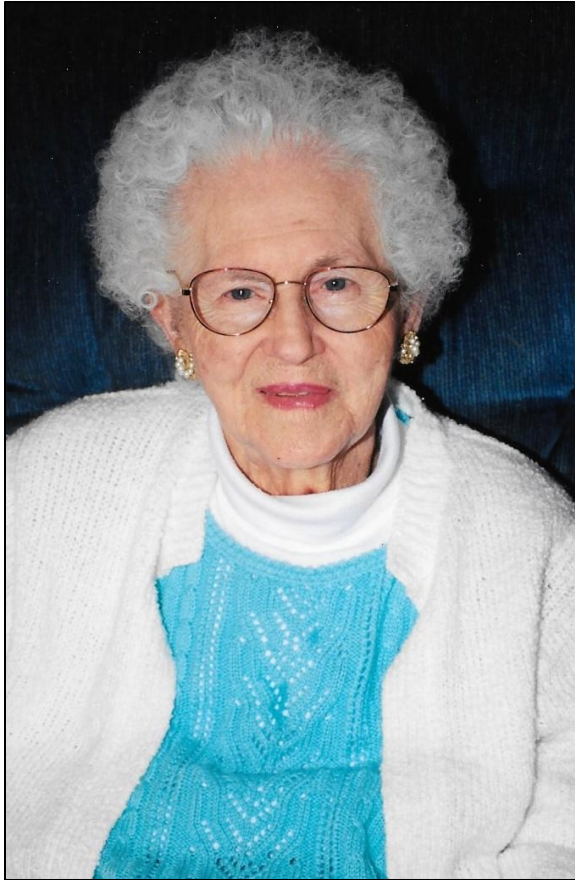


# Fitzgerald Family Information

By Della Snead Fitzgerald

*This written account by Della was taken from the 1994 Fitzgerald Newsletter*



Just when the first of our line of Fitzgeralds left County Limerick, in southern Ireland and came to Virginia has never been determined as far as I know. We do know that the Fitzgeralds were here long before the Revolutionary War. As George Washington said, the fighting Irish were great soldiers and helped win many battles in the war for independence. The Fitzgeralds acquired large land holdings in the southern and western parts of Ireland and attained considerable power there.

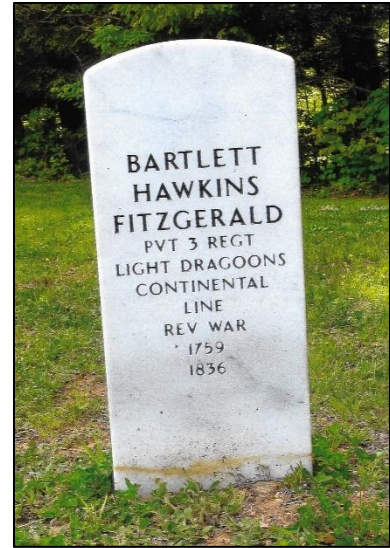
Some of our Fitzgeralds may have come to America as indentured servants. They would seek out a family coming to America and sign a contract to work for them for five to seven years. The Fitzgeralds were very prominent people and owned large boundaries of land and their castles still stand as well as many of their original buildings. The Irish were a very prosperous people until early in the fifteenth century when England invaded the county and took over the Irish government. They made slaves out of the people,

took their land and made them pay rent on the land they formerly owned. One of the reasons the hatred still exists between the Irish and the English is the harsh treatment the English inflicted on the Irish people. The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys left County Wexford, Ireland during the potato famine in 1848. Our line of Fitzgeralds were here early in the seventeenth century and some of our Great-Great-Great Grandfathers were Revolutionary War soldiers. I can county back ten generations in my own family; back to Bartlett who was born in Fauquier County, Virginia in 1759 or 1764 (which is correct I have no way of knowing). His father supposedly was a William (or John) Fitzgerald and his mother was thought to be a Mary Hawkins. I am told there is valuable information about the family in the Fauquier County courthouse.

He was a soldier in the Patriot Army and fought in many battles during the revolution and was wounded at least twice; once with 18 bayonet stabs. He was discharged on April 18, 1782 after being shot in the foot. He returned to Orange County and lived there several years before moving to Nelson County where he received a land grant for his service in the Revolutionary War. His descendants are numerous and he had an enviable war record in the battle from British rule.

Early American historical records indicate the important contributions this family made in the development of our country. Persons bearing this name can be found in all parts of the nation and are well represented in the arts and professions, as well as in the world of business.

In the spring of 1913, McDowell Winters Fitzgerald's youngest daughter, Ella Kent, and her husband John Painter and their four children, moved to Gooding, Idaho. John painter had a store at Montebello and was doing quite well in the grocery business. The family sold everything they owned and boarded the train at Vesuvius and started on their long journey west. There was vacant land in the west at that time and John homesteaded a tract of land. The requirements were to raise three crops on the land and the government would give a deed to the land. The west was sparsely settled at that time. John later



opened a grocery store in Gooding and a second store in a nearby town. They made a trip back to Virginia in the summer of 1918. They were 20 days on the road coming to Virginia. There were no motels in those days so they camped out under a tent. It was the last time Ella ever saw her parents as her father died that fall, the day World war I ended, November 11, 1918. Her mother, Sarah Jane Hite Fitzgerald, lived until July 1926. Ella's parents grieved for years over their daughter and her family being so far away and not being able to spend time with them.

