

THE UNDERWOODS FROM ROARING GAP (NC) TO DUMPLIN VALLEY (TN) AND ONWARD

AND RELATED FAMILIES

The Book, The Title and The Purpose,

The reason for this title is this document deals with the Underwoods who came to Wilkes County, North Carolina (1778), later Surry County, North Carolina, and then in about 1795 through 1823 migrated to East Tennessee and settled in Dumplin Valley in Sevier County Tennessee. This migration included four sons from one family who apparently left another brother, Joel, and four sisters named Sally, Nancy, Milly, and Elizabeth. To date, no record other than a citation of these sisters and a brother left behind in Surry County in the will of John Underwood (1A) has been found -- or at least no record has been made known to the author .

It was an awareness of our heritage and a fear of the loss of this heritage into unrecorded history that prompted this thesis. Too many times has this writer seen and heard older people trying to get the younger generation to grasp the family connections to have their efforts ignored and forgotten. It is for those who treasure our heritage now and those who will appreciate the knowledge contained in these pages in future years that this labor of love is constructed.

The People

The first of these people recorded in these pages came into the untamed land of East Tennessee about the time the State of Tennessee was being formed. Adventure may have been the compelling reason for coming but it is the writer's opinion that it was a more practical desire for land that brought these early Underwoods to Dumplin Valley.

It is interesting to note that most of these early forebearers of ours were able to sign their land deals and sign their own wills. In addition to being diligent farmers many of them were craftsmen of one sort or another. Therefore in addition to living in a manner that provides the present generation a proud heritage many of our ancestors helped to develop the economic strength of this East Tennessee region.

In Appreciation and Dedication

Appreciation must be expressed to my wife of over fifty three years and my sons for the time I have diverted into this labor. Appreciation must also be expressed for those hours given both recently and many years ago by family members who have helped give an accounting of family history and family tradition from their memories and from their documents. Finally this book is dedicated to my three grand children Mary Catherine David Arthur and Sarah Jane Underwood with the sincere hope that they will realize that they are but a link in a strong chain from the past into the future of this family and this nation.

Special appreciation goes to my son Thomas R. Underwood for the many hours he spent revising reorganizing and typing this edition on a word processor and to my son Robert B. Underwood for performing the arduous task of indexing this thesis on a computer.

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FOREWORD

The purpose of these pages is to record in chronological order all of the descendants it has been possible to find of John Underwood, Senior, of Roaring Gap, North Carolina.

The Wilkes County, North Carolina, census of 1790 lists two men named John Underwood. One was the father of the other and the census list designates the father as "sen" and the son as "jun". The same census shows two men who shared the name William Underwood. One was the son of John Underwood, sen, and the other was possibly the father or brother of the John Underwoods. There was a Lewis Underwood. There is indication that Lewis was the son of the older William Underwood. No further record has been found and noted by this writer or any of his correspondents. Further no information has been located concerning the older William Underwood.

A study of the history in the section of North Carolina where the early Underwoods lived and worked becomes frustrating and confusing especially when searching for ancestors. The section in question was once under the jurisdiction of Rowan County, then in Surry County, then in 1770 Wilkes County became responsible for governmental duties for this area. Finally in 1792 Surry County again encompassed the area of Roaring Gap and surrounding countryside. Most of the records for all of this period are to be found in Surry County.

It was on one occasion of a visit to my ninety year old grandfather Enoch Pleasant Underwood (1838 1928) that my life long inspiration to pursue the family's genealogy began. He gave enough facts within that one hour visit to keep me digging and interested over these many years since. In most cases verbal history cannot be relied upon for more than clues. However he was well versed. He said that the Underwoods came from North Carolina but was not specific about the exact location within North Carolina.

After considerable research and study Wilkes County North Carolina seemed to become the logical focal point for study about the early Underwood family. A trip to Wilkes County in the fall of 1971 was the next step. A member of the local Genealogical Society Mr. Tedder helped by looking through the records but found only one lead in the mystery. The records of 1823 showed a sale of a parcel of land by the Sheriff H. B. Satterwhite to a William Underwood presumably for taxes. The land involved is located southeast of Wilkesboro. Then Mr. Tedder did something even more significant than the location of this property transfer. He suggested that there might be something of interest for Underwood researchers at Dobson in Surry County some twenty miles away.

