

Sensebach Heritage

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and other variations of the name

Sencabaughs of Prince Edward Island

An Excess of Elizabeths

by Kathie Sencabaugh

Imagine for a moment that it is 1843, and the children and grandchildren of William Sencabaugh, Loyalist, are gathered for a family reunion. There are approximately eighty people present: William's widow; his nine surviving children and their spouses; and their collective bevy of children, about fifty-seven in total, one of whom is already married with three children of her own. The matriarch, Ruhamah (Hugh) Sencabaugh, widow of William the Loyalist, raises her voice and calls out "Elizabeth! Come here!" Eleven women and girls respond.

The eleven Elizabeths would have included one daughter of William the Loyalist (Elizabeth Sencabaugh, wife of John Windsor LeLacheur); two daughters-in-law (Elizabeth nee Street, wife of William Sencabaugh the younger; and Elizabeth nee LeLacheur, wife of Benjamin Sencabaugh) and eight grandchildren, six of whom bore the surname Sencabaugh. Over the years, the identities of some of the six young Elizabeth Sencabaughs became confused. This issue of *Sensebach Heritage* explores their histories and attempts to untangle the excess of Elizabeths presented in the nineteenth century records.

Why Elizabeth?

The Sencabaugh family seems always to have followed family tradition in naming its children. The conclusions we have reached regarding the origins of William Sencabaugh the Loyalist indicate that he was the son of Johann Jacob Sensebach of Montgomery, New York, and his wife, Elisabeth Krist. (See *Sensebach Heritage*, Vol. 5 No. 4). That William named his elder daughter Elizabeth supports our conclusion, as do his naming his eldest son John (the Anglicized version of Johann) and his use of the less common name Jacob for his fifth son.

Clearly the children of William the Loyalist were traditionalists as well. Nine of his ten children lived to marry and raise families. Among their offspring were seven Williams, seven Ruhamahs, five Johns, five Mary Anns, and the incredibly confusing eight Elizabeths. Of William's nine children, only James, who had but one daughter, omitted Elizabeth from the roster. Although the daughters of William the younger and Benjamin might have been named after their mothers, Elizabeth nee Street and Elizabeth nee LeLacheur, respectively, it is reasonable to conclude that the other Elizabeths were named in honor of either Elisabeth (Krist) Sencabaugh, their great-grandmother, or Elizabeth (Sencabaugh) LeLacheur, their aunt, in addition to various maternal grandmothers named Elizabeth.

Mistaken Identity

Many years ago, when the late Doris Flanagan began to assemble a family tree of the Sencabaughs of Prince Edward Island, she researched records of baptisms and marriages and discovered five baptismal records for girls named Elizabeth Sencabaugh, and four marriage records. While baptismal records provide clear links between parent and child, the civil records of marriage licenses and marriages do not; at best they offer us the names and residences of the bride and groom, and the name(s) of the witnesses or bondsmen. Knowing that Elizabeth, daughter of John Sencabaugh, had never married, and using data from family histories, grave-stones, and newspaper announcements of marriages to identify the others, Doris Flanagan matched the Elizabeths of the baptismal records with the Elizabeths of the marriages. By process of elimination, she concluded that Elizabeth Horton Sencabaugh, daughter of Jacob Sencabaugh, must have been the Elizabeth Sencabaugh who married David Hugh Logan of Georgetown, adding the caveat "No proof this Elizabeth is

Jacob's daughter except age of birth and age at death, according to gravestone, do coincide."¹

In 1998, however, while cleaning out an attic, the late Garfield Graham and his wife Kay discovered an old family Bible, which detailed the births of the children of David Sencabaugh and his wife Jane Clow. Among their children was a sixth Elizabeth, for whom no baptismal record had been found.² Recent evidence has proven that, in fact, it was David's daughter Elizabeth who married David Hugh Logan. The resulting revision of the family tree suggested this article.

Elizabeth Sencabaugh, 1820-1888

The first grandchild of William the Loyalist to be named Elizabeth was the daughter of his oldest son, John Sencabaugh, and his wife Mary Graham. Elizabeth, their second child, was born 30 September 1820 and baptized 9 September 1821.³ Although she never married, in 1845 she gave birth to a son, called Thomas Sencabaugh, fathered by one William McKay.⁴

Elizabeth remained in her family home, where she raised Thomas. Upon the death of her father in June 1862, her younger brother John inherited the homestead. In January of 1864, John married. Relations in the household may have been somewhat strained at times, as indicated by a legal agreement drawn up in May of 1865, which reads as follows:

Know all men by these presents that this is a mutual agreement between John Sencabaugh on the one part and Ellen Herring and Elizabeth Sencabaugh on the other part; and that they do each and severally hereby bind themselves to abide by the conditions herein contained, to wit: that I John Sencabaugh bind myself to support and keep my sister Elizabeth

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