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## RACHEL HILL RESEARCH REPORT

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Rachel "J." (Hill) Keller was born 29 February 1839 in Pennsylvania, according to her death record.<sup>1</sup> Family records indicate that she was born in Monongahela City, Washington County, Pennsylvania. Rachel's death certificate also states that her father's name was William Hill.<sup>2</sup> Her mother's name was unknown. Rachel Hill Keller died 29 May 1914 in Siskiyou County, California, but was interred in McLouth near her husband's grave.

The objective of this research session was to identify conclusively the parents of the ancestor, Rachel Hill, who have been tentatively identified in this session as Samuel and Elizabeth Hill of Washington County, Pennsylvania. The following report details the research completed on Rachel Hill and provides suggestions for continued research to prove her origins.

### **Background Information**

Little is yet known about Rachel Hill prior to her marriage to Garret V. Keller of Leavenworth County, Kansas. Family records state that Garret Keller was born 18 January 1830 in Harrodsburg, Kentucky, son of George H. Keller and Nancy VanDyke. George and Nancy migrated from Kentucky with his family to Kansas sometime prior to 1855. The exact marriage date and place of Garret Keller and Rachel Hill is not yet known.

Children of Garret Keller enumerated in federal census records indicate that he likely had seven children from his marriages to Jane and Rachel. His first wife, Jane, had at least four children, all born in Kansas. Children of Garret Keller through his second wife, Rachel, included Mary [May], born about 1873; Nancy, born about 1875; and Bertha (Birdie), born August 1879.

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<sup>1</sup> Death record of Rachel Hill, County recorder's office, 1914, Siskiyou County, California, obtained through correspondence.

<sup>2</sup> Death record of Rachel Hill, County recorder's office, 1914, Siskiyou County, California, obtained through correspondence.

## Learning More about Rachel Hill

Obituaries for both Garrett Keller and his wife, Rachel, augment family knowledge already gleaned through census and vital records about their lives and that of their children.<sup>3</sup> Rachel Hill's obituary also provided important clues that led to the discovery of her marriage record in Kansas, as well as possible members of her birth family.

Rachel's obituary confirms that she was born in Monongahela City, Pennsylvania, and states that she came to Kansas in 1872 and settled near the town of Abilene. According to the obituary, she married in 1873 to Garret V. Keller of Springdale, Kansas, in 1873, place not given. Abilene is a small town located in Dickinson County, Kansas, near the center of the state.<sup>4</sup> A search of Dickinson County marriage register led to the discovery of Garret and Rachel's marriage, which was performed on 21 December 1871 by E. Clark.<sup>5</sup>

Rachel's marriage took place at the end of 1871, even though her obituary stated that she had not arrived in Kansas until 1872. Rachel appears, in fact, to have resided in Kansas as early as 1870, where she was enumerated in the Federal census household of C. H. Thompson of Newbern Township.<sup>6</sup> She appears to have worked and lived there as a domestic servant. This Rachel Hill was 28 years of age, born in Pennsylvania, which age and birthplace match that of Rachel (Hill) Keller. C. H. Thompson's household was located within the post office district of Abilene, where Rachel's obituary stated that she lived prior to her marriage.

## Identifying the Parents of Rachel (Hill) Keller

Six young females were located in an online 1850 U.S. Census who met the criteria of the ancestor Rachel Hill, i.e., born about 1839 (with a 5-year variance factor) in Pennsylvania.<sup>7</sup> Of those six girls, two were born close to the 1839 birth year: 1) Rachel E. Hill of South Buffalo Township in Armstrong County, and 2) Rachel "I." or "J." Hill of Carroll Township in

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<sup>3</sup> Obituary of Garret V. Keller, *McLouth Times*, 4 July 1901, Page 1, obtained through correspondence with Kansas State Historical Society, March 2007; Obituary of Garret V. Keller, *Oskaloosa Independent*, Oskaloosa, Kansas, 5 July 1901, Page 4, obtained through correspondence with Kansas State Historical Society, March 2007; and Obituary of Rachel Hill Keller, *McLouth Times*, 12 June 1914, obtained through correspondence with Kansas State Historical Society, March 2007. –Documents 2-4

