

family Cathey

(1685 – 1891)

Macfie → Cathy

Family Cathey originated from the ancient Scottish clan^a Macfie. The Gaelic spelling of the name is MacDHUBHSHITH, and is interpreted to mean: Mac = “*the son*”; Dhuibh = “*the dark, or black haired one*”; shith = “*in peace*”. With the break-up of the clan, and with the increased importance of a formal written name, we find many different aliterations of the name Macfie -- MacPhee, McDuffee, Duffy, Mahaffey, Fee, McGuffey, MacCathie, Cathie, Cathey, and others can all trace their origins to the clan Macfie.

Clan Macfie^b

The ancestral home of clan Macfie is the Island of Colonsay^c, located off the western coast of Scotland in the Firth of Lorne. Another smaller island, Oronsay, was used for religious and burial purposes and could be walked to at low tides. In the fifteenth century the political situation changed for the clan when Lordship of the Scottish Isles was appropriated by the Scottish crown. Clan Macfie was forced to share Colonsay with another clan evicted from their own island. Then, in 1615, clan Macfie joined in the losing side of a rebellion and because of that were dispossessed from the Island of Colonsay. At this time the members of clan Macfie largely dispersed -- some traveled to the Scottish colony in the Ulster area of northern Ireland; others went elsewhere in southern Scotland, some of whom later also went to Ireland.



^a In old Scotland *Clan* was the name applied to a group of kinsman united under a chief and claiming a common ancestry. They lived as one great family on the land they possessed.

^b Note that clan Macfie claims it originated from the ancient clan Alpin which is discussed on page 39 as the source of all Scottish kings.

^c Colonsay, together with its close neighbor, Oronsay, are about ten miles long and two miles wide. At present, the population is less than one hundred persons.

Ulster Scots

The English, with superior wealth and might, conquered Ireland in the twelfth century but had difficulty subduing the people, due to its remoteness as a separate island, and the fact that the Irish were Catholic and did not wish to bend to the authority of the rule of the Church of England. James I, King of England (who was also James VI, King of Scots) believed the solution lie in colonizing Ireland with persons of a friendlier persuasion. In the early 1600's the English drove the Irish out of Northern Ireland and in the Ulster area began to establish a power base from which they could effectively rule Ireland by colonizing it with largely Scottish Presbyterians.

The Scottish colonization was initially successful, but in 1641 the Irish Catholics revolted and recaptured Northern Ireland. England was then in the midst of a civil war and was not able to attend to the Irish situation until 1649 when Oliver Cromwell led an army to Ireland and virtually annihilated the Irish leadership. Northern Ireland was re-settled with Scots.

Again in 1688 the Irish almost overran Northern Ireland, although this time the Scots were able to hold out until an army came to their aid two years later.

Now, even after three hundred years have passed, little has changed -- the Irish Catholics still want Northern Ireland back and the Protestants are still holding out, and the fighting and hatred continues.

exodus from Ireland

In the early 1700's things did not fare well for those in Ireland -- neither the Scots colonized in Northern Ireland nor the Irish themselves. Both the Irish Catholics and the Scotch Presbyterians were ruthlessly persecuted by the Church of England. The English government progressively tightened its rule and authority over the people. And, the Scots and the Irish continued to harass each other. These factors, combined with a succession of famines, caused a great exodus to America. The Catheys were part of that exodus.

the troublesome Scots

In the 1730's and 1740's shiploads of Ulster Scots left Ireland and landed in America. Most of these landed in Pennsylvania and the new immigrants settled in areas in the south of the state, bordering the Susquehanna River, which were already occupied predominantly by Germans. The two groups greatly disagreed on most matters and there were riots at election time. To alleviate the problem, the State of Pennsylvania endeavored to separate them by removing the Ulster Scots to the Cumberland Valley to the west.

the Great Wagon Road

From the Cumberland Valley families began migrating south, down the Great Wagon Road, pioneering new lands as they went. While earlier pioneers took more coastal routes (the King's Highway along the coast or the Fall Line Road along the eastern base of the foothills) the Great Wagon Road traveled inland, down the Great Valley of Virginia through which the Shenandoah River flowed, then between the Allegheny and the Blue Ridge Mountains into Tennessee and the adjacent North Carolina. The route approximately followed the present U.S. Highway 81.

This is the route the Catheys, Welchs, Vances, Turners, and Osborns took along with the predominance of other Ulster Scots as well as many Germans. The trip from Pennsylvania to Tennessee/North Carolina often took several generations, because the first generation often settled in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia after leaving the Cumberland Valley in Pennsylvania.

These early Ulster Scots had pioneering blood in them and were constantly pushing the borders of civilization. After a generation in Tennessee/North Carolina, many again picked up and moved to the new Missouri Territory, from which they continued to pioneer -- a later chapter will tell of the Welch's, moving to the wilderness of Missouri, then leaving it and joining the 49er's to the gold rush of California.

