

MARY³ (DILL) BRACKEN (*Thomas² Dill, Captain Mathew¹*), of Manellan township, York county, Pennsylvania, born about 1746; died at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, about November 1826; buried probably in graveyard of First Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh. She married at Carlisle, by Rev. J. C. Bucher, 28 August 1765, JAMES BRACKEN, born ———; died between 11 September and 29 October 1778, son of Thomas Bracken (died ——— 1780) and Martha (Green) Bracken and grandson of William Bracken (died December 1749) and Hannah Bracken.

It is probable William Bracken came from Yorkshire, England. His name is found in New Castle, Delaware, when he made application 14 July 1702 for 100 acres near Red Clay Creek for the price of 12 pounds, 12 shillings and a bushel of wheat yearly rental (Penna. Arch. 2nd. ser. vol. 19. p. 324 and will of William Bracken, Book G. of Wills p. 459 Wilmington, Delaware). It was William Bracken too, whose name is on a list of inhabitants in 1749 fit to discharge public office (Penn. Arch. 1760-1775 p. 604).

Little is known of the youth of James Bracken for he was in middle life when he became attracted to the young girl, Mary Dill. Their marriage bond was signed and filed at Carlisle, 28th August 1765. The Reverend J. C. Bucher officiated at this wedding of the grandson of that staunch Friend, William Bracken, and a daughter of the bluest Presbyterian blood. And the earth still revolved around its axis. Even to the present time, Friends of that section of Pennsylvania claim the teachings of William Penn was paramount until the aggressive Scotch-Irish settled in their midst. With the advent of the fighting Irish, the gentle art of persuasion seemed to lose some of its cunning.

James Bracken had helped to pay for the building of Glebe House in 1760 in Huntington township and was a warden of Christ Church for a number of years. Without a doubt he was an influential member of the community and his death a loss to the settlement.

In his will dated 11 September and admitted to probate 29 October 1778, he left his property to his wife Mary and their children and directed that his three sons be bound out as apprentices in some trade. His will concluded with the words, "I constitute and appoint my well beloved wife Mary and my trusty friends, Lewis Lewis and John McGrew to be my executors." (Book D. of Wills at page 169 and Orphans Court records Book G. at page 127, Court House, York, Pennsylvania).

Upon her husband's death Mary's enegery and wisdom increased. She became the general nurse and midwife of the neighborhood.

A hurried call at midnight in wind, snow and rain was a challenge to her ability. To saddle her horse and to trot for miles over practically impassible roads was merely putting her on her mettle. Besides this work, the young woman baked and tilled the soil and reared her young children. She continued to live in Manellan township and a story handed down through the generations from Revolutionary days is interesting. Some sold-

iers raided her fields and trampled down crops they didn't eat. Mary scolded the trespassers, then drove their horses into her barns and locked the doors. She refused to surrender the livestock until the intruders had paid her for the damage they had committed against her and her children.

On 31 January 1785 Mary petitioned the Orphans Court at York "to appoint a guardian of her daughter Mary, aged ten years and upward, of Jane, aged eight years and upward and son John, aged five years and upward." The court appointed Matthew Dill of Manellan township their guardian, their mother's uncle as well as the brother-in-law of their late father. Orphans Court records Book E. at page 241, York, Pa.). Years later 27th March, 1799, Mary Bracken again came into court with John McGrew and filed an accounting of their stewardship of the Estate. Soon afterwards Mary followed some of her children to live in the flourishing settlement of Pittsburgh where she bought a small house in which she lived until her death. She is claimed to have been an early member of the First Presbyterian church of Pittsburgh and her body was buried in its adjourning cemetery. The early records of that church fail to verify this family tradition and the graves nearby have been largely demolished by the sweep of business on the site of the church holdings. Mary Bracken's will, however, proves conclusively she claimed Pittsburgh as her residence during her declining years. In that instrument she appointed John Thaw her sole executor. This act suggests that a strong friendship existed between the Brackens and this member of a family which later drew its millions from the industries of that region. *(Book 3 of Wills, page 185-7, Pittsburg, Pa.).

Much of the material relating to the Bracken family has been collected by Dr. Henry Bracken now living at Claremont California. He has published a most authentic book on the family as long ago as 1901 but has acquired voluminous material since that time.

He writes, "tradition claims William Bracken came to America in the "Brittania" in 1699. There is nothing to prove this. Apparantly there is no record in this country of the passengers on the Brittania except as relative to those who sickened and died."

Owing to the fine work accomplished by Dr. Bracken, merely a brief outline of the first few generations of this family has been included in this publication. (See William Bracken and his descendants, by Henry Bracken, The University Press, Minneapolis, Minn. 1901).

There is also a most interesting chart belonging to Mr. Louis E. Jones, of Chicago, Illinois, a member of the Bracken family. It is a very careful piece of work and is a distinct contribution to the family history.

The names of the children of Mary Dill and James Bracken were as follows; viz, Thomas, James, Caleb, a daughter who died young, Mary, Jane and John and follow in that order of their birth.

They were born probably in Manellan township, York, Pa.:

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1. THOMAS, born about 1765. He married about 1785, MARY —————
(? FLETCHER).

The names of the children were Esther, Mary, Anne, Jane, Charles, John, James and Martha.

Children (surname Bracken):

1. *Esther*, born — 1786; died young 21 August 1817 at Pittsburgh, Pa. She married 5 January 1809, at Pittsburg, Pa., *Gilbert McKeown*, born 6 May 1787; died 14 October 1861, at Davenport, Iowa; buried in City cemetery but later his body was removed to Oakdale. He married secondly in 1818, Anna Marie Weaver Skelton born, Philadelphia Pa. March 3 1802; died Davenport, Iowa, February 10 1892, daughter of Dr. John Paul Skelton, first druggist west of the Alleghany Mountains.

