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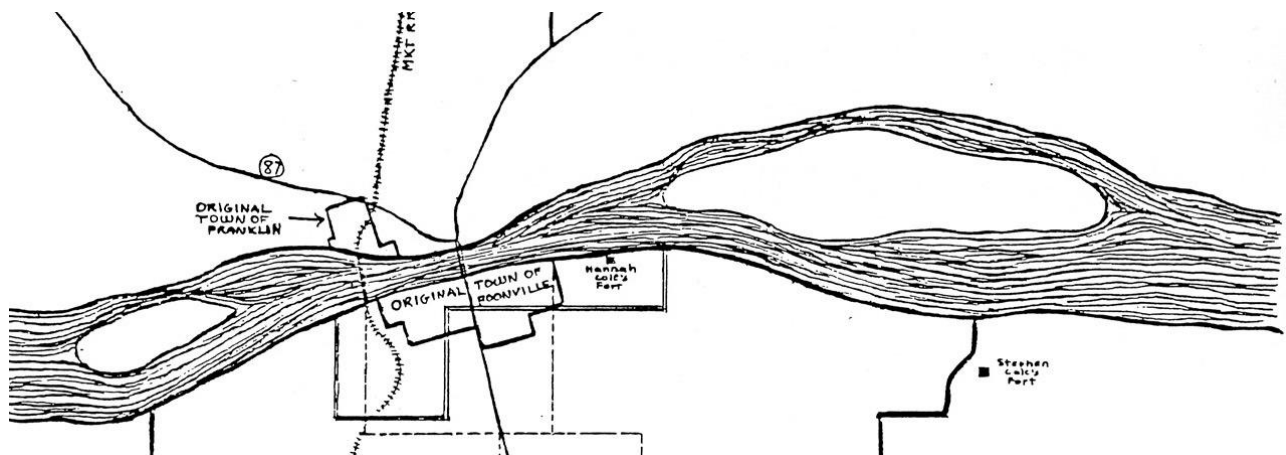
Walter Burris of Missouri, Kentucky and South Carolina

This paper presents some research regarding Walter Burris who was a pioneer of Boonville, Cooper county, Missouri. This investigation provides a text book example of using "cluster genealogy" to solve genealogical problems. The problem to be solved is properly documenting Walter Burris before his arrival in Boonville and determining who his relatives were.

Walter Burris was born sometime between 1761 and 1770 per the 1830 Missouri census (Cole county). That is the only record we have that gives us a clue to his age. Walter's known children were John Burris, Henry Burris, Rebecca Green, Nancy Vernon, William Burris, Alice Crabtree, Mary "Polly" Crabtree Williams, Thomas Burris, Zachariah Burris, Rachel Crabtree, Prudence Burris and Walter Burris. Walter died in late 1839 in Jackson county, Missouri and his estate was handled by his son Henry Burris. Walter was married twice with his second wife Lydia being much younger.

We start in 1811 at or near Boonville, Cooper county, Missouri because that is the earliest place and time we can document Walter Burris in Missouri using easily available historical sources found in a genealogical library (and now online via Google Books).

Early map of Boonville, Cooper county, Missouri on south side of the Missouri River:



The "History of Cooper County, Missouri" 1919 - page 66 says "Other Settlers Move South of River — In the latter part of the year 1811 some more adventurous spirits moved to the south side of the river and began to settle around and near the present site of Boonville. They were Joseph Jolly, Joseph Yarnell, Gilliard Rupe, Mike [Muke] Box, Delaney Bolin, William Savage, John Savage, **Walter and David Burris** and families."

Here we learn that Walter Burris was an early pioneer of what became Boonville, Cooper county, Missouri. This is also corroborated in a 1932 obituary of Walter's grandson Zachariah Burris (son of

William B Burris) which says "Mr. Burris' grandfather [Walter Burris] is credited with building the first house in Boonville, Missouri."

The book mentions a David Burris in conjunction with our Walter Burris. Given how few people we are dealing with here it's likely that David Burris is a close relative of Walter Burris. David Burris eventually moved to Cass county, Missouri and died there in 1849. Cass county borders Jackson county where Walter Burris moved to and died. In the 1880s many local county histories began being researched and published by various publishing companies. David's son Mastin Burris (1812-1888) is given a biography in "History of Cass and Bates Counties, Missouri" published in 1883. Mastin also likely contributed some of the local history.

The "History of Cass and Bates Counties, Missouri" page 664 gives us some biographical information about David Burris. "MASTIN BURRIS, section 19, is prominent among the very old settlers of this county and is a man who has been identified with its interests for nearly half a century. He is a native of St. Charles County, Missouri, and was born March 1, 1812. His father, **David Burris**, was born in South Carolina and was there reared. When a young man he removed to Madison County, Kentucky, and there married Miss Eleanor Lackey. They had eight children, of whom Mastin was the second child. David B. was an old pioneer of St. Charles County, Missouri, having landed there about 1804... ". At that time "St. Charles county" extended further west into Missouri Territory and including modern day Howard & Cooper county, Missouri.

David Burris died in 1849 before the 1850 census so his approximate birth year and birth state are not recorded. According to the 1840 Missouri census (Cass county) David Burris was born 1771 to 1780. This means we only have the above biographical information to go on regarding his birthplace. Five of David's children were alive during the 1880 census where the question of father's birthplace was asked and Elizabeth Gibson said South Carolina, Mastin Burris said South Carolina, James M Burris said North Carolina, Nancy E Martin said South Carolina. [His son William M Burris maybe on the 1880 Texas mortality (Lamar county) schedule as "William" with last name cropped off the film frame. He was 81 years old, died March 1880, born KY, parents born SC, in state 45 years. The entry has the same Enumeration District (131) as his widow Matilda found on the regular census schedule.]

This information from his living children helps corroborate that David Burris was evidently born in South Carolina. The biography fails to mention David Burris had a previous wife named Mary _____. David and Mary's last child Nancy was born 1802 South Carolina. They evidently divorced between 1802 and 1808. In 1850 "Molly" (Mary) Burris age 83 is living with their daughter Jane Crowder in Titus county, Texas.

