

Making the case for William Lee b. abt. 1720, son of James Lee, Sr. of Bertie/Edgecombe, North Carolina, as the grandfather of Rocky River Bill Lee

The focus of this research is twofold. The question was asked “who is the father of Rocky River Bill Lee of Anson County, North Carolina?” I believe I was able to answer that question within this document. The second question came up within the research itself; was there more evidence to provide further details for William Lee of Anson Co., NC, who went to Richmond Co., GA, then later departed with Edward Williams and Margaret Peggy Crittenden and her brother Jonathan Crittenden for Greenville/Pendleton area of South Carolina. This William Lee is the direct ancestor of the Lees who still today (2018) reside on the property at Rabun Co., GA. There is more about this line of Lees in the book *Early Virginia Colonial Families, the Crittendens, Downs, Lees, Ludwells, Taylors and Collateral Families* by Wanda Tucker and Sue Ward. It turned out that there was more, and it is included here.

When I began the search for the father of William “Rocky River Bill” Lee (RR Bill), I did so with the full knowledge that looking for a Lee in North Carolina in the 1700s is like looking for a needle in a package of needles! There are so many of them, and many of them have the same names and are related to each other.

The first step I took was to try to find ANY evidence of what Rocky River’s father’s given name might be. I was able to find RR Bill on several censuses. On the 1840 Census, I was able to identify RR Bill in Anson County, NC. He is listed as “**William Lee, Jr.**” Thus I was able to determine that his father would have been named William Lee also. Using RR Bill’s known birth year, I supposed that his father William would have been born about 1755. On the 1790 Census in Montgomery County, NC, **William Lee** is listed in the age 26-44 bracket, meaning he would have been born about 1756. I had made a pretty good estimate!

NOTE: MONTGOMERY COUNTY was formed from **ANSON COUNTY** in 1778.

However, still a needle in a box of needles, to find out which William Lee this was. There are William Lees all over North Carolina in the time period. Most of the information available about their lives is in the form of deeds or wills, so that was the logical next step.

NOTE: Most of my research here is following names of people, rather than chronological dates. I have included family trees for some of the players which should help the reader follow along. They are attached at the end of this document.

I began looking at the known William Lees who were in North Carolina and could possibly be the father of RR Bill. There were essentially three choices I ended up with: **William Lee, b. abt. 1750 d. 1794**, the son of James Lee and Frances Cureton; **William Lee b. abt. 1743**, the son of Robert Lee and Sarah; and **William Lee, b, abt. 1756**, father to be determined. There are other William Lees that I was able to eliminate; more about them as we go along.

There is a William Lee, b. abt. 1720, the son of James Lee and Sarah Ludwell. I believe him to be the father of William born in 1756, and so he could be RR Bill’s grandfather. I extrapolated William born 1756’s existence from deeds in which there was no other possible William Lee in the area at the correct

time. The man existed; no parent for him had as yet been determined. I came to my conclusions about him based on the information which is to follow.

The narrowing of my choices to the names above will be most readily explained as we go, but for the most part, it was due to the occurrence of collateral names on deeds and in wills, as we will see.

There was a William Lee b. abt. 1712 in Nansemond, VA, the son of Dr. John Lee. This William remained in Bertie County, as demonstrated by wills and deeds:

John Lee, as proved by a subsequent deed, was dead in Bertie by 1739-- where he left a will which did not survive. His children (John's) are proved as follows:

1. Chowan Deed BK G. P 334--Joshua Lee sold to **Samuel Lee** for 30 barrels of lawful, tarr, land beginning on the land that was Godfrey Lee's... being part of a patent formerly granted to John Lee on 4/7/1694. Wits: Simon Pope, Arthur Lee, and Joshua Lee Regt 1/25/1755

2. **Chowan Deed Bk G P 356--8/8/1754.** Chowan Co. NC. **William Lee of Bertie Co**, Sells to **Samuel Lee**, son & Heir of Godfrey Lee of North Hampton Co. NC for 20 Es lawful money of VA...100 acres in Chowan Co. on NS of Cypress Swamp, beginning at the south of Plumb Tree Branch being part of a tract granted to John Lee. Wits: Anne A Lee, Sampson Pope, Francis Lee.

Thus, John Lee had at least two sons, **Joshua** and **William Lee**, and was possibly the father of the other Lee men in that area such as Godfrey, Richard, Arthur, and Francis.

There is a probate record in Bertie County in 1792 for **William Lee** and another in 1808. This is probably father and son, descendants of **William b. 1712.**

Note that the above deed is in 1754, shortly after the deed for **William Lee** below in **Bladen**. On the deed and Tax List below, we see that **William Lee b. about 1720** is in Bladen in 1753 and 1755, making it unlikely that these two men are the same person. This eliminates William born 1712 as the grandfather of RR Bill Lee. The evidence that **William Lee in Bladen in 1754** is the man born in Bertie about 1720 is below.

One more side note; another William Lee I came upon was in Johnston County. His father is speculated to be either Thomas Lee or John Lee, who married Mary Bryan. There is a marriage record for William in Wake County in 1784 to Clary Ballenger, witnessed by Edward Lee and Kedar Bryan. His brother Needham Lee also remained in Johnston. This eliminates him as a possibility for RR Bill's father.

The first deed I came upon of significance to this task was this (from here forward, only names and place names which are of interest will be in bold):

WILLIAM LEE of **Bladen Co.** to **JOSEPH MONTFORT** of Edge. Co. merchant 6 Sept. 1753
50 shillings lawfull money of Great Britain 100 acres on the west side of Quonke pocosin part of
SIMM's patent and purchased by the sd. LEE of **JAMES MILLIKIN** of Edge. Co. 3 May 1735
Wit: **SOLEMON HAWKINS, BENJAMIN MERRITT** Reg. Edge. Co., Nov. Ct. 1753
Benjamin Wynns, C. Ct. (Halifax Co.. Deed Bk. 4# p. 514)S/ William (W) Lee
(his mark)

NOTE: James Millikin in the deed above was a Justice of the Peace in 1732 in Edgecombe, NC.

NOTE: This deed is recorded in Halifax, but in 1753 it would have been in **Northampton County**. This gives us evidence to support William Lee's marriage (more below).

https://archive.org/stream/historyofedgecom00turn/historyofedgecom00turn_djvu.txt

We know **William Lee** was in the area where the above land was sold by deeds he witnessed there. I have so far been unable to locate the original deed for the purchase of the above in 1735.

November 5, 1733: **WILLIAM "W" LEE** (his mark) witnessed with **SAMUEL MURRAY** a deed from **ROBERT WOOD** to **JOHN SPANN** 200 a. **S/Moratock, N/Great Quankey**, part of 344 a. patent to **WOOD** July 24, 1728. (Halifax County Deed Book 1, p. 66)

May 15, 1738: **WILLIAM W. LEE** witnessed with **NICHOLAS KILLINGSWORTH** deed from **BARNABY & MARY MELTON** to **JOHN PATTERSON** - 250 a. **S/Marratock** adjoining **WILLIAM KILLINGSWORTH, JAMES SMITH**, sd. **MELTON & JOHN KILLINGSWORTH** (Halifax County Deed Book 1, p. ?)

NOTE: I have used birth dates spanning 1720-22 for **James Lee, Robert Lee, and William Lee**, the sons of **James Lee, Sr.** who died in **Bertie/Edgecombe** in 1731. It is obvious that the above William would be too young if that is his birth year; however, there is no birth record or evidence as to when these men would have been born. It is my belief from the research within this family that the men in this family married young. For convenience, I continue to use about 1720 as a birth year for **William Lee**. I believe that **John Lee** was born much later than the older three, perhaps even after his father's death.

