

Chapter XVI: Blevins-Taylor

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The mother of Artemisia Blevins, the wife of David Shake, is fairly easy to identify. Not only was she living near David and Artemisia in Oldham County, Kentucky, on the 1830 census, as we saw in the previous chapter, but she was the only Blevins in that county in that year. Her name was Lucinda Blevins, apparently a widow, who was in the age column for 40 to 50 years old in 1830. As we also saw, David and Artemisia evidently had moved first to Owen County, Indiana, during the mid-1820s but had come back to Kentucky sometime later during that decade. By 1832 the Shake couple would be residing in Sullivan County, Indiana.

Lucinda and her remaining children may have accompanied David and Artemisia to Sullivan County, but by the mid-1830s, she and those children seem to have been living in neighboring Knox County, Indiana. Another of Lucinda's daughters married in Knox County in 1836, and on the 1840 census Lucinda was enumerated in that county next to that daughter and her husband; Lucinda's two youngest children were still in her household in 1840. She was placed in the age category for 50 to 60 years old. It is also possible that Lucinda moved from Kentucky directly to Knox County and that David and Artemisia lived with her there for a brief time prior to 1832, when they would finally put

down roots in Sullivan County.¹ Lucinda Blevins never appeared again on the census, so – unless she remarried, and there is no solid evidence that she did – it seems likely that she died in Knox County between 1840 and 1850.²

Who were Lucinda's parents? Information contributed to the LDS shows that a "Lina" Taylor married a Lemuel Blevins in Lincoln County, Kentucky, soon after July 19, 1806, the date their marriage bond was signed. This date is about right if (again as we have seen in the previous chapter) Artemisia, this couple's daughter, was born sometime about 1809. Lina is a credible variation of or nickname for Lucinda, and it is interesting that when Lucinda was listed near David Shake on the 1830 Kentucky census there were two men named Taylor just above her. In addition, a Lemuel and Lucinda Blevins consented to the marriage of a Taylor female in Lincoln County in 1814, probably because the bride's father (who was also Lucinda's father) had already gone off to Indiana, where he patented land in that year.

¹ It is not known exactly where in Knox County Lucinda and her children lived in 1840. At least two of Lucinda's sons did live in Indiana and Illinois at this time, but two other younger Blevins males in Knox County then evidently were not among her sons.

² Our Lucinda Blevins was not the woman of that name who in 1848 married a man named Philip Owens: we can tell from the 1850 census that the female of this couple was much younger than Lemuel's widow Lucinda would have been that year. There is a slim possibility that our Lucinda was the woman identified as "Synthia" Blevins who married William Colier in Knox County on January 20, 1841, but because this couple is never seen on a census again, we cannot be sure of this. It is more likely that this Synthia was the daughter living in Lucinda's household on the 1840 census. Nor is our Lucinda the woman of that name who married a William Wesley Douthitt in Sullivan County on May 2, 1853, as this Lucinda was also a far younger woman.

Other information confirms our conclusion that Artemisia was the daughter of Lemuel and Lucinda Blevins. Of the Blevins males in Indiana and Kentucky who might have been Artemisia's father, all can be eliminated for some reason or another except for one. The census of 1820 for Indiana had only a single Blevins male (William Blevins, Sr.) with a daughter in his household. This daughter was, however, too young to have been our Artemisia, who would have been listed that year in the column for females 10 to 16 years of age, assuming she had been born about 1809. In Kentucky in 1820, though, there were four men named Blevins or a variation thereof in Jefferson County, out of which Oldham County would be created before 1830. One of them (John) had a female the right age to have been Artemisia, but we know from other evidence he did not have a daughter with this name. Two others (Samuel and James) did not have any daughters in the right age category for our Artemisia.

That leaves us with Lemuel Blevins, a Kentucky farmer twenty-six to forty-five years old in 1820 with a wife in the same age category; they *did* have a daughter the right age to be our Artemisia. Moreover, Lemuel Blevins is not listed in either Kentucky or Indiana after 1820, which is consistent with Lucinda's having been enumerated there without a husband in 1830 and 1840. Corroborating evidence connecting Artemisia to these parents is the fact that one of David and Artemisia {Blevins} Shake's sons was named Lemuel and one of their daughters was named Lucinda. Other researchers had previously concluded that Lemuel and Lucinda were the parents of Artemisia, but the clinching

evidence did not come until a search of marriage bonds in Jefferson County, Kentucky, turned up the one for David Shake and Artemisia Blevins in 1825. This document positively identifies Lemuel Blevins as her father. We may now say with complete assurance, therefore, that the parents of David Shake's wife Artemisia were **LEMUEL BLEVINS** and **LUCINDA {TAYLOR} BLEVINS**. Unfortunately, these two may be the only set of parents in this chapter whose identities we can say we know for certain.

Judging from the ages reported for him on various censuses, Lemuel was born between 1775 and 1784, but because he was old enough to pay taxes in 1800 we can narrow that range down to 1775 to 1779. Later censuses indicate that Lucinda was born between 1780 and 1790, but other census data narrows that range down to 1784 to 1790. This apparent age differential between them, as well as the presence in Lemuel and Lucinda's household in 1810 of two males whose births predated this couple's 1806 marriage, suggests that Lemuel could have been married to another woman before Lucinda. But, since Lemuel had been born by 1775, the older of the two males in his household in 1810 (sixteen to twenty-six years old) probably could not have been his son, and the younger one (ten to sixteen years old) could have been Lemuel's son only if this boy was at one of the youngest ages included in his age category in 1810. It seems more likely that these two males in the household of Lemuel and Lucinda Blevins in 1810 were unknown Taylor or Blevins relatives or else unrelated farm workers. The fact that we have found no documentary record of an earlier marriage for Lemuel, although it is not conclusive

evidence in itself, should also lead us to doubt that he was married to someone before Lucinda.

I have found no trace at all of Lemuel before that July 1800 tax list, which covered the Dix River portion of Lincoln County, Kentucky. Assuming he had indeed turned twenty-one years old about then, this appearance on a tax list is consistent with when we have estimated that he was born: in 1775-79. Three years later, Lemuel was taxed at a place called Hanging Fork, also in Lincoln County. In 1805, Lemuel was living on Cinch Creek in Pulaski County, which had been formed out of Lincoln County, but in the following year he was again listed at Dix River in Lincoln County.³ All of these waterways are interconnected, and if Lemuel was renting property or working for another man he could have moved frequently within this fairly compact general area.

