
News, Updates, & More

Varner Family Genealogy

IN THIS ISSUE:

From the Administrator	1
Questions/News.....	1
Varner/Riggs Update.....	2
George Varner of Missouri.....	2
Direct Line	
How Did Missouri Look?.....	3

FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR

This newsletter now has clickable links. Wherever you see a blue underlined hyperlink, you can click from within the PDF and go directly to that mentioned site.

A copy of this and previous issues of the newsletter are downloadable from the website.

Varner Genealogy Website:

[http://home.kc.surewest.net/btvarner/
VarnerGenealogy.htm](http://home.kc.surewest.net/btvarner/VarnerGenealogy.htm)

Some files require a password to open. That password is: VarnerFamily (Case sensitive, no spaces). Please do not provide this password to anyone else. Send them to me so I can keep track of who might access the information.

QUESTIONS / NEWS

Don and Judy Varner now have a new email address and are back online. That address is: jdsvarner@gmail.com

Varner /Riggs Connection Update

No new updates. Continuing to research.

George Varner of Missouri Direct Line DNA

Still trying to reestablish contact with Norman (Butch) Fredrick Varner's family in Eldon. If someone else has a relationship with these folks please let me know.

Looking to engage one of more of the people below in **bold**.

George Varner (1789-1861)

Samuel Philip Varner (1846-1896)

Francis Logan Varner (1874-1939)

Norman Walter Varner (1912-1997)

Raymond Walter Varner (1942-200xs)

Mother Lela Corneett

Jason Raymond Varner

Mother Christine Elizabeth Swillium

Micha Dority Varner

Mother Nancy Dority

Norman Fredrick (Butch) Varner

Mother Alice Ethlene Brown

Michael Logan Varner

Michael Lee Varner

How Did Missouri Look When George Arrived in 1819?

We know the first piece of evidence indicating the presence in Missouri of George Varner was in 1819 at the town of Franklin.

We know that George served during the 1st Seminole War between January and March of 1818. That three month draft contract was with a unit of the Georgia Militia. George was “drafted” at Washington, Wilkes County, GA. The town of Washington is located just south of the present county of Oglethorpe. He was mustered out at Hartford, GA. (About 20 miles south of Macon, GA.

Sometime after his completion of that service, and before a letter finds George in Franklin, Missouri in 1819, George travelled to Missouri. From where did he start? How did he travel? What did Missouri look like at that time? What was going on in the area at the time?

From where did George start out? George must have left his home state of Georgia shortly after the end of his service. We don’t know if he first went back to Oglethorpe County where his relatives were located or not.

Around this same time, the “Owen” family immigrated from Oglethorpe County, Georgia to near Franklin,

Missouri. Thomas Owen had married a Nancy Varner in Oglethorpe before they departed. We believe that Harriet Owen Varner, who George later married is the daughter of this Thomas Owen. Thomas Owen and George Varner are known to have been acquainted in Missouri. Possibly they even travelled to Missouri together.

