

FROM SOUTH CAROLINA SAND HILLS TO ARKANSAS MOUNTAINS THE STORY OF THE MCMILLAN FAMILY

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This is the story of the life and travels of John McMillan, and his family. According to his Civil War military service record, John was born in Chesterfield County, SC about 1822¹. So far, the names of his parents and other members of his family remain a mystery. Since he was functionally illiterate, he may have been born in humble circumstances². However, his fortunes took a turn for the better about 1840 when he married a Rebecca F. Campbell³. Rebecca was local girl born about 1823 of some property⁴. The 1880 census says that her father was born in Scotland and her mother in North Carolina⁵. By 1850 John and Rebecca were the parents of five children, Robert C. born in 1841, Daniel David C. born in 1843, Hugh Frank born in 1846, Sarah Margaret born in 1847, and Virginia Jenny (Jinecy Ann) born in July of 1849⁶.

On December 10, 1850 the state of SC granted to John McMillan a tract of land in what is now the Carolina Sandhills National Wildlife Refuge in the south central part of Chesterfield County. It was composed of some 1683 acres located on the high ground between the headwaters of Skippers Creek, Rattlesnake Creek and Finley's Mill Creek, waters of Big Black Creek and the Middle Prong of Rocky Creek. Although the records of Chesterfield County were destroyed during the Civil War, the land grant has survived in the SC Archives. From it we know the names of John's neighbors. They were Duncan Campbell, Daniel McIntire, "Mr. Hubbard", Henry Boan/Bone and Margaret Campbell. In 1855, John received an additional grant for 376 acres of nearby land on the headwaters of Rocky Creek. Adjacent landowners were Henry Bone's estate, Peter McCaskill, "Mr. Thompson", and Duncan Campbell. There is circumstantial evidence to suggest that these Campbell neighbors were members of Rebecca's family⁷.

Shortly before the beginning of the Civil War, John and Rebecca decided to sell their Chesterfield County holdings and seek a new home on the western frontier. Perhaps the rumors of the coming hostilities played a part in this decision. It is also possible that John's vary sandy land, having already lost it initial fertility after several years of intense cultivation, was no longer sufficient to sustain the family's farming operation. Nevertheless, the McMillan's chose a new home for themselves

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on the sandy rolling plains of south Arkansas' Columbia County not far from the Louisiana State line. By the time of the 1860 U. S. Census they were living in Calhoun Township, just east of the county seat, Magnolia. Next door was another Chesterfield County native, Archibald Campbell and his family⁸. Arch is a good candidate for another of Rebecca's kinsmen, perhaps an uncle⁹. By 1860, John and Rebecca were the parents of two additional children, Angus A., born in December of 1852, and my ancestor, Elizabeth Jane, born on February 10, 1859, shortly before the family left SC¹⁰. No evidence has been uncovered that John owned lands in Columbia County. Rather, it appears that he rented a farm of some one hundred acres, with twenty acres under cultivation¹¹. Perhaps, the McMillans had planned only a short stopover in south Arkansas before moving further west.

However, the impending war left behind in SC, soon caught up with the McMillans in their new home in Arkansas. In May of 1861, responding to Jeff Davis' call for volunteers, John's older sons, Robert C. and Daniel David C., enlisted as volunteers in Capt. Austin's Company of Columbia Guards¹². Robert C. and Daniel D. entered the Confederate Army as privates in Company G of the 6th Arkansas Inf., CSA. However, in November of 1861 Robert C. became so ill that he was discharged and sent back home¹³. In the mean time, the patriarch of the family, John McMillan, also enlisted in the Confederate Army. At the age of about forty, he marched way from home on February 26, 1862. Left behind were his wife and younger children, including newly born twins, John T. "Willie" and Emma A.¹⁴. He served as a private in Company B of the 19th (Dockery's) Arkansas Inf., CSA.

However, the Civil War was not kind to the McMillans. Hugh Frank is said to have tagged along with his older brothers as their unit marched to Little Rock in 1861. He died during the trek and was buried somewhere along the way. His place of burial is not known. Daniel David C., was wounded so severely at the battle of Shiloh, fought in April of 1862 on the banks of the Tennessee River near the Tennessee – Mississippi state line, that he was "discharged" the day after the battle¹⁵. However, family tradition maintains that he died on the way home. It is not known where he is buried¹⁶. In June of 1862, Robert C., who had been living at home with his family recovering from an illness, was recuperated enough to reenlist in the Confederate Army, this time in company A of the 33rd Arkansas Inf. However, early the next year he too was wounded. He survived to return home but was so gravely crippled that he spent the remainder of his days as a paraplegic¹⁷.

