

Is James Preston b. c1797 (Ireland) [person #68] who migrated to America in 1832 the same as James Preston b. 1799 (Ireland, son of David and Nancy McCann Preston) [person #2657]

Prominent Crawford County residents David Preston and Nancy McCann Preston had a son James born 1799 according to grandson and writer William Eldridge Mathews. He states that they moved to relatives in Kentucky in 1801, apparently from Ireland although he does not say. By 1820 they lived in Crawford County.

In 1832 James Preston b. c1797 in Ireland and Elizabeth Jane Clark Preston moved with their three young children to Crawford County from Carlisle, England. Was this James the son of David and Nancy Preston?

Some information suggests that 1832 migrant James b c1797, wife Elizabeth, was their son;

- (1) James and Elizabeth named their firstborn son David. British naming conventions have the first son named after the child's paternal grandfather. While this may be a hint, many did not follow this convention, or James could have been the son of another David. James and Elizabeth only had three children, not enough to determine whether they followed convention in naming their children.
- (2) James b. c1797 would seem to be family to David and other Prestons of Crawford County since James came to America direct to the county.
- (3) The birthdates of the "two James" are very close, one certainly born in Ireland, and the other likely to have been.
- (4) From 1836 on there is only one James Preston in Crawford County of the right age to be David's son. If David's son James was not in Crawford County then where was he?

On the other hand;

- (1) David and Nancy moved to Kentucky when their James was age 2. It would seem he would be brought along. James b. 1797 reported in naturalization papers that he arrived in America in 1832.
- (2) David Preston sued James Preston in 1845 Crawford County Superior Court over a long-running property dispute. In fact David tried to evict James from the disputed property. Why would David Preston sue his own son? Always possible but not the first thought most would go with.
- (3) Why was James not included in David's will while all his other children are accounted for? The lawsuit could explain this. David was very understanding (shown in his will) of his troubled son Andrew James Preston so why not equally so of James? Or it may be that David's son James had moved elsewhere, or possibly as oldest son was already well taken care of financially.
- (4) The Crawford County James b. 1797, wife Elizabeth, was solidly the only James of the right age appearing in county records between 1836 and the late 1850s, and this is the James who moved to Dale County, Alabama by 1860. This is from tax lists 1840-1856, the 1845 David Preston vs. James Preston lawsuit described, and census records. Note however that the 1840 census is something of an outlier, being consistent in some ways with 1850 and 1860 censuses, but also with some inconsistencies.

It seems likely ...

that James Preston of Crawford County, b. 1797, was not David's son but was instead a brother, nephew, or other close relative. DNA may ultimately show whether James was related to David but that work has not been done yet.