

THE TRAVEL LOG OF ALEXANDER MONTGOMERY

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I. Alexander Montgomery of Blount County, Tennessee

We are convinced that our ancestor, Alexander Montgomery, is the son of John and Esther Houston Montgomery from Augusta County, Virginia. However, our Montgomery family research has been complicated by another Montgomery family's claim that their Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County, Tennessee was the son of John and Esther Houston Montgomery. So that we could determine which Alexander Montgomery was the true son of John and Esther, we learned as much as possible about them both. The objective of this article is to identify the ancestry of the Alexander Montgomery whose son John Montgomery resided in Lawrence County, Alabama in 1819.

Our John Montgomery's grandparents, John and Esther Houston Montgomery, purchased land in the Borden's Patent (Augusta, Virginia) in 1747. Near John Montgomery lived his wife's parents, John and Margaret Cunningham Houston. About 1760 Joseph and Abigail Alexander purchased land near the John Montgomery family in Borden's. Their land touched the lands of Francis Beatty and Thomas Berry. Joseph and Abigail Alexander's children were Sarah, James, and Oliver.

Alexander Montgomery (son of John and Esther) married Sarah Alexander about 1772. They purchased land from her parents in 1772. The same day in March 1772 Sarah's brothers James and Oliver also purchased land from their parents. James and his wife Martha and Oliver and his wife Margaret sold their property a year later in 1773. Alexander Montgomery and his wife Sarah sold their land in 1778.

The two brothers, James and Oliver Alexander, and their brother-in-law Alexander Montgomery fought at King's Mountain in 1780. They all served under Captain David Beatty. Captain David Beatty's family owned land in Augusta County that was also in the same neighborhood as were the lands of the Joseph Alexander and John Montgomery families.

After the Revolution in 1792, Alexander Montgomery and Oliver Alexander are documented to be in Washington/Greene County, Tennessee. Oliver sold land he owned in Washington County, Virginia through his power of attorney Robert Craig. Alexander Montgomery witnessed for Oliver in Greene County. It is highly likely James Alexander was also in Greene County at this

time.

By 1797 all three of the men were in Blount County, Tennessee. Alexander Montgomery's son John married his cousin Margaret, who was the daughter of James and Martha Alexander. They were married in Maryville, Tennessee with the Rev. Gideon Blackburn performing the marriage in November 1798. Margaret's father, James Alexander, signed her marriage bond in January 1799. Five of John and Margaret Montgomery's children were born in Blount County.

About 1808 Alexander Montgomery accompanied his son's family to Maury County, Tennessee. His second grandson (James Madison) was born in Maury County in 1810. His first grandson (Alexander Houston) was born about 3 years earlier in Blount County. Also accompanying Alexander Montgomery and John's family into Middle Tennessee were his niece Esther Montgomery Craig and her husband William W. Craig, along with their young children. Two Montgomery men, near the same age as our John, married into the Craig family in Middle Tennessee. In 1809 James Montgomery married Susannah Craig in Maury County, Tennessee, and Alexander Montgomery, Jr. married Margaret Craig in nearby Williamson County, Tennessee 1808. These may also be close relatives to Alexander Montgomery.

In 1814 Alexander Montgomery sold land he owned in Blount County, Tennessee. In his absence from Blount County and while residing in Maury County, Tennessee, Alexander Montgomery gave his nephew John Montgomery of Maryville, Tennessee his power of attorney to act in his behalf for the land sale. After 1814 and before 1817 Alexander Montgomery, his son John Montgomery and niece Mrs. Esther Montgomery Craig were together in Northern Alabama. Also in Madison County, Alabama in 1811 were James S. Montgomery, Esther's brother, and her sister-in-law, Charity Garretson.

In addition to these John and Esther Houston Montgomery descendants, another Montgomery named Joseph lived in Madison County in 1830, according to the Alabama census. Joseph, born 1786, married and raised a family in Lawrence/Limestone Counties, Alabama and lived nearby John in his later years. He and John were both elders in the Old Prospect Church in 1851. Based on the close association of our John and Joseph and on the results of DNA tests of both their descendants, Joseph is another close relative of Alexander Montgomery.

Two of Alexander Montgomery's grandchildren – Sarah "Sally" and Martha "Patsy" were married in Madison County, Alabama in 1817 and 1818. The places and dates of their marriages indicate that John Montgomery was present in Madison County no later than 1817. Sally married William Craig, and Patsy married John P. Craig, sons of John Craig, formerly of Maryville, Tennessee. John Montgomery, father to Patsy, signed her marriage license.

