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Chilton Family Genealogy



Caleb Chilton *m* Elizabeth
(came to Plymouth in 1630 as a small boy)
David

David Chilton – b. 1649, d. 1690
m Mary Whipple, daughter of Captain Isaac Whipple
Elijah

Elijah Chilton – b. 1688, d. 1749, *m* Mercy
Zebulon (at least two brothers)

Zebulon Chilton – b. 5/2/1719, d. ?
m Hannah Coleman – b. 1730?, d. ?
Paul, Lemuel

Paul Chilton – b. 4/5/1749, d. 10/16/1811
m Deborah Easterbrook – b. 6/20/1753, d. 9/4/1812
Theodore (d. at birth), Samuel, Caleb, Hiram, Luke, Dorcas, Peter, Ruth, Rachel

Samuel Chilton – b. 1780, d. ?, *m* Polly White – b. ?, d. ?
Arabella, Prudence, Honora, Hettie, Theodore

Theodore Chilton – b. 10/4/1809, d. 2/12/1879
m Sophiae Preston – b. 1/1809 or 1/1810, d. 9/4/1872
Stephen, Alice, Lydia (d. of pneumonia), Alden, Lyman, Levi, Olive, Eli

Alden Eugene Chilton – b. 7/20/1836, d. ?
m Elizabeth Rogers – b. 9/30/1838, d. 8/16/1908
*Ellen, Mary (d. in childhood), Bertha and Oscar (twins),
Lucia (d. at birth), Arthur*

Oscar F. Chilton – b. 6/13/1875, d. 10/21/1916
m Cornelia Vogt – b. 2/24/1878, d. 8/22/1945
Henry Alden, Willis John

Willis John Chilton – b. 4/1/1899, d. 1/26/1964
m Lorna Mae McConnell Chilton – b. 10/10/1902, d. 9/27/1988
(widow of Henry Chilton)
*Pearl Irene (fathered by Henry),
Mabel Rose (fathered by Henry), Irving Kent, Donald Joseph*

Irving Kent Chilton – b. 5/14/1925, d. 8/6/1980
m Solange Marie Nadal – b. 6/19/1926, d. 1/25/2004
Jacob, Daniel

Daniel Edward Chilton – b. 11/12/1954
m Margaret (Meg) Stark – b. 9/6/1957
Tyler John Chilton



The old oak box with its square nails and domed lid bore the earthly remains of a human life. Rusty hinges creaked, and the scent of musty cotton lining drifted upward as Meg Chilton lifted the lid.

But this was no casket. Inside the small, hand-crafted chest lay a tarnished silver locket and a yellowed envelope. They were all that remained of Deborah Chilton, a woman whose blood now flowed through the veins of Meg's only child.

She set the box on her large desk amid the array of memorabilia gathered there. Determined to provide her son with a meaningful gift for his high school graduation, she had spent her evenings dur-

ing the past four years compiling a detailed genealogical record of the family.

At the back of the desk, a stack of history books and biographies rose to a precarious height. Beside the books, Meg had arranged the precious few photographs she had been able to obtain—faded and sepia-toned images of men in Army uniforms, babies propped on blankets, and brides and grooms standing solemnly side by side. Her favorite, and one of the oldest, was a portrait of Elizabeth Rogers Chilton, her husband's great-great-grandmother, clad in a full-skirted, Civil War-era gown of dark silk with white lace at the neck and sleeves. Meg had added a pale blue mat and had placed the photograph in an ornate silver frame.

On the other side of her desk lay old photograph albums, a set of love letters tied with a red ribbon, and several marriage licenses and military documents. During her years of research, Meg had penned a detailed journal about each member of the Chilton family. In the leather-bound notebook, she recorded tidbits of oral history that had filtered down through the generations, comments from passing historians, and data taken from old diaries

and letters. Gradually, she had compiled biographies—some of them far too short, she thought—that helped to flesh out the lives of her son’s ancestors. This journal, this record of his heritage, would be her graduation gift to Tyler John Chilton.

