

2

The Family of Mary Gleaves Turk June 12, 1746 - March 2, 1835

Mary appears to be the oldest child of Matthew and Esther Glaves. She is the only one of the six children whose actual birth date is known. Family history would have her born in England and immigrating to America with her parents at an early age. The James Turk Bible establishes her birth date but does not provide a clue as to the location. As discussed in Chapter One, it is also possible that she, and her brothers and sisters were all born in the New World.

No records have been found pertaining to Mary's life prior to her marriage. We know from Augusta County tax records that her family was in the Shenandoah Valley no later than 1760. The first time she appears in Augusta County, Virginia court records is 1771. Mary Turk and her husband, along with her brothers and sisters, are litigants in the *Turk vs. Raferty* lawsuit over her father's estate. *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia*

Unlike her brothers, Mary appears to have lived her life in Augusta County. There are no known records of Mary Gleaves Turk or her husband Thomas occurring anywhere else. For a more complete description of early Augusta County refer to Chapter 1.

Mary was the second wife of Thomas Turk Sr., a second-generation member of one of the earliest families to settle in the Shenandoah Valley. Thomas and Mary were married on April 1, 1766 in Augusta County, Virginia. There is no known official record of the marriage, although it is recorded in a family Bible. Some family records give the location of the marriage as the town of Staunton, although this has not been documented. At the time of their marriage, Mary was 19 years old and Thomas more than twice her age, at approximately 48. *James Turk Bible*

Mary Turk was part of the controversy over her mother's possible connection to the John Mitchell family. When Mitchell made his will in 1780, Mary was one of the witnesses. The will, proved in the Augusta County Court in 1783, also lists an "*Esther TURK*" as one of the beneficiaries. Mary and Thomas had a daughter born about 1767 named Esther, and the will identifies Thomas as her father. Mary's mother was also named Esther, although in 1780 her married name was Rafferty. For more detailed account of this issue, see the section on Esther Glaves in Chapter 1.

Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia

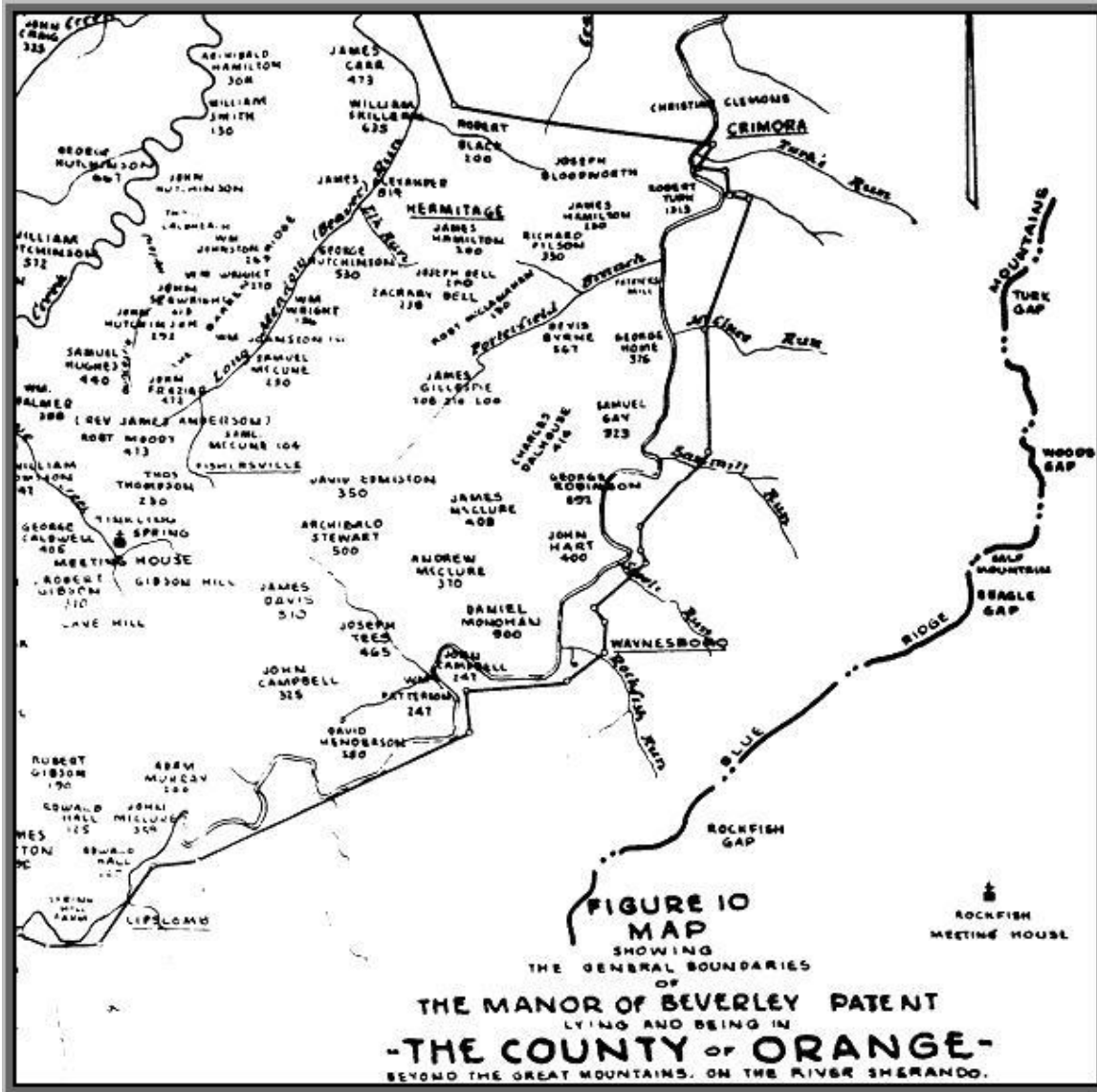
The Turk Family of Augusta County, Virginia

