

Grave of Rachel (Barnett) Sprigg (1774-1803)

By Jerry Long
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Messenger and Inquirer, Owensboro, KY, Sunday, 12 February 1933, p.4A
and Ohio County News, Hartford, KY, 17 March 1933, p.2:

Historical County Cemetery

..... In about, the year 1797 the brothers [Alexander & Joseph Barnett] moved from the fort. Alexander locating on the 2,000-acre tract mentioned above, while Joseph moved to the northeastern part of the county near Narrows. On the land which was the latter's farm is a lone grave, that of Alexander's daughter, Rachel (died 1803), This grave is said to be the survivor of a rather considerable family burying-ground which would antedate the Alexander cemetery

[The preceding passage is from article about the Alexander Cemetery, where the Revolutionary War soldier, Alexander Barnett, is buried. The article was written by Andrew Morris Barnett (1865-1938), a great-grandson of Alexander Barnett (1745-1819) & Jane Barnett (1748-1825) and a great-nephew of Rachel Barnett Sprigg (1774-1803).



Hartford Republican, Hartford, KY, Friday, 18 October 1907, p.5:

One Mother and Her Son

On a high bluff overhanging Rough River valley, just South of here, is a solitary gravestone, the inscription on which arrests the attention of the chance passer-by. Back in the breaking dawn of the nineteenth century, in an isolated farm house in a scarcely broken wilderness, known since as "The Old Orchard", a woman died. The few but generous neighbors gathered in and bore the crumbling clay out into the wild forest and made it a grave. Along with the uncounted millions that have thronged the way of death this woman's name and time and place were unrecorded but for a sorrowing son who brought a slab of stone and chiseled on its face this appealing epitaph:

"In Memory of Rachel Sprigg, who departed this life on the 13th of August, 1803, at 1 o'clock p.m., aged 29 years, three months and five days. Done by Joseph Barnett, son of the deceased. "

Not strange indeed that a son should bring a stone to mark his mother's burial place and engrave upon its face the date of birth and death, and length of life in years and months and days, but this man arched and crowned his efforts to preserve his mother's memory when he made the cold gray marble proclaim the very hour she died. "At 1 o'clock" and "done by her son". These away, her epitaph were as cold and breathless as those of a million other strangers that we pass unnoticed by. But by these he tells us how well he loved her and how much he sorrowed when she died. Custom, pride and duty each has played its hollow part in raising tablets to the dead, and poets have high-strung their harps to grace them with a mocking melody, but out of a heart burdened to the breaking with sorrow this rustic son, unskilled in the art of phrase, evolved an epitaph that shall preserve his mother's memory till heat and frost and storm dissolve the yielding stone.

This epitaph is all the record left us now of the mother or the son, yet we know more. This touching effort to herald down the aisles of time the very hour she died would be paid only to a saintly mother and paid only by a kingly son. We know, too, that the son was already orphaned of his paternal parent for note his mother's name and his are not the same.

Sunday morning I stood alone by that ancient and solitary grave in the meadow now glistening with the autumn frost. Though made a dozen years before the fate of nations fell at Waterloo, the, grave is still a lone spot, removed alike from the passways and habitations of men. There are, it is true, some neighbors in death as calmly sleeping in a circular mound a few rods to the South, but these are of a race now passing rapidly from the earth. I looked on both and reflected solemnly upon the wrecks that time has strewn along its path;

Standing by the hallowed spot I recalled the splendid forest, only recently removed, that for nearly a century maintained a holy solitude in this sacred precinct. How the giant oaks and stately elms had spread their reaching branches to shade the solitary tomb, how at autumn's call they had shed their ripened foliage to share this consecrated ground against the winter's snows, and how at last the woodsman came to garner this forest wealth, but with such reverent care that trunk nor branch nor bough brushed the clinging moss from this stony messenger from the morning of the nineteenth century with its story of a godly mother and her noble son. Will some who read this watch the stone, when I am gone, and if it falls, raise it to its honored place again? While I live that task is mine.

J. H. THOMAS Narrows, Ky.

[Note: The preceding article was written by John Henry Thomas (1865-1933), who had served as postmaster at Narrows and as editor of the Hartford Republican newspaper.]



Family of Rachel (Barnett) Sprigg

Rachel Barnett, daughter of Alexander Barnett & Jane Barnett, was born 8 May 1774 in Virginia. She married her cousin, Robert Barnett (c1765-1799). Robert was a son of Joseph Barnett & Abigail Mills. Robert & Rachel's fathers were sons of Robert Barnett & Rachel Ann Montgomery. Rachel and Robert's marriage was recorded in Hardin County, KY. In 1799 Ohio County was created out of Hardin County. It is widely reported that the marriage of Rachel & Robert occurred on 3 January 1796. Rachel's father, Alexander Barnett, signed consent for his daughter to marry. The following consent slip recorded in Hardin County was signed at Hartford

on 19 December 1796. The date suggests that their marriage may have been on the following 3 January 1897 not in 1796.

