Our American Adventure: The History of a Pioneer East Texas Family, 1657 – 1966

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Our American Adventure: The History of a Pioneer East Texas Family, 1657 – 1966

James Weeks Tiller, Jr. Albert Wayne Tiller

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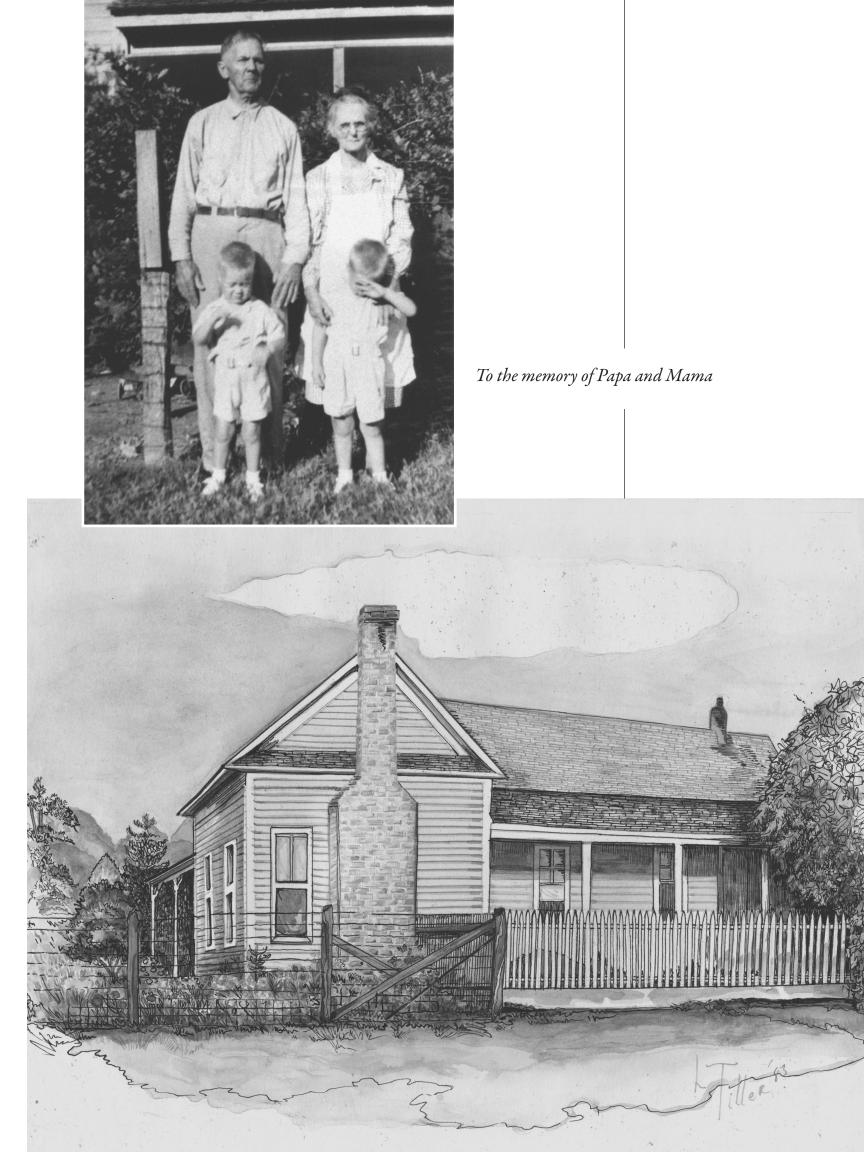
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Facing page:

Photo of Papa and Mama with the authors Wayne (left) and Jimmy, ca. 1945.

Black and white reproduction of an original watercolor of the Albert and Pearl Tiller home courtesy of the artist, LaVella Tiller.



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Preface

Preface

The Albert Carroll and Pearl Weeks Tiller home place is located in far northern Panola County, approximately three miles southwest of the Harrison County, Texas community of Elysian Fields. On their small 190acre farm, the couple brought into the world 10 children, 9 of whom lived to adulthood. Hardworking, and lacking any substantial formal schooling, they nevertheless encouraged their children to seek an education and to make their way in the larger world. So successful were they, that today their descendants may be found from one end of the nation to the other, and in any number of occupations. Some, especially those in Texas, have maintained their tie to the family home and community, but for many, Elysian Fields, Mt. Zion, Carthage and Panola County are just places on a map.

This book, a family history of Albert Carroll Tiller, is an effort to both reconnect and remind those spatially and historically removed from their ancestral home and cultural roots, just who they are and where they came from. The emphasis is not on genealogy, but on the story of seven generations of a family, set in the historical and cultural context of their times.

Our story begins with an overview of the ancestors of George W. Tiller, the great-grandfather of Albert Tiller (Chapter 1), including the early years of George Tiller in Caroline County, Virginia. We will then discuss George's overseer and tenant farmer years in that state's Culpeper County (Chapter 2), and those members of his family who in the late 1820s and early 1830s left their ancestral Virginia home, crossed the Appalachian Mountains and settled in Kentucky (Chapter 3). We then take up the life of William Tiller, grandfather of our Albert Tiller. Leaving his family in Kentucky, William joined his older brother, George Welford, in Mississippi where he met and married his first wife, Laura Richardson (Chapter 4). By December 1836, both brothers had migrated to the new Republic of Texas with its uncertain eastern boundary (Chapter 5). George settled in present-day Bowie County just to the west of Texarkana (Chapter 6), while William made his first home in present-day Harrison County (Chapter 7) and later in what is today Panola County (Chapter 8). It was in the Mt. Zion community of Panola County that both William's son George Carter (Chapter 9) and grandson, Albert Carroll (Chapter 10) grew to adulthood.

While this book expands upon the findings of Terry Jordan (son of Gilbert and Vera Tiller Jordan, third daughter of Albert and Pearl Tiller) and Mary Lynn Weir (oldest daughter of Ray DeWitt Tiller, Albert's youngest brother), no attempt should be made to compare our effort with their 1976 Deep East Texas Folk: The Tillers, Crenshaws, Woodleys, Goldens, and Other Related Families of Panola and Harrison Counties. Their work was directed toward the Tiller line as well as a number of related families, whereas we concentrated our efforts solely on the Tiller line. Their book focused primarily on genealogy, whereas we expend considerable effort in describing the historical and cultural setting in which each generation of Tillers lived. Fortunately, Jordan and Weir were able to interview a number of older family members who had some second-hand knowledge of William Tiller and a great deal of first-hand knowledge concerning George Carter and Albert Tiller. While different in emphasis, the goal of our two books is similar — to provide the reader with a sense for who our ancestors were and, to the extent possible, the times in which they lived.

