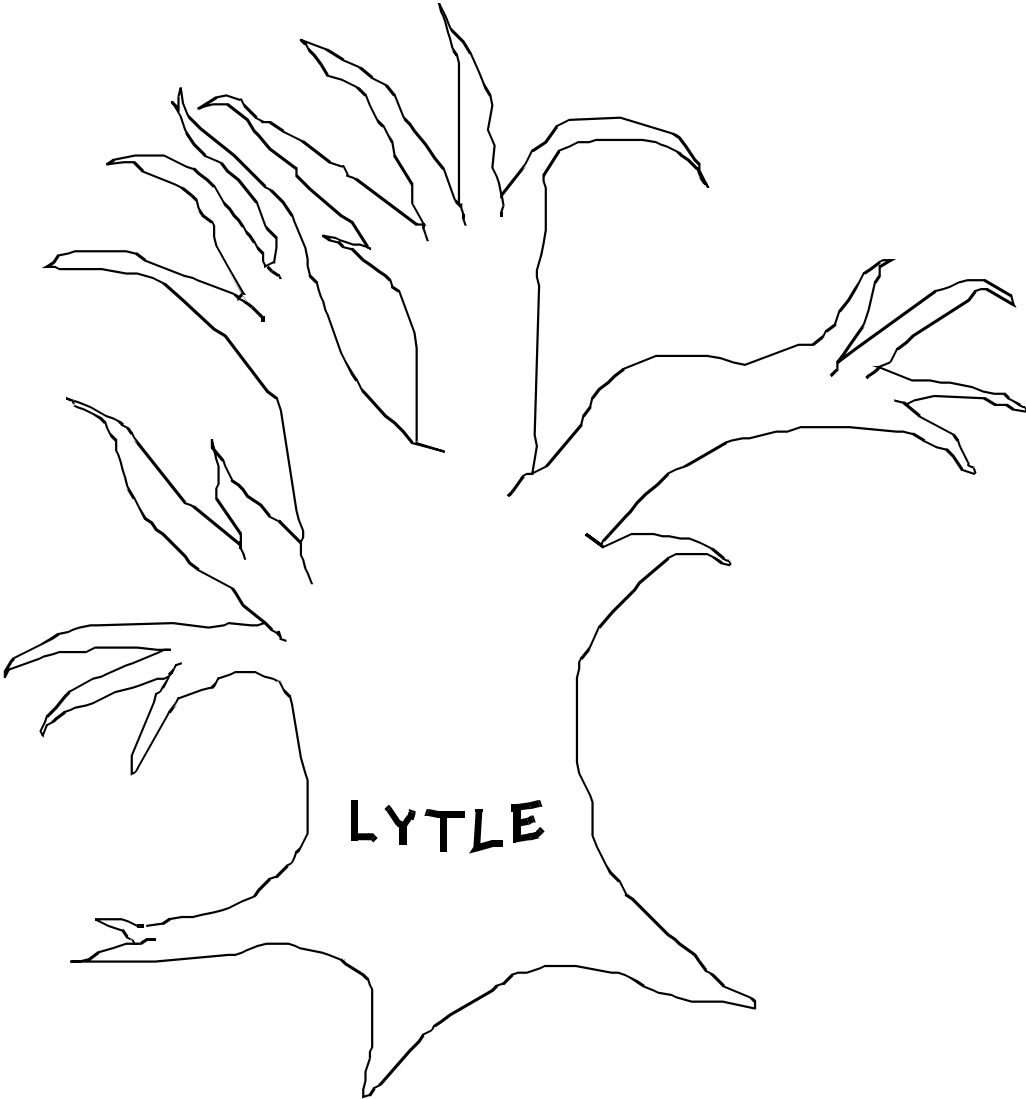


# LYTLE PLANTATION NEWS

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## Revolutionary War Patriots

There is a lot of information on Lytles in the Civil War. Many of our Lytle ancestors served. But were there any in the Revolutionary War (or, if you prefer, "War of Independence")? The short answer is no. Specifically, there is no mention of Thomas Lytle (1740?-1794) or his brother Henry (1740?-1780?) in any military record or history of that era. But by looking at their friends, neighbors, and relatives, it can at least be safely assumed that they were sympathetic, and perhaps supported the cause in some other way. We might well imagine William Bell hiding out in the woods on Thomas Lytle's plantation during the Tory raids and other actions.

The closest relatives of these Lytles to have served would be all three sons-in-law of Henry Lytle. John and Joseph Johnson, who married his daughters Nancy and Agnes, were both militia captains. They had two other brothers who also served, one of whom, Henry Johnson, was killed by Colonel David Fanning, a notorious Tory in North Carolina who raided and burned the farms and buildings of many patriots. Henry Lytle's daughter Elizabeth married Daniel Merrill a private in the cavalry. At one time, Daniel's horse was shot dead from under him, and he found bullet holes in his clothing. He was also captured at one point and sustained a head injury from a sword.

Daniel Merrill's fight against (and probably hatred for) the British may have stemmed in part from an incident in 1771, when his uncle, Benjamin Merrill, was put to death. Benjamin Merrill was one of a number of "Regulators" -- county militiamen who were opposed to high taxes with no representation. They were some of the earliest protestors in the colonies (after Bacon's Rebellion in 1676) who took up arms, and that only after numerous petitions to meet with the governor were refused. Benjamin Merrill led a group of about 300 from Rowan County (a parent of Randolph County) to take part in a small uprising, but heard of its defeat even before his men arrived at Hillsboro, to the east of their homes. Merrill was ordered to be hanged to near death, disemboweled, beheaded, and drawn and quartered. This highly cruel sentence was meant to be a warning to the other Regulators, but Merrill's bravery and dignified speech to the crowd before his death only served to rile up the population against the British.

Lytles have one more connection to Benjamin Merrill. His daughter Nancy was first married to Captain Joseph Clark, then to Benjamin Mendenhall. Her daughter Rachel Mendenhall was married to John Johnson Jr., son of the above John Johnson and grandson of Henry Lytle.

Speaking of the Clarks, those of Randolph County are likely related to the mother of Thomas and Henry, Elizabeth Clark. The relationship is suggested but has not been proven. A number of Clarks served. The above-mentioned Joseph Clark was one. Several other related Clarks also served.

William Bell, executor of Thomas Lytle's will was a militia Captain and later first sheriff of Randolph County. He operated a mill near his home. Bell was married in 1779 to the widow Martha (McFarlane) McGee. Here is a bit of history that shows who Lytles kept company with, and the times that they lived in during the Revolution.

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## CENTENNIAL SKETCHES: A WOMAN OF '76.

