



[CLIENT]
Thompson1411 C14162
18 December 2014

Research Highlights

GOAL

- Create a biography of the adult life of Washington Thompson using documents and letters provided by the client, other pertinent records and documents, and the greater historical context of his time period and geographic locality.

PROGRESS

- Put together the story of Washington Thompson's life from 1840 through 1855.
- Read and analyzed the 240 documents and letters provided by the client.
- Researched mid-19th century Middle Tennessee to place Washington Thompson in his proper historical and geographical context.
- Found several additional documents from online sources as well as from data collections housed in the Family History Library in Salt Lake City which added information and verified facts recorded by the client concerning Washington Thompson.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Due to the time constraints of this project we were unable to complete the story of Washington Thompson's life. We recommend continuing the research and analysis as well as the writing of the biography of Washington Thompson, covering the years 1856 to his death in 1888 in a future research project.

Research Report

The objective of this project was to write a biography of the adult life of Washington Thompson, placing him in his historical and geographical context.

At the outset of this project we were provided with access to the client's family tree on Ancestry.com, transcriptions of 221 original documents passed down through the family to the client, and the transcriptions of 29 letters to and from various members of Washington Thompson's extended family, of which only three were specifically addressed to him.

We faithfully transcribed information as it was written on the various records consulted for this project. If a place name was spelled out, we spelled it out in the transcription; if it was abbreviated, no matter how odd the abbreviation to our modern eyes, we retained the abbreviation as it was written. Punctuation, spelling, and other features were reproduced as closely as possible, given the differences between handwritten and typed documents.

In addition, differences of ages by fewer than five years, particularly as reported in the various census records, can be explained by a number of reasons. Depending on the date of birth, the date of the enumeration of the census, and the directions for listing the ages of individuals, an accurate census report can still differ by a year. For instance an individual's age at the last birthday and his or her age on the 1st of the year can produce different answers. The enumerator may not have asked the question of age and simply estimated the ages of each member of the household. The family member who provided the information may have been a child who was unsure of the information. Or a neighbor may have provided the information.

Finally, it is important to remember that the spelling of names, even as spelled by the individual, was not as precise as we insist on being today. The general notion was that everyone understood to who the document referred, so it was not necessary to duplicate

the spelling exactly at all times. The same was true for dates, especially at a time when there were very few proscriptions against behavior based on age. Therefore, dates may be off by a year or more, even when reported by the individual concerned.

Dollar amounts were written as they were found in the original documents, but we converted the historic values to their modern equivalent using the calculators found on Measuringworth.com and reported those equivalents in parentheses. Each dollar amount was calculated based on the average labor value for an unskilled worker and the labor value of a production worker. This indicates the relative modern wage that would be necessary to purchase this item, pay this tax or rent, or save this historical dollar amount. Because these calculators are adjusted for historic economic swings, the modern dollar amounts may change dramatically, particularly between times of economic growth and decline.

Washington Thompson

Washington Thompson was born on 26 November 1817 in Sumner County, Tennessee to Nicholas Thompson and Elizabeth Marshall.¹ As a young man of twenty-three, Washington did not appear in his father's household in the 1840 U.S. Census, nor was he included in the households of his brothers David and William.² Although he cannot be found listed as the head of his own household in that year, it is clear from his personal records that he was working and providing his own basic necessities by that time.³

The 1840 U.S. Census only listed the heads of each household by name. All other individuals were simply included in the count based on their gender and age. Washington would have

¹ Pioneer Cemetery, Garland, Dallas, Texas, "Washington Thompson Memorial Page," <http://findagrave.com>, accessed December 2014. DOCUMENT 1; and

Client provided information.

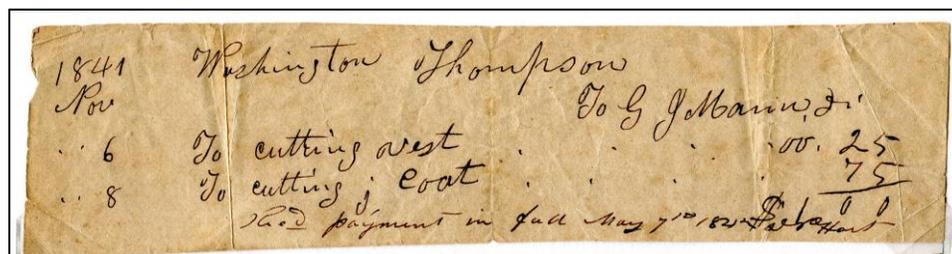
² 1840 U.S. Census (Population Schedule) Sumner County, Tennessee, Page 7, <http://ancestry.com>, subscription database, accessed December 2014. DOCUMENT 2

³ "8. W Thompson invoice for goods 1840," client provided image and transcription.

community he would sometimes be extended additional credit, at interest, and permitted to continue to make purchases through the next year as well.

