

Tombstone Tuesday- WA Murrell and The Murrell Family Bible, Part 4



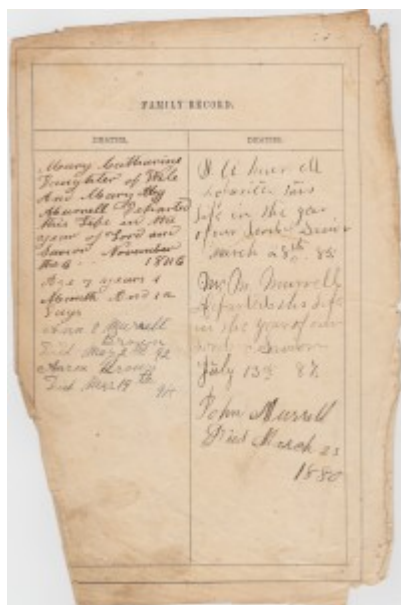
W. A. Murrell and Mary M. Honts- Headstone in Mound Prairie Cemetery, Jasper Co., Iowa. Posted with permission of photographer.



Mound Prairie Cemetery Marker in Jasper Co., Iowa

The final page of entries in the Murrell Family Bible documents the deaths of Wiley Anderson Murrell and his wife, Mary M. Honts Murrell, who are both buried in Mound Prairie Township, on a hill that gets the most wonderful breezes and has a view of the farms all around. What a delightful place to

be 'quietly resting,' especially for a couple who were farmers their whole life.



MURRELL Family Bible- Deaths

[\[click to enlarge\]](#)

Transcription:

Deaths

Mary Catharine

Daughter of Wile

And Mary H. [or Mag]

Murrell Departed

this Life in the

Year of our Lord and

Savior November

the 6 1846

Age 7 yrs 1

Month And 12

Days

Anne E Murrell

Brown

Died May 2nd 92

Aaron Brown

Died Mar 19th 94

[next column]

W A Murrell

Departed this

Life in the year

of our Lord & Savior

March 28th 85.

[? M. M.] Murrell

Departed this Life

in the year of our

Lord & Savior

July 13th 87.

John Murrell

Died March 23

1880

The entries are in a number of hands, which would be necessary, of course, if the bible records were maintained by Mary Honts Murrell as she could not document her own death. Mary may have written all the birth and marriage records, as well as the record for the death of their young daughter Mary Catharine, since they are all with the same ink and hand. The 1850 US Federal Census notes that Wiley could neither read nor write, but there is no mark for Mary- was that because she could read and/or write, or because they didn't even consider that as being important for a woman?

Mary could have written the entry for her husband W. A. since she survived him, but the writing does not have the same characteristics of her earlier script- the capital "A"s and "W"s are very different, and that style does not usually change with age, even if the size of the writing and its smoothness do change. She probably did not write the entry for their son, John Murrell, since he is listed after her death entry, even though he died in 1880, before she did. The entry for their daughter Ann E and her husband Aaron Brown in 1892 and 1894, respectively, must have been made by someone else after Mary's death in 1887.

I do wonder who made those additional entries, so now there must be a quest to gather samples of handwriting of the Roberts and Murrell family, in hopes of clues. I am leaning toward Elizabeth Ann Murrell Roberts as being one of the persons who wrote in the later deaths, because she was the oldest child of Wiley and Mary, and the bible has been passed

down in her Roberts family. I'll let you know if there is any success on that front.

Notes, Sources, and References:

1) Murrell Family Bible, possibly c1845.

2) Daughter Mary Catharine probably died in Botetourt, Virginia, since the family is listed there in the 1850 census, and did not migrate to Illinois until 1853. The bible may have been purchased in Virginia and travelled by covered wagon to Illinois.

3) 1850 US Federal Census for District 8, Botetourt, Virginia, "Wiley A Marrill" as head of household. Source Citation: Year: 1850; Census Place: District 8, Botetourt, Virginia; Roll: M432_936; Page: 156B; Image: 551. Accessed 2-8-14 on Ancestry.com.

