

Searching for John Watts' Ancestors

by

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Like most who search for ancestors, this writer wanted to know who was the immigrant ancestor of her Watts line. Although the search was bumpy at times, it progressed until questions about the parents of John Watts, the usually accepted progenitor of the south Mississippi Watts, arose. John was thought to have been born in Anson County, North Carolina between 1745-1752. He married Judith (?), and they came to Mississippi with or after one or more of their children about 1815.

Watts family researchers typically suggested that William Watts, who died in North Carolina about 1772-73 and was married to Agnes, was John's father. The basis of the father-son relationship of William and John was based on two facts. First, on 15 January 1773, Agnes, the wife and relict of William Watts, relinquished the administration of her deceased husband's estate. Second, on 14 October 1774, administration of William's estate was granted to John Watts with a £ 100 bond posted by John Preslar and James Long.¹ John Watts' relationship to William was not stated, and the purported one is tenuous at best. A query was sent to the North Carolina State Archives requesting a copy of the papers related to the settlement of William's estate. In response, someone wrote, "Due to records loss, Anson Co. Estates begin in 1805."²

Accepting William and Agnes as the parents of John, one must then attempt to answer the question—who were the parents of William. His lineage is an area of contention among the southern Watts researchers. Some say that William of North Carolina was William, son of John and Priscilla (White Layfield) Watts of Accomack County, Virginia. Others allow that he might have been William, son of William and Comfort (?Scarburgh) Watts of Accomack County, Virginia. William, who married Comfort, was the son of John and Priscilla. To confuse matters more, William, who married Comfort, had a brother named John, who had a son also named William.

To sort out this conundrum, the author first looked for all the descendants of the probable immigrant John Watts of Accomack County, Virginia through the nineteenth century, organizing those found in a systematic format. An abridged genealogical report of his male descendants is presented. Following the descendants report, a discussion of these data explains why William [NC] is not a descendant of this Accomack County Watts family.

To distinguish among the male Watts named William and John, hereafter, the Virginia Watts will be differentiated by Roman numerals enclosed in brackets, and William of North Carolina and John of Mississippi will be referred to as William [NC] and John [MS] respectively.

¹M. W. McBee, *Anson County, North Carolina: Abstracts of Early Records* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1970), 84 and 97.

²Response from North Carolina State Archives (4614 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-4614), to Wynema McGrew, 15 March 2001, held by McGrew (606 Bramblewood Drive, Hattiesburg, MS 39402-2101).

Descendants of John [I] Watts of Virginia

The ancestry proposed for William [NC] Watts, and subsequently for John [MS] Watts begins around 1650 on the eastern shore of Virginia with John [I] and Dorothy (?Hosnard) Watts. In the numbering system used below, each number represents a generation and explains the tentative birth position of that person to the preceding number (person).

First Generation

- 1 John [I] Watts was born ca 1625-30 and died between 29 April 1680 and 4 June 1684.¹ He married Dorothy ?Hosnard.²

Whenever and wherever John [I] died, he left a will in which he named his children and wife. The first date cited in the abstracts of Virginia wills signified when it was written and the second date indicated when it was probated. The abstract of the will of John [I] read:

WATTS, JOHN – 29 Apr. 1680 – 4 June 1684 To son John. Bal. personal est. 1/3 to wife Dorothy & the other 2/3 to my children Margery, Jannett & John (all under 16). Wife & friend John Drummond to be guardians of my children. To son John 450 A. where I now dwell at Accocomson & 250 A. on Teasers Island in Somerset County, Md. Granted to me by patent & 300 A. in Somerset County being the Southern most part of 600 A. granted to me by patent. To dau. Tabitha, now wife to John Tarr, the remaining part of my 600 A. in Somerset County for life then to her heirs with reversion to her heirs at common law. Wife Exec. Witt: John Wallop, Thomas Mitchell – p. 381.³

Not knowing the birth date of any of the children, this writer numbered them arbitrarily. The known children of John [I] and Dorothy (?Hosnard) Watts were:

- 11 Tabitha Watts was born ca 1650-1660, probably in Accomack County, VA.
- 12 Margery Watts was born after 1664 probably in Accomack County, VA.
- 13 Jannett (Ann) Watts was born after 1664 probably in Accomack County, VA.
- 14 John [II] Watts was born after 1664 probably in Accomack County, VA.