During most of the years from 1807 through 1816, Lemuel Blevins appears on the tax lists in Garrard County, Kentucky, north of Lincoln County and Pulaski County. Garrard County was yet another county that had been formed out of Lincoln County. The census also found Lemuel and Lucinda in Garrard County in 1810. In that year Lemuel was twenty-six to forty-five years old, Lucinda was sixteen to twenty-six years old, and the one female under ten years old was almost certainly was our recently born Artemisia.

³ For the Dix River (originally called Dick's River) and Hanging Fork Creek, see the USGS map for Bryantsville/Kentucky and slides 12952-56, taken in 2008.

During the War of 1812, Lemuel Blevins was recorded on the rolls as a private in Jonathan Owsley's Company of the 15th Regiment (Slaughter's) of the Kentucky Detached Militia. In fact, it appears he was in uniform only briefly, if at all: Lemuel's military record in the National Archives, which documents his six weeks of service as lasting only from November 10 through December 31, 1814, has a notation that a substitute, Nicholas Burnett, served for him. Whether this means Lemuel himself was in this unit for only six weeks and then hired a substitute or that he had engaged the substitute for the entire term of his service is not clear.⁴

By 1814 (when Lemuel and Lucinda consented to her Taylor sister's marriage in Lincoln County), many of Lemuel's Blevins kin had already moved north and west to Jefferson County, Kentucky. He and his family, though, still seem to have been residing in Garrard County. It might have been after 1817, when Lemuel is no longer on the tax rolls in either county, when they, too, relocated to Jefferson County, but because we do not have complete tax information for Jefferson County we cannot pinpoint when this move occurred. Lemuel is not listed in that county in 1819 or 1820, either (although, as we have seen, the 1820 census shows that he and his family were living there then), and then he appears on that county's tax rolls in only five of the eight years extending through the

⁴ Lemuel's military service record in the National Archives states that his substitute was named Nicholas Burnett, but a duty roster (which I have not seen) reportedly states that Lemuel had a substitute named James Doolen. It is possible that Lemuel hired two or more men as substitutes at various times. The 15th Regiment, led by Lieutenant Colonel Gabriel Slaughter, rendezvoused at Newport, Kentucky, four days after Lemuel's service began. It was taken down the Ohio River and the Mississippi River by boat to New Orleans, where it played a key role in the Battle of New Orleans in early 1815. It is doubtful that Lemuel Blevins participated in that expedition and battle, however.

1820s. According to the records that do exist, Lemuel was taxed for anywhere from 72 to 92 acres and for two to five horses. In 1821 he seems to have been residing on Harrod's Creek, and the 1829 record gives us the valuable information that he was living on Goose Creek at that time.⁵ That is the last time Lemuel ever appears on the tax rolls, however, and neither is he on the 1830 census either in Kentucky or elsewhere.

The reason for this absence from both the tax rolls and the 1830 census is that Lemuel Blevins apparently, had died, presumably not long before December 10, 1829, when an appraisal of his estate seems to have been authorized in Jefferson County. We have to hedge here because that county's records describe the appraisal as one for *Samuel* Blevins, and the subsequent references to the deceased appear to identify him as "Lamuel" Blevins. The clerk's evident confusion is our bad luck, because we cannot be entirely sure it was Lemuel who died and not his father, who *was* in fact named Samuel. But because Lemuel Blevins cannot be found on the 1830 census or on any other one thereafter, and because his wife Lucinda and their oldest child (Alfred) are listed on the 1830 tax rolls in neighboring Oldham County, Kentucky (where brothers of both Lemuel and Lucinda were living), the circumstantial evidence strongly suggests it was *Lemuel* Blevins who died in late 1829. As we shall see later on, this circumstantial evidence also includes the likely death of Samuel Blevins in late 1828, which helps to make the clerk's

⁵ See the USGS map for Jeffersonville/Indiana for the location of Goose Creek. The 1821 entry only says "H. Creek." Harrod's Creek was the largest and most likely waterway starting with that letter; other possibilities are Hites Creek and Hanging Creek. See slides 12933-41 (2008) for views of Goose Creek.

confusion of their similar-sounding names understandable.⁶ We will pick up the Blevins story with Samuel after we delve into Lucinda's Taylor family.

Lucinda was the daughter of **DANIEL TAYLOR**. This we know because his 1835 will mentions her, identified as "Lucina" Blevins in this instance. Two things suggest that Daniel Taylor was married at least twice: he seems to have had two distinctly separate batches of children, and from 1810 to 1830 the census consistently shows him with a wife nearly a decade younger than he was. This woman, evidently his second wife, was Nancy {Black} Taylor, whom Daniel seems to have married about 1810.⁷ We do not know the name of Daniel Taylor's first wife, Lucinda's presumed mother. The only clue we have about this woman and her identity is that she and Daniel named an early son Seaton. This could have been her family's name, or perhaps the given name of her unknown father, although the name of the first son she had had with Daniel, Nathan, might be a better guess for that unknown man's given name. These clues are not much to work with, unfortunately, and so here we collide with the classic family history brick wall – the first of several we will encounter during the remainder of this chapter.

⁶ One perceptive researcher has noted that the inventory of this deceased man's possessions seems to be consistent with those of an active farmer in the prime of life (Lemuel, that is), not an elderly man (Samuel Blevins, Sr.) who was probably living in town with his son (Samuel Blevins, Jr.). It is interesting that Lemuel's cousin named a child Lemuel in July 1829, which hints that the older Lemuel might have recently died. As we have seen in the previous chapter, Artemisia and her husband David Shake apparently returned to Kentucky about the time her father Lemuel died there.

⁷ Nancy Black was born in Kentucky (according to the 1880 census listing for her son, Hiram) about 1770 to 1775 and died about 1844. Her father may have been Nathaniel or Nathaniel Black. Nathan was a given name subsequently used for later Blevins males, but it had been used earlier as well. Nancy {Black} Taylor is buried in the Old Pioneer Cemetery at Lincoln's Boyhood Home National Park in Lincoln City, Indiana.

