

The Blevins Men of the **Hiwassee**

Theoretical Structures
of the
First Blevins Families of Rhea and Meigs Counties
Tennessee

Robert P. Blevins

June 1, 2020

The information contained herein represents both original research and my compilations and interpretations of the work of others. Please address any comments, suggestions, criticisms, or corrections to me:

Robert P. Blevins
173 Amanda Lane
Acme, PA 15610
yairi@lhtot.com

Copyright © 2005 - 2020 by Robert P. Blevins.
This document is protected by U. S. copyright laws.

Permission to print, reproduce, and/or distribute printed or electronic versions of this document is hereby granted provided such reproduction and/or distribution is done without financial gain and is done for the entirety of this document without alteration. Digital copies (PDF format) may be downloaded (free of charge) at <https://www.rpblevins.com/>

Permission to use excerpts from this document is also granted provided that full attribution is given.

All Other Rights Reserved.

Contributors

A number of people have contributed, both directly and in the form of prior research, to this effort:

Alton Blevins is my 4th cousin, once removed and a descendant of David Blevins' son, John T. Blevins (1811-1857). Alton provided me with numerous bits of key information on the structure of David's family and we continue to exchange theories and opinions on the early family units.

Ronald L. Blevins is one of the most prolific and knowledgeable Blevins researcher active today. In 2006, Ron and I collaborated on a joint discussion paper on the Blevins "Cluster" of Rhea and Meigs Counties, Tennessee based on the research of Sarah Blevins Jones.

Bettye J. Broyles was my 4th cousin, once removed and a descendant of David Blevins' daughter, Mary Blevins Taylor (1807-1887). Bettye served for many years as the official historian for Rhea County. Although I was unsuccessful in my early attempts to make direct contact with Bettye, her many publications have provided invaluable information. Bettye passed away in early 2011.

Dorothy (Dee) Howell Carroll is my 5th cousin once removed. She is a descendant of Hardin Blevins' son, John Wilson Blevins (1806-1887). Dee provided copies of her own family data sheets and several old family documents including information from the family bibles of John Wilson Blevins and David Crockett Blevins (1839-1922). She obtained much of her family information from discussions she had with her cousin, Bessie Blevins Howell (1885-1977) who had obtained her own family knowledge from her grandmother, Ruth Vance Blevins (1831-1915). Dee also obtained and verified family traditions and information from her Aunt, Susan "Davie Crockett" Blevins (1876-1976).

Joyce Gass Edmondson is my 4th cousin, once removed and a descendant of David Blevins' son, James Blevins (1802-1849). She graciously gave me a guided tour of Meigs County in April 2007 and provided me with a great deal of information and insight. Joyce's knowledge base comes from both original records research and from discussions she had with her grandaunt Bonnie Blevins (1889- after 1946) in the mid-1940s.

Sarah (Sally) Blevins Jones (1906-1994) was my 3rd cousin, twice removed and a descendant of both David Blevins' daughter, Mary Blevins Taylor (1807-1887) and Hardin Blevins' son, Thomas Vance Blevins (1817-1867). Sarah passed away in 1994 but I was able to obtain copies of most of her notes and documents. I have concluded that although Sarah did a lot of very good work, she made many errors relative to family structure and history. Sarah claimed to have obtained much of her family information from discussions she had with her grandmother, Amanda Thomas Taylor (1846-1933), with whom she spend much of her childhood.

James Donald Thompson, Jr. is my 3rd cousin and, like me, is a descendant of David Blevins' son, Hugh T. Blevins (1800-1836). Jim is a passionate researcher and we have exchanged findings and theories for many years.

Contents

	Page
Introduction	1
The Parents of David and Hardin Blevins	3
The Earliest David and Hardin Records	5
The Anecdotal Evidence	9
The Rhea and Meigs County Records	13
The Journal of John Wilson Blevins	19
The Children of David Blevins	21
The Children of Hardin Blevins	27
Probable Relatives of David and Hardin Blevins	31

The Blevins Men of the Hiwassee

Introduction

In 1819, the Federal Government concluded the Hiwassee Land Purchase from the Cherokee Nation. Part of the new Hiwassee District was organized into McMinn County, Tennessee and the balance was added to Rhea County, Tennessee. The portion added to Rhea was south and east of the Tennessee River and was organized as Meigs County in 1836. The Hiwassee Purchase started a migration of settlers into this newly opened land.

By 1821, my 4th great-grandfather, David Blevins, arrived in the Hiwassee District, settling in what is now Meigs County. By 1825, he was joined by his younger brother, Hardin Blevins. This discussion primarily covers David and Hardin Blevins but includes, in varying degrees of depth, five other early Blevins men who settled in the Hiwassee District during the 1820s: William, Moses, Isaac, Allen, and Abraham Blevins. These five men were almost certainly close relatives of David and Hardin and a wealth of information tie all seven to northeastern Tennessee, and most to Sullivan County, prior to their move to the Hiwassee.

David Blevins and (Colonel) William Blevins are the only two Blevins men originally listed in the book *First Families of Tennessee*. This book was published in 2000 by the East Tennessee Historical Society as a registry of people proven to have settled in Tennessee prior to its admission to the Union in 1796. This registry is far from complete as it only includes those early settlers for whom proof of eligibility was provided by about 12,000 living descendants. The registry has grown since it was first published as applications for inclusion are still being submitted and processed.

In April of 2007, I filed the necessary paperwork to have myself listed as a descendant of David in the *First Families of Tennessee* registry. On June 15, 2007, the East Tennessee Historical Society issued Certificate #14465 to me.

My grandfather, Earl Vincent Blevins, Sr. (1896-1964), was born in Graysville, Rhea County, Tennessee. His father, Hugh Looney Blevins (1862-1945), was born in Dayton, Rhea County. His father, Samuel Looney Blevins (1832-1909), was born outside of Decatur, Meigs County. Although his father, Hugh T. Blevins (1800-1836), was probably born in Sullivan County, he died in what is now Meigs County as did his father, David Blevins (~1775-1830). I obviously have a deep personal connection to this part of the county as I am proud to be a descendant of the first known Blevins man of the Hiwassee.

The Parents of David and Hardin Blevins

Family and local traditions have long held that the father of David and Hardin was named James. As will be discussed later, the first real evidence supporting this tradition was the discovery of the 1913 journal of John Wilson Blevins, a proven grandson of Hardin.

David and Hardin Blevins had proven roots in Sullivan County, Tennessee. The only man named James Blevins from that area who was old enough to have been their father was the James Blevins who settled on the north side of the Holston River in the early 1770s. Genetic tests on two proven descendants of David were found to exhibit two Y-DNA haplotype mutations at the exact same markers as were found among (and *only* among) descendants of two other members of the north-of-Holston Blevins clan (see *The Blevins Men of the Holston - Expanded and Revised Edition*, April 15, 2020, Robert P. Blevins).

In the 1980s, researcher Sarah Blevins Jones posited that the true father was the James Blevins of Grayson County, Virginia who was the proven father of the man known as "Orator" John Blevins (~1760-1816). Jones made her conclusion based on the naming conventions found within Orator John's family and the family of his wife, Catherine Cox (1770-1843). A Y-DNA test on a proven direct descendant of Orator John, however, found none of the mutations that characterize the north-of-Holston, Sullivan County, Tennessee Blevins clan.

I believe that the traditions, the John Wilson Journal (discussed later), and the Y-DNA evidence proves that the James Blevins (~1744~1804) who settled in what is now Sullivan County, Tennessee in the early 1770s was the father of David and Hardin Blevins.

The mother of David and Hardin is unknown. A deeply rooted tradition has held that her name was Margaret Hardin but that hypothesis has never been supported by documentation of any kind.

As discussed above, researcher Sarah Blevins Jones not only believed the father, James Blevins, was from Grayson County, VA, she also believed his wife's surname was Hardin. I believe that she, in fact, *originated* the theory that David's and Hardin's mother was a Hardin. In an undated, handwritten document, Sarah wrote (emphasis added):

"James Blevins, born ca. 1740, died 1801, is rather hard to put on paper. **We do not know the family name of his wife but believe that she was a Miss Hardin.** Reason? In those days it was usual to name children after their parent's family name. James married ca. 1760."

In a separate undated, typed document, Sarah wrote:

“James Blevins was born ca. 1740, died 1806 in Grayson Co. VA. **The name of his wife is not known, but we believe she was a Hardin** because the name “Hardin” is used as Christian name for all the generations we have found.”

Sarah may or may not have known that there was at least one Hardin family living in Grayson County, Virginia at the time and that there were some minor connections between the Blevins and Hardin families in the area. A woman named Mary Hardin, for example, was a buyer at the 1834 Grayson County estate sale of Thomas Jefferson Blevins (~1805-1834 and a son of “Orator” John). It is also *possible* that Mary “Polly” (Isom) Blevins, the widow of Dillon Blevins (1789-1816 and another son of “Orator” John), was remarried to a man named William Hardin.

