

**The Question of
Jacob Summers 2d
1808-1885**

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The Question

Who were the parents of Jacob Summers 2d,¹ born 1808 in New Jersey, died 1885 in Macomb, Michigan?

About Jacob 2d

Here's what we know about Jacob Summers 2d.

- Jacob 2d was born in August 1808 in New Jersey. We have no New Jersey records that document his birth, and his marriage record in New Jersey did not name the parents of the bride and groom. Death records in Michigan (state records and local newspaper accounts) gave Jacob 2d's exact age at death, so that information allows us to calculate when he was born. A birth year of 1808 is consistent with the ages reported in Federal census from 1850-1880.
- Jacob 2d married Jane Davidson around 1833 in New Jersey. We do not have any marriage documentation, but death certificates from two of their children indicate the mother's name.
- Jacob 2d and Jane had three children: James Dekalb Summers born 1834 in New Jersey, Mary Elizabeth Summers (Bromley) born 1838 in Michigan, and Elliot Perry Summers born 1845 in Michigan. Documentation to support:
 - 1850 census of Shelby, Macomb, MI shows this family group living in same household (though relationships in this census are not stated)
 - Jacob 2d's will, written in 1883, names his wife and three children.
 - 1899 death record of James D. Summers named father as Jacob Summers.
 - 1909 death certificate of Elliott P. Summers names father as Jacob Summers and mother as Jane Davison.
 - 1918 death certificate of Mary Bromley named her father as Jacob Summers and mother as Jane Davidson, both parents born in NJ.
- We have a land patent for Jacob Summers Jr. in Sterling Twp in 1835, and several deeds thereafter involving Jacob where he was named either as Jacob Jr. or Jacob 2d, and sometimes with a wife named Jane. All of his land dealings appear to have been in Macomb county (Jacob Summers Sr. had most of his land dealings in Oakland county).
- From 1852-1862, Jacob Summers 2d, along with Asquire W. Aldrich and James Covell, was involved in court proceedings that had to do with the willful burning down of the Canal Mills. It's not entirely clear how Jacob 2d was involved or what the end result was for the case.
- So far, we have been unable to locate any official death records except the statewide registration entry which named Jacob's parents as Jacob and Mary Summers² – no probate record or any official burial records for either Jacob 2d or his wife Jane (died 1892). We do, however, have this remark from a researcher in Macomb County:

1 See my article, "A Study of Two Men Named Jacob Summers in Macomb and Oakland Counties, Michigan 1830-1865" available on my research website, www.yesteryours.net/mann/library.htm.

2 There is no way to know who reported that information, and even if we knew the informant, we could not know that information is correct – I contend that it is not.

Is Jacob II the one who died in 1885? If so, he is supposed to have been buried in Utica Cem in an unmarked grave. Or at least this is what the Utica Cemetery Walk booklets say.³

- The death notice for Jacob 2d in the Mt. Clemens Monitor gave four clues:
 - residing north of the village
 - usually called Lane Jake
 - buried in our cemetery
 - Rev. Thrush, Congregationalist pastor, officiating

Checking Assumptions

Our first assumption is that Jacob 2d was the son of one of the five sons of John Summers Esquire of Sussex, New Jersey (1759-1827). What if that assumption is wrong? What are the other possibilities?

Recent research indicates that the oldest brother of our Freistett immigrants probably also came to America: Matthias Sommer. We have some speculation about a son named Martin being associated with this branch, but who were the descendants of that line and where they went is unknown at this time. We must at least consider that some of the New Jersey Summers might have come from a line other than George Summers and Anna Barbara Rub.

Were there any other sons of George Summers and Anna Barbara Rub? The will of George Summers in 1785 named two sons: George Jr. and John. We have documentation that George Jr. removed to Warrington, Bucks, PA, and he had only one son who died early. That leaves the youngest child of George and Anna Barbara: John Summers, who later became an associate judge and thus acquired the title, Esquire.

How do we know that John Summers Esquire had five sons? We have baptism records for two sons, George and John Jr., but the relationship for David, William, and Jacob was always necessarily assumed because in various New Jersey court cases the names of John Esquire would always appear together with the names John Jr., George, David, William, and Jacob – although admittedly the relationships were never explicitly stated. Until a case went to the New Jersey Supreme Court.⁴ In the May term of 1831, during the case *Den v. Young*, it was recorded:

³ Email from Ann F. (Macomb County Genealogical Group), “Summers Research in Michigan”, dated 20 Aug 2015.

