic], 21 August 1853; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33HY-69YW-93P>), IGN 004228469, image 37 of 407. For Joseph Paul as neighbor of Brice Paul, and Kennards, see Virginia State Land Office, Land Office Grants, Brice Paul, 30 November 1838; imaged, *Library of Virginia* (https://lva.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01LVA_INST/altrmk/alma990008052480205756); citing Land Office Grants no. 89, 1838–1839, reel 155, p. 552.

57. 1850 U.S. census, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 10, p. 43B (stamped), dwelling 598, family 618, household of James Beckett; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8054/images/4191115-00092>). For land

By 1850, James and Sarah lived near Trace Fork in Cabell County.⁵⁸ However, James also appeared in Putnam County the same year, possibly due to confusion over the annexation of the Trace Fork area by Putnam County.⁵⁹ James remained near Trace Fork through at least 1854.⁶⁰ But that summer, when he reported William Beckett's death, he identified his son's mother as Matilda, and not Sarah.⁶¹

CLOSING GAPS WITH FAMILY RECORDS

A Daughter's Recollections

Only one census record during his life identified James Beckett by name.⁶² However, a privately held manuscript handed down by his daughter furnishes details of James's early, and largely undocumented, life. Margaret Ann (Beckett) Brown recounts James's first marriage, Margaret's siblings, the family's attempt to migrate west, and stories of James's second marriage. She reported the details to her son, Frank Brown.⁶³

owning neighbors, see Ibid., Cabell County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 10, p. 43B (stamped), dwelling 594, family 614, William Porter. Also, Ibid., Cabell County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 10, p. 43B (stamped), dwelling 599, family 619, David Porter. For approximate location based on neighbors, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Deed Book 10: 490-1, William and Annatha Porter to William Porter, deed of sale, 6 May 1850; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C37T-91ZZ>), IGN 008588677, image 254 of 603. Also, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Deed Book 10: 9, James H. Brown to David Porter, deed of sale, 24 October 1848; IGN 008588677, image 9 of 603.

58. 1850 U.S. census, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 10, p. 43B (stamped), dwelling 598, family 618, household of James Beckett; imaged, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8054/images/4191115-00092>). For land owning neighbors, see Ibid., Cabell County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 10, p. 43B (stamped), dwelling 594, family 614, William Porter. Also, Ibid., Cabell County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 10, p. 43B (stamped), dwelling 599, family 619, David Porter. For approximate location based on neighbors, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Deed Book 10: 490-1, William and Annatha Porter to William Porter, deed of sale, 6 May 1850; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C37T-91ZZ>), IGN 008588677, image 254 of 603. Also, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Deed Book 10: 9, James H. Brown to David Porter, deed of sale, 24 October 1848; IGN 008588677, image 9 of 603.

59. 1850 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, agricultural schedule, pp.131-2, line 1, James Beckett; imaged, microfilm roll 194, "Agricultural Schedule, Marion-Wyoming"; West Virginia Archives, Charleston. Also, "An Act to change part of the line dividing the county of Putnam from the counties of Cabell and Kanawha," *Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, Passed at the Extra and Regular Sessions in 1849 & 1850 and in the Seventy-Third and Seventy-Fourth Years of the Commonwealth* (Richmond: William F. Ritchie, 1850), 24-5; imaged, HathiTrust (<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=osu.32437123259026&seq=30&q1=Putnam>).

60. For examples of James's area, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1842 List of Alderson Bowen, p. 3, James Beckett Jr., 5 February 1842; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008707645>), IGN 008707645, image 14 of 343. Also, Ibid., p. 3, William Beckett, 4 February 1842. Also, Ibid., Daniel, David, and William Porter, p. 20, 5 February 1842; image 23 of 343. For tax collector visiting neighborhoods, see Samuel Shepherd, *The Statutes at Large of Virginia, from October Session 1792, to December Session 1806*, Vol. 1 (Richmond: Samuel Shepherd, 1835), p. 54-5, particularly sect. 8; imaged, HathiTrust

(<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.35112104867306&seq=60>). Also, Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Deaths, Vol. 1: 2, entry 11, William Beckett, 18 August 1854; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-69YW-MKW>), IGN 004228469, image 38 of 407.

61. Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Deaths, Vol. 1: 2, entry 11, William Beckett, 18 August 1854; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-69YW-MKW>), IGN 004228469, image 38 of 407.

62. 1850 U.S. census, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 10, p. 43B (stamped), dwelling 598, family 618, household of James Beckett; imaged, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8054/images/4191115-00092>). For negative findings in 1840 and 1860, see "1860 United States Federal Census," database with images, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7667>). Also, "1840 United States Federal Census," database with images, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8057>). Search for James Beckett.

63. Margaret Ann (Beckett) Brown, "Mrs. Margaret Ann Brown, nee Beckett," written before 4 November 1870, typescript by Frank Brown (1853-1924); privately held by Brownie Jean (Stapp) Mortlock, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Kettle Falls, Washington, 2020.

For Margaret Beckett as Margaret (Beckett) Brown, see Lawrence County, Ohio, Marriage Record, Vol. 4-5: 153, Frederick G. Brown-Margaret Beckett, 15 July 1850; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:33S7-95B7-GZM>), IGN 004922497, image 354 of 529. Also, Lawrence County, Ohio, Marriage License, Frederick G. Brown-Margaret Beckett, 15 July 1850; imaged, unnumbered microfilm roll; Lawrence County Public Library, Ironton. For Frank Brown as Margaret's son, see Washington death certificate no. 2209 (1924), Frank Brown, 6 September 1924; State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, Olympia; citing "Washington, U.S. Death Records, 1907-2017," database with images, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/6716/images/i2284680-03210>).

- James Beckett Jr. - born 24 August 1811 and died 14 June 1857.
- Margaret Ann Beckett - born 2 December 1833 in "...Cabell County."
Daughter of James A. Beckett and Matilda Porter.
- Matilda Porter's father was William Porter who died in Platte County, Missouri.
- Margaret Ann had a brother and two sisters [unnamed].
- James Beckett "was a small farmer."
- In spring 1838, James Beckett, his father-in-law, a brother-in-law, and a neighbor
"...started to Missouri."
- By late Fall 1838, they settled in Platte County, Missouri.
- In Winter 1838, Matilda (Porter) Beckett died, along with one of James and
Matilda's younger daughters.
- James's "health failed" and he returned to "his old home in Virginia," arriving
in late summer 1839.
- James's affairs were "very unsettled." He left Margaret with his parents
where she remained for over a year.
- Sometime after fall 1840, James Beckett remarried.

A Burned Bible

Bracy Beckett—a grandson of Charles W. Beckett, and great-grandson to James Beckett Sr.—transcribed the "Bible of James Beckett" allegedly "lost in a fire years ago," including details of the Beckett family:⁶⁴

- Nineteen births and deaths, but no marriages.
- No mention of the Bible's origins including a publishing date.
- An entry for James Beckett born Sept. 18, 1774, died Jan. 20, 1868.
- An entry for James Beckett Jr. born 20 August 1810, died 14 June 1867.
- None of the entries include or mention a George Beckett.

JAMES BECKETT JR. OF CABELL COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Margaret (Beckett) Brown provided detailed, but unsupported stories of her parents' lives, and deaths. However, an evaluation of her recollections establishes their general reliability, see Table 2.

James Beckett likely married Matilda Porter sometime before 1832.⁶⁵ The couple's daughter, Margaret Ann, self-reported her 1833 Cabell County birth.⁶⁶ Two more children arrived before James and Matilda's

64. "Bible of James Beckett," *The KYOWVA Genealogical Society Newsletter*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Fall 1991), 8. For Charles W. Beckett as son of James Beckett, [Sr.], see Cabell County, Deed Book 13: 570-1, James Beckett to Charles W. Beckett, deed of gift, 1 June 1857; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSKV-F3LF-H>), IGN 008152411, image 625 of 664. For Bracy Beckett as the grandson of Charles W. Beckett, see West Virginia death certificate no. 152 (1929), S.L. Beckett, 18 January 1929; Division of Vital Statistics, State Department of Health, Charleston; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9T2-JWNP-7>), IGN 004256270, image 161 of 3055. Bracy Beckett reported the death and named Samuel's father as Charles Beckett. Also, Cabell County, West Virginia, Register of Births, Vol. 1: 112, line 20, Bracy Beckett, 2 November 1882; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-6QQ9-83K>), IGN 004014156, images 121-2 of 253. Samuel Beckett reported his son's birth. These images are incomplete, also viewed at "Births," database with images, *West Virginia Archives & History* (<https://dach-image-proxy.digital-relativity.workers.dev/?film=559300&frame=00121>), search for Bracy Beckett.

65. Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Deaths, Vol. 1: 2, entry 11, William Beckett, 18 August 1854; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-69YW-MKW>), IGN 004228469, image 38 of 407.

66. Births were not recorded in Virginia prior to 1853. For negative search for death record, see "Illinois Statewide Death Index, Pre-1916," *Illinois State Archives* (<https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/archives/databases/deathlst.html>). Marion County, Margaret's last known residence, did not begin keeping death records until 1877. Also, *Findagrave*, database with images (<https://www.findagrave.com/>), search for Margaret Brown in Illinois 1873 +/- 3 years. For Margaret's last known residence, see 1870 U.S. census, Township 2, Range 1, Marion County, Illinois, population schedule, Odin Post Office, p. 126B (stamped), dwelling 141, family 141, Margaret Brown; imaged, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7163/images/4263687_00256). For Margaret's death before December 1873, see, Marion County, Illinois, Marriage Records, Vol. D: 91, Fredric G. Brown-Mrs. Dicey Stephens, 25 December 1873; microfilm roll 1010.515, Illinois Regional Archive Depository, Carbondale. Margaret likely died between 1870-73. For negative findings for an obituary, see *Digital*

TABLE 2.
Evaluating Information in Beckett Family Records for Reliability

MANUSCRIPT ^a	BIBLE TRANSCRIPTON ^b	ANALYSIS
"...James Becket, was born August 24th, 1811..."	"James Beckett Jr born Aug 20, 1810..."	State law did not require birth records before 1853. But James's first appearance on Cabell County's 1831 tax roll suggests an 1810 date is more likely correct. ^c
James Beckett married Matilda Porter before December 1833	No marriages recorded	Although some marriage records exist before 1853, no record was located for James and Matilda. The couple likely wed before 1832 when their son William was born. ^d
James and Matilda had four children, including one who died in Missouri during winter 1839	No mention of James Beckett Jr.'s children	William Porter mentions, but does not name his deceased daughter Matilda's three living children in his 1847 Platte County, Missouri will. ^e
Matilda (Porter) Beckett died in winter 1839	Entires for James Beckett Sr.'s children do not mention their spouses	William Porter mentions his deceased daughter, Matilda Beckett, in his 3 May 1847 Platte County, Missouri will. ^f
"...[James Beckett] returned to Virginia...in Summer 1839."	—	James Beckett returned to Cabell County between spring 1841 and February 1842. ^g
James Beckett "married again" after fall 1840	No marriages recorded	No known marriage record survives. James Beckett married Sarah Paul after 1841. ^h
"...James Beckett died June 14th, 1857."	"James Beckett Jr... died June 14, 1867"	No known death, burial, or probate record exists. James was not located in 1860 census and females of 1850 Beckett household all lived in separate homes by 1860. The correct year is more likely 1857. ⁱ

All online records searched 14 October 2024.

a. Margaret Ann (Beckett) Brown, "Mrs. Margaret Ann Brown, nee Beckett," written before 4 November 1870, typescript by Frank Brown (1853–1924); privately held by Brownie Jean (Stapp) Mortlock, [AD-DRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Kettle Falls, Washington, 2020.

b. "Bible of James Beckett," *The KYOWVA Genealogical Society Newsletter*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Fall 1991), 8.

c. Commonwealth of Virginia, "An Act Concerning the registration of births, marriages and deaths," *Acts and Joint Resolutions of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia Passed in 1852–3* (Richmond: William F. Ritchie Public Printer, 1853), 40; imaged, *HathiTrust* (<https://babel.hathitrust.org>). For James's tax, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax, 1831 List of Benjamin Drown, p. 5, James Beckett Jr., 12 March 1831; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 007849097, image 467 of 735. For negative findings for James on 1830 tax list, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax, 1830 List of Benjamin Drown, search for James Beckett Jr.. For tax law, see William Waller Hening, "Poll Tax," *The Statutes at Large Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619*, Vol. X (Richmond: George Cochran, 1822), 166; imaged, *HathiTrust* (<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt>).

d. Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Register of Deaths, Vol. 1: 2, entry 11, William Beckett, 18 August 1854; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 004228469, image 38 of 407.

e. Platte County, Missouri, Will Book B: 79–81, William Porter, will, written 3 May 1847, proven 6 February 1852; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 007631726, images 190–1 of 689.

f. *Ibid.*

g. For James return to Cabell County by 1842, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1842 List of Alderson Bowen, p. 3, James Beckett Jr., 5 February 1842; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 008707645, image 14 of 343.

h. For negative findings for marriage record, see "Marriage Records Search," database with images, *West Virginia Archives and History* (<http://archive.wvculture.org>). Search terms: James Beckett [search set to "Similar"], as well as only surname Beckett in all W.Va. counties for years 1840–1850. For James return to Cabell County by 1842, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1842 List of Alderson Bowen, p. 3, James Beckett Jr., 5 February 1842; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 008707645, image 14 of 343. For James Beckett as husband of Sarah Paul, see Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Deaths, No. 1: 87 (First District), entry 2, Sarah Beckett, 27 July 1893; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 004228469, image 120 of 407.

i. For negative findings for a death, see "Death Records Search," database with images, *West Virginia Archives and History* (<http://archive.wvculture.org/vrr>). Search for James Beckett death +/- five years from 1860–65 with no results for any county in what is now West Virginia. Also, Upper Vandalia Historical Society, *Putnam County Cemeteries* (Poca, West Virginia: Upper Vandalia Historical Society, 1990). For negative findings for James Beckett in 1860, see "United States Census, 1860," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>). Search for: James Beckett born between 1805–1815 living in Putnam, Cabell, and neighboring Mason, Lincoln, or Kanawha Counties in Virginia. For Sarah Beckett, and Beckett girls in separate households, see 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 850 (penned), dwelling 214, family 193, S. and P. Beckett; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>). Also, 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 851 (penned), dwelling 217, family 196, A. Beckett in household of Wm. E. Herndon. Also, 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 824 (penned), dwelling 15, family 14, T. Beckett in household of J. Filer. Also, 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 831 (penned), dwelling 63, family 57, V. Beckett in household of T. Roberts.

Archives of the Marion County Public Library (<https://marion.advantage-preservation.com/>), search for Margaret Brown between 1870 and 1900.

journey “out west” to “better [James’s] financial prospects.” The family departed Cabell County between in 1839.⁶⁷

The Becketts allegedly arrived in Platte County, Missouri in fall 1838, but the dates Margaret recalled appear off by about a year.⁶⁸ Matilda (Porter) Beckett probably died during 1840’s winter. James soon returned to Virginia.⁶⁹ He likely arrived back in Cabell County sometime between spring and fall of 1841 rather than summer 1839, as Margaret remembered.⁷⁰ When James reached Cabell County, Margaret Ann went to live with James’s father. James’s other surviving children—Anna and William—remained in Platte County.⁷¹ By summer 1850, James’s son, William, returned to live with his father.⁷²

67. For James Beckett’s last known appearance in 1838, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1809-1842, all years read for James Beckett [Jr.]; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/007849097>), IGN 007849097. James was recorded in 1838, and then reappears in 1842. For two unnamed children born prior to travel, see Margaret Ann (Beckett) Brown, “Mrs. Margaret Ann Brown, nee Beckett,” written before 4 November 1870, typescript by Frank Brown (1853–1924); privately held by Brownie Jean (Stapp) Mortlock, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Kettle Falls, Washington, 2020.

