

Genealogical Collections

Relating to the families of

CONDRA

G. Mac Cundre, Condry, Condre, Condrey, Condray of America

WITH SOME PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF

RICHARD CONDRA, b. c1751

WILLIAM CONDRY, b. 1753

JOHN CONDREY, b. 1760

JAMES C. CONDRA, b. c1761

BENJAMIN ELIJAH CONDRY, b. c1763

Compiled by

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**from materials provided by numerous researchers to be acknowledged later
and in concert with the Condra National Reunion Genealogy Committe consisting of**

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FOREWORD

In preparing this Condra Family history concerning it from the earliest records, no claim is made to a rightful coat of arms, no claim to a perfect type of character and conduct of all individuals, no claim that this is a definitive or exhaustive account, and no claim is made that it is entirely free of error.

Information has been gathered from many sources(see Acknowledgement page next). Records of some families have been unobtainable or non-existent. Many queries have been unanswered. Many answers contain errors or omitted important information. Some family records are incomplete or have been destroyed by fire. Grave stone markings have, in many cases, become obliterated or the stones have disappeared all together.

The Condra Families have been united by ties of blood with many families both here and abroad. Condras have spread to virtually every state in the union. They have had a share in the pioneer settling and in the growth and development of our nation. Many worthy contributions have been made, of which we are justly proud, to the religious, educational, economic, industrial, social, military and political aspects of our great country. Condras have proudly served our country in peace, and Condras have served in the military in every war.

The Condra lineage has been traced so far as possible. We acknowledge that it is not a complete history....and may our history never be complete for to be complete it must come to an end. We hope, however, that any who wish to trace their ancestry or bring themselves up todate, will find helpful information in what follows.

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CAVEAT ... since this effort represents a compilation of data rather than original research in many cases, documentation has not always been readily available. In large part, it rests with the original researcher, many whom have passed on and their records scattered. The above named committee has accepted all inputs at face value. Should questions, doubt, or reservations occur, they will make every effort to assist you in contacting the original researcher or in locating the documentation. We hope to compile an adequate bibliography as time goes by.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful acknowledgement and appreciation is extended to the following:

The late Mrs. Clarence "Birdie" Condra who so tirelessly worked on and gave us the first history which became known as the "Blue Book" because of the copying process used.

The late Florence Odell Lipsey, who also put years of effort into her book which extended and refined the "Blue Book".

The late Charles Edward Condra and his wife Martha for the inspiration given to many to become interested and motivated in pursuing our heritage, and for the wealth of information they gathered and shared through the years. And especially for their efforts in organizing and perpetuating the Condra National Reunion for which they have been most gracious hosts a number of times.

The late Ethel Condra Sivils who labored many years to find and document the history of her lineage back to George, son of Richard and Dorcus Cox Condra. It was her revelations that helped to establish a relationship between various branches of the family.

All relatives, friends, and remote descendants who answered requests and furnished information and who directed to or gave accounts of family records, who lent treasured documents and to those who gave personal interviews, stories, and traditions of their loved ones. This would, indeed, make a long list.....some of the names are (and please forgive if it's not complete): The late Nellie Condra Bredeson and her daughter Shirley Mitchell, Marjorie Meador, Dayton Birdwell, Larry & Barbara Brown, Bobby Wayne Condra, Ralph Jenkins, Condra Miller, Ethel Dederling, Faye Condray Durham, Lonnie Fink, Steve Felix, Marion L. Kimmons, Wayne E. Condra and his father, the late Albert Condra...and the list goes on, and may it continue to grow.

To officials of many federal, state, and county governments and historical societies who answered questions, furnished records, or gave directions to sources of data.

....And finally to the Condra National Reunion Association for its' backing of this work and the Genealogy Committee whose efforts have made it all possible.

