

**ALEXANDER THOMPSON**  
(CIRCA 1766 – MARCH 1814)

**A**lexander Thompson was the son of William "T" Thompson and Jane Caldwell. Actual date and place of birth are unknown, but circumstantial evidence points to Virginia, probably either Bedford, Campbell or Charlotte County, and probably somewhere near Falling River. Records from 1753 indicate that William Thompson was living near Turnip Creek (now in Charlotte County) and was responsible for assisting in road maintenance between Turnip Creek and Falling River. This part of Falling River became Bedford County and then Campbell County.

First record of Alexander is the Marriage Bond, dated September 4, 1786 giving consent to marry Margaret Ritchie, daughter of John Ritchie and Jane Davis Ritchie. The consent was signed by William Thompson and witnessed by Andrew Caldwell and John Caldwell. This indicates that Alexander had not yet attained the age of twenty-one years, since his father gave consent. Margaret Ritchie was "...of full age of twenty one years." This was signed by her mother, Jane Ritchie, and witnessed by Alexander Ritchie, believed to be her older brother. Her father, John Ritchie, died in 1769 in Prince Edward County. Alexander Thompson was about twenty years old, born about 1766, and Margaret was born in 1765. The Prince Edward County records indicate the marriage took place in Farmville, on December 7, 1786. It should be noted here that Margaret Ritchie's grandmother was Jane Caldwell, sister to Captain John Caldwell of Cub Creek and of George Caldwell, Sr., the latter being the grandfather of Alexander Thompson. Thus Alexander Thompson and Margaret Ritchie were second cousins.

To The Clerk of Prince Edward Sep. 1786  
 I hereby certify my free Consent & approbation  
 to a marriage intended between my son  
 Alexander Thompson & Margaret Ritchie  
 daughter of John Ritchie dec'd of  
 p<sup>l</sup> Co. County  
 Test. James B. Caldwell  
 John Caldwell

To the Clerk of Prince Edward  
 I certify that my daughter Margaret Ritchie  
 is of full age of twenty one years, & has my free  
 consent & approbation to a marriage intended between  
 Alexander Thompson the  
 Test. Sep. 1786  
 Jane Ritchie  
 Alexander Ritchie

First two sections of Marriage Bond for Alexander Thompson and Margaret Ritchie.

**MARRIAGE BOND**

The marriage bond was recorded September 4, 1786 but the marriage did not take place until December 7, 1786 in Farmville, PEC, VA. Farmville is the county seat.

SECTION 1: This is giving permission to the Clerk for Alexander to marry. Following is how I interpret what it says; [brackets are mine]

To: The clerk of Prince Edward [County] Sep. 1786

I hereby certify my full consent application to a marriage intention between my son, Alexander Thompson and Margaret Ritchy, daughter of John Ritchey, deceased of PE [Prince Edward] county. [The next line is unintelligible]

WILLIAM THOMPSON.

\*Test. [Witness] Andrew Caldwell [and] John Caldwell

**SECTION 2:** This is giving permission to the Clerk for Margaret Ritchie to marry.

To the Clerk of Prince Edward

I certify that my daughter Margaret Ritchey is of full age of twentyone years and has my full consent application to a marriage intended between Alexander Thompson. [next two words are unintelligible]

signed by Jane Ritchey

{Dated} Sep 1786

Test. [first name is unintelligible] Alexander Ritchie [believed to be Margaret's older brother]

**SECTION 3:** [Believe this was written by the court clerk, Richard Watkins. This is the actual Marriage Bond.] *Section 3 is not shown in photo because it is so illegible.*

Know all men by these presents that one Alexander Thompson and Alexander Ritchey are bound unto the Commonwealth of Virginia in fifty pounds current money, to be paid to our said Commonwealth, to which payment to be paid. We find ourselves jointly ... [next few words are unintelligible] ... firmly by these presents sealed [and] acknowledged this fourth day of [August is scratched out and written over it is the word] September 1786. The condition of this obligation is such if there is no lawful course to [unintelligible word] a marriage intended between Alexander Thompson and Margaret Ritchey then this obligation to be void order to remain in force hereafter.

Test. Richard Watkins

[Signed] Alexander Thompson (Seal) \*\*

Alexander Ritchey (Seal)

By the end of January 1787 Alexander and his new bride were in Lincoln County, Kentucky, as proven by deed transfers of land. This was no small accomplishment, as it was the frontier and winter, and travel would not have been easy. Though the *Wilderness Road*\*\*\* was well-traveled by then, it was still a hard journey to make.

