

Richard Stevens (1734-1798)

By Jerry Long, Owensboro, Ky., 1986

27 February 1986

Mrs. Willard (Joe Less) Ashby
Rt 4, Box 150
Cadiz, Ky 42211

Dear Mrs. Ashby:

I am sorry it has taken so long, to answer your request. I had several other prior commitments I had to finish.

I have checked for your ancestors Richard Stevens, John Duke (b. 1773) and William Leech (b. c1765) in all the records or Maryland at the Owensboro library. All three families prior to coming to Ohio County, Ky. were all residents of Montgomery County, Maryland. With the shortage of sources available here on Montgomery County and its parent counties I was not able to conclusively prove the parentage or origin of any of your ancestors. From the records I did develop some theories but without more records and hardcore facts they remain only theories.

On Montgomery County the only records available here are militia rosters of the Revolutionary period, 1790 and 1800 censuses, and marriages for some of the parishes of Montgomery County in Barnes' volumes of Maryland Marriages. No will records of Montgomery County are here. The published volumes of Maryland Wills (Colton, Magruder) were all pre 1777, dating before the formation of Montgomery County.

I was especially disappointed in not being able to find any of the marriages for Richard Stevens & Lydia Garner, John Duke & Elizabeth Ann Stevens, and William Leach & Sarah Emily Barnes. The latter two at the time period when they would have married were residents of Montgomery County, and I believe that is where they most likely married, but they did not appear in any of the published Maryland marriages. Barnes' volumes of Maryland marriages contained some marriages of Montgomery County (1776-1800), but it was not inclusive for all of the parishes of Montgomery County. I could not determine if marriage records for the other parishes of Montgomery are available are not. The fact that none of the marriages of the other children of Richard Stevens and Lydia Garner, who had married prior to 1800 while still in Maryland, also did not appear in Barnes' marriages leads me to believe that the home parish in

Montgomery County of the Stevens, Duke and Leach families were not included in these volumes.

No doubt the Stevens, Duke and Leach families as well as the Barnes, Hocker, Phipps, Austin, and many other families of Montgomery County, Md. came to Ohio County, Ky. as the result of the influence and efforts of Rev. Ignatius Pigman. Richard and Lydia Stevens' son, William, had married into the Pigman family. Ignatius Pigman was a noted pioneer minister and land speculator, who before coming to Ohio County, Ky. was a resident of Montgomery County, Md. There in 1777 he married Susannah Lamar, In 1782 he became a minister of the Methodist Church. About 1788 in the interest of his church he came to Kentucky, settling in Ohio County when it was still part of Hardin County. He acquired titles to extensive tracts of land in Ohio County, he returned to Maryland and sold Kentucky lands to his neighbors and friends in Montgomery County. His many land transactions were probably made primarily for the purpose of helping settle Ohio County and establishing a stronghold of followers in his denomination. In 1804 he founded the Bethel Methodist Church, one of the first organized churches of the newly formed Ohio County. Among the founding members of Bethel were the Stevens and Duke families.

Lydia Garner Stevens, widow of Richard, appears in the 1800 census of Montgomery County, Md. According to an article on the Stevens family appearing in the book, History of No Creek, Ohio County, Kentucky by Harry D. Tinsley (Roberts Printing Company, Frankfort, KY, 1953, p29), the Stevens family in the fall of 1800 left Maryland and began their journey to Ohio County, Ky. The 1800 census would have been taken during the summer months of that year and thus shortly before they left. In the household of Lydia (spelled "Stephens" in the census) are two females over 45, one female age 16-26 (who was no doubt her youngest daughter, Charlotte, who would have then been age 22), and one slave. Two other Stevens (Stephens) households appeared in the 1800 Montgomery County, Md. census, those of John and Thomas, sons of Richard and Lydia.

There are: two ways in which census records are presented. One is an alphabetical listing of all of the residents of a county. The second is a listing as the census taker originally compiled it going from house to house in each neighborhood (precinct, parish, etc.) of a county. The first has the advantage of quickly locating someone but it loses some of the information that can be inferred from an in depth study of the second type of listing. The second or regional listing allows you to identify the region of a county where someone was living and enables you to see who his nearest neighbors were, who were also often his relatives.

