

# POPLIN PATTERN

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## THE POPLINS AND THE LEES

In some of the earlier issues I promised to write about the Poplins and the Lees. I have already made some mention of that connection but will try to go into more detail now.

**WHERE TO BEGIN?  
AT THE BEGINNING** It is hard to know just where to begin. Perhaps the logical place to begin is at the beginning. And that for my line is with Patience Lee who married William Poplin, my first known Poplin ancestor. This is a matter of record. Mrs. Chas. C. Trabue of Nashville, now deceased, received that information from Mrs. G. L. Thompson of Calhaun, Ky., who was a granddaughter of Dr. Green Lee Poplin, the son of William Poplin and Patience Lee.

I also had the information from Mrs. Elexie Boyd Fowler, another granddaughter of Dr. Green Lee Poplin and also from my great aunt, Mrs. Walter Farris who was a granddaughter of Patience Lee and William Poplin. Aunt Kizzie Farris said we were related to Robert E. Lee. Of course that aroused my interest because the great general was always a hero to my family.

**HARRY LEE WILLIAMS' LETTER** In a letter dated Dec. 5, 1953 Harry Lee Williams who was a grandson of Dr. Green Lee Poplin wrote to his niece about the heritage that was hers. I quote: "Therefore, Myra, yours is a glorious heritage. Your forbears were numbered among the immortal Lees, Poplins and Williams families, America's finest. When your mother was four years of age and your Aunt Minnie nine, they sat on the lap of Emma Lee, sister of General Robert E. Lee, then a matron of ninety, but who in her early years married my mother's uncle, a brother of her father, Dr. Poplin of Kentucky. That is the reason why there have been so many of the Lee name in our family through the years -- Henry Lee, Richard Lee, and Emma Lee Williams, my first sister, who died a short time after my sister Myra was born."

**WHERE DID THAT TRADITION ORIGINATE?** Before I comment on Harry Lee Williams' letter I will say that the Lee name has been used in every generation of the descendants of Alfred Poplin also. Alfred was the brother of Dr. Green Lee.

Dr. Green Lee being the oldest son of William Poplin and Patience Lee would have had a chance for more information about his mother's family and could have handed the information down to his children. But did he? In the sketch of his life published in Vol. 1, No. 2 of POPLIN PATTERN it is recorded that the doctor was born in Montgomery County N.C. in 1815 and reared in Bedford County, Tenn., but his parents names or information about them is not included.

The Williams letter speaks of Emma Lee marrying a brother of Dr. Green Lee Poplin. That seems very unlikely. Dr. Poplin's mother was Patience Lee. That is where the Lee name comes from. His brother Alfred married Martha Rushing and another brother named Hampton left home young and was never heard from again. A younger half brother, Robert Poplin, married in Kentucky, but not to a Lee.

There must have been some basis for Mr. Williams' belief that his two sisters sat on the lap of the sister of Robert E. Lee, but what it could have been I don't know. The time that would have happened would have been around 1880. Patience Lee died before the 1850 census. The wife of William Poplin in 1850 was Sarah Poplin, age 42, born in North Carolina.

In the records of Old Enon Primitive Baptist Church I find what looks like Sarah Poplin, Jr. was added by experience in Oct. 1842 on Saturday night. Then the following Friday night, Sarah Poplin Sr. (looks like Sr. at least) was added by experience. A later entry reports that Sarah Poplin Jr. died in 1842. No age is indicated, but to have been added to Enon church she must have been 12 years old. That would place her year of birth at 1830 and would have made her as old as Hampton Poplin who was a son of Patience Lee and was 18 in 1850.

I had never heard of Sarah Poplin Jr. until I read of her in the old church record. Who could she have been? How I wish I could have asked some of the older ones about her. Could she have been a daughter of Sarah and was adopted by William Poplin after his marriage to her mother?

Why mention Sarah in connection with the Poplin-Lee puzzle? My great aunt Kizzie Poplin Farris said Sarah might have been a Crittenden. When I met some grandchildren of Bob Poplin, a son of Sarah's, in Graves County Kentucky a few years ago, they said their grandfather's mother was a Crittenden, they believed. So there we have it from two different sources that she "may have been" a Crittenden.

Now the Lee-Crittenden connection.

From the Abstracts of Early Anson County Records.

Page 115. Will of Robert Lee of Anson County. His wife was Sarah Lee. Children were William, Richard, James, Robert, John, Judith, Millie, May Yarbrough, Mitty Lee, Elizabeth Lee and Sarah Crittenden.

John Lee was a brother of Robert Lee.

The will was dated Nov. 9, 1766.

Now here was a Sarah Crittenden who was a Lee before marriage.

