A James family genealogist told me that the age-old mystery of Jesse James’ true fate could be solved by following his paper trail. I doubted what she said at first but have since learned she was right! In 1999 I failed to obtain a court order to exhume my paternal great-grandfather’s grave (mainly due to lack of evidence) for DNA testing to determine his true identity. He was known as James L. Courtney in Texas but according to old family stories he was really Jesse James, America’s most famous outlaw.

This article only reports a fraction of the genealogical information that made me a believer in genealogy and paper trails. Besides genealogical evidence I, with the help of others, have amassed pictorial evidence that literally shows the man known in Texas as James L. Courtney was really Jesse James. Then there’s his 1871 diary that he signed, “J. James” and “James L. Courtney”, and mentioned historically recognized members of the James Gang. There’s a preponderance of evidence that he was Jesse James, yet scientific DNA testing taken under strict chain of custody guidelines, is needed to provide the ultimate identification proof…and it is currently underway.

I have previously written about the Shelton connection to Jesse James and his family, but I recently found more connections I want to share with readers.

Thomas James and Sarah Mason Barbee are referred to as the founders of the James family of America. A number of my Shelton’s (also spelled Chilton) connect to this family.

Sarah Mason Barbee James is my direct ancestor. Sarah Mason married Andrew Barbee first and when he died she married Thomas James. She was born in Stafford County, Virginia (circa 1670 –1672) to George Mason 1 and Frances (maiden name unknown) Norgrave, widow of Capt. John Norgrave.

Mary Jane Shelton is also my direct ancestor. She was the daughter of Alford Mundy Shelton and Elizabeth A. Madry and the mother-in-law of Jesse James AKA James L. Courtney. Mary Jane married Thomas Hudson Barron, son of John M. Barron and Susan Mattingly/Mattenly.
I’ll give two examples of the James-Chilton/Shelton connections beginning with Medley Chilton/Shelton and Mary James. The first example is through Thomas and Sarah Mason Barbee James’ son, Joseph James:

- Joseph James (b. 1712 Culpeper Co. Va.), married Mary Field, (b. 1724), daughter of Henry Field and Ester James;
- Joseph James and Mary Field are the parents of Joseph James and Elizabeth Lightfoot;
- Joseph James and Elizabeth Lightfoot are the parents of the John Lightfoot James that married Margaret T. “Peggy” Brown;
- John Lightfoot James and Margaret T. “Peggy Brown” are the parents of Daniel F. James (b. 1822) that married Mildred Chilton/Shelton, daughter of Thomas Chilton/Shelton and Mildred Zimmerman; and
- Thomas Chilton/Shelton and Mildred Zimmerman are the parents of the Medley Chilton/Shelton that married Martha James.

The second Chilton/Shelton – James connection is the most famous one because it involves the historically accepted wife of Jesse Woodson James, Zerelda “Zee” Mims. History reports that Jesse, America’s most famous outlaw, married his first cousin, “Zee”. (I don’t believe they were ever romantically involved or married, but I do agree that they were first cousins. Please visit http://www.jessejamesintexas.com/ for details.)

Zee Mims’ sister, Nancy “Nannie” Catherine Mimms, married George W. Chilton/Shelton. All of the Chilton’s/Shelton’s mentioned in this article share my family tree.

Please see the genealogical charts presented below for the two examples presented above as well as other Chilton/James – James connections:

**Chart 1:**

**Husband:** Thomas James

Born: ABT 1675 at: Potomac Creek, Overwharton Parish, Stafford Co., VA
Married: 11 SEP 1699 at: Overwharton Parish, Stafford Co., VA
Died: AFT 6 JUN 1726 at: Overwharton Parish, Stafford Co., VA
Father: John (The Immigrant) Sr. James
Mother: Unknown

**Wife:** Sarah E. Mason

Born: ABT 1678 at: Dogue's Neck Plantation, Stafford Co., VA
Died: BET 1715 AND 1773: Stafford Co., VA
Father: George (Immigrant\Col.) \Sr\ Mason

Mother: Francis (Maiden name unknown) Norgrave (Widow of Capt. John Norgrave)
Sarah E. Mason married Andrew Barbee first and when he died she married Thomas James.

