

## Chapter XVIII: Neal-McCammon

Last Revised: November 22, 2013

William Neal was the son of **EDWARD NEAL** and **JANE DOUGLAS {MCCAMMON} NEAL**. Right at the outset of our discussion, we are obliged to confront a fundamental and nettlesome issue: the very names we should use in referring to William Neal's father. My grandfather, in the family history materials that he passed down to me, always called this man *Thomas* Edward Neal. Certain other members of our extended Neal family evidently knew him by that name as well. But my research has revealed that in life this man usually went by either Edward or Ed Neal, and on the censuses he is never listed as anything but Edward. At the time of his marriage he was called Edward Neel. His grave marker identifies him as Edward Neal. He bought public land as Edward Neel, and in his will he calls himself by the same name. Indeed, the only place he is ever described as *Thomas* Edward Neal is within our branch of the Neal family. We will return to this topic in the next chapter, when we discuss the identity of Edward's father, but as we examine what we know about our William Neal's father in the meantime we will refer to that man as Edward Neal.<sup>1</sup>

There are, inevitably, other mysteries about this Edward Neal. The first is where and when he was born. My grandfather believed, and others have often stated, that Edward

---

<sup>1</sup> Like many of the other family names we have encountered, the spelling of this one was in transition during and after the Revolutionary War. It was fairly consistently spelled Neal within the family after about 1800, but Edward Neal, the earliest of the Neals we can be positive is in our line, spelled his name Oneal and then Neel or Neil. His grandson William may have spelled it (if the census is any guide) both Neal and Neil. For the sake of consistency, I have used the Neal spelling except when the alternate spelling is worth noting for substantive reasons.

Neal was born in Clark County, Kentucky (perhaps near the early settlement of Boonsboro) in the year 1763. This is improbable. During 1762 and 1763 the first groups of “long hunters” (men who ventured off into the uncharted wilderness across the Appalachian Mountains for many months at a time in order to trap and hunt for furs) were just beginning to explore beyond the Cumberland Gap, gateway to the then-unsettled region called Kentucky. The long hunters did not penetrate to the heart of Kentucky, where Clark County would ultimately be created in what we think of as the Bluegrass region, until 1766. Legal migration into the geographic place known today as Kentucky did not begin until after the Treaty of Stanwix in 1768. As late as 1774, there still was not a single person of European descent actually residing in Kentucky. Boonsboro itself was not founded until 1775 (Harrodsburg, the oldest settlement in Kentucky, is a few months older), and substantial migration into Kentucky did not begin until 1779 and 1780. There *was* no settlement in Kentucky in 1763, therefore, and so it seems almost impossible that Edward Neal could have been born there – assuming he was born in 1763, that is.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Harrodsburg (then called Harrodstown) was settled in March 1775; Boiling Springs and St. Asaph were settled soon afterwards. As late as June 1775 there was not one woman living in Boonsboro, and there were probably few, if any, women elsewhere in Kentucky. The population of Harrodsburg in 1777 was 198 men, 24 women, and 70 children; the only other two Kentucky towns had, together, even fewer residents. Indian attacks in 1777 drove so many persons out of Kentucky that only about 150 people remained, in just a handful of outposts. It would be possible, though a very long shot indeed, that Edward Neal was born in Kentucky in September 1773, when six families of prospective settlers led by Daniel Boone tried and failed to penetrate Kentucky. They retreated to North Carolina in the face of an Indian raid in which Boone’s own son was killed. Edward Neal’s birth in these dramatic circumstances would tie together several threads of Neal family lore: Kentucky, Boone, and a year ending in the numeral three, but surely the singularity of his having been born during this well-known incident at the very dawn of settlement of Kentucky would have been passed along in family lore together with the facts as we do have them, and those facts do not leave much hope that Edward Neal was born in Kentucky in *any* year.

For there is also good reason to question that date as Edward Neal's year of birth. This is the year commonly cited, it is true, and his grave marker in the Neal-Paxton Cemetery in Paxton, Indiana, does say that he was eighty-three years of age at his death on September 2, 1846 – born in 1763, in other words.<sup>3</sup> The evidence is decidedly against his having been born in that year, however. Edward Neal was given quite different ages on different censuses, but *none* of these censuses show him born as early as 1763. In both 1810 and 1820 he is in the age column for 26 to 45 years old. In 1830 he is in that for 50 to 60 years old, and in 1840 he is said to have reached the age of sixty to seventy years old.

All of these listings thus make Edward anywhere from two to a dozen years younger than if he had been born in 1763. The only years that are common to all four of these census listings are 1775 to 1780, and that five-year period would seem to have been the most likely time period for his birth. It is also worth noting that having been born in 1763 would have made Edward Neal at least twenty years older than his wife. Such an age differential is not impossible, but it should reinforce our skepticism that a birth year of 1763 is accurate for him. I have never seen any credible document in which Edward Neal is described as having been born in 1763, but, for reasons we can only imagine, this is the date he himself must have cited for his birth – unless his survivors had no idea about when he was actually born and simply guessed at a year when they arranged for a

---

<sup>3</sup> See slide 07155 for a view of Edward Neal's grave site and marker as of 1994 and slide 12032 for a similar view in May 2006. This stone was restored and straightened later in 2006.

grave marker for him. I think this last explanation is the most likely one, but we cannot solve this puzzle.

If we assume that Edward Neal was in fact born as many as a dozen or so years later than 1763, however, we are obliged to revisit the issue of his birthplace: he could then have been born in territory at that time generally thought of as Kentucky. The meaning of the term “Kentucky” was applied rather broadly from the 1760s through the 1780s; to some, it was everything west of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. Alternatively, perhaps members of his family – again – wrongly guessed that Edward Neal “must have been born in Kentucky” because that was all they knew about his past or because he himself believed that. What we have now learned about our Edward Neal’s family and origins indicates, though, that his parents resided in Hampshire County, Virginia (now West Virginia), from sometime before the 1770s until the late 1780s and then in southern Virginia and South Carolina. They did not arrive in Kentucky until some during the 1790s – just a few years before we first sight Edward himself there in 1802. Assessing all of this information, we are probably right to think that our Edward Neal was born in Hampshire County between 1775 and 1780, although, as we will see in our final chapter, if he had been born before that five-year time period Pennsylvania is another place Edward Neal might have been born.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> For example, there was a Neal’s Station (fort) at the mouth of the Little Kanawha River, where Parkersburg, West Virginia, now stands – one of the stations created to form a defensive perimeter for the new settlements in Kentucky. Founded in 1785, it was named after a surveyor, James Neal. A modern book on Matthew McCammon and his descendants gives Edward Neal’s birth year as 1783, without explanation, but this is probably nothing more than a typographical error. This book, though not without its

Edward Neal's wife Jane, sometimes called "Ginny,"<sup>5</sup> could have been born in either North Carolina or South Carolina, or else in Kentucky. (The 1850 and 1870 censuses say North Carolina and the 1860 census says Kentucky.) As we shall see, her father appears to have left the Carolinas for Kentucky about 1785, so knowing Jane's exact year of birth would help us to establish where it could have taken place. But determining the likely year of her birth is also a challenge. Jane was thought to have been a few days over one hundred years of age when she died at the home of her daughter, Sarah Anderson, in Haddon Township of Sullivan County, Indiana. The date of her death is given variously as July 8 or July 9 in 1871. A contemporary newspaper account states that she died on the earlier date, but Jane's grave marker in the Neal-Paxton Cemetery in Paxton, Indiana, says she was "aged 100 years" when she died on July 9, 1871.<sup>6</sup>

Census data for Jane does not support this advanced age for her but does not yield a definitive year of birth for her, either. Her ages shown on the census sheets where she was enumerated would make Jane born anywhere from 1775 to 1794, but the pattern that emerges when all of her reported ages on these seven censuses are considered as a

---

errors and omissions, is in my view the single best published resource on not only the McCammon family but that of our own branch of the Neal family as well.

<sup>5</sup> There is considerable confusion about this woman's name. She was called Ginnie at the time of her marriage and Virginia on the 1860 census but Jane on the 1850 and 1870 censuses – as well as in Edward Neal's will and on her grave marker. Her children evidently called her Ginny or Jenny. It seems possible that she was originally named either Jane or Virginia but that over time this name was transformed by usage into one of the two nicknames Ginnie or Jenny. I have chosen to identify her as Jane because her husband and grave marker did so.

<sup>6</sup> See slide 07148 for a view of Jane's grave site and marker in 1994 and slide 12031 for a similar view in May 2006. This stone was straightened and restored in late 2006.

composite suggests that she was born during the second half of the 1780s.<sup>7</sup> In view of what we know about her father's physical movements, her birth in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, in approximately 1785 is possible, although she could have been born in South Carolina instead because her father evidently lived there during the early 1780s. Add to this mix the fact that 1785 was probably the year when the McCammons moved to Kentucky and we end up not knowing much more about her Jane McCammon's place of birth than when we started.<sup>8</sup>

Edward Neal and Jane McCammon were married in Jessamine County, Kentucky, on or about April 12, 1802, the date he signed a marriage bond in that county. There does not seem to be any other record of their marriage. This bond is in fact our very first definite sighting of Edward Neal, for there is no census for Kentucky in 1790 and 1800 and he is not listed in any tax records for that state. Since Jane's father (his name was written as Matthew "McCamron" here) appears on a tax list in Fayette County, Kentucky, in 1788 and again on July 23, 1789, it is possible that Edward Neal too was living in Fayette County then; we will revisit this matter in the next chapter. We cannot be positive how long the Neal and McCammon families might have known one another before 1802: even though, as we shall see, the families seem to have lived in the same area in South

---

<sup>7</sup> On the censuses, Jane was tabulated in the following age categories: in 1810, as 16 to 26 years old; in 1820, as 26 to 45 years old; in 1830, as 40 to 50 years old; in 1840, and as 50 to 60 years old. After categories were abandoned, she was described as sixty-five years old in 1850, as eighty years old in 1860 and as ninety-three years old in 1870. This last census describes her occupation, rather delightfully, as "retired life."

<sup>8</sup> Presuming Matthew and his family were living together all through the 1780s, Jane could not have been born in North Carolina any later than 1788, nor in Kentucky any earlier than 1786. See the text below for more about where Jane's parents might have been residing at this time.