Indeed there was something of interest in Dobson. There in the Register of Deeds Office was a deed transferring a piece of land from a William Underwood of Knox County Tennessee to Zachariah Seaman dated February 10, 1798. It was an already established fact that a William Underwood of Sevier County Tennessee had bought land in Knox County Tennessee in 1797. This was the all important link between the Underwoods of Knox and Sevier Counties in Tennessee with those Underwoods across the mountains in Surry County, North Carolina. Other deeds from John Underwood were found. Most of them were signed by Joel Underwood who acted as an agent. Some were witnessed by Jesse Franklin who was later to serve as Governor of North Carolina and by Joseph Ramey. To the writer this meant that at least two Underwoods had sold their lands and holdings in North Carolina and had moved to Tennessee.

A year later and more research in Dobson produced the will of John Underwood, sen. A photocopy of this will became a new key to the hunt. This will showed the names of the children--four daughters and five sons. The will contained no mention of a wife. At about the same time that this will came into the picture the Wilkes County Genealogical Society produced the original land grant for two hundred and ninety eight acres to John Underwood on the waters of Fisher River. This land grant was dated March 3, 1779. The pieces to the puzzle were now falling rapidly into place. The will established that four of the sons moved to Tennessee. It further confirmed that there was an older George than the son of John Underwood. The older George had bought land in Knox County Tennessee in 1801 while the younger George was born in 1791 making him too young to be the purchaser of land only ten years after his birth. Other records showed that the fourth son of John Underwood moved to Tennessee. This fourth son was Thomas Underwood who moved to Jefferson County in 1823.

This volume is an effort to record the lives, loves, labors, losses, and laurels of a people from whom we have descended. The writer has spent over fifty years of "off and on" time on this project between other projects such as earning a living for my family and the usual spin off activities associated with family and profession. Many new friends were made via visits and telephone calls as well as old friendships renewed. Several self addressed envelopes with letters of inquiry were never returned. I could be assumed that the recipients either knew nothing and cared nothing about finding out or it could be that there were skeletons in the closets" and they didn't want to "rattle any bones". Many the times while searching old cemeteries for names and dates the writer has noted the unmarked graves or those with only a field stone for a marker he has mused as the poet Grey did when he wrote:.

Their name, their years, spelt by unlettered muse '
The place of fame and elegy supply;
And many a holy text around she strews
That teacher the rustic moralist to die.

"*****

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampton, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of field withstood
Some mute in glorious Milton here may rest
Some Cromwell guiltless of his country's blood.

It is hoped that this document will serve as an aid to any person who would want to study further this family or a related family. This book is not complete. Perhaps it will never be complete. However, some acts herein recorded would have been lost if they had not been collected and tabulated when they were. No attempt has been made to make these lines romantic but to show the niche in history in which they had a part.

Utmost care has been made to obtain and record accurate information for this theses, but it can be expected that errors will be found for which neither the writer or the printer assumes responsibility. .

A copy of this book will be available from one of the sources listed below until the supply is exhausted:

Burl H. Underwood
2709 Gaston Avenue
Knoxville Tennessee 37917

Robert B. Underwood
1312 Fieldwood Drive
Knoxville Tennessee 37918

Thomas R. Underwood
5922 Wassman Road
Knoxville Tennessee 37912

The price will be determined by the cost of printing. No price will be exacted for the hours of research or the miles traveled.

The System Used In This Book

This system is similar to the one used by Iona Adamson Nolan in the Huffaker Family. The numerals represent the generations beginning with John Underwood sen. as 1A and his children as 2A, 2B, and so on. The letters designate the children in the family in order of birth if known or if not known then the question mark (?) is used. It is highly probable that another generation can be added in the person of William Underwood as stated elsewhere but this has not been authenticated.

Abbreviations Used

(b....born	bd...buried	res...residence
(d....died	ca...circa (about)	dec...deceased
(m....married	dau...daughter	div...divorced
unm.unmarried	MG...Minister of Gospel	wit...witness
*...designates person giving information		

FURTHER EXPLANATION OF THE SYSTEM USED IN THIS BOOK

The system in use throughout this book may seem confusing on first glance but is really very simple and consistent when understood. The following example of the use of this system may help you:

Let's assume your paternal grandfather (you remember him he was your father's father) was also the grandson of one of the family of brothers and sisters who left the Carolinas in the late 1700's and early 1800's to migrate into East Tennessee. Stop and think at this point. Your Grandfather was someone else's grandson!! (Everybody has to start somewhere.)

Since we have assigned to that first family of brothers and sisters the generation identification of "2" (since we gave old John Underwood the father of all of them the numeral "1" we thought "2" would follow very nicely); and since one of those brothers and sisters knew your grandfather as a grandson your grandfather's generation would have been "4". Let's put this much on a chart: (Let's forget about any code but the numerals for now -- more on letters later.)

