

Prepared by Charles E. Roe for the Coleman et.al family

[ 6410 Arrington Rd., Raleigh NC 27607; [chuck\\_roe@mindspring.com](mailto:chuck_roe@mindspring.com) ]

Explanation: This is a DRAFT summary about my Roe family ancestors excerpted from a considerably longer narrative that I'm currently preparing about the story of my ancestors' migration and pathways from American colonial times (from emigration beginning in the 17<sup>th</sup> century) to their settlement in the Illinois "frontier" in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. I accepted invitations to attend the annual Coleman-Feaster-Mobley families' reunion in Feasterville, South Carolina, on Oct. 6-7, 2018. Elizabeth Roe Coleman (b. 1749 NC- d. ca. 1825 SC) was the shared ancestor of many of those family members. When I revealed that I had been investigating Roe family roots and currently am preparing a written narrative of my findings, I was asked to share pertinent information. I do that somewhat prematurely as my ancestral research is not complete and my narrative is very much in draft form. I ask those of you who may read this account to keep in mind that this document is very much an early draft and is only an excerpt from a much longer document that I am currently preparing.

Meanwhile, my brother Bob (Robert) Roe is doing a deeper dive into the genealogy and historical traces of the paternal side of our "family tree" [and is preparing an even more extensive narrative]. In the semi-retirement phase of our lives, Bob and I may have either too much time or finally enough time to pursue our curiosity about our family history. By my observations, most people develop their interest in (or finally have time to investigate) their family history and genealogy only when they have become "elders" themselves and their own mortality is becoming more obvious to them – perhaps they are searching for their own "context" and attempting to define their lasting influence on their own progeny. Soon they too will become "historic" figures within their own families, and their own stories will be summed and abridged into a mere chart of pedigree and lineage... or worse yet on a memorial marker in some cemetery.

In my limited genealogic research in my late teenage years (some 50 years ago), I had read microfilm copies of 19<sup>th</sup> century US Census records that stated that my Great-great grandfather John Roe had been born in 1807 in South Carolina. By 1830 he'd moved to the vicinity of the little settlement of Liberty in Adams County, Illinois (about 25 or so miles inland from the Mississippi River) with other followers and members of the Church of the Brethren, and where he became a landowner and farmer. There in 1849, when he was a nearly 42-year-old bachelor farmer, he married a neighboring widow Elizabeth Dayton (born Limbaugh) and adopted her four children, before adopting an orphaned child and producing three more children of their own, including my great-grandfather Isaiah Berryman Roe (born 1852 - died 1906). Now that would be another fascinating story to learn: was this a marriage of convenience between an older bachelor farmer and a widow in need of a new partner and means of sustenance? Or could it have been a marriage of two childhood friends and sweethearts [as they had both grown up as teenagers in proximity when their parents lived in the Cape Girardeau, MO, vicinity]? John M. Roe died in 1875 and was buried alongside his wife Elizabeth (who died in 1889) in the small rural Nations cemetery on the northside of Liberty, IL, near the location of their farm. That was about all that I learned in my limited examination in the 1960s. I vaguely remember, while doing student teaching in the spring of 1969 at Springfield IL High School, going to the Illinois State Historical Library where I examined US Census data on microfilm. I recall finding several Roes (two named John) identified as residing in upstate (western) South Carolina in the 1790 and 1800 national censuses, but I had no clues as to which of them might be related to "my" John Roe ancestor. Those early censuses did not record names of spouses or children.

My investigations of my family history started some fifty years ago in my youth and revealed interesting stories and evidence, but I then abandoned my ancestral pursuits until recently and after I retired from a professional career in land and environmental conservation. In my survey of family roots done in the 1960s, I'd discovered some census records and historical documents, some family stories, and gravesites of my paternal Roe and maternal Sorrill family ancestors who had migrated to Adams County, Illinois, in the early- to mid-1800s.

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My ancestors apparently were satisfied enough to put down their roots in west-central Illinois by the 1820s-1870s and remain there for the next several centuries. I and my brother resumed a degree of wanderlust and moved away from home. In my case, I learned later that my path took me back into the geographic routes of my paternal ancestors.

Now in my own "senior years" as I've reached the "milestone" of 70 years of age and as I'm feeling increasingly "mortal", my interest has been drawn to learn more about my family lineage. **With the discoveries that my brother and I have made in family genealogy and**

history, we were surprised to learn that when our great-great grandfather John M. Roe died in 1875, some of the paternal side of his family ancestors had been residing in America for more than 200 years previously! John's own great-great grandfather William Wroe had come to America (about 1687) more than 125 years before John M. Roe's 1807 birth while some of the women that Roe men had married came from families who had immigrated to the American colonies as early as the 1630s! And John M. Roe had been named in honor of his deceased grandfather John A. Roe and his deceased uncle John Roe.

**This account is my version of interpreting my ancestral family history in America ... my family "roots".** I defer to and incorporate from my brother's much more intensive narrative for details. This is intended to be my summary and account of exploring the landscapes through which my paternal side of the Roe family (and branches of the Roe's spouses) passed in their migration routes – from their arriving in the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries into harbor ports on the Chesapeake Bay, and ultimately moving south and west from northern Virginia and eastern Pennsylvania through the Carolinas, passing briefly through Tennessee and Kentucky, then to southern Illinois and Missouri, and finally reaching and settling down as farmers in western Illinois by the 1830s.

While my maternal side of my family lineage were direct emigrants from western Europe in the mid-1800s to the fertile farmlands of west-central Illinois, the paternal side of my family were much earlier emigrants from western Europe, and they have resided in America for 350 years or more. All very interesting to me. This story brings me back "full circle" to my early and long interests in American colonial and "trans-Appalachian" frontier settlement history.

For the past year or so, I've been entertaining myself with occasional explorations of the "historic landscapes" of my paternal ancestors as they emigrated to America and migrated from the Chesapeake Bay region, through the Carolinas, across the Appalachian mountains, and up the Mississippi river valley to put down their deep roots in Adams County of west-central Illinois. There is magnetism in land and home place. Some of my favorite writers write extensively about "sense of place", like my favorite poet and novelist Wendell Berry (author of "A Place on Earth" and many other books and collections of poems remembering his Kentucky home country). Historical novelist Sharon McCrumb observed: "Perhaps it isn't a unique experience in nature, this yearning for a place to which one is somehow connected." After years in the vast ocean, salmon [and many other species of fish] return to spawn in the same small stream from whence they and their forbears came; monarch butterflies [and generations of their progeny] make the journey back and forth from their overwintering home in Mexican forested mountaintops to summer homes in fields of North America, sharing the same birthplace as all previous generations. McCrumb continued, "the journey there and back again in unchanging, but each generation travels only one way. Is it really so strange that humans might feel some of this magnetism toward the land itself?" Indeed, scientists recently

determined that our DNA is affected by our environment and our sense of place is imprinted into our human DNA. Come to think of this, I've written my own essays and observations about "sense of place" (see some of my essays on the [www.ConservationSouth.org](http://www.ConservationSouth.org) website's viewpoints section).

Because my parents left their Adams County, Illinois, homeplaces for employment as public school teachers 150 miles south in the community of Highland in Madison County, my brother Bob and I did not have shared common territory with our cousins who grew up and stayed in the home country of four-five generations of family in Adams County and its Liberty and Quincy vicinity. As another of my favorite North Carolina novelists and humorists, Clyde Edgerton, has observed, our home country and its landscapes provide the "*place to hold the stories*" of families. The landscapes of my personal memories and stories differ from that of my family relatives who kept their roots down deep in western Illinois, along with those of our ancestors who resided there for more than the past century-and-a-half.

None of my ancestors were landed "gentry" or noblemen or famous in any way. They were "regular" people. Some of them may have immigrated to America as simple laborers or even as temporarily indentured servants. They were mostly yeoman, subsistence farmers. They left little evidence beyond a few property deeds, witness signatures (or marks), and wills. To my surprise, I discovered some Roe ancestors in the 18<sup>th</sup> century were small-scale slaveowners (at least owning a few female slaves to help their wives maintain households and their large families of children) in the 18<sup>th</sup> into the early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. To my relief, I discovered that my direct Roe lineage joined a Protestant religious sect that opposed slavery. My direct ancestor John M. Roe traveled with his parents and extended family as a young child (from his 1807 birthplace near Golden Creek in the South Carolina upstate backcountry, in the vicinity of the community now named Liberty, and near modern-day Clemson, SC) along with other members of the Church of the Brethren (known also as German Baptists or "Dunkards" or sometimes "Dunkers" for their practice of adult baptism by total immersion) across Kentucky, soon on to Cape Girardeau, Missouri, and the opposite side of the Mississippi River in Union County, Illinois, and by the early 1830s as a young man moved on northward with other families associated with the Church of the Brethren as the founders of the community of Liberty, in Adams County, in the "new frontier" of west-central Illinois.

Regrettably, I did not have the benefit of possessing any family primary records – Bibles and entries of family events or any written narratives. Those few documents that exist were either lost or transcended into the possession of cousins or more distant relatives. My paternal male ancestors appear to have remained illiterate or at least could not write before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But it is possible that the women they married were literate. Perhaps we will yet find more evidence and written narratives left by great-grandmothers that could shed more light on our family history.

The early records of their property ownerships are so murky and imprecise that one can only suppose the general locations of their land properties – on or near a creek named XXX (the

rest of the property descriptions in metes and bounds, with identified boundary trees, and named neighbors long-departed). My interest was piqued to explore the general landscapes of their American migration routes and to view the streams near which they lived. It has been amusing to roam through the landscapes of their sojourns in Chesapeake Bay area, in northern Virginia, the Carolinas, across Tennessee and Kentucky, and westward and northward to Illinois. Some of my explorations have provided fascinating coincidences – like finding ancestral properties located in the George Washington Birthplace National Historic Park next to the Potomac River in northern Virginia—wow, the Roes rubbed shoulders and exchanged properties with wealthier, neighboring Washingtons, Monroes, Masons! But more often I’ve come up disappointingly empty in my attempts to discover documented evidence of their passage. I’ve formulated hypotheses and guesses. It makes for good historical fiction. It has been a fascinating exercise, and a fun story line to follow. I can continue to fill in missing pieces of this puzzle for as long as I have time and interest.

