

Editor's Note: This manuscript was written by Fannie Roy Micou (b. August 11, 1874), and tells the story of several generations of her father's family. I have an interesting photo of James Micou standing beside three of his first cousins, Andrew, William and Elijah Ingles, probably taken near the Ingles Ferry in Pulaski County. I had always wondered why Jim (noticeably shorter than the three bearded and lanky Ingles brothers) was included in this picture, as if he were close kin. This memoir explains all about the McClanahan sisters (nine of them!) and the fact that many of the sisters ended up raising the children of Fannie McClanahan Micou. My great, great grandmother, Catherine McClanahan Ingles, graciously agreed to bring Jim into her home. I have always wanted to know more about this generation of my ancestors who grew up "over the river" ...on the Pulaski side of the New River, and this little narrative provides some fascinating details!

Introduction

My great-grand mother, Katherine McClanahan, had eight sisters. One of them, Fanny married James Micou, had three children...see Family Narrative History – narrative loaned by Bridget Hill, February 2009

To my nieces and nephews and coming generations of descendants of Thomas William Micou and Fannie McClanahan -

"They who cherish not the memory of their ancestors will not have a posterity to cherish theirs."

In the Virginia Magazine which I have given you, there is a brief history tracing the Micou family back to the year 1685. A booklet "The McClanahans" tells of this family. Thus you will see that on one side, your ancestors were French (Micou) and on the other Scotch Irish (McClanahan). You will have no trouble in establishing your line if you wish to join the Huguenot Society, the D.A.R., etc.

I shall begin this brief history with my great grandparents – James Roy Micou and his wife Fanny Matthews in Essex County; and Colonel Elijah McClanahan and his wife Agatha Lewis, daughter of Colonel Andrew Lewis (son of General Andrew Lewis) – who lived in Roanoke County. At that time, about 1800, Roanoke County was a part of Botetourt County.

Sometime in the early 1830's, Thomas William Micou, second son of James Roy Micou and Fanny Matthews Micou, decided to leave Essex County and "go west" to seek his fortune. I have often wondered about his journey – whether he traveled alone or in a group, how long he was in making the trip through Tidewaters and Piedmont to the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Here he came to a beautiful valley and decided to settle in the small town of Big Lick which was a trade center for a prosperous farming community. His health was not so good in the low lands and he hoped the mountain climate would suit him better.

At Big Lick he opened a store and had a general mercantile business. One of my great aunts told me that he was “a cultured Christian gentleman” and soon made many friends in the community.

His business prospered and all went well. Colonel Elijah McClanahan had a big farm near the town. He also had nine charming daughters, some of whom were married before this time. The coming of a most eligible young bachelor was a most interesting happening! He was a frequent guest in the McClanahan home and a romance developed between him and the eighth daughter, Fanny. It met with parental approval and culminated in marriage in the year 1838 or '39.

Soon the newlyweds were settled in their own home in Big Lick and the future looked bright. In due time they were blessed with children – Virginia, Grace, and on October 23, 1845, a son James Roy. This son was named for both his grandfather and his “Uncle Jimmy” who was clerk of the court in Essex County for over fifty years. An oil painting of him hangs in the courthouse at Tappahannock.

It is well the future is veiled, else the sunshine and happiness of the present might be marred by shadows of storm clouds ahead. The Micou family had but a few short years of happiness and prosperity ahead. The father's health failed only a few months after his son was born. Beginning with severe headaches, a mental illness developed. This was no doubt caused by a brain tumor. He entered a mental hospital at Staunton, but medical science in this field was only in its infancy. Seemingly nothing could be done and Thomas William Micou died in September 1846. Due to difficulties of travel at that time, he was buried in Trinity Church Cemetery. The inscription on his tombstone can still be read.

Thus the fortunes of life change quickly. Fanny McClanahan Micou, who a few short years before was a happy bride, is at this time (1846) a young widow with three small children.

Women of that period were not trained for business or professional careers. She sold her business and home in Big Lick and went back to her parental home. I think all the nine daughters were then married and in homes of their own. In the book entitled “The McClanahans” one may find whom each of the daughters married.

