

William Bynum Sr.

William Bynum
(c1690 – 1746)

William Bynum was the eldest son of James and Elizabeth Bynum. He is likely the William Bynum who witnessed several deeds for land in the vicinity of his father's land beginning in 1713.^[1] The earliest certain record of him is two deeds dated 16 September 1723 from William Bynum of Isle of Wight County to Edward Grantham and Robert Proctor.^[2] The land conveyed was the 460 acres granted in two patents to James Bynum in 1714.^[3] Both deeds were signed by William Bynum and his wife Mary Bynum, and both appeared in court on 18 September 1723 to prove the deeds, and Mary relinquished her dower right in the land.

It seems likely that William Bynum was living at this time on his father's 1719 patent on Flat Swamp in the part of southern Isle of Wight County that eventually became Southampton County.^[4] On 3 January 1724 he witnessed a deed for nearby land in Isle of Wight.^[5] By early 1724, however, it appears he had moved south into what was then the Bertie Precinct of Albemarle County, North Carolina. On 21 April 1724, as "William Binam of the prcink of bartye in the province of North Carilinah" he sold to Joseph Franco that 100 acres on Flatt Swamp, describing it as land "granted by patent to James Bynum dect" in 1719.^[6] William Bynum appeared in the Isle of Wight court on 25 May 1724 to acknowledge the deed.

On 3 and 4 August 1724 he witnessed two deeds for land in Bertie Precinct from Arthur Davis to Richard and William Killingsworth.^[7] The same day, on 4 August 1724, Arthur Davis deeded William Bynum 200 acres on the Moratock [Roanoke] River in Bertie.^[8] William Bynum sold this land to his neighbor Richard Killingsworth on 14 February 1727/8.^[9] He apparently had moved onto a 595 acre parcel on the south side of the Moratock River which he had patented on 1 February 1726.^[10] Following the sale, Arthur Davis sued William Bynum over a debt (possibly an unpaid mortgage on the land sold) but the case was dismissed by the July court later that year.^[11]

In the meantime, it was probably this William Bynum who witnessed the will of his father-in-law John Fort on 21 October 1724 back in Surry County.^[12] In 1730, he also witnessed Mary Fort's discharge of dower in land conveyed by her husband John Fort, Jr. to Davis Hopper on the Moratock in Bertie Precinct.^[13]

William Bynum's 595 acre patent on the Moratock [later called the Roanoke] River was located in the part of Bertie which became Edgecombe County in 1741 and Halifax County in 1758. He was William Bynum "of Edgecombe precinct" on 20 November 1733 when he sold 300 acres of it to Elizabeth Jenkins.^[14] This land, incidentally, was located in what is called the Scotland Neck area of present-day Halifax County within a mile or two of the land his brother James Bynum purchased in 1733. William Bynum retained 295 acres of the land which his son William Bynum Jr. sold forty years later.

The 1735 Quit Rent roll for the Edgecombe precinct of Bertie County lists William Bynum with 240 acres and his brother John Bynum with 270 acres. How William acquired this parcel is unknown, but it was apparently the same 240 acres on Looking Glass swamp and Panther poccusin "where said Bynum now lives" which he and "Mary his wife" sold to John and Robert Whittaker on 19 October 1744.^[15] Looking Glass swamp was a creek of the Roanoke River located in the southeastern part of what is now Halifax County near the present site of the town of Spring Hill.

A few months later on 3 December 1744, William Bynum bought from Thomas Drake 300 acres in Edgecombe County on the upper side of Fishing Creek.^[16] This was several miles west of Looking Glass swamp on the Halifax side of what became the border between Halifax and Edgecombe Counties. He apparently lived on this land until his death.

On 30 December 1745, William Bynum witnessed a deed from William Mearness to "William Bynum Jr. of Fishing Creek" for land on the south side of Fishing Creek, the Edgecombe County side. This is the last record for William Bynum, and the first record of his (apparently) eldest son.

