

GENEALOGY OF SAMUEL WILSON, SEN.

Samuel Wilson, Sr., was one of the earliest settlers of Mecklenburg county, and the patriarchal ancestor of numerous descendants, who performed important civil and military services in the Revolutionary war. He emigrated from Pennsylvania about 1745, and purchased a large body of valuable lands in the bounds of Hopewell church, in Mecklenburg county. He was of Scotch-Irish descent, and inherited the peculiar traits of that liberty-loving, people. He was married three times, and was the father of thirteen children. His first wife was Mary Winslow, a sister of Moses Winslow, one of the early and leading patriots of Rowan county, who died on the 1st of October, 1813, in the eighty-third year of his age, and is buried in the graveyard of Center Church.

Samuel Wilson, Sr., died on the 13th of March, 1778, in the sixty-eighth year of his age. His children, by the first wife, were:

1. Mary; 2. Violet; 3. Samuel; 4. John. 5. Benjamin Wilson. Mary, the eldest daughter, married Ezekiel Polk, the father of Samuel Polk, and grandfather of James K. Polk, President of the United States in 1845. Ezekiel Polk was a man of wealth and influence in Mecklenburg county preceding the Revolution, and owned a large body of the valuable lands in and around the present flourishing village of Pineville. Samuel Polk inherited a portion of this land, lying in the "horse shoe bend" of Little Sugar Creek, and immediately on the Camden road, over which Cornwallis marched with his army on his celebrated visit (the first and the last) to the "Hornet Nest" of America.

2. Violet Wilson married Major John Davidson, one of the signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence.

3. Samuel Wilson, a soldier of the Revolution, married Hannah Knox, a daughter of Captain Patrick Knox, killed at the battle of Ramsour's Mill. He raised a large family, all of whom have passed away, falling mostly as victims of consumption. His daughter Mary (or "Polly") married her cousin Benjamin Wilson, (son of David Wilson) who was killed by Nixon Curry, because he was to appear in court as a witness against him.

4. Major David Wilson, an ardent patriot, and one of the heroes under Colonel Locke at Ramsour's Mill, married Sallie McConnell, a sister of Mrs. General James White, the father of the Hon. Hugh Lawson White. (See sketch of his life, under "Iredell County.")

5. Mrs. Adaline McCoy, of Lincolnton, is a daughter, and worthy descendant of Moses Winslow Wilson, a son of Major David Wilson. John and Benjamin Wilson, the remaining sons of Samuel Wilson, Sr., by the first wife, never married.

6. After General Davidson was killed at Cowan's Ford, on the morning of the 1st of February, 1781, Major David Wilson, and Richard Barry, Esq, both of whom participated in the skirmish at that place, secured the body of their beloved commander, and carried it to the residence of Samuel Wilson,

Sr., to receive the usual preparatory attentions for burial. Mrs. Davidson, who resided about ten miles distant, in the vicinity of Center Church was immediately sent for; she came as hastily as possible in the afternoon, under the charge of George Templeton one of her neighbors, and received, on that solemn occasion, the heart-felt condolence and sympathy of numerous sorrowing friends and relatives. In consequence of this necessary delay, those true patriots and friends of the deceased (Wilson and Barry) moved with the body late in the evening of the same day, and committed it to the silent tomb, by torchlight, in Hopewell graveyard.

7. Rebecca Wilson, the youngest daughter by the first wife, married John Henderson. After the birth of two children, they set out from Mecklenburg, with the intention of moving to Tennessee, accompanied by a brother and sister of Henderson. On the way, while they were stopping for dinner, they were suddenly attacked by Indians. Henderson and his wife were killed. The brother and sister each seized a child and made their escape. The children were brought back to Mecklenburg county, and properly cared for by their relatives; but, after they grew up, and Indian outrages having subsided, they returned to Tennessee.

The second wife of Samuel Wilson, Sr., was a widow Potts. Having a feeble constitution, she lived but a short time, leaving a daughter, named Margaret, who married John Davidson, an uncle of the late William Davidson, Esq., of Charlotte. After she was left a widow, she moved with her three children, Samuel Wilson, John (or "Jackey") and Mary Davidson, to Alabama, where a large number of her descendants may be now found in Bibb and adjoining counties of that State.

The children of Major John Davidson and Violet Wilson were:

1. Isabella Davidson married Gen. Joseph Graham, of Lincoln county, the father of the late Hon. William A. Graham and others.

2. Rebecca Davidson married Capt. Alexander Brevard, a brother of Dr. Ephraim Brevard, the reputed author of the Mecklenburg Declaration of the 20th of May, 1775, and one of the "seven brothers in the rebel army," at one time.

3. Violet Davidson married William Bain Alexander, a son of John McKnitt Alexander, one of the secretaries of the Mecklenburg Convention.