Mary's husband, Thomas, was the son of Robert and Margaret Turk. His mother's maiden name is unknown. Robert Turk was a Scotch-Irish Presbyterian from Ulster Province, Northern Ireland. He is believed to have immigrated to Boston with his family some time around 1720. Turk family researchers report that Robert paid the passage for his family to come from England and was not an indentured servant.

Some time before the late 1730s, Robert moved his family to Virginia and obtained land through the Orange County Court under a procedure known as *Headrights*. Headrights were grants of 50 acres per "*head*" granted by the Colony of Virginia to males over 16 who were willing to clear land in undeveloped areas of the colony. On February 28, 1739, Robert Turk entered an application in the Orange County Court of Common Pleas. This Headrights function served as the only real immigration record during this time period. The entry lists the following individuals: "*Robert Turk, Margrot, Jane, John, Ann, Thomas, James & William Turk*". Next to the entry is a notation "*from Ireland*". *Orange County Court Records*

Turk Family records suggest that Robert patented land in Orange County even before that date. There are reports of records dated as early as September 6, 1736. We do know that Robert Turk had obtained a tract of land from William Beverley at least partially within the boundaries of the Beverley Manor Patent. The tract of land consisted of 1313 acres. It is reported that Robert paid the sum of 40 pounds for the property. Since Beverley did not get around to recording these grants until 1745, the actual date is unclear. Family records list the transaction as occurring in 1739 as does one of the maps of early settlers in the area. The map below shows the location of the property within Beverley Manor.

Beginnings Beyond the Mountains



The map above is of the eastern portion of the Beverley Patent, about 1760. The 118,000 acres of the Patent ran generally from the northeast to the southwest. Robert Turk's name appears in the northeast corner with the number "1313" underneath. The number represents the acreage purchased from William Beverley in 1739. The area was known as Crimora. It appears that the South River ran through the property and a portion of the property may actually be located outside of the Beverley Patent. The map also shows "Turk's Gap" which was a passage over the nearby Blue Ridge Mountains that appears on USGS maps today. "Turk's Run", a small stream that flows from the

mountains into the South River, has been renamed. The Tinkling Spring Meeting House is located to the Southwest.

This is the land inherited by Thomas Turk Sr. from his father.

***The Congregation
of the
Triple Forks of the Shenandoah***

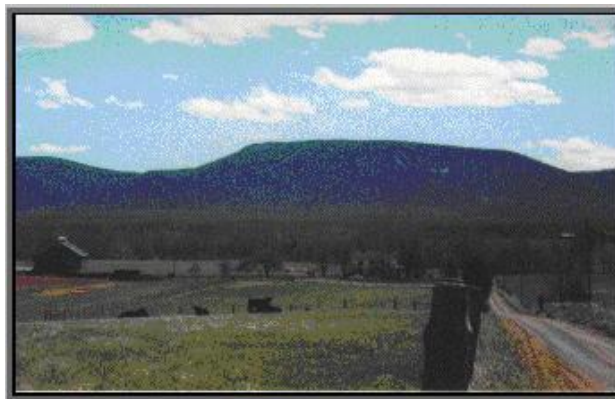
Most of the settlers in this part of the Valley were Scotch Irish Presbyterians who wasted little time in setting up their churches. The Congregation of the Triple Forks of the Shenandoah established two meeting houses in 1740, Tinkling Spring and the Augusta Stone; both were served by Reverend John Craig. The Virginia Colony, although somewhat tolerant of other religions, was an English Colony. All dissenting churches were called “*Meeting Houses*” while the word “*Church*” applied only to the Church of England

