

**Joseph Eccles McCoun (1825-1897), Ancestor 20  
By his great great granddaughter, Linda R Horton, 12 December 2021<sup>1</sup>**

After several years living as gentry in the heart of Kentucky's lovely Bluegrass region, Joe and Luta lost everything that they owned and moved to Fort Worth, Texas. Joseph Eccles "Joe" McCoun (1825-1897) had agreed to help the brother of his wife, Mary Louisa "Luta" Pepper McCoun (1834-1874), to obtain financing for construction of a turnpike. Joe agreed to act as surety on a Kentucky state turnpike bond and, unfortunately, allowed his own property to serve as security for the financing. The turnpike was not finished, so Joe and Luta's property was sold.

They lost their beautiful home, its furnishings, their land, and their farm equipment. The couple packed up their seven children and what possessions they still owned, to make a new start in Texas. Moving out west is the kind of thing that happened in other American families but, except for these ancestors and their sojourn in Texas, it did not happen in ours. By the era of our 16 great great grandparents, all were in Kentucky for some—generally all—their lives. Since then, our ancestors remained in Kentucky rather than venture west, north, south, or back east.

This photograph taken in Texas is the only image we have of Joe McCoun, pictured with his wife Luta and three of their children. From left were Esther or "Hettie" McCoun (1865-1955),<sup>1</sup> age seven; Joe, 47; William, age one; Luta, 38; and Joseph Eccles McCoun, Jr. (1869-1941), age three. The photo was cut, but by layering one part of the photo on the other we can see what the original looked like. Four of Joe and Luta's children were not in the photo: Perla Sue McCoun (1857-1942); our great grandfather Robert Pepper "Rob" McCoun (1860-1940); Samuel Pepper McCoun (1862-1944); and Mary Louise McCoun (1867-). Our grandmother, Ethel McCoun Horton Shuck, resembled her paternal grandmother. The two would never meet.



In Texas, tragedy worse than financial ruin struck the family: 40-year-old Luta died of typhoid fever on 27 December 1874, and nine months later little William died of an unknown cause.

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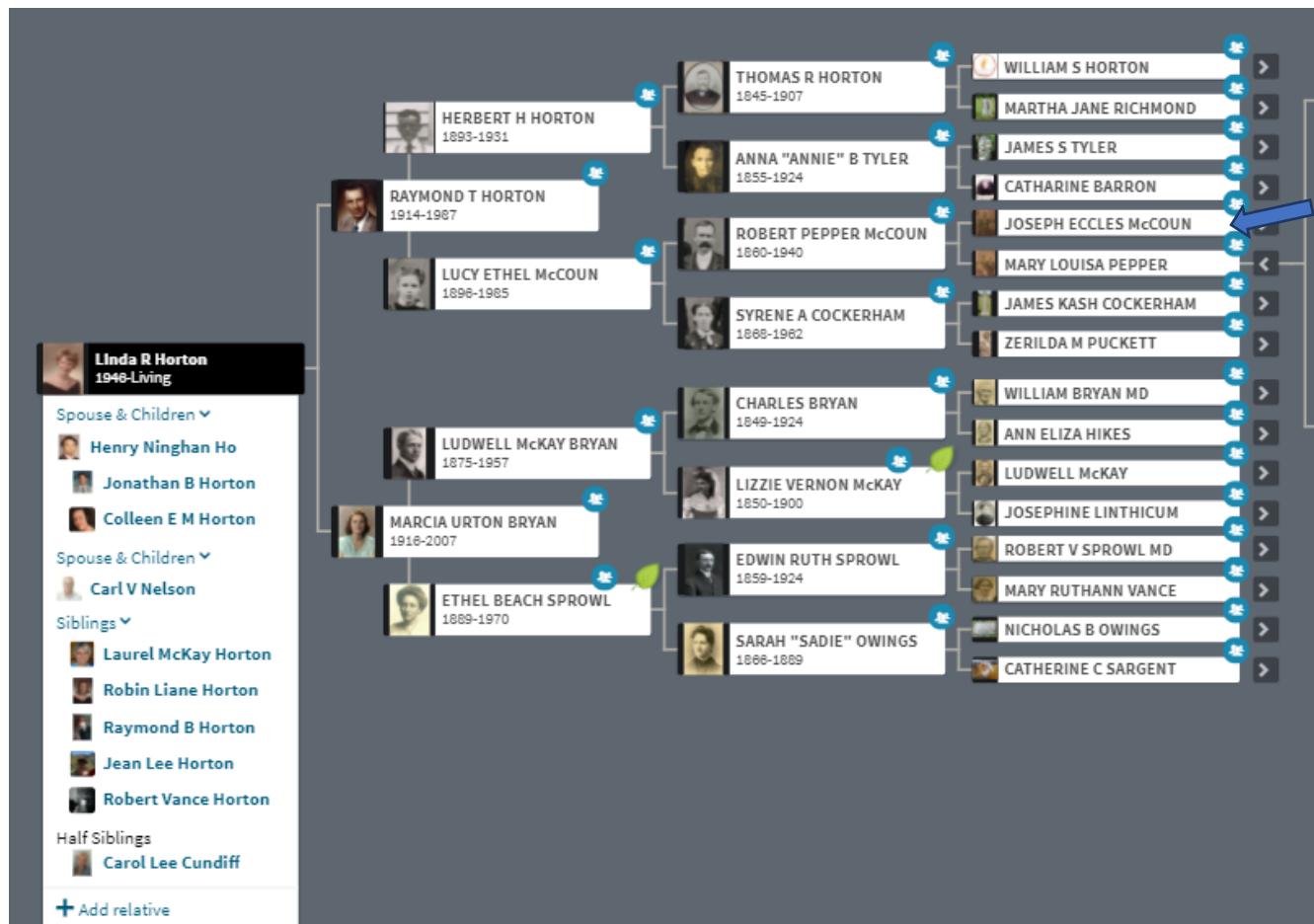
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Then the family split apart: Joe, Rob, and Sam remained in Texas, while the rest of the children returned to Kentucky to live with kin. Joe and his two oldest sons worked as Texas cowboys on the Great Western Cattle Trail. Then they moved westward from Fort Worth to Throckmorton, Texas, where Joe served as County Judge and bought property for a residential development.

Fortunately for our very existence, Joe and Rob decided to return to Kentucky for the remainder of their lives, while Sam stayed out west, eventually settling in Colorado. In 1889, Joe married a widow (and distant cousin), Mary Priscilla Adams Sea (1844-1930), who owned a farm in Mercer County, Kentucky. Rob went to work in the eastern Kentucky timber fields, where he met Syrene Cockerham. In 1891, she became his wife and later our great grandmother. They settled in Wolfe County where our grandmother, Ethel McCoun, was born in 1896 and our father, Raymond Horton, in 1914.

Joe died on his second wife's farm on 28 March 1897. He was buried in the cemetery of the New Providence Presbyterian Church, a church that his great grandfather helped found. Joe thus went to rest only three miles from where he was born 71 years earlier. He was the last of our brave and pioneering McCoun ancestors whose life reached its end in Mercer County, Kentucky.

### Putting Joseph Eccles McCoun on the family tree



### Joe's early years

The adventurous life of Joseph Eccles McCoun began with his birth on 24 August 1825, in the Joseph McCoun House (shown in the photo on the next page) in Salvisa, Mercer County,

Kentucky.<sup>2</sup> He was the fifth of six children of Joseph McCoun (1784-1829) and Esther Eccles McCoun (1792-1881). In these biographies, Joseph Eccles McCoun is called “Joe” and his father “Joseph,” to distinguish the son from the father. Joseph died when Joe was only four. Joe’s uncle, Samuel McCoun (1777-1849), was named as guardian.<sup>3</sup> Samuel was a prominent member of the New Providence Presbyterian Church,<sup>4</sup> where Joe’s mother Esther was assigned a pew originally reserved by Joseph.<sup>5</sup> Joe’s guardian and mother no doubt ensured that Joe attended church regularly. Every indication is that completed several years of schooling. All census reports indicated that he could read and write and, as an adult, he was extensively involved in complex property transactions.

Esther, Joe’s mother, lived 52 years after Joseph’s death. In the 1830 census in which Esther was head of household, Joe was tallied as a male between the ages of five and nine. Until the 1850 U.S. census, only the head of household was named, while other household members were counted by marks according to gender, age, and race. At the time of the 1840 census, when Joe was 14, he was not enumerated in the household of Esther McCoun. He might have been the male in his age range living two doors away with a neighbor and cousin, J.J. McAfee.