Sarah’s “Hardin” theory is interesting but it seems to have been based solely on the use of the given name Hardin. It is also possible that the source of the name Hardin was a local, contemporary luminary named Colonel Joseph Hardin. Colonel Hardin was a Revolutionary War Soldier, a politician within the failed State of Franklin, and the namesake for Hardin County, Tennessee.

Sarah never used the given name “Margaret” for this Hardin woman and I have not been able to identify the original source of this identification. I *suspect* that the name Margaret was “assumed” by some other researcher based on the fact that Hardin named his first daughter Margaret. To my knowledge, no one has ever proven that a woman named Margaret Hardin lived in the relevant area and timeframe.

It should be noted that a 7- to 12 -year span exists between the births of David and Hardin and the births of James' other probable or possible children. This gap could represent a period in which other, unknown children were born or it could suggest that James' first wife (the mother of David and Hardin) died sometime after Hardin's birth and that James later remarried.

The Earliest David and Hardin Records

According to census records, David Blevins was born sometime between 1771 and 1780. Most researchers believe he was born about 1775 but no proof of this birth year has been found. Some researchers claim that David's middle initial was "M." but there are no known records to substantiate this assertion. David *did* have a grandson named David M. Blevins (1833-1911).

According to census records, Hardin Blevins was born sometime between 1777 and 1780. Researcher Dorothy Howell Carroll reports that the family bible of David Crockett Blevins (1839-1922 and a grandson of Hardin) lists Hardin's date of birth as December 8, 1777. Some researchers contend that his full name was Argile (or Argyle) Hardin but every known record lists his name as simply "Hardin" Hardin *did* have a grandson named Argile Hardin Blevins (1842-1912) and a great-grandson named Argyle Hardin Blevins (1909-1982).

David and Hardin were almost certainly born in what is now Sullivan County, Tennessee. To date, I have found no records on David or Hardin prior to 1800 but Hardin indicated in the 1850 census that he had been born in (what is now) Tennessee.

With the exception of land records and some tax lists, all of the early official records of Sullivan County were lost when the Blountville Courthouse was burned during the Civil War. Many records from Washington County, VA (Sullivan County's predecessor) were also lost to fire during the Civil War. These losses include that county's court minute book for the period 1787-1819.

Apparently, neither David nor Hardin owned land in Sullivan but there is a great deal of circumstantial evidence that shows Sullivan County roots. The earliest of this evidence is around 1802 when David's son James was born. James specifically claimed to have been born in Sullivan County.

In about 1799 or 1800, David married Sarah Torbett (1776-1855) and it is *believed* that this marriage took place in Sullivan County, Tennessee. According to the 1850 census, Sarah had been born in South Carolina. Apparently, her family moved to Sullivan County when she was still a child. Some references spell the family name as "Torbet" or "Torbit".

The journal of Josiah Torbett, written shortly before his death in 1911, contains the following statement about his Aunt Sarah Torbett:

"Sarah married a man named Blevins and they moved later to the Cherokee purchase in what was later Carolina, where they raised a large and well to do family, one of which was a captain in the Confederate army and visited in the old home "Sunnyside" after I was grown and married."

Josiah Torbett's journal entry contains several obvious errors. The portion of the Cherokee (Hiwassee) purchase in question was in Tennessee, not in "Carolina" and

none of David and Sarah's sons served in the Confederate army (several of their grandsons did).

Several of David and Sarah's children and grandchildren used the middle initial "T", which most researchers believe stood for Torbett. One grandson was named Hugh Torbett Blevins (~1838~1895) and the 1926 funeral record of another grandson listed his name as Hugh Torbet Vernon Blevins (1833-1926). A great-grandson was named Torbet M. Blevins (1875-?).

Hardin Blevins married Elizabeth Vance sometime between 1801 and 1805 and this marriage is also *believed* to have occurred in Sullivan County. According to later census records, Elizabeth was born about 1780 in Tennessee. According to researcher Dorothy Howell Carroll, Elizabeth was born May 28, 1780 to John and Sarah (Marquis) Vance. According to other researchers, Elizabeth was born in 1784 to James and Margaret (Reneau) Vance. At least four of Hardin's descendants were given the middle name "Vance".

Hardin's name was on the 1806 Washington County, Virginia Personal Property Tax (Lower District) list, which showed that he owned 3 horses. This same list included John Vance, James Vance, and 2 men named Samuel Vance.

According to *Record of Commissions of Officers in the Tennessee Militia, 1796-1811*, compiled by Mrs. John Trotwood Moore, David Blevins was commissioned a Lieutenant in the 2nd Regiment of the Sullivan County, Tennessee Militia on October 2, 1809.

David and Hardin next appeared with their wives and children in the 1810 Washington County, Virginia census. Washington County, VA is just north of Sullivan County, TN. A James Vance and a Samuel Vance - both aged 45 and over - were also listed on this 1810 census.

That census listed both David and his wife as being between 26 and 44 years of age. David's household included one boy under the age of 10, one boy between 10 and 15 years old, and 2 girls under the age of 10. The boy under the age of 10 was probably James and the boy aged between 10 and 15 years was probably Hugh, my 3rd great-grandfather. The two young girls were probably Mary and Susan.

Hardin and his wife were shown in the 1810 census as being between 26 and 44 years old and living with two boys and a girl, all under the age of 10. The young girl was probably Margaret and the young boys were probably John and Moses.

David Blevins also appeared in 1810 as a member of the Washington County, VA Militia in Captain Robert Edmondson's Company, 1st Battalion of the 105th Regiment.

By 1812, Hardin had apparently returned to Sullivan County. His name appeared on that county's 1812 tax list, as did the name "Ditlow" Blevins. There are no known later records of a Ditlow Blevins and many researchers believe that Ditlow was actually

David. I believe that "Ditlow" was simply a misreading and transcription of a poorly written "Dillon". Moses Blevins was also on this 1812 tax list. This Moses Blevins was probably the Moses Blevins, Sr. who was born between 1784 and 1884 and is covered in more detail later.

David may have bypassed Sullivan County and gone straight to Carter County. According to the book *Carter County Minutes: Vol. 2, 1819-1820*, David Blevins served on Carter County, TN juries in February, August, and November of 1819. Moses Blevins also appeared in the Carter County Court records on February 16, 1820 in a case entitled *Moses Blevins for George Keyes and co. vs. Thomas W. White*.

The Anecdotal Evidence

According to researcher Dorothy Howell Carroll, descendants of Hardin Blevins have passed down several interesting “legends” or traditions about the family. Most of these traditions have been traced back to Ruth Vance Blevins (1831-1915), a granddaughter of Hardin.

The first tradition is that Hardin’s family had once settled in Buncombe County, North Carolina. A group of Blevins men were known to have been in Burke County, NC by 1790 and in Buncombe County from 1792 to about 1800. (Buncombe County was formed from Burke County in 1792.) After 1800, most of this group moved to Wayne County, KY and elsewhere. This group was almost certainly in Washington County, NC (now Unicoi County, TN) in 1789 and had probably come from what is present-day Grayson County, VA.

If the Buncombe tradition is true, it *could* suggest that Hardin (and David) were among the progeny of this Grayson County group. Y-DNA tests, however, have revealed clear differences between descendants of the Grayson-Buncombe clan and descendants of David Blevins (as of this writing, no Y-DNA tests have been performed on a direct male descendant of Hardin). The Buncombe tradition could simply mean that Hardin settled briefly in North Carolina prior to rejoining David in Tennessee and that this movement was unrelated to any other Blevins-family movements.

The second tradition is that Hardin’s family had been Loyalists during the American Revolution. According to tradition, Elizabeth Vance’s family disowned her for marrying into a Loyalist family. It is true that, during the Revolution, Blevins families aligned on all sides; some were Patriots, some were Loyalists, some switched sides depending upon circumstances, and some just attempted to stay out of the whole affair.

The Buncombe County, NC group discussed above, for example, included several known Loyalists who were originally from Grayson County, VA. The previously mentioned "Orator" John Blevins was also known as "Tory" John Blevins as he actually served as a sergeant in the British Army during the Revolution.

In contrast to this Loyalist activity, two of the early Blevins men from Sullivan County, TN - Henry and Abraham Blevins - were American soldiers who both filed for Revolutionary War pensions. Henry (1752-1847) and Abraham (1755- after 1830) Blevins were almost certainly Hardin's (and David's) uncles. The man known as John Blevins the Elder (~1718- after 1785), who was almost certainly David and Hardin's grandfather, appeared on the payroll records of John Shelby's Company of Militia stationed on the Frontiers of Fincastle County under the command of Colonel William Russell in 1776.

The tradition that Hardin came from a Loyalist family *could* be based on one additional 1776 Militia record. On June 11, 1776, the Fincastle County (Virginia) Committee of Safety ordered:

“...that **William Blevins, James Blevins** and **John Blevins** be summoned to appear at Cap. Evan Shelbies [sic] on Saturday the 22nd of this month to answer the following complaint. That they have refused to bear arms or muster in Cap. John Shelby's Company of Militia agreeable to the ordinance of Convention by reason of their attachment to the Enemies of American Liberty and the Correspondence with Tories and the Cherokee Nation.”