The "History of Cass and Bates Counties, Missouri " page 329 also says " The first general election in the county after its organization was held in 1836... Martin Rice was elected surveyor. Jamison D. Dickey, James W. McLellan and **Henry Burris**, cousin of **Martin Burris**, were elected county court justices. "

Note the typesetter (no doubt working off a manuscript) printed "Martin" instead of "Mastin" probably by mistaking a cursive s for a cursive r. Given that Mastin Burris has his own biography in the book and was a early resident of the area in question and possibly gave some of the historical information it's reasonable to believe this is just a printing error. There was no Martin Burris living in Cass county,

Missouri at that time.

This is a vital clue for the Burris genealogy because taken at face value it tells us that Henry Burris and Mastin Burris were cousins (assumed first cousins) and therefore Walter Burris (father of Henry Burris) and David Burris (father of Mastin Burris) would be brothers. This also corroborates the close association we find in "History of Cooper County, Missouri". Here we have two separate history books indicating the same close connection between Walter Burris and David Burris. Previous attempts to research Walter Burris *without* considering David Burris has caused errors and mis-associations and in general researching an ancestor in isolation as if not connected to anyone else leads to missing important clues.

The "History of Cass and Bates Counties, Missouri" also states that Henry Burris was from Alabama but given none of Henry's children were living in Missouri to give this information it is second or third hand at best and must be *weighed against other evidence*. Henry Burris was born about 1790 (median of age ranges listed on 1830 and 1840 census). Henry Burris' son William B Burris was recorded on the 1880 California Census (Sonoma county) and he reported his father was born in South Carolina and mother in Kentucky. Taken at face value this would place Walter Burris in South Carolina at the time of Henry's birth about 1790.

Note that the 1790 South Carolina Census (Laurens county) does indeed record a Walter "Burress" next to William Burress. Keep in mind the location of **Laurens** county, South Carolina because it shows up again later in this paper...

Given that Walter Burris can be closely associated with David Burris is it possible to trace them together before Missouri? Yes.

Previous older research in Kentucky marriages revealed that David Burris married Elender "Nelly" Lackey on 5 December 1808 in Madison county, Kentucky verifying the information in the Mastin Burris biography. So, at this point we have located David Burris in Madison county, Kentucky in 1808 and then pioneering in Boonville, Missouri about 1811. This gives us a time frame for David's migration from Kentucky to Missouri of 1808 to 1811. The distance from Madison county, Kentucky to Boonville, Missouri is 500+ miles (straight). The actual migration path would have been farther and done in a time with no roads or bridges just paths. At some point he would have taken a barge across the Mississippi and/or Missouri River. The journey would have taken at least a full month and it's doubtful he or anyone would have ever traveled back unless it was an important reason.

Given the migration pattern for David Burris from Kentucky to Missouri can we find a similar migration pattern for Walter Burris? Yes.

Walter Burris had two children born in the same time frame of 1808 to 1811: Nancy Burris and William B Burris. Walter's daughter Nancy Burris Vernon (wife of Ebenezer) was born about 1809 in Kentucky. This birth year and birthplace is consistent through FOUR consecutive census records. Walter's son

William B Burris was born about 1811 in Missouri. This birth year and birthplace is consistent through three consecutive census records. These solid birth years and birthplaces gives us a time frame for Walter's migration from Kentucky to Missouri of 1809 to 1811.

The 18+ year gap between Walter's son Henry Burris (c. 1790) and Walter's daughter Nancy Vernon (1809) would suggest Nancy was more likely the daughter of Walter's second wife Lydia ____ (born c. 1790) and probably not a late child of Walter's first wife as previously assumed. Given this interpretation this would lead us to theorize that Walter's second marriage to Lydia ____ might be found in Kentucky prior to 1809 instead and not years later in Missouri as previously assumed and repeated by others (with no evidence).

Can we find a marriage records of a Walter Burris/Burrus (or misspelling) to a Lydia ____ in or near Madison county, Kentucky just before 1809? Yes.

In July 2015 research in Kentucky marriage records on Ancestry indeed revealed a marriage of Walter Burris [mis-transcribed as "Burns"] to Lidia [Lydia] Barnes in May 1807 in Clark county, Kentucky which directly borders Madison county. A published transcription correctly lists him as "Walter Burrus". There was no Walter Barnes anyways. The original courthouse record and original marriage bond has yet to be obtained only later transcriptions and indexes. This is a win for deductive reasoning.

[Critical comments: The information repeated on Ancestry that had our Walter Burris marrying a Mary Lively in 1787 in Albemarle county, Virginia and then marrying Lydia "Cole" in 1813-1816 Missouri was never valid to begin with for the simple fact that the Virginia "Walter Burrus" was still living in Albemarle county, Virginia in 1810, 1820 and 1830+. Also there is no actual record of our Walter Burris marrying a Lydia "Cole" in Missouri even though the places he lived have extant (none missing) marriage records. The erroneous Cole information is taken (implied from) from a 1973/1974 Vernon-Stark newsletter that claims Nancy Vernon was a granddaughter of Col. Robert Cole of the Choctaw Nation which is itself nonsensical given where the Vernon family came from and where the Choctaw Nation actually was. Are we to believe that Walter Burris traveled to the Choctaw Nation and there met Lydia or that Robert Cole took his daughter Lydia to Boonville, Missouri where they met Walter Burris? The writer of that genealogy probably conflated Boonville pioneers William Cole and Hannah Cole with Capt. Robert Cole of the Choctaw Nation. This is an example of family lore or wishful thinking being conflated with real history.]

Can we find this Walter Burris in other records in Clark county, Kentucky around the same time? Yes.

Walter Burris was found in the Clark county, Kentucky tax rolls from 1804 to 1808 (1807 no tax roll) proving he was living there but only with personal property (horses) which means he was living on someone else's land (sharing a farm). Walter Burris last appears in Clark county, Kentucky on the 1808 tax roll. David Burris only appears on the 1808 and 1809 Estill county (formerly Clark county), Kentucky tax rolls and is absent from earlier rolls. His absence is explained by the fact (I think) the only people on the tax rolls are people with actual taxable property like land, cattle, horses or slaves. Also the fact that

David Burris was married before Elender "Nelly" Lackey and was still living in South Carolina as late as 1802 per the birth year and birthplace of his daughter Nancy Martin. It's not known exactly when he moved to Kentucky.

