

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE STARNES FAMILY OF BUNCOMBE COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

On August 24, 1818, John Starnes purchased 100 acres of land located on Ragsdale Creek in Buncombe County, North Carolina. With this purchase begins the presence of the Starnes family in Buncombe County.

John Starnes, born March 6, 1779, was the youngest child of Captain John Starnes of Mecklenburg County (now Cabarrus County), North Carolina. Captain Starnes died during his service in the Revolutionary War, leaving his wife, Margaret Speck Starnes with three young children to raise. Although Captain Starnes owned 150 acres of land in Mecklenburg County, and 1,000 acres in Kentucky, it was certainly a struggle for the widow and her family in the uncertain times that followed the Revolutionary War. Captain Starnes' estate was not finally settled until April of 1802. The lands of Captain Starnes went to his eldest son, Frederick, and John, the younger son, had to look elsewhere for his future wealth.

On July 20, 1802, in Cabarrus County, North Carolina, John Starnes entered into a bond to marry Mary Etta Hise. She was born on April 10, 1784, and was the daughter of George Hise and Catherine Starringer (Starnes). Although the exact relationship of Catherine to Captain John is at present unknown, it is likely that she was the daughter of one of Captain John Starnes' uncles, Adam, Leonard, Thomas, or Joseph Starnes. From this point forward, the lives of John Starnes and Mary Etta Hise are more closely connected with the Hise family than with members of the Starnes family. John's brother, Frederick Starnes, moved to the Cane Creek area of what was then Mecklenburg County, where he founded one of the branches of the Starnes family in present day Union County, North Carolina. John's sister, Catherine Starnes married John Wentz, a Revolutionary War soldier, who had served under Captain Starnes. The descendants of this family also ended up in present day Union County, North Carolina.

In 1806, George Hise sold most of his lands in Cabarrus County, and moved to northern Burke County, under the shadow of Table Rock, and just below the Linville Gorge. Accompanying George and Catherine Hise were his children and their spouses, including John and Mary Etta Starnes. George eventually acquired over 1,000 acres of land in Burke County prior to his death in 1846. John Starnes also acquired lands in this same part of Burke County. However, by around 1815, John Starnes and his brother-in-law, Jacob Hise had left Burke County, and were located in Haywood County, North Carolina, which lies to the west of Buncombe County. It is somewhat puzzling as to why John Starnes and Jacob Hise would move to Haywood County, and then double back to the east to finally settle in Buncombe County, North Carolina. However, once again, the explanation lies in the wanderings of the Hise family. George Hise's brother, Jacob, resided in Greene County, Tennessee until 1815, when he moved to Haywood County, North Carolina. The records of Haywood County reveal that Jacob acquired a considerable amount of land prior to his death in 1821. One of the deeds refers to his mill and improvements located on Crabtree Creek, a tributary of the Pigeon River. When uncle Jacob went to Haywood County, with most of his children, apparently John Starnes

and his brother-in-law, Jacob Hise, went to help with the construction of the mill. After the completion of the mill, they moved to Buncombe, and purchased adjoining tracts on Ragsdale Creek.

John Starnes remained in the area now known as Starnes Cove for the remainder of his life. He died on December 20, 1855. His wife survived him for nearly 20 years, dying in 1875. Both John and Mary Etta Starnes were originally buried at Starnes Cove, west of Asheville. However, the lands eventually passed out of the family, and their graves were moved to Riverside Cemetery in Asheville, on the east side of the French Broad River, in a plot near that of their son, Thomas Albert Starnes.

The children of John and Mary Etta Hise Starnes were as follows:

1. Catherine Starnes (born July 3, 1803) married Thomas Lance (born ca 1799).
2. Margaret Starnes (born April 23, 1804) married William Adam Penley.
3. Jacob Starnes (born March 16, 1805, died 1876) married Levina Dotson (born 1825, died July 3, 1868) on November 5, 1844 (bond).
1. George Starnes (born April 16, 1808, died 1879) married Margaret Miller (born 1816).
2. Massinda Atle Starnes (born August 7, 1810, died March 27, 1877) married Eli Glenn (born June 21, 1812, died January 28, 1900).
3. Reuemma Starnes (born December 1812, died 1823).
4. John Russell Starnes (born June 3, 1814, died February 25, 1893) married Mary Ann Rich (born September 17, 1829, died March 18, 1882) in 1847.
5. Mary Louisa Starnes (born November 6, 1816) married Leander J. Wells (died 1849).
6. Thomas Albert Starnes (born April 8, 1818, died December 28, 1897) married Elizabeth Morgan (born September 28, 1825, died June 7, 1896) on December 6, 1842.
7. Minerva Starnes (born February 8, 1820) married Jeremiah Miller.
8. Francis Marion Starnes (born August 21, 1829, died November 3, 1862) married Matilda Elvira McKinney (born February 23, 1837, died March 1, 1920) on November 30, 1854.