
Using Cluster Methodology to Backtrack an Ancestor: The Case of John Bradberry

By William M. Litchman, Ph.D., CG

Perhaps the most common genealogical mistake is focusing a search too narrowly. Broadening research to include a cluster of migrating families can lead to convincing evidence of birthplace and parents.

Tracing a migrating ancestor's origin requires (1) targeting the correct location, (2) recognizing the person in its records, and (3) identifying the ancestor's parental family. Common complications, however, may block these goals:

- Records in the place of settlement might not specify origin, or they name a general jurisdiction unlikely to have records detailing parentage.
- Name, age, and state of birth may not be enough to identify a settler in a prior location, especially if the name is common.
- When a precise origin is determined, its records do not identify the migrating ancestor directly.

All three problems apply to John Bradberry, a Virginia native who settled in Tennessee and Arkansas. Only censuses report his birthplace.¹ Bradberrys, including several Johns, appear in various Virginia counties. Which—if any—was the Tennessee-Arkansas settler?

Several strategies might lead to an answer, but cluster methodology is the most promising. Because people usually migrated in groups, or followed one another, neighbors often came from the same place. Compared with focusing on one ancestor, studying neighborhood clusters yields more clues to ancestral origin and identity.

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1. J. Bradberry household, 1850 U.S. census, Weakley Co., Tenn., population schedule, District 7, p. 468 (stamped, recto), dwelling/family 37; National Archives (NA) microfilm M432, roll 899. In 1860 this J. Bradberry appears as John. See John Bradberry household, 1860 U.S. census, Greene Co., Ark., pop. sch., Concord Twp., Oak Bluff post office, p. 112, dwell. 670, fam. 655; NA microfilm M653, roll 42. Also, J. N. Bradberry household, 1870 U. S. census, Greene Co., Ark., pop. sch., Johnson Twp., Big Creek post office, p. 8, dwell./fam. 52; NA microfilm M593, roll 54.

THE BRADBERRY CLUSTER

In 1850 John Bradberry lived in Weakley County, Tennessee, near other Bradberry men born in Virginia between 1800 and 1816. Their children's birthplaces suggest that the fathers—probably brothers or cousins—had left Virginia between 1834 and 1838. See table 1. A source of unknown reliability identifies the parents of one of them, Henry Bradberry, as “Richard and Ann” but does not state his relationship to the others.² Bradberrys do not appear in most Weakley County court records.³ County deeds and tax rolls, however, suggest ties and additional kin among the 1850 Bradberry cluster.

The earliest Bradberry deed in Weakley County is dated 24 October 1823. Elizabeth Dickson of Carteret County, North Carolina, released her rights to 640 acres to James Bradberry of Wayne County, North Carolina.⁴ On 12 November 1823 Samuel and Daniel Smith transferred an adjoining tract to Bradberry.⁵ By 1834 Bradberry, settled in Perry County, Alabama, had sold the land.⁶

Weakley County deeds identify six Bradberrys, including John, living there between about 1837 and 1858:

- On 12 August 1837 James F. Bradberry pledged livestock, a rifle, tools, and household goods to secure \$37.38 borrowed from James Etheridge. The deed mentions a note dated “first of October last” (1836).⁷
- In separate deeds between 1847 and 1855 Richard, Henry, and Joseph Bradberry made or secured loans.⁸
- On 29 August 1847 Robert S. Bradberry purchased one hundred acres from Young P. Bowers.⁹
- On 8 October 1849 John Bradberry also purchased land from Young P. Bowers.¹⁰ He sold it via a deed witnessed by Robert S. Bradberry on 12

2. Henry Bradberry family Bible record, photocopy (in part) and transcription (in part) by Carolyn Wilcoxon (San Antonio, Tex.), publication data not available, in author's files.

3. Weakley Co. wills, 1828–1900, County Court, Dresden, Tenn.; microfilm 0,988,756, Family History Library (FHL), Salt Lake City. Weakley Co. inventories, County Court, Dresden, Tenn.; FHL microfilm 0,988,664. Weakley Co. guardians' settlements, 1843–66, County Court, Dresden, Tenn.; FHL microfilm 0,988,662. Weakley Co. marriages, 1843–66, County Court Clerk, Dresden, Tenn.; FHL microfilm 0,988,668.

4. Dickson to Bradbury, Weakley Co. Deed Book A:328–29, Register of Deeds, Dresden, Tenn.; FHL microfilm 0,988,760.

5. Smith and Smith to Bradbury, Weakley Co. Deed Book A:330–31.

6. Bradbury to Wade, power of attorney, Weakley Co. Deed Book A:331. Bradbury to Blackmore, Weakley Co. Deed Book A:370–71. Bradberry to Smith, Weakley Co. Deed Book B:73–74 and 76–77; FHL microfilm 0,988,760. Bradberry to Gardner, Weakley Co. Deed Book C:397; FHL microfilm 0,988,761.

7. Bradbury to Etheridge, Weakley Co. Deed Book D:412; FHL microfilm 0,988,761.

8. Trent to Richard Bradberry, Weakley Co. Deed Book H:78; FHL microfilm 0,988,763. Henry Bradberry to Cochran, Weakley Co. Deed Book H:318. Henry Bradberry to Trent, Weakley Co. Deed Book J:197; FHL microfilm 0,988,764. Joseph Bradberry to White, Weakley Co. Deed Book J:643. Joseph C. Bradberry to Cochran, Weakley Co. Deed Book M:583–84; FHL microfilm 0,988,765.

