

MY PATERNAL GRANDMOTHER

JONNIE MAE PARKER*

b. 1/27/1871 Chickasaw Co., MS

d. 1/11/1946 Clay Co., MS



JONNIE MAE PARKER'S PARENTS & GRANDPARENTS

JOHN C. PARKER

b. 9/13/1818 probably NC

d. before 1870 Kemper Co., MS

m. 7/9/1837 Walton Co., GA

MARTHA WARD

b. 11/19/1819 probably GA

d. 1886 Kemper Co., MS

WILLIAM JOHN PARKER*

b. 5/4/1841 probably AL

d. 5/7/1921 Clay Co., MS

second marriage

m. 7/12/1865 Lauderdale Co., MS

ELIZABETH ANN DANIEL

b. 1/___/1839 probably GA

d. 8/19/1898 Kemper Co., MS

*first marriage

Elizabeth Sanders

b. 2/5/1837

d. 6/___/1861

m. 6/12/1860

third marriage

Susan Rebecca Stuart Parnell

b. 12/17/1862 Wilcox Co., AL

d. 12/18/1944 Kemper Co., MS

m. 5/13/1900 Kemper Co., MS

EZEKIEL DANIEL JR.

b. 1806 Walton Co., GA

d. before 1858 AL or MS

m. 12/21/1826 Walton Co., GA

ELIZABETH ARMISTEAD^E

b. 4/2/1799 Oglethorpe Co., GA

d. 1865 Lauderdale Co., MS

^E See Family Trees on pages 399–401.

Note: No ancestors known for J. C. Parker and Martha Ward.

The only proven ancestor for Ezekiel Daniel Jr. is Ezekiel

Daniel Sr. See page 176.

JONNIE MAE PARKER'S ANCESTORS

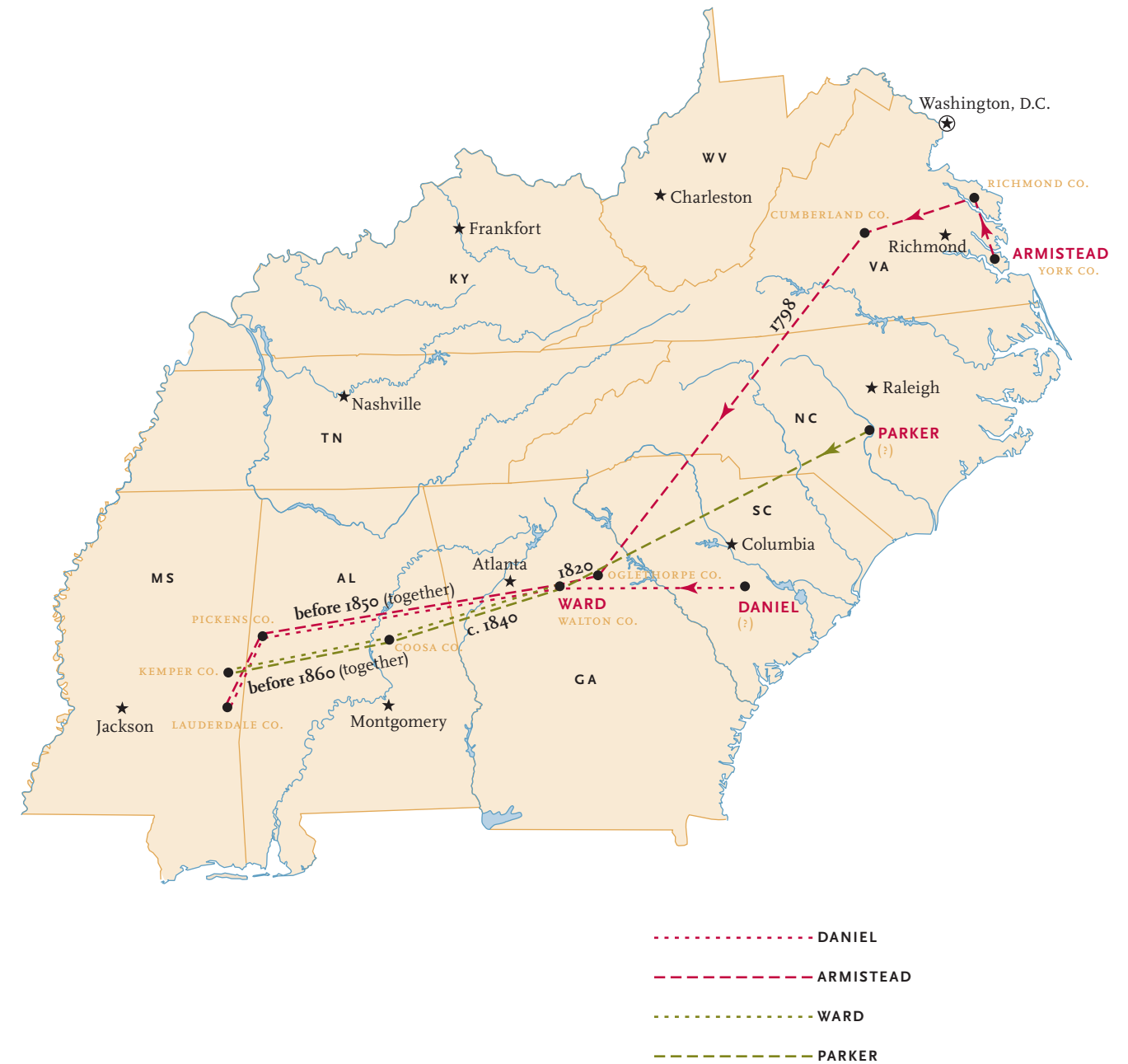
My mother's records of **Jonnie Mae Parker's (1871–1946)** ancestry were quite sparsely developed. However, contemporary research, mostly derived from public records and Internet sources, has yielded considerably more information.

