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Rick L. Sherrod

Stephenville High School

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The Road Less Traveled: Or, Some Antebellum Arrivals to Texas Out of Illinois
By Rick L. Sherrod

In the popular imagination, Robert Frost’s famous poem, “The Road Not Taken” (1916), has wrongly come to connote the idea of a “road less traveled.” Although the Frost work indeed contains the phrase “one [road] less traveled,” even a casual reading of the poetry reveals that both roads, while leading to different destinations, are essentially the same in terms of wear and tear. The dilemma of the traveler at the juncture where the pathway diverges is not whether to chance trekking down a thoroughfare that few have dared to go. Rather, it is having only time and opportunity to take one road or the other. Literary analysis aside, roads less traveled do in fact exist. The poem’s focus was not about that kind of road, but the present discourse is.

At least in metaphor, Illinoisans abandoning their antebellum Midwestern homesteads to exploit unfolding opportunities in faraway southern climes moved along a decidedly less used road. Far fewer nineteenth-century northerners—particularly Illinoisans—came to Texas than did southerners. So clearly indicates the mid-twentieth century census analysis of Barnes F. Lathrop regarding points of origin for immigrants to Texas from 1835 through 1860. A little more than a decade later, Homer L. Kerr found similar results exploring the identical theme while focusing on migratory patterns from 1860 through 1880.1

Lathrop’s conclusions regarding “sources of migration into East Texas to 1860” finds eight states as the principal contributors, all of them southern if one includes slaveholding Kentucky and Missouri.

Rick L. Sherrod is the Social Studies Coordinator at Stephenville (TX) High School
These eight, led by Alabama (20.8%), Tennessee (16.4%), and Mississippi (15.6%), comprised the source of origin for almost 91% of the total 1860 Texas population. Illinoisan immigrants constituted the largest portion of northern arrivals, but the 2.2% they contributed seems paltry in comparison to the overwhelming majority which was of southern character, background, culture, and experience. Kerr’s later analysis of trends from 1860 through 1880 reveals that Illinois moved past Kentucky into the seventh spot, and also increased from 2.2 to 3.7 as a percentage of the whole. Nevertheless, during this later period the six southern states still ahead of Illinois constituted an overwhelming 70.3 percent of the “sources of migration into Texas.”

It is dangerous to reflexively assume that all Texas-bound migrants originating in the north were “Yankees” who departed from the migratory southern norm. As modest as this flow of nineteenth-century northerners in general and Illinoisans in particular may have been, the true northern contribution to the expanding population of Texas, particularly prior to statehood, was even less than prima facie evidence suggests. Lathrop’s depersonalized number crunching of census data reveals a clear macrocosmic, antebellum demographic trend showing that the kinship group examined in this study was part of a far larger phenomenon that represented about ten percent of the 1835-1860 migration coming into Texas.

According to Lathrop, a whopping eighty-two and a half percent of the parents who came from Illinois to Texas were born in southern states. That percentage rises to ninety-four if Kentucky and Missouri are included. “Illinois” immigrants to Texas were in fact contributors to one of three major, post-American Revolution streams of migration eventually populating Texas. Their particular stream “ran westward, primarily from
Virginia, secondarily from North Carolina and Maryland, to the Ohio River valley, first into Kentucky and Ohio, then onward to Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri. People of this stream, usually second or third generation, became Texas settlers from Kentucky and Missouri, Indiana and Illinois.” Those included in this group “were essentially upper Southern in origin” and contributed about “one-tenth” to the total 1835-1860 migration into Texas.⁴

Consequently, many “Illinoisan” immigrants to Texas had ancestral roots extending backward not to northern states but to those same southern locations which provided the lion’s share of American citizens rapidly populating first Mexican Texas, and shortly thereafter the Texas Republic. If the logic of families with deep southern roots migrating to Illinois seems paradoxical, one must remember that it was not until 1784, that Virginia—the “Mother of All”—relinquished its claim to almost all the territory that eventually became the state of Illinois.⁵

Thus for many Illinoisan immigrants to Texas, Illinois was the most recent point of origin but not the crucible in which longstanding traditional family values, culture, and perspectives had been shaped. Indeed, some turn-of-the-nineteenth-century southerners experimented with a Midwestern sojourn in lands newly opened by the Northwest Ordinances of 1785 and 1787, and later still by the Enabling Act of 1802 setting the stage for statehood. At least some of these travelers found that their newly established domiciles in northern latitudes to be wanting. The relocation of those who eventually moved to Texas was not an aberration from family tradition but rather a return to the old and familiar, the culturally tried and true. It was a reuniting with fellow southerners in
perhaps the most attractive and promising frontier available to aspiring immigrants of the 1830s and 40s.
This model applies well to one particular kinship group that moved from Illinois to Texas during those two decades. These families were not a part of America’s antebellum rich and famous, but rather from among those “plain folk” elevated to historical status by Frank Owsley and the scholars who have followed in his historiographical wake. Any eighteenth century slaveholding by members of the group is modest or entirely absent, so a move into the Northwest Territory, where slavery was prohibited, would not have been economically disadvantageous. Meanwhile, good, fertile land in the “public domain” was available at relatively low federal prices. Moreover, the territory that became the state of Illinois in 1818 would have been tempting to any
aspiring northern or southern family that hankered for a fresh start on the developing American agricultural frontier.

During the 1830s, the kinship group examined herein moved into what, at the time, was either the Sabine District or Vehlein Colony. The principal “pentapolis” of families coming to Texas directly from Illinois included Batemans, Lindleys, Littles, Sadlers, and Whitleys (see family tree, *Figure 1*). Also part of the larger kinship cluster were collateral lines like the Pursleys, the Collards, Spillers, and Keltons, whose early-nineteenth century origins were primarily in South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, and Missouri. The integrated five-family network at the core of the kinship group was far more southern than northern or Midwestern. Their two- to three-decade residence in what later became the Land of Lincoln did little to diminish any enthusiasm for moving comfortably and easily back into a transplanted body of categorically southern immigrants gone to Texas, over 90% of which flowed out of Alabama, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri, and Kentucky.

The story of this kinship network dramatically illustrates the reciprocal interaction of three powerful nineteenth century forces: kinship, migration, and settlement patterns, all influences that combined to populate the steadily westward moving nineteenth-century American agricultural frontier. The group’s movements into Illinois, within Illinois, and subsequently to and throughout Texas illustrate two of the most potent push-pull factors that became the *deus ex machina* that rapidly filled fertile, open frontier lands inviting aggressive settlement.
Figure 1
BATEMAN, LINDLEY, LITTLE, SADLER, & WHITLEY KINSHIP GROUP

*Randolph Whitley = Tabitha Saunders
1745-1785
both from Isle of Wight, VA
1750-1793

John Bateman = Tabitha Whitley (*Randolph’s niece)
1746-1826 (IL)
m. Isle of Wight, VA
1750-1812 (IL)

John Saunders Whitley = Bathsheba Bateman
1770 (Isle of Wight) -
1838 (Coles Co, IL)

Abraham Bateman = Mary “Polly” Whitley
b. 1772 (Isle of Wight, VA)
d. 1836 (Bond Co., IL)
b. 1760-70 VA

William Little Sr? = Catherine?
b. 1760-70 VA

9 other children (2 married to Littles, lower right)

Nancy Bateman = Robert Duncan

Elizabeth Bateman = John Little
b. 1807 (TN or IL)
d. 1856 (TX)
b. abt 1802
d. 1854 (TX)

Elizabeth Whitley = Samuel Washington Lindley
b. 1795 (Isle of Wight)
d. 1838 Montgomery Co., TX

Abram J. Little = Mary E. Grooms
1827 (IL)-1896 (TX)
1833 (TN) – 1913 (TX)

Samuel Little = Sarah Nichols
b. 1780-1790 SC
b. 1801-1805 SC

Mary Lindley = Hiram Little
b. 1813 (Sangamon Co., IL)
d. 1891 (Willis, Montgomery Co., TX)
b. 1809 (Bond Co., IL)

Lydia Little = William Pursley
b. 1778 SC
b. abt 1784

Elizabeth Little = Mills Whitley
b. abt 1793 IL
b. 1778 SC

Sarah Little = Sharp Whitley
b. 1802
b. 1791 (Isle of Wight, VA)

Mills & Sharp Whitley were sons of J. S. Whitley & Bathsheba Bateman (upper left)

Barsheba Lindley = John Sadler
b. 1811 (Bond Co, IL)
d. 1885 (Limestone Co., TX)

d. 1893 (Willis, Montgomery Co., TX)
b. 1810 (TN)
d. 1885 (Limestone Co., TX)

Hiram Little
b. 1809 (Bond Co., IL)
d. 1891 (Willis, Montgomery Co., TX)

This family tree is based on federal census records from 1790-1880; state, county, and local land, tax, probate, and church documents; and the written and oral testimony of numerous descendants of the kinship network above. All aspects of the William Little line are not completely proven. However, the above reconstruction is the most logical interpretation based on the surviving documentary evidence. More importantly, the exact parentage of Little family members is less important than the intricate and intertwined nature of the marriage ties within larger kinship group.
Pulling eager migrants was inexpensive farmland—initially Illinois tracts selling at $2.00 an acre and, later still, the even less expensive league and labor—4,605 acres—available to married men who moved to Texas. Both opportunities had tremendous appeal. Both were early versions of “The American Dream,” the prospect of landownership that had drawn Europeans across the Atlantic since the very establishment of England’s New World colonies. A different force pushed at least some nineteenth century Americans from the established settled regions in the east to the periphery, to the edge of the unused. This class of migrant often exhibited an inborn claustrophobia. The urge, the itch to move to free and open spaces became irresistible as each new thinly populated agricultural frontier began to resemble those more heavily-settled areas from which such migrants had most recently come.

Mightily driven by enmity toward overcrowding and seductively drawn by the lure of inexpensive land beyond the immediate horizon, members of the kinship group examined here were part of that north-to-south flow of immigrants who reached Texas either shortly before the Revolution of 1836 or not long thereafter. They were part of the 4% coming to East Texas from Illinois between 1836 and 1840. Their most recent point of origin notwithstanding, they contributed to the definitively southern character of migration into antebellum Texas. Their story reveals the critical role that kinship connections played in nineteenth century America, particularly among migratory collections of travelers headed into terra incognita.

It is difficult today to fathom the importance of extended family in the lives of most antebellum southerners. From the First Families of Virginia to common Virginian farming families, thick kinship ties, especially in frontier settings, often included double
cousins—the product of siblings in one family marrying brothers or sisters from another—and, in a tradition surprisingly commonplace among those with Virginian roots, even occasional first-cousin marriages. Such powerful links magnified the importance of family in extraordinary ways, especially during the extended family’s initial decade in a new location. Some members of the kinship pentapolis first met in Illinois, but others forged critical connections well before the group converged on southern Illinois’ frontier. The trail each family left along respective routes remains discernible.

Over the decades, some of these families retained oral traditions, particularly about routes taken from southern Tidewater states to Illinois and subsequently to Texas. On the one hand, the credibility of such “histories” can be suspect. On the other, these traditions assume authenticity when considered in light of consistent affirming nativity information preserved in the four federal population censuses from 1850 through 1880. Where a credible trail exists prior to the family’s arrival in America, it unfailingly leads to the British Isles.

Such was the case for the Whitleys whose European origins extend to Frodsham in England’s County Cheshire. The family reached Virginia in the early-seventeenth century, ultimately taking up long-term residence in the “Southside” county, Isle of Wight. During the eighteenth century, the Southside—that southernmost portion of early Virginia located south of the James River—became one of the greatest wellsprings of the south-by-southwestern migration that rapidly populated the expanding southern agricultural frontier. By the late-seventeenth century, an ever-increasing stream of migrants out of the Southside sought escape from Virginia’s diminishing opportunities for political, economic, and social advancement, as well as declining productivity on
tobacco lands that had been pressed beyond their limitations. Initially, most such migrants followed the path dictated by local geography. Typically, they traveled south down Virginia’s smaller river valleys like the Blackwater and Meherrin into North Carolina. There these migrants established homesteads first near the mouths of the rivers emptying into the Atlantic; then successively moved upriver along the Chowan, Roanoke, Tar, and Neuse. Later in a different location, the Whitley migration would also follow river valleys—ones leading them through Tennessee and Kentucky into Illinois.

The Whitleys contributed late to the outflow of population from the Southside. The family was still in Isle of Wight at the August 4, 1791 marriage of John Saunders Whitley (1770-1838) to Bathsheba Bateman, the groom’s first cousin once removed. According to family tradition, not long after the marriage, the families of both John and his brother Sharp R. Whitley (abt. 1783-1860) left Isle of Wight, migrating first to North Carolina, and later still to White County on the westward side of the Cumberland Mountains in central Tennessee. John’s son Abraham was born in the Volunteer State in 1804. John’s family sojourned in Tennessee at least through 1806 and the birth of another son, William. Soon thereafter, the Whitleys trekked northward to the Cumberland River and followed nature’s highway to Livingston County, Kentucky (on Christian County’s western border),\(^\text{12}\) where the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers empty together into the Ohio. The journey placed the Whitleys across the river from the southern tip of Illinois where the family quickly exploited early-nineteenth century opportunities.

Like the Whitleys, Bathsheba Bateman’s family had roots in Virginia’s Southside, specifically Nansemond and Isle of Wight counties where evidence of their presence liberally seasons the eighteenth-century public record.\(^\text{13}\) In fact, John S. Whitley’s
marriage to Bathsheba Bateman postdates a preexisting Virginia Bateman-Whitley connection. In 1768 Isle of Wight, Bathsheba’s father John Bateman (1746-1826) wed Tabitha Whitley (1745-1812). She was the sister of Randolph Whitley (1745-1785), who, in turn, was the father of Bathsheba’s husband, John S. Whitley (1770-1838). Intertwining the Whitleys and Batemans more tightly still, Bathsheba Bateman’s younger brother Abraham married her husband’s sister, Mary “Polly” Whitley. Not surprisingly, several of Abraham and Mary Bateman’s children—ones born in the early-nineteenth century—show Tennessee nativity. This telltale sign suggests that the Whitleys and Batemans traveled in harness on the route that eventually led some members of both families to Illinois.

So possibly did the Lindley family whose European origins were in Bally Brommell, County Carlow, in east central Ireland. Thomas Lindley Sr. (1705-1781) led the eighteenth-century Lindley immigration out of Ireland to America. His 1731 Chester County, Pennsylvania marriage to fellow-Irish immigrant, Ruth Hadley, produced eleven children. By 1753, the Lindleys had moved from Pennsylvania to Orange County, North Carolina. The family’s seventh-born child, John Lindley (1747-1798) and John’s wife Sarah Pyle built a large family that eventually relocated in South Carolina where John died in Anderson County on July 5, 1798.

Several years prior to his decease, John’s oldest son Simon (1769-1837) had moved to Salisbury County, North Carolina. That move became the prelude to an even longer migration about 1808 taking him to Christian County in southwestern Kentucky on Tennessee’s northern border. In the early 1800s, the Cumberland River coursed not far to the west of Christian County. Consequently, many migrants like the Lindleys,
Whitleys, and Batemans either passed through the county or sojourned there for a time before moving northwestward into southern Illinois.  

Simon Lindley reached Christian County no later than the fall of 1803. He appears to be the “scout,” that family member who charted the pathway for a host of siblings who either accompanied or eventually followed him. By the time the Lindley migration had run its course, Simon and nine of his younger brothers—William, John, Thomas, Jehu, Jacob Marion, Samuel, Jonathan, and Joseph—all had moved to Illinois. Simon reached that destination no later than the spring of 1808 when, as a Primitive Baptist “messenger,” he preached the first sermon at Shelton’s Fort in what later became Bond County.

John Lindley’s eighth-born son—Samuel Washington Lindley (1788-1859)—would live a remarkably mobile life, ultimately overseeing family relocations to both Illinois and Texas. He was born in South Carolina, probably in the Pendleton District in the state’s northwestern corner. Like Simon, Samuel came into Illinois by way of the Bluegrass State. On June 5, 1809, in Christian County, Kentucky, he wed his first cousin Mary Hall. Some Lindley family members, including Samuel’s mother Sarah Pyle Lindley and his brother Thomas, remained behind in Christian County. Samuel, however, moved to Illinois not long after his marriage. He quickly remarried following Mary’s death in 1810, taking to wife—who else?—Elizabeth Whitley, the third-born child of John Saunders and Bathsheba Bateman Whitley. By their May 1810 Madison County, Illinois, marriage, the couple had caught up with the Whitley family who forsook Kentucky for Illinois no later than 1807. Was there a Whitley-Bateman-Lindley connection prior to the arrival of all three families in southern Illinois? Whether or not
there was, all three families took the same general path through southwestern Kentucky to their Illinois destination.

The kinship group settled in a belt of counties across Southern Illinois.

While Simon Lindley spent the remainder of his life in Illinois, Samuel remained only two decades, after which he headed south to Texas. Samuel’s late position in the family birth order—tenth of eleven—may have made him a classic example of the “younger son syndrome.” In nineteenth century America, particularly among southern agricultural families, older sons often remained relatively stationary. Younger male
offspring, sometimes left without significant inheritance, occasionally felt a greater need than older siblings to migrate to secure their fortunes. Perhaps this impulse drove Samuel. The property available to him in Mexican Texas dwarfed any inheritance he could have provided from his Illinois holdings for his sizable family, which eventually numbered fourteen children. Finally, by the early 1830s Illinois may simply have become too crowded for Samuel’s frontier-loving taste. Along with two of his brothers—Joseph (last in the birth order) and Jacob Marion (sixth-born son and eighth in the birth order)—Samuel, his wife Elizabeth Whitley, and ten of the couple’s children moved to Texas in 1833.26

One Samuel Lindley descendant who followed the Lindley migration southward to Texas was daughter Mary, who in 1831 Coles County, Illinois, had married Hiram Little (b. 1809 Illinois).27 Hiram was one of a host of Little family members who reached Illinois about the same time as the Lindleys. As Samuel Lindley spent his early life in South Carolina, so the Little family enjoyed residency in the Palmetto State. Kinship ties and marriage shines some light onto an otherwise obscure Little pathway. The Little-Pursley connection well-illustrates the point. The Pursleys originated in County Antrim’s town of Ulster, Ireland. They immigrated to South Carolina sometime after the mid-eighteenth century. In 1798, William Little’s daughter, Lydia Little (b. abt. 1784 South Carolina), married William Pursley in York County, South Carolina. The Littles and Pursleys followed the same general route to Illinois traveled by the Whitleys, Batemans, and Lindleys.

If the Littles and Pursleys departed South Carolina in tandem, they probably both reached Kentucky in 1802 or 1803. Hiram Little’s older brother William was born in the
Bluegrass State about 1805. Pursley genealogists believe two of William and Lydia Little Pursley’s children were also born there: son John (1804-1857) and daughter Louisa (1807-1847). By 1809 if not a year or two before, both the Little and Pursley families arrived in Illinois together.

Little lineage is more difficult to track than that of the Lindleys, Batemans, and Whitleys. Indeed, nineteenth century Littles seem palpably disconnected from their historical past. Nevertheless, modern DNA tests connect the Littles of Illinois and Texas to others bearing the surname Little from the Torthorwald area of Dumfries in Scotland’s western “Border Region.” Moreover, all credible evidence points to William Little Sr. (b. 1760-1770) as the patriarch who produced two generations of migrants who trekked first from Virginia to South Carolina; then to Kentucky; subsequently to early-nineteenth century Illinois; and finally to what became the Lone Star State.

In 1830 Shelby County, Illinois, William Little Sr. appears surrounded by his children, residing next to Samuel Little (b. 1780-1790) while two other Littles—John (b. 1790-1800) and William (b. abt. 1805)—live twelve and thirteen respective households away. This pattern almost certainly reveals the aged, widowed father living alone but adjacent to his eldest son, and relatively close to two of his younger male offspring.

If nothing in surviving family correspondence or the public record documents the precise moment of the Little family’s arrival in Illinois, it was no later than the 1809 birth of Hiram Little. That same year William Little (presumably William Sr.) is identified in a history of frontier Baptistry as a messenger for the Richland Primitive Baptist Church in St. Clair County, Illinois. Like Simon Lindley, those among the Littles who embraced religion chose the Primitive Baptist faith.
The Lindleys were also linked by marriage to a fifth and final family within the kinship pentapolis. In 1830, John Sadler (b. 1811 Tennessee) married John Saunders Whitley’s daughter, Barsheba (b. 1811 Illinois). Information about Sadler’s parentage is debated but he may be descended from a group of brothers who emigrated from England to America around 1767.\(^{38}\) John was too young to have arrived in Illinois with the early wave of Whitleys, Batemans, Lindleys, and Littles, but he was probably part of a Sadler family—George, John (perhaps John’s father), and Stephen—that appears in Madison County records assigned, along with almost all other adult males in the county, to work on county roads in 1815.\(^{39}\) Sadler’s marriage to Barsheba Lindley both linked him intimately his new wife and, sooner or later, made him brother-in-law to Barsheba’s five brothers—William, Samuel Jr., John, James, and Elijah—as well as future migrants to Texas, Hiram Little, Lemuel Collard, and Benjamin Franklin Kelton. John Sadler and Hiram Little married “Lindley girls” in Illinois while Collard and Kelton wed another two of Samuel Lindley’s daughters in Texas.

Long before celebration of those two Texas marriages, the kinship network in southern Illinois lived, worked, and operated at least loosely in concert. Like hundreds upon hundreds of other aspiring land owners who poured into the area, they improved and made claim to promising southern Illinois tracts while awaiting official government survey of the area. Only after those surveys could Illinoisans officially obtain clear deed and title to their recently established homesteads.\(^{40}\) Not much about Illinois during those early years resembles today’s state boasting the nation’s fifth largest population. The current mighty metropolis Chicago, America’s third largest city in 2010, was not even officially organized until the 1833 Treaty of Chicago. Chicago’s humble little population
of about 200 souls was geographically far afield—more than 250 miles—from the center of early-nineteenth century activity concentrated in southern Illinois. Edwardsville and nearby St. Louis, Missouri were the central beehives of “urban” activity within the general region.