On 20 May 1746 the will of William Bynum was proved in the Edgecombe County court and the widow Mary Bynum was confirmed as executor. Unfortunately, the will no longer exists, and only the court minutes mentioning it survive. In fact, other than the court entry noting the proving of the will, I found only one surviving document, an inventory of the estate by the widow. This is a loose, undated paper found in the North Carolina Archives.^[17] The inventory is a lengthy list of the goods of a moderately well-to-do planter: "...six Negroes, 40 head of cattle, 2 horses and 3 mares, 16 sheep, 6 feather beds and furniture, 4 bedsteads, 3 chests, 1 box, 2 tables, 6 chairs, 2 pails, 2 piggons, 1 tub, 2 spinning wheels, 6 pairs of casks, 1 lume, 5 sleys and harnesses, 3 plow hoes, 10 weeding hoes, 1 iron wedge, 1 grindstone, ...12 bottles, 3 stone jugs, 1 butter pot, 2 vials, some shoemakers tools, some carpenters tools, 1 adds, [many other tools listed]...1 sword, 4 guns and one barrel of a gun, 9 pounds of powder and 10 pounds of shot...[a long list of farm implements]... "117 pounds of cotton, 6 pounds of feathers, 51 pounds of wool, 89 pounds of pewter...some books (on) the duty of man and 3 testaments and one psalter." This paper is signed by Mary Bynum's distinctive mark, the same mark she had

used back in Virginia.

Since the will itself no longer exists, we are forced to speculate about the children. William Bynum Jr. seems to have inherited his father's land on Fishing Creek, which he later sold, as well as the Scotland Neck land granted in 1726, which he sold as "son and heir of William Bynum". William's other children must be deduced. If William Bynum Jr. were the eldest, which seems likely, the other children would have been born after about 1725. This is also consistent with a marriage date in the mid 1720s. His ownership of six feather beds suggests a large family. It seems quite likely that there were several children, likely born in the mid-1720s through the 1730s.

William's wife, Mary Bynum, was almost certainly the daughter of John Fort and Elizabeth Jordan. John Fort made his will on 21 October 1724 in Surry County. It named his children, among them a daughter named Mary Bynum, and was witnessed by John Phillips, a son-in-law, and William Bynum. John Phillips, who lived in Isle of Wight County, also witnessed the 1723 deed by William and Mary Bynum. Further, most of the rest of John Fort's children also migrated to Edgecombe County. Two sons, John Fort Jr. and Elias Fort, lived on Looking Glass Swamp near William and Mary Bynum. Another son, Richard Fort, made a will in 1746 in Craven County which named his sister Mary Bynum. Finally, I note that, of William Bynum's brothers and cousins, all their wives can be accounted for except for his first cousin John Bynum – whose wife was also named Mary. Based simply on the much closer association with the Forts, I believe it is a near certainty that Mary Fort was William's wife. (Coincidentally, William Bynum's first cousin, also named William Bynum, married Elizabeth Shugars Fort. She was the young widow of Mary Fort's first cousin, Elias Fort and the daughter of John Shugars.)

There must have been several children, including:

William Bynum (c1723 - ?) He was likely the eldest son, and is the only one we can identify with certainty. See separate page.

James Bynum (1725/30 - ?) He was probably another son, as in 1757 he sold 300 acres that had belonged to William Bynum Sr. to John Bynum, probably his uncle. Oddly enough, the land was described as land where Edward Tatum lived – Tatum later showed up as a neighbor of Luke Bynum in Chatham County. He was living on William Bynum Jr.'s land when William sold him a portion of it in 1761. It appears this was the James Bynum to whom William Bynum Jr. sold his Fishing Creek land in 1752 – his uncle James lived a few miles away on Deep Creek. James sold the land he bought from William Bynum three years later in 1764, to Edward Tatum.

It seems likely that James Bynum married Rebecca Tatum sometime after 1750. Nathaniel Tatum had left a will dated 9 November 1750 and proved a few months later in February 1750/51, dividing his plantation on Fishing Creek equally among five children (Edward, Nathaniel, Peter, Jesse, and Rebecca), after the death of his wife Elizabeth Tatum. ????