Jonnie Mae Parker's paternal grandfather, **John C. Parker (1818–before 1870)**, is my earliest known Parker ancestor. With his wife, **Martha Ward (1819–1886)**, he moved from Walton County, Georgia (east of Atlanta), to Coosa County, Alabama (just south of Birmingham), around 1840 and then to Kemper County, Mississippi, before 1860.

Ezekiel Daniel Jr. (c. 1806–before 1858), Jonnie Mae's maternal grandfather, was born and married in Walton County, Georgia. Between 1843 and 1850, he migrated with his wife, **Elizabeth Armistead (1799–1865)**, to Pickens County, Alabama. By 1858 Elizabeth Armistead Daniel had moved to Lauderdale County, Mississippi, where she died in 1865.

Elizabeth Armistead provides the most extensive ancestral lineage of any of Jonnie Mae Parker's forebearers.

MIGRATION | PARKER/WARD & DANIEL/ARMISTEAD



JONNIE MAE PARKER'S LIFE

Jonnie Mae Parker (1871–1846) was the second daughter of **William John Parker (1841–1921)** and his second wife, **Elizabeth Ann Daniel (1839–1898)**. She was born in Chickasaw County, Mississippi, in the town of Buena Vista, near Houston.

Jonnie Mae was born on January 27, 1871, during the middle of the post–Civil War Reconstruction period (1865–76). Her birth date was just a few months before the formation of Clay County (May 12, 1871) and coincidentally in the same year as the famous Chicago Fire (October 8, 1871). In the 1880 census of Chickasaw County, Jonnie Mae Parker is erroneously listed as Mary J. Parker, a nine-year-old student.

The first daughter of William John Parker and Elizabeth Daniel Parker was my grandmother's older sister, **Eula Lee Parker (1868–1947)**.¹ In the 1870 census, she is listed as Ular L. Parker, a two-year-old. In the 1880 census, she is listed as Lulu L. Parker, age 12.

Eula Lee Parker married Joseph Green Gilmore (1853–1936) and lived in West Point, Mississippi, in a large house on Commerce Street. At one time, it was a boarding house. My sister, Caroline, and I both remember visiting "Auntie" Gilmore. She had eight children and lived to age 79.

There were two other daughters born to William John and Elizabeth Ann Daniel Parker in the 1870s. One was **Augusta Lillian Parker (1872–1872)**, who was 3 weeks old when she died. The last child, **Viola Parker (1875–1877)**, died when she was 18 months old.

In June of 1890, at age 19, Jonnie Mae Parker graduated from Mississippi Normal College in Houston, the county seat of Chickasaw County. Family records state that Jonnie Mae was a 26-year-old school teacher in Buena Vista, Mississippi, when she married **James Charles Bryan (1866–1930)**, on May 2, 1897. He was a 30-year-old in the cattle business from West Point, in adjoining Clay County.



James Charles Bryan and Jonnie Mae Parker Bryan with four of their five sons, (left to right) George, Frank, John, and W. B., c. 1909.

Over the next 10 years, they had five sons: **James Charles Bryan Jr. (1898–1941)**, **George Dewey Bryan (1899–1968)**, **Frank Jennings Bryan (1902–1972)**, **William Burnett Bryan (1905–1968)**, and **John Henry Bryan Sr. (1908–1989)**, my father.

My father often talked about his mother, for as the youngest child, he was especially close to her. He told me that she spent all day, every day, cooking and taking care of the house. And each day she prepared noontime meals to be sent by wagon to the meat market for her husband and his employees. I also recall my father telling me that his mother cooked on a wood-burning stove until the 1940s, when her sons bought her a new house with a gas stove. Unfortunately, she died just before moving to that house. Incidentally, that house is today a youth center for the Methodist Church. It was bought and given to the church by my first cousin Jimmy Bryan (b. 1937).

West Point Miss -
 Aug 14 - '45
 My Dear Mrs. Wilkinson -
 Life holds
 for us many uncertainties
 yet we realize the truth,
 when weighted down with
 sorrow, the eternal good news
 of our Heavenly Father.
 I want to offer you my
 tenderest sympathy in your
 hour of sorrow. It is so hard
 to give up a link from the
 family chain but this will
 come consolation from a
 higher source in time.
 Such grief is hard to bear
 because we are so finite

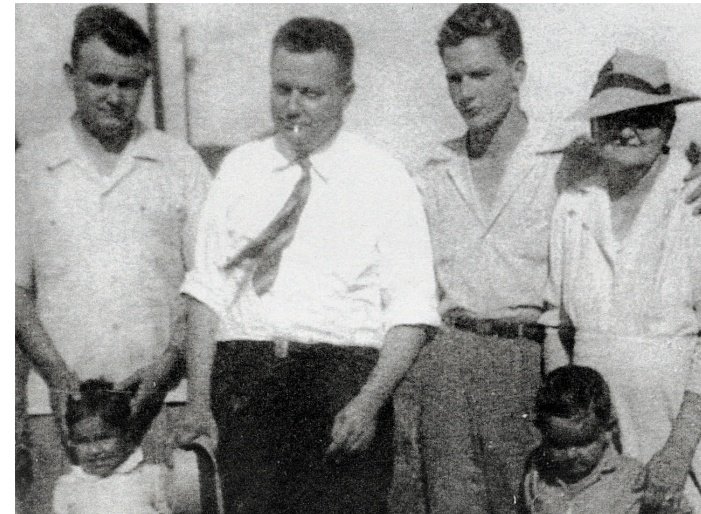
but they can be used as
 stepping stones to brighten our
 faith in Him who suffered
 all for us that we might
 attain a more abundant life
 and close walk with God -
 May His hand clasp yours
 with a firm touch and
 lead you trustingly through
 the dark waters -
 With my thought and love
 Sincerely your friend
 Jonnie Bryan.

