

## Notes on the History and Migration of Walter Robert Kepley's Ancestors: (v.5)

Probably all of the Kepleys in Rowan & Davidson are descendants of either Johann Peter Kepley or Theobold Devault Kepley, who were probably cousins, but this has not been fully documented. Both families trace their ancestors from settlers in Pennsylvania to Rowan County, North Carolina. There were 6 men (probably all related) aboard the *Phoenix*, arriving in Philadelphia on or about September 15, 1749 boarding in either Cowes, England or Rotterdam, Holland. Their names were Michel Koppel, Johan Koppel, Jacob Keppel, Paulus Koppel, Henrich Koppell and Petter Keppel. Our Johann Peter Kepley is thought to be this Petter Koppel. The European home of this family was the village of Herbitzheim, Alsace-Lorraine, which is now on the French side of the German-French border.

Theobold Devault Kepley, who was also a German emigrant, is considered the father of the Davidson County Kepley family. The earliest record in Rowan of a person with the surname of Kepley was George (thought to be the son of Devault) who petitioned for a land grant of 300 acres in 1794. George and his brother John moved to Indiana in 1806. John later became the founder of the Indiana town of New Salisbury, which currently boasts 3,422 inhabitants. Although there is not a direct Kepley ancestor on the Berrier side of our tree, there are numerous aunts and uncles that married Kepleys from Davidson County. Given the connections, I have included a report of the descendants of Theobold Devault Kepley.

Johann Peter Kepley moved to the Gold Hill area from somewhere in Pennsylvania prior to 1821, which is the year that he married Rachael Simison in Rowan County. They had 8 children prior to Johann Peter's death in 1849.

Their son, Jacob Nathaniel Kepley, fought for the Confederacy in the 57<sup>th</sup> NC Regiment, K Company. Jacob fought at Gettysburg and was captured in Maryland and was held at the Capitol Prison in Washington, DC. He was released at the end of the war and returned to Rowan County.

The 1850 census shows the widow Rachael Kepley and her family living on a farm in the eastern part of the county. The family moved prior to 1860, where they appear in the district labeled "County North of NC Railroad". This may have been the same location found in the 1870, 1880, & 1890 census, listed as Franklin Township, on what is now called Kepley Road. At least part of the family attended Salem Lutheran Church during the post civil war years.

In 1901, Lingdon Neumer Kepley moved his family from the farm on Kepley Road (off Hwy 70) to a rental house at 119 East Crawford Street in the Chestnut Hill community of Salisbury to work in The Salisbury Cotton Mill - later known as Cone Mills (the "Mill"). Lingdon, Mattie and the children attended Haven Lutheran Church on Harrison Street.

In 1903, Lula Elizabeth Kepley was born and only lived six months. Three and one half years later Lingdon died and left Mattie to raise four children. Daisy started to work in the Mill on or about her 13<sup>th</sup> birthday and for a while, was the only family member working outside the home. As the years went by, Addie Belle joined her sister at the Mill. There was a need for a larger house and the family rented a two story house at 816 South Main Street. The house no longer exists but it was located at a corner lot across the street from Stallings Baptist Church.

Walter went to work for the Southern Railway (the "Railroad") when he was 16 years old and Tommy joined him two years later. With Walter and Tommy working, the family's finances improved greatly and they bought and moved into the 5 bedroom house at 1123 South Main Street during World War I. In the summer of 1918 Walter received a draft notice and he made plans to go into the army. However, due to an influenza epidemic that went through army camps, the draft notice was postponed. The war ended on November 11<sup>th</sup>, the draft was cancelled, and Walter did not go into the service. One of Walter's friends, Homer Gardner, started a dance band. Both Walter and Tommy were members of the band. Walter and Homer

played cornets and Tommy played the drums. It was during this period that Walter gained the attention of Mazie Lee Simpson. As a couple, they started attending Coburn Methodist Church, where Homer was the choir director.

