

# Thames Family Day...

## Descendants of William Thames Gather in Georgia

*by Shirley Holland*

To the Readers from the Author: This is about the "William Thames, b 1796, Family" from Cumberland County, North Carolina. The family gathering takes place the fourth Saturday in September at Flintwood Farms, McDonough Road, Fayette County, Fayetteville, Georgia. This Farm is owned by Hudon and Caralene Thames. Hudon is the the great-grandson of William Thames. His father was Hewlett Thames, who was the son of James T. Thames, who was the son of William Thames and Rachael Taylor Thames. The gathering written of here took place in 2000.

It is said that William came to Georgia at the age of 12 years. Source: Franklin Garrett's Necrology

When I began my journey in 1997, I could not imagine the wonderful joy this would bring me. Renewed with cousins that I had not seen in many years, except at funerals, and met some really nice new ones along the way. Everyone has been wonderful.

Lee Ponder, Jim Edwards and Beatrice Cochran, from the "second" family of William with his wife Susan Weaver Thames are in attendance today. It is a delight to have them with us.

All present descend from William and Rachael Taylor Thames, son, John T. Thames. We all share the same great-great-grandfather, William Thames, born 1796, but not the same great-great-grandmothers. Some share the same great-grandfather John T. Thames, but not the same great-grandmother.

Descendants of John T. Thames are from William and Rachael Taylor Thames. Lee, Ed & Beatrice are descended from William and Susan Weaver Thames.

Some are descended from John T. and Mary E. Parker Thames, and some are descended from John T. and Louisa Justice Thames. We are still one family. We cannot not talk about one family without talking about the others.

We all began in Forest Park and Red Oak. Many of us grew up in the same community, same church and same schools. We now have family in Atlanta, Alpharetta, Athens, Barnesville, Buckhead, CollegePark, Columbus, Conyers, Cartersville, Decatur, Dunwoody, Douglasville, Duluth, Ellenwood, Fairburn, Fayetteville, Jonesboro, Loganville, Marietta, Palmetto, Roswell, and Sharpsburg, Snellville, Union City, Union Community, Georgia. Alabama, Arkansas, California, Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Washington State and places that we have not found. All of

these places represent descendents of William Thames. Most are descended from John T. Thames. Most of the above places I already knew these families. I have met others, in person, in each city and state mentioned above or communicate with them by e-mail.

We played, laughed and loved each other then and still do. Some of us married within the community and some outside of the community. Got busy living our lives and were taken away for a while. Time has a way of bringing us back together and it is as if we had hardly been separated. We have all really been so blessed to have this opportunity to meet each other here today. Many for the second time around.

John T. Thames married Mary E. Parker and they had five (5) children. Mary E. Parker died 1857 and John T. Thames placed his children with his parents, William and Rachael Thames. John had a brother, Joseph Gray Thames, that lived in Greenville, Alabama, and I believe John went to visit Joseph Gray and met Louisa Justice while there. We do not know exactly when the children were placed with William and Rachael. They are given in the 1860 census in the house of William Thames. John T. Thames is given, 1860 census, as living in Alabama, in the house of J. M. Dodd. The children of John T. are given on the LDS website as children of William and Rachael. This could not be, due to the ages of the children and the age of William and Rachael. In 1861, John T. married Louisa Justice and returned to Red Oak, Georgia. John T.'s son, James Thames, was by this time 17 years of age. Sometime after the death of his grandmother Rachael, James filed a petition for custody of his younger siblings. Posted a \$3000.00 bond, with the help of his uncle, and was granted such. James J.'s grandfather Parker, had made it very plain that he did not like Mary's choice of a husband. He said in his will: "The husband of Mary shall never get the land I have left her. It was in her name and hers alone." I think James needed official authority to sign for the minor children. He was grown and out of the house 1870 census and he married 1877. John T. and Louisa claimed the children and raised them along with ten (10) of their own. This is validated by the 1870 Georgia census and the 1880 census. Given as living in the house of John T. Thames, John, Mary/Elizabeth, Cinthie/Cynthia in both census taken. My grandmother Flora Mae Thames Derrick being the youngest daughter.

I have been asked many times if any royalty or famous leaders have been found. Yes, and even if black sheep have turned up in our line. I have not searched for Royalty and famous leaders. Have sure found some great and awesome family. We do have one Brigadier General, one William McIntyre Thames, Jr., 1926 -1962, who upon retirement worked with and was an advisor for GE with the Apollo project. This project placed a man on the moon. We have a college professor, Nina Louise Thames, Licensed Mortician-Kenneth Thames, Bay City, Texas, Navy retired. Thames family has been a large part of telephone communications both in Georgia and Florida. We are now Antique Merchants, Jewelry Store Owners, Engineers, Sales, Personnel Agencies, Communications, Nurses, Teachers, Carpenters, Detectives, Store Managers, Security Personnel, Automotive Store Owners, Heating & A/C, Insurance Agents, Farmers and Ministers. We began as ministers and farmers and still have one remaining farmer after all these years. Hudon Thames and wife Carolene, son of Hewlett Thames and grandson of James A. Thames, operate Flintwood Farms, McDonough Road, Fayetteville, Georgia.

They conduct tours and have picnic areas for visitors. They also host weddings and receptions, and cater other functions. Their daughter has added greenhouses, and they now are in the wholesale flower growing. Ministers are Alan Thames, Samuel Wilson and Jack Bartlett.

As for the Black Sheep: It is said that William was a Northern sympathizer during the Civil War and flew the Northern Flag over his house during the Civil War. Daughter, Susan Camillia Thames Seymour, and grandmother of Lee Ponder, Jim Edwards and Beatrice Cochran, said she remembered General Sherman Troops sleeping on the porch when they came thru Atlanta. Northern troops stayed at Thames House and Brig. Gen. J. D. Cox, stated that he was at "Thames House" and has been told by Mr. Thames where to cut the Railroad to shut off the southern supply lines to Atlanta. After the war William filed for payment of damages done to his farm during the war. If this is true, William was either very brave or just reckless. He was also just blessed to not have been burned out by the Confederacy. He had family and sons that fought for the Confederacy. Strong roots, huh? The land of William Thames, 1796, was sold in 1954 to the State of Georgia and the Georgia State Farmers Market is on the property. The road used to be named Thames Road and now it is Forest Parkway.

It is said that John T. was such a character and used such language that you could hear him cuss for a mile. That the community of Red Oak was so poor that they passed hot coals from one house to another to keep fires going. They did not have money to buy matches. As I said these are just stories.

Descendants still live in the same communities that are mentioned above. Many now in the seventh (7th) generation.

When we think about how our ancestors persevered for us to stand where we are today is almost more than we can take in at one time. Our ancestors fought on the very land that we are standing on and this building is built on.

Are we not honored and proud to be descendants of this family.