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The Rouzie-Baird Family of Epping Forest

By Lillian Baird Blackwell

In the 1650s two Rowzee brothers, Edward and Ralph, along with their half-brother, John Catlett, IV, left their home in Ashford, County Kent, England, and immigrated to America.¹ The brothers acquired land first along Occupacia Creek, on the Rappahannock River, in (Old) Rappahannock County, Virginia (present day Essex County).²

In 1655 John and Ralph patented 1542 acres, running a mile parallel to the Rappahannock River, and another tract of 400 acres, nearby, close to the site of Port Royal (present day Caroline County). Ralph and Edward chose to make their homes on the Occupacia Creek land, and John lived on the tract in Port Royal.³

The first Rowzee home, on Occupacia Creek in what is now known as "Thomas' Neck", was built on a branch creek located between the Rowzee property and the Thomas property. It was on a slight rise on the river flats one-quarter mile from the creek and about one mile overland to the river. A 34-foot square burial ground lay between the house and the creek.

At some point, the family acquired a tract of land known as "The Forest", which lies near the head of the northern-most branch of Occupacia Creek. Both properties remained in the Rowzee family for generations. In 1720, Capt. John Rowzee, Sr., son of Edward Rowzee,

Jr. and Mary Pierce, inherited "The Forest" jointly with his brother Lodowick. The Thomas' Neck property was inherited solely by John. It is believed that John was the first to leave Thomas' Neck and build his home on "The Forest" property.⁴

By the early 1800s, "The Forest", now known as "Epping Forest", was owned by John Rouzie (note the spelling change) and his wife, Harriott Frances Rouzie, who was also his first cousin. John died in 1819, and Harriott soon followed in 1821. Their daughters inherited "Epping Forest" and part of Thomas' Neck. One of their daughters, Sarah FauntLeRoy Rouzie, married Benjamin Rice Baird in 1839, making their home at "Epping Forest". Benjamin was born at "Hallsfield" in Prince George, County, Virginia, and was the son of William Baird and Jane Henry Gilliam.⁵ He was educated at Princeton from which he graduated with honors. How Benjamin and Sarah met is unknown. Sarah died in 1848, leaving her estate to her two sisters, Elizabeth and Frances. Elizabeth survived both her sisters, and before Elizabeth's death, in 1874, turned over her part of the property to Benjamin.⁶

Benjamin lived at the home place peacefully with his two sons, William Baird and Edward Rouzie Baird, until 1861, when the war came to Virginia. Both William and Edward

(known in the army as "Ned") determined to be of service to their beloved state. On June 6, 1861, Edward enlisted as a sergeant with Co F, 55th Virginia Infantry. William's date of enlistment is unknown, and his military career was cut short for health reasons.⁷

In 1861, Col. George Edward Pickett took command of forces along the Northern Neck.⁸ His district included Lancaster, Northumberland, Richmond, Westmoreland, Middlesex, and Essex Counties. He established his headquarters in Tappahannock. The majority of his troops were militia and, with the exception of the well-appointed 55th Virginia Infantry (Edward's unit), a volunteer outfit. None of his regiments consisted of more than 300 men, barely 30 percent of the authorized strength. Pickett faced the challenge of defending both sides of the Rappahannock with minimal troops and little or no help from the local citizens.

By December of 1861, he was replaced in this command by Col. John Mercer Brockenbrough. Without a command, Pickett went to Richmond to plead for a new assignment. There he met his old friend, Gen. James Longstreet. In February, 1862, Pickett was promoted to Brigadier General and assigned to Longstreet's division. Also in February, 1862, the Hon. Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter, then Secretary of State, C.S.A., and a neighbor and friend of the Baird family, wrote to Pickett, requesting that Edward be considered for the position of aide-de-camp, should Pickett be given a brigade. Soon after Pickett received his promotion, Edward, now a lieutenant, joined Pickett at Manassas, Virginia.

