

Eldridge Family of Overton County Tennessee
An American Frontier Family Account

By:
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Chapter 1 - Early History

First Settlers of Overton County

Its always about money. The first European explorer of Tennessee was Hernando de Soto. In 1540 he brought 650 soldiers with 200 horses and about 250 pigs and assorted other livestock. Just like the Spanish had found in Central and South America they had expected to find wealth native tribes similar to the Inca and Aztec. The plan for North America was the same as it had been in the south. Plunder the gold, steal the silver, take the jewels and find a route to China for the spice trade. They found no gold, no silver, no jewels and no way to China. What they found were natives that knew how to fight and were good at it. De Soto died of a fever and the remaining soldiers built boats and floated down the Mississippi River to the Gulf and then home. On their exit the natives followed them in their war canoes shooting them with arrows. Eleven dead and a number of wounded just on their exit. The Spanish tried two more times, the last time they built five forts, all were destroyed and by 1569 the Spanish had ended further efforts and abounded Eastern North America.

The French in Canada had discovered that fur trading was a lucrative business. As they expanded from Canada they pushed into Tennessee from the North and West (down the Mississippi). They just wanted to trade not to establish colonies. Soon the fur trade was trapped out and so were the French.

It was an English colonist named John Rolfe (ancestor to many Eldridges) that discovered the way to make America economically viable was to grow tobacco, stolen tobacco to be precise. He somehow managed to get seeds of a strain of protected sweet tobacco that was being grown by the Spanish in Cuba. It could be grown, cured and packaged for shipping all in America and arrive in the old world with no spoilage. It and cotton soon became the ultimate cash crops. Many people soon became rich, problem is both crops are extremely hard on the soil and eighteen century farmers didn't understand the concept of rotational planting. They need fresh ground.

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Soon the English farmers-settlers were exploring ways into Tennessee. I'm sure they were well aware of de Soto and his problems. England tried in vain to stop this settlement of the interior and by 1780 it was unstoppable.

On July 2nd 1791 the United States and the Cherokee Nation signed into effect the treaty of Holston (referring to the river Holston so named for Stephen Holstein the first settler on the river), where by the land of Tennessee were divided between the Cherokee Nation and the American Pioneers. In 1799 the land set aside for settlement was expanded to the treaty limits, and early American pioneers began moving into the land previously occupied by the Cherokee. This included Overton County. The treaty boundary ran through Overton County from the northeast to southwest, and was located about two and one-half miles west of present day Livingston. The southeastern portion was to remain in possession of the Cherokee. See Fig. 1 below

The gateway for the expansion into west Tennessee was Kingston. It was established on the confluence of the Clinch and Tennessee Rivers, it is where Fort Southwest Point was built in 1792 and the major east-west road in Tennessee ran through it. See Fig. 1 below.

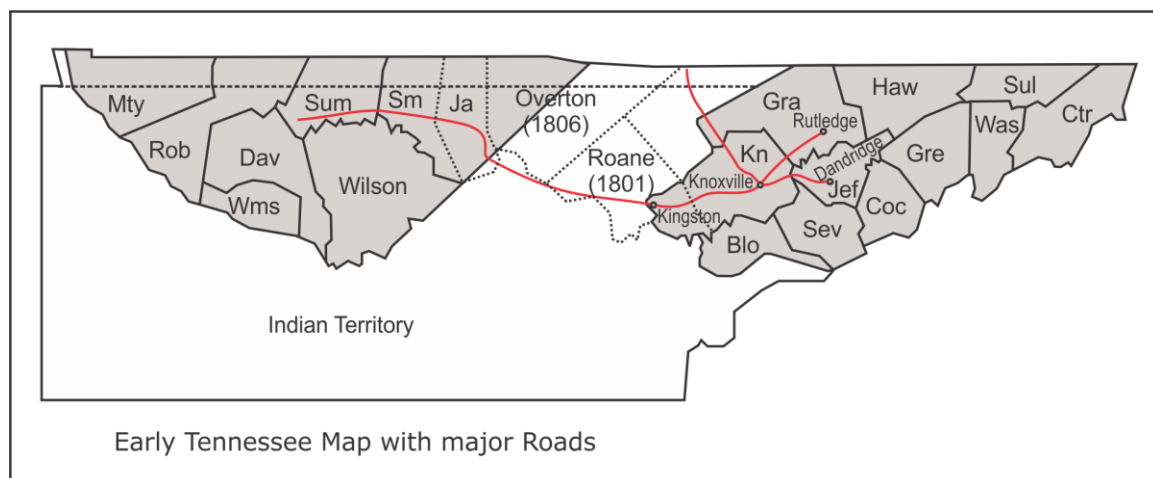


Fig. 1 Showing the major roads, Counties and Native lands of early Tennessee

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Most acknowledge Stephen Copeland and his son Joseph as the first settler of Overton County. He is certainly the most legendary in local lore. He was an officer in the War of the Revolution with large land warrants and a larger than life son who was said to have been over seven feet tall and strong enough to lift a grown hog from the pen and put it on the scale. However several families have made various claims of being first. It is generally recognized that some of the earliest settlers, if not the first, would have been the Allen, Arnold, Bilbrey, Eldridge, Fisk, Goodpasture, Hinds, Langford, Matthews, McDonald, Mitchell, Sevier, and Walton families. All were very early pioneers of the County. The history of the county holds that Stephen Copeland and family moved into the area along with others. This was probably for protection, if not for any other reason. Some claim that John Goodpasture was the first permanent resident of Overton County. But once again it appears that John did not move into the area alone, but rather settled in the area with other families. Early in 1799, John Goodpasture and two other men improvised a home on Buffalo creek where they also raised a crop and cache it during the winter of 1799/1800. It was said that they brought three horses and two cows with them, and traveled through Kingston, where they obtained salt and meal on their way to Overton. They returned to Virginia for their families and later removed to Overton County.¹

Also traveling through Kingston in the spring of 1799 was Stephen Copeland and his son Joseph Copeland. They had stopped there for supplies. After leaving Kingston they followed an old Indian trail through the Cumberland Mountains which led into the valley of the Roaring River where they cultivated and cache a crop of corn. They returned to Jefferson County Tennessee in the fall of 1799.¹

This is important to us because Stephen Copeland's uncle, James Copeland,² lived in the Kingston area at the time Stephen and his son would have been traveling between Overton and Jefferson Counties. Also living in Kingston during this time was Thomas Eldridge. We also know from the list of names on the 1799 petition to the General Assembly of Tennessee for the Division of Knox County that both Zachariah, and John Eldridge, brothers and sons of Thomas Eldridge are living in the Kingston area.³ James Copeland

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had also signed the 1799 petition to form Roan County, and his name appears very close to that of Zachariah Eldridge. From this one could advocate that the men most likely lived close to each another, at the very least knew each other. Kingston certainly appears to have been where Stephen Copeland, Zachariah and John Eldridge likely connected.

Stephen Copeland is listed in the 1800 tax rolls for Jefferson County Tennessee. In December of that same year, there is a Smith County court order for *John Overturf, John Black, Samuel Huff, Abraham Denton, and Stephen Copeland are appointed jury to view mark and lay off a road where Kentucky road intersects Line Creek*. Overton was part of Smith County at the time. This clearly indicates that Stephen had relocated to Overton by mid-year 1800. The process of relocating in the eighteen/early nineteenth century was for the men to camp in the new location, raise a crop of food and cache it for the winter and return in the spring with the family. They would then have a supply of food waiting for them when they returned. It can be assumed that when Stephen and son returned from North Carolina with their family in 1800 that they stopped in Livingston once again.

Chapter 2 - Eldridge Family Background

Eldridge Brothers

Mr. Charles S. Eldridge has written an excellent book titled "*History Tennessee My people and Me*". It documents Thomas Eldridge (b. 1738) his wife Catharine Taylor and many of their descendants. This book is required reading for anyone researching the Eldridge family from Tennessee.

