

Was Thomas Linville Sr's (bc 1732; dc 1798) Wife Catherine Vanderpool (bap 1738)?

Compiled by Alice Eichholz, PhD, CG™ (retired 2022), Minneapolis MN August 2025

The question as to whether Catharina Vanderpool, daughter of Abraham and Jannetje (Wibling) Vanderpool baptized 14 May 1738 Bellevue (Second River Church) NJ, was the wife of Thomas Linville (bc 1732 PA/VA; d 1798 NC) and not the wife of other men whose descendants have claimed her is considered through two research questions using as evidence primary and secondary sources, and cultural patterns. What is the evidence that she was the wife of another man in a completely different location? And what is the evidence that lends support to her being the wife of Thomas Linville an early settler of Belews Creek in North Carolina? The following analysis is related to the second question. The first is addressed in a separate analysis.

Thomas Linville's Wife

Thomas Linville's wife is not mentioned in any document involving him, though a wife appears to be enumerated on the 1790 Wilkes County, NC census. Thomas had seven children who have been identified through tax records, marriage records for daughters, land records, and census records. He apparently left a will as indicated by third son Richard Linville when selling his inherited Ashe County NC land 4 Oct 1800 [Ashe County NC Deeds Bk 1 p 567] while living in Grainger County TN. Clearly, Thomas died before that date. But we can suggest a more specific death date for Thomas because oldest son Thomas no longer referred to himself as "Jr." when he sold his Wilkes County, NC land 12 Nov 1798 [Ashe County NC Deeds Bk 1 p. 49] and moved to Carter County, TN [Carter County TN Tax 1800; Deeds Bk B p. 177-8] across the state border, suggesting his father Thomas Sr. died before that date. And it had to be after the 1797 Wilkes County tax list because that tax list includes both Thomas Linville Sr. and Jr.

The county boundaries of Wilkes County NC were changed in January 1799 with the post-1790 Linville and Vanderpool land holdings in western North Carolina moving from Wilkes County into Ashe County's jurisdiction. No will was filed in Wilkes County before the county was divided, but if Thomas died in late 1798, the will should have been filed after January 1799 in Ashe County. Unfortunately, Ashe County's first book of court/probate records (1799 -1805) appears not extant; only a book of some recopied loose wills remains, the first one in 1805. Consequently, there is no extant will for Thomas Linville Sr., which should have identified his widow and other heirs, in either Wilkes or Ashe counties' records.

However, in the summer of 1799 (therefore between 12 Nov 1798 and 4 Oct 1800), a Catherine Linville joined the Cove Creek Baptist Church (part of Three Forks Baptist Church) in Ashe County, along with Thomas Linville's second son Abraham Linville, his wife Margaret (-?--), and a number of Vanderpools. The Cove was a small enclave that included both Linville Creek of Brushy Fork on the Watauga River and Vanderpool Creek with the same small number of families obvious in the 1793-1797 tax records for Wilkes County. The 1797 petition to NC Legislature about the confusion of jurisdictions from the residents of what was then called Watauga Cove [Washington County TN Archives], includes signatures of Thomas Linville Sr. and Jr., Richard, Aaron, and Abraham Linville and Abraham Vanderpool (the younger). Many of the same names on the petition are included in the Wilkes County NC 1797 tax records and 1800 - 1810 heads of households censuses for Ashe County. After 1800, only second son Abraham Linville and second daughter Rebecca Campbell were still in North Carolina, as were some of the extended Vanderpool families. The rest of the Linville family – sons Thomas, Richard and Aaron and daughters Jane and Sybilla - had all moved to Tennessee. In colonial times, death of a patriarch was often the impetus for the next generation to move on.

Catherine Linville didn't stay in North Carolina after the summer of 1799 either. The Cove Creek church records indicate that she was removed by letter just a month after joining that summer stating that

she was “about to remove away.” This church’s record is the first time there is ever a mention of a Catherine in the family in any NC branch of Linvilles. An assumption would be that, as a widow, following the death of her husband Thomas in late 1798 she moved to live with her children who were resettling in Tennessee though any trace of her is lost after that last church record. Oldest son, Thomas (formerly, Jr.) was just across the border in Carter County, Tennessee at the time. Sinking Creek Baptist church records for the area only have Thomas (formerly Jr.) and his wife Jemima [Campbell] as members in 1803 with their children joining a bit later. If this Catherine was the widow of Thomas Sr., she was already in her 60s. It seems likely she died between 1800-1803 otherwise, one would expect her to have joined the same Baptist church. The other children were farther west in Knox and Campbell counties, Tennessee where no church records exist in that area for the time.