68. Platte County was created in 1838. See, U.S. Congress, *The Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America, 1789–1845*, Vol. 5 (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1856), 34; 7 June 1836, “An Act to extend the western boundary of the State of Missouri to the Missouri River,” Chapter LXXXVI; imaged, *Library of Congress* (<https://tile.loc.gov/storage-services/service/l1/lsl/l1sl-c24/l1sl-c24.pdf>). Also, State of Missouri, “An Act to organize the counties of Platte and Buchanan, and define the boundaries of the same,” 31 December 1838, *Laws of the State of Missouri, Passed at the First Session of the Tenth General Assembly Begun and Held at the City of Jefferson* (Jefferson, Mo.: Calvin Gunn, 1838), 22–4; imaged, *Missouri Digital Heritage* (<https://mdh.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/molaws/id/46332/rec/5>). For William Porter in Platte County, see 1840 U.S. census, Platte County, Missouri, population schedule, p. 116A (stamped), William Porter; imaged, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8057/images/4409534_00239). This is the earliest record of William in Platte. Tax records prior to 1861 are not extant. See, Becky Dye, Chief Deputy Tax Collector, Platte City, Mo., [(BDYE@CO.PLATTE.MO.US,)] to Kelley Lear, 30 September 2024, “Early Platte County Tax Records”; Beckett-Porter Research Files; privately held by Lear, [(THE LEARS@ME.COM) & 1046 N. VIRGINIA AVE. NE,] Atlanta, Georgia. Also, Missouri State Archives, Jefferson City, Mo., [(ARCHREF@SOS.MO.GOV,)] to Kelley Lear, 20 September 2024, “MSA Request – Tax List”; Beckett-Porter Research Files; privately held by Lear, [(THE LEARS@ME.COM) & 1046 N. VIRGINIA AVE. NE,] Atlanta, Georgia. For negative findings for James Beckett in 1840, see “1840 United States Federal Census,” database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/8057>). Search for James Becketts in Missouri and Virginia. For James Beckett Jr.’s last appearance in Cabell County in 1838, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1838 List of Benjamin Davis, p. 3, James Beckett Jr., 1 March 1838; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/007849097>), IGN 007849097 image 627 of 735. For Matilda (Porter) Beckett’s father also taxed on same day, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1838 List of Benjamin Davis, p. 29, William L. Porter, 1 March 1838; image 640 of 735.

69. For Matilda (Porter) Beckett’s death before 1847, see Platte County, Missouri, Will Book B: 79–81 William Porter, will, written 3 May 1847, proven 6 February 1852; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-89L9-Q8BV>), IGN 007631726, images 190–1 of 689. For negative finding for death record for Matilda, see “Missouri Birth & Death Records Database, Pre-1910,” database, *Missouri Digital Heritage* (<https://s1.sos.mo.gov/records/archives/archivesdb/birthdeath>). Search for Beckett, Becket, and Backett in Platte County. Also, a search of Beckett in all counties. Also, Margaret Ann (Beckett) Brown, “Mrs. Margaret Ann Brown, nee Beckett,” written before 4 November 1870, typescript by Frank Brown (1853–1924); privately held by Brownie Jean (Stapp) Mortlock, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Kettle Falls, Washington, 2020. For James’s return, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1842 List of Alderson Bowen, p. 3, James Beckett, Jr., 5 February 1842; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QHV-V38R-M9QG-C>), IGN 008707645, image 14 of 343.

70. Margaret Ann (Beckett) Brown, “Mrs. Margaret Ann Brown, nee Beckett,” written before 4 November 1870, typescript by Frank Brown (1853–1924); privately held by Brownie Jean (Stapp) Mortlock, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Kettle Falls, Washington, 2020. For negative findings of James Jr. in Cabell County in 1841, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1841 List of John Plymale, p. 7, James Beckett, 21 April 1841; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSQ2-QQM2-Q>), IGN 007849097, image 707 of 735. Only one James Beckett appeared on this list and was certainly James Beckett [Jr.’s] father, recorded simply as “James Beckett.” For James Jr.’s return, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1842 List of Alderson Bowen, p. 3, James Beckett, Jr., 5 February 1842; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QHV-V38R-M9QG-C>), IGN 008707645, image 14 of 343. James Beckett “Senr.” paid taxes on 26 February 1842.

71. For Margaret’s sister and brother staying in Missouri, see Margaret Ann (Beckett) Brown, “Mrs. Margaret Ann Brown, nee Beckett,” written before 4 November 1870, typescript by Frank Brown (1853–1924); privately held by Brownie Jean (Stapp) Mortlock, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Kettle Falls, Washington, 2020. For James’s daughter Anna in Platte, see 1850 U.S. census, Platte County, Missouri, population schedule, Pettis Township, p. 433A (stamped), dwelling 144, family 144, Anna Becker in household of Thomas H. Porter; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/3992782:8054>). For Thomas H. Porter as uncle, see Platte County, Missouri, Will Book B: 79–81 William Porter, will, written 3 May 1847, proven 6 February 1852; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-89L9-Q8BV>), IGN 007631726, images 190–1 of 689.

72. 1850 U.S. census, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 10, p. 43B (stamped), dwelling 598, family 618, household of James Becket; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8054/images/4191115-00092>).

James Beckett's Return to Virginia and a New Wife

While James Beckett and his first wife owned land near Trace Fork of Mud River, James did not purchase land when he returned from Missouri.⁷³ The widower arrived back in his old neighborhood, probably around summer 1841, but certainly before the coming winter arrived. He settled near his old property and his brother, William, as well former in-laws along Trace Fork.⁷⁴

In her early thirties at the time, Sarah Paul likely lived with family between Big Hurricane Creek and Trace Fork.⁷⁵ The road "...from Trace Fork of Mud near Joseph Pauls to...the head of Buff's Creek..." connected James Beckett to many members of the Paul family.⁷⁶ So upon James's return, he and his future wife became neighbors, see Image 1.

Nearby family likely provided land for James to farm.⁷⁷ Like some of his soon-to-be in-laws, James seemed to struggle financially.⁷⁸ He "soon wearied of attempts...to work the farm and attend the wants of a household..." and married shortly after his return to the area.⁷⁹

73. Cabell County, West Virginia, Deed Book 7: 366-7, James and Matilda Beckett to William Beckett, deed of sale, 8 March 1839; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSKV-K3QB-J>), IGN 008152410, image 498 of 649. For lack of property, see 1850 U.S. census, Cabell County, Virginia, population schedule, District 10, p. 43B (stamped), dwelling 598, family 618, James Beckett; image, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8054/images/419115-00092>). Also, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Deed Index, Grantee, 1808-1922, Vol. 1, Ba-BI, search for James Beckett; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSG6-FS3J-T>). IGN 008218860.

74. For William nearby, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Deed Book, Vol. 1: 370-1, Thomas and Elizabeth Beckett to William Beckett, deed of sale, 2 February 1849; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSRQ-133D-Z>), IGN 008292939, image 191 of 665. "...fifteen acres...crossing Trace Fork..." Written in Cabell County, the deed was entered in Putnam. Also, Cabell County, West Virginia, Deed Book 7: 366-7, James and Matilda Beckett to William Beckett, deed of sale, 8 March 1839; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSKV-K3QB-J>), IGN 008152410, image 498 of 649. For Porter in-laws nearby, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1842 List of Alderson Bowen, p. 3, James Beckett Jr., 5 February 1842; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/008707645>), IGN 008707645, image 14 of 343. Also, *Ibid.*, p. 20, David Porter, William Porter, 5 February 1842; image 23 of 343. For tax collector visiting neighborhoods, see Samuel Shepherd, *The Statutes at Large of Virginia, from October Session 1792, to December Session 1806*, Vol. 1 (Richmond: Samuel Shepherd, 1835), p. 54-5, particularly sect. 8; imaged, *HathiTrust* (<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=mdp.35112104867306&seq=60>).

75. Only one Sarah Paul married in the state prior to 1842, see Berkeley County, [West] Virginia, Marriage Bond, John Easterday-Sarah Paul, 28 July 1817; Berkeley County Clerk's Office, Martinsburg. Sarah Paul of Putnam County was about seven years old in 1817. For negative findings of prior marriages, see "Marriage Records," database with images, *West Virginia Archives and History* (<https://wvculture.org/vital-records-interactive>). Search for Paul in Cabell, Kanawha, Mason, all years. Also, "Ohio Marriages, 1800-1958," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1681001>). Search for Sarah Paul. No results in any neighboring Ohio counties. For James Beckett-Sarah Paul marriage, see Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Deaths, No. 1: 87 (First District), entry 2, Sarah Beckett, 27 July 1893; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-69YW-MKM>), IGN 004228469, image 120 of 407.

76. For road connecting families, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Order Book No. 1: 33, Joseph Wheeler appointed surveyor of roads, August Term 1848; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9K9-RKVT>), IGN 007618628, image 34 of 655. This record identifies Joseph Paul's location, and the road crew between locations.