The James Blevins mentioned in the above order was almost certainly David's and Hardin's father and the William and John Blevins were almost certainly uncles. At the time of this order - and of the above-mentioned 1776 payroll record - all of the men involved were living in what is now Sullivan County, TN. (See *The Blevins Men of the Holston - Expanded and Revised Edition*, April 15, 2020, Robert P. Blevins for more details.)

It should also be noted that at the time of this order, a legal battle was underway between these Blevins men and the above-mentioned John Shelby over the ownership of land. Animosity between the Blevins and Shelby families could have been a contributing factor in both the failure of the Blevins men to muster and the harsh language used in the order to appear before Evan Shelby (John Shelby's brother).

A third tradition within Hardin's family is attributed to a man named Starling Hughes. Starling Hughes was born about 1825, was one of the founders of the Meigs County Bank, and was reportedly married to one of Hardin's granddaughters. Hughes is quoted as saying (date unknown):

“The Blevins family floated down the Holston and French Broad rivers on flatboats, fiddling, dancing and juggling and they have been at it ever since.”

A contrast to this statement comes from researcher Joyce Edmondson who has written:

“I have been told that David Blevins' family were “straight laced” and that Hardin's family were the fun lovers”.

Hughes' mention of both the Holston and French Broad is interesting. The confluence of these two rivers occurs near Knoxville and today marks the headwaters of the Tennessee River. As such, it would seem impossible to float down *both* the Holston and French Broad without coming from two *different* directions. (Implying two different migrations). Through most of the 19th century, however, the Tennessee River “officially” started 51 miles downstream of Knoxville near Lenoir City, TN (at the mouth of the Little Tennessee River). The 51 miles of river between Knoxville and Lenoir City was considered to have been a continuation of the Holston River. As such, it was possible, at the time, to travel down both the French Broad and the Holston in the same trip.

The phrase “down the French Broad” could suggest a journey originating in northeast Tennessee (southern Carter, Washington, or Cocke Counties) or as far away as

Buncombe County, NC. The phrase “down the Holston” could (at the time) suggest a continuation of the journey “down the French Broad” or it could suggest a separate journey originating in Washington County, VA or in Sullivan or northern Carter Counties.

We will probably never know if Starling Hughes was speaking of one or two journeys but the French Broad mention *could* represent a confirmation of the Buncombe County, NC tradition within Hardin’s family. Conversely, it could represent the *source* of this tradition. Hardin is *believed* to have been in Sullivan County, TN around 1800. He is *known* to have been in Washington County, VA in 1806 and 1810 and in Sullivan County, TN in 1812. His alleged settlement in Buncombe County *probably* occurred (if at all) sometime in the 13 years between 1812 and his arrival in Rhea County by 1825. There are no known records of Hardin’s whereabouts during this 13-year period. In any event, Hardin didn’t “float” into Rhea County until about 1825.

The Rhea and Meigs County Records

Sarah Blevins Jones wrote in 1981:

“I believe they [David and Sarah (Torbett) Blevins] settled in that part of Roane County, which later became Rhea County and that they never lived in Meigs County. At least I have found nothing about their ever having lived there.”

Rhea County was created out of Roane County in 1809, which predates David’s known 1810 presence in Washington County, VA. As such, Jones’ reference to Roane County is misleading at best. Jones never made reference to the 1810 Washington County, VA census and she was *probably* unaware of David and Hardin’s presence there. She *was* aware of David’s 1819 presence in Carter County, however, which makes her Roane County assertion even more curious.

The Shirley Charlton book *Hiwassee Heritage* contains the following passage on page 75:

“David [Blevins] served in the Sullivan County militia from 1807 to 1811, and on 2 October 1809, was commissioned lieutenant of the Second Regiment. He and his brother, Hardin, came down the Tennessee River to Rhea County by 1821. David lived on the north side of the river, while Hardin’s land was in the Hiwassee District and fell into Meigs County on its formation in 1836.”

Not only was David listed in the 1810 Washington County, VA census, he was included on the 1810 militia roster for Washington County, VA. The dates cited above (1807-1811) are, therefore, clearly incorrect. The earliest area records do indeed tie David to Rhea County by 1821 but Hardin didn’t appear in the area records until 1825. As such, the assertion that David and Hardin arrived together in 1821 is almost certainly incorrect.

Charlton’s statement that David lived “on the north side of the river” appears to confirm Jones’ belief that David never lived in present-day Meigs County. It is likely, however, that Charlton was not *confirming*, but was instead *repeating* Jones’ opinion as to where David actually settled. (Charlton cites “Interview with Sara Blevins Jones” as one of her Blevins-information sources for the book.)

No Meigs County records about David have ever been found because he died prior to the 1836 formation of Meigs County. All of the available evidence, however, indicates that he lived in that part of Rhea County that later became Meigs County. An 1822 court order, for example, specified that as an appointed road overseer, David was to have among his workers “all the hands on that fork of Goodfield Creek the road ascends.” Goodfield Creek is in present-day Meigs County.

It is a matter of record that David was in the area by 1821 as his name was included on a list of unclaimed letters in the Washington, TN post office on July 10, 1821. Washington was a small village near the banks of the Tennessee River that served as the original seat of government for Rhea County.

David's name first appeared in the Rhea County Court records in August 1821 relative to roadwork and his name first appeared on the Rhea County tax list in 1822 (Captain Smith's Company). David was the only Blevins included on the 1822 and 1823 tax lists but the 1824 list included David and Allen Blevins in Captain Smith's Company, and Abraham Blevins in Captain Mee's Company. Allen and Abraham Blevins are discussed in more detail later under the heading "Probable Relatives of David and Hardin Blevins".

On March 30, 1824 (registered 30 Dec 1825 in Rhea Deed Book E), David Blevins sold what appeared to have been a major part of his holdings to James Blevins (almost certainly his son) for \$420. The sale included "*Sundry property: 2 head of horses and 18 head of cattle, 50 head of hogs and 5 feather beds and furniture and dresser furniture, 1 crib of corn and all the pots and ovens belonging to said house*". This sale may have been an attempt by David to protect assets from impending legal actions.

According to the 1940 booklet "*The Records of Rhea*" by T. J. Campbell:

"A suit was filed at Washington by Lewis Ross, brother of the famous Cherokee chief, against David Blevins, August 5, 1824."

Lewis Ross was one of the original residents of the Hiwassee District and was one of many Cherokee who had elected to stay after the land had been transferred to the "whites". In August of 1820, a 640-acre tract of land was "reserved" for him on the north side of the Hiwassee River. An early map of the area refers to this tract as the "Lewis Ross Reservation".

The final disposition of the above-mentioned lawsuit is unknown and no official Rhea County records of this suit have been found to date.

Hardin's name first appeared on the 1825 county tax list along with David and Moses Blevins in Captain Miller's Company. The 1825 tax list placed Allen Blevins in Captain Smith's Company. The 1825 appearance of Moses Blevins may suggest that he and Hardin arrived at about the same time.

There is some controversy relative to the 1826 Rhea County tax lists. My primary source for these old tax records is the 1989 book *Rhea County Tax Lists 1819-1829*, transcribed by Bettye J. Broyles. According to Broyles, Hardin did not appear on any extant 1826 tax list but David was included under Captain Miller's Company. Also according to Broyles, Moses, Allen, and William Blevins appeared on the 1826 list for Captain Cooley's Company.

According to the book *Hiwassee Heritage*, by Shirley Charlton, Hardin Blevins also appeared on Captain Miller's 1826 tax list and was taxed that year for 40 acres of land. According to Broyles, Hardin was first taxed on 440 acres of land in 1828. In one passage, Charlton stated that Moses Blevins was on Miller's 1826 tax list (with David and Hardin) but in another passage she appeared to contradict herself by stating that

“William Blevins was taxed in the same district as Allen and Moses Blevins in 1826...”. The Broyles information agrees with Charlton’s latter statement.

Finally, Charlton stated that Hugh Blevins was taxed in 1826 on 320 acres but she did not identify his Company. There is a Rhea County court record associating Hugh Blevins with 320 acres of land, but that record is from 1828 (not 1826) and specifically mentioned that Hugh was not taxed on this land. I consider the 1826 tax information reported by Charlton to be highly suspect.

The only Blevins men listed on the 1827 tax lists were Moses, Allen, John W., and Hugh; all within Captain Lusk’s Company. Both David and Hardin were presumably over the age of 50 by 1827 and were, therefore, no longer subject to poll taxes.

In August of 1827, a man named Anthony Street filed a Rhea County lawsuit against David and Isaac Blevins for recovery of \$47.37. In November of 1827, a man named William Renfro filed another lawsuit against David, Isaac, and William Blevins. The Renfro case was dropped but the Street case was continued. Caswell Hughes and Allen Blevins provided securities for the appearance of Isaac Blevins at a subsequent court date. William and Isaac Blevins are discussed in more detail later under the heading “Probable Relatives of David and Hardin Blevins”. In May of 1828, Anthony Street filed another lawsuit, this time against David and John W. Blevins. John W. Blevins was almost certainly Hardin’s son.

