

THE
BENJAMIN BLACKBURN
FAMILY
and notes on
BLACKBURNS IN AMERICA

by

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THE BLACKBURNS IN AMERICA

The name of Blackburn is of very ancient origin. As early in English History as the time of Ethelbert, King of England, A.D. 596, reference is made to Blagborneshire in the following quotation: "In those times while the said churches had thus been built, there was not, in Blagborneshire, at Cliderhowe, or elsewhere, a castle built, nor any chapel, whatever beside the above named churches, nor any lord who had ever claimed the patronage of the said churches, etc." The name appears under many spellings: Blagborne, Blakeburn, Blackborne, Blackburn. It would seem to be of English or Scottish origin and mean "black brook", or "black river". However, the first person of whom we can find authentic record was a knight who doubtless came over with William the Conqueror in 1066 and helped conquer Saxon England and received for his services "The Blackburn Manor" in Lancaster Shire in northwestern England together with some 1800 acres of fertile land thereto adjacent. He bore the name of Gamaliel de Blackburn, If he was Norman, as the "de" seems to indicate, the writer is inclined to think that he adopted the name of Blackburn from the rich estate he so unceremoniously inherited. Be that as it may, it is certain that the name of Blagborne was given to the site of the present City of Blackburn long before the Norman Conquest, and that the Blackburns moved out from this center eastward into York Shire and northward into Scotland and southward toward London. When James Stuart came to the throne of England, he found North Ireland depleted of inhabitants by civil wars. He offered to his Scotch lowland subjects the opportunity to secure tracts of 1000 to 2000 acres, on the condition that they would build a castle or substantial manor within four years and keep on each one thousand acres at least twenty-four men who were capable of bearing arms. These Scotch emigrants to Ireland (Blackburns among them) were the ancestors of the Scotch-Irish emigrants, some 34,000 of whom came to America between 1730 and 1760. They came bringing with them the Solemn League and Covenant, the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Presbyterian Church Organization. Rebuffed by the unfortunate Stuarts, harshly treated by their English rulers, they came with their hearts filled with hatred against their English kinsmen. When the war of the Revolution broke out, the American cause found no more ardent supporters than it found among these Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. The historian Bancroft says that the Revolution was fought by the Presbyterians. George Washington is reported to have said that if he were deserted by all others "he would retreat to the backcountry and rally the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians around him and fight to the bitter end." Among these Scotch-Irish emigrants who came to America in the early part of the 18th century, were many families of the Blackburns.

Many references may be found to the Blackburns. We read that in 1397 Christopherus de Blackburn was "an extensive Russian merchant"; in the time of Queen Elizabeth a branch of the family emigrated from Lancaster to County Meath, North Ireland, a Rt. Hon. Francis Blackburn appears as Lord High Chancellor of Ireland; in 1406 a Nicholas Blackburn was Lord High Admiral in the British Navy, and tradition says that he was shipwrecked on the coast of Scotland, where he met and later returned to wed a princess of the Stuarts. Peter Blackburn was rector of St. Nicholas Church, Aberdeen, in 1603. Six generations of "Francis Blackburns" all men of note, appear in York from 1650 to 1850. Lancelot Blackburn was Arch-bishop of

York in 1724. Thomas Blackburn was warden of Christ's College, Manchester, 1798. John Blackburn was King's Counsel in 1833 and William Blackburn was made a General in 1854, and others of lesser note are to be found in the records. Therefore it is not surprising that any effort to link up the various families of Blackburn in America would end in failure.

THE BENJAMIN BLACKBURN FAMILY.

Ancestor of Robin &
the author

We come now to the line of the BLACKBURN FAMILY in which the writer finds his personal lineage and in which, therefore, he is most interested. To the reader who thus far has had the patience to peruse these pages, it is patent that there were many immigrants by the name of Blackburn who came to America from Scotland, Ireland and England during the century preceding the Revolutionary War. Their descendants are now to be found in every state of the Union and their number is legion. The family relationship of the several branches is buried in the past with little hope of resurrection. In the fore-going pages we have given such fractional lineages as have come to our knowledge and hope that the same may be helpful to some seeker in genealogical lore.

Tradition says that the family of BENJAMIN BLACKBURN was of Scotch-Irish extraction and came to America from Ireland about 1724. Just where they landed, on what ship they came, where they first settled, and the exact time of their arrival, are all questions that to date remain unanswered. That Benjamin Blackburn came to America from Ireland with his parents, his brothers, John, Will, and Samuel, and other relatives seems quite certain from the evidence of family traditions and scraps of authentic data that have come to hand.

