

The North Carolina Graysons

It is probably no coincidence that The Rutherford County Graysons and the Wilkes County Graysons of North Carolina started their lineage about the same time according to the documents now at hand.

Wilkes county was formed from Surrey county in 1777; Burke County came from Rowan Co. in 1777; Rutherford county came from Burke and Tyron in 1779.

Now look at these dates: these are the earliest land grant dates of Graysons ~~for~~ for the above 3 counties:

- also grant 530:
a. Ent. 2 Dec 1778*
1. WILKES: BENJAMIN GRAYSON; grant 544
 - a. Entered; 19 June 1779
 - b. Described; 5 April 1782
 - c. Issued; 9 Nov. 1784
 - d. Location: On the dividing ridge between Wilkes and Burke counties
 2. BURKE: JOSEPH GRAYSON; grant 386 (also Joseph GRISAM)
 - a. Entered; 31 Dec. 1778
 - b. Surveyed; 10 Feb. 1780
 - c. Issued; 28 Oct. 1782
 - d. A branch of the First Little Broad River ~~is~~ joining the county line that divides Rutherford County from Burke County.
 3. RUTHERFORD: JOSEPH GRAYSON (Was this the son of the Burke co. Joseph?)
 - a. Entered: 13 Oct. 1795
 - b. Surveyed: Nov. 22, 1797
 - c. Issued: 18 Dec. 1797
 - d. Witnessed: Robt Diviney; Wm. Grayson
- d. 400 acres of co.
~~land grant 530~~*

INFERENCES:

1. Joseph Grayson and Benjamin Grayson above came almost simultaneously to enter land in North Carolina.
2. Therefore they might be related.
3. Inasmuch as they each named their sons William, John, Joseph, and Benjamin Grayson, they were probably brothers.
4. Inasmuch as later census returns show that one or more of each of their sons were born in Virginia, it is concluded that the brothers Benjamin and Joseph Grayson came from Virginia.
5. Elsewhere, because of the mentioned names Crow and Hurt in the will of Joseph Grayson's widow Rachel, it is suspected that Culpepper county, Va., was their home.
6. Therefore, the search should concentrate on the Graysons of Culpepper co., Va.
7. If the eldest son of Benjamin was William Grayson and the eldest son of his brother Joseph Grayson was also William Grayson, perhaps the father of Benjamin and Joseph in Va. was a William Grayson.
8. If the father was not William, then we should look for their father to be named John, Joseph, or Benjamin, because of the commonality in the 2 families.

Richard R. Grayson, M.D.

Internal Medicine

24 Hour Telephone: 584-2230

103 West Main Street, St. Charles, Illinois

Mary P. Hammersmith
1424 Lark Lane
Naperville, Ill.

23 April 1978

Dear Mrs. Hammersmith,

It was kind of you to answer my ad regarding the Graysons of Wilkes county and to send the map of land ownership with Benjamin Grayson's grant of 1779.

I have on file photocopies of 2 different grants to Benjamin Grayson, sr., of Wilkes.:

No. 544 is for 290 acres of land in Wilkes county on King's Creek beginning near to Tilley's corner, etc. and is signed by Edmond Tilley, Joseph Woodall, chain carriers and Ben Elledge and Jos. Horndon. Entered June 19, 1779, issued Nov. 9, 1784.

On Dec. 7th, 1778, in the Wilkes county Land entry book is No. 530, wherein Benjamin Grayson enters 400 acres of land in Wilkes county lying on Kings Creek adjoining the land of Edmond Tilly.

I can't imagine how you would go about reconstructing the neighborhood like you did. You must tell me some time. I am grateful for the map, but now I wish I could use it in some way.

I think it more than a coincidence that on Dec. 31st, 1778 a Joseph Grayson entered land (No. 1327) in Burke county right next to Wilkes county on the First Little Broad River on the county line that divides Rutherford County from Burke county. This Joseph Grayson, sr., started a large Grayson clan in Rutherford county on which I have extensive records.

I also have extensive records of the descendants and/or other Graysons of Wilkes including their land grants. I suspect that the above Joseph Grayson of Rutherford was a brother or other relative to my Benjamin Grayson of Wilkes, but have no proof. Joseph Grayson was said to have come from Virginia, but no one knows more than that. The Meltons who intermarried with the Rutherford Graysons came from Albemarle county, Va., so it is tempting to think that Benjamin Grayson came from Albemarle county also.

more

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Mrs. Absher has done research for me and has charted all the records of all the Wilkes Graysons, but alas has not found the name Wren Grayson in Wilkes records. My connection to Wilkes is circumstantial but substantial, through later records out of Tenn. and Ind. Wren Grayson was born in 1782.

