

The McClure Family

Our connection to the McClure family (other spellings - McCluer, McClewer, etc.) is through Sarah B. McClure, wife of David Hannah 3rd (see chapter 7). She was from another Scotch-Irish family who emigrated to the colony of Virginia in the eighteenth century. Like many of the Scotch-Irish, our McClure ancestors came first to Pennsylvania, and then moved on to the Shenandoah River Valley in Virginia in the 1730's.

What we know of our early McClure family history comes from the research of other genealogists done in the past. In particular I will quote from one source I believe to be reliable, the work of Dr. George West Diehl, a genealogist familiar with Virginia records. He wrote a series of articles published in the Lexington, Virginia Gazette which have been compiled by A. Maxim Coppage, III, into what is called the *Rockbridge County, Virginia Notebook*. The following sketch of the early McClure family is taken from "The Early McClures" in that notebook:

It was about 1608 that three McClure brothers migrated from Galloway district in southwest Scotland, an area that comprised the counties of Kircudbright and Wigton, westward across the North Channel to Ireland. (authors' note: this is the same district in Scotland in which the earliest Hannahs and Walkers lived.) Then at the time of the oppression of the last Stuart dynasty, from 1661 to 1688, there was an exodus of Scots to Ireland, fleeing to escape the "killing times" of the Covenanter troubles. Among those finding a haven in northern Ireland were many by the name of McClure.

Some sources say the three brothers settled in County Donegal in Ireland near Raphoe, where there are records of the family in the church.

Dr. Diehl goes on to say that as early as 1722 one David McClure was in Donegal, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, so this places McClures in the Americas at least that early. Sometime in the period of 1736 to 1743 some of the McClures moved up into the Shenandoah Valley to take advantage of the cheap land there. Dr. Diehl states:

It could be that James McClure came to the back parts of Virginia at this time. In Orange County Deed book 3 page 247 there is a record of a deed made June 5, 1739 for a tract of 408 acres which was surveyed for some one on "8br ye 18, 1738" (Oct. 18, 1738) and it bears the name of James McClure. Furthermore, on July 24, 1740, James McClure proved the importation of his wife, Agnes and their children, John, Andrew, Elinor, Jean, James, Jr., (Orange Order Book 1738-41 p. 218). He paid four shillings, ten pence for the tract.

"Proving the importation" meant showing that he was not indentured (obligated to serve some master) in order to pay off his passage to America. This was a requirement before land could be bought.

In Chapter II Dr. Diehl goes on to state:

A Hannah Family of West Virginia

The new home of James McClure was in "Long Meadow" on the Middle Fork of the Shenandoah about five miles north of the present village of Fisherville and in the congregation of the Tinkling Springs Presbyterian Church. But he was not the first McClure to "take up" land in this area. Andrew McClure purchased 370 acres there on Feb. 21, 1738 and Finley McClure was deeded 444 acres on Feb. 29, 1739.

By 1740, then, we have at least three families of McClures, who are probably related somehow, living in the Shenandoah Valley in the general area of Staunton, Virginia. Using a variety of documents – land records, a few baptismal records in Tinkling Springs Church, some early wills naming heirs, and some militia records – genealogists have been able to piece together some of the early McClure families and where they lived. However, scarcity of records and the habit of naming each generation of children by the same naming pattern make it nearly impossible to identify families precisely.

We have been able to trace with accuracy the lineage of the McClures, as they relate to the Hannah family, as far back as Arthur McClure (we'll call him Arthur, 1st), who was born around 1750. He is our proven ancestor, but so far we can't tie him definitively to the McClures who populated the area before him. He is not named as a part of any of the other families of the Shenandoah Valley which have been researched extensively by others. However, he was probably related somehow given the approximate time of his birth and his appearance with other people who had migrated from the Shenandoah to the Greenbrier River area where we first find him in the records. He is named in the National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution index, so someone has established his service during the Revolutionary War.

Arthur, 1st, died in 1800 and named several heirs in his will including a son Arthur, (2nd)³⁰ The will, entered in the Greenbrier County court records on August 15, 1800, names his wife, Martha (maiden name unknown) and children James, William, Charles, Samuel, Arthur, John, Catherine, Jane, Martha, Rebecca, Elizabeth and Mary -- 12 children in all.

It reads in part:

In the name of God amen. I, Arthur McClure of Greenbrier County state of Virginia being sick and weak of body but of sound mind and memory thank God and considering the uncertainty of all things and that it is appointed for all men to die do bequeath my soul to God and my body to the clay to Earth Rotting and Worms hoping that God will restore it to me at the resurrection of the Just.

The will goes on to distribute his worldly goods, leaving his six sons considerable land. He gives 10 shillings each to four of his daughters and one daughter gets a horse and saddle worth 25 pounds. Another daughter gets to keep the horse and saddle she now possesses with everything she possesses at present. The appraisal of his estate showed no slaves, but he had 3 horses, 10 cattle, 7 sheep, 9 hogs and 6 geese. He also owned farm implements, a spinning wheel, and a bed and furniture worth 12 pounds. The value of his estate totaled 103 pounds 13 shillings 6 pence plus

A Hannah Family of West Virginia

considerable real property. (Even though the United States had its own currency at this time, many areas were still using the old Colonial currency.)

The elder Arthur lived in the most northern part of Greenbrier County as early as 1782, at which time his name appears on the tax list for that area. He probably was in the area as early as 1770, when an Arthur McClure is named in court records for Botetourt County, which had jurisdiction at that time for the Greenbrier area.

The next generation of our McClure ancestors, Arthur, 2nd, was willed a part of his father's land. On Oct. 15, 1799, he married Elizabeth Buckley.³¹ They had a family of three sons and five daughters, including Sarah, born in 1822, who was the wife of David Hannah, 3rd (see chapter 7).

Arthur, 2nd's will was written on April 23, 1842 and was recorded in July of that year. It named as heirs his wife Elizabeth, his son-in-law Rese Nanny, children Joseph, Mary, Sarah (married David Hannah 3rd), Samuel, Hannah Gardner, Rachel Spitzer, and daughter-in-law Sarah McClure, widow.

Arthur's wife, Elizabeth Buckley, was the daughter of Joshua Buckley and Hannah Collins. Joshua and Hannah moved to Pocahontas County about 1775 from near Winchester, Virginia.³² Their eldest son was only two weeks old at the time. Genealogical author, William Price, relates that the Buckley family "...the first summer subsisted on a bushel and a half of meal, brought with them from Winchester, with potatoes and venison.". No supermarkets in those days! We have not yet researched the Buckley or Collins families.

A Hannah Family of West Virginia