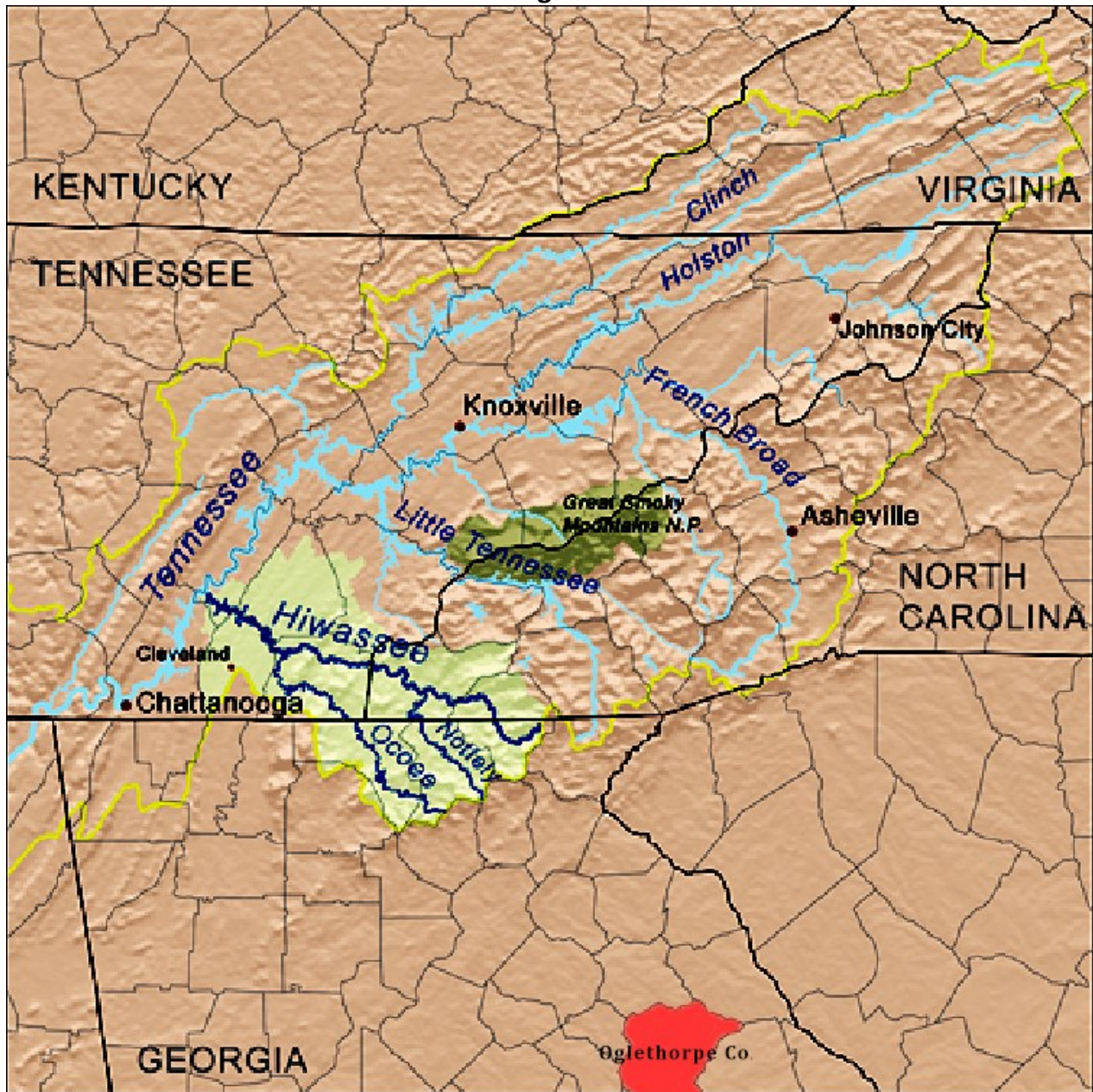
Some of the Varner’s from Oglethorpe County moved into Tennessee. Paths through Tennessee and Kentucky were common routes for immigrants to travel west from the states.

George had enlisted in the US Army in 1810 on the Hiwassee River. Immigrants often followed rivers. Where the Hiwassee dumps into the Tennessee River is very near the Cumberland Trail, a path used by many immigrants going west.

