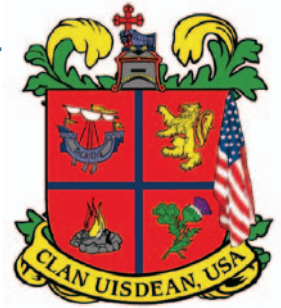


MOUNTAIN ECHO ONLINE

McQuiston, McQuission,
McQuesten, McQuestion,
McCuiston, McCuission,
and other related names



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Guilford Gold



Left to right - Leona McQuiston and her tremendous work of family genealogy, published in 1937, and Carleen Daggett and her book Noah McCuiston, published in 1975. Both books told of Guilford Gold!

Much of the McUisdean family legacy, taking place during the days of Colonial America, surrounds a story of a treasure will, and a day when Lord Cornwallis, leader of the British troops in America, and Andrew Jackson, future President of the United States, both came to the home of Thomas and Ann (Moody) McCuiston of Guilford County, North Carolina – both men concerned with a keg of gold belonging to our family. Andy was said to have helped bury the treasure and Cornwallis was said to have torn the house apart looking for it.

The treasure, it is told, was left by Alexander McCuiston to the children of Hugh and Ann Fleming, in Ireland, and to three daughters of Thomas and Jean Moody. Ann Fleming was a sister to the 1735 immigrants, Robert McCuiston, and Thomas and James McCuiston, and to Alexander. Jean Moody was the daughter of Benjamin McCuiston, another brother to the immigrants – one who had stayed in Ireland.

Part of the treasure was originally intended for Margery, another sister to the immigrants, but was somehow diverted to the Moody girls.

There are actually five indicators that a treasure did exist. Three are in Leona McQuiston's book. One is in Carleen Daggett's book, and one is in the family line of Sandy Beasley. I'll start with Sandy's first, as it is the shortest, but perhaps the easiest to prove.

Sandy came to meet her family at our Texas Clan Uisdean, USA meeting. She brought a document, which was a hand-copied version of one filed officially at the Guilford County Courthouse. Sandy's copy was signed by the original witnesses and courtroom clerk. One signee was named Searcy and was a known friend of Andrew Jackson, based on nearly every biography of Andy. Another signee was Francis McNairy, father of John McNairy, another known friend of Jackson.

The McNairy family connection is especially important because they shared Old Gibson Cemetery with our family and they purchased their property from Walter McCuiston, (son of Robert the immigrant) and Walter's wife, Sarah, (daughter of James McCuiston, the immigrant).

Walter and Sarah were cousins. The son of this couple was named Thomas and he became known as Reedy Fork Tom. He lived on Reedy Fork Creek and had a ford or bridge there, which was used as the escape route by General Nathanael Greene, after the famous Battle of Guilford Courthouse, March 15, 1781.

The McCuiston Bridge story is supported by Cornwallis' records, by the writings of the great North Carolina historian, Caruthers, and by the current administrators of the battlefield, who pointed out the path to McCuiston Bridge, appropriately named McCuiston Road, to a group of family members, when we held our annual meeting in Greensboro.

The bridge has been written of in many other places too, but these three instances seem to remove any doubt about its existence and use.

There are two other points to be made about the bridge. A Reverend Sam Houston, some type of uncle or great uncle to Texas Sam Houston, used the Reedy Fork McCuiston Bridge twice, on the day of the battle, according to his own diary.

Also, after the war, someone named Andrew Jackson was made "overseer of the road from the Reedy Fork Bridge to the Widow Flack's place", according to Guilford Co. legal documents. The Widow Flack was Jane McCuiston, daughter of James the immigrant, making her Reedy Fork Tom's aunt.