**Here is my summary account:**

John M (Miller?) Roe: my previous “ending” point and recent “starting” point in my research quest: born 1807 somewhere in South Carolina; died 1875 near Liberty, in Adams County, Illinois, and buried next to his wife Elizabeth in the Nation’s Cemetery north of Liberty. That for a long time was all that I knew about John M. Roe. Who was he and where did he come from? We haven’t even confirmed his middle name. Oh, it would be so very interesting to have a biography of his life. He left no traces other than the insubstantial evidence recorded by US Census records, and his tombstone along that of his wife and near her Limbaugh parents in the Nations cemetery, north of Liberty. John Roe was my ancestor who was for so long one of the “dead-ends” in my pursuit of my family lineage. How did he come to reside in western Illinois? He obviously did not spring into existence in South Carolina without prior lineage. But when and where did the Roes migrate to America ... presumably from England, and under what circumstances? As I mentioned before, I recall having checked US Census records for John Roe at the Illinois State Historical Library in 1969 when I was doing my college term in Springfield, Illinois, and being frustrated that the first US Censuses in 1790 and 1800 recorded a number of Roes (in fact several John Roe’s) then residing in western (called “upstate”) South Carolina at that time. And the early national censuses at best recorded names (often misspelled, if not entirely missed) of the male head of a household, with only the numbers of other males and females in that household. And so that did me no good in tracing “my” John Roe, without already knowing the name of his father. About all we then knew about greatx2 grandfather John Roe and his wife Elizabeth were their broken grave markers in the Nations cemetery north of Liberty, IL. After then life got in my way, and my curiosity and time to delve into family genealogy waned, until recently revived fifty years later.



Gravestones for John and Elizabeth Roe in the Nations Cemetery, north of Liberty, IL

With my retirement from a full-time professional career, I could join with my brother Bob (Robert Ralph Roe) in examining our family lineage, and now having the added advantage of access to phenomenal amounts of information (some of that even accurate) in the electronic information age of computer technology, as well as the reservoirs of data produced by the Mormon Church, and various other genealogic website tools.

And **now we have discovered that four or five generations of Roes – first spelled Wroe! -- (and the families of their wives) in fact proceeded John M. Roe as American residents and frontier migrants** (the Roes reaching America at least by the 1680s and some of their wives' families immigrating to America as many as 50 years earlier)! Now that was a surprise. Wow, **we Roes were early American immigrants!**

At this point I invite you to examine the accompanying chart illustration of my “family tree.” My “bare bones” outline for the Roe family’s migration is this (my summary here is substantially “fleshed out” in my brother Bob’s much more extensive family history narrative):

**Richard Wroe** (b. 1637 and lived and likely died in the Lancashire region of west England; at least three of his sons migrated to America: Bunch, Henry, and William) .

**William Richard Wroe** : b. 1669 in Lancashire, west-central England; migrated to the Chesapeake Bay area of the American colonies by 1687; settled near or with his brothers in Westmoreland County, Virginia, on the lower Potomac River and likely farmed there, possibly with his older brother Bunch Wroe. William married Judith Browne – herself already a third generation Virginian, whose forebearers had reached the Chesapeake Bay region in the 1630s and had established plantations along the lower Potomac River in Westmoreland Co., VA. William Wroe died there in 1730. [One can read a transcript of his Will online.]

**Original Richard Wroe** : b. 1697 in Westmoreland County, Virginia; named for his maternal grandfather Originall Browne); entered into land real estate and business transactions including property transactions with the neighboring Washingtons, Masons, Monroes, and Popes. His first of three wives was Eleanor June Bolling [b. 1703; d. 1734] who birthed his first children, including our direct ancestor John A. Roe. Original died in Westmoreland Co., VA, in 1774, and in his will [the transcript of which one can now read online] explicitly disinherited his first-born son John Roe (giving him “one shilling and no more” ) – had he already given son John all the financial “stake” he was going to receive? Or had John committed some transgression by marrying someone of another religious faith or pedigree? Or had John offended his father by dropping the W from the spelling of Roe? Or did (as it appears from the evidence of his recorded will) Original’s third wife assure that none of his children from his earlier marriages received any inheritances from his estate?

**John A.(?) Roe** (grandfather of John M. Roe): b. 1721 in Westmoreland Co., Virginia; by 1748 he was apparently married to Sarah Gudgins (possibly his first of two marriages to wives both named Sarah) and moved south to Edgecombe County, in northeastern North Carolina (which was later subdivided into several counties – when in 1754 his property location became part of the newer Halifax County). He arrived with enough capital to purchase immediately in 1749 a 200-acre existing farm near the Roanoke River. A few years later in 1754 he “traded up” by selling that first farm and purchasing a larger 300- acre farm located on Little Creek above its confluence with Deep Creek and that upstream from Fishing Creek (while not far from the Roanoke River, Roe’s second farm was actually located in the Tar River watershed, which flows parallel and immediately south of the Roanoke River watershed). Clues indicate that his first wife Sarah may have died and that he soon remarried a second Sarah (Sarah Johns). John and his wife (or successive wives) produced 14 children; his wife (second?) died in 1774. In the fall of 1776 John A. Roe sold his farm in Halifax County and moved along with all his children (some of them then married) several hundreds of miles to land

on Beaver Creek near the Broad River in the upstate frontier of South Carolina (its Camden District). After the Revolutionary War the elder John A. Roe moved west again with his sons to live with them in South Carolina's Old Ninety-Six or Pendleton District (close to modern-day Clemson). There near Golden Creek he died in 1802 (at age 80).

**Benjamin Berryman Roe:** b. 1766 in Halifax Co., North Carolina; the tenth child of John A. Roe. [NOTE: **Benjamin Roe was a younger brother of Elizabeth Roe Coleman, who was born 17 years before him.**] When Benjamin was ten years old as the American Revolutionary War descended in 1776, he and the rest of his siblings accompanied his father along with their transportable belongings in a surprising relocation to the upstate of South Carolina. One of Benjamin Berryman Roe's sons would be "our" John M. Roe (b. 1807) who was named in honor of his deceased grandfather and uncle. Like his father before him, Benjamin Berryman Roe (who went by either name) kept moving, with several properties and places of residence in the upstate region of South Carolina, then on to Kentucky by 1810, and next moved on to Cape Girardeau, Missouri on the Mississippi River. More to this story follows.

Eventually, I will "weave in" other branches of my family lineage, with addition of information about some of the family histories of women that the Roe men married, some of whom are frankly more interesting than the Roes' story. And as my own wife likes to remind me, "Remember it was the hand who rocked the cradle, who had more influence on the child than the father" (and for that matter, contributed half of the lineage and genetic composition of the child). The mother likely had the larger role than the father in the "nurture and nature" of the child. But we seldom find accounts describing the women who married Roe men. We have not located evidence that those women were literate themselves. We are left to make assumptions from scattered clues and suppositions.

#### Following the Migration Path and Historic Landscapes of the Roes in America:

Knowing that the Roes, like the vast majority of early American immigrants and "common" settlers, were simple country people and not famous historical figures, I deferred to my brother Bob in Oklahoma to do the "heavy lifting" of researching web-source information while I served as his "reconnaissance scout" and explored the historic and cultural landscapes of our ancestors in America.



### My first stop: Westmoreland County, Virginia:

In the late summer of 2017, I chose to stop at the George Washington Birthplace National Historic Site on the southern shore of the lower Potomac River, located in Virginia's "Northern Neck" peninsula region and in its Westmoreland County. In talking with the National Park Service ranger-historian on duty, imagine my pleasant surprise when she immediately responded to my identification of my interest and surnames of my ancestors, saying that I could drive out a park road and be on part of their property from the later 1600s into the mid-1700s. Wow! Turns out that William R. Wroe married Judith Browne (a widow), and took up farming on land that had been owned by her grandfather Henry Brooks (or Brooke) a shipwright and early immigrant from England had acquired a land grant in the 1640s at a boat landing on the southside of the lower Potomac River near its confluence with the Chesapeake Bay in which Westmoreland County, Virginia, was established. One of his daughters, Jane Brooks married an English emigrant Originall Browne, and they farmed the land neighboring that of Henry's property. Granddaughter Judith Browne married William Wroe. Their plantation properties were subsequently sold to neighboring George Washington's father! Now the land is part of the National Historic Park unit – located on the south side of the Potomac River (which has submerged/eroded away some of the original Brook/Browne plantation land) immediately east of the location of the DAR-recreated and monumentalized Washington Family Cemetery. As a park maintenance supervisor observed to me, when I was visiting the site, the Washingtons' graves would have been just like those of our ancestors and buried under temporary field stones or under a tree near their plantation homes and soon those burial locations were lost. The difference being that during the 1930s the grand colonial dames society had the Washingtons' remains exhumed piecemeal and arbitrarily reburied under elaborate monuments constructed in memorial. The park has an interpretive sign identifying the approximate location of the Henry Brook home and plantation, on which archaeological excavations were done several decades ago. Apparently the Wroe's first landholdings and farms were located not far to the west, and near neighboring properties of Virginia's Mason and Monroe families. Historic property records from that period are fragmentary, and the Bunch, William, and Henry Wroe brothers may have co-farmed land in common. But at least we now know the approximate general location of the Wroes' first farmlands in the Virginia Colony – in Westmoreland County, on the southern shore of the Potomac River, and in close proximity to the farms of grandparents and parents of the later-more-famous Masons, Popes, Monroes, and Washingtons. Our Roe ancestors at least knew and mingled with early colonists who produced famous national leaders.

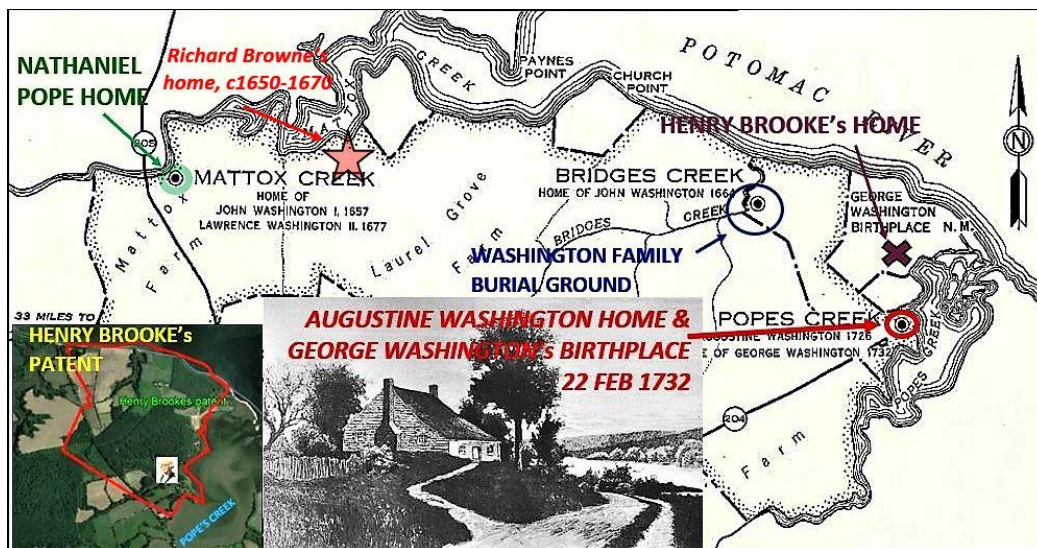
Questions to possibly be determined later include whether William Richard Wroe (and how many other of our immigrant ancestors interconnected with the Roes) were transported to America as indentured servants, who were carried from impoverished situations in the "Old Country" and ultimately worked off their terms of service to their "sponsors" and gained their freedom and often capital with which to purchase their own land properties. At least ten immigrant families with the (w)Roe surname arrived in the Chesapeake Bay region (some as indentured servants) during the mid-1600s period. Our records so far discovered have William Richard Wroe appearing in the Mattox Neck area of Westmoreland County in the mid-1680s.