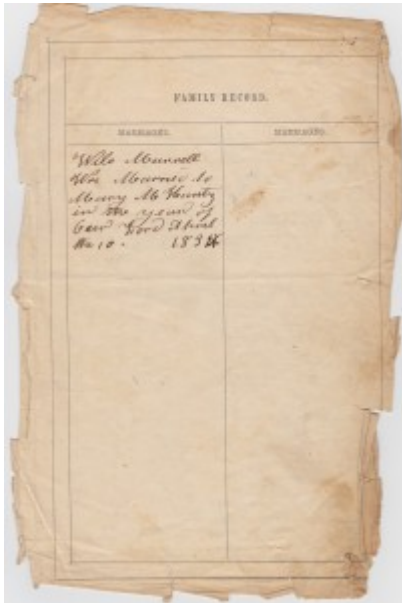
4) Anne E. Murrell Brown is sometimes called Ann Elisy, Elisy, Eliza, and Anneliza. She married Aaron Brown 15 Sep 1869 and they had five children. Her parents migrated to Jasper Co., Iowa in 1868, and Ann and Aaron followed sometime between 1870-1880. Her headstone in Greenlief Cemetery/Mound Prairie, lists her as "Annelliza."

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Mystery Monday- Murrell Family Bible, Part 3



MURRELL Family Bible- Marriages [*click to enlarge*]

There are several mysteries that have to do with this Murrell Family Bible, but one of them has been solved- that is the details about Mary M. Hontz and her family. (More on that in a future post.) We still do not know when this bible was printed or purchased (see [Sentimental Sunday- Murrell Family Bible, Part 2](#)). Even more vexing is the origin of Wiley Anderson Murrell and his parents- there are many various thoughts among researchers but no proof (yet).

Here is a transcription of this entry:

Wile Murrell

Was Married to

Mary M Huntz

in the year of

Our Lord March

the 10. 1834

Their first child married in 1857, but it is curious that none of these marriage events have been added to the bible.

Notes, Sources, and References:

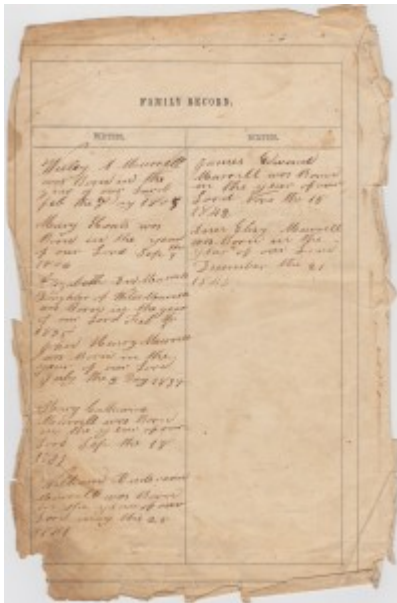
1) Murrell Family Bible, possibly c1845.

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[Sentimental Sunday: Murrell Family Bible, Part 2](#)



MURRELL Family Bible-Births

[[click to enlarge](#)]

Edith Roberts (see [Murrell Family Bible, Part 1](#)) would not have known her great-grandparents Wiley Anderson Murrell and Mary Magdalen Hons Murrell as they died about 15 years before she was born. I do not remember hearing any stories about them, but she told- and thankfully wrote- much about the family she did know. She did lovingly keep the Murrell family bible though, and now it is time for another generation to share for other related family to see. (Grandma would be so astounded at how we can share today!) It is now up to us to find the actual stories of the Murrells, and pass them on to our children.

[I did procrastinate and have gotten so involved with the live streaming of RootsTech that I did not get the Murrell Bible posts up, but will publish all in the next few days- really.]

