

HENRIETTA MCDONALD LEFTWICH

By Ray Leftwich

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My, mother, Henrietta McDonald Leftwich, was born October 28, 1885 in a log house on Little Indian Creek in the Northwest sector of Putnam County, Tennessee (Route 1, Buffalo Valley, Tennessee). She was the daughter of Mary Wallace and Henry Brooks McDonald, and the granddaughter of Samuel King McDonald. Mother had one brother, Jim, and four sisters: Betty, Willie, Jessie (twins) and Zulema.

I was born in the same log house, which still stands today, except it has been moved a few hundred yards to higher ground after the June 28, 1928 flood.

There was very little difference in mother's early life than those at the time Jesus Christ lived on earth. I speak especially of the physical living conditions. There were no, what we call, modern conveniences. They grew on the farm most of what food they ate and the clothes they wore. Their drinking water came from a hand dug well at the rear of the house. Sheep were raised mainly for their wool. They sheared the sheep, carded the wool, spun it into thread and wove it into cloth on a loom. As a child I remember mother and Aunt Betty carding wool, spinning it into thread on a spinning wheel and using a loom to make the thread into cloth. Very few clothes were bought, mostly cloth that was made into clothes. "Ready made" clothes were rare.

Sugar (often brown sugar), coffee, salt and some few other foods were bought. They made their own soap using lye and pork fat. The lye was made in an ash-hopper, a device whereby water was poured over wood ashes and the drippings was lye. PRIMITIVE is the best word I know to describe their living conditions.

Mother attended such schools as were available in those days to the extent that she qualified as a teacher and taught school some years prior to her marriage. She was an avid reader all the days of her life. She was a member of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church at Trinity, located just across the Smith County line at Enigma.

Mother had class and was truly a lady of the old school. She was one of the most unselfish and caring persons I have ever known. As a way of life, she did without in order that others could have. I say this not lightly, but simply as a matter of fact. Those who knew her know this to be true. Mother was twenty-two years old when she married my father, William Roscoe Leftwich, December 30, 1907. They were the parents of eight children: Robert, Fred, Emaline, Ray, Billy, Henry Frank (died at age 4), Charles and his twin brother, who died at birth.

Mother was an optimist and my earliest remembrance of her was her cheerfulness. She sang lots, mostly gospel songs but lively ballads and songs as well. Some of them I still remember and can sing them. She could not stand to see a person or an animal abused. To her detriment, she quickly defended both. I remember as a child when she stopped a man from cruelly beating his team of mules that were pulling a heavy wagon load. Much later in life that man recalled that incident to me and told me how much he loved and respected her.

Tragedy did not pass her by. On Mother's 14<sup>th</sup> birthday her mother died. I remember with clarity her suffering when my two brother's died, and mother was only 56 years of age when my father died. Though somewhat frail she was tough mentally and therefore able to cope with life's sturm and drang (Storm and Stress).

A lover of flowers and garden, she took much pride in being a farmer. Not many years before her death, I was mowing her yard and tore down the web of a garden spider; she was disappointed because she told me she had been watching that spider all fall. A lover of all things, great and small, she taught me to watch garden spiders and their beautiful webs.

When my father died, February 14, 1942, there was a mortgage on the home place and mother paid off the mortgage in a few years, and the home farm together with Social Security supported her comfortably from then on. She followed the axiom: use it up, wear it out, make it do, do without. If she had three apples, she would give one away, eat one and either can or dry the other one. It has been written: "There are two way to be rich, one is to have more and the other is to want less." If you believe this, mother was truly a rich lady. Her tombstone should bear the epitaph: "She worked her passage." The writers of the 13<sup>th</sup> Chapter of Corinthians and the 31<sup>st</sup> Chapter of Proverbs must have had someone like mother in mind when they so eloquently described love and a good person. She could make "egg money" go father than anyone I ever knew. Knotty or wormy apples that anyone else would have thrown out, mother would peel and save, sometimes a ¼ or ½ of the apple and dray or "sulphurate" pieces and later make the best half moon pies you ever tasted.

I can still see the gleam in her eyes when I returned from overseas after World War II.

Mother died August 30, 1968, almost 83 years of age. She is buried in Crest Lawn Cemetery in Cookeville, Putnam Co., TN. As the poet said: "She lived in her house by the side of the road and was truly a friend to man."

(Some other member of my family can, and I hope will, add much to this).

