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JOHN McMURTRY AND THE AMERICAN INDIAN

A Frontiersman in the Struggle for the Ohio Valley

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By

Richard Keith McMurry

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

John McMurtry's Descendants

John McMurtry's death in 1790 left his wife Mary with seven children and a baby on the way. The three youngest, aged 2, 4, and 8, would have required considerable attention. Fortunately, there were older children, aged 11, 14, 16, and 19, who could help around the house and keep the farm running.

Mary McMurtry may have held out the remote hope that her husband would return from captivity just as he had after the Battle of Blue Licks eight years before.¹ But after several months, she evidently gave up hope, for she had John's will probated in April 1791, a few weeks before giving birth to her eighth child, Sarah McMurtry.²

John had written a will in September 1790 just before he marched off to join Harmar's army. It read:³

In the name of God, Amen. . . . I, John McMurtry of Mercer County and State of Virginia, being in perfect health, praised be to God, do make this my last Will and Testament, as followeth:

I do give my son James twenty-five acres of land on the West of my father-in-laws land, and North of John Simon's land; give to my son Alexander McMurtry seventy-five acres of land joining the widow Woods on the South, and also from the North East corner of my survey, and to extend West and South for Quantity so as not to take any of the improvements where I now live; also, to Samuel I give one hundred acres joining on the West of my survey and to include a spring on that side; and to my son William I give a Mulatto boy called Lige; and to my son John I give seventy-five acres of land on the East side of Sider Run; and to my son Joseph, I give the place where I now live, beginning at the East end and including the improvements; and to my daughter Mary, I give a negro girl called Anny; and to my wife Mary, I give a negro woman and the movable estate, and also the house and improvements, for the raising and schooling the children, til Joseph is of age, and the half of the improvements during her life; and my wife I make sole executor of this my last Will and Testament, in witness whereof I have here unto set my hand and seal the 6th day of September in the year of our Lord 1790.

John McMurtry (seal)

(witnesses) Wm. McKee, Wm. Gordon, Henry Bushong

By this will, John bequeathed one slave each to his son William, his daughter Mary, and his wife Mary and divided his land amongst his sons. His youngest son Joseph was especially favored: when he came of age he was to receive the family homestead, including the house and the agricultural improvements. His wife was to have use of the homestead until Joseph came of age and thereafter have equal use of it until she died.

Family tradition reports that for a long time after Harmar's defeat, Mary McMurtry was "firm in the belief that (John) would come back some day," but that "when time passed and nothing was heard of him . . . Capt. Lewis Rose asked Mrs. McMurtry to marry him."⁴ (Lewis Rose had been captured at Blue Licks in 1782 and released along with John McMurtry in 1783.) Mary accepted Rose's offer, and they were married in November, 1793.⁵

Mary and Lewis' household must have been very busy during the first few years of their marriage. Lewis' five children and Mary's eight made a family of thirteen children, eight of whom were under thirteen years old. The children's names, birthdates, and ages at the time of the marriage were:⁶

McMurtry Children					Rose Children				
Name	Age	Birthdate		Year	Name	Age	Birthdate		Year
James	21	17	November	1771	Charles	15	6	October	1778
Alexander	19	12	March	1774	Catherine	12	22	November	1780
Samuel	17	18	July	1776	Jemima	11	12	October	1782
William	14	4	March	1779	Rebecca	8	23	January	1785
John	11	16	April	1782	Lewis	6	4	June	1787
Joseph	7	3	July	1786					
Mary	4	12	November	1788					
Sarah	3	11	May	1791					

To this large family, Lewis and Mary added a son, David R. Rose, on September 2, 1794.⁷ The Roses lived together for over twenty-six years, until Lewis died in 1829.⁸ We know that Mary McMurtry Rose was still living in 1838 when she was residing with her daughter Mary Hogue in Mercer County.⁹ She probably died between 1842 and 1844.¹⁰

Some of the McMurtry children remained in Kentucky. Others continued the family tradition of westward migration.¹¹

John's oldest son James moved to Hardin County, Kentucky about 1807, to Harrison County, Indiana, about 1815, to Crawford County, Indiana, about 1818, and finally to Knox County, Illinois, in 1831. He died there in 1851, almost eighty years old.

Alexander lived in Mercer and Garrard County, Kentucky, and died in 1855.

Samuel married his step-sister Jemima Rose, remained in Mercer County, Kentucky, and died in 1815.

William moved to Parke County, Indiana, about 1830 and died there in 1843.

