

Early-Poindexters-in-America Research Committee

16. SPRING REPORT

[PDA *Newsletter*, Vol. XIV, No. 3, pp 6–8 (Jul. 1995)]

Committee Activities, Spring 1995

1. Researches are continuing in the Channel Islands. We have engaged Mr. Bonamy Moullin to search the governmental archives on Guernsey, which is a major part of our complete survey of the Channel Islands. With aid of the CIFHS, we are continuing our search of Jersey records. So far, we have found Poindexters on both Guernsey and Sark; and we have found many heretofore-unnoticed Poindexters on Jersey. The prime object of this search is to establish firmly the connections among the earliest Poindexters in Virginia. We are spending some of our PDA-authorized research fund here.

2. Madeline Stewart has sent transcripts of very old stories on the American Indian origin of Bettie Pledge, mother of Elizabeth Pledge, wife of one of our early Thomas Poindexters.

3. Col. Art Poindexter has sent preliminary info on possible mixed-race slave descendants of the earliest Poindexters in America. Such connections are often (perhaps deliberately) forgotten. Yet if substantive records are found, they might contain useful info on some of our unsettled early mainline linkages. Art is pursuing the matter.

4. Since the last report, we had opportunity for some brief research at the Virginia State Library and the Swem Library at the College of William and Mary. The findings at the Virginia library are presented below. As for the Swem Library, I was somewhat deflated to find that it is not one vast collection of early Virginia records; rather, the “Swem Library” is the name of the main campus library. It does contain a noteworthy collection of early and unpublished records; however, there was nothing of pertinence to our early George–Susanna–Thomas problems.

Remarks on EPARC Operations

It seems necessary every now and then to reiterate our EPARC philosophy, since we occasionally hear things which indicate unhappy misconceptions. I want to remind everyone that I am just the *coordinator*; not the czar nor the supreme infallible critic and judge. I serve as the focal point of a loosely organized advisory committee which has never even had a meeting. I exhort and collect info on Poindexters prior to 1750, and make up tentative genealogical models from the info at hand. All contributions and the models are published reasonably promptly in the *Newsletter*. We hope that interested persons will comment, corroborate, or criticize any and all of the things we publish. From such clash or concurrence of thought, we hope to distill a consensual “best possible model” of early Poindexters in America. This will then become the “official” PDA genealogy, and published in a booklet. In turn, this PDA model will be further refined,

corrected, and updated by the same procedures.

It is helpful to EPARC if info and ideas are sent directly to me. If the contributor does not indicate to the contrary, I include the new info—as is, edited, or analyzed—in the next EPARC report for this *Newsletter*, so that it is on record. If the contributor doesn't want his info published in this way, we don't publish.

It is not mandatory, however, to send things to EPARC. If you have something that you want to submit directly to the Newsletter, in your own style and with your own ideas, by all means do so. Absolutely no hard feelings! We want all Poindexter info to be recorded in the Newsletter, so it's not lost, and so it's available for everyone to enjoy and to think about. A variety of authors also makes for much more interesting reading. Furthermore, EPARC itself does not analyze or publish any info later than 1750 unless it has a bearing on earlier linkages; such material must be published by someone else if it is to appear in the *Newsletter*.

Technical Topics

The George Poindexter Sequence. Readers may recall the EPARC model of the George Poindexter sequence in the *Newsletter*.¹ The conclusions developed therein were based on several erstwhile unnoticed facts from the St. Peters Parish register and vestry book. Some perceptive comments from Doris Lucas indicate that the evidence cited there should be re-examined.

The issue at hand is whether a vestryman named George Poindexter was one person or two persons (father and son), with postulated death and succession about 1716. The first piece of evidence relies on the perfection of vestry minutes, which give a list of attendees at each meeting, and which include specific mention of the enrollment and termination of vestrymen. As it turns out, in the interval 1686–1725, the vestry minutes specifically mention the induction and termination of *each and every* vestryman who is included in the attendance lists.² There is not even one failure for about 50 vestrymen! This evidence is thus even stronger than originally noted. There was no death and succession of George Poindexters in or about 1716.

A second and now irrelevant piece of evidence is the list of births of some “Negroes belonging to Mr. George Poindexter,” spanning the range 1711–1728.³ This sequence, showing no indication of a succession of ownership in 1716, was interpreted to mean that the owner must have been George-2, and that he therefore did not die in 1716. However, our recent examination of the *handwritten* record⁴ shows that the entire list was written by one person, in 1728 or later; it is not comprised of the original entries, recorded at the time of each birth. Thus, as Doris noted, it could just as well refer retrospectively to slaves owned in 1728 by whichever George was the current slave-owner at the time when the list was transcribed.

A couple of other, weaker bits of evidence¹ were found to support the revised model; these are unchanged by the recent re-examination.

The first evidence alone is strong support for the revised sequence of Georges presented in the July 1988 report, and it is somewhat corroborated by the several weaker observations. The second set of facts will require some ancillary data if they are to have any bearing on the issue. Recall that the EPARC model includes George-2 living until 1738 and outliving his son, George-3, who died in 1716.

Geo. & Son of George Pearson born March 23 — 1726
 Prof negro of Wm Peasley born July 4th 1714 — 1727
 Sam negro of George Pearson born July 7th 1710 — 1727
 Negroes belonging to Mr. Geo. Poindexter
 Moll born Jan'y 29 — 1718
 Tanager born in March 1719
 Jones born March 01 — 1714
 Lucy born Jan'y 7 1718 — 1715
 Pitt born July — 1718
 Sampson born in May — 1720
 Jenny born Christmas day 1722
 Sarah born in July — 1724
 Ned's born in August — 1724
 Sarah born June 23rd — 1724
 Tom born Feb'y 7 1725 — 1725
 Isaac born Jan'y 17th — 1726
 Judith born in Feb'y — 1726
 Frank negro belonging to Jacob Poindexter born March 7th 1727 — 1727
 Hannah & Dat. of Charles Withannah Pearson born March 20th bapt April 23rd 1728 — 1728
 Daul negro belonging to Martha Pattison born Jan'y 14 — 1727
 Sarah D^{ch} of Wm & Eliza Pattison born July 01: 1725 — bapt May 14 — 1728
 Tho' son of Jones & Eliza, Parish born Feb'y 29 1724 — 1724
 Edward son of Ditts — born Feb. 25 — 1725

Fig. 1. Sequence of births of George Poindexter's slaves, copied from photostat of original St. Peters Parish vestry book.

Channel Islands Research . We finally have a glimmer—but only that—of hope on finding something of value in Jersey beyond the Landers studies. The records of all Jersey parishes are recently being made available for study. We have found no pertinent Poindexters outside St. Saviour, where many are recorded, and where Landers seems to have been thorough. We have now begun searching in St. Helier parish, the largest on the island. Lo! perhaps as we should have expected, there are numerous Poindexters. The presently available segment ends at “George son of George” in 1653.⁵ We can hardly wait for the next installment!

1. PDA Newsletter, Vol. VII, No. 3, 20 (Jul. 1988).
2. *The Vestry Book and Register of St. Peters Parish, Virginia, 1684–1786*, edited by C. G. Chamberlayne (Library Board, Richmond, 1937), pp 98–253. Book hereinafter called *St. Peters Parish*.
3. *St. Peters Parish*, pp 484–485.
4. Vestry Book of St. Peters Parish, Virginia: photocopy of original, p. 130.
5. Birth records of St. Heliers Parish, Jersey: handwritten copy by researcher from Channel Islands Family History Society.

Ed Poindexter
 6284 Stofer Road
 Chelsea, Michigan 48118

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