One of the first decisions we had to make as we set about to write a history of our Tiller family was how long we were prepared to spend on the project. As anyone who has been bitten by the genealogy bug well knows, this kind of effort can be a tedious and very time-consuming undertaking. Discovering new material about one's family knows no end, or more precisely, the end is defined only by the limits of time and effort the researcher places upon himself. Although we did take a cursory look at our early Virginia Tiller ancestors, the authors agreed prior to beginning this project that, in the interest of time, our primary focus would be on the George W. Tiller family of Caroline and Culpeper County. While both authors have had a longstanding, although admittedly low-level, interest in family history, neither was prepared as we began this effort in the fall of 2002, for the literally thousands of man-hours we were to spend on this project. Our travels have taken us on multiple trips to the National Archives in Washington D.C., and the state archives and a number of courthouses in Virginia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas. We made extensive use of filmed records available through the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints and the Texas State Library. In addition, we scanned the pages of hundreds of issues of Mississippi and Texas newspapers on microfilm.

In the course of our research, we were constantly amazed at how much material was available. Although time, fire and the Civil War have taken their toll on the records of many Virginia counties, the records of Richmond, Essex, King George and Culpeper County are largely intact. Only in Caroline County where the Civil War laid waste to many of the records, and Bowie County, where an 1889 fire completely destroyed the courthouse and its records, did we encounter situations that resulted in the near-total or total destruction of records of interest. But even here it was possible to piece together period information from original sources to provide the reader with a relatively clear picture of family members. As will be readily noted, we made liberal use of period sources whenever possible. Of paramount importance were period tax rolls and the deed, minute and order books of individual counties, although some of our most exciting finds were associated with depositions taken in period court cases.

The most difficult period to research, without question, was that associated with William Tiller's early years in Texas. Due to the frontier nature of the area, and the uncertainty of the boundary between Texas and Louisiana, period sources were minimal and difficult to locate. Fortunately, the county records for both Harrison and Panola County, including the very important court case files, were complete and proved critical to unraveling the movements and a number of personal relationships associated with our earliest Texas ancestor.

After trying several formats, we decided to divide the book into two sections: at the front we have placed the primary text, related graphics and Chapter Notes (identified in the text as CN) which will be of interest to the general reader. In the Research Materials section following the general text, are found the Research Notes (identified in the text as RN), supporting footnotes and bibliographic citations arranged by individual chapter. The Research Notes offer additional, although generally tangential and typically more tedious, information on topics discussed in the primary text. In choosing this format, we believe we have accomplished two goals: (1) to create an interesting and attractive family history book for the general reader; and (2) to provide an organized and comprehensive disclosure of our sources to future Tiller researchers who might endeavor to continue or expand upon our work.

Also included are three Appendices. Appendix A is a transcription of the original portions of the 1918 *LaBree Report* prepared for T. Carter Tiller in his attempt to gain admittance to the Kentucky Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution. Portions of this report were critical to our effort to determine the paternity of George W. Tiller. Appendix B (The Descendants of the Children of George W. and Lucy Mills Tiller) and Appendix C (The Descendants of the Children of Albert Carroll and Pearl Weeks Tiller) are provided for descendents to more fully develop their respective family trees.

In addition to a section on items that were located too late to include in the final text (Post-Production Materials) and a General Bibliography, the reader will note the presence of two indexes. The Genealogical Index includes all of the individuals mentioned within the pages of the book. The General Index, which *excludes* the names found in the Genealogical Index, is typical of most academic works.

Within the primary text, we have made use of relatively unobtrusive, numerical citations that will direct the reader to the appropriate footnote located in the Research Materials section. References to Chapter Notes and Research Notes are so indicated in the text. We believe this arrangement will best permit the reader to absorb the material presented with minimal distraction while at the same time presenting the full source cited in an understandable format.

As thorough as we have attempted to be, we know well that, even now, material is being discovered and made available that would no doubt have added to our story. For instance, a number of projects are presently underway including the work by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints to digitize their entire film library. This effort, to be coupled with a database entry for each image, will significantly enhance the ability of a researcher to find an ancestor hiding in obscure and seemingly unrelated county records. In the same manner, some Virginia counties are also beginning to digitize their records. Especially valuable is likely to be the digitization of period court cases. And possibly most exciting of all, modern science is bringing us the ability to relate those long dead with the living through DNA.

Anyone who has worked with period documents well knows the difficulty encountered in reading such material. Some clerks wrote in better hands than others, and abbreviations and punctuation were often at considerable variance with that in common use today. While making every effort to be true to the text as written, the authors have made grammatical adjustments when they felt it would assist the reader in understanding the material presented. Any errors are those of the authors. Preface

And finally, a word about the authors. We are the first (Jim) and second (Wayne) sons of James Weeks Tiller, the tenth child and youngest son of Albert and Pearl Tiller. Although both Texas-born, we spent our impressionable early years in Atlanta, Georgia, separated from our Texas roots. However, every year when school was out - for two weeks at Christmas and three months each summer — we came to live in East Texas, in Panola County, and it always seemed to us that we were coming into Paradise. We thank our mother, Dorothy Bost Tippit, and our father, James Weeks Tiller, for providing us that opportunity. We also thank our paternal grandparents, Albert and Pearl Tiller, Margaret Tiller, and numerous aunts, uncles and cousins of that time for contributing to the experience. In that 1940s and early 1950s period, quite unknowing to us at the time, and not fully understood and appreciated until later in life, we were imbued with the values, beliefs, work ethic, pride and closeness of the Tiller family of that day. We hope the reader will find the material contained within to be interesting and informative. For us, it was a labor of love.

Acknowledgments

An undertaking of this magnitude is not the doing of the authors alone. We owe a special debt of gratitude to the following individuals and organizations.

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- The History Room of the Harrison County Historical Museum. Marshall, Texas
- Terry Jordan of Austin, Texas for his personal conversations and emails which early in our research both encouraged and gave us initial direction

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- Mouzon Rankin Tiller of Elysian Fields, Texas, eighth child and third son of Albert Carroll and Pearl Weeks Tiller
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A very special thanks are due Nancy Triska Tiller for the many hours she spent in the design and production of this book. Without her tactful comments, helpful suggestions, eye for detail and cartographic skills, this book would have taken on more the appearance of an academic thesis than the work before you.

