Abraham Haskett and Haskett's Creek

Abraham Haskett (1733-1818) came to Randolph County from Pasquotank County in the mid-1760s, when what would later become the western half of Randolph County was part of Rowan County. He first appears in Rowan County records in 1765, about the same time as Jesse Henley (1725-1801), who also would become prominent in the early history of Randolph County.[1] Both Haskett and Henley were Quakers, and prior to their move westward were members of the Pasquotank Monthly Meeting in the Albemarle region of eastern North Carolina.[2]

Randolph County is known for its Quaker heritage, but most Quakers who settled in the region traveled from Pennsylvania down the Great Wagon Road. When the Lords Proprietors gained control of the North Carolina colony in 1663, they invited English "dissenters," including Quakers, to immigrate in order to better establish the struggling, sparsely-populated colony, promising them freedom to practice their religion.[3] Initial settlement of North Carolina took place in the Albemarle, and many Quakers settled in the area that would become Pasquotank and Perquimans counties. By the mid-1700s, however, the population of eastern North Carolina had grown, land had become scarce, and disease more prevalent. Many residents began moving inland, including some Quakers.

Abraham Haskett was born in 1733 to William (1703-1772) and Mary (1706-1785) Haskett.[4] William's father Anthony (1675-1735) was born in North Carolina, so the Hasketts were among the earliest settlers of the Albemarle. The family included one daughter and eight sons, including Abraham's brother Joseph (1749-1834), who in 1775 would join Abraham in the area that would become Randolph County.[5] In 1753, Abraham received permission to marry Jemima Lacy (1735-1818?) of the Perquimans Monthly Meeting.[6] In 1761, he was disowned by that meeting for being slow to repay a debt, and "not in a spirit to receive advice."[7]

Abraham appears in Rowan County in 1765, appointed constable in "Mr. Nation's district."[8] Nation is an early Randolph County name associated with the present-day Randleman area, so it's clear that Haskett settled in the eastern region of Rowan County that would become part of Guilford County when it was carved out of Orange and Rowan in 1771, and Randolph County when it was created out of southern Guilford County in 1779.

Also in 1765, Jesse Henley sold land in Pasquotank County, where he had been prosperous, and obtained "140 acres both sides of Trading Path & both sides of Deep River in Rowan County."[9] This location would correspond with property Henley is known to have owned in the present-day Randleman area. It appears that Haskett and Henley, apparently associated in eastern North Carolina, moved to present-day Randolph County together. In her exhaustive history of the Henley family, Eleanor P. Bell posits the arduous journey Jesse Henley and his family (and by extension, Abraham Haskett and his family) might have undertaken to reach the interior of the colony from the Albemarle region: "From early maps we find that all Trading Paths and 'roads' went in a north-south direction and the waterways flowed from northwest to

the ocean. People going from east to west had to travel trails and unmarked paths through the country, fording all bodies of water where there were no ferries…" until reaching the Great Trading Path northeast of present-day Raleigh, which would carry them to the Deep River in present-day Randolph County.[10]

Henley continued his previous prosperity in his new home, amassing over 7,000 acres in land grants and purchases extending from Caraway Mountain to present-day Randleman.[11] When the Randolph County seat was moved from Johnstonville, near present-day Randleman, to the center of the county in 1793, Henley sold two acres to Randolph County government to be the site of a new courthouse, and provided the surrounding 55 acres on which the town of Asheborough would be laid out.

In 1784, Abraham Haskett received a land grant of 200 acres from the state in present-day North Asheboro, presumably along what would become known as Haskett's Creek. The tract is identified as being situated west of the Old Moravian Road.[12] While a land grant is recorded on a certain date, a person may have occupied the land long before the grant is formalized. Haskett also may have owned other acreage that does not appear to be recorded; during his life he sold at least 100 acres of the land grant property but also willed 200 acres to his heirs.[13]

The Old Moravian Road was the byway between Cross Creek, now Fayetteville, and the Moravian settlements around what would become Winston-Salem. It roughly tracked the present-day route of Fayetteville Street through Asheboro, although the actual path may have varied considerably. The road was a main thoroughfare from the colonial era through the Civil War, and in the 1850s was paved with planks to make travel easier. It was identified as the Fayetteville and Western Plank Road, and later as the Old Plank Road.

