

Chapter 10, *The Rasco Family Tree, Roots and Branches*, © 1994 by William E. Rasco and used by permission.

THE REESE FAMILY, SOUTH CAROLINA PIONEERS

(pp. 327-332)

[This chapter relates directly to Rasco descendants

whose number starts with a "4", a "2137", or a "31235".]

The union of Laban Taylor Rasco I (#4.) and Sarah Reese in Kentucky in 1804 provided latter day descendants of this branch of the Rasco family with several interesting ancestors through the maternal side. Her parents were Anna (Nancy) Earle born in 1764 (See Chapter 11) and Ephraim Reese born in 1755. Her grandfather, Joseph Reese, distinguished himself as an early Baptist leader in South Carolina.

The Reese family originated in Wales and our branch of the the family settled first in a section of Pennsylvania which later became Delaware. The Welsh version of the name is Rhys. Reese is also spelled Reece and Rees. (N-1)

The tracks of our branch of the Reese family start in Delaware, go south to Richiand County, South Carolina, via a possible stop along the Pee Dee River in that state, then lead west to Tennessee-Kentucky border area where the Cumberland and Tennessee rivers nearly converge. Here the Reese line joins the Rasco line for the first time.

Additional Rascos married members of the Reese family at least two more times -- in Dallas County, Alabama in the 1830s and in Cullman County, Alabama in this century. The linkage of the Reeses of these later marriages to Sarah Reese, wife of Laban Taylor Rasco, has not yet been established.

SARAH AND EVAN REESE

The first of our Reese line is Evan Reese and his wife Sarah Reese I, who were living on Duck Creek in Kent County, Delaware (then Pennslyvania) in the 1730's. Both were from Wales.

A son, Joseph, was born in Kent County in 1732 or 1736 (Green 56). Evan and his family moved to the Congaree section of South Carolina about 1745 (N-2). The Congaree River is in the central part of the state and they were in what became Richland County. The first settlers moved into this Indian territory

about 1740.

Evan Reese recorded 250 acres on Raifords Creek in 1747 (Plat Book IV: 382)(Townsend 145). His name is on a petition for aid to William Hay in completing his mill at Raiford's Creek in 1749. Evan was starting a trip to Georgia when he died in nearby orangeburg in 1757. He was buried in the orangeburg church yard by Pastor Giessendanner (Green 56) (N-3). The last record found for Evan's wife Sarah was a deed in 1759 conveying property to their son Joseph (Green 56). Records of other Reese families of unknown relation can be found in South Carolina during colonial days (N-4).

JOSEPH REESE I, b. 1732/36

As a lad, our great-great-great-great-great-grandfather Joseph moved with his parents from Delaware to frontier of South Carolina about 1745. He is reputed "in his youthful years to have been very gay [old style] and fond of pleasure" (Green 57).

Joseph married first Ann Reynolds in 1753/54. She was born in 1735 (Whitley 1336). Numerous Reynolds families have been associated with the Reeses and other connected family lines over the years but her parents have not been identified at this time.

Ann was alive in 1772 but apparently died within the next few years. Joseph married second Sarah (Altum?) Raiford? who had two previous husbands. Joseph's youngest son John Altum was born in April 1779 and Sarah is believed to be his mother. It is unclear to me whether Sarah or Ann is the mother of the next youngest child, Jesse, born in 1774.

Joseph's home was about 10 or 12 miles east of what is now Columbia, South Carolina between Lykes and Congaree near U.S. Route 76. He had land recorded in 1767 between Hay's Mill Creek and Pincushion Swamp. He also had land at Congaree and Lawson's Fork.

BECOMES FRONTIER BAPTIST

Religion became the focus of Joseph's life. In 1760 he was converted from Anglicanism to Baptist, a denomination which was growing, especially on the frontiers of the colonies where the established church was in short supply and would later be tainted by association with the Tories (N-5). Joseph was converted by the preaching of Rev. Philip Mulky who baptised him.

