The Editor's Page ........................................................................................................................................2
   By Lee Brown
John Page 1627-1693 ..................................................................................................................................3
   By Page Laubach Warden
John Page 1743-1808 ..................................................................................................................................5
   By Cecil Wray Page, Jr.
Autobiography of John Page .......................................................................................................................9
   Submitted by Cecil Wray Page, Jr.
Colonel John Page .......................................................................................................................................14
   By Virginia Lee Hutcheson Davis
Jamestowne Ancestors—400th Commemorative Edition ................................................................. 17
   Submitted by Virginia Lee Hutcheson Davis
The Early Willis Family in Gloucester ..................................................................................................... 18
   By Lee Brown
Object of Colonial Governor's Unrequited Love
   Lies at Rest in Old Middlesex Walled Cemetery ............................................................................... 25
   By Pat Royal Perkinson
Mathews Connections ............................................................................................................................... 28
   By Sara E. Lewis
Steamship Wharves of the Mobjack Bay circa 1900 ........................................................................ 35
   By Bill Lawrence
Surname Files at Gloucester Library Virginia Room ..............................................................................Inside back cover

Visit the website for Gloucester Genealogical Society of Virginia at
http://www.rootsweb.com/~vaggsv/
The Editor's Page—

We are about halfway through the 400th year since a band of colonists landed at Jamestown and managed to keep the place going. You might have heard about that. Although the focus of the year is on Jamestown, that settlement’s role as the center of the new English world was somewhat short-lived. Settlers spread out quickly into Henrico, Hampton, Yorktown, Middle Plantation — and Gloucester — meaning that America’s history is found in many places besides just Jamestown.

I find it interesting that the descendents of some of the earliest English settlers in America still walk where their ancestors walked nearly 400 years ago. Three of us have contributed articles to this issue about two of those early Gloucester families, the Willis and Page families.

Pat Perkinson describes the unusual interest of Gov. Nicholson in Lucy Burwell of colonial Gloucester County. The unacceptable behavior of this governor was the subject of a dramatic presentation to the GGSV on March 26, 2007. Members of the cast from Grace Episcopal Church in Yorktown are pictured beside the graves of Lucy Burwell’s ancestors at Abingdon Episcopal Church. Lois Winter was the author of the drama.

Bill Lawrence has contributed a wonderful article about the steamship wharves that served the people and industry around the Mobjack Bay nearly 300 years after the Jamestown landing and the first explorations of Capt. John Smith and his fellows.

Gloucester’s history has centered around the water. It was the water that brought the early settlers here, and it has been water that has sustained generations, in many different ways. For example, Sara Lewis has given us a look at her ancestry which includes a peek at a nearly invisible part of the shipping industry — the lighthouse keeper.

Finally, I want to mention that the King William Historical Museum has opened in the old King William County clerk’s office. The museum is a legacy of former clerk of court Thomas T. H. Hill. Give it a look, but be careful—the hours are limited.

King William County is, after all, just up the river.

Lee Brown, Editor
When asked to give a talk on Colonel John Page, I thought how and where am I going to find enough meat to put on a 379 year old skeleton? Before I can find the meat I think I need to know the circumstances that made John Page the man he turned out to be.

John Page was born in 1627, in Belfont Parish, Middlesex, England. I don’t think we know the name of his mother; his father was Francis Page, who was born in 1603 and died in 1687. He is buried in St. Mary’s Church, Belfont, Middlesex, England.

Since Francis was buried within the body of the Church, that tells me that the Pages were considered “Gentry.”

Since we know nothing of John Page’s childhood, we assume that he was not the first born son. We don’t know how many siblings he had, nor how or where he was educated. All of this we have to surmise.

The best way to do this is to consider what was happening in his world and to see if these conditions helped shape the character of the man. In 1627, Charles I is on the throne. The Huguenots hold an uprising in France, Robert Boyle is born, and Francis Bacon is planning a National Museum for Arts and Sciences. Johannes Kepler compiles a table giving fixed positions to 1005 stars. The world sounds pretty good.

Since we think John Page was a second son, under the laws of primogeniture he did not stand a chance to inherit. Fortunately he was well educated; however, his choices in England were few—the Church or the Army. In looking at John Page’s portrait, I see a thin faced young man who looks rather aloof, but with an air of self confidence and ambition, a man who knows what he wants and how to get what he wants. I think John Page had a very strong sense of “Noblesse oblige.” I feel he wanted to be someone. I feel that John Page turned his thoughts to emigrating to Colony of Virginia, the largest, the richest of all the Colonies. Whether he came to this decision on his own, or if his father encouraged him, we will never know.
In 1644, John is 17 years old, civil war is fermenting as Oliver Cromwell and his Roundheads are gaining in strength and popularity. In 1647, Charles I is imprisoned in Carisbrook Castle and forced to abolish the Episcopacy, where the monarchy was head of the church. This was very disturbing to men like John Page whose faith and traditions were deeply rooted in the Anglican doctrine. It must have been scary to see these traditions up-rooted, especially after they banned Christmas. Then Charles was beheaded! (I'm sure all of us had doubts and fears when President Kennedy was assassinated. We were luckier because our Constitution guarantees transition.) Virginia is beginning to look more promising. The Colony is 40 years old and is prosperous. There have not been any serious Indian raids for several years. The Colony was attracting more and more of his social class, the trip was less hazardous, so why not?

He felt that his religious convictions would be protected in Virginia, and he also knew he could come "Home" which he did on several occasions. We know that he returned to see that a stone was placed on his father's grave. It is thought that he married Alice Luken at that time as well as having his portrait painted. This then is the meat for "Dem Bones."

In 1623, sixteen years after the Colony was established, Dr. John Pott was sent east of Jamestown to build palisades across the peninsula from Kings Creek off the York to College Creek off the James River to protect the Island of Jamestown. This took place hot on the heels of the Indian uprising of 1622. The area was named "Middle Plantation." The last major uprising was in 1643; and by then, Middle Plantation (Williamsburg) was a thriving suburb of Jamestown, and the colony was growing westward.

So it was in 1650 that John Page set out for Virginia with a grant of 200 acres of land in what is now Gloucester County. He quickly acquired another 850 acres in York County. He then acquired land in James City County and some 1300 acres in Lancaster County. It did not take him long to establish himself in the Colony. He held minor public offices, and in 1654-55, he was elected to the House of Burgesses and appointed to the Governor's Council in 1680. He served on the Vestry from 1674-1684. John Page assumed the cloak of civil responsibility, as he, by position, was expected to serve.

John Page married Alice Lukin, probably in England. They had several children, and because of lost records, we do not know how the other Page names that appear in the area are connected to John. We find an Elizabeth, thought to be John's sister; a Mary, thought to be his daughter; and a John, perhaps a nephew. John Page's will is on record but can totally confuse us, as his terminology was so different. A son-in-law could mean a step-son or the husband of your daughter. Junior often meant uncle or nephew. However, the only accepted male heir who left sons for the Page Family today is Matthew Page who married Mary Mann of Timberneck.

Virginia is now becoming the Mecca for men like John Page, Thomas and Philip Ludwell, James Bray, Lewis Burwell and on and on. It is also attracting the "middleing" sort, the yeomen, and the craftsmen. It is becoming a strong independent Colony.

I think that the first people like John Page who broke the mold, from mud and waddle type homes to substantial brick homes, had an ulterior motive and insight on the future of Virginia. I think it was as early as 1666 when he built his handsome brick home that he envisioned the Capitol City in Middle Plantation. He must have felt that for Virginia to really succeed it must become more urban. He associated this kind of life with civility, and he believed education would promote cultural growth and preserve the heritage and Christianity that he felt so important. This is evidenced by his book "A Deed of Gift" which

(Continued on page 24)
John Page
1743-1808

By his descendent, Cecil Wray Page, Junior

This article was published in April 1982 in the Bulletin of the Gloucester Historical Society in Virginia, Vo., I, No. 7. (A photograph of the bulletin is shown below.) Today, Mr. Page is active in the Rosewell Foundation, the Gloucester Historical Society, and the Gloucester Genealogical Society of Virginia.

John Page is best remembered as an early and outspoken Revolutionary patriot and political leader. Starting well before the Revolution, this son of Gloucester was a conspicuous pioneer in the rising movement in the colonies to overthrow British rule. Holding governmental positions of authority throughout the War, he actively contributed to his first political goal: seeing an independent new nation. Upon victory at Yorktown in October 1781, Page continued in elective and appointive offices to assist in the realization of his second goal: knowing that the new nation would survive as a democracy. He, like his close friend Thomas Jefferson, insisted on limiting the powers of the federal government, decentralizing authority to the states, and increasing personal freedom.

John Page was blessed with a full and active life during a period when he could influence history. Besides being a politician and statesman, he was a scholar, soldier, noted scientist, zealous churchman, and devoted family man.

Son of Gloucester

John Page was born at Rosewell, Gloucester County, Virginia, on April 17, 1743 (according to the old style Julian calendar then in use). The date was April 28 by the present Gregorian calendar. He, a fifth generation Virginian, was the oldest child of Mann Page (1718-1780) and his first wife, Alice Grymes (1723-1746). His other direct ancestors have family names well known in colonial Virginia including: Armistead, Beverley, Carter, Harrison, Higginson, Isham, Keeble, Kemp, Ludlow, Ludwell, Lukin, Mann, Peyton, Randolph, Townley, and Warner.
Early Life

John Page's mother died before he was three years old. Immediately thereafter, his wise and gifted paternal grandmother, Judith Carter Page, assumed the duties of mother. Shortly before Page died, he wrote:

“I was early taught to read and write, by the care and attention of my grandmother, one of the most sensible and best informed women I ever knew. My grandmother excited in my mind an inquisitiveness, which, whenever it was proper, she gratified, and very soon I became so fond of reading, that I read not only all the little amusing and instructive books which she put into my hands, but many which I took out of my father's and grandfather's collection, which was no contemptible library.” [1]

In 1752, when he was nine years old, John Page's father sent him for one year to boarding school (Peasley School) operated by the adjoining parishes of Abingdon and Ware at the Abingdon glebe in Gloucester County. Following were three years of private tutoring, two years at the grammar school of William and Mary, and five years at the College of William and Mary.

Early Revolutionary Patriot

Well educated and trained in government, John Page was an early opponent of British policies in the Virginia Colony. As a member of His Majesty's Council at the beginning of 1775, he boldly advised the English Governor Dunmore to surrender the arms and gun powder which he had had removed from the magazine at Williamsburg. Furious, the Governor retorted, “Mr. Page, I am astonished at you.” [2]

During a prior meeting, Page was among the members who had sought the issuance of new writs for the election and call of an assembly. At that time (1774 -75), such open statements to the English governor were inflammatory and politically inexpedient. Consequently, in March 1775, Governor Dunmore requested that Mr. Page be deposed from the Council; and after the Board meeting of May 2, 1775, this Virginian was never notified to attend another Council meeting.

In the Committee of Safety, John Page advocated a more effective government and military preparedness for the Colony. He led the struggle for a strong navy, primarily for defense of the coasts and waterways against Governor Dunmore's party and other British forces.

The Virginia Convention of 1776 cast votes for three men to be the new state's first governor: Patrick Henry (elected with 67 votes), Thomas Nelson, Sr. (second with 45 votes), and John Page (third with one vote). However, Page was elected to the eight -member Governor's Council and chosen to be its first President.

