

THE BARROW FAMILY OF BOWDON

By Hugh W. Barrow

May 15, 1635, **John Barrow**, about 26 years old and from Lancashire, England, sails outbound from Gravesend on the "Plain Joan" for the Virginia Colony. His brother, Thomas a militiaman, had migrated earlier and has been listed in 1623 as "dead at a small six-man outpost at Elizabeth Citie." At this time, there were only 183 English settlers in the entire colony, which was founded in 1607. John was a headright to John Sweete of what is now Isle of Wight and who lived on Lawnes Creek near today's border with Surry County, Virginia. John, like his brother Thomas, was a militiaman and in 1653 he patented 385 acres of land on "South Side of Upper Chippoaks Creek, South Side of James River" for the transportation of eight persons. Then, in 1656, Captain Merriwether assigns 600 acres to John Barrow for his militia service. The Chippoaks land is only a short distance south of the James and is an excellent fishing or "seining" location for the spawning fish from the ocean. Several generations of the Barrows would settle along the beautiful Virginia and North Carolina rivers establishing fisheries and plantations netting the fish on their yearly spawns and smoke and salt them for sale later to the settlers. It is said that John married Mary Blow whose father owned land adjoining his.

Thomas Barrow (1) came to the Colony when he was about 20 years old. (The (1) is for our identification purposes.) We know that in 1654 Major Abraham Wood received a grant of land for the importation of 8 persons including Mr. Thomas Barrow from Lancashire, England. The title Mr. indicates that Thomas was a person of considerable status and certainly not an indentured servant.

We have much evidence but no direct proof, that this Thomas was the son of the above John Barrow and that he came to join his father. We know that both were from Lancashire, that "Thomas Barrow, son of John, purchased 150 acres of land from John and Mary Smith in 1680" and that John and Thomas owned adjoining Chippoaks land. Thomas(1) was a carpenter, and evidently a very good one, as evidenced from an inventory of his estate which shows in addition to land, slaves, live stock and household items, "3 thousand eight penny nailes and 2 thousand six penny nailes." Nails were a very precious commodity in the early days and we believe that Thomas made them. We know that Thomas was involved with the construction of the famous Bacon's Castle in Surry County, a short distance from the Chippoaks land. The "Castle is one of the oldest brick structures in America and is in fine condition and open to the public today. One can see the magnificent carpentry work of the early artisans and also some of the "nailes" possibly made and driven by Thomas Barrow. Thomas appears on a 1680 tithe list to Arthur Allen, the wealthy merchant and owner and designer of the Castle. Some Barrow family researchers believe that Thomas (1) was the first immigrant. He married Elizabeth and they had at least two sons, Thomas and Edmund (some say Simon). Thomas(1) died in 1684 and Elizabeth married George Blow, Jr. in only a few months. They had at least one child, George Blow, III.

Thomas Barrow, SR Other Barrow family researchers believe that Thomas Barrow, SR, son of the above Thomas (1) was the first to come to America but this is highly unlikely unless he came at a very early age along with his father and/or mother. The well known Rev. David Barrow of Kentucky wrote to his cousin James Barrow, brother of our Moses of Georgia in 1817 stating: "I have heard my grandfather say that two lads by the name of Barrow were early emigrants from Britton to the Northern Neck of Virginia but I was never informed of the date nor from what part of Britton they came. One of them went off southerly but to what part I do not remember. The other married and settled in the Northern part of Virginia. Thomas Barrow, my grandfather and the son of one of the above mentioned brothers moved into Southampton on the waters of the Nottaway River and died between 90 and 100 years, the names of sons in order of their birth, as well as my memory serves, were Simon, John and Thomas. Thomas the youngest was your father." The Reverend David clearly states that **Thomas, SR**, was the son of one of the emigrants. (I am confident that the other brother mentioned was a John Barrow who indeed did "go off southerly" and settled in the new lands of North Carolina in Perquimans County.)

Thomas, SR, was indeed a "senior" although he never used the term on official papers including his will. He did name Thomas, "Jur" in his will however. He died sometimes around 1762 at 95 to 100 years old outliving his son Thomas, JR by about a year. He married Elizabeth Horton and lived on land located south of the Nottaway River and near Meherrin River in Southampton County and operated fisheries and farmed. He is listed as a titheable in the

household of George Blow, JR, his step father, in 1693. He also lived and owned land in Surry and Isle of Wight counties and died testate in Southampton. His will named, "my seven children, Simon, **Thomas, Jur.**, John, Elizabeth, Jane, Sarah and Fortune." We have good documentation on his will, numerous land transactions and proof that he was in the George Blow household.