Second Generation

- 14 John [II] Watts was born after 1664 and died in 1725-1726, probably in Accomack County, VA.⁴ He married (1) Sarah Wallop, daughter of John and Rebecca (?)Wallop

¹Stratton Nottingham, editor, *Wills and Administrations of Accomack County, Virginia, 1663-1800* (Cottonport, LA: Polyanthos, 1973), 10; and Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers, 1623-1666, Volume One* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1979), 193.

²Glenna M. Coultas, "Descendants of John Watts" (computer printed copy, 5 Oct 1999, by Coultas), 1; copy held by Wynema McGrew.

³Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 10.

⁴Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 10 and 59.

about 1695-1699. Sarah was born about 1662 in Accomack County, VA,¹ and she died about 1703. John married (2) Priscilla White Layfield, daughter of John and Sarah (Keyser) White and the widow of George Layfield about 1704. She was born 1677 in Somerset County, MD and died ca 7 Nov 1730/1.²

John's [II] birth date was based on his father's will that stated that he and two sisters were under 16 years of age at the time it was drawn up. John's will, written on 2 Jan 1725/6, had a codicil attached that was dated 9 Dec 1725. His will was probated on 5 April 1726, giving a period of four months for his death. He may have written his will and died in Somerset County, Maryland, since it included "overseers," an artifact of Maryland wills but not commonly found Virginia wills.

Priscilla was born 1677 in Somerset County, Maryland, and was twin to Tabitha. In documents that mentioned both, Tabitha was named first with Priscilla always following her.³ Priscilla first married George Layfield with whom she had a daughter, Elizabeth, and whom John [II] Watts addressed as daughter in his will. He died in May 1703, and in November of that year, Priscilla Layfield, widow of George, sold part of her land, called Carmell, to William Massey.⁴ Allowing for about a year of mourning, Priscilla probably married Captain John Watts in 1704. They may have married earlier, because John [II] almost certainly needed someone to care for his young children.

John [II] inherited 1000 acres from his father, 450 acres at Accocomson in Virginia, and 550 acres in Maryland. In the 1704 quit rent roll for Accomac [sic] County, Virginia, John [II] paid rent on 2450 acres.⁵ Apparently, Captain John acquired land in both colonies during his lifetime through his wives, by patents and/or by purchases. He left a total of 1182 acres in Maryland to son William (815 acres in two tracts) and daughter Esther (367 acres in two parcels). Presumably, his son John [III] received the Accocomson land although what he left this son was undefined in his will. Frequently, the eldest son received his share of the real estate before the father's death, who then omitted mentioning this child's part of the land in his will. The abstract of John's will read:

WATTS, CAPT. JOHN - 2 Jan. 1724/5 - 5 Apr. 1726 - To son John Watts. To son William Watts my island called Wolfes Denn Island at Mattoponey in Somerset County, cont. 90 A., also my Island called Temp Island at Mattopony in Somerset County, Maryland, cont. 725 A. To dau. Easter Watts my two tracts of land called Smithfield & Farloworth cont. 367 A. in the County of Somerset. To dau. Sarah Finney. To dau. Mary Selby. To dau. Jannat Narn. To son John Kendall negroes for life reversion to Lemuel Kendall, heir of Tabitha Kendall as is

¹Ralph T. Whitelaw, *Virginia's Eastern Shore, Volume II* (1951; reprint, Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1968), 1242,1328, and 1336; William S. Burton, "Descendants of John Watts," email message from <drburton@intercom.net> (P. O. Box 817, 9540 Rogers Drive, Nassawadox, VA 23413) to author, 5 Apr 2001.

²Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 73; Whitelaw, *Virginia's Eastern, Volume II*, 1328; and Clayton Torrence, *Old Somerset on the Eastern Shore of Maryland* (Baltimore, MD: Regional Publishing Co., 1979), 331-330, 375-379, and 461-462

³Jane Baldwin, compiler, *The Maryland Calendar of Wills, Volume I* (Baltimore, MD: Kohn & Pollack, 1904), 165-166; Jane Baldwin and Roberta Bolling Henry, compilers, *The Maryland Calendar of Wills, Volume III* (Baltimore, MD: Kohn & Pollock, 1907) 58-59; Jane Baldwin and Roberta Bolling Henry, compilers, *The Maryland Calendar of Wills, Volume IV* (Baltimore, MD: Kohn & Pollock, 1914), 193.