Here is what may be a far fetched idea, but I believe William Poplin's second wife, Sarah Crittenden, may have been a relative of his first wife Patience Lee. Of course the Sarah Crittenden in 1766 would have been much older than the Sarah who was born about 1808 and became the wife of William Poplin.

BEDFORD COUNTY LEES To show that there was a connection between the AND ANSON CO. N.C. Bedford County, Tenn. Lees and those of Anson Co. N.C. I call attention to a note taken from Ansearchin News of 1967. From Anson County Deeds, Vol. R, p. 516, "John Lee of Bedford County, Tenn. to Wm. Brooks (ca 1816)."

This definitely connects the Anson Co. Lees with the Bedford County Lees. Anson County records reveal several Lees back before 1800. There were those named Thomas, John, William, George and James.

In 1756 Thos. & Eleanor Land deeded land to John Lee (546 acres) on south side of Catawaba, north side of north fork of Rocky Creek.

That puts Lees in the area where the Poplins were also.

In 1820 a John Lee was listed only two names away from William Poplin in the Bedford County census.

I have never been able to connect those Lees with the Poplins, but here are the facts.

Lees were in Anson County around Rocky River.

Poplins were in Montgomery (now Stanly County) near the same place.

John Lee in Bedford County sold land in Anson Co. about 1816.

In 1820 a John Lee was a neighbor of William Poplin whose wife was Patience Lee.

In Bedford County, Tenn. in 1833, Dec. 11, there is an agreement entered into between Mary Lee, widow of Thomas Lee, and her children. She was listed as Mary Lee, Sr. and children as Mary Lee, Lovonia (not clear), Margaret, Sarah M., William, Green T., John and Martha Hopkins.

Could this John have been the one from Anson County and the one listed in the 1820 census? And could Patience Lee have been perhaps a sister of Thomas Lee and an aunt of these children listed? Or could she have been one of the children and not listed because she was already dead?

Patience Lee had a son Green Lee Poplin. Was Green T. Lee his uncle or cousin?

**TOO MANY GREEN LEE POPLINS** Another thing that makes me so anxious to find the Poplin-Lee connection is the fact that so many Poplins of supposedly unrelated families still carry the name Lee as a given name. I have several on my mailing list. There are Robert Lee Poplins, Richard Lee Poplins, etc.

John Poplin about whom I wrote in Vol. 1, No. 2, who lived in Hickman County Tennessee after moving with his father Richard and mother Elizabeth from North Carolina, and later moved to Kansas then to Ventura, Calif. recorded that his father Richard, or possibly his grandfather also named Richard, had a brother named Green Lee Poplin.

In Ross District of Stanly County, N.C. Jeremiah Poplin had a 17 year old son named Green Poplin in 1850. From information sent me by Mrs. D.G. Harwood, that Jeremiah was Jerry Poplin, Jr. son of Jerry Poplin, Sr. who was killed during the Civil War and was buried at Canton Baptist Church. Jerry Poplin, Sr. was the son of Richard "Dick" Poplin, Sr. and Margaret Hatley.

Then there was a Green L. Poplin, son of Nathan Poplin of Bernie, Mo. and his wife Mary Ellen Dickson, or Dickerson.

Why were there so many Green L. Poplins? Do they all trace back to a common ancestor? And then there are the Richards, Williams and Johns. There are Richards of about the same age. There are so many Richards that it makes it harder to trace them. There is one thing certain. All Poplins like to use Richard for a name which indicates that they all trace back to the same ancestor.

**LEES WERE AROUND ROCKY RIVER** From Mrs. Dewey (Ruby Smith) Mauldin, 314 North Ave. Concord, N.C. 28025, I received the following:  
The Lees, Allens and Coppedges moved from Mecklenburg County in Virginia sometime before 1776. The following bit of information was taken from "The History of Rocky River Baptist Church" written by the Rev. E.M. Brooks and published in 1928, and I quote: "The first meeting house of the church was built near the stream of Rocky River on what is now the farm of the late Frank Gaddy. This was once the largest farm in the neighborhood containing about eighteen hundred acres. Its original owner was "Rocky River" Bill Lee, the oldest of that name so far known." John Lee settled on the South side of Rocky River and the house he built and lived in is what most of us remember as the Frank Gaddy home in Burnsville Township, Anson County, in North Carolina.

**MY THEORY** I believe my William Poplin married Patience Lee around Rocky River about 1814. Their first son, Green Lee Poplin, was born in what was then Montgomery County, N.C. but near the Anson County line in 1815. Sometime between 1815 and 1820 they moved to Bedford County, Tennessee, and were here when my great-grandfather, Alfred Poplin was born in 1820. I believe Patience Lee was related to John Lee who was in Bedford County around 1816 and sold land in Anson County to Wm. Brooks. John probably went to Bedford County first, or they may have come here together, and they were neighbors in 1820.

