

The Way It Was With Faith and Courage

Researched and presented as a talk at the Barton Reunion (2006) by Anne K. McCuen

One cannot be sure exactly when **Thomas and Bethire Barton** first moved near Pack's Creek and Barton's Creek of the South Tyger River in an area which would eventually become Greenville County. It may well have been and most probably was in the Spring of 1785, after having acquired, in the previous Fall of 1784, 200 acres on both sides of the N. Fork of Packs Creek of the S. Tyger River and when the weather would be suitable for house building, field clearing and crop planting.

I say this for they did not acquire their first piece on Barton's Creek until the Spring of 1786 by Lease and in 1787 by Release and this deed specifically says that Thomas Barton is already from Greenville County.

In August of that year (1787) Court records show that Thomas was already serving on a Greenville County General Sessions Court Case. The case at trial pertained to a John Goodwin, who was being tried for Larceny. It seems that Goodwin on the first of February of that same year had taken two hogs, worth 5 shillings each from Isam Clayton, his neighbor.

Thomas could not have served as a Juror had he not already attained the status of "a gentleman", that being a term used by the English and people from the Low County of South Carolina for a person belonging to the landed gentry, and owner of a considerable amount of property. By 1787, Thomas had, indeed, acquired a total of 934 acres of land on Pack's Creek and the adjacent Barton's Creek.

The question then arises: Did Thomas move here in the Spring of 1785 after he was granted his first piece of land on Packs Creek in the Fall 1784? Or, did he wait until he leased William's land on Barton's Creek

in the Spring of 1786?

If he had not yet moved to Greenville when he bought William's land on Barton's Creek, or the other purchases which made him a "gentleman", then the deeds would have said that Thomas Barton was of Spartanburg. But, they don't say that. Therefore, he already lived in Greenville and, at the time of the purchase of these pieces, only owned his first grant on Pack's Creek and therefore would have lived first on Pack's Creek. And, incidentally, he was already a Captain in the Greenville militia.⁵

We often use the phrase "when Thomas and Bethire moved from Spartanburg County to Greenville County" but, technically, Thomas and Bethire were actually moving from one portion of the 96th District of South Carolina to another portion of the 96th District of South Carolina. They were moving from that portion which was soon to be called Spartanburg County to that portion which had been Indian territory but was soon to be called Greenville County. The line between the two Counties being the Indian Boundary line which had been surveyed in 1767.

Until May 1784, just a month before Thomas' land on Pack's Creek had been surveyed; there had been no legal residents in what became Greenville County, for it was Indian Territory.

Just like Thomas, there were many other Revolutionary War veterans moving into the upper part of what was to become Greenville County where his land was, and many of them were also from that area that was to become Spartanburg County.

Since no legal residents had ever lived in the area there were no ready-built houses or log cabins available, there were no stores from which to buy food, no grist mills from which to buy cornmeal, no saw mills for lumber, no schools, no churches, no doctors, and no newspapers.

So, since there were no ready-built houses or log cabins available, for quite a while, Bethire and Thomas, their 5 or 6 children, and possibly a slave or two would have to continue to camp out, rain or shine, just as they had probably done the last one or maybe 2 nights on their trip from the South Pacolet River in what was to become Spartanburg Co. to the Pack's Creek of the South Tyger River in what was to become Greenville County, a distance of about 40 miles.

In their several wagons, they had a limited amount of com meal and cured meat, mostly pork, their bedding, clothes, pots, pans, and, of course, a gun for protection. For milk, they had a cow or two which had walked every step of the way with them on the trip. And, in some cases, they probably had some chickens, not only to lay eggs, but also, in time, to be eaten. And, then, of course, there were the hogs driven along.

On their wagons, they had to have the tools necessary for building a home, most likely a log cabin. Thomas would need, at least, an axe, hammers, hand wrought nails (if any were available), a ruler, an adze, a Pit-saw, and strips of leather. Wood for building was plentiful but would require a lot of labor to prepare and convert into a cabin. The Bartons may well have had to camp out for quite a number of days.

If we are to believe the plat recorded by the surveyor of Barton's land, (and, there is no reason that we should not believe the plat for it was done by one of the two best surveyors of the time - George Salmon) Thomas Barton had available to him at least 6 kinds of trees. He had: red oak, post oak, Spanish oak, pine, ash and chestnut. Close by also on grants to his brothers, we know there were chestnut oak, black oak, sweet gum, poplar, blackjack, and locust trees.