**CHILDREN:**

1. Name: George \Sr\ James
   Born: ABT 1702       at: Stafford Co., VA
   Married: ABT 1727     at: Overwharton Parish, Stafford Co., VA
   Died: BEF 6 MAR 1753  at: Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania Co., VA
   Spouses: Mary Wheeler

2. Name: William James
   Born: 1702            at: Stafford Co., VA
   Married:              at:
   Died: 2 NOV 1748      at: Stafford Co., VA
   Spouses: Margaret Unknown

3. Name: John (Capt.) James
   Born: 16 MAR 1709      at: Elk Run, St. Paul's Parish, Stafford Co., VA
   Married: 29 DEC 1737   at: Stafford, King George Co., VA
   Died: 2 JAN 1778       at: Hamilton Parish, Fauquier Co., VA
   Spouses: Anne Sebastian   Dinah Allen

4. Name: Joseph “the Elder” James
   Born: 12 OCT 1712      at: Culpeper Co., VA
   Married: JUN 1737      at: Culpeper Co., VA
   Died: 17 DEC 1782      at: Fox Mountain, Culpeper Co., VA
   Spouses: Mary Field   Mimi Marquess
Chart 2:

Husband: **Joseph "the Younger" (Capt.\Maj.) James**
Born: 1743 at: Culpeper Co., VA
Married: 1763 at: Madison Co., VA
Died: 1783 at: Fox Mountain, Madison Co., VA
Father: Joseph "the Younger" (Capt.\Maj.) James
Mother: Mary Field

Wife: **Elizabeth Lightfoot**
Born: 14 JUN 1745 at: Culpeper Co., VA
Died: BEF 27 FEB 1823 at: Madison Co., VA
Father: Goodrich (Maj.) Jr.\Lightfoot
Mother: Susannah Elizabeth Slaughter

**CHILDREN:**

1. Name: **Phillip Henry "Henry" James**
   Born: 11 NOV 1764 at: Culpeper Co., VA
   Married: 20 MAR 1794 at: Louisburg, Franklin Co NC
   Died: 10 NOV 1811 at: Logan Co., KY
   Spouses: Frances Webb

2. Name: **George James**
   Born: ABT 1766 at: Culpeper Co., VA
   Married: at:
   Died: BEF 21 NOV 1839 at: Mercer Co., KY
   Spouses:

3. Name: **Thomas James**
   Born: ABT 1768 at: Virginia
   Married: at:
4. Name: Elizabeth James  
Born: ABT 1770 at: Madison Co., VA  
Married: 31 JAN 1798 at: Madison Co., VA  
Died: at:  
Spouses: Boswell Pulliam

5. Name: Joseph III James  
Born: ABT 1773 at: Madison Co., VA  
Married: 3 SEP 1803 at: Madison Co., VA  
Died: AFT 1818 at:  
Spouses: Jemima Rider

6. Name: Nancy Ann "Annie" James  
Born: ABT 1776 at: Madison Co., VA  
Married: 2 DEC 1784 at: Madison Co., VA  
Died: SEP 1855 at: Clark Co KY  
Spouses: Henry (Immigrant) Gaitskill

7. Name: Mary James  
Born: ABT 1780 at: Madison Co., VA  
Married: 13 MAY 1802 at: Madison Co. VA  
Died: 1850 at: Morganfield, Union Co., KY  
Spouses: James Jr. (Capt.) Finnie