He held that office until 1780 when he felt that it was time for the duty and the honor to be transferred to another private citizen. The position carried with it the responsibilities of lieutenant governor and authority to act for the governor in his absence.

First Acting Governor Of Virginia

With Patrick Henry ill during July and August 1776, John Page acted as the new state’s first governor. One of his duties during the first month of independence was to receive, act on, and acknowledge, on behalf of Virginia, the state's official copy of the U.S.
Declaration of Independence. On the next page is a printed copy of the letter of acknowledgement from John Page, in this instance as President of the Council, to John Hancock (President of the Continental Congress).

In Council Wmsbg. July 20, 1776

Sir

We had the honour to receive your Letter of the 8th Instant inclosing the Declaration of Independence and the Resolve of Congress respecting the Augmentation of the Rifle Corps at New York. We shall take care to have the Declaration immediately published so as that the People may be universally informed of it, who we have the pleasure to inform you, have been impatiently expecting it and will receive it with Joy.

We are perfectly satisfied of the Utility of Riflemen and wish it was in our Power to assist in raising the number in our Country voted by Congress for the support of New York, but the Convention has adjourned and we are vested with no Powers, which can in any manner enforce or carry into execution that Vote; If Commissions could be sent to proper Persons they might raise Companies which would have a Right to march to New York, but we could not oblige them to do so.

It is with Pleasure, Sir, we observe that you say in consequence of the Declaration you are fully convinced that our affairs may take a more favorable turn, and we firmly rely on the Protection, and Continuance of the powerful Interposition, of that Being, whose Power no Creature is able to resist, I have the honour to be with the greatest Respect

Sir

Your obed. & most hble Servt.

John Page Pt.

1 John Page “Autobiography,” Virginia Historical Register, III (July, 1850), p. 144. (This is an autobiography edited for the Virginia Historical Society.) Hereinafter cited as John Page “Autobiography.”


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* Secondary sources based on extensive bibliographies stated therein.
Brief Chronology For John Page

1743 - Born at Rosewell, Gloucester County, Virginia.
1756 - Attended the grammar school of William and Mary (1756-58)
1758 - Attended the College of William and Mary (1758-63).
1765 - Married Frances ("Fanny") Burwell, daughter of Colonel Robert Carter and Sarah (Nelson) Burwell, of Isle of Wight Co., Va.
1766 - Son Mann Page (1766-1813) born at Rosewell, first of 20 children.
1768 - Appointed by the Governor and Visitors to be a Visitor of the College of William and Mary (1768-1789).
1771 - Elected member of the House of Burgesses - representing William and Mary (1771-75).
1773 - Appointed by King George III to be a member of His Majesty's Council (1773-75).
1775 - Elected member of the Committee of Safety (1775-76)
1776 - Elected member of the Virginia Governor's Council (1776-1800).
    - Elected first President of the Council (1776) and Virginia's first Acting Governor (1776).
    - Installed as charter member of Phi Beta Kappa Society at Williamsburg.
1779 - Suggested relationship between electricity and magnetism (half century before established by Michael Faraday in 1831).
    - Was unsuccessful candidate for Governor (1779); defeated by Thomas Jefferson (67 to 61 electoral votes).
1780 - Elected member of House of Delegates from Gloucester County (1780-83, 1785-89, and 1800-01).
    - Commissioned Colonel of Virginia Militia (Gloucester County contingent) 1780-81 and 1794.
1785 - Received honorary L.L.D. degree from William and Mary.
    - Appointed delegate to first General Convention to form the Protestant Episcopal Church.
1789 - Elected U.S. Representative in the First-Fourth Congresses (1789-97).
1790 - Married (second time) - in New York City - Margaret Lowther, daughter of William Lowther, a Scottish immigrant.
1802 - Elected Governor of Virginia 1802-05). (Re-elected twice, the statutory limit.)
1804 - Proposed to President Jefferson the raising of funds for education of deserving and emancipated slaves and the purchase for them of a land, possibly in the Louisiana Purchase.
1808 - Died in Richmond, at age 65. Buried in the cemetery of St. John's Church, Richmond.
Autobiography of John Page

The following material, by John Page (1743-1808) and furnished by Cecil Wray Page, Junior, was published in the Virginia Historical Register in July 1850.

This material was published again in April 1983 in the Bulletin of the Gloucester Historical Society in Virginia, Vol. 1, No. 8.

(We are indebted to our esteemed correspondent, John Minor, Esq., of Fredericksburg, for the following Memoir of Colonel John Page, of Rosewell, sometime Governor of the Commonwealth, written by himself. It may be proper to state that it was originally written in the form of a letter to Skelton Jones, Esq., of this city, in answer to one which that gentleman had addressed to Col. P., dated Richmond, August 1808, submitting certain queries concerning his life, character, & c., and requesting him to furnish answers to them, which might be embodied in a narrative, and published in a work which Mr. J. was about to issue from the press; (probably the Continuation of Burk's History of Virginia, which he was preparing, we suppose, about that time;) and it is a copy of this answer that we have before us now. In transferring it to our pages, we omit the queries, and a few sentences which could hardly have been intended for the public eye, and, with this slight amendment, we think the article will be agreeable to our readers both for the information which it affords concerning the worthy author himself, and also for the light which it serves to shed on the civil and social history of our State.)

I was born on the 17th day of April, old style, Anno Domini 1743, at Rosewell.

I discover from the tomb stones in Williamsburg Churchyard, and from others in my Grandfather's burying ground, his family seat, Rosewell, 1st that one of my ancestors named John Page, was a highly respectable character, and had long been one of the King's Council in this Colony when he died viz. on the 23d January, 1691-2; his manuscripts which I have seen, prove that he was learned and pious. 2d. That his son Matthew Page, was one of the Council, and his Son Mann also, whose letters to his friends, and theirs to him, exhibit as a patriotic, well educated, and truly amiable gentleman. He had his classical education at Eton school in England. He was my father's father, who might also have been appointed to the office of a Councillor, but he declined it in favour of his younger brother John Page, who, my father said, having been brought up in the study of the Law regularly, was a much more proper person for that office than he was. The John Page above first mentioned was, as we find by an old picture, a Sir John Page, a merchant of London, supposed to have been knighted, as Sir John Randolph long after was, for proposing a regulation of the Tobacco trade and a duty thereon. Which if it was the case, I think his patriotism was premature, and perhaps misplaced; his dear, pure minded, and American patriotic grandson, my grandfather, Mann Page, in his days checked the British Merchants from claiming even freight on their goods from England, declaring that their freight on our Tobacco, and homeward bound articles, added to their monopoly of our Trade, ought to satisfy avarice itself; this he expressed repeatedly to his mercantile friends, and some near
relations who were Tobacco merchants in London; however he lived not long after! The fashion or practice then was for men of landed property here, to dispose of their children in the following manner: they entailed all their lands on their eldest son, brought up their others, according to their genius and disposition, physicians, or lawyers, or merchants, or ministers of the church of England, which commonly maintained such as were frugal and industrious. My father was frequently urged by friends, but not relations, to pay court to Sir Gregory Page, whose heir from his Coat of Arms, and many circumstances, he was supposed to be. But he despised titles sixty years ago, as much as you and I do now; and would have nothing to say to the rich silly Knight, who died, leaving his estate and title to a sillier man than himself, his sister's son, a Mr. Turner, on condition that he would take the name and title of Sir Gregory Page, which he did by act of Parliament, as I was told, or read.

I was early taught to read and write, by the care and attention of my grandmother, one of the most sensible, and best informed women I ever knew. She was a daughter of the Hon. Robert Carter who was President of the King's Council, and Secretary of Virginia, and who at the same time, held the rich office of Proprietor of the Northern neck, by purchase, from the Lord Proprietor, his friend, who was contented to receive but 3001, per annum for it, as the report in the family stated. My Grandmother excited in my mind an inquisitiveness, which, whenever it was proper, she gratified, and very soon I became so fond of reading, that I read not only all the little amusing and instructing books which she put into my hands, but many which I took out of my father's and grandfathers collection, which was no con-temptible library.

But in the year 1752, when I was nine years old, my father put me into a grammar school, at the glebe house of our parish, where the Rev'd Mr. Wm. Yates, had undertaken the tuition of twelve scholars. I found there Lewis Willis (the late Col. L. W.) of Fredericksburg. Edward Carter, (his brother, Charles Carter of Shirley, had just left this school and gone to William and Mary College,) Severn Eyre, of the Eastern Shore, Peter Beverley Whiting, and his brother John, Thos. Nelson, (the late Gen. Nelson,) Christopher Robinson of Middlesex, Augustine Cook, and John Fox of Gloster, Robert Tucker of Norfolk, and Francis Willis of Gloster; so that I made up, or kept up the number which Yates required; but in a short time, his passionate disposition induced L. Willis, and Edward Carter to leave him, and Severn Eyre not long after followed the Carters to our College, where Edward had joined his brother Charles. The two Whitings followed them, and Mr. Nelson, and Col. Tucker, took their sons and sent them to England, to finish their education; and at the end of my year, Robinson, Cooke, and Fox, went to College, and my father and Mr. Willis procured a most excellent tutor for their sons, instead of sending them there. I had been totally interrupted in my delightful reading of Histories, and Novels, for twelve months tied down to get by heart and insipid and unintelligible book, called Lilly's Grammar, one sentence in which my master never explained. But happily; my new tutor Mr. Wm. Price, at Mr. Willis's, soon enabled me to see that it was a complete Grammar, and an excellent Key to the Latin Language. This faithful and ingenious young man, who was about 20 years of age, and had been studying the language at his leisure, as he was intended for the church, into which he could not enter till he was 21 years of age, was happily of a most communicative disposition, and possessed the happiest talents of explaining what he taught, and rendering it an agreeable, and most desirable object; was beloved and strictly attended to by me. After 3 years close application to my studies under Mr. Price, some circumstances occurred which induced him to accept of the office of Secretary to the Hon. Philip Ludwell, who was deputed by the Governor to meet a Convention of Governors, or their deputies, at New York, to resolve on the quotas of money.

Autobiography of John Page
that each colony should furnish to carry on the war against France, and his mind had been so inflamed by the military ardour displayed in the letters of Capt. George Mercer, (afterwards Colonel of the 2d Va. Regiment,) and other old fellow collegians, who had quitted the academic groves there for the field of Mars, which he had always read to me with enthusiasm, that he resolved to abandon the humble employment he was in, and fly to the Royal standard, to fight as it seemed necessary then to do, pro Aris et Facis, instead of going to England for a License to come back, and preach and pray. For Braddock's defeat had terrified all but the brave, and every coward believed and said that we were on the point of destruction. My dearly beloved Tutor, however, after having enjoyed a Lieutenancy a few months in the British army, died!

It is highly probably that Mr. Price's Whiggish principles, and his inducing me to admire Roman and Grecian Heroes, and to delight in reading of wars and battles, and to enquire on what the success of those interesting events turned, "gave the colour and complexion" to my prospects and conduct through life; otherwise I know not what could have borne me up to defy the terrible threats of George the 3d. and at last actually oppose his troops in arms, as the heroical militia of Gloster, now Gloster and Mathews, enabled me to do.