Andrew Jackson

1767-1821

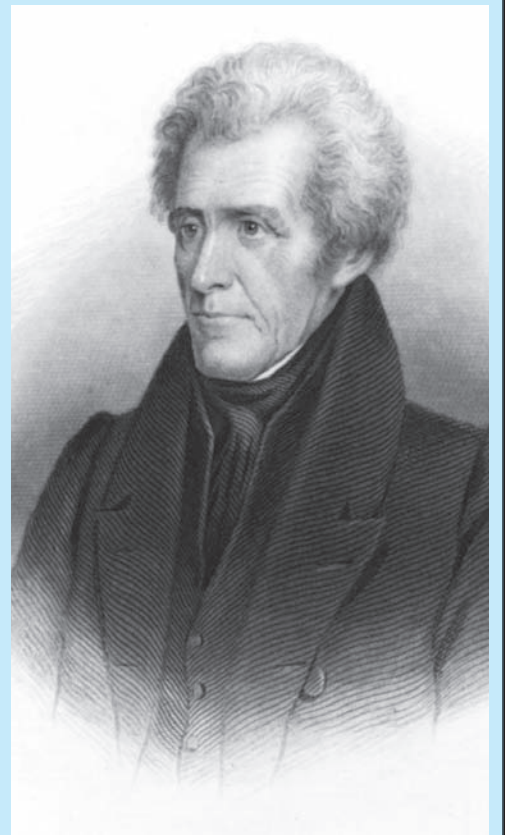
*Hero of the War of 1812
President of the United States*

Andrew Jackson's genealogy and even his birthplace are both glossed over by most historians as they are each in contention.

He may have been born in 1767 in either the home of the McCamey family, or the home of Crawford family. In either case, the woman of the house was a Hutchinson girl, descended from Jean Moody, who was descended from Jean McCuiston. Jackson was raised in the Crawford home. Other theories say he was actually born at sea and one historian lists 8 different places where he may have been born.

What is not in contention is that he spent some of his youth in Martinville, which is now part of Greensboro, NC. There he was known to many who were also associates of the McCuiston family, and he is said by a few sources to have been related to Ann Moody McCuiston.

Ann is reported to have said that Jackson came to her home, just before the arrival of Lord Cornwallis, to help her hide a keg of gold, part of a larger treasure left behind in the will of Alexander McCuiston.



Andrew Jackson Genealogy

Jackson's father was also named Andrew Jackson and his grandfather was named Hugh, and lived at Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland (N.I.). These men are said, in the book The Ulster Jacksons to have come from the line of Richard Jackson and his wife Mary McRandall, who lived in Coleraine, N.I., the port many McUisdeans left Ireland from. In Scotland, Richard was reportedly a caretaker of horses for the McDonalds of Keppoch, and they are one origin of the name McRandall. One possibility is that Richard met Mary while working for her family. They met on the Solway Firth. One island in the Solway River is Hestan Island! The couple moved to Ireland where the Jackson family became landlords for much of the land in the Bann River Valley, where our family lived. Jackson's mother was Elizabeth Hutchinson. Her family also lived in the Bann Valley and at times in Carrickfergus. Her mother was Jean Moody who inherited part of the McCuiston treasure and married a Hutchinson, most likely named Robert. Jean Moody's mother was Jean McCuiston, who married Thomas Moody of Aghadowey, located just below Coleraine. Jean was the daughter of Benjamin, who appears to be a brother to Robert, James, Thomas, and Alexander McCuist(i)on.

There can be no doubt that this is the McCuiston Bridge being spoken of. Some say it was another Andrew Jackson that oversaw this road, however, there is absolute proof that the future president was living in the area shortly after the war, by his own writings. The area was known, then, as Martinville, and was home to the courthouse and the families of McCuiston, McCuiston, Caldwell, McNairy, Rankin, Holland, Nelson, Denny, and other recognizable names.

The McNairy family lived next to the McCuiston family and right on the edge of the battlefield. Andy was a life-long associate of John McNairy, and he worked at a store belonging to Searcy, in Martinville.

The document owned by Sandy Beasley was originally filed by Ann Moody, swearing that she was the wife of Thomas McCuiston and also the granddaughter of Benjamin McCuiston. Sandy told me that it was the tradition of her family line that when the treasure was taken to Texas, it was with the understanding that Robert McCuiston, Ann's son and keeper of the treasure, would make way for Sandy's line to settle in Texas using the treasure money. She seemed to say that there was some hard feelings between the family lines over this, after Robert gave the treasure away to Sam Houston to help finance Texas war debts.