Thomas and Catharine (Taylor) Eldridge, a Quaker family, lived in a troubled age of American History. The American Revolution would envelope their surroundings, and would shape the path that they would follow. Thomas, Catherine and family moved sometime before 1763 from Maryland to what is today Guilford North Carolina and from Guilford to what is now Kingston Tennessee sometime before 1783.⁴ Guilford Court House was a major engagement of the War of the Revolution and I feel may have played a part in their decision to head into Tennessee.

Thomas and Catharine Eldridge had nine children:⁵

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Simeon Eldridge | b. Abt. 1758 |
| 2. Jesse Eldridge | b. Abt. 1762 |
| 3. Nathan Eldridge | b. Abt. 1764 |
| 4. Mary Eldridge | b. Abt. 1766 |
| 5. John Eldridge | b. Abt. 1774 |
| 6. Zachariah Eldridge | b. Abt. 1775 |
| 7. Sampson Eldridge | b. Abt. 1779 |
| 8. Thomas Eldridge | b. Abt. 1785 |
| 9. Elizabeth Eldridge | b. 15 Sep. 1788 |

The brothers Zachariah, John, Sampson, and Nathaniel, all settled in early Overton County. They did not move to County as a family group, as was often the custom during this period, but rather they relocated to the County individually, and over a period of about 15 years. There is some evidence that two of the brothers, Zachariah and John Eldridge, may have come to the County together, but John appears to have left and did not return until the following year. Most likely he prepared living accommodations, and returned the following year with his wife and two children.

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Nathaniel Eldridge was the last of the four Eldridge brothers to arrive in Overton County. Nathaniel signature is not found on "The Legislative Petition of Overton County, Tennessee 1813" to allow Col. Stephen Copeland to raise troops from the County for the war of 1812. This supports the theory that he moved to the county sometime after the petition was presented in 1813. The first record of him in the County is from the 1820 Overton County Federal Census. He is also found in the 1830 Overton County Census on page 206. His age is listed 60 to 70 years of age, which puts his birth year 1765 +/- 5 years. Nathan reportedly moved out of Overton sometime after 1830 to Dades Creek, which is located in present day Cumberland County Tennessee.

The aforementioned petition is allowed as proof of service for inclusion in the Society of the United States Daughters of the War of 1812. There is a transcribed copy online that was contributed for use in the USGenWeb Archives by: Tamara West Stevens prntimge@lcc.net. The web address is as follows: <http://files.usgwarchives.net/tn/overton/military/warof1812/enlistment/petit01.txt>

There is an early record of a Nathan Aldridge found in Knox County Tennessee.⁶ A deed of conveyance from Hiram Geren to Nathan Aldridge was acknowledged in open court and another record of a Nathan Eldridge is listed in a Knox County estate of Susannah Geren, widow of Hiram Geren. The final settlement of the estate was made on April 3, 1811, in Knox County. After careful scrutiny, we believe that this is either another Nathan Eldridge or a case of subtle changes in the name Aldridge. Any connection to the Eldridge families in early Overton County is still subject to further research.

The only record where he used the name "Nathaniel" is on his marriage license. On all other occasions, he used Nathan. The first record of brother Nathan Eldridge is found in the Knox County marriage book. He married Rebecca Davis on May 12th 1798. The bondsman was William Davis.

Nathan signs the 1799 petition to form Roane County from a portion of Knox County. The petition was sent to the Tennessee General Assembly on July 15, 1799. It states that the under sign are "living in Knox County below

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the mouth of Turkey Creek or north of Clinch". Nathan's name appears next to that of Zachariah Eldridge in the 1799 petition, and he has signed it "Nathan". Roane County was formed in 1801 after a second petition was sent to the Tennessee General Assembly. Nathan did not sign the second petition, however he was listed on both the 1802 and 1805 Roane County Tax Rolls.

Census records indicate that Nathaniel and Rebecca (Davis) Eldridge had at least ten children, five girls and five boys. The Overton County Census of 1820 shows him with eight children, and the 1830 census shows him with seven children and that two of them, both boys, were listed under the age of ten (born between 1820 & 1830).^{7 8} Nathan appears to have died before 1840 and it appears that Rebecca survived him by many years. She is listed in the 1840 Roan County Tennessee census. There are 2 male children under the age of 5 and two male children that are in the 10 to 15 age bracket and two female children age 20 to 30.⁹ In the 1850 St. Francis County Arkansas census there is a Henry Eldridge and listed in his family is Rebecca Eldridge born 1778 in N.C. Listed next to him is his brother James M Eldridge. He has Thomas B Mosley listed with him.¹⁰ The 1860 Ripley County census has a listing for John D Collins. Listed with him is Thomas Mosley.¹¹ We will show later that John D Collins is grandson of Zachariah Eldridge and this offers proof that Rebecca is the widow of Nathan Eldridge and Nathan and Zachariah were indeed brothers. The 1830 Overton County census lists Nathan's wife as born between 1770 and 1780 age 50 to 60. The 1820 Overton County census lists Nathan's wife as born between 1775 and 1794 age 26 to 45. Combining these dates gives a birth date between 1775 and 1780. This matches 1850 census date of 1778 and therefore the Rebecca Eldridge listed in the 1850 St. Francis County Arkansas census is the right age to be Nathaniel's widow. Henry Eldridge purchases land in Randolph County Arkansas very near where Sampson Eldridge (Nathan's brother) had once own land. Henry is listed in the 1860 Randolph County census, with a Rebecca Eldridge age 88 setting her birth year at 1772 not 1778.

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The census data suggest the following list of Children for Nathan and Rebecca:

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| 1. Sarah E. Eldridge | b. abt. 1801 |
| 2. Unknown Female | b. 1804 – 1810 |
| 3. Unknown Female | b. 1804 – 1810 |
| 4. Unknown Male | b. 1804 – 1810 |
| 5. Unknown Female | b. 1810 – 1815 |
| 6. Unknown Female | b. 1810 – 1815 |
| 7. Henry Eldridge | b. abt. 1816 |
| 8. James M Eldridge | b. abt. 1818 |
| 9. Unknown Male | b. 1820 – 1825 |
| 10. Unknown Male | b. 1820 – 1825 |

Sampson Eldridge was the third of the four Eldridge brothers to move to Overton County. He signed the 1799 petition to form Roane County. This places him in Roane County with his family and helps bench mark his birth year. Given that persons signing a legal petition are to be of legal age, then Sampson birth year would have had to be 1778 or earlier.

Exactly when Sampson arrived in Overton County is difficult to pin down. He is not listed on either 1802 or the 1803 Jackson County (Overton was formed from Jackson) tax rolls. This does not rule out that he was in Overton County. Sampson may have been living with family and therefore simple not listed. Sampson was married on 20 August 1805 to Fanny Simmons in Roane County Tennessee. This does not necessarily place him as a resident of Roane County, as many people would travel out of county, or even out of state to get married. He does not appear on the 1805 tax rolls for Roane County.

On December 3rd 1807 Sampson was granted a divorce by the First Session of the Seventh General Assembly of the State of Tennessee. The Assembly first convened in Kingston Tennessee on Monday, September 21st, 1807. This was in compliance to a treaty with the Cherokee, which had ceded the land around Kingston, provided that Kingston would become the Capital of Tennessee. And indeed it was the Capital of Tennessee, for one day. The Assembly reconvened in Knoxville just two days later. Sampson's first child was born 25 January 1808, just 1 month and 22 days after his divorce. It

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appears that Sampson was remarried, however a second marriage license has not been found to date.

