

ANCESTRY OF CAPTAIN NATHANIEL PRYOR

By Glenna Parker Middlebrooks and Elizabeth Pryor Harper*

The earliest known record of Nathaniel Pryor, "1st Sergeant"¹ in the Lewis and Clark expedition, is that of his marriage to Margaret (Peggy) Patton in Jefferson County, Kentucky, May 17, 1798.² It is estimated that each was about twenty-three years of age.

Through Floyd family data it has been established that Nathaniel was a son of John and Nancy (Floyd) Pryor of Amherst County, Virginia.³ Certainly Nancy was a daughter of William and Abidiah (Davis) Floyd of that county, but John's parentage has never been documented. Proof that Nathaniel had brothers and sisters comes from the will of James Pryor, drawn in New Orleans on Christmas Day, 1814, and probated in Jefferson County, Kentucky, August 13, 1822.⁴ The heirs named were James Gilly, son of John B. Gilly, one thousand dollars at maturity; brothers, Robert L. Pryor and Nathaniel Pryor; Robert McClelland; sisters, Jane B. Gilly and Eliza Oldham. After James Gilly's one thousand dollars were taken from the estate, other parties mentioned were to have equal shares of the remainder. Robert McClelland had married Nancy Pryor, who was deceased at the time the will was made. James Gilly was James Pryor's namesake as well as his nephew. John B. Gilly was named executor.

Peggy Patton, Nathaniel's bride, was the middle daughter of the three born to James and Mary (Doherty?) Patton, and the whole family is known to have been with the "settlin' folk" who left Redstone Old Fort with George Rogers Clark and his Illinois-

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¹ Donald Jackson, editor, *Letters of the Lewis and Clark Expedition with Related Documents, 1793-1854*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962), p. 645. Hereinafter referred to as *Letters and Documents*.

² Jefferson County, Kentucky, Marriage Records, Book 1, p. 30.

³ Floyd family data compiled by Elizabeth Pryor Harper, Shreveport, Louisiana; Anna M. Cartlidge, Baltimore, Maryland, Floyd family genealogist; Colonel Floyd Farrar, (deceased) great-great-grandson of Mary Lee Floyd, a sister of Sergeant Charles Floyd, only casualty of the Lewis and Clark expedition.

⁴ James Pryor's will, Jefferson County, Kentucky, Will Book 2, p. 183.

bound militia on May 12, 1778.⁵ Peggy's older sister was named Martha, her younger, Mary.

In Kentucky, James Patton had large holdings in and about Louisville, where he was a town trustee and active in the affairs of the settlement.⁶ He built a stone mansion and in 1797, when the office of falls pilot was created by law, it was decreed that the Jefferson County Court appoint only competent men to the place. Captain Patton was the first man chosen for the new position.

No description of Nathaniel Pryor's physical appearance has been found. In his official military record men listed along with him are identified as to age, birthplace, height, color of eyes and hair, complexion and occupation before entering military service. For Captain Pryor every space is blank. Only his service record is given, and much of it is almost illegible.

A descendant of one of his later marriages said, "I never saw a man in the Pryor branch of my family who was not rather handsome. They were gentlemen, too, always kind and thoughtful toward everyone."⁸ While family characteristics and physical features are not always identifiable in offspring, the following description of Nathaniel's uncle, Colonel John Floyd, brother of Nancy Pryor, is interesting: "Colonel Floyd was . . . over six feet high, very military in his bearing, of beautiful appearance, exceedingly agreeable . . ., an impressive manner that gave him great influence."⁹

Through his grandmother, Abidiah (Davis) Floyd, Nathaniel is said to have descended from Nicketti, a sister of Pocahontas. William and Abidiah Floyd moved to Kentucky from Virginia and were still living in Jefferson County in 1800. Although they were past ninety years of age, they were "erect and handsome—the wife with fine, calm, bright eyes and white teeth, with all

⁵ Isabel McLenna McMeekin, *Louisville, the Gateway City*, Messner, Inc.

