

Chapter Nine

MONIAC FAMILY

There are numerous documented spellings of Moniac (the original French spelling), including: Magnaque, Manack, Macnack, Moniack, Maniac, Monack, Manac, Menac, Munac, McNac, McNack, and MacNack. There are probably more ways than this to spell the Moniac surname, but this will suffice.

It is interesting how the spelling of surnames changed over time, notably the surnames of Native Americans. In early Creek times, it was easy for a semi-illiterate people to spell the Indian names and surnames as they heard or pronounced them. The end result is that it created many variations of the spelling of surnames that actually sounded similar. This was the case with Moniac becoming Magnaque (spelling of the name by the Spanish) then variations of Manac(k), and finally Moniac again.

It is amazing the number of Moniac descendants who make up the Poarch tribe. The Moniac descendants are as numerous as any of the original Poarch families. The Weatherford, Sizemore, Steadham, Madison, Hollinger, Rolin, and McGhee families, to name a few, all intermarried with the Moniacs.

According to the Poarch Indians documentation, the Moniac descendants are spread across the globe. It is a considerably large family tree that includes both Steve and my own families. Interesting enough, the Moniac name, and its derivatives, are virtually extinct in our part of the country.

WILLIAM DIXON (JACOB) MONIAC (MAGNAQUE)

We begin the discovery of the Moniac family tree with William Dixon (Jacob) Moniac (Magnaque), our sixth g grandfather. Magnaque was the Spanish translation of the surname. It is believed that William was born in The Netherlands, although the Moniac name has its origin in France.

Steve has done an excellent job of researching William Dixon Moniac (Magnaque) and the rest of this segment on him comes from that research. William, who became known in Creek country as “Jacob,” came to the Creek nation somewhere around the year 1756, with a remnant of the Natchez Indians, who sought the protective arm of the Creeks.

Jacob originally came to America via Saint Domingue (Santo Domingo or San Domingo) in the early 1750's. Saint Domingue was a French colony, which later became the independent nation of Haiti. It is suspected that he traveled to North America from San Domingue with a group of Natchez Indians being returned to their native land in Mississippi and Louisiana.

During the time period from 1720 to 1750, the Natchez Indians were involved in war with the French, along the Mississippi River in Louisiana. Many of the Natchez Indian captured by the French were enslaved by French commanders, and shipped off in chains to work in the French plantation sugar cane fields of Saint Domingue.

It did not take the French long to find out that the Indian did not make a good slave. The free spirit of the Natchez was not conducive to the kind of production the French expected from the enslaved Indians. Because enslavement went against the basic nature of the Natchez Indians, in Saint Domingue many contacted diseases and died there. In fact, virtually all the Natchez were wiped out on the Island of Saint Domingue. Those who survived were returned to Natchez country, with Jacob joining the Indians for the trip back to their homeland.

James McQueen, who later became the founding father of the Tallassee Creek Indians, visited the Natchez Country (probably at the request of the Colbert family in North Alabama) while Moniac was living there. With the aid of McQueen in 1756, Moniac led the remaining Natchez Indians to the safety of Alabama Creek Country. The Natchez Band settled near the original "Tallassee Old Fields," in Talladega County, Alabama. This is very near the present day Talladega Super Speedway and the Allison's Memorial. This was the first Natchez town in Creek Country, and it was called by the name of Natchee (Natchoo by some historians).

As a result of the French's treatment of the Natchez Indians, both Moniac and McQueen came to despised the French. Even though Jacob's family and ethnic background was French, he went against his own family connections by joining forces with McQueen and his band of Tallassee Indians to run off the French from Fort Toulouse (later renamed Fort Jackson by General Andrew Jackson), near present day Wetumpka, Alabama. McQueen and Moniac feared what had happened to the Natchez Tribe would also happen to the Creek Tribe, if the Creeks continued relations with the French.

Moniac's Unions

Moniac had several wives and mates through the years. His first union was with Sehoy III, who later married Charles Weatherford, and became the mother of Billy Weatherford. But it was Jacob's union with Polly Colbert that produced his most notable offspring: John, Samuel and Mary.

Polly was of the Tuskegee tribe. Her father was a Chickasaw chief, William Colbert (Indian name was Chooshemataha), a son of the Scotsman James Colbert. The elder Colbert was a trader and also the leader of the Chickasaw Indians in northwest Alabama. The Colbert Shoals located on the Tennessee River is named for William Colbert.

Polly Colbert had another notable offspring by a previous union who became the Seminole Chief Osceola. You will find a more detail description of Osceola's part in the history of the Moniac family in a later chapter.

Jacob and Polly's daughter, Elizabeth, was General Alexander McGillivray's first wife. Jacob was an interpreter and messenger for McGillivray, but contrary to numerous historical reports, Magnaque (the Spanish version was now in use) did not make the trip to New York where he supposedly played a key role as an interpreter for General McGillivray in the classic meeting with President Washington in 1790. Instead, he had died on April 4, 1787, as the following letter from General McGillivray to Governor Arturo O'Neill references:

LITTLE TALLASSIE, 4 April, 1787

I have been unwell some time past. I am sorry to inform Your Excellency of the sudden death of my Interpreter Manack who dyed of a dry Belly Ache. I feel his loss. He was a just & faithful man in his place. I shall never have such another again. Wishing you health & prosperity I remain your Excellencys most affectionate Service.

