

Our McConoughey Family

Prepared by Ralph Strong

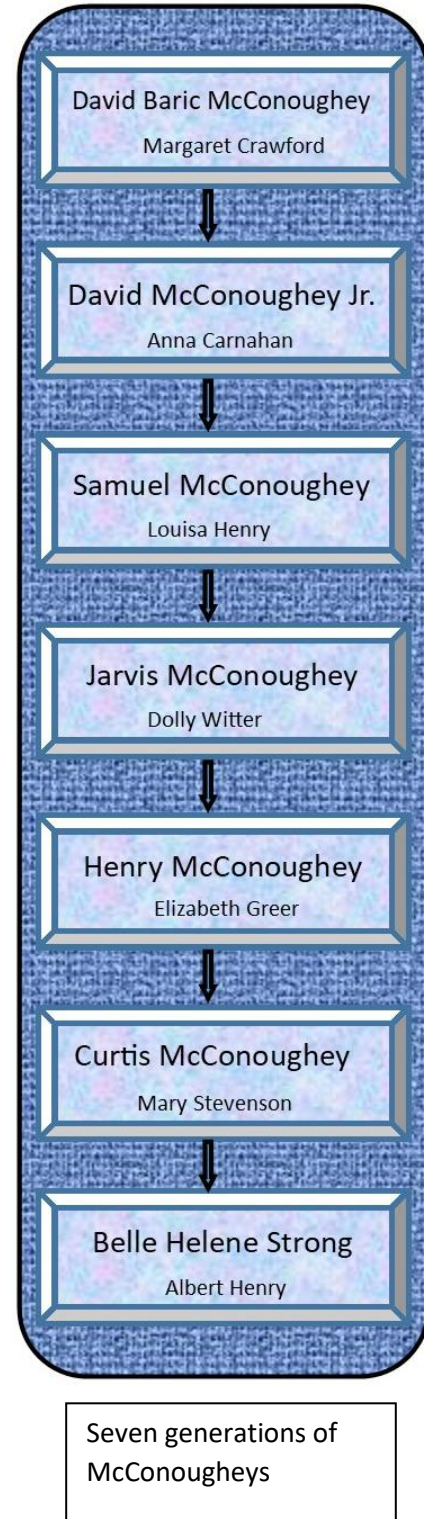
David Baric McConoughey

David Baric McConoughey was the immigrant in this line. His mother and father are listed in Ancestry as David McConoughey and Margaret Carter. Family legend suggests that they came from the area of Londonderry, but there is no documentation. He arrived from Northern Ireland in 1831. His birthday is not documented but is listed in Ancestry inputs as 1686. That would make him 45 when he arrived in America and 79 when he died. This is not impossible, but one might speculate that his birthday would have been closer to 1710, making him 21 when he arrived and 55 at death.

He came to America with his wife Margaret Crawford. No children are listed with his import data, so their first child is assumed to be David, Jr., who was born in Waltham, as listed in Waltham vital statistics. He was born May 27, 1731, the same year as their immigration, indicating that Margaret was pregnant when they left Ireland. This also means that he and Margaret were moved quickly from the harbor to the Waltham area. Some entries indicate that they moved to Watertown which is the adjacent town to the east, but it is likely that boundaries were not well defined in that era. Vital statistics list his children as born in Waltham. Most of the farms in the area were owned by wealthy Boston land holders, so one assumption is that he was hired or put under contract as an indentured servant to work the land in the frontier between the towns we now know as Waltham and Watertown. However, some records indicate that he bought a farm. Since he was known to buy land in Blandford after he left the Watertown-Waltham area, this is plausible, as he may not have been able to accumulate funds as an indentured servant. Or, he may have had some funds and hired out to work the farms on a paid basis.