The tradition that the Benjamin Blackburn of our line was with Washington's forces at Braddock's defeat, the writer had from his mother, who asserted that she in turn had the tradition from her grandmother, Nancy Blackburn Carson, a granddaughter of the said Benjamin Blackburn. Furthermore, this Benjamin is referred to as "General Blackburn" in the "Annals of the American Pulpit", in a sketch therein of his grandson, the Rev. Gideon Blackburn. It may be that this was a complimentary title bestowed upon him because of his military services against the French and Indians or perhaps the writer of the sketch may have confused him with his son, the Gen. Samuel Blackburn, who served with distinction in the Rev. War. That he was in the conflict in 1755 is further born out by the record in Vol. VII of Hening's Statutes that he was one of the men from Frederick County, Winchester, Va., who each received 11 pounds and 2 s. for their services. Mrs. Clifford Long, now deceased, formerly of Mt. Pleasant, Tenn., stated that she was a descendant of Ambrose Blackburn, and that Ambrose and Benjamin were brothers and both were present at Braddock's defeat. The writer has never found anything to substantiate this relationship, except the fact that their grandchildren, who lived in Maury County, Tenn., called each other "cousin" and when in 1855 a number of the family of Ambrose Blackburn moved to Texas they were accompanied by a number of the family of Edward Rose Blackburn, a grandson of Benjamin. Mrs. Clifford Long also found a reference to a John Blackburn who was granted a tract of 123 acres in the County of the Isle of Wight, Virginia on Feb. 2, 1724. The same reference mentioned four brothers, John, William, Benjamin and Samuel, who apparently were the sons of the first John. The writer found a statement that William Blackburn in 1737 sold the same 123 acres--but to date we have been unable to prove or disprove that these four brothers were the same four brothers of like names who appeared in the vicinity of Winchester, Va. in or about 1742. That the Winchester Blackburns came from Chester and Lancaster Counties, Penn., seems to be well established; whether they first came to Penn. directly from Ireland or first settled in Isle of Wight Co., Va., we have been unable to determine. Since the Blackburn and Mathews families were close friends and neighbors in 1760 at Winchester, Va., and also later near Dandridge, Tenn., and Mrs. Annilu B. Odil says (1942) that she found record of one Alexander Mathews in Isle of Wight Co., Va., in 1695, in Deed Book #1 and also mentions of a John Blackburn in the same county - we are inclined to believe that the Blackburns landed in Norfolk, Va. about 1724, then moved on up to Chester Co., Penn., and then about 1742 to the neighborhood of Winchester, Va.

The first authentic date we have on the Benjamin Blackburn of our line is in 1753 when he received a grant from Lord Fairfax "to 101 acres lying on Mulberry Run in Frederick County - - - where he now lives." Probably he had rented or leased this land from Lord Fairfax for several years prior to the date of his grant. We find that Arthur Blackburn died in 1742 and his estate was probated in November of that year in Orange County. Since Frederick and Augusta Counties were taken off of Orange County in 1738, but courts were not established in these counties until 1742 or 1743, it may be that Arthur Blackburn lived near the other Blackburns in Frederick County. What kin Arthur Blackburn was to Benjamin, we do not know, but we believe that Arthur who died in 1742, Archibald Blackburn who died in Frederick Co., in 1749 and John Blackburn of the Isle of Wight, and perhaps a "James Blackburn who lived on a fertile tract of land on Marsh Creek", were brothers. (A mere hypothesis, however.)

The four Blackburn brothers of Frederick County, Virginia -- (namely, William, John, Benjamin and Samuel) - may have married before they moved from Chester Co., Pa., to Winchester. John died in July 1755. His will copied from Bk 2, page 172, Winchester, Va., reads as follows: - -

"The last will and Testament of John Blackburn weak in Body but Perfect in mind and memory and first I Bequeath my Soul to God and my Body to be Decently Laid in the ground and all my just Debts to be Paid and the Remainder of the Estate that God Hath Blessed me with to be divided as follows and first I Bequeath to my well Beloved Wife Ann Blackburn the Third part of all my movable Estate & Likewise I Bequeath My Son James Blackburn all my Lands that I now am possessed of & Likewise I Bequeath to my Daughter Mary Blackburn Fifty Pounds of my movable Estate and all that remains of my movable Estate I allow to the schooling of my Son James Blackburn and likewise I allow my Father & Mother to have their maintenance of the Prodock of my Plantation at the Discretion of my Executors. Likewise I allow my wife and children to live together & have their living of the Prodock of my Plantation until my wife marry & I also allow that my daughter Mary Blackburn be schooled of the Prodock of my Plantation at the discretion of my Executors. Likewise I allow my son James Blackburn to be Colag Bred & if there be not sufficient of the movable Estate and what can be made of the Prodock of my Plantation to do it I allow some Part of the Land to be sold as my Executors shall see his need Requires and I constitute and appoint my well Beloved Brother Samuel Blackburn and my well Beloved Coz Andrew Blackburn to be my Executors of this My Estate Witness my hand and Seal this 2nd day of July 1755. I appoint my Beloved Father in Law David Logan overseer over my Executors.

Signed and sealed in the Presence of us
William Stephenson

his
James x Blackburn
mark

her
Elianor x Blackburn
mark

his
JOHN x BLACKBURN
mark

Presumed brother
of Benjamin

At a Court Held for Frederick County on Tuesday, the 5th day of August 1755. This Last Will and Testament of John Blackburn, dec'd, was Presented into Court by Samuel Blackburn and Andrew Blackburn the Executors therein named who made oath according to Law and being proved by the oaths of William Stephenson, James Blackburn and Elienor Blackburn Witnesses thereto is admitted to record and on the motion of the said Executors and their Performing what is usual in such cases certificate is granted them a Probate thereof in Due Form.

Test. J. Wood Clerk.

In Sept. 1755 (see 7-H-217) the County made this order: -" To Samuel & Andrew Blackburn administrators of John Blackburn Estate for provisions - - - 2 pounds." Doubtless furnished for the Braddock Campaign.

