

Story of the death of James McKnight from the ANNALS OF BUFFALO VALLEY

There are a lot of conflicting stories about which McKnight was killed by Indians. There were multiple occasions during the summer/fall when settlers were killed -hence some times confusing accoust detailed. The following seems the most accurate.

"Aaron K. Gift, Esquire, of Middleburg, furnished me with the following narrative of this occurrence, as related by his grandfather, Jeremiah Gift, who died at an advanced age, in 1843. Michael Lepley and Herrold served in the militia and were stationed at Fort Freeland, near which lived a family named McKnight, father and son. They secured a guard consisting of fourteen persons, among whom were Jacob Gift, Michael Lepley, and Herrold, to go to milk their cows. The cows were driven into a pen, and while milking, they were surprised by a party of thirty Indians, who fired upon them. They were so completely surprised, they could make very little resistance. Lep- ley, with others, and old Mr. McKnight, were killed. Herrold ran for the fort. As he ran along a field which sloped towards the fort, the soldiers in the fort heard the report of a rifle, and saw him fall, ; and an Indian scalp him. Jacob Gift also tried to make his escape, but was overtaken. When the pursuing soldiers came up, they found evidence of a hard fight; the ground -was bloody, his rifle broken in pieces, and himself tomahawked and scalped. He had sold his life as dear as possible. Young McKnight was the only one who escaped. He jumped Warrior run, and a tomahawk struck the top rail of the fence just after he cleared it. He was the only one left to tell the tale. Upon Jacob Gift's father the stroke fell heavy. "

The "Old Mr. McKnight" is I assume the James McKnight who is probated Nov 1779. Some claim it is William but he is alive and well long after and dies 1800. The memorial erected 1916 at Chillisquague Montour County has William McKnight who died 1800 and his son James who died 1823 and says its a memorial to William's parents who were killed by Indians but gives no names. None of the accounts actually say the wife was killed. James McKnight **d.** by 26 Nov 1779 Estate probated by Martha McKnight and John McKnight. Based on Martha's name first it is likely she is the wife and John the son. In Jul 1782 Stephen Foster sued James' estate. I found no other court/land records until Apr 1787. Margaret and John could not pay the expense evidently and James' 300 Acres in Turbot near James Wilson and William Bonham were sold in Apr to pay the debt. Where and when James obtained the 300 A is unknown. James, Margaret, and John were identified as having lived in Cumberland county. Cumberland County deeds V1 H pg 431 and also Orphan Court Apr 1787. In 1791 James **b.** 1763 moved to Seneca NY perhaps due to the loss of the land. Many of his family and wife's family followed him.

Comments

- The McMath book lists John, Andrew and James as children of James **d.** 1779 and that James was killed by Indians. The Memorial for William McKnight erected 1916 does not give his parents names or dates for even Williams but say his parents were killed by Indians. So presumably William is a son of James **d.** 1779 but the dates of their children make it more likely they were brothers. A newspaper account written much later says William was the one killed by Indians and that is clealy wrong as William lived another 20 years. William and James son James **b.** 1763 did live near each oher in 1790. Williams son James **b.** 1753 purchased land in Seneca not far form where James **d.** 1779 son James **b.** 1763 settled on Romulus. It seems very likely Williams and James were related but the exact relationship is not proven. .
- The McMath book says Mrs. Mcknight was a large woman and indicates she was scalped but made to to the fort with Polly and a child dying. It also says Andrew was kidnapped by the Indians and was with them several months. It also says he was 14 when captured which would make the year 1775..
- Founding members of the Presbyterian Church of Romulus 4 Apr 1802. James and Hannah McKnight, Hannah's sister Sarah Barr Carr, Henry Barr, and Andrew's wife Jane along with the McMaths. By 23 Nov 1804 admittted members: John Barr, Nancy Barr, Jenny Barr, Nancy Barr Jr, Polly Carr, Sarah Barr
- Books say James or William or Robert apply for a warrent to obtain land 300 A land Apr 13, 1769 in Northumberland area. Robert McNitt is the actual purchaser and has several other transactions

in the 1770s. His location lists him as living in Philadelphia. There is nothing that indicates he is connected to the family but its possible.

