
Nathaniel Walton who married Hannah Smith is not the Son of Nathaniel and Jemima Walton

For some time, I researched my Walton ancestry under the impression that Nathaniel Walton who married Hannah Smith was a son of Nathaniel and Jemima Walton. Many Internet family trees list him as such, with a birth date of ca. 1734.

There were several things that puzzled me about this Nathaniel Walton:

1. I couldn't find proof of his birth to Nathaniel and Jemima Walton.
2. As I reviewed his will, written 5 October 1775, and probated 4 May 1779 (Connecticut Probate Records, 1609-1999), the names of some of his children were remarkably similar to those of his presumed parents, Nathaniel and Jemima Walton. In his will, Nathaniel Walton named his sons Lawrence Walton, Joseph Walton, deceased and Daniel Walton, and his daughters Susannah Bennet, Jemima Heard, Miriam Williams, and Anna Walton.
3. What especially perplexed me was Nathaniel's mention in his will of the heirs of his son Joseph, deceased. If this son Joseph was born to Nathaniel and Hannah (Smith) Walton who married in 1755, he would, at the oldest, be born in 1759, because the births of the first two children of this marriage were already recorded in 1757 and 1758. In 1775 when Nathaniel Walton wrote his will, Joseph would only be about 16 years old. It seems unlikely that he would have multiple heirs at such a young age. However, there was a Joseph Walton, the son of Nathaniel and Jemima Walton, who was born in 1719 and died in 1755 who could fit this description.
4. Three of Nathaniel's daughters, Susannah, Jemima, and Miriam, were married when his will was written in 1775. Given the presumed birthdate of their brother Joseph as about 16 years old in 1775, the three daughters would have been even younger, which makes it highly unlikely that they would be married in 1775.

The information I subsequently found on Joseph Walton who married Jerusha Johnson on 4 February 1741), (*see item ii., next page*), on Jemima Walton who married first, Nehemiah Hunter abt. 1747 and second, John Herd, on 12 May 1757, (*see item iv. on page 3*), and on Miriam Walton who married Isaiah Williams as his second wife, about 1774/1775 (*see item vi. page 3*), confirmed that the 1775 will was written by Nathaniel Walton, son of Lawrence and Margaret Walton, and the children he named in his will were from his two marriages to Jemima and Hannah (Smith) Walton.

5. The extensive and large inventory of Nathaniel Walton's estate: valued at over £4,940, including about 115 acres of land with the buildings thereon, worth £4,000 seemed impressive for a man of 45 years of age, especially since, aside from his will, there was no record of a land grant from Nathaniel Walton, husband of Jemima, to his sons.
6. Stephen Johnson was a witness to Nathaniel Walton's will. Stephen Johnson was a long-standing and trusted neighbor of Nathaniel Walton, husband of Jemima. The land on which the Walton Family Cemetery was located was purchased by Nathaniel Walton from Stephen Johnson in 1757. As noted below, Stephen Johnson was also named guardian of

Mary Bennett, presumed daughter of Susannah (Walton) Bennett, in 1769. Although Stephen Johnson might have had a close relationship with the son of his friend, Nathaniel Walton, seeing Stephen Johnson's signature on Nathaniel Walton's will was a clear clue as to the real identity of Nathaniel Walton who died in 1779.

Rethinking these relationships helped me to understand what actually happened. There was no son, Nathaniel, of Nathaniel and Jemima Walton. Jemima Walton died in September 1754, and Nathaniel Walton, Jemima's widower, married as his second wife, Hannah Smith, in June 1755.

Nathaniel and Hannah (Smith) Walton had three children together, the three who were recorded in Norwich vital records between 1757 and 1763: Anna, Daniel, and Nathaniel. The other children named in his will were the children of his first marriage to Jemima.