8. Name: Sarah “Sally” James  
Born: ABT 1783 at: Madison Co., VA  
Married: 28 AUG 1806 at: Madison Co., VA  
Died: 1827 at: Mercer Co., KY  
Spouses: Benjamin "Tennessee Ben" (Lt.) Lillard
9. Name: John Lightfoot James
Born: 1785 at: Madison Co., VA
Married: 21 APR 1808 at: Culpeper Co., VA
Died: 1850 at: Kentucky
Spouses: Margaret T. "Peggy" Brown

Chart 3:

Husband: Thomas Chilton/Shelton
Born: 1777 at:
Married: 1803 at: Culpeper Co., VA
Died: 1843 at: Mercer Co., KY
Father:
Mother:
Other Spouses: Mary Owens, Elizabeth James

Wife: Margaret Zimmerman
Born: at:
Died: at:
Father:
Mother:
Other Spouses:

CHILDREN:
1. Name: Susan Chilton/Shelton
Born: at:
Married: at:
Died: at:
Spouses:
2. Name: Eleanor Chilton/Shelton
   Born: at: 
   Married: at: 
   Died: at: 
   Spouses: 

3. Name: Mariam "May" Chilton/Shelton
   Born: at: 
   Married: at: 
   Died: at: 
   Spouses: 

4. Name: Elizabeth Chilton/Shelton
   Born: at: 
   Married: at: 
   Died: at: 
   Spouses: 

5. Name: **Medley Chilton/Shelton**
   Born: 1819 at: Woodford Co., KY
   Married: 17 JUN 1847 at: Mercer Co., KY
   Died: at: 
   Spouses: **Martha James** Catherine "Kitty" Brown Ann Lake

6. Name: **Mildred Chilton/Shelton**
   Born: 1820 at: Woodford Co., KY
   Married: 25 JUL 1844 at: Mercer Co., KY
   Died: ABT 1858 at: Cornishville, Mercer Co., KY
   Spouses: **Daniel Field \Sr.\ James**

7. Name: **Hannah Chilton/Shelton**
Born: 5 JAN 1820 at: Woodford Co., KY
Married: 2 APR 1838 at: Mercer Co., KY
Died: 15 APR 1846 at: Mercer Co., KY
Spouses: **Henry Field Sr. (Sheriff) James**

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**Chart 4:**

**Husband:** **John Lightfoot James**
Born: 1785 at: Madison Co., VA
Married: 21 APR 1808 at: Culpeper Co., VA
Died: 1850 at: Kentucky
Father: **Joseph "the Younger" (Capt. Maj.) James**
Mother: **Elizabeth Lightfoot**
Other Spouses:

**Wife:** **Margaret T. "Peggy" Brown**
Born: 1790 at: Culpeper Co., VA
Died: AFT 1850 at: Kentucky
Father: **William Ambrose Brown**
Mother: **Mary Grigsby Travers**
Other Spouses:

**CHILDREN:**

1. **Name:** **Henry Field Sr. (Sheriff) James**
Born: 30 JAN 1816 at: Culpeper Co., VA
Married: 2 APR 1838 at: Mercer Co., KY
Died: 1 APR 1876 at: Mercer Co., KY
Spouses: **Hanna Chilton/Shelton** Sarah Yowell Margaret Jane "Marg" Ransdell
2. Name: Unknown James  
   Born: BEF 1820   at:
   Married:       at:
   Died:          at:
   Spouses:

3. Name: Unknown James  
   Born: BEF 1820   at:
   Married:       at:
   Died:          at:
   Spouses:

4. Name: **Daniel Field \Sr.\ James**  
   Born: 1822       at: Virginia
   Married: 25 JUL 1844   at: Mercer Co., KY
   Died:          at: Lincoln, Logan Co., IL
   Spouses: **Hannah Chilton/Shelton**  **Mary Jane Constant**

5. Name: **Martha James**  
   Born: 1824       at: Virginia
   Married: 17 JUN 1847   at: Mercer Co., KY
   Died: 29 OCT 1853     at: Washington Co., KY
   Spouses: **Medley Chilton/Shelton**