In 1767 he bought 456 acres in the part of Orange County that became Chatham County, just south of William and Luke Bynum. He appears in the Chatham County records through 1774 when he disappears from North Carolina. It was apparently the same James Bynum who appeared on the 1772 militia roster of Elisha Cain's company. We have a deed from John Hatley Jr. dated 27 January 1772 of some household goods "for and in consideration of the love, good will and affection that I have and do bear towards my loving friend Elizabeth Bynum, daughter of James Bynum and Rebecca". This implies James Bynum was old enough to have had a mature daughter who needed household goods. James Bynum was one of the famous Regulators, a militant agitator against severe local government corruption. In 1770, he was successfully sued for slander by Edmund Fanning, perhaps the most corrupt and hated local official in the area, and was a participant in the "Hillsborough riot" later that year in which demonstrators seized the courthouse and conducted their own court; he was one of 50-odd people indicted by the governor for this riot in early 1771. A fine of £110 was assessed, he defaulted, and his land was sold by Sheriff Elisha Cain in late 1773. Our last citation is his witness of a deed on 8 November 1774, after which he disappears from the local records. What became of him and his family is a mystery. I think he may have accompanied the others to Wilkes County, Georgia and later crossed the Savannah River county line into Abbeville County, South Carolina. It seems likely he was the James Bynum who was granted land in Abbeville on the Savannah River in 1787, 1790, and 1798, and who witnessed a will in Abbeville in 1792. He therefore was probably the "James Binom" who appeared alone in the 1790 census of Abbeville County near a "Jesse Binom". This James Bynum apparently died shortly thereafter. The Jesse Bynum, probably his son, later moved into Pendleton where he lived with the children of William Bynum, and ended up in Blount County, Alabama. He is the Jesse Bynum identified by Jasper E. Bynum (q.v.) as a "relative". I believe James Bynum had a son named James as well as Elizabeth and Jesse.

Luke Bynum (c1730 – 1810) This is purely speculative, but we can't identify any other likely candidates to be Luke's father. Luke Bynum was on the 1755 tax list of Orange County (with two slaves which he may have acquired from his father's will), but not on the tithables list for that year. He was enumerated in the part of Orange that had been carved out of Johnston County. He was appointed to a grand jury for Orange in 1757 and again in 1760. I was told many years ago that a correspondent had found a note in the court records of Luke Bynum selling land to Benjamin Clements, but I could not find this reference when I searched the records. There is, however, a record of Luke Bynum registering a deed from Clements in 1762. As noted above, Luke received a patent on 30 June 1762, recorded in 1763, which appears to adjoin the land William Bynum bought a year later. Luke and William Bynum thus appear to have been neighbors from roughly 1763 through 1775 when William left the area. Luke Bynum is a DAR line, on the strength of his having rendered "patriotic service" in the form of

furnishing supplies. A statement by his great-grandson, Alvis Jesse Bynum in 1893, says Luke *"immigrated to this country [meaning Chatham County] from Pa. or Va. about 1750...He had two brothers who immigrated with him; one went to Stokes Co. and the other to Edgecombe Co...He was of English or Irish descent, In religion a Methodist..."*[18] Luke Bynum's descendants are among the best-researched Bynums. He married Martha Patterson around 1760 and had children named Tapley, Mark, James, William, Sarah, Martha, Milly, and Edith. Luke died testate in Chatham County in 1809.

Mary Bynum (c1725 – aft1792) This is pure speculation. Two sons of Richard Bell of Surry County, Virginia – William and Joseph – settled in Edgecombe County, NC. One of them, Joseph Bell (1722-1792?) is said to have married a Mary Bynum about 1745. They had a son, James Bell (1747-1809), who was later associated with William Bynum in Orange/Chatham Counties, and in Georgia, and who died in Wilkes County, Georgia. Another son was named Thomas, who also settled in Chatham County. A Bell family history gives the wife's name as "Mary Fort Bynum", and claims she was the widow of William Bynum Sr., rather than his daughter.[19] This is clearly an error, perhaps caused by confusion between William Bynum Sr. and Jr., both of whom had wives named Mary.

[1] Surry County Deeds & Wills Book 6, p148 and p195 and p216.