Around town, Jonnie Mae was known as “Mother Bryan.” She was a devoted member of the First Baptist Church, never missed a service, and ensured that her boys attended as well. In fact, my father only left the Baptist Church after his mother died in 1946. After that he became a Presbyterian, joining the church where his wife was a member.

In 1941, Jonnie Mae Parker’s oldest child, **James Charles Bryan Jr. (1898–1941)** died at age 43. He was married, but had no children. He died of a kidney disease. My father told me that his death was on account of alcohol abuse. I do not recall meeting my Uncle Charlie, for I was four years old when he died. I have been told that his death was a particularly painful experience for my grandmother.

My grandmother Bryan was a deeply religious person. Her strong faith is reflected in a letter of condolence that she wrote to my grandmother **Caroline Mosby Montgomery Wilkerson (1884–1957)** just after my grandfather **Jefferson Pinckney Wilkerson (1878–1945)** died in August 1945. Granny died just five months after she wrote this letter.

A letter of condolence written by my grandmother Jonnie Mae Parker Bryan to my grandmother Caroline Montgomery Wilkerson in 1945.



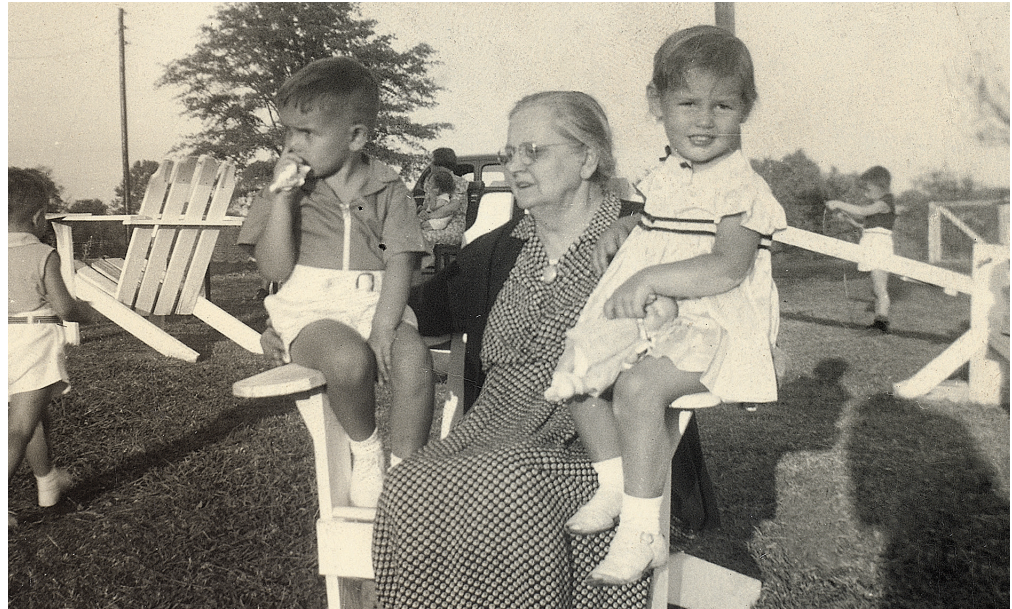
My father (left), with his brother George D. Bryan, George M. Bryan, and my grandmother Jonnie Mae. My cousin George M. Bryan was killed in World War II in 1943. My sister Caroline and I are in the foreground.

Jonnie Mae and J. C. Bryan had 14 grandchildren—10 boys and four girls. We all called her Granny. Her oldest grandchild, George Martin Bryan (1921–1943), was killed in World War II. He was shot and died instantly while copiloting a B-17 airplane on a mission over Germany on August 17, 1943, the day after his 22nd birthday. Flying with the 8th Air Force, based in Basingbourn, England, he was participating in the disastrous “Schweinfurt-Regensburg Mission,”² a Pyrrhic victory for the Allies in the summer of 1943. Of a crew of 10 airmen on a B-17 named *Mizpah*, five were killed and five parachuted to safety and were captured. A nephew of one of the survivors wrote an account of what happened on the fateful day in 1943.³ Some years later, the airport at Starkville, Mississippi, my cousin’s hometown, was named George M. Bryan Field.



George M. Bryan (he was called “Little George” in the family) was killed just about the time that my mother learned that she would be having her fourth child. My brother, George Wilkerson Bryan, was born on April 5, 1944, and named for our first cousin, George M. Bryan. My mother said he was also named for her grandfather **George Washington Wilkerson (1857–1917)**. At any rate, the oldest and youngest of Granny’s 14 grandchildren were both named George Bryan.

My first cousin George Martin Bryan, an Air Force lieutenant in World War II, at age 21.



My grandmother Jonnie Mae Bryan, about 1940, with me at left and my sister Caroline at right.

Granny was a widow for over 15 years. I have many memories of playing with my cousins at her house. But my most vivid memory is when my sister Caroline and I were taken out of school on the day she died.

While babysitting for my Uncle “B” and Aunt Vena, who were out of town, Granny had a stroke and died two days later, on January 11, 1946, 16 days before her 75th birthday.⁴ I was a nine-year-old in the fourth grade, and my sister Caroline was eight.



Jonnie Mae Bryan in the early 1940s.