From the above we note that John Blackburn was a God-fearing man; his wife's name was Ann Logan; his children appear to have been minors in 1755; he believed in education, thereby giving evidence of his Presbyterian background; we sincerely wish he had mentioned the names of his "father and mother" who were to receive their maintenance off of his plantation; could he have meant his "inlaws"? if he meant his own father and mother Blackburn, it would indicate that he was the eldest of the four brothers; (the last line of his will is a gesture of courtesy- who ever heard of an "overseer over executors"?) Somewhere we found this statement (we seem to have failed to note the source) - "In Orange County is found the declaration of David Logan and a man of the Wilson's as to their arrival in Virginia thro Philadelphia about 1740." We might assume that John Blackburn and Ann Logan were married about 1742 and that the children were under fifteen years and John Blackburn was probably not over 40 years old at the time of his death.

Presumed brother of Benjamin

WILLIAM BLACKBURN, brother of John - of him we know but little. According to (7-H-216) he received pay for the Braddock campaign. He is mentioned before Benjamin, which might indicate that he was older than Benjamin. He had a son named Benjamin (see Samuel's will to follow.)

Presumed brother of Benjamin

SAMUEL BLACKBURN, a third brother, married Eleanor Provine in Chester County, Pa., about 1748. Her sister, Ann Provine, married Francis McCormick. They were two of the four daughters of Thomas Provine. The Blackburns sold their interest in the iron ore mining on Mulberry Run to the Provines and Morgans". (Mr. Griffeth in Recorder's office in Winchester, Va. 1940.)

Samuel and Eleanor Blackburn had no children. They first lived south-west of Winchester, Va., but sold out their holdings there and took up lands about ten-miles east of Winchester, where Samuel became quite wealthy. In his will probated October 1776, he mentions: "my wife Eleanor Blackburn; my nephew Samuel Blackburn, son of my brother Benjamin; my nephew Benjamin Blackburn, son of my brother William; my wife's nephew, Samuel McCormick; John Blackburn, son of James Blackburn". (relationship of James not given, we assume it is James the son of his brother John.) Among the assets of his estate is mentioned "one white servant". The total value of his slaves is given as 350 pounds.

Andrew Blackburn, a cousin, married Ann Wilson of Chester Co., Pa. Archibald Blackburn who died in 1749 was probably an uncle of the four brothers. Archibald had a daughter, Elizabeth, who married William Wilson in 1746 "in the Valley of Virginia". George, Arthur and William Blackburn were another set of brothers, and close relatives to the Benjamin Blackburn family. Perhaps they were the sons of Arthur Blackburn who died in 1742. These three brothers had at least three sisters namely, Mary, Martha and Margaret. All these Blackburns settled on or near Mulberry Run which is a small stream that empties into Cedar Creek just below a small settlement of half-a-dozen houses and a well-preserved stone Presbyterian Church. Once the town boasted of 600 inhabitants; today little remains of its former glory. The Blackburns are said to have been iron mongers and dug the ore from the banks of Mulberry Run and crushed the ore by means of a heavy hammer operated by a water wheel at the falls of Cedar Creek. They were instrumental in organizing the Presbyterian Church at that place in 1762.

The following items support the above statements:

1742 - Nov. 25th, Orange County, Va. Will Book K page 238; gives the probate record of the estate of Arthur Blackburn - - Esther Blackburn, William and Robert

