

MCBROOM - The Epic Continues

(James W. McBroom, Seattle, Washington - Corrected Copy of February 17, 2006)

The study of the McBroom surname has been said to be fascinating. This fine complimentary note, however, is an understatement in many respects. Convincing family stories like those that surround General Andrew Jackson, great American war hero and President of the United States, are not up for discussion in terms of whether or not the kinship is true, but rather...where one might find long buried records to corroborate what must be a fact. A similar type view is held in connection with General Christopher Houston "Kit" Carson, the famous American frontiersman and soldier. Then, there's the story about some having kinship with General Sam Houston, statesman and soldier, whose crowning moments of glory came at the Battle of San Jacinto where Texas Independence was born. Plus, the McBroom's of early North Carolina and Southwest Virginia who lived near the Boones, and Crocketts, is note worthy, as some were in the same fighting units and battles with each other. Interesting, too, are place names where the subject family name has been forever marked. Perhaps, from the Loch's Broom in the Scottish Highlands to places beyond McBroom Mountain in Llano County, Texas, and places in between such as, McBroom Hills in Northern Ireland, McBroom Creek in Iredell County, North Carolina, McBroom Gap in East Tennessee, McBroom Hollow in Jackson County, Alabama, and McBroom Branch in Putnam County, Tennessee. Just as sure as our McBroom forebears were on the cutting edge of making history in ancient times, they were there playing the same important role in the birth and growth of America, just as they are doing today in all walks of life. They have fought and struggled to establish and protect themselves on most every American frontier. They have fought in most every war our country has ever engaged in, to include, some small battles that have been forever lost to history, and several have become generals. They have died on these fields of battle, in hospitals, and in prisoner of war camps. At least one was a state senator, and at least two, possibly three, rode in Texas Ranger units during the Mexican War era and The War Between The States. Throughout eternity they have survived overwhelming odds, to become the keeper's of the McBroom name, and the heritage it represents. Such is their legacy to the living....let us rise to the challenge and pass it on.

According to George F. Black's book "Surnames of Scotland," Mac is a Gaelic prefix occurring in Scottish names of Gaelic origin, as MacDonald, MacLean, Macphie, and the like, meaning "son". The prefix M' and Mc are corruption's of Mac. In an effort to be brief about that which much has already been written, mac and mic are pronounced as machc, mikhk, with ch and kh like "ch" in German "doch" and "ich," respectively. This pronunciation is ancient and appears in early Scots records written as mach. In Mac, the "c" is the dominant sound and tends to thrust itself over on to the beginning of the following syllable, as in Maccaulay for Macaulay. The prefix Mac may not necessarily

indicate the son of a Gael, as some Norsemen and lowland peoples assumed it, or it was given to some who were of non-Gaelic origin.

Black, in the above noted reference, shows the name MacBroom as probably being a variant of the surname MacBrayne, which is derived from the ancient Gaelic surname, Mac a' Bhriuthainn, and translates to "son of the judge". Some other surnames that translate likewise, or which are corruption's of Mac a' Bhriuthainn according to Black, are: 1) Brown, that has more than one origin, with one showing, From G. Mac a' Bhriuthainn, from britheamhain, the former G. genitive of britheamh, 'brehon, brieve, judge.'; 2) MacaBhriuin, and MacBrioun as meaning son of Brion, which Black notes in a correction as being corruption's of Mac a Bhriuthainn. Here, too, is mentioned one And rew McBrwin as being Burgess of Dumfries in 1557; 3) MacBriar, MacBraire, MacBrair, and; 4) MacBrew. Under MacBrayne, Black shows other surnames like Makbrehin, M'Breyane, M'Breyne, McBrayan, Mcbrain, and MacBraine, plus two references that read, in part, concerning local government type activity to the effect that the brieve was "a kynd of judge amongst the islanders, who hath ane absolute judicatorie, vnto whose authoritie and censure they willingly submit...betuein partie and partie"... and, in the second as the position being "hereditary". Although such a practice is ancient like today, the interchangeability of names like McBroom to McBrown, or McBroon, continue to be commonplace. Nowhere is this example of confusion more evident than in day-to-day activities when the name McBroom is discussed, or written, by folks unfamiliar with it. It is even recorded to history in a confusing manner as seen on old Scottish maps.