Carolina during the late 1780s, it is possible they first met in Kentucky instead. On the 1810 census, Edward Neal and Matthew McCammon were recorded side by side in Shelby County, Kentucky, which lies between Jessamine County and Louisville. Deed and tax information confirms that McCammon had acquired property in Shelby County at least by 1806, and, based on what we see later in Indiana, it seems likely that Edward Neal was helping his father-in-law farm here.

According to my grandfather, who evidently was repeating what he had heard it from the Neals before him, Edward Neal took his family (including young William Neal, just three years old) from Kentucky to the Territory of Indiana, then just a dozen years old, in 1812. Their initial destination was what is now Posey County in the far southwestern corner of Indiana, where there was a pocket of newcomers to Indiana Territory. Southern Indiana had not been fully surveyed until 1807, and much of what would become the state of Indiana in 1816 was still an unsettled area inhabited only by its native Indians. The expansion-minded territorial governor, William Henry Harrison, was busy making land purchases from the Indians, but in 1809 their Indian chief, Tecumseh, declared those purchases invalid. This led to Indian attacks on the new settlements and Harrison's campaign to suppress these natives. The climax of this strife came in the decisive Battle of Tippecanoe in northwestern Indiana on November 7, 1811. In this famous battle (which would help to make Harrison president three decades later), he and a militia army attacked a confederation of Indian nations that had been put together by Tecumseh and

his brother, the Prophet. The Indians had their camp at Prophetstown on the Wabash River near what is now Lafayette, Indiana.

The Battle of Tippecanoe broke up the Indian confederacy and encouraged those potential settlers who had been eyeing the Indiana Territory to conclude that it was now ripe for settlement.<sup>9</sup> President James Madison had proclaimed in March 1811 that land sales in this section of Indiana Territory would begin in October in that year, and these two events opening the new territory to settlement doubtless triggered Edward and Jane Neal's decision to head there in 1812. Later census records appear to corroborate the family tradition: they show that Edward and Jane's children were born in Kentucky until 1812 and in Indiana after that date.

It is possible that the Neals entered the Indiana Territory along the Buffalo Trace, an old buffalo track that connected the Indiana communities of New Albany and Clarksville (opposite the falls of the Ohio River at Louisville) with Vincennes, then the principal town in Indiana. Vincennes was a former French trading outpost dating to the early 1700s. This was the immigrants' most common overland route into Indiana, and a logical one for the Neals if we assume they had set out from Shelby County, Kentucky. How the Neals actually got from Kentucky to Posey County, Indiana, though, is not known for certain. They could also have traveled down the Ohio River, perhaps to Red Banks (now

---

<sup>9</sup> Posey County was established in 1814. This entire area was in 1812 called Knox County, which took in most of southwestern Indiana at the time.



Henderson, Kentucky), another frequent access point for Kentuckians going into Indiana Territory. Other popular disembarking places were the mouth of the Blue River (now Fredonia), and Yellow Banks (now Rockport).<sup>10</sup>

Once they had arrived in Posey County, the Neals may have tarried for a time in what is now Mt. Vernon, along the Ohio River, as it was one of the first areas in the new territory to be settled (beginning in 1805). Many of the families we have encountered in earlier chapters – the Zinks, the Starks, and others – were also arriving in Indiana Territory at about this time. Pioneers all, they were among the very earliest settlers of Indiana, having reached that territory considerably before the flood of people who would sweep in following the end of all Indian resistance in 1815.<sup>11</sup>

In early 1812, however, the Prophet once again stirred up the region's Indian nations – Kickapoos, Piankeshaws, and Weas – and there were attacks on settlements on the west side of the Wabash River. It was then, probably, that Edward Neal took his family to the safety of Fort Knox on the east bank of the Wabash River near Vincennes – a flight to safety that understandably made its way into the family lore that got passed down to later

---

<sup>10</sup> There are some remarkable parallels between the migration of the Neal family and that of the Lincoln family, which entered Indiana from Kentucky in 1816. Abraham Lincoln spent more time growing up in Indiana than he did in Illinois, and books about his early years there help us to understand what living conditions were like for the Neals in Indiana at the very same time. It is also interesting to note that the Lincoln family was living in the Shenandoah Valley at about the same time some of the families we have studied – including the Zinks and Funkhousers – were also living there.

<sup>11</sup> Indiana had fewer than 25,000 inhabitants in 1810, but within five years this number had grown to about 64,000. Then, in the year 1816 alone, some 42,000 persons migrated into Indiana, nearly all of them into the southern part; northern Indiana was still virtually unpopulated except for Indians and remained lightly settled for many years thereafter.

generations of Neals.<sup>12</sup> Later in 1812, between September 3 and September 16, the Indians attacked Fort Knox itself. The Neals may have been still sheltering there at that time – we do not know. After that crisis had passed, they may have ventured into northern Knox County, which would in January 1817 become the new Sullivan County, but we have no evidence to guide us and we can only guess at exactly where the Neal family was living between about 1812 and about 1816. Whatever their specific movements during these years, our Neals were in the vanguard of a large migration of settlers, mostly from Kentucky, who were attracted by the virgin land in Indiana that had been purchased by Harrison from the Indians in 1809 would not be surveyed and settled until a few years later.<sup>13</sup>

As soon as the Indian threat had seemingly passed for good, the Neals evidently returned to the future Sullivan County, no doubt in the company of others who began to spread across the area from the Wabash River eastward. The first land sales, for the Carlisle and Busseron Creek areas, in June 1815, with more general sales continuing through the summer of 1816. Properties along the Wabash River, the western boundary of Sullivan County, went quickly and both Edward Neal and his father-in-law Matthew McCammon were among the buyers. According to my grandfather, the Neals first settled in Paxton,

---

<sup>12</sup> There have been several places named Fort Knox in and around Vincennes. During the years between 1809 and 1813, Fort Knox was located about three miles upriver from today's Vincennes. Today it is called Fort Knox II and is a park. See slides 11973-76 for views of the area of the fort as it looked in 2006. One wonders if the Neals ever encountered William Henry Harrison, the territorial governor, while they sheltered at Fort Knox. Harrison would be elected president in 1840 but died exactly a month after taking office.

<sup>13</sup> Another large purchase, the New Purchase in 1818, opened much of central Indiana to settlement by 1821.

which is about twenty-five miles north of Vincennes; the location of their first home, he said, was near Busseron Creek about a quarter of a mile west of Paxton.

This is a bit puzzling, for the documentary record shows that Edward Neal first filed for public land in Gill Township of Sullivan County. This township is not near Paxton but is in the far western part of the county near the Wabash River (and the Illinois border). Here he purchased 160 acres near Merom on December 2, 1816. Edward Neal bought this land on credit, which was then permitted, putting one-quarter of the \$320 price down. He paid another installment on July 10, 1817, but did not make the next payment until November 29, 1819 – which probably indicates that the national banking collapse associated with the Panic of 1819 had affected his ability to pay in specie, as required. Edward did manage to complete his payment on November 29, 1820, however, and he received his patent on May 21, 1821.

The evidence suggests that the Neals did not live on the Gill Township property for long – if at all – before they moved east, closer to the emerging center of population and commerce in Sullivan County as well as the site of its future (1838) county seat. Perhaps my grandfather never knew about this earlier patent in western Sullivan County and assumed that Edward Neal and his family had always lived near Paxton, but there is also reason to wonder if they ever actually resided in Gill Township.<sup>14</sup> Complicating things,

---

<sup>14</sup> Edward Neal's property was the southeast quarter of Section 3, Township 7 North, Range 10 West. See my copy of the 1876 Indiana atlas and the USGS map for Merom/Indiana. His purchase is not in the

there is no deed to indicate when Edward Neal disposed of this property in Gill Township; perhaps the deed of sale was destroyed in either of the two Sullivan County courthouse fires, the first in Merom in 1821 and the other in Sullivan in 1850, and was never refiled.

Further confusion about where the Neal family lived after putting down their roots in Sullivan County in 1816 comes from a provision in Edward Neal's 1846 will, in which he left to a son (John) the northeast quarter of Section 27, which is south of the town of Sullivan in the midst of a cluster of properties belonging to Matthew McCammon and Edward's oldest son, our William Neal.<sup>15</sup> There is no deed to show how and when Edward Neal had acquired this property, although because of the two courthouse fires we cannot be sure that he did not purchase it sometime during the early 1800s. Alternatively, Edward Neal might have patented the land in Section 27 before 1820, which would explain why it does not appear in the database of the Bureau of Land Management, but a query to the Bureau revealed that two other men (one of them Edward Neal's brother-in-law, George Boone) patented land in this quarter of Section 27 prior to 1820. Thus it is more likely that Edward Neal subsequently purchased all or a portion of

---

Bureau of Land Management's database because it had come before 1820, but I have a copy of the patent document itself in my files. See Appendix II for a description of how public lands were surveyed and sold by the United States government. Edward Neal paid a total of \$310.98 for the land near Merom on credit, having received discounts of \$8.92, \$.05, and \$.05 for early payments of the three later installments. Edward Neal's property in Section 3 has for years been part of a large complex where electric power is produced; see slide 11967 for a somewhat distant view of his land, which is now a restricted area, in 2006. Carlisle, not Merom, was the first county seat of Sullivan County, but Merom was made the county seat in 1819.

<sup>15</sup> The Neal-Paxton Cemetery would be created in part of the northeast quarter of the northeast quarter of Section 27 in 1841.

this quarter-section from one of those two men and the deed for this transaction was among those lost to fire.

