

WHERE WE CAME FROM: AN INTRODUCTION

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1. WHO WERE THE PALATINES?

Palatine is the name given to people who lived in two small countries of the old German Empire, the Upper Palatinate and the lower Rhenish Palatinate. These countries, located along the Rhine in southeastern present-day Germany, were organized originally as one feudal district by Count Palatine, a prince of the Holy Roman Empire. The countries became a part of the present German state when it was created by Otto Von Bismarck (1815–1898) in 1871.

2. WHAT IS SCOTCH-IRISH?

Scotch-Irish is an American name given to about 250,000 Irish Protestant, largely Presbyterian, immigrants who came to America in the 18th century. These immigrants were people who had been sent to Ulster (Northern Ireland) in the 1600s by English rulers who were attempting to gain better control of the Irish. The name Scotch-Irish is actually a misnomer, for a great many of them were sent to Ireland from England and other countries. They are called Scotch-Irish because of the Scottish character of the communities in which they settled in Ireland.

3. THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI

In 1817 Mississippi became the 20th state to join the Union. It had been organized as an American territory in 1798, after about 20 years of Spanish domination. Mississippi was the second state after South Carolina to secede from the Union in 1861. Mississippi rejoined the Union in 1870.

As best I can determine, my earliest ancestors in the territory of Mississippi were **William Montgomery (1757–1815)** and **Daniel Cameron (1776–1821)**, who came to near Natchez, Mississippi, in the first decade of the 1800s. **Peter Wilkerson (1782–1859)** moved from Kentucky to an area northwest of present-day Greenville, Mississippi, in 1825. **Samuel Burks (1803–1847)** of Kentucky arrived in 1839, and his son-in-law, **Gervas Storrs Mosby (1818–1867)**, came in 1851. **Stephen K. Bryan (1807–1855)** and **Polly Mariah Kornegay Bryan (1813–1901)** moved from North Carolina to the West Point area of Mississippi in 1848.

4. WEST POINT: CLAY COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

In 1858 the town of West Point was incorporated in northeast Mississippi. West Point developed around a railroad depot in the western part of Lowndes County, Mississippi. The railroad, called the Mobile and Ohio, was built between 1850 and 1860.

Stephen K. Bryan (1807–1855), my great-great-grandfather, came from North Carolina to Mississippi in 1848, before West Point was created. He settled on land west of the present-day West Point, near a town called Cedar Bluff, which was then located in Oktibbeha County.

In 1871 Clay County was created at the request of a group of men in West Point. It was formed from parts of three adjoining counties: Lowndes, Oktibbeha, and Monroe. The original name given to the county was Colfax, a name chosen by the Reconstruction Era Mississippi government to honor Schuyler Colfax (1823–1885), vice president of the United States under President Ulysses S. Grant (1822–1885) from 1869 to 1877. Colfax was an avid supporter of emancipation.

In 1876, just as the Reconstruction period ended, the county was renamed Clay in honor of Henry Clay (1777–1852), a highly regarded American statesman from Kentucky.

Today the population of Clay County is 21,000, about 12,000 of which live in West Point.

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5. WASHINGTON COUNTY — GREENVILLE, MISSISSIPPI

Washington County was created on January 29, 1827, as the state of Mississippi's 22nd county. It was formed from portions of Yazoo and Warren counties, and named in honor of President George Washington (1732–1799). Washington County was one of several counties formed from the so-called “new purchase” acquired from the Choctaw Indians by the treaty of Doak’s Stand in 1820.

The county lies completely within the fertile Mississippi-Yazoo river delta and attracted substantial settlers from Virginia, Kentucky, the Carolinas, Georgia, and other parts of Mississippi during the early 1800s.

Peter Wilkerson (1782–1859), my third great-grandfather, was one of the founders of Washington County. He came there from Kentucky in 1825. **William Pinckney Montgomery (1799–1876)**, my great-great-grandfather, lived in the “Natchez Country” of Mississippi. He acquired land in Washington County in 1831. **Samuel Burks (1803–1847)**, my third great-grandfather, bought Loughborough Plantation in Washington County in 1839. He was from Kentucky.

Greenville is the county seat of Washington County. It was named for the American Revolutionary War general Nathanael Green (1742–1786). Greenville presently has a population of about 35,000, and Washington County has around 60,000 people residing there.

6. MY GREAT-AUNTS AND GREAT-UNCLES

HALF BROTHER AND HALF SISTERS OF MY GRANDFATHER: James Charles Bryan (1866–1930)

Andrew Storey (1871–1895)—unmarried

“Aunt Nora,” Lenora Storey Fredericks (1874–_____)—one child

“Aunt Lula,” Martha Louvenia Storey Roebuck (1875–1895)—two children

Florence Storey (1878–1895)—unmarried

HALF SISTER AND SISTER OF MY GRANDMOTHER: Jonnie Mae Parker Bryan (1871–1946)

Elizabeth Sanders Parker Lamon (1861–1914)—no children

“Auntie,” Eula Lee Parker Gilmore (1868–1947)—eight children

SISTERS AND BROTHER OF MY GRANDFATHER: Jefferson Pinckney Wilkerson Sr. (1878–1945)

