

Early-Poindexters-in-America Research Committee

4. PHOENIX REPORT

[PDA *Newsletter*, Vol. VII, No. 3, pp 20–25 (Jul. 1988)]

Our recent reunion in Phoenix was very successful for EPARC. We will summarize the reunion items of interest and plans for the coming year, and then continue into our first technical analysis.

Committee Activities

1. Robyn Daviet drew attention to Mr. George F. Hunt of Dallas, who has a good copy of Henry Benskin Lightfoot's will (1805), which includes important cross-connections with our early Poindexter lines. The will was found in Antigua, Barbados, thus reinforcing the relevance of this geographical area to our research.

2. Doris Ann Lucas arranged for a fine computer printout of most of our PDA lineage data—extremely helpful, even indispensable as a framework for our research.

3. Pauline Dunn recommended a new researcher, William Poindexter of New York.

4. Josephine Simmerly brought a copy of Dr. John B. Poindexter's new family history (1980). This new version contains a reference to a Poindexter presence in Normandy in 1180 AD, thus pushing our known history back by nearly 100 years. The source cited is the *Bulletin of the Society Jersiaise*.

5. Mary Ann Rembert of Dallas offered to attempt contact with Nila Walker Kohen, an ardent Poindexter buff who has so far been inaccessible to us.

6. Both Doris Ann Lucas and Robert W. Poindexter brought copies of extensive writings by Senator Miles Poindexter. Their dual submission was most welcome, as certain pages were illegible in one copy, and supplemental notes were missing from the other. The information in this material reinforces and extends the important Miles Poindexter writings submitted by Virginia Hulvey after our Williamsburg reunion. The main point of interest is the repeated assertion that Senator George Poindexter of Mississippi is a “near cousin” of George Benskin Poindexter, which establishes the blood link between George-1 (the immigrant) and Thomas-1 Poindexter (from whom most Poindexters in the USA descend). It should be noted that Miles Poindexter was an ardent Poindexter history buff, and his knowledge was derived at least 65 years ago—2 generations earlier than today. The closer in time is the information to the persons of interest, the more the principle of “proximate acquaintance” comes into effect. Presumably, we are all reliable in our knowledge of our own names and birthdates, a bit less of our parents, still less of our grandparents, etc.

7. The undersigned made a visit to the Atlanta Public Library, where he learned of a

possibly important untapped original source—personal letters of Senator George Poindexter—stored in the University of Mississippi library. If useful genealogical information is included therein, this could be within 4 generations of George-1, close enough for “proximate acquaintance” to be quite effective.

Plans for 1988-89

1. EPARC will commence publishing in the *Newsletter* some proposed models of the early Poindexter era, incorporating new information uncovered by PDA members and new methods of analysis. These are tentative working models, but may ultimately constitute an official PDA genealogy after review, critique, and modification. The purposes of these models are (1) to correct obvious errors for the record, (2) to acquaint PDAers with EPARC methods and progress, and (3) to provoke serious scrutiny and well-reasoned discussion. I have already spoken to several of our EPARC volunteers and asked for their personal commitment to this new phase of EPARC activity. All other interested PDAers are urged to participate. Comments and critique will be published if desired by their author; all will be carefully considered by EPARC. Up to now, PDA has served as a vast data-gathering net; now, it must serve as a vast computer to evaluate data and synthesize the best model.

2. We need volunteers to visit

(a) Museum of Southern Decorative Arts in Winston-Salem, NC;

(b) University of Mississippi in Oxford (near Memphis, TN);

(c) Virginia State Library in Richmond;

(d) Libraries in Barbados.

Persons able to make such visits are requested to contact EPARC for the specific sources and information which we are seeking.

Technical Topics

The George Poindexter Sequence. A review of numerous published genealogical works and PDA lineage sheets reveals that there are two common versions of the George Poindexter sequence in early Virginia. These will be termed *Old Model A* and *Old Model B*; they are shown in Fig. 1 (irrelevant offspring are omitted).

Both models are deficient. Old Model A contains a blatant error. Old Model B contains no glaring mistakes, but it does not take advantage of all the information available in the St. Peters Parish vestry records,¹ which are the main source for these models.

