

Elizabeth Melone Linthicum and her Coverlet  
Linda Horton, 14 April 2021

This framed square of quilted blue cloth, decorated with a red bird and plants, has been hanging on my living room wall for many years, at a spot where I can see it daily yet where it is untouched by sunlight. The blue background and red wool threads may be as bright as they were in 1840 when my great great great grandmother Elizabeth Melone completed a coverlet<sup>1</sup> of 16 squares, including this one of a red bird, 181 years ago as I write this in 2021. For the nearly half century in which I have owned this framed bird image, I have loved it, even before family history became my passion.



This is a story of the coverlet and the woman who made it. Useful clues are found on a sheet of paper taped to the backside of my bird square. Dated November 1971, it says:

This is one of sixteen squares from a coverlet made by Mrs. Thomas Prather Linthicum [Jr] at her home in Bardstown, Kentucky, [in approximately] 1840.

She, Elizabeth Melone, married Judge Thomas Prather Linthicum [Jr] and they, with their daughter Josephine and her husband Ludwell McKay and their family, made their home at Edgewood from 1855 until 1902.

Ludwell and Josephine McKay's children were—

Lizzie Vernon married Charles Bryan.

Hugh Lacy married Myra Cox.

Allan Vaughn married Myrtle Troutman.

Ludwell Edwin never married.

Florence Earle married George D. Shadburne.

This coverlet has been in the keeping of Elizabeth Melone [Bryan] and Aileen Lacy Bryan, daughters of Lizzie Vernon McKay and Charles Bryan, and in 1970 they divided it so that many of the descendants of Mrs. Linthicum could see and appreciate the handiwork of their very talented ancestor.



The framed bird square shown above is owned by my third cousin, Cecilia Allen "C'Allen" McKay Chauvin, who displays it in her home in Louisville, Kentucky. The description on the back of C'Allen's square differs from mine only in adding lineage information relevant to the couple who were recipients of the square, my mother's second cousin Arch Cox McKay and his wife, Kathryn Barber McKay. Their oldest child, C'Allen, who was born in 1937, now owns the bird square.<sup>ii</sup>

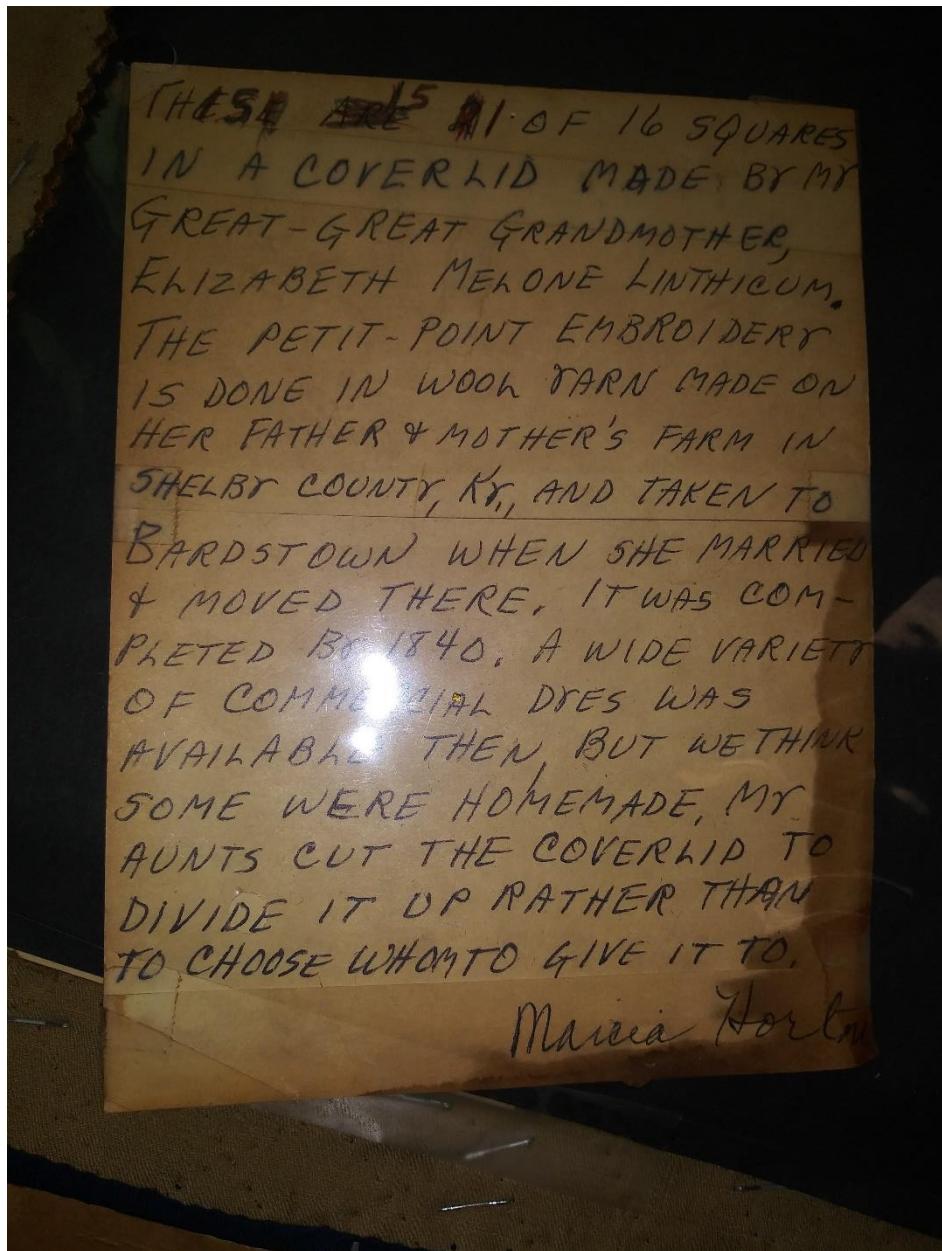


Elizabeth Melone's handiwork was not limited to depictions of birds. My sister Robin Horton Bauer of Jacksonville, Alabama, owns a framed square illustrated by an image of a vase of flowers. Unlike each of the bird squares, which had on its reverse side a page on which one of my great aunts had typed explanations of the origin of this fabric art, my sister Robin's vase-of-flowers square has on its back the following undated explanation, in hand-written print recognizable as that of our mother, Marcia Bryan Horton (1916-2007):

This is 1 of 16 squares of a coverlid made by my great-great grandmother Elizabeth Melone Linthicum. The petit-point embroidery is done in wool yarn made on her father's and mother's farm in Shelby County, [Kentucky], and taken to Bardstown when she married and moved there. It was completed by 1840. A wide variety of commercial dyes was available then, but we think some were homemade. My aunts cut the coverlid to divide it up rather than to choose whom to give it to.

[Signed] Marcia Horton

"Coverlet" and "coverlid" are interchangeable terms that derive from the Middle English word "coverlite," which in turn is from Anglo-French "coverlit."<sup>iii</sup> The word combines the French words for cover, "covre," and for bed. A coverlet is an extra layer of bedding used for decoration or extra warmth on top of a comforter or bedspread, often a smaller and lighter alternative to other bedding options.



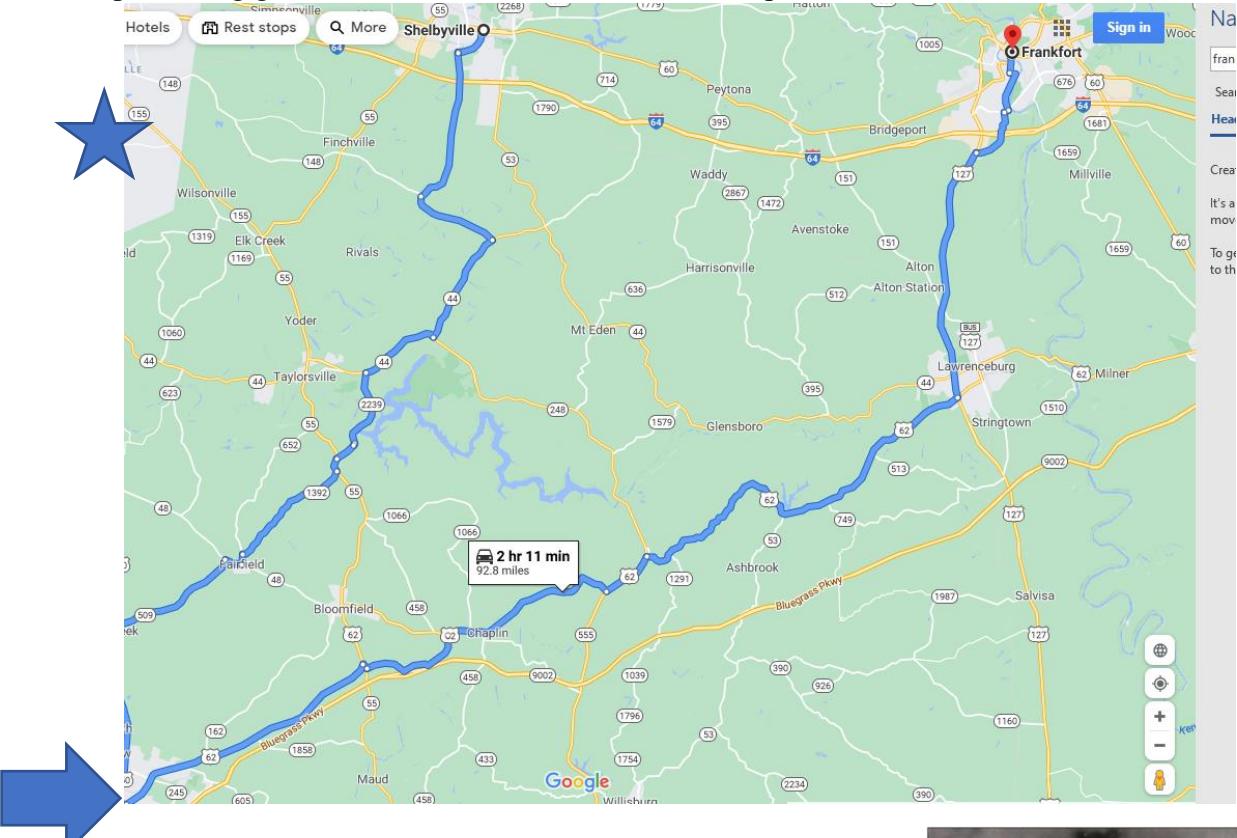
### Elizabeth's Early Life, Her Family, and Where They Lived



