

Curry – Johnston Family History

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John H. Curry (ca. 1786-1869)

Mary A. Curry (1833-1913) and Washington M. Johnston (1817-1895)

Mary Frances Johnston (1857-1923) and Samuel Butts (1852-1933)

Matie Katie Butts (1882-1968) and William David Rustin (1884-1935)

Marie Missouri Rustin (1906-1982) and Fred Page (1891-1961)

Edward LeRoy Page (1928-2000)

Deborah Sue Page (1960-)

Beginning as early as 1817, just eleven years after Lewis and Clark returned from their epic search for the Northwest Passage, pioneers began arriving into what was then Pike County. According to the 1884 History of Monroe County, *“These were years of toil and hardship, of hope and disappointment, of genuine hospitality and true friendships. There was no squinting at aristocracy among the people, no formalities, all were on one common footing, grappling with nature in a united effort to reduce it to the uses of civilization. Rude cabins with puncheon floors or without even this resemblance of a floor, without windows, except a hole closed with a piece of greased paper to let in the light, were built, forests were felled and cleared away by the united efforts of the pioneers.”*^[1]

Indeed, these first settlements sprang up in the forested areas along rivers, such as the Salt River and its tributaries the Middle Fork, South Fork, Elk Fork, and Long Branch, and smaller creeks such as Crooked, Otter, and Indian. Again, according to the 1884 History of Monroe County, *“... the settlers who first hewed out homes in the timber, while at present not the most enterprising and progressive, were, nevertheless, an essential factor in the solution of the problem [settlement of the “Western country”]. Along either side of the various streams which flow across the country, were originally belts of timber; at certain places, generally near the mouths of the smaller tributaries, the belt of timber widened out, thus forming a grove, or what was frequently called a point, and at these points or groves were the first settlements made; here were the first beginnings of civilization; here “began to operate those forces which have made the wilderness a fruitful place and caused the desert to bud and blossom as the rose.”*^[1]

These wooded areas were central to settlement. Emigrants from eastern states, such as Kentucky, were already familiar to homesteading in forested land, which a portion had to be cleared in order to grow crops to sustain families. Even so, these emigrants had, *“as a matter of necessity and convenience”* retained some timbered ground as a resource for future building material and other necessities. As these emigrants moved toward the prairie, the lack of familiar, forested ground *“seemed unendurable, and the average Kentuckian could not entertain the idea of founding a home away from the familiar forest trees.”* And, of course, these early settlers needed wood to build homes, provide fuel for cooking and heat, and build fences. ^[1]

The trickle of immigration that started in 1817 began to accelerate and by 1830 was occurring rapidly in northeastern Missouri during 1829 to 1830, especially in Ralls County, which had been split out of Pike County in 1821.^[5] Unfortunately, the emigrants found it increasingly inconvenient to be so remote from the county seat, New London. As a result, the pioneers began the process of organizing a new county. Monroe County, named for James Monroe, was split from Ralls County and formally organized on 6

January 1831.^[3] This area was characterized by undulating terrain with very productive soils used to grow corn, wheat, oats, help, and tobacco.^[3]

One early pioneer was **JOHN H. CURRY**, who, according to the US General Land Office records for Monroe County, obtained 160, 80, and 40 acres between 1830 and 1837.^[2] Most likely a native of Kentucky, John was very active in the county's earliest days. Missouri Governor John Miller appointed the first county court, which included John Curry, Andrew Rogers, and William P. Stephenson. They were commissioned justices and met the first time at the house of Green V. Caldwell, on Saturday, 26 February 1831.^[4] For some reason, John was not enamored with this task, because by the next regular term of the court, 2 May 1831, John Curry and William P. Stephenson had resigned; because of this John missed having the dubious distinction afforded to the next session of the court: approving the first license *"for the sale of wines and spirituous liquors"* and the *"first license for a tavern or public house of entertainment."* During 1831 John served on Monroe County's first grand jury (perhaps a reason for his resignation?), and was foreman for the second grand jury.^[7] He was one of five men who laid out the Paris-Columbia Road in 1831, and in 1834 was one of three men appointed to superintend the construction of the 120-foot-long Middle Fork Bridge at Paris, with a budget of \$500. It was to be constructed *"between the town spring branch, the branch which now runs into Middle Fork near the colored schoolhouse, and the county jail, which then stood near the river."*^[6] John registered his brand for his cattle in 1831.^[8] And, in 1832, John and C. Acuff bought 4 lots in the new town of Paris; they paid between \$6 and \$17 for each lot.^[9]

