

## The Hams of Union Parish, Louisiana

by Timothy Dean Hudson

The notes describe the Ham family of what is now Union Parish, Louisiana. The earliest of this family to settle there was William Ham, who moved with his family there from Lowndes County, Alabama in February 1837. The saga of William Ham's family is a "*riches to rags*" story. Between 1837 and the early 1860s, William and his two sons, Hillory and Reuben, together built one of the largest planting operations in Union Parish, including roughly 3000 acres of land cultivated by more than fifty-two enslaved workers. While they seemingly thrived during the antebellum era, their heavy dependance on slave labor left them vulnerable after the demise of that institution beginning in 1865. Family traditions indicates that they did not properly treat their enslaved workers. While enslaved workers with strong ties to their former owners often assumed their surnames as their own after the end of slavery, there is no record of any black Hams in Union Parish in the nineteenth century. Moreover, it appears that many of the Ham slaves left the vast fields of the Ham plantation once slavery ended. With only a handful of workers to cultivate the land, the bulk of it soon became idle.

To further complicate matters for the Hams, Reuben died in 1867 and William Ham in 1868. Instead of assuming control of his family's financial situation and providing vital stability, William's older son, Hillory H. Ham, allowed alcoholism to turn him a mean, physically abusive person who abandoned his wife and children and lost his livelihood. These events caused Hillory Ham's children to go from the financially elite of Union Parish to the homeless, from growing up on their family's profitable plantation in the antebellum era to living as sharecroppers in the 1880s and 1890s. Although some of Hillory's children eventually recovered and managed to maintain their own farms, others struggled financially their entire lives. Tragically, some struggled with the legacy of violent behavior, perhaps a learned behavior from observing his publicly documented cruelty towards his wife, Samantha.

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## The William Ham & Clarenda Seale Family

William Ham was born in Culpeper County, Virginia on 8 January 1801. Evidence indicates that he was the son of Reuben Ham and Elizabeth Pendleton, who married in Culpeper County on 28 January 1790. At this time, we know virtually nothing of his life prior to about 1826 or 1827, when he married Clarenda Seale, the daughter of James Seale (1769–1860) and his wife Rachel (1770/1774–1820/1839). Clarenda's birth occurred in Fairfield District South Carolina near the Wateree River, sometime in November 1811. James and Rachel Seale's next child was Cynthia, born soon after Clarenda, probably in late 1812 (possibly Clarenda's twin). The sisters would spend their lives living on adjoining plantations in South Carolina, Alabama, and Louisiana. They both married about the same time, Cynthia to David Ward. Soon after their marriages, the Hams, Wards, and Seales moved from northwestern Butler County north into what was then southwestern Montgomery County. Settlers found the farmland there quite desirable and flocked in from the surrounding regions, buying up the land as soon as the government put it up for sale. The influx of settlers led the Alabama Legislature to put this region into Lowndes County in February 1830. James Seale and many of his siblings lived there in the 1830s.

William Ham and his wife Clarenda Seale Ham moved into northwestern Ouachita Parish Louisiana in early February 1837 as part of the first wave of Alabama immigration into that region led by Colonel Matthew Wood and his son-in-law, former Butler County, Alabama Sheriff John Taylor. Clarenda's sister Cynthia and her husband David Ward accompanied them on the initial trip, which departed from Lowndes County, Alabama immediately after 14 January 1837. It appears that Clarenda and Cynthia's brother James Hayden Seale also traveled with them in early 1837, although he could have waited until the fall to make the trip. William Ham and his brother-in-law David Ward purchased adjoining farms south of Bayou D'Loutre on 14 February 1837 from the Ouachita Land Office in Monroe. When the Louisiana Legislature carved off this region from Ouachita on 13 March 1839 to form a separate parish, their farms thereafter lay in central Union Parish, a few miles east of the parish seat of Farmerville.

In 1838, William Ham paid taxes on six slaves that he apparently brought with him from Alabama, as well as a herd of twenty-six horned cattle. He became an active participant in building the new parish, serving as "*Captain of Patrol*" of his locality (captain of the local militia) as well as overseer of the men appointed by the Union Parish Police Jury (the local governing body) to construct the first road from Farmerville east through Hams' plantation towards the Ouachita River. Ham also helped to lay out many other roads during the 1840s as the police jury began the process of improving transportation options for farmers in the region.

Between 1837 and mid-1860s, William Ham accumulated an extensive plantation of roughly two thousand acres of land that lay a few miles east of Farmerville, extending from the Ward's Chapel Road south to the modern Louisiana Highway #2 from Farmerville towards Sterlington. He developed an extensive planting operation on his property, putting over six hundred acres into cultivation by 1860, of course with the labor of enslaved workers. In 1850, he owned a total of twenty-six slaves, and in 1860, he and his two sons were listed as the owners of fifty-two enslaved people. During the 1850s, Ham's plantation produced annually over 2700 bushels of corn, between 40 and 50 bales of cotton, and other produce and farm goods of various sorts.

The Civil War had a devastating effect upon William Ham and his family. Although they belonged to the upper-class of Union Parish society prior to the war, they were among the few Union Parish citizens who based their financial standing almost entirely upon slave labor. We have no record of how Ham obtained the bulk of his slaves. We know he obtained a few from his father-in-law, James Seale, but no known record shows Ham purchasing any enslaved

peoples. He could have inherited the rest from relatives, but so far, no known evidence indicates how he obtained them.

Family tradition suggests that the Hams did not treat their enslaved workers in proper manner. We do not know whether this tradition is aimed at William and Clarendia or at their son, Hillory Herbert Ham (Sr.), whose post-bellum alcoholism apparently led to his abusing his wife, Samantha Elvyann Scarborough. What is remarkable, however, is that although the Hams owned a large number of slaves, not a single one of them took the surname "*Ham*" after the end of slavery. To contrast with this, numerous other formerly enslaved people in Union Parish chose the surnames of their former owners as their own surnames after the end of chattel slavery in 1865.

The antebellum lifestyle of the Hams could not survive in the postwar era. Although some of their former slaves remained on their massive plantation as sharecroppers in the years immediately following the war, most moved on within a few years, leaving the majority of the Ham's cleared fields idle.

