

Robert Wilsons in Virginia (17th Century)

Hotten's The Original Lists...includes what may be the earliest mention of a Robert Wilson in Virginia, viz: In the Paule of London, 6 July 1635, Bound for Virginia: Katherine Wilson, aged 28

2 children { Robert Wilson, aged 6
Richard Wilson, aged 5

Waters. Genealogical Gleanings in England... notes this in connection with the will of Robert Wilson, citizen and draper of London, dated 2 January 1639 (1639/40?) in which he mentions his brother Richard Wilson in Virginia, Richard's wife Katherine, and their two sons Robert and Richard. The will also mentions "the first child of my said brother Richard which was born in Virginia, begotten of the body of Katherine, how or late his wife..." And the speculation is made that this refers to the same family. Robert Wilson's widow, as Katherine Highlord of London, in her will dated 22 May 1648, also mentions Robert and Richard Wilson, "my cousins now in Virginia..." The term "cousin" was frequently used for nephew in the 17th century.

The speculation in Genealogical Gleanings notes that the Richard Wilson referred to may be the Richard Wilson who embarked on the Phillip for transportation to Virginia on 20 June 1635 (citing Hotten again) but also notes that his age, given as 19, must be in error if he is indeed the husband and father of Katherine Wilson and the two children given above.

It would appear from Katherine Highlord's will in 1648 that the two children, Robert and Richard Wilson, were still alive at that time - at least so far as she was aware, and there are some other entries in the English records which may relate to this family:

Robert Wilson, son of Richard Wilson, chirurgion, deceased, was in debt to "my father Andrew Jacob" for 1580 lbs of tobacco. He leaves to his mother Katherine Jacob 41 pounds 4 shillings and to his brother John Wilson 30 pounds, with the residue to "my father and mother." Administration was granted to Katherine Jacob, the mother, 1 June 1651, with the note that the deceased, late of Virginia, was a bachelor. (Frank Smith and David Gardner. Immigrants to America Appearing in English Records (1976) No. 678 (page 66). George Sherwood (American Colonists in English Records...originally published in 1932, also notes this PCC entry and notes that Henry Walker, "my friend," and George Smith were witnesses to the will. And Peter Wilson Coldham (American Wills & Administrations in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 1610-1857 (1989) also lists this.

If this were the same Robert Wilson then his father Richard must have died by 1651, and he doesn't mention a brother named Richard - though he does mention his brother John, who could possibly be the first child born in Virginia. The mother's name, Katherine, fits - and it would appear that her first husband had died and she was remarried to Andrew Jacob.

But this is all rather speculative, and none of the above records gives the location in Virginia. In Torrence's Virginia Wills & Administrations, 1632-1800 there are listed the following, all in Northampton County:

Richd Wilson - Inventory 1639.

Robt. Wilson - Will 1650.

Richd. Wilson - 1659 Inventory.

I haven't checked the printed Northampton court records.

Done

James Knox

ROBERT WILSON OF ALBEMARLE COUNTY, CAROLINA.

According to Winslow's History of Perquimans County Robert Wilson was living in Chuckatuck, Nansemond County, Virginia when he witnessed the marriage banns of Levin Bufkin and Dorothy Newby, but she seems to have confused the dates. She has 9th day, 12th month (i.e. February) of 1688, but the marriage actually took place on the 17th day of the 2nd month (i.e. April) 1688, according to the record which is usually referred to as The Chuckatuck Record. (Miles White, Jr. Early Quaker Records in Virginia, p. 10) Robert & Ann Wilson both witnessed this marriage, but 22nd day of 6th month (i.e. August) 1678 Robert Wilson (Robert Willson) witnessed the marriage of John Morry and Elizabeth Yarrat at the house of William Yarrat in Isle of Wight County. Nansemond, Isle of Wight, Lower Norfolk and Surry counties in Virginia were all within the bounds of the Chuckatuck Monthly Meeting in Nansemond County, so records of various counties appear in the Chucatuck MM Record, and it's not always possible to tell exactly where a person lived.

I believe that Robert Wilson did in fact live in Nansemond County, Virginia just prior to his moving to Perquimans, but he may have lived in Isle of Wight, Surry or Lower Norfolk counties prior to that. Unfortunately the records of Nansemond seem to have been mostly destroyed, and although I find a Robert Wilson as a witness in Surry County 3 January 1647 (Surry County, Virginia Court Records 1652-1663, transcribed by Weynette Parks Haun, p. 110), The other volumes of Haun's transcript-ions, which cover the period 1664-1700 fail to reveal any mention of Robert Wilson, unless the entries in 1667 and 1668 to a Mr. Robert WMSON ^{are} is intended for Wilson.

I have checked a number of other printed sources for Isle of Wight, Surry, Lower Norfolk and find Wilsons but no Robert Wilson. Winslow seems to think that Robert Wilson didn't come into Perquimans Precinct in Old Albemarle County until April of 1689, but he witnessed the marriage of William Bundy and Mary Peirce in Perquimans in December of 1683, and when he was granted 450 acres of land in 1684 there is mention of his line and of "Robert Wilson's creek," so that it would appear that he was already established there at that time. I have temporarily mislaid my list of North Carolina officials, but by 1689 at least Mr. Robert Wilson was one of the justices of the Perquimans Precinct Court.