I have not found the names of the neighbors of Benjamin Grayson in my records; that is, Holt, Tilley, Cox, Witherspoon, Stapp, W. t. b. l. t., Neathery, Coffee or the other names you mentioned: Smalley, Anthony, Murray.

Wren Grayson's 1st wife was a Betsy Owens and I had hoped he met her in Wilkes, but it might have been Scott co., Ky. where he found her, since that is where his 1st child was born and there were many Owens in Scott co.

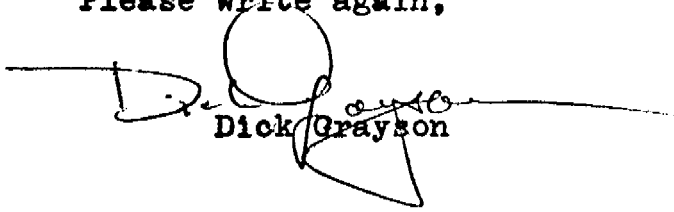
Then in 1807 Wren and Betsy went to Bledsoe co., Tenn. In about 1827 they moved back to Scott co., Ky, then in about 1830-2, went to Decatur co., Ind. Do any of these places ring a bell with you? Betsy must have died and Wren married a Rebecca ____.

I have not been to Wilkes county, but I will go if there is some research I can do. Maybe you could suggest something.

I do not have the Wilkes quarterlies for 1978 or 1977 and I think I had the 1975-6 subscription. I hope you can find some new clues on the Graysons.

Thanks again for the nice letter,

Please write again,


Dick Grayson

Mrs. W. O. Abaker
702 Sixth Street
North Wilkesboro, N. C. 28659

29 August 1975

Dr. Richard R. Grayson
 103 West Main Street
 St. Charles, Ill. 60174

Dear Dr. Grayson,

Wilkes County tax lists have been one of our weaker records for the early period as well as into the 1800's. Last fall three years tax lists were found in the private collection of William Lenoir in the University of N. C. Library at Chapel Hill. About six weeks ago, eight more years were found. They are going to be published by the society this winter. I have copied two "batches" and have the third to do. I am telling you this to explain the enclosed chart.

I am just back from a trip to Raleigh where I did research in the Archives and in the Land Grant Office. I am also enclosing copies of the original land grants for Benjamin Grayson here in Wilkes and Joseph Grayson who entered his first land in Burke County. While in the land grant office I met a young man who, believe it or not, descends from Joseph Grayson in Rutherford County!! He has volunteered to send me information that he has compiled on those Graysons there. He is a graduate student at Chapel Hill and will not go to Rutherfordton for a few weeks, but I have all faith that he will keep his promise!

You will see from the chart that I have included the 1800 census of Wilkes on the Graysons. It would appear from the chart that Benjamin of Wilkes (1778) had sons John, Joseph, Jesse and Benjamin, Jr. and a male bet the ages of 16-26 in 1800 WHO COULD VERY WELL BE WREN, but there are no records here to prove it, as you have said.

Since the William (5) does not appear on the ¹⁷⁰⁰ tax lists, and since talking to the young man in the land grant office, it is quite possible that William Grayson belongs to Joseph in Rutherford County as he is supposed to have had a William, a Benjamin and a Joseph, Jr., I believe. William (5) I do not believe could belong to Benj. (1778) for that would give him an extra male and the census for 1787, 1790 and 1800 belie this fact.

Also from the 1800 census, I do not believe that Bej. 1778 left Wilkes until after the census was taken and by the 1805 tax list, Jesse still was paying on 80 ac and 1 poll, but by 1810 only William (5) was left.

My theory would be that William belongs to Joseph of Rutherford County. He came to Wilkes and bought land on Moravian Creek because his UNCLE Benjamin was here. Benjamin (1778) and his family left, but William remained. I have listed three sons for William (5). Note their names. Benjamin (2) is, I believe the one who married the widow Kilby and who was divorced by her. Sept. term 1826 for living in adultery. I have not gone beyond 1820 since your Graysons left here prior to that time.

The young man in the land grant office and I feel that Benjamin and Joseph were perhaps brothers. Benjamin getting his first land on the ridge bet Wilkes and Burke and Joseph getting his first land bet Burke and Rutherford Coa. By both of them using the same names and then William (5) using the same, they almost certainly had to be very closely related.