William and Clarendia had only two children who survived early childhood, sons Hillory Herbert Ham (Sr.) and Reuben James Ham. Reuben died sometime in early 1867, leaving two young daughters. William himself died in May 1868, leaving Hillory as the patriarch of his family. By 1870, Hillory had the responsibility of supporting a total of eleven children by two marriages, his widowed mother and sister-in-law, plus two nieces. The combined Ham property holdings in the latter 1860s included three thousand acres of land, plus an array of valuable farm equipment and vehicles.

As a widowed woman, Clarendia continued to maintain her household for a while, taking charge of her eldest three grandchildren, the children of Hillory's first wife. For some reason, she even increased the size of her plantation by purchasing additional land. Thus, during the early 1870s, it briefly appeared that the Hams might manage to survive the economic depression that engulfed the South during Reconstruction.

Had Hillory H. Ham (Sr.) stepped up and taken a firm grasp of his extended family's financial situation, he could probably have stabilized it. However, he failed to seize the moment, instead turning to alcohol to cope with the drastic changes wrought by the War. His crop production decreased significantly each year after 1867. He failed to properly maintain his plantation or his mother's, so they gradually decreased in value. Whatever the root cause of his problems, they clearly had a devastating financial effect upon his entire family for years to come – his wife, children, mother, and also his fatherless young nieces, in whom one would expect him to take an interest.

Hillory became physically abusive to his wife, Samantha Elvyann Scarborough, and in 1874, he abandoned her and their children. He then sold his old plantation of one thousand acres for a pittance. Now homeless and "*paupers upon the charity of the world*," as she put it, Samantha divided her youngest seven children up and sent them to live with her siblings and elderly parents, Noah and Samantha Scarborough. She filed for divorce in 1876, an extremely unusual step for that era. Her petition claimed that Hillory severely beat her and had provided no financial support to their children for several years. Hillory ignored the court summons and did not respond in any way to her claims, so the judge granted the divorce. Afterwards, Samantha's eldest son, Matthew Addison Ham, went to court and chose his father as his guardian; however, in 1880 he was still living with Samantha's relatives instead of his father. This perhaps suggests that Hillory was abusive to his wife but not his children, but this is really impossible to determine.

By 1880, Hillory lived with his eldest son Hillory Crawford Ham and worked as a carpenter. His ex-wife and their children remained scattered among Samantha's relatives in the region. He paid his poll tax in 1880 and 1881, but not in 1882, 1883, or 1884. In late 1884 or early 1885, Hillory apparently built a house on vacant government land, and

in 1885 he paid taxes on that improvement and his poll tax. As his ex-wife Samantha had filed a homestead application on vacant land, apparently hoping to acquire her own farm, it is possible that Hillory built the house for her. I have absolutely no evidence of this, but Hillory only paid taxes for this improvement in 1885, whereas Samantha paid taxes on her public land improvements in 1884, 1885 and 1886. Hillory paid his poll taxes in 1886, 1887, and 1888, but he died the next year on 12 April 1889. His family buried him in the Wards Chapel Cemetery with his father and first wife, as well as his aunt, Cynthia Seale Ward, and her family.

Beginning in the latter-1870s, Hillory was certainly in no position to offer his widowed mother any support, and Clarendia Seale Ham's grandchildren were either no longer willing or able to support her. William Ham's old plantation now lay idle and virtually without any value. By now an elderly woman of seventy, Clarendia had no one nearby to depend upon for assistance, so she left her home and moved in with her younger brother, Thomas Jefferson Seale, who lived south of Farmerville near Downsville. After his death in 1893, she moved back to her former neighborhood in eastern Union Parish. Her own grandchildren all struggled financially, and so instead of living with any of them, Clarendia lived with her niece, Mollie Seale Kennedy, daughter of Thomas J. Seale.

Clarendia Seale Ham died at Mollie's house on 30 May 1897.



## Brothers William & Reuben Ham

Although we currently have no firm documentation of William Ham's parents, the remnants of his tombstone from the Ward's Chapel Cemetery give his place of birth as Culpeper County, Virginia. However, the name of his second son provides a clue. William's eldest son, Hillory Herbert Ham, was undoubtedly named for Butler County, Alabama's first physician, Dr. Hillory Herbert, who arrived there in January 1819. William's second son, Reuben James Ham, was I believe named for both of his grandfathers. Clarendo's father is known to be James Seale (13 Feb 1769 – 4 Feb 1860); this connection is documented fully (see Butler Co AL Will Book 1, pp. 143–146; Probate Book 4, pp. 105–107, 165–166, 574 – 575; Butler Co AL Probate Book 5, pp. 131–134, 305–307). This explains the origins of Reuben J. Ham's middle name.

As for the origins of his first given name, several indications point towards William Ham's younger brother and father being both named "*Reuben Ham*." On 4 December 1842 in Union Parish, Reuben Ham married Frances Edwards. On 2 October 1843, Reuben Ham hired the legal firm of Downs & Richardson to file the following petition against his wife in the District Court for Union Parish. Notice that he gives the date of 17 April 1842 for the birth of his wife's child that occurred after their marriage (four months and thirteen days after the marriage, to be precise). The date written in this record is obviously a mistake, with the birth undoubtedly occurring on 17 April 1843:

*To the Honorable the Judge of the Seventh Judicial District Court holding sessions in and for the Parish of Union, State of Louisiana.*

*The petition of Reuben Ham a resident of the Parish of Union State aforesaid with respect represents that on the ---- day of November in the year 1842, he married in your said Parish Frances Edwards a resident thereof beleving [sic] her to be a chaste and virtuous woman flattering himself with the enjoyment of much happiness with her he was disposed to cherish and protect her as a dutiful and affectionate husband but that to his great unhappiness and mastification [sic] he discovered after his marriage that the said Frances Edwards was pregnant and had conceived and had had communications with some other male previous to their marriage as she had not had with your petitioner previous to that time. And that his said wife was delivered of a child on the 17<sup>th</sup> of April 1842 [sic – should be 1843] sound, perfect in form and capable of Living.*

*Petitioner avers that his said wife was in the habit previous to her marriage as petitioner has since learned of having communication with Benjamin Robinson and others in your said Parish all of which was unknown and entirely unsuspected by petitioner at the time of the obliation [probably should be 'obligation'] of his marriage and for sometime afterwards.*

