

Forrest, Thomas J.C. (1865-1897) and Family

[Note: Next to Thomas C.J. Forrest's monument is that of Thomas's nephew **Claude B. Forrest**, son of George H. & S.C. Forrest. His story is written up separately.]

The sad story of Thomas J.C. Forrest and his family is best summarized in his obituary, which appeared in the January 23, 1897 issue of the Brunswick Herald:

“Another accident occurred on the Brunswick yard last Saturday morning [Jan. 16] about 11 o'clock, by which Thomas Forrest, youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. Wesley W. Forrest, of this town, lost his life. He was working as a brakeman on one of the yard crews, and while attempting to make a coupling was caught between two dead blocks and fatally crushed.... He was in his 33rd year [his widow later reported that he was 31 years and 8 months old] and leaves besides a wife and little child, an aged father and mother, and 1 brother, Mr. Edwin S. Forrest. One brother, Charles W. Forrest, was killed in the same manner, about the same hour of the day in Sept 1893 [in his 31st year]. [He was buried in Middletown.] Interment was made in the town burying ground, where 3 of his children lie.”

The names and dates of Thomas and 2 of his 3 deceased children are inscribed on a single monument in the Old Berlin Cemetery:

- Thomas J.C. Forrest (1865 – Jan 16, **1897**). AGE 31.
- Henry Earl Forrest (July 11, 1892 – Oct 22, **1892**). AGE 3 MONTHS
- Charles Edward Forrest (Sep 7, 1893 – Dec 15, **1893**). AGE 3 MONTHS
- There is no record of the third deceased child.

Now for the “back story” on this family. Where did Thomas J.C. Forrest and Winona come from? And what happened to Winona after Thomas died?

Winona first appears in the 1880 census of Berlin, where she is listed as Winona Gaver, the 9-year old step-daughter of John Hutz and his wife Emily, born in Illinois. Going back to the 1870 census, we find that Emily was married to Lewis C. Gaver. Lewis was the son of George Gaver, a shoemaker in Burkittsville. Although Emily and Lewis were both born in Maryland, in 1870 they were living in Rochester, Illinois. Why they had moved to Illinois, I do not know, but, interestingly, Hezekiah Kidwell (a generation older), also from Berlin, was living with them at the time.

It appears that Emily left Lewis shortly after Winona's birth (in 1871), and returned to Berlin with her daughter and Hezekiah. Lewis stayed behind and continued his work as a shoemaker, like his father. He married a girl named Amanda, and their first daughter was born in 1877. I did not pursue his family further.

Emily, as mentioned earlier, returned to Berlin and became the wife of John Hutz. In 1880, they were living next door to Hezekiah Kidwell, and by then their family was blessed with three children, in addition to Emily's daughter Winona.

Winona became of age and married Thomas J.C. Forrest, whose family had been in Frederick County for at least 2-3 generations. He was the son of Wesley W. Forrest and Margaret Cochran, who were already the parents of 7 children when he was born in 1865.

The tragic loss of several of Winona's children and her husband is described in his obituary above.

Thomas had a brother by the name of George H. Forrest, whose wife (Sarah Koontz) died in March 1896, just 10 months before Thomas died. Piecing clues together from the census records and obituaries of the children, it appears that George and Winona became married shortly after Thomas's death. They had 7 children, in addition to 5 children from George's first marriage (and possibly the one surviving child from Winona's marriage to Thomas, although I cannot verify that).

George died in 1928 and was buried in Park Heights Cemetery in Brunswick. His first wife Sarah Koontz died in 1896 and is buried in Mt. Olivet Cemetery in Frederick. Winona died sometime between 1916 (when her last child was born) and 1920 (when George was listed in the census as a widower); we have no record of her burial.



In Memory of
Thomas J. C. Fortney
Died
Jan. 16, 1897
AGED 37 YRS. 4 MRS.

My heart and life were
sacredly given to
my father and mother
and to the cause of
the oppressed and
the poor. My life was
a life of sacrifice and
of love. My death was
a death of peace and
of joy. My soul is
at rest in the arms
of my Father in
Heaven.

Thomas J. C. Fortney
was born in
the town of
and died in
the town of
on the 16th day
of January 1897
aged 37 years
4 months
and 16 days.

He was a
member of the
Methodist
Church and
was a
devoted
and
loving
father and
husband.

He was
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the
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