<sup>4</sup> Map of Abilene, Kansas, <http://www.expedia.com>, accessed March 2007. –Document 5

<sup>5</sup> Dickinson County Marriage Register, 1861-1913 (Salt Lake City, Utah: Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, 1987), FHL Microfilm 1521941 Item 9. –Document 6

<sup>6</sup> 1870 U.S. Census, Abilene Post Office, Newbern Township, Dickinson County, Kansas, Page 14 (28), Rachel Hill in C. H. Thompson household, <http://www.ancestry.com>, accessed March 2007. –Document 7

<sup>7</sup> 1850 U.S. Federal Census (Online: MyFamily.com., 2003), subscription database [Digital scan of original records in the National Archives, Washington, DC], <<http://www.ancestry.com>>, accessed August 2005. Document 8

Washington County, Pennsylvania. A third Rachel Hill was born about 1834, but resided in Washington County where Rachel Hill may have been born. These three females were investigated further in this session of research.

The first female, Rachel E. Hill of South Buffalo Township, resided in the 1850 Census household of a William M. Hill, which was the given name of the ancestral Rachel's father, according to her death certificate.<sup>8</sup> William M. Hill was 49 years old, with wife, Elizabeth, and several children, Rachel E. being a middle child at 11 years of age. William was born in Ireland, and Elizabeth was born in Pennsylvania.

William and Elizabeth Hill appeared again in the 1870 U.S. Census record of South Buffalo, and their daughter, Rachel, was still with them.<sup>9</sup> Her middle initial appeared as a "J." in this later census rather than an "E." Rachel's name, age, and birthplace of Pennsylvania correlate with the ancestral Rachel, as does her father's name of William. William's birthplace of Ireland in all three census records, however, conflicts with Rachel's later census records which consistently gave her father's birthplace as Pennsylvania. In addition, this Hill family was located in Armstrong County, several counties apart from Monongahela City, Washington County. One other concern with this candidate is that Rachel was still residing with her parents in Pennsylvania in 1870, at the same time when the ancestor, Rachel Hill, was likely already settled in Kansas. These factors eliminate this Rachel Hill as the ancestress who married Garrett Keller in Kansas.

The second Rachel Hill candidate in the 1850 Census was Rachel J. Hill, age 11, who resided in Carroll Township in Washington County.<sup>10</sup> Her middle initial could have been interpreted as either "I." or "J." with handwriting patterns of this time period. Maps of Washington County, Pennsylvania, show the location of Monongahela City within the

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<sup>8</sup> 1850 U.S. Federal Census, Buffalo, Armstrong County, Pennsylvania, Page 113, Dwelling 241 Family 251, William M. Hill household, jpeg image (Online: MyFamily.com., 2003), subscription database [Digital scan of original records in the National Archives, Washington, DC], <<http://www.ancestry.com>>, accessed August 2005. Document 9

<sup>9</sup> 1870 U.S. Federal Census, South Buffalo, Armstrong County, Pennsylvania, Page 423, Dwelling 217 Family 212, William Hill household, jpeg image (Online: MyFamily.com., 2003), subscription database [Digital scan of original records in the National Archives, Washington, DC], <<http://www.ancestry.com>>, accessed August 2005. Document 10

<sup>10</sup> 1850 U.S. Federal Census, Carroll Township, Washington County, Pennsylvania, Page 237, Dwelling 145 Family 146, Samuel Hill household, jpeg image (Online: MyFamily.com., 2003), subscription database [Digital scan of original records in the National Archives, Washington, DC], <<http://www.ancestry.com>>, accessed August 2005. Document 11

boundaries of Carroll Township, which corresponds with Rachel's presumed birthplace.<sup>11</sup> This Rachel Hill, however, lived in the household of a **Samuel** Hill, not William Hill, the name given for the father of the ancestress, Rachel. Samuel Hill, at 63 years of age, along with his wife, Elizabeth, age 50, were older parents for such young children in their home, but the ages of all the children suggests that these children were indeed siblings of each other. One of their children was named William, but he was too young to have been the parent of the ancestor, Rachel Hill.