John and his wife **MATILDA** were religious, being charter members in at least two area churches. The first, organized on 7 May 1831, was Bethlehem, and John was elected clerk. By August the church agreed to enter the Salt River Association. In 1832 its name was changed to Middle Fork, and in 1833 its name was listed as Paris, and William Armstrong succeeded John Curry as clerk.^[10] It's not clear when, but eventually John and Matilda joined the Otter Creek Baptist, perhaps when the church was organized in 1837, as it was probably *"organized by Anderson Woods who was the pastor of the Paris Baptist Church and who was also the first pastor of this church."* The church was six miles east and two miles north of Paris.^[11]

The J.H. Curry Family appears in the 1840 US Census for Jackson Township, Monroe County.^[12] Comparing the entries with the 1850 US Census, I believe these are the names associated with the entries:

White male aged < 5 = 1 (James Robert)
White male aged 5 thru 9 = 1 (John D.)
White male aged 15 thru 19 = 1 (unknown)
White male aged 50 thru 59 = 1 (John H.)
White female aged 5 thru 9 = 2 (Mary A. and Betsy)
White female aged 10 thru 14 = 1 (Frances)
White female aged 15 thru 19 = 1 (unknown)
White female aged 40 thru 49 = 1 (Matilda)
Male slave aged 24 thru 35 = 1
Female slave aged 55 thru 99 = 1

In 1850, the US Census for District 59, Monroe County, shows John H. Currey [sic] as a farmer (60 years), born in Pennsylvania, his wife Matilda (55), born in Kentucky, and their children Frances (20), Mary A. (17), Betsy (15), John D. (20), and James R. (13), all born in Missouri.^[13] The census all showed John as a

farmer. The 1850 Slave Census also showed that John H. then only owned a single slave, a 70-year-old female.^[14] By 1860, the US Census showed that John lived in Woodlawn, Monroe County, and that he was born in Kentucky, as was his wife, Matilda.^[15] Son John is listed as farm hand, as is Robert (James R.), and daughter Frances is still living at home. James R. served in the Confederate ranks during the Civil War. He was a private in the 1st Northeast Regiment, Missouri Cavalry.^[24]

In the 1870 US Census for Woodland, Monroe County, Matilda Curry, born in Kentucky, is now a widow, and her daughter Frances is still with her.^[16] Both Matilda and Frances appear in the household of **WASHINGTON M. JOHNSTON**, a farmer born in Virginia. Washington had married **MARY ANN CURRY** on 4 Sep 1856 in Monroe County^[21] and four of their children are listed: Mary F. (13 y), Dorcas E. (10), Emma S. (6), and Matilda S. (3). I found one additional record of a Matilda Curry owning 80 acres according to an 1876 map; the land is in Monroe County, however, the legal description doesn't match any of the original descriptions mentioned above (it's about 10 miles south) and I show Matilda dying in March 1875.^[17] Washington died in 1895 and Marry Ann in 1913; both are buried in Weatherford Cemetery, 9 miles north of Madison, Monroe County.^[25]

[See the Butts—Rustin and Page Family Histories for descendents of the Johnston—Curry union.]

I found a record for a J.H. Curry buried in Oak Grove Cemetery one mile south of Woodlawn, Monroe County.^[18] The transcription shows he died on 11 Jan 1869 at the age of 84y, 11m, 11d. This would make his birth date 31 Jan 1784, which is different than the 22 Jul 1789 date I have from a list (unknown source) I received from Shirley (Smutter) Page. That mystery list also shows Matilda was born on 4 Oct 1796 and died on 31 March 1875. Oak Grove Cemetery seems correct, especially because their son, James Robert, is also buried there^[20] as is their daughter, Elizabeth Sanders.^[23] So, assuming that it is the correct J.H. Curry, then, interestingly, this cemetery is also the resting place for a David Curry, born 14 Dec 1799 and died 22 Aug 1873.^[18] Were John H. and David related? This may be the same David that appears in the 1850 US Census for Cuivre Township, Pike County, Missouri (Ralls County lies between Monroe and Pike counties).^[13] It shows David is a farmer, born in Kentucky, married to Clarissa, who was also born in Kentucky. Also shown are six children: Thompson (16 years, the only child born in Kentucky), John W. (13), George M. (10), James R. (9), Beri G. (4), Thomas F. (3). The 1850 Slave Census shows that David owned 7 female slaves (aged 22, 20, 18, 14, 12, 10, and 4) and a single male slave (8).^[14] The 1860 Slave Census for Clay Township, Monroe County, shows that David owned eight female slaves (blacks aged 30, 27, 23, 18, 3, and 1, and mulattos aged 12 and 10).^[19] In the regular 1860 US Census for Clay, Monroe County, seven children are listed: MT (24), George (20), James R. (19), Beerri G. (14), Thomas F. (13), Frances B. (4), Martha A. (2).^[15] David appears again in the 1870 US Census for Clay, Monroe County, along with Clarissa, James R., Beerri, Fannie, and Matty.^[16]