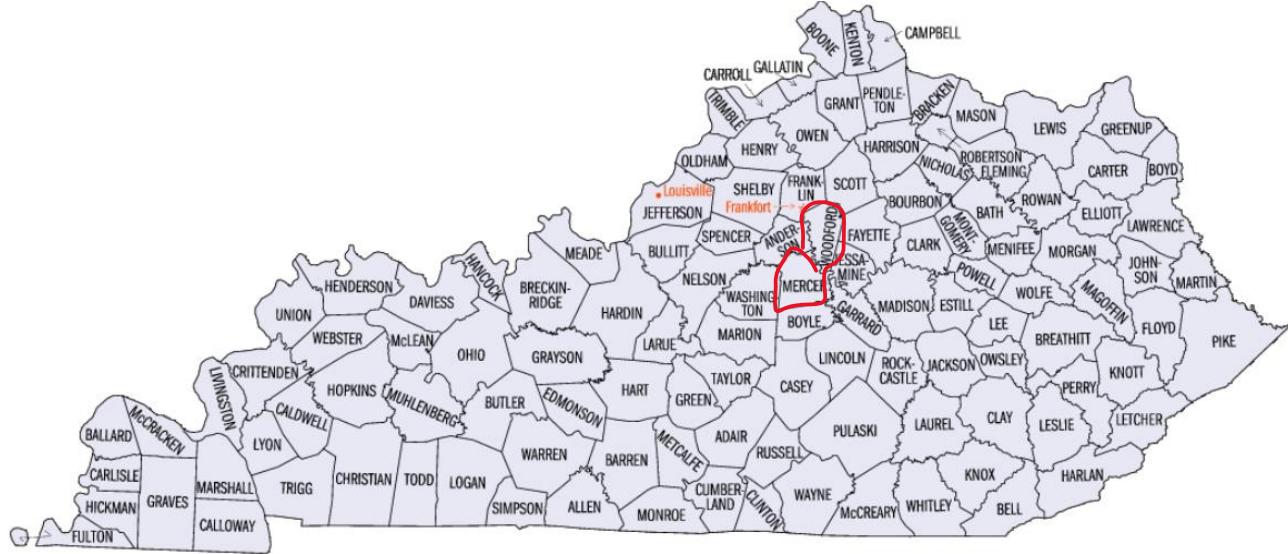
In the 1850 census, Esther, 58, and Joe, 24, were the only McCouns still living in the Joseph McCoun House. Both of Joe’s sisters were married. Arethusa was living next door with her husband Merit Cunningham, and their sister Mary Elizabeth was in Wisconsin with her husband, James H. Earnest. In the 1850 census, Joe’s brother William was living in Liberty, Missouri, with his wife and two small children. But William, apparently a restless fellow, would not stay there long, and his shocking death in 1857 is discussed on page four. In seeking adventures out west, William yielded to Joe the status of eldest son in their widowed mother’s household.<sup>6</sup>

### **Joe and Luta got married**

Joe might have wondered how he had won the heart of Miss Mary Louisa Pepper. Luta was almost nine years his junior and the youngest child of a well-to-do family in Woodford County. Luta grew up on a plantation named Sweet Lawn, near the family distillery business. Today Sweet Lawn, shown at right, is the homestead of a horse farm, Sun Valley Farm.<sup>7</sup> Luta’s grandfather, Elijah Pepper, the founder of the Kentucky



bourbon whiskey industry, had the mansion built for Luta's parents, Samuel Pepper (1802-1874) and Mahala Perry Pepper (1904-1865). Elijah Pepper had died in 1831. During Luta's lifetime the family business was run first by her grandmother, Sarah Neville O'Bannon Pepper (1770-1848) and then by her Uncle Oscar Pepper (1809-1865). Samuel's farm supplied much of the corn and other grains needed to produce bourbon. Today the successor to Elijah and Oscar Pepper's bourbon business is Woodford Reserve, well-known among bourbon enthusiasts.<sup>8</sup>



Although Joe's pedigree could not match that of his fiancée, with her tony Peppers, Perrys, O'Bannons, and Nevilles, the McCouns were a respected and well-established family who owned a lot of property in Mercer County. On this modern map, Woodford County, to the north, and Mercer County, to the south, are circled in red. Both are in the heart of the Kentucky Bluegrass region, and each is historic in its own way. Mercer celebrated the bravery of pioneer settlers who were Kentucky's earliest. Genteel Woodford's rolling hills were then, and still are, associated with things that benefit from the region's limestone-rich water and soil: bourbon, horses, and the blue grass itself. Pedigree aside, we can see from Joe's photo when he was 47 that Miss Luta may have found him a handsome fellow when they met 15 or more years earlier.

No stories have come down to us about how that meeting happened, although the biography of Luta offers theories. What is certain is that, on 2 December 1856, they were joined in holy matrimony at Sweet Lawn, her home. The ceremony was performed by a well-known Disciples of Christ evangelist named L.L. Pinkerton.<sup>9</sup> A substantial amount of marriage documentation was required in that era, as demonstrated in Luta's biography.

After the wedding, Luta moved into the Joseph McCoun House that Joe and his mother shared. This is evident from the 1860 census report, enumerated in Mercer County on 29 August 1860 and discussed below. Just three months after Joe and Luta were wed, shocking news reached the McCoun household in Salvisa. Perhaps Joe and Luta tried to console Esther, who earlier had lost to death her husband and two of their children, but the new loss was profoundly disturbing.

**On 7 April 1857, Joe's brother William was executed by a Mexican firing squad.**

We can only imagine how shocking it must have been to hear such news about a son and brother. The three residents of the Joseph McCoun house had never traveled outside of Kentucky. Esther and Joe had not seen William since the early 1840s, when he moved to

Missouri and married a woman he met there. William and Joe's sister Mary Elizabeth, living in Wisconsin, probably informed Esther and Joe when William and his family moved to a nearby Wisconsin town. But William and his family were in Wisconsin only briefly before returning to Missouri.

In about 1852, William left for California, likely enticed by the discovery of gold. His family remained in Missouri. He was elected to the California state senate and seemed to be making a name for himself. But in 1857 William joined a foolish invasion of Caborca, a small city in Sonora State, Mexico. The invasion was organized by a man named Henry Crabb whom William had met when both served in the state senate.

On 7 April 1857, William, Henry Crabb, and other recruits were executed by a Mexican firing squad. The family may have been among those who hoped for retribution by the U.S. government. However, none was forthcoming because the Crabb expedition was in no way officially approved and the Sonora state government was within its rights. Esther's biography provides additional details.

The 1860 census listed Joe, age 34, as a farmer, with Luta, age 24; Sue P (Perla), age two; Robert P, two months old; and Esther, age 68. Joe reported that his real estate was worth \$8000 (\$263,100 today) and that his personal estate was worth \$11,100 (\$365,100 today). The 1860 slave schedule for Joe McCoun reported that he owned ten enslaved persons: males aged 49, 21, 21, 19, three, and two; and females aged 40, 19, 15, and 15.<sup>10</sup>

Joseph E. McCoun	34	M	farmer	8000	11,100
Mary E	"	24	7		
Sue P	"	2	7		
Robert P	"	2	12	M	
Esther McCoun	68	7		1	1000

The living arrangement recorded in the 1860 census was, without question, intended to be temporary. From 1855 to 1865, Joe took actions that enabled him to acquire enough McCoun family land so that he had title to a large parcel, including the Joseph McCoun House, which he could sell for cash, enabling his purchase from his father-in-law of Sweet Lawn and surrounding land.

#### **Joe and Luta acquired the “beautiful house on the hill”**

Purchase of the new house could not be accomplished immediately, because the complex, and at times contentious, property acquisition process took Joe years to complete. This litigious chapter in the McCoun family history is discussed in the biography of Joe's mother, Esther Eccles McCoun, and a *Timeline of the McCoun, Eccles, Pepper and Perry Families* that is a companion to biographies of ancestors in this branch of the family tree.

For present purposes, there are two key events. The first was the 21 April 1864 sale by Joe and Luta to a man named Jarvis of 173.75 acres of McCoun property for \$8,687.50.<sup>11</sup> That amount today would be about \$151,056.<sup>12</sup> The land sold included Joe's inheritance, property acquired

from his siblings, and land acquired from his mother after she relinquished her widow's share in exchange for his payment to her of \$2031.75, worth \$35,334 today. The \$8,687.50 sale enabled Joe to make the first of three installments to purchase a property from his recently widowed father-in-law Samuel Pepper.

This purchase of Sweet Lawn from Joe's father-in-law was the second key event. In early 1865, Samuel and Mahala Pepper moved into nearby Frankfort where, on 4 March Mahala died, probably at the home of their son and Luta's brother, Robert Perry Pepper. Two weeks after Mahala's death, on 18 March 1865 Samuel Pepper sold Joe not only Sweet Lawn but surrounding acreage totaling more than 205 acres. The property was described in the deed in metes and bounds but for clarity it was stated that the land conveyed was the same as that conveyed by Sarah Pepper to Samuel on 1 November 1831.<sup>13</sup> Also sold in this deed was an adjacent 82-acre parcel of land that had belonged to Luta's maternal grandfather, Roderick Perry (1776-1821), and that had in 1832 been conveyed to Samuel and Mahala. The two properties totaled property totaled a little over 287 acres.

