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James William Vaughan and His
Railroading Descendants

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James William Vaughan and his Railroading Descendants

By Pamela Lyons Brinegar

The Railroad Arrives

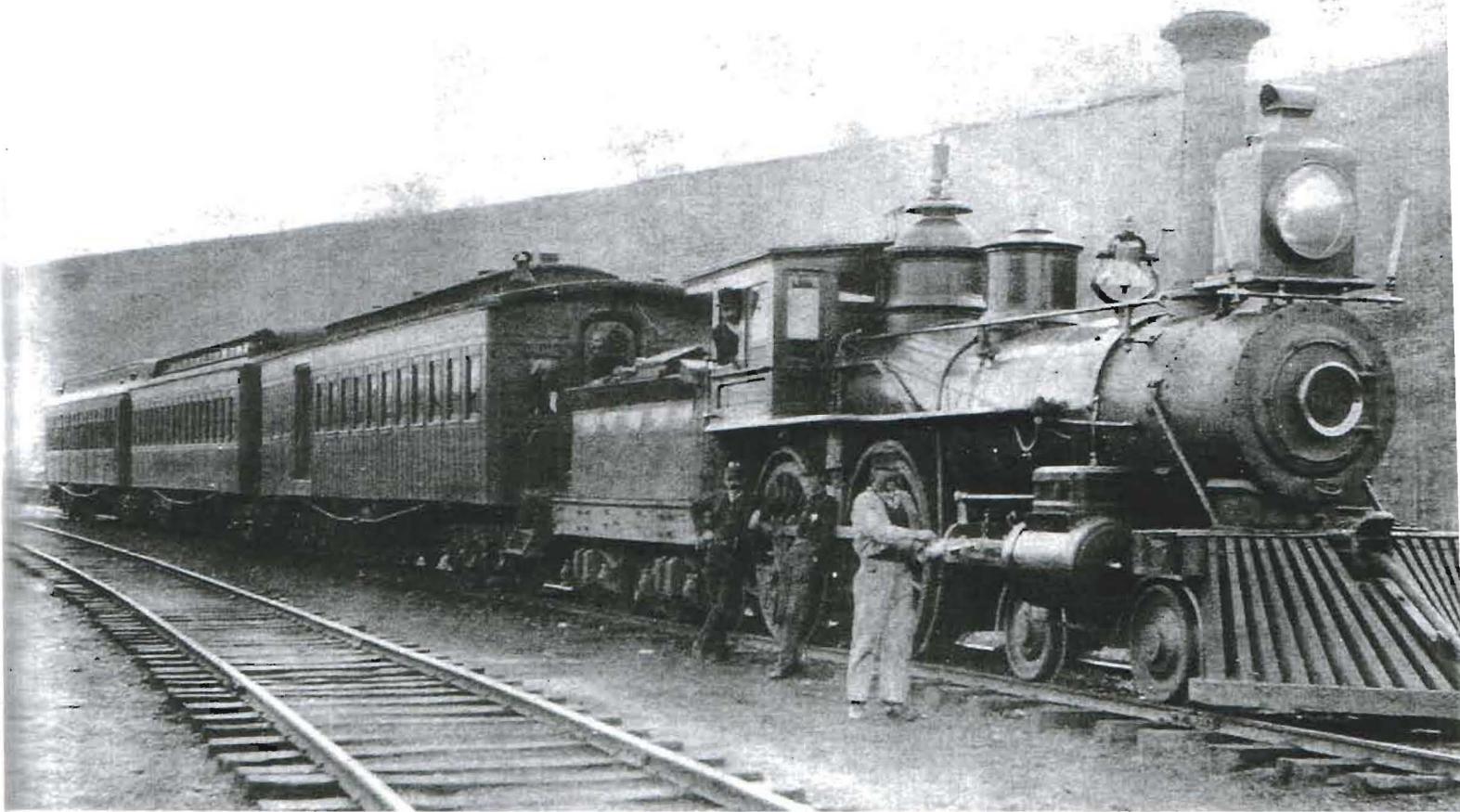
The western frontier of the United States was centered in Kentucky for many years.¹ A Virginia county during its settlement period, Kentucky became an independent state in 1792. Its leaders soon shocked the residents of Lexington, the largest and most sophisticated town in the state, by locating the new capitol in the village of Frankfort. The decision seemed to make excellent business sense. Kentuckians were eager to expand their commercial success and Frankfort, not Lexington, was located directly on the Kentucky River. Almost everyone agreed that a river provided the best way to move surplus goods to markets. No one foresaw a technology that would make water commerce less essential. No one could know that the sons of early Kentucky pioneers would soon fashion a new frontier, this time taming a technology rather than a landscape.

Propelled by mechanical and animal power, cars of many kinds had moved along rails of assorted construction for centuries. When an English company, the Liverpool & Manchester Railway, began regular use of steam locomotives for that purpose in 1830, the invention as a practical device was only a few years old. Among the very first to build steam-powered railways in the United States were the Baltimore & Ohio and the South Carolina Canal and Railroad companies, both chartered in 1827 and functional during the early 1830s.² At about the same time, Lexington & Frankfort Railroad Company in Kentucky began operations.³ Often

referred to as the second railroad in the United States,⁴ the Lexington & Frankfort certainly was among the earliest railroads in the United States and decidedly the first in the West.