- The first deeds recorded in Northumberland are William McKnight while a resident of Buffalo township buying of three tracts land in 1774. They were "contiguous to and bounded on each other," in Turbutt township, about four miles east of Milton, along the Limestone run. One tract was called "Trout Spring;" the second, "Limestone Quarry," and the third, "McKnight's Addition." .321 acres, 100 acres, and 80 acres. He sold 321 acres in 1783
- The McKnight and Barrs are Presbyterian. Trees that connect them to the other religious records are unlikely. They founded Presbyterian churches and it seems to run strongly in both families. 1790 subscribers: Chillisquague Presbyterian church: William McKnight, Jas McKnight, William Irland, David Irland, Warrior Run Church: Alla McMath, James Welsh, John Barr, Thomas Barr, Jas McKnight. Philip Vickers Fithian: journal, 1775-1776 Volume 2 contains information on his visit to Warrior Run 1776. The journal describes the area in a lot of detail.
- 1778 James McKnight ran for judge. William McKnight was chosen a member of the Committee of Safety and was an active patriot. His son James was a legislator.
- James McKnight taxes in 1793 goes to David Hunter. David Hunter got land from James Espy and his wife Matha whose maiden name is McKnight. They married 14 Dec 1762 Derry Church, Carlisle, PA Rev John Roan officiating. Her mother was Mrs Joseph Wilson. Could Martha McKnight Espy be another child of James d. 1779 or was Martha married to a McKnight before becomes an Espy?
- Cumberland info:
 - Deeds Grantee: David Shippensburg, John Jr Juanita, Joseph Tyrone, Robert Franklin , Grantor: David Sho Southhampton, Elizabeth 1783 Allen Tp
 - William McKnight mill mentioned Jan 1774 Court records located between Letterkenny and Lurgan
 - James McKnight grantee Thomas Penn et al Attny grantor V6 A 170 Aug 21 1761 Mar 1 1900 West Pennsboro Tp
- Census and taxes:
 - Turbot taxes
 - 76 William McKnight (300) James McKnight (200) James has note "By being a New Settler" but William does not.
 - 78 John or James (150 A) William (300 A) and son James (single)
 - 80 John (200 A) William (150 A) and son James (single)
 - 81 John (200 A) William (150 A) and son James (single)
 - 82 John (200 A) William (300 A) and son James (single)
 - 83 John (200 A) William (200 A) Alla McMath (200 A) John and James McKnight single Dated 3 Dec 84
 - 85 John (200 A) William (200 A) Alla McMath (150 A)
 - 86 John (200 A) William (200 A) John (single)
 - 87 John (200 A) William (172 A) and son James (172 A) James (72 A) James and John single
 - 88 William (170 A) James (170 A) and son James (52 A) John McKnight (single)
 - 89 William (168 A) and son James (198 A) James (56 A - near Thomas and John Barr) James McKnight single
 - 90 Jas McKnight (70 A) William (170 A) and son James (170 A) Andrew (0 A but 2 horses 1 cow) James Barr single James McKnight listed as single but crossed out
 - 91 James McKnight (50 A smith) William (170 A) and son James (170 A) Andrew McKnight (0)
 - 92 James McKnight (70 A smith) William (170 A) and son James (170 A) Andrew McKnight (0)

around this time James McKnight goes to Seneca NY followed by Alla McMath, his brother Andrew McKnight and Hannah Barr's siblings.