After I had lost my tutor Mr. Price, my father entered me in the Grammar School at William and Mary College, when I was 13 years of age, instead of sending me to England, as he had promised my mother he would, before I should arrive at that age. But fortunately for me, several Virginians, about this time, had returned from that place (where we were told learning alone existed) so inconceivably illiterate, and also corrupted and vicious, that he swore no son of his should ever go there, in quest of an education. The most remarkable of these was his own Cousin Robert Carter, of Nominy, who however in a course of years, after he had got a seat at the Council board, studied Law, History, and Philosophy, and although his knowledge was very limited, and his mind confused by studying without the assistance of a tutor, he conversed a great deal with our highly enlightened Governor, Fauquier, and Mr. Wm. Small, the Professor of Mathematics at the College of Wm. and Mary, from whom he derived great advantages. And his understanding was so enlarged, that he discovered the cruel tyrannical designs of the British government, and when I found him at the Council Board, in the time of Lord Dunmore, he was a pure and steady patriot. At College, as my father put me to lodge, board, &c., at the President's, Thomas Dawson, a younger brother of Dr. William Dawson, at whose death Thomas succeeded to his office of President of William and Mary College, and the Bishop of Londons Commissary in Virginia, and of course became his successor in the Council: for the Bishop of London always had sufficient weight with the King, to place his Deputy Bishop, as we may call him, in that mimic deputy House of Lords—I say at College, as I lived with the President, who my Father had fed handsomely to be my private tutor, and he, finding me far better graduated in Latin than many boys much older than myself, was proud to introduce his pupil to the particular attention, first of Governor Dinwiddie, an old Scotch gentleman, who was fond of appearing a patron of learning, and secondly, to Governor Fauquier, to whose much greater learning and judgment my ever to be beloved Professor, Mr. Small, had held me up as worthy of his attention;—I had finished my regular course of studies, in the Philosophy Schools, after having gone through the Grammar school, before the death of Governor Fauquier; and having married Miss Frances Burwell, only daughter of the Hon. Robert Burwell, and of his wife Sarah Nelson, the half sister of William Nelson, and Thos. Nelson, (two brothers and members of the King's Council,) I was by these gentlemen, introduced to Lord Botetourt's attention, when he arrived here as Governor, and, after his death, to Lord
Dunmore, on his arrival. These circumstances contributed to introduce me into public life and added to my having been twice elected, by the President and Professors of Wm. and Mary College, to represent it in our general Assembly, and had been appointed by the Governor and visitors, a visitor of the College.

As a visitor, I faithfully supported the rights and privileges of both Professors and Students; and notwithstanding I had been placed at the Council Board by Lord Dunmore, I opposed his nomination of John Randolph as a visitor, boldly declaring that as he had been rejected on a former occasion, as not possessing the disposition and character, moral and religious, which the Charter and Statutes of the College required, he ought not again to be nominated, till it could be proved that he had abandoned his former principles, and practices, which no one could venture to say he had. I then proposed Nathaniel Burwell, in the place of Lord Dunmore’s nomination, and he was elected I think by every voice except Dunmore’s. For this, although he never showed any marks of resentment, I found I had incurred his displeasure, and that of his Secretary, Capt. Edward Foy, who resented my conduct so much before some of my friends, that I was obliged to call him to an account for it—and he, like a brave and candid man, made full reparation to me, and my friend James Innes, at that time Usher of the Grammar School in William and Mary College, afterwards the well-known Col. Innes. I continued to discharge the duty of a visitor till I was elected a member of Congress, when finding that I could not attend the visitations, I resigned my office of visitor.

As a member of the General Assembly, I voted always in favour of civil and religious liberty; that is for the enaction of those laws that would promote either, and for the abolition of entail. In the Council, I adhered to my former Whiggish principles, and of course opposed the Tory principles of the Governor, a pupil of Lord Bute: for he boasted that he was the companion of George III. during his tuition under that Earl —(Par nobile Fratrum!) At one Board, I joined with those patriotic members who advised the issuing of new writs for the election and call of an Assembly, and at a time when it was dangerous (as far as a loss of office went) to propose it, as the Governor had plainly given us to understand, that the King was determined to rule the Colonies without their check, or controul; and at another Board, I boldly advised the Governor to give up the Powder and Arms, which he had removed from the Magazine. But he flew into an outrageous passion, smiting his fist on the table, saying, “Mr. Page, I am astonished at you.” I calmly replied I had discharged my duty, and had no other advice to give. As the other Councillors neither seconded or opposed me, he was greatly embarrassed. As I was never summoned to attend another Board, I might well suspect I was suspended from my office; but as I cared nothing about that, I never enquired whether I was or not. P. Henry, afterwards so famous for his military parade against Dunmore, did actually bully him, but they appeared to me to be mutually afraid of each other.

I never refused any office, however humble, or however perilous. I served as Col. of a Regiment of Militia, which was offered me during a serious invasion; and resigned but that of Councillor, after having served, as I expressed in my letter to the General Assembly, beyond what I conceived was the time contemplated by the Constitution.

In 1784, I served as an Academician, with Bishop Madison, Mr. R. Andrews, and Andrew Ellicott, in ascertaining and fixing the boundary line between Pennsylvania and Virginia; and in 1785, as a Lay Deputy of the Protestant Episcopal Church, deputed by the Convention of Virginia, with the Rev. Dr. Griffiths, and the Rev. Mr. McCroskey to represent—in the Grand Convention, at New York. I then served my native county as a representative in Assembly, till the new Constitution threw me into Congress, where I
served my country eight years with a safe conscience, till John Adams and A. Hamilton shut me out; I however repeatedly struggled to get in again, but in vain.

It would require volumes to describe what I did whilst in the Committee of Safety, Council, and Congress, and no small one to relate the interesting and hazardous services I performed with my brave associates in Gloster and Mathews. If I live my Memoirs shall do justice to the brave and patriotic brother, who served under him freely during those times, and Capt. Camp, now Colonel, are alive, as is also Capt. Hudgins, now of Mathews, who displayed, with many other officers, bravery and skill, particularly Col. J. Baytop.

I next served in the military character as Lieut. Col. Commandant in Gloster, and took my tour of duty, as Commander of a Regiment, composing part of the quota called from Virginia, to quell the insurgents in the Western Country. Though sick, I marched and joined my Brigadier at Winchester, and my Major General at Frankfort, near the foot of the Alleghany, who finding me actually ill, wrote me a consolatory letter, and advised me to return home by slow marches.

Before I had the benefit of a Philosophical education at College, with Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Walker, Dabney Carr, and others, under the illustrious Professor of Mathematics, Wm. Small, Esq., afterwards well known as the great Dr. Small, of Birmingham, the darling friend of Darwin, History, and particularly military and naval History, attracted my attention. But afterwards, natural and experimental Philosophy, Mechanics, and, in short, every branch of the Mathematics, particularly Algebra, and Geometry, warmly engaged my attention, till they led me on to Astronomy, to which after I had left College, till some time after I was married, I devoted my time. I never thought, however, that I had made any great proficiency in any study, for I was too sociable, and fond of the conversation of my friends, to study as Mr. Jefferson did, who could tear himself away from his dearest friends, to fly to his studies,” &c.

*   *   *

The Memoir is manifestly unfinished, and we regret that we cannot complete it as we could wish. We can only add (as at present informed) that the writer was subsequently elected by the General Assembly Governor of the Commonwealth, in the year 1802, again in 1803, and a third time in 1804, at the end of which term, being constitutionally ineligible for another, he retired of course to private life; and was soon afterwards appointed by Mr. Jefferson, who was then President of the U. S. Commissioner of Loans for Virginia, which office he held till his death on the 11th of October, 1808.

Gov. P. was twice married, first, as he has stated in the Memoir, to Miss Frances Burwell, of Gloucester, and after her death, and while he was a member of Congress, (probably about the year 1790,) to Miss Margaret Lowther, of New York, who survived him some years. He left also several sons and daughters by both marriages, some of whom (with their descendants,) are still living.  §
Colonel John Page

Virginia Lee Hutcheson Davis
TIDEWATER VIRGINIA FAMILIES
A Magazine of History Genealogy

This brief article taken from volume 1, number 3, pages 123-126, Nov./Dec. 1992.

- John Page patented land on the south side of the York River and named, among others, Alice Page, Eliza Page and Mary Page (without further identification) as headrights. [a] No date was included in the patent. The preceding patent on the same page was dated September 11, 1653.

- The inscription of John Page's gravestone gave his death date as January 23, 1692, aged sixty-five. [b] Thus, he would have been born in 1627. The inscription of Alice Page's gravestone gave her death date as June 22, 1698, aged seventy-three. Thus, she would have been born in 1625. [c]

- Alice Page has been identified with the maiden name of Alice Lukin because of the facsimile of the Lukin family arms cut into her tombstone. [d]

- John Page of Middle Plantation made his will on March 5, 1686/7. He named his wife, Alice Page, and his sons, Francis and Matthew, to whom he left his substantial holdings. [e] He identified John Tyler [1] as his grandson, the son of his granddaughter, Elizabeth Tyler, and left him the sum of £50 sterling. [f] John Tyler was contingent heir to 200 acres of land in James City County, which he received after the death of Francis Page (son of John Page) in 1692. [g] John Page identified John Chiles as his grandson when he bequeathed him a mourning ring. He also bequeathed mourning rings “to his coz. Henry Tyler and his wife, and to his sister, Eliz: Diggs.”

- Alice Page made her will on November 12, 1696 and died on June 22, 1698. [h] She left her estate to her son, Matthew Page, and his children: Mann, Alice, and Mary Page. She did not name any Chiles connections as legatees in her will.
Francis Page, the son of Colonel John Page, made his will on April 23, 1692 [i] and died on May 10, 1692 at the age of thirty-five. His wife had already died, and he left one child, Elizabeth Page: In his will, he bequeathed mourning rings to his “cussen Tyler and his wife,” among a number of other persons.

Conclusions.............

John Page was twenty-six years old in 1653 when he named Alice Page, Elizabeth Page, and Mary Page as headrights in a land patent. Alice seems to have been his wife, and Elizabeth was evidently his sister, as he later identified Elizabeth Diggs (the wife of Edward Diggs) [j] as his sister. The identity of Mary Page is not clear. Some have thought she may have been the wife of John’s brother, Matthew. She could have been an early wife; however, in a land patent of Matthew Pagge (sic) on March 19, 1662, the patent identified his wife at that time as Elizabeth Crump, the widow of John Crump. [k]

Since John Chiles served as a witness to a deed involving John Page in 1673/4, it would appear that he was close to being of age at that time. Under those circumstances, he would have probably been born about the year 1655. [2]+[l] At this time, John Page, himself, would have been only about twenty-eight years old. Chronologically it is not realistic to think of Mary Page as a daughter of John Page, who married Walter Chiles, and was the mother of John Chiles. Given the known information about Walter Chiles (II), and about John Page, there is little likelihood that Walter Chiles (II) married, first, a daughter of John Page.

