

Eleanor Cole of St. Mary's County, Maryland

There is almost nothing known about the spouse of Joseph Clayton, Revolutionary War soldier and early migrant from St. Mary's County, Maryland to Nelson County, Kentucky. One census record indicates that she was 26-44 years old in 1810, and an 1824 marriage bond for her daughter gives the mother's first name as Eleanor. There are no known marriage records in Maryland or Kentucky.

I think that there's a credible case that she may have been Eleanor Cole, sister of Basil Hayden's wife, Henrietta Cole, of St. Mary's County. By the time of the War, the sisters' parents and three elder siblings had all died. It would be natural for Henrietta's younger sister to go along with her in the migration, which Basil Hayden led, the more so because other relatives and friends were part of the group.

When the sisters' father, Robert Cole, died in 1771, he had three minor children, Eleanor being the oldest. His will set up a trust for their care. Basil Hayden and two others were executors. When Robert Cole's second wife died, Charles Hayden administered her probate process. In Kentucky, Basil and Charles were immediate neighbors of Joseph Clayton. Family members of Richard Melton, who married Henrietta's and Eleanor's older sister Margaret, were close neighbors. The Claytons' immediate neighbor Philip Mattingly was a member of the extended families both of the Coles and of the Robert Mattingly who married the oldest sister, Jane Cole. Robert Greenwell, a member of the extended family of Eleanor's probable mother, Anne Greenwell, guaranteed the marriage bond of John Clayton, Joseph's son. Eleanor Cole was of an appropriate age, place of origin, religion, and social characteristics to fit as a spouse for Joseph Clayton.

All told, circumstantial evidence suggests that it is somewhat more likely than not that Eleanor Cole married Joseph Clayton. There is no direct proof that she did, and it seems unlikely that such proof could be found, since the surviving records are so few.

Author's note

The focus of the current analysis is the possibility that Eleanor Cole, daughter of Thomas Cole and probably Anne Greenwell, was Joseph Clayton's wife. It will be of most interest to those interested in him. He is covered in a separate manuscript,¹ which has a lot of detail about him and his family that isn't repeated here. Most people will pick up these notes after having read that.

Robert Cole, Anne Greenwell and their children

There was a succession of Robert Coles in St. Mary's. The one of present interest was born perhaps in the 1710s to Robert Cole and Elizabeth Tant.² He married, first, Ann Greenwell, daughter of Thomas Greenwell and Mary Medley,² sometime by 1743.³ ⁴ Ann was still living in 1750, when her father died. At an unknown later time Robert Cole married, second, "Sary" Elizabeth —.⁵ (All of her estate documents refer to her as "Elizabeth."⁶) Robert Cole had at least seven children, six of them daughters: (i) Jane, (ii) John, (iii) Margaret, (iv) Henrietta, (v) Eleanor, (vi) Elizabeth and (vii) Mary. He died in 1771. Three of his children had died before him. Three of the daughters had married. The administrators of his estate were his sons-in-law Basil Hayden, Robert Mattingly and Richard Melton.^{5,7} Robert Cole's second wife, Elizabeth, died by 1776. Charles Hayden, brother of Basil Hayden,⁸ was administrator of her estate.⁹ Clement Hayden provided surety for the administration bond.⁶

Of the Cole children, (i) Jane was born perhaps in the later 1740s. She married Robert Mattingly between 1761 and 1767.¹⁰ They had a daughter, Catherine.⁵ By 1771, Jane had died. Robert Mattingly died by 1776.¹¹ (ii) John Cole died by 1770. He was evidently a young adult by that time, with assets passing through the probate process. The records list his next-of-kin as Robert Cole, his father, and Thomas F. Thompson, who married Robert's sister Mary.¹² (iii) Margaret was born by, say, about 1750. By 1771, she had married Richard Melton and died.⁵ The couple may have had one child, Susanna.¹⁰ (iv) Henrietta Cole was born July 2, 1754.¹³ By 1771, she married Basil Hayden.⁵ The couple had some fifteen children from 1772 to 1798, many of whom died early. In 1785, the couple moved to Kentucky, Basil being the leader of a Catholic community migration from St. Mary's and nearby Maryland counties to the settlement at Pottinger's Creek in Nelson County, Kentucky.^{14, 15} During her husband's life, Henrietta carried on a confessed affair with Charles Ewing, a local real estate speculator, whom she married following Basil Hayden's death. The second marriage ended in divorce on the grounds that Charles Ewing was already married, which required a special act of the Kentucky Legislature.¹⁶ Needless to say, such doings created some notoriety and scandal. Henrietta died in 1837¹⁷.

