



was born in Stratford, Connecticut on July 19, 1756.

According to Peter Haring Judd, Ph. D., a noted historian and writer from New York City, her father Thomas Ivers was a trader with a storehouse by the mouth of the Housatonic River at Stratford. Shortly after receiving Mary's letter Betsy and her family would flee to Stratford to escape the British. She married Abraham Herring (1755-1837) there on September 8, 1776. One can only wonder if Mary attended her sister at the wedding. Unlikely during those difficult times- but, nonetheless, something to ponder.

After the Evacuation in 1783, the Herrings returned to New York City where Abraham had great success as a businessman. Dr. Judd informs us that "Betsy" had 14 children that were named in Dutch church records and four more who died before naming. In 1790, according to the first census ever taken in the United States, Abraham's household contained three free males over 16, three under 16, three white females, and three slaves. Elbert Herring, their eldest, graduated from Princeton and became a lawyer living to the age of 99 years. He served as the United States first Commissioner of Indian Affairs

from 1832-1836. In this capacity he signed the New Echota Treaty on December 31, 1835 that required relocation of the eastern Cherokees to Indian Territory (Oklahoma). This became known as the Trail of Tears.

We think the Herring Family may be the link to where the letter came from. The late Howard Durie's name borders on the legendary in our historical community. He authored *The Kakiat Patent* and many of the stories that filled the pages of *Relics* for many years. We think he was related somehow to the Herrings and we believe he might be the one who donated this letter to the museum. When we find proof positive of our theory we will report it to you.

We have saved Thomas Ivers (1724-1808) the father of Mary and Betsy for last. His expansive life and service to his community is worthy of a book one day. Dr. Judd has written about the Ivers Family for the NYG & B in the past and we hope that he will be the man to bring Thomas Ivers' complete life story before the public.

Thomas Ivers' obituary in the February 16, 1808 edition of the *New-York Commercial Advertiser* is lengthy, rather unusual during those times. It reads :