

*Pelham  
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## PELHAM POTPOURRI

By  
Julius J. Gordon

This is not a story about the "begots" or the "begottens" of my family, but anecdotes about a family named PELHAM. It is assumed that they were Norsemen from the Scandinavian country, later migrating to Normandy, France, and often claiming to be of Norman stock.

While in Normandy, because of the place where they resided, they took the name of Bec - Crespin, possibly as early as the tenth century. Gilbert Crespin was the Baron d'Bec in Normandy. His son and heir, William d'Bec Crespin accompanied William the Conqueror in England acquiring lands in Pelham, Hertfordshire and Kent from the See of London.

The name changed gradually from Bec du Crespin, alternating the usage of de Bec and de Pelham until the mid thirteenth and fourteenth century, while the original deCrespin name continued. Odd as it may seem, one family had become three distinct ones on both sides of the channel.

The Saxon lineage of this family strengthened and the name Bec de Crespin was replaced by the name dePelham, or Pelham, from the word meaning people who lived in a fortified dwelling. The family instinctively appeared on the winning side of the multiconflicts and civil wars in which England was engaged.

John de Pelham's armor-clad figure is painted on a glass window in the Chapter House at Canterbury Cathedral where he is buried. His wife (nee Joan Herbert) was the first English woman to write a letter to her husband in English instead of French.

John Pelham, the ancestor of a long line of Pelham warriors, fought in the Battle of Poitiers, where he and Lord De La Warr took King John II of France for presentation to their king on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September 1356. A descendant Herbert Pelham, using the family name of John Herbert as a given

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## PELHAM POTPOURRI, Con't.

name, was born about 1600 in Lincolnshire, England and moved to Massachusetts about 1632, as a representative of the King and Commissioner of the United Colonies at Massachusetts. He served as first treasurer of Harvard College from 1643-1645. As a selectman at Newtown (Cambridge), Massachusetts, the clerk of the council was never certain about the spelling of his name, and a review of the minutes of the town meetings indicates the name spelled nine different ways!

His daughter, Penelope Pelham, married Josiah Winslow in 1657. He was Governor of the Plymouth Colony from 1673 -1679. His brother-in-law, Waldegrave Pelham, was entrusted to reconcile differences between the Governor and the Crown, by sending Gov. Winslow's letter and "King Phillip's Crown" to King Charles II, but neither the crown or Winslow's letter ever reached the King. This failure to act properly by Waldegrave Pelham, was the cause of family hostilities for many years.

Thomas Pelham-Holles, known for being one-half hour late each day from the time he got out of bed until he retired at night, rose to become the Prime Minister of Great Britain for eight years. He had little remarkable ability except for annoying the King. After his departure from his official office as Prime Minister, King George II is reported to have said, "Thank God. Now I can be King of England."

In order to jump-start a century, a descendant by the name of Peter Pelham, born in 1690 in London, arrived in Boston about 1736, and took for his third wife, Mrs. Mary Singleton Copley, widow of Richard Singleton Copley, on 22 May 1748. Peter Pelham was the first mezzotint engraver, and portrait painter known in New England. He taught his step-son, John Singleton Copley the art of portrait painting, and soon the student excelled the master teacher.

## PELHAM POTPOURRI, Cont'd.

He was appointed sutler at Ft. Brooke, Florida, from 1824-1826, and letters to his wife describe his life in the wilderness among the "spiders, scorpions, alligators and mosquitos." On a buying trip to Pensacola, his ship the Sconner Hope, was wrecked off Cedar Keys, Florida, causing loss of his merchandise for his sutler store at Ft. Brooke. As a result of the injuries received during the War of 1812, his health deteriorated and he died at Ft. Brooke on the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> of July 1826, and was buried in the Garrison Cemetery, where his remains stayed until 1883 when the Steamer Matchless arrived at Government Wharf at the Post. The remains of the officer were disinterred and transported to Fort Barrancas, Pensacola, Florida, for reinterment..