It is likely that preparatory steps for the March 1865 sale had been undertaken before Mahala's death. The sale price was \$19,000, or \$326,230 in 2021 dollars, to be paid by Joe in three annual installments. The Deed was delivered to him on 25 May 1867, with an annotation in the margin acknowledging payment in full for the property.

### **Death of Oscar Pepper; Joe's service as estate administrator**

At the time Joe and Luta moved into their home, probably in early 1865, the Pepper family's bourbon business was thriving. Back in the 1830s, Samuel's brother Oscar had brought in a Scot, James Crow, to add his considerable whiskey knowhow to the Pepper family recipes. Oscar had a knack for marketing, and the "Old Pepper" and "Old Crow" had built loyal customer followings. It was expected that, with Joe's move to Woodford County, he could help with the family business.

The future of that business was soon thrown into question with the 19 June 1865 death at age 55 of Oscar Pepper. He died without a will, leaving behind a 38-year old widow, Nannie, and seven children ranging in age from a few months to 17 years.

Within days after Oscar's death, the Woodford County court appointed Joe McCoun to serve as administrator of Oscar's estate. Details of the estate administration are set forth in the *Timeline of the Pepper Family Bourbon Businesses*, a companion to the biography of Elijah Pepper.

For purposes of this biography of Joe McCoun, it is enough to point out only that a key property allocation decision made by him, and backed by the County Court, resulted in years of litigation and property reallocations within the Pepper family.

Joe correctly identified protection of the interests of the young widow as of paramount importance, but in seeking to protect Nannie's interests Joe did not make use of such customary legal instruments as a trust, a life estate, or an order that the widow was to have first priority in claiming one-third of the estate's assets as identified by an appraisal or a sale. Rather, Joe decided to allocate to the youngest child—an infant named Presley O'Bannon Pepper born in the year of Oscar's death—the land that included both the Elijah Pepper home and the Oscar Pepper distillery. The reasoning seemed to be that, because Nannie would need for many years to serve as the guardian of young O'Bannon (he went by his middle name) and his property, her

economic well-being would be ensured until he reached adulthood. On 17 October 1869, the Woodford County Commissioner partitioned the Oscar Pepper property according to the plan put forward by Joe McCoun as estate administrator.

There were several problems with Joe's effort to provide for the widow by allocating the choicest property to the baby of the family. First, unlike her mother-in-law Sarah O'Bannon Pepper, who ran the distillery after Elijah's death until Oscar could take it over, Nannie had no interest in managing a distillery. Instead, on 1 January 1870, she leased the distillery to a partnership known as Gaines and Berry. For the first time, the Pepper bourbon business was being managed by people outside the Pepper family. Second, her eldest son, James E. Pepper, wanted the distillery for himself. Only 15 when Oscar died, he was nearly 20 when his mother leased the distillery in January 1870. Six months after that, when the 1870 census was enumerated in Woodford County, James described his occupation as manager of a distillery. It is likely that Gaines and Berry and a third partner they brought in, a distillery expert by the name of E.H. Taylor, believed they could placate the ambitious young man by assigning him either significant responsibility or a fancy title in what had been his family's business.

Then, on 28 July 1871, O'Bannon Pepper died of unknown causes at age six, foiling Joe's poorly thought through widow protection planning. The following year, on 29 October 1872 his eldest brother James sued their mother, seeking reallocation to himself of that part of his father's estate which included the distillery. In very short order, the Woodford County Court on 25 November 1872 granted James the distillery. Numerous court orders and deeds were needed to effectuate this decision and the resulting reallocations of inheritances of other Pepper heirs. Eventually, on 28 December 1874 the Woodford County Commissioner deeded property to James E. Pepper that included the distillery. James' difficulties in the distillery business had just begun, as is recounted in the *Timeline of the Pepper Family Bourbon Businesses*.

During the time in which Pepper family was undoing and redoing Joe's estate property allocations, he was no longer around to witness the cleanup. Rather, he and his family were in Texas. How they got there is our next chapter.

### **The good life, for awhile**

For a few years, life in Woodford County was good for Joe and Luta, settled in their beautiful brick house on a hill.<sup>14</sup> Joe bought additional land, increasing his holdings to 360 acres.<sup>15</sup> Their family grew to seven children:<sup>16</sup>

1. Perla Sue McCoun, born in Salvisa on 13 September 1857.
2. Robert Pepper McCoun, born in Salvisa on 8 May 1860.
3. Samuel Pepper McCoun, born in Salvisa on 13 October 1862.
4. Esther McCoun, known as Hettie, born in Salvisa on 28 January 1865.
5. Mary Louise McCoun, born in Sweet Lawn, Millville, Woodford County, 10 March 1867.
6. Joseph Eccles McCoun, Jr, born in Sweet Lawn, 26 February 1869.
7. William H. McCoun, born in Sweet Lawn, 13 August 1871.

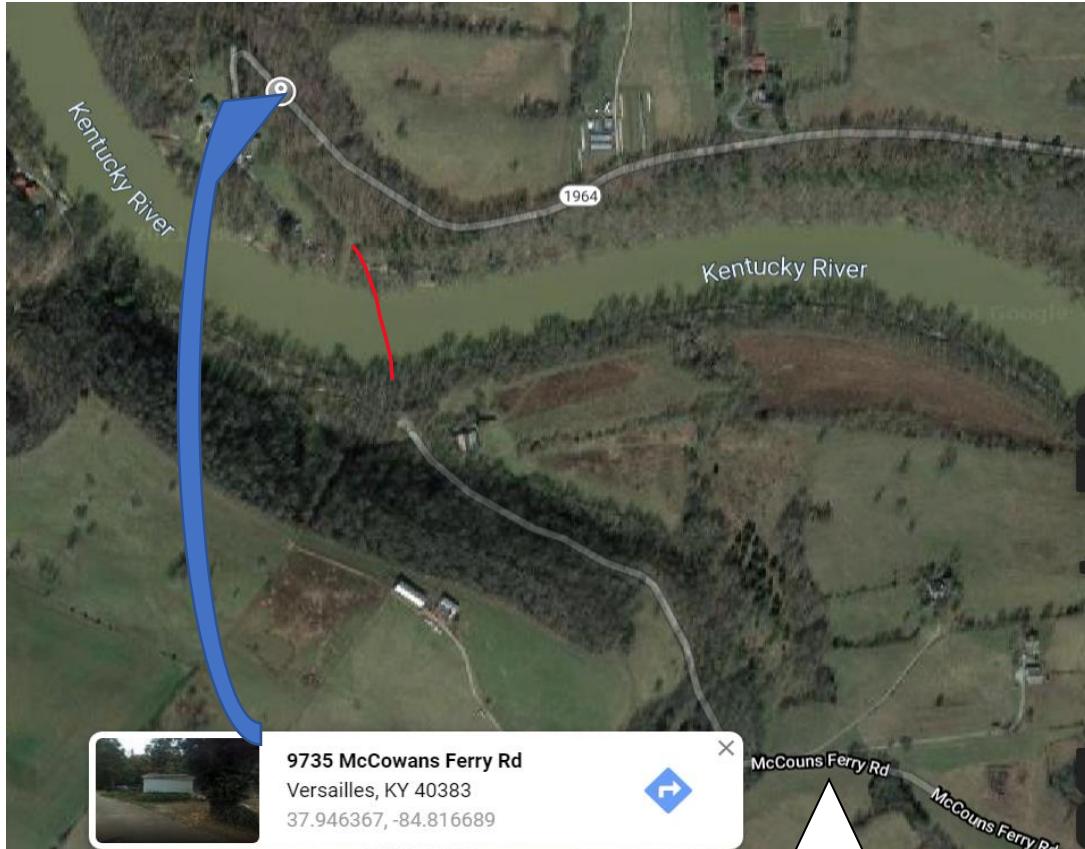
### **The turnpike**

The seeds of future financial ruin were sown when Joe's brother-in-law Robert Perry "Bob" Pepper proposed that Joe get involved in a turnpike project, and Joe agreed. Bob wanted to build a toll road in Woodford County from Versailles, the Woodford County seat, to Harrodsburg, the

Mercer County seat, by way of the McCoun's Ferry crossing on the Kentucky River. The winding river—so important to the development of the Bluegrass—essentially bifurcates the region, creating the need for bridges or, in those days, ferries. The map at right shows the thin, curving blue stripe zigzagging north to and through Frankfort on its way to the Ohio River.

In those days, the Kentucky legislature chartered corporations, and in the mid 1860s a corporation was chartered with the name The Versailles and McCoun's Ferry Company. A Woodford County deed dated 18 September 1865 records a conveyance of land from a man named Garvey to Hiram Wilhoyt, President of the company. There was at the time in Kentucky a program for funding the construction of turnpikes (see the appendix for details). The plan was for The Versailles and McCoun's Ferry Company to secure from this program funding for the completion of the desired turnpike. Bob Pepper was unable to obtain the funding because of prior bankruptcies. Someone with a solid credit history would need to sign for the state funding and would need to secure the promise-to-repay agreement with his own property as collateral. To the consternation of any of Joe's descendants who hear this story, Joe agreed to be that person.