9. Bowers to Bradbury, Weakley Co. Deed Book H:97.

10. Bowers to Bradbury, Weakley Co. Deed Book K:272–73; FHL microfilm 0,988,764.

Table 1

Bradberry Families in Weakley County, Tennessee, in 1850

| DWELLING AND FAMILY | NAME | AGE | BIRTHPLACE |
|---------------------|--------------|-----------|----------------|
| 33 | R. Bradberry | 34 | Virginia |
| | Elizabeth | 22 | Tennessee |
| | Isiah | 3 | Tennessee |
| | James | 2 | Tennessee |
| | Joseph | 36 | Virginia |
| | J. Ford | 18 | Tennessee |
| 36 | R. Bradberry | 38 | Virginia |
| | Elizabeth | 30 | Tennessee |
| | Ann | 13 | Tennessee |
| | George | 9 | Tennessee |
| | Richard | 2 | Tennessee |
| | A. J. Ford | 13 | Tennessee |
| 37 | J. Bradberry | 40 | Virginia |
| | Sarah | 29 | North Carolina |
| | George | 4 | Tennessee |
| 42 | H. Bradberry | 50 | Virginia |
| | Susan | 34 | Virginia |
| | Virginia | 26 | Virginia |
| | Elizabeth | 24 | Virginia |
| | Susan | 22 | Virginia |
| | James | 21 | Virginia |
| | Georgiann | 18 | Virginia |
| | John | 16 | Virginia |
| | Ann | 15 | Virginia |
| | Edmond | 12 | Tennessee |
| | William | 8 | Tennessee |
| | Gabrella | 7 | Tennessee |
| Robert | 6 | Tennessee | |

Source: R. Bradberry, R. Bradberry, J. Bradberry, and H. Bradberry households, 1850 U.S. census, Weakley Co., Tenn., population schedule, District 7, p. 468 (stamped, recto and verso); National Archives microfilm M432, roll 899.

October 1852.¹¹ On 1 November 1852 and 5 June 1854 John bought two more tracts from Bowers—acreage adjoining land owned or occupied by Richard and Robert “Bradbury.” Robert Bradberry witnessed this deed as well.¹² After securing a debt on 4 August 1854, John sold his land on 3 November 1854.¹³ John purchased another lot on 10 January 1858.¹⁴ Finding himself in debt, he created a trust deed on 19 August 1858 and sold his land three months later.¹⁵

In Tennessee free white males age twenty-one through fifty paid annual poll taxes. The first payment, therefore, might indicate a birth twenty-one years earlier and the last a birth fifty years earlier. Many men, however, ignored or eluded the collectors.¹⁶ See table 2 for Bradberry tax records in Weakley County.

The 1831–32 tax entries for James Bradberry pertain probably to the James who bought land in 1823, while living in North Carolina, and sold it in 1834, while living in Alabama. Conducting his Weakley County transactions through an attorney, he may have been a nonresident taxpayer. He has no known association with Virginia or the Bradberry cluster from Virginia. Moreover, born apparently in the 1770s, he was too old to be a sibling of any Weakley County Bradberry in 1850.¹⁷

Deeds identify the four household heads in the 1850 Bradberry cluster as Henry, John, Richard, and Robert. A fifth associate, Joseph Bradberry who lived with “R.” Bradberry in 1850, borrowed money in Weakley County in 1851 and 1855. The tax lists in table 2 suggest two more members of the cluster:

- James F. Bradberry paid taxes in the same district as John in 1842. He disappeared from Weakley County after 1846 and left no estate there. He does not appear in any 1850 census index.
- David Bradberry paid taxes in 1848–50 on one hundred acres but no deed identifies him as a grantee. On 29 August 1847, however, Robert S. Bradberry purchased one hundred acres for which he was never taxed. Robert apparently bought the land for David, which suggests a close relationship between them. David’s appearance on the tax list in 1848 implies he was born in 1826–27.

11. Bradbury to Duke, Weakley Co. Deed Book K:281–82.

12. Bowers to Bradbury, Weakley Co. Deed Book K:301–2. Bowers to Bradberry, Weakley Co. Deed Book L:617–18; FHL microfilm 0,988,765.

13. Bradberry to Bowers, Weakley Co. Deed Book M:26. Bradberry to Gill, Weakley Co. Deed Book M:182–83.

14. Finch to Bradberry, Weakley Co. Deed Book O:431–32; FHL microfilm 0,988,766.

15. Bradberry to Drewry, Weakley Co. Deed Book P:32–34; FHL microfilm 0,988,767. The deed mentions debt judgments against John. Also, Bradberry to Brasfield and others, Weakley Co. Deed Book P:156–57.

16. Ann Evans Alley, “Taxation and Politics: Tennessee’s Poll Tax Laws,” *Middle Tennessee Journal of Genealogy and History* 11 (Fall 1997): 51–55. Also, Shirley Wilson, “An Introduction to Taxation for Genealogists,” *Middle Tennessee Journal of Genealogy and History* 13 (Fall 1999): 51–57.