The first Tinkling Spring Meeting House, built in 1744, was a log cabin measuring twenty-four by fifty feet. The original members of the Congregation were assessed 12 shillings each to build it. Church records list “*Turk*” among those families. Several of Robert’s children were baptized there including Thomas, although no date is given. *The Tinkling Spring: Headwater of Freedom*

A November 1747 Augusta Court entry confirms that Robert settled the land prior to 1741. That year, Robert was brought to court by a group of church trustees from the Tinkling Spring Congregation for failure to pay his portion of the Pastor John Craig’s salary for the years 1741-46. The amount due was one Pound per year. They attached a copy of the mutual obligations between the Congregation and their Commissioners. Robert eventually paid the debt. *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia*

By May 21, 1747 we know he had settled the family homestead. On that date the following Augusta County Court entry was recorded. “*Road to be repaired from Alexr. Thomson's to top of Ridge leading to Louisa, with the tithables from the So. Mountain.....by Ro. Turk's*” ...The map on the previous page shows that the location of the Turk homestead is consistent with roadwork described above. *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia*

When Robert Turk died in 1772 he left his entire estate to his son, Thomas Sr. A second son, James received just one shilling. There is no mention of Robert’s wife Margaret, sons John and William, or daughters Jane and Ann. Signing the will as one of the witnesses is Thomas’ daughter “*Elizabeth GLEAVE*” who had married William Gleaves two years earlier. *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia*



The dirt road on the right side of this picture is Robert Turk Lane, located in the Crimora area of Augusta County. It runs a quarter mile eastward from Rockfish Pike and stops just short of the South River. In the background, Turk Mountain rises on the other side of the river. This is the land shown on the preceding map settled by Robert Turk.

Thomas Turk Sr.
March 1718 - 1809

“Thomas Turk my Father was born In The Year of Our Lord in 1718 - Mary Gleaves, my Mother was born the 12th Day of June 1746—Thomas and Mary were married April first 1766 — And he Departed this life the 22nd Of June 1809.”
The James Turk Bible

Family records have the birth of Mary’s husband Thomas occurring in 1718. There are conflicting reports concerning Thomas’ date of birth with at least one record placing it as 1710. A declaration made by Thomas in a 1798 court case, Estill vs. Ramsey, in which he states his age as 88, has led to the confusion. Thomas could not write so whoever transcribed his statement may have made a mistake. In either instance it appears he was born in Ireland. In this case, family records appear to be more accurate than other reports. James Turk Bible

During the 1740-50s, the sons of Robert Turk, James and his younger brother, Thomas, were beginning to make their own marks. Thomas is believed to have been a farmer and landowner, since no records have been uncovered listing any other occupation.

The earliest report of Thomas acquiring land occurs in 1741 when his father deeded 437 acres to him. 437 acres is almost exactly one third of 1,313, the total acreage of the tract of land Robert had obtained from William Beverley in 1736. It is not known if Robert gave a similar share to his son James. Orange County Court Records

Thomas appeared in Augusta County Court acquiring land in March 1751. He received “400 acres on the South river adjoining Christian Clayman’s line and Thomas Kenley”. A man named “Christian Clemmons” appears on the map of the Beverley Patent with his lands located just north of the Patent boundary. Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia

The next entry referring to Thomas also dealt with acquiring land. On September 10, 1755, he filed Patent #31 for “226 acres on the south side of the South River of Shanando”. On the same day his father filed for 100 acres “On both sides of the south river of Shanando”. Patents were issued by the Colony of Virginia to pass title to unclaimed lands. After the Revolution, Land Grants were issued in their place. Theoretically, the land was the property of the George the Second, King of England. Patents were issued by applying directly to the Colonial capital in Williamsburg. Copies of these and other Patents may be viewed online at the Library of Virginia website.

This first Patent was most likely for unclaimed land north of the Beverley Manor Patent. Robert Dinwiddie, Colonial Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, granted the patent. Thomas paid “the Sum of Fifteen Shillings of Good and Lawful Money” for the Patent. This appears to be a much better deal than his father got in 1739 when he paid 40 pounds sterling for 1,313 acres, a portion of a Patent granted to William Beverley in 1736. Virginia Patent Book 31, pages 607-608

From 1755 through 1797, this author has found 12 patents and grants issued to Thomas Turk Sr. totaling over 3,300 acres. On a single day, August 31, 1789, he received four land grants totaling 1,210 acres. His brother James filed several patents as well. In each case, Thomas had to have a survey done and this description was included in the document transferring ownership. These surveys included direction (including degrees), distance (measured in poles), natural landmarks and the names of owners of adjoining property. Many of the parcels are described as lying on the banks of the South River between it and the South Mountain. The South Mountain appears to have been renamed, as the one that appears on maps today is 40 miles south of Crimora in Rockbridge County, Virginia. The grants continue to list Augusta County after Rockbridge was formed in 1778, so it appears the properties were in the Crimora area, adjacent to the Blue Ridge Mountains and near his father’s original settlement. This author believes the South Mountain referred to in these land grants is in fact, present day Turk Mountain, renamed some time after 1800.