Esther (Bracken) McKeown died in Pittsburgh, Pa. soon after the birth of her youngest child. Her husband brought up their children first in Pittsburgh, Pa. and then after heavy loss by fire moved to Cincinnati, Ohio. In 1840 he moved to Davenport, Iowa, where he opened up a general store on corner of First and Main Streets later occupied by the St. James Hotel. He retired from business in 1851 and died in 1861 as result of stroke of apoplexy. In Pittsburgh, he was precentor and elder of Associate Reform Church now First Presbyterian Church. In his home at Davenport he organized the First Presbyterian Church of the town and of which it is said, he was an elder.

Children (surname McKeown):

- i. MARY JANE, born on a plantation near Martinsburgh, Berkeley county, Virginia 5 November 1810; died 15 May 1890 at Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She married Major WINCENTY SERAFIN DZIEWANOWSKI, 7 February 1843 at Walnut Grove, Wisconsin.

When Mary was two years old she was taken by her parents to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania on horseback from Martinsburgh. She was educated at Pittsburgh but owing to delicate health went to live with her uncle General Charles Bracken at Walnut Grove.

After her marriage from the house of the general with Major Dzienanowski, she went with her husband to a farm at Avoca, Wisconsin. Her life on the frontier was hard but she managed to offer hospitality to the Methodist Ministers who seemed to have a monopoly of the vicinity.

Her husband, the Major was of noble birth, born 5 April 1804, at Padolia, Poland. During Poland's struggle for freedom in 1832, Wincenty became a victim of circumstances and was forced to choose his exile. With four hundred of his countrymen, he landed in New York city in March 1834.

President Jackson had set apart in 1833 a section of Illinois for settlement for exiled Poles. It was to this point, Wincenty set out from New York city but upon stopping in Ohio, found the Polish Reservation in Illinois, completely taken up by Americans. Wincenty had learned the tanners trade at Newark New Jersey, but now took up smelting ore and took charge of works near Muscoda, Wisconsin. He built his cabin there and he was the first person to turn a furrow in the valley.

MATHEW DILL GENEALOGY

- ii. THOMAS BRACKEN, born 12 May 1812.
 - iii. JOSEPH GLASS, born 24 July 1813.
 - iv. GILBERT BRACKEN, born 15 August 1815. He married ALMIRA SHERMAN SMEAD.
 - v. JAMES CURRY, born — July 1817. died infancy same month.
2. Mary, born 8 February 1791 at Pittsburgh, Pa.; died 13 September 1824 at Cynthiana, Kentucky. She married 18 February 1813, at Pittsburg, Pa. *Alexander Downing*, born 9 August 1784 in Lancaster county, Pennsylvania; died 14 November 1865 at Vicksburg, Miss.

After her marriage to Alexander Downing, Mary Bracken Downing went to Cynthiana, Kentucky with her husband where he speculated heavily in real estate. Alexander Downing's hopes for the section did not materialize and after losing heavily, he moved his family on into Mississippi where his ventures proved more successful.

Children (surname Downing):

- i. THOMAS ALEXANDER, born 18 November 1813 at Cynthiana, Ky. died unmarried 15 June 1861.
 - ii. ALEXANDER THOMAS, born 18 February 1815. He married first 7 January 1848 MARGARET E. CONRAD. He married secondly .. June 1854, MARY ANN OWEN.
 - iii. JOHN ROSENBERG, born 17 February 1817. He disappeared in 1843 from his father's home in Mississippi.
 - iv. JAMES CURRY, born 13 March 1819; died young unmarried — 1837.
 - v. MARY BRACKEN, born 28 September 1821; died — 1856. She married Rev. W. HALL.
- 3. *Anne*, born ————. She married *David Pride*.
 - 4. *Jane*, born ————. She married *Thomas Campbell*.
 - 5. *Charles*, born ————. He married *Sarah Jones*.
 - 6. *John*, born ————.
 - 7. *James*, born ————; died unmarried at about 25-30 years of age.
 - 8. *Martha*, born ————. She married *James Rolland Curry*.

Children (surname Curry):

- ii. JAMES
- iii. CALEB, born 1767. He married 14 August 1793 REBECCA MILLER.

Children (surname Bracken):

- 1. *Rachel*, born 5 November 1795. She married *Shaidlock Negus*.
- 2. *James*, born 14 October 1796, a twin; died infancy.
- 3. *Solomon*, born 14 October 1796, a twin. He married *Sarah Rogers*.
- 4. *Elisha*, born 24 November 1798. He married first *Phoebe Brans*, secondly *Esther Fawcett*.
- 5. *Sarah*, born 5 November 1799. She married *Isaac Branson*.
- 6. *Caleb*, born 24 May 1802; died in infancy.
- 7. *Caleb 2nd*, born 24 October 1803. He married *Mary Binns*.
- 8. *Rebecca*, born 17 January 1806; died in infancy.

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(Surname Bracken).

- iv. Daughter died young.
- v. MARY, born 1773.
- vi. JANE, born 20 April 1775.. She married 24 December 1795,
JAMES MORRISON, of County Antrim, Ireland.
Children (surname Morrison):
 - 1. Nancy, born 18 October 1796. She married *Benjamin Kendrick*.
 - 2. John, born 4 June 1779. He married *Nancy Majors*.
 - 3. James, born 8 March 1801. He married *Mary S. Duggans*
 - 4. Mary Bracken, born 24 November 1803. She married *William Lafferty Robb*.
 - 5. Norris, born 16 May 1808 He married *Jane Horner*.
- vii. JOHN, born — 1779; died unmarried.