

More about
Mildred Washington
and the three wives of Henry Willis.

The second wife of Henry Willis was born Mildred Lewis, the daughter of John Lewis and Elizabeth Warner. She married first John Howell, by whom she had one child, a daughter Mildred Howell, who married a Lightfoot. John Howell died, and she married, second, Dr. John Brown, as probably his second wife. It is thought that she did not have any children by Dr. Brown. Her third husband was Henry Willis, and she was his second wife. By Henry Willis she had four children. After her death Henry Willis married Mildred Washington, daughter of Lawrence Washington and Mildred Warner, and they had one child, Lewis Willis. Notice that the two Mildreds are first cousins, since their mothers were the two Warner sisters.

Mildred Washington's first husband had been John Lewis. He was a first cousin of Mildred Lewis (Howell, Brown, Willis), but was not related to his wife Mildred Washington. He soon died without issue, and then Mildred Washington married Roger Gregory and had the three Gregory daughters. After he died, she became the third wife of Henry Willis, and had by him the one child Lewis Willis.

Perhaps this should have begun by saying that Henry Willis's first wife was born Ann Alexander. Ann's first husband was John Smith of Purton, by whom she had one son, John Smith. John Smith of Purton was a son of Mary Warner and John Smith, so he was a first cousin of the two Mildreds above. Ann Alexander (Smith) then married Henry Willis and had six children. To complete the listing of the Johns, it is odd that Henry Willis had a son John Willis as one of the six children of his first wife, and another son John Willis as one of the four children of his second wife.

It is true that forty or fifty years ago there was considerable misunderstanding and confusion about these three wives of Henry Willis and their children, but it was all cleared up more than forty years ago, and any confusion can be traced to early, incorrect data.

Also part of the early confusion arose from the fact that the descendants of Anne Willis, who married Duff Green, had a tradition of Washington descent. They claimed she was a daughter of Mildred Washington and Henry Willis. It turned out that she was, of course, a daughter of Mildred Lewis and Henry Willis, and so the Green family did not have the Washington line. Adlai Stevenson was one of these Green descendants, and most likely his grandmother was one of the perpetrators of the mistaken lineage.

John A. Washington