6. Name: Unknown James  
   Born: BEF 1835   at:
   Married:       at:
   Died:          at:
   Spouses:

7. Name: Unknown James
Born: BEF 1840 at:
Married: at:
Died: at:
Spouses:

8. Name: **Sylvester Lightfoot James**
Born: 1820 at: Ohio
Married: 19 DEC 1847 at: Mercer Co., KY
Died: 3 JUN 1863 at: Murfreesboro TN
Spouses: **Mary Lynn Tomlinson**

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**Chart 5:**

**Husband:** **Medley Chilton/Shelton**
Born: 1819 at: Woodford Co KY
Married: 17 JUN 1847 at: Mercer Co KY
Died: at:
Father: **Thomas Chilton/Shelton**
Mother: **Margaret Zimmerman**
Other Spouses: **Catherine “Kitty” Brown**  **Ann Lake**

**Wife:** **Martha James**
Born: 1824 at: Virginia
Died: 29 OCT 1853 at: Washington Co KY
Father: **John Lightfoot James**
Mother: **Margaret T. “Peggy” Brown**
Other Spouses:

**CHILDREN:**

1. Name: Anna Maria Chilton/Shelton
Born: 27 FEB 1843      at: Mercer Co KY
Married:      at:
Died:      at:
Spouses:

Chart 6:

Husband: **John M. (Rev.) James**
Born: 1775             at: Hanover Co., VA
Married: 26 MAR 1807      at: Goochland Co VA by Rev. Lewis Chaudoin
Died: BEF 5 DEC 1827   at: Lickskillet, Logan Co KY (Burial site unknown)
Father: William
Mother: Mary
          Other Spouses:

Wife: **Mary "Polly" Poor**
Born: 1790             at: Hanover Co VA
Died: 27 APR 1826      at: Logan Co KY (Burial site unknown)
Father: Robert
Mother: Elizabeth
          Other Spouses:

**CHILDREN:**

1. Name: **Mary James (Zee Mimms’ mother)**
   Born: 28 SEP 1809      at: Goochland Co., VA
   Married: 1827        at: Logan Co., KY
   Died: 23 JUL 1877    at: Kansas City, Jackson Co., MO
   Spouses: Anna Maria Chilton/Shelton (Zee Mimms’ father)

2. Name: **William Henry (Rev.) Sr.\ James**
Born: 11 SEP 1811 at: Logan Co., KY
Married: at:
Died: 14 NOV 1895 at:
Spouses: Mary Barber/Barbee Mary Ann Varble Mary Ann Gibson

3. Name: John R. (Rev. Dr.) "Junior" James
Born: 15 FEB 1815 at: Logan Co KY
Married: 1 SEP 1836 at: Logan Co KY
Died: 25 OCT 1887 at: Carthage, Jasper Co., MO
Spouses: Amanda E. "Polly" Williams Emily Bradley

4. Name: Elizabeth James
Born: 25 NOV 1816 at: Logan Co., KY
Married: NOV 1837 at: Logan Co., KY
Died: 2 NOV 1904 at:
Spouses: Tillman Howard West

5. Name: Robert Sallee (Rev.) James (Jesse James’ father)
Born: 17 JUL 1818 at: Whippoorwill Creek, Logan Co., KY
Married: 28 DEC 1841 at: at home of James M. Lindsay by Rev. Younger R. Pitts, Stamping Ground, Scott Co., KY
Died: 18 AUG 1850 at: Placerville, formerly Hangtown, El Dorado Co CA
Spouses: Zerelda Elizabeth Cole (Jesse James’ mother)

6. Name: Nancy Gardner James (Robert Woodson “Wood” Hite’s mother)
Born: 13 SEP 1821 at: Logan Co., KY
Married: 7 JUN 1841 at: Adairville, Logan Co., KY
Died: 1875 at:
Spouses: George Burns (Maj.) Hite (Robert Woodson “Wood” Hite’s father.)