ALEX: MCGILLIVRAY [rubric]
Gov. Arturo O'Neill

According to J.D. Driesbach, Jacob Moniac was said to be a man of "fine sense and indomitable courage, strict integrity and enterprise, who had considerable influence over the Indians." It might be added that he acquired considerable financial resources along the way.

SAMUEL (TOTKIS-HADJO) MANAC(K)

Sam was the second son of Jacob and Polly Moniac. There is conflicting evidence about when he was born. It appears to have been in the early 1770's in Tuskegee, Alabama. Sam made the biggest splash among the Creek Indians of the Moniac siblings.

Somewhere along the way to adulthood, the surname "Moniac" for Sam gave way to Manac or Manack, and other variations. As previously mentioned, without a written language the Creek were at the mercy of their English interpreters, who created various spellings of surnames. So Sam's last name was spelled differently on numerous documents and instruments, but the most prominent usage for him appeared to be "Manac."

Sam Manac's Creek name was "*Totkis Hadjo.*" It was also spelled *Toatkis Hadjo*, *Toatkis Harjo*, or *Takkes Hadjo*. Steve Travis offers this about the origin of Sam's Creek name, "*After much research, I*

have concluded that the meaning of his Creek Name was the "Mad Firemaker" or "Mad Fire," which was his name written on the Creek Treaty of New York, 1790."

Sam, like the other Magnaque siblings, was raised as an Indian instead of as a white. Sam's oldest brother, John, married Mary Tyner, and their daughter Sopathe Thlanie, was Billy Weatherford's second wife, as we saw earlier in Chapter Eight.

Sam Manac's marriage to Elizabeth "Betsy" Weatherford occurred around 1797. Betsy was born in 1780 and passed away in 1855.

Sam and Betsy had three children: Alexander Dixon (our 4th grandfather) born in 1797, Levitia born in 1801 and David Tate born in 1802, who was named for his uncle and became the first Native American from the Five Civilized Tribes to graduate from the U.S. Military Academy. We will have more on the Manac siblings later.

Little is known about Sam Manac's educational background. His father, Jacob, certainly could have afforded a formal education for him. Even if he lacked classroom learning, General Thomas Woodward stated that, "*Sam Manack was always looked upon as being one of the most intelligent half-breeds in the Nation...*" We do know Sam was fluent in English, serving as General McGillivray's interpreter at the meeting with President Washington in 1790.

John R. Swanton wrote in the "EARLY HISTORY OF THE CREEK INDIANS AND THEIR NEIGHBORS" these words about Sam: "*The people of Tuskegee have some cattle, and a fine stock of hogs, more perhaps than any town of the nation. One man Sam Macnack, a half-breed, has a fine stock of cattle. He had, in 1799, one hundred and eighty calves...Macnack and the other Tuskegee people have lost their language, and speak Creek, and have adopted the customs and manners of the Creeks...*"

From about 1802 to 1820 Sam and Betsy owned an inn and other property on the old Federal Road by Pinchong Creek near Pintlala, which is located in the southwestern part of Montgomery County, Alabama. The inn was noted for its hospitality and fine food. Under The Treaty of Fort Jackson 1814, Sam received an island on the Alabama River under the Treaty of Fort Jackson of 1814. Called Manac's Island, it was located near present day Montgomery (in the river area near where Gunter Air Force Base is presently located). Pintlala is where David Tate Moniac was born.

Sam and Betsy moved to South Alabama along the Alabama-Tensaw Rivers in the early 1800's, well before they sold the inn in 1820. Here they acquired considerable land. As well-to-do landowners, planters and ranchers, the Manacs were recognized as one of the wealthiest of the Creek Indian families of the time.

SAM'S ROLE IN THE CREEK WAR

During the Creek Indian War, Sam Manac remained friendly to the U. S. Government. He served as a guide for the U.S. Army and led several units of Friendly Creek, mixed-blood warriors in the campaign against the Red Sticks. Here is further documentation of Sam Moniac's allegiance to the U. S. Government during the Creek War of 1813-14:

"We certify that we have been acquainted with Samuel Manac for many years and that he always appeared friendly to the American People; he gave early information of the hostile disposition of a part of the Creek Indians; he also moved from among and was very active against them during the war between them and the United States; whenever he was called upon to render any service to the United States, he performed it with cheerfulness."

WILLIAM & JOHN PEARCE

October 25, 1815

RESITUATION FOR SAM MANAC

Sam Manac lost virtually everything as a result of his allegiance to the Federal Government. After the war, Sam filed documents concerning efforts to gain compensation for his war losses in the river community, and to gain clear land title to his Alabama-Tensaw River properties.

