

“WHO ARE THOMAS BARROW ?”

In the eleven volumes of Mae Belle Barrow North's *Barrow, An Early Southern Family*, which later became *The Barrow Family Quarterly*, I doubt there are many names mentioned as often as that of Thomas Barrow. Look in any index of the 44 issues and you will find multiple listings for Thomas Barrow. James, John, William, and Thomas seem to be the most popular early Barrow names but Thomas is clearly the leader in Colonial and early years of our country in Virginia and North Carolina. The census reports of the eighteenth hundreds and later of the Southern states list numerous Thomas Barrows. We do find that the more recent generations of the Barrow families use the name Thomas much less often, however. Rarely do we find the name Thomas Barrow in a directory these days. I would venture to guess that more members of The Barrow Association of America descend from a Thomas Barrow than from any other name.

Mae Belle seemingly was fascinated with researching the early Thomas Barrow lineage in Virginia and North Carolina. She devoted a tremendous amount of time and effort searching for every bit of information she could gather on **“WHO ARE THOMAS BARROW ?”** and trying to solve the puzzle of correctly identifying each and every one of the numerous Thomases and assigning him to the proper place in our Barrow line.

Since Mae Belle's death, I have carefully re-read each of the 44 issues of her quarterlies and this time tried my best to keep up with her in her interpretation of what she believed, or could substantiate, on the early Thomas Barrows of Virginia and North Carolina. This is critical for me to understand as it is my proven line of descent.

I have made numerous notes, constructed charts and calendars and must say that I still have lots to understand on exactly how the various Thomas Barrows fit in with each other and with other early Virginia families such as the Blows, Smiths and Killebrews who are so often mentioned as being closely associated with the Barrows. I do believe that I now have a much better understanding of my line of descent from Thomas Barrow and who the various Thomases were and how they fit in.

Many facts we know and are confirmed with proof as listed in the quarterlies. I will not give references to this proof as it is well documented by Mae Belle and others in the publications. I will, however, state so when I am speculating or quoting some fact that I have found on my own. We will not go into discussing the later Thomases but will begin with my g-g-g-great grandfather, father of Moses, who Mae Belle, for our identification purposes, has labeled, “Thomas Barrow, Jr.” Actually, he was indeed a junior although we have never seen his name signed as such even while his father was alive. His father did, however, identify this Thomas in his will as “Thomas jur.”

Thomas, Jr. was born in Southampton County, Va. In 1698. He married his second wife, Elizabeth Atkinson, about 1735 and was living in Isle of Wight County, Nottaway Parish, VA. on the south side of the Nottaway River. In 1754, Thomas Barrow, (Jr.) drew a grant of 215 acres from Lord Granville in Edgecombe County, North Carolina 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. His wife, Elizabeth, died about a year later leaving three small boys; Jacob, Moses (my line) and James; a daughter Sally who was born after Thomas, Jr.'s death plus an older son, Hosea, by his first wife, Mary. Thomas, Jr.'s father outlived him by about a year. The three youngest children's grandmother Atkinson and her son, Solomon, raised the orphaned youngsters in Halifax County "On Kekuke Swamp near the old Kekuke Meeting House." We have much well-documented information on the family of Thomas, Jr. including his will, numerous land transactions, where he lived as well as when he was there, and his father's will. Thomas Jr. and his father were fishermen as well as farmers. He left fisheries on the Roanoke River to his heirs especially to son Jacob. The three youngest boys, Moses, James and Jacob, would all become Revolutionary War soldiers fighting for American independence.

