



“My Research Path” created for John Smith

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Research Goal or Question – Identify the full name of both parents of William Combest who married Gilla Jasper. Also, identify any of William’s siblings found during research.

Background Information from Client

1. 1850 U.S. Federal Census for Platte, Andrew, Missouri, lists that William Combest was born in Kentucky about 1801, Gilla Combest was born about 1804 in Kentucky.¹
2. [The Find A Grave entry for William Combest](#) states he was born 2 May 1802 in Pulaski County, Kentucky, and he died in Andrew County, Missouri, in 1855.² This entry also lists his parents a Samuel Combest and Sarah Dick, but there is not documentation to prove it.
3. Reference on Find A Grave to the book, Samuel Combest and His Descendants.

Analysis of Background Information

1. 1850 U.S. Federal Census states that William Combest was born in Kentucky. If this is true, then it is probable that at some time William’s parents lived in Kentucky. But it is important to understand how the census was recorded. The census enumerator would go house to house and if a parent was not home, then an older child could be asked the information; if no one was home, then the enumerator could ask a neighbor. The other family member or neighbor may not have known the exact age or place of birth for each person.

The 1850 U.S. Census does not list the relationships of the individuals, but the first possible child of William and Gilla in the census was born in Kentucky about 1825. A total of six household members who were possible children were born in Kentucky. The other three were born in Missouri.

2. If Find a Grave has a photo of the headstone, that headstone is considered an original source. The other information added to the page was “authored” by someone. This means that the statements need to be verified regarding 1) William Combest’s birth on 2 May 1802 in Pulaski County, Kentucky, and 2) that his parents are Samuel Combest and Sarah Dick.
3. The family history, Samuel Combest and His Descendants, is considered a “authored source” which means it is not an original record so all information contained in here also needs to be verified. But efforts should be made to locate a copy of the book and see if it included any references to the sources used. Also, these authored sources can provide great clues not found anywhere else for names and places to be researched.

¹ 1850 U.S. Census, Platte, Andrew, Missouri, Roll: M432_391; Page: 82B; Image: 171, Family Number: 694, William Combest; database with images, *Ancestry* (ancestry.com : accessed September 2015); National Archives Microfilm Publication M432.

² "Find A Grave," *Find A Grave* (<http://findagrave.com> : accessed September 2015), database with images, "William Combest," Find A Grave Memorial# 34827468.

Facts to Remember based on Client Background Information

1. By 1850, William and Gilla Combest were living in Andrew County, Missouri.
 2. It is possible that William Combest was born 2 May 1802 in Pulaski County, Kentucky.
 3. Gilla Combest was born about 1804, probably in Kentucky.
 4. Their first six probable children who were listed in the 1850 U.S. census were born in Kentucky, beginning in 1825. The youngest three were born in Missouri.
 5. It is possible that Samuel Combest and Sarah "Sallie" Dick were the parents of William Combest.
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NOTE: In the suggestions below, some of the databases are followed by (\$) indicating that they are a subscription-based service. If you do not have a subscription to that site, there are several options:

1. Your [local Family History Center](#) (open to the public) will have free access to the major databases. At the end of 2016, FamilySearch had more than 4,960 free centers in 129 countries.
 2. Often larger public libraries offer free access to these major databases. Check their website or call to learn more.
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Record to Search: #1 The Marriage of William and Gilla Combest

Strategies to Consider

1. If both William and Gilla were born in Kentucky, as well as their first children, it is most likely that William and Gilla were married in Kentucky.
2. If William was born about 1801, Gilla in 1804, and their first child in 1825, a good date range to search for the marriage is 1820 – 1826.
3. Marriages were recorded in Kentucky on the county level, usually as soon as the county was formed.

What it Might Contain

1. Sometimes a marriage license or marriage bond would list the names of the parents. If so, this information would be considered first-hand or primary information and would be considered strong proof of his parents.
2. Even if the marriage doesn't list any parents, it could document which county in Kentucky William was from.
3. Witnesses to a marriage are sometimes listed, and often they were relatives.

Where to Look for It

1. FamilySearch: "[Kentucky, County Marriages, 1797-1954](#)"
2. FamilySearch: "[Kentucky Marriages, 1785-1979](#)"

3. Ancestry (\$): ["Kentucky Marriages, 1802-1850"](#)
 4. Ancestry (\$): ["Kentucky Marriage Records"](#)
 5. FindMyPast (\$): [Kentucky Marriage Records](#)
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Record to Search: #2 The Book Samuel Combest and His Descendants

Strategies to Consider

1. This is an authored source, but may have many dates and names that can give a basis for research. Hopefully it will have sources in the book.
2. Search first in Pulaski County, Kentucky

What it Might Contain

1. These family histories often contain the names and dates of several generations and their children, along with some history.
2. It may mention historical sources like land or probate records which will make it easier to find the originals

Where to Look for It

1. [WorldCat Library](#) is an online catalog for many libraries around the world. It will also reference online sources for some books. If not available online, you can often do interlibrary loan through your local library.
 2. [FamilySearch Catalog](#) lists books available at the Family History and it also has a link to the book if they have digitized it.
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Record to Search: #3 Cemetery Record for Samuel Combest and Sarah Dick

Strategies to Consider

1. If you can't locate a memorial for the person you are searching for, try looking for the spouse or children of that person.
2. Try several spelling variations of the name.