So at this point we have BOTH David Burris and Walter Burris linked to the same area of Kentucky at the same time just like we see 3 or 4 years later in Boonville, Missouri. This appearance in the jurisdiction of two adjoining counties may indicate they lived close to the border and that a marriage license was easier to get out of Madison county while their minister was working over the border in Clark county and filed his returns there.

Can Clark county, Kentucky tax rolls reveal possible relatives of Walter and David Burris? Yes.

With Walter Burris and David Burris now documented in Clark county, Kentucky the tax rolls were further combed to find other possible relatives. Using the instances of identical collection dates (in a loose alphabetical ledger) it's possible to see which group of Burris men paid their taxes together on the same day indicating close proximity if not cohabitation (sharing a farm). Using this interpretation the overlapping of 9 years of tax roll data (1799-1808) gives us evidence of a related group consisting of William Burris, Walter Burris, Thomas Burris, Isaiah Burris and David Burris. This methodology for early Kentucky tax rolls is proven to be valid by the fact Walter Burris and David Burris are already linked and all the other links are validated by other research not detailed here. Other evidence suggests members of the Burris family were living near Woodward Creek in current-day Estill county.

Kentucky tax roll data with Burris men that share the exact same collection date:

[April 9, 1799 \(Clark county\) - William Burris, Thomas Burris](#)

[May 15, 1800 \(Clark county\) - William Burris, Isaiah Burris](#)

[April 16, 1801 \(Clark county\) - William Burris, Isaiah Burris, Thomas Burris](#)

[June 14, 1802 \(Clark county\) - William Burris, Thomas Burris](#)

[Aug 11, 1803 \(Madison county\) - William Burris, Isaiah Burris, Walter Burris](#)

[July 15, 1808 \(Estill county\) - Isaiah Burris, David Burris, James Box, William Bowles, John Snethen](#)

Walter Burris and Isaiah Burris appear on the Clark county, Kentucky tax rolls for 1804, 1805 and 1806 but with different collection dates. This may indicate they were living apart or that one just had to pay his share later. There was no 1807 tax roll possibly because the county was in the process of being divided. In 1808 the southern part of Clark county was designated the new Estill county.

With the tax roll data providing new names to consider other county records in Clark county and neighboring Madison county were looked into. In the Madison county, Kentucky marriage bonds we find a July 1800 marriage bond for a marriage of Thomas Burgin to Nancy Owen (d/o Prudence). The sureties (bondsmen) were Walter Burris and William Lackey. The mother's consent was witnessed by Isaiah Burris! So in **one record** related to one event we have both Walter Burris and Isaiah Burris involved. This record extends Walter's residence in Clark county, Kentucky to as early as July 1800 and links him to the Isaiah Burris in the tax roll and by extension to William Burris also. Let's look more at

Thomas Burris and Isaiah Burris...

Thomas Burris:

This Thomas Burris is later linked in Missouri to David Burris by intermarriage of two children and Thomas Burris is also linked to Walter Burris because Thomas selected Henry Burris (Walter's son) to be his Executor when he wrote his will in 1845 in Cass county, Missouri. Walter, David and Thomas are further linked by the migration of their children/grandchildren to the exact same areas in Texas [Burris and Vernon notes]. This Thomas Burris should not be confused with the Thomas Burris Sr and Thomas Burris Jr who also lived in Clark county south of Winchester and originated from Orange county, Virginia. He should also not be confused with the Thomas Burris that lived in Howard county, Missouri. Our Thomas Burris lived in Clark county, Kentucky which changed to Estill county, Kentucky in 1808 and then moved to Cass county, Missouri about 1831 where he died after 1845. In his will Thomas selected Walter's son Henry Burris as his Executor but it appears no estate was actually probated.

Isaiah Burris:

Research into Isaiah Burris reveals he was living in Estill county, Kentucky as late as 1817 and moved to Wayne/Ripley county, Missouri by 1830 and as stayed there as late as 1840. Isaiah Burris appears on the 1848 tax roll in Cass county, Missouri along with David Burris and Mastin Burris. Eventually Isaiah moved to Johnson county, Missouri which is next to Jackson county (where Walter Burris lived) and also Cass county (where David Burris lived). Isaiah lived long enough to be recorded on the 1850 Missouri Census (Johnson county). According to the census he was born about 1776 in South Carolina (like David Burris). Isaiah is assumed to have died in the 1850s in Johnson county. There was no estate.

Can Estill county, Kentucky records reveal possible associates of Walter Burris and David Burris? Yes.

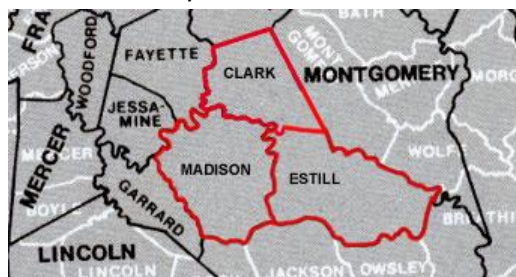
The connection between Walter Burris, David Burris, and Isaiah Burris is reflected in the people they can be directly associated with.

In 1808 the southern part of Clark county, Kentucky and a part of Madison county, Kentucky were formed into the new Estill county, Kentucky so we continue in Estill county records.

1800 Kentucky



1810 Kentucky



Isaiah Burris appears in many court order records for Estill county, Kentucky (formerly southern Clark county) in 1808 and 1809 the same time period Walter Burris and David Burris were living there or near. This writer believes they all worked the same farm/plantation.

An Estill county court order dated May 17, 1808 says "[David McGee](#), [Augustus Davis](#), [Gilliard Roop](#) and [Isaiah Burross](#) [Burris] view a road from the mouth of Woodard's Creek to intersect the road from the Rock Lick to the courthouse."

