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## Document Title: Balaam Newsom (1766 VA - 1840 TN), descendant of the Newsom Family of Surry County, Virginia

Balaam Newsom was in the sixth generation of Newsoms in America. His first ancestor came to Surrey Co., Virginia by 1636. His father, William Newsom, b ca 1740, moved to Southampton Co., Virginia, where he was a millwright and farmer. In the late 1790s, the children of William Newsom moved to Davidson Co., Tennessee where they operated a mill, a quarry, and farmed. Family tradition says that William Newsom and his wife also moved to Tennessee with their children.

**Balaam<sup>6</sup> Newsom** (William<sup>5</sup>, Sampson<sup>4</sup>, Thomas<sup>3</sup>, William<sup>2</sup>, William<sup>1</sup>)<sup>1</sup> was born in Surry Co., Va. 26 May 1766.<sup>2</sup> Balaam died 13 December 1840 in Madison Co., TN, at 74 years of age.

He married **Elizabeth** \_\_\_ (possibly Knight) in ?Southampton Co, VA in 1786. Elizabeth was born circa 1770 in Virginia. Elizabeth died after 1840 in ?Madison Co., TN. In the 1840 Census, Elizabeth \_\_\_ was listed as a head of household in Madison Co., TN.<sup>3</sup>

Balaam was baptized in Albemarle Parish, Surry Co., VA, 10 August 1766.<sup>4</sup> Albemarle Parish Records (of Surry Co., VA) indicate that Balaam Newsom was born either on 26 May 1766, chr. 10 Aug 1766 (godparents Charles Knight, John Fort, Rebecca Long) OR 7 Aug 1769 as a twin to Eldridge Newsom, chr. 15 Feb 1770 (godparents Daniel Harwood, John Knight, Fanny Newsom). It depends which source one uses. Boddie's transcription of the Albemarle Parish Records show two Balaam Newsom births, which Holtzclaw followed. The Colonial Dames transcription shows only one Balaam Newsom birth.

He was in the 1803 census of Rutherford Co., TN.<sup>5</sup> He was listed in the 1820 US Census in Davidson Co., TN.<sup>6</sup> He made a will in Madison Co., TN, 9 March 1841.<sup>7</sup>

Balaam, his siblings, and his parents moved to Davidson Co., TN about 1800, settling around Newsom's Station, which is close to the Davidson and Williamson County line. Newsom's Mill is a small state park and is a national historic landmark. My cousin Steve West and I visited there in January 1997.

### Newsom's Mill/Station





**PHOTO:** By Rudy Nothdruff, used with permission. These are photos taken at Newsom's Mill, which is on the National Historic Register. The roof of the mill was lost years ago during a storm, and has not been replaced. The stone here is similar to that used to build government buildings in Nashville, as the government building stones were thought to have been quarried by the Newsoms. You can't see from these photos how large some of the stones in the mill are - huge and thick.

#### LIFE IN TENNESSEE

Balaam was involved in a conveyance of land in Davidson Co., TN in 1799 (indenture made 2 May 1798). He was in the Davidson Co. census in 1820 (220001--10001) and moved to Madison Co., TN about 1825.

His will is dated 16 Jul 1840 and recorded 9 Mar 1841 in Madison Co., TN (Will Book 3, p. 341). In his will, Balaam Newsom leaves the land where he now resides, household furniture, his stock of every kind and one negro named Polly to his wife Betsey Newsom. His sons Lemuel, Balam and James are given equal shares of his land after the death of their mother. His son William received \$100. Son James' share of his land is to include the dwelling and out houses. Sons Lemuel and Balaam's shares are to include the land where they now reside. Daughter Polly Lester is bequeathed "one negro girl slave named Eliza during the natural life of my daughter aforesaid at her death the said slave Eliza and her Increase I bequeath to my Grandson Thomas Hudson Williams son of the said Polly Lester by a former Husband". He leaves \$1 to Hiram Anderson and to Betsey Lester and Polly Duncan each \$20. Upon the death of his wife, he directs that the slave Dolly and her increase and the balance of his stock of horses, sows, hogs and sheep is to be sold and the money divided equally among his children Solomon, Robert, William, Lemuel, Balam, and James Newsoms (my sons) and one share to the children of daughter Rhoda Reeves, viz Betsy, William, Balam, Lucinda, & John Reeves. He also gives a share each to daughters Lucy Sanford and Jane Garland. Son Balam Newsom was named executor.

