

**THE ANCESTRY AND DESCENT**  
**OF**  
**WILLIAM SHIELDS**

**b. County Armagh, Ireland, 1728**

**d. Frederick County, Maryland, 1797**

**John Edgar Shields**  
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# THE SHIELDS FAMILY IN AMERICA: Its Origins, Migrations, and History in the New World

This narrative consists of three parts. The first presents general information on the European origins of the largest "connected" Shields family in America—that group of related individuals who in the middle Seventeenth Century (approximately 1655) began the family migrations from the Ulster counties of northern Ireland to North America. The second part presents a very general overview of a number of the American Shields families, including the largest related family groups extant today in the United States. The third deals more specifically with the individuals who comprise the direct ancestry of the immediate Shields family which is the subject of this presentation. This document is not a "cram" course in family history, but rather seeks to bring to younger members of the family some perception of who their Shields ancestors are, where they came from, and a brief history of some of their careers and their progeny in the New World.

## **PART I: European Origins**

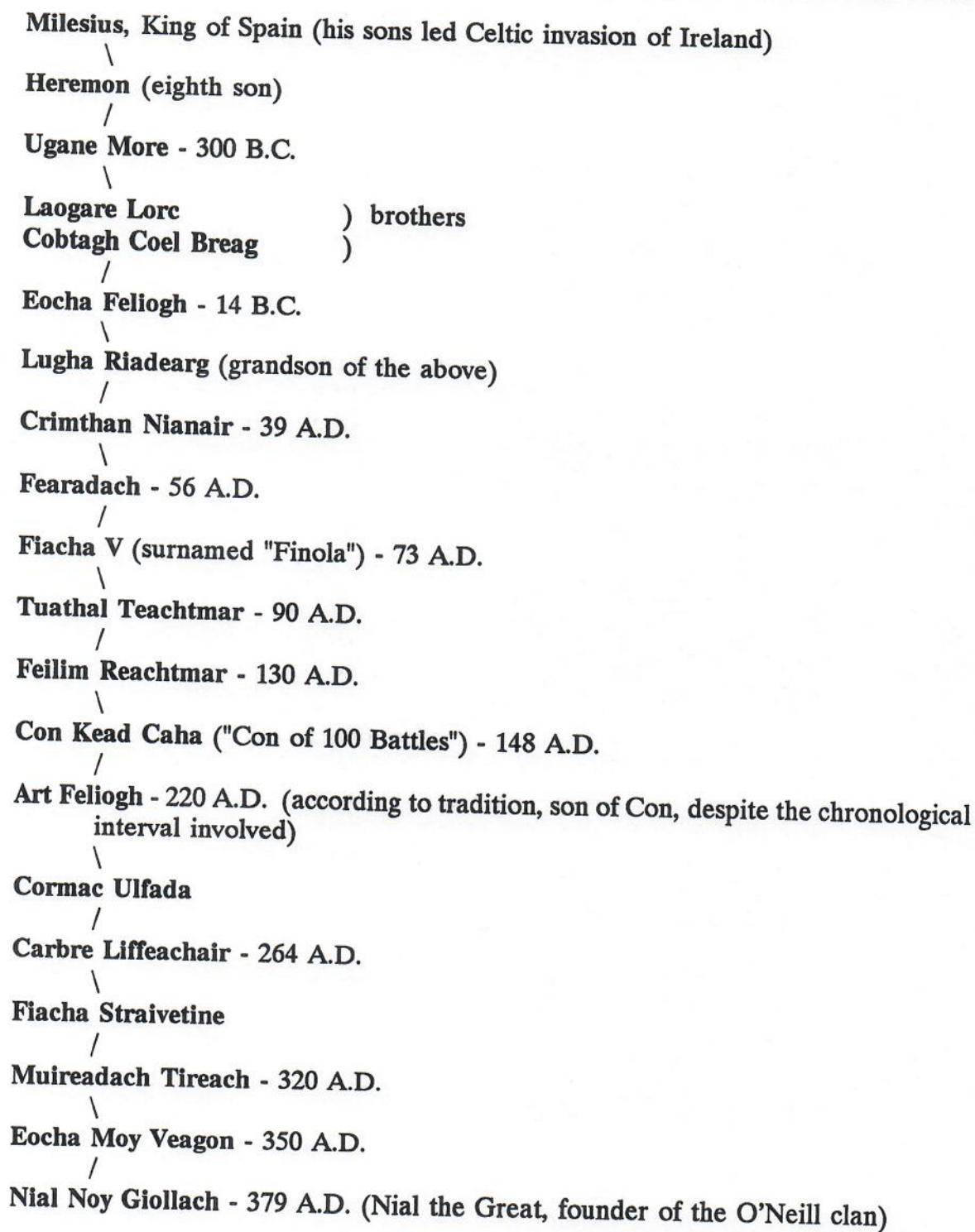
There are, both historically and contemporaneously, family groups bearing the Shields name, or a close variant, to be found in continental Western Europe—Germany, Norway, Holland (Scheldt), and even France (DaShiell, Dashiell, etc.) By far the largest European Shields family group, however, is—and for many centuries has been—found in Ireland. The Irish Shields family is of Celtic origin, and is more specifically—and correctly—referred to as a Milesian family. "Milesian" is the term applied to descendants of the Celts who invaded Irish shores centuries before the beginning of the Christian era.

Irish mytho-history holds that the eight sons of Milesius, Celtic conqueror of Gaul and King of Spain, together with their mother Scota and a cousin of Milesius, assaulted the Irish coast. Only three of the eight sons, their mother Scota, and their cousin Lugadh survived a fierce tempest and actually landed in Ireland. The survivors claimed sovereignty over much of Ireland.

The origin of the Celts (pronounced according to individual preferences, with either a hard or soft "C", but with the hard "C" most commonly heard) is shrouded in mystery, but they are classified linguistically as members of the Indo-European racial group. The Celts first appeared historically in the Greek/Scythian regions of Asia Minor, expanding rapidly both to the East and, in particular, throughout Western Europe during the millennium before Christ.

## Emergence of the Shields Family

For whatever interest such mytho-history may hold, the Irish (and principal American) Shields family traditionally is held to have developed from the following lineage:



Eogan - northern Hy (Ui) Nials	)	All sons of
Conal Gulban - northern Hy Nials	)	Nial the Great
Laogare - southern Hy Nials	)	
Conal Crimthine - southern Hy Nials	)	
Fiacha - southern Hy Nials	)	
Maine - southern Hy Nials	)	

It is from Nial's son Maine (known as Maine More—"Big Maine") that in several short generations a distinct O'Siadail (Shields) family emerged. A son of Maine named Brian, Brien, or Breen was next in the line of descent which produced the Shields family; for this reason, there is occasional confusion concerning O'Brien family origins of the Shields lines. This Brian was not, however, part of the southern Irish clan O'Brien whose members included Ireland's greatest Christian king, Brian Boru. The Shields' came from the clan O'Neill, one of the two dominant family groups in the Ulster counties.

