

# **JEPHTHA CHARLES MCCOY**

## Haskell County, Kansas

Rewritten by Eva Mae Cooper  
*Initially written by Jephtha Charles McCoy*

Jephtha C. McCoy has experienced many hardships in western Kansas. In 1887, Two years before Haskell County became organized; Jephtha established himself and undertook the task of making a living in this part of the country.

Mr. McCoy wrote the following:

*“I have witnessed practically every phase of development and change in this part of western Kansas. My own experiences have been as varied as the vicissitudes of the soil and climate could make them.*

*I represent old Virginia and Tennessee stock of Scotch-Irish ancestry. I was born in Hancock County, Tennessee, on 17 Dec 1854. My great-grandfather was a Scottish-Irishman and came to America in colonial times. I grew up on my father’s modest farm and acquired only a common school education. I lived at home until the age of twenty, and then I married Mary Chapman. After our marriage, we became tenant farmers.*

*When we came to Kansas in 1885, we brought with us our two children. We combined with a neighbor the cost of shipping our goods to Cimarron. We owned a wagon and team, but we owed our neighbor for expenses incurred during the trip by the time we reached Cimarron. It amounted to forty-five dollars, and I only had twenty-five cents in my pockets. Under the spur of the necessity to provide for my family, I went to work freighting from Cimarron to Santa Fe and old Springfield. I also plowed land for absentee owners, planted trees on timber claims, and the first year I lived entirely from the fruits of my labor.*

*Soon after my arrival, I entered as a homestead the northeast quarter of section 7, township 30, range 32, seven miles south of Santa Fe, and the county seat. For six years we lived there, I proved up the land, and all the time, my family and I lived in a half dugout. In the second year, I got a little fodder (coarse food for cattle & horses) from my farm, and in the third year, I raised an abundant wheat crop. At the end of the sixth year, I was a little better off than when I had settled on this claim.*

*In 1893, I moved to Santa Fe to give my children a better school education. I still had to depend upon the toil of my hands to support my family and went to Colorado as a place offering better advantages. I was there for almost a year and then decided to return to Kansas. I planted four hundred acres of wheat, and even though there was a fair crop, I was one hundred dollars worse off after it was over. It had been a year of wet, cold weather, and the wheat was almost ruined by the black dust. The following year, I again went to Colorado and began operating a threshing outfit for hulling alfalfa. My*

*experiences there kept me in Colorado until June of 1900, when I returned to the harvest fields of Larned, Pawnee County, Kansas. Since 1901, I have been engaged in farming and stock raising near Santa Fe, Kansas. I now own the east half of section 25, township 28, & range 33. Mr. Rosenthal, a former banker from Santa Fe, placed the improvements on this land.*

*I have been quite active in local affairs and was for two years a trustee of Loco Township and one of the early members of the school board of District No. 45. I always supported the Democratic Party in politics and in October of 1917, I retired after two years of service as county treasurer of Haskell County, having run on the democratic ticket. Three of my children now reside in Sublette.”*

### Additional Information JEPHTHA CHARLES MCCOY

JEPHTHA CHARLES MCCOY, son of William J. McCoy (1832-1878) and Salene “Emeline” Cantwell (1834-1917), was born on 17 Dec 1854, in Hancock County, Tennessee. In 1874, he married MARY MATILDA CHAPMAN, daughter of Crittendon Everet Chapman (1827-1887) and Amanda Jane Ruyle (1834-1877). Mary was born on 24 Oct 1852 in Missouri. Jephtha passed away on 10 Jul 1940 in Sublette, Haskell County, Kansas. Mary died there on 5 Jan 1948. Burial was at the Haskell County Cemetery in Sublette.

Four children were born in their marriage:

MAYSIE ELLEN MCCOY was born on 24 Sep 1877 in Polk County, Missouri. She sometimes went by the name “Ella”. On 17 Jan 1895, Maysie married Francis Eugene “Gene” Murphy, son of Henry Clay Murphy and Mary Frances Elliot. Gene was born on 11 Feb 1861 in Moniteau County, Missouri. He was president of the Santa Fe (Kansas) State Bank, where they lived for many years before moving to Sublette. They did not have children. Gene died on 21 Oct 1932 in Sublette, Haskell County, Kansas. Maysie died there on 19 Dec 1958 at her home. Both were buried at the Haskell County Cemetery in Sublette.

ROBERT FRANKLIN “FRANK” MCCOY was born on 3 Jun 1880 in Polk County, Missouri. Frank married Etta Laura Swartz, daughter of John William Swartz and Elizabeth Campbell, on 14 Sep 1905 at Deerfield, Kearny County, Kansas. They moved to Old Santa Fe, Kansas, shortly after they married, living there until 1913, moving to Sublette, Haskell County, Kansas. Frank was in the real estate, banking, and grain business. He served as a register of deeds and was director of the District Highway Division. Etta was a schoolteacher. She was born on 17 Oct 1881 in Carlisle, Nicholas County, Kentucky. Frank died on 23 Mar 1956 in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas, and Etta died on 27 Oct 1964 in Sublette. Burial for both was at the Haskell County Cemetery in Sublette. They had one daughter, Ethel Louise McCoy Orth (1908-1977).

MYRTLE NORA MCCOY was born 5 Aug 1889 in Santa Fe, Haskell County, Kansas. On 1 Nov

1908, she married Ernest Henry Elliot, son of Albert Guinn Elliott (1857-1949) and Christina Barbara Reichart (1862-1952). Ernest was born on 9 Jan 1882 in Moniteau County, Missouri. In 1903, when he was 21 years old, Ernest went to Lenora, Oklahoma and worked in his uncle's grocery store. He then moved to Woodard, Oklahoma, staying only a short time. By 1906, he had moved on to Santa Fe, Kansas. He soon began working as a cashier in a local bank for his cousin, F. E. Murphy. He continued working there after the bank was moved to Sublette, Kansas. In 1939, he devoted his time to wheat farming. Myrtle passed away on 12 Apr 1949 in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas. On 29 Sep 1954, Ernest married his childhood friend, Eunice (Miller) Ratcliff. Two years later, he died on 6 Dec 1956. Myrtle and Ernest were buried at the Haskell County Cemetery in Sublette, Kansas. Their children were Merton Elliott (1910-2007), Dorsey Frank Elliott (1917-2006), and Aletha Eltrude Elliott Hall (1919-2015).

EDNA GERTRUDE MCCOY was born on 25 Feb 1894 in Haskell County, Kansas, and lived there until moving to the Garden Valley Retirement Village in Garden City, Finney County, Kansas, in February of 1984. She was married to Thomas Jay Harrel, son of Jeremiah and Rachel Harrel, on 19 Apr 1921 in Haskell County. Thomas was born on 26 Apr 1888, near Pratt, Kansas, and passed away on 9 Nov 1930 at the Epworth Hospital in Liberal, Kansas. Edna died on 25 Dec 1987 in Garden City. Both were buried at the Haskell County Cemetery in Sublette, Kansas. They did not have any children.

### Cemetery Headstones



HASKELL COUNTY CEMETERY  
Sublette, Haskell County, Kansas

*Headstone photographs provided by Leon Barton*