The children of Nathaniel Walton's first marriage to Jemima ()¹ Walton were:

- i. **Lawrence Walton**, born 15 December 1717 at Canterbury, Connecticut (Canterbury Vital Records, 1696-1820)²; married **Deborah** (Norwich Vital Records, 1640-1834)³, ca. 1739; died 28 November 1795 at Chesterfield, New Hampshire (Find a Grave, 1995)⁴. A number of Internet family trees give her maiden name as Bennett, however I haven't a record to verify this.
- ii. **Joseph Walton**, born 14 November 1719 at Norwich, Connecticut (Norwich Vital Records, 1640-1834)⁵; married **Jerusha Johnson** 4 February 1741 at Norwich, Connecticut (Norwich Vital Records, 1640-1834)⁶; died 1754 at Norwich, Connecticut (Connecticut Probate Records, 1609-1999)⁷. He died at 34 years of age, intestate, leaving a widow, Jerusha, three minor children, and one child on the way, born 1 August 1754. An inventory of his estate was taken 19-22 April 1754. His widow, Jerusha, signed a statement on 17 April 1754 that she was not capable of administering Joseph's estate and asked Samuel Lathrop to be administrator. Lawrence Walton and Moses Hagget were named guardians of son Joseph Walton. On 4 February 1755, Widow Elizabeth Lathrop stated she was guardian to Silas, Zerviah and Jerusha Walton. Norwich Vital Records give Silas' birthday as 1 August 1755; however, this must have actually been 1754, based on Widow Elizabeth Lathrop's statement and the approximate date (before April 1754) of Joseph Walton's death. Joseph Walton may be one of the Walton family members

¹ A number of Internet family trees give her maiden name as Clark, daughter of Benjamin and Mary (Smith) Clark, however I have found no information to verify this.

² Volume 1, page 356; Image 452 of 590 on Family History Library (FHL) Film # 007730763.

³ Volume 2, page 53 ½; Image 554 of 973 of FHL Film # 007730319. Some Internet family trees state her maiden name is Bennett, however I have found no records to back this up.

⁴ Memorial ID 117344580, URL <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/117344580/lawrence-walton>

⁵ Volume 2, page 107; Image 447 of 973 of FHL Film # 007730319

⁶ Volume 2, page 114; Image 585 of 973 of FHL Film # 007730319

⁷ Estate of Joseph Walton, Town of Norwich, 1754, No. 11166.

originally buried at the Walton Family Cemetery; and in 1992, reburied at the Hopeville Cemetery.

- iii. **Susannah Walton**, born 13 December 1721 at Norwich, Connecticut (Norwich Vital Records, 1640-1834)[vii]; married, probably, **Jeremiah Bennett** of Plainfield, Connecticut. Her father named her as "*Susaner Bennet*" in his will, written 5 October 1775, and she is referred to as "*Susannah Bennet, 1st daughter*" when Nathaniel Walton's will was administered on 4 May 1779. There are a few clues that Jeremiah Bennett is probably the husband of Susannah (Walton) Bennett:
- a. Jeremiah Bennett is the only person with the surname Bennett who appears in public records associated with other members of Susannah Walton's family.
 - b. In the administration of the will of Susannah's next older brother, Joseph Walton, on 26 April 1754, Jeremiah Bennett received £6, 5 shillings from debts collected on the estate (Connecticut Probate Records, 1609-1999).
 - c. When Jeremiah Bennett died insolvent in 1769, his assets were sold off. Among the buyers of his estate was "*John Heard*", the husband of Susannah's next younger sister, Jemima (Connecticut Probate Records, 1609-1999).
 - d. The most compelling clue is the chosen guardian for Jeremiah Bennett's minor daughter, Mary, after his death. On 4 July 1769, "*Mary Bennet a minor Daughter to Mr. Jeremiah Bennett Deceased appeared in court and made Choice of Capt Stephen Johnson to be her Gardien which is allowed by sd Court.*" (Plainfield District Probate Court, 1762 - 1790)⁸ Captain Stephen Johnson was a trusted neighbor of the Walton family, from whom Nathaniel Walton purchased land for the Walton Family Cemetery in 1757. Stephen Bennett was also a witness to Nathaniel Walton's will in 1775. Thus, it would seem fitting that a trusted family friend with resources would be deemed a suitable guardian for the daughter of Susannah (Walton) Bennett and the granddaughter of Nathaniel Walton.

Aside from her birth record in Norwich vital records, Susannah (Walton) Bennett does not appear in records for marriage, birth of children, cemetery, or probate records. She probably lived close to the Walton farm in Norwich (Plainfield was just over the town boundary) because she took as her inheritance from Nathaniel Walton's estate, a yoke of oxen, "*Excepting five pounds Seventeen Shillings & nine pence which she is to pay Daniel Walton, the oxen according to the Inventory price Surmounting her share in estate being 172:2:3*" (CT. Probate Records, 1609-1999).