While living in the Waltham area, they had four children, David (1731), George (1734), and Sarah (1737). And Samuel (1743). These births can be verified in the Waltham vital records. Rachel, their fifth and last child was born in Blandford, Ma, on May 26, 1743. They probably moved from Waltham to Blandford about 1740, the year when Blandford was founded. Family legend mentions that Samuel walked the distance from Waltham to Blandford in his bare feet when he was about 2 years old. The distance between Waltham and Blandford is 100 miles by modern roads but would have been somewhat longer then. The route passes through Worcester and family legend suggests they may have stopped there for a time.

They lived in the Waltham area for about 9 years. If we speculate that their stay at Waltham was as indentured servants, the term was normally 7 years,



but they also could add time if the women became pregnant. Many of the Scotch-Irish immigrants came under contract to the captain of the ship, who then sold the contract to pay for the passage and profit. However, as reported in some genealogy records, he may have come with funds and bought the farm upon arrival. He had money to buy property when he moved to Blandford. In this period, Scotch Irish Presbyterians and the more rigid Puritans were in conflict. Blandford was established by Scotch Irish who elected to move to their own frontier town to avoid this conflict.

Blandford's first settler was Hugh Black in 1735. The first Scotch-Irish settlers were mostly from Hopkinton, which was about 30 miles west of Boston. They were joined by some French Huguenots who has escaped from Europe to Northern Ireland and then made their way to America along with the Scotch Irish. They moved to Blandford in response to continuous conflict with the Puritans, who insist they support the Puritan meeting halls while blocking founding of their own Presbyterian Churches.

Blandford was to be named New Glasgow and arrangements had been made to receive a gift from Glasgow, England, a bell for their town hall. However, politics intervened. Governor William Shirley, who was appointed governor of Massachusetts made his passage on the ship Blandford and he insisted the town be renamed for the ship. The town did not get a bell from Glasgow.

Blandford was evacuated at least twice during wars with the Indians. Farming in the hilly rocky area was tough, but the town survived with taverns and inns, as it was on the active road between Boston and Albany. As noted later, the tavern industry was particularly good, as excessive drinking was a problem. Later, the town became known for the manufacture of cheese and in modern days, is a popular ski resort.

In 1776, Henry Knox passed through the town hauling 30 cannons salvaged from Ticonderoga. When teamster they hired in New York state reached Blandford, the going was exceedingly difficult over the Berkshire mountains with insufficient snow for their sleds and they threatened to quit and go home. However, Henry Knox succeeded in keeping them on the job until they reached Springfield where he could hire new teamsters to complete the trip to Boston. Some of those cannons were deployed on the high ground overlooking the Boston harbor, causing the English to withdraw to Nova Scotia.

The McConougheys seemed to thrive there. There is a record that David Sr. moderated a Town Hall meeting in Blandford in August 1765 and his son David became a prominent citizen and his children raised large families. He died there on 4 October 1765.

David McConoughey Jr.

David Jr. was 9 or 10 years old when the family moved to Blandford. He served in the French Indian war with William and John Carnahan, future brother-in laws. He married Anna Carnahan in 1758 and later, was commissioned as a Lt. during the Revolutionary war, serving under Capt. William Knox's company of the third Hampshire Regiment. He marched to Ticonderoga on Oct. 21, 1776. History shows that there was a threat, but no fighting occurred there at that time. One report notes that the militias were there until all the food was gone and then went home. His son George served alongside him as a private. In his lifetime, he was active in the community as he was elected to many town offices in Blandford, including moderator, selectman, treasurer, and for many years until at least 1801, town clerk. His handwriting reported to be preserved in old town books and is in a beautiful style.

David and Anna had 10 children, George (1754), Sarah (1761 d. 1761), Rachel (1763)m Mary 1763), David (1767), Samuel (1759), Anna (b & d 1772), Sarah (1775), Anna (1780), Eli (1784). Two of the children migrated to Ohio, David, 2nd, and Samuel. History repeated as they again owned land side by side with the Carnahans, who by this time had changed the spelling of their names to Cannon.

David died in Blandford on 30 august 1805.

