A Dobbins Story

John Dobbins is the earliest known ancestor, in my family that has been found in the area of Virginia. He was in Scotland, in 1747, and came to America sometime before the American Revolution. In 1771, he enlisted in the Continental Army and served with General Anthony Wayne of the 4th Pa. Regt. with Capt. James Taylor. His pension is dated June 22, 1819, and shows he is living in Greenbrier County, Va.

He married Elizabeth Keener of Woodstock, Va. in 1785, the daughter of Samuel Keener. They moved to Hampshire County where their son Samuel was born. Then they moved to Patterson’s creek, in Greenbrier County, in 1785, and as time passed this area became Braxton Co.

During the French and Indian War, Elizabeth Keener was captured by marauding Indians and taken prisoner for about 15 years. Since she was a small child, she learned all the ways of her captors, and when she was returned as a young woman later, she was returned to her father, Samuel in Virginia.

According to Fern Minney, the Keener’s lived on Little Whitely Creek, which is about fifteen miles from Morgantown. John Dobbins died on O’Briens fork of Steer Creek, Braxton County, on April 11, 1833.

In a newspaper article that appeared in the Webster Republican of July 21, 1965, some personal background is given concerning Elizabeth Keener. Near the close of the French and Indian War, the Indians made a raid on the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia, killing, scalping, and capturing the natives; and among their captives was a little baby girl. They carried her to their homes in Ohio and one tribe adopted her. She lived with them fifteen years before she was rescued by white settlers. During that time she learned their ways, customs, habits and language.

She had to learn the American language---after she learned to talk English, her father made a great feast and invited many people in to celebrate the return of his daughter. This young lady was Elizabeth Keener, daughter of Samuel Keener and wife of John Dobbins … a pioneer of Central West Virginia.”

Samuel Dobbins married Mary Hamrick, a sister of Benjamin, William and David, three pioneer Hamricks of Webster Co. It is believed she was born in 1787. They were married August 9, 1808 by John Skidmore.
They had eight sons and four daughters: John, Samuel, Joel, Benjamin, William, Peter, George, Thomas, Betty, Nancy, and Sally. The Samuel Dobbins family settled on O’Briens Fork of Steer Creek, which is not far from Frametown, Braxton County.

While enroute to their new home they stopped at the home of John W. and Martha Frame. Upon leaving William Dobbins said to Rachel, their daughter, “Rachel, I’ll be back to see you.” A short time later, he came back and they were married on December 21, 1834. William Dobbins once owned the land on which Webster Springs got its name from the springs that were located there. (It was once a famous health resort; and the large hotel that was located there burned and was never replaced.)

The Rev. William Dobbins was baptized October 17, 1861 and appointed as a missionary on October 1, 1870. A story told by his son, James P. Dobbins, about building of the First Baptist Church, goes thusly. His father, William, had gone out and picked out a certain spot and began chopping down a very large tree. Some of the neighbors came by and said, “What are ye aimin’ to do, Uncle Billy?” He replied, “I’m building a Baptist church.” At a later date a memorial window was dedicated to the memory of the Reverent William Dobbins and Fern Minney said she saw this beautiful window once. This church building burned and new one now sits on the same location.

William Dobbins married Rachel Frame on December 21, 1834, and their children were: Francis Marion; Nancy M. who married Elliot Frame; the son of (Andrew B. Frame, son of James Frame, Sr.); Isabelle A. who married John McCourt; Melvina Jane, who married a Mr Belknap; James Polk, who married Laverna Jane Stump, and Zachary T., (single); Matthew Scott, who married Catherine Moore; Johnson J., who married Elvira Shock; Harriet Ann, (single); and Rebecca Florinda, who married Wesley Weese.

According the Fern Minney, James P. Dobbins became a member of the Mt. Pisgah Church in 1866. He is listed as a charter member of the Crooked Fork Baptist Church and later a church at Rush Run. He was elected as a Deacon on January 21, 1893 at the Mt. Pisgah Church. The first Frame’s settled at the mouth of Powell’s Creek on Birch River, Braxton County; and this is where Rachel Frame grew up.

Williams’ brother, Benjamin Dobbins married Isabell Frame, sister to Rachel and their children are: Marshall, who went west; Frank B., who married Sarah Rodgers; Thomas, who died young, Ruie (Ruhama), who married Henry Carr; and Martha, who also married a Carr. The Webster Republican gave a list of Samuel Dobbins family of eight sons and four daughters are: John, Samuel, Joel, Benjamin, William, Peter, George, Thomas, Jane, Betty, Nancy, and Sally.
John had a son named Uriah, who married and had one son, Anthony. The family of John settled in Roane County near Spencer. Samuel married Betsy James and had Hanson, who married Martha Frame.