Now, I have checked my own private collection of records in Virginia since I have not had time to go to the library and research in the material up there. There was an Ambrose Grayson who left a will in 1742 naming his brother BENJAMIN GRAYSON his Execr. Ambrose and a John Grayson obtained land in the 1720's. John sold Ambrose land in 1729. Ambrose had a son John and one Ambrose and "other childre", not named. There is mention of Col William Grayson in both the Spotsylvania Books and Augusta County Books. We have right much material in the library on the counties formed out of Augusta and around that area of Spotsylvania Orange, Caroline, etc. I do not know that there is enough to find a connection with the Benjamin and Joseph that came into Wilkes, but I can only tell you I will search through it all if you want to continue with the search.

The enclosed material exhausts the check mailed earlier. I will await your pleasure.

Sincerely,

R. Absher

Mrs. W. O. Absher

Encl.

P. S. I could not make copies of the zerox copies of the tax lists at this time. It might be possible for me to do so later, but one especially has to be cut and put together in a better order. I am speaking of copying only the Grayson references.



I'm Looking Up
My Family Tree

RB

Richard R. Grayson, M.D.
Internal Medicine

September 5, 1975

24 Hour Telephone: 584-2230

103 West Main Street, St. Charles, Illinois

Mrs. W. O. Absher
 P.O. Box 1629
 North Wikesboro, N.C. 28659

Dear Mrs. Absher:

Thank you for your excellent report on the Graysons. I see that one of the crucial points to resolve is the matter of WILLIAM GRAYSON whose family was recorded in Wilkes county in the census of 1800, 1810, and 1820. I have records indicating that he sold his land in 1824. I assume him to be the William Grayson who then shows up in Monroe county, Tenn., in the same area where four Grayson families the right age to be his sons are listed: namely Henry, John, Benjamin, and Joseph Grayson. This William Grayson according to your census schedules turned 45 between 1811 and 1820 and therefore was born between 1766 and 1775.

In Rutherford county in the 1810 census there were 2 William Graysons age 45 or older. One of them had one girl under 10 and a wife 26-45; the other had three girls under 10 and a wife 45 or older. Therefore the two William Graysons of Rutherford county in 1810 were not the same as the William Grayson of Wilkes county.

Furthermore, William Grayson witnessed the will of Rachel (VanZant) Grayson in 1828 in Rutherford county. Rachel was the widow of Joseph Grayson. I assume that William was the son of Joseph and Rachel. I have a letter from Harold Rollins of Winston-Salem, N.C., stating that the children of Joseph Grayson according to estate proceedings, were 1) William who married Susannah Logan in 1807 and died 1841, 2) Joseph, Jr., 3) Isaac, 4) Benjamin, 5) Elizabeth, and 6) Susan. Further, I have the will of William Grayson of Rutherford county dated 16 Feb., 1841, in which he names as his children Benjamin Grayson, Sally Deviney, Patsy Queen, and Elizabeth Grayson. This latter William Grayson must therefore be the William of the 1810 census with 3 girls under 10.

Further analyzing the age of William Grayson of Wilkes, I note that in the 1800 census his wife was 16-26 and he had 3 sons and 2 daughters under 10. His wife must have been close to 26 and they must have been married about 10 years previously in 1790. If William was 21 at marriage, his birth would have been about 1769. This still lies in the bracket 1766-1775 as calculated from the 1810 and 1820 census, between which he turned 45. HOWEVER, if he was born BEFORE 1774, as is likely (could a 26 year old man have 5 children?) then William Grayson of Wilkes, no doubt the William E. Grayson of other records, might NOT be a son of Benjamin Grayson of Wilkes. Further, the son of Benjamin in the 1800 census who was 16-26 and the last born at home out of 7 children (5 boys, 2 girls) could have been WREN GRAYSON, born 1732.

If William Grayson of Wilkes is the same William Grayson of Monroe county, Tenn., then he was born in 1767 in Virginia and his wife was Anny, born 1774 in N.C. (1850 census of Monroe county, Tenn.) This fits well with the calculations above for William Grayson of Wilkes.

We can try to calculate the age of Benjamin of Wilkes from his son, John, who was married by 1790. If John was 21, and if Benjamin had been 21 at John's birth, then Benjamin was born at least 42 years before the 1790 census: 1748. If we give a 2 - year margin plus or minus for John and also for Benjamin, we have 1748 plus or minus

4 years, or 1744-1752. We know that Benjamin Grayson, Sr., was born before 1755 because in the 1800 census he was over 45 years of age. In addition to this we have the census of JOHN GRAYSON of Knox county, Tenn., in 1830: (I assume this to be the son of Wilkes for reasons stated elsewhere). In 1830 John was 60-69; thus he was born 1760-1770, and this proves that he was over 20 in the 1790 census.