⁴Ruth T. Dryden, *Land Records of Worcester County, Maryland, 1666-1810* (San Diego, CA: Privately printed, 1987), 95.

⁵[Anonymous], *Virginia Tax Records* (Baltimore, MD: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1983), 562; Annie Laurie Wright Smith, *The Quit Rents of Virginia, 1704* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1980), 94.

recited on the back of a bill of sale endorsed by me to the said Kendall being in his possession. To grandson Lemuel Kendall negro to be delivered to him at 18. To son William negro & liberty to get timber on my land at Mattapony called Wattses Conveniency for building of houses on Temp Island. To dau. Elizabeth Colliar. Beds & furniture to be div. bet. wife & 6 children, Sarah Finne, John Watts, William Watts, Mary Selby, Jannet Nairn, Ester Watts. To Wife Priscilla 1/3 of all my lands & 2/3 of personal est. not disposed of & the other to be div. bet. my above named children. Wife Exec. Richard Kitson & Mr. William Tazewell overseers. Witt: Solomon Ewell, Comfort Ewell, Sarah Wallop, Charles Littleton, John Wallop. Codicil dated 9 Dec. 1725 - I app. my friend Richard Kitson & my son in law John Kendall assistant Exrs. until my son John arrive at 20 years. p. 58¹

In addition to what Priscilla inherited from John [II] Watts, she was a beneficiary in three other wills made at Pocomoke, Somerset County, Maryland.² In his will written on 1 June 1685 and probated on 3 October 1685, John White left his twin daughters, Tabitha and Priscilla, 700 acres of land known as "Newport Pannell." In 1703, her first husband, George Layfield, left Priscilla and her heirs three parcels of land—"Newport" given her by her father, "Creedwell," and the 500 acres known as "Poplars Pt." After bequeathing certain properties to their daughter and other kin, Priscilla and Elizabeth shared the balance of his estate. The way these two wills read indicated that Priscilla received the land in fee simple, and it automatically belonged to John [II] when they married or he had the right of curtesy. Her brother, Stevens White, gave the children of three of his sisters—Tabitha, Precella [*sic*], Sassiah [*sic*—20 shillings each.

Since she remained a widow, Priscilla drew up a will. Only single women and widows could bequeath property, and the assets they had to distribute were usually limited.³ Priscilla's will did not describe any of the real property she inherited, and it seemed as if she essentially had personalty to leave. She bequeathed something to "cousin" Mary Riley, who was most likely her niece and daughter of her sister Tabitha White Riley. Further, she did not leave any bequest to her son John [III] or to the daughters and their heirs, of John [II] and Sarah Wallop, although John left something to her and George Layfield's daughter. The abstract of Priscilla's will read:

WATTS, PRISCILLA - 7 Nov. 1730 - 5 Jan. 1730/31 - To son William Watts. To dau. Elizabeth, wife of Peter Collier. To grandau. Elizabeth Collier. To dau. Esther Watts. To grandau Mary Collier. To cousin Mary Riley. Son William, dau. Esther and all my grandchildren of my 3 daus. Elizabeth, Mary & Jannett resid. legatees. Son William & son in law Peter Collier Exrs. Witt: George Douglas, Charles Taylor, Thomas Taylor - p. 113⁴

Altogether, John [II] Watts had seven children by two wives and one stepdaughter. Since his stepdaughter was less than two years old at her blood father's death, Elizabeth Layfield was treated as a child in this history. According to Berkin and Horowitz and to Carr and Walsh, the cycle of pregnancy,

¹Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 59.

²Baldwin, *The Maryland Calendar, Volume I*, 165-166; Baldwin and Henry, *The Maryland Calendar, Volume III*, 58-59; and Baldwin and Henry, *The Maryland Calendar, Volume IV*, 193.

³Carole Shammass, Marylynn Salmon, and Michel Dahlin, *Inheritance in America: From Colonial Times to the Present* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1987), 45.

⁴Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 73.

birth, nursing and weaning followed a uniform pattern of every two to two and one-half years.¹ Since the birth dates of John's children were unknown, they were most likely about two years apart, and the birth order of each set of children was set arbitrarily.

