

<http://oliverdreams.tripod.com/TomBell.html>

By 1734, the Great Wagon Road had pushed into the Virginia Valleys and the settlers traveled a well-worn path through the valleys, across the hills, and across the rivers into Virginia. The Quakers in Pennsylvania and the Scots Presbyterians did not agree on what the Pennsylvania area needed in the way of protection. The Scots were not one to bear the brunt of the Indian fighting, nor to allow the Indians to not be taught a lesson of force, so many moved south into Virginia.

*Carolina Cradle*, by Robert W. Ransay, gives additional, and possibly conflicting, information about the origin of these BELL, Holmes, and WILSON families.

The BELLS originated before 1720 in Cecil or Talbot County Maryland whence many of them removed to Philadelphia County sometime before 1739. Accompanied by many of his kin, **THOMAS BELL** removed to the Shenandoah Valley in 1741 or 1742 and then to Carolina.

The family of John Holmes, BELLS's brother-in-law, was evidently in Lower Dublin township. Philadelphia County, between 1734 and 1741. Holmes himself moved on to Prince Georges County in 1742 and proceeded from there to the Shenandoah Valley. Holmes was a man of considerable prominence, for he served as Constable of Augusta County in 1747 and was appointed Justice of the Peace for Anson County in September the following year. [Ransay, *Carolina Cradle*.]

Anson County was a vaguely defined area that later included much of North Carolina, Orange, Rowan, Iredell, etc.

*The McCubbins Collection of Rowan County Records*, available at the Arkansas History Commission on microfilm, gives another account of John Holmes. It says that he first moved to Savannah, Georgia, then to Pennsylvania, and then to Rowan. He had nine children: Robert Holmes, Mary Holmes, Margaret Holmes, James Holmes, Katherine Holmes, Jane Holmes, Elizabeth Holmes, Richard Holmes, and William Holmes. We find this Robert Holmes, son of John Holmes, in early records. Robert, son of John, married into the Luckie family. Robert apparently also had a son, Robert Holmes, Jr., who married Elizabeth Askew.

The *McCubbins* collection is quite helpful at times in researching this area but *has many factual errors. Nothing in this collection should be taken as "gospel."*

John Holmes left a will dated January 1, 1772, and probated in May, 1775, [Book A, page 1890, in Rowan] which shows that he is the same John Holmes found in Augusta County, Virginia. It mentions his wife, "Jennet" [Jane Wilson] and most of the children that we know John and Jane had. The will of his father-in-law, [ROBERT WILSON](#), mentioning his son and his wife, confirm that this is the same John Holmes.

After leaving the Pennsylvania area, the BELL, WILSON, and Holmes families took up land in Augusta County, Virginia, about 1736. For each cabin they built or each area “blazed,” they were to be allotted so much land. Many times they did not file their claims officially, because they did not have to pay taxes until after the claim was filed. The land was not supposed to be “free,” but there was so much land, and it was so sparsely settled, that they, more or less, got away with squatting.