

Who Was The Father Of John McAdams, Sr.?

**An Analysis Of The Evidence Regarding The Lineage
Of The McAdams Family Of Walker County, Texas**

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WHO WAS THE FATHER OF JOHN MCADAMS, SR.?

By Charles M. Cole

1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is not necessarily to answer the question in its title, because at the present time it is simply not possible to identify the father of John McAdams, Sr. of Walker County, Texas. Rather, the purpose is to offer evidence that John's father was not Captain John McAdams, Esquire of Abbeville, South Carolina.

It is important that the reader have a clear understanding of the family lines involved. This document examines the lives of several men who bear the name, John McAdams. Don't confuse one with the other. John McAdams, Esq. was the ancestor of the McAdams family of Abbeville, South Carolina. John McAdams, Sr. was the ancestor of the McAdams family of Walker County, Texas. Since the early 1970's, the Walker County family has accepted the theory that these two men were father and son.

However, the genealogical evidence presented in this document will show that these two men were not related. In addition, the results of recently conducted DNA testing will support the historical findings.

Background

In the late 1960's and early 1970's, Kelly Edgar and Ina May Ogletree McAdams compiled the genealogy of the John McAdams family of Walker County, Texas.

Their research concluded that Captain John McAdams, Esq. of Abbeville, South Carolina was the father of John McAdams, Sr. of Walker County, Texas. However, due to further research in the 1980's and 1990's, it became apparent that the original research was flawed and that there was no relationship between these two individuals.

John McAdams, Esq. of Abbeville was a soldier in the American Revolution. This fact is not disputed, as there are several credible documents to support it. The problem is that many members of the John McAdams family of Walker County used the invalid relationship to establish membership in DAR and SAR chapters.

It is vital that readers understand that the mistakes made by Kelly and Ina May during their investigation were common and were most certainly neither intentional nor malicious. The records of the time were sparse, and computers were not around to enhance genealogical research. In addition, the McAdams family of Abbeville was similar in many ways to the Walker County family of John McAdams, Sr., and the evidence at the time supported reasonable, but, nevertheless, faulty, genealogical conclusions. The errors were understandable but we must now correct the record. Kelly

and Ina May published their conclusions regarding the genealogy of the Walker County McAdams line in The McAdams Family of Walker County, Texas in 1985. I will refer to this publication as “The White Book” throughout this document.

Genealogy – The Process

Genealogical research is a complicated process. False leads, conflicting information, and missing data are just some of the issues with which the genealogist must deal.

Researchers, genealogists included, draw conclusions from evidence, and if the evidence is flawed, then the conclusions based on that evidence will be invalid.

A basic principle of research is that the conclusion cannot precede a thorough investigation of the evidence. In other words, the evidence must lead to the conclusion and not vice versa. Another requirement is that the researcher must test each and every conclusion. A standard and very reliable method used to test a conclusion is to make a detailed attempt to prove it invalid. This appears to have been the step which was omitted in the original research.

We can sometimes use a lack of evidence as the basis for a conclusion. For example, if there is simply no evidence that a man lived in a certain location at a specific time, then the conclusion must be that he probably didn’t live there at that time. Conclusions based on a lack of evidence should always be conditional, because future research may reveal the missing information.

Generally speaking, the genealogist should never assume unless the assumption is based on a solid logical analysis of the available evidence. For example, we might not know the birth date of an individual, but we do know the marriage date of the parents. In this case, it would be logical to assume that the individual in question was born after the marriage date, but “after” is as far as we should take this particular assumption. Conversely, it would be proper to assume that a marriage occurred before the birth date of a child. The point here is that in historical research, assumptions are necessary evils, but we must employ them sparingly.

The Colonial and Revolutionary War periods are especially difficult to research due to the scarcity of birth and marriage records. Therefore, the family Bible becomes a valuable source of biographical information. As you will see later, a family Bible is primary evidence in the issue of the genealogy of the McAdams family of Walker County.

Before examining the evidence, we should again review the family lines involved:

White Book / Abbeville, South Carolina (Incorrect)

Parents: Catherine McAdams (From Ireland – husband died at sea)

..Son: Captain John McAdams, Esq. (Revolutionary War soldier)

....**Grandson: John McAdams, Sr. (born 1779)**

.....Great-Grandson: John McAdams, Jr.

.....Great-Great Grandson: Hiram A. McAdams

Walker County, Texas (Correct)

Parents: Unknown

..Son: John McAdams, Sr.(born 1779)

....Grandson: John McAdams, Jr.

