

Margaretha Dymond wife of Reuben Montross

Montross: A Family History—John Wilson Taylor & Eva Mills Taylor 1958

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FIFTH GENERATION

age 85, was living in Fishkill with Francis W. and Susan Leach, one of whom was probably a grandchild.

Children (15, of whom the names of 6 are known):

- (1) Euphemia Montross b. abt. 1789; m. bef. 1810 John See (CFP)
- 198 (2) William V. Montross b. 15 Feb. 1799
- 199 (3) Matthias Montross b. abt. 1801
- 200 (4) Jacob Montross b. abt. 1808
- (5) Phoebe Montross b. abt. 1809, assumed to be the Phoebe who married. Florence and, when the New York census of 1865 was taken, was living as a widow, Phoebe Florence, with William V. Montross (199) in Monroe town, Orange Co. She was listed as having had 3 children.
- 201 (6) Robert Montross b. 19 Feb. 1812

Note: An analysis of census returns for Fishkill from 1790 to 1850 shows these additional children, all daughters: 1 b. bef. 1784; 1 b. bet. 1784 and 1790; 1 b. bet. 1790 and 1800; 3 b. bet. 1790 and 1794; 2 b. bet. 1800 and 1810; and 1 b. bet. 1810 and 1820.

Mackenzie (CFP) assigns a son Jesse Montross (221) to Cornelius apparently on the ground that he was buried in the Methodist cem., Pleasantville, N.Y. Jesse (b. 28 May 1795), however, farmed in South Somers and Rye and does not appear to have settled in Mt. Pleasant until after 1840, appearing there in 1850 as a shoemaker. Census returns of Cornelius's family show no male in his age group other than those positively identified as sons. His grave and his wife's grave are far removed in the cemetery from the grave of Cornelius's wife Leah.

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REUBEN MONTROSS (parent: Jacob Montross, 36)

b. 8 Aug. 1768 prob. near Roslyn Harbor village, Long Island, N.Y.

d. 5 Jan. 1856; bur. Vernon, Pa.

m. 8 Dec. 1791, in Poughkeepsie Dutch Church, Margaret ("Peggy") Dymond (Rec. 74:33)
bp. 3 Oct. 1773 by Dominie Livingston at New Hackensack, N.Y., dau. of Matthew and Anne (Mosure) Dymond (RNH 19); she d. bef. 1850, date of Reuben's first deed of sale in which his wife was not a party.

Before he was 5 years old, Reuben was brought by his parents to Dutchess Co., N.Y. He had already left his father's home in Fishkill town when the 1790 census was taken. It is a reasonable surmise that he was in Poughkeepsie, where he married the next year. His father-in-law, Matthew Dymond, was born in England in 1740, lived for a while in Connecticut, and settled in Dutchess Co., N.Y., where he enlisted in the 5th Regiment of the militia and served in the Revolutionary War

(NYR 1:142). By reason of this fact, all descendants of Reuben Montross have a Revolutionary War ancestor.

Reuben and Peggy, along with Reuben's father Jacob and Margaret's father and brother, Matthew* and John Dymond, removed to Woodstock town, Ulster Co., N.Y., before 1800. Reuben is listed in the 1800 census there, next to his father, as head of a family with 3 daughters and a son (Peter). But the party was not convinced that it had reached the promised land.

Reuben and Margaret left in 1807 for "the wilds of Delaware County" to the west. John Dymond had previously (in 1800) migrated about 120 miles southwest to the vicinity of Keelersburg on the Susquehanna River, and Reuben and Margaret joined him in this region in 1812. The settlement was later known as "Dymond Hollow", about 4 miles east of Center Moreland, Pa. The first year Reuben lived in an old log schoolhouse, then worked on Thomas Wright's farm some 6 miles southeast on the Lackawanna River, after which he tried living on "Sickler's Hill" near the Dymond settlement (LLW 526). In 1815 he purchased for \$280 105 acres—the s.e. corner of a tract called Plainfield (west of Vernon) and some years later moved to the Greene Woods. Sickler's Hill (el. 1,260 feet) is identifiable as on the left of Pa. Route 292 leading from Center Moreland to Falls about 4 miles east of the former hamlet. "Greene Woods" is traversed by Route 292 between Vernon and Center Moreland.

This region lies on the west side of the Susquehanna River about 10 miles west of Scranton. It is a well-watered territory of lush vegetation; a land of steep hills and deep valleys varying from elevations of 600 to 1,600 feet. The lower lands are fertile but subject to floods; the steep hills make agriculture difficult or impossible. Nearby are the rich coal deposits around Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. The general region is known locally as the Back Mountain country.