[2] Surry County Deeds & Wills Book 7, p477.

[3] Virginia Patent Book 10, p150 and p155.

[4] Virginia Patent Book 10, p424.

[5] Isle of Wight County Deeds & Wills., Vol. II, Part 1, p533 and p536

[6] Isle of Wight County Deeds & Wills, Vol. II, Part 2, p655

[7] Bertie County Deed Book A, p317 and p329.

[8] Bertie County Deed Book A, p354. This deed is partially destroyed, but one of the witnesses may have been his brother John Bynum.

[9] Bertie County Deed Book B, p344.

[10] North Carolina Land Patents 1663-1729, Margaret M. Hoffman (1979), grant #2382. (Also described in deed of sale)

[11] North Carolina Higher Court Minutes 1724-1730, Robert J. Cain (1981), p464 and p468

[12] Surry County Deeds & Wills Book 7, p632.

[13] Bertie County Deed Book C, p252.

[14] Halifax County Deed Book 1, p46 (which inherited Edgecombe deeds)

[15] Halifax County Deed Book 5, p316 and p318

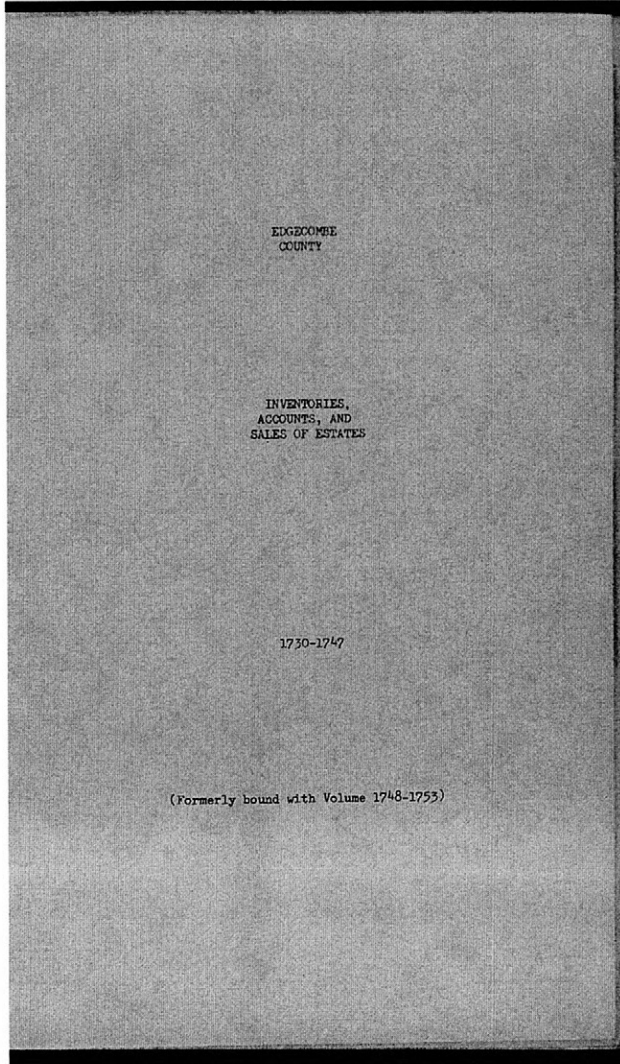
[16] Halifax County Deed Book 5, p343

[17] Edgecombe County Inventories, Accounts and Sales 1730-1747, NC Archives File Number 037.514.1 (loose papers in box)

[18] There are many old letters written among the descendants of Gray Bynum (a son of John III), those of Luke Bynum, and between the descendants of Gray and Luke, mostly after the turn of the century. Although they are not consistent with regard to ancestry, they tend to assume that the Bynums who remained in North Carolina and gained prominence there were descended from brothers. These people all were evidently unaware that these people were cousins, not brothers, and that large numbers of Bynums in every branch had left the area in the late 1790s and early 1800s. In the case of this 1893 letter, it seems likely that Luke had two brothers who came with him, but they almost certainly were not those implied. I would note that this letter identifies the "original" homestead of Luke Bynum incorrectly, and contains a few other errors, so it should probably not be taken too literally with regard to Luke Bynum.

