

## Chapter Three

### Characteristics of the Nottingham Settlement's Pioneering Generation

When the Nottingham Settlement's pioneering generation arrived in North Carolina, they exhibited traits and participated in activities characteristic of communities found throughout colonial America. But eighteenth-century communities were more than individuals and families living near one another or in an urban setting.<sup>1</sup> Generally, colonial communities included people residing within a geographical area who shared common characteristics. The Settlement's pioneering families demonstrated their membership in such a community in four ways—landownership, material possessions and wealth, social customs, and religion.

I base the following analysis on biographical information gathered for a sample of the pioneering generation. The twenty men and one woman included in this sample represent purchasers of the initial Granville land grants as well as others related to them. (A full biography for each of these individuals appears in appendix A.<sup>2</sup>) Land conveyance, court and probate records supplied much of the biographical information collected. Local and family histories supplemented what the county records provided.

#### Property—Landownership

In the eighteenth century landownership meant an opportunity for economic advancement, security and independence. The scarcity and high cost of farm land in

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<sup>1</sup> See the historiography (chapter one).

<sup>2</sup> When ascertainable, each biography includes pertinent dates (birth, marriage and death), and names (parents, spouse(s) and children) as well as one's involvement in the county and one's material wealth at time of death.

Pennsylvania by the 1730s influenced individuals and families to migrate south to Virginia and the Carolinas in search of inexpensive, fertile land. Those associated with the Nottingham Settlement were no exception to this quest.

Historians of the Settlement claim that agents representing a group of families in southern Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, traveled to North Carolina and requested the survey of thirty-three tracts of land in Rowan (Guilford) County.<sup>3</sup> Upon scrutiny of colonial North Carolina records this claim retains validity. On March 5, 1750, Lord Granville's (John, Lord Carteret) Land Office Entry Book records six requests totaling thirty "640 acre tracts, on the Waters of the South fork of Saxapahaw River, & the Waters of Buffalo."<sup>4</sup> Five of the six men requesting tracts later claimed much of the land they entered. This "company" of men included Thomas Donnell with twelve entries; John Cunningham with two entries; Robert Rankin with six entries; Robert McCuiston with three entries; William McClintock with five entries; and Thomas McCuiston with two entries.<sup>5</sup> In 1752, Thomas Donnell asked that two additional 640-acre tracts be entered under his name. Others of the pioneering generation also made similar entries. The following year (1753), four additional men made entries. Robert Thompson entered 640 acres in "Orange-Rowan [County] . . . Beginning at ye N. E. Corner of No. 28 . . . Joyn[ing] No.18 . . ."<sup>6</sup> John Nicks and James Barr entered one 640-acre tract each.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> E. W. Caruthers, *A Sketch of the Life and Character of the Rev. David Caldwell, D.D.* (Greensborough, N.C.: Swaim & Sherwood, 1842), 24; For further explanation, see chapter 2, footnote 1 of this study.

<sup>4</sup> Lord Granville's Office Entry Books, 1750–51, Secretary of State, Land Office, Lord Granville's Land Office, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh (NCDAH) (referred to as "Lord Granville's Office Entry Books, 1750–51").

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Lord Granville's Office, Rowan County, Entries 1752–53, Secretary of State, Land Office, Lord Granville's Land Office, Entry Books and Memoranda of Entries, 1750–63, NCDAH (referred to as "Lord Granville's Office, Rowan County, Entries 1752–53"), Entry number 6. "No. 18" and "No. 28" appear to refer to those entries of the thirty Nottingham Settlement tracts.

George Finley's entry for two 640-acre tracts appears in the Entry Book several pages later.<sup>8</sup>

The land entries not only demonstrate the contemporaneous presence of Settlement members, but also confirm the proximity of members' landholdings to each other—many of which lay within a section of central present-day Guilford County approximately sixteen miles wide and nine miles long.<sup>9</sup> The initial six entries of thirty tracts appear in succession in the order book. The first entry (Thomas Donnell's) provides a general description of the vicinity, while the remaining five entries list only the name of the person entering the land, the number of tracts entered, the amount of acreage and the location as "described as above." Although the men who reserved the tracts or their families (i.e., Cunningham, Rankin, and the two McCuistons) eventually purchased four of the six entries, two of the men relinquished several of their tracts to other Settlement families after purchasing the tracts they wanted. Donnell, who had entered twelve tracts in 1750, purchased only six of these grants from Granville between December 1753 and December 1762. McClintock's tracts appear to have been claimed in part by his kinsman, John McClintock, as no "William" McClintock appears in the Granville Proprietary Land Office records after this initial entry.<sup>10</sup> (table 3.1)

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<sup>7</sup> Lord Granville's Office, Rowan County, Entries 1752–53, Entry numbers 102 and 103.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Entry number 157.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Geographical Survey, "Greensboro Topographical Map," <http://www.trails.com> (accessed June 8, 2009). Calculation of width and length of combined landholdings based on current USGS topographical map of Guilford County, N.C.

<sup>10</sup> For further accounting of the land grants purchased from Granville by these men, refer to the individual's biographical information found in appendix A.

**TABLE 3.1** The Nottingham Settlement's Thirty Tracts and the Purchasers.

<u>Tract Number</u>	<u>Name of Purchaser(s)</u>	<u>Acreage</u>	<u>Date(s) Purchased</u>
No. 1	Adam Leckey	392	June 1758
No. 2	[not designated]	--	--
No. 3	[not designated]	--	--
No. 4	[Thomas Donnell] <sup>a</sup>	?	?
No. 5	Thomas Donnell	650	August 1759
No. 6	John McKnight	639	November 1756
No. 7	Adam Mitchell	631	December 1753
No. 8	Robert Rankin	640	June 1758
No. 9	Lydia Rankin	620	January 1761
No. 10	[not designated]	--	--
No. 11	[not designated]	--	--
No. 12	Thomas McCuiston	600	November 1755
No. 13	John McClintock	640	December 1753
No. 14	Samuel Scott	640	December 1753
No. 15	Samuel Scott	640	December 1753
No. 16	[not designated]	--	--
No. 17	John McClintock	640	December 1753
No. 18	Robert Thompson	640	November 1756
No. 19	[not designated]	--	--
No. 20	James Brittain	584	July 1760
No. 21	[not designated]	--	--
No. 22	[not designated]	--	--
No. 23	Jane McCuiston	700	July 1760
No. 24	[not designated]	--	--
No. 25	Thomas McCuiston	550	June 1758
	John Blair		November 1761
	David Caldwell		January 1765
No. 26	Robert Donnell	560	December 1753
	Robert Mitchell		October 1762
No. 27	Thomas Beals	285	December 1753
No. 28	James McCuiston	420	December 1753
No. 29	Robert Thompson	605	August 1760
No. 30	Thomas Donnell	640	December 1753
<u>Those Purchasers with Undesignated Tracts:</u> <sup>b</sup>			
No. (?)	James Barr	389	December 1753
No. (?)	George Black <sup>c</sup>	504	August 1762
No. (?)	John Cunningham <sup>d</sup>	640	December 1753
No. (?)	John Cunningham	640	December 1753
No. (?)	John Nicks/Nix	650	December 1753

*Sources:* Granville Grants; George Black, 504 acres, Rowan (August 27, 1762), Granville Grants; and Fred Hughes, *Guilford County, N.C.: a Map Supplement* (Jamestown, N.C.: Custom House, 1988), 52–53.

*Note:* Further information for each of the tracts can be found within appendix A. Tracts marked “not designated” indicate that at the time of survey, the tract number was not included in the official description.