Another reference to the treasure, and one that ties in with Sandy's story, is a tale taken from Leona McQuiston's book on our family. On page 332, Leona says "Some time later when there was an activity to restore old estates to the descendants, some of the family got together to see what could be done about the one mentioned here." Leona had just been talking about the treasure of Alexander McCuiston, partially held by Ann Moody McCuiston, so she could have meant nothing but that there was an "activity" to restore a rightful share of the treasure money to "some of the family". This coincides with Sandy's story.

What this activity was, we can only guess, but it indicates that there was enough of a treasure to worry about its distribution, that Ann Moody took it seriously enough to have a legal document filed concerning her ancestry, and that Sandy's line and "some of the family" remembered it well.

Before we go any further, let's recap what we know. It seems that several members of our family had recollection of the treasure's existence. Names associated with

Andrew Jackson appear on the legal document prepared by Ann Moody McCuiston to indicate her relationship to Thomas McCuiston and to Benjamin McCuiston, and according to tradition, she did this to protect her involvement with the treasure. The McCuiston and McCuiston families intermarried and lived close to each other, to the battlefield, to the McNairy's, and to McCuiston Bridge, an historically recorded landmark of Guilford Co.

Jackson is reported to have said the gold weighed 80 pounds. Texas land was eventually given in trade for it and these hints help us place Ann Moody's share of gold at about \$25,000, in money of the day.

Carleen Daggett came from the line of Robert McCuiston and apparently heard the story of the gold from her father. She also saw some documents to support our story and she points to 10,000 acres of Texas land that Robert received for the treasure and gives the deed number at the Robertson County Courthouse, in Texas, for the land.

Carleen's account is the third mention of the treasure. It cannot be doubted that Carleen was an ardent supporter of this family and an avid historian. I know of some points of hers that are incorrect – particularly concerning Andrew Jackson. However, she does say that Andy received his inheritance from his mother's side, not from his Irish grandfather, Hugh. This has now been supported by three separate and very authoritative figures.

The curator of the Hermitage museum, in Nashville, TN, says she has read evidence that this is the case. Professor Rik Booraem, of Rutgers University, wrote one of the more current, and most complete biographies on Jackson's youth. In it he says plainly that he believes

Elizabeth Jackson buried a small treasure under the dirt floor of her cabin, and after her death Andy dug up the gold for his inheritance.

Booream hadn't heard our story, yet, when he wrote this, but it seems quite coincidental that, according to our tradition, Andy help Ann Moody bury her share of the treasure shortly after his mother may have buried her share. Both shares were hidden, one in a creek, one under a dirt floor.

The third authoritative source is D.J. McCartney, who wrote the book *The Ulster Jacksons* under the guidance of Helen Rankin, curator of the Andrew Jackson Centre, in Carrickfergus, Northern Ireland.

D.J. McCartney interviewed just about every living Jackson family in Ireland and their tradition states that Andrew Jackson descended from Richard Jackson of the Bann Valley. He also says there is absolutely no proof that Andrew Jackson ever inherited anything from his Irish grandfather, Hugh, or for that matter from any other source in Ireland!

Two Jackson museum curators and two Jackson biographers all seem to support our source for the treasure, not the conventional one given. I have spoken or emailed with these people. I emailed many times with Booream and shared our story. He asked question after question and finally said that we seem to have a valid story, which does not conflict with any proven Jackson history. I emailed with the curator of the Hermitage, after touring that museum, and I met, personally, with Helen Rankin, in Carrickfergus, and toured the museum, there, too.

Another Jackson biographer was James Parton, who wrote his book right after Jackson's death and who interviewed many people in North Carolina and Tennessee, who knew Jackson personally.

Parton says that the Hutchinson sisters came to America with a “considerable” amount of wealth. Back in the Bann Valley of Northern Ireland, lived William McQuiston, who happened to be wed to Mary Hutchinson. In a legal document her brothers’ wealth was described as “considerable”. Her brothers’ names were James, Robert, and John.

John Hutchinson was the name of the executor or witness to Alexander McCuiston’s will.

