

APPENDIX - WHAT'S IN A NAME?

While compiling information for this book, there were many times when I wondered about certain attributes and behavior exhibited by some of our ancestors. For example, one distinguishing characteristic of Rev. John and Ann McGee was their penchant for carefully selecting the first and middle names of their children based upon the first and last names of particular individuals. As one might expect, a few of these names came from within their own family lines, but, more often than not, they named their children after individuals outside the family, people whom they knew personally and evidently held in great esteem. The deliberate manner in which they assigned their children's names has led this author to not only speculate about the identity of John McGee's biological mother but also the identity of his grandfather as well.

John and Ann McGee had thirteen children, and when one looks closely at the names given to each child, it soon becomes clear that they were very conscientious in choosing namesakes for their offspring. Rev. John McGee's birth mother died in Ohio when he was a young boy, and he was raised by his father and step-mother. The identity of his biological mother still remains a mystery, but it's quite possible that her given names may have been "Martha Alice," the same two names that John and Ann McGee assigned to their first daughter, Martha Alice McGee, born December 29, 1845. Admittedly the idea is only conjecture, but the rationale can be explained as follows:

The first-born child of John and Ann (Hawkins) McGee was a son, Medley Shelton McGee, born February 29, 1840. There is little doubt that he was named after Ann Hawkins' uncle, **Medley Shelton**, a popular tavern owner and politician who lived at Versailles, Woodford County, Kentucky. According to Medley McGee's obituary, he was born in Versailles, Woodford County, Kentucky, and one wonders if he might actually have been born at the home of his great uncle, Medley Shelton.

John and Ann McGee's second child was Jouette Fletcher McGee, who was born on August 20, 1841, probably in Mercer County, Kentucky. At the time of his birth, there was an individual named **Jouette Fletcher** residing at Salvisa in Mercer County. Dr. Jouett F. Fletcher was a physician whose name appeared on the Mercer County tax rolls for the years 1835-1843. Listed among his real estate holdings were two town lots in Salvisa, which probably contained his house and his doctor's office. He died in Mercer County about 1843, and his will was probated at the Mercer County courthouse, dated February of 1844. The Hawkins home place was located only a couple of miles from Salvisa, and John and Ann McGee attended church in Salvisa, so undoubtedly, they knew the physician well and named their second child after him. Since babies were often named for the physicians who delivered them, there is the distinct possibility that Dr. Jouett Fletcher attended Ann McGee when Jouette Fletcher McGee was born.

Richard Deering McGee, born on October 8, 1843, was the third child of John and Ann McGee. He was the namesake of **Richard Deering**, the minister at the Methodist church in Salvisa, Kentucky and a person who may have played a significant roll in helping Rev. John McGee

choose the ministry as his life's calling. Richard Deering's name also appeared in Rev. John McGee's official obituary in 1890, which further signifies his importance to the McGee family.

Martha Alice McGee was the couple's fourth child, but more importantly, she was their first daughter, an event that the author believes deserved a special namesake. Before we consider Martha Alice, I want to proceed to the next offspring, the fifth child and the couple's second daughter, Permelia Helen McGee. She was born on March 11, 1847, and undoubtedly was named after Ann Hawkin's mother, **Permelia Shelton**. It is not known if her middle name was Helen, the same as her granddaughter's, but my hunch is that that was the case, considering the established pattern of choosing both the first and middle names of an individual.

Now, let us return to Martha Alice McGee. It is the author's belief that she may have been named after John McGee's biological mother. She was their first daughter, and since their second daughter, Permelia, was named after Ann's mother, it makes sense that their first daughter would be named after John's mother. There were no female relatives in Ann's family who carried the names of either Martha or Alice, which would seem to eliminate the Hawkins family line as a source. It is always a possibility that Martha Alice McGee was named after a close friend or neighbor, but the author suspects that was not the case.

Another point to consider is that after the death of John McGee's mother, his father remarried to Jane Cassel, and the couple subsequently had six children together. Their first daughter was also named Martha McGee, born in Butler County, Ohio in August 1830. Was she named after John McGee's deceased first wife, the biological mother of Rev. John McGee?