In August of 1828, David filed a schedule of his property with the Clerk of the Court and was administered “the oath of insolvency”. David’s bankruptcy resulted in his being dismissed from the two pending lawsuits. The records do not show the final disposition of the lawsuits against Isaac and John W. Blevins.

All of the Blevins men on the 1822 to 1827 lists had been taxed for 1 white poll each, but none had been taxed for black polls or for land, suggesting that the early Rhea County Blevins men were neither slave nor land holders.

In 1828, James Blevins in Captain Farmer’s Company was taxed for 1 white poll plus 400 acres of land. Hugh T. Blevins appeared on the same list (one white poll) but was not taxed for land. Another 1828 tax list was for Captain Blevins’ Company. It is unclear which Blevins man headed this Company but the list included William Blevins (no land), Moses Blevins (no land), Allen Blevins (160 acres), John W. Blevins (160 acres), and Hardin Blevins (440 acres). Each of these men was taxed for 1 white poll except for Hardin who was assessed no poll tax. Again, both David and Hardin were presumably over the age of 50 by 1828 and were therefore no longer subject to poll taxes.

In 1829, all of the listed Blevins men were in Captain Blevins’ Company. David Blevins reappeared on this list with 320 acres and 1 white poll. In all probability, the single poll listed for David applied to a son living with him at the time and not to David himself. Hugh T. Blevins, William Blevins, and John W. Blevins were taxed for 1 white poll each

but none had land. Allen and Moses Blevins were each taxed for 1 white poll and 160 acres and James Blevins was taxed for 1 white poll and 320 acres. Hardin was again taxed for 440 acres but again had no poll tax.

In February 1829, Thomas and Abraham Cox sued Moses Blevins for \$26.52. The court ordered that Moses' land (160 acres) be sold to satisfy the debt and all costs. Moses apparently left Rhea County soon thereafter.

It is unknown how or when the different Blevins men originally acquired their lands in what is now Meigs County. The family tradition is that David and others bought land in 1821 but there are no records that confirm this tradition. The early Rhea County Deed Books do not record the original titles to these lands and they were presumably first recorded in the Hiwassee District Land Office entry records in Knoxville or Athens, TN.

About 66% of these original records have been lost but it is known that the Land Offices recorded two types of entries: general and occupation. Because the first land tax record for a Blevins man didn't appear until 1828, it is reasonable to assume the Blevins men fell under early "occupation" entries meaning the land they lived on wasn't actually purchased until several years after their arrivals.

The only clue I have been able to find relative to Hiwassee land entries is from Rhea County Deed Book F. On September 30, 1835, James Blevins conveyed to William Ingle "18 acres in Hiwassee District for \$20". The deed specified "Tract granted by patent No. 719 (Entry No. 1763 dated 7 November 1825)".

The 1830 census shows David Blevins (listed as "Davin" Blevins) in Rhea County with his age between 50 and 59 years. Living with him at the time was one female aged between 50 and 59 (almost certainly his wife, Sarah), one girl between the age of 15 and 19 (probably Lucretia), and two unknown girls between the ages of 5 and 9.

The 1830 census shows Hardin Blevins in Rhea County with his age between 50 and 59 years. Also living in the household were two males aged 10 to 14 (probably Phillip and Thomas), one male aged 15 to 19 (probably Samuel), and one male aged 20 to 29 (probably either John or Moses). The census also listed two unknown females under 5, one female aged 5 to 9 (probably Elizabeth), two females aged 10 to 14 (one was probably Catherine), and one female aged 40 to 49 (almost certainly his wife, Elizabeth).

Four other Blevins households appeared in the 1830 Rhea County census.

William Blevins (age 20 to 29) headed the third household, which included William's wife (age 20 to 29). The schedule also listed four children: three males and one female under the age of 5. Other sources on William's children imply that the census entries were reversed and should have shown three females and one male under the age of 5.

James Blevins (age 20 to 29) headed the fourth household, which included one male under the age of 5 (probably Alfred), one male aged 15 to 19 (probably James' brother, John), and two unknown females aged 5 to 9. No female old enough to have been a wife (Ruth) was listed. Also missing was James' first-born daughter, Beersheba, who would have been one year old at the time. It is possible that Ruth had taken her daughter north that year for a visit with her family in Sullivan County. James was one of David's sons.

Hugh T. Blevins (age 20 to 29) headed the fifth household, which included a female aged 20 to 29 (almost certainly his wife, Ann) and one male under the age of 5 (probably his son, Rodney). His listing in the 1830 census was under the name "H. T. Bevins". Hugh was one of David's sons.

Isaac Blevins (age 30 to 39) headed the sixth household. Also shown in the household was a female aged between 15 and 19 years (perhaps his wife, sister, or daughter) and another female aged between 60 and 69 years (perhaps his mother or mother-in-law). Researcher Alton Blevins has suggested that the female aged 15 to 19 *may* have been the Sarah Blevins (born about 1810) who later married Hardin's son Samuel Blevins. Isaac disappears from the area records after 1835.

The six Blevins households shown in the 1830 Rhea County census reveal several things. The households appear on schedule pages 373, 374, 375, and 376 indicating they were living in close proximity to one another.

There are also indications that the family groups may have been mixed. James' household included a male (aged 15 to 19) who was probably too old to be a son and two females (aged 5 to 9) too old to have been daughters. David's household included two females between the ages of 5 and 9 who were probably too young to have been daughters.

Hardin's household included three unknown females; one aged between 10 and 14 years and two under 5 years old. Researcher Alton Blevins has suggested that the unknown female aged 10 to 14 *may* have been the Sarah Blevins (born about 1816) who married Larkin Madden Stokes on February 2, 1836 in Rhea County.

Two of David's sons (Hugh and John T.) and two daughters (Mary and Susan) are missing from his 1830 household. Of David's missing children, all but John T. Blevins had married prior to 1830 and had established separate households. John T. was about 19 at the time and he probably represents the male aged 15 to 19 in James' household.

Two of Hardin's probable daughters (Margaret and Ruth) are missing from his 1830 household, as is one probable son (either John W. or Moses). Margaret was certainly married at the time and was probably in a separate household. The same is probably true for Ruth. John W. Blevins didn't marry until November of 1830 and Moses didn't

marry until about 1834 but clearly one of these men was living in a separate household or was out of the area in 1830.

David Blevins died intestate after the census was taken in 1830. His gravesite has not been located. In February 1831, Thomas Cox was appointed administrator of David's estate, "the widow having relinquished her rights to administer". Samuel Looney, Archibald Taylor, and William Ingle were appointed commissioners to "lay off a years provisions for the widow (Sarah) and children of David Blevins".

A sale was held later in the year and purchasers included at least two of David's sons: John T. and Hugh T. Blevins. William Blevins was also a purchaser. Hugh's father-in-law Samuel Looney, David's son-in-law Peach Taylor, and three other men including James Taylor, Wright Smith, and Thomas Cox were also listed as purchasers.

Between November 1829 and November 1833, the Rhea County Court minutes mention "Captain Blevins' Company" nine separate times. These mentions were made relative to the appointments of constables, common school commissioners, and tax enumerators within 14 (1829-1831) or 15 (1832-1833) different Companies. The 1828 and 1829 tax lists also mention Captain Blevins' Company. The first names of the various Captains were not recorded.

Hardin Blevins appeared several times in the Meigs County Court minutes between 1836 and 1843 relative to tax appeals and jury duty. On January 7, 1839, the Ranger of Meigs County took up a stray steer owned by Hardin.

Hardin also appeared on the 1840 and 1850 Meigs County, TN census and he probably died just before the 1860 census was taken. According to the 1860 United States Census Mortality Schedule he died of an "Affection of the Bowels" (sic) in May 1860 at the age of 82 in Meigs County. Hardin also died intestate and his son, John W. Blevins, was appointed Administrator of his estate.

A final tradition within Hardin's family is that he had stated that when he died, he wanted to be buried on the hill across from the house so he could still hear the family fiddling, dancing, and having a good time. Hardin's gravesite has not been located.

The Journal of John Wilson Blevins

John Wilson Blevins (1845-1930), a proven grandson of Hardin Blevins, served as a Private in the Meigs County Company I of the 5th Tennessee Cavalry during the American Civil War. [Note: *Hardin had a son named John Wilson Blevins (1806-1887) but the subject John Wilson was a son of Thomas Vance Blevins (1817-1867), another of Hardin's sons.*]

In May of 1913, a reunion of Confederate Veterans was held in Chattanooga, Tennessee and John Wilson Blevins traveled from his home in Yell County, Arkansas to attend. John keep a journal of sorts detailing this trip.

In 1999, researcher Carole Blevins Kessler (a descendant of John Wilson Blevins and the apparent owner of his journal) provided a partial journal transcription in her correspondence with researcher Ronald L. Blevins, who subsequently provided it to me.