Lower Norfolk, Surry, Isle of Wight and Nansemond Counties in Virginia were an early center of Puritan settlement in Virginia, and many of these non-conformists subsequently became Quakers. This was also an area to which many of the landless freemen and small landholders of Virginia moved to in an attempt to obtain some land and a living. And consequently this area was also a center of the discontent which ultimately broke out in Bacon's Rebellion in 1676. A good many of the people in this area afterwards moved to old Albemarle County in Carolina. Some have attributed this to the persecution of the Quakers in Virginia, and that was doubtless one of the motivating factors for removal to Carolina. Some Virginians put it more bluntly:

Carolina, (I meane the North part of it) alwayes was and is the sinke of America, the Refuge of our Renagadoes.

Thus Governor Culpepper, as cited by Edmund Morgan, American Slavery American Freedom. The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia, p. 239.

From John Knox

McIntosh, Charles Fleming. Brief Abstract of Lower Norfolk County and Norfolk County Wills, 1637-1710. (1914 - reprinted 1982 by Southern Historical Press.)

Early Quaker Records in Virginia, compiled by Miles White, Jr. (Baltimore: 1989) Originally published in the Publications of the Southern History Association, vols VI (May 1902) - VII (May 1903)

Hinshaw, William Wade. Encyclopedia of American Quaker Genealogy. Volume VI: Virginia. For background and history of the Chuckatuck Meeting and Quakers in the Nansemond-Surry-Isle of Wight area.

Boddie, John Bennett. Seventeenth Century Isle of Wight County Virginia. Baltimore: 1973. Originally published Chicago: 1938.

Boddie, John Bennett. Colonial Surry. Baltimore: 1974. Originally published Richmond: 1948.

Fleet, Beverley. Virginia Colonial Abstracts. Baltimore: 1988 3 vols. Originally published in 34 volumes, 1937-1949.

Chapman, Blanche Adams. Wills and Administrations of Isle of Wight County, Virginia, 1647-1800. (Baltimore: 1975. Originally Smithfield, VA: 1938)

Chapman, Blanche Adams. Marriages of Isle of Wight County, Virginia, 1628-1800. Baltimore: 1982. Originally published Smithfield, Va., 1933.

Quaker Marriage Certificates. Pasquotank, Perquimans, Piney Woods, and Suttons Creek Monthly Meetings, North Carolina, 1677-1800, compiled by Gwen Boyer Bjorkman. (1988)

Adventurers of Purse and Person. Virginia 1607-1624/5, revised and edited by Virginia M. Meyer and John Frederick Dorman. (1987)

Coldham, Peter Wilson. English Adventurers and Emigrants, 1609-1660. Abstracts of Examinations in the High Court of Admiralty with Reference to Colonial America (1984) and Volume II: 1661-1733 (1985)

Coldham, Peter W. American Wills & Administrations in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, 1610-1857. (1989)

Coldham, Peter W. The Bristol Registers of Servants Sent to Foreign Plantations, 1654-1686 (1988)

Coldham, Peter W. The Complete Book of Emigrants 1607-1660 (1987)

Coldham, Peter W. The Complete Book of Emigrants 1661-1699 (1990)

Surry County, Virginia Court Records, 1652-1663, transcribed by Wegnette Parks Haun (1986) Volumes 2-5, covering the period 1664-1700 were published 1987-1991.

Nugent, Nell Marion. Cavaliers and Pioneers. Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, 1623-1666 (1934) Volume II: 1666-1695 (1977)

Robert Wilsons in 17th Century Virginia.

As noted above, a number of other Robert Wilsons appear in Virginia in the 17th century. Robert Willson, a form in which the name often appears, was transported into Virginia sometime prior to July 10, 1648 by William Edwards and Rice Davies of James City County (Nugent. Cavaliers & Pionners...)

1652 - prior to October 10th - Robert Wilson imported by John Merradith, of Lancaster County.

1652 - prior to 25 October - Robert Wilson imported by Col George Ludlow, of Gloucester County.

1653 - prior to 4 January ¹⁶⁵³ ~~1653~~, Robert Wilson imported by John Maddison, Gloucester Co.

1656 - Howell Pryse proved his rights to 1450 acres of land...for importation ofRobt. Wilson & a number of others. Howell Price was Clerk of Charles City County Court and involved in land speculation. (Fleet. Virginia Colonial Abstracts, III:168.

1656 - Robert Wilson received a grant of 400 acres in Northumberland County, 3 March for the transportation of 8 persons. Patent renewed 7 April 1662.

↳ 28 Sept 1657 - William Edwards, 1800 acres in Surry County, Southwarke Parish, the ~~1800~~ 1080 acres granted to Rice Davis & said Edwards 10 July 1648 & 720 acres due him for transportation of 14 persons, including Robert Wilson. Renewed March 6, 1662.

Before 5 February 1657 - Robert Wilson imported by Edwin Connoway & Mrs. Hannah Mountney, Lancaster County, for trans. of 33 persons.

Robert Wilson imported prior to 26 Feb. 1665 by Lt Col Thomas Beale (2950 acres) in York County. (York County, Virginia Records, 1665-1672, abstracted by Benjamin B. Weisiger III (1987)

Prior to 1 Sept 1658 - Robert Wilson transported by George Chapman, New Kent Co. (trans of 30 persons)

Unless otherwise noted the above citations are to Nell Marion Nugent. Cavaliers and Pioneers. Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, 1623-1666 (1934) The follow on volume for 1666-1695 includes a few more instances, including one by George Chapman of New Kent County 4 September 1670 for 1900 acres - and Robt. Wilson is one of those named as a headright, which looks like double dipping to me, unless these were two different Robert Wilsons.

There may well have been others as well, who don't appear in the works I checked, and of course people who paid their own transportation would not appear in these records unless they claimed themselves as headrights.

Some of the things checked are listed on the next page.