

GLENDALE'S BAGWELL BROTHERS

By [Clarence Crocker](#)

Long before the village of [Bivingsville](#), the forerunner of [Glendale](#), South Carolina had been founded; the surname "Bagwell" was already prominent in the area. Two brothers, William and Littleton Bagwell from North Carolina, moved into the area about mid 1780s and began to purchase land on both sides of [Lawson's Fork Creek](#). Though they had little to no education, they were progressive, respected and highly successful, impacting both, the economy and growth of the area. Most of the ladies and many of the men signed legal documents with their X mark. They and their children bought land, built homes, tenant houses, barns, black smith shops and other buildings necessary to farming. Their families grew, planting roots in the area. They established two Bagwell plantations, one on the south side of [Lawson's Fork Creek](#), the other on the north side of the creek. The County Records books show that the Bagwell families made some 150 land transactions involving small tracts to 500 acre farms, from 1787 to 1915.

The 1790 South Carolina Census had only two Bagwell families listed in the entire state, John and Littleton Bagwell. Both were living in Spartanburg County. Some have suggested that John was their father; others suggested that they were all three brothers. I have not found any records confirming relationship.

The 1900 South Carolina Census listed thirty eight Bagwell families in Spartanburg County. Fifteen of those represented families composed of some 50 persons who were living in the [Glendale](#) area, many of which were destined to become prominent in the area over the next 100 years. Perhaps many more were not indexed or counted.

James M. Bagwell, believed to be William Bagwell's son, was associated with [Bivingsville Cotton Mill](#) from its early days and was commissioned as [Postmaster](#) in [Bivingsville](#), S. C., in or about 1847. Samuel Bagwell, a grandson of William served as Spartanburg County Clerk for a number of years. He also taught school and was a Census Enumerator. Records show that a number of the men were veterans of the Confederate War, WW1 and WW2, some paying the supreme sacrifice.

Book E, page 72 in the Recorder's office shows that the first recorded land purchase by William Bagwell was for 100 acres of land on the south side of [Lawson's Fork Creek](#) and was bought on September 22, 1797 from Edward Barnette for the amount of 30 pounds. His second recorded purchase was made on July 4, 1808, when he bought 120 acres for the sum of \$200.00 from Benjamin Wofford. This is recorded in Book L, Page 295. Perhaps other pieces of land were bought but not recorded as I understand this was quite common in those days.

Apparently William had entered into a contract with J.M. Smith to buy 250 acres of land but had not closed the deal before his death. An estate settlement recorded in Book V, Page 426. Dated; December 11, 1834, shows William Bagwell as deceased. In the settlement J.M. Smith conveyed 250 acres of land on [Lawson's Fork Creek](#) for the sum of \$500.00 to the heirs of William Bagwell; William's widow, Sally (Sarah) Bagwell; children, Allen Bagwell, Lunsford Bagwell, John D. Carman and his wife, Rachel, Josiah Bagwell, Nancy Bagwell, James M. Bagwell, William W. Bagwell, John J.M. Bagwell and Winkfield Bagwell.

William and his family kept buying segments of land until the William Bagwell Plantation consisted of some 2000 acres with all land lying on the south side of [Lawson's Fork Creek](#). The land is located between the present Dogwood Club Road and the Country Club Road and has been sold and developed into a housing sub-division known as the Glenn Forest and Oak Creek subdivisions.

Excerpts from the Last Will and Testament of Sarah Bagwell recorded in Book D. page 316, Box 8, Package 37, dated June 20, 1851 in the Spartanburg County probate Court. R. Bowden. O.S.D. "My property consists of the land on which I live, being that which I derived from the estate of my deceased husband, (William Bagwell) also some cattle, hogs, horses and sheep, household and kitchen furniture and plantation tools.

I have had nine children who have lived and become grown and have married; Allen, Lunsford, Josiah, Rachel who married J.D. Cannon, James Madison, Nancy who married James Gore, William, John and Winkfield. Of my nine children, three have died, leaving children, viz Allen, Rachel Cannon and Nancy Gore.

Now it is my will that all of my property of whatever kind shall be sold by my Executors and the proceeds of the sale to be equally divided among them all, share and share alike.

The children of my above children who are dead, to receive among themselves equally the portion to which their parents would have been entitled if living.

It is furthermore my will that if any one of my grandchildren shall die without heirs of their body begotten, that the surviving brothers and sisters, or brother or sister of such deceased grandchild, shall take the whole property from me derived by this my will, to the exclusion of their parent.

It is furthermore my will that my Executors retain the management of so much of my estate as my grandchildren may be entitled by this my will and be by them, put to interest and paid over to my grandchildren as they become 21 years of age, except for my female grandchildren, to whom it is my will, their share be paid when they arrive at the age of 21 years or marry.

In addition to the land on which I live, I have purchased 25 acres, more or less, which shall be disposed as directed. I also have some money due me which I have loaned out on notes of which I want my funeral expense to be paid.