It was to this region that Reuben came and founded one of the most prolific branches of the Montross family. One of his great-great-grandsons, Floyd Howard Montross (1577), spent much time while this book was being prepared in identifying the land, residences, and activities of Reuben by

*Matthew Dymond died in 1839 in Woodstock at the age of 99. The village bell tolled 99 times for him. Peggy is said to have been buried in Woodstock, according to Mrs. Homer Dymond, Clifton Springs, N.Y.

talking with the oldest inhabitants and with Reuben's living descendants in the region, checking their memories and records with the official land records, and constructing maps based thereon.

As an example of the descriptive material with which he had to work is this extract from a deed of 20 Apr. 1837 recording a sale of 50 acres for \$300 by Reuben to his son David: "Beginning at a stake near a hickory tree on Calvin Penn's line and the southeast corner of Matthia Weaver's land; thence west agreeably to the patent from Benj. Dorrance to the said Reuben to a rock oak sapling standing in the line of the old certified 17 Township; south to a corner near Reuben Montrosses house; east to the northeast corner of said crib; thence south along the fence as it now stands to the old certified township line * * * reserving a lane from the dwelling house of Reuben to the nearest spring by the marsh". This was part of a 60-acre tract purchased in 1834 from Anson Martin for \$250. The other 10 acres were sold in 1838 to C. Vanscoy for \$50 (Deeds, Luzerne Co. 30:128; 33:135; 34:84). Margaret signed by her mark.

Reuben was a large dealer in land, having owned altogether well over 1,000 acres. The exact amount is uncertain since not all the deeds were registered. In fact, at one time he was "land poor" and a tract of 40 acres was sold in 1849 by the sheriff to satisfy a debt of \$89 (Deeds, Wyoming Co. 5:546). Reuben was away at the time, and his long-time friend Asa Keeler bid the property in for \$196—more than twice the amount of the debt.

After he left Sickler's Hill, Reuben's first purchase (12 Sept. 1815) was 105 acres about half a mile west of Vernon (Deeds, Luzerne Co. 16:552). He bought this land from Thomas Wright and paid \$280 for it. His house was on the northwest side of the highway leading from Vernon to Beaumont. In 1956 there were still (in the rear of a sawmill) remains of stone fences and some ancient apple trees. Here he lived for many years. In 1826 he bought an adjoining 400 acres so that his land extended almost the entire 2 miles from Vernon to Center Moreland, and in 1837 he was living about midway between these points on the west side of to-day's Route 292. The house is replaced (1956) by a residence owned by Tony Angelo. For this 400 acres he paid \$500, subject to a mortgage of the same amount and sold 100 acres of it to Charles More in 1828 for \$325 (Deeds, Luzerne Co. 23:623; 24:76). This reconstruction of Reuben's

holdings is based partly on deeds and partly on the recollection of Allen Dymond, b. 25 May 1866, son of Elihu Dymond, a neighbor of Reuben.

Reuben owned for a few years another 400 acres extending from near Vernon to the Susquehanna River opposite the "three islands". He bought it at a sheriff's sale 12 Jan. 1825 for \$30 and sold it 18 Dec. 1830 for \$550 (Deeds, Luzerne Co. 23:491; 27:559). On 10 Apr. 1833 he bought 5 acres of "land or coal-bed" in the town of Kingston for \$100. This he sold to his son Peter 11 Jan. 1838 for \$200 (Deeds, Luzerne Co. 29:219; 33:478). On 4 Sept. 1844 Reuben bought 65 acres for \$375 near Beaumont with house and barn and sold it 6 Feb. 1850 for \$520. In the same sale was involved 1 acre containing a mill race, but the deed is not specific in the price (Deeds, Wyoming Co. 3:465; 4:241).

Reuben sold various tracts of land to his sons Peter, Elijah, and David. The money paid, where it can be determined, shows that they were not gifts. He apparently dealt at arm's length with his sons as well as with others. Some portion of Reuben's land remained in the possession of his descendants until 1953, when William A. Montross (1606) sold his farm and removed to Binghamton, N.Y. Reuben's descendants have kept his memory green by holding, from the year 1907 to date, annual reunions in some one of the many beauty spots of Wyoming Valley.

Besides dealing extensively in land, Reuben was a physician and also a preacher. Although without formal training or degree, Reuben won a wide reputation as a frontier physician and is reported to have been called as far east as Massachusetts and as far west as Indiana. He made no charge to neighbors, but apparently amassed a substantial amount of money to support his large land holdings.