Haskett's Creek rises in the vicinity of Amity Road in west-central Asheboro and runs north between I-73 and North Fayetteville Street, winding northeasterly to cross West Bailey and West Balfour streets before turning generally east to cross present-day North Fayetteville Street about four miles north of the center of Asheboro, and flow into the Deep River.

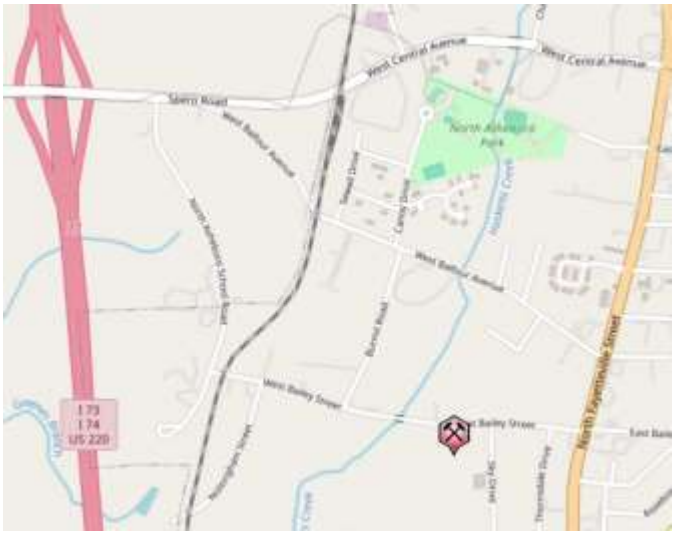
Haksett's Creek Covered Bridge near Central Falls, 1935

It is difficult to trace the exact location of Haskett's land, but it can be safely deduced to have adjoined the northwestern corner of the Scarlett Copper Mine property, which sits south of present-day West Bailey Street and west of Sky Drive, just west of North Fayetteville Street. In the early and mid-1800s, this property was owned by Haskett's grandson, John Scarlet (1803-1890), and his wife Elizabeth (1803-1860).[14] Elizabeth was Joseph's granddaughter, thus John and Elizabeth were second cousins.

In 1882, a gold mine began operation on the Scarlet property, which was by this time in the hands of other owners.[15] A few years after the gold mine closed, the site was mined for

copper from 1899-1915. Sampling at the site continued until 1948; the shafts were filled in in 1969, and the main shaft was converted to a water supply.

Deed descriptions of the mine property peg its northwestern edge as "near Haskett's corner." A reminiscence about Haskett's Creek written for an Asheboro newspaper in 1940, and tracing the creek from south to north, describes the Haskett farm as laying on the "left," or west, side of the creek.[16] This would place Abraham Haskett's homestead perhaps in the area of North Asheboro Middle School and southwest of North Asheboro Park. Between 1801 and 1815, Abraham's brother Joseph obtained some 370 acres in the area, some of it contiguous with Abraham's.[17] It is possible that the creek takes its name from Joseph, or both Abraham and Joseph, although it was Abraham who arrived in the area first. One possibility, entirely speculative, is that the Haskett property was near the location where, at the time, the Moravian Road might have crossed the creek, and hence served as a landmark from which the creek took its name.



The area of Haskett's Creek showing the location of the Scarlett Copper Mine, from mindat.org.

Although Abraham appears to show no further affiliation with the Society of Friends after 1761, his wife Jemima is described as a founder of Back Creek Monthly Meeting, which was organized in 1792.[18] In 1793, their daughter Orpha was disowned by Back Creek for marrying John Scarlet (Scarlett), whose family's property adjoined Haskett's, "out of unity" – that is, outside the faith.[19]

In spite of being disowned, Abraham may have retained his Quaker principles. At the time of Randolph County's founding at height of the Revolutionary War in 1779, he appears on the county's first tax list as having failed to take the Oath of Allegiance and return an inventory of his property for the purposes of taxation.[20] The Oath of Allegiance to the newly-formed United States was required by the Patriot government of North Carolina. Quakers declined to swear oaths, and some, as pacifists, declined to pay taxes that would support the war. Abraham may have fallen into this category.

Joseph emancipated enslaved people that he owned, including a 28-year-old man named Pompey Free in 1803 and a woman named Sarah with her child, Peter in 1814.[21] Although Quakers are known for their opposition to enslavement, early on some Quakers owned enslaved people, but then came to view slavery as wrong and emancipated them. The deed emancipating Sarah and Peter states Joseph's view that it is "right and natural" that they be free. Abraham appears not to have owned enslaved people.

