

Windsor, Illinois
June 4, 1956

Dear Miss Gilpin,

I am doing some genealogical research on our family and as my great grandmother on my fathers side was Nancy Catherine Gilpin I am most interested in tracing the Gilpin family. I was having almost no success with the exception of finding a marriage record of Nancy Gilpin in our County Courthouse. It was of a second marriage but it gave the names of her parents which I didn't know until then. Her father was Eli Gilpin and he was born in Virginia and her mother was born Rebecca Deford, also born in Virginia. I haven't yet been able to find the County or town from which they came.

One day last winter I was reading a "History of the Foster Family," that belonged to my niece's husband, really just to get some idea of how to put a family history together, when I saw the name and address of a Bernard Gilpin who lived near Liverpool, England. I just couldn't resist writing to him altho I had very little hope that he would answer. I was really entranced when I got a very long letter from him giving me some of the family history (which I suppose you know already; if you don't I will be glad to copy his letter for you.) and sending a sketch of the coat of arms. He said he had a copy of the "family tree" which he referred to as "rather a tattered old document that must measure some 8 feet by 2 feet and is packed full of names and information". He sent me a couple of excerpts from it naming the last six generations before Joseph Gilpin, who was the one that came to America and founded the American branch.

I have been longing to visit the past and see if I could trace the Gilpin family to my Eli Gilpin, but we are farmers and it is difficult to get away at any time of year and especially in the spring and summer. Also, our budget does not allow for extended trips too often. However, I have a sister who lives near Knoxville, Tennessee. She knew I was trying to get some information on the Gilpin family, altho she, herself is not especially interested in genealogy. She saw an item in the paper telling about a Kenneth N. Gilpin from Boyce, Virginia, being in Tennessee to see about settling an estate or something like that. Anyway, she sent me the name and address and so I wrote to him. He very kindly sent me a letter; a most interesting letter, and told a few facts about the Gilpin family. Briefly, that the first Joseph Gilpin who came to America was of the Quaker Faith and that he was the father of 15 children, the youngest whose name was George was a close friend of George Washington and that he was a pall bearer at Washington's funeral. He mentioned a Grandson named William who went with Fremont and Kit Carson and was the first Governor of the Colorado Territory. He also mentioned that you were the best Historian of the family and that you might give me more information.

Bernard Gilpin of England gave me a brief account of several prominent Gilpins. I am afraid our branch of the family was very ordinary and the only notable person about whom I know is W. Mark Sexson. Mr Sexson was a grandson of Thomas Gilpin who was a brother to my great grandmother. He was brought up in the hill country of Missouri and later became a preacher. In some way he lost both of his legs but kept on with his work and held a high office in the Mason lodge. I am not familiar with the lodge and cannot give you his title, but he founded the Rainbow Girls organization that is a branch of the Masonic lodge. Perhaps you know far more about this than I.

My great grandmother died before I was born and unfortunately, I had no idea how to go about finding facts before my father passed away, when I did start hunting I had to hunt up some of my fathers' cousins. They told me that she had taken up with the Quaker belief in her later years and wore only the plain Quaker dress until she died and she was buried in that same kind of dress. This fact had no particular significance until I read about several of the Gilpins being devout Quakers.

How I would like to have the names of all of those 15 children of this first Joseph Gilpin to come to America. Kenneth Gilpin told me there were 45 grandchildren when he died. I do not have many dates to go on; perhaps you have more. George Washington was born in 1732. Joseph Gilpin came to America in 1696. Do you suppose his son George was about Washington's age? Eli Gilpin must have been born about 1775. I do not have the exact date. Then he would have been probably a grandson or a great grandson of Joseph Gilpin.

Has there been to your knowledge any book written about the Gilpin family? I was fortunate enough to find one about my mother's people. It saved many, many hours of research. Most of the data in that book had been taken from the old record books of the Hebron Lutheran Church in Madison County, Virginia. Some data was taken from old will records.

If you have any data that would be of help to me I would appreciate it no end if you would send it to me. Be sure and let me know if you would like a copy of Bernard Gilpin's letter.

It is a lovely June evening; perhaps a little chilly but clear with a beautiful sunset. These are busy days on the farm. We live on a small 130 acre farm just two miles from Windsor which has a population of 1000 people. They are celebrating their centennial anniversary this year and you should see the beards!! My husband was putting up the first cutting of alfalfa hay today and I picked the strawberries from my small patch. I had about three gallons so put a few in the locker and had plenty for dinner and supper. We have one little daughter who is only nine years old. I say she is the child of our old age as I am 42 and my husband 50.

We have had almost a week of rainy weather so the weeds got a good start in my garden, so the afternoon was spent getting rid of the most of them. I will pick my first new peas tomorrow. The spinach I canned last week. The first radishes are too big to use now and the second planting just coming on. The lettuce is still good but the onions are almost too big for green onions. Perhaps you will be bored stiff with my chatter. My husband says I write a book every time I write a letter.

Please write to me. So far-- the Gilpins have proved to be such friendly people. Aside from the fact that I will be waiting eagerly to see if you can tell me more facts about the Gilpins I like to know about living people, too, so will be wanting to get acquainted with you through a letter. I assure you I did not write such an informal letter as this to your cousin Kenneth Gilpin.

Most sincerely,

Faith Evans