

The Thames family of Joseph & Martha (Newberry) Thames leave Cumberland County, NC.

By Walter S. and Maxine C. Gabennesch

Our research shows that Thomas and his brother Samuel Thames left NC with their immediate families in the years of 1808/9. Thomas Thames, Samuel Thames or any members of their immediate family does not appear on the 1810 census of Cumberland or Bladen Counties, NC or any other NC census.

Amos Thames, who was a nephew of Thomas and Samuel's, left in 1810 soon after the sale of his mother-in-law Marion Plummer's property in Bladen Co. and the marriage of his widowed mother Elizabeth to Joseph Butler. Amos Thames does not appear, or more properly is not named, on the 1810 or any other NC census of that year.

The story of this Amos Thames is well known. He was born in about 1785 in Bladen County, NC. His pension papers and the Georgia censuses of 1820, 1830, 1840 and 1850 show his movement from mid Georgia to the western Georgia County of Randolph. His wife Elizabeth became a pauper and ward of the county upon his death. His male children that survived him, with possibly with one exception, probably continued west. The big question with Amos is just how many children did he have and what were their names? Who are the individuals on his 1820/30/40 censuses are they all really his children? Why does Elizabeth Thames who appears on his 1850 census say she was born in NC 1830? We wish we knew the answers.

The Reverend William Thames' children Nancy Wiggins, Martha Cooper, Lucy Newberry, Cornelius, William and James Thames left NC for MS and AL about 1816 and were certainly all gone before 1817. At first we thought they left in two groups. Nancy Wiggins, Lucy Newberry and Cornelius Thames went to Monroe Co. Alabama with their respective families. Martha Cooper, William Thames and their brother James went to Newton Co., Mississippi with their families. We now doubt that.

We now believe they all left together with the intent of going to Mississippi to join the family of Jonathan Cooper Sr. that had gone on ahead. For some reason, when the party reached Monroe Co. Alabama half of them decided to stay. It could have been any reason. My thought is that it probably had to do with the fervent religious atmosphere of the area. That would have appealed to Cornelius and the other two families. The entire group certainly parted on good terms, as they corresponded later by letter.

To our knowledge and the records show that the next Thames to leave NC was John Thames Junr. , as he was usually listed on records, in about 1822, and he went to Randolph Co. Georgia with his family. He was the nephew of Thomas and Samuel Thames that had gone to GA earlier.

The next Thames to leave NC was Amos Thames born in 1801 the eldest son of the Reverend David Thames. Amos must have left NC by at latest 1829 since he does not appear on the 1830 census of Cumberland Co., either individually or in the household of his father David Thames. He was in Texas by 1831. The pension papers of Mourad Whitfield Bumstead prove this fact. Amos Thames and Mourad W. Bumstead lived in Pine Island, which was a part of Hardin Co. Texas. Bumstead states therein that he and Amos Thames fought in June of 1832 against Bradburn of Anahauc under the command of Frank Johnson. In 1835 Thames and Bumstead joined Captain Andrew Briscoe, of Anahauc, who organized the "Liberty Volunteers". Amos Thames and Mourad W. Bumstead were with Briscoe and the "Liberty Volunteers" on October 27, 1835 when they joined Captain James Fannin and Colonel Jim Bowie in the battle of Concepcion. The battle of Concepcion pitted 92 Texians against 400 plus Mexican Soldiers. It was the first real battle and victory of the revolution. This decisive victory for the Texians resulted in the capture of two artillery pieces and the loss of about 45 Mexicans killed and 20 wounded.

Amos Thames and Mourad W. Bumstead were later members of a force of 400 Texians who participated in "The Siege of Bexar" San Antonio with Ben Milam. Ben Milam called for volunteers to enter the town of Bexar, San Antonio and only about 200/300 men showed up at the midnight muster, two of them were Thames and Bumstead. On December 5 to 10, 1835 Ben Milam and his force fought the Mexican Army in San Antonio from house to house severely outnumbered. At the end of the fifth day they had wrested the town of San Antonio from the Mexican force of over 1,200. The Mexican's under the command of General Cos flew the white flag of surrender over the Alamo

and were allowed to return to Mexico. Unfortunately the Texians lost six men, one of them their leader Ben Milam. The Mexicans suffered between 200 to 700 men dead and many wounded, according to different accounts.

Texas declared its independence from Mexico on March 2, 1836 and became the Republic of Texas.

