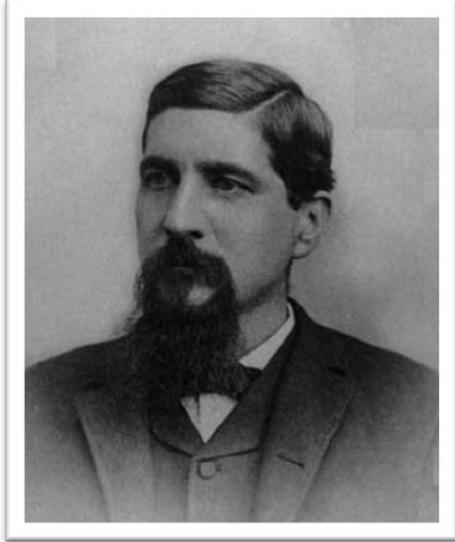


Fry Family Summary: Reuben Macon Fry
by Aubin Clarkson Hutchison; 22 February 1999
Updated June 2013, by Pamela Hutchison Garrett



Reuben Macon Fry, sixth and last son of Philip Slaughter and Pa(r)melia Anderson, is our ancestor in this generation. His tombstone says he was born on 2 July 1847 at Orange Court House, Virginia. His father, who served in Orange County Court House in one capacity or another from 1817 till his death in 1859 (with the exception of two years in Kentucky), died when Reuben Macon Fry was only twelve years old. It's likely that the seven Fry brothers were well schooled, and continued to be a great help to their mother after their father's death. Alexander Maury Fry, the youngest of the Fry family, died in November 1859*, just a few months after his father.

Reuben Macon Fry was clearly named after his grandfather Reuben Fry, but the source of the name "Macon" has always eluded us. The source may have been an Orange County friend. In 1803 a new town called Somerset was established

by Thomas Macon near the railroad station serving Orange Court House. It would be interesting to search for more information on Thomas Macon.

The Fry family appears in the 1860 Census of Orange county Virginia, just after the death of Philip Slaughter Fry, and just before the Civil War. John M Anderson is the brother, possibly twin, of Permelia Anderson Fry:

1860 Census of Orange county Virginia
Permelia M Fry; 50 (1810) Virginia
Philip Fry; 26 (1834) Virginia; clerk
Edmund Fry; 24 (1836) Virginia
Luther Fry; 15 (1845) Virginia
Reuben H Fry; 13 (1847) Virginia
John M Anderson; 50 (1810) Virginia; dentist

Reuben Macon Fry was between the ages of 14-18 during the Civil War years, just a bit young for joining the Confederacy in an official capacity. But, according to family tradition he did join his brother, Capt Charles William "Willie" Fry, who headed Fry's Battery of the Orange County Virginia Artillery. Another brother, Edmond "Ned" Fry was a member of the 13th Virginia Infantry, Co A, "Montpelier Guards". He died from wounds received at Second Manassas. In January 1865, Reuben M Fry joined the Cadet Corp of Virginia Military Institute and probably served in several minor engagements toward the close of the war. Later he served as the Adjutant General and Chief of Staff for the Arkansas Division of the United Confederate Veterans, a roll for which he was highly complimented.

Following the Civil War, Reuben M Fry removed to Chicot county Arkansas, where he was found in the 1870 census, living with DH Sessions of Mississippi. We have never understood exactly what

precipitated this move to Arkansas, but he was likely a young man with few prospects in ravaged Virginia, who decided to try his luck "in the west". His older brother, Willie Fry, had taught school in Chicot county Arkansas prior to the War. It is likely that the two brothers returned to Arkansas together.

1870 Census of Chicot county Arkansas

DH Sessions; 51; Ms; planter

Anna Sessions; 13; Ark

Joseph W Sessions; 11; Ms

Joe Roeman; 31; Poland; carpenter

Reuben Fry; 22; Va; can't read occupation

Reuben Macon Fry (age 25) married Eliza Brooks Hutchins (age 24) on 15 January 1873 at the Mason Lake Plantation of the Gaines family at Lake Village, Arkansas. As for why Reuben's bride Eliza was at Lake Village, we know that the family of Eliza Brooks Hutchins ("Brooksie") had suffered terribly during the war at their Glen Aubin Plantation south of Natchez, Mississippi. She and a sister and brother had finally gone to live with Gaines family relatives who had bought property across the river in Arkansas long before the Civil War.

In 1992 our daughter Pam and I did some family searching in Natchez and then made a stop in Lake Village Arkansas where we found their marriage record and many other records regarding Reuben M Fry at the Chicot County Court House. He served there as County Clerk, and later sold plantation produce on credit, not with much success. Many records indicated problems he had collecting.

Reuben and Eliza's three children, all born in Lake Village, were:

Edmund Mortimer Fry; born 29 Oct 1873

Reuben Macon Fry; born 14 Apr 1875

Aubin Mildred Fry; born 12 Aug 1878

Lake Village today is a quiet little town in a lovely setting on a Mississippi River backwash where prosperity has all but disappeared. Just what attracted our ancestors there 125 years ago is unknown, other than prospects of plantation farming.

The Fry family appears in the 1880 census of Chicot county Arkansas:

1880 Census of Chicot county Arkansas; McConnell

Reuben M Fry; 32 (1848) Virginia; merchant

Eliza B Fry; 35 (1845) Mississippi

Edmund M Fry; 6 (1874) Arkansas

Reuben M Fry; 5 (1875) Arkansas

Aubin Fry; 2 (1878) Arkansas

Mattie Muse; 23 (1857) Arkansas; cook

Not long after the 1880 census, Reuben Fry and Brooksie Hutchins moved to Fort Smith, Arkansas in Sebastian County, a town with much greater prospects. Aubin Fry's baptism is recorded at St. John's Episcopal Church, Fort Smith, on 20 March 1881, age 2 1/2.