In Mercer County, McCoun's Ferry Road (at the triangle) connected the town of Salvisa to the banks of the Kentucky River. As shown where the arrow is pointing on the map below, the Woodford County side of the river has a counterpart road, McCoun's Ferry Road—the same name with a slightly different spelling. The Google map image below shows how the McCoun's Ferry Road in each county leads to a spot on the Kentucky River where there once was a business known as McCoun's Ferry. It took passengers, their horses, and their carts and buggies from one side of the river to the other. The ferry would have crossed the Kentucky River where the red stripe is drawn across the river.<sup>17</sup>



The McCoun's Ferry business would clearly benefit from a turnpike on which customers could travel more efficiently from Versailles to the McCoun's Ferry crossing and from there on to Harrodsburg. Who owned the ferry business?

A 1980 letter from our mother, Marcia Bryan Horton, to a Mercer County genealogist who doing research for her stated that Joe McCoun operated that ferry business.<sup>18</sup> No sources are cited for this statement, but it is safe to assume that my father's uncle, Glenn Reynolds McCoun, was the one who told our mother that Joe owned or oversaw the ferry service. However, possibly contradictory information was presented by a source quoted in a 1941 *Woodford Sun* newspaper clipping (at right) found in the McCoun family file at the Woodford County Historical Society in Versailles. Harvey McCoun said his grandfather, William McCoun, established the old McCoun Ferry more than 100 years earlier, i.e., before 1840. The author has been unable to identify any William McCoun who was the right age at that place and at that time to have established a ferry business.

In sum, it has not yet been discovered whether Joe himself had an ownership stake in the McCoun's Ferry business. If he died, Joe's decision to sign for the funding of the turnpike project, and to put up his own property as security, would have been a choice motivated by economic self-interest. If so, the family legend suggesting that Joe was doing his brother-in-law a favor does not holdup. And even if Joe was not himself an owner of the Ferry, someone in his family was. Therefore, Joe's efforts to line up funding for the turnpike project would advance McCoun family economic interests.

Perhaps someday through additional research we can learn whether the existence in Woodford County of a road called McCown's Ferry Road implies that at least part of Bob Pepper's planned turnpike was completed, perhaps by someone else. That turnpike would be useless today. Bridges have long since replaced ferries as the way to cross the Kentucky River, so ferries ceased operations many years ago. With no McCoun's Ferry, the twin roads named for it on either side of the Kentucky River, are used today by local residents, fishermen, and boat owners.

Editor Dan Bowmar wrote that "Harvey McCoun, a Mercer County oldtimer, said his grandfather, William, established the old McCoun Ferry more than 100 years ago." Harvey added, "I was born in the old ferry house." Editor Bowmar further commented, "If Harvey spells it that way and his grandfather spelled it the same way, we are going to spell it the McCoun hereafter. In Woodford County records, the name of the ferry and the turnpike leading to it is spelled McCoun in some places, McCowan in others. On Woodford County road maps the name appears McCowan. People living on the turnpike are not agreed as to the spelling, but Harvey, the oldtimer born at the ferry, has convinced us." 1941

### Bankruptcy of Robert Perry Pepper

Several documents in the Woodford Courthouse files relate to Bob Pepper's bankruptcy in the years 1868 and 1869. On 22 April 1868, his assets in Woodford County were assigned to a Mason Brown who was serving as an assignee in the bankruptcy proceeding. Bob Pepper and Joe McCoun had together purchased land for the turnpike; on 1 March 1869, Joe bought Pepper's half interest from Brown as assignee so as to possess the entire parcel. Bob lived in Frankfort, so research in Franklin County court records is needed to understand Bob Pepper's bankruptcy.

## Turnpike not completed, and Joe and Luta ruined

Unfortunately, for unknown reasons, the project was not completed. In the wording of the family legend, Joe “went” Bob’s bond for \$90,000. Putting aside this colloquialism and using more conventional finance terminology, what happened was that Joe McCoun agreed to act as a surety, or guarantor, for performance of the Versailles and McCoun’s Ferry Turnpike project. For whatever reasons, Bob could not, or would not, complete the project, and Joe’s property was forced to be sold at an auction. Joe had not only co-signed for the bond, but also had put up his own real and personal property as collateral. The penalty in the event of nonperformance was the astronomical sum of \$90,000, which equates to nearly two million dollars today.<sup>19</sup>

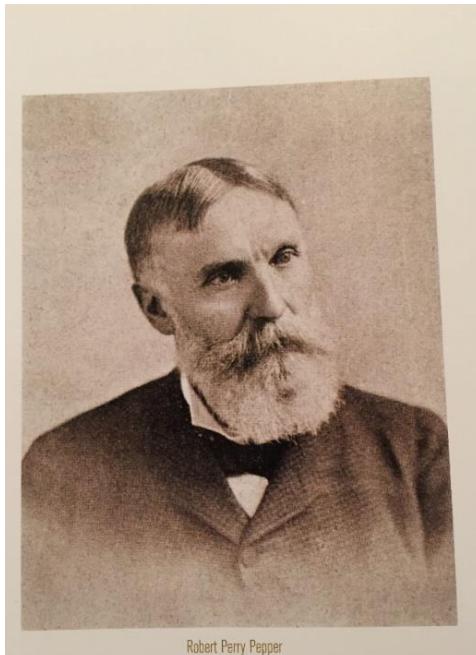
When the road project was not completed, Joe’s real estate, furnishings, and farm equipment all had to be sold. Barely ten percent of the needed \$90,000 was raised.<sup>20</sup>

Why did Joe risk his home in this way? Perhaps Joe wanted to curry favor with the Peppers. He had married into a higher-status family and may have wanted to show that he was a worthy Pepper family team member. Might Luta have asked Joe to be her brother’s surety? It is clear from Joe’s determined efforts to acquire the McCoun property that he needed to resell, in order to obtain the money needed to afford the house his wife wanted, that Joe strived to make his wife happy. Joe put far too much trust in his brother-in-law’s business acumen and, as we have seen from Joe’s own odd choices in administering the estate of Oscar Pepper, his own business expertise left a lot to be desired.

And as discussed earlier, Joe likely saw opportunity in this venture: he no doubt planned to make money from the future toll road. Those who built toll roads kept the proceeds, and he would have expected much of the income after putting his own property on the line. Also, the turnpike would generate new business for whoever owned the family ferry business.

Even with the opportunity for financial gain that the turnpike project offered, it is difficult to understand why Joe so recklessly risked everything he owned, everything he had worked so hard for nearly a decade to attain. His agreement to post his property as security for the road project led to the financial downfall of Joe and his family.

So, we should not view Bob Pepper, shown at left, as the villain in the story of how Joe and Luta lost everything. But for Joe’s financial ruin, none of us who descend from their son Robert Pepper McCoun would exist. If Joe’s family had continued living happily ever after in that



gorgeous house on a hill, Rob McCoun would never have had any need, in the late 1880s, to be in Wolfe County cutting white oak timber where he met Syrene Cockerham. That meeting led to their marriage, children, grandchildren and...us.

The biography of Mahala Perry Pepper, the mother of Luta and Bob Pepper, includes brief biographical sketches of Bob Pepper and his interesting daughters, Frankfort's "Belle Peppers." Except for Bob's murky role in the failed turnpike project, he and his family appeared to be exemplary individuals. His daughters gave our great uncle Glenn Reynolds McCoun the equivalent of \$25,000 so that he could start an oil business. That generous gift enabled Glenn to lift his own family's economic well-being and also to provide his nephew Raymond Horton—our father—with life-changing financial assistance. That story is told in the appendix to Mahala's biography.

Bob Pepper went through major life changes in the 1860s that made it not the best time for him to undertake a major new enterprise such as a turnpike project. His family life may have distracted him from completion of the turnpike. His first wife died in 1863, leaving him with a small daughter to raise. His parents' decision to move to Frankfort in early 1865 may have been influenced by a desire to help Bob with the daughter by joining his household. Also, Bob volunteered for the Union Army in 1863 and the following year served in the 26<sup>th</sup> infantry.<sup>21</sup>

On 6 December 1865, Bob married Elizabeth Starling (1841-1924), and the eldest of their six children was born 4 January 1867. Sometime after 1865, Bob started a distillery business in Frankfort, probably an effort to continue the family business. At the urging of his second wife, who had moral concerns about running a distillery, Bob switched his principal business activities to raising and breeding horses. In the horse business, Bob became one of the top people in the country. For Bob, the turnpike project could never have been more than a small sideline.