⁶ Reuben Thomas Durrett, *The Centenary of Louisville*, (Louisville: John E. Morton and Company), printed for the Filson Club, 1893.

⁷ Military service record of Nathaniel Pryor, General Services Administration (GSA), Washington, D.C.

⁸ Statement by Elizabeth Pryor Harper, Shreveport, Louisiana.

⁹ In making a xerox copy of this source the title of the book was inadvertently omitted. The author of the biographical sketch of Colonel Floyd says he "gathered the facts in this sketch from records of the land office in Kentucky, from depositions of contemporaries of Col. Floyd, from recent letters of his granddaughter, Mrs. Lettic P. Lewis, of Va., and from other manuscript and printed sources gathered with much labor. H.H.C.," pp. 238-239. The rare book is in the library at Mississippi State University, Starkville, Mississippi.

the countenance, high bearing, courage and composure which characterized noble forest ancestry.¹⁰

An unproven point which may be accepted as valid is that Nathaniel's and Peggy's marriage was of short duration. On June 18, 1803, Meriwether Lewis, in writing instructions to William Clark in Louisville, Kentucky, stipulated that in receiving applications for membership in the expedition which the two were to lead to the Pacific, he was to consider only those men who were "good hunters, stout, healthy, unmarried men, accustomed to the woods, and capable of bearing bodily fatigue in a pretty considerable degree."¹¹ So on October 29, 1803, when he enlisted for service in the expedition,¹² Nathaniel Pryor's marital status was that of a single man, due no doubt to the death of his young wife, for divorce was very rare.

No record of children by this marriage has been found, but some members of the Pryor-Floyd families think there was a son. They base their conclusion on sketches of the life of Nathaniel (Miguel) Pryor, who is said to have been born near the Falls of the Ohio in 1798.¹³ An account states that in 1820 he went to Missouri and by 1821 he was with trader Hugh Glenn who had located on the Verdigris either with or near Captain Pryor.¹⁴

Independent accounts of the travels of both Jacob Fowler¹⁵ and General Thomas James¹⁶ leave no question as to the identity of the Nathaniel Pryor who was with them: He was the one who had served with Lewis and Clark. Pryor traveled with one party or the other—at times the two were combined—from September 21, 1821, to June 20, 1822, before he returned to his post on the Verdigris River. Where Nathaniel (Miguel) Pryor was at this time is not known, but a line from the diary of Colonel Auguste Pierre Chouteau, April 4, 1824, provides some basis for the belief that Miguel, as he was known later, was still with the man said to be his father. Colonel Chouteau's entry read: "Young Pryor came by the place [where Nathaniel Philbrook, sub-agent, had been murdered] a few days later, and discovering Philbrook's

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ Jackson, *Letters and Documents*, p. 58.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 378.

¹³ Raymond W. Settle and Ward Lund "Two Nathaniel Pryors, a Problem of Identity," Ms. Library, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ *Journal of Jacob Fowler*, Elliott Coues, ed., 1898.

¹⁶ Grant Foreman, *Frontier Days in the Early Southwest* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1926), p. 48-49-52.

horse, saddle bags and 'cloque' learned the sad story of his death."¹⁷

Colonel Chouteau, born in 1786,¹⁸ was approximately eleven years younger than Captain Pryor, who in 1824 was nearly fifty years old. At the age of thirty-eight Chouteau would not have spoken of a man of fifty as "Young Pryor." Nor could the discoverer of the foul play have been a son by Pryor's Osage wife for dates showing his presence in other localities indicate that Pryor's marriage to the Indian woman did not take place till about 1818.

Nathaniel (Miguel) Pryor is said to have lived in New Mexico four years before he joined the Patties in their excursion through the West. He left them in California to settle in the Los Angeles area, and it was there that he became Miguel, el Paltero, because he worked as a silversmith and clockmaker. He married a Mexican girl, raised a family and lived the remainder of his life in the vicinity. In 1847 he served as city alderman, and in 1850 he died, nineteen years after Captain Pryor's death on the Verdigris.