<sup>a</sup>Brackets indicate that although none of the grant documentation found specifically use this designation for a tract, local historians consider Donnell the owner of this tract.

<sup>b</sup>The following names are absent from the top list because no number designation appeared in the description of their Granville grant even though they purchased their first grants in December 1753.

<sup>c</sup>Black's tract adjoined Samuel Scott's two tracts, supporting the possibility of his purchasing a Nottingham Settlement tract.

<sup>d</sup>Cunningham appears twice because he purchased two land grants (640 acres each) on the same day.

The Nottingham Settlement pioneering generation began purchasing Granville land grants for the entered thirty 640-acre tracts in early December 1753.<sup>11</sup> In a 1934 history of the Presbyterian Church organized by Settlement members, Samuel M. Rankin lists nineteen names of men whom he considered to be initial owners of the thirty tracts—James Barr, Thomas Beals, George Black, John Blair, John Cummings, John Cunningham, Robert Donnell, Thomas Donnell, Hugh Foster, John McClintock, James McCuiston, Robert McCuiston, Thomas McCuiston, Adam Mitchell, Robert Mitchell, John Nicks, Robert Rankin, Samuel Scott and Andrew Wilson.<sup>12</sup> Of these nineteen names, at least three cannot be confirmed as an *initial* purchaser of one of the thirty tracts.<sup>13</sup> Also, Thomas Beals (listed by S. M. Rankin) was a practicing Quaker, while John Blair purchased his tract from the settler who first purchased it.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Secretary of State Record Group, Granville Proprietary Land Office: Land Entries, Warrants, and Plats of Survey, NCDAAH (referred to as "Granville Grants"). Photocopies of the original grants along with a surveyor's drawing of the land in question can be accessed at NCDAAH.

<sup>12</sup> Samuel Rankin, *A History of Buffalo Presbyterian Church and Her People, Greensboro, N.C.* (Greensboro, N.C.: Jos. J. Stone & Co, [1934?]), 22.

<sup>13</sup> George Black possibly purchased one of the thirty tracts in 1762. He sold it in 1767 to Thomas Donnell. Although Hugh Foster purchased Granville land grants in Rowan County during this time, most of his grants were located south of the Settlement near Salisbury. Granville grants in Andrew Wilson's name could not be found in the Granville Grants.

<sup>14</sup> William Wade Hinshaw, *Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1969), I:487, 490, 525; and Rowan Co. Record of Deeds (referred to as "Rowan Co. Deeds"), 4:647–49. Society of Friends records confirm that Thomas Beals and his family were practicing members in good standing of the New Garden Monthly Meeting, located to the west of the Nottingham Settlement landholdings. Quaker chronicler William Wade Hinshaw states in a short history of the New Garden Monthly Meeting that Thomas Beals was one of that group's original members. Quaker records do not indicate that this family left the Society of Friends for another faith (i.e., the Presbyterian Church). Since one characteristic of a Settlement member includes an association with the Presbyterian Church, Beals' association with the Society of Friends excluded him from the sample.

The proximity of these men's tracts supports the idea that landownership created a sense of community for the pioneering generation, their children and grandchildren. (See figure 1.) Most of the original landowners of the thirty tracts bestowed their tracts on one or more of their children. In two instances, widowed daughters-in-law of the pioneering generation purchased in the names of their children one of the original thirty tracts from Granville.

In 1760, Jane/Jean (Ruth) McCuiston, widow of Robert McCuiston and daughter-in-law of James McCuiston, purchased tract No. 23 for her two daughters (Ruth and Jane) as part of their inheritance from their deceased father.<sup>15</sup> In 1761, Lydia (Steele) Rankin, widow of George Rankin (1729–1760) and daughter-in-law of Robert Rankin, purchased tract No. 9 for her sons, Robert (1759–1840) and John (1757–1850).<sup>16</sup> When early settlers sold their tracts, fellow community members occasionally purchased them, as demonstrated by George Black selling his tract to Thomas Donnell in 1764.<sup>17</sup>

Landownership included an added civic responsibility. Colonial North Carolina law required landowners (or “freeholders”), when summoned by the sheriff or justice of the peace, to participate in the court system as jurors.<sup>18</sup> Nottingham Settlement's landowners participated frequently as jurors in both grand and petit juries within Rowan

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<sup>15</sup> Jane McCuiston, 700 acres, Rowan (July 29, 1760), Granville Grants; and Rowan Co. Deeds, 4:528–529; and North Carolina Supreme Court, Case NC 364, *Thompson vs. Blair* (from Guilford Co.), November 1819, NCDAAH. Although she later denied it, court documents confirm that Jane McCuiston Blair, widow of Robert McCuiston and mother of Ruth and Jane McCuiston (Robert's heirs) purchased this tract for her daughters.

<sup>16</sup> Lydia Rankin, 620 acres, Rowan (January 30, 1761), Granville Grants.

<sup>17</sup> Rowan Co. Deeds, 6:374–75.

<sup>18</sup> North Carolina, *Laws of North Carolina* (New Bern, N. C.: Printed by James Davis, 1755), 25; and Marjoleine Kars, *Breaking Loose Together: The Regulator Rebellion in Pre-Revolutionary North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 68–69. Kars states that juries were “handpicked by the sheriff, an office held in rotation by the justices themselves.” (68) Thomas Donnell served as a justice of the peace in Rowan County between 1757 and 1762. Based on Kars' statement, one may conclude that the Settlement's pioneering generation appeared as jurors during this time in part due to Donnell's status as justice.

County between 1754 and 1762.<sup>19</sup> Before his death in 1762, John Cunningham appears in Rowan County jury lists for both grand and petit courts from 1754 to 1762 as well as the grand jury in Wilmington (May 1755) and the Superior Court for Rowan and Anson Counties in 1760.<sup>20</sup> Thomas Donnell, before his term as a justice of the court in Rowan County from 1757 to 1762, served as a juryman in Rowan County in the years prior (1754 to 1756).<sup>21</sup>

### **Property—Material Possessions and Income**

Prosperity became one aspect of Settlement life that all members experienced before the deaths of the pioneering generation. Wealth reached such levels that neighboring communities recognized the Nottingham Settlement's prosperity. In 1772, Moravian minister George Soelle, of the Wachovia community west of the Nottingham Settlement's lands, traveled through Buffalo Settlement (as the Nottingham Settlement community became known) and remarked in his journal that "all the residents here were Presbyterians, rich and well-satisfied."<sup>22</sup>

Settlement members acquired their wealth primarily through farming, although several of the pioneering generation supplemented their agricultural incomes with other occupations. David Caldwell served as pastor to the Settlement's Presbyterian

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<sup>19</sup> Refer to appendix A; and Rowan County Minutes of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions (referred to as "Rowan Co. Minutes"), 3:294–95; 4:37–38; 3:358. The one exception is David Caldwell who arrived in the community after 1762. He appears in the Rowan County court records as a juror in 1771, 1772 and 1774.

<sup>20</sup> Rowan Co. Minutes, 1:45; 2:59, 91, 102, 193, 201, 220, 238, 267, 294.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:45, 80, 91, 154, 179, 185, 207, 219, 221, 222a, 223, 238, 239, 245, 248, 249, 253, 265, 279, 280, 286, 321, 365, 391, 430, 433, 435; and Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 69. In colonial North Carolina, the governor appointed justices of the peace. Generally, one's wealth or social connections played a part in one's appointment.