Although it is sometimes given as Cyrus, I believe a Robert Hutchinson was very likely the father of Andy’s mother, Elizabeth Jackson. This can be shown by a naming convention often used by the Scotch-Irish in which the first son was named for the paternal grandfather, the second for the maternal grandfather, and the third for the father.

Andrew Jackson, the third son, was named for his father, Andrew. His oldest brother, Hugh, was named for the paternal grandfather. This leaves the second son, Robert, being named for the maternal grandfather - in this case, Robert Hutchinson.

William and Mary (Hutchinson) McQuiston were contemporaries of Elizabeth Jackson and company. What the actual connection of all these folks was is unknown, but certainly worth consideration and contemplation. All came from the same small area of Ireland, along the Bann River, and all connect both the Hutchinson and McUisdean families to “considerable” wealth.

Professor Booraem, who wrote the book *Young Hickory*, also places the Jacksons in Guilford Co. before the battle, staying with relatives. Our tradition says they were in Guilford Co. staying, at times, with the McCuistions. Andy’s friend was John McNairy, next door neighbor to Thomas and Ann McCuiston.

The McNairy family has its own tradition of Andrew Jackson living with them for awhile.

On the opposite side of the McCuiston farm was the house of David Caldwell, and his wife Rachel Craighead. Rachel’s sister, Nancy, was the best friend of Elizabeth Jackson, back in the Waxhaws. This is written about in nearly every Jackson biography. The Caldwells lived next to the McCuistions and have their own tradition of Andrew Jackson being at their home.

Another Craighead sister was wed to one of the Crawford boys in whose house Jackson was raised, if not born. Mrs. Crawford was Jean (also given as Jane or Jenny) Hutchinson, daughter of Jean (Moody) Hutchinson, daughter of Jean (McCuiston) Moody.

Another Craighead sister wed Patrick Calhoun but died giving birth to twins. Later, Patrick married Martha Caldwell, niece of David and Rachel, and by her he fathered John C. Calhoun, the man who would become Andrew Jackson’s vice-president and enemy.

There seems to be an abundance of evidence that Jackson knew some if not many McCuistions. From his oversight of the McCuiston Bridge to the Widow (McCuiston) Flack’s home, from his friendship with John McNairy, from his mother’s friendship with the Craighead girls, from the signatures of his friends on Ann Moody McCuiston’s legal document, and finally, from known military records of McCuiston men serving under Jackson in Tennessee, and elsewhere during the Creek Indian Wars.

In addition, we have Booream’s contention that Jackson was in Guilford Co. before the big battle, and we have a document that Doug McCuiston found in the Guilford

Library showing a fund-raising effort by local historians, a few years back, to specifically preserve “McCuiston’s Mill and Andrew Jackson’s racing paths.”

I like to apply a simple rule when I do my research. If we have several official, semi-official, or circumstantial proofs of a point, we only need one proof to be true in order for the spirit of the story to be true (at least in substance if not in every minute detail).

In this case we have several proofs listed here and probably as many more not listed because of their extremely complex nature.

Another rule I like to apply is that if there is no other known alternative theory, then the only existing one, whether it is from family tradition or not, at least deserves some serious consideration. In this case, not only is there no other known theory of where Jackson was in March 1781, but in fact, Rik Booream says Andy “disappears from the pages of history” and based on his research, he places Jackson in Guilford Co.

There is a story out there that Jackson stayed with his relatives, the Wilsons, and we know that the Wilsons were also related to the McCuistions. Jackson’s own words say he was north of Charlotte and did not return to the Waxhaws until after Cornwallis left North Carolina, which of course was after the Guilford Battle. These words of Jackson are found in his official letters collection, one of many books I own on Jackson. In fact, I believe I own every biography on Jackson, including several obscure volumes.

I even have pages from Amos Kendall’s unfinished biography of Jackson. Kendall was Jackson’s speech writer and was working on a biography of Jackson, which was never finished. I copied all the pages

of it that were available, from the National Archives, in Washington, D.C. I believe there is little of significance, written in standard Jackson biographies, that I have not read and taken into account.