Identified as one of the "nine young men from Kentucky"¹⁹ who enlisted with Lewis and Clark, Nathaniel Pryor served from October 20, 1803, until the company disbanded in St. Louis on October 1, 1806.²⁰ For this stint of three years—lacking ten days—he drew \$250.78 plus a certificate showing that he was entitled to a tract of 320 acres of land which he was to choose in the territory west of the Mississippi River.²¹

On the following February 27th, Pryor enlisted in the First Infantry, U.S. Army, with the rank of ensign.²² Soon afterward he was assigned the duty of returning Chief Sheheke and his party to their Mandan village on the Upper Missouri.²³ In spite of great tact and courage on the part of Pryor and others of the escort, they were forced to turn back because of the hostility of

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 210.

¹⁸ Jackson, *Letters and Documents*, p. 412.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 118.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 378.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 377.

²² Military service record of Nathaniel Pryor, GSA, Washington, D. C.

²³ Jackson, *Letters and Documents*, pp. 383-84. (The accepted Anglicized form of the name of the Mandan, a Siouan tribe, chief mentioned here is *Shahaka*, found in Government bulletins and original documents. The native spelling is *Sheheke*, meaning "coyote," a form seldom seen in historical accounts.—F. H. Hodge, *Handbook of American Indians*, Bureau of American Ethnology, *Bulletin* 30, (Washington: 1912, Vol. II, p. 518.)

the allied Arikaras and Sioux, who were at war with the Mandans.²⁴ His next assignment was at Cantonment Belle Fontaine, where he was promoted to second lieutenant on May 8, 1808. In August of that year Lieutenant Alpha Kingsley was sent up the Mississippi to establish a new post, Fort Madison, and Pryor went with him as second in command.²⁵ Early in 1809 the new fortification was threatened by marauding Indians, and Pryor was sent to St. Louis with an urgent request for aid. However, the alarm proved false, and the relief troop sent by Governor Meriwether Lewis returned after a disagreeable and useless errand.

Possibly by this time Second Lieutenant Pryor was beginning to feel that misfortune was too much with him, or he may have become interested in the stories of quick riches from the lead mines at Galena, Illinois, up river from Fort Madison, but whatever the cause he resigned his commission with the army on April 1, 1809.²⁶ From that time to January 1, 1812, there is slight record of his whereabouts. On the latter date a swarm of angry Winnebagoes rose from their lodges along Rock River, plundered the mining-smelting operation he had set up and killed two of the friendly Indians who worked for him.²⁷ At first it was reported that Pryor was slain, along with George Hunter, a fellow miner-trader, but later it was learned that both men, on being warned by an Indian woman, escaped down the Mississippi—minus all of their possessions. Pryor estimated his loss at more than five thousand dollars.²⁸

A part of the time between April 1, 1809, and January 1, 1812, is accounted for by a family legend which pride has hushed for more than a century and a half. At the time he left the army Pryor had relatives—Pryors possibly, Floyds certainly—in Georgia. According to the 1850 census records for Jefferson County, Kentucky, Eliza (Pryor) Oldham—she of the James Pryor will—was born in Georgia in 1794, and in 1818 a John Pryor paid taxes in Oglethorpe County, Georgia. Also known to be in the same county was Mourning (Floyd) Stewart, only child by the first marriage of Nathaniel's uncle, John Floyd. Years before in Virginia she had become the wife of Charles Stewart, and with his mother the young couple had moved to Georgia where all of them settled on bounty lands which came to them through the service of John Stewart, husband and father, who

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 432-38.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 642.

²⁶ Military service record of Nathaniel Pryor, GSA, Washington D. C.

²⁷ Jackson, *Letters and Documents*, p. 642.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 641.

participated in the battle of Point Pleasant and in the Revolutionary War.²⁹

About the time Nathaniel Pryor left for Fort Madison the William Melton family lived in Greene and later Putnam County, Georgia. Melton was a leading citizen in whatever community he lived. He was a zealous Baptist, a rigidly strict father of numerous progeny, and a colonel in the Georgia militia. Sharing command with Colonel Lamar he led his unit in the capture of Fort Fideus, Greene County, Georgia,³⁰ a move made to circumvent General Elijah Clark's efforts to aid Citizen Genet.