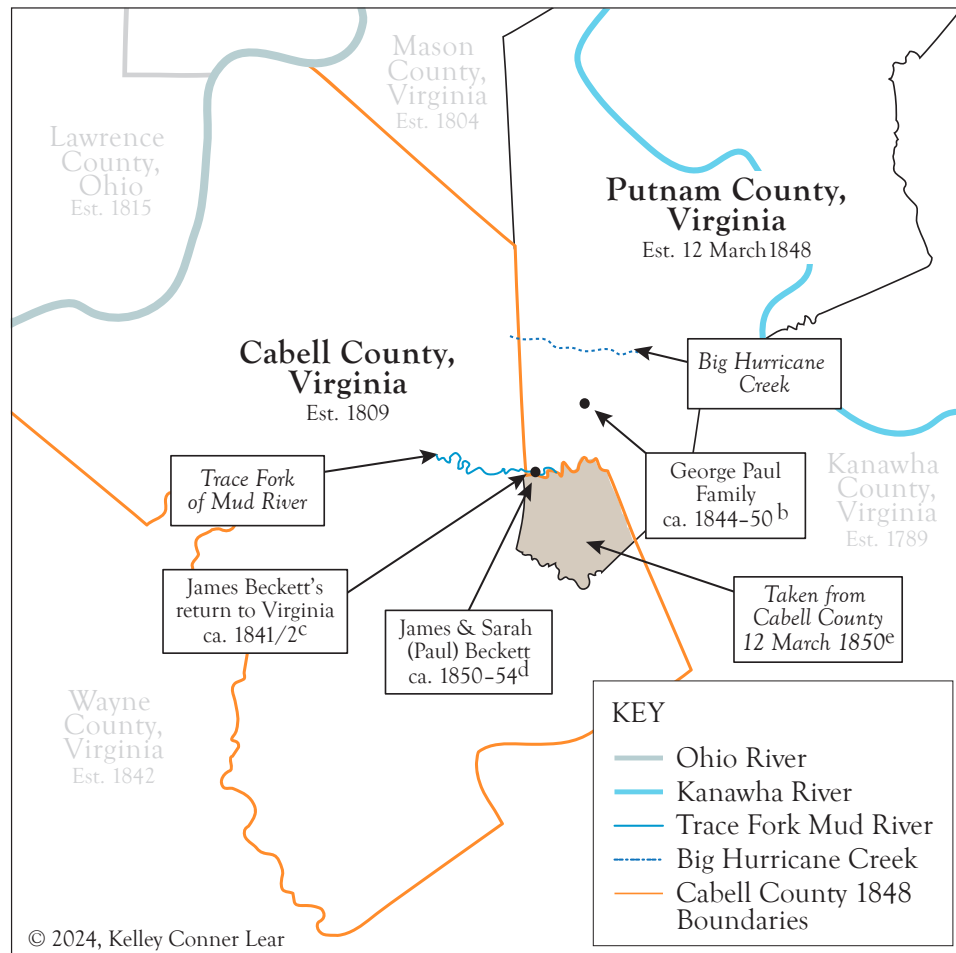
77. For farming, see 1850 U.S. census, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 10, p. 43B (stamped), James Beckett; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8054/images/419115-00092>). Although James farmed, he did not own property. For nearby family, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Deed Book, Vol. 1: 370-1, Thomas and Elizabeth Beckett to William Beckett, deed of sale, 2 February 1849; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSRQ-133D-Z>), IGN 008292939, image 191 of 665.

78. For finances and social status, see 1850 U.S. census, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 10, p. 43B (stamped), dwelling 598, family 618, James Beckett; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>). James Beckett owned no property. For Sarah's brother not paying taxes, see Putnam County, West Virginia, List of Real Estate Sold for Non-payment of Taxes and Purchased for the State, p. 1, Joseph E. Paul, non-payment of taxes, 1865; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G92L-HZQM>), IGN 007627822, image 407 of 780. For James's struggles, see Margaret Ann (Beckett) Brown, "Mrs. Margaret Ann Brown, nee Beckett," written before 4 November 1870, typescript by Frank Brown (1853-1924); privately held by Brownie Jean (Stapp) Mortlock, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Kettle Falls, Washington, 2020.

79. For marriage, see Margaret Ann (Beckett) Brown, "Mrs. Margaret Ann Brown, nee Beckett," written before 4 November 1870, typescript by Frank Brown (1853-1924); privately held by Brownie Jean (Stapp) Mortlock, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Kettle Falls, Washington, 2020. Margaret recalled the marriage taking place shortly after James's return. Also, Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Deaths, No. 1: 87 (First District), entry 2, Sarah Beckett, 27 July 1893; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-69YW-MKM>), IGN 004228469, image 120 of 407. For James's return to Cabell

IMAGE 1.

Beckett and Paul Families in Cabell and Putnam Counties, Virginia, 1840–1850^a



All online records searched 14 October 2024.

a. This map was created using the following sources as reference: "Relation: Cabell County 1848–1850," *Open Historical Map* (<https://www.openhistoricalmap.org/relation/2787801>). Also, "Atlas of Historical County Boundaries," *Newberry Library* (<https://digital.newberry.org>). Also, Lewis Barnhart, *Map of Putnam County, West Virginia* (Red House Shoals, West Virginia: Lewis Barnhart, 1899).

b. 1850 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 46, p. 316A (stamped), dwelling 686, family 710, George Paul in household of Howard Kennard; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>). Although the Kennards did not own property, their neighbor, Brice Paul did. See Virginia State Land Office, Land Office Grants, Brice Paul, 30 November 1838; imaged, *Library of Virginia* (<https://lva.primo.exlibrisgroup.com>); citing Land Office Grants no. 89, 1838–1839, reel 155, p. 552.

c. For examples of James's neighborhood, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1842 List of Alderson Bowen, p. 3, James Beckett, Jr., 5 February 1842; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 008707645, image 14 of 343. Also, *Ibid.*, p. 20, Daniel Paul, David Porter, William Porter, 5 February 1842; image 23 of 343. Also, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1844 List of Andrew G. Chapman, p. 4, James Beckett, 17 April 1844; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 008707645, image 58 of 343. Also, *Ibid.*, p. 4, Thomas Beckett, William Beckett, 17 April 1844; image 58 of 343. Also, *Ibid.*, p. 21, James Paul, Joseph Paul, Daniel Paul, 18 April 1844; image 75 of 343. Also, p. 21, William Porter, David Porter, 16 April 1844. For tax collector visiting neighborhoods, see Samuel Shepherd, *The Statutes at Large of Virginia, from October Session 1792, to December Session 1806*, Vol. 1 (Richmond: Samuel Shepherd, 1835), p. 54–5, particularly sect. 8; imaged, *HathiTrust* (<https://babel.hathitrust.org>). For examples of neighbor's locations, see Cabell County, West Virginia, Deed Book 8: 290–1, Thomas Beckett to James Paul, 1840; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 008211437, images 154–5 of 617. Also, Virginia State Land Office, Land Office Grants, Daniel Paul, 1 July 1836; imaged, *Library of Virginia* (<https://lva.primo.exlibrisgroup.com>); citing Land Office Grants no. 86, 1836, reel 152, p. 112.

d. 1850 U.S. census, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 10, p. 43B (stamped), dwelling 598, family 618, James Beckett; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com>). For approximate location of Becketts, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Deed Book 10: 490–1, William and Annatha Porter to William Porter, deed of sale, 6 May 1850; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 008588677, image 254 of 603. Also, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Deed Book 11: 194–5, Alexander H. Quarrier to James H. Brown, deed of sale, 6 May 1850; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org>), IGN 008588677, image 405 of 603.

e. "An ACT to change a part of the line dividing the county of Putnam from the counties of Cabell and Kanawha," *Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, Passed at the Extra and Regular Sessions in 1849 & 1850 and in the Seventy-Third and Seventy-Fourth Years of the Commonwealth* (Richmond: William F. Ritchie, 1850), 24–5; imaged, *HathiTrust* (<https://babel.hathitrust.org>).

County between 1841–1842, see Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1842 List of Alderson Bowen, p. 3, James Beckett, Jr., 5 February 1842; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QHV-V38R-M9QG-C>), IGN 008707645, image 14 of 343. Also, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, Personal Property Tax Lists, 1841 List of John Plymale, page-by-page search for James Beckett Jr.; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSQ2-QQM2-Q>), IGN 007849097. James had not returned prior to spring 1841.