In addition, we have the words of Ann (Moody) McCuistion. She told Caruther's about Cornwallis taking over her home. This event was verified by none other than Lord Cornwallis, himself, in his own daily tactical war records. If Ann already had a good story to tell of Cornwallis, why would she make up the additional details of Andrew Jackson being there?

How do we know she even did tell that part of the tale? We don't.

What we know is that Carleen told that part of the story and attributed it to Ann. And we know that when Ed McCuistion visited the McCuistions of Guilford County, in 1895, he was told about how Jackson was related to Ann, and that he used to pass through her yard on the way to David Caldwell's school. This means that at least Carleen's line, and the line that stayed in Guilford, both shared the belief that Jackson was related to Ann Moody and was near her house at some point. Ed also uncovered stories of the existence of the treasure. This means that Sandy Beasley's line, Carleen's line, and the line of those who stayed in Guilford County all support the treasure story.

In Leona's book is also found the fourth "proof" of the treasure. On page 331, under the bio of Thomas McCuistion, husband of Ann, and son of James, the immigrant, Leona tells how a courier's note, taken by a governor describes the will and the treasure of Alexander McCuistion, and its relationship to the household of Thomas and Ann (Moody) McCuistion.

In the mention of the will, John Hutchinson is given as the executor. The "children of Hugh Fleming in Ireland" are given as some of the recipients. Alexander McCuistion is said to be "at the sign of the rising sun in Red Made lane near the Hemitage" and he is said to have "died four or five years ago and left no lawful issue". He was also said to have left part of "his estate to the children of Thomas Moody, at present in North Carolina". Also, we have "John Hutchinson, at the three Mariners at Wapping Old Stairs . . . supposed to be . . . executor to the said McCuistion."

A separate website, on which Thomas Moody is mentioned, says he was born in Aghadowey, Northern Ireland. In Leona's book, she says he married Jean McCuistion, daughter of Benjamin McCuistion of Derry County, Northern Ireland. Aghadowey is in Derry County. Nearby is Dungiven where a few McCuistion/McQuiston men are known to have come from. Nearby is also Boveva where Isabel Creton, wife of John McCuistion, was born. Nearby is Newton-Stewart, home to the Calhoun family, and the place where Thomas Moody and Jean McCuistion were married according to Leona McQuiston's book, and based on Ed McCuistion's research.

Also nearby is Lislane, where William and Mary (Hutchinson) McQuiston lived, along with her brothers, James, Robert, and John Hutchinson.

Finally, nearby is Coleraine where the family of Andrew Jackson held sway as landlords of much of the Bann River Valley.

When "some of the family" was trying to restore their share of the treasure, a reference was made to a place in Ireland as Ag_____. Leona conjectured this meant Aghadowey.

I went to Aghadowey. In fact, I went to Dungiven, Boveva, Newton-Stewart and a bunch of other family-related places in Northern Ireland. In the Aghadowey Cemetery I saw both Hutchinson and Jackson graves within an arm's reach of each other. Nearby were Rankin graves.

The Rankins were very close and intermarried with the McCuistions. Ann Moody McCuistion went to the Rankin home to pray during the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. Her husband, Thomas, was on the run with David Caldwell, as both had a price on their heads. No doubt, British bounty hunters were after them for the reward.

Again, before we go any further, it seems like there is enough evidence, circumstantial and not, that these families in Guilford County came from the Bann River Valley. Most came by way of the Susquehanna settlements in northern Maryland and southeastern Pennsylvania.

The Jackson family controlled Coleraine. Londonerry, Dungiven, Aghadowey, Lislane, Boveva, and Newton-Stewart are all within a very short drive. There seems to be enough evidence that these people all knew each other long before immigrating to America.

There seems to be evidence that some type of will existed for Alexander McCuistion, which placed him at the sign of the Rising Sun near the Hermitage and that John Hutchinson was associated with his will, and was found at the Three Mariners Inn, at Wapping Old Stairs, in London, England.

I did some very extensive research on this. The Rising Sun and the Three Mariners Inn were two inns in the dock section of London known as Wapping Old Stairs. The Rising Sun Inn still exists today and is near Hermitage Road, near Wapping Old

Stairs, and near Red Mead Lane. If this isn't the same Rising Sun, where Alexander was found, I'll eat my hat.