The first record we have of Sampson in Overton County is during the War of 1812, when he signs Col. Stephen Copeland's 1813 Petition to raise a regiment of 500 men.¹² This does not conclusive place him as a resident of Overton County, but most that signed it were. He is found listed in the 1820 and 1830 Overton County Federal Census. Sampson purchased 50 acres of land in Overton County on the head waters of the Roaring River in 1822.¹³ I was able to locate this land and if you have ever tried to find land from old Tennessee land records you know what an accomplishment this is. It is found west side of Rickman Road south of Livingston between Rickman road and Hwy. 111 on the Matthew Brach.

Sampson removed from Overton County to Lawrence County Arkansas sometime shortly after the 1830 census was taken. He is listed every year from 1831 to 1835 in the tax rolls of the Columbia Township of Lawrence County Arkansas. This portion of Lawrence County was set-aside in 1835 to help form Randolph County Arkansas. Sampson is listed in the 1840 Randolph County Arkansas Federal Census with his age listed as 50 to 60, which is the same age bracket that he gave for the 1830 census. Based on this, his birth year would have been about 1780, which would have given him the age of 50 in 1830 and 60 in 1840. This gives a slight discrepancy of two years with the above conclusion that his birth year was 1778 or earlier.

On November 1st 1834 Sampson was issued a certificate of land registration from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management in Batesville for 80 acres of land located S½SE of section 3, Twp. 21N, Range 1E, 5th Meridian in the County of Randolph Arkansas. This is located right on the Missouri – Arkansas border and is due south of present day Griswold Missouri.

Sampson died intestate February 24th 1849.¹⁴ His son Ransom filed a lengthy petition with the probate court in Randolph county Arkansas that contains a complete listing of Sampson's heirs and children.

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The following is a list of Sampson children.

- | | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Mariah Eldridge | b. 25 Jan 1808 |
| 2. Wiley B. Eldridge | b. 25 Jan 1808 |
| 3. Mary Eldridge | b. Abt. 1810 |
| 4. Ransom F. Eldridge | b. Abt. 1816 |
| 5. Reason Eldridge | b. Abt. 1821 |
| 6. James Richard Eldridge | b. Abt. 1826 |

The above list of children matches all of the existing census data exactly with one anomaly. Sampson might have had a seventh child. The 1840 Lawrence County Arkansas Census indicated that Sampson had a girl under the age of five living in his house and his wife was not listed and is presumed that she had passed, perhaps in childbirth. Or possibly this child may have been his niece or granddaughter and his wife had died of natural causes. There was no mention of either this child or his wife in the probate records.

John Eldridge appears to have been the second to move to Overton County. He is first found in Knox County Tennessee, where he signs the 1799 petition to form Roane County. Both John and his brother Jesse Eldridge sign the 1801 follow up petition to form Roane County. The first record of John in Overton County is from the 1803 Jackson County tax roll. Charles Eldridge writes on pg. 233 of *History Tennessee My People and Me* " ...John Eldridge, with his wife and two first children... moved into a log house on 43 acres assigned to him, located on Crocket and Matthew's Creek (a main headwater of Roaring River) about one mile upstream from Roaring River, at what is now called Windle. Family moved to Oak Hill, 5th Dist., Overton about 1809..." He is found listed in the 1820 Overton County Census. He is also found in the 1830 Overton County Census, near the bottom of page 209. This lineage is well documented in Mr. Charles S. Eldridge's book *History Tennessee My People and Me*. The author makes a special note in his book that there is an "unusually close friendship between John and Col. Stephen Copeland". I think this is signified. More on this later. John died before the 1840 Overton County census was taken. His widow, Sarah (Gilliland) Eldridge is listed.

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John and Sarah (Gilliland) Eldridge had nine children. The following is a list of them.³

- | | |
|--------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Katherine Eldridge | b. Abt. 1797 |
| 2. James Eldridge | b. 23 Feb 1800 |
| 3. Thomas Eldridge | b. Abt 1802 |
| 4. Zachariah Eldridge | b. 10 Jan 1807 |
| 5. Jane Eldridge | b. Abt 1810 |
| 6. Jesse Ranter Eldridge | b. 4 Feb 1815 |
| 7. John Dillard Eldridge | b. Abt 1816 |
| 8. Jefferson Eldridge | b. 1820 |
| 9. Calvin Eldridge | b. 26 Aug 1821 |

Zachariah Eldridge appears to be the first of the Eldridge brothers to arrive in Jackson County. He is found listed in both the 1802 and 1803 Jackson County tax rolls. Zachariah had previously lived in that portion of Knox County, which later became Roane County. He had signed the 1799 petition to set aside a portion of Knox County to form Roane County. However Zachariah's name does not appear on the follow up Roan County petition of 1801. Both of his brothers Jesse and John Eldridge have sign this petition, but Zachariah does not. Based on this we believe that Zachariah removed from Knox/Roane County to Jackson/Overton County about 1800 and may have come with Stephen and Joseph Copeland. He is listed on both the 1802 and 1803 Jackson County tax lists. His name is found on Col. Stephen Copeland's 1813 Petition to form a mounted troop of 500 men. He is listed on page 9 of the 1820 Overton County Tennessee Federal Census.

It is not known where Zachariah first settled when he came to Overton County, but most probably it was in the area that is now known as Windle. In 1821, during the fall session of the Overton Circuit Court, Zachariah filed a lawsuit seeking damages against Joseph Brooks. The Court order a continuance until depositions could be obtained from Nelly Singes of White County Tennessee, Robert Tays, and Joseph Wheeler of Jackson County Alabama. Zachariah was successful in this lawsuit and won an award of \$50.⁰⁰ plus cost. Cornelius Carmack Sr. agreed to pay the amount due and the case was closed. It appears that Zachariah used this award to purchased land, for which he paid 12½ cents per acre.

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The process of purchasing public land in Tennessee during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries involved three steps. First the purchaser of the land would record a land entry in the entry books of the county. This was a rough description of the land and its location. Next a full survey of this land was conducted and recorded on the county plat book. A Certificate of Survey was issued after the survey. The witness and chain carriers were most often family members or close friends and neighbors. And finally if all previous requirements were met, a Grant of use was issued by the state to the purchaser. Sometimes years would pass between the time of the land entry was made and when the land grant was issued.

Zachariah was the only one of the four brothers for which a marriage licenses has not been found. Since the marriage records of Knox are still available, we therefore believe that he was not married before he moved to Jackson/Overton County. Neither of these Counties have early marriage records that have survived to present day.

Zachariah received three land Grants in Overton County, two of which were issued in 1825, Grant numbers 2837 for 160 acres,¹⁵ and 2876 also for 160 acres.¹⁶ His last grant, number 3589 for 95 acres, was issued in 1835.¹⁷ Description of these lands shows that they were located on the headwaters of Roaring River, in Eldridge Cove¹⁸ adjoining the lands of Thomas Carr Sr., A. Cullom, Henry Deck, and Jos. Brown. The 1836 tax rolls for Overton County has a listing for Polly Eldridge, with two tract of land each at 160 acres and a third tract of land at 90 acres located in district 6 of Overton County. Roaring River cuts through the very southwest edge of this district, very near the community of Okalona. This puts the location of Zachariah's land just west and south of Okalona community of Overton County. Eldridge cove today is located in district 5, Southwest of Oak Hill, which is 5 miles south of Okalona and derives its name from land that was once owned by Zachariah's brother John Eldridge and his descendants. There is an old Eldridge Cemetery in the woods there. A very spooky place indeed. As of 2007 there were many gravestones still in good shape. A cousin with the same name that lived very near the graveyard acted as our guide. He was a very accommodating gentleman.