The 1800 Montgomery County, Md. census listing referred to above is an alphabetical listing. However, the 1790 census of Montgomery County is a regional listing (it did not identify the parishes). In this census two Stevens (Stephens) households are listed, Richard Stephens and James Stephens. The Richard Stephens is almost certainly your ancestor, Richard Stevens and his family. The number in his household and age groupings correspond exactly, with the family

of Richard Stevens and Lydia Garner. The listing indicates that in his household were four males over age 16 (they would have been Richard and his three oldest sons, John the eldest aged at least 20, Thomas then age 19, William over 16), two males under 16 (they would have been Richard and Henry then age 6), and three females (they would have been Richard's wife, Lydia, and his two daughters, Elizabeth Ann then age 14 and Charlotte then age 12). Also in the census the family of Richard Stephens was enumerated only 11 households (indicating they were near neighbors) after three Garner families, who were most likely Richard's in-laws. The Garner families were those of Benjamin, Peter, and Benjamin, they were the only Garner households appearing in the 1790 census. One of the Benjamins appears to have recently married with only three in his house-hold, one being under 16. I would theorize that the other Benjamin was the father of Lydia Garner Stevens. Peter and Benjamin, Jr., but cannot prove.

Your ancestor Richard Stevens died in Maryland sometime between 1790 and 1800. Regarding this I found one interesting item in the book, Maryland Records, Colonial, Revolutionary, County, and Church, by Gaius P. Brumbaugh, Vol. 2 (1928). In a listing of funerals conducted in Montgomery County appears one Richard Stevens during the year of 1798. Since your Richard died during this time period and since only one Richard appears in the 1700 Montgomery census there is a good chance this is your ancestor. The page from this source is enclosed, the columns 1, s, d refer to monetary sums paid to the rector or sexton to cover funeral expenses. When you get access to Montgomery County will or estate records the 1798 date would be something that should be looked into.

Also enclosed on the Stevens family are copies from the following: 1). 1790 Census of Maryland (all of Montgomery County listing with Stevens, Duke and Leach families marked, Richard Stevens appeared on page 89). 2). 1800 Census of Maryland (page from Montgomery County listing with Stevens families). 3). Maryland Marriages, 1634-1777 (by Barnes, (page with Stephens, Stevens marriages; note marriage of William Stevens to Sarah Duke, 1750, in Baltimore County, on the back of this page I have listed the Duke and Leach marriages from this book), 4). The Early Settlers of Maryland (Skordas, 1968; pages showing arrivals in Maryland from overseas prior to 1680 of those of the name of Stevens, Duke, and Leach, note in this source "Liber" refers to book, "folio" to page, immigrated to those who paid own way, and transported to those whose way was paid by someone else).

In Brumbaugh's Maryland Records appeared rosters of militia companies of Montgomery County during the Revolutionary War, in these listings appeared the following: Benjamin Stephens, Edward Stephens, Lewis Stephens, Michael Stephens, John Stevens. William Duke, William Leach Sr., William Leach Jr., Thomas Leach, John Leach, Benjamin Leach, and Josiah Leach.

Only one Duke family, that of John Duke, is enumerated in the 1800 Montgomery County, Pd, census, The listing for this John Duke corresponds exactly with the age groupings of the family of John Duke and Elizabeth Ann Stevens in the 1810 census of Ohio County, Ky. The

John of Montgomery County, Md. is almost certainly the son-in-law of Lydia Garner Stevens who with her and her other children came to Kentucky in the fall of 1800. The 1800 Montgomery County census lists in the household of John Duke: 1 male 26-45, 2 males 0-10, 1 female 26-45, 1 female 16-26, 1 female 0-10. In the 1810 census of Ohio County, Ky. in John Duke's household are: 1 male 26-45, 2 males 10-16, 3 males 0-10, 1 female 26-45, 1 female 10-16, 1 female 0-10.