During a visit in the 1990's, we made a stab at old court records in Fort Smith in a temporary warehouse where they had been deposited while reorganization was underway. It was fascinating, and there is much to be found on both the Fry and the Clarkson family. But there must be an easier way and hopefully the Family History Library in Salt Lake, or the Arkansas State Library at Little Rock have indexed microfilms we can search. We also have found a few miscellaneous facts in some Arkansas newspapers.

From several family sources we know that Brooksie Fry was musically inclined and had attended a fancy New York boarding school before the Civil War. A sad detail we uncovered in the warehouse was the mortgage of a piano recorded under the name of Reuben Fry.

It seems likely that great prosperity was not in the cards for Reuben Fry and Brooksie Hutchins, but we do have a photograph of them out front of their lovely Fort Smith Arkansas home which was located at 418 N. 19th. It appears that possibly daughter Aubin Fry was looking out an upper window.



Apparently Reuben M Fry engaged in several interesting employments during their years in Fort Smith. His brief biography given at the Virginia Military Institute website lists his career: Merchant, owned a general store; Internal Revenue collector; Deputy Clerk; Deputy Sheriff; Justice of the Peace. It would be helpful to learn more. We do know that he rode as a deputy with the "Hanging Judge" Isaac Parker, and was in the posse that brought in "Cherokee Bill". He also served as Clerk of Parker's U.S. District Court. One record I stumbled across on a newspaper microfilm in the Fayetteville Arkansas Public Library said Reuben rode with a posse in that area that brought in some illegal moonshiners.

Fort Smith Arkansas Internal Revenue Collector RM Fry returned from Newton county (Arkansas) this evening having in charge two moonshiners Thomas S Struve and H Standridge, both of whom he lodged in the (Fort Smith) jail. On Saturday Mr Fry, accompanied by Deputy marshal WE White of Pope county (Arkansas) and a posse of seven men, invaded the mountains of Newton county and in a hollow known as "Devil's den" came upon the still . . . Standridge was engaged in making a run. As soon as the officers demanded their surrender, Jones drew his pistol . . . Standridge drew a Winchester rifle and endeavored to stand them off. Several shots were exchanged, Jones received one possibly fatal wound through the bowels . . . Standridge surrendered and Struve was arrested at his home . . .

[source] Daily Picayune (New Orleans Louisiana); 20 September 1887. Located on the web at standridgenationalfamilyhistorysociety.org; edited.

A Desperate Fight. Encounter Between Revenue Officers and Moonshiners in Arkansas. Hot Springs, Ark., June 28: News of a desperate fight between revenue officers and moonshiners; which took place near Black Springs, Montgomery County, yesterday, has just reached this city. Internal Revenue Collector R. M. FRY, in charge of a posse, was in that vicinity raiding moonshiner's camps and destroying illicit distilleries. They had succeeded in ferreting out and destroying three. Shortly after they had destroyed the last one they were attacked from ambush by a band of moonshiners armed with Winchester rifles when a desperate battle ensued, in which Deputy United States Marshal John D. TRAMMEL, was instantly killed. Revenue officer FRY has telegraphed to Fort Smith for a reinforcement of officers and is determined to rout and capture every one implicated in the foul murder, if possible.
[source] St Louis Post Dispatch (St Louis Missouri); 28 June 1888; contributed by Gigimo.

What a unique husband Reuben M Fry was for Brooksie, back home with her little children, probably giving piano lessons in her parlor for extra grocery money. I don't know that for a fact, but I suspect it. There is much more to be found in Fort Smith Arkansas records, including even some school records for the children.

Recently (2013) I discovered an article about the Clarkson-Christopher Lumber Company in St Louis Missouri. The officers were EE Mason, president; HC Christopher, vice-president; and RM Fry, treasurer. The Clarkson involved was James Livingston Clarkson, a cousin of my own Clarkson family, and the EE Mason was Ezra Mason, brother-in-law of my Clarkson gg-grandmother. Because my Fry and Clarkson families intermarried in 1899 in Fort Smith Arkansas, I assumed that RM Fry was my Reuben Macon Fry. But, I eventually discovered my mistake when I identified RM Fry of the Clarkson-Christopher Lumber Company, as Robert Maxwell Fry whose ancestors came from Connecticut – no relationship to my Fry family.

Reuben Macon Fry and his wife Eliza "Brooksie" Hutchins appear, without children, in the 1900 Census of Sebastian county Arkansas:

1900 Census of Sebastian county Arkansas; Fort Smith
RM Fry; 58 (Jul 1841) Virginia; married 27 years; coal dealer
Eliza B Fry; 56 (Mar 1844) Mississippi; 3 of 4 children living

We have a most complimentary obituary for Reuben Macon Fry that appeared in a Fort Smith newspaper. He died 3 February 1905 after taking a terrible fall on the icy streets. He was buried in Oak Cemetery in Fort Smith. Brooksie Hutchins Fry died about twenty years later, on 16 July 1926 in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Her daughter, Aubin Fry Clarkson, had made her home there. But, her body was returned to Fort Smith for burial beside her husband.

*Some records identify the youngest child of Philip S Fry and Pamela Anderson as Alexandra Maury Fry, female, and note her death as November 1858.