Charles Atkinson Pelham, son of Dr. Atkinson Pelham of Jacksonville, Alabama, practiced law in Talladega County, Alabama in 1858. He was a veteran of Co. C. 51<sup>st</sup> Alabama Regiment during the Civil War, and was nominated and elected by the Republicans of the State to the forty-third Congress from 1873-1875. For his protection from Ku Klux after his return to Talladega, he was spirited out of Talladega and for many years his whereabouts were unknown. On a journey to Poulan, Georgia, recently this author was greatly surprised to see his gravestone resting next to that of his brother, Major Peter Pelham, in the Poulan Cemetery, Poulan, Georgia.

Charles A. Pelham had a daughter named Rosa Pelham, who traveled with her father to Washington while he served in the 43<sup>rd</sup> Congress. She was an attractive young lady, and received many invitations to dinners and parties, along with scores of suitors.

She met a wealthy middle aged man, Col. Samuel Taylor Suit, who pursued her for four years. After his many proposals of marriage, she finally told him, "Build me a castle and I will marry you." What a dare, and he took her up on it. He built a half-size replica of Berkeley Castle in England, where Edward II was murdered in 1337. Rose Pelham fulfilled her bargain and she married Col. Suit on September 4, 1883, at the tender age of 22 years. He was 53. The Castle was completed in 1887, and Col. Suit died in 1888. She was a young widow; enjoyed the night life and quickly went through her husband's fortune. She sold the Castle

## PELHAM POTPOURRI, Cont'd.

Another son, Peter Pelham, born 9 December 1721 in London, also immigrated to the American colonies. He was a talented musician, having studied under Carl Theodore Pachelbel, son Johann Pachelbel, famous German organist. He was appointed organist at Boston's Trinity Church in 1747. An increase in the size of his family, and a need for more income to support them, he moved with his family to Williamsburg, Virginia, where he was appointed organist of the Bruton Parish Church, along with an appointment as chief gaoler, and teaching music to students of the local gentry.

A grandson, William Pelham, authored a book entitled "System of Notation: Representing the sounds of Alphabetical Characters." It was published in Boston in 1808, with copies at Harvard University, and the book is still available for sale today at a cost of \$175.00.

Henry Pelham, half-brother to John Singleton Copley, detested war, and during the early years of conflict of the American Revolution, he remained loyal to the King of England. He fled for his life to Nova Scotia where a British ship sent by the King, transported the loyalist to London, where Henry was pensioned off by the King for his loyal support to the crown. He was an artist and cartographer, and in a letter dated 29 March 1776, addressed to Paul Revere, he accused Revere of stealing his original drawing of the "Boston Massacre." His letter was unanswered by Mr. Revere.

Engraved in the pages of the history of the Territory of Florida is the name of Capt. Peter Pelham, grandson of the organist of Williamsburg, Virginia. A veteran of the War of 1812, and wounded at the Battle of Chrysler Fields in 1813, he was captured and sent to Montreal, Canada, as a prisoner of war. In a prisoner exchange, he was returned to his regiment in New York by the Commanding General of the British forces. He was appointed Indian Sub-Agent for Florida by President Monroe in 1821. Many of his letters, over 151, written by Capt. Peter Pelham are in the author's possession, and they tell of many intriguing stories of his work with the Seminole Indians of Florida. He details stories of his visits with Chief Oponay, and King Hadjo of the Seminole Indian tribes.

## PELHAM POTPOURRI, Cont'd.

In 1913. The castle can still be seen to this day at Berkeley Springs, West Virginia.

Most families have one hero that lives on in the memories for generations. The Pelhams had Lt. Col. John Pelham, graduate of West Point Military Academy in 1861, but he resigned his commission in order to fight with the Confederacy. His skills as an artilleryman are well documented, including the statement by General Robert E. Lee, calling him "The Gallant Pelham." He participated in many major battles of the Civil War, including the first battle of Manassas, Williamsburg, Cold Harbor, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battle of Manassas, Sharpsburg, Fredericksburg, and the Battle of Kelly Ford, Virginia where he was killed on 18 March 1863.

A letter in the possession of the author, written by John Pelham from West Point to his brother, William Pelham, tells of his life as a second year student at the Academy, and the tough requirements demanded of each cadet.

Richard Pelham, my great-grandfather, arrived in Florida before 1845, residing with Levi and Elizabeth Pelham and Lydia Pelham, his sister, in Alachua County, Florida.

