

The Roes – We Heard They Moved West

- by Charles (Chuck) Roe, October 2024
[chuck_roe@mindspring.com & croe@conservationsouth.org; resident Raleigh, NC]

Arrival of the most recent Coleman-Feaster-Mobley Family Tree Newsletter reminded me of my unfulfilled intention to compose this note about the Roe family's early residency in your families' home area. Numerous grave markers in the Coleman and the Coleman-Feaster-Mobley family cemeteries near Feasterville memorialize individuals bestowed with the middle name of "Roe", and the grave marker of the Coleman family matriarch Elizabeth Roe Coleman recognizes her Roe maiden surname.



Elizabeth Roe Coleman grave marker (daughter of John and Sarah Roe) , Coleman family cemetery, Fairfield Co., SC



The Coleman family continued to bestow Roe as middle name for multiple generations (from Coleman family graves section in the Coleman-Feaster-Mobley Cemetery sw of Feasterville, SC)

After I and my brother (Robert Roe) retired about nine years ago from our respective professional careers, we embarked on admittedly amateurish examination of our family history. Both Bob and I had left behind our Illinois home state for our pursuits of universities graduate degrees, professional careers, and raising families (I to North Carolina, and my brother eventually to Oklahoma). My North Carolina residency better positioned me to pursue genealogical leads and visit the historic landscapes of our paternal-lineage Roe ancestors in this region as they migrated from England to Virginia (Westmoreland County, on the lower Potomac River) in the 1600s; on to North Carolina in 1732; to Fairfield County, South Carolina in 1776; to South Carolina's Pendleton District after the War for Independence to about 1810; and then moved on to the new frontier territories of the new United States.

Perhaps some of the Coleman Family may be interested in their Roe ancestors.

Roe family patriarch and by then widower, John Roe (having modified his original family name of Wroe) moved with his entire family from Halifax County, in the northeastern coastal region of North Carolina, to South Carolina's upper piedmont Camden District in the fall of 1776, shortly after the outbreak of the American Revolutionary War.

Since purchasing farmland in northeastern North Carolina in 1749, John Roe and his wife Sarah (or possibly two wives, both named Sarah – Sarah Gudgins and then Sarah Johns – or vice versa?) for the next 27 years farmed near Little Creek and raised fourteen children in what became Halifax County, North Carolina (that county was

subdivided out of former Edgecombe County in 1759). Sarah died in about 1774 (during or soon after the birth of her last children-twins) and was likely buried 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. At least twelve of John and Sarah Roe's children 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 /

By the fall of 1776 – with the American Revolutionary War 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. 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 Elizabeth (whose prominent grave marker is located in the Coleman Family cemetery near Festerville) and her husband Robert Coleman, Jr., had already moved the previous year to the South Carolina Camden District and John followed them with the rest of the family to resettle in a neighboring location on Beaver Creek near the Broad River. The widower John Roe moved with the rest of his eleven 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 conversion 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 19th-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. By 1779 guerilla warfare engulfed. Somehow they survived. [We are not sure how long John's oldest son, David (born 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.

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,

Interestingly Elizabeth Roe Coleman must have insisted that all her male children carry the middle name of Roe, and that convention continued for multiple generations, even into the 20th century, with male children receiving the middle name of Roe, like the succession of David **Roe** Colemans, while some female children were given Roe as their first name, like **Roe** Ellen Coleman. In my 2017 and 2018 visits, I found some three generations of David **Roe** Colemans buried well into the mid-20th century in the little Feaster-Coleman-Mobley country cemetery near Blair, SC. Robert's wife, Elizabeth Roe Coleman, is buried and memorialized in another nearby Coleman family cemetery.

After the war ended with American independence established, the Roe brothers Andrew and Solomon were awarded land grants from the new state of South Carolina in compensation for their military service. And apparently Benjamin Berryman Roe 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). Roe family patriarch John Roe moved to South Carolina's Pendleton District with his sons and their families. He would die there in 1802 at the age of over 80. **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 20th 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 20th 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. And the next year in 2018 I accepted invitation to attend the annual Coleman-Feaster-Mobley family reunion in Feasterville.

Roes in the South Carolina Upstate “Pendleton District”:

All of the Roe family (leaving behind only the Coleman “in-laws”) soon after the Revolutionary War moved a hundred miles 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 for 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 my direct ancestor Benjamin Berryman Roe, with his father John seemingly in residence in his household, was settled in the vicinity of the Golden Creek tributary of Twelve Mile Creek/or River. This is near the 19th-century established town of Liberty, South Carolina.