Thomas Barrow, JR was born in Southampton County, VA in 1698. He married his second wife, Elizabeth Atkinson, about 1735 and was living on the south side of Nottaway River. In 1754, Thomas Barrow, JR. received a grant of 215 acres from Lord Granville in Edgecombe County, NC signing his name which was a requirement of Lord Granville for anyone settling on his very large land grants in northern North Carolina. He subsequently owned lands and lived in Halifax and Onslow Counties in North Carolina and died testate in 1761 at his 300-acre plantation located on the banks of New River in Onslow County. This land is now a part of the Camp Lejeune Marine Corps base. He farmed and operated fisheries on the Roanoke, Tar, Nottaway and New Rivers. His wife Elizabeth Atkinson died about a year after Thomas' death leaving three small sons, Jacob, James, and **Moses** and daughter Sally, born after his death, plus an older son, Hosea, by his first wife, Mary Killebrew. The four youngsters were sent to their grandmother Atkinson's in Halifax County where they lived with her and near her son Solomon "On Kekuke Swamp near the old Kekuke Meeting house." Hosea remained on the New River land and when of age, Jacob operated the fishery on Roanoke River. We have much well-documented information on the family of Thomas, JR. including his will, many land transactions, where he lived and when he was there, plus his father's will. The three youngest boys, Jacob, James, and Moses would all become Revolutionary War soldiers fighting for American Independence.

Moses Barrow, son of Thomas, JR., was born 15 Oct. 1755 "on Fishing Creek" in Edgecombe County, NC. We believe that he possibly was married to a Mildred Powell before marrying Martha Smith in 1790. Martha was the granddaughter to the prominent Drew Smith of NC. Martha and Moses were the parents of Jacob, twins William and Mary Drew, Mildredge Smith and James R..

Moses' father and mother died when he was very young. When older brother Jacob was old enough to take over the inherited fishery on the Roanoke River in Halifax County, N.C. Moses lived with him. He later moved to Edgecombe County and owned several properties there. He moved to Washington County, GA in the very late 1700s on land along Keg Creek in the western edge of the county. This land today is a part of a large kaolin mining operation. He evidently was fairly prosperous as he owned 460 acres and 7 slaves. His wealthy brother James who moved to nearby Baldwin County owned thousands of acres in several counties and 77 slaves. Moses had drawn the Georgia land for his service in the Revolutionary War, having served in Captain Bacot's 10th regiment under Colonel Abraham Sheppard. (NSDAR Patriot Index, Page 40)

Moses died intestate on Dec. 28, 1801 when youngest son "Jimmy" was three days old. We have not been able to locate his grave. His brother James was appointed an executor of the estate and guardian of the older children who went to live with him. Martha married Charles Thompson, a friend of Moses, in only a few months and they, including baby boy "Jimmy", my great-great grandfather, lived near High Shoals, in Walton County, GA. She had several children by her new husband and died in 1812. She is buried in an unmarked grave in the Thompson Family Cemetery near High Shoals. Young James then went to his uncle's home until his brother Jacob became of age and became his guardian.

James R. (Jimmy) Barrow (Reverend) was born on Christmas Day, 1801, three days before the death of his father. As stated previously, he lived with his mother and stepfather until his mother's death in 1812. His older brother Jacob of Milledgeville became his guardian. He became a mechanic by trade and lived in Talbot and Upson counties before moving to Carroll County sometimes around 1842. We know that he was preaching at the Eden Baptist Church near Bowdon very soon afterwards. He had married Lucinda "Lucy" Bivins in Baldwin County in 1825. He and "Lucy" were very religious and he was a part-time preacher before moving to Bowdon. By middle age, he was badly crippled by what in those days was called rheumatism having to walk with the aid of crutches and his hands were badly drawn. They moved to land drawn in the land lottery of 1827 by "Orphans of Moses Barrow." They drew two lots in Carroll County, one in the Smithfield community and one in the Jake community, and a third in or near what is now Coweta County(?). James moved to the Smithfield land but was unable to farm due to his