When Abraham Haskett died in 1818, his wife Jemima inherited his land, which passed to their daughter Orpha.[22] Orpha and John Scarlet ended up in Barren County, Kentucky, but appear to have continued to own the Abraham Haskett land in Randolph County until it was sold by their heirs in 1859.[23] The Haskett family name, in terms of property transactions, disappears in Randolph County by 1879. However, the name lives on through Haskett's Creek.

Abraham Haskett's story provokes another area of speculation. When the county seat was moved to Asheboro in 1793, on the land bought from Jesse Henley, the courthouse was situated at the present-day intersection of East Salisbury and North Main streets in Asheboro, on Abram's Creek. Abram's spring sits just northwest of the intersection. The creek joins Penn Wood Branch, which flows north into Haskett's Creek. No one has been able to identify Abrams, and there's no record of that name in the county at the time, first or last – other than Abraham Haskett. A deed in which Haskett sells 40 acres in 1812 describes the property as "on Abraham's Creek," long after "Haskett's Creek" was first used in similar descriptions for the area in present-day North Asheboro.[24] Does the deed actually refer to Haskett's Creek, or another creek – perhaps the Abram's Creek traditionally associated with the county seat? If Abraham Haskett arrived with Henley, and perhaps settled on or near his land before acquiring his own – is it possible that Abraham Haskett also gave Abram's (Abraham's?) spring and creek its name?

—Ross A. Holt, 2025

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[1] Jo White Linn, *Abstracts of the Minutes of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, Rowan County, North Carolina, 1763-1774*, Vol. II (Salisbury, N.C.: Jo White Linn, 1979), 44 and 62.

[2] Wade Hinshaw, *Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy*, Vol. I (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1978), 100.

[3] For a discussion of Quakers and early North Carolina settlement, see David La Vere, *The Tuscarora War: Indians, Settlers and the Fight for the Carolina Colonies* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013, 6-9.

[4] Hinshaw, 100.

[5] Hinshaw, 1030. Joseph was received into Center Friends Monthly Meeting, located just north of the present-day Guilford County line in the central part of the county.

[6] Hinshaw, 52.

[7] Ibid., and U.S. Quaker Meeting Records, 1861-1865, North Carolina, Perquimans, Perquimans/Piney Woods Monthly Meeting, Perquimans Monthly Meeting Vol. 11-A, 1736-1774, n.p. [Ancestry.com].

[8] Linn, 44.

[9] Eleanor P. Bell, *The Saga of the Family and Descendants of David Vestal Henley and Eleanor Lassiter of Randolph County, North Carolina* (Columbia, S.C.: Dependable Printing, Inc., 1986), 178

[10] Ibid., 181-182. Bell goes on to describe how the Henleys might have traveled, and what livestock and other possessions they likely brought along.

[11] Ibid., 178.

[12] Randolph County Deed Book 2/95.

[13] See Randolph County Deed Book 13/233, and North Carolina, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1665-1998 for Abraham Hasket [Ancestry.com].

[14] Randolph County Deed Book 22/575.
[15] See P. Albert Carpenter III, Metallic and Mineral Deposits of the Carolina Slate Belt, North Carolina (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of Natural and Economic Resources, 1976), 64.
[16] J.F. Burkhead, "Rowing Down Haskett's Creek," The Randolph Tribune (Asheboro, North Carolina), 17 March 1940, 5-A. Burkhead's article follows the creek from its rising to Deep River, identifies property owners along the way, and recounts events and legends associated with the area.
[17] See Randolph County Deed Books 8/220, 9/74 and 9/76.
[18] Hinshaw, 695.
[19] Hinshaw, 717.
[20] "Randolph County's First Tax List," *Randolph County Genealogical Journal*, Vol. XXIV No. 1 (Spring 2000), 15.
[21] See Randolph County, North Carolina, Randolph County Public Libraries, Randolph Room, Barbara N. Grigg Collection, Haskett Family File, [Petition of Joseph Haskett, 1803]; "Freeing of Slaves," *Randolph County Genealogical Journal*, Vol. XII No. 2, Spring 1988, 41-42. citing Records of Slaves and Free Persons, N.C. Archives, C.R. 081.928, 1-6; and Randolph County Deed Book 12/255.
[22] See Randolph County Deed Book 53/158
[23] Ibid.
[24] Randolph County Deed Book 13/91.