The father of the above-mentioned Thomas, Jr. has, for our identification purposes, been tagged "Thomas, Sr." and he indeed was a senior as he identified his son Thomas in his will as "Thomas jur". He did not, however, use this title on official papers such as his will which he signed with "his mark." We have evidence that Thomas, Sr. was born sometimes around 1662-1667 since we know that he died in 1762 and was reported by several sources including the Reverend David Barrow of Kentucky to have lived to an age of 95 to 100 years. He married Elizabeth who, I believe, was Elizabeth Horton, daughter of Thomas Horton, who, in his will, left daughter Elizabeth Barrow "5 shillings." Thomas Horton owned land adjoining that of Thomas Barrow (Sr.). (This is the first assumption in this paper that is mine.). Other Barrow researchers think maybe Elizabeth was the daughter of John Brantley, who in January, 1740, sold Thomas, Sr. and wife Elizabeth 350 acres of land for the token sum of "5 Shillings." This land was located South of the Nottaway River and near Meherrin River. It is odd that the "5 Shillings" is in both the will and the land transaction. Thomas (Sr.) is listed as a tithable in the household of George Blow, Jr. in 1693 after his father's death in 1684. His mother, Elizabeth, married Geo. Blow, Jr. about two months after the death of her husband who was also a Thomas Barrow. Thomas, Sr. lived in Surry, Isle of Wight and Southampton counties in Virginia and died testate in Southampton. His will named "my seven children, Simon, Thomas ("Jur."), John, Elizabeth, Jane, Sarah and Fortune." Son Thomas, Jur. and daughter Elizabeth were deceased and their children, or at least some of them, were listed as heirs along with wife Elizabeth. For some reason the three younger children of Thomas, Jr. were not mentioned. Perhaps they had been taken care of during the old grandfather's lifetime? He named a grandson, still another Thomas who was the son of his son Simon, to inherit his home place after the death of wife Elizabeth. We have documentation on his will, numerous land transactions and proof that he was in the household of George Blow, Jr., his mother's second husband, and his stepfather.

Since Thomas, Sr.'s father died around 1684 and his mother Elizabeth married George Blow, Jr. in a very short time and since both Thomas and brother Simon were in the George Blow, Jr. household, this Thomas, (Sr.). could not have been the emigrant unless he came to Virginia at a very early age along with his father and/or mother which we believe is highly unlikely. Some Barrow family historians have, however, stated that the Reverend David Barrow of Virginia wrote to James Barrow of Georgia that, "Two lads from England came to the Northern Neck of Virginia and one of these was your grandfather." This Thomas, Sr. thus would have been James', and my Moses', grandfather and the emigrant. I am certain that this is not the case and that it is not what the Reverend David stated in his September 10, 1817 letter to his cousin James

of Milledgeville, Georgia. A portion of the letter is quoted here from James Barrow's December 16, 1818 diary entry. His diary is now located in the Barrow Papers in the Southern Historical Collection of the University of North Carolina Library. It reads as follows: "I have heard my grandfather say that two lads, brothers 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 Southwardly , but to what part I do not remember. The other married and settled somewhere in the Northern part of Virginia. Thomas Barrow, my great grandfather and the son of one of the above mentioned brothers moved into Southampton on the waters of the Nottaway River, at the first settling of that part of Virginia where he lived raised his family and died aged between 90 and 100 years, the name of his sons in the 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.

We therefore believe that Thomas, Sr.'s father, who we have for identification purposes labeled Thomas "1", was probably the earliest emigrant but even here it is possible that he too was born in Virginia.

One probability on our Thomas(1) is as follows: **ABOUT 1640**, Thomas Barrow was born in England. He came to Virginia when "**UNDER 20 YEARS OF AGE**" and settled in "British Colony". We know that in 1654, when this Thomas might have been about 15 years old or even younger, Major Abraham Word received a grant of land for the importation of 8 persons including Mr. Thomas Barrow believed to be from Lancashire, England. The title "Mr." indicates that Thomas was a person of considerable stature and certainly not an indentured servant. Thus, this Thomas would have been about 45 years old when he died and left wife Elizabeth and sons Thomas, (Sr.) and Simon. Elizabeth would then marry George Blow, Jr. the following year in 1685. She would then have one son that we are aware of, George Blow, III. Thomas (1), who married another Elizabeth, was evidently a carpenter and a very good one at that. An inventory of his estate shows in addition to Negroes, live stock, land and household items, there were lots of carpenter tools and "3 thousand eight penny nayles and 2 thousand six penny nayles." Thomas(1) Barrow appears on a 1680 tithe list to Arthur Allen, a renowned architect, builder and carpenter, who is known to have built the famous Bacon's Castle in Surry County, Virginia. This magnificent structure is in fine condition today and is open for public tours. In this same year, 1680, Thomas(1) purchased 150 acres of land from John Smith and his wife Mary, "on the other side of Green Swamp."

