

Feb 22, 1999

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Dear Robert,

I very much appreciate your kind response to my recent letter and your suggestions. Frankly, I have spent considerable time the last nine years gathering information on various branches of my family — including the Duponts, McNeills and McNishes of Beaufort District. (I am descended from Ralph McNeill (1762-1845) and his wife Virginia McNish, the second daughter of Henry McNish.)

About four years ago, Betty Caldwell put me in touch with George McNish; and we have swapped letters and information monthly ever since. George can be "opinionated" and on some issues we don't agree. The parentage of Henry McNish is obviously one such area. I have no real proof, but I still feel that his parents were John McNish and Mary Catherine Ideall. However, there is clearly room for doubt.

My father was Walter Alexander McNeill — the great-grandson of Ralph McNeill. He grew up surrounded by genealogical talk; and though ambivalent about the subject, he absorbed much of it. His recollection was that Henry McNish was the eldest son of John McNish. When my father's aunt, Virginia McNeill, died in 1959 we ended up with boxes of family papers. Mostly they dealt with the Dupont, Coachman, Smith and McNeill families of South Carolina — and the Cobbs family of Virginia. Very little touched on the McNish family. There was a genealogical chart that showed that Henry McNish was the son of John McNish

and — Caile. (Enclosed is a copy.) The compiler of the chart couldn't remember the full name of Mary Catherine Ideall. This chart was done in the latter part of the 19th Century by either Virginia (McNeill) McNeill or her daughter Sarah Parkinson McNeill. As George McNeill points out, the chart does not list James McNeill — a known child of John McNeill. Nor is Henry mentioned in the Baptism records of St. Helena Parish, as are John and James McNeill. In "Tale of a Legacy" by Eugenia Walker Howard (National Genealogical Society Quarterly 1968) Henry is listed as the son of John and Mary Catherine McNeill. The article was largely based on a Federal Court case, the papers of which are at the Federal Record Center in Atlanta. I mentioned this to George and he looked into the records and said they didn't support any such conclusion. He also said he would send me the basis for his rejection of Ms. Howard's article. It's been two years and he is still working on it. (He does accept Ms. Howard's finding that Mary Catherine Ideall was the correct name of the wife of John McNeill. Previously, it had been thought to be Mary Rivers, due to mistranslation of the geographical reference to the May River in the certificate.)

Enclosed is a map that shows the location of "Republican Hall". It was sent to me by Betty Caldwell. Ralph McNeill owned a plantation called "Waterloo" which I have never located. It was near Coosawatchie next to the Drayton and Grumball

holdings. When Ralph McNeill died in 1845, his will directed that "Waterloo" be sold, and it was purchased by Julius Huguenin. His widow then used the proceeds to buy "Good Hope" from the estate of William Heyward. These were large rice producing operations. In the 1850 census, Virginia McNeill was listed as follows:

Slaves - 121

Acres - 4,400

Rice (lbs.) - 360,000

This was for St. Louis Parish. Ralph McNeill also owned "Laurel Hill" which his wife continued to run after his death. I believe it was in St. Peter's Parish.

Once again I appreciate your response. If anything ever turns up on Henry McNick, I would be forever grateful if you would pass it my way. Enclosed are some items I thought you would find interesting.

Yours sincerely,
Taschall

Do you still have any copies of Our Family Circle? Duke University has a copy that once belonged to Alexander Talley with his notes in the margin. Some of his comments are rather scathing.