By the governor's courier note we know Alexander left no children. We know the children of Thomas Moody in North Carolina, and the children of Hugh Fleming in Ireland, were involved in the will. We know John Hutchinson was involved in the will. We know that at least two inns are somehow involved in the will, and they are located in London, in an area which is part of Middlesex County. We know that Alexander died 4 to 5 years before the courier's note was written. It was found at the beginning of the war, around 1775, or perhaps earlier.

The final proof - on page 52 of Leona's book, she reprints a will from 1765, of one Alexander M'Cuiston. He lives in Middlesex County, near London. He is a victuallor, or an innkeeper. He leaves part of his money to the children of his sister, Ann Fleming of Londonderry, Northern Ireland. He also leaves to his infant son "residue of all my goods and chattels, lands and tenements, stock in trade liquors, utensils, household furniture, plate and linen, together with all and any movable and immovable that shall be found owing or belonging to me at the time of my decease."

Sounds like a lot of stuff.

Alexander leaves to "my trusty and well-beloved friend, Mary Denny, the use, interest, profits and emoluments" of the above if his son should die before reaching maturity including his "Occupation Store Liquors" insinuating he is in the occupation of selling liquor.

He leaves his only son, also named Alexander, in her charge and only her charge. He is very specific about that. Alexander filed this will

on October 27, 1765. On November 30, 1765, an Alexander MacHuison, of the County of Middlesex, and a victuallor, passes away. On the same day, a two year old boy named Alexander M'Huison died in the same place. If these Alexander's are not the same as the males of the will, and are not the same as Alexander McCuiston of the courier's note, I'll eat my socks, too.

And as a kicker, John Hutchinson is given as witness to the will and James Denny is one of the executors. We know that a James Denny was in Guilford Co. by the time of the battle. We also know that Robert McCuiston married Ann Denny.

Robert died in Guilford Co. although we don't know where his wife died. There is no record of her death in Pennsylvania, so there is a 50-50 chance Ann Denny died in Guilford Co., near James Denny.

Whatever became of Mary Denny is unknown, but if both Alexanders of her household died on the same day, it seems very likely they died of a commonly held disease or sickness, especially because of the age difference between them. Perhaps she died at the same time.

Both wills speak of considerable wealth. Both mention Alexander McCuiston, or M'Cuiston, or MacHuison. Both have a John Hutchinson involved. Both have the children of a Fleming from Ireland involved. Both mention a link to an inn. Both take place in Middlesex County, England. Both have Dennys in the story. Both involved people whose families would end up in Guilford County, North Carolina.

"Four or five years" (as the courier's note said) from 1765 would be 1769 or 1770. The first battle of the Revolution took place near Guilford County, in nearby Alamance County, in 1771, one year

later. Thomas McCuiston fought at that battle. The courier's note could well have been written then.

The official will mentions "Margory" Hamilton as a sister to Alexander. In Robert McCuiston's immigrant notebook is a note from Thomas Hamilton referring to Thomas McCuiston, the immigrant, as his uncle. In Guilford tradition, "Old Aunt Margery" is spoken of.

Carleen gives 1740 for the death of Alexander, but this could not be true if the money was left to his brother's young granddaughters, who already had their own children born by around 1740. Elizabeth Jackson already had two children by 1765, so she had to be in her early 20's at minimum, by then.

For lack of any other evidence to the contrary, and based on an enormous amount of evidence in favor of, I feel there is little if any doubt that the two wills spoken of are the same will, and are of the same Alexander, and that Andrew Jackson received a small part of the treasure through his Hutchinson mother, by way of his his Moody grandmother, and by way of his McCuiston great grandmother.

It is a double-edged sword to make this proposal. So much detail is asked for to prove the story that it sometimes overwhelms the reader. And yet, without it, the story is questioned. There is more evidence available that is more circumstantial and even more detailed and so it has been left out. Explaining this every time I try to talk about the story would obviously be ridiculous.