In the North West Highlands of Scotland are two bodies of water that front the sea. They are shown as Loch Broom and Little Loch Broom on modern maps. However, they are shown as Loch Broum and Little Loch Broun (or, perhaps, vice versa) on some of the older maps. Also, one unverified, modern report has it that Loch Broom translates to Taigh Braion in Gaelic, meaning Lake of Showers, or Lake of Rain. Braion would appear to sound much like Brehon, shown above. Brehon, or Mac Brehon, not only translates to "son of the judge," it is a surname seen with or without the Mick Mack abbreviation. Additionally, it would appear to have the same basic sound as Brayne. This line of thought tends to lend credence to Black's thinking that MacBroom is a derivative of MacBrayne. It is no wonder that some folks believe the McBroom family might have lived near the Lochs' Broom long, long ago. As a matter of fact, this notion was once penned by a well-educated McBroom nearly one hundred years ago, along with the indication that the Loch(s) might have been named after the discoverer, which would reflect a long established custom when naming landmarks. Plus, one author in a book about Scottish clans, made note that the Broom family was of this geographical location. All of the above being indicators that the McBrooms might once have lived in the Scottish Highlands, although official documents uncovered to this date show otherwise.

History records the first family of McBrooms in the Scottish Lowlands in the early 1500s. These records are housed in the Burgh Court Records of Dumfries and the Town Council Records of Kirkcudbright, (pronounced as Kirkcoobray with the accent on the "oo"). Dumfries is located just north of the port town of Kirkcudbright. Kirkcudbright was in this time a busy port of trade, as were two other coastal towns in the south of Scotland known as Wigtown and Portpatrick. This small family of McBrooms served their community primarily as local government officials and as mariners, with property ownership evident, and trading as being a normal part of their lives. One became a schoolmaster and minister, and one was banished from the community forever.

Shown in the Burgh Court Records of Dumfries are: Andro McBryne, 1519; David McBrwm, early 1520s; Matho McBrwm, early 1500s; Andro McBrome, Dean Court of Dumfries held in Tolbooth, 1520-1521; Agnes McBrome (or McBirnie), 1524; Andro McBrwin, Burgess, 1557; Andro McBrome/MakBruym/McBroom, 1561, and; David McBrium/McBroom/McBriume, 1561. Add one reference having to do with Andro as having died in 1519, engraved on a headstone. Two interesting notes concerning Andro McBrome on November 19, and November 26, 1561, show him as Burgess of Dumfries, and being challenged by the whole community for his share of cargo of a French salt ship. Andro said he would give his answer to the Master of Maxwell, and he had a notary certify that if his accounts for half of the goods for the salt and wine ship sold March 27, 1560, is not accepted, it should turn him no harm.

The Kirkcudbright Town Council Records 1576-1604 and 1606-1658 show more than sixty entries regarding the name McBroom and its variants, with the given names of Andro/Androw/Andrew, David/David, Marioun Dicksoun, James Andro, Bartholome(s)/Brattill, Margaret Kae, Jonet (Janet), Elspett, Nicolas, Elizabeth, Hobbie/Harbert, Robert, and Johnne/John/Joannes, with surname variants listed as McBrwme, McBrome(s), McBrumes, McBrom, and McBroome. Numerous points of interests in these records are: 1.) David McBrome noted as being the spouse of Marioun Dicksoun; 2.) David McBrome referred to as Mariner; 3.) Jonet McBrome and three other women with bag and baggage to report to town one morning to be scourged through it, then burned on their shoulder and banished from the community forever (bad behavior), as was practiced on Johnne McCome; 4.) Elspett and Nicolas McBrome, daughters(?) of Bartholome McBrome burgess of Kirkcudbright to be nearest and lawful heirs of line to Margaret Kae their mother...and Elizabeth and Nicolas are mentioned together in a later account; 5.) Robert McBroom heir to Andro McBroom his father('s) brother; 6.) Robert McBroom of Arrbigland is admitted burgess and frieman of this burgh; 7.) Andro McBroom, burgess of Kirkcudbright was charged with "intromitting with pirates" in 1576; 8.) January 1638 Johnne McBroom apparent heir to Robert McBroom...and at the request of his mother Marion Broun; 9.) 1650 Johnne McBroom was admitted under doctor in the scoole of this burgh; 10.) April 1652 Johnne McBroom for the fartherance to his colledge the sum of twenty pounds Scottis, and; 11.) December 4, 1652 Johnne

McBroome lawful son to David McBroome burgess of Kirkcudbright...as being the nearest of kin to his father and mother...chooses Patrick and Thomas Carsane (Carson) to be his curatoris.