.....Great-Grandson: Hiram A. McAdams

Abbeville, South Carolina (Correct)

Parents: Thomas and Catherine McAdams (From Ireland – Thomas died at sea)

..Son: Captain John McAdams, Esq. (Revolutionary War soldier)

....Grandson: John McAdams (born 1802)

.....Great-Grandson: Not Relevant

The conclusion of the original research (White Book) was that the Walker County son (John McAdams, Sr.) was the same person as the Abbeville grandson (John McAdams). These two men were, in fact, a generation removed in age.

To fully understand how the original research was flawed, we must compare the relevant genealogical facts regarding both the Abbeville McAdams family and the Walker County, Texas McAdams family.

Note 1: Throughout this document the following naming convention is used:

1. John McAdams, Esq. (John Esq., Captain John McAdams, Esq.) is the father of John McAdams and the ancestor of the McAdams family of Abbeville, South Carolina.
2. John McAdams (John) is the son of John McAdams, Esq. of Abbeville, South Carolina.
3. John McAdams, Sr. (John Sr.) is the ancestor of the McAdams Family of Walker County, Texas, and his father is unknown.

Note 2: For the purpose of this document, the comparison, unless otherwise noted, is between John McAdams (#2 above) and John McAdams, Sr. (#3 above), because John McAdams, Sr. was incorrectly identified as the son of John McAdams, Esq. in the original White Book research.

2. John McAdams, Esq. of Abbeville, South Carolina

For the purpose of this section, we will compare three sources of information: the White Book, a McAdams family Bible, and genealogy records from South Carolina. Pay particular attention to the differences between the White Book and the other two sources.

White Book (Abbeville McAdams Family)

Assume that the information in the White Book regarding the Abbeville McAdams family is basically correct, even though subsequent research raises serious questions regarding the two wives of John Esq. and the birth date of his son, John McAdams. The White Book names Sarah Webb as the first wife and Sarah (Jones, based on an assumption) as the second wife of John Esq. Further examination of the Abbeville family indicates that Catherine Stuckey was probably the first wife and Sarah Webb may have been the second wife. However, this issue is not relevant to our examination of the parentage of John McAdams, Sr., and the focus should be on the children John Esq. had with his two wives.

See Attachment #2 for more information on the two wives of John McAdams, Esq.

The following list of the John McAdams, Esq. (Abbeville) children is from the White Book:

1. **JOHN born 1779 married Martha Rogers**
2. MARY (Polly) born 1785 married George Fisher
3. MARGARET born 1787 married Lemuel W. Tribble
4. DRUCILLA born 1788 married John Wright
5. RACHEL born 1791 married Masten Shirley
6. JANE born 19 Feb 1808 married Thomas Davis
7. ROBERT born 5 Oct 1811 married Christiana Hill
8. ELIZABETH born about 1813 “was over 21 in 1834”
9. JAMES JONES born 27 Oct 1814 “Rebecca _____ d. 6/14/1892”
10. SARAH born about 1816 “Archibald Mattison”
11. REBECCA born about 1819 “minor over 14 in 1834”

McAdams Family Bible (Abbeville McAdams Family)

A letter regarding the family Bible of Robert McAdams (#7 above) contains the following description of the immigration of the Abbeville family. Note that the John McAdams in the quote is the same as the person we refer to as John Esq.:

“Thomas McAdams embarked at Belfast, Ireland for America 24 of Dec, 1766, but he took measles and died on shipboard and was buried at sea. John McAdams was born in Ireland, County Down, August 15, 1759. Sailed from Belfast with his father Dec 24, 1766; landed at Charleston, South Carolina in February, 1767.”

The Robert McAdams Bible, according to the letter, also lists the following children of John McAdams, Esq. of Abbeville:

1. MARY born 23 Nov 1785 married (?) Fisher
2. MARGARET born 11 Jun 1787 married Squire Lemuel Tribble
3. GRISELLA born 23 Nov 1788 married John Wright
4. AGNES born 5 Feb 1790
5. SARAH born 29 Dec 1792 married Archibald Mattison
6. ELIZABETH born 21 Nov 1794 married Josiah Carwile
7. CATHEY born 20 Aug 1797
8. AMY born 7 Aug 1799
9. RACHEL born 22 Nov 1801 married Maston Shirley
- 10. JOHN born 16 Feb 1802 married Vashli [sp?] Branyon**
11. JANE born 19 Feb 1808 married (?) Davis
12. REBECCA born 5 Oct 1809/10 unmarried
13. ROBERT born 12 Oct 1811 married Christena Hill
14. JONES born 27 Oct 1814 unmarried

Note that in the above list, the wife of John McAdams (#10) is Vashli [sp?] Branyon. This information conflicts with other records, and most researchers agree that the name was actually Vashti Seawright. With the exception of Vashli/Vashti, the spouses of the children of John McAdams, Esq. are well documented by other source information.

The full text of this letter is in Attachment #1. The above list of children is by birth date. The children in the original letter are in no specific order.

