

## Haemer Ashford's Parents

When I started researching the parents of my paternal great grandfather all I had to go on was oral family history and his death certificate.

The death certificate for William Ashford, my great grandfather, lists his mother's maiden name as 'Butsher' and states that he was born in 1851. My father and said his real name was Haemer.

The census records for Haemer's (William) family are very inconsistent and erratic with the birth year of his mother varying as much as 7 years from census to census. His mother Mariah (also sometimes spelled Maria) appears twice in the census year 1850 in Ravenswood, Virginia and once in the years 1860, 1870 and 1880 living in Wheelersburg, Ohio, with various combinations of the same children, but never with a husband. The children listed with Mariah in those census years are:

John Ashford (may also be called James) b 1835, Claiborne Ashford b 1837, George B. Ashford b 1843, Haemer Ashford b 1848, Rufus K. Ashford b 1849, Hazen Ashford (daughter) b 1852, Hays E. Ashford b 1855, Lorenzo D. Ashford b 1858.

The Special Schedule of Surviving Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, and Widows enumerated in Wheelersburg, Ohio, in connection with the 1890 Census lists "Maria L. widow of Ashford". It states that the Ashford listed was a Confederate soldier and that he died in service. This means that Mariah's husband fought for the Confederacy during the War Between the States and that he died in that war. This supposition is supported by the fact that Mariah had no children born after about 1858 or 1859.

The Gibbens-Butcher Genealogy book by Alvaro F. Gibbens, published in 1894 in Parkersburg, West Virginia, has the following information 1): Mariah Butcher was the daughter of Eli Butcher and his first wife, Elizabeth Hart. 2) She was born May 26, 1815, 3) on September 12, 1833 she married John Ashford of Catletts, Kentucky, (more accurately named Catlettsburg, KY), and 4) died in Lyons, Iowa in December of 1893.

Eli Butcher's will lists Mariah Ashford as his daughter.

With all the confusing census data and only a death certificate listing the maiden name of my great grandfather's mother I was unable to definitively identify Mariah Butcher as my ancestor.

Here is how DNA solved my brick wall

I had my DNA tested by Ancestry.com in the spring of 2015. The first results were great, but by the end of the second year I was getting really amazing finds.

First Ancestry DNA has connected me to a son of Mariah Ashford, Lorenzo D Ashford, the youngest brother to Haemer. Ancestry DNA then attached me to several of Mariah's aunts and uncles on her father's and mother's side (Butchers and Harts). Later on I was linked to another younger brother of

Haemer, Hayes Edward Ashford. The clinching DNA connection was being connected to one of Mariah's older sisters, Edith Almira Butcher.

With this DNA evidence I now had conclusive proof I am a descendant of Eli and Elizabeth Hart Butcher. Eli's father, Samuel Butcher, fought in the American Revolution and Elizabeth's grandfather, John Hart, was a signer of the Declaration of Independence.