This is an important record because "Gilliard Roop" [or Gilead Rupe] is also later documented in Booneville, Missouri along with Walter Burris and David Burris! Repeating from a few pages before...

The "History of Cooper County, Missouri" 1919 (page 66) says "[Other Settlers Move South of River](#) — In the latter part of the year 1811 some more adventurous spirits moved to the south side of the river and began to settle around and near the present site of Boonville. They were Joseph Jolly, Joseph Yarnell, [Gilliard Rupe](#), Mike [Muke] Box, Delaney Bolin, William Savage, John Savage, [Walter and David Burris](#) and families."

So, now we have a person that can be directly associated with Walter Burris and Isaiah Burris in Kentucky and Missouri. This verifies again the migration of the Burris (and now also Rupe) families from Clark (Estill) county, Kentucky to Boonville, Cooper county, Missouri.

Now note the name "Mike" Box [Muke Box] in the quote...

Muke Box (c.1795-1852) is a member (per Ancestry users) of the James Box family that originated in **Laurens** county, South Carolina and moved to Clark county, Kentucky. It turns out Muke Box is yet another person that can be directly tied with the Burris family in Clark/Estill county, Kentucky before moving to Boonville, Missouri. Here is how...

In early 1808 James Box (father of Muke Box) died in southern Clark county, Kentucky (soon to be designated Estill county). On March 28, 1808 Isaiah Burris and David McGee were the witnesses for the recording of James Box's will in the new Estill county courthouse.

The 1808 tax roll for Estill county, Kentucky was looked at again to see if the Box family could be found and if there was any date proximity to the Burris family. We find Mary Box (widow of James and mother of Muke), Isaiah Burress, and David Burress all with the exact same tax collection date of July 15, 1808 indicating proximity. The proximity of Isaiah Burris to Mary Box is further verified by the following.

An Estill county, Kentucky court order dated July 17, 1809 says "[Isaiah Burress surveyor of road from Flatwood's Meeting House to the Red River Ironworks to cross road of the Woodward's Creek near Widow Boxes...](#)"

So, at this point we can say that Walter Burris, David Burris, Isaiah Burris, James Box, Mary Box, Muke Box and Gilead Rupe all knew each other in southern Clark (Estill) county and likely lived very close to each other or even shared the same farms or plantations.

The previously mentioned Estill county court order from May 17, 1808 also lists a David McGee and Augustus Davis. Both of these men are also seen later at Boonville, Missouri.

So now we can create the following list of connected or associated people that went from Clark/Estill

county, Kentucky to Boonville, Missouri:

Walter Burris, David Burris, Muke Box (and probably Mary Box), Gilead Rupe, David McGee, Augustus Davis.

Let's fast forward 6 years to Boonville...

***** The incident in Boonville, Missouri *****

In the years 1813 and 1814 the Boonville pioneers were victims of much Indian depredation and had to retreat into makeshift wooden forts for protection. When they were away from the forts to gather honey and game they were in danger of Indian attacks.

The book "Tales of Black Hawk the Red Head and Missouri Rangers" by Perkin 1974 gives a harrowing account of one deadly attack near Boonville and specifically mentions our Walter Burris. Unfortunately the book's actual sources are not known at this point.

Dec. 14, 1814 - "... Samuel McMahan, who had been staying in McLain's Fort since Indians had burned McMahan's Fort, was on his way to Cole's Fort to drive up some cattle which he had corralled there. He chanced upon a group of pioneers, including **Muke Box, Walter Burriss** and **Gilead Rupe** who were cutting a bee tree beside the trail, less than three miles from Cole's Fort. It was supposed afterwards that savages were sneaking up on these settlers, when McMahan came riding along. Instead of attacking the bee hunters, they fired on McMahan. He was shot through the body and his horse was killed. McMahan jumped up and ran towards the river, but redskins overtook him and killed him with three spear thrusts in his back. Then, they scalped him, cut off his head and disemboweled the body.

Hearing gunfire, Rupe and Burriss ran to Fort Cole and gave the alarm. Box climbed a tree and shot one of the murderers as they were returning — in great glee — with McMahan's scalp. Greatly confused, the savages caught up their companion's body and bore it away, limp and lifeless. It was found later in a ravine, a mile away.

The next day, men of Cole's Fort, reinforced by some militia, went out and retrieved McMahan's mangled remains. James Cole, then a boy of 14, carried the body on the pommel of his saddle, and David McGee brought the head, wrapped in a sheepskin..."

Note the presence of David McGee (previously linked with Isaiah Burris and the Box family in Kentucky) and also Samuel McMahan who was yet another neighbor back in Clark (Estill) county, Kentucky. Samuel McMahan was a brother-in-law of David McGee. Another account of this story only mentions "settlers" cutting a bee tree and no names.

The next year 1815 Indian Depredation claims were taken by J. P. Stephen Cole. Muke Box was a witness for Walter Burris' claim. Henry Burris and David Burris also filed claims.

So, at this point we have successfully used standard genealogy and cluster genealogy to document Walter Burris' migration from Kentucky to Missouri between 1808 and 1811 and link him to likely relatives and many associates seen in both Clark (Estill) county, Kentucky and Boonville, Missouri.

Is there more evidence of these connections and migration? Yes.

Research online in the early Missouri court files reveals a record of a two court cases involving David Burris and John Snethen for altercations against each other that occurred in July 1810 at or near the "Loutre Island Settlement" in modern-day Montgomery county, Missouri. The cases were in the jurisdiction of St Charles county which covered the modern day county but also extended further west into the "Boon's Lick" region.

John Snethen was married to Prudence Bowles (born 1785) in 1801 Clark county, Kentucky. Prudence Bowles was a daughter of the previously mentioned Mary Box (widow of James Box). Prudence was the step-daughter of James Box and 1/2 sister of Muke Box. Mary was first married to a Mr. Bowles (or Boyles) in the 1780s and had Prudence Bowles (born 1785 SC) and William Bowles (born c. 1788). Mary then remarried to James Box after 1790 probably in **Laurens** county, South Carolina and had Muke Box after 1790 (dates vary). Mary Box was called as a witness in the case(s) along with members of the Cole family (the other Boonville pioneers mentioned above).

