
FAMILY *Reunion*

News for Descendants of Henry Hodge, Joseph Mobley, Burl Mason & Albert McAfee

In This Issue: The Theory of Relativity

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From Kissin' Cousins to Hissin' Cousins and Points In-between

Quite often when people find out I'm a genealogist, I get quizzed about that "removed cousin thing". Unless you study family relationships in depth, the concept of cousins removed is sometimes difficult to grasp. When I decided to address this issue in a newsletter article, I planned to simply explain that one angle of relationship. However, when I began re-searching the subject, I discovered several tidbits of information that were news to me and I thought you might enjoy a little more in depth look at what makes us "kin".

The concept of kinship comes with a whole new vocabulary that I had not encountered before. *Paternal* relatives (those on your father's side) and *maternal* or *matrilineal* relatives (those on your mother's

side) are easy enough. But did you know that those paternal relatives are also described as *agnate* relatives and that your maternal relatives can also be referred to as *cognate* relatives? Some genealogists concentrate on building an *agnatic family tree*, meaning that they only trace their line of descent on their father's side of the family. (Sounds sexist to me.)

A *sib* or *sept* is a kindred group where all persons descend from the same ancestor. From the same Old English root word "sibb", meaning kinship or kinsman, we derive our word *sibling*, meaning brother or sister.

Siblings-german (children born of the same parents) are the closest of blood relatives. The only possible exception occurs in the event of *identical twins* (who at conception share a single egg). *Fraternal twins* (conceived from separate eggs) are no closer gene-

tically than individual children born to the same parents.

In a future article, I intend to address the issue of *consanguinity*. The courts have established a chart to determine degrees of blood relationship to help in distribution of the estate of a person who never got around to making a will. (The moral being--don't procrastinate about that will. Some upstart niece might make a run on your estate.)

The terms *aunt*, *uncle*, *niece* and *nephew* should need no explanation. Likewise, most everyone understands the concept of *first cousins*, being your relationship with the child of your aunt or uncle. But then the water gets murky fast.

So what is the difference between a *first cousin removed* and a *second cousin*?

Simply put, the levels of cousinship are based on the number of generations that have occurred from the ori-

ginal relationship. Clear as mud, huh?

But take an example: I am the first cousin of my uncle's child, Tyler Hodge. Ty has had a daughter, Taylor Rebecca, who is one generation *removed* from the original relationship I have with Ty. Therefore, Taylor Rebecca is my *first cousin once removed*. When Taylor Rebecca has a child, that child will be two generations removed from my original relationship with Ty, making him or her my *first cousin twice removed*. And so on, adding one *removed* for each generation subsequent to the original relationship. Thus:

```
Nettie--<siblings>---Larry
|
Cindy-<1st cousins>-Tyler
||
|| 1st cousin once |
|| removed         | Taylor
|
| 1st cousin twice |
| removed         | child
```

A *second cousin*, on the other hand, would be the relationship my child would have with Ty's child. Both children would be a second generation from the original relationship. In the same fashion, their children would be *third cousins* since they

both would be a third generation from the original relationship between Ty and me. Or to put it another way:

```
Nettie--<siblings>---Larry
Cindy-<1st cousins>-Tyler
child-<2nd cousins>Taylor
child-<3rd cousins>- child
```

Think you've got a handle on the situation now? Okay, let's talk about *double cousins*. This is what happens when two siblings from one family marry two siblings from another. Their children have a double first cousin relationship. What I find most interesting here is that these cousins have the *same genetic makeup as siblings*. This kind of situation turns up quite often in the large families of the 19th century. (On my Wilcoxon side, I have a case of three brothers marrying three sisters. I also have a situation where one of my great-great-great-grandfathers married three sisters in succession. I have not been tempted to calculate all the official relationships his descendants might have had to each other.)

As if this is not hard enough to keep track of, you also have to calculate in *half-brothers* and *half-sisters*, who only share a single parent. (We have a situation like this in our McAfee/ Mason line. More on this later.)

The onerous task of calculating relationships is made somewhat easier if you have all your family information loaded into a genealogy package on your personal computer. I use **Family Tree Maker**, which has a handy little button that instantly calculates all the relationships of the people in your database to any person you select. This can produce a surprise or two. For instance I found out that I am my own 5th cousin. I am not about to try and figure out how that happened.

I found the following book of enormous help in composing this article. If you're interested in getting deeper into the subject, it's short, clear and covers the subject well.

KINSHIP, It's All Relative, by Jackie Smith Arnold, ISBN #0-8063-1273-4.