By November 30, 1765, Joseph and his thirty-two fellow converts had established the Congaree Baptist Church. William Howell donated about an acre of land about three miles from Joseph's home and a structure, 26 x 34 was erected, probably of logs. Joseph was its first pastor and a powerful force in attracting additional converts, among them, Richard Furman who later was a Baptist leader in the Charleston area for many years. Congaree was the mother church of all Baptist churches in the central part of the state. Reese expanded its influence to establish other churches at Wateree Creek in Fairfield County, Twenty-five Mile Creek (Harmony in Kershaw County), Amelia (Hill Hills of Santee?) and Four

Holes. The Rev. John Newton, and Messrs. Timothy Dargan, Richard Bell, Ralph Jones and John Blake aided Mr. Reese in the work of caring for the five meetings (Townsend 144). The Congaree church had 33 members in 1766. At the end of Reese's tenure, the membership was at 130.

In 1813 a Baptist historian gave this appraisal:

Mr. Reese was a man of good understanding and warm affections. His piety, it is believed was never called into question. He had but little education, though he made improvements after he began to preach; but he had a large fund of evangelical and experimental knowledge. His natural eloquence, and command of the passions of his hearers, were extraordinary. He was both a Boanerges ['which means Sons of Thunder' Mark iii: 17], and a son of consolation. His voice and his countenance are said to have affected his hearers like an enchantment. In the early part of his ministry he met with much opposition but with surprising success. (Green 57)

The rebellious preachings of some of the Baptists have been credited by some historians with helping enlist citizens to overthrow the English government in the colonies. At a hearing for one of the seditious preachers, an attorney for the Crown warned that "The Baptist are like a bed of camomile; the more they are trodden the more they spread" (Arnow Seeds 51).

Joseph is said to have served as a chaplain to some of the Whig troops in the Revolution (Green 102). He is also said to have been a delegate to the South Carolina Constitutional Convention. His patriotic service to South Carolina has been accepted as a basis for membership in the DAR (N-6).

Joseph was in poor health the last ten years of his life. He died March 5, 1795 in Richland County. His will, recorded in Richland Will Book B: 107, mentions his wife, children, property, slaves and books, particularly the writings of Bunyan (Townsend

145).

The nine children of Rev. Joseph Reese include:

a. **Ephraim T. Reese** b. September 17, 1755, m. Anna (Nancy) Earle, daughter of Baylis Earle and Mary Prince (See Chapter 11). Ephraim and Nancy had five children including Sarah who married Labon Taylor Rasco I. Details follow below. (N-7)

b. **Mary Reese** b. August 17, 1758, m. Hargrave Arthur, ten children.

c. **Catherine Reese** b. January 14, 1760, m. _____ Wells, two sons and three daughters.

d. **Joseph Reese** i b. June 17, 1764, m. Sarah Howell (Sarah H.Reese iii), five children.

e. **Daniel Reese** b. October 4, 1766, died young.

- f. **Timothy Reese** b. May 7, 1769, m. Elizabeth Howell, d. November 14, 1837, two children.
- g. **Ann Reese** b. May 30, 1771, m. Robert Tucker (Tuxker), had issue.
- h. **Jesse Reese** b. November 7, 1774, d. 1821, unmarried.
- i. **John Altum Reese** b. April 18, 1779, married Mary Howell, five children.

Ann Reynolds, first wife of Joseph Reese I was alive in 1772 when the Congaree area was visited by Morgan Edwards an early Baptist leader. The last child, John Altum, was born of Joseph's second wife, Sarah Altum? Raiford? Jesse may also be born of the second wife.

EPHRAIM T. REESE, 1755-1823

Ephraim T. Reese was born September 17, 1755 in the Congaree area of South Carolina. Little is known of his youth. He may have helped on his father's plantation or he may have been a trapper or an Indian trader as were many young men of that era. The Indian territory was not far from the Reese home in central South Carolina.