Absolutely proving this story, beyond any shadow of a doubt, is likely impossible. Disbelieving this story is a choice for the reader. But there is no doubt that I have studied this story almost pathologically for years and have done my best to

lay it out. There is no doubt others believed it, even before I was born. There is no evidence to the contrary and much evidence to back this story up. Experts and other family historians have supported it in their own ways. Legal documents and family traditions support it. Seeming coincidences in places, names, and events seem to support it. And, finally, timelines, motives, and common sense support it.

Beyond all this there are many other family names who surrounded the story from the Caldwells, Crawfords, Hollands, Nelsons, Wilsons, Rankins and McNairys, and even Cornwallis and Caruthers.

I think to disbelieve this story, at least in its general traditions, would seem much sillier and harder to do than to believe it. I think that Ann Moody McCuistion would not intentionally lie, nor would Leona, Ed or Carleen intentionally lie either. I think mistakes were made and we don't know the whole story, but I think the curator of the Hermitage Museum was right when she told me she finds that family tradition is most often true in principal, if not in all the details. We have more details than we know what to do with. We have written records from the 1700s and 1800s. We have authoritative figures who don't discount us.

In short, we have a great little family tradition with no real reason not to believe it.

I do.

Nothing happens in a vacuum and our associaton with Jackson and the Craigheads is no exception, nor is the American Revolution for that matter.

Rev. Robert Craighead was a minister at the Siege of Londonderry of 1689, where Daniel McCuistion fought. Craighead's son, Rev. Thomas Craighead, came to America

with Rev. William Homes, on the first boat to leave the Bann Valley and head for America. They landed at Boston but were soon forced to move to New Hampshire, where Londonderry, NH was established.

The McQuesten branch of our family also moved to this area.

Homes was married to Robert's daughter, (Thomas' sister) and they had a son who married the sister of Benjamin Franklin.

Franklin moved from Boston to Philadelphia. Thomas Craighead, and his son, Alexander, moved on to Pennsylvania, too, and Alexander became the pastor at the Middle Octoraro Church, from 1735 to 1749. The McCuist(i)ons attended this church and so he links the New England McQuestens with the Susquehanna McCuist(i)ons. The McCuist(i)on men had settled on land set aside for "the families of the brave defenders of Derry" because of their grandfather, Daniel.

Craighead later moved on to North Carolina and is linked with our family there, through his daughter, Rachel, who married Rev. David Caldwell. She was Ann Moody McCuistion's next-door neighbor and friend. Thomas McCuistion and David Caldwell hid out together from the British after the Battle of Guilford Courthouse.

Another daughter of Craighead married the son of Jean Crawford, in whose house Andrew Jackson was raised. Another Craighead girl was the best friend of Jackson's mother, and the fourth daughter married the father of John C. Calhoun. She died in childbirth and so he married the niece of David Caldwell. This ties all these families together very, very tightly.

On November 11th of 1743, the members from a few neighboring churches joined with those of Middle

Octoraro to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Scottish National Covenant. Alexander Craighead was a fiery preacher and before it was all over the congregations of Scotch-Irish raised swords and declared independence from King George.

One source says that Franklin covered the event in his Philadelphia newspaper, although I haven't been able to relocate that exact source, yet. However, Franklin did publish Craighead's thoughts on independence in a pamphlet.

I originally pieced this story together from several sources. Here are most of them --

A book called *The Colonial Clergy of the Middle Colonies*, published by the respected American Antiquarian Society, says that Rev. Alexander Craighead was the "author of a pamphlet on political independence, 1743" and that he served at Middle Octoraro Church, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania.

Wikipedia states that, "Rev. Craighead had numerous published works, including *Renewal of the Covenants, National and Solemn League*, . . . 1743, published by Ben Franklin." It goes on to say "Craighead was a vocal critic of King George II and the Church of England. He often preached to his flock to resist threats to their independence, and he held the rights of the common man as sacred to that of kings. He is counted as the spiritual father of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, which was written nine years after his death."

From the publication, *Southern Presbyterian Leaders*, by Rev. Henry White, published in 1918, the following -- "Craighead had strong, clear views about the right of the individual man to do as he pleased in the matter of religious worship,

and about the rights of the individual man in the government of the community. A pamphlet concerning civil government was circulated in the colony of Pennsylvania. This pamphlet gave great offense to the governor of the colony. He thought that the writer of it claimed too much freedom for each citizen of the province.