17. Jas Bradberry household, 1820 U.S. census, Wayne Co., N.C., p. 457, line 33; NA microfilm M33, roll 83. The household’s oldest male was age forty-five or above. Also, James Bradberry household, 1830 U.S. census, Perry Co., Ala., p. 76, line 6; NA microfilm M19, roll 3. The household’s oldest male was over age sixty and below age seventy.

Table 2
Bradberry Taxpayers in Weakley County, Tennessee, 1831-69

| YEAR | GIVEN NAME | DISTRICT | TAXABLE ITEMS |
|---------|------------|----------|--------------------------------|
| 1831-32 | James | | |
| 1838 | James F. | 3 | 1 poll |
| 1842 | Jno. | 3 | 1 poll |
| | James F. | 3 | 1 poll |
| 1843 | John | 3 | 1 poll |
| 1844 | John | 8 | 1 poll |
| | James F. | 14 | 1 poll |
| 1845 | James F. | 14 | 1 poll |
| 1846 | John | 7 | 1 poll |
| | James F. | 14 | 1 poll |
| 1847 | John | 7 | 1 poll |
| 1848 | John | 7 | 1 poll |
| | David | 7 | 1 poll, 100 acres, \$150 value |
| 1849 | John | 7 | 1 poll |
| | David | 7 | 1 poll, 100 acres, \$150 value |
| | Robert | 7 | 1 poll, 100 acres, \$200 value |
| 1850 | John | 7 | 1 poll, 54 acres, \$100 value |
| | David | 7 | 1 poll, 100 acres, \$150 value |
| | Robert S. | 7 | 1 poll, 100 acres, \$150 value |
| | Henry | 7 | 1 poll |
| 1851 | Jno. | 7 | 54 acres, \$185 value |
| | Rob. S. | 7 | 100 acres, \$250 value |
| 1858 | John | 7 | 103 acres |
| | Robt. | 7 | 100 acres |
| | J. R. | 7 | |
| 1859 | R. S. | 7 | 100 acres, \$700 value |
| | J. R. | 7 | |
| | J. H. | 7 | |
| 1860 | J. H. | 7 | |
| 1862 | R. S. | 7 | 100 acres, \$600 value |
| | J. H. | 7 | 100 acres, \$600 value |
| 1865 | R. S. | 7 | |
| 1866 | R. S. | 7 | 100 acres, \$400 value |
| | E. T. | 7 | 150 acres, \$750 value |
| | William | 7 | |
| 1869 | J. H. | 10 | |
| | R. E. | 7 | |

Sources: Weakley Co. 1828-32 tax lists, County Court, Dresden, Tenn.; microfilm 0,988,756, Family History Library (FHL), Salt Lake City. Also, Weakley Co. Tax Books 1-3, County Trustee, Dresden, Tenn.; FHL microfilm 1,003,115.

Note: Lists before 1828 and for 1833-37, 1852-57, 1861, 1863-64, and 1867-68 are missing. No Bradberrys are listed in 1828-29. Some lists do not specify poll tax assessments, though a listing implies that the man owed or paid a poll tax. The search ended arbitrarily with 1869.

These seven Bradberry men shared proximity, a Virginia birthplace, and socioeconomic status. Furthermore, John lived next to Richard, who associated with Robert, who associated with David. The birth range for the cluster—from 1799–1800 (Henry) to 1826–27 (David)—means they could have been brothers. Additional research might verify or refute this possibility and locate John Bradberry’s Virginia birthplace.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY BRADBERRYS

The 1850 census suggests the Weakley County Bradberrys had moved from Virginia to Tennessee in the 1830s. Only two cluster members, however, headed Weakley County households in 1840:

- John Bradberry, whose household matches his family’s composition in 1850
- James F. Bradberry, who lived with five females perhaps next to John’s home¹⁸

Where were the others from the 1850 cluster? Three Bradberry households in Montgomery County (three counties east of Weakley)—headed by H. L., Richard, and Mrs. A. Bradberry—seem to fill the gap. See table 3.

Montgomery County deeds and a will show that the Bradberrys who paid taxes and voted there in the 1830s and early 1840s moved to Weakley County in the late 1840s:

- The earliest Bradberry deeds involved indebtedness—two for William in 1838 and one for Richard in 1840.¹⁹
- Henry and Joseph Bradberry secured debts between 1843 and 1846.²⁰
- On 26 January 1843 Robert S. and Ann Eliza Bradberry bought 87.5 acres from Samuel Wade. The deed’s phrase “Robert S. Bradberry and Ann Eliza Bradberry, his & her heirs and assigns forever” implies that Ann Eliza was a *feme sole*, not a wife.²¹
- Ann Eliza Bradberry’s will, dated 22 November 1843 and proved in February 1846, mentions her mother, Nancy Bradberry, her brother Robert S. Bradberry, and George W. Bradberry. It refers to about forty-three acres on which “Robert S. Bradberry now lives.”²² The surname of witness Mary “Foard” appears twice within Weakley County Bradberry households in 1850.

18. Jno Bradberry and Jas F Bradberry households, 1840 U.S. census, Weakley Co., Tenn., p. 292, lines 21–22; NA microfilm M704, roll 530. This enumeration is not alphabetized.