A grandson, the Rev. James Eldridge Newsom (1833-1913), son of Lemuel Newsom, wrote a letter to his daughter, Josie Phelps, on 9 April 1912. This is what he had to say about the Newsom family:

"...Grandfather Balaam Newsom and his brothers were in the war [sic: Probably not the Rev. War because of their ages]. They and their parents came from England in the early days of the country to Virginia, thence to Tennessee around Nashville, thence to West Tennessee near Jackson. Some went to Georgia and some to Mississippi. Grandpa Newsom gave \$30.00 of the old Continental money for a water melon for grandma. You see the money was not worth much, hence the saying 'not worth a Continental.'

"Well grandpa died in 1840. I think I was in my eighth year. Grandma died a few years afterwards.... Politically they were all Democrats, religiously they were Baptists though some went to the Campbellites round Nashville. A few of the Newsom descendants through marriage in West Tennessee were Methodists....

"...One of the characteristics of the Newsoms was to speak their sentiments pretty plain. Another was they were farmers and of a mechanical turn of mind. They built mills and gins. I met an Englishman in McKinney once who heard my name and said he knew the Newsoms in England and they were mill men engaged in manufacturing. The Newsoms were generally handy with tools, especially woodworking though some were professionals such as Doctors, lawyers, preachers and teachers."

Rev. Newsom was the cousin who moved to Texas with Thomas H. Williams. The Newsoms settled at Vashti in Clay Co., Texas and Rev. Newsom was pastor of a Baptist church.

In October 1982, the *Mid-West Tennessee Genealogical Society* (Vol. XIV, No. 4, p. 154), published a transcript of a handwritten letter by Balaam Newsom which was then in the possession of Mrs. W.J. Travis of Nashville, Tennessee, a descendant of William Newsom, Balaam's son. Here is the letter:

"State of Tennessee County of Madison Oct. 27, 1832

Dear Son William,

I once more take up my pen to let you know that we are all well at present. Hope this few lines finds you in the same state of health. You rote to me to buy \_ barrels of corn but you had as well let [that wait?] until you come. I don't think that the price of corn will rise before Christmas. You rote to me to get you some boards and I will try to get them for you. You rote to me that you was a going to marry and you requested me to no if I and your mother could be satisfied for you to come and live by us. I will inform you that we are satisfied and I want you and your companion to come and live by me what little time I have to live in this world. You rote me to buy you some pork. I will get some for you but I want you to write another letter as soon as you get this telling me what you want me to do. You had better not make but one trip but move and come on. I want you to remember our best love and compliments to Brother Frances and Sister Prissa and all my friends and connections there. Gore told meto tell you to tell William Reeves to be sure to come out to see him. I will inform you that James got out here in five days safe. Nothing more at present but be remembering your loving father and mother until death.

Your Father Balaam Newsom"

Note: Balaam's son William Newsom remained in Davidson County, Tennessee.

## CHILDREN

Balaam Newsom and Elizabeth \_\_\_ had the following children:

- 36 i. **Jane<sup>7</sup> Newsom**. She married Jesse Garland. Jesse Garland was the son of Elisha Garland. Jesse and Jane Garland had a daughter, Elizabeth, who married Briant Dillard in Davidson Co., TN. They also had a daughter, Sarah, who married John Dillard, Briant Dillard's brother. This information comes from a descendant of Elizabeth Garland Dillard, Susan Kirby Morris.