Chapter "H" - HISTORY

"OUR BEGINNINGS"

G. Mac Cundre, Condry, Condra, Condrey, Condray
"Hound of the Plain and Battle"

Many words over many years have been written trying to explain why there are so many spellings of the Condr__ name and the lack of information to categorically separate the families. In many of the documents that have been researched, the name would be spelled two or even three ways within the same document. Literacy has often been blamed for the many spellings of the name. John Condr__ of John and Catherine, 1720's, St. Stephens, witnessed wills and acted on behalf of orphans taken into their home. A considerable tithe of tobacco had to be granted for bond in order to execute the orphan's bond. Richard Condr__'s lease shows considerable property including real estate, dwellings, livestock, etc. These Condr__s appeared to be people of accepted substance.

During the National Condra Reunion of 1992 in Morton, Illinois, Charles Condre traveled from Pennsylvania to attend his first reunion. He brought with him a family birth certificate from the Isle of Man for a Condry/Condrey. This prompted a visit to the Isle of Man by Rawleigh Condra Fjeld and Norma Condre Craps where they met with the Man Condras and began research on clan and surname indexes. The origin of the name Condra, Condry, Condre, Condrey, Condray, has little to do with literacy and much to do with language origins and phonics. Celtic names (from which Condra, etc., is derived) really have no direct transition into Anglo-English. CONDRA: Kneen's Manx surnames - MacCundra 1515, Cunder 1643, Cundry 1703, Cunnery 1739, Condray 1796, Caundra 1800, Condra 1806, Condyr 1809. G. MacConraoi "Son of Curaoi" hound of plain and battle is often angl. "King" in Ireland owing to the erroneous belief that it is derived from "righ" .a king, and that the Irish form is Mac an Riogh. "Son of the King" on the Isle of Man. Mac Cundre was also confused with Mac Gilan-der. In the Manorial Roll, AD1515, Donald Mac Cundre of Kirk Andreas is set down as "moar" in the name of Donald Mac Gillander. Bellacunner in Kirk Andreas was the original home of this family. Bellacondra is just down the road. Also, Curaoi and his wife Blathnat("Little Flower") were pagan deities connected with the Isle of Man. Conree is a derivation as Conree 1679, Cunnery 1670, Condroy 1787. G. Mac Con-raoi "Son of Curaoi(Hound of the Plain or of Battle) was also Conree, Conroy. It is also wrongly translated King Curaoi, a legendary King of Ireland who married Blaaniid(Little Flower) spelling variation of this deity was daughter of Midler, King of Mann. The Isle of Mann was the home of the folk warrior Cuchulain.

Bella Condra, the home of the Condras, is in Kirk Bride and the first recorded records...Manoral Roll, Fynio Mc Cundre 1515, Man Roll Ballacunder 1643, and Mac Cundre, now Condra. The cousins on Man said that there is little recorded real estate, birth or financial records or related information due to the 700 years of occupation by the English and the Scottish. People made little or no improvements to property, and lived aboard boats or in their Viking long-houses made of sod.

The people on the Isle of Man were very poor and everything was taxable and the entire region made for very poor farming. The island was controlled by the Scots at this time and under the partition of Scotland as a country into Briton. The plantation system was devised to enable the poor people to have access to land. The English planta-tion system was being introduced in

Northern Ireland at the same time as the Virginia Company was formed for Virginia exploration. The year was 1609.

Many of the Manx men resorted to smuggling as they were Celtic/Viking seaman and were not farmers by nature. Due to the ex-tremely poor condition on the Isle of Man at this time, it is highly unlikely that the Condras migrated there. Dublin was founded by the Vikings and was a very entwined Viking/Celtic history. It would follow that the poor Manx man who could now leave Man would migrate into Dublin, just a few water miles away. Irish clan and Manx clan re-search states that the name Condra is Manx. The Irish Condras of Drum Condra and County Down attempts at genealogy research determined that they had come from somewhere other than Ireland years ago. The Celts, or Gauls when they were marauding tribes in B.C., were touted as the first Europeans. The migration to Wales, Man, and Ireland created the Celtic peoples as we know them today. Some Manx seaman of note were Miles Standish and Fletcher Christian. Also, Captain Blythe married Elizabeth, a Manx. The Bella Condra was sold to a Ratclif family in the 1700s. The Condras are indigenous Manx and still live on the island and there is also a population in Ireland. There is an area outside Dublin called Drum Condra. The Viking heritage is very entwined with the Celtic on Man and the Mc was dropped from names during the first 300 years of Norse occupation of the islands. We have tried to find some attachment to the Gri(as in Gri Condra) and what it means...well, it could have something to do with G. Mac Cundra.