Among Colonel Melton's several children was a pretty daughter, Nancy, who was born July 10, 1789. According to Putnam County records Nancy married William Pryor on February 23, 1811.³¹ The name of the groom, however, has come down through five generations of Meltons as William Nathaniel. He was called the latter which was not perpetuated among his descendants because among them the name meant dishonor for he left his bride within a few weeks, saying he was going back to Kentucky for fine horses by which he would improve Georgia stock. In the community it was whispered about that he would not return for he could not tolerate his over-pious Melton in-laws. The rumor proved correct—he did not return.

Seven years Nancy waited for him, but in 1818 she asked for and was granted a divorce by the Georgia State Legislature.³² The parties named were Nancy S. Pryor and William H. Pryor, her husband. Descendants of William Stokes Pryor, son by this marriage, born November 15, 1811, say the printed record now available is incorrect. According to Georgia State Library officials there is no copy of the original, handwritten minutes to show if the initial *H.* was mistakenly transcribed from the letter *N.*

Possibly it was the report that her wayward husband had become a "squaw man" in Arkansas Territory that caused Nancy to sue for a divorce. However that may be the story did seal Nathaniel's fate as a skeleton in the Melton family closet. Except in private family sessions his name was not mentioned again, and Stokes was left in Putnam County with his great-uncle, Thomas Melton, when William and family moved to Walton County.

About 1912 Robert Quarles Pryor, son of William Stokes

²⁹ Letter from Anna M. Carlidge, Floyd family genealogist, to Glenna Parker Middlebrooks, October 25, 1964.

³⁰ Richard K. Murdah, *The Georgia-Florida Frontier, 1793-1796* (University of California Publications in History, 1951), p. 152.

³¹ Copy of original marriage certificate, Putnam County, Georgia.

³² *Georgia State Senate Journal*, December, 1818, p. 62.

Pryor, was a resident of Perry County, Alabama, and patriarch of the clan, when he learned that there was to be an observance of some kind in Oklahoma in which his "black sheep" grandfather was to be honored. Resentful, but curious, he thought the matter over and curiosity triumphed. He called his aging sisters and adult children together, told them that he was going to attend the celebration and warned them that they were to tell no one of his trip.

At the event he listened attentively to speeches eloquently detailing a character very different from the one in the Melton closet. He talked with visiting dignitaries and local people, gathering all of the information he could to take back to his waiting family.

In the cool shade of the deep porch about his Alabama home he recounted his experiences to the close kin he had taken into his confidence. He told them of a strange Nathaniel who was a courageous ambassador for peace between frightened, warring and frequently starving Indians in an alien land. He told of the terrible misfortunes that plagued the steps of this worthy man—how he worked tirelessly without recognition and with little or no pay. Frontiersman Nathaniel was honored among both white men and red for his high principles, his adamant sense of justice. When Robert finished, there was a long moment of stunned silence. Was he trying to shape *honor* from the disgraceful black stain on the family escutcheon?

"Well," daughter Zula finally voiced the concern of the group, "I suppose you told those people that you are Nathaniel Pryor's grandson?"

"No," Robert replied, the complete Melton again, "I could not acknowledge that with pride. The taint is still there."³³

On August 30, 1813, Nathaniel Pryor re-enlisted in the army, this time with the Forty-fourth Infantry. Going in as first lieutenant he served through the remainder of the War of 1812 and came out with a captaincy and an honorable discharge on June 15, 1815.³⁴ Following that there was another lapse of almost two years in which there is no record of his whereabouts, but subsequent events indicate that he may have returned to Kentucky then by way of St. Louis gone to Osage country.