But until today, when her husband brought his mother’s small jewelry box from Solange Chilton’s attic, Meg had been stalled at the Revolutionary War. Her chart included men’s names, of course, and a few anecdotes about those who had fought in various battles. But the women—particularly Deborah Chilton—remained a mystery. Meg knew neither birth nor death dates, nothing about her life, not even the woman’s maiden name. Eager to study the chest’s contents, she reached for the locket.

Her hand paused as Meg caught the familiar sounds of her son’s sneakers clomping across the wooden floor downstairs, his letter jacket dropping on the couch, and his backpack flopping onto the kitchen table. She stepped to the door of her home office, where she worked as a freelance designer. “Hey, Tyler, you’ve got to see this! Your dad found an old jewelry box in *Grandmaman* Solange’s attic.”

“Just a minute, Mom.” Tyler’s husky voice filtered upstairs. Its deep timbre still sometimes took his mother by surprise. “I gotta eat something first. I’m starving.”

“This dates all the way back to the Revolutionary War!”

“Hey, don’t we have any Little Debbies?”

“Look in the pantry.”

Meg sighed and returned to the box. She found it frustrating that despite her enthusiasm, neither her husband nor their son shared her passion for genealogy. Her own history had been almost too easy to track—both parents had immigrated to the United States from Norway, and their records were preserved in church archives. But Dan Chilton’s family tree grew this way and that, a winding, twisting mass of branches and fruit. Nearly every ethnic group in America’s melting pot played some role in the Chilton history.

“Where in the pantry?” Tyler called up.

“By the Cheerios!”

How could a boy be a senior in high school, a four-year honor roll student, a National Merit finalist, a track star, and a scholarship winner bound

for Yale University—and still not remember where his mom kept the snacks?

“I don’t see ’em,” he hollered.

“Third shelf down, on the left. Paper towels, soups, Cheerios, Little Debbie’s.”

“Got it!”

Meg closed her eyes. Now Tyler would be taking a large glass from the cabinet and pouring milk to its brim. He would peel back the clear wrapping from the Devil Squares and stuff half of one cake into his mouth. Without chewing or swallowing, he would pour in a mouthful of cold milk. And then, his cheeks bulging, he would devour this bite in the space of about three seconds. Would any other Yale freshmen eat like that despite *their* mothers’ best efforts?

Shaking her head, Meg pinched the silver locket chain between her thumb and forefinger and gingerly lifted the oval necklace from the jewelry box. All these years she’d been trying to find out about Deborah Chilton, the woman whose bloodline could be traced through eight generations from the Revolutionary War. Then Dan’s mother had passed away at age seventy-seven. Finally, there amid the clutter in *Grandmaman* Solange’s dusty attic, he had

found it—the legendary family heirloom that had vanished for three generations.

Slipping her fingernail into the tiny groove on the side of the locket, Meg pried open the two halves. A shiver skittered down her spine as she gazed on the painted miniature of a beautiful woman. Her dark hair was swept up in a knot, and her depthless blue eyes stared forward. It was a rough portrait, no doubt executed by an itinerant artist, but it captured the determined spirit of the woman.

“What’re we having for supper?” Tyler called up.

“There’s a roast in the Crock-Pot.”

“Roast?”

“It’s right there on the counter.” Blind, Meg thought, the boy was blind. “Hey, come up here and look at this, Tyler. It’s amazing. I’m holding a picture of your ancestor from eight generations ago.”

“Just a sec. I gotta call Charlie, see what he’s doing tonight. We might order a pizza.”

“Tyler, I am cooking a roast!” Was he deaf too? “You can invite Charlie for dinner. There’s plenty.”

Silence. Meg pried open the silver panel that covered the other half of the locket. A small curl of

dark hair tied with a white ribbon slipped out onto her lap.

"Oh, Tyler, it's her hair!" she cried. "They saved her hair!"

"Huh?"

"Your great-great-great-great-great-great-grandmother's hair! I'm holding it."

"Yuck."

"Tyler, get up here right now!"

"Okay, okay."