The children of John [II] and Sarah (Wallop) Watts were:

141 Tabitha Watts born ca 1699/1700, Accomack County, VA.

142 Sarah Watts born ca 1702/1703, Accomack County, VA.

The child of George and Priscilla (White) Layfield was:

143 Elizabeth Layfield born 4 Feb 1701/1702, Somerset County, MD.

The children of John[II] and Priscilla (White Layfield) Watts were:

144 Mary Watts born ca 1705, Accomack County, VA/Somerset County, MD.

145 Jannett Watts born ca 1707, Accomack County, VA/Somerset County, MD.

146 John [III] Watts born ca 1709, Accomack County, VA/Somerset County, MD.

147 Esther Watts born ca 1711, Accomack County, VA/Somerset County, MD.

148 William [I] Watts born ca 1713, Accomack County, VA/Somerset County, MD.

Third Generation

146 John [III] Watts was born ca 1709, Accomack County, VA/Somerset County, MD, and died 1776. He married Rebecca (Wallop) Kendall, daughter of John Wallop and widow of John Kendall, ca 1768-1769.²

John's [III] birth date was a guesstimate, based on when his parents married, and he was under 20 years old when his father died in 1725. He died in 1776, probably in July. He was likely married at least twice and Rebecca was his last wife. According to Barnum, Rebecca's first husband

John Kendall died intestate 1758-1760. In March, 1760, the estate was appraised and divided between 'the widow's lott' and Mary Kendalls part.' [Accomack Co, VA, 1757-1761, Wills, Deeds, Court Orders, Court Minutes, pp. 203-209]. In Aug 1768, Rebeckah Kendall returned as guardian of Mary Kendall. By Aug, 1769, John Wats was gdn of Mary Kendal. [Accomack Co, VA, Orphan Returns, 1741-1780, pp. 183, 216, LDS film 30, 108; also in Gail M. Walczyk, Accomack County, VA Orphans Accounts 1741-1770, pp. 107, 126].³

¹Carol Berkin and Leslie Horowitz, editors, *Women's Voices, Women's Lives* (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 9; Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "The Planter's Wife: The Experience of White Women in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," *The William and Mary Quarterly* XXIV (Third Series, October 1967): 553.

²Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 59 and 227; and Whitelaw, *Virginia's Eastern, Volume II*, 812, 1320 and 1328; D. Barnum, "John Watts," e-mail message from <dotbar@prodigy.net>, 30 April 2001, to ghtotes-digest V4 #559 <ghotes@esva.net>, 9 May 2001.

³Barnum, "John Watts," e-mail to ghtotes-digest V4 #559, 9 May 2001.

The change in the guardian of Mary Kendall from Rebecca to John [III] suggested their marriage date. Barnum further reported that Rebecca appeared in the Accomack County tax digests from 1786-1797. She had 157 acres in 1797 which appeared in the tax list of David Watts in 1798. Whether this change in the tax list reflected her death was not explored.

When his father John [II] died, John [III] was left something in his father's will, not described, one-seventh of the family's beds and furniture, and one-ninth of the personal property not bequeathed in his will.¹ Although John [III] was under 20 years of age when his father wrote the codicil, evidently he was heir at law of John [II] and automatically received the Watts entailed land. When his mother died 1730, Priscilla did not mention him in her will.

Before his death, John [III] drew up a will, in which his wife and children were named. An abstract of John's will read:

WATTS, JOHN - 6 July 1776 - 27 Aug. 1776 - Wife Rebecca ro [to] whole Exec. To son David Watts 18 A. on Pungoteague which I purchased of Henry Scarborough. Wife to be guardian of my children Henry, David, William & Rebecca. To son William Watts the land purchased of David Walker & the land I bought of William Blake, cont. 82 A. To dau. Anne Downing. In case of the death of my wife my son in law William Downing to be my Exr. Children resid. legatees. Witt: Skinner Wallop, James Drummond, William Fosque. - p. 438 In order of prob: James Henry app. guardian to David Watts, heir at law to the testator.²

John [III] was the father of five children according to his will, four of whom were underage—Henry, David, William and Rebecca. He had one married daughter who was emancipated regardless of her age, because she was married. Although their ages were unknown, their birth dates were estimated, using the data from Barnum and John's [III] will and the general time interval between births of children. The children were:

- 146-1** Anne Watts born ca 1758, Accomack County, VA.
 - 146-2** David Watts born ca 1760, Accomack County, VA.
 - 146-3** Henry Watts born ca 1762, Accomack County, VA.
 - 146-4** William [III] Watts born ca 1770, Accomack County, VA.
 - 146-5** Rebecca Watts born ca 1772, Accomack County, VA.
- 148** William [I] Watts was born ca 1713, Accomack County, VA/Somerset County, MD, and died 1743, Accomack County, VA. He married Comfort Scarborough, probably daughter of Henry [I] and Winefried (Powell) Scarborough after Nov 1735.³

William's birth date was estimated, based on data about his parents. His death date came from his will, as did his wife's given name. Stell suggested that Comfort's surname was Scarborough, primarily because Henry [II] Scarborough, who died 1744, was named guardian of John [IV] Watts, heir at law of William [I] in the order of probate. Henry [I] Scarborough, who died 1735, named his daughter

¹Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 59 and 73.

²Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 227.

³Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 59, 80, 100, and 144; Judy Stell, "Watts," e-mail message from <stell@aol.com> (Virginia), to author, 12 April 2001.

Comfort as one of his heirs. Apparently, she and William [I] married after Henry [I] Scarburgh died, since he did not list a different surname for her. Wills written in that time period seemed to list married daughters by their husband's surname. Further, Comfort and William's [I] second son was named Charles, a name used in the Scarburgh family but not previously found in this Watts family.¹

Miles deduced that William [I] was born about 1700, which was unlikely since one may reasonably assume that his parents did not marry until after his mother's first husband died. He further reported that Col. Henry [I] Scarburgh and Winifred Powell were Comfort's parents.²

William [I] was left bequests by each parent, John [II] and Priscilla.³ When his father John [II] died, he left William [I] two parcels of land. William inherited (1) Wolfes Denn Island at Mattoponey, Somerset County, Maryland, which contained 92 acres and (2) Temp Island, containing 725 acres, located at Mattoponey, Somerset County, Maryland. According to Dryden, this land included Priscilla's part of Newport Pagnell [*sic*]: "18 Oct. 1724 John Watts with wife Priscilla Watts of Acco.Co. Va. gave 300 acres to son William Watts."⁴ In addition, he received one-seventh of the family beds and furniture and one-ninth of the personal estate of his father. Priscilla bequeathed William something not described, listed him as a residual legatee, and named him and Peter Collier co-executors of her estate.

William [I] died at about the age of 30-35. He apparently had not been married long, for he had only three children according to his will. An abstract of his will read:

WATTS, WILLIAM - 2 Oct. 1743 - 29 Nov. 1743 - To son John Watts land where I now live, also Mills Island & Wolfs Denn. To son Charles Watts planta. in Maryland call Mattapany & likewise Accomsick Island. To son William Watts land in Maryland call New Port pannel. To wife Comfort 1/3 of all my personal est. & 1/3 of my land during her life. Wife & son John Exrs. Witt: Robert Nairn, John Smith, Lemuel Kendall - p. 506
In order of prob: Henry Scarburgh app. guardian of John Watts, heir at law to the testator. - Henry Scarburgh qualified on estate.⁵

Of the three witnesses to William's [I] will, at least two were related. Robert Nairn/Nairne was his brother-in-law and married to his sister Jannett, and Lemuel Kendall was his nephew and son of his sister Tabitha Watts Kendall. The New Port pannel land left to William [II] was originally owned by his maternal great grandfather, John White.

The children of William [II] and Comfort were named in the will, and presumed to be underage, since John [IV] was named as heir at law and required a guardian. The birth dates of the children were arbitrarily at two years apart and are listed in the order they appeared in William's will. They were:

¹Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 80 and 110.

²Moody K. Miles III, "Miles Collection (New Miles Project Version 2, June 11, 2000)," Eastern Shore of Virginia Public Library, online <<http://www.espl.org>>, Miles <mkmiles3@home.com> (13568 Adrian Ct., Woodbridge, VA 22191), downloaded 21 April 2001, page [William] Watts Family 1.

³Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 59 and 73.

⁴Dryden, *Land Records of Worcester*, 434.

⁵Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 100.