Daniel Taylor was reportedly born in Virginia and died in Perry County, Indiana, between June 10, 1835 (the date of his will) and February 11, 1839, when this will was probated; his son John was named the administrator of Daniel's estate in March 1843.⁸ One researcher states that Daniel was born about 1768 to 1770 and that his full name was John Daniel Taylor. There is no solid documentary evidence to substantiate this was his full name, but a deed in Perry County does provide some support for thinking it was.⁹ The censuses we are sure he is on tell us only that he was evidently born between 1760 and 1770: he was over forty-five years of age in 1820 and between sixty and seventy years old in 1830. We do not know when or where Daniel Taylor married his first wife, Lucinda's mother, but based on Lucinda's evident birth between 1784 and 1790 the marriage probably took place during the late 1770s or early 1780s.

We have no trouble locating Daniel Taylor in Tobin Township of Perry County, Indiana, in both 1820 (when the census describes him as a farmer) and 1830. He had purchased public land in that county in early 1815, soon after he left Lincoln County, Kentucky, before he was able to give the consent to a daughter's marriage that Lucinda and Lemuel

⁸ Daniel Taylor is said to be buried in Hobbs Cemetery, Perry County, Indiana, but no grave marker exists for him there and some Taylor researchers believe he is buried in the Shoemaker Cemetery a short distance west of Rome instead. See slide 12081 for a view of Hobbs Cemetery in 2006. His will mentions both Lucinda Blevins (whose given name is incorrectly spelled Lucina) and a later daughter born in 1811 whose name *was* in fact Lucina, which has confused many researchers.

⁹ A John Taylor sold land in Perry County, Indiana, to Daniel Taylor in November 1832, and Daniel sold adjoining land in February 1841, which was two years after the death of Lucinda's father named Daniel Taylor; both deeds were recorded during the latter month and year. It could be that when the elder Daniel Taylor sold this property to his son Daniel in 1832 he used his formal first name of John for the sake of clarity. There is no John Taylor on the census in Perry County in 1820, 1830, or 1840.

would provide instead.¹⁰ His ages in both years (forty-five years old or older in 1820 and sixty to seventy years old in 1830) indicate that Daniel had been born during the decade between 1760 and 1770, probably closer to the beginning of that decade than to 1770. References to him in Perry County include his service on a jury in 1815, his having voted in 1818, and his selection as county coroner in 1828. We know nothing more about this man and his life in Kentucky or Indiana.

Unfortunately for us, Taylor is a very common family name (perhaps the most common of all the scores of names in our entire family), and so can be quite difficult to trace. This multiplicity of Taylors will impede us when we try to see where Lucinda's father Daniel was immediately before he went to Perry County, Indiana. Given migration patterns, we would expect to find him somewhere in Kentucky before 1820. Of the four men named Daniel Taylor on the 1810 census for that state, one was too young and two had insufficient children for the large number we know the household of our Daniel Taylor should have had.

¹⁰ Daniel Taylor patented the east half of the northwest quarter of Section 32, Township 6 South, Range 1 West (80 acres) and the west half of that same quarter (also 80 acres). He made his purchase on credit on January 6, 1815, at \$2.00 per acre. He put the required one-quarter deposit down but then evidently ran into trouble making the remaining three annual payments, no doubt because of the national banking crisis associated with the Panic of 1819. Finally, on September 29, 1821, Taylor paid \$150 in cash and received a discount of \$90, a settlement of his debt authorized under a relief land act Congress had passed in 1821. His total purchase price, therefore, was \$230 instead of \$320. See the USGS map for Rome/Indiana-Kentucky for the location of this property, which is now just inside the area of the Hoosier National Forest, and slides 12082 and 12083 for views of it in 2006. Daniel Taylor's purchase is not in the Bureau of Land Management's database because that database does not yet include the land purchases on credit (paid for over three years) that were permitted until 1820. See Appendix II for a description of how public lands were surveyed and sold by the United States government.

This leaves us with the Daniel Taylor of Bullitt County, who was not only the right age (forty-five years of age or older) but had the proper number of both male and female children in each age category as we know Lucinda's father did. There are reasons for doubting this is the right Daniel Taylor, however.¹¹ Most importantly, Lemuel Blevins must have been living near the Taylors before he wooed and wed Lucinda in Lincoln County, Kentucky, in 1806. Barring some unanticipated reason for Lemuel to have been elsewhere in Kentucky during those years, therefore, we should be able to find Lucinda's Taylor parents in Lincoln County or nearby during the decade between 1800 and 1810. Conversely, since we have no reason to think that our Blevins family ever lived near Bullitt County, Kentucky, providing an opportunity for Lemuel to meet Lucinda Taylor there, the Daniel Taylor in Bullitt County was probably someone else.

What then *do* we know about the movements of our Daniel Taylor before 1810? Family tradition is that Daniel and his household at some point resided in Tennessee, where a son is said to have been born in 1790 or 1791. This means they could have been living there when Lucinda was born during the late 1780s. (Some Blevins families were living in the northeast part of what would become Tennessee at about this same time, and it is possible we might find evidence there about Daniel Taylor during these years.)

¹¹ There was another Daniel Taylor, who according to his later application for a Revolutionary War pension was living in Nelson County, Kentucky (from which Bullitt County was formed in 1797) in 1810. Either this man's memory of where he had lived was faulty or the 1810 census in Nelson County missed him. It is this other Daniel Taylor, probably, who paid taxes in Nelson County on October 22, 1792, in 1795, and on August 30, 1800.

Shifting our sights back to Lincoln County, Kentucky, where our own Blevins family evidently had arrived sometime during the 1790s (and where Lemuel and Lucinda would marry in 1806), we find a *John* Taylor who piques our interest. He owned property from at least 1794 onward on Hanging Fork and the Dix River – the very waterways where our Blevins clan had settled. This John Taylor was the right age to have been the father not only of Lucinda (he and his wife¹² had been married in 1782) but also the other children named in the will of the man called Daniel Taylor of Perry County, Indiana. John Taylor, however, seems to have remained in this area of Kentucky (the part of Lincoln County that would become Garrard County in 1796) into the 1820s, when we believe that Lucinda's father had already moved to Perry County, Indiana, and we have no ready explanation for this apparent duplication. We seem to be stymied.

