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May 5, 2019

About: Edward “Edd” Coatly Bennett

After several years of researching [Edd Coatly Bennett](#), I have decided to share my findings so far.

My maternal grandfather, [John “Johnnie” Walter Bennett \(1912-1963\)](#) was the youngest son of [Edward Bennett](#) and Lula Felder Bennett. Initially, I added the hints on Ancestry without giving them much thought — but soon realized that the vast majority of trees on Ancestry had incorrect information for [Edward’s](#) parents.

[Edward’s](#) mother was almost certainly [Mary Elizabeth Bennett](#), only daughter of Thomas Turner Bennett (approx. 1790-1862) and Eliza Darkes Everett Bennett (approx. 1815-1862). I have arrived at their birth and death dates through extensive census and property records, despite many people having other dates listed.

[Edward’s](#) mother [Mary Elizabeth](#) is often (almost always) confused with her sister-in-law, [Mary Elizabeth Charlton Bennett \(1842-1933\)](#), who married William Henry Bennett (1836-1914), the oldest son of Thomas & Eliza. [Mary Elizabeth Charlton](#) is the daughter of Samuel Snowden Charlton and Sabrina Lavisia Mixon. Despite sharing a first and middle name with the other [Mary Elizabeth](#), they have nothing else in common and are most certainly not the same person. [Mary Charlton Bennett](#) & William Henry Bennett had several children together, and their family is well-documented through census and pension records. [Edward](#) was NOT their child.

Returning to our [Mary Elizabeth](#), her birth is estimated to be between 1842 and 1844, based on the 1850 and 1860 census records. In 1860, she is living in St. Helena Parish, Louisiana with her parents and two of her brothers. This is the last time that I can find [Mary](#) documented.

Did she die in the 1860s, when her parents supposedly died, maybe of yellow fever or other contagious illness? There is a photo supposedly of [Mary Bennett](#), which was published in the book “The Descendants of Thomas Turner Bennett” by the Thomas Turner Bennett foundation in Livingston Parish, Louisiana. This book was compiled mostly by descendants of Mary’s brothers, but I have not been able to track down who originally submitted the photo. IF the photo IS our [Mary Bennett](#), then it looks like it is from approximately 1870 or 1880, based on her clothing in the photo. After a close comparison, this photo is most definitely not [Mary Elizabeth Charlton Bennett](#), so it could be [Mary Bennett](#).

In the meantime, sometime between the 1860 census and [Mary’s](#) death (possibly in 1870-1880, after the photo), [Mary](#) gave birth to one son, [Edward Coatly Bennett](#). There is no record of Edward’s birth or baptism, probably because of the rural area in which they lived, where the line now is between Tangipahoa and Livingston Parishes. Two birth years are often given for Edward - 1852 or 1864. It is my belief, based on research, that his birth date is most likely close to 1864 - especially if the 1844 date is accurate for [Mary’s](#) birth.

I have not been able to find either [Edward](#) or [Mary](#) on the 1870 census. In fact, Edward does not appear again until the 1900 census, where he is living with his wife, Viola McDowell.

During his adult life, [Edward](#) seemingly lived with multiple women, and has been listed as the father of most of these womens’ children. Whether he was legally married to all four of these women (Elizabeth “Liza” Mashon, Viola McDowell, Rebecca “Becky” Jones, Lula Felder) is not documented.

Through tireless DNA research, Charlotte Stubbs Legath (charlottelegath@hotmail.com) and I have determined that several of these children most likely were not Edward’s biological children. The extent of his relationship with each of the four women, and their children, is not clear.

We have proven for sure that he had children with Eliza Mashon (Frank Marion Bennett, Minerva Bennett, Cornelius Bennett), Viola McDowell (James Martin Bennett), and Lula Felder (Eula Bennett, William Bennett, Herman Bennett and John Bennett).

Edward died on October 20, 1928 in Wadesboro, Louisiana. His death certificate has been the cause of much confusion and many questions. For the record, he is listed as married at his time of death, but his wife's name is not listed. The registrar who signed his death certificate is M. McCahill and the undertaker is E. Young of Ponchatoula, Louisiana.

Edward's parents are listed as **Mary** Baham and what looks like Elis (maybe Eli) Bennett. There is no informant listed on his death certificate. We know that this is not correct, as his mother's maiden name was **Mary Bennett**. Given this, and the process of elimination over months of daily research, I have ultimately concluded that whoever the informant was, mixed up Edward's parents' last names. It makes sense, since Edward used the surname 'Bennett,' for someone to assume that Bennett was his father's name.

If we take this mix-up into consideration, that would then make his parents' names be **Mary Bennett** and **Eli/Elis Baham**.

I then created a mirror tree for the Baham family, beginning with Juan dit Genty Baham and Franchoise Guillory, who first immigrated to Madisonville, Louisiana. I worked out from this couple, through their four sons, and looked at descendants who would have been of child-bearing age in or around 1862. I then worked with DNA matches from my own profile, as well as my mother's and maternal cousins, to eliminate individual members of the Baham family.

As of today, May 5, 2019, I believe **Edward Coatly Bennett's** biological father was **Robert Ellis Baham** (1840-1880), son of Serville Ursin Baham (1801-1860) and Josephina Evalina Baham (1812-1896). **Robert Ellis Baham** was living in Washington Parish, Louisiana on the 1860 census. The next record of him is when he married Mary Jane Henson in Kentucky in 1872. Where was he for the 12 years in between these two events? It is certainly reasonable to believe that he was still in Washington Parish, near **Mary Bennett**, in 1862, to father her child - but the facts after that are unknown.

If anyone has any information on the story of Robert Ellis Baham and how/why/when he moved to Kentucky, I would be very interested in this.

If you have any questions about my research, or any information to edit or add, please contact me through Ancestry or by email at JaymeLQuick@gmail.com.