John Page’s identification in his will of John Tyler, grandson, Elizabeth Tyler and John Chiles as granddaughter and grandson respectively, seems indicative of kinship of a different nature. Later York County records indicate a continuing relationship between the Tyler family and the Page family. Henry Tyler’s mother requested the favor of John Page as her “well-beloved friend” in a document dated 1672. [m]

“Henry Tyler and wife” were named as “cousins” in both the wills of John and Francis Page, and it would seem that this may have been more related to their associations with Henry Tyler, than with his wife. The legacy left John Tyler may have been for the same reasons. As a number of researchers have observed, it may have been the namesake connection that prompted the above legacy, as well as that of the mourning ring to John Chiles, to the exclusion of his brother, Henry. The term grandson may have been used, as it was in that time, to designate a step-child relationship. Alice Page did not identify any Chiles grandchildren, nor name any of the Chiles family in her will.

It appears that John Page may well have married Alice Lukin, the widow of Walter Chiles (I). Dr. Lyon G. Tyler wrote of his conviction that this was the only logical explanation for the relationship [n] and further stated that Edward Neill in Virginia Carolorum erred in his identification of Captain John Page. [o] “He meant to say that Captain John Page was the father-in-law of Walter Chiles, son of Colonel [Walter] Chiles. Father-in-law then meant stepfather and John Page’s wife, Alice, was doubtless the widow of Colonel Walter Chiles.”[p]

Dr. Tyler went on to elaborate by saying it was the only satisfactory explanation he could give to the nature of John Page’s will, his consideration of his collateral relatives of the Page blood and his scant recognition of the Chiles “grandchildren.” He further observed that Alice Page did not mention the Chiles children in her will. [q] §
NOTES
[1] — John Tyler identified himself as the grandson of Colonel John Page when he claimed his inheritance on August 19, 1706.
[2] — John Chiles may be considered to have been between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one at the time he witnessed the document. While he may not have been legally of age, there are instances where those of maturity did perform this service before legal age.
[a] — L P Bk 3212; Nugent I: 279.
[c] — Jester & Hiden
[d] — Jester & Hiden
[e] — York County Will Book #9, pp.103-106.
[g] — York County Deeds, Wills, Etc. #9, pp.127-129.
Virginia Lee Hutcheson Davis is a Virginian with deep roots to Tidewater Virginia. Ms. Davis became fascinated with genealogical research as she began to trace her very own family history back to 1616, when her ancestors first landed in the Virginia Colony. Ms. Davis is currently a resident of a retirement community in Hanover County; however, she has not retired from her passion of preserving the history and heritage that is Virginia.

For over sixteen years, Ms. Davis has devoted her time to gathering information and preserving the records surrounding the lives and families of individuals who helped establish this great state and country. Her most recent publication of March 2006, “JAMESTOWNE ANCESTORS, 1607-1699, Commemoration of the 400th Anniversary of the Landing at James Towne, 1607-2007,” recounts the establishment of England’s first successful colony in North America. This book presents and documents a brief history of the earliest settlement and a documented, comprehensive listing of the names of the early ancestors, people who established the colony, first under the auspices of the Virginia Company of London and then under King James I.

The Jamestown Colony has the distinction of providing the basis of our democracy; our republican form of government, our freedom of worship, as well as our system of agriculture and industry; the basis of our present western culture. Ms. Davis’s most recent publication comes at a perfect time as all of Eastern Virginia, in fact our whole country, gears up to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the Jamestown settlement in 2007 and the basis of our western culture.

Ms. Davis was specifically chosen to compile this most recent publication because of her prior expertise and reputation for well-documented research in the area of Tidewater Virginia genealogy and social history. “Jamestowne Ancestors” is now in its third printing. She is also the author of several other publications including, “Tidewater Virginia Families: A Social History”, a compilation of some forty interrelated early Virginia families, now in its fourth printing. For this work, Ms. Davis was awarded the National Genealogical Society National Award for Excellence in Genealogy and Family History. A sequel followed titled “Tidewater Virginia Families: Generations Beyond”, presenting eleven more recently identified interrelated families. A later book took the form of a transcription of “The Albemarle Parish Vestry Book, Surry and Sussex Counties,1742-1786”, the last remaining colonial vestry book to be transcribed and made available to researchers.

In an effort to preserve and make available early Virginia records and family histories, she also edited and published the quarterly, “Tidewater Virginia Families: A Magazine of History and Genealogy” for 12 years. This publication, as well as her books, can be found in all of the major libraries in the United States and also many local libraries and research facilities. Ms. Davis has now readied an abstraction of “Henrico County Deeds, 1750-1774”, for publication. She plans to continue to conduct research and to preserve the legacy and heritage that our Commonwealth holds for us.

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The Early Willis Family in Gloucester

By Lee Brown

Little more than 30 years separated the landing of colonists in Jamestown from the arrival of Colonel Francis Willis in what would become Gloucester County. He was among the earliest colonial landowners north of the York River and held a succession of public offices both before and after the region was split from York County. And although he and his wife Jane were childless and returned to England in 1675, he left behind a Willis family legacy that would continue to make a mark in Virginia for generations.

He was born in the parish of St. Fowles, als St. Algato, in Oxford, England; we do not know when but probably about 1620. Neither do we know when he emigrated to Virginia. By 1640, he was Clerk of Charles River County (later to be renamed York and then divided to form Gloucester, New Kent, King & Queen, and King William counties). In 1648, he was a justice.

The career of Col. Willis was not without interruptions. He was a supporter of Governor John Harvey, who was replaced by Sir Francis Wyatt as Virginia’s Royal Governor in 1639. Willis’s public support for Harvey caused him to be fined and to lose his clerkship in 1640. But when a more friendly William Berkeley became governor two years later, Willis was restored to good graces.

A January 29, 1649, patent gave Francis Willis “450 acres beg.g towards the head of the easter most branch of Severne at a point where that branch devides itselffe into two branches.” A patent dated July 11, 1666, made Colonel Francis Willis grantee of “100 acres on the south west side of Ware River; Beginning at Thomas Tracyes north west corner.” The latter grant would be in the area of what would become the Willis family home, “White Hall” in Zanoni.

Most or all of the 1649 patent of Richard Kemp, secretary of the colony, seems to have come into the hands of Francis Willis. This patent, known as the “Hunting Dale” patent, was described as “3500 acres on Mockjack Bay in Ware River lyeth towards the narrows of the sd. river and beg.g at acertayne creeke called Snare Creeke.”

In 1652, the new county of Gloucester sent Francis Willis and Hugh Gwinne as its first representatives to the House of Burgesses. “Captain” Francis Willis, apparently the same

1 Willis, Byrd Charles and Richard Henry Willis. *A Sketch of the Willis Family of Virginia*, 1897, Richmond, Va. p. 11. (Google books)
2 Willis, p. 9-10.
3 Land Office Patents No. 2, 1643-1651, p. 199 (Reel 2). *Genealogical Gleanings in England, Vol. 1 (Part First)*, 1885, cites what appears to be the same patent from Book No. 2, p. 199, but claims the date of the patent was July 3, 1642. The online records from the Library of Virginia transcription give the 1649 date.
6 Land Office Patents No. 2, 1643-1651, p. 174 (Reel 2).
Francis as the colonel, was a burgess again in the sessions of 1658-1659 and 1659-1660. By 1665, he was a member of the Governor's Council.

As a large landowner, it is likely that Col. Willis was an influential member of Ware Parish. He must have played a part in the construction of the first church in Ware Neck, a short trip across the water from “White Hall”. A trip he made to England in 1665 may have included seeking support for the appointment of the Ware Parish rector as Bishop of America.  

In 1675, Francis and Jane returned to England and settled in East Greenwich, Kent. His will, signed July 6, 1689, and proved April 25, 1691, has been an invaluable source of information about his Willis contemporaries. Being childless and outliving his brothers and his cousin, Hugh, he provided for several of their children and widows and several of his other cousins—all enumerated in his will.

Many of these Willises of the next few generations were prominent people in Gloucester County and the state. But with there being a Francis in something like ten successive Willis generations, it is difficult to keep them all straight.

The Roots of the Willis Family Tree

The earliest known member of the Willis family is Francis[1] Willis, probably born ca. 1540 and died October 29, 1596. He matriculated at St. John’s College of the University of Oxford in 1557 and eventually became President of St. John’s and Vice-Chancellor of the University. He held various prominent offices in the Church of England. He is buried in Worcester Cathedral. Oxford records list an impressive resume: BA February 16, 1562/3; MA February 16, 1565/6; BD and DD July 17, 1587; president of his college 1577-90; vice-chancellor 1587; vicar of Emsley, Northamptonshire 1569-72; rector of Kingston Bagpuze 1581; vicar of Cumnor, Berkshire 1579; canon of Bristol 1576; dean of Worcester 1587; vicar of Crophthorne, Worcestershire 1589.

A Sketch of the Willis Family of Virginia, by Byrd Charles Willis and Richard Henry Willis (1897), says there is a second generation about which there is no record and then proceeds to define a third generation. However, based on the few known birth and death dates of those in the first, third, and later generations, it is this author's opinion that the second generation may be a phantom. Most of the Willis generations are separated by 35 to 45 years which is just about the same as the separation between the guessed-at birth date of Francis[1], about 1540, and the birth date of John of the third generation (see below), 1587. Otherwise, the first and second, and second and third generations are

8 Complete Book of Emigrants 1661-1699.
10 Willis. p. 7-8. Six other members of the Willis family are known to have attended Oxford in the next few years.
separated by little more that 20 years which seems out of the ordinary.

Here, in deference to the earlier published material, and not knowing where its conclusions come from, we will continue on as if the mysterious second generation does exist and distinguish each "Francis" with a generational number based on that.

If there was a second generation, the name of interest to us is presumed to be Francis[2]. That is based on the family tradition that the Francis of the fourth generation shared the name of his father and grandfather. 13

In the third generation, we know of John and at least one brother, assumed to be Francis[3]. John was born in 1587 and entered New College, Oxford, on January 23, 1607. He received his BA on April 29, 1611; MA on January 20, 1614/5; and he became rector of Orington, Hampshire, in 1618. 14

We believe a brother to John existed because several members of the next generation are described as cousins of John's son, Hugh. We ascribe to this brother the name Francis[3], based, as mentioned above, on the tradition that the immigrant Francis of the fourth generation, who introduced this story, is said to have been given the same name as his father and grandfather.

The fourth generation, the children of John and Francis[3], is where things broaden out.

**Descendents of John**

John, of the third generation, had a son Hugh and daughters Frances and Elizabeth.

Hugh was born in 1625 and died before 1689. He attended the University of Oxford, matriculating in 1647 and receiving a Bachelor of Civil Law from New College, Oxford, in 1656. He married Mary Palmer. 15 He became vicar of Thame in Oxfordshire in 1665 (or 1662 through 1675 from other sources). His two known sisters and three sons, Francis, Christopher, and William, survived him. 16

Hugh’s son Francis was born in 1664. He entered New College, Oxford, in 1681; his brother William preceded him in 1675. Francis was apparently still at Oxford in 1702, on his way to becoming a Doctor of Medicine. In the library of the British Museum, in London, there is a reference to a poem by Francis “To his much honored friend and relation, Mr. Francis Willis, merchant at Greenwich, upon his discovery of a weed in Virginia which is a present remedy against the venom of the rattle -snakes there.” 17 The copy scanned by Google has this handwritten note on one of the front pages: “Francis Willis, of Thame, in the county of Oxford, was admitted Fellow of New College, as of kin to the Founder Novr 16, 1681, and died Nov. 24, 1702, being still a Fellow of the College, and was buried in the Cloisters.” The signature is illegible.