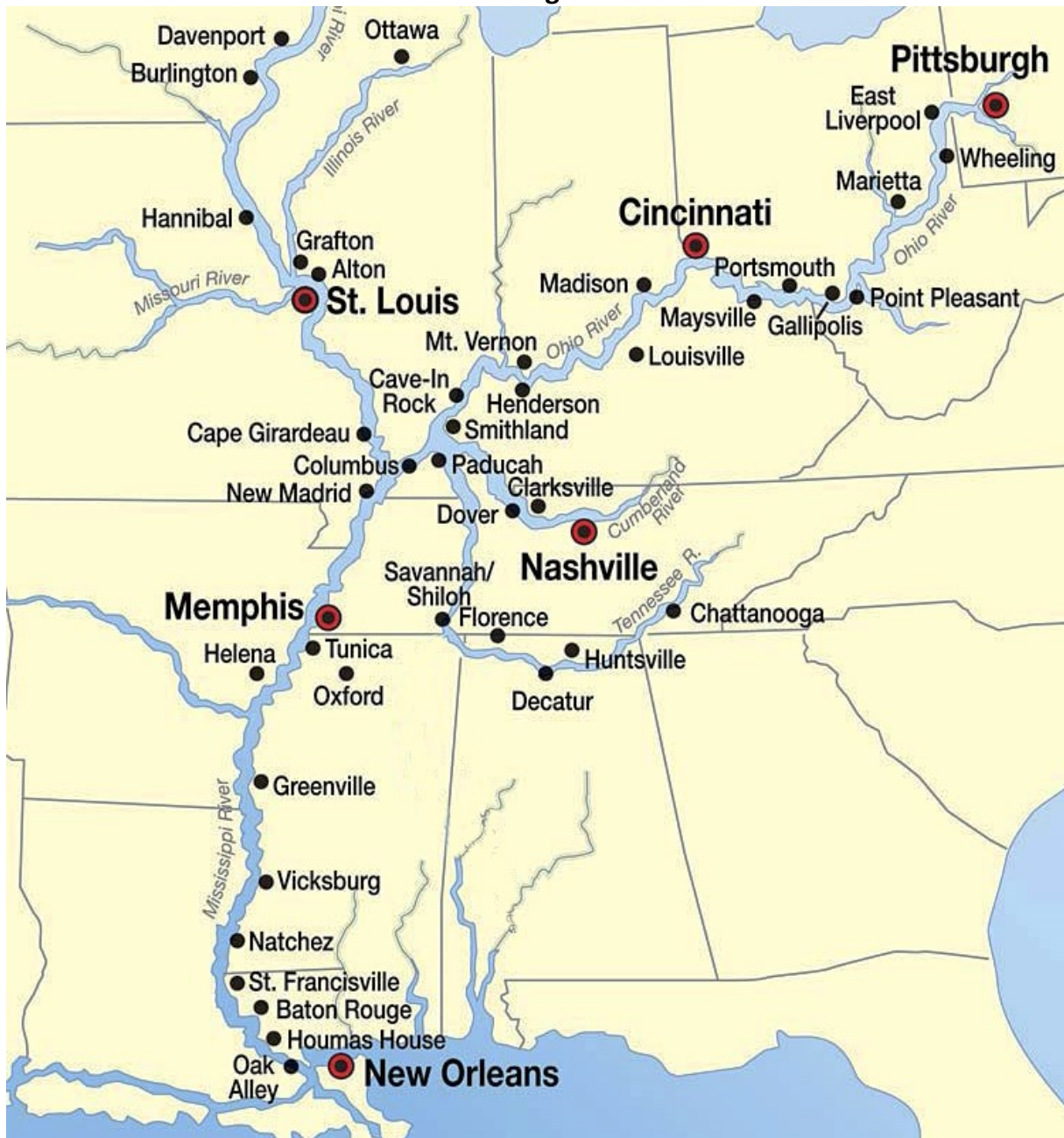
The Ocoee River is located north of Oglethorpe County, flows into the Hiwassee River which in turn flows into the Tennessee River. (Image 1)

So it is possible that George and whoever he might have traveled with followed this water path.

The Tennessee River then flows into the Ohio River near Paducah, Kentucky. The Ohio River shortly thereafter dumps into the Mississippi River south of Cape Girardeau. (Image 2)

Image 1¹

¹ Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hiwassee_River

Image 2²

² <http://www.americancruiselines.com/>

But in reality mostly the well-to-do or those employed on the river used boats for transportation west. Everyone else went overland, and there is only one main trail or road used.