Virginia, Grace, and Jimmy were happy with their grandparents. Jimmy, not a year old when his father died, did not remember any other home. Throughout his whole life of eighty years, his grandfather was his beloved hero. However, it was not just a little boy's fancy that made

him a great man. Elsewhere we find Colonel McClanahan spoken of as "a man of noble build in body, mind, and spirit."

Now as I think of my father (James Roy Micou), I feel that he must have absorbed many of these noble traits of character in those early days of close association with his grandfather.

But again "Time" makes changes for this family. In 1852 Colonel Elijah McClanahan died and his widowed daughter Fanny Micou married Reverend Charles Miller, a Presbyterian minister, and they moved to Christiansburg, Virginia.

Of this period my knowledge is very limited. The children were not too happy over the changes and Fanny's health was not very good. She had two sons by her second marriage. They were Lewis and William McClanahan Miller. Fanny McClanahan Micou Miller died when in her "forties." Virginia was now about eighteen years of age, Grace was sixteen and Jimmy fifteen. Now, as orphans, they were made welcome in the homes of several of their aunts.

Virginia spent most of her time at "Ingleside" the home of her "Aunt Agie" who married Dr. John Ingles.

Grace called Christiansburg home with her Aunt Mary Montague and other relatives.

Jimmy was given a home with his Aunt Kitty who as Catherine McClanahan had married Thomas Ingles.

The two Ingles homes were on the New River about a mile apart. A portion of these farms is now part of the city of Radford, Virginia. The home of William Ingles is near the site where the old Thomas Ingles home stood.

This chain of circumstances caused Jimmy (James Roy Micou) to grow up with his Ingles cousins as more like brothers and these close ties remained throughout his life. Having never known his father, and the Micou relatives living so far away – so it seemed in those days – he did not know them.

After I was grown, I contacted a few of the cousins. Among them was Paul Micou, an Episcopal minister who wrote the articles in the Virginia Magazine concerning the Micou family.

Colonel William Montague who married Mary McClanahan, was guardian and administrator for the Micou children after their mother died. It was a critical period with the War Between the States starting. He made some unwise investments which failed and most of the parental inheritance was lost.

In September 1861 before Jimmy was sixteen, his trunk was packed for him to go with his Aunt Jane McClanahan Lewis to Florida to enter a boy's school. He went to a recruiting rally in Christiansburg. Feeling ran high and he joined the army with the "Montgomery Fencibles." Thus his patriotism cost him his education. The decisions of a moment often change the course of one's entire life.

Though a rather delicate boy, he often said hardships of army life made a man of him. He was in the Valley Campaign under Jackson and also fought in "Seven Days Battle" around Richmond. He changed from Infantry to Cavalry and was in Jenkins Cavalry until the end of the war. He came back to his Aunt Kitty Ingles' with whom he made his home until he married.

Nannie Jury was born in Mt. Vernon, Kentucky on March 5th, 1852. Her mother was Elianna May, one of the old May family of Albemarle County, Virginia. I am told she was beautiful, but she died when Nannie was only four years old. There were four children and the father soon married again. At the approximate age of fourteen, Nannie came to Virginia to live with her Aunt Sunny May Rogers and go to school. Mr. Rogers was principal of Christiansburg Female College and his wife was a music teacher. These were happy years for Nannie and she made good use of them. She was a good student and especially loved music. She had taken piano lessons since she was six years old.

At the age of seventeen Nannie Jury was offered a job as governess to little Mary Jones, young daughter of "Aunt Kitty" the former Mrs. Thomas Ingles, who after Mr. Ingles' death, had married Mr. Jones. They still lived at the Thomas Ingles home, however, and it was still home to Jimmy Micou.

Providence works in strange ways! In summer (August) of 1869, "Aunt Kitty" sent Jimmy to Christiansburg to get the new governess. He always said it was "love at first sight" for him and that the moment he saw her he said in his heart "she is just the girl for me." Such was another quick decision with momentous bearing on his future. Now, they had the twelve mile ride in the buckboard (her trunk in the back) to the farm on New River. It was a happy and romantic year for them. Nannie taught only one year.

On the 28th of September 1870, eighteen year old Nannie Jury married James Roy Micou, at the home of her Aunt Mary Enser in Bristol, Tennessee. Dr. Caldwell, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, officiated.