Jimmy Tiller Huntsville, Texas

Wayne Tiller Tyler, Texas xir

Our Earliest Virginia Ancestors

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-n this first chapter, we will draw upon both available period records and our best thinking to discuss the lineage of George W. Tiller of Caroline and Culpeper Counties, Virginia. We emphasize here that George W. Tiller, the great-grandfather of Albert Carroll Tiller, is the earliest of our ancestors for whom we have clear and definitive proof of kinship. The reader is therefore cautioned that the conclusions drawn and presented within the pages of this chapter, although based on a record that is both diverse and substantial, are speculative to a degree not typical of the balance of this book.

We will discuss a number of Tiller generations in this chapter, and the reader will notice that several popular first names are repeatedly bestowed upon young Tiller males in each generation. To avoid confusion, we will often apply a prefix or suffix to a name. For example, we will hereafter refer to George W. Tiller of Caroline County as our.George.

In summary, we believe our earliest ancestor in America, whose name was William (hereafter also referred to as old. William or The Immigrant), most likely arrived in Tidewater Virginia from England in the early to mid-1650s. He was probably 8 to 10 years old at the time. We believe he almost surely initially lived in the James River Valley in or near what is today Isle of Wight County. At some point, probably in the late 1650s or early 1660s, he appears to have moved north to the Rappahannock River Valley. Old.William and all of his children lived their lives in the lower Rappahannock River Valley in what are today Westmoreland and Essex Counties (Figure 1.1). By 1760,

The Virginia Tidewater Region Washington, D.C. Fauquier 5 6 Stafford Madison Culpeper Ppanhan King Georg MARYLAND Westmorela Spotsylvania Leedstown Caroline Richmond Pagan River – Moon Creek, 3 Essex Probable Initial Indenture Location of The Immigrant, William Tiller Hanover 2 Original William Tiller Home Place ippahannock River Polecat Creek Home Place 3 Henrico かっ Daniel Tiller Home Place 4 New Kent Richmond Battaile's Eastham 5 Road Plantation Chesterfield Mountain Run Tenancy 6 7 Gourdvine Neck Tenancy James River N Isle of Wight 45 60 Miles VIRGINIA Map by Nancy Tiller

NORTH CAROLINA

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hile we may know relatively little of George Tiller's life prior to his leaving Caroline County in the fall/winter months of 1805, once he arrived in Culpeper County, he left a trail relatively easy to follow, especially when one considers the events described took place some 200 years ago. The available record, which includes order books, land causes, minute books, militia records, deed books, tax lists and various probate records and petitions, makes it clear that there was only one Tiller family present in Culpeper County during the 1800-1830 period. The fact that a number of county documents mention several known members of our George W. Tiller family only serves to confirm the presence of this single Tiller family (RN 2.1, RN 2.2).

We begin our Culpeper story by taking a few paragraphs to introduce the brothers and sisters of our William Tiller, fourth son and the eighth child of George and Lucy Tiller (Appendix B). Although the primary focus of this particular chapter is on Father George, it was during the Culpeper years that his four youngest children were born and a number of the older children were married. In Chapter 3, we will consider in some depth the children who crossed the Appalachian Mountains to Kentucky — Catharine, Benjamin, Edmund, George, William and Carter, as well as Mother Lucy. Here we provide a brief overview, in chronological order by year of birth, the children of George and Lucy Tiller, and give some attention to those daughters (Martha Lee, Nancy and Sarah W.) who remained behind in Virginia. The reader may wish to consider as well the material provided in RN 2.3 where we offer the evidence for, and our best estimate of, the ages of each of these children.

The oldest sibling, Martha Lee (also known as Patsy) was born on April 3, 1798. She married James Carter James in Culpeper County on October 20, 1820, and seems to have lived out her life in the Rappahannock River Valley. During her later years, she lived with her daughter, Sally, wife of William T. Crittenden in Fauquier and later, Stafford County.

Catharine, born in 1799, was the only daughter to leave Virginia and settle in Kentucky. We will discuss what we know of Catharine's life in Chapter 3.

Benjamin F., born on October 10, 1801, was George and Lucy's oldest son. In late 1829/early 1830, he, his family and his brothers, Edmund, George, William and Carter, crossed the Appalachians and settled in Kentucky. We will chronicle Benjamin's life in Chapter 3 as well.

George's second son, Edmund McAdams, was probably born in 1803. Our research into the life of Edmund, an unknown sibling at the time of Jordan and Weir's book, was instrumental in understanding the early movements of the Tiller family. We will discuss Edmund at greater length in Chapter 3.

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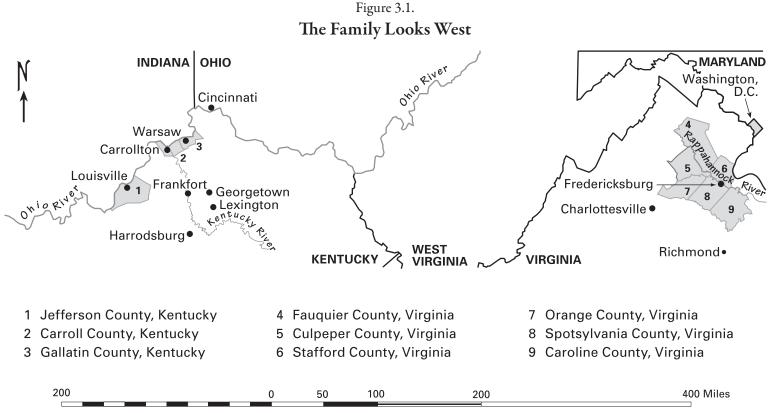
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etween November 14, 1829 and July 1831, all the George W. Tiller family, save for three married daughters, Martha Lee (Patsy), Nancy and Sarah W., made the move from the Fauquier/Culpeper/ Stafford County, Virginia area to Kentucky. Their destinations included Louisville, situated at the Falls of the Ohio in Jefferson County, and Warsaw in Gallatin County, some 75 miles upstream from Louisville, and approximately 20 miles upstream from the confluence of the Kentucky and Ohio Rivers (Figure 3.1). A number of push and pull factors, in addition to the death of Father George on May 20, 1831, no doubt contributed to the decision of the family to seek greater opportunities to the west.

As we will make clear in the pages and chapters to follow, none of George W. Tiller's sons were farmers at the time of their crossing the Appalachians, or for that matter years afterward. All were either tradesmen or businessmen. Thus, while it is not likely they would have suffered directly from decreasing agricultural production related to declining soil fertility in the Virginia Piedmont, the indirect effects of this situation would certainly have taken its toll on available and future prospects for the family.

