

The Last Word on the McDonalds; I Hope!

Brenda Lincke Fisseler

I have to admit, the story of the Ira McDonald family of Lavaca County is a historical phoenix; it just keeping rising out of the ashes.

Let's review. In *Forever Divorced*, I related the story of Elenor and Henry Brown whose troubled marriage ended in divorce on October 13, 1849 in Lavaca County. That story ended in 1850, according to the census, with Elenor living in the county seat of Petersburg employed as a seamstress. After 1850, Eleanor disappeared from Lavaca County. End of story. I thought.

However, several months later, when researching the Ira McDonald family, I discovered that Ira was a player in the Brown divorce. In *Forever Divorced: The Rest of the Story*, I related that Ira and Dorothy McDonald had filed for divorce and Dorothy testified that Ira was involved in a relationship with guess who, Elenor Brown. The divorce was never finalized and sometime during or after 1850, Ira McDonald and Elenor Brown leave Lavaca County, Texas and move to the state of Missouri. End of story. I thought.

Like a phoenix, the McDonald story has risen yet again. What follows is the final word on the Ira McDonald family. I hope!

The End of Ira McDonald.

Ira was not living in Missouri for very long before his journey ended. According to the St. Louis City Death Records and the Missouri Death Records, Ira died on May 26, 1851 in St. Louis, Missouri of cholera at the age of 47 years. He is buried in the St. Louis City cemetery.

After Ira's death, a deed was filed in the Lavaca County Clerk's office in which Silas Bennett, Ira's attorney, sold to Dorothy McDonald Lot 3 in Block 5 as a portion of the community estate which she is entitled to from the relation above (of man and wife). The deed was dated February 26, 1852 approximately nine months after Ira's death.

In September of 1852, Wiley T. Rogers files a petition in the County Court of Lavaca County to be appointed the Administrator of the Estate of Ira McDonald who had died in Missouri in May of 1851. In the petition, Rogers states that

McDonald died intestate leaving several children as his heirs whom live in Lavaca County with his surviving widow.

Rogers further showed that said McDonald died intestate(without a will) leaving a considerable amount of property, consisting principally of a house and lot in the town of Hallettsville and a considerable amount of personal property, and debts that the value of which is unknown to your petitioner; also a tract of land in the County of Sabine, one tract of land in the County of DeWitt and also a tract of land in the County of Gonzales, all of this State, all of said estate being worth as near as your petitioner can ascertain about fifteen hundred dollars, that there are considerable amount of debts against said estate in this county which remain unpaid, and that no person has yet administered upon.

Wiley T. Rogers was appointed administrator of the estate by the Chief Justice of Lavaca County on September 27, 1852. This is the last item found in the probate packet.

Now, the story of Dorothy McDonald.

After the news of Ira's death reached Hallettsville, Dorothy was now a widow instead of an abandoned wife. First Dorothy sold Lot 3 Block 5 to Collatinus Ballard on January 27, 1854. Later, on July 24, 1854, Dorothy McDonald married Ruben Fisher in Lavaca County. The couple was married by J.P. A.W. Hicks.

I have yet to locate Ruben and Dorothy Fisher after their marriage in 1854. Neither Ruben nor Dorothy are listed in the Lavaca County Probate (1847 – 1956) Lavaca County Deeds (1846 – 1877) or the Lavaca County Tax Rolls. Maybe one day Dorothy will decide it is time to me to finish her story as well.

Lavaca County Deed Vol. B p.47

Lavaca County Marriage License Vol. 1 p.114

Lavaca County Deed Vol. C p16 - 17

Estate of Ira McDonald Lavaca County Probate #22

Missouri Death Records 1834 – 1910

St. Louis City Death Records 1850- 1902

Estate of Ira McDonald Lavaca County Texas #22
Petition for Letters of Administration on the Estate of Ira McDonald decd.
Filed in office 11 September 1852
Josiah Dowling Clerk CC LC

Your Petitioner Wiley T. Rogers a servant of said County and State would respectfully show unto your honor that Ira McDonald late of said County of Lavaca and more recently of the County ____ and State of Missouri departed this life sometimes in the month of May 1851 in said State of Missouri leaving several children as his heirs and of whom now live in said County of Lavaca with his surviving widow.

(*According to this court document, Ira never married Eleanor Brown)

Your petitioner further shows that said McDonald died intestate leaving a considerable amount of property, consisting principally of a house and lot in the town of Hallettsville and a considerable amount of personal property, debts, ____ in ____ the value of which is unknown to your petitioner; also a tract of land in the County of Sabine, one tract of land in the County of DeWitt and also a tract of land in the County of Gonzales, all of this State, all of said estate being worth as near as your petitioner can ascertain about fifteen hundred dollars, that there are considerable amount of debts against said estate in this county which remain unpaid, and that no person has yet administer upon.

Your petitioner therefore prays that letters of administration be granted him upon the estate of said Ira McDonald, upon his complying with the same in such cases made and provided and as in duty bound your petitioner will over pray.

Wiley T. Rogers

Filed 27 September 1852

Know all men by these present that we, Wiley T. Rogers as principal and M. B. Bennett and Peter McDermott as securities are held and firmly bound unto the Chief Justice of the County of Lavaca in the sum of five thousand dollars for the payment of which will and truly be made unto the said Chief Justice. We bind ourselves, our heirs, executors, and administrators jointly and severally, firmly by these present.

Signed with our hand and sealed with our seals, the seals being _____, the 27th day of September A.D. 1852.

The condition of this obligation is such that whereas the above bound Wiley T. Rogers has been appointed by the Chief Justice of the County of Lavaca Administrator of the estate Ira McDonald deceased. ____ if the said Wiley T. Rogers shall well and truly perform all the duties required of him under said appointment then this obligation shall be null and void; otherwise to remain in full force and affect.

Wiley T. Rogers
M. B. Bennett
Peter McDermott

Examined and approved and ordered on file and of record Sept. 27, 1852
J.E. Martin Chief Justice L.C.