In 1828, the Kentucky legislature approved the incorporation of the Lexington Railroad or Turnpike Company, saying “it appears that the construction of a railway from the town of Lexington to some point on the Kentucky River would be of great utility.” Commissioners were authorized to sell stock in the company and to build a turnpike instead of a railway if preferred.⁵ The legislature granted a second charter on 27 January 1830 for the optimistically named Lexington and Ohio Railroad Company. The company was directed to build a span of tracks extending some eighty miles between landlocked Lexington, and the Ohio River, but away from Louisville, the largest river town in the state and a competitor of Lexington. The citizens of Lexington quickly gave \$700,000 of the estimated one million dollar cost and Governor Metcalfe drove the first construction spike on 21 October 1831.⁶

Long before the first passenger boarded, the developers of the railroad realized that it was exciting, but that much trial and error was required to bring a railroad into being. They sold the line to the Lexington and Frankfort, which initially used horses to pull passenger cars to the outskirts of Lexington. Progress was slow, but a 1901 newspaper article recounts that “. . . as early as 1833 a steam locomotive pulled some cars out of Lexington over two or three miles of track . . . The engineer who



West Frankfort train, 1884
(Personal collection of the author)

pulled the engine out was G.W. Vaughn, who died last month at the age of 89 years.²⁷

Engineer Vaughn's kinsmen also worked on the new Kentucky railroad. Among them was James William Vaughn, of Fayette and Franklin counties. His railroad service began during the early days of the railroad industry. His descendants continued the tradition for more than a century.

James William Vaughn

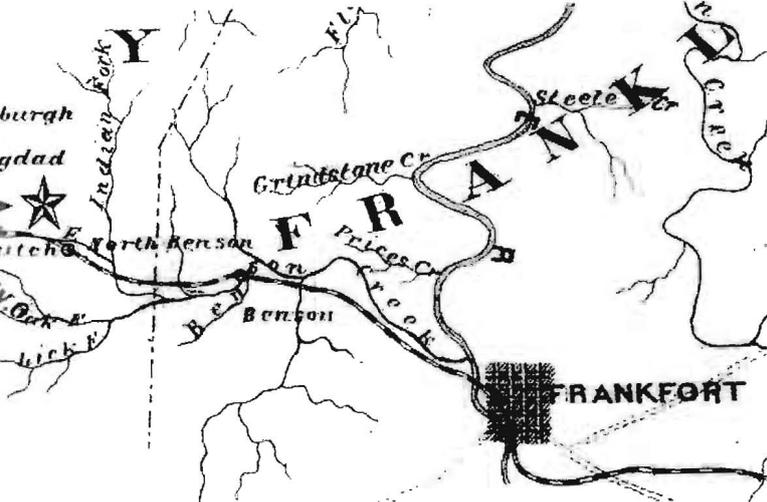
1. **JAMES¹ WILLIAM VAUGHAN** was born during March 1814 in Kentucky⁸ and died there about 1901, likely in Carter County.⁹ On 18 October 1838 he married Louisa Combs, a daughter of William R. and Elizabeth (née Blanton) Combs.¹⁰ **LOUISA MARY COMBS** was born about 1814 in Kentucky¹¹ and died there, likely in Franklin County between 1879-80.¹²

On 17 October 1838 in Fayette County, James signed with his mark when binding himself to marry Louisa Combs.¹³ The Reverend B. F. Hall married the couple the next day, probably in Lexington.¹⁴ Two years later, James and Louisa were living there with one female child under the age of five.¹⁵ Sometime before 1846, they moved to neighboring

Franklin County, where James was listed on the tax rolls,¹⁶ and enumerated as a farmer in 1850.¹⁷ Just a couple of gates away, in the midst of the Franklin County farms near North Benson, lived nine railroad laborers, mostly from Ireland.¹⁸ These workers were undoubtedly boarding within walking distance of their work, which meant that the railroad between Frankfort and Louisville was being built where James and his sons could watch its progress and even participate in its construction.

James was first taxed in 1853 for fifty acres of [North] Benson land in Franklin County.¹⁹ Subsequent tax records show that he was a small-scale farmer who typically kept a cow, a horse, some hogs and over two hundred bushels of corn.²⁰ Rural residents commonly engaged in a mixture of subsistence methods, exchanging various goods and services as a critical part of their community's social bond. This system made it possible to live comfortably on the proceeds of even a few acres. We can expect that James fully participated in such a local network and that it could have defined his occupational life, but that was not the case.