Furthermore, Joe's management of money in the late 1860s seems less than ideal. He continued to spend money accumulating more land instead of putting that money into completing the turnpike project on which he had staked his home. Although some acquisitions involved property needed for the turnpike construction, others were in the Glenn's Creek area near Sweet Lawn and merely enlarged his already substantial plantation without advancing completion of the toll road.

For example, on 26 December 1865, Joe McCoun and Bob Pepper bought from James H. Harris, for \$700, a tract of land on Glenn's Creek that was described as part of a tract owned by Notley Harris.<sup>22</sup> On 29 November 1869, Joe McCoun bought land on Glenn's Creek from the Darnells—Luta's sister Sarah and husband Aaron Darnell), who had relocated to Illinois.<sup>23</sup>

Our Great Uncle Glenn McCoun (1891-1985) told Marcia Bryan Horton the legend of Mary Louise Pepper, but of course he had not yet been born at the time the events in the story took place. His source of course was his father, Robert Pepper McCoun (1860-1940). Rob McCoun was but a boy when his parents lost everything and left for Texas. He was too young to understand fully the causes of his family's financial downfall, and Joe would have presented to his eldest son the version of the story that put his own actions in the best light.

### **Sale of Joe and Luta's property**

The family legend says that Joe's real and personal property was sold at auction. This is supported by Woodford County records showing that, on 23 June 1873, the county sheriff deeded the land that had belonged to Joe to a man named Adam L. Childers, who lived in

Versailles and had bought the land at a public sale.<sup>24</sup> In acquiring Joe McCoun's property, Adam Childers' claim took precedence over a judgment entered against Joe in a lawsuit brought in 1873 by several of his relatives. The plaintiffs were his nephew Frank Cunningham and his sister Arethusa McCoun Cunningham, and the suit involved the same 360 acres on Glens Creek which Samuel Pepper had sold to Joe McCoun and which Childers bought at the public sale.<sup>25</sup> It is unclear why Joe's kin sued him: had he failed to pay his sister for the land she deeded to him when he was rounding up McCoun property for resale? Or had his sister or nephew loaned Joe money, that he never repaid? In any case, it was Childers, not Joe's relatives, that ended up with his property and at a bargain price.

The deed was delivered to Childers on 2 May 1874.<sup>26</sup> The sale price for the 360-acre tract was \$7075.30, about one-third of the \$19,000 that Joe had paid Samuel Pepper starting nine years earlier.

Speaking of Joe's father-in-law, Samuel was at the time living in Frankfort with his son, Bob Pepper. I have to think Samuel was saddened by the hardships experienced by his family. His wife and brother Oscar died in 1865, his son lost a wife and went bankrupt, his eldest daughter and her husband had died, and another daughter's husband joined the Confederate army and was promptly captured and held in a Union prisoner-of-war camp. Just when it looked like the tide may be turning on all this bad luck and that his son-in-law Joe McCoun might make a good life for his youngest daughter in the family's beloved homestead Sweet Lawn, Joe instead lost the property and moved the family far away to Texas. If anyone should be dying of a broken heart, it should be Samuel. He died in Frankfort on 16 October 1874 at the Frankfort home of his son. At least he was spared the news of Luta's death just two months later.

### **The end of the Civil War and emancipation**

Students of history will note that many of McCoun and Pepper land transactions and family events coincided with the end of the Civil War. Confederate General Robert E. Lee surrendered to Union General Ulysses S. Grant near Appomattox, Virginia, on 9 April 1865. Considering family members' many court actions and land transactions during the 1860s, it seems they had little difficulty transacting business during the war years.

Emancipation in Kentucky of previously enslaved individuals was effective 6 December 1865. It wiped out that part of the wealth of slave owners which was represented by their human property. There was no program of compensation or reparations for former slave owners, nor were the formerly enslaved persons compensated for their involuntary servitude.

Concerning this part of our family, no family stories have reached us about our ancestors' views on the Civil War. Certainly, the McCoun, Eccles, Pepper, and Perry families all were slaveholders. Interestingly, Bob Pepper fought on the Union side, and his Ohio-born second wife was known as a fervent supporter of the Union cause, undaunted by the pro-Confederacy sympathies of some of their Frankfort neighbors. At the same time, as mentioned above, the husband of Luta's sister Sarah fought on the Confederate side and was a prisoner of war.

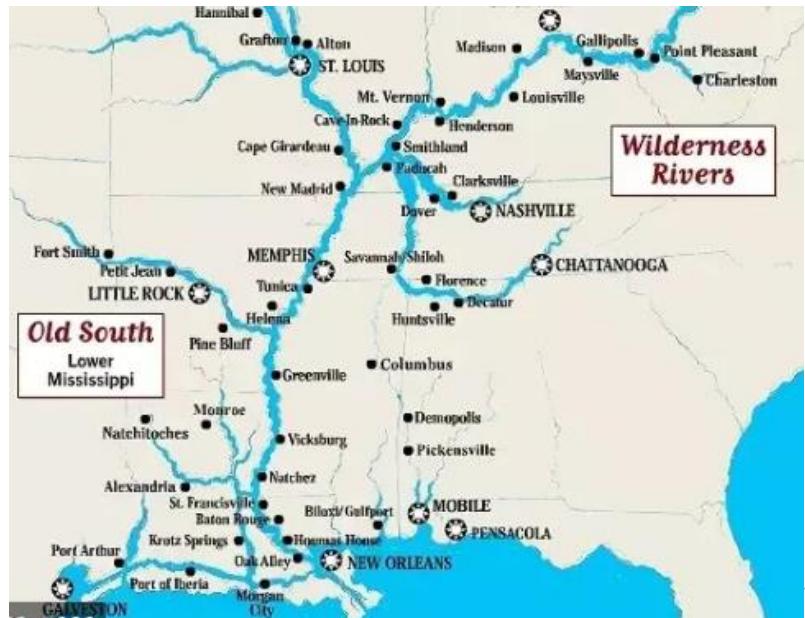
*Importantly, in all our family stories handed down by our parents or other family members such as Great Uncle Glenn McCoun, there has never the slightest allusion to emancipation as a cause of loss of family wealth. Certainly, the family legend of how Joe and Luta McCoun lost everything attributed their ruin to the fact that he "went" his brother-in-law's bond, and the brother-in-law failed to fulfill the contract with no mention ever of emancipation.*

## The Texas years

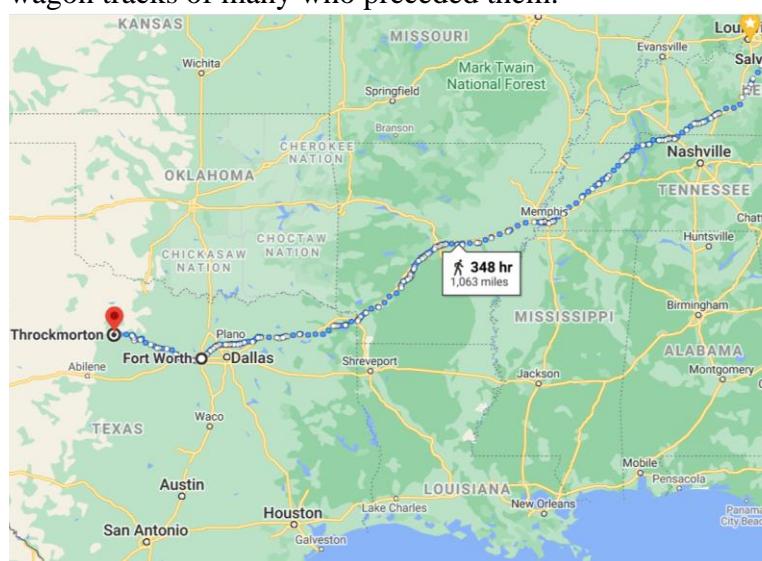
Destitute, Joe and Luta decided to make a new start in the Fort Worth area of Texas. They were already in Texas when all the litigation was going on in Woodford County relating to both the Oscar Pepper estate and the loss of their own property.

The family's mode of transportation from Kentucky to northern Texas is unknown.<sup>27</sup> Going by boat from the Kentucky River to the Ohio River, and down the Mississippi was certainly an option, as may be seen in the map at right. If they went by boat, they might have disembarked at Memphis and traveled overland from there to Fort Worth on wagons or by stagecoach.<sup>28</sup> It seems unlikely they would have taken a steamboat all the way down the Mississippi to New Orleans. There they would have had to take a boat with a westbound route along the Gulf of Mexico coast to Galveston (in the southwest corner of the map). At that point, Fort Worth would still be hundreds of miles away, probably making the river-then-gulf-then-land route impractically long.

The McCoun family probably traveled overland in a more or less straight southwesterly line, as shown by the map below.<sup>29</sup> Roads were poor, but by the early 1870s they were traveling in the footsteps and well-worn wagon tracks of many who preceded them.