Now this young couple was beginning a long matrimonial journey. They were poor, as were most people of the South after the war, but love and youth know no barriers and with courageous, happy hearts they faced life together.

Grace Micou had married Jesse Miller some years before and they had gone to Holly Springs, Mississippi. She wanted her brother and his bride to come there, too. Cotton was in demand at a high price and prospects were bright for the cotton farmer. The trip from Bristol, Tennessee to Holly Springs, Mississippi was their honeymoon.

Their courage had a real test here, poor housing, few comforts, and worst of all illness from mosquitoes causing malaria. Their first child, May Fenton, was born July 30th, 1871. After two more years there, all were sick and weakened by malaria, so they decided to come back to Virginia. Soon afterwards, the Jesse Miller family came too. Jimmy said, "Health and life in Virginia though poor, were better than money and a grave in Mississippi."

They were welcomed back home at "Aunt Kitty's" until he could find a place to go. He rented a farm across the river almost opposite Aunt Kitty's home and with his young wife and baby, moved into a small house.

Here on August 11th, 1874, their second child, another daughter, Fanny Roy, was born. She it is who is now writing this article in the year 1958, eighty four years later. I regret that more records were not kept, so that I could do this more ably.

The Micou's had not lived there long, until they were forced to make another move. The owner of the land sold it and the new owner moved in on a Saturday night without any notice whatever. I have heard my father say he was never as mad in his entire life.

Aunt Kitty's son Andrew ("Reubin" to Jimmy), who was like a brother to Jimmy, was living at Ingles Ferry in the old tavern. He had been married about a year. He helped them move, on Sunday, up to the tavern with him and his family. This was another tie that drew the two families closer together. The two young mothers lived harmoniously and throughout their lives, were the closest of friends.

In a few months my father took a five year lease on a large farm at Dunkards Bottom, owned by Miss Lucy Cloyd and we moved there. Here they hoped to be settled for five years at least, but after only two years Miss Cloyd decided to marry and wanted her farm. She offered to sell my father 100 acres fronting on the old Rock Road if he would release her from the contract.

Thus, another move was in prospect. Every foot of this land was in timber – even a clearing had to be made to build a house. In later years this timber would have been most valuable, but then it only represented much hard labor to clear the land for crops and pastures. Logs were cut and hand hewed during the winter and in the spring of 1877 the house was built. It was a log house into which this brave young couple moved and which with many improvements through the

years, was to be home the rest of their lives. After so many moves their hearts must have been singing. "Be it ever so humble, there's no place like home."

A month after this move their first son was born on May 30th, 1877. He was named William Thomas Micou. There were few hospitals, no telephones, and not many doctors in those days. Our family doctor lived in Newbern – six miles away. There were only two houses and woods all the way. Most of the travel was by horseback. So it took time to reach a doctor but he always came day or night in all kinds of weather. The bill for maternity cases was from ten to fifteen dollars. What changes the years have brought!

I could write much about these changes, but must get back to family history. There was much hard work to be done. Papa built two log cabins for tenants. Labor was plentiful and cheap but money was scarce.

Three more busy but happy years passed and Dr. Jordan was sent for again. On April 2nd, 1880, another son James McClanahan became a member of the Micou family. Mother called him Jamie (Scotch) all her life, but to most others he was Jim – as was his father.

In those days you seldom heard of a "bottle baby." If a mother did not have enough milk, it was supplemented by the cow. The doctor prescribed fresh, warm milk for Jim in his third summer. Consequently he took his little tin cup to milk Gap every day and drank his fill of warm cow's milk. Germs didn't bother people much then and this saved lots of work!

On the 24th of March, 1883, a third son was born. They named him Ernest Lee Micou. It was often my job to rock the cradle or "babysit" while Mother was busy. The cradle we were all rocked in was a nice, big, handmade one and would be an antique today. It was given away later for lack of storage space or because someone needed it, without a thought of sentimental value! How I'd love to see it now!

Several rooms were added to the house as the family grew, but by no means did every member have to have his own room as is the case today. What a spoiled generation is the present one! They want not only private rooms but private baths, too!