The acreage was deeded to him by William Thompson in 1787 and lay on the main fork of Dougherty's Creek in Lincoln County. This area today is about one and a half miles southeast of Danville, Kentucky — an area known today (1998) as "Balls Branch". It was near a settlement known in 1787 as "Dougherty's Station" on a branch of Clarks Run, then known as "Dougherty's Creek". According to *Genealogies of Kentucky Families*, from the *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society (1981)*

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\* **Note: This is the only time I have ever found a true signature of William Thompson. All the other documents show his signature as a "T", his mark. Other genealogist agree with me that it is probably a practiced signature ... that he probably could not really write or even that he was lazy and used the "T" because it was easier!**

\*\* **Note: The signature of Alexander Thompson is done with great flourish!**

\*\*\* **See pages 11 and 12 for more about the Wilderness Road.**

pages 233 through 263, "...Most of the land around Dougherty's Station was being farmed and in 1783, a grist mill was built nearby on Dougherty's Creek by William Thompson."

It is recorded that William Thompson, Sr. was a landholder on Clarks Run near the Dix River in 1780, 1782 and 1784. Kentucky records note both William Thompson, Snr. and Jr. for several years but there is no mention after 1795 of William Thompson, Sr. He may have died or moved away during this time frame. Alexander buys an additional 100 acres from a Wm. Logan in 1800. Alexander appears on almost every tax roll from 1787 to 1810, though it appears he was brought before the Lincoln County court on January 16, 1793 "...to show cause why he refused to swear to a list of taxable property." On March 20, 1793 he swore an oath and paid his taxes.

Though I cannot prove it, circumstantial evidence would indicate that Alexander and William operated the grist mill. I have found several instances where Alexander Thompson sues to get money from several individuals with William acting as a witness to the action from 1787 to 1789. I'm not sure if this was William, Sr. or Jr. Also it would appear, from court records of 1793, that Capt. John Dougherty was a partner in the grist mill business venture. I find evidence in the records of money loaned (1793) to Alexander and Margaret Thompson and John Dougherty and wife Isabella with payment being paid in full to William Bryant on October 20, 1795.

Sometime in 1809 Violet Ritchie, sister of Margaret Ritchie Thompson, died in Clark County, Kentucky. Alexander Thompson was summoned to court in October of 1809 on the motion of "...Charlotte, a woman of color..." where he was to produce the last Will and Testament of Violet Ritchie. Alexander had apparently destroyed the Will for whatever purpose. Charlotte was able to produce a copy of the Will proven by oaths from Robert McMillian and Samuel Armstong who were subscribing witnesses to the original. The Court accepted the copy of the Will, thus freeing Charlotte and her children when they came of age.

Recorded in Will Book No. 2, page 445 in Clark County, Kentucky, October 1809:

The substance of Violet Ritches will as far as we now recollect. After a common preamble of a will she directed that her Negro woman of the name of Charlotte should be free at the death of the said Violet. She then named five other small Negro children of the said Charlotte by their several names, to wit, Harry, Ginny, Charlotte, Moses and Mime and also named for their several ages which we do not at present recollect, and directed that they should severally be free when they arrive at the age of 18 years.

She named Alex Thompson of her will and requested him to take charge of her small Negroes until they arrived at the age of 18 years each. She willed her bay mare to her brother George Ritchie and her best side saddle and gray mare to her sister's daughter Violet Thompson. Two cows, one to her brother Alexander Ritchies' son, George, and the other to John Gilaspie.

I find this an interesting glimpse into the life and times of Alexander Thompson. It seems to me that the destroyed Will of his sister-in-law was his veiled attempt to keep her slaves under his control. It is questionable that he ever intended to free them. It is also interesting to see that "Charlotte, a woman of color", brought about this action. Was she freed at the death of Violet Ritchie or did she bring about this action so she could be free, along with her children? We shall probably never know the full

truth of the matter. But with the acceptance of the Will by the court, it is a relief to this writer to know that freedom would eventually come to this family.

The 1810 census of Kentucky shows Alexander living in Lincoln County. About this time, he moved to an area on the bluffs above the Missouri River, near the present-day town of Chesterfield, St. Louis County, Missouri. Records indicate that they lived in what was then called Bonn Homme Township. According to Sanford Charles Gladden's book, *Durst and Darst Families of America*, Alexander and Margaret settled on the St. Louis County side of the Missouri River near the ferry to St. Charles. There he bought 300 arpents\* of land from John Murphy (St. Louis Deed Book C, page 484 and 12, page 451).