James Lee, Sr. died in 1731, leaving a will:

JAMES LEE - Will -of "Bartie Precinct".
Dated: January 17, 1731
Proved: November, 1732 - Edgecombe Precinct

Son: **JAMES LEE** Plantation whereon I now live & all the tract of land belonging to it.

Son: **ROBERT LEE** 1/2 of that tract of land which I hold at a place called **KINYARDS**.

Son: **WILLIAM LEE** The other half of **KINYARDS**.'

To my 3 sons All those cattle, horses, and other stock for some time called their own.

Wife: **SARAH**, horse "Button" - all rest & residue of estate so

long as she remain my widow; and after cease to be my widow, estate to be divided among her my said wife & ALL MY SONS & DAUGHTERS.

.Wit: JOHN MORE, RICHARD MORE, JUNR.

Proved: By SARAH LEE, relict & Extx. of said deceased, and JOHN MOORE.

(Raleigh, N. C. State Archives - Wills 1663-1789, p. 11)

May 19, 1736: JOHN RAY was administrator. Bond - 1,000 L.

Securities: JOHN BROOM & JOSEPH HALL all of Edgecombe Precinct.

John Lee is not named in the will of James Lee, Sr., however, Robert Lee names his brother John Lee in his will of 1766 in Anson. James Lee, Sr. in his will names "all my sons and daughters."

The name **MERRITT** in the 1753 deed above set off my spidey senses, so I referred back to my family tree. I had a record of **William Lee born 1750** marrying **Susannah Merritt in 1787** in Wake County! But this William Lee died in Wake County in 1794. RR Bill Lee's father William is on the Montgomery County Census in 1800, so this is not him. This William is the son of **James Lee** and Frances Cureton, grandson of James Lee, Sr. of Edgecombe. When **James Lee, Jr.** died in 1777, several of his children inherited land in JOHNSTON COUNTY. Some of the land may have been part of WAKE COUNTY. The counties were very close, and WAKE was formed in 1770.

The name **Joseph Montfort** was also significant to our search.

North Carolina, Civil Marriages

Name William Lee

Event Type Marriage

Event Date 20 Feb 1787

Event Place Wake, North Carolina, United States

Gender Male

Spouse's Name Susanah Merritt

Bondsman and witnesses to the above marriage were **John Ludwell Lee**, James Lowry, and **J. Montfort**. This establishes the connection between **William Lee of Bladen** in the deed above to the family of **William Lee** who married **Susanna Merritt**. William Lee who married Susannah Merritt had a first cousin named **William**. This cousin is **William Lee b. 1720**, the son of James Lee, Sr. of Edgecombe.

In the will of James Lee, Sr. appeared another name for the spidey-senses, **William Moore**. It led me to the deed below:

CUMBERLAND COUNTY, N.C. LAND RECORDS
January 30, 1764: **JOHN ANDERSON**, planter, of Cumberland County to **WILLIAM LEE**, planter, county not given.
100'a. in county aforesaid.. '25 L - whereon the said **JOHN ANDERSON** did live of, the South fork of **Crains (Crane) Creek**, beginning at a red oak 'on the 'south side of sd. fork, running N. E. to a live oak at the creek .170 poles, then down the creek being the dividing line 36 poles to a pine West by North to a stake 180 poles to a stake with the edifices & buildings thereon erected & built & other appurtenances there into belonging. Said 100 a. part of 200 a. granted by patent May 26, 1757 unto JOHN HEARD who conveyed to said JOHN ANDERSON.
Wit: WM.MOORE
JNO. THORNTON John IA Anderson (Seat)
JOSIA WILLIAMSON(his mark)

(Cumberland Co. Deed Book 2, p. 362)
April 3, 1767: **WILLIAM LEE**, planter, of Cumberland County, sold the above 100 a "whereon the said WILLIAM LEE now lives" to THOMAS MAPLE. Description reads the same.
Wit: 'STEPHEN GILMORE
HUGH GILMORE WILLIAM LEE (Seal)
SARAH, LEE (Seal)
(Deed Book 3, p. 136)

This deed would seem to name **William Lee's** wife as **Sarah**. She is most likely **Sarah Moore**, the daughter of John Moore, who witnessed James Lee, Sr.'s will of 1731.

The location of this land at **Crane Creek** appears on the map below, along with other grants to William Lee. The county names changed so much it makes it appear sometimes as if these are different people, but in reality the land grants are very close together, making it much more likely they are the same man.

There is another deed in 1767 in Anson:

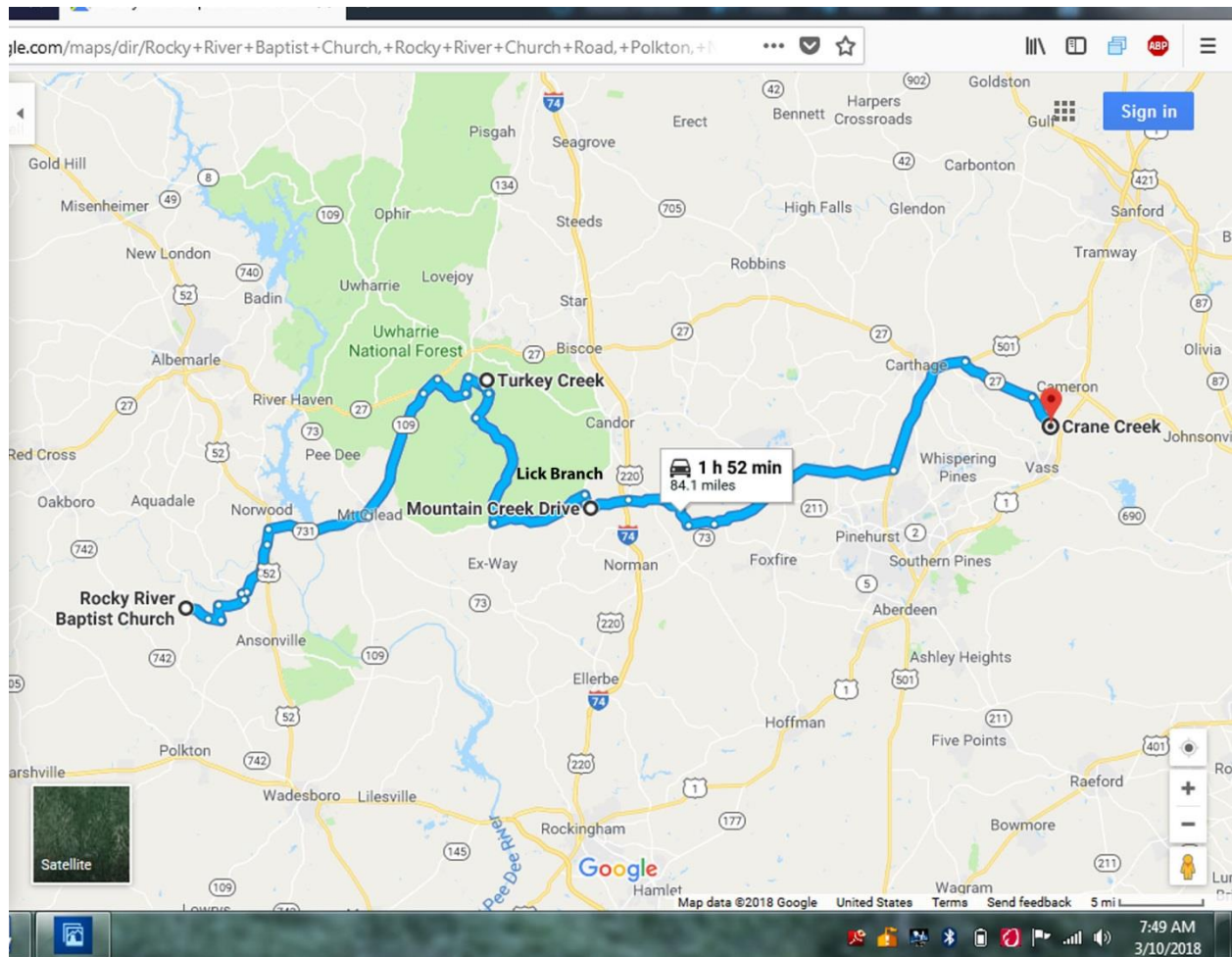
16 July, 1767 Joseph Donham to Wm Burns (both of Anson) 100 acres on **Mountain Creek**
Abstracts of deeds, Anson County, NC / by A. B. Pruitt, books H1, K, & H (1767-1787).