Meg set the locket aside and picked up the old envelope. On the front someone had written: "Deborah Easterbrook Chilton. Born June 20, 1753. Died September 4, 1812."

Easterbrook. That was the maiden name she'd been seeking!

Tingling with excitement, Meg realized this was absolutely invaluable. She glanced up at the long row of pages she had tacked to the wall of her office. At last, she would be able to fill in the blank at the far end of the genealogical chart.

She turned the envelope over and read another notation: "Deborah Easterbrook Chilton. Played important role in Rv. War."

An important role? Meg's heart began to thud. *Grandmaman* Solange had mentioned the old box, the locket, and the ancestor who had brought the family line from England. But there had been no mention of any role the woman might have played in the struggle for independence.

"Tyler, she was a war hero!" Meg looked up as her son emerged from the stairwell. The trace of a milk mustache clung to the wispy tendrils on his unshaven upper lip. She carried the locket to him. "Look at this picture. Isn't she pretty? Her name was Deborah Easterbrook Chilton, and the inscription on the back of this envelope says she played a key role in the Revolutionary War."

"Cool." He studied the locket for a moment. "Why's her hair in there? That's gross."

"That's what they used to do in memory of a loved one."

"Don't ever do that to me. Just shut the coffin and let me go."

"Tyler, that's morbid."

"Keeping some dead lady's hair is morbid."

"This was not 'some dead lady.' She's your great-great-great-great-great-great-grandmother. Look

at this stuff.” He followed her to the cluttered desk. “Can you believe this was in *Grandmaman Solange’s* attic all along? See, my chart stops right here. I got this far with the Chiltons, and then I ran into a dead end. I didn’t have her maiden name or anything. You know, you can’t go hopping back to England if you don’t have the right connections. There were lots of Chiltons in pre-Revolutionary War America, believe me. I had no birth or death dates to put in this space either. Nothing. But now that I know the name and the dates, I can fill in the blank. Deborah Easterbrook Chilton—and look, she had black hair and blue eyes, just like you. Isn’t that amazing?”

She turned to find her son standing by the window and gazing down at the street below. Tall and lanky, he leaned one shoulder against the frame and traced the wooden mullions that divided the windowpanes. Stricken anew with the imminent absence of her son—his graduation in two weeks, his summer job at a Christian camp, and then his four years at college—Meg felt her stomach churn. She knew it was time to let him go. Time for him to test those wings he’d been growing and strengthening all these years. Time for him to fly away into his

own life. But, oh, it was going to be quiet around the house. Quiet, empty . . . lonely.

"You okay, Tyler?" she asked softly.

His focus darted to her face. "Mom, I need to talk to you about something."

"Sure. Anything." She perched on the corner of her desk, affecting a casual pose. How many times had he made such an announcement—and how many times had she feigned calm and serenity? She could almost hear the roll call of incidents that began with "Mom, I need to talk to you about something. . . ." *I fell off the slide today and cut my knee open; I punched Johnny in the nose for calling me a nerd; I made a D on my art project; I'm going out with Amber; Amber dumped me; I'm dropping an elective; I'm going out with Shelley; I dumped Shelley. . . . On and on . . .*

As always, Tyler flushed a pale shade of pink and rubbed his palms on his blue-jean-clad thighs. As always, he cleared his throat and swallowed a few times. As always, he seemed to search too long for the right words. And then he spoke.

"Mom, I've decided not to go to Yale in the fall," he said quickly. "I've been praying a long time about this, and I talked it over with my youth pastor—and I

feel like God's telling me to enlist in the military. Army. I'm supposed to protect our country."

Meg stared at her son as the blood drained out of her head. Not go to Yale? Not accept a full scholarship to the finest university in the nation? Not compete on its track team?

A soldier?

Every droplet of protective mother-tiger instinct rose up inside Meg to form a gigantic wave of determination. "No," she said. "Absolutely not."

"What?"

"I said no. Tyler, that's not possible. You're going to Yale and get yourself a great education and have a wonderful, fulfilling life. You are not joining the Army."

