

John Mathley (c1835-1887) & Permelia Hulsey

By Jerry Long, Owensboro, Ky., 1984-1985

3 September 1984

Mrs. Betty Ford
119 Bakers Ridge Road
Morgantown, WV 26505

Dear Mrs. Ford,

Last week I spent two days researching the Mathley family at the courthouse and library, and I have made several discoveries. At the courthouse I checked marriages, wills, guardian bonds, administrator bonds, and criminal orders. In the Owensboro library I checked the 1870, 1880 and 1900 Daviess County censuses, three volumes of published Daviess County cemeteries, index of the family files, and the Owensboro newspapers on microfilm. Enclosed are abstracts of all vital information regarding the Mathleys found in the above records.

In the criminal order books is a record of Robert Mathley's indictment and trial for murder. Up 22 August 1904 he was indicted on two counts of murder, for the shooting and killing of Emma Watkins and James Gregson. He was tried, only on the first count. The trial lasted for a week, the 24 through 31 of August 1904; on August 31 a verdict of guilty was returned and he was sentenced to die by hanging. Several appeals for a new trial were denied, and ten months later on 7 July 1905 he was hanged.

From the date of Robert Mathley's indictment I went backwards in the Owensboro newspapers to find the date of the crime and forward to find the date of his execution. I am sending six articles from the Owensboro papers which give a detailed chronicle of the trial and execution: from the Owensboro Daily Messenger articles appearing in the issues of June 28, June 29, 1904 and July 7 and July 9, 1905, and from the Owensboro Daily Inquirer July 7 and July 9, 1905. These articles relate a very dramatic story. The copies were taken from the microfilm and are the best I could get. I thought about retyping the articles but that would have take quite some time, so I decided not to delay and hope you can make them out, the worst blurred passages I have rewritten on the backs.

In the Daviess County wills is the will of Robert Mathley's wife, Nora, she died at the age of 30 in August 1903, and was survived by two children. At the time of their father's death in 1905 the two children, Rodman Seymore and Goldie May, were ages 10 and 8. Robert's daughter is probably the Goldie Mathley your family has a picture of, I have not been able to find what happened to Robert's children,

While checking the newspapers for articles regarding Robert Mathley I found an obituary for his mother, Mrs. Permelia (Amelia) Mathley, your great-grandmother. She died July 6, 1904 only ten days following the crime by her son Robert.

Your great-grandparents were John W. Mathley and Permelia Hulsey. They were married here in Daviess County on July 12, 1860. I have compiled a family group chart on their family showing all vital information I have uncovered.

Your great grandfather, John W. Mathley, was born in Kentucky circa 1835 and died sometime between 1881 and 1894. I have not been able to find where he was buried or any record of the administration of his estate,

John and Permelia Mathley had six children to live to be adults, they were your grandmother Lettie A. Powell, Kate Kuntz, Robert, Alex, Mike, and Dan Mathley. The census records indicate they had five other children to die at birth or in early childhood. Your grandmother and her sister, Kate Kuntz, were both deceased by 1900, and only the four boys survived their mother, Permelia.

According to her obituary your great-grandmother, Permelia Hulsey Mathley, was buried at Elmwood Cemetery in Owensboro. Her sons Robert (1905) and Mike (1952) were also buried there. Elmwood is the largest cemetery within Owensboro, established in 1868. There is no record of burials there before 1914 and no listing of grave markers has been completed. However, there is a group now in the process of copying the cemetery and hopefully there will be a listing available in the future. Thus I have not been able to find but whether or not your great-grandfather, John W. Mathley, has a monument there, or not. It is doubtful if your great grandmother, Permelia, ever had a marker, but according to one of the articles on Robert Mathley his wife, Nora, did have one there. If this is true it should be possible to locate the grave of Robert Mathley. Since 1914 there have been five, Mathley burials at Elmwood: your great-uncle Mike Mathley (1952), 1 found the location of his grave; Mike's two wives Rose (1952, they were divorced) and Lora (1951), and two of Mike's sons Raymond Mathley (1942) and John W. Mathley (1982). Enclosed are obituaries of Mike Mathley and his son John W.

There is only one person of the Mathley name living in Owensboro today. She is Christine Mathley the widow of John W., the son of Mike and a first cousin of your dad. I called her but she said she could not tell me anything about the Mathley family, and she replied negatively to several of my questions. I have her address and phone if you should want it. Your grandmother's other two brothers, Alex and Dan Mathley, evidently left Owensboro in the very early 1900's. Alex Mathley last appears in the city directory in 1905 and Dan Mathley disappears after the 1909 city directory.

