

WELLS FAMILY (part one)

Barnabas/Barnaby Wells was born in England ~1637. He left from Bristol and arrived in Virginia in 1662 indentured to John Buck for 4 years. He married Rebekah UNKNOWN and later Grace UNKNOWN. Barnaby served as an attorney, probator and estate appraiser in Rappahannock Co., VA. On 6 May 1685, it was "Ordered that Barnaby Wells by reason of his lameness & inability of body in labour be exempted from paying leveys this ensueing years". An inventory of Barnaby's estate taken 21 Jun 1686 reveals he owned the following: one old horse, old couch, old fry pan, small flock bed boulder, blankets & old rug, old sheet, parcel of old Coopers tooles, old gun, old bed & two old rugs, one small tray & two old trays very old, two old potts & one small kettle, one quartr Caske & one small Rundlett. His children were: George, John and Rebeccah who was born before 1682 and died before 1715 "in her minority and without issue".

John, son of Barnaby, was born ~1664 in Rappahannock Co., VA. He was appointed to a Land Jury in that county in 1690 and bought land there in 1699. John married first a daughter of Elizabeth Bradley, then Milan UNKNOWN. In 1715, he was a resident of Sittingbourne, Richmond Co., VA and sold "Land bequeathed by William SERGEANT deced to Rebecca WELLS, daughter of Barnaby WELLS, who dying in her minority without issue, sd. land descended to John WELLS being brother "in the whole blood" to sd. Rebecca WELLS as per will of sd. William SERGEANT, dated 15 Feb 1682". The will of Elizabeth Bradley, proved 6 Nov 1723, names John Wells as a son-in-law and three grandsons: "Item- I give unto my grandson Barnaby Wells one

shilling...Item- I give and bequeath unto my grandson John Wells, son of John Wells my son-in-Law one hundred Acres of land...Item-I give unto my Grandson George Wells one feather bed...(more items to Grandson John Wells)...Lastly I nominate constitute and appoint my two son in laws John Wells and Tobias Pursill whole and sole Executors...” John’s will proven 3 Mar 1730 in Richmond Co., VA contains the following information: wife Milon Wells “and if she marry to then my son George Wells to have two parts and she one”; son George Wells all my land after my wife’s decease; son Barnaby Wells my riding horse Gloster, bridle and sadele; son John a feather bed and Bolster which I had with my former wife, his mother; personal estate to be equally divided between wife Milon, son George Wells and son Thomas Wells; wife Milon and son George to be executors. John’s children were: John (~1700-1757, Lunenburg Co., VA), Barnaby, George (~1708-1761 Lunenburg Co., VA) married Sarah UNKNOWN and Thomas, who researchers often confuse with the Thomas who married Susannah Cole and was the son of John and Frances (Barnfather) Wells. After John’s death, Milan married Thomas Chambliss.

Barnabas/Barnaby, son of John, was born ~1705 in Richmond Co., VA. In the 1720-30s, Barnaby resided and sold land in Farnham Parish, Richmond Co., VA. He married 2 Jun 1731 in Richmond, VA to Joyce Smith, only surviving child of Thomas Smith, eldest son of William Smith. By Oct 1741, he resided in Amelia Co., VA. He bought land in Lunenburg Co., VA as early as 1749 and is listed on the tax lists there in 1752 & 1764. He continued to buy and sell land and witness deeds through the 1750s. In 1763, he bought land on Sandy Creek. In Apr 1764, Barnaby Wells of Cornwall Parish,

Lunenburg Co., VA sold land and his wife, Joyce, relinquished her dower right. Barnaby sold land in Lunenburg County on Sep 1764 and in Pittsylvania County in 1768. His children were: John, Martha (1734-aft. 1800 Henry Co., VA) married (~1750) John Hailey, Barnabas (died 1797 Henry Co., VA) and Matthew (died 1774 Lunenburg Co., VA).

John, son of Barnabas, was born 1732. He married 1756 in Lunenburg Co., VA to Judith UNKNOWN. It has been theorized her surname was Morton-Walton or Gravely, but no supporting documentation has been found. John lived near his parents in Lunenburg County. Throughout the 1760s, he witnessed deeds and bought and sold land there. In 1767, he found himself in the newly formed county of Pittsylvania and on its list of tithables. On 27 Sep 1775, John was nominated Ensign in the Pittsylvania County militia. In 1777, he was once again the resident of a newly formed county, Henry. That same year he was appointed a road surveyor, a 1st Lieutenant in the militia and signed the Oath of Allegiance. From 1777 through 1802, in addition to buying and selling land John was quite active in Henry County. He was a surveyor as well as a witness of strays, deeds and wills. He took inventories, did appraisals, signed county expense reports and served on juries and grand juries sometimes as foreman. In 1779, he was “appointed Captain in the place of Brice Martin’s Company on Leatherwood”. He served at a number of Inquisitions in 1779 & 1780. These were proceedings in which land was taken from citizens loyal to Britain. In August 1780, he resigned his office as Captain of the militia. He was recommended to serve in the Commission of the Peace and appointed Commissioner to the North Battalion in 1782. In 1799 and 1800, he was appointed

Sheriff and to collect taxes. John sold land in 1801 with his wife, Judith, relinquishing her dower's right. On 19 March 1802, he served at an "inquest" even though his will written 13 March states he was "sick in body". His will probated 27 Oct 1802 names his wife, Judith, and states he has "six sons and daughters". The inventory lists: "Negroes: Feby, Mary, livestock, furniture, tools". Judith died 5 Nov 1819, Henry County. His children were: Catherine (~1756-died TN) married (1) James Morton, (2)(1835 TN) Thomas Black, Matthew (1758-1828), Jemima (1761-1858) married (1783) Thomas Dickenson, Barnaby married (1795) Sarah Bayles, Joyce (1768-1856) married (1789) James Johnston and Judith (1772-) married (1797) Jabez Gravely.

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Written and submitted by Cindy (Hubbard) Headen, Henry County, VA

Sources Bristol Register, county records, deed books, will books, research by Cindy (Hubbard) Headen

Photo caption Matthew Clay Wells family 1875