He straightened from the window. Breathing hard, he clenched his jaw and glared at her. "Mom, you don't understand."

"Who put this idea into your head?" she demanded, determined to ferret out and punish the perpetrator.

"Nobody!" He paused. "That's not what I mean. It was God. He showed me this."

"How?"

“Well, I got to thinking about all the things that have been happening to our country—the threats, the attempts at sabotage, the attacks. It’s not right. Someone has to defend the people of the United States, and I believe it should be me. I watch you and Dad, Uncle Jake and Aunt Martha, the kids in the playground near the high school track, even the girl who works the counter at the Dairy Queen—”

“Is this about a girl, Tyler?”

“No, Mom, I’m trying to tell you that I watch these people—most of them I don’t even know—and I think about their futures. I care about their lives. I want to protect them from harm. Dad fought in Vietnam, and you’ve told me about other Chiltons who were military men. Now it’s my turn. I’ve been praying about this for a long time. I feel like it’s what God wants me to do, Mom.”

“God gave you a scholarship to Yale, Tyler. What on earth would make you think He wants you to enlist in the Army?”

“I can’t explain it. It’s just something I know. It’s like a sense of determination that’s really strong inside my heart—and you always told me to search my heart. So I did, and this is what I’m supposed to do.”

"But enlist? You mean go to boot camp and then be sent straight off to an Army base somewhere? If you're so determined to join the military, why don't you become an officer? You're smart enough for that. Be in the ROTC while you're at Yale. Or join the Air Force—go to the academy in Colorado."

"No, Mom. I plan to enlist in the regular Army. I can't afford to take the time for officer training or the Air Force Academy. I need to do this, don't you see? I feel called to take action. Right now."

"Have you discussed this with your father?"

"Not yet, but I know he'll be okay with it. He's told me about Vietnam, and he—"

"And he nearly died of malaria in some makeshift medic tent out in the steaming jungle! There's more than bullets or grenades that can kill you on a battlefield, Tyler." Hot tears flooded her eyes as she thought of the suffering her husband had endured all those years ago. He had been so young, so sick, and so alone. "Our enemies are using chemicals now, and biological weapons."

"I know, and they have to be stopped."

"But you could be wounded trying to stop those people. Horribly scarred. You could be disabled by

a land mine, Tyler. Have you thought about living the rest of your life without your legs? You're a track star! You could lose your arms, too, or your eyesight or your hearing. And it's not just physical scarring I'm talking about. Walk down any big-city street, and you're going to see mentally ill, homeless people—many of them veterans. Vietnam veterans came back with terrible trauma. Post-traumatic stress syndrome, suicidal depression, even schizophrenia. War does terrible things to people, Tyler. Some become drug addicts. They live under bridges.”

“Mom, I'm a Christian. I have high moral standards. You know that.”

“Yes, but the military is very different from the church youth group, believe me. You wouldn't have that kind of support, and you wouldn't be able to call your youth pastor to ask his advice. How can you be sure you wouldn't stray from the Lord, honey? The temptations out there are so great—alcohol, prostitution, drugs. And when you're off in some foreign country alone and frightened—”

“You rely on God's strength, not your own. I'll face those same temptations when I go to college,

Mom. And I could die at Yale just as easily as on a battlefield. I could step off a curb and get hit by a—”

“Not just as easily! I know you’ll encounter temptations at college, and I realize life is fragile. But you’re telling me you want to throw yourself right square in the path of every physical, emotional, and spiritual danger there is.”

Tyler gazed at her, his eyes unflinching. “Mom, I’m going to join the Army. I’ve made up my mind. But I want your blessing. Can I have it?”

“No,” Meg snapped as a tear spilled down her cheek. “You cannot go into the military and fight and get wounded or killed! I won’t allow it.”

“So, I don’t have your blessing?” He looked like a five-year-old, disappointed and confused.

“No.”

“Mom, you and Dad brought me up in church. You’ve read to me from the Bible every single day of my life. You taught me what it means to be a Christian and how to follow God’s leading. It was through your example that I gave my life to Christ. You’re the one who told me over and over again to seek God’s will and to do whatever He asks.”

