

BOURLAND - McGARY - ROBERTSON - ASHBY

With my 2gGrandfather, the **Rev. John Bourland**, saying the prayer in 1806 to announce the separation from Henderson County by Hopkins County, KY, and my own father being born and raised there, I have accumulated considerable folklore on the places and people of that county. Among them are the Ashbys, Robertsons and the McGarys. Indeed, the committee to form Hopkins County meet in **Daniel McGary's** (1770 - 1841) home and he later donated 20 acres to assist in forming a town. Still later that year, certain men met at the home of **Robert McGary** (1767 - 1840) at the Governor's direction and named the initial justices of the peace for the county; among whom was **General Stephen Ashby** (1776-1841) and after whom was named the Hopkins County chapter of the D.A.R. I collected data on all of these men but only because they represented local color for family stories.

Hugh McGary, however, father to Daniel and Robert, was the one about whom stories were told. Among those stories were that he stole from a guest at his inn; that he sold liquor without a license; that he murdered in cold blood an Indian Chief; and that he was the cause of the loss of the Battle of Blue Licks in Kentucky, which was known as the last battle of the Revolutionary War.

Lately I have determined that I descend from both the Ashbys and the McGarys as do all descendants of **Mary Ann Robertson** and **Elmore Claude Bourland** (D763). Here's how, starting with my grandfather:

Elmore C. Bourland (1870-1940)	m. Mary Elizabeth Cardwell (1877-1963).....her parents were Charles Rice Cardwell (1852-1927)
David S. Cardwell (1819-1898)	m. Emily Clay Graham (1852-1879).....his parents were Joseph Robertson (1780-1838)
Joseph Robertson (1780-1838)	m. Mary Ann Robertson (1822-1907).....her parents were Hugh McGary, Sr. (1744-1806)
Hugh McGary, Sr. (1744-1806)	m. Elizabeth McGary (1785-1860).....(1) her parents were m. Catherine Yokum (1758-1803) and then (2) his parents were
William Robertson (1760-1842)	m. Sinah Claywell Ashby (1760-1842)her parents were Henry Ashby (1716-1797)
Henry Ashby (1716-1797)	m. Ellender Bounds (1735-1811).....his parents were Thomas Ashby (1680-1752)
Thomas Ashby (1680-1752)	m. Rosannah Berry (1680-?)

Here are my computer Notes on Hugh McGary, who along with Daniel Boone may be the best known of the Kentucky pioneers.

HUGH McGARY

Mary P. Hammersmith in her excellent 2001 book, Hugh McGary, Senior, Pioneer of Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky and Indiana (B654) has brought together years of research to tell the remarkable tale of this mysterious, overlooked and misrepresented figure from our frontier past. Hugh McGary, associate of George Rogers Clark and Andrew Jackson, friend of Daniel Boone, Revolutionary War Officer, and fighter at the Battle of Blue Licks in Kentucky, was witness and participant to many key events in the early history of the Midwest.

He is said to have been a large man, over six feet tall, with fiery red hair and a temper to match. He appears to have had the temperament to survive the turbulent times which included the Indian Wars, the Revolution and the opening of a new territory in Kentucky.

It is almost certain he appears on the Rolls of the Virginia militia in Augusta County, Virginia in September 1758 and in several other Augusta County records. It is considered that several of the variant names of McGarys in Augusta County were of the same family based on each having numerous scrapes with the law and their time period.

He is found in Rowan County witnessing a deed between David Caldwell and James Bunton and Robert Bunton who

were conveying land on the Beaver Dam Branch, once called Fifth Creek, of the South Yadkin on 14 April 1769. This is significant because Mary Buntin was his first wife; the land was near that of Daniel Boone.

He migrated from the Yadkin River area of North Carolina to Kentucky in 1775 with his wife, Mary Buntin Ray McGary, and sons Robert and Daniel. In addition, Mary's three sons by a previous marriage were with them. The party was taken through the Cumberland Gap by Daniel Boone who had been their neighbor and after arriving in Kentucky they separated with Boone continuing to Boonesborough and the McGarys to Harrodsburg. James Harrod was another neighbor and these three men had made earlier explorations of Kentucky; indeed Harrod had made the first settlement in Harrodsburg the year before in 1774.



George C. Bingham, *Daniel Boone Escorting Settlers Through the Cumberland Gap*, 1851-52
or, with apologies to Mr. Bingham,
Hugh McGary and friend cross the Gap

While there were 20 or so single men in Kentucky around 1775, the first families who settled Kentucky were those of Daniel Boone at Boonesborough and Hugh McGary, Thomas Denton and Richard Hogan at Harrodsburg. Boone and McGary had come together from Rowan County, NC but split apart once deep into the state. James Harrod and George Rogers Clark (of Lewis and Clark fame) were there by 1776.