This deed was witnessed by **William Lee and Sarah Lee**.

John Lee was granted land in Anson, in 1762, So. Side of the Pee Dee, beg. At a small hiccory on the So. side of Rocky River.

Name: John Lee
Issue Date: 22 Oct 1762
Residence Place: Anson, North Carolina, USA
Certificate Number Range: 910-1778
Description: Anson 910-1778

Plotting on modern maps is helpful when place names from old deeds still appear. This is especially helpful when the county names were constantly changing in the early years of North Carolina. There are several deeds for William Lee in Orange County, NC, but when plotted on a modern map, they are within mere miles of Rocky River Baptist Church. The land at **Crane Creek** isn't far away, either, only about 60 miles.



The place name **Mountain Creek** appears on the deed above, signed by William and Sarah Lee. There is a creek by that name on the map; but I can't zoom in on it if I want the map to show the other places.

The deed below for William Lee at Orange County is on **Lick Branch**. But plotted on a map, using data from mapofus.org, it is actually in **Cumberland County** in 1760. Orange and Cumberland shared a border until 1770, when Chatham County was formed and separated them.

Name: William Lee
Issue Date: 1 Aug 1760
Residence Place: Orange, North Carolina, USA
Certificate Number Range: 4-908
Description: Orange 4-908

https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/60621/44173_354550-00791?pid=56411&backurl=https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?_phsrc%3DxlG1638%26_phstart%3DsuccessSource%26usePUBJs%3Dtrue%26indiv%3D1%26db%3DNCLandGrants%26gss%3Dangs-d%26new%3D1%26rank%3D1%26gsfn%3DWilliam%26gsfn_x%3D0%26gsln%3DLEe%26gsln_x%3D0%26msydy%3D1750%26msydy_x%3D1%26msydp%3D10%26msypn_ftp%3DAnson%2520County,%2520North%2520Carolina,%2520USA%26msypn%3D171%26MSAV%3D1%26uidh%3Ddv3%26pcat%3D36%26fh%3D1%26h%3D56411%26recoff%3D8%25209%26ml_rpos%3D2&treeid=&personid=&hintid=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=xlG1638&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true

NOTE: It appears that when deeds were filed or granted, they were done so at the most convenient courthouse, not necessarily the courthouse within the same county as the land was in.

NOTE: In 1753, BLADEN COUNTY was very large. In 1754, CUMBERLAND COUNTY was created from the top half of BLADEN COUNTY. ANSON COUNTY was formed from BLADEN in 1750.

This deed issued in Orange but located in Cumberland led me to the elimination of yet another William Lee as a possible father of Rocky River Bill Lee.

I found William Lee and William Lea on a Tax List in Orange in 1755. There were also two deeds in Orange, in 1755, for William Lea and John Lea:

Name: William Lea
Issue Date: 8 May 1755
Residence Place: Orange, North Carolina, USA
Certificate Number Range: 4-908
Description: Orange 4-908

This deed for William is on both sides South Hicoe.

This deed for John Lea, also in 1755, found at the North Carolina Archives:

Title File No. 781, John Lee
Years: 1755
Creator:

Languages:
Call Number: S.108.947
Location: 769 (Archive Stacks)
MARS Id: 12.14.95.768 (Folder)

Acres: 770
Grant No: 108
Issued: **May 8, 1755**
Surveyed:
Warrant No: Entry No:
Entered:
Book No: 14
Page No: 445
Location: **Lying on both sides South Hicoe**

Remember, the deed above for William Lee in 1760 is listed in **Orange**. That accounts for his being on the 1755 Tax List. The two deeds above account for another William Lea and John Lea on the Orange Tax List in 1755. However, in 1779 there are still a William Lea and a John Lea in Orange. We know for certain that our John and William had moved on to Anson County by then, so that means the men on the Orange County list in 1755 were a different set of Lees.

Sue Ward had been doing some work for another family, who also had Lee ancestors in North Carolina. When we put out information together, it became clear that the John Lee and William Lee in Orange were descendants of William Leigh, one of the five Lee brothers (or cousins, according to some; Richard Lee, Dr. Henry Lee, George Lee and John Lee being the other four) who came to the colonies in the first half of the 17th Century. That eliminated them as the relatives of Rocky River Bill Lee.

William Moore is also found on the **Cumberland** Tax List. He is connected back to **James Lee, Sr.**

The will of **John Moore**, the man who witnessed the will of James Lee, Sr. of Edgecombe, names his children:

JOHN MOORE - Will - Northampton County
Dated: September 1, 1753
Proved: November, 1753.
Sons: MARK, **JOHN**, ISHAM, **WILLIAM**, NATHANIEL, RICHARD.
Dau: SARAH MOORE
Wife & extrx: TABITHA MOORE
Clk. of Ct.: I. EDWARDS
Exrs: RICHARD MOORE & THOMAS PACE
Wit: GEORGE HARPER, JOHN MACDESLEY

William Moore is the witness to the **William Lee** deed in Cumberland shown above. **William Moore** is the son of **John Moore**, who witnessed **James Lee, Sr.**'s will in 1731. This helps establish this William

as the son of **James Lee, Sr. of Bertie/Edgecombe**, North Carolina. The daughter, **Sarah Moore**, is most likely his wife.

John Moore, Jr. went to Anson with William and Sarah Lee:

https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/60621/44173_347300-00397?pid=32980&backurl=https://search.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/sse.dll?indiv%3D1%26dbid%3D60621%26h%3D32980%26tid%3D68901442%26pid%3D100187947648%26usePUB%3Dtrue%26_phsrc%3Dx1G1573%26_phstart%3DsuccessSource&treeid=68901442&personid=100187947648&hintid=&usePUB=true&_phsrc=x1G1573&_phstart=successSource&usePUBJs=true

The Moore's were also associated with another son of **James Lee, Sr.**:

JAMES LEE, s/o JAMES LEE, SR.

b. abt. 1720

d. October, 1777 (Will)

(1) FRANCES CURETON

(2) AGNES CADE November 3, 1760 Edgecombe County, N. C.

Bondsman: EDWARD MOORE

m. By 1779 JOHN ROGERS

James Lee's children were determined from three

sources; his will, a lawsuit 1790 Edgecombe County, and the division of his estate, which was not divided until May Court 1794.

