

THE CUNNINGHAM FAMILY

The following history and genealogy of the early Cunningham Family was taken from a history of [THE TORRENCE AND ALLIED FAMILIES](#). Sarah Marjory Cunningham remarried Hugh Torrence and hence was included in that history.

From [ANECDOTES OF HERALDRY](#), page 160:

According to the tradition of this Cunningham family, it dates its principal accession of fortune from the days of Malcolm Canmore, King of Scotland. When that prince was flying from the emissaries of the usurper Macbeth, who, having murdered his father, Duncan, sought to kill him also, he was so hotly pressed, that he was obliged to take refuge in the barn of Malcolm, son of Friskin, the ancestor of the Cunninghams, who on being informed by the prince of his danger, bade him at once place himself under some straw which lay in the barn, and to which he commenced making additions from another heap with a pitching fork, continually calling out to the companion who assisted him in his labor, 'Over, fork over'. To the pursuers, who asked whether he had seen anything of the prince, he replied in the negative. At a later period, when Malcolm Canmore had overcome and slain Macbeth, the grateful prince bestowed on his preserver the Thanedom of Cunnighame, with permission to take the name of Cunningham, and to assume for arms a shakefork, with the motto, 'Over, fork over.'

My history begins with the first of the family on whom I have details.

BARNETT CUNNINGHAM Sr.

Barnett Cunningham, senior was the first of our line that we have records. Barnett was born in Ulster Province, Northern Ireland. He was married there about 1730 to Sarah Marjory.

Barnett must have died prior to 1743 as Sarah remarried Hugh Torrance in 1744. All their children were born in Ireland.

Barnet and Sarah Cunningham had the following children:

MARGERY CUNNINGHAM born in 1732, and married Capt. Joseph Huston.

WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM born in 1734, and married Margaret Nicholson.

BARNETT CUNNINGHAM born June 29, 1736, and married Anna Wilson.

ANN CUNNINGHAM born in 1738, and married Robert Clark.

JANE CUNNINGHAM born in 1740, and married John Blair.

BARNETT CUNNINGHAM Jr.

The younger Barnett Cunningham was born June 29, 1736 and died on September 13, 1808. Born in Ireland, he came to America, settled at Peach Bottom, in York County, Pennsylvania, along the Susquehanna River, leaving there sometime after 1770, to take up lands by '*Tomahawk claim*' in Tyrone Township, Cumberland County, Pennsylvania.

This is from Ellis's [HISTORY OF FAYETTE COUNTY PENNSYLVANIA](#), page 796, and from the [PENNSYLVANIA ARCHIVES](#), vol.22 page 605 and vol.23 page 315,

His name is mentioned as being assessed in 1783 for 150 acres, 10 inhabitants, 3 horses and 5 cattle in Tyrone Township.

Barnett Cunningham served as a private in Captain David Lindsey's Company of Rangers on the Frontier from 1778 to 1783; was the first Ruling Elder in the Tyrone Presbyterian Church. Seven of his descendants have been Ruling Elders. Later on Barnett served as a Captain of the Lancaster Militia. It is said of him, that at the time of his death, he had two hundred and fifty grandchildren.

In the year 1760, he married Anna Wilson. Anna was born on September 18, 1739 and died August 4, 1865. She was the daughter of James Wilson. I have found a copy of James Wilson's Will in Lancaster County.

Barnett Cunningham's will was probated on September 20, 1808 in Uniontown, Fayette County, Pennsylvania, Will Book 1, page 122.

They had the following children:

JOHN CUNNINGHAM born August 8, 1761. He was in the Pennsylvania Legislature 1793-1804.

SARAH CUNNINGHAM born August 11, 1763. She married John Morrison.

HUGH CUNNINGHAM born October 18, 1765.

WILLIAM CUNNINGHAM born October 10, 1767. He married Mary Huston.

JAMES CUNNINGHAM born October 15, 1768.

BENJAMIN CUNNINGHAM born March 10, 1770.

ELIZABETH CUNNINGHAM who married JOSEPH KITHCART. Elizabeth was born October 4, 1772 in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, died on August 20, 1854 in Mount Pleasant, Ohio. Joseph and Elizabeth Cunningham Kithcart's daughter, Martha Kithcart married Smiley Sharon. Their life and children are in the [KITHCART FAMILY HISTORY](#).

BARNETT CUNNINGHAM born April 11, 1775.

ANNA CUNNINGHAM born March 2, 1777. She married Mr. Morian.

JOSEPH CUNNINGHAM born February 8, 1778. He was a minister, and married Agnes Huston.

MARY CUNNINGHAM born February 9, 1782. She married Joseph Hutchinson.

