

“Barcelona” Neckerchiefs, Teaware, and China Plates: Kinship, Status and the Division of Fourth Creek Church

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Introduction

Writing in the early 1950's, Carl Bridenbaugh stated that, “[t]he conquest of the Back Parts was achieved by families” whose “fundamental social unit...was preserved intact” despite the trauma of relocation in a new world.¹ The importance of the family, which lies at the center of Bridenbaugh's contention, has gained new acceptance by more recent historians. Several, such as David Hackett Fischer, Russell M. Reid, and Ned C. Landsman, contend that migration to the New World and along the American frontier was a “movement of clans” who, although immigrating at different times, “tended to settle together in the American backcountry.”² The networks that arose around these clusters of extended families drew their strength from “the support of other kin groups round about them.”³ Coincident with the security the kinship webs fostered was the deep loyalty to family, both blood and affinal, felt by these pioneers.

These two factors -- familial support and loyalty -- aided in the formation of communities in the Backcountry as neighborhoods grew around collections of interrelated households. Bonds of friendship reinforced the support offered by kinship networks. These connections were frequently invoked as settlers called, upon their comrades to witness documents or pose as their security in legal matters.

Newcomers having no consanguineal ties to established families in an area often sought out former associates who had preceded them to the frontier. New acquaintanceships might grow out of contacts created during the boisterous few days surrounding the meeting of the local county court. Over the four to six day period in which the magistrates held court, residents from wide geographic areas poured into their county seat to attend these sessions. Some of these travelers flocked to the court house because they had been summoned as jurors or had matters to lay before the justices while others came to take advantage of the attendant crowd and trade with their fellow settlers. Yet another group came merely as spectators, desirous of partaking in the clamor accompanying court days.⁴ Friendships might also arise from associations formed at local sporting matches such as horse races or target shooting.

Intermarriage between members of the families involved in these companionships intensified and strengthened the alliances. Among the Scotch-Irish families studied by Russell Reid, these ties were reinforced by additional marriages in the next and succeeding generations.⁵ In time, marriages between related turned communities into a kinship network writ large.

¹ Bridenbaugh, *Myths and Realities*, 135.

² David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (1989), 663-664; Ned C. Landsman, *Scotland and Its First American Colony, 1683-1765* (Princeton, 1985); and Russell M. Reid, “Church Membership, Consanguineous Marriage, and Migration in a Scotch-Irish Frontier Population,” *Journal of Family History*, XIII (1988), 397-414.

³ Fischer, *Albion's Seed*, 666.

⁴ For a description of court days in eighteenth century Virginia, see Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1982), 88-94 and Carl Lounsbury, “The Structure of Justice: The Courthouses of Colonial Virginia,” *Perspectives in Vernacular Architecture*, III (1989), 214-216.

⁵ Reid, “Church Membership, Consanguineous Marriage, and Migration in a Scotch-Irish Frontier Population.”

In the Backcountry, these bonds of kinship and neighborliness extended over great distances due to the dispersed nature of the area's settlement. While residents of the Chesapeake region of Maryland and Virginia might find their spouse and comrades among households no farther apart than five miles, settlers in the Backcountry were forced to look farther afield for their contacts.⁶ This great distance, coupled with impediments such as natural barriers or the lack of a highway network, created what historian Darrett B. Rutman has termed "spatial friction."⁷

No less damaging to the bonds of kinship and mutuality that tied communities together were the desires for economic independence and status that brought many settlers to North Carolina's Backcountry. On the surface, it would seem unlikely that the Backcountry's multi-ethnic and religiously diverse population could forge a common identity. Yet, at the very time that settlers were finding their way into North Carolina's Piedmont, the American colonies were undergoing a consumer revolution of sorts as the number and variety of imported goods available to colonists skyrocketed. Colonists at all levels of society emerged as discriminating buyers, seeking out the latest fashions and the best quality they could afford. British manufactures began to replace homemade American wares, uniting Americans as consumers and as Americans. These "Baubles of Britain," as T.H. Breen has termed the imported commodities, not only improved Americans' quality of life, but created a single consciousness among their owners.⁸ The same consumer goods that brought colonists together, however, could just as easily exacerbate divisions between haves and have-nots. Possessions, especially among the more ambitious, equal wealth and status.

By the early 1770's, during the Regulator uprising, conflicting visions of society and competition for power were already tearing apart North Carolina's eastern Backcountry.⁹ The Back Settlers of the western frontier were no less desirous for advancement. Spatial friction, coupled with tensions between members of the different layers of the eighteenth century's hierarchical society, could prove to be as disjunctive as the bonds of kinship and friendship could be unifying. For one Presbyterian congregation in Rowan County of North Carolina's Backcountry, this proved painfully true.

The "Old House": The Fourth Creek Congregation

Lying northwest of Salisbury, the region between the South Yadkin and Catawba Rivers is bisected by a number of low ridges running from the northwest to the southeast. Foremost of these is the South Iredell Ridge, a crescent-shaped feature which divides the two watersheds. To the north of the ridge lies the valley of Third Creek. Between 1750 and 1762 this valley and that of the creek to its north, Fourth Creek, became the focus of settlement by several Scotch-Irish families migrating southward from Pennsylvania and Maryland.

Although most of the new residents clustered around the two creeks, a few crossed the South Iredell Ridge and pushed on to the Catawba River, establishing themselves along the short

⁶ Lorena S. Walsh, "Community Networks in the Early Chesapeake," *Colonial Chesapeake Society*, ed. by Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan and Jean B. Russo (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1988), 219 and 222.

⁷ Darret B. Rutman, "Community Study," *Historical Methods*, XIII (1980), 31.

⁸ T. H. Breen, "'Baubles of Britain': The American and Consumer Revolutions of the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present*, no. 199 (May 1988), 73-104.

⁹ For interpretations of the Regulator conflict as an outgrowth of the struggle between ambitious newcomers, see A. Roger Ekirch, "Poor Carolina:" *Politics and Society in Colonial North Carolina, 1729-1776* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1981), and James P. Whittenburg, "Planters, Merchants, and Lawyers: Social Change and the Origins of the North Carolina Regulation." *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d Ser., XXXIV (1977), 215-238.

creeks which flow southwards into that river. From the home of one of these families, the Sherrills, a path led northeastwards, crossing Third and Fourth Creeks and continuing on to the South Yadkin. From there, the track, known as Sherrill's Path, swung in a northeasterly direction until it reached the Yadkin River near its Shallow Ford.¹⁰ Along Third Creek, another road led eastwards through the settlement, ultimately reaching Salisbury and tying the residents of the area to the seat of Rowan County's government.

By 1762, sixty-two families resided in this region.¹¹ Ten years later, through natural growth and continued in-migration, this number had risen to one hundred and ninety-six families'.¹² Several of the households established during the thirteen years between 1762 and 1775 were an outgrowth of the settlement to the area's east, Cathey's or the Irish Settlement, which clustered between Witherows and Grants Creeks. Indeed, the unoccupied region between Fifth Creek and the South Yadkin River acted as a release valve, siphoning pressure away from the rapidly filling Irish Settlement as its younger men sought to found households of their Own. The dispersed farms established in this locale by the younger sons of the King, Todd, Wasson and Nesbit families mirror the

Scotch-Irish settlements of New Jersey studied by Ned C. Landsman, who concludes that "the patterned dispersal of the Scots, rather than isolating individual settlers from their homes and families, served instead to bind together the scattered settlements through a system of interlocking family networks."¹³ Not only did these family networks assist in integrating newcomers into the community, they also served to foster a religious unity between New Jersey's Presbyterian congregations. In the case of Rowan County's Fourth Creek congregation, several families, such as the Rosebroughs and Kings, maintained ties with the Presbyterian congregation to their east, Thyatira or Cathey's meeting house.

During 1773 the Presbyterian congregation which ranged along Fourth Creek called upon one of its members, William Sharpe, to create a map showing the bounds of the assemblage. The impetus for Sharpe's mission stemmed from an attempt the previous year to divide the congregation.¹⁴ Under the leadership of William McKnight, Thomas Morrison, Samuel Harris, and James Purviance, a faction calling for the division of the church had developed among the members of Fourth Creek living northwest of the meeting house.¹⁵ Eight years earlier several of these same men had joined with fellow Presbyterians living along Fifth Creek and petitioned the Synod of New York and Philadelphia to organize the church they now sought to divide.

Acting diplomatically, the thirty-one year old surveyor and attorney took pains to locate the residences of the farthest communicants and then proceeded to draw his map (Figure 1). Rather than locate the church at its midpoint, Sharpe's map took as its focal point the actual geographical center of the widely dispersed congregation. Sharpe's decision not to locate the meeting house at the center of his map may indicate his feelings about the issue of division. Indeed, as if the separation into new congregations had already taken place, Sharpe referred to the Fourth Creek meeting house as the "old house."¹⁶

¹⁰ *The Heritage of Iredell County* (Winston-Salem, N. C., 1980), 6.

¹¹ Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 94

¹² Hugh H. Wooten and Francis Joseph Marschner, "Transcript of a Map of Fourth Creek Congregation by William Sharpe, Esq., 1773," McClelland Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, N. C.

¹³ Landsman, *Scotland and Its First American Colony*, 153.

¹⁴ Homer M. Keever, *Iredell: Piedmont County* (Statesville, N. C., 1976), 79.

¹⁵ *Heritage of Iredell*, 106. The four were among the first elders of Concord Church, formed in 1775 after the division of Fourth Creek Meeting House.

¹⁶ William Sharpe Map.