A fourth son was born on July 29th, 1886. They named him Andrew Lewis for cousin Andrew Ingles.

A fifth boy came in 1889 but due to some respiratory trouble, lived only two days.

The last child born to these parents was a daughter, Agnes Ingles whose birth date was September 8, 1890.

The 28th of that September was the twentieth wedding anniversary of my parents. Maybe the years had not fulfilled the dreams and hopes of that day, but together they had shared the realities of life. I imagine as they “took inventory” twenty years later they were happy and felt that those years had been good years.

We seven Micou children were blessed in being reared in a Christian home and community. Our father had many noble characteristics, but it was Mother who was the spiritual leader in the home. It was she who taught us our first prayer and had family worship around the fireside each evening. She read and re-read the stories of the Bible that we loved. She taught us verses from the Bible and drilled us on our catechism. She took us to Sunday School and taught a class.

We had to cross the river and attend Sunday School in an old barn at first, but Aunt Kitty and Aunt Agie were the leading “spirits” in getting a chapel built. Here we had Sunday School and preaching service. Before this we had no church service nearer than the “Old Brick Church” or Lovely Mount. Papa would hitch the horses to the wagon and take us to services. It was a distance of four or five miles and the river to ford or ferry. The road was rough and it took a long time. It must have taken real effort for our parents, but we children got a thrill out of those rides.

Mother always prepared Sunday dinner on Saturday, and we all had good appetites for country ham, salt risen bread, etc., when we returned home about two o’clock. Later we had a surry and buggy which made traveling easier, but still very slow compared to that of the automobile. But man is never satisfied! He still desires to travel faster. I sincerely doubt that his zeal for worshipping his God is as great as was that of his forefathers.

After a school house was built on the lower side of our farm (present site is where road turns to go to the Appalachian dam), a Sunday School was started there and Cousin Andrew Ingles was the superintendent. Mother and Aunt Grace were two of the teachers. The Millers had moved to a farm near ours. Other families had moved in and it was a lively neighborhood.

There was more genuine hospitality than there is now – not so much superficial pride and show. Neighbors “dropped in” or came to spend the day, bringing several children, without special invitation. With our so called “high standards” of today, much has been lost of the simple love of life and true neighborliness.

The social life of the Ingles Ferry neighborhood when I was in my teens was an interesting period that stirs many memories about which I could write pages. There were such activities as summer company, big trunks, dinings, or spending the day, dances, hayrides, moonlight picnics,

watermelon feasts, etc. That was indeed “the gay nineties” but I must hasten on to real family history.

We now deal with the course of events concerning each of the seven children of Jim and Nannie McCou, my beloved parents.

May Fenton Micou did not marry and was Mother’s help in the home. She was never very strong physically and during the last ten years of her life she suffered much. She died in December 1917.

I, Fannie Roy Micou, after two years in college, began teaching at the age of eighteen and made teaching my career. I attended the University of Virginia for many summers to gain necessary professional training. I did not marry and have now retired. I am now living with my brother Jim at Dublin, Virginia and at present am writing this narrative history. The date of my death will be supplied by someone else.

At the age of sixteen, William Thomas Micou went to Pewee Valley, Kentucky to live with his Uncle Will Jurey and clerk in his store. He studied to go into insurance work later, and worked it as a side line for some time. Finally he became a full time salesman for the Mutual Life of New York. This became his life’s work. He married Georgia Davidson of Louisville, Kentucky on June 6, 1906. About three years later they moved to Louisville where they lived until his death on April 20th, 1952. They had four children, the first of whom was Sarah Louise. She married Ben D. Rake and at present they live at Winchester, Kentucky where she teaches and he is a minister and is also treasurer and business manager for Southeastern Christian College of Winchester. They have two children, Betty Lou and Ben, Jr. Betty was married (August 31, 1957) last year to James B. Green, Jr. of Greenville, South Carolina. She is a registered nurse and he is studying for the ministry.

The second of William T. and Georgia Micou’s children was Virginia who is Mrs. James L. Addams of Louisville, Kentucky. They have one son James, Jr., who married Joyce Redden, September 14, 1956. He is now an undertaker in Louisville.