By now you can see the job of the Condra National Reunion Association genealogists who are working to match the progenitors in America to the thousands of Condr__ cousins on the Isle of Man and in Ireland.

The pattern of world civilization is determined largely by geo-graphical factors. To understand the movements of the Condr__'s, we need only to follow the history of the United States and it's people's struggles against the earth's natural barriers. The Condr__'s were active participants in almost every phase of settlement of this country and their descendants live in every state of the union. We need only follow the course of the history of the United States of America to evaluate their achievements.

Why did they...the Condr__'s come to America?? During the Virginia Colonies' first 50 years, many of the new comers were trying to escape civil war in England and the 700 year occupation of Ireland, Scotland, and the Isle of Man by the English. As many as 75% of these new comers were indentured people. In the beginning years, only one out of every six lived; starvation, climate, Indians and disease carried away five of every six. Amazingly, the life span of our "tough", early Condr__'s often reached between seventy to even a hundred years of age. When white man reached the shores of America, it was a wilderness penetrated only by aboriginal trails leading to rivers, over mountains, and across plains to widely scattered tribal kingdoms. There were many pioneer people of humble beginnings who quickly rose to property ownership and prominence in the Virginia community. Skill and toughness, rather than gentle birth was highly regarded. The travail and trails the Condr__ pioneers endured and followed to build a new civilization is the stuff of which family histories are made.

No single trail was more significant in the westward spread of English colonization than the Wilderness Road of Virginia, Tennessee, and Kentucky. It was the first route opened across the Appalachian barrier. From 1775 to 1800, it was the principal overland entry into the limitless reaches of the West. The whites feared the Indians, but the latter, in turn, were up against a tough

breed of man, Anglo-Saxon, mostly Highlanders, they had already fought their way through the valleys of Virginia and the mountains of North Carolina --

Yorkshire men who used such words as wrassle, dang, by gum, agin, this-a-way, consarned, jist, and yaller...words which live in the mountains today; and Scots-Irish who had come by way of Pennsylvania from the four counties of Northern Ireland, where their Scottish and Manx ancestors had settled after the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and who brought with them the Elizabethan speech still to be heard in the Smoky Mountain Country. About them, an author wrote:

“If abused, they fight; if their rights are infringed, they rebel; if forced, they strike; and if their liberties are threatened, they murder....They eat meat and their bread is always hot.”

The Condr__'s were very active in these early settlements and we now begin to have a real estate paper trail as evidence of our ancestor's settlements. These pioneer leaders were typical of the best settlers of the uplands of Tennessee and North Carolina. Here, the frontiersmen found what they had long been seeking: home and freedom. Imagine, by the time of the American Revolution, the various Condr__ cousins had been in America for five generations. The documents identifying the progress of our ancestors and their activities during this period are beginning to make sense and we're able to more effectively match families. The period that is the most troublesome to identify and match progenitors is in the 1600's to the 1775 years. We have found possible cousins in the Eastern States, like Dennis of Massachusetts, an Irish sea captain from Wexford, Ireland. He appeared to marry. The records are just surfacing about our sea captain. There are stories that this is the Dennis who arrived to help with the Donelson Flotilla, was listed in North Carolina preemption act of 1784 as a settler who stayed and defended the Cumberland Settlements and was entitled to 640 acres in Davidson County. In 1783, Dennis Condry was granted 640 acres on the South Fork of White Creek allotted to the Cumberland River settlers granted to new Continental Line settlements. The Donelson Flotilla had responsibility to move settlers up-river in order to protect the women and children from Indian attack. This was also to avoid the perilous walk over the mountains. The Donelsons played a major role in the settlement of the Tennessee Territory and much documentation has been written about their exploits.