- 37 ii. **Solomon Newsom** was born in Southampton Co., VA 1787. Solomon died CA 1875 in Rutherford Co., TN. He married Elizabeth \_\_\_. In July 1996, Ed O. Newsom of Hartman, AK provided me information about Solomon and his family from his files. According to Mr. Newsom's records:
- Solomon settled in Rutherford Co., TN, where his father, Balaam, was in the 1803 county census. Solomon married Elizabeth \_\_\_ and they had six children.
- Solomon and Elizabeth Newsom are in the 1860 Tennessee census and their ages are listed as 72 and 69, respectively. Also in the household is Caroline E. age ?50 (probably is 30 years and was transcribed incorrectly).
- Mr. Newsom also sent me a photocopy of the Albert George Newsom (1848-1912) and Balaam Newsom (1788-ca 1875) Family Bible.
- 38 iii. **Lucinda 'Lucy' Newsom** was born in VA or TN 2 November 1793.<sup>8</sup> Lucinda died 2 July 1870 at 76 years of age.<sup>9</sup> She married John Sanford on 2 September 1810.<sup>10</sup> John was born circa 1800.
- 39 iv. **Robert Newsom** was born in Southampton Co., VA 1795. He married HESSIE JIMMERTON or JAMISON.
- 40 v. **Rhoda Newsom** was born in Southampton Co., VA 1799. Rhoda died before 1840. She married George Reeves in TN, 10 January 1816
- 41 vi. **Betsy Newsom** was born in Southampton Co., VA 1800.
- 42 vii. **Susan Newsom** was born in TN 1802. Susan died 1840 in TN, at 38 years of age. She married Hiram King Anderson in Davidson Co., TN, 5 January 1818.<sup>11</sup> Hiram was born circa 1800.
- 43 viii. **William Newsom**<sup>12</sup> was born in Southampton Co., VA 18 April 1806. William died 14 January 1874 at 67 years of age. He married twice. He married Sarah Gower. He married Levinia M. Gower 24 December 1832.
- 44 ix. **Lemuel Newsom** was born in TN 17 April 1808. Lemuel died 7 April 1882 in New Salem, Rusk Co., TX, at 73 years of age.<sup>13</sup> He married Nancy Crowder in Madison Co., TN, 28 February 1832.<sup>14</sup> He moved to Texas in 1855 and Thomas Hudson Williams, son of his sister, Mary "Polly" Newsom Williams Lester, went to Texas with him.
- 45 x. **Balaam Newsom Jr.** was born in Davidson Co., TN 15 April 1810.<sup>15</sup> Balaam died 15 September 1872 in Madison Co., TN, at 62 years of age.<sup>16</sup> He married Mary M. Newsom.
- 46 xi. **James Newsom** was born in Davidson Co., TN 1813.
- + 47 xii. **Mary "Polly" Newsom** was born circa 1814. She married, first, \_\_\_ Williams, who died before their first child, Thomas Hudson Williams was born in 1832. She later had two daughters by her second husband, Richard Lester. Her son lost track of her after the Civil War (she was living in Arkansas), and we have no further information about her.

Special thanks to Tom Brown, Ed Newsom, Dr. George L. Newsome, Patricia Martin, and Rudy Nothdruff (whose wife is a Newsom) for sharing their research. Of course, we all benefit from Dr. Holtzclaw's original article, even though we note a correction in the fifth and sixth generations to our line:

Holtzclaw, H.C., Ph.D., "*Newsom Family and Related Families of Surry, Isle of Wight, Southampton and Sussex Counties*," originally published in *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 1939, 1940. Reprinted in *Genealogies of Virginia Families: From The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. IV, Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1981, pp. 490-537.

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#### REFERENCES

<sup>1</sup>Holtzclaw article; Newsom's Mill; Newsom's Station.

<sup>2</sup>Albemarle Parish Register, p. 135.

<sup>3</sup>Elizabeth Newsom, 1840 U.S. Census, Population Schedule, Madison Co., TN, Reel T-5-168, (hereafter cited as Eliz. Newsom, 1840 Census).

<sup>4</sup>Albemarle Parish Register, p. 135. Godparents were Charles Wright, John Fort, Rebecca Low.

<sup>5</sup>31010-22010-03.

<sup>6</sup>220001-10001.

<sup>7</sup>Balaam Newsom, Will Book 3: 341, Office of the County Clerk, Madison Co., Tennessee (hereafter cited as Balaam Newsom will). The will was signed 16 July 1840 and recorded 9 March 1841.

<sup>8</sup>Ed O. Newsom papers.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid. Family sheet for Balaam Newsom (1755-1840).

<sup>10</sup>Ibid. Balaam Newsom FGS.

<sup>11</sup>Chn: Betsy Anderson Lester & Polly Anderson Duncan.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid. From Family group sheet for Balaam Newsom, b 1766.

<sup>13</sup>Newsom Family of Virginia and Tennessee Family group sheet, 1995 Patricia K.J. Martin, 8928 North Moody; Morton Grove, IL 60053. Meticulous research. (hereafter cited as Patricia K.J. Martin papers).

<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

<sup>15</sup>Ed O. Newsom papers. FGS for Balaam Newsom b 1766; Birth & death dates from cemetery records.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid. FGS for Balaam Newsom, b 1766.