⁴ *Reports of cases argued and determined in the Supreme Court of Judicature of the State of New Jersey [1796-1804; 1821-1831] by New Jersey Supreme Court of Judicature*; Halsted, William, 1794-1878, reporter; Coxe, Richard S. (Richard Smith), 1792-1865; Linn, John; Volume 7; Publisher Jersey City : F.D. Linn; Published 1886; available on Internet Archive: <https://archive.org/details/newjerseysup12newjiala>; page 305.

dence,

1st. A judgment by confession, entered on that day, in the Inferior Court of Common Pleas of the county of Sussex (then extending over the said lands) at the suit of John Kinney, jun. against the said John Summers, together with his four sons, David, William, John, and Jacob Summers. Which judgment was accompanied by the proper affidavit.

2d. A writ of *fi. fa.* sued out on said judgment, returnable

[Note that George was not mentioned because he had died before the case in question. Nevertheless, we do have a baptism record for George, so we know he was a fifth son.]

How do we know that John Summers Esquire did not have more than five sons? We don't, but there has been no other documentation located in deeds, court cases, or local histories that mention any male names other than John, John Jr., George, David, William, and Jacob.

What if Jacob 2d is not related to our Summers family at all, i.e., there was another Summers family in the same area of Michigan who was not related to our family. I suppose that is possible, but it's not likely. The census data don't show any other Summers families in the same areas of early Michigan, and Jacob 2d definitely had ongoing interactions with other members of our MI Summers family.

Now let's look at each of the five Summers brothers and see what evidence we have to support whether that brother could have been the father of Jacob 2d.

Son of Jacob Summers Sr.?

The most obvious evidence that Jacob 2d was the son of Jacob Sr. is the death record of Jacob 2d. It states that Jacob 2d's father was Jacob Summers and his mother was Mary Summers. When I visited the Michigan State Archives this past summer, I went to look at this record specifically. It is a state register that contains information sent in from all the counties – so it is transcribed information. Whether or not each county still holds the originals could not be answered. Certainly the state register contains no indication about who the informant of the death information was.

Nevertheless, we must consider the possibility that the two Jacob's were father and son. Jacob Sr. was 24 when he married Mary Hiles, so there could have been a brief marriage and child before Mary Hiles. It's possible.

Is there any other evidence that ties Jacob 2d to Jacob Sr.?

- In the 1830 census of Oxford, NJ, the only household where I can see that Jacob 2d might have been living was the household of Jacob Sr. However, in 1830, two of the five Summers brothers had died (George and David), so it seems possible that Jacob 2d could have been living with his uncle at that point.
- In 1852-53, Jacob Sr. was involved in a court case with C.W. Chapel where it appears that Jacob lost, and apparently owed money. The case went on to prohibit Jacob Sr. from transferring any

assets to John and David Summers (believed to be sons of Jacob Sr.), Jacob 2d, and even Jacob Sr's wife, Charlotte. This can be seen as evidence that Jacob 2d was a son of Jacob Sr., but I'm not so sure. In looking more closely, we see that the actual promissory notes were from John and David (almost certainly Jacob Sr.'s sons) to Jacob Sr., which then, trickily, Jacob Sr. transferred to Jacob 2d as collateral security. I'm not well-versed in financial matters, but it looks to me like Jacob Sr. was trying to move any and all assets away from his immediate family so Chapel couldn't get that money. John and David were his sons, but Jacob 2d was not - even though this nephew was Jacob Sr's namesake and all-but-adopted son.

- Maddeningly, we have found no death records of any kind for Jacob Sr., which seems unusual because he had been a state senator and was a well-known character of the time - no death certificate, no probate record, nor any newspaper account that would indicate precisely who his children were. There are marriage records, and divorce records, which we can associate with either Jacob Sr and Jacob 2d, then allowing us to link certain deeds with each of them. But so far, no deed we've found names relationships between parties other than the wives of the men.

Absent any other written documentation, is there any logical evidence that ties Jacob 2d to Jacob Sr.?

Well, there is the name. But see my blog post, "[UNCLE Jake Summers](http://mann-genealogist.blogspot.com/2015/09/uncle-jake-summers.html)".⁵ Jacob Sr. was familiarly known as Uncle Jake, and my speculation is that "uncle" was a literal description of the relationship between the two Jacob's.

Son of John Summers Jr.?