Edward rose to the rank of Captain and remained with Pickett throughout the war. He was with Pickett at Gettysburg, and used as a courier during the fateful charge. In September, 1863 in Petersburg, Edward arranged the wedding ceremony of General Pickett and Sallie Corbell.⁹

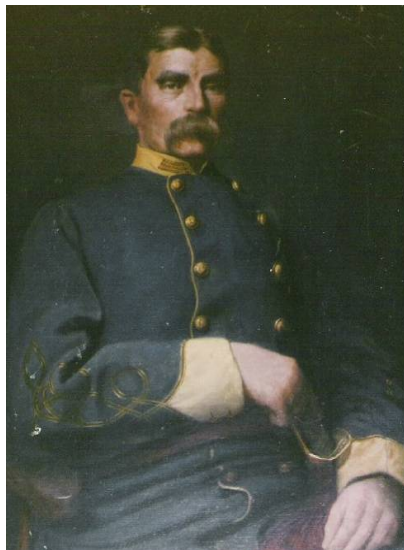
Stationed in the west at the

beginning of the war, Pickett made his way east, by way of Panama and New Orleans. One of his companions on this trip was Samuel Barron, III, of Hampton, Virginia, later to become Edward's brother-in-law. Sam's father, Commodore Samuel Barron, Jr., had been in command of Fort Hatteras when it fell to union forces in August of 1861, and he was captured and imprisoned.¹⁰ Pickett and Sam became fast friends and remained so throughout the war and after.¹¹

It is not known when Edward first met the Barron family. In March of 1863, he wrote his brother, William, that he had no intention of ever marrying. But Sam's sister, Virginia "Jennie" Pendergrast Barron, must have changed his mind. She was a striking beauty.¹² Exactly when they met is not known either, but, it is assumed it was through General Pickett. On March 7, 1865, while on duty in Petersburg, Edward and Jennie were married in Richmond at the home of a family friend, Lewis D. Crenshaw, Esq. Jennie and her siblings were living with the Crenshaws while the Commodore was in Europe. Where Jennie lived for the remaining months of the war is unknown.

Edward was also with Pickett at Five Forks, and on the arduous march west from Petersburg. He was with him at Appomattox on one of the saddest days for the Confederacy. In fact, he was the third person to sign the parole of honor, just under Brig. Gen. George E. Pickett and his brother, Maj. Charles Pickett.

After the war Capt. Baird returned to "Epping Forest". It was in this house that, toward the end of April, 1865, Robert Mercer Taliaferro Hunter, of nearby "Fonthill", and Confederate Secretary of War, James Seddon, were dining with Benjamin and Edward when the house was surrounded by a detachment of Federal troops. Hunter was arrested and taken prisoner. Seddon hid in the basement, then fled, and later surrendered to Federal auth-



Capt. Edward Rouzie Baird (1840-1931)
Portrait Courtesy of
Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin H. Baird
"Epping Forest"

orities in Richmond.¹³

Jennie eventually joined Edward at "Epping Forest". The first of their three sons, Benjamin Harrison Baird, was born in March of 1866. They went on to have another son, Edward Rouzie Baird, Jr., and an additional six daughters. Though the Captain had forbidden any of his daughters to marry and leave him, three of the daughters dared to disobey. Virginia "Jennie" Barron Baird, born in 1868, married Henry Latane' Baylor, Sr., of "Port Tobacco" and "Edenetta". Sarah FauntLeRoy "Fauntie" Baird, born in 1873, married Dandridge Sale, of "Fairfield". Mary Blake Baird, born in 1877, married Richard Baylor, III, of "Kinloch".

Edward and Jennie's last son, Samuel Barron Baird, was born in 1887, ten years after their last child, and just one year before Jennie's death.¹⁴

After the war, Edward became Superintendent of Schools for Essex County. In 1920, Captain Baird gave two speeches to the Daughters of the Confederacy in Essex about his experiences in the war. In 1921, he was interviewed, at "Epping Forest", by the *Baltimore Sun*. This article was reprinted in Virginia Craft

Showell's "Essex Sketches", and published again in the *Richmond Times Dispatch* on March 6, 1921. He reminisced that as "examiner of the public schools of this county [Essex] for more than twenty years....[He] had ridden from one end of the county to the other, his schedule of visitations as rigidly kept as any war-time duties. He had risen cold winter mornings and had seen the sun rise many times from the saddle as he made the twenty-mile trip to the county seat to meet a 9 o'clock engagement." When the reporter attempted to turn the questions to the war, the Captain artfully dodged any questions on the subject. He did, however, recall the hardships suffered by him and his family after the war.