Location within the U.S. state of Texas



## More heartbreak in Texas

The move to Texas did not have a happy outcome. Luta died of typhoid fever on 27 December 1874, when she was only 40. Our great grandfather, Rob, the second child and eldest son, was just 14 when his mother died. The family legend claims that Mary Louisa Pepper McCoun “died of a broken heart in Texas, grieving the loss of her beautiful Kentucky home.” In that photograph on page one, Luta looked none too happy. She may have hated Texas. Perhaps I am biased, but a comparison of the color photo on page three with the photo on page 17 reveals strikingly different landscapes. Typhoid fever was all too common a cause of death during Joe and Luta’s lifetime. We know this was Luta’s cause of death because of a notice, then a letter, published in the Woodford Weekly in January 1875. What follows is transcribed word-for-word.

### Notices in Woodford Weekly regarding death of Mary Louise Pepper McCoun<sup>30</sup>

*Woodford Weekly*  
15 January 1875, Versailles

*Death of Mrs. Joe McCoun*— We are sorry to learn that Mrs. Jo. McCoun died at her home, near Ft. Worth, Texas, a few days ago. We understand Mr. McCoun is on his way to Kentucky with her remains, and is also bringing his family, being tired of Texas.

*Woodford Weekly*  
25 January 1875, Versailles

*We copy the following letter in reference to the last illness and death of Mrs. J. E. McCoun, late of this county, from the last issue of the Apostolic Times.*<sup>31</sup>

Fort Worth, Tex., Jan. 1 '75

Mr. W. F. Patterson:

Dear Uncle--This is New Year's night, and it is indeed a sad, sad one to me. It is with an aching heart I now address these few lines to you to inform you that my darling mother has left this corrupt earth for a brighter home on high. The morning your letter reached us, she was a corpse in the house.

After lingering along for about eleven weeks with typhoid fever, she died on the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup> of December, at half past four o'clock. A calmer, more peaceful death was never witnessed. She seemed as if she was falling into a happy sleep—happy it was indeed, for she awoke in Heaven. She died with her hands in mine. She was conscious to the last, but so very weak she could not talk. I think she knew she was passing away, for she would frequently say, “Oh, I want to talk.” She would first call father, then me.

About half an hour before she died, she called father and, in about five minutes, said, “Oh! My darling,” which were her last words.

Her funeral was preached by Mr. Banton, one of our preachers. She was too pure and good for the earth, therefore the Lord called her unto him, thus depriving us of the light of our family. She has gone to make the way smoothly for us—gone to meet her dear mother, from whom she has been so long separated; gone to meet her kind father, who left us only a short while ago and last, but greatest of all, she has gone to be welcomed home into Paradise by our own heavenly father, never again to know a sorrow or feel a fear. Oh! I can scarcely realize the great, great responsibility of raising and training the dear little children. I will look to God for help and strength, for I know he is too good and kind to refuse.

I never saw anyone look so natural after death as she. Such a bright happy smile was on her countenance! I looked at her sweet face after they prepared her for the last resting place, I could not help thinking how wrong it was for us to strive for one so happy as she. It was the will of the Lord to take her, therefore she should not murmur. He could no longer spare her from his band of happy angels.

Dear Uncle, please write to me soon a long letter of advice, such as I know you are capable of giving. That we may all be prepared to meet our dear friends in heaven is the prayer of

Your devoted niece,  
Perla McCoun

Little William McCoun died in Fort Worth on 23 September 1875, at age four, and only nine months after his mother's. Joe decided that most of the children should return to Kentucky, to live with kin, while he, Rob and Sam would remain in Texas and make some money. Joe's children who returned to Kentucky in about 1876 were Perla, 19 years old; Hettie, 11; Mary Louise, nine; and Joseph Eccles Jr, six. In Perla's care, the youngsters might have traveled from Fort Worth by train, as rail service was established there in 1875. They arrived safely in Mercer County, where all were accounted for in the 1880 census, living with their grandmother, Esther Eccles McCoun, in the home of their cousins.

### **Joe, Rob, and Sam became cowboys**

After the departure of Perla and the younger children, Joe and his sons Rob and Sam worked as cowboys on the Great Western Cattle Trail,<sup>32</sup> driving cattle from Fort Worth to Throckmorton, Texas and then to points north, on the way to Kansas. It is not known how many cattle drives they participated in. For Joe, who was 50 when little William died, one cattle drive might have been enough. Rob and Sam likely participated in additional cattle drives.

#### **The Great Western Cattle Trail**

Longhorn cattle roamed free in Texas for three centuries, as 16th century Spanish explorers had brought them from Spain and freed them in southern Texas, with the plan to have in place herds of cattle for future settlers. But Spanish colonization of the area did not occur, yet the cattle left in Texas thrived. When the U.S. Civil War ended in 1865, there were millions of "feral" cattle inhabiting Texas. They belonged to no one.

From 1874-1885, the Great Western Cattle Trail was the major means by which longhorns from Texas reached railroads that could transport the animals to slaughterhouses. Some longhorns were transported not eastward to slaughterhouses, but westward by rail to Wyoming and Montana, expanding the cattle industry to those areas.

Getting the free cattle to northern and eastern markets where consumers were hungry for beef was no easy matter. The cattle needed to be rounded up, branded, and fed during an arduous trip north to the train stations in Kansas. About 12 cowboys were required to herd 3,000 longhorns. Typically, the cowboys wrangling a herd of cattle head would move 10 to 12 miles a day and would be accompanied by the trail boss and a cook. The drive from Texas to Kansas took about two months and paid \$1000 in wages plus provisions. At the end of the trail, cattle sold for

\$20.00 to \$35.00 each.

Life on the trail was challenging for the longhorns and the cowboys herding them. Being a cowboy required weeks in the saddle away from the comforts of home. On good days, cowboys struggled for breath, bandanas pulled up over their faces as cattle kicked up dust trudging across the hot and dry terrain. On bad days, there might be violent storms, high water, cattle stampedes, rattlesnakes, illness, injury and, on rare occasions, Indian attacks. As the years passed, the cowboys ran into increasing conflict with farmers and ranchers who had received land grants and then fenced in their property.

Ultimately, it was settlement—and the invention of barbed wire in 1885—that killed the longhorn cattle drives. Homesteaders and their barbed-wire fences blocked the path of the cattle and the men herding them. Ultimately the extension of rail service to Texas meant it was no longer necessary to drive cattle overland to reach railheads in Kansas. Also, slaughterhouses in Texas had been established.

Before its decline, beginning in 1885, and the last cattle drive in 1893, the Great Western saw over six million cattle and one million horses pass through Texas and Oklahoma to railroad stations in Kansas and Nebraska.



When Joe, Rob, and Sam joined the cattle drive in Fort Worth, and it took them to and through Throckmorton, they must have been impressed by what they saw in that raw new community. They decided to relocate from Fort Worth to Throckmorton, which is 130 miles west. Throckmorton was a key stop on the Great Western Cattle Trail. It is said that the main street of the town runs from south to north because it once was part of the Trail.

By the 1880 census, counted in Throckmorton on 7 June, Joe, Rob, and Sam were well-established in the town. The census that year showed that Joe was serving as county judge, while Rob McCoun at age 20 was “at home,” and Sam McCoun, age 17, was a student. Also living with them were two boarders, a stonemason from Massachusetts, and a lawyer from Ohio.

Weaver Status R W M 30			Boarder	1	Wool Grower		One	Two	Three
8	8	McCoun Joseph E 11 M 53			County Judge	✓	Kentucky	ky	ky
—	—	Robert P W M 20	Son	1	At Home		Kentucky	ky	ky
—	—	Samuel P 4 M 17	Son	1	At School		Kentucky	ky	ky
Douglas John T W M 32		Boarder ✓			Stone Mason	✓	Mus.	Deland	Gretna
Ol' Jess P 46 M 30		Boarder ✓			Lawyer		Ohio	Pew	Ohio

Four households away was a young family that included Glenn Reynolds, age 26, and his wife and two small children. Reynolds was the first sheriff of Throckmorton County. Later he moved to Arizona and was elected sheriff of Globe, Gila County, Arizona.<sup>33</sup> In 1891, when a baby boy was born in Wolfe County, Kentucky, his father—Rob McCoun—named the child Glenn Reynolds McCoun, thereby honoring a friend he had made in Texas a decade earlier.

While living in Throckmorton and serving as County Judge, Joe bought land from the state of Texas with the intention of subdividing it for residential development. It was a 153½ tract that Joe later sold to a man named J.B. Massie when Joe left Texas. A street called McCoun Avenue, shown below, commemorates our ancestors' time in Throckmorton.<sup>34</sup> This photo gives us a glimpse of north Texas and how its flat, dry terrain contrasts with the lush green of Kentucky.

Fortunately for our very existence, Joe and Rob decided to return to lovely Kentucky, while Sam stayed in mousy Throckmorton. In 1894, Sam purchased from Mr. Massie the land sold him by Joe a few years before. But by 1900, Sam left Throckmorton for Pueblo, Colorado, where he was counted in the census. Sam married, had good jobs, and lived in Pueblo the rest of his life.