References to the O'Siadail, much later anglicized to O'Shields, name are found in a great many of the standard Irish archival sources. These include *Calendar of State Papers - Ireland, "The Book of Howth"*; *Calendar of the Patent Roles - Ireland (Reign of Charles I)*; *Census of Ireland (ca 1639)*; *County Armagh Poll Book (volumes for 18th century and earlier)*; *Gravestone Inscriptions (Volume I)*; *Hearth Money Rolls of Ireland (1664—1666 enumeration)*; *Index to the Prerogative Wills of Ireland*; *Irish Land Records (1708—1743)*; *Register of Deeds - Dublin - Abstracts of Wills*; *Fiants of Elizabeth*. In addition to the foregoing official records, references to early Shields' are found in many historical and other reference works, dating from fifth and sixth centuries A.D. into the modern era.

### O'Neill Ancestry

An interesting legend, carried forward today in many examples of Irish heraldry, concerns the origin of the "red hand of the O'Neills." This legend holds that as the surviving sons of Milesius and others in their party approached the Irish coast, it was announced that whoever first touched land would hold sovereignty over all that he could behold. A son of Milesius, according to the story, took an axe, severed one of his hands, and threw it far enough toward the approaching shore that it touched the land, entitling him to claim it as his territory. Today in Irish heraldry, any coat of arms bearing one or more red hands denotes descent from the O'Neill clan which devolved from this intrepid son of Milesius.

Milesian families in Ireland for many generations were distinguished from others by the prefix "O'" before the clan name. Originally "O'Neill," for instance, meant "son of Neill" but was later expanded to mean "descendant of Neill." Thus, with the Shields family, the Celtic version of the name (with a number of variant spellings) was most commonly "O'Siadail" (pronounced "O'Sheel" or "O'Sheelall").

The office of the Lord Herald of Ireland, located in Dublin Castle in the city of Dublin, serves as the repository for extensive genealogical, heraldic, and other historical archives relating to the early families of Ireland. The Lord Herald functions as the official

arbiter of the likely validity of ancestral lineage and heraldic claims. Official mythohistories have been compiled for virtually all of the principal Milesian families, even though many of them contain major gaps or intuitive leaps (for instance, a listed son of an early member of such a clan might show a birthdate several hundred years after that of his reputed father), but such genealogies nevertheless represent the distillation of all known information, oral histories, and archival references—whether wholly plausible or not—concerning a given family line.

Most Irish histories acknowledge that the two greatest Irish kings were Niall (or Nial) the Great, more completely known as Niall Naoighiallach (Noy Giollach) or, to the Romans (whom he prevented from invading Ireland) Niallus Magnus; and Brian Boru, generally considered the greatest of the Christian Kings.

As ancestor of the Irish Shields family, Niall is the object of our immediate interest. He is considered the greatest of the pre-Christian kings and was the founder of the most important and longest dynasty of Irish history. With virtually no interruption, Niall's direct descendants were Ard-Rights of Ireland for some 600 years.

His direct descent, which in time became known as the O'Neill clan, was most numerous in the northern reaches of Ireland, and is that line from which a distinct Shields (O'Siadail) family emerged sometime around 500 A.D. A final note on Niall: according to frequently repeated legend, while campaigning in France Niall captured and took back to Ireland as a slave a youth named Dathi, whose education abroad he later sponsored. Dathi subsequently assumed the name Patrick and converted Ireland to Christianity—the Saint Patrick of rich Irish tradition.

## The Medical Tradition

In Ireland, beginning in very early times (6th or 7th centuries A.D.) and continuing as late as the 17th or 18th Centuries, the Shields (O'Shields, Saidhail, O'Saidhail) family was a medical rather than a territorial sept. Members of the family, which closely guarded its collected medical lore, passed both written and oral versions of such knowledge selectively down through the family and across the generations as a valued legacy. The family's medical practitioners served the Irish kings and other political and military leaders, often intermarrying with such family groups, and occupying honored positions as "surgeon to the army" of many prominent figures of early Irish history. For this reason, although the Shields family is considered predominantly an Ulster family because of its origins in northern Ireland's O'Neill clan, archival references to Shields family members, including numerous medical practitioners, are found in many regions of Ireland.

As reward for their services, and often through intermarriage, the O'Shields' were in many cases landowners of some substance, but not predominantly in any particular geographic region. For serving medically the person, family, and indeed army of a military chieftain, the Shields' were generally well rewarded. When their sponsors lost their battles and suffered the resulting consequences of defeat, however, their Shields medical practitioners suffered with them. Thus the fiants of Elizabeth, writs from the throne which included appointments, rewards, punishments, and pardons include with some frequency the names of individual Shields family members. These were generally practitioners whose

services to a defeated leader had been punished, and whose names subsequently appeared as the recipients of pardons from the British Crown.

Today, in the Royal Irish Academy in Dublin the "Book of Shields" is preserved, one of the most famous of the family medical compilations. It contains the hand-written lore accumulated by the Shields family over the centuries, and includes entries in Greek consisting of quotations from Galen the Physician, as well as medical protocols concerning treatments and medications in Latin, French, Italian, Gaelic, and English. This compendium, while not illuminated or otherwise adorned in the manner of other early Irish books (such as the Book of Kells), is nevertheless regarded as a national treasure. That coat of arms most closely associated with the Irish Shields family contains, in addition to the red hand of the O'Neills, a red star, denoting the family as a medical clan.

### Scottish Connections

There are traditions in some family groups in America that their particular Shields lines are Scottish or, more commonly, Scotch-Irish. During the first decade of the 17th Century King James I of England (who had been James XII of Scotland), dispossessed rebellious clans in the northern Ireland counties, scattered their leadership, and established Ulster Plantation into which he imported many lowland Scots. With the Scottish came the teachings of John Knox, and the protestant (Presbyterian) tradition which today continues to characterize British Northern Ireland—an area which in modern times consists of six of the nine traditional Ulster counties. Shields family members, whose family name by this time most commonly had been anglicized to O'Shiel, O'Shield, O'Shields, and similar variants, were in many instances converted to the protestant faith from their traditional Catholicism—sometimes conversions more of convenience than of conviction.

Living among Scots who included many protestants and who retained cultural affinity with Scotland, Irish families which remained in Ulster after 1609 included a number whose members converted to the protestant faith, often sending their children to Scotland to be educated in what were regarded as that country's superior schools—or at least schools not permeated by Irish Catholic teachings and outlooks. It is apparent that this occurred among some of the Shields families of Ulster. It is possible that there were Shields' of Scottish ancestry in northern Ireland dating from this period, but from available documentary evidence it appears very likely that the majority of Shields families in Ulster continued to be those of long-established Celtic-Irish origin. The genealogical records of Scotland do not support contentions of major Shields families settling in Ireland from that country or, indeed, of a significant Shields presence in Scotland either before or after establishment of the Ulster Plantation.