ISSUE: By (1)

1. JAMES LEE-----
2. ROBERT LEE-----
3. **WILLIAM LEE-----b. 1750 d. 1794**
4. TRAVIS LEE-----
5. WINIFRED "Winney" LEE-----
6. TABITHA LEE -----
7. MARY LEE-----

ISSUE: By (2)

8. JAMES BUDD LEE-----
9. PHILLIP LUDWELL LEE -----
10. JOHN LUDWELL LEE-----
11. OBEDIENCE "Beedy" LEE-----
12. MILBERRY (Milbray, Milbury) LEE-----
13. SARAH LEE-----
14. DRURY LUDWELL LEE-----
15. JAMES LUDWELL LEE-----
16. LYDIA LEE-----

There is another deed for **William Lee** in **Cumberland** during this time period, found at the NC Archives:

File No. 0149, **William Lee**, 1763, 100 acres on both sides Lower Little River; MARS Id: 12.14.51.6575 (Folder)

From a study of modern maps, this deed refers to land that is further west towards Rocky River Baptist Church land. It would be in **Montgomery County** today, about thirty miles east of the Church.

It is important to distinguish **William Lee b. 1743**, the son of **Robert Lee of Anson**, from the son of **William Lee** named in the deeds above, **William Lee b. 1756**. **Robert Lee** died in Anson County in 1766. His brother **John Lee** was an executor of his will. Robert left a son **William b. about 1743**.

https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/9061/004753817_00019?pid=2129311&backurl=https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/68901442/person/34532024450/gallery&usePUB=true&_phsrc=xIG966&usePUBJs=true

I was able to eliminate Robert's son William as the possible father of RR Bill. **William Lee b. 1743** was the brother of **Sarah Lee** who married **William Crittenden**. He was the uncle of **Peggy Crittenden**, their daughter, who married **Edward Williams**. Sarah and William were named in the will of her father in the link above, **Robert Lee**, in 1766. Author Sue Ward was able to show that this William Lee migrated with Sarah and William Crittenden in the book *Early Virginia Colonial Families, the Crittendens, Downs, Lees, Ludwells, Taylors and Collateral Families* by Wanda Tucker and Sue Ward. Edward Williams and William Lee would have been about the same age, they served in the Revolutionary War together, and so would have made logical companions later on.

I also found it compelling evidence that when Robert Lee died in 1766, his sons **William** and Richard did not receive real property, only the proceeds from the sale of a slave.

- Wife Sarah to have "negro fellow Jack" as long as she lives a widow, and then William, Judith and Richard Lee are to have "negro fellow Jack," or as much as he can be sold for (Jack is real property, but would have to be sold in order to be divided).
- Son James three cows and calves.
- Son Robert half of the tract of land the house and plantation is on and a rifle gun.
- Son John the other half of the tract of land.
- Daughter Millie a bed, furniture and a breeding mare
- Daughters Mary Yarbrough, Millie/Mittry Lee and Elizabeth Lee ten pounds proclamation money
- Daughter Sarah Crittenden ten shillings proclamation money

I speculate that the reason William and Robert did not receive real property is by 1766 they had left the Anson area, or had acquired property of their own. It is my belief that after Sarah married William Crittenden and her father Robert died, they left the area. They ended up in Richmond Georgia. William

Lee b. 1743, Sarah's brother, went along. This is where daughter Peggy would probably have encountered Edward Williams. There are land grants for William Lee in Berkeley during this time:

12/6/1768 – Lee, William, land grant for 100 acres in Berkeley County.

8/28/1772 – Lee, William, land grant for 400 acres in Berkeley County.

There are several land grants for Edward Williams in this area in the same time frame. (*There is more on these deeds in Early Virginia Colonial Families*)

After the War, William Lee and others (William Crittenden being one) received land bounties in Richmond, Georgia. Maps in *Richmond County, Georgia Land Records* show these families near each other. **William Crittenden, Sr.** died in Richmond, Georgia in 1786. The grandson of **William Crittenden**, also named **William**, was associated with the Rocky River Baptist Church. In 1815, he was a delegate for the church. He later moved into Tennessee, where his children were born, and died in Graves County, KY between 1860 and 1870.

By 1790, Edward Williams and wife Peggy, Jonathan Crittenden (Peggy's brother) and William Lee had left Georgia. Edward, Peggy and Jonathan were in Pendleton County, and William Lee was in bordering Greenville County, where he died in 1803. Edward, Peggy, and Jonathan continued on to Rabun County, GA. The descendants of Edward Williams moved back and forth between Rabun County and Oconee County, SC.

Jonathan Crittenden is named as a witness in 1796 on a plat found at the South Carolina Archives, at Choestoea Creek, Pendleton County:

Date: 4/30/1796

Description: JENKINS, FRANCIS, PLAT FOR 500 ACRES ON CHOESTOEA CREEK, PENDLETON COUNTY, NINETY SIX DISTRICT, SURVEYED BY WILLIAM SLOAN.

Names indexed: CREDINTON, JONATHAN; JENKINS, FRANCIS; JENKINS, WILLIAM; SLOAN, WILLIAM

Locations: CHOESTOEA CREEK; NINETY SIX DISTRICT; PENDLETON COUNTY

Document type: PLAT

I am including this document because when plotted on a modern map, this land is in Oconee County, SC, where descendants continued to live into the 1940s. There is more about this in *Early Virginia Colonial Families*, pgs. 89-93.

William Lee b. 1720 and **John Lee b. abt. 1731** would have been joining their family when they made their way into Anson/Montgomery Counties. Three brothers named in the 1731 will of **James Lee, Sr. of Bertie County**, would now be in this area. Only the eldest, James, remained in Edgecombe, where he

died in 1777. The deed below may indicate the approximate time period in which Robert left for Anson. He sold his property in Bertie/Edgecombe to his brother:

August 17, 1741: **JAMES LEE** bought from **ROBERT LEE**, 100 L -300 a. S/Moratock, adj. a little run, a branch & river. Wit: **RICHARD CURETON, JOHN BOYLE, JOHN JONES** (Halifax County Deed Book 1, p. 419).

Robert Lee acquired land in Anson in 1747:

Oct. 9, 1747 on Lane's Creek by the King
Abstracts of deeds, Anson County, NC by A. B. Pruitt, c 1998, books H1, K, & H (1767-1787).

Lane's Creek is about 15 miles south of Rocky River Baptist Church.

There are also two deeds for Robert Lee in Bladen, on this same date, October 9, 1747. One reads:

200 acres, on the South side of Rock River below McCollock's line beginning at a white oak on the river. (I believe this refers to Rocky River).

The second deed, (possibly a duplicate?) same date, reads:

200 acres, South side of Rock River. (also refers to Rocky River).

There was another important name in the **William Lee of Bladen County** deed of September 6, 1753; **SIMM'S**. Back to the deed:

Pg. 514-

WILLIAM LEE of Bladen Co. to **JOSEPH MONTFORT** of Edge. Co. merchant **6 Sept. 1753**
50 shillings lawfull money of Great Britain 100 acres on the west side of Quonke pocosin part of **SIMM'S** patent and purchased by the sd. LEE of **JAMES MILLIKIN** of Edge. Co. 3 May 1735
Wit: **SOLEMON HAWKINS, BENJAMIN MERRITT** Reg. Edge. Co., Nov. Ct. 1753
Benjamin Wynns, C. Ct.