By the time members of the kinship group began entering Illinois, Meriwether Lewis, William Clark, and the Corps of Discovery had only recently returned to St. Louis (September 23, 1806) following their celebrated exploration of the great American northwest. On March 1, 1809—just forty days before the birth in Illinois of Hiram Little—Congress officially created the Illinois Territory with the riverside city Kaskaskia (about 100 miles downriver from Edwardsville) christened as territorial capital. The same year Illinois received statehood—1818—across the Mississippi River from Edwardsville, St. Louis saw the arrival of the first steamboat connecting the city to New Orleans, America’s eastern seaboard, and the outside world. When Missouri received statehood in 1821, St. Louis became the state capital. By 1830, the population of the “Gateway to the West” was almost 5,000. Such was the greater area through which aspiring, land-hungry turn-of-the-nineteenth-century migrants passed.

What frontier Illinois then lacked in population and urban sophistication, it had in bucolic harmony with nature. The first arrivals reached southern Illinois in the new century’s first decade. Elizabeth Lindley, the daughter of Simon born in 1803, remembered:

I came to Illinois Territory in 1807, and wintered on Wood River, in what is now known as Madison County. I then moved to Shoal Creek, which is now [in] Bond County. . . . When we first came to Shoal Creek [probably
in 1808], game was abundant. My brother, John Lindley [b. 1791 North Carolina], and another man killed twenty-five deer one morning before nine o’clock. They took only the hams and hides, which they took to St. Louis.\(^4\)

In this pristine setting, from O’Fallon in today’s St. Clair County to the Greenville area of Bond County, families of the kinship group logically concentrated themselves in the safer, more settled and if still thinly populated southwestern quarter of the state, a locale that provided relatively easy access to the Mississippi River and the Illinois Territory’s larger fledgling urban centers.\(^4\)

The peaceful, steadily growing location into which new arrivals to Illinois lived and moved did not last for long. The War of 1812 not only disturbed American cities in the east. British military agents and traders in the west were quick to foment Indian depredations including the Fort Dearborn Massacre (August 15, 1818) in which the Potawatomi Indians destroyed the fortification at what later became Chicago. Many migrants, only recently arrived in Illinois, put life and limb at risk once the conflict escalated. Abraham Bateman, William Little, Joseph Lindley, Samuel Lindley, William Pursley, John Whitley, and Mills Whitley are all found on Illinois muster rolls during the war.\(^4\) Most were privates, but John Whitley served as a sergeant in Captain William Jones’ company of the Illinois volunteer infantry.\(^4\) In Captain Samuel Whiteside’s company, so did William Pursley.\(^4\)

Even before the formal June 18, 1812 declaration of war, Indian tribes in southwestern Illinois had become increasingly restless. As early as 1811, Indian raids elicited a defensive response from the Illinois Rangers—a local militia unit\(^6\)—who
turned Hill’s (a. k. a., White’s) Fort near today’s town of Greenville into a base for rendezvous. One Lindley family memoir elaborates:

Everything was very peaceful here until about 1811 when the Indians began to pillage and to kill some of the settlers. Simon Lindly [sic] was warned by an old white-haired Indian about further Indian raids. The settlers then built a stockade in which they lived, but went outside to do their farming.

In the late spring of that same year, an anonymous Lindley family member experienced a harrowing episode while attempting to assist a detail of Rangers in pursuit of the Indian raiding party that had attacked a vulnerable homestead and kidnapped Rebecca Cox. About this incident, the territorial governor Ninian Edwards wrote:

A young man, by the name of Lindley, was to have joined the party who pursued the Indians, but did not arrive at the place of rendezvous in time. On his return home, he states that he was pursued and overtaken by two Indians (supposed to be those spoken of by Miss Cox in her affidavit); that after running until he was nearly exhausted, he stopped in the midst of a fallen tree, from which he shot the foremost Indian and seized his gun, and with it shot the other Indian as he came up, and actually killed both.

As the war began in earnest and Indian attacks became a sustained threat to settlers, members of the kinship group and their neighbors gravitated to the closest fortified structure or “block house.” About forty families, including the Lindleys, Littles, Whitley, and Pursleys, spent the better part of the conflict inside Hill’s Fort, a fortification in then-Madison County, Illinois. During the four-year conflict, the Indians
attacked the settlers’ refuge four different times. Even give the dislocation, some
semblance of normality remained. On February 17, 1814, in a ceremony conducted by
Ranger Captain and Shoal Creek Church Primitive Baptist minister, William Jones
performed the wedding (quite likely held within Hill’s Fort) of Mills Whitley and
Elizabeth Little.50 One week later, Jones again officiated at the nuptial of Mary Little
(Elizabeth’s sister) and Thomas Heaven Finley.51 Lydia Little Pursley, the sister of
Elizabeth and Mary, soon thereafter acquired local celebrity of a very different kind.

In family history, the most fêted wartime heroics occurred during a very nearly
successful September 8, 1814 Indian attack against Hill’s Fort. An historical marker atop
William Pursley’s Illinois grave site even commemorates the event. On that date, Pursley
and a dozen other men left the safety of the fort only to be ambushed by a large party of
hostile Indians. In a fiercely fought skirmish, somewhere between two and four of the
fort’s defenders died. Another man was severely wounded. The survivors retreated back
into the fort, except for Tom Higgins who stood his ground for “one more pull at the
enemy.”52 Three tribesmen pursued Higgins, shooting him first and then closing upon
their victim with knives, tomahawks, and spears. Higgins shot one of the oncoming
Indians, but the other two continued their advance. As hand-to-hand combat ensued, the
Indian war party in the rear began moving forward to assist.

When none of the Rangers who had retreated into the fort responded to Lydia
Little Pursley’s entreaties to rush to Higgins’s aid, William Pursley’s wife found a gun,
mounted a horse, and rode out of the fort to help the struggling Ranger. Inspired by
Lydia’s courage, and perhaps also shamed by her pointed taunts, others within the fort
abandoned timidity and followed to render assistance. Thus was Higgins rescued and
carried to safety within the fortification’s walls. Notwithstanding seven bullet wounds and a tomahawk blow that severed Higgins’s ear laying “bare his skull to the back of his head,” the wounded Ranger survived the brutal encounter.  

Simon Lindley’s daughter Elizabeth, who as a ten year old witnessed the entire engagement, recalled in later life that her father helped remove the bullets from Higgins’s body while her twenty-one-year-old brother Joseph rode to fetch both reinforcements and a doctor.  

Not long after this incident, the inhabitants of Hill’s Fort chose wisdom over valor and abandoned the block house. Most within the kinship group withdrew west to Edwardsville. Illinois church records reflect this removal from 1814 through 1816 when Bond County’s Shoal Creek Church was not represented in Baptist records. An October 1814 retreat to Edwardsville certainly explains the April 1811 letters of dismission from Edwardsville’s Wood River Baptist Church for Rangers Captain William Jones and his wife Elizabeth, followed by their October 1814 readmission to the Wood River congregation. Shoal Creek Church appears again as part of the Illinois Association’s 1817 records, apparently resurrected after Bond County’s former residents returned following the Anglo-American peace settlement of December 24, 1814 and the subsequent 1815 treaty resolving differences with southwestern Illinois’ Indian population.  

With the peace came a return of the kinship group to the homesteads that they earlier had carved out of the south-central Illinois frontier. No later than 1818 and probably well before, the majority of family members were back at work on the farms and acreages that they had established near Bond County’s Perryville prior to the recent unpleasantness. Some Lindleys were also found in Madison County on Bond’s western
but most members of the kinship group were concentrated in a compact two by four mile area within Bond County. Clustered together in 1820 Bond (officially created January 4, 1817), there were no less than nine households of eleven in a row that were part of this tightly knit extended family: William Sr. and Samuel Little; William Lindley; Mills, John Sr. and Jr., Elisha, and Randall Whitley; and Robert Duncan (married to Nancy Bateman). There, they largely remained until the mid-1820s, their names found liberally distributed throughout the public record. When the kinship group began moving northeastward, it settled in what at the time was Fayette County but that part which eventually became Shelby (created January 23, 1827), Moultrie (created February 16, 1843), and Coles (created December 25, 1830).

In the fall of 1825, Samuel Little (b. 1780-1790) abandoned Bond County for the less developed, more remote Shelby County to Bond’s immediate northeast. Traveling in an ox cart, he transported his family and all their possessions to western portion (section 18) of Ash Grove township where he built a cabin and became the first settler in that area. He was soon followed by John Little and John’s wife Betsey Bateman, as well as John’s in-laws Robert and Nancy Bateman Duncan. John settled on the side of Wabash Creek immediately southeast of Samuel and some 150 yards from the mouth of Willow Branch. In his new location, John cleared half a dozen acres of timberland and planted corn. Meanwhile, Duncan squatted in the section due east of Samuel on the west side of the Wabash Branch. An early history of Shelby County described these extended family members as “regular frontier-men” who “delighted to hunt and have sport with the neighboring Indians.”
William Little Sr.’s daughter Lydia and her husband William Pursley lived two sections southeast of the kinship group concentrated originally Bond County. They probably were not participants in the mid-1820s northeastward move by many members of the extended family. As recently as 1819, William Pursley had served as Bond County justice of the peace. Both William and Lydia are in the 1820 Perryville, Bond County census living near greater kinship group. By 1823, the couple is listed among owners of property in Tonti Township in the northwestern portion of Marion County. Their “new” location, somewhat east-southeast of other family members in 1820 Bond, almost certainly was the product of the 1823 creation of Marion County which swallowed up the original Pursley homestead.65

In the meantime, John Saunders Whitley Sr.’s family forsook Bond County for Shelby. His residence in Bond dated from no later than February 1813.66 In the fall of 1826, thirty-five family pilgrims, including seventeen of John Sr.’s grandchildren, moved en masse into the raw frontier. They traveled somewhat farther northeast than the Littles and Duncans, settling in what became Moultrie County in 1843. The location is known still today as Whitley Township. Whitley family migrants either walked or rode in the wagons transporting the family’s belongings along a primitive wilderness trail that ran northeastward out of Greenville; up Shoal Creek; on to Cold Springs; and finally into Shelby County where they stopped at Williamsburg Hill’s south side.67

These “energetic and enterprising” Whitleys, christened “real men” in a late-nineteenth century Moultrie County history, were the first to settle the area. Included in the migration were John Sr., his wife Bathsheba Bateman, sons Sharp, Mills, Randall, William, and Josiah, and son-in-law Samuel Washington Lindley (married to Elizabeth
Whitley, b. 1795 Virginia). The Whitleys made a profound impression during their Moultrie County years. John Sr. constructed the county’s first horse-powered mill. When Moultrie was still part of the newly created Shelby County (1827), John Sr. was one of five county commissioners selected in the first county election. John’s son Sharp was a member of Shelby’s first petit jury. So were fellow-kinship-group members William Little Sr., Samuel Little, and Robert Duncan. John Whitley’s son Mills served on Shelby County’s first grand jury.68

Describing the character and quality of the Whitley family, a late-nineteenth century history of Moultrie County explains, John Sr.

erected the first cabin and broke the first prairie in what is now Moultrie County. . . . He and all his sons were very fond of sport, great horsemen, and always kept a number of fine thoroughbred Kentucky race horses [as well as “hunting hounds”]. They would frequently ride some distance to settlements and race for money; in fact, gambling in general seemed to be their chief occupation. The sons were all large, athletic men, and inclined to fight at the slightest provocation.69

One Whitley family historian colorfully elaborated on these family qualities, writing:

The Whitleys, along with all the other settlers, spent Sundays at the Indian village. Friendly horse-racing, shooting, and wrestling contests showed the Indians that the Whitleys and others could match their best, and they must have developed a healthy respect for each other through these contests. Corn whiskey was the prize for the contests, and by nightfall, everyone was probably feeling happy. A
preacher from the Methodist settlement at Wabash Point in Coles County tried to put a stop to these Sunday games.\textsuperscript{70}

By 1830, Shelby County was home for almost the entire cluster of kinship members that very soon would migrate to Texas. William Sr., Samuel, John (the husband of Elizabeth “Betsey” Bateman), and William Little lived in Precinct Five. John Bateman, and Robert and Nancy Bateman Duncan were found in Precinct Four. The Duncans were separated from two brothers, Mills and Sharp Whitley (both married to daughters of William Little Sr.) by only a single dwelling. Although the Duncans remained in Illinois, both Whitley brothers became part of the 1830s migration to Texas. Another Whitley brother, William, lived eight households beyond. He eventually moved to Missouri, not Texas, but his nearby neighbor, John Sadler (married to Barsheba Lindley), arrived in the incipient Texas Republic early enough to participate in revolutionary events. Beyond the Sadler household, Whitley family patriarch, John Saunders Whitley Sr. lived alongside the son and namesake. And only a single household separated John Jr. (who eventually trekked to Missouri) from Wright Little, probably the second-oldest son of William Sr.\textsuperscript{71}

Meanwhile, by 1830 at least one member of the kinship group, Hiram Little, located in Whitley township near his soon-to-be brother-in-law John Sadler and close to what became the easternmost part of Shelby County after December 25, 1830 when Coles County was created out of Shelby. Indeed, Hiram wed Mary “Polly” Lindley in Coles County on July 4, 1831. Meanwhile, in 1830, William Little Sr.’s daughter Lydia (by then, the widow of William Pursley, d. 1828) lived still in Marion County (separated from Shelby County by Fayette County in between the two). Nine others, presumably her
minor children and perhaps other members of the kinship group, resided with Lydia.\textsuperscript{72} Finally, Randall Whitley and Samuel Washington Lindley both lived in 1830 Clark County, probably locating in Clark’s westernmost portion along Shelby County’s eastern border where they remained in proximity to members of the kinship group living to the immediate west.

Not all the Lindley clan remained in Illinois through the 1820s. Simon Lindley’s second-born, Joseph (b. 1793 North Carolina), relocated in Tennessee at some point between the 1822 birth in Illinois of his daughter Sarah and the 1826 birth of son John. Soon after John’s birth, the thirty-four-year-old son Joseph left his then-home in Henry County, Tennessee and reached Texas by April 1827. He appears in the 1838 Montgomery County Clerk Receipts (no. 50) as recipient of one labor of land.\textsuperscript{73} Joseph came with his twenty-six-year-old wife Nancy and their four children, ranging in age from one to nine. As the earliest documented arrival from the kinship group, Lindley illustrates two common phenomenon tied to nineteenth-century migration into new frontiers: the younger son syndrome and the practice of sending a family “scout” into the wilderness to chart the way for subsequent waves of family soon to follow.\textsuperscript{74}

The same Montgomery County clerk receipts also place a host of other family members in Texas prior to the start of the 1836 Revolution: William Lindley (no. 103), Samuel Washington Lindley (no. 115),\textsuperscript{75} Jonathan Lindley,\textsuperscript{76} and John Sadler (no. 116),\textsuperscript{77} all in November 1833; Hiram Little (no. 104),\textsuperscript{78} William Little (no. 118),\textsuperscript{79} John Whitley (no. 253), Mills Whitley (no. 250-251), and Sharp Whitley (no. 254) in January 1835; and John Little (no. 91, 256) on February 11, 1836.\textsuperscript{80} What compelled so many members of the kinship group to abandon Illinois?
There were many factors. One fundamental consideration was that restless quality, perhaps genetically foreordained, that kept some members of this particular extended family periodically on the move from their earliest departure out of their domiciles in the more settled upper-southeastern United States. Even during the group’s Illinois residence, its members gravitated magnetically to the periphery. The kinship network was among the earliest arrivals in south central Illinois. They were soon followed, however, by hundreds who rapidly brought a more settled, “civilized” character to what, only shortly before, had been a raw frontier complete with Indian population.

Albert Marrin cleverly and ironically titled one of his forty book-length works 1812: The War that Nobody Won. While no boundaries changed and the postwar world essentially reverted to the status quo ante bellum, there were nevertheless many winners, including thousands of military bounty recipients or their assignees that at conflict’s end were entitled to fertile Midwestern land grants. Free land in exchange for military service was a godsend to cash-poor settlers hoping to establish themselves on the Illinois frontier. All veterans needed to do was apply for their warrants and use them to obtain land patents in the western territories that eventually became the states of Illinois, Michigan, and Arkansas.

The increase in early-nineteenth century Illinois’ population was the product both of the bounty system and the natural inflow of land-hungry settlers with means to purchase federal land. Between 1812 and 1830, the state tripled in population, growing from 50,000 to 150,000. That steady increase was a significant factor in the Whitley family’s progressive movement first to the more remote, less populated area of Moultrie County, Illinois and subsequently on to Texas. Moultrie County’s history declares as
much in describing the impact of a different extended family, the Waggoners some forty-five strong, who followed the Whitleys into the same frontier:

The Waggoners were a more quiet folk, and it is not surprising to learn that they did not quite approve of the sporting proclivities of the Whitleys.

... After the Waggoners came, it was getting a little crowded, as they, like the Whitleys, had some half-dozen families. So many people would frighten the deer and make other game more shy, if not less plentiful. ... Anyway, there was trouble and there is a tradition that some of the Whitleys and their friends made a menacing visit to the Waggoner settlement. There was no fighting, but they separated without reaching an amicable agreement. I have heard Uncle Gilbert Waggoner say, “The Whitleys were a rough set—a bad lot.” Their ways of life were different, and the two families didn’t understand each other. The Whitleys, doubtless, were brave, strong, active and restless. Some of them went to Missouri and others to Texas. ... They were “rough and ready,” but I believe Uncle Gilbert was too severe in pronouncing them “a bad lot.” They were the typical pioneers—the advance guard of civilization, and their kind made the frontiers safer for those who came later.  

U. S. Indian policy was probably also a significant if less important factor explaining the larger kinship group’s migration to Texas. By 1828, government liaison Thomas Forsyth served Illinois Indian tribes notice that they must vacate the state and move west of the Mississippi River. Removal notwithstanding, strained Anglo-Indian relations were not resolved until the end of the Black Hawk War of 1832, a conflict
resulting in the deaths of some seventy soldiers and settlers, and untold numbers of
Indians. Ironically, members of the kinship group—particularly the Whitleys and the
Littles—seem to have enjoyed their relationships with Illinois Indians, at least after the
War of 1812. The Combined History of Shelby and Moultrie Counties, declares, “When
the Indians left the state, the Littles moved to Texas. . . . When this country began to be
settled, and [Samuel Little’s] old friends and companions the Indians left, as he delighted
to hunt with them, he too left the county, moving to Texas.”83 Coincidentally, the 1833
Treaty of Chicago provided for the acquisition and settlement of any remaining Illinois
Indian lands. Meanwhile, the main exodus of the kinship group from Illinois to Texas
unfolded from 1833 through 1835.

Another force igniting Texas Fever was enthusiastic, aggressive promotional
literature of the period.84 This was probably far more significant than nostalgia for good
times with old Indian friends. Unimaginably large tracts of land were available to those
who dared making the trek to Texas. The lure of thousands of obtainable acres no doubt
drew the majority within the kinship group, and no more dramatic example exists of this
phenomenon than Samuel Washington Lindley. He needed larger land tracts to launch all
his children as property-owning, fully-independent adults. During his three odd decades
in Illinois, Lindley patented a mere 158.63 acres,85 not nearly enough to secure the future
for the eleven surviving offspring he had produced by 1833. In the summer of that year,
the forty-five-year old patriarch liquidated his Coles County real estate,86 and six days
after the start of fall, led a family migration including his wife Elizabeth Whitley, eight of
their younger children ranging in age from two to nineteen, and probably their twenty-
two-year-old daughter Barsheba and her twenty-two-year-old husband, John Sadler. They
headed for Mexican Texas. Samuel and Elizabeth’s remaining children also soon abandoned Illinois for Texas. The 1833 band of migrants probably took the National Road that ran through southern length of Coles County and westward, all the way to St. Louis. The thoroughfare passed through the then-state capital Vidalia where undoubtedly Simon Lindley, on in September 27, received his certificate of character signed by Illinois governor John Reynolds. From St. Louis, the migrants probably worked their way down the Mississippi River Valley, perhaps making their own roads when necessary just as the better-known 1833 Daniel Parker party from Crawford, Illinois, had to do while traversing Missouri and the Arkansas Territory into Louisiana.

The Lindley party reached Texas in November 1833. Most of its members first settled in the Vehlein Colony along the Austin Colony’s northeastern border. On August 27, 1835, Samuel W. Lindley received two Montgomery County, Texas land titles for a total of 4,465¾ acres—an ample amount to provide for all concerned. In addition to the Labor of land constituting part of Lindley’s original headright, Montgomery County annual tax records from 1838 through 1859 reveal a man of money, property, and substance that was light years beyond what his possessions would have been had he remained in Illinois.
Samuel W. Lindley’s Certificate of Character signed by Illinois Governor, John Reynolds. Lindley no doubt secured the document in the then-state capital Vidalia on his way out of Illinois to Texas. (secure permission to publish)

Finally, at least a few family members—particularly those who enjoyed a good fight—were likely lured to Texas by the growing prospect of hostilities as Antonio López de Santa Anna, the self-proclaimed “Napoleon of the West,” progressively assumed dictatorial power over Mexico from 1833 through 1835, thereby threatening the liberties of the notreamericanos populating Texas. Four of the kinship group’s earliest arrivals became participants in the historical events forever linked to the successful establishment
of the Texas Republic. Ever connected by thick and substantial kinship ties, there was eighteen-year-old John Thomas Whitley, the son of Mills and Elizabeth Little Whitley; forty-two-year-old Joseph Lindley, the son of Simon who had remained in Illinois; Joseph’s twenty-two-year-old first cousin and aspiring stock raiser, Jonathan Lindley; and Jonathan’s twenty-six-year-old brother-in-law, Hiram Little. Joseph Lindley and John Thomas Whitley shared in common an aunt and uncle: Samuel W. Lindley and his wife Elizabeth Whitley. Samuel and Elizabeth were the parents of Jonathan Lindley.

Joseph Lindley had prior military experience as an Illinois Ranger during the War of 1812. He was also the “family scout,” the first member of the kinship group to arrive in Texas, getting there in time to gain additional military experience through participation in the failed 1826-1827 Fredonian Rebellion centered in Nacogdoches in the Haden Edwards Colony. Lindley’s seditious involvement prompted the Mexican government to deny his claim to clear deed and title to some 2,592 Mexican Texas acres. Joseph’s arrival in Texas some seven years in advance of his cousin Jonathan also positioned him to sign the letter of endorsement for Jonathan’s November 1833 entry into Texas.

