

Using Indirect Evidence to Find a Father for Leonard Lyons

The Commonwealth of Kentucky did not record early nineteenth-century births, marriages and deaths. Despite this lack of vital statistics, many other resources, including family bibles, depositions, estate records and pension applications can help identify family groups. When no documents directly state the relationship between two people, such identifications are trickier, but evaluation of indirect evidence can provide a positive result. This was the approach used to find a father for Leonard Lyons.

Leonard Lyons was born in Kentucky about 1807¹ to unidentified parents. He married Permelia Wilson, daughter of Olivia Wilson, in Fayette County about 8 February 1830² and was enumerated that year on the Owen County census.³ By 1840, he had moved his household to Oldham County where he engaged in manufactures and trades.⁴ He remained in Oldham County, working as a wagon maker until his death, which likely occurred the latter half of 1860.⁵

Census Data

The young Leonard should have been counted as an unnamed male under the age of 10 on the 1810 population census. To structure the search for his father, it was assumed that at the time of this census Leonard's father was:

- still alive
- born before 1795
- a resident of Kentucky
- in a household that included Leonard.

Working with a published index⁶ and Ancestry.com records, 40 Lion(s)/Lyon(s) households were identified in the 1810 population census.⁷ There were two discrepancies between the sources, but all individuals collectively listed were considered. Of these, 25 were headed by a male of the appropriate age and also contained a male child under the age of ten.

¹ Leonard's age is listed as 43 in the 1850 census, and 54 in the 1860 census: 1850 U.S. census, Oldham County, Kentucky, population schedule, Division No. 1, pp. 125-126 (stamped) dwelling 14, family 15, Leonard Lyons, digital image by subscription, *Ancestry.com*, (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 23 July 2007), from National Archives microfilm M432, roll 200; and 1860 U.S. census, Oldham County, Kentucky, population schedule, LaGrange P.O., p. 42 (penned), dwelling 322, family 320, Leonard Lyons, digital image by subscription, *Ancestry.com*, (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 23 July 2007), from National Archives microfilm M653, roll 390.

² Fayette County, Kentucky, Marriage Records, bonds 1830-1836, unpaginated, Lyons-Wilson, Office of the Fayette County Clerk, Lexington, Kentucky. No return was found.

³ 1830 U.S. census, Owen County, Kentucky, population schedule, p. 330 (penned), Leonard Lyons, digital image by subscription, *Ancestry.com*, (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 29 June 2007), from National Archives microfilm, M19, roll 40.

⁴ 1840 U.S. census, Oldham County, Kentucky, p. 154 (stamped), Leonard Lyons, digital image by subscription, *Ancestry.com*, (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 29 June 2007), from National Archives microfilm M704, roll 121.

⁵ He is last enumerated in the census on 23 June 1860: 1860 U.S. census, Oldham County, Kentucky, p. 42 Leonard Lyons. He last appears in Kentucky county tax lists there in 1859: Oldham County, Kentucky. Tax Lists 1824-1850. Microfilm roll 73-0329A, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort.

⁶ Ann T. Wagstaff, compiler, *Index to the 1810 Census of Kentucky*, (Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1980), 123, 126.

⁷ The detail from these lists is not provided in this discussion.

Only one connection was immediately apparent between the men on this list and Leonard – Jonathan Lyons was enumerated in Fayette County⁸ and, although 20 years separated the events, Leonard had married in Fayette County.⁹

Tracking Jonathan to the 1820 census revealed a second possible connection between the two men. He had moved to Gallatin County,¹⁰ a parent to Owen County where Leonard first appeared in the census. But the 1820 Gallatin census also listed William F. Lyon.¹¹ A William Lyon of Shelby County was on the list of potential fathers drawn from the 1810 census. Was William F. of Gallatin in 1810 the same as William of Shelby in 1820? Could either he or Jonathan be Leonard's father? Census records were further explored in search of answers to these questions.

William F. Lyon

William (later William F.) Lyon was born in Virginia about 1777.¹² He was first enumerated in Shelby County on the 1810 census.¹³ By 1820, William Lyon had left Shelby County and a William F. whose age and household composition are consistent with that of William of Shelby was found in Gallatin County.¹⁴ Ten years later, William F. was in Lawrence County¹⁵ and, by 1840, in Owen County¹⁶ where he apparently remained.