James Beckett and Sarah Paul likely wed soon after his return in 1841. While a few rustic churches stood not far from their Trace Fork neighborhood, circuit riders often ministered in this rural area where livestock outnumbered people four-to-one.⁸⁰ As a result, few religious records survive, and no known record of the couple's marriage—if ever created—remains.⁸¹

A HOUSEHOLD SCATTERS

James Beckett died on 14 June 1857, rather than in 1867 as the Beckett bible transcription suggests.⁸² With no property at stake, no court proceedings marked his death.⁸³ The court did not oversee placement or appoint guardians for any of the girls from the 1850 Beckett home.⁸⁴ By 1860, the Beckett girls resided in various residences along Big Hurricane Creek, and two worked as servants.⁸⁵

80. For rustic churches, see William D. Wintz, ed., "Churches and Religion," *History of Putnam County, West Virginia*, Vol. II (Charleston, W.Va.: Pictorial Histories Publishing, 2001), 255–305. For area churches, Jim Comstock, *Hardesty's West Virginia Counties*, Vol. 1 (Richwood, W.Va.: Jim Comstock 1974), 139–43, 147; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/542255>), FS identifier 47962-01. Also, Jim Comstock, *Hardesty's West Virginia Counties*, Vol. 6 (Richwood, W.Va.: Jim Comstock 1974), 98–9; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/viewer/299674/>), FS identifier 47962-06. These are reprints of original volumes published in the early 1880s. For circuit riders in area, see For example of area served by circuit riders, see Rev. Jacob Young, *Autobiography of a Pioneer: or, The Nativity, Experience, Travels, and Ministerial Labors of Rev. Jacob Young* (Cincinnati: L. Swormstedt & A. Poe, 1859), 332–3; imaged, *GoogleBooks* (https://www.google.com/books/edition/Autobiography_of_a_Pioneer_Or_The_Nativi/e1k_AQAAMAAJ). For area, population, and livestock, see J.D.B. DeBow, "Population by Counties—Ages, Color, and Condition—Aggregates," *Statistical View of the United States Embracing Its Territory, Population—White, Free Colored, and Slave—Moral and Social Condition, Industry, Property, and Revenue; The Detailed Statistics of Cities, Towns, and Counties; Being a Compendium of the Seventh Census* (Washington, D.C.: Beverley Tucker, Senate Printer, 1854), p. 257 for Putnam; PDF, *Census.gov* (<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/1850/1850a/1850a-28.pdf>). Also, *Ibid.*, "Agriculture—Farms and Implements, Stock, Products, Home Manufactures, &c.," pp. 274, 276 for Putnam.

81. For negative findings for extant church records, see "Mud River Baptist Church, Minute Books, 1818-1982"; A&M 2845, roll 1812–1909; West Virginia and Regional History Center at WVU, Morgantown. Also, "Search Manuscript Collections," *Marshall Digital Scholar*, database (https://mds.marshall.edu/sc_finding_aids). Search for Cabell and Putnam church records. Also, Carrie Eldridge Collection, Papers, MS 0770; Marshall University, Huntington.

82. For James Beckett still living in 1856, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia Personal Property Tax, List of Nelson Handley, unpaginated, 17 April 1856; imaged, "Putnam County Personal Property Tax Records, 1851–1856, 1870," microfilm roll 714; Library of Virginia, Richmond. For negative search for 1857–1870 Putnam County taxes, see "Putnam County Personal Property Tax Records, 1851–1856, 1870," microfilm roll 714; Library of Virginia, Richmond. "The following Years are not available. They either do not exist, or a copy cannot be located. 1857–1870." For negative findings for James Beckett in 1860 census, see "1860 United States Federal Census," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7667>). For 1857, see Margaret Ann (Beckett) Brown, "Mrs. Margaret Ann Brown, nee Beckett," written before 4 November 1870, typescript by Frank Brown (1853–1924); privately held by Brownie Jean (Stapp) Mortlock, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Kettle Falls, Washington, 2020. For 1867, see "Bible of James Beckett," *The KYOWVA Genealogical Society Newsletter*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Fall 1991), 8. For negative findings for death or burial records, see Carrie Eldridge, *Cabell Cemeteries, Cabell County, Virginia*, Vols. 1–3 (Chesapeake, Oh.: self-published, 1990–92). Also, Upper Vandalia Historical Society, *Putnam County Cemeteries* (Poca, W.Va.: Upper Vandalia Historical Society, 1990). Also, Upper Vandalia Historical Society, *Putnam County Cemeteries Addendum* (Poca, W.Va.: Upper Vandalia Historical Society, 2001). Search for James Beckett in all volumes. Also, "The Becketts, no. 2," Fred B. Lambert Papers, 1809–1964, MS 76; box 4, notebook 19; Marshall University Archives and Special Collections, Huntington; imaged, *Marshall Digital Scholar* (https://mds.marshall.edu/lambert_papers/331).

83. For lack of property, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, General Index to Deeds, Reverse A–D, Vol. 1: 141–2, search for James Beckett; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSR7-SS3W-S>), IGN 008292952, images 76–6 of 441. For negative findings for probate and/or guardian records, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Will Index, A–Z, 1847–1968, page-by-page search for James Beckett; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/62189>), IGN 004715356. Also, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Fiduciary [Settlement] List, 1850–1909, search for James Beckett; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/136301>), IGN 007618631. Also, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Index to Appraisements and Inventories, 1848–1991, search for James Beckett; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/136301>), IGN 007616639. Also, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Order Book Index, Vol. A–D: 52B–53B, search for James Beckett; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9K9-WSPG>), IGN 007618489, images 61–2 of 399.

84. For negative findings for guardian records, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Order Book Index, Vol. A–D: 52B–53B, search for James Beckett; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9K9-WSPG>), IGN 007618489, images 61–2 of 399. Also, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Order Book, Vol. 1, 1848–1857, internal index search for Beckett; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/film/007618628>), IGN 007618628 > item 1. Also, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Order Book, Vol. 2, 1857–1873, internal index search for Beckett; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G9K9-R2WY>), IGN 007618628 > item 2.

85. 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 851 (penned), dwelling 217, family 196, A.

When the census counted Putnam County's residents in 1860, the District Two Assistant Marshal neglected to record forenames and primarily logged only first initials and surnames. But it appears Sarah Beckett, and a younger girl designated only as "P. Beckett," lived next to Sarah's brother, Joseph.⁸⁶

Sarah likely remained near the other Beckett girls, but despite hosting a wedding at Hurricane Station in Putnam County in 1869, no Sarah Beckett appears in any county in West Virginia, Ohio, or Kentucky in 1870. But by 1880 she made her home with son-in-law, Daniel Smith.⁸⁷

THE BECKETT GIRLS

The 1850 home of James Beckett included four children—William, Virginia, America, and Tabitha. William died in 1854. James's death followed in 1857, and by 1860 Sarah (Paul) Beckett appeared with another child, Permelia.⁸⁸ While Sarah lived with three-year-old Permelia, America, Virginia, and Tabitha lived and worked in the homes of other families in Putnam County's Second District.⁸⁹ James was

Beckett in household of Wm. E. Herndon; imaged, *Ancestry*

(https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7667/images/4298868_00445). America was working as a domestic servant and living three households away from Sarah Beckett. 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 824 (penned), dwelling 15, family 14, T. Beckett in household of J. Filer; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/34115713:7667>). Thirteen-year-old Tabitha was living with the town's cigar maker. 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 831 (penned), dwelling 63, family 57, V. Beckett in household of T. Roberts; imaged, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7667/images/4298868_00425). Virginia was working as a domestic servant in the Roberts household.

86. For census marshal instructions, see United States Department of the Interior, Census Office, "Individual Names," *Eighth Census, United States—1860, Act of Congress of Twenty-Third May, 1850, Instructions to U.S. Marshalls, Instructions to Assistants* (Washington, D.C.: Geo. W. Bowman, 1860), 14, Sec. 3; PDF, *Census.gov* (<https://www2.census.gov/1860-instructions.pdf>). Census marshals were to record "...the name of every person..." For examples of initials, and residences, see 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 850 (penned), dwelling 214, family 193, S. and P. Beckett; imaged, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7667/images/4298868_00444). Also, 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 850 (penned), dwelling 213, family 192, Jos. Paul. For Joseph E. Paul as son of George Paul, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Register of Deaths, Vol. 1: 1, entry 29, George Paull [sic], 21 August 1853; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-69YW-93P>), IGN 004228469, image 37 of 407. Joseph, the informant, identified himself as George's son.

