

Wrightstone Family History

We're related to the Wrightstone family through my mother Dorothy (Dottie) Irene Klinger, who was born to Irene Mary Wrightstone and Edwin Charles Klinger. In 1948 Dottie married Robert Harvey Graham.

Like many of our families, the Wrightstone families were early settlers of the 18th century Northern York County Townships of Pennsylvania, which today include Carroll, Monaghan, Fairview, Newberry, Washington, and Warrenton (Warrington). The family origins are still being researched.

Our research is hampered with the German and English pronunciation and spelling versions of the Wrightstone name. We know the original German spelling of Wrightstone was Richtstein or Richstine; meaning the "right stone." English speaking British and Dutch cultures influenced the pronunciation, and subsequently the spelling of Richstein changed to Rightstone. The name Richstein or Richstine is still being used, but by the mid 19th century our specific family name further evolved from Rightstone to its current spelling of Wrightstone.

We also are mindful of given names, which includes German baptism naming traditions and the religious practice of using Christian Saint's name for all the children; Johann Jacob or Johann Wilhelm. It was also a common practice to name the first born son after the child's paternal grandfather and the second born son after the maternal grandfather. ¹ Johann Wilhelm Richstein would have been known in German circles as Wilhelm, but with English influences, this person may have also been recorded as John or William.

From what we have researched, ² we believe our Wrightstone family immigrated to America sometime between 1750 and 1770. ³ From our family stories we believe our Wrightstone family 1st settled in the Germantown area of Philadelphia. After a brief period the family wanted to experience more of the Colonial English influences, and migrated away from traditional German enclaves of Germantown and other Colonial Pennsylvania German communities. Historically, Colonial German farm families didn't traditionally cross the Susquehanna to venture west until about 1780-1790.

We're looking for a Johann Jacob Richtstein (Wrightstone) ⁴ who would have been born in Colonial Pennsylvania about 1765 to 1775. ⁵ Johann would have been known as Jacob, and we believe he married a woman named Elizabeth. ⁶ This Elizabeth was born 1770-1780, most likely before 1775 when John was born.

- We know John and William both came into Fairview Township York County area before 1820. ⁷ It was here in 1830 Fairview John was married and William was living with his mother and other siblings.

We believe Jacob and Elizabeth married about circa 1790, and had the following children.⁸

- i. John Wrightstone (1791-1856). Our lineage is connected to John, who before he died in 1856, had three sons and five daughters. His daughters went on to marry, but we believe only two sons survived to start a family; Michael and John.
- ii. Un-named Wrightstone who was born 1800-1810. In 1830 a male and female of this birth range were living with John and Margaret Wrightstone. It could be a sister, Leah who married Joseph Sipe,⁹ or some other female sister or male brother to either John or Margaret.
- iii. William Wrightstone (1807-1881), William had one son and one adopted daughter. His son was named Jacob, who had nine sons and three daughters. You can imagine how many children Jacob's sons had in their families.
- iv. Un-named Female Wrightstone was born 1810-1825. In 1830 she was living with her mother and 23 year old brother William.
- v. Un-named Female Wrightstone was born 1810-1825. In 1830 she was living with her mother and 23 year old brother William.

Bibliography

1. 18th Century Pennsylvania German Naming Customs & Patterns, August 18th 1995, Charles F. Kerchner Jr., 3765 Chris Drive, Emmaus PA, 18049-1544
2. 1790 Jacob Richtstein (Richsstein) Census: Long Swamp, Berks, Pennsylvania; Series: M637; Roll: 8; Page: 89; Image: 103; Family History Library Film: 0568148; First Census of the United States, 1790 (NARA microfilm publication M637, 12 rolls); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington, D.C.
3. 1810 Jacob Wrightstone Census: Coventry, Chester, Pennsylvania; Roll: 47; Page: 232; Image: 0193673; Family History Library Film: 00063; Third Census of the United States, 1810. (NARA microfilm publication M252, 71 rolls). Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D.C.
4. 1820 Michl Hart Census: Fairview, York, Pennsylvania; Page: 76; NARA Roll: M33_114; Image: 159; Fourth Census of the United States, 1820. (NARA microfilm publication M33, 142 rolls). Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington, D.C.
5. 1830 William Wrightstone Census: Fairview, York, Pennsylvania, Page 269; NARA Roll: M19-160; Family History Film: 0020634, Ancestry.com and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 1880 United States Federal Census, Original data: 1830 U.S. Census, population schedules. NARA microfilm publication M19, 201 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.
6. 1830 John Wrightstone Census: Fairview, York, Pennsylvania, Page 261; NARA Roll: M19-160; Family History Film: 0020634, Family History Film: 0020634, Ancestry.com and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 1880 United States Federal Census, Original data: 1830 U.S. Census, population schedules. NARA microfilm publication M19, 201 rolls. Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration.
7. Michael Hart Estate Will: Book 3Q Page 174, March 26th 1840 – John Rankin, administrator of Michael Hart late of Fairview Township, yeoman, to Jacob Cocklin Jr. of Monaghan Township for \$245.30 21 acres 118 Perches in Monaghan Township. Michael Hart had a daughter Margaret, wife of John Rightstone. York County Archives, 150 Pleasant Acres Road, York, PA 17401