19. William Bradberry to Hampton, Montgomery Co. Deed Book P:432, Register of Deeds, Clarksville, Tenn.; and William Bradberry to Edwards, Montgomery Co. Deed Book R:2; both on FHL microfilm 0,320,863. Richard Bradberry to Fanier, Montgomery Co. Deed Book S:24; FHL microfilm 0,320,864.

20. Montgomery Co. Deed Book T:284–85 (Henry Bradberry to Wade), 308 (Joseph Bradberry to Marr), 534 (Henry Bradberry to Johnson), and 584–85 (Joseph Bradberry to Johnson); FHL microfilm 0,320,865. Henry Bradberry to Waller, Montgomery Co. Deed Book W:73 and 518; FHL microfilm 0,320,865.

21. Wade to Bradberry and Bradberry, Montgomery Co. Deed Book T:151.

22. Ann Eliza Bradberry will, Montgomery Co. Probate Record J:321; FHL microfilm 0,321,048.

Table 3

**Suggested Composition of Bradberry Households in
Montgomery County, Tennessee, in 1840**

| | SEX AND AGE IN 1840 | HOUSEHOLD | | |
|---------|------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| | | H. L. BRADBERRY | RICH ^d BRADBERRY | MRS. A. BRADBERRY |
| MALES | under 5 | Edmond (2) | Unknown | |
| | | unknown | Unknown | |
| | 5-9 | John (6) | Unknown | |
| | | James (11) | | |
| 20-29 | | Richard (28) Joseph (26) | Robert (24) | |
| | 30-39 | Henry (39) | | |
| FEMALES | under 5 | Ann (5) | Ann (3) | |
| | | Unknown | Unknown | |
| | 5-9 | Georgeann (8) | Unknown | |
| | | | Unknown | |
| | 10-14 | Susan (12) | | |
| | 15-19 | Elizabeth (14) | Unknown | |
| | 20-29 | | Elizabeth (20) | Unknown |
| 30-39 | Susan (37) | | | |
| | 50-59 | | | Mrs. A. |

Sources: Rich^d Bradberry household, 1840 U.S. census, Montgomery Co., Tenn., p. 264, line 23; H. L. Bradberry household, 1840 U.S. census, Montgomery Co., Tenn., p. 267, line 29; and Mrs. A. Bradberry household, 1840 U.S. census, Montgomery Co., Tenn., p. 268, line 11; all on National Archives (NA) microfilm M407, roll 532.

Note: Numerals in parentheses are ages in 1840 calculated from possibly corresponding entries in the 1850 census, which had the same enumeration date (1 June) as the 1840 census. See R. Bradberry, R. Bradberry, J. Bradberry, and H. Bradberry households, 1850 U.S. census, Weakley Co., Tenn., population schedule, District 7, p. 468 (stamped, recto and verso), dwellings/families 33, 36, 37, and 42, respectively; NA microfilm M432, roll 899. For the enumeration dates, see Ann Bruner Eales and Robert M. Kvasnicka, eds., "Census Records," in *Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States*, 3rd ed. (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2000), 24-25.

- On 13 January 1846, probably soon after his sister Ann Eliza's death, Robert Bradberry sold part of the tract purchased from Samuel Wade.²³ On 3 July 1848 Robert, "of Weakley County," sold the remaining portion.²⁴

Six Bradberrys—Henry, Joseph, Richard, William, and two Johns—paid Montgomery County taxes in 1836. Each, apparently between age twenty-one and fifty, lived in District 1 and owned no land or other taxable property.²⁵ Richard may have been the older of the two R. Bradberrys in Weakley County in 1850, because the younger, born in 1815–16, probably was not taxable in 1836. In 1841 Henry, Richard, and William Bradberry, over age twenty-one and living in District 2, were eligible to vote in Montgomery County.²⁶

The cluster of Bradberrys surrounding John Bradberry lived in Montgomery County, Tennessee, from about 1835–6 until about 1846–7, when most of them moved to Weakley County. Records in both counties show their connections. For example, Ann Eliza Bradberry in Montgomery County named George W. and her brother Robert, who associated with John and David in Weakley County. John lived with or near James F. and his land adjoined Richard's farm. Henry's mother was "Ann," and Ann Eliza's mother was "Nancy," a nickname for Ann. Moreover, combining both counties' records provides enough information to identify these increasingly probable siblings in Virginia.

THE BRADBERRY CLUSTER IN VIRGINIA

Seven Bradberrys headed Virginia households in 1830. The names of two in King William County—Henry L. Bradberry and Ann Bradberry—echo those in Tennessee. The makeup of Henry's household matches the 1850 H. Bradberry household in Weakley County. Although the 1830 census does not name most other Bradberry men in the Tennessee counties of Weakley and Montgomery, Ann Bradberry's household accounts for them. They include John Bradberry who, without information concerning his associates in Tennessee, could not have been identified in Virginia in 1830. See table 4.

