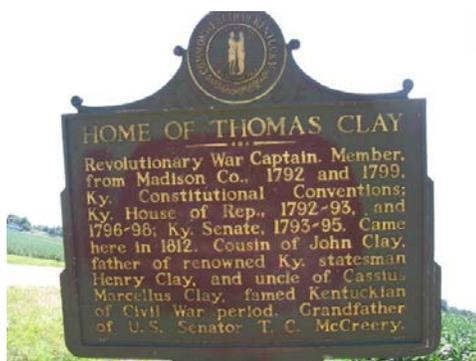


Notes from a descendant of Thomas Clay



My name is Alexander Stuart, Thomas Clay was my g-g-g-grandfather. I was born in a two story farmhouse which was located on a 90 acre farm my father, Robert McCreery Sturat, inherited sometime around 1918. The 90 acres was a small part of the original 4,000 acres that Thomas Clay settled on in 1812, which was located 6 miles east of Owensboro, Daviess County, Kentucky. Our house was probably built in the late 1800's or early 1900's.

I have very little memory of anything relating to the Clays and was not particularly interested in family genealogy until about two years ago when my brother Thomas Stuart began sending me copies of letters and documents he had accumulated during years of searching through courthouse archives in various parts of Kentucky. Only recently, I have done some internet

research into family history, but most of the interesting details have been provided by my brother.

There were several houses on the Clay land when I was a young boy but no one knew which one if any had been Clays personal home. One account is that Clay could sit on his front porch and see the Ohio River in the distance. We lived about 2 1/2 miles south of the river which would have blocked his view unless his home was near the river on top the ridge. The highest point along the ridge was called Jackass Knoll, but to the best of my knowledge no old homes or foundations were located there. One old two story house was torn down by my brother and he said all the woodwork and extra tall doors were made of very fine mahogany.

At the time the house was built, mahogany must have been very expensive. One or two gravestones had been used as stepping stones but the names were illegible. One former resident claimed he recalled seeing a small graveyard but it was lost through overgrowth or was plowed under after the stones had been "borrowed".

Another old house was located on an adjacent farm just east of where I grew up. It was unusual for the area in that the exterior was stuccoed. For a few years in the early 1920's, my uncle James Stuart, lived in that house with his family. Uncle James had entered Harvard at the age of 16, in the same class with FDR, and graduated at the top of his class. After Harvard, James came home to Kentucky and became a farmer, eventually moving back to the Boston area where he continued farming.

It has been said that Indians used Kentucky as a hunting ground but did not live there. I don't know if it is true, because just north of our farm there was a small knoll where we kids could find arrowheads, tomahawk heads and what appeared to be burned spots from campfires. A mile or so from our house, at the base of the sandy ridge, there was limestone which had been eroded by water into a small indentation which we called "the cave" and when someone began digging around there they found one or more human skeletons. An Indian, who was passing through, heard about this and went to examine the bones. He claimed based on the high cheek bones of a skull that it must have been an Indian burial ground, and asked us kids to leave it undisturbed. That is about all that I can recall about the Thomas Clay property.

THOMAS CLAY born July 30, 1750 was the fifth child and fourth son of Charles and Martha Green Clay, mentioned in his father's will.

Thomas was a soldier of the Revolution, was granted a Military land warrant #2278, bearing the date of January 23, 1784 for 3 years service as Captain in the Virginia state Line. It called for 4 thousand acres of land. He and his brother General Green Clay were both members of the first Constitutional Convention of Kentucky. He married Polly Callahan, aka Polly Dawson. Thomas served in the 1792 and 1799 Kentucky Constitutional Conventions, was a member of the Kentucky House of Representatives 1792-1793 and 1796-1798, and represented Madison County in the Kentucky Senate 1793-1795. In 1812 he emigrated to Daviess County Kentucky (Yellow Banks, incorporated as Owensboro in 1818).

Thomas and Polly were the parents to 3 children, Nestor, Tacitus and Cynthia Green Clay.

Will of Charles Clay of Powhatan CO. VA (will book 1 page 173)

In the name of God Amen, I, Charles Clay of the county of Powhatan being of sound mind and memory, doth hereby make this my last will and testament, hereby revoking all former wills by me made. Item, I lend to my beloved wife Martha Clay during her natural life, the track of land whereon I now live, also the four following slaves, Jacob, Bidy, Grace and Clarety, also a feather bed and furniture and a horse and saddle.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my son Eleazar Clay and his heirs and assigns forever one negro man b the name of Joe and every part of my estate which he at this time has in possession.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my son Charles Clay his heirs and assigns forever a feather bed and furniture.