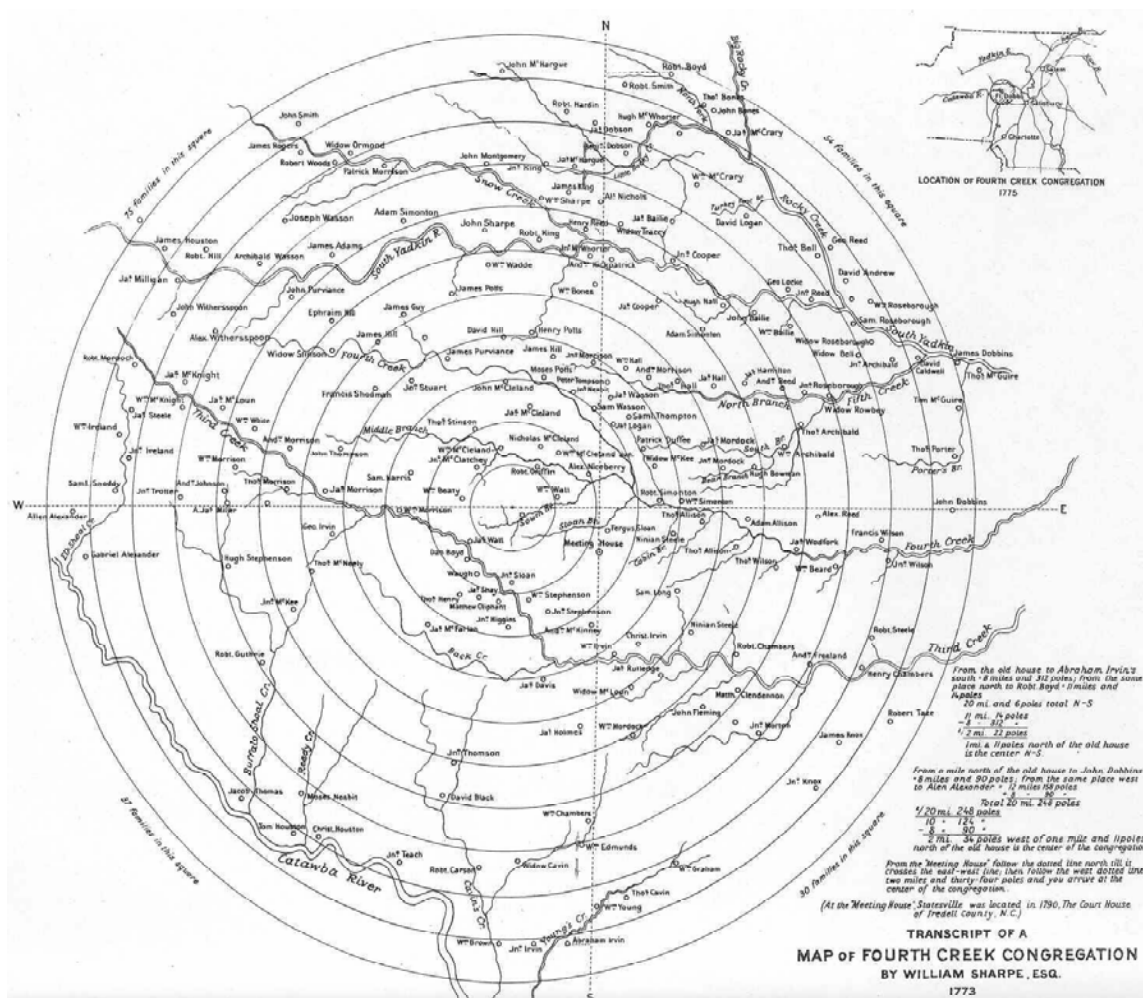


Figure 1, Hugh H. Wooten and Francis Joseph Marschner, Transcript of a Map of the Fourth Creek Congregation by William Sharpe, 1773, McClelland Family Papers, Southern Historical Collection

Integrating the Newcomers: The Cases of William Sharpe and Robert King

In William Sharpe's mind, the division of Fourth Creek had already taken place. A relative newcomer to the area, during the early spring of 1769 he established himself near the confluence of Snow Creek and the South Yadkin River, about eight miles north of the meeting house.¹⁷ Prior to this he had resided in Mecklenburg County where he associated himself with his relatives, the Alexander family. There, he had married Catherine Reese, the daughter of David Reese who, like Sharpe and his kinsmen, had moved to the area from Cecil County, Maryland.¹⁸ Like his son-in-law, Reese also enjoyed close ties to the Alexanders, particularly

¹⁷ *Ibid.* See also Mecklenburg County, Deed Books (microfilm), IV, 888, NCDAAH.

¹⁸ *Heritage of Iredell*, 476. Worth S. Ray, in his *The Mecklenburg Signers and Their Neighbors* (Baltimore, 1966), states that Reese was a native of Wales who established himself in Maryland's Somerset County. However, Norris W. Preyer, in his *Hezekiah Alexander and the Revolution in the Backcountry*, notes the Rees

Moses Alexander, a former justice for Anson County and Mecklenburg's sheriff.¹⁹ The years Sharpe spent among his relations in Mecklenburg County were undoubtedly happy ones as old feelings of affection were rekindled with compatriots who had preceded him southward.

Perhaps more than any other factor, the prior settlement of kinsmen and onetime acquaintances in the Backcountry determined to which area a future settler would gravitate. In the example of William Sharpe, the presence of relatives and old friends proved a drawing card in his decision to relocate. Until new relationships developed, the stability offered by these older bonds provided the newcomer with security. These ties were often reinforced through the subsequent intermarriage of younger members as these extended families renewed acquaintanceships in their new home. The absence of kin or former neighbors might result in the alienation and withdrawal of a recent arrival from the neighborhood into which that person had moved. During the early 1770's many members of the Fourth Creek congregation, including William Sharpe, would find this to be true. Sharpe, like many of his coreligionists, enjoyed few of the ties, such as kinship, which should have cemented the congregation together. Indeed, because many members of Fourth Creek were themselves recent arrivals to the area between Third Creek and the South Yadkin River, the extensive family ties which might have brought the congregation stability had not had time to develop.

William Sharpe and his brother, John Sharpe, were probably drawn northward into Rowan County by the presence there of James and Elizabeth Deacon. In this respect, like the Scotch-Irish settlers in New Jersey and elsewhere, they were merely passing from one system of family networks into another. Deacon, who resided between Witherows and Sills Creeks in the Irish Settlement, had been closely acquainted with the Sharpe family in Maryland before moving south to North Carolina.²⁰ However, rather than take up land near the Deacons in the densely populated Irish Settlement, the Sharpe brothers settled well to its northwest, establishing themselves beyond the South Yadkin River near the home of Robert King.

During the mid-1750s, while still in his late teens, Robert King accompanied his father to Rowan County. In Rowan, the elder King, an Irish clothier, settled along the head branches of Witherow's Creek near kinsmen of this wife's maternal grandparents, the Kerrs.²¹ By 1768 Robert, along with his brother James King, had established himself well to the north of the family's original acreage. Through their marriages, the two brothers had allied themselves with two of the Fourth Creek congregation's more prominent families, the Morrissions and the Halls.

The date of Robert and James King's weddings has, unfortunately, been lost, but they must have occurred during the latter half of the 1760s. Sometime prior to 1767 James King chose Sarah Hall, the daughter of James Hall, as his bride.²² The bond between the two families was

family as being among the families from Cecil County, Maryland, which accompanied the Alexanders on their move to Pennsylvania's Conococheague Settlement during the early 1750's. It seems probable that Reese, like Hezekiah Alexander's grandfather, Joseph, moved northwards from Somerset to Cecil County to take advantage of that area's more fertile soil and trade advantages with the Delaware River valley towns. In addition to Reese, other Somerset clans which associated themselves with the Alexanders both in Cecil County and, later, in North Carolina included the Wallaces, Brevards, and Polks. See Ray, 421 and Preyer, 13 and 31.

¹⁹ . Mecklenburg Deeds, I, 590 and II, 271.

²⁰ Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 60-61.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 126. See also Heritage of Iredell, 345 and James King Hall Papers, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, N. C..

²² This date is based upon the birth in 1767 of Richard Hugg King, the son of James and Sarah Hall King. Richard Hugg, however, is presumably not the couple's first child as his brother, Samuel, was old enough to marry in 1776. If James King, like his two brothers, John (age twenty-five at marriage) and Thomas (age twenty-three), married while in his early or mid-twenties, then the union between Sarah Hall and himself would have taken place

strengthened by the marriage of one of James King's brothers-in-law, Hugh Hall, to King's sister, Margaret. The Hall family, originally from Donegal Township in Pennsylvania's Lancaster County, arrived in Rowan County slightly later than the Kings and took up land well to the north of Richard King's Witherow's Creek landholdings.²³ During mid-April 1763 Hugh Hall, along with his brother Thomas, and Robert King worked together with several other residents of the area between the South Yadkin River and Fifth Creek to lay out a road linking their community to the road leading from Salisbury to Charles Town.²⁴ Quite possibly through this exposure, the bond which would ultimately link the two families developed. Two years later, in October 1765, this tie of friendship would be invoked as both King brothers called upon Hugh Hall to witness their sale to William Barr of land along Third Creek and Blyth's Creek.²⁵

By that time, Robert King had married, taking Mary, the daughter of William Morrison, Sr., as his bride.²⁶ Formerly a resident of Colerain Township in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where he held the office of tax collector, by 1752 William Morrison had established himself along the upper reaches of Third Creek.²⁷ There, he quickly entered into a position of patronage and prominence.

During their 1752 quest for land in the North Carolina Backcountry, the party of Moravians led by August Spangenberg sent a messenger from its camp near the forks of the Little River to Morrison's, well to the southeast, in hopes of finding two of the Brethren left behind earlier in the journey of discovery.²⁸ From the tone of Spangenberg's narrative, it is evident that William Morrison's home was an important stopover for those hoping to take up land near the Catawba River. Late the following year, Morrison petitioned the Rowan County Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions to have his mill "being built and Erected" on Third Creek recorded as a public grist mill.²⁹ Already on the road to local prominence, Morrison would be catapulted further by this mill which served the residents between the Catawba and Fourth Creek. Just as the settlers of the South Carolina Backcountry studied by Rachel N. Klein came to view the millers in their midst as men of importance because of the services they were able to provide, Morrison's neighbors came to look upon him as a "man of influence."³⁰ Indeed, in October 1754, when a dispute occurred between the Hall family and Michael Dickson of Third Creek, both parties requested that Rowan's justices refer the matter to William Morrison for resolution.³¹ William Morrison's stature continued to grow as evidenced by the honorific "Es[qui]r[e]" which follows his name in Rowan's 1768 tax list. More than Morrison's prestige grew, however. His fortunes increased also, with Morrison owning two African slaves in 1768.³²

during the early 1750's. For family data on the King family. see Heritage of Iredell, 345, and "King" folder, McCubbins Collection, Rowan County Public Library, Salisbury, N. C.

²³ Ramsey, Carolina Cradle, 99. See also Rowan Deeds. IV, 515.