David McConoughey, Jr. Will (Written in the family Bible)

In the name of God, Amen

David McConoughey of Blandford, county of Hampden and Commonwealth of Massachusetts, being weak in body but of sound and perfect mind and memory, blessed be Almighty Gog for the same, do make and publish this my last will and testament.

I give and bequeath unto my beloved wife Anna McConoughey, two cows to be kept summer and winter, and to have the benefit of a horse to ride at any time when she wishes to ride; and to have 5 bushels of rye, 5 bushels of Indian corn and one bushel of wheat yearly and every year as long as it shall please God to spare her life; and 5 score weight of beef, 5 score weight of pork; 6 bushels of potatoes and four of turnips each and every year, and firewood in such quantity for one fire cut up at her door; 8 pounds of good wool, 12 pounds of flax each and every year, and one room in the house, such room as she shall choose, and all my household furniture, also the loom and all things belonging thereto.

To my son George McConoughey, 10 dollars

To my son David McConoughey, all that homestead or tenement on which I now live, being Lot 37 First Division also one undivided half of a piece of land that was part of Lot 22, to him and his heirs an assigns forever.

To my son Samuel, 1 dollar

To my daughter Mary Osburn one cow worth 30 dollar 33 cents

To my daughter Sarah Beard one cow worth 13 dollars 33 cents.

To my daughter Anna Blair one cow worth 13 dollars 33 cents

To my son Eli, 17 acres of land bought of Dr. Jos. Brewster

I hereby appoint David Osburn sole executor of this will and testament, revoking all former wills by me made.

(signed David McConoughey)

23 August 1805

Witnessed

Jedediah Smith

Zeno Kent

Oliver Wilson

Executor appointed November 20, 1805

Appraisal of ESTATE January 2,

1806 -- \$1, 592.50 by Samuel Knox

John Hamilton

Notice that in the will, the third son Samuel only was to get one dollar. This was because he had already been given his inheritance. Samuel wanted to go west and needed his father's help and apparently got it.

Andrew Wilson
Gore lot 30 Acres \$320.00
Home Lot 60 acres 930.00
Vina Hill lot, 17 acres 170.00

Samuel McConoughey

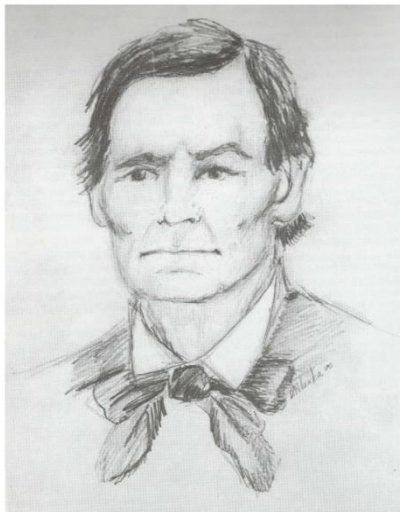
Samuel was born in 1769 in Blandford, the 3rd son of David McConoughey, Jr. He married Louisa Henry in 1792. Louisa was the daughter of William Henry had who owned a farm in Framingham, Mass., and was one of the original settlers in Blandford.

Samuel packed up and migrated to Ohio in 1805, settling in the Henry neighborhood on the eastern shore of what is now called Aurora Lake. (His father-in-law had acquired property in Solon.) Samuel and Louisa had 8 children, Jarvis, Louisa (Squire), Almira (Goodsell), Rachel (Henry), Sally, Wiley, George, and Augustus.

Samuel's brother David, II, who had inherited the bulk of his father's estate, moved to Ohio in 1811. He spent a winter with Samuel and then moved to Bainbridge, where he had bought 100 acres. He built a cabin there and lived as about the only inhabitants there for several years. David had inherited most of his father's estate, but he among others in town had serious problems with whiskey. His wife Louisa insisted that they move to Ohio to give their children a better environment. David eventually stopped drinking and became an active church member.