In 1860, James was enumerated as laborer.²¹ Farmers were sometimes referred to as laborers in



Approximate location of the Vaughan farm (indicated by star). Detail from *Map of Surveys for the Louisville & Cincinnati B'ch Railroad*. I.M. St. John, Chief Eng. (Louisville, 1866)

census records, especially if they were tenants rather than landowners, but James worked as a skilled laborer as well as a farmer. Public records do not reveal that he was a moulder by trade,²² and what material was used in the moulds he built is not known. Most likely, it was hot metal for a local blacksmith, but it could also have been clay for a brick maker. Beyond this work and his farming, he was drawn to the most dramatic innovation of his lifetime. He obtained employment with the new and highly dangerous railroad during its infancy, taking charge of its Frankfort roundhouse,²³ and later working as an engine tender in neighboring Fayette County.²⁴ The construction of the railroad and its varied job opportunities may have been what first took him to rural Franklin County. It is also possible that his relationship with the railroad began in Lexington before his move into the Franklin County countryside. His skills as a moulder, especially if he worked with hot metal, would have been useful to the railroad from its earliest days.

James stayed with the railroad company for many years. In December 1866, the *Kentucky Gazette* proclaimed that “The new wooden bridge over the Kentucky River is now almost completed.”²⁵ Soon after it was finished, both James and his son, Benjamin, transferred to Lexington with the railroad.²⁶ In 1870, James was again enumerated as a farmer, which may not fully reflect what he was doing.²⁷ By then, he could easily have taken a train from his farm to work in Lexington whenever he was needed.

When the census enumerator visited the North Benson farm on 6 June 1880, the household contained James, two unmarried daughters, and

a grandson.²⁸ During the previous decade, James seemingly had learned to read, but not write.²⁹ It is possible that he could always read and it was only when separate questions regarding these skills were asked that the distinction was noted. More significant is that the enumerator did not note a marital status for James or list Louisa as a household member.³⁰ A change noted in the ensuing county tax list confirms that her death had almost certainly occurred within the year. In 1881, for the first time in almost thirty years, James Vaughan was not taxed for the land on which he lived. The responsible parties for the fifty acres were noted as the “Vaughan heirs.”³¹

At the age of eighty-six, James was “retired and living with [his] son” in Carter County.³² He probably did not change residences again prior to his death, which likely occurred in 1901. The September 1901 newspaper article naming G. W. Vaughn as the first Kentucky railroad engineer mentions that he died the preceding month.³³ But the engineer G. W. Vaughn had died before 4 February 1885 when his will was proved.³⁴ It is more likely that J. W. Vaughan, rather than G. W., died about August 1901³⁵ and the reporter was confused by stories about two railroad men called G. W. and J. W.

Where James Vaughan is buried is unknown. Records for the family plot in the North Benson Baptist Church in Franklin County no longer exist, and there is no tombstone.³⁶ If a cemetery existed on the family farm, it has not been found. It is this farm that remains a point of interest. James left no property or estate records, yet between 1853 and 1880 he was listed as the responsible taxpayer for a fifty-acre farm. Why was he taxed for this property? What happened to it? To answer these questions, it is necessary to know something of his wife’s background.

Louisa Mary (née Combs) Vaughan

Louisa Mary Combs was born about 1814 in Kentucky.³⁷ Some researchers report a family tradition that she was the disinherited daughter of General Leslie Combs,³⁸ a Lexington attorney. Combs left behind many diverse documents,³⁹ but they do not mention Louisa. Between December 1783 and December 1785, Leslie’s father, Benjamin, and his uncles, Cuthbert, Fielding, James, and Joseph, all sons of John Combs of Stafford County, Virginia,

acquired more than 10,000 acres of land in Fayette County, Virginia, much of it located in the present-day Kentucky counties of Clark and Madison.⁴⁰ This circumstance generated records naming Leslie Combs's family members, including a brother, William R. Combs.⁴¹ Several transactions state the relationship between Leslie and William R. (e.g., on 6 April 1816, Wm. R. Combs purchased an interest in a Shenandoah County, Virginia property from his brother John who said it "was devised to me by my brother Marquis Combs, in conjunction with my Brothers the said William R. Combs, Fielding Combs and Leslie Combs.").⁴²

On 10 November 1834, William R. Combs⁴³ named his eight children as "Sarah Ann Combs, Louisa M. Combs, Lucy C. Combs, Sythe E. Combs, Mariam P. Combs, Margaret F. Combs, Benjamin B. Combs, and William H. Combs, children of my deceased wife Elizabeth Combs formerly Elizabeth Blanton."⁴⁴ Louisa was a daughter of William R. and Elizabeth (née Blanton) Combs. She was one niece among many to Leslie Combs, and not his daughter. At the time of her marriage, Louisa was likely living in her father's house on Lower Street in Lexington.⁴⁵ It was her marriage to an illiterate laborer that may have met with disapproval and formed a basis for the disinheritance story. Her father did not sign for her marriage, but it was not necessary since she was twenty-four at the time. Nor did he disinherit her, despite any reservations he may have held about her choice of husband.