In 1777 there may have been 500 people in Kentucky, 150 of which were able-bodied.

McGary, as Chairman of the Committee of the County of Kentucky of the state of Virginia signed various petitions to Virginia, often asking for better protection from the Indians. McGary was sent by that Committee to Pittsburgh and Natchez, which were trips of 700 or so miles, a not unusual horse ride in those days.

In 1780 he resigned as a member of the County Commission, probably because his wife, Mary, had died. The next year he accepted a commission as a Major, and in 1786 was sworn in as a Lt. Colonel.

In 1781 he broke up a meeting held ostensibly to break from the Union and return to Spanish control. It was said erroneously he called the meeting when in fact he had dispersed it.

Hugh was blamed for the Battle of Blue Licks on August 19, 1782 - said to be the last battle of the Revolutionary War - when it has been said he acceded to the wishes of his fellow officers and pursued an Indian party straight into a

trap by the British. This battle occurred on the Lower Blue Licks Crossing of the Licking River in northeast Kentucky on August 19, 1782. Mrs. Hammersmith proves McGary's actions were blameless. A letter from Daniel Boone to the Governor of Virginia 11 days after the Battle of Blue Licks gives Boone the responsibility for the attack and the letter laid no blame on McGary. See B654, pg. 211. Indeed McGary was promoted shortly after the battle and a letter from him to his commander asking if he had been at fault was apparently ignored.

In 1786 McGary took a unit to the Miami villages, there finding Chief Moluntha of the Shawnee. Moluntha was asked if he had been at Blue Licks and upon answering yes, McGary took an axe and killed him as he was surrendering. He was acquitted of murder, slapped on the wrist, but remained on the County Court to which he had been appointed. One of the anecdotes of his life is captured by a ballad sung as a result of this escapade:

Oh, our soldiers when done, in the town they convene,
Where trophies of Vic'try were everywhere seen,
a brave son of Mars slaps his bloody old dagger,
And swears by the Lord that he made a squaw stagger,
A dastardly fellow advanced to the King,
Who was promised protection and brought to the ring,
He soon was espied by intrepid McGary,
Who just at this juncture came up from the prairie.
He gave the old savage a cuss and a blow
And sent him bare-skulled to the region below.

One of the sons of his first wife Mary Buntin Ray was scalped by Indians, which Hugh never forgot. In 1792 the government had "closed the season" on killing Indians. Hugh was still upset over the scalping and Blue Lick defeat and so killed one the day after the "closing". He claimed not to have gotten the word so they extended the season closing by one day. Thereafter, Indians carved "DFM" on trees all over Kentucky - "don't fool with McGary".

In the early 1790s he accompanied Andrew Jackson and Rachel Donelson Robards from Natchez to Nashville on the Natchez Trace. Because Rachel was married to Robards, future President Jackson was accused of adultery and McGary was vilified because it was said he had grown to dislike Jackson and testified against him in court. But in the court Hugh had been required to tell the truth or risk perjury. Indeed when the issue became important when Jackson ran for office in 1827, Hugh was long dead and unable to defend the accusation of perjury.

In 1795 he petitioned Mercer Cty Court to open a tavern in Harrodsburg. He moved as a consequence from McGary's Station in Shawnee Run (five miles north and east of Harrodsburg) to Harrodsburg. He ran the tavern until about 1800 when he moved to Barren-Warren County to be near his daughter Mary Steenbergen.

In 1799 he moved to Barren County, ostensibly to be near daughter Mary McGary Steenbergen. He had been awarded a patent on his land there and may have gone merely to get it sold properly.

He moved on 12 months later to Henderson or Red Banks as it was known. There he owned an inn, a tannery and numerous slaves. He was a slave trader and owner, consistent with the times. When he was later moving to Indiana which did not permit slaves, he signed them to long term indentures to avoid the law, and later allowed their manumission.

Among many other stories he was accused in 1803 in Henderson (or Madisonville, as it is not clear which) of felonious theft and carrying away of 19 guineas, two half-eagles, thirty dollars in silver and 600 dollars in bank notes - all stolen from Samuel Baker who was a guest at McGary's Tavern and whiskey shop. He was also charged with selling liquor without a license (the first so charged in Henderson County, 1803). Neither of these incidents have been proven.

McGary had many faults as well as many assets and the heavy criticism heaped on him was surely overblown and undeserved. McGary had no formal education but was "literate....intelligent and astute". He entered many claims for

land, earlier than most especially in Shawnee Run and Harrodsburg. Because claims often caused a court battle and each has a winner and loser, Hugh was resented by many in the area as he had large holdings in choice locations.

B639 indicates the assignment in Knox County, IN of the Executor for his estate to inventory that estate and produce the will. The will includes the names of most of his children.