Oscar Ray Middleton (1889-1968) of Gibson City, Illinois
His Family Ties to the Baronets of Bathurst

© Susan McNelley

Baronets: The hereditary Order of Baronets in England was created by King James I on May 22, 1611 because he needed money. He offered this distinction to 200 gentlemen of good birth, who agreed to pay a sum equivalent to three years' pay for 30 soldiers. In later years, the title was conferred by the king on anyone whom he wished to honor. It is hereditary, but does not entitle the holder to a seat in the British House of Lords.

Sources of information: Information on the Bathursts in England comes from three books: *Burke's Peerage and Baronetage, Burke's Extinct and Dormant Baronetcies*, and *A New History of Gloucestershire* (first published in 1779). A pamphlet titled *The History of the Manor of Lechlade*, printed in 1975 on the 500th anniversary of the Parish Church, also mentions the Baronet of Bathurst family. Information on the American descendants of the Baronets of Bathurst comes from two letters. One, a "Correct Bathurst Lineage", was written by Lawrence Bathurst, Jr. of Centre County, Pennsylvania, in 1816, on his return from England. (It was signed by his neighbors as a "Certificate of Character.) The second was written by Dwight Laurence Bathurst (great, great grandson of Lawrence Bathurst, Jr. of Center County and a contemporary of O.R. Middleton) from Pueblo, Colorado in 1906, following a trip to London, Cirencester and Lechlade. Both of these men had gone to England in an effort to establish the continuation of the lineage in America and to investigate the possibility of an inheritance for descendants of Laurence Bathurst, Jr. of Centre County, Pennsylvania (to no avail).

"The family of Bathurst was originally of Bathurst in the county of Sussex (England), whence they removed into Kent, and afterwards spread into various other counties."

Note: The history and genealogy of the Bathurst family includes a family of Earls and a family of Baronets. The present Earl of Bathurst resides in Cirencester, England. Oscar Ray Middleton was not a descendant of this line. He was a **descendant of Sir Edward Bathurst, Baronet of Lechlade in Gloucestershire, England; this Baronetcy title became extinct in the late 1700s.**

1. Robert Bathurst — Esquire of Lechlade (in the English Cotswolds). High sheriff of Gloucestershire in 1611. Married, first, Benetta, but had no issue. Married, second, Elizabeth (daughter and heir of Ralph Waller, esquire and widow of Sir John Laurence, lord mayor of London). They had four children.

2. Sir Edward Bathurst
First Baronet

Esquire of Lechlade, born in 1615, the 2nd son of Robert. (First son died a minor.) **Edward was knighted and created a baronet on December 15, 1643 for remaining loyal to King Charles I in the troubled times of the Civil War.** In *A New History of Gloucestershire* and in *The History of the Manor of Lechlade*, it is noted that the manor and town of Leachlade (Lechlade) was given to Sir Edward Bathurst. He had 3 wives and 14 children. Sir Edward died in 1674 and is buried in the chancel of St. Laurence Church, Lechlade, England. (There is a brass likeness of Sir Edward over his burial place in the church.)

Lawrence ,the eldest son of the First Baronet, died in 1670, during the lifetime of his father. It is noted in *A New History of Gloucestershire*, that he "endowed the church and vicarage with the tithes of his whole estate, by his will dated September 16, 1670...The church is dedicated to St. Lawrence." **Edward**, the first son of Lawrence and grandson of the First Baronet, then became the **Second Baronet**, but died at the age of 12, in March, 1677. The Baronetcy passed to his uncle, the second son of the First Baronet, **but the manor of Lechlade passed to his sisters, Mrs. Greening and Mrs. Coxeter and devolved upon the son of the latter, Thomas Coxeter, thus passing out of the Bathurst lineage in 1677.** The manor house has changed hands many times; in 1980 it was serving as a boarding school for girls, run by the Community of St. Clotilde.

3. Sir Edward Bathurst
Third Baronet

Second son of the First Baronet. Married Mary Peacock, daughter of Francis Peacock, esquire of Chawley, in the county of Oxford and had six children (five sons and one daughter).

Sir Edward Bathurst, oldest son of the Third Baronet, became the Fourth Baronet. He died unmarried and was succeeded by his brother.

4. Sir Francis Bathurst Fifth Baronet	Second son of the Third Baronet. He married Frances, daughter of the Rev. Mr. Peacock, and had 2 sons and 3 daughters. **On October 14, 1735, Sir Francis and his lady, with his daughters, Elizabeth, Mary and Martha and youngest son, Robert, embarked for America on the *Prince of Wales* (Captain Dunbar in command) with General Oglethorpe to encourage the new settlement in Georgia. Sir Francis settled on a plantation near Savannah, Georgia.** Lady Bathurst died there in 1737 and Sir Francis died the following year in 1738. His son Robert was killed by the Indians. The title of Baronet fell to his eldest son, Lawrence, who was attending school at Westminster, England.
5. Lawrence Bathurst Sixth Baronet	Son of Sir Francis Bathurst and Frances Peacock. He was baptized March 3, 1713 in Lechlade, Gloucestershire, England. He came to America and, in 1736, he was teaching in the home of Senator Roberts of Norristown, Pennsylvania. He married Mary Roberts on April 21, 1741 in the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia. He had 3 children: Mary, Elizabeth and Lawrence. He died in 1792. **At this point in the lineage, as stated in *Burke's Peerage*, "the title is stated by some to be extinct, but by others to be vested in a man still resident in America".**
6. Lawrence Bathurst, Jr.	Born August 22, 1757 in Germantown, Pennsylvania. While living in Providence Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania, **he was drafted into the American militia in August, 1776 and served as a part of the militia in the State of Pennsylvania in the American Revolution through the Fall of 1777.** He later moved to Centre County, Pennsylvania. There he married Rebecca Bathurst on April 7, 1782 at Barren Hill Church near Germantown and had 11 children. **In 1816, Lawrence went to England and placed this notice on record in London, England: "Know all men by these presents that Lawrence Bathurst, son of Sir Lawrence Bathurst, Son of Sir Francis Bathurst, Baronet, who was one of the first settlers of Georgia, is now a respectable citizen of Howard Township in Centre County, State of Pennsylvania, and has been for upwards of 30 years."** He died February 17, 1845.

7. Rebecca Bathurst	Born in 1795 in Centre County, Pennsylvania. She was the 7th child of Lawrence, Jr. She married Jacob Middleton in Pennsylvania and moved to Fayette, Ohio with her husband. They had seven children: Jo, Lawrence, Will, Seth, Cyrus, Hannah and Samuel. She died in January of 1892, at the age of 97, and is buried in Bellflower, Illinois.
8. Rev. Samuel Middleton	Born about 1831, the son of Rebecca and Jacob Middleton. He was a Methodist minister, married to Mary Easterbrook, daughter of George W. Easterbrook. They lived in Ohio and had two children: Kate and Sam
9. Samuel See Middleton	Born November 19, 1864 in Washington Court House, Ohio. In 1888, he married Lulu Cackley. They had 3 children: Gladys, Margaret and Oscar Ray. He died on December 16, 1929 and is buried in Champaign, Illinois.
10. Oscar Ray Middleton	Born October 4, 1889 in Clinton, Illinois. He married Sibyl Mary Hoover in 1913 and had 2 children: William Samuel and Laura Ann. He died in 1968 in Gibson City, Illinois.

© Susan McNelley/ www.tracingsbysam.com/ March 2013