There is no physical evidence to support that Jacob 2d was son of John Jr. We do have a probate record where the brothers and sisters of Maria Summers Chapel were named, but James G. and Jacob 2d were not mentioned. This is tricky because we are nearly certain that James G. was a son of John Jr., so we can't really make the assumption that the lack of mention in this document means a lack of relationship.

Here is circumstantial evidence in favor of John Jr. being Jacob 2d's father:

- John Jr. married Jane Gardner in October 1807. The first known child in this family group was born in 1810, so there was plenty of room for Jacob 2d to fit into this family group.
- John Jr. seems to have settled mostly in Macomb (name the s/t/r) – as did Jacob 2d.

Here is some logical evidence that is against this theory:

- The probate record for John Jr. has signatures for Jacob Summers (no suffix), but the signature matches that of Jacob Sr. (found on bank notes from Utica Bank).
- If Jacob 2d was the oldest son of John, then he might have showed up on the probate, but instead we find only Jane and Thomas J.
- Another deed transaction in 1844 seems to list nearly all the family members of John Jr, but again, no Jacob 2d.

⁵ <http://mann-genealogist.blogspot.com/2015/09/uncle-jake-summers.html>.

Son of William?

For: Can't think of any.

Against:

- William married Rachel Hoagland in 1806. If Jacob 2d were his son, he would have been born a few months before Amos H. Summers, born in November, 1808 – so not likely.
- William was alive in 1830, but there was no male of Jacob 2d's age in William's household.

Son of George?

We now have documentation that says the following:

- George and Sarah Summers had 5 children together.
- After the death of George in 1814, we have a New Jersey Orphan's Court record where John Summers, grandfather, was appointed the guardian for John, Nathan, Jane, and Sarah, all under 14 years old.
- A Monmouth County court case involving John Summers Esquire clearly indicates that Sarah Hoagland Summers' oldest child was a daughter named Ann. So adding the name of Ann to the list of the other four orphans would mean that all five of George's children have been accounted for, and Jacob 2d was not a son of George.

Son of David?

So I seem to have arrived at this possibility by the process of elimination: Jacob 2d was a son of David Summers and Mary Horn.

Evidence in favor:

- David Summers was married in December 1807. Jacob 2d was born in August 1808.
- Jacob Sr. would have been the uncle of Jacob 2d, and thus my theory about Uncle Jake reference still applies.
- The death register record for Jacob 2d said his mother was Mary Summers, which in this case would be correct! (Note that a maiden name of the mother is not stated in the death register).

Evidence against:

My biggest beef with this theory has been location, location, location. Let's walk through what I mean by that. But first, here is a summary of the family group of David Summers if Jacob 2d was included as a son:

David Summers 1782-1825, born and died in New Jersey

+ Mary "Polly" Horn, born 1785 in New Jersey, married in NJ Dec. 1807, died 1864 in Avon, Oakland, Michigan