Elizabeth Melone was born on 16 December 1810, in Shelby County, Kentucky, the daughter of Drury Melone<sup>iv</sup> and Sarah Hicks Melone. She was the tenth of their 13 children. Elizabeth married Thomas Prather Linthicum, Jr. (1807-1874) on 24 November 1830, in Shelby County, which lies between Louisville and Lexington. T.P., as he was known, was born on his parents' farm in Nelson County, Kentucky, and, according to his obituary,<sup>v</sup> at age 16 began regular six-mile trips by horseback to St. Joseph's College in Bardstown, the county seat of Nelson County. Later he studied law with a well-known local judge. Bardstown is a small city 40 miles south of Louisville. Today Louisville is the most populous city in Kentucky, but in

the first U.S. census, enumerated in 1790, Bardstown had a slightly larger population, 216 persons to Louisville's 200.<sup>vi</sup> "Almost from the first, Bardstown had a position in national affairs out of all proportion to its size. Though located in what was at that time a frontier community, it developed a life far removed from the gun-toting, rummaging settlements with which the early days in Kentucky are usually associated."<sup>vii</sup> Bardstown was known for excellent schools and a lively social life.

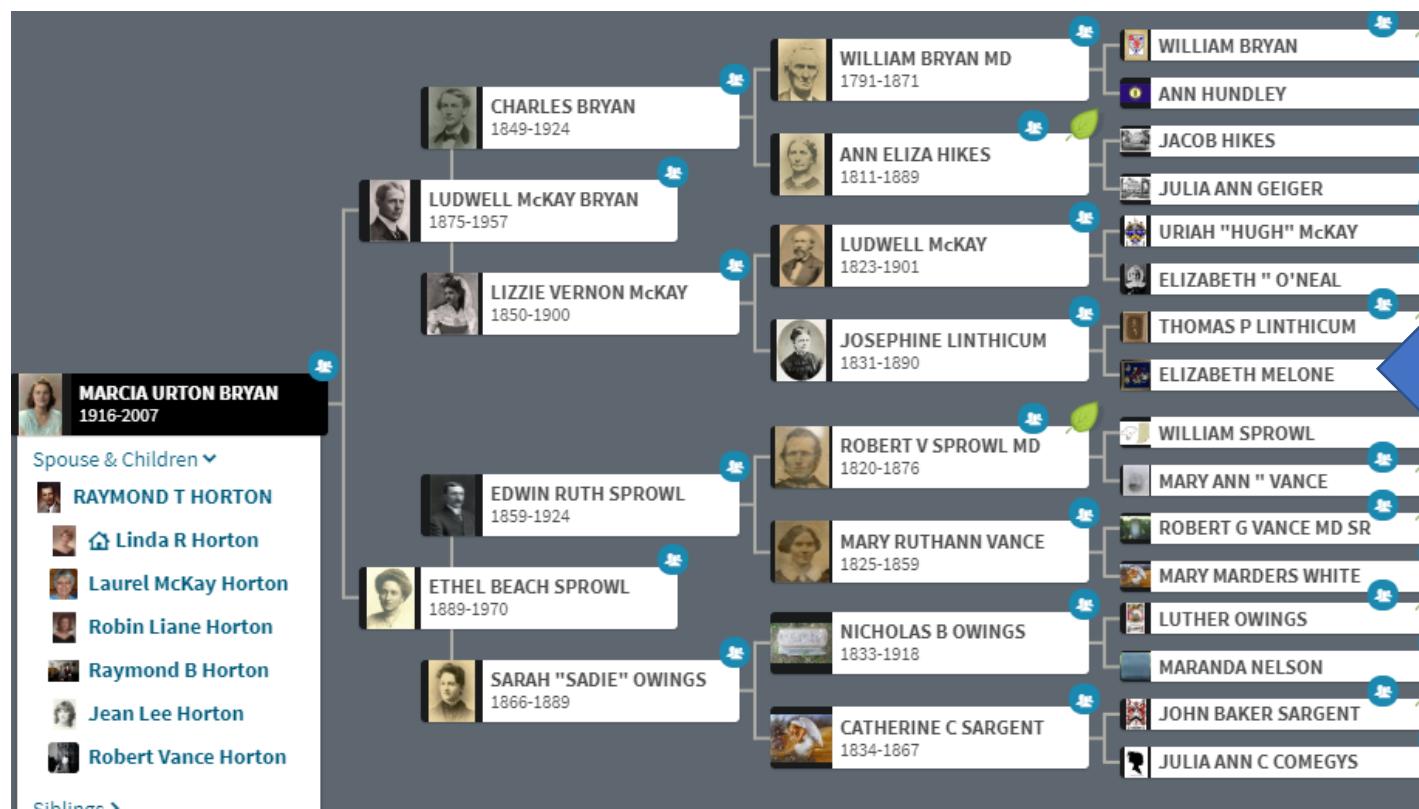
T.P. and Elizabeth Melone Linthicum made their home in Bardstown, where T.P. practiced law, served as a county judge, and was elected to two terms in the Kentucky General Assembly in Frankfort, the capital of Kentucky, starting in 1840, and then in the state Senate. Later he held posts in the Nelson County government, including election as County Judge in 1858. The map below marks a route (1) from Shelbyville, the seat of the county in which Elizabeth was born, (2) to Bardstown (marked by the arrow), where she lived after marriage, and (3) to Frankfort to show her husband's route to the state capital when he served in the General Assembly. The author's hometown, Jeffersontown, is just off the map at the grey area—representing greater Louisville—at the star in the map's northwest corner.



Also near the star was property that T.P. Linthicum owned for several years, certainly by January 1872 when a family story reports that his granddaughter Lizzie McKay visited him at his home near Louisville, and he gave her \$100 to purchase a gown to wear at a ball in honor of the Grand Duke Alexei, son of Czar Alexander II of Russia. At right is a photo of Lizzie, age 21, wearing the gown.<sup>viii</sup> T.P. Linthicum bought the property near Jeffersontown, on the outskirts of Louisville, after he had become so deaf that he could no longer serve his district in the Kentucky General Assembly. He obtained an appointment to oversee the Louisville-Bardstown Turnpike. That position required his presence near the turnpike, and the property near Jeffersontown gave him a place to stay during the workweek, from which he could easily

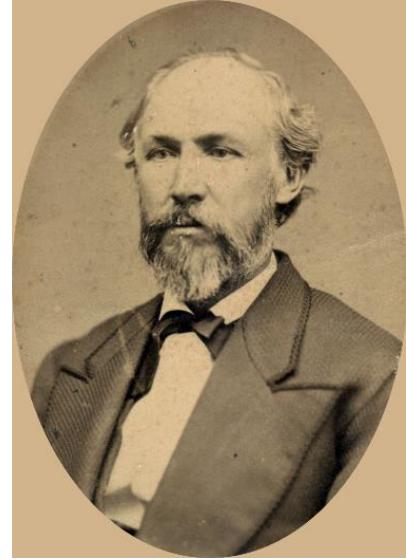


return to Bardstown for weekends. T.P. died in 1874, so the 1878 map<sup>ix</sup> below of Jeffersontown describes his property, marked by the blue triangle, as "T.P. Linthicum Est. [Estate]," and we can see its proximity to the property to the turnpike, the road running from northwest to southeast, and marked by the arrow. In November 1872, his granddaughter Lizzie McKay married Charles Bryan and moved to his home, Beechland, marked on the map by a blue circle. The star marks where Lizzie's son Ludwell McKay Bryan, born in 1875 and so three years old when this map was made, would in 1913 build a home in a subdivision laid out by his father-in-law E.R. Sprowl. Ludwell's three children, including the author's mother Marcia, were born in this 1913 house, a block from where the author grew up.