*Petitioner avers that the said Frances Edwards has acknowledged and admitted the fact and that said Robinson is the father of the child born since his marriage.*

*Petitioner further avers that his wife the said Frances Edwards in violation of the sanctity of her marriage vows and in disregard of the duties of a good and faithfull [sic] wife has committed adultery since her marriage with your petitioner with the said Robinson and others on divers occasions all of which was at the time without the knowledge or slightest intimation of your petitioner.*

*Petitioner avers that the bad conduct of said Frances Edwards and her pregnancy was concealed and unknown to your petitioner before his marriage and that to remain bound to such a woman in the bonds of matrimony is contrary to the feelings of an honorable man is repugnant to law and justice and would destroy his happiness forever.*

*Wherefore petitioner prays that the said Frances Edwards be duly cited to answer this complaint and that upon a final hearing they be separated bed & board and that the Bond of matrimony between them be forever dissolved and severed according to equity and law in such cases made and provided and for general relief in the premises, &.*

On 7 November 1843, John V. Robertson filed Frances Edwards Ham's response to her husband's petition:

*Frances Edwards the wife of Reuben Ham who herein prays to be authorised [sic] by this Honorable Court to appear defend herself in the said actions for answer saith that in so far as the petition of the said Plff. sets forth the fact of intermarriage between the said parties the same is true. But for further answer she says that during the whole period of their cohabition [cohabitation] she acted to her said husband as true and faithful fond and affectionate wife. That the child which she bore was born several months after the said marriage and within the*

*bonds of matrimony she utterly denies that any period since her said marriage that she has been untrue to her said husband or ever violated the sanctity of her marriage vows, but on the contrary, has ever been true and constant and in the hope of future reconciliation and restoration to her rights and duties as wife of the Plff. she prays that this Honorable will dismiss the petition of the Plff with costs of this suit and that a proper allowance be made her suitable to the condition of her said husband and for general relief in the premises.*

There is no record of Reuben Ham's response to his wife's answer. However, two days later, on November 9<sup>th</sup>, District Court Judge E. K. Willson dismissed the case at Reuben Ham's costs by order of Ham's legal counsel (materials all found in Union Parish Louisiana Suit Book D, pp. 70–72).

The marriage and court suit are the only records I have found in Union Parish for Reuben Ham. Exactly what happened to Ham after this is pure speculation. Although Reuben dismissed his suit for a divorce, I think it likely that he refused to accept Frances back as his wife. His legal action in the Union Parish court system was public information, and such a scandalous situation in those days would have certainly brought humiliation to him. It was common in such cases for the parties involved to leave and move to another locality.

I think it likely that Reuben Ham moved east, across the Mississippi River into Holmes County Mississippi. The 1850, 1860, and 1870 censuses as well as cemetery records indicate that a man by the name of "Reuben Ham" born on 4 January 1805 lived there during this period. He worked as an overseer in 1850 and 1860, and as a farmer in 1870. The 1850 census indicates that his birth occurred in Georgia (but it also mistakenly had his name as "*Hamp*" also), but the 1860 and 1870 censuses agree that he was born in Virginia. Reuben married on 20 January 1861 to Elizabeth Ann Frizell (30 Mar 1835–14 Jan 1929), a native of Russellville, Logan County Kentucky. Reuben and Eliza Ham had an infant, J. R. Ham (7 Aug 1862–22 Oct 1862), son George B. Ham (8 Feb 1866–15 Sep 1906), and a daughter Elizabeth Ruth Ham (7 Dec 1867–2 Sep 1952).

Reuben Ham died at the age of seventy-five years on 29 April 1880 in Holmes County and was buried in the Franklin Cemetery about seven miles from the county seat of Lexington.

Although I have no concrete proof that the Reuben Ham in Union Parish in 1842 and 1843 was William's brother, nor that the Reuben Ham of Holmes County Mississippi was the same Reuben in Union Parish Louisiana in the early 1840s, I think it there is a significant possibility that both scenarios are indeed the case.

Furthermore, I think it quite possible that Reuben Ham was the father of Hillory Herbert Ham (Jr.), the young relative that William Ham raised and who bought a portion of his old farm from his estate in 1868 (described more later).

With the majority of the censuses indicating that both William and Reuben's births occurred in Virginia, several records in Culpeper County Virginia stand out in a search for their potential parents. Reuben Ham married there on 28 January 1790 to Elizabeth Pendleton. I have no further information on them, but his name and this date of marriage certainly make them likely candidates for parents of our William Ham and his presumed brother, Reuben. Hopefully future research will reveal more details of this connection.

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## Another William & Reuben Ham in Union Parish, Louisiana

Sometime during the 1860s, probably after the war, a man by the name of William H. Ham moved into northwestern Union Parish. He was born in September 1825 in Georgia, with both of his parents also born in Georgia according to the 1880 and 1900 censuses. In 1870, he owned no real estate and the census enumerator only listed his personal estate as \$150. William's wife was Naomi C. Miller Ham (26 Aug 1829–1 Apr 1880), born in Alabama; she was buried in the Beech Grove Cemetery. Their daughter Letha Ham, born about 1863, and she either married or died between 1870 and 1880. In that latter year, William H. Ham was only listed with his son Reuben A. Ham (c1865–aft. 1930) and Emaliza (Emily) L. Ham (24 Apr 1866–18 Apr 1966). Emily apparently never married, but just a few days short of one hundred years. She was buried beside her parents in the Beech Grove Cemetery.

In 1900, William H. Ham lived across the state line in Johnson Township, Union County Arkansas. He had remarried about 1882 to Bethas, who was born in May 1847 in Arkansas. They had three daughters born between 1887 and 1892. He died on 6 November 1902 and was buried beside Naomi in the Beech Grove Cemetery.

I also have no idea how William H. Ham is related to the older William Ham who married Clarenda Seale. I suspect that they were distant cousins and not closely related. They lived in different regions of the parish, but the common name of "*Reuben*" once again suggests some type of connection. A number of Ham families migrated from Virginia into Elbert County, Georgia in the early 1800s, so perhaps this William H. Ham descends from them. There was a Reuben Ham living in Oglethorpe County, Georgia in 1820, so obviously that name held some significance to the Ham family.



