

## McCREARY (McCRARY) FAMILIES in OWEN COUNTY

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When William McCrary came to Owen County in 1846, he brought with him a family heritage of adventure and self reliance that had begun with his grandfather James McCreary's adventure of leaving Ireland for America in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. This heritage is known to have continued three generations into the lives of William's descendants. One family tradition says that it was William who changed the spelling of McCreary or McCreery to McCrary. Other Owen County family connections included in this history are: Long, Lucas, Need, Ritter, Strouse, Wark, and White.

William's father John McCreary taught his children from his personal experiences of adventure and hardship. After leaving his father's home on Looneys Creek in Botetourt County, Virginia, John went to Redstone, Pennsylvania, where he worked on the Monongohela River. Then, he ventured west and bought land in Tuscarawas County, in Warren and later in Fairfield Townships.

John was a strong man. He made seven trips down the Ohio & Mississippi Rivers by himself on flat boats to New Orleans. He entertained himself in New Orleans by winning stone-lifting contests with the strongest men in the area. After selling his trade goods, he returned home; five times he walked the entire distance. When he had saved about \$1400, he decided to invest in Ohio frontier land. He moved to Tuscarawas County with his sister Margaret and brother William and became the first settler in Warren Township. He built a little cabin in the wilderness on Indian Fork of Connotton Creek and cleared six acres of his 640-acre section. These were the first improvements made in Warren Township. He erected the first mill in the township so he and his neighbors could grind their grain locally. He recognized how the growing settlement was upsetting the Indians but he earned their respect by his strength and honesty and became their friend. Later when trouble developed into war between the settlers and Indians, the McCreary family was not harmed by the Indians. But he didn't escape other troubles. His partners in Redstone to whom he trusted his flat boat business cheated him and left him unable to continue payments on his section in Warren Township. He had to sell out and move to a smaller, more affordable place in Fairfield Township. But John was not discouraged and worked hard to clear and improve his new land. John McCreary married Margaret Slutts (now spelled Slutz), a daughter of John Slutts on 28 October 1810.

Margaret Slutts was born 28 November 1788 in Frederick, Maryland. She came to Jefferson Co., Ohio in 1808 with her father and stepmother. John McCreary died on 29 April 1857 in Fairfield Township. Margaret died 13 June 1878 in Tuscarawas Co., Ohio. John had conveyed his life experiences and lessons learned to his son William, who used them wisely in Owen County.

William Slutts McCrary, born 12 June 1824 in Fairfield Twp., Tuscarawas Co., OH, died 31 December 1906 at Spencer, Owen County, and is buried in Riverside Cemetery at Spencer. William, who lived with his parents in Ohio until he was 22 years of age, was reared on a farm where he experienced the hardships common to all frontiersmen in those early days. In 1846, William, equipped with the lessons he learned from his father and a basic school education, headed west for Indiana. He traveled on the Ohio River to Madison, Indiana, then took the old "flat bar" railroad to Columbus, Indiana, the end of line in 1846. He continued to Owen County and made an original entry of government land in Lafayette Township. He purchased an adjoining tract of "canal land." These wilderness tracts had never been settled or cleared. With much labor he cut down the trees and cultivated both tracts.

Tradition says that he made seven trips back to Ohio on foot just as his father had done.

William married Nancy Jane Ritter, a daughter of George A. and Martha (Busby) Ritter, on 26 February 1852 at Freedom, Franklin Twp., Owen Co. Nancy was born on 11 April 1826 at Clear Creek, Bloomington Twp., Monroe Co., IN. Her father, George A. Ritter Sr, was born 10 February 1790, probably in Baltimore Co., MD. George married Martha (a daughter of James Busby) about 1810. George and Martha were living in Fayette Co., KY in 1820 prior to moving north into Monroe County and then into Owen County.

Afterward he sold his first farm lands and bought a 400-acre tract, then known as the "Grimes" farm. William and Nancy lived on this farm until 1901 when they moved into Spencer. William was known to his neighbors for his integrity and business capabilities. He was a valuable counselor and assistant in public business of all kinds, including an administrator of estates, guardian of minors, an appraiser of property, and commissioner to divide lands. He served two terms as trustee of Lafayette Township; he was an active, conservative democrat. When a young man, William

united with M. E. Church and he was one of the organizers of the Pleasant Hill church in Lafayette Township where he served as class leader and Sunday School Superintendent. These characteristics and the family tradition to seek adventure in the west, he passed on to his sons.