The senior McMillan, two sons already dead, served in the Confederate Army until March of 1863, when he was discharged for being "over the age of forty years". His severance pay consisted of \$89.70 for his military service, his clothing allowance, and mileage back to his home. He also received a rare Confederate discharge "Certificate" In it, he is described as being five feet, one inch tall, of a fair complexion with blue eyes, and light hair. He signed his receipt with his mark (X)¹⁸.

After the war, The McMillan Family, perhaps haunted by memories of the War's sad events, remained in Columbia County for only a year of so¹⁹. Late in 1867, they joined a group of area residents who were moving to new homes in western

Arkansas' Ouachita Mountains. The leader of the emigrants was Stephen P. Baker, a Columbia County planter²⁰ whose brother, Jonathan Baker, lived in the mountains near Amity, in Clark County. One of Stephen Baker's sons, recently married Patrick Henry Baker, a veteran of the Confederate Army, was looking for a more healthful climate for his wife, Mary Susan Smith Baker²¹. She was suffering from Tuberculosis, a disease that would eventually kill many members of the Baker Family. The mountains offered pure pine scented mountain air and clean abundant spring water both thought to benefit victims of this dreaded disease.

The Baker colony settled on Rock Creek near its mouth with the Caddo River, just south of what is now Glenwood in Pike County. This was where the "Mountain Road" crossed the creek. The area was then in northern Clerk County. Here Baker built a home, a mill, and later a general store. Baker founded the Rock Creek Post Office in 1868²². Within a short while, a thriving village grew up nearby. The other immigrant families, including the McMillans, settled nearby²³. Shortly after 1870, Robert C. McMillan opened Rock Creek's first general store²⁴.

In 1874, Mary Susan Baker, the wife of Patrick Henry, died leaving him with several small children, including newly born twins. According to a family tradition, one morning about a year later, as the thirty-year-old Baker, who obviously needed someone to help care for his children, was making his way to the family mill, he met a beautiful teenage girl with blue eyes and blond hair. She was Elizabeth McMillan, daughter of John and Rebecca McMillan. Although she was only sixteen at the time, it was love at first sight²⁵. On October 7, 1875, Patrick and Elizabeth were married. They became the parents of a number of children: Robert J., Patrick H. Jr., William T., Benjamin Franklin, Wallace W., Samuel J., Dewitt T., Mattie Winnie, Annie Laura, Lottie E., John P., and Ida J.²⁶. Elizabeth Jane McMillan Baker died April 11, 1922 and is buried in the Coker Cemetery near Glenwood²⁷.

Elizabeth's oldest brother, Robert C. McMillan, never married. After 1880, he moved from Rock Creek to New Hope in western Pike County, where he operated a general store and served several years as postmaster²⁸. He died in 1884. Her sister, Sarah Margaret, married Levi L. Forrester on July 21, 1870²⁹. She devoted much of her time to caring for her brother, Robert, during his last illness³⁰. After his death she and her family, together with her youngest brother, John T., moved to Grant County, Kansas. The Forresters later settled in Lynn County, Texas where they founded the Forrester Ranch. Sarah died there about 1903³¹.

Virginia Jenny (Jenecy Ann) married first G. W. Henthorn about 1879³². After his death, she remarried although the name of her second husband is not known³³.

Angus A. McMillan married Prudence Adline (Addie) D. White in Pike County about 1877. He was living in Mt. Ida, Montgomery County, Arkansas in 1900³⁴. He later married a widow names Prudence A. White. It is not know when or where he died. John T. (Willie) McMillan married about 1883 to Anna L. Afterwards he moved to Grant County, Kansas³⁵. His date of death is not now know. Emma A. McMillan, twin sister of John T., married William D. White, a brother of Angus'

wife. In 1900, the family lived in the nearby town of Amity, where Mr. White was a watch repairman³⁶. The family later moved to El Paso, Texas because William has tuberculosis. He died there in 1922, although his body was brought back and buried in the Old Ebenezer Cemetery near Rock Creek³⁷. It is not known when or where Emma died.

John McMillan died on February 27, 1879³⁸. His wife, Rebecca, was still alive in 1880. However, she was ill with chronic bronchitis³⁹ and died soon afterwards. Tradition maintains that they are both buried in the County Line Cemetery at Glenwood, although neither have grave markers. Thus, the story of this Chesterfield County McMillan Family ends in the mountains of western Arkansas.

Notes

¹ Military records of John McMillan, Co. B, 19 (Dockery's) Arkansas Inf., CSA.

² *ibid.* He signed his discharge with this mark (X).

³ Letter from Mary Lou White, Arkadelphia, AR to Alvin Black, Mt. Ida, AR in which she indicates that Rebecca was a Campbell. Copy in the possession of the author. SC has no early marriage records.

⁴ 1850 U. S. Census, Chesterfield County, SC, p. 138B – 139A. Rebecca, not John, is the property owner according to this census. Other Campbell family members living nearby were also property owners. Chesterfield County, South Carolina records were destroyed late in the Civil War.

