

Thomas Linvill* (bc 1703; dc 1761), son of John Linvill, Immigrant

Thomas Linvill was born circa 1703 at Chichester Twp, Chester County, PA. The *year* of birth is supposed from his first appearance as a freeman who had reached age 21 on the 1724 tax list for Conestoga PA where his father, John, was living and also taxed. The *place* is supposed from the location of his father's land between 1701-4. He was, then, the firstborn Linvill/Linville in North America from whom tens of thousands of Linvilles descend.

Given his father's place of residence, he lived at Chester Township, Chester County, PA, between 1704 and 1715 and then at Conestoga, Lancaster County, PA between 1715 and at least 1727. Thomas was again identified as Freeman on the 1725 tax list for Conestoga, Chester County, PA. On the last Chester County tax list (1727) before Chester County was split to create Lancaster County, he still appears as a Freeman. Consequently, he was not married until after 1727. After 1729, court records on this branch of the Linvilles moved to the Lancaster County PA jurisdiction where Thomas last appears on the Lancaster County Court of Common Pleas in 1732. This likely began the process of his move down the Shenandoah Valley to the area which took the family name -- Linville Creek, VA.

Thomas first established a homestead between 1727 and 1733 across the Susquehanna River on the west side Codorus Creek which was then identified as, "Baltimore County", PA (now outside of York, PA). Maryland and Pennsylvania had continual disputes about the dividing line, but settlement across the Susquehanna was considered Shawnee land and, according to agreements between Penn's government and the tribe, no official land dealings were to occur. This was resolved by the early 1730s when Samuel Blunston was given authority to issue licenses for the land west of the Susquehanna. For on 7 March 1734/5 Thomas Linvill's 600 acres with "improvement" on Codorus Creek was licensed by Samuel Blunston to Hans Kaighe. Clearly, Thomas and family had moved on to the Shenandoah Valley by that date. No survey existed for those 600 acres making it hard to pinpoint with any more detail. The

disputed territory west of the Susquehanna was claimed by both Pennsylvania and Maryland with a number of skirmishes in 1730 as a result. While Thomas's brother William was prominently involved in these (known as the Cresap War) there is no documentation that Thomas was, possibly because he, unlike his brother, had already started a family. Thomas seems likely to have moved across the Susquehanna sometime in the late 1720s with his uncle, John Grist (husband of half-aunt Martha Baldwin), John Hendricks (son of James), and sister Ann Linvill who married Henry Hendricks as likely neighbors.

At some point between 1728 and 1746 Thomas married a woman named Hannah (--?--) either in Conestoga PA or Shenandoah Valley VA. As stated previously, in all three extant tax lists (1724, 1725, 1727) for Conestoga, Thomas Linvill appears as an unmarried freeman, yet on the 1746 deeds for Linville Creek VA, a wife Hannah signed with Thomas. He probably had more than one wife. Given Hannah is mentioned only on the Virginia deed, I lean toward her being a woman from a Conestoga PA family and the mother of the oldest children – Thomas, David, William, Richard, all born before 1740. All the given names of the older sons, except David's, reflect much used given names in the family while the given names of the youngest sons bring completely new given names into the family – Aaron and Moses - suggesting the names from *their* mother's family. One is tempted to consider the older sons' names as a clue to their mother's family, as well, as there are two Davids living in Conestoga and near John Linvill at the time Thomas would have been first married (David Jones and David Priest). Thus far, limited research into those possibilities has not been fruitful.

There may be some connection to the David Jones family, though, as he was active in Conestoga affairs in PA with Thomas's father. At the time of Thomas Linvill's death, his brother William Linvill on 20 Oct 1760 (recorded Jan 1761) sold their sister Alice's husband (Joseph Bryan) a quantity of household goods and animals with notably a DJ, as well as TL, and L animal brands. Thomas disappears

from the records after the 1759 Rowan County NC tax list and the issuance of the grant and deed to his 200 acres on Belews Creek in late Oct 1760. He left no will or probate record and is not mentioned in any later court records. This sale might indicate a distribution of his estate. Interestingly, there is a family with men named Aaron Short and Moses Short in the Dan River area when Thomas Linvill settled there in Belews Creek, NC who might account for a mother of the younger sons, Aaron and Moses, though this has not been researched.