²⁴ Rowan Court Min., 13 April 1763.

²⁵ Rowan Deeds, VI, 344 and 345.

²⁶ Ibid., 345. See also Rowan Wills, A:105.

²⁷ Ramsey, Carolina Cradle, 65-66.

²⁸ Moravian Records, I, 46.

²⁹ Rowan Court Min., 21 September 1753.

³⁰ Rachel N. Klein, "Frontier Planters and the American Revolution," An Uncivil War: The Southern Backcountry During the American Revolution. Ronald Hoffman, Thad W. Tate and Peter J. Albert, eds. (Charlottesville, Va., 1985), 45-46.

³¹ Rowan Court Min., 13 October 1754.

³² Linn, "Lists of Taxables in Rowan County, 1768," 203.

Given the regard with which this “first Inhabiter of the country” was held, it should be no wonder that his son-in-law, Robert King, also came to command local respect.³³

By the summer of 1770 a friendship between Robert King and William Sharpe had taken root. That year the two neighbors found themselves charged with administering the estate of Samuel Forgey.³⁴ During the next two years, Sharpe’s and King’s prestige among their neighbors increased. In mid-February 1771, William Sharpe received permission to build a public grist mill at his home on Snow Creek.³⁵ Much like the case offered by William Morrison, Sr., the mill allowed Sharpe to develop a following among the settlers served by his mill. The next year, in early November 1772, his protege King qualified as a justice for Rowan County’s court. Two years later, he would be joined on the justices’ bench by Sharpe.³⁶ Throughout this time the two continued to enjoy a high esteem among their neighbors.

Late September 1774 saw Sharpe appointed to Rowan County’s Committee of Safety. The following June, as tensions deepened within the colony between its royal governor and those opposed to the British Parliament’s mounting taxation of the American colonies, King joined Sharpe as a member of the committee. On 1 June 1775 King, newly appointed to the revolutionary body, undertook the task of settling accounts with the organization’s former treasurer, Maxwell Chambers.³⁷ During the next year, Sharpe and King became increasingly involved with the Committee of Safety’s affairs, frequently acting as emissaries on its behalf in dealing with their neighbors along the South Yadkin. By the end of 1775 William Sharpe had risen in importance within the committee, becoming its secretary on 17 October.³⁸

The “Old House” Divides

The same year which saw William Sharpe become heavily involved in Rowan County’s break with the royal governor and his supporters also witnessed the collapse of the Fourth Creek Church. Partly under its own weight, the Presbyterian meeting house fragmented into three congregations. Other factors, however, played a role in Fourth Creek’s demise. William Sharpe and several of his neighbors, many of whom had established themselves in the area during the previous ten years and had few affinal ties to others in the original congregation, formed Bethany meeting house near the home of James Hall. A second congregation, taking the name Concord, grew around the home of James Morrison on the headwaters of Third Creek. The brother of William Morrison, Sr., James Morrison, like his brother, had grown prosperous since establishing himself on Third Creek in 1753.³⁹ His son Thomas, along with his neighbor, Samuel Harris, became one of the elders of the new church.⁴⁰ The parent church, Fourth Creek, having survived the 1772 attempt to divide the congregation, survived this split also. Under the leadership of John Mordah and William and John Stevenson, Fourth Creek now focused on those

³³ Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 66.

³⁴ Rowan Wills, A:56.

³⁵ Rowan Court Min., 13 February 1771.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 4 November 1772 and 4 May 1774.

³⁷ John Hill Wheeler, *Historical Sketches of North Carolina, From 1584 to 1851* (Baltimore, 1964 reprint of 1851 edition), II, 364.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 370.

³⁹ *Heritage of Iredell*, 423.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 106.

settlers living south and east of the old meeting house.⁴¹ Like Concord, Fourth Creek included several of the original settlers who had taken up residence between the Catawba and South Yadkin Rivers.

Tradesmen Planters and Far-Reaching Roads: Bethany Meeting House

Of the nearly two hundred households which claimed membership in Fourth Creek in 1773, forty-seven families, nearly one quarter of the parent church's congregation, banded together to form Bethany meeting house. Thirty-seven of these families shared the same surname.⁴² The most extensive affinal ties within the new church belonged to the family of the elder James Hall. Through the marriage of his children, Hall enjoyed bonds to Bethany's King, Dobson and Archibald families. The tie between the Hall and King households was doubly reinforced as Hall's eldest child, daughter Sarah, married James King while her brother, Hugh, wed Margaret King. Hall's youngest son, Alexander, chose Ann Dobson, whose family lived beyond the South Yadkin River, as his bride.⁴³

Mary Hall, the fourth child of James and Prudence Roddy Hall's marriage, married John Archibald, the son of William Archibald, Sr. In 1761 Archibald's father, who came to the area from West Nottingham Township in Pennsylvania's Chester County, established his home to the southeast of the Halls along Fifth Creek's south branch.⁴⁴ Two years later, during the spring of 1763, William Archibald, Jr., and two of the Hall brothers, Thomas and Hugh, undoubtedly formed an acquaintanceship while opening a road linking their community with Salisbury.⁴⁵ The bond between the two families was strengthened the following year when William Archibald, Jr., and either the patriarch of the Hall family or his son, James Hall, Jr., were brought together to witness the transfer of three hundred acres lying along Fifth Creek between James Mordah and his son John.⁴⁶

In addition to the Halls, the Archibald family enjoyed ties to three other families making up the Bethany congregation. Following the death of William Archibald, Sr., in 1764, his daughter Elizabeth chose Robert Hardin as one of her guardians.⁴⁷ Hardin, a Marylander, had originally taken up land to the southeast of the Fourth Creek region, settling east of Cathey's meeting house in the Irish Settlement. By 1765 he had relocated on the north side of the South Yadkin near Sherrill's Path.⁴⁸ Although possessing no kinship ties to other members of the new church prior to its creation, in early 1775 Hardin would be bound to the Sharpe family through the marriage of his daughter to William Sharpe's brother, Walter.⁴⁹ A second member of Bethany to which the Archibalds enjoyed close ties was David Andrew. The son of John Andrew of Middle Octoraro Township in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, David Andrew purchased three hundred and fifty-seven acres on the north side of Fourth Creek from George Hall on 20

⁴¹ William Henry Foote, Sketches of North Carolina. Historical and Biographical. Illustrative of the Principles of a Portion of Her Early Settlers (New York, 1846), 324.

⁴² Heritage of Iredell, 97.

⁴³ Ibid., 304.

⁴⁴ Ramsey, Carolina Cradle, 97.

⁴⁵ Rowan Court Min., 13 April 1763.

⁴⁶ Rowan Deeds, V, 472.

⁴⁷ Rowan Court Min., 10 April 1765.

⁴⁸ Rowan Deeds, VI, 313. See also Ramsey, Carolina Cradle, 125, and Heritage of Iredell, 6.

⁴⁹ Rowan Marriage Bonds,

July 1762.⁵⁰ Twelve years later, in early December 1774, Andrew named John Archibald as co-executor of his estate.⁵¹

In addition to the influential Hall family, the Archibalds also enjoyed a relationship with members of the extensive Reed clan. Originating along the border between the Pennsylvania counties of Chester and Lancaster, by mid-1753 members of the Reed family had established themselves in the region between the Catawba and the South Yadkin.⁵² There, Alexander, the family's patriarch, settled on a Granville grant of six hundred and sixty acres along the north side of Fourth Creek. To Alexander's south, below Fourth Creek, resided his son Samuel, a cordwainer, while a second son, Andrew, dwelt to the north beyond Fifth Creek. By 1768 increasing prosperity had allowed the elder Reed, along with sons Samuel, John and Andrew, to enter the ranks of Rowan County's slave owners.⁵³ Ten years later, with an estate valued at £1760, John Reed was among the ten wealthiest men in the area north of the South Yadkin between Snow and Rocky Creeks.⁵⁴ Immediately ahead of him was his brother George, the sixth most affluent man in this area. Both brothers, however, were less well-to-do than their brother Andrew, whose estate was valued at £2392.⁵⁵

Andrew Reed, like William Morrison, Sr., was a man of influence in his immediate neighborhood. A silversmith, in mid-January 1763 he opened a grist mill at his home on Fifth Creek.⁵⁶ Three months later, recognizing the growing importance of Reed's mill, Rowan County's Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions sought to link the area surrounding it with the main road running south from Salisbury to Charles Town, South Carolina.⁵⁷ This road, laid off in part by William Archibald and Reed's brother Samuel, not only brought neighbors together, both figuratively and literally, but ushered in the prosperity reaped by Andrew Reed. The new road opened additional markets for the flour produced by millers such as Reed, more and more of which found its way to the grain collection center established at Camden, South Carolina.⁵⁸

On 9 January 1765, Andrew Reed rose further in local prominence when Rowan's justices appointed him overseer for the roads in the area between Fourth Creek and the South Yadkin. Nine years later, the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions again entrusted Reed with a supervisory position, naming him, along with William Simonton, to "nominate Taxables" to work on the road leading from Fort Dobbs to near Salisbury.⁵⁹ As such, Reed was responsible for the maintenance of existing roads within his district and the construction of new ones. Although the position of road overseer, according to Marvin L. Michael Kay and William S.

⁵⁰ Rowan Deeds, IV, 725. See also Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 97.

⁵¹ Rowan Wills, A:247.

⁵² Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 68-69. See also Rowan Deeds, I, 19.

⁵³ Linn, "Lists of Taxables in Rowan County, 1768," 203-204.

⁵⁴ Rowan County, 1778 List of Taxables, NCDAH.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Rowan Court Min., 13 January 1763. See also Rowan Deeds, VIII, 103.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 13 April 1763.

⁵⁸ For a discussion of the growing importance wheat and flour to the economy of North Carolina and its Backcountry, see Harry Roy Merrens, *Colonial North Carolina in the Eighteenth Century; A Study in Historical Geography* (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1964), 111-119. See also Joseph A. Ernst and H. Roy Merrens, "'Camden's turrets pierce the skies!': The Urban Process in the Southern Colonies during the Eighteenth Century," *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, XXX (1973), 561-562.

⁵⁹ Rowan Court Min., 5 August 1774.