- 1A. John Underwood and Sussannah Underwood
 - 2? (Your Grandfather's grandparent)
 - 3? (Your grandfather's parents)
 - 4? Your grandfather !!
 - 5? Your father (remember we said paternal grandfather)
 - 6? YOU !!
 - 7? Your children etc. etc.

We used question marks (?) in this illustration since the letter usually placed here would indicate the order of birth of the brothers and sisters. We wanted to teach you the generation code first. Do you have that? If so, go on to the next paragraph:

To clear up the letter codes we will assume your grandfather was the second child (we will say he had an older sister since most boys need one). We will assume your father was an only child and you were the last of four children. Now the chart would look like this for just those three generations:

- 4B. Your grandfather's name here
 - 5A. Your father name here
 - 6D. YOUR NAME HERE
 - 7? Your children here

Remember, there will be brothers and sisters listed along side your ancestors with lettered codes indicating whether they are older or younger than your line.

Now with the skills, you can now plough through and track down cousins, uncles and lots of other relationships.

EARLY UNDERWOODS

Alexander Spotswood (1676-1740) was the Lieutenant Governor of colonial Virginia from 1710 to 1722, when he was removed. He tried to accomplish three things while he was in this office. (1) regulate the fur trade with the Indians (2) encourage the production and export of high quality tobacco (3) encourage settlements along the colony's western frontier to serve as a buffer to the older settlements against Indian raids. He acquired over 85,000 acres of land through grants in Spotsylvania County and in Orange County Virginia. Spotsylvania County was established in 1720 and Orange County was established in 1734 out of lands which were previously a part of Spotsylvania County.

From Orange County Virginia Deed Book 5, 6, 7, and 8 (1741-1743) pages 149-153 abstracted by _____ is recorded:

April 7, 1740 Alexander Spotswood Esq. to John Underwood lease of 200 acres in St. Marks Parish on south side of River Rappahannock part of a 40,000 acres called the Spotsylvania Tract.;
For lived of John Underwood and Sarah Underwood his wife. Yearly rent 1000 pounds of tobacco to be delivered in one hogshead at some convenient landing on Rappahannock River in Spotsylvania County commence 25, December 1740.

There were other Underwoods recorded as being in Orange County about this time, but John was the only Christian name used for the following generations of the family subject. For instance a David Underwood and wife Katherine was given the same type of lease as John and Sarah Underwood on the same date. Nathan (T) Underwood was a witness in a case titled Foy vs Smith, November 5 1734. (Deed Book 1 & 2). Further, Christophyer Underwood is mentioned in Orange County Book 2 dated March 26, 1772.

From Underwood Families of America, page 563 are names of Underwoods in Orange County Virginia in 1782: Joshua Margaret and Reuben. Also a Joseph Underwood born ca 1745 in Yorkshire, England, settled in Orange County, Virginia, then moved to Culpepper County, Virginia, and then later to Elbert County, Georgia.

There is evidence that John Underwood (1A) migrated from Orange County, Virginia, to western Surry County, North Carolina. It is known that he married a Margaret Jackman of Fauquier County, Virginia, which is near by Orange County. Also the families of Kirbys and Franklins and possibly others were from Orange County and settled in Surry County in the Fisher and Mitchell Rivers section of Surry.

The biographer of Jesse Franklin (1760-1823) states that young Franklin and others came in 1770 to western Surry County North Carolina and built accommodations for their families and returned to Orange County, Virginia to guide the families to the new home site. He states further that Jesse Franklin married a Miss Meeky Perkins. Some genealogists claim that he married Nancy Underwood daughter of John Underwood (1A) which could have been his first marriage. Young Franklin was a volunteer in the Continental Service under George Washington and held a lieutenant's commission at the age of 17. It is believed that William Underwood, the older son of John Underwood (1A), was with Franklin when he came to western Surry County to prepare for the families' settlement. It is also known that William Underwood (2B) married Sussannah Kirby in Surry County but she was born in Virginia. Another brother, John Underwood, (2F) married a Kirby.

The land grants to John Underwood in Surry County dated 1778, 1779 and 1780 had boundary lines adjoining Franklins and Kirbys and Wootens, which is evidence that these families migrated together in what some writers called a cluster.

It is this writer's opinion that John Underwood (1A) was the son of John and Sarah Underwood who leased land from Alexander Spotswood in Virginia in 1740.