Unlike his father John or brother William, Thomas did not sign the petition for the creation of Lancaster County on 6 Feb 1728/29 at Lancaster County, PA. This may be related to his newly established homestead across the Susquehanna. At the first court for the new county 5 Aug 1729, his father John Linvill was appointed Supervisor of the Roads and David Jones, Overseer of the Poor at Conestoga. Thomas Linvill has a number of court appearances in the early 1730s in Lancaster County after its formation and before he left for the Shenandoah Valley. He was summoned to appear in court for a suit brought by George Middleton on 3 Nov 1730 at Conestoga, Lancaster County, PA. However, that entry is marked N.E.J. which means that he did not appear because he was no longer in that jurisdiction. Indeed, Thomas was definitely living across the Susquehanna by then. A few years later, Thomas Perrin bought a suit against Thomas Linvill in Lancaster Court of Common Pleas 6 Feb 1732/3, but the case was discontinued by Perrin. Since John Hendricks apparently paid 20 pds as part of this case, that may be the source of a debt Thomas Linvill still owed John Hendricks that appears in Hendricks' estate accounting in York County, PA 6 Jan 1749/50.

Thomas Linvill was clearly no longer living across the Shenandoah on the west side of Codorus Creek (now York County, PA) by 4 Mar 1734/35 when Samuel Blunston licensed the Linvill 600 acres and improvements to Hans Kaighe. He was at Linville Creek, Orange (then Augusta County), VA by

the mid-1730s to 1746/7. Several sources in the mid to late 1730s acknowledge the name of Linville Creek, indicating that at least part of the family had settled the area by that time.

The settlement of the Linville Creek area began when Robert McKay and Jost Hite secured 100,000 acres of Lord Fairfax's Northern Neck grant from the Governor and Council of Virginia 21 Oct 1731. That included the 1500 acres that eventually were deeded to William and Thomas Linvill. The terms of the agreement required McKay and Hite to settle 1,000 families on their land within two years. The period for required settlement was extended to 1737 when McKay and Hite were found to have met the agreement. Although no definitive list of all 1000 families exists, at least William Linvill was included in one list of the Fairfax property law suit settlement. And it seems obvious that the Linvills --- Thomas and William at Linville, VA -- with younger brother John (Jr.) 50 miles north around Stephens Town with his wife's family -- were included by virtue of their appearance on the court records which covered the area and by deduction, since by 29 May 1739 as some of McKay and Hite land listed in the 1730s was on "Linwell's Creek."

Thomas Linvill appeared in Orange County, VA court on 26 Oct 1738 to receive payment of 140 pds tobacco for 3 wolf heads, certified by Morgan Morgan and Henry Willis. On 23 Mar 1742/43 Thomas Linvill agreed to rent a mill from Jost Hite, presumably at Linville Creek, Orange (later Augusta) County, VA. Then, Thomas took the oath as Cornet (one who carries the colors of the company) in his brother Captain William's militia troop on 22 Mar 1744 at Linville Creek, Orange County, VA. Others taking oaths in the company at the same time included Benjamin Allen as captain of the horse and Thomas West and Thomas Harrison in other positions.

Thomas failed to appear for an Orange County VA court in a case against him by Pendleton and Clayton causing a continuance on 24 Nov 1744. However, on 30 March 1746 the case was agreed to and dismissed. James Pendleton and Philip Clayton, both justices of the Orange County, VA appeared

in court on the 29th and 30th of May 1745 claiming that Thomas Linvill owed them a debt. The case was discontinued when the parties agreed. In the record, Linvill refers to himself as "Thomas Linvill otherwise called I Thomas Linvill above the ridge." In a packet of court judgements dated June 1747, regarding this case, there is a note dated June 1746 which states that Thomas Linvill could not be found in the bailiwick. This seems related to the fact that the court was no longer Orange County, but now Augusta County.

