



John Burruss 1776-1846

John Burruss, Jr, was the third son born to Reverend John Burruss and his wife Rachel Terrell. John was born on December 14, 1776 in Caroline County, Virginia. His father owned a 225 acre farm and a grist mill. His father John Burruss, Sr., was one of the first Baptist ministers in Virginia.

When John Burruss, Jr was less than two years old his father died for reasons lost to history. John Jr. had two older brothers, Henry and Thomas, and one younger brother, Nelson. In 1780, less than two years after his father's death, John's mother Rachell Terrell Burruss married Thomas Hackett, a quaker. Rachel and Thomas Hackett had at least five children and these children grew up in the same household with the Burruss brothers.

Because John's father, the Reverend John Burruss left a will, it is assumed he must have known he was ill. He was only 33 years old when he died. While not totally uncommon, it was somewhat an oddity for a healthy man of 33 to write a will. In his will, it was his wish that his four sons be educated "in a manner that would make them suitable to do county business" but in a plain fashion. From the Burruss family letters kept by John Burruss, Jr and subsequently by his descendants, we know that John Burruss and his brothers received that education.

On January 8, 1886 in Spotsylvania county, Virginia, John Burruss, Jr married Ann Lewis Merriwether, the daughter of David Merriwether and Mary Ann Lewis. Ann Lewis Merriwether was the great granddaughter of Robert Lewis and Jane Merriwether. Robert Lewis was born in Gloucester County, Virginia and became one of the largest land owners in Albemarle County, Virginia, owning over 6500 acres near Ivy Depot. Ann Lewis Merriwether was born July 7, 1785.

John Burruss, Jr spent some time in Albemarle County, Virginia and married into a prominent Virginia family. He possessed carpentry skills, and helped to build "Snugly" the homeplace of Robert Lewis, who was the son of Major John Lewis and his wife Ann Lewis of Spotsylvania County. This Robert Lewis was the uncle of John Burruss, Jr's wife. Snugly was located near Pen Park, which was the family home of another prominent family, Gilmer. Dr. Gilmer was a professor at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia and taught in one of the residences on the present day "lawn" on the campus.

From Carmel Church records we know John Burruss, Jr attended services in the church founded by his father. In the early 1800's John and Ann Lewis Merriwether Burruss left Virginia for Jefferson County, Kentucky and moving later, to Carrollton, Greene County, Illinois. The primary motivation for their relocation was likely the intense dislike of slavery. With Quaker roots the Burruss family were vexed to know how to deal with the issue. By law, Virginians could only free one slave a year. While his brothers owned slaves, John Burruss, Jr. did not.

With roots deep in Virginia soil and a vast distance from family and friends, it could not have been a move without reservation. John's grandfather Jacob Burruss had been one of the first men to settle in Caroline County. His father had been well respected, and the Burruss name carried familiarity and respect. Like the Burruss pioneers before him, John Burruss, Jr and his family would become one of the first families in Kentucky and likely one of the first families in Illinois.

John and Ann Merriwether Burruss were the parents of 10 children, eight survived infancy.

Twins Burruss were born 9-11-1806 and died shortly after birth

John Henry Burruss was born March 16, 1808 and died 12, 17, 1882 in Saline County, Mo. He married Martha Ballenger on May 21, 1840 in Green County, Illinois. The couple had 7 children.

Mary Ann Merriwether Burruss was born 6-11-1810 and died March 10, 1818.

David Nelson Burruss was born June 25, 1813 and died July 18, 1851. He married his first cousin, Frances Cornelia Burruss on Nov 21, 1839 in Greene County, Illinois. The couple had 5 children. Four survived infancy.

Frank Burruss was born July 17, 1815 and died three days later on July 18, 1815.

Barbara Terrell Burruss was born Dec 10, 1816 and died Nov 27, 1854. She married George Winston, and they had two daughters.

George Lewis Burruss was born Feb 15, 1820 and died Jan 23, 1854. George married Mariah Jane Wood on April 26, 1846 in Greene County, Illinois. The couple had 7 children.

Thomas Lewis Burruss was born Dec 22, 1827 died May 7, 1828

Chiles Terrell Burruss was born Dec 22, 1827 died Jun 12, 1828