Samuel died in Aurora in September 1829.

Jarvis McConoughey



Jarvis McConoughey, tintype sketch by Darlene Polanka from family archives; "Pioneers with Web Feet"

Jarvis. Samuel's oldest son, was about 13 years old when the family moved to Ohio. He may not have been much help in farming, but he may have kept the family well supplied with meat. He found an Indian settlement on the other side of Aurora lake and made friends with them, Hunting, fishing, and trapping with them. They say that after killing 500 deer he stopped keeping count.

He became a scout during the War of 1812 and was assigned to watch for unusual British or Indian activities along the shores of Lake Erie between Cleveland and Sandusky. While he had been very friendly with Indians before the war, after the war, he became negative after several incidents in North East Ohio. He found one of the last Indians sneaking around his barn, tracked him into the forested swamps and killed him. The Indian he killed had been a problem in town with drunkenness and thefts. In a recent incident, he had harassed a housewife who managed to lock him out. He then knocked out the filling between the cabin's logs, pointed a rifle at her through the opening and forced her dance. He eventually

wandered away without further harming her. The Town was not sure whether to convict Jarvis of murder or give him a medal.

A well circulated story can be found in several sources with small variations. Jarvis and his son were hunting when his dog treed a bear. The dog and the bear were fighting inside a large hollow log or tree. Jarvis climbed into the hollow log, grabbed the bear by the legs and had his son pull him out, with the bear. His son then shot the bear, also saving the dog from a sure death.

Jarvis married Dolly Whitter in 1812. He was active in community life, serving as township trustee for many years. He died in 1880. Jarvis and Dolly raised eight children, Samuel, Festina (McDowell), Otis, Minerva (LaMareux), William, Hannah (Parsons), Augustus, and Henry.

Henry McConoughey

Henry was born in 1834 and died in 1916. He married Elizabeth Greer and there were five children, Curtis, Grace, Helen, Edward and Charles. Henry was a farmer in the Solon area.

Curtis McConoughey

Curtis, my grandfather was a railroader. He had several positions, including station master at Lodi and Operated the switch tower operator. Curtis married Mary Stevenson and had 2 children, Belle and Merle. Mary died from complications of childbirth a few days after Belle was born in 1897. Curtis remarried Dora Miller and they lived in Lodi until they died. I have fond memories of visiting them at Lodi. We were there almost every Christmas and I stayed with them for a week during the summer.

Curtis could make a toy in a few minutes with his pocketknife. I remember whistles, sling shots, and other toys that he made from scratch with just his pocketknife. When he retired, he attempted to sell “stuff” to supplement his pension. At one time he took me with him when he went around trying to sell fire extinguishers. He would put a little gasoline in a bucket and set it on fire. He would throw a handful or the fire extinguisher on it to smother it.



Dora and Curtis McConoughey with their daughter, Belle Strong ca. 1930



Curtis McConoughey at switch tower

He and Dora kept their lawn immaculate with beautiful shrubs and flower gardens. Curtis was an avid hunter and gun collector. At one point when he was Station Master, he noticed someone following him home. He carried funds from the station home for deposit the next day. That evening, he sat at an upstairs window overlooking the front door. Sure enough, the guy attempted to break in the door, and Curtis shot him. The potential burglar took off and Curtis and his neighbor attempted to catch him but failed.

Curtis was an avid pheasant hunter and kept a beautiful short haired German Pointer. When Curtis died, we inherited the dog and then kept 2 more generations of his offspring.

Curtis died in 1941 of a heart attack that occurred a few days after he participated in a Masonic funeral. He had marched with the precession from the funeral home to the cemetery and had overexerted himself.