Price, Jr., contained less stature than that held by road jurymen like Reed's brother Samuel, it nevertheless earned Andrew Reed increased respect among his neighbors.⁶⁰

The families which constituted Bethany, such as the Halls, Kings, Archibalds, and Reeds, held few ties, either of friendship or of kinship, with their coreligionists to the west and south. Although worshipping together in Fourth Creek meeting house prior to the 1775 split of the congregation, those persons living between Snow Creek and Fifth Creek had little contact with the settlers below Fifth Creek. This failure to develop bonds with residents to their south quite probably can be attributed to the very factor which aided Andrew Reed in his rise to prosperity: the road. In addition to the path opened from Reed's mill in 1763, another highway connected members of Bethany congregation residing north of the South Yadkin in the Rocky Creek area with the road leading north from Salisbury towards the region known as the Forks of the Yadkin.⁶¹ Laid out in late 1772, this trail quite probably joined the earlier road leading to Reed's mill, which departed from the Forks road at the ford on Second Creek. Both roads served to facilitate contact within the bounds of the new congregation. Only Sherrill's Path tied the members of the new church to persons worshipping at Fourth Creek and Concord meeting houses. In existence since the early 1750's, Sherrill's Path effected only a few of those belonging to Bethany as it ran through the western periphery of the new church's bounds.⁶²

The network of roads which served the region surrounding Bethany not only promoted friendships and marriages within the congregation as access between its members improved, but also brought prosperity to these same people. In addition to Andrew Reed and William Sharpe, both of whom operated gristmills, the congregation also boasted a sawmill owner, David Caldwell, among its ranks. Caldwell, like Reed and Sharpe, quite probably profited from his proximity to a road. Located near the path laid out in 1772 from Rocky Creek to Fifth Creek, Caldwell's sawmill was operational by early May of 1774.⁶³ Four years later, in 1778, the value of Caldwell's estate ranked ninth among the members of Bethany recognizable in the tax list for that year.⁶⁴

In addition to Sharpe, Reed, and Caldwell, all of whom possessed estates valued well over £1000, Bethany also included a number of prosperous tradesmen. Two of these, Thomas Hall and Andrew Morrison, resided as neighbors along the north branch of Fifth Creek. Hall, a weaver, was the oldest son of James Hall, Sr.⁶⁵ To his west lived Morrison, a wheelwright.⁶⁶

The son of mill owner William Morrison, Sr., Andrew Morrison enjoyed close ties to two of Bethany's families, those of Robert King and William Archibald, Jr. Sometime prior to October 1765 his sister, Mary, had wed King. Morrison's ties to William Archibald, Jr., unlike his bonds to King, did not involve kinship. During the summer of 1774, when faced with a family crisis involving the care of his brother Hugh, a "Lunatic," Morrison turned to his friend, Archibald, for assistance.⁶⁷ On 4 August Archibald, willing to help his associate, appeared

⁶⁰ Kay and Price, "To Ride the Wood Mare," 374.

⁶¹ Rowan Court Min., 4 November 1772. The new road was to lead south from a ridge separating the landholdings of John Cowden and William McConnell and connect with the Fork Road at or above the ford on Second Creek. From Fifth Creek south this trail merely followed the course of that laid out in early 1763.

⁶² *Heritage of Iredell*, 6.

⁶³ Rowan Court Min., 4 May 1774.

⁶⁴ Rowan 1778 Tax List. Caldwell's estate was valued at £1999.

⁶⁵ *Heritage of Iredell*, 304. See also Rowan Deeds, IV, 729.

⁶⁶ James H. Craig, *The Arts and Crafts in North Carolina* (Winston-Salem, N. C., 1965), 154.

⁶⁷ Rowan Court Min., 4 August 1774.

before Rowan's justices and presented himself as security for Andrew Morrison, Hugh Morrison's intended guardian.

The prosperity realized by Morrison and Thomas Hall also touched other craftsmen in the Bethany congregation. Joseph Wasson, Jr., who resided near Sherrill's Path to the southwest of Morrison and Hall, possessed an estate valued at £1053, well below that of his artisan neighbors.⁶⁸ Despite this, the young cordwainer held few reservations about purchasing items, such as "6 China plates," which would impart status to his household.⁶⁹ In this respect, Joseph Wasson, Jr., was little different from his grandfather, Archibald Wasson, also a shoemaker. Originally from Chester County, Pennsylvania's Fallowfield Township, during the early 1760's the elder Wasson established himself along Grant's Creek in Rowan County's Irish Settlement.⁷⁰ By 1768 he had moved from his landholdings there to the area north of the South Yadkin River. During the early 1770's, Archibald Wasson, although possessing an estate valued far below that of either his grandson or son Joseph, sought to acquire several status-granting items. Like his grandson's purchase of fragile "China plates," Archibald Wasson invested in an equally breakable tea set, spending the extravagant sum of seven shillings. Equally lavish was his purchase of a "barselonia" neckerchief for himself, which, at the price of ten shillings, cost far more than the checked and printed neck cloths which adorned his neighbors.⁷¹

While growing prosperous as a result of the expanding road network in their midst, the inhabitants of the area surrounding the South Yadkin turned their thoughts toward the education of their children. Sometime in 1774 James Hall, Jr. newly returned from the College of New Jersey at Princeton, opened a classical academy between the South Yadkin and Snow Creek. Taking the name of Clio's Nursery of Arts and Sciences, the school offered its pupils "the study of Greek, Latin, and English Belle Letters, Geography, Algebra, Practical Surveying, and the principles of Navigation."⁷² Given his later interest in education, William Sharpe undoubtedly assisted Hall with his curriculum, quite probably leading the classes on "Practical Surveying."⁷³ Largely supported by the Sharpe, Hall, King and Reed families of Bethany, Clio's Nursery also drew upon their coreligionists to the west at Concord meeting house. James Guy, Sr., who lived near the headwaters of Fourth Creek, enrolled his son Joseph in the academy while James Adams, an elder for Concord, assisted Hall and Sharpe in teaching at Clio's.⁷⁴

The "Old House": Fourth Creek Church and the Region's Pioneering Families

As indicated by the inclusion of members of Concord meeting house among the students of Clio's Nursery, Bethany did not stand completely apart from the other Presbyterian congregations in the region. Bonds existed which tied a few of Bethany's communicants with members of the parent congregation at Fourth Creek. In early April 1764 two members of

⁶⁸ Rowan 1778 Tax List. On the Wooten and Marschner transcript of the William Sharpe map, Joseph Wasson is identified as "Jas. Wasson."

⁶⁹ Store ledger, John Nisbet Papers.

⁷⁰ Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 123. See also Rowan Deeds, V, 486 and VII, 365.

⁷¹ Store ledger, John Nisbet Papers. The Oxford English Dictionary identifies barcelona as a handkerchief or neckerchief made of twilled silk. "Barselonia" neckerchiefs were sold by merchant Nesbit at ten shillings, well above the four shillings that would buy two "Stampt" neckerchiefs or the three shillings needed to purchase two neck cloths made of checked cloth.

⁷² *Heritage of Iredell*, 65-66.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 476.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 65. See also, Keever, *Iredell*, 82.

Bethany, James Hall and William Archibald, Jr., witnessed the transfer between James Mordah and his son John of three hundred acres on Fifth Creek's south fork. A native of either Donegal or Derry Township in Pennsylvania's Lancaster County, by late March 1755 James Mordah had established himself along Fifth Creek.⁷⁵ Following the division of the mother church in 1775, the households of two of Mordah's sons, John and William, stood within the bounds of the Fourth Creek meeting house. Indeed, John Mordah, who resided on Bear Branch to the immediate south of his father, became one of Fourth Creek's elders after the partition.⁷⁶ The friendship which existed between John Mordah and William Archibald, Jr., extended to include Mordah's brother William. On 29 August 1764 William Mordah called upon Archibald to witness his purchase from John Fleming of land on Third Creek.⁷⁷

In addition to James Hall's friendship with members of the Mordah family, the Halls enjoyed a bond with one of Fourth Creek's most ardent supporters, Fergus Sloan, through the marriage of their son Thomas to Sloan's daughter Elizabeth. Characterized as a "landless itinerant" from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania's Salsbury Township, in 1755 Sloan purchased six hundred and forty acres near Fourth Creek.⁷⁸ This tract was to yield two of the most enduring features of the early Fourth Creek Settlement: Fort Dobbs and the meeting house. On 7 January 1758 Sloan deeded three quarters of an acre to Robert Simonton, Thomas Allison, Samuel Thornton, Patrick Duffie, and William Simonton for the "use and Benefit of the Presbyterian Society, commonly called the Fourth Creek Congregation Society."⁷⁹ Eleven days later, Luke Dean, a witness to the transaction between Sloan, his wife and the congregation's trustees, appeared before Rowan County's Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions to offer proof of the affair.⁸⁰

Like Bethany, the Fourth Creek congregation consisted of a number of extended families such as the Mordahs and Fergus Sloan, all of whom retained their membership in the parent church following its partition. To the northeast of the meeting house and Sloan dwelt the Simonton, Allison, Thornton and McKee families, all interrelated. During the early 1750's Theophilus Simonton, a former resident of manor Township in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, and two of his sons, Robert and William, established themselves above the forks of Fourth Creek.⁸¹

Like those of a biblical patriarch, the scattered households of Theophilus Simonton's family surrounded him. Nearby resided one of Simonton's sons-in-law, Thomas Allison. Originating either in London Britain Township of southeastern Chester County, Pennsylvania, or along the border between Chester and its western neighbor, Lancaster County, by 1748 Allison had wed Simonton's daughter Magdalene.⁸² To the east of Thomas dwelt a second son-in-law, Andrew Allison of Colerain Township along the Lancaster-Chester County border, who married

⁷⁵ Rowan Deeds, II, 64. See also Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 98.

⁷⁶ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 324.

⁷⁷ Rowan Deeds, VI, 37.

⁷⁸ Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 100.

⁷⁹ Rowan Deeds, II, 258.

⁸⁰ Rowan Court Min., 18 January 1758.

⁸¹ Rowan Wills, A:157.

⁸² "Allison" folder, McCubbins Collection. Although information in the McCubbins Collection incorrectly gives the surname of Allison's wife as Neil, the couple's first child, Theophilus, was born in 1748. See also Rowan Wills, A:146.