health and soon moved to the village of Bowdon leaving his oldest son John at the farm. His Bowdon house was where the present Barrow House now stands on West College St. He was active in the Eden Baptist Church south of Bowdon and in 1850 was officially ordained as a Missionary Baptist Church pastor by the Carrollton Church. He was one of the founders of the Bowdon Baptist Church in 1860. He was assigned missionary duty to serve the western part of Georgia and the newly opened lands in eastern Alabama. He made his rounds on horseback and had to be helped on and off his horse. We have several news items of his preaching as far away as Tuskegee, AL which is about 150 miles from Bowdon. He also filled pulpits all around the Bowdon area including those at Indian Creek, Eden, The Tallapoosa Baptist which became the First Baptist Church of Carrollton and Bowdon. His cousin, Chancellor David Barrow of the University of Georgia, wrote that the old man could recite from memory entire chapters of the Bible.

James and Lucy had at least 7 children: Mildred, Martha A., Mary Emily, Sarah Jane, John T., William Henry C. and James R., JR. Mildred and Sarah Jane married sons of Gideon Smith of the Smithfield community and son John married Martha, Gideon's daughter. "Lucy" was burned terribly while working around a wash pot and died a painful death on 21 Dec. 1873. The old preacher lived on until 30 July 1884 living with his son William in Bowdon the latter part of his life. He and "Lucy" are buried in the Bowdon Baptist Church Cemetery.

James R. (Reeves ?) Barrow was the youngest child of the Rev. and "Lucy" Barrow and was born in Bowdon on 31 Oct. 1844. He was a 16-year-old student at Bowdon Collegiate Institute when the Civil War began and became a member of Company B, Cobb's Legion, Infantry. The unit was formed in Bowdon by Charles McDaniel who was President of the Institute as well as the Methodist Protestant preacher. The company took part in most of the major battles in Virginia and suffered tremendous loss of life and limb. Private James R. was wounded in left ankle and foot during the Battle of Crampton's Gap, Maryland on Sept. 14, 1862 when he was not yet 17 years old. He was captured and his left leg amputated by Yankee surgeons. He recovered and was sent to prisons in Maryland and then exchanged and returned home to Bowdon. He served in some capacity in the army around Atlanta drawing pay for at least through 1864. He returned to Bowdon and married Martha S. "Mattie" Holmes on 10 Dec., 1865 at Bowdon. Mattie was the daughter of local black smith Thomas F. and Mary Jo Holmes, He never drew a Confederate pension but did receive money from the state for the purchase of an artificial leg.

James became a very prosperous merchant in Bowdon as well as being half-owner of Victory Mills, a complex consisting of a grist and flour mill, cotton gin, saw mill, tannery and store located on the Little Tallapoosa River east of Bowdon. This mill boasted of having the first circular saw in Western Georgia indicating that they used steam power instead of water power for the saw mill. He and "Mattie" had a son, John William, a daughter Georgia, who was born on Sept. 3, 1868, and an infant who was born on Jan. 1 and died on Feb. 1, 1872. "Mattie" died the following June 10th and on Dec. 5, 1876 little Georgia died. Then four years later on July 11, 1880 James R. died leaving 14 year old John William an orphan. James died testate and named his brother William guardian for his young son. James, "Mattie", Georgia and the infant are buried in the Bowdon Baptist Church Cemetery. It is said that James R. died from TB contracted in the Yankee prison camps.

John William Barrow was born in Bowdon on 5 Sept. 1866 during the reconstruction era of the beaten South to a disabled Rebel soldier father. He was orphaned at the age of 14 and went to live with his Uncle William who was appointed his guardian. He attended school in Bowdon and then entered Mercer University. He returned to Bowdon to enter business. He traded his inherited half-interest in Victory Mills for a store and a considerable amount of property in Bowdon and established a mercantile business on the north side of the main street building the first brick building in town. This building is now part of the corner bank building. He later built six of the brick buildings on the south side of the street and expanded into a general store and even later specializing in hardware. The store became one of the largest and most successful in the area. He was a director of the local bank, director of the railroad and oil mill and was part owner of an unsuccessful pickle factory venture. He was also a trustee of Bowdon College and active in the Baptist Church, the Masonic Lodge and other civic organizations. He became wealthy only to lose everything during the great depression of the 1920s and 30s. With all the disappointments, he maintained his great love of Bowdon and his fellow man, many of whom owed him money which was never repaid. He started several smaller businesses after the hardware store closed and in his last years could be found on the

streets, always wearing a coat and tie and with highly polished shoes, especially on “Second Tuesdays”, Bowdon’s Trade Day, swapping and selling pocket knives. He was great fun to be around and was Bowdon’s greatest booster.