Jonathan came to Texas with the party of his father, Samuel Washington Lindley. By December 1835, Jonathan, along with his cousins Joseph Lindley and John Thomas Whitley, and his brother-in-law Hiram Little, were among the 300 Texian volunteers who participated in the December 5-9, 1835, Siege of Bexar during which legendary “Old Ben Milam” fell. The engagement successfully pried San Antonio de Bexar from a Mexican army of 1,200 under the leadership of Perfecto de Cos, general and brother-in-law of Santa Anna himself. Following the siege, Whitley returned to the future Montgomery County where he owned a farm. Little, quite possibly accompanied by his
brother-in-law Jonathan Lindley, went back to his then-home in the Sabine District where both men held property. Joseph Lindley also departed San Antonio. Between the Siege of Bexar and San Jacinto, Texian revolutionaries suffered a seemingly irreversible February-March 1836 defeat as Santa Anna’s army decisively overwhelmed those 189 hopeful soldiers, including their leaders, Travis, Bowie, and Crockett, in their makeshift Alamo fortress. Jonathan Lindley, back in San Antonio no later than February 1, 1836, was one of the 189—and the only Illinoisan—who died March 6 at the Alamo.

Forty-six days later, on April 21, 1836, another of Jonathan Lindley’s brothers-in-law, John Sadler—a fifth family member who participated in the Revolution—fought in Captain William Ware’s company along with Sam Houston at the Battle of San Jacinto. So did Joseph Lindley, the first cousin both of John Sadler’s wife, Barsheba Lindley, and the fallen Jonathan Lindley. Knowing that their kinsman Jonathan had died at the Alamo some seven weeks before, it is easy to imagine both Sadler and Joseph Lindley shouting, “Remember the Alamo!,” with particular and personal vigor as they descended on Santa Anna’s soldiers at siesta.

If other members of the kinship group enjoyed a less eventful early Texas experience, their impact was nonetheless both significant and reminiscent of Stephen F. Austin’s memorable assessment:

If he who, by conquest, wins an empire and receives the world’s applause, how much more is due to those who, by unceasing toil, lay in the wilderness the foundation for an infant colony, and build thereon a vigorous and happy state. . . . A successful military chieftain is hailed with admiration and applause, and monuments perpetuate his fame, but the
bloodless pioneer of the wilderness, like the corn and cotton he causes to spring where it never grew before attracts no notice, no slaughtered thousands or smoking cities attest his devotion to the cause of human happiness, and he is regarded by the mass of the world as a humble instrument to pave the way for others.¹⁰³

The majority of Batemans, Lindleys, Littles, and Whitleys in pre-Revolutionary Texas fit most comfortably into the class of settler described by Austin above.

The eleven Texas counties outlined above where the principal locations where the kinship group owned property and lived at various times.

In the absence of surviving family correspondence or first-hand personal testimony, census records combined with common sense paints a composite picture of the
The kinship group’s actions, behaviors, and location in the fledgling Texas Republic that soon became the twenty-eighth state. During the decade following the Revolution, in the multiple counties created out of the Vehlein Colony, the kinship group established a chain of settlements connected by ties of sentiment, identity, and bloodlines. The miniature “kinship kingdom” stretched primarily from Montgomery County in the south through Walker, Leon, Limestone, and Anderson counties to the north. These migrants from Illinois not only remained in contact but effectively worked in concert to establish themselves and advance their agricultural endeavors.

Within two years after the Revolution, almost all members of the kinship group were ensconced in Montgomery County (created in 1837 from the then-large and sprawling Washington County). The extended family dramatically demonstrates the principle so ably articulated by Carolyn Billingsley in the title of her groundbreaking volume, *Communities of Kinship*. The 1838 county tax assessor listed Mills and John Whitley, William Spiller, John Sadler, and Hiram Little all living side by side. John Spiller, William Lindley, Samuel W. Lindley, John Little, Lemuel Collard, and Sharp Whitley were in close proximity. 104

From 1838 through the remainder of the antebellum era, county tax records also convey a clear sense of relative wealth within the extended family. Three individuals—Joseph Lindley, Samuel W. Lindley, and John Sadler—consistently stand atop the socioeconomic pyramid within the kinship pentapolis. The automatic prestige and status fellow Texans conferred upon veterans of San Jacinto no doubt gave both Sadler and Joseph Lindley a leverage they otherwise would not have enjoyed. So did the 640 acre “Donation” dispensed by the Republic to all who fought in the decisive battle for
independence. Meanwhile, Samuel Lindley’s age—forty-eight at the time of the Revolution—and accumulated assets likely gave him a running start even as he crossed the Louisiana-Texas border in 1833. The 1838 tax assessment shows both Sadler and his father-in-law with 4,428 largely yet-to-be-developed acres valued at about 82 cents an acre. Samuel Lindley’s total assets—$5,291—are somewhat more than Sadler’s $3,726, but no other significant extended family member, other than Lemuel Collard with $1,992, held more than $1,000.

While Joseph Lindley’s assets in the 1838 tax record are inexplicably modest—two horses worth $150—he appears prominently in the following year’s accounting. In 1839, similar to Sadler and Samuel W. Lindley, he claims 4,425 acres valued at a dollar an acre. Joseph’s $5,448 in total assets put him in a league with first cousin, Samuel (although Samuel W. Lindley’s assets had grown to $8,063 in 1839). Meanwhile, whether at the family’s socioeconomic apex or at its base, one notable feature suggests that many of these Illinoisans-come-to-Texas adapted to their new surroundings by blending into the incipient plantation economy, complete with its essential accoutrement, slave-based labor.

In chameleon-like fashion most family members embraced the very means that well-to-do southern immigrants to Texas usually employed to cultivate wealth and prosperity, particularly in the Trinity River Valley. The Trinity formed the eastern boundary of Montgomery, Walker, and Leon counties where the kinship group was concentrated. If in the mid-1840s some of the Littles pushed farther north than their kinsmen—specifically into Anderson County—they remained within the same river valley, selecting a location on the Trinity’s opposite bank where Anderson adjoined
Leon’s northeastern corner. The timing of the kinship group could not have seemed much better. In 1840, the steamboat *Ellen Franklin* paddled 500 miles upstream, heralding what contemporaries proclaimed (wrongly, as it turned out) to be the beginning of a new and celebrated commercial era for the Trinity River Valley.  

While the Trinity never became the corridor of agriculture commerce that effusive promotional literature predicted, those who settled along or near its banks in the 1830s through the 1850s had high expectations as they staked out homesteads—hopes and dreams that they believed could be rapidly realized, especially with the aid of slave labor.  

With just that goal very likely in mind, most members of the kinship group acquired bondsmen very quickly.  

Ironically, even though the extended family had thoroughly southern roots and heritage, little suggests that any significant slaveholding tradition existed among any of the families within its ranks (a fact undoubtedly contributing to the early-nineteenth century move into Illinois where relocation was little economic threat for southern families who lacked a slave-based labor force in the first place). While not every last Illinois migrant embraced the Peculiar Institution upon arrival in Texas, many at least experimented with it during the 1830s and 1840s. Even John Little, who otherwise remained slaveless, claimed a single bondman in 1846 Leon County and, four years later, another valued at $300 in 1850 Anderson County.  

John’s son, Riley T. Little, would die in 1863 as a result of wounds suffered at the Battle of Chickamauga in Georgia, all in defense of “The Cause” which in large part constituted the defense of slavery.  

In fact, the Lone Star State never had the time to develop a full-blown plantation economy comparable to those in the more established southern states east of the Mississippi River or even throughout Louisiana.
Nonetheless, during the 1850s a few members of the kinship group slowly made progress toward planter status. By 1860 only one—Jonathan Stark Collard, Lemuel’s oldest brother—crossed the socioeconomic threshold to twenty bondsmen, which “qualified” one for that particular social distinction. In only a single decade, he quadrupled his bondmen, expanding from five in 1850 to twenty in 1860. Among more immediate family members with a history in Illinois, Samuel W. Lindley (d. 1859) acquired the largest reserve of slaves, a total of twelve in 1850. A decade later, his son and son-in-law, William Lindley and Hiram Little, each held eleven bondsmen. Between 1850 and 1860, William had increased his holding from four to double digits, while Hiram expanded from two in 1850 to six in 1859, and eleven in 1860. Such patterns suggest comfortable acceptance of the Peculiar Institution and, quite likely, the intent to expand the pool of slave-based labor necessary to make a sustained ascent up the socioeconomic ladder.

During the 1850s, certain telltale signs suggest that at least some members within the larger kinship network pursued agricultural endeavors in concert. A multiplicity of property sales among extended family members suggest both closeness within the kinship group and willful effort to work together for the good of the whole. The 1850 Walker County slave schedule lists in direct succession three brothers-in-law: William Lindley, B. F. Kelton, and Lem Collard. These men may well have pooled their agricultural efforts. Collard’s equal division of his slave labor force of ten bondsmen between Montgomery and Walker counties certainly could indicate collaboration among family members, and at least the occasional sharing of bondmen among members of the extended family. The 1850 double listing of John Sadler in both the Montgomery and
Walker county censuses may also imply the mutually supportive operation of the kinship group across county lines, although the southern third of Sadler’s main property rested in Montgomery County while the remainder was in the southernmost part of Walker County (created in 1846 out of Montgomery). Respective 1850 census takers—H. R. Bell in Montgomery and S. A. Moore in Walker—may simply have been conscientiously covering their bases.

However the extended family functioned economically, in the 1850 Walker County listing, Sadler is surrounded by a succession of family members: B. F. Kelton, William Lindley, L. M. Collard, Anthony Gibson, the widow Mary Lindley McGary, Sharp Whitley, Mills Whitley, and John Whitley. Meanwhile, in the Montgomery County census listing, John Sadler’s nearby neighbors include “Lem Collard” (another double listing—he is also found in Walker County as “L. M. Collard”), patriarch Samuel W. Lindley, Hiram Little, Delilah Little Tolbert, William Whitley, G. B. Pursley (whose widowed, sixty-six-year-old mother Lydia Little Pursley resides in his household), Robert F. Kelton, and George A. Spiller—all individuals who obviously lived on the Montgomery County side of the county divide. Such proximity suggests the kind of cooperative kinship group activity that was often the norm in the antebellum South.

In the 1860 Montgomery County slave schedule, William Lindley, his brother Elijah Lindley, and their brother-in-law Hiram Little are found as nearby neighbors, again pointing toward cooperative labor within the kinship group. Had not the American Civil War and subsequent Reconstruction abolished the institution of slavery, at least some of the Illinois migrants examined in these pages would most likely have continued to expand, improve, and develop their massive Texas tracts in the same way that
agricultural southerners had done since the early seventeenth century—on the backs of unfortunate bondsmen.

Throughout the antebellum era, Montgomery County remained the geographic center for the most within the kinship group. Hiram Little spent at least the last fifty-three years of his life there. This dark-haired, dark-eyed, six-foot three-inch pioneer came to Texas as a recently married twenty-six-year-old who had never patented land in Illinois. Hiram, his twenty-three-year-old wife Mary Lindley, and their two daughters, Adelphia (age two years, seven months) and Elizabeth (six months old), reached the Sabine District in East Texas no later than January 1835. In so doing, the family caught up to the sizable party led by his father-in-law, Samuel Washington Lindley, which had reached Texas a little more than a year before. As a married family man, Little received the League and Labor of land offered by Mexico to immigrants like himself. Although Hiram’s 4,605 acres were in Tarrant County, he subsequently purchased property in the counties of Montgomery and Walker where he lived the majority of his life. In an interesting twist of fate, Little bought some 1,176 of his Walker County acres from Jackson Crouch, the man who married Sallie Winters who was the sweetheart of Hiram’s brother-in-law and defender at the Alamo, Jonathan Lindley. The contrast between being landless in Illinois and land rich in Texas must have been staggering, particularly for a couple like the Littles, so young and at the front end of building their family.

Hiram and Mary capitalized on their opportunities, rearing eleven children, successfully farming, and serving as a merchant in northern Montgomery County’s Danville area. This was a region highly reputed for its antebellum cotton production. During his first quarter century in the county, Hiram’s acquisition of slaves—“property”
held by some two-thirds of the county’s white residents—laid a foundation to become part of the cotton planter class in a local plantation economy that grew by leaps and bounds during the 1850s. On the one hand, Little’s thirty-seven bales of ginned cotton in 1860 was a modest .05% of Montgomery County’s 8,000 bales in total production. On the other, his production level was comparable to other “planters in the making” to the east who, with greater time to mature economically, rose from very similar circumstances to full-blown planter status.

Northwest Louisiana’s thirty-three-year-old Daniel Brown is one such example. After living in northwest Louisiana for a decade, his 1831 cotton crop, cultivated with the aid of only three slaves on eight acres in the Kisatchie region (some eighteen miles south-southwest of the town of Natchitoches), was only two and a half bales worth $100. Nineteen years later, the 1850 Natchitoches Parish slave schedule and agricultural schedules shows Brown—one of the leading planters in the parish—with thirty-nine bondsmen and a cotton crop of eighty-five bales. With the promise of similar success within his grasp, little wonder that the fifty-two-year-old Hiram made an unsuccessful May 4, 1861 attempt to enlist in the Seventeenth Brigade of the Texas State Troops. Perhaps the coming conflict revived the martial instincts that had stirred Hiram a quarter-century earlier at the siege of Bexar. But prospective defeat of the Confederacy threatened to overturn the economic system that had served him well since his arrival in Texas. It was in his economic self-interest for the South to win the war. Aspirations of defending the Stars and Bars notwithstanding, Little served only a few days before being dismissed on account of age. Three of his sons, however, fought for the Confederacy.
Little lived in Montgomery County for another two decades, eventually operating both a postwar twelve-horse-powered cotton gin and a water-powered grist mill. During the 1869 crop year, his gin produced 50,000 pounds of lint cotton valued at $5,000 and 100,000 pounds of cotton seed worth $50. His grist mill handled 300 bushels of grain and earned $1,371. All the while, Little actively participated in the Danville Baptist Church of Christ and, as his tombstone attests, enjoyed status as a Master Mason in Danville’s San Jacinto Masonic Lodge 106. In 1873, he also became a trustee in District Three of the Willis School District. Rounding out a distinguished public service resume, particularly for a man lacking literacy skills, in 1881 became a Montgomery County’s Precinct 1 Commissioner.

Hiram Little’s story is interesting in and of itself, but it unfolded in a larger family context illustrating the powerful influence of kinship ties in the antebellum south. In 1850, Hiram Little and his wife, Mary Lindley, were flanked on one side by their oldest Little daughter, Delia and her husband William Tolbert. On the other are brothers- and sisters-in-law, Lemuel M. Collard and his wife Sarah A. Lindley, and John Sadler and his wife Barsheba Lindley. The three Lindley sisters enjoyed proximity that largely kept members of the Lindley Illinois-to-Texas migration tightly bound throughout their lifetimes. Not all Lindley family members—even the Sadlers—remained forever connected geographically.

From the end of the Revolution until the mid-1840s, Joseph Lindley resided near the majority of the kinship group in Montgomery County. His local and national contributions during the period of the Republic were conspicuous. In addition to his election as a civil officer in 1839 Montgomery County, no less than President Mirabeau
B. Lamar appointed him as an Indian agent charged with keeping the peace. Meanwhile, Lindley’s surveying skills gave him the opportunity to lay “out the first road from Austin to the ‘springs at the headwaters of the San Marcos River [Aquarena Springs]’ so that a military post could be established there in 1840.” Lindley was also “appointed by the Congress of the Republic of Texas to survey a road to the Sabine in 1844.”

Not long thereafter, between November 1845 and April 1846, Joseph liquidated his principal holding—a robust 4,428.4 acre Montgomery County land grant—and moved to one of the northernmost points on the kinship group’s central east Texas axis of settlement. The frontier-loving Lindley went northwest into recently created Limestone County. Some thirteen years before his arrival, another group of immigrants from Illinois—Silas M. Parker, Moses Herrin, Elisha Anglin, Luther T. M. Plummer, David Faulkenberry, Joshua Hadley, and Samuel Frost—established Fort Parker and became the first settlers in the region. A May 19, 1836 Comanche and Kiowa raid on the settlement resulted in the historical kidnapping of nine-year-old Cynthia Ann Parker; her eventual marriage to Peta Nocona; and the birth of the couple’s celebrated son, Comanche Chief Quanah Parker. No further efforts to settle the area occurred until 1844. That year, Sam Houston orchestrated a treaty signed at Tehuacana Creek by Buffalo Hump and other Comanche leaders. The agreement promised to make the region safe once more for settlement. Over the next two years migration into the area finally renewed. During that very period, the United States finally annexed Texas.

Statehood in 1845 likely gave impetus to move yet again, both to Joseph Lindley and other more restless extended family members. After all, it was a veritable family tradition, at least for some, to stay abreast of the advancing agricultural frontier.
Psychologically, annexation promised increased security and probably emboldened many that had otherwise remained sedentary during the era of the Republic. The mid-1840s also marked a transition point in the life cycle for those who came to Texas as young adults with fledgling families. By 1845, most within this cohort had acquired both independence and stability. The personal property accumulated by this generation undoubtedly encouraged some to risk geographical separation from the kinship group that, during earlier more fragile pioneering times, made proximity to kith and kin a high priority. Of course, not all members of the kinship group worked hand-in-glove, even during the period of the Republic.

Those like Joseph Lindley eventually relocated closer to the frontier’s edge when they anticipated better opportunities. The April 11, 1846 formation of Limestone County, favorably positioned between the Brazos and Trinity rivers, prompted Joseph Lindley’s final migratory trek. He settled in the Big Tehuacana Creek area, some four miles north of today’s Mexia. Lindley continued his storied career as a public servant, receiving election in 1854 and a Limestone County Commissioner.137

Another family member to course his way to Limestone County was John Sadler, the husband of Joseph Lindley’s first cousin, Barsheba Lindley. Prior to that relocation, the Sadlers enjoyed a comfortable existence on their 4,428½ acre tract that straddled the Montgomery-Walker county border.138 In 1850, the Sadlers lived in Walker County’s household 266. Sadler’s former commanding officer, General Sam Houston, resided in household 463. One Sadler descendant remembers: “In later years, John’s daughter, Mary Sadler Baldwin, recalled knowing and playing with the children of Sam Houston when
she was young."\textsuperscript{139} Not long after these memories were made, however, the Sadlers departed Walker County.

Although the Sadler children were enrolled in Limestone County schools by 1855, the county’s annual tax record suggests the family’s removal from Walker County probably took place in stages, a process similar to that of other antebellum families that traversed distances both short and long to establish themselves in new locations.\textsuperscript{140} \textsuperscript{140}
Saddler” is listed in the 1856 Limestone County tax roll as a landless county resident with three slaves worth $1,850 and $2,720 in total assets. The following year, only his oldest son, twenty-two-year-old James, appears in the county record, suggesting that the family patriarch John Sadler probably visited Limestone County in 1855 or 1856 to find an available tract, taking with him his slaves to begin development of any promising property. Thereafter, he returned to Walker County, sending James to oversee Limestone County family affairs until the elder Sadler permanently relocated in 1858.\textsuperscript{142}

Although San Jacinto veterans Joseph Lindley and John Sadler both resided in Limestone County, they were separated by 127 households. In their respective locations, both Lindley and Sadler are respectively surrounded by the households of their children come of age and who, by that late date, had children of their own. The sixty-seven-year-old Lindley and Sadler’s forty-nine-year-old wife Barsheba were indeed first cousins, but being near the children and grandchildren probably commanded greater priority than proximity to family links extending back to Illinois. Nevertheless, it may well be that Joseph Lindley for a second time in his life played the scout, albeit on a smaller scale, charting the pathway from Montgomery to Limestone, and encouraging the Sadlers to follow.

Whatever the family dynamic leading them to Limestone, both Joseph Lindley and John Sadler left behind a host of Lindley kinsfolk in Montgomery County. Certainly, from the end of the Texas Revolution to the beginning of the Civil War, the population of Lindleys and their extended family remained thick within the county. Four of Samuel W. Lindley’s sons—Elijah, William, Samuel Jr., and James\textsuperscript{143}—resided in Montgomery throughout the 1840s, and all but Samuel Jr. (who died in 1849), were there throughout
much of the 1850s. If Samuel Sr.’s daughter Barsheba departed Montgomery in the mid-
1840s, Samuel’s five remaining daughters—Mary, Sarah Elizabeth, Martha, Rachel, and
Mahala—\(^{144}\)—and their husbands lived out their lives along the Montgomery-Walker
county border. As the table below suggests, Texas proved a relatively good trade for
Illinois, assuming Samuel Sr. hoped to better the material conditions of his many
offspring. Their collective wealth in 1860 ranged from $1.5 to $2.1 million in present-day
purchasing power.\(^{145}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Montgomery &amp; Walker County Assets of Samuel W. Lindley’s Children in 1860</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals listed below in birth order—figures drawn from county tax rolls unless noted otherwise</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Acres</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Original Grantee</th>
<th>Total Assets</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Montgomery</td>
<td>475</td>
<td>$3,800</td>
<td>Sam Lindley</td>
<td>$10,600</td>
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<td>Hiram Little)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah E. Lindley (b. 1815 /</td>
<td>Caldwell</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>W. C. G. Hill</td>
<td>$7,490</td>
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<tr>
<td>m. Lemuel M. Collard)</td>
<td>Walker</td>
<td>320</td>
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<td>Young</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>$9,600</td>
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<td>Sam Lindley</td>
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<tr>
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<td>161</td>
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<td>Sam Lindley</td>
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<td>m. Anthony Gibson)</td>
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<td>250</td>
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<td>100</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>Sam Lindley</td>
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<td>m. B. F. Kelton)</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John L. Lindley (b. 1829)</td>
<td>Walker</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>$2,940</td>
<td>John Sadler</td>
<td>$4,590</td>
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<tr>
<td>James Lindley (b. 1831)</td>
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<td>TOTALS</td>
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Samuel W. Lindley’s children Sarah Elizabeth, Samuel Jr., and Mahala predeceased him.