South Carolina Genealogy Records (Abbeville McAdams Family)

South Carolina records reveal the following regarding John McAdams, Esq.:

“John McAdams son of Thomas and Catherine was born in Co. Down, Ireland 15 Aug. 1759. He served in the Revolutionary War under Maj. Williamson. He married Catherine Stuckey about 1784 who died in 1804. He remarried Sarah Webb. He died 1 Nov. 1834.”

Also: “John McAdams, b. 1759 in Ireland enlisted as a private from Abbeville on Nov. 1777 under Major Williamson. He served with Andrew Pickens and was at the battle of Snow Camp and Old Field. He saw other service and was on the Florida Expedition. He received land grants of 365 acres in 1804 first married Catherine Stuckey and later Sarah Webb. Ref. Nat. Archives.”

One of the children of John and Catherine Stuckey McAdams, according to these South Carolina records was:

John (born 16 Feb. 1802) married Vashti Seawright (born 10 Oct. 1816) in about 1838. He remarried Agnes Seawright sometime after her [Vashti's] death. The children were:

James C. b. 30 Dec. 1839 d. 10 Sept. 1862

John O. b. 9 March 1841 d. 18 Sept. 1863

William F. b. 1848 lived with his twin sister, Margaret in 1880

Andrew W., b. 28 Nov. 1846 d. 1872

Margaret C. b. 1848 married James D. Lomax

This information agrees with the Abbeville McAdams family Bible, except for the name of John's first wife. As stated earlier, however, researchers now generally agree that the name was, in fact, Vashti Seawright. Researchers also generally agree that the name of John Esq.'s third child was Grizella or Grisella, not Drucilla as listed in the White Book. The probate document in Attachment #5 confirms this fact.

The next step is to examine known facts regarding John McAdams, Sr. of Walker County, Texas.

3. John McAdams, Sr. of Walker County, Texas

We know the following about John McAdams, Sr.:

1. He died in 1850 in Walker County, Texas, shortly before the 1850 U.S. Census, and he is buried in a small family plot in Walker County.
2. His children agreed in statements made at different times to different people that John Sr. was born in Ireland. For example, Martha Ragsdale and John McAdams, Jr. (children) claimed on the 1880 census that John Sr. was born in Ireland.
3. Family tradition and oral history state that John Sr. came to America as a small boy at the age of three or four.
4. John Sr. gave his age as 55 on the First Census of Texas in 1834. Based on this, he was born in 1779. Note that this census was taken between 1829 and 1836. John Sr.'s family was counted in 1834.
5. We know from church records and birth records that John Sr. lived in North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama between 1802 and 1825.
6. We know that John Sr. had only one wife, Martha Rogers, and we are reasonably certain that these two were married in South Carolina about 1802.
7. We can conclusively place John Sr. in South Carolina only in the 1802-1806 time period.
8. John Sr. had the following children: James, Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph, Nancy, John Jr., Martha, William, Jane, George, and Drucilla.
9. John Sr. came to Texas with his family before the Texas Revolution. We know that he lived in Alabama in 1825, because his daughter, Drucilla, was born in Alabama in that year. We also know that John Sr. was in Texas by 1834, but we cannot say for certain exactly when he made the move from Alabama to Texas.

After comparing the Abbeville facts with the Walker County facts, I believe that it is safe to form the following conclusions:

4. Conclusions Based on Genealogy

1. The White Book correctly lists John McAdams, Sr.'s birth date as 1779. However, current research reveals that the Abbeville John was actually born on 16 Feb 1802, and this fact, alone, makes it impossible for the Abbeville John to marry, have 11 children, and move from Tennessee to Alabama and then to Texas before the Texas Revolution. Furthermore, our John Sr. gave his age as 55 on the First Census of Texas in 1834. The Abbeville John would have been only 32 years old at this time
2. According to the White Book, John Esq.'s daughter, Rachel, was born in 1791, and the next child, Jane, was born in 1808. Even though it is possible, I don't believe it is reasonable to accept a span of 17 years between children during the early 19th century, even though two wives were involved.
3. The White Book correctly states that our John Sr. was married to Martha Rogers. We also know that this marriage occurred about 1802, the year the Abbeville John was born. In fact, our John Sr. and Martha Rodgers had their first child, James, in 1804. The Abbeville John would have been only two years old when our John Sr. was grown and having children.
4. There is no record that the Abbeville John McAdams ever left South Carolina. The evidence is that he was born in South Carolina, lived there all his life, and died there. On the other hand, our John Sr. told his children that he was born in Ireland. In addition, John Sr. lived in several different states before finally settling down in Walker County, Texas. We can place John Sr. in South Carolina only in 1802 and 1806. He married Martha Rogers in 1802 in South Carolina, and his daughter, Elizabeth, was born there in 1806.
5. There is not now, nor has there ever been, any hard evidence that a John McAdams was born to John McAdams, Esq. in 1779. On the other hand, there are numerous references to a son named John who was born in 1802. In fact, this birth date and John's marriage to Vashti Seawright have become the accepted genealogy for the Abbeville McAdams line.
6. The names of the children of the Abbeville John and the Walker County John Sr. are somewhat similar. Both families used the names, James, William, and John, but the birthdates of these children are more than a generation apart. For example, the first child of the Abbeville John was James C., born in 1839, while the first child of the Walker County John Sr. was James, born in 1804. Note again that the comparison here is between John McAdams, Sr. of Walker County and John McAdams, the son of John McAdams, Esq. of Abbeville.
7. The evidence shows that John Sr. was born in 1779 in Ireland. John Sr. himself said that he was born in 1779, and at least two of his children stated that he was born in Ireland. On the other hand, all of the children of John McAdams, Esq. were born in South Carolina.
8. Evidence obtained after the publication of the White Book confirms that Mary (born in 1785) was the first child of John Esq. We also have evidence that John Esq. married his first wife in 1784, five years after the birth of the Walker County John Sr.