Ann Simonton prior to 1747.⁸³ In June 1753, following the creation of Rowan County, Andrew Allison and Robert Simonton became justices for the new county's Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions. On the seventeenth of that month, Thomas Allison's kinsmen used their influence among their fellow magistrates to secure his appointment as constable for the settlement growing up around Third and Fourth Creeks.⁸⁴ A third son-in-law, Samuel Thornton of Chester County's Bradford Township, established himself to the north of Theophilus Simonton prior to the spring of 1757.⁸⁵

The households of Simonton's own sons, Robert and William, stood, respectively, to the west and south of their father. In June 1753 Robert, who was both a tavernkeeper and surveyor, added the office of road commissioner to his growing list of titles.⁸⁶ Like his brother, William Simonton also enjoyed a fair amount of local prestige. The owner of two slaves in 1759, William had doubled his slaveholdings by 1768.⁸⁷ The owner of four taxable blacks, the size of William Simonton's slaveholdings was approached only by his neighbor to the west, William Watt, who also owned four Africans. In terms of slave ownership, both men stood above their neighbors, the majority of whom owned no more than two bondsmen. Ten years later, in 1778, William Simonton stood at the pinnacle of wealth in the region bounded by Third and Fifth Creeks with an estate valued at £5678.⁸⁸ A portion of this wealth undoubtedly derived from the landholdings William, the "dutiful son," inherited from his father.⁸⁹ Sometime after 1760 William, then aged forty-three, married the daughter of his neighbor, the widow Margaret McKee, a "newcomer" from Lancaster County's Derry Township.⁹⁰

In addition to the Simonton brothers, affinal ties bound William Watt to the Allison family. The son-in-law of James Allison of Donegal Township, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, Watt married Jean Allison, presumably a sister or close relative of Thomas and Andrew Allison.⁹¹ In late 1749 the twenty-seven year old Watt and his younger brother, James, accompanied their Allison kinsmen to North Carolina. Settling well to the west of the Allisons, William Watt established himself near the path running northwards from Sherrill's Ford on the Catawba to the Yadkin River's Shallow Ford.⁹² Watt's brother James received grants on Third Creek and settled southwest of his brother. Like his brother William, James Watt entered the ranks of Rowan County's slaveholders, owning one African by 1768.⁹³ Following the separation of Fourth Creek into its various congregations in 1775, both brothers remained members of the parent church.

Well to the south of the Simontons and their kin dwelt two more interconnected clans who retained their membership in Fourth Creek meeting house, the Steel and Chambers families. By early March 1762 Robert Steel, formerly of New London Township in Chester County,

⁸³ Leonard Allison Morrison, History of Alison or Allison Family in Europe and America (Boston, 1893), 159.

⁸⁴ Rowan Court Min., 17 June 1753.

⁸⁵ Ramsey, Carolina Cradle, 98. See also Rowan Deeds, II, 130, and Rowan Wills, A:146.

⁸⁶ Rowan Court Min., 10 October 1754. The securities for Robert Simonton's ordinary were his brother-in-law, Andrew Allison, and James Carter. All three were among Rowan County's first justices of the peace. See also Heritage of Iredell, 487.

⁸⁷ Linn, "Lists of Taxables in Rowan County, 1768," 203.

⁸⁸ Rowan 1778 Tax List.

⁸⁹ Rowan Wills, A:157.

⁹⁰ Heritage of Iredell, 488.

⁹¹ Ibid., 537.

⁹² Ibid., 6.

⁹³ Linn, "Lists of Taxables in Rowan County, 1768," 204.

Pennsylvania, had made his home to the north of Third Creek.⁹⁴ A schoolmaster, Steel possibly assisted in teaching at the classical academy opened in 1760 to his south at the home of Alexander Osborne on the upper reaches of Rocky River.⁹⁵ To Steel's southwest resided Henry Chambers. By March 1754 Chambers, originally from Prince Georges County, Maryland, had settled along Third Creek. On 12 March 1770 the two families would be united through the marriage of Steel's son Ninian to Chambers' daughter Elizabeth.⁹⁶ Eleven days prior to his wedding, Ninian Steel, sensing the responsibilities involved in starting a family, purchased two hundred acres along Third Creek from Robert Chambers, soon to become his brother-in-law. Either Henry Chambers or his son Henry witnessed the land transfer.⁹⁷ Both families enjoyed ties to a third Fourth Creek family, the Beards. On 26 July 1771 Robert Steel and Henry Chambers witnessed the purchase by William Beard of four hundred and fifty acres of land along Fourth Creek from Samuel Reed.⁹⁸

Like their coreligionists at Bethany, the Fourth Creek parishioners sought to provide an education for their youth. In South Carolina Charles Woodmason, an itinerant and highly bigoted Anglican minister, found that "Ignorance and Impudence is so very high, as to be past bearing" among the Back Settlers there.⁹⁹ Differing from the Dissenters in the neighboring colony, several members of Fourth Creek's congregation attempted to give their children a rudimentary education. Between late 1771 and the mid-1770's, Andrew McKinsey, an elder of the church, and at least two other members of the congregation trekked northward along Sherrill's Path to purchase spelling books from the store operated by John Nesbit.¹⁰⁰

Although a schoolmaster, Robert Steel, lived in their midst, Fourth Creek's members failed to create a formal academy such as Clio's Nursery. Instead, some families, like the McKinseys apparently chose to teach their children themselves, the parents relying on their own limited education to assist them in this undertaking. Supplementing the spelling books Andrew McKinsey purchased was a small library apparently located at the meeting house. Like other Presbyterian congregations, Fourth Creek maintained a small collection of books, primarily of a religious nature, to use in instructing the church's youth.¹⁰¹ Other reading material used as teaching aids could be found in the homes of many of the parishioners themselves. John Nesbit's store, the source of McKinsey's spelling books, also stocked the catechisms, testaments, and Bibles purchased by Fourth Creek's Moses Nesbit and Robert Stevenson.¹⁰² Through the use of

⁹⁴ Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 123.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 190. In 1762 Steel, who identified himself as a schoolmaster, purchased one hundred acres along the north side of Third Creek. See Rowan Deeds, VI, 81.

⁹⁶ Rowan Marriage Bonds.

⁹⁷ Rowan Deeds, VII, 466.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 432.

⁹⁹ Woodmason, *Carolina Backcountry*, 52.

¹⁰⁰ Store ledger, John Nisbet Papers. McKinsey's estate was valued at £325:0:0 in 1778, placing him among the least wealthy families in his tax district. See Rowan 1778 Tax List. Despite the low value of his estate, McKinsey sought to educate his progeny while providing his household with objects of status such as the "Delph plate" he purchased on 12 September 1771.

¹⁰¹ Although residing well to the south of the meeting house, John Sloan of Coddle Creek mentions his books in the "New Fourth Creek Library" in his will, dated 7 August 1779. Similarly, in 1793 Samuel Young, who resided along the lower reaches of Third Creek, refers to his share of books in Cathey's library, presumably Thyatira (Cathey's) Meeting House. According to Robert Ramsey, the library at Thyatira Presbyterian Church was in existence as early as 1765. See Rowan Wills, C:212 and D:250; Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 190. For a listing of Young's personal library, which stood at nearly one hundred volumes at the time of his death, see Ruple, *History of Rowan*, 161-162.

¹⁰² Store ledger, John Nisbet Papers.

these materials, the members of Fourth Creek, as did other Presbyterians, created a high rate of literacy among their offspring. Indeed, David Hackett Fischer, in his study of North Britons in the Southern Backcountry, has found that by the mid-eighteenth century the Borderers had achieved an amazing literacy rate which approached eighty percent.¹⁰³ This achievement is even more astounding considering that, from “the annual length of school sessions in the backcountry, they [the children of these Border immigrants] received only a few weeks of formal education during their entire lives.”¹⁰⁴

Although Fourth Creek shared Bethany’s concern for the enlightenment of its youth, the parent church differed from its offspring in that the majority of its members could trace their lineage to the pioneering families which established themselves between Fifth Creek and the Catawba prior to 1762. Of the sixty-two families which resided in the region between the Catawba and the South Yadkin by 1762, twelve remained attached to Fourth Creek meeting house. By comparison, only five of these early households can be positively identified with the Bethany congregation thirteen years later.¹⁰⁵

Participation in the initial settlement of the region between the Catawba and the South Yadkin Rivers carried with it a prestige which did not extend to later settlers. On 14 January 1760 Robert Allison, the recipient of a 1752 grant of land by the Earl of Granville, sold four hundred and eighty acres along Fourth Creek to “Newcomer” Margaret McKee.¹⁰⁶ Three years later, in early November of 1763, William McLelland, another “newcomer,” purchased six hundred acres on Fourth Creek from George Reed, who, seven years earlier, had established himself in the region.¹⁰⁷ By the late 1760’s this tendency to stigmatize recent arrivals had, conceivably, been embraced by onetime newcomers like McLelland. Nowhere, however, was this pride in being an early householder more evident than in the epitaph chosen in 1771 by William Morrison, Sr., who wished to be remembered as the “first Inhabiter of the country.”¹⁰⁸

Accompanying the prestige inherent in belonging to the first families of the region was the tendency for these pioneers to furnish the bulk of local office holders. Well after the land north of Fifth Creek filled with new settlers, constables for the neighborhood continued to be drawn from families who had established themselves in the vicinity by 1765. In addition to the hold on the constabulary exerted by the early settlers, a territorial grasp upon the office also existed. Between 1753 and 1774, Rowan County’s court drew heavily upon the inhabitants residing south of Fifth Creek, which would mark the northern boundary of Fourth Creek congregation after 1775, for the area’s constables.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰³ Fischer, *Albion’s Seed*, 716. Although Fischer credits the Scotch-Irish of the Backcountry as being highly literate by period standards, he errs in assuming that their reading preferences were “remarkably secular (718).” The studies of eighteenth century North Carolina libraries Fischer bases this conclusion upon deal with the eastern counties of Edgecombe and Bertie, areas well outside the boundaries of the Backcountry. For a differing account of Backcountry reading tastes, see Elizabeth Cometti “Some Early Best Sellers in Piedmont North Carolina,” *The Journal of Southern History*, XVI (1950), 324-337.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 722.