It makes a lot of sense that this Thomas Barrow "1" was our ancestor and that he was the first emigrant. This assumption fits nicely into the puzzle and I believe this is what Mae Belle thought and believed was the case although she would have never said so without absolute proof. However, as good as this fits, I believe there is still another probability which must be considered as follows, and which is all my assumption, but not without more than a few facts backing my beliefs:

- A. There was a Thomas Barrow who died 16 January, 1623 at "Elizabeth Citie". This was only 16 years after the founding of the Virginia Colony on May 13, 1607, and at this time in 1623, there were only 183 English inhabitants in the entire Colony. This information

was found in *Barrow Families of New England*, a publication I found in the library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City. (Plymouth Colony was established in New England in 1620.) This Thomas was probably of the “Third Supply” of those arriving in the colony.

- B. The Reverend David stated that, “Two lads, brothers by the name of Barrow, were early immigrants to the northern neck of Virginia.” He did not state that the two came at the same time.
- C. From, *Early Windows-Early Virginia and It’s People*, Volume 1: “A list of the dead in Virginia since April last: February 16, 1623, Thomas Barrow.” We know that he was a militiaman and died on the south side of the James River opposite the Jamestown settlement near “Elizabeth Citie”, at a small six-man outpost.
- D. **JOHN BARROW** was born **about 1609** in England. He sailed on the “Plain Joan”, Master Richard Buckham, outbound from Gravesend for Virginia on **May 15, 1635 at the age of about 26 years**. He was the headright of John Sweete of the Isle of Wight who patented 650 acres of land adjacent to Mr. Cooper and Francis England, November 11, 1642 for transportation of 13 persons. Mr. England’s land was near Lawnes Creek on the border of Surry County. Was John a brother of Thomas who had died in Virginia in 1623 and were these the two lads referred to by Reverend David? We know that John, like Thomas, was a militiaman.
- E. In 1651 and 1652, John was serving as a militiaman. As early as 1650, John was mentioned as living in James City County when Surry County was created from all the lands on the south side of the James River. Thus, now he would be living in Surry where our Thomas (1) and Thomas, Sr. would also live. On May 3, 1653, he patented 385 acres of land in Surry County “on the South Side of Upper Chipoake Creeke, South Side of the James River, bordered by George Burcher’s marked trees.” for the transportation of 8 persons. We know that our Thomas (1) purchased land near Chipchoaks Creek (Green Swamp) in 1680 from John and Mary Smith.
- F. In 1656, Captain Merriwether assigns 600 acres of land to John Barrow, evidently for his militia service.
- G. Remember, we have stated previously that a Thomas Barrow was born in England before 1640 and came to Virginia before he was 20 years old. Is it possible that this was John’s son who joined his father in the colony as soon as he was old enough to migrate? It is reasonable to believe that John would have named his son for his brother Thomas who had died in Virginia.
- H. “Thomas Barrow, son of John, purchases 150 acres of land from John and Mary Smith on Green Swamp on July 6, 1680.” We have already noted that Thomas (1) purchased 150 acres of land from John Smith and wife Mary in 1680. This must be the same land and I believe the same person buying this land from the same sellers.

- I. It is said that John Barrow married Mary Blow. We know that our Thomas(1) was very closely associated with the Blow family and that George Blow, Sr. owned land adjacent to John Barrow. Thomas (1)'s widow married George Blow, Jr., and our Thomas, Sr. was living in their household at one time. John Barrow also owned land adjacent to Thomas Barrow (1).

My conclusion is: It seems to me that there is very good evidence that Thomas Barrow (1) was the son of John Barrow and it is likely that he was born in England; however, it is possible that he was born in Virginia. I believe that he was born in England and joined his father as soon as he was old enough to migrate. If this is the case, descendants of Thomas Barrow can now trace their line in Virginia to John Barrow's arrival in 1635, 365 years ago!

By no means do I mean to imply that the portion of this paper regarding John and Thomas(1) Barrow should be taken as fact. It is something which requires much more research and all of the descendants of a Thomas Barrow of Virginia need to continue to work on trying to prove **"WHO THOMAS ARE?"**. Please study the tremendous amount of information that Mae Belle and others have contributed attempting to find the answers. We owe it to her memory to carry on her great work and to dig ever deeper into our heritage.

I welcome your comments regarding the above paper and solicit your help.

Hugh W. Barrow

Hugh Will Barrow>Hugh Witt Barrow>John William Barrow>James Reeves Barrow, Jr.>Rev. James R. Barrow>Moses Barrow>Thomas Barrow, Jr.>Thomas Barrow, Sr.>Thomas Barrow(1)>John Barrow(?)

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