When the Pleasant Hill M. E. Church was organized near them in Lafayette Township, William and Nancy joined as charter members and held their membership there until they moved to Spencer in 1900. After William's death in 1906, Nancy continued to live at her home on the west side of Spencer. After suffering severe pneumonia, Nancy died on 20 February 1923, at the age of 96y 10m and 9d, the last of a family of 10 children and was buried in Riverside Cemetery at Spencer.

The nine children of William and Nancy (Ritter) McCrary are:

- Margaret E. McCrary, b. Jan 1853, Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN;
- Martha Elizabeth McCrary, b. 8 Feb 1854, Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN;
- William M. McCrary, b. 4 Jan 1856, Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN;
- Mary Letitia McCrary, b. 1858, Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN;
- George R. McCrary, b. 5 Dec 1859, Spencer, Owen Co., IN;
- Daniel Vorhees McCrary, b. 16 Nov 1861, Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN;
- Nathan McCrary, b. 1864, Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN;
- Lucy Belle McCrary, b. 27 Jun 1865, Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN;
- John McCrary, b. 8 Oct 1867, Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN.

Margaret E. McCrary was born Jan 1853 in Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN, and died 1931 in Owen Co., IN. She married Henry Christopher Long on 27 Jan 1870 in Owen Co., IN. He was born in Jan 1843 in Indiana. In 1900 they were living in Lafayette Twp. At the time of her father's death (1906), Margaret and Henry were living in Owen Co. In 1923, when her mother died, Margaret was living at Patricksburg. Margaret Long is buried in Riverside Cemetery at Spencer.

Children of Margaret McCrary and Henry Long are:

- Olive Long, b. Jan 1876.
- Ella Long, b. Jan 1878; d. Abt. 1980, living with parents in 1900 in Owen Co.

Everet Long, b. Mar 1887, living with parents in 1900 in Owen Co.

Martha Elizabeth McCrary was born 8 Feb 1854 in Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN, and died on 27 Feb 1934 in Spencer, Owen Co., IN. She married Robert Anthony White on 29 Apr 1872 in Owen Co., IN, son of Presley White and Mary Foster. He was born 23 Sep 1846 in Spencer, Owen Co., IN, and died 8 Jun 1910. In 1906, Martha and Robert were living at Spencer. In 1923, Martha was living in Spencer. Martha White is buried at White Cemetery, Franklin Twp., Owen Co.

Children of Martha McCrary and Robert White are:

- Claude Vernon White, d. 8 Aug 1958, Billings, Yellowstone Co., MT.
- George Frederick White, d. before 1956.
- John Turner White, d. before 1934.
- Nannie Belle White, d. before 1934.
- Robert P. White, d. before 1934.
- William Wigfall White, b. 22 Mar 1883, Spencer, Owen Co., IN; d. 24 Dec 1979; m. Josephine; d. 22 Jul 1979.
- Pierce Arvin White, b. 30 Jan 1892, Franklin Twp., Owen Co., IN; m. Goldie Blair; b. 1892, Owen Co., IN.

William M. McCrary was born 4 Jan 1856, Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN, and died 14 Nov 1915 at the home of his mother on Vandalia Ave., Spencer, Owen Co., IN. In 1906, William was living in Billings, MT. He married Martha E. Wark, became ill with asthma and lung problems and moved into Spencer to live in his mother's home.

Mary Letitia McCrary was born in 1858 in Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN, and died after 1946. She married George S. Lucas 31 Dec 1878 in Owen Co., IN. He was born 22 Feb 1854, and died 16 Oct 1884 in Owen Co., IN. George is buried at Splinter Ridge Cemetery in Lafayette Twp. In 1906, Letitia, a widow, was living in Owen County. In 1923, Letitia "Aunt Tish" Lucas was living in Kansas City, MO.

Children of Mary McCrary and George Lucas are:

- William O. Lucas, b. 7 Mar 1880.
- Charles S. Lucas, b. 5 Jan 1882.
- George R. McCrary, born 5 Dec 1859 at Spencer, Owen Co., IN, died 18 Jun 1946, Superior, Nuckolls Co., NE, and was buried in the Red Cloud Cemetery, Webster Co., NE. George married Anna M. Tritsch, on 21 Jan 1914 at Chelan, WA. George retired after

-serving two two-year terms as Owen County Treasurer. He followed his family heritage and moved to Nebraska. In 1906, George was living in Red Cloud, NE. In 1923, George was living at Insvale, NE.

