

March 19, 2014

Steve -

It is great to make contact with you. I do recall visiting with your mother several times during the period from 2002 thru 2004, which is when I was working on a compilation of the descendants of our common ancestor William Henry Wolcott. I believe I called a halt to that project when I got to about 1,500 names, so I imagine the reports your mother had were some of the earlier iterations (of the many surnames listed in this record, there are more persons with the Garvin surname than any other, owing to the large families from Mary Ann Rebecca Elizabeth Garvin and her sister, Evaline Isabella Garvin, followed next by Wolcott).

You and I are 3rd cousins, once removed. We are almost the same age (I was born in 1952), but there was a "skipped" generation in my line, as my grandfather, Edward R. Wolcott, was 54 years old when my father, Eldon N. Wolcott, was born. I would be a 3rd cousin to your father, and you would be a 4th cousin to my son, William E. Wolcott, who lives in New York City.

Part of my interest in compiling a list of descendants of William Henry Wolcott was to see if I could locate any of my living "cousins" who knew the story of William Henry's origins. We had the notation from the reference work, "A History of Texas and Texans", by Frank W. Johnson, that stated that William Henry Wolcott was a native of New York. There also were the notations in the 1830 and 1840 census records from Alabama in which New York is listed as William Henry's birthplace. But we could never determine *which Wolcott family* in New York. As far as I could tell, this question of William Henry's family of origin had been unresolved by our Wolcott family in Texas for over one hundred years. This was a question of particular interest in determining whether we were related to one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Oliver Wolcott, a former governor of Connecticut, or any of the other famous Wolcott's from the Colonial era, including multiple early governors of Massachusetts

and Connecticut. Unfortunately, while I had a great time meeting many previously unknown distant cousins (lots of Garvins!), primarily living in Texas, but also in Oklahoma, New Mexico, and almost every other state in the United States, no one had the answer as to the question of William Henry Wolcott and his birth family of origin.

In 2004, I volunteered as a member of the Wolcott Family Society (to which our Wolcott line had been "associate" members for many years, given our unproven Wolcott pedigree) to head up a DNA research program. The principal objecting of this Wolcott DNA Project was to determine the relationships of the various Wolcott families in America (including spelling variants such as Walcott, Wilcott, Woolcott, Wallcut, Willcutts and others). This project has been far more successful than we had at first imagined, and we now have reliable DNA "signatures" for all of the known Wolcott lines in America. As part of this process, I was able to determine that our Wolcott line in Texas was descended from the immigrant to America, John Wolcott of Watertown, Massachusetts (1599-1638), who arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1634 (more can be learned about the early Wolcott family in America at the Wolcott Family website, www.wolcottfamily.com). This John Wolcott was a 2nd cousin to the famous early Wolcott immigrant to America, Henry Wolcott of Windsor, Connecticut, from whom all the famous Colonial era patriots were descended.

After I was able though the DNA record to narrow my search for my Wolcott origins, I fairly quickly determined that the father of our William Henry Wolcott was a Nathaniel Wolcott who was born in Brookfield, Massachusetts in 1764 and married Elizabeth Pease of Spencer, Massachusetts in 1787. They later moved to Delaware County, New York in the late 1790's, and settled a farm on Ouleout Creek, a tributary of the Susquehanna River near Sidney, New York. It was at this farm presumably that William Henry Wolcott was born in 1800. The Pease name was helpful in making the connection in that it was the middle name that William Henry gave his youngest born son, Oliver Pease Wolcott (1857-1916). I

later was able to find death records for Nathaniel Wolcott that referenced his son, William Wolcott, who had "relocated to another part of the United States" (I wish it had said Alabama, as that is where William Henry was living in 1847 when Nathaniel Wolcott died at Sidney, New York). Here is a photo of Nathaniel Wolcott's headstone from the East Sidney Union Cemetery:



As an interesting aside, I subsequently was reviewing some of my father's notes from a Wolcott family gathering at Midland, Texas during the early 1960's, and there was a note in the margin of one of the papers stating, "William Henry's father's name may have been Nathaniel". (!)

We still have many unresolved questions regarding William Henry Wolcott, including particularly why he would have left his family in New York to cross the cultural divide to move south during the 1830's to Wetumpka, Alabama, where he married Elizabeth Ann Gallagher in 1839. It may be that he had received some sort of land-grant in the South for military service. Or it may be that he was seeking opportunity in the strong cotton-economy of the South following the introduction of cotton-gin.

Another question has to do with his profession as a teacher. For my part, I now discount the reference in the Frank Johnson book about William Henry being educated in the schools of New York City. As far as I can tell, he came from a family of limited means farming a modest piece of land in upstate New York. I have never found any record of William Henry having been in New York City, which, of course, does not prove that he was never there. It just seems unlikely that his family would have had the resources to send him for schooling to the big city. From the history I have read, it seems that many men turned to teaching (or some other non-physical employment, such as pastoring) after they had become too old for physical labor, or perhaps had become injured in a earlier occupation. It may have been that William Henry had just enough schooling from upstate New York that he was able to keep himself employed as a school-teacher in rural parts of Alabama and then Texas.

A final unresolved question has to do with William Henry's burial site. From the Frank Johnson book, we have the statement that William Henry died in 1860 near Tyler, Smith Co., Texas. From the 1860 census for Smith Co. (which was taken in September of that year and does not include William Henry), the record for "Eliza Walcot" indicates that she was living in the small community of

New Harmony, Texas, which is about seven miles north-west of Tyler. There is a cemetery in New Harmony, but the earliest carved headstones are from 1862. The cemetery does include, however, a number of iron-ore slabs, presumably marking early graves. I spoke with an historian for Smith Co., Texas, and she told me that in the early days, before the arrival of stonemasons in the area, many early graves were marked with iron ore, which is readily available in the area (I had forgotten that one of the armories for the Confederacy was located in Tyler, Texas, because of the local availability of iron ore and coal). Here is a photo of some of these graves marked with iron ore, one of which, I believe, likely marks the gravesite for William Henry Wolcott:



My great-grandfather, Benjamin Fitzpatrick Wolcott, was born 1841 in Wetumpka, Alabama. He was named for Benjamin Fitzpatrick, who was recently elected governor of Alabama. One

of his younger sisters was your great-great-grandmother, Mary Ann Rebecca Elizabeth Wolcott (Mollie) Garvin, born 1845 in Ozark, Alabama. I still remember my satisfaction at locating Mollie's grave at the Mt. Zion cemetery in Ellis Co., Texas. I also remember my efforts to uncover her full name, in that her initials in the early census records were simply Mary A. R. E. Wolcott. It seemed somewhat grand that a young country girl would have some many names. I still do not know the origin for the Mary Ann name (do you?) but suspect it may have been given by Elizabeth Gallagher. I believe the Rebecca was for William Henry's maternal grandmother, Rebecca Jones Wolcott (who supposedly is a Mayflower descendant), and the Elizabeth was for his mother, Elizabeth Pease (though it may have been for Elizabeth Gallagher). Names are important!

Well, this is all I have for now. I have quite a bit more on the early Wolcott family in Brookfield, Massachusetts, but you can find most of that information on the Wolcott Family webpage if you have an interest.

I used to travel to Milwaukee occasionally on business, but that was many years ago, and otherwise I have never been to Wisconsin. Perhaps if you are traveling to Texas again at some point in the future we could get together in Dallas area. Most of my genealogical records are now online on a family tree with [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) titled "William Wolcott of NY/AL/TX (1800-1860)".

Thank you again for contacting me. You have a fine looking family!

Best regards,

Your cousin, Charles Wolcott
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