In 1850 a land survey indicates that Richard Pelham residing in the College Hill section near Fort Green, Florida, along with the Greene Alderman, Underhill and Summerall families. Later the area was described as being on Payne's Creek on the Ft. Choconickler - Tampa Road. His wife nee Sibbie Driggers in her application for a widow's pension from her husband's service during the Indian Wars, states they were married October 11, 1854 at Keysville, Florida in the home of his sister and brother-in-law, Thomas - Summerall and Lydia Pelham Summerall.

Also present at the wedding was Ellen E. (Driggers) Simmons (Mrs. Wilson Simmons), a sister of the bride; Mrs. Mary Pelham, mother of the groom and another unnamed sister of Richard Pelham. The Justice of Peace, Francis C. M. Boggess, officiated at the wedding, but failed to record the marriage license with the Hillsborough County Court House.

During the Third Seminole Indian War, Richard Pelham served under Capt. William B. Hooker's Florida Mounted Volunteer Company from 1855-1856.

## PELHAM POTPOURRI, Cont'd.

While tending to a mule, he had a leg broken when the mule kicked him. He was attended by Dr. William A. Lively and Dr. Mobley. He later enlisted in Co. G 8<sup>th</sup> Florida Infantry during the Civil War, but was recommended for a discharge after a few months due to his injured leg. On his return to his home at Ft. Meade, Polk County, Florida, Union soldiers scouting for recruits, came upon Richard Pelham working on his farm. The Union officer threatened to shoot Richard Pelham if he didn't saddle up and follow them to camp. Richard replied to the officer while the barrel of the officer's gun was still pointing at him, to go ahead and shoot him if he dared, but called his attention to a rifle barrel sticking out between the chinks near the fireplace, that his wife was at the end of the rifle, and a much better shot than Richard was. "She will have shot you dead before you can pull your trigger." The message was not wasted on the Union officer, and lowering his rifle barrel, he turned his horse towards the road and took off. Both Richard and Sibbie Pelham are buried in the Pelham Cemetery on their old homestead at Ft. Meade. That property is now owned by Agri-co (a phosphate mining company), who maintains the small cemetery.

A daughter of the Pelham's was Mary Elizabeth Pelham, who married James B. Albritton, who was the son of George and Lenora E. (Garner) Albritton, on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December 1887. The family was residing in Moore Haven, Florida, near Lake Okeechobee during the great flood of 1921, where her second husband lost his life. Mary Elizabeth was forced to manage the farm and ranch in order to make a living for her family. A cousin, the late Mrs. Edna Mae Pelham McDade, declared that "she was an excellent horse-woman and could ride and rope and brand calves with the best of men."

John B. Pelham, a cousin of Richard Pelham, who had moved to Panola County, Texas for a few years, returned in 1883 and purchased 76 acres of land from Samuel N. Boyett in Hillsborough County, Florida. He was a delegate to the Democratic Convention of Hillsborough County, Florida on 18 September 1886 from District 7. He signed a petition in Plant City for the separation of that part of the Northeast Hillsborough County to be separated from the greater part of the Hillsborough County, Florida. The petition failed. He and his wife were frequent visitors to the home of Mr. & Mrs. Chauncey Wesley Wells. Mrs.

PELHAM POTPOURRI, Cont'd..

Wells was the former Miss Carolyn Campbell, daughter of William J. and Samantha Campbell of Tampa.

My grandfather, Richard Pelham, Jr., married Mary Elizabeth Sparkman, daughter of Harley Sparkman and Frances Whidden, daughter of Noah Whidden. They resided in DeSoto County for most of their married life, and both are buried in the Oak Grove Cemetery at Arcadia, Florida.

They attended church services at a nearby Primitive Baptist Church, and too often their sons were brought before the church on charges of running hogs under the church building during worship services.

My mother, Sibbie Pelham, married Hopson English Gordon on 21 April 1914 in Hillsborough County, Florida, with Judge E. A. Whitaker officiating. She died 24 May 1930 and is buried in the Ft. Myers Cemetery. Hopson English Gordon was the son of Allen Gordon, a Union War Veteran, and Mary Elizabeth Harding, daughter of George Tryon and Margaret Harding; and the grandson of Daniel Ramsbarger of Kentucky and Robert Gordon of Illinois.

