

Michael Duff McClung

Three McClung brothers (James, John, and Robert) fled English repression in the Scottish Highlands sometime in the late 1600s. After temporary residence on the Scottish coast in Galloway, and later across the Irish Sea in Ulster, McClungs began arriving in North America in the early 1700s – with records indicating Boston, Philadelphia, and Virginia as ports of entry.



My own great-great-great-grandfather can be traced back to the borders of Tennessee and Alabama (ca. 1799), where the family remained until my grandfather, Virgil Choice McClung (1901-1988) relocated to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan as a superintendent of schools. He subsequently moved to the Los Angeles area and worked in the booming aeronautics industry, until his retirement in the late 1950s.

McClungs served in the so-called “French & Indian Wars,” the American Revolution, the War of 1812, and on both sides during the Civil War. McClung history is evident in many places of the southern Appalachians. There is a McClung House at a museum outside Knoxville, and a McClung Hall at the University of Tennessee.

Having grown up never knowing another McClung family, it was astonishing to travel in eastern Tennessee during my 30s. When giving my name to register at hotels or to reserve a table, I was suddenly treated as a celebrity. All around there were roads, plazas, buildings with my name on them. It created an odd “discovered” sense of belonging to a much wider world of family than I'd ever had reason to expect.



Top: Michael Duff McClung (b. 1961), Charles Richard McClung (1932 - ??), Virgil Choice McClung (1901-1988) photo ca. 1986

Bottom: McClung House, Museum of Appalachia

Right: McClung Hall, U. Tennessee



With acknowledgments to Rev. William McClung (1868-1960) and his work “The McClung Genealogy,” Pittsburgh, 1904, reprinted 1983, The Print Shop, Dixon, Illinois.