A medical lance of Reuben's housed in a wooden home-carved case was in the possession of Reuben's great-grandson George William Montross (957) of Clovis, Calif., in 1953. But it would appear that Reuben relied for his cures on much more than drugs and minor surgery. Prayer and suggestion were the main factors in the reported cure of a woman from epilepsy, handed down by oral tradition and told to us in 1950 by Clark John Montross (1584). After praying with the woman, he simultaneously stroked her and a cat. The cat died, and the woman recovered. Characteristic also

was his manner of setting the dislocated shoulder of a woman who had been thrown from a wagon. She was in bed suffering great pain. After conversing with her quietly for a while, he asked if she could get up. "Not without help", she replied. A member of the family brought him on request a ball of yarn, which he placed under her arm. Then, as he assisted her in rising by taking her hand, he gave a quick pull, which restored the shoulder to its socket. The story was told to us by Scott Newberry (968), a great-grandson of Reuben.

Reuben's powers became something of a legend locally as appears from his son Peter's obituary in the Wilkes-Barre *Telegram* (May 1884). Reuben is credited with the ability to "stop the bleeding of wounds, cure burns, relieve rheumatism, and stay fire in the woods, it is said, by repeating his charmed words".

Reuben apparently believed thoroughly in his gifts and seems to have aspired to make them available in New York City. In 1850 he was absent from Wyoming Co. and we find Reuben Montross, Doctor of Medicine of New York City, leasing a house and lot (25 feet by 100 feet) on 40th St. and 3rd Ave. to Paul Cavanaugh for 5 years from 1 May 1851 (Deeds, New York Co. 576:587). No Reuben Montross other than the one from Pennsylvania is known in the period; we are of the opinion that Reuben tried practicing in the metropolis, leasing a house there, but changed his mind and assigned the lease as shown. The rent was \$3 per month.

Reuben must be credited with considerable knowledge of his family history. His son Elijah's first wife passed on to her grandson George Stuart Walker (970) the information that the family had come from France. Reuben's great-great-grandfather Pierre Montras was born in France, but other branches of the family had apparently forgotten it. From Reuben also would appear to have come the statement told to Mr. Walker that the Montross family had lived in France from the 16th century, when the progenitor had fled from Scotland because of religious persecution (see p. 1).

It is probable that Reuben lies buried beneath one of the field stones in the churchyard at Vernon.

Children (at least 10, as inferred from census; names of 4 known):

- 202 (1) Peter Montross b. 4 Feb. 1798
 203 (2) David Montross b. 14 July 1811
 204 (3) Elijah Montross b. 16 Apr. 1815

- (4) Lovica Montross b. abt. 1820; m. Isa Taylor; Lovica witnessed in 1837 sale of land by Reuben to his son David (Deeds, Luzerne Co. 33:135).

Note: Other children of Reuben includes 3 daughters born between 1792 and 1797; a daughter and a son born between 1800 and 1810; and a daughter born between 1812 and 1814. One widowed daughter or daughter-in-law with an infant child was apparently living with Reuben in 1830.

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MATTHIAS MONTROSS (parent: Jacob Montross, 36)

b. abt. 1772 prob. in Fishkill town, Dutchess Co., N.Y.

d. bet. 1840 and 1847

m. abt. 1790 Hannah b. bet. 1770 and 1775;
 d. after 12 Apr. 1852

Matthias had left his father's home in Fishkill before the census was taken in 1790 but he does not appear in that year as head of a household. Before 1800 he settled in Woodstock town, Ulster Co., N.Y. a few miles northwest of Kingston and not far from his father and his brother Reuben. At the town meeting in 1799 he was chosen one of the overseers of highways, name given as Matthew (HUC 2:319). By 1800 he had 4 daughters under 10. Before 1810 Shandaken town was formed from part of Woodstock and Matthias appears in this newly formed town. By this time he had 7 daughters. By 1830 he had moved south in the same county to Olive town and was farming a 90-acre rented farm "at or near a place called Bushkill." After Matthias died, Hannah for \$210 obtained title to this farm, on 17 Apr. 1847, from Montgomery Livingston of Clermont, Columbia Co., N.Y., "on condition that Hannah Montross is the lawful and proper owner of the original lease granted to Matthias Montross, deceased" (Deeds, Ulster Co. 83:657). Hannah sold this farm for \$500 on 12 Apr. 1852 to John M. Burger, husband of her granddaughter Elizabeth.

Children (7, of whom the names of 2 are known):

- 205 (1) Margaret Montross b. abt. 1791
 (2) Hannah Montross b. abt. 1805; d. after 1870; resided unmarried in 1830 with her parents and in 1850, 1860, and 1870 with her niece Elizabeth Burger on the old Matthias Montross farm in Olive town

Note: The eldest daughter of Matthias is inferred to be the Margaret Montross who married Charles Doty (DF 535) despite the fact that Bertha Lee Hempstead (1891),