Many researchers believe that the family of Lucinda's father, Daniel Taylor, originated in Lunenburg County, Virginia, so perhaps we can enlighten ourselves by moving back a generation or two. One of the Taylors in that county, a minister named Daniel, had children whose names were quite similar to those of a well-known earlier (late 1600s and early 1700s) family of Taylor men who were also ministers, and the family into which this later Daniel Taylor married seems to have lived near Lucinda's father in Indiana.¹³

¹² Her name was Blanchy {Bucknell} Taylor.

¹³ The earlier Virginia Taylors included Daniel, a minister from 1700 to 1724, and his son Daniel (1704 to 1742). The latter married Alice Littlepage, the daughter of Richard Littlepage, and had four sons. One of them, William (1732-1820), was the clerk of Lunenburg County. Members of the Blevins family lived in Lunenburg County at about this same time. Taylors lived near men named Blevins in Goochland County during the first half of the 1700s, but we can only speculate about whether the two families had any relationship before Lucinda Taylor married Lemuel Blevins. There was a minister named Daniel Taylor in the Taylor family that produced our Sarah {Taylor} Power, but this man was born during the 1620s, nearly

Perhaps there is a connection here, therefore, but we are reduced to educated guesses in this instance as we are in so many others.

Other possible clues come from a Taylor family that used some given names we find in our own Blevins-Taylor line. An Argle (Argyle?) and Ann Taylor had a daughter named Artemisia in 1778 who, judging from her age, could have been the sister or cousin of our Lucinda {Taylor} Blevins. What makes this particular Taylor family even more interesting is its intermarriages with a Linney family, possibly the source of the name or nickname of “Lina” (or “Linney”?) for the woman who would become Lemuel Blevins’s wife in 1806. One can imagine a scenario in which our Lucinda Taylor was usually called “Lina” or “Linney” out of fondness for someone in Mary {Linney} Taylor’s family and then Lucinda named her daughter, our Artemisia {Blevins} Shake, for the Artemisia Taylor born in 1778. All of this is just conjecture; still, the later use of these uncommon given names may be a significant clue.

In my view, our strongest Taylor lead is the Lunenburg County family with a father and son both named Daniel. When the father died in 1781, he left a will that mentions children – to one of whom he leaves some land – without naming all of them. But the year before, 1780, Daniel Taylor, Sr., and his wife Elizabeth had sold 120 of their 779

eighty years before the one mentioned earlier in this footnote; it remains possible that the two Taylor ministers were related somehow, as both lived in the same general area of Virginia, but of course Taylor is a relatively common name.

acres to Daniel Taylor, Jr. More than a dozen years afterwards, in April 1796, the younger Daniel Taylor and his wife, Rebecca, sold this land to Daniel's brother, John Taylor. There is no further record (land sales or a will) for Daniel Taylor, Jr., in Lunenburg County, which suggests that he and his family departed Lunenburg County in 1796 or soon thereafter.

Thus we might have a Daniel Taylor who, after a brief stay in Tennessee, could have been living in Lincoln County, Kentucky, by the time Lemuel Blevins and Lucinda Taylor (born in Virginia between 1784 and 1790?) married in 1806. If Daniel's brother John subsequently also moved to Lincoln County, we would also be able to account for the John Taylor who was still living in that county when Daniel Taylor was living in Indiana. It seems more likely, though, that the John Taylor who resided in Lincoln County into the 1820s was someone from an unrelated Taylor family. The unsolved mystery here is why the Daniel Taylor of Perry County, Indiana, would be referred to as Daniel throughout the span of time we have examined – but then use “John” on the 1832 deed. Until we learn more about these somewhat mysterious Taylors, we cannot go further than to theorize that Daniel Taylor, Jr., and his wife Rebecca (Seaton?) *could* have been the parents of our Lucinda Taylor and that Daniel was the son of Daniel Taylor, Sr., and a woman named Elizabeth of Lunenburg County, Virginia. Further research may shed more light on this problem.

Leaving Lucinda and her family's numerous mysteries behind us, we return to Lemuel Blevins and his line – and its own plentiful mysteries. There being quite a number of Blevins males in Kentucky in 1800, our first challenge is identifying Lemuel's father. We have no specific information about Lemuel himself before he appears on that 1800 tax list in Kentucky, but fortunately there is considerable information about the Blevins family as a whole and an active group of Blevins researchers have mined this information in an effort to understand its various subgroups and generational connections.

The Blevins males in Kentucky in 1800 included two men who paid taxes in Lincoln County the same time our Lemuel did, Samuel and John, along with Berry (in Pulaski County); Elisha (in Cumberland County); Nathan (in Green County); James (in Logan County); and William (also in Pulaski County). Some well-informed Blevins researchers believe that Lemuel's parents were a man named Samuel and a woman named Hannah. After reviewing the documentary and circumstantial evidence that is available, I agree that **SAMUEL BLEVINS** was probably Lemuel's father but cannot be sure about the identity of Lemuel's mother.

Circumstantial evidence that Samuel was Lemuel's father comes from the census of 1820 for Jefferson County, Kentucky, where as we have seen there were four Blevins males between twenty-six and forty-five years old. Samuel and John lived in Middletown Township; James and Lemuel lived elsewhere in the county. There is good reason to

believe that two of these four men, John and James, were among the sons of the Samuel Blevins we are focusing on here; the third younger man in Jefferson County, Samuel, was probably the elder Samuel's son of that name. Although there was no Blevins male forty-five years old or older who headed a household shown on the 1820 census in that county, in the household of the Samuel Blevins aged twenty-six to forty-five years old was a man who was tallied in the column for those 45 years old or older in that year. The census also shows that no one in this household was farming and that one person was engaged in commerce, which is consistent with our knowledge that the younger Samuel was a shoemaker and operated a tavern – and with the belief of most Blevins researchers that the senior Samuel was living with his son at that time.¹⁴

As for the identity of Lemuel's mother, we know that the elder Samuel Blevins was married to a Hannah during the 1790s, but we do not know if she was the mother of Lemuel, who, we believe, was born between 1775 and 1779. Some Blevins researchers believe that Samuel was at some time also married to a Mary Elizabeth Cox, daughter of David Cox and Margaret Ann {McGowan} Cox, but I have seen no evidence to confirm this. It is clear that the Cox and Blevins families were closely associated in both Virginia and Kentucky, though, so it is plausible that Samuel might have married a Cox female,

¹⁴ It is also possible that the older Samuel Blevins had died in either Lincoln County or Pulaski County, Kentucky, before his sons moved to Jefferson County. If so, the older man in the household of Samuel Blevins on the 1820 census would have been someone else, for example the younger Samuel's father-in-law or even an employee in the family businesses. The 1820 census shows Samuel Blevins had two male slaves, also perhaps workers at the younger man's two businesses. The 1820 census, like the one ten years before, tells us only that the senior Samuel Blevins, if he was in fact the unnamed older man in this household, was born before 1775; the ages of his children indicate that he was probably born about 1745.

perhaps more than one. The name of Samuel's presumed second wife, Hannah, also may have been Cox, but if so we can only guess at how she was related to Mary Elizabeth Cox and to Mary's parents.