When Augusta County, VA was created from Orange County, the land on Linville Creek fell under the jurisdiction of the new county, although Orange County had been created in 1739. William and older brother Thomas Linvill's land would then be in Augusta Co VA with younger brother John Linvill living in Frederick County VA. Neither Augusta or Frederick counties got organized before 1744-5, which is why there can still be court cases for them in their former county.

In Augusta County, Thomas Linvill told Robert Patterson that he had paid William Wright a certain sum of money which was due to said Wright's father. William Wright had an order from Patterson dated 10 Dec 1744 to collect the money. Jost Hite declared on 12 May 1746 in open court that Thomas Linvill owed him money. Presumably this was related to the Linvill's rental of the Hite mill that began in 1742/3. When Jost Hite sued Thomas Linvill on 18 Sep 1746 at Augusta County, VA in an action brought to recover damages for actions having resulted indirectly in injury or loss, it seems likely to have been related to Thomas renting the mill from Hite also, but that is just a guess. Thomas apparently countersued Jost Hite but not appearing in court, Hite was sent home and case not continued the next day on 19 Sep 1746 at Augusta County, VA.

Thomas Linvill appeared in court in two suits against his brother William Linvill on 27 Jun 1746 at Orange County, VA, but both were settled that day as agreed. Through his attorney, John Newport, Thomas Linvill sued Cornelius Murley for slander. Murley's attorney entered a not guilty plea and trial

was set for the next court on 27 Jun 1746 at Orange County, VA but the case was not settled until it was dismissed 28 Feb 1747, presumably because Thomas and William were already heading to North Carolina.

Between 5 Aug 1746 and 14 Nov 1746 William Linvill first legally acquired the 1500 acres he had been living on for over ten years and then sold his brother Thomas Linvill his 500-acre share. Thomas and his wife Hannah then sold their share to Jacob Christman. William sold the two remaining 500-acre lots to George Bowman [a family who knew John Linvill in Frederick Co., by virtue of Rev. Stover's baptism and marriage records] and Joseph Bryan [married to their sister Alice Linvill]. Along with other evidence, these land records document the relationships between the Bowmans, Christmans, Linvilles and Bryans in VA.

Thomas Linvill appeared in Augusta County court to provide evidence for William Ewell in suit against Morgan Bryan on 22 Aug 1746. Thomas transferred some unidentified Augusta County land to Jacob Clement (*sic?*) on 20 Nov 1746. [This seems likely a transcription error in the court record as it should refer to the land Thomas sold Jacob Chrisman on that date and not Jacob 'Clement'].

There were several outstanding court cases before they left. To secure a trust owed to Capt. Robert Green & Co. (surveying partner to McKay, Hite and others) Thomas sold three cows and a set of smithing tools to Morgan Bryan for 16 pds on 26 Feb 1746/7. Valentine Sevier, who owned the major outpost for goods in the valley, brought an attachment against Thomas Linvill on 6 Mar 1747 at Augusta County, VA. And Thomas was fined for not appearing in court on 19 Jun 1747 at Augusta County, VA. Christopher Zimmerman sued Thomas Linvill (who did not appear in court for the suit) for payment of a debt on 22 Aug 1747 at Augusta County, VA. McKay, Hite, Green and Company, as executor of another partner, William Duff, brought a suit against William Linvill, Thomas Linvill and Morgan Bryan based on a debt from a bond dated 18 June 1746. However, when the writ dated 24 Aug 1747

was presented, neither William nor Thomas Linvill were found in the district. But Thomas Linvill and his wife, Hannah, had sold their 500 acres on Linville Creek on 14 Nov 1746 marking their last physical appearance in Virginia valley before appearing in North Carolina records. In fact, the court record shows that Joseph Briant (*sic*) paid the fee for his brother Morgan and the two Linvills, his brothers-in-law.