The first identified record found by family genealogists was for Gri Condry, listed on a patent, dated 1648, in Gloucester County, Virginia on Roswell Creek on the York River. The next record we have is another patent filed in 1673 listing a John Connadra on the Mattaponi River in Virginia. Around 1730, we have a St. Stephens (Church of England) Parish record of births to John and Catherine Conre for a daughter Sarah, Else was daugh'r to John Condry born Nov'm 24, 1731, John and Catherine, twins born 06/16/1735, and then William Condrey is born 02/16/1738.

We know that this son, William, married Mary Blenkinsop of Chesterfield County in Virginia. He was a member of the Virginia Militia in 1763, and his name appears in “A List of Muster Fines Received for the Year 1763.” The Blankenships were some of the first plantation owners along the James River.

When the present day Condra Foundation was formed to organize the work of many relatives, we felt that we had a clear paper trail and that we could proceed to press with the two siblings for which some 15,000 names had been identified. We thought that we had clear records for the

generation following the brothers, William and John. However, we soon found a document for a Richard Condrey executing a lease for 24 years on Aug 7, 1746 with an attorney from Frederick County for land in Prince William which became Fauquier County in Virginia. The name on this document is spelled Condry and then toward the end...Condrey. During the same years, we found a reference for Elzy, a male, and also another John doing something in Fauquier County. Then to make everything begin again, there is a 1703 reference for Dennis and a Peter Conree in Northumberland County. Early research indicated that John, Dennis, Richard, and Peter were all brothers. However, as of this writing, we have not been able to verify the last two records as Condry. Additionally, there are records for Condry's in Massachusetts and Pennsylvania that have only marginally been researched. Both of the above mentioned John and Catherine's boys moved to Chesterfield County, near what became Richmond. John purchased land and we have the Patent document for this John Condrey, 7 Aug 1751, Patent Book 29, pp530-531. His brother William married Mary Blankinship and there is land records for this couple and Mary's sister as well. Chesterfield County, VA Deeds, Book 4, pp536, August 1761. From Thomas Hatcher and Wilmoth, his wife, William Moore and Frances, his wife, 100 acres to William and Mary Condra, part of land descended to Wilmoth, Frances, and Mary, daughters of William Blankenship, deceased. Witnessed..John Condrey. Book 4, Page 652, 4 June 1762..from William and Mary Condra, 100 acres to James Miles. The names also appear in the document as William Condra. Book 5, page 63, 7 August 1761: From William and Mary Condra, Thomas and Wilmoth Hatcher, and William and Frances Moore, parcemus of William Blankenship, deceased, to Henry Mills. Witnessed..John Condra. Book 8, page 282, 6 August 1773, Bill of Sale, 5 March 1773 from William Condrey and John Mohon, 350 acres to James Gorden.

The Blenkinsopp family name has changed to Blankinship and was a very large and prominent family in early Virginia's Old Dominion. The Blenkinsopp records date back to the beginning of the Old Dominion in the 1610s. The records also include much information regarding the family estates in Northern England. Mary's sister, Wilma Blankinship married a Hatcher, the same Hatcher as Hatcher Island situated in the middle of the James River. So, we know that the brothers John and William came to Chesterfield County and were active in real estate transactions, etc. From these two brothers, the progeny of the next generation would play an active role in the Cumberland Settlements and the Wilderness Road.

Persons acquainted with conditions in Virginia testified before the Board of Trade in July 1721 that "the lands already settled in Virginia were almost worn out by planting" since tobacco would grow but three years on any land". It was hoped that this would encourage settlement in the frontier counties in spite of the fact that there were treaties with the Indians. There was constant crop failure and just about every five years, events of some kind caused chronic economic disaster. Colonel Nathaniel Blakiston, agent for Virginia, believed that the considerable families in Virginia would not remove from their old settlements but would send overseers with servants and slaves to make small settlements which they call quarters in the remote parts of the Colony.

The large land holders brought in Scotch/Irish settlers who they placed on small farms with leases extending over two generations. There were Germans from Pennsylvania who were encouraged to settle in the German's frontier region where Richard acquired his lease. There also developed the manufacture of naval stores and the mining and manufacturing of iron. The people were then selling a public auction in Williamsburg kitchen utensils and backs, frames and andirons for

fireplaces. They also shipped pig iron to England. A manufacturing class was very slow to develop though and the merchant class would move on to develop in Charleston, South Carolina.