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The last land grant that was issued to Zachariah was grant number 3589 and appears to have been issued after his death. The land entry was dated October 2nd 1824, and the survey was dated February 12th 1829 and the grant issued by the state on January 8th 1835. The chain carriers and witness were Stephen Eldridge and West Riley. ¹⁶

West Riley is found in Ripley County Missouri which is the County north of Randolph County Arkansas. Stephen Eldridge is also found in this County records. At his passing the following article is found in the local Doniphan newspaper.

NOV 22, 1878-Died on Friday morning the 15th inst. at his residence one mile southwest of Doniphan, Mr. West Riley, one of the oldest and one of the best citizens of our county. Mr. Riley was 69 years 6 mos. and 7 da. old at the time of his death. He emigrated from Overton Co. Tn. some thirty five or forty years ago and had resided here ever since. The last thirty years he lived and occupied the home where he died. Now he is gone from amongst us, his widowed wife and fatherless children have the sympathy of the community in their sad bereavement.

The Prospect News Abstracted
by November 22nd, 1878
Prospect News, PO Box 367, Doniphan, MO
63935, Obituary Published November 22nd, 1878
110 Washington St, Doniphan, MO 63935

In a 1900 interview of Ripley county historian John D. Hume reported that he had recorded the first European resident of the county was "Wees" Riley, who arrived in 1802. I wonder if there is a connection with West Riley that arrived half a century after Wees? Doniphan located in Ripley County, Missouri is a great little community with a lot of history. The town was named in honor of Col Alexander William Doniphan of the war with Mexico fame.

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Zachariah Chaos

To avoid any confusion it is important to point out that there were at least four (4) Eldridge's named Zachariah at this time and place in history. Please use this as reference to Zach names.

1. Zachariah Eldridge b. abt. 1775 named "Old Zach", his father was Thomas Eldridge
2. Zachariah Eldridge b. abt. 1807 his father was John Eldridge and was a "Nephew" of Zachariah(1)
3. Zachariah Eldridge b. abt. 1815 father was James Eldridge and was most likely a "Cousin" of Zachariah(1)
4. Zachariah Eldridge b. abt. 1819 father was Zachariah(1) and was therefore "Zach Jr."

Zachariah(1) Death

It is difficult to date exactly when Zachariah(1) died. He is not listed in the 1830 Overton County census. However, there is a Mary Ann Eldridge listed on page 213 of this census who appears to be a widow.¹⁹ On February 5th 1833 William Morris makes a land entry for 100 acres where he makes references to the "Widow Eldridge".²⁰ The description of the land location matches that of Zachariah's(1) land grants and therefore this record must be referring to the Widow of Zachariah Eldridge. We know from the 1836 tax list that Polly (Mary Ann) Eldridge has in her possession the land that Zachariah received from his land grants and we know from court documents that the (Widow) Mary Ann is the mother and guardian of his children.^{16 21 22 23 24} We can therefore safely say that "Widow" Eldridge and Polly (Mary Ann) Eldridge are one in the same and she is the widow of Zachariah Eldridge. This also provides proof that Zachariah's death was before February 5th 1833 and probably before the 1830 Overton County census was taken. Some claim that it is this Zachariah(1) listed in the 1833 Tax rolls for Lawrence County Arkansas.²⁵ But this is unlikely. If this were to be the case then the tax roll would have had to been taken early in January of 1833, Zach would have had to died shortly thereafter and the news of this would have had to make its way back to Overton before 5 Feb 1833. This is very unlikely. I believe the Zachariah in the 1833 census is cousin Zachariah(3) from Illinois. He

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traveled from Morgan County to Lawrence County with John Eldridge and John's brother-in-law Allen Deck. Allen is found listed next to John in the 1830 Morgan County Census.

Most newcomer farmers left Randolph County in 1833. Early nineteenth century farming in Kentucky and Tennessee involved getting produce and goods to market via riverboats and barges. Randolph County has a natural port on the Black River (the Black a tributary of the Mississippi) and therefore would be a natural draw to farmers in 1830s. However, by 1833 the County seat of Pocahontas had become the largest port in Arkansas, a true port city boom town with all the vice and trappings that follows boom towns. Stephen and John Eldridge moved just across the border into Missouri about 1834/1835. Their uncle Sampson Eldridge remained in Arkansas but less than half a mile from Missouri and his nephew's. Zachariah(3) moved back to Morgan County Illinois where he marries Elizabeth Ann Brown on 21 Oct 1834. It appears that Allen's wife (Sarah Jane Eldridge) dies on this trip and Allen returns to Illinois with Zachariah(3).

Allen and Sarah Jane* (Eldridge) Deck had four known children.

1. Arminta Deck b. 1823
2. Anderson Deck b. 1828
3. Irena Deck b. 1830
4. Mary Ann Deck b. 1831

Their son, Anderson Deck, is listed living with his grandmother Mary Ann Eldridge in the 1860 Overton County Tennessee Federal Census. ²⁶ This and the fact they had one of the orphans listed with them in the 1850 Overton census gives proof that the Deck children were Mary Ann's grandchildren.

* NOTE: Her name, Sarah Jane is speculation on my part. We have found no evidence of her actual name. All other names listed here are verifiable using Federal Census data.

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Other Early Eldridge Families in Overton

James Sanders Eldridge (b.1795) was listed over the age of 26 in the 1820 Cense of Overton County. James and his family leave Overton County before the 1830 census is taken, and are found listed in the 1830, 1840, and 1850 Morgan County Illinois Federal Census. Also found in the 1850 Madison County Illinois Federal Census. That is correct; they were listed twice in the 1850 Federal Census.^{27 28} It is interesting to note that he gave Tennessee as his birth state in Morgan County census, and Kentucky as his birth state in the Madison County census. The next census record I have of James is the 1860 Fayette County Illinois Federal census. The last record I have of him the 1870 Hamilton County Illinois census. Later we will show that other Eldridge families leave Overton and first move to Morgan County then on to Arkansas. This just strengthens the argument that James is related to the Thomas Eldridge line. I'm told that James married Leanna Hamilton and had the following children:

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Zachariah Eldridge(3) | b. 9 Feb 1808 – "Cousin" |
| 2. Mary Ann "Polly" Eldridge | b. Abt. 1817 |
| 3. Margaret Eldridge | b. Abt. 1823 |
| 4. William Eldridge | b. Abt. 1827 |
| 5. James Matthew Eldridge | b. Abt. 1829 |
| 6. Elizabeth Eldridge | b. Abt. 1830 |
| 7. Sarah Eldridge | b. Abt. 1832 |
| 8. Richard Carr Eldridge | b. Abt. 1836 |

William Eldridge (b. Abt. 1800) was listed between the ages of 18 to 26 in the 1820 Cense of Overton County. He is shown to be younger than his brother James. He is not listed in the 1830 Overton census and is presumed to have relocated to Illinois with his brother, James. I am told that their parents were Samuel and Pricilla (Carr) Eldridge. A close neighbor of "Old" Zachariah and Mary Ann Eldridge on Matthew branch creek was named Thomas Carr.

Thomas Eldridge (b. Abt. 1791) was listed on page 188 of the 1830 Overton County census. This is believed to be a nephew of "Old" Zachariah(1) Eldridge. The rest of the Eldridge are found much later in this census.

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Chapter 3 - Census Data for the Children of Zachariah and Mary Ann Eldridge

In order to determine the children that this marriage produced it is necessary to first evaluate the Overton County Federal census.