But the issue of Samuel's wives is even more complicated than that. There appears to be at least one considerable gap in the list of Samuel's known and probable children. Unless the parents had had bad luck in producing children, or in producing those who survived, one gap seems to exist between two older ones and our Lemuel. This leads to the suspicion that Samuel may have lost a first wife to death and remarried during the 1770s. Lemuel, born late in that decade, could have been Samuel's first child with his second wife. Another possible gap during the early 1780s further suggests that Hannah (according to the census data, a decade or so younger than Samuel) might actually have been his third wife. Thus Lemuel could have been the product of either of Samuel's suspected earlier marriages. Without more evidence, the number, identity, and order of Samuel's wives will have to remain a mystery. (On June 25, 1808, Samuel Blevins married a widow named Mary Garrat or Garrard in Lincoln County, Kentucky, and perhaps this woman – possibly Samuel's *fourth* wife – was the Mary Elizabeth Cox some Blevins researchers refer to.)

Leaving this matter unresolved as well, we turn to Samuel Blevins himself. During the 1770s and 1780s numerous Blevins families populated what is called the New River area

in southwestern Virginia. At this time, the spread of settlers into this region led to the formation of new Virginia counties in rapid order. Finding Samuel Blevins here during his earlier years is made somewhat easier by the fact that he seems to have been the only Blevins male with that given name in Virginia at that time, as well as in Kentucky later on. Our guess is that Samuel was born around 1745. He first comes to our attention in 1777 and 1778, when a Samuel Blevins swore two loyalty oaths in Henry County, Virginia, where there was a sizeable colony of Blevins families. The next year, 1779, Samuel was a witness to a deed in that same county. These oaths indicated his switch of allegiance from King George III to the new state of Virginia and to the even newer United States that Virginia had helped to create.

In this connection, it is interesting to observe that in 1775 and 1776, the Fincastle (Virginia) Committee of Safety – one of the proto-governmental groups that had sprung up in many of the American counties as the conflict with Britain reached a boil – had taken notice of James and William Blevins, whom they probably suspected of disloyalty. Fincastle County then included a vast area just west of Henry County and Montgomery County. This James could have been our Samuel's father, as we shall see. There continue to be hints through the 1780s of the reluctance of certain Blevins men to support the American Revolution. In fact, despite his oaths in 1781 we find Samuel Blevins himself was enrolled as a private in Captain Thomas Hamilton's *Loyalist* Company in Hillsborough, North Carolina (not far south of Henry County, Virginia). Samuel is

described as a deserter on this list, however, so his true allegiance at this time remains in doubt.

The next year, 1782, Samuel Blevins is on the tax list of Montgomery County, Virginia, the home of another colony of Blevins families. Also that year, the sheriff of Henry County took him into custody while his political views were investigated. Samuel must have been judged reliable now, for in 1783 he was listed among the members of Captain Flower Swift's militia unit in Montgomery County. Samuel "Blevin" later appears on a list of those who received certificates for pay due for service in the Continental forces during the Revolutionary War. These certificates were issued during 1783-85 and were redeemed in 1790. Unfortunately, there is no unit listed for this man, who was owed \$59.70. Neither is there any evidence in the National Archives that he was a member of any of the Continental forces, but to have been paid this amount he must have been deemed eligible for reasons we cannot determine. All this leaves us wondering whether Samuel was a British loyalist (as at least one brother was), an American patriot, an opportunist who took whatever side seemed most advantageous at the moment, a young man who could not make up his mind, or a man without convictions who bent to whichever faction was pressuring him to make a commitment. Also in 1785, Samuel Blevins was a witness in a court case in Henry County.

After the war ended, Samuel Blevins is on tax lists or the Virginia census in Henry County, Virginia, in 1785, in 1787, on May 28, 1788, and on October 23, 1789. The tax lists and other records for the Blevins males show that their properties were located on Chestnut Meadow Creek, Crooked Creek, and Grassy Creek, as well as on the Fox River. These tributaries were all in what is generally spoken of as the Mouth of Wilson area in the New River region. Most of this area was in Botetourt County until 1772, in Fincastle County until 1777, and then in Montgomery County until 1790. In that year the area would become the new Wythe County and in 1793 the even newer Grayson County.¹⁵ It is just above the border with extreme western North Carolina and close to extreme northeastern Tennessee, where some Blevins families are also known to have lived at about this time.¹⁶

Sometime after 1790, numerous Blevins males – Samuel and his presumed son Lemuel among them – would make the trek over the mountains to Lincoln County, Kentucky, which at that time formed the entire southeastern quadrant of the new state of Kentucky. It is possible that their route took them through areas now in northwestern North Carolina and northeastern Tennessee, but there is no firm evidence of this. By October 1792 Samuel had become a taxpayer in Lincoln County. He repeatedly appeared on the tax

¹⁵ See the USGS map for Mouth of Wilson/North Carolina. In 1787, Samuel Blevins had two horses and four head of cattle.