Other names chosen by John and Ann McGee for their remaining children are equally interesting. Child # 7 was John Legrand McGee (1850-1929). His middle name obviously came from Ann's brother, **Aurelius Legrand Hawkins**, and his first name, John, could have been derived from his father or his grandfather, the tailor, John McGee.

Joseph Flood McGee, born December 12, 1854, was the couple's ninth child, and although he was born in Texas, it is quite likely that he was named for **Joseph Flood** of Shelby County, Kentucky. In 1852, the year before the family left for Texas, Rev. John McGee was assigned to the Shelby Circuit, in Shelby County, Kentucky, where they resided in the small community of Christianburg. One of the prominent residents of Christianburg at the time was Joseph L. Flood, a descendant of William Flood of Virginia. The Flood family came from Buckingham County, Virginia and settled the area around Christianburg in the early 1800's. It was in Christianburg, Kentucky that John and Ann McGee's four month old daughter, Betty Ann, died on August 3, 1852. Joseph Flood's wife died in March 1853 at Christianburg and was buried there. Since we don't know the exact date when the McGees departed for Texas, it's possible that Rev. McGee presided at her burial. We do know, however, that the next McGee child following Betty Ann was named Joseph Flood McGee, and the author believes that he was given this name for Joseph Flood, their former neighbor in Shelby County, Kentucky.

John and Ann McGee's tenth child was George Pierce McGee, born July 10, 1856, and he was the namesake of the eminent **George Pierce**, a widely popular bishop in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South elected in 1854. George F. Pierce (1811-1884) was born in Georgia, the son of a

Methodist minister. In 1845, in Louisville, Kentucky, he helped to organize the M. E. Church, South which resulted from the schism within the church over slavery. He was ordained by Bishop James Osgood Andrew, the same church official who ordained John McGee.

Their twelfth child was James Wilson McGee, born in Wilson County, Texas on June 6, 1861. He was named for **James Wilson**, the Texas senator who was born in Yorkshire, England in 1816, and attended Oxford University before he moved to Texas in 1837. James C. Wilson was a veteran of the Texas War for Independence and later served several terms in the Texas State Legislature. Wilson County, Texas, established in 1860, was named after him. In addition to his legal career, he was an itinerant minister in the Methodist Church. He died in neighboring Gonzales County on February 7, 1861, exactly four months before James Wilson McGee was born.

On two different occasions John and Ann McGee assigned the name “William” to one of their sons; the first child, born in December 1848, died in infancy, and the second, William Dempsey McGee, was born ten years later in May 1858. Although a common first name, William McGee of Beaver County, Pennsylvania was one of two individuals discussed in the Introduction as a possible grandfather for Rev. John McGee. In 1832, in Butler County, Ohio, the tailor, John McGee and his second wife, Jane Cassel, named their second son William McGee. Considering that their first son, Ralph McGee, was named for his grandfather, Ralph Cassel, it is certainly possible that William McGee was named for his other grandfather in Pennsylvania. During my research on the McGee family, no person named William Dempsey was encountered. However, if the name did not come from within the family, the author believes that William Dempsey McGee was the namesake of someone known and respected by the family.

Finally, the origins of two names remain unclear. The eighth child was Betty Ann McGee, born in Shelby County, Kentucky on March 10, 1852. She died four months later on August 3, 1852. If Betty was a nickname for Elizabeth, it is possible that she was named for Elizabeth McGee, the wife of John McGee (Sr.) of Beaver County, Pennsylvania. The middle name, Ann, may have come from her mother, Ann (Hawkins) McGee. Virginia Lee McGee was the thirteenth and youngest of the McGee children, born July 20, 1864 in Bexar County, Texas. Undoubtedly, Rev. John and Ann McGee had someone specific in mind when they assigned names to each of these girls, but the author has been unable to trace them to specific individuals. It has even been suggested that Virginia Lee McGee may have been named after General Robert E. Lee from Virginia, who commanded the Confederate Army during the Civil War. After all, Rev. John McGee was pro-slavery and sympathized with the Southern cause. In 1860, prior to the start of the Civil War, Robert E. Lee was stationed in Bexar County, Texas. Rev. McGee was a resident of Bexar County at the same time, so the two men may well have been acquainted.

