

Barclay Branches

Carolyn L. Barkley, FSA Scot

The following article was submitted for publication in the Broadside by clan member Weeden Nichols. It was written by Dr. Robert Humphreys, the husband of Weeden's first cousin, Glenda Gay Henderson Humphreys. Our thanks to Dr. Humphreys for his permission to do so and the article, begun here, will be published in its entirety in subsequent issues. The footnote numbers have been adapted here to fit a serialized presentation, but include the same content and format as in the original

In addition, clan thanks go to Weeden for representing Clan Barclay at the Cedar Bluff (south of Ogallah, Kansas) at Th' Gatherin'/Th' Ancient Festival O' Beltane held in mid-May. The tent was surely colorful as it represented both Clan MacLeod's Missouri Valley Region, of which Weeden is a Regional Vice-President, and Clan Barclay. Now no one will ever keep the yellows straight! We look forward to a report and picture for a future Broadside issue. clb

Robert and Leah Barkley of Rowan County, North Carolina, Revisited

By Robert P. Humphreys, PhD

Introduction

Robert Barkley was a prominent landowner, farmer, mill operator, and public servant who lived in Rowan County, North Carolina from the mid to late eighteenth century. Robert and his wife, Leah, raised a family of eleven children who lived to become adults. Except for two, these children left Rowan County and North Carolina after the death of Robert and Leah, and continued to live on America's frontiers.

While some of the details regarding Robert Barkley such as his family line, birth date, birthplace, and his wife's maiden name have not been established with certainty¹, his presence and activities in Rowan County are well documented in the North Carolina and Rowan County public records.

The purpose of this paper is to recount what can be learned about Robert Barkley from the public records, and to document these records for readers to examine should they so choose.

Robert's Will and Death

Robert Barkley left a will dated December 25, 1786², that was probated on February 5, 1788³. Based upon the date of probate, it appears that Robert died in late 1787 or early 1788. Robert's will identifies his wife as Leah, but unfortunately does not give her maiden name. The will also identifies their children in the following sequence:

- i. Samuel Barkley
- ii. David Barkley
- iii. John Barkley
- iv. Margaret Barkley
- v. Elizabeth Barkley
- vi. Catherine Barkley
- vii. Mary Barkley

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viii. Rachel Barkley**ix. Robert Barkley, Jr.****x. William Barkley****xi. Walter Barkley**

Much has been written about these children and some excellent online sites include the GENWEB site for Tyler County, Texas, the Clan Barclay site at www.clanbarclay.org, and the Barkley Bastion on rootsweb.

In addition to his children, Robert named two of his grandsons—Robert Barkley and Robert Todd, both of whom were probably very young children when the will was written. Robert Todd was the son of Benjamin Todd, Jr. and Margaret Barkley.⁴ However, I found no record for grandson Robert Barkley. One could speculate that he was a son of Samuel Barkley, Robert's oldest son, who did not survive.

The executors that Robert named in his will were Benjamin and Peter Todd. Benjamin was his son-in-law who was married to his daughter Margaret, and Peter was Benjamin's brother.⁵ Two other brothers of Peter and Benjamin, Joseph and Thomas, were witnesses on Robert's will. An additional witness was John Hendrickson who did not appear to have any family connection.

Robert Barkley's Property Ownership in Rowan County

Robert Barkley's first property record in Rowan County, North Carolina was the purchase of some cows from Andrew Pitts on October 13, 1759³, even though he may have arrived in the county several years prior to this date. The Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions records indicate that he served on a jury in Rowan County on October 21, 1757. The recording of the purchase of cows in the deed records was a little unusual. However, he may have wanted documented proof of ownership. The cows carried a brand other than his, and Andrew Pitts probably did not live locally since his name does not appear in either the deed or tax records for Rowan County. Hermon Butner who was a member of the Jersey Church in the Jersey Settlement (see next section) witnessed the transaction.

Robert became a landowner in Rowan County through the purchase of at least five tracts of land that were located in Rowan County at the time of purchase. The first purchase was in present-day Rowan County, and the other four were on the east side of the Yadkin River in present-day Davidson County. Each of these properties is discussed in the following paragraphs. The information in parentheses gives the deed book number and page, date of the transaction, and the number of acres involved in each transaction. The land granting or purchasing process in North Carolina during Robert Barkley's time is discussed in Appendix I.