Although this uncertainty about Edward Neal's land holdings frustrates our efforts to determine exactly where he and his family actually lived immediately after coming to Sullivan County, at least we know that by the time of the 1820 census they were residing near our Matthew McCammon: the two men are only a couple of names apart on the census sheet that year. It would be natural for Edward to have been living near his father-in-law – possibly on land Edward was renting, possibly on his own land in Section 27, which is just a short distance from McCammon's land in Section 35.<sup>16</sup>

It is also possible that Edward Neal was actually residing *with* his father-in-law and helping Matthew to farm his 160 acres, but the separate census listings make this doubtful. The difficulty Edward had had scraping up the money to complete payment for the purchase in Section 3 near Merom may have left him in the position of having to

---

<sup>16</sup> Matthew McCammon purchased his land on October 4, 1816, for \$2.00 per acre. He bought on credit, which was then permitted, but did not make his down payment of \$80 until over a month later (on November 7, 1816). On March 17 in the next year, though, McCammon completed his purchase by paying \$182.40 in cash, receiving a discount of \$57.60 for early payment. His total cash outlay for this land thus was \$262.40. McCammon received his patent on January 23, 1818. Matthew's land was the southwest quarter of Section 35 of Township 7 North, Range 9 West. In early 1821, Matthew transferred 40 of his 160 acres to a son, Hugh, and presumably transferred another 40 acres to a second son at the same time. (The original deeds for these transactions evidently were destroyed in the fire at Sullivan County's courthouse, in Merom, in November 1821; only Hugh refiled his deed later.) For a view of Matthew McCammon's property, see the USGS map for Sullivan/Indiana and slide 12022, taken in 2006. This land is just south of the Neal-Paxton Cemetery. See slide 07150 for a view of this cemetery in 1994 and slide 12023 for a view of it in 2006. Also see the USGS map for Sullivan/Indiana. As noted in an earlier chapter, David Shake's property was near to the ones described here. My grandfather also remembered that Edward Neal built a schoolhouse on his property, which was naturally referred to as "the Neal School House," so that his younger children would not have to walk three miles to school as William had had to do. I have not seen any other mentions of a Neal School House.

accept the expedient of combining forces with his father-in-law, which would turn into a long-term arrangement. Or, perhaps Matthew was physically unable to handle the acreage he owned and Edward and Jane had agreed to assist him, even though they lived separately. We cannot be sure about the exact circumstances in 1820 either, therefore.

How does Edward's ownership of the land in Gill Township fit into this picture? Did he and his family ever live there? It could be that Edward Neal bought the land near Merom entirely on speculation, never actually living on it but hoping to profit later when he (incorrectly) thought this area – the most highly populated one in the county during those early years – would appreciate in value. If so, he was among many who made this same bet, as that property sold quickly to speculators at the land auctions in 1816 and 1817. Perhaps the soil around Paxton was richer than that around Merom. Or, perhaps Edward and Jane started out living in the western part of the county but soon decided they would rather live closer to Matthew McCammon or learned that Jane's father needed assistance.

In any event, Edward Neal's investment in Section 3 may have proved to be a losing one: in view of the fact there is no documentary evidence that he ever sold the land there, he may have been forced to abandon it. But even if he did manage to sell it, and the deed was later destroyed by fire, it is likely he did not reap full value from his investment. The area around Merom was destined to become an isolated backwater when the town of Sullivan, in the geographic center of the county, was established and then was chosen to

become the new county seat. When this shift began to occur, the value of land on the western fringe of Sullivan County, including that in Section 3 in Merom Township, surely underwent a steady decline.

In Paxton, the Neals and the McCammons would remain neighbors, at the least, for many years to come. We have already referred to the 1820 census, which also records the fact that both households had two persons engaged in agriculture. In addition, Matthew McCammon evidently employed in that year what the 1820 census identifies as a “free colored male,” a man who probably helped to farm Matthew’s extensive land.<sup>17</sup> The 1820 census correctly shows our William Neal as a young male ten years old or younger in his father and mother’s household, and the second person listed there as engaged in agriculture may have been a hired hand or a relative.

Edward Neal and his wife Jane were also living in Haddon Township at the time of the 1830 census. There was now an older male (seventy to eighty years old) in their household – undoubtedly Matthew McCammon, who was in his seventies by 1830 and was not listed separately on the 1830 census but rather in the household of Edward Neal.

---

<sup>17</sup> There is family lore that Matthew McCammon owned slaves in South Carolina and took at least some of them to Kentucky and then Indiana with him. Whether or not he emancipated them in Kentucky, as the lore suggests, any of these people who had accompanied Matthew on to Indiana would have become free automatically according to the terms of the Northwest Ordinance. The lore also speaks of former slaves being buried – in a separate section – in Sullivan County’s McCammon Cemetery. Whether the existence of what the 1820 census termed a free colored man helps to confirm this story or actually gave rise to the lore about Matthew owning slaves cannot be determined. Recruiters for South Carolina’s militia forces, including the Thomas Sumter under whom Matthew served, did sometimes promise potential soldiers an adult slave if they would enlist for ten weeks, and it is possible McCammon received this benefit but sold the slave before leaving the state for Kentucky.

This situation is repeated in 1840, with Matthew McCammon (then eighty to ninety years old) listed by name as a pensioned veteran of the Revolutionary War. It seems quite likely that Edward and Matthew had been farming together all these years since 1816 or 1820 on the neighboring properties that the two men owned. In later years, Matthew McCammon patented two 40-acre portions of the section where William Neal had already begun farming, an indication Matthew may have been continuing to help his daughter's family economically.<sup>18</sup>

Here we should pause to consider a story that has tantalized Neal family researchers for years. My grandfather stated that his father, Thomas Neal, remembered seeing living in the home of his own father, William Neal, not only William's father the Edward Neal we are focusing on in this chapter but his (William's) *grandfather* as well – a man who would have been of the same generation as Edward Neal's father. To tell them apart, my

---

<sup>18</sup> Matthew McCammon's later purchases were as follows. On March 24, 1837 (patent received on August 1, 1839), he bought 40 acres comprising the southeast quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 26 in Township 7 North, Range 9 West; on August 17, 1839 (patent received on May 25, 1841), he bought 40 acres in the northeast quarter of the southwest quarter of that section. These purchases cost \$50 each. This gave Matthew McCammon a total of 240 acres, quite a sizeable chunk of land. For views of these three properties, see slides 12019 through 12021, taken in 2006. It is worth noting that McCammon's later purchases adjoined Edward Neal's in Section 27 and not his own in Section 35. In 1840, the census taker was sloppy in placing Matthew's name on the second page of the census form, where veterans of the American Revolution were to have been listed by name, and so Matthew's name is not aligned with that of the householder, Edward Neal. But the enumeration of individuals on that census shows that a man Matthew's age was indeed living in the Neal household – and not in any of the adjacent ones. Matthew McCammon's patent dated May 25, 1841, is an interesting document. General Land Office clerks placed on each patent the "signature" of the current president of the United States, which was really a clerk's signature using the sitting president's name. It was not uncommon for patents issued around the time of a change of presidential administrations to have the signature of the outgoing president crossed off and that of the new president inserted in its place. But Matthew's patent has not only Martin Van Buren's signature, which was crossed out, and that of William Henry Harrison (inaugurated in March 1841 but deceased in April 1841), which was also crossed out, but also a third presidential signature – that of John Tyler, who became president when Harrison died. I expect that only a few patents have this set of three "presidential" signatures, each of which was effective at some point during the time Matthew's patent was going through the General Land Office's approval process.



grandfather said, these two elderly men were called “Little Grandfather” and “Big Grandfather,” respectively. The more my grandfather contemplated this story, the more he was convinced that Big Grandfather *was* in fact Edward Neal's father, a man – possibly bearing the same given name – who in family lore was one hundred and fifteen years old when he died about 1840. My grandfather speculated that Big Grandfather could have been the man who, again according to family oral history, was born in Pennsylvania and migrated south and west to Kentucky along with Daniel Boone. This anecdote ties together several elements of Neal family lore.<sup>19</sup>

The 1830 and 1840 censuses, though, disabuse us of this idea: there was no unidentified extra male in the households of either Edward Neal or his son William Neal. The only elderly male there was Matthew McCammon, who resided with the former in both years. The Big Grandfather of this tale was in actuality probably Matthew himself, who of course as Edward's father-in-law was indeed two generations older than William. If we assume that young Thomas (born in 1832) was remembering seeing both Little Grandfather and Big Grandfather during the later 1830s, he would have been seeing in that one household both Edward Neal, who would die in 1846, and Edward's father-in-law Matthew McCammon, who would die in 1841. One can imagine a small boy having trouble sorting out exactly how these two very old men, belonging to successive generations, were related to one another. Moreover, we have now learned that Edward

---

<sup>19</sup> See Appendix V for an extended discussion of the Neal-Boone relationship.

Neal's father had lived out his life in Kentucky. Here he died a year or two after 1800, which obviously rules him out as the "Big Grandfather" present in Indiana during the 1830s. The lore is correct: only the identity of Big Grandfather is wrong.

Even if the 1840 census does not reveal the presence and identity of a legendary Big Grandfather Neal, it does reveal information that is rather remarkable from the perspective of the 21st century. This single census page shows Edward Neal (the head of household), his wife Jane, their son William, William's wife Elizabeth, their son Thomas, and Jane's father Matthew McCammon. This is four generations in all, living in close proximity, evidently in the very same household. Such an occurrence, uncommon even then, must be even rarer today.

Edward Neal made his will on August 13, 1846, and died on September 2 in that year; the will was probated on November 9, 1846. The original document was lost when the Sullivan County courthouse burned in February 1850, but in August in the next year the court accepted testimony as to its contents and declared the will valid. Edward Neal left his land and dwelling to his son John and additional land to his widow Jane, along with the residue of his personal estate. Property left to the couple's other children included either horses or feather beds – or, in our William's case, enough feathers to make a bed.

Edward Neal is buried in the Neal-Paxton Cemetery, very near to the farmland he had undoubtedly helped to cultivate for many years.<sup>20</sup>

Edward's widow Jane is listed on the 1850 census, still in Haddon Township of Sullivan County; it appears that she was living with two teenaged females, probably relatives, who might have been caring for her. She is on the census in this township in 1860 and in 1870 as well. In both years she was residing with a daughter, Sarah Anderson. Whereas the 1860 census shows that Jane and her daughter were living near Carlisle the one ten years later shows, rather curiously, that their post office was in Merom – many miles away in Gill Township.<sup>21</sup> In a strange way, therefore, the story of the first generation of our Neals to have lived in Sullivan County both begins and ends in Gill Township, far from what we consider the Neal “homeland” in Paxton.

Jane was the daughter of a man we have already met, someone we will study in detail before completing our look at Edward Neal and his origins. Her father was **MATTHEW MCCAMMON**,<sup>22</sup> said to have been a Highland Scot of the Buchanan Clan who was

---

<sup>20</sup> Edward Neal's will mentions the northeast quarter of Section 27, Township 7 North, Range 9 West, including a dwelling on the western part of the property. Jane was allowed the west portion of this land.

<sup>21</sup> Jane had \$100 in real property (identity and location unknown) in 1850. By 1860 she was reduced to having \$20 in personal property. On the 1850 census and again in 1870 she was said to have been unable to read or write; that category was left blank in 1860, probably an error of omission on the part of the census enumerator.