[19] Key and Allied Families, Mrs. Julian C. Lane (1931), p360.

Wm Bynum_Inv



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... six Negroes forty head of cattle two
 horses & three mares sixteen sheep six feather
 beds & furniture four bedsteads three chests in
 one box & six chairs to make ten chairs
 one table two spinning wheels & six pairs of
 shears in large & some small sizes three
 stone jugs one butter pot two vials some shoemakers
 tools some carpenters tools one adds [many other tools listed]
 one sword four guns and one barrel of a gun
 nine pounds of powder and ten pounds of shot
 along list of farm implements
 one hundred and eleven pounds of cotton
 six pounds of feathers
 fifty one pounds of wool
 eighty nine pounds of pewter
 some books (on) the duty of man and three psalter

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Two long canes some books the duty of
 man and three psalter & one psalter
 three stone jugs in another place two
 wheel stones one grindstone one iron wedge
 one shears saddle & two bottles two
 thousand five hundred six penny nails
 two thousand eight penny nails two
 pounds of quality worth five yards of
 two yards of red powder & ten pounds of
 shot twenty gun hints six pounds of feathers
 one hundred & fifteen pounds of cotton
 fifty one pound of wool one case of horse
 shears six balls one calling knife eight
 nine pound of powder money two thousand
 pounds of eight shillings & six pence cast

Mary Bynum & amara

Transcription: "...six Negroes, 40 head of cattle, 2 horses and 3 mares, 16 sheep, 6 feather beds and furniture, 4 bedsteads, 3 chests, 1 box, 2 tables, 6 chairs, 2 pails, 2 piggonns, 1 tub, 2 spinning wheels, 6 pairs of casks, 1 lume, 5 sleys and harnesses, 3 plow hoes, 10weeding hoes, 1 iron wedge, 1 grindstone,...12 bottles, 3 stone jugs, 1 butter pot, 2 vials, some shoemakers tools, some carpenters tools, 1 adds, [many other tools listed]...1 sword, 4 guns and one barrel of a gun, 9 pounds of powder and 10 pounds of shot...[along list of farm implements]..."117 pounds of cotton, 6 pounds of feathers, 51 pounds of wool, 89 pounds of pewter...some books (on) the duty of man and 3 testaments and one psalter."

William Bynum (c.1690 – 1746) and wife Mary Fort (abt.1700 – abt.1765)
b.VA d.NC b.VA d.NC

William Bynum apparently grew up working his parent's (James and Elizabeth) plantations. Later, as a fairly young man he was living on the southern most parcel of land in Virginia that James owned. As the oldest son, William inherited his father's plantation and almost immediately sold one of the land parcels. His wife, Mary's name appeared on the record of that sale, showing they were married before 1723. Her maiden name was revealed when her father's will was discovered. John Fort's will dated, 1724, named his children, including Mary Bynum.

William and Mary continued our Bynum family line's migration to the south. He quickly sold the remainder of his father's Virginia land. In 1724, he moved to northeast North Carolina; originally to a place in Halifax County along the Roanoke River, and then to Edgecombe County where his brother, John, acquired an adjoining plantation. William later bought additional property in Edgecombe County, along Fishing Creek, and that was apparently the place he lived when he died in 1746. William and Mary had four children: William (c.1723), Mary (c.1725), James (c.1727), and Luke (c.1730). All, except (possibly) William, were born in North Carolina.

William apparently was a relatively successful plantation operator. Although he bought and sold various parcels of land; at any given time he usually owned 500-600 acres. It appears that tobacco and cotton were the primary crops. At William's death in 1746, the estate inventory included about 600 acres of land, several dozen head of livestock (cattle, horses, sheep), a large inventory of farm implements and household items, and six slaves. Mary was named administrator of the estate and the oldest son, William, inherited the land. William (the son) sold the Edgecombe property in 1752, but held the Halifax property until 1765, probably because Mary lived there for the remainder of her years.

Information from R.W.Baird website.