

Barringer, Paul ^[1]

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Barringer, Paul

by Mary Richmond Keating, 1979

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26 Sept. 1778–20 June 1844

Paul Barringer, businessman, member of the North Carolina House of Commons and Senate, and brigadier general in the [War of 1812](#) ^[3], was born at the family homeplace, Poplar Grove, in southeastern [Cabarrus County](#) ^[4]. He was the eldest child of John Paul Barringer, founder of the Barringer family in North Carolina, who emigrated from Germany to Pennsylvania in 1743. John Paul's second wife, Catherine Blackwelder, was Paul's mother. Since his father spoke only German, young Paul's early education was conducted mainly in the German language, but at the age of eighteen he was sent to an English classical school, where he remained for three years. He spoke and wrote both English and German fluently.

When he was twenty-one years old, he moved to Concord and, with his father's help, became a successful planter and merchant. Later he helped to organize the first cotton mill in Cabarrus County and became its first president. He also subscribed \$2,000 toward the construction of North Carolina's first railroad, the [Raleigh to Gaston Railroad](#) ^[5]. Not only did he support this railroad financially, but he was one of a small group that worked to make the idea of such an undertaking a reality.

In 1805, Barringer married Elizabeth Brandon of [Rowan County](#) ^[6], daughter of Matthew Brandon, an enthusiastic supporter of the [American Revolution](#) ^[7]. Barringer's father died in 1807; a few years later, the young couple moved back to the family home. There they had a family of eleven children, two of whom died in early childhood: [Daniel Moreau](#) ^[8], U.S. minister to Spain under presidents Taylor and Fillmore; Margaret, married first to John Boyd and second to Andrew Grier; Paul Brandon, one of the first settlers in the "Chickasaw Purchase" at Pontotoc, Miss.; Mary Ann; Matthew; William; Elizabeth; Alfred; Rufus, a general in the [Confederate](#) ^[9] Army; Catherine, who married W. C. Means; and [Victor](#) ^[10], lawyer, professor at [Davidson College](#) ^[11], state senator, and U.S. representative at the International Court at Alexandria, Egypt, from 1874 to 1894.

A handsome man nearly six feet tall, Barringer was quiet and unassuming. He preferred a simple life as a planter and merchant and close relationships with his family, church, and community. Underneath his quiet dignity, however, was a leader and a man of integrity. Because his associates recognized his leadership and respected his integrity, he was elected to represent his county for twelve years in the [North Carolina Assembly](#) ^[12], where he performed admirably and won the esteem of his fellow legislators. He was a member of the [Federalist](#) ^[13] party until he later joined the [Whig party](#) ^[14]. In 1823 he refused to run for reelection, claiming that his business interests—three plantations, two stores, a tannery, and a cotton mill—needed his guidance. Because he felt it necessary to locate nearer his enterprises, he moved his family in 1838 from Poplar Grove to a location two and a half miles west of Concord and built a home called Bellevue.

Like many others of German descent who had suffered hardship in Germany, Barringer was not in favor of slavery. He did for a time own about fifteen slaves; these he later gave to his son Paul Brandon to take to Mississippi, saying he did not believe the practice was moral or economically sound and that he did not wish to own them any longer.

He was opposed to the [War of 1812](#) ^[3], but when the war broke out, he quickly volunteered and was commissioned a brigadier general of volunteers, a position he held throughout the war.

Like his father before him, Barringer was a deeply religious man. He held office in St. John's Lutheran Church, for the building of which his father had given the land and most of the money. Paul, too, was a generous financial and spiritual supporter of this church.

Barringer was buried in the then new Lutheran Cemetery in Concord.

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Additional Resources:

Barringer, Paul 1778-1844 in WorldCat: <https://www.worldcat.org/identities/lccn-no2009-54151> ^[15]

Paul Barringer (1778-1844), (painting) at the Smithsonian Institute: http://collections.si.edu/search/results.htm?q=record_ID:siris_ari_194607 ^[16]

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