Few records survived an 1885 courthouse fire in King William County.²⁷ Some refer to Bradberry court actions and deeds concerning John Bradberry who was about a generation older than the John of Tennessee:

23. Bradberry to Merriwether, Montgomery Co. Deed Book W:274.

24. Bradberry to Smith, Montgomery Co. Deed Book Y:508; FHL microfilm 0,320,866.

25. Bradberry entries, Montgomery Co. 1836 Tax List, District 1, p. 352, lines 15 (Richard) and 16 (Wm), and p. 353, lines 1 (John), 2 (John), 3 (Joseph), and 4 (Henry), Trustee, Clarksville, Tenn.; Early Tennessee Tax Lists microfilm 7, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

26. Montgomery County Court Minutes 21, District 2, entries 5 (Ric'd), 10 (Robert), and 11 (Wm), County Court, Clarksville, Tenn.; FHL microfilm 0,321,067. For a transcription see, County Court Minutes Book 21: An Enumeration of free white male persons in the county of Montgomery [in] 1841," *TNGenWeb Project* (<http://www.tngenweb.org/montgomery/1841voters.html>).

27. John H. Gwathmey, *Twelve Virginia Counties: Where the Western Migration Began* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1979), 61.

- John Bradberry, separately and jointly with Richard Bradberry, defended suits for debt in 1808, 1809, and 1820.²⁸
- On 24 June 1816 Richard Bradberry received payment for “patrolling” or other public activities.²⁹
- On 27 January 1817 Mary Garnett, a childless sister of John Bradberry’s wife, named four of his daughters, Susanna, Polly, Lucy, and Jane Bradberry—names not appearing among the Tennessee Bradberrys.³⁰ Earlier deeds identify John’s wife as Frances Garnett, daughter of “Achiles” Garnett, and suggest that John married Frances soon after 1797.³¹
- John Bradberry bought land in King William County in 1805 and 1810 and sold land there in 1811, 1816, and 1822.³²

Like those of most “burned” Virginia counties, state copies of King William County’s personal property and land tax records have survived.³³ They reveal details about the Bradberry cluster and their probable kin:

- John Bradberry paid taxes in King William County in 1800 through 1826, when tax liability for his land was transferred to Richard Bradberry “by deed.”³⁴ Whether John died or moved away is unknown.
- Richard Bradberry was taxed in King William County in 1800–26. He died in 1826–27, as his estate was taxed in 1827–43.³⁵

28. King William Co. Court Minute Book, pp. 81 (Richeson v. Richard and John Bradberry), 82 (Richeson v. John Bradberry), 183 (Richeson v. Richard and John Bradberry, continued), 253 (Hill v. John Bradberry and McNab), and 305 (Daniel v. Crow and Bradberry), Clerk of the County Court, King William, Va.; FHL microfilm 1,987,199, item 2.

29. *Ibid.*, unnumbered page near end of book.

30. Garnett to Bradberry, King William Co. Deed Book 7:50, Clerk of the County Court, King William, Va.; FHL microfilm 1,987,190.

31. Garnett to Fleet, King William Co. Deed Book 3:289; FHL microfilm 1,987,187. Bradberry to Smith, King William Co. Deed Book 6:22–23; FHL microfilm 1,988,189. Bradberry to Tuck, King William Co. Deed Book 8:398–99; FHL microfilm 1,987,191.

32. King William Co. Deed Book 5:42 (Redd to McNab); FHL microfilm 1,987,188. King William Co. Deed Book 6:22–23 (Bradberry to Smith) and 104–6 (Garnett and others to Bradberry). King William Co. Deed Book 8:398–99 (Bradberry to Tuck); FHL microfilm 1,987,191. King William Co. Deed Book 8:466–67 (Temple to Bradberry) and 8:468–69 (Tompkins to Bradberry); FHL microfilm 1,987,192.

33. See “Using Land Tax Records in the Archives at the Library of Virginia” and “Using Personal Property Taxes in the Archives of the Library of Virginia,” *Library of Virginia* (http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwehave/land/rn1_landtax.pdf) and (http://www.lva.lib.va.us/whatwehave/tax/rn3_persprop.htm).

34. John Bradberry entries, King William Co. 1800–1, 1804–7, and 1809–26 personal property tax lists and 1805–7 and 1809–26 land tax lists, unpaginated but alphabetized by first letter of surname, Virginia Commissioner of Revenue, Richmond; FHL microfilms 0,032,110 (personal property), 0,029,944 (land, 1805–19) and 0,029,945 (land, 1820–26).

35. Richard Bradberry entries, King William Co. 1801, 1803, 1806, 1809, and 1811–26 personal property tax lists and 1826 land tax list. Richard Bradberry estate entries, King William Co. 1827–43 land tax lists.

