

Bio: Thomas Waters

Pamela Hutchison Garrett, 2018

Thomas Waters was probably born about the year 1760. Most researchers identify him as the son of Daniel Waters and Sarah Cornell of Hempstead New York, on Long Island, but this remains in question. The Will of Daniel Waters of Hempstead (written 1758, proved 1764) names a wife Mary, and five children – Daniel Waters jr, Mary Waters, Sarah Waters, Elizabeth Waters, and Hannah Waters. Thomas Waters is not mentioned in the Will, but this could be accounted for by the indication that Thomas Waters was born about 1760, after the Will was written. Later Waters family accounts seem to point to this family of Daniel Waters, but additions and changes to the family leave questions.

Author Franklin Burdge, in his Second Memorial to Henry Wisner (1898), suggests that Sarah Cornell Waters was secondly married to Henry Wisner, and defines the family in this way:

. . . Wisner, by license dated April 5, 1769, married Mrs. Sarah Waters . . . who was the widow of Daniel Waters of Hempstead and the daughter of Thomas Cornell. I am indebted for several facts concerning her and her children to Isaac S. Waters and Mrs. Sarah T. Matthews, her great granddaughter. Her eldest son Daniel Waters probably died young. Her eldest daughter Mary (afterwards Mrs. Latham) and her married daughter Sarah Thorne remained in Queens Co. Elizabeth Waters, aged 15, Hannah, and Thomas, aged 9, went to Orange Co. Wisner did not bring immediately his new family under the old roof, but went to live in Cornwall precinct, perhaps near Greycourt. He was appointed one of the assistant justices of the Court of Common Pleas in 1769 and returned to Goshen in 1771. This led to the marriage of his son Gabriel to his step-daughter Elizabeth about 1772. Soon after, in return for £200 of her money, Wisner conveyed to Gabriel an undivided half of 600 acres, situated at the outlet of the drowned lands, but the deed was not recorded.

. . . Hannah Waters and Thomas Waters, having married and left Wisner's house, Gabriel's widow followed in July, 1789 (marrying Coe Gale), and Wisner's family was reduced to his second wife and his three grandchildren, who were also her grandchildren. James Everett, the Surrogate of Orange Co., husband of Hannah Waters, lived on the East Florida road, nearly a mile from Goshen Court House.

Thomas Waters married Bridget Mathews about the year 1787. No marriage record has been located. Bridget was the daughter of Fletcher Mathews and Sarah Woodhull of Orange county New York. Horses were a primary focus of Thomas Waters' life - an interest he shared with his father-in-law Fletcher Mathews, and brother-in-law Jonathan Brooks (husband of Catherine Mathews). Several stories have survived of Thomas Waters' commitment to "horse management".

An early story took place during America's Revolutionary War. At the age of nineteen, Thomas Waters took part in the Battle of Minisink, 22nd of July 1779. Young Waters "had charge of the horses used to convey some of the Goshen volunteers to the fatal field and he brought the horses back to Goshen." Accounts tell us that the battle was a "decisive British victory, as the colonial militia was hastily assembled, ill-equipped, and inexperienced (Wikipedia)." Gabriel Wisner, husband of Thomas Waters' sister Elizabeth, was killed in the battle.

The town of Goshen was unable to bury its "Minisink" dead for 43 years, as the battlefield was too distant and dangerous . . . In 1822, a committee was formed to travel to the battlefield and comb the area for remains. The few bones recovered were buried in a mass grave, first in Barryville and later moved to the village of Goshen. A stone obelisk was erected for the centennial of the battle, engraved with the names of the dead. [Wikipedia] Extant newspaper accounts make it clear that Thomas Waters, then past sixty years, was an active participant in this community project. A yearly commemoration still takes place at the Minisink Battleground Park in Sullivan county New York. See link below.

Some researchers refer to Thomas Waters as Colonel or Major, but it is unknown where he might have acquired this military title. It was perhaps a courtesy title. Thomas Waters filed for a pension in 1832, shortly before his death, and his application gave these details of his service:

Personally appeared before me the under signed James Hopson a Justice of the Peace in and for the City and County of New York Thomas Waters the applicant within named who being duly sworn deposeseth and saith that by reason of old age and the consequent loss of memory he cannot swear in all cases positively as to the precise length of his service, but according to the best of his recollection and belief he served not less than the periods mentioned below, in every case as a private.

In 1776 he served three weeks at Fort Montgomery

During the residue of the year 1776 and the year 1777 he served at the same place eight weeks. In October 1777 he served at New Windsor, Hurley or Kingston, about the time that place was burnt by the enemy four weeks.

That he served at Ramapo in the years 1777 and 1778 Seven Months at least that in the year 1778 and 1779 he served at Peenpack, five months.

That he was in the Minisink battle, and was in service for eight days about that time which was in July 1779.

That he was at Tappan on the North River in the winter of 1776 and 1777 four months that he served at various other times making altogether more than two years of Service and for my service, I claim a pension for the time specifically set forth in the above declaration and the said Thomas Waters further saith that when his former declaration was made he was informed that the certificate of a clergiman was not necessary as he had positive proof of service.

