

Mathew Ryburn Family Record

Handwritten copy, probably from an earlier record
Held in 2011 by Carolyn Ryburn (Glade Spring, VA)
Transcribed Apr 2011 by D. Powell

Elizabeth (Byars) Hall's Bible was discovered in 2007 stored in the basement of Carolyn Ryburn's family home in Glade Spring, Virginia. The Bible was wrapped in paper and labeled "Cousin Lizzie Hall's Bible". Pinned inside the Bible was a handwritten sheet of paper listing the children of Jane (Beattie) Buchanan and Mathew Ryburn, as well as Jane and Mathew's dates of death. This is referred to as the Mathew Ryburn Family Record.

Elizabeth Hall did not leave surviving children. It is believed her Bible passed to her cousin Whitley Ryburn. Elizabeth and Whitley were grandchildren of Beattie Ryburn, and great grandchildren of Mathew Ryburn and Jane (Beattie) Buchanan Ryburn.

The underlying source of the Mathew Ryburn Family Record data is not known. It is also not known who copied it, or when, or how it made its way into Elizabeth Hall's Bible. The paper was lined and the entries were made in ink, not ball point pen. The data may have been copied from a record created by Mathew himself, but if so the children's entries were probably not made at their birth since many contain apparent errors and Jane's death was recorded before her children's births. Mathew's date of death was probably added by the unknown copyist.

The following is an analysis of this tantalizing document:

My beloved wife Jean departed this life August 21th 1814 Aged 54 yrs

- Jean and Jane were often used interchangeably
- Every date in the record was followed by "th", even when current usage would be "nd" or "st", as in 2nd or 1st.
- Jane's niece, Jane Buchanan (daughter of Mathew Ryburn's sister Ann Buchanan), is buried at Buchanan Cemetery. Her stone reads: Jane B. Buchanan, d. August 21, 1814, age 19y 1m 19d. Did both women die on the same day or is one of these dates in error? Jane, wife of Mathew Ryburn, was Jane (Beattie) Buchanan at the time of her marriage to Mathew. Did the similarity in names create confusion years after the fact?

Margaret Buchanan was born Dec 9th 1775

- Margaret was Jane's daughter from her first marriage. Margaret's entry may have been added after the other entries were made, however it was written by the same person and in the same ink.
- Margaret's granddaughter, Mary Elizabeth Beattie (Edmondson) Dickenson recorded a list of family birthdates which states Margaret was born Dec. 29th 1778. Margaret's original stone at Old Glade Spring Cemetery is reported to have read b. 29 Dec. 1778 - d. 19 Feb. 1853. Margaret was recorded at age 72 on the 1850 federal census for Washington Co., Virginia.

Elenor Ryburn was born Sept. 21th 1781

- The date agrees with her headstone and with her husband's family Bible

Mary Ryburn was born Feb. 22th 1782

- This date cannot be correct as it is 5 months after the well documented birth date of Eleanor Ryburn. *Early Southwest VA Families* reported Mary's birthdate as Oct. 22, 1782 and although not sourced, it is more likely the correct date.

Jean Ryburn was born Dec 8th 1784

- Jane's sister, Sarah Ryburn Davis, contributed Jane's date of death (17 Nov. 1858) and age (73/11/9) to a diary kept by Sarah's daughter. This data calculates to Dec. 8, 1784 date of birth. Jane's age at death was recorded on her headstone as 73/11/8, creating a calculated date of birth of Dec. 9th.

Sarah Ryburn was born Dec 29th 1788

- Sarah provided this same date for her daughter's diary.

Beattie Ryburn was born Nov 11th 1792

- Beattie's headstone clearly says he was born in 1790.

Ann Ryburn was born Oct 4th 179_ \[smudged but probably a 3\]

- Ann's headstone uses Oct. 4, 1792. Ann's great nephew, J.B. Hutton, reported the date as Oct. 4, 1793

Nancy Ryburn was born Jan 3th 1795

- Date agrees with reported headstone reading (cemetery later destroyed) and her granddaughter's DAR application

Mathew Ryburn was born June 25th 1797

- Although other dates have been reported, the above date is also credited to a Mathew Ryburn-Martha Orr Bible

Mathew Ryburn died March 6th 1818 Aged 66 years

- Date probably correct as his will was recorded March 17, 1818. He was probably 65 (based on baptismal record) but age was sometimes written as "in his 66th year".