Thomas Turk's Marriage to Margaret

In 1747, six years after acquiring land from his father, Thomas married for the first time. He would have been about 29 years old. Although not recorded in court records, it is believed to have occurred in Augusta County, Virginia. His marriage was to a woman named Margaret, although her maiden name is unknown. Some researchers identify her as Margaret Kerr. This author knows of no documentation of this surname. Margaret died some time around 1762.

Thomas and Margaret appear in Augusta County Court in March of 1756. *Turk vs. Walker* involved a lawsuit against Moses Walker and Agnes his wife. No details on the case or its outcome have been uncovered.

The couple returned in the same court on August 16, 1758 when Thomas and Margaret sold land to Thomas' brother, James Turk. The land is described as "320 acres on South river, Shando; corner to land formerly Bloodworth's crossing the cranberry swamps. Christian Clemance's land". This is most likely the land believed to have been acquired from "Christian Clayman" in 1751. James paid 50 pounds for the property. *Augusta County Court Records*

In August of 1762, James Turk and his wife Mary returned the favor selling land to Thomas. "250 acres on South river of Shanandoe below Humble's land". The price paid was 40 pounds. *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia*

Thomas Turk's Militia Record

Several sources detail Thomas' involvement in the Augusta County Militia during a period of almost 30 years. In August 1756 Thomas is listed as a private in Captain James Allen's Company. Captain Allen's son would later marry one of Thomas' daughters. He is also reported to have been a private in Captain William Louis' Company in 1757. Thomas was court-marshaled by Captain Louis for missing a general muster, date unknown. He is further documented as being a member of Captain Thomas Rankin's Company 1780-83. His youngest brother-in-law, Matthew Graves Jr. was also a member of Rankin's Company during this same period.

Daughters of the American Revolution Application #63861

Thomas probably was enrolled in other units during the missing years as participation was mandatory. Very possibly, these records were lost over the years. There is no record of Thomas participating in the Revolutionary War (1775-1783). He would have been almost 60 years old at the time it began. No evidence has been uncovered to date that would document Captain Rankin's Company being involved in any military engagements during this period.

There is a family report that Thomas served as a private in Captain Alexander's Company in 1778. This author has not found the record as of yet. Augusta County Tax Records document Thomas' participation in the militia after 1783. He and Thomas Jr. are found throughout the 1780s in various companies. *Augusta County Tax Records*

The Graves & Turk Connection

Thomas and Margaret had at least four children during this first marriage. While they are not direct descendants of the Matthew Graves line, three have connections to the family that needs to be explained to help the casual reader understand the intermarriages that occurred during this period.

Jane Turk (1747/48-1845) The oldest child of Thomas and Margaret, Jane, married Robert Allen on May 18, 1768. Robert Allen was a Revolutionary War soldier and was present at the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781. He died about 1789. After her husband's death, Jane moved the family to Kentucky in 1798 and with 7 sons and 4 daughters and settled in Cumberland County, in the Marrowbone Valley, on Allen's Creek. Robert had explored this land previously and hoped to move his family there. He died before he could realize his dream, so Jane fulfilled his vision.

Nathan Allen (1781-1871) was one of the sons of this marriage. In 1810 he married Sarah "Sallie" Gleaves in Wythe County, Virginia. Sarah was the daughter of William Gleaves and Nathan's mother's sister, Elizabeth Turk Gleaves. Sarah was Nathan's cousin. Sarah and Nathan are profiled in the next chapter. It is through Nathan Allen's Bible that the birthdates of Sallie and her siblings have been documented. Wythe County, Virginia Marriage Records

Elizabeth "Betty" Turk (1753-1840) Elizabeth was the middle child of Thomas and Margaret. It is through her marriage that the families of her brother and sister first connect with the Gleaves family. In 1770, Elizabeth married William Gleaves, the brother of her father's second wife, Mary. This made her stepmother her sister-in-law as well. Elizabeth's life is profiled in the next chapter.

Thomas Turk Jr. (1755-1833) The youngest child of Thomas Sr. and Margaret, Thomas Jr. was also a Revolutionary War veteran. Thomas married Ann Rhea in 1777. Thomas and Ann lived most of their lives in Augusta County, although they later moved to Tennessee, where they both died.

Thomas is listed obtaining a 1792 Augusta County Land Grant with his sister, Jane Allen (widow of Robert Allen). The land, 400 acres, "Near the South Mountain on the waters of the South River" would be near the lands patented by his father and grandfather.