A letter from J. F. Graves, Esq., a young lawyer of Mount Airy, North Carolina and a grandson of Governor Jesse Franklin written to Rev. Eli Washington Caruthers contains:

The principal Whig families in the western and north-western part of Surry County were the Franklins, Cunninghams, McCraws, Toliaferos, Thompsons, Underwoods, and Williams. Much of the greater part of the population was at that time of the Tory party but these families were Whigs. Bernard and Mary Franklin the parents of Jesse were residing in Orange County Virginia at the commencement of the Revolutionary War.....¹

Jesse Franklin's mother was a sister to Colonel Steve Cleveland under whom he served as a lieutenant before he came to North Carolina..

¹ Revolutionary War Incidents or "Old North State" by Rev. Eli Washington Caruthers, 1856, pages 198-199

Additional direction signs were provided in a letter from Miss Delphine Miller of Dallas, Texas, dated July 5, 1975, which pointed to the origins of the Underwoods on their way to Roaring Gap, North Carolina in 1790. This letter includes quotes from a far older letter written on June 24, 1824, by John F. Hammett of Pleasant Grove, Greenville District, South Carolina, to his brother, George Hammett, in Nova Scotia. In this letter John made some comments concerning the family of John Underwood. John F. Hammett wrote:

"Mother's Uncle John (Underwood) married a woman by the name of Jackman whose daughter I married. The most of their children live in Tennessee. There is one at Fisher Gap 30 miles from where we live on the Yadkin, North Carolina. Uncle George (Underwood) married my wife's sister who lives here."

Miss Miller continued:

"George Hammett (b. 1759) and John Ferguson Hammett (b. 1761 in Culpepper County, Virginia) were the oldest sons of John and Sarah Underwood Hammett who left Culpepper County, Virginia, after 1763 and by 1782 were living in Spartenburg County, South Carolina."

George Hammett joined the British Army at the age of fifteen in South Carolina and fought for the British in most of the important battles of the Revolution in South Carolina. As happened in the case of many of those similarly situated loyal subjects he was evacuated to Nova Scotia. He settled there married and reared a large family. Some forty years later he was finally able to make contact with his family in South Carolina and in the above letter, John is bringing his bother up to date on the relatives he left behind.

John F. Hammett and wife, Emilia "Milly" Underwood and George Underwood and his wife, Sally, were among the first settlers of Greenville District after that part of South Carolina was opened for settlement after 1784. Presumably George Underwood was the brother of Sarah Underwood who married John Hammett Sr. (the parents of John F.)

"The children of John F. and Emilia "Milly" Underwood Hammett were Joel, Jesse, Jonathan, Sarah, Elizabeth, Nancy, Ellender, and Martha."

"In Fauquier County, Virginia, the will of Thomas Jackman (proved in 1782) names a daughter Margaret Underwood. She was the wife of John Underwood above."

With the above in mind the notes on Orange Count, Virginia, was searched and the following was found in Deed Book 1-8 in abstracts copied from books found in the McClung Collection in the Knoxville Knox County Library:

Nov. 5, 1734 Nathan (T) Underwood was a witness in a case Foy vs Smith (Deed Book 1 and 2).

In Deed Book 3 and 4 page 54 the record shows Daniel Underwood was a witness on 23 Oct. 1740. Daniel Underwood and wife Katherine leased land from Alexander Spotswood, Esq. on 7 April, 1740.

Orange County, Virginia Deed Book 5, 6, 7, and 8 (1741 1743) shows that Alexander Spotswood, Esq. leased to John Underwood 200 acres in St. Mark's Parish on the south side of River Rappidanne part of 40,000 acres called the Spotsylvania Tract.

For lives of John Underwood and Sarah Underwood, his wife, yearly rent, 1,000 pounds of tobacco, to be delivered in one hogshead at some convenient landing on Rappahannock River in Spotsylvania County to commence 25 December, 1740

In the same book Daniel Underwood, yeoman, shue (sic) maker, leased and released. This record appears at page 52. He was also a witness on the 26th of August, 1742 according to the record at page 76.

John Underwood's Will

Taken from Will Book .(early)..Dodson Surry County North Carolina pages 97, 98, and 99.)

"In the name of God Amen. August ye 25th day 1793.

I, John Underwood of the County of Surry and State of North Carolina, yeoman, being weak of body yet of sound mind and memory calling to mind that it is appointed for all men once to die do hereby make and ordain this my last will and testament dis-annulling and revokeing all other form or wills and testament whatsoever and as it hath pleased God to me with my worldly Estate I do hereby dispose of same in the manner and form following as for my soul I recommend it

to the hands of God that gave it and my body to return to the earth from whence it came. It is my will and desire that all my just debts and funeral charges be paid and satisfied by my Executors hereafter mentioned: Item;

I give unto my well beloved daughter Sally ten shillings.