Census Place: 1880          District 5, Jackson Co., Tennessee

Source: FHL Film 1255264 National Archives Film T9-1264 Page 241A

|                  | Relation      | Sex    | Marr   | Race           | Age | Birthplace |
|------------------|---------------|--------|--------|----------------|-----|------------|
| Henry MC DONALD  | Self          | M      | M      | W              | 30  | TN         |
| Occ:             | Farmer        | Fa: TN | Mo: TN |                |     |            |
| Mary MC DONALD   | Wife          | F      | M      | W              | 29  | TN         |
| Occ:             | Keeping House | Fa: TN | Mo: TN | (Mary Wallace) |     |            |
| James MC DONALD  | Son           | M      | S      | W              | 6   | TN         |
| Occ:             | At Home       | Fa: TN | Mo: TN |                |     |            |
| Bettie MC DONALD | Dau           | F      | S      | W              | 4   | TN         |
| Occ:             | At Home       | Fa: TN | Mo: TN |                |     |            |
| Millie MC DONALD | Dau           | F      | S      | W              | 1   | TN         |
| Occ:             | At Home       | Fa: TN | Mo: TN |                |     |            |
| Jessie MC DONALD | Dau           | F      | S      | W              | 1   | TN         |
| Occ:             | At Home       | Fa: TN | Mo: TN |                |     |            |
| Wirt MC DONALD   | Nephew        | M      | S      | W              | 13  | TN         |
| Occ:             | Works On Farm | Fa: TN | Mo: TN |                |     |            |
| Carol MENIER     | Other         | M      | S      | B              | 14  | TN         |
| Occ:             | Farm Laborer  | Fa: TN | Mo: TN |                |     |            |

Census Place: 1900          District 12, Putnam Co., Tennessee

Dwl: 1 Family: 1

Henry MC DONALD Head W M March 1849 51 Widow (27 years married) Farmer TN TN TN  
 Bettie K. MC DONALD Dau. W F October 1875 24 Single TN TN TN  
 Jessie F. MC DONALD Dau. W F November 1878 Single TN TN TN  
 Willie J. MC DONALD Dau. W F November 1878 Single TN TN TN  
 Huerie E. MC DONALD Dau. W F October 1885 14 Single TN TN TN (*Henrietta McDonald Leftwich*).  
 Julana C. MC DONALD Dau. W F December 1887 12 Single TN TN TN

Census Place: 1900      District 12, Putnam Co., Tennessee: *Living next door:*

Dwl: 2 Family: 2

James WALLACE Head W M May 1820 80 Widow (56 years married) Farmer TN NC NC

Robert F. WALLACE Son W M December 1844 45 Single TN TN TN

Sallie WALLACE Dau. W F December 1846 43 Single TN TN TN

Census Place: 1910      District 11, Putnam Co., Tennessee

Dwl: 77 Family: 77

**William R. LEFTWICH** Head W M 27 Married (2 yrs. married) Farmer TN TN TN

*(William Roscoe Leftwich)*

**Henry E. LEFTWICH Wife** W F 25 Married (2 yrs. married) (1 child born, 1 child living) TN TN TN

*(Henrietta McDonald)*

**Robert L. LEFTWICH** Son W M 11/12 Single TN TN TN

Source: Putnam County Tennessee Cemeteries by Maurine Patton, pg. 542:

WALLACE FAMILY GRAVEYARD: Located in Ensor Valley on Indian Creek, Putnam Co., TN

Robert F. Wallace – b. 29 December 1843 – d. 3 April 1925

J.R. Wallace – b. 8 May 1817 – d. 13 December 1900

Rhoda Wallace – b. 23 February 1852 – d. 3 April 1898

**Mary McDonald** – b. 14 June 1849 – d. 28 October 1899 *(Mary Wallace md Henry Brooks McDonald).*

Sally Wallace – b. 17 June 1846 – d. 3 April 1925

Arabel Wallace – b. 13 November 1819 – d. 3 June 1891

Source: Putnam County Tennessee Cemeteries by Maurine Patton, pg. 609

YOUNG CEMETERY: Located in the lower end of Putnam County on Jared Church Road near the Smith County line on the William Hill. Also called Young and Watts Cemetery.

**H. B. McDonald** – b. 2 March 1849 – d. 12 July 1907 *(Henry Brooks McDonald md Mary Wallace).*

Source: Putnam County Tennessee Cemeteries by Maurine Patton, pg. 255

CREST LAWN MEMORIAL CEMETERY: Located on Buffalo Valley road. Established in 1955.

**William Roscoe Leftwich** – b. 14 April 1882 – d. 14 February 1942

**Henrietta Leftwich** – b. 28 October 1885 – d. 30 August 1968 *(Henrietta McDonald).*

**Henry Frank Leftwich** – b. 16 August 1921 – d. 13 April 1923

**Infant Leftwich** – b. 24 July 1926 – d. 4 August 1926

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