Virginia Grants Book 26, page 407

Thomas and Ann Rhea Turk had at least four children; the youngest was Thomas Turk III (1782-1826). On December 24, 1802, in Wythe County, Virginia, he married Margaret "Peggy" Gleaves, another daughter of William Gleaves and his father's sister, Elizabeth Turk Gleaves. Again, Thomas III and Peggy were cousins. Thomas and Peggy are profiled in the next chapter under the section dealing with the children of William and Elizabeth Gleaves.

Wythe County, Virginia Marriage Records

Thomas Turk's Marriage to Mary Gleaves

During the period of the late 1760s there were very few court entries regarding Thomas Turk. Margaret had died by 1762. As previously reported, Thomas married for a second time on April 1, 1766. His bride was *Mary GLEAVES*, a woman less than half his age. They soon began a second family, with Mary giving birth to their first child in 1767.

This marriage was not recorded with the Augusta County Court although it is documented in family records. James Turk Bible

A single court entry has been found during the latter part of the 1760s. A November 18, 1767 entry lists a number of men being issued "hemp certificates"; Thomas was among them.

Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia

1772

1772 was a very busy year for the Turk family; they reappear in Augusta County Court with gusto. In March, Thomas and Mary were involved in the *Turk vs. Raferty* lawsuit detailed in the previous chapter. The next month, in April, James Turk sued his father Robert, to recover monies James had paid for his daughter Elizabeth's education in Carolina. In August, Thomas sued his brother James over a 1758 agreement where Thomas had apprenticed his daughter Elizabeth, to James. From the lawsuit we learn that Elizabeth was only five years and two months old at the time she was apprenticed.

By November Robert had died leaving his son Thomas the entire estate with his brother James receiving a single shilling. In many cases a single shilling was given to heirs who had been provided for, prior to the father's death. It was also used as a way to insure that those children out of favor did not contest the will by claiming that their father forgot them when he drafted the document.

The exact reason in this case remains a mystery. It is not known if James was truly alienated from his father. Thomas had received property from his father previously, so it is quite possible that bad blood existed between James and his father because of the lawsuit.

Augusta County Court Records

Some time that same year Thomas deeded land to his son Thomas Jr. “*condition, Love and Affection*”. There may have been a problem with the deed since Thomas Jr. was only 17 years old at the time and still a minor. In May of 1792 a court proceeding was conducted to clear up the matter.

Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia

The Thomas Turk Family

During this period Thomas and Mary prospered on their own as he acquired more land and livestock. Between 1767 and 1780 family records indicate that they had at least five children.

By the early 1780s, Virginia began collecting a tax on the personal property of its residents. The tax exists today on cars, boats, etc. The 1784 Augusta County Personal Property Tax roll lists Thomas Turk Sr. owning 13 slaves, 17 horses and 41 cattle. It appears that Thomas and Mary Turk are the first known slave owners in the family.

Virginia State Library

On May 26, 1789, Alexander Long entered a “*Writ of Slander*” against Thomas in the Augusta Court. While we do not know the details, we do know that Long was a physician and a lady named Mary Wallace was also involved. The verdict was for the plaintiff, although no details of any damages paid by Thomas exist

In the 1790s Thomas was involved in a number of land disputes, not all as a litigant, but rather as a historical expert. It seems that as a younger man Thomas had done some work as a surveyor’s assistant. Many of the early surveys done to support patents were inaccurate and disputes arose as land changed hands or was divided. In *Kennerley vs. John Allison*, April 7, 1795 “*Thomas Turk Sr. deposes, about sixty years ago he, Thomas, carried the chain upon survey of a tract for William Russell*”. His testimony helped clear the title for the Russell family. Augusta County Court Records

Thomas Turk’s Will

Thomas Turk’s Will was written on August 3, 1808 in Augusta County, Virginia. Some family records also list this date as his date of death, although the actual date was in 1809. He would have been at least 90 years old when he died. The exact date is listed in the “*James Turk Bible*”.

The will was proven to be authentic in the Augusta Court on July 24, 1809. It mentions a number of individuals by name including, “*wife Mary*”, and “*wife’s mother Esther Woolman*”. Among those receiving an inheritance are two namesake grandsons, “*Thomas Turk McCullough*” and “*Thomas Turk Rhea*”. The mothers of both boys had died previously. All of his living children from both of Thomas’ marriages are mentioned in the will with daughters listed by their married names.

The estate was to be divided between Mary and her children, “*daughters Esther Johnston, Betsey Coger, Rebecca Anderson,*” (Mary McCollough appears to have died previously) and “*son James Turk*”.