Excerpted from *Appleton's Journal*, Vol. XV, No. 328, January 29, 1876

At the outbreak of the Revolution there lived, on the banks of the Sandy Creek, in the old North State, a widow with five young children. Her lately-bereaved home was sumptuous for the times, and she held large possessions in lands and mills. Her husband, Colonel John McGee, had been a person of influence in his section—a man of wealth and widely-extended business relations. His young widow now carried on the plantation, the mills, and the store, and proved herself a thrifty and efficient manager. She was in many respects a remarkable woman. Her fine figure and commanding bearing were the exponents of a noble and dauntless heart, a mind keen, energetic, and resolute. Her presence of mind was wonderful; and, through all the wild vicissitudes of her life, she was never at a loss for expedients to accomplish her will. Her deep, intense nature made her a noble friend, but a dangerous enemy; while her bold, daring, and unconquerable determination more than offset the disadvantages of her sex. Yet, she was in no way unwomanly; through all her life no voice of reproach was ever lifted against her from any respectable source.

When the war came on she espoused the Whig principles with enthusiasm; but woe to the luckless Tory who crossed her path! General Gray, in a manuscript-letter, now seventy years old, says that she despised the very name of a Tory, and if she ever prayed for one it must have been in the language of the one hundred and ninth Psalm.

Her maiden name was McFarlane, and she held, in strong force, the sturdy characteristics of her Scotch ancestors. Colonel McGee had been an extensive trader, and most of the business at the store was carried on by barter. He received deer skins, furs, beeswax, all such articles as could be easily handled; and when the time came to replenish his stock he would load this produce on wagons, travel to Petersburg, and exchange it for goods. On all these expeditions he accompanied the train on horseback; and, while his drivers slept by the teams, he himself would seek a lodging in some neighboring house. His wife had learned his methods of business, and the names of his friends on the route, and now that she was a widow she was determined that the hand of the master should not be missed.

The fair hand of the young widow McGee belonged to a woman of many personal attractions, and held in its grasp large wealth; so it was greatly sought for in marriage through all that region; but, conscious of her vantage ground, she resisted for a long time the assaults of love. This won her the reputation of being haughty among her rejected suitors; but “haughty” though she was, she found at last a heart more powerful than her own, and in the spring of 1779 she became Mrs. Martha Bell.

William Bell was of a respectable family and in a good business. He lived on the Deep River, near the ford on the Greensboro road, and here the new wife removed, and joined her fortune with his. The active part taken by Mr. Bell in the struggle which was desolating the State made it unsafe to remain at home while the British troops or Tory bands were in the neighborhood, and much of his time was spent “lying out” in the woods or swamps, or seeking safety in the American camps.

Just after the battle of Guilford the British army marched to Wilmington. About the middle of the afternoon, the van of the army, led by Lord Cornwallis, reached the house of Mrs. Bell. The earl dismounted and entered. After looking about him a space, he said abruptly: “Madam, where is your husband?” “In Greene’s camp,” was the short reply. “Is he an officer or soldier?” “No, he is not; but he knew it was better to be among friends than fall into the hands of enemies.” “Very well, madam; I must make your house my headquarters for a few days, and take your mill to grind for my soldiers.” “Sir,”

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said she, "you have the power to do as you please; but after using our mill do you mean to burn it?" "Why do you ask that?" "Answer me first, and I'll tell you afterward." "No, then," said Cornwallis, "your mill shall not be burned or your property injured, but my officers must have provisions for the army. I shall remain in your house, and my presence will protect you from insult, for no soldiers of mine will dare plunder near my quarters." "Well, now, sir," rejoined the stouthearted woman, "as you were so kind as to answer my question, I will answer yours. If your lordship had intended to burn my mill after using it, I intended to save you that trouble by burning it myself at once!"

Cornwallis took no offense, but began giving orders in a quick, nervous manner. He walked up and down the room like one ill at ease, turning sharply on his heel. He told Mrs. Bell that he had just annihilated Greene's army, and could fear no more harm from him. Presently he opened the back door and looked nervously up the road for a few moments, then resumed his walk to and fro. The air drew through the room and the good lady rose and shut the door. The earl opened it and again gazed up the road. He appeared to be in trouble, and could not keep still a moment. He would sit down in a chair, only to find his feet at once, and return to his pacing. Again Mrs. Bell closed the door. Cornwallis immediately opened it, saying sternly that he wished it to remain so. His hostess asked him the reason. "Why," said he, "I don't know but Greene may be coming down on me at any moment." "But I thought you said just now that you had annihilated him, and feared nothing further." "Well, madam," said the earl, with a sigh, "to tell you the truth, since God made me I never saw such fighting. Another such victory would annihilate me!"

During the stay of the enemy on Mrs. Bell's plantation, Cornwallis treated her with proper respect. But the British general lacked either the will or the power to withhold his troops from their usual depredations. They took her provisions, her crops, and her livestock, and stripped the place of all they chose to want. The presence of the commander protected her from direct insult, but she often heard the officers without the house curse her bitterly for her rebel proclivities. One day when one of them was galloping toward the river to water his horse he shouted an insulting remark to her as he passed the door. Provoked beyond endurance, she said she wished his horse would throw him and break his neck. The next moment the horse stumbled, the rider was thrown on to the rocks, and instantly killed.

When Mrs. Bell learned that the British army were likely to pass over her road, she took the usual precaution of burying her money. This was all in specie, and she had deposited it under a stone step of one of the buildings. It was a heavy rock, and she was barely able to move it enough to scratch a hole and drop her guineas. But she had not counted on having the army actually encamped on her grounds, and now, knowing well their custom of prying up every stone and searching every cranny for plunder, she felt certain the soldiers would discover her treasure. She was not the woman to lose her property without an effort to save it. She determined to recover her gold, and find for it a safer hiding place. She accordingly made an excuse for visiting the camp, roamed about leisurely to disarm suspicion, and, watching her opportunity, stepped to the stone, moved it by one tremendous effort, grasped her bag, and, hiding it in her gown, carelessly retreated.

Her bacon and numerous things of value she had deposited among the rocks on the other side of the river. These were soon discovered. The miller who had been for a long time employed by Mr. Bell was one Stephen Harlin, who was at heart a Tory. Now in the presence of the British troops he had opportunity to show his proclivities. He not only allowed the soldiers to take the grain, but he also revealed the hiding place of the bacon, and the prize was at once secured. He told them, too, that there was much cider in the cellars. They immediately went to the house and demanded it of Mrs. Bell. She

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told them stoutly they should not have it. They seized an axe and started for the door. She rushed before them, placed her back to the door, and told them they could not have it without assaulting a lady. Moved by shame or fear, they withdrew, and the cider was saved; but the miller lost a good place.