He was eventually successful by means of Congressional legislation in receiving compensation for some of his losses and title to some of his land. Documentation written on the behalf of Sam and his family to the U.S. Treasury Department reads:

U.S. GOVERNMENT DOCKET NO. 200

A.) For The Relief of Samuel Manac, a friendly half-breed, during the war between the U.S. Government and the Creek tribe of Indians:

"In August, 1813, I was commanding officer at the town of Mobile when the massacre of Fort Mims took place. Soon afterwards, many of the citizens from the waters of Mobile fled to Fort Charlotte for protection; amongst them was Samuel Manac, his wife and children, who had, sometime before, been driven from the Nation where he resided. It was the universal opinion and belief at Mobile, that Sam Manac was an Indian, of large property, and that he had lost it all, or nearly all, by his fidelity to the United States. While Manac remained in Mobile,

he and his family were subsisted by issuing rations to them: they having no other means of support.”

George Gibson

Late Lt. Colonel

5th Infantry

B.) To the Congress of the United States Page 7, of Docket No. 200:

“...but his (Sam Manac’s) principles would not suffer him to join the hostile party, and he relied on... the assurances which were given to him by General Wilkinson that his fidelity would be rewarded with the protection of the (Federal) Government and indemnification for his loses. Your petitioner further sheweth that his plantations have been laid waste, his horses and mills destroyed, his slaves murdered, his cattle killed or driven away, and other property burnt or stolen...”

JOHN S. WIRT

Late Captain 2d Regiment Infantry

The settlement of the Account of Sam Manac by the U.S. Treasury Department, Washington, D.C. occurred in May, 1816:

“Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the proper Accounting Officers of the War Department be, and they are hereby, authorized and directed to audit and settle the claim of Samuel Manac, a friendly Creek Indian of the half blood, for his property, which was destroyed by the hostile Creek Indians, in the late war, by ascertaining or causing to be ascertained, the value thereof in such manner, and upon such terms as may

Sec. 2. And be it further enacted. That the amount thereof, when so ascertained, shall be paid to the said Samuel Manac, out of my money in the Treasury, not otherwise appropriated.”

HENRY CLAY,

Speaker of the House of Representatives

JOHN GAILLARD,

President pro tempore of the Senate.

April 27, 1816 --Approved : JAMES MADISON.

DEPARTMENT OF STATE, APRIL 29, 1816.

It is reported that the amount paid to Sam was in the neighborhood of \$12,000.00, a sizable sum in those days, but a mere dent in what he had lost. Despite the government’s aid, Manac neither regained his financial prowess, nor his leadership role in the Creek community.

SAM'S LATTER LIFE

Sam started drinking heavily after the loss of the major portion of his property and belongings. While unofficially documented, there is a widespread belief that Manac was unable to kick the liquor habit for the duration of his life.

Reportedly, things got so bad for Sam that just prior to 1820, he fled deep into the Creek nation to seek immunity from debtors and tax collectors. The return of his son David from West Point in 1822 helped to save the family's holding from being completely lost.

Little is known of Sam's life in its latter stages, but we do know that he joined the Friendly Creek Indian Army on June 9, 1836. Speculation is that Sam, now well over 60 years of age, signed up to serve because he wanted to fight along side of his son, David, in the Seminole War. There is no record he made it to David's side before David was killed in battle in November of 1836. We will cover this episode in more detail in Chapter Sixteen.

Sam Manac, along with many other Creek Warriors fighting for the U. S. Government against the Seminoles, was earmarked for removal to Indian Territory. The warriors were sent directly from Florida to Pass Christian, Mississippi, and not even allowed to go home to visit loved ones prior to their forced removal.

There are indications that Sam did little to fight his removal. He had become extremely discouraged over the death of his son David and also with the Federal Government over the handling of some of his land claims.

Sam Manac died on the way to Oklahoma at Pass Christian on August 21, 1837 and was buried, as previously mentioned, in an unmarked grave with the medal he had received from President Washington in 1790. There are documents with a Pass Christian trademark that report Sam's mother, Polly, also died at Pass Christian, although there is nothing official to back this up. Chapter Fifteen entitled "THE TRAIL OF TEARS" will offer more on Sam's death.

AFTER SAM'S DEATH

After his death, the government relinquished Macnack Island that Sam owned on the Alabama River to Charles Gunter. This property was taken away and sold by the U. S. Government in the early 1850s, long after Sam had passed away. Evidently, neither he nor his heirs were paid for the land.

Manac had also reserved land in Bullock County, Alabama under the 1832 treaty with the U.S. Government. It was about a half of a section, or 320 acres. There are no records of his being paid for this land either, although the government says he was paid for some of it.

It was never settled prior to his death, and his heirs were never paid the difference.

There are also deed documents showing that Sam Manac owned land under his Creek Indian name of *Totkis Harjo*. A portion of his land holdings was located in Macon County, Alabama near the present day Victory Land Dog Track at the 1-85 exit. Other land reservations were near the Creek town of Little Tallassee on the Coosa River in Elmore County. As best we can tell, none of those properties were ever possessed by Sam Manac's heirs, or money paid for them.