As the children got married and left home, Mattie started taking in boarders. Mattie's nephew, Adam Locke Pinkston, who also worked for the Railroad, was a boarder for a while. Eula Thompson, a young lady who worked at Salisbury Mill, also boarded at Mattie's for many years. Walter was transferred to work at the Southern Railway's Cameron Yard located near Washington DC. He boarded in the home of a Mr. Walter Durr in Alexandria, Virginia. When he married Mazie Simpson on December 16, 1922, they went to live there. He was able to transfer back to Spencer Shops and they moved back to Mattie's family home in time for the birth of their first child, Jack Simpson, on February 15, 1924. Walter and his family returned to Alexandria briefly but were back in the Salisbury home when Mary Ruth was also born July 18, 1925.

In 1927 Walter was transferred to Charlotte and he moved his family to an apartment on Brevard Street. They later rented a five room house on 22<sup>nd</sup> Street where Juanita was born on February 24, 1928. In 1930 the railway made a big cut and Walter returned to the family home in Salisbury. Walter Robert Jr. was born in the home on South Main Street on May 7, 1932. Although Walter eventually worked for the Railroad 51 years, it was not always steady full time employment. He also worked for Goodman Lumber Company at times as a night watchman (during the periods when he was laid-off from the railroad). He became skilled at glazing and would cut glass and install it into doors and windows between his rounds.

In 1946 Walter and Mazie bought the house at 1123 South Main Street from Walter's mother, his brother and sisters. He lived there until he died in 1978. Mazie maintained the home until she began living with her children in 1986.

Additional information is organized under the following surnames:

**Brandon, Cathey, Horah-Gardiner/Gardner, Simison, Locke, Lyerly/Layrle, Parks-Sheppard/Shepard, Patton, and Pinkston**

**Brandon/Patton-** This family, like so many others, first settled in Pennsylvania briefly before coming down the Great Wagon Road. There is a question as to the original homeland of our Brandons. I believe that this family (also similar to the Lockes) was originally English and fled to Ireland for at least one generation before sailing to America. I have seen researchers document the birthplace of our John Brandon (1662) in both London and Ireland. (More research required).

Early Rowan records show a Richard Brandon was here in 1745. The Brandons were among the first settlers along Grants Creek southwest of what is now Salisbury in the area first called the Irish Settlement. A state historic marker located on US 29 denotes George Washington's stop at the Brandon Estate. John Brandon, along with James Carter, was appointed to supervise the construction of the first jail for Rowan County which was completed in 1754. He served as a Judge during the first year the court was in Rowan. Matthew Brandon served in the House of Commons and in the North Carolina Senate. There were several Brandons that fought in the Revolutionary War, particularly Col. James Brandon, who served under General Griffith Rutherford. The Brandons were some of the first to be buried at the present graveyard at Thyatira Presbyterian Church.

The Brandon Family and the Locke Family became forever joined when Mary Elizabeth Patton Locke (widow of John Locke, who was born in London in 1706) married the widower John Richard Brandon (b. 1691). They were married in 1744 in Middleton Twp., Chester County, Pennsylvania. Three of her children (Francis, Matthew, and Margaret) married John Richard's children (Margaret Anna, Mary Elizabeth, and John Richard). It has been said that

both families sailed to the new world on the same ship but there is no documentation of this fact. (More research required.) Mary Elizabeth Patton's father, William Patton, also migrated to Pennsylvania. Our records indicate that his parents, Henry and Sarah Lynn Patton, were born in Ireland

**Cathey**- Some say members of the Cathey Family were the first English speaking settlers in the area. James Cathey (b.1685) and his wife Ann moved from Monaghan County, Ulster, Northern Ireland to Cecil County, Maryland in 1718 and remained there until 1724. He then moved to the Shenandoah Valley near Staunton until the early 1740's when he moved to what is now Rowan County.

Early Rowan records show Andrew, Alexander, & George Cathey were also here in 1752. What is now known as Thyatira Presbyterian Church was once known as "Cathey's Meeting House" and was established adjacent to James Cathey's land in 1753. George Cathey was among the first 5 men to purchase lots in the Rowan County Court Village before it was named Salisbury in 1755. He was also one of the first in Salisbury to receive a license to operate a tavern. George was a member of "The Committee of Safety" (famous for a document dated August 8, 1774 - known as "The Rowan Resolves"), where citizens of Rowan pledged solidarity with the colonists in Boston and outlined their rights and civil liberties. Other famous members of this family include Senator Elizabeth Hanford Dole (Walter Robert Kepley's 7<sup>th</sup> cousin) who is related to us through her mother Mary Ella Cathey.