<sup>22</sup> "Soelle's Diary," August 1772, in Adelaide L. Fries, ed., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina* (1922, repr. Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1968), I:799.

congregation and established a school.<sup>23</sup> The listing of woodworking tools in the estate inventory for George Rankin, first husband of Lydia (Steele) Rankin Forbis, suggests that he worked as a carpenter before his death.<sup>24</sup> Both John Cunningham and Thomas Donnell petitioned the county court for permission to run taverns on their respective “plantations” beginning in 1756.<sup>25</sup> These same two men (Cunningham and Donnell) also profited from the county offices they held—Cunningham as a constable and Donnell as a justice of the peace.<sup>26</sup> Both offices afforded opportunities for acquiring additional income. Responsible for law enforcement as well as administering tax collection, constables collected fees for services rendered to the court and paid only thirty percent of their annual taxes.<sup>27</sup> Although justices of the peace received no direct compensation, they gained “insider knowledge of economic opportunities” acquired through their position.<sup>28</sup>

Although no documentation remains detailing the pioneering generation’s financial situations before their arrival in Rowan (Guilford) County, the wills of those examined in this study suggest their ability to acquire material possessions and wealth.<sup>29</sup> This wealth manifested itself in three ways—the accumulation of land, access to currency and the increased presence of enslaved persons in members’ households.

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<sup>23</sup> Caruthers, *Rev. David Caldwell*, 14, 20, 22; and Rankin, *Buffalo Presbyterian Church*, 114.

<sup>24</sup> Inventory of George Rankin (1760), Rowan County Estate Records, NCDAH.

<sup>25</sup> Rowan Co. Minutes, 2:97, 100.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:112, 255, 387. Three others also served terms as constable—John McClintock in 1762 (as a replacement for Cunningham when he died during his term), John Nicks/Nix in 1755 and Robert Thompson in 1759.

<sup>27</sup> Alan D. Watson, “The Constable in Colonial North Carolina,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 68, no. 1 (1991): 8, 13.

<sup>28</sup> Kars, *Breaking Loose Together*, 69. Kars defines this “insider knowledge” as “which business was likely to fail, [and] where a road would soon be built.”

<sup>29</sup> For specific information on the individuals discussed in this study, refer to appendix A. At the end of each biography is a summary of the possessions, land and funds bequeathed to the individual’s heirs based on extant will and inventory (when available). Although this summary is not a complete listing for that individual, it indicates the reported extent of his wealth at his death.



The Settlement's pioneering generation enhanced their original landholdings by purchasing neighboring tracts of land—either from Granville's agents or other settlers. Even those men who died within the first two decades of their arrival in Rowan (Guilford) County purchased additional land. For example, within three years of his two initial Granville grants, John Cunningham, who died in 1762, bought two additional tracts of land (equaling 657 acres).<sup>30</sup>

Several settlers purchased land and then sold it—sometimes at a profit; sometimes not. Thomas Donnell, who entered twelve of the original thirty Settlement tracts, bought and sold approximately 3,328 acres between 1759 and 1787.<sup>31</sup> An example of Donnell's ability to profit from his entrepreneurial endeavors was his purchase of George Black's 504-acre Granville grant (possibly one of the original thirty tracts) for five shillings sterling in January 1767. Twelve years later in 1778, Donnell divided this 504-acre tract, first selling 254 acres of it to son Robert for £200 while John White purchased the remaining 293 acres for £293.<sup>32</sup>

Besides adding to their personal wealth, the pioneering generation may have purchased more tracts of land than they could personally maintain as a means of securing

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<sup>30</sup> John Cunningham, 640, Rowan (December 3, 1753), Granville Grants. The additional tracts included 320 acres purchased from Giles Tillet, March 1756, in Orange County, North Carolina (Orange Co. Record of Deeds, 1:222–23), and 337 acres purchased from Isaak Timmons, April 1756, in Orange County (Orange Co. Record of Deeds, 1:223–24).

<sup>31</sup> Tho. Donald, 640 acres, Rowan (Dec. 3, 1753), Granville Grants; Tho. Donnell, 640 acres, Rowan (Dec. 3, 1753), Granville Grants; Tho. Donnell, 400 acres, Rowan, Granville Grants; Rowan Co. Deeds, 7:55–57; Thomas Donnell, 650 acres, Rowan (August 10, 1759), Granville Grants; Rowan Co. Deeds, 4:591; Rowan Co. Deeds, 1:110–111; Thos. Donnell, 392 acres, Rowan (December 21, 1761), Granville Grants; Rowan Co. Deeds, 5:481–82; Rowan Co. Deeds, 6:374–75; Guilford County Record of Deeds (referred to as “Guilford Co. Deed” from this point), 1:432–3, 429–430; Rowan Co. Deeds, 7:70–71; and Guilford Co. Deeds, 1:110–111, 4:356–57. For additional examples, refer to appendix A. The section titled “WEALTH DURING LIFETIME, LAND” provides an explanation of the land bought and sold by each individual.

<sup>32</sup> Rowan Co. Deeds, 6:374–75; and Guilford Co. Deeds, 1:432–33, 429–430.

their progeny's financial future—whether at one's death, the child's majority or, in the case of a female, marriage (table 3.2). For example, John McClintock purchased two

**TABLE 3.2** Amount of Land Purchased, Sold and Bequeathed.

	<u>No. of Acres Purchased</u>	<u>No. of Acres Sold to Their Children (from total amount sold)</u>	<u>No. of Acres Bequeathed</u>
Barr, James	389	0	(389)
Blair, John	1190	0 of 550	(640)
Caldwell, David	1668	0 of 226	(1442)
Cunningham, John	1937	0 of 0	1937
Denny, William	640	0 of 0	(640)
Donnell, Robert Sr.	2007	0 of 1357	(650)
Donnell, Thomas	3956	1259 of 2627	(1329)
Finley, George	864	0 of 0	(864)
Leakey/Lackey, Adam	392	0 of 0	402
McClintock, John	1280	440 of 1113	(167)
McCuiston, James Sr.	2053	200 of 1193	(440+)
McCuiston, Robert Sr.	993	0 of 0	(993)
McCuiston, Thomas Sr.	1790	0 of 1190	(600)
McKnight, John	639	0 of 0	639
Mitchell, Adam	631	400 of 401	(230)
Mitchell, Robert	560	0 of 150	(410)
Nicks/Nix, John	1290	0 of 430	(860)
Rankin, George/Lydia	620	0 of 0	(620)
Rankin, Robert	1760+	480 of 1120	(1000+)
Scott, Samuel	2100	unclear	820
Thompson, Robert	2589	0 of 750	1839

*Source:* Appendix A. (See individual biographical information under WEALTH DURING LIFETIME and WEALTH AT DEATH for specific references regarding each man's landholdings.)

*Note:* The men listed here all purchased land throughout their lives in North Carolina and either sold the land they purchased in order to increase their wealth or bequeathed their land acquisitions to their heirs. In those instances where wills or probate information could not be located, the number of acres bequeathed appears within parentheses to denote the unsubstantiated nature of this number. A plus sign (+) indicates that the number may possibly be larger than discovered in land conveyance records. For example, Robert Rankin's will mentions 1000 acres of land as well as additional unspecified amounts of acreage; yet Guilford County records do not account for this extra land.