While the vast majority of Lindleys found comfortable circumstances in
Montgomery and Walker counties, seventy-five percent of the male Little pioneers
pursued opportunities at the northernmost end of the kinship group’s settlement pattern.
William, John, and Samuel Little were far less sedentary than Hiram. Although their
movements are somewhat more difficult to chart than those of the Lindley and Sadler
families, all three Littles left a discernible and interesting trail. Brothers Hiram and
William Little—the two youngest in the family birth order—are listed in the 1835 Sabine
District, Texas census. Both were married with children, and are named side by side in the census listing, Hiram as a “farmer” and William as “mechanic.” Five households away from William are the Whitley brothers, Mills and Sharp (also farmers), who were married respectively to older sisters of Hiram and William, Elizabeth and Sarah Little. The simultaneous January 1835 arrival and presence of these four families in the Sabine District suggests that they traveled together to Texas, coming down the El Camino Real out of Natchitoches, Louisiana to the Sabine River; crossing the river at Gaines Ferry; and entering Mexican territory through this heavily-used East Texas gateway that brought so many other immigrants into Texas.

The “forty-something” Samuel and the “thirty-something” John Little arrived in Texas close to the same time as the younger Littles, Hiram and William. Samuel came with wife Sarah Nichols Little and their children, ages five and one. John was accompanied by his twenty-nine-year-old wife, Elizabeth Bateman, and their four children, ages four through fourteen. The Combined History of Shelby and Moultrie Counties, Illinois, asserts that John “Little left for Texas at the same time as his brother” Samuel. Assuming that the two traveled in tandem, family tradition declares they entered Mexican Texas traveling overland into today’s Montague County in the north central part of the state. If true, the families quite possibly traveled down the “Great Trailing Road from Santa Fe to St. Louis in Missouri” and then backtracked southeast along the western Texas panhandle spur leading back to Red River.
MAP OF THE STATE OF COAHUILA AND TEXAS, 1833. If John and Samuel Little took the “Great Trailing Road from Santa Fe to St. Louis in Missouri” (11 o’clock above) they probably followed the spur in the western Texas panhandle down to Red River and into Texas where Montague County was created in 1858 (secure permission to publish)

The move into Montague was consonant with several aspects of the character and interests of both men. Their mutual fondness for Indian culture and companionship no doubt diminished any anxieties that either might have had about the presence of the Comanche and Wichita Indians within the area. Moreover, a significant number of settlers who populated the area that eventually became Montague County came there from Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio—all areas that lacked a slaveholding tradition. On the
eve of the Civil War, Montague was home for only thirty-four slaves. Revealingly, county voters were ambivalent enough in toward plantation society to reject secession in 1861 by almost a two-to-one margin. The relative absence of slaves held by Samuel and John after their arrival implies that the both men would have operated comfortably in such an environment.

Eventually, both Littles departed the Montague area. In the time-honored family pattern, they followed the nearby watercourses. Two forks of the Trinity River—the Denton-Elm and the West Fork—not only drained the Montague County but pointed in the direction where their fellow-kinsmen had already begun to settle.\(^{151}\) The presence of Samuel and John in the upper Trinity River Valley may well account for Hiram Little’s 1849 selection of Tarrant County as the location of the League of land to which he had been entitled since 1835. If Hiram never scouted out the area himself—Montgomery County was some 240 miles down the river valley—his kinsmen were well placed to deliver a good report about the very area that became Fort Worth the same year that Little located his land grant.

At some point not long after the Revolution, all four Littles—Hiram, William, John, and Samuel—congregated near the kinship cluster in Montgomery County. The annual county tax rolls place the Littles geographically. Hiram and John appear in them by 1838; William is there in 1839; and Samuel (who may well have remained beneath the public radar for a number of years in Montague County) arrived in 1842. After the initial listing of each, all of the Littles appeared in the rolls intermittently from 1838 through 1845. Hiram is absent in 1844; John in 1843 and 1845; William in 1845; and Samuel in 1843-1845.\(^{152}\) In light of the eventual northward relocation of the three last-named,
perhaps some or all of the Littles used the middle 1840s to explore promising options outside of Montgomery County. Pinpointing residence is often complicated by the proliferation of relevant counties in 1846, just one year following annexation. That year, Anderson, Dallas, Grimes, Leon, Limestone, Navarro, and Walker all appear on the updated Texas map. At one time or another, various members of the kinship group would reside or own property in one or more of these seven new polities.153

Both William and John Little appear on the 1846 Leon County tax rolls, most likely the result of a northwestward relocation since Leon was carved out of Robertson County rather than Montgomery. William and John probably migrated together, and almost certainly farmed together considering that both men respectively held 200 acres valued at $600. All 400 acres was part of an original William Little grant. Undoubtedly, William’s 1845 absence from Montgomery County reflected his search for a suitable tract where he and his brother jointly could move. For William, Leon County proved a satisfactory domicile for the remainder of his life.154

In 1846, William and John Little also owned two town lots in Navarro, a small settlement founded in the early 1840s and located some eighteen miles northeast of Centerville along a bend in the Trinity River where Leon and Anderson shared a common boundary. Sometimes referred to as Navarro Crossing, the locale, situated on a forty foot bluff above the bank of the river, became a popular passageway for those traveling back and forth between the bordering counties, as well as a strategic economic point where cotton could be stored before being shipped on the steamboats that ferried the commodity downriver to market.155 Navarro became the place that Lydia Little Pursley, the heroine in September 1814 at Hill’s Fort, Illinois, would die in 1860.
After her husband’s William Pursley’s 1828 death, Lydia persevered at length in southern Illinois, rearing her minor children. During the late 1840s, she and a number of her children—John, Guion Black, and William Jr. (who married Bathsheba Whitley, the daughter of Sharp and Elizabeth Little Whitley)—found their way to the kinship group in Texas. Lydia may well have died in one of the Navarro town lots purchased by her younger brothers. If she did, William Little was not around to bid his sister farewell. He had died in Leon County the previous year. By Lydia’s death, John Little had also died, although he had long since departed Leon County. As early as 1846, John began focusing his attention on a homestead across the Trinity River in Anderson County. That year, he owned 1,190 Anderson County acres.

Samuel Little also established a residence in Anderson County. He and wife Sarah “Sallie” Nichols Little are found in the 1845 Houston County tax rolls with deceptively modest total assets of $30, the value of their thirty cattle. The 1846 creation of Anderson County out of Houston most likely swallowed up the area in which the Littles had been residing, namely the locale of today’s town of Palestine. Samuel Little descendant, Robert Little, pinpointed the area as “the south side of Boxes Creek and the west side of Sand Branch.”

In addition to Samuel and John Little, other members of the kinship group also located in Anderson County, including John’s brother-in-law John “Jack” Bateman; “John S. Spillers” (probably the thirty-year-old John M. Spiller, the husband of John Little’s daughter, Prissila Ann [1821-1863] who followed his father-in-law to Leon County in 1847); and possibly San Jacinto veteran, William Turner Sadler (who may
have been related to John Sadler and came to Texas from Illinois as part of the famous Daniel Parker migration in fall 1833).\textsuperscript{164}

Samuel died in 1847 Anderson County. His widow, the fifty-nine-year-old Sarah became head of household, eventually laying claim in January 1860 to her husband’s \textbf{NUMBER} acre land grant.\textsuperscript{165} That same year, she superintended twenty-five improved acres of a 5,000 acre farm worth $8,000; held $7,000 in personal estate; managed $1,225 worth of livestock; and produced 200 bushels of corn. Sarah remained in Anderson County for the remainder of her life. Old and full of years, the matriarch died in the household of her son, John Jiles Little, at Pruitt’s Tan Yard about 1880.\textsuperscript{166} Along with five generations of other Little family members, Sarah lies buried near Elkhart south of Palestine in the Pilgrim Primitive Baptist Church cemetery. Coincidentally, Illinois immigrants to Texas organized this congregation, the oldest church in Anderson County.\textsuperscript{167} Daniel Parker from Palestine in Crawford County, Illinois—a county east-southeast of the area from which the Little migration to Texas flowed—established Anderson County’s Elkhart Pilgrim Church which eventually included Sarah Little among its members.\textsuperscript{168} Her membership perpetuated a Little family denominational tradition that stretched back at least to frontier Illinois.

If Samuel and John Little pushed the boundaries of the kinship group’s settlement farther north than any of its other members, John soon even became dissatisfied with Anderson County.\textsuperscript{169} By 1849, only two years after Samuel’s decease, John was exploring options deeper into the Texas frontier up the Trinity River Valley with its rich soil, lush vegetation, abundant wildlife, and what contemporaries hoped would become effective water transport all the way down to the Gulf of Mexico. Having migrated into
Texas through Montague County, he would have been well acquainted with the region’s potential. Although John continued to live and own property in Anderson County through 1853—844 acres worth $422 in that particular year—in 1849, John’s agent Abner Keen helped him to secure a 2,214 acre headright claim worth $1,107 along Bois D’arc Creek (today more commonly known as the East Fork of the Trinity River). Little did not actually move from Anderson to Dallas County until 1854, and when he did, his principal acreage was a sizable tract that straddled Duck Creek and rested in northeast Dallas County roughly between today’s towns of Garland and Mesquite.  

The choice arguably made Little the most devoted frontiersman in the entire kinship group. Much as Chicago was a thinly populated backwater “metropolis” during the Little family’s Illinois residency, today’s thriving “Big D” did not even become an identifiable fledgling town until about 1842. The first permanent settlers of European descent reached today’s Dallas County in November 1841. Moreover, as recently as 1843 Sam Houston negotiated the Treaty of Fort Bird that compelled the area’s Indian population to remain west of Fort Worth. When John Little located his headright grant in Dallas County, the county itself was only officially three years old. Perhaps Little’s northwestward move again reflected his disinterest in slaveholding and the plantation economy. As late as 1850, Dallas County’s slaves constituted a meager eight percent of the county’s total population—a stark contrast to the home base of the kinship group where bondsmen were sixty-one percent in Montgomery County and thirty-three percent in Walker. In that same year, cotton production—a meager forty-four bales—was an all but invisible part of the Dallas County economy.
John Little’s principal Dallas County acreage was in the northwestern portion of the county, straddling Duck Creek. Following his 1854 death, the property was divided amongst his children. (secure permission to publish)
John Little did not live long enough to develop his Dallas County property. In July 1854, he died in Kaufman County en route to Dallas County from Anderson and Houston counties. Given county boundaries at the time, Bois D’arc Creek flowed out of Collin County almost due south through the western edge of Kaufman. It diverged somewhat westward flowing for a short distance through east-southeastern Dallas County where Little held one of his main north central Texas properties. Little was either making the move into Dallas County or returning from Anderson and Houston counties where he still retained and very possibly continued to work his agricultural acreages. In either case, the logical route from one location to the other passed through Kaufman County. John Little’s oldest son Abraham Jefferson Little (1827-1896), as well as John’s son-in-law John M. Spiller, became administrators of the deceased’s estate. Abraham also assumed responsibilities as guardian of his father’s minor children.

The children John and Elizabeth Bateman Little remained in Dallas County for quite some time. A curious early-nineteenth-century echo resonated in late-nineteenth century when John’s oldest son Abraham in 1879 abandoned his domicile near the growing urban center of Dallas, exchanging it for more rural, undeveloped Lampasas County to the south-southwest. Whatever drew Abe to Central Texas, in 1884 he and his family traded the Lampasas area for an even less developed frontier region further still to west. Family tradition declares that the Abe Little family sojourned at least briefly in Palo Pinto County before finally settling in Somervell and Erath counties just inside the Ninety-Eighth Meridian. There, the character of life resembled the same frontier conditions in which the family largely had lived since the turn of the nineteenth century. The Little family’s pioneer marksmanship and frontier survival skills endured
well into the twentieth century. During the Depression years of the 1930s, Abe Little’s descendants, much like their nineteenth century Illinois ancestors, often lived off the land where, of necessity, squirrel and rabbit became the family’s meat of choice. Indeed, Abe Little’s grandson, Walter Little (1901-1985), “believed” that unless the bullet from his gun struck a jackrabbit directly in the eye, it was not a “kill,” a subtlety far less relevant to the intended target than the marksman.

Two other Little family members came to Texas among the original pioneers: Elizabeth (1792-1860) and Sarah (b. 1807), married to respective Whitley brothers, Sharp and Mills (siblings of Elizabeth Whitley, the wife of Samuel Washington Lindley). The Whitleys probably came to Mexican Texas in the company of Hiram and William Little. The forty-five-year-old Mills Whitley, his forty-three-year-old wife Elizabeth Little, and their minor children ages one to eighteen reached Texas in early 1835. So did thirty-three-year-old Sharp Whitley with his “thirty-something” wife, Sarah Little. Shortly after their arrival, both couples settled in the Montgomery-Walker County area alongside the bulk of the kinship group. Mills remained in that location for eighteen years.¹⁷⁹

*Sharp Whitley (1802-1857) (secure permission to publish)*
Like other members of the kinship group, both Mills (1791-1864) and Sharp (b. 1802 Tennessee / d. 1857 Texas) remained alert to unfolding opportunities on the Texas frontier. However, rather than migrating northwestward up the Trinity and Brazos river valleys as did Joseph Lindley, John Sadler, and the three restless Littles, the Whitley brothers largely followed a southwesterly course into counties where other members of the kinship group did not go. Admittedly, Sharp held acreage in today’s Kaufman County (1844), Henderson County (1845), and Washington County (1850), but he eventually moved to Lavaca County well south of the kinship group’s principal base. He owned 500 Lavaca County acres from the time of his 1851 arrival in Lavaca, and lived there until his 1857 death. Meanwhile, Mills remained in Montgomery County through 1853 but relocated the following year in Caldwell County where he resided until his death in 1864.

The story of this kinship group represents a pattern quite common to immigrants entering Texas, whether they came from north or south. Group migration in successive waves was typical of the times. Wherever migrants to Texas originated, moves were usually led by a handful of family patriarchs, older than the majority of the migrants but still young enough to endure a spartan journey of several hundred miles across rough terrain where thoroughfares sometimes had to be created by the travelers themselves. The “Old Guard” among the Batemans, Lindleys, Littles, Sadlers, and Whitleys all had clear, living memories of their years on the Illinois frontier and the War of 1812. They traded the known for the unknown hoping to contribute to unfolding historical events while decisively bettering their material condition in the process.
This Illinois kinship group came to Texas, at least in part, to escape the exponential population growth that rapidly swallowed up southern Illinois. Texas promised to satisfy their love for the thinly-populated agricultural frontier. It also promised to make the migrants land rich beyond their wildest dreams, especially in comparison to their Illinois prospects by 1830. Certainly, the move to Texas was not without great risks. By their very nature, new frontiers are uncertain, dangerous, and potentially hazardous places. That tentative environment enhanced the importance of kinship ties, acting as a centripetal force binding extended family members more tightly than they probably would have been in more benign and settled settings. Little wonder that the kinship group remained tightly clustered together in the Montgomery-Walker county area during the first decade of its Texas residency.

By the middle-to-late 1840s, a new stability became the norm in Texas. Statehood, in 1845, followed by a victorious outcome in the Mexican War of 1846-1848, no doubt emboldened members of the extended family. This was particularly true for those who had seen the War of 1812 through children’s eyes, come to Revolutionary Texas in their twenties and thirties, and subsequently accumulated the property that imbued them with a self-sufficiency lessening dependence on other members of the kinship group. During the middle 1840s, family members who hankered for life on the edge of the frontier—Joseph Lindley, Mills and Sharp Whitley, John Sadler, and three of the four Littles (William, Samuel, John)—packed their belongings and moved yet again to the periphery. By the time they bid farewell to those remaining in the Montgomery-Walker county nucleus of original settlement, all were of sufficient age and financial means to move from the extended family’s center to the frontier’s edge.
Ironically, the very force that was likely strongest in drawing members of the kinship group to Texas also bore within itself the seeds of family disintegration. In the long run, the reality of large-scale landownership weakened the ties holding extended family together. Vast, inexpensive tracts of land ultimately eroded the coherence of the kinship group whose composition became progressively kaleidoscopic. Its members dispersed across a wide expanse virgin territory and into multiple different counties, often relying on the support and companionship of children come of age and grandchildren who filled their lives with love and laughter. Indeed, the children of those family members with a shared Illinois experience soon lost both contact with and memory of one another. They remained at one, however, as young and old alike returned to the southern culture which bound extended family members even before their Midwestern sojourn and the subsequent embracing the of Lone Star State as happy hearth and home.
ENDNOTES


2 Ibid., 72, 202.

3 See Lathrop Migration, 38, 42 (Table 6).

4 Ibid, Table 7, “Birthplace of Parents,” 43-44, (based on 1850 census data) and 51.


6 Frank Lawrence Owsley, Plain Folk of the Old South (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1949).

7 In the 1790 census, there are four William Littles in S.C. None hold slaves. In 1800 S.C. census, there are three William Littles. Only the one in Edgefield, S.C., is a slaveholder and he claims only a single slave. Simon Lindley did not hold slaves in the 1800 census. Neither did John Lindley in the 1790 Laurens County, S.C., census or in the 1810 Orange County, N.C., census. In 1783 Nansemond Co., Va., John Batmen held two slaves (NANSEMOND COUNTY, VA—CENSUS, s. v., “1783 Taxlist of Jeremiah Godwin,” http://files.usgwarchives.net/va/nansemond/census/1783/1783tax04.txt [accessed July 15, 2012]).

8 Lathrop, Migration, 56.

9 Ibid., 39, Figure 2.

10 For example, Sharp Whitley (b. 1802 Virginia) married Sarah Little (b. 1784). Their daughter Bathsheba married William Pursley Jr. who was the son of William Pursley Sr. and his wife Lydia Little (who was Sarah’s sister). The December 15, 1844 union in Danville, Montgomery County, Texas between William Jr. and Bathsheba was a first cousin marriage. Cf. Martin Ottenheimer, Forbidden Relatives: The American Myth of Cousin Marriage (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996).

11 James David Miller, South by Southwest: Planter Emigration and Identity in the Slave South (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2002).


14 Birth locations of children John and Nancy Bateman are shown in United States Sixth Census (1850), Anderson Co., Tx. John was in Missouri in 1841-1842 and did not catch up with the family migration to Texas until after that point. Cf. Robert Duncan household, Bond County, Il. Duncan was the husband of Nancy Bateman; cf. Nancy Duncan household, 1860 census, Marion County, Il., showing an 1808-1809 Tennessee nativity. Bateman genealogists (and census records where they exist) show a Tennessee nativity for all of Abraham and Mary’s children born from 1802 through1810, including Elizabeth who married John Little.

15 See John Lindley (b. 1791) household, United States Eighth Census (1860), Salisbury, N.C., [accessed June 4, 2012]. The North Carolina nativity shown for John suggests that his father, Simon Lindley, arrived in North Carolina no later than 1791. See also Simon Linley [sic] household, United States Second Census (1800), Salisbury, N.C., [accessed May 23, 2012].

Cf. Jo Ella Powell Exley, *Frontier Blood: The Saga of the Parker Family* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), 24-25. Another family circumstantially connected to the kinship group in Texas (and possibly Illinois) was the Parkers. They also followed the Cumberland route to Illinois.


Cf. Ricky L. Sherrod, “Into the Cotton Frontier: The Manning Quest for an American Canaan” *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XCV No. 3 (Fall 2011), 356-372. Ben Manning II followed a migratory pattern similar to that of Samuel W. Lindley—one short move followed by two long ones. Ben’s migration was simply in a different direction: from Martin to Edgecombe County in N.C.; on to Washington County, Ga.; and finally to the Florida Panhandle. The sons of Samuel Lindley followed their father to Texas. Similarly, many of Manning’s sons followed him from Georgia to the Sunshine State. Regarding the nativity of Samuel W. Lindley and his wife Elizabeth Whitley, the 1880 Census in Balk Prairie, Robertson Co., Tex., for their son Elijah Lindley (b. 1835 Tx.) indicates a S.C. birth for his father and (incorrectly) an Il. (should be Va.) birth for his mother.
examples of this phenomenon are brothers John Little (b. abt. 1802); Hiram Little (b. 1809), William Little (b. 1805).

26 Samuel W. Lindley’s petition for his Texas land grant and field notes are dated Nov. 4, 1834. Lindley’s grant was within the Vehlein Colony about one and one-half miles south of the “Cooshatte trace on branch of the San Jacinto.” See original certificate at Texas General Land Office (hereafter cited as TGLO), http://scandocs.glo.texas.gov/webfiles/landgrants/pdfs/1/0/3/1/1031928.pdf [accessed July 6, 2012].


28 William Little household, United States Seventh Census (1850), Schedule 1 (Free Inhabitants) Leon Co., Tx.

29 John R. Ellisor [and wife, Sallie Elizabeth Pursley] household, San Jacinto County, Tx., and H. M. [and wife, Lydia Ann Pursley] Herring, Walker Co., Tx. from both United States Sixth Census (1880), list the birthplace of John Pursley as Ky. Some Pursley genealogists, without solid documentation, also posit an 1807 Illinois birth for their daughter Louisa.

30 H[iram] Little household, United States Sixth Census (1860), Schedule 1 (Free Inhabitants), Montgomery County, Tx. and Hiram Little household, United States Sixth Census (1880), Montgomery County, Tx. Both document an 1809 birth year in Illinois. Hiram’s grave marker identifies his birth date as April 9, 1809.

31 By the taking of the 1880 census, none of the children of migrant to Texas, John Little (1802-1854), retained much memory of their Illinois experience. Not a one of John’s children could identify the nativity state of either parent.

32 Fortunately, the geographic origins of the eighteenth century parents the Illinois Littles can be pinpointed in the United States Tenth Census (1880), Schedule 1, Montgomery Co., Tx. census. Hiram Little identified Virginia as his father’s nativity state and South Carolina as his mother’s. That information, combined with the collective weight of other evidence—state and federal census documents; state, county, and local land records; tax, probate, and church records; and the written and oral testimony of a host of Little descendants—make William Little Sr. the probable family progenitor. Little-Lindley descendant Carol Todd once examined a book by Kenneth Rea Whitley—Samuel Washington Lindley: His Four Wives and Fourteen Children (1788-1859) (New Braunfels, Tx., 1987)—which identifies Hiram Little’s father as William Little. Cf. Kenneth Rea Whitley and Chester Perry Whitley, The Ciscadera Whitleys (Austin, Tx.: Aus-Tex Duplicators, 1986). The frequent use by the extended family of the forename “Hiram” is another indicator that Hiram Little’s father was the William Little Sr. found on the family tree in Figure 1. Lydia Little Pursley’s grandson—the firstborn child of Lydia’s oldest son John Pursley—was also Hiram (probably named after his older first cousin once removed). Mills Whitley and his wife Elizabeth Little also named their youngest son Hiram Little Whitley (b. 1837 Sabine District, Texas), further illustrating the connectedness of members of the kinship group. See also GLO documenting the Jan. 20, 1824 acquisition of William Little of 248.8 acres (NE¼, Sec. 18, T4N, R1W (today’s Fayette Co., Il.). William was the assignee of Thomas Heaven Finley who married William’s daughter Mary in a Feb. 24, 1814 ceremony performed by Captain William Jones (Ancestry.com, Illinois Marriages to 1850, http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?db=ilmarriages_ga&h=88067&ti=0&indiv=try&gss=pt:ssrc=pt_t1029034_p6135888400_kpid z0q3d6135888400zq26pgz0q3d32768zq26pgPlZq3dpid [accessed July 11, 2012]). Finley eventually moved to Texas where he died in Collin Co. in 1859.