<sup>22</sup> This family name is another one spelled various ways, from McCalmont to McCamant. Some McCammon researchers believe that most of those persons with such names, including the McCammon family of which Matthew was a member, descend most immediately from a Thomas MacCollman born in Argyllshire, Scotland, about 1740, and ultimately from a Thomas MacCollman who was born about 1641. This may be so, but I have not seen any convincing evidence that confirms this statement.

born in County Antrim, Ireland.<sup>23</sup> As such, he was in broad terms one of the numerous Scotch-Irish who formed a key element in the emigration to America, particularly during the 18th century, although most of the true Scotch-Irish who came to this county were actually lowland Scots rather than Highlanders as the McCammons were.<sup>24</sup>

Matthew's date of birth is another moving target for us. The census takers in 1810 and 1820 put him in the columns for 45 years old or older, dating his birth before 1765. In 1830 he was recorded as 70 to 80 years of age, which means a birth between 1750 and 1760. The list of Revolutionary War pensioners, attached to the 1840 census, McCammon's last, states that he was eighty-five years old then (1755). On his application for a Revolutionary War pension in 1832, though, Matthew McCammon himself stated that his age was then seventy-five years (1757). Most McCammon researchers regard February 23, 1757, as his date of birth. I have never seen documentary evidence for this particular date, and in the absence of any it seems best to accept his own statement that he was born sometime in 1757. Matthew died on October 6, 1841, reportedly at the home of his daughter, our Jane {McCammon} Neal. He was buried on the "church farm" or Milam Cemetery in Haddon Township, Sullivan County, Indiana.<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> Other sources state that the McCammon Clan originally came from Stirling Shire in south-central Scotland (just east of Loch Lomond, or, perhaps, from a small island in Loch Lomond itself), which is where the Buchanan Clan originated.

<sup>24</sup> The term Scotch-Irish is in actuality something of a misnomer. Within a few generations of having been planted in Ulster, most of the Scots probably thought of themselves as Irish, in fact, and they were typically described that way later in America. The term Scotch-Irish came into use more frequently after the arrivals, following 1850, of great numbers of Irish emigrants from the *south* of Ireland – newcomers with whom the earlier Scotch-Irish arrivals did not want to be confused.

<sup>25</sup> This cemetery is described as having been on the Owen Ridgeway farm near an old ice pond south of Paxton, on a slight rise of ground at the base of an old black oak tree. The author of the book on Matthew

Matthew McCammon is said to have fathered three sets of children, eighteen children in all. Who his wives were, and in what order he married them, is not at all clear. Family tradition is that Matthew married a woman named Mary in Ireland and that at least one of Matthew and Mary's children succumbed during the ocean crossing and was buried at sea. Mary too is said to have died young, sometime after the McCammon family arrived in America, but we have no idea when this was. In any case, as we shall presently see, there is good cause to doubt that Matthew was old enough to have married and had children before he came to this county, and if this is so these traditions about his family are not tenable. Matthew's actual first wife may have been a Scotswoman remembered in family lore as **MARY {DOUGLAS} MCCAMMON**, whom he presumably married in the Carolinas, but evidence to document either her name or their marriage does not exist. Mary's marriage to Matthew would have occurred sometime between about 1775 and about 1785. We do not know when this woman was born or died, or indeed anything more about her than the name attributed to her, but barring evidence to the contrary she should be considered our Jane's mother. It seems likely to me that two traditions about Matthew's first wife have been conflated and that there was just one woman named Mary, probably someone he married in America but we cannot be certain of that.<sup>26</sup>

---

McCammon was unable to find his gravesite there some years ago. I was unable to find even the cemetery in 2006. In view of his long association with the Neals, it is interesting that Matthew McCammon was buried here and not in the Neal-Paxton Cemetery. But there were (and still are) a great many McCammons in Sullivan County, and so his burial among some of them elsewhere is not so surprising.

<sup>26</sup> The name Douglas was sometimes spelled Douglass. Perhaps Mary died during a serious smallpox pandemic in the Carolinas, which, judging from statements in pension applications of some McCammons who served in the Revolutionary War, hit the family at about this time. Research has revealed just how widely the South Carolina militia inadvertently spread smallpox throughout the state.

A modern book on Matthew McCammon and his descendants suggests that by about 1800 he had married again. This wife was named Martha {Galley} McCammon. Some Galley researchers state that Matthew married a Martha Whiteside, the widow of Benjamin Galley, about 1794, but a Samuel Galley of Jessamine County, Kentucky (where Matthew McCammon lived at the time), did have a daughter named Martha and she might have been the woman Matthew married.<sup>27</sup> We do know that it was Matthew and Martha McCammon who in 1802 gave their consent for Jane to marry Edward Neal, with two men named Galley serving as witnesses, so there seems good reason to accept this second marriage for Matthew even if we do not have complete documentary evidence for it and for Martha, whose date of death we also do not know. There may have been a later wife of Matthew McCammon as well: some McCammon researchers believe that he married a Martha Trimble from Kentucky, the marriage having been performed in Indiana; other researchers believe that this woman's given name was Flora instead of Martha.<sup>28</sup> The principal reason there is not enough evidence to determine whether Matthew McCammon was married to either or both of these women is once again fire: the early (pre-1803) marriage information from Fayette County, Kentucky, was lost in a courthouse fire and the two similar ones in Sullivan County, Indiana, destroyed many early marriage records there as well.

---

<sup>27</sup> Her name was possibly spelled Galey. Samuel Smith Galley was a native of Ireland. Martha was born around 1774.

<sup>28</sup> One reason for caution regarding the notion that Matthew married a woman named Trimble is that the source for this information also states that his third wife was a "Miss Neal," which does not match anything that we know.

The first evidence we have that Matthew McCammon was in North America comes from a reference in his own application for a Revolutionary War pension, written more than half a century later. In it, he stated that he was drafted into the militia in South Carolina in 1779. He did not say how long he had been living in that colony before then. If Matthew was in fact born in 1757, already married, and a father before he came to America, it is unlikely that he could have emigrated from Northern Ireland (also known as Ulster) before about 1775, when he would have been only eighteen years of age.

The five-year period ending in 1775, when the onset of the American Revolution interrupted most emigration to America, saw the heaviest influx from Northern Ireland. That influx was largely due to economic conditions in Ulster – particularly the decline of the linen industry – but also to religious and political causes. In general many of the Scotch-Irish who came to America were farmers, but others had toiled in the linen industry or were weavers. An unfavorable change in England's trade policies after 1698 provoked the beginnings of a long wave of Scotch-Irish emigration to America, though, and the collapse of the linen industry during the 1770s produced a powerful surge of people eager to escape Northern Ireland's depressed economy. Virtually all those who came to America from Ulster in 1772 and 1773 were linen workers. Sharply increased rents, notably in County Antrim, also helped to feed the large migration that took place between 1770 and the start of the American Revolution.

Family tradition also tells us that Matthew McCammon and several members of his immediate family came to America as a group, with as many as five brothers and perhaps their parents as well making up that group. We have evidence that at least two men named McCammon were in Mecklenburg County of North Carolina by 1767, but if Matthew had come to America with these McCammons, he would not yet have reached his teens and thus would still have been unmarried at that time. Because Matthew is first observed in South Carolina, though, I am inclined to think that he was part of a second and perhaps more numerous McCammon group, probably related somehow to those in North Carolina, that had arrived in South Carolina by the mid-1770s.<sup>29</sup>

The first documentary evidence of any McCammon in South Carolina – other than for military service – does not come until 1782, but at least four other McCammon males besides Matthew served in South Carolina units during the American Revolution and it is reasonable to suppose they had been residing in this colony for awhile before enlisting in those units – and before emigration from Ulster virtually ceased about 1775. Putting all the variables together, we can say that if Matthew arrived during the 1760s or up to about 1773, he cannot have been married with children when he did. If he came to America between 1773 and 1775, it is doubtful that he had a wife and child by then. Only if he was among the relatively few who emigrated between 1775 and 1779 could he have

---

<sup>29</sup> The North Carolina McCammons lived northeast of Charlotte along the Rocky River and several of its tributaries: Buffalo Creek, Coddle Creek, and McKee's Creek.



brought a wife and child with him. It seems most likely to me that Matthew McCammon came to America during the first half of the 1770s, and so we are led back to our earlier conclusion that information about his first two wives has been intermixed and he was probably married in the Carolinas, and only there.

Whenever they did make that ocean voyage to America, the McCammons, like most other Scotch-Irish headed here, probably departed from a County Antrim port such as Belfast, Larne, or Portrush, or possibly from Londonderry. We do not know for sure where this extended family landed, either. They could have come directly to South Carolina, landing in Charleston, but emigrants from Northern Ireland came into many other ports as well: New Bern and Wilmington in North Carolina; Savannah in Georgia; Philadelphia and Chester in Pennsylvania; New Castle in Delaware; and New York City. Given what we know about Scotch-Irish immigration at this particular time, the McCammon family's most likely port of entry was either Philadelphia or New Castle. From there they would have been drawn into what was at that time the Pennsylvania frontier (areas along a broad arc north and west of Philadelphia) and then gravitated down the interior valleys – including the Shenandoah Valley, of course – until they found congenial territory for settlement. An overland journey from Philadelphia or another northern port southward would have taken weeks or months, even years: perhaps the McCammons, like many others, did not make this long journey all at once but tarried in

certain places en route for awhile – how long is impossible to say – before resuming the trip southward.<sup>30</sup>

By the 1760s, the most congenial and accessible territory for the Scotch-Irish newcomers had become the Piedmont area of the Carolinas. This upcountry region had opened up after the Cherokee Indian wars that concluded in 1761, and South Carolina's colonial government was now offering to settlers bounties and public land free from taxation for ten years. The Camden region was first settled during the early part of the 1770s, just about when we believe the McCammons arrived there. Unlike the eastern, lower, and more intensively planted sections of South Carolina, the upcountry area including Camden had very few plantations – or slaves. By the 1770s there was already a sizeable Scotch-Irish population in the Carolina upland area called “the Waxhaws” after an Indian nation of this name that had lived there. The area straddles the border between North Carolina and South Carolina and was the birthplace of Andrew Jackson; born in 1767, he was Matthew's contemporary.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> The Scotch-Irish who landed in Wilmington, North Carolina, went up the Cape Fear River into the interior to what is now Fayetteville (at that time called Cross Creek), then fanned out over numerous routes to the areas straddling the North Carolina and South Carolina border where we first encounter our own McCammons. Such a trip would of course have taken less time than an overland one from New York City, Philadelphia, or one of the other ports and the land travel that would have followed their arrival.