The pedigree on the previous page shows Elizabeth Melone Linthicum in our family tree. Starting at the left: Our mother was Marcia Urton Bryan (1916-2007), who married Raymond Horton (1914-1987); her father was Ludwell McKay Bryan (1875-1956), who married Ethel Beach Sprowl (1889-1970); his mother was Lizzie Vernon McKay (1850-1900), who married Charles Bryan (1849-1924); her mother was Josephine Linthicum (1831-1890) who married Ludwell McKay (1823-1901) in 1849; and her mother was Elizabeth Melone.

I know of no photograph of Elizabeth, but we do have photographs of her husband, T.P. Linthicum, below left, her daughter Josephine, below center, and her son-in-law Ludwell McKay, below right. The dates of the photographs are unknown. It is possible that the portrait of T.P. Linthicum was painted in the mid-1850s, at about the time of his 1855 purchase of the home known as Edgewood. My best guess is that Josephine was in her late forties or early fifties when her photo was made. Although her hair has not grayed, her eyelids and jowls have begun to droop, indicating middle age. She appears to be wearing a mourning dress and she had plenty of occasions to wear such a gown in those years.



Her son William died at age ten in 1874 when Josephine was 42; her father died the same year; her eight-year-old daughter Estelle died in 1879 when Josephine was 48; her 34-year-old son Hugh died in 1888 when she was 57. Ludwell McKay's photograph was likely taken at the same time as Josephine's. He was eight years older, and his hair and beard had begun to gray. His suit may have been intended for mourning. His jacket's wide lapels, trimmed in black piping, suggest that he was a stylish dresser. He had worked in a dry goods store before he married the only child of a local lawyer and judge and had begun to oversee his father-in-law's farm and other enterprises. In his previous life and married life, Ludwell may have had the opportunity to interact with tailors making men's suits from cloth sold in the store where he worked. He may have learned something about style and fit, even before he married into a life of wealth and comfort when he joined the Linthicum household.

As indicated earlier, Marcia Bryan Horton believed that the yarn used by Elizabeth to make the coverlet was brought with her from the Shelby County farm owned by her parents to Bardstown after her 1830 marriage.<sup>x</sup> This opinion is supported by the records of the estate of Elizabeth's father. Personal property of Drury Melone listed in the inventory of his estate included *142 sheep* as well as 90 hogs, geese, cows,

calves, 7 horses, 2 oxen, a harness for riding and for farm work, hemp seed and stacks, 50 barrels of corn, stills, various tools and farm equipment, apple mill, *wool, kettles for dyeing*, spinning wheels, 40 books, a number of beds and other household furniture that indicated gracious living (emphasis added). Many of these items are listed among the items sold on 11 May 1837 to settle the estate of Drury Melone. Estate records show that Sarah, Drury's widow, claimed the spinning wheels but there is no reference indicating who acquired the wool and the kettles for dyeing. The Melone family owned slaves, and it seems likely that much of the preparation of wool for yarn was done by them, especially the shearing, washing, spinning, and the dyeing of fabric and yarn, all necessary steps before a lady such as Elizabeth Melone Linthicum took up her needles and crochet hooks to produce the coverlet with its colorful squares.<sup>xi</sup>

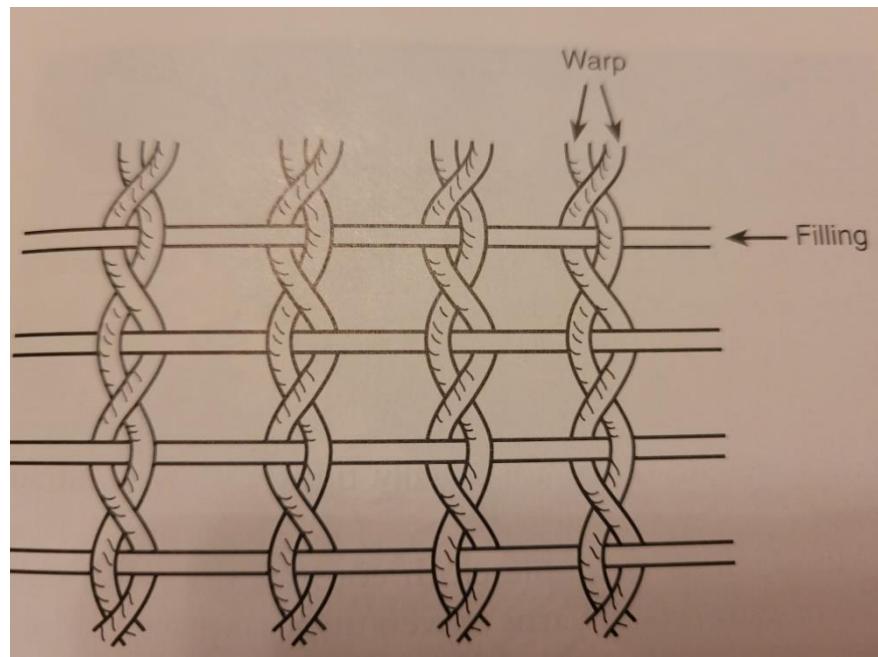
Marcia's theory that Elizabeth sourced the coverlet's wool yarn from her parents' farm is likely correct, considering that wool as well as 142 sheep were part of her father's estate. Given the reference not only to wool but also to "kettles for dyeing" and spinning wheels, we can infer that the dyeing of the wool and the spinning of the wool into yarn probably took place on her parents' farm, probably before the death of her father.

To review the relevant dates: Elizabeth was born in 1810 and married T.P. Linthicum in 1830. Her daughter Josephine was born in 1831, her father Drury died in 1837, the coverlet was finished by 1840, and in 1855 the family moved into Edgewood, a stately mansion in Bardstown, discussed below.<sup>xii</sup>

#### How the Coverlet Was Made

I requested an opinion about how the coverlet was made from my sister, Laurel McKay Horton, an internationally recognized expert on historical fabrics.<sup>xiii</sup> She put me in touch with another expert, Margaret T. Ordoñez in Tennessee.<sup>xiv</sup> I had suggested that the blue color in the background cloth was probably dyed with indigo, while Laurel suggested that chenille yarn was used for the birds and plants.

Dr. Ordoñez agreed with us on these points and advised as follows:<sup>xv</sup>



...[T]he embroidery yarn... is a chenille yarn. In those days it was made by weaving a leno weave fabric--see [image above]<sup>xvi</sup>--with many filling yarns through the open spaces in the paired leno-weave yarns. Then the manufacturer cut the fabric into strips between the columns of leno warp yarns creating a fuzzy yarn that could be used as a filling yarn in a woven fabric, knitted, or used as an embroidery yarn. The fuzzy (filling) yarns would have been silk or wool--you can probably look closely and see shiny silk filaments or kinky wool fibers. The blue backgrounds would have been indigo, the reds/red-oranges would be madder, the brown possibly from nuts or bark. I cannot tell anything about the quilted blue fabric from the picture.

Because the brown paper attached to the reverse side of my bird square has split, and the framed bird needs to be remounted soon, I was able to examine the construction of the blue fabric. As noted earlier, the blue front is quilted with many tiny and even stitches, attesting to the skill of Elizabeth Melone as a seamstress and quilter. This closeup view shows once again the precision of the quilting stitches. A very thin batting material, tan in color, was used between the quilted blue top (which apparently was edged in tan color around the square) and the patterned cloth that Elizabeth used for the backside of the quilt, as shown at right near the finger.

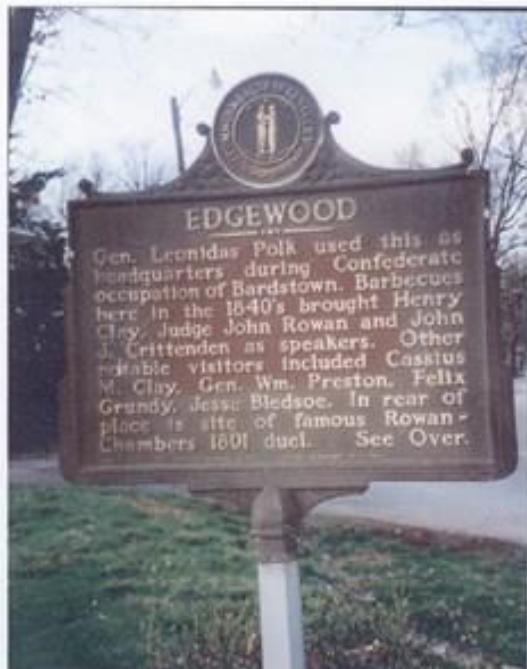


The Three-Generation Household and Their Home, Edgewood



Like Elizabeth Melone Linthicum, her daughter Josephine married young. Unlike Elizabeth, who had but one child, her daughter Josephine and son-in-law Ludwell McKay had a large family. In addition to the six children listed on the back of each bird square who lived to adulthood, four other children died when young.