Ms. Kessler wrote that a bank account book (originally blank) was used and inside the front cover was written:

J W Blevins
Memorandum
Of Trip to Reunion
Chattanooga, Tennessee
May 27-28-29 / 1913

Ms. Kessler further wrote " There is a page at the front of the book:"

Great Grandfather James Blevins' Family
Harden Blevins
Will A. Blevins
James Blevins
Isaac Blevins
All deceased

The above entry provides the most critical information; that Hardin's father was named James Blevins and that Hardin had at least three brothers. Strangely, John Wilson Blevins did not include David as a brother and instead listed a brother named James. A subsequent entry, however, clearly shows that he had misnamed David as "James":

Great Uncle James Blevins Family:
Lucrey Blevins Lillard
Pony Blevins Taylor
Susan Blevins Russell
James Blevins Rucolt
All deceased

As will be discussed later, the four children listed for "Great Uncle James Blevins" were all proven children of his granduncle David. David Blevins had died 15 years before John Wilson Blevins was born, so his mistake here is certainly forgivable. He also failed to list two of David's proven sons; Hugh T. and John T. Blevins. Hugh T.

Blevins (my 3rd GGF), died 9 years before John Wilson Blevins was born and his omission was understandable. John T. Blevins, however, lived in the area until 1857.

Ms. Kessler further wrote that "on one page he lists his father as Thos Blevins. On another page he lists:"

My Father Thos V Blevins' Brother Moses Blevins' Family:
Moses Blevins and Elizabeth Thomas Blevins
Cousin Juda A Blevins R
Cousin Harden Blevins Dead
Cousin Mosey Blevins Dead
Cousin Maranda Blevins Dead

The final transcription provided by Ms. Kessler reads:

Grandfather's Brother Will Blevins' Family In White County, Arkansas. Cousin Frank,
Cousin Will. Have never seen others.

Ms. Kessler also wrote that there were several other pages listing family structures but did not provide transcriptions of same. I have tried multiple times to make contact with her in the hopes of obtaining either a full journal transcription or photocopies of the full journal but have been unsuccessful in that regard.

John Wilson Blevins apparently made at least one more trip to Tennessee to attend a reunion. Researcher Sarah Blevins Jones wrote that when she was age 12, (about 1918), John Wilson Blevins came to her home in Decatur while attending the last Meigs-Rhea "Rebel Reunion". She wrote that she could remember his "big rebel yell".

The Children of David Blevins

Identifying David's children has posed a challenge for some researchers as exemplified by the following references.

In *The History of Rhea County, Tennessee Vol. I*, Bettye J. Broyles stated that she had seen a handwritten document (author unknown) that was found among some old papers. This handwritten document reportedly stated (emphasis added):

"**David Blevins, Sr.**, first Blevins I know of that came to this county from upper Tennessee, settled in what is now Meigs County. His children were **John, Jim, Hugh, Polly** (who married William Russell), Creasie [**Lucretia**] (who married a Thomas first and had two children, Sarah and Hugh, and then Capt. William Lillard--four children). John married a Darwin, Jim married Ruth Rockhold, Hugh married Ann Looney. Capt. William Lillard's children: Amanda, Myra, Mary, John."

Broyles also developed a book of abstracts titled *Rhea County, Tennessee, Wills, Inventories, Estate Settlements, and Guardian Reports 1810-1881*. In this book, Broyles added the following notation to her abstract of David Blevins' estate settlement (emphasis added):

Note – **David Blevins** died intestate late in 1830 leaving widow, Sarah (Torbett) Blevins, and the following children: **William, Hugh T** (wife was Anna B Looney, dau of Samuel), **Mary** (wife of Peach Taylor), **Susan** (wife of Wm S Russell), **John T** (wife was Jane A. Darwin), **Lucretia** (wife of Henson W Thomas and 2nd William W Lillard, and possibly **Sarah** (wife of Samuel Blevins).

Both references agree that David had sons named Hugh and John but they disagree on the name of a third son. The first reference names Jim (James) Blevins, married to Ruth Rockhold whereas the second names William Blevins. A fair amount of documentation is available on both James and William Blevins and it is clear that they were closely related but they were certainly not brothers. (The best information on both men place their dates-of-birth 7 days apart.) A wealth of evidence has convinced me that James was David's son.

Both references agree that David had a daughter named Lucretia. Both references also agree that David had a daughter who married William Russell but one gives her name as Polly and the other as Susan. Census records show that Susan was the wife of William S. Russell. In all probability, "Polly" Blevins was Mary Blevins (a daughter of David) who married Peach Taylor. The second reference names Sarah as a *possible* daughter of David but other researchers (myself included) believe Sarah Blevins was more likely the daughter or sister of Isaac Blevins.

Following is what I believe to be a complete list of the children of David and Sarah Torbett Blevins.

Hugh T. Blevins (my 3rd GGF) (1800-1836) was probably born in Sullivan County, TN in early 1800. His middle initial "T" *probably* stood for "Torbett", his mother's family name.

Many researchers place Hugh's birth in 1805 but other evidence implies an 1800 date of birth. The 1810 Washington County, VA census schedule for his father (David Blevins) lists two young boys in the household. One was under 10 years of age and the other was between 10 and 15 years of age. Hugh's brother James was certainly born between 1802 and 1805 so James would have been the boy under 10. Hugh must have been the other child and that would place his birth at sometime between 1795 and 1800. In the 1830 Rhea County census, Hugh's age was listed as being between 20 and 29 years. This age would place his date of birth no *earlier* than 1800.

Hugh first appeared on the Rhea County tax list in 1827, which may suggest he was a later arrival to the Hiwassee District. He witnessed a deed of conveyance from Joseph M. Daniel to Thomas Cox on March 10, 1827 and he appeared in the May 1827 County Court records relative to roadwork.

In January 1828 he sold 160 acres of Hiwassee District land to Allen Blevins for \$100 but there is no record extant as to when or how he acquired this land. In February of 1828, the above 160 acres and another tract of 160 acres were removed from Hugh's name on the Rhea County tax lists. Hugh's name appeared on the Rhea County tax lists in 1828 and 1829, but he was not taxed for land during these years. Hugh also served on Rhea County juries in 1828 and 1829.

On April 5, 1828 Hugh married Anna Burton Looney (1801-1861) in what was then Rhea County (now Meigs County). The marriage was performed by Hugh's brother-in-law, Peach Taylor who was a Justice of the Peace and Thomas Cox was Hugh's Best Man. Ann was the daughter of Samuel Looney, Jr. (~1778-1874) and Sarah Evan Childress (~1778-1862).

Hugh appears in the 1830 Rhea County census as H. T. "Bevins". That schedule shows both he and his wife were between 20 and 30 years of age and also included a son (probably Rodney) under the age of 5.

On May 2, 1831 Hugh was appointed a Constable of Rhea County and on November 10, 1831, he was indicted on a charge of extortion. He was acquitted of that charge on February 9, 1832. Hugh stood as a bondsman for Jesse Combs in 1832. Hugh T. Blevins is listed on Captain John W. Smith's 1832 Rhea County tax list with 80 acres of land and one white poll.

Hugh was once again appointed a Rhea County Constable on May 3, 1833. On June 3, 1834, Hugh sold two slaves at auction to satisfy writs issued against William F. Seay (Rhea County Deed Book F). Rhea Court records also show this sale when, on August 5, 1834, Hugh recorded a bill of sale to McCorkle, Alison, & Co. for a Negro woman named Ann and a Negro boy named Jerry.

The name Hugh T. Blevins appeared on a January 15, 1834 list of unclaimed letters at Washington Tennessee. In 1835, Hugh stood as a bondsman for Jesse McCarter. On March 26, 1835, Hugh T. Blevins and James Blevins were listed as prosecution witnesses in the grand larceny case of State v William McKerler.

In 1836, Meigs County was created from the eastern third of Rhea County and Hugh was elected or appointed a Meigs County Constable. In late July 1836, Hugh died and the family tradition is that he was killed in the performance of his constable duties. Hugh's gravesite has not been located.

The Meigs County Court records of August 1, 1836 mention that:

William S. Russell admitted to administer on the estate of Hugh T. Blevins, dec'd.; bond with Samuel Looney, Joseph McCorkle, and James Blevins, his securities. Ann B. Blevins, Relick and Widow of the said dec'd., relinquished her right to administer. Samuel McDaniel, John Taff, and Thomas Eaves to lay off the widow Blevins dower for one years provisions.

Anna died in 1861 in Meigs County. She was living with her father, Samuel Looney, at the time of her death.

Researcher James Donald Thompson and I are both descendants of Hugh T. Blevins.

Hugh and Ann had at least five children:

1. Rodney Evan Looney Blevins (1829-1863)
2. Melissa Flovilla Blevins (1830-1877)
3. Samuel Looney Blevins (1832-1909)
4. Hugh Torbet Vernon Blevins (1833-1926)
5. John H. Blevins (1835- after 1850)

James (B. or P.) Blevins (1802-1849) was almost certainly born in Sullivan County in about 1802. He married Ruth Rockhold (1808-1891) on December 27, 1827 in Rhea County. Peach Taylor was the officiating Justice of the Peace and Samuel Igo was the Best Man.