None of these people are known to have come to Virginia.

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13 Willis, p. 11.
14 Willis, p. 8, and Foster (as transcribed by Court).
16 Willis, p. 12-14.
Descendents of Francis

The immigrant Francis[4], whom we spoke of earlier, was one of three known sons of Francis[3].

Francis[4]’s brothers were Henry and William, and he had a sister Grace (Mrs. Fielder) who had a son Charles.

William joined his brother in Virginia and patented 250 acres in Gloucester County, described as “upon part of a branch of Craneneck [Craney] Creek” in October, 1665. 18 At some point, Francis[4] acquired all or part of the lands of his brother William, for he bequeathed them to William’s only known son, William. The bequest was described as about 100 acres on the south side of Crany Creek.

Henry’s children were Francis[5], William (the executor named in the will of Francis[4]), Susanna, Mary (Mrs. Herren), and Alice. Whether Henry ever came to America is unknown, but his son Francis[5] (Captain Francis Willis, also referred to as Francis Willis II) inherited the bulk of the Virginia estate and public responsibilities of his uncle. In fact, it is reasonable to assume that the younger Francis might already have been in control of the “White Hall” plantation when his uncle returned to England in 1675. It is this younger Francis who must be the discoverer of the rattlesnake anti-venom weed mentioned in his cousin’s poem.

Francis[5] was probably born in Greenwich, England, somewhere around 1655-1660 and was likely still a young man when he became a leading citizen of Gloucester. In the rent roll of 1704-05, the size of the Willis estate was 3,000 acres, the largest in Ware Parish and among the largest in the county.

The Two Sons of Francis II

The two sons of Francis[5], Col. Francis[6] Willis III and Col. Henry Willis, each became the head of important Virginia family trees.

Both sons were born in Gloucester. Francis[6] was born in 1690 and died after 1749. Henry was born about 1692 and died September 14, 1740.

In 1726, Francis[6] was the county sheriff and Henry was a county coroner. Both men were justices of the peace.20 Henry was a burgess from Gloucester in 1718 and 1720-26; Francis[6] in 1727-36, in 1740, and 1745-49. In 1727, both men were burgesses, Henry having moved from Gloucester and representing Spotsylvania. Both men also served as lieutenant colonels in the militia, Francis[6] in Gloucester and Henry in Spotsylvania.

Henry, who as the younger of the two brothers would not enjoy an inheritance of the “White Hall” estate, moved to Spotsylvania in 1726, where he acquired property and by 1727 was a trustee of the new town of Fredericksburg and senior warden of the church there.21 Col. William Byrd wrote in 1732 that Henry Willis was the “top man” in Fredericksburg.

Henry Willis first married Ann (Alexander) Smith, the widow of John Smith of “Purton” (eldest son of John Smith and Mary Warner), on November 2, 1714. They had children Mary

19 Jones, p. 49.
21 Jones, p. 51.
The Early Willis Family in Gloucester

(b. 1716, m. Hancock Lee), Francis (b. 1718), David (b. 1720), Henry (b. 1722), John (b. 1724), and Robert (b. 1725).

Within a year of Ann’s death, Henry married widow Mildred (Howell) Brown (daughter of John Howell), on October 30, 1726. Their children were John (1728 -1750), Elizabeth (b. 1729), and Ann (b. 1731, m. Duff Green).

Two months after Mildred’s death, Henry married Mildred’s cousin, Mildred (Washington) Gregory, widow of Roger Gregory, on January 5, 1733/4. It was her third marriage as well. Their children were Isabell (b. 1733), Lewis (b. 1734), and Ann (b. 1734).

Francis[6], as the older brother, inherited the Willis estate in Gloucester. In 1715, he married Lady Anne Rich, daughter of Edward Rich. The marriage might have taken place in England, as she is listed as Mrs. Anne Willis in Stanard’s Emigrants to Virginia. 22

Anne was born in 1695 into a prominent English family. She and Francis[6] had children Francis[7], John, Mary, and Ann (b. 1727, d. at age 7 days). Anne died on June 10, 1727, probably due to complications of childbirth. She and their infant daughter, Ann, are buried together under the chancel of the present Ware Church.

According to the Colonial Dames, Francis[6] later married a second wife, Elizabeth Smith Harrison. 23

Based on the obvious wealth of Francis[6] Willis, the prominence of Anne’s family, and the location of her burial, it is a good assumption that they were heavily involved in the life of Ware Parish and the construction of the present church.


John, 1719-1767, married Mildred Smith of “Shorter’s Hill” in 1719. She was the daughter of Augustine Smith (who was the grandson of Col. Augustine Warner and Mildred Read) and Sarah (Carver) Smith, and as such counted Martiau, Bernard, Smith, Warner, and Reade families in her ancestry. John was a burgess from Brunswick County in 1752 -1755.

Mary married Lewis Burwell (1710-1756) of “Fairfield”, who was President of the Virginia Council.

The descendents of Francis[6] and his brother, Henry, are relatively easy to locate. For example, Francis's son, John, and Mildred Smith had a daughter, Ann (1749 -1810), who married Thomas Maclin (d. 1793) of Greensville County, grandson of a 1725 Scottish immigrant. Their daughter, Mildred Maclin, married John Elliott of Brunswick County. Their daughter, Anne “Nancy” Willis Elliott, married Samuel Pryor Bolling. And their daughter, Mary Harriet Bolling, married Dr. John Feild, who is the second -great grandfather of the author.

The present “White Hall” was built in 1836 after the estate left the Willis family in 1802. 24 The new home replaced at least one previous dwelling on the property.

Finally, this story is being typed on a computer where the author has the same view out the Ware River to the Mobjack Bay that his ninth -great grandfather, Francis II, the nephew of immigrant Col. Francis Willis enjoyed nearly 400 years ago. §


24 McCartney, p. 51.
The Early Willis Family in Gloucester

Sources
The most authentic source of information is the will of Francis[4], written in 1689.

In 1897, Byrd Charles Willis and his nephew, Richard Henry Willis, M.A., Ph.D., wrote A Sketch of the Willis Family of Virginia, and of their kindred in other states, with brief biographies of the Reades, Warners, Lewises, Byrds, Carters, Champes, Bassettts, Madisons, Daingerfields, Thornton, Burrells, Taliaferros, Tayloes, Smiths, and Amblers.


There are many other works that list immigrants to Virginia in colonial time and early Virginia public figures.

(Continued from page 4)
was a testimony to his faith and also his gift of land and money to build Bruton Parish Church. Although I can not document it, my gut tells me that John Page was a strong supporter of the college. In other words, I think that he was trying to bring and cultivate the best of England in Virginia.

I think the topography of Virginia had a tremendous effect on the men of Virginia. The broad coastal plain and temperate climate promoted the growth of ideas of men like Locke and Burke. He worked to make the Middle Plantation the Capitol of the Colony, which became a reality six years after his death.

John Page was a supporter of Nathaniel Bacon, Jr., in his rebellion of 1676 against an autocratic governor, an event that is looked on by many as the precursor of our American Revolution.

The spirit of John Page reaches across the York River to Gloucester where his son, Matthew, married Mary Mann of Timberneck. It was their son, Mann Page I, who envisioned Rosewell, the finest brick structure in the Colony.

The great-great grandson of John Page I, the progenitor, another John Page, walked in his foot steps. This John was a cousin and lifelong friend of Thomas Jefferson. This John was head of the Committee of Safety, served in the Revolution, and became Governor of Virginia. The Pages have lived in Gloucester for 350 years and have made their mark here. You will find us in the pages of history.

I am proud to say John Page is my ancestor and feel that his legacy to me is to uphold the principles that he lived by. A legacy is something you live by.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I hope I have brought John Page alive for you.  §
Object of Colonial Governor’s Unrequited Love Lies at Rest in Old Middlesex Walled Cemetery

By Pat Royal Perkinson

As Middlesex volunteers scoured the county to document its many graveyards for the book, Cemeteries in Middlesex Count Virginia, we knew it would be unlikely that we would find many Colonial stones other than those at Christ Church and perhaps a few old plantations. It was with heightened hopes that we sought permission to visit the walled cemetery at Barn Elms, the 18th century plantation owned by three Edmund Berkeleys, and it was with great surprise that we came upon the tomb of a lady who once figured—perhaps unwittingly—in the history of our Virginia Colony.

It wasn't the first time a head of state made a fool of himself over a much younger woman and certainly not the last. Still, the story of a Royal Governor's infatuation with a dazzling teenager could well serve as a cautionary tale for others hoping to accede to high places.

The wife of Edmund Berkeley and mistress of Barn Elmes plantation, Lucy, was laid to rest in 1716 in this quiet place beside the Piankatank River.

Family crest embellishes Lucy Berkeley’s 1716 tomb
Only a decade and a half earlier, then in her teens, Lucy Burwell had played a prominent – very prominent – role in the downfall of the Governor of the Colony, Francis Nicholson.

The story may be pieced together from accounts in old Virginia Historical Society quarterlies, and in the book, Historic Buildings in Middlesex County Virginia – 1650-1875.

Lucy was born November 21, 1683, fifth child and third daughter of Major Lewis Burwell II of "King's Creek" in Gloucester County. Her father was well connected in the affairs of state, having served on the Council. Raised in luxury, Lucy, by the age of sixteen, was a ravishingly beautiful and charming young woman. In the social whirl of eighteenth century aristocracy, she soon came to the attention of the governor. Francis Nicholson by then was well into his forties. Their relationship (in the colonial sense of the term) was to change the course of his life, as he became more and more obsessed with the idea of taking her as his wife.

Possibly no suitor was more persistent in his pursuit of a maiden than was the smitten governor. Lucy drove him to impassioned outpourings of love and admiration – in person, in letters, in poetry. He pleaded with her to allow him to ask her father for her hand. While not seriously discouraging the flattering attention of the Royal Governor of the Colony, flirtatious Lucy apparently never gave him reason to believe his wooing would actually win her. In time, his doggedness became quite the subject for talk about the capitol.

Exasperated at his failure to achieve his most fervent ambition, Nicholson finally dispatched an intemperate letter to Lucy's father. Far from furthering his cause with Major Burwell, the letter slammed the door on any possible negotiations. The governor's declarations to the effect that he would harm not only any man who did marry Lucy, but others complicit in the act as well, certainly did not advance his cause.

Fortunately, Nicholson never carried out his threats; however, his temper finally spilled over into his public life, and before long his behavior gained notice in London.

Queen Anne, herself, took care of the problem: she forthwith recalled her servant back to England. In due time Francis Nicholson was posted to Nova Scotia.

His hour on the Virginia stage was over for the man who had first served the Crown as Virginia’s lieutenant governor and then as governor. To his credit also was the

Edmund Berkeley built Barn Elms as a one-story home with full basement. A later owner raised the roof to add another story. The brick home was damaged by fire prior to 1788 and again in 1932, never to be restored. Photo from Historic Buildings in Middlesex County Virginia.
founding of Williamsburg, previously known as Middle Plantation. Two of the colonial
capital's streets still honor his memory. (He named them himself.)