The undated photograph of the parlor at Edgewood at right shows a portrait of T.P. Linthicum on the wall behind the piano.



Caption: Edgewood Monument  
Courtesy: [www.bardstown.org](http://www.bardstown.org)

Date:

Josephine and Ludwell made their home with her parents throughout their marriage, and Josephine kept a journal for many years as well as a scrapbook of newspaper clippings. She recorded unhappy events such as her children's deaths as well as happy events. An entry in the diary in 1855 describes the family's joy at moving into a beautiful mansion called Edgewood, originally built between 1815 and 1822. The house was in the family until 1901. Today it is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.<sup>xvii</sup>

The 1952 article below by my great aunt Elizabeth Melone Bryan (1885-1975) needs to be transcribed. It is included here because the photograph accompanying it shows Edgewood as it appeared in 1901 when our family sold it. Later owners added the front porch and columns seen in the photo on page 9. The handwritten information on the clipping below was written by my mother, Marcia Bryan Horton.

May 15, 1952

**KENTUCKY STANDARD, BARDSTOWN, KY.**

**ON GARDEN TOUR THIS WEEK**

## **Muir Home on South Fifth Street Here Was Once Residence of Judge Linthecum**

**BY ELIZABETH M. BRYAN.**  
**1890 WOODBOURNE,**  
**LOUISVILLE**

I am glad to know that during the tours of Kentucky homes and gardens this week, the Ben Hardin House, now owned and occupied by the family of Mr. and Mrs. John Muir, will be opened to visitors. This is a lovely old home, and has always been of great interest to our family, as it was purchased by my great-grandfather Judge Thomas Prather Linthecum, in the early 1850s, and was the home of Judge Linthecum, his wife and their only child, Josephine and her husband, Ludwell McKay.

In my grandmother Josephine McKay's diary, an entry made in March 1855, she wrote: "On Feb. 22nd we left our old home in town, and took up our abode in Ben Hardin's old home, which we have called Edgewood." My mother, Lizzie Vernon McKay, was at that time four years old, and this was her home until she married my father, Charles Bryan. Their marriage took place in the parlor at Edgewood in November 1872.

**Practiced Law Here**

Judge Linthecum was a prominent citizen of the town—born near Bardstown in 1807, he attended St. Joseph's College, and after leaving College he entered the office of Mr. Ben Hardin as a Law student; and after receiving his license to practice law was taken into full partnership by Mr. Hardin. He became County Attorney, and later served two terms as Senator in the Kentucky Legislature. After his return to practice of law in Bardstown he was elected to the office of County Judge, which office he held until his retirement a few years before his death in 1874.

After his death the home became the property of Josephine McKay and her husband, and remained in the family until after the death of my grandfather, Ludwell McKay, in 1901, when it was sold to settle the estate.

Our family made many visits to our grand-parents, and we have always had very happy memories of the days spent there. Most of my brothers and sisters (there were seven of us) stayed with our grand-parents at Edgewood during various school terms and attended school in Bardstown. This was also true of our cousins, the children of our uncle Hugh McKay—there was always a welcome at the old home for short visits or prolonged stays.

During these years the old kitchen portion of the house was still intact, and a brick building was located just back of where the swimming pool is now; this was the servants' quarters, occupied during most of our childhood days by Prudence, the family nurse-maid and cook, and her family.

**Civil War Troops There**

The large yard had many shade trees, flowering shrubs and rose bushes, and back of the rear yard was my grandmother's flower garden. My grandmother passed away in my early memory, but I can still remember the outlines of the garden and the grape arbor leading to it. Also in my grandmother's diary she mentioned that a contingent of Civil War troops were encamped in the wooded area, which was part of the property, running back to the river, and that the officers had come to the house and requested her permission for them to use the double porches for a ball—this she consented to and the ball was quite an event.

During the time the home belonged to the McKay family, there was a vine-covered portion at the front entrance. This was changed to a long porch in the last few years, and I believe it was Mr. Harry Kendall who had the pillars put across the front. However the large stone steps to the porch are the same as when Ben Hardin built the house, with the initials "B. H." in the top stone.

(After 1900 the property was owned and occupied by the family of Orville Arnold and later by the late C. P. Raper and his family.—Editor's note.)

**"EDGEWOOD"**

This parlor and other rooms in Edgewood were likely the location of many social gatherings of friends as well as family. We know from the journal of a neighbor that T.P. and Elizabeth Linthicum, as well as their daughter Josephine and son-in-law Ludwell McKay, were part of a group of neighbors who frequently hosted each other.<sup>xviii</sup> The neighbor who kept the journal, Charles Weissenfels “C.W.” Thomas, was born on 13 May 1830 and thus was closer in age to Josephine, born in 1831, and Ludwell, born in 1823, than to her parents. The entries in C.W.’s journal describing visits to the Linthicum-McKay household at Edgewood, as well as visits to C.W.’s home by T.P. Linthicum and other Linthicum/ McKay family members, give a flavor of the social life in Bardstown. Notably, the Linthicums hosted parties at Edgewood on 27 October 1857 and again on 31 December 1857. The latter party was for children and started at 2:00 PM and ended at 8:00 PM.

### The Family’s Later Years

Elizabeth’s husband, T.P. Linthicum, died on 30 July 1874, at the age of 67, just three months after the death of an 11-year-old grandson.<sup>xix</sup> The official record gives no cause of death for T.P. Linthicum but his obituary in a local newspaper stated that, “He died suddenly, without a struggle, without a moment’s warning, after a day of unusual activity...” The description sounds like myocardial infarction, or heart attack. In the next line of the official death records, the 11-year-old grandson was described as dying of “disease of hips,” which may have been osteomyelitis, infection of the bone.<sup>xx</sup> Elizabeth survived T.P. by 19 years, continuing to live in Edgewood with her daughter, son-in-law, and grandchildren.

Josephine Linthicum McKay died on 14 October 1890,<sup>xxi</sup> which must have been an incredibly sad occasion for Elizabeth, who outlived her daughter by three years before passing away on 13 November 1893. Josephine was only 58 when she died—her cause of death is unknown—while Elizabeth lived to 82. The inscription on Josephine’s headstone reads “Pure of Heart.” Surely Elizabeth helped select this sentiment for the memorial to her only child. Josephine’s widower remarried in 1893, shortly before Elizabeth’s death. Ludwell’s second wife, Sallie Linthicum Able, was Josephine’s first cousin once removed. Family members called her “cousin Sallie Able.” Josephine’s grandfather, Thomas Prather Linthicum, Senior, was Sallie’s great grandfather.

The untimely death of her only child may have influenced Elizabeth’s decision to write a Will:<sup>xxii</sup>

I Elizabeth Linthicum do make the following last Will [and] testament, hereby revoking all former wills by me made.

1<sup>st</sup> I desire my funeral expenses and cost of administration on my estate paid and debts should there be any.

As a special devise to the four children of my grandson Hugh L McKay [who had died on December 11, 1888] viz: Orion, Thomas, Tillie, Lud and to the children of my granddaughter Lizzie Bryan (4) viz: Ann, Florence, Bessie + Allene (girls) I give one hundred to each. I hold a note or obligation for money on my grandson Hugh L McKay dec’d with his father surety this note and the one I hold on my grand-daughter Lizzie Bryan + husband Charles Bryan or on him alone are hereby cancelled.

I gave to my grand-daughter Florence McKay a house and lot on the North side of Broadway street in Bardstown + conveyed the same to her by deed. I give to Florence my horse, buggy [and] harness.

Now the balance of my estate I devise in equal parts thus. One part to my son in law Ludwell McKay, one part to my grandson Allan V. McKay, one part to Lud McKay Jr, one part to Lizzie Bryan my granddaughter, one part to the children of my deceased grandson Hugh L. McKay, one part to Florence McKay my granddaughter and I make this condition as to the devise herein made to her that said house and lot heretofore conveyed to her she shall take and hold not under the deed made to her therefor but she shall hold same under this will as separate estate free from the claim or control of any husband she may have but she shall hold same for her own exclusive use and benefit with full right to enjoy the same and its rents and profits as her own exclusive estate with full power to will same though she may marry.

Witnesses

JW Muir

Orville Arnold

State of Kentucky { December Term  
Nelson County Court { Dec. 14, 1891

The foregoing writing purporting to be the last will and testament of E. Linthicum deceased late of this Nelson County Ky was on this day produced in open Court and duly proven by the oaths of JW Muir and Orville Arnold subscribing witnesses thereto, whereupon it is ordered that said paper be recorded as the last will and testament of said E. Linthicum deceased, which is done.

July 23, 1891

E. Linthicum

Att. [Clerk]

Elizabeth's Will showed careful and loving attention to the needs of her children and grandchildren. Her grandson Hugh Lacy McKay had recently died, and his young children, who in 1891 ranged from eight to thirteen years old, would no doubt benefit from a bequest of \$100 each. The similar bequest to the four daughters of Elizabeth's still-alive granddaughter Lizzie McKay Bryan is puzzling in that Lizzie also had three sons, William, Ludwell (the author's maternal grandfather), and Charles who, at the time Elizabeth made her Will, were 14, 16, and 17 years old, respectively, and for whom Elizabeth's Will

made no similar bequest. Perhaps she had already given cash gifts to these teenage grandsons. All grandchildren, of both genders, benefitted from Elizabeth's cancellation of the debts owed her by both her deceased grandson Hugh and her still-alive granddaughter Lizzie and her husband Charles Bryan.