## **The Two Different Union Parish Farmers by the Name of “Hillory Herbert Ham”**

Two different men by the name of “Hillory Herbert Ham” lived in close proximity to each other in eastern Union Parish Louisiana between the 1840s and 1880s. The older man was the eldest son of William and Clarenda Ham, born between April 1828 and February 1829 in either Butler County or southwestern Montgomery (later Lowndes) County, Alabama. The younger man was born on 3 September 1834, also in Alabama. At this time, all I can prove is that the younger H. H. Ham was a blood relative of William Ham, a close relative considering the connections between them. I believe that he was actually William’s nephew, the son of Reuben Ham who married Frances Edwards in Union Parish back in 1842.

It should be clearly emphasized that these two men by the name of “Hillory Herbert Ham” were certainly **not** father and son – this is physically impossible, given their proven years of birth. In those years the designations of “senior” and “junior” did not carry the implication of a father/son relationship as they do today.

### **Hillory Herbert Ham (Sr.)** (Apr 1828/Feb 1829–12 Apr 1889)

William Ham undoubtedly named his son for Dr. Hillory Herbert, the first physician of Butler County, Alabama who arrived there in January 1819. William’s son was known as “Hillory H. Ham, Sr.” throughout his lifetime, with the designation of “Sr.” given to distinguish him from the younger male by the same name; he had no son by this name who survived early childhood. Hillory married in 1851 to Isabella Ann Robinson, and after her death in May 1860, he married the following November to Samantha Elvyann Scarborough. In 1860, he seemed poised to follow in his father’s footsteps as one of the wealthiest planters of Union Parish. Certainly the vast Ham plantations several miles east of Farmerville were among the largest producers of cotton and corn in the parish, and Hillory and his brother had both formed their own large plantations adjoining their father’s. However, secession and the war changed everything.

In the summer of 1861, Hillory H. Ham formed a company of men for the war effort. He reportedly outfitted them using Ham money, with help from the Union Parish Police Jury and possibly other local planters. The men chose the moniker “Stars of Equality” and elected Ham their captain on October 13<sup>th</sup>. They left Union Parish for Camp Moore, just north of Lake Pontchartrain, where they officially entered the Confederate service on December 11<sup>th</sup>, with Ham still serving as captain. The Confederate officials gave them the designation of Company E, 19<sup>th</sup> Louisiana Infantry Regiment. They spent December and January in New Orleans, awaiting orders for the regiment to be sent north to meet General Grant’s Yankee army moving south across Tennessee. On January 9<sup>th</sup>, Hillory H. Ham resigned his commission as captain in the Confederate army and returned home to Union Parish. Ham’s former company went on to participate in many of the bloodiest battles ever fought on American soil. The 19<sup>th</sup> Regiment fought at Shiloh on April 6 – 7, participating in the infamous attack upon the Hornet’s Nest; in that action the regiment lost about 20% of its men. They fought at the Siege of Jackson, Mississippi in July 1863, in particular repulsing a Yankee attack on the 12<sup>th</sup>. They later fought at Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, and throughout the Atlanta Campaign during the summer of 1864. They saw heavy fighting at the Battle of Nashville in December 1864, and finally, they participated in the Siege of Spanish Fort in the spring of 1865.

According to letters written in the early 1900s, after his resignation from the Confederate Army, Hillory H. Ham actively served with the Confederate Post of Farmerville, collecting conscripts and tracking down escaped slaves and criminals who flocked into the piney hills of north/central Louisiana during the chaos of the war. Hillory also produced

large corn crops during the war to help supply the Confederate Army, as well as giving them meat and other goods. Other Union Parish men certainly suffered far worse during the war than Hillory. Indeed, while Hillory was enjoying the comforts of home in the piney hills of Union Parish, many of his male relatives and former comrades in the 19<sup>th</sup> Louisiana were fighting at Shiloh, Chickamauga, and Atlanta, or else existing on mule meat and green peas in the trenches of Vicksburg while defending it from the Federal troops.

As the war ended, the Ham crop production decreased by about two-thirds, due partly to the loss of the slave labor upon which the Hams depended for their plantation operation. To further complicate matters, Hillory's brother Reuben died in early 1867, followed by William Ham's death later that year.

Family tradition indicates that Hillory H. Ham possessed a cruel streak, perhaps cultivated by the relatively luxurious life dealt him in his formative years and early adulthood. His descendants claimed he was mean to his slaves as well as his wives (although no mention was made of how he treated his children). Moreover, after the war he became an alcoholic. His crop production decreased with each passing year, and he began to sell off portions of his one thousand-acre plantation. By the mid-1870s, Hillory H. Ham was bankrupt.

To top things off, his mistreatment of his wife Samantha Elvyann Scarborough intensified. His great-grandchildren claimed that as his life began to spiral downward due to his alcoholism, he took out his frustrations upon Samantha. Hillory beat her with his fists, a stick, and a pistol, whipped her, and in her own words, he *"...violently choked her until the blood would freely flow from her nose..."* He abandoned Samantha and his children in 1874, and provided no support to their eight young children at all. Luckily, Samantha had numerous relatives in the surrounding region, and she divided up her family, sending the older ones to live with her siblings and parents, while keeping the youngest ones with her on her sister's farm.

Samantha sued Hillory for divorce in 1876, and when he refused to respond to her petition, the judge granted Samantha's petition. Samantha and her children remained split up among her family in 1880, whereas Hillory lived with his eldest son Crawford Ham and worked as a carpenter.

Hillory's situation not only contributed to his abandonment of his wife and children, but also prevented him from caring for his aged mother, Clenda Seale Ham. By the mid-1870s, when her granddaughter Isabella Ham married, Clenda had no one to provide for her. This forced Clenda to leave her home and grandchildren behind and move to the Downsville community of southern Union Parish, where she lived with her brother Thomas Seale and family for the next decade or so.

We know little of Hillory's life after 1880. He died on 12 April 1889 and was buried with his family in the Wards Chapel Cemetery.