Your grandmother, Lettie Ann Powell., died March 3, 1897. I found her death date by checking the guardian and administrator books at the courthouse. On March 9, 1897 David A. Wood (your dad's uncle, he married Melissa Powell) was appointed the administrator of Lettie Ann Powell and guardian for her children. From this date I checked the Owensboro newspapers and found an obituary for her in both of the Owensboro newspapers of that time, copies of which are enclosed. She died in the vicinity of Grissom's Landing and Stanley, which are small

communities about five miles west of Owensboro. One of the obits states the funeral took place at "Oakford", but where the burial was at is not stated. Oakford is the name of the precinct in which Stanley is located, and to my knowledge there is no cemetery of that name, I will check this further.

I did some research on the Hulse family. I discovered the names of your great-great-grandparents. Permelia Hulse Mathley was the daughter of Joel T. and Delphy Hulse. Joel T. Hulse (born c1798) and his wife Delphy (born c1801) were natives of the state of Georgia. They were married circa 1820, probably in Georgia because they had a son Elijah Hulse born there about 1820. Joel Hulse and his family migrated northward, a son Jordan Hulse was born in Tennessee circa 1826, another son Joel T. Jr. was born in Kentucky in the county of Barren in 1836. Your great-grandmother, Permelia Hulse, was born in January 1838 in Kentucky, probably in Barren County, for the family would have been living there at the time. In 1850 Joel and Delphy Hulse were living in Edmonson County, Ky., and sometime between 1850 and 1860 the Hulses moved to Daviess County, Ky.

From the census records I have identified seven possible children of Joel and Delphy Hulse, they are:

- Elijah, born c1820 Georgia; married for the third time to Amanda Farmer, 19 August 1869 in Daviess County, Ky.; he was living Daviess Co in 1870, and his wife Amanda remarried in 1872.
- Jordan, born c1826 Tennessee, married Sarah c1848, he was living Daviess County, Ky., in 1870.
- Joel Thomas, born 24 March 1836 Barren County, Ky.; married Mariah Louisa Moseley, 28 August 1862 Daviess County, Ky.; he died 14 September 1882 in Daviess County, Ky.
- Permelia, born January 1838 Ky.; married John W. Mathley, 12 July 1860 Daviess County, Ky.; she died 6 July 1904 Owensboro, Ky. and buried Elmwood Cemetery in Owensboro, Ky.
- Arminda, born c1839 Ky.
- Delphy, born c 1841 Ky. and
- Carroll, born c1842 Ky., probably others.

At the Owensboro library I found the name of a great-granddaughter of Joel T. Hulse, Jr., who was researching the Hulse family. Her name is Bernice Maglinger and her address was given in the library files as 600 Bolivar St, Owensboro, as of 1982. Her name is not listed in the phone book and I have not yet been able to contact her.

I will close for now and let you digest what I have found. I hope you can read my notes. Would it be too much to request \$30.00 for my copying expenses and for the two days of research time, about eighteen hours. Do you want me to try to discover more about the Mathley and Hulse families? I have several leads which I could pursue if you would like.

Yours truly,
Jerry Long

1701 Alexander Ave.
Owensboro, Ky. 42301

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May 31, 1985

Betty Ford
119 Baker's Ridge Road
Morgantown, W. Va. 26505

Dear Mrs. Ford,

I am sorry it has taken so long to write. I was waiting until I could make some significant discoveries, and recently I have come up with a few more facts about the Mathley and Hulsey families.

I believe I have found your great-grandfather, John W. Mathley, in the 1850 and 1840 Kentucky censuses. His marriage in Daviess County and the 1870 & 1880 Daviess County censuses all indicate he was born about 1834-1835 in Kentucky. In the 1850 Kentucky census index there is only one Mathley listed. A John Mathley, age 16, appears in Anderson County, Ky, living with the family of Wade Morgan. The name and age fit, and it is likely your great-grandfather. The 1850 Anderson County, Ky. census listing appears as follows:

Page 231, #605:

Morgan, Wade	26	m	farmer	Ky.
Sarah F.	22	f		Ky.
Lydia	2	f		Ky.
Jane	6/12	f		Ky.
Mathley, John	16	m	laborer	Ky.

In the 1840 Kentucky census index again there is only one Mathley listed. The family of a John Mathley, age 40-50, is living in Washington County, Ky. In his household are listed three children, including a son who was age 5-10 who would be the right age for the John Mathley in Anderson County in 1850 and who was later in Daviess County. Since all records indicate your great-grandfather, John W. Mathley was born in Ky. and since this is the only Mathley family appearing in Kentucky in 1840 it appears to be his family. And in that case your great-great grandfather would have also been named John, and he would have been born between 1790 & 1800. John Mathley Sr. (also spelled Matherly) may have died circa 1841; he is listed in the Washington County tax lists in 1841 but does not appear in the 1842-1845 lists. Washington and Anderson Counties are adjoining counties in mid-central Kentucky, in the vicinity of Lexington. The Owensboro library does not have very many records from these counties so I am not able to check for any other information on the Mathley family without making a trip to these counties. The 1840 Washington County, Ky. census listing appears as follows (note; the 1840 census lists only the name of the head of the household and all others living in that household are accounted for by tallies in standard age groupings):

