

Census Sunday: Ann Elisy Murrell and Aaron Brown

23	Wiley A. Murrell	41	M						
24	Mary	44	F						
25	Richard	18	M						
26	William	15	M						
27	William	7	M						
28	James G.	5	M						
29	Ann E.	5	F						

Ann Elisy Murrell, age 5, with her parents in the 1850 US Federal Census taken in Botetourt County, Virginia. (Click to enlarge.)

[Roberts Family, Murrell Family](#) (Click for Family Tree)

Ann Elisy Murrell, sometimes called Eliza or Anneliza, was the youngest child of Wiley Anderson Murrell (1806-1885) and Mary Magdalene Honts (1806-1887). Like her older siblings, she was born in Botetourt County, Virginia, with her 'natal day' (an old-timey way of saying 'birthday') being 21 December 1845.

Ann Elisy Murrell
was Born in the
year of our Lord
December the 21.
1845

Birth record of Ann Elisy Murrell, from Murrell Family Bible. (See previous posts on the Bible.) (Click to enlarge.)

Eliza was just five years old on 4 October 1850 when the census taker was stopped by their home in District 8, Botetourt County, Virginia to count the inhabitants. He listed her father, Wiley A. Murrell, first, as the head of household,

then her mother. Next came the children in order of birth with their sex and ages. The ditto marks on the census extract above indicate Virginia was the birthplace for all the family members. Wiley was listed as a farmer, but no value of real estate was given, so he may have been renting their farm. The mark to the far right indicates that Wiley could not read nor write.

In 1853 the family moved to Warren County, Illinois. So we find Eliza with her parents and brothers William and James in the 1860 census there. All three children had been in attendance at school and her father, Wiley, was listed with \$718 in personal estate value- still no real estate, so he was likely renting the land there too.

The quest for land they could own possibly drove Wiley and Mary to migrate further west, to Iowa, in 1868. Eliza's sister Elizabeth Ann Murrell had married John Roberts, and they all migrated together. We don't know if Eliza went with them or not, but it appears she may have chosen to stay, or else she took the train back to Roseville. She married on 15 September 1869 in Warren County, Illinois. Her husband, Aaron Brown (1846-1894), had been born in Indiana, but his family moved to Fulton County, Illinois, and then Warren County, where the couple probably met.

Eliza was 24, Aaron 23, when the next census taker found them in Greenbush, Warren County, Illinois, on 3 June 1870. Aaron was noted as a farmer, but with no real estate value listed; his 'personal estate' was listed as being worth \$300. So Aaron may have been renting the land too. Eliza had gone from being a farmer's daughter to a farmer's wife. She had also just become a mother the week before- their son James Brown was enumerated as being "7/365" days old.

Interestingly, Eliza was listed as being born in Kentucky on the 1870 census, although most other records note her birth as Virginia, plus she was found in the 1850 census there. We do

know there are errors in the census, and they can be caused by a number of situations, such as the enumerator not speaking directly to the person they are listing, errors in copying, 'misremembering,' etc.

James was apparently used to migration since his family had moved a number of times, and Eliza may have missed her parents, especially once she became a parent herself. Perhaps the Murrell and Roberts families had sent back glowing reports of the fertility of the soil, and the cheap land to be had in the west? For whatever reason, James and Eliza decided to move to Iowa. Their move came sometime after the birth of their daughter Mary R. Brown in 1872 and son William A. Brown (possibly named William Anderson after his uncle and grandfather?), born about 1875. They were in Iowa by about 1878, when their son George L. Brown was born in Jasper County, Iowa. Their last child, Edith M. Brown, was born in 1885, in Jasper County as well.

Edith was born just before the 1885 Iowa State Census was taken, as there was no age recorded for her but she was listed. Her mother was listed as "Ann Eliza," and Aaron, Mary R., William A., and George L. Brown were also listed. They were farming property listed as Twp. 79, Range 20, Section 25, NW $\frac{1}{4}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$.

More to come about the Murrell-Brown family.

Notes, Sources, and References:

1. We do need to check land records in the various counties to determine if the Murrells actually owned land in Virginia or Illinois.
2. Census records as described which can be found on Ancestry.com and FamilySearch.org.

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