**Origins of the McGuffin Family**

**(Notice: It has been determine that Jonathon David McGuffin’s name was in fact, Jonathan R McGuffin 6/4/2013)**

**(Notice: See Album item “Bushwhacked at Lone Mtn”? for the latest version of Jonathan R McGuffin’s Story)**

**John David McGuffin and**

**Nancy Cook**

John David McGuffin emigrated from

Ireland, arriving in America (probably Virginia)

prior to 1830. No research has been discovered

revealing further information other than family

lore that reports four McGuffin brothers, John David, James, William, and Joseph came to America, and one, a preacher, returned to

Ireland. James settled in Pennsylvania, William settled in New York, and Joseph settled in Franklin County, Va.

John David McGuffin was born about

1804, as determined by the 1870 federal census of Monroe County, Tenn., Post Office:

Sweetwater, Place of Birth: Ireland.

The year 1830 is known because that is the

year of the birth of John David McGuffin's

oldest child, Jonathon David McGuffin, who was born in Virginia. John David's wife was

Nancy Cook, who was also born in Virginia about 1805. (The spelling of Jonathon could possibly be Jonathan, as various handwritten

documents could be interpreted as either spelling. Living descendants, however, have consistently used the spelling Jonathon.)

An understanding of Irish history offers a possible explanation to the McGuffin family

story.

John David McGuffin's immigration to

America probably occurred in the mid-1820s, when he was a young man. That was prior to the devastating Irish potato famine of 1845-49

in which some 1 million people died, and the deplorable "coffin ships" full of Irish emigrants

who died at sea or of fever in quarantine stations.

According to a documentary film produced by the National Endowment for the Humanities, "Out of Ireland: The Story of Irish Emigration to America," some 7 million people left Ireland during the 18th, 19th, and 20th Centuries. Through the 1700s, emigrants were predominantly Presbyterians from the northern province of Ulster seeking land on the frontier of colonial America. With the coming of the

19th Century, the Scotch-Irish (protestant)

were joined by a new stream of emigrants

(Roman Catholic) from all four provinces of

Ireland.

Protestants and Catholics had distinctly

Different reasons for leaving Ireland.

Protestants emigrated in search of land.

Catholics fled oppression (religious

discrimination and denial of basic civil rights such as the right to vote or hold office) and

famine.

Since there is no evidence of any kind that the McGuffin family had any Roman Catholic

origins, it must be presumed that the four brothers probably originated in Northern Ireland. Also, since one of the brothers was alleged to have been a "preacher," not a "priest," the implication is that they were protestant.

The likelihood is that the McGuffin

brothers entered America in Virginia because

Joseph supposedly settled in Franklin County,

Va., and John David married Nancy Cook

from an established Virginia family (her

mother, Catherine, was born in Virginia,

probably in the 1780s).

John David McGuffin and Nancy Cook McGuffin migrated to Tennessee in the 1850s. We know this because their youngest child, Charlotte, was born in Virginia in about 1849 and their oldest child, Jonathon R, was

married in Greene County, Tenn., in 1856. The family's migration route probably was through the Shenandoah Valley because, "The Blue Ridge Mountains, which form the boundary between North Carolina and Tennessee, are barriers to travel. ... For that reason it was easier to come into Tennessee from the north than from the east. Many of the settlers, therefore, came into Tennessee from Virginia," reads *The Handy Book For Genealogists,* seventh edition, published by The Everton Publishers, Inc., Logan, Utah.

"Many of the Tennessee counties were

settled by Scotch-Irish immigrants coming into

the state via the Shenandoah Valley," *The*

*Handy Book For Genealogists* adds.

In the eighth edition of *The Handy Book*

*For Genealogists,* it was reported, "Early white settlers of Tennessee were predominantly English, but there were many Scotch-Irish,

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Germans, and Irish, as well as some French and Dutch."

John David McGuffin and Nancy Cook

McGuffin eventually moved to Sweetwater,

Monroe County, Tenn., as confirmed by the

1870 census, and it is believed the couple is

buried in Sweetwater.

**Jonathon David McGuffin and**

**Ellen Tellena Self**

As mentioned previously, Jonathon David

McGuffin was born in 1830 in Virginia. As a young man he moved with his family to Tennessee in the 1850s. He married Ellen

Tellena Self on September 7, 1856, in Greene County, Tenn. The couple produced five children: John David (b. 1857), James Jason (b. 1859), Margaret Angeline (b. 1860), Lewis Harmon (b. 1862) and Albert Perry (b. 1863).

Jonathon David McGuffin, Ellen, John, and James were counted in the 1860 U. S. census as living in Blue Springs, Greene County,

Tenn., prior to the Civil War. The 1860 census recorded the status of families on the eve of the Civil War. Many families would never be as intact or as stable again, including the McGuffins.

Jonathon David McGuffin was one of the

110,000 men from Tennessee who joined the

Confederate Army during the Civil War (in addition to those Confederate soldiers, an

estimated 31,000 men from east Tennessee fought with Union forces). We don't know when he joined the army, but oral family history relates that although he survived actual war hostilities, he was murdered for his horse as he was returning from the war in 1865. He was about 12 miles from home when he and two other soldiers were bushwhacked when they stopped to eat breakfast at a farm house. They tied up their horses and stood their guns inside the door while they ate. All three men where shot and killed when they rushed to investigate a disturbance outside the home. The murderers took the horses and escaped. Jonathon David and his companions were buried in a common grave in ~~Sullivan~~ Greene (corrected 6/4/2015) County near a place called Roaring Springs, Tenn.

At the time of Jonathon David McGuffin's death, he was about 35 years old. His widow, Ellen Tellena Self McGuffin, was about 27, his

children respectively were: John David, about

8, James Jason, about 6, Margaret Angeline,

about *5,* Lewis Harmon, about 3, and Albert

Perry, about 2. The couple had been married

about nine years.

Upon the death of Jonathon David

McGuffin, Ellen Tellena Self McGuffin took her children to live among her family (the

Selfs) in Midway, Greene County, Tenn. This

is confirmed by the 1870 U. S. census. From that information, we can conclude that she

raised her children with the support of her father and some of her brothers. She was not known to have remarried.

It is likely that the adult male role models

for the children of Jonathan David and Ellen Tellena were her father and brothers, because Albert Perry's accounts of his childhood, as told to his grandchildren, remembered his "Grandpap Self." In addition, the proximity of the residences of Ellen Tellena Self McGuffin and her father, Claiborne Self, and her bothers,

James, Thomas and Manning, as recorded in the 1870 U. S. census, makes it obvious that those families were close neighbors. Ellen Tellena Self McGuffin's mother, Margaret, is presumed to have died by the time Ellen moved with her children to the Self family environs. Margaret was listed in the 1850 U. S. census, but did not show up in the U. S. 1870 census.

It is apparent that Ellen Tellena Self

McGuffin's father, Claiborne Self, was at least moderately well to do. The U. S. census

reports that his real estate holdings in 1870 were valued as $22,000, and his personal estate was valued at $1,155 (both substantial sums for the times). Because of his wherewithal, it is likely that Claiborne Self paid for Albert Perry McGuffin's "finishing school."

One final note of interest: the Self family was located in Tennessee in the early days, as Ellen and both of her parents were born in Tennessee-Ellen in about 1838, Claiborne in about 1806, and Margaret in about 1804. There is a Claiborne County in Tennessee bordering both Virginia and West Virginia (close to Greene County), created in 1801. Further research is needed to determine whether there is any connection between Claiborne County and Claiborne Self.

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