Daniel Vorhees McCrary was born on 16 Nov 1861 in Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN, and died 6 Jun 1898 in Shenandoah, Fremont Co., IA. Daniel, following his family tradition, headed west. First he went to Missouri and then to Iowa. After moving to Iowa, Daniel was killed by lightning. He married Julia Louisa Benedict 28 Dec 1887. She was born 1 Jan 1868, and died 3 Apr 1934.

Children of Daniel McCrary and Julia Benedict are:

Nathan Otis McCrary, b. 25 May 1890, Atchison Co., MO; d. 11 Feb 1988, Fairfax, MO; m. Mary Elvira Buntz (b. 2 Apr 1888 Fremont Co., IA) 28 Oct 1908 in Sidney, IA.

Grace McCrary, m. Ernest Jones.  
Viola McCrary, m. Sam McAllister  
Mabel McCrary, m. Louis Ripley  
Myrtle McCrary, never married  
Mildred McCrary, m. Arnold Spears

Nathan McCrary was born in 1864 in Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN, and died before 1946. He married Ida A. Charlotte Mow on 25 Apr 1898. Just as his two older brothers had done, Nathan headed west after his marriage and shortly he and Ida were living on a homestead near Park City, Montana. In 1902, "Professor" Nathan McCrary reported on the condition of crops in his area to the Billings Gazette. In 1906 and in 1923, Nathan was living at Park City, Montana.

The only known child of Nathan McCrary and Ida Mow is:

Frances McCreary

Lucy Belle McCrary was born on 27 Jun 1865 in Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN, and died at age 72 on 22 Jan 1938 at Spencer, Owen Co., Indiana. At age 22, she married William Heenan Need on 1 Jan 1888 in Owen Co., IN, a son of William Need and Sarah Long. He was born on 19 Mar 1860 in Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN, and, when Lucy was age 31, died of typhoid fever on 30 Aug 1896 in Lafayette Twp. Owen Co., IN. Lucy never remarried after Heenan's death. On 18 Jun 1900, she was farming with two young sons, Bert and Curt, in Lafayette Co. Farming by a widow and two young boys is difficult and after a few years had to give it up. She moved into a home on Vandalia Ave in Spencer and lived there 24 years, the last fifteen alone. When Lucy was a young girl, she joined the Methodist

church and after moving to Spencer, she became a member of Spencer M E Church. In 1906 and in 1923, Lucy, a widow, was living in Spencer. Lucy was buried at Auburn (Riverside) Cemetery at Spencer.

Children of Lucy McCrary and William Heenan Need are:

Bert Need, b. 12 Jan 1889, Spencer, Owen Co., IN; d. 27 Oct 1954, Clay City, Clay Co., IN; m. Ilda Grace Johnson (b. 4 Mar 1890, Edgar Co., IL) 16 Aug 1911 in Owen Co., IN, daughter of Dillard Johnson and Lizzie Houghton.

Curtis Need, b. 30 Nov 1893, Owen Co., IN; d. 9 Oct 1918, U.S.S., Mercy, Norfolk, VA. m. Jesse Mae Slaughter (b. 20 May 1895 IL) 12 Feb 1913 in Greene Co., IN.

John McCrary was born 8 Oct 1867 in Lafayette Twp., Owen Co., IN, and died of TB on 16 Apr 1935 in San Jose, Santa Clara Co., CA. He married Edna Strouse on 4 Mar 1894. She was born 3 Mar 1872 in Indiana, and died 7 Aug 1915 in San Jose, CA. On 18 Jun 1900, John (age 32) and Edna (28) were living with their children: Ruth (5), Nellie G (2), and infant George (2/12) in Lafayette Twp. In 1906, John was living at Terre Haute, IN. John and Edna migrated west from Indiana. They farmed next to his brother Nathan's place near Park City, Montana. In 1912, they moved to California. After Edna's death in 1915, John and his son George homesteaded near Craig, Colorado, on oil shale land. In 1923, John was living at Craig, CO.

Children of John McCrary and Edna Strouse are:

Ruth McCrary, b. Jan 1895, Spencer, Owen Co., IN; d. 1945; m. William H. O'Neil (b. 1895, Willits, CA). Two children born in San Jose, CA: Ruth (b. 1918) & Wm (b. 1927)

Nellie G. McCrary, b. 9 Nov 1896, Spencer, Owen Co., IN; d. 11 Jul 1975, San Jose, CA; m. George Johnson, 29 Dec 1916.

George McCrary, b. Mar 1900, Spencer, Owen Co., IN; d. 1955, San Jose, CA; m. c.1925 to Margaret Allen.

