

Spivey Ancestors – Colonists, Pioneers, Patriots

Hiram Calvin Spivey and Annis Isaacs form but one connection among an extended family of long hunters, pioneers, and patriots. Their common ancestors were among the first to arrive on the North American continent as colonists, the first to explore and hunt the lands west of the mountains, and the first to move westwardly into present-day Tennessee and Kentucky.

For the younger generations, Hiram and Annis Spivey may not be familiar names. They were the parents of John Hurshel Spivey (b. 1922), Wanda Spivey Lakes, Arlie Spivey, Anna Lee Spivey Barrett, Gearldean Spivey Gabbard, Una Jean Spivey Lakes Coons Poor, Evellyn Spivey Poole Bower, Gloria Spivey Barrows, and Defreda Mae Spivey Garrison (b. 1940). Look for one of your grandparents in this list or for your immediate family in an online family tree at <http://liepe.com/spivey/>.

The first Spivey ancestor on this continent was likely a Robertson, moving first from the highlands near Edinburgh, Scotland, to Ireland north of Belfast, and then to America in the early to mid 1600s. Documentation of the Robertson family's American origins begin with the birth of Nicholas Robertson around 1665 in what was Prince George County, Virginia (now Dinwiddie County) about 30 miles south of Richmond (see attached ancestor tree).

Nicholas Robertson's grandson Charles Robertson was also born in Prince George County in 1733. Starting with Charles Robertson's generation, the family gradually moved south and west. Charles Robertson's second son Julius Caesar Robertson was born in 1760 in Lunenburg, Virginia, about 60 miles southwest of Richmond.

At some point in the mid 1700's the family removed to North Carolina. There is evidence that Charles Robertson worked as a surveyor. There are land records that Charles Robertson's brother, John had a farm in Granville, North Carolina. Granville County is on the Virginia border, north and west of Raleigh-Durham.

In North Carolina the family was increasingly dissatisfied with the unfair fees and taxes being imposed by the tyrannical colonial Governor William Tyron. At the same time, game was becoming short and they were hearing grand stories of mystical lands to the west from friends and neighbors who were long hunters and frontiersmen – Daniel Boone among them. Boone was then a farmer from the Yadkin River Valley, close to present day Winston-Salem.

Charles Robertson's nephew, James Robertson, accompanied Daniel Boone on his third expedition across the Appalachians in 1769. Upon crossing the mountains, James found a valley watered by the Watauga River, which he explored while Boone went on to Kentucky. James Robertson planted corn, and then returned home to North

Carolina. Many of the Robertson clan and several other families followed James back west and settled the lands he had explored. Their land bordered the Watauga, Nolichucky, and Holston Rivers. This area today comprises much of Northeastern Tennessee.

This was a daring move since, in the Proclamation of 1763, King George III prohibited any settlement west of the Appalachian Mountains and required those already settled in those regions to return east. The people known as the Watauga Settlers stayed in defiance of the King's orders and became outlaws or, as one Royal North Carolina Legislator referred to them as "Fugitives from justice" and "off-scourings of the earth" – clearly untrue. On his return to England, a young Englishman named William Tatham who was employed at John Carter's store on the Watauga wrote:

In thirty years knowledge I have witnessed an almost universal open door to the stranger, the needy and the man of frank and inoffensive demeanor ... I went among them a stranger and they took me in ... I was nameless and they gave me common shelter; I was bewildered in the forest; they conducted my footsteps. I believe the great bulk of the inhabitants to be among the most useful and orderly citizens belonging to the American States.

The Watauga Settlers were not only defying the King but were trespassing on Cherokee land. The settlers leased the land from the Cherokees, but not all Cherokees agreed with the lease and frequently attacked the settlers.

In 1772, the settlers formed a court known as the Watauga Association. The court created Articles of Association, elected thirteen commissioners including ancestor Charles Robertson, and petitioned to be annexed to North Carolina. (The commissioners are shown in the attached illustration.) Many of the Robertson family were signers, including Elijah, Mark, John, William, and ancestor Julius Caesar Robertson. Another notable signature was that of David Crockett.