Edward died in 1931 at his beloved "Epping Forest". He was buried, in his uniform, next to Jennie and the other Bairds and Rouzies.

Today, "Epping Forest", and the Thomas' Neck land are owned by Benjamin Harrison Baird, son of Samuel Barron Baird, Sr., and his wife Harriet Tunstall FauntLeRoy. Ben and his brothers are the 4th generation Baird, and the 9th generation Rouzie descendants to live in Essex.

ENDNOTES

¹ In 1623, Preston, County Kent, England, John Catlett III, son of John Catlett, Jr. and Elizabeth Frauncis, married Sarah Hawkins. Sarah was the daughter of Ralph Hawkins and Martha Baldwin. John only lived for two short years. After his death, Sarah left her home in Sittingbourne Parish and returned to the home of her father, in Canterbury, for the birth of her posthumous child. John and Sarah had two sons, Col. John Catlett IV, the child she was carrying at the time of her husband's death, and Thomas Catlett. Having two small sons to care for, Sarah married Dr. Lodowick Rowzee in 1626, in Ashford, County Kent. Lodowick (Lewis) was born in Antwerp, Belgium. In 1619, he was issued a physician's license. He wrote a pamphlet entitled "The Queenes Welles, That is a Traticke of the Nature and Vertues of Turnbridge Water, London". He died, in Ashford, in 1655. Lodowick and Sarah had three daughters, Sarah, Martha and Katherine, and three sons, Lodowick, Jr., Edward and Ralph. John Catlett, IV, was appointed by an English Court to administer the "goods, chattels, and debts" of Ralph, Edward, and Martha. (It is believed that Martha may have come to Virginia with her brothers. John's brother, Thomas Catlett, evidently stayed in England.)

² It is said that John Catlett was responsible for naming the new parish Sittingbourne, which encompassed both sides of the Rappahannock, after the area in England where he was born. Sittingbourne was in existence from 1656 to 1732.

³ In 1665, John Catlett acquired a tract of 1364 acres on the south side of the Rappahannock River, a part of a dividend called "Goulden Vale". Goulden Vale creek runs into the Rappahannock just north of present day Port Royal. In 1666, he was a founding Justice for (Old) Rappahannock County. He was with John Lederer on an expedition to the upper Rappahannock. It is said that the Lederer party reached the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

⁴ This house (or possibly one that was built after) burned before 1840. At John's death, "The Forest" was inherited by his sons, Richard and William, and Thomas' Neck by William. Richard predeceased William, leaving three daughters. One of these daughters, Harriott Frances Rouzie, married her first cousin, John, son of William. At his death in 1798, William owned the Thomas' Neck property, almost in its entirety, and "The Forest".

⁵ Jane Henry Gilliam was the daughter of John Gilliam and Jane Henry, first cousin of Patrick Henry, the orator. William's father was John Baird, Jr., of Glasgow, Scotland. John had immigrated to Virginia in the mid 1700s. He was one of the founders of the community of Blandford (in present day Petersburg), and helped start the Blandford Masonic Lodge. After his marriage to Jane Poythress, they moved outside of Petersburg and started a stud farm at "Hallsfield". John Baird was a landowner, merchant, farmer, and breeder of horses. The site of their home, later called "The Avery House", is located on the present day Petersburg Battlefield.

⁶ Benjamin Rice Baird died in 1890 and was buried at "Epping Forest", beside Sarah.

⁷ William never married, and after the war attended the University of Virginia. He lived at "Epping Forest" for the remainder of his life, where he died in 1912, and is buried there.

⁸ In 1861, Brigadier General Theophilus Hunter Holmes was the commander of the Department of the Rappahannock, headquartered at Brooke Station, Virginia. He was soon joined there by Col. George Edward Pickett. After briefing Pickett on the local situation, Holmes sent him to take command of forces along the Northern Neck.

⁹ Captain Baird: "I think I met her before the General did. In fact, I knew her as a school girl in Petersburg....I remember I secured the license for him when he was married and she was nineteen at the time. I had gone on ahead to escort her to Petersburg, where she was to meet the General. I had some trouble about the license as Miss Corbell was not a legal resident of the city. The newsboys were calling out 'Extra! Extra!' All about the marriage of the famous Southern beauty to the hero of Gettysburg! Before the details were arranged, I finally adjusted the difficulty and the marriage proceeded with all the pomp possible to a war-ravaged city."