The Buffalo Creek Property (4:617; April 4, 1761; 708a). This property was purchased from the Earl of Granville, and was the first that Robert purchased in Rowan County. It was located on both sides of present-day Irish Buffalo Creek approximately one and three-quarter miles north of the Rowan-Cabarrus county line, and three and one-half miles west of I-85.⁷ Robert Barkley divided this land and sold it in two separate transactions. The first sale was to Alexander Penny (4:649; January 27, 1762; 200a.) less than a year after the purchase from the Earl of Granville. The second part was sold a little over thirteen years later to Yomen William Gibson (8:314; March 21, 1755; 500a.)

The Home Plantation (5:322; March 25, 1763; 508a.) This land was purchased from Henry E. McCulloh and was part of the 100,000 acres known by the name of Track No. 9 (See Appendix I). Robert retained this land for less than a year before selling it back to McCulloh (5:507; December 14, 1763). The reason for this resale is not clear, however Robert appears to have remained on the land, continued to make improvements, and after seventeen months again purchased 200 of the 508 acres with the improvements he had made (8:59; May 28, 1765; 200a). This 200-acres parcel became known as the home plantation, and Robert willed it to his wife⁸ and subsequently to two of his sons, Robert Jr. and Walter. Robert Jr. and Walter sold the home plantation to Thomas Durham after they moved to Madison County, Kentucky (17:327; October 2, 1797; 200a and 185a).

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The Weaver Davis Place. The date of purchase of this tract of land and from whom it was purchased has not been determined. However, in his will, Robert left all his right of the land lying on the north side of Richard's Creek called Weaver Davis' place to his oldest son Samuel if he was willing to take up Robert's bond. If not, the land was to be sold and the money divided among the rest of the children. This property appears to have passed in some manner to Robert's two sons, Robert Jr. and Walter, who sold the property to Thomas Durham after they had moved to Madison County, Kentucky (18:123; August 3, 1801; 156a).

State Grant #1658 (11:690; July 11, 1788; 100a). "In 1777 the Legislature of the "new" state of North Carolina passed an act allowing the state to take over the title to all "vacant" land within its borders. This land had previously been the property of the King or the Earl of Granville. In the same year, the Legislature also passed an act creating a procedure for selling the land to almost anyone who had the money to pay the required fees."⁹

Through the process defined by the state of North Carolina Robert obtained title to this 100-acre tract that was on the east bank of the Yadkin River adjacent to John Davis and above Bald Mountain and Robert Shipton. Bald Mountain is on the east side of the Yadkin River in Davidson County approximately five miles south of the High Rock Dam. This property appears to have been sold by Robert's executors to Lewis Beard on February 12, 1791.¹⁰

The fact that this property was on the Yadkin River, and that it was the only part of Robert's estate that was sold outside the family soon after his death leads one to conclude that it was probably the mill property mentioned in Robert's will. He had stipulated in his will that the Mill and all the land belonging to it along with the residue of his estate were to be sold and equally divided among his four daughters and grandson—Elizabeth, Cathrine, Mary, Rachel, and Robert Todd.

Rowan County Court records provide additional evidence that Robert's mill was on the Yadkin River. On November 3, 1770 the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions for Rowan County ordered that a grist mill erected on the north side of the Yadkin River by Robert Barkley be recorded as a public mill, and that he may dam the water for that purpose.¹¹ If this was the same Yadkin River property that Robert later acquired by a state grant, he did not obtain title to the mill property for several years after that mill was built.

The gristmills of the time were located on the banks of a stream with sufficient water flow to turn the crude machinery that ground the wheat into flour. The Yadkin River provided power for several mills, but Abbott's Creek and its tributaries furnished more power to run these mills than any other stream in Davidson County (Rowan County at the time).¹²

Unidentified State Grant. The deed record for Robert's acquisition of this 185-acre tract of land was not found. However, Robert's two sons, Robert Jr. and Walter, sold this tract along with the home plantation to Thomas Durham (17:237; October 2, 1797; 200a and 185a). It was described as being on the same waters of Richard's Creek as the Home Plantation and as a tract of land granted by States Settlers patent to the said Robert Barkley bearing the date May 18, 1789. Grantees (new land owners) had one year to have state grants recorded in the county Register of Deeds, and some grants were never recorded in this county. Robert's deed may have been one of those not recorded in the county since the grant was completed after his death.

Salisbury Lots. The Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions recorded that John and Elizabeth Bone sold lots in Salisbury to Robert Berkley on February 12, 1785. I did not find records for either purchase or disposition of this property in the Rowan County deed records.

Robert Barkley's Jersey Settlement and Jersey Church Associations

Margaret Barclay, an early Barclay researcher from Waco, Texas, believed that Robert Barkley was probably part of a group that migrated from New Jersey and established the Jersey Settlement in Rowan County, North Carolina (present-day Davidson County on the east side of the Yadkin River centered around Linwood) and that he was probably a member of the Jersey Church¹³ that was established in the Jersey Settlement (Appendix II). While no records have been found to substantiate either of these beliefs¹⁴, evidence does exist that he knew and was closely associated with several men in the Jersey Settlement including some who were Jersey Church members.