I give unto my well beloved son William ten shillings.

I give unto my well beloved daughter Milly ten shillings

I give unto my well beloved daughter Nancy ten shillings.

I give unto my well beloved daughter Elizabeth ten shillings.

I give unto my well beloved son John ten pounds to paid in a horse at cash price.

I give unto my well beloved son Thomas all of the land that I hold south of the roaring gap creek supposed to be seventy five acres to him and his heirs and assigns forever.

I give unto my well beloved son George one hundred and twenty five acres the lower end of the survey I live on to him his heir and assigns forever.

I give unto my well beloved son Joel one hundred and fifty acres of land where I now live on to him his heirs and assigns forever. Also all my stock of every kind and households goods after settling the above legacies with his brothers and sisters.

I give and bequeath unto my well beloved housekeeper, Betsy Watts the bed and furniture whereon she commonly lay also one two year old heifer that she raised by hand to her and heirs and assigns forever.

Item; I hereby constitute and appoint my well beloved sons William Underwood and Joel Underwood my whole and sole Executors of all my lands and tenements to divide and dispose of them as is above described.

In testimony whereunto I have set my hand and fixed my seal the day and year above written.

Signed

John Underwood (seal)

Signed and acknowledged in the presents of:

William Cunningham

John Cunningham

State of North Carolina Surry County May Session A.D. 1811"

John Underwood (1A)

This edition deals with the progeny of John and Margaret Jackman Underwood. John Underwood lived in Orange County Virginia before 1770. He married Margaret Jackman, the daughter of Thomas Jackman of Fauquier County, Virginia. She was mentioned in his will. The earliest record found of this John Underwood was a land grant for 298 acres in western Surry County North Carolina. The grant "included the improvements where Underwood now lives."

When the area of western Surry County, North Carolina, was opened for settlement, several young men went into the area and built accommodations for the families and returned to Orange County Virginia for the families. The Underwood claim was on the Fisher River, while the Franklin Claim was on the Mitchell River. These rivers were headwaters for the Yadkin River. Both rivers were in the Roaring Gap section of Surry County. Wilkes County North Carolina was created in 1777 out of a part of western Surry County and these people were listed in Wilkes in the 1790 US Census. This part of Wilkes was put back into Surry in 1793 by legislative action through the efforts of Jesse Franklin a member of the legislature. It was done for the convenience of the people to get to their county seat.

William Underwood (2B), son of John Underwood (1A) was the young man who came to build accommodations for his family. He also claimed land for himself. He married Sussanah Kirby from Virginia. The Kirbys must have come with the clan for the Underwood and Kirby families intermarried afterwards. One writer stated that people at that time moved in clusters for religious and political protection. Caruthers, in "Old North State 1776" mentions the Whig families in western Surry as Underwoods, Franklins, Thompsons, Kirbys, and others.

This treatise is divided into the number of children of John Underwood (1740? 1811) designated as 1A and the children designated as 2A, 2B, 2C, and so on according to the children named in the will of John Underwood (1A)

The children of John Underwood (1740 1811) of Surry County, North Carolina:

2A. Sally Underwood m. George Underwood, her first cousin and the son of William or Thomas Underwood. They went to Greenville District, South Carolina.

2B. William Underwood (1754 1814) m. Susannah Kirby. They settled in Knox, now Anderson County, Tennessee in, 1797

2C. Milly or Emelia Underwood (1758-) m. John F. Hammett.

(2D. Nancy Underwood. No information but possibly married Jesse Franklin.

2E. Elizabeth Underwood. No information found.

2F. John Underwood (1767 1858) He settled in Sevier County Tennessee about 1795. He had three wives, _____ Kirby Elizabeth Manifold and Mary Evans Huffaker. There are children from all three wives

2G. Thomas Underwood (1770 1856) m. Mary Ramey. Settled in Jefferson County, Tennessee, in 1823

2H. George Underwood (1772 1826) m. Sally. _____ Settled in Knox County, Tennessee in 1803

2I. Joel Underwood (1776 1840) m. Susannah Cunningham. This is the only son of John Underwood.(1A) who did not go to Tennessee. He was in Surry County North Carolina in 1830. It is thought that he went to visit his son, Jackman in Cass County Missouri and died there. There is a Joel Underwood buried in Underwood Cemetery in Lonejack, Missouri.

It is interesting to note that all four Underwoods who came to East Tennessee bought their land rather than taking grants. Some grants were taken later however.