A few hours after the British army had broken camp and started on their day's march to Walker's plantation, the gallant Colonel Lee dashed up to Mrs. Bell's door. He was well acquainted with this noble woman, and received from her a hearty welcome, though she quickly surmised that his appearance at such a time presaged a fresh call upon her services. General Greene had determined to pursue Cornwallis, and Colonel Lee with Colonel Washington were harassing the rear of the retreating army, cutting off their foraging parties, and picking up valuable information regarding the enemy's condition, and the country he was passing through.

In the afternoon Mrs. Bell mounted a fleet horse, armed herself as usual with dirk and pistols, and rode furiously to the new camp. Pretending to be angry at the soldiers' depredations on her plantation, she demanded to see Lord Cornwallis. The earl had been kindly treated while staying at her house, and now received her courteously and heard her fictitious complaints. Meanwhile, her keen eyes were actively serving the cause of liberty, and, with a woman's tact, she learned much at a glance. On leaving his lordship's tent, she strolled about among the troops, and, having soon gained the information she sought, once again took to the road, and bore home her valuable knowledge in safety.

That night the indefatigable Greene found fresh encouragement in his preparations for that masterly pursuit of Cornwallis, from which, baffled by Providence, he turned aside to march into South Carolina. Only a few days before this noble man had written to his wife that for six weeks he had not taken off his clothes, and now, on learning the condition of Cornwallis at Bell's Mills, he was in hot pursuit of the victorious enemy!! Tarleton, in his history, speaks of fierce skirmishes with Lee and Washington around Mrs. Bell's house, and it is certain that partisan strife raged with great bitterness.

Colonel Lee, on one of his raids, captured two young Tories who, when told that they must die, earnestly pleaded to be taken to Mrs. Bell's. On seeing the good woman they fell down before her, and begged tearfully for her intercession, crying: "You know us, Mrs. Bell!" How like the voice of that fearful prophecy must have sounded to them her reply: "I know you not! I know you not!" The men met their just reward. Yet we may feel sure it was from no unwomanly hardness of heart that she thus doomed these men to their fate. On another occasion a Tory wretch, who had been nearly hacked to pieces by enraged Whigs, for picking off their beloved commander, crawled to her door and besought her mercy. Moved by his terrible condition, she took him in and nursed him to recovery; and that, too, at a time when her husband dared not sleep in his own bed from fear of just such outlaws.

Mrs. Bell was soon called on for another deed in the service of Colonel Lee and liberty, still more daring than invading the British camp. It was discovered that a formidable band of Tories was gathering about four teen miles up the river, on the other side. Just after nightfall one day, Mrs. Bell, well mounted and armed, left her house on a reconnoitering expedition. During her widowhood she had often employed her knowledge of midwifery for the benefit of her neighbors, and her skill was well known throughout that country. She now assumed the mid wife's character, and, of course, the midwife's need of haste, which suited her purpose admirably. Dashing along at full speed, she would hail any passing traveler, or call at some house on the way, and, artfully dropping such hints as would indicate her business, would carelessly inquire the condition of the country-if the Tories were in good spirits; if any were gathering at any place; how many there were, where they were meeting, how to get there, what were their plans, and if she had anything to fear should she meet them. In many cases she

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received important answers, and to the last question the invariable reply, "Not if you are on that business." She would speak of her great need of haste; even now she might be too late; and, putting the lash to her horse, would soon be lost in the darkness. In this way she went over many roads, turning aside wherever she knew information was to be had; for she was acquainted with every foot of the ground.

At daylight she was back again in her own house, having traveled over thirty miles, and learned the whole story of the loyalist gathering. Colonel Lee pounced down upon them on the following night, and broke up that nest forever. It was now three months since the dreadful carnage at Guilford, and the desperate strife between Whig and Tory was raging all over the State. The crack of the rifle was heard in every forest; some dead man lay beside nearly every ford; and night after night the glare of burning dwellings quivered in the skies. So active a Whig as Martha Bell could not escape the fury of the loyalists. Her husband was in the North on matters of business, but the next best thing to murdering a patriot was the destruction of his property. Again and again was the plantation invaded by bands of armed desperadoes. They burned the barns, drove off the cattle, rifled the house of its contents, wounded one of the little sons, and threatened to shoot the whole family.

The father of Mrs. Bell was making her a visit. Learning the fact, a party of Tories came in the night, and avowed their purpose of taking his life. Forcing their way into the house, they rushed upon the aged patriot with drawn swords. Not a moment was to be lost; there was not even time to rush across the room for her pistols; and, grasping a broad axe which stood by the fireplace, the noble woman sprang between her beloved parent and the approaching death. Swinging the axe high over her head, her eyes terrible with wrath, she cried: "If one of you touches him, I'll split you down with the axe!" Panic-stricken by this invincible spirit, they turned and fled. Through all that bitter summer Martha Bell lived in desperate struggle for the preservation of her family. Yet her courage and will met every emergency, and her dauntless spirit rose above every loss.

In the fall of 1781 her husband returned, and hoped to live concealed in his house. The Tories soon heard of his presence, and one dark night they surrounded the house in large numbers. The doors were securely barred. Finding they could make no entrance, the ruffians brought fire to burn him out. As they were passing round a corner of the building, Mr. Bell thrust his head from a corner window, intending to shoot. One man chanced to be directly under the window, and cut at Mr. Bell with his sword, inflicting a terrible wound. His wife now shouted to her boys to get out the guns and fire from the windows. Then she cried out to her negro Peter, raising her voice so that the enemy could hear: "Peter, run quick to Joe Clarke's and tell him to bring up his light-horse at once, for the Tories are here!" The ruse was a success: visions of Joe Clarke's dreaded scouts filled their terrified minds, and the Tories fled precipitately to the woods.

But this experience sufficed for Mr. Bell. He sought a place of safety, and did not enter his own house for many months. When the notorious Colonel Fanning was returning, the night after his horrible slaughter of the Whigs, up the Deep River, he rode up to the house of Mrs. Bell, followed by his whole bloody troop. The undaunted woman began at once, with loud voice, to give rapid commands, as if the building were full of armed men. She ordered them to the windows, to take good aim, and not fire till each one was sure of his man. Fanning thought he had started a hornet's nest; he wheeled about and sped down the road at full gallop, closely pressed by the frightened troopers, who expected every moment to hear the bullets whistle about their ears.

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Mrs. Bell's professional services had always been rendered gratuitously, and no deeper insult could have been inflicted upon her than to offer her money. But, as the war dragged wearily on, she found herself stripped of most of her property, and almost reduced to want. She then began to make small charges, and under this change more families felt willing to call upon her skill. In this way her practice became extensive, and she could be seen at all hours of day and night scouring the country on her fleet mare.