The 1820 Overton County Census

Starting with the 1820 census, we can see that there are eleven (11) children listed, five male (5) and six (6) female.²⁹

Male Children

- 1 - 1794 to 1804 } Same Person
- 1 - 1802 to 1804 } Same Person
- 1 - 1804 to 1810
- 3 - 1810 to 1820

Female Children

- 1 - 1794 to 1804
- 3 - 1804 to 1810
- 2 - 1810 to 1820

The 1830 Overton County Census

Looking at the listing for Mary Ann Eldridge in the 1830 Overton County census it appears that there were another five (5) children added between 1820 and 1830, three (3) boys and two (2) girls.³⁰

Male Children

- 1 - 1810 to 1815
- 1 - 1815 to 1820
- 2 - 1820 to 1825
- 1 - 1825 to 1830

Female Children

- 1 - 1800 to 1810
- 2 - 1810 to 1815
- 1 - 1820 to 1825
- 1 - 1825 to 1830

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The 1840 Overton County Census

The 1840 Overton County census reveals that there were no more children added to Mary Ann Eldridge's household between 1830 and 1840.³¹ There are three (3) boys listed one (1) girl. The list below clearly shows that no children were born to Mary Ann after the year 1830. This will be important later when we discuss Allen Eldridge.

From the 1840 Overton County census we get the following.

Male Children

1 - 1810 to 1820
1 - 1820 to 1825
1 - 1825 to 1830

Female Children

1 - 1825 to 1830

The 1850 Overton County Census

The 1850 Overton County census offers the names of some of the children. From page 50a of the 6th District of the 1850 Overton County census we get the following.³² See Fig. 2

1. Mary Eldridge 68 – F (b. 1782)
2. Townsond Eldridge 27 – M (b. 1823)
3. Hannah Eldridge 25 – F (b. 1825) {per 1900 census birth Apr 1822}³³
4. Susan Eldridge 24 – F (b. 1826)
5. James Eldridge 23 – M (b. 1827)
6. Allen Eldridge 18 – M (b. 1832) {not listed in the 1840 census}³¹

678	679	Eldridge	Mary	68	F		800	Tenn.
			Townsond	27	M	Blacksmith		Tenn.
			Hannah	25	F			Tenn.
			Susan	24	F			Tenn.
			James	23	M	Farmer		Tenn.
			Allen	18	M	Farmer		Tenn.

Fig. 2 From the bottom of page 51a of the 1850 Overton Co. Census

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There are a couple of inconsistencies between the 1840 and 1850 census. First there is Allen Eldridge. He is listed as being born in Tennessee about the year 1832, and Mary Ann's listing in the 1840 census indicates that there were no children born after 1830 and therefore Allen does not appear to be her child. Then in July of 1844 Mary Ann Eldridge posted a bond for the "minor children and heirs of Zachariah Eldridge".³⁴ Only Susan and James are listed on the bond. These were the only two children that were under the age of 21 in 1844. Since Allen is younger than both James and Susan this gives proof positive that Allen was not a child of Mary Ann and Zachariah. It also supports our theory that Zachariah had died before the 1830 Overton County census had been taken.

The other discrepancy between the 1840 and 1850 census records that should be reconciled is there was only one female child listed in the 1840 census and there are two female children listed in the 1850 census, Hannah and Susan Eldridge. The 1840 census gives the birth year of the lone female child as between 1825 and 1830. This matches up with Susan birth year, and the fact that Susan is listed with Mary Ann in every census through the 1870 census, gives us reason to believe that the 1840 census record shows Susan as the lone female child. Evidently Hannah had left home and returned before the 1840 census. The rest of the 1850 Census data matches up very well with all of the earlier data. The question now is - who was Allen Eldridge?

Eldridge Orphans

A study of the 1850 Overton County Census yields a list of displaced Eldridge children and it becomes quite clear that there is a family of orphans that were taken in by the family members of Zachariah and Mary Ann Eldridge. It appears that Allen Eldridge and his siblings were the orphan children of George G. Eldridge of Fayette County Tennessee.^{35 36} We have not devoted much time to researching the ancestry of Allen or George G. Eldridge nor do we have any record of a blood relationship between them and Zachariah(1). This should be researched further. The first record we have of the orphans being in Overton County is from a court order in June 2nd 1845

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for Jefferson Eldridge to do some road work.³⁷ Granted, John Eldridge has a son named Jefferson b. abt. 1820 but he was challenged and unable to work. There was a court order for his older brothers to manage his affairs.

It is reported by some that George G. Eldridge was born in Virginia about the year 1792 and was the son of Aristotle Eldridge of Virginia. This birth year matches the census data we have for George. The 1840 and 1850 Federal census of Shelby County Tennessee has a Rolfe Eldridge listed born in Virginia about the year 1807.^{38 39} I am also told that Aristotle had a half-brother named Rolfe that had a son named Rolfe that married Mary Moseley. Fayette County Tennessee is next to Shelby County and was formed from parts of Shelby and Hardeman Counties in 1824. This would place George G. Eldridge and Rolfe Eldridge fairly close to each other in 1840 and may add some validity to this claim. The Rolfe Eldridge line is of course the Eldridge line with proof of heritage back to Pocahontas of Jamestown Virginia that met the Queen of England fame. But if this is true, it produces more questions than answers, but the main question remains, what brought these orphans to Overton County? Did George G. move to Overton before his death or did he die while in Fayette County and the orphans were sent to Overton? And if it is the latter then there must be a blood connection with the Eldridge families of Overton. If George G. was the son of Aristotle then why didn't at least one of the orphans go to Rolfe Eldridge living in the neighboring County, which is much closer than Overton County? And then there is always the possibility that they assumed the name Eldridge and/or were or were not born in Tennessee. Like I said this is a matter of another time and place.

While we have not established a blood connection, we do know of a marriage connection. Allen's older brother, Jefferson Eldridge was married to Mary Ann's Eldridge granddaughter, Irene Deck. This gives reason enough for the orphans to be taken in by the Eldridge family of Overton. The question now is which came first the marriage or the adoption? These orphans are listed below along with their age, birth year, and page where they are found listed in the 1850 Overton Census. We used this list as markers to help identify children of Zachariah and Mary Ann.

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1. Jefferson Eldridge	age 25	b. abt. 1825	Pg. 50b
2. Allen Eldridge	age 18	b. abt. 1832	Pg. 50a
3. Thompson Eldridge	age 15	b. abt. 1835	Pg. 50b
4. Nancy Eldridge	age 15	b. abt. 1835	Pg. 3b
5. Jacob Eldridge	age 13	b. abt. 1837	Pg. 19b
6. Thomas Eldridge	age 12	b. abt. 1838	Pg. 30a

This 1850 list does not correlate exactly with George G. Eldridge census of 1840 which shows only one male child under the age of five (1835-1840). According to the list above there should have been two, Jacob and Thomas listed on the 1840 form.^{40 41} This is reconciled by looking at the youngest, Thomas' age in the 1860 census. It is shown as 19 years old, born about 1841 and therefore was listed with the wrong age in 1850. He would not have been born before the 1840 census was taken and was therefore not listed in it.⁴²

The Census analysis for Zachariah and Mary Ann Eldridge, and the names of the children are as follows:

From the 1820 Overton County Census:

Males

1792 to 1804 - 1 (Stephen b. Abt 1801)} Same Person

1802 to 1804 - 1 (Stephen b. Abt 1801)} Same Person

1804 to 1810 - 1 (John b. Abt 1806)

1810 to 1820 - 3 (Thomas b. Abt 1809) (Joseph C. b. 1812) (Zachariah b. 1819)

Females

1794 to 1804 - 1 (Sarah Jane(?) b. Abt 1802)

1804 to 1810 - 3 (Francis "Fanny" b. Abt 1804) (Unk Female b. Abt 1807)
(Mary Ann b. 1808)

1810 to 1820 - 2 (Catherine b. 1810) (Melanie b. 1813)

From the 1830 Overton County Census:

Males

1810 to 1815 - 1 (Joseph C. b. 1812)

1815 to 1820 - 1 (Zachariah b. 1819)

1820 to 1825 - 2 (Townsend b. 1823, Solomon b. 1822 {possible a twin})

1825 to 1830 - 1 (James b. 1827)

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Females

1800 to 1810 - 1 (Mary Ann b. 1808)
 1810 to 1815 - 2 (Catherine b. 1810, Melanie b. 1813)
 1815 to 1820 - 0 none
 1820 to 1825 - 1 (Hannah b. 1822 {possible a twin})
 1825 to 1830 - 1 (Susan b. March 1825)

We can see that the unknown female child is not listed with Mary Ann in the 1830 census. Her age in 1830 would be about 23. The theory is that she was married and had left. Possible marriage candidate is Thomas Cook, the only person listed between Mary Ann and her son Stephen in the 1830 Overton Census. Possible great-grandson is J.W. Ashburn listed with J.D. Collins and Mary Ann Eldridge in the 1870 Overton Census.