The deaths of the first three successive Georges are well established. The St. Peters Parish record allow a solid inference from George’s refusal to serve on vestry in 1690,² and then the changing of slave ownership from George-1 to his wife Susannah-1 by 1694,³ that George-1 died about 1692. The death of another George Poindexter is re-

corded 12 March 1716,⁴ and another, 06 July 1738.⁵ The birth of George Benskin Poindexter is recorded 26 August 1739;⁶ so George who died in 1738 could not have been the father. The existence of an additional George (-4) is well established by several references to his wife Susannah⁶ and birth of their son George Benskin, land ownership, and other matters in the St. Peter's Parish records during the interval 1738–1760,⁷ before another known George-5 (not an the main line of the firstborn sons) reached age 21.⁸ Only one George Poindexter is listed as a property holder in 1773,⁹ and it is surely George-4, since he was the direct heir of George-3's estate. He apparently died before 1779, since his son George B. appeared on vestry at that time.¹⁰

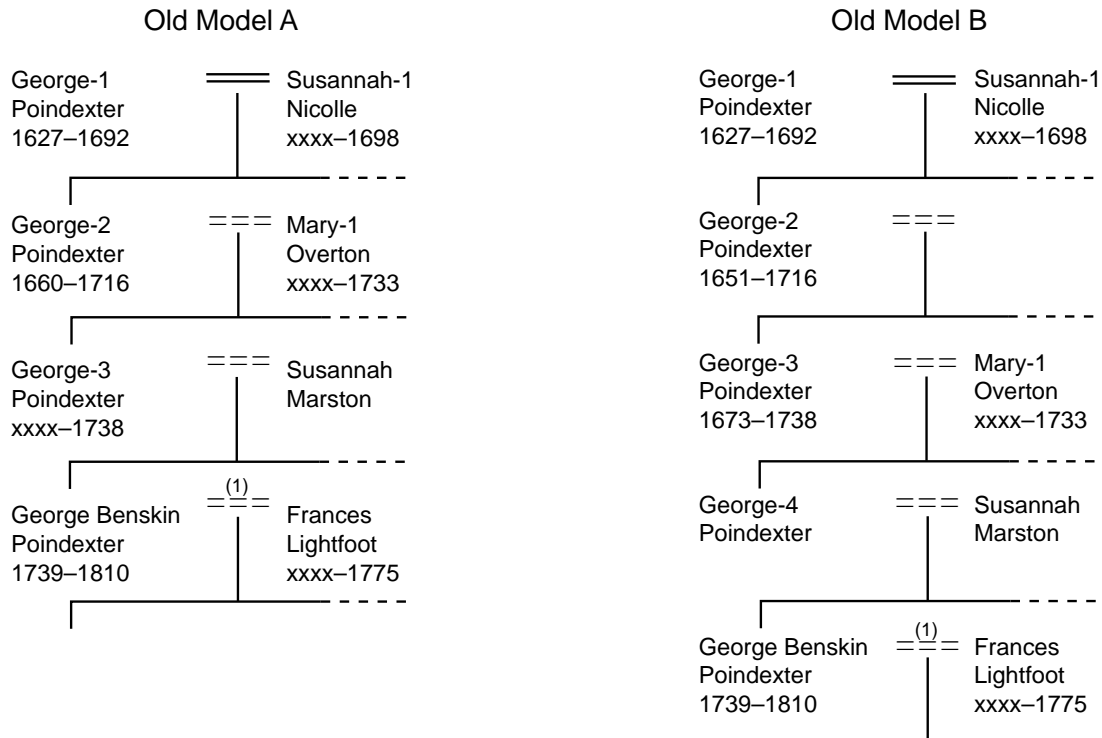


Fig. 1. Two common genealogical models of the George Poindexter sequence in early Virginia.