⁵ 1880 U. S. Census, Clark Township, Pike County, Arkansas, p. 453B.

⁶ 1850 U. S. Census, Chesterfield County, SC, p. 139. It is possible that the "C" in the names of several of John and Rebecca's sons stands for "Campbell".

⁷ Letter from John L. Andrews, Jr., Hartsville, SC to R. P. Baker, Mabelvale, Arkansas.

⁸ 1850 U. S. Census, Chesterfield County, SC, p. 152 and 1860, Calhoun Township", Columbia County, Arkansas, p. 290.

⁹ Campbell is old enough to be Rebecca's father. See below.

¹⁰ 1860, Calhoun Township", Columbia County, Arkansas, p. 290.

¹¹ 1860 Productions of Agriculture, Calhoun Township, Columbia County, Arkansas, p. 11. Arch Campbell had 80 acres under cultivation. However, Rebecca says in 1880 that her father was born in Scotland. Arch was born in North Carolina.

¹² Little Rock, Arkansas, *True Democrat*, June 6, 1861, p. 2, col. 2 and June 20, 1861, p. 3, col. 6.

¹³ Military records of R. C. McMillon, Co. G, 6th Arkansas Inf., CSA.

¹⁴ 1870 U. S. Census, Coldbath Township, Clark County, AR, p. 139. They were born in October of 1861. See 1900 U. S. Census, Amity Township, Clark County, Arkansas, p. 164B.

¹⁵ Military records of D. D. C. McMillon, Co. G 6th Arkansas Inf., CSA.

¹⁶ Conservation with Mattie Winnie Baker Waits by R. P. Baker, notes of which are in the possession of the author.

- ¹⁷ Ibid., Military records of Robert C. McMillan, Co. A, 33rd Arkansas Inf., CSA, and 1880 U. S. Census. Clark Township, Pike County, Arkansas, op. cit.
- ¹⁸ John McMillan's military service record, op cit.
- ¹⁹ 1866 Tax Book, Columbia County, Arkansas.
- ²⁰ *Goodspeed's Biographical and Historical Memoirs of Southern Arkansas* (Chicago, 1891), p. 314.
- ²¹ *ibid.*, and Columbia Co., Arkansas Marriages Book C, p. 1.
- ²² Russell P. Baker, *Arkansas Post Offices From Memdag to Norsk: A Historical Directory 1832 – 1990* (Little Rock, AR, 2003), p. 164.
- ²³ See the Will of John McMillan, David Kelley, *Pike County Burned Records 1855 – 1890, Will Section* (SLC, UT, 1993), p. 34 – 35. McMillan's land at Rock Creek was located next to that of S. P. Baker.
- ²⁴ *Goodspeed's Southern Arkansas*, p. 313.
- ²⁵ Conversation between "Guy" Baker and Russell P. Baker.
- ²⁶ *Goodspeed's Southern Arkansas*, p. 314 – 315 and Baker Family History File in the possession of Russell P. Baker.
- ²⁷ Glenwood, *Arkansas News Press*, April 14, 1922, p. 1, col. 2. The obituary contains very little information.
- ²⁸ R. L. Polk and Co., *Arkansas State Gazetteer and Business Directory 1884 – 5* (St. Louis, MO, 1884), p. 414.
- ²⁹ Clark County, AR Marriage Records Book E, p. 227.
- ³⁰ David Kelley, *Pike County Burned Records 1855 – 1890, Will Section* (SLC, UT, 1993), p. 38. She received the majority of Robert's estate.
- ³¹ Frank P. Hill and Pat Hill Jacobs, *Grassroots Upside Down A History of Lynn County, Texas*, p. 46 – 48 and 323.
- ³² 1880 U. S. Census, Clark Township, Clark County, Arkansas, p. 452A.
- ³³ Mattie Winnie Waits remembered his name was something like Knox Bowus (?). No conformation of this has been found.
- ³⁴ 1900 U. S. Census Mt. Ida Town, South Fork Township, Montgomery County, AR, p. 88A.
- ³⁵ 1900 U. S. Census, Lincoln Township, Grant County, Kansas, p. 217A.
- ³⁶ 1900 U. S. Census, Amity Township, Clark County, Arkansas, p. 164B.
- ³⁷ Wendy Richter, *Clark County Arkansas: Past and Present* (Arkadelphia, Arkansas, 1992), p. 774, "White, William D. El Paso County", Index to Texas State Death Records and cemetery inscriptions for Old Ebenezer Cemetery.
- ³⁸ David Kelley, *Pike County Burned Records 1855 – 1890, Will Section* (SLC, UT, 1993), p. 34 – 35 and "John McMillan Estate", Homestead Papers of John McMillan, Bureau of Land Management, RG 49, copy in the possession of the author.
- ³⁹ Clark Township, 1880 U S. Census, Pike County, Arkansas, p. 453B.