Table 4
Suggested Composition of Two Bradberry Households in
King William County, Virginia, in 1830

| | SEX AND AGE IN 1830 | HOUSEHOLD | |
|---------|------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| | | ANN BRADBERRY | HENRY BRADBERRY |
| MALES | under 5 | | James (2) ^a |
| | 5-9 | David (of age in 1848) ^b | |
| | 10-14 | Robert (14) | |
| | 15-19 | Joseph (16) Richard S. (18) | |
| | 20-30 | James F. (20-30) ^c William W. (of age in 1836) ^d John (20) | Henry (30) |
| FEMALES | under 5 | | Elizabeth (4) Susan (2) |
| | 5-9 | | Virginia (6) |
| | 10-14 | Ann Eliza ^e | |
| | 15-19 | | Elizabeth (14) |
| | 20-29 | unknown | |
| | 50-59 | Ann | |

Source: Ann Bradberry household, 1830 U.S. census, King William Co., Va., p. 92, line 23; Henry L Bradberry household, 1830 U.S. census, King William Co., Va., p. 86, line 26; both on National Archives (NA) microfilm M19, roll 201.

a. Numerals in parentheses are ages in 1830 calculated from entries in the 1850 census, which had the same enumeration date (1 June) as the 1830 census. See R. Bradberry, R. Bradberry, J. Bradberry, and H. Bradberry households, 1850 U.S. census, Weakley Co., Tenn., population schedule, District 7, p. 468 (stamped, recto and verso), dwellings/families 33, 36, 37, and 42, respectively; NA microfilm M432, roll 899.

b. David Bradberry entry, 1848, district 7, Weakley Co. Tax Book 2, County Trustee, Dresden, Tenn.; microfilm 1,003,115, Family History Library, Salt Lake City.

c. Jas F Bradberry household, 1840 U.S. census, Weakley Co., Tenn., p. 292, line 22; NA microfilm M704, roll 530; shows James as age 30-39.

d. Wm Bradberry entry, Montgomery Co. 1836 tax list, District 1, p. 352, line 16; Early Tennessee Tax Lists microfilm 7, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

e. If Ann Eliza was the unknown female age 20-29 in the Mrs. A. Bradberry household in 1840, which seems likely, she was age 10-19 in 1830. See Mrs. A. Bradberry household, 1840 U.S. census, Montgomery Co., Tenn., p. 268, line 11; NA microfilm M407, roll 532.

- Ann Bradberry was taxable in 1828–32.³⁶ She probably was Richard’s widow because (1) she was taxed after his death, (2) his wife reportedly was “Ann,” and (3) Ann Eliza Bradberry’s mother was “Nancy” (a nickname for Ann).³⁷
- Thomas Bradberry was taxable in 1817–19, suggesting that he had moved out on his own in 1817. The decrease from two polls to one in Richard Bradberry’s 1816–17 listings suggests that Thomas was Richard’s son. Richard’s increase from one to two polls in 1813–14 implies the son turned sixteen in 1814.³⁸
- Henry L. Bradberry paid taxes in 1820 and 1826–28.³⁹ The first listing indicates he was born before 1804, which is consistent with the Weakley County, Tennessee, “H. Bradberry” enumeration in 1850.⁴⁰
- Robert Bradberry paid taxes in 1827, pointing to his birth before 1811, and agreeing with his Weakley County listing in 1850.⁴¹
- Except for the land in Richard’s estate, tax listings for the above “free white” Bradberrys cease in 1834, consistent with the appearance of Bradberry families in Montgomery County, Tennessee.⁴²

John and Richard Bradberry, both born 1776–94, headed King William County households in 1820. As shown in table 5, Richard’s household configuration could include the Bradberrys who went to Tennessee. Considering only the composition of both households, however, either Richard or John could be their father. Two points tip the scale toward Richard:

- King William County tax and census evidence suggests John and his children left before 1830 and probably in 1826. In contrast, the Bradberrys appearing in Tennessee in 1838 remained in King William County through 1834.
- The King William County tax records imply that Ann was Richard’s widow. Ann (or “Nancy”) is identified directly as mother of two members of the cluster. Her household accounts for them in King William County in 1830.

CONCLUSION

King William County tax lists, its surviving courthouse records, and gleanings from the Tennessee counties of Montgomery and Weakley provide

36. Ann Bradberry entries, King William Co. 1828–32 personal property tax lists.

37. For Ann’s identity as Richard Bradberry’s wife, see Henry Bradberry family Bible record. For Nancy’s identity as Ann Eliza Bradberry’s mother, see Ann Eliza Bradberry will, Montgomery Co. Probate Record J:321.

38. King William Co. 1814 (Richard Bradberry), 1817 (Richard Bradberry and Thomas Bradberry), and 1818–19 (Thomas Bradberry) personal property tax lists.

39. Henry L. Bradberry entries, King William Co. 1820 and 1826–28 personal property tax lists.

40. H. Bradberry household, 1850 U.S. census, Weakley Co., Tenn., pop. sch., District 7, p. 468 (stamped, verso), dwell./fam. 42.

41. Robert Bradberry entry, King William Co. 1827 personal property tax list. R. Bradberry household 1850 U.S. census, Weakley Co., Tenn., pop. sch., District 7, p. 468 (stamped, recto), dwell./fam. 36.

42. Several “free black” Bradbys and Bradberrys sporadically paid King William Co. personal property taxes between 1798 and 1841. Their given names were Edward, Miles, Ned, Patrick, Richard, and William.