End Notes

¹ Naming Conventions and Customs: 18th Century Pennsylvania German Naming Customs & Patterns, August 18th 1995, Charles F. Kerchner Jr., 3765 Chris Drive, Emmaus PA, 18049-1544

² Our Research: We are assuming 1st son is John and the 2nd son was William; suggesting John Rightstone (1791-1856) was named after his paternal grandfather, and William Rightstone (1807-1881) was named after his maternal grandfather. John's first known son and second born, Michael, was after his maternal grandfather, while William's first son and first born, Jacob, was named after his paternal grandfather.

- We are suggesting this assumption to continue our research. Johann Jacob Richtstein (Wrightstone) is the father of two sons; John and William. Johann Jacob is known as "Jacob" and his father was known as Johann Wilhelm (William) Richtstein. German families would know them and record them as Jacob or Wilhelm, while the English may have recorded them as Jacob or John, or William or John.

³ Wrightstone Colonial Origins 1750-1770: This assumption is made largely from the census record of two brothers; John Wrightstone (1791-1856) and William Wrightstone (1807-1881). In the 1880 census record, William, indicated his parents were born in Pennsylvania. Assuming their parents married at 18 years of age, about 1790, they would have been born in Pennsylvania about 1772. The largest German migration to Colonial Pennsylvania occurred about 1845 to 1770.

⁴ Johann Jacob Richtstein Name: This is a reasonable assumption, which is based on German religious naming conventions; William Wrightstone (1807-1881) naming his 1st son, Jacob; a 1810 John Wrightstone Census cited in the Bibliography.

⁵ Johann Jacob Richtstein Birth Date: This is a reasonable assumption: John Wrightstone (1719-1856) was born 1791, and his parents would have been between 16 to 28 years old; 1830 William Wrightstone census, cited in the bibliography, a female 50-60 years old living with William implies she was born sometime between 1770 and 1780.

⁶ The Assumed Names of Jacob Wrightstone and his wife Elizabeth: Johann Jacob; we selected Jacob over John, which is based on John being a son's name; John Wrightstone (1791-1856). Also, based on German naming traditions; 1st son after the father's father: William Wrightstone (1807-1881) named his 1st son Jacob. This is also assuming John and William are brothers.

- Jacob's wife, Elizabeth, is also based on German naming traditions; 1st daughter after the father's mother or 1st daughter after the mother's mother. Margaret's mother's name was Barbara Hart, which suggest Elizabeth was named after her father's mother.

⁷ Two brothers in Fairview Township Prior to 1825: This is a reasonable assumption: John Wrightstone (1719-1856) married Margaret Hart who is the daughter of Michael Hart. Michael Hart was living in Fairview Township in 1820 cited in the Bibliography; John and Margaret Wrightstone's son was born 1825.

⁸ John and William as Brothers: There are no official records that indicate they are brothers. However, the “brother” connection comes from the great-great grandson of John Wrightstone, our Uncle Clyde Wrightstone, who would visit the gravesite of William Wrightstone and family, recalling how they were his ancestors.

⁹ Leah Wrightstone: This is a possibility, but verification is required. A Leah did marry a Joseph Sipe, who was born in 1801. This Joseph had a son, George Sipe, who was born 1837. The issue is how other researcher writes up, and properly cites, their findings. A marriage between Joseph Sipe and Leah Wrightstone would clear this up. What we know is that a researcher indicated that George Sipe was born to Joseph Sipe and Leah Wrightstone.

- Joseph died circa 1848, did his wife Leah marry John Wrightstone, or did the researcher intend Leah Wrightstone married Joseph Sipe?
- Church Records, Family File 3073, Volume XIX, Page 37-81, Henry James Young Genealogical Reports, York County Heritage Trust, 250 East Market Street, York, PA
- Descendants of Kraft Billet, Compiled by Donald F. Billet, co-author of Billet and Related Families of York, Lancaster, and Dauphin Counties, Pennsylvania 1751-1997, Gateway Press, Inc., 1998.
- Joseph Sipe Will: Book W Page 340, November 11th 1848, Joseph Weir, legal heir of Joseph Sipe of Conewago Township who died intestate about two years since (Died circa 1846), complains that the decedent’s son (Joseph Sipe Jr.), administrator, has neglected the estate.