It is a reasonable conclusion that most, if not all, Irish Shields families found in diverse counties of Ireland during this period were descended from Milesian forebears. Indeed, the biography of General/Senator James Shields, whose statue represents the State of Illinois in the U.S. Capitol's Statuary Hall, states of this Catholic statesman that he was from a northern Irish family converted from Catholicism to the protestant faith and, later, reconverted to Catholicism, and asserting family presence in Ireland significantly antedating the Ulster Plantation. Among the immediate forebears of James Shields in Ireland are

several collateral families using the Milesian "O'Shields" form, a usage which would never be used were Scottish ancestors part of his family group. General/Senator James Shields, it should be noted, descends from one of the four sons (Daniel) of William Shields (1600) of County Antrim, ancestor of the immediate Shields line treated in this narrative.

When Irish immigrants from the Ulster counties reached America during both 17th and 18th centuries, they were commonly characterized in the New World as Scotch-Irish (or Scots-Irish), whether or not they had Scottish ancestry. In our own line of the Shields family, it has been common in some recent generations to refer to the family as Scotch-Irish. With reference purely to the Shields part of the ancestry, this is inaccurate. The immediate family line, descended from John Sanford and Alice Paxton Shields—her Paxton forebears Scottish members of the clan McLeod from the Scottish islands of Skye, Lewis, and Harris—could properly be termed Scotch-Irish, but the term is inapplicable when considering the Shields side of the family alone.

There are, to be sure, several known Shields family groups in America of Scottish origin. One of these descended from the controversial Scottish Presbyterian theologian, Alexander Shields (also rendered Sheilds or Sheils) who was born in Berwickshire Scotland and died in Jamaica. Alexander had a son William, born in 1690 in Jamaica, who resettled to the North American mainland, and died in Londonderry Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania in 1760. He had eight children of whom we have record, two of whom—Archibald and Thomas—married Bayard sisters, members of a prominent Huguenot family later associated with the founding of Bardstown, Kentucky, and whose descent includes the American literary-journalistic personage, Herbert Bayard Swope. This family group includes among its descent Princeton University theologian Charles Woodruff Shields; U.S. Representative Benjamin Glover Shields; Patrick Henry Shields, pioneer and associate of William Henry Harrison; and a number of southern planters, lawyers, and military officers, particularly in the United States Navy. Thomas Wilmer Shields, member of this line and a Navy purser and port director of New Orleans during the War of 1812, made a major contribution to the American victory in the 1815 Battle of New Orleans.

Notwithstanding the existence of such family lines, the major Shields family in America today is chiefly of Irish origin, and can probably lay claim to having ancestry in Ireland dating back to the time of the initial Celtic invasions—sometime between 500 and 1000 B.C. Or, as one of the present writer's correspondents, a Shields family member from Georgia, expressed it in a letter during the 1970s: "We Shields' are Irish, nothing but Irish, and damn' proud of it. There is no family any better, and very few as good."

## PART II: The New World

Early records of the North American colonies report the presence of a few unidentified persons named Shields, particularly in Maryland and Virginia, before 1650. The context in which such references occur suggests that they were possibly of English, rather than Irish, nationality. The arrival in the New World of the forebears of the Irish Shields family is chronicled in several privately published genealogical works, and has long been the subject of an oral history which, though varying in detail, is essentially consistent.

The original migrating generation of the largest "connected" family in America today appears to have been the sons of a family member who lived at the turn of the 17th century in County Antrim, Ireland, "on the shores of Lough Neagh" (adjacent to Belfast, and the largest lake in the British Isles). One William Shields, born at some time between 1590 and 1600, whose wife's name is not known, fathered four sons of whom we have record. He may well have fathered daughters, as well—many genealogical records from this period often mention female offspring only in passing or omit them entirely—but we know today only of sons William (b. 1630), James (1633), Daniel, and John (born apparently in the early 1640s and presumed by other circumstances to have been significantly younger than the two older Shields sons).

Following the execution of Charles I in the early 1650's, during the period of the Commonwealth (1653—1659), Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell reportedly included the two elder Shields offspring in one of several roundups and deportations of young Irish men whose principal offense was the fact that they were Irish. Harassment of William Shields 1600, probably leading to his death in the early 1650s, as well as the fact that his two younger sons were kept in concealment for much of their youth, suggests that the Shields' may have been in particular disfavor, for whatever reasons, with the Roundheads. Family histories and tradition hold that these two older Shields brothers, William and James, both in their early 20s, were exiled to the important trading center of Barbados in the West Indies, which at mid-17th Century had a greater European population than the entire North American mainland. How they survived their exile we do not know, but family history is agreed that within less than two years they managed to take passage via slave ship ("chattel boat") to Virginia, arriving around 1655 at Middle Plantation, the site of present-day Williamsburg.

The subsequent histories of these two Shields brothers is extensively chronicled, chiefly in books by the late John Arthur Shields as well as by other descendant members of the resultant family lines. Other accounts exist which connect these two Shields immigrants with the two younger sons of William 1600, the youngest of whom, John Shields (ca. 1640), was the progenitor of the line which is the subject of this compilation.

To treat with their careers and descent in a very summary manner:

1. **William Shields (1630).** A few years after arrival of the two Shields brothers in Middle Plantation (which did not become Williamsburg until 1699), William's younger brother, James, migrated northward to the port of Baltimore, and subsequently located in Kent County, Maryland. His elder brother William, meanwhile, remaining in Williamsburg, was himself the progenitor of a well-documented family line. Later generations of William 1630's descent migrated elsewhere in Virginia, to the river settlements in North Carolina,

and ultimately into Indiana Territory around 1800. Various genealogical works treat with the resultant lines which, collectively, are sometimes referred to as "the Williamsburg line." Among prominent Americans in this branch of the family were President John Tyler (one of two Shields-connected Presidents, the other being James Buchanan) and William Tyler Page, author of "The American's Creed." William 1630's son, also named William, together with his father, operated Shields Ordinary. These Shields family members are mentioned in the Bruton Parish church records of the time, and their tavern is noted occasionally in constabulary records—one assumes for occasional breaches of the peace. Shields Tavern has been restored within the past decade as one of Colonial Williamsburg's historical points of interest and informal dining establishments, and has become a popular stop on tours of the restoration.