Catheys in America

James⁸ Cathey (ca. 1685 - 1764): The first Cathey specifically identified in this genealogy is James⁸, born about 1685 in the Ulster region of Northern Ireland of Scottish ancestry. He married in Ireland around 1708 and had seven children, some born in Ireland, some in America. He and his family came to America probably in 1715 or shortly thereafter.

Following land records left by James over the forty-five years he lived in America, we can track him from Maryland to Pennsylvania to Virginia and finally to North Carolina. His migrations took him from Pennsylvania down the Great Wagon Road through the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia where he settled in Augusta County.

James was a farmer who purchased and sold a number of parcels, several larger than one thousand acres. He also established a mill for the grinding of grain.

He served as Captain in the Augusta County, Virginia militia in 1742 when it was organized to defend the community against Indian attacks.

James Cathey migrated to North Carolina in 1749, bringing with him children, in-laws, grandchildren, and other friends and relatives. They settled in Rowan County and established what was called the Cathey Settlement, the first town to be established in North Carolina not on a navigable river. There he was appointed Justice of the Peace by the North Carolina Colonial Assembly.

They established a church on son George's property, the Thyatira Presbyterian Church, which was then the westernmost church in all of North Carolina and beyond. Settling in North Carolina was a truly a pioneering effort.

George⁷ Cathey (ca. 1715 - ca 1790): George⁷ was born about the time his family migrated from Ireland to America and it is not known on which continent he was born.

George married Margaret⁷ about 1738 and with her had four children. Little is known about Margaret, save for one story of her pioneer life, as follows:

"One of the sharpest little Indian fights ever fought in Burke County, N.C. was fought at the mouth of the North Fork of the Catawba. (Margaret Cathey) learned that the Cherokees were about to attack the Pleasant Garden Settlement. She mounted a stable horse of Cathey, astride, and at quarterspeed, warned the settlement to meet at the mouth of North Fork and march from there to (Cathey's) Fort They had barely met when the Indians attacked them. They fought bravely until some coward cried out that their powder was out. The Indians understood it and were about to rush in and tomahawk them, when old Mrs. Cathey pulled off a pair of red flannel pockets and called out that there was powder aplenty. Fortunately, one of their chiefs who had stepped out and brandished his tomahawk was shot down, and the Indians retreated..... There was no powder in the pocket, but the bravery and quick wit of Mrs. Cathey saved the party."

Capt. George⁶ Cathey (ca. 1756 - 1840): George⁶ entered the Revolutionary War as a volunteer in the capacity of a private soldier in 1776, re-enlisted soon after as a Lieutenant, and later was promoted to Captain. In one early engagement he was in a company consisting of ninety-five light horsemen against the Cherokees. They defeated the Cherokees and while doing so destroyed several towns. Soon after the Cherokee action they were ordered to march against the British and Tories at Silver Creek, where they had battle and defeated the enemy. Over the next several years George was engaged in a number of other battles against the British and the Tories in North and South Carolina. Several memorials exist acknowledging his Revolutionary War activities, one established by the Daughters of the American Revolution.

George was born in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina in 1756; married Margaret Chamberlain in 1776, and with her had ten children. In 1798 he moved with his family to the Pigeon River Valley in Buncombe County (now Haywood County), North Carolina. Then, in 1815, he, most of his family, and several neighboring families migrated to Missouri.

William⁵ Cathey (1777 - 1864): William arrived in the Pigeon River Valley, North Carolina, when his parents migrated there in 1798 when he was a young man of twenty-one years of age. The following year he married Catherine⁵ Turner. Later, when his father migrated to Missouri, William, the oldest of the five sons, was the only one to remain in North Carolina.

William and Catherine had only one child, a son.

William served as a Major in the Seventh Regiment in the War of 1812, and is said to have distinguished himself as such. Most action was likely against Indians in western North Carolina who were siding with the British.

Col. Joseph⁴ Cathey (1802 - 1874): Joseph Cathey grew up in the Pigeon Valley area of Haywood County, North Carolina. In 1814, as a boy of twelve, he enlisted in the War of 1812, serving under his father, a Major.

Educational facilities were almost non-existent, nevertheless, he became self-educated in a wide range of subjects. A contemporary said of him, "*Few men, if any, knew so much about all kinds of business transactions and all industrial pursuits as he. He was an excellent farmer, merchant, miller, trader, a good family physician, and a most excellent legislator. He was well versed in the general principles of law, theology, medicine, and almost every department of knowledge.*" Sometime in his early manhood he became known as *Colonel*, although it is believed he never held a military commission. It was more likely a prestigious rank conferred on him by his neighbors and peers. Prior to the Civil War it was not uncommon for certain outstanding men in the South to be awarded such titles by common consent.

