

Early-Poindexters-in-America Research

SUPPLEMENTS 3–4

3. THE GEORGE POINDEXTER SEQUENCE REVISITED

[PDA Newsletter, Vol. XXVII, No. 1, pp 5–8 (Jan. 2007)]

Purpose of this Report

A new model for the descent of successive George Poindexters from George-1 was developed about 20 years ago, and presented in our PDA Newsletter.¹ It seems a good time to update the research and correct errors, and to re-phrase and condense the analysis to make it (hopefully) easier to follow. We will not review unchanged portions of previous reports, and we will include only a few critical reference citations.

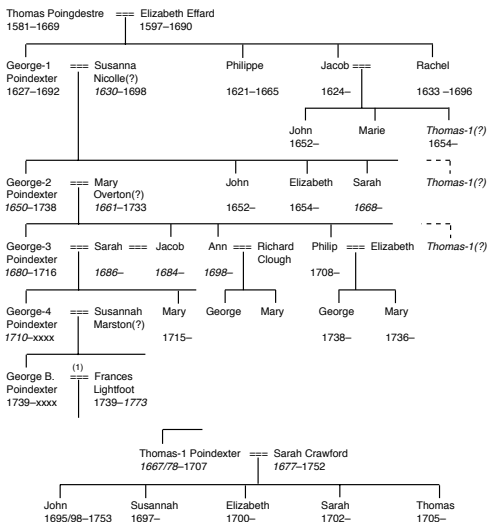
Overview of Prior Research on the Sequence

The main research effort was focused on the register and vestry records of St. Peter's Parish, with the intention of discovering and using every pertinent bit of evidence therein. I had never seen a really complete scrutiny of these records—not in the early extensive series of papers on the early Virginia Poindexters,² nor in some later popular studies. We supplemented the St. Peter's information by key findings from other well-known sources, with the totality yielding a new model for the George sequence. Many persons in the model were positioned without direct evidence on their origins. Yet on the whole, the model was distinguished from earlier models not only by the use of more information, but also by its overall self-consistency.

Critical Evidence and Analysis

Tacit Assumptions. Earlier and herein we have assumed the very significant basic framework that the sequence of first-born sons named George Poindexter actually existed in early Virginia. This is evidenced by the seeming inherited ownership of the home “Christ's Cross” or “Criss-Cross” in New Kent county from its construction by George-1 *ca* 1685 to its occupancy by George-5 B. in the early 1800s. Unfortunately, I cannot recall the source of this information on the home.

Jacob as Likely Second Husband of George-3's Wife Sarah. Our earlier analysis named Jacob as the cohabiting lover of Sarah, based on a report of easy morals among the colonists. The statement on Jacob is even more to the point than originally noted. We quote from St. Peter's Parish records,³ “*There's in this parish, one Jacob Poindexter, who has, in a seeming marry'd relation, lived with his Brother's widow above 7 years & has several Children by her.....*” The date was 17 February 1726. This, and the fact that only one Poindexter male—George(-3)—was recorded as dying at about the right time, led to the deduction that Jacob had taken up with George-3's wife. In corollary, George-3 must have died rather young. The birth of a strangely-named son, Julius



Updated and enhanced version of genealogical model for the George Poindexter sequence in early Virginia. Model includes information and possibilities for origins of Thomas-1 Poindexter.

Caesar, to a *Mrs. Sarah Poindexter* in 1719 led to the further deduction that Sarah was the illicit lover of Jacob, and previously, wife of George-3.

Plausible Namesakes. We do not rely on namesakes to establish facts of birth. Yet it is gratifying if they fit sensibly with an otherwise-derived model. Our model for the George sequence embraces two pertinent groups of possible namesakes. First, the sons of George-2 and Mary—George, Jacob, and Philip—have the same names as George-2’s father and two uncles.⁴ Second, there are at least two, and possibly three, sets of grandchildren of George-2 and Mary who are also named George and Mary. The children of George-3 are well substantiated by the proven existence of George-4, and by the birth record of a Mary born to George, Jr. in 1715. The children of Philip and Elizabeth are cited in the parish records. The third possible set of namesake grandchildren, of Ann Poindexter

and Richard Clough, is not as solid. There is no specific record of births; Mary appeared as executor of Richard Clough's estate, and George was a witness. This is not too bad; but note that the name of Richard's father may have been George,² which would kill the exclusivity for a possible namesake.