Jonathan Lyons

Based on his age ranges marked in the following census years, Jonathan Lyons was born between 1760-1770. He was enumerated in Fayette County during 1810,¹⁷ in Gallatin

⁸ 1810 U.S. census, Fayette County, Kentucky, population schedule, p. 790 (penned), p. 18 (per Ancestry), Jonathan Lyons, digital image by subscription, *Ancestry.com*, (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 27 June 2007), from National Archives microfilm M252, roll 6.

⁹ Fayette County, Kentucky, Marriage Records, bonds 1830-1836, Lyons-Wilson, Office of the Fayette County Clerk, Lexington, Kentucky.

¹⁰ 1820 U.S. census, Gallatin County, Kentucky, population schedule, p. 117 (penned), Jonathan Lyons, digital image by subscription, *Ancestry.com*, (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 27 June 2007), from National Archives microfilm M33, roll 17.

¹¹ 1820 U.S. census, Gallatin County, Kentucky, population schedule, p. 118 (penned), William F. Lyon, digital image by subscription, *Ancestry.com*, (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 3 July 2007), from National Archives microfilm M33, roll 17.

¹² His age is given as 73 and his birthplace Virginia: 1850 U.S. census, Owen County, Kentucky, population schedule, District No. 2, p. 38 (penned), p. 186 (stamped) dwelling 270, family 270, William F. Lyon, digital image by subscription, *Ancestry.com*, (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 10 October 2007), from National Archives microfilm M432, roll 216.

¹³ 1810 U.S. census, Shelby County, Kentucky, population schedule, p. 699 (penned), p. 197 (stamped), William Lyon, digital image by subscription, *Ancestry.com*, (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 3 July 2007), from National Archives microfilm M252, roll 8.

¹⁴ 1820 U.S. census, Gallatin County, Kentucky, p. 118, William F. Lyon.

¹⁵ 1830 U.S. census, Lawrence County, Kentucky, population schedule, p. 289 (penned), Wm. F. Lyon (indexed Wm. J. Lyon), digital image by subscription, *Ancestry.com*, (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 3 July 2007), from National Archives microfilm M19, roll 38.

¹⁶ 1840 U.S. census, Owen County, Kentucky, population schedule, p. 18 (penned), p. 193 (stamped), William F. Lyon, digital image by subscription, *Ancestry.com*, (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 3 July 2007), from National Archives microfilm M704, roll 122.

¹⁷ 1810 U.S. census, Fayette County, Kentucky, p. 18, Jonathan Lyons.

County in 1820¹⁸ and in Owen County during 1830,¹⁹ when he is last named in Kentucky population census records.

This census data alone does not permit a conclusion regarding the father of Leonard Lyons. It does allow for the likelihood that William of Shelby is the same man as William F. of Gallatin.

Other Records

County tax lists can often be used to fill in gaps between census years and provide other useful information. An appearance on a county tax list did not necessarily indicate a county of residence. Some named individuals may have simply owned land there, or have been acting on behalf of others. Such relationships should have been recorded, but sometimes were not. Generally, however, these lists can be relied on as evidence of residence in part because they were often used as a basis for voter eligibility.

What the census does not reveal is that between 1821 and 1826 William F. Lyon was named in the Owen County tax lists.²⁰ So was Jonathan Lyons.²¹ Leonard therefore could have been in either man's household. But Jonathan remained on the Owen tax list until 1830,²² when Leonard is first named there in the census.²³ In 1831, William F. was in Lawrence County,²⁴ but Jonathan had relocated to Oldham.²⁵ Within two years, Leonard's name appears on the Oldham county lists as well.²⁶ William F. had returned to Owen County before 1840²⁷ and apparently never lived in Oldham County. Jonathan and Leonard both appear on the Oldham County tax lists between 1833 and 1849,²⁸ the year Jonathan is presumed to have died.

Although Jonathan is not named in the 1840 census, Leonard's household that year contained a male between the ages of 60-70.²⁹ This is very possibly Jonathan since it is known that he was then still living. When census and tax data are combined and Jonathan is assumed to be with Leonard in 1840, a more useful picture emerges (Table 1).

¹⁸ 1820 U.S. census, Gallatin County, Kentucky, p. 117, Jonathan Lyons.

¹⁹ 1830 U.S. census, Owen County, Kentucky, population schedule, p. 329 (penned and stamped), p. 657 (penned), Jonathan Lyons, digital image by subscription, *Ancestry.com*, (<http://www.ancestry.com> : accessed 27 June 2007), from National Archives microfilm M19, roll 40.