In allocating the balance of her estate in six parts, she treated her widowed son-in-law Ludwell McKay in the same way as the five grandchildren listed, i.e., Allan, Lud Jr, Lizzie, children of Hugh (deceased) as a group, and Florence. Allan and Lud Jr had no children receiving cash bequests, but the childless grandsons received equal shares of the estate.

Most interesting is the special attention in the Will to Florence, at left at age 10, the youngest child of Josephine Linthicum. Florence was born in 1873



when her older sister Lizzie—my great grandmother—was married and almost 23 years old. Florence was 16 when her mother died and almost 18 when Elizabeth made her Will in 1891. The photo below shows Florence, age 30, teaching art at Cumberland University in Lebanon, Tennessee.<sup>xxiii</sup>



Elizabeth's bequest showed a particular affection for Florence and a concern for her well-being, perhaps influenced by the girl's loss of her mother at a tender age. The bequest of a horse, buggy and harness ensured that Florence had a way to get around. The girl may have been the household member who, for some time, had commandeered the horse and buggy when her grandmother needed rides to church or other places. The language to guard Florence's assets from takeover by any future husband is interesting: was Florence being courted by a beau whom her grandmother disliked? Or was this a feminist sentiment that it was simply wrong for a woman's inheritance from a grandmother to be absorbed at marriage into the assets of her husband? In any case, Elizabeth's insistence that the real estate she had *already deeded to Florence*

shall be hers and hers alone, separate from the claim or control of any husband, might raise legal eyebrows. The legality of inserting in a Will a condition applicable to property already conveyed by deed, at a time in the past when the person making the Will was alive and well, may not have been enforceable.



Florence in fact did marry, but she did not rush into it. She studied art, showing some talent, and became an art teacher. Not until 1905 when Florence was 31 years old, and her doting grandmother was long-gone, did she marry. The man she married, George David Shadburne, was twice her age, a 63-year-old Texan who had served as a Captain in the Confederate Army and then moved to San Francisco, California. There he had a first marriage with a wife and six children. A 1905 wedding announcement for Florence and George in a Kentucky newspaper had as its headline, "Captain Shadburne weds a lively Kentuckian."<sup>xxiv</sup> In their 16 years of marriage before George died in 1921, he and Florence had five children together. The photo at left shows Florence, age 32, with her first child, another Ludwell, of course: Ludwell

McKay Shadburne. I love their smiles and how the photographer's light glints in the baby's eye. After George Shadburne's death, the children from his first marriage challenged his Will. That is a story there, but it is not being written here. Florence lived a long life, until 1954, and I have communicated with cousins who descend from her.

My attention to how the Will of Elizabeth Melone Linthicum reflected her care for family members has diverted me from discussing the end of her life. She died at Edgewood on November 13, 1893 at the age of 82.<sup>xxv</sup> Her obituary, found by my great aunt Elizabeth Melone Bryan in a Family Bible, indicated that the cause of death was heart failure brought on by pneumonia. The obituary described Elizabeth as “leading the life of an exemplary Christian woman, being beloved by her relatives, cherished and esteemed by all who knew her.” It also states that “[s]he was a strict and devoted member of the Baptist Church.”

The story of Elizabeth Melone and her coverlet demonstrates how an artistic creation can outlive its creator and become a legacy for unknown descendants many years after the lifespan of the artist. I am grateful to Elizabeth for her handiwork, to my great aunts Elizabeth Melone Bryan and Aileen Lacy Bryan (shown below) for divining a way to share this handiwork among their grandmother’s descendants, and to my mother for passing down to me a family history bequest that includes not only my framed bird but also a wealth of ancestral information.

*Below: the author’s great aunts, Elizabeth Melone Bryan (1885-1975) and Aileen Lacy Bryan (1889-1984), then owners of the coverlet, in about 1970.*



Mrs. Linthecum Dead.  
[Special Dispatch to The Post.]  
BARDSTOWN, KY., Nov. 13.

Mrs. Elizabeth Linthecum, widow of the late Judge T. P. Linthecum, died at the home of her son-in-law, Hon. Lud Mackay, here this morning at five o'clock, of heart failure, brought on by an attack of pneumonia.

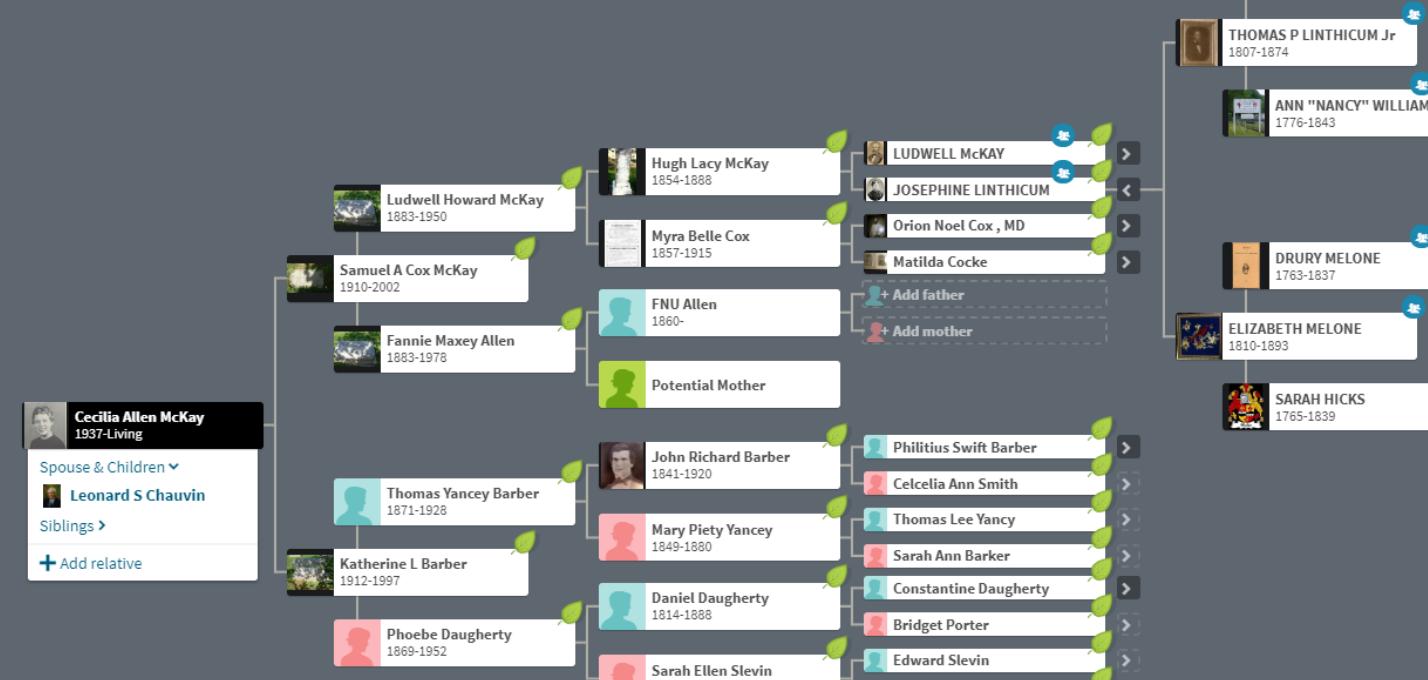
Mrs. Linthecum was, at the time of her death, in the eighty-second year of her age, and has always made this place her home, leading the life of an exemplary Christian woman, being beloved by her relatives, cherished and esteemed by all who knew her.

She was a strict and devoted member of the Baptist Church. Her funeral will occur tomorrow afternoon at 2 o'clock.

Much as I would love to learn the locations of the 13 squares of the coverlet that I have not seen, to photograph them and speculate about where each appeared on the coverlet, I am content with the vision of my great aunts Bess and Aileen that each square of the coverlet can stand alone as a work of art that multiple descendants can appreciate and enjoy.

<sup>i</sup> Although, according to Merriam-Webster's on-line dictionary, "coverlet" and "coverlid" are alternative spellings of a word that is a synonym for bedspread or bedcovering, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/coverlet>, decorators regard coverlets as distinguishable from bedspreads in that coverlets are smaller and lighter. <https://www.housebeautiful.com/design-inspiration/a32705949/what-is-a-coverlet/> "Coverlet" and "coverlid" derive from the Middle English word "coverlite," which in turn is from Anglo-French "coverlit." The latter word combines the French words for cover, "covre," and for bed, "lit" from Latin "lectus." Coverlets were woven in almost every community in the United States from the colonial era to the late 19th century and, as was the case with Elizabeth Melone's coverlet, were often colored with dark blue dye from indigo or other natural sources. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woven\\_coverlet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Woven_coverlet) A coverlet is an extra layer of bedding used for decoration or extra warmth on top of a comforter or bedspread, often a smaller and lighter alternative to other bedding options. Id.

