

The Walker Family

David Hannah, Jr., the subject of chapter 6, married Margaret Burnside in 1815 . Miss Burnside was the daughter of John Burnside and Mary Walker, who had married around 1775. Thus we have a Walker family connection and Scotch-Irish Walker ancestors.

Proving the lineage of Mary Walker has been a difficult, lengthy process. She was said by the author, Price, to have been from Augusta County and to have been closely related to Gen. James A. Walker of the Confederate Army²³. That little piece of information and other evidence lead us to believe that her father was the Alexander Walker who died in Augusta County, Virginia leaving a will dated Nov. 20, 1774.

Alexander's heirs included his wife, Elizabeth and nine children - John, Andrew, Robert, Elizabeth, Isabel, Barbara, Margaret, Martha and Mary²⁴. He also named two grandchildren, Jane and Elizabeth, daughters of his deceased son, Alexander. His son, John, inherited the plantation and was the grandfather of Gen. James A. Walker, an important figure in the Confederate Army.

Mary's share of Alexander's estate was:

.....fifty pounds and the Negro Wench called Lucey and her Wheel
and a young Black Mare a foal of young Jewel and her saddle and
her own Cloths.....²⁵

Eight years later in 1783 the tax collector for Greenbrier County noted that John Burnside had a slave named "Luci"²⁶. We think this is the same Lucey named in the will of Alexander, quoted above. (Property owners of that time were taxed on the number of males over age 16, the number of horses and cattle, and the number of slaves they held.) This tax record naming Luci is good evidence that our Mary Walker, wife of John Burnside, and the Mary Walker who inherited the slave, Lucey, from Alexander Walker are the same person.

Further evidence comes from another genealogist, Bertha Lewis Clark, who researched the Burnside family in the 1930s.²⁷ She says in her manuscript on John Burnside, Jr. that Mary Walker, John Burnside's wife, is a daughter of Alexander Walker and a great aunt of Gen. James A. Walker. A book by C. E. May²⁸ shows the lineage from Alexander Walker down to the General and confirms that Mary was his great Aunt.

Mary's father, Alexander, lived near Mt. Meridian, Virginia, on a plantation he obtained in 1760 as a grant from the Colony of Virginia. He undoubtedly had lived in the area for quite some time before that, since he was appointed Constable by the Augusta County court in 1748²⁸. The plantation was located on what is now called Broad Run ("run" is a colloquial term meaning "creek"), and was held by successive members of the Walker family for three more generations before it was sold in 1917.

Alexander raised horses and cattle, grew hemp, flax and some grain, was a distiller and a money lender. His probate papers tell us he had six slaves and that his personal property when he died was valued at 1175 pounds - a considerable sum for the time. So we think Mary was raised in a fairly affluent family.

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The year of her father's death, 1775, is about the time she married John Burnside, although no marriage record for them has been found. But we can imagine John claiming his bride, Mary, with her 50 pounds cash money, her spinning wheel, her horse and saddle and her clothes as well as her personal slave, Lucey, and taking her back to his plantation on the upper Greenbrier River in what is now Pocahontas County, West Virginia. They and their descendants would reside there for the next 140 years.

The lineage of Mary's father, Alexander, is uncertain. He is probably descended from the family of John Walker of Wigton, Scotland. John of Wigton is probably the progenitor of most, perhaps all, of the Walker families who lived in western Virginia in Colonial times. This family and descendants are described in the book *Genealogy of the Descendants of John Walker of Wigton, Scotland 1600-1902* by Emma Siggins White.

John Walker lived in Wigton in southwestern Scotland in the late 1600s where he married Jane McKnight. They had two children that we know of - John, Jr. and Alexander. John, Jr., who later emigrated to America, married Katherine Rutherford in 1702. Alexander remained in Scotland, but three of his children, John, Alexander and Eleanor emigrated to America with their Uncle John and Aunt Katherine.

Like many Scottish people of the 1600s John and Katherine moved to North Ireland where most, if not all, of their eleven children were born. In about 1728 (the year is not known for sure) John and his family along with two nephews and a niece (John, Alexander and Eleanor Walker) boarded ship in Strangford Bay, North Ireland and sailed for America, arriving in Maryland on August 2nd. The family went on to Chester County, Pennsylvania where they settled for a few years before moving on to Virginia where the majority of the family settled in Rockbridge County.

We believe Alexander Walker, Mary's father, who died in 1775, to be of this family. The biography of Gen. James A. Walker by Caldwell states that the General is descended from John Walker of Wigton, but admits to great confusion as to exact lineage²⁹. The book states

" Poorly kept family records, together with the loss of an old family Bible, carried west, make it impossible now to trace the exact number or names of the grandsons.....".

The old family bible referred to is known to exist and is said to be held by a Walker descendant in Montana. It is hoped that the information in it will be made public some day and will help to clarify some of the Walker family relationships.

A further complication in researching this family is that the given names used in the various Walker families, Alexander, John, James, etc., are repeated over and over in each family and each generation and lead to much confusion and frustration for genealogists.

So we may never know for sure.