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## PAUL THILMAN

Tavern/Inn Keeper, Hanover County, Virginia, 1764

Submitted by Brooke Smith, #16-20

Paul Thilman and his twin brother Richard were born 17 Jan 1729 and were baptized 21 Jan 1729 in Christ Church Parish, Middlesex County, Virginia. Their mother, Jane (George) Thilman, died 18 Jan 1729 and their father, Paul Thilman, died on 4 Feb 1730 leaving one year old twins Paul and Richard and his 2 siblings as orphans.<sup>1</sup> In 1733, Paul Thilman's uncle Robert George, was appointed as the guardian.<sup>2</sup> As an adult, Paul Thilman was married three times and had 9 children, 5 of whom reached their majority.<sup>3</sup>

Paul's occupation as a tavernkeeper probably began in Caroline County, Virginia, in 1758 when he was granted a license to operate a tavern at Port Royal called Needwood.<sup>4</sup> Paul maintained his ordinary license at Needwood until 1772,<sup>5</sup> but his future as a tavernkeeper was to be farther south in Hanover County.

Approximately five miles south of the Needwood tavern was the Hanover County court house complex which included the court house, jail, tavern and numerous out buildings.

The courthouse and jail were owned by Hanover County, but the nearby tavern and associated structures were part of a 550 acre plantation

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1 The National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the State of Virginia, *The Parish Register of Christ Church, Middlesex County, Virginia from 1653 to 1812* (Richmond: Wm. Ellis Jones, Steam Book and Job Printer, 1897), p. 128, 187.

2 The Antient Press, *Virginia County Court Records, Order Book Abstracts of Middlesex County, Virginia, 1732 to 1737* (Springfield: Dickman, 2002), p. 5.

3 These families are compiled primarily from five resources: John Frederick Dorman, *Adventures of Purse and Person Virginia, 1607-1624/25* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2004), Vol. 1, pp. 801-802; John W. Pritchett, *Southside Virginia Genealogies* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 2007), pp. 1957-1958, 1961; Henley C. Doswell, "Thilman Family Records, Hanover County," contributed by A. Sidney Briggs, *Virginia Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Oct 1977): pp. 126-128; John Frederick Dorman, *The Farish Family of Virginia and Its Forebears*, (Richmond: privately printed by Ben Robertson Miller and Archibald G. Robertson, 1967), p. 19; Jean Pickett Hall, "Legislative Petitions – Hanover County," *Magazine of Virginia Genealogy*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (Feb 1994): pp. 51-52.

4 John Frederick Dorman, *Caroline County, Virginia Order Book 1755-1758* (Washington: J. F. Dorman, 1977), p. 107-108.

5 Campbell, p. 410-413.

owned and operated from 1750 to 1764 by John Shelton.<sup>6</sup> By late 1764, John Shelton's continuing financial burdens caused him to sell the property to Paul Thilman for the sum of "1000 pounds current money."<sup>7</sup> In addition to the activities related to the court house, the Hanover Tavern was a stop on stagecoach service to Williamsburg.<sup>8</sup>

In the late 1760s and early 1770s, Paul Thilman and his wife Elizabeth were raising their family, tending to the tavern and running their plantation. Like other entrepreneurs of his day, Paul was also involved somewhat with the buying and selling of real estate. He frequently had business partners and family members as joint owners.<sup>9</sup> Paul was also responsible for the operation and maintenance of the nearby Hanover County jail. In 1772 and 1774, he placed advertisements in the *Virginia Gazette*, stating that he was detaining certain runaway slaves and asking their owners to come take them away and reimburse him for the cost of their board.<sup>10</sup>

As America's problems with the British intensified, Paul Thilman's Hanover Tavern became more important due to its location along a main road between the northern part of Virginia and the Richmond/Williamsburg area. During the spring of 1775, George Washington passed through Hanover Court House on his way to and from Richmond. On 19 March 1775, he stayed overnight at the tavern on his way to Richmond, and he dined at the tavern 9 days later on his way home.<sup>11</sup>

On 11 March 1776, he was reimbursed for providing guns and provisions to Captain Anderson's Company of the Hanover County Militia.<sup>12</sup> Later in 1776, he gave food and accommodations to troops of the First Virginia Regiment which passed through the county seat on their way to New York.

Thilman was issued certificates for a number of contributions including over 1,600 pounds of beef donated in 1780 and 1781, and timber to repair a

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6 Martha W. McCartney, *Nature's Bounty, Nation's Glory, The Heritage and History of Hanover County, Virginia* (Hanover: Heritage and History of Hanover County, Inc., 2009), pp. 101-102.

7 Harbury, deeds. The source document for this deed transcription is in the Shelton-Winn-Oliver Family Papers, 1764-1965, Accession 42149, Personal papers collection, The Library of Virginia, Richmond, Virginia.