<sup>ii</sup> This pedigree for the author's third cousin, Cecilia Allen "C'Allen" McKay Chauvin shows her descendants from Elizabeth Melone Linthicum (right side of pedigree image at middle). Individuals whose first and last names appear in all-capital letters are ancestors of both C'Allen and me:



<sup>iii</sup> Id.

<sup>iv</sup> The original spelling of the family's surname was "Malone," the more common spelling. The immigrant ancestor is believed to have been Daniel Malone, born in Connaught, County Westmeath, Ireland in 1643, who died in Prince George County, Virginia in 1688. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/192342113/daniel-malone>

<sup>v</sup> Bardstown, Kentucky, 30 Dec 1874, clipped from the local newspaper and pasted into a scrapbook maintained by Josephine Linthicum McKay, daughter of Thomas Prather Linthicum, Jr. The local newspaper may have been the Bardstown Gazette.

[https://www.loc.gov/newspapers/?all=true&c=150&dates=1874&fa=location:kentucky%7Clocation\\_state:kentucky%7Cpartof\\_title:bardstown+gazette+%28bardstown,+ky.%29+1841-18%3F%3F&st=list](https://www.loc.gov/newspapers/?all=true&c=150&dates=1874&fa=location:kentucky%7Clocation_state:kentucky%7Cpartof_title:bardstown+gazette+%28bardstown,+ky.%29+1841-18%3F%3F&st=list)

A photocopy of T.P. Linthicum's obituary, included on pages 21 and 22 below, will eventually be placed in the author's sketch about him. As of 1985, when the author's mother Marcia Bryan Horton included a photocopy of the obituary in a compilation of genealogy materials distributed at a family reunion, Josephine's original scrapbook was in the possession of Gretchen Weiler Buckmiller, a second cousin of the author who also is a descendant of Josephine. On 27 March 2021, the author wrote to Gretchen via Ancestry and Facebook requesting a scanned copy of Josephine's journal.

<sup>vi</sup> Matt Spaulding, Bardstown: Town of Traditions. Schumann Printing Co., Louisville, Kentucky. First edition July 1942; reprinted April 1960, at 3.

<sup>vii</sup> Id.

<sup>viii</sup> The photo in the accompanying text shows Lizzie Vernon McKay, age 21, wearing the gown she purchased with the \$100 given her by her grandfather, T.P. Linthicum. In 1985, Lizzie's granddaughter Marcia Bryan Horton, the author's mother, wrote a story about the visit of Grand Duke Alexis, the son of Czar Alexander II of Russia to Louisville and the ball held there in his honor at which Lizzie wore her beautiful new gown. Marcia's story is too long to include here, and it will be included in the story about Lizzie. Only a short excerpt follows:

In late 1871, the Grand Duke Alexis, 22-year-old son of Czar Alexander II, arrived in the United States. ...Louisville was one of the cities on his itinerary and for weeks local citizens had prepared for the gala event. ...After the reception came the Grand Ball [held on January 31, 1872] and, for that night at least, all the sorrows and deprivations of the Civil war [1861-65] and its aftermath were forgotten. The Courier-Journal wrote:

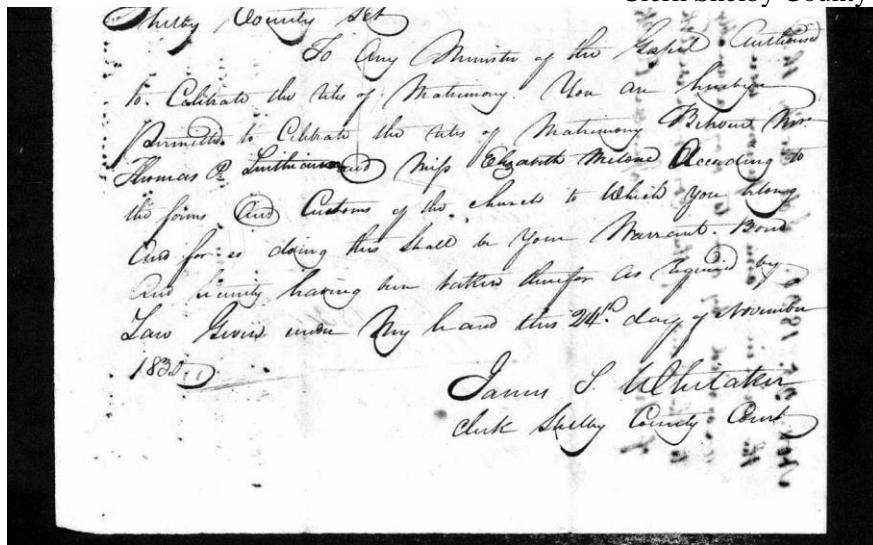
The Galt House was in a blaze of glory...The radiance that streamed from the stately chandeliers lit up a scene that is witnessed but once in a lifetime...All of Beauty and Fashion had gathered to do honor to the royal guest...It was an outpouring of Kentucky's fairest daughters and most gallant sons...and with what exquisite grace the Kentucky belles floated through the measures of the lancers, the polka and the waltz!" Sixty-eight dishes graced the menu and "forty carefully selected musicians" played, concealed behind a "screen of rosebuds.

<sup>ix</sup> 1797: Jeffersontown's Past 175 Years, pub. Jeffersontown Specialty Co., Inc., Jeffersontown, Kentucky 1972, 3.

<sup>x</sup> The Shelby County, Kentucky marriage record of Elizabeth Melone and Thomas Prather Linthicum, Jr follows:

To any Minister of the Gospel Authorized to Celebrate the rites of Matrimony. You are hereby permitted to Celebrate the rites of Matrimony Between Mr. Thomas P. Linthicum and Miss Elizabeth Melone According to the forms and Customs of the church to which you belong and for so doing this shall be your Warrant. Bond and Security having been taken therefor as required by Law. Given under my hand this 24<sup>th</sup> day of November 1830.

James L. Whitaker  
Clerk Shelby County Court



Ancestry.com. *Kentucky, U.S., County Marriage Records, 1783-1965* [database on-line]. Lehi, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2016.

Original data: *Marriage Records. Kentucky Marriages*. Madison County Courthouse, Richmond, Kentucky.

<sup>xi</sup> The Drury Melone estate documents recorded that 17 enslaved individuals were divided among family members. An order of the Shelby County Court dated 10 May 1837 indicated that T.P. Linthicum and Elizabeth his wife were allotted a Negro boy Jack, value \$600.00, 1 negro boy Joseph, value 200.00, 1 negro girl Rachael, value 400.00 and 1 negro girl Hellen, value 150.00 for a total of \$1350.00 for the four (\$37,000 in 2021).

To T P Linthicum and Elizabeth his wife we allot the  
Negro boy Jack value a \$600.00  
1 negro boy Joseph value 200.00  
1 negro girl Rachael value 400.00  
1 negro girl Hellen value 150.00  
\$1350.00

which leaves the sum of Twenty five Dollars to  
be paid by Hiram Melone to T P Linthicum  
& wife. which makes each allotment equal  
all of which is respectfully submitted to the court  
by the undersigned const. grm under our hand  
this 10th day 1837. *Hiram Melone*

Slavery in Kentucky predicated its 1792 admission as a state. Prior to that date, Kentucky was the far-western frontier of Virginia, which had a long history of slavery. "Kentucky's slave population was concentrated in the Bluegrass region of the state which was rich in farmland and a center of agriculture."

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History\\_of\\_slavery\\_in\\_Kentucky](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_slavery_in_Kentucky) Nelson County lies in this Bluegrass region. Pro-Confederacy sentiment was strong in Nelson County during the Civil War. Robert P. Moore, *Bloomfield, Chaplin and Fairfield: A History and Genealogy of Northeastern Nelson County, Kentucky*, Nelson County Genealogical Roundtable, 3<sup>rd</sup> printing Aug. 2012, at 159. Kentucky never seceded from the United States to join the Confederacy despite the predominance of pro-Confederacy sentiment in Nelson County and elsewhere.

<sup>xii</sup> Edgewood apparently was sold again in 2020 or 2021, possibly for \$525, 000. The house was described as comprising 6932 square feet, sitting on 2.37 acres, with six bedrooms and 2.5 baths.

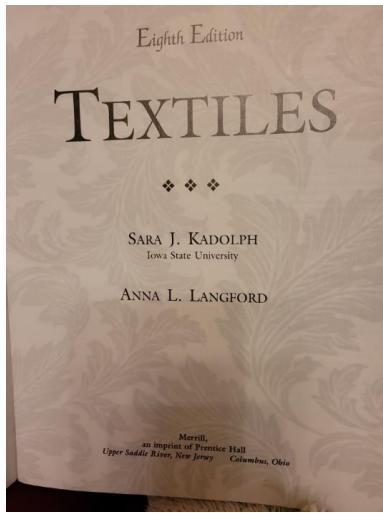
<https://www.oldhousedreams.com/2020/10/21/1815-bardstown-ky/> This website displays photos of the interior of Edgewood, evidently taken when the property was offered for sale and most rooms were empty.