## Hillory Herbert Ham (Jr.)

(3 Sep 1834–16 Mar 1889)

The younger Hillory Herbert Ham was known throughout his life as “*Hubbard*” (a common nickname for Herbert), “*H. Hub Ham*”, or “*H. H. Ham, Jr.*” to distinguish him from his older relative. At this time, I have no concrete proof of Hub Ham’s parents. I do have concrete proof that Hub Ham was related to William Ham, however. William Ham’s son Hillory H. Ham (Sr.) was the father of Matthew Addison Ham. On 26 September 1896, Hub Ham’s widow Minnie F. Jordan Ham petitioned the Union Parish court that Matthew was a relative to the children of Hub Ham (Union Parish Louisiana Succession Book A-3, pp. 423–424). As stated earlier, I am of the opinion that the Reuben Ham who was in Union Parish in 1842 and 1843 was William Ham’s brother, and the father of H. Hub Ham (the younger Hillory Herbert Ham). I believe that the scandalous situation with Reuben’s wife Frances Edwards caused him to leave Louisiana and move to Mississippi, leaving his son with William to raise.

Hub Ham lived with William and Clarenda in 1850, and presumably spent that decade with them. He joined the “*Phoenix Rifles*” in the summer of 1861, a company of men from Union Parish raised for Confederate military service. They trained in Union Parish in early 1861, and then went south to Camp Moore just north of Lake Pontchartrain where they officially entered the Confederate service on September 29<sup>th</sup>. Hub Ham was present for duty for the next year, likely fighting with his unit at the Battle of Shiloh on 6–7 April 1862. His unit joined the garrison of Vicksburg in May 1862 and remained there for the next year. Hub was absent from duty, sick in the hospital in July and August 1862, but again present between September and December. By the end of the year he served as the company’s drummer.

Hub’s regiment helped repulse General W. T. Sherman’s attack upon Vicksburg at the Battle of Chickasaw Bayou on December 26–29, and remained at Vicksburg until May 1863. His unit saw heavy fighting at the Battle of Port Gibson on May 1<sup>st</sup>, when the Confederates attempted to stop Yankee General Grant’s progress towards Vicksburg. Hub Ham participated in the Siege of Vicksburg, but was sick in the hospital at the surrender on July 4<sup>th</sup>. He rejoined his unit after their exchange in August 1864, and spent the remainder of the war guarding the Red River near Alexandria or marching towards Mansfield.

Hub returned to Union Parish after the war. He married to Louisa J. Dean on 18 December 1866, and then purchased his own plantation on December 27<sup>th</sup> (Union Parish LA Conveyance Book L, p. 391). However, after the death of his Uncle Billy Ham in 1867, Hub sold this farm on 24 October 1868 (Conveyance Book M, p. 255) and instead bought 280 acres from William Ham’s estate. He lived there the rest of his life. Louisa died on 1 April 1879, leaving Hubbard Ham a widower with three young children. He remarried on 28 December 1880 in Lincoln Parish Louisiana to Minnie F. Jordan (10 Nov 1857–4 Feb 1905).

In contrast to Hillory H. Ham, Hub Ham certainly appeared to be a model citizen. He became an industrious farmer, keeping his family living in a modest but comfortable standard of living. He served in various civic positions in the community. For example, in 1885 when Perry Melton and his son were executed by hanging for the murder of a neighbor, the sheriff constructed the gallows inside a building in Farmerville. Hub Ham was one of the witnesses to the hanging. Hub died in March 1889, and was buried in the Taylor/Liberty Hill Cemetery. His grave is located under the large magnolia tree in the center of the cemetery.

After Hub’s death, Minnie continued operating his old farm that lay adjacent to Tom Dean’s, the brother of Hub’s first wife Louisa. In 1900, Minnie, her three children, and her stepson Burt Ham all lived next to Tom. Minnie remarried

on 17 January 1902 to Mack Stancil. A terrible tragedy occurred in 1905 – Minnie Ham Stancil was killed by her youngest son, Palmer Ham. The Farmerville “Gazette” issue of Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup> carried this notice:

*A Terrible Mistake*

*News reached Farmerville Saturday morning of a terrible tragedy which occurred Friday night at the residence of Mr. Mack Stancil who lives about eight miles east of town, resulting in the killing of Mrs. Stancil by her son, Palmer Ham.*

*It seems that young Ham, who is about 16 years of age and another boy of his own age were out in the yard playing and observing a light in the field back of the house they became frightened and ran into the house and asked Mr. Stancil where the gun was as they thought some one was prowling around the place. Young Ham secured the gun and went out the back door and around the house and in the meantime Mrs. Stancil had gone out the back way and was standing on the back gallery watching the light, which was evidently only someone passing by. The boy came up within about 30 feet and discovered his mother standing on the gallery and thinking that she was some prowler, raised his gun and fired without saying a word. When the gun fired she screamed and Mr. Stancil, recognizing his wife's voice went in search of her and found her at the door-steps stone dead.*

Minnie was buried beside Hubbard Ham in the Taylor/Liberty Hill Cemetery. Her tombstone states that she was a native of “Tolbert” (Talbot) County, Georgia.



**The 1876 Divorce of  
Hillory Herbert Ham [Sr.]  
and his second wife  
Samantha Elvyann Scarborough**

In early 1876, Hillory Herbert Ham's second wife Samantha Elvyann Scarborough hired Farmerville attorney W. K. Rutland to file a divorce petition for her before Union Parish Court Judge Thomas Charles Lewis, III. Rutland filed her suit on 29 February 1876, and it gives a remarkably sad story of physical abuse and cruelty she had suffered from her husband:

*To the Honorable the Judge of the Parish Court in and for the parish of Union State of Louisiana.*

*The petition of Samantha E. Scarborough a resident of your said parish with respect shows that she intermarried with Hilory [sic] H. Ham who is also a resident of your said parish about 15<sup>th</sup> of November AD 1860 in this parish of Union. She avers that the said marriage has been both disagreeable and unfortunate and that the conduct of the defendant her said husband towards her has been unkind and cruel and totally repugnant to the marriage covenant and has permanently destroyed the happiness of your petitioner. It is avered that he has repeatedly been guilty of outrages towards her person by beating, and whipping her, that he has violently choked her until the blood would freely flow from her nose, that that he has assaulted her with a pistol and beat her with a stick and with his fist, and has often used abusive and insulting language to her, such as was calculated and intended to bring shame and reproach on her good name in the community in which they lived and among her best friends, and that all of this has been done without any good cause.*