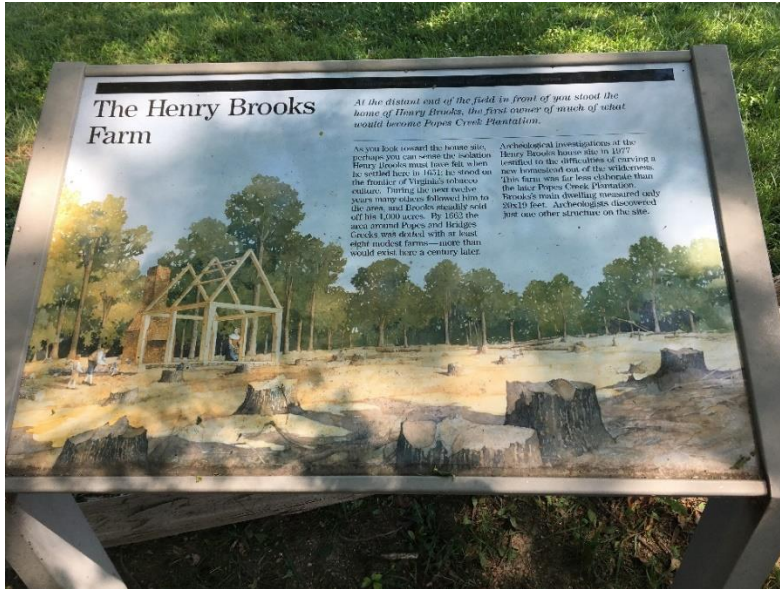
Please read my parallel Historical Narrative to accompany this summary of my family lineage.

Westmoreland County's early property records have been largely lost or destroyed. Only fragmentary property locations have been reassembled for the area immediately around the Washington and Mason families' historic landholdings. Land owned by William Wroe's older brother Bunch appears on reproduced old land grant maps a few miles west of the Brook/Browne (and Washington, Pope) properties, which was closer to the properties of the Masons and Monroes. In talking with a local historian, there may be some possibility that William Wroe first farmed in common tenancy with his older brother on the land. Records of the next generation of properties have been lost, so we do not have records of the property locations of Original Wroe. We may assume those were the same properties or in the same vicinity as those of the earlier generation of Wroes, Brooks, and Brownes close to the Potomac River and Popes Creek in Westmoreland County VA.

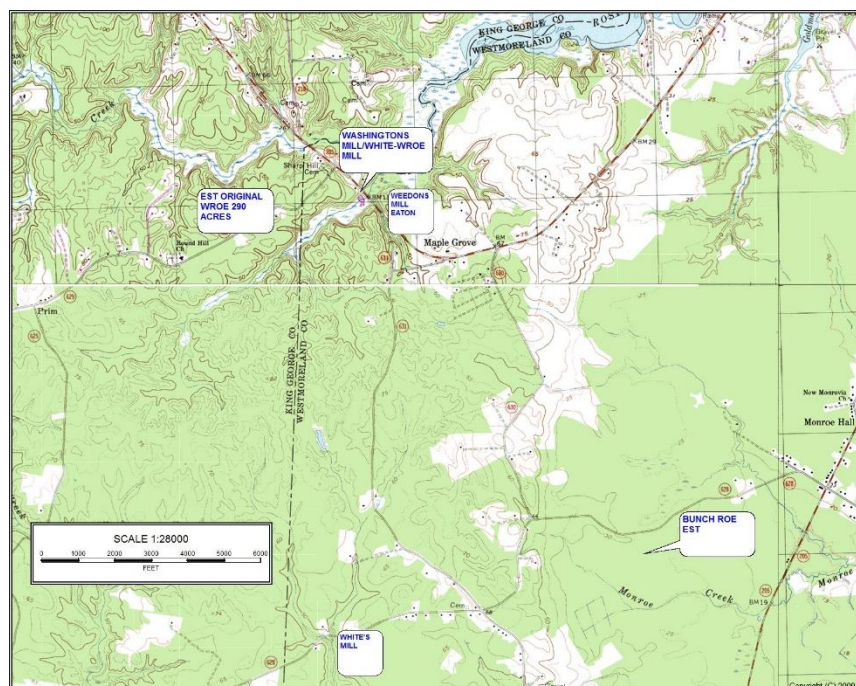
I offer copies of maps and photo images of the landscape on which the WROes, Brownes, and Brooks lived in the latter 1600s and 1700s.

[more photographs in my collection]









In summary, what my brother Bob's research has found for our early paternal ancestors who immigrated to the Chesapeake Bay area of Maryland and northern Virginia is:

"Our direct ancestors **Originall Browne** and his son **Richard Browne**, emigrated from England in 1634-1635 as indentured servants for William Clayborne on Chesapeake's Kent Island. The Brownes worked off their indentures; Richard married and moved to St. Mary's MD where he became an attorney. St. Mary's was the first colonial capitol of the Maryland colony, and was located on the north side of the embayed lower Potomac River, across the bay from the north shore of Virginia.

About 1650, **Richard Browne** and **Henry Brooke** both moved to the "Mattox Neck" area (Westmoreland Co) of Northern Neck VA, probably to escape violence in St Mary's Co MD when English Civil War spilled across the Atlantic. Henry Brooke settled in St Mary's MD ca 1639, but had made a couple of merchant voyages to VA prior to that, as the son and nephew of members a prominent London grocer/merchant family. Well-connected with aristocratic power structure of England, the Brookes who were charter investors in the Virginia Company of London. Brookes & Sons probably had good contracts to deliver food to keep the Jamestown settlers alive during the early years of Virginia colony.

Henry was also a shipwright as well as a good customer of several sea captains, who all did very well by applying for 50-acre land grants for each immigrant they sponsored to VA or MD, each new immigrant was used multiple times (Henry at least 4 times himself) to acquire land. Most of the big plantations patented by Browne and Brooke, Nathaniel Pope and others, on Mattox Neck were all "paid" through sponsorship of "immigrants," including Brooke's entire family of seven, who "migrated" across the Potomac from MD to Northern Neck.

Browne and Brooke probably knew each other in St Mary's, and migrated about the same time as the Pope family and others across the Potomac to claim headrights to acquire their properties in Westmoreland County VA. All became neighbors and affluent planters in the Mattox Neck area, between Mattox Creek & Popes Creek. Especially Nathaniel Pope, whose Cliffs Plantation was one of biggest tobacco plantations in Virginia.

One generation later, **Original Browne** (son of Richard) married **Jane Brooke** (daughter of Henry) ca 1670 in Westmoreland VA. Of their 5 children, dau. **Jane Browne** married **Nathaniel "Bridges" Pope**, grandson of Col. Pope, heir to Cliffs Plantation; and other dau. **Judith Browne** married **William Wroe**, immigrant from Lancashire England possibly with his father + ~4 siblings ca. 1675. Both Browne-Pope and Browne-Wroe weddings were ~1692. An older brother of Wm Wroe - Bunch (Bunce) Wroe married into the Monroe family, and the 5<sup>th</sup> US President James Monroe was born in Mattox Neck area.

John Washington, great-grandfather of 1st President & Revolutionary War hero George, was 1st mate on his friend's ship the Seahorse from London in 1656. They had just loaded tobacco from one of the 3 planters in 1656 when they were shipwrecked on the Potomac during a sudden storm. Washington was stranded for several months as a guest of Co. I Pope. Pope took a liking to Washington and Washington took a liking to Pope's daughter Anne. They married, and son Augustine (GW's father) accumulated much land in the Mattox Neck area, including part of 1,020-acre patent lands of Henry Brooke, where George W was born Feb. 22, 1732. "

There are still Wroe's (who kept the "W" either as Wroes or Rowes), Brown's (who dropped the "e") and Brooks (who dropped the "e" but added an "s") in Maryland today, descendants of the original planters who lived and intermarried in Mattox Neck VA during 1670-1700s." [But we've found no Wroes still living in northern Virginia.]

A story we'll never know, but is the stuff for a good historical novel, is that of John A. (middle name unknown) Roe, who with his wife Sarah Gudgins by 1749 had left northern Virginia (probably with their infant children) for new lands in northeastern North Carolina, locating themselves on substantially-sized farmland above the swamp forests of streams near the Roanoke and Tar Rivers. John Roe apparently arrived in North Carolina with money, as he promptly paid twenty pounds Crown-sterling "cash down" to purchase 200 acres of already improved farmland in 1749. Apparently, John and Sarah had some financial means and did not arrive poor. There John and Sarah (perhaps two successive wives both named Sarah) produced and raised a large family of fourteen children, and traded up in size of farm/plantation in 1754 by selling their first 200-acre farm property and simultaneously purchasing a 300-acre farm property nearby on the west side of Little Creek (located between the Roanoke and Tar Rivers, on an upper tributary stream flowing southward to Deep and Fishing Creeks). The 1754 property sale and purchase transactions were done simultaneously. According to the real estate purchase deeds for those two properties, they both already contained established farmsteads with pre-existing real estate improvements when John Roe bought them. Likely the Roes farmed the upland terrain above the lower bottomland swamp forests nearer the streams. I suspect they moved to North Carolina from the Potomac River in Virginia by a freight-carrying, schooner sailboat. Both the Roanoke and Tar Rivers were major commercial and transportation routes at that time, with multiple boat landings up the rivers to the "Fall Line" upstream at Roanoke Rapids on the Roanoke and Rocky Mount on the Tar River.