In the early decades of the 1800s, a plantation economy held sway on the Virginia Piedmont. Typically, the landscape was dotted with many small towns surrounded by large plantations, with smaller family farms found on the area's less desirable land. As a rule, the larger plantations were able to



George Welford and William Tiller, the Mississippi Years

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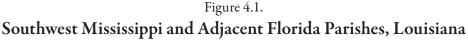
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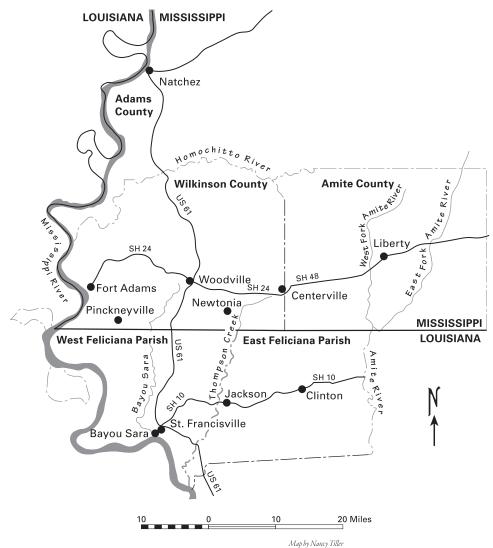
s indicated in the previous chapter, there is no question at least six of George W. Tiller's siblings migrated to Kentucky. Two, George Welford and William, did not remain long, but moved on to Wilkinson County, Mississippi, ultimately settling in the small community of Whitesville (present-day Newtonia). This crossroads settlement is located some seven miles south-southeast of the county seat of Woodville and approximately two miles north of the Louisiana border (Figure 4.1). While concrete evidence is lacking, we believe George had moved to Mississippi by the summer or early fall of 1832, and that William probably joined his brother sometime in early 1834 once he had turned 21 and was no longer subject to the guardianship of his brother Edmund.

Two major themes dominate the Tiller brothers' years in Mississippi: their relationship with the extended Richardson family in Wilkinson County, and unfolding events in Texas.

The livelihood and future of both brothers appears to have been closely tied to a number of members of the very large Richardson family. As discussed in the previous chapter, one member of this family, Francis Rivers Richardson, was probably instrumental encouraging in George to move to Wilkinson County, and he very likely assisted George in establishing himself in the community. Both George and William married Richardson women within a year of their arrival in Mississippi. In late 1836, both brothers moved to Texas; settling, not in close proximity to each other as might be expected, but rather in widely separate areas of the Republic, very likely attracted to these locations by their association with members of the Richardson family.

In mid-1830s Texas, at the time controlled by Mexico, events were moving toward a conclusion that would result in the creation of an independent Republic. Americans,





The New Republic and the Elusive East Texas Boundary

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The Elusive Boundary

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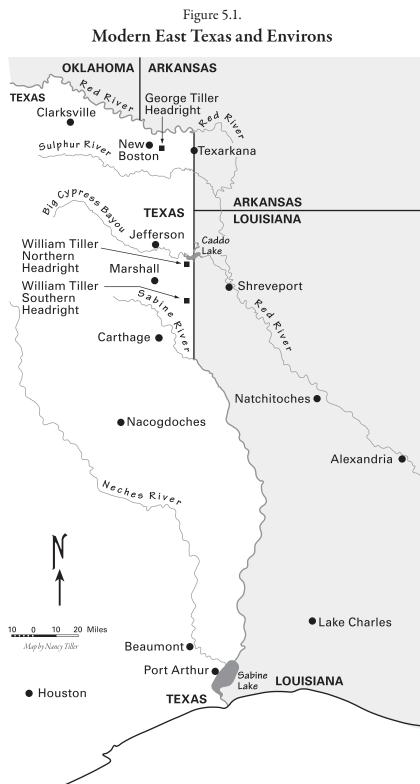
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s noted at the conclusion of the previous chapter, the particular areas to which our Tiller brothers came in late 1836 were both harsh and dangerous. But above all the border areas to which William and George migrated were uncertain. So uncertain in fact, that in the case of William, it would be almost a full five years before he would know with any degree of confidence that he was in fact a citizen of Texas and not Louisiana.

The long, complex history of the evolution of the boundaries of Texas spans over 150 years and is filled with international political intrigue, military actions and countless personal stories, and is much too detailed to discuss in our current effort. We confine our attention to the eastern boundary of Texas, namely that portion of the boundary running from the Gulf of Mexico north to the Red River, and specifically to that segment of the eastern boundary lying between the Sabine and Red Rivers (Figure 5.1). It was in this area that both William and George settled, and the conditions surrounding the unresolved nature of this boundary had a significant influence on their lives. Early in our research, we came to realize that a thorough understanding of the boundary problem with all its ramifications was necessary to understand the early years of our Tiller brothers in Texas.

The Texas to which William and George moved in December 1836, was a far cry from the Texas we know today. The Texas Revolution had been brought to a successful conclusion earlier that year, and the Congress of the Republic of Texas was engaged in establishing the trappings of an ordered society.

In addition to the societal transformation underway in the Republic, both brothers were faced with uncertainties related to the undefined nature of the Texas-United States boundary in the areas in which they settled. That portion of present-day Harrison County where William settled was essentially a noman's land with neither Texas nor the United States in control. Present-day Bowie County, where George and his family moved, although in Texas, was actually administered at the time of the family's migration as a part of Miller County, Arkansas. For George, most of the uncertainty would be resolved by late 1838, but William would not know his country of residence



George Welford Tiller of Bowie County

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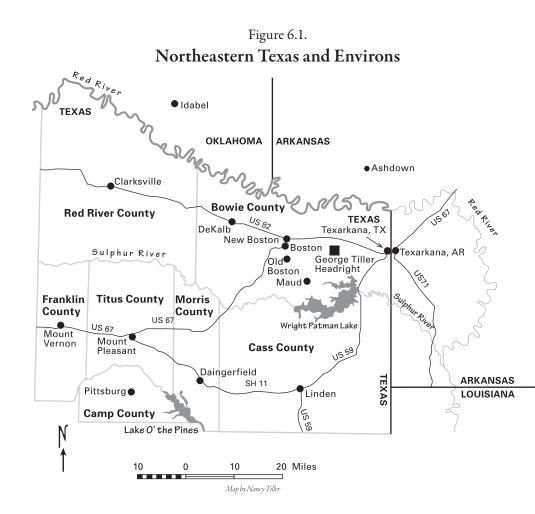
Ithough we doubt what was to become known as Bowie County was "a heaven for men and dogs," life likely appeared to hold a great deal of promise for the George Tiller family as they settled into their new home in late December 1836.

The area to which George moved, and what would become known as the George W. Tiller headright in later years, is located on the watershed divide between the Red and Sulphur Rivers in northeastern Texas in presentday Bowie County. The site of the original homestead and the old Tiller Cemetery both lie near the geographic center of the 1,280-acre headright on and just to the north of Old Boston Road approximately 3.4 miles due south of Hooks, a small settlement located some 12 miles west of Texarkana (Figure 6.1).