James and several of his children are featured in *Goodspeed's History of Tennessee* (originally published in 1886) as being early settlers and prominent citizens of Meigs and Rhea Counties. Goodspeed also referred to James and his wife as "natives of Sullivan County." According to the book *Tennessee Cousins*, James and his wife Ruth were "*both from old Sullivan families*".

James represents a perfect example of how birth and death dates become confused in the historical records. According to one Goodspeed reference, James was born on January 22, 1802 and died February 10, 1849. According to a second Goodspeed reference, he was born in 1803 and died in 1845. According to a Civil War questionnaire completed by his son William, James was born in 1805 and died at the age of 48 (1853). According to his headstone, James died February 10, 1849 at the age of 45, which would place his birth in 1804 or 1805.

As this is almost certainly the same James who purchased David's holdings on March 30, 1824, he had to have been born prior to April 1803.

According to the diary of Augustine F. Shannon (a mid-19th century circuit rider for the Methodist Church) who attended his funeral on February 3, 1849, James died on February 1. Shannon's diary said of James: "...*this poor man died without religion....the worst of all is, he was a stiller [distiller] of spirits...*" Shannon's diary also makes mention of a J. W. Blevins (probably John Wilson Blevins, one of Hardin's sons) and another J. Blevins (probably John T. Blevins, one of David's sons).

According to researcher Sarah Blevins Jones, James lived in Sullivan County until after about 1840 and later settled in the Goodfield community in Meigs. However, James appears in the Rhea County Court minutes as early as 1824 and his marriage to Ruth Rockhold is documented as being performed in Rhea County on December 26, 1827.

James was appointed a Rhea County Justice of the Peace by the Tennessee legislature in November 1833. He was elected a Justice of the County in March 1836 in the first election following the formation of Meigs County and he served on the commission that founded the county seat Decatur. In 1836, he purchased lot #42 in the new City of Decatur. According to researcher Alton Blevins, his deed for this lot was recorded under the name James B. Blevins. According to researcher Joyce Edmondson (who is a direct descendant), James' middle name was "Polk".

Researcher Sarah Blevins Jones contended that both David and Hardin had sons named James. She erroneously assigned this James Blevins (married to Ruth Rockhold) as a son of Hardin. Jones named a James H. Blevins, married to a woman named Jane H. Gillespie, as a son of David. A woman named Jane H. Gillespie does appear in the 1840 Rhea County will of George Gillespie in which he refers to her as his daughter, Jane H. Blain. There is no Blain in the 1830 Rhea census but there is a Blane on page 388: James H. Blane, aged 20-29 with a female aged 20-29, living near George Gillespie. I believe that Sarah mistakenly confused Blane with Blevins on the handwritten census schedule and that there never was a James H. Blevins.

James and Ruth had at least seven children:

1. Beersheba Stewart Blevins (1829-1903)
2. Alfred Carter Blevins (1830-1905)
3. William F. Blevins (1835-1925)
4. Hugh Torbett Blevins (~1838~1895)
5. Sarah A. Blevins (1840-1927)
6. Melissa D. Blevins (1844-1900)
7. James A. Blevins (1848-1857)

Mary F. "Polly" "Pony" Blevins was born June 10, 1807. On September 16, 1824 she married Peach Taylor (1801-1886). She died on July 18, 1887. Researchers Bettye J. Broyles and Sarah Blevins Jones both claimed Mary Blevins as an ancestor.

Mary and Peach had nine children, several of whom died in childhood:

1. Robert Taylor (1825-1830)
2. William Taylor (1827-1828)
3. Emily McDonald Taylor (1829-1845)
4. Mary Ann Taylor (1832-1888)
5. John Blevins Taylor (1834-1902)
6. Benjamin Franklin Taylor (1837-1862)
7. David Blevins Taylor (1839-1841)
8. James Osborne Taylor (1842-1895)
9. Amanda Thomas Taylor (1846-1933)

Susan Blevins was born June 10, 1809. On March 5, 1828 she married William S. Russell. She died on July 27, 1887.

Susan and William had twelve children:

1. John T. Russell (1829-1882)
2. David H. Russell (1831-?)
3. Felix Grundy Russell (1832-1899)
4. Susan C. Russell (1835-?)
5. Mary Elizabeth Russell (1842-1910)
6. Sarah R. Russell (1843-1882)
7. Peter Russell (~1846-?)
8. Nancy Russell (~1848-?)
9. Fatima Jane Russell (1850-1886)
10. Daniel Russell (~1851-?)
11. John Russell (~1853-?)
12. James Russell (~1857-?)

John T. Blevins was born in 1811. He first appeared in the extant record on August 6, 1832 relative to court-ordered road work. He was included on the 1833 Rhea County tax list (1 white poll, no property) for the first time, and on February 4, 1837, he purchased 160 acres in Meigs County from Joseph McCorkle. The land was near Lower Goodfield and was on a tributary of Goodfield Creek. His family lived there until 1861.

On November 15, 1838, John married Jane Adams Darwin (1818-1869), daughter of James Adams Darwin and Bethiah White Clements.

John was Common School Commissioner for District 3 in 1838. He was a Justice of the Meigs County Court in 1842-45 and Chairman of the Court in 1848-49 and in 1852. John was a co-founder and trustee of the Decatur Academy in 1846. The academy promoted "painting, music, and the fine Arts" and was considered one of the premier schools in eastern Tennessee for many years.

John T. Blevins died in late 1857. Family tradition holds that he was killed in a riverboat explosion and fire at Cottonport Landing while loading/unloading lumber. John was probably buried at Lower Goodfield Cemetery.

On November 2, 1857, James A. Darwin was appointed Administrator of the estate of John T. Blevins, deceased. James filed an inventory and account of the sale of property held at Cottonport on November 26, 1857, and a year's support was set aside for the widow and children. The sale account includes a list of lumber sold for about \$325.00. Also sold was a engine boiler (to H.M. Bales) for \$975.00. On April 25, 1859, an additional load of lumber was sold for \$34.27. On January 4, 1858, Jane A. Blevins (widow) filed a petition for dower (Jane vs. "Revananna", Byron, Peyton, Julia, Perry, and John Blevins). The Chancery Court Minutes of Apr 29, 1859, indicate that a lawsuit was brought by James A. Darwin (as Administrator) against Jane A. Blevins, widow, and heirs and creditors of John T. Blevins. Another law suit was filed by Joseph McCorkle against the same parties for unpaid land notes. Jane sold the 160 acres in Meigs County on January 5, 1861, to William Eaves. She returned to Rhea County, where she died in 1869. She is buried at the Pierce cemetery near Evansville, TN.

Researcher Alton Blevins is a descendant of John T. Blevins.

John and Jane had seven children:

1. Rivannah Blevins (1839-1918)
2. James Byron Blevins (1841-1908)
3. David Peyton Blevins (1848- after 1858)
4. Bethena Blevins (1849-1858)
5. Julia Blevins (1850-1924)
6. William Perry Blevins (1852- after 1858)
7. John Henry Blevins (1856-1929)

Lucretia F. (Creasie) Blevins was born July 15, 1813. She married Henson W. Thomas (1814-1839) on January 2, 1834. She was later married to William Wesley Lillard (1822-1882). She died on July 16, 1859.

Lucretia and Henson had two children:

1. Sarah B. "Sallie" Thomas (1835-1873)
2. Hugh Talbott Thomas (1838-?)

Lucretia and William had six children:

1. Amanda C. Lillard (1843-1921)
2. Elmira Manerva Lillard (1845-1909)
3. John Wesley Lillard (1846-1892)
4. Susan Russell Lillard (1849-1925)
5. Emily T. Lillard (1851-1855)
6. Myra Mary Lillard (1854-?)

The Children of Hardin Blevins

Identifying Hardin's children has also posed a challenge for many researchers. Probably the most credible listing of his children was found in the family bible of one of Hardin's grandsons - David Crockett Blevins (1839-1922). Unfortunately, the children reportedly listed in this bible differ depending on the source. According to Dorothy Howell Carroll, who claimed to have seen the actual bible, six children were listed: John, Margaret, Samuel, Phillip, Elizabeth, and Catherine.

In the book *Hiwassee Heritage*, Shirley Charlton (who claimed to have interviewed David Crockett Blevins III) listed eight children from the bible: John, Margaret, Moses, Ruth, Phillip, Thomas, Catherine, and Elizabeth. (Charlton's list excluded Samuel and added Moses, Ruth, and Thomas.)

Both Bible lists agree on the five children shown below.

John Wilson Blevins was born March 15, 1806. He married Elizabeth Frances Guinn (1810-1899) on November 4, 1830. He died November 23, 1882. John Wilson Blevins also maintained a family bible that listed his own family marriages.