This policy explains both the large debt of \$34.45 (\$12,845) that Washington accrued in 1840 as well as the reason for the partial payment he made on his account in July of 1841. It appears that Washington had enough money to pay nearly half of his outstanding debt at that time, but not all of it. There is no indication of when G. Anthony Th. was satisfied, but it appears that Washington Thompson was a man who paid his bills, as seen by his full payment in 1842 of his 1841 invoice from his tailor, G.J. Manning.⁴

This invoice, for the cutting of cloth for a vest and coat, suggests that Washington was embarking on some adventure which required a new suit. Since we know that Washington married his wife, Nancy, in 1843, it is possible that the new vest and coat were for courting purposes. It is interesting that Mr. Manning was only hired to cut the cloth and not sew the garments. Perhaps Washington hired another tailor to construct the vest and coat, or perhaps his sisters sewed it for him.



1841 Invoice for tailor's services.

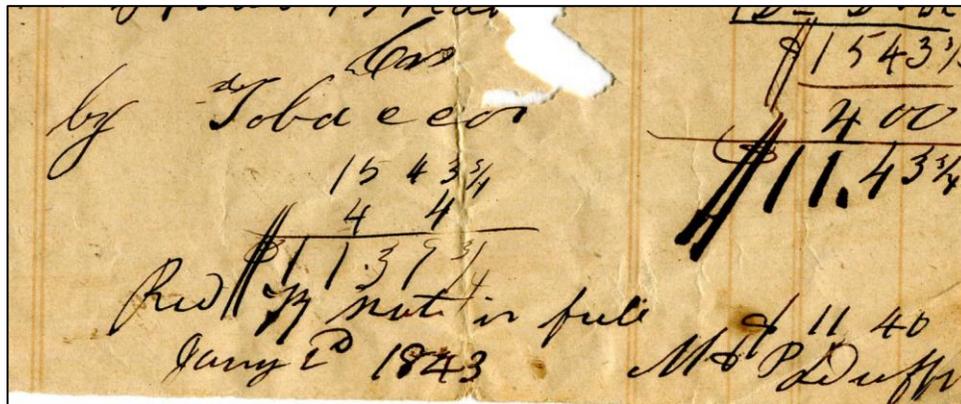
An 1842 invoice from M & P Duffy suggests that Washington's sartorial efforts continued into the following year.⁵ Included in his purchase was enough cambric, a cotton or linen fabric, to make a set of under drawers, and some other black fabric most likely intended for a shirt. The inclusion of a set of buttons and the skeins of silk suggests that this was a dress

⁴ "9. W Thompson Invoice from Tailor 1841," client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 4a-b.

⁵ "11. W Thompson invoice for goods 1842," client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 5a-b.

shirt, with fancy china or glass buttons down the front. Other clothing items included a pair of work gloves and a set of elastic suspenders.

This invoice also provided insight into Washington's occupation. An undated payment of \$4 (\$1350) in the form of tobacco indicates that he was a tobacco farmer.



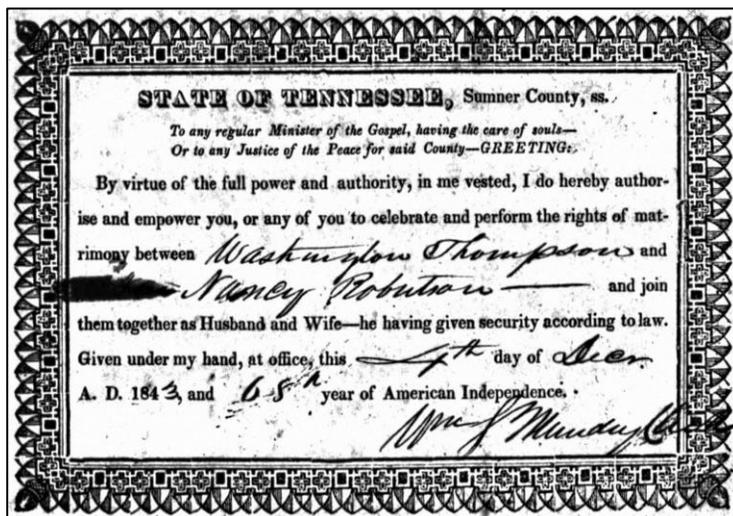
1842 invoice which was paid, in part, with tobacco.

Middle Tennessee counties such as Sumner County have the ideal climate and soil necessary for growing dark tobacco which is used for chewing tobacco and snuff rather than for smoking. Dark tobacco required special attention after harvesting, when it must be hung in a barn and then “fired” by means of oak or hickory wood fires which burned on the floor of the barn. Careful attention had to be paid to the process day and night to ensure that the fires did not get out of control and burn down the barn while maintaining enough heat to prevent the growth of mold on the tobacco leaves.



Likely route of travel from Albemarle County, Virginia to Sumner County, Tennessee.

Tobacco farmers from Virginia migrated along the Appalachian Mountains south to the Tennessee/North Carolina border and then west to Sumner County where they continued their farming practices. It is likely that Washington's father, Nicholas, was a tobacco farmer prior to his migration from Albemarle County, Virginia and that he chose his new home based on its suitability for farming tobacco.