87. "1870 U.S. census," database with images, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7163>). Search for Sarah Beckett, Becket, Becker, and Backer born between 1800–1820 in all states. For Sarah hosting a wedding, see General Affidavit, 30 July 1891, Sarah Beckett, widow's pension, service of James T. Paul (Pvt., Co. G, 11th Reg., W.Va. Infantry, also Co. D, 10th W.Va. Vols.), pension no. 510,104; Case Files of Approved Pension Applications..., 1861–1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Record Group 15: Records of the Department of Veteran's Affairs; National Archives, Washington, D.C. Also, Putnam County, West Virginia, Marriage Record, Vol. B: 414, James T. Paul-Nela A. Beckett, license, clerk's certificate and minister's return, 7 January 1869; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-D897-ST2>), IGN 004227540, image 503 of 548. For 1880 residence, see 1880 U.S. census, Putnam County, West Virginia, population schedule, Teayse's Valley District, enumeration district (ED) 113, p. 103C (stamped), dwelling 189, family 189, household of D.P. Smith; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/6742/images/4244697-00411>).

88. For William's death, see Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Deaths, Vol. 1: 2, [1854] entry 11, William Beckett, 18 August 1854; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-69YW-MKW>), IGN 004228469, image 38 of 407. For James's death, see Margaret Ann (Beckett) Brown, "Mrs. Margaret Ann Brown, nee Beckett," written before 4 November 1870, typescript by Frank Brown (1853–1924); privately held by Brownie Jean (Stapp) Mortlock, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Kettle Falls, Washington, 2020. For Sarah, see 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 850 (penned), dwelling 214, family 193, S. and P. Beckett; imaged, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7667/images/4298868_00444).

89. 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 851 (penned), dwelling 217, family 196, A. Beckett in household of Wm. E. Herndon; imaged, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7667/images/4298868_00445). America worked as a domestic servant and lived three households away from Sarah Beckett. Also, 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 824 (penned), dwelling 15, family 14, T. Beckett in household of J. Filer; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/34115713:7667>). Thirteen-year-old Tabitha was living with the town's cigar maker. 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 831 (penned), dwelling 63, family 57, V. Beckett in household of T. Roberts; imaged, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7667/images/4298868_00425). Virginia was working as a domestic servant in the Roberts household. Thomas Roberts was a neighbor of Daniel Smith's father. For Thomas Roberts as neighbor, and location of Smith family, see Putnam County, West Virginia, Survey Book, Vol. A: 265, Bartley Smith survey, 7 May 1866; imaged, *FamilySearch*

certainly the father of William, but were James and Sarah also the parents of America, Tabitha, and Permelia?⁹⁰

America Beckett

Born on 23 July 1844, America Beckett married John H. Smith—a brother of Daniel Pleasant Smith—in 1863.⁹¹ However, records of John and America's marriage present conflicts in America's identity.

John H. Smith allegedly gave America's name as "America E. Beckett (Bailey)" when he provided information for the County Clerk.⁹² But when someone recorded details of the wedding in the marriage register, the bride's name appeared as "America E. Beckett." Her parents' entry read "J. and S. Beckett," with no mention made of the surname Bailey.⁹³ While this alternate surname might suggest America married prior to 1863, no record of an earlier marriage appears in Putnam, or any surrounding county.⁹⁴

When America started a family in 1867, John, or other family members, always identified the children's mother only as America Smith.⁹⁵ No record of her children's nuptials provides their mother's maiden name, and other than her tombstone, no known record of America's death survives.⁹⁶ However,

(<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G92L-HZXY>) IGN 007627822 > item 2, image 349 of 780.

90. Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Deaths, Vol. 1: 2, [1854] entry 11, William Beckett, 18 August 1854; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-69YW-MKW>), IGN 004228469, image 38 of 407.

91. For birth, see *Findagrave*, database with images, (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/106449132/america-smith>), "America Beckett Smith" (1844–1903), memorial by "Chris McVey," tombstone image by "Brandon Carden"; citing Sattes Cemetery, Charleston, Kanawha County, West Virginia. For marriage, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Marriage Record, Vol. B: 93, John H. Smith-America E. Beckett (Bailey), marriage license, clerk's certificate, and minister's return, 8 January 1863; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-D897-SBP>), IGN 004227540, image 340 of 548. For John and Daniel as brothers, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Register of Marriages, 1853–1882, p. 11, entry 2, John H. Smith-America E. Beckett, 8 January 1863; County Clerk's Office, Winfield. Also, *Ibid.*, unnumbered page, entry 38, Daniel P. Smith-Jane Beckett, 4 November 1860.

92. Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Marriage Record, Vol. B: 93, John H. Smith-America E. Beckett (Bailey), marriage license, clerk's certificate, and minister's return, 8 January 1863; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-D897-SBP>), IGN 004227540, image 340 of 548.

93. Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Register of Marriages, 1853–1882, p. 11, entry 2, John H. Smith-America E. Beckett, 8 January 1863; County Clerk's Office, Winfield.

94. For negative findings for America Beckett marriage prior to 1863, see "Marriage Records," *West Virginia Archives and History*, database with images (<https://wvculture.org/vital-records-interactive>). Search terms: America Beck* [wildcard] and America Bailey, all years, all counties. Also, "Ohio Marriages, 1800–1958," database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/collection/1681001>). Search terms: America Beckett and America Bailey, all years, all counties. For negative findings in [original] minister's returns, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Register of Marriage Returns, search for Beckett in internal index; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G92L-HCHZ>), IGN 007627822 > item 9. This volume appears incomplete and only includes marriages from 1850–53. The original was also examined in the County Clerk's Office in Winfield. Also, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Register of Marriage Licenses Returned, search for Beckett, and Bailey in internal index; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G92L-HCHM>), IGN 007627822 > item 10. A page-by-page search was also conducted for years 1860–1863. This volume cover years 1850–1882. Entries appear entered chronologically as minister's returns were received.

95. For examples of mother's reported name, see Kanawha County, West Virginia, Register of Births, Vol. 1: 121, entry 288 [Lower District], John C. Smith, 22 April 1867; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-DTPK-RV>), IGN 004226912, image 130 of 621. John Smith reported the birth. Also, Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Births, Vol. 1: 96, entry 31, Mary M. Smith, 15 August 1872; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-63N9-8NE>), IGN 004228468, image 148 of 559. John's sister, Hannah (Smith) Bailey reported the birth.

96. For death date, see *Findagrave*, database with images, (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/106449132/america-smith>), "America Beckett Smith" (1844–1903), memorial by "Chris McVey," tombstone image by "Brandon Carden"; citing Sattes Cemetery, Charleston, Kanawha County, West Virginia. For negative findings for a county death record, see "Death Records," *West Virginia Archives and History* (<https://wvculture.org/vital-records-interactive>). Search for Smith in 1903, in Kanawha and Putnam counties. For negative search for state death records, see "Genealogy," *West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources* (<https://dhhr.wv.gov/HSC/VR/Pages/Genealogy.aspx>). The state did not begin maintaining death records until 1917. For negative findings for an obituary, see "Charleston Daily Mail, June 22, 1901–December 30, 1905"; imaged, unnumbered microfilm roll [Charleston Newspapers]; West Virginia State Archives, Charleston. For examples of children's marriage records, see Putnam County, West Virginia, Marriage Licenses, Vol. 5: 93, James Madison Mynes-Mary "Mollie" Smith, marriage license, certificate, and minister's return, 12 August 1897; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-6D37-ZFP>), IGN 004227543, image 332 of 755. Also, Kanawha County, West Virginia, Register of Marriages, Vol. X: 172, entry 111, William Smith-Edna Smith, 20 February 1909; imaged,

at the deaths of two of her children, informants shared her last name as Beckett. America's granddaughter provided information for one of the deaths.⁹⁷

Only one known mention of the surname Bailey appeared during America's life.⁹⁸ It's possible America married a Bailey between 1860, and her 1863 wedding to John Smith. But her home with James and Sarah Beckett in 1850, "J. & S. Beckett" registered as her parents, and her granddaughter's report of her maiden name as Beckett all certainly support America's parents as James and Sarah (Paul) Beckett.

Tabitha Beckett

Born 22 April 1848, Tabitha Beckett spent her life in Putnam County.⁹⁹ While lineage society applications claim Tabitha as James Beckett's daughter, an 1850 transcription of the Beckett's 1850 household provided the "evidence."¹⁰⁰ In summer 1850, two-year-old Tabitha certainly lived with James and Sarah Beckett. After James's death, she lived with the town's cigar maker near Hurricane Bridge, not far from where she'd grown up.¹⁰¹

When Tabitha married, a county official entered her marriage. The court's pre-printed forms did not request identities of the bride or groom's parents. But Tabitha's 1870 marriage to Henry Cox took place in the home of "Pleasant Smith"—certainly Daniel Pleasant Smith, husband of Jane Beckett.¹⁰² And in 1899 when Tabitha applied for a Civil War widow's pension, the Putnam County Recorder certified the court held a record naming Tabitha's parents as James and Sarah Beckett.¹⁰³ The courthouse no longer appears to hold the record.¹⁰⁴

FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HY-6SLQ-QD7>), IGN 004226398, image 185 of 634.