- Worthington gave bond to administer the estate of Arthur Blackburn - - - same book states that Esther was the widow of Arthur Blackburn. In (1-W(2)-227) we found: "Esther Jones, widow of Arthur Blackburn, married Zachary Taylor".
- 1746 - Fanny Wilson Frayer writing from #343 West 104th St. New York City (date not given) to J. W. Blackburn, Grottes, Va. says: "I am a descendant of Archibald Blackburn whose daughter Elizabeth married William Wilson in 1746, the place not recorded save "in the Valley of Virginia". Col. Benj. Wilson of Harrison Co. Va., was a son of this marriage and my father, John Wilson, Jr., was born in Harrison Co., on July 5, 1788."
- 1749 - (Winchester Co., Va., Ek I pp 305) appraisal of the Estate of Archibald Blackburn, deceased, made June 5, 1749, amounted to 68 pounds, 15s, 4 d. Appraisers were James Hogue, Samuel Vance & James Canton. Administrator Margaret Blackburn; bond signed by Margaret Blackburn, John Blackburn, and Wm. Stephenson for 500 pounds.
- 1753 - The Land Office Records at Richmond, Va. record a grant from Lord Fairfax to Benj. Blackburn on Sept. 1, 1753: - "Grant to Benjamin Blackburn of 181 acres -- where he now lives."
- 1755 - Arthur, George and William Blackburn received a grant from Lord Fairfax to land on Mulberry Run, Jan. 3, 1755.
- 1755 - Aug. 5th, Will of John Blackburn probated in Winchester, Va., mentioning wife, Ann, daughter, Mary, and son, James. And brother, Samuel, and cousin, Andrew.
- 1758 - Deed Book #4, pp. 408, Frederick Co., Va. records that on Sept. 6, 1758: - "Benjamin Blackburn of the County of Frederick, Va. - - in consideration of Fifty Pounds to him paid by Andrew Blackburn - - - sells to him (Andrew) 181 acres lying and being in said County on Mulberry Run, beginning at two oaks and a red oak on the line of John and Margaret Blair on the side of Little North Mountain".
- Witnesses:
James Hoge
James Fresh (?)
Isaac White
- Signed - - Benjamin Blackburn
Mary Blackburn
- 1760 - Robert Blackburn & Elizabeth Downey, County of Frederick, Colony of Virginia gave deed to land - - which said Robert Downey bequeathed to his daughter, Elizabeth Downey, now intermarried to Robert Blackburn of Frederick Co., Province of Virginia - - -
- Witness:
Thomas Prather
Evan Shelby
- Signed:
Robert Blackburn
Elizabeth Blackburn
- 1762 - A deed was granted by Lord Fairfax in 1762 conveying one hundred acres of land to William Vance, James Colville, James Hoge, William Swans and Andrew Blackburn, elders of the Presbyterian Congregation on Cedar Creek. (Shenandoah Pioneers" pp 170.)
- 1762 - Aug. 3rd - Benj. B. Blackburn bought land of Richard Calvert on "Red Bud".
- 1764 - Feb. 9th - Land Grant on Mulberry Run by Lord Fairfax to John Blackburn, who married Janet Mathews in 1765.
- 1764 - April 27th - Benjamin Blackburn bought of Lindsey 200 acres on Opeckon Creek.
- 1767 - Andrew Blackburn sold the land he bought of Benj. Blackburn in 1758 to Lewis Stevens. Anna Wilson, wife of Andrew Blackburn, was a daughter of Alexander Wilson, of Township of Calisbury, County of Lancansber, Penn.
- 1767 - Fairfax County - Deed book G, pp 260; wife, Andrew Blackburn, Hugh Blackburn and Wm. Bople, merchants in Glasgow - - have been for a certain number of yrs past and at present time in joint trade & partnership to the Colony of Va. under the name and designation of Hugh Blackburn & Co. - - -".

- 1768 - Aug. 6th - - Robert Blackburn received a grant of 500 acres of land from Lord Fairfax.
- 1769 - July 31st - - Arthur, George and William Blackburn sold 242 acres, the grant received from Lord Fairfax, Jan. 3, 1755 - - - on Mulberry Run and adjoining land of William Wilson.
- 1769 - August 1st - - John and Janet Blackburn, his wife, sold to Thos. Early 200 acres on Mulberry Run, a drain of Cedar Creek, for 80 pounds, being part of a grant from Lord Fairfax made Feb. 9th, 1764.
- 1769 - Sept. 5th - Robert Blackburn and Margaret Blackburn, his wife, sold to John Hauser (sic) 200 acres, being part of a grant of 500 acres received from Lord Fairfax August 6, 1768, on the drains of Opeckon Creek.
- 1776 - October court - probate of the will of Samuel Blackburn (already mentioned).
- 1789 - Sept. 3rd - Robert Blackburn sold land on south side of Little Limestone Creek, Tenn, to Thomas Gillespie - - 4 acres for 6 Pds-13s-4d.
Signed by Robert Blackburn (no wife joins).
(see record in Jonesboro, Tenn, Bk. 2 pp 266).
- 1789 - Sept. 4th - Robert Blackburn and Margaret Blackburn of Washington Co., Tenn. sold to John McCollister 225 acres on south side of Little Limestone Creek for 300 pounds. Signed by Robert Blackburn and Margaret Blackburn - witness, Thomas Blackburn. (See record in Jonesboro, Tenn.)
- 1794 - Knox County, Tenn. Deed book 1 C pp 54: Robert Blackburn of County of Davidson sells 500 acres to Stokely Donnellson - - at head of Town Creek, according to the original grant to me issued, #1299.
Witness: Benjn Blackburn Signed: Robert Blackburn
John Stone Recorded, Aug. 29, 1794.

We found no marriage records on file in the Court House at Winchester, Va., prior to 1780. We were told by the recorder that prior to that date marriage records were kept in the Church Parish Records, and that most of these church records were now missing. Since Benj. Blackburn came to Frederick County prior to 1753, the marriage records of his sons Benjamin, Jr., John and Robert were probably entered in the records of the Cedar Creek Presbyterian Church. John married Janet Mathews April 4, 1765; Robert married Margaret Richie probably in 1766. A letter received Nov. 1st, 1941, from Rev. Harry M. Crim, recent pastor of the Cedar Creek Church states that all the session records prior to 1815 have been lost.