Washington and Nancy's 1843 marriage license.

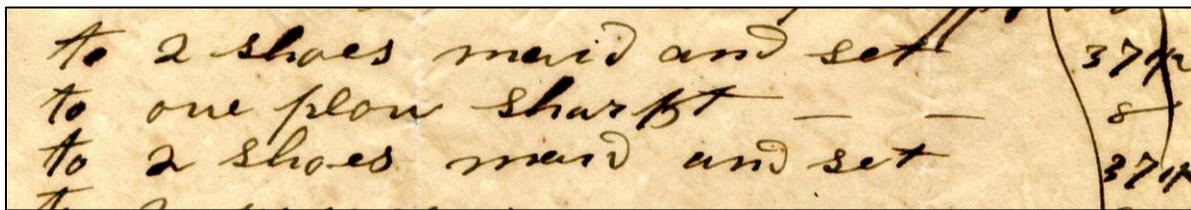
On 4 December 1843 Washington Thompson and Nancy Robertson acquired a marriage license in Sumner County, Tennessee.⁶ Although there is no record of their wedding date, presumably they were married within a week of acquiring their marriage license, as was typical for that time period.

⁶ *Tennessee State Marriages, 1780-2002*, Washington Thompson and Nancy Robertson, <http://ancestry.com>, subscription database, accessed December 2014. DOCUMENT 6.

After his marriage, Washington's shopping habits, and bill, changed dramatically. Based on the invoices for 1845 and 1846 it appears that Nancy purchased sufficient fabric to make herself three dresses each year, two being calico cotton work dresses and one being a finer wool fabric for shopping, church, and visiting.⁷ There was also thread, pins, needles, and trim for the dresses, as well as a shawl and shoes. The smaller amounts of fabric of around 2 to 2 ½ yards were likely for shirts for Washington, and some of the fabric was of a sturdier construction and probably intended for trousers.

There were also household items on the invoices. These included a wash pan, a copper wash pan, a set of knives and forks, a bowl, six glass tumblers, and ticking for mattresses. The bill was paid in part with tobacco, and in part with cash and a promissory note.

Two invoices from 1846 provide a more detailed look into the lives of Washington and Nancy Thompson. In 1846 Washington's blacksmithing bill totaled \$5.39 (\$1,960).⁸ These expenses included making, mending, and sharpening a plow, sharpening other farm tools, and making and shoeing horses. The bill was paid in August of the following year.



Blacksmithing invoice including two sets of two horseshoes and sharpening a plow.

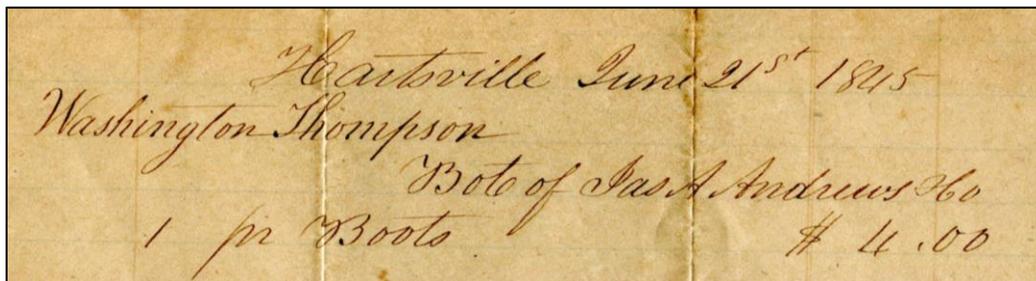
The other 1846 invoice was \$4.00 (\$1,450) for a pair of boots.⁹ These were likely tall work boots for Washington. Lasts, or wooden forms shaped exactly like Washington's feet, would have been used to create boots that fit him perfectly. The boots were made of leather with

⁷ "24. Invoice for goods for W Thompson 1845," client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 7a-c.

⁸ "28. Invoice for blacksmith for W Thompson 1846," client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 8a-c.

⁹ "20. Invoice for boots from J A Andrews to W Thompson 1846," client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 9a-b.

leather soles, and everything would have been sewn by hand. While the cost may seem high, these boots would have been worn all day and every day. When a hole was worn into the sole, they would be re-soled and new heels would be put on when the old ones wore down. If a farming accident resulted in a cut or some other damage to the foot or shaft of the boot, Washington would have taken them in for repair. These boots may have lasted for 20 years or more before they were replaced.



The purchase of an expensive necessity: boots.

An invoice for the costs involved in the sale of some crop, likely tobacco, from 1847 suggests that Washington continued farming until at least 1847, and it is likely that he continued farming beyond that year.¹⁰ The invoice noted that Washington was charged for freight (shipping the goods from the farm), warehouse storage fees, insurance on the commodity, drayage (most likely loading the goods into the warehouse from the wagons used to transport them to the city of sale), and a sales commission.