Her father was ultimately responsible for the acquisition of James and Louisa's Franklin County farm. Four years before Louisa's marriage, William R. had deeded to his children whatever estate he was entitled to through his late wife, Elizabeth (née Blanton) Combs.⁴⁶ On 3 April 1849, Elizabeth's widowed mother, Sally Blanton, died in Bourbon County at the home of her son-in-law, John Clay.⁴⁷ On 11 December 1849, on behalf of his children, William R. Combs sued their co-heirs.⁴⁸ He continued to push for an estate settlement until the court finally ordered a commissioner's sale which took place 13 January 1851 on the Lexington courthouse steps.⁴⁹

Around the time of this sale, Louisa's sister, Lucy C. Combs, died. In her will, dated 21 December 1850 and proved January 1851,⁵⁰ she refers to Uncle John and Aunt Nancy Clay as well as Margaret Clay

and Sally Clay. This John Clay, married to Nancy, and father of Margaret and Sally, was the same as the son-in-law of Sally Blanton.⁵¹ He was also a son of Henry Clay of Bourbon County.⁵² The Vaughan family tie was to Henry Clay of Bourbon County and almost surely not to Henry Clay of Lexington, as the family story later became.

On 4 February 1852, the Fayette Circuit Court named Frankfort attorney Edmund Vaughan as trustee for Louisa in the matter of her father's lawsuit.⁵³ A month later, Edmund apparently purchased fifty acres and sixteen poles of land in Franklin County, Kentucky, on her behalf. This property was likely the land on which Louisa and James then lived, since their North Benson location did not change. An official record of this transaction was not found; however, it was understood that Louisa owned the land and her children were to inherit it. After her death, the farm was referred to as "the same tract of land conveyed by Lewis C. Smith and Elisabeth Ann Smith his wife to Edmund Vaughn as trustee of Louisa M. Vaughn and her children by deed dated March 6 1852."⁵⁴

The possibility of additional estate revenue from various sources must have remained part of the family's discourse for years. By 1872, Louisa no longer expected to receive anything else of consequence. In October, she and James deeded to her sister, Margaret, "any interest they may have to any estate to them descended from Wm. R. Combs dec'd" in exchange for \$35 and a new dress for Louisa.⁵⁵ Louisa came to the Franklin County clerk's office on 9 May 1873 and signed a certificate in the deed book's margin that the terms of the purchase had been met.⁵⁶

The known children of James William Vaughan and Louisa Mary Combs, all undoubtedly born in Kentucky are:

- i. BETSY A. VAUGHAN, born about 1840;⁵⁷ died after 7 June 1880. She apparently lived with her parents until after her mother's death ca. 1880-81. Nothing further is known about Betsy.
- ii. GEORGE WASHINGTON VAUGHAN, born 1 January 1842; died 4 August 1923 in Franklin County.⁵⁸ On 25 August 1869 he married Susan C. (née Hulett) Pilcher, a daughter of A. G. [J.] Hulett.⁵⁹ Susan

was born 8 December 1846⁶⁰ in Kentucky and died there in Shelby County on 4 January 1913.⁶¹ Susan first married Albert Pilcher on 4 September 1862 in Franklin County.⁶² George accompanied his brothers and father to Fayette County where he worked as a night watchman,⁶³ but returned to Franklin County, where he farmed for the next half century 1880.⁶⁴

2. iii. **BENJAMIN OWEN VAUGHAN**; born 19 July 1844 in Fayette County; died there 29 October 1934.⁶⁵ On 12 February 1869, he married Mary Lyons,⁶⁶ a daughter of Leonard and Permelia (née Wilson) Lyons. **MARY CATHERINE LYONS** was born 11 September 1845 in Oldham County, Kentucky and died 6 May 1931 in Lexington, Fayette County, Kentucky.⁶⁷
- iv. **LUCY INEZ VAUGHAN**, born about 1847;⁶⁸ died after 6 June 1880.⁶⁹ She apparently lived with her parents until her mother's death, ca. 1880-81. It is possible that she was the mother of Leroy H., a grandson born about 1873 and living in the 1880 household.⁷⁰ They were not found subsequently.
- v. **JEANNETTA VAUGHAN**, born about January 1850⁷¹ possibly, but unlikely, in Scott County; died 30 August 1852 in Franklin County.⁷²
- vi. **AMANDA LOUISE VAUGHAN**, born 31 October 1856; died 17 August 1942 in Hazel Green, Wolfe County.⁷³ On 24 July 1879 Amanda married Harrison Taylor Smith.⁷⁴ Harrison "Hal" Smith worked as a sawmill laborer in Franklin,⁷⁵ Fayette,⁷⁶ and Wolfe⁷⁷ counties. His death occurred before 1930, when the widowed Amanda is living with her son in Estill County.⁷⁸

The children of Amanda Louisa Vaughan and Harrison Taylor Smith, both born in Kentucky, are:

1. Clara, born October 1884⁷⁹

2. James H., born November 1893.⁸⁰

- vii. **JAMES WILLIAM VAUGHAN**, born 26 February 1858 in Franklin County; died 11 September 1934 in Salt Lick, Bath County.⁸¹ About 1875,⁸² James married (1) Mary "Mollie" V. McDonald, a daughter of Jno. McDonald and Martha M. Combs.⁸³ Mary was born about 1862 in Bath County, Kentucky and died 9 December 1911 in Carter County, Kentucky.⁸⁴