Item I give and bequeath unto my son Thomas Clay his heirs and assigns forever a negro woman by the name of Biddy after the death of his mother will all her increase from this time. Also a negro boy by the name of Warwick and a feather bed and furniture.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my son Matthew Clay the sum of five shillings.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my son Green Clay his heirs and assigns forever the tract of land whereon I now live containing by estimation four hundred acres, and a negro man by the name of Jacob after the death of his Mother also a negro boy by the name of Sam.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter Mary Lockett the sum of five shillings.

Item, I lend unto my daughter Betty Murry during her natural life a negro girl by the name of Christiana and all her increase and after the decease of my said daughter Betty Murry, I give and bequeath the said negro Christiana with her increase unto Bette Clay Murray and Martha Murray, daughters of the said Betty Murray to them and their heirs forever.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter Lucy Thaxton to sum of five shillings.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter Priscilla Clay her heirs and assigns forever, three negros by the names of Grace, Betty, and Danice with their increase, also a feather bed and furniture.

Item, I give and bequeath unto my daughter Martha Clay her heirs and assigns forever, three negros by the names of Charity, Pegg and Jack with all their increase also a feather bed and furniture.

Item, my will and desire is that ll my stock of cattle, sheep, hogs and horses and every other part of my estate whatsoever not before disposed of, be sold by my Executors to discharge my debts and after paying the same that the over plus if any there should be, be equally divided between my wife Martha Clay and my two daughters Priscilla and Martha Clay to them and their heirs and assigns forever, and lastly I so hereby appoint my beloved wife Martha Clay my Executrix and my son Green Clay my Executor of this my last will and testament in witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal on this twenty-eighth day of October 1788

Charles Clay, Seal

Signed, sealed and acknowledged in presence of Richard Crump

At a court held for Powhatan County at Scottsville on Thursday the 16th day of July 1789, this last will and testament of Charles Clay was presented in Court and proved by the oath of Richard Crump the only witness thereto and ordered to be certified and at one other court held for the said county the 17th September 1789 probate thereof is granted to Green Clay and Executor herein named and leave given the Executors to come

Marriage of Thomas Clay and Mary Jane (Polly) Dawson

Mary Jane Dawson was the daughter of Samuel and Martha Jones Dawson, and first married David Callahan. David and Mary (Polly) were the parents of one child, named Martha Callahan. Later Polly and David entered into a divorce agreement, which at that time had to be approved by the State Legislature. The agreement was rejected by the body and Polly then moved from her father's house in Bourbon Co. Ky, to Madison Co. Ky, where it is assumed she and Thomas Clay became an unmarried couple. Mary's second daughter Cynthia Green Clay Callahan was born June 20, 1795 and her legal name was Callahan. David Callahan died in Virginia in 1797, when word reached Kentucky, Thomas executed a marriage bond in Madison Co. to marry Mary Callahan.

Mary's oldest daughter, whose father was David Callahan, was married to Philip Thompson, Thompson filed suit against Thomas Clay, demanding payment of what he claimed was due Martha as heir to David Callahan's estate, which had gone to Clay upon the death of Callahan. These events may have reflected poorly upon Green Clay's standing and may explain why Thomas Clay a man in his 60's would leave a settled area like Madison Co., and relocate in what was then not much more than a wilderness. It may also explain why Cassius M. Clay omitted his uncle Thomas when writing his memoirs.

Children of Thomas and Polly Clay

Nestor Clay (provided by Alexander Stuart, written by Laura Seward Thornhill)

Nestor Clay eldest son of Thomas and Polly Clay moved to Texas about 1843 and settled in Washington County, Texas. Nestor married Nancy Johnson. Nestor was born near Owensboro, KY on the 6th of January, 1799. A political career began early for Nestor when as a young man he became a member of the Kentucky Senate. The only known likeness of him was a portrait that hung in the Senate Chamber of the Capitol at Frankfort, KY., which was lost when the Capitol burned many years ago. Nestor was very popular with the people of KY.