The five Bryan brothers are pictured with their mother probably in the late 1930s. Standing, left to right, are James Charles Jr., Frank, and John. Seated, left to right, are W. B., Mrs. James Charles Bryan, and George.

JONNIE MAE PARKER'S LIFE

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1. EULA LEE PARKER: "AUNTIE" GILMORE

My grandmother **Jonnie Mae Parker (1871-1946)** had an older sister named **Eula Lee Parker (1868-1947)**. She was the first child of **William John Parker (1841-1921)** and his second wife, **Elizabeth Ann Daniel (1839-1898)**. She is my great-aunt and we called her "Auntie."

On September 29, 1891, in Porterville, Mississippi, Eula Lee Parker married Joseph Green Gilmore (1853-1936), who was 15 years older than she was. He was a section foreman for the Mobile and Ohio Railroad. In 1907 Joseph Gilmore was transferred to West Point, Mississippi, where he retired and died at age 82, in 1936.



Joseph and Eula Lee Parker Gilmore in 1909. At the time, he was 56 and she was 41.

The Gilmores lived at 97 Commerce Street in a large antebellum home that had once been a school for boys. The house was very near the Gulf, Mobile & Ohio Railway Station, and for many years it was operated as a boarding house for travelers. In 1966, after its owner, Elizabeth (Lady B.) Gilmore died, the property was zoned for commercial use. The house was then razed and replaced by a parking lot.



The Gilmore house on Commerce Street in West Point.



1934 photograph of the Gilmore family in front of their home in West Point.

Front row (left to right): Ann Gilmore (daughter of Blanche and Alton Gilmore), who is sitting on her Grandpa's lap; Shelly Phillips; and John (Bubba) Phillips.

Middle row (left to right): Jewel Gilmore Woodson, Elizabeth Gilmore Lee, Joseph G. Gilmore, Eula Parker Gilmore, William Gilmore, Alton Gilmore, and Billy Gilmore.

Back row (left to right): George Lee Jr., Gladys Gilmore Phillips, Eddy Phillips, Zula Gilmore Dyer, Paul Gilmore, Sara Gilmore, Earl Gilmore, and Blanche Gilmore (holding Alton "DD" Gilmore Jr., son of Blanche and Alton Gilmore).

Elizabeth (Lady B.) Gilmore (1893-1966) was the firstborn. She had a twin sister who died at birth. Lady B. married George Lee of Missouri in 1921. She had one son, George Lee Jr. (1923-1976). She was a tiny lady and lived at the Gilmore house in West Point in her later years. I remember her quite well.

William Joseph Gilmore (1896-1971) was born in Porterville, Mississippi. He married Sarah and had one son, William Rhodes Gilmore (1923-2007), whose son, William Rhodes Gilmore II (b. 1946), lives near Jackson, Mississippi.

Jewel Gilmore (1898-1983) married Emmett Woodson, who was born in Virginia in 1894. He was a lineman for Western Union. He had a glass eye that he removed each evening. They lived in Knoxville, Tennessee, and had no children. Jewel died at age 95.

Jonnie Gladys Gilmore (1900-1966) was named for my grandmother Jonnie Mae Parker Bryan. She married Shelly H. (Eddy) Phillips and had two sons; Shelly Phillips (b. 1926), who became a successful dentist, and John Melvin (Bubba) Phillips (1928-1993), who played college football and professional baseball.

Alton Parker Gilmore (1903-1973) married Blanche Gardner and had two children, Ann (b. 1931) and Alton P. (DD) Jr. (b. 1933), now a retired school administrator. Alton Parker Gilmore was an Army Air Force major in World War II. He died in Cedartown, Georgia, Polk County, at age 69.

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Zula Gilmore (1905-1991) married Buford Dyer and lived in West Point, where he owned and ran a furniture and appliance store for many years. I remember Mr. Dyer and Mrs. Dyer (cousin Zula) quite well. They had one son, Homer Dyer (b. 1941), my second cousin, who lives in West Point and is younger than I am.

Paul Palmer (née Parmer) Gilmore (1907-2006) moved to New York City after college in Tyler, Texas, and became a registered nurse. In 1936 he married a nurse, Arvilla Imler Price (1911-1989), and moved to Richmond, Virginia, where he worked for the Virginia Department of Highways until his retirement in 1968. He had two daughters, Patricia Diane Gilmore Johnson (b. 1942) and Janice Gilmore Weisenberger (b. 1945), who has been especially helpful with the Gilmore section of this book. Paul died at age 99 in 2006.

Earl Truman Gilmore (1908-1976) served in the U.S. Navy and married Agnes. He was an architect who designed churches. It is said that he was also a beautiful artist and painter. Earl had one daughter, Karen Gilmore Brassell (b. 1945), who has also assisted me greatly in the preparation of this part of the book.

Eula Lee Parker died at age 79, in 1947, the year after the death of her younger sister, my grandmother Jonnie Mae Parker Bryan. They were very close.



Eula Lee Parker Gilmore (left) and Jonnie Mae Parker Bryan, on Eula Lee's 73rd birthday, January 22, 1941. Jonnie Mae is almost 70 years old.

Notable among my second cousins is John Melvin "Bubba" Phillips (1928-1993), who is the only professional athlete I have discovered in my family history.

For 10 years (1955-64), he was a third baseman/outfielder for three major league baseball teams: the Detroit Tigers, Chicago White Sox, and Cleveland Indians.

In 1959 Bubba Phillips was the starting third baseman for the Chicago White Sox in the World Series, which they lost 4-2 to the Los Angeles Dodgers.

Bubba was born in West Point, Mississippi, and attended the University of Southern Mississippi in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. He was 5'9" and weighed 180 pounds.