The living children from Thomas’ first marriage to Margaret; “*Jane Allen, Betty GLAVE and Thomas Turk*” (Jr.) each received the sum of one shilling (Margaret Turk Rhea had died in 1799). As previously discussed, this was usually done in cases where heirs had received their share of their father’s estate before his death. We know that Thomas had already given land to Thomas Jr. in 1772, but there is no record of what, if anything, he gave to Jane or Betty. Thomas could not write and signed his will with his mark. Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia

Mary's Life after Thomas

Mary was provided for in her husband's will. She was about 62 years old at the time of Thomas' death. There is very little information about her after his death. We know she was still in Augusta County in 1820. She probably lived with one of her children during this period. As previously discussed, her mother, now Esther Woolman, may have been with her during part of this period.

"Mother enjoys as good health as a woman of her age can expect, but she has been more subject to brashes(?) The past winter and spring than she formerly has been but we must expect that age will bring on infirmities and she is now 74 years of age this day."

Letter from James Turk Sr. to James Turk Gleaves Sr. June 12, 1820, #146

Mary's death is recorded in her son's Bible as March 2, 1835. She lived more than 25 years after the death of Thomas. There is no known record of her remarrying and given her age, it is unlikely that she did.

"Mary Turk Departed this Life on Monday Morning the Second of March 1835 aged Eighty Nine Years Three Months and Twenty Days"

The James Turk Bible

The Turk Legacy

The Turk family had a significant impact in the Northeast corner of the Beverley Manor Patent during the latter half of the 18th Century; Robert was one of its earliest settlers. Thomas and James expanded the family lands and Thomas Jr. was a Revolutionary War hero. Although later generations moved away, the family legacy remains even today.

The U.S. Geological Survey lists a number of geographical features bearing the family name. Because of the location of these features, there is little doubt that they are named for members of the Robert Turk family. Most are in present day Augusta County, east of Staunton and north of Waynesboro. All of the features described below are today within the boundaries of Shenandoah National Park. They appear on two USGS maps titled *Crimora* and *Waynesboro East*.

<http://mapping.usgs.gov/www/gnis/MapServer>

- ◆ Turk Gap: This appears to be the same feature that appears on the 1750 map of the Beverley Manor Patent. It is a passage over the Blue Ridge Mountains.
- ◆ Turk Mountain: Part of the Blue Ridge Chain and is just south of Turk Gap. This mountain appears to formerly named South Mountain
- ◆ Turk Mountain Overlook: Appears to be a feature on Skyline Drive, a road that runs the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains for over 70 miles.
- ◆ Turk Branch: "*Turk's Branch*" on the 1750 map was on the western slope of the Blue Ridge Mountains and has been renamed. This stream is on the eastern slope in Albemarle County. It appears that the stream begins very near Turk's Gap.
- ◆ Turk Branch Trail: Runs along Turk Branch on the East Side of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

The Children of Thomas and Mary Turk

Mary and Thomas had at least five children that lived to adulthood. Information on their birth dates is sketchy. Thomas Turk's Will offers the most information on the family. All of the children appear to have been born in Augusta County, Virginia.

Documentation of the children born into Thomas' first marriage appears to be much more extensive than the information located on Mary's children thus far.

1) Esther Turk ***About 1767 – About 1845***

Esther adds further mystery to her grandmother's maiden name. Several researchers suggest that Esther; the wife of Matthew Graves Sr. was a Mitchell. This author is not aware of these researchers offering any proof to substantiate this claim.

Esther is mentioned when still a child in the will of a man named John Mitchell. Mitchell wrote his will on September 23, 1780 and lists "*Esther Turk*" among his heirs. Esther is positively identified when later in the will the following appears; "*Thomas Turk, father of Esther, is to control her legacy until she is of age*". Esther's mother, Mary Gleaves Turk, is also listed as one of the witnesses. The relationship of the Thomas Turk family to John Mitchell, if any, remains a mystery.

Augusta County, Virginia Will Book #6

Esther married James Robertson Johnston (before 1766 – after 1806) on December 19, 1786 in Augusta County, Virginia. She would have been about 19 at the time. James was the son of Zachariah and Ann Robertson Johnston. Very little is known about James and Esther's lives after their marriage. Family records identify the names of 10 children born into this union.

Augusta County Marriages

There are a number of Virginia land grants issued in the name James Johnston beginning in 1789. Two of the patents are in Augusta County and given the location, very likely pertain to our James Johnston. On August 31, 1789 James patented "*200 acres On both sides of Pine run and between Beverley's line and the South Mountain*". This land would have been just outside the Beverley Manor Patent in the Crimora area near the Turk homestead. The second patent was dated July 28, 1797, was for "*34 acres On the South side of the Middle River joining the lands of the said Johnston and the widow Henderson*". The remaining six patents occur in other counties and may or may not pertain to our James Johnston.

Virginia State Library

This author has not found any data pertaining to James' will or the resting place of either James or Esther.

2) Mary "Polly" Turk ***About 1770 – Before 1809***

Little is known about Mary's life. Her birth and death dates are not known. Researchers have her marrying Thomas McCollough on August 31, 1802. The marriage of Polly Turk to Thomas McCullough is recorded in county records.