<sup>31</sup> See the USGS map for Van Wyck/South Carolina-North Carolina for a general view of the Waxhaws. Ironically, this is the very area in which my sister lived during the first years of her retirement, certainly without realizing beforehand its connection to our family. During the period discussed in the text, there was confusion about the demarcation between the two Carolina colonies, and it was not until years later that the present border was agreed upon. In the meantime, parts of this area were originally in North Carolina (which had issued land grants for it) but ended up in South Carolina. Some of the McCammon properties were in this area between the two jurisdictions.

The McCammon cluster living in South Carolina appears to have been concentrated on the west side of the Catawba River and the north side of the Main Fishing Creek, which eventually merges with that river. This area was in what was called after 1769 the Camden Judicial District. (South Carolina did not create counties until later. When it did so during the 1780s, seven counties, for our purposes principally York County, Chester County, Lancaster County, and Fairfield County, were created out of the former Camden District.) Exactly where Matthew McCammon resided, if he in fact was a member of this particular cluster, is not known, but it is probable that he lived somewhere in the Fishing Creek watershed, where he may have been helping an older brother, an uncle, or a cousin farm. Likely candidates are Hugh, William, and James McCammon, all shown on the 1790 census for Fairfield County in Camden District, but none of these men had living with them then any additional males older than sixteen years old. Alternatively, Matthew could have been working for a neighbor or someone else, identity unknown. In the records of this county and the other three relevant counties that superseded the Camden District, there is no documentary evidence of Matthew's existence. Only his later pension application tells us that he was there by 1779.<sup>32</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> The meanders of Fishing Creek can be traced on a number of USGS maps, including the ones for Catawba/South Carolina, Edgemoor/South Carolina, Great Falls/South Carolina, and Rock Hill West/South Carolina. Also see digital images 00842-00854 and 00866-00868 (taken in 2010) for views of Fishing Creek, which drains a large portion of northeastern South Carolina. We will discuss it again later in connection with the Neals. James McCammon, one of those who lived on Fishing Creek, was described in a deed as a weaver.

Thanks to that application, which he dictated to a commissioner in Sullivan County, Indiana, and signed with his mark on August 13, 1832, we learn an exceptional amount about Matthew McCammon's military service.<sup>33</sup> He is not the only man included in this family history who served under arms, but we know the most about his military service – limited as it was and confusing as the application itself is in places.<sup>34</sup> We must be mindful that what Matthew related in his application may not be entirely accurate. His account, after all, was prepared more than half a century after the events themselves, and

---

<sup>33</sup> The act under which Matthew McCammon applied for a pension was approved by Congress on June 7, 1832. It was intended to recognize the (presumably few) Revolutionary War veterans still alive at that time. The number of applicants far exceeded expectations, however, which led to the commissioning of a special census of those veterans in 1835. This census confirmed that the high response to the 1832 pension act had been legitimate. McCammon is on the special census in 1835 and also on the tally of Revolutionary War pensioners taken in conjunction with the regular 1840 census. I have not been able to find Matthew McCammon's Revolutionary War service record at the National Archives, so we have only his pension application and the South Carolina records to verify his service. The fact that a minister named James Love endorsed McCammon's petition – the petition required such an endorsement from a clergyman – leads one to think that McCammon attended Love's church, which appears to have been a Church of Christ congregation, but the two men may only have been neighbors (as they were in 1820) and acquaintances. The entire Neal line in Indiana from William down to my own grandfather, Charles M. Neal, was affiliated with this denomination. It seems likely Edward had attended the Church of Christ too, although William and his offspring may have been steered into that denomination by their mother. McCammon, having applied for a pension on August 13, 1832, supplemented his application in January in the next year with an affidavit that he had no documentary evidence to support his claim.

<sup>34</sup> Our war veterans were many, and the wars were varied. Adam Rickabaugh's service during the War of 1812 is fairly well documented but was also brief. In addition, we should not forget that Aaron Stark, James Trimble, Christopher Shake, the Stark brothers, and Adriaen Post were involved in various military or quasi-military activities. (Even Abraham Verplanck might qualify here.) Still others (John Crooks, Lemuel Blevins, and William Hughbanks) might have served in uniform – we cannot be certain. In the next chapter we will add one more to this list, at least tentatively. Undoubtedly others too contributed in ways we do not know about to the wars they lived through. Most of them undoubtedly served for years in the militias in their respective communities, as we have seen in some instances, since men eighteen to forty-five or fifty years old (except for state officials, ministers, and those physically unable) customarily were required to enroll in the militia and generally mustered twice a year, at least until the 1830s or so. There were other contributions as well: during the Civil War William Neal paid \$10 in newly imposed U.S. income taxes on his stallion in 1863, 1864, and 1865. This was not an insignificant sum at that time. When the national draft was imposed during the Civil War, Thomas Neal apparently did not register, as we saw in an earlier chapter, but William R. Zink did so as required. (Henry Rickabaugh was too old for the Civil War draft and Samuel Green Vanderpool was too young.) The Civil War divided many of our families, since some branches of them had remained below the Mason-Dixon line while members of others had migrated to Indiana or elsewhere above it. Vanderpools, Starks, Chastains, and others served on both sides of the conflict, although those in the Confederate ranks were rather more distant from our particular lines than those who fought for the Union were. Three of Samuel Green Vanderpool's brothers served in the Union infantry, and one of them was captured.

some of the names and dates in particular seem to be erroneous when compared to other sources of information. No doubt some of the evident errors can be attributed to the fact that Matthew was dictating his recollections to an Indiana official who had to guess at the unknown names and their spelling, and McCammon's poor command of written language precluded him from making corrections before the application was submitted.<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless, the narrative and his replies to the application's prescribed questions about his Revolutionary War service both seem generally credible and certainly help us to understand his military experiences during the early 1780s.

McCammon's narrative begins by stating that he was drafted for four weeks in Camden District, South Carolina, in 1779, but my inspection of the original application in the National Archives revealed that he actually said he was drafted for four *months*.<sup>36</sup> The British, having reached a military stalemate with General George Washington's army in the North, opened a second front in the South during 1778 and 1779 by capturing several key coastal cities (including Savannah and, later, Charleston) in preparation for occupying the upland areas. In response, the Southern states hurriedly raised militia companies to augment the small Continental army that was resisting the British.

---

<sup>35</sup> McCammon's pension, \$53.33 per year, was approved on March 21, 1833, to begin on March 4, 1834. Presumably he received this annual payment until he died seven years later. He was also awarded payment of two years in arrears to cover the period between his application and the first scheduled payment. The 1835 special census of Revolutionary War veterans shows that Matthew had received \$159.99 by the time of that census. McCammon's military experience in the South paralleled the experience of that other Scotch-Irish resident of the Waxhaws who fought in some of these same engagements: Andrew Jackson. One wonders if he and Matthew McCammon ever crossed paths.

<sup>36</sup> The clerk who transcribed Matthew McCammon's application originally wrote "three months" and then corrected this to "four weeks." Since Matthew says he served twice as long as that, nine weeks, the clerk probably had intended to write four *months* but mistakenly put down four weeks instead.

Matthew McCammon's service was part of this mobilization. In South Carolina, militia forces were generated by the state's districts as needed. Service in these units was legally required of all men (usually with exceptions for certain occupations) within prescribed age cohorts (sometimes expanded in response to needs), although hired substitutes were permitted and those opposing the American rebellion and independence often refused to report for duty.

The districts, sometimes given quotas to meet, filled their militia rolls first with volunteers and then by drafts. Terms of service were typically short, so the available males rotated through the militia at intervals – three or six months was a common length of service. Sometimes credit for longer service was awarded to attract volunteers who would be dismissed after a shorter period. The reputation of most of these militia units was not high: in general, they were poorly clothed, equipped, trained, disciplined, and led. Most experienced commanders did not count on them to stand and fight, nor to fight very well.

The war in the Southern backcountry, less known than the battles to the north, was a swirl of organized military campaigns and small-scale partisan (today we would say “guerrilla”) raids. There was considerable pro-British sympathy in the Carolina hinterlands in particular, in part growing out of resentment of the wealthy coastal leadership that had supported American independence, and so the British created a

number of loyalist regiments to help them pacify Georgia and the Carolinas. Both sides used brutal reprisals against noncombatants, destroyed the property of their antagonists, and summarily executed adversaries and even prisoners – often their neighbors and former friends. Loyalties sometimes shifted as the fortunes of war changed, but most of the Scotch-Irish like the McCammons could be counted upon to side with those resisting British authority.

Matthew McCammon declared dictating his 1832 pension application that he served in the company of Captain James Knox, part of the South Carolina Regiment of Colonel “E. Cushaw” (whose name was actually Eli Kershaw). Kershaw’s unit was part of the larger command of General Thomas Sumter. Sumter had commanded rebel forces earlier in the war but then fled to western South Carolina when the British burned his plantation. He did not resume his military career until 1780, and McCammon’s regiment probably was one of the units Sumter took command of when he did. Sumter became the foremost leader of the South Carolina militia during the Revolution. He attracted men largely from the upland sections of South Carolina, including many Scots who were said to be angry at the British for burning Bibles that had been translated into Gaelic.<sup>37</sup> Sumter operated primarily as an independent commander and is regarded by some scholars as something of a freebooter who was not above pillaging the countryside for its own sake. (It is he after whom Fort Sumter was named.)

---

<sup>37</sup> The New Testament was first translated into Gaelic in 1767, which makes this story plausible.

Matthew's application also states that after nine weeks he was released from his military service and sent home. This must have been during the first part of 1780, when the conflict in the Carolinas had also evolved into a stalemate. McCammon said he was drafted again later in 1780, this time for three months. We can deduce that his resumption of military service was part of the renewed recruitment of militia companies in South Carolina in response to the offensive into the backcountry that the ruthless British Colonel Banastre Tarleton launched after the British capture of the city of Charleston in early 1780. Tarleton and his forces arrived in the Waxhaw area in late May in that year, when they overwhelmed (and massacred) a Virginia regiment commanded by Colonel Abraham Buford. McCammon says that he served about six weeks in Captain Henry Bishop's company before being released halfway through his term of enlistment. (He does not say whether he had been promised such an early release.) Bishop's company was also part of the South Carolina Regiment, now commanded by Colonel Richard Winn (spelled Wyne in the application), which remained part of General Sumter's overall command.