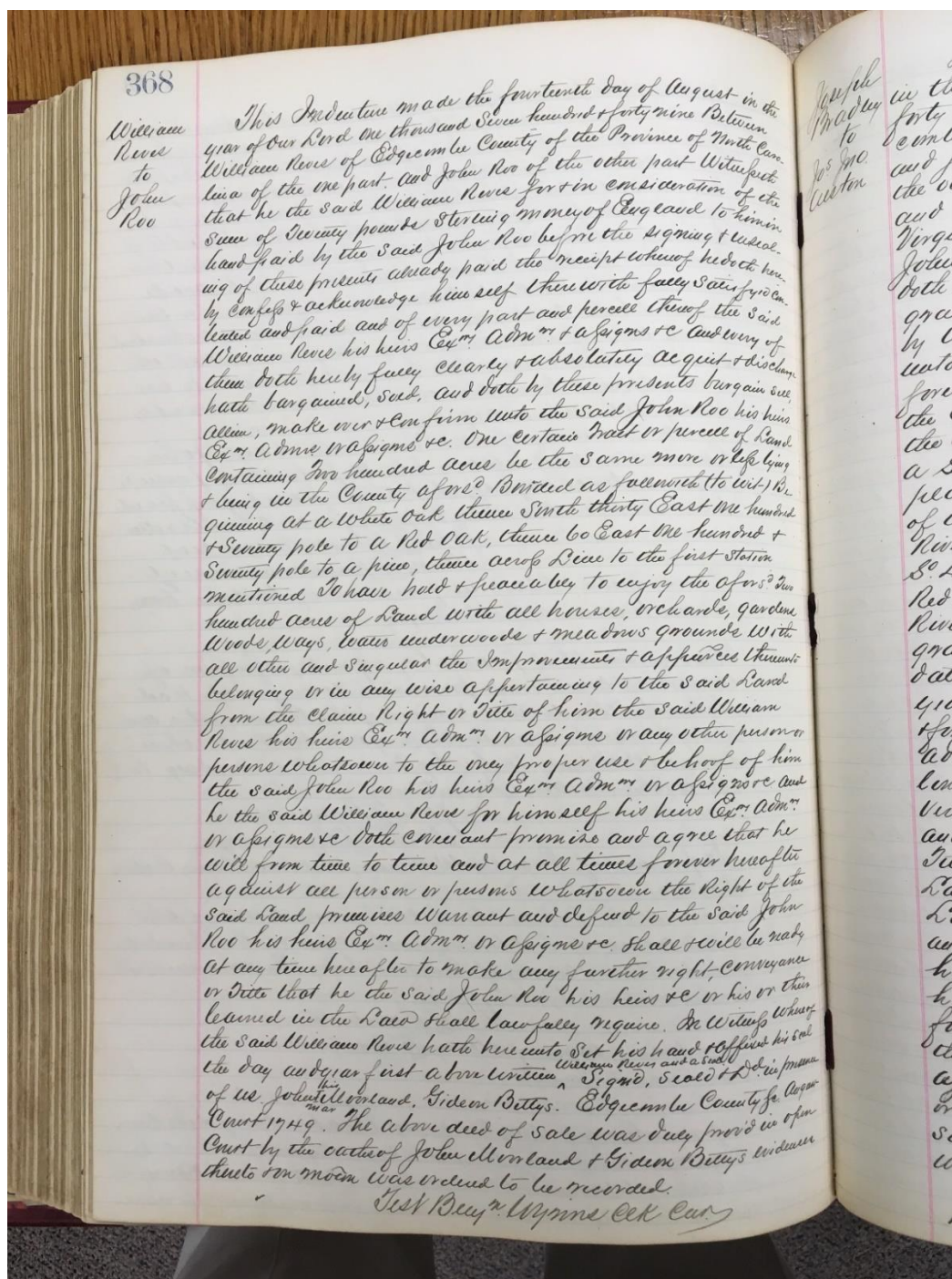
Both the Roanoke and Tar Rivers are bounded by expansive bottomland and swamp forests. Multiple units of the Roanoke River National Wildlife Refuge and state wildlife management areas preserve expanses of the same kinds of forest ecosystems that the Roes would likewise have seen. John and Sarah Roe purchased their farms from the previous owners, who may have been the original recipients of land grants. The uplands on which John and Sarah Roe established their farms likely had already been partially cleared for modest agricultural use (principally for growing corn and some tobacco). Those upland forests would have been a mix of oak, hickory, and pine, but this locale was out of the range of being in the "land of the longleaf pine" savannahs.

By this time the first "native" Americans had already been exterminated or eliminated – over two centuries of pandemic disease, subjugation, warfare, enslavement and removal—the most recent episode having been the Tuscarora War of 1711-15 in which that Iroquois tribe had been completely defeated and subsequently removed from coastal North Carolina to the northern Great Lakes region.

The day after my visit to the George Washington Birthplace National Historic Park in late summer 2017, I made the first of two visits to Halifax, North Carolina, county seat of Halifax County and location of Historic Halifax state historic site. I visited the county public library's history and genealogy section, and in the county's register of deeds archives I viewed the

original deeds of transfer for John Roe's properties (dated 1749 and 1754). I returned to Halifax County in the spring of 2018 to locate the general vicinity of John Roe's farm on the west side of Little Creek and returned to the Halifax library and register of deeds, where I took photo images of his deed records.

[selected photographs of John Roe's 1749 and 1754 property deeds in Halifax County NC]





The within and of ear was acknowledged in open  
 court in the form of deed by the within named Sarah  
 wife of her majesty James and by manifest Edick Rogers  
 and proved by the oath of the peace for said County  
 Clerk and in witness whereof was caused to be registered  
 This Day of February the first

(902)

Montand 1700

This Indenture made this nineteenth day  
 of February in the year of our Lord one thousand  
 seven hundred and fifty four between John Mon-  
 tand and Dorothy his wife of Edgecombe County in  
 the province of North Carolina in the one part and  
 John Rowe of the County and province aforesaid in  
 the other part witnesseth that the said John Montand  
 and Dorothy his wife for and in consideration of the  
 sum of fifty pounds current money of Virginia to  
 them in hand before the passing and signing of these  
 presents by the said John Rowe well and truly con-  
 veyed and paid unto the said John Montand and  
 Dorothy his wife he acknowledge the Receipt and  
 thereof and every part thereof to receive and discharge  
 the said John Rowe his heirs Executors and  
 assigns and every of them forever by these presents  
 hath granted bargained and sold and by these  
 presents do grant bargain and sell to the said John  
 Rowe all that tract or parcel of land situate in  
 the South side of Roanoke River in Edgecombe  
 County containing by estimation three hundred acres  
 be the same more or less (to wit) Beginning at  
 a white oak in the West side of Little Creek  
 then W. 170 paces to a hickory in John Schaners  
 line then along his line S. 20° W. 18 paces  
 to a poplar his corner then along his other line  
 S. 20° E. 200 paces to a pine his other corner then along  
 his other line W. 30° N. to a hickory then S. 40° E.  
 to a red oak then E. 195 paces to a white oak  
 in the Creek then the remains of the Creek to  
 the first station which said land was granted  
 to the said John Montand by Edward Moseley  
 and Robert Watton Esqrs. Agents Commissioners  
 Attorneys assigned for granting land in behalf of  
 the Right Honble John Earl Granville by deed  
 of great bearing date the twentieth day of December  
 in the twenty second year of our Lord the King  
 will more fully appear Reference therefore being

(903)



first had; To Have and to hold the said tract of land with their and every of their appurtenances in any wise belonging or appertaining to the said John Rowe his heirs and assigns forever to the only proper use and behoof of the said John Rowe his heirs and assigns forever, and the said John Morland and Dorothy his wife for their lives and heirs. Covenant and grant to and with said John Rowe his heirs and assigns that the above land and premises are free and clear of all incumbrances, and that they have good Right ~~and~~ Lawfull power to sell and dispose of the same, and that the said Land and premises shall be and remain unto the said John Rowe his heirs and assigns as a free indefeasible Estate in fee simple and such an Estate in and to the premises to the said John Rowe his heirs and assigns shall and will warrant and forever defend by these premises. In witness whereof the said John Morland and Dorothy his wife have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first within mentioned.

Signed sealed ~~and~~ delivered in presence of  
 John Morland, Sheriff of Jamaica, } John Morland (Seal)  
 Edgewood County, Va. Dorothy <sup>his</sup> Morland (Seal)  
 To the Power of deed -

The abm and of sale was acknowledged in open Court in due form of Law, and in motion was ordered to be registered.

Test Benj<sup>m</sup> Wynne clerk

and it was } This Indenture made the twenty ninth  
 to } day of June

For 27 years John Roe and his wife Sarah (or possibly two wives, both named Sarah – Sarah Gudgins and then Sarah Johns – or vice versa?) farmed and raised fourteen children in what became Halifax County, North Carolina (that county was subdivided out of former Edgecombe County in Jan. 1759). Sarah died in about 1774 (during or soon after the birth of her last child) and was likely buried on their Little Creek farm in Halifax County. Entries for the names, births and deaths of fourteen children (born between 1747 to 1772) were entered into a family Bible that was retained and possessed by the family of the second daughter (Elizabeth Roe Coleman, wife of Robert Coleman) in Blair, Fairfield County, South Carolina. John and Sarah Roe's son Benjamin (Berryman) Roe, who was my direct ancestor, was the tenth of the fourteen children and was born November 10, 1766. He was likely named by his parents for family friends back in the Washington Parish of Westmoreland County, Virginia: Benjamin Berryman, Sr. and Jr. Benjamin Berryman Roe had six older brothers and two younger brothers; three older sisters and two younger sisters. Apparently at least eleven of his siblings survived into adulthood.

### **Birth dates of John and Sarah Roe's children from the Roe-Coleman Family Bible**

#### **FAMILY RECORD OF THE ROES (in same Bible )**

**"The Roes came to South Carolina from Halifax County, North Carolina."**

**David Roe was born October 18, 1747.**

**Elizabeth Roe (mother of David Roe Coleman) was born February 20, 1749.**

**John Roe, was born February 6, 1751.**

**William Roe, born April 20, 1754.**

**Andrew Roe, born April 26, 1756.**

**Solomon Roe, born August 6, 1759.**

**Francis Roe, born December 18, 1761**

**Mary Roe, born February 25, 1763.**

**Pattey Roe, born December 14, 1764.**

**Benjamin Roe, born November 10, 1766.**

**Salley Roe, born June 13, 1769.**

**Joseph Roe, born May 17, 1770.**

**Nancy Roe 5th daughter \                      Twins, born October 3, 1772**

**Hancil Roe, 9th son                      /**

On February 27, 1776, a major battle occurred at the Moores Creek Bridge above Wilmington (along the dirt road that connected Wilmington upstream to the Scottish settlement of Cross Creek in the newly established Cumberland County) in which Rebel militia forces of about a thousand men soundly repulsed and defeated a Loyalist force of nearly equal size (mostly composed of Scottish Highlanders). As far as the Roes and other residents of the North Carolina colony were concerned, the rebellion and revolutionary war had begun then, not later that spring when hostilities broke out in Massachusetts.