2. **James Shields (1633).** From a Malthusian standpoint, James Shields was probably responsible for a greater portion of the Shields family in America than any other member of an immigrant generation. His own descent is not fully known, but included a son, William, born in Kent County, Maryland, in 1668, and died in Augusta County, Virginia, in 1741 while helping one of his sons build a cabin. This William Shields married Jeannette Parker and fathered five children: James Shields ("the cordwainer"), Jane Shields (did not marry), Thomas Shields, Eliza Shields (Hathaway), and John Shields, the latter born in 1709. The three sons migrated to Augusta County, Virginia, became major landowners, farmers, surveyors, and (James) cordwainer, or shoemaker/leatherworker in the Beverly Manor portion of the huge Borden Tract which included much of the central Shenandoah Valley. John Shields, above, included among his children a Robert Shields (1740) who married Nancy Stockton., This family, which later migrated farther south in the Shenandoah Valley and, about 1784, into the wilderness of East Tennessee near present-day Pigeon Forge, consisted of ten sons and a daughter. Known as the "family of the Ten Brothers," all lived to maturity and fathered what in most instances were large families. Many of the Ten Brothers migrated about 1800 to Indiana Territory. Among this group were David Shields ("Big Dave"), a man of great strength and equally great compassion; in his later years he was active in the Underground Railway, helping slaves escape to freedom in the North. Another of the Ten Brothers was John Shields, official scout and gunsmith of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The Ten Brothers family built Shields Fort on Middle Creek in Sevier County, Tennessee, at the foot of Shields Mountain (which exists today under that name, and one of whose claims to fame is that it is the birthplace of country singer Dolly Parton).

Of interest to our immediate branch of the family is the fact that Eliza Shields Hathaway had a son, William Hathaway, who in 1790 wrote a two-paragraph document which very clearly delineated family interrelationships, and mentioned that William Shields 1728, ancestor of our subject Shields family in America, together with his mother, sister(s) and brother(s) took up residence with their Shields/Hathaway cousins in Southern Pennsylvania, and perhaps adjacent areas of Maryland, after their arrival in America with the immigrant William's father and younger brother Robert having died on the voyage. From our Shields ancestor's arrival at New Castle, Delaware, the bereaved family went to nearby southern Pennsylvania (apparently Chester County) and resided with Shields cousins descended from the 1655 immigrant James until their subsequent migrations to various

destinations, including—for William 1728—Frederick County, Maryland.

The so-called 1790 Hathaway history, which provides the genealogical linkage and serves as one of the principal original documentary sources whose text has survived to today concerning the interrelationships of the early families in America, reads as follows:

*My great grandfather on the Shields side was James Shields. He was born in County Armagh in the year 1635. His father was born in County Antrim. In about the twentieth year of his age he and his brother and many others were arrested by the English and deported to the Barbadoes Islands. He came to Baltimore before 1660. He settled first in Kent County [MD] and then in Newcastle [DE]. His brother John and family came to America about the year 1738 or 1740. I was a mere child when they arrived. Cousin William lived with us about two years, his father having died on the ocean. The family settled in Frederick County [MD]. I have not seen any of them for nearly fifty years. Cousin William has a large family. Great grandfather James Shields died when my mother was a little girl.*

*My grandfather was William Shields. He was born in Kent County in the year 1668. My grandmother on my mother's side was Jeanette Parker. Aunt Jane (Shields) was born January 15, 1696. She died in Lancaster County [PA] in the year 1750. I had four uncles. One died young. Uncle Tom was born in the year 1699. Uncle James was born in the year 1694. Uncle John was born in the year 1709. They lived first in Chester County [PA] and then moved to Augusta County, Virginia. Mother was born June 3, 1704. She died in Chester County in the year 1742, being stricken with pneumonia. Grandfather William Shields was killed by a falling log while helping one of my uncles build a house in Virginia in 1741. Grandmother lived with my Aunt Jane until her death. Uncle James died about the year 1750. His son John was about my age. He visited us soon after. I have never seen him since then. He was living in North Carolina a few years ago. Uncle Tom died about the year 1765 leaving several children. Uncle John died just before the war. Several of my cousins were in the Continental Army. Uncle Tom's children moved away and I do not know where they are. Some of them went south, I think. Uncle John's children scattered. One lived in Pennsylvania. One went to North Carolina. One went to Boone's settlement in Frankland [Tennessee] a few years ago. Some of them lived in Virginia. My relatives on my mother's side [Shields'] were all large, strong, long-lived and industrious people.*

**3. Daniel Shields.** The third son of William Shields 1600 of County Antrim was Daniel Shields, born in the late 1630s or early 1640s in County Antrim. He and his younger brother, John, spent some years of their youth in hiding because their family was *non grata* politically with the Commonwealth—indeed, their father apparently died in the early 1650s at about the time that his two eldest sons were deported, quite possibly as a result of persecution. Daniel was reconverted to Catholicism—possibly as a reaction to the excesses of Cromwell's Puritan forces in Ireland—and was killed at the Battle of the Boyne

in 1690. He had four known sons—the eldest escaped to Spain and achieved high rank in the Spanish Court; the second also made his way to Spain, then to France, and finally to Jamaica, where he died; the third son was killed with his father at the Battle of the Boyne. The fourth son, Daniel, removed to County Tyrone and held as his lands the Castle Caulfield estate. This Daniel had a son Patrick who died in County Tyrone in 1771. Patrick's son Charles was born in County Tyrone, as was his grandson, James Shields, in 1806. James migrated to America in the early nineteenth century, and had prominent military and political careers. He served as an officer in the Black Hawk War, a major general and national hero in the Mexican War, and a brigadier general in the Civil War. He is the only American to have served as a United States Senator from three different states: Illinois, Minnesota, and Missouri. His statue is one of two representing the State of Illinois in Statuary Hall at the U.S. Capitol in Washington.

4. **John Shields.** William 1600's youngest son, John, also spent his youth in hiding. Little is known of his career, except that he retained the protestant faith of his father. Some family histories state that he was the immigrant father of William Shields 1728 who died at sea. If this is correct, he would have been in his 80's—or even older—at the time of undertaking the perilous ocean voyage to America in the 1730s, and would have fathered at least his younger children when in his 70s or 80s. Against this unlikely scenario, most family genealogists intersperse a generation, probably also named John (see Hathaway history) as the father of William 1728, and the migrant Shields ancestor who died at sea. Whatever the circumstances, the particulars of William Shields 1728, born in County Armagh (adjacent to County Antrim), are known from many sources, and are summarized in Part III, which follows.

## Part III: The Descent of William Shields of County Armagh

### First Generation in America: The Immigrant

#### WILLIAM SHIELDS - 1728-1797

The direct Shields ancestor of the immediate line—the first of his line to reach the New World—is William Shields, born in County Armagh, Ireland, on July 14, 1728 (Oldstyle—that is, before British adoption of the Gregorian Calendar in the early 1750s which added 11 days to previous Julian Calendar dates). Certain basic particulars of his early life and emigration to America were handwritten in a family Bible presented to William Shields II in January 1796 and subsequently given by him to his daughter, Jane Shields Hunter, and comprise a basic family history of this line. In addition to enumerating the eleven children born to William and Jane Williams Shields, the record includes:

*"William Sheilds [sic] was born in the County of Armagh in the Kingdom of Ireland on Sunday the fourteenth day of July in the Year of our Lord 1728—embarked Aboard A sloop Comanded by Capt. Alexander Smith for America on the twenty sixth day of July 1737 Being the Ninth Year of his Age. Arrived at Newcastle State of Delaware on the first day of August Next Ensuing on the voyage lost hius father and Brother Robert, who was taken away by the unrelenting hand of death. Dwelt in Newcastle County six years—then Removed into Cessil [Cecil] County State of Maryland. Remained there four years Next ensuing—then removed to Frederick County, State of Maryland aforesaid in the year 1748—and was married on the twenty fifth day of April 1754 to Jane [Bentley, a previous married name] Williams Daughter of John Williams—who was then late from Chester County Pennsylvania Sade Jane was born in Lancaster County State of Pennsylvania—in North America—on the sixteenth day of August 1736..."*

This family Bible, viewed and photographed by the present writer in the late 1960s, was then in the possession of the late Barbara Hoffman O'Kelley of Leesburg, Florida, a direct descendant of Jane Shields Hunter. It is presently in the possession of a son of Barbara O'Kelley, Marion Benson O'Kelley.