Granville grants of 640 acres each (equaling 1,280 acres). Although he sold 673 acres to others in the community, McClintock also sold 440 acres to his four sons, leaving the

remaining acreage for his wife's use until her death (at which time the land would be sold, and the money received divided between his four male heirs).<sup>33</sup>

Thomas Donnell also sold land to his sons, who were each in their mid-twenties at the time of the sale.<sup>34</sup> Of the 3,956 acres purchased within his lifetime, Donnell sold 1,259 acres to sons James (320 acres in 1769), John (347 acres in 1772) and Robert (254 acres in 1778) and son-in-law Alexander McKnight (392 acres in 1761).<sup>35</sup>

Decedents bequeathed varying amounts of currency to their heirs. At a time when specie (coinage) was scarce in the colonies, the presence of both local (e.g., the British and colony-based pound) and foreign currency (e.g., the Spanish doubloon) in probate records indicates access to specie during the pioneering generation's lifetime.<sup>36</sup> James McCuiston, Sr., bequeathed varying amounts of shillings and pounds to several of his sons, daughters and grandchildren within a timeframe of his choosing (i.e., son Thomas was to receive "Twenty shill[ings] Current money of North Carolina . . . three months after my [James Sr.'s] deceases . . .").<sup>37</sup> John Blair granted each of his children "five shilling sterg." (with the exception of son John who inherited the bulk of the estate after

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<sup>33</sup> John McClintock, 640 acres, Rowan (December 4, 1753), Granville Grants; Rowan Co. Deeds, 1:175, 203; Rowan Co. Deeds, 2:323–325; Guilford Co. Deeds, 3:183, 4:453–54, 5:401–2, 6:302, 389, 9:86–87; and Will of John McClintock (1807), Guilford Wills. Son John purchased 100 acres in 1785; son William, 100 acres in 1797; son Robert, 100 acres in 1797; and son Samuel, 140 acres in 1806.

<sup>34</sup> Appendix A. Son James was twenty-five years old in 1769. Son John was twenty-four years old in 1772. And, son Robert was twenty-six years old in 1778.

<sup>35</sup> Tho. Donald, 640 acres, Rowan (Dec. 3, 1753), Granville Grants; Tho. Donnell, 640 acres, Rowan (Dec. 3, 1753), Granville Grants; Tho. Donnell, 400 acres, Rowan, Granville Grants; Rowan Co. Deeds, 7:55–57; Thomas Donnel [*sic*], 650 acres, Rowan Co. (August 10, 1759), Granville Grants; Rowan Co. Deeds, 4:591; Rowan Co. Deeds, 1:110–11; Thos. Donnell, 392 acres, Rowan (December 21, 1761), Granville Grants; Rowan Co. Deeds, 5:481–82; Rowan Co. Deeds, 6:374–75; Guilford Co. Deeds, 1:432–33, 429–30; Rowan Co. Deeds, 7:70–71; and Guilford Co. Deeds, 1:110–11, 4:356–57.

<sup>36</sup> Hugh Talmage Lefler and Albert Ray Newsome, *North Carolina: The History of a Southern State*, 2nd ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1963), 103.

<sup>37</sup> Will of James McCuiston (1766), Rowan County Wills, 1743–1971, NCDAH (referred to as "Rowan Wills").

his mother’s death).<sup>38</sup> And, the final inventory report for John Cunningham’s estate in July 1763 listed “£607.11.5 besides the 40 Dollars in Silver 8 Doubloons & 1 Chakun.”<sup>39</sup>

In 1759, less than a decade after the pioneering generation purchased land in North Carolina, Rowan County poll tax lists showed the presence of enslaved men and women of African descent in Settlement households.<sup>40</sup> It is unclear if these enslaved persons accompanied Settlement members from Pennsylvania and Maryland. The Settlement’s increasing enslaved population becomes more evident when comparing the 1759 poll tax lists to the 1768 poll tax list administered by Thomas Donnell.<sup>41</sup> (table 3.3) Both the 1759 and 1768 lists provide the full names of those men residing in the county and enumerate the enslaved persons present in the households as “negro.”

**TABLE 3.3** Example of Increased Ownership of Enslaved Persons in Settlement Households.

Settlement Members	Enslaved persons			
	<u>1759</u>	<u>1768</u>	<u>will</u>	<u>probate year</u>
David Caldwell	-	1	18	1824
William Denny	1	2	2	1770
Thomas Donnell	0	1	n/a	---
Adam Leckey	-	0	1	1801
John McClintock	0	0	3	1807
James McCuiston	0	0	1	1766
John Nicks/Nix	2	2	n/a	---
Robert Rankin	0	0	2	1795
Samuel Scott	0	0	6	1777

Source: Linn, *Rowan County Tax Lists 1757–1800*, 22–35, 73–75.

<sup>38</sup> Will of John Blair (1772), Guilford County Wills, 1771–1968, NCDAH (referred to as “Guilford Wills”).

<sup>39</sup> Rowan Co. Minutes, 2:470.

<sup>40</sup> Jo White Linn, ed, *Rowan County, North Carolina, Tax Lists 1757–1800: Annotated Transcriptions* ([Salisbury, N.C.]: Linn, 1995), vii–viii, 22–35. In an overview of the tax system, Linn states that “taxes on [North Carolina] land . . . were discontinued in the 1720s” and replaced with a poll tax by the 1750s. (vii) The taxables included every white man over the age of sixteen and all those of African descent (male and female over the age of fourteen).

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 73–75.

Occasionally, the lists include the enslaved person's name as well. Furthermore, Settlement members listed in their wills several of the enslaved persons mentioned in the two (poll) tax lists. The appearance of a small but increasing number of enslaved persons bespeaks both the landowner's increased need for field hands and household servants as well as his ability to afford adding to the number of enslaved persons already living within his household.

### **Social Customs — Family Dynamics, Kinship, Inheritance Patterns and Literacy**

A study of the family dynamics of those associated with the Nottingham Settlement's pioneering generation provides a glimpse into the community's composition. For example, the age distribution and size of households upon their arrival in North Carolina's backcountry offers insight into the Settlement's attitudes regarding land purchases. Of the twenty-one settlers selected for this study, eleven were forty years or older when they purchased land in Rowan (Guilford) County, North Carolina. The remaining ten were between twenty-two and thirty-seven years old (table 3.4). The more mature settlers, such as John Blair, the three McCuiston brothers and the two Mitchell brothers, brought their teenage and adult progeny with them.<sup>42</sup> The presence of older children in a household amounted to free labor—labor needed for clearing land and building a farmstead. Settlers with younger children (infants and those under the age of ten), such as James Barr, John Cunningham and George and wife Lydia Rankin, had the added burden of caring for and raising children while attempting to improve their land.

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<sup>42</sup> Refer to appendix A for specific information regarding the ages of each man's children.

**TABLE 3.4** Age and Size of Families When They Migrated to North Carolina in the 1750s and 1760s.

	<u>Approx. Age of Settler</u>	<u>Number of Children</u>	<u>Accompanying Siblings</u>
Barr, James	< 30	1 of 5	unknown
Blair, John	< 50	8 of 8	unknown
Caldwell, David	40	0 of 9	unknown
Cunningham, John	< 25	0 of 3	(1?)
Denny, William	< 40	(6) of 6	2
Donnell, Robert Sr.	< 25	(5) of 5	1
Donnell, Thomas	41	5 of 11	1
Finley, George	22	(2) of 6	0
Leakey/Lackey, Adam	unknown	0 of 0	unknown
McClintock, John	40	(5?) of 7	0
McCuiston, James Sr.	53	9 of 9	2
McCuiston, Robert Sr.	48	9 of 9	2
McCuiston, Thomas Sr.	49	(3) of 3	2
McKnight, John	< 30	(3?) of 6	1
Mitchell, Adam	41	6 of 6	1
Mitchell, Robert	49	4 of 4	1
Nicks/Nix, John	37	6 of 8	unknown
Rankin, George (Lydia)	26 (Lydia = 22)	0 of 2	5
Rankin, Robert	< 40	(5?) of 6	0
Scott, Samuel	< 28	(4?) of 4	0
Thompson, Robert	32	(3?) of 10	0

*Source:* Refer to appendix A for detailed information regarding names, dates and other information pertinent to this chart.