Augusta County Marriages

Mary appears to have died prior to 1808, when her father had his will drafted. The married names of the other daughters appear in the will as well as the names of two grandsons; "*Thomas Turk McCollough and Thomas Turk Rhea*". Both grandsons appear to have lost their mothers before that date.

3) Elizabeth "Betsy" Turk ***June 1778 – After 1808***

There are conflicting reports as to Betsy's date of birth, with some listing it as June 1768, others list it as 1778. All agree that she married James Coger in July of 1797 in Augusta County, Virginia. This author believes the 1778 date of birth is more plausible since women tended to marry early. Court records indicate that Thomas Turk Sr. had to give his consent to the marriage, meaning

Elizabeth was still younger than 18 at the time. This would call into question the 1778 date of birth as well. The actual record lists her husband as “*James Conger*”. James Johnston, husband of her sister Esther posted the marriage bond. *Augusta County Marriages*

Little is known of James and Betsy’s lives other than the names of four children. Betsy is reported to have died in Mercer County, Kentucky although no date is given.

4) Rebecca Turk
About 1780 – After 1821

Rebecca is believed to have been married twice, first to James Anderson on January 14, 1803 and then to Hugh Glen on November 13, 1821. Both marriages are reported to have occurred in Augusta County, Virginia, although no court record has been found.

Rebecca had five children with James Anderson and their names are known, but not the dates of birth. There are no children recorded from her second marriage and it is unlikely that any existed since she would have been over 40 at the time.

This author does not have any information regarding the date and location of Rebecca’s death, or similar information about either of her two husbands.

5) James Turk Sr.
May 13, 1780 – April 8, 1862

As is the case with most male children during this time frame, there is more information about James, than about his sisters.

We are fortunate to have a number of documents written by James that are valuable tools in telling the early story of our family, the most important among them is his Family Bible.

James appears to have lived his whole life in the Augusta County area. He was a farmer and a substantial landowner. It is believed that he inherited most of his father’s property as he was the only son of this second marriage

Virginia land records include three land grants filed by James. All three are dated July 6, 1818 and totaled 70 acres. All parcels are described as “*On the south side of the South River*”. These small parcels were most likely located between larger tracts claimed earlier by the family and others.

Virginia State Library

Elizabeth Armstrong
August 5, 1782 – July 24, 1837

James married Elizabeth Armstrong on July 3, 1800 in Augusta County, Virginia. She was the daughter of William Armstrong. Very little is known about Elizabeth. The only known official record of her life is her marriage. *Augusta County Marriages*

James recorded this event in his bible. “*James Turk May 13 1780 – Elizabeth Armstrong August 5th 1782 .James and Elizabeth were Married July 3rd 1800*” *The James Turk Bible*

William and Elizabeth’s marriage produced at least seven children that have been identified. All appear to have been born in Augusta County.

*“Elizabeth J. Turk Wife of James Turk Departed this Life on Monday Morning of July 24th
1837 Aged 54 Years Eleven Months and Nineteen Days”* *The James Turk Bible*

Letters to his Cousin

During a period lasting more than forty years James Turk Sr. corresponded with his cousin James Turk Gleaves Sr. although he always addressed him as “*Dear Nephew*”. The latter James was the son of his uncle William Gleaves Sr. and lived 100 miles further down the Shenandoah Valley in Wythe County, Virginia.

Between 1820 and 1861 at least five letters still exist that tell of his life and children. It was his letter in 1820 that reveals that his grandmother, Esther Gleaves was still living.

After James Gleaves was elected to the Virginia Assembly, James Turk’s letters took on a more political tone. Two such letters written in 1847 dealt almost exclusively with the moral and political welfare of the country. James was a man of strong convictions and gladly shared them with his politician cousin. The following letter was transcribed by Robert Allen and may be found in its entirety in the Letters Section of the Gleaves Family Association website. It is letter #1011.