At the age of 23, Nestor left Kentucky, moving to Texas with Austin's first 300, he had gone to Texas the year before to look around. In 1824 Nestor and Nancy settled near Independence, Washington Co., at that time included in Austin's Colony. They had three children, Mary Jane and Lucy and one son Tacitus Thomas Clay.

Nestor is mentioned in Henry Brown's history of Texas as follows: "In January 1829 when Captain Brown was returning from a trading trip into Mexico with 500 horses, hostile Indians stampeded the herd in the night near Gonzalis, Texas. A Captain Kykendall from Austin's Colony, in command of a hundred men or two companies commanded by Oliver Jones and Barlett Sims, joined Capt. Brown. They chased the Indians several days and made a charge on a band of warriors left to guard the retreat. Only a few shots were fired, one by Nestor Clay and brave and talented Kentuckian, who killed the only Indian that fell. Nestor Clay served with distinction in the first Convention in 1832 and in the Second Convention at San Philipe de Austin in 1833. He was a man of superior ability and his early death was a loss to the Country."

"At the first Convention ever held in Texas in 1832 among the delegates from the district of Hidalgo were Nester Clay and Alexander Thompson. On the second day a committee to report on the best mode of regulating the Custom House Offices of Texas were John Austin, Nester Clay, James Kerr, etc. On the third day Mr. McFarland submitted a resolution providing for petitioning for a State Government, that is as distinct from Coahuila. On this motion Mr. Clay demanded the yeas and nays and they stood for motion. Nestor Clay was also named on the Committee to recommend a plan to organize the militia."

Nancy Johnson was born in 1806 in Kentucky, a kinswoman said she looked like a little French beauty, with large, sparkling dark eyes, black curls and clear white and rosy complexion. Her descendants have letters which she wrote back to her parents and sisters which were pathetic, showing her longing for them in this far away state. Still she was brave and face the exile from her lovely home and the deprivations of a new country with courage. She asked them when and if they came out to visit her to bring all kinds of vegetable and flower seeds, mentioning especially a "root of Mother's sweet pinks". She tells of borrowing a spinning wheel and adds, "but now I have one of my own and have managed to make a scanty supply of clothing for our Negroes". Nancy also added she had "pieced 4 or 5 quilts, done some knitting and worked one beautiful bedspread, and begun another which she is eager for them to see." She signs herself, "your loving sister and my dear parents, your sincerely loving child, Nancy J. Clay."

This brave young couple left the comforts and safety of their cultured homes, to face unknown dangers and pioneer hardships, he being then only 23, and yet an experienced statesman, brave soldier, husband and father is wife, only 16 years old when they came out to Texas, nobly playing her part of mother and pioneer homemaker, dying while still a young woman of 28. It is said the intense grief at the loss of his beautiful young wife whom he loved so deeply was responsible for the death of Nestor Clay who died the following year. While on an Indian raid north on the Brazos River, he was killed by an Indian October 31, 1835. At the time of his death he owned 25,000 acres of land. The children, all born in Independence were sent back to Owensboro, Ky. to be raised by relatives, all of the children returned to Independence as adults.

The children of Nancy and Nestor Clay were:

Tacitus Thomas Clay

Matthew Michael Clay

Mary Jane Clay and Lucy Clay

Cynthia Green Clay

Synthia (also spelled Cynthia) only daughter of Thomas and Polly Clay was born June 20, 1795, married Robert McCreery brother of Viabella P. McCreery on January 29, 1815. Robert died at age 39 on October 7, 1823, Cynthia died June 10, 1833 of Cholera (cholera plague of 1833), they are buried on their farm about 7 miles east of Owensboro on the Owensboro-Yelvington Road. Robert also had two brothers Elijah, Sherriff of Daviess County and Dr. Charles McCreery.

Cynthia and Robert had the following children:

1. Thomas Clay McCreery, Senator, took a month to travel to Washington in 1836, he wrote his daughter Cynthia about the loss of her son Thomas Clay on January 29, 1879, which occurred "since I left home". He referenced the recent burning of his home with his papers and beloved library on Fourth Street in Owensboro.

His son was Decius McCreery

His daughter Cynthia Green Clay McCreery was mother to:

1. Thomas Clay McCreery Stuart 1877-1879

2. Nellie Stuart, born three days after the death of her brother Thomas, 1879

3. Robert McCreery Stuart 1881- 1964

a. Thomas Mosely Stuart