

Early-Poindexters-in-America Research Committee

7. SPRING REPORT

[PDA *Newsletter*, Vol. IX, No. 2, pp 22–24 (Apr. 1989)]

Committee Activities

1. The interim conclusions and models developed by EPARC over the past couple of years, and reported in the *Newsletter*, are now being incorporated into the comprehensive computer record prepared by Doris Ann Lucas. We note that these are presently not “certified” models, but they do include new information and approaches, never before used. After additional scrutiny, and with or without further factual or analytical inputs, these models may be the basis for an “official” genealogy endorsed by PDA as “best available.” In the meantime, it seems desirable to publish and use the models as a more thoroughly reasoned working hypothesis, and to bring order into the present chaotic collection of early lineage data currently in PDA files which have been gathered from members’s lineage charts and numerous other sources.

2. A number of volunteers are currently occupied in their planned research assignments, most of which have been previously noted here. There are no new results or findings to report as of this date.

EPARC Approach and Goals

1. We are very pleased that so many PDA members (and others) who have heard of our EPARC effort have been sending us valuable records and information. We want to be sure that no stone is unturned, and that EPARC and PDA have all the extant information on the early Poindexters for comprehensive inspection. I hope this generous spirit will continue! We are trying to get all documents and facts examined, correlated, and published in the *Newsletter* as promptly as possible, so that the entire Association knows about them, and so that contributors may benefit from mutual data-sharing from their sometimes difficult and costly information-collecting activities.

2. At this point in time we emphasize an additional area where we need members’s help, *viz.*, in citing of sources. Ultimately, we plan to prepare a report with the best-reasoned genealogy of the early Poindexters possible. For rigorous evaluation of data and for preparation of a “professional” scholarly report, we need to get the ultimate sources of our information. Ideally this means the following:

(a) A first-hand documentary source of the facts: birth record, will, court action, Bible record, etc; unofficial documents (letters, newspapers, books, etc.) which give good indication of care and veracity are also in this category.

(b) A more nearly contemporaneous informal record, as a letter, or description of ancestral events which was written by someone who seems to have been privy to earlier

unrecorded writings or word-of-mouth family info. For example, a letter from a John Poindexter (b. 1765) concerning his lineage back to George-1, and based on family conversation during the late 1700s, would be much more authoritative than a similar informal lineage from someone born c. 1965.

(c) A derived genealogy which shows evidence of extensive gathering and evaluation of information and rigorous logic in analysis and construction of genealogical models—with ultimate data sources, as in (a) and (b), cited.

Unhappily, much of our Poindexter data has no indication of where it came from. Some especially troublesome points have been mentioned in previous EPARC reports in the *Newsletter*, and we hope everyone is on the alert in these cases. But meanwhile, we earnestly ask everyone who sends us information to tell us where it came from, even if you cannot cite (a), (b), or (c). For example:

- (d) Copied from book on the Jennings family.
- (e) From a book in Houston library; don't recall title or author.
- (f) My father wrote or told me these things.
- (g) Saw it in the genealogical column of *The Phoenix Times*; forgot the date.
- (h) Ginny Walker of Dallas gave it to me.
- (i) Don't know where I got it.

Any of the above is helpful. And keep the info coming in!

Technical Topics

The Birthdate of the First John Poindexter in Louisa County. Over the past 40 years, the birthdate of the first John Poindexter (m. Christian Gizage) of Louisa County has been repeatedly given as 1703. This is based on the suit of *Sneed vs Poindexter*, c. 1765, in Louisa county; Landers cites¹ a section of the court records²—a section which we have not been able to locate. The clerk or attorney based his unexplained derivation of John's birthdate, apparently, on the claim of John's brother Thomas that he (Thomas) was about 60 years old (in 1765),² and on the fact that Thomas had 3 sisters born in 1697, 1700, and 1702.³ Thus John could have been born about 1703, between sister No. 3 and Thomas. However, several facts and considerations cast doubt on this logic.