I do hereby constitute and appoint my sons, Winkfield, James Madison and William Bagwell the Executors of this my Last Will and Testament, this twentieth day of June, 1851"

She also listed the following nine Negros living on the plantation; Frank, Maria and her infant child, Cato, George, Rufus, Mary, Susan and Narcifsa.

Signed by Sarah (X) Bagwell

Witness; John Simpson, Washington Poole and John Brooks.

Appointment of Winkfield, James Madison and William Bagwell was made by the Probate Court on October 16, 1851. Inventory of all assets and liabilities were made with final report back to court due on or before October 17, 1852.

The first recorded land purchase made by Littleton Bagwell was from Grant Diskin in which Littleton gave Grant 30 pounds for 100 acres of land joining the White property as recorded in Book B, Page 66, dated, 1787.

According to Book C, Page 345, dated March 17, 1794, he purchased 186 acres from George Parkinson for the sum of (illegible) pounds.

Book L, Page 226, dated April 1, 1808, shows he purchased 231 acres on the north side of [Lawson's Fork Creek](#) from Thomas Wofford for the sun of \$110.00.

Littleton and his family continued to buy segments of land until the **Littleton Bagwell Plantation** consisted of some 1000 acres. All land lay north of [Lawson's Fork Creek](#) running towards Zion Hill and Clifton where the Calhoun Lakes subdivision is developed today.

Obviously leaving no will, Elendor his wife and William Bagwell, perhaps a son, applied for the Administration of his estate. On June 22, 1811, William Lancaster, Ordinary of Spartan District, appointed Elendor Bagwell as Administratrix and William Bagwell, Administrator, to serve under a two thousand dollar bond. They were to have all possessions listed, reporting back on or before the July 22, 1811. They were instructed to make a true and just account of their Administration on or before the first Monday of August, 1811.

Signed by; Elendor (X) Bagwell (her mark) and William Bagwell.

Witnessed; Patrick Tylor, J.H. Jones

On July 10, 1811, Anthony Foster, Richard Thomson and William Smith appeared before John H. Jones, Justice of Peace, and were sworn to appraise the property of Littleton Bagwell and make their return to Elendor and William Bagwell on or before July 22, 1811.

Sworn before me this day and year; J.H. Jones. J.P.

Out of respect for the deceased and their families, I have not reported the value and final details of the estate settlements.

[The old Georgia Road](#) which was first an Indian trail ran through both properties, becoming the eastern Interstate highway of that day, connecting the south-west to the north-east. Legend tells us that an Indian burying ground was located on the north side of [Lawson's Fork](#) alongside of

[the Georgia road](#) in the Littleton Bagwell farm area. Blanche Crocker, a distant cousin of this writer and former [Glendale Postmaster](#), said that she knew a number of the persons buried there.

Though records show that funeral homes were prevalent in the area in the last 1800s or before, those same records show that families were still burying their dead as late as 1925. Obviously, for this reason, the Bagwell families, like many other families of that day had their own private graveyards in which family members could be buried. One was located on the **William Bagwell Plantation** and one on the **Littleton Bagwell Plantation**. The **William Bagwell Plantation Cemetery** is enclosed by an iron picket fence and appears to be well kept.

Unfortunately, the Littleton Bagwell Cemetery has become overgrown by trees, vines and weeds. A deed recorded in book 5F, Page 161, in the Spartanburg County Recorder's office, shows J.S. Bagwell, wife deceased, for one dollar, granted to; Jessie Bagwell, J.L. Bagwell, Thomas Bagwell and Simpson Bagwell, trustees, one lot containing a fracture of an acre, to be maintained as a graveyard, together with right of way. Plat was drawn by [S.J. Dupre](#), April 26, 1913. (Former [President of Glendale Mills](#)) This refers to the **Littleton Bagwell Plantation Cemetery**.

In doing my research for this story, two interesting bits of history I found was when I opened Book Z.Z. Page 19, dated March 22, 1887 and saw where Littleton Bagwell sold a one acre tract of land to my Grandfather, [Albert W. Crocker](#), for \$50 whereon he built a stately two story, colonial family home. Littleton signed the deed with an X, witnessed by Louise Bagwell. In turning to Book 5N, page 532 I saw that my Grandfather had sold to J.E. Bagwell 71 acres of land lying a short distance from our home place, for \$5757.75 on December 4, 1915.

My Grandfather's land joined the **Littleton Bagwell Plantation** on the southern tip and again at the extreme northern tip.

It is because of the Bagwell's impact on the growth and economy of the [Bivingsville/Glendale](#) community and Spartanburg County along with their patriotic spirit and in the interest of the many friends they had in this community that I have compiled these records that they might become a part of the history of [Glendale](#), South Carolina. I have sought to be careful in my research, if I have erred in any details, my apologies to all concerned.

The Bagwell Household Listing along with more interesting nuggets of history is shown in another article, [Bagwell Brothers - Part 2](#).

Researched and Compiled by;
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