Page 123:

Mathley, John	1 male 40-50	1 female 30-40
	1 male 5-10	1 female 5-10
	1 male 0-5	

Your great-grandfather, John W. Mathley, died 12 September 1887 in Daviess County, and was buried in the Fern Hill Cemetery. A short death notice, giving date of death and place of burial appeared in the Owensboro newspaper. Fern Hill Cemetery is located about two miles west of Owensboro along Highway 60. On the north side of Highway 60 is a pond just past the Booth Field Road, which turns north off of 60 and leads to Ben Hawes Park. Behind west end of pond is a hill and on top of this hill is Fern Hill Cemetery. John W. Mathley does not have a marker in the cemetery but there are signs of many unmarked graves.

I contacted Bernice Maglinger (2610 East Cloverdale, Owensboro) who I mentioned in my earlier letter. She is a great-granddaughter of Joel T. Hulsey (24 March 1836-14 Sept. 1882) a brother of your great-grandmother, Permelia Hulsey Mathley. Joel T. Hulsey is also buried in the Fern Hill Cemetery, but has no marker. The Hulsey family settled in the area of the cemetery when they came to Daviess County. At one time a coal mine was operated near here and there was a small mining community around it.

The 1870 and 1880 Daviess County censuses indicate the Mathley family lived about two miles due west of Owensboro, in the vicinity of Fern Hill. In 1887 when John Mathley died he was buried in the Fern Hill Cemetery no doubt because his wife's family, the Hulseys, were buried there. After his death sometime between 1887 and 1900 his wife and children moved into Owensboro. When Permelia Mathley died in 1904 in the Seven Hills area of Owensboro she was buried in Owensboro at the Elmwood Cemetery. When your grandmother, Lettie Ann Mathley Powell, died in 1897 she died at Grissom's Lending, located about three miles northwest of Fern Hill. Her funeral was at Oakford, which is the name of the precinct just west of Owensboro. It seems likely that she would have been buried in the nearby cemetery of Fern Hill where her father and other Hulsey relatives were buried.

Enclosed is a family group sheet compiled by Bernice Maglinger on the family of her great-grandparents, Joel T. Hulsey and Mariah Louisa Moseley. Miss Maglinger also gave me a copy of a very interesting item about the Hulsey family that appeared in the Owensboro newspaper in 1905. A copy of the article is enclosed and since it is not very clear I have retyped the article so you can clearly read it.

This article concerns land in Atlanta, Georgia that at one time was owned by your great-grandfather, Joel Hulsey (born ca 1798 Georgia, died 1850-1860 Ky.). Heirs of Joel Hulsey were seeking to bring suit in hopes of establishing their title to the land. The article states that there were 30 heirs of Joel Hulsey, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. Your dad would have been one of the heirs, since he was a great-grandson. This article also indicates that Joel Hulsey was a Mexican War veteran. I would suggest writing the National Archives in Washington, D.C. to see if they have a military record for him. Also you may want to consider trying to locate a marriage record of your great-great-grandparents, Joel and Delphy Hulsey, They married about 1820, probably in Georgia. They appeared to have lived in two different counties in Georgia,

Hall County (county seat Gainesville) and Atlanta. Possibly by writing to the county courthouses in these two places you may find their marriage.

On the Powell family I am sending two items, the 1850 Perry County, Indiana census listing for the Powells, and a biography of James Powell a brother of your great-grandfather, William Powell, that appeared in the book, History of Warrick, Spencer and Perry Counties, Indiana, Goodspeed, c, 1885.

Your great-great-grandparents, William Powell and Elizabeth Godfrey, had seven children:

- ? born Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.
- Malachi, born c1825 Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.
- James, born 1826 Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.
- Cindarella, born c1828 Indiana.
- William, born 1829 Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.
- Mary Ann, born c1836 Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania.
- John, born c1840 Perry County, Indiana.

I asked Doris Leistner, Perry County genealogist, if she had anything any further back on William and Elizabeth Godfrey Powell, and she said no. The Powells lived in Westmoreland County, Pennsylvania, and locally we do not have any records for that county, so I was not able to uncover anymore here,

Again I apologize for taking so long to write. In the future if I run across something on the Mathley, Hulsey, or Powell families I will gladly let you know, Could I please request \$15.00 for my copying expenses and research time. If you should have any questions about anything I have enclosed feel free to write. Good luck with your research and thank you for contacting me.