**Horah/Gardiner/Gardner**- Documents in the McCubbins Collection at the Rowan Public Library state that Henry Horah and his wife, Lady Margaret Gardiner, emigrated from Ireland. Margaret, the daughter of Lord Gardiner, was said to have been disinherited when she fell in love and married Henry, a common weaver. They ended up in Salisbury, where Henry operated a Tavern (Inn). Early Rowan records show that Henry Horah was in Rowan County in 1754. Henry's sons, Henry and Hugh, became Silversmiths and his grandsons followed them in this profession. Horah Street in Salisbury is named after Hugh's son William Henry Horah who was a silversmith and a bank officer. The Horah family once owned the entire 100 block of West Bank Street. The small two story house in the middle of the block was built in 1850 by Henry's descendants. It is believed that some of Margaret Gardner's relatives followed them to Rowan and settled here as well. Early Rowan records show a John Gardner in 1764.

So far, we have been unable to find collaborating documentation that a lady from Lord Gardiner's household was expelled (more research needed).

**Simison**- The parents of Johann Peter Kepley's wife Rachael Simison are a mystery. There was a Robert Simison in Mecklenburg Co. in 1800, but not in 1810. In fact, there were no Simisons at all in North Carolina in 1810. There was a Needham Simison in Mecklenburg County in 1820. I think it's likely that Rachael Simison was actually Rachael Simpson, which was a more common surname in the area (more research needed).

**Locke**- the Locke Family is of English descent. In fact, I have read that we were descendants of John Locke, the famous English philosopher. (If you have forgotten, John Locke had a profound influence on our founding fathers - his ideas were incorporated in the Declaration of Independence and the US Constitution). However, the famous John Locke was never married and never fathered any children. I believe our Lockes migrated to Ireland for at least one generation prior to sailing to America. More research is needed to see if there is a connection between John Locke, born in 1632, and our ancestor Captain Robert Locke, born about 1660, who was supposed to have been a sea captain.

Francis Locke is the first Locke documented in Rowan in 1745. It is generally accepted that there were originally three brothers (Matthew, Francis and George), but my research includes a fourth brother, John. These were the sons of Mary Elizabeth Patton Locke, the widow listed above.

In Vol. I of the Record of Deeds in Rowan County, we find that between 1752 and 1754 Matthew, Francis and George Locke acquired land in this county. Francis Locke in 1752 purchased 1,012 acres of land from John Brandon called "Poplar Lands". In the same year the Earl of Granville granted George Locke, another brother, a tract of 610 acres of land near Poplar Springs. Also in the same year, the Earl of Granville granted Matthew Locke 600 acres. Upon these 600 acres, Matthew built a fine mansion about five miles south of Salisbury.

Matthew was an extensive landowner and planter. He was also in the business of transporting goods by wagon and became influential in western North Carolina. He was a member of the "Committee of Safety" along with George Cathey (mentioned earlier) and was treasury commissioner of the colony of North Carolina in 1771.

Matthew Locke:

- Represented Rowan County in the Provincial Congress at Hillsboro, August 20<sup>th</sup>, 1775
- member of the Colonial Congress at Halifax in 1776
- delegate to the state constitutional convention in 1776, and was on the committee which governed the state after the flight of the Royal Governor Martin.
- was a Brigadier General during the Revolutionary War
- served as paymaster of troops in the Salisbury District in 1775.
- was a member of the state house of commons 1777-1781 and 1783-1792;
- served in the state senate in 1781 and 1782;
- served as a delegate to the state constitutional convention in 1789 called to ratify the Federal Constitution (He voted against ratification).
- was elected to the Third US Congress in 1792 and served three consecutive terms.
- unsuccessful candidate for reelection in 1798 to the Sixth Congress
- died on September 7, 1801 in Salisbury, N.C.
- buried at Thyatira Presbyterian Church

Matthew Locke, in a family legend, was supposed to have been one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, but, as the legend goes, he got lost on the way to Philadelphia and either never made it or arrived late.