Table 5
Suggested Composition of Richard Bradberry Household in 1820

| | SEX AND AGE | IDENTITIES |
|------------|-------------|--|
| MALES | under 10 | Robert (4) ^a |
| | | Joseph (6) |
| | | Richard S. (8) |
| | | John (10) |
| | 10–14 | William W. (of age in 1836) ^b |
| | | James F. (10–20) ^c |
| Henry (20) | | |
| 26–44 | Richard | |
| FEMALES | under 10 | Ann Eliza ^d |
| | 16–26 | unknown |
| | 26–44 | Ann (“Nancy”) |
| | | |

Source: Richard Bradbury household, 1820 U.S. census, King William Co., Va., p. 334, line 8; National Archives (NA) microfilm M33, roll 136.

a. Numerals in parentheses are ages in 1820 calculated from entries in the 1850 census, which had the same enumeration date (1 June) as the 1820 census. See R. Bradberry, J. Bradberry, and H. Bradberry households, 1850 U.S. census, Weakley Co., Tenn., population schedule, District 7, p. 468 (stamped, recto and verso), dwellings/families 33, 36, 37, and 42, respectively; NA microfilm M432, roll 899. For enumeration dates see Ann Bruner Eales and Robert M. Kvasnicka, eds., “Census Records,” in *Genealogical Research in the National Archives of the United States*, 3rd ed. (Washington, D.C.: National Archives and Records Administration, 2000), 24–25.

b. Wm Bradberry entry, Montgomery Co. 1836 tax list, District 1, p. 352, line 16; Early Tennessee Tax Lists microfilm 7, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville.

c. Jas F Bradberry household, 1840 U.S. census, Weakley Co., Tenn., p. 292, line 22; NA microfilm M704, roll 530; shows James as age 30–39.

d. If Ann Eliza was the unknown female age 20–29 in the Mrs. A. Bradberry household in 1840, which seems likely, she was under age 10 in 1820. See Mrs. A. Bradberry household, 1840 U.S. census, Montgomery Co., Tenn., p. 268, line 11; NA microfilm M407, roll 532.

enough data to locate the Virginia origins and parents of John Bradberry who settled in Tennessee and Arkansas. Examining the pieces of evidence separately does not reveal John’s parents or an origin more specific than “Virginia.” Only when fragments of information about a cluster are assembled piece by piece does a picture emerge. Remarkably consistently, the bits support the hypothesis that the men in the Virginia-born cluster in 1850 Tennessee, including John, were born to Richard and Ann Bradberry in King William County, Virginia.

Perhaps the most common genealogical mistake is focusing a search too narrowly. Studying only John Bradberry and records he created would never have revealed his origin. Broadening research to include a cluster of migrating families, however, led to convincing evidence of his birthplace and parents.

GENEALOGICAL SUMMARY

1. **Richard Bradberry** was born about 1775.⁴³ He died in King William County, Virginia, in 1826–27.⁴⁴ Richard married **Ann “Nancy” (née [—?—])**, probably before 1797 if she was mother of all his children.⁴⁵ Born about 1780, Ann headed a household in King William County in 1830 and Montgomery County, Tennessee, in 1840.⁴⁶ She died after 22 November 1843, probably in Tennessee.⁴⁷ The evidence discussed above suggests that Richard had eleven children, born in King William County:

- 2 i. THOMAS BRADBERRY, born about 1797–98.⁴⁸ By 1830 he had settled in Augusta County, Virginia, with a young household.⁴⁹
- 3 ii. HENRY L. BRADBERRY, born 1 April 1801. On 15 April 1821, probably in King William County, he married Susan Taylor, born 7 April 1803 to James and Genie Taylor.⁵⁰
- 4 iii. WILLIAM W. BRADBERRY, born about 1805–10.⁵¹ He married on 19 November 1839 in Montgomery County, Ann Ragsdale.⁵²
- 5 iv. JAMES F. BRADBERRY, born about 1805–10.⁵³
- 6 v. JOHN N. BRADBERRY, born 1809–10. He married, apparently, Sarah A. (née [—?—]), who was born in North Carolina, 1820–21.⁵⁴

43. Richard Bradbury household, 1820 U.S. census, King William Co., Va., p. 314, line 8; NA microfilm M33, roll 136.

44. King William Co. 1826 (Richard Bradberry) and 1827 (Richard Bradberry estate) land tax lists.

45. For Ann's identity as Richard Bradberry's wife, see Henry Bradberry family Bible record. For her nickname “Nancy,” see Ann Eliza Bradberry will, Montgomery Co. Probate Record J:321.

46. Ann Bradberry household, 1830 U.S. census, King William Co., Va., p. 92, line 23. Mrs. A. Bradberry household, 1840 U.S. census, Montgomery Co., Tenn., p. 268, line 11; NA microfilm M407, roll 532.

47. Ann Eliza Bradberry will, Montgomery Co. Probate Record J:321.

48. King William Co. 1814 (Richard Bradberry) and 1817 (Richard Bradberry and Thomas Bradberry) personal property tax lists.

49. Thomas Bradberry household, 1830 U.S. census, Augusta Co., Va., p. 70, line 3; NA microfilm M19, roll 189.

50. Henry Bradberry family Bible record. The record includes birth dates for Henry's older children: Virginia A., 22 November 1824; Elizabeth, 25 July 1826; Susan, 7 February 1828; James, 2 March 1830; and George Enor, 25 December 1831.

51. Richard Bradbury household, 1820 U.S. census, King William Co., Va., p. 314, line 8. Ann Bradberry household, 1830 U.S. census, King William Co., Va., p. 92, line 23. William is not named in either census; his enumeration is inferred from his associations with the Bradberry cluster.

