



## The Mysterious Ancestor Henry Neild

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The fact that John Wilson and Mary Ulmer named their first son after Mary's father, and their second son after someone named Henry Neild indicates that Henry Neild was considered an important ancestor. But who was Henry Neild and how does he fit into the family tree? As yet there is no definitive answer, but an analysis of the family naming patterns and namesakes suggests that Henry Neild was either the father of Catherine, who married William Faulkner (i.e. he was John Wilson's mother's grandfather), or he was the father of John Wilson's father's mother (i.e. John Wilson's father's grandfather). So Henry Neild had a daughter who married either William Faulkner—in which case her name was Catherine—or Richard(?) Wilson, her name, in that case, still unknown. We can further surmise that, since William Faulkner was born in 1694, the daughter of Henry Neild was probably born in 1690-1720. Therefore Henry Neild himself was probably born in 1660-1690. These qualifications are sufficiently specific that we should recognize the correct Henry Neild immediately upon learning who his daughter married. The task then is “simply” to search out as many possible candidates as we can find and then run them all to ground. The surname Neild, Neald or Nield was quite common in Cheshire, but does not appear in Tattenhall until the late 1700's. Tattenhall records show a Joseph Nield born in 1794 to William (and Mary)

Nield of Tattenhall, son of John Nield of “Bonebury” (Bunbury)—so apparently the Tattenhall Nield family originated in Bunbury.

Here, for example is one candidate: Richard Neild (born 27 Mar 1645 in Wilmslow) married Ann Perkine on 18 Dec 1677. Their son, Henry Neild, was born on 1 Aug 1679 in Pownall Fee, married a woman named Sarah, and died on 25 Nov 1742 in Hale, Bowden. He is the *only* Henry Neild recorded in the records of the 1723 Oath of Allegiance, which purportedly enumerated every head of household in Cheshire that year. Sarah and Henry had a son named Henry, born in 1719, but he is too late to fit our model. Sarah and Henry also had a daughter named Mary Neild, born 17 May 1722 in Hale (spouse unknown). This is too late (and her forename is wrong) for her to have married William Faulkner, but she might very well have married Richard(?) Wilson when she was 18, ca. 1740, and given birth to our John Willson in 1740/1.

Another possibility is Henry Neild, son of William Neild, born in Tarvin on 19 Nov 1691; this William Neild is also registered as having children in Stapleford, exactly where William Faulkner was born in 1694. If Henry had a daughter Catherine in 1711, she would have been the right age to marry the somewhat older William Faulkner and bear children in the 1730’s.

Another possibility is the Catherine Neild born 11 Dec 1705 in Pyershays, the daughter of John Neild. If we postulate that John Neild’s full name was Henry John or John Henry, then his daughter could have married William Faulkner (perhaps as a teenage second wife) and given birth to children in the 1730’s. It’s a stretch, but good candidates are scarce, so we must conserve and evaluate them carefully.

The Neilds and the Faulkners were definitely acquainted, and lived near each other. William Nield married Eleanor Falkner, both of Tarvin Parish, on 2 May 1727. And John Nield married Rebeckah Falkner, both of Tarvin parish, on 8 Jan 1732/3. This Rebeckah, baptized in Tarvin on 15 July 1702 and the daughter of Simon Faulkner of Bruen Stapleford, was “our” William Faulkner’s sister. Perhaps Catherine Neild(?) was John Nield’s sister. This is far more of a connection than the Neilds and Wilsons can claim. The Wilsons definitely seem more closely associated with the Sheen family around Tattenhall

Other people named Henry Neild or Nield were born in Stockport, Cheshire, in 1587 and 1597; in Wilmslow in 1593; married Ann Kelsall in Wilmslow in 1629; in Derbyshire in 1675 and 1678; in Manchester in 1596, 1605, 1622, 1628 and 1632.

The search continues for a daughter of Henry Neild who married a Wilson or William Faulkner ca. 1690-1715.

The following Neild/Nield wills have been checked:

Henry Neild of Hapsford 1693  
James Nield of Tarvin 1819  
John Neild 1640  
John Nield of Bunbury 1840  
John Nield of Hockenhull 1639  
John Nield of Hockenhull 1688  
John Nield of Hockenhull, Tarvin 1639  
John Nield of Stapleford 1740  
John Nield of Tattenhall 1865  
Joseph Neild 1865  
Richard Nield of Tattenhall 1861  
Robert Nield of Tarvin 1647  
Sarah Neild of Tarvin 1717  
Thomas Nield of Tattenhall 1846  
William Neild of Tarvin 1633  
William Neild of Tarvin 1634  
William Neild of Tarvin 1717  
William Nield of Tarvin 1690  
William Nield of Tattenhall 1809  
William Nield of Tattenhall 1888