In the 1700 census of Montgomery County, Md. only one Duke family, that of William Duke, is listed. In his household are 3 males over 16, 4 males under 16, and 8 females. In the militia company rosters of Montgomery County appearing in Brumbaugh's Maryland Records (copy enclosed) only one Duke is listed, who was William Duke in the company of Edward Burgess in 1778. The William Duke in Montgomery County in 1778 is most likely the same William there in 1790. William Duke in the 1790 census was near neighbors of the family of Richard Stevens and Lydia Garner. John Duke who married Elizabeth Ann Stevens would have been about age 17 at the time of the 1790 census and is likely one of the males over 16 listed in the household of William Duke. The fact that William Duke appears to be the only Duke family in the county at the time and his nearness to the Stevens family strongly suggests that William was the father of your ancestor John Duke.

William B Leach, b. c1765, and Leonard Leach, b. c1768, were not in Ohio County, Ky. in 1800 but shortly afterwards in 1801 or 1802 they came to Ohio County. Neither is listed as a head of a household in the 1800 census of Montgomery County, Md. In that census four Leach families are listed: William Sr., Jesse, Basil, and Joshua. The William Sr. is over 45 and does not appear to be the William B. of Ohio County, who was born about 1765 and would have been about 35 in 1800. The fact that the William of the 1800 Montgomery County census is listed as "Sr." indicates there was a younger William who was then (or recently had been) a resident of the county.

In the 1790 Montgomery County census and 1778 Militia rosters of Montgomery County appeared the following Leaches: 1778 roster – William Sr., William Jr., John, Benjamin, Thomas & Josiah; 1790 roster – William, William Jr. (?b. c1765), Thomas, Josiah and Leonard (b. c1768).

The William Leach Jr. in the 1790 census I believe is probably the William B. Leach b. c1765, of Ohio County, Ky. If so he would have then been about 25 and only recently married. In William Jr.'s household in the 1790 census are 1 male over 16 and 2 females, who could be William B., his wife and an infant daughter. He is listed immediately next to another William Leach, this William may be the William Sr. of the 1800 census and the William Jr. of the 1778 Military rosters. The third William in the 1790 census may be the William Sr. of 1778 and deceased by 1800. If this guesswork is correct I would theorize that your William B. was a son of a William Leach (?b. 1740's) and a grandson of another William Leach (?b. 1720's). The wills,

estate, court orders, deeds, etc. of Montgomery County may be a big help in proving or disproving this.

It seems that most of what I have to offer is only guesswork. However, study of the problem, formation of theory (educated guesses) and further research guided by theory forms the basis for future genealogical research. Continuing along this line I would speculate that the Duke, Leach, and Garner families may have all been in Calvert County, Maryland before coming into the Montgomery County area. This is based on several facts. In the parent counties of Montgomery County - Frederick and Prince George I did not find these names in the early records of those counties. Families in earlier times frequently migrated together and were interrelated across several generations. In Calvert County these same family names were to be found prior to 1700. The families of Brooke and Dawkins who intermarried with the Calvert County Dukes were also to be found later in Montgomery County. The names of Leach and Duke also appear in Anne Arundel County and Baltimore County which are just north of Calvert County and east of Montgomery County, suggesting these families may have first migrated north and then westward.

The book Register Of Maryland's Heraldic Families states that the progenitor of the Calvert County Dukes was James Duke (copies are enclosed). James' father, Richard Duke, was a descendant of "The Duke of Lake", Devonshire, England, a knight. Richard Duke came to Maryland in 1634 with his family on "The Ark and Dove". Richard and his family except for his son, James, returned to England. James Duke remained in Maryland and later purchased part of "Brooke Place Manor" from the Lord Robert Brooke in Calvert County.

Ancestor of many of the Calvert County Leach families was a John Leach who died in that county in 1699. He left a will naming four sons: Ambrose, James, Jeremiah and John. His Sons Ambrose, Jeremiah, and John also recorded wills in Calvert County. Abstracts of their wills as well as their father, John's 1699, appeared in Maryland Calendar of Wills by Colton, copies are enclosed. John Leach, Jr. died 1714 in his will he named the following children: John, Samuel, Mary, Elizabeth, Margaret, Alice (the fact his daughters were not yet married suggests he was fairly young, possibly in his 40's which would make him born in the 1670's). Jeremiah Leach (son of John Sr.) died 1722, his will names his wife Elizabeth and children James, Jeremiah, Charles, and Mary. Ambrose Leach (son of John Sr.) died 1744, his will names sons Ambrose Jr. (? Ambrose Leach married Elizabeth Nearn, 7 July 1748 in Baltimore County), Joshua, and William (? could this be the William Sr. in Montgomery County in 1778).