By the fall of 1776 – with the American Revolutionary War and rebellion actively underway and with colonists dividing themselves into sides of Loyalists, Rebels, or frightened neutrals – the Roes had decided to abandon their homes and farms in northeast North Carolina for uncertain prospects in the upstate region of South Carolina. The North Carolina Provincial assembly had selected the new county seat of Halifax in Halifax County (where John Roe’s farm was located) to meet and on April 12, 1776, where the Assembly passed Resolves directing their representatives to attend the first Continental Congress and declare Independence from the England Mother Country. Were the Roes being harassed by Loyalists to the British Crown? Or were their sentiments initially in favor of remaining loyal to the British Crown, or were they independently neutral and attempting to flee the portending violence of war. For whatever motivations, the Roes elected to escape and move away. John Roe (his wife having already died) sold his 300-acre farm on Little Creek to a George Morris on October 7, 1776 (Halifax Co. NC Register of Deeds, Book 13, Page 512). John Roe’s eldest daughter and her husband Robert Coleman, Jr., had already moved the previous year to South Carolina Camden District and John followed them with the rest of the family to resettled in a neighboring location on Beaver Creek near the Broad River. The widower John Roe moved with all eleven of his surviving children, ranging from two to over twenty years of age (some of the elder sons and daughters now married). With them they brought as many as eight slaves. They left their farmland and homes in Halifax County, North Carolina, and moved to the western frontier of upstate South Carolina. We’ll never know why. We can only hypothesize.

What must it have been like—and by what motivations and incentives-- to sell your land and residence and farm buildings and livestock, and move with a collection of young people and some slaves by foot, horseback, and simple wagons across something like 300 or more miles? (And by what route? I’m surmising they moved by primitive roads westward from Halifax County across the North Carolina piedmont, probably passing through Hillsborough, then down the old Indian and subsequently Colonial Trading Path route to Salisbury, on to Charlotte, and further southwest into the South Carolina Camden frontier district). Was there an added motivating factor of religion? Did they travel with others sharing similar religious faith? Had they already become members of the German Baptist/Church of the Brethren (“Dunkards” or

“Dunkers”)... or did that occur after they had reached South Carolina? There was a population of practicing Dunkards living near their new South Carolina area of residence. And there are enticing clues that the historic Liberty Universalist Church located in the early 19<sup>th</sup>-century Feasterville community near Beaver Creek, actually may have been established as early as 1777 as a Church of Brethren/German Baptist chapel. Once the Roes reached the forests of the South Carolina frontier, they had to start over by clearing woodlands, planting subsistence crops, reestablishing livestock pasturage, and erecting simple dwellings and shelters – all the while with guerilla warfare threatening them by 1779. Somehow they survived. [We are not sure how long John’s oldest son, David (. 1747) lived as his name disappears early from historical records. His son John, Jr., died in South Carolina in 1780 during the war years reportedly from scarlet fever or smallpox. My direct ancestor and great-great grandfather, John M. Roe (b. 1807), a son of Benjamin Roe, was named in memorial for both his diseased grandfather and for his uncle John, Jr.

As noted above, John A. Roe’s oldest daughter Elizabeth (b. 1749, most likely in NC) and her husband Robert Coleman, Jr., had moved in 1775 (the year before the rest of the family moved ) from Halifax County, North Carolina, to the Camden District of upstate South Carolina – near Beaver Creek on the eastern side of the Broad River (which is about 75 miles southwest of Charlotte, NC, in what later became Fairfield and Chester counties). The Broad River is similar in size to both the Roanoke and Tar Rivers of North Carolina, and likewise is a big “brown” river carrying a large load of sediments, and likewise was a major artery for commerce and transportation. We can suppose the Colemans sent back encouragement for the rest of the Roe and Coleman families to follow them. But they were mistaken if they thought they were escaping from the impending Revolutionary War. Instead they had moved right into the heart of a vicious civil war pitting neighboring Loyalists versus Rebels, with nasty guerrilla warfare occurring all around their new residential location. John A. Roe’s son-in-law Robert Coleman, in fact, became an officer (rank of colonel) with British Loyalist troops in South Carolina. Meanwhile, several of John Roe’s sons enlisted and fought with South Carolina rebel militia forces. My brother has discovered a diary written in 1780 by a Tory Lt. Anthony Allaire of NY who joined British Col. Ferguson’s militia in Carolinas, in which Allaire mentions stopping twice at the Coleman home in Mobley’s settlement, where they were hosted by the Coleman’s who were Loyalists. Once they found Mrs. Coleman and her children living without food, clothes, or furniture that had been plundered by rebels.

Loyalist (or Tory) and Rebel (Whigs) fought frequent, brutal skirmishes and battles throughout this region. Lord Cornwallis’s British army temporarily occupied the nearby county seat of Winnsboro. Later General Nathaniel Green’s American rebel army also swept through the area. [See my accompanying general narrative for more details about the Revolutionary War in the upstate South Carolina region.]

Interestingly, Elizabeth Roe Coleman insisted that all her male children carry the middle name of Roe, and that convention continued for multiple generations, even into the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with male children receiving the middle name of Roe, like a succession of David Roe Coleman’s, while some female children were given Roe as their first name, like Roe Ellen

Coleman. That practice would indicate that no “ill will” lasted between the Colemans and Roes, despite their conflicting alliances during the Revolutionary War ... bygones were forgotten.

My direct ancestor, Benjamin Berryman Roe was born to John and Sarah Roe in 1766 (as the 10<sup>th</sup> of 14 children) and would have been only ten years old when the family moved on to South Carolina. Two of his older brothers, Andrew and Solomon, are known to have served in South Carolina Rebel militia units and military actions in the latter years of the Revolutionary War (in the 1779-80 time period). His oldest living brother, John Jr., died of scarlet fever or smallpox in 1780 (according to a notation in the Coleman-Roe Bible). Younger brother Benjamin would have been too young to have actively served in the ranks as a militia soldier, but he could likely have been a camp aide (like Andrew Jackson and other young adolescent boys) or may have been present in some of the military actions with his older brothers’ units. It is conceivable that he may have become a militia soldier by the end of the war. There is a military service record for a Benjamin Rowe serving in the South Carolina Little River District Regiment, and present in the 1781 Stone Ferry engagement as part of General Nathaniel Greene’s rebel army’s siege of the British/Loyalist Ninety-Six fortification (but we don’t know if this is one-in-same with our ancestor, or a different person). Records at the Siege of Ninety-Six National Park Historic Site list a Benjamin Roe as a rebel soldier engaged there.

We suppose that after the war concluded, with the rebels winning independence for the American colonies, Robert Coleman must have signed a loyalty oath pledging to be faithful to the new American government and, unlike many other Loyalists to the British Crown (Tories), he was permitted to keep his South Carolina property and residence. Many of his ancestors have remained in residence there in the same neighborhood ever since, and I found some three generations of David **Roe** Colemans buried well into the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century in the little Feaster-Coleman-Mobley country cemetery near Blair, SC. Robert’s wife, Elizabeth Coleman Roe, is buried and memorialized in another nearby Coleman family cemetery.

[see photographs of the landscape near Beaver Creek and the Broad River in SC ]

[see photographs of Coleman-Feaster-Mobley families cemetery plot]

After the war ended with American independence established, Benjamin’s brothers Andrew and Solomon were awarded land grants from the new state of South Carolina in compensation for their military service. And apparently Benjamin likewise was awarded grants of land nearby. Those properties were located further west, in lands taken away from the Cherokee Indians, and in the Pendleton District of South Carolina (near more modern-day Clemson, SC). And so the Roe family again moved west. In talking by phone with a descendant of the Coleman family who remained as residents in the near vicinity of the farmsteads in Fairfield County, South Carolina, she commented to me, “We were told that after the Revolutionary War, the Roes moved West... somewhere.” The Colemans would continue to give children the middle name of Roe for several generations well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century! There three generations of David Roe Colemans are buried in the Feaster - Coleman cemetery above

Beaver Creek, near Blair, South Carolina ... and only a few miles from historical markers for Fort Wagner (1760s) and for the Liberty Universalist Church (est. 1777). In October, 2017, (on my way to be the speaker at the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the local area land trust) I spent a partial day exploring around the vicinity of the Roe's short- stop residency in the Beaver Creek area of the South Carolina Camden District (now Fairfield County), taking photos of the creek, the nearby Broad River, historic markers for the 1760s Fort Wagner and Liberty Universalist church, and the Feaster-Mobley- Coleman historic cemetery.

Whether or not the Roes by this time became associated with the Church of the Brethren (German Baptists or "Dunkards"), that Protestant religious sect was well-established in the vicinity of the Roes' new place of residence in that Camden District of South Carolina. We know that Benjamin B. Roe, at least, after moving westward to the South Carolina Pendleton District there married the daughter of a German family who belonged to that faith, and when Benjamin and Dinah Roe moved on to Kentucky in the early 1800s they united with other members of that Church of the Brethren sect.

The Church of the Brethren (or German Baptists, known as Dunkers or Dunkards for their practice of adult baptism by water emersion) derived from Pietist religious roots in Germany. The Brethren in America believed in the then controversial idea of "universal restoration of all souls," a concept that charismatic-leader George Wolfe, Jr., apparently taught and preached to his flock as they migrated from Kentucky and on to Illinois. In fact, a number of Brethren churches transformed into Universalist churches (including congregations in Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Illinois, and elsewhere). Other Church of the Brethren congregations later affiliated with other forms of Baptist and Christian Protestant sects.

#### Roes move "West" to the South Carolina Upstate "Pendleton District":

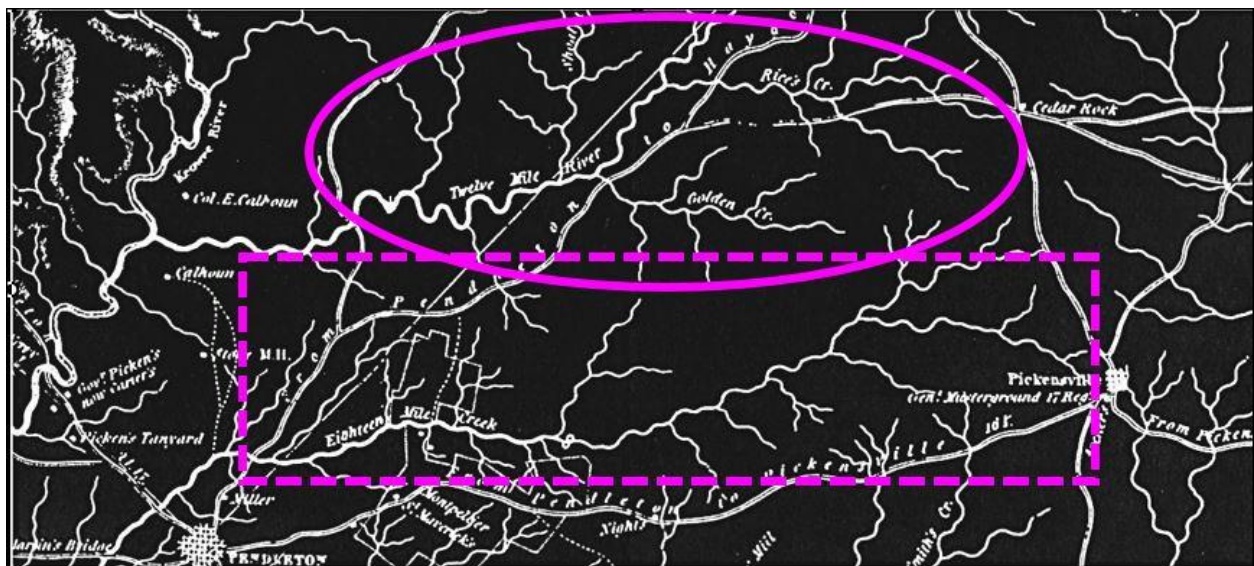
All of the Roe family (leaving behind only the Coleman "in-laws") soon after the Revolutionary War moved modestly west to the newly-opened Ninety-Six or Pendleton District, where they established new farms on former Cherokee Indian lands, after the Cherokee had been conquered and relocated for making the error of siding with the British in the war. John A. Roe, moved in the 1785-88 time period along with at least four sons (Andrew, Solomon, Benjamin Berryman, Absalom/or Hancil) and their families about one hundred miles westward from the South Carolina Camden district. His older sons, Andrew and Solomon received South Carolina militia military service land grants of substantial sizes, and their younger brother Benjamin also acquired land. This enabled all of them to establish new farms on tributary streams to the Keowee River: on Twenty-Three Mile Creek, Eighteen Mile Creek, on Golden Creek tributary to Twelve Mile Creek; and possibly also on the Saluda River. A few years later