*That since his former declaration he moved to the City of New York where he now resides. (signed)
Thomas Waters.*

Sworn before me 21 November 1832. James Hopson, Justice of the Peace.

[source] Pension Application for Thomas Waters; S.11694; State of New York; City and County of New York; <http://revwarny.com/watersthomas.pdf>.

Around the time of his marriage in 1787, Thomas Waters was appointed (High) Sherriff of Orange county New York, a position he held for a number of years. His passion for horses can be traced from several articles written about his racetrack in Orange county New York. In 1878, Little Joe Adams Jr wrote an article titled Early Racing in Orange County, and it was published in Wallace's Monthly: An Illustrated Magazine Devoted to Domesticated Animal Nature (Volume 4). It gives some wonderful details about the "Old Waters' Course". Further information is given in the 2018 blog post titled "They are off! - A Horseracing Family Tradition".

The Waters – Mathews marriage produced four identified children, born between 1788 and 1797 – Sarah Waters (married Robert Seely); Elizabeth Waters (married Thomas Thorne); Thomas Cornell Waters (married Emeline Darrah); Henry William Waters (married Eliza Denton). Henry Waters and his wife Eliza remained in Goshen New York, but his siblings removed to several communities in New Jersey.

Goshen, 23 Jun – Lightning – On Thursday afternoon last, the house of Thomas Waters Jun at the Drowned Lands, was struck by lightning and considerably injured. The lightning struck the chimney and split it down to the roof. . Two women were in the house at the time, one in the second story and the other in the cellar. They were both knocked down senseless. . Mr Waters had procured lightning rods, and the next day they were to have been put up.

[source] New York Evening Post, 25 June 1823.

A small collection of records related to Thomas Waters' family appear in the Presbyterian and Episcopal Church records of Goshen, New York. They include baptisms, marriages and deaths.

Early Records of the First Presbyterian Church at Goshen New York (ancestry database)

Mary, servant of Thomas Waters (baptism); 6 Nov 1813

Morris Van Horn, Servant of Thos Waters Esq to Jane Dill, free woman; 18 June 1814

Mary, Serot of Thomas Waters, 29 Typhus (death); 1 March 1816

Eliza Waters, wife of Henry E Waters (member); 29 April 1822

Solomon, Serot of Thos Waters, 50 Delirium tremans (death); 26 Feb 1826

Child of Henry E Waters, 8 weeks, inflm lungs (death); 9 December 1828

Bridget, Child of Henry C Waters and Eliza his wife (baptism); 5 Dec 1828
Child of Thomas C Waters, 4, Fit (death); 29 April 1829
Eliza Waters and Catharine Waters (dismissed members); recorded 29 January 1841
Elizabeth Waters, widow of HW Waters, and Catharine Waters (member); 6 August 1841

Extracted From St. James Protestant Episcopal Church Records; Goshen, Orange County, New York
Copied & compiled by Gertrude A. Barber, 1932; Transcribed by Jane Devlin

Eliza HAYTHORN, colored girl, d. 11 Aug 1818, ae 14 yrs. Not baptized, buried on ground of Mr.
WATERS

Julia d. 17 Jan 1825, a colored girl; buried in I. WATERS' ground

Samuel, a slave of Thomas WATERS, d. 26 Feb 1826, in the burying ground of Thomas WATERS

6 Apr 1826, in Goshen, Thomas THORN & Elizabeth WATERS

List of Adult Members – about 1832 - Miss Eliza WATERS, Thomas C. WATERS, Henry W. WATERS

Thomas WATERS d. 2 Dec 1834, ae 74-7-25

Thomas C. WATERS d. 26 Sep 1835, ae 43

Bridget Mathews Waters died in 1813, when she was about fifty years of age. Her husband outlived her by twenty years. He removed to New York City during the later years of his life, and his death is reported there in 1834. He is buried in the Everett Cemetery, along with his wife.

On Sunday, Thomas Waters, Esq, late of Orange co, in the 73rd year of his age.

[source] *Spectator* (New York City); 4 Dec 1834.

Do you want to know more?

[Link to Thomas Waters in database](#)

[Link to Bridget Mathews in database](#)

Further Reading:

[Minisink Battle Monument set to be dedicated](#); Jennie Sweetman for the New Jersey Herald; 16 July 2017.

Wallace's Monthly: An Illustrated Magazine Devoted to Domesticated Animal Nature, Volume 4; B. Singerly, 1878; available online through googlebooks.

Thomas Waters, Richard Thorne and Sarah [Waters] his wife – Appellants, against John Steward – Respondent; 1804; found in Cases Argued and Determined in the Court for the Trial of Impeachments and Correction of Errors, in the State of New-York. [1796-1805], Volumes 1-2; George Caines, 1810; available online through googlebooks.

Bio of Thomas Waters; written by Pamela Hutchison Garrett for John Markham of Chesterfield website; 2018.