That he was in Kentucky at this time is supported by a legend which originated with the Cherokees, who in 1829 occupied an area in Arkansas Territory formerly held by the Osages. There in the hands of French traders and mixed bloods they found a number of excellent horses which were said to be from fine stock

³³ Elizabeth Pryor Harper, fifth generation descendant of William H. (N.?) Pryor and Nancy (Melton) Pryor.

³⁴ Military service record of Nathaniel Pryor, GSA, Washington, D. C.

brought from Kentucky by a trader named Pryor.³⁵ This represents achievement of intentions expressed by William H. (N?) Pryor when he left his young wife, Nancy, in Georgia in 1811. Seemingly he changed only his point of delivery, possibly unwilling to go back to the staid, over-prim orthodoxy he found in his in-law family in Georgia and at the same time lured irresistibly by the thought of free life on the new frontier.

That he was in St. Louis before he arrived in Osage territory seems probable since tradition says that Pryor came to the Nation as a representative of Chouteau's trading establishment.³⁶ Certainly he had known the famous French traders since the winter of 1803-1804, when the Lewis and Clark "Corps of Discovery" was formed at the Wood River base and members of the group frequented the town. In 1807, when Ensign Pryor commanded the military escort assigned to conduct Chief Sheheke and his party back to their village on the Upper Missouri, he also provided some material and protection for Lieutenant Auguste Pierre Chouteau, his crewmen and a large boat of trade goods.³⁷ Chouteau now supervised trade with the Osages along the Verdigris and Grand (Neosho) Rivers with a post and handsome residence on the latter, only ten miles from where Pryor would settle on the Verdigris one and one-half miles above its junction with the Arkansas River.

The earliest record of Pryor's activities among the Osages locates him at Arkansas Post in 1817, two years after he left service at the end of the War of 1812. At the Post he and his partner, Samuel B. Richardson, had a trading house and shared ownership of a tract of land with George R. Sampson.³⁸ On November 28, 1819, he received a license from Robert Crittenden, acting-governor of Arkansas Territory, to trade with the Osages on the Arkansas River "with one trading boat to the six bull or Verdigris, together with all hands appertaining thereto."

The exact date of his removal from Arkansas Post to the site on the Verdigris is unknown, but the English scientist, Thomas Nuttall, met him on the Arkansas "descending with cargoes of furs and peltries, collected among the Osages."³⁹ This was in March, 1819, and in May Nuttall met him again at the "little trading settlement" of Three Forks, so called because of its proximity

³⁵ Joseph B. Thoburn, "New Light on the Career of Captain Nathaniel Pryor," *Proceedings of the Society at Its Sixty-fourth Annual Meeting*, Publications of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison, 1917, p. 145.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 143.

³⁷ Jackson, *Letters and Documents*, 1962, p. 382.

³⁸ Grant Foreman, "Nathaniel Pryor," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 7, 1929.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 154.

to the junction of the Verdigris, the Grand and the Arkansas Rivers.

It was during his residence here that travelers through the area began to speak of Pryor's Osage wife. It is generally assumed that the two met and married in this vicinity, but other events indicate that such conclusion might bear further investigation.

According to tradition the marriage took place "Osage style" in the presence of assembled band to which the bride belonged. Except for the following church record from St. Mary's Mission, Marmeton, Kansas, there is no mention of her name: ⁴⁰

1841, Nov. 11, *Mary Jane*, daughter of Capt. Pryor and Osage woman. Sponsors Francois Chikive Argurite, Osage Nation, baptized at Marmeton, aged 17 years.

1841, Nov. 11, *Angelique dicta* (Capt. Pryor's) Osinga; sponsors, Jos. Swiss and P. Melicours Papin at Marmeton, aged 55 years. -Rev. H. G. Aelon, S. J.

1842, Sept. 1, Rev. J. F. L. Verryds, S. J.: "I have baptized without ceremonies *Marie Prior* 24 yrs. at Osage River."

The baptismal rites took place ten or eleven years after Captain Pryor's death on the Verdigris about June 10, 1831. ⁴¹ In spite of the spelling of the surname, a common error in Nathaniel's record, Marie Prior is accepted as being a daughter of Captain Pryor and Osinga. If she was, her parents had met by 1817, or before if she was not the oldest child. Possibly they married on the Osage then went to Three Forks.