Amos Thames and Mourad W. Bumstead both appear on the 1850 census of Jefferson Co. Texas. Amos seems to have died early in 1860 before the census of that year. Bumstead was still alive in 1873.

One thing that is so fascinating to me about the Anahauc incident in 1832 is that Bradburn, a representative of the Mexican Government, had William Barret Travis in jail there at that time. Cornelius Thames the Uncle of Amos Thames must have known W. B. Travis who was a newspaper owner in Claiborne, the county seat of Monroe Co., Alabama. In 1850 Cornelius Alexander Thames the grandson of Cornelius married Elizabeth Brantley the niece of William Barrett Travis. Based on that marriage one can safely assume that the Thames and Travis families knew each other well.

Creditors chased William Barret Travis out of AL when his newspaper "The Claiborne Herald" failed in 1829. Travis took this opportunity to desert his wife Rosanna Cato Travis and family. The Travis Family was well known by residents of Conecuh, Alabama where they resided and the neighboring Co. of Monroe.

The reason they were well known was primarily because of "Alexander Travis the Alabama Baptist Preacher" an elder brother of William Barret Travis and educator of note. He was the Superintendent of Sparta Academy. Alexander Travis often traveled to Claiborne in Monroe Co. from his home in the neighboring county of Cunecuh to preach the Gospel. There his sermons drew large crowds of fervent members of the Missionary Baptist faith. Among those that attended were undoubtedly Cornelius Thames, James Newberry and Stephen Wiggins (all three were very well educated) with their respected families. Alexander Travis was an educated man of God with great powers of oratory. It is Alexander Travis that I believe Cornelius Thames had in mind when in 1828 he named one of his sons Travis. Jesse Thames the son of Cornelius and Susanna (Carver) Thames in 1830 named a son Cornelius Alexander, again I think it was to honor Alexander Travis. Jesse Thames is listed on the 1840 Monroe Co. AL census in 1850 he is listed as living in Cunecuh Co.

I am not trying to diminish the notoriety of William Barret Travis, as I am sure he was also well known, but not in the same light or context as his brother Alexander. And don't forget we are talking Alabama 1830 here, not Texas 1836.

So wouldn't you like to know if William Barret Travis knew Amos Thames? Did they make a connection to Cornelius Thames and Alabama? There is no question that William Barret Travis knew of Cornelius Thames. There is no question that Amos Thames knew William Barret Travis from 1831 until his death at the Alamo in 1836. Did they ever have a discussion? Did they ever make the connection?

By 1850/60 there were several descendants of the Bladen/Cumberland Co. Thames family in Texas as well as their Beard cousins. Some of the Mississippi Thames descendants of the Rev. William Thames of NC went to LA and then on to Texas. As did some Thames from GA. There were also Newberry/Thames from Alabama who went to Texas. A cousin William Carver Beard is listed on the 1850 Jefferson Co. Texas census just a few doors down from Amos Thames.

James Thames went to Texas and Mexico in 1845 as a member of the NC Volunteers in the U.S. war with Mexico and then returned to NC. John and Calvin Thames went to Alabama in the early 1850's and Calvin returned to NC after the "War of Rebellion". John and Margaret (Thames) Cade went to Texas from Cumberland Co. NC in the 1850's. All were children of the Rev. David Thames.

This little story is based on our research, the pension application of Mourad W. Bumstead and the book titled "Three Roads to the Alamo" by William C. Davis. Gypsy McKim needs to be given credit for initially finding the information about Amos Thames in 2001 in the papers of Mourad W. Bumstead and the Jefferson Co. Texas Militia. We must credit a descendant of Cornelius Thames, Anna Mary Ellerbee, for making us aware of and recommending the book "Three Roads to the Alamo". We also recommend buying the book. Anna Mary also gave us information about the genealogy of Elizabeth A. Brantley, her great, great grandmother. Paul Thames, Cheryl Aultman and Lee

[1] Names on transcribed roll. For dates of enrollment, service, death or other remarks, see transcribed roll in MUSTER ROLLS OF THE TEXAS REVOLUTION, Daughters of the Republic of Texas, Austin, 1986 [T1]. "In parentheses will be noted any difference of initials or spelling of surnames that appeared on the Muster Roll Indexes" (of the Texas General Land Office).[T1]

***** Index to Military Rolls of the Republic of Texas 1835-1845 *****
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We hope we have not been remiss in acknowledging any one who contributed to the above story. If we did we apologize. We named the first who sent the Murad W. Bumstead information.

All North Carolina information came from the research of Walter S. & Maxine C. Gabennesch