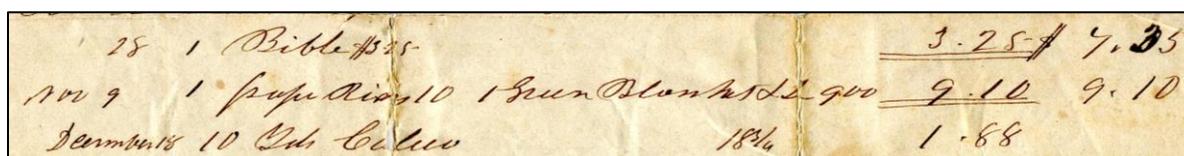


Washington's profit of \$47.69 on the sale of some tobacco in New Orleans.

¹⁰ "32. Invoice from JK Rayburn 1847," client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 10a-c.

Washington earned a total of \$47.69 (\$17,000) for this portion of his crop, and it appears to have been bound for New Orleans. It seems likely that this was not Washington's entire crop since the total net earnings were less than his annual bill at the dry goods store.

Household goods, such as a tin cup, tin bucket, a coffee pot, knives and forks, a blanket and a Bible made up much of the existing 1849 invoice.¹¹ Household sewing needs were also important, including pins, needles, thread, buttons, various amounts of fabric for under garments, dresses and shirts, bedding, and household linens. Some smaller amounts of fabric indicate that Nancy was making clothing for one or more children. The short lengths of edging and lace that were also purchased would have adorned clothes worn by babies and small children of both sexes.



Purchases in 1849 included a family Bible, a green blanket, and 10 yards of calico cloth.

The 1850 U.S. Census confirmed that Washington and Nancy had at least three daughters between 1843 and 1850.¹² This census report noted that Washington Thomson was 31 years old and a native of Tennessee. However, no occupation was listed for him, nor was there a dollar amount listed for the value of his real estate. It is possible that this was simply an oversight on the part of the census enumerator. It is also possible that Washington did not own any land at the time and worked on the farm of his father or one of his brothers.

Living with Washington in 1850 was 29-year-old Nancy, also a native of Tennessee, and three girls who would have been their daughters, although it must be noted that the 1850

¹¹ "42. Invoice from JA Andrews to W Thompson 1849," client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 11a-b.

¹² 1850 U.S. Census (Population Schedule) Sumner, Tennessee, Washington Thomson household, <http://ancestry.com>, subscription database, accessed December 2014. DOCUMENT 12.

census did not include any indication of relationship within a household. The girls were six-year-old Helly (or more likely Hetty) E. Thomson [sic]; Martha D. Thomson, age four; and one-year-old Mary D. Thomson. All three were born in Tennessee.

Locality			1850, Sumner, Tennessee					
Enumeration Date			12 September 1850					
Page	House	Family	Name	Description		Occupation	Real Estate	Birth Place
				Age	Sex			
142	198	198	Washington Thomson	31	M			Tennessee
			Nancy Thomson	29	F			"
			Helly E.	6	F			"
			Martha D.	4	F			"
			Mary "	1	F			"

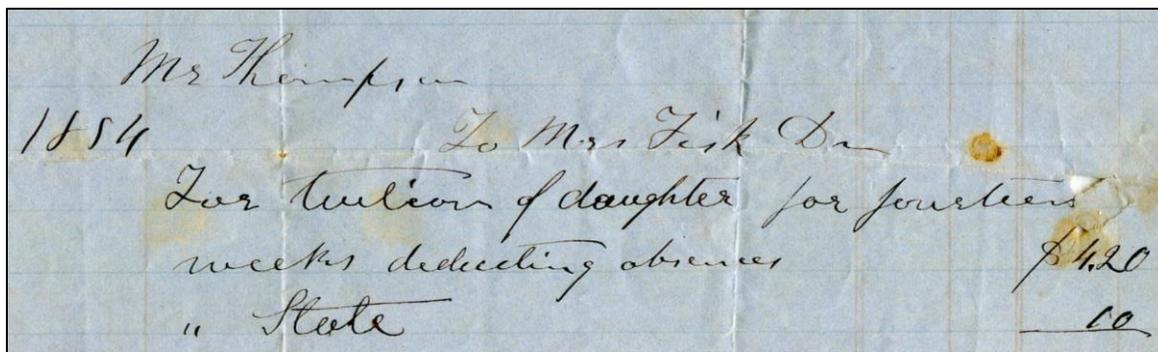
Washington's father, listed as Nicholson Thompson, lived nearby, as did Washington's brothers, Nathaniel and William.

Education was clearly important to the Thompson family. Between 1851 and 1854 there were several invoices and receipts for Hettie's tuition.¹³ One teacher, Mrs. Fisk, also provided a slate for writing upon and working math problems.