There were other McCreary families who lived in Owen County. Some are related to William S. McCrary, e.g., Reason Peter McCreary, and others, e.g., Findley McCreery, who may be related.

Other researchers who know these McCreary family connections and have additional family history details, are kindly asked to provide them to me.

## Laura McCormick Lukenbill

### Last Surviving Member of James McCormick Family died in Iowa

contributed by her granddaughter Audrey Stotts, 3906 E. Tiffen, Des Moines IA 50317  
excerpt from the *Indianola Record & Tribune* May 8, 1939

Laura McCormick Lukenbill, 78, of Beech, last surviving member of the James McCormick family of whom there were 10, all residents of Warren County, died in a hospital at Pleasantville last Wednesday, May 3.

Recently Mrs. Lukenbill wrote a letter to the postmaster at Gosport, Ind., her old home town, asking if any members of her family, the McCormicks, were still living there. Even after she became critically ill, she had expressed a hope of returning there for a visit in her girlhood home.

The postmaster turned her letter over to the editor of the *Gosport Reporter* who printed it, requesting that if any relatives were still living there to write Mrs. Lukenbill.

In reply she received a letter from a Mrs. Zelma Dittmore who is 88 years old and a cousin of Mrs. Lukenbill. Their mothers were sisters whose maiden name was McHenry.

From Omaha, Nebr., came another letter from Paul V. Brown, acting regional director of the U.S. Department of the Interior, who wrote Mrs. Lukenbill of the McCormick's Creek State Park in Owen County, Ind. He stated that her father's farm was now in this park. He wrote: "You will be interested to learn that the park has been enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of men, women and children during the past 20 years."

Myron L. Reed, director of the state parks, also wrote Mrs. Lukenbill and sent her a booklet giving a description of the park. The booklet tells of McCormick's Creek which is named for John McCormick Sr., grandfather of Mrs. Lukenbill, and for whom the park was named. The sons, Hudson and James, Mrs. Lukenbill's father, each inherited 160 acres of this land,

which with an additional 80 acres, make up the park of 400 acres [1,852 acres in year 2001].

Mrs. Lukenbill came with her parents, Mr. and Mrs. James McCormick, to Iowa from Indiana 67 years ago when she was nine years old. During all these years she had no contact with relatives in Indiana. Of the four brothers and five sisters she was the last surviving member.

The deceased sisters are: Mrs. Mary Sandy, Mrs. Anna Reynolds, Mrs. Amanda Ream, Mrs. Lizzie Bare, and Mrs. Minnie Darnell. The brothers: Montgomery, George, Tom, and Charles O. "Jack" McCormick. Jack was the only child born in Iowa.

Among the correspondence Mrs. Lukenbill received was a letter from a Mrs. Lucy Lukenbill Brighton, a relative of Mrs. Lukenbill's late husband Sylvester. She wrote there are many Lukenbills around Gosport.

Henry Lukenbill, father of Sylvester, came to Iowa several years before the McCormicks. Mr. and Mrs. Sylvester Lukenbill were married September 23, 1880, and for 50 years lived on their farm north of Beech. In 1929 they built a house in Beech where they resided until his death in 1931 and where Mrs. Lukenbill continued to live.

Ed. note:

Audrey also contributed to the library files an obituary for Sylvester C. Lukenbill which states he was born June 28, 1859 near Sandyville, Iowa, and died March 21, 1831. He was a son of Henry and Elizabeth. He was survived by brothers and sisters: Nora Bare, William, Sam, Orlando, Illa Bassett, Flora Davey, and Fred. Preceding him were Frank and Oscar.

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### The Origin of Surnames

From *Owen Leader*, May 3, 1916. Owen County Public Library

Once upon a time given names were the only names in use. One was Tom, Dick or Harry, and that was all there was about it. Our present surnames arose from the nicknames. Thus Tom the Taylor became in time Tom Taylor, and his descendants used Taylor as the family name. The most familiar of our surnames were taken from the occupations of our forefathers, as Smiths, Bakers, Brewers, etc. Many men, moving to new towns, had the name of the place from which they had come fastened upon them. Others took names like Pope, King, and Bishop. Hogg and Bacon are simple. Purcell developed from pourcel, meaning little pig. Tod meant fox, Fitchie was polecat, and so the keen student of language traces the beginnings of our names in the old dialects. Some of the nicknames were originally distinctly uncomplimentary, as Seely for silly, Cameron for crooked nose, and Kennedy for ugly head. Grace developed from gras or fat. *American Boy*