*Note:* Because birth dates and individual arrival dates (in North Carolina) are not firm, the ages of each man and woman listed as well as the number of children born before their arrival is approximate. Numbers within parentheses denote a possible number that cannot be certified.

The size of one’s family may have played a part in the settler’s desire to increase his landholdings. For example, Robert Thompson, who purchased numerous tracts of land between 1755 and 1766 (equaling 2,589 acres), reportedly sired nine children (six sons and three daughters) after his marriage to Ann Ferguson in 1750.<sup>43</sup> He likely

<sup>43</sup> Robert Thompson, 464 acres, Rowan (November 11, 1755), Granville Grants; Robert Thompson, 640 acres, Rowan (November 9, 1756), Granville Grants; Robert Thompson, 350 acres, Rowan (August 2, 1760), Granville Grants; Guilford Co. Deeds, 1:15–17; Robert Thompson, 605 acres, Rowan (August 2, 1760), Granville Grants; Rowan Co. Deeds, 4:495–96, 4:496–97, 6:501–2; and Donna Martin, “Wright & Kivett Connections,” <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com> (accessed March 13, 2009). Of the five tracts (each of varying sizes totaling 2,589 acres) Thompson purchased during this time, he retained 1,839 acres until his death in 1771. Martin reports that the Thompson household included a child born to

accumulated land based on the amount of free labor available to him (in the form of his progeny) as well as a means of providing for his children's dowries and inheritances—provisions that served his family well after his untimely death in 1771.<sup>44</sup>

Although the Nottingham Settlement included families with no apparent connection to the rest of the community, kinship bound several of the pioneering families—both before and after their migration south. Foremost among those ties were close familial connections between the members. Several sets of siblings, such as the McCuiston, Donnell, and Mitchell brothers, purchased Granville land grants. However, connections based on marriage such as George Finley, the brother-in-law of John Cunningham, bound individuals to the community.<sup>45</sup>

Intermarriage among the pioneering families extended existing relationships within the community. In some instances, cousins married. For example, within both the McCuiston and Mitchell families, marriage between first cousins appears to have been an accepted tradition. Two of James McCuiston's daughters married his brother Robert's two sons—Sarah married Walter McCuiston; and Dorcas married John McCuiston.<sup>46</sup> Three of Adam Mitchell's six children intermarried with three of Robert Mitchell's four children.<sup>47</sup> The children of the pioneering generation also married into neighboring Settlement families—both those owning one of the thirty Granville tracts and others residing nearby. Although eighteenth-century North Carolina birth, marriage and death

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Thompson's wife in a previous marriage. Therefore, although Thompson may have only sired nine children, he would have been financially responsible for ten.

<sup>44</sup> Martin, "Wright & Kivett Connections." Reportedly, Thompson's youngest child was only four years old when Thompson was executed before the Battle of Alamance in 1771.

<sup>45</sup> For more information on these men and their families, consult appendix A. Each of the brief biographies found there provides (when available) a list of the subject's parents, spouse(s), children and in-laws.

<sup>46</sup> Appendix A.

<sup>47</sup> Appendix A.

records are scarce, community and family histories uphold the connections made between Settlement families before the American Revolution.<sup>48</sup>

Some, like John McKnight, who owned land in Cecil County, Maryland, before migrating to North Carolina, were not related to the community by marriage or blood ties. McKnight may have been a previous acquaintance of the other pioneering families while they lived in Pennsylvania or Maryland. Other unrelated members included those who arrived in the Settlement after 1760, such as the Settlement's first full-time minister, David Caldwell. Caldwell's biographer, Eli W. Caruthers, states that "many of them [Nottingham Settlement members] had known him from his childhood."<sup>49</sup> Robert Thompson's relationship to the Settlement may also have been based on acquaintance. Accompanied by his wife and children, Thompson's father, Presbyterian minister John Thomson, traveled throughout the middle colonies before migrating first to Virginia and then to Rowan County, North Carolina.

The Settlement's inheritance patterns found in the wills of the pioneering generation show that the head of a household first provided for his wife's welfare before mentioning his children or other heirs. While some men discussed the widow's situation in general terms, other heads of household provided a list of items to be left to her and sometimes included instruction regarding the management of her bequest. (For example, childless Adam Leakey left wife Martha not only his land but also any personal property she desired, including "one negro girl named Fillis . . . also all the household and kitchen furniture . . . also her choice of the one half of all my lybria [sic] of books, . . . her choice

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<sup>48</sup> Rankin, *Buffalo Presbyterian Church*, 22–43; and appendix A.

<sup>49</sup> Caruthers, *Rev. David Caldwell*, 24.



of two hed [sic] of the best horses I have . . .”<sup>50</sup> Usually, the will stipulated that the widow’s use of the family home and its land was contingent upon her continued status as widow. If she remained the decedent’s widow until her death, the estate (i.e., one of the sons) provided for her livelihood. If she remarried, she lost the right to any of the provisions granted in the will.<sup>51</sup>

The Settlement’s pioneering generation saw wealth as belonging to the family. Therefore widows lost the right to their husband’s personal and real estate (unless the husband provided for her in his will) and married daughters, who had already received their portion in the form of a dowry, received nominal bequests. Because of this tradition, the family home (or plantation) where the parents resided generally passed to a son whether before or after the death of the father or the widow. If there were other sons, they inherited what land remained unless it was sold and the proceeds divided among the heirs.<sup>52</sup> John McKnight appears to be an exception to this practice. Instead of bequeathing his plantation to one son, he direct that it be divided equally between his two sons Robert and William. He even provided for his unborn child (if a son), directing that his “land [then] be divided into three equal parts.”<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Will of Adam Leckey, Guilford County Record of Wills (referred to as “Guilford Co. Wills”), A:219–220.

<sup>51</sup> Will of John Blair (1772), Guilford Wills; Will of David Caldwell (1824), Guilford Wills; Will of John Cunningham (1762), Rowan Wills; Will of William Denny (1770), Rowan Wills; Will of Adam Leckey, Guilford Co. Wills, A:219–220; Will of John McClintock (1807), Guilford Wills; Will of James McCuiston (1766), Rowan Wills; and Will of John McKnight (1771), Guilford Wills. Note that although John McClintock provides a detailed bequest to his wife Catrine, he does not list her first in his will. Rather, the first bequest distributes real estate to his sons.

<sup>52</sup> Will of John Blair (1772), Guilford Wills; Will of William Denny (1770), Rowan Wills; Will of Adam Leckey, Guilford Co. Wills, A:219–220; Will of John McClintock (1807), Guilford Wills; Will of John McKnight (1771), Guilford Wills. Sometimes, a son received a portion of the estate upon his majority or marriage rather than at his father’s death. Whether this son was the first-born is not discernible due to the paucity of birth and death records for mid- to late-eighteenth century North Carolina.