33 John [Jiles] Little household, United States Tenth Census (1880), Schedule 1, Anderson Co., Beat No. 2, Tx. Cf. William Little and John Pursley households, First Census (1790), York County, SC., Schedule 1 (Free Inhabitants) [Ancestry.com, accessed May 21, 2012]

35 William Sr.’s wife may have been named Catherine. Duncan Aker, a Pursley descendant from Vanceburg, Ky., cites a Feb. 15, 1825 conveyance record in which William and Catherine Little conveyed title to land in Fayette County, Il. in a deed witnessed by Samuel Little, Mills Whitley, and John Whitley. In the absence of harder evidence, other clues about the Little family can be coaxed from southern naming practices, specifically the inclination of eighteenth and nineteenth century southerners to name first-born sons after the paternal grandfather, second-born sons after the maternal one, and third-born sons after the father. See David Hackett Fischer, Albion’s Seed: Four British Folkways in America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 50-51, 307-310 and Carolyn Earle Billingsley, Communities of Kinship: Antebellum Families and the Settlement of the Cotton Frontier (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2004), 23-26, 56-58, 110. Significantly, the two last-born children of Mills Whitley and Elizabeth Little—Randolph Little and Liram Little Whitley—both bore the surname of their maternal line. William Little Sr.’s oldest daughter Lydia and her husband William Pursley named their first son John, the given name of Pursley’s father. They christened their second son William, no doubt doubly honoring both Lydia’s father and husband. William Sr.’s younger daughter Elizabeth and her husband Mills Whitley adopted an inverted version of the usual practice, naming their first son John, pointing to Mills’s father John Saunders Whitley. Their second son, christened “William Mills,” bore at once the names of both of paternal grandfather and father. Hiram Little and wife Mary Lindley named their first son Jonathan (b. 1836) apparently in honor of his uncle who fell at the Alamo only two months earlier. Subsequently, they conformed to the usual practice by naming their second- and third-born sons William and Samuel. To be sure, naming practices are an imperfect measuring stick, but such genealogical clues are at least suggestive in the absence of more conclusive documentary proof.

36 Households of William [Sr.], Samuel, John, and William [Jr.], United States Fifth Census (1830), Bond County, Il., [Ancestry.com, accessed May 11, 2012]. See also the petit juror list (abt. 1827) for Shelby Co., Il., which names “William Sr.” as a juror, indicating that the second William in the 1830 Shelby County census was indeed the son, William Jr.

37 William Warren Sweet, ed., Religion on the American Frontier, The Baptists, 1783-1830; A Collection of Course Material (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1964), 520-521. The St. Clair Co. location suggests greater precision than actually exists. In 1809, St. Clair Co. constituted 75 percent of the northern portion of Illinois. Little’s sermons were delivered near today’s O’Fallon, Il., east of East St. Louis, Il. The Lindley family, at least prior to its arrival in Illinois, embraced the Quaker faith. No record survives indicating when Simon Lindley moved from Quakerism to the Baptist denomination.

38 The Sadler name is spelled differently in various public records. Some use “Saddler.” There is no Sadler in the 1820 federal population census. However, there are Sadlers aplenty—Joseph, Mitchell, Samuel, and Uriah—who patented Illinois land as early as 1817-18 18.


No Lindleys or Littles appear in the 1810 Illinois census, but information deduced from various federal population censuses and family memoirs place both families in Illinois around 1807-1810.


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The Richland Church [a.k.a., Ogle’s Creek, Clinton Hill Church], was “the third Baptist Church to exist in Illinois,” and included members of the Little family on its membership rolls.


52 John Frost, Pioneer mothers of the West, or, Daring and heroic deeds of American women (New York: Arno Press, 1974, c1859), 184-190. Cf. John L. Ferguson, edited by Ronald Loos, “A Walk Through Marine, “http://www.usacitiesonline.com/ilmarinehistory.htm [accessed July 8, 2012]. In his 1875 description, Ferguson remembers: “When in forts women could do as good fighting as the men and it was not an uncommon things in those days for a single lone woman with perhaps five or six children in blockhouses on the farms to successfully defend herself against five or ten Indians particularly if the attack was made in daytime which was generally the case as women and children were never left home alone at night if it could be avoided. All women on the frontier at that time learned to shoot. My mother was a good shot with a rifle and could shoot a deer or an Indian as well as my father. Her services were several times called into requisition on certain occasions during the war as were like services by many other ladies of those times.”

53 Accounts of the engagement vary, e.g., the historical marker on the Pursley grave differs from the Frost account in some details. So does History of Sangamon County, Illinois, 457-458 and records of the engagement in the National Archives. Cf. The Lindlys and Allied Families.


56 “Primitive Baptist Church and Family History Research Assistance for Bond County, Illinois,” http://www.carthage.lib.il.us/community/churches/primbap/FamHist-Bond.html [accessed May 25, 2012]; History of Madison County, Illinois, p 301; and Wilson and Kaegy, The Tales of Hill’s Fort and Other Bond County Stories during the War of 1812 (Greenville, Ill.: Hill’s Fort Society, 2003), 83. Cf. Ricky L. Sherrod, “Planters in the Making: The Brown Family's Alabama Years,” The Huntsville Historical Review 34 No. 1 (Winter-Spring 2009): 33-53. While the kinship group studied in this article retreated back only to the Edwardsville area, other southern migrants fell back considerably farther. The Brown family out of Cumberland Co., Va., purchased significant Madison Co., Al., tracts in 1811 but deferred moving the family with its property and assets to Alabama until after the threat of war and Indian troubles was gone.


58 Lewis C. Beck, A. M., A Gazetteer of the States of Illinois and Missouri (Albany: Charles R. and George Webster, 1823). The creation of Fayette Co. in 1821 led to the selection of Greenville as the new county seat, after which Perryville declined in importance. The town is described in the gazetteer cited above as “a very trifling place, containing only about 12 or 15 houses.”

59 In addition to the Simon Lindley listed in Madison County, there is a Samuel Lindley in Crawford County on Bond’s eastern border (see note 60 below). The ages of the latter’s children in the 1820 and 1830 censuses reveal that he is not the Samuel Washington Lindley who moved in concert with the kinship group studied herein.

Madison County, Simon Lindley and John Lindley; and in Crawford County, Samuel Lindley and nine members of the Parker family (who would become part of the group that migrated to Texas around the same time members of the above kinship group also arrived there). See also Bond County Genealogical Society: A History of Bond County, Illinois; 1979, as recorded by Alice Blevins in her book The Blevins-Little Families: William, Samuel, and John Little are listed among voters in a July 6, 1818 election at Perryville. Cf. Illinois Public Domain Land Sales, http://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/archives/databases/data_lan.html [accessed May 28, 2012]. Purchase of federal land became available in 1814. These records in this archive include: 1) Simon Lindley, Apr. 4, 1816; 2) John Whitley (probably Senior), Apr. 27, 1816; 3) Joseph Lindley, Jul. 22, 1816; 4) Abraham Bateman, Nov. 19, 1816; 5) Samuel Little, Jan. 25, 1817; 6) Samuel Lindley, Apr. 7, 1817; 7) Mills Whitley, Nov. 4, 1817; 8) John Whitley (Jr.?), Apr. 6, 1818; 9) William Pursley, June 20, 1823; and 10) Wm. Little, purchase date unknown, sold Feb. 1825. Also, John Lindley bought E½ SE, Sec. 30, T5N, R3W (today’s Bond Co.) on Oct. 15, 1817, and NW¼, Sec. 19, T5N, R3W (today’s Bond Co.) on Dec. 16, 1818; William Lindley bought SW¼ Sec. 6, T5N, R3W (today’s Bond Co.) on Oct. 1, 1818. All three of these parcels are near Lindley’s Fort. Most of the same households appear in the same locations two years later in the United States Fourth Census (1820), Bond Co., II. In Madison Co., John and Joseph Lindley resided near Silver Creek. In Bond Co., Samuel and William Little, Abraham Bateman, John Whitley Sr. and Jr., and Mills Whitley, all live near county seat Perryville in the east central portion of the county. Also living in Bond are Elisha and Randle Whitley; Samuel and William Lindley; William Pursley; and Robert, Sarah, William, and Nancy Duncan. John and Joseph Lindley live still farther west in Madison Co. near Silver Creek. Cf. Garnett, History of Bond and Montgomery Counties, Illinois, 67-68 naming Thomas White and a William Robinson as arrivals in the 1816 Greenville Precinct. The two resided for a year at Lindley’s Fort, built in 1817 and named to honor Joseph Lindley, the first settler of European descent to settle in the area southwest of Greenville (where Lindley built the first house in the forks of the creek). 61 United States Fourth Census (1820), Bond Co., II., [Ancestry.com, accessed May 21, 2012]. In various records, Randall Whitley’s given name is occasionally spelled “Randle” and “Randolph.” One significant member of the kinship network that remained in Illinois was Robert Duncan (b. 1799 South Carolina). His 1821 Bond County, Illinois marriage to Nancy Bateman (b. 1805 Tennessee) tied him intimately to both the Batemans and the Littles. His wife’s sister, Elizabeth “Betsey” Bateman, married John Little (the Illinois record wrongly shows John Little wedding Betsey “Bartman” on May 7, 1821. Illinois Marriages to 1850,” http://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/ssedll?indiv=1&db=eamil&rank=1&new=1&MSAV=0&msT=1&gss=angs-d&gsfn=batsey&gsln=bartman&uidh=u81&pcat=34&fh=0&h=3641&recoff=5+7+23+24+57+58 [accessed July 5, 2012]). Nativity locations for both Robert and Nancy Bateman Duncan are documented in Robert Duncan household, United States Sixth Census (1850), Bond County, II., Schedule 1 (Free Inhabitants) [Ancestry.com, accessed May 16, 2012]). From 1822 through 1853, Robert Duncan patented over 1,000 acres of low-priced federal land which no doubt gave strong incentive to remain exactly where he was. See entries for Robert Duncan in Illinois BLM, GLO at Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records (hereafter cited as BLM, GLO), http://www.glorecords.blm.gov/search/default.aspx [accessed May 14, 2012]. The Combined History of Shelby and Moultrie Counties relates “Robert Duncan settled on section 17, west side of the Wabash branch near where D. T. Clawson now lives. He was only a ‘squatter,’ never owning any land, as was the case with his brothers-in-law. He afterward went up into what is now Moultrie county, and settled in the Whitley creek settlement, and subsequently went to Bond county, where he died about two years ago, in good circumstances”(304). The Dec. 5, 1836 will of Abraham Bateman names his wife Mary, his oldest son William, his daughters Nancy Duncan, Elizabeth Little, Tchithey Butler, Coah Chorna (Sarah Cochran), and Mary Runnels, and his sons Abraham and Riley. Bateman died March 1,1837.

62 John Whitley Sr. was one of five county commissioners appointed “to locate and establish a permanent seat of justice.” See County boundaries, from the legislative act of 1817: “Beginning at S. W. Corner of Township No. 3 North, Range 4 West, thence East to S. E. corner of Township No. 3 North, Range One East to the 3rd Principal Meridian line, thence North to the boundary (sic) line of the territory, thence West with said boundary (sic) line so far that a South line will pass between ranges 4 and 5 West, thence South with said line to the beginning.” Cf. Garnett, History of Bond and Montgomery Counties, Illinois, 25-26, 7. Bond County Records, County Commissioners minutes, April 15, 1817, document Samuel Little’s appointment as tax assessor in Okaw township (now Tamalco Township). In 1817, Okaw included part of
adjoining Fayette Co. Cf. History of Bond and Montgomery Counties, Illinois; p 30. The first sessions of the Bond County’s Circuit Court also held its first sessions at Hill’s Station. On Monday, May 17, 1817, both John Whitley Sr. and Jr. received appointment as grand jurors.

63 Federal land patents confirm the location. See GLO, Samuel Little entries, Arp. 27, 1833, W½ NW and NW¼ SW¼, sec. 18, T11N R6E, Shelby Co., Ill.


66 Illinois Library Magazine; Illinois State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Springfield, IL 62756, p. 67 documenting notation in the county Squatters Book entry #117 (Apr. 22, 1816) by John Whitley Sr. and his son, Mills Whitley, into NE¼, Sec. 35, T5N R4W in present-day Bond Co.. The Lindleys were found in Bond Co. to the northeast of the Whities (NE¼ Sec. 35 T4N R4W). Illinois granted men who made improvements on tracts prior to February 5, 1813, preemptive right to 160 acres. The 1813 section of the squatters book revealed that the Whitley father and son had “improved and cultivated on said square section prior to February 5, 1813, and continues to reside within the reserved tract ever since.” Above reference copied from : Whitley, Chester Perry “Bubba” and Whitley, Kenneth Rea; The “Ciscadera” Whitleys and Other Descendants of John Saunders Whitley (Aus-Tex Duplicators, Austin, Texas, 1986), 45 (copy held in Alamo Library, Daughters of the Republic of Texas, San Antonio, Texas). Cf. Bond County IL GenWeb, s. v., “The Period Before Land Sales,” http://bond.ilgenweb.net/histories/economicsocial.htm [accessed July 5, 2012].


68 I. J. Martin, Notes on the History of Moultrie County and Sullivan, Illinois, http://www.edenmartin.com/family/notes.htm, 213-214 [accessed June 1, 2012]. “It was, perhaps, John Whitley’s reputation as a horseman and his race horses and hunting hounds that secured his election as County Commissioner.”

69 Combined History of Shelby and Moultrie Counties, Illinois, “Moultrie County, Settlements,” 44. The Whities “settled in Section 12, T. 12, R. 6, at the point of timber which has ever since been known as Whitley’s Point.” Although many members of his family migrated to Texas in the 1830s, John Sr. “moved up the Okaw River, in Coles County, about 1838, where he died a few years later, and his wife soon followed him in death. Although none of their descendants live in the county, the name of Whitley, united as it is to township and stream, resists decay.” Cf. Martin, Notes on the History of Moultrie County and Sullivan, Illinois. “The government was not selling land here then, and so the Whities just settled. What was the use of buying land, anyway, when one had the whole out-of-doors. The first land patents were issued in 1830, and John Whitley, Sr., Sharp, and William Whitley each entered the eighty acre tracts upon which they had settled. Mills Whitley sold his homestead rights to Samuel M. Smyser, who took out a patent in 1831.”


71 Right [sic] Little household, United States Fifth Census (1830), Shelby County, Il. Cf. Combined History of Shelby and Moultrie Counties, 41, which pinpoints Samuel Little’s arrival in Shelby County as the “fall of 1825,” and further indicates that his brother John and brother-in-law Robert Duncan came as well “the following spring.”

72 United States Fifth Census (1830), Clark and Marion counties, Il., [Ancestry.com, accessed May 21, 2012]. There are other Littles found in Bond, Fayette, and Sangamon counties. They may in fact be related to the Littles examined above. However, they do not appear to have contributed to the Illinois-to-Texas migration of the 1830s.

73 Family tradition wrongly places Joseph in Tennessee in 1817 (see especially Horace Lindley’s The Lindlys and Allied Families which wrongly places both Joseph Lindley and Samuel W. Washington in Texas by 1822). Joseph Lindley, United States Fourth Census (1820), Madison Co., Il. (he lives next to John Lindley); Joseph Sinley [sic], James Sinley [sic], and Daniel H. McGary, (and wife Sarah Lindley)
28, 1827 certificate of character indicates he came to Texas from Henry Co., Tn. See original document at
TGLo, http://scandocs.glo.texas.gov/webfiles/landgrants/pdfs/1/0/3/1/1031926.pdf and
See also Montgomery County Land Office Returns for March 1838 at TGLo,
http://scandocs.glo.texas.gov/webfiles/landgrants/pdfs/1/0/6/2/1062185.pdf and
is listed as no. 50. Also in the same record is James N. Linley (no. 88) who on Apr. 4, 1827 received a third
of a league of land. Given the proximity of the grants to Joseph and James, the two are undoubtedly related,
but the parentage of the latter remains uncertain.

74 Joseph Lindley’s older brother John (b. 1791 N. C. / d. 1863 Madison Co., IL.) remained with their father,
Simon. Regarding scouts and the migration process in general, see Frank Lawrence Owsley, “The Pattern

75 My Family History, http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/f/a/m/Kathy-Lorena-Brooks-
AL/FILE/0078page.html [accessed June 3, 2012]. “A copy of a Spanish Land Grant shows that Samuel
Washington Lindley asked to be granted a league of land. This request was signed Nov. 4, 1834, and
proves that Samuel Washington Lindley resided in Texas. Another copy of a statement from the General
Land Office showed that in 1835, Samuel Washington Lindley was a resident of Montgomery County and
lived near the Walker County line.” For relevant TGLo documents, see
http://scandocs.glo.texas.gov/webfiles/landgrants/pdfs/1/0/3/0/1030833.pdf;

76 See Findagrave, s. v., “Jonathan L. Lindley” http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-
bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GRid=8881263 [accessed June 3, 2012]. This source indicates that Jonathan “entered
Mexican Texas in November 1833, as a livestock raiser and applied for a land grant in Joseph Vehlein’s
Colony on November 4, 1834. His quarter-league grant, located on land now in Polk County, Texas, was
surveyed on June 21, 1835, and the grant was issued on July 17, 1835.” There is a transcribed copy of the
Whitley Family Bible in the Jonathan Lindley file at the DRT Library at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas.
For original land grant document, see TGLo,

77 Herzstein Library’s Veteran Biographies, s. v., “San Jacinto Bios: Sadler, John” (http://www.sanjacinto-
museum.org/Herzstein_Library/Veteran_Biographies/San_Jacinto_Bios/biographies/default.asp?action=bio
&id=3550 [accessed June 24, 2012]). “In Headright Certificate No. 116 issued to him February 19, 1838,
for one labor of land by the Montgomery County Board, it is stated that he arrived in Texas in November 1,
1833. He had received title to a league of land in Vehlein’s Colony situated in Walker and Montgomery
Counties, April 9, 1835.” For additional Sadler land grant information, see TGLo,
http://scandocs.glo.texas.gov/webfiles/landgrants/pdfs/3/3/0/330278.pdf; Cf. certificate of character at
http://scandocs.glo.texas.gov/webfiles/landgrants/pdfs/1/0/3/2/1032044.pdf [accessed July 6, 2012]. The
1838 Montgomery Co. Clerk receipts (http://scandocs.glo.texas.gov/webfiles/landgrants/pdfs/1/0/6/2/1062185.pdf) list a Robert Sadler (no. 105)
in proximity to John Sadler (no. 116). The two are undoubtedly related.

78 For original Hiram Little documents from TGLo,
http://scandocs.glo.texas.gov/webfiles/landgrants/pdfs/1/0/6/2/1062185.pdf;
http://scandocs.glo.texas.gov/webfiles/landgrants/pdfs/1/0/3/1/1031931.pdf; and
1860 Montgomery County, Tx. Census shows a Texas nativity for Hiram’s son Jonathan (b. May 1836).
Not surprisingly, he lives in the midst of a cluster of Lindleys (the family into which Hiram Little married).
As an aside, Jonathan born two months after the death of Jonathan Lindley at the Alamo, is undoubtedly
the namesake of his deceased uncle.

79 Hiram Little arrived in Texas “20 Jany 1835.” Not quite nine months later, on September 11, 1835,
Hiram sponsored William Little’s arrival in Nacogdoches. Cf. TGLo,
http://scandocs.glo.texas.gov/webfiles/landgrants/pdfs/1/0/6/2/1062185.pdf;


Martin, Notes on the History of Moultrie County and Sullivan Illinois, 215. The 1831 marriage of Leah Waggoner to John “Jack” Bateman is a minor irony in the Whitley-Waggoner antipathy. The couple eventually followed the kinship group’s migration to Texas where they are found in the 1850 Anderson County, Tx. census. Cf. Roney, “A Salute to the Whitleys.” Perhaps the Waggoner assessment of the Whitleys was overly harsh. “The old 1881 history portrays the Whitleys as colorful, to say the least, and I was astonished to learn that Samuel Lindley, John S. Whitley’s son-in-law, invited a Methodist preacher, Miles Hart, into his home to preach in 1828, the first preaching by any preacher in the future Moultrie County.”

“First Settlement and Early Settlers, Shelby County,” 41, and “Ash Grove Township,” 304. At least some knowledge about the Little affinity toward the Indian tribes survived, if only as a kernel of the truth in somewhat distorted form. John Little’s great-grandson, Walter Lee Little (1901-1985), who grew up in Somervell and Erath counties in Texas, regaled his children and grandchildren with tales about his unnamed ancestors who interacted in unspecified frontier locations with Indian tribesmen. Historical amnesia about geography notwithstanding, his accounts bore striking resemblance to descriptions of the Littles as “regular frontier-men,” who “delighted to hunt and have sport with the neighboring Indians.” At one level or another, that historical memory remained with the family. During the 1950s Walter Little taught his grandsons, much to his delight and theirs, the finer art of “Indian leg wrestling” which they practiced at length, pitting strength against strength on Little’s Erath County, Texas, living room floor. See Combined History of Shelby and Moultrie Counties, Illinois; 1881, http://www.edenmartin.com/counties/toc.htm; “First Settlement and Early Settlers, Shelby County,” 41 [accessed May 18, 2012]. Cf. “How to Indian Wrestle,” http://www.ehow.com/how_4472997_indian-wrestle.html [accessed May 18, 2012].


specifically 4,411.83 acres (more than double the 1,880 acres patented by the Whitleys). Lindley patents averaged 441.2 acres per male head of household (Elijah, Jehu, John, Jonathan, Joseph, Samuel, Samuel W., Simon, Thomas, William) versus the Whitley’s 313.3 acres per male head of household (Elisha, John Sr., John Jr., Randall, Sharp, William).

