

CARRS ARRIVED EARLY IN AREA;
PAPERS KEPT
By John Wilson

Samuel and James Carr came from Virginia and were among the earliest settlers in Rhea County. Samuel's large trunk of family papers were carefully handed down through the generations, and its rich historical trove was recently passed on to the historical department at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Bicentennial Library.

Samuel Carr was born about 1770. His papers date back to the 1790s, including one in which James Carr was making computations in English pounds.

Some of the documents relate to trading trips Samuel Carr made to Augusta, GA. He dealt in salt, cotton, wheat, rye, sheep, horses, cows and other commodities.

One paper signed by Simpson Geren in January 1819 says, "Samuel Carr Sir you will let this little boy have one bushel of salt and I will settle with you for it for I promised to let him have a bushel before you came home."

Irby Holt in 1809 wrote, "Mr. David Gilbreath Sir you will please pay Mr. Samuel Carr three dollars for the season of your mare put last spring and this shall be your receipt for the same."

Abner Witt in 1811 "received by the hand of Samuel Carr two dollars and fifty cents in part of the amount due John Rawlings for school keeping."

James Carr died in 1810, leaving his widow Ann. At the estate sale, Samuel made many purchases, including a bar shear plough, an axe, two hoes, some iron, a handsaw and clives, a large kettle, an auger, a chisel, a lock, a table, a bay horse and a cow.

Samuel Carr was neighbors with the Roarks and with the Blythes, who operated a ferry where the Hiwassee River enters the Tennessee. In 1813, Samuel sold William Blythe "a Negro woman Nancy and her child Mona age 6" for \$600.

Family members say the wife of Samuel Carr was Margaret. The 1850 census lists Samuel Carr, 80, and Mary, 78. There is a marriage in Rhea County in 1810 of Samuel Carr and Sally Blythe.

The Samuel Carr homestead was on the Birchwood-Harrison Road three miles south of Birchwood. A descendant, Laura Roark Shropshire, wrote of visiting the site. She said, "Upon my first visit to the homestead of my great-grandfather, Samuel Carr, my girlfriend took me to the cabin of an aged Negro woman, near the Carr homestead, who had white hair and a very wrinkled face. I wonder if Samuel Carr had slaves and this was one of his remaining slaves."

Mrs. Shropshire also wrote, "I can remember my mother telling me that as a child she had a most wonderful time at home trying on all the beautiful clothes of her grandmother, Juda Carr. The clothes were rich silks and satins and entirely inappropriate for pioneer living, but she kept the clothes she had brought from Virginia because they represented an entirely different way of life than the one she had adjusted to on Grasshopper Creek."

Samuel Carr died in 1853. It is believed he and his wife were buried at the Gardenhire (Eldridge) Cemetery two miles south of Grasshopper Creek.

Juda Carr, one of Samuel's daughters, married Joseph Roark, and Roark was made executor of the estate. He also came into possession of the Carr trunk. Many Roark papers were added to the trunk down through the years.

Another Carr daughter, Margaret, married Leonard Brooks in Meiggs County. A daughter, Jane, married a Mahan.

The children each received \$14 shares from the estate. Other heirs got either \$7 or \$2.50. These included D. A. Medley, Francis M. Carr, Matilda and Juda M. Brooks and three unnamed grandchildren.

The sons included James, John and Alfred – all of whom eventually left Hamilton County. John Carr married Jane Lane at Rhea County in 1829, and they later lived in Nashville.

Alfred's wife, Susan, was a native of North Carolina. Their children included Sarah Ann Virginia who married Samuel H. McCallie, Juda, Margaret, **Elizabeth who married John Wilson**, Mary who married Ephraim Skiles, Louisa who married H. C. Avery, and James.

William Carr, who was born about 1800, lived near the Clifts and McRees at Soddy. He and his wife, Sarah, had, Samuel, Martha, Marion, Isabel, Margaret, John and Agnes.

The Samuel Carr trunk went to Reba Shropshire Wilson, daughter of Laura Roark Shropshire. Mrs. Wilson allowed her cousin, John Jefferson Roark of Dallas, to have access to the papers.

He indexed them on computer and placed each one in an acid-free folder. They have been turned over to the library. They are still being processed and are not yet available for public viewing.

The home of Joseph and Juda Carr Roark still stands on Birchwood Road near Grasshopper Creek. Dating to about 1834, its interior is made of logs.

Another early Carr here was David J. Carr, who was Chattanooga's second postmaster. He held that office from 1845 to 1852. It was said he was a friend of President James K. Polk and got the appointment because of that connection.

The Carrs had a fine home at the northwest corner of Market and Seventh. It was rented in 1854 to the Rev. Frederic A. Ross for the then fancy price of \$300.

David J. Carr and his wife, Eliza, moved near Bristol, TN, prior to the Civil War. His children included Aaron B., James W., Margaret, William, Joseph, J. M. and Seth.

Aaron B. Carr was postmaster at Carrville near Jonesboro in 1865.

Dudley C. Carr, a native of Massachusetts, was mayor of Chattanooga in Reconstruction days. During his term in 1867, the town was inundated with a great flood. The mayor traveled by boat to inspect the damages.

D. C. Carr in the 1870 census was listed as a retired lawyer.

*Read more stories by John Wilson at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>