In the files there is a legal document where Walter Burris agrees to help pay the \$300 court fine if court case goes against David Burris. The file also mentions David's wife as "Nelly" (nickname for Elender).

So, now we know that Walter Burris and David Burris and the Box family were residents of the "Loutre Island Settlement" in Montgomery county, Missouri as early as July 1810. This was a year or two before their migration west to the "Boone's Lick" region and Boonville, Missouri a distance of 70+ miles. This information is reflected in the historical record and many other families followed an identical path.

The book "A History of the Baptists of Missouri" reveals some biographical information about John & Prudence Snethen: "In the year 1809, several Baptist families emigrated from the State of Kentucky, and settled near Loutre Island, in what is now known as Montgomery County. Among the number were Rev. Joseph Baker (and wife, perhaps), and John Snethen and Prudence, his wife; also one or two families by the name of Brown... The next year a Baptist church was organized a short distance west of Loutre Island, which was the first organization of the kind north of the Missouri River... "

The book also contains a biography of their son Alia B Snethen: "Alia Babb Snethen.*—John Snethen, Sr., a native of New Jersey, emigrated to Kentucky in 1799, and in 1802 he married Miss Prudence Bowles, a native of South Carolina. The year previous they had both become Baptists. In 1809 they moved to the territory of Missouri, and soon after (in 1810) went into the organization of a Baptist church near Loutre Island, Montgomery County, the first church of any order north of the Missouri River and west of St. Charles County... The war of 1812 drove nearly all the settlement on Loutre to the Boone's Lick Ports in Howard County, where the settlement had become much the

strongest. Here John and Prudence Snethen became in 1812 constituent members of Mt. Pleasant Church, the second one formed this far west and north. The war over, they returned to their home on Loutre, and subsequently became members of the Baptist church at Mount Horeb, then located in the eastern borders of Callaway County, some ten miles north of where they lived. They continued members of this church until their death, at the time of which he was 81 years old and she was 71... The oldest child of John Snethen and Prudence his wife, was Alia B. Snethen, the subject of this brief notice. He was born in Estill County, Kentucky, August 4, 1803, and during his boyhood was of moral deportment." [clip]

Notice Prudence Snethen is said to be a native of South Carolina. We already know from various Ancestry trees that Muke Box (younger 1/2 brother of Prudence Snethen) was also native of South Carolina, specifically **Laurens** county.

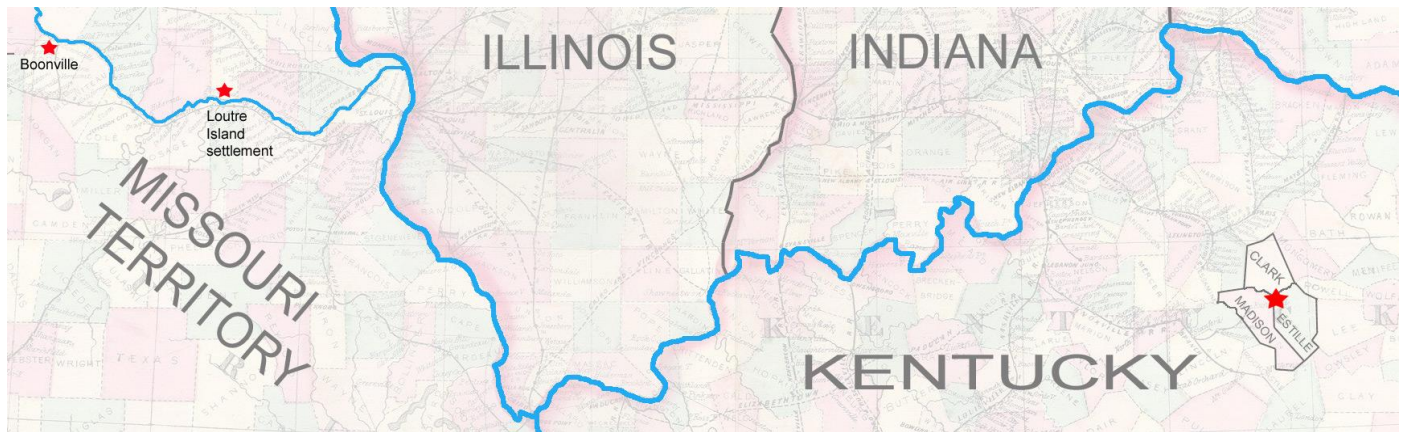
One early resident of the Loutre Island Settlement was Elder William Thorp. Judge Joseph Thorp, son of Elder William Thorp, wrote some letters to The Tribune, a Clay Co. MO newspaper recounting the settlement of the "Boonslick" area of Missouri:

"My father, Elder William Thorp, left Madison county, Kentucky, about the 1st of August, 1809, with his wife (Frances) and seven small children, with a few household goods and implements of husbandry, packed on horses, and made his way through the wilderness to the western wilds of Missouri, landing at a place called Luther Island, above St. Charles, on the 9th of September following.

There were very few Americans in St. Louis or St. Charles — mostly French-Creoles and Indians. They were then used as trading posts. Part of the family raised a crop there. My father, with a few others, some of whose names I can't call to mind, but prominent among whom were Col. Benjamin Cooper, Capt. S. Cooper, Jno. Ferril, Thos. McMahan, David McClain, William Monroe, — Carson, (father of the noted Kit Carson, the pathfinder and great mountaineer), Fugate J. Hancock, Thomas Elisha, Joseph, David and Jonathan Todd, (brothers), Still J. Banion, made their way still further up the Missouri river to a place called Boonslick, named after the old pioneer, Dan'l Boone, who had previously explored that region of the wilderness and found the salt spring, from which he had supplied himself with salt by boiling the water in kettles. They raised a crop of corn without much labor, only what it took to prepare the ground for the seed, for it grew and yielded a bountiful crop with but little further labor. "

The reference to "Luther Island" is actually referring to the "Loutre Island" Settlement. Here we have even more people that trace back to the same area in Kentucky. Given that people in this period took part in group migrations of extended family and neighbors rather than a more dangerous solo migration it's possible the Burris and Box families were part of this same migration but that is just speculation at this point. What we DO know is that David Burris is last taxed in Estill county on June 4, 1809 and David Burris and Walter Burris are at Loutre Island by early July 1810. The migration took an entire month and it's doubtful anyone ever traveled back to Kentucky because of the conditions.

