

## Chapter 19 Lewis Bratcher Family

The Bratcher family has a long history in Craven County and the Tuscarora area. The estate of **Roger Bratcher** was recorded in Craven County in 1784. An **Abbey Bratcher** married David White in 1788 in Craven County. Numerous Bratcher family members lived in the Tuscarora area in the period before the Civil War.

The Bratcher family cemetery existed in Tuscarora on Tuscarora-Rhems Road at Tomahawk Branch. The cemetery was relocated to the Gethsemane Church about 1970, but no Bratcher markers or dates survive. Only the infant Stewart gravestones survived the relocation.

On a Civil War era map, the Bratcher home appears near Tuscarora on the west side of the Tuscarora Road. (*See map Chapter 25*).

**Durant Bratcher**, born about 1808, appears in the 1840 Craven census in the Tuscarora area. Durant also appears in the estate files of Solomon Wetherington in 1840, purchasing farm implements at the estate auction. Durant Bratcher was buried in the Bratcher cemetery on Tomahawk Branch in Tuscarora but no dates are available.

**Reuben Bratcher**, a turpentine farmer of Tuscarora, appears in the following newspaper account:

*From the Newbern Daily Journal of Commerce, Tuesday, July 23, 1867:*

**Another Murder.** – We are again called upon to record another atrocious murder committed on the person of **Reubin Bratcher** at Bachelor Creek in this county and almost within site of the steeples of this city. The murder was committed on Saturday last while Mr. Bratches [Bratcher] was in the woods chipping turpentine boxes. It is supposed to be the work of . . . . Sturgiss and as the murdered man was one of the most important witnesses against Sturgiss, and as it is not probable he would have been shot for money or valuables at such a distance in the woods while at hard work.

**Lewis Bratcher**, born about 1808, reportedly married **Mary Avery**, born about 1807. <sup>1</sup> Lewis and Mary appear in the 1850, 1860 and 1870 Craven census. Lewis occupation listed in the census was wheelwright and blacksmith. Mary Avery Bratcher died in December 1873 in Tuscarora. A newspaper account of her death exists and a family story relates that Mary Bratcher died from burns received when her dress caught fire while boiling clothes in an outdoor wash pot.<sup>2,3</sup> Lewis married <sup>2nd</sup>, **Louisa Wetherington** on October 29, 1874 in Craven County. <sup>4</sup> Louisa was the daughter of William B. Wetherington. <sup>5</sup> Lewis and Louisa, b.1832, appear in the 1880 Craven census with Matilda Bratcher, age 15, relationship unknown. There were no known children by the <sup>2nd</sup> marriage. <sup>6</sup>

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The children of Lewis Bratcher and Mary Avery were:

1. John L. Bratcher 1837 – married Sarah F. Wetherington on June 6, 1876 in Craven County. The 1880 census lists the couple but no children.
2. Dennis Bratcher 1839 –
3. Caroline Bratcher 1845 – 1927, never married
4. Susan J. Bratcher 1844 – 1923 married Haywood Stewart on October 13, 1885 in Craven County. There were no children by this 2<sup>nd</sup> marriage for Haywood Stewart.
5. Enoch Bratcher 1848 –
6. Harvey Thomas Bratcher (1854– after 1930) married Elizabeth Wetherington on December 14, 1878 in Craven County. The ceremony was performed at the residence of Lewis Bratcher and witnessed by Gus (W. A.) Moore. Elizabeth W. Bratcher died between 1894 -1900 and H. T. Bratcher and children are listed in the 1900 Craven Census. Elizabeth W. Bratcher was buried in the Bratcher cemetery in Tuscarora, but no marker or information survived. Harvey T. Bratcher married 2<sup>nd</sup> Maggie Guthrie on December 25, 1900 in Craven County. The children of Harvey T. Bratcher and Elizabeth Wetherington were:
  - a. Brice M. Bratcher 1879 – 1941 m Mary Vandiford
  - b. Susan Mary Bratcher (1884) - m. Walter D. Jones
  - c. Mark L. Bratcher 1893 - 1966 m. Onnie Smith

The children of Harvey T. Bratcher and Maggie Guthrie were:

- d. Louis Bratcher
  - e. Jenny Bratcher
  - f. Female Bracher married M. P. Marshall
7. Penelope Bratcher 1846– m. Abner Wetherington, the son of Wm. B Wetherington.