Adding to the English need to open frontier lands was the increasing French occupation of the lands on the other side of the Appalachians and the ever constant desire of the new colonists for their own land. In spite of the French and Indian menace, settlers with their pack horses were following the trails along the trans-Allegheny rivers. Joshua Fry, as agent, reported to the then President Burwell on May 8, 1751 that along the new River and its tributaries and on the North Branch of the Holston, about one hundred were seated and with proper encouragement the number would soon greatly increase. The brothers Condr__ appeared to go in separate directions.

Brother John, twin of Catherine, disappears from the paper trail. William and Mary and their possible progeny became part of the Wilderness Road pioneers. We are still not sure of the correct match for Richard, John, James, William, Dennis, and Benjamin, who ventured out into North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky. This brother John appears to have stayed in Richmond, Virginia. All of the Condr__s except John, for whom we have just found a will listing all of his children and his grandchildren, eventually left Virginia. It is certainly true that the Northumberland brother's possible progeny—William, Richard, John, James, Jacob, Benjamin, and possibly a later William, have provided us with a rich history. John, who stayed in Virginia, was given a pension for his participation in the American Revolution. William, who joined the Revolutionaries from Henry County, Virginia as an Indian spy with Colonel John Martin, is certainly one of our enigmas.

Border men in Virginia and North Carolina willingly read into the 1788 Treaty of Fort Stanwix permission to venture into Cumberland area and along the Wilderness Road, places like Reed Creek, Henry County, Yadkin River (with the Boones), Wolf Hills, Abington, Washington County, etc. became common names in our history of the settlement of this upland area. Due to the frenzied land rush activity and the disputes between the Revolutionary Council, the Cherokees and the state of Virginia and the Territory of North Carolina, and the independent settlement of Sullivan, which became Tennessee, the area was called at times North Carolina, Sullivan, Kentucky, or Virginia. There was one thing for certain, this was truly wilderness. Henry County, even today, is all wilderness and home to moonshiners. The Condr__s had active real estate transactions in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Sullivan County Deed Book 2, p604, 10 Sept 1792, Deed Warranty...Henry Simpson to Richard Conder, 180 pounds for 200 acres on the waters of Reedy Creek on the North side of creek. Witness: Alex Berry, William Simpson, James Gains. Deed Book 4, p616, 22 Sept 1804, ...Richard Condra to Harry Click, \$300 for 200 acres on North side of Reedy Creek. Witness: George Wilcox, Matthias Click. Washington County Court Pleas and Quarter Sessions, Vol. 1, 1778-1798, p202, 7 Feb 1783...Richard Condra vs. Jesse Ivey. Well, now we find our pioneers sandwiched with the Indians on the lands between the English Tidewater holdings and the French on the other side of the mountains. We would be elated if there was some written record so that we could definitively write our history. There was little time or need to keep diaries as the day to day struggle to survive must have occupied a great deal of time. The very active research of the National Archives being conducted by Dr. Ralph Jenkins, our cousin, of Temple University, has identified many Condr__s who were listed on the Cherokee rolls.

The volumes of Condr__s from the 1800s to date, indicate that the "Hounds of the Plain" were participants of every Great Migration in the United States. The Wilderness Trail...the migration to

Tennes-see and Kentucky. The Oregon Trail and the Mormon Trail to Utah. There were Condr____ family members who fought in every war in which America has been involved and the story has just begun.

THE TASK AT HAND

At the time of this writing, there have been years of research and literally thousands of Condr____ cousins identified. It would appear that we have more family than the proper records with which to match them to our early pioneers. Due to the vast number of our cousins coming to America in the early years, we have, as of this writing, been unable to definitively match the early progenitors with their children.

Condra cousin, Mr. Ralph Jenkins, who is doing research for a paper or book on the migration patterns of early Americans, has put considerable effort into determining the early day travels of our Condras. He wrote the following in January of 1996.