During his baseball career, his batting average was .255. He hit 62 home runs (including two grand slams in 1961), and he had 356 RBIs. Bubba Phillips retired at age 37, in 1964. He died of a heart attack at age 65 in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, in 1993.



Autographed "Bubba" Phillips photo on a 1957 Topps baseball card.



My first cousin Dorothy Ann Bryan (b. 1930) on a tennis court with our second cousin Bubba Phillips, c. 1948.

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2. THE SCHWEINFURT-REGENSBURG MISSION

The Schweinfurt-Regensburg Mission was a strategic bombing attack flown by B-17 Flying Fortresses of the U.S. Army Air Force on August 17, 1943. It was conceived as an ambitious plan to cripple the German aircraft industry before an invasion of Europe.

The attack targeted two critical locations on the same day. The Schweinfurt Force of the mission was composed of 230 bombers. George M. Bryan's plane was one of 18 of the 91st Bomb Group, of which seven were lost. A total of 56 of the 230 B-17s were shot down over Germany that day. George's odds for survival were not good on that mission.

The Schweinfurt attack did extensive damage, but was not crippling to the enemy. The mission has often been called a failure because of the heavy losses. About two months later, with B-17s again unescorted by fighter planes over German airspace, another bombing raid was made on Schweinfurt. Losses were again quite high. After that, U.S. bombing raids deep into Germany were curtailed for the next five months.



The crew several days before their fatal flight. George Bryan is second from the left in the front row.

The aircraft, *Mizpah*, a B-17 F based in Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire, England, was on a mission to bomb ball bearing factories in Schweinfurt, Germany. The airplane, shot down by German fighter planes, crashed at 2:47 p.m. over Mayen, Germany (25 km west of Koblenz, Germany), on August 17, 1943. Of the crew of 10, five did not survive.

Three of those killed were re-interred in The Netherlands in September 1945. George M. Bryan was reinterred in Greenwood Cemetery, West Point, Mississippi, in 1948. I attended the service and recall it quite well.

MIZPAH CREWMEN KILLED

- P: Kenner, Everett L., 2/Lt. (Pilot—killed instantly in cockpit)
- CP: Bryan, George M., 2/Lt. (Copilot—killed instantly in cockpit)
- N: Martin, Richard G., 2/Lt. (Navigator—parachuted to safety, killed by German civilians on the ground)
- G: Moore, Gardner H., S/Sgt. (Waist gunner—killed in crash of the plane)
- G: Hagin, William B., S/Sgt. (Waist gunner—killed in crash of the plane)

PRISONERS OF WAR*

- B: Egender, Herbert F., 2/Lt. (Bombardier—parachuted to safety)
- E: Chase, Glen E., T/Sgt. (Flight engineer—parachuted to safety)
- RO: Vender, George, T/Sgt. (Radio operator—parachuted to safety)
- G: O'Toole, John B., S/Sgt. (Ball turret gunner—parachuted to safety)
- G: Bowcock, James, A., S/Sgt. (Tail gunner—parachuted to safety)

*Egender was taken to Luft Stallag III, a prison reserved for officers. Chase, Vender, O'Toole, and Bowcock spent the next 21 months in Stallag 17-8 in Krems, Austria.

JONNIE MAE PARKER'S LIFE

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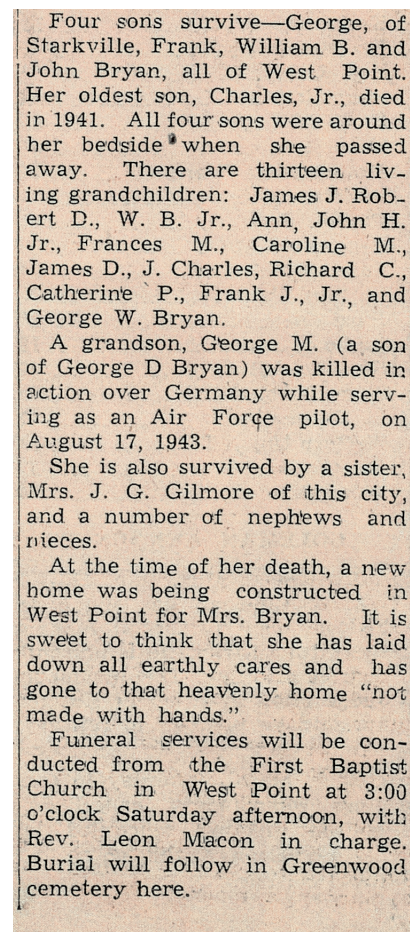
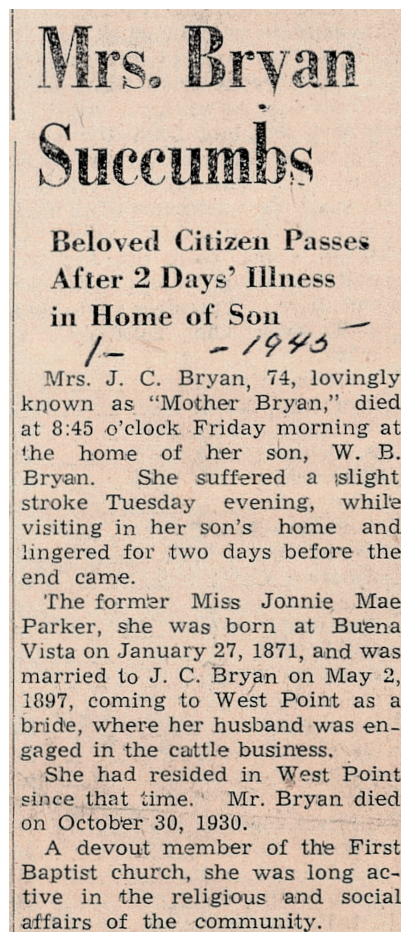
3. MIZPAH: AN ACCOUNT OF THE FATE OF HER CREW