A note about orthography is in order. The spelling of most English words was not standardized in the language until the appearance of Noah Webster's first dictionary in the early 19th century. Both common and proper nouns, in particular, were spelled in widely variant ways. In William Shields' hand-written will he spells his own family name three different ways. Until roughly mid-nineteenth century, in consequence, spelling variations in the family name did not necessarily denote different family lines, but simply the inconsistency which characterized much spelling during earlier periods

The wording of the above Bible account suggests that William arrived in America by himself, but this does not appear to be the case. He was, indeed, an orphan as orphanhood was then defined—the loss of a father—but so were his sister(s) and brother(s) as well. The Bible account, written some 60 years after the event, was focused on William Shields, not the other members of his family. There is a substantial record which strongly suggests that his mother, one or more sisters, as well as at least one, and probably several, older brothers were also part of the immigrant party. There was a James Shields associated with William Shields 1728 during the early years of the American Revolution who clearly was not his son James (although both sons James and John did serve with their father), but was quite possibly his older brother. A second probable brother was named David, who married a Nesbitt, and concerning whom genealogical records exist which suggest a family connection with William 1728. The possible identity of these immigrant siblings has received little attention but is a field of interesting inquiry for some future family historian.

William Shields the immigrant was by profession a surveyor who, together with fellow settler Samuel Emmitt, laid out and founded the town of Emmitsburg, Maryland. He became an owner of extensive land holdings in the area and was, by the standards of his time, a wealthy man. By his wife, the Welsh widow Jane Bentley Williams (more accurately, Jane Williams Bentley), William fathered eleven children over a 28-year period, all born at the family plantation south and west of the town of Emmitsburg. The area comprised what was in the mid-eighteenth century the Appalachian frontier; during the French and Indian War period it was an area not unknown to Indian raids—fomented by the French—on the Frederick County settlers.

By the outbreak of the American Revolution, William's older sons had reached adulthood, and several (John and James, to our certain knowledge, and possibly one or more others) served with him in the Frederick County militia company which he organized and commanded. His later Revolutionary career includes service with the Continental Army as a major in a regiment organized by a member of the prominent Maryland Goldsborough family. No record exists of the engagements in which William Shields participated, but it is known that he served in the Continental Line under direct command of George Washington during the period of his majority in the later stages of the war.

In the 1780s and 1790s a number of William's children began to migrate to East Tennessee, joining there a number of the cousins who were descended from James 1633, the Cromwell deportee. By 1797, the year of his death at age 69, only the youngest few of his children appear still to have been at home, including Ebenezer, ancestor of the immediate family line.

William's will and estate inventory, as well as Maryland land records in Annapolis, indicate a substantial and comfortable lifestyle that was exceptional on the frontier. His possessions included a number of books, chiefly religious and cartographic in nature; a copper still; many furnishings and personal possessions; and seven slaves, whom he bequeathed to his wife and older sons.

## Second Generation in America Progeny of William Shields

WILLIAM SHIELDS - 1728-1797

JOHN	JAMES	HENRY	WILLIAM	SAMUEL	AGNES
DAVID	BANNER	MARY	EBENEZER	MARGARET	

William 1728's eleven children, comprising the second generation of the immediate family line in America, and the first generation born in the New World, were as follows:

1. **John Shields**, born March 20, 1755 (Newstyle). Married Mary McCollum in 1790. Served as an Ensign in his father's militia company in the Revolution; later studied and practiced law. Had eight children (three sons, five daughters). Migrated to Jefferson, then Cocke County, Tennessee in the 1798—1799 period. Died in 1833, probably in Cocke County.

2. **James Shields**, born June 12, 1757. Served as a sergeant in his father's company in the Revolution. Married Jane Gilliland in 1783 and shortly thereafter migrated to South Carolina, and from there to Greene County, Tennessee, about 1797, the year of his father's death in Maryland. James, "the Old Curmudgeon" as he was later styled, fathered seven sons and four daughters, and was a prominent landowner and political figure in the affairs of East Tennessee. His descent included Dr. Samuel Shields, merchant and physician who operated Shields Station, an inn and tavern at Blaine's Crossroads, northeast of Knoxville, and today a structure on the National Register of Historic Places. Other descent was John Knight Shields, Chief Justice of the Tennessee Supreme Court who ended the night riders (Klan) in East Tennessee after World War I, and who subsequently served as a United States Senator from Tennessee; also, his brother, William Simpson Shields, a Knoxville banker who endowed Shields-Watkins Field, the athletic facility at the University of Tennessee. Other descendants of this line include Alexander Shields, the nationally prominent men's clothing designer and father of double knit polyester menswear who twice won the Coty Award as America's outstanding men's clothing designer. James Shields died in 1840 and is buried on a small hilltop in Greene County, Tennessee.

3. **Henry Shields**, born November 3, 1759. Married about 1784 in Maryland to Esther Waddell, and the following year migrated to Greene County, Tennessee. Fathered two sons and six daughters. Large landowner, farmer, and entrepreneur. Descent includes Dr. John Shields, a prominent physician, investor, and businessman of the area in the nineteenth century. Henry died in Greene County in 1826. He is buried in the churchyard of Timber Ridge Presbyterian Church, land for which he had donated, and a church which the present writer has attended many times over the past quarter century.

4. **William Shields**, born October 8, 1761. Married four times to: Elizabeth Coulter (1785), Ann Patterson (1798), Ann McKissic (1810), Betsy McDonald (1813), by whom he fathered a total of seventeen children (eight sons, seven daughters). Was a

farmer in Frederick County, Maryland; did not join the migration of his brothers and sisters to Tennessee. Died in 1828 in Ohio while visiting one of his children, and is buried there.

5. **Samuel Shields**, born March 13, 1764. Migrated first to Pennsylvania, where his early children were born to a first wife, name unknown, but believed to be a Ware; then to Elbert County, Georgia, where he was remarried in 1789 to Jane Montgomery; finally to Giles County, Tennessee. Total offspring were eight sons and four daughters by two wives. Died in 1827.