From the "History of Rocky River Baptist Church":

"There is little recorded of **Drury Sims**. The first account we have of him is given by Morgan Edwards in 1772-73, who traveled through North Carolina during the years mentioned. He tells us that Elder **Elnathan Davis** had charge of six churches in the State and had three assistants. One of these was **Drury Sims**, who as sub-pastor was serving Rocky River Church, in Anson county. The next we hear of him was at Jersey Settlement, October 16, 1784, when he and Elder William Hill served as presbytery in the constitution of the church (Jersey) the second time. He was one of the constituent members. He was then called to the pastoral care of the church and held that position about five years. He and his wife were dismissed by letter September 8, 1789; but no intimation is given as to where he went."

So we may safely infer that both **Drury Sims** and **Elnathan Davis** were joint pastors in the earliest days of Rocky River Church. You may notice that Rocky River is spoken of in 1772-1773, which is earlier than any other known records have ever given any mention. This is not so strange since a number of churches of that period existed as "Arms" for years before they were orderly constituted by a presbytery. And, as Elder Sims remained in reach of Rocky River till 1789 he could have remained pastor till Elder **Edmond Lilly** took charge in 1790. Then Elder **John Culpeper, Sr.**, probably took charge and served till the end of 1840, as the records show.

https://archive.org/stream/historyofrockyri00broo/historyofrockyri00broo_djvu.txt

NOTE: When I began this research, I had no idea that it related to my family in any way, but Elnathan Davis is my 7th great-grandfather.

There are several names in the above paragraph which are important to this research. We will begin with **Simms/Sims**.

Will of **Robert Sims**, Bertie County NC, 1729

Bartey Prect.

I Robert Sims Being Very Sick and weak of Body But in perfect Memory And Remembering the

Mortality of my Body Do in This manner Give and Dispose of what worldly Goods God has Been

Pleased to Endow me with—

First I Bequeath my Soul to Almighty God who Gave it and my Body to be Buried Decently-According to the Discretion

of my Excec—

Item I give unto my Son Robert Sims my new? Dwelling Plantation and the Rest of the Land

Belonging thereunto I Say unto my Son Robert Sims for Ever and to the Heirs of his Body

Lawfully Begotten And for want of Such Heirs Then to The rest of the family—

Item I Give unto my Son Thomas Sims a Plantation and The Rest of the Land Belonging Thereunto Lying upon the Oachoneche

Neck Joynig upon William Boons Plantation I Say unto my Son Thomas Sims for Ever and to the Heirs of his Body Lawfully

Begotten and for want of Such Heirs Then to the next Heir of the Family

Item I give unto my Son James Sims four Hundreds acres of Land Lying upon **Conaconara Swamp** with the plantation Belonging Thereunto The Plantation That Matthew Caps now Lives upon— I Say unto my Son James Sims—

Item I give unto John Fybash [*Fiveash*] The Rest of The Land Containing Two Hundred and forty acres Belonging to the Said Tract Lying upon the Bever Dam Branch and the Said Branch to Be the Devishion? between Them

Item I give and Bequeath unto my Loving Wife my Cattle and for her to Dispose of Them Equally as She Shall See Convenient

when come to age I Likewise appoint **my Loving Brother John Sims** Exer. and my Loving Wife of This my Last Will and Testament

To Take a Diligent Care of my Children That They Be Brought up Christian Like

And I Do Entrust Them with all my Stock ***** *** *** Horses and Cattles and my negro man to Remain in Service for

The Benefit of *** ***** (illegible)

Item I give unto my Son Robt Sims my negro man Dick; When Come to age: if Life permits:

The Last Will and Testament of Robt Sims Testater:

Witness my Hand and Seal

Robert Simes (signed)

William (His + mark) Boon

Elias (his [backwards E] mark) Ford Jurat

Nathaniell Cooper

At a Court held for Bertie precinct the 10th day of Feb 1729

The above Will was proved in Open Court by the Oath of Elias Ford one of the Evidences there to Ord: to be Recorded

Test Tho Cren*ee

Transcript/ Marc Anderson/ from NC State Archives/ MARS Id: 12.96.1.2049

The **CONOCONNARA SWAMP** mentioned above is in Halifax. All these James Lee, Jr. deeds are in Halifax County:

December 15, 1744: **JAMES LEE** sold above to
EVAN RAGLAND - 60 L. Wit: ROBERT HARRIS,

DAVID ROZAR, **NATHANIEL MERRITT**.
(Halifax County Deed Book 5, p. 355)

August 17, 1741: **JAMES LEE** bought from **ROBERT LEE**, 100 L -
300 a.S/Moratoock, adj. a little run, a branch & river.
Wit: **RICHARD CURETON**, JOHN BOYLE, JOHN JONES
(Halifax County Deed Book 1, p. 419)

December 15, 1744: **JAMES LEE** & FRANCES, wife,
sold this to DAVID ROZAR. It had been purchased
from his brother. **ROBERT LEE**.
Wit: ROBERT HARRIS, EVAN RAGLAND, **NATHANIEL
MERRITT**.
(Halifax County-Deed Book 5, p. 368)

The above **James and Robert Lee** are the brothers of **William Lee**. They are the three sons named in the will of **James Lee, Sr.**, of Bertie.

John Anderson mentioned in the January 30, 1764 Cumberland County deed to **William Lee**, is also connected to the **Sims** family:

Abstracts of Granville Co. Deeds, 1746-1765, Z.H. Gwynn

520- Feb. 20, 1756- **Benjamin Sims of Johnston Co., N.C. and Mary, his wife, to George Anderson**, now of Granville Co., N.C., for 42 pds. 400 acres in St. John's Parish of Granville Co., N.C. above Lynches tract, it being land granted to Joseph Sims at Newbern Apr. 12, 1745 and conveyed by Joseph Sims to Benjamin Simms Aug. 30, 1748. Wts: Theo Brogdon, Eliz Beckham, Thos. Parker.

Will, George Anderson 1757 Granville

In the name of God amen this sixth Day of July in the yeare of our Lord 1757 I George Anderson of St. Johns Parish and County of Granville Being Sick and Weake of Body but of perfect minde and memory Do make and ordain this my last Will and Testament in maner and forme following

Imprimis— that is to say I give and Bequeth unto my Beloved wife Mary all my Estate Real and Personal — During her natural Life and after her Ded. to my Daughter Eave Anderson and her heirs and in case She Dies without Ishue I give my Land and plantation Whereon I now live [crossed out- “and the Remainder of my Estate”] to **my Brother William Andersons Son George Anderson** and his heirs and assigns for Ever and the Remainder of my Estat to be Equally Devided Between him and Elizabeth Underwood Daughter of John Underwood and their heirs for Ever and I Doe hereby nominate and apoint my Beloved Wife Mary Anderson and Osborn Jeffreys my Whole and Sole Executors of this my last Will and Testament uterly Revoking and Dysalowing all other former wills or Bequests by me heretofore made Ratifiing this to be my last will and Testament in witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this Day and Yeare above written

George (his mark) Anderson

assined Seald publisht pronounced

and Deliverd by the sd George Anderson

to be his last Will and Testament in

the prsanse of us the Subscribers

James (his marke) Braezer

William (his marke) Anderson

Thos: Smith

At a Court held for Granville County 7 March 1758 this Will was proved in due form of Law by the Oaths of William Anderson & Thomas Smith two of the witnesses thereto, and was Ordered to be Recorded

Teste Danl Weldon CC

Transcribed/M Anderson/from online NC Archives

Deeds in Granville show the connection:

04 Apr. 1755 Granville Co. deed C-51, Bobbitt to Jones, 100 acres South side Buffalo Creek, witnesses William Anderson and John Steel.

00 xxxx 1757 Granville Co. tax list, William Anderson.