Map of Boonville, Missouri and Clark county, Kentucky a straight distance of 500+ miles.



Can we trace Walter Burris BEFORE Kentucky? Yes.

At this point the earliest record of Walter Burris in Kentucky is the July 1800 marriage bond he was a surety for with William Lackey (likely kin to David Burris' wife Nelly Lackey). David Burris and Isaiah Burris were both born in South Carolina in the 1770s. The only information we have about Walter's age is that he was born 1761-1770 per the 1830 census and no direct evidence of his birthplace.

The only clue to his residence before Kentucky is the evidence that his son Henry Burris was born about 1790 (median of age groups on 1830 and 1840 census) in South Carolina (1880 census answer by son William). If this is true then that would place Walter Burris in South Carolina about 1790...

Is there a record of a Walter Burris in South Carolina in 1790? Yes.

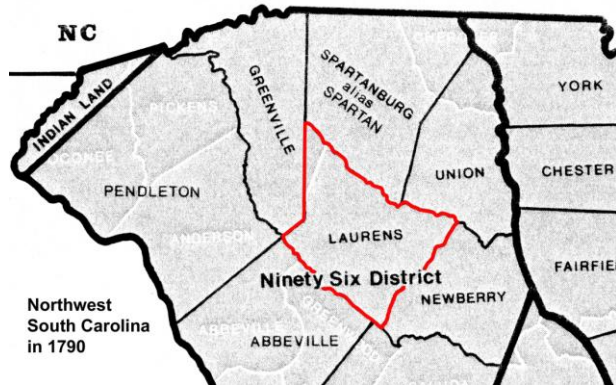
The 1790 South Carolina Census (**Laurens** county) records a "Walter Burress" next to a "William Burress".

1790 South Carolina census, Laurens county, page 431, line 30 & 31:

William Burress, head of house, 4 males aged 16 and up, 2 males aged under 16 years, 7 females

Walter Burress, head of house, 1 male aged 16 and up, 2 males aged under 16 years, 1 female

The consecutive listing allows us to link William and Walter as likely relatives. William Burress has older teenage males in his household indicating he was probably a generation older than Walter who had two assumed sons under 16 years. At this point we don't know if this William was the possible father of Walter or an older brother. Here is Laurens county, South Carolina in 1790:



The previous Kentucky tax roll data allowed us to link Walter Burris to a William Burris. Could this be the very same William Burris also seen 10 years earlier in Laurens county, South Carolina? Note that the older males in William's household fit the estimated ages for David Burris (1771-74), Isaiah Burris (1776) and Thomas Burris (1776-78) who would have been teenagers in 1790. The females remain unknown.

Back to the Kentucky tax rolls...

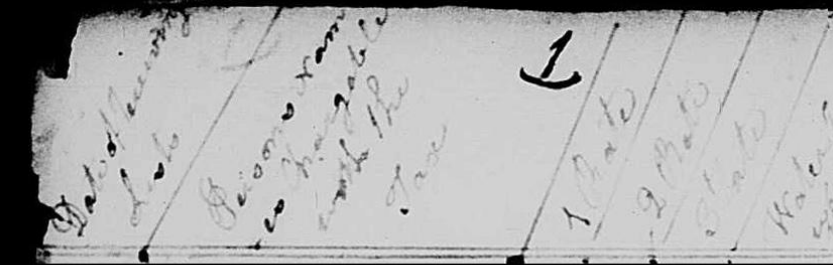
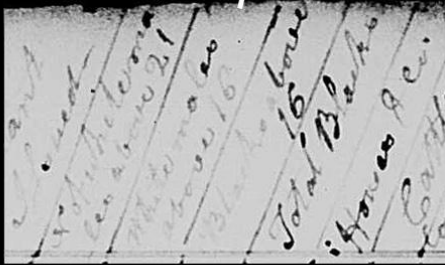
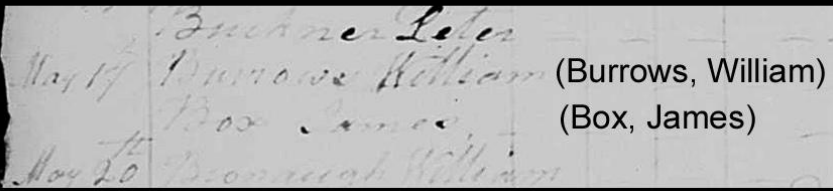
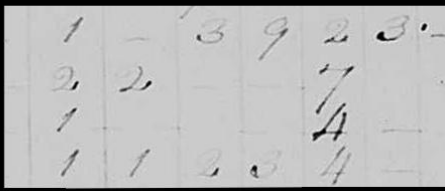
The 1798 Clark county, Kentucky tax roll does not exist and none of our Burris has been located on the 1797 tax roll in Clark county, Kentucky. We DO find an interesting entry in the 1796 tax roll...

The 1796 Clark county, Kentucky tax roll records a "William Burrows" who paid taxes on May 17, 1796. The person listed next to him with the exact same collection date (indicating proximity) is a James Box.

According to the tax roll the William Burrows household consisted of 2 white males above 21 years of age and 2 white males above 16 years of age. Females were not record. Note that this grouping is consistent with a group of William Burris (Sr or Jr?), Walter Burris (b. 1760s), Isaiah Burris (c. 1776) and Thomas Burris (b. 1776-78). David Burris (b. 1771-1774) would have still been in South Carolina.

This James Box is certainly the very same James Box who was the father of Muke Box. Both James and Muke have been linked to our Burris family and the Box family is known to have came from **Laurens** county, South Carolina to Kentucky in the 1790s. If the close association between the Burris family and the Box family existed in Kentucky as early as 1808 and continued into Missouri as late as 1815 it's possible the association actually extends back before 1808 as well...