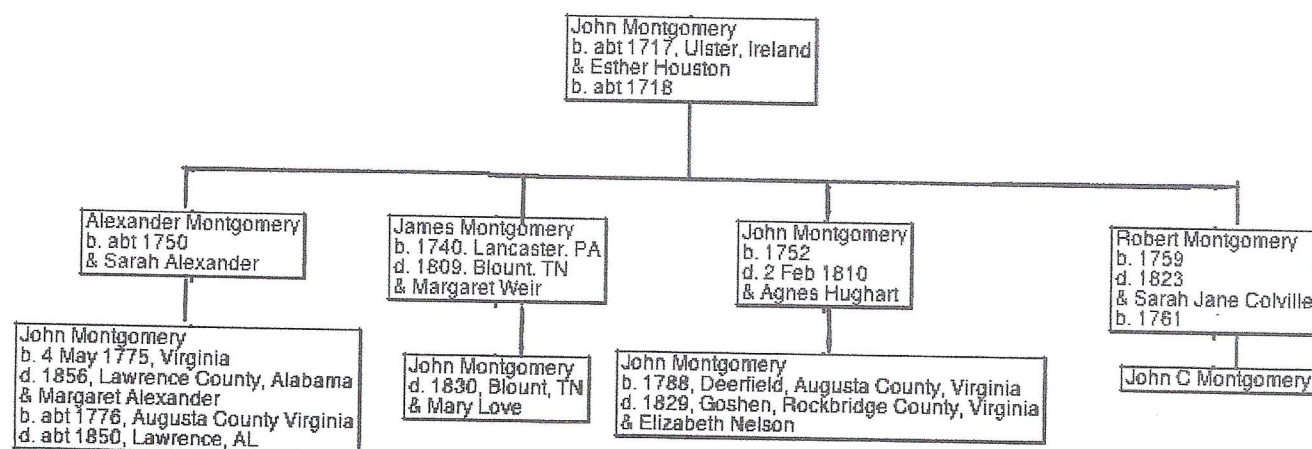
Other important pieces of data that were used to follow Alexander Montgomery's journey to Alabama are the 1820 and 1830 censuses. The 1820 Lawrence County, Alabama census has one additional male adult over the age of 21 who lived in John and Margaret Montgomery's household. This additional adult could **not** have been John and Margaret's oldest son, Alexander Houston Montgomery, because he was only 13 years old at the time of the census. The additional adult male in John's household in 1820 was probably his father Alexander Montgomery. Although there is not an Alexander Montgomery listed in Madison, Lawrence or Limestone Counties in the 1820 censuses, we know from another source that he was present in Northern Alabama at that time. A lawsuit was brought by Alexander Montgomery in 1821 and was settled in the Limestone County, Alabama Circuit Court in 1822 (court record on file).

The 1830 censuses of the above mentioned three Alabama counties--Madison, Lawrence and Limestone--did not list an elder Alexander Montgomery as 'head of a household'. However, there were three younger Alexander Montgomerys who were listed in Lawrence and Limestone counties in 1830. Alexander Houston Montgomery (John's son), Alexander Lowry Montgomery (James' son), and Alexander Montgomery (Joseph's son) all lived in the Lawrence/Limestone area of Alabama. In 1830 all three Alexander Montgomerys were newly married with young families. Each is a relative of the elder Alexander Montgomery.

Because he was no longer in son John's household in 1830, the elder Alexander Montgomery is believed to have died in either Lawrence or Limestone County after 1822 (settlement date of court suit) and before the 1830 census. He would have been about 73 years old at the time of his death. Because his son John lived in Lawrence County, Alabama during this time, we believe that Alexander Montgomery was buried in the historic Old Prospect Church Cemetery along with other early Presbyterian family members and settlers to the area. The oldest recognizable marker is 1826 with numerous others unidentifiable due to age and vandalism. His son John was an elder of the church. Grave markers have been found for other members of the church who are relatives of Alexander. Numerous of his grandchildren and great grandchildren were documented members of the Old Prospect Presbyterian Church.

Our Alexander Montgomery family can be defined by the naming tradition followed in his son John's family. 'Houston' was the middle name given for each of the first-born sons in three succeeding generations. John Montgomery, son of Alexander, named his first son Alexander Houston Montgomery; Alexander Houston Montgomery named his first son George Houston, and George named his first son John Houston. John, Joseph, and James Montgomery, the earliest Montgomery residents of Lawrence/Limestone Counties, each named a son Alexander Montgomery. In addition, John and Margaret named a daughter Sarah for his mother, Sarah Montgomery, the wife of Alexander. Their second daughter was named for Margaret's mother, Martha Alexander.