From the records given above, we see that ARTHUR, GEORGE, and WILLIAM BLACKBURN received a land grant from Lord Fairfax on Mulberry Run, Jan. 3, 1755. This tract was adjacent to the land of William Wilson, whom we assume to be the same William Wilson who married Elizabeth Blackburn, daughter of Archibald Blackburn, in 1746. These three brothers had three sisters, namely, Mary, Martha and Margaret. We note that Margaret was the name of the administrator of the estate of Archibald Blackburn and doubtless she was his widow. The fact that one of these three sisters bore the name of Margaret and that the land grant was adjacent to the land of Wm. Wilson, a son-in-law of Archibald, may indicate that these three brothers and three sisters were the children of Archibald and Margaret Blackburn; while the name, Arthur, might point to Arthur Blackburn who died in 1742 as their father. Arthur, George and William sold their land grant in Frederick County in 1769, as did John and Janet, and Robert and Margaret. We think this indicates that the Blackburn family at that date left Frederick County and moved on southward in the Valley of Virginia to the vicinity of the county line between Augusta and Rock-bridge Counties. There they remained until 1772 when Arthur, George and William moved to Washington County in southwestern Virginia. There these three brothers

5. James -- (1746-
6. Elizabeth (1749- ?) married Thomas Bay.
eight sons, one daughter.
7. Archibald (1751-1823) married, 1st, Rosannah Steele; 2nd, Isabel _____ ?
six sons, three daughters, perhaps others.
8. George -- (1753-
9. William - (1755-
10. Ann (Nancy) (1757- ?) married John Weir, Rev. War Vet.
three sons, five daughters - perhaps others.
11. Samuel -- (1759-1835) married Anne Mathews, daughter of Gov. Geo. Mathews.
no children.

I. BENJAMIN BLACKBURN (1738-1834)

Benjamin Sr's first son

Benjamin Blackburn, the eldest son of Benjamin and Mary Blackburn, was one of the one hundred and fifty men from Augusta County, Va., who served under Col. Charles Lewis in Dunmore's Indian War. He served as sergeant in Col. Chas Lewis' company in the Battle of Point Pleasant, October 10, 1774 when the Indians led by the famous Shawnee Chief, Cornstalk, sought to wipe out the Virginian Volunteers, before their juncture with Lord Dunmore's forces. In an all-day battle, one of the greatest battles ever fought between the Indians and their white opponents, the Indians were finally driven back and forced to yield the field. In the *Annals of Augusta County* (Vol. I, pp. 230) we find that "Benjamin Blackburn proved that he was disabled in the service at the Battle of Point Pleasant by losing the use of two fingers of his left hand". In a pamphlet called "Revolutionary Soldiers in Alabama", Miss Augusta Bradford of Chattanooga, Tenn., found this item: "Benjamin Blackburn, age not given, a resident of Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, private in Lewis's Regiment; date of enrollment not given, payment to date from April 1, 1810, annual allowance \$60.00; sums received \$363.90; transferred from Tennessee Sept. 14, 1819; on April 24, 1816 rate increased to annual allowance of \$96.00 under which the sum of \$1715.18 received to date of publication of lists. Revolutionary Pension Roll, in Vol. 14, Senate Document 514; 23rd Congress, 1st Session, 1833-34." Arthur Blackburn from the Holston Region was also in the above battle. He was a private in Capt. Evan Shelby's Company from Fincastle County.

In the course of proving the claims of the children of Benjamin, Jr., to share in the estate of the Gen. Samuel Blackburn, Benjamin of the third generation, writes under date of 1835: That "my father Benjamin Blackburn died Sept. 24, 1834; my brother, John, lives in Fayette Co., Alabama; my sister Mary Davis, lives in the State of Mississippi near Columbus, about eighty miles from Tuscaloosa; my sister, Jane Wallace, lives in Lawrence Co, in Alabama, about one hundred miles from Tuscaloosa; my sister, Sally Derwin, lives in Jackson Co. Alabama, about one hundred thirty miles from Tuscaloosa; sister Asena has been twice married, first to Ezekiel Harlen, and then to a Mr. Miller. Have not seen her for twenty years, she lived near Lexington, Kentucky. Brother James has removed to Arkansas. Myself and wife have thirteen children, nine sons and four daughters". John Wallace, his brother-in-law, states in an affidavit: "That five children of Benjamin Blackburn (brother of Gen. Samuel Blackburn) are living. First, my wife, Jane Wallace; Polly Davis living five miles from Columbus, Missi, Benjamin Blackburn living in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, John Blackburn living in Marion Co., Ala.; Sally Derwin living in Jackson Co. Alabama".

Miss Jeanie Blackburn of Bowling Green, Ky., granddaughter of a James Blackburn and great granddaughter of a Benjamin Blackburn, writes under date of July 24, 1925: "There were three brothers, Benjamin, James, John and a sister Kitty. Their father, I was told, was Benjamin. My father, General Samuel Davies Blackburn, a scientist and lawyer, was of Scotch-ancestry; and descended from Benjamin who was disabled in the war with the Indians - disabled and could not serve in the Rev. War - - Aunt Mary also told me her grandfather was wounded and unable to serve in the Revolution - - Samuel Davies Blackburn, son of Rev. James Blackburn and Jeanie Davies, his wife, son of Benjamin Blackburn and Elizabeth Nesbitt, his wife, whose children were Benjamin, James, John, and Kitty - - . The Nesbitts were connected with the sea faring interests as were the Blackburns - - - James Blackburn from teaching became a minister of the gospel, left his father living in Tennessee, John and Benjamin, his brothers and a sister Kitty, and went to the wilds of Arkansas after the birth of his four children - - my father's father was highly educated and taught my father, who never had an English grammar, but attained what he knew from his Latin one - - - when quite a child I personated Mary Queen of Scots - - all the girls said I looked just like Queen Mary. My mother said nothing but my father raised his eyes from his book and said to her: "Lizzie, do you think a strain of physical resemblance could be perpetuated to a third or fourth generation?" I asked how - "Well, you are a descendant of the Stuarts". - - - years after his death by chance I met an aged aunt and asked her could we have been connected with the Stuarts - - - she replied, "Our Blackburn ancestor was a Lord High Admiral of the seas and his ship was wrecked on the coasts of Scotland and he met the young princess Stuart of the Royal House of Scotland and later returned and married her."

