

WILLIAM "T" THOMPSON

(CIRCA 1730 – CIRCA 1797)

I have termed this man William "T" Thompson because he signed most of his documents (deeds) with a "T", his mark. Because there were several other William Thompsons in Bedford, Campbell, Charlotte, Franklin, Prince Edward, Lunenburg and Amelia Counties, this has proved one way to distinguish him from others of the same name. Though there is no proof or documentation, William may have been the son of the Reverend John Thomson who was in this area of Virginia until about 1750 when he removed to North Carolina dying there in 1753. *[For information of the Reverend John Thomson see the Virginia Magazine of History and Biography published by the Virginia Historical Society, Vol. LI, year ending December 31, 1943; pages 394 through 404; article titled: Some of the Descendants of the Reverend John Thomson (c-1690-1753) by John Goodwin Herndon.]* Recent correspondence has proved several mistakes in this article, however, so use it only as a guide.

I have given an estimated date of birth for William Thompson as circa 1730. His ancestry is not known but, I suspect he is of Scot-Irish descent based on where he lived, his neighbors, and whom he married. We know that he married Jane Caldwell. The Caldwell family dates back into Ireland and Scotland and members of this family were leaders in the settlement of the part of Virginia where William lived. His neighbors were also closely connected to the Caldwells and the Cub Creek Congregation (Presbyterian) which Captain John Caldwell (Jane's uncle) helped found about 1740. We know that the Reverend John Thomson came to this area (Buffalo Creek) to serve as a sort of circuit-rider preacher to those people who lived on the frontier. Most of these people were Scot-Irish and were devoted Presbyterians.

William Thompson first appears on Lunenburg County Road Orders (page 67) in 1753 in which he and James Cunningham (his wife was Ann Thomson, daughter of the Rev. John Thomson) and others were to assist William Rogers in keeping the road in repair from Turnip Creek to the Falling River. The Rogers family and the Caldwell family were also connected by marriage.

Lunenburg County Road Orders (page 110-111) dating 1758 mentions that Thomas Rogers took over as surveyor for William Rogers and names Thomas Dougherty, James Dougherty and William Thompson to assist. These Dougherty's are sons of Michael Dougherty who came with the Caldwells, Ritchies, Moores, and Dudgeons from Ireland in 1727 and were connected to the Cub Creek Congregation (Presbyterian Church). These same Doughertys were cousins of Captain John Dougherty who led many early settlers into Kentucky in the late 1770s, establishing a settlement called Dougherty's Station near present day Danville, Kentucky.

Bedford County Deed Book A-1, Page 21, dated 1759: William Thompson is mentioned as owning adjoining land when Samuel Taylor was deeded land by Patrick McDavitt on Little Falling River and Samson Branch. Also mentioned is George Caldwell as an adjoining property owner. It is believed that George Caldwell (Jr.) was the brother of Jane Caldwell who was married to William Thompson.

Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, V, page 51, 1754/1758 mentions that Jane Thompson, wife of William Thompson, was one of the legatees of George Caldwell. This information comes from the records of Prince Edward County, July 1755. George Caldwell died in Amelia County in 1742 (see excerpts from his will on page 3) in which he names his daughters Jean (Jane) and Marry who were not yet married and a married daughter Agnes Cleath. It is believed that George Caldwell was the brother of Capt. John Caldwell of Cub Creek fame (1740) and was one of the founders of Lunenburg County about 1747. Their sister was Jeanne (Jane) Caldwell who married Alexander Ritchie. This is significant because Alexander Thompson, son of William and Jane, later (1786) married Margaret Ritchie, granddaughter of Jane Caldwell Ritchie.

February 28, 1774, William Thompson was granted leave to build a grist mill on his own land on the Little Falling River, according to Bedford County records.

June 1780 finds William Thompson selling his land on the north side of Falling River, adjoining George Caldwell. It is believed that he sold the land in preparation for his move to Lincoln County, Kentucky (in 1780 it was still Virginia) since he first appeared in the records of Lincoln County that same year. Though there is no real evidence, it is felt that William Thompson actually went to Kentucky prior to 1780 to scout and purchase land. Perhaps this is the reason why Thomas Dougherty acted as surety when Elizabeth Thompson married Benjamin Beachboard on June 28, 1778 in Bedford County, Virginia.

In 1783 William Thompson is mentioned as having built a grist mill on Dougherty's Creek and Clark's Run in an area then known as Dougherty's Station (fort) just southeast of present day Danville, Kentucky. This area was originally settled by Capt. John Dougherty, a cousin to Thomas and James Dougherty in Bedford County, Virginia, who worked together with William Thompson keeping the road in repair from Turnip Creek to Falling River. [See *Genealogies of Kentucky Families, from the Register of the Kentucky Historical Society, A-M, 1981, pages 233 through 263. The article is called, "The Dougherty's of Kentucky", by William C. Stewart.*]

William and Jane (sometimes referred to as Jean) Thompson sold a tract of land to William Logan for 300 pounds on July 2, 1785, (Lincoln County Deed Book, A, page 126). Another reference on July 20, 1785, William and Jane Thompson acknowledge an indenture. (Deed Book A, page 127) William Logan and wife Agnes to William Thompson, for 300 pounds, a tract of land beginning at John Dougherty's settlement line, near Dougherty's Station (Danville, Kentucky), Davis' fence, being William Logan's settlement tract of 400 acres.