IRISH BLESSING

May those who
love us, love us.
And those that
don't love us,
May God turn
their hearts;
And if He doesn't
turn their hearts
May He turn
their ankles
So we'll know them
by their limping.

Mark Your Calendars

The important family
dates for this quarter are:

January

Birthdays

19th – Lisa Patton
19th – Jacob Pekar

February

Anniversaries

14th – Larry Hodge &
Sallie Victor

Birthdays

16th – Keri Hodge Pekar

March

Birthdays

14th – Nita Hodge

The Tangled McAfee/Mason Family Web

The union of Burl Mason and Nettie McAfee triggered some unique relationships in our family. Both Burl and Nettie had been married previously and both had children from their first marriage. These step-sisters and brothers were joined in due time by one half-brother (who died in infancy) and three half-sisters: Ellen, Annie Mae and our own Lucy.

Nettie had in her own family two half-brothers and three half-sisters from her father's second marriage to Mary Brock. One of her half-sisters, Cora McAfee, married her first husband's brother, making them also sisters-in-law.

Things got even more interesting in a relative sense when one of Nettie's half-brothers, Albert McAfee, Jr., married one of her stepdaughters, Susie Mason.

The result was that our Lucy Mason ended up with a half-uncle who was also her half-brother-in-law and a half-sister who was also her half-aunt by marriage. She herself was a half-aunt as well as a half-first cousin to

the children of Albert and Susie. (It is at this point that a map might come in handy. See the family group sheets attached at the end of this newsletter.)

It was my privilege to attend a recent reunion of the descendants of Albert and Susie McAfee in Bastrop. I had a nice visit with two of their daughters, Beulah Martin and Dovie Lowden. They shared with me some of their memories of Grandma Mason and "blind Grandma" (Mary Mason).

I also visited with Beulah's son, W.D., who is pursuing his own research of the McAfee line and we have been comparing notes. Maybe with both of us at work, we will eventually be able to dig up the roots the family left back in Arkansas and Iowa.



Jessie J. McAfee Burl W. Mason

Did You Know?

The surname "Hodge" is from the Old French "Roger" and/or the Old German "Rodger". The meaning is "fame spear". Hodge was an established surname in England before 1300.

Congratulations to Nita Hodge for taking 1st place at the 9th grade level (Elgin) in an essay and drawing contest sponsored by the Family Consumer Science Committee of the Texas Agricultural Extension Service. Way to go, Nita!

New Year's Resolutions

Each of these newsletters gets a little easier, so I'm going to stick my neck out and promise to get each issue out the week prior to the start of each quarter in 1999. I have ideas for articles that should carry me painlessly through the next year, so I'm afraid you're stuck with me awhile.

I'm also experimenting with a new scanner, as you might guess from the picture on the previous page. I hope to be able to include

more pictures as well as images of documents that I have collected. I am busily scrounging through the records of Bastrop County and the State of Texas for marriage, birth and death certificates. I plan to have the necessary proof and applications in to become a Daughter of the Confederacy by the year 2000. (After that, I'll aim for the DAR.)

David is loading some of my scanned pictures to the Internet and we hope to have a website ready for you to visit sometime in the near future.

If there are other members in your family who would like to be added to my mailing list, I will be glad to do so. You can reach me by phone at (512) 303-0638, by mail at 803 Jefferson, Bastrop, TX 78602, or by e-mail at LWilcoxn@onr.com.

If any of you would like to contribute an article, story, poem, recipe, joke, etc., to a future newsletter, please send it along. The more of us involved in this endeavor, the merrier!

I'm My Own Grandpa

Many, many years ago,
When I was twenty-three,
I was married to a widow
as pretty as can be.
This widow had a grown-up
daughter
Who had hair of red.
My father fell in love with her
And soon the two were wed.

This made my dad my son-in-law
and changed my very life,
For my daughter was my mother,
For she was my father's wife.
To complicate the matter,
Even though it brought me joy,
I soon became the father
Of a bouncing baby boy.

My little baby thus became
A brother-in-law to Dad,
And so became my uncle,
though it made me very sad.
For if he was my uncle,
Then that also made him brother
To the widow's grown-up
daughter,
Who of course was my stepmother.

Father's wife then had a son
who kept him on the run,
And he became my grandchild
For he was my daughter's son.
My wife is now my mother's mother
And it makes me blue,
Because although she is my wife,
She's my grandmother, too!

Oh, if my wife's my grandmother
Then I am her grandchild,
And every time I think of it,
It nearly drives me wild.
For now I have become
The strangest case you ever saw--
As the husband of my
grandmother,
I am my own grandpa.

--Unknown author