*She avers that she has even been a dutiful and a prudent wife and careful and mindful of his interests and wishes but that notwithstanding all this he has abandoned her and for more than two years has failed to contribute to the support of your petitioner, his wife, and her large family of helpless children the issue of her marriage with the defendant and that she by her own exertion and with the assistance of her own relatives have to bear the burden of feeding and clothing and educating the same.*

*She avers that without the unrewarded assistance of her friends that her said children would suffer for the absolute necessities of life and would be paupers upon the charity of the world.*

*She avers that her said husband has indulged in many excesses, and in habitual intemperance and has involved the community and made it insolvent.*

*Wherefore she prays that she be authorized to prosecute this suit and stand in judgment herein and that her said husband Hilory [sic] H. Ham be duly cited to answer hereto and that after a trial had hereon that she have judgment in her favor dissolving the bonds of Matrimony heretofore existing between her and her said husband and for general relief and costs.*

*W. R. Rutland  
Atty for petitioner*

Upon receipt of Samantha's petition, Union Parish Clerk of Court W. W. Heard issued a summons to Hillory Ham, ordering him to appear in court to answer within ten days of receipt of the summons. Union Parish Sheriff M. L. McFarland returned the writ with this report:

*Recd. in office on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of Feby. A.D. 1876 and on the same day and date I made service by delivering a certified copy of the within citation together with a certified copy of petition to Hillory H. Ham in person at his domicile in this Parish about four miles from office.*

*service & mileage 2.80*

Hillory ignored his wife's petition and the summons, so Union Parish Court Judge Thomas C. Lewis issued his judgment two weeks later:

*In this case by reason of the law and the evidence adduced on the trial hereon being in favor of the Plaintiff and against the defendant, the judgment by default not having been set aside after two judicial days, it is ordered adjudged and decreed that the said Plaintiff Samantha E. Scarborough wife be authorized to prosecute this suit and stand in judgment and that she have judgment against the Defendant Hilory [sic] H. Ham dissolving the bonds of Matrimony heretofore existing between them and that defendant pay the costs of this Suit.*

*Thus done read and signed in open court on this 18<sup>th</sup> day of March 1876.*

*Thos. C. Lewis  
Parish Judge*

Exactly one month later, Hillory hired Farmerville attorney G. H. Ellis to petition the court for custody of his eldest son by Samantha, Matthew Addison Ham, who was then fourteen years old. Ellis filed Ham's petition on April 18<sup>th</sup>:

*To the Honl. the Parish Judge of Union Parish Louisiana.*

*The petition of Hillory H. Ham a resident of Union Parish La. with respect represents unto your Honl. Court that a judgment "a vinculo matromoni" has been rendered by your Honor in a suit where petitioners wife was plaintiff and petitioner was defendant petitioner represents that there are several minor children the lawful issue of petitioner and his said wife, that all of said children except Mathew A. Ham are living with their mother, that she wishes to keep the said minors and petition wishes to keep the said Mathew A. that said arrangement is perfectly agreeable to all parties – petitioner represents that said minor Mathew A. has no property, but a tutor should be appointed to supt. his education and take charge of and controle [sic] him, and that petitioner is the natural tutor and entitled to said tutorship.*

*Where fore petitioner prays that he be allowed to qualify as Natural Tutor and that letters of tutorship issue, and that Crawford Ham be appointed Under tutor...*

On the day his attorney filed his petition, Hillory H. Ham appeared in court and signed his oath as natural tutor to his son Matthew.

The timing of Hillory's petition is suspicious, coming just one month after the court granted Samantha's request for a divorce. One wonders if he used this custody claim of his son to further punish Samantha, or he truly wished to look after his Matthew. At this late date so long after the events occurred, we can only speculate. However, one telling piece of evidence is that in 1880, Hillory lived with his eldest son, Crawford Ham. On the other hand, Matthew, of whom Hillory pledged to "take charge of and controle," lived with Samantha's sister and her husband, Betty Scarborough Ward and Jack Ward.

#### **Sources:**

- Union Parish LA Civil Suit #790: Samantha E. Scarborough, wife vs. Hilory H. Ham, husband
- Union Parish LA Suit Book 1875–1882, pp. 82–83: Samantha E. Scarborough, wife vs. Hilory H. Ham, husband
- Union Parish LA Succession Book A-2, pp. 60–61: Tutorship of Matthew A. Ham

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

## Ham Descendants

### William Ham “Billy”

born: 8 Jan 1801, Culpeper County, Virginia  
 married: about 1827 or early 1828, Butler County, Alabama  
 died: May 1868, presumably on his plantation near Farmerville, Union Parish, Louisiana  
 buried: Wards Chapel Cemetery  
 parents: probably Reuben Ham and Elizabeth Pendleton of Culpeper County, Virginia  
 religion: Methodist Protestant

### Clarenda Seale

born: November 1811, Fairfield District, South Carolina  
 died: 30 May 1897, near Farmerville, Union Parish, Louisiana  
 buried: Wards Chapel Cemetery  
 parents: James Seale (1769 – 1860) and his wife Rachel (1770/1774 – 1820/1839)  
 religion: Methodist Protestant

Remark: Clarenda’s obituary states that she was born in November of 1812. However, the 1850–1880 census enumerations indicate she was born in the year 1811. Since the obituary also errs by stating that she was born in the state of North Carolina (all other documents prove her birth occurred in South Carolina), I believe it quite possible that the obituary make a mistake on her year of birth. Her obituary in Farmerville’s “*The Gazette*” issue of 2 June 1897 (Wednesday):

*Died.*

*Mrs. Clarinda Ham, nee Seale, May 30, 1897, at the residence of Mr. D. N. Kennedy, 4 miles east of Farmerville. Was born in North Carolina in Nov. 1812. She with her husband, Mr. Wm. Ham, moved to Union parish La., and has resided here ever since. Monroe Evening News will please copy.*

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

## Children of William Ham & Clarenda Seale

The heirs of William and Clarenda Ham are given in Union Parish, Louisiana Succession Book H, pp. 613–615. This record proves that H. Hub Ham (1834–1889) who lived in their 1850 household and who bought a portion of William’s old plantation in 1868, was **not** their son. All evidence indicates that he was William Ham’s nephew.