The Osage Rolls contain clues for tracing the descendants of Pryor and Osinga, but links are missing. Among listings which seem most significant are: "Allottee No. 251 He-he-kin-to-op-pe, Jan. 1, 1894 Full (Mary Jane Pryor); 450 (Mary Pryor) Jan. 1, (dead)." ⁴²

Franklin County, Missouri, marriage records show that on March 17, 1849, Mary Jane Pryor was married to Charles Alderman. ⁴³ This fragment introduces the thought that if Mary Jane of the marriage records and Mary Jane of the Rolls are the same person, she was back at the place of her birth seventy years later, and in so doing she may have been following a pattern set by her

⁴⁰ *The Church Registers—Osage Indian Mission, Upper Missouri Indians, St. Mary's, Kansas.* Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri.

⁴¹ Foreman, "Nathaniel Pryor," p. 155.

⁴² Data from *Osage Rolls*. (The term "Full" here means "full blood," or a full blood Osage.—Ed.)

⁴³ See reference in, 40 *supra*.

mother in her return to the Marmeton-Osage area after Captain Pryor's death.

Allottee No. 460, William Pryor, was a son of William Pryor (Quiver) and his wife Mary.⁴⁴ In Quiver's household, likely in the 1880's, there were two sisters, Rosie and Julia (Sacred-Arrow-Shaft) Pryor, who wore "the prissy clothes of the Heavy Eyebrows of the day."⁴⁵ Among their forebears was Baptiste Maugraine (Mongrain), son—or grandson—of a French trader and an Osage beauty but Rosie and Julia had little French blood. Since they lived with Quiver's family and bore his surname, they may have been related to him but the nature of the kinship is unknown.

There were two Maugrains who bore the name Baptiste: they were of different generations—uncle and nephew—with the young man being the son of Joseph Noel Maugraine. The senior Baptiste was fifty years old when Tixier visited the Osages in 1839-1840. The other was considerably younger for his father, Joseph Noel, though head of his lodge and a brave warrior, was regarded by the senior Baptiste as too young to have a voice in the councils. Which of the two Baptiste's was Julia's forefather is not recorded, but one might hazard the younger for he had a sister named Julia.⁴⁶

Also young Baptiste had a sister named Sophia, who married P. Melicours Papin,⁴⁷ sponsor for Osinga when she became a member of the Catholic Church. A son of Joseph Marie and Marie Louise (Chouteau) Papin, P. Melicours was forty-eight years old, seven years younger than Osinga at the time of the baptizing. Eight years later he died in St. Louis and left a will in which he bequeathed a lot to the Catholic Church in Papinsville, Bates County, Missouri, and all the remainder of the land he owned in the county plus three thousand dollars to his son, P. Melicours, whose mother was Mitiehais, an Osage woman.⁴⁸

Sophia, sister of the younger Baptiste Maugraine, was wife of P. Melicours, Senior, in 1840, and twenty-three years his junior. They had a two-year-old son, Edward, and living with them was Sophia's mother, Achinga, "who did the cooking."⁴⁹ Both

⁴⁴ Letter from B.C. Schrock, acting-superintendent, Osage Agency, Pawhuska, Oklahoma, February 8, 1966 to Glenna P. Middlebrooks.

⁴⁵ John Joseph Mathews, *The Osages, Children of the Middle Waters* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), p. 767.

⁴⁶ John Francis McDermott, ed., *Tixier's Travels on the Osage Praries—1839-1840*, p. 123n.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 119.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 118.

Achinga and Osinga are phonetic spelling of the word A-ci'n-ga, which means "fourth daughter."⁵⁰ In an Osage family formal names were given to the first three daughters born to a man and wife so any who had a fourth daughter probably would have an Achinga—or Osinga, depending on the ear of the French recorder. There are two different records of Papin's mother-in-law. Perhaps neither tells the whole story.