- **93 James McKnight (smith) taxes to be paid by David Hunter and under David Hunter it gives James McKnight as what he is paying taxes for)**
William and son James, Andrew McKnight
 - 95 William and son James McKnight - Alla McMath not listed along along with James and Andrew McKnight
 - 97 David McKnight (smith) William and son James McKnight
- Wyoming: taxes 81 John McKnight (250 A), Robert (100 A) James (50 A) William 30 A) 87 Allison (1500 A) nonresident
- 1790 census Northumberland PA Page 24:: Henry Barr 1 - Page 26: Andrew McKnight 3, Alla McMath 11 - Page 27: James McKnight 3, John Barr 9, Thomas Barr 9 (all 3 sequential) - Page 28: James McKnight 4, William McKnight 3
- 1800 census Turbot, Northumberland, PA James McKnight 6 , David McKnight 7, James McKnight, William McKnight, William Irland
- 1800 enumeration List Turbot PA : James McKnight , William McKnight, David McKnight
- 1800 census Romulus, Cayuga: James McKnight 4M 3F, Andrew McKnight 3M 4F Ovid: John McKnight 2M 3F, Israel McKnight 2M 2F
- 1810 census Turbot PA James McKnight 6 , David McKnight 7 , East Buffalo Andrew McKnight, William McKnight 1
- 1810 census Seneca NY Romulus: Hannah McKnight 4M 3F, Andrew McKnight 4M 3F, Ovid: Luke McKnight 3M 4F, Israel McKnight 3M 2F, James Barr 3M 5F, Aurelius: McKnight David 1M 1F, Fatette, Seneca William Irland 10
- 1810 census Genesee Caldonia NY Robert McKnight
- 1820 census Genesee York NY Robert Thomas Niagara Hartland: Robert
- Land Warrent
 - Charles McKnight 18 Mar 1775
 - David McKnight 1 Jul 1784 (3) 26 May 1784
 - James McKnight 2 Seo 1785, 18 Aug 1811 Beaver
 - John McKnight 7 Feb 1774, 8 Jul 1784, 8 Jul 1784, 22 Mar 1793 The 1774 warrant is John Knight and near the warrent of Jonathan Robeson where it is describes as on the West Branch of Thimlock 6 miles from the North East Branch Susquenna and 48 miles from Sunbury. Is this the land in the tax records for James then John McKnight?
 - Paul McKnight 26 May 1784 1 Jul 1784
 - Robert McKnight 14 Jan 1773, 14 Jan 1774, 20 Jul 1774 (Buffalo), 2 Seo 1785
 - William McKnight 17 Seo 1774 Turbot got Patent 21 Seo 1774 682 113 121



Military Tract 1792 The McKnights and Barrs got land in Lots 60 and 64 In Romulus

- **Centennial celebration of the official organization of the town of Romulus, Seneca County, New York, Jun 13, 1894**
 - page 51: Early schools were also taught at James McKnight's and John Sayre's resident.
 - page 109: The present Presbyterian Church of Romulus was founded 4 Apr 1802. It is the oldest Prespyterian church in Seneca County and connected to the Synod of Albany. It was founded in the old red house on the Depue farm a mile south of Romulus. Members mentioned are: James and Hannah McKnight, Jane McKnight, Sarah Karr, , All McMath. There is a lot of description on were services were held etc.
 - Page 80: 1795, 1796 Town meetings were held at James McKnight
 - Page 58: Says James McKnight had an early hostelry at which the town meetings were held.. Page 35 mentions this land was on Seneca lake were C.C. Pontius lived at the time of the book
 - Page 37: 26 Nov 1799. They choose 3 delegates to a convention for the newly formed county of Cayuga. The also selected a committee of 4 to give instruction to the delegates and James McKnight was one

- Page 76 awards made by Onondaga Commissioners in cases of disputed titles in Romulus Military township: James McKnight 600 acres 24 Nov 1800
- Page 24: Mentions people who suffered Indian captivity during or after the Revolution and Andrew McKnight is listed.
- Page 27 & 29 Description of who came when. 1789 to 1794 (the official organization of Romulus) are Alla McMath and James McKnight. 1794 to 1800 Yerks and near Varick Andrew, McKnight & Karr families, early 1800s Sample family
- Page 30: death of McMath 1804 and James McKnight 1808
- Page 82: electors on the town valued at L100 James McKnight, James McKnight, James Barr and Alta McMath
- Page 74: Patents from Albany records; James Barr 192 substitute acres, James Karr 92 substitute acres