00 xxxx 1758 Granville Co. tax list, William Anderson, by John Martin

00 xxxx 1759 Granville Co. tax list, William Anderson.

00 xxxx 1760 Granville Co. tax list, William Anderson and Son John Anderson. by Macon. also William Anderson, Thomas Person list.

00 xxxx 1761 Granville Co. tax list, William Anderson and son John, taken by Alston.

In 1777, **John Anderson, William Anderson, William Anderson, Jr.** and **George Anderson** all appear on the Cumberland County Tax List.

Elnathan Davis, mentioned in the Rocky River History, is also connected to the families surrounding **William Lee**. Multiple online sources claim that Benjamin Davis, the brother of **Elnathan Davis**, moved with Elnathan to Rowan County North Carolina, sometime around the French and Indian War of 1754-63. Benjamin is reported to have married Rebecca Harrell and Elnathan married Mary Collins, but probably not in North Carolina. Benjamin and Rebecca had a son Elnathan b. 1770 who is reported to have married **Rebecca Brooks**.

24 Jan 1763, **John Brooks** of Anson, to **John Culpepper** of same, for £10 NC money... land on S side Rocky R., beginning at a branch, near the ford, between John Brookes & John Lee...

Richardson Creek... John Brooks (B) (Seal), Wit: Henry Stokes, Aaron Burlison, W. Brooks.
Anson County, North Carolina Deed Abstracts, 1749-1766, Abstracts of Wills & Estates, 1749-
1795, Book 3, Page 173

There is a wealth of information about the connections between the Culpeppers, Lees, Brooks, and others
in the book *Early Virginia Colonial Families*.

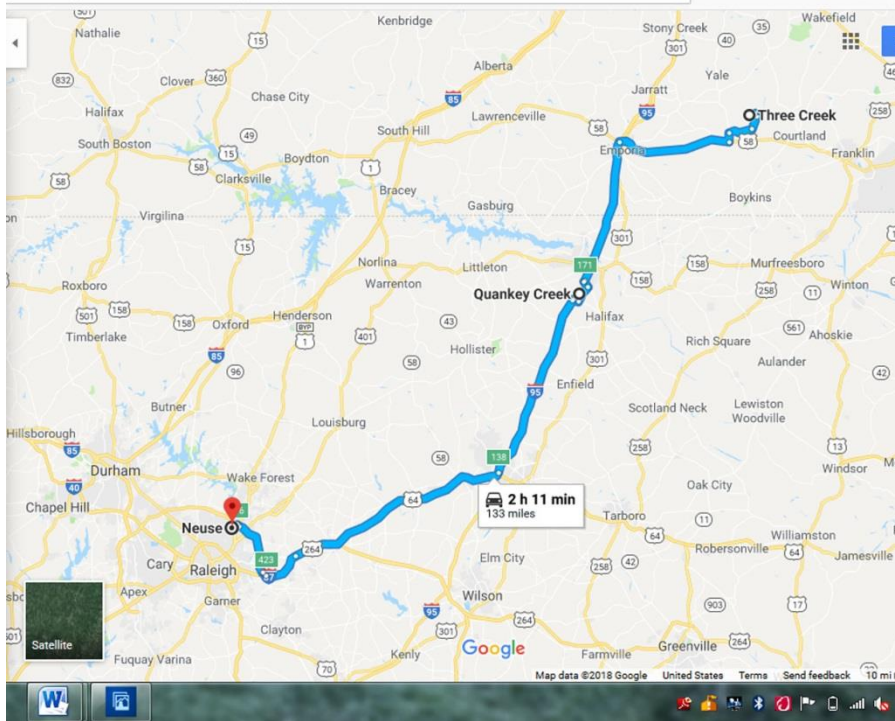
IMPORTANT ASIDE: From the will of **James Lee, Sr.** of Bertie/Edgecombe, there has arisen much
speculation about the location of “Kinyards,” the land left to sons **Robert** and **William**. Before coming to
Bertie County, **James Lee, Sr.** acquired land near Three Creek, Virginia.

James Lee, 190 acs. (N. L.), Surry Co; on S. side of the Three Creeks; 5 Sept. 1723, p. 283. 20
Shill.¹

Cavaliers and Pioneers, Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, abstracted by Nell Marion
Nugent. Volume Three: 1695-1732, p. 255

There is more about this deed’s significance in the book *Early Virginia Colonial Families*.

It is interesting to note that the land in the deed of **William Lee of Bladen** on 6 September, 1753 was
originally purchased by Lee from James Millikin of Edgecombe on 3 May 1735. This land “on the west
side of Quonke pocosin” and the Conoconnara Swamp land mentioned in the will of Robert Sims are
within 2-5 miles of each other. Also interesting is the fact that the land acquired by **James Lee, Sr.** at
Three Creeks, Virginia is only about 45 miles Northeast of **Quankey Creek, North Carolina**. I
speculate that after **William Lee** inherited the land at “Kinyards,” he went to do what anyone would do
with an inheritance. He went to see it. He may have sold the parcel, and purchased the land at Quankey
Creek at that time. The map below shows that it is about a 125 mile journey in a straight line from the
area of **James Lee Sr.’s** Bertie/Edgecombe land to Three Creek, VA. Quankey Creek falls within the
straight line. I believe the land at Three Creek is Kinyards.



From the inventory papers of James Millikin, **William Lee** may have stayed on the land at Quankey Creek until at least 1738. Unk. Lee is mentioned:

https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/9061/004853243_00472/350477?backurl=https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/52391563/person/26027298348/facts/citation/120361620486/edit/record#?imageId=004853243_00476

When William Lee moved on to Bladen County, he sold the land at Quankey Creek.

There are many later deeds for a William Lee in Bladen County, found at the North Carolina Archives. It is uncertain whether these deeds are for our target William Lee, or not. The Cumberland deeds are to the northeast of the land shown below at Colly Swamp, nearer to the Rocky River Baptist Church. There was another Lee family in this area at this time, so these deeds may be for one of them. I include them because we can't know for sure whether this was land acquired by RR Bill Lee's father, and later willed to him:

File No. 5191, William Lee, 1779, 200 acres on E. side of Colley Swamp; MARS Id: 12.14.33.5194 (Folder)

File No. 01005, William Lee, 1795, 100 acres Beg at a pine midway between Whortleberry pond and Cypress pond; MARS Id: 12.14.33.9464 (Folder)

File No. 01031, William Lee, 1796, 100 acres W. of South River; MARS Id:
12.14.33.9490 (Folder)

File No. 01032, William Lee, 1797, 320 acres E. side of Colly Swamp; MARS Id:
12.14.33.9491 (Folder)

File No. 5457, William Lee, 1802, 320 acres on E, side of Colley Swamp; MARS Id:
12.14.33.5466 (Folder)

File No. 01054, William Lee, 1803, 200 acres Joining Geo. Spearman; MARS Id:
12.14.33.9513 (Folder)

Again, it is possible that when William Lee died, all of this property in Bladen County would have been left to RR Bill Lee.

NOTE: MONTGOMERY COUNTY was formed from **ANSON COUNTY** in 1778.

Starting in 1790, we find **William Lee b. abt. 1756** in Montgomery County on the Census:

Name: William Lee

Home in 1790 (City, County, State):	Montgomery, North Carolina
Free White Persons - Males - Under 16:	1 RR Bill Lee, b. 1787
Free White Persons - Males - 16 and over:	2 William Lee, b. abt. 1756
Free White Persons - Females:	3
Number of Household Members:	6

On this same census are **John Lee, James Lee** and **Sarah Moore Lee**, their mother. Edmond Lilly, Sr. and Jr. and John Lilly, names associated with Rocky River Baptist Church, are also there. **Sarah Lee** is also found in Montgomery again in 1800, as are both William and James.