The land in Augusta County sold, Thomas and family moved down the Great Wagon Road to Belews Creek, Rowan (later Surry) County, NC by late 1747 where he lived until his death circa 1761. In Thomas Linvill's first NC record he appeared with two "of age" (over 16) sons – Thomas Jr. and David in North Carolina on the first tax list for Dan River district in 1750, which can be found catalogued with Granville County NC records. He appeared again on the 1751 tax list for Dan River, Granville County, NC but this time his "of age" sons were Thomas Jr. and William, not David (see discussions on both David and William in separate narratives for further details).

Then, Thomas Sr. and his son Thomas Jr. each entered 200 acres of land for a Lord Granville Land Grant as part of the distribution of western NC land – the father on 21 Apr 1752 and son a month earlier. Thomas Sr. then received a warrant to survey his land a year later on 21 March 1753 and it was then surveyed 17 May 1753 as 200 acres on both sides of Belews Creek, beginning at upper "Cane Break" - (son) William Linvill (*sic*) was chain carrier, along with William Barclay. The grant and deed were issued 1 Aug 1760, so Thomas Sr. was likely still alive at the time. However, no deed was recorded in Rowan County for either Thomas Sr.'s or Jr.'s 200 acres (400 in total). They may have been part of the missing Orange County deeds since the warrant was catalogued as in Orange County. These deeds may have been burned in advance of Cornwallis's march through the area in 1778, though this is only speculation.

Thomas Linville Sr. and Beverly Watkins served as chain carriers for the Granville survey of Adam Teat's 512 acres on the Dan River 28 Feb 1754. Thomas also had 500 acres surveyed on Mayo

Road south side of Fishers or Piney Mountain with both sons David Linvill and William Linvill as chain carriers. No deed for either these 500 acres or the land granted in Belews Creek for Thomas Sr. and Jr (200 acres each) appear in Rowan County deeds. Thomas's last appearance in NC land records was as chain carrier with son William Linvill on 20 Mar 1754 for Egbert Hayward's survey at Belews Creek, Rowan County, NC.

Thomas Linvill Sr. may still have held some land on Linville Creek in VA in June 1755 when his sister and brother-in-law, Joseph and Alice (Linvill) Bryan, pulled up stakes and moved to North Carolina selling their 500 acres that brother William Linvill had previously sold them in August 1746. The Bryans' deed of sale indicated that the land was abutted by land "in possession of Thomas Linvil." However, this may simply be a reiteration error of the original deed which used the same language in 1746.

His last appearance on any records is on the 1759 tax list for Rowan County, NC. He is not on the extant list for Rowan County in 1768. However, there are only incomplete scraps of tax records for the 1760s. There also are no Rowan County court, orphans court, or probate records that indicate a division of property or an estate for Thomas. Presumably, he was alive when the grant and deed for his 200 acres were issued on 1 Aug 1760. A clue, though, to his date of death may be in that fact that as stated earlier his brother William Linvill sold their sister Alyee's husband, Joseph Bryan, several animals marked DJ, TL, and L along with sundry household goods on 20 Jan 1761. It seems quite possible this was a sale of Thomas's estate to raise money to care for his youngest children - Aaron and Moses - who would have been about 10 and 8 years old. In addition, Thomas's son David applied for a land entry of 700 acres on 27 Feb 1762 that when actually granted included just the 306 acres of new land but not the 400 acres of Thomas Sr.'s and Jr's land grants. The loose papers of original land entry indicates that it included the 700 acres and "Thomas Linvill's improvement." (See David Linvill's narrative for

additional information). Since Thomas Jr. was still alive and living on his adjacent 200 acres, the sale or transfer of Thomas Sr.'s adjacent 200 acres seems to have been a family arrangement for son Richard Linvill, as son William was apparently no longer living and later land records attribute these 200 acres to Richard. Thus all three surviving older sons – Thomas, David, and Richard – were living on Belews Creek in adjacent properties.