There seems to be strong evidence to believe that the great grandfather of Jeanie Blackburn of Bowling Green, Ky., and the Benjamin Blackburn (1738-1834) of this discussion were one and the same person. First, the wound that prevented him from taking part in the Rev. War; second, the names of the children; third, the son James who went to Arkansas. If some one could supply the name of the wife of our Benjamin (1738-1834) the point might be finally determined. By correspondence we have tried to get in touch with some of the Blackburn descendants who must still be living in Alabama, but have been unsuccessful in getting any replies. If we could get access to the family records that must surely be in the "Great Bible" which Benjamin of the will of 1791 gave to his eldest son Benjamin, we would doubtless find some very interesting information about the patriarchs of this family who came over from Ireland and Scotland. One daughter of John, son of Benjamin (1738-1834) was named Nancy Blackburn.

* * * * *

II. JOHN BLACKBURN (1740-1808)

Ancestor of Robin & the author

John Blackburn, second son of Benjamin and Mary Blackburn was born Dec. 25, 1740, probably in Chester County, Pa. On Feb. 9, 1764 he received a land grant from Lord Fairfax on Mulberry Run in Frederick Co., Va. April 2, 1765 he married Jane (Janet) Mathews. Janet was born April 23, 1747, died Sept. 29, 1818. She and her husband were buried in the old cemetery at Dandridge, Tenn.

Their children were: -

Alexander - - born Jan. 14, 1766; killed at Babson's Ferry below Dandridge by the Indians, and is said to have been the first man buried in the Dandridge cemetery.

Robin's ancestor - Benjamin - - born March 8, 1767; died at 18 years of age. (1785)
- Mary - - - - born Nov. 1st 1768; married James Moyers Nov. 3, 1789.
- Andrew - - - born Dec. 13, 1770; married, 1st Margaret Samples, 2nd Catherine McGirk.

William - - - - born Oct. 7, 1772; married Amy Samples; 2nd
Grizelle - - - - born Oct 27, 1774; Married her 1st cousin, Gideon Blackburn
George - - - - - born May 26, 1776; married Martha Neely
John - - - - - born Mch 24, 1778; Elizabeth McGirk
Edward - - - - - born June 3, 1780; Margaret McGirk
Jane - - - - - born June 3, 1780; married Thomas Snoddy
James - - - - - born Oct. 2, 1782; married Catherine Jamieson
Nancy - - - - - born Apr. 7, 1785; married John Carson

John and Jane Blackburn sold their land grant in 1769 in Frederick Co., Va., and with a number of Blackburn families moved down to the south side of Augusta County or over the line into Rockbridge County. There they remained until probably the summer of 1773 when they moved on down and settled on Beaver Creek between the present location of Abingdon and Bristol. John served on the Jury of Washington County, Va., in May 1778, June 1779, May 1781, August 1782 and Nov. 1782. He is mentioned as being an elder in the Sinking Springs Presbyterian Church at Abingdon, County seat of Washington County in 1782. On September 25, 1780 he was one of the band of four hundred men who under Col. William Campbell joined forces with their compatriots under Shelby and Sevier and marched over the Smokies and wiped out Col. Ferguson's force of British regulars and Tories at the famous Battle of King's Mountain. In Nov. 1780 he was one of the administrators of the estate of Lt. Wm Blackburn, who was killed at King's Mt. He also appears in 1782 as a beneficiary in the will of Arthur Blackburn, which was witnessed by his wife "Janet Blackburn". It is reported that he served seven years in the militia of Washington County; however in 1787 he received from North Carolina for his services, a military grant of 400 acres on Long Creek in Green County, to which locality he probably moved in 1783. When John Sevier was elected Governor in 1784 of the ill-starred State of Franklin, he appointed John Blackburn Justice of Peace. He was a member of the first court held in Jefferson County. This court met in the home of Jeremiah Mathis about four miles west of Dandridge. The old house is still pointed out on the road to the home of John K. Blackburn (1940). Later, when John Sevier became Governor of Tennessee, he again appointed John Blackburn, Justice of Peace.

Military Land Grant No. 265, recorded in Book B, page 36, North Carolina Military Book, Nashville Tennessee, reads as follows:

"KNOW YE, that we have given and granted unto John Blackburn a tract of land containing four hundred acres, lying in our county of Green on Long Creek; Beginning at two box oaks and a pine on a hill and running thence north two hundred and forty poles to a white oak on the south of a hill crossing the branch at two hundred and twenty-four poles, thence north fifty-seven degrees east on the line between said Blackburn and Samuel McGarvey three hundred and twenty poles at a stake on the top of a hill; thence south forty degrees east on the line between said Blackburn and Andrew McFerren one hundred and thirty-eight poles; to a red oak on a hill crossing a branch at sixty-five poles; thence south forty-eight degrees west four hundred and seventy poles to the beginning TO hold to the said John Blackburn and his heirs and assigns forever. Dated this 20th day of September 1787.