While the author has catalogued over 11,000 entries into the Pelham family history, I hope this gives you some insight into the lives of part of my family.



DID YOU KNOW ?

The word LASER is an acronym for light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation.

CALIFORNIA Death Index 1940-1997, <http://userdb.rootsweb.com/ca/death/search.cgi> is searchable by surname, given name, mother's maiden name, father's last name, birth year, death year, death place, and sex. Entire set of results can be paged through.

CALIFORNIA Birth Records 1905-1995, <http://userdb.rootsweb.com/ca/birth/search.cgi> is searchable by surname, given name, mother's maiden name, county, year, and sex. No limit to number of hits returned.

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION has two new web pages:  
Deaths of U.S. Citizens in Foreign Countries: [www.nara.gov/genealogy/deaths/.html](http://www.nara.gov/genealogy/deaths/.html)  
World War 1 Draft Registration Cards: [www.nara.gov/genealogy/wldraft.html](http://www.nara.gov/genealogy/wldraft.html)

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## FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF LAND O'LAKES, FL CEMETERY

Transcribed February 18, 1988

By John H. Baxley

Directions: Go US Hwy. 41 north out of Tampa to SR 54; continue another 1.9 miles to traffic light at Bell Lake Road; go another 0.1 mile to School Road on left. Turn onto School Road one mile to cemetery on left.

Abbreviations used: DS w/ ... (double stone with/....); TS w/ ... (triple stone with/...); ((M)) Mason; ((OES)) Order of Eastern Star; FH mkr (funeral home marker).

ALVAREZ, Adrian C.  
(DS w/ Anna G. ALVAREZ)  
1899 / 1975

ALVAREZ, Anna G.  
(DS w/ Adrian C. ALVAREZ)  
1902 / ---

ALVAREZ, Anna L.  
1902 / 1981 (F. T. Blount FH mkr)  
(believe this is same as above  
Anna G. ALVAREZ)

ALVAREZ, Hugh H.  
1897 / 1988 (F.T. Blount FH mkr)

BAKER, Walter  
March 29, 1918 / April 7, 1960

BISHOP, Cora M. (Mother)  
1928 / 1971

BISHOP, James Edward  
FLA SGT U S ARMY Vietnam  
June 8, 1948 / 24 July 1971

BLACKBURN, Elizabeth Gray  
(DS w/ S. J. "Jack" BLACKBURN)  
January 8, 1903 / 1987  
(F.T. Blount FH mkr for death year)

BLACKBURN, Frank  
(DS w/ Marion BLACKBURN)  
Born Doerun, GA  
1902 / 1974

BLACKBURN, Kline E.  
(DS w/ Lola M. BLACKBURN)  
July 25, 1920 / ---

BLACKBURN, Lola M.  
(DS w/ Kline E. BLACKBURN)  
July 25, 1913 / October 6, 1987

BLACKBURN, Marion  
(DS w/ Frank BLACKBURN)  
Born Brooklyn, NY  
1911 / ---

BLACKBURN, Rhoda Lee  
September 16, 1899 / May 16, 1968

BLACKBURN, S. J. "Jack"  
(DS w/ Elizabeth Gray BLACKBURN)  
January 26, 1900 / December 30, 1979

BRADFORD, Arthur W.  
(DS w/ Dorothy R. BRADFORD)  
April 14, 1916 / ---

BRADFORD, Dorothy R.  
(DS w/ Arthur W. BRADFORD)  
November 6, 1921 / May 5, 1987

BRYAN, Curtis J.  
1910 / 1972

BUNNELL, Marion Lee  
FLA PFC US ARMY WWI  
(DS w/ Nellie BUNNELL)  
June 14, 1900 / July 10, 1969