86 Deed, Samuel and Elizabeth Lindley of Coles Co., Il. to Gideon Thayer of Boston, Massachusetts, Aug. 31, 1833, SW ¼ sec. 6 T12N R7E, Clerk of Court’s Office, Coles Co., Charleston, Il. (hereafter cited as CCC), Book A, 204. Interestingly, neither Lindley’s wife, Elizabeth Whitley, nor his twenty-four-year-old son-in-law, Hiram Little, had literacy skills. Both signed with an “X.”

87 Lindley’s daughters were: Sarah Elizabeth m. Lemuel Collard; Barsheba m. John Sadler; Mary m. Hiram Little; Martha m. Anthony Gibson; Rachel m. B. F. Kelton; and Mahala m. Elijah C. Tolbert. His sons were: William m. Martha Jane Hostetter; Samuel Jr. m. Margaret Park; John L. m. Elizabeth Ann Martin; James m. Margaret Irvine; and Elijah m. Eliza Tolbert.


90 See Exley, Frontier Blood, 37.


92 Texas, Land Title Abstracts, Aug. 27, 1835, Patent no. 943, Patent vol. 21. Cf. the Montgomery County Clerk Receipts of March 1838 which documents an additional Labor of land received by Lindley in November 1833. Lindley is also be found in the 1840 Montgomery Co., Texas census (drawn here and below from Gifford White, ed., The 1840 Census of the Republic of Texas [Austin: Pemberton Press, 1966]) and Samuel Lindley household, United States Sixth Census (1850), Montgomery Co., Tx.


On April 6, 1835, Lindley was awarded a Headright for 1 league of land (25,000,000 square varas) or 4,428.4 acres which he located in Montgomery Co., TX near the San Jacinto River. Several early Montgomery county deeds make reference to the area where he settled as ‘Lindley Settlement’ or ‘Lindley’s Prairie.’ The land which is the focus of my study is located within this headright now known as The Joseph Lindley Survey, A-25, on present-day maps. A few years after receiving the headright, as evidenced by the deed records, he began donating and/or selling pieces of his large tract of land.” Family members involved in these transactions included: Samuel Lindley Sr. (Dec. 1845), William Harper Spiller (March 1846), John Spiller (Apr. 1846), and a 320-acre gift donation to his daughter Sarah Lindley McGary (Nov. 8, 1845). “Before concluding the disposition of all of his headright land, Joseph Lindley moved his family north to Limestone Co., TX ca. 1846. They settled slightly north of present-day Mexia, TX. Lindley died on January 20, 1874 and was buried in Limestone Co.” See also Handbook of Texas Online, s. v. “Lindley, Joseph,” [accessed on June 3, 2012]. While Lindley forfeited his original land grant for involvement in the Fredonian affair, Joseph Lindley prospered after the Revolution, securing 4,428 Montgomery County acres. The Joseph Lindley Survey was in Montgomery County, Texas northeast of Danville. See Montgomery County Deed Books F (116) L (5, 169, 229, 231), O (181). Cf. Lawless, Journey to Danville, [accessed June 9, 2012]. Also of interest is Lindley’s Montgomery Co. First Class Grant, TGLO, http://scandocs.glo.texas.gov/webfiles/landgrants/pdfs/3/0/9/309775.pdf and Title, http://scandocs.glo.texas.gov/webfiles/landgrants/pdfs/1/0/3/0/1030669.pdf [both accessed July 6, 2012]. TGLO, http://scandocs.glo.texas.gov/webfiles/landgrants/pdfs/1/0/3/1/1031926.pdf [accessed July 16, 2012]. Jonathan Lindley’s [sic] Oct. 31, 1834 certificate of character to the Alcalde of Nacogdoches, signed by Joseph Lindly [sic] and Nat Robbins in San Jacinto, placed him on the “North side of Cushati trace about 5 miles from his father’s survey.” Jonathan’s land grant was located in today’s Polk County just a little northeast of where Samuel settled.

In December 1835, during the storming of Bexar, Jonathan Lindley was in Crane’s company that served in the First Division under the command of Benjamin R. Milam. Jonathan became a part of Captain John Crane’s volunteer company at the Bexar siege. On December 14, just five days after Cos capitulation, Lindley officially joined the Texas army as a private in Captain William R. Carey’s artillery company. However, like many of the other revolutionaries including John Thomas Whitley, Jonathan may have returned to his home for Christmas.

See Hiram Little/Mary Lindley—Illinois/Tex, http://genforum.genealogy.com/little/messages/3219.html [accessed June 4, 2012]. “Hiram Little joined the Army of Texas about the first of November 1835 and fought in San Antonio under Ben Milam up into December of that year, when the Mexican General Cos was defeated. The troops there in the Texas Army were allowed to go home for Christmas of that year, or to be discharged from the service. It was indicated that Hiram preferred to be discharged since records indicate that he ‘joined the Army of the Republic of Texas again about the First of June, 1836 in Wade’s Company, 2nd Regiment . . .’ Since Jonathan Lindley was also at San Antonio in December 1835 and he left for his home late that month, it is very probable that he and Hiram returned to the home settlements together. Records indicate that Hiram joined the Army of the Republic of Texas in June 1836, that it was for a period of three months; was in J. M. Wade’s Company of the 2nd Regiment commanded by Colonel S. Sherman; that he was discharged at the expiration of this three months and was awarded 320 acres of land (bounty land) by the Republic of Texas; later papers indicate that he was paid the sum of 24 dollars for this three months service.” On Joseph Lindley’s service, see Karen Lucas Lawless, “A Journey to Danville,” [accessed June 8, 2012].

Some secondary sources, including an “official” list of participants at the Alamo in San Antonio, identify, the youthful Jonathan Lindley as part of the reinforcements—the Gonzales Mounted Rangers—that arrived at the Alamo in the early morning hours of March 1, 1836. No known primary source verifies his connection to the so-called “Immortal 32.” Neither is there any evidence of Jonathan’s residency in Gonzales. Jonathan was in San Antonio in February 1, 1836 as is documented by his name appearing on a voting list so dated. See Texas State Library and Archives Commission, s. v., “Election for Delegates to attend the Convention of 1836, February 1, 1836,” line 23, https://www.tsl.state.tx.us/treasures/republic/alamo/election-1.html [accessed June 18, 2012]. “This document is an election return from February 1, 1836. On that date, each settlement in Texas voted on delegates to the Convention of 1836, which would begin meeting on March 1 at Washington-on-the-
Brazos. The Convention of 1836 wrote the Texas Declaration of Independence, prepared a constitution, organized an interim government, and named Sam Houston commander-in-chief before hastily adjourning on March 17 to respond to Santa Anna's invading army. This return was taken in the Alamo fortress, and is sometimes called the ‘Alamo muster roll,’ as it is one of the rare pieces of documentary evidence that definitively places individuals at the scene of the Alamo prior to the siege.” Cf. Cf. Sons of DeWitt Colony Texas, s. v., “The DeWitt Colony Alamo Defenders: Members of the Garrison & Surviving Couriers & Foragers, Alamo Widows & Mothers; The Immortal 32 Gonzales Rangers,” http://www.tamu.edu/faculty/ccbn/de Witt/gonreliefframe.htm; The DeWitt Colony Alamo Defenders, http://www.tamu.edu/faculty/ccbn/de Witt/gonreliefframe.htm; Jonathan Lindley (1814?-1836), http://www.gtt-gonetotexas.com/jonathanlindley.html [all accessed June 3, 2012]. Another Jonathan Lindley legend identifies him as a surveyor in the Gonzales area. See clmroots, s. v. “History of an American Family: Remember the Alamo—Jonathan Lindley,” Saturday, May 24, 2008, http://clmroots.blogspot.com/2008/05/jonathan-lindley-alamo-defender.html. “Some say that Jonathan was a surveyor for early Texas colonists and a resident of Gonzales.” However, since Jonathan signs his name with an “X” in surviving records, it seems unlikely he would have possessed the skills necessary to write out metes and bounds. See Thomas Ricks Lindley, Handbook of Texas Online, s. v., “Lindley, Jonathan,” http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fli33 [accessed June 18, 2012]. Jonathan had no land grant in the Gonzales area. His “quarter-league grant, located on land now covered by Lake Livingston in Polk County, was surveyed on June 21, 1835, and the grant was issued on July 17, 1835. Lindley signed the grant application with an ‘X,’ which indicates he was probably illiterate and could not have been a surveyor as some sources have claimed. The grant was later invalidated because a previous grant had been surveyed on the site and issued to William Pace in May 1835. Lindley appears to have been unaware that his grant was invalidated, and he was probably living in the site in the fall of 1835 when the Texas Revolution broke out.” The notion that Jonathan Lindley was part of the “Immortal 32” may spring from the volume The Alamo Defenders by Amelia Williams and edited by Michelle M. Haas. Williams appears to have confused Jonathan with the Englishman Charles Linley who died along with Fannin at Goliad.

Jonathan Lindley is included in a list of casualties at the Alamo in Baker & Bordens, editor. Telegraph and Texas Register (San Felipe de Austin [i.e. San Felipe], Tex.), Vol. 1, No. 21, Ed. 1, Thursday, March 24, 1836, Newspaper; digital images, (http://texashistory.university.edu/ark:/67531/metaph47891/), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, http://texashistory.university.edu; crediting Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Austin, Texas). Montgomery County annual tax records identify Jonathan’s father, Samuel W. Lindley, as the administrator of the deceased’s estate. Jonathan’s “heirs received 1280 acres bounty for service in Panola Co, TX near Carthage.” See also Jonathan Lindley (1814?-1836), http://www.gtt-gonetotexas.com/jonathanlindley.html [accessed June 3, 2012]. Lindley “helped garrison the Alamo under the command of Lt. Col. James C. Neil.” Cf. clmroots, s. v. “History of an American Family: Remember the Alamo—Jonathan Lindley,” Saturday, May 24, 2008, http://clmroots.blogspot.com/2008/05/jonathan-lindley-alamo-defender.html [accessed June 4, 2012]. “Jonathan’s ‘heirs received 1280 acres bounty for service in Panola Co, TX near Carthage. After the Battle of San Jacinto, the surviving Lindley family re-settled in Montgomery Co, TX. In the Lindley Cemetery 5 miles north of Anderson in Grimes Co, TX is a HISTORICAL MARKER honoring Jonathan L,[sic—there is no evidence that his middle initial was “L.”] Lindley. . . . Following the independence of Texas, the grateful Republic of Texas posthumously awarded the heroes of the Alamo bounties of land. Under certificate #9132 dated May 14, 1839, Houston, Texas, Jonathan Lindley was awarded 1280 acres of land situated in Panola County, ten and one-half miles south, twenty degrees west from Carthage, Texas. It was patented March 9, 1860. The lawful heirs of Jonathan Lindley, namely his parents and his brothers and sisters, since he was not married, fell heir to the 1280-acre bounty plus his original Mexican Grant of 640 acres in the William Pace Survey in Polk County. His father, Samuel Washington Lindley, was appointed administrator of the estate of Jonathan; as such he administered and divided the estate. . . . After the battle of San Jacinto the Lindley family opted to re-settle in Montgomery County. In the Lindley Cemetery five miles north of Anderson, Grimes County has erected an historical marker honoring Jonathan Lindley as an Alamo hero. [The Lindley family was said to be close friends of Jesse Grimes, signer of the Texas Declaration of Independence after whom Grimes County was named-WLM]. Much of the above information came from an article by Virginia Stewart Lindley Ford that was printed in The History of Gonzales County, Texas.”


Proof of John’s service can be found in different sources: FOUNDERS AND PATRIOTS OF THE REPUBLIC OF TEXAS, BOOK II; Published by The Daughters of The Republic of Texas; Austin, Texas, 1974. Page 147. Mrs. Nannie Fay Sadler Robertson; No. 6179; admitted November 17, 1919; Mary Ann Lawhon Chapter. ‘John Sadler, b. 5-28,-1811, Tennessee, d. 4-18-1885, Oleta, Texas, m. 11-17-1830, Shelby County, Illinois, Barsheba Lindley, b. 3-5-1811, Illinois, d 10-17-1885, Oleta, Texas. John Sadler, a soldier at San Jacinto in Captain William Ware’s Company.’ MUSTER ROLLS OF THE TEXAS REVOLUTION, Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Austin, Texas, 1986. Muster roll - page 37. San Jacinto List; Col Sherman’s Command. Name & Rank: John Sadler.” An 1874 John Sadler pension application for service in Battle of San Jacinto exists. Finally, see clmroots, s. v., “John Sadler—A True Texan.”


The 1838 Montgomery Co. tax record is particularly valuable in that it reveals not only assets but location. It is a rare instance of a non-alphabetized accounting. Much like nineteenth century federal population censuses, 1838 residents appear in order of household, giving the historian a particularly useful tool in placement of individuals for that year.

Online sources:


- John Jeffler, Handbook of Texas Online, s. v. Walker County; [both accessed June 20, 2012]. For additional information on Montgomery County, see Gandy, "A History of Montgomery County, Texas;" [accessed June 20, 2012].


- Fold3, National Archives compiled military service record, Riley Little, private (Jan. 15, 1862 – Oct. 1863), Company C, 18th Regiment, Texas Cavalry, American Civil War, [accessed June 28, 2012]. Little enlisted in Dallas, Texas., “for three years or the war.” Ironically, given the family’s Illinois “origins,” Little was part of the 18th Regiment captured Jan. 11, 1863 at the “Arkansas Post” and is found on the Feb. 8, 1863 “Roll of Prisoners of War” at Camp Douglas, Illinois. Little was paroled on Apr. 1, 1863 at Camp Douglas and delivered to City Point, Virginia on Apr. 7, 1863. He might have been better off had he remained imprisoned. The cryptic notation found on most of Little’s folders reads, “Absent—at Hospital wounded, supposed to be dead.” The final entry reads, “died of wounds received at the battle of Chickamauga [Sep. 19-20, 1863].” Two of Hiram Little’s sons also served the Confederacy. See Ken McCann Hett, “Hiram Little,” [accessed June 28, 2012].

- Southwestern Historical Quarterly CXIII No. 1 (July 2009): 1-31; “Planters in the Making: The
See Slave Schedule of 1850 censuses for Montgomery Co. The number of bondsmen follows each name: Lem Collard, five; Hyram [sic] Little, two; William Whitley, four; R. F. Kelton, one; G. A. Spillers [sic], twelve; Sam Lindley, twelve; W. H. Spillers [sic], four; J. S. Collard, five; Sam F. Spillers [sic], six. In Walker Co.: B. F. Kelton, one; William Lindley, four; L. M. Collard, five. And in Washington Co.: Sharp Whitley, three. See also the 1860 censuses for Caldwell Co.: John Whitley, one; Mills Whitley, two; W. Whitley, two; Freestone Co.: J. N. Lindley, eight; W. H. Spillers [sic], four; Montgomery Co.: Mills Whitley, two; W. Whitley, two; M. Collard, one; J. S. Collard, twenty; P. H. Spillow [sic], thirteen; S. J. Spillow [sic], fourteen; Wm Linly [sic], eleven; E. Linley [sic], one; Hiram Little, eleven; Leon Co.: S. H. Little [son of William Little, d. 1859], two; Limestone Co.: Joseph Lindley, nine; Jno Sadler, two; and Walker Co: James Lindley, three; John Lindley, three. Texas county annual tax rolls add details about the ebb and flow of slaveholding from year to year (see TCTR).

In 1860, Jonathan Stark Collard (b. 1807, Christian Co., Ky., son of Elijah Simmons and Mary Ball Stark Collard)—held $20,000 in real estate & $10,550 in personal estate. The 1860 Montgomery Co. tax record reveals that among his several properties, J. S. Stark held a 493-acre tract valued at $5,916. It was Collard’s most valuable Montgomery Co. landholding. Not surprisingly, given the interconnectedness of the greater kinship group, the “Original Grantee” of that particular acreage was Joseph Lindley.

In 1858, the year before his death, Samuel Lindley’s slaveholdings had dropped to eight valued at $5,400. He may have dispersed at least some of his slaves to his own younger sons who by that time had long since come of age. The 1848 TCTR for Montgomery Co. shows Elijah Lindley (age twenty-three) with one bondsmen and James Lindley (age twenty-seven) with two.

TCTR for 1859 Montgomery Co. shows Samuel Lindley’s slaveholdings down to seven valued at $4,800, and Hiram Little’s at six worth $5,500. William Lindley is not listed.

One particularly good example is Deed, Jonathan S. Collard to George Spiller, Feb. 20, 1852, MCC, Deed Book P, 344-346; and X, 135, Clerk of Court's Office, Montgomery Co., Conroe, Tx. (hereafter cited as MCC). This sale involved “a part and remainder of six hundred and forty acres of land donated to me by the Republic of Texas for having participated in the Battle of San Jacinto.” In the annual county tax rolls, there are also multiple examples of one family member in possession of tracts whose “Original Grantee” was a fellow-family member, e.g., William Whitley in the 1853 Montgomery Co. tax record in possession of seven acres from Joseph Lindley’s original grant.

In fairness, portions of various family properties originally in Montgomery Co. were “reassigned” to Walker Co. at Walker’s 1846 creation. However, the bondsmen of Lemuel M. Collard (married to Samuel W. Lindley Sr.’s daughter, Sarah Elizabeth) listed in the Montgomery and Walker county slave schedules are of different ages so this cannot be a double listing of the same individuals. In all, nine members of the kinship group are listed in the 1850 Montgomery County slave schedule. They appear on three successive pages, interspersed among twenty-one of the county’s slaveholders. As such, the census record suggests geographical proximity of the extended family’s agricultural endeavors.

Both John Sadler’s list the same wife—“Bersheba” in Walker and “Bosheby” in Montgomery—as well as the same children. Double census listings are not unprecedented, e.g., James Brown Sherrod is found in the 1870 Natchitoches Parish census twice: once in the Ward 1 household of his mother, Sarah Godwin Sherrod, and again in his own Ward 4 household with his wife. In the latter listing, J. B. Sherrod’s first cousin, Morgan Manning Sherrod, also resides in his cousin’s household. But Manning Sherrod is listed again in the Ward 3 household of his father, George.

The extended Brown family in Northwest Louisiana appears to have followed a similar practice. See Sherrod, “Plain Folk, Planters, and the Complexities of Southern Society,” 20-23.

Cf. Hiram Little/Mary Lindley—Illinois/Tex, [accessed June 4, 2012]. “The Hiram Little family came to Texas to join up with the Samuel W. Lindley family sometime in the period of July 1834.” In the note immediately below, Little’s land grant is documented as Jan. 20, 1835.

See original Hiram Little documents from TGLO, [accessed July 6, 2012]; Deed, Jackson Crouch to Hiram Little, Aug. 9, 1846, two tracts of Crouch’s third of a league headright (patent 497), WCC, Book A2, 28. Cf. Deed, Henry Wageman to Hiram Little, May 18, 1850, W½ of 300 acre tract acquired from Jackson Crouch (part of his third of a league headright), WCC, Book B21, 18. The priceless information regarding Sallie Winters comes courtesy of Lindley-Little descendant Carol Todd who provided the author with a two page reproduction of “A Distinguished Visitor” by Lucy McGregor (Temple Times, 1909, edited by Sallie’s grandson, John F. Crouch) and an unattributed two-page biographical sketch of Sallie and her family written in the late 1930s. The opening lines of a historical marker at Winters Memorial Park in New Waverly, Tx., declare that she “lost her first sweetheart, Jonathan L. [sic] Lindley, in the Battle of the Alamo.” For a detailed history of Hiram Little’s well, see Karen Lucas Lawless, “A Journey to Danville,” [accessed June 8, 2012].


Hiram Little, United States Seventh Census (1850) and Eighth Census (1860), Montgomery Co., Tx., Schedule 1 (Free Inhabitants) and Schedule 2 (Slave Inhabitants); United States Eighth Census (1860), Montgomery Co., Tx., agricultural schedule. Inexplicably, Little declares no value in real estate in 1850 but in 1860 shows $4,750, as well as $8,650 in personal estate (most of which reflects the values of his bondsmen). Like most southerners, Little’s total net worth declined in value between the war and the taking of the 1870 census. By that year, his real estate appreciated modestly to $5,000, but his personal estate fell to $500.


Little’s military resume may have also included service between the Texas Revolution and Civil War. See original Hiram Little Pension Application at TGLO, [accessed June 4, 2012]. Cf. Hiram Little/Mary Lindley—Illinois/Tex, [accessed June 4, 2012]. “Under the provisions of an Act of Congress, Act of January 29, 1887, ‘Mexican War Pension,’ Mary Polly Little in 1891, November 30, to be exact, made a claim for a pension based on claimed service of Hiram Little in the Mexican War of 1846-47 between Mexico and the United States. Claim was made that Hiram service in Gillaspie’s Company of Texas Mounted Volunteers, under a Colonel Jack Hays, and subsequent to discharge he served in Captain M. T. Johnson’s Company of Hay’s Texas Cavalry and was honorably discharged in April 1848. The findings of the War Department, Record and Pension Division, Washington, D. C. on January 13, 1892 was ‘Respectfully returned to Commissioner of Pensions with the information that the name of Hiram Little has not been found on rolls of any Company
commanded by) Colonel John C. Hays, Texas Mounted Rifles of 1st Texas Mounted Volunteers, Mexican War.”