**Joe and Rob, back in Kentucky**

Upon reaching Kentucky in about 1888, Joe and Rob went first to their native Mercer County, even though they no longer had a home there. Joe's children there were no doubt happy to see their father and brother after so many years apart. Perhaps it was during Joe's time in Mercer County that he met, or renewed his acquaintance with, a widow named Mary Priscilla Adams Sea, who owned a farm in Mercer County. (Did they know they were distant cousins? Both were great grandchildren of James McCoun IV and Margaret Walker, the immigrant ancestors and pioneer settlers of Mercer County.)

From Mercer County, Joe and Rob proceeded to Wolfe County, Kentucky, in the foothills on the western edge of the Appalachian Mountains. There, they formed a business harvesting white oak timber, as is discussed in more detail in Rob's biography. The men stayed at a boarding house on Devil's Creek, owned by James Kash Cockerham and Manervia Puckett Cockerham. That was where their daughter Syrene was spotted by Rob McCoun. The two married 14 February 1891.

Even before his son's wedding, Joe had returned to Mercer County and in 1889 married the widow Mary Priscilla Adams Sea. They had eight years together before Joe died on Mary Priscilla's farm on 28 March 1897.

### **Joe's death and burial**

His funeral was conducted in their home by a Reverend Taylor. A local newspaper in Harrodsburg published an obituary for Joseph on 31 March 1897.<sup>35</sup> It included several errors, for which corrections are given in the column on the right. When judging the accuracy of facts stated in an obituary, one must consider who likely wrote it and the extent to which the writer had the facts about the life of the deceased. In this case, it was likely the second wife, who was well-meaning but who lacked direct knowledge of many facts.

Obituaries: MCCOUN	Corrections
<p>Mr. Joseph E. McCoun, a highly respected citizen, native of this county, died, Sunday, at his home, three miles west of McAfee, in the seventy-second year of his age.</p> <p>He was the only son of Joseph McCoun one of our pioneer settlers and Mary McCoun, a daughter of John Eckles, one of the first of Harrodsburg's merchants. He was brought up in the Presbyterian faith and in early life became a member of New Providence church. He was truly a Christian gentleman.</p> <p>Forty years ago, he married Miss Pepper, of Franklin, and lived for thirty years in that county. After her death he removed to this county and eight years ago married Mrs. Sea who survives him.</p> <p>His children are Mrs. T. J. Fry, Denver, Col; R.P. McCoun, Compton, Ky.; S.P. McCoun, Pueblo, Col.; Miss Lutie McCoun and Joseph E. McCoun of this county and Mrs. Pearla Vanarsdall, Fort Worth, Texas. The funeral was conducted at the house by Rev. Taylor, his pastor, and the interment was in Providence cemetery.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Joe was not the only son of Joseph McCoun. Aside from Joe's brother James, who died young, Joe had an older brother named William who in 1857 was killed by a firing squad in Mexico.</li><li>2. Joe's father Joseph was not a pioneer settler. Joe's great grandparents James McCoun IV and Margaret Walker, and his parents John McCoun and Elizabeth Tilford, were the family's pioneer settlers.</li><li>3. Joe's mother was Esther, not Mary.</li><li>4. Esther Eccles McCoun's father was named Joseph, not John. The surname was spelled Eccles not Eckles.</li><li>5. The information that Joe's maternal grandfather (who died in about 1801) was one of Harrodsburg's first merchants is interesting but probably incorrect. Perhaps Esther had a relative named John Eccles who was the early Harrodsburg merchant.</li><li>6. Miss Pepper was not from Franklin County. She was from Woodford County. She and Joe did not, as a couple, live in either county for 30 years. They lived in Woodford only about seven years. The obituary does not mention the Texas years. The correct spellings are Campton, not Compton, and Perla not Pearla.</li></ol>

Joe was buried in the cemetery of the New Providence Presbyterian Church, three miles from where his life had begun 71 years earlier. His connection to the church went back to its founding more than a century earlier by his great grandfather and other pioneers who cleared and settled land that Joe sold so that he could afford to buy the woman he loved the home she loved in another county.

After Joe's death, Mary Priscilla lived another 33 years. She invited her stepson, Rob McCoun, and his family to come live with her on her farm, promising to leave it to them when she passed away. However, Rob's wife Syrene did not wish to leave Wolfe County, so they declined Mary Priscilla's offer.<sup>36</sup> If Rob and Syrene had accepted Mary Priscilla's offer, we wouldn't exist: their daughter Ethel would likely have married a young man she met in Mercer County, not Wolfe County resident Herbert Horton.

The headstone for Joseph E. McCoun is interesting in how it memorializes both of his wives. It seems likely that Mary Priscilla ordered it and had it placed shortly after Joe's death on 28 March 1897. After her death on 28 January 1930, her date of death was chiseled in the stone. The mystery is whether the remains of Mary Louisa are buried under this headstone. I believe not, in which case the stone is for her a cenotaph, a grave marker where the body is not present, erected as a memorial to a deceased person. In late December 1874 or early January 1875, it would have been enormously difficult for Joe McCoun to have his wife's coffin transported from Fort Worth, Texas to Mercer County, Kentucky. Joe probably considered doing this, as Luta had so regretted the move to Texas. Indeed, if Joe had managed to transport Luta's coffin to Kentucky, there would have been a headstone just for her, not one erected for her husband when he died a quarter of a century later.

I believe that Mary Louisa was buried in Fort Worth, Texas, possibly on the homestead on which she and Joe had settled there. Their four-year-old son William, who died on 23 September 1875, was laid to rest in the Pioneers Rest Cemetery in Fort Worth. That cemetery's records do not indicate that Luta was buried there.

With the death of Joseph Eccles McCoun, the Mercer County and Woodford County chapters of our family history closed, and tiny Wolfe County in the Appalachian foothills began to play the starring role.

I hope you enjoy reading these biographies as much as I enjoy writing them.

Linda Horton, [lhorton@comcast.net](mailto:lhorton@comcast.net), 12 December 2021

#### Appendix: Turnpikes in Kentucky in the nineteenth century

A Kentucky House of Representatives document, published in 1876 and excerpted below, included long lists of Kentucky corporations that had failed to pay taxes the previous year. Among companies listed was the Versailles and McCoun's Ferry Turnpike Road Company.<sup>37</sup>



Put in a broader context, the Versailles and McCoun's Ferry Turnpike Project was probably funded by, and regulated by, the Kentucky government. During the 1800s, the main way in which roads were built was by private companies that funded the road construction and, in exchange, were permitted to charge tolls and retain the tolls they collected.<sup>38</sup>

Some references in a Kentucky House of Representatives document published in 1876 provide enlightening information about the construction of turnpikes in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Kentucky.

STATE OF KENTUCKY,  
OFFICE OF AUDITOR OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS,  
FRANKFORT, February 28, 1876. }

HON. W. J. STONE, *Speaker of House of Representatives*:

SIR: I herewith transmit to you a statement showing the various corporations in the State which have failed to pay taxes to the State for the year 1875, in obedience to the resolution adopted by the House of Representatives on the 22d inst., with marginal notes showing why such taxes have not been paid.

I have the honor to be,

Very respectfully,

D. HOWARD SMITH, *Auditor*.

CORPORATIONS WHICH HAVE FAILED TO PAY TAXES FOR 1875.

Salisbury and Kirkwood Turnpike Road Company -----	"
Salt River and Dry Branch Turnpike Road Company -----	"
Town of Franklin -----	No report.
Tuckahoe Ridge Turnpike Road Company -----	No dividends reported.
United States Mail Line Company -----	No report.
Versailles and Anderson County Turnpike Road Company -----	No dividends reported.
Versailles and Georgetown Turnpike Road Company -----	"
Versailles and McCoun's Ferry Turnpike Road Company -----	"



The now-nonexistent Whig Party, which in its heyday included legendary U.S. Senator Henry Clay of Kentucky, favored national investment in road projects. The Whigs' political opponents, led by Democratic President Andrew Jackson, were against such projects due to the cost as well as philosophical opposition to U.S. government involvement in what they viewed as matters for the states. National road policy for a century was set when Jackson vetoed a bill that would have provided for the U.S. government to pay half the cost of a 67-mile turnpike in Kentucky from the Ohio River to Lexington. This turnpike was to be part of a national road from Ohio to New Orleans, so it was not merely a parochial priority for Kentucky but part of a national infrastructure objective.

Denied Federal assistance, the Kentucky turnpike was built by the sale of subscriptions to towns, county governments, and the state, and similar projects soon followed. A Kentucky law was enacted in 1836 that created a Board of Internal Improvement to regulate all public improvements within the state. From 1836 to 1868, many turnpike companies were chartered at each session of the legislature, including the Versailles and McCoun's Ferry Turnpike Road Company.