9. According to the White Book, John McAdams Sr. was born in 1779. The next child, Mary, was born in 1785, a span of about six years. The other children in this family were born, on the average, about two years apart. A plausible reason for the unusual six year gap between John Sr. and Mary should have been presented in the original research.
10. Based on the above, we must conclude that John McAdams, Sr., of Walker County, Texas and John McAdams of Abbeville, South Carolina are not the same person. Therefore, it is also safe to positively state that John McAdams, Esq. of Abbeville, South Carolina was not the father of John McAdams, Sr. of Walker County Texas.
11. The White Book correctly establishes that both John McAdams, Esq. and James Webb, Sarah Webb's father, participated in the American Revolution. Unfortunately, the Walker County McAdams family's DAR and SAR memberships based on the service of either of these men are invalid. As indicated previously, there is simply no evidence to support the relationship of either John McAdams, Esq. or James Webb to the McAdams family of Walker County, Texas.

**Comparison:
John McAdams (Abbeville) and John McAdams, Sr. (Walker County)**

Detail	John - Abbeville (Father: John McAdams, Esq.)	John Sr. - Walker County (Father: Unknown)
Birth Date:	1802	1779
Birth Place:	South Carolina	Ireland
Emigrated:	No	Yes: 1783
Wife:	Vashti Seawright	Martha Rogers
Marriage Date:	About 1838	1802
First Child Born:	1839 (James)	1804 (James)
Lived In:	South Carolina	South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Texas
Death Date:	After 1848	January 1850
Death Place:	South Carolina	Texas
Children:	James, John, William, Andrew, Margaret	James, Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph, Nancy, John Jr., Martha, William, Jane, George, Drucilla
Age in 1834:	32	55

5. Conclusion Based on DNA Testing

Joe McAdams of the McAdams Historical Society conducted DNA testing of various McAdams lines in early 2003. The testing was part of a larger MacGregor DNA project, as it has long been presumed that the McAdams (MacAdam) line is actually a sept or sub clan of the larger MacGregor Clan.

The test required that the DNA sample come from a male descendant of John McAdams, Sr., and that this descendant bear the McAdams surname. James McAdams of Bryan, Texas volunteered for the test. James is a descendant of John McAdams, Sr. through John McAdams, Jr. and James Roger McAdams. James Roger McAdams was Hiram McAdams' brother.

The test results proved that most of the McAdams families in America are directly related to the MacGregor family, and are, therefore, of Scottish descent (McAdams family of Walker County, Texas included). The test also conclusively proved that the Walker County line of the McAdams family was not related to the Abbeville line. In fact, the DNA results further revealed that the Abbeville McAdams family was not Gaelic or even European in origin. The following is the relevant text of a report from Joe McAdams:

“James McAdams, 1200 E. 31, Bryan, Texas 77802, 409-822-3282, JMC3058@TCA.Net is the person where the Walker Co., Texas DNA comes from. One of the key markers from Malcolm MacGregor is 30. Both James and I are 29 which means we are pretty closely related back somewhere.

Two people from the Abbeville McAdams line had their DNA tested. They are not Gaelic or even European but rather an ancient race more related to Asia. This means they either adopted the McAdams name when they joined the family or the McAdams name in this family is from the maternal side.”

6. Who Was The Father of John McAdams, Sr.?

It is fairly easy to disprove genealogical research. Supporting positive conclusions is considerably more difficult, and it is now proper to ask the question, “Well, if John Esq. was not John Sr.’s father, who was?”

