

Return to J. Age

Once Upon A Time —

*A History of Emory Chapel Community,
Chambers County, Alabama*

1832-1976

by

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THE BARBER'S¹John L. Barber

A number of the children of John L. Barber have played an important role in the early history of the Emory Chapel Community and Chambers County. He was born in Glenberry County Antrim, Ireland in 1770, the youngest of nine children. Eight of his brothers took part in a rebellion sometime before the American Revolution. The six of his brothers who were officers had to leave Ireland or be executed as fugitives. Of these, two went to Germany, two went to Australia and two came to America.

John L. and his two brothers who were privates stayed in Ireland, but in 1779 John L. and a brother, James, came to America to join the two brothers who had immigrated earlier. This left one remaining brother in Ireland.

In Ireland, the Barbers were linen makers. It is said that Barber linen was among the best made in the 18th Century. Although John L. learned this trade, he did so against his wishes and never followed it after he became of age. John L. immigrated to South Carolina, where in 1790 he married Sarah Carmichael of Chester, South Carolina. They immigrated to the Fairfield district sometime in 1791.

About 1833 or 1834 Nathaniel C. Barber, son of John L. and Sarah came to the Chambers County area as a government surveyor.² He returned to South Carolina and brought his father and brothers, James A. and William Thomas back to Chambers County before 1838. Also immigrating with them were their sister Sarah and her husband, John Welch.

John bought 160 acres of land from John B. Turner on May 15, 1843.³ He died in Chambers County on July 3, 1848 at age 78.⁴ He is buried at Sweet Home Cemetery. According to the appraisalment of his estate, he owned 5 slaves.⁵

At the demise of John L. Barber, the locations of his children and heirs were as follows:⁵

John, Jr.	Washington County, Alabama
Nathaniel Carmichael	Chambers County, Alabama
James A.	Chambers County, Alabama
William Thomas	Chambers County, Alabama
Sarah (Welch) ¹⁷	Chambers County, Alabama
Jane (Matilda Jane)	York District, South Carolina

Heirs of Mary Hall	
Mansell ⁶	South Carolina
Nathaniel B. ⁶	South Carolina
Sara L. Perkins ^{6,7}	Randolph County, Georgia

Heirs of Louisa M. Knighton ⁸	
Mary ⁹	State of Georgia
Sara ⁹	State of Georgia
Eugenia ⁹	State of Georgia

For some reason, John Barber, Jr. and one sister said to have married a Smith did not share in the final division of the estate of their father.¹⁰

Nathaniel Carmichael Barber

Nathaniel (born May 22, 1800 - died May 6, 1875) was the son of John L. Barber an Irish immigrant (Glennberry, County Antrim, Ireland) and Sara Carmichael (Chester County, S.C.). Nathaniel was one of the first trustees of Emory Chapel Church. He is listed in Woods Reminiscences as a local Methodist Preacher in the period 1833-1838.¹¹ West speaks of him as a man who repeatedly sought license as an itinerant minister from the Alabama Conference but was disqualified or rejected because of the poor quality and expulsions of previous preachers which had been recommended by the various Quarterly Conferences of the LaFayette Circuit.¹² He presented his credentials to the County on March 26, 1839, as an ordained minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church and was authorized to perform marriages.¹³ In the 1850 census of Chambers County, he listed his principle occupation as a Methodist clergyman. He was undoubtedly a true Christian and a man of the highest integrity, being appointed as guardian of numerous estates.¹⁴ He, along with Humphrey Gilmore, another itinerant preacher met the spiritual needs of the early members of Emory Chapel Church.

Nathaniel had permanently immigrated to Chambers County from South Carolina about 1835. Previously he had been in the County as a government surveyor after the Creek Indian Treaty of March 24, 1832, which ceded these lands to the United States. He returned to South Carolina and in 1839 he brought back his father, several brothers (James A. and William T.) and members of his family.¹⁵ In the party also were John Welch (1798-1878) and his wife Sara Barber Welch (1802-1887) who was Nathaniel's sister. He bought 160 acres in 1844 from Samuel B. and Martha Turner and by 1855 he was an established farmer and slave owner having 9 slaves.¹⁵

Nathaniel married Elizabeth Walker Harden (born November 27, 1811 - died May 19, 1897) on November 11, 1828.¹⁵ He and Elizabeth later moved to the Sweet Home Community where he served Sweet Home Methodist Church, and it is here that Nathaniel and Sara are buried. Many of his children and grandchildren were members of both Emory Chapel and Sweet Home and are active to this day in these communities.¹⁶

Issues of Nathaniel C. and Elizabeth W. Barber were:¹⁸

1. Benson Fletcher ---b Apr. 26, 1830 d Sept. 19, 1848
2. Sara Elizabeth¹⁷ ---b Oct. 21, 1832 d May 26, 1896
Married Corporal William J. Crook,^{17,19} Co. I, 37th Ala. Inf. CSA.
3. John Henry²⁰ ---b Feb. 11, 1835 d Feb. 1, 1895
4. Malcolm Lorenza ---b Mar. 23, 1835
Moved to Texas, he became a Capt. in Co. C, 14th Ala. Inf. CSA
He married Mary Frances (Fannie) Andrews²¹ in 1865.²²
5. Mary Jane ---b May 15, 1846
Died in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, about 1931. She married
Thomas H. Stevens.²⁴
6. Nathaniel James ---b July 4, 1845 d Dec. 1923
He married Harriet Elvira Vaughn²³ ---b Apr. 5, 1852 d Feb. 24, 1889
On October 18, 1870 Nathaniel mustered out with Co. F., 1st
Alab. Regt. Inf. CSA.