What started out as the Cisca Trail, became the Old Federal Road. The road ran between the early Spanish settlement in St. Augustine, Florida to near what is now Nashville.³

The trail went by many names. Called the Nickajack Trail by early white settlers in Tennessee. The Cisca Trail by early Shawnee Indians who named it after their village in central Tennessee, the Georgia Road in Georgia,⁴ and the Old Federal Road by the United States which improved it for travel after 1803.⁵

This route was the main means of travel through Georgia and was used extensively. It also was the main route the military used in Georgia during both the War of 1812 and the Seminole Wars. George would have been very familiar with this road. (Image 3)

Presumably from Nashville, George would have travelled west. He would likely have made his way to St. Louis before heading west along the Missouri River by water or the Boone's Lick trail until arriving in Franklin.

³ Indian Trails of the Southeast by William E. Myer (1925) p. 846

⁴ Ibid

⁵ http://www.aboutnorthgeorgia.com/ang/Old_Federal_Road

Of course how many layovers occurred that amounted to days, weeks, or months are unknown. The space of time between his discharge and the letter for him in Franklin is only slightly over a year.

Upon viewing Missouri Territory for the first time, what did George see?

Upper Louisiana (Louisiana Territory), was changed to the Missouri Territory in 1812 in order to differentiate the land from Louisiana proper, which had become a state that year (Image 4).

Missouri was separating its boundaries off from the rest of Missouri Territory and looking towards becoming a state in 1821 (Image 5).