- iv. **Jemima Walton**, born about 1725, married 1) **Nehemiah Hunter**, abt. 1747⁹ in Norwich, Connecticut; he died about 1754 in Norwich¹⁰, Connecticut. On 19 January 1755, the widow Jemima Hunter signed a deposition declining administration of the estate of her deceased husband, Nehemiah Hunter, and asked that Benjamin Kimball of Preston be named administrator. The statement was witnessed by her older brother,

⁸ Miscellaneous records from the administration of the estate of Jeremiah Bennett of Plainfield, Connecticut found on Family History Library film # 007626786, Image 257 of 882.

⁹ Based on the birth of their first son, 12 April 1748.

¹⁰ Based on the administration of his estate in January 1755.

Lawrence Walton, and his wife Deborah Walton (Connecticut Probate Records, 1609-1999)¹¹. Jemima (Walton) Hunter married 2) **John Herd**, son of Thomas and Lydia (Bumpas) Herd of Plainfield, Connecticut on 12 May 1757 (Barbour Collection, Pre-1850). She is named as “*Jemimey Heard*” in her father’s will and as “*Jemima Hearde, 2nd daughter*” in the administration of his will. She had two known sons, with her first husband, Nehemiah Hunter: John Hunter, born 12 April 1748 in Preston, Connecticut (Barbour Collection, Pre-1850), and Daniel Hunter, born 21 April 1749 in Norwich, Connecticut.

- v. **Anna Walton**, born 6 March 1728 at Norwich, Connecticut (Norwich Vital Records, 1640-1834)¹²; no other records have been found for her. She must have died before 1757, or else Nathaniel and Hannah (Smith) Walton probably would not have given their first child the same name. She may also be one of the Walton family members originally buried at the Walton Family Cemetery; and in 1992, reburied at the Hopeville Cemetery.
- vi. **Miriam Walton**, born about 1750 (Hale, 1932-5), married late 1774 or before 5 October 1775¹³ as the second wife of **Isaiah Williams** of Lebanon, Connecticut. She is named as “*Meriam Williams*” in her father’s will, and “*Miriam Williams, 3rd daughter*” in the administration of his will. Isaiah Williams named his wife Miriam and six children in his will, written 15 January 1812, and probated 20 February 1812 in Lebanon, Connecticut (Connecticut Probate Records, 1609-1999). Considering their ages when they married - Miriam was about 25 years of age and Isaiah was 36 years old, and the fact that Isaiah was married to his first wife, Elizabeth “Betsey” (Bill) Williams for about 8 years, it seems likely that one or more of the six children named in his will were from Isaiah’s marriage to Miriam. More research is required to determine this. Isaiah died 26 January 1812 in Lebanon (Hale, 1932-5) and is buried at Exeter Cemetery in Lebanon, Connecticut (Find a Grave, 1995)¹⁴. Miriam died 1 August 1838 in Lebanon, aged 88 years. She is buried with Isaiah and his first wife, Elizabeth “Betsey” at Exeter Cemetery (Find a Grave, 1995)¹⁵.

The children of Nathaniel Walton’s second marriage to Hannah (Smith) Walton were:

- vii. **Anna Walton**, born 25 June 1757 at Norwich, Connecticut (Norwich Vital Records, 1640-1834)¹⁶; married **Asa Culver**, the son of Timothy and Mary (Lamb) Culver (Giorgi, 1984). Although she is named in her father’s will as “*Anney Walton*”, she is named in the administration of his will as “*Anne Culver, 4th daughter*”, so she must have married Asa Culver after 5 October 1775 when Nathaniel wrote his will, and before 4 May 1779 when the will was probated. The *Colver-Culver Family Genealogy* (Giorgi, 1984) states

¹¹ Probate of the estate of Nehemiah Hunter of Norwich, Connecticut. 1755. No. 5506, Norwich Probate District.

¹² Volume 2, page 132; Image 459 of 973 of FHL Film # 007730319

¹³ Based on the fact that she was named Meriam Williams in her father’s will, written 5 October 1775.