- 148-1** John [IV] Watts born ca 1736-1737, Accomack County, VA.
148-2 Charles Watts born ca 1738-1739, Accomack County, VA.
148-3 William [II] Watts ca 1740-1741, Accomack County, VA.

Fourth Generation

146-4 William [III] Watts was born ca 1764, Accomack County, VA.¹

When his father died in 1776, William [III] received land John [III] purchased from David Walker and from William Blake, containing a total of 82 acres. He was also listed as a residual legatee. William or his first cousin William [II] (**148-3**) bought an unspecified amount of land from Gilbert Morris after 1784 and 226 acres from Jonathan W. Mifflin in 1817. No other data were found that could be specifically related to this William Watts by the author.

148-1 John [IV] Watts was born ca 1736-1737 in Accomack County, VA. He married Margaret Scarburgh, perhaps the daughter of Henry [II] and Margaret (Custis) Scarburgh, between 1755-1763. Margaret was born ca 1736 in Accomack County, VA.²

John [IV] birth date was guessed, based on his grandfather, Henry [I] Scarburgh's will. Miles estimated John's [IV] birth date as about 1730, which would have been before his parents married most likely. He also projected that John [IV] and Margaret married about 1755, which was a realistic date. Margaret's brother, Bennett Scarburgh, named "Bro. John Watts Exr." of his will. John's [IV] death date was not found. His wife's name was deduced from the wills of her father, Henry [II] Scarburgh and her brother, Charles Scarburgh. Miles agreed that Margaret's maiden name was Scarburgh. If her surname was Scarburgh, she and John [IV] were first cousins, which possibly violated ecclesiastical law of the Church of England.

Little data were found about John [IV] and Margaret.³ In 1755, presumably John resurveyed that which he inherited from William [I] known originally as Wolf Den and Temple Island to Watts Cow Quarter. About 1763, they assisted John Kendall, son of Lemuel and John's second cousin, in fulfilling the instructions in Lemuel's will. John Kendall was to give one-half of the entailed land on Wallop's Island (1000 acres) to his brother William. To meet this condition, Kendall had the entail docketed by Act of Assembly, and he then deeded it to John [IV] Watts by a General Court deed. John [IV] and Margaret deeded the 1000 acres back to John Kendall to give him a fee-simple title. In 1772, John [IV] most likely sold 50 acres of Watts Convenience to Dixon Quinton.

From 1758 through 1775, a John Watts was a party in wills of 19 persons in Accomack County, Virginia, as witness executor, trustee, or bondsman.⁴ These John Watts were either John [IV] or his uncle John [III]. It was impossible to sort out which one of them did what. In addition, a John Watts, probably either John [III] or John [IV], was chosen on 23 December 1774 for the Accomac

¹Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 227.

²Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 100, 110, and 162; Whitelaw, *Virginia's Eastern, Volume II*, 1243; Miles, "Miles Collection," 21 April 2001, page [John] Watts Family 1.

³Whitelaw, *Virginia's Eastern, Volume II*, 1242-1243; Dryden, *Land Records of Worcester*, 2, 135, and 681.

⁴Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 148, 173-174, 176, 180, 183-184, 189-190, 194, 196, 197-198, 202, 204, 206-207, 215-216, 223, and 225.

[sic] County Committee of Correspondence that was responsible for securing cooperation among the Colonies.¹ A John Watts was a member of the Society of Cincinnati, attending a meeting of the Society in Richmond, Virginia, 13-15 December 1802.² This person was in all likelihood either John [IV] or John [V].

John [IV] and Margaret had at least four children as inferred from her grandmother Winefried Scarburgh's will and her brother Bennett Scarburgh's will.³ They are listed in the order in which they appeared in the Scarburgh wills and no estimate was made of their birth dates. The children were:

148-11 John [V] Watts.

148-12 Elizabeth Watts.

148-13 Sarah Watts.

148-14 Henry Watts.

148-2 Charles Watts was born ca 1738-1739, Accomack County, VA. He married but his wife's name was not found.⁴

Charles was named second in the bequests in William's [I] will. Using the data about the projected marriage date of William [I] and Comfort and the birth of a child every two years, Charles was probably born about 1738-39. Dryden reported that Charles, son of William [I] Watts, repatented Watts Convenience, located in Maryland, in 1750. It seems implausible that one could complete a legal transaction before reaching majority. Perhaps Dryden mistakenly copied the wrong date—it could have been 1760.