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Further notes about the Roe family (from my much more extensive family history account:

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

William Richard Wroe : b. 1669 in Lancashire, 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 as “tenant in common” 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.

Original Richard Wroe : b. 1697 in Westmoreland County, Virginia; named for his **maternal grandfather Original 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. Some of his property is located in the present-day National Park Service administered George Washington Birthplace National Historic Site. Original died in Westmoreland Co., VA, in 1774, and in his will 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? (as John in 1749 had made a cash purchase of his first 200-acre farm in North Carolina). 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 than 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 (we think 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 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).

My forebearer **Benjamin Berryman Roe**: b. 1766 in Halifax Co., North Carolina; the tenth child of John A. Roe. 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 my direct paternal ancestor, 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 near Cape Girardeau on the Mississippi River in Missouri, where he died in March, 1818. His son John M. Roe, after settling his parent's estate, moved further upriver to Adams County, Illinois, with a group of fellow German Baptists known as Dunkards, led by George Wolfe, and established a community named Liberty.

THE ROBERT COLEMAN FAMILY
 "LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF JOHN ROW, of Record at
 Page 32 of Will Book A of Anderson County Records, Anderson, South
 Carolina, formerly Pendleton District.
 Copied by J. P. Coleman and Frank Coleman on July 29, 1961.
 South Carolina
 Camden District

IN THE NAME OF GOD, AMEN, the twentieth day of April, One
 Thousand Seven Hundred Seventy and Eight. That I John Row, late of
 the County of Craven in the Province aforesaid, gentleman, being in
 health and perfect mind and memory, calling to mind that it is appointed
 for all men to die, I therefore make and ordain my last will and testament
 as follows:

I first recommend my soul into the Hands of God who gave it me,
 secondly, my body for to be buried in a decent manner at the discretion of
 my executors and also all my just and lawful debts to be paid out of my
 estate and the remainder to be divided as follows, to-wit:

ITEM: I give and bequeath to son, John Row, one Negro girl named
 Sue.

ITEM: I give to son, William Row, one Negro boy named Sam to him
 and his heirs.

ITEM: I lend to son, Andrew Roe, one Negro girl named Phyllis, to
 him and his heirs.

ITEM: I lend to son, Solomon Row, one Negro girl named Karis him
 and his heirs.

I lend to my son, Benjamin Row, 1 Negro girl named Lucy to him and
 his heirs.

ITEM: I lend to my son, Joseph Row, one Negro named James to him
 and his heirs.

ITEM: I lend to my son Hansile Row, one Negro woman named
 Hannah and the first child she brings to be given if it lives to my daughter,
 Mary, and the next child if she lives to bring any more to my daughter.

ITEM: I lend to my daughter, Nancy, one Negro woman named
 Rachel to her (and her) heirs and the first child she brings if it lives to be
 given to my daughter, Sarah, and if she brings any more children to be
 given one to my daughter Frances and my house furniture to be equally
 divided between my daughters at my decease.

This being my Last Will and Testament whereof I have to set my hand
 and affixed my seal the day and date above written.

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 Seneca
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Twelve M
 are in north
 & North Fork
 Colony River
 of Picken &
 north of Cl
 Reservoir
 lies wholly

9th child is Potley & Potley is left out so could Martha be Potley? Yes Martha
 The 1st (David) & 2nd (Elizabeth)

THE ROBERT COLEMAN FAMILY

Witnesses Present: John Row^{Jr.}, Andrew Row, Joseph Attoway,

his
John x Row
mark

Proved by the oath of Andrew Row "the only witness to be obtained,"
February 5, 1802.

John's son, Andrew, was in what later became Anderson County
earlier than February 9, 1796. On that date, Book C, Page 155, Andrew
sold Isaac West 200 acres on Twenty-three Mile Creek. Andrew was
still alive on March 29, 1806, for on that date he sold land in the same
locality to Richard Robinson, Book H, Page 307.

John's son, Solomon Roe, was in the area as early as 1788, as we shall
see hereafter.

John's son, Benjamin, went along with the others, as shown by a deed
in which he sold 69 acres of land to Abraham Duke, Book K, Page
108.