It is known that one of Alexander's neighbors in Missouri was Gabriel Long, a landowner with large holdings in the Chesterfield area (northwest of St. Louis). Gabriel Long's sister, Nancy Long, was married to Ludwell Bacon who lived south of Chesterfield near Manchester. It is also noteworthy to mention that Ninian Hamilton lived in this same area on Bon Homme Creek southwest of Chesterfield. Across the Missouri River from Chesterfield is Femme Osage Creek. Where it intersects with the Missouri River is the area known as "Darsts' Bottom". Femme Osage Creek is still popularly known as "Daniel Boone Country", for Daniel Boone did settle there, lived his later years in the area, and was originally buried there before being moved to Kentucky. The Bacons, Longs, Hamiltons and Darsts all play a part in the lives of the Thompson family.

Alexander Thompson signed his Will on March 4, 1814. Theophilus McKinnon, Langston Bacon, James Ritchie (his son-in-law) and Gabriel Long witnessed the Will. He appoints his wife, Margaret, Gabriel Long and Langston Bacon as executors. The Will was entered into Probate and apparently was opened on March 30, 1814. Margaret Thompson renounces the Will and elects to take dower right as provided by the laws of Missouri. There was an inventory list with the usual tools, furniture and equipment of a yeoman farmer. The Will and disbursements were not completed until August 25, 1819. In the Will Alexander names his six daughters and only son, William Thompson.

According to information given by the Darst family descendants, "Alexander Thompson was killed by marauding Indians who were stirred up as a result of the War of 1812". These Indian Wars are well documented and were fought for a number of years. There was a series of forts built to protect the populace from Indian attacks; the largest of these was at Darst's Bottom with Daniel Boone's son as the commander. Alexander Thompson was killed while hunting for renegade Indians during an uprising. If Alexander made out his Will on March 4, 1814 and it was opened in Probate Court on March 30, 1814, it appears to me that he died within that time frame. Furthermore, I propose that he made out the Will because he knew he was dying or about to die, possibly the results of being wounded in a battle with Indians, or perhaps because he was embarking on a dangerous mission. There were several skirmishes between the

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\* According to Merriam-Webster's Dictionary, an arpent is any of various old French units of land area; especially: one used in French sections of Canada and the U.S. equal to about 0.85 acre (0.34 hectare).

Indians and the settlers in that area and time. I find no references to our Alexander Thompson, but it is plausible this is what happened.

I find no further records of Margaret Ritchie Thompson after August 1819. Since her daughter, Jane Thompson Ritchie, signed off and acted as co-guardian with her mother for her brother, William Thompson, Margaret probably lived with Jane and James Ritchie. But that is an assumption on my part and may not be correct. The 1820 Census does show a James Ritchey living in Bon Homme Township.

Alexander Thompson and Margaret Ritchie had seven children, six daughters and one son, all of whom were born in Lincoln County, Kentucky. These children are all mentioned in the disbursement of Alexander's Probate papers in the St. Louis County Superior Court.