Neither Samuel nor Elizabeth Hill was located in the 1860 Federal Census of Washington County, Pennsylvania, or elsewhere in the United States. Given Samuel's advanced age, it is possible that he died shortly after the 1850 Census enumeration and that Elizabeth also died or remarried. These possibilities may explain why Rachel Hill's birth family has been difficult to identify by other researchers.

Samuel Hill also appeared in the 1840 Federal Census of Carroll Township, Washington County, and his household included two females under the age of 5.<sup>12</sup> His residence in Carroll Township supports the fact that Samuel Hill lived in or near Monongahela City near the time of birth of the ancestor, Rachel Hill.

That Rachel Hill may have been the daughter of Samuel Hill, not William, obviously conflicts with the information given in her death certificate. The informant of her death record, identified as Lillian M. Pollock of Yreka, California, has no known familial relationship with Rachel Hill Keller. It is possible she may have given incorrect information based on her best knowledge.

The third Rachel Hill in the 1850 Census records noted in this session was born about 1834, living at West Pike Run in Washington County.<sup>13</sup> Her parents were Joseph J. and Eveline Hill. By 1860 this Rachel Hill was absent from their household, presumably having married or

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<sup>11</sup> Map of Monongahela City, Pennsylvania, (Online: Expedia.com, 2005), <http://www.expedia.com>, accessed August 2005; and Carroll Township in Washington County, Pennsylvania (Online: usgenweb.com, 20--), <http://www.usgenweb.com>, accessed August 2005. Documents 14 and 15

<sup>12</sup> 1840 U.S. Federal Census, Carroll Township, Washington County, Pennsylvania, Page 102, Samuel Hill household, jpeg image (Online: MyFamily.com., 2003), subscription database [Digital scan of original records in the National Archives, Washington, DC], <<http://www.ancestry.com>>, accessed August 2005. Document 16

<sup>13</sup> 1850 U.S. Federal Census, West Pikerun Township, Washington County, Pennsylvania, Page 289, Dwelling 55 Family 56, Joseph J. Hill household, jpeg image (Online: MyFamily.com., 2003), subscription database [Digital scan of original records in the National Archives, Washington, DC], <<http://www.ancestry.com>>, accessed August 2005. Document 12

died by that time.<sup>14</sup> This may be the ancestral Rachel, but again her father's name did not match the name given in Rachel's death certificate. At this point in research, Rachel Hill of Carroll Township presents a stronger candidate as the ancestress, Rachel. Future research should continue its focus on her to prove or disprove her as the ancestor of interest. If disproved, the other three less likely candidates located in the 1850 Census could be explored in future research.

### **Summary and Future Research**

This research session was very productive in learning more about Rachel's origins in Pennsylvania and in exploring several possible parents, including the family of Samuel and Elizabeth Hill of Washington County. How and why Rachel Hill was living in Kansas at the time she met and married Garret is still uncertain, but it is possible that she may have migrated west to Kansas to join other family members. This and other theories can be examined more closely in future research, which remains very promising in identifying the parents of Rachel Hill.

Suggestions for future research on these families include the following—

1. Search land and probate records of Washington County for any records of Samuel or Elizabeth Hill for further evidence of his daughter, Rachel Hill.
2. Search for other possible Hill family members living in and around Dickinson County, Kansas, at the time that Rachel Hill was located there in 1870.
3. Search the 1865 Kansas State Census for Rachel Hill and other possible Hill family members.
4. If Rachel Hill of Carroll Township in Washington County is disproved as the ancestor of this research project, refocus research on the other candidates presented in this report.
5. Examine deeds of Siskiyou County, California, for the purchase and sale of Rachel Keller's property.

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<sup>14</sup> 1860 U.S. Federal Census, West Pikerun Township, Washington County, Pennsylvania, Page 991, Dwelling 1393 Family 1393, Joseph Hill household, jpeg image (Online: MyFamily.com., 2003), subscription database [Digital scan of original records in the National Archives, Washington, DC], <<http://www.ancestry.com>>, accessed August 2005. Document 13