



Report Number: JR0018
GMP Ancestor: n/a
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Related Codes: GMP-098, GMP-117, GMP-153, GMP-155, GMP-270

Purpose: To summarize a history of the Plowden family of Vermilion Parish, Louisiana

Discussion:

A family headed by Francis Plowden, born ca. 1814 in Maryland, is found on the 1870 census of Vermilion Parish, Louisiana. As Plowden is a surname found among the GU272, Francis Plowden and his family were researched to see if any connections could be made to the GU272 Plowden families.

Two Plowden families are found among the GU272. One is the family of Nicholas and Bibiana Plowden (GMP-153), the latter from the Jesuits' Newtown Manor in Maryland. One daughter, Harriet Plowden or Hill (GMP-177) married William Harrison (GMP-302) and left numerous descendants. The second is the family of Henry and Elizabeth (sometimes Betsy) Hill (GMP-155), also of Newtown Manor. In the baptismal records of the children of Henry and Betsy, Henry is identified as Lewellen's Henry in 1809, 1811, and 1816, and Plowden's Henry in 1821, 1822, 1824, 1828, and 1831. Elizabeth or Betsy was purchased by Henry Johnson and sent to Louisiana with all but one of her children, Dick Plowden or Hill (GMP-171), a carpenter, who remained in Maryland. Some of the children of Henry and Betsy assumed the surname Hill in Louisiana while others are recorded under the surname Plowden. Living descendants have been identified and a number of them have done DNA tests.

Francis Plowden, age 26, is listed among 93 enslaved persons arriving at the mouth of the Mississippi River on 4 Nov. 1833 on board the brig *Tribune*. They were shipped by Franklin & Armitage from Alexandria, District of Columbia, on 16 Oct. 1833 and consigned to Isaac Franklin in New Orleans.¹ No sale by Isaac Franklin of an enslaved man named Francis or Frank has yet been found in the New Orleans notarial records.

Frank Plowden and his sons are mentioned in the records of the Freedmen's Bureau. In a Monthly School Report dated 2 Jan. 1868, amounts were paid to Frank Plowden, his sons, and two other men, Overton Henderson and Anthony Levine, freedmen working under contract with Mr. Levi Campbell.² This is undoubtedly Levi Watkins Campbell, born 1825 in Louisiana, the son of Allen Campbell, a wealthy Vermilion Parish planter from Georgia, and Melissa Moss. Allen's father, also

Levi Campbell, was in Louisiana as early as 1817. Allen Campbell owned 17 enslaved persons in 1840, 22 in 1850, and 29 in 1860. This Campbell family does not appear to have been Catholic. While freedmen often contracted with their former slave holders shortly after emancipation, it is not yet known if Frank Plowden had been enslaved by Levi Watkins Campbell. Lending some credence to this possibility is that Frank's mother-in-law is identified in two census records as Lucy Campbell.

Francis Plowden next appears on the 1870 census of Vermilion Parish. He was age 56 and born in Maryland. In his household were Rosetta, age 53, born in Louisiana, and the following persons: Francis Plowden, Jr., age 24; Alcidine Plowden, age 25; Laurent Plowden, age 21; Thomas Plowden, age 17; John Plowden, age 8; William Plowden, age 4; Charles Plowden, age 10; and Lucy Plowden, age 5. Also in the household is Lucy Campbell, age 63, born in Maryland.³

In 1880, Frank and Rosetta Plowden were still living in Vermilion Parish. The census indicates that Frank, age 66, was born in Washington, D.C., as were both of his parents. His wife, Rosetta, age 62, was born in Louisiana and both parents were born in Washington, D.C. Lucy Campbell, age 80, identified as mother-in-law, was born in Maryland and both parents were born in Maryland (in contradiction to Rosetta's entry indicating her parents were born in Washington, D.C.).⁴

Francis Plowden was married to Rozetta Maheaut (sic) at St. Mary Magdalen Catholic Church in Abbeville, Louisiana, on 26 Aug. 1871. The marriage record identifies his parents as George and Jeanne Plowden, and her parents as Laurent Maheaut and Louisa Brown.⁵ Louisa Brown is likely the same as Lucy Campbell living in the Plowden household in 1870 and 1880 and identified as mother-in-law on the latter census. A burial record was found for a Lucie Plowden who died 22 Oct. 1891 at the reported age of 110. She was buried in the Catholic cemetery in Abbeville.⁶

Frank and Rozetta Plowden likely died between 1880 and 1900. Neither can be found on the census after 1880, nor can any burial records be found in the Catholic Church in Abbeville.

As previously mentioned, no sale of Frank Plowden who arrived in New Orleans on the *Tribune* in 1833 has yet been found. An incomplete search of the New Orleans notarial records for the late 1833/early 1834 time period for a sale by Isaac Franklin produced no results. Vermilion Parish, whose court records burned in 1885, was formed in 1844 from Lafayette Parish. A search of conveyance records for Lafayette for purchases by Levi Watkins Campbell was not undertaken.

Another Vermilion Parish slaveholder of interest was also considered—Notley Young, born ca. 1787 in Prince George's County, Maryland. He came to Louisiana prior to 1821, settling first in St. Landry Parish, then moving to Vermilion Parish prior to 1850. Shortly afterwards, he moved to Kentucky, but two of his sons remained in Vermilion Parish. The Young family was Catholic and had connections to the Jesuits in Maryland. However, no documentary evidence of any connections between Frank Plowden and the Young family has yet been found.

One descendant of Francis Plowden is known to have tested his DNA on Ancestry. HT matched at the five to eight cousin level (20 centiMorgans) to one confirmed GU272 descendant, SG. SG is not a Hill or Campbell descendant, but a descendant of Sam Harris (GMP-098) and Betsy Ware or West (GMP-117), both of St. Thomas Manor in Maryland. Prior to Ancestry raising its minimum threshold for matches from six to eight centiMorgans, HT also matched SL, a descendant of Sam Harris and Betsy Ware/West as well as a descendant of Adeline Campbell (GMP-270) of St. Inigoes. HT did not, however, match any of a number of other descendants of Sam Harris and Betsy Ware/West, nor were there any shared matches between HT and SG to help determine where the match might be.

Conclusion:

No evidence has been found to date connecting the descendants of Francis Plowden of Vermilion Parish, Louisiana, to the two GU272 Plowden families.

Endnotes:

1. Ancestry.com. New Orleans, Louisiana, U.S., Slave Manifests, 1807-1860 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010. Original data: Slave Manifests of Coastwise Vessels Filed at New Orleans, Louisiana, 1807-1860. National Archives microfilm publication M1895, 30 rolls. Records of the U.S. Customs Service, Record Group 36. National Archives, Washington, D.C.
2. Records of the Field Offices for the State of Louisiana, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, 1863-1872, National Archives Microfilm Publication M1905, Reel 77, accessed on Ancestry.com.
3. 1870 U.S. census, Vermilion Parish, Louisiana, pop. sched., Subdivision 109, p. 162A (stamped), family #6, citing National Archives microfilm publication M593.
4. 1880 U.S. census, Vermilion Parish, Louisiana, pop. sched., Ward 3, E.D. 16, p. 29C (stamped), family #47, citing National Archives microfilm publication T9.
5. Rev. Donald J. Hebert, *Southwest Louisiana Records, Church and Civil Records, Volume X (1871-1872)* (Cecilia: n.p., 1977), pp. 260 and 319.
6. Rev. Donald J. Hebert, *Southwest Louisiana Records, Church and Civil Records, Volume XXII (1891)* (Cecilia: n.p., 1980), p. 339.