The long course of civil war had wrought wild confusion in the State; the roads were badly broken up; the forests were infested with desperadoes and cut-throats. But Mrs. Bell was needed, and therefore she went. No obstacles could stop her way, and no danger could daunt her resolute heart. Well mounted, and armed with dirk and pistols, and daring spirit and ready tact, she answered every call, and seemed to bear about with her a charmed life. She was often attacked on her lonely rides, but always came off conqueror.

One day, as she galloped along the road on her errand of mercy, she saw a horseman coming slowly toward her. In a moment she was near enough to recognize his face as belonging to Steve Lewis, a notorious ruffian of Colonel Fanning's troopers, whose brutal deeds were the terror of the district. As she drew nigh he dismounted and stepped into the road. She attempted to pass, but the man seized her bridle and ordered her to get down. Quick as thought she drew her pistol and threatened to shoot him. Surprised by the suddenness of her movement, he could offer no resistance, and dared not stir. She turned about and ordered him to walk on ahead. She still covered him with her pistol, and in this manner she marched him to her own house, a prisoner of war.

She never passed a stranger on these excursions without stopping him and demanding an account of himself. Few ever braved her determined spirit, and in this way she did the public a noble service. Acute, fearless, magnetic, she was a vigilance committee in herself. After the return of peace this remarkable woman was blessed with prosperity and honors, and largely recovered her former fortunes. She lived to a ripe old age, seeing her sons become men of eminent usefulness, and the country for which she had suffered so much taking a proud place among the nations. To the Rev. Dr. Caruthers we are indebted for many reminiscences of the heroic women of the Old North State; but no one of them all is more worthy of admiration, of gratitude, and of memory long and green, than Mrs. Martha Bell.

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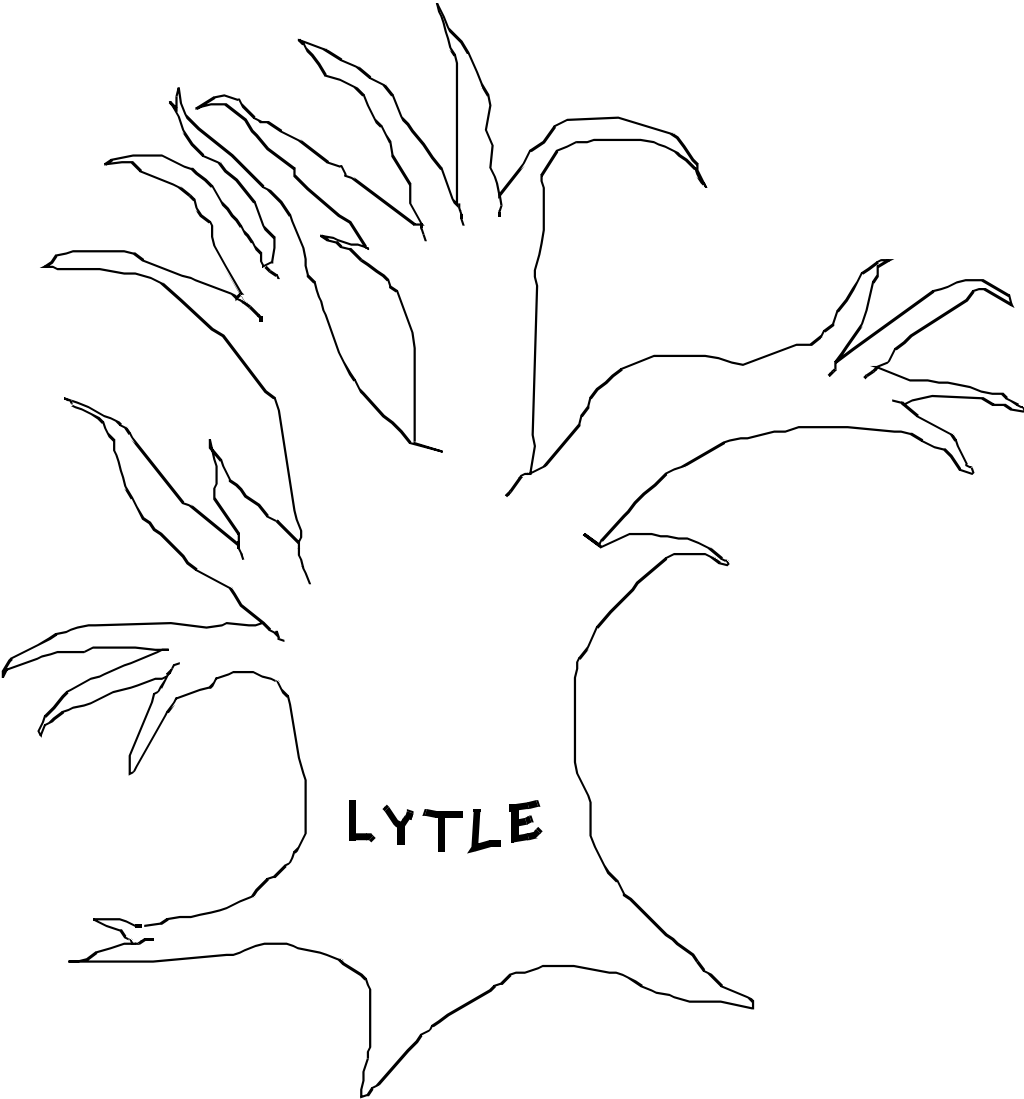
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## **Bulla House Restored**

Attendees of the 1994 Lytle Family Reunion may recall seeing the old Bulla House and the Bulla Cemetery as part of our tour. The house was last pictured in the January, 2000, edition of the Lytle Plantation News as it was taken apart and readied for removal and restoration. The move and restoration were completed last fall. Now the majority of Lytle Plantation descendants who also trace back to the Bullas can see this ancestral house where it stands by the cemetery.