97. For John H. Smith's wife as America Beckett, see West Virginia death certificate no. 11821 (1948), William M. Smith, 4 September 1948; State Department of Health, Department of Commerce, Charleston; imaged, *West Virginia Archives & History* (<https://dach-image-proxy.digital-relativity.workers.dev/?film=1984021&frame=02837>). The informant for William's death certificate was not identified. Also, West Virginia death certificate no. 10338 (1946), Mollie M. Mynes, 23 September 1946; State Department of Health, Division of Vital Statistics, Charleston; imaged, *West Virginia Archives & History* (<https://dach-image-proxy.digital-relativity.workers.dev/?film=1983810&frame=01360>). The informant was "Mrs. F.W. Spears." For Mrs. Spears as grandchild, see 1910 U.S. census, Cabell County, West Virginia, population schedule, Huntington Ward 4, Enumeration District (ED) 34, sheet 3A, Cleora Mynes in household of James M. and Molly Mynes; imaged, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/7884/records/170762635>). For Cleora Spears as Cleora Mynes, see "Ohio Death Records, 1908–1932, 1938–2018," database, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com/search/collections/5763/records/1825968>); citing Ohio death certificate no. 036307 (1993), Cleora Mynes Spears, 2 May 1993; Ohio Department of Health, Division of Vital Statistics, Columbus. While Cleora was only four when her grandmother died, she surely would have learned about her while her mother was living.

98. Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Marriage Record, Vol. B: 93, John H. Smith-America E. Beckett (Bailey), marriage license, clerk's certificate, and minister's return, 8 January 1863; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-D897-SBP>), IGN 004227540, image 340 of 548.

99. For birth, see *Findagrave*, database with images, (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/55075268/tabitha-cox>), "Tabitha Beckett Cox" (1848–1918), memorial and tombstone image by "Robert Fitch"; citing Teays Hill Cemetery, Saint Albans, Kanawha County, West Virginia. For life spent in Putnam County, see Declaration for Original Invalid Pension, 20 April 1889, Henry Cox (Pvt., Co. A, 15th Reg., W.Va. Infantry), pension application no. 649,592; Case Files of Approved Pension Applications..., 1861–1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Record Group 15: Records of the Department of Veteran's Affairs; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

100. For an example of applicant, see Membership application, Dorothy Frances Dunlap Lenhart, National no. 831233, on Richard Beckett (Ancestor no. A008338), approved 3 July 2004, specifically Generation 4; National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR), Office of Registrar General, Washington, D.C.

101. 1850 U.S. census, Also, 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 824 (penned), dwelling 15, family 14, T. Beckett in household of J. Filer; imaged, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/34115713:7667>).

102. Putnam County, West Virginia, Marriage Records, Vol. C: 16, Henry Cox-Tabitha Beckett, marriage license, certificate, and minister's return, 3 July 1870; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-DCWS-BKS>), image 13 of 547.

103. For record naming parents, see Record of Minister's Return, 21 March 1899, R.A. Salmons, County Clerk, Tabitha Cox, widow's pension application no. 697,055, service of Henry Cox (Pvt., Co. A, 15th Reg., W.Va. Infantry); Case Files of Approved Pension Applications..., 1861–1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Record Group 15: Records of the Department of Veteran's Affairs; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

104. For negative findings for marriage register entry in courthouse, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Marriage Register, 1853–1882, page-by-page search for Cox-Beckett marriage; County Clerk's Office, Winfield. Also, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Marriage Index, Direct, A–Z 1848–1968, search for Cox; County Clerk's Office, Winfield. Also, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Marriage Index, Reverse,

Additionally, James Beckett's daughter, America, and husband John provided multiple statements and served as witnesses for the pension applications for Henry and Tabitha (Beckett) Cox. John Smith recounted being "frequently at [the Cox] house," and knowing Tabitha "for 37 years." America described being at the Cox home on the day Henry Cox died.¹⁰⁵

Although no known record in today's Putnam County Courthouse identifies Tabitha's father as James Beckett, the County Clerk certainly once did.¹⁰⁶ Further, Tabitha's residence with James in 1850, and her close relationship with John and America (Beckett) Smith also support Tabitha (Beckett) Cox as a daughter of James and Sarah (Paul) Beckett.

Permelia Ann "Nela" Beckett

Six-year-old "P. Beckett" first appeared in Putnam County in the home of "S. Beckett."¹⁰⁷ This was certainly Sarah (Paul) Beckett, now widowed, and living next to her brother, Joseph. The never-before-recorded little girl was the right age to be a child of Sarah, and even James, but was she?

In 1869, "Nela A. Beckett" wed James T. Paul at the home of "Mrs. Beckett." An eighty-year-old, widowed Sarah Beckett—surely Sarah (Paul) Beckett—also attested to the wedding being held "at home" near Hurricane Station.¹⁰⁸ While clerk's certificates did not request parents' names, a register at the county's courthouse reports Nela's parents as "J. and S. Beckett," certainly James and Sarah Beckett.¹⁰⁹

After the Civil War, James Paul and his wife settled near John H. and America Smith "for about six years."¹¹⁰ And when James's wife applied for a widow's pension, correspondence revealed her fully as Permelia Ann (Beckett) Paul.¹¹¹ "Nela" and Permelia were one woman—a daughter of James and Sarah (Paul) Beckett.

A-Z 1848-1968, search for Beckett; County Clerk's Office, Winfield.

105. General Affidavit, 16 March 1899, America Smith, widow's pension application no. 697,055, service of Henry Cox (Pvt., Co. A, 15th Reg., W.Va. Infantry); Case Files of Approved Pension Applications..., 1861-1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Record Group 15: Records of the Department of Veteran's Affairs; National Archives, Washington, D.C. Also, General Affidavit, 22 August 1900, John H. Smith.

106. For negative findings for marriage record naming Tabitha's parents, see Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Marriages, 1853-1882, page-by-page search for Cox-Beckett marriage; County Clerk's Office, Winfield. Also, U.S. Work Projects Administration [WPA], *Putnam County, West Virginia, births, marriages, wills and inventories (1846-1900); copied from Winfield Courthouse records* (West Virginia: WPA, 1936), 54; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-89KM-4WDH>), IGN 007617961 >item 1, image 216 of 1151. The "Record of Marriages" volumes are the only extant Putnam County marriage records requesting names of parents. See Works Projects Administration, *Inventory of the County Archives of West Virginia, No. 40, Putnam County (Winfield)*, (Charleston, W.Va.: West Virginia Historical Records Survey, 1941), 55; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/125382>), FS identifier 52851.

107. 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 850 (penned), dwelling 214, family 193, S. and P. Beckett; imaged, Ancestry (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7667/images/4298868_00444).

108. Putnam County, West Virginia, Marriage Register, 1853-1882, p. 20, entry 1, James T. Paul-Nela A. Beckett, 7 January 1869; County Clerk's Office, Winfield. Also, Letter from Elizabeth (Paul) Cooper to Pension Bureau, 11 August 1924, Permelia Paul, widow's pension, service of James T. Paul (Pvt., Co. G, 11th Reg., W.Va. Infantry, also Co. D, 10th W.Va. Vols.), pension no. 510,104; Case Files of Approved Pension Applications..., 1861-1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Record Group 15: Records of the Department of Veteran's Affairs; National Archives, Washington, D.C. Also, Declaration for Widow's Pension, 7 April 1901, Permelia Paul, widow's pension, service of James T. Paul (Pvt., Co. G, 11th Reg., W.Va. Infantry, also Co. D, 10th W.Va. Vols.), pension no. 510,104. Also, General Affidavit, 30 July 1891, Sarah Beckett, widow's pension, service of James T. Paul (Pvt., Co. G, 11th Reg., W.Va. Infantry, also Co. D, 10th W.Va. Vols.), pension no. 510,104.