Yours truly,
Jerry Long

1701 Alexander Ave.
Owensboro, Ky. 42301

Owensboro Inquirer, Owensboro, Ky., Wednesday, 31 July 1907, p1:

MILLIONS WILL BE INVOLVED

Hulsey Heirs of Henderson and Daviess
to seek to Recover Valuable Georgia Lands.
ONE TRACT IS IN HEART OF ATLANTA
Other Near That City, and Once Property
of the Late Joel Hulsey, Mexican Veteran.

Hon. A.O, Stanley has been retained by the Hulsey heirs in this and Henderson counties, to push their claim for several hundreds of acres of land in Georgia, and he has begun to investigate the titles of the land, with a view of bringing suit to recover.

Joel Hulsey, grandfather of the heirs, served in the Mexican war, and after the war was over he took up some land claims, living on the land for a number of years. One claim is composed of 150 acres and is located a few miles out of Atlanta, while the other is nearly in the heart of the city, the land having been taken up when Atlanta was only a small place, and at that time was a few miles out from the city. It is now worth millions of dollars.

Joel Hulsey died and the land was taken up by other parties and his heirs failed to get any benefits from the land.

There are thirty heirs and all are grandchildren or great-grandchildren of the deceased, Tom Hulsey of Owensboro is one of the heirs, and the others live in Daviess and Henderson counties.

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John W. Mathley, born c1835 Ky., died 12 September 1887 Daviess County, Ky.; buried Fern Hill Cemetery, Daviess County, Ky. He married 1st Frances Barnes, 15 April 1855 Anderson County, Ky. and 2nd Permelia Hulsey, 12 July Daviess County, Ky. The 1900 census reports that Permelia was the mother of 11 children, only 4 of whom were then living. He and Permelia were the parents of:

1. Lettie Ann Mathley, born 10 June 1861 Daviess County, Ky., married Oliver M. Powell, 3 October 1881 Owensboro, Daviess County, Ky., died 3 March 1897 Grissom's Landing, Daviess County, Ky., buried Grissom's Landing.
2. Robert S. Mathley, born in August 1868 Daviess County, Ky., married Elnora Mattingly in 1891; he was executed by hanging in Owensboro, Ky. on 7 July 1905 for the murder of his sweetheart, Emma Watkins and her cousin, James Gregson. Robert was buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, Ky. Elnora ('Nora') was the daughter of William T. & Catherine Mattingly and was born 11 February 1875 Ky., died 9 July 1903, buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, Ky. Robert & Nora had four children – Verga B. (born 25 July 1893 Ky., died 8 August 1902 Owensboro, Ky., buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, Ky.), Rodman Seymore (born in July 1894 Ky., died after 1907), Goldie May (born in May 1896, in 1912 lived Indianapolis, IN), and Silvia M. (born 18 May 1901 and died 19 December 1901, buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, Ky.
3. Edward Mathley, born c1864 , died 1870-1900.
4. Alexander Mathley, born 3 August 1870 Daviess County, Ky., married 1st Sorena Hester, 3 May 1893 Daviess County, Ky. and 2nd Lula, 1900-1905, died 9 January 1946 Evansville, Vanderburgh County, IN, buried Locust Hill Cemetery, Evansville, IN.
5. Michael Mathley, born 18 May 1871 Daviess County, Ky., married 1st Rose E. Rouse, 16 November 1892 Owensboro, Daviess County, Ky. (divorced August 1916) and 2nd Lona J. Taylor, 12 February 1921 Owensboro, Daviess County, Ky., died 21 February 1952 Owensboro, Daviess County, Ky., buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, Ky.
6. Katherine ('Katie') Mathley, born c1873 Ky., married John Simon Kuntz, 16 July 1894 Owensboro, Daviess County, Ky., died 1894-1897.

7. Daniel Mathley, born 1 April 1880 Daviess County, Ky., married Julia Ermine Hardin, 20 November 1901 Owensboro, Daviess County, Ky., died 11 March 1913 Owensboro, Daviess County, Ky., buried Elmwood Cemetery, Owensboro, Ky.

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Robert S. Mathley (1868-1905) was executed by hanging in Owensboro on 7 July 1905. He had been convicted of the murder of his 17-year-old paramour and her cousin.

Messenger-Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, 14 August 2014, p1B:

Daviess County has seen five executions in 200 years

... July 7, 1905, Robert Mathley, 39, was led from the jail at 4 a.m. on a rainy Friday to the same gallows where Green had died.

He was convicted of the June 27, 1904, shooting deaths of 17-year-old Emma Watkins, with whom he was infatuated, and Jim Gregson, her cousin.

Five hundred people applied for tickets to the hanging.

Most didn't get them.

At 4:40 a.m., after a prayer and a short speech, Mathley was dropped to his death.

His neck snapped, but his feet touched the ground.

Deputy Sheriff Robert Abell hastily dug a hole beneath the body, so the feet would swing free.

Sixteen minutes later, Mathley was pronounced dead. ...