Two other surnames of interest shown in the above records, aside from Carson, are Houston, and Thompson.

A note of interest by George F. Black, author of the aforementioned book, "Surnames of Scotland", in reference to Joannes McBromius, who appears on the rolls as a Graduate of Glasgow University (laureated) M.A. 1655: Black notes the name Joannes McBromius as being in Latin form. This reference seems to be the basis for John McBroome the schoolmaster of Kirkcudbright records being referred to as a graduate of Glasgow University

The Burgesses were, in the early days, merchants, an upper class with capital invested in property, shops, and trading interests such as shares in ships. They were required to be proficient in archery, and later in firearms. They had their own courts, but because hangings and imprisonment involved heavy expenses, the alternative of banishment tended to become popular.

Janet is believed to have married. David died c. 1580, had married Marioun Dicksoun, and they had a son named Robert. Robert and wife (unknown) had a son named David. David II married Marion Broun (Brown), and they had John McBroom born circa 1630. John is believed to have been the Joannes McBromius who graduated from Glasgow University. He is also thought to have been the above mentioned schoolmaster, as well as the Presbyterian Minister of a church in the seacoast town of Portpatrick. John was ordered to move his family to the Ulster plantation in Northern Ireland due to his religious persuasion during the 1660s. There he lived in County Down, Ireland, town of Hillsborough as minister of the Anahilt Presbyterian Church. John is said to have had four sons: William, Gilbert, John, Jr., and Andrew.

John McBroom, Jr II, is thought to have had a son by the name of James, and according to one story, he married Mary Jackson, older sister to Hugh Jackson, the great grandfather of General Andrew Jackson. This story has it that James and Mary Jackson had two sons and four daughters named James, Thomas, Margaret, Janett, Elizabeth, and Mary. However, this is the same family of one John Mc Broom who emigrated with his family from Northern Ireland to Pennsylvania in the 1720s(?). Therefore, it is more correctly believed today that it was John McBroom, Jr II, who would have married Mary Jackson, instead of James. It seems that Mary Jackson died before her husband, John II, as she is not mentioned in his will. James I married Elizabeth Houston, and story has it that brother Thomas I married Janet Darlin(g). The will of James I is on file in Pennsylvania. His widow, Elizabeth Houston of Rowan County, NC, conducted her administratrix duty locally, and with her counterpart(s) in Pennsylvania, no doubt, via mail.

It seems that Thomas' family moved to Rowan County, NC, along with James, and/or his family, in late 1766 or 1767. Perhaps, some of this McBroom family and their relations made the move to North Carolina prior to this date. Whatever the case might have been, they settled in and around the Second Creek area just west of Salisbury. James I and Elizabeth Houst on had a very large family with one of the son's named James. In Elizabeth's will, it was thought at one time that her son, James, was noted as "James, third", but today, it is known that this is "not" the case, and that in reality, her will shows, "James, the sd." with "sd." being the abbreviation for "said". This understanding helps to better clarify the remainder of the sentence, too.

Thomas I is known to have had at least three sons, William, John, and Thomas, Jr. And, there is a convincing story that concerns a family Bible reference which notes that Thomas I died in the year 1783. Thomas' son, William, might well be the William McBroom who lived on the wild frontier of Southwest Virginia during 1774 - 1777, part of which later became North Carolina then Tennessee. William's name appears on the 1768 Rowan County Tax List, but not on the 1778 Tax List with his father, and brother's John, and Thomas, Jr II. It is a good possibility that elements of this family might have begun to establish their homes on Big Creek, north of the Holston River in present day Hawkins County, Tennessee, before the last of them moved there immediately after the 1778 Tax List was recorded. This location might well be the place of McBroom's Station, aka McBroom's Fort, which is noted in numerous records of Revolutionary War soldiers, and in other references.

These McBrooms along with their relatives and neighbors played an important role in the Revolutionary War. If the Battle of Saratoga was the "turning point," then regular forces and patriots in the southern colonies shattered the spirit of all the King's men, at places like King's Mountain and Guilford's Courthouse, sending Cornwallis' army limping to the sea, and setting the stage for the Battle of Yorktown and American Independence.

(Added to McBroom.Org by permission, April 12, 2009)