²⁰ Owen County, Kentucky, Tax lists, 1819-1842. Microfilm roll 73- 0332, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort.

²¹ *ibid.* Neither man may have moved at this point, since Gallatin County is a parent to Owen.

²² *ibid.*

²³ 1830 U.S. census, Owen County, Kentucky, p. 330, Leonard Lyons.

²⁴ "Tax Lists Lawrence County, Ky," online transcription, 1830, *Lawrence County KYGenWeb Project*, (<http://rootsweb.com/~kylawren/tax.html> : accessed 12 December 2007)

²⁵ Oldham County, Kentucky, Tax Lists 1824-1850. Microfilm roll 73-0329A, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort.

²⁶ *ibid.*

²⁷ 1840 U.S. census, Owen County, Kentucky, p. 193, William F. Lyon.

²⁸ Oldham County, Kentucky. Tax Lists 1824-1850. Microfilm roll 73-0329A, Kentucky Historical Society, Frankfort. There were two exceptions: the Oldham tax book for 1832 is missing and, for 1835, largely illegible.

²⁹ 1840 U.S. census, Oldham County, Kentucky, p. 154, Leonard Lyons.

Table 1. Census and Tax Data (*tax data italicized*)

YEAR	<u>William (F)</u>	<u>Lyon</u>	<u>Jonathan</u>	<u>Lyons</u>	<u>Leonard</u>	<u>Lyons</u>
	COUNTY	AGE	COUNTY	AGE	COUNTY	AGE
1810	Shelby ^a	26-44	Fayette ^h	45+		
1820	Gallatin ^b	26-44	Gallatin ⁱ	45+		
<i>1821-</i>	<i>Owen^c</i>		<i>Owen^j</i>			
<i>1826</i>						
<i>1827-</i>			<i>Owen^k</i>			
<i>1830</i>						
1830	Lawrence ^d	50-60	Owen ^l	60-70	Owen ^q	20-30
<i>1831</i>	<i>Lawrence^e</i>		<i>Oldham^m</i>			
<i>1833-</i>			<i>Oldhamⁿ</i>		<i>Oldham^r</i>	
<i>1840</i>						
1840	Owen ^f	60-70	Oldham ^o	(60-70)	Oldham ^s	20-30
<i>1841-</i>			<i>Oldham^p</i>		<i>Oldham^t</i>	
<i>1849</i>						
1850	Owen ^g	73	—		Oldham ^u	43

- a. 1810 U.S. census, Shelby County, Kentucky, p. 197, William Lyon.
b. 1820 U.S. census, Gallatin County, Kentucky, p. 118, William F. Lyon.
c. Owen County, Kentucky, Tax lists, 1819-1842.
d. 1830 U.S. census, Lawrence County, Kentucky, p. 289, Wm. F. Lyon.
e. Lawrence County, Kentucky, Tax lists, 1830.
f. 1840 U.S. census, Owen County, Kentucky, p. 193, William F. Lyon.
g. 1850 U.S. census, Owen County, Kentucky, p. 186, William F. Lyon.
h. 1810 U.S. census, Fayette County, Kentucky, p. 790, Jonathan Lyons.
i. 1820 U.S. census, Gallatin County, Kentucky, p. 117, Jonathan Lyons.
j. Owen County, Kentucky, Tax lists, 1819-1842.
k. *ibid.*
l. 1830 U.S. census, Owen County, Kentucky, p. 329, Jonathan Lyons.
m. Oldham County, Kentucky. Tax Lists 1824-1850.
n. *ibid.*
o. 1840 U.S. census, Oldham County, Kentucky, p. 154, Leonard Lyons.
p. Oldham County, Kentucky. Tax Lists 1824-1850.
q. 1830 U.S. census, Owen County, Kentucky, p. 330, Leonard Lyons.
r. Oldham County, Kentucky. Tax Lists 1824-1850.
s. 1840 U.S. census, Oldham County, Kentucky, p. 154, Leonard Lyons.
t. Oldham County, Kentucky. Tax Lists 1824-1850.
u. 1850 U.S. census, Oldham County, Kentucky, pp. 125-126, Leonard Lyons.

It was noted, but not considered definitive, that William F.'s surname almost always appears in records as LYON and Jonathan's typically, but less consistently, as LYONS. Since they did not create these records, the difference may have resulted from how they were understood to pronounce their names. Or, it could have greater significance than it is given

here. Nonetheless, a conclusion regarding the identity of Leonard's father was still premature, so more information was sought.

