

McClurkin-Smith Record, Washington County, Illinois

The attached page is from the periodical, "Branching Out from Saint Clair County, Illinois" July 1976, Volume 3, Issue 3. It was obtained from the Allen County Public Library Foundation through their Periodical Source Index (PERSI) service.

Obituaries . . .

death the country is deprived of a patriotic citizen, the community of a good neighbor, and the orphans of a ready helper and sympathizer.

The funeral services were conducted at Liberty Church by Rev. C. E. BAKER and Rev. G. W. WALKER. The remains were laid to rest in Liberty Cemetery.

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Meridith WHITE died 29 June 1904, at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Ezekiel LOVING, near Desdemona, Texas. Uncle Med, as he was familiarly known, was born in a Fort in Illinois, near St. Louis, Missouri, 4 Sep 1814. He was married to Miss Myra P. TEEL in 1839. His wife died in 1859, and he was married again to Mrs. Martha J. WOODRONE, who died a few years later. Uncle Med has many relatives and friends in Washington County, and while death is inevitable they will regret to hear of his demise.

Uncle Med came to Texas in the fall of 1878, to live with his only child, J. W. WHITE. He has never been known to say aught against anyone. If he could not say a good word he was silent. While he has been feeble for a long time the end was not unexpected, yet he will be greatly missed by his grandchildren and his immediate family. They are Mrs. Ezekiel LOVING, Mrs. Nellie LYNN, J. W. WHITE and Mrs. Ida MOTT. . . . J. Frank SNODGRASS.

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These two WHITE Obituaries were submitted by Mrs. Ruth COULTER BERRY of Fullerton, Ca.. She writes the following notes: "These two Obits are from newspaper clippings yellow with age and so fragile I hesitate to try to take them out of the book for Xerox copies. No newspaper mentioned and no dates shown. I gather they were taken from the Ashley Gazette (later Washington County Gazette). It was established in 1876.

I wrote to the Post Master in Desdemona, Texas giving the names of Meridith WHITE. Several weeks later I got a letter from Mrs. John H. CARPENTER, 101 Cotswold Dr., Schertz, Tx., 78154. Her name had been Carol WHITE. She sent to me in chart form, the decedents of Meridith WHITE. I shall have copies made to send to you. J. Frank SNODGRASS went to Liberty School, became a Doctor, moved to Texas. Many years ago in the American Magazine he was featured with a picture. He had found an oil gusher, while still using a horse and buggy!"

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LOOKING BACK

Wanda GROENNERT

In 1762 the ship "Lord Dunlace" set sail for America with a group of immigrants from Ireland. They put into port at South Carolina. Among the passengers were Robert McClURKIN and his four sons, Thomas, Archibald, John and Mathew. They finally settled in Chester County, Caniden District, South Carolina where they bought some land.

Like many immigrants who fled to America from the "old country" they too were striving for a better way of life, free from oppression and the King's rule. But the very thing they left behind followed them to America. When America declared war to fight for independence from Great Britain in 1776, Robert McClURKIN and his four sons joined in the fight by serving from the State of South Carolina.

When the war was over, Thomas Mc CLURKIN had married Elizabeth SMITH in South Carolina (Elizabeth was the daughter of John and Agnes Faris SMITH. John SMITH was also in the American Revolution.) To this union the following children were born: Nancy, John, James, Thomas, David, Archibald and another son not named.

Sometime in the spring of 1830 James and Thomas MC CLURKIN, Archibald and John HOOD and their families started the long journey from South Carolina in covered wagons.

Looking Back . . .

In May 1830 they all arrived in Washington County, Illinois in the part that was called Ayer's Point, Elkhorn Prairie of Elkhorn Point.

In 1833 more of the family arrived, namely: John and David McCLURKIN and John DONNELLY. These people, along with the ROUNTREES, Thomas BIRD and others opened up this part of the county to other settlers.

It soon became a growing, thriving community and by 1835, they had a school house, built a church made of brick, had a steam-mill, a store, a blacksmith shop and of course, a cemetery.

Indeed these Scotch and Irish settlers had found their promised land. Here they could worship as they wanted. They could till the ground and raise their families in the peace they so desperately sought and fought for.

Illinois was a free slave state and this too was reason to settle here. The very idea of slavery to these people was abhorred. They knew what it was to be an oppressed people and the thought of owning a slave was disgusting and truly against their religious beliefs. Some of these people played a great role in our county by manning the "underground railroad," to help slaves escape farther north, only to come under attack by their neighbors and friends.

Thomas MC CLURKIN was one of these pioneers who helped settle Washington County in the 1830's. He also is distinguished apart from many of our other earlier settlers by the fact that he is one of only four known American Revolutionary Soldiers buried within the boundaries of Washington County. The other three known burials are George BROWN, James CRABTREE, and Conrad GOODNER. If there are any others buried in Washington County they too are like the "Unknown Soldier" and known only to God.

Thomas MC CLURKIN surely thrived in our county, for at the age of 95 he applied for a pension for having fought in the American Revolution. I do not know if he ever received his first payment, but as a guardian of our nation of independence and a pioneer who helped to open up Washington County, he certainly would have deserved it.

Today Washington County has many descendants of Thomas MC CLURKIN. If you are of this line or any other line which you can prove back to the American Revolution now is the time to join the new DAR Chapter being organized. The DAR is open to all the women if you can prove your descent from anyone who gave service of any kind to the colonies during the years 1775-1783.. Printed first in the Nashville News, 18 Dec 1975.

Another column of Looking Back by Wanda GROENNERT, published 6 May 1976, in the Nashville News, is also interesting for our Bicentennial Year.

"In 1782 General George WASHINGTON established the first U. S. military decoration, the Badge of Military Merit. In 1932 it became the Purple Heart. General WASHINGTON created it to honor his soldiers for extraordinary bravery during the American Revolution. During that war only THREE men received it.

From that time until 1861, when Congress approved the Medal of Honor, the United States had no decorations. During our nation's early years decorations were unpopular, as the people thought of them as being symbols of the European monarchies. Almost 80 years later when the Medal of Honor was established there was still much debate among the people.

During the long and bloody Civil War and the Indian Wars there were more than 1900 medals of Honor given to U. S. servicemen for bravery.

In 1918, Congress restricted the Medal of Honor to persons who performed extraordinary acts of heroism and today this medal is called the Congressional Medal of Honor.