

10/7/2019

Ray Stillwell from Utah researched the Stilwell/Stillwell line for about 20 years starting in 1990. He was doing it for his son. He did use Ancestry.com but a lot of his research used Dr. John Edward Stillwell's (JES) 1930 books, census info, and Gravestones. In 2010 he issued in book and CD form his full tree with references to the people and books used to reference the family connections in 8 volumes. His research is then a trusted source for the whole family. He only distributed copies to 8 people that had helped him with his research.. These you can now reference or download.

Using Ancestry.com is a valuable tool when using gravestones and census info. Using other peoples trees for ancestors before 1850 is suspect. The reason is that the basis for their tree information may be using info prior to JES's published material.

Here is why the other sources of info are suspect:

1- 1878 - Benjamin Marshall Stilwell (in my line) was wealthy as he was the son of Sylvanus Stilwell who had a successful Clothing Business in NYC and New Orleans. He produced a book. It is mostly a history of the New Amsterdam interaction with the Indians in the early years. The genealogy he produced is wrong. It can not be relied on. Using it will corrupt your tree. He may be accurate that my ancestor William Moore Stilwell (1797) performed 5,000 marriages in NY City during his lifetime.

2- 1883 - William H Stillwell produced a book of the family genealogy. However, according to JES he had eyesight issues and transposed things. Hence, his genealogy is wrong. IE worthless. Great effort by him in 1883. Of no use to us now. His bad info probably gave JES the motivation to correct his work.

3- 1914 Dewitt Stilwell (my line) produced a book on "One branch of the Stilwell family". However, I recently noticed that the Richard line information is wrong. Some of the Nicholas-Nicholas-Nicholas info may be wrong. It is a great history of some of the family especially my line. As a reference tool for your tree it needs to be validated against JES's 1930 publications.

4- 1930 - JES produced 4 books on the family that were issued by 2 friends on his death. His endeavor was to correct the issues of William H Stillwell's work. He used a lot of direct knowledge from within the various branches of the family. It is the gold standard for our research on the family and we are lucky to have it. However....

5- While working on the research of the family Ray and I and some others found that the conclusions made of JES about Nicholas Stillwell (1603) being born in England was proved wrong by Martin Stilwell in England. He found the grave of

the Nicholas noted by JES as being the US Stillwell was buried in England not Staten Island. Hence, connecting the US Nicholas to the lines noted in JES's first book is invalid. Those people may be accurate Stilwell's in England, but that particular connection to Nicholas Stillwell 1603-1671 is wrong. Ray's book shows the incorrect reference to Nicholas in Surrey England.

Obviously, you can do as you wish with your trees. We are currently working with DNA to validate some of the lost branches of the family. Based on the DNA of males we can connect some of the lost branches. My understanding of that process is poor, But Barbara Garrison has the expertise to interpret the results.

If you are a serious researcher of the family you should want your information to be accurate. In some cases the actual documented evidence to determine "who were someone's parents?" way back when may not always be possible. If you are serious about accurate and validated information use Ray's books. If you want to participate in correcting or enhancing Ray's work I can be reached at gregs125@aol.com. If you want to help with DNA evidence then contact Barbara at bjg@psu.edu.

Yours – Gregory H Stilwell