¹³ "52. Tuition receipt from M Smith to W Thompson 1851," client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 13a-b; and

"58. Receipt for tuition payment from M Smith to W Thompson 1852," client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 14a-b; and

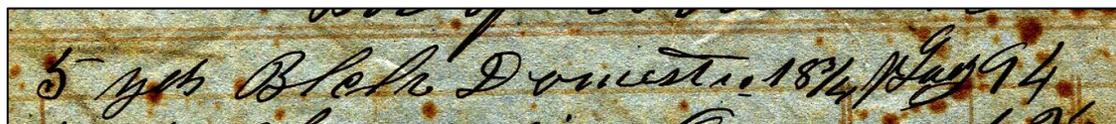
"65. Tuition Invoice from Fisk to ? Thompson 1854," client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 15a-b.



Absences were deducted from Hettie's tuition bill which included charges for a slate.

Based on the three years for which we have invoices, we know that Hettie received at least ten and a half months of education, costing \$11.10 (\$3375). While this may not seem like an exorbitant amount of money to spend on an education, and the total amount of time spent in school is only a very small percentage over three years, this was a significant amount of money to be paid for the education of a girl who was between seven and ten years old during those years and clearly indicates that Washington and Nancy believed in the importance of an education for girls.

An 1851 invoice from Goodall & Andrews, who appears to have been the dry goods merchant of choice in the Thompson household, provides another interesting glimpse into the lives of Washington and Nancy.¹⁴ Because the invoices began to provide more detail regarding the purchases we were able to determine favorite colors of the household as well as which items were specifically purchased by or to be used by Nancy.



"5 yds Blck Domestic 18 $\frac{3}{4}$," indicating the purchase of a dress length of black gingham fabric for a total cost of 93 $\frac{3}{4}$ ¢, or \$307.

¹⁴ "50. Invoice for goods from Goodall & Andrews to W Thompson 1851," client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 16a-d.

It appears that blue, purple and red (the items listed as “turkey” were a bright red color) were favorite colors in the household. These were also very stylish and popular colors of the time period. Several fabric purchases were specifically listed in these colors. In addition, alum, madder and indigo, the supplies necessary for dyeing fabrics into various shades of red, blue and purple, were included in several places in this invoice. Black and green fabrics were also included, suggesting that at least one person in the family favored those colors. The black fabric labelled “domestic” was simply domestically made gingham (made in the United States as opposed to Britain), a cotton fabric and not for use in mourning.

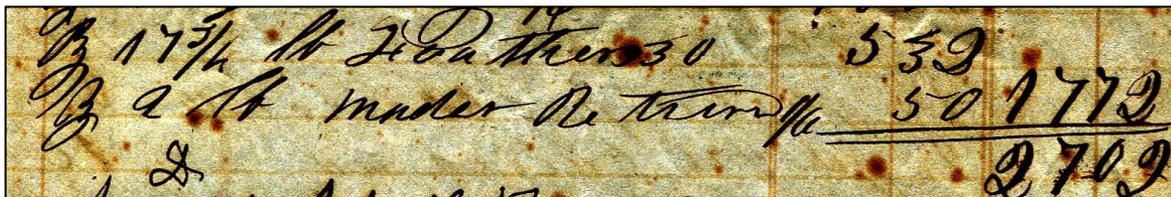
Shoes were also a frequent expense in the Thompson household in 1851. A pair of ladies’ shoes, two additional pair of shoes, and a pair of small shoes were listed on this invoice, suggesting that Nancy, Hettie, Margaret, and Mary all had new shoes that year. A pair of kid shoes was likely a fancier pair of shoes for Nancy, more appropriate for going to town to shop, attend church, or pay social calls, rather than her everyday shoes. The 4 ½ yards of “Red di Lain,” *mousseline de laine*, a soft, lightweight red wool fabric, suggests that Nancy made herself a completely new formal outfit for the year. The silk handkerchief finished her look while the “fine black brush hat” provided the right amount of formal polish for Washington.



1850s ladies' day dress and gentleman's frock coat and black brush hat.

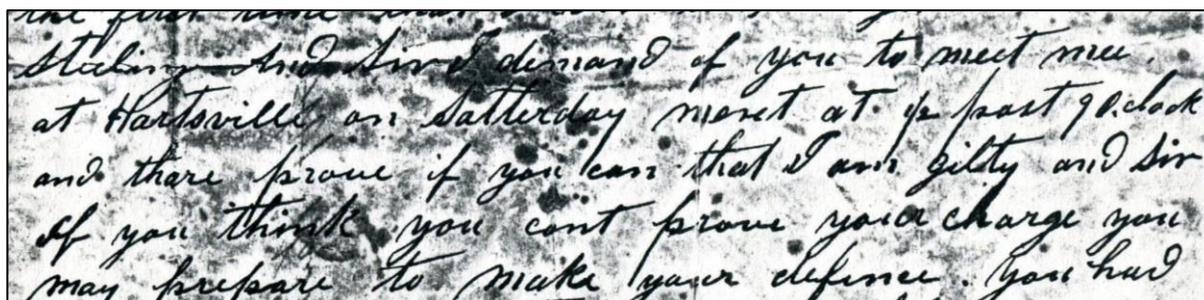
A number of household goods were purchased as well. Included in the annual shopping list was a set of plates, a coffee pot, quantities of spices for cooking (pepper, allspice and ginger), as well as six tumblers, and a teapot.

