

Proposed Research on Mary Malissa Marshall

Background – What is Known

According to family stories, Isham Marmaduke Lee “took” Mary Malissa Marshall from the “home” where she was living as a teenager. Some stories say she lived with a Yeats or Yates family and that she had brothers named George and John Marshall. Some say her mother’s name was Marshall and she was unmarried.¹

Mary M. Marshall married I. M. Lee in Ware County, Georgia, on 24 December 1894.²

According to her death certificate, Mary was born 8 October 1879, in Coffee County, Georgia. She died 22 June 1960 in Jacksonville, Duval County, Florida. She was widowed and owned her home. Both father and mother spaces were blank. The informant was her son Rufus Lee.³

On her Social Security SS-5 form, dated 10 March 1938, Mary gave “unknown” for the names of her parents. For the age at last birthday, she gave her age as sixty-two. The space for date of birth has “11 Unknown” typed in and “1875” penciled in. The space for place of birth has “Ware County, Georgia.” The signature line has “Mrs I.M. Lee”, signed in ink.⁴

In 2014 and 2016, Mary’s granddaughter, Lorraine Silvey, submitted DNA for testing, both autosomal and mtDNA, but the results have not yet been studied for this genealogical problem.

Research Goal

Determine where Mary Malissa Marshall lived before her marriage to Isham Lee in 1894.

¹ Marshall Family Traditions, Cathy Finnie, compiler (MSS notes, ca. 1990; privately held by Cathy Finnie, Salisbury, North Carolina); parentage of Mary Malissa Marshall, (born ca. 1879), reported by Ruby Lee Martin, Mary’s daughter, ca. 1990. Stories of Mary’s elopement and unknown parentage. Also, stories by Mary’s daughter Grace about Mary’s brothers.

² Ware County, Georgia, County Marriage Records, 1828–1978, marriage license for I. M. Lee and Mary M Marshall; “Georgia Marriage Records From Select Counties, 1828-1978,” database with images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 21 November 2016); image 177 of 302, top right.

³ Florida, State Board of Health, Bureau of Vital Statistics, certified copy, Certificate of Death 12903308 (1960), Mary M. Lee; Office of Vital Statistics, Florida.

⁴ Mary Marshal Lee, SS no. 255-12-9864, 10 March 1938, Application for Account Number (Form SS-5), Social Security Administration, Baltimore, Maryland.

Ethical Considerations

Since there are grandchildren of Mary M. Lee still living, the research and findings should be privatized in any online genealogical websites, such as Ancestry, FamilySearch, etc.

Any DNA research needs to be done with sensitivity to the DNA owners as well as the DNA matches to protect the privacy of living people.

Before publishing any reports, consent from living people mentioned in those reports will be needed, in writing. Consider not publishing if there is negative information that may offend or embarrass living relatives.

Research Plan

Analyze the known information

- For conflicting dates, establish ranges to resolve Mary's likely date of birth.
- Create a table to illustrate differences between sources, for example year of birth, place of birth, etc.
- Study the table and date ranges to consider how to resolve the conflicts. This should be done again after new research has been incorporated.
 - Would she have been able to marry without parental consent if she was not twenty-one?
- Begin a timeline

Sources to consult

- Determine record dates for the counties surrounding and including Ware County, Georgia, in case there is overlap of years.
- Read *History of Ware County, Georgia* to learn about orphanages, schools, etc. that Mary Marshall may have attended.⁵ Look for records related to those institutions.
- Contact relatives to ask about church affiliations.
- Examine census records for 1880 and 1890 to find where Isham Lee lived.⁶ He may have lived near Mary's home. They could have met in school or at church.

⁵ Laura Singleton Walker, *History of Ware County, Georgia*, (Macon, GA., J.W. Burke Co. Publishers, 1934); database and images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 21 November 2016).

⁶ 1880 U.S. census, Ware County, Georgia, population schedule, Glenmore, p. 33 (penned), dwelling 286, family 293, Richard Lee household; images, *Ancestry.com* (<http://ancestry.com> : accessed 21 November 2016); citing Family History Film 1254170, roll 170, image 0234.

- Examine census records for 1880 and 1890 (if available) in Coffee and Ware counties looking for children called Mary and/or Malissa in the age range, but without searching on last name.
 - Begin with households near Isham Lee's family in 1880.
 - Look closely at Yeats/Yates and Marshall households.
 - Look closely at households with family members named George and John.
- Examine the Mary and Isham Lee household in 1900 through 1940 census records to see if any men name George or John appear in their household. If so, find their death records.
- If no answer has been found, expand the research and consider Isham Lee
 - Consider ages for the couple.
 - Consider Isham's siblings and occupations as possible connections to Mary before their marriage.
- Investigate court records, such as probate, estates, and guardian bonds.
- Begin a study of matches to the autosomal and mtDNA tests submitted by Mary's granddaughter.
 - Look for connections to Georgia in the closest matches where family trees were provided.
 - Contact the closest matches
 - Ask if they are interested in exchanging information, and if so, do not share information about living people.
 - Ask about their family trees and possible family connections to southern Georgia.

Methodology

The best methodology for building the case is not yet clear. If there are multiple candidates for Mary's home before her marriage, the alternate hypotheses approach could work well.

With a variety of evidence items from multiple sources, the building block method is likely to be most effective. Several items may be correlated within the building blocks. The final report may incorporate a combination, depending on how complex the proof argument needs to be.

Tables will be helpful for discussing and resolving conflicting birth dates and ages. Timelines can also help to clarify relationships and events.