<sup>53</sup> Will of John McKnight (1771), Guilford Wills; and John McNight, 639 acres, Rowan (November 9, 1756), Granville Grants. McKnight apparently only owned one tract of land in North Carolina (the Granville land grant of 639 acres purchased in 1756) at the time of his death. As well, the

Land was not the only possession bequeathed to Settlement members' heirs. Heads of households also provided their heirs with a wide variety of gifts ranging from currency to items considered necessities. Besides access to their spouse's "goods and chattels," widows sometimes received gifts of a personal nature. John Cunningham bequeathed to wife Isabell "her own riding saddle."<sup>54</sup> Males of the family received money, farm animals, tools, clothing worn by the decedent and books. Bequests made to daughters often depended on their marital status at the time of the will's execution. Unmarried daughters generally received household items or monetary gifts—either for use as their marriage dowry or as financial support until they wed. To his unmarried daughters Margaret and Jane, John Cunningham bequeathed not only his land (to be divided equally among his widow, the daughters and the unborn child his wife carried) but also granted each girl a "riding saddle."<sup>55</sup> William Denny instructed son James (one of his executors) "to give to each of my Daughters, that are now unmarried, [the] Sum [of] Thirty po[un]d lawful money of North Carolina, & a Spinning Wheel."<sup>56</sup> Denny further directed James in how to distribute each daughter's amount using a graduated schedule—Hannah was to receive her bequest in half-increments one year apart over a two year period; Agnes was to receive her bequest in half-increments, the first given three years after Denny's decease and the rest the following year; and Jean was to receive her bequest in half-increments, the first five years after Denny's decease and the rest the following year.<sup>57</sup> Married daughters received nominal gifts. John McClintock's two

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request that his wife provide his sons with a Christian education leads one to believe that his children might yet be minors. Both factors could explain why the land was divided instead of bequeathed to one son.

<sup>54</sup> Will of John Cunningham (1762), Rowan Wills.

<sup>55</sup> Will of John Cunningham (1762), Rowan Wills.

<sup>56</sup> Will of William Denny (1770), Rowan Wills.

<sup>57</sup> Will of William Denny (1770), Rowan Wills.

married daughters (Isabella Dick and Nansey Ballinger) each received “one dolar” upon his death in 1807.<sup>58</sup>

Wills also conveyed the decedent’s wishes regarding the raising of his children. John McKnight, who apparently wrote his will when his children were young, wanted them to receive more than monetary and physical gifts. McKnight admonished his widow to “give my Children a Christian Education.”<sup>59</sup>

As indicated in McKnight’s will, literacy appears to have been an important skill in the lives of Nottingham Settlement members. Of the twenty purchasers of the original thirty tracts and those of the pioneering generation who arrived afterward, at least sixteen could write their names. The clarity of these signatures implies a level of literacy beyond that of a rudimentary education.<sup>60</sup> At least one of the men (Adam Leckey) owned a library of books.<sup>61</sup>

The arrival in 1765 of David Caldwell, who graduated from the College of New Jersey (later known as Princeton University) meant that subsequent generations had the opportunity for a formal education. Besides fulfilling his primary duty to the Settlement as its religious leader, Caldwell supplemented his meager and unreliable church salary by establishing an academy.<sup>62</sup> Reminiscent of the “Log College” of William Tennent of Neshimy, Bucks County, Pennsylvania, and other academies like it established by

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<sup>58</sup> Will of John McClintock (1807), Guilford Wills.

<sup>59</sup> Will of John McKnight (1771), Guilford Wills.

<sup>60</sup> Copies of the Granville grants and wills support this statement. For specific individual leases and wills, refer to the citations provided in appendix A.

<sup>61</sup> Guilford Co. Wills, A:219.

<sup>62</sup> Caruthers, *Rev. David Caldwell*, 29.

Presbyterian ministers throughout Pennsylvania and other colonies, Caldwell offered his students a classical education.<sup>63</sup>

## Religion

The Presbyterian Church played an important role in the lives of members of the Nottingham Settlement. Members' willingness to sign the 1756 petitions to the King and Granville requesting a suspension of the vestry tax (table 3.5) demonstrates not only their allegiance to the practices of the Presbyterian Church but also their recognition of the church's importance within their lives.<sup>64</sup> In the King's copy of the petition, supplicants state that they were "originally your [the King's] Liege people & Mostly Originally from the North of Ireland, Trained & brought up under Presbyterian Church Government" who had "Mostly Resided some time in the Northern Provinces of Pennsylvania Jerseys & New York & where we were Exempted from paying [toward] supporting any Clergy save our own."<sup>65</sup> They continued, "[we] came here [North Carolina] in Hopes of Enjoying like Freedom."<sup>66</sup> The petition also demonstrates an organized Presbyterian presence from relevant areas of Pennsylvania during the Settlement's early history.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Wayland F. Dunaway, *The Scotch-Irish of Colonial Pennsylvania* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1962), 220–224; and Caruthers, *Rev. David Caldwell*, 29–40. Caldwell's biographer states that Caldwell operated a "classical school." (29) Although he does not expound on the subjects taught by Caldwell, Caruthers states that many of Caldwell's students became "eminent, as statesmen, lawyers, judges, physicians, and ministers of the gospel." (30).

<sup>64</sup> English Records, Granville District, Papers from the Marquis of Bath's Library in Longleat, Warminster, Wilshire, England, 1729–1780. NCDAH (referred to as "English Records"). See a transcription of Rowan County petitioners' signatures in appendix B for a complete list of names.

<sup>65</sup> English Records.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.* The petition addressed to Granville states "As All our Said Three Countys [*sic*] are Chiefly Inhabited by Dissenters, where is [*sic*] Ten Large Congregations Settled in So Many Bodies Together & are Yet Destitute of the Ordinances of the Gospel, Our Ministers being Discouraged from Settling here."

**TABLE 3.5** Partial List of Rowan County Signatures on the 1756 Vestry Tax Petitions

...	David Brown	John Cunningham
James Donnell	William Robinson	Benj Starratt
William Brown	Thomas Brally	John Mcgowan
William Denny	<b>Adam Lecky</b>	<b>Robt. Thompson</b>
Samuel ___lson	C_____ Mcdad	Robt. Doke
James Barr	John Mcadow	James Mathews
<b>John McKnight</b>	James M_adow	Will Mathis
<b>Robert Rankin</b>	William Mcban	James Mathew Junr.
Thomas McClure	Charles Burnney	Gustaves MCuiston
<b>George Rankin</b>	<b>James MCuiston</b>	James McCuiston Junr.
<b>Adam Mitchel</b>	<b>Robert MCuiston</b>	<b>Thomas Donall</b>
<b>John MClintock</b>	<b>Tho. MCuiston</b>	James Minnis
Robert Er[v]on	Hugh Brally	...

*Source:* English Records.

*Note:* This partial list of names provides a better understanding of the possible surnames associated with the Nottingham Settlement in the 1750s. Surnames of those purchasing one of the thirty original Granville tracts are in bold print. Refer to appendix B for a complete transcription of Rowan County signatures.

Community and family historians agree that before the Settlement's pioneering generation migrated to North Carolina they were associated with Presbyterian Churches in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania (including that section of Cecil County, Maryland, which Pennsylvania once claimed as part of Lancaster County).<sup>68</sup> Whether this association pertained to one particular church or a group of churches in Pennsylvania/Maryland could not be ascertained.<sup>69</sup> In the early eighteenth century, Lancaster County's boundaries encompassed a much larger area than its current

<sup>68</sup> The churches in question existed under the auspices of the Donegal and New Castle Presbyteries.