Lucy’s marriage in December 1704 to successful planter and tobacco exporter
Edmund Berkeley, of Gloucester's Petsworth Parish, ended speculation as to which of many
admirers she would choose.

Some time around 1712 or 1713, the Berkeleys moved to Barn Elms in Middlesex
where they raised their five children and great quantities of the colony’s cash crop,
tobacco.

Sadly, Lucy Burwell Berkeley’s days on the Piankatank were to be brief. Her
gravestone states that she “departed the 16th day of December 1716 in the 33rd year of
her age.” Most of the lengthy inscription may be read from her handsome marble
gravestone within the brick-walled cemetery near which the Berkley home once stood. It is
surrounded by several obviously old, unmarked broken stones. They may have covered the
remains of Col. Berkeley who died two years after Lucy’s death, and possibly those of other
Berkeley family members. The plantation was left to Col. Berkeley’s son, Edmund, upon his
father's death, and later to the second Edmund’s son, Edmund. Graves of more recent Barn
Elms families’ members are found also in this serene spot in the middle of a large
cultivated field:

Lucy’s life as Mrs. Berkeley spanned just “twelve years and fifteen” days, the
inscription states. Her husband commemorated those years in a muted tribute composed
for her marker, elaborately adorned with the Berkeley shield. In part it reads:

I shall not pretend to give her full character.
It would take too much room for a grave stone.
Shall only say that she never neglected her duty
to her Creator in Publick or in Private.
She was charitable to the poor, a kind mistress
And indulgent mother and obedient wife.

Col. Berkeley ended the inscription on a note of self-reference, a sentiment that might
be viewed by today’s women as “faint praise” indeed:

She never once in all the time she lived with her
husband gave him so much as once a cause to
be displeased with her.

Pausing at the gate to reflect on those words, chiseled into the beveled -edged slab so
many years ago, one cannot but wonder how different Lucy’s life might have been the had
the Governor not been so impetuous and Lucy more accepting back there at the turn of the
18th century.

And one wonders, too, how much more eloquently Lucy would have been eulogized by
the man who once addressed her as his “Vertuous Pretty Charming Innocent Dove” and
who concluded one of his paeans to her with these words:

“And I to you shall Constant prove
With Sacred Pledges of true Love
Which Age nor time shall ever move.”  §
Mathews Connections

By Sara E. Lewis

In 2003, I wrote *Waterfront Property*, a novel about the past and future of a fictional town I named Marysville. The town was a thinly disguised version of Mathews, and the Mathews Memorial Library chose the book for their 2005 Read It Mathews program. Whenever I visited the Library or Mathews High School to talk about the book, a chorus of “I’m related to you” always met me.

I am not surprised. A 1784 enumeration that became part of the reconstructed 1790 First Census of the United States lists 243 heads of households in the Kingston Parish of Gloucester County, which became Mathews in 1791. I am directly descended from names represented by 51 households including Hudgen (Hudgins) – 14, Foster – 9, Davis – 8, Forrest – 5, Lewis – 5, Williams – 5, Merchant (Marchant) – 3, Dawson – 2, Machen – 2, Weston – 2, and Jones – 1. My cousins have married Sadlers, Canons, Ashburys, Midgetts, Halls, Millers, Callises, Brookes, Hunleys, Whites, Diggeses (Degge), Athertons … and more Hudginses and lots of Forrests. I must be related by blood or marriage to half or more of the founders of Mathews County!

Seriously, however, I am fairly confident that I am a direct descendent of three 1784 Kingston Parish heads of household: Peter Foster, Edmund Forrest, and Hugh Hudgen (Hudgins). I hope that someone who reads this article will help me trace my ancestors beyond these three men and to others.

**Working Backwards from My Mathews County Grandparents**

My sister, Susan Lewis Dutton, and I are the children of Frank Raymond Lewis, Jr. and Mary Belle Jones Lewis. Although we grew up in Gloucester, we spent a lot of our youth in Mathews where our grandparents were born and reared and where all but one of their parents were born.
Our grandparents were:
Frank Raymond Lewis, Sr. (1894-1959) — Papa
Clemmie Ware Forrest (1902-1990) — Nana
Roland Christopher Jones (1886-1963) — Grandpa
Laura Belle Foster (1890-1976) — Granny

Papa's Line: Lewis-Marchant-Hudgins-Forrest-Weston

Frank Raymond Lewis, Sr. (1894-1959) and Clemmie Forrest (1902-1990) were married on April 25, 1921, in Norfolk, Virginia, and on their marriage license Papa's occupation is listed as policeman. He had served in the Army during World War I and was involved in battles at Champagne (August 4, 1918) and St. Michael (September 12, 1918) in France. His enlistment record notes that his character was excellent when he was discharged at Camp Meade, Maryland, on March 19, 1919, with his full pay of $103.40, which included a $60 bonus.

Papa and Nana made their home in Hudgins in Mathews County. Papa was a lighthouse keeper on six lights (Cedar Point, Great Wicomico, Stingray Point, York Spit, Tug Marshes, and Page's Rock) and Nana was a homemaker who worked at Sutton and Kline on Main Street in Mathews in the 1960s and 1970s. Their children were my father, Frank Raymond Lewis, Jr., and his sister, Juanita Erchinbeck Davis Culver.

Papa was one of six children of Charles Leonard Lewis (1855-1940) and Ellen N. Davis (1861-?) who were married in 1881 and buried in a family cemetery on Lewis Lane in Hallieford.
Mathews Connections

Mathews County. The Lewises were members of Mathews Baptist Church.

Charles Leonard Lewis was the son of Robert T. Lewis (1828-1893) and Diannah Francis Marchant (1837-1905), who were married on January 6, 1855. Children from their marriage were:

i. Charles Leonard Lewis (Papa's father and my great grandfather)
ii. John R. Lewis (1859-?)
iii. Claudius A. Lewis (1861-1880)
iv. Martin Luther Lewis (1866-1954)
v. Curtis Roland Lewis (1869-1959)
v. Clementine E. Lewis (1874-1968)
vii. Ernest Elmo Lewis (1877-1964)

Ellen N. Davis was the daughter of Larkin Wesley Davis (1833 -?) and Sarah (1841-?).

Robert T. Lewis (1828-1893) may be the son or nephew of Addison T. Lewis or the son of Thomas B. and Maria Lewis.

Diannah Francis Marchant was the daughter of John J. Marchant (1806 -1873) and Lucy R Hudgins (1806-1859). Diannah had one brother, John Wesley Marchant (1834 -1886).

John J. Marchant was listed as a farmer in the 1860 U.S. Census. He was in Captain Foster's company and Captain Lewis's company of the 61st Regiment, Virginia Militia, commanded by Col. Levin Gayle. He was deeded or inherited land on Cow Neck from William Dunlavy and James Marchant. After his first wife, Lucy's, death, John J. Marchant married Louisa Lewis, daughter of Warrion Lewis, in 1860. John J. Marchant was the son of James Marchant (1784-1840) and Mary Forrest (1786-1849).

Children of James and Mary's marriage were:

i. John J. Marchant
ii. James Daniel Marchant (1808-1874)
iii. Edmund Marchant
iv. Elizabeth Marchant
v. Levi DunLevy Marchant (1823-1905)
vii. Thomas J. Marchant
vii. Christopher Marchant

Lucy R. Hudgins was the daughter of Hugh Hudgins, First Census head of household.

Mary Forrest was the daughter of Edmund Forrest (1755 - ), First Census head of household, and Mary Weston of Gloucester. Edmund Forrest served in the 7th Virginia Regiment of the Continental Line. He married Mary Weston (1757 - ) on July 25, 1776.

Edmund Forrest was the son of John Forrest (possibly another First Census head of household) and Mary (both about 1735-1755).

Mary Weston was the daughter of Major Weston and Frances Forrest. Children from the 1752 marriage of Major Weston and Frances Forrest were:

i. Mary Weston
ii. George Weston (1756-?) - First Census head of household
iii. Nanny Weston (1758-?)
iv. Betsy Weston (1762-?)
v. Dolly Weston (1764-?)
v. Robert Weston (1766-?)
Nana's Line: Forrest-Davis-Dawson-Machen

My Nana, Clemmie Ware Forrest, was the daughter of Alpheous Lee (Allen) Forrest (1868-?) and Flossie Davis (1876-?), who were married in Mathews in 1892. Children from this marriage were:

i. Clemmie Forrest
ii. Lola Forrest
iii. Mary Lummie Forrest
iv. Ruth Forrest
v. Bertha Forrest
vi. Ida Forrest
vii. Charles Forrest
viii. Allen Lee Forrest, Jr.

Alpheous Lee Forrest was the son of Absalom Forrest (1820-?) and Columbia P. Dawson (1836-?). Family legend holds that Alpheous’s grandfather was a French soldier who made his home on Gwynn’s Island after the American Revolution.

Flossie Davis was the daughter of John H. Davis and Mary Eliza Machen (both born about 1838).

Grandpa’s Line: Jones

Roland Christopher Jones, Sr. (1886-1963) was a farmer and a storekeeper. He and my Grandmother, Laura Belle Foster (1890-1976), of North in Mathews County had four children, including:

i. Mary Belle Jones, my mother
ii. Alonzo Foster Jones (1926-1996).
iii. Catherine Elizabeth Jones (1918-1991)
iv. Roland C. Jones, Jr. (1917-1938)

Grandpa was the son of Walter Gabriel Jones (1837-1919), a Civil War veteran who served as a private in Company F of the 5th Virginia Cavalry, and Sara Elizabeth (1843-?). Children from their marriage were:

i. Roland Christopher Jones, Sr., my grandpa
ii. Walter Gabriel Jones, Jr. (1877-1963)
iii. Edmond Haley Jones, Sr. (?-1973)
iv. Mollie Jones (?-1953)
v. Carrie Jones (?-1970)
vi. Crisse Jones (?-1962)
vii. Alice Jones (?-1957)
Mathews Connections

My mother, Mary Belle, sits on the porch (see above car’s headlight) while my Great Aunt Minnie Foster combs her daughter's hair. My Grandmother, Laura Belle Foster Jones stands behind while my Aunt Catherine posed with her arm draped around the porch column at the Jones home, Road Island Farm, at North, circa 1930.

viii. Dora Jones (?)-1949
ix. Lewis C. Jones (?)-1870

Walter Gabriel Jones was the son of Edmond Healy Jones (1798-1874) and Harriet. Children from this marriage were:
   i. Walter Gabriel Jones, my great grandfather
   ii. Lewis Robert Jones (1840-1870)
   iii. Rebecca Jones (?)-1828
   iv. Thomas A. Jones (1829-1876)
   v. Ernest Herbert Jones (1853-1884)
   vi. Mary Elizabeth Jones (1846-1883)
   vii. John Clarence Jones (1849-1879)
   viii. Sands S. Jones (1833-1866)
   ix. Edmond Healy Jones (-1908)
   x. Christopher Muse Jones (1844-1919)

Granny’s Line: Foster-Hodge-Carpenter-Debnam-Hudgins-Williams-Hall-Rand

My Granny, Laura Belle Foster, was the daughter of Captain Henry Howitt Foster (1851-1930) and Catherine Belle Hodge (1963-1893). Catherine Belle was Captain Foster's second wife. Children from this marriage were:
   i. Laura Belle Foster
Alonzo (Lonnie) Finch Foster

Catherine Belle Hodge was the daughter of Alonzo Ross Hodge and Arabella Catharene Debnam (1837-1900), who were married in 1858, and granddaughter of Henderson Allonza Hodge and Frances Marion Carpenter. Catherine Belle Hodge was the niece of her husband's, Captain Foster, first wife.