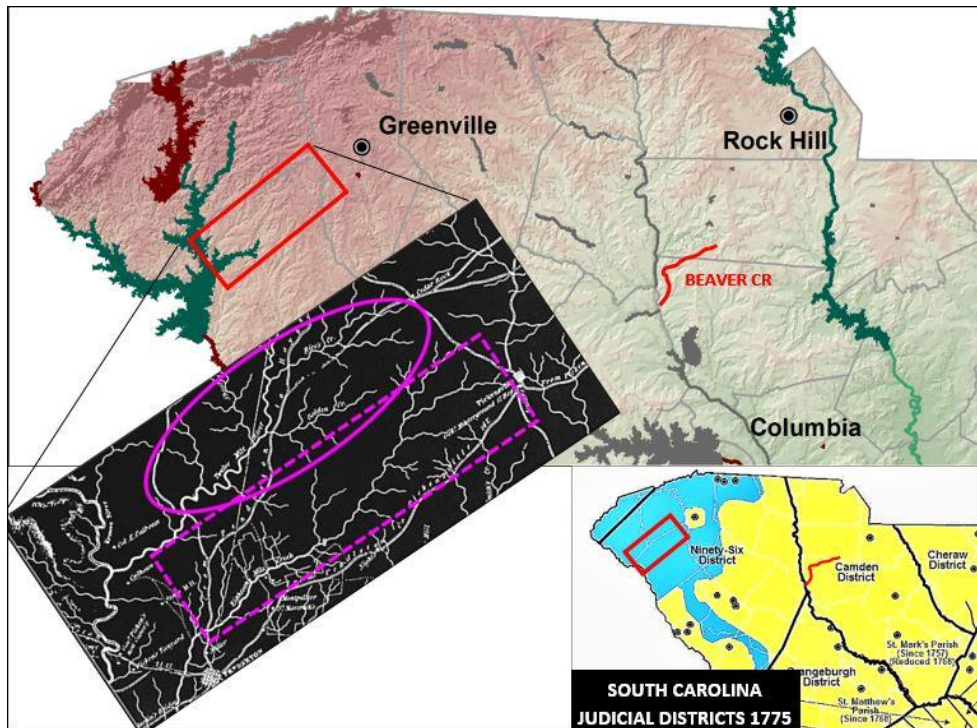


the town of Pendleton was established as the new Pendleton county seat (which is located only a few miles south of modern-day Clemson). Pendleton and Greenville counties were established in 1789 by act of the South Carolina state legislature. The first court was held in Pendleton County in April, 1790, in a log court house, of 18 by 25 feet dimensions, that historical records document was built by Andrew Ro(w)e. By about 1792 our direct ancestor Benjamin Berryman Roe, with his father John seemingly in residence with him, was settled in the vicinity of the Golden Creek tributary of Twelve Mile Creek/or River. Interestingly, this is not far from the 19<sup>th</sup>-century established town of Liberty, South Carolina.

[see photographs of the South Carolina landscape in vicinity of the Roe-Miller's properties]

Maps showing general area of Roe and Miller locations in Pendleton District of Upstate South Carolina, late 1780s- early 1800s (Golden Ck-Twelve Mile River; Eighteen Mile Ck):





Surviving historic property records indicate that Benjamin B. Roe acquired at least three properties in South Carolina's old Ninety-Six District (which was latter subdivided into several Districts, including Pendleton which was subsequently subdivided again into additional counties- incl. Pendleton, Pickens, Anderson). Surviving land records identify Benjamin or Berryman Roe having acquired 53 acres on a branch of Saluda River in 1785, 255 acres on a branch of Golden Creek in 1792, and 69.5 acres on a branch of Eighteen Mile Creek in 1803. Simultaneously, Benjamin's future father-in-law George Miller acquired at least three land grants nearby on tributaries of Twelve-Mile Creek (or River): 212 acres on Golden Creek in 1785, and a tract on Rice's Creek in 1789, and another on Golden Creek in 1792.

When Solomon Roe died young (at about age 35 in 1793-94), his younger brother Benjamin Berryman Roe inherited at least some of his property as well, probably including a few slaves. The first U.S. Censuses of 1790 and 1800 present significant confusion as a number of Roes were reported as being upstate South Carolina residents (some being our ancestors and their relations, others simply with shared surname, including at least two contemporaneous John Roes living in South Carolina – and several other John Roes living in North Carolina). My brother and I waded into this quagmire and decided the evidence is sufficient to confirm the Roe brothers were doing well as small-scale frontier farmers in South Carolina's Pendleton District vicinity. Likely their father John Sr. lived with his sons, who by then were heads of their own households.



Another area of mass confusion that my brother and I found is that many online ancestry collections of others have misinterpreted and confused the several John Roes who were cousins and nephews of the Wroe lineage, as siblings consistently bestowed the same set of first names on their progeny. “Our” John Roe did not remain in Virginia to die in Richmond in the 1780s as other lay people have mistakenly presumed; no, that was a different John Roe, perhaps a cousin of our direct ancestor. Our ancestor John A. Roe moved first from Virginia to North Carolina, and moved on to South Carolina with his family to die there as an old man of over 80 years-old in the Pendleton District of upstate South Carolina in 1802, where he likely resided in the home of his son Benjamin Berryman Roe.

An historical context interlude: the Revolutionary War did not formally end until the Peace of Paris Treaty was signed in 1783. The Continental Congress enacted the Northwest Ordinance in 1785 which formally opened the territories south of the Great Lakes and north of the Ohio River for land purchases and settlement. The early years of American Independence were economically and socially difficult. The original Articles of Confederation quickly proved inadequate to maintain public order, economy, commerce or defense. In 1787 the newly independent states convened another special congress that created the U.S. Constitution and form of federal government that has stood the test of time (and mid-19<sup>th</sup> century civil war). The original thirteen states formally accepted and ratified the new constitution to govern the new nation in 1789. Kentucky and Tennessee were soon added into the union as new states. Next the territories of Alabama and Mississippi were secured by the federal government, and in 1803 the immense Louisiana territory was acquired and opened formally for land purchases and settlement. All these newly-opened territories then were magnets for people looking for better opportunities.

**SEE my companion account of American colonial and trans-Appalachian frontier history for more details.**

Benjamin Berryman Roe in 1794 (at age 28) married teenage Dinah Barbara Miller, youngest daughter of George and Maria Elizabetha (Koenig) Miller, who lived near Benjamin’s land. Both George (1740-1812) and Mary Miller (1745-1813) were natives of the Rhine river valley area of Germany (actually from Hofen/Hoffen in the state of Alsace on the German/French border, which continually was switched back and forth from Germany and France possession, depending on the outcome of the most recent war). They angelized their surname to Miller from the previous German “Mueller” spelling, and her first name was altered from Maria to Mary. Their families had emigrated to eastern Pennsylvania (York County) in their youth (about 1751-55). George reportedly fought against the Cherokee Indians during the French and Indian war in western North and South Carolina (in the 1756-63 period) as a soldier with a German-speaking militia unit associated with the British Army. In 1764 George returned to York, Pennsylvania, and either married Maria there, or in the western piedmont region of North Carolina after traveling there together with her family down the Great Wagon Road. Quite likely they had known each other from their youths, as both their families had

immigrated from the same Hofen/Hoffen German/Franco village). Internet ancestry data are conflict as to the place and date of marriage for George and Maria Miller: leaving us uncertain on whether they married before they departed York, PA; or as their Miller and Koenig families migrated through the western piedmont region of North Carolina. The Millers moved from York county in Pennsylvania, via a brief sojourn in the western piedmont of North Carolina (Rowan and/or Anson, or Montgomery counties, possibly as early as the late 1760s, but more likely in the 1770s. After the conclusion of the American Revolution war, they took up former Cherokee Indian land to establish a farm on nearby Golden and Rice Creeks (both tributary streams to the larger Twelve-Mile Creek/River, above its confluence with the Keowee River). There are some hints that George Miller may have first visited this vicinity and been impressed by its opportunities while serving as a German immigrant and soldier in the British Army against the Cherokee Indians in the 1760s. He may have first taken “squatters rights” on the former Cherokee lands. His landownership was later legitimized after that war in at least three land grants to him on the Golden and Rice creek tributaries to Twelve-Mile River (in 1785, 1789, 1792) in reward for his military service in the wars against the Cherokee Indians.

Benjamin Berryman Roe (who alternated in use of his preferred first name) must have farmed. He shows up in a number of surviving court documents as witness to property transactions and on estate wills of others, as well as for doing temporary service as a deputy sheriff.

The first U.S. national census records were imprecise and incomplete. But we found some basic information and clues in searching for evidence of our ancestors in the censuses of 1790, 1800, and beyond. A John Roe (presumably our ancestor?) was recorded as a head of household in the 1790 US Census as residing in the Pendleton district of upstate South Carolina: with two “free white males” of 16 years or older of age (including himself), two white males of under 16 years of age, and five white females, and no slaves. John’s older sons by then were adults and heads of their own households. The 1790 U.S. census recorded for Benjamin Roe one white male child under 16 years old, three white females (including his wife), and no slaves. By the time of the national census of 1800, John Roe was no longer heading a household, and we presume he may have been residing in the household of his son Benjamin. By the national census of 1800 the household of Benjamin Berryman Roe (spelled Rowe in the census record) included his wife, three children (two boys and a girl), one “other” adult (possibly his father John?), and three slaves (these slaves may possibly have been the same three individuals identified in the 1790 census as the three slaves owned by his brother Solomon, who died a few years later, and conceivably they could have been some of the same individual slaves identified by first names in their father John Roe’s 1778 will).