The children of Abner Wetherington and Penelope Bratcher were:

- a. Louis Wetherington 1868 –
  - b. Alice Wetherington 1870 –
  - c. Rufus Wetherington 1872 –
  - d. Benjamin H. Wetherington 1874 –
  - e. Victoria Wetherington 1876 –
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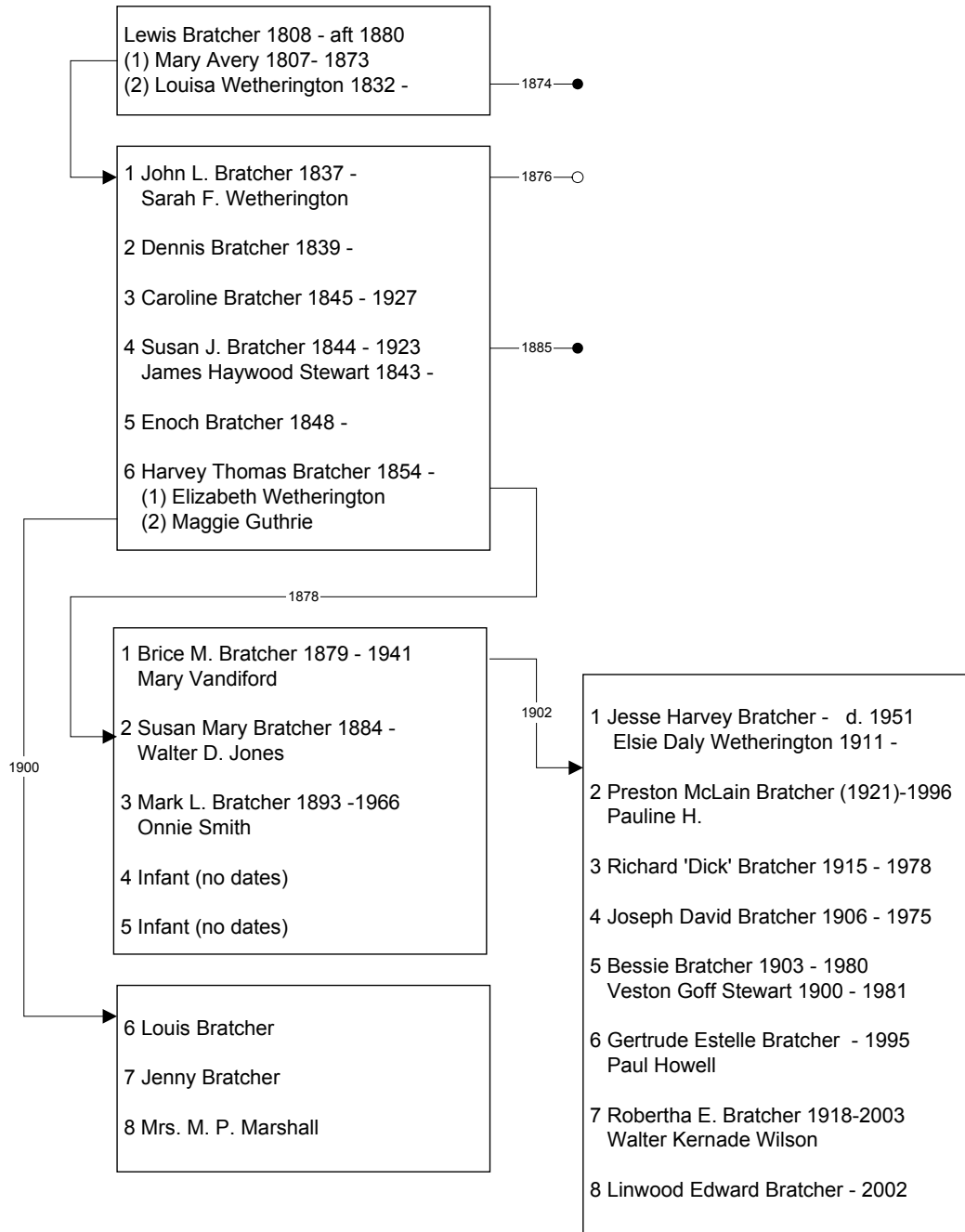
- f. Walter Wetherington 1878 -

**Next Generation**

Brice M. Bratcher, the son of Harvey Thomas Bratcher and Elizabeth Wetherington, married Mary Vandiford on August 23, 1902 in Craven County, NC. Mary M. Vandiford was born on 1880 and died 1960. Brice and Mary are buried in the Greenleaf cemetery in New Bern.

Their children of Brice M. Bratcher and Mary Vandiford were:

- a. Bessie Bratcher 1903 – 1980 m. Veston Goff Stewart 1900 - 1981
  - b. Joseph David Bratcher – 1906 – 1975 m. Cleo Grimes Register 1908-1980
  - c. Jesse Harvey Bratcher d. 1951 m. Elsie Daly Wetherington 1911 -
  - d. Gertrude Estelle Bratcher 1912 – 1995 m. Paul Howell 1915 - 1991
  - e. Richard “Dick” Bratcher 1915 – 1978 m. Margaret Dowdy
  - f. Roberta Elizabeth Bratcher 1918-2003 m. Walter K. Wilson 1913-1983
  - g. Preston McLain Bratcher (1921) – 1996 m. Pauline H.
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**Figure 44 Lewis Bratcher Family Tree**