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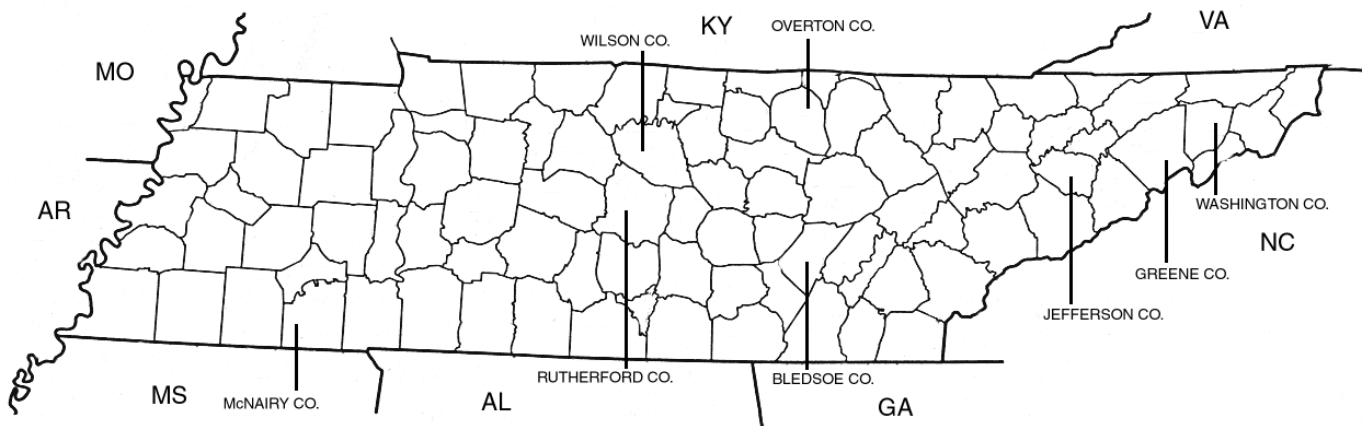
## Anyone for Tennessee?

While most of our Lytle ancestors either stayed in North Carolina, or moved on to Indiana and Iowa, there were several related families who went to the Volunteer State, Tennessee. There does not, however, seem to be any trend in location. They went to many different counties.

Many early inhabitants of Tennessee were given land grants there because of service in the Revolutionary War. North Carolina residents, in particular, were one of the largest groups migrating there. The United States government was always willing to give land as payment instead of real cash. Murfreesboro, Rutherford County, TN, was founded by veteran William Lytle of North Carolina. William's line also traces to Lancaster Co., PA, as do our Lytles, though there is no known relationship between the two families.

The Moore family, probable family of Frank Lytle Sr.'s wife, were in Tennessee before moving up to Grant County, Indiana, near the Lytles. This is shown in the children's birthplaces as listed in the U.S. censuses. Unfortunately, they have not been found in any Tennessee census, so we do not yet know where the Moores were exactly between North Carolina and Indiana. They appear to have been in Tennessee from about 1806, when Edward Moore sold land in Randolph County, to about 1818, when the last date for a Tennessee birth is given. After that they were in Wayne County, Indiana, for a few years before moving to Grant County.

We might deduce that the Moores had been in Greene Co., TN, by looking at some of their relatives. A perusal of the 1850 census of Grant County, Indiana, does show a family from Tennessee living right between Jane (Lytle) Benbow [daughter of Francis Lytle and wife of Moses Benbow] and Jane (Moore) Thomas [wife of Isaac M. Thomas and probably a first cousin of Francis]. And that family is the Samuel Stanfield family. Samuel's wife, Sarah Baldwin, was originally from Randolph County, but migrated to Greene Co., TN before coming to Grant Co., IN. And here we have another of those complex family relationships -- because Sarah was a first cousin of Isaac Thomas as well as a second cousin of Moses Benbow. So there is a connection from Lytle to Moore to Thomas to Baldwin to Benbow and back to Lytle. (I have documented a lot of these relationships involving our Lytles; it just goes to show how tight-knit these communities were, even across three different states.



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Now here are some other Lytle relatives who also moved to Tennessee (see the map):

Adam Means, half-brother of Thomas Lytle and Henry Lytle, moved to Overton County.

Jesse Merrill, grandson of Henry Lytle (1740?-1785?) moved to McNairy County.

Mary Merrill, his daughter, lived in Bledsoe County.

Thomas King, father-in-law of Thomas Lytle (1740?-1794), moved to Greene County.

Enoch Tucker, perhaps related to Winnie (wife of Albert Lytle, 1802-1871) moved to Wilson County.

Mordecai Mendenhall, uncle of Charity Mendenhall (4th wife of Francis Lytle, 1796-1880) moved to Jefferson County.

## Personal Update

Yes, the News is a little later than usual. It's been a busy year so far, and it's not letting up. I have had two trips to Baltimore, three to Phoenix, one to San Jose, one to Los Angeles, and one to Singapore. OK, so I've had some fun along the way. During one trip to Baltimore, I took a short drive down to Washington, D.C., and saw the Presidential Inauguration on January 20th. And one of the trips to Phoenix was a Spring Break family vacation, during which I turned 40. Next June is my 20th anniversary with my wife Linda, so we're headed for a week in Hawaii. Our girls, Anna and Laura, are 12 and 10 now.

While I'm at it, I could really use some material for future bulletins. It's always getting a little harder to come up with something you might find interesting. And even though I'm also behind in getting a few questions answered to a few of you, I'd enjoy it if you dropped me a line -- all of you!