The third child, William T. Jr., married Elizabeth – with their own prosperous business dealing in paper and paper products. They have two children, Harriet, now sixteen, and Billy (William T., III) who is eight.

Freeman D. married Jean Short and they also live in Louisville. They have two children – Gwen and Robert Freeman. Freeman is also in the paper business.

Now back to my immediate family, namely my brother James McClanahan Micou. He married Virginia E. Davis of Erwin, Tennessee on February 10th, 1909. Jim was a civil engineer and chief of the party that located the Virginia and Southwestern Railroad in Tennessee and North

Carolina. A year after his marriage, they came to the farm in Virginia and built the home he still lives in.

Their children are Frances McClanahan Micou who does clerical work in Richmond, Virginia. Frances has not married.

Nancy Kay is now Mrs. John Norris and lives in North Carolina.

Agnes Madeline is now Mrs. Cliff Lilly of Pennsylvania.

James Roy Micou III (Jimmy) is still in school in Dublin.

The youngest child of James and Virginia Micou, William Davis, married Evelyn Courtney King, and lives in Dublin, Virginia.

They have two children, Roger William and Martha Courtney, both in school in Dublin.

Virginia Davis Micou died on February 28th, 1940. In 1952, James McClanahan Micou married Mrs. Sallie King, the mother of Evelyn, William's wife. They live at "the Maples" house built by him in 1910 on part of the farm bought by his father in 1876.

Ernest Lee Micou, fifth child of James and Nannie Micou, married Mary Kate Freeman of Rutherfordton, North Carolina on November 17, 1911. He was a civil engineer for state highways of Virginia for many years until he was disabled by paralysis in 1942. He bought a farm in Cumberland County near Farmville and settled his family there. His one regret was that his work kept him separated from his family so much of the time. There were five children in this family.

The first was Lewis Alan, now Dr. Micou of Buena Vista, Virginia. He married Helen Walthall of Farmville. They have two children, Lewis Alan, Jr. and Les Venable ("Dutch").

Catherine Micou took her degree at Farmville Teacher's College and taught three years at Holland, Virginia. She then was persuaded by a nice young bachelor of the town to make Holland her home. She married Garland F. Saunders on June 20, 1940. They have two children, Emmet Bec and Marilyn.

Ernest's third child, Paul Micou, was named for the ancestor who came to America from Nantes, France and settled on the Rappahannock River (Port Micou). Paul married Rosa McLaurin of Ballville, Virginia. They live in Chester, Virginia, and have three children. They are Mary Byrd, Paul, Jr., and Ann McLaurin.

The fourth child, Frank, married Gladys Pressly of West Virginia and they have three children. He follows construction work so has no permanent home at present.

The youngest of Ernest and Mary Micou's children, Mary Virginia is now Mrs. William Morris of Atlanta, Georgia. She has a step son, but no children of her own. Her husband is a pharmacist and has his own business. They are Presbyterians and are quite active in the work of the church.

Mary Freeman Micou died in the year 1939.

Ernest Lee Micou died in 1950. Both are buried in the cemetery of the Old Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

Andrew Lewis Micou, sixth child of my parents, married Elizabeth Pendleton of Floyd, Virginia in 1916. They had no children. He was a civil engineer and county engineer of highways in Halifax County for a long period. Later he lived in Radford and after a long illness from Paralysis, died in 1953. He is buried in Floyd, Virginia. His widow lives in Roanoke.

Agnes Ingles Micou, youngest child of Nannie and James Micou, married Rufus G. Parlier of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, in June 1917. They had two children, Rufus Gwinn, Jr. and Nancy Jury. However, Nancy died in her second year. A few years later they moved to Wilmington, North Carolina. Her husband died suddenly in 1939. Rufus Jr. married Elizabeth Moore of that city in 1940. They have two children, Gayle and Wayne. Agnes lost her sight in 1943 and is now at White Hall Rest Home at Council, North Carolina.

Now I am tired and will turn this over to the younger generation to carry this history on to their children and future generations who have Jury and Micou blood in their veins. May all be worthy descendants of the courageous young couple – Nannie and Jimmy – who had only love and faith and courage to start on the matrimonial road. Oh, yes, one more asset they had – an invaluable one – a Christian heritage!