

## Second Generation - David Hannah, Sr. and Elizabeth

In 1901 William T. Price authored a book called "Historical Sketches of Pocahontas Co. West Virginia". Thanks to this man, who lived in Pocahontas County in the 1800's, we know a little about David and his descendants. This book is an excellent genealogical reference for the Hannah family as well as for many other families whose ancestors populated the area. Another source of information is the county courthouse in Marlinton, Pocahontas County, West Virginia, where we have found wills, land records, births, marriages, deaths and other documents.

According to the above book (page 219) David Hannah, Sr., settled at the mouth of Locust Creek soon after the Revolutionary War ended in 1783. This supports our research, which shows him on the Greenbrier County tax lists as early as 1782. His plantation would have been in Greenbrier County in 1782, on land that is now part of Pocahontas County. The original land grant for their plantation along the Greenbrier River has a survey date of Oct. 28, 1783. David may have been there earlier, but there are no earlier tax lists, and no earlier land records for him have been found. Locust Creek, the location of David's plantation, runs into the west side of the Greenbrier River just north of the current Pocahontas/Greenbrier county border. An 1822 map showing landowners of Pocahontas County was found in the National Archives. It shows David Hannah as a landowner, but the quality of this map is such that it can not be reproduced.

Two near neighbors, the Burnside family to the north, and the McClure family just to the south, also appear on the tax list at that time. These families were later joined in marriage to the Hannah family and are part of our ancestry.

David Hannah, Sr. married Elizabeth Gibson prior to 1774, although we have found no record of the marriage. Joseph, whom we believe to be their oldest son, was born about 1775, according to the 1850 federal census record of Pocahontas County. See the end of this chapter for more on the Gibson family.

The land on which David and Elizabeth settled in about 1782 was later purchased by land grant from the State of Virginia. The typical procedure for obtaining a land grant was first to apply to the State (or, in Virginia, to the Commonwealth) which in turn issued a warrant to have the chosen land surveyed. The survey was accomplished and submitted along with the appropriate fee, and if everything was in order, the patent or title was issued. Soldiers of the Revolution or of the recent Indian Wars were entitled to free land, "bounty land", as it was called. It was not uncommon for a soldier to sell his right to his bounty land to another person. Some of the land David acquired later was from purchased bounty rights.

The location where David lived changed its county name several times because of county boundary changes. Through the years their land was in Orange County until 1738, then in Augusta County until 1769, then in Botetourt County until 1776, then Montgomery until 1777, then Greenbrier County until 1791, then Bath County until 1822 when it became Pocahontas County, Virginia. In 1862 the state of West Virginia was formed and Pocahontas County was included in the new state. So, to find the

records of David Hannah, Sr. living on the Greenbrier River, we had to search records from several of the counties named.

According to court records David received his original grant to the Greenbrier property on November 20, 1793. In 1823, right after Pocahontas County was formed, he had the land re-surveyed and the grant re-issued because of errors in the earlier survey.<sup>11</sup>

His original land patent reads as follows:

*Henry Lee Esquire Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia to all whom these presents shall come greetings. Know ye that by Virtue of a Certificate in Right of Settlement given by the Commissioners for adjusting the Titles to unpatented Lands in the District of Augusta, Botetourt and Greenbrier and in consideration of the ancient composition of one Pound Sterling paid by David Hanna unto the Treasury of this Commonwealth there is granted by the said Commonwealth unto the said David Hanna, a certain tract or parcel of Land containing Two Hundred acres by survey bearing date the twenty eighth of October one thousand seven hundred and eighty three, lying and being in the County of Greenbrier on Greenbrier River adjoining the land of Robert Reah and bounded as followeth towit, Beginning at a black oak and gum corner to Reah and with his line South eighty five degrees East forty poles to a black Oak and Gum, South thirty six degrees East seventy six poles to two white Oaks, thence leaving said line, North three degrees East eighty four poles to two Pines on a high bank of the River, thence East thirty poles to a white Oak and Gum across the River, South fifty one degrees East forty six poles to a double hickory on the River Bank, North twenty seven degrees East fifty poles to a white Oak and dogwood, North thirty eight degrees West two hundred and fifty eight poles to two white Oaks on the side of a Hill, North eight degrees East twenty six poles to two white Oaks, South fifty eight degrees West forty six poles to two white Oaks on a ridge, South twenty degrees East one hundred and ten poles to a chestnut and South nineteen degrees East one hundred and fifty seven poles to the beginning.*

## A Hannah Family of West Virginia

*With its appurtenances to have and to hold the said tract or parcel of Land with its appurtenances to the said David Hanna and his heirs forever. In witness whereof the said Henry Lee Esquire Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia hath herewith set his hand and causes the lesser seal of the said Commonwealth to be affixed at Richmond on the twentieth day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety three, and of the Commonwealth the eighteenth.*

*Henry Lee*

This method of survey, using natural markers such as trees or rivers or a neighbor's line, was common in the eastern states. Since natural boundaries can disappear, it was standard practice for neighbors to walk their common boundaries every year or so, to renew the blaze marks on trees and to agree on just where the line was.

Virginia tax lists starting in 1782 are still in existence. These lists show the occupiers of the land for each year and what they were taxed on - the number of male adults over 16 years, the number of slaves over 12 years of age and the number of horses and/or cattle. The lists generally name only the head of household and do not show exact locations; but by looking at other names on the lists, which are organized by geographic area, one can identify families pretty well. In 1783 David had one slave, Charles, three horses and seven cattle. He is listed each year with varying numbers of cattle and horses and in 1802 he had two slaves and six horses.