I am sure you are well aware of the fact that John Duke and his wife, Elizabeth Ann Stevens, are buried in the Bethel Cemetery, Ohio County, Ky. In the area of Bethel, Horton, Rosine many of my ancestors also lived (Long, Ashford, Watson, Wilson). I have some questions about some Dukes of Ohio County I thought I would ask just in case you might know something about them. Caleb Boswell married first Lydia Duke (d/o John & Elizabeth) and second Cynthia Watson (a sister of my ancestor Hampton Watson). Lydia Duke Boswell had two

daughters, Matilda and Amanda, would you know what happened to them? Do you know who were the parents of the following two Dukes: 1). Henderson Duke born c1826 Ohio County, Ky. married Elizabeth Wilson, 6 May 1854 Ohio County, Ky. 2). John Duke born prior to 1809 married Elvira E. Mason, 4 June 1831 Ohio County, Ky., he died between 1834-1850.

At the Owensboro Library I found the names of two other Leach researchers, who I thought I would list just in case you had not made contact with them. Both are descendants of William B. Leach, b .c1765. Lois Leach Young, 1822 Webster, San Angelo, Texas, 47690, she is a descendant through William's son Joseph, b. 12 October 1795 Md.; Janice Cox Brown, Rt. 1, Box 279, Arp, Texas, 75750, she is a descendant through William's daughter Susannah Miranda Leach born 15 May 1807 Ohio County, Ky., married Thomas Jefferson Cox. On Mrs. Brown's ancestor chart she has that William Brooks Leach was born 1765 in Charles County or Montgomery County, she may have some information that may link the Leaches to Charles County.

I hope that I have found something that will be of help. I wish we had more Maryland records available here. In all I spent 12 hours of research time and spent \$2.80 in making xeroxes (28 copies). Since I took so long in answering your letter I will request \$25.00 and not for my full time. Thank you for your request.

Yours truly,
Jerry Long

1701 Alexander Ave.
Owensboro, KY 42303

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Hartford Herald, Hartford, KY, 5 July 1899, p1:

Ohio County 100 Years Ago
Biography of the Stevens
And Other Families.
Some Very Interesting History That
Goes Back to the Early Days Of Kentucky
By R. T. Stevens

Kentucky was formerly a county of Virginia. In 1790 it was formed into a separate territory, and in 1792 it was admitted into the Union as a state.

The glowing accounts that reached the older states, concerning Kentucky, the cheapness of the land, the fertility of the soil, and the abundance of game, stimulated hundreds of families in the older states, especially in Virginia and Maryland to seek a home in Kentucky.

Of this number there was a family of Stevenses then residing in Montgomery County, Maryland. Lydia Stevens, then a widow, was the head of the family. She had five sons: John, William, Thomas, Richard, and Henry; and two daughters, Elizabeth and Charlotte. Three of the

sons and one daughter were married. John married a Miss Smith; William, a Miss Pigman; Thomas, a Miss Warfield; and Elizabeth married John Duke. Richard, Henry, and Charlotte were single.

For some time they had been making preparations and directing all their efforts to one point, and that point was emigrate to Kentucky. In the fall of 1800, the entire family, being equipped for the journey, loaded their house-hold goods, such as could be taken on wagons, harnessed their teams, and started on their long and tedious journey.

By slow stages they journeyed on, until they had crossed the Allegheny Mountains and had arrived at Wheeling, a town on the Ohio River. Winter had then set in. They stopped here and built a family boat. When completed, they put their goods and families aboard, and, loosing from shore, they started again on their journey, this time by water. Two of the company came through by land, bringing their horses. They continued their voyage down the Ohio River, until they came to Cloverport, Breckinridge County, Kentucky. Here they landed their boat, and here those who had charge of the horses met them. It was now January 1801. From the above, one may learn something of the time required and the hardships to be borne, at that day, to come to Kentucky.