6. **Agnes [Ann] Shields**, born December 30, 1766. Married (1) Jacob Gilliland, brother of Jane Gilliland, wife of Agnes' older brother James. Married (2) Michael Woods. Agnes and her first husband migrated to South Carolina where Jacob Gilliland died; Agnes and children then migrated to Washington County, Tennessee, where she remarried. Total children by two husbands were six sons and four daughters. Agnes died in Washington County, Tennessee, year unknown.

7. **David Shields**, born June 12, 1769. Married Rachel Waddell, apparently a sister of Henry's wife Esther, in the early 1790s. Migrated to Washington County, Tennessee. Fathered three sons, two daughters. Died in Tennessee in 1844.

8. **Banner Shields**, born October 28, 1772. Married (1) Margaret Ware and (2) Nancy Bailey, both in Tennessee. Migrated to Blount, then McMinn Counties, Tennessee. Fathered two sons and five daughters. Died in Tennessee, date unknown.

9. **Mary [Levicia, or Levicia Mary] Shields**, born January 2, 1775. Married to Samuel Blair, member of a prominent family of Maryland landowners. Migrated to Cleveland, Ohio, and then to Washington County, Tennessee. Was the mother of three sons and three daughters. Place and date of death are not known.

10. **Ebenezer Shields**, born December 22, 1778. Of him, more below.

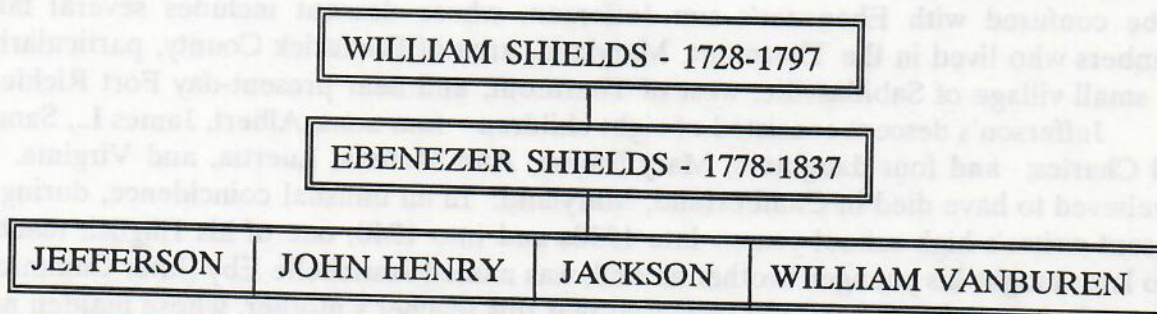
11. **Margaret [Elizabeth] Shields**, born October 2, 1783. Migrated to Greene County, Tennessee, where her marriage to Evan Evans probably took place. She gave birth to one son and one daughter, and died in Greene County, Tennessee, date unknown.

(The names of the three daughters of William Shields 1728 are singular in form in the family Bible; middle names enclosed in brackets above are those found in a compilation of Shields family miscellany published in 1968 by Katherine Susong Harmon, a descendant of Henry Shields above. The source of this middle name information is not given.)

The eleven children of William and Jane Williams Bentley Shields were thus born over a 28-year period, with more than a generation ensuing between the birth of the eldest and the youngest child. Nine of the eleven children migrated from Frederick County to a variety of destinations, but all eventually settled in the eastern half of the State of Tennessee. During the period of these migrations, chiefly from the early 1780s to about 1800, many relatively close cousins of William's children—the so-called Ten Brothers family as well as other descendants of the 1655 Williamsburgh immigrant, James Shields—were living in East Tennessee and were known to, and in some instances were personal acquaintances of their Shields cousins from Maryland.

Only two of William 1728's children remained in Maryland: William II and Ebenezer.

### Third Generation in America Progeny of Ebenezer Shields



Ebenezer Shields, William 1728's eighth son and tenth child, and direct ancestor in his generation of the line primarily treated in this narrative, was a young child when the first of his older brothers began the family migrations to East Tennessee. Ebenezer had been born on December 22, 1778, at the family plantation. He was nineteen years old and still living at the family plantation in Hampton Valley, Frederick County, Maryland, when his father died in 1797. As an adult, a farmer and surveyor, he entered into two common-law marriages which in the locale and at the time were recognized legal unions whose offspring were considered legitimate if acknowledged ("adopted") by the father (which was the case with Ebenezer's four children). It is of interest to those persons concerned with the American patriotic societies that the Daughters of the American Revolution, for reasons of their own, do not recognize the legitimacy of common-law offspring, despite both Common Law practice and statutes in force in the various American colonies; consequently, persons seeking DAR membership who cite a line of descent which includes such a link are denied that privilege. The Sons of the American Revolution, on the other hand, routinely accept such lines.

Ebenezer's first consort was Rachel Robison, by whom he fathered one child, a son named Jefferson. After Rachel Robison's death, Ebenezer entered into a second union, with Margaret Morrison, to whom his remaining three sons were born. Ebenezer died on July 1, 1837, at age 58 and, as indicated in his will, in poor health. He served as agent for unsold lands still a part of his father's estate—lands still unsold in a number of instances at the time of his death.

His children were as follows:

1. **Jefferson Shields**, son of Rachel Robison, and born about 1819 in Emmitsburg, appears to have been in some respect impaired or not expected to achieve longevity, since his legacy under Ebenezer's will was limited, with the bulk of it held in trust for him until he was in his early 30s. This conclusion is reinforced by recollections given the present author by an aunt, Edna Shields Hollenbaugh, who with embarrassment reported that "Uncle Jeff" (who was still living during her early years) was "funny"—stated in a context which meant "strange" rather than "humorous." Some researchers have been confused in determining Jefferson's descent because there were several related Jefferson Shields' resident in Frederick County, Maryland, and nearby Maryland and Pennsylvania counties

during the first half of the 19th century. Records of the northern Maryland locale include a Jefferson who at one time was a member of the Emmitsburg fire department, was a son of William Shields II, and later resided in Taneytown, Carroll County, Maryland. He is not to be confused with Ebenezer's son Jefferson, whose descent includes several family members who lived in the Thurmont, Maryland, area of Frederick County, particularly in the small village of Sabillasville, west of Thurmont, and near present-day Fort Richie.