¹⁶ One Blevins, relationship to Lemuel and Samuel (if any) unknown, is thought to have been the famous “long hunter” called William Blevins. Several of the Blevins males were long hunters, it appears. Long hunters ventured, often alone, far into the unknown western wilderness (principally what would become Kentucky) in search of game and pelts. They got their name for being absent for long periods of time, usually many months.

rolls first there and then in Pulaski County (formed from Lincoln County in 1801) from 1792 through 1809, when a four-year gap in the records begins, and then again in 1813. In 1809 and 1813 Samuel Blevins is described as being exempt from the tax levy, which is consistent with a Pulaski County court order dated May 26, 1806, that excused him from the county levy owing to his infirmity. During the years when he was taxed, Samuel was living variously on Hanging Fork, Cinch Creek, Dix River, and Brush or Brushy Creek.¹⁷

The absence of census records in 1800 for Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky prevents us from discovering exactly where Samuel Blevins was living in that year, but we presume he was residing somewhere in Pulaski County, Kentucky, a presumption strengthened by the fact that in 1804 the tax records show him living with William Blevins on Buck Creek in the northern part of Pulaski County. Only in 1810 does he appear on the census, now in Lincoln County, Kentucky. Here he was enumerated as forty-five years old or older, and a female in his household was placed in that same age category. Sometime between then and 1814, Samuel and his sons (Lemuel excepted) evidently moved northwestward to Jefferson County, Kentucky: a Samuel Blevins shows up on the tax rolls in Middletown Township there in 1814 and continues to be listed through 1818 but not thereafter. We cannot tell whether the man taxed in these years was the older Samuel, who perhaps had not yet been able to get himself exempted in this county, or the younger

¹⁷ See slides 12952-56, taken in 2008, for these locations.

Samuel, who became twenty-one years of age in 1814. My guess is that the younger man was the one being taxed and that by 1815 his father, also our Lemuel's father, was already living with young Samuel, as he appears to have been doing in 1820. Why was neither Samuel taxed after 1818? As we have seen in an earlier chapter, Jefferson County's tax information is spotty for these years, which handicaps our ability to answer this question, but it is also possible the father's exemption was approved about 1818. A better explanation may be that neither Blevins lived in Jefferson County after then. We know a Samuel Blevins (father or son?) purchased a lot on Main Street in Floyd'sburg, in Oldham County, in 1818, and it seems likely that the older Samuel lived out his life there. The 1820 census we considered earlier in this chapter is our last glimpse of any kind of Samuel Blevins, and it seems almost certain that he died sometime during the 1820s. The confusion of the clerk when Lemuel died in 1829, as we have seen, suggests that he had recently encountered Samuel's name too. The fact that Samuel Blevins, Jr., sold the Floyd'sburg lot in late 1828 might also indicate that his father had recently died.¹⁸

Establishing Lemuel's ancestry beyond his presumed father, Samuel, is a challenge that even some very accomplished Blevins researchers, with their larger stake in the outcome,

¹⁸ The estate of Samuel Blevins was inventoried by Jacob Shake, so evidently these two families had known one another well for years – perhaps were neighbors, in fact – before our David and Artemisia were married in 1825. There were actually two men named Samuel Blevins on the Lincoln County, Kentucky, census in 1810; they had slightly different family profiles, although the ages of Samuel and his wife are shown as the same in both listings. Blevins researchers seem to agree that Samuel was probably mistakenly recorded on two different sheets and that the second listing is the more accurate one. Two men named Samuel Blevins are on the Jefferson County tax rolls for 1819, but this may be an error of another sort. The Samuel Blevins who does appear on the Jefferson County tax rolls in most years after 1817 is on tax lists in Oldham County, Kentucky, instead during 1827 through 1829. This may help to confirm that Samuel Blevins, Jr., inherited his father's lot during the late 1820s.

have not yet met. In general, I have elected to follow what most of them have concluded, although there is such vigorous and often acerbic debate among them about their findings that a consensus is not always easy to discern. Some of these researchers believe that Samuel's parents were Daniel Blevins and a woman named Sarah, whose family name may have been Belcher. Daniel's life span is said to have been from about 1710 to sometime after September 27, 1771.¹⁹ Other Blevins researchers believe that Samuel was the son of a James Blevins and a woman named either Catherine Cox or Elizabeth Ward. James lived from about the 1730s until 1801, which means it is (barely) possible that he could have fathered Samuel during the late 1740s. Still other researchers are not willing to hazard even a guess as to Samuel's parents.

The close proximity of our Samuel to James Blevins and the latter's known children makes a good argument for his having being an older son of this James Blevins, and I believe we should take as a working hypothesis that James was indeed Samuel's father. It is possible that James in turn was the son of the Daniel Blevins (about 1710 to after 1771) and Sarah (Belcher?) who were just mentioned. We now turn, therefore, to James Blevins and what we know about him and his origins. This search is complicated by the presence in this area of three or more Blevins contemporaries named James, and errors are likely when it comes to determining to which of them the sparse evidence refers. This task is complicated, too, by the constant replication of counties within this

¹⁹ Daniel's son of the same name probably was not much older than our Samuel was, so he is not a viable candidate to have been Samuel's father.

developing section of Virginia – and by the fact that Blevins fathers seem even more likely than their contemporaries were to name their sons after their own brothers and uncles.

The James Blevins we are focusing on here (that is, the one who was born during the 1730s) was in 1771 living on the head of Little River, part of Virginia's New River system, where, one of his sons said, James would live out the remainder of his life among kin. James Blevins was a member of Captain William Herbert's militia unit, which saw some Indian fighting in the Holston River and Clinch River areas and participated in Dunmore's War, although James Blevins is not named as an active participant in this war or included on any payroll for it. In December 1774, James Blevins purchased 150 acres in Peach Bottom on Bent Creek, located in the Loyal Company's grant on another tributary of the New River region.

There is also some question about the political loyalties of James Blevins: as we have seen earlier in this chapter, a man with this name had aroused the suspicions of the Fincastle County, Virginia, Committee of Safety in 1775, and in 1781 he or (more likely) a son with the same name was, like our Samuel Blevins, a private in Captain Hamilton's Loyalist Company. In addition, the county court of Montgomery County, Virginia, had charged James and John Blevins with being "disaffected" in August 1779. Our remaining sightings of James Blevins are appearances on tax lists and other documents in

Montgomery County and elsewhere in 1782, 1787 through 1789, and 1793 through 1797. He died in 1801. We cannot assume that all of these references were to our James Blevins, but some of them must have been.