We can, then, suggest that this Catherine was likely the widow of Thomas. Might this Catherine also be the Catherine Vanderpool, baptized in Belleview, New Jersey 14 May 1738, the daughter of Abraham Vanderpool and Jannetje Wibling? If so, the Linville and Vanderpool families would have to have been living in the same locale by the 1760s.

The Linvilles and Vanderpools Migrating Together

Geographically, Abraham Vanderpool’s family was in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia on the South Branch of the Potomac until the mid-1750s. Then, Abraham appears as chain carrier on an Orange County, North Carolina survey in August 1757 [Grant #267 for Herman Husband, a well-known Quaker and miller throughout the piedmont of NC]. At the time the shared boundary between Orange and Rowan counties North Carolina was in dispute. Although no land grants or entry records have been found for Abraham Vanderpool along Belews Creek [Rowan County NC Court Minutes Bk 2, p. 710], he was overseer of a Belews Creek road to David Linville’s (Thomas’s younger brother) in July 1767 and subsequently appointed constable for Belews Creek, Rowan County North Carolina in 1768 [Rowan

County NC Court Minutes Bk 3, p. 15], suggesting established trust and presence in the area for some time. Given the rise of the Regulators movement against corrupt local constables and sheriffs at the time, a newcomer would not be given that authority.

Thomas Linville's extended family had previously moved from the Shenandoah Valley and settled along Belews Creek in Rowan County NC by 1749 with his Granville land grant of 1753 inaccurately identified as Belews Creek in Orange County, not Rowan County until the dispute was settled. Abraham Vanderpool's family must have become neighbors of the Thomas Linvilles on Belews Creek in NC at least by the 1760s, if not earlier. Tax lists for the area in the early 1760s are only fragmentary providing no additional information about either family. The 1768 tax list includes both Thomas Linville and Abraham Vanderpool. By the early 1770s the Thomas Linville and Abraham Vanderpool families migrated together as neighbors from Belews Creek in Rowan County, North Carolina [See Rowan County NC Taxes 1768; Surry County NC Taxes 1771-1772] to the Upper Yadkin Valley, Wilkes County North Carolina [Multiple Wilkes County NC Records beginning in 1772]; and on to Cove Creek, Wilkes County by 1791 [Multiple Wilkes County NC tax and land records].

Definitively, there are numerous recorded marriages between the Linvilles and Vanderpool families in the next two generations through their migration first to Campbell County, Tennessee then central and western Missouri, and finally on the Applegate Trail west to Oregon in 1846. The suggestion is that the reason the two families started migrating together from Belews Creek beginning in the mid-18th century was because Thomas Linville's wife and mother of his children was Catherine Vanderpool, daughter of Abraham Vanderpool and Jannetje Wibling. Although Jannetje was Abraham's first wife, his second wife and mother of his younger children was a Rebecca (maiden name not known*). Both Abraham and second wife Rebecca Vanderpool died in the Upper Yadkin by 1779 [Rebecca Vanderpool will – Washington County (TN) Wills p. 1]. There is also some evidence that back in New Jersey Abraham Vanderpool was a

turner – an occupation associated with milling and mining [New Jersey Historical Society document MASS PACA XL1#17 – Lease from Nathaniel Rogers to Abraham Vanderpool 1736]. Thomas Linville apparently operated a mill in the Upper Yadkin Valley, as the land he bought there had a mill seat on it and the creek was called Thomas Linville Mill Creek as late as the middle of the 19th century (it is now called Lay Creek). His brother David Linville had operated a mill on Belews Creek on the, then, Rowan/Orange counties' boundary.

Thomas Linville and Abraham Vanderpool were clearly neighbors by the 1760s and could have known each other for some time. Beyond geographical proximity, the second part of this analysis relies on the (a) naming pattern of Thomas and Catherine's seven children, and (b) birth year of their first child.

