



Tarrant County TXGenWeb

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Civil War Veterans of Northeast Tarrant County

Dr. John B. McMurry

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Dr. John B. McMurry was an officer in a Confederate Georgia regiment who settled in Texas and Tarrant County about the time the War ended. He was a physician for several years in the Birdville area, and moved to Wise County, Texas where he died. His younger brother, Thomas Edward McMurry, was also one of our veterans.

A considerable amount of information on this family has been posted online at ancestry.com. John B. McMurry's father was William C. McMurry, who was born in Caswell County, North Carolina on April 2, 1801. He died January 18, 1891 at Carnesville, Franklin County, Georgia, and was buried in the Cross Roads Baptist Church Cemetery at Carnesville. John's mother was Eletha Ann McMurry, who was born in South Carolina about 1808 and who died in Carnesville, Georgia on June 1, 1890. She was buried beside her husband. Family internet sources say John's middle name was Blanton, while his widow's pension application says it was Boman. They also say that John's mother's maiden name was McMurry, and that she and her husband were cousins.

John B. McMurry was born in South Carolina on October 5, 1829. This date is verified by his headstone in Sandhill Cemetery in Wise County, Texas.

In 1850 the family is found in the eastern subdivision of Anderson County, South Carolina. John B. McMurry was living with his parents and siblings; he was 21 years old and a student. His younger brother, Thomas E. McMurry, was four years old. There was an elderly lady named Ann McMurry living with them, born about 1772 in South Carolina. She may have been John B. McMurry's grandmother. The McMurray's owned many acres of real estate and several slaves.

In 1860 John B. McMurry was a single man working as a farmer and living in Franklin County, Georgia with the family of his brother, William A. McMurry (born about 1832 in Georgia). In that year their father, William C. McMurry, owned four thousand dollars worth of real estate and nine slaves.

McMurry's records in the National Archives show him to have been a First Lieutenant in Captain Knox's Company of Franklin County Georgia Cavalry. He enlisted on August 1, 1863 at Carnesville, Franklin County, Georgia for a term of six months under Captain William Knox. He brought with him a horse worth six hundred dollars. He was mustered into the service on August

20, 1863 at Carnesville, Georgia. This unit subsequently became Co. E, Third Regiment Cavalry, Georgia State Guards. Captain William Knox's Company was "...for local defense, to serve within the limits of the 6th and 9th Congressional Districts of Georgia and in the counties of Lincoln, Wilkes, Columbia, Warren, and Richmond."

McMurry's name appears "present" on a roll for the period September 15, 1863 through January 31, 1864, with a notation: "Company called into active service and pay commenced Sept. 14, 1863."

Some time between his arrival in Tarrant County and the taking of the census in 1870, Dr. McMurry married a Confederate widow, Selete C. (Leonard) Crowley, the widow of Hiram Crowley, who had been killed in service at Yellow Bayou, Louisiana. She was a daughter of two of the true pioneers of Tarrant County, Archibald Franklin Leonard and Mary Ann (Foster) Leonard, who arrived at Grapevine on the day after Christmas, 1845. Selete was born in Platte County, Missouri. Selete's headstone in Birdville Cemetery says she was born December 21, 1839 and died June 24, 1878. An excellent account of her life, and an example of her superior weaving ability, may be seen on the Crowley Heritage Page website at: <http://ccc ranch.net/crowley/tributes/selete.html>

When Dr. McMurry registered to vote in Tarrant County on November 17, 1869, he said he was a native of South Carolina and a resident of Precinct 4 in Tarrant County. He said he had been in Texas three years, and in Tarrant County and Precinct 4 for two years.

In 1870 J. B. McMurry was a physician in Precinct 2 of Tarrant County. The two children shown with them in the census are Archibald Franklin Crowley and Hiram Edward Crowley, Selete's children from her first marriage to Hiram Crowley. Mr. Crowley was killed at Yellow Bayou, Louisiana in 1864 while serving with the 34th Texas Cavalry. Crowley and Leonard family sources believe that Dr. McMurry and Mrs. Selete McMurry did not have any children of their own.