After the War of 1812 long wagon trains of immigrants came down the Osage Trail and lesser roads joining it. Jolting in before Osage footprints were cool, these land-hungry Anglo-Americans claimed title to the lands their beneficent government had wrested from the red men by treaty. Somewhere among these restless seekers for new opportunity were the Shobes, who touched mysteriously on the Pryor story. In the county clerk's office at Sherman, Grayson County, Texas, there is record of an adoption which shows that Maud Williams (full name according to family tradition, Maud S. Pryor Williams) signed over her small daughter, Lizzie, to C. W. and S. W. Shobe, who made affidavit that "we hereby adopt and give unto this child our name calling it Lizzie Shobe and giving it all rights and privileges of our own child constituting it our legal heir having the right to inherit our lands and property at our death."⁵¹

There is a story that Maud S. Pryor Williams was ill from milkleg, usually associated with childbirth, and did not expect to recover. Her husband, Frank Williams, was not with her and his absence is unexplained. Also unknown is the fate of a younger child, possibly an infant, called Omah.

The Shobes took Lizzie as their "own child" on November 27, 1882.⁵² In March, 1883, Charles W. Shobe, with little Lizzie, went to San Antonio, Texas, where she was left in a Catholic orphanage.⁵³ As Lizzie recalled in her later years she was seven years old at the time and for the next eleven years she had no communication with anyone in the outside world. She never knew what became of her mother or her small sister, nor did she ever hear from the Shobes again.

The Dallas County Census, 1900, shows Lizzie married to Henry L. Cooper and her birth date and place as 1879, Indian Territory, which represents a slight discrepancy in Lizzie's think-

⁵⁰ Letters from John Joseph Mathews, Pawhuska, Oklahoma, September 27, 1966.—(Notes) from Lenore Harrington, Librarian, Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis, Missouri, September 22, 1968.

⁵¹ Grayson County, Texas, Adoption Records, Book 58, p. 6.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Letters from Emmaline (Herrimaen) Giles, Reno, Nevada, to Glenna Parker Middlebrooks, January 20, 1966; October 14, 1966.

ing concerning her age. If she is to be credited with her recollections of her early life, however, she would have been nearer seven than three at the time of her adoption. Also it does not seem likely that the authorities at the orphanage would have released a fourteen-year-old girl who had no relatives to give a home.

By 1920 Lizzie had married again, this time to a man by the name of Herrimaen, and she had children by both husbands. To these children she tried to pass on what she could recall of her mother's story: "Maud's father was an Indian chief, her mother could not speak English, and her great-grandfather was a white man named Nathaniel Pryor. The town Pryor, Oklahoma, was named for him." Because of her ancestry she had "rights." Lizzie recalled that a man by the name of Burnett came to the Williams' home occasionally and brought money, which in her mature years, she felt was an allotment.

After the death of her second husband Lizzie went to California to live near her two older Cooper daughters who had moved there. While the family was out driving one day, they came to the intersection of Wilshire and Western in Los Angeles and saw Jackson Barnett, eccentric Creek oil millionaire, carrying out his self-assigned task of directing traffic. At once Lizzie recognized him as the man who brought money to her family when she was a child. Instead of trying to get in touch with him she hurried back to Maud, Oklahoma, which she thought was named for her mother. She found no clue concerning Maud S. Pryor Williams, but she heard that the Shobes had been there, leased land to an oil company then Mr. Shobe had died and his wife had moved away, no one knew where.

Lizzie returned to Los Angeles, for she did not know how to proceed further her search. A young lawyer listened to her story and promised to help her, but before they made any progress, Pearl Harbor was bombed, and he was called into service. While he was away, Lizzie died.⁵⁴

Maud S. Pryor Williams' grandchildren are still trying to untangle the fragile thread of lineage which Lizzie gave them, but the raven fate which seemed to hover over Captain Pryor throughout his life plagues his tradition with equal persistence so an anxious posterity may never find a firm link with this worthy but mysterious man.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*