Bowie County is largely a transitional area between two of the state's major geographic regions: the Pine Woods which dominate the eastern portions of the county; and the Post Oak Belt which characterizes the more western areas. The Red River floodplain bounds the county to the north while the Sulphur River delineates much of the southern boundary. Between these two rivers, and extending the entire length of the county, is found an east to west running ridge of low, rounded hills. If one were to extend a line from

north to south across the county bisecting the Tiller headright, the terrain could be described as generally rolling, moderate in both height and slope, and ranging from some 300 feet along the Red River, rising gently to approximately 400 along the central ridge, then falling to some 200 feet along the Sulphur River. In general, elevation decreases from northwest to southeast across the county.

The Tiller headright is located on one of the highest points in eastern Bowie County, and lies on the central ridge almost exactly along the Pine Woods-Post Oak Belt boundary. Both the original homestead site and Tiller Cemetery occupy a small, relatively level, ridgetop of a generally circular nature. The radial stream pattern emanating from this location serves as the source for several small, and today generally intermittent,



William Tiller in Harrison County, 1836-1849

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hen we embarked upon our research, William Tiller was our primary interest. Although he established our Tiller line in Texas, in fact, our family knew almost nothing about him prior to his move to Panola County in 1849. It was correctly assumed that he was born in Virginia, had moved to Kentucky with a portion of his family, and then somehow made his way to Texas. His time in Mississippi was unknown to our family. In their book, Jordan and Weir correctly assumed William was in Texas before October 1, 1837, as that was the cutoff date for second class headrights, however, their earliest documented evidence of his presence in Texas was his September 1841 application for his headright. Interestingly, this headright application, executed when William was 28 years old, was the earliest known documented evidence of his existence anywhere.

Due to the frontier nature of the area at the time, and above all to the uncertainty of the boundary between Texas and the United States and the ramifications thereof, evidence of William's whereabouts during the period between his arrival in late 1836 and his headright application in late 1841 was indeed difficult to find. We quickly realized that scanning deed, minute and order book indexes for the name Tiller, a mainstay method of family researchers, would not suffice. Instead, researching William would require a thorough understanding of area history, a knowledge of other persons in the area, with particular scrutiny of his neighbors and close associates, and hundreds of hours of browsing through petitions, commissioners court minutes, and court cases which on the surface seemingly had nothing to do with him, but that sometimes contained valuable information. Indeed, a wealth of area history is contained in period court depositions.

Settlement History of the Area

The area in today's Harrison County where William settled was just outside the old Neutral Ground, originally created by Spain and the United States in 1806. Until the Texas Revolution in 1836, the United States, Spain and Mexico had all discouraged, or officially made illegal, Anglo settlement of this area. Two other impediments to Anglo settlement, particularly in Harrison County and northwest Louisiana west of the Red River, were the presence of Caddo Indians and the Great Raft of the Red River.

There were still many Caddos in East Texas north of the Sabine in the early 1830s. Across the border, Caddos had possession of much of northwest Louisiana until July 1835. Given the vagueness of the Mexican/United States boundary line in this area, their lands almost certainly would have included William's future headright lands. The Caddos sold their lands to the United Sates in July 1835, with the intention of migrating west into what was then Mexico, having been invited to do so by the Mexican government

William Tiller in Panola County, 1849-1876

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William in Panola County

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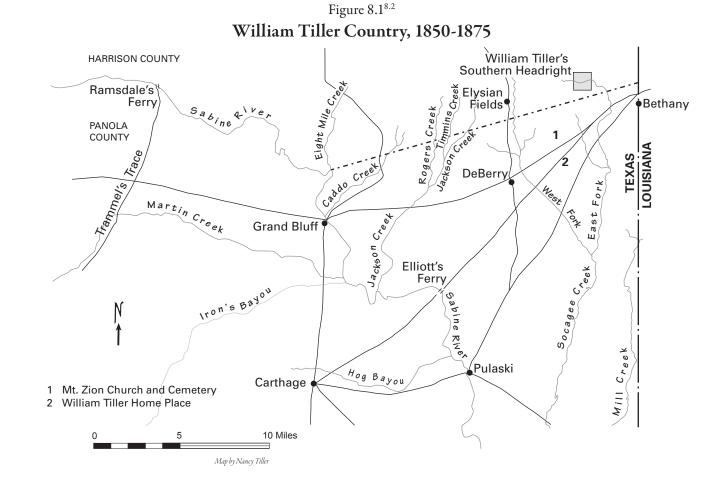
William in Panola County



illiam's years in Panola County cover three interesting periods in Texas history, namely the decade of the 1850s, with its prosperity on the one hand, but ominous buildup to the Civil War on the other; the War itself; and the terrible hardships of the Reconstruction years that followed the War. It is within this historical backdrop that we view William's final years.

Panola County in 1849-1850

Panola County was formed from Harrison and Shelby Counties by an act of the Texas Legislature in 1846. At the time, the area comprising Panola County was much less developed than its northern neighbor in that there were fewer towns of any significance, far fewer cotton plantations and a much sparser population. Most of the settlers in the new county lived east of the Sabine River (Figure 8.1). By 1850, Panola County's population was 3,871 including 2,676 whites, 1,193 slaves, and 2 free colored. The population of Harrison County was 11,822, including 5,604 whites, 6,213 slaves, and 5 free colored.^{8.1}



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George Carter Tiller

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George Carter Tiller

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George Carter Tiller



eorge Carter Tiller, the second child of William and Betsie Tiller, was born on November 1, 1847, on the William Tiller headright in Harrison County.



Figure 1.9.1 The Signature of George Carter Tiller.

Childhood and Early Years

He was just over one year old when the family moved to Panola County. We do not know much about George's childhood. He would have attended school in the mid-and-late 1850s, probably at O.C. Taylor's School and/or A.D. Smith's School, as William was a receiver of funds for those schools in 1858 and in 1860, respectively. George could have also attended Jay Bird School, just a short distance south of the Tiller home, as Leila LaGrone states that Jay Bird was probably in operation by 1849, however, not by that name — in fact, Jay Bird School was probably Taylor's and/or Smith's school mentioned above.^{9.2} Mt. Zion School was probably not established until after the Civil War (Figure 9.2).

We do not know the extent of George's schooling. Manpower was rather short in the family during George's childhood. Recall that two of George's brothers died at the ages of 6 and 4, and older half-brother Cornelius went off to the Civil War when George was only 13 years old. Given the general decline in school activity in the county during the War, plus the fact that George was the only male child in the family at the time, it is doubtful that he received any formal schooling past the age of 13. On the other hand, a study of George's activities during the last 40 years of his life indicate he possessed a better than average education for his time and place, undoubtedly achieved through a lifelong process of self-education.