Captain Henry Howitt Foster's first wife was Madeline Debnam, daughter of Thomas Richard Debnam and Priscilla A.J. Macon. They were married on December 21, 1871 in Wake County, NC. Children from this marriage were:

i. Florence E. Foster (1872-1873)
ii. Annie Macon Foster (1874-1953)
iii. Madeline Debnam Foster (1875-1966)
iv. Nathaniel Debnam Foster (1877-?)
v. T. Henry Foster (1879-1897)
vi. R. William Foster (1880-1883)
vii. Mary Sharpe Foster (1882-1953)
viii. Benjamin Woodland Foster (1883-1963)

Uncle Ben Foster took over his father's boat, the Alexander Bond, and his exploits were retold in the local paper on several occasions.

**Mathews Journal**, August 9, 1906: “On the evening of August 5, a delightful launching party was given by Mr. Ben Foster of Bohannon. The party consisted of Misses Clara Miles, Dola Lawson, Effie Miles and Julia Cottrell, and Messrs. Garland Miles, Ned Foster and brother, James Peed and Ben Foster.”

**Mathews Journal**, March 27, 1924, shipping news sent by the Mobjack correspondent: “The schooner ‘Alexandria Bond,’ Capt. B. W. Foster, is loading oysters for Ballard Fish & Oyster Co., Norfolk. From there he will go up the James for a load of seed stock.”

**Mathews Journal**, July 15, 1926: “Capt. B. W. Foster of Mobjack, of the schooner Alexander Bond, has just arrived from Baltimore, where he took a cargo of potatoes, bringing back wheat for Dr. Tabb at Cow Creek Mill.”

Captain Henry Howitt Foster was the son of Joseph Finch Foster, Sr. (1819-1896) and Anne Macon Hudgins (1830- ). Children from their marriage were:

i. Captain Henry Howitt Foster, my great-grandfather
ii. Joseph Finch Foster Jr. (1856-1926)
iii. Ella E. Foster (1853-?)
iv. Ann E. Foster (1859-?)


Joseph Finch Foster, Sr. was born on Rose Hill Farm in Mathews to Richard Foster (1785-1851) and Pricilla Bailey Williams (1786-1850) of North Carolina.
Richard Foster was the son of Peter Foster (1756-1819), a Kingston Parish First Census head of household, and Nancy Ann Hall (1756-1820). Peter married Nancy on October 27, 1776, in Gloucester.

Peter Foster was the son of Richard Foster and Susannah Rand (1723-1794). He served as a midshipman and carpenter’s mate on the Henry.

Richard Foster’s ancestry is uncertain. He married Susannah Rand in 1747 in Isle of Wight County, Virginia. Children from this marriage were:

i. Peter Foster
ii. Elizabeth Foster (1753-1794)
iii. Beverly Ransome Foster (1748-1803)
iv. Peter Garnett Foster (1757-1819)
v. Richard Foster (1758-1785)
vi. James Foster (1759-?) §

Sara E. Lewis is a freelance writer and marketing consultant. She lives in Williamsburg with her husband, Kenneth Jette Schmidt, and two children, Elizabeth Hare Lewis Flanary and Lewis Stephen Flanary. Please contact her with questions or comments by calling 757-220-2042 or e-mailing slewis@cox.net.

My great-grandfather, Captain Henry Howitt Foster, was captain of the Chesapeake Bay buy boat Alexander Bond, a bugeye schooner. (Circa 1880)

Recently published book written by Sara Lewis
A pictorial history of Gloucester County

Available in local stores & e-mailing slewis@cox.net
Steamship Wharves of the Mobjack Bay circa 1900

By Bill Lawrence

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Old Dominion Steamship Co. of N.Y. with its railroad connections provided transportation to most of the United States, as shown by the adjacent chart. There was a direct connection from New York City to Norfolk by an ocean steamship. Also, Norfolk was connected to Baltimore, Washington, and Richmond within the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. Norfolk and Richmond were connected by railroad lines to the south, mid-west, and beyond.

Baltimore, MD, and Norfolk, VA, became major port cities of the Chesapeake Bay. These cities were connected by local steamships to a network of wharves located conveniently along the navigable tributaries of the bay. During these years, the tidewater counties surrounding the bay were totally dependent upon the steamship lines for their passenger travel and the transportation of the US mail and general cargo. Farmers and watermen shipped their products to market and received their supplies by the same ships that carried passengers to their destinations.

Travel by water was so convenient that in some cases in Gloucester County it was easier to travel to Norfolk and Baltimore by ship than going to Gloucester Courthouse by horse and buggy on muddy or dusty roads. I heard an acquaintance say her father, who grew up in Gloucester, made three trips to Baltimore before he ever went to the Courthouse.

The large map on the next page illustrates the local steamship lines serving the James and York Rivers and the Mobjack Bay of Virginia. The routes shown were those of the Virginia Division of the Old Dominion Steamship Company. In January 1900, the cities of Norfolk, Portsmouth, and Hampton were connected to the wharves on the four rivers (Severn, Ware, North, and East) of the Mobjack Bay, shown on page 36. The present article will describe this route and the wharves that were served by this line.

The steamship “Mobjack” operated daily (except Sunday) stopping at ten different wharves on the Mobjack Bay. The listed schedule shows the stops from August of 1901 through 1912. After 1912, the schedule changed sporadically. Some were dropped, then added later, and times changed.
Steamship Wharves of the Mobjack Bay

1901 Map showing the locality of Gloucester and Mathews Counties, Virginia, and all the lines of the Old Dominion Steamship Company’s Virginia Division.
The “Mobjack” was built as hull #108 by the T. S. Marvel Shipbuilding Co. of Newburgh, N.Y., for the Old Dominion Steamship Co. in 1899. She weighed 610 tons, was 180 ft. long by 29 ft. wide, and ran the Mobjack route from 1899 to 1920. She was abandoned in 1951.
Steamship Wharves of the Mobjack Bay

"The Pilot" was the schedule/flyer that the Old Dominion Steamship Co. printed each month showing times, fares, tidbits, pictures, and articles about the localities they served. The map on page 36 and the cover page and schedule on page 37 all come from the "Pilot." Some of these can be found in the Swem Library at the College of William & Mary, the Mariner’s Museum library, and the Va. Historical Society’s library in Richmond. Many of the pictures in this article came from this source.

The agency list below for January 1900 shows the person in charge at each wharf. This person would have handled both passenger and freight charges.

The passenger fares are listed in the table below. It cost a passenger $1.00 for a trip from Norfolk to the Mobjack Bay area. "The Pilot" also advertised roundtrip one day excursions on the company’s steamer "Mobjack" from Old Point Comfort and Norfolk to Virginia’s picturesque western shore for the same price. Meals were 50 cents each.

### AGENCIES

- **G. T. Newbury, New York Agent**
- **M. B. Crowell, General Agent, Norfolk**
- **John F. Mayer, Agent, 111 E. Main St., Richmond, Va.**
- **John E. Lemoine, Agent, Petersburg, Va.**
- **John Myers’ Son, Agent, Washington, N. C.**
- **J. E. Tench, Old Point Comfort, Va.**
- **George Schermesser, Hampton, Va.**
- **H. C. Parker, Smithfield, Va.**
- **W. Sigwart, Suffolk, Va.**
- **H. T. Philpot, Philpot’s Wharf, East River, Va.**
- **B. Williams, Williams’ Wharf, East River, Va.**
- **J. C. Davis, Hicks’ Wharf, East River, Va.**
- **A. J. Elvis, Digg’s Wharf, East River, Va.**
- **L. M. Roane, Roane’s Wharf, Ware River, Va.**
- **P. W. Smith, Smith’s Wharf, Ware River, Va.**
- **R. P. Taliaferro, Thompson’s Wharf, Ware River, Va.**
- **H. D. Smith, Severn’s Wharf, Severn River, Va.**
- **M. J. Evans, Auburn Wharf, North River, Va.**
- **J. F. Amory & Son, Amory’s Wharf, Back River, Va.**
- **J. G. Wernam, Hunt’s Wharf, Poquosin, Va.**
- **E. C. Whitehurst, Poquosin, Poquosin, Va.**
- **E. E. Slagle, Crab Neck, Back Creek, Va.**
- **R. W. Sheldin, Yorktown, Va.**
- **J. H. Hobday, Gloucester, Va.**
- **W. W. Almond, Allmond’s Wharf, Va.**
- **C. K. Weaver, Claybank, Va.**
- **B. W. Hefferson, West Point, Va.**
- **George Henderson, Newberne, N. C.**
- **S. C. Whitemore, Roanoke Island, N. C.**
- **J. J. Cherry, Greenville, N. C.**
- **T. B. Jarakeks, Tarboro, N. C.**
- **W. H. Moore, Centre Bluff and Falkland, N. C.**
- **Scranton & N. C. Land & Lumber Co., Malden, N. C.**
- **R. F. Steam, Belhaven, N. C.**
- **W. J. Smith, Oriental, N. C.**
- **G. P. Haskell, Ocracoke, N. C.**
- **W. J. Farnam, Sparta, N. C.**
Roanes Wharf-1900

The first stop in the Ware River was Roanes Wharf, located to the left of the entrance to Wilson's Creek. A right of way was deeded to the Old Dominion Steamship Company on September 11, 1889, by Richard A. Roane (grandfather of L. Roane Hunt) and Thomas J. Meredith for the use of “Roanes Wharf” including the house on wharf for storage of freight for $100 per annum. The company was to make any repairs to the wharf. A half-acre wharf landing was purchased by Roane and Meredith from Luther Major Roane, brother of Richard. L.M. Roane, however, was listed as the wharf agent until 1904 when his younger brother, Charles E. Roane, replaced him as wharf agent. In 1906, William T. Ashe, brother-in-law of the Roane brothers, purchased the interest of Mr. Meredith in Roanes Wharf. He later modernized the York River Ferry system. There are still two wharf pilings that can be seen at low tide. The “Mobjack” left this wharf and headed up the river to Smiths Wharf.

Smiths/Baileys Wharf-1900

The second stop on the Ware River was Smiths Wharf located in the Zanoni area. My great-great-grandfather, Peter William Smith, Sr., the land owner and wharf agent, had signed a right of way with the Old Dominion Steamship Co. on Sept. 13, 1889. For $300 per annum, paid quarterly, it gave the company use of the pier and the storehouse on shore for storage of freight. P.W. was to maintain the pier. He died Jan. 21, 1909, and his heirs sold the land and wharf to George W. Bailey on Dec. 29, 1909. Thereafter and to the present, it became known as Baileys Wharf. Interestingly, P.W. Smith, Sr., set
Smith, Sr., set aside a family cemetery on the shores of the Ware River about 300 yards from the old steamship wharf where he is buried. He also raised his grandson, P.W. Smith, Jr., who became Treasurer of Gloucester County from 1916-1954. There are no remnants of this wharf left.