Evidence from Thomas Linville's Children

The names of the Linville children and projected or known birth dates/order were:

Jane Linville – gravestone lists dates as 1754-1850 age 96; married Edward Smith 3 March 1780 – Wilkes County NC - see discussion below about problem with birth date and birth order

Thomas Linville Jr. born 1760-62- first son to enter extant tax rolls in his father's household in 1784, but likely married at the time – to Jemina Campbell. He was assigned warrant for land 5 June 1780, but he did not have to be 21 years old at the time to receive a warrant from a private individual. The land for the warrant was not actually recorded until 1794; he clearly had an established separate household from Thomas Sr. in 1790 census; no census records 1800-1820; in 1830 census age 60-70

Rebecca Linville born c 1766 - married 23 Feb 1789 James Campbell – Washington County NC/TN - age about 84 in 1850 census

Abraham Linville born c 1768 - over 16 in father Thomas's 1790 census; second son to enter tax rolls in a separate household -1793 as unmarried; married Margaret (--?--) c 1795; age 26-45 in 1800 and 1810; 60-70 in 1830

Richard Linville born 25 Aug 1773 - over 16 in father Thomas's 1790 census; third son to enter the tax rolls- 1795; married Mary Magdaline Yount c1797 actual birth date from family records of his son Harrison Linville

Sybilla Linville born c 1778 - married John Mynatt 28 Feb 1794 Wilkes County NC; age 72 in 1850 census

Aaron Linville born c 1780 - under 16 in father Thomas's 1790 census; not old enough to be taxed before

leaving NC in 1800; first sold inherited land from his father in 1801 (then age 21); married c 1801 Rebecca Yount

Birth intervals of 2-4 years were typical for the time. The longer birth intervals here (6/8-6-2-5-4-2) particularly between the first three children seem unusual and is addressed in the timeline discussion below concerning the accuracy of Jane's information, which would switch her birth order to one between her siblings Thomas and Rebecca. Instead of her being the first child, she would still be the first daughter.

Clarifying Jane's Age

Here is the evidence as to Jane's age/year of birth in the records involving her.

Jane Linville – dates on a not highly legible gravestone probably erected by youngest son with whom she was living at the time [1850 Giles County TN census]. Gravestone in Giles County indicates she was born 1754 died 1850 age 96 or the 1850 census that she was 95 and “insane.” Highlighted ages below are those of her assumed age at time of the document either first in relation to the gravestone birth date or second a birth date ten years later, based on earlier census records and cultural expectations of women in the mid-late 18th century.

1780 March 3 - married Edward Smith [age 26 if born in 1754 or 16 if born in 1764]

1780-1787 – possible birth or Elizabeth Smith (witness to 1805 deed) [ages 26-33 or 16-23]

1787 in Wilkes Co NC “census” with husband Edward Smith and 5 other females in Kings Creek, Upper Yadkin household [age 33 if born in 1754 or 23 if born in 1764] there is no information at all as to the 5 other females, if they were her daughters, included twins, lived beyond childhood, or were other family members helping out, though daughters are possible (e.g. an Elizabeth Smith who was deed witness in 1805 to Edward Smith's Washington Co TN land sale; and Sally suggested by local family members) – just very limited evidence as to who they were and when born. Land, tax, and court records only identify sons Thomas, Isaac, Nathan, Benjamin, Jacob and possibly a John Smith

1788 birth of her son Thomas Smith - married Margaret Yount [age 34 or 24]

1796 birth of son Isaac Smith - married Highley “Wilson” [age 42 or 32]

1798 probable birth of son Jacob Smith -probably married a Burford [age 44 or 34]

1800 possible birth of daughter Sally - married Michael Hamby/Hanby [age 46 or 36]

1802-4 birth of son Nathan Smith - married Rebecca Ann Burford [age 50 or 40]
 1805 birth of son Benjamin Smith - married Rosanna Rowe [age 51 or 41]
 1820 census – not obviously enumerated in Edward’s household [no female age over 45] and only son Isaac is in a separate household with just one female 16-26. It is possible Jane was in an unknown daughter’s household.
 1826 husband Edward died – left will that is lost – a few court/land records indicate some family members [Jane age 72 or 62]
 1830 census as head of her own household Jane is listed as 60-70 [born 1760-70] with 2 males 20-30 [Nathan and Benjamin]and one female 15-20 [wife of Nathan?]
 1840 census listed as age 70-80 in household of son Benjamin [born 1760-1769]
 1850 census listed as 95 and “insane” in household of son Benjamin [born 1755]
 1850 [died after Sept – not on 1850 mortality census] listed as nearly unreadable 96 on gravestone – year of birth on gravestone read by many to be 1754 [born 1754].