<sup>69</sup> Although a few records for the Presbyterian Church in Lancaster County (Pennsylvania) and Cecil County (Maryland) have survived over the past three centuries, they are limited in scope and details. For example, some Donegal Presbytery records survive but generally pertain to discussions on ministers and other official business). The Presbytery records do not provide a detailed listing of church memberships. For most of the congregations in this area, eighteenth-century records are non-existent. A search of The Presbyterian Historical Society's archives held no session (congregation) records prior to 1800 for churches located in southern Lancaster County or northern Cecil County. Therefore, I cannot confirm to which congregations Settlement members belonged before their relocation to North Carolina.

dimensions, and Presbyterian congregations such as Chestnut Level, Middle Octorara, Little Britain and Nottingham lay within approximately 20 miles of each other.<sup>70</sup> (figure 3) But, the networks created by the limited number of clergy who traveled from congregation to congregation within neighboring presbyteries may have connected the Settlement's families.

Nottingham Presbyterian Church figures significantly in the traditions associated with the Settlement's establishment. Historian Samuel Rankin names this church, located near present-day Rising Sun, Cecil County, Maryland, as the church whose members proposed relocating families to North Carolina.<sup>71</sup>

Under the auspices of the New Castle Presbytery, the Scots-Irish families who migrated into the once predominantly English Quaker settlement of Nottingham (known as the Nottingham Lots) established the Nottingham Presbyterian Church in Maryland sometime before 1724.<sup>72</sup> During the early 1740s, the church split into two congregations due to the ecclesiastical differences created by George Whitefield's preaching during the Great Awakening. Those remaining with the Old Side became known as the "first

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<sup>70</sup> MapQuest, <http://www.mapquest.com> (accessed December 2008). Mileage based on distance between Chestnut Level, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and Rising Sun, Cecil County, Maryland (approximately 16 miles.).

<sup>71</sup> Rankin, *Buffalo Presbyterian Church*, 14–15. See chapter 2, footnote 1 of this essay regarding the Nottingham Lots and the later establishment of the Mason-Dixon Line. Since its physical relocation to Colora (Cecil County), Maryland, in 1800, the Nottingham Church has been known as the West Nottingham Presbyterian Church.

<sup>72</sup> Samuel A. Gayley, *An Historical Sketch of the Lower West Nottingham Presbyterian Church* (Philadelphia: Alfred Martien, 1865), 10–11, 16–17, 27. During the early eighteenth century, Presbyterian congregations located in Maryland and neighboring Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, looked to the New Castle Presbytery for assistance in obtaining ministers as well as settling disagreements within the congregation. In 1732, the Donegal Presbytery (associated with congregations in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania) was organized; the Nottingham congregation chose to affiliate with those congregations located in Lancaster County due to their proximity. This affiliation lasted until the Old Side/New Side controversy split the congregation into two—those adhering to the Old Side tradition maintained a connection with the Donegal Presbytery, while the other congregation (referred to as the "second congregation") reestablished ties with the New Castle Presbytery whose constituencies supported New Side practices.

church,” while those following the New Side designated themselves as the “second church.”<sup>73</sup> Although the Old Side/New Side schism plaguing the Presbyterian Church resolved itself in 1758, the two Nottingham congregations did not reunite officially until 1792.<sup>74</sup> In 1796, the combined congregation, now known as the West Nottingham Presbyterian Church, relocated approximately four miles to its present site in Colora, Cecil County, Maryland.<sup>75</sup>

Connections between the Nottingham Settlement’s pioneering generation and the Nottingham (Pennsylvania/Maryland) congregation remain elusive due to the lack of extant eighteenth-century session records for the two congregations. Therefore, a link between the Nottingham congregations and the Nottingham Settlement’s pioneering generation can only be based on conjecture. In an 1865 history of the West Nottingham Presbyterian Church, author Samuel Gayley when discussing the church’s activities mentions members with similar surnames to those associated with the Nottingham Settlement in North Carolina—although the relationship between those sharing surnames in both locations is not clear.

Two ministers known to Presbyterians in the Nottingham (Pennsylvania/Maryland) area also may have played roles in the lives of Settlement families before their move to North Carolina. John Thomson, who served Presbyterians living in southeastern Pennsylvania as early as 1729, upheld the Old Side’s stance on traditional Presbyterianism, while Samuel Finley, the minister of the Nottingham (Pennsylvania/Maryland) New Side congregation from 1744 to 1761, was a strong

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<sup>73</sup> Gayley, *Historical Sketch*, 28.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 33–34, 41.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 41.

proponent of the New Side movement.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, both men had close family members—Thomson’s son Robert and Finley’s younger brother George—who purchased Rowan (Guilford) County Granville land grants in the 1750s.

Upon John Thomson’s (abt. 1690–1753) emigration to America in 1715, the Ulster Scot held offices in the Philadelphia Synod of the American Presbyterian Church and ministered first throughout the New Castle and Donegal Presbyteries.<sup>77</sup> In 1730 he served as moderator for the Nottingham Presbyterian Church, ministering off-and-on between Nottingham and two neighboring Pennsylvania churches (Middle Octorara and Chestnut Level) until he and his family departed for Virginia in 1744, where he ministered to various Presbyterian congregations throughout that colony.<sup>78</sup> By 1751, Thomson had moved to western Rowan County (the section which became Iredell County in 1788), North Carolina, where he preached to a number of Presbyterian congregations in the area.<sup>79</sup> Thomson died in Rowan County in 1753.<sup>80</sup>

Samuel Finley (1715–1766) served as the minister of Nottingham (Pennsylvania/Maryland) Presbyterian Church when the church’s congregation split in 1746. Originally from County Armagh, Ulster, Ireland, Finley in 1734 migrated with his extended family to America. He received his formal education at William Tennent’s Log College in Pennsylvania and was ordained in the Presbyterian Church in 1740. A

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<sup>76</sup> Gayley, *Historical Sketch*, 12–13, 29–31.

<sup>77</sup> John G. Herndon, “The Reverend John Thomson,” pt.1, *Journal of the Department of History of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.* 20 (March, June, September 1942): 116–118. Thomson’s biographer determined that Thomson himself always signed his surname without the “p,” but that his descendants consistently used “Thompson” during their stay in Virginia and from that time forward. Thomson graduated from the University of Glasgow in 1710 or 1711 and was licensed by the Armagh Presbytery (Ireland) in 1712.

<sup>78</sup> Gayley, *Historical Sketch*, 13; and Herndon, “Reverend John Thomson,” 20: 132, 134–37, 155.

<sup>79</sup> Herndon, “Reverend John Thomson,” pt. 2, *Journal of the Department of History of the Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A.* 21 (March 1943): 44. One of the congregations associated with Thomson is Fourth Creek Church.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 21: 45.



contemporary of Whitefield, Finley advocated the New Side's ideology concerning the supremacy of a conversion experience over a scholarly knowledge of the Christian faith. While at Nottingham (Pennsylvania/Maryland), he established (circa 1744) an academy. In 1761, his academic pursuits led him to be named the president of The College of New Jersey (now known as Princeton University). Finley died five years later.<sup>81</sup>

Apparently, members of the Nottingham Settlement in North Carolina did not suffer long without the ministrations of a Presbyterian clergyman. As early as 1755, the Synod of Philadelphia sent Reverend Hugh McAden, a missionary from Pennsylvania, to minister to Presbyterians in North Carolina.<sup>82</sup> McAden, a New Side adherent, encountered the Settlement in late August 1755.<sup>83</sup> Historian William Henry Foote reports that McAden preached at the home of Adam Mitchell.<sup>84</sup> McAden wrote in his journal ““the people [at Adam Mitchell's] seemed solemn and very attentive, but no appearance of the life of religion.””<sup>85</sup> The worshipers' lack of enthusiasm and McAden's New Side leanings support Samuel Rankin's claim that members of the Nottingham Settlement supported the Old Side in the controversy.<sup>86</sup>

In 1756, Nottingham Settlement families organized as a Presbyterian congregation. This congregation would later become known as the Buffalo Presbyterian Church (currently located within the Greensboro city limits).<sup>87</sup> Presbyterian missionaries ministered to the congregation until fellow Pennsylvanian Reverend David Caldwell was

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<sup>81</sup> Samuel Finley, 1715–1766, Biographical Vertical Files (RG 414), Presbyterian Historical Society (PHS), Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

<sup>82</sup> Rankin, *Buffalo Presbyterian Church*, 19.