John lived in Garrard County, Kentucky, and died there in 1819.

Joseph was a doctor, lived at various places in Kentucky, and died in Paris, Kentucky, in 1832.

Mary married Samuel Hogue in 1810 and died in Mercer County, Kentucky, in 1839.

Sarah married William Sharp in 1810.

The family chart on the next page gives the names of the first three generations of John's family, with dates of birth, marriage, and death, and indicates where the various branches settled. Appendix E consists of fifteen pages of family charts that trace the male line of descent of each of John's children to the recent past, including, when possible, the present generation. Appendix F is an index to the charts. Subsequent volumes planned for this series will give historical and biographical details for each of John's children and their descendants.

Virginia-Ky
Capt. John McMurtry
1748-1790
Mary Todd Hutton
1752-1842/4

Ky-Ind-III

James
1771-1851
1 Polly McKee
-1795-
2 Elizabeth Jewell
1772-1800-1818

1 Lydia Todd
1795-1882
Ky-Ind-Knox Co., Ill
John
1797-1877
Mary
1799
2 Ky-Ind-Knox Co., Ill
William
1801-1875
Nancy
1804-1866
Ky-Ind-Knox Co., Ill
James
1807-1893

Garrard Co., Ky
Alexander
1774-1798-1855
Mary "Polly" Smith
1775-1859

Ky-Parke Co., Ind
John Smith
1799-1888
Mary A.
1801-1821-
Garrard Co., Ky
James
1803-1878
Elizabeth
1805-
Ky-Shelby Co., Mo
Alexander
1806-1882
Sarah
1809-
Margaret
1811-1828-1838
William
1813-cal1846
Martha
1815-1838-1839
Joseph
1818-1844

Mercer Co., Ky
Samuel
1776-1802-1815
Jemima Rose
1782-1840

Rebecca
1803-1823
Mary E
1805-1832
Lewis Rose
-1837-
Deniza
1815-1869
Charles
-1870

(continued in
next column)

(John McMurtry's
family-continued)

Ky-Parke Co., Ind

William
1779-1808-1843
Priscilla Sharp

Abraham
died young
John
Ky-California
William Sharp
1818-1904
Indiana
George Alexander
1819-1865
Ky-California
James H.
-1858
Mary
Elizabeth

Garrard Co., Ky

John
1782-1819
Sallie Wrenn
1777-1821

Vincent
-1845
Ky-La-Mississippi
Woodson
1808-
Ky-Mississippi
Alexander Todd
William
Tabitha
-1828-

Kentucky

Joseph
1786-1832
1 Margaret Haggin
-1813-
2 Lucy L. Madison
1792-1822-1880

Catherine
1824-1855
Mary Elizabeth
1826-1900
New Albany, Ind
Myra Gabriella Madison
1828
George
1830-1856
Jane
1832

Mercer Co., Ky

Mary
1788-1810-1839
Samuel Hogue
1783-1839

Sarah
1791-1810-1872
William Sharp

Chapter Twelve – pages 58 to 60
Harmar's Expedition

1. There were numerous accounts written of the expedition – frequently with conflicting details. The version included here is mostly that of a participant, Sergeant Whiteman, as reported in Eckert, *The Frontiersman*, pp. 398-403. A second source used was Basil Meek, "Harmar's Expedition", *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society Publication*, Vol 20, Jan 1911, no. 1, pp. 74-108. The Draper manuscripts, which have considerable material, were not consulted.

2. Myra McMurtry, *The McMurtry Family*, *Kentucky State Historical Society Register*, 1907, Vol 5, no. 15, p. 64. Original source of story was probably Todd manuscript mentioned in footnote 7 of Chapter Seven.

Chapter Thirteen – pages 61 to 63
John McMurtry's Descendants

1. An 1849 letter from Robert McAfee (Draper Manuscripts 4CC87) stated: "Lewis Rose lost his first wife in 1792 and in 1793 he married Mrs. McMurtry, the widow of John McMurtry, who was killed in Harmar's defeat, but it was not positive that he was killed for a long time and Mr. Rose was at first rejected, but persevering, he finally married her and then it was reported that McMurtry was alive to their great annoyance, but _____ Caldwell having last seen him surrounded by Indians put the matter to rest. Lewis Rose became an elder in the Presbyterian Church at Cane Run and Harrodsburg in place of McMurtry. It was on McMurtry's return after the Battle of Blue Licks that Mrs. McMurtry exclaimed as Judge Robertson relates "That's John's Gun".

