

Lived In This Family Home 158 Years

Original Owner Was Given Land Grant By King George
By Elizabeth Reed

T. Samuel Barry was born in the house and lived in it all of his almost 70 years. His father, John H. Barry, saw the light of day in its rooms and breathed his last in one of them. His grandfather, William A. Barry, was born and lived out his long life-time under its roof. And his great grandfather, Andrew Barry, who acquired the house in 1790 by grant of King George of England, lived in it and died there.

Quite a record for one house, isn't it?

But from the appearance of its firm timbers, Billy Howe, Mr. Barry's grandson, may be able in time to say that nine generations of one family have spent their lives here.

Certainly the Barry house, a few miles from Ebenezer, is one of the most remarkable homes of the county from the standpoint of continuous occupation by succeeding generations of one family.

An amazing feature of the home is that in an old seaman's trunk in an upstairs room reposed one of the largest collections of old records to be found anywhere in the state. Mr. Barry's great grandfather, Andrew Barry, was a seaman and the little trunk is filled to the brim with records with such dates as 1687, 1790, and 1844. In fact, nothing in the trunk is later than about the 1850's.

In the trunk is the grant made by George of England ceding the original 310 acres of land to Andrew Barry; and incomplete record of settlement with the Catawba Nation; several appraisals of the estate at various times and other land grants for plantations in Rowan County, N. C., and other places. A lover of history could spend a day perusing the brittle but well preserved pages, written in delicate and beautiful script by hands now dust.

Even the pasted-in lining of the little old trunk is interesting. It is a copy of the Weekly Register for "Saturday, September 11, 1813". Who remembers the Weekly Register?

Six Generations

Few York County homes can boast that they have sheltered the same family through six generations.

Andrew Barry, first owner of the property after it had passed from possession of the Catawba Nation, lived and died in the house.

His son, William A. Barry, was born in the house and lived in it for his long lifetime with his wife, Eliza Watson Barry. Next in succession came John H. Barry and his wife Martha Neely Barry, parents of T. S. Barry. Mr. Barry's father, John H. Barry, was a lieutenant in the War Between the States, serving from April 13, 1861, to April 13, 1865 under Col. Coward, later head of The Citadel at Charleston.

The present owner was married to Miss Eva Jackson. She died in 1927. Mr. Barry now lives in the old home with his daughter, Mrs. Hazel Howe, Mr. Howe, and their son Billy.

Mr. Barry also has three other children, William Neely Barry, Mrs. Mattie Barry Williams, and Mrs. Lottie Faye Barry Wade, all of the community.

It is remarkable that the Barry home is in the excellent state of preservation that it is today. The present condition of the home only goes to prove that the pioneer builder built for keeps.

When Andrew Barry secured possession of the property in 1790 by grant from England's king, the one and one half story log house was there. Through the years it has been changed but the main body of the house remains. The present owner does not remember when the outside was weatherboard but he does recall the kitchen that stood in the back yard where meals were formerly prepared.

Main Section

The main part of the house has been raised to accommodate two full size rooms upstairs and new rooms have been added to the back of the house. But three downstairs rooms and the two upstairs are of the original 1790 house.

Inside are the same wide board ceiling, smooth and sound. However, the side walls have been recently papered and the floors renewed because as Mr. Barry said, "They just wore out".

A museum piece is the wide fireplace in the living room. The only change made to it has been a slight filling in to make for better heating. In one corner of the large 24 by 24 living room a winding stairs leads to the upper floor. A door closes the stairway.

The house does not now contain many of the first furnishings. However, there are a few chairs and an antique luster teapot and cup and saucer that are very, very old.

Mr. Barry's great grandmother bought the tea pot. In his early childhood the eminent Presbyterian minister, Dr. J. H. Thornwell, used to visit the family and always insisted that he have a cup of tea from the pot because "No other tasted so good".

Neither of the two tall end chimneys is an original one. The left chimney was destroyed by lightning about 25 years ago and the right one was leveled by a cyclone about 40 years ago.

In one of the chimneys was found a heavy, seven-pound brick with the date 1680 – mind you Charleston was not settled until 1670!

Mr. Barry remembers the day he was attending a meeting of Presbytery on April 7, 1907. A Negro came riding on a mule to tell him of the cyclone. "Everythin's gone but Miss Martha and the house," he was told. It was quite true. When Mr. Barry hurried home he found every outbuilding and Negro house razed, but the old house itself stood firm and strong with only the chimney gone.

Mr. Barry still owns the original 310 acre grant of land. Through the years the family has added more land until the estate now has 500 acres. Many of the original pieces of furniture are owned by Mr. Barry's only living sister, Mrs. Corinna Barry Neely, who lives on an adjoining farm.

Picture captions:

The Barry Home

This well proportioned and comfortable home was built in 1790 or before, according to T. Samuel Barry, its present owner. Mr. Barry plays with his two favorite fox terriers, Tiny and Oscar. - (Herald Staff Photo).

Living Room

One of the pleasing features of the Barry home near Ebenezer is this large living room with its graceful but simple mantel. – (Herald Staff Photo).