From the 1840 Overton County Census:

Males

1810 to 1820 - 1 (Solomon b. 1822)
 1820 to 1825 - 1 (Townsend b. 1823)
 1825 to 1830 - 1 (James b. 1827)

Females

1825 to 1830 - 1 (Susan b. 1825)

Complete Children's List

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Stephen | b. Abt. 1801 |
| 2. Sarah Jane(?) | b. Abt. 1802 |
| 3. Francis "Fanny" | b. Abt. 1804 |
| 4. John | b. 1806 |
| 5. Unknown Female | b. Abt. 1807 |
| 6. Mary Ann "Polly" | b. 1808 |
| 7. Thomas | b. 1809 |
| 8. Catherine | b. Dec 16 th 1810 |
| 9. Joseph Copeland | b. Feb 3 rd 1812 |
| 10. Melanie | b. Abt. 1813 |
| 11. Zachariah | b. Abt. 1819 |
| 12. Solomon | b. 1822 (Possibly Twins) |
| 13. Hannah Thatcher | b. Apr. 1822 (Possibly Twins) |
| 14. Townsend | b. 1823 |
| 15. Susan | b. Mar 1825 |
| 16. James | b. 1827 |

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Mary Ann Eldridge must have been a very hardy and robust woman. Sixteen children in twenty nine years of marriage!

For further reference, please note that Mary Ann b. 1808 (daughter of Zachariah(1) and Mary Ann Eldridge) married William Collins abt. 1831. Her son John D. Collins is listed in 1860 Randolph Arkansas Census with his cousin Solomon Eldridge and 1870 Overton Census with his grandmother Mary Ann.

Chapter 4 - Mary Ann's Mystery Maiden Name

Mary Ann Eldridge was born about the year 1782. Her daughter, Susan Eldridge is list in every census with her mother. In the 1870 census Mary Ann is listed as an owner of property with no disabilities. However in the 1880 Overton Census Susan is listed with her sister, Hannah Thatcher. Mary Ann appears to have died in the decade since the last census. We have assigned a death year of about 1875, making her age of about 93 at death. This would be within a couple of years of the actual death. No marriage record for Zachariah and Mary Ann has ever been found. Nor has there been any record located that gives any hard direct evidence of her maiden name. We are only left to examine the records that still exist and to interpolate the data to determine if there is sufficient evidence to resolve this mystery.

As discussed above, we do have a fairly good list of her children. The naming of children in the early to mid-Nineteenth Century followed a lose convention. At the heart of this was a simple rule; name the children after close family members. In many cases this rule still applies today. I for one was named after my father. The common Eldridge family names of this generation in this location were John, James, Jesse, Thomas, and Zachariah. Any child's name not associated with the Eldridge family may come from Mary Ann's side of the family. Therefore a close examination of the naming of Zachariah and Mary Ann's children should yield some usefully information.

Male Children Name Comparison

Stephen was not only a very unusual name for a southern Eldridge it was unique. I have studied and cataloged every Eldridge that is listed from 1800 through the 1880 Federal Census from the States of Tennessee, Arkansas, Illinois and Missouri, and there was only one Stephen Eldridge of this generation. As of 2019 he is the only Stephen Eldridge in my data base. I can therefore say with some certainty that his name did not come from the Eldridge family and most likely was derived from Mary Ann side of the family.

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John, Thomas, Zachariah and James were all widely used as Eldridge names, and they do not appear to hold any clues as to their mother's heritage.

Solomon was not a name used by the Eldridge family and may have come from his mother side of the family and therefore may hold some clues.

Joseph Copeland was undoubtedly named after Joseph Copeland, but there was more than one Joseph Copeland. Col. Stephen Copeland father and oldest son were both named Joseph Copeland. Joseph was not a name used by the Eldridge family until later in the nineteenth century.

Townsend is also not a name used by the Eldridge family and may have come from his mother side of the family.

Female Children

Sarah Jane; we have no proof that her name was in fact Sarah Jane and will not use it here as part of this exercise.

Francis was very popular name at this time and does not appear to hold any clues of her mother's heritage.

Mary Ann was obviously named after her mother and does not appear to hold any other clues as to her mother's heritage.

Catherine was a widely used Eldridge name, and does not appear to hold any clues as to her mother's heritage

Susan was a widely used Eldridge name, and does not appear to hold any clues as to her mother's heritage.

Hannah Thatcher was shown above to have been listed in the 1850 census with just the name Hannah and Thatcher in all other census data after that. It is obvious that her full name was Hannah Thatcher Eldridge. This was not a name used by the Eldridge family and may have come from her mother side

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of the family. Also, Mary Ann's granddaughter was named Harriet Thatcher Collins. The census enumerator made a notation that Harriet's brother was the grandson of Mary Ann. Wish he had enumerated all the census records I've been through.

Melanie was a not a name used by the Eldridge family and may have come from her mother side of the family.

The short list of children names that may have been derived from the maternal side of the family are:

1. Stephen
2. Joseph Copeland
3. Solomon
4. Townsend
5. Melanie
6. Hannah Thatcher

Conclusions

Since her son Townsend Eldridge was listed with his mother in the 1850 census the first choice is that her maiden name Townsend. This is a name that has been used through my line of Eldridge, and was both my great grandfather's and my great-great grandfather's middle name. However, from the above list of names we can determine that all, with the exception of Melanie, are the names that have been derived from the Copeland family of Overton County Tennessee. Page 51b of the 1850 Overton County census provides proof of this. Listed in dwelling number 687 on page 51b is the Joseph Copeland family including his wife Hannah Thatcher and his son Solomon. It is known that Joseph's father was Stephen Copeland, and that his mother was Sarah Jane Townsend. However, this in itself does not provide proof positive of Mary Ann's maiden name. But the likelihood that Zachariah or Mary Ann would name their first-born son, Stephen, after someone outside the family is remote and the fact that Joseph Eldridge's middle name was Copeland clearly suggest that Mary Ann's maiden name was Copeland.

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The following chart of the Copeland family may help visualize what is presented here.

Stephen Copeland
| 1756-1833
m. Sarah Jane (Townsend) Copeland
1766-1866
Joseph Copeland
| 1783-1857
m. Hannah Thatcher (Ward) m. 1806
1790-1869
Solomon Copeland
1824-1910

This one chart explains five of the sixteen children names and five of the six on our list of children names that may have been derived from the material side of the marriage. However, I feel it is necessary to examine other evidence before we give up on her maiden name of Townsend and declare this mystery solved.

Court Records

Solomon Eldridge was the defendant in the court case of "State of Tennessee vs. Solomon Eldridge", in which he was charged with Assault and Battery, by the State of Tennessee in 1843. The court records of the ensuing arraignment show that William Collins, and Moses W. Copeland were with Solomon Eldridge at the hearing and that they both acknowledged themselves "in open court" to be the defendants security for the fine and costs.⁴³ It is understandable why his brother-in-law, William Collins would do this. What is not known to us is why Moses W. Copeland would do this. It appears that Solomon Eldridge and Moses W. Copeland were somehow related.