William Ham and Clarenda Seale had only two sons who survived early childhood:

1. **Hillory Herbert Ham** (Sr.) (Apr 1828/Feb 1829–12 Apr 1889) married Isabella Ann Robinson (15 Sep 1828–28 May 1860) and Samantha Elvyann Scarborough (15 Sep 1842–6 Apr 1922).
2. **Reuben James Ham** (1830/1831–Jan/June 1867) married in Union Parish, Louisiana on 29 September 1852 to Narcissus V. D. Pace (12 Aug 1830–18 Nov 1899).

♦ ♦ ♦ ♦ ♦

## Hillory Herbert Ham (Sr.)

(Apr 1828/Feb 1829–12 Apr 1889)

Hillory known variously as “*H. H. Ham Sr.*” and “*Hillory H. Ham Sr.*,” to distinguish him from his slightly younger first cousin of the same name. He married first in Union County, Arkansas on 9 January 1851 to Isabella Ann Robinson (15 Sep 1828–28 May 1860), daughter of Leggett Robinson and his wife Elizabeth. Hillory married in Union Parish, Louisiana on 15 November 1860 to Samantha Elvyann Scarborough (15 Sep 1842–6 Apr 1922), daughter of Noah Scarborough (c1808–1881/1882) and Samantha Fowler (19 Nov 1819–28 Nov 1905). Hillory and Samantha Elvyann divorced on 18 March 1876.

Upon Isabella’s 1860 death from “*inflammation*,” Hillory paid for an elaborate above-ground vault and had it placed in the Ward’s Chapel Cemetery. Isabella’s marker indicated that she was born in Fayette County, Georgia. At his death, Hillory’s body was laid beside or on top of Isabella’s remains inside her tomb in the Ward’s Chapel Cemetery. However, no one ever erected a marker for him. Isabella’s tombstone remained standing until the 1960s, when it cracked and fell to the ground in pieces. Either in the 1950s or 1960s, the top of the vault also cracked, exposing the bones. For many years, their grave became a macabre attraction to local citizens due to the exposed bones. Some few years after the top of the vault cracked, the cemetery association agreed to demolish the damaged vault and bury the bones underground.

At her death in 1922, Samantha Elvyann Scarborough Ham was buried in the Taylor/Liberty Hill Cemetery beside her parents in an unmarked grave.

Known children of Hillory Herbert Ham (Sr.) and Isabella Ann Robinson:

1. **Hillory Crawford Ham** [Crawford] (19 Jun 1852–23 Jan 1910) married about 1875 to Frances Elizabeth Walker [Fannie] (29 May 1854–10 Mar 1925), daughter of William Wesley Walker (6 Jan 1825–17 Apr 1914) and Frances Elizabeth Barron (12 Nov 1829–7 Aug 1908). Crawford and Frances Ham are buried with all four of their children in the Hasley Cemetery, West Monroe, Ouachita Parish, Louisiana.
2. **Clarenda Jane Ham** [Janie] (25 Oct 1854–23 Jul 1902) married on 16 or 18 June 1873 in Union Parish to Matthew Addison Scarborough (4 Jun 1850–19 Mar 1931), son of Noah Lewis Scarborough (c1808–1881/1882) and Samantha Fowler (19 Nov 1819–28 Nov 1905). Clarenda Jane Scarborough is buried in the Taylor/Liberty Hill Cemetery. Matthew A. Scarborough is buried in the Carlsbad Cemetery, Carlsbad, Eddy County, New Mexico.
3. **Isabella Independence Ham** (4 Jul 1858–20 Feb 1936) married between 1870 and 1877 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Henry Archer Roye (28 Jan 1855–3 Nov 1925), son of John D. Roye (23 Mar 1822–22 May 1890) and Kittie Minerva (1825–8 Sep 1886). Isabella and Henry Roye are buried in the Farmerville City Cemetery.

The known children of Hillory Herbert Ham (Sr.) and Samantha Elvyann Scarborough include:

4. **Matthew Addison Ham** [Dick] (Dec 1861–23 Mar 1930) married on 9 April 1885 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Henrietta Jane Russell [Helen, Etta, Jennie, Janie] (19 Mar 1868–9 Mar 1942).
5. **Nancy Alice Ham** (Mar 1863–1910) married 8 January 1880 in Union Parish, Louisiana to William Jackson Roan (1 Dec 1859–26 May 1904).
6. **William J. Ham** (Oct 1865–aft. 1900).
7. **Mary T. Anna Ham** [Anna, Mittie] (Nov 1867–13 Dec 1900) married on 7 April 1884 in Union Parish, Louisiana to William Pinckney Boatright [Will] (10 Nov 1857–8 Feb 1901).

8. **Henry Regensburg Ham** (6 Aug 1868–17 May 1947) married on 28 May 1896 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Daisy A. Elkins (21 Apr 1878–28 Jul 1946). Henry married on 27 April 1902 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Betty Gertrude Towns (19 Feb 1882–23 Apr 1957).
9. **John Hubbard Ham** (14 Mar 1870–2 Jan 1913) married on 19 December 1895 in Union Parish, Louisiana to Lillie Saphronia Elkins (4 Mar 1876–2 Nov 1911).
10. **Bettie Ham** (c1872–aft. 1880) lived with her mother in 1880. It is not known if she died young or married.
11. **Rosa Etta Ham** [Rosie] (Jun 1874–7 Dec 1934) married in Union Parish, Louisiana on 29 December 1901 to Amos G. McLemore (24 Nov 1856–28 Sep 1927),
12. [unknown] **Ham** – records indicate that Elvyann had a total of nine children during her fourteen years she and Hillory lived as a married couple. Given that she gave birth to a child about every two years during their marriage, her unknown, ninth child may have been a twin to one of her other children. The child died young.

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**Reuben James Ham**  
(1830/1831–Jan/Jun 1867)

Reuben James Ham married in Union Parish, Louisiana on 29 September 1852 to Narcissus V. D. Pace (12 Aug 1830–18 Nov 1899), daughter of James and Ellen Pace. Reuben died *“while away from home”* of unknown causes, in 1867 sometime prior to June 4<sup>th</sup>. His father witnessed the inventory of Reuben’s estate, the last known record of William before his death soon afterwards, that very year. Reuben was presumably buried in the Wards Chapel Cemetery, but his family never placed a marker to his memory. Narcissus was buried in the Farmerville Cemetery near her daughter, Clarendia E. Ham Pace.