According to his father William's [I] will, Charles was left the plantation in Maryland called Watts Convenience at Mattapany [sic] and Accomsick [sic] Island, probably also in Maryland. In 1750, Charles repatented to Watts Convenience, enlarged for 704 acres. In 1807, David Watts, Charles' first cousin who lived in Accomack County, Virginia, sold rights to Watts Convenience to Littleton Robins. In 1809, David Watts and wife Sally of Virginia sold Watts Convenience to Littleton Robins for docking, that which "Charles Watts willed to son Charles who died without issue and became right of Charles."⁵ In 1756, Winefried Scarburgh left a Charles Watts something not reported, presumably this Charles was her grandson.

Although Charles apparently married and had children, only one child's name has been found. This child was:

148-21 Charles Watts.

¹Charles Washington Coleman, "The County Committees of 1774-75 in Virginia," *The William and Mary Quarterly* V (Series 1, April 1897): 252.

²[Anonymous], "Notes and Queries: Society of the Cincinnati in Virginia," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* I (July 1893): 96.

³Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 144 and 183.

⁴Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 80, 100, and 144.

⁵Dryden, *Land Records of Worcester*, 662; Stell, "Watts," e-mail to author 12 April 2001.

148-3 William [II] Watts was born ca 1740-1741 in Accomack County, VA. He died after 1792. He married Sophia (?).¹

William [II] was named third in the bequests in William's [I] will. Using the data about the projected marriage date of William [I] and Comfort and the birth of a child every two years, William [II] was probably born about 1740-1741. William witnessing the will of his maternal Uncle Bennett Scarburgh in 1764 lends credence to his estimated birth year. The last land transaction that was identified as this William Watts was 1792 but he easily could have died later. William [II] and Sophia apparently lived all of their married life or most of it in Maryland.

When his father died in 1743, William [II] inherited the land in Maryland called New Port Panel. This originally belonged to great-grandfather John White, father of Priscilla White Layfield Watts. When George Layfield, the first husband of Priscilla, died in 1703, he willed the land to her since it came to him through her. It automatically became John [II] Watts when they married and he left it to William [I]. If Henry [I] and Winefried (Powell) Scarburgh were his maternal grandparents, it was interesting to note that William [II] was not mentioned in Winefried's will whereas his two brothers were.

Between 1772 and 1805, eight land transactions were concluded by a William Watts. This William Watts was probably William [II]. Five of these transactions specifically related to the Newport Panell that William [II] inherited from his father William [I]. These land dealings were:

Date	Deal
14 April 1772	Thomas Johnson, Jr. sold to William Watts, agreement of common recovery [Newport Pagnell]
June 13, 1772	William Watts and wife Sophia sold 100 acres [Newport Pagnell] to John Rackliffe
January 24, 1789	William Watts and wife Sophia sold 129 ½ acres [Newport Pagnell] to Thomas Prunell of Wallops Neck
January 24, 1789	William Watts with wife Sophia sold 120 ½ acres [Newport Pagnell] to Edward Harmanson
5 Dec. 1792	William Watts with wife Sophia and Edward Harmanson with wife Sarah sold all claim [Newport Pagnell] to Henry Franklin
24 Jan. 1792	William Watts with wife Sophia sold 10 acres [Killglass] to Edward Harmonson with New Port Pannell
17 April 1801	William Watts purchased part of Lanes Addition from Francis Lane
3 Sept. 1805	William Watts of Accomack County, Virginia, sold 41 acres of Lanes Addition, Locust Ridge, and Strand to Moses Pilchard of Worcester County, Maryland ²

¹Nottingham, *Wills and Administrations*, 80, 100, and 183; Stell, "Watts," e-mail to author, 12 April 2001; Dryden, *Land Record of Worcester*, 434.

²Dryden, *Land Records of Worcester*, 353, 371, 434 and 614; Stell, "Watts," e-mail to author, 12 April 2001.

Throughout the book, Dryden specified the state, and frequently the county, of residence of the seller or purchaser if other than Worcester County, Maryland. Stell also stated that no mention of anyone involved in the Watts transactions listed above was in North Carolina or that someone other than the owner was acting as agent. From the last two transactions, it appeared that William [II] had moved back to Virginia between 1801 and 1805 or this William may have been William [III], his cousin.