<sup>83</sup> William Henry Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina: Historical and Biographical, Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of Her Early Settlers* (New York: Robert Carter, 1846), 165, 167.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>85</sup> Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 167. McAden's quotes excerpted from a journal he kept during his first trip through North Carolina.

<sup>86</sup> Rankin, *Buffalo Presbyterian Church*, 19.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

installed as their first full-time minister in 1768.<sup>88</sup> That same year, congregant Adam Mitchell—the same man visited by McAden thirteen years before—sold one acre to John McKnight and William Anderson, “trustees for the Presbyterian Congregation on the Waters of N. Buffalo . . . for use of a Presbyterian Meeting House to those that are members of the Synod of Philadelphia in Pennsylvania & New York Synod. . . .”<sup>89</sup> The land cost the trustees twenty shillings.<sup>90</sup>

Rev. David Caldwell served as the Buffalo Presbyterian Church’s minister until he retired in 1820, four years before his death. (See appendix A.) Educated in America, Caldwell excelled in his studies first at a classical school run by a Mr. Smith in eastern Pennsylvania and then at the College of New Jersey.<sup>91</sup>

Caldwell did not shy away from working on behalf of his congregation during the political conflicts troubling colonial North Carolina. In 1771, at the height of the Regulation movement over unfair taxation, Caldwell approached Royal Governor William Tryon hoping to “use his influence in effecting a conciliation” between the governor and the regulators rallying nearby.<sup>92</sup> Unfortunately, Caldwell’s efforts failed. The Battle of Alamance soon ensued and Robert Thompson, one of the men accompanying Caldwell into Tryon’s camp, was executed. Tryon had retained Thompson as a prisoner after Caldwell returned to the Regulators’ encampment to broker peace

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<sup>88</sup> Caruthers, *Rev. David Caldwell*, 24; and Rankin, *Buffalo Presbyterian Church*, 19, 113. Caldwell’s biographer claims that members of the Nottingham Settlement were acquainted with Caldwell when they lived in Pennsylvania and that Caldwell had committed to come as the community’s minister after he finished his academic studies and subsequent ordination. Caldwell held dual preaching positions at this time—the second being with the nearby Alamance Presbyterian Church, a New Side congregation.

<sup>89</sup> Rowan Co. Deeds, 7:72.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*, 7:72.

<sup>91</sup> Caruthers, *Rev. David Caldwell*, 18–19.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 148–49. Caldwell had an interest in reconciling the two factions as “. . . a larger portion of the men in [Caldwell’s] congregation were Regulators.”

between the two groups. When Thompson attempted to leave Tryon's camp without permission, Tryon reportedly shot and killed him.<sup>93</sup>

During the Revolution, Caldwell "exhorted his hearers . . . to value their liberties above every thing else and to stand up manfully in their defence."<sup>94</sup> Caldwell's biographer, Caruthers, claims that Caldwell's reputation as a patriot had reached General Charles, Lord Cornwallis, before that British officer's arrival in the vicinity of the Nottingham Settlement for the Battle of Guilford Courthouse in 1781.<sup>95</sup> During this battle, the British army occupied Caldwell's house, destroying his library as well as his sermons and church records in his possession at the time.<sup>96</sup>

Before the nineteenth century, the Buffalo Presbyterian Church fulfilled another role for the Settlement's pioneering generation (auxiliary to its primary purpose of providing religious sustenance). It also supervised the moral conduct of its members.<sup>97</sup> Extant session minutes and records of the church cover a limited timeframe (1777 to 1788) and predominantly mention descendants of the pioneering generation rather than those first members. One exception regarding James Barr hints of the role played by the church in its regulatory capacity. In October 1779, Barr was brought before the Session (the pastor and ruling elders) for defaming the Christian character of John Chalmber [*sic*] as well as for reportedly being intoxicated "two or three Months since."<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Caruthers, *Rev. David Caldwell*, 153.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>97</sup> Buffalo Presbyterian Church, Greensboro, North Carolina. Session Minutes and Records, Volume 1, June 8, 1768–April 2, 1796, NCDAAH (referred to as "Buffalo Session Minutes"). The limited, surviving session minutes record witness depositions for libel cases covering possible sexual misconduct, theft, lying, murder and even witchcraft,

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*; Lefferts A. Loetscher, *A Brief History of the Presbyterians*, Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958, 27; and D. K. Sanford, Thomas Thomson and Allan Cunningham, *The Popular Encyclopedia*, Glasgow: Blackie & Son, 1841, I:303–4.

A few of the Nottingham Settlement's pioneering generation served the congregation in a leadership capacity. Samuel M. Rankin lists Adam Mitchell, Thomas Donnell, Sr., George Rankin and Robert Rankin as men who held the church office of "ruling elder."<sup>99</sup> As a ruling elder, these men would have possessed a good deal of influence within the congregation. As members of the congregation's Session, ruling elders presided over cases brought before the church to either censure or exonerate church members.

The pioneering generation of the Nottingham Settlement, although a diverse group of individuals, exhibited similar traits and experiences. Pioneer John McClintock in many ways exemplifies a typical Settlement member. Reportedly born in Ireland, the forty-year-old McClintock settled in Rowan (Guilford) County, North Carolina, in December 1753, when he purchased two Granville land grants designated as Nottingham Settlement tracts. One of the tracts he sold to another settler (Robert Erwin/Erwine). Sections of the other he sold to his sons as part of their inheritance. He used this land to establish and increase his personal wealth. As a landowner, he served on county court juries several times within a decade of arriving in North Carolina, and also replaced a fellow member as constable in 1762. His material possessions and wealth (as demonstrated in his 1807 will) grew to include not only his land but also three enslaved persons of African descent, farm stock, household furniture, and two hundred dollars cash.

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<sup>99</sup> Rankin, *Buffalo Presbyterian Church*, 122–25. Because of the lack of extant church records for the eighteenth century, Rankin relied on family traditions to create a list of ruling elders for this time period.

McClintock's family included seven children—five of whom may have been born before the family's arrival in North Carolina in 1753 and may have provided him with additional labor for developing his land. While he did not migrate to North Carolina with any known siblings, at least one of his children married into another Settlement family. Upon his death, McClintock provided for his family by dividing his estate among his wife and children. As with others in the Settlement's pioneering generation, he was able to sign his name legibly (indicating a level of literacy), and he was affiliated with the Buffalo Presbyterian Church (though he does not appear to have served in a leadership capacity).

Although some fellow members sired more children, purchased more land or died within a decade of their arrival in North Carolina, McClintock's life demonstrates the range of collective characteristics and traits found within the Settlement. Whether intentional or not, these common denominators shape the Nottingham Settlement's identity and allow present historians to better recognize those associated with this eighteenth-century backcountry community.