Reuben J. Ham originally joined his brother’s company in mid-1861 and perhaps accompanied them south to Camp Moore. On a roster of this company published in Farmerville’s *“The Gazette”* in September 1898, Reuben was listed as *“Dr. Reubin Ham,”* with the indication that he was *“discharged for want of physical ability.”* This strange phrase suggests he suffered from some type of physical impairment. Since his name does not appear on the official Confederate records of the 19<sup>th</sup> Louisiana Regiment, he must have been discharged as the unit entered the service at Camp Moore in December 1861. No other records indicate that he was disabled or physically impaired in any way. Moreover, no other records suggest he was a medical doctor of any sort, so we cannot explain the *“Dr.”* that preceded his name on the roster.

Reuben’s wife Narcissus remained a widow for thirty-two years after his death, apparently living with her daughters. Farmerville’s *“The Gazette”* published a notice of her death in the issue of 22 November 1899 (Wednesday):

*Mrs. Narcissa Ham died Saturday night after a brief illness with pneumonia at the residence of her daughter Mrs. A. L. Pace. She was ---- years of age. A good woman has gone to her eternal rest.*

The children of Reuben James Ham are proved by federal census records and cemetery records. These court records prove that only two daughters survived their father: Union Parish LA Succession Book F, pp. 580–587 (filed 4 June 1867) and Succession Book A-2, pp. 59–60.

The known children of Reuben James Ham and Narcissus Pace

1. **Clarendia Elizabeth Ham** [Clara] (9 Sep 1853–29 May 1941) married on 27 September 1871 in Union Parish, Louisiana to William H. Maroney [Bill] (?–17 Jul 1874), son of Samuel Maroney and Martha Officer. Clarendia married on 12 December 1876 to Alexander Lane Pace [Alex] (21 Jun 1850–19 Mar 1931), son of Thomas Pace and Matilda F. Davis. Alex and Clarendia Pace are buried in the Farmerville Cemetery, Farmerville, Union Parish, Louisiana.
2. **Anna E. Ham** (1 Jul 1855–28 Jun 1860) was buried in the Wards Chapel Cemetery near Farmerville.
3. **Martha Ham** [Mattie] (30 Aug 1856–13 Dec 1916) married about 1875 to Charles Price Maroney (29 Dec 1850–30 Nov 1918), the son of Samuel Maroney and Martha Officer. Charles was born in Union Township, Webster County, Missouri. Mattie and Charles lived in north/central Union Parish near Oakland. They are buried in the Springhill Cemetery, Oakland, Union Parish, Louisiana.
4. **W. J. Ham** (c1859–1860/1867) died sometime between 26 July 1860 and 4 June 1867. Probably named *“William James Ham,”* the 1860 federal census is the only record of his existence.



## Reuben Ham

born: 4 Jan 1805, Culpeper County, Virginia  
 married: (1) 1830/1833, probably Butler County, Alabama, to an unknown woman  
 (2) 4 Dec 1842, Union Parish, Louisiana, to Frances Edwards  
 (3) 20 Jan 1861, Holmes County, Mississippi to Elizabeth Ann Frizell (30 Mar 1835–14 Jan 1929)  
 died: 29 Apr 1880, Holmes County, Mississippi  
 buried: Franklin Cemetery, Holmes County, Mississippi  
 parents: probably Reuben Ham and Elizabeth Pendleton of Culpeper County, Virginia

### Presumed Child of Reuben Ham and his first wife:

1. **Hillory Herbert Ham (Jr.)** [Hub] (3 Sep 1834–16 Mar 1889) was known by a variety of names to distinguish him from his namesake first cousin, including "*Hubbard Ham*," "*H. H. Ham Jr.*," "*H. Hub Ham*," "*Hub Ham*," and "*Hillory H. Ham Jr.*" He married in Union Parish Louisiana on 18 December 1866 to Louisa J. Dean (c1848–1 Apr 1879), the daughter of Josiah Deanes (c1800–8 Oct 1851) and Sarah Ann Taylor (c1808/1811–1870/1880). H. Hubbard Ham married on 28 December 1880 in Lincoln Parish, Louisiana to Minnie F. Jordan (10 Nov 1857–4 Feb 1905), daughter of Elizabeth ? (c1827–aft. 1880).

This man had the same name as his presumed first cousin and neighbor who was born about five years earlier in 1828 or 1829. The elder Hillory was commonly referred to as "*Hillory Herbert Ham, Sr.*"

In 1850 Hub Ham lived with William and Clenda Seale Ham and their two sons H. H. Ham, Sr. and Reuben James Ham. He was not enumerated on the 1860 Union Parish Federal Census. In 1868, he bought 280 acres from the estate of William Ham and lived there, next to William's old plantation, for the rest of his life.

No known documentary evidence conclusively proves that Hub Ham was the son of Reuben Ham. The evidence for this claim is circumstantial.

### Children of Reuben Ham and Elizabeth Ann Frizell:

Elizabeth Ann Frizell was reportedly born in Russellville, Logan County, Kentucky. She is buried in the Charleston Cemetery, Charleston, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi with her daughter and son-in-law.

2. **J. R. Ham** [male] (7 Aug 1862–22 Oct 1862) was on an old cemetery listing of the Franklin Cemetery, Holmes County, Mississippi.
3. **George B. Ham** (8 Feb 1866–15 Sep 1906) married on 19 December 1889 in Holmes County, Mississippi to Mary M. Williams (12 May 1867–?). George B. Ham is buried in the Franklin Cemetery, Holmes County, Mississippi.
4. **Elizabeth Ruth Ham** (7 Dec 1867–2 Sep 1952) married on 9 June 1894 in Holmes County, Mississippi to Jefferson Winston Williams Jr. (6 Jul 1870–1937), son of Jefferson Winston Williams Sr. (13 Dec 1827–5 Feb 1897) and Julia Virginia Horton (12 May 1842–20 Feb 1920). Elizabeth and Jeff Williams are buried in the Charleston Cemetery, Charleston, Tallahatchie County, Mississippi.

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