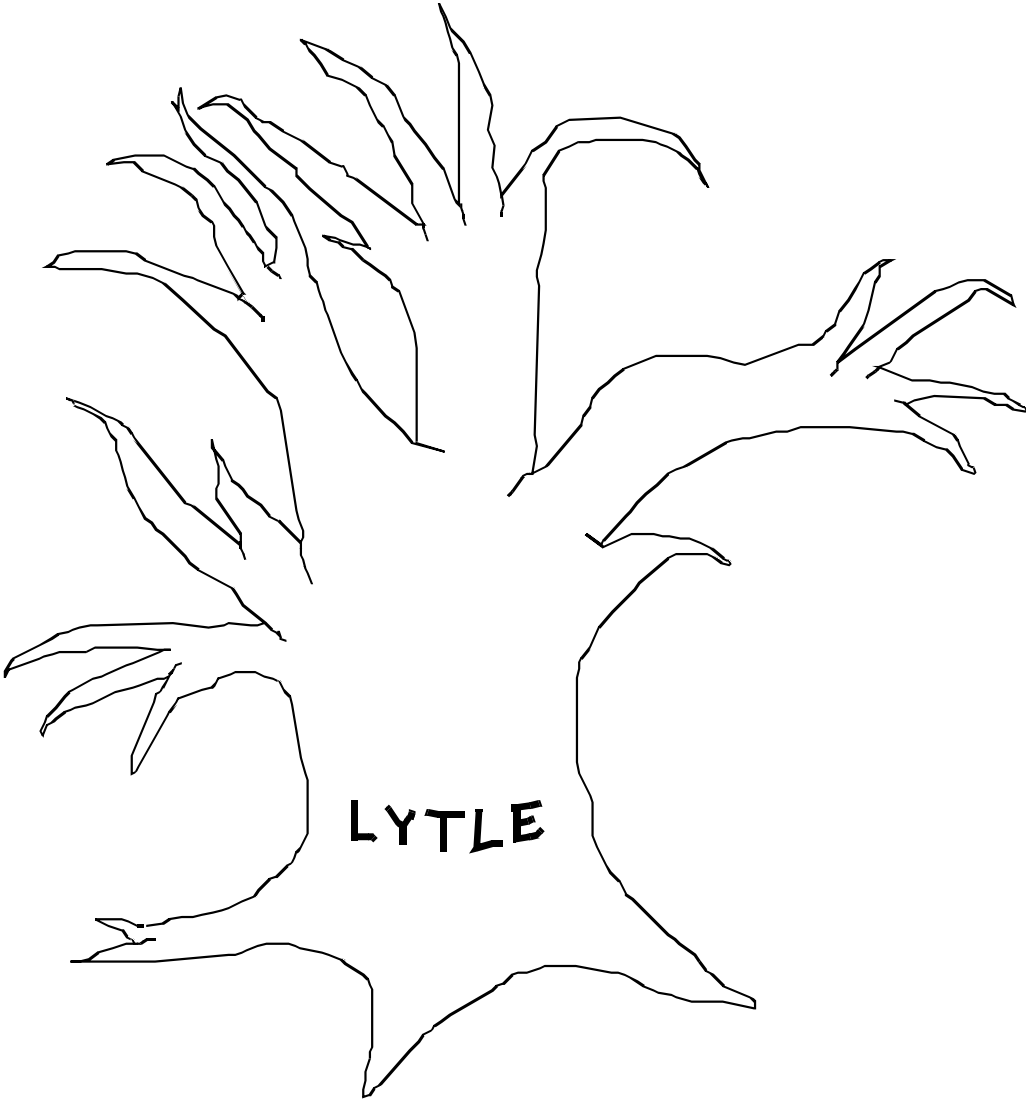
-- Rik Vigeland



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## Long Live the Lytle Lines!

As a matter of curiosity, here is the count of descendants of certain lines. Some of our ancestors had very large families, and even in their own lifetimes saw a great number of descendants. Here are some numbers for our ancestors.

Our farthest back Lytles are the brothers Thomas and Henry. It is not known which of these is oldest. Henry's death date is not even certain. However, when Henry died he left three daughters. They eventually bore him 21 grandchildren. If Henry lived through 1785, he would have seen three of his grandchildren.

The story of Thomas Lytle is well known to our readers. It is presumed on circumstantial evidence that the slaves referred to in the amendment to his will were his children. What can be deduced from the records regarding their approximate ages would indicate that none of them were young enough to be his grandchildren, though many grandchildren arrived not long after his death in 1794. Counting the slaves' children, we would come up with 41 grandchildren. There may be others, as the whereabouts of three slaves (Joe, Sam, Parker) after about 1820 are unknown.

Frank Lytle Sr. (1773-1869) had 10 children, one of them out of wedlock. He also had at 62 grandchildren born in his lifetime, possibly more. His descendants scattered far enough that there are unknowns. However, also in Frank's lifetime there were 197 great-grandchildren born and 55 great-great-grandchildren. Some proceeded him in death, but this makes 324 descendants born in his lifetime. The remainder of this article lists the descent for his children.

Frank Lytle Jr. (1796-1880) had 22 children grow to adulthood, and another five who died young (their names are unknown). He had at least 106 grandchildren, 90 of whom were born in his lifetime. There were also 84 great-grandchildren born in his lifetime out of an eventual 330 known, and two great-great-grandchildren were also born in this time. This makes at least 219 known descendants born by 1880. One can only wonder how many of their descendants Frank Sr. and Frank Jr. became aware of, let alone kept track of!

Elizabeth (Lytle) Walden (1799-1831) had five children, but she passed away fairly young. If she had lived to, say, 1869 as her father did, she would have seen 23 grandchildren born.

Albert Lytle (1802-1871) had seven known children. In his lifetime there were 27 grandchildren born. Another 20 arrived after his death. There was just one great-grandchild born in his lifetime.

Alfred Lytle had one child and apparently died after 1840. The son, Francis, died in a diving accident around the time that he enlisted in the CSA. Alfred's sister Deborah Robbins had six children and also died young. A few of her descendants are now known.

Dorcas (Lytle) Swaney (1810-1884) had fourteen children. There were 53 grandchildren, with 42 of them born in her lifetime. She eventually had 108 great-grandchildren, and all but one or two were also born in that time.

Mary "Polly" Laughlin (1811?-1885?) had only one son, named Doctor P. Laughlin. He had ten children. Mary's death date is not known exactly, but she should have seen at least eight of these.

Rebecca Lytle had one child, Frank M. Lytle. He can be found in McDowell County, NC, when enlisting for the Civil War, and had at least one child there, Sarah, who has many descendants in that area.

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## Science, DNA, and the African Past

Continuing on the assumption that all of Thomas Lytle's slaves were his children, one of the ongoing bits of research has been to find living descendants of the slaves other than Frank. They were, in probable age order, following Frank, who was apparently the oldest: Esther, Joe, Sam, John ("Jack"), Parker, and Pink. Three things have been of the most value so far - all back issues of Randolph County Genealogical Society Journal (1977 to present, and I began subscribing in 1982); complete Randolph County census transcripts for 1870 and 1880, and the transcript of blacks in 1900, all published by cousin Ruth Grady (now deceased); and on-line (internet) census pages, supplemented with the occasional trip to archives for census indexes.

Several things have stood in the way of tracing these lines to the present. The biggest challenge has been to find any of the slaves who were not freed. A few were freed in the 1830's and kept the name Lytle. Of the great number who were not freed, I have found only one family in the 1870 census and beyond. For the lines of those freed early, by 1900 these lines either disappear from Randolph County without a trace around 1900 or end up as dead-ends - no children. So, to date, no living relatives have been found who descend from Franks brothers and sisters.

The work is slow, but not necessarily time consuming. It's just a long time between connections. But some recent news has caused a renewed interest in the slave lines. And that news centers around DNA.

Many of you have probably seen news in the last year regarding Thomas Jefferson and his slave Sally Hemmings. Scientific testing of her descendants' DNA has shown a match to the Jefferson line. It shows, at a minimum, that at least a male Jefferson did father at least one of Sally Hemming's children. There is still debate over whether this was actually Thomas Jefferson or one of his male relatives.

The bit of DNA that allowed this test is known as the Y chromosome. Most DNA dilutes over time, as with each passing generation our genes from our parents are mixed and then passed on. In most cases, we cannot tell over time where a gene has come from. However, there are two bits of DNA which do not dilute. The Y chromosome is passed from father to son, but never to daughters. It is this chromosome which determines a person's gender, and so women do not get it. There is a second bit of DNA which all persons (even men) inherit only from their mother. Men do not pass it on to their children, only women do. This bit from the mother is known as mitochondrial DNA or, simply, mtDNA. It, too, remains virtually unchanged from generation to generation.

