

McKenzies of Reynolds County Trace Ancestors Back to Native Scotland

Part One

By Kathryn Vickery

The earliest records on the Mackenzie family (the name was later changed to McKenzie by the branch which emigrated to America) dates back to the 1600s.

My Great-Great Grandfather was Laird Mackenzie (first name not available) who was the hereditary head of the Mackenzie Clan with his home castle in the mountains of Kental in the Scottish Highlands near the north-western coast of Scotland.

As a matter of fact, among his other large land holdings were some on the Arian Isles between the coast of Scotland and Ireland. Some of the MacKenzie family are reported to have emigrated to Ireland during the uprising of the serfs in the 1600s but this branch of the family still maintained their holdings in the Scottish Highlands. My sister Iras visited Scotland several years ago and found many landmarks, commemorative plaques, cemeteries and other records of the family still there and a few years ago the Castle of Kental was featured in the National Geographic Magazine with pictures of the present Laird and Clan Chief. The castle has, of course, been restored but much of the original building is still there.

Although a younger son entitled to bear the title of Sir since his older brother was to inherit the title of Laird, Sir Marion Mackenzie was expected to follow his fathers wishes and marry in the clan or at least a lady of noble birth. However, he met and fell in love with the daughter of a wealthy merchant family who



Dr. D.H. McKenzie — inscription on the back to his mother to whom he sent the picture reads, "Diagnosis — a bad case of whiskers."

lived near Edinburgh, Scotland, and since his father refused him permission to marry he defied family and clan tradition and quietly married this girl. Her given name was America but we have no record of her last name, and immediately cut all family ties and sailed to America.

Upon landing in New York soon joined a colonizing party and sailed south in a coastal

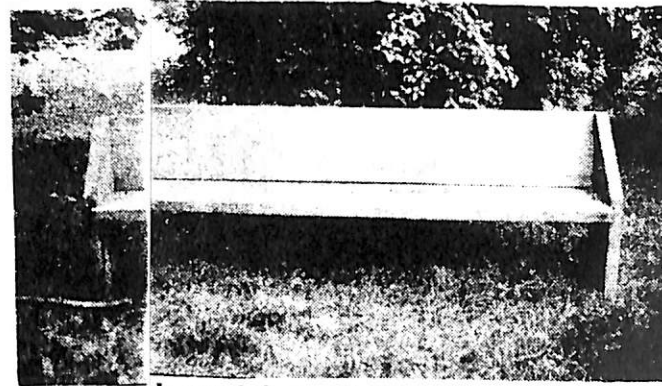
vessel for Charleston, South Carolina. From Charleston they proceeded to North Carolina where they took up lands. While living in North Carolina the following children were born to Sir Marion and America Mackenzie, Henry, Katherine, Bell, and Mary Elizabeth.

In or about the year of 1850 the family migrated to Tennessee near the spot where the

town of Mackenzie, Tennessee, now stands. It has never been established as to whether or not this town was named for this family but it is considered highly likely since the town came into existence at about that same time. After the families moved to Tennessee the following children were born, Alexander, William, Frances, Jane Betty Anne, Pauline and Dorcas.

Sir Marion was drowned in a tragic steam boat explosion near the mouth of the Tennessee river leaving America with a large family to raise. According to the story told to Dr. D. H. McKenzie by his aunt Katherine, aged 90, when he visited her in Tennessee in 1891, she as the eldest daughter found it necessary to take over the managing of the household and most of the responsibility for her younger brothers and sisters since her mother, although not of the nobility, had been raised in a wealthy home with many servants to do all the menial chores and she was at an utter loss when faced with the running of a home and the raising of a large family in what was, at that time, practically a wilderness. Aunt

"Kath" (as she was affectionately known) had the family dry sense of humor and explained the fact that she had remained a spinster all her life (as had her sisters Bell and Mary Elizabeth) by saying she had been too busy managing the home and helping raise the younger children and added that, in defiance of custom at that time, she had managed to obtain an education far beyond what was deemed proper for a lady. In her own words the fact



Church saved from "Emily's Chapel." It was built by Frank McKenzie about 92 years ago. Back and front seats are made of 2 inch pine boards, hand planed and about 1 1/2 inches wide.

that she was perhaps a bit scared off by a teenager my Uncle Alexander and he told me he did not see them as proud of her

as much or more than they would be suitable for a teenager my Uncle Alexander and he told me he did not see them as proud of her

children were educated far beyond the average of that day, although money was not available for education and most of them worked their way through whatever schooling they could get.