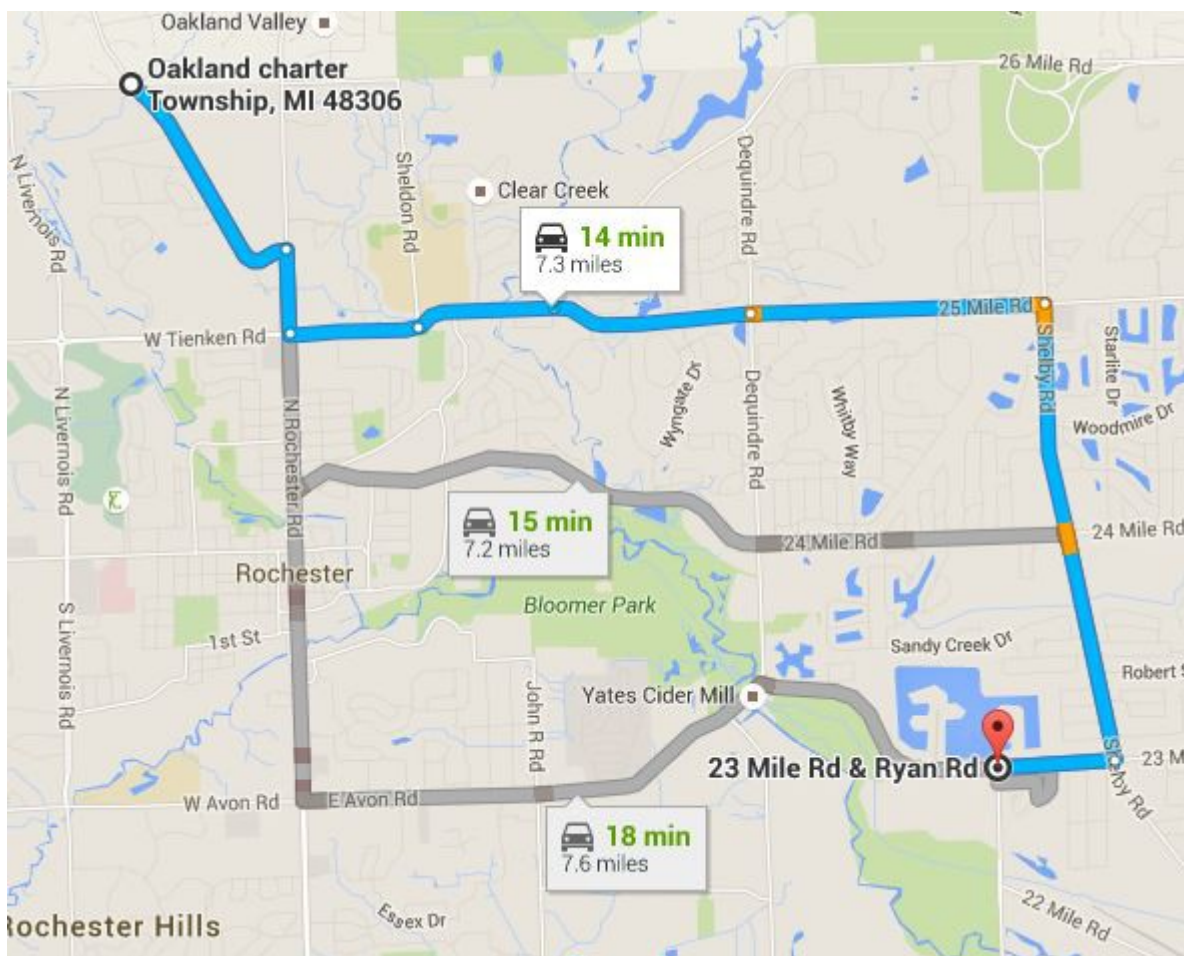
- ◆ Jacob 2d, born 1808 in New Jersey, died 1885 in Shelby, Macomb, Michigan
- ◆ Charles, born 1810 in New Jersey, died 1880 in Goodison, Oakland, Michigan
- ◆ Sarah H., born Dec. 1811 in New Jersey, married Lyman Willcox in MI around 1837, died 1872 in Rochester, Oakland, Michigan
- ◆ David, born 1817 in New Jersey, died 1891 in Detroit, Michigan (but lived a long time in Avon, Oakland, Michigan)
- ◆ Emby, born 1825 in New Jersey, died 1905 in Waterford, Oakland, Michigan (but lived a long time in Avon, Oakland, Michigan)

Before I get into my location issues, here is a general observation. Notice there is a gap in the ages of the children, which is explained, we think, by David Summers Sr. serving in the War of 1812. There aren't as many records as I would hope to support that fact, but there was a David Summers from Belvidere, Sussex County, New Jersey who served with the Third Regiment of the NJ militia under Capt. Francis Donlevy. He was enrolled and discharged in this regiment in 1814. Potentially, David gave service to other regiments between 1812 and 1816 for which records have not yet been located. Nevertheless, we can see there were two groups of his children: **Group A** born before the war, and **Group B** born after the war.

Now here is my location issue: if Jacob 2d's mother and siblings were living in Oakland county, why was Jacob 2d living in Macomb? And if Charles was also a son, why was he living in Oakland Twp while his mother and siblings were living in Avon Twp?

I don't know why this keeps tripping me up, but I just have to keep remembering that these jurisdictional lines really didn't mean much for those living on the ground. It might be what makes this research so difficult, but in terms of where these people were actually located, the distances between were not far at all.

- Jacob 2d lived approximately 4 miles away from where David Summers lived with his family and his mother, Mary (about 7 miles taking modern-day roads).
- Charles Summers and David Summers lived on just opposite sides of the township line between Oakland Twp and Avon Twp. The actual distance between their two farms was probably 2 miles.