Assuming our tentative connections – Lemuel to Samuel and then back to James – are correct, do we have any ideas about who the father of James Blevins could have been? Our attention is drawn to two men who lived just to the east of the New River region. They are a James and a Daniel Blevins – possibly brothers, possibly father and son – who first appeared in the Leatherwood Creek section of Lunenburg County, Virginia, during the mid-1740s. James Blevins purchased 162 acres on the south side of the Smith River on March 13, 1748, and 88 acres on the north side of the Irwin River on April 5, 1749. He also patented 180 acres on the north side of the latter river near the mouth of Rug Creek in March 1756; he sold this particular property in December 1763, but we do not know exactly where he moved after that. This area would become Halifax County in 1752, Pittsylvania County in 1767, and Henry County in 1777. Court records show James and Daniel Blevins were in Halifax County from 1752 through 1768, so we can assume they remained in the same general area – perhaps on the Irwin River – during these years.²⁰ James appears on tax or militia lists in Halifax County in 1758 and 1760.

²⁰ One of the court records is a request by James Blevins to construct a mill. Such official permission was required because a new mill would affect the water supply of neighbors and the ability of other millers to make a living.

A land survey from 1768 and the movements of another family that was closely associated and intermarried with the Blevins family indicate that during this year a Daniel Blevins was living on 243 acres on Marrowbone Creek a few miles south of Martinsville (then still in Pittsylvania County). James evidently was living nearby in an area known locally as “Blevins on Leatherwood.” James and another Blevins male, possibly brothers and heirs, sold 180 acres here in 1759, and on November 20, 1765, two pieces of property (612 acres in all) on Leatherwood Creek belonging to James Blevins were “transferred,” presumably having been sold. Some Blevins researchers suspect that at least some of the Blevins men living in Halifax County had been unsuccessful in securing title to their land (or perhaps were only renting or squatting on it) and so decided to move further south and west at this time, but they could just as easily have been riding the tides of population growth and geographical expansion that Virginia was experiencing during these decades.

Going back to earlier years to see what we can learn about the line of James Blevins, we find that a man with that name and a John Blevins, presumably his brother, were granted land in Goochland County, Virginia, in 1737 and 1739, respectively. The property of James Blevins was two parcels (400 and 295 acres) on both sides of Little Muddy Creek. This part of Virginia did not evolve into Lunenburg County, so we can conclude that James Blevins must have left this area on Little Muddy Creek sometime during the decade after 1737 for Leatherwood Creek in Lunenburg County. We do not know whether Daniel Blevins accompanied these men, but from other evidence it seems likely

that he did. (Here we should recall from an earlier part of this chapter that there was a Taylor family in Lunenburg County during the first half of the 1700s, and that in Goochland County the property of James Blevins adjoined that of a man named Richard Taylor – possibly an ancestor of Daniel Taylor and his daughter, Lucinda, though this just speculative.)

Still earlier, in 1733 and 1734, two men named Daniel and James Blevins were living in Prince George's County, Maryland, which at that time comprised the entire western portion of that colony. Each of these men had two taxables, which suggests that they were already middle-aged during the early 1730s. They lived in the Monocacy Hundred on the north side of the Potomac River. (A hundred was a political and taxation unit, carried over from English law, that was smaller than a county and consisted of a large enough area to raise approximately one hundred fighting men.) The Monocacy Hundred was situated along the Monocacy River where it joins the Potomac River near Poolesville. This then-unorganized area is where Montgomery County and Frederick County, Maryland, come together today. These Blevins men are thought to have lived in Cohasset, New Jersey, and in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, before they came to Maryland. Where were they before then?

In trying to answer this question, we are enlightened by a very significant document from 1771. On July 1 in that year, Daniel Blevins, Sr., his wife Sarah, and Daniel Blevins, Jr.,

signed a power of attorney document in Pittsylvania County, Virginia. This document authorized the sale of 100 acres in Westerly, Washington County, Rhode Island. Either the two Blevins males themselves or the clerk described them as being “from Rhode Island.” We can infer from the document that the Blevins family had left their homes in Rhode Island without having disposed of some ancestral property, and now they were taking steps to facilitate the sale of the property. The power of attorney document identified Pittsylvania County as the home of the older Daniel Blevins but Botetourt County, Virginia, as the home of the younger one.

Why were these men identified as being from Rhode Island? It does not necessarily mean that they had just arrived in Virginia directly from Rhode Island, though they might have. Perhaps they had just arrived in this part of Virginia, though, and so were still regarded as newcomers there. Perhaps they themselves still thought of themselves as New Englanders even at this late time. To me, it is most likely that they felt the need to identify themselves as having been from Rhode Island in order to establish their credentials for the power of attorney so the court back in New England would honor the document. In any event, it is clear these Blevins males did have their ultimate roots in Rhode Island.

We can make the case that the Daniel and James Blevins in Maryland in 1733 and 1734 are the same ones who lived first in Goochland County and then in Halifax (later

Pittsylvania) County, Virginia, from about 1737 onward, but we cannot be sure of this.²¹ Here both of the men presumably died, James probably around 1765 when his land was transferred and Daniel sometime after he filed the power of attorney in mid-1771.²² The two (younger) men named James and Daniel who about 1771 moved west to the New River in Botetourt County (later Montgomery County and then Grayson County), thus could have been the sons of the older Blevins men with these names. The younger Daniel was clearly the son of the older Daniel, as we know from the 1771 document. Was the younger James his brother, or (as I suspect) the son of the older James? About this we can only guess.

In sum, we can construct a tentative yet plausible scenario that traces James and our Samuel's (and thus Lemuel's) roots back to Rhode Island. There were, however, two other Blevins groups in the region that must also be considered as possible sources for the particular Blevins clan that we have been examining in this chapter. We will make a short detour in order to see how they might fit into this picture we are trying to complete.

One of these groups originated with a Bartholomew Blevins, who arrived in Maryland during the 1660s and evidently lived on the south side of the Potomac River, an area then claimed by Maryland. By the 1730s, his descendants might well have been living further

²¹ Members of the Cox, Walling, Swift, and other families that were over the years closely associated with the Blevins family were also in these several locales. Daniel Blevins is not shown owning property in Goochland County, for reasons unknown.

²² In this connection, it should be noted that the James Blevins on the 1767 Pittsylvania tax list is identified as "Jr."

up and across the Potomac River on the Monocacy Hundred. Some Blevins researchers contend that Daniel Blevins was born in Maryland in 1715, the son of a William Blevins who was born in Maryland about 1690 and the grandson of another William Blevins, but I have seen no convincing proof this is so. It is worth noting that the given name Bartholomew is not used in our Blevins line to which our Samuel and Lemuel belong.