The practical offshoot of these unchanging bits of DNA is that even very distant relatives will have the same unchanged bit of DNA. Male only lines will share the common, undiluted genes, and female only lines will also share common genes. It is the male line set of genes which were used in the Jefferson case. One of Sally Hemmings' sons had a son, who had a son, and so on, to the present day. The same male descent holds for one of Jefferson's brothers, so the two lines DNA were compared and found to match. However, if there were a woman in the line of descent, this chain would be broken and lost.

The pure-female set of DNA can be tested in the same way, as long as one traces a woman's daughter, then her daughter, etc. Any two persons with (even men) whose mother's mother's mother (etc.) line leads back to the same person should have the same particular set of DNA.

Would this be of any use in the Lytle family? Absolutely! Three cases come to mind.

CASE 1. If we knew who the father of Thomas Lytle was (or suspected), and if he had a brother with male line descendants (presumably named Lytle to this day) a test between them and male Lytles from

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the Randolph county line would probably constitute enough proof that Thomas Lytle had fathered Frank Lytle (essentially the same as the Jefferson/Hemmings case). However, at this point we do not know the father of Thomas Lytle, or any other male Lytle cousins with male Lytle descendants. Thomas Lytle's full brother, Henry, had only daughters, so there are no male Lytles from his line. Arbitrarily sampling Lytles from around the country might be interesting. A negative test result would not disprove a link between Thomas and Frank, however, because any other Lytle line of descent could be broken without our knowing it, due to an undocumented adoption or child out of wedlock.

CASE 2. Did Francis Lytle (1796-1880) have a wife between Winnie Blizzard and Martha Bulla? Or was Winnie Blizzard the mother of Sarah Lytle?

[2022 Update: Descendants of Sarah (Lytle) Huff and Jane (Lytle) Benbow had their maternal DNA tested and were found to be an exact match. This appears to confirm that these two daughters of Francis Lytle were indeed full sisters, and Sarah's mother was Winnie Blizzard.]

CASE 3. A firm in England named "Oxford Ancestors" (and there are others less well-known) is now performing DNA tests on both types of DNA discussed here (male line and female line). The founder, Bryan Sykes, has found that there are seven basic types of the female line DNA in Europe, and has written a book, "The Seven Daughters of Eve". He has thousands of samples from all over the world, however, and sites a English woman of African descent who submitted her DNA for a female line match. She expected her line came from Africa, though, and not Europe. Sykes' closest match was to a person in Kenya.

Knowing this, the question is, might we identify the African country of origin in Frank Lytle's ancestry? The answer is a qualified yes. There are two requirements for working this out. First, that the slaves Esther and Pink have the same mother as Frank. This is likely given what data we have about the ages of Thomas Lytle's slaves, and how they were counted as far back as the 1785 tax list. The second requirement is to find a living descendant of Esther or Pink, with a strictly female line of descent between them. Note that male descendants of Frank would not qualify; that male line should lead to Europe. But his mother's line should lead to Africa. If any of Frank's maternal line had ever been free, succeeding generations would have been born free, so we know this is not the case.

So far I have been able to trace just a few lines forward from Esther and Pink. The vast majority were lost to slavery in the 1830's. Several of the lines ended with either no children, or with only male children. At this point, there remain four women who are "lost" but may be found by searching through vital records in and around Randolph and Guilford counties in North Carolina. They appear in the 1870 or 1880 census, but have not been found afterward, presumably because of name changes due to marriage. It will take some further concentrated digging to find them.

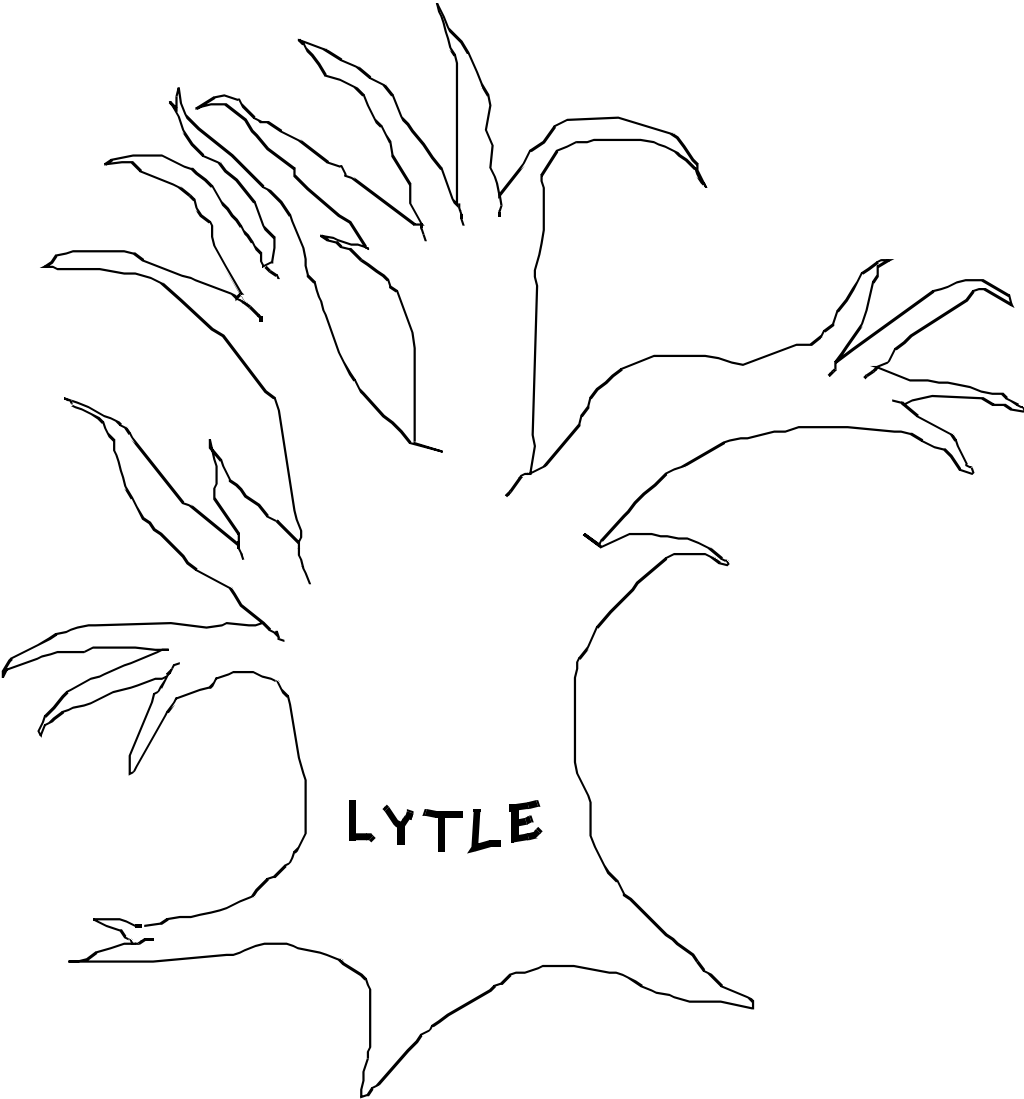
Should we find a living person with such a line back to the Lytle Plantation, all it takes is a quick swipe inside the cheek with a cotton swab, and a DNA test may locate an African ancestral homeland.