A reading of an unindexed deed book revealed the following (abstracted) transaction between Jonathan Lyons and Leonard Lyons:

This indenture made and entered into this 1st day of April 1842 between Jonathan Lyons of the County of Oldham and State of Kentucky of the first part, and Leonard Lyons of the same county and state of the second part Witnesseth: that Jonathan Lyons for one dollar to him paid, hath conveyed unto Leonard Lyons and such person or persons as he shall appoint in case of his death, or in default of such appointment, such person as the Court of Chancery shall designate the following property personal and real: one spotted mare, bridle and saddle, two bedsteads, beds and bedding, one bureau, one shugar chest, one set of chairs, one cupboard and ware, one lot of casting, one plough and gears, about 34 barrels of corn, one clock, one axe, one woman's saddle and all the other personal property now in the ownership & possession of Jonathan and also the house & lot in Ballardsville purchased of N.H. Beckwith by Jonathan and the same now in the occupancy of Jonathan, also the house and lot in said town purchased by Jonathan of Jimerson Vawter and a lot of 2 ½ acres of land adjoining said property. And Jonathan doth transfer to Leonard Lyons the following debts & notes due to him to wit: a note from Wm Lyons³⁰ to Jonathan for one hundred and eighty eight dollars, subject to a credit of \$2.00 due March 1843, a note on Dennis Vanhise due March 1844 for one hundred and eighty seven dollars & a half, a note on John North for thirty three dollars 50 cents due Oct 19th 1838, and a debt of eighty seven dollars 37 cents from Leonard Lyons to Jonathan Lyons by account. But the conveyance of property notes and debts are in trust, Leonard may collect said debts & notes and out of the proceeds pay the debts due by Jonathan who is now old & infirm, and manage the property conveyed so as out of the proceeds to support Jonathan comfortably during his natural life and at his death hold the same in trust for the benefit of the heirs and distributes of Jonathan Lyons and in case the proceeds of the property conveyed shall be inadequate to the support of Jonathan, Leonard shall have the power to dispose of so much thereof as he may deem necessary for that purpose but not otherwise—

To have and to hold the said property both personal and real unto Leonard Lyons in trust for the purposes aforesaid and to his successor or successors in said trusts for & during the natural life of Jonathan Lyons and so long afterwards as may be necessary to accomplish a division and distribution of the same among his heirs & legal representatives—

And the said Leonard Lyons on his part agree to & accept the performance of the trust aforesaid—

his
Jonathan Lyons [seal]
mark
Leonard Lyons [seal]

State of Kentucky, Oldham County sct.

I Wm. Dornton Mitchell Clark of the County Court certify that this deed of trust from Jonathan Lyons to Leonard Lyons was this day produced in my office & acknowledged by them to be their act & deed & ordered to be recorded, whereupon said deed with their certificates hath been duly admitted to record in my office, Given under my hand this 1st day of April 1842.

Wm. Dornton Mitchell clk
test Brent Hopkins D.C.³¹

Findings

1. Leonard Lyons married in Fayette County, the first county known for Jonathan.
2. Jonathan was found in Owen County in 1830 by which time Leonard had established his own household there.
3. Jonathan and Leonard were both found on the Oldham County tax lists between 1833 and 1849.

³⁰ The identity of this William Lyons is unknown.

³¹ Oldham County, Kentucky, Deed Book B: 298-299, Oldham County Clerk's Office, LaGrange.

4. Jonathan may have been a member of Leonard's 1840 household.
5. Jonathan executed a deed of trust in 1842 giving Leonard power of attorney over his affairs.

Conclusion

It is possible that either William F. Lyon or Jonathan Lyons was the father of Leonard Lyons. Both William F. and Jonathan were named in Gallatin County during 1820. Both resided in Owen County, although apparently not at the same time. But it is Jonathan who was found in Owen County when Leonard appeared there in the census. It is persuasive that, subsequent to the Gallatin County 1820 co-location of William F. and Jonathan, it is Leonard and Jonathan who moved closely together to both Owen and Oldham counties. It is compelling that Jonathan chose Leonard to be his caretaker during his final years, and formalized this arrangement by granting Leonard power of attorney for his affairs. The conclusion drawn from the evidence examined is that Jonathan Lyons was the father of Leonard Lyons.