Summary Regarding the George Sequence

Certain important evidence and logic supporting our model of the George Poindexter sequence have been re-examined and updated. A new and more nearly complete diagram is shown in the figure for aid in visualizing of various aspects of the arguments. Except for some adjustments to dates, the model remains the same; there have been no changes to assignments of position in the structure.

References

1. EPARC Report 4, *PDA Newsletter*, Vol. VII, No. 3, pp 22–25 (Jul. 1988).
2. *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vols. XIX–XXI, XXV (1911–1913, 1917) numerous articles.
3. *The Vestry Book and Register of St. Peter's Parish, Virginia 1684–1786*, edited by C. G. Chamberlayne (Library Board, Richmond, 1937) p. 633.
4. J. Bertrand Payne, *An Armorial of Jersey* (publisher information not stated, 1865) p. 324.
5. *The Vestry Book*, *ibid.*, numerous entries for George Clough in index, p. 729.

4. ORIGINS OF THOMAS-1 POINDEXTER

[PDA Newsletter, Vol. XXVI, No. 1, pp XX–XX (Jan. 2007)]

Implications of the George Sequence for Thomas-1's Origins

Acceptance of the George model defines possibilities for the origins of Thomas-1. The situation of Thomas-1 requires further inference, as there is no direct evidence on his parentage. Thomas might reasonably have been an early son of George-2 or a late son of George-1; or a son of George-1's brother Jacob. These possibilities are shown in the figure of Supplement 3. Because of the sensitivity of the argument, it is necessary to consider three generations: Thomas, his father, and his eldest son, John—the latter also included in the figure.

Constraints on the Possible Parents of Thomas

Necessary Working Assumptions. As a basis for argument, it will be assumed that colonial fathers did not have their first child before age 18, but could have their last one as late as 60. It is assumed that mothers did not have their first child before age 17, nor their last one after age 47. This latter seems an extreme range and not the usual situation. However, I have no expert data on the most probable childbearing ranges. It is further assumed that a minimum of two years must separate successive births. Finally, we assume only one wife per husband unless specifically called out otherwise.

Birthdate of Thomas-1's First Son, John. Bible and St. Paul's Parish property records

allow John to have been born as early as 1695, or as late as 1698; but not in the middle of this range, since his sister Susannah's birth is documented as early 1697. If John were born in 1698, then Susannah's birth sets Thomas's latest possible birth at 1679; if John were born in 1695, Thomas's latest possible birth would have been 1677.

Possibilities for George-2 and Mary as Parents. George-2 and Mary had son Philip in 1708. This means Mary's first child could be born no earlier than 1678. If their first child was son George-3, it is already an unacceptably tight squeeze for Thomas, who could not have been born before 1680. Even with a 1698 birth for John, the birth of Susannah in 1697 requires Thomas's birth in 1679. If John's birth were 1695, it would require Thomas's fatherhood at 15, biologically possible, but quite unacceptable. Still worse, if George and Mary had a daughter before George-3, then George-3 could not have been born before 1680. Thomas would then be strongly ruled out as their son.

Possibilities for George-1 and Susanna as Parents. We now look in the other direction, viz to George-1 and Susanna. They had their first child, probably George-2, about 1650. Presuming she might have been born as late as 1633, this sets Susanna's last possible child at 1680. There is now a much looser constraint on Thomas, and he could have been born as early as 1659. However, if he attained age 21 by 1680, his name would be expected in York County property records, along with his possible father George-1, and brothers, George-2 and John. Birth of Thomas anytime between 1665 and 1675 causes no problems with his mother, his children, or property transactions.

Possibilities for Jacob as the Parent. This unlikely situation has been discussed previously, and we do not comment here. However, note that the origins of pertinent St. Saviour Thomases who died cannot be determined from parish records.¹

Possibilities for Other Parents. Initial DNA tests² indicate that Thomas's origins were close to George-1 in the family tree. This is another reason not to look far afield.

Summary Regarding Thomas-1's Origins

Lack of pertinent direct evidence limits us to no better than probabilities that one or another model is correct. If one accepts our George sequence, then birth of Thomas to George-1 and Susanna is strongly favored. We must, however, offset that clear situation against the probability that the George model itself is right or wrong. I surely hope someone else will examine the problem from a fresh viewpoint, or better yet, discover some definitive evidence! For now, Thomas's parents remain the reader's option.

References

1. Letter from Mr. J. R. Worrall, *Societe Jerseyaise*, St. Helier, Jersey, to E. H. Poindexter, 11 Dec. 2006.
2. Robin's Nest, *PDA Newsletter*, Vol. XXV, No. 1, p. 5 (Jan. 2006).

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