Here they reloaded their property and families into wagons, harnessed, their teams, and started again. They now traveled south or southwest until they came into Ohio County and into the vicinity of Hartford. Here they stopped, and after overlooking the county, they decided to settle. In selecting situations for homes, they divided. John Stevens, the eldest of the brothers, settled about five miles east of Hartford, on what was called Pigeon Creek. William, next in years, settled about seven miles northeast of Hartford, on Wolf Creek, and John Duke settled about seven miles east of Hartford, near where old Bethel Church now (1899) stands. Thomas settled three miles west of Hartford, in the No Creek neighborhood. Lydia Stevens, the mother of this family, with her two unmarried sons, Richard and Henry, and her single daughter, Charlotte, settled nearby where Thomas had located.

The country was then almost a wilderness, covered by a dense forest. The hills were covered with pea vines, and the lower lands with a heavy undergrowth of reeds, or cane, higher than one's head on horseback. Large numbers of wild animals roamed the forest. Wolves made the nights hideous with their howling. Bears, panthers, wildcats, and many other noxious animals infested the country. It was necessary to corral stock at night to save them from the depredations of those beasts of prey. The panther, when pinched by hunger, would not hesitate to attack the human.

On one occasion, my father, William Stevens, had gone out on a hunt. While walking along a small path, he was startled by a scream almost over his head. He looked up and there, lying stretched out on the limb of a tree, was a large panther. He instantly raised his rifle and fired, and the monster fell to the ground. Fortunately, it had received a death shot. If I am not mistaken, it was said to have measured nine feet from tip of nose to tip of tail.

A bear would sometimes create quite a sensation in the community by making a raid on domestic animals. Perhaps he had pulled down a yearling calf or a young heifer, Or, if he preferred, a porker. He may have taken one, even if he had to go in the pen to get it. The news spread rapidly through the community; men with their guns and dogs were soon on the ground, ready for chase. A search was made for the trail of the intruder. When found the dogs were put on it, and a merry chase ensued. The bear, when over-taken, generally gave battle. Dogs sometimes suffered in the fight, but the bear could not stand the unequal contest. The array of men, guns, and dogs was too much for him. He had to yield to the inevitable and give up his life

to pay the penalty of his rashness. Those hunters not only enjoyed the chase and the capture of the intruder, but they would have a feast of bear meat, which by many was considered quite a luxury.

There were many other wild animals, deer, wild turkeys, and squirrels, any of which were very fine for table use. There remained of these a considerable number for 40 or more years after the coming of those pioneers to Kentucky.

After all, the early, pioneers of Kentucky had no very easy task. It took a great deal of hard labor to roll back the heavy forests and open up farms. As money was very scarce, something rarely seen, they kept up a kind of commerce among themselves by an exchange of one species of property for another. They were compelled, however, to have money to pay their taxes and buy their salt, but that amount they found very difficult to obtain. Besides, they had to go a long way to the saltworks to obtain salt and bring it home on packhorses, for there were no roads at that time suitable for wagons.

As far as clothing was concerned, they were quite independent. They had wool and raised cotton and flax. Our mothers, God bless their memory, had their spinning wheels, looms, scissors, thimbles, and needles and knew how to use them. They could make all clothing needed for their families, and they could make all their own bedding.

Not a great while after the Stevens family came to Kentucky, all those members of the family that were single when they came had married. Richard married a Miss Henman; Charlotte, married Higginson Belt; and Henry, the youngest, married a Miss Bennett, daughter of John Bennett, Sr., commonly called Governor Bennett. Richard, soon after his marriage, moved to Indiana and settled in Warrick County near Boonville, the county seat. Higginson and Henry both settled in the No Creek neighborhood. All the branches of this family reared a family of children, except Charlotte. She had no children, but she and her husband reared several orphaned children. From the original stock, there are many scions. In almost any direction, one may find those in Ohio County who have descended from the original Stevens family that emigrated from Maryland to Kentucky at an early day. Indeed their descendants are not confined alone to Ohio County, but may be found in Daviess, McLean, and Muhlenberg counties and in different states of the Union.