John and Elizabeth had nine children:

1. Ruth Jane Vance Blevins (1831-1915)
2. Mary Ann "Pannie" Blevins (1833-1926)
3. Sarah Melinda Blevins (1835-?)
4. James Duke Blevins (1836-1895)
5. David Crockett Blevins (1839-1922)
6. Elizabeth Frances Blevins (1841-1914)
7. Bartholomew King Blevins (1843-1911)
8. Eadens McCorkle Blevins (1845-1863)
9. Thomas Richard Blevins (1850-1922)

Margaret Blevins was born June 11, 1807. She may have never married. She died in 1855.

Phillip M. Blevins was born December 14, 1815. He first married Harriet Blakely (1819~1855) on December 6, 1838. He later married Altimire Shears (1834-?) on September 15, 1858. Phillip died April 20, 1900.

Phillip and Harriet had seven children:

1. James C. C. Blevins (1840-1862)
2. Argile Hardin Blevins (1842-1912)
3. Margaret Jane Blevins (1845-1926)
4. Dicey E. Blevins (1848-?)
5. Thomas Wilson Blevins (1849-1936)
6. Rodney Blevins (1852-?)
7. John Blevins (1854-?)

Phillip and Altimire had six children:

1. Elbert Blevins (1859-?)
2. Mollie Blevins (1861-?)
3. Juda Ann Blevins (1863-1925)
4. Woods Blevins (1864-?)
5. Connie Blevins (1867-1900)
6. Alice A. Blevins (1869-1950)

Catherine Blevins was born August 27, 1819. She married William Collins. I have no information on her marriage date, on her children, or on her date of death.

Elizabeth J. "Elisa" Blevins was born February 12, 1822. She married John M. Gourley (1809-1871) on November 19, 1857 but apparently had 3 illegitimate children prior to this marriage. Elizabeth died October 4, 1911.

Elizabeth had three children:

1. Rutha Jane Blevins (1842-?)
2. James T. Blevins (1844-?)
3. Samuel E. Blevins (1846-?)

The two Bible lists disagree on the following four children:

Moses Blevins, Jr. was born September 18, 1809. (According to Sarah Blevins Jones, he was born in 1815.) He was, according to Sarah Blevins Jones, the son of Moses Blevins Sr., and a nephew of Hardin's. According to the 1913 journal of John Wilson Blevins, Moses was one of Hardin's sons. I am reasonably certain that this Moses was Hardin's son.

Moses married twice; first to a woman named Nancy (perhaps a Taylor or a Lillard) (1807-1884) on July 23, 1834 and second to Elizabeth Thomas (~1816- after 1880) on August 29, 1839. Moses probably died about 1845 in Meigs County, TN.

Moses and Elizabeth had three children:

1. Judy Ann Blevins (1840-1878)
2. Harden E. Blevins (1842-?)
3. Moses L. Blevins (1844-?)

Samuel Elbert Blevins was born January 10, 1812. According to Rhea County records, he married Sarah Blevins on December 31, 1832. Samuel died sometime after 1880. Some researchers have speculated that Sarah Blevins was a daughter of David Blevins and others speculate that she was the daughter or sister of Isaac Blevins. Other researchers contend that the marriage record was in error and believe that Sarah's last name was really Taylor. I believe that Samuel was one of Hardin's sons.

Samuel and Sarah had nine children:

1. Amanda E. Blevins (1883- after 1907)
2. Catherine Blevins (1835-?)
3. Allman Blevins (1837-?)
4. William B. Blevins (1839-?)
5. Tennessee Blevins (~1841-?)
6. Margaret Blevins (1843-?)
7. Charles Hardin Blevins (1845-?)
8. Lucinda Blevins (1847-?)
9. Samuel H. Blevins (1849-?)

Ruth Blevins was born February 12, 1813. She reportedly married a brother of the William Collins who married her sister Catherine. I have no further information on Ruth but I believe she was one of Hardin's daughters.

Thomas Vance Blevins was born October 14, 1817. He married Elvinia P. Gourley (1820-1896) on July 1, 1839. He died October 1, 1867. Thomas named one of his sons John Wilson Blevins. Some researchers confuse this son of Thomas with Hardin's son of the same name. Sarah Blevins Jones claimed Thomas as an ancestor and she was positive that he was a son of Hardin. Thomas was almost certainly one of Hardin's sons.

Thomas and Elvinia had twelve children:

1. Joseph Hugh Blevins (1840-1917)
2. Lycurgus R. Blevins (1842-1863)
3. Samantha Blevins (1844-?)
4. John Wilson Blevins (1845-1930)
5. Phillip Grundy Blevins (1847-1927)
6. Thomas Vance Blevins (1849-1899)
7. Mary E. Blevins (1852-?)
8. Evander T. Blevins (1854-?)
9. Alexander Rice Blevins (1856-?)
10. William S. Blevins (1858-1924)
11. Lillie D. Blevins (1860-?)
12. Franklin T. Blevins (1864-1867)

Probable Relatives of David and Hardin Blevins

William A. Blevins was born January 15, 1802 in Sullivan County and married Celia Bolin on Jan 28, 1824 in Sullivan County, TN. Celia was born on Aug 10 1803 in TN. Descendant George B. Lusk reports that Celia was the daughter of John Bolling and Millie Blevins (Note: Millie was *possibly* an unmarried daughter of Colonel William Blevins of Sullivan County). William died on October 6, 1873 in Independence Arkansas. Celia died about 1880 in White County, Arkansas.

In 1831 William Blevins bought 53 pounds of bacon for \$4.77 and a looking glass for 12 and a half cents at the estate sale of David Blevins. In May 1834, a man named John Chatten filed a Rhea County lawsuit against William A. Blevins. In 1836 William Blevins purchased lot #43 (next to the lot purchased by James Blevins) in the new City of Decatur. In September 1841, William A. Blevins was paid \$25 for repairing the Meigs County Jail and \$5 for jury duty. He also received \$2 in jury pay in January 1843.

Following is the obituary for William A. Blevins that appeared in the Nashville Christian Advocate (publication date unknown):

"Brother Wm A. Blevins was born in Sullivan Co, Tenn., Jan. 15, 1802, and died Oct. 6, 1873; was married to Miss Seby Bolin, Jan. 28, 1824; moved to Hiwassee Purchase in 1826; professed religion and joined the Methodist Church in 1836, and lived a consistent member until death. He removed to Arkansas with his family in 1849, where he resided until called from labor to reward. He leaves an aged widow, eleven children, many grand and great grandchildren, to mourn their irreparable loss. He has five children gone on before, all infants, to await his arrival. The last time he was home, was to attend a protracted meeting, in company with his eldest son. Although in feeble health, he said he wished to see the brethren once more, especially the Rev. C. S. Floyd, for his end was nigh. He was taken sick at the meeting on Sunday, but stayed until Monday. Taking leave of the kind family and Brother Floyd, accompanied by his son, he started for his home. Journeying on, he spoke of his dissolution, and said his work was done. Reaching his home he sank upon his bed, where he was confined twenty one days; during which time he bore his afflictions without a murmur. When advised to call a physician, he said: "I leave all to you." During his illness he was happy in the love of God, and on one occasion sang sweetly, "O, when shall I see Jesus?" and exclaimed: "What a blessed old song!" He was asked several times if his way was clear. He replied: "Nothing in the way, all is right." The last words he spoke audibly, with hands clasping the hand of a daughter-in-law, was "My Lord!" three times. He never complained of a pain, during his sickness. He craved nothing of an earthly character, but seemed to be in a sweet sleep most of the time. When aroused was reticent, until his eyes were dim in death. Thus he fell asleep in Jesus, without a murmur. About two months before his death he gave up the class book of his class, and told them it was the last class meeting he would ever hold, for his work was done, and so it seems to have been, as an exhorter or class leader. But in his triumphant death resolutions, doubtless, were formed, that will tell well in the day of eternity. I attended his funeral, and God was there in great power, making the bereaved widow and the orphans happy, in the hope of meeting Father Blevins again. I trust God will bless the family, and make them an unbroken family in heaven."

According to his obituary, William didn't move to the Hiwassee area until 1826 and the early tax lists and court records tend to verify this date. As such, he was one of the last of the Blevins men known to have migrated into the area in the 1820s.

Bettye J. Broyles (in one reference) identified William as being David's son but omitted William in another reference. According to Sarah Blevins Jones, William was Hardin's oldest son but he was not mentioned in the family bible of David Crockett Blevins. Jones also said his middle name was Howard but she was clearly in error. I have found no records of a William Howard, or William H. Blevins but there are several mentions in the early court records of a William A. Blevins.

The 1913 Journal of John Wilson Blevins identified Will A. Blevins as being a brother to Hardin. I consider William to have been a *probable* brother to David and Hardin.