The simple answer to this question is, “We don’t know.” Moreover, even though there is continuing research into the parentage of John Sr., we may never know. We know that John Sr. lived in Tennessee, and there is speculation that his father may have been another John McAdams who was a Constable in the Nashville area. The McAdams Historical Society supports this theory.

There are indications that John may have come to America from Ireland as a small boy, but immigration was halted during the American Revolution, and the idea that he emigrated as a child may not be correct. What we do know is that he was born in 1779. We know this because in 1834 he gave his age as 55 on the First Census of Texas. We believe that he was born in Ireland, because his children made this claim on the 1880 U.S. Census. How and exactly when he came to America remains a mystery. However, consistent family tradition says that John Sr. came to America at age three or four, and we must give this strong oral history serious consideration. Hostilities in the American Revolution ended on 4 Feb 1783, and the Treaty of Paris was signed on 3 Sep 1783. It is reasonable to assume that immigration was immediately resumed after the cessation of hostilities, so John could have come to America as early as the spring and probably no later than the fall of 1783. This would have made him about four years old. Therefore, the theory that he came to America as a small child just may be valid.

We must ask some questions: If John Sr. did emigrate from Ireland as a small boy, who accompanied him? Was it his mother? Who was she? What about brothers and sisters? What was their point of departure? (We should probably assume Belfast.) What was their port of entry? It is reasonable to assume that the port of entry was Charleston, South Carolina, however it is possible, although unlikely, that the family’s entry was through either Baltimore or Philadelphia.

In addition, what was John Sr. doing during the 19 years between 1783 (assumed immigration) and 1802 (marriage)? There is no record of his existence during this time period. In fact, there is really no record of his existence between his birth date of 1779 and his marriage date of 1802.

Once John Sr. started having children, he made it fairly easy for us to trace his migration and reconstruct his life. We do this by examining the birth dates and places of his children. Remember that he married Martha Rogers in 1802 in South Carolina, when he was 23 years old:

The children of John McAdams, Sr. of Walker County, Texas

1. JAMES born 1804 in North Carolina
2. ELIZABETH born 1806 in South Carolina
3. MARY born 1808 in Tennessee
4. JOSEPH born 1811 birth place unknown
5. NANCY born 26 Mar 1814 in Tennessee
6. JOHN JR. born 8 Jul 1815 in Maury County Tennessee
7. MARTHA born 19 Dec 1816 in Kentucky
8. WILLIAM born 1819 in Tennessee
9. JANE born 1820 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama
10. GEORGE born 1824 in Alabama
11. DRUCILLA born 1825 in Alabama

John Sr.'s last child, Drucilla, was born in Alabama in 1825. In 1834 John Sr. was enumerated on the First Census of Texas, so we know that the migration from Alabama occurred sometime between 1825 and 1834. It is not possible to establish the exact date of the family's arrival in Texas. However, we can be certain that John Sr. was in Mexican Texas by 1834.

Did John Sr. come to America without his father, possibly as an orphan or with just his mother? If he came to join his father who had may have preceded him to America, did he first go to Tennessee, then back to South Carolina to marry and then to North Carolina where his first child was born and then back to South Carolina where his second child was born before finally settling in Tennessee? We cannot even begin to answer these questions until we solve the mystery of the missing 19 years, and without answers, it is impossible to identify John Sr.'s father.

The original question was, "Who was the father of John McAdams, Sr.?" The answer at this point remains, "We still don't know." However, we do have the following letter written by Margarette Annaliza McAdams Barron, daughter of John McAdams, Jr. (grand daughter of John McAdams, Sr.) in 1935:

*"I am sure that my father's father, John McAdams, came from Ireland but was of Scottish descent. And that my grandmother, Martha Rogers McAdams came from Ireland. They met over here and married. They lived in Tennessee for some time before going on to Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The whole family moved from there to Panola County, Texas. My father's father was named John **and his father was John also**. John was a real family name. My great grandfather [John Sr.'s father] fought in the Revolutionary War, and Pat Allphin has his old sword. I left it with him when I moved here. An Uncle Hiram had the sword and gave it to my grandfather when he left home. **My grandfather [John Sr.] and this Uncle Hiram [brother of John Sr.'s father] are the only two that I ever heard of who came over to America.** I have heard my father tell about this Uncle Hiram entertaining Lafayette with a banquet in that long ago. My grandfather came to America when he was four years old."*

Notes regarding the above letter:

1. Martha Rogers McAdams gave her birthplace as South Carolina on the First Census of Texas in 1834.
2. The text enclosed in [brackets] has been added for clarification.
3. Margarete's name is seen spelled variously as Margarete, Marguerite, and Margaret.