See also


131 Cf. Ken McCann Hett, “Hiram Little,”
http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~barrettbranches/Researchers/Karen%20Hett/biographies/hlittle.html. “By 1836, he was living in Washington County in the area which later became Montgomery County. . . . Montgomery County was formed from Washington County in 1838, and Hiram appears on the list of taxables beginning in 1839. His only taxable possession that year was a clock valued at $10. He resided in the vicinity of Danville and later in Willis, after the post-Civil War demise of Danville. In the minutes of the first session of the court in Walker County, July, 1846, he was appointed to supply hands for a road from Huntsville to Houston; his residence must have fallen into the boundaries of Walker when that county was cut from Montgomery. In 1848, Hiram Little purchased land near Danville from W. W. Shepperd. He sold certain Danville tracts of land to Jonathan Collard in 1850. When the city of Danville was platted in 1848 for incorporation (which was filed by Daniel Robinson in 1851), it was the inner wall of Hiram Little’s well which was used as the beginning point for the surveying of all the lots in the town. . . . Hiram’s property with the well was purchased by G. A. Spiller and became Spiller’s homestead. The well still exists in a cow pasture near what used to be the city of Danville. In 1852, he was one of the trustees of the Danville Baptist Church of Christ who accepted a deed from G. A. Spiller for three-tenths of an acre of land in the northern part of the town, where the church members were meeting. This congregation moved their church building to Willis in 1875. According to the church minutes, Hiram Little joined the church by baptism. In 1863, he was chosen to be a delegate to the Tryon Association. In 1864, he was appointed to look into the accusation against a Sister Burk for dancing. He served as moderator pro tem in 1865. In December, 1865, he was dismissed by letter, as he was moving away. Hiram was listed as a Master Mason in the year 1857 in the San Jacinto Masonic Lodge 106 at Danville.”

132 William Tolbert’s parents were John Tolbert and Margaret Collard (the daughter of Elijah Simmons Collard and Mary Stark), again showing the intricate nature of the kinship web as it expanded its membership in mid-nineteenth century Texas.

133 The Collards are in the 1850 Montgomery Co., Tx. agricultural census, listed near other members of the kinship group. The family originated out of Augusta Co., Va.; spent a short early-nineteenth residency in Kentucky; and came to Texas not from Illinois but from Missouri. On the Collard family, see “My Family History,” http://familytreemaker.genealogy.com/users/f/a/m/Kathy-Lorena-Brooks-AL(FILE/0078page.html [accessed June 8, 2012]. “Another of Montgomery County’s oldest family lines go [sic] back to the Collard family. According to a history of Montgomery County, Elijah and Mary Collard came to the Montgomery/Walker County area in 1833. Collard was one of the first commissioners when Montgomery County was formed in 1837 and was a member of the First Council of Texas.” Like the other families followed in this study, the Collards likewise came from the Old South. Their European roots ran back to Ireland. Cf. Newton Gresham Library, s. v., “The Collard Cabin,”

“This is Cheryl Spencer, Special Collections Associate in the Thomason Room at Newton Gresham Library at Sam Houston State University. Our talk today concerns the cabins on 19th Street across from Sam Houston Woodland Home. There are three old homes that house today’s Homestead restaurant, the main one being the Collard Cabin. In 1828, Lemuel M. Collard left Missouri to explore the possibilities of the Mexican province of Texas. Apparently his report was glowing, because in 1832, two of his brothers joined him. In 1834, his father, mother, and five brothers and sisters followed. Lemuel, his brothers James Harrison, Job Stark, and Jonathon Stark Collard all fought for Texas independence. The year is now 1843. Just north of the present-day New Waverly, Lemuel Millard Collard and his bride, Elizabeth Lindley, settled on the league of land Collard had received as a settler in the untamed lands of Coahuila-Texas. Elizabeth Lindley was born in Illinois in March of 1815. Her parents were Samuel Washington Lindley and his second wife, Elizabeth Whitley. The Collard, Lindley, and Whitley families had been long-time friends in Kentucky and Missouri before their trek to Texas. A marriage record has not been found for this couple. The one-room cabin, built by Lemuel and Elizabeth, was constructed of native pine logs that were hand-hewed and square-notched. The room was probably divided into a parlor and sleeping area. A chimney was used for warmth and light. A loft, which served as sleeping quarters for their children, could be reached by an L-shaped stairway. Additions were added as the family grew. A second room was added with a ten-foot
wide dog run dividing the two main rooms. A clapboard siding was added to the exterior, and two brick chimneys replaced the old mud and stick chimney. The Collards sold the house around 1846. Eight of their 13 children were born in this house. Descendants of these children still live in Walker County. The house changed hands several times and was remodeled several times before 1980, when George Russell acquired it and moved the house to 19th Street. It was restored to its near-original appearance, then opened as a restaurant. If walls could talk, many happy experiences of the Collard family would unfold." It is worth noting that Samuel W. Lindley Sr. himself eventually married into the Collard family. His third wife was Margaret Elizabeth Collard.


135 See Lawless, Journey to Danville,

136 Ellen Maschino , Handbook of Texas Online, s. v., “Limestone County,”

137 Joseph Sinley [sic--Lindley] household, United States Seventh Census (1850), Limestone Co., Tx. He is a slaveless farmer with $5,400 in real estate. See also TCTR, Limestone Co., 1855 (in addition to Lindley’s 640 Limestone Co. acres worth $640 [image 9, lines 34-35], see image 23, lines 3-11 which list Joseph’s properties outside of Limestone Co. including 355½ acres worth $355 in Freestone Co. and 3,217 acres worth $2,627 in Walker Co.). Cf. Joseph Lindley household, United States Eighth Census (1860), Limestone Co., Tx. He is a farmer with $7,000 in real estate and $20,000 in personal estate (no doubt representing in large part his nine bondsmen, five of whom are suitable ages—seventeen, twenty-eight, and fifty year-old males and twenty-seven and forty-three year-old females—for field work). Cf. Delma Cothran Thames, Handbook of Texas Online, s. v., “Lindley, Joseph,”

See also Sessions, “Freestone Past/Present.” “Lindley died Jan. 20, 1874 and buried in nearby New Home Cemetery. His wife Ann lived until 1881 and was buried here also. In about the middle 1950’s the bodies were moved to the Texas State Cemetery in Austin. In 1986 during the Texas Sesquicentennial was formally honored on Memorial Day by a Proclamation of Governor Mark White of April 17, 1986 recognizing Col. Lindley’s service in the Battle of San Jacinto and The War of 1812.” Finally, see Joseph Lindy [sic--Lindley] household 1209, United States Ninth Census (1870), Limestone Co., Tx. He is a slaveless farmer with $5,400 in real estate. Lindley’s thirty-six-year-old son Joseph Madison Lindley resides in his father’s household and lists himself as a “Stockraiser” with $2,000 in real estate and $1,880 in personal estate. Lindley’s thirty-four-year-old son Simon Travis Lindley also lives in the household and is a “Stockraiser” with $3,000 in real estate and $1,565 in personal estate. Lindley’s thirty-three-year-old grandson and Civil War Confederate veteran, Edward Oliver Hugh McGary, lives next door in household 1210 and is a “Laborer.” One household (1211) beyond is twenty-six-year-old Joseph Pendleton Lindley—another grandson—who is a “Planter” with $700 in real estate and $330 in personal estate. Some distance away, in household 1218, the twenty-five-year-old, black “Jas. Lindly” is listed as a “Laborer.” In fact, numerous black families are interspersed throughout Joseph Lindley’s neighborhood, presumably individuals who helped maintain the Lindley family’s Reconstruction-era planting operation.

138 Multiple sources place John Sadler on the Walker-Montgomery County border: Texas, Land Title Abstract, Patent Volume 20, Patent #351 for 4,428½ acres, Apr. 29, 1835, and Patent Vol. 1, Patent #4 (File 125) for 640 acres, May 20, 1846; the 1840 Texas Census, Montgomery Co. (Sadler holds 2,000 acres under completed title and another 1,652 awaiting survey; one slave and fifteen cattle); John Sadler household, United States Seventh Census (1850), Montgomery Co., Tx. and Walker Co., Tx. See also Bounty Certificate #465 regarding Sadler’s receipt of 320 acres for his service in the Texas army from June 17 through September 17, 1836; and Deed (part of “Sadler’s headright league of land granted to him as a
colonist”), John Sadler to Daniel McGill, Dec. 16, 1850, MCC, Book N, 128. Sadler lists no real estate or slaves in the 1850 Montgomery Co. census, but $1,784 in 1850 Walker Co. real estate.


141 For example, see Thomas E. Blackshear Papers, “Records of Ante-Bellum Southern Plantations from the Revolution through the Civil War,” Series G, Part I, Reel 44 of 44, University of Texas at Austin, The Center for American History.

142 As late as 1854, the lion’s share of the Sadler family remained in Walker Co. where five of the Sadler children were enrolled in school (Gifford White, Texas Scholastic Census 1854-1855, [Austin: Archives Division, Texas State Library, 1979], 374 [for John Saddler (sic), 1854 School Enumeration in Walker Co., Texas, District 6]; cf. 178 which shows the Sadler children in the 1855 School enumeration in Limestone Co. See also TCTR, Limestone Co., Tx., 1856 (Jno. Saddler, image 16, line 24 and Jas. Saddler, image 15, line 20); 1857 (James Saddler, image 19, line 12). John Sadler appears in the Limestone Co. tax record again in 1858 (image 21, lines 17-18), still landless with two slaves and $2,932 in total assets. He is thereafter a permanent fixture in the Limestone County tax rolls. Meanwhile, Green W. Spiller, who appears in the Limestone County tax record as early as 1854 (image 12, line 7), is quite likely a member of the Spiller family that frequently moved with the Littles after William, John, and Samuel abandoned Montgomery County in the mid-1840s. If so, Spiller may well have encouraged the Sadlers to come to Limestone. On Sadler’s subsequent residence in that county, see: See Jno. Saddler [sic] household, United States Eighth Census (1860), Limestone Co., Tx. Sadler identifies himself as a farmer with $1,500 in real estate, $4,100 in personal estate, and two slaves (a twenty-four-year-old male and a fifty-year-old female). Sadler was still in Limestone Co. at the taking of the United States Ninth and Tenth censuses (1870 and 1880). In the former, he lists himself as a “Planter” with $375 in real estate and $130 in personal estate, and in the latter he list himself as a seventy-one-year-old farmer. John and Barsheba Sadler live in the midst of a host of Sadler family members, as well as John Lindley (b. 1845 Texas) who is probably Barsheba’s nephew. Both John and Barsheba Sadler are buried beside one another in Furguson Cemetery a mile southeast of Limestone County’s Oletha. Cf. Herzstein Library’s Veteran Biographies, s. v., “San Jacinto Bios: Sadler, John” [HTTP://www.sanjacinto-museum.org/Herzstein_Library/Veteran_Biographies/San_Jacinto_Bios/biographies/default.asp?action=bio&id=3550 [accessed June 24, 2012]) and clmroots, s. v., “John Sadler—A True Texan,” [HTTP://CLMROOTS.BLOGSPOT.COM/SEARCH/LABEL/LINDLEY%20FAMILY accessed June 24, 2012]. “John Sadler—A True Texan” summarizes: “John and Basheba had nine children, five sons and four daughters. Many of their children and grandchildren stayed in the Limestone county area, but others spread out and helped to populate and settle the great state of Texas. Children of John and Basheba were: (1) James Caine Sadler, 1834-1910; (2) Sarah Sadler Wageman, 1835-1900; (3) Samuel Lewis Sadler, 1839-1921; (4) Elizabeth Sadler, 1842-1912; (5) Richard Henry Sadler, 1844-1887; (6) Mary Sadler Baldwin, 1845-1933; (7) Robert Sadler, 1849-1924; (8) Martha Sadler Ingle, 1850-1897; and (9) John "Bud" Sadler, 1853-1898.”

143 Elijah, William, and Samuel Lindley Sr. households, United States Seventh Census (1850), Schedule 1, 1850.

144 Mary married Hiram Little; Sarah Elizabeth married Lemuel M. Collard; Martha married (1) John J. Crowson and (2) Anthony Gibson; Rachel married Benjamin Franklin Kelton; and Mahala married Elijah C. Tolbert (whose mother was Margaret Collard). The Collards appear to have connected to the kinship group in Texas and not before, although Newton Gresham Library, s. v., “The Collard Cabin,” [HTTP://library.shsu.edu/about/podcasts/transcripts/Musings_Collard09042007.pdf accessed June 26, 2012) declares that “the Collard, Lindley, and Whitley families had been long-time friends in Kentucky and Missouri before their trek to Texas.” Family patriarch Elijah S. Collard came from Virginia through Kentucky and Missouri to Texas. The first family member to reach Texas was Lemuel Collard in 1828. James H. Collard came in 1832. By Aug. 1833, Job S. Collard had arrived. In Nov. 1833, Lemuel Collard (who became the husband of Sarah Elizabeth Lindley) received his Mexican land grant. He lived and farmed in the Montgomery-Walker county area from the time of his settlement until his death in 1893.


146 The entire Mills and Elizabeth Little Whitley family were part of the 1835 migration to Texas. Their last-born child, Hiram Little Whitley, was born 1837 in Sabine District, Texas.


149 “Ash Grove Township,” 304. Samuel Little moved to Palestine, Anderson Co., Tx., in 1846 and died there in 1847. Internet Little family genealogies are hopelessly tangled due to widely reproduced but impossible lineage that identifies Samuel Little (not William Little Sr.) as the father of Hiram, William, and several other Little family members. While Samuel is conceivably old enough to be the father of some of William Little’s children, his wife Sarah “Sary” Nichols was not even born until 1802. Some if not most of the confusion springs from Samuel Little’s great-grandson, James Robert “Rob” Little (1884-1975) who lived in both Anderson Co., Tx. and Grapeland, Houston Co., Tx. He identified Samuel as one of four brothers who came to turn-of-the-century Illinois from England (not Scotland as Little DNA evidence suggests). Rob declared that Samuel went directly to Crawford Co., Ill., to settle. No records place Samuel Little in Crawford Co. Amplifying misinformation about the Littles, the History of Shelby and Moultrie Counties wrongly declares that Samuel was “born on the frontier” (“First Settlement and Early Settlers, Shelby County,” 41). Hiram Little household, United States Ninth Census (1870), Montgomery Co., Tx., specifically indicates that Little’s father was of “foreign birth.” John [Jiles] Little household, United States Tenth Census (1880), Schedule 1, households of Anderson Co., Beant No. 2, Tx. identifies South Carolina as the nativity state of both his parents, Samuel and his wife Sarah Nichols Little (b. abt. 1801—Sarah herself, however, consistently claims Georgia nativity in the census records). Although Rob Little personally knew Hiram Little (d. 1891 Montgomery Co., Tx.) and called him “Uncle Hi,” Hiram and Samuel were more likely brothers than, as Rob claimed, father and son. Moreover, if Samuel is Hiram’s father, why does Samuel Little’s 1847 will exclude mention of Hiram?

150 The Montague County tradition probably has substance. The 1862 and 1864 Anderson Co. tax records note that John Little (probably John Jiles b. 1830, son of Samuel Little) was responsible for Sam Little, Grantee of a League & Labor (4,605 acres) Survey in Montague Co. (see TCTR, “Little, Jno.,” image 44, line 42, 4,605 Montague Co. acres (“Sam Little Grantee L & Labor”) valued at $4,605). The 1862 county tax roll also lists John Little for 1862 (image 44, line 48) holding 4,605 Montague Co. acres (“Sam Little H. D.”) valued at $2,302); two years later, its value had fallen to $3,202 (1864, image 38, line 37). See also TGLO, http://www.glo.texas.gov/cf/land-grant-search/LandGrantsWorklist.cfm [accessed July 6, 2012], on Samuel Little Montague Co. land grants (Patent Vol. 11, March 21, 1859, 2,391.32 acres and 2,214.19 acres , patent no. 806-807, abstract 416-417, certificate 340, file 000894). Montague was created in 1857 (a full decade after the death of Samuel Little) out of Cooke Co. It may well be that Samuel
Little’s general absence in Montgomery Co., where his kinship group clustered after the Revolution, is the result of his development of this acreage on the Texas-Oklahoma border. Cf. newspaper article by James Robert Little (1884-1975), “Log House Has Long Time and Interesting Past,” an undated publication in the author’s possession. It likely appeared in a newspaper in either Palestine (Anderson Co.) or Grapeland (Houston Co.), Tx. Little concluded the article with the observation, “I believe I am the oldest great-grandson and grandson living.” He declares that “the family came to Texas in 1832 by oxen drawn wagon—a trip of six months. Three of Samuel Little’s brothers also made the trip.” Rob Little’s article is story-rich but sadly without any external documentation.

David Minor, Handbook of Texas Online, s. v., “Montague County, http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hcm16 [accessed July 6, 2012]. On trails and roads entering Texas through Montague Co., see “Red River Station—start of the Chisholm Trail in Texas, The Bridgeport Index, Aug. 30, 2007, page 13. As an aside, Daniel Montague (for whom the county was named) was part of a military force—the Independent Volunteers of Texas—raised by James Parker and others from Illinois to go to the Red River and strike a blow against “the Indians of the Prairies” (Exley, Frontier Blood, 80).

TCTR, Montgomery Co., Tx.: 1838 (Hiram Little, image 9, line 29; John Little, image 10, line 16); 1839 (William Little, image 7, line 26); 1842 (Samuel Little, image 11, line 21 of left-hand column). See also Montgomery Co., Tx., Commissioners Court Minutes, April 1843 Term, 143: “Ordered that John Little be and he is hereby appointed overseer of the road from Hiram Little’s prairie to the County line and that he have all the hands within the bounds of said road and east of Caney creek.”

In addition to the seven counties created in 1846, family members also owned property in Tarrant County. Hiram Little had his League in Tarrant surveyed in 1849, fourteen years after the approval of his claim and the year Texas lawmakers carved that county out of Navarro. Little’s League was located in today’s town of Fort Worth. His Labor was located in Navarro County.

TCTR, Leon Co., 1846 (Wm. Little and John Little, image 14, lines 1-4 ). The 1849 Leon Co., Tx. tax roll (image 20, lines 25-27) shows “Wm. Little” with 1,330 acres worth $720, and total assets of $2,980. By this year, his brother John has moved to Anderson Co. (image 13, lines 28-29) where he claims 770 acres worth $305. Cf. William Little household, United States Sixth Census (1850), Leon Co., Tx. The 1850 slave schedule shows Little with one bondsman. William’s son George W. Little (b. 1828 Il.) also lived in Leon County. By 1860, one year after William’s death, several of his children were still in Leon Co., e.g., his son Samuel H. Little (household 468) and his daughter Mahala and her husband J. L. Orenbaum (household 466).


Lydia Pursley households, United States Fifth and Sixth Census (1830 and 1840), Marion and Macon Co., Il.

Some family histories place the Pursleys in Texas by 1844-1845. However, G. B. Pursley was married in Marion Co., Il., on Aug.11, 1845 and his first child, Lydia Ann, shows a Nov. 9, 1846 Illinois nativity. John Pursley (Guion’s older brother) appears in the 1849 Montgomery Co. tax roll (image 20, line 4—he holds 100 acres worth $100 and $410 in total assets). Hard documentary evidence places Lydia and Guion in the Lone Star State the following year. See Montgomery Co. 1850 annual tax roll (G. B. Pursley, image 8, line 41—he holds one town lot in Danville worth $20) and G. B. [Guion Black] Pursley household, United States Seventh Census (1850), Montgomery Co., Tx. Pursley, a blacksmith, lives three households away from William Whitley (b. 1820 Il. / m. Emily Collard), the son of Mills and Elizabeth Little Whitley, and next door to Robert F. Kelton (brother of Benjamin Franklin Kelton). See also Guion B. Pursley household (597), United States Eighth Census (1860), Walker Co., Tx. Pursley declared $1,600 in real estate and $550 in personal estate. Nearby, other members of the kinship group and Parker families reside: Hiram B. Pursley (596, the son of Guion’s brother, John Pursley, d. 1857), James Parker (600), Francis Parker (601), Jane E. Pursley (602), Francis Parker (606), Samuel Parker (607), and Mary Whitley (608). Some Pursley descendants believe that Lydia and Guion came to Texas with members of the Parker family, a likely theory that probably springs from the fact that the two oldest offspring of John Pursley (b. 1804 Ky.) were married to members of the Parker family. Hiram B. Pursley was married to Matilda Parker (b. 1836 Il.); Lydia Ann Pursley was married to James Parker (b. 1830 Tn.); and the first cousin of both Hiram and Lydia, Guion Black Pursley, was married to Mary Ann Parker (b. 1827 Tn.). Matilda, James, and Mary
Ann Parker were the children of Francis Parker (1793-1861) and Priscilla Mount (1793-1863) who both died in Walker Co., Tx.

Leon County annual tax records reveal that by 1847 (image 13, lines 5-8), William Little had increased his town lots to five (John’s total remained at two). The 1849 Leon Co. record no longer includes John Little, but William declares ownership of 1,520 acres worth $720, town lots in Navarro, and two slaves valued at $1,000 (image 20, lines 26-28).


See newspaper article by James Robert Little (1884-1975), “Log House Has Long Time and Interesting Past,” an undated publication in the author’s possession. It likely appeared in the early 1970s in either a Palestine (Anderson Co.) or Grapeland (Houston Co.), Tx. newspaper.

John Bateman household (362), United States Seventh Census (1850), Anderson Co., Tx. Bateman and his wife Leah Waggoner (part of the clan that lived in frontier Moultrie County, Illinois near the Whitleys) lived next to Charlotte Clark Orenbaum (household 361, the widow of Michael Orenbaum (b. 1801 Va. / d. 1849 Anderson Co., Tx.), and the mother or aunt of John L. Orenbaum who was married to Mahala J. Little. Mahala was the daughter of William Little of Leon Co. By 1860, many of the Orenbaum’s resided in Leon Co., Tx. See households of G. C. Orenbaum (434—son of Charlotte Clark Orenbaum), Susan Coker (435—daughter of Charlotte Clark Orenbaum who is living in Charlotte’s 1860 household), J. L. Orenbaum (466—son or nephew of Charlotte Clark Orenbaum), and T. R. Orenbaum (467—son of Charlotte Clark Orenbaum).

TCTR, Leon Co., Tx. annual tax roll for 1847.