After Selete McMurry's death in mid-1878, Dr. McMurry was again married....again to a widow...Mrs. Eugenia Blance (Miller) Todd, the widow of H. Carter Todd. Family sources at ancestry.com say she was born in Anderson County, South Carolina on April 28, 1845. She married Mr. Todd on December 30, 1868, and he died November 28, 1871. Given her birthplace, it may have been that she and Dr. McMurry had known each other while they both were still living in South Carolina.

Mr. and Mrs. McMurry appear in the 1880 census at Birdville in Tarrant County. The only child living with Dr. and Mrs. McMurry was Eugenia B. McMurry's daughter by her first marriage, L. H. Todd, who was ten years old and born in South Carolina.

When the 1880 tax lists for Tarrant County were made, J. B. McMurry was the owner of several tracts of land, including fifty acres of the Mary Johnson survey (worth \$400), sixty acres of the G. B. Stanley survey (worth \$400), forty acres of the L. G. Tinsley survey (worth \$120), ten acres of the J. W. Elliston survey (worth \$15), and one hundred sixty acres of the G. W. Couch survey (worth \$320). He is also shown as the owner of twenty-two horses worth \$220, but this entry would make more sense if it had been entered in the column for cattle.

By the time the 1900 census was taken, the family had moved to Wise County and settled in Precinct one there. Mrs. McMurry said she had given birth to only one child, who was still alive. With the family in the same household was Mr. Murray's son-in-law, Thomas C. Bridges, and Bridges' wife (and McMurry's daughter), Leila A. Bridges, who was born in "Carolina" in December,

1869. Since Mr. and Mrs. McMurry were not married until 1880, and she brought this daughter to their marriage, it seems likely John B. McMurry never had any children of his own.

Dr. McMurry died in Wise County on January 14, 1908. He lies buried in Sandhill Cemetery south of Decatur, Texas. We have not found Dr. McMurry appearing in any census with children who might have been his own. When the 1910 census was taken, Mrs. Eugenia B. McMurry was living with the family of her son-in-law, Thomas Cicero Bridges, in Ward 2 of the town of Decatur in Wise County. She was still with them, as "Blanche" McMurry, ten years later when the census was taken in 1920, still in Decatur. At some time in the 1920's they moved to Breckenridge in Stephens County, Texas.

Mrs. McMurry applied to the State of Texas for a Confederate widow's pension in Stephens County on March 13, 1926. Her address was Box 625, Breckenridge, Texas where she had lived for five years. She said her husband had died on January 14, 1908 in Wise County, Texas. She claimed to be seventy-nine years old, and a native of "Chickens" County, South Carolina. She said she came to Texas in 1871.

In her declaration, Mrs. McMurry said she married John B. McMurry on March 21, 1880 in Wise County, Texas. Oddly, there is also in her file an notarized copy issued by the Court of Ordinary in Franklin County, Georgia in 1925 which says the marriage was performed there on March 20, 1880 by William P. Grady, a minister of the gospel.

Mrs. McMurry said she knew very few details of her husband's Confederate service. She said he was a member of "Patrick's Co. Regiment D," which was raised in Georgia, and that he was taken prisoner February 13, 1864. While the National Park Service's Civil War Soldiers and Sailors System lists eighty-three men surnamed Patrick who served in Georgia units, none of them held any rank higher than first lieutenant. There was one J. W. Patrick in the same regiment as John B. McMurry, the Third Regiment Cavalry, Georgia State Guards, but Mr. Patrick was only a private.

After several months of effort, she was able to obtain an affidavit from E. L. Cawthon of Franklin County, Georgia, which he made on November 10, 1925. Among other things, he said he "...knew J. B. McMurry formerly of said county, and who he is informed and believes died in the State of Texas, that deponent and the said J. B. McMurry were stationed at Atlanta, Georgia during the months of August and September 1864, they were not in the same Co. or Reg. but was personally associated there as soldiers of the Confederate Army during said two months. That the said J. B. McMurry was made captain of a squad of men during August, 1864, and when the Northern soldiers captured Atlanta, Ga. Capt. McMurry left me there I have not seen him since..."

Mrs. McMurry died in Breckenridge, Stephens County, Texas on December 14, 1927. Her headstone there records her birthdate as March 3, 1846. Buried beside her in Breckenridge Cemetery are her daughter, Lelia Anna Bridges (December 11, 1869-July 10, 1935) and Lelia's husband, Thomas C. Bridges (April 19, 1856-May 6, 1939).