1796 Clark county, Kentucky tax roll:

1796 Kentucky, Clark County, tax roll, book 3		No. white males above 21	White males above 16
William Burrows had no land.			
			
			

Repeating from several pages above to illustrate the proximity of the Burris and Box families.

An Estill county, Kentucky court order dated July 17, 1809 says "**Isaiah Burress** surveyor of road from Flatwood's Meeting House to the Red River Ironworks to cross road of the Woodward's Creek near **Widow Boxes...**"

"Widow Box" was Mary Box the wife of James Box who had died a few months before. Isaiah Burris evidently lived close enough to the Box farm/plantation to be the man selected to do the work. The county would have not hired someone that lived far away.

An Estill county, Kentucky court order dated June 19, 1808 says:

" A report of the road from the mouth of Woodward's Creek on Red River to intersect the road leading from the rock lick to the court house and ordered to be recorded as follows to wit in obedience to an order of the Estill County Court to use directed being first sworn we have proceeded to view a new way for a road. Beginning at the mouth of Woodward's Creek on Red River thence up said creek through the land of Graham. Thence through the land of **widow Box** to intersect with the road leading from the Rock Lick on Kentucky River to Estill Court house. Given under my hand this 19th day of June 1808 - signed David McGee, **Isaiah Burross**, Augustus Davis -- Wherefore it is ordered that spec(?) issue vs Graham & the widow Box to cause them to appear here at our next County Court to show cause why the s'd road should not pass through their land as aforesaid. "

How do we know that the 1796 "William Burrows" is the same as William Burris seen later in the Kentucky tax rolls and linked to Isaiah Burris and Thomas Burris?

We can't prove it absolutely but the apparent association with James Box is good circumstantial evidence and leads us down a specific path to more information. We also have this...

A 1889 biography of Luther W Burris (son of William Burris, grandson of Henry Burris, great-grandson of Walter Burris) says "[William Burris was a Missourian by birth, a son of Judge \[Henry\] Burris, one of the settlers there before the country was taken over from the French. His father \[Henry Burris\] was a member of one of the colonial families of the east, a son of a Revolutionary soldier of the name of Burroughs.](#)" The source is "An Illustrated History of Sonoma County, California" 1889 (pages 683-684).

The biography indicates that Walter Burris served some part in the Revolutionary War and that the family name was originally Burroughs [Burrows]. So at an earlier time the family was or could have went by "Burroughs" [Burrows] or even have alternated.

So, at this point we can link all these people together:

1. [William Burrows / William Burris](#). A similar name is on 1790 South Carolina census (**Laurens** county).
2. [Walter Burris](#) born 1760s. A similar name is on 1790 South Carolina census (**Laurens** county).
3. [David Burris](#) born 1770s South Carolina.
4. [Isaiah Burris](#) born c. 1776 South Carolina.
5. [Thomas Burris](#) born 1770s.
6. [Henry Burris](#) (son of Walter) born c. 1790 possibly in South Carolina.
7. [James Box](#) from **Laurens** county, South Carolina.
8. [Muke Box](#) (son of James) born 1790s **Laurens** county, South Carolina.
9. [Prudence Bowles](#) (step-daughter of James Box) born 1785 South Carolina.

Notice a pattern? Given that people migrated in groups of extended family and neighbors it's reasonable to believe that William Burrows and James Box might have came to Kentucky together from **Laurens** county, South Carolina.

If William Burris [Burrows] came to Kentucky with James Box can they be found together in Laurens county, South Carolina? Evidently.

James Box is listed on the 1790 South Carolina census (Laurens county) just 2 pages away from William Burress and Walter Burress. James Box is listed as a male over 16 years and evidently living alone. In a few years he would marry Mary "Nancy" ____ Bowles and they would have Muke Box. It's not know when Muke was born but it was probably early to mid 1790s. According to the 1830 and 1840 census Muke Box was born 1791-1800. The 1850 census has him listed older than he actually was.

Further research finds that a "William Burrows" obtained a land grant in Laurens county in 1769 that was memorialized in 1786. The records pertaining to this land verify William Burrows and William Burris were the same person. His land was located along "Williams Creek" which is now called "Burris Creek".

Burris Creek joins the larger Rabon (Raiborns, Rayborn) Creek. Various members of the Box family also had land along Rabon Creek. The land was bounded by Joseph Babb.

Laurens county, South Carolina deeds:

On December 9, 1791 a plot of 382 acres for James Box was surveyed. The land was situated on the "...Branches of Burris's Creek the waters of Rayburns Creek and Reedy Rivers."

On January 30, 1793 James Box is granted a tract of land. On February 4, 1793 James Box is granted a tract of land.

On April 16, 1794 a plot of 284 acres for David Burris was surveyed. The land was situated on "... waters of Chestnut Fork of Burriss's Creek..." and was bounded by land of Patrick Cunningham and William Burris.

On October 21, 1795 a William Burris gives power of attorney to David Burris which would give David the power to act in his behalf as attorney to transfer land.

On July 18, 1797 a deed is recorded (written Sep. 10, 1795) where William Burrows (Burris) and wife Rachel sells 200 acres of land on a branch of "Raiborns" Creek to John Blackwell.

On Jan. 20, 1803 a David Burris (and wife Mary) sells 197 $\frac{3}{4}$ acres along waters of "Raiborn's Creek" to Thaddeus Sims and William Osbourn. We know from other researchers that our David Burris that married to Elender "Nelly" Lackey in 1808 was first married to a Mary ____ and that they were still in South Carolina after 1800.

It should be noted that William Burris might have owned two tracts of land not one. The land records are difficult to follow.

Did Walter Burris really serve in the Revolutionary War? Evidently.

While we would like to think our ancestors were always on the right side of history sometimes they were not. This may be the case with the Burris family.