Modern route from Jacob 2d in Macomb to David in Avon

So here's the scenario I'm imagining:

The earliest Summers record we have in Michigan is a land patent on 1 Jun 1831 to John Summers, assignee of Peter J. Desnoyers, for 104 acres in 6-2-12 of Sterling twp. A few months later, John also purchased property at 31-3-12 in Shelby twp. My speculation is that the Summers family of New Jersey was dead broke due to a huge legal battle where the family probably lost everything. John Summers Jr., the older of the two remaining brothers (the other being Jacob Summers Sr) somehow found his way to Michigan, and associated himself with somebody who did have means. I believe that John Summers was employed to clear the land belonging to Peter J. Desnoyers, thus allowing John to build on his own property and subsequently acquire other properties. I'm guessing that John Jr. brought his brother, Jacob, and any other New Jersey family who were willing to come to Michigan for this opportunity.

By July, 1832, Jacob Sr. had enough to acquire his own land patent, 80 acres at 17-3-11 in Avon twp.⁶ I'm not at all clear about what happened to that land, but it does appear that Jacob Sr. was thereafter involved with properties in Orion twp even though in 1840, he was enumerated in Sterling. Very curious, but let's for the moment keep our eyes on Jacob 2d.

⁶ I am making an assumption that it was Jacob Sr. to whom this land patent was granted. The name on the patent is "Jacob Summers of Oakland County".

Three years later, the following Michigan land patents were granted to Summers:

- 8 Oct 1835, 80 acres to Jacob Jr.⁷ at 17-2-12 in Sterling. Jacob Jr. and Jane sold this land in 1837, and thereafter had properties in Shelby Twp.
- 9 Oct 1835, 40 acres to John Jr. at 8-2-12 in Sterling. I'm not sure what became of this property, but it might have ended up in the hands of Charles, who sold it in 1836.
- 15 Oct 1835, 80 acres to Charles at 8-2-12 in Sterling. Charles sold this land in 1836, and relocated to Oakland Twp (near the township line between Oakland and Avon Twps).

By the 1840 census, we see all three children of Group A of David's children settled in Michigan (Sarah had married Lyman Willcox before 1838). But where were the children of Group B? I can't find them, or their mother, Mary Summers, in 1840, but by 1850 we suddenly see David Summers living two miles from Charles with his mother, Mary, in his household, and Emby was living nearby with his sister, Sarah Willcox.

I think it just happened that Jacob 2d and Charles – assuming they were brothers – ended up with some space between them, and I'm guessing it might have had something to do with family dynamics.

- It's clear that Jacob 2d did have ties to his uncles, based on being enumerated with Jacob Sr. in 1830 Oxford, NJ, on staying in the same area where John Jr. and Jacob had purchased properties, and becoming involved in Uncle Jake's financial debacle. It seems that Jacob 2d felt connected to his uncles' families.
- Charles, on the other hand, had petitioned to have his own guardian assigned when he was 18 in New Jersey. Maybe he wasn't happy with his uncles for whatever reason, or maybe there was some division over what appears to have been a first marriage for Charles in New Jersey.⁸ What we do know is that in 1835, Charles bought a Michigan land patent in Macomb for cheap, turned around and sold it, probably at a profit, and moved over to Oakland county where it appears his other cousins (children of William) also settled. Charles maybe wasn't keen about his uncles and their families, but it seems he didn't mind sticking together with his cousins who had also lost their father too soon.

⁷ My recent research indicates that Jacob Jr. is the same person who later identified himself as Jacob 2d.

⁸ Charles did not marry Laura Tower until 1839 in Michigan. The 1840 and 1850 census show a male, Samuel Summers, born abt 1832 in New Jersey. Since Charles requested William R. Longstreet as his guardian in 1828, and a young couple of the age of Charles was living in the household of Longstreet in 1830, the speculation is that Charles had a first marriage in NJ.

Conclusion

Ongoing research is a funny thing. If you stick with it, eventually you find reasons to adjust your thinking. Originally, I thought like everybody else that Jacob 2d was a son of Jacob Sr. even though he was born before Jacob Sr. was married to his first wife. But as I was researching to differentiate the Jacob's, I came to the idea that "Uncle Jake," in reference to Jacob Sr., was significant. So I moved Jacob 2d to be the oldest son of John Summers Jr, the other brother who lived to migrate to Michigan. Because there was room in the years between when John Jr. married Jane Gardner and the next known child (Matilda, born 1810), Jacob 2d seemed to fit in that family group. But now, we have discovered some probate records and deeds that make it seem less and less likely that Jacob 2d was a son of John Jr. So this time around, and based on the information presented here, I now feel the evidence as I understand it today supports the premise that Jacob Summers 2d could have been a son of David Summers.

And I wonder if we'll ever know for sure.