Rd Caswell

J. Glasgow, Secretary
"Wt. No. 80, surveyed by Jas. Kamper, Jno Hines and Henry Haggard, chain carriers."
Richard Caswell was Governor of North Carolina in 1787. It would seem from the description that John Blackburn had already settled in the tract and had marked its boundaries.

We will have more to say concerning John Blackburn and his wife, Janet Mathews later when we take up the lineage of his children and grandchildren.

died the year that the grandfather drew up his will, doubtless the grandfather wished to give a Bible to one of the living sons of John. We note that at that date each of his other children had a living son named Benjamin. But who was Samuel? While in Jonesboro in 1940, we took a good look at the record, and it certainly looks like "Samuel" on the record.

List of Descendants of the children of John and Jane Blackburn as far as known to the writer.

ALEXANDER BLACKBURN (1766 - cir 1786); named after his maternal grandfather, Alexander Mathews; killed by the Indians near the large island below Dandridge, Tenn., about 1786. Said to have been the first man buried in the old cemetery in Dandridge.

BENJAMIN BLACKBURN (1767-1785); "died at 18 yrs of age". Named for his paternal grandfather, Benj. Blackburn. Cause of his death not known.

Robin's ancestors--

MARY (POLLY) BLACKBURN (1768 - circa 1846); md Nov. 3, 1789, James Moyers: Mary Blackburn & James Moyers were the parents of: -

1. John Moyers..... m. Mary Snoddy, 1812. --Robin's ancestors
- 2 Susannah Moyers..... m. Enoch Willoughby, 1813.
- 3 Grizelle Moyers (1796 - c 1830) m. John M. Patton.
- 4 James Moyers..... m. 1824 Cynthia Carson, Dandridge, Tenn.
- 5 Alfred Jefferson Moyers (1811-18??) m. Jane Reams

We think there were other children; also uncertain whether James was a son of James and Mary Moyers.

- (John Moyers, who married Mary Snoddy, Oct 1812 (dau. of Thos Snoddy ?)
- (Thos Snoddy Moyers (1818-1914) m 1846 Martha Jane Billingsby (1822-89)
- ((John C. Moyers (1848-1914) m 1874 Susan Edna Hill (1853-1917)
- (((Flora E. Moyers, m. L. S. Gillentine, Pikesville, Tenn.
- (Other children ? ? included Narcissa Ann Myers, who married F.J. Hutcheson
- (Susannah Moyers who married, May 6th, 1813, Enoch Willoughby; Issue ?
- (Griselle Moyers, m. John M. Patton, 3/14/1813. Griselle died circa 1830.
- (James Patton
- (Mary Patton, m. Jan 2, 1832, Henry Massengill. Lived (1871) in Calhoun Co. Ala.
- ((John A. Massengill
- ((Martha (Massengill) Porter
- ((Darthula (Massengill) Broyles
- (Eliza S. Patton, m. Aug. 1, 1834, Jonathan S. Ward
- (Susan Patton m. Aug 29, 1839, Morgan Ryan.
- (Samuel Patton, b. 1823, m Sept 15, 1845 Martha Pearman (issue at least 2).
- ((Mary E. Patton, b. 1846
- ((Isaac C. Patton, b. 1849; living (1850) in Jefferson Co., Tenn.
- (John William Patton, soldier in Mexican War; md _____ Lyons.
- ("supposedly two sons besides."
- (Alfred Jefferson Moyers, b. 1811, m. Jane Reams
- (David Nelson Moyers
- (John Tate Moyers
- (Thomas Benton Moyers
- (Richard Calhoun Moyers
- (Alfred Jefferson Moyers, Jr.
- (Mary Jane Moyers
- (Sarah Ann Moyers

- ((James Bartlett Moyers (1834-1877); m. Mrs. Elizabeth (Moore) Robinson (37-93)
 - ((Sarah Moyers, b. 4-17-1866
 - ((Laura Moyers, b. 10-8-1870
 - ((Susan Moyers, died age 2 yrs.
 - ((Mabel Moyers, died aged 1 wk.
 - ((Nancy Jane Moyers (1864 -), m. Jas. A. Carpenter (1854-1929) in 1881.
 - (((Eva Carpenter, b. 1882; m. Dr. F. A. Pierce
 - (((Ollie Carpenter, b. 1884; m. Wm. L. Curtis, Atty.
 - (((Kathryn Curtis
 - (((Viola Carpenter, b. 1887, m. Richard A. Mayes.
 - (((Richard A. Mayes, Jr.
 - (((Lola Carpenter, b. 1890; m. Shelby S. Hurlburt
 - (((Natalie E. Hurlburt
 - (((James C. Hurlburt
 - (((Lola Jane Hurlburt
 - (((Ruth Carpenter, b. 1892; m. 1st, Gaston A Shumate; 2nd, L. B. Hall.
 - (((Nancy Jane Shumate
 - (((Gaston A. Shumate, Jr.
 - (((Lesta Carpenter, b. 1895; m. Archibald B. Patterson
 - (((Archibald B. Patterson, Jr.
- ? (James Moyers who married Cynthia Carson, Sept. 24, 1824, at Dandridge, Tenn., supposed to belong to this family.