Hancil Roe, the ninth son and fourteenth child of John Roe, was in the
same area as early as June 25, 1792. Book B, Page 21. On that date,
called "Anselm" Roe, he purchased 150 acres from William Jackson on
Twelve Mile Creek. His name regularly appears thereafter in the old
Pendleton District Records (now at Anderson, South Carolina) through
the year 1827.

His wife's name was Mary, and she was the daughter of Thomas
Watson. Deed Book L, Page 227.

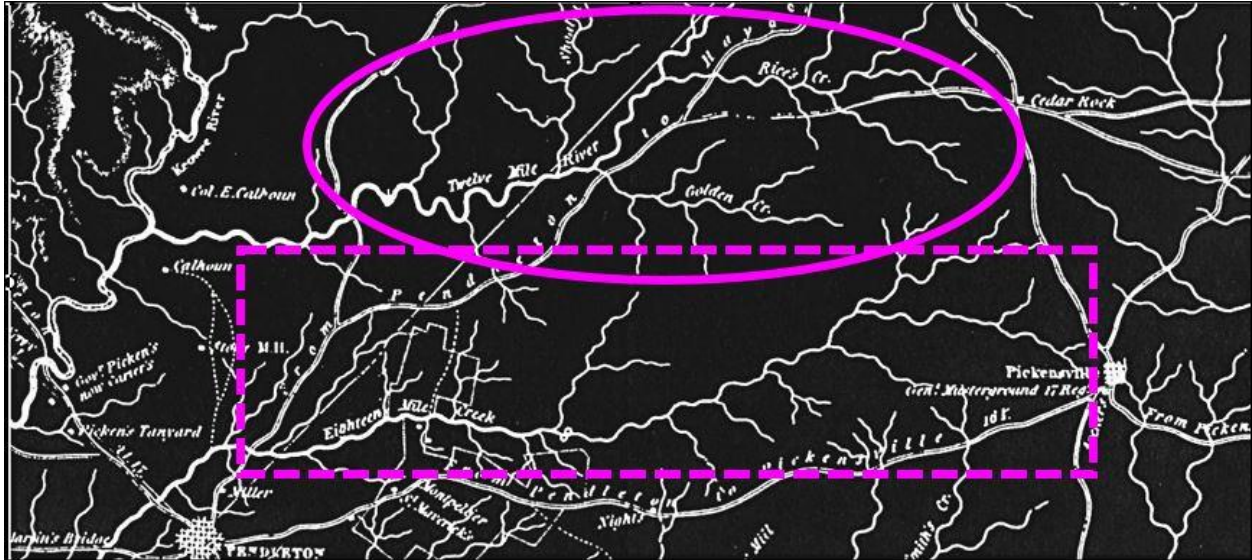
On November 7, 1809, Abraham Duke, Hugh Tatum, John Roe, and
Nancy Roe recite themselves to be the heirs of Solomon Roe, deceased.
On that date, they sold land on Rock House Fork, Eighteen Mile Creek,
Seneca River.

The deed recited that Solomon had acquired this land in 1788.

Twelve Mile Creek is on the S.C.H.D. map of Pickens Co. Its sources
are in north central Pickens Co. Two of its sources are Middle Fork
Seneca River & join just NW of the town of Pickens & flow west
into Lake Seneca just north of Central & into Lake Seneca just
north of Clemson. This Lake is the same headwaters of Hartwell
Reservoir into which Eighteen Mile Creek flows. Twelve Mile Creek
is wholly within Pickens Co.

Three & Twenty
Mile Creek is
on the S.C.H.D.
map of Anderson
Co. Its sources
are SW of Easley
which is in SE
Pickens Co. but
the creek's
name is not
on the Pickens
Co. map. The
creek immedi-
ately flows
into Anderson
Co. & stays
well within
the Co. follow-
ing Anderson Co.'s
Northern border
passing just
South of Pendleton
& through France
& into Hartwell
Reservoir.

Eighteen Mile
Creek is on
the S.C.H.D. maps
of Pickens &
Anderson Co.
Its sources
are also SW
of Easley in
Pickens Co. but
it stays within
Pickens Co. fol-
lowing Pickens
Co.'s Southern
line to Clemson
& Pendleton & flows
between these 2
towns & into
Anderson Co. & into
the headwaters
of Hartwell Reser-
voir.



General locations of properties owned by the Roe family - Benjamin Berryman Roe and George Miller (on 18-Mile Ck, Golden Ck., Twelve Mile River in Pendleton District SC)- after Rev. War Roes moved west from Camden Dist. (Fairfield Co.) in late 1780s to early 1800s