Matthew married the daughter of Richard Brandon and Elizabeth Cathey, and had 13 children. Four of his five sons served in the Revolutionary War. His son George served as a Lieutenant under Colonel William R. Davie at the Battle of Charlotte on Sept. 26<sup>th</sup>, 1780. A mounted militia force of 150 under Davie fought 2,000 redcoats under Lord Charles Cornwallis in the small village of Charlotte. Davie's men retreated northwest along the Salisbury Road. Near the Sugar Creek Presbyterian Church, four privates and Lieutenant Locke were at the rear of the retreating forces and were confronted by the British Dragoons. They were "cut to pieces with British sabers". Within two weeks following this battle, Cornwallis withdrew from Mecklenburg County calling it a "Hornet's Nest". The DAR erected a monument honoring Lieutenant Locke in 1911.

Matthew's brother, Francis Locke (our direct ancestor), was appointed in April 1776 as Colonel of the First Rowan Regiment by the Provincial Congress and became famous after the Battle of Ramsour's Mill. On June 20, 1780 on a series of ridges above a mill pond in what is now the city of Lincolnton, North Carolina, a force of 250 Patriots defeated a force of about 700

Loyalists. It was a foggy day in June. The Patriots led by Colonel Francis Locke surprised and surrounded the larger group of Loyalists and ran many of them into the Mill Pond at Ramsour's Mill. This defeat caused many Loyalists to change their minds about the ability of the British to muster support for the King's cause. It also gave encouragement to the Patriots who were unsure of the ability of the revolutionary forces to resist the power of the crown. As a preliminary to the Battle of Kings Mountain, The Battle of Ramsour's Mill can be said to have been a turning point in the hearts and minds of many of the foothill citizens.

Colonel Francis Locke's son (also named Francis) served as a Judge on the Superior Court of North Carolina beginning in 1803. He was a United States Senator in 1814 and died unmarried in 1823. Many male children in the family were named after the famous Francis and Matthew Locke. At one time there were more than a dozen males in Rowan County the name of Matthew Locke. This fact has confused many historians.

**Lyerly/Layrle-** Johann Christoph Layrle, emigrating from Wurttemberg, Germany, sailed on the ship *Richard & Mary*, and landed in Philadelphia on or about Sept. 30, 1754. He moved to Culpepper County, VA for approximately 10 years and then migrated to Rowan about 1771. He was a member of the Organ Lutheran Church and was sent to England to solicit aid for church work in the colony. Lyerly remains a very common surname in Rowan County

**Parks/Shepard/Sheppard-** Early Rowan records show a James and William Sheppard living here in 1755 and a Hugh Parks here in 1756. In the 1850 census, our ancestors, David Parks and Polly Sheppard Parks are living in Rowan County School District #41, which is now part of Yadkin County. In the same district in 1850, there are numerous families living nearby with the surname of Parks, Park, Sheppard, and Shepard. I believe that the parents of David and Polly lived in this same area (more research is needed).

**Pinkston-** Early Rowan records show a John Pinkstone here in 1768. However, the earliest record of a Pinkston in the new world is a land warrant issued in Oct 25, 1695 to Peter Pinkston (200 acres in Anne Arundel County, MD). There is a Rowan County connection to Peter Pinkston. His Grandson, Shadrack Pinkston (born abt. 1754 in Virginia), served as a Corporal in George Washington's personal guard during the Revolutionary War. After the war, Shadrack and his wife Athaliza moved from Fauquier County, Virginia, to Rowan County, NC, where they lived briefly before settling in Wilkes County, GA. The 1790 federal census shows only seven Pinkston households in the United States, mostly in North and South Carolina. In Rowan County, there were, Mashick Pinkston, Peter Pinkston, Thomas Pinkston, and William Pinkston. I believe that there is a very good chance that our Aaron Pinkston, Shadrack Pinkston and the others are all somehow related (more research required).

Walter Robert Kepley's mother, Mattie Ester Pinkston, was strongly against the consumption alcohol. After Jack returned from the Pacific following the end of World War II, occasionally, with some of his veteran friends, would adult beverage. This would not sit well with Mattie, Jack's grandmother. She would tell the guys "Liquor killed my father". The story goes that Aaron Pinkston would sell grain to the local distilleries which were known to pay the most for grain prior the Civil War). Naturally, it was customary to receive part of the payment in liquid form. Prior to the current DUI laws, it was also customary to sample the liquid payment on the way home. Aaron apparently sampled too much in August of 1850, because he literally "fell off the wagon" and the wagon ran him over.