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Hamrick Family I

FOUNDER CAME FROM GERMANY

History Traces Family To Hans George Ham- erick

A family tree of the Hamrick generations in Cleveland and Rutherford counties reveals to genealogists that thousands of limbs and branches are so mixed and intertwined with a dozen other leading family trees that nearly everyone is "cousin."

The family name of Hamrick has for years led all other family names in numbers in Shelby and Cleveland county and still is ahead of the Beams, Blantons, Bridges, Greenes, Hoyles Roberts and the ever-present Smiths, Browns and Jones.

From Germany

According to two sources, a book "The Hamrick Generations" by the late S. C. Jones and a book "Life Values in the New South" by the late W. C. Hamrick, all the present generation of Hamricks in Cleveland and Rutherford counties are descendants of one Hans George Hamerick (Hambrick Homrick or Hamrick) who came to this country from Germany in 1731 as a poor immigrant farmer who was seeking religious freedom.

French armies had laid the lower Rhine River valley in waste and the rulers persecuted the Protestant elements horribly, so Hamerick joined a shipload of refugees in Rotterdam and sailed for America and landed in Philadelphia where he later married and worked.

Come To Cleveland

Several years prior to the war for Independence Charles, Benjamin and George Hamerick, sons of Hans George migrated to Cleveland county, North Carolina, the county then being Tryon, later Rutherford. Soon the name became Hamrick, or in some cases Hambrick and the hard-working industrious farmers began the task of earning their bread and of following the Biblical injunction of "replenishing the earth."

One prominent member of the Hamrick family, Attorney Fred D. Hamrick of Rutherfordton, believes, after considerable investigation, that several members of the Hamrick family may have originated in Ireland, but the exact origin is not clear.

Street Hamrick

Dr. W. C. Hamrick in his book says his father, Streeter Hamrick, son of Moses Hamrick, the

son of Price Hamrick, the son of Charles Hamrick, the first son of Immigrant Hans George.

Streeter had six sons whose descendants have organized and hold a reunion in the Poplar Springs-Beaver Dam community each year. It was said of Streeter Hamrick that when his sons married he gave each of them a mule, a pig and a straight-backed chair to begin their career, and that each of them went to work and carved out fortunes in farming, trading and textiles.

Amassed Wealth

At one time the combined wealth of the six sons exceeded four million dollars. The brothers were Marshal Newton, Sidney Hill, John Calhoun, Leander Sheppard, Alonzo Marion, and Wiley Cicero, and all lived their entire lives in this county with the exception of Dr. Wiley Hamrick who moved to Gaffney to build the Hamrick Mills there and a textile fortune.

With the death of John C. a few days ago only Alonzo M. remains. All have lived to a ripe old age, the total for the six almost reaching 500 years.

Many Professions

Of the hosts of Hamricks whose ancestors first were farmers there are now prominent lawyers, doctors, business men, craftsmen, textile leaders and workmen in every activity in the county. Marriages and inter-marriages with a score or more leading families have made family records and family traditions and names seem almost like those of one family, especially in the southern part of the county.

An anecdote is told of a Civil War captain who was calling the roll of men from a Cleveland county company and after calling a score of Hamrick surnames came to "Moore" Hamrick, and a wag called out, "There are not any more Hamricks: they are all here."

Of all the earlier Hamricks Dr. Wiley said "their lot was one of unremitting, grinding toil from sun to sun. Their scant learning consisted in reading the Bible and writing their names. They were honest, substantial citizens of their generation, and their history was the short and simple annals of the poor."

"Uncle" Berry Hamrick

Probably the most prolific of the progeny of the Hamricks has been the family of the late "Uncle" Berry Hamrick who was born in 1820 and died in 1917 at the age of 97, possibly the oldest of the Hamricks and who had three wives and outlived all three.

He was well acquainted with the earlier Hamricks and said that the first George Hamrick had 21 children and that three of them, the three mentioned by Dr. W. C. Hamrick, came south and that their

marriages and connections brought the families of Greens, Blantons Bridges, Harrells, McSwains, Champions, Washburns, Wrays, Suttles, Bosticks, Ledbetter, Doggets, Conners, Hughes, Magness, McBrayer, Webb, Lovelace and Williamson under the roof of the family tree.

Some of the very earliest Hamricks, according to S. C. Jones who got records from courthouses, land grants and other sources were: Samuel, entered land 1797 near Mt. Sinai; James, nearby in 1800; Jones, west side First Broad river, 1800; Frederick, Patterson Springs, 1800; Price, near Beaver Dam, 1800; Nathaniel, Hickory Creek, 1797.

Mr. Jones found some very puzzling connections, some of the Hamricks having three great-grand fathers who were all brothers; a number of men were fifth or sixth cousins to their wives, "yet all of them had sense enough to go to mill and back."

Public Life

The prominence of the Hamrick family and connections in public life is revealed in the following summary of service: Housand Harrill, Rutherford legislature, 1804; David Hamrick, R. C. legislature, 1834; William Jones, R. C. legislature, 1846; Amos Harrill, R. C. legislature, 1846; Benjamin Washburn, R. C. legislature, 1858; Charles Blanton, first Cleveland sheriff, 1842-1852.

James Y. Hamrick, first legislator of Cleveland county, 1844 and again in 1848 when he died; Richard Champion, first clerk of court of Cleveland, 1842-1866; John Blanton, Rutherford Sheriff, 1880-90; Burwell Blanton, trustee N. C. State college, 1890; Dr. John B. Harrill, R. C. legislature, 1885; Capt. G. G. Holland, Cleveland county legislature, 1850; William M. Blanton, Cleveland legislature, 1856; James Y. Hamrick Jr., Cleveland legislature 1881; Senate, 1895.

James L. Webb, legislature 1881, superior court judge many years; Wiley C. Hamrick, Cleveland legislature, 1889 and S. C. Senate 1910; Drury S. Lovelace, legislature, 1909 and many others too numerous to mention.