I have long had the hope that I could "get a line" on those Lees and by so doing find out more about William Poplin.

**GUESSING ABOUT RICHARD HENRY POPLIN, SR.** My friend, and I like to think cousin, Oner G. Poplin, P.O. Box 172, Lilesville, N.C. 28091, believes our ancestor was Richard Henry Poplin, Sr. He has heard his father, who died in the 1930's, speak about some of the earlier Poplins leaving and coming to Tennessee. There are many things that fit together to indicate that those early relatives were my William and his family. Oner G. is convinced that they were.

Oner G. writes that in 1939 he with a brother who is no longer living visited an old man in Albemarle who was then in his 80's. This old man by the name of Poplin had an old Bible which was about torn up, but in the Bible was a record of Richard Henry Poplin, Sr., his three wives and children. Oner G.'s brother copied the information, but since he has since died this copy can no longer be found. Neither can Oner G. learn anything about the old man Poplin who had the Bible. BUT HE SAW THE RECORD WITH HIS OWN EYES.

## FACTS DESIRED

I always want facts where history is concerned, but from time to time I will engage in some thinking on paper about what could be possible. Anything I am not sure of, I will label as a theory or as wondering what could have been. Sometimes by taking the few facts we have and trying to piece them together we can come up with some ideas that will lead us to facts that can be established.

Now don't quote this as fact, because I am trying to put pieces together to see how they fit, but think about the following and see if you can help us to get the facts.

First of all: Does anybody know who the old Poplin gentleman could have been who had the old Bible in 1939 with a record of Richard Henry Poplin Sr.? Could that old Bible still be around somewhere?

Now if you will go to your census records in Vol. 1, Numbers 1 and 3 of POPLIN PATTTER and let us see if this could be correct.

In 1790 Richard Poplin was listed as head of a family. There was only one male and one female. This was evidently a young couple married too short a time to have children. That was Montgomery County.

He could have been Richard Henry Poplin (later to become Sr. when a son was born) 24 years old.

In 1810 there is an R. Poplin listed with 4 males in the family, 1 under 10, 2, 10 to 16, and one over 45, and six females.

Although he was listed as over 45, this could be the same Richard that was in the 1790 census. Ages vary a year or two in different censuses.

Then in 1840, 30 years later, Richard Poplin Sr. is listed with one male under 10 and one between 70 and 80. Again, this could be Richard (Henry) Poplin, Sr., now 74 years of age. There were 4 females in the family.

In that same census, Richard Poplin Jr. is between 30 and 40.

Ten years later, in 1850, in Stanly County, there is a Richard listed as 84 years old, with Anne 52 and Enoch 16. The age is right for this to be Richard (Henry) Sr.

In that year Richard, age 43, and wife Rebecca lived nearby. I believe this was the Richard Jr. of the 1840 census.

Then in 1860 Richard and Becky -- this would be the same as Richard and Rebecca in 1850 -- are listed. Richard is 52, and living with them is Henry age 94. I BELIEVE THIS ONE LISTED AS HENRY is the same as Richard in the other censuses. I believe this is Richard Henry Jr. and his father Richard Henry Sr. is living with him.

There was a Henry listed as 80 years old in 1850, but he would have been only 90 in 1860. The age of Richard who was 84 in 1850 fits Henry who was 94 in 1860, and since he was living with Richard, it stands to reason that Richard was his son.

This seems that it could fit with the record Oner G. saw of Richard Henry Poplin Sr. From the census it seems that Richard who was listed as 84 in 1850 was married more than once.

My William Poplin could have been a child of Richard Henry's first wife, born about 1790. Although William was listed as 61 in 1850, making his birth year 1789 and Richard had no children listed in 1790, I believe William could have still been his son since ages in census records vary as much as a year often times.

Then John Poplin who was born Mar. 5, 1803, whose wife was Anna, and among whose children were Thomas J., James Alston and Martin M., could have been the son of Richard Henry Sr. and a brother, or half brother to my William. This fits the tradition that a brother of John left early in the 1800s and came to Tennessee.

I realize this is speculation, but it does give us something to think about until we can either prove the theory right or wrong.

## MAPS OF ANSON AND STANLY COUNTIES

Does anybody know where I could get old maps of Anson and Stanly Counties, or Montgomery County before Stanly was cut off? I have an old map of Bedford County, Tennessee in 1878 which gives names of many of the people who lived in the county at that time. Are such maps available for N.C. counties? If I could not get an old map, I would like to have even a modern highway department map, or any such map that is large enough to show roads, creeks, cemeteries, churches, etc.

## POPLIN REUNIONS

I had reports of the two Poplin reunions held the first Sunday in last September. Wish I could have been there to have met a lot of you. I hope to get back to N.C. for a week this summer, but doubt that I could be there at reunion time.