<sup>xiii</sup> Email from Linda Horton to Laurel Horton, 20 Mar 2021 at 1:21 PM. Subject: "Elizabeth Melone Linthicum's 1840 bird coverlet: request for help." Laurel's website is <http://www.kalmiaresearch.net/> Her exhibition, "Whitework: Women stitching Identity," will be on display at the Kentucky Museum at Western Kentucky University in Bowling Green May-Nov. 2021. <https://www.wku.edu/kentuckymuseum/exhibits/whitework.php>

<sup>xiv</sup> Email from Laurel Horton to Margaret Ordoñez, 20 Mar 2021 at 6:15 PM. Margaret's contact details are:  
Margaret T. Ordoñez, PhD  
Ordoñez Textile Conservation Services  
21 Bounty Lane  
Camden, TN 38320  
[mordonez@uri.edu](mailto:mordonez@uri.edu)  
401-258-6454

<sup>xv</sup> Email from Margaret Ordoñez to Linda Horton and Laurel Horton on 20 March 2021 9:01 PM.

<sup>xvi</sup> The diagram is in the accompanying text is from an expert guidebook on Textiles. Margaret's email included as attachments both the diagram appearing in the text and the image below of a book cover:



xvii <https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/NRIS/75000815> A website accessed on 29 March 2021 displayed photographs of the interior of Edgewood as it looks today. <https://www.oldhousedreams.com/2020/10/21/1815-bardstown-ky/>

xviii C.W. Thomas Journal, 1856-1858. Edited by Dixie P. Hibbs and Janice Donan. Published by That Special Touch, Bardstown, Kentucky. First Ed. Oct. 1999. ISBN # 0-9674930-0-5. <https://www.worldcat.org/title/cw-thomas-journal-1856-1858/oclc/43065307> Page numbers refer to this 1999 publication:

15 Oct 1856: T.P. Linthicum visited the Thomas household this evening. Page 2.

27 Oct 1856: C.W. indicates that two of his sisters and one of his brothers are “going to Linthicum to Party tonight.” Page 3.

1 Nov 1856: “Mrs. [Elizabeth] Linthicum and Josey [Josephine Linthicum McKay] here this Eve.” Page 4.

9 Nov 1856. “Mr. Linthicum & Lizzie Kay here this Eve.” Page 5. Lizzie McKay was his 6-year old granddaughter, the eldest child of Josephine and Ludwell McKay and the author’s great grandmother. Page 5.

12 Nov 1856: “At night we had a small party here.” He lists 15 guests including T.P. Linthicum. “We danced until 10 or 11.” Page 6.

22 Nov 1856: “Mrs. McKay here all day [referring to Josephine Linthicum McKay, age 25].” Page 7. On this day and others, C.W. was raising his new house, and 25 people came to help him.

23 Nov 1856: T.P. Linthicum, Ludwell McKay, and Josephine Linthicum McKay visited. Page 7.

10 Dec 1856: Mr. Linthicum here this evening. Page 9.

31 Dec 1856: C.W.’s wife, his son age 5, his daughter 22 months old, and other family members “went to Party at Mrs. Linthicum. Given at 2 o’clock for Children [and stayed] till 8.” Page 11.

2 Jan 1857: Mr. Linthicum here today. Page 11.

4 Jan 1857: Mr. Linthicum here this evening. Page 12.

23 Jan 1857: Mr. Linthicum here this evening and loaned us the Grinnell Exploration” by Elisha Kent Kane MD. Page 17. [The diarist was referring to *Arctic Explorations: The Second Grinnell Exploration in Search of Sir John Franklin*,” a new book, published in 1856 by Childs & Peterson, a Philadelphia publisher.

<https://www.baumanrarebooks.com/rare-books/elisha-kent-kane/arctic-explorations-the-second-grinnell-expedition-in-search-of-sir/66448.aspx>]

19 Feb 1857: Mrs. Linthicum, Mr. and Mrs. McKay [and others] took dinner here [and four guests] played cards all evening. Page 17.

25 Feb 1857: C.W.’s wife and children spent day with Mrs. [Elizabeth] Linthicum. Page 18.

18 Mar 1857: Mr. Linthicum came out after dinner. Page 21.

2 Apr 1857: C.W.’s widowed sister-in-law remarried. Wedding guests included the Linthicums and McKays. Page 22.

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14 July 1857: Mrs. Linthicum spent the day visiting at C.W.'s house. Page 31.

14 Sept 1857: Mrs. Linthicum and others visited. The family was in mourning because C.W.'s brother-in-law hanged himself on 12 Sept and had been buried on 13 Sept. Page 38.

19 Sept 1857: Mr. and Mrs. Linthicum came to visit this evening despite heavy rain and windstorm. Page 39.

8 May 1858: C.W.'s wife spent the day with Mrs. Linthicum. Page 62.

6 June 1858: Mr. Linthicum visited that evening. Pages 62-63.

2 August 1858: C.W. went to town to attend election and voted for T.P. Linthicum for County Judge, noting that he and the other candidates for which C.W. voted were all Democrats. Page 74.

27 Dec 1858: C.W.'s wife "went to town to see Josy McKay and others baptized in Johnson's pond." Page 85.

<sup>xix</sup>No cause of the death of T.P. Linthicum was given in the official records. *Kentucky Birth, Marriage and Death Records – Microfilm (1852-1910)*. Microfilm rolls #994027-994058. Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort, Kentucky. *Birth and Death Records: Covington, Lexington, Louisville, and Newport – Microfilm (before 1911)*. Microfilm rolls #7007125-7007131, 7011804-7011813, 7012974-7013570, 7015456-7015462. Kentucky Department for Libraries and Archives, Frankfort, Kentucky. The obituary of T.P. Linthicum, shown on the next page, was published in a local newspaper, as discussed in note v above. It needs to be transcribed. The obituary stated in column one that, "He died suddenly, without a struggle, without a moment's warning, after a day of unusual activity, on the night of July 30, 1874—being in his 68<sup>th</sup> year." The description sounds to the author like myocardial infarction, i.e., heart attack.

<sup>xix</sup> In 19<sup>th</sup>-century America, children sometimes contracted osteomyelitis, bone infection, which in an era before the discovery of antibiotics, was difficult to treat. <https://www.nature.com/articles/pr200425>

JUDGE LINTHICUM

Some men drop out of the world like a pebble in the water, ruffling the surface a moment, and—every trace disappearing. The death of another is the going out of a great light, in whose benign radiance we were wont to rejoice, and whose extinction we feel to be a great calamity. Such a calamity our little church at Bardstown suffered this summer past, in the death of Hon. Thomas Prather Linthicum. The drapery of mourning, which, on the occasion of his funeral, decked the house of God he so much loved, was but too true a type of the great shadow that had fallen on our hearts. Few men have passed away from any community the lessons of whose life more deserve to be remembered, for of few men can it be said, as was said of him, "his life, in every regard, was a success."

Mr. Linthicum was born near Bardstown, on the 6th day of January, 1807, and spent his life chiefly amidst the scenes and associations of his youth. He died suddenly, without a struggle, without a moment's warning, after a day of unusual activity, on the night of July 30, 1874—being in his 68th year.

From his very youth were evinced those sterling qualities, which, ripening with advancing years, developed the strong and useful man. While yet a merchant's clerk he formed the high resolve to get an education and take a profession. In pursuance of this end he entered St. Joseph's College, being about sixteen years old, and for several years prosecuted his studies—meanwhile riding a distance of six miles every day, back and forth, in every condition of weather and of health. This circumstance tends to illustrate, even so young, the patience and persistence which entered so largely into his character, and contributed so much to his success. Upon leaving St. Joseph's he entered the office of the late celebrated Ben. Hardin as a student of law, and for three years pursued his legal studies with such commendable industry and success, that upon receiving his license to practice, he was at once taken into full partnership with his distinguished preceptor. Thus early did he begin to reap the reward of industry, and of fidelity to purpose. He was now fairly launched upon his career, and bright promise of "honor, riches, troops of friends" the future gave him.

Very early he determined to go before his fellow citizens as a candidate, to ask the office of County Attorney, and was elected—indeed, he was never defeated, for an office he sought during his public and political life.

Married to Miss Elizabeth Malone, of Shelby county, a lady of excellent family and culture, with whom he lived in the happiest relations to the close of his life. To his wife, more than to any other friend, he was wont to attribute his success through life, as it was to her influence chiefly he was indebted, under God, for the blessed change that was wrought in his life.

In 1840 Mr. Linthicum was honored by his fellow-citizens as their Representative in the Legislature, and for two terms after he served in the Senate.

These several years of political life and success seem to have quite satisfied his ambition, and he henceforth devoted himself to the more immediate interests of his own county. In this service he

at made County Commissioner for the County of estates, and afterwards of County Court, which office he continued to fill with distinguished energy and ability for many years, until the loss of his hearing suggested to him the necessity of early retiring from public service.