This letter is the only real hint, with the exception of the incorrect White Book account, that John Sr.'s father was also named John. Moreover, the letter indicates that John Sr. of Walker County had an uncle named Hiram and that John Sr.'s father, the brother of Uncle Hiram, fought in the American Revolution. The possibilities posed by Margarete's letter certainly deserve further investigation, but for the time being, we still cannot identify the father of John McAdams, Sr. However, if we are to accept the statement in Margarete's letter, we now can theorize that the father's name may have been John.

Added 15 Jun 2003:

Last minute research has revealed that in 1852, Margaret McAdams, the widow of a Joseph McAdams applied for a pension based on the Revolutionary War service of her husband. The pension application was apparently rejected, but the details are:

Joseph McAdams

TN Lewisburg, Marshall

Margaret McAdams, widow of. For proof of service by the North Carolina records to be specified by survivors. (Rejected/Suspended Pensions, 1852)

Could this Joseph McAdams, Uncle Hiram, and the father of our John McAdams, Sr. have been brothers?

7. Summary

The genealogy of the Abbeville McAdams family, as presented in the White Book, is essentially correct, up to a point, and we owe Kelly and Ina May McAdams our gratitude for working so hard to compile our family history. They did a magnificent job until they reached the question of the parents of John Sr. Their mistake was to attach John McAdams, Sr., of Walker County, Texas to the Abbeville line. They made the invalid conclusion that John McAdams, Sr. of Walker County was the son of John McAdams, Esq. of Abbeville.

Our Walker County John Sr. was born in 1779, and, if we are to accept the statements of his children, he was born in Ireland. John Sr. married Martha Rogers in 1802 in South Carolina. From the birth dates and places of his children, we know that he and his family moved around the country and never really settled down until they arrived in Texas by 1834. Between 1804 and 1825, for example, children were born in North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Alabama.

On the other hand, the Abbeville John McAdams was born in South Carolina in 1802. He married Vashti Seawright about 1838, and they had several children, all born in South Carolina. There is no evidence to indicate that this John McAdams ever left South Carolina. It appears that he was born, lived his entire life, and died in South Carolina.

There are three puzzles that we must relentlessly attempt to solve, because until we get some answers we will not be able to complete our search for the father of John McAdams, Sr.:

1. Who was the elusive Uncle Hiram? Was he truly the brother of John McAdams, Sr.'s father? Was Uncle Hiram's brother (John Sr.'s father) a Revolutionary War soldier as claimed in Margarett McAdams Barron's letter? Was Uncle Hiram, himself, a Revolutionary War soldier?
2. Will the Joseph McAdams pension application reveal any new information?
3. What is the connection between John McAdams, Sr. and a Constable John McAdams from Nashville, Tennessee? Was Constable John our John Sr.'s father?
4. What were the details surrounding the assumed immigration of John Sr. from Ireland? Notice the use of the word, assumed. Family oral history is our only source regarding John Sr.'s birth place. His children said he was born in Ireland, but John Sr. never made such a claim on an official document. We must at least consider the possibility that he was born in America.

The identity of the father of John McAdams, Sr. of Walker County, Texas remains a mystery. We simply cannot give him a name. However, because of what Margarett McAdams Barron wrote, there is a strong likelihood the name was John.

Even though we don't know who John Sr.'s father was, there is overwhelming evidence that his father was not John McAdams, Esq. of Abbeville, South Carolina.

8. Attachment #1

Abbeville McAdams Family Bible

Transcription of letter from Carrie Armstrong to her sister. Carrie Armstrong was John S. Mattison's sister. (descendant of Sarah McAdams and Archibald Mattison - #9 in the list of children in the letter).

Lewisburg, Tenn.
Dec. 17, 1928

Family History Copied from Uncle Robert McAdams' Bible

Robert McAdams and Sarah Mattison's grandfather, Thomas McAdams, embarked at Belfast, Ireland, for America 24 of Dec. 1766; but he took measles and died on shipboard, and was buried at sea. He was our great-great-grandfather.

Grandmother Mattison's father, John McAdams, was born in Ireland, County Down, August 15, 1759. Sailed from Belfast, with his father (who died at sea) Dec. 24, 1766; landed at Charleston, South Carolina in February 1767.

John McAdams married first a Miss Sturkey (I think was her name). She was Grandma Sarah's mother. John McAdams' second wife was a Miss Haddon; she was Uncle Robert's mother.