We were surprised, but not shocked, to discover that **the Roes possessed some slaves** – as did many other small-scale farmers of that era. The will of William Wroe, our first known ancestor to have emigrated from England to Westmoreland County, Virginia, (prepared 1725 and executed in 1730) divided an unspecified number of slaves among his wife and children. Likewise, the will of William Wroe’s son Original Wroe (prepared 1772 and executed in 1774) conveyed his slaves to his third wife and her children. The will of John A. Roe was first recorded in 1778 (in the Camden District of South Carolina, as the civil war that was the Revolution raged

around them), but his will was not exercised until his death in 1802 in the Pendleton District of South Carolina, after several of his sons named in his will had already died. John Roe's will in 1778 called for distribution of eight individual Negro slaves (we interpret two women, one male, four girls and one boy slaves), one to each of his eight older children (including "one Negro girl named Lucy" to Benjamin), and with the added provision that future progeny of the slave women would be awarded to John's other younger children. However, the 1790 U.S. Census records for the John Roe and his sons in Pendleton county of South Carolina's Ninety-Six District identify no slaves possessed by John or by any of his sons other than three slaves owned by his son Solomon. We wonder what happened to the other slaves who apparently accompanied the Roes in their move into South Carolina. Were they sold, escaped, died, or freed? After Solomon's death (1793) his younger brother (our direct ancestor) Benjamin may have gained possession of Solomon's three slaves, as the US Census for the year 1800 recorded "Berryman Ro(w)e" as owning three slaves. Assuming my presumptions are correct in identifying a record for Berryman Roe, misspelled as "Boriman Row" in the 1810 national census, when he and his family were migrating westward on through Kentucky (see fully account below), that census entry recorded him as possessing two slaves. But the Church of the Brethren disapproved of slavery. What pressure may have been upon Benjamin to free his inherited slaves? Regrettably we find no entry for Berryman Roe in the 1820 national census to provide any additional clues.

In November, 2017, I spent a day exploring the area around Pendleton and Clemson, South Carolina. I could find no information (beyond what brother Bob had already located from web information) about the Roe's slight trace left in that area in their brief twenty years or so in the vicinity in the late 1780s to 1810 period. I spent a few hours in the small Pendleton historic library (without much guidance from the librarian). I found no evidence of Roe property locations on the few historic maps. My only contribution to our historic record was to take some photographs of streams on which the Roes once possessed land. I did surprisingly find the nearby small community of Liberty, South Carolina. While apparently all the Roes in our family lineage moved on west, at least some Millers seemingly remained in South Carolina. In my November, 2017, brief visit I discovered the Golden Creek Baptist Church west of Liberty, SC, and its cemetery contained graves of numerous Millers (but I could not read names or dates on the older grave markers). How interesting and coincidental (or not) that we discover "Liberty" communities or churches along the Roe's migration path from South Carolina to Illinois! The only Roes that remained in South Carolina appear to have been ancestors of other Roes who took up residence in the Palmetto State about simultaneously with "our" Roes, particularly in the vicinity of Greenville, SC, where there on the Furman University Campus is a Roe Fine Arts Building.

The period in the decades of the late 1700s and early 1800s were particularly difficult economic times in the Carolinas. Transportation was primitive and there was little means to carry produce any distances for commercial sale. Agriculture was principally subsistence farming, except for the very wealthy who "employed" large numbers of slave labor. Without soil fertilizer and nutrients, with only primitive agricultural technologies and techniques, soil was quickly exhausted or its fertility impoverished after only a few plantings of corn or tobacco crops. The land and people quickly wore out. Families were only able to produce subsistence

livelihoods for their own families, with some corn, free-range livestock, and a little cash-crop tobacco. From the clues of U.S. Census records some of the Roes possessed a few African slaves, but those were few and may have been mostly domestic labor for helping beleaguered wives maintain households with large broods of children. The beckoning beacon was the allure of more fertile soils and economic opportunity by moving further west. That too drew the Roes on west, apparently moving together with other family friends including the Millers. They left behind the grave of family patriarch John A. Roe, who had died in 1802, likely buried beneath a South Carolina tree or under a temporarily -placed field stone, prior to the existence of established cemeteries. But a few years later his namesake grandson, John M. Roe was born in South Carolina in 1807. Too bad they could not know each other. This next John would by 1810 move westward as a child with his parents and family friends to reunite with his maternal grandparents and with other Brethren/Dunkard families who were already settled on Drakes Creek in Warren County, west-central Kentucky.

Would it not be fascinating to hear John A. Roe's story or read his biography?! What a tale that would have been. But he was illiterate (his property transfers were signed by his X mark). He is long gone, his story untold, and he is practically forgotten. He was a simple frontier settler and farmer, and father of a large family. We'd like to think of him as a stately and respected, elder family patriarch. His life journey took him from his youth in the land of Virginia gentry neighbors on the lower Potomac River, to the burgeoning area of settlement in the coastal plain region of the North Carolina colony where he established a substantial farm and family, but then fled with his large family to the central piedmont region of South Carolina as the revolutionary war descended, and finally lived his senior years with his adult children and their children in the frontier upstate part of South Carolina. He died before his children moved their families on westward.

Note: Brother Bob and I alert you that if you too embark on genealogical research about the "early" Roe family in America you will encounter much confusion and false trails. The Roes were no different from other families in repeating the same first names over multiple generations, with siblings bestowing the same sets of first names as their own siblings and uncles on their own children. If there had been a big family reunion gathering, there would have been great confusion with the same first names repeated among multiple cousins and their uncles. Compounded by few surviving records, and the multitude of errors committed by amateur students of genealogy, we have a maze of confusion. Roe is not a common name. But we found numerous John Roes living simultaneously in North and South Carolina. Also a common error is the assumption that "our" John Roe, who died in the Pendleton District of upstate South Carolina in 1802, was the same John Roe who died in 1802 in Richmond, Virginia (and yet another John Roe recorded as dying in Richmond, VA 1794). WRONG!: that other John Roe was not our ancestor. Possibly related – perhaps a cousin with the same name – but not the same person. Yet, this is an example of mistakes and incorrect assumptions repeated and recorded in the various online genealogic records (which do NOT allow mistakes to be corrected by anyone other than the original person who made the entry, and that author may now be long gone). Another frustrating error that we found often repeated was the incorrect

claim that all of John and Sarah Roe's children were born in South Carolina: also WRONG. None of "our" John and Sarah Roe's children were born in South Carolina (or in Virginia). We conclusively determined that all fourteen were born in Halifax County, North Carolina. When US Censuses began in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century to record the first names of family members (not just head of household), that made a world of difference and helped move the great confusion that preceded. We are particularly thankful that the son of John A. Roe who was our direct ancestor was given the distinctive name of Benjamin Berryman Roe. But even with that unusual middle name, we found multiple different spellings and permutations in the few existing historical documents – some with his full name, some only identified as Benjamin Roe (one of several concurrently living), some only as Berryman Roe, others by a variety of other spellings of Berryman, and quite often with Roe spelled Rowe (including in the 1800 Census records for the Roes living in the Pendleton District, South Carolina). Benjamin Roe (misspelled by a census taker as "Boriman Row") appeared in the 1810 national census as a resident of Warren County, Kentucky, with his wife and their children and two slaves. But Benjamin Roe apparently was missed in the 1820 federal census... I suppose the Roes had then gone missing on the American Frontier of the Mississippi River valley.

#### Passing through Kentucky:

The Roes apparently did not much like South Carolina, or they decided that some thirty years of residing there were enough. In the first decade of the 1800s most of John A. Roe's surviving sons moved away from South Carolina's Pendleton District. But they moved in different directions: some went south to Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, or eventually on to Louisiana; while my ancestor Benjamin Berryman Roe moved on to Kentucky by the year of 1810 and then subsequently into southern Missouri near the Mississippi River in the Cape Girardeau vicinity (where both Benjamin B. and his wife Dinah died and were buried on the Dickman Farm cemetery, in 1834 and 1835 respectively). The national census of 1810 recorded a misspelled "Boriman Row" as residing in Warren County, Kentucky (with his wife, five male children, four female children, another young woman, and two slaves). The likelihood of this assumption that this is "our" Berryman Roe is enhanced because this was the same county in which Benjamin Berryman Roe's wife Dinah's parents and siblings had already moved to several years previously. But apparently Benjamin Berryman Roe evaded (or was missed, or just was not recorded in) the national census of 1820. Consequently, we lack the evidence that census record could have provided to confirm if they may have moved on to Cape Girardeau in southern Missouri by then. [Perhaps in the future we can find local records in Kentucky and Missouri to help us clarify their migration timeline.]

This move north-westward from South Carolina is again another largely unknown story. Perhaps Benjamin Roe simply followed the migration path of his Miller in-laws, or he might have had communications with and enticement to move from some of his Virginia Wroe uncles or cousins, who appear to have been engaged in the post-Revolutionary War land speculation and real estate boom in Kentucky (at the time Kentucky had been subdivided from Virginia and

had gained its independent statehood status). His uncle or cousin Benjamin Wroe (from Virginia) is recorded as having been associated in real estate business in Kentucky with his brother-in-law, Kentucky's first U.S. Senator John Edwards, who likewise later moved on to Cape Girardeau, Missouri.

Benjamin Berryman Roe moved to Kentucky with his own young family and the families of his wife and other friends prior to 1810. His in-laws George and Mary Miller had already preceded them in moving first to Warren County in central Kentucky, and Benjamin and Dinah followed after settling their affairs and selling the properties in South Carolina. George and Mary's older son Micah had first bought land near Drakes Creek, an upper tributary of the Green River basin in (then) Warren County, Kentucky (its southern part subsequently in 1815 subdivided to become Allen County). Drakes Creek flows northward into the Barren river at Bowling Green, Kentucky, and then downstream joins the Green River].

George and Maria Miller moved to Kentucky in 1804, when they were 63 and 59 years old. They left their Golden Creek, South Carolina, home to accompany two of their grown sons, Micah and Morris and their families, along with other neighbors from the Golden Creek area to take up new residence in Warren County, Kentucky. Why did they all move? We presume because of religion. A prominent Church of Brethren/German Baptist (Dunkard) community and population, with several churches, were located on Drakes Creek (a tributary stream to the Green River). This time coincided with the *Second Great Awakening* of evangelical fervor in the Ohio River Valley region. A large growth of Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian church communities occurred here on the American western frontier. Central to this religious "universalist" spirituality were anti-slavery, pro-public education, social welfare and tolerance, anti-alcoholic sentiments.

