

Here is McCauley Blog Three.

I think I've been flim-flammed, taken in by an 18th century jokester whose clever ruse has endured for at least two centuries. The boy-in-the-barrel account of the Scots-Irish lad who escaped the English king and came to America in a hogshead of molasses (and was fed through a bung hole) actually has no basis in fact. Respected historians, feature writers for periodicals, and prominent political figures have repeated the story on countless occasions, particularly on major anniversaries, reporting the boy in the barrel as if it were fact. More judicious persons couched the story of this possible but improbable event by attributing it to "tradition."

Anyhow, what follows below is an assemblage of factual data which strongly demonstrates that Matthew and William McCauley came to America at different times, thus giving the lie to William's feeding Matthew through the bung hole on a trans-Atlantic voyage. The most persuasive evidence comes from Matthew's widow, Martha. In 1836 Congress enacted legislation awarding pensions to widows of Revolutionary War soldiers. At age 77 Martha applied for the pension. Her application had insufficient detail and she was required to provide additional data. She suffered from edema (or "dropsy") and could not travel to the court in Hillsborough to complete her application. A justice of the peace went to her home and she executed a sworn statement, testifying to her marriage in 1780, the births of their children and Matthew's entering those dates into the family's bible. She provided extensive and accurate accounts of his complex military service. Although she was apparently illiterate, she signed by her mark and demonstrated that Matthew, given his entries in the bible, was himself quite literate. Relevant to the question at hand, she reported that her family (the Johnstons) and Matthew's were "neighbors" in the 1770s, and that she met him first in 1775 when he came to live with his brother William in New Hope. Shortly thereafter he enlisted in the military in the Revolutionary War and in subsequent militias before completing his service in 1783. The only flaw in her reporting regarded the date of his death, some 16 years earlier, which she stated as occurring in 1820 instead of 1821. Court documents, including the probate of his will, establish the date of his death as September 6, 1821. As a psychologist who is versed in cognitive functions and the vicissitudes of memory, I find her account to be fully credible and remarkably detailed. A check of A. B. Markham's map of land grants revealed that the Johnston family held a grant adjacent to a William McCauley grant in the New Hope and Morgan Creek watersheds. Indeed, they were neighbors—although perhaps separated by hundreds of yards of deciduous forest on their respective grants as families were in those days. The Johnstons and the McCauleys were close in so many ways, sharing Scots-Irish ancestry, relationships that may have predated their arrival in North Carolina, and many years of serving as witnesses to wills and property transactions, and as executors of their respective wills and estates. In what is ordinarily dry and stereotypic legal terminology, a McCauley professes his "love" for his Johnston brother-in-law in one document. Although the evidence is a bit shaky, it appears that William was actually married in America to a cousin of Martha's, Katherine, who was the widow of another Scots-Irish settler who held an adjacent land grant. And so, it appears that the McCauley brothers were married to the Johnston cousins before William moved from New Hope to his Great Meadows estate on the Eno.

A second telling document is a notice published in a Belfast newspaper of an attestation to the superb care rendered by the captain of the ship, *Philadelphia*, which apparently brought young Matthew to Philadelphia from Ireland in 1771. The 46 passengers personally attested, including Matthew. And so, with tens of thousands of Scotch Irish immigrating to America, this group of passengers publicly recommended Captain Malcom's services to their countrymen. Of course, there is always the possibility that there was yet another Matthew McCauley. However, the surname McCauley was relatively uncommon among the Scots-Irish immigrants. There are additional documents, for example, letters from descendants which indicate that the brothers came separately, William first, and then Matthew. The disparate dates raise an additional interesting question: what did Matthew do in the several years between his arrival in Philadelphia and his coming to live with his brother in New Hope in 1775?

There exists recurring speculation over the centuries that there was yet a third McCauley brother in Orange County. All that can be said at this juncture is that another *William McCauley* seemed to have lived in New Hope. The only data I have is that this man was also born in County Antrim in 1838, emigrated to America, and died in 1825. He was possibly married to yet another Johnston (Catherine), and they had two children, Mary and Charles. They are buried in the old section of the New Hope Presbyterian Church cemetery. Sadly, there is the possibility that the data have been conflated between the two Williams by historians and that he also may have had land grants and that we may never know which was which. The dilemma of recurring given names runs rampant among the Scots-Irish and other ethnic groups of that time. George, Matthew, William, and Charles occur repeatedly from generation to generation and from family to family, and it confuses historians and genealogists to no end.