109. Putnam County, West Virginia, Marriage Record, Vol. B: 414, James T. Paul-Nela A. Beckett, license, clerk's certificate and minister's return, 7 January 1869; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-D897-ST2>), IGN 004227540, image 503 of 548. Also, Putnam County, West Virginia, Marriage Register, 1853-1882, p. 20, entry 1, James T. Paul-Nela A. Beckett, 7 January 1869; County Clerk's Office, Winfield.

110. Letter from Joseph T. Paul to Pension Commissioner, 4 March 1889, service of James T. Paul (Pvt., Co. G, 11th Reg., W.Va. Infantry, also Co. D, 10th W.Va. Vols.), pension application no. 565,683; Case Files of Approved Pension Applications..., 1861-1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Record Group 15: Records of the Department of Veteran's Affairs; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

111. Letter from Elizabeth (Paul) Cooper to Pension Bureau, 11 August 1924, widow's pension, Permelia Paul, service of James T. Paul (Pvt., Co. G, 11th Reg., W.Va. Infantry, also Co. D, 10th W.Va. Vols.), pension no. 510,104; Case Files of Approved Pension Applications..., 1861-

STUCK IN THE MIDDLE

Intertwined Lives

America, Tabitha, and Permelia Beckett were all certainly daughters of James and Sarah (Paul) Beckett and share significant connections to them. And two of the three sisters share notable links with Jane (Beckett) Smith. America and Virginia married brothers, John H. and Daniel Pleasant Smith. Tabitha's wedding took place in Jane's home. And after the death of James Beckett, all four went to live in separate households. The women were certainly very close, shared important life events, and were surely at least half-sisters. However, persistent uncertainty surrounded Jane's birth year. Was it possible Sarah was her step-mother?

A Very Important Birthyear

An 1839 birth for Jane Beckett as James Beckett traveled to Missouri, creates multiple conflicts. Reportedly eleven in 1850, Jane only aged seven years by 1860.¹¹² And at her November wedding a few months later, the eighteen-year-old bride's birth allegedly took place in 1842 rather than 1839.¹¹³

It's not uncommon for birthyears to vary by a year, or even a few, in late nineteenth century records. But in this case specificity matters. If Jane's birth occurred in 1839 after James Beckett's departure, either James Beckett was not her father, or Sarah Paul was not her mother.¹¹⁴

However, when asked about Jane's birth, her husband and son recollected the year as 1841 or 1842.¹¹⁵ When an unknown person spoke about her birth, years ranged from 1839 to 1842, and when requested, informants reported the month as August. However, no matter who offered the information, Jane's birth always took place in Virginia or West Virginia, never Missouri—or any other state.¹¹⁶ Further, at their deaths, James and his first wife left only three living children from their union—William, Anna, and Margaret, who reported her siblings.¹¹⁷

1934; Civil War and Later Pension Files; Record Group 15: Records of the Department of Veteran's Affairs; National Archives, Washington, D.C.

112. 1850 U.S. census, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 10, p. 43B (stamped), dwelling 598, family 618, household of James Becket; imaged, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8054/images/4191115-00092>). Also, 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 831 (penned), dwelling 63, family 57, V. Beckett in household of T. Roberts; imaged, Ancestry (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7667/images/4298868_00425). Also, 1900 U.S. census, Putnam County, West Virginia, population schedule, Teaye's [sic] Valley, sheet 9 (penned), dwelling 152, family 153, Jennie Smith; imaged, Ancestry (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7602/images/4123465_00062).

113. Putnam County, West Virginia, Register of Marriages, 1853–1882, unnumbered page, entry 38, Daniel P. Smith-Jane Beckett, 4 November 1860; County Clerk's Office, Winfield.

114. Margaret Ann (Beckett) Brown, "Mrs. Margaret Ann Brown, nee Beckett," written before 4 November 1870, typescript by Frank Brown (1853–1924); privately held by Brownie Jean (Stapp) Mortlock, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Kettle Falls, Washington, 2020. Also, 1850 U.S. census, Cabell County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 10, p. 43B (stamped), dwelling 598, family 618, household of James Becket; imaged, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/8054/images/4191115-00092>).

115. For an example of her husband's account, see Putnam County, [West] Virginia, Marriage Record, Vol. B: 31, Daniel P. Smith-Jane Beckett, marriage license, certificate, and minister's return, 4 November 1860; imaged, FamilySearch (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:S3HT-D897-324>), IGN 004227540, image 309 of 548. For son's account, see West Virginia delayed birth certificate no. 18342, John Henry Smith, 10 October 1862; Division of Vital Statistics, Department of Health, Charleston; imaged, "Birth Records," *West Virginia Archives and History* (<https://dach-image-proxy.digital-relativity.workers.dev/?film=4017240&frame=00697>).

116. For example, see 1870 U.S. census, Grant District, Putnam County, West Virginia, population schedule, Winfield Post Office, p. 283B (stamped), dwelling 35, family 55, Jane Smith; imaged, Ancestry (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/5598935:7163>). Virginia was reportedly 28 [born in 1842]. Also, 1860 U.S. census, Putnam County, [West] Virginia, population schedule, District 2, p. 831 (penned), dwelling 63, family 57, V. Beckett in household of T. Roberts; imaged, Ancestry (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7667/images/4298868_00425). Virginia was allegedly 18 [born in 1842]. Also, Findagrave, database with images, (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/40973986/v-smith>), "Virginia Jane Beckett Smith" (1842–1912), memorial and tombstone image by "Mary Barker"; citing Peach Ridge Cemetery, Hurricane, Putnam County, West Virginia. The tombstone reports the specific date of 4 August 1842 and is inscribed with the name Virginia Smith.

117. Margaret Ann (Beckett) Brown, "Mrs. Margaret Ann Brown, nee Beckett," written before 4 November 1870, typescript by Frank Brown

In June 1850—Jane Beckett’s first known appearance—an unidentified person surely reported her as a few years older than her age at the time, or simply guessed.¹¹⁸ During her adult life, those around her recalled a later birth. And although she left no birth record, Virginia Beckett most likely was born 4 August 1842 in Cabell County. Soon after James Beckett’s return to the county after the 1841 tax collector’s visit, he likely married Sarah Paul—more than enough time for Jane’s birth—further eliminating the possibility of Jane Beckett’s father being anyone other than James Beckett.

CONCLUSION

Virginia Jane Beckett left no record of her birth or death. Only a marriage record ever directly named a father. But even court records can be wrong. The absence of any George Beckett the right age, race, or nativity in the United States between 1830 and 1860 contradicts information penned by a court official in 1860. James Beckett’s return from Missouri and marriage to Sarah Paul about a year before Virginia’s birth offers further support of a reporting or clerical error. A maternal grandfather named George certainly introduces the possibility of names being conflated in a marriage register the day Daniel Smith wed Jane Beckett.

Taxes, death, and probate—among other records—offer corroboration for some obscure, but mostly reliable family records supporting claims made by online trees and family histories. The Beckett manuscript also offers rare details of a man identified just once by name in any census during his lifetime and firmly connect him to his second wife and family.

Reconciling Virginia Jane (Beckett) Smith’s identity and relationships required clarifying timelines, a birthyear, and multiple names. But those many conflicts, once resolved, led to one conclusion and establish a nearly overlooked man’s link to his daughter and reunite Jane Beckett with her father, James Beckett Jr. (1811–1857).

(1853–1924); privately held by Brownie Jean (Stapp) Mortlock, [ADDRESS FOR PRIVATE USE,] Kettle Falls, Washington, 2020. For confirmation of three living children, see Platte County, Missouri, Will Book B: 79–81 William Porter, will, written 3 May 1847, proven 6 February 1852; imaged, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-89L9-Q8BV>), IGN 007631726, images 190–1 of 689. For Anna as second living daughter’s name, see 1850 U.S. census, Platte County, Missouri, population schedule, Pettis Township, p. 433A (stamped), dwelling 144, family 144, Anna Becket in household of Thomas H. Porter; imaged, *Ancestry* (<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/3992782:8054>).

118. U.S. Congress, *Public Acts of the Thirty-First Congress of the United States*, 1st session (1850), p. 430, “An Act providing for the taking of the seventh and subsequent Censuses of the United States, and to fix the Number of the Members of the House of Representatives, and provide for their future Appointment among the several States,” particularly Sec. 10; imaged, *Library of Congress* (<https://maint.loc.gov/law/help/statutes-at-large/31st-congress/c31.pdf>). The law detailed instructions to marshals: “...by inquiries made of some member of each family, if anyone can be found capable of giving the information, *but if not, then the agent of such family...the name of each member...the age and place of birth...*”