Several wings of our ancestors had relocated from the Carolinas to this part of central Kentucky/and Tennessee border counties in the 1804-20 period (the Roes, Millers, Strahans, and Walkers), probably with religion at the root of their migration motivation.

George and Mary Miller died in the vicinity of Drakes Creek in central Kentucky in 1812 and 1813 respectively, during the tumultuous war years with Britain and the New Madrid series of great earthquakes. Berryman Roe was one of the executors for George Miller's estate there.

An historian of the Church of the Brethren, Merle Rummel, noted that American Universalism developed from influences of various Pietist and Antibaptist movements first originated in central Europe (including Lutherans, Methodists, Moravians, Quakers, Brethren and others). So-called Universalists generally opposed slavery as immoral. Many of the families that first settled in the Drakes Creek area of Kentucky had been South Carolina *Universalists Brethren*. Rummel further noted that many of those same families soon moved on in groups traveling together from Kentucky to Union County, Illinois, and to Cape Girardeau, Missouri. **The Roes were among them.** Their path there intertwined with that of the Church of Brethren followers migrating down the Ohio River from western Pennsylvania, of which George Wolfe was one of the prominent leaders. Brethren churches in central Kentucky soon shifted into becoming Baptist or Christian Churches, while the families who moved on to southern Illinois and Missouri maintained more universalism pietist convictions. Rummel comments in his

Brethren Life, “The beginning of ‘Far Western Brethren’ of Illinois came from this church (Wolfe et. al’s near Owensboro, in Muhlenberg County, Kentucky) and the Drakes Creek Church....Brethren from the Kentucky Churches kept moving on to new lands” [north and west].

**Another move (west and north):** The Roes time of stay in Kentucky was relatively short, even by their transient standards. They apparently moved with other members of the Church of Brethren by about 1820 to Union County, Illinois, on the Mississippi River, or to Cape Girardeau, Missouri, immediately across on the west side of that river. Church of Brethren communities relocated to both of those places. The Brethren communities on Clear Creek in Union Co., IL, and on Whitewater River near Cape Girardeau, MO, were about 15 miles apart on opposite sides of the Mississippi River, but connected by ferries. The two communities were in close relationship. My GGG grandparents Michael Limbaugh (from Cape Girardeau, MO) and Kitty (Catherine) Wolfe (from Union Co., IL) married in about 1806.

As noted above, there is no 1820 national census record for Benjamin Berryman Roe and his family (so we do not know if they were then still in Kentucky or had moved on to Cape Girardeau, Missouri, on the Mississippi River). The 1830 U.S. federal census records a misspelled entry for a “Berrymon Ral (or Roe)” residing in Cape Girardeau county, Missouri, with his wife and three children (one boy, two girls) (but no slaves indicated). I assume this is my Benjamin Berryman Roe ancestor. Had Benjamin Roe by then freed his few slaves (ideally), or simply sold them, or had they possibly died after decades of serving the family? The Church of the Brethren generally opposed slavery. Somehow the three slaves he held in the census of 1800, and the two slaves he possessed as recorded in the 1810 national census were gone for whatever cause by the 1830 census. Too bad we don’t have evidence of and facts for the Benjamin Roe family which is missing from the 1820 census.

#### Affiliation with the Church of the Brethren (Dunkards) and Move to Liberty, Illinois

My brother Bob has done more substantial research on my ancestors’ involvement in the Church of the Brethren (German Baptist Brethren / Dunkards or Dunkers). We do not know for certain when our Roe ancestors became members of the Church of the Brethren; it may have been as early as when the Roes resided in upstate South Carolina, even before Benjamin Berryman Roe married his wife Dinah Miller, whose parents seem certainly to have been members of the Church of the Brethren (German Baptists).

The Limbaughs also were members of the Church of the Brethren. The Limbaugh family (alternatively spelled Lymbach or Limbach) emigrated to Pennsylvania (ca. 1735-1745) from the German Rhineland region (from Baden). After the Revolutionary War (I defer to brother Bob’s narrative for more details here) the Limbaughs left eastern Pennsylvania, some of them moving about 1790 down the Great Wagon Road to Rowan County (Salisbury area) in the North Carolina upper piedmont, and other Limbaughs (including my GGGGrandparents, Frederick and Catherina Limbaugh, moving with other members of the German Church of the Brethren from

Pennsylvania down the Ohio River, and by late 1799 reaching Cape Girardeau (future Missouri) then in the Spanish territory west of the Mississippi River.

The Limbaughs had already been residing in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, for nearly two decades before Benjamin Berryman Roe moved his family there (ca. 1820). The Roes and Limbaughs would likely have become acquainted there through their shared membership in the Church of the Brethren. But the Roe and Limbaugh families did not merge until John M. Roe married the widow Elizabeth Limbaugh Dayton in Liberty, IL. Likely the families were long familiar with one another from the time of their residences in proximity in southern Missouri, and quite possibly John and Elizabeth had known one another since their teenage youth. [Note: surprisingly we find no national census record for John M. Roe prior to the 1850 census, after his marriage to Elizabeth, adoption of her children and addition of the first of their own child, Barbara.]

Liberty, Illinois, had been established in the late 1820s. Early settlers had come with land ownership titles granted in the federal government's Illinois Military Tract, while other purchased military pension bounty land from original owners or from speculators and companies who had purchased land bounty lands from military veterans, and still others arrived as "squatters" who hoped to buy the land later. Here is where Rev. George Wolfe, Jr., chose to establish a community of the Church of the Brethren.

George Wolfe, Jr.'s father George Wolfe, Sr., after the Revolutionary War had moved his family from eastern Pennsylvania (Lancaster County) to western Pennsylvania on the Monongahela River (south of Fort Pitt, in Fayette Co.) where he and his sons built flatboats. They later floated some of their boats down the Ohio River and then poled the boats up the Greene River in western Kentucky, where they settled with a German Brethren community in present-day Muhlenberg County, Kentucky. After experiencing the frustrations of Kentucky's massive corruption in land ownership and dissatisfaction with unclear and disputed land titles, George Wolfe, Jr., led a band of Brethren out of Kentucky to southern Illinois (to Union County, across the Mississippi River from Cape Girardeau, Missouri, where other Brethren resided).

Inspired by the Second Great Awakening religious revival (spurred in part by traumatic threats of the series of great New Madrid earthquakes of 1811-12, and the Indian uprising led by Tecumseh, and the War of 1812), George Wolfe, Jr., became a Brethren Elder, minister, and a charismatic leader like his father, and moved several successive bands of followers up the Mississippi River from Union County IL and Cape Girardeau MO. to Adams County beginning as early as 1827 and into the early 1830s. The impressive (both spiritually and physically at 6'6" tall and 250 lbs.) George Wolfe was influential in regional politics as well as religious ministry (among his friends was young Abraham Lincoln). The Brethren generally opposed slavery, but pro-slavery sentiment prevailed in southern Illinois and Missouri. That could have been an incentive for them to move upriver to the west-central region of Illinois (the so-called "Military Tract") that had only recently been upon to settlement and where good, fertile prospective farmland was readily available. Brethren church congregation members who moved to Adams County with George Wolfe, Jr., included Hunsaker, Walker, Limbaugh, Boren, Daugherty, Lierly, Ebbert, Hendricks, Nations, Vancil, Wigle, and other families. They first settled along Mill Creek northwest of Liberty. The free-flowing waters of that stream would have furnished a good site



for their church and baptisms. Rev. Wolfe, representing the strong Brethren belief that opposed slavery, was an ardent and outspoken opponent of slavery and his influence on the Illinois state legislature is credited for helping to assure that Illinois did not permit slavery. His son David became pastor of the Liberty Brethren church and a state legislator.

George's sister Catherine "Kitty" Wolfe had married Michael Limbaugh in Cape Girardeau, MO, in 1806 or '07. Among their children was Elizabeth (b. 1809) who forty years later would marry John M. Roe. Michael and Catherine Limbaugh and their children moved to the Liberty area of Adams County, IL, about 1831 along with other Church of Brethren members led by Kitty's brother Rev. George Wolfe, Jr.

About the time of his father's death in 1833 and mother's death in 1834 (both buried in the Dickman cemetery near Cape Girardeau, Missouri), John M. Roe moved on up the Mississippi River from southern Illinois (Union County) to western Illinois with a group of Church of the Brethren fellow members. He was then an unmarried bachelor of about 27 years old. The band of Brethren members moved to the newly established Liberty community in Adams County, Illinois. By 1837 John M. Roe had purchased 115 acres of farmland north of Liberty, IL. Not until 1849 (at nearly age 42!) did this bachelor farmer marry Elizabeth Limbaugh Dayton, a widow with four children from her previous marriage (see my brother's interesting account of her first husband, John Henry Dayton, who had left his family and Illinois in 1842 to seek medical care (possibly for tuberculosis) back in his home state of Rhode Island, where he died that same year). Elizabeth Limbaugh Dayton and her four children for the next six years must have become wards and household members of her parents, Michael Limbaugh and Catherine "Kitty" Wolfe Limbaugh.

Together John and Elizabeth produced three children, including my direct ancestor and great-grandfather Isaiah Berryman Roe (b. 1852).

In the summer of 2018, after realizing that no gravestone marker had been erected honor of our Roe great grandparents – Isaiah Berryman Roe and Susan Ann Walker Roe – my brother Bob and I decided to remedy that omission and, with assistance from our Roe cousins in Adams County, took action to have a nice memorial stone erected for them in the Walker Cemetery north of Liberty. Isaiah Berryman Roe (b. 1852; d. 1906) and Susan A. Walker Roe (b. 1848; d. 1916) were the first in either lines of their families to have lived their entire lives as residents of the Liberty Township of Adams County, Illinois. They operated a farm on the north side of Liberty in close association with the farms of their parents. They produced two children: William and our grandfather Ralph Walker Roe. They continued membership in the local Church of the Brethren. They are buried in the Walker Cemetery, near the graves of Susan's parents and those of their sons and my grandmother Hattie Keller Roe. That cemetery is about one mile south of the Nations Cemetery.

This new memorial stone honoring my great grandparents, Isaiah and Susan Walker Roe, was erected in August, 2018, and now sits among the gravesites of other members of the Roe and Walker families.



-- TO BE CONTINUED --

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READ MY "COMPANION" NARRATIVE ABOUT AMERICAN COLONIAL AND TRANS-APPALACHIAN FRONTIER HISTORY CONCURRENT WITH THE MIGRATION OF MY ANCESTORS IN THE 17<sup>TH</sup>-19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES.

SEE MY ACCOMPANYING COLLECTION OF MORE ILLUSTRATIONS, MAPS, AND PHOTOS.

READ ALSO THE MORE EXTENSIVE NARRATIVE ACCOUNT PREPARED IN 1017/2018 BY MY BROTHER, ROBERT RALPH ROE.