David Henry (or D.H. as he became known) became one of the first doctors to practice in Reynolds county, William (Willie) became a minister, and Alexander (Alex), Ollie and Arvezena became school teachers. In addition to their own large family the McKenzies raised a granddaughter Della Lewis Markum. Della's mother died in childbirth and Della was raised as a much loved younger sister to the aunts and uncles.

Grandfather McKenzie was a very religious man and when the Lewis family, another very old and well established family who lived on lower Carver Creek at that time, donated land for a church he and his sons pitched in to build a small chapel, "Emily's Chapel," which stood until about four years ago when it was destroyed by vandals. Iras and I visited the adjoining cemetery and seeing how it was falling down and the church benches being chopped up for camp fires decided to retrieve three of the solid pine benches (the most uncomfortable I have ever sat on), loaded them into my station wagon and started looking for someone to pay for them. We finally located an elderly man who lived nearby and when we explained who we were and why we wanted to preserve them he told us he knew of no one with a better right to them since our father had, at age 15 or 16, made most of the benches and our grandfather had been largely responsible for the building of

the church and the maintenance of the cemetery next to the church. The McKenzies were of the Methodist faith but since there were no other churches in that area at that time it was opened as an interdenominational church and any church encouraged to use it. For many years until the death of my aunt Amanda (Mandy) McKenzie Dunn the family met there each year from all over Missouri and sometimes from further distances for Decoration Day. At this time we had a general grave working followed by a church service conducted by a minister available followed by "Dinner on the Ground."

Three or perhaps four generations of youngsters, many of whom are now parents and grandparents, have many wonderful memories of those family get-togethers and when we do get together now we enjoy reminiscing about the fun and scrapes we got into then as well as the family feeling and inspiration kept alive by these yearly reunions.

In speaking of this branch of the McKenzie family and their home life I feel one thing that should be mentioned is their love for singing which is inherent in the Welsh people and to a degree in those of Scottish descent. Their singing talent was much in demand for weddings, funerals and other occasions throughout the area and it was nothing unusual for them to drive miles over rough roads in buggies or wagons to share their talent with others with no thought of pay.

Although Henry and Arvezena lived for some time in Lester-ville at the home of their son, Dr. D.H. McKenzie, while he practiced medicine there, and Arvezena was living with my parents near Garwood at the time of her death, they were returned to the family cemetery on lower Carver Creek less than a mile from the old homestead for burial.

Henry Woods McKenzie died Dec. 25, 1904, aged 69 years, 8 months and 15 days, and Arvezena Wells McKenzie died Feb. 8, 1915, aged 78 years, 6 months and 28 days.

Sarah Jane McKenzie was united in marriage to a member of the Lewis family who had long been neighbors and friends of her family. She was the mother of Della Lewis Markum but died in childbirth when her second child was born. This child was a boy who



Henry Woods McKenzie and Arvezena Well McKenzie on the day of their marriage Oct. 16, 1856. They were married in Riceville, Tenn., by Rev. James Parieson, a Methodist minister.

only survived his mother for a short time.

Laura Valentine McKenzie was to become Mrs. Thompson. In addition to raising the children of her husband, who was a widower, she had three daughters of her own. Lily Thompson Zimmers, who spent most of her life in Matthews, Mo., where her husband farmed, started teaching at an early age and continued teaching in the Matthews area until shortly before her death. A second daughter, Lou Thompson Duckett, was married to Joseph Duckett of Advance, Mo. Lou was also a well known educator and until advanced arthritis forced her retirement served as principal at the public schools in Advance. Her husband Joe and her two daughters Nadine and Helen of Washington D.C. survive her. Laura's third daughter Elzie is also deceased and is survived by her two sons Paul and William.

After the death of Thompson, Laura was remarried and at the time of her death was Mrs. Laura Dejonski.

Maryline McKenzie was also married to a member of the Lewis family but died at the birth of her first child and is buried at the family cemetery beside her mother and father, her sister Sarah Jane and near her sisters Amanda and Laura. This genealogy will be continued in a later issue of the Reynolds County Courier.

Important Exam Given Oct. 18

Glen Bryant, Counselor at Ellington, has announced that sophomores, juniors, and some seniors will be able to join over one million other students around the world in taking the Preliminary Scholastic Aptitude Test/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT) this fall. The test, cosponsored by the College Board and National Merit Scholarship Corporation, is an important step in making college plans.

Scheduled for October 18, at Ellington High School, the PSAT/NMSQT measures verbal and mathematical aptitude—two abilities important in doing college work. The test can also lead to other opportunities for high school students. For example, students can ask to participate in the College Board's Student Search Service which provides their names to colleges interested in students like them.

By taking the PSAT/NMSQT, they can enter the competition for scholarships administered by the National Merit Scholarship Corporation and can get a good idea of what the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is like.

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