1. **ANEY (ANNIE OR ANN) THOMPSON** married Samuel Watson on January 18, 1816. They were married by Gabriel Long, as reported in the Missouri Gazette of January 27, 1816. Samuel R. Watson is also mentioned in the disbursements of the will of Alexander Thompson, wherein he received monies from in July of 1816 for his wife. It is believed that Ann Thompson Watson died in childbirth on December 24, 1817 in Pike County, Missouri. The child also died. Samuel Watson never remarried and was known by his family as "Batchelor Sam." It is not proven that Samuel R. Watson and "Batchelor Sam" are the same person. There was a Samuel Watson living in St. Charles County, but his age does not seem to fit one who might be the husband of Ann. It appears there were no surviving children of this union.
2. **MARY ("POLLY") THOMPSON** married David Holman Darst of Darst's Bottom on Femme Osage Creek across the Missouri River from Chesterfield. David Holman Darst was the son of David Darst and Rosetta Holman who obtained a Spanish Land Grant in 1799 and settled the area called Darst's Bottom, St. Charles County. David's brother, Jacob Darst, died at the Alamo in Texas in 1836. David Darst and wife, Polly, lived all their lives at Darst's Bottom. They had at least two daughters:
  - i. Nancy Darst, who married Samuel Keithly in 1848 at the Methodist campground on Femme Osage Creek. She died in 1875 and is buried at Flint Hill, St. Charles County.
  - ii. Mary Darst, who married Marvin Keithly. I am not sure of the relationship of these Keithlys. It is my understanding that there are still Keithlys living in the O'Fallon area of St. Charles County, Missouri.
3. **ELIZABETH THOMPSON** married John Kinkead. I have made some contact with descendants of this family, John A. Kinkead in Red Bird, Gasconade County, Missouri. I believe the Kinkead family were neighbors of the Thompsons when they all lived in Lincoln County, Kentucky.
4. **VIOLET THOMPSON** was the second wife of David McQuitty born in 1779. David was the son of William McQuitty and Ellen Smith and brother of Andrew McQuitty. Both brothers settled in Boone County, Missouri. Violet and David had at least two known children: Alexander Thompson McQuitty, who married Catherine Lutes, and Violet McQuitty, who married Archibald March. David McQuitty had family by his first wife (name unknown): Andrew, Sarah, Isabella, Mary "Polly", and Elizabeth. After the death of Violet (1824), David was married a third time to Mary Stephenson, and they had: David and George McQuitty. David and Violet McQuitty are mentioned in probate records of Alexander Thompson in St. Louis County.

5. **MARGARET "PEGGY" THOMPSON** married James Tygart. I believe they lived in St. Charles County. I have contact with some Taggarts who lived in Warren County, Missouri and are connected to the Long/Bacon families of St. Louis, but conflicting information leaves me without sufficient documentation to actually make a tie.
6. **JANE THOMPSON** married James Ritchie In Lincoln County, Kentucky in 1805. James is believed to be a cousin. He signed as a witness to the Will of Alexander Thompson in 1814. Jane Ritchie signed as a witness when that Will was closed in 1819. I found a James Ritchie in St. Louis County in the 1830 census but nothing beyond that date.
7. **WILLIAM THOMPSON**, youngest child and only son of Alexander and Margaret Thompson. It is estimated that he was born in Lincoln County, Kentucky about 1805. This is based on the information in the Will of Alexander Thompson. William would have been only about 9 years old at the time of his father's death. It is also noted that when the Will was closed in August of 1819, William was still considered a minor child. William married Nancy Bacon of St. Louis County some time after 1825. I have not yet found a marriage date and place for them. (*See biography for William Thompson, 1805-1846, Chapter 3.*) Note: Nancy Bacon's uncle was Langston Bacon who was witness to the will of Alexander Thompson, and her aunt was Nancy Bacon Long, wife of Gabriel Long, also a witness to the will of Alexander Thompson.

Last is the Hamilton family mentioned earlier in this chapter. Though they probably were known to the Thompsons and Bacons, there seemed to be no relationship with this family until the next generation, when Pleasant Thompson, son of William Thompson and Nancy Bacon, married Sarah Ann Hamilton. Sarah Ann Hamilton was the granddaughter of Ninian Hamilton who obtained a Spanish Land Grant in 1803 between Bon Homme Creek and Wild Horse Creek, St. Louis County, Missouri.