McCammon's application does not specifically mention his having been in any engagements during this phase of the war in South Carolina, which began with a disastrous defeat for the American forces in Camden (August 1780). One major engagement took place on Fishing Creek, near where many of the McCammon clan lived.



The British then set up a crescent-shaped chain of forts ranging from the coast through the interior of South Carolina, then back to the coast again. These forts would enable them to pacify the state and ensure adequate provisions for their own soldiers. With South Carolina seemingly lost to the rebel cause, these were difficult times for those who supported independence. Soon, however, the fortunes of war turned: American victories in battles known as Kings Mountain (October 1780) and the Second Cowpens (January 1781) rallied the patriots again. By then, however, McCammon's short enlistment presumably would have been over, so it is unlikely he had participated in either of these well-known battles – which, one expects, he would have mentioned in his application had he taken part in them.

According to McCammon, he resumed his military duties by enlisting in “the United States service” on April 15, 1782. This date cannot be correct as written and surely should have been recorded as April 15, *1781*, instead: the actions he describes next in his application took place during 1781, and he gives the date of his ultimate discharge as April 15, 1782. Furthermore, the Waxhaw-area militia had suffered a serious military setback on April 9, 1781, and McCammon may have rejoined after the militia there intensified its recruiting efforts in order to replenish its ranks. Thus we should date Matthew's service from April 15, 1781, instead.<sup>38</sup> Matthew went on in his application to

---

<sup>38</sup> In a letter dated 1925, the Commissioner of Pensions told a correspondent that the 1782 date was in error and should be 1781. The editor of a book describing McCammon's wartime record (among with those of many others) also cites the date as 1781, so he must have agreed with the reasoning detailed here. Also see the next footnote.

state that on this occasion he served – as a private, he said – for ten months in what was called the South Carolina Cavalry. He identified the officers of his company as Captain John Mills, Lieutenant John Miller, and Ensign Alexander Brown. This company was part of Colonel Henry Hampton and Colonel Wade Hampton’s South Carolina Regiments of Light Dragoons (which meant that they were mounted forces, what we would call cavalry).<sup>39</sup> McCammon’s ten months of service this time was, he stated, evenly divided between the regiments the two Hamptons commanded.

There is no reference in McCammon’s application to anything other than South Carolina units, and I can find no evidence that he was enrolled in this state’s Continental Line (regular soldiers, paid by the Continental Congress, whose enlistments were for eighteen months to the duration of the war). Unless we find such evidence, we probably should hypothesize – as the events to be recounted later in this chapter lead us to believe – that the South Carolina units to which Matthew belonged fought alongside, or perhaps temporarily as part of, the Continental units in the army in the South. McCammon (and, later, the Pension Office) evidently regarded this lengthy stint as a cavalryman as his having been in “the United States service.”

---

<sup>39</sup> Wade Hampton was the grandfather of the more famous man with that name who was a prominent general during the Civil War. Mills, Miller, and Brown (along with McCammon himself) are listed as members of the Hampton regiments. Mills served only from April through September in 1781, which helps to verify that McCammon’s service occurred in that year and not in 1782. Unfortunately, no relevant information for the officers he mentions – Bishop, Winn, Knox, Kershaw, Miller, or Brown – can be found in individual service records, pension applications, or muster rolls in the National Archives, but this is consistent with McCammon’s statement that he was primarily in a South Carolina unit that worked with a Continental detachment. We must remember, too, that not every record created during the Revolutionary War has survived.

This third phase of McCammon's war service was his most active one. He said he was present at the capture of "Fort Congaree" in South Carolina. This was most likely Fort Granby on the Congaree River, later the town of Cayce in that state and a part of metropolitan Columbia: the entire, heavily Scotch-Irish settlement in that area was sometimes called Congaree. Fort Granby was one of the chain of garrisons American troops captured in 1781 (on May 15 in its case). McCammon also stated that he was at the capture of Fort Tompson, "alias Boccades" or Buckhead. (The application document uses both names.) Here it is likely that he was referring to Fort Motte (also on the Congaree River), which was sometimes called Buckhead Hill. Fort Motte was near Orangeburg, where McCammon said he was also engaged in battle; it was captured on May 12, 1781. The fighting at Orangeburg itself that Matthew described could have been one of two incidents in 1781, one on May 11 and another extending from July to November 14, 1781, but from the context we are probably right to think he was referring to the first of these clashes, the one on May 11.<sup>40</sup>

McCammon thus was a participant in the campaign being led by the able new American commander, General Nathanael Greene. This initiative aimed at retaking the Carolina backcountry from the British by destroying the forts they had established a year or two

---

<sup>40</sup> For a view of the approximate location of Fort Granby in 2010, see digital images 00857-00858; this site is across the river from downtown Columbia. Alternatively, McCammon might have been referring to the original British fortification named Fort Congaree, built during the early 18th century, which was located on the Santee River. Although there is a small settlement called Fort Motte where the outpost called Fort Motte once stood, nothing seems to remain of the former fort itself.

earlier. Greene calculated that this would deprive the British of the supplies they needed for their army and force them back to the coast, where they could be contained. Most of this fighting was done by partisan units, including Sumter's, under the command of General Francis Marion, who was popularly known as "the Swamp Fox." Greene kept the bulk of his Continental forces intact in hopes of engaging the British army in a decisive battle but did lend to this campaign a body of dragoons led by General Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee, the father of Robert E. Lee.

As we have seen, whether or not Matthew McCammon was a member of the Continental Army may be a matter of definition. At the Battle of Cowpens, in early 1781, the Continental dragoons had been augmented by both South Carolina state forces and militiamen recruited specifically for this purpose, and presumably this process occurred at other times during 1781. In addition, at Cowpens some South Carolina state dragoons had been assigned to their Continental counterparts as guides, and the success of this collaboration might have led to its having been repeated later on. Thus McCammon might have remained in the South Carolina Cavalry throughout the period he described in this section of his application, but even if he had not been officially enrolled as a member of the Continental forces he might have thought himself part of a United States army unit because the fighting outfits to which he actually belonged also included Continentals – and in any case he was part of a force that was under General Greene's orders. Nowhere,

however, is Matthew McCammon listed on the rolls of Continental soldiers – only on South Carolina’s state rolls.<sup>41</sup>

Next, Matthew's application states, he was involved in a skirmish with the “famous Tory, Simon Girty,” after which he took part in the more substantial Battle of Eutaw Springs on September 8, 1781. We will examine this reported encounter with Girty later, after concluding McCammon’s own account of his military service. During mid-1781, Greene finally got his chance to bring the British army to battle and advanced along the south bank of the Santee River toward Charleston. A British force under Colonel Alexander Stewart blocked the road at Eutaw Springs, about forty miles above (northwest of) Charleston. Most of the fighting here fell to Greene’s Continental brigades from Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina, but four small militia units from the two Carolinas (approximately 150 militiamen and 250 rangers) were in the front lines and the South Carolina Cavalry was paired (as at Cowpens) with the Continental cavalry commanded by Colonel William Washington, a cousin of the American army’s Commander-in-Chief. Each side had something over 2,000 soldiers.

After having paused overnight at Burdell’s Planation, Greene attacked the British camp at dawn on a hot, humid day, and the fighting lasted for four hours. The militiamen (used as

---

<sup>41</sup> According to the pension application of a man who enlisted at this time and must have served with Matthew McCammon, the enlistees were promised 100 pounds in money and also land but received neither, which leads one to wonder if Matthew did in fact receive a slave as a recruitment bonus.

a front line here) fought very well on this occasion, firing seventeen rounds per man before retreating as planned, and they and the Continentals who moved forward through them drove their surprised British and Tory opponents from their encampment. Most of the Redcoats fled, leaving their uneaten breakfasts and their baggage behind, but Washington's combined cavalry encountered substantial opposition from one British contingent on the left flank and was severely bloodied in the fight. The underfed and poorly clothed American foot soldiers, meanwhile, paused to plunder (and eat) what their opponents had abandoned in their camp and eventually were driven from the battlefield when the British regrouped and charged. According to McCammon's statement in his application, he received during the battle a slight flesh wound – “in the act of charging,” he seems eager to say – and so was among the 375 American soldiers who were wounded that day.<sup>42</sup> He must have been wounded during Washington's cavalry charge, although we cannot be positive about this.

The Battle of Eutaw Springs – unheralded today but the bloodiest battle of the American Revolution in the South (and one of the bloodiest of the entire War of Independence) – became the climactic event in Greene's effort to harass and repel the British forces in the South. Although it was tactically another of a series of setbacks for the American forces, in strategic terms the outcome of the battle was to force the British, now short on both

---

<sup>42</sup> The Battle of Eutaw Springs also resulted in 138 dead and 41 missing American soldiers. Unfortunately, the actual site of the engagement has for many years been covered by the waters of the artificial Lake Marion, which may help to explain why this battle's significance is less known today than it might be if the battlefield were accessible.

provisions and men, to retreat into their small coastal enclaves as Greene had hoped. What happened at Eutaw Springs thus brought to an end the British military presence in most of South Carolina (excepting these enclaves, which they would be forced to abandon in 1782) and, indeed, the entire lower South. The British never left the coast to do battle again, and six weeks following the Battle of Eutaw Springs their commander, Lord Cornwallis, and his army would be penned up in Yorktown, Virginia, where he was ultimately forced to surrender his army. Slight as Matthew McCammon's war record may appear to be, we can take satisfaction from the fact that he was present at a key turning point in the War of Independence.