Sir } Hartford Town Dec 19th day 1796
 Whereas A Marriage is intended Between Robert Barnett
 and Rachel Barnett My Daughter on Application
 being made to you for License you need not be Under
 any Doubt to grant them. Given Under my hand
 The Clerk of the Court } Mrs. Barnett
 of Harden —

Robert Barnett died in 1799. In Ohio County Order Book 1, page 17, it is recorded that at the court of 3 December 1799 Alexander Barnett was appointed administrator of the estate of Robert Barnett, deceased. Rachel Barnett married on 20 January 1803 to Thomas Sprigg in Ohio County, Ky. They were married by Rev. Ignatius Pigman, a Methodist minister.

Mrs. Liza Gravins and Rebecca Tarlton, Sep.
 1802 —
 Mr. Thomas Sprigg and Rachel Barnett
 Jan'y 20. 1803
 Ignatius Pigman.
 January 23. 1803
 Samuel Work Esq. 3

Six months after her marriage Rachel Barnett Sprigg died on 13 August 1803. In Ohio County, KY Will Book A, pages 16-19 an inventory and appraisal of the estate of Rachel Sprigg, deceased, was recorded at the December 1803 term of the court.

Rachel was buried in a Barnett family cemetery near Narrows, Ohio County, Ky. Directions to the cemetery – Traveling from Hartford on Highway 69 at Sulphur Springs take the next road on the right (Highway 878); turn left (north) at first road (Narrows – Shultz Road); about one mile on the right is the farm of Felix Shultz (in 1990), there are two houses immediately opposite each other on both sides of the road, behind the house on right (east side of road) – graveyard is near the edge of the woods.

Rachel's is the only grave in the cemetery now marked by a monument. Her husband, Robert Barnett, was probably also buried here and possibly his mother & Abigail (Mills) Barnett McGrady, who was living in Ohio County in 1810, also lies here in an unmarked grave.

Rachel Barnett Sprigg's monument, has the following inscription:

"In Memory of Rachel Sprigg who departed this life on the 13th of August, 1803, at 1 o'clock p.m., aged 29 years three months and five days. Done by Joseph Barnett, son of the deceased."

Joseph Barnett was Rachel's only child, he was born 28 November 1798 in Ohio County (KY), Joseph was orphaned at the age of 4. He was raised by his grandparents, Alexander & Jane Barnett. Joseph Barnett is listed in the 1820, 1830, 1840, 1850 & 1860 censuses of Ohio County, KY. He resided near Hartford and later at Beda. He died on 19 November 1860 in Ohio County, KY, where he is buried in the Carson Cemetery.

Joseph Barnett married twice. He married Mary ('Polly') Skillern Midkiff, 2 December 1818 Ohio County, KY. The daughter of Benjamin Midkiff & Elizabeth Robinson, she was born 22 August 1797 KY. Mary Midkiff Barnett died at the age of 23 on 9 September 1820 Ohio County, KY. Mary's birth and death dates were recorded in the Joseph Barnett family bible (see "Barnett Bible", Family Bible Records, Volume 1 A-F, West-Central Kentucky Family Research Association, Utica, KY, McDowell Publications, 2002, pp15-17; and Peter Schaun, by Anthony Jones, Dallas, TX, 1981, pp.135-141). Mary Midkiff Barnett was buried in the Alexander Cemetery about three miles north of Hartford in Ohio County, KY; the cemetery was named for Revolutionary War veteran Alexander Barnett (1745-1819).

Mary Midkiff and Joseph Barnett had one child: Rachel Elizabeth Barnett who was born 7 December 1819 Ohio County, KY. She married James Prudden / Pruden, 5 November 1839 Ohio County, KY. James, son of Daniel Prudden & Ann McGill, was born 15 March 1817 Ohio County, KY. In the Ohio County, KY censuses of 1850 & 1860 James is listed. He is listed near Spottsville in the 1870 census of Henderson County, KY. Rachel Elizabeth (Barnett) Prudden died 21 October 1857 Ohio County, KY. A record of her death was recorded in the 1852-1861 Kentucky Vital Statistics. The cause of death was given as pneumonia and her parents were given as Joseph & Mary Barnett. She was buried in the Old Bell (Lindley-Condit) Cemetery at Point Pleasant in Ohio County, KY.

Joseph Barnett married second Charlotte Stevens, 1 November 1821 Ohio County, KY. Charlotte, daughter of Thomas Stevens & Nancy Warfield, was born 16 August 1803 Ohio County, KY, died on 21 July 1881 and was buried in the Carson Cemetery, No Creek, Ohio County, KY. Joseph Barnett & his second wife, Charlotte Stevens had 10 children – Nancy Jane (1822-1888, married John Allen Bennett), Sally Mary (1825-1905, married Alexander B. Baird), Susan M. (1828-1829), Lucretia B. (1830-1839), Lydia Charlotte Belt (1832-1839), Thomas Alexander (1835-1863, single, died while serving in the Union army during the Civil War), Robert Gunn (1837-1839), Henry Stevens (1839-1862, single, died while serving in the Union army during the Civil War), Joseph Warren (1842-1895, married Florence Catherine Stevens) and Eliza Neal (1844-1906, married Stephen Albert Bennett).