The Scots-Irish were among the most cohesive of ethnic groups upon migration. They shared the centuries-old trauma of having moved en masse from lowland Scotland to County Antrim and nearby counties in Northern Ireland or Ulster. Under various pressures in Ireland, hundreds of thousands of them came as small networks of related families to America on the same ships, settling in the same locales, founding Presbyterian churches which they attended, using and reusing the same given names, intermarrying, and being buried in the same cemeteries. A settlement example is the Blackwood, Craig, Freeland, and Kirkland families who were from County Londonderry and who likely knew one another before coming to the colonies on the same ship in 1741. They chose a locale in Pennsylvania but found that region largely settled. Along with the Johnston family and Gilbert Strayhorn they traveled the "Great Wagon Road" down the Shenandoah Valley and settled along the Haw River in Orange County, North Carolina. When the validities of their land titles were challenged, the entire group of six families moved ten miles to the east and purchased new land grants from the Earl of Granville. There, in the tributaries of a major creek, they again settled and established the New Hope Presbyterian Church in 1756. There are at least two versions of the origin of the term, New Hope. Establishing new plantations in a new region of Orange County and with "new hope" for the permanence of their deeds, they settled once again. Another interpretation is that "new hope" is derived from a Gaelic term which means the flood plain between adjoining elevations on either side. Thus, New Hope comprised the settlement of Scots-Irish in central Orange County along New Hope Creek and its tributaries. They were east of the Cate families who were probably Germans and who settled on Cane Creek, and they were north and east of the Lloyd families located in White Cross and along Morgan Creek.

As I reflect on the boy-in-the-barrel confection, the psychologist in me detects the same dynamic as that operating in the Old East cornerstone myth. McCauleys, probably Matthew, concocted a conceivable drama which was credible (although unlikely) and perpetrated it on unsuspecting later generations and newcomers until it was incorporated if not enshrined in the family lore and accepted as fact. This mythology embellished the glamor of the McCauleys and it must have constituted a source of mirth for those of the in group. I find the purported excellence of Matthew's Irish whiskey much more believable. Part of the ethos of the Scots-Irish is that a little whiskey is to be enjoyed every day—and particularly on festive occasions. Soil characteristics contributed to the feasibility of grain production in a swath running from the southwest of the county to the northeast. Thus, barley, corn, and other grains favored for the brewing of whiskeys preferred those soils in the up county New Hope, while cotton was grown in the southeast and tobacco in the north. A careful reading of the wills of both Matthew and William reveals that liquor-producing stills were specifically mentioned in the allocation of goods upon their deaths.

The McCauley project was discussed by the Board of the Chapel Hill Historical Society on March 21st and the general thrust of the historical inquiry was endorsed as was the need for rehabilitation of the site. Repairs to Matthew McCauley's headstone may need to be made, and the stone must be resealed. New split railings need to be installed and the destructive Leyland Cypresses should be removed. In all probability, UNC, UNC Alumni, and McCauley descendants should be approached for funding, since resources for the accomplishment of these items are not available within the Historical Society. Over the past two weeks a plan is evolving to create a McCauley program, that is, a Sunday historical presentation by the Chapel Hill Historical Society in 2017 or 2018, coupled with a reunion of McCauley descendants and friends. Linkage have been established with black McCauleys who are descendants of McCauley plantation slaves. Liaisons with OWASA, UNC, and the DAR will be pursued.

The McCauley Cemetery 1992 attachment and the 2017 attachment illustrate the dramatic differences in the appearance of the cemetery over the course of 25 years. The canopy of evergreen and deciduous trees has overspread the site leaving it in near total shade, while the intrusion of the Leylands has taken its own toll. The shade plus an abundance of rainfall (nine inches above the mean in 2016) fosters the growth of mold on the sandstone headstones which creates a long term risk to the integrity of the stone. I have spoken to the problems presented by the planting of the Leyland Cypresses. Look at the lower right section of the 1992 photo and on can observe the recent planting of a Leyland. The row of them around the front and sides of the cemetery, without subsequent pruning and trimming, was a long term mistake. On the wrought iron gate, I called the metal attachment a shamrock. There *are* shamrocks with four petals or leaves but most have three. Board members correctly identified that as a dogwood not a shamrock. It was placed in 1992 and was said to have been created by Paul Gove who also designed and constructed the wrought iron gate.



McCauley Cemetery, 1992.



McCauley Cemetery, 2017