¹⁰⁵ The families who retained their membership in Fourth Creek Church were James Mordah, John Mordah, William Watt, Robert Simonton, William Simonton, James Watt, William Stevenson, Samuel Thornton, John Fleming, Fergus Sloan, Thomas Allison, Andrew Allison. Those who moved their membership to Bethany Meeting House following its creation were James Hall, Thomas Hall, Hugh Hall, George Reed and Andrew Reed.

¹⁰⁶ Rowan Deeds, IV, 209.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, V, 421 .

¹⁰⁸ Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 66.

¹⁰⁹ Constables from the area south of Fifth Creek were Thomas Allison (1753), William Watt (1755 and 1764), Henry Chambers (1759), James Mordah (1762), William Simonton (1765), William Stevenson (1767),

Prior to 1768, only one constable had been sufficient for the section between the Catawba River and the lower reaches of Third Creek, but in that year the county's justices split the region. Beginning in 1768 Rowan County's Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions chose two constables, one for the territory west of Fort Dobbs and another for the territory lying east of the fort, to patrol the neighborhood. Even with this division, the pioneering families continued to enjoy their hold upon the office.¹¹⁰ For Fourth Creek parishioners such as William Watt, Thomas Allison, William Simonton, and Samuel Thornton, their elevation to the constabulary may have rested on their kinship to members of the court. Indeed, all could trace a kinship, either familial or affinal, to justices Robert Simonton and Andrew Allison.¹¹¹ Yet another magistrate who possibly influenced the appointment of these men as constables was Walter Lindsay, a justice for the area surrounding Fort Dobbs through early 1772. Believed to be a resident of the Third Creek valley, Lindsay held ties of friendship to Fergus Sloan and was also acquainted with Nicholas McLelland.¹¹² Both men served as constables for the area east of Fort Dobbs during Lindsay's tenure as justice, McLelland in 1769 and Sloan in 1771. Through these bonds of comradery and kinship, members of Fourth Creek meeting house dominated local office holding at the expense of the newcomers, such as William Sharpe, to their north.

Not only did the two congregations differ in their percentage of first families, they also differed in their distribution of wealth. In the Rowan County tax list for 1778, the median value of twelve households identified as belonging to Fourth Creek stood at £1671, somewhat lower than the median of £1806 belonging to Bethany's communicants.¹¹³ This lower prosperity among Fourth Creek's members may lie behind the decision of parishioners like Andrew McKinsey to educate their children at home rather than raise a subscription to support a classical

Nicholas McLelland (1769), Patrick Duffie (1769), Fergus Sloan (1771), William Beard (1772), Samuel Thornton (1773), John McLelland (1773), and Hugh Bowman (1774). The families residing to the north of Fifth Creek contributed William Archibald (1756), James Hall (1757), James Roseborough (1761), John Dobbins (1768), and David Andrew (1770) to the constabulary.

¹¹⁰ Although the territory between the South Yadkin River and Third Creek experienced a population surge around 1765 as several new families moved into the area, these newcomers were unable to wrench control of local offices from the hands of the pioneering settlers. Even after the creation of a second constable for the district, an event which reflects the growing number of inhabitants within this region, constables continued to be chosen from older, established families. Noticeably absent from the ranks of constables are newcomers such as William Sharpe or Robert King, both of whom established themselves in the vicinity during the late 1760's.

¹¹¹ With the exception of Thomas Allison, each of the remaining three men could trace kinship to Andrew Allison through marriage. Andrew Allison's wife, Ann Simonton Allison, was the sister of William Simonton as was Samuel Thornton's wife, Mary Simonton Thornton. William Watt was either a brother-in-law to Andrew Allison or a close kinsman by marriage. Thomas Allison was Andrew Allison's brother,

¹¹² Rowan Deeds, VII, 12 and 77.

¹¹³ Rowan 1778 Tax list. At either end of the scale of wealth for Fourth Creek were William Watt, with an estate valued at £3535:2:0, and David Beard, £192:3:5. Less prosperous than either his brother William or son David, Jr., the elder David Beard felt compelled, despite his poverty, to bequeath a sum to Fourth Creek Meeting House as directed in his will of late September 1785. Bethany's two extremes in prosperity were marked by Robert Hardin (£3878) and Robert Smith (£265). Merchant John Nesbit of Bethany, owning an estate worth £5516, and Robert and William Simonton of Fourth Creek (£4163:1:0 and £5678:16:8, respectively) were excluded from calculating the median for the two congregations because their wealth placed them far above their most affluent neighbors. Indeed, the prosperity exhibited by Nesbit and the Simonton brothers is somewhat anomalous when compared to that of the mill owners, William Sharpe (£2496) and William Morrison, Jr. (£1141). The estate of sawmill operator David Caldwell stood at £1999 while that of miller and silversmith Andrew Reed was valued at £2392. Similarly, the household worth of blacksmith John Dobbin, owner of at least two slaves and who, unlike his neighbors, seems to have paid for his purchases at Nesbit's store in cash (including £2:0:0 "specie gold"), was reckoned at £3403. See Store ledger, John Nisbet Papers and Rowan Wills, B:51.

academy and its attendant faculty. Two factors, the economy of the area and the lack of a road network, created this situation of lowered wealth.

Fourth Creek, unlike Bethany, remained largely agrarian. Farmers, such as John Mordah, rather than tradesmen were characteristic of its membership. While Bethany boasted weavers, cordwainers, a wheelwright, one sawmill and two grist mill owners among its parishioners, Fourth Creek could muster only a tailor, cooper, and blacksmith.¹¹⁴ Roads, which brought prosperity through contact with market areas, bypassed the few craftsmen associated with Fourth Creek. Although the bounds of the congregation were bisected by Sherrill's Path, which connected the Catawba River settlers with the Great Wagon Road at the Yadkin's Shallow Ford, an east-west highway linking the area with Salisbury did not exist until late in the congregation's history. On 4 November 1772 Rowan's magistrates called upon John Mordah and William Simonton to assist several of the settlers residing near the South Yadkin and along the Fifth Creek watershed to layout a road leading from Cooper's Ford to Fort Dobbs and then on to Kerr's Bridge in the Irish Settlement.¹¹⁵ Other than this track, along with Sherrill's Path and another early trail leading westwards along Third Creek to William Morrison's mill, the region surrounding Fourth Creek meeting house remained devoid of roads.

Despite their lower wealth and the limited access provided by the few roads running through their midst, members of the Fourth Creek congregation were as covetous of status granting objects as the settlers living north of Fifth Creek. Much like the less prosperous residents of Middlesex County, Virginia, studied by Darrett and Anita Rutman, the parishioners of Fourth Creek sought to acquire "amenities that made merely getting by more comfortable."¹¹⁶ These Virginians, the Rutmans contend, turned to purchasing frills after finding themselves barred from making "productive investments," such as slaves, which would have enabled them to "get on in the world."¹¹⁶

Lacking the means to purchase African slaves, the farmers worshipping at Fourth Creek, like their counterparts in Tidewater Virginia, endeavored to secure worldly goods for their households.¹¹⁷ James Mordah, who proudly referred to himself as a "farmer" when drawing up his will in 1774, purchased six tea spoons and a set of tea cups from Nesbit's store.¹¹⁸ Similarly, John McLelland, Jr., whose estate in 1778 was valued at under £1000, bought one wine glass, a set of tea cups and a bowl, possibly a slops bowl used in tea ceremonies, from Nesbit.¹¹⁹ Through their purchase of fragile tea sets, both men sought to bask in the stature imparted by their new acquisitions. Rodis Roth, in her study of tea drinking in colonial America, has found that "in America as in England...a certain amount of prestige was associated with the

¹¹⁴ William Stevenson was reportedly apprenticed to a tailor as a young man while living in Ulster's County Antrim. To Stevenson's north, near the Middle Branch of Fourth Creek, lived William McLelland. In early May 1774 McLelland agreed to take the orphaned John McCloud as an apprentice in the cooper's trade. Living well to the southeast of Stevenson was John Knox, the son of John and Jean Gracy Knox of nearby Thyatira Presbyterian Church. On 24 February 1764 the younger Knox, a blacksmith, purchased six hundred acres south of Third Creek from James Stewart. See *Heritage of Iredell*, 500; Rowan Court Min., 4 May 1774; and Rowan Deeds, V, 544.

¹¹⁵ Rowan Court Min., 4 November 1772. A possibility exists that this road, from the vicinity of Fort Dobbs to the Irish Settlement, may have followed an earlier path carved out of the wilderness when the fort was built during the mid-1750's. By 1775 the trackway leading west from Third Creek to William Morrison, Jr.'s mill had acquired the designation "the provincial road."

¹¹⁶ Rutman and Rutman, *Place in Time*, 192.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*

¹¹⁸ Store ledger, John Nisbet Papers. See Rowan Wills, A:191.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*. See also Rowan 1778 Tax list.

[possession of tea] equipage.”¹²⁰ Accompanying this prestige was the ritual etiquette involved in taking tea. These unspoken rules surround the tea ceremony, which were not unknown in the Southern Backcountry, served to further distance men like Mordah and McLelland from their uninitiated, and less acquisitive, neighbors. Indeed, their preference for tea marked the two as apart from those who considered the drink as “only slops, which...were designed only for people of quality, who do not labor, or the sick.”¹²¹

Concord Church: Independence Resulting From Isolation

As the area north of the Fourth Creek church grew in population and prosperity following the mid-1760's, Fourth Creek itself stagnated, bypassed by roads and new settlers. A similar fate befell the area along the headwaters of Third Creek west of the meeting house. This area, which would fall within the bounds of Concord meeting house following its creation in 1775, also contained a number of families who had established themselves in the region prior to 1762. Predominant among these settlers was James Morrison, a brother of mill owner William Morrison, Sr.

Originally a resident of Drumore Township in Pennsylvania's Lancaster County, during the early 1750's James Morrison accompanied his brothers William and Andrew to North Carolina.¹²² There, he settled west of William Morrison on Third Creek. By 1773 the households of James Morrison's sons, like those of Theophilus Simonton, surrounded his landholdings. To the northwest dwelt son William, connected by marriage to the Mordah family far to the east.¹²³ Additional ties to the families residing to the east of the Morrisons along Fourth Creek existed through the marriage of a second son, Andrew, and a daughter, Sarah, to members of the Potts family.¹²⁴

Unlike his brothers, Thomas Morrison, turned to the family of one of his more immediate neighbors, James Woods, for a bride, marrying Martha Woods on 6 December 1769.¹²⁵ Three years later, through the assistance of Morrison's parents, the young couple established themselves across Third Creek from Morrison's father. Following the creation of Concord meeting house, Thomas Morrison, whose estate barely exceeded in value the median for the area lying between the Catawba and South Yadkin Rivers, began to emerge as a leader in the new church.¹²⁶ James Morrison, Jr., like his brother, also looked to the families residing west of

¹²⁰ Rodris Roth, “Tea-Drinking in Eighteenth-Century America: Its Etiquette and Equipage,” *Material Life in America, 1600-1860*, edited by Robert Blair St. George (Boston, 1988), 441.