The Murrell Family Bible does not have a title page or publication date- the first pages are missing. Many, but not all, of the entries were written in the same hand. The births look as if they were all written at the same time- maybe after all the children were born, after 1845? The marriage record and the first recorded death appear as if the same pen and ink were used as is on the births page. This makes me wonder if the bible was purchased around November 1846, when their daughter Mary Catharine died at the young age of 7 years. We

start to see the possible stories of this family as we analyze just these three pages of Bible records. One can almost feel the grief of a mother, setting the family's history into their Holy Book, to pass to subsequent generations.

The ephemera within the bible, which I will also post this week, gave clues that it was owned by the Roberts family in the 1930s, and we know it was passed to Edith Roberts Luck in later years. The bible was transcribed in 1966 with a purple Flair pen (the newest and coolest thing then), with Grandma Edie by my side to explain who each person was and how they were related. I have added notes of more information found in subsequent years, and corrected some of the things I did not know about transcribing when I was a new to genealogical research.

Transcription of the above Bible page:

Births

Wiley A. Murrell

was Born in the

year of our Lord

Feb the 3 day 1805

Mary Honts was

Born in the year

of our Lord Sep 9th

1806

Elizabeth Ann Murrell

Daughter of Wilee Murrell

was Born in the year of our Lord Feb the [1? Or 4?]

1835

John Henry Murrell

was Born in the

year of our Lord

July the 2 Day 1837

Mary Catherine

Murrell was Born

in the year of our

Lord Sep the 18

1839

William Anderson

Murrell was Born

In the year of our
Lord May the 25
1841

[next column]

James Edward
Murrell was Born
in the year of our
Lord Nove the 15
1842

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

Notes, Sources, and References:

1) RootsTech.org is streaming video of wonderful speakers from the 2014 RootsTech conference, and they will be available on the website for a short time after. The theme of many of the speakers is, "Tell your stories!" which is exactly why we started this blog. If opportunity presents, watch the Keynote from Saturday, 2/7/14 with Stephanie Nielson- it is a powerful story and was very moving. For some reason the videos are not available yet as I write this (and it's a genealogy and tech conference??? Oh, the irony...) but it is all free online so am very grateful for that.

2) Wiley A. Murrell- born in Virginia; parents John (?) Murrell and ?; mother or grandparent possibly ___ Anderson since Anderson is used as his and son's middle name?

3) Mary Honts- Parents were Henry Honts and Catherine Coffman; name Mary Magdalene Huntz/Hunts/Honce/Hance.

4) Elizabeth Murrell- Note: Feb 1 is date in other documents; middle name was Ann. Elizabeth Ann m. John Roberts in Roseville, Illinois, 08 Mar 1857 and d. 02 Feb 1917 in Prairie City, Jasper, Iowa.

5) John Henry Murrell- b. Botetourt Co., VA; m. Lydia Raburn by 21 Dec 1862 and d. 23 or 25 Mar 1880.

6) Mary Catherine Murrell- died young- see deaths

7) William Anderson Murrell- "of Roseville, IL" per obit of his sister Eliz. in 1917. Married Cordelia Talley 1 Oct 1867 in Warren Co., IL, and d. 1 Aug 1922 in Roseville, Warren, IL.

8) James Edward Murrell- m. Mary E. Robinson 17 Nov 1867; "of Leavenworth, KS" per sister Eliz's obit in 1917.

9) Ann Elisy Murrell- m. Aaron Brown; she d. 02 May 1892.

10) Murrell Family Bible, possibly c1845.

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Mystery Monday- Murrell Family Bible of 1815



W. A. Murrell and Mary M. Honts- New Headstone in Mound Prairie Cemetery, Jasper Co., Iowa. Posted with permission of photographer.

One of my wonderfully dedicated Murrell cousins brought my attention to a post on GenForum (<http://genforum.genealogy.com/philips/messages/649.html>) for

a Murrell family bible that contains family history from 1758-1869. This cousin is so good about following up clues and revisiting information, and she has made great leaps in our knowledge of what had been one of my brick walls for years. We are still looking for the parents of Wiley Anderson Murrell, however, and this family bible may contain clues.