Following the Battle of Eutaw Springs, McCammon apparently served for a length of time not stated in an outfit usually called the "South Carolina Tories," although the unit was not identified as such in his application for a pension. His commander was a Major Bleauford.<sup>43</sup> These South Carolina Tories may have been Scotsmen, sometimes termed Tories because as a group they were preponderantly loyal to the British crown during the American Revolution. Or, they might have been soldiers originally loyal to Great Britain who had later switched sides and fought against them in order to prove their loyalty to the new rebel regime. McCammon's presence in this Tory outfit does not necessarily mean that he was a Tory himself, or that he had ever sided with the British: he might have been an experienced – and loyal – soldier brought in to assist the officers in handling this

---

<sup>43</sup> This officer's name is variously given as Blanford, Blewford, Bleuford, and even Bleanford, but Bluford appears in some later histories. I cannot identify him, unfortunately.

potentially difficult group. McCammon's record shows that he, like most of the Scotch-Irish (including his four brothers), was consistently on the patriots' side of the conflict.<sup>44</sup>

Even though Cornwallis had surrendered his army in October 1781, sporadic fighting continued in the South for months as rebel forces sought to mop up the remaining bands of Loyalists in the Low Country area and to isolate the British in their Charleston stronghold. This would bring about a fourth phase of McCammon's war. Under Major Bleauford's orders Matthew marched from South Carolina into Georgia, where in 1781 or 1782 (from the evidence, probably the latter) he said he was involved in an engagement with the British within eight or ten miles of Savannah, and in another with the (presumably pro-British) Indians within twenty or twenty-five miles of Ebenezer, Georgia, a town on the Savannah River above Savannah. McCammon's account matches the known facts quite well, for a group of Sumter's mounted forces was detached for service in Georgia at about the time Matthew said he was in that state and there were actions in the places he mentions during February and March in 1782. Following these engagements, McCammon continued, he served briefly as a guard for captured Indians who were escorted back to Ebenezer. After waiting there a week, and with the term of his enlistment already having expired, he was marched back to Orangeburg and dismissed with instructions to appear on the Congaree River on April 15, 1782, in order to receive his formal discharge. When he appeared there on this date as directed, no one

---

<sup>44</sup> Since the Scots who settled in the Carolinas tended to remain loyal to Great Britain, there was often bitter fighting between them and the Scotch-Irish, who were typically vehemently anti-British.



was present to give him his discharge and so he simply went home. This time it would be for good.<sup>45</sup>

Matthew McCammon's answers to the several questions the pension law required, a friend's attached testimony, and the separate pension application of one of Matthew's nephews provide some useful supplementary information that sheds more light on McCammon's military experiences. These documents mention Matthew's service in a brigade of the Light Horse Troops commanded by General (Benjamin) Lincoln, who headed the American forces in the Carolinas until he was captured in Charleston in May 1780. Lincoln's surrender – of more than 2,000 South Carolina militiamen, a like number of Continental troops, and huge stores of arms and supplies – was one of the most embarrassing events of the war for the American rebels. Matthew also included in his replies to the commissioner in Indiana the additional comments that he had served under a General Wayne and a Colonel Gill. General “Mad” Anthony Wayne had been the commander in campaigns during early 1782 to drive the British out of Savannah and Georgia, where as we have seen McCammon's application says that he had seen action.

McCammon himself does not mention having served before 1779, and one wonders if his friend and nephew confused Lincoln with William Washington or Henry Lee, under

---

<sup>45</sup> McCammon's pension application gives the date for his appearance on the Congaree River as 1783, but internal evidence in the application shows that the correct year must have been 1782, before he was discharged. McCammon evidently had not been present at the earlier battle at Ebenezer (sometimes called New Ebenezer), which occurred on March 3, 1779. His account places the engagement he was part of closer to Savannah and later in time.

whom McCammon evidently did serve at the Battle of Eutaw Springs and perhaps elsewhere. On the other hand, it is possible that McCammon did serve with Lincoln in 1780 and might have been captured with him at Charleston (and was then paroled, as was customary) but did not mention this earlier incident in his war service in his application even half a century later because being captured was an embarrassing memory for him as well (and not germane to his request for a pension). Such a circumstance might also help to explain why McCammon stated that he had at one point been in “the United States service.”

The documents of Matthew’s friend and nephew mention some other officers under whom he is said to have served, including a Major Doyle and a Colonel White, as well as to a battle at “Puren Burg” (this is Purysburg, also on the bank of the Savannah River) in Georgia, where a battle occurred on April 29, 1779.<sup>46</sup> The application of Matthew’s nephew cites the experiences of his own father, who also fought in South Carolina under General Sumter during two other engagements – the renowned Snow Campaign (late 1775) and the Battle of Hanging Rock (August 1780) – that are better known than the Battle of Eutaw Springs is. The nephew implied that his uncle, our Matthew McCammon, also participated in these battles; but because Matthew himself was silent about them, we can only wonder if this was correct. It does seem possible, though, that

---

<sup>46</sup> White may have been Henry White of the South Carolina militia (1779-82), and Doyle might have been the officer named Daniel D’Oyley. The officer named John Miller, whom McCammon himself identified (see above), was captured in February 1779. This could indicate that Matthew did indeed serve in the militia that early.

McCammon's war experiences were actually rather more extensive than his pension application alone would indicate, but that he mentioned in it only what he remembered in 1832, or included just enough to support his application without telling everything he recalled. All in all, these supplementary documents help to flesh out Matthew McCammon's memories of his Revolutionary War service but may not be entirely reliable.

Let us return now to McCammon's reference to a clash involving Simon Girty. The reference is intriguing not only due to Girty's very notoriety but also because when and where it might have occurred raises some interesting questions about where McCammon could have been living during the 1780s. Girty was a Pennsylvanian who after initially supporting the patriot cause opted in 1778 to join the British instead. He fled his home near Pittsburgh for British headquarters in Detroit and became a ruthless and for that reason infamous instigator of frontier Indians on behalf of the British and Loyalist causes, mostly in Ohio but occasionally also in Kentucky. Thus Girty was active mainly north and west of anywhere McCammon said in his pension application he himself had been engaged. But as a British agent, Girty encouraged the Indians to make raids south across the Ohio River on settlements in northern Kentucky. These raids – often accompanied by numerous atrocities – took place during the summer of 1782, the year before the peace treaty with Great Britain was signed.<sup>47</sup> McCammon could have been involved in this

---

<sup>47</sup> The culminating conflict was the Battle of Blue Licks on August 19, 1782, in which the Kentuckians were defeated. Fortunately, news of the peace came soon thereafter.

fighting if he had been living in Kentucky as early as mid-1782, but he placed his reference to Girty in sequence between his references to Orangeburg and Eutaw Springs – events that took place in 1781 – and, as we shall see, seems to have been residing in the Carolinas as late as 1785.<sup>48</sup>

How then can we account for McCammon's reference to having fought Girty? Might Matthew and other South Carolina militiamen have been mustered in 1782 and sent to assist the Kentucky settlers fending off Girty? If this is the explanation, perhaps it was McCammon's brief visit to Kentucky in 1782 that sparked his interest in moving there later on. I have found no solid evidence to substantiate any such mission of assistance, and it seems likely that McCammon would have mentioned the circumstances in his application had he been sent to Kentucky for the purpose of fighting the infamous Girty. A better explanation for the reference comes when we learn that in September 1786 more than 500 Kentucky residents crossed the Ohio River themselves in order to attack Indians stirred up but not actually led by Girty. These Indians were being encouraged by the British, who were using them to delay having to turn the area north of the Ohio River over the new United States as the Treaty of Paris ending the American Revolution in 1783 had specified they would. If McCammon had already relocated to Kentucky by

---

<sup>48</sup> Girty may have been involved in a raid on two Kentucky stations in June 1780, and there was a clash along the Kentucky-Indiana portion of the Ohio River in mid-1781 in which he might have participated. From August to October in that year, Girty was recuperating from an injury he had received in a fight.

1786 – as we will soon see he probably had – he may have participated in *this* skirmish but mistakenly placed it out of sequence in his pension application narrative.<sup>49</sup>

Thus we cannot positively identify the specific encounter with Simon Girty that McCammon mentions in his application. We may in fact be dealing with a case of mistaken identity altogether. Girty was “seen” at many battles and raids in which he did not personally participate; his reputation was so formidable and terror-producing that he was frequently given credit for inciting battles and Indian raids even though he had had nothing to do with them. He became a kind of bogeyman for Americans (especially westerners), a symbol of the cruel and capricious Indian savagery that so frightened settlers, and it was natural that they would suspect this notorious turncoat was behind every clash with Indians in the West. It is possible that McCammon drew upon Girty’s enduring reputation as a way of characterizing, for an Indiana official far too young to remember the events of the 1780s himself, the sort of ruthless pro-British groups against whom he and others had fought in South Carolina more than a half-century before. In the end, we cannot know whether Matthew McCammon actually did face Girty across a battlefield or only thought (or said) he did.

---

<sup>49</sup> Troubles with Indians in the Old Northwest continued for almost another decade after 1786, and Girty was involved right up until the end. On November 3, 1791, for instance, Girty led Indians on a raid on General Arthur St. Clair's regulars and Kentucky militiamen. On August 20, 1794, the Indian hegemony in this part of the Old Northwest was finally brought to an end at the Battle of Fallen Timbers. Here, near present-day Maumee, Ohio, General “Mad” Anthony Wayne decisively defeated them.

As we have seen, McCammon's last military enlistment expired on April 15, 1782. From the book on Matthew and his descendants, we learn that he was still living in the Camden, South Carolina, area in early 1784, for he attended an estate sale there on March 9 in that year. On October 1 in that same year, the state of South Carolina awarded Matthew pay and bounty due him for his service in Mills' Troop, H. Hampton's Regiment, Sumter's Brigade, for service through April 1782, plus interest through October 1, 1784. Court records in that same state link McCammon to South Carolina from 1783 to 1785, and another document confirms that he was residing in this state through at least mid-1785.

On June 17, 1785, Matthew sold his certificate awarding him pay and bounty from the state of South Carolina to James McCammon, who was possibly his brother of that name. Although this transaction was formalized before a justice of the peace in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, the sworn statement describes Matthew as a “planter” (farmer) from Camden District of South Carolina. James McCammon resided in Mecklenburg County at this time, and it is likely that he was a member of that county’s McCammon cluster, which dates at least to 1766. Although we cannot rule out the possibility that Matthew and his family were living in North Carolina in 1785, despite what the sworn statement says, it seems more likely that he would have traveled to his relative’s county to make this transaction – it was Matthew who was seeking money from James, after all. Such vouchers for pay and bounties were customarily deeply discounted when exchanged

for specie, and so Matthew accepted in cash half of the amount due him. The transaction was probably part of his preparations for his and his family's departure for Kentucky either later that year or early the next. Matthew swore at this time that the horse and saddle he had used during his military service had been his own property; in addition, he stated that he had not received any previous remuneration for his military service, except for a pair of overalls and a hat.<sup>50</sup>

We cannot be sure how soon after this 1785 transaction Matthew McCammon and his family left the Carolinas. What we can be sure of is that this family, probably including the infant Jane, would soon cross the mountains and enter Kentucky – most likely through the Cumberland Gap. Near Gray Hawk in what was then the new county of Madison, there is a cluster of natural features – a branch of Laurel Fork (a tributary of the Rockcastle River), a ridge, and, most notably, a spectacular waterfall – that bear the name McCammon. These features lie about halfway along but slightly off the branch of the Cumberland (later Wilderness) Road that runs between the Cumberland Gap and Boonesborough in the Bluegrass region of Kentucky where the McCammons would be living by the late 1780s. They are also not far from the Warrior's Path, another route that settlers heading through this area for northern Kentucky sometimes used.