How was Moses W. Copeland? Genealogical researchers report that Moses Wilkerson Copeland, son of Joseph and Hannah Thatcher Copeland, was born February 1812 and died September 1871. He married Nancy Webb about the year 1833. Nancy was born May 1815 and died about the year 1852. There is no known connection between the Webb family and the Eldridge family until well after the 1843 court case of Solomon Eldridge. Solomon did not marry

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until 1846. Therefore the connection to Solomon must come from Copeland side of the family. This certainly corroborates the suggested connection with Copeland and Townsend. There is another court case that supports this as well.

During the July 1844 session of the Overton County court, William Collins (Mary Ann's son-in-law), Stephen H. Copeland, and Tench McCormick acknowledged themselves "in open court" to be security for a two thousand dollar bond for the minors James and Susan Eldridge, both children of Mary Ann Eldridge.³⁴³⁴ We are faced with the same dilemma that was presented with Solomon Eldridge court case. It is understandable why James and Susan's brother-in-law, William Collins, would do this, but why would Stephen H. Copeland and Tench McCormick do so. It is obvious that they were also somehow related to the children of Mary Ann Eldridge.

Who was Stephen Harrison Copeland? He was born September 11, 1817 and died in 1858 and was the son of Joseph and Hannah Thatcher Copeland and a younger brother of Moses W. Copeland.

Who was Tench McCormick, and why would he post bond? Tench married Catherine West about 1832 and Francis Eldridge married Barnibus West Winter of 1829 or Spring of 1830. The exact relationship between Barnibus and Catherine is not known at this time, but the family connection to Tench is through his marriage. Twenty years after this court hearing, Tench's son William was married to Susan Collins. She was Mary Ann's Eldridge granddaughter and therefore Solomon Eldridge's niece (daughter of his sister Mary Ann (Eldridge) Collins).

The naming of Eldridge children and these two separate court cases where two different sons of Joseph Copeland have posted securities for three different children of Mary Ann. This clearly gives proof that there is a family tie between Joseph and Hannah Thatcher Copeland and Mary Ann Eldridge.

It is known that Joseph Copeland's mother was Sarah Jane Townsend. The question now is whether Mary Ann was the sister of Joseph Copland, or his

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Aunt and she was a sister of Sarah Jane Townsend? The simple answer is found in the 1850 census, Mary Ann was listed age 68 and Joseph Copeland was listed age 67. They certainly were the correct age to be brother and sister. Also, if Mary Ann and Sarah Jane had been sister then their age difference would have been fairly large and the two sisters would have not likely been that close.

Charles S. Eldridge writes of a close connection between the Eldridge and Copeland families of Overton County Tennessee in his book *"History Tennessee My People and Me"*. There is a passage on page 234 of this book that is of particular interest. *"In the year 1813 ...the Eldridge/Copeland friendship remained strong"*. I can testify that the records of the Copeland and Eldridge families certainly seem to show that they tend to be in the same locations throughout the last part of the eighteenth century, and the first part of the nineteenth century.

Given that Zachariah and Mary Ann's first born son was named Stephen, and this named is not associated with the Eldridge side of the family, then it is most likely Mary Ann's father was named Stephen. And given that her maiden name has been narrowed down to either Copeland or Townsend we get that either Stephen Copeland or Stephen Townsend would be the name of her father. Stephen Copeland was Joseph's Copeland father. Also we have shown that Zachariah came to Overton County with Stephen Copeland and his son Joseph about the year 1800 and we have shown that no marriage document has been found for Zachariah and was the only Eldridge brother to move to Overton County that didn't have a recorded marriage. It is certainly probably that a young and single Zachariah would have met any unmarried female children of Stephen Copeland. He certainly would at least have had the opportunity. We have shown opportunity and motive that Zachariah Eldridge married Mary Ann Copeland and that Joseph Copeland and Mary Ann Eldridge were brother and sister and children of Stephen Copeland. This just simply fits all the given facts. They are shown in the 1850 Overton County census as living close to each other and only one-year difference in age. Mary Ann's mother would have been Sarah Jane Townsend and would account for Townsend Eldridge name. Mary Ann would have been an Aunt to

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Stephen H. Copeland and Moses W. Copeland and therefore they would have been first cousins with her children. This would explain why they would acknowledge themselves as security for cost and bonds for Solomon Eldridge and his siblings James and Susan Eldridge.

Here are some additional facts about Zachariah Eldridge and his Copeland connection. Zachariah is found listed in Fitzgerald District of the 1802 Jackson County Tax Rolls. Listed in this same district are two sons of Stephen Copeland, Nicholas and Joseph Copeland. In the 1803 Jackson County Tax Rolls, Zachariah is listed in Stephen Copeland District. (Note: Copeland's district did not exist in 1802) Zachariah signed the 1813 Overton petition to raise a mounted force of 500 men. His name appears very close to that of Stephen Copeland. He signed the 1799 petition to set aside a portion of Knox County to form Roane County, and his name appears very close to that of James Copeland.

I must admit that when I first start this endeavor to document my line of Eldridge's I had the preconceived notion that Mary Ann's maiden name was Townsend. That is the conclusion that Mr. Charles Eldridge came to in his book *"History Tennessee My people and Me"* (pg. 233). We have shown that she must have been a strong and robust woman to have born 16 children. Her brother Joseph Copeland was said to have been a large strong man able to lift a grown hog and put it on the scales. Sounds like brother and sister were a lot alike. New information notwithstanding, I must acknowledge that with this volume of compelling evidence I have changed my position and now advocate that her maiden name was indeed Copeland.

The Naming of Sarah Jane Eldridge

This paragraph is dedicated to explaining why I believe that the oldest daughter of Mary Ann was named Sarah Jane. A summary in case you've jumped to this section. First let us review the names of her children. She named her oldest son after her father, Stephen; she named a son after her brother, Joseph Copeland; she named a daughter after her sister in law, Hannah Thatcher, she named another son after her brother, Solomon, she named yet another son after her mother's maiden name, Townsend. Very

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simply stated; given what we have shown here it would seem logical that she would have named her first-born daughter after her mother. And given that Stephen Copeland's wife and Mary Ann's mother was Sarah Jane Townsend; Mary Ann's first daughter would have been named "Sarah Jane". This is 100% pure speculation, but is consistent with the naming of her children.

Mary Ann's Death

Mary Ann (Copeland) Eldridge is first found listed in the 1830 Overton County Census on page 213. We have shown from court documents that Zachariah's death was before February 5th 1833. He most likely died before the 1830 Overton Census was taken. Based on various records and information at hand, it appears that Zachariah died sometime about 1829. He would have been about 55 years of age at the time of his death. Mary Ann Eldridge lived until after the 1870 Overton County census. She is gone before the 1880 census. This would put her somewhere around 93 years of age at her death. All the information at hand says that she led a hard and difficult life and yet she managed to live into her nineties. She must have been a very hardy woman indeed. It is interesting to note that stories that were told about her brother Joseph Copeland say that he was a large, robust man and may have been the strongest man in Tennessee. Maybe it ran in the family.

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Final Note

It is of interest that two of their eight male children were elected to the Missouri State Assembly. John Eldridge of Ripley County and Joseph Copeland Eldridge of Dallas County both won elections. Joseph was a first lieutenant during the war with Mexico and may have been briefly station at the same location as his brother. His regimental commander during the war with Mexico was future first Governor of Colorado William Gilpin. Gilpin was also one of twelve bodyguards that accompanied Lincoln on his train trip to Washington DC after the 1860 Presidential Election. Joseph C. went on to become Captain in a Missouri Home Guard unit during the Civil War.