![Smiths Wharf with Hockley house (center) and Thompsons Wharf in the background (right) - 1910](image)

**Thompsons/Hockleys Wharf (2 views) - 1900**

After leaving Smiths Wharf, the “Mobjack” headed directly across the Ware River to Thompsons Wharf located in Ware Neck. For $400, Tazewell Thompson, son-in-law of Dr. Samuel Byrd of White Hall, sold a right of way and one-half interest in the wharf to the Old Dominion Steamship Company on Dec. 21, 1889. Richard P. Taliaferro was listed as the wharf agent and operated the local Ware Neck Store. His family moved to Gloucester from King and Queen County where their home on the York River was named “Hockley.” Hence,
their new home in Ware Neck became “Hockley.” In 1897, Tazewell sold his one-half interest to the Taliaferro family, and by 1901, the landing became known as Hockley’s Wharf. There are no remnants left.

**Auburn Wharf-1898**

Upon entering the North River, the first stop the “Mobjack” made was on the Mathews County side of the river at “Auburn.” The estate, “Auburn,” was built by Philip Tabb for his son, Dr. Henry Tabb, and remained in their family until 1896. Charles Heath purchased it around 1904 and was listed as wharf agent that year. Morgan J. Evans had preceded him as
Steamship Wharves of the Mobjack Bay

wharf agent. Nothing is left of the old wharf. Upon leaving Auburn, the steamer headed a short distance up the river to “Elmington Manor” at Dixondale Landing.

Dixondale Wharf-1905

At Thomas W. Dixon, Jr.’s request, the Old Dominion Steamship Co. built a pier and storehouse at “Elmington.” He signed a lease for a right of way, use of one-half acre, and the pier for an annual fee of $10 on September 7, 1900. Frederick L. Bussey, nephew of Thomas Dixon's wife, was the listed wharf agent. Dixondale was added to the “Mobjack’s” schedule in June 1900. There are no remnants left of this fine wharf.

Dr. Thomas Dixon, a minister, was also the noted author of The Life Worth Living, a biographical book on his life in Gloucester County. He was also the author of The Clansman, The Leopard's Spots, and The One Woman. He wrote the following in an article for “The Pilot,” “The man who is looking for an ideal climate, a good soil, a beautiful wild country within forty miles of the greatest seaport south of New York, will find it on the Western Shore of Virginia. Dixondale, Va., Sept. 19, 1901.”

“Elmington” at Dixondale on the North River—1900
Philpots Wharf-1900

The first stop on the East River was Philpots at the present Mobjack area of Mathews County. Hesekiah Thornton Philpot built the wharf and was listed as its agent. He was born in Gloucester, but lived with his first wife in Norfolk. He moved to Mathews and married Elizabeth Bell in Mathews in 1895. He developed the adjoining property into small home lots. There are still many pilings left from this old wharf. The next stop was Williams Wharf up the river about 2 miles and on the opposite side.

Williams Wharf-1886/88

Williams Wharf housed the custom house for “The Port of East River in the District of Yorktown” since at least 1826. William Williams was inspector and surveyor of this Custom House from 1839 through 1852. He died in 1885 and his heirs signed a lease.
agreement for $200 per year for two warehouses and the wharf with the Old Dominion Steamship Company in February 1898. In 1900, the wharf agent was listed as Benjamin Williams, younger brother of William. When Benjamin died in 1903, he was replaced by Milton Murray, a grandson of William Williams. The steamship “Northampton,” as seen above, stopped at this wharf until 1897 when it was replaced by the “Plymouth” and then the “Mobjack” in 1899. Passenger ships continued here until 1935 when service was discontinued. Williams Wharf has been rebuilt and is now the present site of the Mathews High School crew team. Upon leaving this wharf, the “Mobjack” proceeded across and up the East River a very short distance to Hicks Wharf.

**Hicks Wharf-1920**

On February 23, 1888, William E. and Mary S. Hicks signed a lease agreement at $200 per year with the Old Dominion Steamship Co. for use of the wharf and three warehouses. It included use of the wharf and land “not to exceed up to the garden fence near the store house run by John G. Davis.” In 1900, Mr. Davis, son-in-law of William Hicks, was listed as wharf agent. There is nothing left of the old wharf, and one would never know it was a landing at one time. It was here that the steamship “Munnatawket” caught fire on September 6, 1935, and was towed away from the dock. The disintegrating remains can be seen at very low tides a short distance away. Leaving this wharf, the steamship headed back down the river.
Steamship Wharves of the Mobjack Bay

Diggs Wharf-1920
The last stop on the East River was Diggs Wharf, a good three miles from Hicks Wharf, and it is on your left or port side as you are leaving the East River. It was built by Andrew J. Diggs, who was also the wharf agent. Later, James K. Brooks was listed as wharf clerk. Many of the old pilings are still standing. Depending on the day of the week, the “Mobjack” either headed towards the Severn River or back to Hampton Roads.

Rowes/Severn Wharf -1900
In 1900, the only landing on the Severn River was Rowes Wharf. For $1.00 and other considerations, Samuel M. and Emily C. Rowe gave a deed of easement to the Old Dominion Steamship Co. on March 24, 1888. This deed gave the company a right of way and “privilege to use, occupy and enjoy such part of the waterfront and to erect a wharf and buildings” as they saw fit. The easement referred to “Rowes Wharf.” The listed agent was Hunter Davidson Smith. As it turned out, Samuel was the brother of Frances Jane Rowe Smith, wife of Peter W. Smith, who ran Smiths Wharf on the Ware River, and Hunter was their youngest son. Jessie L. Thomas, a distant relative, followed Hunter as agent. It appears that they were making it a family business. I found a reference to Rowes Wharf as late as 1898, but by 1900 and ever since it has been known as Severn Wharf.
Steamship Wharves of the Mobjack Bay

has been known as Severn Wharf. Many of the pilings are still standing. According to the schedule of 1900, the “Mobjack” left here and headed back to Fort Monroe. However, other stops were also mentioned from time to time.

Layboat-1900

The photo below is believed to be Layboat and lies between the mouth of the Severn River and the Guinea marshes. It appears on a 1901 map of the routes of the Virginia Division of the Old Dominion Line, but does not appear on the schedule. I believe it may have been a pick-up/drop-off point for goods of the fishermen of the Guinea area. But since it touches no land, it was not listed as a passenger stop.

Pierhead/Bayside Wharf-1920

Bayside Wharf first appears as a scheduled stop in 1912. What appears as Bayside on a 1917 map is listed as Pierhead on the 1901 map. According to an article in the Gazette-Journal in March of 1933, “Bayside Wharf was burned to the water’s edge early Tuesday morning by fire of unknown origin. The loss is estimated between $2,500 to $3,000 and is partially covered by insurance. The owner, Walter J. Green, proprietor of Mathews Ice
Company, expects to rebuild immediately.” He must have done so as most of the pilings were still standing in 2006.

**New Point-1920**

“New Point Pier Head”, as it was mentioned in a deed of transfer in March 1889, was built in 1888. (I have not been able to determine if this reference is to “Pierhead” or to “New Point.”) New Point does show up, however, in “The Pilot’s” schedule as being a stop for the “Mobjack” in 1913. All the land from the pier to the lighthouse has entirely disappeared. The remaining pilings stand by themselves, quite a distance from any land.

Blackwater Wharf on the North River shows up on a 1917 U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey map as a steamship stop. However, I found no reference to it in any of the material I researched.

In an article from “The Pilot,” Mr. E.F. Rorebeck says, “In the winter months, the Mobjack picks up at the different wharves as many as 400 to 500 barrels of oysters each day, unloading them in the evening on the Old Point Wharf, ready for the bay lines to Baltimore and the Old Dominion Line to New York to come along and carry them north the same night. In the spring, crabs and fish supplant the oyster as freight.” Some old decaying pilings are all that remain of the former life on the busy steamship route. §

Note:
1) Photos of Bayside, Diggs, Hicks (first picture), New Point and the second Smiths Wharves were courtesy of the Mariners Museum.

2) Photo of Williams Wharf was courtesy of Lola Murray Clements.

3) The rest came from The Old Dominion Steamship Co.’s publications, “The Pilot” and “The Picturesque Western Shore of Virginia,” 1898 (rare book collection Swem Library, College of William and Mary) and 1900 (in possession of the author).
Steamship Wharves of the Mobjack Bay

Appendix: Personal Data—by L. Roane Hunt

George Washington Bailey (1869-1942) s/o William Thomas & Matilda Jane Robins Bailey, m. Elizabeth A. ?.


James K. Brooks (1872-1846) s/o Rienzi & Cothia I. Minter Brooks, m. Alice A. Sadler.

Frederick Lucas Bussey (1874-????) s/o Henny Clay Bussey & Martha Ann Singleton. He was a nephew of Thomas Dixon’s first wife, Harriett.

John G. Davis (1843-1919) s/o Mathew J. & Sarah D. Miller Davis, m. Elizabeth A. Hicks.

Andrew Jackson Diggs Jr. (1898-1978) s/o Andrew Jackson & Viola Lee White Diggs, m. Elsie Brooks.

Andrew Jackson Diggs Sr. (1862-1935) s/o Andrew Jackson & Martha W. Diggs, m. Viola Lee White.


Walter James Greene (1862-1943) s/o Thomas & Virginia H. Green, m. Mary Seaflower Ward.

William E. Hicks (1817-1890) m. Mary S. Brownley.

Thomas James Meredith (1847-????) s/o Thomas & Elizabeth Janvier Meredith, m. Julia Davidson Screven.

Milton Murray (1875-1943) s/o Heron Campbell & Cordelia Cary Williams Murray, m. Georgie Anna Foster.


John F. Philpotts (1861-????) s/o Eleanor D. & Rosa A. Sale Philpotts, m. ?.

Charles Edward Roane (1849-bef.1930) s/o Charles Alexander & Sarah Rebecca Roane Roane, m1. India Letetia Roane, m2. Eugenia Virginia Roane (sisters).

Luther Major Roane (1839-1897) s/o Charles Alexander & Sarah Rebecca Roane Roane, m. Demarious Ann Elizabeth Fary.

Richard Alexander Roane (1842-1920) s/o Charles Alexander & Sarah Rebecca Roane Roane, m1. Lucy M. Bowden, m2. Elva Maude Worrell.

Samuel Marion Rowe (1833-1916) s/o Edward Hansford & Grace A. Dobson Rowe, m. Mary Elizabeth Rowe.

Hunter Davidson Smith (1866-1932) s/o Peter William & Frances Jane Rowe Smith, m1. Octavia E. Willey, m2. Emma Ruth Smith.

Peter William Smith (1828-1909) s/o Anthony A. & Sarah Smith, m. Frances Jane Rowe.


Richard P. Taliaferro (1856-1928) s/o John Philip & Eleanora Whitfield Anderson Taliaferro, m. Fanny Johnson.

Tazwell Thompson (1834-1914) s/o William H. Thompson, m. Susan Lewis Byrd.

Benjamin Williams (1821-1903) s/o Thomas & Mary Lilly Billups Williams.

Cordelia Cary Williams (1845-1907) d/o William & Delelia Borum Williams, m. Heron Campbell Murray.

William Williams (1805-1885) s/o Thomas & Mary Lilly Billups Williams, m. Delelia Borum.