---

<sup>50</sup> If Jane was indeed born in North Carolina, this, then, is about when and where her birth would have occurred. The document in which Matthew relinquished his rights to the back pay passed through the hands of at least five other persons before it was finally redeemed by the state of South Carolina. Such documents, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, served as a kind of surrogate for specie and paper currency, which were always in short supply.

Long-standing lore in a Gray Hawk family that has lived in this area since the early 1800s has it that the falls, and presumably the other features, were named by a Matthew McCammon in 1788. This place might have served as the site of an extended lay-over, or even a wintering, but in my opinion, the Gray Hawk area also would have been a logical, secluded, and safe spot for Matthew to plant his family and their household goods in 1785 or 1786 while he continued north to make more permanent arrangements for its long-term domicile – perhaps even get a house built and a crop planted. Matthew McCammon is not on the tax rolls in Madison County in 1787, but this is not too surprising if he and his family were in effect birds of passage who may have left that fairly young county before the authorities knew they were there.<sup>51</sup>

In any case, the McCammon family's stay in Madison County must have been brief: in 1788 and in 1789, Matthew paid taxes (listed under the name Matthew "McCamron") in Fayette County, Kentucky, which surrounds Lexington; the three horses and eight head of cattle shown for him on the 1788 tax list suggests that he was in a good condition financially. When he went back to the McCammon Falls area to retrieve his family, if he had left them there, is not known.

---

<sup>51</sup> These features in Jackson County are located just west of Gray Hawk, Kentucky, in a state forest; a local guide is required to find the falls. See the USGS map for McKee/Kentucky and digital images 01335-1343 for views of McCammon Falls, McCammon Branch, McCammon Ridge, and the arable land that might have been used as cropland during the sojourn there. Deed records in Madison County do not show that Matthew McCammon owned any property there.



This was an unsettled time in Kentucky. Not only were newcomers flooding in but there was considerable intrigue surrounding possible alliances between westerners and France or Spain, rumors of military expeditions of various sorts, and even talk of a separatist movement for Kentucky looking toward the creation of a new country that would control the vital Mississippi River. In this connection, it is interesting to see that Matthew McCammon received a commission in the Kentucky militia on December 18, 1789. There is no evidence he was involved in or sympathetic with any of these political movements, or that he was opposed to them for that matter, and his commission might have been nothing more than a recognition of his previous military service in South Carolina.

In 1799 and in 1800 McCammon is listed (once again as McCamron) on tax records in Jessamine County, Kentucky. We have not been able to discover all of his physical movements and land dealings, but it seems likely that he lived from 1788 onward in the part of Fayette County that would become Jessamine County in 1798; we can say that there are no tax records, deeds, or other indications that he lived elsewhere in Kentucky during this decade. In Jessamine County he was taxed for 100 acres of “second-rate” land (a tax assessor’s valuation) that had been entered by a prosperous Revolutionary War veteran named John Curd; this property was located where the Dix River empties into the Kentucky River.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>52</sup> The Dix River was originally called “Dick’s” River. The second of these tax records is dated August 29, 1800. For the location of McCammon’s property in Jessamine County, see the USGS map for

We should probably assume that like most of the others in this heavily rural and agricultural region<sup>53</sup> Matthew McCammon was busy growing corn, hemp, or (increasingly after 1787) tobacco – and probably making liquor or feeding hogs with the much of the corn, since those were the easiest ways to get this crop to market. But Curd also operated a key ferry across the Kentucky River, and perhaps he employed fellow former Revolutionary War veterans such as Matthew to operate it. While he was living in Jessamine County, Matthew gave permission for two of his daughters to be married, one of them, Jane, to our Edward Neal in 1802. We do not know exactly when McCammon obtained his land (actually only 92 1/4 acres) from John Curd, as there is no deed of sale for the transfer, but we do know that Matthew sold it to Daniel Curd on January 19, 1807.

By then, on September 25, 1806, McCammon had purchased 90 acres in Shelby County, Kentucky, which is northwest of Jessamine County between Frankfort and Louisville. His property is on the waters of Bullskin Creek and Fox Run.<sup>54</sup> As we have seen, Edward Neal and Matthew McCammon are shown residing next to one another in Shelby

---

Wilmore/Kentucky and slides 12972-79, taken in 2008. Curd was a well-known figure and has a historical marker on his property; McCammon's property adjoined that of Curd. During the 19th century, a landmark railroad bridge – the highest in the United States – was built across the river at this point, fittingly named High Bridge, and it is still in use.

<sup>53</sup> Lexington, then the largest city in Kentucky, had then just over 1,500 residents, and the state's other "cities" had about 500 inhabitants at most.

<sup>54</sup> See the USGS map for Simpsonville/Kentucky for the location of McCammon's property in Shelby County and slides 12884-85 (2008) for views of the area where Bullskin Creek and Fox Run come together, presumably part of what he owned.

County on the 1810 census, and it is likely that Edward and Jane were living with her father. It may be that McCammon continued to reside in that county until late 1815, when he had to get a court order to finalize his purchase of the property he evidently had been living on since 1806. He would have needed a clear title in order to sell the property, and the man from whom Matthew had purchased the 90 acres in 1806, William Hinton, had died before completing the sale to Matthew. But it is also possible that McCammon went north into Indiana with his son-in-law Edward in 1812 and did not sell his Shelby County property until 1815, after which he entered public land in Indiana in October 1816. But the fact that Matthew gave assent to another daughter's marriage in Shelby County in May 1813 suggests that he did not accompany Edward and Jane to Indiana Territory right away. Because the court order in Shelby County in October 1815 describes him as a resident of Knox County, Indiana (Sullivan County there had not yet been created), we are probably correct to date Matthew McCammon's move to Indiana between mid-1813 and mid-1815. As we have seen, this is just about the time Edward and Jane Neal moved (back) to northern Knox County after sheltering in Fort Knox.

About Matthew McCammon's Scotch-Irish family in County Antrim we have little specific information (to be described later in this chapter) but a broad understanding of the larger movements of which this family was a part. If the McCammons were indeed Scots who had gone to Ulster as colonists, they could have done so along with the impoverished tenant farmers from Scotland's lowlands. The Scots were sent to Northern

Ireland principally at three times: early during the 1600s (during the reign of King James I, which began in 1607), after the rebellion of 1641, and during the 1690s. County Antrim was actually colonized a few years earlier, however, and since the McCammons were reputed to have been Highlanders they are more likely to have been planted in Ulster when the Highland Scots arrived beginning in 1605. Even though most of the Highlanders were Roman Catholics in Scotland, we do not know whether the McCammons were originally Roman Catholic or not. (After 1610, the Roman Catholic Highlanders were excluded from being planted in Ulster.) In any case, after a few generations among the Protestants surrounding them in Ulster, the Roman Catholic Highlanders often became Protestants themselves.

The Scots newcomers were put onto land confiscated from the Irish by England landowners as a way of pacifying this unruly and troublesome (to the English) area and in order to establish the linen trade there. There was very little intermarriage of the Scots and the native Irish. The Scots eked out modest livings as tenants, but they found themselves caught between their absent landlords and the resentful Irish; in turn, the Scots resented the English landowners who made them pay tithes to the established Anglican church and they considered the Irish they were displacing lazy, ignorant, and savage. With only shallow roots in Ulster, the Scots were attracted by an America where land was plentiful and where there were no absent landlords and their tithes – nor Irish. It

is estimated that as many as 250,000 of the Ulster Scots left for America between 1717 and 1775.

It is possible that the McCammon family was not one of the families deliberately planted in Ulster but had gotten themselves there independently. (Only twenty miles of water separate Northern Ireland and Scotland.) One McCammon researcher contends that the family probably came from Argyllshire, an area in Scotland just above the line that separates lowland from highland Scotland, so we cannot be positive about which group of settlers in Ulster they accompanied. Beyond this, I have seen speculation that the McCammon family actually originated in southern France as Huguenots named Calmon who fled to Ireland when France began to persecute the Huguenots, but I know of no evidence that supports this particular idea.

The one glimmer of information we may have about our McCammons in Ulster comes from a survey of the religious affiliations of householders there, which was taken in 1766. Much of the original documentation for this survey was destroyed in a fire in 1922, but fragments and transcripts for County Antrim do exist. Among the householders in Ahoghill Parish, Diocese of Connor, were McCammons (of various spellings) named William, Matthew, James, and Hugh. These men could very well have been the same McCammons with those given names found in South Carolina a decade later, although we cannot be sure of that. The first two of them were listed as dissenters, meaning

Presbyterians, and the others were listed as Catholics. This might reflect the fact that the McCammons were in transition in their religious affiliations, or it might simply be incorrect information. It is interesting to note that a John and William Douglas (or Douglass) are also listed on this survey of householders, along with several Neals and McNeals. Could one of the Douglas men have been the father of Matthew's first wife? Additional information from 1740 for the baronies of Toome, Kilconway, Cary, and Dunluce, along with the town and liberties of Coleraine – most or all of which were part of Ahoghill Parish, show a William and Martha McCammon in the same parish. Given the time frame, they might well have been the parents of some or all of the several McCammons listed in 1766.

We have no way of knowing whether these people were our McCammons, but it is tantalizing to think they might have been members of the family that would migrate to America a few years later. It is interesting, too, that a wave of lawlessness afflicted Ahoghill Parish beginning in 1771. This might have further encouraged families like the McCammons to consider leaving for America. Our Matthew McCammon would have been too young (only nine years of age) to have been listed as a householder in 1766, but the Matthew on that year's list might have been an uncle or other relative. Certainly more evidence is needed before we can state with assurance that we have found the home of the McCammons in County Antrim, but we have at least some basis for hoping that we have done so.

As we close out this family history narrative in the next chapter, we will find ourselves again in Northern Ireland, the home of the earliest Neals we know about. The road this family would take to America, though, was quite different from the one the McCammons followed.