

THOMAS AND PARTHENIA BALDWIN PARSONS FAMILY

THE EARLIEST INFORMATION OF A PARSONS IN OUR FAMILY LINE IS THAT OF THOMAS PARSONS, (#2 ON CHART #5, 5TH GGF). SOME SAY HE IS THE SON OF WILLIAM PARSONS, (#4 ON CHART #5 6TH GGF) ONE OF THE ORIGINAL TWELVE SONS OF JOHN PARR, THAT CAME TO AMERICA, FROM ENGLAND AND SETTLED ON MARYLAND'S EASTERN SHORE IN 1725. IT IS ALMOST CERTAIN THAT WILLIAM WAS OUR EARLIEST ANCESTOR, BUT WE HAVE NO DIRECT PROOF.

IN A BOOK ENTITLED "EARLY MARRIAGES OF WESTERN FREDERICK CO., VA AND EASTERN HAMPSHIRE CO., W. VA.," PAGE 104, THOMAS PARSONS AND PARTHENIA BALDWIN (BOYLDWIN), (#3 ON CHART #5, 5TH GGM), ARE LISTED BUT NO DATE IS GIVEN. HOWEVER, THIS IS THE MARRIAGE OUR LINE COMES THROUGH.

THE STATE OF WEST VIRGINIA CAME INTO EXISTENCE AS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE CIVIL WAR. THIS SECTION HAD ALWAYS BEEN A PART OF VIRGINIA, EVEN THOUGH THE TWO SECTIONS NEVER HAD MUCH IN COMMON. ONE OF THE MAIN REASONS FOR THIS, NO DOUBT, IS THE RUGGED ALLEGHENY MOUNTAIN RANGE SEPARATING THE TWO SECTIONS WHICH MADE TRAVELING, AT THAT TIME, RATHER DIFFICULT. WHEN VIRGINIA CAST ITS LOT WITH THE CONFEDERACY, THE SETTLERS WEST OF THE ALLEGHENIES BEGAN TO MURMUR. IT BECAME SO LOUD THAT A SEPARATE GOVERNMENT FOR THE WESTERN SECTION WAS ORGANIZED IN 1861 UNDER THE NAME OF KANAWHA. TWO YEARS LATER, 1863, WEST VIRGINIA WAS ADMITTED TO THE UNION AS THE TWENTY-FIFTH STATE WITH FIFTY COUNTIES. MANY OF THESE COUNTIES WERE SETTLED BEFORE THEY WERE ORGANIZED. HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, FOR INSTANCE, WAS FORMED FROM FREDERICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA IN 1753 AND WAS PART OF VIRGINIA UNTIL WEST VIRGINIA BECAME A STATE, ONE HUNDRED TEN YEARS LATER, IN 1863. HARDY COUNTY WAS FORMED FROM HAMPSHIRE IN 1785.

THE PHYSICAL FEATURES OF THIS SECTION MADE WEST VIRGINIA MORE ACCESSIBLE FROM PENNSYLVANIA, AT LEAST IN THE EARLY DAYS, USING THE INDIAN TRAILS THAT SERVED AS ROADS, THEN FROM VIRGINIA. THE GERMANS, WELSH AND IRISH CAME AS EARLY AS 1670, THE ENGLISH IN 1671, AND VARIOUS NATIONALITIES IN 1715 AND 1725.

AND SO IT WAS THAT, AS WITH MOST ALL THOSE EARLY IMMIGRANTS WHO WERE CONSTANTLY SEEKING BETTER LAND AND OPPORTUNITIES, THOMAS PARSONS MOVED WESTWARD INTO HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, VIRGINIA, (NOW WEST VIRGINIA). COURT AND LAND DEEDS, DATED IN 1761, 1768 AND 1770 SHOW HE HAD LARGE SECTIONS OF LAND, NOT ONLY IN HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, BUT ALSO IN HARDY AND GRANT COUNTIES. HIS WILL WAS DATED 27 MAY 1771 AND PROBATED ON 10 MAR 1772, SO HE DIED SOMETIME BETWEEN THOSE TWO DATES.

HE AND HIS WIFE, PARTHENIA BALDWIN, HAD EITHER SIX OR SEVEN CHILDREN. THE PARSONS FAMILY HISTORY AND RECORDS ONLY SHOW SIX, FOUR SONS AND TWO DAUGHTERS. HOWEVER, IN HIS WILL, THOMAS LEAVES ONE HUNDRED POUNDS TO ELIZABETH HEINSMAN, WIDOW OF DR. HEINSMAN. FROM THIS, ONE WOULD ASSUME THAT ELIZABETH MUST HAVE BEEN A DAUGHTER.

THE CHILDREN WERE: THOMAS, THE FIRST CHILD AND SON, WAS MARRIED THREE TIMES AND HAD TWENTY-ONE CHILDREN. HE DIED IN 1804. (MORE ON THIS THOMAS LATER.) JAMES, THE SECOND SON AND CHILD, WAS MARRIED TWICE. HE DIED IN 1813. (MORE ON HIM LATER.) ISAAC, THE THIRD CHILD AND SON, WAS BORN 27 JAN 1752. HE MARRIED MARY E. GREGG AND HAD TWO SONS. HE DIED 25 APR 1777 AT THE AGE OF TWENTY FIVE. HE IS OUR DIRECT DESCENDANT. ARNESS, THE FIRST DAUGHTER AND FOURTH CHILD, MARRIED WILLIAM WELTON. PRUDENCE, THE SECOND DAUGHTER AND FIFTH CHILD, MARRIED ROBERT CUNNINGHAM. BALDWIN, THE FOURTH SON AND SIXTH CHILD, MARRIED RACHAEL ?. OF COURSE IF THE ABOVE NAMED ELIZABETH WAS ANOTHER DAUGHTER, SHE WOULD APPEAR IN SOME CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER, PROBABLY ONE OF THE EARLIER CHILDREN.