In all likelihood, Thomas Sr. was buried on family land as part of his original 200-acre 1752 Belews Creek grant. According to family oral history, Thomas and some family descendants were buried in old family field cemetery that was on property later owned by Connie Linville Preston (off Kernersville/Belews Creek road about 1 mile from Hwy 158). This graveyard today on private land consists only of unmarked field stones and has been cleaned up and maintained by members of the annual NC Linville family reunion.

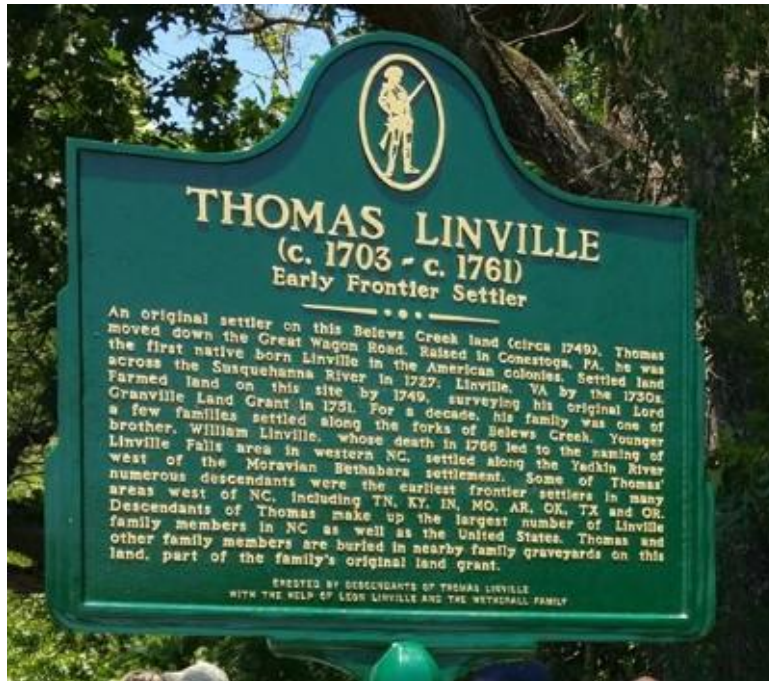
Children of Thomas Linvill and first wife [probably Hannah (--?--)]:

Thomas Linvill bc 1732 Conestoga or Cordorus Creek PA dc 1761 Belews Creek, NC
David Linvill bc 1734 Across Susquehanna in PA or Linville Creek VA; d 1787 Belews Creek, NC
William Linvill bc 1735 Linville Creek VA; d between March 1754 and 1759 in NC or VA
Richard Linvill bc 1740 Linville Creek VA; d before March 1822 Belews Creek, Stokes Co NC
No known daughters

Children of Thomas Linvill and a likely second wife:

Aaron Linvill bc 1750; d before 14 Sept 1824 Stokes County NC
Moses Linvill bc 1752; d before 15 Feb 1826 Surry County NC
No known daughters
[See Linville Database for details on these descendants.]

An historical marker for Thomas Linvill Sr., first settler on Belews Creek, was installed and dedicated in June 2015 by the Linville family on property that was part of his 1752 land grant on which he and his descendants lived for many generations. It is located at Kernersville Road just off Hwy 158, Belews Creek, Forsyth County, NC.**



*Eighteenth century spelling was fairly consistent in not including the “e” though by the end of that century and beginning of the 19th century, the “e” has been consistently added to the NC branch and its descendants, while the PA branch more consistently did not add the “e”. All place names here are spelled as they are in the 21st century.

**All sources are available in the Linville Family Database – linvillefamily.us

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