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- ¹ *Echoes From the Foothills*, published by the "Livingston Academy, Class of 1952", Chapter 1, page 3, pp. 129
- ² *Copeland Y-Chromosome - DNA Testing Project*, Test Group 13965 and 57012, published via the internet, <http://small-stuff.com/COPELAND/index.htm>, August 30, 2008
- ³ *"History, Tennessee, My People, And Me"*, Charles S. Eldridge, Privately Issued 1991, pg 203
- ⁴ *1783 Greene Co. Tennessee Tax List* by Mrs. Louise Wilson Reynolds, published April 1919, D.A.R. Magazine
- ⁵ *History, Tennessee, My People, And Me*, Charles S. Eldridge, Privately Issued 1991, Pg 206 to 225
- ⁶ *Deeds of Conveyance 1792-1805*, Knox County, Tennessee, October Sessions 1795, page 41
- ⁷ *1820 United States Federal Census*, Overton County Tennessee, Roll M33.122, Page 256, Image 215, Nathan Eldridge
- ⁸ *1830 United States Federal Census*, Overton County, Tennessee, Roll 179, Page 206, Image 69, Nathan Eldridge
- ⁹ *1840 United States Federal*, Roane County, Tennessee, Roll 535, Page 76, Rebecca Eldridge
- ¹⁰ *1850 United States Federal Census*, Johnson Township, St Francis County, Arkansas Roll M432.30 Page 53 Image 107 James M Eldridge, Henry Eldridge, Rebecca Eldridge, and Mosley families
- ¹¹ *1860 United States Federal Census*, Union Township, Ripley County, Missouri, Roll M653.643, Image: 484
- ¹² *Legislative Petitions*, Book 12 for the year 1813, Tennessee State Archives, Memorial Building, Nashville, Tennessee
- ¹³ *Tennessee Land Grant #17535*, Tennessee State Library and Archives, 403 Seventh Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37243 registered in Book 9, page 406, dated 21 June 1822, Grant for 50 acres in Overton, TN
- ¹⁴ *Wills and Probates*, Randolph County, Arkansas, County Clerk's Office, Pocahontas AR, Will Book 1, page 309
- ¹⁵ *Tennessee Land Grants*, Tennessee State Library and Archives, 403 Seventh Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37243, Mountain District, Book 2, Page 496, Grant# 2837
- ¹⁶ *Tennessee Land Grants*, Tennessee State Library and Archives, 403 Seventh Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37243, Mountain District, Book 2, Page 533, Grant# 2876
- ¹⁷ *Tennessee Land Grants*, Tennessee State Library and Archives, 403 Seventh Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37243, Mountain District, Book E, Page 372-373, Grant# 3589
- ¹⁸ *Overton County Locator Book 1833 to 1859*, Transcribed and typed by Mrs. Bettie (Peterman) Owen, published by the Overton County Tennessee Archives Project, Locator No. 1357 page 57
- ¹⁹ *"History, Tennessee, My People, And Me"*, Charles S. Eldridge, Privately Issued 1991, page 223

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- ²⁰ *Overton County Locator Book 1833 to 1859*, Transcribed and typed by Mrs. Bettie (Peterman) Owen, published by the Overton County Tennessee Archives Project, Locator No. 1225, page 3
- ²¹ *Overton County Locator Book 1833 to 1859*, Transcribed and typed by Mrs. Bettie (Peterman) Owen, published by the Overton County Tennessee Archives Project, Locator No. 1344, page 51
- ²² *Overton County, Tennessee, County Court Minutes, February 1844 to November 1849*, Transcribed, typed and indexed by Vonnie Looper Munnerlyn, published by the Overton County Tennessee Archives Project, document page 238, May 12th 1847
- ²³ *Overton County, Tennessee, County Court Minutes, February 1844 to November 1849*, Transcribed, typed and indexed by Vonnie Looper Munnerlyn, published by the Overton County Tennessee Archives Project, document page 290 February 7th 1848
- ²⁴ *Overton County, Tennessee, County Court Minutes, February 1844 to November 1849*, Transcribed, typed and indexed by Vonnie Looper Munnerlyn, published by the Overton County Tennessee Archives Project, document page 123, June 1st 1846
- ²⁵ Arkansas 1830-1839 Tax Lists Index, Columbia Township, Lawrence County, Arkansas, Year: 1833, Allen Deck, Zechariah Eldridge, Sampson Eldridge, Stephen Eldridge Page: 12 and 13, Jackson, Ron V., Accelerated Indexing Systems, comp. Arkansas Census, 1819-70. Provo, UT, USA: The Generations Network, Inc., 1999. Original data: Compiled and digitized by Mr. Jackson and AIS from microfilmed schedules of the U.S. Federal Decennial Census, territorial/state censuses, and/or census substitutes. [Online] <http://www.ancestry.com>
- ²⁶ 1860 United States Federal Census, Place: District 6, Overton County, Tennessee; Roll: M653.1267; Page: 212; Image: 431, Mary Ann Eldridge
- ²⁷ 1850 United States Federal Census, Marine, Madison County Illinois, Roll M432.119, Page 561, Image 458, James Eldridge and family 2nd listing for 1850
- ²⁸ 1850 United States Federal Census, Morgan County Illinois, Roll M432.122, Page 339, Image 342, James Eldridge and family 1st listing for 1850
- ²⁹ 1820 United States Federal Census, Overton Co., Tennessee, Roll M33.122, Page 254, Image: 213, Zachariah Eldridge
- ³⁰ 1830 United States Federal Census, Overton County, Tennessee, Roll: 179, Page: 213, Mary Ann Eldridge
- ³¹ 1840 United States Federal Census, Overton County, Tennessee, Roll: 533, Page: 33, Mary Ann Eldridge
- ³² 1850 United States Federal Census, District 6, Overton County, Tennessee, Roll: M432.892, Page: 50a, Image: 101, Mary Ann Eldridge
- ³³ 1900 United States Federal Census, Civil District 6, Overton County, Tennessee, Roll T623-1591, Page 5B, James Rooker, Susan Eldridge
- ³⁴ *Overton County, Tennessee, County Court Minutes, February 1844 to November 1849*, Transcribed, typed and indexed by Vonnie Looper Munnerlyn, published by the Overton County Tennessee Archives Project, document page 31 of the July Court 1844, July 1st, 1844, Bond for minor children Susan and James Eldridge
- ³⁵ 1840 United States Federal Census, Fayette County, Tennessee, Roll 521, Page 154
- ³⁶ 1830 United States Federal Census, Hardeman County, Tennessee, Roll 176, Page 383

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- ³⁷ *Overton County, Tennessee, County Court Minutes, February 1844 to November 1849*, Transcribed, typed and indexed by Vonnie Looper Munnerlyn, published by the Overton County Tennessee Archives Project, document page 69 of the June Court 1845, June 2nd, 1845, Jefferson Eldridge road work
- ³⁸ *1840 United States Federal*, Shelby County, Tennessee, Roll 530, Page 212, Rolfe Eldridge
- ³⁹ *1850 United States Federal Census*, District 10, Shelby County, Tennessee, Roll M432.895, Page 184, Image 569, Rolfe Eldridge
- ⁴⁰ *1840 United States Federal Census, Fayette County, Tennessee*, Roll 521, Page 154
- ⁴¹ *1830 United States Federal Census, Hardeman County, Tennessee*, Roll 176, Page 383
- ⁴² *1860 United States Federal Census*, Union Township, Ripley County, Missouri, Roll M653.643, Image 491, Solomon Eldridge, Thomas Eldridge age 19
- ⁴³ *Overton County, Tennessee, County Court Minutes, 1839 to 1844*, Transcribed and typed by Vonnie Looper Munnerlyn, published by the Overton County Tennessee Archives Project, document page 428, October 1843 Term, 25th day of October 1843, State of Tennessee vs. Solomon Eldridge, William Collins and Moses W Copeland the defendants security