8 Harbury, p. 22.

9 Harbury, p. 24.

10 McCartney, p. 108.

11 George Washington, *George Washington Papers, Series 1, Diary, January 1-June 19, 1775*, Manuscripts, MSS 44693: Reel 751, Images 29-31.

12 Virginia Military Records, *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1983), p. 603.

bridge across the Pamunkey River in 1781.<sup>13</sup> Following the war in 1783, certificate holders received reimbursement from the State of Virginia.

In the summer of 1781, British General Lord Cornwallis lodged and boarded his staff at the Hanover Tavern. Chastellux also wrote that: “Mr. Tilghman, our landlord, ...lamented his misfortune in having lodged and boarded Lord Cornwallis and his retinue, without his Lordship’s having made him the least recompense, ...”<sup>14</sup>

Paul Thilman did not live long after the war to enjoy the peace. He died on 10 Dec 1784.<sup>15</sup> He was probably buried in what is now designated as the “Paul Thilman Burying Ground,” behind the Hanover Branch Library.

According to a legislative petition filed on 3 November 1791, Paul Thilman died intestate. The issues of his estate were complicated by the death of one of the children, Richard Thilman, earlier in 1791. The final settlement involved selling some specified estate lands and dividing the proceeds among the 5 surviving children.<sup>16</sup>

Today, the Hanover Tavern is one of only a few surviving colonial era taverns in the United States. It was built in five stages and includes more than 12,000 square feet on three levels, 27 rooms, 97 windows and 16 exterior doors. The earliest surviving section of the present tavern was built in 1791, some 7 years after the death of Paul Thilman. The Hanover Tavern Foundation, a 501c(3) non-profit organization, bought the tavern in 1990 with the mission to restore and stabilize the historic building. Renovations have been made and the building returned to public use in 2005.<sup>17</sup>

Child of Paul Thilman and his first wife (name, b., m., & d. unknown): Sarah b. unknown; d. Feb 1819, prob. in Caroline Co., VA; m.(1) Robert Graham, Hanover Co., VA; m.(2) Paul Woolfolk, Hanover Co., VA and later Caroline Co., VA; ch. unknown.

Children of Paul Thilman and Elizabeth Farish, b. 16 Jun 1738 in Caroline Co., VA; m. 25 Jun 1761 prob. in Caroline Co., VA; d. Apr 1778 in Hanover Co., VA:

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13 Public Service Claim Certificates for Paul Thilman, Library of Virginia (Richmond: Library of Virginia), Microfilm Reel 2 (Court Booklet), Reel 14 (2 Certificates) and Reel 16 (1 Certificate).

14 de Chastellux, p. 216.

15 Doswell, p. 127.

16 Hall, pp. 51-52.

17 Hanover Tavern, *History* (Hanover: hanovertavern.org) pp. 1-2.

John b. 27 Jun 1762 in Caroline Co., VA; no m.; d. 4 Mar 1781 in Hanover Co., VA

Jane b. 9 Sep 1763 [sic] in Caroline Co., VA; d. bef 1767 in VA<sup>18</sup>

Elizabeth b. 16 Feb 1763 in Caroline Co., VA; d. 4 Oct 1766 in Hanover Co., VA

Jane (again) b. 31 Dec 1767 in Hanover Co., VA; m. 17 Mar 1785 in Hanover Co., VA to James Doswell (b. Oct 1757; d. 23 Jun 1825); d. 31 Mar 1831 in Hanover Co., VA; 10 ch.

Paul b. 17 Jan 1770 in Hanover Co., VA; m. 21 May 1797 to Barbara Overton Winston (b. 15 Apr 1775; d. 17 Aug 1812); d. summer 1802 in Hanover Co., VA; 3 ch.;

Richard b. 2 Jun 1772 in Hanover Co., VA; no m.; d. bef 1791 in Hanover Co., VA;

Elizabeth (again) b. 4 Jan 1775 in Hanover Co., VA; m. bef 1791 prob. in Hanover Co., VA to William Trueheart (b. unknown; d. 1 Feb 1839); d. 22 Jan 1799 in Hanover Co., VA; no ch.

Child of Paul Thilman and Sally Dudley, b. unknown; m. 11 Nov 1779 in Charles City, VA; d. unknown;

Frances Street b. ca. 1780 in Hanover Co., VA; m. Haslewood Farish (b., m. & d. unknown); d. aft 1791 in VA; ch. unknown.



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18 In 1763, Paul Thilman is shown as the guardian of ward Jane Thilman in T. E. Campbell, *Colonial Caroline, A History of Caroline County, Virginia* (Richmond: The Dietz Press, Incorporated, 1954) p. 491. Since the name of Jane Thilman was used again at the later birth of another daughter, this Jane Thilman was clearly deceased before 1767.