The payment for this bill provided another insight into the Thompson farm. In addition to several cash payments, at least one of which was made by Nancy, was a partial payment in feathers. Nearly 18 pounds of feathers, valued at 30 cents per pound, were given in August of 1851 to pay over five dollars of the Thompson family bill. Duck or goose feathers were used for pillows, feather beds, padding for winter clothing, and blanket fill. It took the feathers of four geese or at least six ducks to produce a pound of feathers. This suggests that the family had a large flock of ducks and/or geese for both food and as an additional source of income.



17 3/4 pounds of feathers used to partially pay a dry goods bill.

In addition to tobacco and waterfowl, Washington grew watermelons on his property. While we do not know how many watermelons he grew, or the quality of the melons, someone in the neighborhood stole several of them, enough to be noticed that they were missing.¹⁵ Based on a note sent to Washington on 7 September 1853 it appears that Washington had accused B.S. Martin of stealing his watermelons. There is no evidence that the accusation was formally made since it does not appear that the sheriff or any other law enforcement official was involved. It is more likely the accusation was made in a conversation that was repeated to Mr. Martin who took offense that he was accused of the theft.



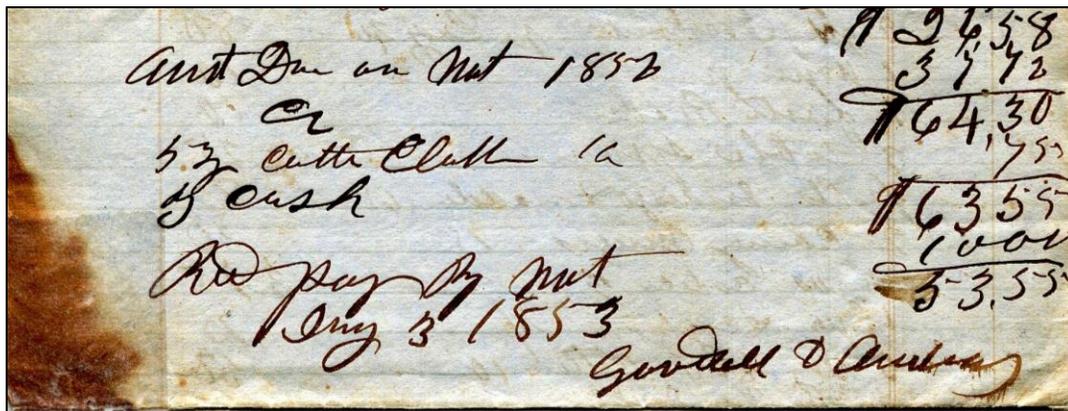
Letter which challenges Washington to a duel over an accusation of the theft of watermelons.

It is interesting to note that in his letter, Mr. Martin says that this is the first time that he has been accused of theft but he does not declare his innocence. Martin set a time and location for the two parties to meet and for Washington to prove Martin's guilt or else "prepare to make your defence" implying that this was a matter of honor rather than a legal case. We do not know if Washington met Mr. Martin and proved his accusations, if the two

¹⁵ "64. Theft-charge Defense from BS Martin to W Thompson 1853," client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 17a-b.

men fought or dueled, or if Martin even showed up. We do know that if there was a confrontation, Washington survived it.

Between 1852 and 1854 the Thompson family went on a bit of a spending spree, ultimately owing Goodall & Andrews \$99.56 (\$30,125) in 1854, which Washington agreed to pay via a promissory note in January of 1855.¹⁶ Prior to beginning a discussion of these three documents, we wanted to note a small transcription error made regarding the March 13, 1853 document. The client provided us with a digital copy of this record, and the heading is difficult to read; the date could be 1853 or 1858. As we read down the column of purchases on the front of the document, there were no other years mentioned, simply the day and month of each purchase.



However, we noted that recorded on the back of the document were three different years, all significantly earlier than 1858. The first was for the “Amnt Due on Not 1852” which we understand to mean “amount due on [promissory] note 1852” but which was transcribed to read “1856.”

¹⁶ “92. Invoice from Goodall & Andrews for W Thompson 1858 [sic],” client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 18a-c; and

“62. Invoice for goods from Goodall & Andrews for W Thompson 1853,” client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 19a-c; and

“66. Invoice for goods from Goodall & Andrews for W Thompson 1854,” client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 20a-c.

The second entry was “Re’d pay by Not Jny 3 1853” or “received payment by [promissory] note January 3 1853.” This entry was transcribed to read 1859. At the bottom of the page was the inscription noting that this particular document was for Washington Thompson’s 1852 bill.

While the date on the front could have read 1858 and the first date on the back of the invoice might possibly be construed to be 1856, the final date is clearly 1853 and the date of the document was clearly 1852. We believe that this indicates that the invoice is for the year 1853, the first note was dated 1852, and the final note was 1853.