George joined the Mt. Zion Methodist Church in 1860,^{9.4} and he remained a devout and active Methodist his entire life. When he reached 17 years of age, George joined the Confederate effort. He was attached to Company C of Wells' Battalion, Texas Cavalry,^{9.5} however, the War ended before he saw battle action. When he returned, George probably lived with his father and mother and helped them on the farm until his marriage in late 1868. We base this assumption on the fact that he was assigned road maintenance duty on the Mansfield-Marshall Road for the years 1867 and 1868, the same section of road William had worked in prior years.^{9.6}

Like his father, George saw tremendous changes in society during his lifetime; however, unlike his father, the most dramatic and pervasive

Albert Carroll Tiller

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Albert Carroll Tiller

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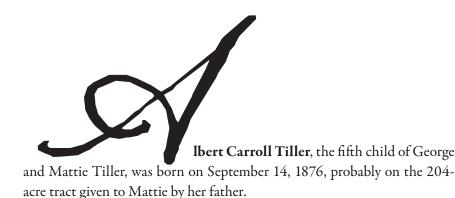
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Albert Carroll Tiller



a. b. Filler

Figure 10.1. Signature of Albert Carroll Tiller.^{10.1}

Childhood and Early Years

Most of Albert's childhood was spent on the William Tiller home place at Mt. Zion, as George moved his family there no later than 1884, and more likely as early as 1880.

Although grandfather William died three months before Albert's birth, and grandmother Betsie died in September 1878, Albert would have learned much about them in his early years from his father and others. During our research on William, the authors have often wished Albert was still with us so that he could have possibly shed light on some of our most important questions whose answers are simply not to be found in any documents. The authors were in their mid-twenties when he passed away. Unfortunately but not surprisingly, we had little knowledge or interest in family history at that young age.

Recall that Albert was George and Mattie's third son. The oldest boy, Cornelius, died in 1882 at age 11, and the second oldest boy, Benjamin, died as an infant before Albert was born. The fourth son, George Jr., was not born until 1884. Hence, Albert was undoubtedly strapped with a great deal of responsibility and hard work during much of his childhood. Initially, father George was engaged full time in farming and raising livestock, however, beginning in 1890, his terms as County Commissioner and Justice of the Peace would have consumed much of his time and likely saddled Albert with even greater responsibilities.

We know very little about Albert's early years. He attended Mt. Zion and Jay Bird schools close to his home (RN 10.1). One of his teachers was Margie Neal of Carthage, who later became the first woman to serve as a state senator in Austin. We do not know how many years Albert attended school, but it was probably not more than about eight, which would have been rather common for that time. He joined Mt. Zion Methodist Church.

Figures 10.2 and 10.3 are photographs of Albert. Although we cannot date these precisely, we estimate they were taken when he was about 12 and 16 years of age, respectively.



Figure 10.2. Photograph of Albert Carroll Tiller, taken about 1888. Original in the possession of Linward Shivers.



Figure 10.3. Studio portrait of Albert Carroll Tiller, taken about 1892. Original in the possession of Dr. Robert L. Clifford, Jr.

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Epilogue

Our American adventure began over 350 yeas ago when a scared young boy arrived on the shores of Virginia to begin his new life in America. As an indentured servant in the lower James River Valley, William Tiller's master saw to it that he learned the skills of a carpenter — a trade that in the ensuing decades provided his family with a degree economic security.

In the centuries that followed, his descendants, who became craftsmen, businessmen, local politicians, overseers and farmers, participated in the American dream. After some 180 years in Virginia, members of the George W. Tiller family joined thousands of other Virginians who looked west for their fame and fortune. Crossing the Appalachians in 1830, the family initially settled along the Ohio River in Kentucky. While most remained in the area, two of the brothers, George and our direct ancestor William, moved on to Mississippi, and by late 1836 they had migrated to the new Republic of Texas.

Although a carpenter by trade, William apparently found little demand for his skills in frontier Harrison County, Texas, and within a few years he had made the transition to an agrarian life. William suffered many hardships during his life, including the early death of his first wife, the deaths of four of his children before they reached adulthood, the Civil War and Reconstruction. Tuberculosis took him in his 63rd year in 1876. He was a Methodist, a Mason and a respected member of his community.

His son George, although a farmer at heart his entire life, rose to prominence in Panola County through elected office and his appointment as postmaster in Carthage. Like his father, George was a Methodist and a Mason. Throughout his long life, his solid character, traditional values and strong work ethic served as an example to his family and many friends.

George's third son, Albert and his wife Pearl, the paternal grandparents of the authors, began their married life with little education, no financial resources to speak of and few material possessions — yet in many respects they were wealthy from the beginning. First and foremost they had one another — a perfect match, good upbringings, strong work ethics, their respected family names, a strong Christian faith — and they had their dreams. Though simple, their dreams were laudable — to be happy together, to work hard and to become the best they could with the means available to them — and above all to give their children and grandchildren the best possible start in life. They realized their dreams, completely and superbly.

One could say that the story of these seven generations of Tillers is not particularly captivating. After all, there were no prominent historical figures, no great fortunes made or lost and no sensational events portrayed. However, our story is interesting for the very fact that it is the story of millions of Americans whose forefathers crossed the Atlantic seeking to better their lives in America.

The authors have grandchildren now, and as we ponder their futures, we hope and believe that we will have a significant and positive influence on their lives — just as Papa and Mama had on ours. As Papa and Mama are a part of us, so too are they a part of our children and grandchildren.

According to our best count, there are currently surviving Papa and Mama 3 children, 20 grandchildren, 48 great-grandchildren, 63 great-great-grandchildren and 1 great-great-great-grandchild. To each of you, we hope this work has enhanced your understanding of the rich American heritage we all share. Doubtless, Papa and Mama and The Immigrant William would be proud.

Introduction to the Research Materials Section

The casual reader is encouraged to make use of the extensive chapter Research Notes found in this section of the book. These materials, developed during the course of our research, were deemed too detailed and/or tangential to include within the main text, however, they do offer the reader an opportunity to learn more about a number of specific topics.

That said, most of what lies beyond is intended primarily for the eyes of the next Tiller family researcher. The two authors spent literally thousands of hours searching period records. The results of those efforts are found within the pages of this section.

We hope the next generation of family researchers will find the footnotes, bibliographic sources and speculation of use as they take our family history to the next level.