“**J. W.**” married **Martha Ellen Lovvorn** on Christmas Day, 1887 in Bowdon. Ellen was the daughter of the prominent citizen, W. D. Lovvorn, owner of the Lovvorn Mill complex on Indian Creek a mile or so north of Bowdon. Their children were: Otis who married Alice Walker, Roy, Hugh Witt, infant Guy, Gladys who married Mallory “Bubba” Rumble and Frances who married Harvey Jackson. To make ends meet after the business failure, “**Miss**” **Ellen**, as she was known, turned the “Barrow House”, which they had built around the turn of the century, into a boarding house. It was known for the great food and for a clean and safe home away from home for travelers as well as many of Bowdon’s college students and schoolteachers. Ellen died in Dec., 1943 and J. W. lived with his beloved Hugh and Virginia in the Barrow House until his death on 29 July 1951. He and Ellen are buried in the Bowdon City Cemetery.

Hugh Witt Barrow was born in Bowdon on Friday the 13th of January, 1894. He always said that this was bad luck, and maybe it was. He attended Gordon Military Academy in Barnesville where he was a close friend and roommate of his distant cousin, future Georgia governor and senator, Richard Russell. He returned to Bowdon and worked for the family hardware store and was in charge of their two White trucks, hauling all types of goods to-and-from Atlanta. After the store closed, he took the trucks and his two driver friends, “Red” and Lee, and hauled material for building highways in Alabama. Soon, as the depression worsened, the trucks were taken also. He then was shop foreman at Folds Motor Co. in Carrollton and then a furniture salesman in Rockmart. He returned to Bowdon and worked at Sewells for many years and, later he substituted for his son-in-law, John Barr, as a rural mail carrier.

Hugh married **Virginia Mae Trammell** daughter of Thomas Appling and Lelia Johnson Trammell of Bowdon and Five Points, AL on 28 Oct. 1917. They were the parents of Virginia Ellen (Jean) who married John H. Barr, JR, infant Sue, Hugh Will (Bill) who married Bonnie Jeanne Spruill, and David Trammell. “Gin” worked at Sewells and after the death of Hugh on Nov. 10 1950, continued to care for “J. W.” until his death. She then struck out on her own and became a housemother at The Church’s Home for Girls in Atlanta where she became the trusted “mother” and friend to hundreds of young girls who were coming to the big city from farms and small towns to find jobs. She retired and returned to live out her life in her “little house” in Bowdon next door to the Barrow House and to enjoy her children and grandchildren, her Church and Sunday School, her “As You Like It” Club and her many friends. She died on 21 May 1969 and is buried with Hugh in the Bowdon City Cemetery.

Bill (Hugh Will) and Bonnie moved back to Carroll County after a 54 year absence and settled in Carrollton. (Hope old “J. W.” never realizes this as he would come up out of his grave and move me to Bowdon in a hurry, he never liked Carrollton after “they stole the college”.) Chemical engineer Bill retired from the DuPont Co. after 40 years service and for the next 10 years or so served as a consultant to several chemical, carpet and textile companies. His last few working years as a consultant were spent in developing the popular worn or distressed look on denim fabrics such as dungarees where he holds several patents.

Bonnie, the daughter of Marvin and Ruth Huddleston Spruill of the Smithfield community, was and is a wonderful mother and a very successful real estate sales lady in Delaware/Pennsylvania and in Dalton, GA.

They have four children: Dr. Hugh, JR, an OB-GYN specialist in Spartanburg, SC; Lew Spruill, an Asst. District Attorney in Columbus; Ann Barrow Harris, Director of the pharmaceutical company Bayer in New London, CT and Rebecca, a Physician’s Assistant anesthetist in Houston, TX and five grandchildren. .

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