BUNNELL, Nellie  
(DS w/ Marion L. BUNNELL)  
1907 / ---

CLARK, Maude Eley  
(DS w/ William J. CLARK)  
March 6, 1902 / January 26, 1965



*Hist. & Biog. Record 449  
Lenawee Co., Mich.*

**R**ICHARD PELHAM was born in Catskill, Greene county, N. Y., August 8, 1810, where he resided until 1826. At that time, when he was sixteen years old, he went to Middletown, Delaware county, and served four years in learning the millwright's trade, and until 1835 he followed his trade in different parts of the State. In October, 1835, he started for Michigan with a team and wagon, and made the journey, arriving in Woodstock, this county, December 6th, after being about six weeks on the road. He came with his father-in-law, Joseph Every. When Mr. Pelham arrived in Woodstock, besides his wife and children, he had a chest of tools and one dollar and fifty cents in money. But he was young and ambitious, soon found employment, and with his first fifty dollars he purchased forty acres of land on section 9, in Woodstock. In the spring of 1836 he was engaged to assist in erecting the Brooklyn grist mill, and during the following four years he worked the most of the time on this mill. He also took a contract to build a saw mill on Goose creek, in Woodstock, for Jesse Osborn and David Tyrrel. In 1840 he went to Ionia county and built a saw mill for John T. Van Vleet. In August, 1837, he located forty acres more land on section 4, and in 1838 he purchased fifty acres of Jesse Osborn, on section 4. In 1845 he purchased of Alvin C. Osborn forty acres more on section 4. In January, 1848, he purchased forty acres on section 3, of Daniel Palmateer. In 1845 he purchased a house and lot in the village of Brooklyn, Jackson county. In January, 1868, he purchased 104 acres of land of Philip A. Hasbrowek, on section 3, in Wood-

00008

stock. Mr. Pelham still owns all the land he has ever purchased in Woodstock, and has erected a large frame dwelling, with good barns and out-buildings. It will be seen that he has been a very active, industrious man, and must have practiced rigid economy, which together with good judgment has made him well off. There are many instances in Lenawee county where young men came in with families in an early day without any means what ever, who are to-day thrifty, well-to-do men, and Mr. Pelham gives us a striking instance. It should be known, however, that during Mr. Pelham's best and most active days, he was attacked with inflammation of the eyes, and was blind for more than eighteen months, during which time he entirely lost the sight of one, and the other was greatly impaired. Richard Pelham's father, Henry Pelham, was born in New Rochelle, Westchester county, N. Y., and was the son of Joseph and Rachel Pelham, who came from France. Henry Pelham married Margaret Gray, of Middletown, Delaware county, N. Y., where she was born. They had eight children, Richard being the seventh child. James Pelham was a farmer, and owned a farm in Catskill, N. Y., where he died in March, 1813. His wife survived him until 1876, when she died in Olive, Ulster county, N. Y., aged eighty-four. Richard Pelham married, October 22, 1831, Abigail Every, daughter of Joseph and Margaret Every, of Middletown, N. Y., by whom he has had five children, as follows: Hannah S., born in Middletown, N. Y., December 6, 1831, now the wife of James Peterson, a farmer of Columbia, Jackson county, Mich.; Henry, born same place, February 20, 1833, a farmer of Napoleon, Jackson county, Mich.; Loretta, born in Columbia, Jackson county, Mich., April 18, 1836, now the wife of James R. Turpening, a farmer of Woodstock; Harmon I. Q., born in Woodstock, this county, July 18, 1840, a resident of Woodstock; Charles W., born same place, March 12, 1843, at home. Mrs. Abigail Pelham was born in Middletown, Delaware county, N. Y., January 20, 1810, and came to Michigan with her husband in 1835. Her father was a native of Dutchess county, N. Y., and was born April 18, 1766, was a farmer, and owned a farm in Middletown, where he resided until 1835, when he came to Michigan and settled in Columbia, Jackson county, where he died in August, 1853. He married Margaret Ecker, daughter of George A. and Maria (Asher) Ecker, of Olive, Ulster county, N. Y., by whom he had ten children, Mrs. Pelham being the seventh child. Mrs. Maria Pelham was also a native of Dutchess county, of German parents. Her parents met with a misfortune on their passage to America, and lost their luggage en route, and upon their arrival in New York, being unable to pay their passage money, were sold

PELHAM Family

Donated by  
Shirley Bessinger

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