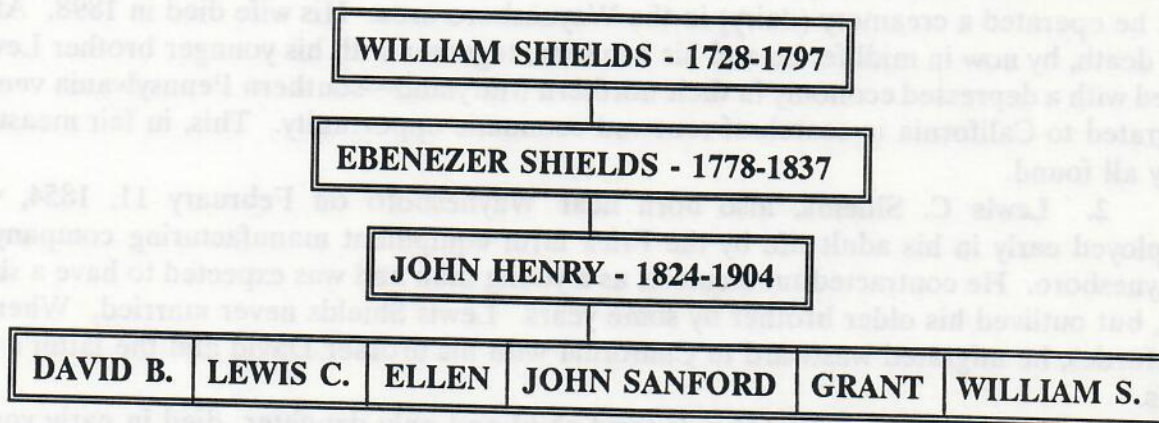
Jefferson's descent consisted of eight children—four sons, Albert, James L., Samuel, and Charles; and four daughters, Mary Emma, Ann Malissa, Luertia, and Virginia. He is believed to have died in Cumberland, Maryland. In an unusual coincidence, during the present writer's high school years—late 1930s and into 1940, one of his English teachers, who later taught his younger brother as well, was named Annabelle Eby (later Cummings). Research undertaken much later disclosed that this teacher's mother, whose maiden name was Shields, was a direct descendant of Jefferson. The "A's" which she gave both this Shields and his brother Bob, it should be noted, were earned, not the rewards of nepotism. Ebenezer's political persuasions as a Democrat or Democratic-Republican were quite evident from the names he gave to three of his four sons.

2. **John Henry Shields**, born in 1824 to Ebenezer Shields and Margaret Morrison, is the ancestor of the immediate line. Of him more below.

3. **Andrew Jackson Shields**, was Ebenezer's third child, born also to Margaret Morrison, date unknown. Children included two daughters, Cora and Ida, and a son Craig. Ida was a schoolteacher in Gettysburg; Craig served in the Union Army during the Civil War, and was a member of Emmitsburg Presbyterian Church. (This institution was earlier known as Tom's Creek Church, constructed on land donated by William Shields 1728.)

4. **William Vanburen Shields**, youngest of Ebenezer's four sons, and the third born to Margaret Morrison, was born relatively late in his father's life. After his father's death, either the death of his mother, or her inability to care for him, resulted in his adoption by an Emmitsburg family named Favorite (pronounce Fav-o-right) whose descent still resides in the area. William Vanburn appears to have been reared in the Catholic faith by his adopted family, and apparently for a time was known as William Favorite, a family name which he later renounced in favor of the natal Shields. Little is known of his career; his obituary indicates that he lived in Emmitsburg at the time of his death. He left Shields descendants, some of whom live in Emmitsburg at the present time.

**Fourth Generation in America  
Progeny of John Henry Shields**



The immediate family line is carried forward by Ebenezer's second son, John Henry Shields. He was born on August 8, 1824, in Frederick County, Maryland, near Emmitsburg on land formerly a part of William Shields 1728's holdings. John Henry was 12 years old when his father died in 1837 and, in common with his siblings, was cared for by Margaret Morrison under terms of his father's will. On May 29, 1849, he was married in Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, to Eve Ann Benchhoff of that city. In the antebellum years, John Henry was a millwright and later a surveyor. At various times he and his wife lived in Franklin and Adams County, Pennsylvania, as well as Frederick County, Maryland. Their six children were born over the fifteen-year period from 1852 to 1867.

Early in the second year of the Civil War, 38-year-old John Henry volunteered for service in the Union Army, serving in the Sixth Regiment of Maryland Volunteers despite at this juncture having four—and possibly five—small children at home. He saw extensive action until, on May 9, 1864, he lost his left arm to Confederate sniper fire after the Battle of the Wilderness, during the campaign at Spottsylvania Court House in central Virginia. Early the following year he was mustered out of service, classified as "disabled," and returned to life with his family at home in southern Pennsylvania. Unable to continue his prewar occupations as either millwright or surveyor, John Henry Shields taught school for the rest of his professional life. He did not share in the prosperity enjoyed by many of his uncles and cousins who had migrated southward in the 1780s and 1790s. His father, Ebenezer, had done less well for himself than had many of William Shields 1728's older children; few if any of the land holdings of his grandfather remained in Shields family possession; and Emmitsburg and adjacent areas had by mid-century become essentially "backwater" areas—the days as a frontier outpost and a funnel for westward and southwestward migrations long a thing of the past. John Henry died in 1904 at the age of 80, preceded in death by his wife four years previously.

John Henry and Eve Benchhoff Shields (she a descendant of a Hessian soldier fighting with the British in the American Revolution) had six children, as follows:

1. **David Banner Shields**, born near Waynesboro, Franklin County, Pennsylvania, on June 21, 1852. He married Mary Martha Willhide, by whom he fathered three children: Charles Darwin, John Harlan, and Mary Byrd (who died in infancy). At one point in his life, he operated a creamery (dairy) in the Waynesboro area. His wife died in 1898. After her death, by now in midlife, he and his two sons, together with his younger brother Lewis, faced with a depressed economy in their northern Maryland—southern Pennsylvania venue, migrated to California in search of renewed economic opportunity. This, in fair measure, they all found.

2. **Lewis C. Shields**, also born near Waynesboro on February 11, 1854, was employed early in his adult life by the Frick farm equipment manufacturing company in Waynesboro. He contracted tuberculosis as a young man and was expected to have a short life, but outlived his older brother by some years. Lewis Shields never married. When in his forties, he migrated westward to California with his brother David and the latter's two sons.

3. **Ellen Shields**, John Henry's third child and only daughter, died in early youth, possibly by her own hand.

4. **John Sanford Shields** was born near Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, on August 28, 1856. Of him more below.

5. **Grant [Ulysses Grant?] Shields** was born during the Civil War period. As a young man he worked in the Frick plant in Waynesboro, and died unmarried at age 21.

6. **William Stanton Shields** was born near Emmitsburg in Frederick County, Maryland, on January 24, 1867. A rugged individualist with forceful personality, he became a well-known figure in the Emmitsburg-Gettysburg area. A farmer with outspoken views on many subjects, he married Susan Dellamay (or Delmay) Tressler in 1888, by whom he had nine children. Later in his life he was employed by the Gettysburg National Memorial Park. William Stanton Shields died on January 1, 1927.

The migration of the two oldest of John Henry's children to California and the untimely deaths of both Ellen and Grant left only two of his offspring remaining in the Pennsylvania-Maryland area during the present century. For reasons both of geography and chronology, there was close interaction between the families of John Sanford and William Stanton Shields—a relationship over the years which makes appropriate the identification of the children of "Uncle Bill"—as he was known to many in the family. All born in Gettysburg, Adams County, Pennsylvania, they were:

Arthur Harrison Shields, born in 1889, married Margaret Venetia Rosensteel.

William Isaac Shields, born in 1891, married Sarah Urilla Plank.

Clarence Bernard Shields, born in 1892, married Lillian Marion Gladfelder.

