

# Thomas Greer

*By William N. Greer*

As we move backward in our family tree, it is inevitable that our knowledge of people and events becomes less detailed and less reliable. So it is with Thomas Greer, Nathaniel Hunt Greer's grandfather. Tradition holds that Thomas was born in Ireland on January 3, 1723, the son of Thomas Greer and Rachel Morton — but this is dubious. The Irish couple in question did have a son named Thomas born August 14, 1731 — but he apparently died before his sixth birthday, because he was omitted from his father's will of February 14, 1737. Some claim our Thomas was born in MD or PA, but proof is lacking.

Thomas wed Jane Dunlap, perhaps on April 4, 1750, but this date is disputed. One researcher has suggested 1753 and another listed December 10, 1758 — but their first child was born (in PA, it is said) on September 9, 1754. The site of their union is thought to have been near Mount Pleasant, Adams Co, PA. We are not at all sure about the roster of their children that appears at the end of this page. It is possible that not all of these children are properly assigned to Thomas and Jane — and it is possible that some children may be missing from this list. However, the list is likely the best that can be produced at this time.

In the early 1760s, Thomas and Jane moved their family to Rowan Co, NC, where on January 4, 1765, they bought 326 acres from James Tennin for 70 pounds. A month later Thomas witnessed the sale of 300 acres — on a ridge between the Catawba and Rocky rivers — to his father-in-law Gilbert Dunlap<sup>1</sup>. Just three years later, Thomas had nearly doubled the value of his property, selling it on January 15, 1768, to John Miller for 130 pounds.

Within a month, Thomas and his family moved to St. Paul Parish, GA, and took up residence along Uchee creek, about 4 miles from where it feeds into the Savannah river. Next spring, in May of 1769, Thomas — claiming a wife and 9 children — petitioned for a headright of 250 acres. This could have been the land on which they had been living. On October 6, 1772, the petition was granted by Gov. James Habersham and on February 21, 1785, another 150 acres were granted along the Uchee by Gov. Samuel Elbert, bringing the Thomas Greer estate to 400 acres.

Thomas fought for the Revolution, and although it has been suggested that he served in Wake Co, NC, the actual nature of his duty is unknown. In 1777, his GA property was designated part of the newly-created Richmond Co, but the locals continued to call the area St. Paul Parish for several more years.

In 1781 Thomas was appointed a Justice of the Peace for Richmond Co, and in 1783 he served as Road Commissioner.

In 1783 the state obtained Indian land from which Washington Co. was created, February 25, 1784, to use for military service bounty grants. Later in 1784, Gov. John Houston granted some

of this land to Thomas in recognition of his service. On July 20, 1785, Thomas sold 200 acres of it (along Harris' Branch) to Robert Allison.

In 1786 Washington Co. was subdivided and Greene Co. came into being. There, on June 19, 1787, Thomas bought property from Abraham and Hannah Reddick on Beaverdam creek which feeds the Ogeechee river. Five years earlier, Thomas' son John (NHG's father) had wed the daughter of Nancy Reddick. Nancy was very likely kin to the Reddicks who sold to Thomas — perhaps they were her parents.

On October 13, 1787, Thomas sold to James Garrett the rest of his Greene Co. military bounty grant — 287.5 acres on Harris' Branch. Then in 1790, Richmond Co. was subdivided and Thomas' Uchee creek homestead became part of the newly-created Columbia Co.

It seems that in 1793 Thomas' health began to fail because late that summer he abruptly sold off his remaining property and moved in with one of his children. On September 3 he sold his home along Uchee creek to Peter Stubblefield. On November 7 he sold 287.5 acres along Town creek in Greene Co. to his son Gilbert Dunlap Greer — the first of many descendants to be named after Thomas's father-in-law.

Thomas died soon after that last sale, for on December 11, his son Thomas was named administrator of the estate which was valued at just over 294 pounds on December 17, 1793.

Jane apparently predeceased Thomas because she was not among his heirs — indeed, she may even have died in the 1770s since she would have been rather old to have borne Thomas' last two children. Possibly the children were born to an unidentified second wife of Thomas, although this is not indicated in the list that appears below.

1—Thomas GREER, Sr

sp: Jane DUNLAP (abt 1735-bef 1793)

2—William GREER (9 Sep 1754-27 Aug 1821) ... wed Sarah Stephens in GA on 8 Dec 1784

2—unknown GREER (abt 1756-) ... wed a man named Higginbotham ca 1775

2—Agnes GREER (14 Feb 1758-5 Sep 1820) ... wed Thomas Johnson, Sr, ca 1778

2—Gilbert Dunlap GREER (abt 1759-bef 11 Dec 1799) ... wed Francis Rebecca Marbury in Columbia Co, GA, ca 1785

2—John D GREER ... father of Nathaniel Hunt Greer

2—James GREER (abt 1763-) ... believed wed and had children, but wife unknown

2—Thomas GREER, Jr (2 Mar 1764-bef Oct 1823) ... wed Letitia Grinage in Richmond Co, GA, on 15 May 1788

2—unknown GREER (abt 1766-) ... wed Jonathan Wood

2—Elizabeth GREER (abt 1773-) ... wed Seth Kennedy on 10 Jan 1794

2—James Alexander GREER (1779-) ... fate unknown

1-Very little is known about Gilbert Dunlap, but it is apparent from his many namesakes that he was highly esteemed by the family.

He is thought to have been born in Scotland around 1710, but this is speculative. He married a woman known to us only as Agnes. The wedding would likely have been around 1730 — perhaps in Scotland.

He is known to have resided in PA in the first half of the 18th century. By the mid-1760s he had relocated to that part of Rowan Co, NC, now known as Iredell Co. There on February 12, 1765, he bought 300 acres spanning a ridge between the Catawba and Rocky rivers. This parcel was part of the land granted in 1757 to the sons of Robert Johnson by Simon McCormick. Thomas Cribbs witnessed the transaction and the following day Thomas Greer (Gilbert's son-in-law) and James Potts swore they saw Gilbert Dunlap pay the note.

Ten years later Gilbert sold off his land in two parcels. The smaller part, comprising 60 acres, was sold on August 13, 1775, to his son-in-law Thomas Cribbs. The next day Gilbert sold the remaining 240 acres to John Lister, a future son-in-law. After the liquidations of 1775, Gilbert disappears from official records and we know nothing more about him. It is theorized that these sales were made so that Gilbert could move to GA and spend his final years living with his eldest daughter Jane and her husband Thomas Greer.

Known children of Gilbert and Agnes:

Jane DUNLAP ... paternal grandmother of Nathaniel Hunt Greer

Mary DUNLAP (abt 1744-abt 1775) ... wed Thomas Johnson in Greene Co, GA, ca 1765/1766

Agnes DUNLAP (1745-) ... wed Thomas Cribbs—probably in Rowan Co, NC

Elizabeth DUNLAP (-) ... wed John Lister in Rowan Co, NC, on February 16, 1776.