

## **SHIRLEY FAMILY TRACES ROOTS TO PLANTATION NEAR OOLTEWAH**

By John Wilson – 1998

Thomas Shirley Jr. arrived at Savannah Creek near Ooltewah about 1836. Because of his Confederate sympathies, he had to flee his plantation in 1864 and a neighbor took his 800 acres. But he won it back in a lawsuit that went to Federal Court in Knoxville.

The Shirleys made their way from Virginia to North Carolina and on to Tennessee. Thomas Shirley Sr. and his wife, Margaret, went from Guilford County to Rutherford County in North Carolina. They moved on to Cherry Creek at White County, Tennessee, about 1811.

Their daughter, Jane, married Sherod Horn in White County. After he died, she married Robert Denny and they pushed on to Hamilton County. Jane died in 1862.

While in White County, 14-year-old Anderson Findley, a “person of color,” was bound as an apprentice to Thomas Shirley Sr. At age 21, he was to be provided a horse, saddle and bridle worth \$100, but the arrangement didn’t work out.

Also in White County, Mary Ann Shirley, who was apparently another daughter of Thomas Shirley Sr., prosecuted Lazarus Denny on a charge of bastardy.

Thomas Shirley Sr. migrated to Cheekville (later called Shirleyton) in Marion County and operated a trading post. An Indian bought a hunting knife, but he became disgruntled and returned. He attacked and killed William Shirley, a son of Thomas Sr. Thomas Jr. was armed with a huge poker and was able to fend off the attacker.

Thomas Shirley Jr. was witnessing land deeds in Hamilton County as early as 1828. In 1836, he sold Moses Payne five slaves for \$3,100. An election was held “at the house of Thomas Shirley” in February of 1836.

He acquired 434 acres, including Williams Island and land on the side of Walden’s Ridge.

At his property near Ooltewah, he had a ferry landing and half interest in the Shropshire mill. John Jackson Shropshire had married Mary Shirley at Whitwell in 1821.

Thomas Shirley Jr. was active in trying to establish the town of Vannville (Harrison) and was its first postmaster in 1839. He was an admirer of the Cherokee Chief James Brown, and he named one of his sons for him.

The wife of Thomas Shirley Jr. was Julia Ann, who was born in Virginia about 1805. Her maiden name is said to be Johnson.

Their children included Lucian Bonaparte, Adaline R., Thomasdore Perry. Another daughter, Cordelia, married George O. Cate, but she died soon after the birth of their son, George O. Cate Jr. Thomas III died at a young age from typhoid fever and Commodore Perry died as an infant. Lucien Bonaparte died about the time of the Civil War, leaving all his slaves to his mother.

James Brown Shirley joined 2<sup>nd</sup> Co. K of the 1<sup>st</sup> Confederate Cavalry at Ooltewah. He rose to the rank of third sergeant, but he was captured May 12, 1863, at Linden, TN. He was exchanged the next month and then was hospitalized at Thomaston, GA, in October.

Thomas Shirley Jr. on November 25, 1863, fled his home “under advice from neighbors from threats that had been made that would cost him his life.” Julia Ann and the daughter, Adaline, stayed at the house, though they spent most nights with Henry and Louisa Penick.

Shirley made his way to the home of Robert and Eliza Williamson near Tunnell Hill, GA, refugeeing there several weeks. He became deathly ill, but finally recovered. His wife and daughter arrived with two horses, a wagon and some bedding, and they went on to join James B. Shirley at Thomaston.

Meanwhile, a Union man, Peter Monger, took over the Shirley place. He allowed a cohort, Joseph G. Ritchie, to live there. Other members of Ritchie's family had been killed by Confederate sympathizers, and he had vowed revenge. While Ritchie was at the Shirley home, it was burned down in the winter of 1864-65 by the Confederate William Snow "and his bandittis" Ironically, Monger was married to Snow's sister, Betsy. Monger built a double log cabin in place of the old Shirley house.

Shirley brought suit against Monger, claiming he had gotten his lands through a forged note. He said he had never met John Westmoreland – the man the note had allegedly been made to.

Shirley's attorney located David Westmoreland, who said his brother, John, had died before the Civil War.

The lawyer caught up with Joe Ritchie in 1868 at Bean's Station, and Ritchie proved a key witness for the Shirley side. He said he was with Monger and Sheriff R. C. Campbell at Monger's carding machine when the note and winking "pulling out the note and winking his eye at me" and said Monger asked him to "put out threats against Thomas Shirley."

Judge Connally Trigg ruled for Shirley, ordering that Monger pay \$3,710.86 and give back the land.

Shirley returned to Ooltewah. The family held the property until it was taken for Lake Chickamauga. Thomas Shirley Jr. died about 1887 and was buried at the Shirley Cemetery at Savannah Bay. His daughter, Adaline, died in 1876 at the age of 44. Julia Ann died in the 1870s. She and Adaline are buried at the Anderson Cemetery at Ringgold.

James Brown Shirley graduated from Tennessee Medical College in 1890 and became a doctor. He married Mary Achsah Andrews. Their daughter, Adaline Josephine, married W. Edward McDonald. Sons included James B. Jr. and Homer. James B. Jr. Married Jessie Payne, then Sarah Conner and then Louise Axmacher Lutz. Homer married Beulah Wilson. Another son, Thomas Griffin Shirley, married Daisy Hartman and they had a daughter Kate.

After a divorce from his first wife, a remarkable thing happened. Despite the bitterness of the past, a Shirley married a Monger. Thomas Griffin Shirley married Elizabeth Monger, granddaughter of Peter Monger.

Their children were James Fielding Shirley who married Lousie Glover, Thomas Griffin Shirley III who married Jemima Reed, William Frank Shirley who married Ruby Arnold, Glenn Frederick Shirley who married Lynita Guess, and Robert Lee Shirley who married Elizabeth Carlock.

Children of James Fielding Shirley are James Fielding Shirley Jr. and Thomas R. Thomas Griffin Shirley III of Ringgold is a son of Thomas Griffin Shirley II. Another son of Thomas Griffin Shirley II was Alan Phillip Shirley. Children of William Frank Shirley are William Frank Shirley Jr., Donald and James M. Children of Glenn Frederick Shirley are Larry and Scott. Children of Robert Lee Shirley are Elizabeth and Alice Ann.

Another Shirley here was Blackman L. Shirley, who was born in 1828 near Jasper and later moved to Hamilton County. He fought on the Union side with Co. F of the 5<sup>th</sup> Tennessee Infantry. He moved to Parkes County, Texas, in 1881 and lived to be well over 100.

\*Read more stories by John Wilson at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>