

Alexander Murray, one of the Justices of the Peace,
April 1st, 1778.

The foregoing records are inserted in the hope that it may some time in the future lead to the discovery of the relationship between the above persons and the aforesaid James Murray, if such relationship existed.

JOHN, JAMES AND WILLIAM MURRAY.

About the year 1769, the three brothers, John, James and William Murray, in company with their brother-in-law James McMahan and others, removed from Cumberland to Northumberland county, Pennsylvania, and settled on a tract of land of about a thousand acres, lying along the Chillisquaque Creek in the vicinity of the present village of Pottsgrove, and for which they obtained patents from the Commonwealth. See copy in Appendix.

Samuel McMahan, Esq., of Milton, Penna., in his "*Historical Sketch of the McMahan Family*," says, "That John, James and William Murray with James McMahan their brother-in-law and others, came from Sherman's Valley to the Chillisquaque country early in the year—according to the survey of McMahan's farm it was in the month of April 1769, and each of them located a tract of land. James, afterward Colonel Murray, entered and had surveyed a large tract of land on the west side of said Creek beginning at some distance above the present Catawissa Railroad Bridge and running south east to about where the Presbyterian church of Pottsgrove now stands, and

then turned southward with the bend of the creek, to a white oak tree which marked the corner between the James McMahan and Murray farms. The same white oak tree still stands and has been for many years the established corner of four different farms. John entered a large tract on the opposite side of the creek and William still higher up. John Murray, one of the three brothers, was the great-grandfather of our enterprising townsman, S. W. Murray, of the Milton Car Works."

The farm house of John Murray stood near the east end of the present highway bridge across the Chillisquaque Creek on the road from Pottsgrove to Danville. It was a very large frame building with extensive barns and other outbuildings in the rear, all of which have now disappeared and been replaced by other buildings. On the site of the former farm house now stands a brick house of modern construction.

In the "Muster Rolls and Papers relating to the Associators and Militia of the County of Northumberland," in Pennsylvania Archives, Volume XIV, we find on Page 336, that James Murray, January 24, 1776, was Captain of the Seventh Company of Colonel James Potter's Regiment, Second Battalion.

On Page 338, that James Murray, March 13, 1776, was made Lieutenant Colonel of Colonel Plunket's Regiment, Third Battalion.

On Page 346, certificate of the Muster Roll of Captain Long's Company of Second Battalion, "now in

actual service," dated December 3, 1776. Signed by James Murray, Lieutenant Colonel.

On Page 349, "Second Battalion," "Return of the Second Battalion of Northumberland Militia, May 1, 1778," "Colonel James Murray." He had in the meantime succeeded Plunket as Colonel of the Regiment.

The "Return" is as follows :

COLONEL JAMES MURRAY.

- First Company—Captain Thomas Gaskins,
Total, officers and men, 61.
- Second Company—Captain John Nelson,
Total, officers and men, 60.
- Third Company—Captain David Hayes,
Total, officers and men, 63.
- Fourth Company—Captain Arthur Taggart,
Total, officers and men, 66.
- Fifth Company—Captain James McMahan,
Total, officers and men, 57.
- Sixth Company—Captain Robert Reynolds,
Total, officers and men, 43.
- Seventh Company—Captain John Chatham,
Total, officers and men, 42.
- Eighth Company—Captain John Clingman,
Total, officers and men, 73.

Colonel Murray participated in the New Jersey campaign and continued in active military service until the army was disbanded in 1783.

Potter, Lieutenant Colonel James Murray, John Kelly and Thomas Robinson, Majors; Benjamin Allison, Surgeon; Joseph Green, Surgeon's Mate."

Samuel McMahan, Esq., in his "*History of the McMahan Family*," says:

"Colonel Murray was a brave, fearless soldier and an efficient officer. He too, like Captain McMahan gave of his own means to keep men in the field; but his descendants were more fortunate than those of his brother-in-law McMahan, inasmuch that the government reimbursed them dollar for dollar, with interest. The colonel served in different capacities during the entire war. He served the country and served it well, and after peace was declared he retired from the active duties of a soldier to that of a private citizen—spending his time in the cultivation of his farm. He was a useful man in the community and among the pioneers of Presbyterianism in the new settlement—active in the formation and support of the Chillisquaque church, of which organization one of his grandsons is an active ruling elder at the present time. The colonel lived to be an old man, and died like Jacob, leaning upon the top of his staff. He had gone out in the evening to bring in his sheep to house them from the depredation of dogs, and not returning, a member of his family went in search of him, and found him cold in death, with his hand holding the top of his staff—which had run into the ground—supposed to be by the pressure of his weight in falling. Thus ended the life of a useful man. 'Verily man knoweth not his time.'

Although this soldier, citizen and christian fell by the way, he still lives in the life of his descendants, many of whom were and still are active members of the same religious organization he helped to form more than a century and a quarter ago."

The present inhabitants of this beautiful, fertile and peaceful valley of the West Branch, scarcely realize the hardships and perils to which the people of this section were subjected during the trying period of the Revolution. The grandmother of the writer, Charity Arbour Murray, lived during her early life, near the mouth of Chillisquaque Creek, and he well remembers, when yet a child, of hearing his grandmother relate her thrilling experiences when a young girl. Word would reach the settlement that the Indians were coming and the people would flee to Fort Augusta (now Sunbury) for protection. On several occasions she witnessed the scalping of men and women of their company. We of the present day have certainly great cause for thankfulness that our lot has been cast in these happier times when we can live in the enjoyment of peace and plenty, free from the privations and dangers endured by our forefathers.

The following extracts show the great hardships and dangers voluntarily endured by the early settlers of Northumberland county, to achieve independence from Great Britain, to establish a Republican form of government, and to secure for themselves and their posterity the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—blessings which the present generation scarcely appreciate in the measure they deserve.

Extracts from the record in the family Bible of the late James McMahan, of Watsontown, Penna :

“Colonel James Murray was twice married, his first wife was a Fisher by whom he had two sons, Thomas and Samuel. Thomas was known as Thomas Murray, Sen., to distinguish him from his cousin Thomas son of John. His second wife was a Wind whose children were as follows: William, (known as lame William) John, Potter and Robert, also Belle Gray, Mrs. McCoy and Hetty Kittler.

“Thomas Murray, Sen., married Jane, daughter of Major McMahan. They had one son, 'Squire James F. Murray.

“William Murray, brother of Col. James, had two sons, William and James (known as long James) both of whom removed to Western Virginia, about the year 1830.

“John McMahan (grandfather of the above James of Watsontown) married Jane, daughter of John Murray. They had, among others, a son James who was married to Margaret, daughter of John Murray who came from Dauphin county and was a distant cousin of the Murrays before mentioned. The above James (of Watsontown) was their son.”

The children of John Murray, the eldest of the three aforesaid brothers, were one son Thomas, and three daughters, Jane, Ann and Mary. Jane was married to John McMahan and Ann to John Rezner. Mary died unmarried.