

PART TWO

THE SIBLINGS OF JOHN SIMPSON MCGEE

While Part One focused on the Methodist circuit-rider, John Simpson McGee, and his descendants, Part Two deals with his siblings, i.e., his half-brothers and sisters who were born in Butler County, Ohio. John S. McGee left home in Fayette County, Indiana when he was approximately 19 years old and traveled to central Kentucky. It was there he would meet his future wife and answer the calling to become a preacher. During research into his early life in Ohio and Indiana, a considerable amount of information was also gathered on his half-siblings and their descendants, and this section of the book briefly traces some of their history beginning in Oxford, Ohio.

John S. McGee was the oldest of seven children (five boys and two girls) fathered by the tailor, John McGee (Jr.), and he was the only one to be born in Pennsylvania. The McGee family left Beaver County, Pennsylvania shortly after the 1820 U.S. Census and traveled to Oxford Township, Butler County, Ohio. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that his mother died in the early 1820's, and his father remarried around 1825 to Jane Cassel, the daughter of Ralph Cassel. The Cassel family came to Butler County, Ohio from South Carolina before the 1820 census and settled in Oxford Township. As of this writing, no documentation on either of John McGee's marriages has been found, not to his first wife in Pennsylvania, or to Jane Cassel in Ohio. This is disappointing but not surprising, since many records from that period have not survived in those two locations.

Six children were born over a nine year period to John McGee (Jr.) and Jane Cassel in Butler County. Ralph McGee was their first child, born January 8, 1827, followed by Martha (1830), William (1832), Elizabeth (1833), James (1835), and Theodore (1836). Shortly after Theodore's birth, the McGee family left Oxford, Ohio and moved approximately 25 miles west into Fayette County, Indiana, where they would live until shortly before 1850. When John Simpson McGee left his family and relocated to Kentucky in 1838, his brother, Ralph, was 10 years old and his youngest sibling, Theodore, was still a baby.

In the late 1840's, John and Jane (Cassel) McGee moved once again, this time to Clinton County, Indiana, accompanied by five of their children. The exception was their oldest, Ralph McGee, who stayed behind and married a local girl from Franklin County. Ralph married Sarah Jones in 1850, and three years later they made their permanent home in Decatur County, Indiana.

Not long after the McGee family's arrival in Clinton County, sisters, Martha and Elizabeth McGee, married brothers, Jacob and John Dodson, who were from neighboring Tippecanoe County. Martha and Jacob Dodson left Indiana for McLean County, Illinois about 1860, where they lived for the next twelve years before finally moving on to Norton County, Kansas. In 1865, Elizabeth and John Dodson relocated to Champaign County, Illinois which became their permanent home.

William McGee married in the late 1850's, and he and his wife, Mary, moved to McLean County, Illinois at the same time as his sister, Martha Dodson and her husband, Jacob. The two families were neighbors in McLean County for over twelve years, until the Dodson's departure for Kansas about 1872. William and Mary McGee eventually relocated to Rock County, Minnesota in the early 1880's, but they moved again after 1885, and their final location is not known.

The next to youngest child was James McGee, and no trace of him has been found after the 1850 Clinton County, Indiana census when he was still living at home.

The youngest child, Theodore McGee, was not found in the 1860 U.S. Census, but at some point he ended up in Joliet, Illinois where he enlisted in the 20th Illinois Infantry Volunteers on April 27, 1861. He served with this regiment throughout the Civil War. After his discharge from General Sherman's army, he married Sarah L. Wright in Decatur County, Indiana on December 29, 1864. They eventually settled in Humboldt County, Iowa in 1868. Sarah McGee gave birth to eighteen children within an interval of twenty four years.

It is believed that Jane (Cassel) McGee died in Clinton County before 1860, because John McGee (Jr.) was designated a "widower" in the 1860 U.S. Census. John McGee, the tailor, died in the early 1860's, probably in Tippecanoe County. As of yet the exact dates of their deaths and their burial sites have not been located.