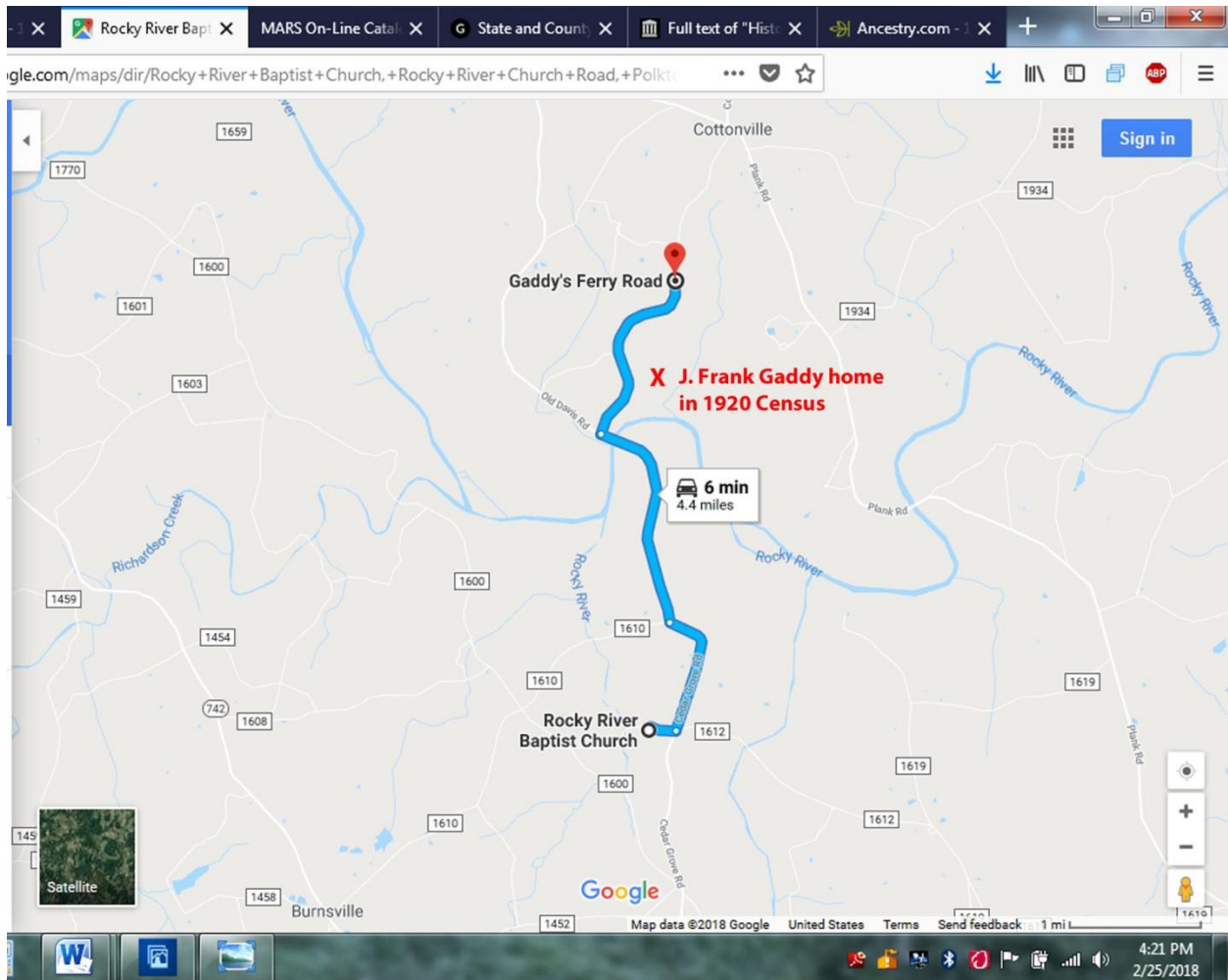
There is a deed for **William Lee** in Montgomery County in 1793-95:

File No. 852, **William Lee**, 1795, for 100 acres on the S.W. side of the Pee Dee River; MARS Id:
12.14.89.852 (Folder)

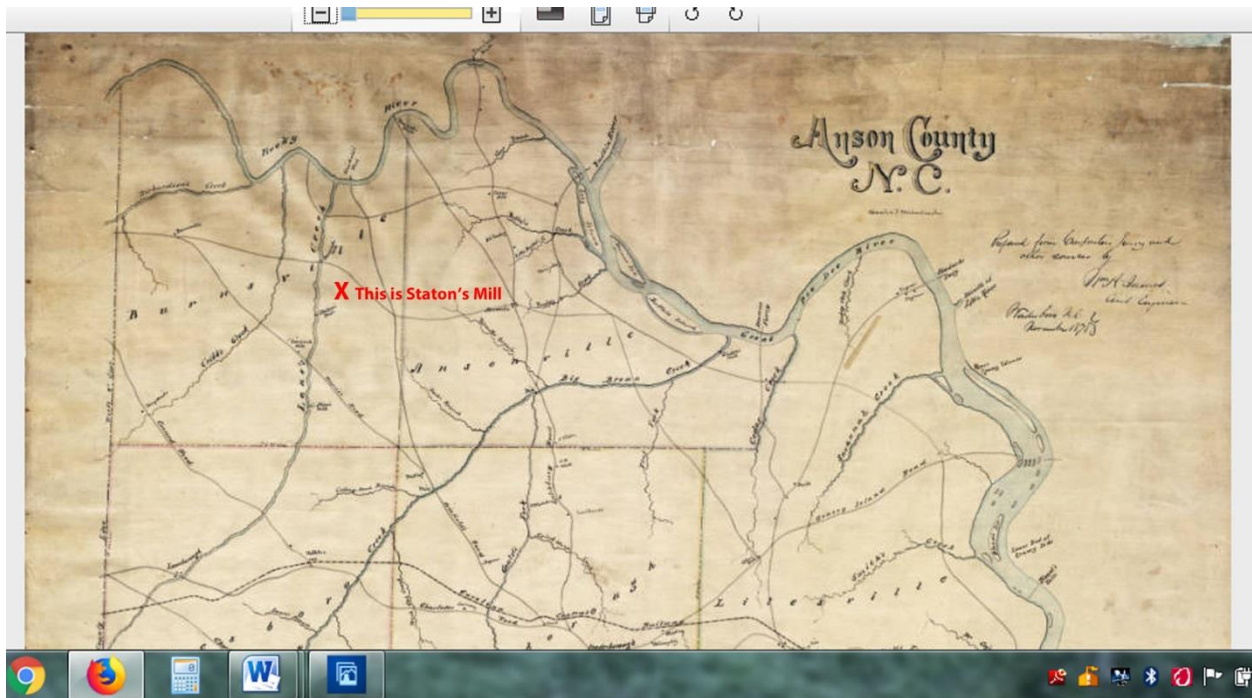
This is the deed for land that I believe would have eventually been referred to in "*History of Rocky River Church*" written 1923:

"It is known, however, that the Culpepers lived quite awhile on Rocky River near the first site of Rocky River Church, on what is now a part of the "Rocky River Bill" Lee plantation more recently owned by the late J. Frank Gaddy."