In January of 1787, Alexander Thompson was in Lincoln County, Kentucky where he was given 200 acres of land by William Thompson, Senior, a "...part of said Thompson's Tract of land lying and being in the County of Lincoln and on the main fork of Dougherty's Creek." This area today would be about one and a half miles southeast of Danville, Kentucky. Today (1998) the area is known as "Balls Branch", near a settlement known in 1787 as "Dougherty's Station" on a branch of Clark's Run, then known as "Dougherty's Creek". According to *Genealogies of Kentucky Families*,

"...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." 200 acres of land was given to Alexander by William Thompson, Sr. January 27, 1787 and witnessed by Alexander Ritchie, John Simpson, Jr. and William Thompson. This document is signed by William Thompson "T", by his mark.

Four days later, on January 31, 1787 William Thompson, Sr. gave to William Thompson, Jr. *"...my stock of horses, mares and colts, cows and calves and also all my hogs and sheep, and all my household furniture, beds, pewter, pots, and every other moveable affect in on and about my house with all other plantation utensils of every kind and also one Negro wench and child. Also, all the remainder of the Tract or parcel of land whereon I, the said William Thompson, Sen. do now live except that part which I sold to Elisha Pruitt, and that which Alexander Thompson holds by Deed".* This document was witnessed by Alexander Thompson and John Simpson and signed by William Thompson "T", by his mark.

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, Sr. 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. Because of the lack of evidence to support his death date, I am using the date of circa 1797 based on the last 1795 entry for a Householder in Lincoln County. Jane Caldwell Thompson must have died sometime after 1790. The last known mention of her was in regard to a land sale in that year.

I believe William "T" Thompson died sometime about 1797, probably in Campbell County, Kentucky. I found a letter dated 1818 from the Court Clerk of Campbell County addressed to the Court Clerk of Lincoln County. The letter states that William Thompson, Jr. is the "administrator" of the estate of William Thompson, Sr. and he was therefore authorized to sell a parcel of land on the Dix River. The description of this piece of property is very similar to the property that William "T" and wife Jane purchased in 1786. A search of Campbell County, Kentucky records has not turned up any information on William "T" Thompson, but based on the letter Campbell County to Lincoln County, it appears he died without a will (intestate). It is presumed that the reason William Thompson, Jr. moved to Campbell County, Kentucky in 1799 (documented in his Revolutionary War Pension Application) was to take over his father's property.

WILLIAM "T" THOMPSON and wife JANE had several children:

1. **ELIZABETH THOMPSON** (circa 1760 – 1801) married Benjamin Beachboard in Bedford County, Virginia on June 27, 1778. This family moved to Tennessee and descendants eventually moved south into Alabama.
2. **JANE THOMPSON** (circa 1763 –1824) married Captain John Downing (formerly of Bedford County, Virginia) on June 2, 1783 in Lincoln County, Kentucky. This family eventually settled in St. Charles County, Missouri. *(See Chapter 10, Descendants of John Downing and Jane Thompson.)*
3. **ALEXANDER THOMPSON** (1766-1814) married his cousin, Margaret Ritchie on December 7, 1786 in Farmville, Prince Edward County, Virginia. They moved to Lincoln County, Kentucky by 1787 and to St. Louis County, Missouri about 1810. *(See Chapter 2.)*

4. **WILLIAM THOMPSON, JR.** (1767-1840) married Nancy Drinkard in March of 1790 in Madison County, Kentucky. William served for different periods of time in the American Revolution in Kentucky, according to his Pension Application of 1833. He moved to Montgomery County in 1797 and to Campbell County in 1799, where he remained until his death about 1840. Some of his descendants moved west to Missouri, Texas, and Oregon. (*See Chapter 10, Descendants of William Thompson and Nancy Drinkard.*)
5. **GEORGE THOMPSON** (circa 1774 - ?) It is unknown whether this is a son of William "T" and Jane, but circumstantial evidence points to a possibility. We know he owned land in the general vicinity of William "T" and Jane on the Dicks River near Danville. He also appears on the land/tax records on the same day, book and page numbers as does Alexander Thompson, which indicates they lived in close proximity to one another. If he was not the son of William "T" it is believed he was probably related in some way which remains unknown at this time.
6. **SARAH THOMPSON** — Oral family history of the Beachboard family indicates that Elizabeth had a sister named Sarah who married a Joseph Smith. No documentation has been found.