It is often glibly stated that both George-2 and George-3 served in the St. Peter's Parish vestry, based mainly on randomly selected meeting minutes both before and after 1716 (when a George died). Actually, a careful reading of the entire vestry record from 1704 (when a George was elected) to 1738 (when a George died)¹¹ makes it certain with about 99% probability that only one George was a vestryman in this interval. The election, swearing in, and ultimate fate of every vestryman (by death, resignation, moving away from New Kent County) are scrupulously recorded in the minutes. There is no such entry for George P. between 1704 and 1737; so there was no death of one George and election of another in this interval, and specifically, not in 1716. As to which George—2 or 3—was on vestry, it is highly probable that it was George-2. In 1704, George-2 was 54 and owner of the Poindexter plantation; it is very unlikely that the son, rather than the father, would have been elected to this council of generally middle-aged men of stature in the community.

George's vestry attendance record is further evidence of his identity. His record was very good until 1724; then became sporadic until his last meeting in 1728; finally he resigned in 1737.¹² Such a decline followed by a long absence suggests infirmity due to age, rather than sickness. It also suggests the stature of a venerated patriarch of the community to be accorded such respect. All other vestrymen were deleted from membership within a year or two of any infirmity. Again, here is evidence that this George was a very old man when he died, and therefore was George-2.

There is a long sequence of slave births listed in one entry in the Parish records for 1711–1728.¹³ It is highly probable that George-2, as owner of the plantation, would be the listed owner of all slaves on the plantation while he was alive. But since this sequence extends through 1716 to 1728 it is further evidence that George-2 was not the one who died in 1716; it was George-3.

With the probable death of George-3 in 1716 as a substantial hypothesis, another important set of events correlates well with it. In 1726, Jacob Poindexter had been cohabiting with his brother's widow since 1718–1719.¹⁴ There is a record of only one male Poindexter's death anywhere near the right time, the George who died in 1716. A Mrs. Sarah Poindexter had an oddly-named child, Julius Caesar, in 1719,¹⁵ and received mysterious attentions for a year afterward.¹⁶ (This Sarah is often erroneously named as Thomas-1's widow; this will be discussed later.) It makes sense here to put 2 and 2 together: Sarah was George-3's widow, and Julius Caesar was an illegitimate child of Jacob. Eventually, Jacob and Sarah were either married or accepted as common law man and wife; the record notes son Henry, born to Jacob and Sarah in 1726.¹⁷

The significant result of this deduction is that Sarah was the name of George-3's wife. So the George and Mary who appear together in the Parish record must be George-2 and Mary-1. The George, Jr., who had a daughter Mary-2 in 1715¹⁸ must then be George-

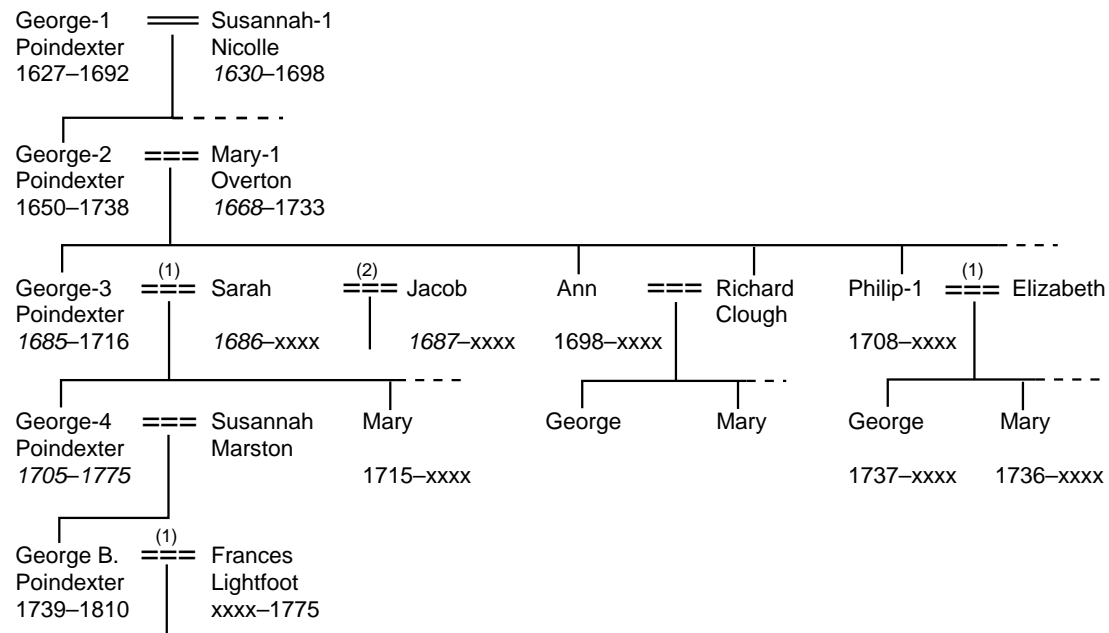


Fig. 2. EPARC Model 1, a new and revised genealogy of the George Poindexter sequence in early Virginia.