52. Bradberry-Ragsdale marriage record, Montgomery Co. Marriage Record 1:25, County Court, Clarksville, Tenn.; FHL microfilm 0,321,021.

53. Richard Bradbury household, 1820 U.S. census, King William Co., Va., p. 314, line 8. Ann Bradberry household, 1830 U.S. census, King William Co., Va., p. 92, line 23. James is not named in either census; his enumeration is inferred from his associations with the Bradberry cluster.

54. J. Bradberry household, 1850 U.S. census, Weakley Co., Tenn., pop. sch., District 7, p. 468 (stamped, recto), dwell./fam. 37. John Bradberry household, 1860 U.S. census, Greene Co., Ark., pop. sch., Concord Twp., Oak Bluff post office, p. 112, dwell. 670, fam. 655. J. N. Bradberry household, 1870 U. S. census, Greene Co., Ark., pop. sch., Johnson Twp., Big Creek post office, p. 8, dwell./fam. 52.

- 7 vi. RICHARD S. BRADBERRY, born 1811–12. He married, apparently, Elizabeth (née [—?—]), born in Tennessee in 1809–10.⁵⁵
- 8 vii. JOSEPH C. BRADBERRY, born 1813–14.⁵⁶ On 10 September 1852 in Weakley County, Tennessee, he married Mary Ford.⁵⁷
- 9 viii. ROBERT SEMPLE BRADBERRY, born 28 September 1816; died 20 March 1875.⁵⁸ On 24 December 1846 in Montgomery County he married Elizabeth Ann Ford.⁵⁹ Daughter of James and Nancy Ford, she was born in Montgomery County on 22 October 1828.⁶⁰
- 10 ix. ANNELIZA BRADBERRY, born 1816–20.⁶¹ She died unmarried in Montgomery County, between 22 November 1843 and February 1846.⁶²
- 11 x. GEORGE W. BRADBERRY, born 25 December 1822; died 8 February 1881.⁶³ On 18 January 1846 in Montgomery County, he married Sarah E. O'Neal.⁶⁴ Sarah was born 19 December 1828 and died 20 August 1879.⁶⁵ George remained in Montgomery County after most of his brothers moved to Weakley County.⁶⁶
- 12 xi. DAVID BRADBERRY, born 1826–27.⁶⁷

55. R. Bradberry household 1850 U.S. census, Weakley Co., Tenn., pop. sch., District 7, p. 468 (stamped, recto), dwell./fam. 36.

56. J. C. Bradberry household, 1870 U.S. census, Weakley Co., Tenn., pop. sch., Civil District 7, Dresden post office, p. 12, dwell./fam. 72; NA microfilm M593, roll 1570. Joseph Bradbury household, 1880 U.S. census, Clay Co., Ark., pop. sch., Bradshaw Twp., ED 32, sheet 23, dwell. 188, fam. 193; NA microfilm T9, roll 40.

57. Bradberry-Ford marriage record, Weakley Co. Marriage Records 1843–66, p. 28, County Court Clerk, Dresden, Tenn.; FHL microfilm 0,988,668.

58. "Bradberry Cemetery," in *Daughters of the American Revolution James Buckley Chapter, Weakley County, Tennessee: Cemetery Listings*, 2 vols. (Sharon, Tenn., 1980), 1:39.

59. Bradberry-Ford marriage record, Montgomery Co. Marriage Record 1:75.

60. Robert Semple Bradberry family Bible record, in *Old and New Testament translated out of original tongues in Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: John E. Potter, no publication date); photocopy by Carolyn Wilcoxon in author's files.

61. If Ann Eliza was the unknown female in the Mrs. A. Bradberry household in 1840, which seems likely, she was born 1810–20. Correlating that entry with those of females of comparable age in likely Bradberry households in 1830 and 1820 yields 1816–20 as the probable time of her birth. See Mrs. A. Bradbury household, 1840 U.S. census, Montgomery Co., Tenn., p. 268, line 11. Also, Richard Bradbury household, 1820 U.S. census, King William Co., Va., p. 314, line 8; and Ann Bradberry household, 1830 U.S. census, King William Co., Va., p. 92, line 23.

62. Ann Eliza Bradberry will, Montgomery Co. Probate Record J:321.

63. Anita Whitefield Darnell et al., *Cemetery Records of Montgomery County, Tennessee*, 3 vols. (Clarksville, Tenn.: Ideal Publishing, 1965–68), 1:61.

64. Bradberry-O'Neal marriage record, Montgomery Co. Marriage Record 1:14.

65. Darnell et al., *Cemetery Records of Montgomery County, Tennessee*, 1:61.

66. Geo. W. Bradberry household, 1850 U.S. census, Montgomery Co., Tenn., pop. sch. [district not specified], p. 223 (stamped, verso), dwell./fam. 1312; NA microfilm M432, roll 891. G. W. Bradbury household, 1860 U.S. census, Montgomery Co., Tenn., pop. sch., "N & E of Cumberland River," Clarksville post office, p. 390, dwell./fam. 482; NA microfilm M593, roll 1266.

67. David Bradberry entry, list for 1848, Civil District 7, Weakley Co. Tax Book 2, unpaginated but alphabetical within each district, County Trustee, Dresden, Tenn.; FHL microfilm 1,003,115.