He was a large landowner, farmer, and merchant. His home, store, and blacksmith shop were the center of community life in the area, both social and commercial.

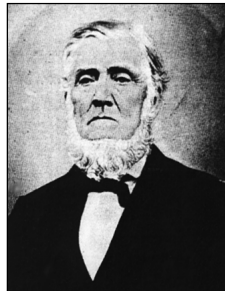
Joseph Cathey maintained a country store in Pigeon Valley. It was a large building with enormous fireplaces in which great logs were

burning when it was cold outside. There were four rooms at the back where travelers who had no place to stay were given a room for sleeping. At the end of the Civil War, freed slaves who had no place to go were allowed to sleep in these rooms and were given food -- a very magnanimous gesture from one who had his own slaves taken from him with the South's defeat in the Civil War.

When tensions flared between the North and the South, Joseph Cathey was a proponent of legislative action to resolve the crisis, but when that no longer was an option, he fully supported the Southern Cause. He was too old to serve in battle, but he lent his influence to the cause; he hauled food and supplies in support of it; and he lost two sons to it. Joseph Cathey had a difficult time accepting the defeat of the South and is said to have remained an unreconstructed Rebel to the end of his days. The two sons who died in action were both in the Twenty-Fifth Regiment, Company F, the Haywood Highlanders. Two son-in-laws were also in action and survived.

Joseph Cathey was sent to the North Carolina Constitutional Convention of 1835, and was a member of the State Senate in 1842.

Joseph married Nancy⁴ Hyatt (see page 32) in 1825 and together they had nine children as is shown on the next page.



Col. Joseph⁴ CATHEY & Nancy⁴ HYATT

Col. Joseph⁴ CATHEY

Birth: 12 Mar 1803; Haywood Co., N.C.
Death: 01 Jun 1874 Haywood Co., N.C.
Father: William CATHEY (1777-1864)
Mother: Catherine TURNER (1770-1879)

Nancy⁴ HYATT

Birth: 08 Mar 1807; Haywood Co., N.C.
Death: 01 Jun 1874; Haywood Co., N.C.
Marriage: 24 Mar 1825
Nine children

William Burton CATHEY

Birth: 09 Feb 1826
Marriage: 13 Sep 1846; Lucinda MOORE
Death: 17 Oct 1866; Haywood Co., N.C.

Mary Minerva CATHEY

Birth: 22 Nov 1829; Haywood Co., N.C.
Marriage: William J. WILSON
Death: 17 Sep 1862; Haywood Co., N.C.

Julia CATHEY

Birth: 04 Sep 1832; Haywood Co., N.C.
Death: 1834; Haywood Co., N.C.

Joseph Turner CATHEY

Birth: 07 Feb 1835; Haywood Co., N.C.
Marriage: 02 Mar 1858; Martha A. KILLIANN
Death: 01 Sep 1863; Wilson, N.C. (from war wounds)

James Madison CATHEY

Birth: 07 Aug 1837; Haywood Co., N.C.
Marriage: 04 Jun 1863; Margaret E. PRICE
Death: 1863; Petersburg, VA. (died in battle)

Sarah Lucinda CATHEY

Birth: 20 Dec 1839; Haywood Co., N.C.
Marriage: 19 Jul 1871; William Pinckney WELCH (1838-1896); Waynesville, Haywood Co., N.C.
Death: 04 Jan 1873; Waynesville, Haywood Co., N.C.

Nancy Louisa CATHEY

Birth: 15 Apr 1842
Marriage: 10 Nov 1868; Capt. James Allen BLAYLOCK
Death: 22 Nov 1899; Haywood Co., N.C.

Martha³ Ann (Mattie) CATHEY

Birth: 13 Mar 1844; Pigeon River Valley, Haywood Co., N.C.
Marriage: 27 Oct 1868; David VANCE (1839-); Haywood Co., N.C.
Death: 25 Feb 1891; Haywood Co., N.C.

Thomas Harrison CATHEY

Birth: 08 Oct 1846; Haywood Co., N.C.
Marriage: 23 Jun 1869; Rachel Rebecca JOHNSON; Henderson Co., N.C.
Death: 05 Feb 1919; Asheville, Buncombe Co., N.C.

Martha³ Ann Cathey (1844 - 1891): Martha Ann was the seventh child of Colonel Joseph⁴ Cathey and Nancy⁴ Hyatt. She was born in Haywood County, North Carolina, and married, raised her family, and died there. She married David³ Vance in 1868 and with him had seven children. (For a continuation of the genealogy, see David³ Vance, page **Error! Reference source not found.****Error! Bookmark not defined.**)

Sources:

The Catheys -- Haywood Co., N.C.; Walter Kerr Cathey; 1980.
Cathey Family History and Genealogy; Boyt Henderson Cathey.
Map Guide to American Migration Routes, 1735-1815; William Dollarhide; 1997.