7. Name: Thomas Martin "T.M." \ \ James
Born: 8 APR 1823 at: Whippoorwill Creek, Logan Co., KY
Married: 25 JUL 1847      at: Goochland Co VA in the home of the bride's parents
Died: 25 DEC 1901      at: Kansas City, Jackson Co., MO at 937 Harrison St.
Spouses:  Susan Ann S. "Sarah\Sallie" Woodward

8. Name: Drury Woodson (Rep\Sen\Co, Supervisor) James
Born: 14 NOV 1826      at: According to Mary Joan Malley-Beamis, great granddaughter
Married: 15 SEP 1866      at: San Luis Obispo Mission, San Luis Obispo, San Luis Obispo Co
CA by Rev. Pedro Sa
Died: 1 JUL 1910       at: San Francisco, CA. at 6:50 a.m. 2153 Pacific Ave.
Spouses:  Mary Louisa Dunn

9. Name: Mary Elizabeth James
Born: 16 JAN 1826      at: Franklin Co., KY
Married: 16 JAN 1844      at: Franklin Co., KY
Died: 22 MAR 1845      at: Franklin Co., KY complications from giving birth
Spouses:  John Richard "Hugh" \Sr.\ Cohorn

Chart 7:
Husband:  John Wilson "Uncle John" (Rev.) Mimms
Born: 31 AUG 1805      at: Goochland Co., VA
Married: 1827             at: Logan Co., KY
Died: BET 6 APR AND SEP 1870at: in his home in Kansas City, Jackson Co., MO
Father: Robert W. Mimms
Mother: Lucy Poor
Other Spouses:

Wife: Mary James
Born: 28 SEP 1809      at: Goochland Co., VA
Died: 23 JUL 1877      at: Kansas City, Jackson Co., MO
Father: John M. (Rev.) James
Mother: Mary “Polly” Poor

Other Spouses:

**CHILDREN:**

1. Name: Robert William "Willie" (Rep\Judge) Mimms
   Born: 30 MAR 1830 at: Adairville, Logan Co., KY
   Married: BEF 1870 at:
   Died: 1 JAN 1893 at: his home near Holt, Clay Co., MO
   Spouses: Unknown Martha Ann "Mattie" Thomason

2. Name: John Wilson Jr. Mimms (Zee Mimms’ father)
   Born: 14 JUL 1831 at: Logan Co., KY
   Married: 22 DEC 1859 at: Logan Co., KY
   Died: FEB 1863 at:
   Spouses: Mary Cordelia Dobbins (Zee Mimms’ mother)

3. Name: Drury Lilburn "D. L." Mimms
   Born: 9 MAY 1833 at:
   Married: at:
   Died: at:
   Spouses: Unknown

4. Name: David Woodson Mimms
   Born: 23 AUG 1836 at:
   Married: at:
   Died: 27 JUL 1879
   Spouses: Unknown

5. Name: Mary Elizabeth Mimms
   Born: 18 OCT 1837 at:
   Married: at:
   Died: at:
Spouses:

6. Name: Lucy Frances Mimms
Born: 14 JUL 1839 at: Logan Co., KY
Married: 4 APR 1867 at: Jackson Co., MO
Died: JUL 1879 at:
Spouses: Robert Boling "Bolen" Browder

7. Name: George Tillman Mimms
Born: 6 NOV 1841 at:
Married: at:
Died: at:

Spouses:

8. Name: Nancy Catherine "Nannie" Mimms
Born: 15 AUG 1843 at: Logan Co., KY
Married:
Died: at:
Spouses: George W. Chilton/Shelton Charles McBride

9. Name: Zerelda Amanda “Zee” Mimms
Born: 21 JUL 1845 at: Woodford Co., KY
Married:
Died: 13 NOV 1900 at: Kansas City, Jackson Co., MO
Spouses: Jesse Woodson “Jesse” James (I don’t believe Jesse and Zee ever married or were even romantically involved, and I have a preponderance of evidence to support my belief. I believe Zee may have married her other first cousin, Robert Woodson “Wood” Hite. I believe Jesse married Mary Ellen Barron.