Three of Robert Coles' children were not legally of age when he died. The terms of his will gave detailed instructions for their future welfare:

I give and bequeath Eighteen hundred lb. of Crop Tobacco to be laid out in Goods in Order to Cloath the above three Children to be laid out by him or them whose hands the children shall come under as soon as him or them shall think proper in order to prevent he or them going to any Cost or expense of their own or the Children suffering from Want of Cloaths and likewise to

go as much provision such as Meat & bread as reason would think might be required to Serve them from the time of my Death for the Space of Twelve Months and my Will is the abovementioned ten pound may be paid in Goods & Chattles at the Appraisalment or Cash as my Executors shall think proper and my Will is if either of the abovementioned three Children should die before Marriage or should not arrive to Age that their part of my Estate may go to the Survivors of these four, Viz. Eleanor, Elizabeth, Mary & Henrietta Haden and if all three should die Viz. Eleanor, Elizabeth and Mary as above mentioned then to go as the Law directs excepting such part as my Daughter Henrietta has received by the death of some one or two of them or their Deaths, My Will is in regard to the Tobacco and provision which is above mentioned is to be applied at or as soon after my Death to the three Children aforesaid and not to be paid to them or any part or parcel of them or any other of my heirs afterwards, its for an Easement to him or them whose hands they Shall fall under.⁵

The administrators of Robert Cole's estate, Basil Hayden, Robert Mattingly and Richard Melton, became the trustees for the assets due to his minor children and guardians of their welfare. At the final accounting,¹⁸ his estate was valued at £512 13s 6½d. Robert Mattingly died by 1776, passing on his responsibility to the other two.¹¹ The guardians' role in practice could have been a removed one, holding the assets and making annual reports of them, or it could have been a close one, possibly taking the children into their own households. Since Henrietta Cole was married to Basil Hayden, we might suspect it would tend to be active and involved. Of the minor Cole children, (v) Eleanor Cole is mentioned by that name in no other known record besides her father's will. From the birth dates of her siblings, we might guess she was born in the later 1750s. (vi) Elizabeth was born somewhat later, if the order of the lists in her father's will reflects birth order. There are various later references to her name in St. Mary's records, but because Elizabeth was such a common name, it is not evident which might refer to her and which to a namesake. (vii) The baptismal records of St. Joseph's congregation in St. Mary's report the baptism of Mary Cole on November 16, 1760.^{19, 20} Sponsors were Henry and Monica Bryan. In 1763, Henry Bryan died. Robert Cole, Robert Mattingly and Peter Mattingly were witnesses of his will.²¹

The scattered records that remain give us some idea of the circle of friends and community around the Cole family. For some generations, they had been supporters of the Catholic church in Newtown. So were the Greenwell family.^{20, 22} Robert Cole's will gives us the names of his sons-in-law, whom he trusted enough to make the administrators of his estate. The 1760 probate records of Elizabeth Hayden provide some names that turn out to be of particular interest. Robert Cole was a witness to her will,²³ indicating that he knew the people involved. Besides those of her children, the names cited in her will include her grandson Basil Hayden and Joseph Clark, son of James Clark. Basil was one of the beneficiaries. Joseph received the right of first refusal to purchase the land that where Richard Hayden had lived for 562½ pounds of tobacco, which was commonly used in lieu of currency. I can find no near family ties between

the Clarks and the Haydens. My impression is that the Clarks were neighbors or friends of Elizabeth and had expressed interest in the land, with which she was inclined to favor them. The inventory of her estate was attested to by John Baptist Mattingly.²⁴ — It may be noted that Robert Cole completed the various documents with his signature, rather than his mark, indicating that he was able to read and write, as were his early ancestors.²²

Kentucky

The late 1770s and early 1780s were a time of civil and religious turmoil for the St. Mary's Catholic community. They were also a time of personal turmoil for Eleanor Cole as she emerged into adulthood. Both her parents had died, as well as the first three of her four elder siblings. Her surviving older sister, Henrietta, was moving to Kentucky as the wife of the leader of the migration movement that would settle at Pottinger's Creek. So were a number of family friends. It would seem very natural and unsurprising if she decided to go along.