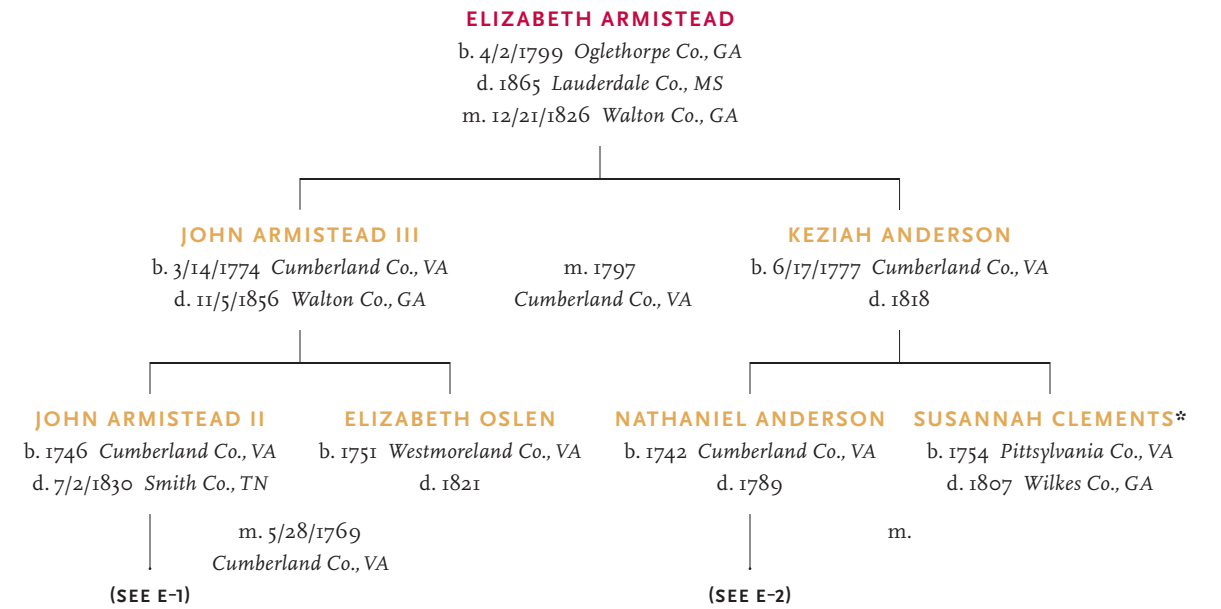
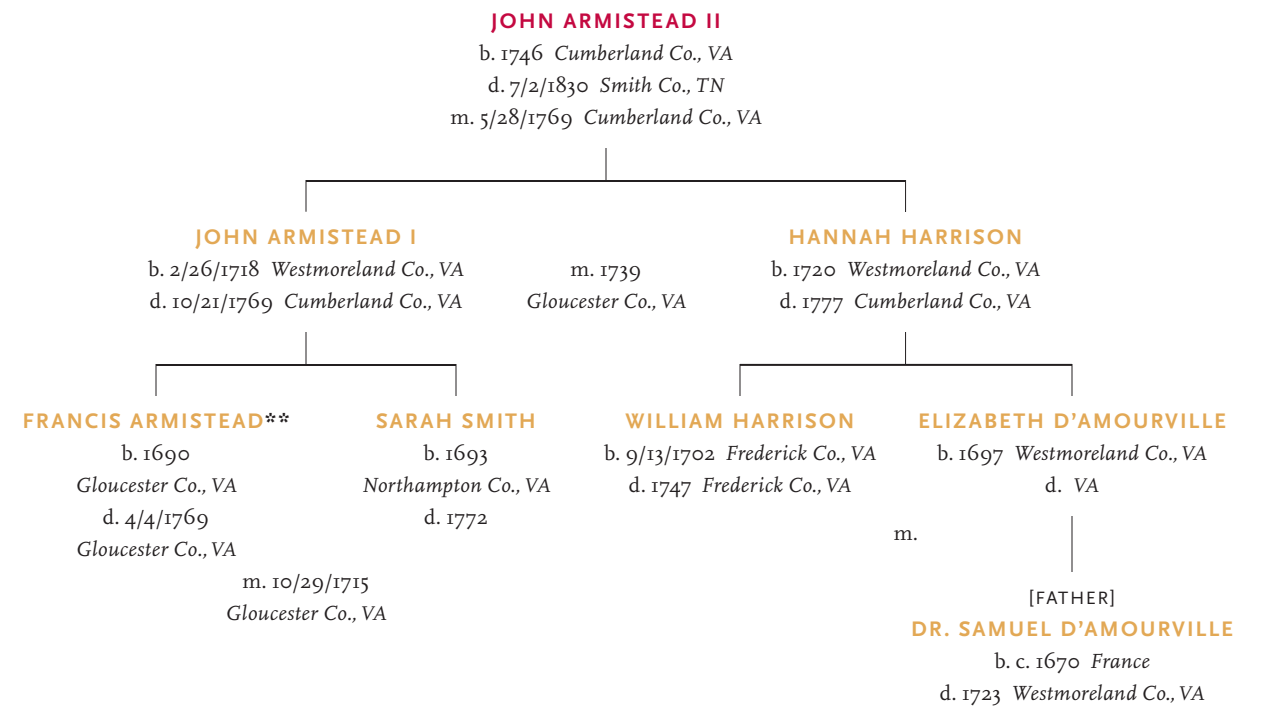
Rich Ribaud, a nephew of one of the survivors (Johnny O'Toole [d. 1981]) of the *Mizpah* wrote an account of what happened to the crew and the airplane on August 17, 1943. His account is drawn from interviews with two crewmen who survived: George Vender and Herbert Egender. The following are excerpts from that account:

"Mizpah" first started to get into trouble above Mayen, the town over which she was shot down, before ever reaching the ball bearing factories at Schweinfurt. There were vicious and unrelenting head-on attacks of German Me 109s and FW 190s. They passed literally within feet of the bombers as they rolled past them....