The children of James William Vaughan and Mary V. McDonald are:

1. William Cleber, born 3 April 1884 in Kentucky⁸⁵
2. Walter D., born July 1887 in Alabama; died 10 May 1912 in Kentucky.⁸⁶

James William Vaughan married (2) Sciota (née Shouse) Stephens, a daughter of Green Shouse and Lydia Myers.⁸⁷ Sciota was born 10 August 1861 and died 5 May 1938 in Salt Lick, Bath County, Kentucky.⁸⁸ James was a career railroad man, working his way up from night watchman⁸⁹ to locomotive engineer.⁹⁰ When he died, a notice appeared in the Frankfort paper, calling him "a grandson of General Leslie Combs, of Lexington, and the great nephew of Henry Clay, of Lexington."⁹¹ His local newspaper did not repeat the mistaken family tradition.⁹²

Benjamin Owen Vaughan

2. **BENJAMIN² OWEN VAUGHAN** (James¹), son of James William Vaughan and Louisa Mary Combs, was born on 19 July 1844 in Fayette County, Kentucky, and died there on 29 October, 1934.⁹³ On 12 February 1869, he married Mary Lyons,⁹⁴ a daughter of Leonard and Permelia (née Wilson) Lyons.⁹⁵ **MARY CATHERINE LYONS** was born 11 September 1845 in Oldham County, Kentucky, and died 6 May 1931 in Lexington, Fayette County, Kentucky.⁹⁶

Raised on his parent's Franklin County farm,

Benjamin began railroad work at an early age:

I first began work in the summer of 1856 at West Frankfort, Kentucky, with my father, James Vaughan, who was in charge of the roundhouse at that point. . . . I worked in the shops at Lexington for a time and later was put in firing the "Daniel Boone." This was the seven-ton, English built engine, single pair of drivers with hook motion. . . . I fired this engine until I was able to for one of the through trains. This was the latter part of 1859. . . . In 1862 I was promoted to engineer and ran between Louisville and Lexington.⁹⁷

It was a career milestone to become a railway engineer, but the work was not easy, as Benjamin related:

Engineers washed out their boiler, set cut cylinder packing, packed valves, pistons and valve stems. You made two round trips on the road and worked two days in the shops in one week. . . . Overtime was unknown. You would get thirty days' rest if you complained of long hours on the road with leaky flues and no steam . . . if you ran out of water you had to dip it from any place you could get it.⁹⁸

Civil war events occasionally played out near Benjamin's home village. On 9 June 1864, next to his family's farm, an ordnance train engaged in a gun battle with a guerrilla band. One account describes that "The train arrived safely at Bagdad, and attempted to proceed from Bagdad to Frankfort, but an open culvert was found destroyed a short distance from North Benson, which prevented it from proceeding further. The first bridge below North Benson was destroyed, and here our troops had a severe skirmish with the rebels, and repulsed them."⁹⁹

Given the timing of this and other local events, it is tempting to place Benjamin in the Twenty-second Kentucky Infantry Battalion which formed on 26 May 1864 and mustered out on 28 June 1864.¹⁰⁰ Several members of the 112 men who joined this short-term group of soldiers can be identified as

residents of Boyd County in eastern Kentucky.¹⁰¹ A twenty-year old Benjamin Vaughan lived in Boyd County in 1860,¹⁰² and is the more likely soldier. The Benjamin of interest to this narrative was then occupied by his civilian work. He writes:

During the Civil War I had many close calls between outlaws and bushwhackers. Many times my engine was fired into, cab shot full of holes, headlight shot to pieces, or ditched; big rocks rolled down from the top of cuts, cattle guards stuck full of ties and many a running fight with train guards and confederates and bushwhackers.¹⁰³

I was captured with my train nine miles west of Frankfort in 1864. My engine was cut loose from the train and I was ordered to start the engine. . . . Unnoticed by them I slipped my water pump on full so the steam would be reduced and the boiler flooded with water which would "kill" the engine. . . . As soon as the scrap was over I lit out to overtake my engine, but was minus my watch and \$69.00, which I had to give up to the "gray coats." I captured a horse and "hit the high spots." My engine had run about eight miles and then "died."¹⁰⁴

After the war and the construction of a new railroad bridge in Frankfort, probably in early 1867, the company transferred Benjamin and his father to Lexington¹⁰⁵ where Benjamin worked for his uncle G. W. Vaughn.¹⁰⁶ G. W. was then mechanical foreman of the Lexington and Frankfort shops, and the engineer who was credited with driving the first steam locomotive out of Lexington in 1833.¹⁰⁷

On 10 February 1869, Benjamin obtained a license to marry Mary Lyons,¹⁰⁸ and the marriage occurred two days later in Fayette County.¹⁰⁹ The new couple lived in Lexington,¹¹⁰ next door to Mary's mother.¹¹¹ Within two years, Benjamin had taken a position as engine house foreman in Mt. Sterling, Rowan County where his daughter, Bertha, was

born.¹¹² The family remained there¹¹³ until between 1882-83 when he was employed as roundhouse foreman in Lexington.¹¹⁴