Around the turn of the century, quite a few families from the Montebello area joined the Mormons and moved west. Some went to Utah, Idaho and Colorado. I think it was more for material reasons as they were looking for government land and hoping for an easier and better living and not so much in the Mormon religion.

McDowell and his father, Preston Fitzgerald, were good Christian people and were charter members of Mt. Paran Baptist Church in Montebello which was established in 1869. They raised good law-abiding Christian families and their descendants are numerous. McDowell prayed to live to see World War I end and he died a few hours after being told the war had ended. He died at the home of his son, Wade Hampton Fitzgerald on November 11, 1918. He and his wife are buried at Nettlefield (Averill Campbell) graveyard on the mountain above the fish hatchery.



John Preston Fitzgerald was the son of John Clarkson and Nancy Carr Fitzgerald. He was born December 31, 1816. He married Sophia Ramsey, born around 1820, as her age in the 1850 census was given as 28 years of age. They were married January 11, 1840 and had the following children:

Ananias Fitzgerald – killed in the Civil War at age 19

McDowell Fitzgerald – born March 19, 1842 and died November 11, 1918

Martha Jane Fitzgerald – 15 in 1860 census and never married

Daniel P. Fitzgerald – 16 in 1860 census records

Elzie Ann Fitzgerald – 13 in 1860 census records

Evalena Fitzgerald – 10 in 1860 census records

Elvira Fitzgerald – 7 in 1860 census records

Sidney Baxter Fitzgerald – 5 in 1860 census records

Obediah Fitzgerald – 4 in 1860 census records

Walter J. Fitzgerald – 8 in 1870 census records

Evidently 1862 was a sad year for the Preston Fitzgerald family. Their son Ananias was killed in the spring of 1862 in the Civil War. On September 8, 1862 their son Obediah died at 6 years of age and 8 months. Then on September 18, 1862, their daughter Evalena died at 12 years of age. These two children died of diphtheria. Their grief must have been almost unbearable for losing three children in one year after the birth of their son Walter in 1862.

McDowell and Daniel also served in the Confederate Army the entire four years, having been drafted in the fall of 1861. It was such a terrible destructive war. So many lives lost. Slavery was on the way out as it had proved to be unprofitable. States rights were the main issue. Preston Fitzgerald was a well-respected man and a Christian man.



Life was hard for southern families for many years after the Civil War. Farming was the only way they had to make a living as the industrial revolution was many years away in the future. Confederate money was no longer good after the Confederate states were defeated. According to the 1880 census, Preston was no longer living. His wife Sophia died in 1900.

McDowell married Sarah Jane Hite on June 1, 1865. Sarah was the daughter of Shepherd and Melinda Wood Hite. She was first married to a man whose last name was Lowe. She had one child by Lowe who died in infancy. Lowe was killed in the Civil War. Why she chose to marry McDowell by her maiden name no one ever knew. They lived for a while on the headwaters of Irish Creek. McDowell later bought a large tract of land near Montebello and built a small house where they raised their six children, who are as follows:

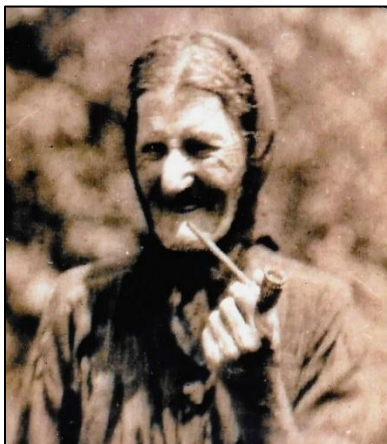
Virginia Alice – born January 5, 1865 (married Henry C. Painter)  
Wade Hampton – born April 19, 1869 (married Nellie Harvey)  
Dorsey Bell – born October 4, 1872 (married Eula Campbell)  
Conard P. – born January 5, 1874 (married Virgie Beard)  
Lola T. – born March 20, 1876 (married Mac Cash)  
Ella Kent – born April 17, 1878 (married John Painter)

Apparently, Sarah Jane was a lady of leisure and was not given to do much work. Her mother lived with them. Melinda raised the children and she and McDowell did the cooking and cleaning. When Sarah Jane wanted to go to visit a relative or neighbor, McDowell had to stop whatever he was doing and hitch the horse to the buggy and take her where she wanted to go.