"Mizpah" was leading the high element of the lead group when she met her fate (the B-17 airplanes flew in formation and at an average speed of 125 miles an hour). Second Lieutenant Egender (a survivor) reported that a string of 7 FW 190s were attacking at a near level altitude from dead ahead, a popular attack strategy that exploited the Flying Fortress's weakest area of defensive gunfire in the nose of the aircraft. The fighters pumped a continuous stream of shells into "Mizpah," raking the ship from left to right as they passed and rolled away at the last second. The fighter in the middle of the attacking group found its mark. Gunfire hit and destroyed the #2 engine, ran across the inboard wing setting it afire and then hammered into the flight deck. Both pilot Everett Kenner and co-pilot George Bryan were instantly killed. According to a later report, the Flight Engineer, Sergeant Glenn Chase, said both pilots were decapitated in the attack....

4. MY GRANDMOTHER BRYAN'S OBITUARY

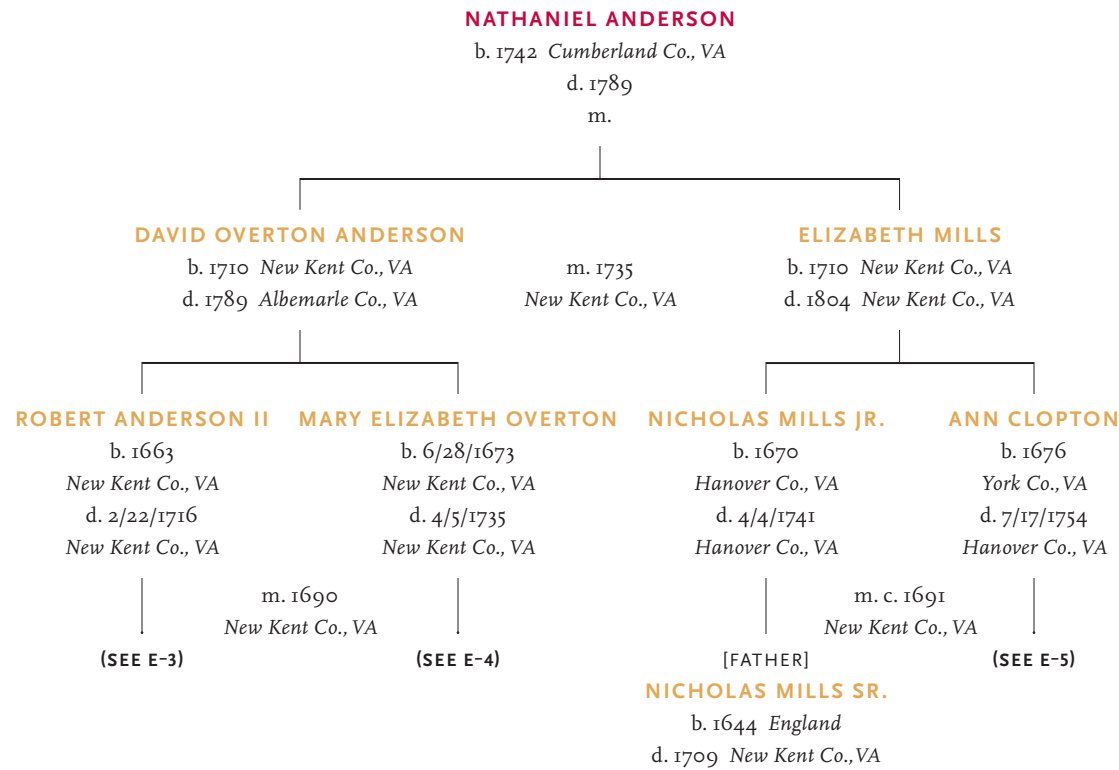


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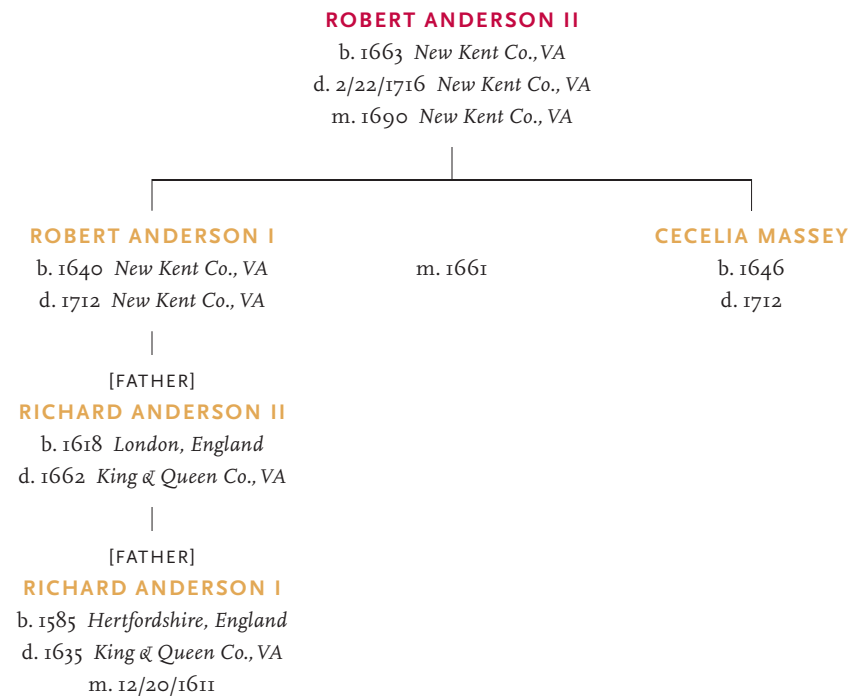
*Several generations of Susannah Clements's family are available on Ancestry.com.