According to his obituary, William and Celia had eleven children still living in 1873 plus five unnamed, deceased infants. Some of the children in the following list may have been grandchildren, particularly those born after the mid 1840s:

1. Ellandar Blevins (1824-1901)
2. Mahala Blevins (1825- before 1860)
3. Nancy Blevins (1829-?)
4. John Anderson Blevins (1830-?)
5. James Henderson Blevins (1831-1902)
6. Elizabeth Blevins (1833-?)
7. Mary Catherine Blevins (1833-?)
8. July Blevins (1836- before 1840)
9. Henninger Blevins (1839-1906)
10. Franklin Cheatem Blevins (1841-1900)
11. William Slovis Blevins (1843-?)
12. Susan Celia Blevins (1845-1853)
13. Russell Ezra Blevins (1846- before 1860)
14. Melissa Blevins (1848-?)
15. Andrew Jackson Blevins (1851-1888)

Moses Blevins, Sr. was probably born in Sullivan County sometime between 1784 and 1789. The first mention of Moses in Sullivan County was his inclusion, along with Hardin Blevins, on that county's 1812 tax list (both in Captain William Scott's Company).

By 1820 Moses had moved to Carter County (perhaps with David) where he appeared in that county's' February 16, 1820 County Court minutes. Moses and Hardin Blevins first appeared on the Rhea County tax list in 1825, which may suggest that both men arrived at about the same time. He apparently left Rhea County soon after he lost his land in an 1829 lawsuit. He appeared in the 1830 Carter County census.

On February 1, 1833, Moses and his wife, Christina Mottern (~1795~1880) signed a Sullivan County, TN deed as heirs of Nicholas Mottern. Moses later moved to Gasconade County, Missouri where he died sometime between 1860 and 1870.

Moses was not named as a brother to Hardin within the John Wilson Blevins journal but he had left the area about 15 years before John Wilson was born and could have simply been forgotten. Hardin named a son Moses in 1809 and Moses Sr. named his first son Isaac M. Blevins in 1822 (see below). Moses Sr. named his second son James

Nicholas Blevins in 1825, which *could* have been an homage to both his father (James) and his father-in-law (Nicholas).

Finally, a woman named Susan Blevins was born in 1793 and married Samuel Wadley in Sullivan County in about 1806. Susan clearly had a direct connection to Moses Blevins as she named her first son Moses Blevins Wadley in October of 1809. The family is recorded in the Rutherford Co., TN census beginning in 1810. Researcher Nel Rocklein believes that her ancestor, Susan Blevins, was a sister to David Blevins.

I consider Moses to have been a *probable* brother to David and Hardin.

Moses and Christina had at least four children:

1. Isaac M. Blevins (1822~1893)
2. James Nicholas Blevins (1825-1864)
3. Rachel Ronan Blevins (~1833-1879)
4. Mary Catherine Blevins (1841-1916)

Isaac Blevins. Based on his age group in the 1830 Rhea census, Isaac was born between 1790 and 1800. Isaac's only known, possible connection to Sullivan County is an October 19, 1818 indenture in which a man named Isaac Blevins of Rutherford County, Tennessee witnessed the sale of 70 acres of land in Sullivan County, Tennessee. A man named Isaac Blevins appeared on the tax lists for Roane County, Tennessee from 1822 to 1827

It is unknown if this was the same man who first appeared in the 1827 Rhea County records. The last known record of Isaac Blevins in Rhea County was September 28, 1835 when he served on a jury.

There were almost certainly two different, similarly aged men named Isaac Blevins. There is a tradition within one Blevins family that a man named Isaac Blevins, Sr. was born in Sullivan County on January 8, 1799. This Isaac married a woman named Eliza Maupin in September of 1833 in Rock Castle County, Kentucky. He moved his family to Missouri in 1840 and in 1850 he moved to the Oregon Territory where he died on February 10, 1883.

The 1913 journal of John Wilson Blevins named Isaac as being one of Hardin's brothers. I consider Isaac to have been a *probable* brother to David and Hardin.

I have no information relative to his wife and children.

Allen Blevins was born about 1804 in Sullivan County, Tennessee. He was married in Rhea (now Meigs) County to Clara Owens on April 21, 1824 and he first appeared on the Rhea County tax list that same year (predating Hardin's arrival by about one year). In January 1828, Allen purchased 160 acres of Hiwassee District land from Hugh T. Blevins for \$100.

Allen apparently left Rhea County by early 1830 and moved east to McMinn County. The McMinn County, TN Deed Book C records a March 15, 1830 deed conveyance by Andrew Williams of Smith County to Allen Blevins. In 1836, Allen Blevins provided securities for the Meigs County court appearance of Isaac Blevins relative to a lawsuit filed by a man named Anthony Street.

Allen's 1830 residency in McMinn County suggests an early separation of sorts from the David and Hardin groups. He appeared on that county's 1830 census schedule and he appeared as Allen "Belvins" in the 1840 Bradley County (just south of Meigs) census. In 1851, Allen and his family removed to Arkansas where he died that same year.

One of Allen's sons (Michael R. Blevins) was profiled in *Goodspeed's Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Northwestern Arkansas*. Goodspeed stated that:

" M. R. Blevins, son of Allen and Clara (Owens) Blevins, was born in Bradley County, Tenn., May, 1837. **The father was born in Sullivan County, TN**, received a common-school education here, and was here married. He afterward moved to Bradley County while the Indians were still there, and assisted in banding them together to take them to the reservation set apart for them. Mr. Blevins continued to live in TN until 1851, when he immigrated to Independence County, AR., where he died the same year. His wife, Clara Blevins was born in NC, her parents leaving that state when she was but a small girl. She married Mr. Blevins in Meigs County, TN and became the mother of eleven children, seven now living; John, Michael R., Gideon T, Mrs. Lorinda Tunnel, Mrs. Malinda Milsap, Mrs. Myra Teal and Mrs. Mary Wood. Those deceased are William, Allen, Catherine and an infant."

There is one later linkage between the Allen and David Blevins families. Around 1868, Samuel Looney Blevins (my 2nd GGF and a grandson of David) moved briefly to Round Prairie Township in Benton County, AR. Samuel, his brother Hugh Torbet Vernon Blevins, Allen's widow Clara, and two of Allen's sons (Michael and Gideon) all lived nearby one another. Although many people migrated to Arkansas before and after the Civil War, the proximity of David's and Allen's descendants there could suggest a close family connection.

Allen Blevins was clearly connected to the David Blevins family but his exact relationship is unclear. He was not mentioned in the John Wilson journal but he, like several others not mentioned, had left the immediate Rhea/Meigs area many years before John Wilson Blevins was born. I consider Allen Blevins to have been a *possible* brother to David and Hardin.

Allen and Clara had ten known children plus an unnamed infant:

1. Allen B. Blevins (1824- before 1889)
2. Catherine Blevins (~1825- before 1889)
3. William Blevins (1827- before 1889)
4. Clorinda Blevins (1828-?)
5. John W. Blevins (1832-1900)
6. Malinda Blevins (1833-?)
7. Michael R. Blevins (1837-1923)
8. Mariah Blevins (1838-?)
9. Gideon Thompson Blevins (1844-?)
10. Mary Jane Blevins (1848-1926)

Abraham Blevins is listed in the 1824 Rhea County tax list with David and Allen Blevins but this is the only known reference to this man in this area. There were at least four men named Abraham (or Abram) Blevins known at the time.

An Abraham Blevins signed a petition dated November 6, 1777 that called for an alteration of the county line in what is now Sullivan County, Tennessee. This man was almost certainly the same Abraham Blevins: who was issued a Surveyor's Certificate in the Sixth District of TN sometime between November 1814 and May 1816; who applied for a Revolutionary War pension in Knox County, Kentucky on October 14, 1825 at the age of 70; and who appeared on the 1830 Knox County, KY census aged between 70 and 79. This Abraham Blevins would have been nearly 70 years old in 1824 and was almost certainly an uncle of David and Hardin. I consider it *highly unlikely* that he was the one who appeared in Rhea County in 1824.

An Abraham Blevins married Pheby Monton in Wayne County, KY on 9 Nov 1819. He was probably the same Abraham Blevins who appeared on the 1820 Wayne County, KY census as being aged 16 to 26. An "Abram" Blevins, aged 20 to 29 years, appeared on the 1830 Fentress County, TN census. Given the close proximity between Wayne, KY and Fentress, TN, this was very likely the same man who was in Wayne County, KY in 1820. I consider it *highly unlikely* that he was the one who appeared in Rhea County in 1824.

An Abraham Blevins, married to a woman named Jane, appeared in the 1850 Wood County, VA census. According to this census record, he was born in North Carolina in 1806 and his wife was born in Tennessee in 1815. This man was probably too young to have been included on the 1824 Rhea County tax list.

Finally, an Abraham Blevins married Nancy Williams in Hawkins County, TN on 19 Aug 1824. He was probably the same Abraham Blevins who appeared on the 1830 Hawkins County census as being 20 to 29 years old and on the 1840 Hawkins census aged 30 to 39 years. I *suspect* that this was the same Abraham Blevins who appeared on the 1824 Rhea County tax list. This man was very likely a son of Revolutionary War veteran Henry Blevins and would have *very likely* been a first cousin to David and Hardin.