¹⁰ Commodore Barron was later released on a prisoner trade and was assigned first to England, and then to Paris, as Flag Officer Commanding Confederate Naval Forces in Europe. Sam soon accompanied his father to Paris, as an aide on the Commodore's staff, leaving his two brothers and two sisters in the homes of friends in Richmond.

¹¹ At the end of their journey, Pickett gave Sam a ring to commemorate their trip. Descendants of the Barron family still have this ring.

¹² T. C. DeLeon, in his "Belles, Beaux, & Brains of the '60's", described her as being "gentle and popular...so sought by the best of both sexes when in Richmond."

¹³ On June 13, 1865, Benjamin Rice Baird petitioned to the Provost Marshall under then President Andrew Johnson for amnesty under the 13th exception, which included "all persons who have voluntarily participated in the rebellion, and the estimated value of whose taxable property is over \$20,000." He also stated that he had "never held any office, civil or military, legislative, executive, or judicial, under the so called Confederate States". In October, 1865, he "deposited in this Department (Department of State) his original oath...being in the form prescribed by the President's Proclamation of May 29, 1865".

¹⁴ Edward and Jennie's sons all married, and all but one left "Epping Forest". Benjamin Harrison Baird moved to Richmond County, where he founded the B. H. Baird Insurance Agency. He married Lucy P. M. Davis, and had one daughter, Page Baird. Benjamin was a vestryman and Senior Warden at St. John's Episcopal Church, in Warsaw, Virginia.

Virginia and Edward's second son, Edward "Eddie" Rouzie Baird, Jr., wanted to go to the University of Virginia, and study law. The Captain did not approve. Eddie left home, joined the Merchant Marine, and saved enough money to put himself through college. After college, he settled in Norfolk, and married, in 1902, Katherine Cameron Michaux, daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Jacob Michaux, of Norfolk. Eddie started a law firm called Baird, White, and Lanning. His son, Edward Rouzie Baird, III, continued the tradition with Baird Crenshaw and Ware. He later started a firm with his son, Edward "Eddie" Rouzie Baird, IV, called Willcox and Baird. Eddie (IV) worked for the United States Corps of Engineers from 1967 to 1973. He then worked for the United States Attorney's office from 1973 to 1977.

Edward and Jennie's last son, Samuel Barron Baird (named after Jennie's father), was born in 1887, ten years after the birth of his sister Mary. It is said Edward wanted a son for his old age. Jennie died the next year, in March of 1888. Her father had died just the month before. Barron was raised by his three older sisters, Imogen "Immie", Elizabeth "E", and Lelia "Elaw".

In 1917, Barron married Harriet "Hattie" Tunstall FauntLeRoy, of "Farmington", in King and Queen County, daughter of Henry Latane' FauntLeRoy and Ellen Bankhead Brooke. She was a teacher at the nearby school at Hustle, and possibly was hired by the Captain, in his capacity of Superintendent. She lived with the family of another teacher, Miss Powers.

Barron and Hattie's first son, Edward FauntLeRoy Baird, born in 1919, only lived two days, and is buried in the family plot. Their second son, Samuel Barron "B" Baird, Jr., born in 1922, was born at "Epping Forest". Barron and Hattie moved next door to "Sedgeley" where they had two more sons, Benjamin "Ben" Harrison Baird, born in 1925, and William "Bill" FauntLeRoy Baird, born in 1930.

In the 1930's Barron and Hattie moved back to "Epping Forest" to care for the aging Captain. Their son "B" remembers the Captain often exclaiming that "the Yankees are in the yard!" Barron and Hattie continued to live at "Epping Forest", after the Captain's death. Hattie tended to the large house and took care of the "sisters", until their deaths: "Elaw" in 1934, "E" in 1952, and "Immie" in 1962. Barron enjoyed farming and especially training horses. He died in 1966, and Hattie joined him in 1980.

