

JOSEPH WIKERSON, SCIPIO, AND HC

I don't know *what* HC stands for! In all my searching, all these years, I have found no document or evidence to suggest what these initials mean. I start with this point because if it wasn't for James HC's pride in his name, I may never have found anything at all. He always signed his name "James **HC** Rodgers"¹ always emphasizing those two middle letters and he always recorded his name this way on official forms and applications. There are literally hundreds of "James Rodgers" and "James Rogers" listed in census and other official documents across the country over time. Jim, Jimmie, Jimmy, Jm, etc. are all there, too. Not our guy, though. He was always James **HC** Rodgers, thank you very much.

James HC was born on November the 9th, 1828 near the town of Scipio (pronounced 'sip e oh') in Jennings County, Indiana.² James HC's parents, Robert Wooding Rodgers and Elizabeth Wilkerson Rodgers were married on April 8th, 1818 in Clark County, Kentucky, after Robert Wooding Rodgers paid Elizabeth's father fifty *pounds*, (yes, pounds not dollars!) for her hand in matrimony.³ Nothing much is known about Robert Wooding Rodgers other than his name and marriage and some and land purchases. Elizabeth Wilkerson's parents are known and can be described, however.

Elizabeth Wilkerson was born on January 3rd, 1795 in Clark County, Kentucky. Her parents were Joseph Wilkerson and Elizabeth Blazebrook Fowler.⁴ Joseph was a six year veteran of the American Revolution and was even held prisoner by the British for over fourteen months.⁵ After the war, on April 29th, 1785 Joseph married Elizabeth in Bedford County, Virginia and they moved to Clark County, Kentucky where they would

¹ [James HC Rodgers' signature](#)

² [James HC's handwritten document #1](#)

³ [Robert Wooding Rodgers and Elizabeth Wilkerson marriage license](#)

⁴ [Wilkerson Group Sheet from Scipio, Indiana Library](#)

⁵ Daughters of the American Revolution #386846

begin their family. Joseph would acquire quite a bit of land on August 18th, 1801, and even paid for this land in pounds and shillings which was still being used in Kentucky in some places⁶. Twenty years later on September 14th, 1821, Joseph sold his land⁷ and his entire family, daughters and spouses included, would move 150 miles north to Jennings County, Indiana very near the town of Scipio. Joseph later filed for a renewed pension⁸ and would purchase even more land in the area totaling 120 acres.⁹ Joseph Wilkerson would live near Scipio the rest of his life, dying in 1841. He is buried with a son and his wife on his farm¹⁰. As he neared the end of his life he began to sell part of his land to his sons and son in laws. His son Thomas would eventually own all of it, but Robert Wooding Rodgers, James HC's father purchased forty acres of land in Jennings County, Indiana on September 9th, 1835¹¹ and another sixth three acres of land on August 10th, 1837¹² from Joseph and patented the acreages. James HC Rodgers' grandfather Joseph Wilkerson, not only a veteran of the American Revolution, was one of the most successful farmers of his time in Jennings County. I have yet to get much research done in Clark County, Kentucky, but since Joseph lived there for twenty years, I am sure to find a great deal when I eventually get there.

James HC had at least two siblings, Sallie Ann Rodgers Ray¹³, and Wilkerson H. Rodgers. Sallie Ann was born January 23rd, 1823 in Jennings County, Indiana, and died July 26th, 1884 in Scotland County, Missouri¹⁴. Wilkerson H's exact birth and death are

⁶ [Joseph Wilkerson Clark County Purchase](#)

⁷ [Joseph Wilkerson Clark County Sale](#)

⁸ [Joseph Wilkerson New Pension Application](#)

⁹ [Joseph Wilkerson Farm Photo](#)

¹⁰ [Joseph Wilkerson Grave](#)

¹¹ [Robert Wooding Rodgers Purchase #1](#)

¹² [Robert Wooding Rodgers Purchase #2](#)

¹³ [Sallie Ann Rodgers Ray Photo #1](#)

¹⁴ [Sallie Ann Rodgers Ray Stone](#)

unknown but he was “older than [James HC].”¹⁵ Census records put Wilkerson’s birth around 1819 or 1820 while his parents Robert Wooding and Elizabeth Rodgers still lived in Clark County, Kentucky. Wilkerson apparently lived his entire life in Scipio and was both a justice of the peace and a constable in that community. Wilkerson married Francis (maiden name unknown) and had at least one child, Louisa Rodgers, born around 1856. As of this writing I am only getting started pursuing this branch of our family.¹⁶

Wilkerson’s life wasn’t always the best, however, as he is listed twice in the “poor farm” records in Jennings County.¹⁷ I did find a marriage license for Louisa Rodgers, Wilkerson’s daughter dated July 4th, 1883. She married Frank Houser in Jennings County, Indiana.¹⁸

James HC Rodgers grew to manhood near the town of Scipio in Jennings County, Indiana. There is no record of him ever living any where else prior to his first marriage but he was awarded a “pension” (land grant) on May 23rd, 1849.¹⁹ This land grant was part of Congressional legislation of 1847 and 1848 that awarded up to 160 acres of land or \$100.00 to men who served in the Mexican War of 1847 and 1848. James HC was mustered in Madison, Jefferson County, Indiana (just south of Jennings, County) on October 14th, 1847.²⁰ James HC fought for Captain Hull’s Company A, 5th Regiment, Indiana Infantry located in and around Mexico City and apparently served the entire war. His compiled service record found at the National Archives in Washington, DC details very little about his service other than clothing and transportation allowances. James HC was mustered out on July 28th, 1848 at Madison, Indiana²¹ and James HC would return to