DNA tests conducted by members of our Montgomery family confirmed the theory that our John Montgomery is a descendant of John and Esther Houston Montgomery through their son Alexander Montgomery of Blount County, Tennessee. In the Fall 2008 issue of *The Blount Journal*, there is an article that describes how DNA tests and genealogy research in combination were used to determine that Alexander Montgomery, son of John and Esther Houston Montgomery, is the ancestor of our g-g-g-grandfather John Montgomery of Lawrence County, Alabama. In addition, the naming pattern followed by each of John and Esther Houston Montgomery's four sons is illustrated by the figure below. Each of their four sons--James, Alexander, John, and Robert-- named his first-born son John Montgomery.



II. Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County, Tennessee

So that we could resolve the mystery of our Alexander Montgomery's ancestry, it was necessary to study the ancestry of a different Alexander Montgomery who lived in Sevier County, Tennessee in 1808. Clearly, there are similarities between the two Alexander Montgomeries. Both 'appear' to be the son of John and Esther Houston Montgomery. However, only one can be that person. The focus of this portion of the article is to show how Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County, Tennessee is most probably descended from another Montgomery family and not the John and Esther Houston Montgomery family of Augusta County, Virginia.

The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) has a file with the family documented genealogy of Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County, Tennessee. The NSDAR file was obtained. From the file we learned much of what is written today of Alexander Montgomery of Sevier and his wife Margaret. Their descendants, who submitted the material that is contained in the NSDAR file, suggested he was born between 1760 and 1767. According to the family's records, Alexander Montgomery and his wife Margaret probably came to Sevier

County, Tennessee from Virginia. They married about 1780, and their children's names were Robert, William, John, and Margaret. The children of Alexander and Margaret were born between 1784 and 1793. The order of their births is uncertain, and there is no birth year for John provided. Some descendants of Alexander and Margaret Montgomery believed that Alexander was the son of John and Esther Houston Montgomery.

Notably missing from the NSDAR files of Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County, Tennessee were crucial pieces of data. Although there was a documented death date of Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County (1817), his burial place was not known. There is a present day commemorative marker in Shiloh Cemetery in Sevierville, Tennessee where his family believed he might be buried. In the NSDAR file there is no documented marriage date, and his wife Margaret's maiden name is not known. The files suggest the marriage date was probably 1780. The files also suggested that Margaret's maiden name could be Napier or Eaune. Further investigation on our part revealed in *Old Virginia Marriage Records* one Alexander Montgomery and Margaret Napier who married in Montgomery/Fincastle County, Virginia in 1798. (1798 is too late a marriage date to be that of Alexander and Margaret Montgomery of Sevier County, because their children were born between 1784 and 1793).

The descendants of Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County believe he came to Tennessee from Virginia, but the NSDAR files contained nothing to confirm that belief. After studying all of the family's information provided in the file, the following list is what was documented about Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County Tennessee: He likely came from Virginia before 1808, he was born between 1760 and 1767, he probably married about 1780 and his wife's name was Margaret. Alexander Montgomery died in 1817 and Margaret died in 1830. Based on their sons' names and the traditional way in which children were named in that era, Alexander's father was likely named, William, Robert, or John. From their family records, Robert appears to be the most commonly used name; therefore, it is reasonable to assume that Robert Montgomery could be the father of Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County, Tennessee.

In comparison, Alexander Montgomery of Blount County, Tennessee has a birth year (before 1750) that is a much better match with the known birth years of other John and Esther Montgomery children. Since John and Esther's first son James was born in 1740, it is highly likely there were children born between 1740 and 1752 in the family. The listing of the children's order of births and their birth years in the John and Esther Montgomery book has a 12 year span between 1740 and 1752 when no children were listed. Quoting from the John and Esther book page 30, "several sources indicate order of birth is not known and year of birth for certain ones does not check out with all source material." Alexander Montgomery, whom the authors confessed they knew little about, is one of the children whose order of birth and birth year are incorrectly listed in the book. Based on the approximated birth year (1767 as listed in

the book), Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County would have been only 50 years old at his death in 1817. In contrast, using the approximate birth year of 1750 and death year of 1823, Alexander Montgomery of Blount County would have been 73 years old at the time of his death.

III. What The Recently Discovered 1783 Land Document of Rockbridge, Virginia Tells Us

After several trips to the Virginia Court and Land Records Offices in Augusta and Rockbridge Counties, one probable set of parents with the name Alexander Montgomery and a wife Margaret was discovered. Per the newly discovered land record, Alexander Montgomery (of Rockbridge County) and his wife Margaret sold land located in Augusta County, Virginia to John McGlamory May 19, 1783 (land record on file).