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RN 1.1. Burned Counties. "Burned counties" is a general term applied to a number of Virginia's counties, most of them located in the eastern part of the state, which have lost all or a considerable portion of their older county records to activities related to the Revolutionary War, the Civil War or isolated fires. The Library of Virginia classifies Caroline and Stafford Counties, both of interest to Tiller researchers, as two of the "difficult" counties in which to conduct genealogical research. Fortunately, none of the Virginia counties we were concerned with fell into that organization's "hopeless" or "almost hopeless" categories. In fact, of all the Virginia, Kentucky, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas counties of concern to us in our research, only Caroline and Stafford Counties in Virginia and Bowie and Shelby Counties in Texas experienced a significant record loss.

RN 1.2. The Caroline County Problem. We have read and thought a lot about our research. Within the pages of this chapter, we present our best thinking as to just who some of our earliest Virginia ancestors might have been. Although the documents are numerous, in our opinion they are insufficient to provide a *definitive* answer to the question at issue. On the other hand, we do have some strong suspicions as to what these citations mean with regard to our early Virginia Tillers. You do not live with your research for six years and not form some opinions.

In summary, the physical presence and familial interrelationships among our earliest Tiller generations in Old Rappahannock, Richmond, Essex and King George Counties beginning in the late 1600s can be reasonably well established. In the fall of 1759, this entire Tiller community, which consisted of at least one of William Tiller's sons, John (hereafter also referred to as our.John), and a number of our.John's sons including John (hereafter also referred to as John.2), Daniel (hereafter also referred to as our.Daniel), Thomas (hereafter also referred to as King George.Thomas) and possibly George (hereafter also referred to as 1781.George) moved from King George County across the Rappahannock River to Caroline County. By the turn of the century, a number of sons of these individuals had reached adulthood and moved from the area to begin their own families. While there is no question that the many Tillers who appear in the period documents are related, the gaps in the Caroline County record make very difficult the task of definitively determining the relationships between the various Tillers found in the county during the latter half of the eighteenth century.

By late 1805, our.George had moved to Culpeper County, Virginia and, with but a few exceptions, the trail of documentary evidence as regards our family from that point through Kentucky, Mississippi to Texas is wide and deep. Prior to beginning our effort, we would have never guessed period records relating to ancestors from so long ago would have been so varied and numerous.

That said, the problem of Caroline County ultimately proved insurmountable. Unfortunately, even after hundreds of hours of research in the records of Caroline and surrounding counties, we were not able to *definitively* connect our.George W. Tiller with any of the many Tillers present in the county. That a connection exists between these Tillers and those of late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century Old Rappahannock, Richmond, Essex and King George Counties we have

no doubt.

What is in doubt is whether two researchers, living in far-away Texas, have sufficient time, and, we must admit, the interest, to find the "smoking gun" that makes the connection between old.William, and our.George W. Tiller. We only skimmed the surface in Virginia, devoting most of our attention to county records and other materials readily available on microfilm. Our experience tells us the wealth of resources in the state, especially those of the Virginia Historical Society, the Library of Virginia and the various county historical societies, is just too great for one with the time, the inclination and the physical proximity *not* to be able to locate any number of period documents relating to our Tillers in Virginia. We are confident that in the years ahead, as researchers make their way into these less accessible materials, the elusive documentary evidence that will *definitively* connect our Tiller branch to old.William will be found.

The reader is once again cautioned that, although the fragmentary documentation is intriguing, the factual basis for much of what follows in this chapter is at best only "informed fiction." If only the authors lived in Virginia near those libraries and the State Archives ... if only we had more time and the interest to devote to this project ... if only more revealing entries had been left in the records ... if only the Civil War had not resulted in the destruction of so many of Virginia's old records, ... if ..., if ..., if ...

RN 1.3. Tillers Found in Early Virginia Patent Records. Early Virginia patent records compiled by Nugent, while incomplete, indicate that at least five Tillers were transported to Virginia in the mid-1600 period. Before we discuss these Tiller immigrants, it is important to consider what Nugent's abstracts of these early patents actually tell us. Typically Nugent lists the patentee, the number of acres granted, the date of the patent and its location/page number, a brief physical description of the land grant and often a list of individuals transported (the number of individuals transported being the basis for the land being granted the patentee). It is difficult if not impossible to draw any temporal or geographical inferences from the period land patent materials as it was not uncommon for a contractor to off-load his transportees in one place and to patent his land in a distant location. Interestingly, in addition to Jamestown, one of the major Virginia landings for transportees was Hobbes Hole (modern-day Tappahannock) in Essex County located across the Rappahannock and just downstream from Leedstown, the home of our old.William Tiller line.

Perhaps even more importantly, the reader should be aware that typically no relationship can be assumed between a patent date and the date of arrival of a transportee listed on the patent. Patents were often granted many years after the transportee actually arrived on the shores of Virginia. Consider the comments of Paul Drake, Virginia historian, attorney, author and a name well-known to those with an interest in early Virginia genealogy:

Almost never do land patent records reveal when that ancestor came. Indeed, the patent may have, and often did, issue many years after the arrival of the immigrant ancestor. Not only did it take a couple years at very best to perfect a patent after making application containing the names of the servants, but also because only in very rare circumstances did the person who claimed the headright ever pay any shipper or ship's master to bring anyone here.

The business of moving servants was brisk, widespread and profitable in the 17th and 18th centuries. The fare for most servants to come here was paid for by old country entrepreneurs (or so ordered by Courts

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Appendix

The LaBree Report, Introduction

The authors received a copy of the *LaBree Report* from Bill Everheart of Dallas, Texas on December 15, 2005. He noted that the *Report* as sent was a complete copy of what he had received from Mary Lynn Weir of Orange, Texas on January 8, 1996. The material sent included several pages obviously not a part of the original report. We transcribe and label these pages as Miscellaneous Pages. While we cannot be positive, the pages of the original report all appear to have been bound at one time into some sort of binder as evidenced by holes along the left margin of a number of the pages received from Mr. Everheart. All of the pages with these left margin markings are included in the section entitled the *LaBree Report*.

Miscellaneous Pages

Miscellaneous Page 1. This letter from Mary Ann Weir to Bill Everheart made note of the LaBree forgery.

January 8, 1996.

Dear Bill,

I am enclosing some Tiller material that I hope will be of benefit to you and also to us as we believe you are the one to connect the Tiller generations.

Most of the enclosed information has come from Terry Jordan's notes. Some of it we have had for over twenty years, but the last pages are from his recent trips to Virginia. The Tillers seem to have come to Virginia very early.

One Mr. Tiller paid Mr. LaBree to find the Tiller ancestor to get him in the SAR. It seems that Mr. LaBree forged the papers to get the line established. The only thing is it was not true. But there is information there to guide in a research.