Sadly the message was posted on November 30, 2007, and the email addresses no longer work. (IIRC, I had also tried the emails years ago.) A good genealogy samaritan had posted a note about a post he read on a website called "Treasures Lost and Found" by "Rmay424727@aol.com." Rmay was also a good genealogy samaritan when he purchased this bible in a second-hand store in El Paso, Texas, and then tried to find descendants who should own it.

The post stated that the bible listed that an Elizabeth Phillips had married a Murrell in 1799. Two funeral notices were on the inside cover, for Mr. George Simmons, with the date being 11-3-1866, and another for Capt. W. E. Murrell, 11-24-1869.

I had corresponded with a R. May many years ago, but he was elderly then so may already be hanging out with his ancestors. I have posted a reply- should have done that years ago- and reposted on the Virginia, Illinois, and Iowa lists. I love that GenForum has a box to check so you can be notified if anyone replies to your posts.

I also stated in my reply that I would be posting the Murrell Bible I have copies of, sometime this week. I'll have to tear myself away from RootsTech webinars if I procrastinate too long, so look for those posts in the next couple of days.

Looks like we have a few new clues to research, with the 3 new names and some dates. Too bad we don't know where Elizabeth Phillips married Mr. Murrell, but it will be fun to search for that information.

It would be nice to know who placed the new headstone for W. A. and Mary M. Honts Murrell, too- it surely isn't 125+ years old. Not sure how to go about that since the cemetery is not really 'run' by any group that I know of, but maybe the local genealogy society will have some information.

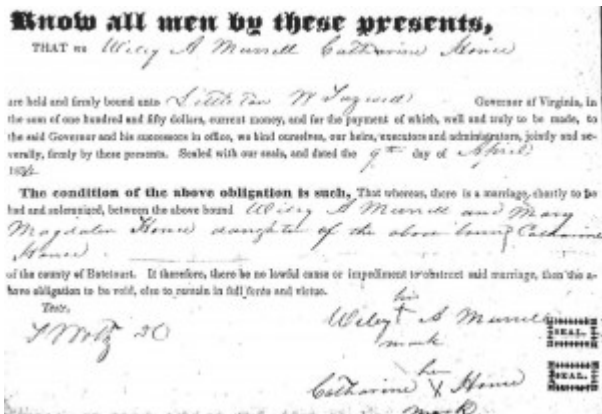
By the way, RootsTech is a great conference with live-streamed, FREE events/lectures starting at 8:30am (Mountain time) on Thursday, Feb. 6th. The conference has been excellent in years past and looks promising again this year. You can even download all of the syllabi for the conference (<https://rootstech.org/about/syllabus-materials/>)- thank you, RootsTech! See roots.tech.org for more info.

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[Mystery Monday- The Murrells of Virginia and Iowa](#)



Wiley A Murrell and Mary Honce Marriage Bond, 09 Apr 1834.
[Click for larger image. See footnotes for transcription.]

Sometimes we family historians have to just realize that the information we seek may no longer be available, or maybe was never available. That is tough to accept for most of us, so we beat our heads up against the proverbial brick wall. We rejoice in any minute clue, and try to look at the negative data in a positive way. We keep hoping to learn just one more tidbit about our elusive ancestor...

Wiley Anderson Murrell (Murrill, Merrell, etc.) is one of my most frustrating brick walls. He was born 03 Feb 1806 in Virginia, a time when record keeping and record survival was not optimum for genealogists. We have been unable to determine his parent's names, where his parents were from, siblings, or exactly where he was born in Virginia.