What it Might Contain

1. The Find A Grave memorials, or those from other cemetery sites, will often include a picture of the headstone and name which cemetery it was found in. The memorials will often list the parents, children, and siblings of the person with links to each of their memorial pages. Remember this other information on the family needs to be verified.

Where to Look for It

1. <https://www.findagrave.com/>
 2. [FamilySearch Find A Grave](#)
 3. [FamilySearch BillionGraves](#)
 4. [Ancestry Find A Grave](#)
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Record to Search: #4 A History of Pulaski County, Kentucky, and a Map of its County Boundary Changes

Strategies to Consider

1. The United States was experiencing fast growth in the 1800s and this meant that county boundaries were continually changing as counties became more populated.
2. When searching for records for Samuel Combest you will need to know when Pulaski County became a county and if other counties were formed from it. This is make sure you are searching in the correct county.

What it Might Contain

1. The history of when Pulsaki County, Kentucky, was created and maps of the when the county boundaries changed.

Where to Look for It

1. [Wikipedia](#) – check for the specific county
 2. [“Atlas of Historical County Boundaries”](#) by the Newberry Library; search for the state.
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Record to Search: #5 Census Records for Samuel Combest

Strategies to Consider

1. If William was born in Pulaski County, Kentucky, in 1802 then start by checking for census records for Samuel Combest in that county for 1800-1850.
2. Try to find Samuel in each census year he was alive.
3. Remember to check for name variations, especially for Combest. Check Combess, Combert, Cambest, etc. Try just the first or last name.
4. Use a [1790-1840 Census Comparison Sheet](#) to compare ages of individuals in each census and better determine a possible age.

5. Narrowing down your search often will get better results than a general search. Try to narrow down the search to just one census year, like 1810, and then narrow down the search to Pulaski County, Kentucky.

What it Might Contain

1. Prior to 1850, the United States census records only recorded the names of the heads of household and then, to count the rest of the household, they used tick marks in various columns to mark their gender and age groups.
2. This makes these census records more challenging to use, but they can still provide useful information, which, when combined with other records, can help to document the family.

Where to Look for It

1. [FamilySearch](#)
 2. [Ancestry \(\\$\)](#)
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Record to Search: #6 Probate Records for Samuel Combest and Surname Dick

Strategies to Consider

1. According to the author of William Combest's Find A Grave Memorial, William was born in Pulaski County, Kentucky, and his parents were Samuel and Sarah "Sallie Dick"
2. Based on where William and Gilla children were born, they moved from Kentucky to Missouri after they had six children. Samuel and Sarah could have stayed in Kentucky or moved as well, possibly to Missouri.
3. Search first in Pulaski County, Kentucky for a probate for Samuel Combest and anyone with the Surname Dick.
4. In the online probate collections listed below, search for Sarah Combest for a possible listing in her father's probate.

What it Might Contain

1. Probate is one of the best ways to prove relationships, especially before the census records named each household member.
2. If Samuel Combest or Sarah Dick's father left a will, they often will name each of their children, including the married names of daughters in the will.
3. Even if either of them died without a will (intestate) there still might be records of administration which can provide clues about family members.

Where to Look for It

1. Ancestry (\$): ["Kentucky, Wills and Probate Records, 1774-1989"](#)
2. FamilySearch: [Kentucky Probate Records, 1727-1990 – Partial Index](#)
3. FamilySearch: [Kentucky Probate Records, 1727-1990 – Browsable Images](#)
4. Find My Past (\$): [Kentucky, Wills, Deeds, and Marriages, 1700-1909](#)

Record to Search: #7 Pension Records for Samuel Combest and the Surname Dick

Strategies to Consider

1. According to the author of William Combest's Find A Grave Memorial, William was born in Pulaski County, Kentucky, and his parents were Samuel and Sarah "Sallie Dick"
2. Based on where William and Gilla children were born, they moved from Kentucky to Missouri after they had six children. Samuel and Sarah could have stayed in Kentucky or moved as well, possibly to Missouri.
3. Search first in Pulaski County, Kentucky

What it Might Contain

1. Pension records often will name the children of the soldier, including the married names of daughters.
2. Sometimes documents or affidavits were submitted to prove family relationships.
3. Location, dates, and unit of service are usually stated.
4. The current residence is also listed.
5. If the application is for a Widow's Pension, then the date of death of the soldier is usually listed.

Where to Look for It

1. Fold3 (\$): [Fold3 Revolutionary War](#)
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