He was on one of the several branches of the South Tygar River. To his West, he was near the North Saluda River with its many tributaries, to the East were the headwaters of

the Middle Tygar River and to the Northeast was the South Pacolet River from whose larger stream he had just moved. And, just over Hogback Mountain was the beginning of the North Pacolet River. Associated with most of these water systems were even some mineral springs.

All of these waters provided excellent bottom land for crops, particularly com.

Thomas was already familiar with the road systems - which were actually "glorified" Indian trails. These he had traveled since leaving his old homestead. In time, all of his new land was located on what became known as the Tugolo (Tugaloo) trail. Nearby was the Indian trail running the length of Glassy Mountain, the Middle Indian Path, the Upper Indian path, the Saludy path, the path up the right face of Glassy Mountain, the path to the Indian Town House, and Gowen's trail. In addition to the great variety of trees, there were present many beautiful wild flowers - the Lady Slipper or Mocassin Flower, Pipsissawa, Jack-in-the-pulpit, Trillium, Violets, Clover, Daisies, Golden Rod and Soloman's Seal.

Even some of the trees were flowering trees - the Dogwood, the Locust, and the Tulip poplar. And, then, there were the flowering shrubs, an abundance of Mountain Laurel and Rhodo-dendron. And, flowering vines such as the honeysuckle. And, medicinal plants such as yellow root, ginseng and foxglove from which today we get the heart medicine - digitalis.

There was, also, an abundance of animals - beavers, muskrats, foxes, wolves, panthers, and wild cats. Luckily, to provide a source of food, there were deer, bears, coons, opossums, squirrels and rabbits. And, there were plenty of fish, including trout, in many of the creeks and rivers. But then, too, there were plenty of ants, chiggers, hornets and yellow jackets.

There probably were a few Indians still around, for about 7 miles away (near the

present day dam of Greenville's reservoir) a village of Cherokee Indians had lived- enough of them that they had built a Townhouse. They had called the N. Saluda River the Checheroa.

Just 10 miles away (on present day Highway #414 west of Highway #25) had recently been a camp ground belonging to an Indian named Usetie. And, some distance away on the upper part of the S. Saluda River had been Wattacoo's camp ground and even the homestead of Richard Pearis' half-breed son, Robert Pearis, and nearer (at present day River Falls) had been Oyl's (OYL) camp. On the S. Pacolet (not far west of Gowensville) had been Kentuck's "old field" or farm.

And, no doubt, there were many other Indians, of which there is no record, living particularly in the Hog Back Mountain area.

There were a few "old time" white folk around - these were referred to as "squatters." They lived on and planted crops on land belonging to no one. The nearest known squatter to Thomas Barton was one whose name was Hugh Warren and he lived very near Thomas Barton's Barton Creek land. Just west or southwest of present day Tyger Baptist Church, present day Warren's Creek which runs into the S. Tyger River and was no doubt named for this Squatter.

A squatter named Trammell lived not far away on today's creek called Campbell's Creek, which in early land records was called Trammell's Creek. And a squatter named Ballew lived a little further away near Green's Creek of the S. Pacolet River.

And, there were a few other families, all just arriving or having in the last few days arrived and all in the same predicament as the Thomas Barton family.

Soon to become the nearest new neighbors of the Bartons were the Reubin Barretts, Archibald Dills, Ephraim Reese', Andrew McCrary's, Jacob Kytles, Absolom Thompsons, and the Thomas Howards, etc.

Many of his new neighbors, like Thomas, were Revolutionary War veterans. Among them were John Peace, Absolom Thompson, Thomas Ponder, Richard Brassell and Runnells Dill.

After 1791, when folk other than South Carolinians were allowed to buy Greenville land, came the Center, the Howard, the Gosnell and the Bower families and others, all coming from NC. In time, moving over from Spartanburg came the Whittens, the Earles, the Fishers, the Goodjions, the Pruitts, the Gowens and many others.

But, back to the Thomas Bartons - they still had to camp out until their log cabin was built, then they would have to clear land, plant crops, set up their stills and, in time, help start a church and teach the younger generations to read, write and cypher.

And, all of this "By and With Faith and Courage" (the Barton Clan motto).

