

Thomas Welch and His wife Hester Parton Welch

By

Thelma Welch Swanson

1993

Thomas Welch, son of Joseph and Catherine Deck Welch, was born in Rutherford County, North Carolina, June 12/18, 1806 and died March 23/28, 1861 in Macon County, North Carolina.

Thomas Welch was married to Hester Parton about 1827. No place or date of their marriage has been found. Hester, daughter of Benjamin Parton, was born in South Carolina, probably in Fairfield county. She was born May 13, 1802 ( Burningtown Baptist Church Records) November 8, 1802 ( cemetery) and died Dec 3, 1859, age 57. Her death is recorded in the Macon County Mortality Schedule of 1860 and it lists tuberculosis as cause of death.

Benjamin Parton of South Carolina, age 80 , was residing in the household of Thomas and Hester at the time of the 1850 Census enumeration. He lived in Haywood County in 1810 and 1820. In the Haywood County records there is a marriage of Anna Partin, daughter of Benjamin, to Samuel Norris, December 17, 1814. Benjamin was the bondsman for the marriage of Moses Partin and Mary Hasley, February 19, 1828.

Thomas and Hester first lived in the Cowee section for the Macon County records show that on March 28, 1829 Thomas Welch, Thomas Shepherd, Jr., Joshua Dickey and B.S. Brittain were members of the County Patrol for the Cowee Community. The new county was divided into militia companies with a leader and patrols.

From May 23, 1835 Cowee Church Records: Chose Brethren Isaac Truett, Henry Burnett, Joseph Kilpatrick and Thomas Welch to meet and labor with members, Thos. Daves and James Gilbreath.

They later moved to the Burningtown section where Thomas became a large land owner through purchase from individuals, land grants and entry and claim. By 1860 he had 3400 acres valued at \$9,640 and personal property valued at \$1,918.

They lived near the Burningtown Creek where Thomas operated a grist mill. The location is often referred to in the old Macon County records: June 18, 1845- Ordered by the court that Richard Clappett be appointed overseer of the Burningtown road from the ford in the creek below Thomas Welch's mill. May 1854... To work out a road beginning at the lower end of Zachariah Downs' field through the Saldeer Gap and to intersect the Burningtown road near Welch's mill.

Thomas was also a blacksmith. A blacksmith was a skilled artisan with many talents. Besides putting shoes on horses, he built and repaired wagons and he made most of the tools and many of the utensils for the house, and farm. In his will in 1861, he gave to his daughter, Louisa Huggins " all of my farming and smith tools and all the iron I have on hand and loaned out and wagons unfinished except one which I owe J. W. Welch."

Thomas and Hester were the parents of 3 daughters and 2 sons: Joseph Wilburn Welch, Emily Amanda Welch, Isabel Marianne Welch, Louisa A. Welch and James William Welch.

Hester Parton Welch and son, William, had died by the time of the 1860 Census. The Mortality Schedule of 1860 lists their deaths. Hester's death was caused by tuberculosis and William's death from bronchitis. The account book of Henry Hardin Ray, a carpenter and storekeeper of the Burningtown community, shows that Thomas paid for 3 coffins." one for William, one for wife and one for self." There is no date for this entry.

The 1860 Census shows that Thomas Allen, age 13, son of D. H. and Amanda Welch Allen, is living in the household with his grandfather, Thomas Welch. He is remembered in Thomas's will written in 1861. " Fourth, I will and bequeath to my grandson, Thomas Allen, one horse, bridle and saddle, worth One Hundred Dollars, one cow, one bed and furniture and one rifle gun to be paid to him by Executor when he attains the age of twenty one years."

I do not know the cause of Thomas Welch's death, but it was evidently of a brief illness for his name appears in the December 1860 County Court records as having been drawn for jury duty at the March 1861 term of Superior Court. He had also been appointed to a committee by the Burningtown Baptist Church shortly before his death. His will which was made on March 21, 1861, two days before his death, was contested by two of his daughters, Emily Amanda Welch and Isabell Marianne Welch Drinnon, when it was filed for probate June 10, 1861. The will was transmitted to the Superior Court to be submitted to a jury. On September 9, 1861, the jury: T.J.Kimsey, R.A. Phillips, A.B. Angel, Andrew Justice, M.A. Russell. A. Conley, Hugh Elmore, John Elmore, John Ramsey, Peter Davis, William Patton and F. Barnett, found the will to be the Last Will and Testament of Thomas Welch. Joseph Wilburn Welch and Louisa Welch Huggins were the chief beneficiaries of their father's estate. Emily Amanda Allen and Marianne Drinnon were to receive the proceeds from the sales of mountain lands owned by Thomas. His will is part of this history.

Thomas and Hester were Charter Members of the Burningtown Baptist Church which was organized June 16. 1839.