## **ABOUT THE WILDERNESS ROAD**

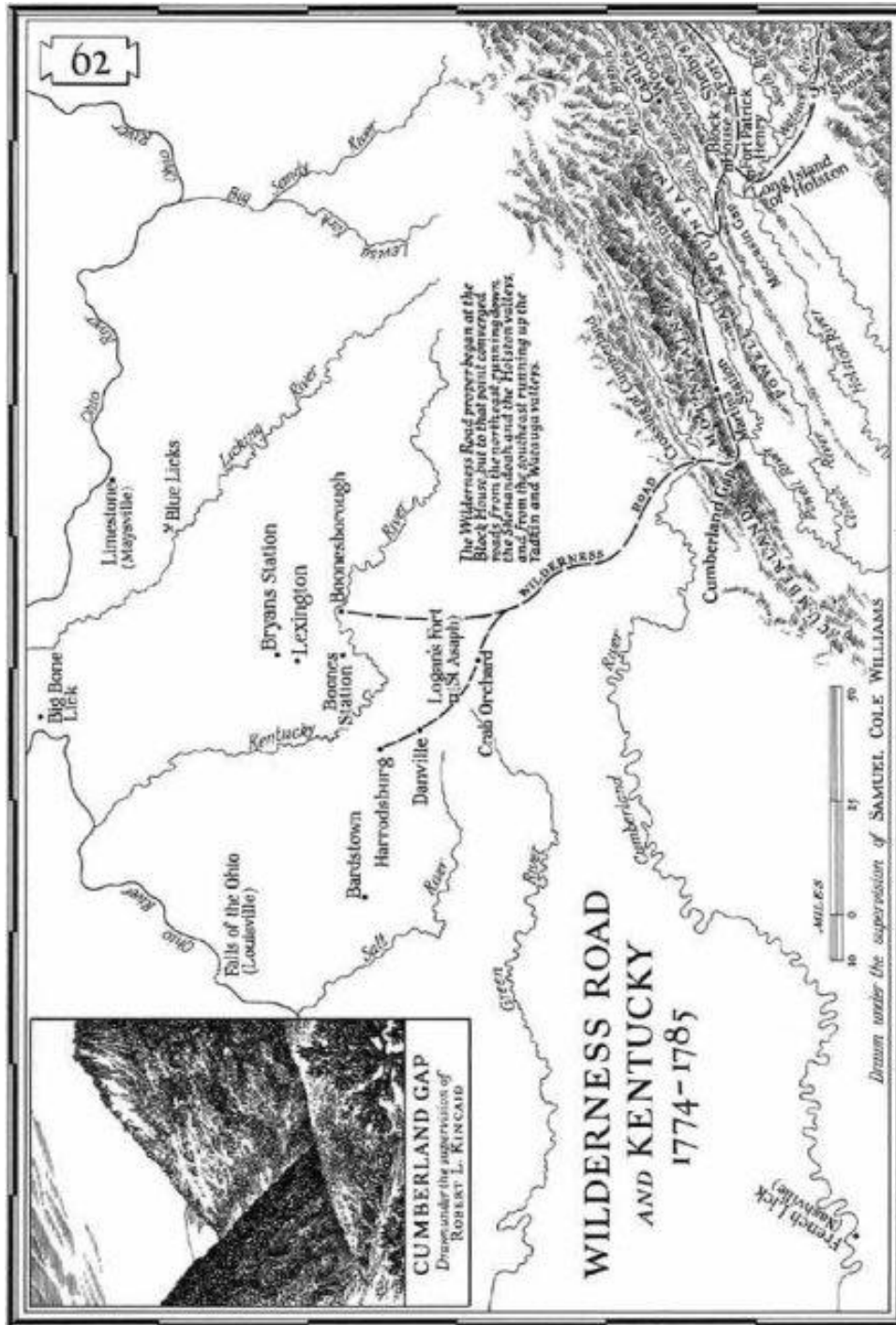
The Wilderness Road began at a point in western Virginia known as the Block House, near Fort Patrick Henry. Two roads converged here from the South (the Carolinas) and from the North (Pennsylvania and northern Virginia). From the Block House it ran southwesterly through the Cumberland Gap then turned and ran northerly. It split in two just south of Crab Orchard in Kentucky. One section ran straight north to Boonesborough and the other northwesterly to Danville and Harrodsburg (north of Danville about 15 miles. (*See map, page 12.*)

This was a trail blazed by the early explorers (Boone and others) who went into Kentucky. There was another way into Kentucky via the Holston River, but the Indians were so hostile there that it was seldom used at the time. It was an easy route because it connected to the Ohio river, where they could use flat boats or rafts to go down river into Kentucky and Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. This route really wasn't used much until the Indians were brought under control in the late 1700s. So, the early settlers of Kentucky used the Wilderness Road. Most of those who came from Pennsylvania and the northern states like New York, New Jersey, Maryland, etc. used the Holston River route after 1785.

The Wilderness Road had Indian attacks too. John Downing and his brother, James (remember, John married Jane Thompson.), built a station (fort) along the road

after several people were killed trying to migrate into Kentucky. Even so, the Indians were not as hostile here as on the Holston River route, so migration was easier.

What I found interesting is that Alexander and Margaret, in a little over a month, made the trip from Prince Edward County, Virginia to Lincoln County, Kentucky. About 1810, William Bacon went from Albermarle County, Virginia to St. Louis and it took him over 3 months.



Historical map acquired at Ancestry.com website.