Joel, a Union soldier in the Civil war, who married Sarah Dodrill, daughter of James and Elizabeth (Gregory) Dodrill. (The Dodrills lived near Bergoo.) They were married on November 26, 1839. Their children are: Elizabeth, Isaac, James, (single) Nancy, who married William Ellison, Franscena, who married John Riffle, Adam, who married Janie Gainer, daughter of a preacher, and youngest son of Joel and Sarah Dobbins was named Samuel, who married Ellen Rutherford of Gilmer County.

Benjamin Dobbins married Isabelle Fraine (Frame) and their children are: Marshall, (who went west); Frank B., who married Sarah Rodgers; Thomas died as a child; Ruie, who married Henry Carr; and Martha who also married a Mr. Carr.

William Dobbins family was not listed.

Peter Dobbins family also not listed.

George Dobbins, a Union soldier in Co. G, of the 9th Va. Reft, married Hessoine Frame on October 22, 1846. (He was born August 5, 1825 and she was born August 15, 1830.) They had thirteen children: Sara Ann, (single); Levi Newton, who married Cecelia Gerwig in 1869. Second wife of Levi was Samantha Emily Moore; they were married in 1870; (she was born 1849 and died in Braxton Co. 1926).

Mary Jane, who married Adam Moore; and twins, Samuel Jasper and Andrew Jackson; (Samuel died at age of five, and Andrew married Safrona Harrison; Della Adaline, who married John Ballengee; Emma Drusilla, who married Arthur Given; Rachel Cassandra, who married Jacob Nottingham, (they live near Akron, Ohio); George McElfellen, who died young; Luceba Ellen, who married Fielding Harrison; and Martha Cecelia who married Elliot Long of Frametown.

There is no family information for Thomas, Betty, Jane, Nancy, and Sally.

In the last year of the civil was the following record is given in John Sutton’s Braxton County History. “Last Grand Jury Before the Was June 4, 1861. Grand Jury to-wit:.... to consider their indictments and presentments, and after some time returned to Court and presented an indictment again, Isaac Thrasher for trepass, assault, and batter--a true bill---
and indictment again Benjamin Dobbins for seditious speaking---a true bill--and the Grand Jury having nothing further to present are discharged--on the forgoing indictments as returnable on the first day of August, term next.

At a later time, Benjamin Dobbins and Michael Smith were appointed commissioners to superintend the election at the house of Daniel B. Friend at Steer Creek...and Samuel Rollyson was appointed surveyor of the road that began at the Braxton-Gilmer county line on O’Briens Fork of Steer Creek, and up said fork to the hill above the Benjamin Dobbins farm; and John Dobbins, Allen Meadows, John Clark, Addison Wilson, Jacob Keener, William Dobbins, James Dobbins Mason Minney, Seth Hamric, William Perkins, Andrew Carr, and James P. Carr would help keep the road in good repair.

James F. Dobbins, a Federal soldier, during the Civil War, from Braxton County, died of consumption on March 20, 1863, at Winchester, Virginia. Joel Dobbins, another soldier, died of consumption at Grafton, on January 25, 1864. Samuel P. Dobbins died from an accidental wound he received while serving with Federal troops at Beverly.

All that were listed with the Braxton County Guard are: Thomas Dobbins, Adam G. Dobbins, George Dobbins, James Dobbins, Joel Dobbins, John M. Dobbins, Samuel P. Dobbins, and another Thomas Dobbins.

In Prominent Men of West Virginia p. 989 the following sketch was found.

PEYTON BYRNE DOBBINS...born in Braxton County, Virginia, March 3, 1842. He grew up to manhood in Jackson and Roane counties, where he received a fine English education.

When about sixteen years of age he began the trade of a carpenter and followed int attentively until the break of the Civil War in 1861. He then enlisted as a soldier in Company B. of the 9th Va. Regt. and remained in the service of his country until July 24, 1865 Returning to civil life he located in Wheeling and became chief clerk in the Auditor’s of the State’s office, which he continued to fill until the Democrats assumed control of the State in 1871.

Mr. Dobbins then became book-keeper in the Merchant’s Bank of Charleston. He stayed in that position until 1872, when he returned to Wheeling and was a bookeeper until 1878. Then he started a fire insurance business, first as Assistant Secretary of the Peabody Insurance Group and then Secretary of the American Insurance Companies.

In 1887, he became cashier of the Dollar Savings Bank of Wheeling. He has always been public spirited and a leading, and later president of the Board of Commissioners of Ohio County, and he served on the Board of Education.
Sources:


William Dobbins Family Bible obtained from Wilbert Frame 1972


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