“Aunt Princesa,” Princesa Adams Wilkerson Hayley Falls (1880–1966)—four children, no grandchildren

“Uncle Harry,” Harry Lee Wilkerson (1885–_____)—no children

“Aunt Jo,” Frances Josephine Wilkerson Foote (1889–1967)—no children

SISTER OF MY GRANDMOTHER: Caroline Mobsy Montgomery Wilkerson (1884–1957)

“Aunt Mur,” Frances (Fannie) Cameron Montgomery Payne (1878–1950)—seven boys

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7. MY 23 SECOND COUSINS

GRANDCHILDREN OF: Eula Lee Parker Gilmore (1868–1947)

George Lee Jr. (1923–1976)

William Rhodes Gilmore (1923–2007)

Shelly H. Phillips (b. 1926)

John Melvin (Bubba) Phillips (1928–1993)

Ann Gilmore (b. 1931)

Alton P. (DD) Gilmore Jr. (b. 1933)

Homer Dyer (b. 1941)

Patricia Diane Gilmore (b. 1942)

Janice Eileen Gilmore (b. 1945)

Karen Gilmore (b. 1945)

GRANDCHILDREN OF: Frances Cameron Montgomery Payne (1878–1950)

Malcolm Luther Payne Jr. (b. 1929)

Francis Cameron (Cam) Payne Jr. (b. 1940)

Elizabeth (Betsy) Platt Payne (b. 1942)

Ann (Doodie) Platt Payne (b. 1947)

John Beckwith Payne (b. 1951)

Layton Montgomery Payne (b. 1957)

Kathryn (Kathy) Adelle Payne (b. 1948)

William (Bill) Mosby Payne Jr. (b. 1949)

Francis Montgomery (Monty) Payne (b. 1950)

Thomas Beckwith (Buck) Payne Jr. (b. 1940)

Benjamin (Ben) Bailey Payne (b. 1948)

Caledonia Jackson Payne (b. 1941)

Mary Frances (Fru) Payne (b. 1946)

8. MY THREE AUNTS AND FIVE UNCLES

BROTHERS OF MY FATHER: John Henry Bryan (1908–1989)

“Uncle Charlie,” James Charles Bryan Jr. (1898–1941)

“Uncle George,” George Dewey Bryan (1899–1968)

“Uncle Frank,” Franklin Jennings Bryan (1902–1972)

“Uncle B,” William Burnett Bryan (1905–1968)

SISTERS AND BROTHER OF MY MOTHER: Catherine Cameron Wilkerson (1909–2002)

“Aunt Jo,” Josephine Adams Wilkerson Spiars (1912–1986)

“Uncle Jeff,” Jefferson Pinckney Wilkerson Jr. (1914–1995)

“Aunt Caroline,” Caroline Mosby Wilkerson Hamilton (1917–1982)

“Aunt Frances,” Frances Montgomery Wilkerson Ellis (1919–2001)



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9. MY 25 FIRST COUSINS

My 10 first cousins on my father's side

George Martin (George) Bryan (1921–1943)

James Jerome (Jack) Bryan (1924–1983)

Robert Dewey (Bobby) Bryan (b. 1928)

Frances Marie (Frances Marie) Bryan (b. 1937)

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Franklin Jennings (Butch) Bryan Jr. (b. 1943)

William Burnett (Billy) Bryan Jr. (1928–1955)

Dorothy Ann (Ann) Bryan (b. 1930)

James Dillard (Jimmy) Bryan (b. 1937)

Richard Coe (Dickie) Bryan (b. 1942)

My 15 first cousins on my mother's side

Early Wilkerson (Early) Spiars (b. 1934)

Charlotte Frances (Charlotte) Hamilton (b. 1938)

Bascom Bradley (Bradley) Hamilton Jr. (1940–1987)

Jefferson Garland (Jeff) Hamilton (1942–1992)

Josephine Willkerson (Jo) Hamilton (b. 1949)

Catherine Hayley (Kat) Hamilton (b. 1951)

Helen Weddle (Helen) Wilkerson (1942–2004)

Princella Elizabeth (Princella) Wilkerson (b. 1948)

Frances Wilkerson (Frances) Ellis (b. 1942)

Benjamin Tecumseh (Buster) Ellis Jr. (b. 1946)

Eva Catherine (Eva) Ellis (b. 1947)

William Robert (Bob) Ellis (b. 1950)

Jefferson Hicks (Jeff) Ellis (b. 1957)

Vivian Montgomery (Vivian) Ellis (b. 1959)

John Malcolm (John) Ellis (b. 1965)

*Deletion requested.

10. HOW TO DEFINE COUSINS

A cousin is a relative with whom a person shares a common ancestor. First cousins share grandparents. Second cousins share great-grandparents, and so on.

Your first cousins are the children of your parents' brothers and sisters (your aunts and uncles). Your second cousins are the children of your parents' first cousins.

Your third cousins are the children of your parents' second cousins.

If you are of a different generation than one of your cousins, you must define the degree of removal. For example, your parents' first cousins are your first cousins once removed. Your grandparents' first cousins are your first cousins twice removed.