Although historians debate the importance of the Watauga Articles of Association, many call it America's first Declaration of Independence. It was important enough at the time that the Royal Governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, wrote General Clinton, the Supreme Commander of the British forces in America. In describing the Watauga Association he said their formation, "sets a dangerous example to the people of America, of forming governments distinct from and independent of His Majesty's authority."

In 1776, North Carolina accepted the Watauga's Petition and officially annexed the Watauga River area as the Washington District and the Watauga Association ended.

The first Spivey known on this continent was Zadock Spivey, born in 1776 in that new Washington District. Zadock was Hiram's great-great-grandfather. One source reports that Zadock's father, David Spivey, emigrated from Germany. Zadock wed Susannah Robertson, the daughter of Julius Caesar Robertson, in about 1800. Zadock served in the War of 1812, discharged at Camp Greenfield, North Carolina.

The same Robertson family appears again among Hiram's mother's ancestors. David Robertson was the brother of Zadock's wife Susannah. His daughter, Minerva Robertson, married Jeremiah M. Fowler and became Hiram's grandmother. Thus, Julius Caesar Robertson is Hiram's 3rd great grandfather on his father's side and his 2nd great grandfather on his mother's side. (Hiram was his own third cousin, once removed.)

Like his kinsmen and neighbors, Julius Caesar Robertson believed that the people of the colonies should be free from oppression from the colonial governments of the British crown and its tax-hungry local representatives. Uniquely, he was deeply involved in both the first battle of the American Revolution and its deciding battle in the south.

While the Battle at Lexington Green ("the shot heard round the world") in 1775 is often thought to be the start of the American Revolution, the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774 has been so recognized by Congress. At Point Pleasant, on the Ohio River about 40 miles northeast of present-day Huntington, West Virginia, the British Governor of Virginia, Lord Dunmore, incited the Indians to attack the colonists. Dunmore's action was in retribution for the Boston Tea Party of 1773 and to keep the colonists to the east – within the control of the British Crown.

Here, at daybreak on October 10, 1774, Julius Caesar Robertson and a companion left their camp (apparently without authorization) and went up the Ohio River to hunt. They discovered a large number of Indians just rising from their encampment. The two men were fired upon and Robertson's companion was killed. Robertson was able to return to camp and warn commanding General Lewis of the attack about to occur. Despite large losses of officers and men, the army of colonists prevailed over the Shawnees and their leader Cornstalk. Had it not been for the warning by Julius Caesar Robertson, the Battle of Point Pleasant may well have been lost.

By 1780, the Revolutionary War was raging. Charleston had fallen and General Cornwallis had advanced into North Carolina. The picture was bleak for the Patriots.

British Colonel Patrick Ferguson was battling rebels in the western Carolinas and was not pleased by their flight over the mountains. He too had a very low opinion of the Watauga Settlers. In frustration he dispatched a message to the Watauga in which he stated if they gave refuge to the rebels he would "invade their lands and lay waste their country with fire and sword, and to hang their leaders." His intention was to scare the Settlers and have them take a loyalty oath.

Colonel Ferguson's message did not have the expected results: The message was delivered to Sullivan County, North Carolina (now Tennessee) Militia Colonel Isaac Shelby of Sapling Grove (present-day Bristol, Tennessee), who immediately rode out to confer with neighboring Washington District Militia Colonel John Sevier. These men determined "to rid the country forever of this enemy, who menaced their independence and the safety of their homes and families."

A militia force of about 1,100 men was formed at Sycamore Shoals. Beginning September 25, 1780, these Overmountain Men, including Col. Charles Robertson and his son Julius Caesar Robertson, marched in pursuit of Ferguson. Joined by a corps of 400 South Carolinians, they sometimes marched day and night. Their first party of 900 reached Ferguson's camp on October 7. You can retrace the steps of these patriots today on the Overmountain Victory National Trail – Commemorative Motor Route.

Ferguson thought his camp on the summit plateau of King's Mountain was ideal. The slope was too steep to be easily scaled and his troops could fire down on attackers. What Ferguson did not realize was that his men could only fire down by briefly exposing themselves at the edge of the plateau. For the Overmountain Men, accustomed to hiding in the woods and shooting fast-moving animals, Ferguson's troops were easy targets.