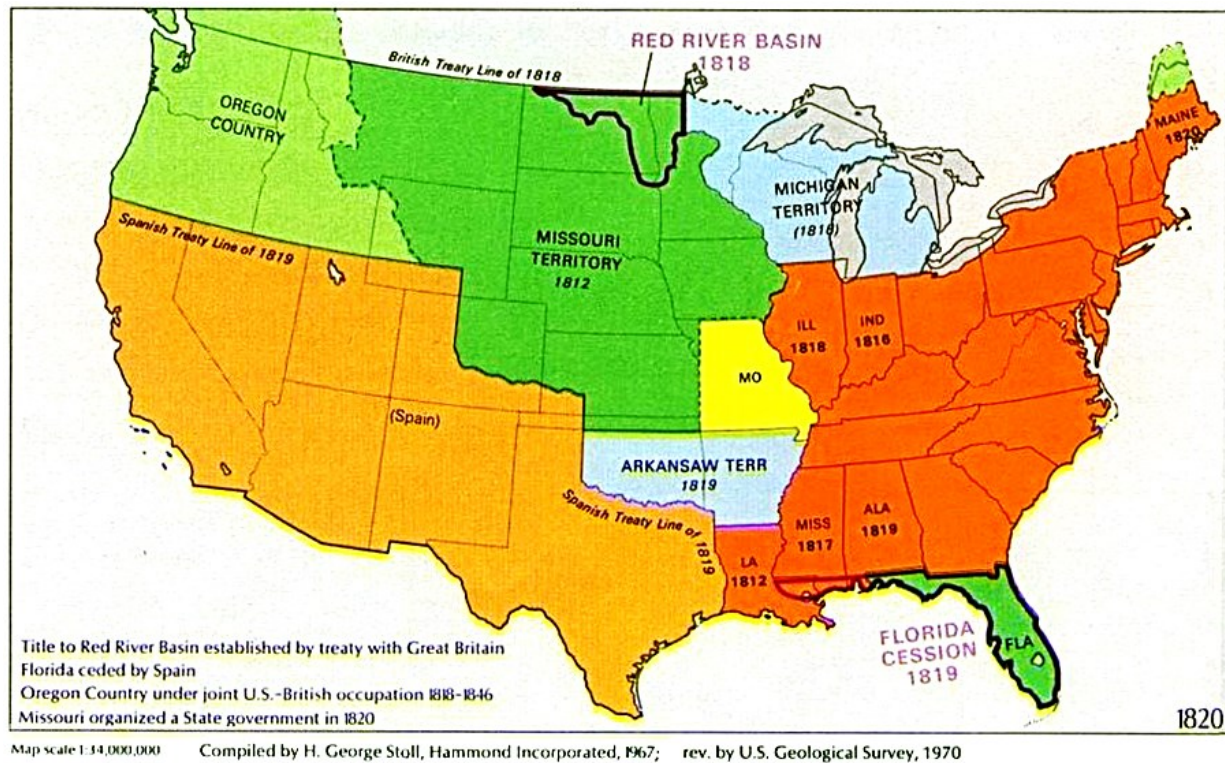
Image 3⁶

⁶ <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/>

Image 4⁷



⁷ Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missouri_Territory

Image 5⁸

⁸ Wikipedia: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Missouri_Compromise

St. Louis was at the time a small but important town that had been in existence since 1761. With a population of 4,600⁹, St. Louis had been under Spanish and French control before purchase by the United States in 1803, and both the culture and population showed this influence.

A very good description of what St. Louis was like can be found in the memoir of John Mason Peck, a Baptist missionary who extensively travelled the country during this very timeframe. Peck writes:

"At the commencement of 1818, St. Louis was crowded with inhabitants, including families temporarily residing there for the winter. Every house and room that could shelter persons was occupied. There was no regular hotel, nor were there even boarding-houses, that afforded nightly accommodation. 'Shin-plaster' currency abounded. The bills were the droppings of the first generation of banks instituted in the far West without any adequate specie basis. Their leaves were scattered over the frontiers like the leaves of the trees by an autumnal frost, and the price of every article of necessity (for articles of luxury were not thought of) was high in proportion. There had been several duels within a year. There was another class in St. Louis at the period of these reminiscences that

⁹ Lion of the Valley: St. Louis, Missouri, 1764–1980. Primm, James Neal (1998), p. 104

*merit only that sort of notice which will place in wide and vivid contrast the advances in morals and social order by the American and French population. One-half, "at least, of the Anglo-American population were infidels of a low and indecent grade, and utterly worthless for any useful purposes of society. Of the class I allude to, I cannot recollect an individual who was reclaimed, or became a respectable citizen..... This class despised and vilified religion in every form, were vulgarly profane, even to the worst forms of blasphemy....."*¹⁰

A full reading of Peck's memoirs is insightful about the Missouri of this timeframe. The Library of Congress has online this memoir of John Mason Peck D.D. which can be read from the site or downloaded free as a PDF or Kindle book.

<https://archive.org/details/fortyyearsofpion00pe>

Peck mentioned 'Shin-plaster'. This description for paper money of little value references the Panic of 1819.

In 1811 the re-charter of the Bank of the United States failed to pass. Regulatory influences over state banks ceased.¹¹ During the War of 1812 (1812-1815) the government needed loans and the proliferation of paper money occurred.

¹⁰ Forty Years of Pioneer Life. Memoir of John Mason Peck, by Rufus Babcock, 1864, p 84-85

¹¹ The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln, Sean Wilentz, (2008)

A speculative bubble formed as a result of inflationary practices threatening the health of the economy¹²

The result was inflation of state bank issued paper money and a lack of hard gold and silver coins which were hoarded back east. Businesses closed down because people only had paper money with which to pay. Prices jumped because much more of this paper money was required to achieve the needed value.

This was the state of affairs affecting the country, and the west in particular as George came to Missouri.

After picking up supplies in either St. Louis or St. Charles, immigrants would set off for the interior of Missouri.

The Boone's Lick Road or Trail was the way west by land starting in St. Charles. Boone's Lick was north of the Missouri River and by 1819 travelers would progress from home or inn, and Tavern to Tavern during the journey along the trail. Settlers along the route would open their homes to traveler's for a price.