Jo Ella Powell Exley, *Frontier Blood: The Saga of the Parker Family* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), 37, 108. W. T. Sadler was part of thirty ox-drawn wagons that left Crawford County, Illinois in 1833 and reached East Texas, perhaps coincidentally, in November about the same time as the Samuel Washington Lindley party arrived. Cf. Louis W. Kemp, Herzstein Library’s Veteran Biographies, s. v., “San Jacinto Bios: Sadler, John” ([http://www.sanjacintomuseum.org/Herzstein_Library/Veteran_Biographies/San_Jacinto_Bios/biographies/default.asp?action=bi o&id=3550](http://www.sanjacintomuseum.org/Herzstein_Library/Veteran_Biographies/San_Jacinto_Bios/biographies/default.asp?action=bio&id=3550) [accessed June 24, 2012]). This site declares: “Mr. [John] Sadler was a brother of William T. Sadler [b. 1797 N. C. / d. 1884 Anderson Co., Tx.] who also participated in the battle of San Jacinto.” No available Ancestry.com lineage for William Turner Sadler lists John Sadler as William’s brother, e. g., McDaniel/Jones Family Tree, [http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/16861480/person/436115820?ssrc=](http://trees.ancestry.com/tree/16861480/person/436115820?ssrc=) [accessed June 24, 2012]. This tree gives Virginia as the nativity state for both of W. T. Sadler’s parents (Nathaniel Milton Sadler [b. 1772 Va. / d. 1853 Ga.] and Phoebe Tucker Moreland [b. 1789 Va. / d. 1850 Ga.]). In the 1880 census, John Sadler listed North Carolina as his father’s birth state and Alabama as his mother’s. However, if the two men were related, W. T. Sadler’s presence in Anderson Co., Tx. is undoubtedly linkable to Samuel and John Little who both migrated to the same county. In the population census, W. T. Sadler’s 1850 residence—household 352—is within eleven households of John Little’s brother-in-law, John Bateman (household 363). It is logical that both John and W. T. Sadler were part of the same Sadler family—George, Joseph, Micajah, Mitchell, Samuel, Thomas, Uriah, and Richard—who had large numbers of land patents in southern Illinois from 1817 through the 1850s. W. T. Sadler’s presence in Anderson Co. is richly documented in the 1846-1865 annual tax records. He holds between 5,460 acres in 1848 (TCTR, Anderson Co., image 14, line 14) and 7,505 acres in 1854 (including his original headright grant and a 640 acres “Donation” claim for military service in 1836). See also TCTR, Anderson Co., image 19, lines 14-16; his property “situated in other counties” (2,965 Dallas Co. acres worth $5,930, image 29, line), and between six and thirteen slaves. If W. T. Sadler and John Sadler were in fact related, John Little’s move in 1854 to Dallas Co. may be connected in some way to W. T. Sadler’s holdings in that county. Finally, one index of the high regard in which W. T. Sadler was held is his frequent listing as administrator for the estates of numerous Anderson Co. residents.
Sarah Little’s family amongst a host of Illinois-born residents. In Anderson County’s Beat 2, twenty-one of the ninety-four households (250-343) listed before the Little family (households 344-345) include Illinois-born residents. Regarding socioeconomic status, the Littles appear to be among the better off among the non-slaveholding class of farmers, although not to any great extent. Only forty-one slaveholders lived in 1860 Anderson Co., and just twenty-six were planters. This elite coterie was led by F. S. Jackson with 119 years, cf. Green Little household, United States Ninth Census (1870), Anderson Co., Tx. (son with whom Sarah is living). Other valuable information about Sarah is available in the 1861 and 1862 Anderson Co. annual tax rolls. In 1861, “John Little” [probably John Jiles Little] is listed under the pages headed “Assessment of Lands, Situated in Other Counties.” “Jno. Little, agent for Sarah Little,” represents his mother Sarah’s 300 acres (“her Pre” [preemption]) worth $300 and total assets of $750 (TCTR, image 21, line 1). Also relevant is the 1861 Anderson Co. tax roll for G. W. Little which itemizes 307 acres worth $460 from the Sarah Little “Pre” and another 4,605 acres worth $1,406 listing “Sam Little H. D.” as “Original Grantee (TGLO, image 31, line 4—this may well be the G. W. Little found in the 1875-1886 Lampasas Co., Tx. annual tax rolls and often listed alongside Abram Little, the oldest son of John). The following year, the 1862 Anderson Co. record shows Sarah Little triple listed: “Mrs. Sarah Little (by her son)” holding 300 acres (“her Pre” [preemption]) but now valued at $500, with $1,048 total assets (Sarah is listed immediately above her children John, George, and Green, none of whom hold land but all of whom hold livestock—image 39, lines 44-47); “Jno. Little, agent for Sarah Little” still holding 300 acres (“her Pre” [preemption]), and still valued at $300 (TGLO, image 21, line 1); and also “Mrs. Sarah Little,” without assets (image 19-20, line 23).

Georgia Kemp Caraway, Handbook of Texas Online, s. v., “Anderson County,” http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hca01 [accessed July 7, 2012]. “In 1833 members of the Pilgrim Predestinarian Regular Baptist Church settled at the site of Parker’s Fort in Limestone County, and others settled near the site of present Elkhart [in today’s Anderson Co.], where they established ‘Old Pilgrim,’ reputedly the oldest Protestant church in Texas.” Cf. Exley, Frontier Blood, 35-38, explaining the sleight of hand used by Daniel Parker to circumvent the 1832 denial of the Mexican government to establish a Protestant church in Texas. Parker simply constituted the new Pilgrim Regular Predestinarian Baptist Church of Jesus Christ on July 26, 1833 in Illinois and then brought it with him to Texas (all, according to Parker family tradition, with tacit approval of Stephen F. Austin). The first recorded meeting of Pilgrim Church in Texas was Jan. 20, 1834. Cf. Samuel B. Helser, Handbook of Texas Online, s. v., “Parker, Daniel.” http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fpa19 [accessed July 7, 2012].

Little, “Log House Has Long Time and Interesting Past,” misidentifies the founder of Pilgrim Church as John Parker. It also indicates that Sarah Little joined Pilgrim Church in 1840. No other source places Samuel Little’s family in what became Anderson Co. this early (although that could be the result of Houston Co. records burning in 1865). Nevertheless, both Littles and Parkers appear to have moved into Texas as part of the same general flow of migrants out of southern Illinois. Indeed, the 1833 relocation of Pilgrim Church from Crawford Co., Il. to Texas parallels the Samuel W. Lindley Illinois-to-Texas migration that also reached the Sabine District in November of that year. The W. T. Sadler (who was part of the Parker party) may well have been related to the John Sadler (who accompanied his father-in-law Samuel W. Lindley). In the 1835 Sabine District, Texas census, there is a Matthew Parker who is quite likely one of the Illinois Parkers. There is also a William Pace, who may be the same man whose survey predated the tract selected by Jonathan Lindley as his land grant. On Daniel Parker’s creation of the Pilgrim Regular Predestination Baptist Church of Jesus Christ, see Jo Ella Powell Exley, Frontier Blood: The Saga of the Parker Family (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), 35-36. Cf. Gandy, “History of Montgomery County, Texas,” 178.
Pursley (the son of Lydia Little Pursley) married Mary Ann Parker in Marion Co., Il. on Aug. 11, 1845. Mary Ann appears to be part of the extended Parker family that first came to Texas in 1833.

John Little is found as a property owner—1,190 acres worth $1,190—in the 1846 Anderson Co. annual tax rolls. He does not appear again until 1849, after which he remains on the rolls through 1852.

TCTR, Dallas Co., 1849 (John Little, 2,214 acres worth $1,107, Tract 4428, Headright Grant on Bois D’arc, image 3, line 28, “Property owned by non-residents” and “Keen, Abner ag. for John Little,” 2,214 acres worth $1,107, Tract 4428, image 11, line 27, “Property rendered for taxation owned by residents”); 1850 (Keen, Abner agent for John Little,” 1,994 acres worth $997, Tract 4428 on Bois D’arc, image 12, lines 32-33,); 1851 (Abner Keen, agent for John Little, 1,994 acres worth $997, Tract 448 on Bois D’arc Creek, image 8, lines 34-35 Property rendered by citizens thereof, and situated in other counties). See also TCTR 1846-1854 Anderson annual tax records, especially Anderson Co. for 1849 (image 11, line 27); 1850 (image 12, lines 32-33); 1851 (image 8, lines 34-35); 1852 (image 25, lines 7-8 [citing Dallas and Houston county properties “situated in other counties”]); 1853 (image 13, lines 12-14 for both John Little and his oldest son Abram); and 1854 (image 13, lines 4 and 15 for both John Little and his oldest son Abram). The “John Little Survey” came from Tract 4428 in Dallas Co. In the 1850 Anderson Co. tax record under “Property rendered by Citizens thereof, situated in other Counties,” John Little declared ownership of 640 acres (Jackson Burk Original Grantee) worth $320 in Huston [sic] Co. The 1851 Anderson Co. record shows John Little, still living in the county with 120 acres valued at $120 from the Wm. Dun Survey. The 1852 Anderson Co. record, in the section “Anderson County, of Property rendered by Citizens Thereof situated in other Counties,” indicates John Little retained 120 Anderson Co. acres (Wm. Dunn Survey) worth $60 and another 124 acres (Wm. Burke Survey) valued at $362. Little also declared ownership of another 410 acres (Wm. Burke Survey in Houston County) worth $210. He held $862 in total assets. See Little’s Houston Co. land grant at TGLO, 


Ewers, Some History of the Johnsville, Pony Creek and Chalk Mountain Communities, 81. Ewers writes: “John Little died 13 July 1854 in Kaufman Co., Texas on the way from Houston and Anderson Cos. to Dallas Co. according to Dallas Co. court records. He owned land in Anderson, Houston and Leon Cos. but the record states this was not settled due to lack of proven title. Some say his granddaughter, Rose [Rosa Ann] Little Carter got her part of the Little estate in Anderson Co. about the 1930’s but I have not searched any records there for verification as to whether it was settled. John Little’s land in Dallas Co. was divided among his children. Apparently his wife Elizabeth [Bateman] predeceased him as no mention of a widow was made.” The 1855 Dallas Co. annual tax record (image 23, lines 35-37) does, however, mention “Mrs. Little,” naming her oldest son, Abraham and his brother-in-law, J. M. Spiller, as administrator of her estate. She probably died not long after her husband John.

Handbook of Texas Online, s. v., “Bois D’arc Creek (Collin County),” http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/rbqqy [accessed June 28, 2012]. Today, Bois D’arc Creek flows through the southeastern corner of Collin Co. into northeastern Rockwall Co. (not created out of Kaufman until 1873, twenty-four years after John Little began purchasing his north central Texas properties). Kaufman Co. was created in 1848, one year before John Little used Abner Keen to secure his Dallas Co. property along Bois D’arc Creek.
The 1855 Dallas Co., Tx. tax record identifies Abraham Little and J. M. Spiller as administrator for Mrs. Little’s 1,734 acres valued at $3,868 (image 23, lines 35-37). Abraham’s total property value is $5,128. As annual tax records attest, prior to the move to Dallas Co., John Spiller resided in Anderson Co. along with the Little clan. In 1849, he held 125 acres worth $500 and total assets of $980 (image 17, line 24); in 1850, he held 115 acres worth $500 (Reuben Brown Original Grantee) and another 320 acres worth $160 (John M. Spillers [sic] Original Grantee) with total assets of $1,225 (image15 , line 5-6); in 1851, he held 301 acres (Reuben Brown Original Grantee) worth $1,053 with $1,758 in total assets (image 22, line 13). The Spiller family had Virginia roots. Family patriarch was John Spiller (b. 1785 Caldwell Co., Ky. / d. 1846 Montgomery Co., Tx.). John Little’s family often moved in tandem with various members of the Spiller family, who also sojourneyed in southern Illinois before moving to Texas. Little’s daughter, Prissila Ann married John Mitchell Spiller in 1842. John’s oldest brother, William Harper Spiller was born in Caldwell Co., Ky., in 1809. John M. Spiller (b. 1818 Il.) was the third-born son and the fifth child out of eleven. The Spiller family arrived in Texas in November 1833, possibly as part of the Lindley group migration. Like other members of the kinship group, the Spiller family adopted slaveholding after their southward move. In 1850 Montgomery Co., William H. Spiller held four bondsmen; Sam F. Spiller held six; and George Spiller held twelve. The 1860 Walker Co. slave schedule shows James W. Spiller with seven, while W. H. Spiller in Freestone Co. held four bondsmen.

The 1856 Dallas Co. tax record shows Abraham Little with 187 acres worth $374 (John Little Survey, tract 4428, on Duck Creek) and an additional twenty acres worth $40 (Jm Stone Survey on Rowlett Creek). His is designated guardian for his deceased father, John Little’s minor children Nancy E., Riley T., Tabitha M., Sarah C. who each have 187 acres worth $374 (out of John Little Survey in Dallas Co. on Duck Creek - image 28, lines 7-14). Abraham’s twenty-one-year-old brother, “Wm J. Little,” holds 187 acres worth $374 (John Little Survey in Dallas Co. on Duck Creek—image 28, lines 13-14) and 160 acres worth $100 (Wm. J. Little Preemption in Dallas Co. on Musquett [sic—Mesquite Creek]). Brother-in-law John M. Spiller holds 160 acres worth $480 (John Little Survey, Tract 4428, on Duck Creek); another 187 acres worth $374 (John Little Survey, Tract 4428, on Duck Creek); sixty-four acres worth $128 (Thos. Stone Survey on Rowelts Creek); one slave valued at $1,000; and $3,302 in total assets (image 44, lines 33-35). The 1857 tax record list a host of Little family members, including John Little’s son, John Madison Little with 214 acres worth $642 (John Little Survey, Tract 4428, on Bois D’arc Creek—image 29-31). In 1858 Dallas Co., “Property rendered by Citizens thereof, situated in other Counties” lists Little family property in Anderson and Houston counties (image 73, lines 14-15).

As documented by the Dallas Co. annual tax record, the family remained in that area during the war years: in 1861, Abram Little held 135.7 acres worth $740 (John Little Survey) and another 20 acres worth $80 (John Little Survey); Wm. J. Little held 187 acres worth $375 (John Little Survey); John Little Jr. held 210 acres worth $735 (John Little Survey). Abraham little acted as agent for two of his minor siblings: Riley Little with 208½ acres worth $410 (John Little Survey) and Sarah C. Little with 180½ acres worth $360 (John Little Survey—image 39, lines 33-40). Abram’s brother-in-law J. M. Spiller held 480 acres worth $2,400 (John Little Survey 509, on Bois D’arc Creek) and another 24 acres worth $120 (Thos. Stone Survey 848 on Rowelts [sic Creek]) with $5,090 in total assets (image 57, line 43-44; see also image 61, lines 21-22). Meanwhile, under “Assessment of Lands, Situated in Other Counties for 1861,” the Littles retained 800 acres worth $1,200 in Anderson Co. (Wm. Burks [sic Survey, Abstract 102—image 73, lines 16-17 in right-hand column). Subsequent Dallas Co. records during the war years reflect similar holdings. By 1863, property values of family members had decidedly appreciated: Jm M. Little’s from $735 to $1,135 and William J. Little’s from $375 to $1,415 (image 17, lines 40-41 in right-hand column), suggesting the steady development of these particular family holdings. In 1864, J. M. Spiller’s assets balance sheet changed significantly with his acreage falling to a mere 20 worth $100; his bondsmen rising to eight valued at $5,600; and his total assets valued at $10,925 (image 28, line 28-29 in right-hand column). In 1865, Spiller declared 480 acres worth $1,600 (John Little Survey 509, on Bois D’arc Creek); another 24 acres worth $80 (Thos. Stone Survey 848 on Rowlett Creek); and $4,115 in total assets (image 69, lines 30-31). That same year, he is listed as “agent” for multiple individuals, including his deceased brother-in-law Riley T. Little who was killed in the war. See also TGLO, Dallas Co., 1878 (Abram Little, images 253-254, line 29-31, 190 acres worth $1,520 [Jm Little Survey], 20 acres worth $25 [Jos. Stover Survey], 70 acres worth $140 [H. McMillan Survey], and $2,850 total assets; J. M. Little Image 253-254, line 25-26, 87½ acres worth $100 [H. McMillan Survey] and 214 acres worth $1,870 [Jm Little Survey] and $2,880 total assets; and J. M. Little, images 255-256, line 42, no assets).
probable in anticipation of the Whitley migration to Texas); and Oct. 16, 1835 (on the eve of his move to

Sharp and Sarah Whitley sold this Coles Co., Il. tract to Sharp’s brother, Elisha, on Oct. 27, 1834, 

Trinity River worth $630 (Sharpe Whitley, Original Grantee); and total assets of $1,330. Texas Land Title

Walker Co. acres worth $700 (Mills Whitley, Original Grantee); another 2,437 Henderson Co. acres on 

eighty-acre patents: May 1, 1831, sec. 9, E½ NE, T12N R6E; Jan 1, 1834, sec. 34, W½ SE, T14N R7E 

year-old Sharp Whitley came to Texas with experience in land transactions. GLO records include his three 

1845, Houston-Nacogdoches District, Patent Vol. 2, file 102, patent #485, certificate 108). The thirty-three-

District, Patent Vol. 2, file 131, patent #182, certificate 108) and Henderson Co. (2,213¾ acres, March 10, 

Abstracts also show Sharp Whitley patents in Kaufman Co. (2,213¾ acres, Aug. 12, 1844, Nacogdoches 

was along Rough Creek near the Somervell-Erath County border.

See Texas Census of 1840; TGLO, Mills Whitley household, United States Seventh Census (1850), 

Walker Co., Tx.; and Mills Whitley land grants in Walker Co.,


http://scandocs.glo.texas.gov/webfiles/landgrants/pdfs/1/5/7/157859.pdf [all accessed July 8, 2012].

See Texas Census of 1840. Sharp Whitley does not appear in the 1849 Washington Co. tax roll. In the 

1850 Washington Co. slave schedule, Sharp Whitley claims three slaves: a two-year-old male; a nine-year-

old male, and a twenty-eight-year-old year old female. His “residence” in 1850 Washington Co. appears to 

be a first-time relocation rather than a return to property he held during the 1830s. That part of Washington 

Co. which became Montgomery Co. in 1837 undoubtedly was where the kinship group settled after the 

Revolution. In a sequence of twenty-three names, kinship group members found in the 1837 Washington 

County annual tax rolls (image 6-7) include: J. W. Spiller; C. Collard; Joseph Lindley (with 4,428 acres 

worth $3,221 and one slave worth $500); John Spiller; Sam Lindley (with 4,428 acres worth $2,214); John 

Sadler (with 4,428 acres worth $2,214); Jonⁿ S. Collard (with 5,035 acres worth $2,517 and one slave 

worth $700); Hiram Little; Mills Whitley; Sharpe [sic] Whitley; L. M. Collard; John Little (the nine last-

named living side by side); and Wⁿⁿ Lindley. Further down the list (image 8) is Wⁿ Little; still later 

(images 22-23) are J. C. Collard (with 1,311 acres worth $656 and one slave worth $500); Job S. Collard 

(with 4,428 acres worth $2,314 and one slave worth $500); W. H. Spiller; Warrenton Spiller; and W. S. 

Spiller. None of these names appear in the 1838 Washington Co. tax rolls.

Sharp Whitley appears in the 1850 Washington Co. annual tax roll (image 23, line 46), listing 560 

Walker Co. acres worth $700 (Mills Whitley, Original Grantee); another 2,437 Henderson Co. acres on 

Trinity River worth $630 (Sharpe Whitley, Original Grantee); and total assets of $1,330. Texas Land Title 

Abstracts also show Sharp Whitley patents in Kaufman Co. (2,213¾ acres, Aug. 12, 1844, Nacogdoches 

District, Patent Vol. 2, file 131, patent #182, certificate 108) and Henderson Co. (2,213¾ acres, March 10, 

1845, Houston-Nacogdoches District, Patent Vol. 2, file 102, patent #485, certificate 108). The thirty-three-

year-old Sharp Whitley came to Texas with experience in land transactions. GLO records include his three 

eighty-acre patents: May 1, 1831, sec. 9, E½ NE, T12N R6E; Jan 1, 1834, sec. 34, W½ SE, T14N R7E 

(Sharp and Sarah Whitley sold this Coles Co., Il. tract to Sharp’s brother, Elisha, on Oct. 27, 1834, 

probably in anticipation of the Whitley migration to Texas); and Oct. 16, 1835 (on the eve of his move to
Texas), sec. 34, W½ SE¼, T14N R7E. Sharp Whitley is in the 1851-1856 Lavaca Co. annual tax rolls. In the year before his death, he held $3,110 total assets, including three slaves valued at $2,000 (image 16, line 1). Cf. Deed, Sharp Whitley Estate to [Sharp’s sons] Martin Whitley and John R. Whitley, Aug. 14, 1858, Lavaca Co. Deed Book E, 652-653, Clark of Court’s Office, Halletsville, Lavaca Co., Tx. Signing the deed was “E. [Elisha] Whitley, W. [William] Pursley, Bathsheba [Whitley] Pursley, Cathern [ Catherine Whitley] Smith and her husband J. A. Smith,” all heirs of Sharp Whitley. Sharp’s daughter Bathsheba was married to her cousin William Pursley (whose mother Lydia was the sister of Bathsheba’s mother).

See Texas Census of 1840; Mills and Sharp [son of Mills] Whitley households, United States Seventh Census (1850), Walker Co., Tx., Schedule 1 (Free Inhabitants) and agricultural schedule; Mille [sic] Whitley household, United States Eighth Census (1860), Caldwell Co., Tx. The 1860 census shows Whitley with $600 in real estate and $2,185 in personal estate. That year’s slave schedule shows him holding three bondsmen. Mills Whitley curiously lists his nativity state in the 1850 as North Carolina but in 1860 as Virginia. Mills is in the 1853 Walker Co. tax record (image 15, line 60), landless with $2,075 in total assets (image 15, line 53). (As an aside, William Whitley appears on image 16, line 15, with 320 acres valued at $750; the land was part of the “Collard & Whitley” original grant, once again showing the cooperative nature of family land transactions and agricultural endeavors.) Mills appears as “M. Whitl [sic]” in the 1854 Caldwell Co. annual tax record, holding 200 acres valued at $400; two slaves worth $1,200; and $2,470 in total assets (image 17, line 36). Toward the end of his life, Mills Whitley’s assets remained decidedly modest compared to those of other family members. See TCTR, Caldwell Co., 1862 (image 21, line 19) and 1863 (image 11, line 24) in which he declares ownership of 200 acres valued at $600 with $1,360 in total assets, and does not hold land in other Texas counties. In 1862 and 1863, his landless son, R. L. Whitley, is listed immediately above him. In the 1863 record, another landless son, Hiram Whitley, appears immediately below his brother R. L.