In a few years time, all the branches of the original family, by industry and frugality, had gathered around them the necessities, as well as many of the comforts of life. When old age came upon them, they were in easy circumstances and had means sufficient to raise them above the fear of want when they should become too old to work.

It would be improper to close this sketch without making some allusion to the standing of those early pioneers as citizens of the new commonwealth. We are safe in saying that they had a very considerable influence in molding the community in which they lived. They were Methodists before they came to Kentucky, old-time Methodists, and therefore the staunch supporters of order and good morals. They were of those who took a leading part in the building of Old Bethel Church, about the first, if not the first, church that was built in Ohio County. Goshen Church was built about the same time, and a few years afterwards No Creek Church was built. There was a campground at Old Bethel Church and also at No Creek. The Stevenses were among the leaders in building those camps and in making all necessary preparations for those annual camp meetings that were kept up for so many years.

They were not office seekers. They seemed to have practiced the principle of "let the office seek the man and not the man the office." They were, however, called to fill important positions in the church, as well as in the state. In the church there were those of the family (I

refer to the original family) who filled the office of class leader, of steward and trustee of church property, and other responsible positions in the church. In the county, they held responsible positions.

The magistrates of the county at that day, constituted the county court. Three of the brothers served a full term each as a magistrate of the county. A full term meant from the time they were commissioned until by seniority they were entitled to the office of sheriff. The constitution then provided that at the end of every two years the oldest magistrate of the county should come in as sheriff of the county, hence three of the brothers served as sheriff of the county.

At one time, John Stevens, the eldest of the brothers, was strongly solicited to become a candidate for the legislature, but he refused. His friends were so sanguine of success that they insisted on him permitting them to have his name put on the poll book, urging that if he would consent to that, his election would be assured. This he respectfully but positively declined to do. Of this circumstance I was informed by one who took part in the matter.

To show the sympathy and generosity of the early settlers of Ohio County toward one whom they believed to have been greatly wronged, I relate a remarkable circumstance that occurred in the early settlement of the county. I will give it as well as I can from memory, having heard it related by the early settlers in my boyhood days.

There resided in the county, and near neighbor to some of the Stevens family, a man with a family. (I regret that I have forgotten the name) who was recognized by all his acquaintances and especially by his immediate neighbors as a strictly honest, upright man. No one questioned his moral honesty. Suddenly the whole community was stunned by the report that this man had stolen a horse. He was arrested, brought into court, tried, found guilty, and sentenced to the penitentiary. The whole proceeding rested on circumstantial testimony. His acquaintances believed him innocent, and those best acquainted with him were the most sanguine in this belief. The horse had been stolen, no one doubted that, and was found in this man's possession, or on his premises. This could not be denied. He had no way of proving that he had not stolen the horse, nor of how the horse happened to be there.

Might it not be that the real thief, being hotly pursued, left the horse with this man or on his premises, for the purpose of eluding his pursuers, throwing them off his track, and gaining time to make his escape? This man's acquaintances were still decidedly of opinion that he was an innocent man, that it was by some trick or misfortune that he had been brought into this trouble. They therefore determined to use all legitimate means to relieve him. They got up a strong petition to the Governor, asking him to use the pardoning power in his behalf. William Steven was chosen by the petitioners to go before the Governor with the petition and present the case. This he did, and to the gratification of a large number of his friends, the unfortunate man was pardoned. He proved in after life to be all that his friends claimed of him, an honest and upright man.

I have gone beyond what I anticipated when I commenced to sketch the coming to and settlement of those pioneers in Kentucky. I will say in conclusion that if anyone ever expressed doubt of the integrity or moral honesty of any one of them, I have never heard of it. They filled well their place in life and left the world the better by having lived in it.

It is ardently hoped that the descendants of so worthy an ancestry will guard well the heritage that has been bequeathed to them, and see that it is transmitted unsullied to their children, as it has come to them from the original family.

There were several other families that came from Maryland and settled in Ohio County.
The Barnes, Millers, Dukes, Belts, Boswells, Actons, and Bennetts, and perhaps others.
Those named were all good families and therefore made good citizens.

R. T. Stevens