¹²¹ Joseph Doddridge, *Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars of the Western Parts of Virginia & Pennsylvania* (New York, 1977 reprint of 1824 edition), 112.

¹²² Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 65.

¹²³ William Mann Morrison, *The Morrison-Williams Register* (Atlanta, 1977), 18.

¹²⁴ *Heritage of Iredell*, 416. Quite probably by mid-October 1768, Sarah Morrison had taken James Potts, the son of Henry Potts, as her husband. On 18 February of that year Andrew Morrison married Margaret Potts, the daughter of Henry Potts' brother, Moses. Seven years later, in mid-January 1775, the bonds tying Andrew Morrison to the Potts family would lead Henry Potts to name Morrison as one of the executors of his estate. By 18 October 1768 Henry Potts had established an independent household, quite probably to the northwest of his father near the South Yadkin River. See Linn, “Lists of Taxables in Rowan County, 1768,” 204; Morrison, *Morrison-Williams Register*, 16; *Heritage of Iredell*, 448; and Rowan Wills, A:197.

¹²⁵ Rowan Marriage Bonds.

¹²⁶ Rowan 1778 Tax list. Morrison's estate was valued at L1332 in 1778. The median for his district (“Capt Purviance's”) was £1314, with its upper and lower ends represented by Allen Alexander (£2730) and Thomas Punch (£101).

Fourth Creek meeting house for his mate. On 25 October 1772 he wed Eleanor Snoddy, whose father, Samuel Snoddy, dwelt to the west of the Morrisons along Elk Shoals Creek.¹²⁷

Also residing along Elk Shoals Creek was Allen Alexander, a close associate of the elder James Morrison. Quite possibly a former resident of Cecil County, Maryland, by 1755 Alexander was living in the North Carolina Backcountry. Like James Morrison's son William, Allen Alexander enjoyed strong ties to the Fourth Creek congregation's Mordah family through his marriage to Nancy Mordah.¹²⁸ A onetime constable for the area from the Catawba River to Fort Dobbs, by 1778 Allen Alexander had risen to the pinnacle of wealth in his district with an estate valued at £2730.¹²⁹

Separated from Alexander by the South Iredell Ridge was his kinsman by marriage, Robert Mordah, who lived on the upper reaches of Third Creek. More than geography, however divided the two. Mordah, far less wealthy than either of his brothers-in-law, in 1778 possessed an estate valued at a mere £645.¹³⁰ In this respect, Mordah differed little from his downstream neighbors, brothers William and James McKnight.

The sons of Hugh McKnight, the two young men left their home in the southwest corner of the Irish Settlement and moved to the Third Creek region between 1768 and 1773. There, they settled on land granted their grandfather, William McKnight, a maltster from Chester County, Pennsylvania's West Caln Township.¹³¹ Unable to establish households in the densely occupied Irish Settlement, the McKnight brothers, like many of the younger sons of other families living in the region, looked upon the vacant land lying to the west as a suitable place to settle and begin a family. That this was true seems highly probable in the case of James McKnight. On 10 December 1766 McKnight, a worker in one of the metal trades, married Sarah McKee, the daughter of Fourth Creek's Widow McKee.¹³²

Eight years later, James and Sarah McKnight, already distracted by the demands of their own young family, found themselves charged with the care of Agnes Williams, the orphan of James Williams. Called upon to watch over the child until her eighteenth birthday, the McKnights were not only responsible for Agnes Williams' welfare but were also bound to give their ward one cow and a calf, a spinning wheel and a Bible upon her reaching that age.¹³³ A similar burden was placed on William McKnight, who was to care for Agnes' sister, Rebecca. What problems these additions may have posed for the McKnight brothers can only be guessed at, but difficulties undoubtedly arose as the households of the two men were far from prosperous. By 1778 James McKnight's estate was valued at £563 while that of his brother, William, stood at £417.¹³⁴ Despite his low wealth, however, William McKnight emerged as one of the elders of Concord meeting house following its establishment in 1775.

Less prosperous than the settlers residing to their east, the families living along the headwaters of Third Creek found themselves handicapped by the lack of a road network running through the region. Not until March of 1770 would a trail link them to the area to their east. Even then, the road decreed by Rowan County's Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions would not tie families such as the McKnights to Salisbury but, instead, would connect them with the

¹²⁷ Morrison, *Morrison-Williams Register*, 18.

¹²⁸ *Heritage of Iredell*, 192. See Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 94.

¹²⁹ Rowan 1778 Tax list.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 122 and 210.

¹³² Rowan Marriage Bonds.

¹³³ Rowan Court Min., 3 August 1774.

¹³⁴ Rowan 1778 Tax list.

inhabitants of the South Yadkin and beyond.¹³⁵ Five years later, on 11 February 1775, Rowan's justices corrected this oversight and ordered a road to be laid out which ultimately led to the county seat. Connecting with the terminus of the "provincial road" from Salisbury at Morrison's mill on Third Creek, this new path led westwards beyond Third Creek's headwaters and crossed the branches of the Little River before reaching the "lime kilns" on the Catawba.¹³⁶

With these two roads came a marginal burst of industry. By 1775, William McKnight's neighbor, Joseph Steel, had erected a fulling mill beyond the Catawba.¹³⁷ In addition to Steel, the vicinity around Concord meeting house contained two other fullers, William Watt and George Erwin. In 1775 Watt, the son of James Watt of Fourth Creek congregation, emerged as one of the new church's elders. Like Watt's father, Erwin, a former resident of Chester County, Pennsylvania, had come to the region during the 1750's.¹³⁸ All three men undoubtedly realized a modicum of prosperity as they process the wool cloth produced by weavers such as William Waddel and David Hill who dwelt to their east.¹³⁹

A mutual dependency existed between these tradesmen and their neighbors. Just as Waddel and Hill depended on Steel, Watt and Erwin to process the cloth they produced at their looms, they in turn relied upon the husbandmen in their midst for the wool they turned into fabric. Like their coreligionists at Fourth Creek church to the east, the majority of the settlers living near the headwaters of Third Creek were farmers. By the early 1770's these yeomen were producing tallow in quantities large enough to be bartered for goods at the store operated by John Nesbit.¹⁴⁰ In addition to livestock such as sheep, these households, like those further downstream along Third Creek, also raised field crops such as corn, wheat and flax. Despite their willingness to venture into diversified crops, most of these farmers were far from prosperous and failed to amass estates valued at over £1000. Indeed, James Morrison, Sr., the owner at least one slave, stood well above his agrarian neighbors with an estate estimated at £1146.¹⁴¹

Lower wealth, however, did not hinder the residents of the upper Third Creek valley from acquiring amenities. On 28 March 1774 William White, who lived adjacent to the Morrison family, journeyed to Nesbit's store and purchased a silk hat priced at twenty shillings, well above the normal cost of £0:5:8 for a felt hat.¹⁴² Two months later, on 31 May, he again traveled to the store and purchased a second silk hat in addition to a toy for one of his children, a jew's-harp

¹³⁵ Rowan Court Min., 2 March 1770. The road was to lead northwards from Robert Mordah's home to John Frohock's mill on Hunting Creek.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 11 February 1775.

¹³⁷ Charles J. Preslar, Jr., *A History of Catawba County* (Salisbury, N. C., 1954), 177.

¹³⁸ Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 97. Erwin's profession has been deduced from his purchase of a pair of "Clothiers Cards" from Nesbit's store. These cards would have been used to dress, or full, woolen cloth. See Store ledger, John Nisbet Papers and Heritage of Iredell, 536.

¹³⁹ Rowan Deeds, VII, 343 and Rowan Wills, A:194. Hill may have also followed the tailor's trade as he purchased thimbles, papers of pins, needles, thread, sleeve buttons, and a "bolt [of] garters" from Nesbit, who lists "by Cash from the Taylor" among Hill's payments. Yet another weaver in the vicinity of the Catawba was Matthew Gasten, who resided on Elk Shoals Creek. On 3 August 1774 Gasten agreed to take James Williams' orphaned son, William, as his apprentice in the weaver's trade and to give the boy a loom upon William's reaching age twenty-one. The products of these weavers undoubtedly found their way, in small quantities, into John Nesbit's store. Francis Redman, who resided to the southwest of Hill, and Samuel Gamble, who, in 1778, dwelt within "Capt. Morrison's District" to the north of the South Yadkin River, were both credited by Nesbit for weaving, Gamble's products being "Linsy" and "shirting." See Rowan Court Min., 3 August 1774 and Store ledger, John Nisbet Papers.

¹⁴⁰ Store ledger, John Nisbet Papers.

¹⁴¹ Rowan 1778 Tax list.

¹⁴² Store ledger, John Nisbet Papers.

costing four pence. Four years later, in 1778, White's estate would be worth a mere £685, well below the £1475 attached to the property of his neighbor, James Morrison's son, Andrew.¹⁴³

White's purchases were not unusual as several of his neighbors sought out status granting items among the imported wares offered by John Nesbit. Possessing an estate valued slightly less than twice that of William White's, John Ireland also made extravagant purchases. A metal worker, on 20 April 1773 Ireland strode into the store and bought a scarlet cloak, quite probably intended for his wife, which cost twenty-eight shillings.¹⁴⁴ Like many of Nesbit's customers, Ireland did not immediately pay for the goods he purchased. Yet the amount of his debt, at a time when a skilled artisan could expect to earn about five shillings per day, indicates that John Ireland was very eager to spend money on expensive goods.¹⁴⁵ Further along the area's scale of wealth was James Purviance, one of Concord's elders, who invested in six fragile China plates to grace his table. Wealthier than Ireland, in 1778 Purviance's assets totaled £1755, some four hundred pounds above the region's median.¹⁴⁶ Neither man, however, approached the consumerism of Samuel Snoddy, a metal worker like Ireland. The third wealthiest man in his district, Snoddy purchased all the trappings required for taking tea.¹⁴⁷ Much like James Mordah and John McLelland, Jr., of Fourth Creek and Joseph Wasson, Jr., of Bethany, members of Concord meeting house hoped to derive prestige through their acquisition of material objects.