¹⁵ [Robert W. Rodgers Deposition pg. 5](#)

¹⁶ [Wilkerson Rodgers 1870 Census](#)

¹⁷ [Wilkerson Rodgers Poor Farm](#)

¹⁸ [Rodgers-Houser Marriage License](#)

¹⁹ [James HC Rodgers Mexican War Grant](#)

²⁰ [James HC Rodgers Muster In Mexican War](#)

²¹ [James HC Rodgers Mexican War Muster Out](#)

Scipio as he and his wife Mary Ann are listed at residence 108 in Geneva Township on the Jennings County census of 1850.²² Incidentally, this residence is right next door to the Robert Wooding Rodgers residence previously listed, whom I believe is James HC's father.

James HC Rodgers married Mary Ann Moore on July 4th, 1849.²³ Mary Ann Moore was also born in Jennings County, Indiana on either January 6th, 1830² or January 4th, 1824²⁴ and died in Scotland County as Mary Ann Love on November 26th, 1893.²⁵ Most of the census records list her as two years younger than James HC, so I am inclined to believe that James HC's handwritten document is accurate. Why there is such a discrepancy on her tombstone is a mystery. Apparently, Mary Ann's mother's maiden name was "Roscoe," and she had a brother named "Bob". Nothing else of her life prior to her marriage to James HC is yet known.¹⁵

James HC and Mary Ann had some interesting years together. After being married in July of 1849, they lived together on James HC's land near Scipio, Jennings County. Their oldest child, Nancy Jane Rodgers was born a little more than a year later in Jennings County on August 17th, 1850. Nancy would later marry Lewis F. Garrison in Scotland County, Missouri on November 11, 1869.²⁶ Nancy apparently had four children of her own. Two of these children died while the Garrisons were living in Scotland County and are buried in the Bible Grove cemetery.²⁷ Their names were Parley and John. Two other children; Robert Riley²⁸ and James Wilburn²⁹ both survived to adulthood. What became of Robert is unknown, but I am investigating that he may have settled near

²² [James HC Rodgers 1850 Census](#)

²³ [James HC Rodgers Mary Ann Moore Marriage License](#)

²⁴ [Mary Ann Moore Rodgers Love Stone](#)

²⁵ [Mary Ann Love Obituary](#)

²⁶ [Lewis and Nancy Jane Rodgers Garrison Marriage License](#)

²⁷ [Parley and John Garrison Stones](#)

²⁸ [Robert Garrison Photo](#)

²⁹ [James Garrison Photo #1](#)

Watertown, South Dakota. This is not proven at this time. James W. Garrison (Jim) apparently followed his parents ultimately to Alfalfa County, Oklahoma, lived a long and successful life, and died there. His tombstone is very near Lewis' and Nancy's. James Garrison's wife's name was Mattie Womack³⁰ and they had several children. I am happy to report as of late reconnecting with this branch of our family and have made contact with Cousins Stanley Garrison and Janice Shepard who I am presently exchanging information with. Stanley and Janice's great grandmother was Nancy Jane Rodgers Garrison daughter of James HC making them my second cousins twice removed. There is also some evidence to suggest that Nancy and Lewis may have adopted or at least taken in orphaned children.³¹

James HC and Mary Ann's second child Robert W. Rodgers³² was born on March 15, 1852 also in Jennings County.² A special note of gratitude is necessary to Robert. His pension deposition, which has already been frequently cited in this document, was tremendously valuable in confirming so many of the items believed to be true about the life and times of James HC Rodgers and our family. Several stories have been passed down through the generations about this "Uncle Bob" as well.

Two members of our family, Volana Gleason (second cousin twice removed to me, descended from James HC's sister Sallie Ann Rodgers Ray) and Bobby Lee Rodgers (my grandfather's brother) both have spoken of Robert W. Rodgers through narrative and personal correspondence. Robert apparently was a river boat gambler who lived up and down the Mississippi in his earlier days. He had several lady friends in different ports and was frequently gone for long periods of times and would show up in different places unannounced. Robert states in his pension deposition that he communicated with his half

³⁰ [Mattie Garrison Photo](#)

³¹ [Lewis and Nancy Garrison, Willie McKinney, and Ina \(Tint\) Harle](#)

³² [Robert W. Rodgers Photo](#)

brother John Ray Rodgers—something no one else seemed to do—and even ran into his half sister Demira on a river boat at Cairo, Illinois. Robert also seems to be the last member our family to communicate with James HC's and second wife Harriet's children and family, at least until I made contact with Harriet's descendents in 2006. He would later move to Pratt County, Kansas, marry a Katie Lewis,³³ and would ultimately settle in Augusta, Woods County, Oklahoma where he would become the postmaster³⁴ of the community. Eventually, his life would end in Alfalfa County, Oklahoma, close to his sister, Nancy Jane, his half brother Charles Love (son of Mary Ann Moore Rodgers Love and Abe Love), several nieces and nephews, and his wife. Apparently the couple never had any children. I am willing to bet there is more information to be found in Alfalfa County, but as of this writing, I have only had the time to visit the cemeteries where Robert and Nancy Jane and their spouses and children are buried.

³³ [Robert and Katie Lewis Wedding Photo](#)

³⁴ [Robert Rodgers Newspaper Article](#)