Barron and Hattie's oldest living son, S. Barron Baird, Jr., joined the Army in the fall of 1942. He was assigned to the 88th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop (Mechanized). He fought in Italy, and received two Purple Hearts for wounds received in combat. He also received the Bronze Star for "heroic achievement in action on 21 April, 1945, near Lavino Di Mezzo, Italy." Upon returning home, he married, Lillian Gazelle Gallagher, daughter of James Allen Gallagher and Maude Lillian Hynson. "B" and Gazelle lived at "Epping

Forest", until December of 1946, when they moved to "Otterburn", where they continue to live today. They have two daughters, Elizabeth Ann and Lillian Gazelle Baird, who also live at "Otterburn".

Bill, Barron and Hattie's youngest son, also served in the Army. In 1950, he was drafted for the Korean Conflict, but served two years in Germany. After the military, he used the GI Bill to learn car upholstery, and was employed, in Richmond, at a car dealer. In 1958, he opened his own business, doing car and boat upholstery. He has been married twice and has one son, William Roy Baird.

Today "Epping Forest" is owned by Ben, Barron and Hattie's middle son. Ben married twice, and lives there with his wife, June, and their son, Benjamin Barron Baird. Benjamin, his wife Paula, and their son, Zack, also live in the large house. Ben faithfully farms the land inherited so long ago from his great grandmother. He also trains and breeds trotters for harness racing.

REFERENCES

"Hidden Village", by Ralph Emmett Fall

"The Diary of Robert Rose", by Ralph Emmett Fall

| | | |
|--------------------------|------------|------------|
| Essex County Will Books: | 3, p. 141 | 4, p. 142 |
| | 13, p. 194 | 14, p. 241 |
| | 15, p. 463 | 17, p. 461 |
| | 19, p. 115 | 19, p. 123 |
| | 19, p. 410 | 24, p. 666 |

Essex County Deed Books: 39, p. 37

"Pickett-Leader of the Charge" by Edward G. Longacre

Lillian Baird Blackwell is the great-granddaughter of Capt. Edward Rouzie Baird. She and her husband Tom, who was born and raised in Tappahannock, currently live in a home they built in 2001 on the farm where she grew up in Essex, "Otterburn." They have two children; daughter Sarah, an actress, was recently named Educational Director at Wayside Theatre in Middletown, Virginia, and Tom, Jr. is currently pursuing a degree in computer sciences at the University of Delaware. Her parents have lived in the original home since December, 1946, the oldest section of which was built in 1884. Through the years, "Otterburn" was bought and sold several times, finally returning to its rightful heirs in history. Lillian simply explains this phenomenon by saying, "Otterburn went out of my family on my grandmother's side, and came back on my grandfather's side." Lillian's interest in genealogy began in 1989, and continues today. We wish to thank her for this informative and interesting glimpse of her family history, and look forward to her future contributions to the Bulletin.

Celebrating the Merger

The title page of the Bulletin has been re-designed to reflect the January, 2006 merger of the Essex County Museum and The Essex County Historical Society. We cordially welcome you to visit the Essex County Museum to learn more about the history of "Epping Forest," the ancestral home of the Rouzie/Baird family of Essex County featured in this issue. View the artifacts and memorabilia now on display. Browse our wonderful Gift Shop for unique gift ideas and prized limited edition historical books and publications. Admission is always free, so step into the history of Essex County. We look forward to greeting you.

You're Invited!

Participate in the living history of Essex County...become a Docent! Hours are flexible, and the people you meet and friends you make are well worth your time. For more information, contact Kathryn Carpenter, Docent Director, 804-443-3875.

Museum Hours

Sunday 1 - 3

Monday 10 - 3

Thursday 10 - 3

Friday 10 - 3

Saturday 10 - 3

Membership

If you or someone you know is interested in joining the Essex County Museum and Historical Society, pick up a membership application at the Essex Museum, 218 Water Lane, Tappahannock, Virginia.

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| Individual | \$20 |
| Family | \$45 |
| 1692 Society | \$50 |
| Tappahannock Society | \$100 |
| Corporate Sponsorship | \$150 |
| Essex Circle | \$500 |

The Essex County Museum and Historical Society is a 501-3 non-profit organization, dependent on your financial support for our existence. Thank you for your participation.

Mark Your Calendar

Yard Sale Fundraiser

Memorial Day Weekend-May 27, 2006
Call Priscilla Vaughan for details and participation
804-443-2271

Applebee's Breakfast

Saturday, June 10, 2006

Join Us at RivahFest!

Visit the Essex County Museum & Historical Society
Gift Shop Booth on June 17, 2006

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