An enormous amount of fabric was purchased during those three years. In total, after subtracting the fabric which was returned to the store, and deducting the fabrics which would have been used for under garments, Washington’s shirts, and household linens, enough fabric was purchased to make 23 everyday cotton work dresses for an average-sized adult woman.

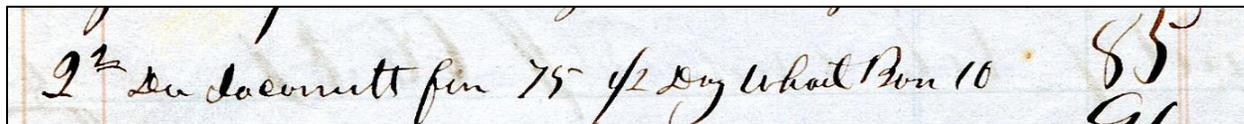


Varina Howell Davis, future First Lady of the Confederacy, in a sheer dress.

In addition to the work dresses there was a purchase of more red *mousseline de laine* for Nancy, a second purchase of the same fabric for a second wool dress, and enough light weight cotton fabric (jaconet) to make three sheer dresses. These were ideal for paying formal visits during the summertime, particularly in the hot and humid climate of north central Tennessee.

In addition to the fabric there were also all of the necessary items for making clothes: pins and needles, thread, buttons, linings, and trim. An interesting item included in the invoice was the purchase of half a dozen whale bones, no doubt used in the construction of a fitted bodice since there were not

sufficient whale bones for the construction of a full corset.



2 1/2 yards of jaconet, a sheer cotton fabric, and half a dozen whale bones.

Other accessories included a pair of ladies' shoes, gatered shoes (men's shoes with a cover which extended over the hem of the trousers), two bonnets, a wool hat, a pair of suspenders, two pairs of silk gloves, a silk handkerchief, and a cape.

There were also household goods, both practical and luxurious. Included in the three shopping lists were a spelling book, a first reader, and a bottle of ink, all no doubt intended for the use of one or more of the student daughters. There were also items for household chores, such as indigo and madder for dyeing fabric, a long wash pan, a large bowl, ticking for making mattresses, a pair of scissors, pepper, flour, a butcher knife, and two padlocks.

Practical utensils included three table spoons as well as a "large spoon for Charls [sic] Roberson" (possibly one of Nancy's brothers) and two china mugs. But the list also included two [serving] dishes, a china (or possibly a Chinese-themed or patterned, such as the blue willow pattern, which was popular at the time) teapot, plates, a sugar bowl, and a cream pitcher.



Clearly the Thompson family was financially secure and Nancy felt comfortable purchasing not only necessities but also luxuries for herself and her family. Cash, feathers, and promissory notes paid the bill for these items. The fact that Goodall & Andrews were willing to accept such a large promissory note from Washington is an indication that he was considered to be a safe "risk" and would pay his debts when they came due.

A bill presented by Dr. T.W. Fitts in 1855 chronicles the family's illnesses between 1850 and 1855.¹⁷ According to the bill, Washington was ill in 1850, requiring the doctor to sit with him overnight on two occasions. For Washington's illness laudanum was prescribed. Laudanum, also known as "tincture of opium" was a mixture of opium and alcohol, extremely bitter to the taste, which was prescribed for a variety of ailments, but primarily for pain relief and as a cough suppressant.

In August of 1851 Dr. Fitts was called to the farm to extract "farm substance" from the eye of a child. Again he spent the night sitting up with the child, suggesting that this was not a simply case of washing some dirt or manure out of a child's eye. The doctor spent one night sitting up with Nancy in 1852 and in June of 1853 he returned, sitting with Nancy for a total of three nights and performing a "venesection" or what is known as "bloodletting."

This procedure was generally out of fashion by the middle of the 19th century, but it is clear that Dr. Fitts still believed in the value of opening a vein in order to remove a quantity of blood. This was believed to relieve pressure and return balance to the various bodily fluids. Washington was also a patient of Dr. Fitts for two nights in September of 1853.



Dr. Tandy Walker Fitts, the Thompson's family physician.

The year 1854 was a particularly difficult year for Nancy. Dr. Fitts was at the house and treated her for 14 of the 16 days between 17 July and 1 August. Unfortunately we do not know the cause for his extended care; Nancy could have been ill, injured, or had an extremely difficult pregnancy. The total bill for Nancy's care was \$21 (\$6,385). Washington

¹⁷ "49. Invoice from TW Fitts (Doctor) for W Thompson 1850 – 1855," client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 21a-b.

required the doctor's care for one night soon thereafter, suggesting that her illness may have been contagious, or that Washington was so worried about the health of his wife that he, in turn, became ill through a lack of sleep and worry.