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They were his neighbors who witnessed deed records for each other, served on juries together, paid taxes in the same tax district, and served together in militia units that provided community protection.

The earliest families identified in the Jersey Settlement c1745 were those of **Jonathan Hunt, Thomas and Rebecca Smith, Robert Heaton, and John Titus**.¹⁵ Hunt and Titus were married to Smith's nieces and Thomas Smith was the brother-in-law of Jonathan Hunt.¹⁶ Thomas Smith had received land on Swearing Creek about 1745/1746 and was appointed Justice of the Peace for Bladen on September 30, 1748.¹⁷ John Titus and Jonathan Hunt were chain bearers when a survey was made on Swearing Creek on November 5, 1748 for Robert Heaton adjoining Thomas Smith.¹⁸

Col. George Smith and Jonathan Hunt were identified as leaders in the community when in 1753 the Assembly refused to approve a bill for the formation of Rowan County until their names were inserted after being deleted from the original bill.¹⁹ Other Jersey Settlement leaders identified in a list prepared by Rev. Henry Sheets included the names of **McKoy, Merrill, McGuire, Smith, Moore, Ellis, March, Hayden, Wiseman, and Trantham**.¹⁹

Some of these men including Jonathan Hunt, Benjamin Merrill, George Smith, and John McGuire, along with Zebulon Stout, Benjamin Drake, John Drake, Samuel Drake, John South, Benjamin and Josiah Roundsopher, Josiah Barton, David Harry, and one "Vanclift" were charged on October 13, 1755 at a meeting of the Executive Council in New Bern with Assault and riot in preventing the agents of Henry McCulloh from resurveying patents of land in Tract #9.²¹ The portion of Tract #9 on the east side of the Yadkin River was the heart of the Jersey Settlement.

Robert Barkley's name first became associated with some of the men from the Jersey Settlement when Capt. Jonathan Hunt led a group of men on "Scout" in May 1759.²² These militia units were formed from time-to-time to search for Indians who may have raided or killed settlers. The men who served under Capt. Hunt included:

Andrew Smith, Ensign

Benjamin Merrill, Sergeant

Israel Cox, Sergeant

Private Men

James Smith	John Smith	Richard Anderson
John Hunt	Samuel Smith	Benjamin Vanclave
Robert Berteley	Jonathan Congers	John Sloan
John Davis	Andrew Hall	Edward McGuire
James MaCay	William Glen	Cornelius Anderson
Benjamin Drake	David Rounsavale	Joshua Whitehad
Abraham [blank]	Joseph Brown	Jesper Robenent

The men who participated in this militia unit, including Robert Barkley, probably all lived in the Jersey Settlement area and were known to and recruited by Capt. Jonathan Hunt.

Robert Barkley may not have known all these men prior to the formation of the unit, but one could reasonably assume that he came to know them during the unit's operation. His name on the roster of this unit also suggests that he had arrived in Rowan County several months or years prior to 1759.

The men in Hunt's militia unit not only worked together to provide community security, but they were also witnesses for each other in the purchase of land. Jonathan Hunt (4:165; February 13, 1759; 220a) and George Smith (4:167; February 13, 1759) had purchased land in the Jersey Settlement on the west side of Swearing Creek a few months prior to the action of the militia unit. **John Gano**, a visiting pastor of the Jersey Church (Appendix II), was a witness for both of these purchases. Further evidence of John Gano's association with this group of men

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was his witness to the purchase of 250 acres by John Hunt from H. McCulloh (4:211-213; November 14, 1760; 250a).

A little over a year after George Smith purchased land in the Jersey Settlement, he sold three tracts to Benjamin Merrill that were witnessed by James McCay and Robert Barkley. The first tract was on the north side of the Yadkin River above the mouth of Davis' Creek (4:363-365; September 9, 1760; 512a), the second was on Cabin Creek (4:365; September 10, 1760; 240a), and the third was identified as being in Rowan County (4:366; September 10, 1760; 419a).

(To be continued in Fall 2006 issue of the Broadside)

Notes

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15. First Families of Jersey Settlement, Ethel Stroupe, Rowan County Register, Vol. 11, No. 1, February 1996, Salisbury, NC.
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19. Ibid.
20. A History of Watauga County, North Carolina, John Preston, E. Waddey Co., Richmond, 1915.
21. Rowan County, North Carolina Tax Lists 1757-1800, Annotated Transcriptions, Jo White Linn.
22. Ibid.