One of the confusing factors in researching David Hannah is that another David Hanna lived in Greenbrier County a short distance south of our ancestor. We don't know the relationship, if any, to our David Hannah, Sr. The two David Hanna(h)s were clearly two separate families, as shown in 1791 when Bath County was created: David Hannah, Sr. appeared on the Bath County tax list, while the other David Hanna remained on the Greenbrier tax list.

Our Hannah families were also among the first permanent settlers in upper (North) Pocahontas County along the Old Field Branch of the Elk River. An early land grant found in Randolph county records says: (the following is abstracted)

*By virtue of a Land Office Treasury Warrant number 21470 issued December 20, 1783 granted to David Hanna 151 acres from a survey dated November 7, 1792 lying in the county of Randolph and on the west side of the Old Field Fork of the Elk River and adjoining lands of James Ewing. April 1796.*

Another grant is for 200 acres in the same area. Through the years David Hannah, Sr., and two of his sons, Joseph and David, acquired several hundred acres along the Old Field Fork of the Elk River. One group of Virginia land grants which we reviewed shows eight separate grants, for a total of 3485 acres, issued to David Hannah (Sr. and Jr.) and partners. The land records of Bath, Randolph and Pocahontas counties

of the early 1800's show many transactions by the various Hannahs descended from David Hannah, Sr.

In 1820 the U.S. federal census of Randolph County shows that both David Hannah, Jr., his brother Joseph and their families were living up on the Elk River in the north part of present Pocahontas County, an area which was Randolph County until 1822.

Price's book<sup>12</sup> says that David Hannah, Sr. was a doctor of sorts - "*He possessed some practical knowledge of medicine of the botanical school, and did a good deal of practice in frontier times. He was probably the first person that ever practiced physic in lower Pocahontas*".

The inventory of David's estate includes five books. One was "Family Physician" and another was "Dictionary of Arts and Sciences". It would seem likely that he was a self taught practitioner.

David Hannah, Sr.'s will was probated in 1826 in Pocahontas County and is recorded there. A portion of his will reads as follows:

"....I give and bequeath to my wife Elizabeth Hannah my black Charles while she lives with the command of both my plantations during her natural life and at her decease I give and bequeath my lower plantation whereon I now live to my son David Hannah to him and his heirs forever...."

This provides a little more information on David, Sr. First, holding two "plantations" makes us think he may have been rather successful and well-to-do, and that is reinforced by the fact that he held at least five slaves who were named in his will. However, the amounts of money and numbers of cattle and horses named in the will are very modest, the total estate value being \$2180.31.

It is also worth noting that David provided in his will for his slave, Charles:

".... Charles is to have eighteen dollars yearly..... to commence when he becomes helpless."

Charles was named in a Greenbrier County tax list with David Hannah in 1783, thirty nine years before David's will was probated.

In the inventory of the estate, where all items including slaves are given value, Charles is valued at \$100 while James is valued at \$360, Bob at \$400, Dick at \$420, and Sall at \$300. Perhaps Charles was getting old and therefore of less value.

Another item mentioned in his will:

".....to my son Joseph Hannah I give and bequeath ten dollars with my still and still tubs...."

So apparently he was not a teetotaler! The still was listed in the inventory as "still, ten tubs and kegs, cap and worm" worth \$40 - more than his work horse, which was valued at \$26.50. The inventory also included many personal items such as beds, tools, and guns, as well as twenty-two cattle, one horse, three sheep, sixteen pigs, and fifteen geese.

David was probably buried at Locust Creek Church, but no burial or death record has been found.

## A Hannah Family of West Virginia

Price's book says that David, Sr. and Elizabeth had six daughters and four sons and gives details of the marriages and descendants of each child.

Ann Hannah married Joseph Oldham; Lucinda married William Oldham; Mary married John Mollohan; Elizabeth married William Bennett; Jennie married Samuel Whiting; Nancy married James Cochran. Of the sons, Price's book says that William and John died in youth; Joseph married Elizabeth Burnside; David Hannah, Jr., subject of chapter 6, married Margaret Burnside.

### Elizabeth Gibson

We know very little about the Gibson family, but we believe that this is the same Elisabeth (sic) born to Robert Gibson and baptized March 17, 1745 at Tinkling Springs church near Staunton, Virginia.<sup>13</sup> Price<sup>12</sup> states that Elizabeth was "reared in Augusta County" and we believe that David was raised within a few miles of the Gibsons. No marriage record has been found for David and Elizabeth.

Elizabeth died after 1830 since she is mentioned in the 1830 federal census of Pocahontas County, Virginia on page 85. Her age was 80-90 and she had two slaves. No death or cemetery record has been found, but she was probably buried at Locust Creek Church near her home.

Robert Gibson, Elizabeth's father, had other children mentioned in the baptismal records of the church, namely Mary, March 15, 1743; twins William and Isabella, May 3, 1747; James, March 19, 1749. Tinkling Springs church records do not list the mother's name.

Robert is shown in 1754 as one of the landowners in the Beverly Tract (see chapter 2) near Staunton, Virginia. Robert is also mentioned in the militia lists of Augusta County, Virginia in 1742, which generally listed all males over the age of 16 years.

**A Hannah Family of West Virginia**