4. Elizabeth Davidson married William Lee Davidson, a son of General Davidson, who fell at Cowan's Ford.

5. Mary Davidson married Dr. William McLean, a distinguished physician during and after the Revolution.

6. Sarah Davidson married Alexander Caldwell, a son of Dr. David Caldwell, an eminent Presbyterian minister of Guilford county.

7. Margaret Davidson married Major James Harris, of Cabarrus county.
8. John (or "Jackey") Davidson, married Sallie Brevard, a daughter of Adam Brevard, a brother of Dr. Ephraim Brevard.
9. Robert Davidson married Margaret Osborne, a daughter of Adlai Osborne, the grandfather of the late Jas. W. Osborne, of Charlotte.
10. Benjamin Wilson Davidson married Elizabeth Latta, a daughter of James Latta, Esq.

The third wife of Samuel Wilson, Sr., was Margaret Jack, a sister of Captain Jack, the bearer of the Mecklenburg Declaration to Congress. By this marriage there were five children:

1. Sarah Wilson, married Ben McConnell, who had three children, Charity, Latta and Wilson McConnell. Charity McConnell married Reese Davidson, a nephew of General Ephraim Davidson. This family, and also that of Wilson McConnell, moved to Tennessee.
2. Charity Wilson, died at the age of sixteen years.
3. Robert Wilson, married Margaret Alexander, a daughter of Major Thomas Alexander, and grand-daughter of Neil Morrison, one of the Mecklenburg signers. He left five daughters, and one son, who lost his life in the Confederate cause.
4. Lillis Wilson, (frequently written "Lillie,") married James Connor, who emigrated from Ireland when about twenty-one years of age; volunteered his services at the commencement of the Revolutionary War, and fought through the struggle to its close. He died in April, 1835, aged eighty-four years, and is buried in Baker's graveyard. He left two children, Henry Workman and Margaret Jack Conner. H. Workman Conner was a worthy and influential citizen of Charleston, S.C., where he spent about fifty years of his life, and died in January, 1861. Margaret J. Connor married J. Franklin Brevard, a son of Capt. Alexander Brevard, of Lincoln county. She was an estimable Christian lady, survived her husband many years, was beloved by all who knew her, and died with peaceful resignation, on the 25th of October, 1866, in the sixty-eighth year of her age. Her only child, Rebecca, married Robert I. McDowell, Esq., of Mecklenburg county.
5. William Jack Wilson, youngest child of Samuel Wilson, Sr., by the third wife, married Rocinda Winslow, the youngest daughter of Moses Winslow. The house in which this old patriot then resided, has long since disappeared. It stood on the public road, about three miles southwest of Center church. A large Honey Locust tree now (1876) nearly points out its original location.

William J. Wilson left four children: 1. Dovey A., (Mrs. Dougherty); 2 Robert; 3. La Fayette, and 4. James C. Wilson.

The house in which Samuel Wilson, Sr., resided, and to which the body of General Davidson was borne by David Wilson and Richard Barry, before sepulture, was a two-story frame building. No portion of it now remains and the plow runs smoothly over its site. Robert and William J. Wilson built on the old homestead property. These two brothers were closely united in filial affection during their lives, and now lie, side by side, in Hopewell graveyard.

Mrs. Margaret Jack Wilson, third wife of Samuel Wilson, Sr., is described by all who knew her, as a woman of uncommon energy, of an amiable disposition, charitable to the poor, and a truly humble Christian. She died at the age of fifty-eight years, was never sick during her life, until a few days before her death, and is buried in Baker's graveyard. When drawing near to the close of her earthly existence, she was asked if she had a desire to live longer; she replied, "No; she was like a ship long tossed at sea and about to land at a port of rest."

In this same spot of ground, (Baker's graveyard,) five miles northeast of Beattie's Ford, on the Catawba, consecrated as the last resting-place of some of the earliest settlers of Mecklenburg county, repose the mortal remains of the Rev. John Thompson, one of the first Presbyterian missionaries in this section of the State, and who died in September, 1753. No monumental slab or head-stone is placed at his grave. Tradition says he built a cabin (or study-house) in the northwestern angle of the graveyard, and was buried beneath its floor, being the first subject of interment. John Baker, who lived in the immediate vicinity, married his daughter, and dying a few years later, gave the permanent name to the burial-ground. Here also repose the remains of Hugh Lawson, the grandfather of the Hon. Hugh Lawson White, a native of Iredell county. The only tablet to the memory of this early settler, is a rough slate rock, about one foot high and nine inches broad, on which are rudely chiseled the initial letters of his name, thus combined, HL. In subsequent years, after the erection of Hopewell Church, the most of the Wilson family and relatives were buried in the graveyard at that place.

Source: Sketches of Western North Carolina, Historical and Biographical
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