¹⁴ Find a Grave Memorial ID 36195075. See <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/36195075/isaiah-williams>

¹⁵ Find a Grave Memorial ID 36195808. See <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/36195808/miriam-williams>

¹⁶ Volume 2, page 176; Image 617 of 973 of FHL Film # 007730319

that Asa Culver's father, Timothy Culver and his second wife, Margaret "*are both buried at Norwich Bridge Cemetery, Huntington [Massachusetts], with his younger brother Asa, his wife and children*"¹⁷. The headstone of Asa Culver at Norwich Bridge Cemetery reads, "*In Memory of Mr. Asa Culver he died 15 August 1804 in the 50 year of his age.*"¹⁸ (Massachusetts Death Records, 1841-1915)Walton. Based on Anna Walton's recorded birth date in Norwich Vital Records, the age on her headstone is a few years off. She was actually 68 years old when she died, not 71, however this discrepancy is probably not significant. The 1875 Blandford, Massachusetts death record of Asa and Anna Culver's daughter, Anna Gibbs, provides her parents' names as Asa Culver and Anna Walton, which gives proof of Anna Culver's maiden name (Massachusetts Death Records, 1841-1915).

- viii. **Daniel Walton**, born 27 February 1758 at Norwich, Connecticut (Norwich Vital Records, 1640-1834)¹⁹; married 1) **Zerviah Slafter** about 1777 (Barbour Collection, Pre-1850; Slafter, 1869)²⁰. He and his mother Hannah were named co-executors of Nathaniel Walton's estate. Hannah (Smith) Walton died in 1776, leaving Daniel, who was then 21 years old, as the sole executor. His father bequeathed to him, "*all my lands buildings thereon that is in Norwich*", which included 115 acres of land with buildings, valued at £4,000 (about \$188,320 in 2023). This was probably "*all ye land yt I have within the Township of Norwich or ever shall or Could have any right unto by any former purchas, or in Comon & undevidded Land, but especially ye farm that I now live on*" granted in 1725 by Lawrence Walton to "*my loving son Nathaniell Wolton*" (Norwich Land Records, 1717-1727).

Zerviah (Slafter) Walton divorced Daniel Walton on 12 August 1812 for desertion and adultery and asked for a property settlement, which was granted (Knox & Ferris, 2022). Daniel married 2) **Sabra Smith** 8 October 1827 in Lisbon, Connecticut (Barbour Collection, Pre-1850)²¹. Zerviah (Slafter) Walton died 29 September 1831 and was buried at Read Haskell (also Read and Herskell) Cemetery (Hale, 1932-5). Daniel died 24 November 1845 and was also buried at Read and Herskell Cemetery (Hale, 1932-5). Sabra (Smith) Walton died 19 September 1858 in Griswold, Connecticut (Hale, 1932-5). Her place of burial is not known.

- ix. **Nathaniel Walton**, born 1 April 1763 at Norwich, Connecticut (Norwich Vital Records, 1640-1834)²². He died before his eighth birthday, on 17 March 1771 at Norwich,

¹⁷ Page 63, Colver-Culver Genealogy. Ms. Giorgi inaccurately referred to Asa Culver as the younger brother of Timothy Culver, because she also lists him as Timothy and Mary Culver's youngest son.

¹⁸ Find a Grave Memorial ID 51568778. See <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/51568778/asa-culver>

¹⁹ Volume 2, page 176; Image 617 of 973 of FHL Film # 007730319

²⁰ The birth dates of their children are given beginning in 1778 in Barbour, Town of Griswold, page 46 (referencing original Griswold Town Records, page 8). The Slafter genealogy notes the marriage of Zerviah Slafter and Daniel Walton but does not give a marriage date.

²¹ Barbour, Town of Lisbon, page 234 (referencing original Lisbon Town Records, Volume 1, page 80)

²² Volume 2, page 176; Image 617 of 973 of FHL Film # 007730319

Connecticut (Norwich Vital Records, 1640-1834)²³. He is probably one of the children originally buried at the Walton Family Cemetery; and in 1992, reburied at the Hopeville Cemetery.

Nathaniel Walton, son of Lawrence and Margaret (Smith) Walton, died on 27 March 1779, just after his 82nd birthday. His will, written 5 October 1775, and probated 4 May 1779, named his sons Lawrence Walton and Daniel Walton, his daughters Susannah Bennet, Jemima Heard, Miriam Williams, and Anna Walton, and the children of his son Joseph Walton, deceased. Both his wives and his children Joseph, Anna, and Nathaniel predeceased him.

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²³ Ibid.

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