Ephraim was in the militia and served with Col. John Thomas's Spartan Regiment where he was a lieutenant in 1780. The Spartan Regiment was organized by John Thomas Sr. in 1775 from residents of Spartanburg and Union Counties. John Thomas Jr. assumed command of the unit in 1780. The Spartan Regiment joined with other militia and Continental units for skirmishes and battles in the central South Carolina area.

His assignments included service as an adjutant under Col. Thomas and, by appointment of General Andrew Pickens, brigade commissary on a tour to Beacon Bridge (South Carolina Archives Acct. #881X: Crumpton 9). Ephraim was paid for a total of 126 days of duty (Stub Indents X pt. 1, p. 84: Green 102).

The records have not been located for the marriage of Ephraim to Anna (Nancy) Earle, a member of the politically prominent Earle family of Earlesville in Spartanburg County. The marriage was probably before October 1780 when his wife's brother-in-law, Edward Hampton, was murdered by a renegade Tory. With Edward's wife, Sallie Earle Hampton, Ephraim and another noted frontiersman and kinsman, William Prince, were named administrators of Edward's estate in 1783. They gave bond of £2,000. The many Rasco and Reese descendants with Hampton as part of their name recall the exploits of Edward Hampton. (N-8)

EPHRAIM'S FATHER BECOMES INFIRM

The administration of Edward Hampton's estate was assumed by Baylis Earle, father-in-law to Ephraim, in 1786. By this time, Baylis was a county judge. The year before Ephraim's father Joseph became "very

infirm" (Green 57) and Ephraim, the oldest son, may have had to assume duties at home.

Ephraim, referred to as captain, assisted in conducting the first Census in South Carolina in 1790. He and Nancy had five children and lived in the up country at that time (Green 58).

Ephraim's father died in 1795 and by 1798 Ephraim moved his family to Kentucky. Ephraim entered 200 acres of land on the Little River in Christian County, Kentucky March 23, 1799 (Jillson 5: 393). His move to the new frontier was probably with other relatives and friends from South Carolina. William Prince, his wife's uncle and his associate in the war and later in the administration of Edward Hampton, had preceded him (N-9).

In 1818, about the time some of their children were moving to Alabama, Ephraim and Nancy sold some of the Little Creek property for \$1,300 (Fowler 16). Ephraim's farming activities were helped by the 14 or 15 slaves he owned (Simmons: *Trigg*). He died in the Roaring Springs Community of Trigg County, Kentucky April 23, 1823 (Trigg County Will Book A: 76). Trigg was formed from part of what had been Christian County.

The children of Nancy Earle and Ephraim Reese were:

a. **Daniel Hampton Reese**, b. in South Carolina.

b. **Sarah Reese**, b. May 30, 1786, in South Carolina, m. Laban Taylor Rasco on January 17, 1804, d. Marion Junction, Alabama. See Chapter 7.

c. **Samuel Reese** b. in South Carolina.

d. **Joseph Reese** ii, b. in South Carolina.

e. **Ephraim T. Reese** i b. in South Carolina, believed to have died without issue in Dallas County, Alabama in 1842 because his property went to his brothers and sisters.

f. **Rhoda Reese**, m. _____Daniels.

g. **Mariam (Mary) Reese**, m. Willis Wilbanks (Willbanks) April 29, 1810 in Christian County, Kentucky.

h. **Demaris Reese**, m. Andrew Boiling January 13, 1816 in Christian County, Kentucky.

i. **Polly C. Reese**, m. Slayton C. Bourland October 10, 1815 in Christian County, Kentucky.