In all, 255 loyalists were killed and 163 wounded. Ferguson was among those killed. The present Kings Mountain National Park includes his grave. Twenty-eight patriots were killed and 68 wounded – including Julius Caesar Robertson, shot in the foot.

Historians consider the Battle of King's Mountain in 1780 the turning point in the south in America's war for independence. The victory of the "Overmountain Men" against the loyalists ultimately led to the surrender of Cornwallis to Washington at Yorktown the following year. After the Revolution, many of the militia leaders went on to be Congressmen, Senators, and Governors of the newly formed states and of the nation.

Because of Julius Caesar Robertson's (a.k.a. Robinson) participation in the war for independence, female descendants of Hiram Spivey are eligible for membership in the Daughters of the American Revolution (once the necessary documentation is assembled).

The ancestors of Annis Isaacs were no less involved in the settling of the west and the founding of our nation. While the original Isaacs (then Isaacks) emigrated from Scotland in the late 1600s or early 1700s, present-day Spiveys carry more blood from the Lakes family than of Spiveys or Isaacs. Carter Lakes and his wife Edith Jane Skinner were the great-great grandparents of both Hiram Calvin Spivey and Annis Isaacs. In addition to being childhood neighbors, Hiram and Annis were third cousins before their marriage in August 1921.

Carter and Edith Lakes' son (and Annis' great-grandfather) Greenberry Lakes married Nancy Jane Harrison. Two of Greenberry and Nancy Harrison Lakes' daughters married into the Isaacs family – daughter Mary Jane Lakes to Henry Stubblefield Isaacs and daughter Sarah Ann Lakes to John E. Isaacs. These four people were Annis Isaacs' grandparents. Annis' parents – Godfrey P. Isaacs and Matilda Isaacs – were first cousins.

Greenberry Lakes' wife, Nancy Jane Harrison, was the daughter of the Cherokee Ifa "Sookotosh" Baker. Sookotosh was the daughter or ward of John Tenerentta Baker –

another revolutionary hero and long hunter. “Renty” Baker’s relationship to Sookotosh is not clear – she may have been his daughter with a Cherokee squaw or the Bakers may have raised her because Renty killed her Indian parents. It was Renty who gave consent for Sookotosh’s marriage in 1805 at the age of 15.

The Isaacs may or may not be blood relatives with the Bakers, but Renty Baker is a key figure in the Isaacs family history and the history of Tennessee and Kentucky. He was friend and companion to Benjamin Cutbirth – who in turn was a close friend and relative of Daniel Boone, marrying Boone’s niece. During 1767, Boone and Cutbirth hunted North Carolina’s (now eastern Tennessee’s) Watauga country. The next year, Cutbirth, Baker, and two others were the first white men to penetrate the wilds of the Tennessee wilderness to reach the upper Mississippi River entirely by land.

In 1769, Baker was among a company of about 20 men who further explored Kentucky. This group included Robert Crocket, great-uncle of David Crockett and King’s Mountain volunteer. Baker was also one of Col. James Knox’s party of long hunters in 1770 and 1771. Baker later settled in Rockcastle County, Kentucky.