Benjamin spent part of the latter 1880s in Montgomery, Alabama, working as an assistant master mechanic.¹¹⁵ He had returned to Lexington by August 1889 when he bought a new subdivision house on West Pine Street.¹¹⁶ His son, Forrest, died there three months later,¹¹⁷ and the family soon moved into rental property on West Main Street,¹¹⁸ selling the West Pine Street house a few months later.¹¹⁹

In 1897, Benjamin bought another subdivision house, this time on Merino Street,¹²⁰ but his wife may not have wanted to leave their leased property at 143 Georgetown Street.¹²¹ In May 1901, Benjamin made \$250 in improvements to the leasehold,¹²² but Mary may have had something a bit more extensive in mind. In July 1901, Benjamin sold the Merino Street house by subscription to benefit a widow,¹²³ and, a week later, Mary received a city permit to make \$1,000 in improvements to their leased home.¹²⁴ Within the year, she had purchased the remodeled property in her name only.¹²⁵ During Mary's final years, the couple lived with their grandson, George, in the Main Street house they had occupied decades earlier.¹²⁶ Following Mary's death, Benjamin moved back around the corner to her old Georgetown Street home, where he remained.¹²⁷

When Benjamin retired in 1909, he made news as only the second employee to receive a pension for life from the regional division of the Louisville & Nashville Railroad.¹²⁸ The L&N awarded its pensioners "all the privileges and concessions allowed regular employees, including free transportation, etc."¹²⁹ Benjamin's railroad career had spanned a half-century and, upon retiring, he announced that he would not "engage in any business soon."¹³⁰ He had served as an officer in the Fraternal Union of America¹³¹ and the Masons,¹³² and it is likely that he remained active in both organizations. For many years he was considered one of two remaining Civil War-era railway engineers.¹³³

The children of Benjamin Owen Vaughan and Mary Catherine Lyons, all born in Kentucky, are:

- i. HALLIE BLANTON VAUGHAN, born 21 December 1869; died in Lexington, Fayette County 30 April



Picture of several likely children of Benjamin Owen and Mary Catherine Vaughan. Two identified are: Hallie Blanton Vaughan (upper left) and Ida May Vaughan Lyons (lower right). (From collection of the late Walter Pitts)

1948.¹³⁴ A retired "trained nurse," Hallie apparently never married and was a resident of Cincinnati, Hamilton County, Ohio, at the time of her death.¹³⁵ Her remains were given a Christian Science funeral service¹³⁶ before burial in the Lexington Cemetery on 3 May 1948.¹³⁷

- ii. BERTHA EMMA VAUGHAN, born 12 October 1872; died 28 November 1964 in Lexington, Fayette County, Kentucky.¹³⁸ She married Clarence Rogers about 1894;¹³⁹ they divorced prior to 1910.¹⁴⁰ Even during her marriage, she apparently lived with her parents. Following her parents' deaths, her siblings gave their mother's house to Bertha's son, George.¹⁴¹ Bertha lived there for a number of years.¹⁴²

The children of Bertha Emma Vaughan and Clarence Rogers, both born in Kentucky, were:

1. Raymond, born May 1896;¹⁴³ died October 1913 in Tennessee¹⁴⁴
 2. George Owen, born in 1904;¹⁴⁵ died March 1991 in Kentucky.¹⁴⁶
- 3 iii. IDA MAY VAUGHAN, born 5 March 1875; died 30 April 1958 in Covington, Kenton County, Kentucky.¹⁴⁷ On 5 September 1892 she married George C. Lyons, a son of James E. and Julia A. (née Staley) Lyons.¹⁴⁸ GEORGE CLINTON LYONS was born

25 November 1873 in Kentucky and died 2 February 1946 in Covington, Kenton County, Kentucky.¹⁴⁹

- iv. ROGER OWEN VAUGHAN, born 16 August 1877;¹⁵⁰ died February 1961 in Volusia County, Florida.¹⁵¹ On 26 April 1899 he married (1) Isabella Sheets,¹⁵² a daughter of C.W. and Fannie Sheets.¹⁵³ Isabella died 9 July, 1922 in St. Augustine, St. Johns County, Florida.¹⁵⁴ Her funeral was held at the home of B. O. Vaughan on Georgetown Street in Lexington, Kentucky,¹⁵⁵ and she was buried in the nearby Lexington Cemetery.¹⁵⁶

The children of Roger Owen Vaughan and Isabella Sheets are:

1. Frances G., born about 1905
2. Hallie E., born about 1907.¹⁵⁷

On 30 April 1924, Roger Owen Vaughan married (2) Mary Conner, a daughter of C. E. Connor.¹⁵⁸ Mary was born 8 January 1889 in Inverness, Citrus County, Florida¹⁵⁹ and died 13 December 1986 in New Smyrna Beach, Volusia County, Florida.¹⁶⁰ Roger was a locomotive engineer.¹⁶¹

The children of Roger Owen Vaughan and Mary Conner, both born in Florida, are:

1. Claud C., born about 1926
2. George H., born about 1928.¹⁶²

- v. CHESTER LAWRENCE VAUGHAN, born 7 September 1881; died 4 April 1970 in Oldham County, Kentucky.¹⁶³ On 26 April 1905, he married Lucy Alma Purnell, a daughter of James and Elizabeth (née Crowell) Purnell.¹⁶⁴ Chester was a locomotive engineer.¹⁶⁵

The children of Chester Lawrence Vaughan and Lucy Alma Purnell, all born in Kentucky, are:

1. Marion Milburne, born 5 February 1907¹⁶⁶
2. Charles W., born about 1912¹⁶⁷
3. Chester D., born 11 November 1926.¹⁶⁸

- vi. CARLOS DALTON VAUGHAN, born 21



Benjamin Owen Vaughan with Frances G. and Hallie E., children of Roger Owen and Isabella Sheets Vaughan, ca. 1915
(From photo postcard collection of Walter C. Pitts, deceased)

December 1884; died 22 January 1971 in Newport, Campbell County, Kentucky.¹⁶⁹ On 19 June 1905, he married (1) Mae Elizabeth Leonard.¹⁷⁰ She died 29 September 1914, in Butler, Pendleton County, Kentucky from "drowning with suicidal intent."¹⁷¹

The possible children of Carlos Dalton Vaughan and Mae Elizabeth Leonard, all born in Kentucky, are:

1. John Carlos, born about 1907¹⁷²
2. Lawrence Owen, born about 1910¹⁷³
3. Leonard Shirley, born about 1911¹⁷⁴
4. George Julius, born about 1913¹⁷⁵
5. Nellie May, born 28 August 1914;¹⁷⁶

died 15 February 2004 in Florida.¹⁷⁷

From the documents examined, it is not apparent that these were all Mae's children. Daughter, Nellie May, who was raised by her father's sister and may have had limited contact with her remaining birth family, stated that all five were the children of this couple.¹⁷⁸ She did not acknowledge a second marriage for her father. Carlos apparently married (2) Mary [—?—] before 28 February 1920 when she is named as his wife in the population census.¹⁷⁹ Whether she is the same person as surviving spouse Minnie Desconnett listed on his death certificate is unknown. Carlos was a locomotive engineer.¹⁸⁰

vii. FORREST VAUGHAN, born May 1887; died 17 November 1889 in Lexington, Kentucky.¹⁸¹ He is listed on the 1900 census, by error of either the census taker or informant.¹⁸²

viii. Probably WILLIAM LAWRENCE VAUGHAN, born about 1880¹⁸³ and buried in the Benjamin Owen Vaughan cemetery plot on 4 October 1881,¹⁸⁴ the same month Benjamin purchased it.¹⁸⁵

In 1910, the census taker recorded that Mary was the mother of eight children, six living, which matches the list above. But the 1910 Fayette County census names William Vaughan, born about 1899, as a son in the B. O. Vaughan household. At the age of eleven, he was not in school, but working as a porter for the railroad.¹⁸⁶ Mary was fifty-four when this William Vaughan was born, so she probably is not his mother. The 1920 census says he is a foster son.¹⁸⁷ In 1930, he was enumerated as a brother in the Chester Vaughan household.¹⁸⁸ His relationship to the family remains undetermined, but he is not considered here to be a son to Benjamin and Mary.

Ida May Vaughan

3. IDA³ MAY VAUGHAN (Benjamin², James¹), daughter of Benjamin Owen and Mary Catherine (née Lyons) Vaughan,

was born 5 March 1875 in Kentucky and died there in Covington, Kenton County, on 30 April 1958.¹⁸⁹ On 5 September 1892, she married George C. Lyons, a son of James E. and Julia A. (née Staley) Lyons.¹⁹⁰ GEORGE CLINTON LYONS was born 25 November 1873 in Kentucky, and died there in Covington, Kenton County, on 2 February 1946.¹⁹¹

Railroad men depended on the women in their lives to maintain a home while they responded to the extraordinary demands of their occupation. Ida May grew to adulthood as a child of the railroad. Her grandfather was a railroad pioneer. Her father and uncle were railway engineers and mechanics. Her brothers were locomotive engineers. She was well prepared to cope with the demands of unexpected absences and long hours required of railroad employees. It is not surprising that, when she married, she chose a railroad man. What is surprising is that her marriage occurred in Jefferson County, Indiana where neither she nor her prospective husband had lived or likely had ties.

There is some basis for suggesting they had eloped. Ida's tall, thin husband with brown eyes and black hair¹⁹² was her cousin. Her mother, Mary Catherine (née Lyons) Vaughn, was a sister to George's father, James E. Lyons. The young James and Mary were found in the Leonard Lyons household in 1850 and 1860.¹⁹³ When James E. Lyons, died, Mrs. Owen Vaughn was named as a sister.¹⁹⁴ Marriages between cousins were not extraordinary occurrences in Ida's grandparents' day, but an intervening cultural shift found these unions frowned on and even outlawed in some areas (but not Kentucky).¹⁹⁵

Ida and George were born into a world where life without railroads would have been unimaginable. Railroad companies were reliable employers and George committed his working years to the railroad, starting out his career as a hostler.¹⁹⁶ By then, a hostler looked after locomotives and cars in a train yard, rather than caring for stable-boarded horses. Like Ida's brothers, George spent most of his career as a locomotive engineer.¹⁹⁷ The young couple lived in Lexington near Ida's parents,¹⁹⁸ and later lived in Kenton¹⁹⁹ and Clark²⁰⁰ counties.