I give you now Grandmother's (1) family--all her brothers and sisters and all I could find out about them. I give them just as I found them in the old Bible now owned by Homer McAdams, Alan's son:

1. Rachel McAdams was born Nov. 22, 1801. Married Maston Shirley. (Also seen as "Mastern".
2. Amy McAdams was born August 7, 1799.
3. Jane McAdams was born Feb. 19, 1808. Married ----- Davis.
4. Rebecca McAdams was born Oct. 5, about 1809 or 1810. Died about 1892. Unmarried.
5. Mary McAdams was born Nov. 23, 1785. Married ----- Fisher.
6. Margaret McAdams was born June 11, 1787. Married Squire Lemuel Tribble.
7. Grisella McAdams was born Nov. 23, 1788. Married John Wright.
8. Agnes McAdams was born Feb. 5, 1790.
9. Sarah McAdams was born Dec. 29, 1792. Married Archibald Mattison.
10. Elizabeth McAdams was born Nov. 21, 1794. Married Josiah Carwile.
11. Cathey McAdams was born Aug. 20, 1797.
12. John McAdams was born Feb. 16, 1802. Married Vashli [sp?] Branyon.
13. Robert McAdams was born Oct 12, 1811. Married Christena Hill.
14. Jones McAdams was born Oct. 27, 1814. Unmarried.

Sister, will you ever forgive me for writing so much to you at once? If you know lots of family history, tell it to me. Do you know where great-grandfather Abel Wakefield and his wife Mary Branson died and were buried? Did Grandpa Hezekiah have any brothers but Uncle Martin? Where did they live? Mollie Ellis gave me Grandma's double woven bag with her children's pictures in it and some letters written by her sons as far back as 1850. I don't know any one from another except Uncle Ki and that because he was a Mason and has on Masonic regalia. How I wish we could look at them together. Did Pa and Ma never have pictures taken?

Be sure to show all this writing to Mag and tell her to answer my letter. She writes such interesting letters, but puts it off so long she makes my heart ache. Now answer me at once. Love to all. God bless you.

As ever,
Carrie

9. Attachment #2

The Wives Of John McAdams, Esq. (Abbeville)

The following discussion is not an attempt to discredit the research of Kelly and Ina May McAdams as presented in the White Book, and it has no bearing on the lineage of the McAdams Family of Walker County, Texas, whatsoever. However, the assumptions Kelly and Ina May made regarding the marriages of John McAdams, Esq. deserve further scrutiny because they raise some serious questions.

Note that in this attachment we are dealing only with the Abbeville McAdams family.

The White Book presents Sarah Webb, who was born in 1759, as the first wife of John McAdams, Esq. It also says that after Sarah Webb died, John married Sarah or Sara (last name unknown). The speculation was that her last name was probably Jones because she and John Esq. had a son they named James Jones McAdams.

There is no evidence that John Esq. married Sarah Webb in 1778, as stated in the White Book. There is also no evidence that this marriage did not occur. However, we have credible evidence that John Esq. was married to a Sarah or Sara in about 1806-1807 and that this Sarah became his widow upon his death in 1834. Sarah was still living in 1866, because it is documented in the White Book and other sources that she made application for restoration of her Revolutionary Service Pension in 1866.

Most other genealogical records indicate that John's first wife was Catherine Stuckey and that Sarah Webb was his second wife. I believe that this is only partially correct. Sarah (maiden name unknown) was, without a doubt, the second wife John married after his first wife's death. It is highly unlikely that Sarah Webb was John's second wife and continued to live until at least 1866. Immigration records confirm that Sarah Webb was born in 1759. In 1866 she would have been 107 years old. In this regard, the White Book is correct.

That settles the issue of John's second wife. Her name was Sarah, but she was not Sarah Webb.

The issue of John's first wife is quite a bit more complicated. As mentioned earlier, current research indicates that her name was Catherine Stuckey, and I agree with these findings. It is important to note that I base my agreement on the amount of evidence available, not necessarily the quality. Therefore, we must now examine what the White Book says about Sarah Webb and see how it compares with contemporary research.

Sarah Webb:

1. Emigrated from Ireland in December 1765 at age 6. (Correct)
2. Born 1759 based on immigration records. (Correct)
3. Parents were John and Elizabeth Webb. (Correct)
4. Married John McAdams in 1778 in Abbeville. (Incorrect)
5. Had five children: John, Mary, Margaret, Drucilla, and Rachel. (Partially Correct)
6. Died in 1805. (Probably Correct)

According to the White Book, John McAdams Sr. was born in 1779. The next child, Mary, was born in 1785, a span of about six years. The other children in this family were born, on the average, about two years apart. A plausible reason for the unusual six year gap between John Sr. and Mary should have been presented in the original research.

Remember that this issue of the wives of John McAdams, Esq. has absolutely nothing to do with the McAdams Family of Walker County, Texas, because we have already established that there is no relationship between John McAdams, Esq. of Abbeville and John McAdams, Sr. of Walker County.

