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1824, April 30 - John Selby Martin

John Selby Martin

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Snow Hill, Worcester County, Maryland
April 30th. 1827

Dear Sir,

In compliance with the request contained in your letter of the 26th. March 1827 addressed to my son John C. Martin of Philadelphia I have taken considerable pains to ascertain facts so as to answer the several interrogatories propounded by Mrs. Martin. From record and other conclusive evidence it appears that the first person of the name of Martin came from Scotland about the year 1706 and settled at Snow Hill then in Somerset County Maryland. His Christian name was Robert. About the year 1714 he was married to a lady by the name of Mary Downes, by whom he had several children, and died in the year 1725 on the 22^d May. From the will of said Robert Martin which bears date 12th. May 1725 it appears that Colo: James Martin, our ancestor, was in Maryland at the time of Roberts death and he is noticed in Roberts will as follows. "Item I give and bequeath to my cousin James Martin, one suit of clothes of what sort he may like best, or otherwise in lieu

thereof if he like better to have his storage and accommodations free as long as he thinks proper." From this extract we infer that James Martin had not been in America long, but as to the exact time that he came we cannot now ascertain. It appears from the Court records and proceedings that the said James Martin married Mary Martin, the widow of Robert, some time in the years 1725 or 1726. This fact is established as well by the recollection ^{of living witnesses} as the family tradition. — It is well known that the said James Martin came from Scotland, but from what particular place cannot be ascertained. It is not known to what particular occupation James Martin was brought up; but it is well known that Robert was a merchant and it is presumed that James succeeded Robert in the mercantile business for a time. — It appears from the records of our Courts that James Martin was held in high estimation by and had the confidence of the public from the frequent references for the transaction of public business — that he purchased lands near Snow Hill in 1731 and devoted a part of his time

to the pursuits of agriculture. - In the year 1742
Somerset County was divided into two Counties - the
one retaining the name of Somerset and the other
called Worcester, now still then became the County
town or seat of Justice of Worcester County - The
first County Court for Worcester was held in ^{March} 1742 and
from the records of said Court it appears that said
James Martin was high Sheriff of Worcester County,
which office he held until the year 1745 - From
the records of Worcester County it appears that he
is styled Colonel James Martin - from his settle-
ment as sheriff with the Vestry of the Parish he is
also styled Colonel and his name is handed down
by tradition as Colonel James Martin - James Martin's
will is now in what was then called the Commissary's
now the Register of Wills office of Worcester County
and bears date 12th. December 1747, and was
admitted to probat on the 3^d March following,
consequently must have died between the date
and probat aforesaid - The family bible of James
Martin cannot now be obtained, and the session
book of the Presbyterian church, which probably
could throw light on this subject has been misplaced or lost.

It appears by the last will and testament of said James Martin that he left the following children, to wit: — Thomas, Elizabeth, William, James and George, all of whom are now dead, but who are in the recollection of many of the family now living, except William. — That Thomas, Elizabeth, James and George married and have descendants — but that William followed the sea and died whilst young and unmarried — The children of James Martin have been named above according to their seniority — Thomas Martin the oldest son of said James, was styled Captain Thomas Martin, — He was sent to Scotland whilst young for education, but to what part is not known, but he probably visited Dumfries, as he often talked of that place. Thomas married a lady by the name of Sarah Selby by whom he had a number of children but few survived him — he died in the year 1800, at an advanced age — We will only name his children who married or have left descendants — to wit: William, died and left one child named Sarah who is now living and married, to Josiah Davis who is a farmer, and lives in Worcester County and

has one child a daughter - Thomas Martin's second
child was named George, who died in 1790 and left
three children, to wit: John, Susan and Sarah. John
Selby Martin the first child of George, the author
of this communication, and has seven children,
is a practising physician of this place - Susan
the second child of George Martin married James
Upshur, is dead and left two children, George
and Rosina minors, and Sarah the third child
died unmarried - Thomas Martin's 3rd child was
named Sarah and married William Wise she died
in 1815 and left four children to wit: Petsy
Samuel, Mary and William - Petsy married
Peter Hall a farmer, is living in the State of Dela-
ware and has two children, the names unknown
- Samuel also lives in Delaware and has four or
five children the names unknown - he is a mechanic
Mary is married to John B. Stemons, farmer,
lives in Somerset County and has never had a child
William married - died in 1824, merchant and left
three children in Somerset County, to wit William
George and Edward who are minors - Thomas Martin's
fourth and last child was named Levin, died in 1798

and left one daughter named Mary who is now living, married James Anderson, a mechanic and has one child - This ends the Genealogy of Thomas Martin the first child of the first mentioned James Martin.