Many of the farmers and plantations owners in upland South Carolina (where Laurens county is) were in fact Loyalists, that is, loyal to the King and government of England. This was when South Carolina was a British Colony (not a state) and land owners were given land grants and favors by the English government. Rebellion could have meant losing your land and/or your life if your side lost. A search of available Patriot (non-Loyalist) muster rolls reveals no Walter Burris.

A search of published South Carolina "Loyalist Rolls" finds muster rolls for the "Little River Militia" listing William Burris Sr, Williams Burris Jr and Walter Burris:

1780 (14 June - 13 Dec) payroll: William Burres Sen., William Burres Jun.

1780 (14 June - 30 Dec) payroll: William Burris Sen., William Burris Jun.

1781 (3 Nov - 2 Jan) payroll: William Burrows

1782 (9 March - 5 May) payroll: William Burrows, Walter Burrows

1782 (6 May - 5 Aug) payroll: Walter Burns, William Burns

1782 (6 Aug - 6 Oct) payroll: Walter Burris, William Burris

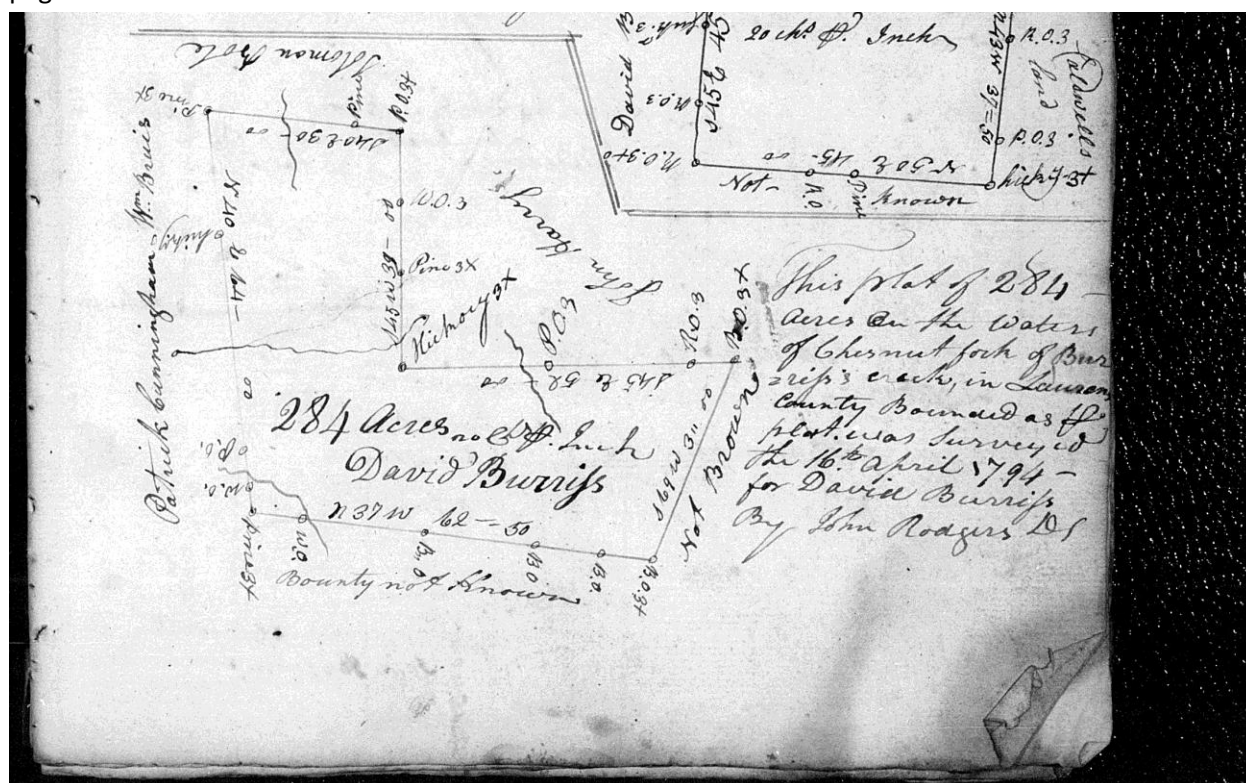
1782 (6 Aug - 31 Dec) payroll: Walter Burrows, William Burrows

Note the alternating use of Burrows / Burris and the common mis-transcription of Burns.

They were part of the "Little River Regiment" of the Ninety-Six Brigade which covered part of the upland area in South Carolina where Laurens County [then Ninety-Six District] is today. This regiment served under Major Patrick Cunningham and he is known to have resided in Laurens county, South Carolina before and after the War.

On April 16, 1794 a plot of 284 acres for **David Burris** was surveyed. The land was situated on "... waters of Chestnut Fork of Burriss's Creek..."

The following survey shows David Burris' land was bounded on one side by adjoining tracts owned by **Patrick Cunningham** and **William Burris** (left side). The source is "South Carolina Land Grants Vol. 4" page 17:



So, now we know a William Burris and a David Burris were literally neighbors of former Major Patrick Cunningham and a William Burris and Walter Burris served in Cunningham's "Little River Militia" which

included people from Laurens county, South Carolina.

The service date of 1782 also helps indicate that Walter Burris would have been at least old enough (14? 16?) for militia service but still not born before 1761 per the 1830 census. It's possible the William Burris Sr and Jr may have fought in the "Battle of King's Mountain".

Recent Y-DNA research has validated that male-line descendants of Walter Burris share identical Y-DNA with male-line descendants of David Burris verifying they have the exact same paternal ancestry. They also share identical Y-DNA with male line descendants of Isaiah Burris/Burrows.

[End for now]

Researched and written by:

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For more detailed information and documents go to my Rootsweb page:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~texlance/my/burris/index.htm>

Lance Hall descends from Walter Burris in the following manner:

Walter Burris (1760s-1839) md. Lydia Barnes

...Mary Burris Crabtree (1814-1892) md. John Williams

.....Margaret E Williams (1858-1925) md. Granville G Millican

.....Wm Matt Millican (1873-1952) md. Eva V Richey

.....Eula Mae Millican (1914-96) md. William B Hall

.....Ray D Hall (1933-95) & Margaret S Mannon

.....Lance L Hall (1971)