A more detailed overview of the Boone's Lick Trail can be found on the website for the "Boone's Lick Road Association" (http://www.booneslickroad.org/Boones_Lick_Road_Association/Timeline.html)

¹² The Panic of 1819: Reactions and Policies by Murray Rothbard (1962)

The effective terminus for Boone's Lick was the settlement of Franklin. The actual salt lick worked by the Boone's and others was a short distance further down the trail. George settled a few miles east of Franklin so it was likely he first laid eyes on the town after travelling the length of the Boone's Lick trail.

Our first reference of Franklin for this time period is from the Franklin newspaper of the time:

*"Immense numbers of wagons, carriages, carts, etc. with families, have for some time past been daily arriving. During the month of October it is stated that no less than 271 wagons, four-wheeled carriages and 55 two-wheeled carriages and carts passed near St. Charles, bound principally for Boon's Lick."*¹³

Franklin was established in 1816. It was named after Benjamin Franklin.¹⁴ By 1819 the town's population was approximately 1,000.¹⁵ About 200 of which were slaves brought by owners from Kentucky and other slave states.¹⁶

¹³ Franklin Missouri Intelligencer, November 19, 1819

¹⁴ Paris, Tightwad and Peculiar: Missouri Place Names by Margot Ford McMillen (1994), p 49

¹⁵ http://www.booneslickroad.org/Boones_Lick_Road_Association/Timeline.html

¹⁶ Bound for Santa Fe: The Road to New Mexico and the American Conquest, 1806-1848 by Stephen Garrison Hyslop (1950), p 100

In the summer of 1819 Edwin James a scientist traveled in a party up the Missouri and wrote this description of Franklin:

*"This town, at present increasing more rapidly than any other on the Missouri, had been commenced but two years and an half before the time of our journey. It then contained about one hundred and twenty log houses of one story, several framed dwellings of two stories, and two of brick, thirteen shops for the sale of merchandise, four taverns, two smiths' shops, two large team mills, two billiard rooms, a court house, a log prison of two stories, a post office, and a printing press issuing a weekly paper... The Missouri bottoms about Franklin are wide, and have the same prolific, and inexhaustible soil as those below. The labor of one slave is here reckoned sufficient, for the culture of twenty acres of Indian corn, and produces ordinarily about sixty bushels per acre, at a single crop. In the most fertile parts of Kentucky, fifteen acres of corn are thought to require the labour of one slave, and the crop being less abundant, we may reckon the products of agriculture there at about one third part less than in the best lands on the Missouri"*¹⁷

In 1821, William Becknell placed notice in the Missouri Intelligencer stating he was creating a party to go westward:

"for the purpose of trading for horses and mules and catching wild animals of every description.....

*Every man shall fit himself for the trip, with a horse, a good rifle, and as much ammunition as the company may think necessary....."*¹⁸

In September of 1821, his party crossed the Missouri River at Arrow Rock and set out to blaze what would become the Santa Fe Trail.

These are the conditions and times surrounding George Varner's arrival and early years in Missouri. Which of these events might he have assisted or participated in? He surely rubbed elbows with these historical figures.

The more I don't know, the more I want to know.

Additional Online Reading:

New Georgia Encyclopedia,

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/federal-road>

About North Georgia,

http://www.aboutnorthgeorgia.com/ang/Old_Federal_Road

Historic Trails, Roads, and Migration Routes in the United States,

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~tqpeiffer/Documents/Ancestral%20Migration%20Archives/Migration%20Webpage%20Folder/Trans->

¹⁷ Ibid, p 99-100

¹⁸ Ibid, p 101

[Appalachian%20Migration%20Routes.htm](http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gentutor/trails.html#Boston)

Early American Roads and Trails,
<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gentutor/trails.html#Boston>

Please contact me with subject ideas for future newsletters.

School has started. Fall is quickly approaching.....

Bruce Varner