In January of 1855 Martha Dyer, referred to simply as "Dyer" on the invoice, became ill and Dr. Fitts went out to the farm to sit with her for a night. Washington became seriously ill soon after that. His illness was so severe that Washington required medication, a venesection, and the attention of the doctor for 11 nights during the first two weeks of February. Although the planned extraction of her tooth in February was put off or became unnecessary, Nancy became ill in July, requiring another venesection.

According to information provided by the client, Washington's father, Nicholas Thompson, Sr. died on 19 September 1855. Two months later on 15 November of that year, Washington and his younger brother Nicholas, Jr. paid their younger brother Joseph \$50 (\$15,000) for his portion of the land in District 2 of Sumner County which was in the possession of Mary Thompson at the time.¹⁸ According to the client's family tree, Mary was Nicholas Thompson, Sr.'s third and final wife who survived her husband.

It was not uncommon for a man's will to state that much of or even all of his land and possessions were to go to his wife for her use during her lifetime while she remained his widow. If she remarried, all of the land and possessions would then be distributed to his children. This was designed to protect widows from an opportunistic suitor who would take control of all of her property upon her marriage. If the suitor was able to support the widow, then she knew that she was not being married for her money. If the original deceased's widow did not remarry, all of the land and possessions reverted to the children upon her death.

¹⁸ "69. Sale of land from J Thompson to N Thompson and W Thompson 1855," client provided image and transcription. DOCUMENTS 22a-d.

Joseph preferred to take an immediately available small sum of money from his brothers rather than wait for a future portion of land, resulting in this agreement. The document also stated that if Joseph failed to provide Washington and Nicholas with a clear title to the land upon the death of Mary that he would pay them \$100.

However, in a second document dated the next day, 16 November 1855, Joseph sold all the “rights, title, and interest” that he had in the estate of his father, Nicholas Thompson, to David Grey for the sum of \$625 (\$188,500).¹⁹ Joseph explicitly stated that “the present estate of my Father Consist of Land, lying in Dist No. 2 Sumner County and State aforesaid [Tennessee], Negroes, & all other personal property belonging to said estate.” At the bottom of the paperwork between Joseph and David Grey the County Registrar R.D. Moore noted that this transaction was properly registered in his office on 19 November 1855.

Joseph Thompson sells all of his interest in his father's estate.

It appears that Joseph sold the same parcel of land twice: once to his brothers Washington and Nicholas, and once to David Grey. It is possible that Nicholas, Sr. reserved a portion of his land for Mary's use, which Joseph sold to his brothers, and that a second portion of land was bequeathed to Joseph for his immediate use. However, this seems unlikely considering that the sale to David Grey included land, slaves, and personal property. Under normal circumstances Nicholas, Sr. would have permitted Mary to retain the use of the land, the slaves, the house, and all of the furniture and other items inside the house and on the farm.

¹⁹ Sumner County (Tennessee). Register of Deeds, *Land records, 1787-1967; indexes to deeds, 1787-1965* (Nashville, Tennessee: Tennessee State Library and Archives, 1966-1967) Deeds v. 23-25 Sep 1854-Jan 1867, Family History Library microfilm 467529. DOCUMENT 23.

The only way to determine if Joseph legally sold two separate portions of land to two different buyers would be by reading Nicholas, Sr.'s will to learn the terms of the bequests. Unfortunately, a search of the wills proved in Sumner County between the years 1842 and 1870 did not yield a will written by Nicholas Thompson.

One final document indicates that in spite of the wording of the two different documents, Joseph did not swindle either his brothers or David Grey. On the back of the bond securing the promise of a clear title to the land from Joseph to Nicholas and Washington is a notice that the Sumner County Registrar, Mr. R.D. Moore registered the bond on 5 March 1856. This indicates that three and a half months after the two transactions were initiated the original bond was legally filed with the county. Mr. Moore would not have registered this document if it was not legal and properly completed. Therefore, it appears that Joseph must have inherited two different portions of land from his father's estate. One portion he sold to his brothers, and the other portion he sold to David Grey, along with the rest of his inheritance.

Conclusion

At this point our allotted research time had expired. In the course of this project we read and analyzed the 240 different documents provided by the client, determining the value of each document in telling the story of the life of Washington Thompson, and placing the records into their proper historical and geographical context. This included researching the life and times of people in the 1840s and 1850s in the United States, and particularly those who lived in Tennessee.

We also discovered several documents from online sources as well as from data collections housed in the Family History Library in Salt Lake City which add additional information and verification of facts recorded by the client concerning Washington Thompson. Then we combined all of our analysis and research with the documents to create a biographical story of Washington Thompson from 1840 to 1855.

Due to the time constraints of this project we were unable to complete the story of Washington Thompson's life. There are still documents provided by the client as well as documents which we discovered that tell of his life between 1856 and his death in 1888. We recommend that the remaining thirty-plus years of Washington's life be told in a future research project.

It has been a pleasure researching and writing the story of Washington Thompson. We particularly enjoyed the opportunity to read and work with such a large collection of documents relating to one individual's life. The details available in those records are extraordinary. We look forward to continuing research in the near future, according to your direction.

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