## DOCUMENTATION

- Lunenburg County Road Orders 1746-1764, pages 23, 67, 110-111 (Wm. Thompson appointments)
- Bedford County Deed Book A-1, page 21 ( 1759 - mentions land adjoining Wm. Thompson and George Caldwell, Jr., brother-in-law of William Thompson)
- Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, V, page 51 (mentions Jane Caldwell, daughter of George Caldwell, Sr. in 1742)
- Amelia County, VA Will Book I, page 8 (regards the Wills of George Caldwell, Sr. and daughter Jane)
- Prince Edward County Order Book, July 1755 (regards Wills of George Caldwell and daughter Jane who was the wife of William Thompson.)
- Bedford County Order Book – Feb. 28, 1774 (give permission to Wm. Thompson to build grist mill on Little Falling River, a branch to Falling River.)
- Bedford County Marriages – June 27, 1778 records the marriage of Elizabeth Thompson to Benj. Beachboard.)
- Bedford County Deed Book – June 1780 (Wm. Thompson sells land on the north side of Falling River, adjoining George Caldwell)
- Genealogies of Kentucky Families, from the Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, A – M, 1981, article titled *The Dougherty's of Kentucky*, by William C. Stewart, pages 233–263. (Pages 237 and 238 describe the settlement on Clarks Run and Dougherty's Creek and tell that in 1783 William Thompson builds grist mill at that location.)
- Marriage Bond of John Downing and Jane Thompson, January 2, 1783, Lincoln County, VA (later KY)
- Marriage Bond of Alexander Thompson and Margaret Ritchie, dated September 1786 in Prince Edward Co., VA (Marriage took place on December 7, 1786 in Farmville, PEC, VA)
- Lincoln Co., KY Deed Book A, page 275, recorded May 15, 1787. (Gift deed from William Thompson to Alexander Thompson)
- Lincoln County, Kentucky records from 1784 to 1795. I found several instances of Alexander and William Thompson being mentioned as having served on juries, various suits and appointments.
- Early Kentucky Landholders 1787-1811, page 327 and 339, Early Kentucky Householder 1787-1811, page 185, and Old Kentucky Entries and Deeds, page 67, by Willard Rouse Jillison.
- The 1790, 1800 and 1810 Federal Census Records of Lincoln County, Kentucky. Alexander and William found in the 1790 census. The 1800 Census Records are incomplete and I found no Thompson's listed. Found Alexander and William listed in the 1810 Census.
- Durst and Darst Families of America, by Sanford Charles Gladden, (1969), pages 122-123. I have found several major differences in the article written about the Thompson family in this book. Essentially the article is mostly correct but there are several things with which I take issue and would like to correct.
- St. Louis County Deed Book C, page 484 and Deed Book 12, page 451. Regards purchase of land by Alexander Thompson.
- St. Louis County Court Probate Records, File 142: Alexander Thompson, farmer, opened March 30, 1814. This is the Will of Alexander Thompson, with inventory and estate disbursements to his named children.

- Notes from Serena Castlio Hays (wife of Daniel Berry Hays, son of Willie Bryan Hays) and Harriet Darst (daughter of David Holman Darst and Mary Thompson). Sent to Winifred Thompson Ames by Lillian Oliver (daughter of Serena Hays). These notes were then passed to me. Mrs. Hays gives a lineage of Alexander Thompson, saying that he descended from a William Thompson and wife Mary who came from Scotland to Ireland about 1718 where William Thompson died. Mary and family continued to America about 1720 and settled the area known today as Windsor, Connecticut. This William and Mary had a son, Hugh Thompson, who married Elizabeth Ellsworth. They in turn had a son named John Thompson who had a son named Alexander Thompson. She gives Alexander Thompson's birthdate as May 31, 1754 and his death date as December 30, 1814.

Investigation of this genealogy has proved that it is not the lineage of our subject Alexander Thompson. I cannot discount some sort of relationship to this family, but it doesn't appear to be our direct line. Investigation has proved that the Alexander Thompson, son of John Thompson mentioned above, died in December 1814 and was buried in Windsor, Connecticut. Our subject Alexander Thompson died in 1814 but sometime in March between the 4th and the 30th when his Will was opened.

- A typewritten page of notes on the Alexander Thompson Family, by W. M. Shankland, A.M., Ed D. I believe this was written and sent to my cousin Winifred Thompson Ames in response to some questions she had when she first started her inquiry into the Thompson and Bacon families in Missouri.