I found one more interesting census record. In the 1850 US Census for District 59, Monroe County, Susan Curry (54), born in Kentucky, is shown as the head of a household with what appears to be five children, all born in Kentucky: Sarah (26), Thomas J. (22, farmer), Samuel P. (21, farmer), Susan (16), John (14).^[13] Is she the widow of a brother of John H. and/or David Curry? Whatever the case, Susan died either in late 1851 or early 1852, as her two children, Susan E. and John M., chose George Cunningham to be their guardian on 3 February 1852.^[22]

If John H. and David are brothers, and Susan was their sister-in-law, then it seems likely that John H. was probably also born in Kentucky, rather than in Pennsylvania as recorded in the 1850 US Census.

Sources:

Monroe County, Missouri (part of MoGenWeb)(last accessed 18 Mar 2013).

- [1] History of Monroe County, 1884. Chapter 1. Introductory to Monroe County. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~momonroe/history/bookindex.htm>
 - [3] Monroe County Formed & Organized. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~momonroe/organization.htm>
 - [4] Conard's History of Missouri - Monroe County. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~momonroe/conardhistory.htm>
 - [6] August 13, 1931 - The Monroe County Appeal. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~momonroe/atterbury5.htm>
 - [7] History of Monroe County, 1884. Chapter 3. Early Records and Public Buildings. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~momonroe/history/bookindex.htm>
 - [8] Court Records of Monroe County: Marks & Brands 1831-1870. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~momonroe/marks.htm>
 - [9] Court Records of Monroe County: List of Lots Sold in Paris, Missouri, 1834; County Court Minutes, Book A, Pages 129-132. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~momonroe/courttopic.htm>
 - [10] Salt River Association. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~momonroe/churchpage12d.htm>
 - [11] Otter Creek Baptist; 1837-1873. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~momonroe/church60.htm>
 - [22] Monroe County Guardianship Bonds. Bond Book A, 1831-1842 & 1848-1854 [*Note: Page numbers run to 200, and then, they begin 101 again. So we have used the correct numbers for the first 200 pages, and then used 2-101, 2-102, etc., to indicate that the reference is to the second series of numbers.*] <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~momonroe/guardian.htm>
 - [24] Confederate Veterans in Monroe County. http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~momonroe/confvetc_e.htm (Notes: also listed is a G.M. Curry, John Q Curry, and Manless Curry. In addition, on the 1890specialcensus page there is a listing for a John R. Curry, from Granville, who served as a private from 1861-1862 in Company B of the 10th Missouri Infantry. This was a Union force; this John R. not necessarily from Monroe County originally?).
- [2] US General Land Office Records, 1796-1907 [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com (accessed 19 Mar 2011). Original data: United States. Bureau of Land Management, General Land Office Records. Automated Records Project; Federal Land Patents, State Volumes. <http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/>. Springfield, Virginia: Bureau of Land Management, Eastern States, 2007. 10 Nov 1830, Monroe County, Missouri, T54N, R9W, Sec 18, SW 1/4 – 159.7 ac; 21 Oct 1835, Monroe County, T54N, R9W, Sec 19, E 1/2 of SE 1/4 – 80 ac; 10 Apr 1837, Monroe County, T54N, R9W, Sec 19, SE 1/4 of NW 1/4 – 40 ac.
- [5] Ralls County, Missouri. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~moralls/> (accessed 18 Mar 2013).
- [12] 1840 US Federal Census. <http://Ancestry.com> (accessed 19 Mar 2011). Original data: Sixth Census of the United States, 1840. (NARA microfilm publication M704, 580 rolls). Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29. National Archives, Washington DC. Search = "J H Curry." Jackson, Monroe, Missouri; Roll: 226; Page: 141; Image: 870; Family History Library Film: 0014856.
- [13] 1850 United States Federal Census. <http://FamilySearch.org> (accessed 19 Mar 2011). Original data: Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives, Washington DC. Search = "John H. Currey, Monroe County, Missouri." Film Number: 443615; Digital GS Number: 4200567; Image Number: 00143; Lines 12-18. Search = "David Curry, Cuivre, Pike, Missouri." Roll: M432_409; Page: 184A; Image: 372. Search = "Susan Curry, District 59, Monroe, Missouri." ; Roll: M432_407; Page: 156B; Image: 318.