Some of the only Virginia documentation that has been found concerns the marriage of Wiley. There was a marriage bond with Catharine Honce, promising a marriage between Wiley and her daughter, Mary Magdalen Honce; the bond was signed on 09 Aril 1834. Mary's mother signed the bond- unusual for the time- because Mary's father, Henry Hons/Johns (1773-1864) had moved to Tennessee with his (to be) second wife, Elizabeth Firestone, their child, and some of Mary's siblings. The family had been unstable- Henry demanded that his daughter Mary go with him as well as all the other siblings, but Mary refused and hid from him when he came to get the other children. (Henry Hons/Honce/Johns is another long story for

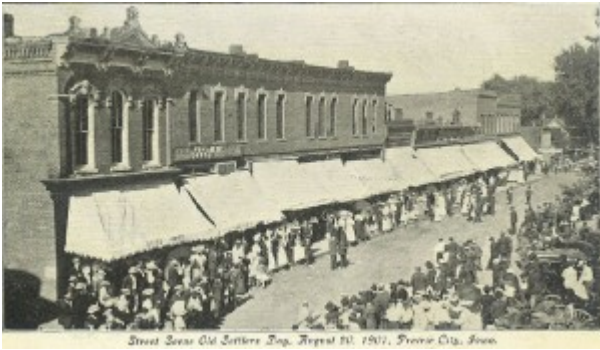
future posts.)

The *Murrell Family Bible* states that Wiley and Mary were married "March the 10 1834." This date corresponds with Dodd's *Early Marriages: Virginia to 1850*, which also states that Jacob Carper, a Methodist Episcopal minister, presided, and that Mary was the "d of Catharine who also gives surety."

Wiley A. Murrell is found in the 1840 US Federal Census in Botetourt, Virginia, with ages and gender of others in the household indicating probably Wiley, Mary, and 3 children (2 girls and a boy); Wiley was a farmer. The *Murrell Family Bible* records that one of these children, Mary Catherine Murrell, born 18 Sep 1839, "departed this life in the yr of our Lord & Savior November the 6 1846 age 7 years 1 month & 12 days."

In 1850, Wiley A. "Marrell" was again listed in Botetourt Co., Virginia, in the Western District (District 8) as a farmer and living with his wife Mary and their children: Elizabeth, age 15, John H[enry], 13, William [Anderson], 9, James E., 8, and Ann E[lisy], age 5. There was no value listed for real estate owned, so he may have been renting the land, and it was noted that he was over age 20 but "cannot read & write." In 1850 there were also many Murrills listed in the nearby Bedford Co., VA census, but no clues of how they might be related to Wiley.

The family moved to Greenbush, Illinois per their son William A.'s obituary in 1856, or 1853 to Roseville, Swan Twp., Warren Co., per family oral history and the obituary of daughter Elizabeth Ann (Murrell) Roberts. The family remained in Warren Co. during the 1860 census- Elizabeth Ann was married by then, but William, James, and Eliza were going to school, and Wiley continued to farm.



Prairie City, Jasper Co., Iowa, August 20, 1907. Street scene during Old Settler's Day. RPPC.

In 1868, per obituaries, the family, including Elizabeth Ann and her husband John Roberts, migrated to Jasper County, Iowa, in covered wagons per their great-granddaughter Edith Roberts who heard the stories often as a child. The family has not been found in an 1870 census- not in Iowa, as expected, nor Illinois; even Virginia censuses have been checked with no success.

The family is next found in the 1880 US Federal Census in Jasper Co., Iowa, indexed as "Murren." Wiley was still farming that year, at age 74, and living with just his wife. In March, 1885, the two were found together in the Iowa State Census in Mound Prairie Township, Jasper Co., Iowa, listed after their daughter Elizabeth and her husband John Roberts. (No land description is given and they have a separate dwelling, so they may have been living on the Roberts' farm.)



Headstone of Wiley Anderson Murrell and his wife Mary Magdalene Honce. Mound Prairie Cemetery, Jasper Co., Iowa

Wiley A. Murrell died that same month as the census, on 27 Mar 1885 in Prairie City, Jasper, Iowa. His wife Mary died two years later, on 13 Jul 1887 in Mound Prairie Twp, Jasper, Iowa. Both are buried in the Greenleif/Mound Prairie Cemetery near the family's farm.