Belle Helena McConoughey Strong

Belle was born in 1897 in West Salem, Ohio, a small town near Wooster. Her mother died a few days after she was born from complications from the birth. Her father, Curtis, remarried Dora Miller. They moved to Lodi when she was fairly young and she graduated from Lodi High School. Between her Junior and Senior years, she took attended Wooster College for classes in education. During her senior year of high school, she spent part of the year teaching in first grade. She attended Wooster College for the summer session to obtain temporary teaching credentials and then taught in the one room school in North Benton. She taught at North Benton, Sebring and Berlin center for four years, attending Kent State Normal School in the summers to maintain credentials.



She Married Albert Strong in 1920 and settled into duties of a farm wife. She must have had some cultural shock with her new duties. She had moved from a suburban home to the country, although she had some rural experiences. During some of her teaching years, she boarded with Jake Miller, a farmer living on the Western Reserve Road near North Benton. One of her early experiences at their new farm would have been a shock. As she was getting breakfast, a strange man wondered down the stairs and into the kitchen. The guy had worked on that farm before Belle and Albert bought it. He had gone to town and got drunk and came home to his old bedroom during the night. Albert knew him and ended up hiring him as his hired man. He stayed for several years.



She and Albert had 3 children, Dora, Merle and Ralph. She mastered her new role as housewife very well. Her kitchen was about 15 x 15 feet with a large wood fired iron cook stove. A large supply of firewood was always stored in the woodshed. They maintained a large garden and she canned about large numbers of Ball Brothers quart jars of Tomatoes, Peas, string beans, beats, corn, cherries, and more. The cellar was filled with bushels of potatoes, apples, pears, onions, and other food every fall. In the late 1920's and 1930's, there were 6 or 7 at the table for 3 meals per day. She baked pies of all types in the iron stove's ovens. Wash water was heated on the big stove for the Monday washing and the clothes were hung with clothespins on clotheslines in the back yard. In the summer, she used a kerosene stove to avoid firing up the wood stove. Belle and Albert had an agreement from day one that they always kept. Belle took care of the house and Albert took care

of the Barn. Albert's father was always starting arguments on how to manage the farm. It worked well for them.

The kitchen was the social center for the family with a large table that could easily seat 8. It was the place for homework and many other activities and the iron stove kept it nice and warm in the winter. The Telephone was in the kitchen. In the early 1930's it was a mahogany phone with a crank. As I recall, one turn would bring an operator online who could patch your phone to the rest of the country. Of course, long distance was used very carefully, as it was expensive. The first 3 minutes could cost several dollars and you were charged by the minute after that. People on the party line would respond to their code of 2, 3 or 4 turns in combination with half turns. Later in the 1930's the wall phone replaced the big mahogany phone. The process became simpler as you simply picked up the earpiece and waited for the North Benton operator to connect you, providing she was not busy doing other things when you needed her.



Belle loved to play Auction Bridge. A group from North Benton played about once a month, rotating homes for the game. Deserts were served and it was a contest among the women as to who could come up with the fanciest or best tasting treats. The same group were WCTU members, although the town was already dry. Belle was a pacifist and intensely hated the war.

Belle was approached in 1942 to resume teaching. She went to Deerfield and taught 5th and 6th grades. She thoroughly enjoyed teaching and was good at it and continued to teach there until the school was centralized in the early 1950's.

After retiring, Belle and Albert began spending most of their winters in Florida. He built a house in Palmetto Point, Florida and spent their winters in Florida. She died in 1965 after a series of heart problems.

References:

1. Ancestry.com
2. Pioneers with Web Feet, by Nelson P. Bard, a book written for the Solon, Ohio Centennial.
3. Turnpikes and Taverns, by Summer Gilbert Wood
4. Online histories of Blandford, MA
5. Vital Statistics of Waltham, MA found online
6. Unpublished Genealogy "The Descendants of Samuel (Carnahan) Cannon, by Almon Brown Cannon.

Spelling of the McConoughey name seems to depend upon where immigration to America took place. Those related to David McConoughey who arrived in the New England area seem to use the spelling used by our family McConoughey. Those who came though the Delaware valley use the McConaughey spelling.