- [14] 1850 United States Federal Census – Slave Schedule. <http://Ancestry.com> (accessed 19 Mar 2011). District 59, Monroe, Missouri. Original data: Compiled and digitized by Mr. Ron V Jackson and AIS from microfilmed schedules of the US Federal Decennial Census, territorial/state censuses, and/or census substitutes. John H. Curry, Monroe County Missouri, page 689. David Curry, Pike County, Missouri, page 119.
- [15] 1860 United States Federal Census. <http://Ancestry.com> (accessed 19 Mar 2011). Original data: 1860 U.S. census, population schedule. NARA microfilm publication M653, 1,438 rolls. Washington DC: National Archives and Records Administration. Search = "John H. Curry, Woodlawn, Monroe, Missouri." Roll: M653_635; Page: 79; Image: 83; Lines 30-34; Family History Library Film: 803635. Search = "David Curry, Clay, Monroe, Missouri." Roll: M653_635; Page: 111; Image: 115; Family History Library Film: 803635.
- [16] 1870 United States Federal Census. <http://Ancestry.com>. Original data: 1870 U.S. census, population schedules. NARA microfilm publication M593, 1,761 rolls. Washington DC: National Archives and Records Administration. Search = "Matilda Curry" or "Washington M. Johnston." Woodlawn, Monroe, Missouri; Roll: M593_793; Page: 743A; Image: 747; (census p 14 lines 35-40 and p 15 lines 1-2); Family History Library Film: 552292. Search = "David Curry, Clay, Monroe, Missouri." Roll: M593_793; Page: 534B; Image: 330; Family History Library Film: 552292.
- [17] US Indexed County Land Ownership Maps, 1860-1918. <http://Ancestry.com> (accessed 19 Mar 2011). Original data: Various publishers of County Land Ownership Atlases. Microfilmed by the Library of Congress, Washington, DC. Search = Matilda Curry. Collection Number: G&M_92, Roll Number: 92. T56N, R11W, Sec 32, W1/2, SW1/4, 80 ac.
- [18] Oak Grove Cemetery, Monroe County, Missouri. <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~momonroe/oakgrovecem.htm> (accessed 19 Mar 2011).
- [19] 1860 United States Federal Census – Slave Schedule. Ancestry.com (accessed 19 Mar 2011). David Curry, Clay, Monroe County, Missouri.
- [20] Missouri Death Records, Missouri State Archives. <http://www.sos.mo.gov/archives/resources/deathcertificates/> (accessed 19 Mar 2011). 1910-1960 database. Monroe County Cert #20825. James Robert Curry, b. 18 Oct 1839 Monroe County, d. 13 Jun 1918 Monroe County. Buried 14 Jun 1918 Oak Grove. Retired farmer, widow. Father: Jack Curry, born Ohio. Mother: Matilda Wills, born Ohio.
- [21] Missouri Marriage Records, 1805-2002. Original data: Missouri Marriage Records. Jefferson City MO: Missouri State Archives. Microfilm. Viewed at <http://Ancestry.com>, accessed 5 Mar 2011.
- [22] MoGenWeb, Missouri County, Missouri., <http://monroe.mogenweb.org/oakgrovecem.htm> (accessed 20 Mar 2011). Sanders: Elizabeth: b. May 19 1835, d. Jan 21 1906; Benjamin: b. Nov 28 1831, d. Feb 2 1906.
- [25] MoGenWeb. <http://monroe.mogenweb.org/weatherfordcemetery.htm> Weatherford Cemetery, 9 miles north of Madison, Monroe County: Washington Johnston d. 1895; Mary Ann Johnston d. 1913; Johnnie Johnston d. 1894.