## “My Life as I Have Lived It”

By Della Snead Fitzgerald

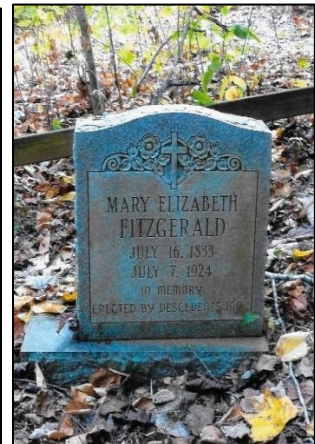
My great-grandmother on my mother’s side was Mary Elizabeth Fitzgerald who first married Jim Henry Anderson who died after the Civil War ended on April 1865. Jim Henry died in November of 1865 and was not shot and killed as a deserter as was falsely reported. After his death, Mary Elizabeth married Achilles Washington Fitzgerald. She was a sister to Preston Fitzgerald, so my husband Robert Fulton Fitzgerald and I are both descended from the same line of Fitzgeralds. I and several of her descendants had a marker put on Mary Elizabeth Anderson Fitzgerald’s grave. She is buried by Achilles W. Fitzgerald near the foot of Crabtree Falls. She was a pretty woman so I have been told but never had much of this word’s goods, but she shared the little she had with her less fortunate neighbors.



Mary Elizabeth Fitzgerald



At her home on Crabtree Falls



Her grave at foot of falls



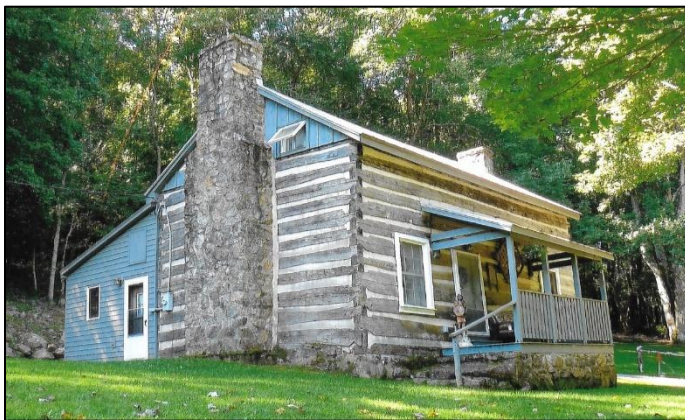
**Della's parent, James and Betty Snead**



**Della at three years of age**

I was born on July 28, 1907, to parents James Crist Snead and Mary Elizabeth Fitzgerald Snead, on a Sunday afternoon about 4 miles from the village of Montebello in Nelson County, Virginia. I was the oldest of 7 children. The little girl next to me was born in September of 1908. She was a delicate child and died in 1910. She would have been 2 years old in September. I have a faint remembrance of her. I remember her blue eyes and blond hair and being carried in my daddy's arms to the family cemetery the day she was buried. I was not yet three years old.

We lived in a little house by the side of the road. It was part of the old slave farm on Fork Mountain that a man by the name of Turner from Amhurst County bought and operated with his slaves before the Civil War. It was a large boundary of land and the virgin timber was cut and burned. They raised tobacco, wheat and corn. After the war, the land was sold to local people in smaller tracts. The overseer's house was struck by lightning and burned a few years ago. This is a little history of the area in which I was raised until I was 12 years old.



**The early Jim Snead cabin where Della lived**

7 grades were taught. A four-room school was later built at Montebello where 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades were taught the last two years I went to school. I walked two miles each way there because there

My oldest brother, Roy Snead was born in 1911, my sister Ruby was born in October of 1912. Then my brother Raymond was born in 1916 and Vernon was born in June of 1918.

The little house was becoming rather crowded by this time so daddy bought a farm with a larger house. My baby brother, James, was born in the new house in January of 1921.

We went to a one-room school where all

were no school busses in those days. When I was seventeen, I went to Lynchburg and worked at Randolph Macon College two school years from 1924 and 1925. I worked in the dining room and the work was easy and I really enjoyed it. My mother was taken ill and I didn't go back the next year. Mother died in July of 1926 in University Hospital in Charlottesville. A blood transfusion killed her. They gave her the wrong blood type which is always fatal. She was 39 years of age.

I stayed at home for 18 months and then I married Fulton Fitzgerald on August 20, 1927, who lived in the joining neighborhood. His great-grandfather and my great-grandmother were brother and sister. They were good Christian people and I always considered I was lucky because we had a good marriage and we raised six children. Edgar, the oldest, was born on March 5, 1929. Edsel was born on November 29, 1930. Helen was born on February 26, 1933. Curtis was born on March 4, 1939. Calvert was born on August 17, 1943 and Wayne was born on November 27, 1945, the year World War II ended. They were good children and they learned to work. They have all done well and we were proud of them.



**Fulton and Della shortly before marriage**



**Celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary**

We lost Curtis in August of 1962 in a tragic automobile accident. He was only 23 years old and had been married 17 months and had a two-month-old son. Needless to say, his death left a scar that never healed but we have to accept the things we can't change. Fulton passed away on January 28, 1982 after a long illness. So, my life hasn't been all sunshine. But in every life some rain must fall. I feel God has richly blessed me. I have had a good life; much better than my parents and the pioneer people who came to this country and settled in a wilderness.

I have lived in a progressive age. I've seen radio, television, airplanes and numerous modern inventions and saw the men walk on the moon.