Lula Grace Shields, born in 1895, died in childhood.

John Henry Shields, born in 1898, married Maud Evelyn Tout.

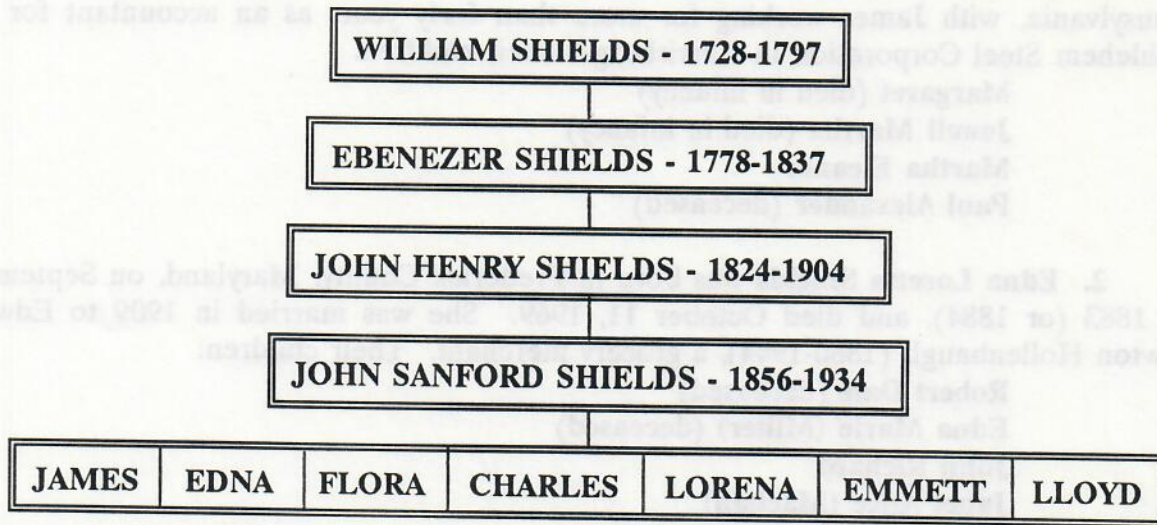
Carrie Margaret Shields, born in 1902, married Harry Lewis Newman.

Susan Catherine Shields, born in 1904, married Albert Shealer.

Goldie Mabell Shields, born in 1906, married Joseph I. Freet.

Ruth Evelyn Shields, born in 1910, married (1) Solomon Meckley, (2) Earl Shearer Miller.

**Fifth Generation in America  
Progeny of John Sanford Shields**



John Sanford Shields, through whom the subject family line is carried forward, was born on August 28, 1856, in Franklin County, Pennsylvania, near the town of Waynesboro, an area in which his father, John Henry Shields, apparently made his home for more than a decade in the years preceding and during the Civil War. He received very limited schooling, and on August 8, 1881, married Alice Mary Paxton of the Thurmont area. She was a person of extraordinary intelligence who, despite little formal education, was a respected and effective school teacher.

For a while after their marriage, economic conditions obliged the couple to make their home with John Sanford's parents in the mountains west of Emmitsburg, and their first two children—James and Edna—were born during this period. John Sanford worked as a laborer, handyman, and sometime farmer. The family lived in what today would be considered conditions of poverty and the children, when old enough, contributed the bulk of their earnings to the household. The family moved to Gettysburg in 1896, and in 1904—largely at the urging of eldest son James—moved to Penbrook on the outskirts of the city of Harrisburg. John Sanford Shields died on Christmas Eve 1934 at the age of 78. Alice Paxton Shields had predeceased him by five years.

The children of John Sanford Shields and, in turn, their immediate progeny, are listed below. Descent beyond this generation is beyond the intended scope of this narration, whose focus is chiefly on the family's origins. Detailed information was included in a 1968 work by the present author, *A History of the Shields Family*; efforts to secure updated information from a number of family members in recent years have met with only limited success. Information on the individual family groups descended from John Sanford Shields should, of course, be available within such groups, at least in unstructured form. It is hoped that some future genealogist will update the broader family record to reflect vital statistics through the current generation.

1. **James Franklin Shields** was born in Frederick County, Maryland, on June 12, 1882, and died on September 2, 1958. He was married in 1910 to Martha Jennii Alexander (1881-1954). James and Jenii resided for most of their adult lives in Dauphin County, Pennsylvania, with James working for more than forty years as an accountant for the Bethlehem Steel Corporation in Harrisburg. Their children:

**Margaret** (died in infancy)  
**Jewell Martha** (died in infancy)  
**Martha Eleanor**  
**Paul Alexander** (deceased)

2. **Edna Loretta Shields** was born in Frederick County, Maryland, on September 25, 1883 (or 1884), and died October 11, 1969. She was married in 1909 to Edward Newton Hollenbaugh (1886-1944), a grocery merchant. Their children:

**Robert Dale** (deceased)  
**Edna Marie** (Miller) (deceased)  
**John Richard**  
**Janet Alice** (Machan)

3. **Flora Alvira Shields** was born in Frederick County, Maryland, on October 18, 1886, and died February 4, 1959. She was married in 1907 to William David Lenker (1880-1940), a successful dairy farmer. Flora was active throughout much of her adult life in the political affairs of the State of Pennsylvania, and served in various capacities as a Republican Party official. Their children:

**John Luther** (deceased)  
**Eleanor Mae** (Cook) (deceased)  
**William Shields**  
**Ruth Lorena** (Hummer) (deceased)  
**David Franklin**  
**Jesse Sanford**  
**Emily Dorothy** (Long)  
**Theodore Lewis**

4. **Charles Lewis Shields** was born in Frederick County, Maryland, on December 26, 1888, and died March 14, 1966. He married in 1928 Isabella Matilda Loban (1891-1989), served in the U.S. Army in World War I, and for most of his adult life was a printer, owning and operating Triangle Press in Penbrook (Harrisburg), Pennsylvania. Their child:  
**Isabella Loban** (Bockius)

5. **Lorena Eudora Shields** was born in Frederick County, Maryland, on April 21, 1891, and died June 23, 1960. She did not marry, and was a proofreader and later businesswoman, residing during her later years in the Washington D.C. area.

6. **Emmett Paxton Shields** was born in Frederick County, Maryland, on May 2, 1893, and died on March 17, 1987. In 1915 he married Marion Amy Killeffer (1895-1940). He was a printer throughout his adult life, retiring as a senior official of the U.S. Government Printing Office in Washington D.C. Their children:

**Winifred Mae (Callow)**

**Lois Charlotte (Ager) (deceased)**

**John Edgar**

**Robert Kenneth (deceased)**

7. **Lloyd Ebenezer Shields** was born in Gettysburg, Adams County, Pennsylvania, on June 30, 1896, and died February 22, 1962. He served in the U.S. Army in World War I, later pursued a career as a plumber in the Harrisburg area, and did not marry.

Compiled and written by

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