We are very lucky to know so much about the family once Wiley A. Murrell and Mary Magdalen Honce were married. The brick wall part is Wiley's ancestry- who were his parents, where did they live, and where in Virginia was Wiley born? Some researchers think that John Murrell (1785-?) and Hannah Mitchell were his parents. This is the theory I am leaning toward, especially since Wiley and Mary's first son had the name of John (after his paternal grandfather possibly?) and the middle name of his maternal grandfather (Henry Honce.) Other researchers suggest William L. Murrell (b. 1769 VA, d. 1850-1860 in Cocke Co., Tennessee) and Elizabeth or Nancy Lax (1760-) were Wiley's parents. We would welcome conclusive proof of either, or other leads and sources.

Notes, Sources, and References:

1) *Murrell Family Bible*, hand copied circa 1966 at a relative's home in Iowa, though whose home is unknown. Some researchers and the newer headstone for Wiley state his birth date was 02 Feb 1806; the Bible states it was 03 Feb 1805. Date of Bible is unknown. (Sorry, it was the time before much documentation, and hey, I was just a kid!)

2) Marriage bond transcription:

"Know all men by these presents, that we, Wiley A. Murrell

[and] Catherine Honce are held and firmly bound unto Littleton W. Tazewell- Governor of Virginia, in the sum of one hundred and fifty dollars, current money, and for the payment of which, well and truly to be made, to the said Governor and his successors in office, we bind ourselves, our heirs, executors and administrators, jointly and severally, firmly by these presents. Sealed with our seals, and dated the 9th day of April 1834.

"The condition of the above obligation is such, that whereas, there is a marriage shortly to be had and solemnized, between the above bound Wiley A. Murrell and mary Magdalen Honce daughter of the above bound Catherine Honce of the county of Botetourt. If therefore, there be no lawful cause or impediment to obstruct said marriage, then the above obligation to be void, else to remain in full force and virtue."

It was signed by Wiley A. Murrell, his mark, and Catharine Honce, her mark, with F [Woltz?] as the witness.

3) Marriage Bond date is listed as marriage date on Ancestry.com and per *Early American Marriages: Virginia to 1850*.

Source Information: Ancestry.com. *Virginia, Marriages, 1740-1850* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 1999.

Original data: Dodd, Jordan R., et al.. *Early American Marriages: Virginia to 1850*. Bountiful, UT, USA: Precision Indexing Publishers.

4) 1840 US Federal census: Source Citation: Year: 1840; Census Place: , Botetourt, Virginia; Roll: 552; Page: 294; Image: 601; Family History

Library Film: 0029684. Accessed last on Ancestry.com 12/08/2013.

5) 1850 US Federal census: Source Citation: Year: 1850; Census Place: *District 8, Botetourt, Virginia*; Roll: M432_936; Page: 156B; Image: 551.

6) William A. Murrel- Obituary: "G. A. R. Veteran at Roseville, is Buried Today." *Galesburg [Illinois] Evening Mail*, page 10, August 3, 1922. William was just 15 when they moved to Illinois. On 01 Aug 1862 he answered the call to arms and joined Co. H, 83rd Illinois Volunteer Infantry during the Civil War. He participated in active fighting during his 3 years with the company and was mustered out 26 Jun 1865. He married Cordelia Talley of Roseville, IL, on 01 Oct 1867 and they had 2 daughters and 2 sons. William died 01 Aug 1922.

7) Obituary of Elizabeth Ann (Murrell) Roberts: "Mrs. Roberts Called Home," *Prairie City News*, February 7, 1917. Page number unknown as my copy is a clipping acquired many years ago from family.

8) 1880 US Federal Census: Source Citation: Year: 1880; Census Place: *Mound Prairie, Jasper, Iowa*; Roll: 346; Family History Film: 1254346; Page: 150A; Enumeration District: 096; Image: 0524. Accessed 12/08/2013.

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