“When the governor was told that Alexander Craighead was the writer of the paper, he laid the pamphlet before the Synod of Philadelphia of which Craighead was a member. The synod expressed its disapproval of the views set forth in the pamphlet. It said, also, that Craighead had not been given the authority to speak for the synod with reference to matters of civil government. It was charged that Craighead was ‘tinged with an uncharitable and party spirit.’

“Probably for the reason that he found himself in advance of his brethren in Pennsylvania concerning freedom in church and in state, Craighead left that colony and came to the mountains of Virginia. Craighead loved liberty and he wished for himself and brethren privileges as great as those enjoyed by Episcopal ministers. Since these were not granted in Virginia, he sought North Carolina as a place of freedom.”

In *Historical Papers and Addresses of the Lancaster County Historical Society*, from 1921, the following – “. . . when the viewers reported that as to a road from the Great Road leading to William Smith’s Mill, they laid out the same beginning at Craighead’s Meeting House and extending on a west-northwest course four miles and a quarter to a great road leading to said Smith’s Mill. The Court confirmed the same. That Middle Octoraro Church is meant is further

evident from the fact that Alexander Craighead was pastor there from 1735 to 1749.”

Professor Carlton Jackson, author of *A Social History of the Scotch-Irish* addressed Clan Uisdean, USA, at our meeting in Kentucky. In his book he writes, “Craighead, pastor of Middle Octoraro Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania, defined, in 1743, much of the ‘New Side’ philosophy. He quarreled with the American Presbyterian Synod’s failure to abandon the crown (King George) as the head of the church. Craighead’s dissent did not go unnoticed by the Presbyterian hierarchy. His battles with the authorities caused Craighead to quit Pennsylvania and go to the frontier. Two members of his Augusta Co., Virginia, congregation complained that he ‘maintained treasonable positions’. Virginia governor, Robert Dinwiddie, ordered the Augusta County sheriff to take Craighead into custody . . . Craighead took a loyalty oath to the crown . . . however, he moved on to North Carolina.”

The book *Scotch-Irish Pioneers* is considered one of the most complete works on our race ever published. It was written in 1910 by Charles Knowles Bolton. In it we learned “William Homes married Katherine, daughter of the Rev. Robert Craighead, a venerable and distinguished minister of Londonderry (Northern Ireland). Their children (included) Robert . . . He came to New England and married Mary Franklin, of Boston. She was the sister of Benjamin Franklin, the scientist and statesman. The Rev. William Homes and his brother-in-law, Rev. Thomas Craighead, arrived in Boston in 1714 from Londonderry.”

Thomas Craighead was the father of Alexander Craighead. This would

make Benjamin Franklin the brother of Alexander Craighead’s Aunt Katherine.

The final part of this story comes from none other than *The Presbyterian Quarterly and Princeton Review*, of 1870.

It says, “A valiant Scotchman, the Reverend Mr. Craighead, had much to do with the spread of these ideas, and with giving ‘form and pressure’ to the political principles inspired by the religious Reformation, which, later on, found their noblest and most complete expression in the Declaration of Independence.

“On the 11th of November, 1743, just as Walpole’s corrupt ministry was expiring, Mr. Craighead convened a meeting at Octorara, in Pennsylvania. The congregation appealed to the rights which Jesus Christ has transmitted to us. They deposed King George II. because he ‘has none of the qualities which the Holy Scripture requires for governing this country.’ They made a solemn covenant, which they swore to with uplifted hands and drawn swords, according to the custom of our ancestors, and of soldiers ready to conquer or to die, ‘to protect our persons, our property, and our consciences against all attacks, and to defend the Gospel of Christ and the liberty of the nation against enemies within and without.’ Shortly after this meeting was held at Octorara, this same Mr. Craighead removed to Mecklenburg County, in North Carolina. He died before the war began, but his work lived after him.”

There is so much more to this story and I hope to someday write a book about the whole affair, including a better picture of Andrew Jackson’s genealogy. To protect our legacy I am copyrighting this newsletter.

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