3, son of George-2 and Mary-1. George-2 and Mary-1 had a son Philip-1 in 1708.¹⁹ Allowing 30 years as Mary-1's absolute maximum childbearing period, George-3, their heir and first-born son, could not have been born before 1678 at the absolute earliest. More likely, with a 25-year period, he could not have been born before 1683.

Consideration of likely namesakes reinforces some of the conclusions developed above. The assignment of Mary-1 as mother of all the children of George-2 is reinforced by their children's choice of names for their own offspring. George-2 and Mary-1 have 2 known sets of sibling grandchildren who are also named George and Mary: children of George-3 and Philip-1²⁰ (and possibly also Ann^{21,22}). This duplicate pairing of children's names strongly suggests that they are namesakes; and these double namesakes suggest the high esteem held for George-2 and Mary-1. But the important conclusion is that they also support Mary-1 as the only wife (or at least, the only childbearing wife) of George-2. She is mother of both Philip-1, the youngest child, and George-3, the eldest.

Thus we have a new model for the George Poindexter sequence, which will be called *EPARC Model 1*. It is portrayed in Fig. 2. Note that only those persons named or pertinent to this discussion are included; thus many persons are omitted. Dates in Roman type are based on direct evidence and are estimated to be good to ± 3 years; dates in *italic* are inferred from the above analysis.

In future EPARC presentations, the genealogical assignment of other persons will be considered, particularly Thomas-1 Poindexter, our most critical PDA problem.

1. *The Vestry Book and Register of St. Peters Parish, Virginia, 1684–1786*, edited by C. G. Chamberlayne (Library Board, Richmond, 1937), hereinafter designated as *St. Peters Parish*.

2. *St. Peters Parish*, p. 32.

3. *St. Peters Parish*, p. 383.

4. *St. Peters Parish*, pp 441, 482.

5. *St. Peters Parish*, p. 547.

6. *St. Peters Parish*, p. 554.

7. *St. Peters Parish*, pp 274, 307, 324.

8. *St. Peters Parish*, p. 544.

9. *St. Peters Parish*, p. 653.

10. *St. Peters Parish*, p. 644.

11. *St. Peters Parish*, pp 98–253.

12. *St. Peters Parish*, p. 253.

13. *St. Peters Parish*, pp 484, 485.

14. *St. Peters Parish*, p. 633.

15. *St. Peters Parish*, p. 483.

16. *St. Peters Parish*, pp 171, 177, 177.

17. *St. Peters Parish*, p. 484.

18. *St. Peters Parish*, p. 386.

19. *St. Peters Parish*, p. 385.

20. *St. Peters Parish*, p. 527.

21. *St. Peters Parish*, p. 411.

22. *Louisa County, Virginia, Deed Books A and B (1742–1759)*, abstracted and compiled by Rosalie Edith Davis (Bellevue, WA, 1976) p. 77.

Remarks

We urge all interested PDA members to submit comments, criticisms, corrections, and corroborations regarding the above analysis. It is essential that our “official” PDA

genealogy be the consensus of a number of serious researchers and reviewers; I again emphasize that I am acting solely as coordinator, not as czar. It is unacceptable to have our official genealogy based solely on one person's logic.

Contributions should be sent to me; and please indicate whether you are willing for them to be published in the *Newsletter* (They will be carefully considered, whether published or not).

Ed Poindexter
6284 Stofer Road
Chelsea, Michigan 48118

Phone: 734-433-9648
Fax: 734-433-9649
Email: epoindex@tm.net

NOTE: Reference list edited to conform with standard format to match references with citations by Ed Poindexter, August 21, 2006