We are hoping you will be able to find the connecting lines to our Virginia ancestors.

Let us hear,

Sincerely, Mary Lynn [her signature]

Miscellaneous Page 2. Page 2 of the material sent by Mr. Everheart, judging by the dates appearing on the page (many are dated after the 1918 *LaBree Report* — for instance, Henry Alexander Tiller is noted as having been born on October 29, 1889 and died on February 4, 1958) was not a part of the original *Report*. This page, which is a listing of census/tax roll calculations of birth, death and marriage dates/name of spouse(s) was probably prepared by someone working on the Henry Alexander Tiller line. The names listed include William Tiller (Amherst County, Virginia), Daniel Tiller, Sr. (Caroline County, Virginia), Daniel Tiller, Jr. (Anderson County, Tennessee), Thomas Tiller (Campbell County, Tennessee), Henry Clay Tiller (Campbell County, Tennessee) and Henry Alexander Tiller (Campbell County, Tennessee).

The LaBree Report

The Report as received had been reproduced on purple ditto and over the

A

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years several hands had added written notes regarding the content. The material that follows is reproduced verbatim from the original text (ditto plus LaBree's handwritten additions and corrections to his typed material). His grammar/typing skills leave much to be desired. Any notes added by the authors of the current Tiller book project will be so indicated in nonitalic text, typically bracketed. As noted earlier, those materials included in the original *Report* are relatively easy to identify as the ditto copy indicates the presence of a series of "hole shadows" along the left side of the page. These holes appear to have been used in the original binding process.

Page 1 of the LaBree Report as Received. Letter from LaBree to T. Carter Tiller. The letter is typed on the letterhead of the Kentucky Society, 201 Starks Bld'g, Louisville, Ky..

February 18, 1918

Mr. T. Carter Tiller 814 The Paul Jones Louisville, Ky.

Dear Mr. Tiller:-

I returned last week from a successful research in seven Kentucky Court Houses for a client living in Columbia, Mo. and I am now prepared to make a research for you.

I have spent considerable time on a preliminary research on your Tiller line. I never take up a research unless I can find something that is encouraging. I believe I have found something that will lead to good results.

I find that the name of your great grandfather was GEORGE and bis father's name was DANIEL. The Tillers (that is the pioneers of the family) settled first in GALATIN COUNTY, KY. I have also found an official record of the marriage of GEORGE TILLER and DANIEL TILLER, the date of marriage, where married and name of the women they married.

There were four TILLERS in the Revolutionary War, they were HENRY TILLER, JOHN TILLER, WILLIAM and MAJOR TILLER, and it may turn out that one of these may have been your ancestor. Daniel Tiller may have also been in the Revolutionary War. All from Virginia.

As the TILLER'S first settled in GALATIN COUNTY, a research should be made in that County Court House, among the Marriage, Will, Deed, Court, Appraisement, Administrator and other records, and continued into FRANKLIN and SHELBY COUNTIES, from which GALLATIN Co. was c rved [sic] from in 1798, and then into the Court Houses in Owen, which was carved from Gallatin Co. in 1819, and if necessity demands, then into Trimble and Caroline [sic, should have been Carroll] Counties, which were carved from Gallatin Co., in 1836 and in 1838 respectively. Members of the Tiller family should also be written to.

I will make a research in the above counties, and write to the members of the Tiller family for information, for the reasonable sum of \$65. I am ready to take up the work at once. For your own satisfaction you should have this research made. It will save you much time and expense in the future, the longer you put off a research the more difficult it becomes. Hoping to hear from you by early mail, or grant me an interview, I am,

Yours very truly Ben. LaBree [his signature]

Appendix

В

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The Descendants of the Children of George W. and Lucy Mills Tiller

Martha Lee	Catherine	Benjamin F.	Edmund M.	Nancy	Sarah W.	George W.	William	Carter W.

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Appendix

The Descendants of the Children of Albert Carroll and Pearl Weeks Tiller

Bettie	Charles	Mattie	Albert	Vera	Alice	Birdie	Mouzon	Lillian	James
Lucille	Eric	Mary	Carroll, Jr.	Belle	Pearl	Wells	Rankin	Lois	Weeks

Post-Production Materials

Post-Production Materials

The material below, while located too late to include in the text, may be of interest to those pursuing various Tiller lines.

Item 1.

Robert Mickleburrough Caroline County Virginia 18 Aug 1788/9 Oct 1788

Wife (not named) five negroes, Old Ballock, Young Dick, Seller, Danniel, and Grace for her lifetime and then to be set free. David Dickerson, son of Samuel Dickerson, one negro named Hannah, daughter of Nan. Thomas Guy, son of Thomas Guy, one negro named Mime. Reubin George one bay horse named Jolly. John Thilman, Sr. three negroes, Burtis, Gift and Anny to use to maintain his daughter, Jane Thilman. Thomas Mills two negroes named Hannah and Tom for repairing my house. Susannah Ferrell two negroes named George and Rachel. Susannah Hackett one negro named Poll and a negro named young Ballock. After Susannah Hackett death, said negroes to go to Thomas Mills and Thomas Hackett to be equally divided. Rest of my estate to John Thilman, Sr., George Williamson, Susannah Hackett, John Williamson and Benjamin Williamson's son Robert Williamson. All of my land and stock to John Thilman Sr., George Williamson, Susannah Hackett, John Williamson and Robert Williamson, the son of Benjamin Williamson. Exors. Reubin George and Thomas Hackett. Wit: John Young, Andrew (X) Long, and William Tiller.

Albermarle 375-2 "Mickleburrough's Exors vs Danile" Acc. 33216

The above is found in: Hopkins, William Lindsay. Selected Wills from the Burned Record Counties of Virginia and Some Unrecorded Wills. *Magazine of Virginia Genealogy*. Volume 31, No. 4 (November 1993). pp. 343-344.

Item 2.

As this is being written in late 2007, a Tiller/Tillyer DNA project is being established. This area will very likely yield huge returns for future Tiller researchers. It appears from preliminary comments made by those involved that the Tillers of Virginia had their origins in the Tillyer family who lived in suburbs of present-day London – specifically in a Harmondsworth Parish village named Sipson where a Tillyer appeared on a rent roll. The village is located approximately one mile north of Heathrow Airport. Too, there has been much discussion about distant DNA matches with those having such surnames as Mason, Hilliard (roofer) and Waller suggesting that the name Tiller may have origins in the building trades and not in agriculture as previously believed.

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General Bibliography

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Boundary Between Republic of Texas and United States From Logan's Ferry on Sabine

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