In order to establish a husband-wife relationship between Sarah Webb and John McAdams, the White Book relies heavily on the fact that John McAdams, Esq. was an executor of the wills of both James Webb (Sarah's father) and Andrew Webb (Sarah's brother). The implication is that he was an executor because he was Sarah's husband. This may or may not have been the reason he was chosen as an executor. He could have been a close family friend, neighbor, or he could have even served in some official capacity, for example.

We cannot ignore the letter in Attachment #1. which states: "John McAdams married first a Miss Sturkey (I think was her name)..." However, at the same time we also cannot ignore the fact that this same letter says that John's second wife "...was a Miss Haddon..."

We also must take into account the South Carolina genealogy records which say, "...He married Catherine Stuckey about 1784..." The date of 1784 would be about right, because the Abbeville records show that the first child, Mary, was born on 23 Nov 1785. However, again we face a conflict, because these very same records state that John's second wife was Sarah Webb.

There is not enough conclusive evidence to say that Sarah Webb was not the first wife of John McAdams, Esq. However, we must remember that contemporary research indicates that Catherine Stuckey was his first wife. Even though there is still not enough proof to detach Sarah Webb from John Esq., researchers into the lineage of the Abbeville family should take a serious look at this issue...

The answer to the question of the wives of John McAdams, Esq. may prove to be as elusive as the answer to the question regarding the father of John McAdams, Sr. of Walker County, Texas.

13. Attachment #6 Research Notes

Letter from Marilyn McAdams Sibley (19 Sep 2000):

“Since our John Sr. was probably in Texas by 1832, I assumed that any John that still remained in Tennessee by that time was not ours. That is why I concluded that John McAdams who appears on the census of 1820 in Stewart County, TN is our John Sr. and that the John McAdams from Overton County in that same census was his father. The Overton man was a signer of the Cumberland Compact on May 1, 1780 and received land in Stewart County for his service on the Tennessee frontier during the American Revolution. As John (Stewart County 1820) has a family that matches that of John Sr. who moved to Walker County, I think he is our John Sr.

Note: John Sr. 's daughter, Jane Evalina, was born on 02 Oct 1820 in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. This means that the move from Stewart County, Tennessee to Alabama occurred before October 1820. We could establish a more exact date if we knew exactly when the 1820 Stewart County census was taken.

Comparison Table (Stewart County, TN and Walker County, TX):

John McAdams U.S. Census 1820 Stewart Co., TN	John McAdams, Sr. Walker County, TX Family in 1820
3 males under 10 years	Joseph – age 9 John, Jr. – age 5 William – age 1
1 male 10 to 16 years	James – age 16
1 male 26 to 45	John Sr. – age 41
2 females under 10 years	Martha – age 4 Nancy – age 6
2 females 10 to 16	Mary – age 12 Elizabeth – age 14
1 female 26 to 45	Martha – age 35

Tennessee Affidavit:

A John McAdams appeared before a Justice of the Peace in Tennessee and swore that he was the John McAdams who had served in Capt. Porter’s Company, Wynn’s Regiment in the War of 1812. This document was dated May 14th, 1851. Our John McAdams, Sr. died in Walker County, Texas in 1850 and could not have been the man who made this sworn statement.

Saline Baptist Church Records (Bumpus Mills, Stewart County, Tennessee):

“John McAdams joined from Little River Church in Christian County, Kentucky in May 1818, along with wife Martha. Appointed church clerk in June 1818. On Aug 27, 1823 had been excluded, now a member and preaching on the Black Warrior in Alabama. Letter received on Jan 17, 1824 fro the Sardis Church in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama about some kind of trouble there. On Aug 7, 1830 there had been a request for a list of charges against him in person.”

“Martha McAdams joined from Little River May 1818, also husband John”.

Note: Christian County, Kentucky was formed in 1797 and was basically adjacent to Stewart County, Tennessee. Borders were vague and often in dispute on the early 19th century frontier, and people probably didn't know or care what state they were in. John Sr.'s daughter, Martha, was born in Kentucky on 19 Dec 1816. His next child, William, was born in Tennessee in 1819. These dates and the dates from the above church records indicate that the move from Kentucky to Tennessee occurred between December 1816 and May 1818.

John McAdams Signer of the Cumberland Compact (by Marilyn McAdams Sibley):

Booklet focus on two men named John McAdams, one of Stewart County and the other of Overton County Tennessee. Marilyn's theory is that the Overton John is probably the father of the Stewart John (our John Sr.)

“The name of John McAdams first appeared in the records of Tennessee when that state was still the western wilderness of North Carolina and while the American Revolution was still in progress. On May 1, 1780, at Nashborough (later Nashville) on the Cumberland River, he and 255 other men signed the Cumberland Compact, a document that established a form of law in an area several hundred miles from the nearest white settlement...”

This John McAdams was an early resident of Stewart, Jackson, and Overton (later Clay) Counties in Tennessee.