- - -

ANDREW BLACKBURN (1770-1844), m. 1st Margaret Samples, 1791, 2nd Catherine McGirk, Andrew was a farmer and a large land holder. Said to have been 1802. quite successful.

Andrew Blackburn and Catherine McGirk were the parents of : -

1. John Blackburn (1803-18??) who married "Sept. 22, 1822" to _____?
 2. Alexander Blackburn (1805-1846), 1st Priscilla Morrow; 2nd Harriet Campbell
 3. Sally Blackburn (1808-1892) m. Samuel Campbell
 4. Mary (Polly) Blackburn (1808-1848), m. David Campbell.
- 1 (John Blackburn, b. Mch 23, 1803; "married Sep. 22, 1822" to _____.
- 2 (Alexander Blackburn, "General in 6 wks war against the Indians". b. 2-23-1805; died 2-2-1846, m. 1st Priscilla Morrow, 2nd Harriet Campbell.
- (Andrew Blackburn (1827-1859) son of Alexander & Priscilla, was a Pres. Minister at Chattanooga; died "Aug 22, 1859 aged 31 yr 10 mo. 24 da"; was buried in Westminister Cemetery, Dandridge, Tenn. m. Anne Elizabeth Gillespie.
- 3 (Sally Blackburn, twin (1808-1892) wife of Samuel Caldwell, 1830. pie. (Marcissa Caldwell (1831-1860) - other children ? ?
- 4 (Mary (Polly) Blackburn, (1808-1848) wife of David Caldwell, 1831, (bro of Saml).

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WILLIAM BLACKBURN (1772-1856) m. Anna (Amy) Samples in Dandridge, 1798; she died c. 1818; the first six of the eleven children are supposed to be children of Wm and Anna. In 1805, William was living on a farm adjacent to his father's farm. He probably came to Franklin, Tenn., about 1812 and settled south of Franklin near Spring Hill. When the Spring Cove Pres. Church was organized near Medora, Ill., in 1834 five of his nephews were made elders. William wrote them a letter of congratulations to their elevation to that office. The writer's mother said that William sometimes "preached" altho not an ordained minister.

Because of its special reference to family history, we include a copy of a letter by William Wirt Blackburn:

Dandridge, Tenn.
April 20, 1909

Senator J.K.P. Blackburn
Nashville, Tenn.

Dear Sir:

I am very glad to make your acquaintance. I have been reading of your proceedings in the Senate and wondering if you are a relative of mine, and it seems that you are. Gideon Blackburn, that you spoke of, was a great Uncle of mine by marriage. He married Griselda Blackburn, who was a great aunt of mine, also his first cousin. My great grandfather partly raised him; he worked on the farm by day and studied by pine knot by night and went 8 miles to recite to old Dr. Henderson, I think it was, who lived below Dandridge.

My great grandfather's name was William(*) as near as we can tell; he came from Scotland and settled in Rockbridge County, Virginia. He had two sons, Samuel was a General in the Revolutionary War and was a very eminent lawyer, but as we have it had no children. John B. was the second son and my great grandfather, he raised Gideon Blackburn. He came from Rockbridge Co., Va. and settled in Jefferson Co., 6 miles east of Dandridge on Long Creek, was the first Justice of the Peace in Jeff. Co., and an elder in the Presbyterian Church. You thought there were 4 sons but I was under the impression that there were only two. Here is the record of my great grandfather's family taken from his Family Bible, which I have in my possession.

John Blackburn and Jenat Mathis were married April 2, 1765. Their children:

Alexander Blackburn was born Jan. 14, 1766 - killed by the Indians.

Benj. Blackburn Mar 9 1767

Mary Blackburn Nov 1 1768

Andrew Blackburn Dec 3 1770

Wm Blackburn Oct 7 1772

Grizzell Blackburn Oct 27 1774

John Blackburn Mar 24 1778

Geo. Blackburn May 26 1776

Jenny & Edward June 3 1780

James Blackburn Oct 2 1782

Nancy Blackburn Apr 7 1785

(John was my grandfather)

Copied from the family record by W W. Blackburn

Benjamin Ardery, oldest son of John, was my father. He died the 20th day of Sept. 1877, aged 72. He had 4 sons and 8 daughters, only two sons and one daughter living. John, living near Jefferson City, Harriet Moore, Atlanta, Ga., Rev. John Moore, her son, is pastor of Presb. Church there. Four of my father's grandsons are Presby. Preachers. Andrew was 3rd son of my grandfather's, had 1 son and 1 daughter who died in Live Oak, Fla. His son Henry is a merchant and lives in Live Oak, Fla. Henry has a large family of fine people.

Gideon H. Blackburn, 3rd son, lives at Coal Creek, Tenn., married in Va., is 80 yrs old and has no children. Mac never married, died in Ga. We have 6 sons and 7 daughters, 7 children married. I was 71 years old, the 9th of April. If you write to Rev. Geo. Blackburn of Columbia, S. C., I think you will find out lots about the Blackburn Family. He was here some time ago and was getting up a history of the Blackburn Family and was going to get it put into book form and said he would send me a copy, but I have not received it yet. He has gone to quite a good deal of pains to get it up. He is a brother of Rev. Asa Blackburn, who is pastor of the Stranger's Church, N.Y.; they are sons of the Rev. John Nelson Blackburn, son of my uncle