George retired from the railroad sometime before 1941²⁰¹ and died in 1946.²⁰² Ida lived another twelve

years, and had made her home with her daughter, Agnes, by the time of her death.²⁰³ Both Ida²⁰⁴ and George²⁰⁵ are buried in the Lexington Cemetery with their three children and Ida's parents. They left no heirs to carry on the railroading way of life they had embraced.

Children of Ida May (née Vaughn) and George Clinton Lyons, all born in Kentucky, are:

- i. CECIL MORTON LYONS, born 25 September 1893; died 11 August 1894 in Lexington, Fayette County, Kentucky.²⁰⁶
- ii. LIONEL REXFORD LYONS, born 17 August 1897; died 26 March 1928 in Covington, Kenton County, Kentucky.²⁰⁷ On 27 September 1918, Lionel married (1) Emily Bowman, a daughter of Jerry and Nancy Bowman.²⁰⁸ They divorced on 24 April 1920.²⁰⁹ On 16 November 1920, he married (2) Stella Princess Price,²¹⁰ a daughter of Edwin Ambrose and Henrietta Morgan (née Case) Price.²¹¹ She was born 30 June 1897 at Stony Point, Bourbon County, Kentucky²¹² and died 7 December 1974 in Paris, Bourbon County.²¹³ On 27 October 1947, she married (2) James Brooks Woodford,²¹⁴ a son of Benjamin and Alice May (née Brooks) Woodford.²¹⁵ He was born 18 June 1884 in Bourbon County and died there on 1 July 1963.²¹⁶

The child of Lionel Rexford Lyons and Stella Princess Price is:

1. Rexford Price Lyons, born 04 November 1922 in Kentucky; died 12 May 1982.²¹⁷
- iii. AGNES KATHRYN LYONS, born 4 May 1900;²¹⁸ died 23 July 1995 in Newbury, Geauga County, Ohio.²¹⁹ About 1926²²⁰ she married Walter Henry Pitts, a son of Alfred and Margaret (née Buckshorn) Pitts.²²¹ Walter was born 2 October 1902 in Covington, Kenton County, Kentucky and died there 16 August 1957.²²² He was a pharmacist.²²³

The children of Agnes Kathryn Lyons and Walter

Henry Pitts, both born in Kentucky, are:

1. Walter Clinton Pitts, born 28 January 1927;²²⁴ died 6 January 2006.²²⁵
2. Living Pitts.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ For discussion of this period, which extends approximately from the last quarter of the eighteenth century through the first quarter of the nineteenth, see e.g., Stephen Aron, *How the West Was Lost: The Transformation of Kentucky from Daniel Boone to Henry Clay* (Baltimore, 1996); Craig Thompson Friend, ed., *The Buzzel About Kentucky: Settling the Promised Land* (Lexington, 1999); and James H. Perkins, *Annals of the West: Embracing a Concise Account of Principal Events Which Have Occurred in the Western States and Territories, From the Discovery of the Mississippi Valley to the Year Eighteen Hundred and Forty Five* (Cincinnati, 1846).
- ² Lewis H. Haney, *A Congressional History of Railways in the United States to 1850*, Bulletin of the University of Wisconsin, No. 211, Economics and Political Science Series, Vol. 3, No. 2:167-439 (Madison, Wisconsin, 1908): 192.
- ³ Robert Peter, *History of Fayette County, Kentucky* (Chicago, 1882), 76, 80. A discussion of railroad development, especially in Kentucky, may be found on pages 75-90.
- ⁴ George W. Ranck, *History of Lexington Kentucky: Its Early Annals and Recent Progress* (1872; reprint, Lexington, 1970), 318.
- ⁵ *Kentucky Reporter* (Lexington, Ky.), 23 April 1828, 2.
- ⁶ Thomas D. Clark, "Lexington & Ohio Railroad," in John E. Kleber, ed. *Kentucky Encyclopedia*, web edition, The Institute for Regional Analysis and Public Policy, 2000 (<http://www.kyenc.org>) (website accessed 29 December 2007).
- ⁷ "Historic Section of Fayette County," *Morning Herald* (Lexington, Ky.), 15 September 1901.
- ⁸ James Vaughn, 1900 U.S. census, Carter County, Kentucky, 51.
- ⁹ Ibid. This is his last known residence.
- ¹⁰ Fayette County, Kentucky, Marriage Supplemental Records January 1831-December 1843, unpaginated, return, Vaughn-Combs, 1838, (microfilm copy); Office of the Fayette County Clerk, Lexington.
- ¹¹ 1860 U.S. census, Franklin County, Kentucky,