2. Mercer County Will Book 1, p. 52.

3. Ibid.

4. Quote from an 1849 speech of George Robertson, son of Alexander Robertson, published in the "Harrodsburg Herald" as cited in David McMurtry's, "McMurtry-Rose Romance Refuted". See footnote 5 of Chapter Seven.

5. Marriage Bond: November 4, 1794 per letter to author from David C. McMurtry, Lexington, Ky, Sept 13, 1979.

6. McMurtry dates from McMurtry-Rose Bible (See footnote 7). Rose dates from letter of David McMurtry, Sept. 13, 1979 which cites as sources the Bibles of Lewis Rose (given by Mrs. Marvin Averill, Frankfort, Ky) and Catherine (Rose) McMurtry (given by Miss Lena Bonta, Lexington, Ky.)

7. Birthdates from McMurtry-Rose Bible in possession of Lucille Sharp Brown, granddaughter of Abram Sharp, son of Sarah McM. Sharp, daughter of John McMurtry. (LDS microfilm 551319). Bible was printed in 1789; entries were made after 1794 birth of David Rose, son of Lewis and Mary McMurtry Rose.

8. Ibid.

9. Mentioned in an 1838 letter of the grandfather of Susan McMurtry, family historian, and referred to in her letter to Hattie Bingham in 1912 (LDS microfilm 231909).

10. Letter of Myra McMurtry, Aug 26, 1905 said "Grandma . . . was over 90 years old when she died" implying death date after 1842. Robert McAfee, executor of Lewis Rose's estate, sold land on April 3, 1844 per Lewis' will which said land should not be sold until Mary died.

11. Information on John's children from Myra McMurtry's manuscript on McMurtry family (LDS microfilm 231909).

APPENDIX E

Family Charts

The charts that follow show John McMurtry's family at a glance. The first one shows the first three generations and gives an idea of which branches stayed in Kentucky and which ones migrated to other states. The remaining 14 charts trace John's descendants (generally the male lineage) down to the recent past, including the present generation when possible.

The dates listed below each name are those of birth, marriage and death. The place names listed above the names indicate the person's principal residence or residences. Please send any additions or corrections to the author at the address given in the Preface. An index to the charts appears in Appendix F.

John's Children	Chart Number
James	2 - 9
Alexander	10 - 12
Samuel	13
William	14
John	15
Joseph	15
Mary	15
Sarah	15

Virginia-Ky
 Capt. John McMurtry
 1748-1790
 Mary Todd Hutton
 1752-1842/4

Ky-Ind-Ill

James
 1771-1851
 1 Polly McKee
 -1795-
 2 Elizabeth Jewell
 1772-1800-1818

1 Lydia Todd
 1795-1882

Ky-Ind-Knox Co., Ill

John
 1757-1877

Mary
 1799

2 Ky-Ind-Knox Co., Ill

William
 1801-1875

Nancy
 1804-1866

Ky-Ind-Knox Co., Ill

James
 1807-1893

Garrard Co., Ky
 Alexander

1774-1798-1855
 Mary "Polly" Smith
 1775-1859

Ky-Parke Co., Ind

John Smith
 1799-1888

Mary A.
 1801-1821-

Garrard Co., Ky
 James

1803-1878

Elizabeth
 1805-

Ky-Shelby Co., Mo

Alexander
 1806-1882

Sarah
 1809-

Margaret
 1811-1828-1838

William
 1813-ca1846

Martha
 1815-1838-1839

Joseph
 1818-1844

Mercer Co., Ky

Samuel
 1776-1802-1815
 Jemima Rose
 1782-1840

Rebecca
 1803-1823

Mary E
 1805-1832

Lewis Rose
 -1837-

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Charles
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(continued in
 next column)

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 family-continued)

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Indiana
 George Alexander
 1819-1865

Ky-California
 James H.
 -1858

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Garrard Co., Ky

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 1782-1819
 Sallie Wrenn
 1777-1821

Vincent
 -1845

Ky-La-Mississippi
 Woodson
 1808-

Ky-Mississippi
 Alexander Todd

William

Tabitha
 -1828-

Kentucky

Joseph
 1786-1832
 1 Margaret Haggin
 -1813-
 2 Lucy L. Madison
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Catherine
 1824-1855

Mary Elizabeth
 1826-1900

New Albany, Ind
 Myra Gabriella Madison
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George
 1830-1856

Jane
 1832

Mercer Co., Ky

Mary
 1788-1810-1839
 Samuel Hogue
 1783-1839

Sarah
 1791-1810-1872
 William Sharp