July 30th 1847

Dear Nephew

Being at leisure and feeling a great anxiety for the welfare of my country morally and politically, not so much on my own account, as for my offspring, and yours, together with the residue of the people of this once happy, free and independent United States until with our free will and accord we placed at the helm of affairs the man whom Thos Ritchie publicly proclaimed that he (Andrew Jackson’s) elevation to the chief Magistracy would be one of the greatest curses that ever befell us as a Nation, which was more truth that he has ever published since, for he assumed to himself infallibility, and excommunicated every man who could not subscribe to ever article, big and little, of the party faith – to every matter of detail and form, as well as to ever essential point of principle, they become, instead of conservatives of freedom, its most fatal enemies, and upon the ruins of free thought and personal independence, erect a despotern more degrading than that of sceptered authority. -- It is the everlasting share of one of the most prominent administration leaders of the day, that he unblushingly proclaimed a rule of action for party which would better have become a chief of robbers, or a pirate of the seas, than an American Statesman. – “To the victor belongs the spoils.” – And upon the principle, whether avowed or not, Democratic Administrations have acted for nearly sixteen years – like villains flying to the battlefield to feast upon the putrid victims, and grow fat upon the decay of human flesh. – Swarm after swarm of hungry office seekers have followed every Triumphal Presidential march to the capitol, and satiated their ravenous Maws upon a reeking banquet of political corruption. – Party, in its worst aspect, has run riot in the administration of our government, from the hour of Genl Jackson’s inauguration – and now in its old age, this hopeless sinner, grown grey in inequity, and more hardened than adamant in habitual sins, startled with it dying pangs, raves wildly of principle, consistency and political virtue. -- It talks of fixed sentiments when its exulting and political virtue. -- It talks of fixed sentiments when its exulting boast has hitherto been of Progress, and its progress has been an eternal circle around the central sun of Patronage. -- The principles of Democracy now, and of Republicanism in the day of Madison, are as far apart as darkness and light. -- Opposition to executive encroachment, and encouragement of American Industry, have been discarded long ago, and all the old Republican marks lost sight of, as the Democratic ship, under a heavy press of canvass, has careened onward over an untraversed sea, in pursuit of her “manifest destiny.[“]

I claim for the Whigs of the Union that from the moment of their association, they have warred day and night against the excess of party – contending that its sole object should be the common good, and that its successful candidate should so conduct the Administration of public affairs, and so distribute official gift, that in him “all parties could confide, all interests unite” – Hence so far from an abandonment of principle, it is but a strong reassertion and practical exemplification of their Ancient and cherished faith, when the Whigs rally upon Genl. Taylor who declares that he will not accept the

Presidency as a party candidate – using the word, as he evidently does, in the acceptation which the course of events has unfortunately made common, to denote an instrument by which party is to obtain power, without regard to the general good – Upon the ground all patriots of ever name may well support Genl. Taylor, who, in assuming the Guardianship of the National family, will reek to remove domestic quarrels – to distribute equally paternal favor – and to know as sons, and treat as brethren, all who assemble in the household of a common country – Let our opponents, and their few panic struck friends in the Whig ranks, who think that when a man renounces party he renounces patriotism, reject, if they choose, the idea of a cessation of political hostilities, even for the brief period of one Presidential term. – It is not as impracticable or as absurd as they now think - The day may soon come when the lion losing nothing of his nature but his ferocity, will lie down with the lamb, when the serpent of political hate, if not destroyed will at least be deprived of his venomous fangs. – Party as it now exists is full of evils – party, as it might be constituted, an agent of good. In the latter case, it may be the Angel that guards the paradise of Freedom – in the former it is the messenger of wrath, with flaming sword, preventing the return of a fallen race to a paradise their own folly has lost.

The 1860 Census finds James living Augusta County with his son Thomas' family. He is recorded as being 82 years old, although other records set his age at 80.

“James Turk departed this life on Tuesday Morning the 8th day of April 1862 at 6 o'clock aged 81 years 10 months and 2 days” James Turk Bible

His death is recorded as having occurred at Mossy Creek, Rockingham County, Virginia. Rockingham borders Augusta County to the north and the county line is very close to the northern boundary of the Beverley Manor Grant.

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by his son Rudolf Turk to James Turk Gleaves on April 25, 1862.

“In this, melancholy as it is (yet not unexpected) I have to give you the news & particulars of the death of my Father, he died at Brother James' on Mossy Creek – the 8th of the present Month, with all his children around him, after a very brief illness without any perceptible suffering, he had rested well during the night and at 5 o'clock in the morning he quietly passed away without a struggle, his health had declined gradually for the last 12 months, yet he was able most of the time to be up in his room, but was not from home except once, about Christmas he went to one of his nieces and stayed a few weeks, my Sister Amanda was with him much of the time since the breaking out of the war, when she was away her daughter whose husband is in the Army was there, I can assure you and it is a great pleasure (altho we were scattered over the county, Bro James and myself in the Army, Bro Thos and St Clair living some distance from my Father) that he was provided with every comfort that he desired – the times annoyed him very much, and he was very solicitous about James – but he got a furlough and was at home about a month with him in his last moments, he retained his faculties to the last and expressed himself freely, that he was prepared and expected soon to depart – Rev Pinkerton a Presbyterian Minister in the neighbourhood visited him frequently and ministered to his spiritual wants – under all the circumstances, altho it is natural that we should mourn for departed friends, there is much in his death to relieve his friends, on the 13th of May next he would have been 82 years old, an age, to which but few attain.”

More About Mary & Thomas' Family

The story of the Mary Gleaves Turk Family continues later in this manuscript. Additional generations are chronicled in Chapter 7.