

Statement  
Giving a Brief Account  
of the  
Hall, McChesney and McCormick Families.  
Made about the Year 1882,  
by  
Mrs. Mary Caroline McCormick Shields.

## *McCormick Family.*

In the year 1770, there came to this country, from the North of Ireland, County Armagh, two families, Halls and McChesneys.

Of the McChesneys, there were James, Hugh, Robert, Susan and Martha; of the Halls, Patrick, William and Jane.

They crossed the ocean in a sailing vessel. There were also several cousins of the McChesney family in the party, by the name of Patterson, one of whom, a young lady, died by the way, and was buried at sea.

These, our ancestors and relations, were eleven weeks on the ocean. Soon after landing, they found homes in the counties of Rockbridge and Augusta, State of Virginia.

James McChesney married his cousin, Miss Patterson, before leaving Ireland, and located about two miles west of Brownsburg, Rockbridge Co., Va. His descendants still own the old homestead.

Hugh McChesney married Joanna Hanan, of Fredericksburg, Va., and settled in Brownsburg.

Robert McChesney had married Jane Hall before leaving Ireland, and he bought land and settled about six miles above Middlebrook, in Augusta county. His descendants, until recently, owned this old home of their fathers.

Martha McChesney never married.

Patrick Hall was engaged to be married, before leaving Ireland, to Susan McChesney, and had given her a betrothal ring, inside of which was engraved: "I have obtained whom God ordained." This ring I had, and lost it in the Chicago fire of 1871.

Patrick Hall bought a farm in Augusta county, and was married, in 1773, to Susan McChesney, by the Rev. John Brown, pastor of New Providence Church. My grandfather Hall served in the Revolutionary War, and was also a commissary in the war of 1812-14.

A paper, signed by Major Doak, giving him his commission for services in 1812, was burned in the Chicago fire of '71.

I have often heard my mother speak of conversations she had

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with her parents regarding the privations they had to endure, and how they economized during the wars. Everything advanced in price, and all they could spare had to be given to support the army.

All the men were in service, while the women and the servants, cut the wheat with reap-hooks, and sowed flax, and the women spun, wove and made up the cloth worn by the men, boys and servants. They kept sheep, and carded, spun and wove, at home, all the winter apparel. They wore cotton dresses, beautifully colored. I saw a piece of calico, which my grandmother had, which cost one dollar a yard in Revolutionary times, and was a little heavier cloth than we now buy for ten cents per yard.

Our great grandparents were well-to-do; they brought their fortunes from Ireland, in linen, which they sold, and with the proceeds bought land. One of my grandmother's wedding-dresses was a lemon-colored satin, very heavy, with a white brocaded stripe in it.

The first children born to Patrick and Susan Hall, were twins, and when they were eight days old, the Rev. John Brown was sent for to baptize them. These children died in infancy.

The next child born was Patsy, who married her second cousin, Thomas McChesney, and went to live in Washington county, South-western Virginia. She had no children. She was buried in Green Spring Cemetery, six miles South of Abingdon, Washington county, Virginia.

The fourth child, Mary Ann, was born June 24, 1780.

Grandfather Hall had three other children, Robert, William and Joanna.

Robert died, a bachelor, in the winter of 1826. Joanna married a Mr. Brown, and a year after was buried, with her babe, in Old Providence grave-yard.

Uncle William Hall had a great desire to join the army in 1812. His parents and family opposed it, but he was very determined, and they finally yielded. He was under age when he joined the regular

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army, and went to Norfolk. How long he was there is not known, but, in the fall of 1814, grandfather had news that he was sick, and he took a covered conveyance and brought him home. He died soon after of yellow fever. My grandmother was soon prostrated with the fever. Father and mother went to wait on her; she lived but a few days, dying November 19, 1814. Grandmother's age was sixty-seven; she was two years older than grandfather. He was soon taken with the fever, and died November 23, 1814, aged sixty-five years.

Dr. McChesney, nephew of my grandparents, was the attending physician. A colored man belonging to my grandfather, died soon after; then a man belonging to father, took the fever and died, and it was with difficulty that he could be buried, so great was the fear of the disease. Brother Cyrus, then a boy five years of age, took the fever. Father saw that all who had been treated in the past had died, so he tried a different method, using a hot steam bath in which were bitter herbs and whisky. This treatment was successful, and no more cases occurred.

Grandfather and all the relatives who came over with him from Ireland, were religious people, strict in their attendance on church, in keeping family worship, in asking God's blessing at the table, and these things were not neglected by the women when the men were absent. The children were taught the catechism, and the Bible was the book all read in school. They also committed to memory a great many of the Psalms.

When our grand parents came to this country, they and their friends, connected with New Providence Church, Rockbridge County, Virginia.

At this time, the Psalms of David were used almost exclusively in all the churches. After some years, there came to the church, a minister who introduced Watts' hymns. Grandfather thought that nothing should be sung in the worship of God but the Psalms of

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David, and, as soon as the hymn was given out, he picked up his hat and left the church, and a number of others followed him.

They immediately determined to build a church in which worship should be to their minds, would be most acceptable to God, and prove to the building up and edification of His church. Grandfather proposed to give the ground off one side of his farm, the timber and stone also.

The church was built of limestone, and grandfather Hall was so zealous on the subject, that, in addition to what he had given, he boarded the workmen, part, if not all of the time that the church was in process of building. It is still standing and in good condition, being used for an academy for young ladies, while a short distance from it is a new red brick church, which takes its place and is called the Associate Reformed Church.