In the year 1860 occurred an event in the life of Mr. Linthicum to which he ever referred with emotions of devoutest gratitude to God. Up to this period he had been emphatically a man of the world—devoted to its honors, its pleasures, its gains—and pursuing these with all the zeal and persistence characteristic of his ardent and resolute nature. He was in every sense of the word an irreligious, Godless man. About this time the then youthful Lorimer, of Louisville, held a meeting of days with the Baptist church at Bardstown, and Mr. Linthicum was prevailed upon by his pious wife and daughter (an only child) to attend the meeting. It proved the most gracious and memorable event of his life. From these meetings he came away a converted man—the proud man of the world bowed his neck to the lowly yoke of Jesus. A more sudden, radical, and complete change was perhaps never wrought in the character of any man. From this period "old things literally passed away, all things became new." He married the church as he had married the wife of his youth, and gave to it henceforth a constant, undivided affection. Being a man of deep feelings and strong convictions from the very inception of his Christian life he responded faithfully and lovingly to every demand which his religion made upon his time, his talents, and his money. He took part in the first prayer-meeting he ever attended after his connection with the church—as he did in the last, the Wednesday evening before his death. His

intelligent piety soon so com-

pleted to the office of deacon, which office he held in the church until within a year of his death, when at his own request, on account of increasing physical infirmities, he was released. His mind, however, was still active, his love ardent, and his zeal for the prosperity of God's Zion unabated; and he continued to be a leader in every good word and work among his brethren, whose counsel they valued, and whose life, to an unusual degree, exemplified the power of the religion of Jesus.

There are many points in the character of this excellent man and Christian that will deserve to be studied and imitated. He was a man of positive and decided character. There was nothing negative or hesitating in his nature. His apprehensions were clear, his convictions absolute, and his purpose unfaltering. Whatever his judgment approved, that he undertook with all his might, and pressed it to the end.

He was a man of sterling integrity. No man among us in the last forty years has had more fiduciary responsibilities imposed upon him, or had more to do with the settling up of estates, and financing public monies, and never was the name of any man freer from the breath of suspicion; but the testimony of all is, that he died as he had lived, "an honest man, the noblest work of God."

He was a public spirited man. While industrious as a bee in all that concerned himself, he was in no sense of the word a selfish man—but was sincerely devoted to the interests of his country, particularly of his own county and town. Whatever looked to its prosperity, schools, churches, railroads, commerce in any of its forms, received his hearty co-operation. His private charities, always unostentatious, were large for his means; and the poor of his community recognize in his death the loss of their most thoughtful and liberal friend.

A wise forethought and providence for the future was a marked trait, which can not be too highly commended to the imitation of all men. In all the transactions of life he looked ahead to what he would need and to meet its emergencies, and went promptly to work to be ready for them. He put off preparation for nothing which he once decided was useful to be done. This was an undoubted element of success in his life. It was true of him, moreover, not less in religion than in his business. When once he was awakened to the fact that he was an immortal being, hastening to eternity; that he was a sinner before God, and must answer for his sins, he went to work with his habitual earnest-

ness to prepare for the issue, and never ceased his efforts until he felt he was at peace with God, and was prepared for death and eternity.

As a Christian, he was eminently a humble man. Though the wealthiest and most honored of the church, he never assumed to himself anything above the lowliest of the flock.

He was, moreover, a peaceful man. Firm in maintaining his views of truth, he was always courteous, kind, and gentle. Among his brethren he was of all others recognized as the peace maker.

He was constant. Religion was a reality with him, and its obligations ever present and binding. His church was his dearest earthly delight; nor was he ever absent from her meetings when it was possible for him to get there; nor did he ever withhold from her any labor,

or sacrifice of time, talent, or money that he felt would enhance her prosperity.

He was a man of deep devotion. At home, with his family, God was honored; and in private the Word of God was the food of his soul, and communion with God in prayer his constant habit.

Such a life ripened all too soon. In the midst of his usefulness he is taken away—a dispensation of Providence that we can not understand; and we can only exclaim, as we mourn our loss, “he is not, for God took him!” C.

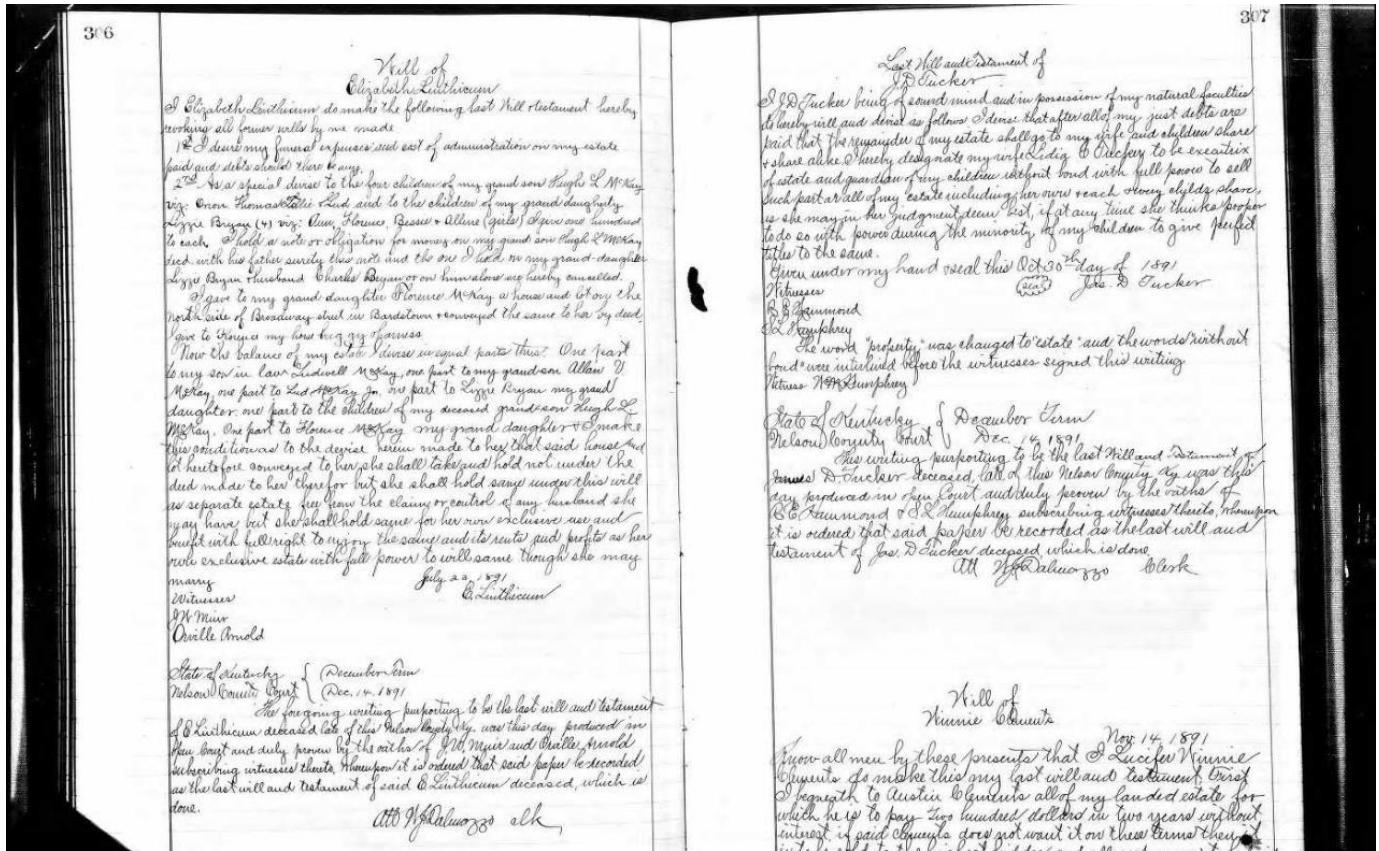
Bardstown, Ky., Dec 30, 1874.

<sup>xxi</sup> I have not found an official record of death for Josephine Melone Linthicum, nor do I have information on her cause of death. I am relying on family records for her date of death. A photo of her headstone posted on FindaGrave.com indicates that the headstone is inscribed simply “Josephine: Pure in Heart” and does not provide dates of birth or death. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/126089359/josephine-mckay>



xxii Kentucky. County Court (Nelson County); Probate Place: Nelson, Kentucky Will Books, Vol 19, 1880-1901. Accessed on Ancestry.com. Kentucky, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1774-1989 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2015. Original data: Kentucky County, District and Probate Courts.

An image of the original of Elizabeth's Will is here, on the page at left:



xxiii Cumberland University, located 27 miles east of Nashville, was at the time a Presbyterian educational institution. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cumberland\\_University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cumberland_University)

xxiv Subscription to Newspapers.com is required to view the article.

xxv <https://www.newspapers.com/clip/55756966/obituary-for-elizabeth-rit-herum/?xid=637> Newspapers.com - The Owensboro Messenger - 14 Nov 1891 - Page 1, 14 Nov 1891 Owensboro, Kentucky, [www.newspapers.com](http://www.newspapers.com)