**See Armistead Heritage on pages 177-79.

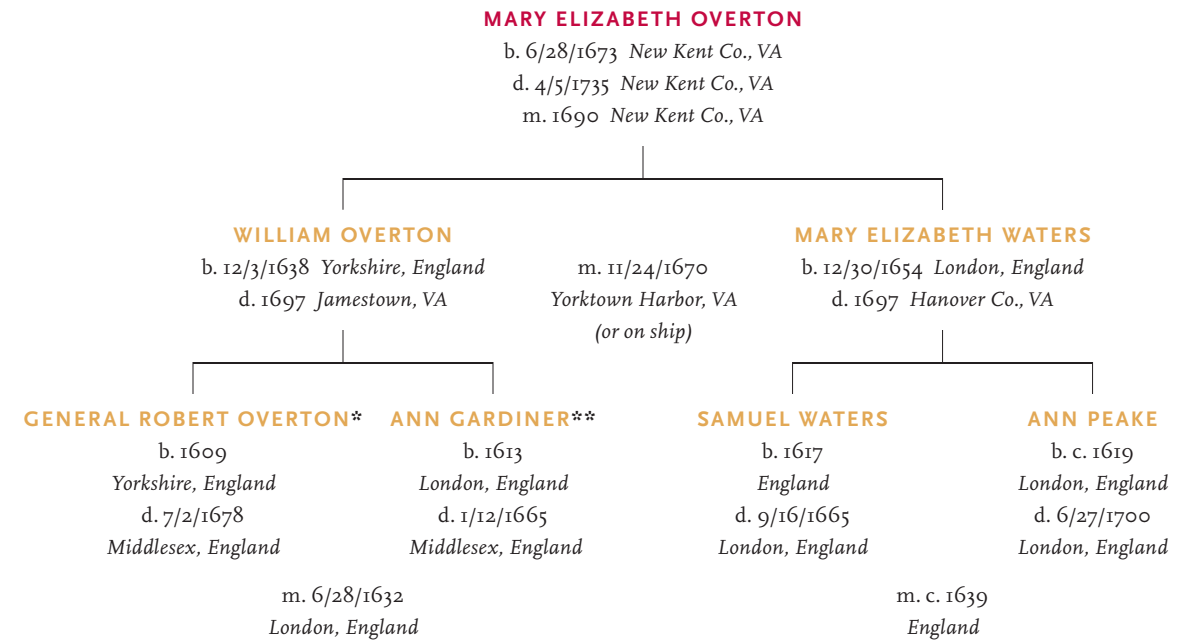
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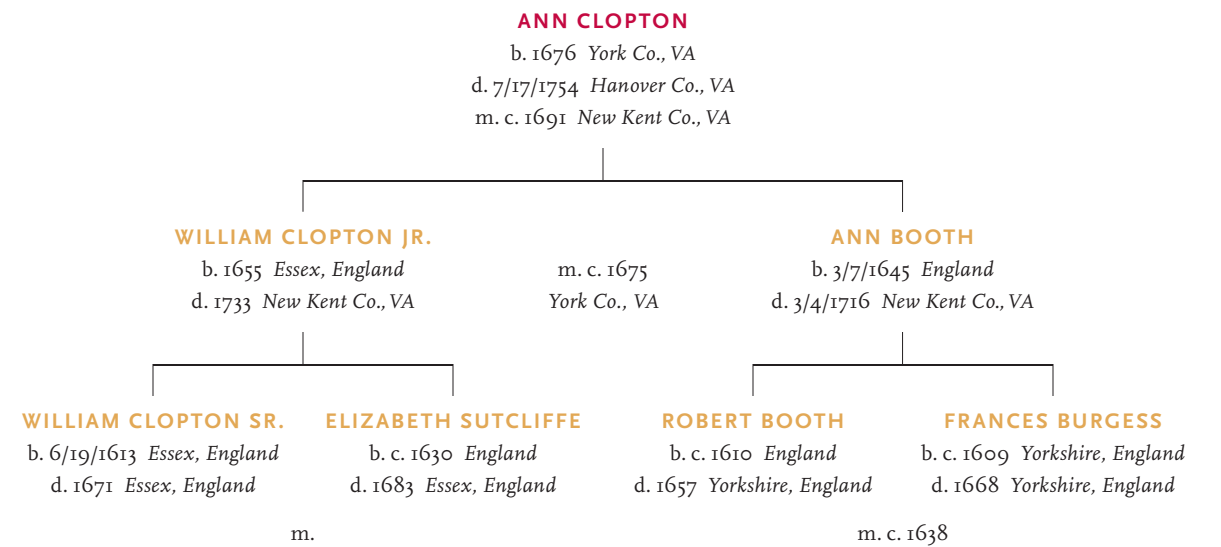
E-3



E-4



E-5



*See Overton Heritage on pages 180-81.

**Additional lineage for Ann Gardiner is available on Ancestry.com.