In Accomack County, Virginia, William [II] or his first cousin William [III], son of his paternal Uncle John [III] bought an unspecified amount of land from Gilbert Morris after 1784 and 226 acres from Jonathan W. Mifflin in 1817. No other data were found related to William Watts.

Discussion

The area of contention among the southern Watts researchers, and under consideration by this writer, related to the ancestry of William [NC] Watts of North Carolina. The male descendants of John [I] and Dorothy (?Hosnard) Watts of Accomack County, Virginia, included three William Watts through at least 1776. Using data in the abridged genealogical report, each William was considered and the reasons for rejecting each as William [NC] were explicated. The three William Watts of Virginia and Maryland were:

- (1) **148** William [I], son of **14** John [II] and Priscilla (White Layfield) Watts;
- (2) **148-3** William [II], son of **148** William and Comfort (?Scarburgh) Watts; and
- (3) **146-4** William [III], son of **146** John and Rebecca (?) Watts.

148 William [I] Watts

William [I] died before 29 November 1743, the date his will was probated in Accomack County, Virginia. He did not die intestate but wrote the probated will on 2 October 1743. Presumably, a will could not be probated until the testator died. It was doubtful that William [I] could have died a second time about 1772-1773, which is the approximate date when William of North Carolina died. Further, William's [I] wife was identified as Comfort in his will not Agnes. He probably was about 30-35 years old when he died, based on the estimated date of his parents' marriage and their age. Priscilla was born in 1677 and his father was likely about the same age or a little older. Priscilla's first husband died in May 1703, and the length of her period of mourning was not found. John [II] and Priscilla possibly married sometime early in 1704. William [I] was not their older son. His brother John [III] was presumably heir at law of John [II] whose codicil stated John [III] was under the age of 20 when it was written. If John [III] had not attained majority in 1725, neither had William [I].

148-3 William [II] Watts

If William's [II] mother was Comfort Scarburgh, she and William [I] likely married after her father's death between 31 August 1735 and 4 November 1735. The first heir mentioned in Henry Scarburgh's will was his daughter Comfort without a surname. In a study of several wills in Virginia, the testator seemed to use the husband's surname for a married daughter; therefore, it seemed reasonable to estimate the marriage date of William's [II] parents as about 1736. His brother John [IV] was heir at law of William [I]. William [II] was probably born no earlier than late 1737 nor later than

1743, and John's [MS] birth date has been estimated as between 1745-1752. William [II] would have been between 8-15 years of age when he married and moved to North Carolina or vice versa; and, allowing at least nine months for his wife's pregnancy, he would have been about 7-14 years when he fathered John [MS]. Further, William's [II] wife was Sophia not Agnes. Data indicated that William [II] and his wife Sophia sold part of Newport Panell in 1772, and this land was inherited from his father William [I]. He and Sophia sold all claim to Newport Panell in 1792. At least one other land deal involving William and Sophia was closed during 1792, and no mention was made about him being an absentee landowner or using someone else to handle the cited transactions. The last transactions pertaining to Newport Panell occurred about 20 years after William [NC] supposedly died about 1772-1773 in Anson County, North Carolina.

146-4 William [III] Watts

William [III], son of **146** John [III] and Rebecca (Wallop Kendall) Watts, had not reached his majority by 1776 when his father died. William [III] would have been born no earlier than about 1758, since he was not heir at law of John [III]. William [III] would have been younger than John [MS] was; thus, he could not have been John's [MS] father.

Conclusion

The data support the conclusion that William Watts of North Carolina was not a descendant of John [I] and Dorothy (?Hosnard) Watts of Accomack County, Virginia. This author regrets that William [NC] Watts was not a child of this eastern shore of Virginia family, and as a consequence, further searching must be done to identify and establish the ancestors of John [MS] Watts.

Since the father-son relationship between William [NC] and John [MS] was supported by minimal circumstantial evidence, but possibly correct, the task now is to look for stronger data to substantiate it. Conceivably, other Watts families from the eastern seaboard need to be examined for fit with John [MS] Watts. Watts families with male offspring/s with the given names of John, William, Reuben, and Thomas also need to be investigated, since those first names recur among the male descendants of John [MS] Watts.

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