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## In Memory

### **Wilbur R. Lytle, 1916-2001, and Lorraine Lytle (1918-2001), Husband and Wife**

It is my sad duty to report the death of two Lytles I came to know. Wilbur was the first Lytle I ever met, and was a first cousin of my grandfather, Harry Hahn. Lorraine was his wife of 53 years. We met in 1984 and several times thereafter. I have also met all of their kids and grandkids, one brother, and three other first cousins in Wilbur's generation, all being grandchildren of Luke Lytle (1840-1930), who lived for some time in Lewiston, Pawnee County, Nebraska. All were raised in southeast Nebraska, in the area between Beatrice and Tecumseh. Wilbur was and Lorraine now rest in the Lewiston Cemetery, along with two previous generations of Lytles.

As for family history, Wilbur always had a knack when we went "cemetery hunting" of being the first to find whoever we were looking for. And he shared a lot of stories going back to generations I was too young to have been able to meet myself, especially as my grandfather had lost touch with these folks decades ago. Wilbur, thanks for your help and sharing.

As much as any tribute, one good indication of the recognition of a Lytle is the number of people I heard from to let me know of Wilbur and Lorraine's passing. And this includes a few who probably did not know them but recognized the name Lytle and sent me obituaries from Nebraska newspapers.

After having heard of Wilbur's death, I arranged to make a side trip while returning from Boston to Oregon. Sadly, Lorraine passed away just two weeks before I arrived. I visited the Richardsons in Crab Orchard and Lewiston for a day before continuing home, and made a stop at the Lewiston Cemetery to pay respects.

Without further ado, I include excerpts of their obituaries, combined below. All towns are in Nebraska unless otherwise noted.

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Wilbur R. Lytle was born to Orba and Anna (Winchell) Lytle on March 25, 1916, at Filley. He died on Wednesday, August 1, 2001, and the age of 85 years old. The family included older brother Truman and younger brother Larry. As a youth he was an outstanding athlete, including being a dynamite basketball player while in school in Filley.

Lorraine Menard was born April 22, 1918, in Omaha and died October 11, 1911. She attended school at St. Theresa's in Omaha.

Wilbur married Lorraine in Omaha on June 11, 1938. They moved to a farm near Vesta in 1942, where they resided until 1999, at which time they moved to Tecumseh. For 57 years he farmed the same farm and raised Charlois cattle.

Both Wilbur and Lorraine also worked for the Beatrice State Development Center for many years. He retired as night supervisor in 1983 after 27 years with BSDC. Lorraine worked there for 22 years.

Those members of the family who have entered the spirit world are Wilbur's parents, Orba and Anna. Those who remain to grieve his death are sons Ed of Elkhorn, Tom and wife Anita, and Steve Lytle, both of Beatrice; grandchildren Troy, Todd, and Thad Lytle, Gary Lytle and wife, Denise, Kristy and Annette Lytle, Missy Creek and husband John, Mikki Land and husband Keith; four great grandchildren; brothers Truman Lytle and wife Violet of Riesel, TX, and Larry Lytle of Helena, MT.

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Lorraine's survivors also include brother Ben Menard and wife MAdeline of Omaha; sister Mabel Lancaster of Omaha, half-brothers David and Jeffrey Menard, several nieces and nephews. She was preceded in death by

Wilbur was a life-long sports enthusiast. He enjoyed bowling. He loved to fish. Wilbur was a generous man, and one evidence of generosity and affection was demonstrated in his providing beef for the children and grandchildren.

Wilbur is remembered by family members as a man who had an even temperament, much like his father Orba. He will be sadly missed.

Funeral services for Wilbur were held Monday, August 6 at the Wherry Brothers Mortuary in Tecumseh with Rev. Judith Dye officiating. Pallbearers were Troy Lytle, Todd Lytle, That Lytle, Gary Lytle, John Creek and Keith Lane. Lorraine service included a mass on Monday, October 12, at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Beatrice, with Father Mark Seiker officiating.



Wilbur Lytle, center, with cousins Bud Richardson (left) and Gilbert Richardson. This photo was taken in 1984 at the grave of their great grandfather, Francis Lytle Jr. (1796-1880) at the Rose Hill Cemetery in Shenandoah, Iowa.

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## Lewiston Cemetery

Lewiston Cemetery, in Pawnee County, Nebraska, has more Lytle relations in it than any other cemetery that I can think of. At this time there are Luke Lytle (1840-1930), his second wife, Mary Jane "Jenny" Brown, and many descendants. These include three of their four children: Una (Lytle) Richardson and husband Leonard Richardson; Orba Lytle and wife Anna (Winchell); Erna Lytle and wife Anna Richardson. Luke and Jenny Lytle also have grandchildren buried here: O.K. "Bud" Richardson, Mildred (Richardson) Kinghorn and husband Dean Kinghorn; and Wilbur Lytle and wife Lorraine (Menard).

One additional Lytle is buried here with no marker other than a small stone set into the ground (though the cemetery books do indicate the presence of a Lytle grave). This is Maude (Briant) Lytle, (1879-1898), first wife of Luke's oldest son Henry (1862-1930). She died of childbirth when their son Melvin was born on May 13, 1898. Henry later married Maude's sister and had five more children, all in Montana and Idaho.

Several other family members related by marriage to these Lytles are also buried here, including Winchells, Richardsons and Kinghorns.

Erna "Ernie" Lytle was cemetery caretaker for many years. Following him was Mildred Kinghorn's brother-in-law, Jim Kinghorn. It is now cared for by cousin Gilbert Richardson.

## Seen in the News

While in Nebraska, the name of Major General Roger Lempke appeared on the front page of the *Beatrice Daily Sun* on October 25, 2001. Roger is the son-in-law of cousin Ellen Ford of Tecumseh, and is also the commander of the Nebraska National Guard. Ellen is a descendant of Rev. James Lytle (1818-1904).

Nebraska is aiding efforts overseas with the Nebraska Air National Guard's 155th Air Refuelling Wing. Several other operations to ensure the safety of Nebraskans were discussed in the article.

[Editor's note - Sorry I missed you, Ellen, maybe next time!]