
Introduction

by Alan Barber

On the death of my parents in 1992 I inherited boxes of “family history”, including old photographs, documents, Bibles and books. Among the books was a lengthy genealogy of the Henderson Williams family titled *Deep Roots and Strong Branches*, by Clara Vaughn O’Brien. Pleased at finding my own name in it, I attacked it with a yellow highlighter, threading my way generation by generation backwards until I reached the dead end six generations back with one Samuel Barber.

The story of Samuel and his descendents has fascinated me since. It’s a tale of succeeding generations pushing beyond whatever frontier faced them and settling down for a couple of decades only to watch their children do the same to the next frontier. It’s a pattern not broken until my parents’ generation left Alaska.

Samuel left Virginia at the end of the 18th century for the Spanish colony of Louisiana. After the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 led to statehood in 1812 he briefly visited the Spanish colony of *Coahuila y Tejas* to the west, returning in 1813 to settle on land still in dispute between the US and Spain. He moved the family in 1829 to *Coahuila y Tejas* in time to witness the Texas Revolution and receive a land grant certificate from the new government of the Republic of Texas. By 1850 many of Samuel’s children had pushed fur-

ther west in Texas, opening new cattle country in Gonzales and Refugio Counties and his grandchildren soon after in Bee County. Shortly after the turn of the century G. L. Barber, a great-grandchild, coaxed his own family to the north Texas cow town of Spur, becoming sheriff of a county of ranchers and cowpokes. Reluctant to break a long tradition, his own sons moved their families first to northern Idaho then with their sons to the Territory of Alaska after World War II.

This is the story of Samuel and his descendants, every one of them a vagabond at heart. It's a story with gaps, but I've not hesitated to fill them with my own speculation, labeled as such. And it's the story of the families that the Barbers married into, the Barrows, Kokernots, Williams, Hatchers, and Carothers

Alan Barber

San Jose, California