In addition to their acquisitiveness and agrarian lifestyle, Concord's parishioners shared one other trait -- the desire to educate their children at home -- with Fourth Creek's communicants. James Purviance, one of the church's elders, purchased both a spelling book and a primer from John Nesbit. Purviance's brother John also purchased educational material from the merchant, buying a spelling book in addition to a Bible and testament which could be used as reading aids.¹⁴⁸ Other members of the congregation, such as James Guy, one of James Purviance's neighbors, also crossed the open country between Third and Fourth Creeks to reach Nesbit's store. Although Guy would later send his son Joseph to attend Clio's Nursery following its establishment in 1774, he began his son's education at home using the primer bought from Nesbit.¹⁴⁹ Samuel Harris, an early settler of the Third Creek valley who probably came to the region from New Jersey, also shared this penchant for home education. An elder of the church, Harris, the area's second wealthiest man, purchased two large and two small slates from Nesbit to use in teaching his children how to write.¹⁵⁰

In addition to the educational materials purchased from John Nesbit, Concord's parents could turn to the church itself for reading matter. Like Fourth Creek, the new church maintained a small library of religious titles. Among the contributors to this athenaeum was David Hill, a weaver who, when writing out his will in 1774, expressed his desire that "his lot of books in the Public Library" be sold following his death.¹⁵¹ Despite Hill's wish to sell a portion of the

¹⁴³ Rowan 1778 Tax list.

¹⁴⁴ Store ledger, John Nisbet Papers.

¹⁴⁵ Kay and Price, "To Ride the Wood Mare," 403.

¹⁴⁶ Rowan 1778 Tax list. See Store ledger, John Nisbet Papers.

¹⁴⁷ Store ledger, John Nisbet Papers. Snoddy purchased a set of cups and saucers, a set of teaware, and six teaspoons from the merchant. In 1778 the value of Snoddy's estate stood at £2011, below that of Allen Alexander and Samuel Harris. See Rowan 1778 Tax list.

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.* Although Nesbit's ledger does not list the titles of the reading matter he stocked, it is possible that he, like the Johnston-Bennehan store in Orange County, sold copies of Thomas Dyche's *The Spelling Dictionary*. See Cometti, "Some Early Best Sellers," 333.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Rowan Wills, A:194.

collection, Concord's parishioners continued to maintain their library. Five years later, James Morrison, less willing to see his allotment of books in this collection scattered and sold than was Hill, directed that his wife Mary receive his "lot of books in the public library" upon his death.¹⁵²

The efforts of Hill and others to put together their library prior to the formal creation of Concord meeting house points toward an attitude of independence held by its communicants. Plagued by the lack of roads connecting them to the region to the east, the settlers along Third Creek's headwaters shared few bonds with their coreligionists worshipping at Fourth Creek. Aside from Robert Mordah, along with Allen Alexander and James Morrison's son William, both of whom were bound by affinal ties to the parent congregation's Mordah family, few of Concord's future parishioners enjoyed connections with the Presbyterians to the east. In addition to Mordah, William Morrison, and Alexander, two prospective members of Concord Church, James Purviance and John Stewart, could be counted among the friends of Henry Potts, who chose to become a member of Bethany following its creation in 1775.¹⁵³ A third settler, William McKnight, enjoyed a limited contact between the families of upper and lower Third Creek valley. During the fall of 1766, McKnight, a onetime constable for the region lying between the Catawba River and the western fringes of the Irish Settlement, sat with James Hall of Fifth Creek and Robert Tate, a resident of lower Third Creek, as a jurymen.¹⁵⁴

This lack of kinship and fraternal connections presumably led several of these western families to begin worshipping together prior to the 1775 division of Fourth Creek into three congregations.¹⁵⁵ Indeed this independence of the mother church seems to have existed from an early date. Prior to his death in the early 1750's, the Reverend John Thompson maintained a preaching "stand" at the home of James Morrison's brother, William Morrison, Sr., on upper Third Creek in addition to "stands" at Cathey's meeting house in the Irish Settlement and at Fourth Creek.¹⁵⁶ During the following twenty years, as the area lying east of Sherrill's Path between the South Yadkin River and the lower reaches of Third Creek grew in population and prosperity because of its road networks, the families to the west, along Third Creek's headwaters, drew together more tightly.

The independence created through isolation, however, did not separate the settlers of upper Third Creek from the inhabitants to their east doctrinally. Both of Fourth Creek's offshoots, Concord and Bethany meeting houses, adhered to the same tenets held by the mother church. Indeed, for several years following the division of Fourth Creek, all three congregations were served by the same minister, James Hall, Jr.¹⁵⁷ This situation led to strong ties between Hall, who resided near Bethany Church, and members of the two meeting houses to his west and south. At Concord, Hall enjoyed a close friendship with James Morrison, whose son Thomas was among the elders of the new congregation.¹⁵⁸ A similar bond existed between Hall and William

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, B:95.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, A:197. Potts named Purviance as a co-executor of his estate while Stewart acted as a witness to the signing of the will. Both men dwelt near Potts with Purviance residing on the north side of Fourth Creek's North Branch and Stewart living across the creek to Purviance's south. S. W. Stevenson, in his *History of Concord Church*. Iredell County. N. C.. 1775-1913 (Statesville, N. G., 1913), lists Stewart among the members of Concord (31). I would like to thank Diana Ruby Sanderson of The Presbyterian Study Center, Montreat, N. G., for providing me with a copy of Stevenson's work .

¹⁵⁴ Rowan Court Min., 16 October 1766.

¹⁵⁵ *Heritage of Iredell*, 106.

¹⁵⁶ Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 187.

¹⁵⁷ *Heritage of Iredell*, 304.

¹⁵⁸ Rowan Wills, B:95. On 19 March 1779 Hall acted as a witness to the writing of James Morrison's will.

Stevenson of Fourth Creek. Originally from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania's Earl Township, Stevenson served as one of Fourth Creek's elders following the fragmentation of the church.¹⁵⁹ After Bethany's creation in 1775, Stevenson occasionally trekked northwards from his home on Third Creek to act as a substitute for Hall.¹⁶⁰

Conclusion

Aside from religious doctrine, few firm ties existed to link together the settlers living to the north of Fifth Creek and in the upper and lower valley of Third Creek. Two local functions, road building and jury duty, could have brought the inhabitants of these regions into close contact and allowed them to form bonds of friendship, but failed to do so. Other than the creation of new roads in 1770 and 1772, little contact was made between the three areas.¹⁶¹ The maintenance of these trackways, when completed, fell largely to those whose neighborhoods were penetrated by the trails and did not extend to draw in men from the wider area.

Like the road overseers, juries for the local Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions and the Superior Court were also taken from immediate neighborhoods. In mid-October 1766 Archibald Wasson, John McClatchey, and William McKnight, all of whom dwelt well to the northwest of Fourth Creek meeting house, found themselves serving as jurors with James Hall of Fifth Creek and Robert Tate of lower Third Creek.¹⁶² This jury, drawn from a wide geographic area, was an exception as it was far more common for men like Hugh Bowman and John Mordah, who lived adjacent to each other, to serve together on juries.¹⁶³

One other function which might bring members of the three congregations together, the indenture of apprentices, also failed to unite the families scattered across the region between the Catawba and South Yadkin Rivers. Apprentices for the few tradesmen resident in the area came not from neighboring households, but, instead, from distant regions. Thus, in 1755, William Watt accepted Archibald Lafferty, the orphan of Dennis Lafferty of the Irish Settlement, as his apprentice while, fifteen years later, John Dobbin agreed to teach the blacksmith's craft to Barnabeth Baker, the orphaned son of Salisbury's Henry Baker.¹⁶⁴ The families of both young boys dwelt well to the east of Watt, whose household stood at the point where Sherrill's Path crossed Fourth Creek, and Dobbin, who resided downstream from Watt. Similarly, James Williams owned land in the Forks of the Yadkin and near the Trading Ford at Carter's Creek yet his daughters, Agnes and Rebecca, were indentured to James and William McKnight of upper Third Creek following Williams' death in 1774.¹⁶⁵

The inhabitants residing along either side of Fifth Creek and those who dwelt near the headwaters of Third Creek possessed few bonds, either familial, affinal or of friendship, to firmly cement them together as Fourth Creek Church. The presence of or lack of a road network in the three areas both promoted and hindered the development of these ties. The residents of the upper Third Creek valley who banded together to form Concord meeting house especially felt the

¹⁵⁹ Foote, *Sketches of North Carolina*, 324. Two of Stevenson's kinsmen also served as elders for Fourth Creek: John Stevenson, believed to be William's brother, and John McLelland. McLelland is either one of Mary McLelland Stevenson's brothers or a cousin of William Stevenson's wife. See *Heritage of Iredell*, 499.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 333-334.

¹⁶¹ Rowan Court Min., 2 March 1770 and 4 November 1772.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, 16 October 1766.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 9 October 1765.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 18 April 1755 and 4 November 1772. See Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle*, 165-166 and Rowan Deeds, IV, 53.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 3 August 1774.

isolation brought on by the lack of paths connecting them to the areas to their east and north. Adding to this situation was the inequality of wealth and prestige between the tradesmen planters who occupied the territory to the north of Fifth Creek during the mid and late 1760's and the older agrarian regions to the south and west. Along with affluence and status, there also existed a disparity in office holding between the settlers who lived below Fifth Creek and would remain loyal to the Fourth Creek meeting house after 1775 and the future parishioners of Bethany and Concord. These three components -- the lack of prominence and riches and exclusion from local offices -- may have conspired to create resentment between the neighborhoods composing Fourth Creek congregation. Despite the assemblage's shared religious and educational values, this tension may have exacerbated the failure of kinship and comradeship to unite the families worshipping together at Fourth Creek Church prior to 1775. When these variables are considered, it is not surprising that the congregation splintered into new religious bodies. It is astounding, however, that the split did not occur before 1775.