Chapter Notes: Reese Family (pp. 332-333)

- (1.) At least one other Reese family, a possible relative, was living in the same area of Pennsylvania/Delaware about the time our Evan Reese was there. According to Mary E. Reese in her book *Genealogy of the Reese Family In Wales and America*, the Rev. David Reese family came to America in 1700 (some sources say 1710) landing in Newcastle, Delaware. She says the Rev. David Reese and his two daughters, Ruth and Ester, went to Pennsylvania (where Ester married a Mackay and Ruth never married), sons Charles remained in Delaware where after a few years he died and his family went to Pennsylvania, George settled in Maryland leaving a numerous progeny, David married Susan Ruth Polk and they lived in Cecil County, Maryland; Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and then about 1750 moved to Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. There is pretty good documentation that another brother, William, married Penelope Groner. This family also has Sorrell-Prince connections. (Walker June 9, 1993). (See N-4, below)
- (2.) Green (56) states the move was in 1745. Townsend (145) says Evan recorded a plat on Raifords Creek in 1747. The area involved is now Richland County. Landrum (23) says Governor William Littleton the Lord Wescott acquired the area in 1756 by treaty with the Cherokee Indians.
- (3.) The Rev. John Giessendanner started keeping a record book of Orangeburg, South Carolina births, deaths and marriages in 1737. His nephew the Rev. John Ulrich Gisessendanner assumed responsibility for the records after the uncle's death in 1738. A few records were added after the nephew's death in 1761 (Salley 205)
- (4.) Townsend (145) refers to a 1767 memorial of Joseph Reese for 100 acres granted to Daniel Rees in 1750 on the east side of the Pee Dee, considerably east of the Congaree area. Whether Daniel is a brother or uncle is unknown. Mays (233) lists the family of a David Reese of the Charlotte, North Carolina area whose descendants were in the nearby Pendleton, South Carolina area before some moved to Alabama. David was a signer of the Mecklenburg Declaration in 1775. This may be the branch of the family from which David Addison Reese, a medical doctor in Alabama and member of Congress from Georgia in 1853, is descended.
- (5.) The colonies had various religious orientations but the Church of England was in a quasigovernmental role in the South as it was in England. Church tithes were assessed with the same legal force as other taxes. The church had a welfare role in the community. Vestry members were often the most prominent, politically active, members of the area. Even though the colonies expanded faster than the church could provide services on the frontier, Baptist preachers were jailed for religious activities in Virginia in the 1760s. In North Carolina, marriages performed by Presbyterian ministers were not recognized as valid until 1766. Other denominations (other than Anglican) were not recognized until 1778. At the end of the Revolution, the new states disestablished the Anglican church and ministers with Tory leanings returned to England or to Canada as did some of the colonists.
- (6.) DAR members based on Joseph's record include Mrs. Ruth Owen (Luther W.) Moore No. 290409 in

Tennessee; Mrs. Grace (Adam O.) Kessler No. 558968 and Ms. Mary Lou Rasco No. 555147 both in Alabama.

(7.) The origin and meaning of the initial *T.* associated by some historians with Ephraim Reese has not been determined by the author.

(8.) Edward Hampton rated high marks from early historians for his daring and courage in the cause of the Revolution. His brother Wade and the Wade namesakes seem to be more famous today. Perhaps their subsequent public office and consequent public spotlight added to their recognition. Of Edward Hampton, Landrum (*Colonial* 127) said he was a "brave and patriotic officer who like many others we mention, has never received the place he rightly deserved to occupy." Landrum (354) describes his murder: *Colonel Hampton, after having ridden all night, stopped at a house to breakfast. Very soon after he entered the building, it was surrounded by the Tories. He snatched his pistols from the table, thinking to defend himself, but it was no use. He fired his pistols in the air. The Tories shot him down. A truer patriot than Edward Hampton never lived.*

(9.) In 1799, William Prince entered three tracts on Eddy and Donelson creeks in Christian County and two tracts in Livingston County, Kentucky (Jillson 9: 385). However, Prince had been in the area much earlier. In February, 1792, William Prince was chairman of a committee in the adjacent Montgomery County, Tennessee, which petitioned General James Robertson for relief from the frequent murder of settlers by the Indians. The petition followed the murder by a band of Cherokees of Col. John Sevier's three sons and three other settlers the month before (History 5: 756).

Four brothers of Nancy Earle Reese, children of Baylis Earle I, entered land in Christian and other nearby Kentucky counties in the next few years (Jillson 8: 306).