The 5 sons of Benjamin of Wilkes were:

1. JOHN, the eldest, who had his own family in 1790.
2. JOSEPH, who went to Knox county, married Pattie Brazeal in 1798.
3. JESSE, who left for Tenn. after 1805, had a large family in Marion county, witnessed the will of Joseph.
4. BENJAMIN, Jr., proven the son of Benjamin, Sr., in the 1799 tax list which mentioned Sr. and Jr.
5. WREN, proven the brother of JOSEPH elsewhere.

From all of the above, we usually have concluded that there were only 5 sons of Benjamin of Wilkes, mainly because in the 1787 census there were 5 sons, and in the 1790 census when John Grayson was in his own household there were 4 sons in the home of Benjamin. But suppose TWO sons left the home of Benjamin 1787-1790, and one was BORN. Then there would be 6 sons, and there would be room for William E. Grayson on the list. William could have left during the period 1787-1790 (age 20-23) as well as John (21?)

The only trouble is, who was the boy in Ben's house age 16-26 in 1800? Wren or the youngest? To answer, let us examine the sons: 1) It was not John because he married, went to Tenn. to Knox county before 1800. 2) Joseph went to Knox county, married 1798, and there is no reason to think he returned. 3) Jesse Grayson must have been born before 1777 because he had land and paid taxes 1797-1805, so it was not Jesse at Ben's house in 1800. 4) Benjamin, Jr., was on the tax record in 1799 but owned no land. From Marion county, Tenn. records we have concluded previously that the wife of Benjamin, Jr., was Martha, born in 1780. Therefore, Benjamin is likely to have been born before 1780. Furthermore, Benjamin Grayson, Jr., might be the one who witnessed the will of Jane McCarty in Knox county, Tenn., in 1792.

Therefore, we have no evidence for the theory stated above, that there might have been a son younger than Wren and that 2 rather than 1 son left 1787-1790.

However, suppose there had been 6 sons BEFORE 1787 and one left before the 1787 census and then John left after that census. If William instead of John was the eldest, and if William had left before 1787, he could then be a brother to Wren. William was born about 1767 (1850 census in Monroe County, Tenn.). He leaves home age 19-20, evading the 1787 census, and leaving 5 brothers at home. John leaves in 1790, leaving 4. Wren is the last at home in 1800. Now we have 6 sons of Benjamin of Wilkes.

I prefer the last theory. Therefore William would have been the eldest son, not John, and if William was born when his father was at least 21, then his father Benjamin would have been born in (1767-21) about 1746 instead of 1748 (+ or - 4).

There are two other N.C. Graysons: in the 1800 census for Lincoln county is DRURY GRAYSON 833, 42101-31001. Also an ELI GRAYSON in Wake county, N.C. in three marriages and as a witness in 1798, 1810, 1820, and 1824.

You mentioned the Virginia Graysons. I have the genealogy collections of 3 of the descendants of these Graysons, including the collections of 2 certified genealogists who have Grayson lines. The material amounts to hundreds of pages and hundreds of Graysons. I have given up trying to go from that family to mine but have decided that I must go backward from my Graysons to find the connecting link.

Incidentally, would you explain to me the meaning of 1 poll and 0 poll? If that means 1 poll tax, when would they NOT pay 1 poll tax? When not voting?

I shall appreciate the material on the Rutherford clan if you obtain it from the person you met. Maybe he has some new clues.

It is significant that Benjamin Grayson, Sr., left (or died?) Wilkes between 1800 and 1805 because Wren Grayson married Betsy Owens in 1805 in Scott county, Ky., suggesting that when the last son (Wren) left home, so did the father leave for other lands. I note that the first jury in Roane county, (1805) Tenn., had a Benjamin Grayson on it. Further, Bledsoe county, Tenn., was created out of Roane county in 1807, the year that Wren Grayson and his wife and first child, John Wren Grayson, left Scott county, Ky., for Bledsoe county. Benjamin Grayson (Jr. or Sr?) and Wren Grayson signed a petition in 1815 in Bledsoe county. In 1813, Marion county was created out of Bledsoe county and Indian lands, and in 1830, Jesse Grayson, Benjamin Grayson, (Jr. no doubt) and the widow of Joseph Grayson are in Marion county with large families. Joseph is proven to be the brother of Wren in a bounty application and Jesse witnessed the will of Joseph, this linking all these people. Further I have a letter from Wren to his nephew Henry, the known son of Joseph.

