

Orson Martin, Jr.

Orson Martin, Jr. was born 1775/1776 in Cumberland County, Virginia to Orson Martin, Sr. and Anne Forsee. In 1786, he inherited land from his father who had inherited it from his father, Valentine. The land was on the lower end of Cat Tail Branch near the confluence of the Willis and James Rivers. About 1800, Orson married Elizabeth Sadler, probably the daughter of John Sadler and Susanna Atkin(son). She was born ca.1778. On 25 August 1800, Orson sold 10 acres to his brother, John. He sold 137 ½ acres to Thomas Walton as trustee for Judith Howard, 23 October 1818, reserving the family graveyard, and moved to Henry County.

In Henry County, Orson built his home, "Breckenridge", about 2 ½ miles east of Mountain Valley. In 1836 and 1837, he was "permitted to keep a house of private entertainment at his house." On 14 March 1837, he was appointed a commissioner "to superintend the election of a member to the congress, a member of the State Senate and a delegate to the house of delegates" and on 9 April 1838, "to superintend the election of a member to the house of delegates."

Orson was a founder of Mount Vernon Baptist Church, April 1839. He was the first person listed on the church's roll and the second pastor of the congregation. In June 1839, he was one of two delegates appointed to the Appomattox Association. Orson was a trustee of the land on which the church was built about 2 miles south of Breckenridge and the church clerk for years. Called "Parson", he was a "Hardshell Baptist" who became a "Missionary Baptist".

According to the marriage bond of Virginia E. Harris, 13 December 1845, Orson was her guardian. He was "granted license to keep an ordinary at his house", 13 April 1857. His wife, Elizabeth, died between 1840 and 1850. Orson wrote his will 17 April 1858 and added a codicil 21 July 1859. He died 13 August 1859 and was buried in a graveyard near his home. He appointed Benjamin F. Gravely his executor. Although his estate was large and his personal property took two days to sell, it appears he misplaced his trust in his executor as very little of the money from his estate ever reached his heirs.

Orson's children were: James L. (born ca.1802) married (1) Eliza Goin (2) Leatha Fuller; Charles Franklin (5 October 1806 - 7 September 1884) married (1) Sarah Lawrence (2) Elizabeth Cox; Joseph Thomas (1 January 1811 - 23 October 1880, Missouri) married Martha Frances Mayes; Samuel Hudson (20 February 1813 - 14 May 1873, Missouri) married Dorothy Branch Allen; Robert Henry (1815 - 21 July 1890) married Nancy W. Dickerson; John C. (1816 - 1857) unmarried; William Orson (1818 - 1903) married Mary Katherine Riddle; Elizabeth Jane (17 January 1820 - before 1859, Missouri) married John Milton Barding; Mary M. (1825 – between August 1854 and April 1858) married James Robert Grant. Some researchers list daughter, Leatha Jane (ca.1808 - died young).

Written by Cindy (Hubbard) Headen, Henry County, VA

Submitted by Bryan Hubbard, Collinsville, VA

Sources censuses, court records, wills and death records, marriage bonds and records, Valentine Martin of Cumberland County Virginia compiled by John R. Martin

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