1. John is listed as a property owner in 1719,⁴ which implies he had reached age 21. Prior to that time, we find James Brechin (John's stepfather) listed thus: in 1711, "lands of Nicholas Meriwether, William Meriwether, David Meriwether, Widdow Crawford, James Brechin, John Hill, Widdow Ariss;"⁵ then in 1715, "lands of Nicholas Meriwether, William Meriwether, David Meriwether, Widdow Crawford, James Brechin, John Hill, and Widdow Ariss."⁵ Then in 1719, we have "lands of Nicholas Meriwether, William Meriwether, David Meriwether, John Poindexter, and John Hill;"⁴ and again in 1727, "lands of Nicholas Meriwether, David Meriwether, William Fleming, John Poindexter,

William Meriwether, et al.”⁴ Throughout these same pages, we find many references to the lands of “orphans,” indicating that the lands of such children below age 21 were recorded under the father’s or mother’s name. James Brechin, John’s stepfather, died in 1721,⁶ and his mother Sarah in 1752.⁷ All this suggests that John reached 21 sometime between 1715 and 1719, and therefore was born between 1694 and 1698.

2. The scribe in the *Sneed* case was relying on *approximate* age asserted by brother Thomas. If Thomas did not know his own age exactly, or was in vanity trying to appear younger, and was in reality 61 or 62, then the scribe’s deduction would be incorrect. If Thomas were born in 1704, or 1703, it is less and less probable that John could have been born in the interval after his third sister’s birth in 1702.

3. John’s brother Thomas apparently had a grandchild born in 1739: George Apperson, son of Peter Apperson and Frances Poindexter.^{3,9} Though definitely not impossible, this is an improbably tight squeeze, at 17 years per generation if Thomas were born in 1705.

4. John’s mother, Sarah Crawford, received land from her father David in 1691⁸ which was clearly designated as a consideration in her marriage to Thomas Poindexter, John’s father. There is 6 years between 1691 and the first recorded birthdate¹⁰ of a child to Thomas and Sarah in 1697. Again, this is possible; but it is an improbably long time between wedding gift and birth.

Weighing these four considerations, it seems reasonable that John Poindexter of Louisa County may very well have been born about 1695 instead of 1703. His birth is not recorded anywhere, but neither are the births of numerous other first-born sons in the Early-Poindexters-in-America era.

1. John Poindexter Landers, *Poingdestre-Poindexter—A Norman Family* (Robert Downs Poindexter, location unknown, 1975) pp 94-95. Book hereinafter designated *Landers*.

2. Deposition by Thomas Poindexter in case of *Sneed vs Poindexter*., Louisa County, VA, 5 March 1765, as quoted in *Landers*.

3. *The Vestry Book and Register of St. Peters Parish, Virginia 1684-1766*, edited by C. G. Chamberlayne (Library Board, Richmond, 1937) pp 384, 449, 550. This book hereinafter designated *St. Peters Parish*.

4. *The Vestry Book of St. Pauls Parish, Virginia, 1706-1786*, edited by C. G. Chamberlayne (Library Board, Richmond, 1940) pp 258, 271. Book hereinafter designated *St. Pauls Parish*.

5. *St. Pauls Parish*, pp 236, 248.

6. *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 21, 314 (1913).

7. *Abstracts of Louisa County Will Books, 1743-1801*, compiled by Nancy Chappelle and Kate Binford Hatch (published by editors, 1964) p. 6.

8. *Poindexter Ancestry and Their Descendants Throughout the Years*, Ronald Poindexter (published by the author, 1985) p. 113.

9. *An Act for Confirming Certain Entailed Lands Therein Mentioned to William Meriwether, etc* , proceedings of House of Burgesses, Williamsburg, 5 November 1731.

10. *St. Peters Parish*, p. 384.

We hope persons having evidence or ideas on this matter will contact us.

Ed Poindexter
6284 Stofer Road
Chelsea, Michigan 48118

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