All my father's children were baptized in Old Providence Church. The small window, which may be seen at the left end of the church, was placed there by him, and was directly opposite the pew he and his family occupied.

Father's views becoming changed with regard to adhering exclusively to David's Psalms, and not liking the minister then in charge, he and my mother united with New Providence, five miles distant, of which Rev. James Morrison was pastor.

Grandfather Robert McCormick married Martha Sanderson, and lived in Cumberland county, Pennsylvania, until after the birth of five children, George, William, James, Elizabeth and Martha. In the year 1779, he sold his farm and removed to Rockbridge County, Virginia. He was for many years an elder in Old Providence Church; he was well instructed in the Scriptures, and tried to be faithful in following the teachings of God's word, and was strict in his observance of the Sabbath. The Bible was the chief book with those old Scotch Irish Presbyterians, and their other books were mostly religious.

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Grandfather, on his arrival in Virginia, bought a farm of five hundred acres, which had on it a large log house. In this house, my father, Robert McCormick, Jr., was born, June 8, 1780.

His eldest brother, George McCormick, married Jane Steele, and moved to Henderson county, Kentucky.

Uncle James McCormick married Irene Rodgers, whose family lived near New Providence Church, and they moved to Gallipolis, Ohio.

Uncle William McCormick married Mary Steele, and lived near my father.

Aunt Elizabeth married Hugh Gibson, and moved to Kentucky.

Aunt Martha married Edward Bryant, and soon afterwards died.

Robert McCormick, my father, was married, February 11, 1808, to Mary Ann Hall, who was very near his own age, and also the same height, five feet, eight inches.

Grandfather continued to live with them, on the old homestead, until his decease, October 12, 1818, when eighty-one years of age. The property then became my father's, on condition of his paying a certain sum to the other heirs. In this old house there were born to Robert McCormick and Mary, his wife, eight children, of whom I am the fifth.

With good health, both full of energy and ambition, my parents started in their married life. The first misfortune that came to them, was a few years after marriage, the burning of a large barn, (which had been finished just in time to store away the year's crop), with all the wheat and other grains and hay needed for their stock; two horses were also burned in it. Shortly after this, in 1822, father built a brick house on his farm, to which he gave the name of Walnut Grove. I was, at that time, a child between five and six years of age, but though so young I can well remember how happy my mother was in making things for and furnishing her new house. She was a devoted, self-sacrificing mother, and my father a man of

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unswerving integrity of character; this was his reputation wherever he was known.

After the improvement of Walnut Grove, father bought a farm about a mile and a half east of his home-place, on which was a saw-mill, where he spent much of his time experimenting in its working.

His next investment was the purchase of another farm about nine miles south of Walnut Grove, on which there was also a saw-mill, and this farm father prized, as well as the other, on account of the South River running through it; this would enable the owner to have any kind of manufacturing establishment--the motive power abundant and inexpensive.

Father and mother were social and hospitable in their disposition, and their house was a place where friends, relatives and strangers were ever welcome.

Our parents had their losses and disappointments in various ways, but until June, 1826, father, mother and children, were all spared to be happy together. Dysentery prevailed in the neighborhood in the spring of 1826, of which, several children had died. Brother Robert was taken with this much dreaded malady, and lingered in great suffering about two weeks. Then sister Susan was taken ill with the same disease, Thursday morning, June 25; the following Sabbath, June 28, at 4 P. M., Susan died. She was buried, Monday, June 29, at noon, and that evening, about eight o'clock, brother Robert died. The death of these children was the greatest sorrow that had ever come to my parents. Robert Hall was their second child, and was about sixteen years of age. Sister Susan was the third child, and at her death, nearly thirteen years old. Beautiful, as all who knew her testified, and bright and intelligent beyond her years.

In the winter of 1845-1846, father took a severe cold, caused by hurrying out of bed in the night, half dressed, to assist in putting out a fire which had started in one of his shops. In March, he again

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contracted a severe chill, but continued to attend to business, his habits of industry being such that, although mother often begged him to take life more easily and to rest, he still kept up his interest in the works. Early in May, however, he gave up all further attention to business, and from that time was under the care of his physicians. We secured the best medical skill that could be had, but his stomach, liver and lungs, were all so involved, that all his devoted wife and children could do was of no avail, and after great suffering, he died on July 4, 1846, about nine o'clock in the morning, aged sixty-six years and twenty-six days.

His funeral sermon was preached by Rev. James Morrison, our pastor. His text was, "The righteous hath hope in his death." A little notice in our country paper read: "Died in the lower end of Rockbridge county, at 9 A. M., the 4th of July, Robert McCormick, a gentleman of great worth and respectability, and an honest man."

Father was a humble-minded Christian—a modest and rather diffident man. He had much in his disposition and character worthy of all praise and imitation, yet he neither sought nor desired the praise of the world.

In a conversation my mother had with Mr. Morrison, after father's death, our pastor said father was a man of remarkable mind, and that from him he had gotten many beautiful and original thoughts on the Bible.

In a letter from cousin William S. McCormick, of Patterson, Wayne County, Missouri, he said father was "the greatest natural genius he ever saw—the greatest natural mechanic—that he never failed to accomplish anything he undertook."

MARY CAROLINE McCORMICK SHIELDS.