



A Birdseye View of Montgomery County Records before 1840

by Terry Moore, CG

Francis Joseph Krohn was a physician, an observer of human behavior, and a resident of Montgomery County, North Carolina. In his 1835 journal he described the weather, the countryside, the business, and family practices of the residents of this county. His uncle Henry Delamothe, Nathaniel Lilly, Benjamin Bell, John Morris, David and Henry Morgan, James Kirk, the widow Paulina Moss, and others are described in his journal. He depicts one family as being made up of rascals and liars and also observed this about his neighbors:

The truth is that within a urile of eighteen miles where perhaps thirty families dwell I could count as many as twenty illegitimate children some the off springs of widows, others of single never married women and others, too, intruders in lawful wedlock.¹

His diary provides local gossip for a county that suffered three courthouse fires, the greatest record loss by the fire of 1835.

When researching in a county that suffered a large record loss, find out what records were not in the courthouse when it burned (federal, state, private records, and records of the surrounding counties), and what records survived. Montgomery County was created from Anson in 1779. Below is a list of the surviving Montgomery County records before 1840.

- 1787 North Carolina State Census of Montgomery County. The published version of this census is available on Ancestry.com.² Note that the 1820 U.S. Federal census for Montgomery County has not survived.

¹ Terry Moore, CG, "The Diary of Francis Joseph Krohn of Montgomery County," *the North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal* Vol. XXXII, no. 4 (November 2006):338-352 & Vol. XXXIII, no. 1 (February 2007): 47-57.

² Mrs. Alvaretta Kenan Register, *State Census of North Carolina 1784-1787, from Records in the North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C., Second Edition, Revised* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1973).

- Wills 1785-1970. The will book images are now available on FamilySearch (<http://familysearch.org>) in "Records" but they are not indexed in FamilySearch's global index.
- Loose Estates Records 1818-1970 are available on FamilySearch in "Records."
- The bound Record of Estates doesn't begin until 1842; however, these images are also available on FamilySearch in "Records," but they are not indexed in FamilySearch's global index.
- The grantor and grantee indexes cover the years 1838-1917, but a few earlier deeds survive for 1774-1795, 1777 (partial), 1798-1807, and then begin again in 1838. They are at the State Archives in Raleigh.
- A few deeds are in the North Carolina Private Collections. On the North Carolina State Archives website, <http://www.ncdcr.gov/archives>, search the MARS index for Montgomery County to determine which private collections have Montgomery County records and then go to the private collection index at <http://www.ncdcr.gov/archives/Public/FindingAids/PrivateCollectionsFindingAids> to find the description of the private collection.
- There are some miscellaneous Montgomery County land records 1769-1922 and land entries 1779-1795 at the State Archives in Raleigh.
- Surviving court records include civil action papers 1799-1940, criminal action papers 1833-1921, equity minute dockets 1804-1824, and the recognizance dockets for Superior Court 1821-1845.
- Surviving tax records begin in 1843 with the exception of a 1782 list, abstracted in the *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, Volume IX (May 1983): 109-114.
- Montgomery County, NC Voter List for 1779, abstracted in the *North Carolina Genealogical*

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Society Journal, Volume X (February 1984): 44-46.

- Minutes, Wardens of the poor 1831-1867 at the North Carolina State Archives.
- Justices, lists of Militia Officers 1800-1810, Justices 1812-1819 at the North Carolina State Archives
- Marriage License Purchase Lists, Montgomery County, NC, 1785-1789, abstracted in the *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, Volume VI (May 1980): 135.
- Montgomery County marriage bonds begin in 1842-1868; marriage licenses begin in 1846; the marriage register begins 1843-1950. The Montgomery County marriage bonds are not included in the North Carolina Marriage Bond Index because they were not in possession of the State Archives when the index was created. Debbi Blake later created an index for them and they have been published in the *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, Volume XXII (May 1996): 123-150 (done in three parts).
- The 1850 Mortality Schedule for Montgomery County may have information about people who lived before 1835 and died between June of 1849 and June of 1850, abstracted in the *North Carolina Genealogical Society Journal*, Volume X (May 1984): 80-82.

A few other Montgomery County articles have been published in the *NCGS Journal*:

- “The Will of William Howard of Montgomery County, NC proved 1815 in Wilson County, TN,” Volume IX (1983)
- “The Burned Courthouse Records of Montgomery County, NC,” Volume XVII (1991)
- “Montgomery County, NC: A New Look at its ‘Wandering’ Courthouses 1779-1884,” Part 1-2, Volume XVIII (1992)
- “The Family of James Nall of Montgomery County, NC,” Volume XVIII (1992)
- “Charles and Nancy (McArthur) Bell of Montgomery County, NC,” Volume XVIII (1992)

- “Bridging a Fiery Gulf: Tracking Garrett Parker of Montgomery County and his Family Past Sixty Years of Local Record Loss,” Volume XXXII (2006)
- “Wills and Other Documents from Burned Counties as Found in Supreme Court Records,” Part 1, Volume XXIX (2003)

Don’t forget to search the North Carolina State Land Grants, all of the United States census records during your ancestor’s lifetime, and military pension records for both your ancestor and his associates. Pension records in particular allow a bird’s eye view into your ancestor’s neighborhood just as Francis Joseph Krohn’s diary has.

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