I was happy to obtain the copy of the 290 acre grant of Benjamin of Wilkes because it was entered June 19, 1779, this being the earliest date of a document that I now have. I note that Wilkes was created from Surrey county in 1777. Could there be Grayson records in Surrey? Perhaps you could check deeds, deaths, marriages, courts, taxes, etc., there.

What if Benjamin, S.r, had come directly to Virginia or to North Carolina from England? Are there immigration records?

Enclosed is a check for \$25.00 for more searching.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,


R. R. Grayson, M.D.

RRG:jl

Encl.

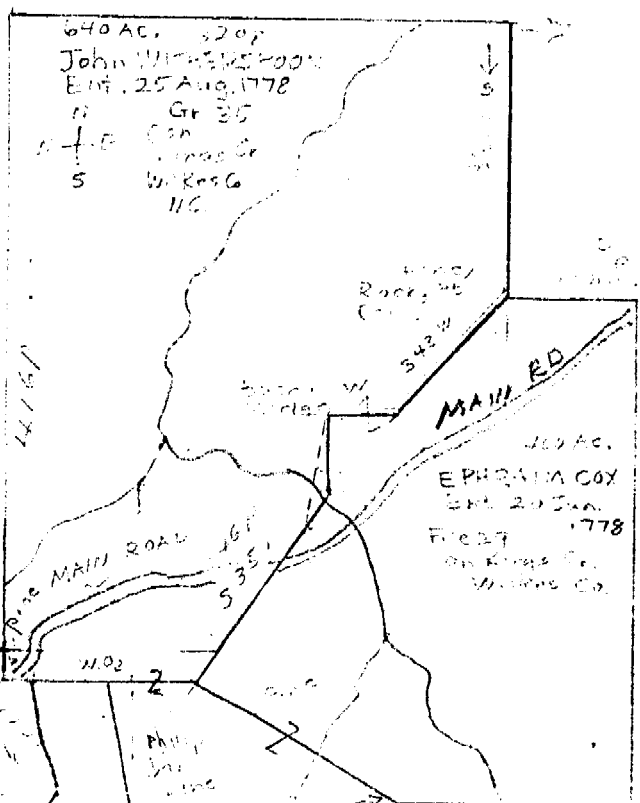
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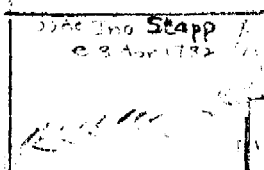
Walker's

Ambrose
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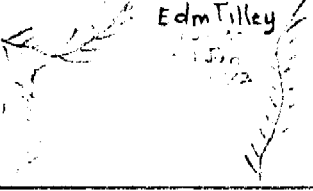
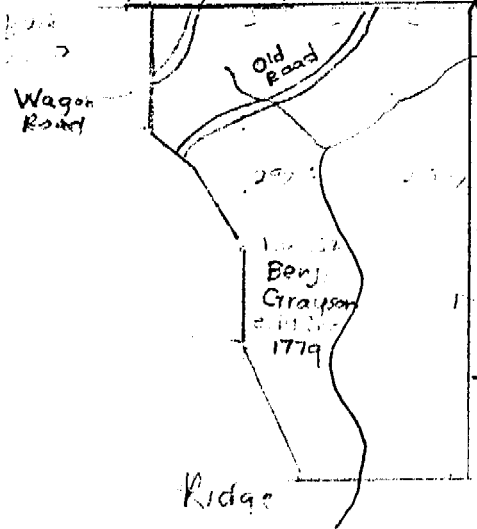
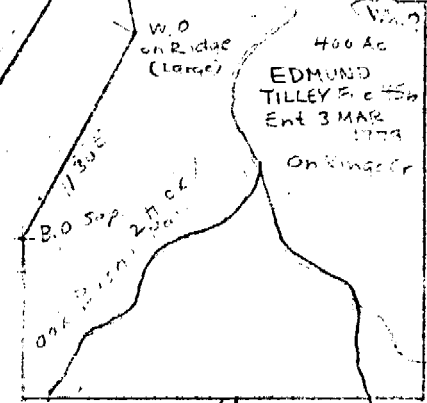
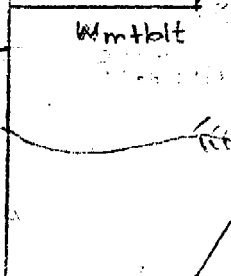
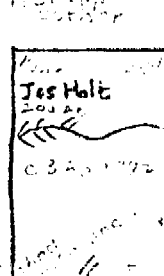
Robt Neathery
Apprx



Joel
Coffee



To a
Chestnut
in the Co Line
Walker-
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Line



Quad Scale

Branchy
ME

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