“I have numerous records, mostly census, Cherokee enrollment cards, and general historical sources that may supplement the records that you have. I believe one the record another Condra cousin, Bonnie Smith, recently found is one of the most interest-ing pieces.

Ed note: Bonnie found a record of Dennis Condry, circa 1710-30, as commander of one of several vessels operated by Patrick Tracey plying trade off the waters of New England as a mer-chant and operating out of Wexford, Ireland.

It appears to show how the line that runs through Dennis arrived here, and suggests a relation between the New England Condrys and the North Carolina/Virginia group. It would be natu-ral for seagoing Dennis to settle in tidewaters areas, then work inland. One of the commonplace observations about the Atlantic coast is that the architecture and way of life along the coast shows more similarity between, say, Cape May, New Jersey and Savannah, Georgia than between Cape May and Camden, New Jersey. There were sea captains with homes in more than one seaport, since they travelled up and down rather than inland. The evidence so far suggests to me that the Condry name in America may have multiple roots, and may not spring from a single progenitor, even if they were all related in Ireland or the Isle of Man. The evidence tends to indicate the plausibility of Rawleigh Condra’s explanation of our Manx origins with a group who moved across the channel to Ireland, thence to the American colonies. The Condry pattern is different from those who came as indentured servants in that time. Many of the Condrys had money, bought land, owned slaves, held political office, could read and write, and general-ly seem to have a different economic origin. Anyway, the sense I get when I look at the masses of records now accumulated on the Condra/Condry family is that they were a large group in Ireland and the Isle of Man, several of whom emigrated at the same time, who brought resources with them, expanded their holdings, and moved deliberately in sizeable groups for support.”

DOWN TO SPECIFICS

Again, no one, to our knowledge has a verifiable single lineage for our early ancestors. That remains to be discovered. Consequently, this document will probably be revised many times until it reaches some accepted conclusion. One of the most important aspects of our research is that we finally have the generations sorted through and we can only hope that the records will eventually surface. We have no doubt that this is all one family clan because they frequently appear on census records living very close to one another. This is probably a large clan of family

members who came to America at separate times. Therefore, on the basis of much evidence, research, and consideration of the previously discussed factors, it was decided to start putting together a Condra book or books comprised of all we knew or could learn about the Condras. We have considerable information on the generation of around 1750 which consisted of at least six closely related family members:

Richard Condra, b. c1751, d. c1800, md. Dorcus Cox
William Condra, b. c1756, md. Sarah Welsh
James C. Condra, b. c1749, d. c1830, md. Esther Stone
John Condra, b. 7 Feb 1760, d. 7 Aug 1838
Benjamin Condra, b. c1755
Dennis Condre, b. in this era. Work continues to document this family and will be included later.

Because of the large number in our family with many similar names involved and the inability to identify a single progenitor, it becomes necessary to devise a numbering system that allows assignment of a specific number to each individual providing positive identification for all persons (the number of John Condras alone is considerable). It was decided to use a modified system known as the "Henry System" To have that number have more meaning, it has been made to show lineage by adding the first or symbolic letters for the progenitor followed by the usual Henry System numbers.

An example:

R1_10_3-S2 means...

R—Richard Condra lineage

1 -- 1st child of Richard

10 -- 10th child of 1st child of Richard

3 -- 3rd child of 10th child of 1st child of Richard

S—Spouse of 3rd child of 10th child of...

2 -- 2nd spouse of " " " "

This numbering system will be used in all of the chapters of the current books consisting of the following chapters.

Chapter "R"—Richard Condra Family with Henry numbers beginning with "R" for Richard.

Chapter "W"—William Condra Family with Henry numbers beginning with "W" for William.

Chapter "JO"—John Condra Family with Henry numbers beginning with "JO"

Chapter "JA"—James Condra Family with Henry numbers beginning with "JA".

Chapter "BC" -- Benjamin Elijah Condra Family with Henry numbers beginning with BC.

Again, additional chapters on Dennis or others will be added as the book continues to be revised and updated.

So now, let us get on with the accounts of the five progenitors of which we know much, yet, yearn to know more.