10. Name: Thomas Martin Mimms
Born: 27 NOV 1846 at: Logan Co., KY
Married: at:
Died:
Spouses: Mary Giberson

11. Name: Sarah Ann “Sally” Mimms

Born: 3 MAY 1849 at: Logan Co., KY

Married:

Died: at:


12. Name: Henry Clay Mimms

Born: 13 AUG 1857

(Much of the information on the above charts was obtained from Eric James’ Stray Leaves Surnames Page: http://ericjames.org/html2014/surnames.html)

For more information about my other family lines that connect to the James family of America click here: http://jessewjames.wordpress.com/

To view more of my pictorial evidence click here:

http://www.jessejamesintexas.com/

http://www.jessejamesintexas.com/a-picture-is-worth--family-tree.html

On the following page view the Statements of Recognition from Visionics Corporation (now called Identix) and William McCann, formerly with the Austin Police Departments Forensic Multi-media Crime Laboratory:
The Visionics Corporation is a leading provider of fingerprinting, identification and information systems for law enforcement. Visionics is also recognized as the leader in Face Recognition Technology.

In June of 2002, Visionics Corporation was merged with Identix Incorporated. The merged company continues to lead its industry in the area law enforcement and identification technology including facial, fingerprint and biometric identification. The company is particularly known for their Face Recognition Technology which has become so important and prominently featured in the media post September 11, 2001.

William McCann, formerly with the Austin, Texas Police Department Forensic Science Laboratory, examined my family photographs in comparison to historically accepted James family photographs and issued the following statement of recognition:

"After visually inspecting both sets of photographs (Dukes and historically accepted photos of the James family), the Austin Police Department Forensic Science Multi-Media Lab determined, with a high degree of certainty, that the faces in question match."

- William S. McCann
Forensic Science Multi-Media Lab Supervisor  
Austin Police Department  
(1999)

To learn why the 1995 exhumations of the graves marked as that of Jesse W. James in Kearney, Missouri did not prove anything with DNA testing click on the following URL, and scroll to the bottom of the page:


"Stephen Caruso, deputy county counselor for Clay County [Missouri] at the time, protested the exhumation from the start. Today, he will tell you the whole thing was “phony.”  
“They tried to do DNA testing on remains that weren’t Jesse James,” Caruso said. Caruso claims that at one point someone lost Jesse’s hair that was to be tested, but then it suddenly turned up. He claims someone submitted their own hair in place of the lost hair." - Courtesy of Kevin M. Smith


Professor Starrs was the exhumation project leader for the 1995 exhumations of the purported graves of Jesse James. Click on the URL below to read an excellent article about Professor James E. Starrs and his amateur passion for exhuming the noted dead:

[http://jessewjames.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/bone_hunter.pdf](http://jessewjames.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/bone_hunter.pdf)

In 2001 Jim Riek, anchorman for NBC 8 KOMU TV at Columbia, Missouri, interviewed John Hartman, the director of Clay County Parks at the time of the 1995 exhumation. He provided the strongest evidence yet that the 1995 exhumation smacks of cover-up:

“Clay County property, [the remains of Jesse James], were never returned [for reburial] and with that being the case there’s no way to repeat these tests. There’s no way they can be verified. We don’t really know the results of the first set of tests. Any good scientific work can stand peer review. The results could be published as they were found, not as they have been framed or sanitized for public consumption. The results were not presented in a convincing enough manner to close the books on Jesse James.”


Let’s pretend for a moment that the need should again arise for me to attempt to gain a court order to exhume my great-grandfather’s grave in Blevins, Texas for DNA testing purposes. If the judge should again deny my petition I feel completely confident that it would not be due to a lack of evidence.

Betty Dorsett Duke

[banditoutlaw13@aol.com](mailto:banditoutlaw13@aol.com)