J. Frank Gaddy lived on Gaddy's Ferry Road in 1920. It seems likely that his land must have spanned both sides of the river:



On the 1820 Census for Anson County, RR Bill Lee is listed living at Staton. The map below shows the location of Staton's Mill on an 1878 Map of Anson County. It is very near what would be the location of Rocky River Baptist Church.



There is a much later deed in Montgomery, which I believe to be for RR Bill Lee:

Title File No. 2402, William Lee, 1824, for 22 acres on McGuire's Fork of Little Creek;
 MARS Id: 12.14.89.2402 (Folder)

William Lee b. 1756, father of **Rocky River Bill Lee**, most likely died in Montgomery County sometime between the Censuses of 1810 and 1820.

1800 United States Federal Census

Name: William Lee

Home in 1800 (City, County, State):

Montgomery, North Carolina

Free White Persons - Males - Under 10:	1	James Lee, sibling of RR Bill Lee
Free White Persons - Males - 10 thru 15:	1	John Lee, sibling of RR Bill Lee
Free White Persons - Males - 26 thru 44:	1	William Lee, b. 1756
Free White Persons - Females - Under 10:	3	
Free White Persons - Females - 10 thru 15:	1	
Free White Persons - Females - 26 thru 44:	1	
Number of Household Members Under 16:	6	
Number of Household Members Over 25:	2	
Number of Household Members:	8	

1810 United States Federal Census

Name: Wm Lee

Home in 1810 (City, County, State): Capt Cage, Montgomery, North Carolina

Free White Persons - Males - 10 thru 15:	1	James Lee
Free White Persons - Males - 45 and over:	1	William Lee, b. 1756
Free White Persons - Females - Under 10:	1	
Free White Persons - Females - 10 thru 15:	1	
Free White Persons - Females - 16 thru 25:	2	
Free White Persons - Females - 26 thru 44:	2	
Number of Household Members Under 16:	3	
Number of Household Members Over 25:	3	
Number of Household Members:	8	

In this 1820 Census, **William “Rocky River Bill” Lee** is living nearby Armiger Lilly, a son of Edmond Lilly, who was an early pastor of the Rocky River Baptist Church. Also nearby are **Merritt Lee**, Solomon Lee, **John Lee** and **James Lee**. **John Lee** is in the 26 to 45 age column and **James Lee** is in the 16-26 year old age column, the correct ages to be the siblings of William Lee listed in the 1810 Census. Either **Truckwheel Bill Lee** is the son of RR Bill Lee OR he could be a son of James Lee who has been found in censuses next to RR Bill’s father since 1790 in Montgomery, NC. He could also be a son of John Lee. However, James Lee and John Lee, both with children, are listed in the 1820 Census living adjacent William Lee. It doesn’t make sense to me that one of their sons would be living with Williams “Rocky River Bill” Lee.

Name: William Lee

Home in 1820 (City, County, State):	Staton, Anson, North Carolina
Enumeration Date:	August 7, 1820
Free White Persons - Males - Under 10:	1 Shepherd Lee, b. 1813
Free White Persons - Males - 10 thru 15:	1 William Lee, b. 1803 (TW Bill Lee)
Free White Persons - Males - 26 thru 44:	1 RR Bill Lee, b. 1787
Free White Persons - Females - Under 10:	2
Free White Persons - Females - 26 thru 44:	1
Slaves - Males - 14 thru 25:	1
Slaves - Females - Under 14:	1
Slaves - Females - 14 thru 25:	1
Number of Persons - Engaged in Agriculture:	4
Free White Persons - Under 16:	4
Free White Persons - Over 25:	2
Total Free White Persons:	6
Total Slaves:	3
Total All Persons - White, Slaves, Colored, Other:	9

There was record loss in Montgomery County from a courthouse fire in 1835, with most records lost. The censuses may be the only information available to pinpoint the death of RR Bill's father, William Lee. There is no existing will for William Lee in Anson.

Merritt Lee, living next door to RR Bill, is the son of **William Lee b. 1750 d. 1794** and **Susanna Merritt**. This William is RR Bill Lee's father's first cousin. Merritt Lee and RR Bill would be second cousins.

There are many sources which state that William Lee born 1825 is the son of RR Bill Lee, and the brother of Shepherd Lee born 1813. Study of the census data suggests that this is not the case. As unlikely as it seems at first glance, William born 1825 is probably the son of Shepherd Lee:

Name: Shepherd Lee

Home in 1840 (City, County, State)	Anson, North Carolina
Free White Persons - Males - Under 5	1
Free White Persons - Males - 15 thru 19	1 William Lee, b. 1826
Free White Persons - Males - 20 thru 29	1 Shepherd Lee, b. 1813
Free White Persons - Females - Under 5	1
Free White Persons - Females - 20 thru 29	1
Slaves - Males - Under 10	1
Slaves - Males - 10 thru 23	1
Slaves - Females - 10 thru 23	1
Persons Employed in Agriculture	4
Free White Persons - Under 20	3
Free White Persons - 20 thru 49	2
Total Free White Persons	5
Total Slaves	3
Total All Persons - Free White, Free Colored, Slaves	8

As improbable as it sounds, there it is. There is a will for Shepherd Lee filed 1895.

https://www.ancestry.com/interactive/9061/004852755_00510/322556?backurl=https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/68901442/person/100182376185/facts/citation/500402199319/edit/record#?imageId=004852755_00514

Of course, there is more to the story. I am stopping here because I have achieved my goal of uncovering the ancestry of Rocky River Bill Lee of Anson. He is William Lee b. 1756, son of William Lee b. 1720, son of James Lee, Sr. of Bertie/Edgecombe, North Carolina

NOTES: I would bet the misspelled name in these deeds, variously Caker, Keker, Kaker, and Kake is actually KIKER. Fanny Lee, a daughter of Robert Lee b. 1745 and granddaughter of James L. Lee and Frances Cureton married an unknown Kiker. This is from Robert Lee's will.

1802 July 13, Anthony Lee (John Lee's son) to George "Caker" for 1,000 pounds sold 5 ac on S. Side of the Thurafare; border begins at a burch at mouth of Dutch Br. And Joins the "back line"; includes a mill seat. Signed by Anthony Lee

Witnesses: William Lanier and Zachariah White

1802 July 14, "Jorge Keker" and William Lee swore they heard Richard Lee deceased direct his brother Anthony Lee to make a deed for 5 acres that includes a mill seat on Rocky River to "Jorge Kaker sr"

Witnesses: William Lee and "Jorge Kake"

FAMILY TREES FOR REFERENCE – ALSO SEE ATTACHED COMBINED TREE

William Lee, b. 1750, d. 1794

Dr. John Lee (1678 - 1738)
great-grandfather

Lee, James Sr. (1702 - 1731)
son of Dr. John Lee

James Ludwell Lee (1720 - 1777)
son of Lee, James Sr.

William Lee (1750 – 1794)
son of James Ludwell Lee

William Lee, b. 1743

Dr. John Lee (1678 - 1738)
great-grandfather

Lee, James Sr. (1702 - 1731)
son of Dr. John Lee

Robert Lee (1722 - 1766)
son of Lee, James Sr.

William Lee (1743 - ?)
the son of Robert Lee

ROCKY RIVER BILL LEE, b. 1779, d. 1857

Dr. John Lee (1678 - 1738)

2nd great-grandfather

Lee, James Sr. (1702 - 1731)

son of Dr. John Lee

William Lee (1720 -)

son of Lee, James Sr.

William Lee (1756 - 1810)

son of William Lee

William Rocky River Bill Lee (1779 – 1857)

son of William Lee