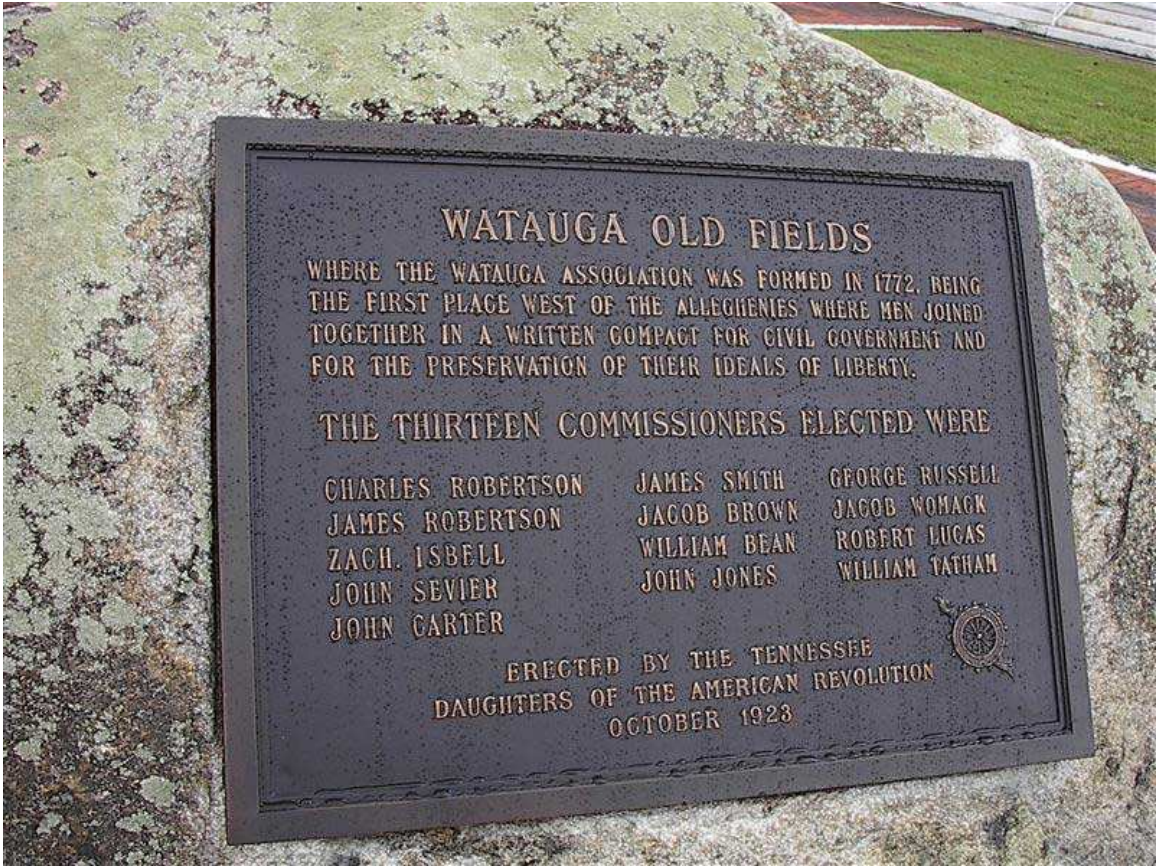
As far back as can be traced, this was a family that was rugged, fearless, self-reliant, and independent. They had a strong belief in the cause of freedom and were willing to defend their families to the very end. Each generation of ancestors spawned numerous leaders and heroes. Their descendants should aspire to no less.

Whether forming the first democracy in America, defeating the British at King’s Mountain, or defending against the Nazis in Germany, this is a family that changed the course of world history. Our great country, which so many loved so dearly, may not have come to bear without these great men and women.

This document was possible only because of the work of other genealogists and historians – amateur and professional – and the newfound accessibility of their work via the Internet. In particular, we recognize The Life of Daniel Boone by Lyman C. Draper.

However, our research is very incomplete with much more family history to be discovered. The descendants of Hiram Calvin Spivey and Annis Isaacs number in the hundreds across five generations. We would be happy to share the information in our database with them so that the discoveries can continue and to add the newest family members to our database for future generations.

Paul Carl Liepe
Jason Paul Liepe
Husband and son of Marjory Jo Spivey
December 2004



WATAUGA OLD FIELDS

WHERE THE WATAUGA ASSOCIATION WAS FORMED IN 1772, BEING THE FIRST PLACE WEST OF THE ALLEGHENIES WHERE MEN JOINED TOGETHER IN A WRITTEN COMPACT FOR CIVIL GOVERNMENT AND FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THEIR IDEALS OF LIBERTY.

THE THIRTEEN COMMISSIONERS ELECTED WERE

CHARLES ROBERTSON	JAMES SMITH	GEORGE RUSSELL
JAMES ROBERTSON	JACOB BROWN	JACOB WOMACK
ZACH. ISBELL	WILLIAM BEAN	ROBERT LUCAS
JOHN SEVIER	JOHN JONES	WILLIAM TATHAM
JOHN CARTER		

ERECTED BY THE TENNESSEE
DAUGHTERS OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
OCTOBER 1928

