

James Frank McKay (McKoy) of Roanoke, Virginia

By Allen McClain

Believed to have been the second of twelve children of Henry McKay Jr (b.1854) and Jennie (b.1856), James Frank McKay (McKoy) was born March 18, 1874 in Harnett County, North Carolina possibly in the Stewarts Creek area. In 1880, James lived with his parents and three of his siblings [Lewis W. (b.1873), Flora A. (b.1876) and Thomas (b.1879)] next to the McLean family.

Alexander McLean (b.1846) was a farmer and head of the McLean household. Around the year 1865, Alexander McLean married Isabella McDougal (b.1846) and had seven children: Daniel McDougal (b.1865), Bulia Mary (b.1870), Julia A. (b.1870), Alexander (b.1872), Lewis (b.1877), Sarah Catherine (b.1878) and Isabella (b.1880). Though never married, it is said from interviews with the descendants of the McKay family that James and Sarah Catherine McLean had a child, George McClain (b.1900).

It has been reported that James Frank McKay was graduated in the academic and agriculture department of Hampton Institute. At present, the first known document of James Frank McKay outside of his father's household is the "Annual Report of the Christiansburg Industrial Institute" in Cambria, Virginia dated 1908. In this annual report he was listed as an Ass't Farm Manager. On September 20, 1911, James Frank McKay married Loretta M. Long (b. 1886) in Montgomery County, Virginia. The ceremony was performed by Loretta's brother, Edgar A. Long. Edgar A. Long worked at the Christiansburg Industrial Institute from 1897 til 1906 as treasurer, agriculture and printing instructor, then principal from 1906 until his death in 1924. In 1896, Booker T. Washington accepted the Friends' Freeman's Association's invitation to serve as supervisor of Christiansburg Industrial Institute until his death on November 14, 1915. James Frank McKay taught at the Institute from 1908 until 1913.

Colored School Principal Dies

J. F. McKay, principal of the Gregory Public School and a leading colored citizen of Roanoke, died last night at his home, 147 Harrison Avenue, N. W. He was fifty years old and had been connected with the colored schools of Roanoke for ten years. He was born in North Carolina in 1874.

While still a high school student he taught in a three-month session of the North Carolina colored schools for a salary of eighteen dollars a month, and largely by this salary he was able to secure an education. In 1908 he graduated in the academic and agriculture department of Hampton Institute. He first taught school at Christiansburg from 1908 to 1913. In 1914 he came to Roanoke as assistant principal of the Gainsborough School and was later transferred to the principalship of the Gregory School where he served until his death.

Roanoke public school officials considered him a teacher of unusual ability. He is said to have maintained high standards as a teacher and to have exercised a wholesome influence upon his students.

Funeral arrangements have not yet been completed.

In 1914 James Frank and Loretta McKay moved to 342 Harrison Avenue NW, Roanoke City, Virginia. James worked initially as the assistant Principal of the Gainsborough School and later the Principal of Gregory School until his death at home in August 11, 1924. He is believed to have been buried in the C. C. Williams Memorial Park (also once known as the Lincoln Burial Park).

Sources cited:

1880 US Federal Census, Stewarts Creek, Harnett County, North Carolina: Roll: T9-967 Family History Film:12549, Pg. 87, Enumeration District: 97, family 25, dwelling 25, lines 28-41

1920 US Federal Census, Roanoke Melrose Ward, Roanoke (Independence City), Virginia: Roll: T625_1912 Page 4Am, Enumeration District: 38, family 75, dwelling 85, lines 31-35

World War 1 Draft Registration Card, Roanoke (Independent City), Virginia: Roll: 1985175; Draft Board: 2, Serial Number 2860, Order Number 1160

Annual Report of the Christiansburg Industrial Institute, Cambria, Virginia; Managed by the Friends' Freedmen's Association of Philadelphia, Forth-Fifth Year Ending 9th Month 20th 1908 pg.2

Anna Fariello, ed., *A Vision of Education: Selected Writings of Edgar A. Long* (Christiansburg: Christiansburg Institute, Inc, 2003), p. 17 and 189-191

Marriage certificate for Jas. F. McCoy and Loretta M. Long, 20 September 1911, File No. 3137931, Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Health-Division of Vital Records, PO Box 1000, Richmond, VA 23218-1000

Death certificate for James Frank McKay, 11 August 1924, File No. 19522, Commonwealth of Virginia, Department of Health-Division of Vital Records, PO Box 1000, Richmond, VA 23218-1000

Roanoke City, Virginia, Directory, 1915, pg. 362
Roanoke City, Virginia, Directory, 1916, pg. 384
Roanoke City, Virginia, Directory, 1918, pg. 404
Roanoke City, Virginia, Directory, 1924, pg. 563

The *Roanoke World News* (), 12 August 1924, newspaper clipping; photocopy.

The *Roanoke Times* (), 13 August 1924, newspaper clipping: photocopy.

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