The other set of Blevins immigrants were Virginians, descendants of a Richard Blevins of Liverpool, England. He too was a sea captain (of the *Jane and Elizabeth*) who was paid in land for transporting new settlers to Virginia. Richard Blevins seems to have operated this service as early as 1711 and as late as 1721 and was a frequent caller at Richmond County in the Northern Neck, on the Rappahannock River. Evidently, Blevins families from this group intermingled with the one we have concentrated on in this chapter: several of these Blevins men, including a James, lived in Goochland County in central Virginia during the 1730s and 1740s, and it seems clear that some of them made their way to Henry County and on to Kentucky and Indiana with the Blevins group that included our Samuel and Lemuel. It is also worth noting, though, that the given name Richard does not seem to have been used in our Blevins line.

This leaves us with the Blevins group of Rhode Island. It seems to have originated when Joshua Blevins (another sea captain, whose ship was the *Polly*) and several of his brothers – including James, Edward, John, and perhaps Henry – arrived in Salem,

Massachusetts, sometime before 1650. John and perhaps others among them evidently were Seventh-Day Baptists, Quakers, or dissenters of another sort who refused to consent to prevailing religious orthodoxy in New England. John, a resident of Lynn, Massachusetts, was repeatedly fined, whipped, and even imprisoned for having been absent from worship services or for having worked on the Sabbath day. Joshua was living in Newport by 1669 and Edward seems to have gone to live in Oyster Bay, New York. Joshua Blevins had sons named Edward and James who are thought to have been the ones who settled in Westerly, Rhode Island. During the early 1700s, a large Blevins community would live in this oceanside town.

James married Margery Cord. He may be the James “Bliven” who had an innkeeper’s license in Westerly for at least three years (1698 to 1703) before obtaining acreage that he would sell between 1708 and 1715, after which he left the Westerly area for another area in the colony of Rhode Island. James and Margery had a son also named James, born about 1700. This might be the man who we find in Maryland in 1733 and later in Virginia, and perhaps Daniel (born in 1710) was his brother, but it would appear that the elder James had sold all of his land decades before the power of attorney was signed in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, in 1771.

Joshua’s son Edward Bliven, thought to have been born in Scotland or Wales in 1643, married Isabel Maccoon, the daughter of John and Anna Maccoon, on October 2, 1691.

The Maccoons evidently originated in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. Edward is listed as a freeman in Westerly as early as June 13, 1698. He received land from the town in 1704, perhaps because he was serving as the Town Sergeant. Edward was impressed during Queen Anne's War. In January 1707/08 he bought 100 acres near "the great bridge" from Ninecraft, the Sachem of the Narragansetts, to which he added a month later another 100 acres and in 1715 two additional, smaller plots that added up to only 10 1/2 acres. In his will, dated August 22, 1716, and proved April 30, 1718, Edward Bliven left these various properties to his three sons, James (born 1692), Edward (born 1694), and John (born 1707). Was these properties that figured in the preparation of the power of attorney in Pittsylvania County, Virginia, in 1771? His widow Isabel wrote her will in 1742 but lived until about 1753, and it seems possible that a simmering legal dispute among the heirs (John having been left only the 10 1/2 acres, whereas his two brothers received 100 acres each) following her death was the cause of the legal action in 1771.

But John Bliven had died in 1728 and the other two, Edward and James, were still living as of 1771 (they would die in 1775 and 1783, respectively), so this solution to the mystery also seems unlikely, unless there are unrecorded details from the early 1700s that we are unaware of. It is obstacles of this sort that have prevented Blevins researchers from figuring out how the 1771 power of attorney fits into what else is known about the Blevins family in Rhode Island – and so making a positive connection between the later Virginia members of the Blevins clan and the ones who had lived in New England nearly

a century earlier. We are, in fact, quite fortunate to have that single legal document to bring us so close to solving the mystery, only to leave us still tantalizingly short of that goal.

Thus there is as yet no general schema integrating and correlating information about the Blevins group in New England with that for the Virginia Blevins families. The 1771 power of attorney request discussed earlier, however, does enable us to say with confidence that the Blevins line we began studying with Artemisia and her father Lemuel was tied to this Rhode Island group, whether it was through Joshua's descendants or through those of one of his several brothers. (For the record, it must be said that the given name Joshua does not seem to have been used within Samuel and Lemuel's branch of the Blevins family, either.)

Most Blevins researchers are convinced that all three of these American branches of the Blevins family can be linked to the Blevins ancestral home of Formby, England, and beyond that to some Welsh families of the same name. Formby, a seaport located in Lancashire on the west coast of England between Southport and Liverpool, can be traced back to the 11th century at least and may have been founded as a Viking outpost. Thus it is natural that many men in the Blevins clan there were mariners. Some Blevins researchers also believe that both the Massachusetts and the Maryland branches can be traced through a James Blethyn born in 1602 to a Welshman named William Blethyn II,

born in 1572, and his wife Elizabeth Morgan. William's parents were William I, the bishop of Llandaff Cathedral from 1572 to 1599, and his wife Anne Young. The Blevins surname was used in the area around Denbighshire during the 11th century, and a few adventurous researchers wonder if the American Blevins line connects to Bleddyn ap Cynfyn, Prince of Powys (1063-1075).²³ Such speculation is risky business. Until further information comes to light, we probably should be satisfied to have identified the locale in the British Isles where most if not all of the Blevins emigrants to America originated, as well as how our particular Blevins line links up with those emigrants.

And with the Blevins line pushed back as far as our information allows, we have plumbed all the lines for the mother of Charles M. Neal, Mary Ellen {Shake} Neal. They have included the Blevins and Shake families, along with the principal intermarried families of Davis and Taylor. It is time to return to the line of Charles M. Neal, whose father was Thomas Neal.

²³ Blevins is a patronymic form of the Welsh name Blevin, from the given name Bleiddyn. Sometimes spelled Bleddn, Blethyn, or Bleddyn, it meant "little wolf" and was often used to designate a hero. In the Welsh language the *dd* is pronounced like *th*, which accounts for the later spelling.