Joseph Clayton

The demographic characteristics of Eleanor Cole generally match those we might expect for Joseph Clayton's wife. The 1810 Nelson census²⁵ indicates him as head of household aged 45+, so born before 1765, and a female aged 26 to 44, i.e. born from 1765 to 1784. The date of Robert Cole's will and the birth date of Henrietta would put her birth between 1754 and 1770. Both Joseph and Eleanor were Catholics. The birth dates of Joseph's children, from about 1785 to 1803, fit the childbearing span we would expect of a somewhat younger sister of Henrietta Cole, whose children were born from 1772 to 1798.¹⁷ The Coles lived near Newtown in St. Mary's;¹⁰ available evidence suggests that Joseph Clayton came from that area as well. Both Eleanor's father and Joseph Clayton were literate. Both were financially in the middle class, owning land and having assets measured in hundreds, not tens or thousands, of pounds.

There is clear evidence that Joseph Clayton and Eleanor Cole had close mutual relatives, friends and neighbors, and so could be expected to know each other. (1) Basil Hayden was an abutter of the Claytons in the early Kentucky days.^{26, 27} and married Henrietta's older sister. (2) Basil's brother Charles Hayden was administrator for the estate of Elizabeth Cole, Eleanor's apparent stepmother (or, possibly, mother). He was also an abutter and close friend of Joseph Clayton in Nelson County. In 1796, Charles Hayden and his sister Mary witnessed a sale of land by Joseph Clayton.²⁸(3) Following the death of Margaret Cole, her widower, Richard Melton, remarried and had a number of children.²⁹ In 1780, he purchased for £200 500 acres of land to be surveyed in Nelson

County. The survey is dated 1786.³⁰ Benedict Webb's often-cited list of the original 1785 settlers at Pottinger's Creek¹⁴ includes Richard's family member Stanislaus Melton. Richard died about 1800 in Chaplin Fork, Nelson County, about 15 miles from the Clayton home.^{29, 31} In 1804, "Stanfordlaus Melton on Pottinger's Creek in Nelson County" found a lost mare and reported it to the local authorities.³² The 1830 census³³ shows "Stain Milton" two lines up from William Clayton, Joseph's son. (4) John Baptist Mattingly, who along with Robert Cole was involved in the probate process for Elizabeth Hayden, was father of Joseph Clayton's immediate neighbor and friend Philip Mattingly.^{34, 35} John Baptist was the son of Thomas Mattingly and Ruth Cole,³⁶ thus related to the Robert Mattingly who married Jane Cole both on the Mattingly and Cole sides.³⁷ (5) James Clark, who is a key figure discussed in Elizabeth Hayden's will, was a member of the same artillery company as Joseph Clayton during the Revolutionary War.³⁸ It is possible that Joseph was introduced to the set of people cited in the will through James. It is clear in any case that Joseph Clayton's relationship with the Clarks was a long and close one. In 1793, he was listed on court records as a bondsman for the marriage of George Clarke,³⁹ indicating a close prior tie. George Clark was a close neighbor.⁴⁰ James was the father of the James Clarke who was the Claytons' neighbor in 1830.³³ (6) The godparents of Mary Cole, Henry and Monica Bryant, had a daughter Monica.⁴¹ The younger Monica, who married Philip Miles,² was one of the original 1785 emigrants to Pottinger's Creek.¹⁴ The couple appear in early tax lists close to Joseph Clark and Charles Hayden.⁴² Monica Bryant's presence does not mean that Mary Cole was present, but it contributes context for the scant available information about Mary. (7) In 1767, Robert Cole was a witness of the St. Mary's will of John Johnson, father of Leonard Johnson,⁴³ one of the original emigrants to Pottinger's Creek¹⁴ and a near neighbor of the Haydens there.⁴² I suspect but can't prove (the names are exceedingly common ones) that the John Johnson whom Webb notes as the son of Leonard was the same as the John Johnson listed a few lines away from the Claytons in the 1830 census.³³ (8) In 1818, Robert Greenwell and Stanislaus Hayden guaranteed the marriage bond of Joseph Clayton's oldest son, John, to Maria Hayden.⁴⁴ Robert Greenwell, son of Joshua Greenwell, was a St. Mary's emigrant and member of the extended family of Eleanor Cole's probable mother.⁴⁵ Stanislaus was the oldest son of Basil Hayden and Henrietta, *née* Cole.⁴⁶ — All of these circumstances indicate that Henrietta Cole's marriage to Basil Hayden was not an isolated, happenstance event, but collectively contribute to a picture of a *family* amid a *set* of people surrounding Joseph Clayton, moving together from St. Mary's County to Pottinger's Creek.