“Yes, but not this, Tyler!”

“Mom, it shouldn’t matter *what*. It should only matter that I say yes. And I’ve said yes. This is what I’m supposed to do. Please give me your blessing!”

Meg brushed the tear from her cheek as the image of military coffins being unloaded from the belly of a plane flashed through her mind. She saw night skies with screaming anti-aircraft fire streaking through the blackness. She saw the hollow eyes of the sick and wounded. She saw body bags, rows of the dead lined up for burial.

“Tyler,” she whispered, “you are my only child. You’re the precious bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh. You’re the son for whom I prayed night and day for too many years to count. And when your dad and I had abandoned all hope of ever having children—God chose to bless us with a baby boy. You’re a miracle, Tyler. You’re all I have.”

“So it’s only moms with lots of kids who should send their sons or daughters to war?” Tyler was staring at her, resentment filling his blue eyes. “Is that what you’re saying, Mom? If a woman has two sons, then she can send one of them to battle—like his place could ever be filled by the other one?”

Mom, there's no such thing as a *spare* kid. Each child is special."

"Yes, and you're *my* special child. You're my only son, and I will never give you my blessing to enlist."

His lip trembled as he leveled a dark gaze at her. "Charlie and I are going out for pizza and a movie. I'll be back around eleven."

"Okay," she said, closing her eyes as her son brushed past her. "I'll wait up."

She heard the echo of his shoes pounding down the stairs and the slam of the back screen door. And then she heard his car's engine roar to life.

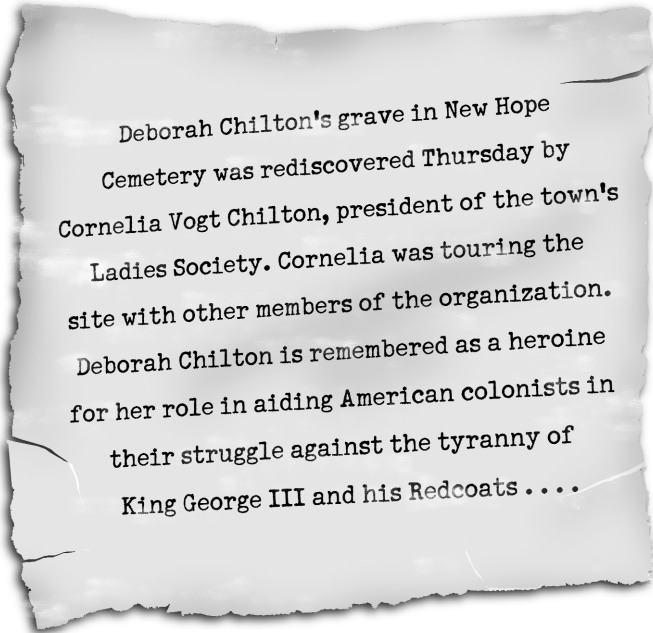
Sinking into the chair at her desk, Meg laid her hand on the old box. A tuft of hair, a tiny portrait. This was all that remained of Deborah Chilton. This was what death left behind. This was the nothingness, the emptiness that followed in its wake.

She wanted more than this for her son. Much more.

Meg picked up the envelope again. No woman of good conscience would willingly risk the life of her only child, she thought as she shook the envelope and a small, folded newspaper clipping fell

into her hand. It was a woman's duty to love and protect her offspring, and no military or political cause could possibly be great enough to lead her to willingly sacrifice that loved one.

Certain she had taken the right stand in refusing to bless her son's decision, Meg opened the faded yellow paper and scanned the article. "Cemetery Holds Grave of Revolutionary War Hero: A Woman" the headline read. It was dated July 1, 1936:



Deborah Chilton's grave in New Hope Cemetery was rediscovered Thursday by Cornelia Vogt Chilton, president of the town's Ladies Society. Cornelia was touring the site with other members of the organization. Deborah Chilton is remembered as a heroine for her role in aiding American colonists in their struggle against the tyranny of King George III and his Redcoats