When reading the document, we were struck by how the document provided many of the “supposed” vital statistics that were missing from the NSDAR file of Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County. Such things as where he lived before coming to Sevier County, confirmation his wife was Margaret, proof that Alexander and Margaret were already married in 1783 when they sold land he had inherited, and knowing that his father was Robert. There were just too many matches between the data found in the Augusta County, Virginia land record and what we had learned about the Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County to brush aside the similarities as merely coincidental.

Per the 1783 land record of Alexander and Margaret Montgomery, Alexander had gained the land he sold through inheritance. He was the “heir at law” of his father Robert Montgomery. An “heir at law” is someone who receives something from another’s death without a written will. Robert was a popular family name of the Alexander Montgomery family of Sevier County.

Upon learning Alexander’s father was Robert, we immediately thought of Robert who is the son of John and Esther Houston Montgomery. But Robert, John and Esther’s son, died in 1813 and left a will that describes his children. In 1783, the date Alexander sold the land, Robert son of John and Esther was still alive. Therefore, John and Esther’s son Robert was not the father of the Alexander Montgomery who inherited land in 1783.

Below are six points that are important considerations when defining who was Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County, Tennessee. They are based on data from his family’s records in the NSDAR files and from the 1783 recently discovered land sale record of Rockbridge/Augusta County, Virginia.

1. Alexander and Margaret Montgomery, the names provided by the 1783 Virginia land document, are the identical names for the parents of William, Robert, John, and Margaret (children of Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County) whose names are provided by NSDAR documents.

2. Alexander and Margaret were a married couple before 1783 when they sold the land in Augusta County, Virginia. (The land record found in Rockbridge County, Virginia provides confirmation).

3. The known dates of the births of their children (between 1784 and 1793) correspond with the time of Alexander Montgomery and Margaret's likely marriage date before 1783.

4. Alexander Montgomery was likely a young man at the time of his father's death and when he inherited the land before 1783.

5. Alexander and Margaret Montgomery probably left Rockbridge County after selling the land in 1783. (Habitually, that is what happened when a land sale occurred).

6. In looking at their children's names, Alexander and Margaret Montgomery followed the traditional pattern of naming for the child's grandparents. Alexander and Margaret Montgomery named a son 'Robert' (probably for his grandfather, Robert). Robert, the son of Alexander and Margaret, had no children. However, his brother William named his child Robert also. The name Robert carried through several generations of the family and appeared to be the one most often used in naming sons who descended through the family.

The NSDAR file of Alexander and Margaret Montgomery of Sevier County did not supply documents to confirm the date of marriage of Alexander and Margaret Montgomery, nor to confirm Margaret's maiden name. Nor did they provide information confirming where they lived before purchasing land in Sevier County, Tennessee in 1808. They provided no documentation to verify the claim that Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County was the son of John and Esther Houston Montgomery. The NSDAR file did not provide documentation to support the claim that he was living in the Southwestern part of Virginia where Captain Beatty's Company of Washington County, Virginia mustered before The Battle of King's Mountain in 1780.

It is well documented that some members of John and Esther Houston Montgomery's family lived in Washington County, Virginia prior to The Battle of King's Mountain; but nothing in the NSDAR files indicates that the Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County lived in Washington County in 1780. Since many people passed through Washington County, Virginia going to other western places, Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County,--from our recent research-- was probably among those who passed through Washington County after 1783. But until 1783, he resided in either Augusta or Rockbridge Counties. His name appears in the 1782 Rockbridge County Census record, and he did not sell the land he had inherited until 1783--three years after The Battle of King's Mountain.

From the recent discovery of the 1783 land sale document of Alexander and Margaret Montgomery in Rockbridge County, Virginia, the DNA test results, and recent genealogy discoveries by the descendants of Alexander Montgomery of Blount County, Tennessee, doubt has been cast on the previously accepted ancestry of Alexander Montgomery of Sevier County to the John and Esther Houston Montgomery family. New evidence, both scientific and genealogical, clearly suggests that the Alexander Montgomery of Blount County, Tennessee is the son of John and Esther Houston Montgomery. In addition, the new evidence strongly suggests that the Sevier County Alexander's father is Robert Montgomery instead of John; and the evidence proves the Robert Montgomery who is mentioned in the Rockbridge County land document cannot be a son of John and Esther Houston Montgomery.

Should there be questions about the article, Susan's email address is hoffmjm@aol.com. A more detailed discussion of our research, how DNA tests were used for verification, and a complete bibliographical list of references that were used is available at our web site: <http://www.johnmontgomeryancestry.com>

At the annual Montgomery Reunion in Greenback/Loudon County, TN in June, 2009, Joe Montgomery of Decatur, AL tells of the extensive genealogical and historical research and DNA testing to connect the line of the authors to the Blount County Montgomery line established by John and Esther Houston Montgomery.