There is some evidence from family naming patterns. It is soft, since the names involved are very common ones, but consistent with a Clayton-Cole marriage. The list of Henrietta Cole Hayden's children¹⁷ has a notable pairing:

<i>Birth</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Apparent origin of name</i>
	...	
1773	Robert	Henrietta's father
1774	Basil	Basil (Henrietta's husband)
1776	Ann	Henrietta's mother
1779	John Baptist	Uncertain
1781	Joseph	? husband of Henrietta's sister
1782	Eleanor	Henrietta's sister
	...	

Joseph Clayton's military discharge was in 1780.⁴⁷ There does not seem to be a closely related Joseph in the Hayden or Cole families to provide a different possible source for the name. The names of Eleanor Clayton's daughters¹ could have been drawn from Cole family given names, although there is nothing striking in them.

<i>Birth</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Possible origin of name</i>
ca. 1785	Sarah	Eleanor's step-mother (? mother)
ca. 1788	Mary	Eleanor's sister
ca. 1803	Catherine	Eleanor's sister's daughter

I have run across a number of other reports of closely related Coles moving to the Nelson County area. Because of lack of documentation and some contradictions, I'm not including them here. Probably some of them are true but I'm not sure how much a bit more peripheral detail would add to or change the story told here.

Families of Robert Cole and Anne Greenwell

Wives of Robert Cole

There are a few unsourced reports on the web, presumably copied from each other, that Robert Cole's second (or first) wife was Sarah Elizabeth Prindell, daughter of John Prindell and Eleanor Bond. These apparently stem from two valid sources. One is the record of the birth of Sarah Elizabeth Pindell (without the *r*) to John Pindell and Eleanor,⁴⁸ daughter of Richard Bond. The second is the will of Richard Bond,⁴⁹ which cites John Pindell and Eleanor, his wife, along with Elizabeth Cole. Review of these documents makes it obvious, however, that the match is not tenable. Sarah Elizabeth Pindell was born in 1765, which would make her six years old at the death of Robert Cole. John Pindell was an Episcopalian Church warder in Baltimore County.⁵⁰ Richard Bond, also of Baltimore County, did have a daughter named Elizabeth, who married

Mordecai Cole⁵¹. The people named in these reports were evidently carelessly conflated with each other, and with the (Sarah) Elizabeth who married Thomas Cole.

It is an appropriate question, regardless of (Sarah) Elizabeth's surname, which of his two wives was mother of which children. A couple of considerations suggest that Anne Greenwell was the mother of most, if not all. One is simple proximity in time. She was known to be alive in 1749/50,⁴ closer to the times of the children's births, in the 1740s and 1750s, than 1771, the time of the will. The last known child's birthdate was in 1760.²⁰ Robert's will citing his wife Elizabeth was in 1771.⁵ The other consideration is the language of Robert Cole's will. As noted above, he was at pains to make provision for the welfare of his minor children. Legally, they were orphans even if their mother were still living;⁵² but his omission of any mention of his wife's name in this discussion is notable, given the detail he goes into about arrangements for their future care. He was also at pains to exclude from the children's share any of her property: "excepting any of my Wife Sary Alias Elizabeth Coles Estate, which I renounce having any Right, title or Claim to." This is very different from the more common recital of a wife's right by dower to one third of the property held in the name of the husband. It suggests that Elizabeth might have brought property of her own to the marriage, which he was anxious should remain with her. Perhaps it was her second marriage as well; it was outside of norms for a woman to own property except by widowhood. — So, for the time being, I will proceed under the assumption that Anne Greenwell was the mother of the Cole children.