Later the state legislature gave the Board the authority to grant state funding for the construction of toll roads, causing a "veritable flood of turnpike charters."<sup>39</sup> Board activity ceased during the Civil War, but interest in state-aided private turnpikes rebounded immediately after the armistice. The Kentucky governor was empowered, with the advice of

the Board, to issue bonds to pay for roads projects. The program sounds like one that would be highly susceptible to corrupt decision-making. Notably, there was no comprehensive plan for the overall state road system to govern the adoption of new projects. Instead, there was a hodgepodge of local toll roads.

In 1869, the Board of Internal Improvement was abolished. After that, it was the duty of county governments to oversee the building of roads without state participation or controls. Toll roads became increasingly unpopular with citizens, and there was a gradual phasing out of toll roads until, by the 1930s, Kentucky had none. In the second half of the twentieth century, however, toll roads were reborn, to fund construction of new highways that otherwise could not be built.

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<sup>1</sup> Hettie Frye McCoun, the older sister of our grandmother Ethel (1896-1985) was named Hettie Frye McCoun in tribute to her great aunt Esther “Hettie” McCoun who married Thomas Joshua Fry.

<sup>2</sup> Joe’s father, Joseph (1784-1829), had built the house in 1820 then died in 1829.

<sup>3</sup> Klimcheck, Maurie McCoun, *James McCoun & Margaret Walker & Their Descendants*, 1993 Vol. II at 231.

<sup>4</sup> McAfee, Robert B., *History of the rise and progress of the first settlement on Salt River and establishment of the New Providence Church*, published in the Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society, Vol. 29 No. 87, April 1931 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/23370120> in Register, pub by the Kentucky State Historical Society January 1931.

<http://jtenlen.drizzlehosting.com/mcafee/church/church2.html>

<sup>5</sup> Id at 26. <http://jtenlen.drizzlehosting.com/mcafee/church/church3.html>

<sup>6</sup> Joe’s effort to acquire from his siblings their shares of McCoun land was greatly complicated by the fact that William had moved around a lot and was difficult to locate. William had not informed his family when he returned to Missouri from Wisconsin or when he later moved to California. We know this because of Joe’s efforts to correspond with William using a Wisconsin address. And William’s death without a will meant that judicial proceedings in Missouri were needed to obtain permission to sell to Joe land that had been inherited by William’s widow and minor children.

<sup>7</sup> Sun Valley Farm, 556 New Cut Road, Versailles, Kentucky 40383, 859-533-5377  
<https://www.visitsunvalleymares.com/amenities>

<sup>8</sup> “The World’s Finest Bourbon.” <https://www.woodfordreserve.com/> See the biography of Elijah Pepper for details.

<sup>9</sup> Kentucky Birth, Marriage, and Death Records—Microfilm (1852-1910). Microfilm rolls #994027-994058. Kentucky Department of Libraries and Archives, Frankfort Kentucky. Cited as Mercer County Marriage Book-I, in Klimcheck, Maurie McCoun, *James McCoun & Margaret Walker & Their Descendants*, Vol. II at. 231.

<sup>10</sup> The 1850 Slave Schedule had indicated that, at that time, Joe owned nine slaves, four of them males aged 32, 11, six, and one, and five enslaved females aged 31, 20, nine, eight, and five months.

<sup>11</sup> Mercer County Deed Book 34-553.

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.in2013dollars.com/us/inflation/1864?amount=8687>

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<sup>13</sup> Woodford County Deed Book Y-94, 95, 18 March 1865. The deed includes notations in the margin referring to payment in full by Joseph E. McCoun. All Deed Book references that follow are from the Woodford County Deed Book.

<sup>14</sup> “Louisa, daughter of Samuel and Mahala, married Joseph McCoun, and they lived in a large brick residence on Glenn’s Creek opposite Elijah Pepper’s residence.” Railey, William E. *History of Woodford County, Kentucky*. [https://archive.org/stream/registerofkentuc18fran/registerofkentuc18fran\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/registerofkentuc18fran/registerofkentuc18fran_djvu.txt)

<sup>15</sup> 1865, Deed Book 2-424: R. P. Pepper bought about 370 acres near Grassy Spring Meeting House about one mile south of Versailles-Frankfort Road; sellers were J.N. Lindsey and James Harris; 1865, 26 December. Deed Book Y:453: Joseph E. McCoun and Robert P. Pepper bought from one James H. Harris for \$700 land on Glenn’s Creek, part of a tract owned by Notley Harris. Recorded in Deed Book P-275.

1869, 29 November: Joseph bought land on Glenn’s Creek from the Darnells (Luta’s sister and husband). Deed Book Z-585.

<sup>16</sup> The present discussion omits mention of Mahalie, who was born 17 May 1859 and died four days later.

<sup>17</sup> Marcia Horton’s *History of the McCoun Family* includes a statement that, “Court records through the years include mention of mills and of ferries over the Kentucky [River] operated by McCouns.” *A History of the McCoun Family compiled as a Memorial to my husband Raymond Thomas Horton (1914-1987)* [hereinafter, Horton *History of the McCoun Family*]. 1989, at A-23.

<sup>18</sup> Letter from Marcia Bryan Horton to Alma Ison, 10 February 1980, in the author’s records.

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.measuringworth.com/dollarvaluetoday/?amount=90001&from=1871>

<sup>20</sup> Horton, *History of the McCoun Family*, at A-24.

<sup>21</sup> This may have been the 26th Kentucky Volunteer Infantry. Union Soldiers Compiled Service Records, 1861-1865. 26th Kentucky Infantry.

[https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/26th\\_Regiment,\\_Kentucky\\_Infantry\\_\(Union\)](https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/26th_Regiment,_Kentucky_Infantry_(Union)). There was, however, a Robert Pepper in the 26th Regiment, Missouri Infantry, Union side, who joined as a private and left as sergeant. M390 Roll 37 <https://www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers-detail.htm?soldierId=5BAD4EC2-DC7A-DF11-BF36-B8AC6F5D926A>

<sup>22</sup> See note 15.

<sup>23</sup> Deed Book Z-585.

<sup>24</sup> Deed Book DB-2-16.

<sup>25</sup> Deed Book 2-94 and 2-423.

<sup>26</sup> Deed Book 2-115, 116.

<sup>27</sup> Maps are from Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Throckmorton\\_County,\\_Texas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Throckmorton_County,_Texas)

<sup>28</sup> Map is from <https://www.quora.com/Can-you-take-the-Ohio-River-from-Pittsburgh-to-New-Orleans>

<sup>29</sup> GoogleMaps: Millville to Salvisa to Fort Worth to Throckmorton.

<sup>30</sup> Transcribed by Linda Horton from microfilm viewed and photographed by her at the Woodford County Historical Society in Versailles on 11 November 2021.

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<sup>31</sup> *The Apostolic Times* was a publication of the Disciples of Christ Protestant denomination. [https://webfiles.acu.edu/departments/Library/HR/restmov\\_nov11/www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/resources/discbibl.html](https://webfiles.acu.edu/departments/Library/HR/restmov_nov11/www.mun.ca/rels/restmov/texts/resources/discbibl.html)

<sup>32</sup> The photo accompanied this article: Bell, Kathie, Great Western Cattle Trail, Special to the Dodge City Daily Globe, 26 Feb. 2018. <https://www.dodgeglobe.com/news/20180226/great-western-cattle-trail>

<sup>33</sup> “On November 2, 1889, while transporting Apache Indian prisoners to Yuma State Prison, [Glenn Reynolds] and Deputy Sheriff Williams Holmes, were overpowered outside of Kelvin, Arizona and killed by them. One of these prisoners was the infamous Apache Kid.” [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Throckmorton\\_County,\\_Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Throckmorton_County,_Texas)

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.google.com/maps/@33.17685,-99.1718808,3a,75y,161.6h,59.41t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1seezGnaDDBfDp2W2KIkS0jA!2e0!7i13312!8i6656?hl=en>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.google.com/maps/@33.17685,-99.1718808,3a,75y,161.6h,59.41t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1seezGnaDDBfDp2W2KIkS0jA!2e0!7i13312!8i6656?hl=en>

<sup>35</sup> *The Sayings*, Harrodsburg, Kentucky, 31 March 1897.

<sup>36</sup> Source was Glenn Reynolds McCoun, quoted in Horton, *History of the McCoun Family*, 1989 at A-25.

<sup>37</sup> Journal of the regular session of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Kentucky, Frankfort, Kentucky 1876 at 902, 906. [https://www.google.com/books/edition/Journal\\_of\\_the\\_House\\_of\\_Representatives/VcklAQAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1](https://www.google.com/books/edition/Journal_of_the_House_of_Representatives/VcklAQAAIAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1)

<sup>38</sup> Bray, D.H., Kentucky Parkway System, at 1.

[https://uknowledge.uky.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1207&context=ktc\\_proceedings](https://uknowledge.uky.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1207&context=ktc_proceedings)

<sup>39</sup> Id. 29.