Several things are illuminated by this timeline. First, it seems that as head of household Jane’s own age in 1830 was reported as between 60-70 years, resulting in a birth year between 1760-1770. Comparable age range is also reported in the 1840 enumeration – age 70-80 or born 1760-1770. By the 1850 census she is listed in youngest son Benjamin Smith’s household as “insane” and consequently clearly not in full faculties. The family apparently considered her age 95 that year and therefore either born in 1755 as recorded on 17 Sept 1850 census or born in 1754 as listed on her gravestone. Those two dates are not necessarily inconsistent, if her birthday was after 17 Sept. But there is an age discrepancy of a decade between the 1830 and 1840 enumerations and the one in 1850.

Second, is it would be quite unusual for a woman in the 18th century to marry as late as age 26 and still be having children at age 51, which would be the case if she, indeed, was born in 1754. A marriage age of 16 and last child born at age 41 are far more likely and in keeping with both the 1830 and 1840 censuses, making her born about 1764, not 1754. In addition, if she had been born in 1754, then the birth year intervals of her siblings would be 6/8-4-2-4/5-4-2 years not very typical for the time unless there were some miscarriages or early deaths of children.

If Jane was born by 1764, or 10 years younger than the gravestone suggests, the ages and birth order and intervals of Thomas and Catherine's children would be 2-2-2 -4/5-4-2 years more in keeping with 18th century norms.

In addition, Dutch naming tradition for Thomas and Catherine's first four children is also in keeping with what might be expected of a Dutch family like the Vanderpools:

Thomas born c 1760-2 [named for father's father]

Jane born c 1763-4 [named for mother's deceased mother]

Rebecca born c 1766-7 [possibly named for father's unknown mother, but maybe for mother's stepmother]

Abraham born c 1768-9 [named for mother's father]

Richard born 1773 [Thomas's brother Richard as namesake]

Sybilla born c 1778 [given name of wife of an Angel family Belews Creek neighbor – no known relationship though a Benjamin Angel sold Thomas Linville the land with the mill seat in the Upper Yadkin]

Aaron born c 1780 [Thomas's brother Aaron as namesake]

Similarly, naming of children for the grandparents or close relatives was quite common in the Linvilles through the 18th century.

Finally, the given name of Abraham appears in no other branch of the Linvilles before the birth of this Abraham Linville born c 1768 and no other head of household named 'Abraham' who was living anywhere near the Linvilles in the mid-18th century provided any possible connection to the given name besides the Vanderpools. This Thomas Linville branch of the Linvilles is the only one that used Abraham as a given name.

Summary

Thomas Linville and Abraham Vanderpool were clearly Belews Creek neighbors by the 1760s. The two families and their descendants continued to migrate together from Belews Creek beginning in the 1770s through the trek to Oregon in 1846. Linville's first daughter's age in 1850 in census and on gravestone seems at odds with other records for her. In addition, the ages at which she married and was

birthing children was more likely 16-41 and not 26-51, making her birth year closer to 1763-4, not 1754. The naming pattern of the first four of Thomas and Catherine's children fits the Dutch tradition of father's father for first son; mother's mother for first daughter; mother's father for second son. Their second daughter may have been named for either father's unknown mother or for mother's stepmother. The given name of Abraham appears in no other branch of the 18th century Linvilles. With these details established, it seems probable that Thomas Linville's wife was Catherine Vanderpool, daughter of Abraham Vanderpool and Jannetje Wibling.

Alice Eichholz, PhD, CG® (retired 2022)
Minneapolis, MN
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*Assumed by some Vanderpool researchers to be "Isaacs" which is possible, but not the subject of this analysis.