Ancestors of Robert Cole and Anne Greenwell

Robert Cole's family was a notable one and may be traced a number of generations back, to before 1600 in Middlesex, England. Because that work is already done and publicly available, I will not reiterate it here in any detail but will refer those interested to *Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck*⁵³ and to the *Nielsen Hayden genealogy* web site,⁵⁴ which includes most of the relevant information in *Early Colonial Settlers*, as well as much other material of interest. Anne Greenwell's ancestry was also a long and elevated one running back into the 1600s in England.

Conclusions and questions for further investigation

The scenario here is a hypothesis. I can't prove it. Neither can I disprove it, as I've been able to do with many other Eleanors as possible wives for Joseph Clayton. The story is by quite a bit the best of those I've considered, so I am making it available to others for their consideration and comment.

There are a few unsourced reports on the internet⁵⁵ and at least one in print⁵⁶ that Eleanor Cole married Cuthbert Fenwick. When I search for a documented basis for the story, I find a couple of kernels of reality. One is that the Cole and the Fenwick families were close for generations. For instance, Mary Cole married Ignatius Fenwick in about 1715.⁵⁷ The other is the Register of Baptisms for the Congregations of St. Francis Xavier and St. Inigoes shows that one of the several Cuthbert Fenwicks around did marry an Eleanor and bring a child for baptism in 1774.¹⁹ On the face of it, this Cuthbert appears most likely the son of Robert Fenwick and Susanna Hopewell, since the godparents were Richard Fenwick and Eleanor Hopewell.⁵⁸ Linda Reno, who during her lifetime was arguably the doyenne of early St. Mary's genealogy, reported tentatively that the mother was Eleanor Jarboe.² *Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties* also reports that Cuthbert Fenwick married Eleanor Jarboe, but gives dates that are many years later.⁵⁹ The upshot seems to be that we don't know what happened. I would welcome the emergence of documentation so we could understand what happened and adjust our thinking appropriately. That seems highly unlikely to me, however. The early St. Mary's records are very sparse and have been thoroughly combed by dedicated and able researchers. I don't think that there's an obvious piece of information that everyone has missed so far, or that a treasure trove of old records will be discovered in someone's attic or barn. In the meanwhile, my experience in older genealogy is that it is better to be guided by a few bits of hard evidence, even circumstantial, than by an oft-repeated tale that has neither any visible basis in reality nor person who is willing to come forward to defend it.

Questions for further work include the following: What became of Eleanor's younger sisters, Elizabeth and Mary? Who was the Sarah Elizabeth who became Robert Cole's second wife, and when did the marriage take place? What members of Joseph Clayton's artillery company might have had connections to the Cole family? Did other relatives of Eleanor migrate to Kentucky about the time she did?

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 37. Coordinator: Mike Marshall. Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties,. <https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us>, viewed March 22, 2018. Notes: The Cole and Mattingly trees may be traced through various searches here. There are some discrepancies in various reports. Joseph Clayton's neighbor Philip Mattingly was perhaps a second cousin of the Robert Mattingly married by Eleanor Cole's eldest sister, Jane.
 38. Maryland State Archives. A Return of the Officers and Privates belonging to the State of Maryland 921 Feb. 17 and Attach'd to the Corps hereafter Specified under the Resolution of Congress VII 174 of the 15th of March 1779. http://mdhistory.msa.maryland.gov/msaref05/msa_te_1_171/html/msa_te_1_171-0066.html, viewed December 12, 2020.
 39. Marriage bond of George Clark and Sarah Brothers, widow. Nelson County, Kentucky, October 3, 1793. <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:939K-Y633-YW?i=710&cc=1804888>, viewed February 12, 2017.
 40. Tax books 1792-1810, Nelson County, Kentucky, 1796. <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSMQ-VSZ8-4?i=134&cat=156788>, viewed April 9, 2018. Notes: The 1796 tax list, for instance, shows George and Thomas Clark on the Pottinger's Creek watercourse, along with Joseph Clayton, who is noted to be levy-free.
 41. Will of Henry Bryan of St. Mary's County. Prerogative Court of Maryland, July 16, 1761. Book 31, Page 867, http://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/stagser/s500/s538/000000/000047/pdf/msa_s538_000047.pdf, viewed April 10, 2018.
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43. Will of John Johnson of St. Mary's County. Prerogative Court of Maryland, April 23, 1767. Book 35, Page 407, http://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/stagser/s500/s538/000000/000054/pdf/msa_s538_000054.pdf, viewed April 3, 2018.
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