Elizabeth, the second child of James Martin married Benjamin Handy in 1748 - who has several children, we will only mention her children who married or have left descendants - Elizabeth died in 1787 - her first child was named James Handy sea Captain, who married Nancy Martin, died in 1802 left two children Margaret and George - Margaret Isaac P. Smith merchant by whom she has five children, now living in Snow Hill - George is married lives in the City of Philadelphia has no child and is a respectable merchant - Levin the second child of Elizabeth married Nancy Wilson died in 1799 was an officer in the revolutionary war, afterwards pursued the mercantile business and was at the time of his death commissary or Register of Wills of Worcester County, Levin left three children Priscilla, Sally and Esther - Priscilla married Samuel Handy and is dead - she left

five children, minors, to wit: Charles, Levin, Henry
William and Priscilla, living with their father in the
city of Washington - Sally married John P. Suffice
merchant, now living in Snow Hill, she is dead and left
three children minors, to wit: John Vance and Saunders
who are living with their father - Esther is unmarried
and lives in the city of Washington - George Handy
the third child of said Elizabeth, married to Elizabeth
Wilson, died in 1820, was a captain in General Lee's
celebrated Legion during the revolution, was a lawyer
and for many years prior to his death was commissary
or Register of Wills of Somerset County - He left the fol-
lowing children now living, to wit: George, Martha,
Anne, Samuel, Levin, Matilda, Alexander and John -
George is a lawyer, colonel of militia and is clerk
of Somerset County Court, has two children, and lives
in Princeps Anne, Somerset County - Martha married
to John P. Marshall, merchant, has three children
and lives in Princeps Anne - Anne, Samuel, Levin, Matil-
da, Alexander and John are unmarried and live in
Princeps Anne - This ends the genealogy of Elizabeth
Handy the only daughter and second child of the first
mentioned James Martin -

William Martin the third child of the first men-
tioned James Martin died unmarried as before
mentioned.

James Martin the fourth child of James Martin
marrying Mary Hanoy, he died in 1808, who had four
children who left descendants, to wit: Elizabeth,
Thomas, Mary and Sarah, Elizabeth the first child
marrying Doctor John Neill, she died in 1820 leav-
ing two children to wit Doctor Henry Neill a highly
respectable Physician of the city of Philadelphia
is living and has nine children - Margaret
unmarried and lives in Philadelphia with her
brother - Thomas his second child, a lawyer and
married Charlotte Hayward, died in Baltimore
about 1815 leaving five children, to wit: Mary,
James, Sarah, Margaret and Charlotte - Mary
married James Johnson, merchant, of Baltimore
and has no child, James, merchant in Baltimore
married Miss Vane and has two children -
Sarah married William Morris, merchant of
Baltimore and has four children - she is now a
widow - Margaret and Charlotte married gentlemen
by the names of Banks and resided in Virginia. -

Mary their third child married Mitchell Wise,
was living when last heard from in the State of
Illinois, and has three children - she is now a widow
Sarah, fourth child married Robert Smith of Snow
Hill died in 1816 leaving three children, Mary
Henrietta and Levin, Mary married Samuel
Turnell of Virginia, Henrietta and Levin are
unmarried - This ends the genealogy of James
Martin the fourth child of James Martin first
herein mentioned

George Martin the fifth child of James Martin
married Mary Pope, died in 1798 has four
children who left descendants, to wit, John, George,
Nancy and Benjamin John his first child married
in North Carolina, died and left two sons James and
George who now reside in Nashville in the State
of Tennessee - George married in Baltimore died
and left two children, named George and Mary -
cannot ascertain where George is - Mary married
Samuel R. Smith merchant of Snow Hill died and
left one child named Elizabeth - Nancy married
her cousin James Handy whose children are men-
tioned under his name - she is now living in

Shew Hill — Benjamin is living in Shew Hill as a widower with one son named George, now living in Philadelphia — This ends the Genealogy of George Martin the fifth child of James Martin first herein mentioned.

With regard to the family of Gilchrist in Norfolk we can say very little that is satisfactory — It is difficult if not impossible to trace their relationship — It is however in the recollection of Colo. Samuel Handy, now aged eighty seven, that one of the Gilchrists came to Shew Hill from Norfolk before the revolution on a visit to the Martins, his relations, and some of the more aged of the Martin family remember to have heard their ancestors speak of the Gilchrists of Norfolk as their relations. —

No emigrant from Scotland by the name of James Martin other than my ancestor is believed to have settled in this part of the Country, indeed none other has ever been heard of by me or any one of the many persons with whom I have conversed upon the subject.

These several matters have been carefully

investigated and the result is communicated with all possible fidelity. They meet the views and accord entirely with the recollections of the oldest persons in this neighbourhood.

Answers to any further questions which may be asked will be communicated with promptness and pleasure.

Yours most obt. Servant

John Pelby Martin

Foreign Letters