The Wives of William Combs
and the Hatton Connection

On 13 October, 1742, William Combs of St Mary’s County, gentleman, signed his will. In it he made bequests to his family:

I give and bequeath to my daughter Mary Waughop one shilling ... together with sundry other valuable goods & Chattles she had of me these twenty years last past and upwards ... I give to my daughter Eleanor Medley one shilling ... together with a niger Wench she had of me about thirteen years ago called Nell ... I give and bequeath unto my son Enoch Combs one shilling ... together with a niger Wench he had of me about the same time of thirteen years ago called Flora ... I give will and bequeath of all the Rest of my Estate the one third part unto my dearly beloved wife Mary Combs ... [and the remaining part] between my now five younger Children: viz Thomas Hatton Combs Susannah Combs William Combs Junior James Combs and Philip ... and it is my will that my son Hatton Combs do remain and live with my loving wife Mary Combs aforesaid until he shall arrive at the age of twenty one years ... and also I will and desire that my other four younger children viz Susannah William James and Philip Combs may live along with their mother the said Mary Combs ... till they or any or Either of them come or arrive to their Lawfull age as aforesaid ... I make and ordain constitute and appoint my dear and well beloved wife Mary Combs aforesaid my full and sole Executrix.

According to the transcript of the will, his widow accepted administration on 20 December, 1740. As the inventory was sworn on 18 March 1742/43, the date of administration should be 20 December, 1742.

From this will it is clear that William Combs’ children can be placed into two main groups: the older children, Mary, Eleanor and Enoch; and the younger children, Thomas Hatton, Susannah, William, James and Phillip.

The Wives of William Combs

In 1721 William Combs gave his age as fifty. He was born in about 1671 and married his first wife in the mid to late 1690s. Her name does not survive.

By 13 August 1722 William Combs had married Elizabeth, the widow of Cornelius Manning. On that date the accounts in the Manning estate were presented by William Combs and Elizabeth, his wife, executrix, and John Mills. On 8 December 1721 Elizabeth Manning had presented the appraisement of her late husband’s estate so the marriage had occurred early in 1722. Elizabeth may not have survived her marriage for long, as in 1723/24 an administration bond for the estate of Cornelius Manning was requested by William Combs and John Mills with no mention of Elizabeth, the executrix.

The only other wife recorded for William Combs is “my dearly beloved wife Mary Combs” who was the executor of his estate. Soon after his death Mary remarried. On 18 March 1742/43 Joseph Jenkins and Mary his wife made oath regarding the Combs estate. Mary and Joseph had four children born between 1744 and 1752. In her will Mary Jenkins left bequests to her Jenkins children, to her daughter Susannah Cooper and mentions her sons William Combs and Phillip Combs. James Combs had died childless in 1772.
The Older Children

William Combs’ older children were Mary Waughop, Eleanor Medley and Enoch Combs.

Mary Waughop

From her father’s will it can be seen that Mary Waughop had been married for more than twenty years as she had been in possession of “sundry other valuable goods & Chattles she had of me these twenty years last past and upwards.” She may have been married in about 1720 and born in about 1700.

There are two women named Mary who married men named Waughop.

The first is Mary, the wife of James Waughop who died in about 1750. James was active in 1720 when he and John Medley were sureties in the administration of the estate of James Baker. By 1722 he and his wife had a son, Thomas Palmer Waughop. Therefore this Mary is of the right age to be the eldest daughter of William Combs.

The second Mary was the granddaughter of John Evans of St Mary’s County, who by 5 September 1719 had become the wife of Thomas Waughop. This Thomas Waughop was the brother of James Waughop. Thomas died in 1735. In his will his widow, Katherine, is nominated as his executrix. Therefore this Mary could not be the daughter of William Combs as William’s daughter was still alive in 1742.

Eleanor Medley

In his will dated 24 August 1752 William Medley of Saint Mary’s County. left bequests to his wife Elinor, whom he nominated as his executrix, and his daughters Elinor and Mary. His daughter Elinor was to receive her bequest at the age of sixteen or on the day of her marriage.

As there is no condition as to the age at which Mary would receive her inheritance then she must have been aged 21 or more and therefore born in or before 1731. Her mother, Eleanor, would have been born in about 1710.

Enoch Combs

Enoch Combs married Mary, widow of John Mills. The will of John Mills was granted probate on 6 November 1728 and on 22 October 1729 Enoch Combs and Mary his wife were acting as his executors. It is therefore probable that Enoch was born in about 1705.

William Combs’ First Wife

The name of the first Mrs William Combs has not been preserved. However, it is interesting to note that some the lands held by Enoch Combs, Wilderpoole and Grapnell at Poplar Hill, had both been surveyed for James Johnson in the 1640s and 1650s. By 1707 these lands had passed to James Johnson’s son, another James Johnson, born in about 1652.

For these properties to have been passed to Enoch Combs it seems likely that his mother was a daughter of James Johnson junior.
The Younger Children

William Combs’ five youngest children fall into two groups. The eldest, Thomas Hatton Combs, who was to “remain and live with my loving wife Mary Combs” and the younger four, Susannah William James and Philip who were to “live along with their mother the said Mary Combs.”

This wording makes it clear that Thomas Hatton Combs was not the child of Mary Combs. He was, therefore, the son of William Combs' second wife, Elizabeth Manning.

The Hatton Connection

In 1751 Thomas Hatton Combs was in possession of an estate called Rich Neck. Rich Neck was a tract of land devised by Thomas Hatton in his will of 1701 to his daughter Elizabeth and his unborn child.

In 1753 Thomas Hatton Combs also held a tract of land named Hatton’s Rest or Hunting Creek. This estate had been surveyed for Thomas Hatton in 1654 and resurveyed for his son Thomas Hatton junior in 1665. From him it passed to his son, Thomas Hatton III, who, in his will of 1701, bequeathed it to his daughter Elizabeth Hatton.

The inheritance of both these estates by Thomas Hatton Combs, along with his very name, identifies his mother Elizabeth as the daughter of Thomas Hatton III.

The Three Wives of William Combs

William Combs was married three times. His first wife, who may have been a daughter of James Johnson junior, gave him three children. His second wife, Elizabeth Manning, formerly Hatton, was the heiress of Thomas Hatton, Secretary of Maryland who had brought the Hatton family to Maryland. She may have died in childbirth with their only child. His third wife, Mary, who survived him by forty six years, gave him four children.

William Good
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1 The will of William Combs, Will Book TA1 folios 116-117
3 Inventory http://mdhistory.net/msaref10/msa_te_1_020/html/msa_te_1_020-0451.html
4 Abstracts of Chancery Court Records of Maryland, 1669-1782, by Debbie Hooper (Westminster, Maryland 1996) Pages 49-50
6 The Flowering of the Maryland Palatinate by H.W. Newman (Baltimore 2001), page 308
7 Testamentary Proceedings, Liber 27, fol. 18, cited on http://www.combs-families.org/combs/ms/ms-fcg.htm
9 Will of Mary Jenkins: Will Book JJ1 folios 453-454
10 Will of James Combs: TA1 637-638
Will of Katherine Palmer, widow: Will Book PC1, folios 313-314
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