

## ANCESTRY OF GLENDON JEAN STARR

### GROUP FIVE

#### Edward Pate and Mary (Crawford)

Eleanor (Pate) Clark Comstock Hambleton was the daughter of Edward Pate, born February 25, 1766 in Bedford County and Mary Crawford, born November 18, 1771 in neighboring Botetourt (pronounced "bought a tot") County, Virginia. We know very little about the childhood of either Edward or Mary. We can assume their life wasn't all that much different from others who grew up in the shadow of the Blue Ridge during the Revolutionary War years. Both fathers served with local militia companies, requiring them to be away from the family for three to six months at a time. Edward by then was old enough to take on the chores usually performed by his father and Mary would have been expected to keep her younger siblings from harm's way. Once the war was over dinner table conversation likely revolved around discussion of crop yields and the latest news from Kentucky.

Edward and Mary married April 6, 1789 in Botetourt County and their first children, including your Eleanor, were born there. For them the decision to move west wasn't as difficult as it could have been. They were joining others -- her parents, several of their siblings and numerous friends. This group settled in Hardin County, but ended up in Ohio and Breckinridge when those two counties were carved out of the larger one.

The first Court of the Quarter Sessions for Breckinridge County was held Monday, August 15, 1803 with William Comstock, Edward Pate and James Jennings presiding. One county historian makes reference to one Justice appearing at the first court in the judicial garb more commonly seen around Williamsburg of black robe and powdered wig. All others -- justices, lawyers, jury members and clerks -- were surely more comfortable in their usual homespun hunting shirts. The historian didn't name the Justice, but common sense suggests he was the eldest, Justice Comstock. On the other hand, perhaps one of the younger gentlemen enjoyed a reputation of dressing in style.

Apparently the early Kentucky judges were not exempt from serving on juries for Edward's name occasionally appears on the list of jurors. One time the Grand Jury filed a presentment against him for not keeping "his road in order." This neglect cost him 15 shillings plus the court costs, adding insult to injury to the already thankless task of being the boss of a road gang. In 1801 he and his father-in-law Samuel Crawford co-signed the security bond guaranteeing the "just actions" of John Pate (Edward's brother) who was beginning his first term as County Commissioner. John was married to Jane "Jennie" Crawford another of Samuel's daughters. Making the early court even more an "all in the family affair," Justice James Jennings was married to yet another Crawford daughter, Ellen, and William Comstock would later become the father-in-law of Edward's daughter, your Eleanor Pate.

On March 31, 1801 siblings Edward, John and Judith Pate (who was married to Benjamin Allen Pate; exact relationship between the couple not as yet known) signed a power of attorney to Matthew Pate of Bedford County, Virginia and John Pate of Botetourt County, Virginia. The POA gave the Virginia residents, who were executors of the will of Jeremiah Pate, full power to act in their names when

conveying a deed to Samuel Crawford Sr. As a lawyer might say, "in his lifetime Jeremiah sold land to Samuel Crawford, but died before making a good title deed." A reminder: this Samuel Crawford is Edward and John's father-in-law. The next year the same four Pates gave power of attorney to Joseph Huston to receive their share of their father's estate in Virginia. In those days a married woman, couldn't act without her husband's approval. Thus, Benjamin Allen Pate's signature appears on all the documents Judith signed. But the signatures of the wives of Edward and John weren't required.

In 1808 Edward paid his father-in-law \$500 for 483 acres on Clover Creek. I believe this is the area where Edward and Mary spent the rest of their lives. This area is just west of the town of Hardinsburg. Pate Cemetery Road branches from the main highway and has to be near this property, if not actually on the tract once owned by them. This particular road now ends in a pasture. Although we didn't locate the cemetery, and their stones weren't found by transcribers, I believe the two are buried there. Mary died before Edward wrote his will. His death due to old age is given as August 1849 on the county death record. Of their eleven children, you descend from Eleanor, their eldest daughter but second child.

### **John Dent and Sarah (Brown)**

Nancy Allen "Nannie" (Dent) Jordan was the daughter of John Dent who was born during the 1740s in Charles County, Maryland. Based on his father's last appearance in Maryland records, the family left the state about 1764. They next appear in the Amherst - Bedford Counties area of Virginia in 1769. Where they were in between is not known, but John's father could easily have hidden from tax men in some remote cove in the hills abutting the Blue Ridge. John married Sarah Brown about 1772 based on the age of their eldest son William. At least we think she was a Brown and sister of Joseph who is thought to have married John's sister. One book on numerous Bedford County families with strong ties to Breckinridge County, Kentucky errs in saying Sarah was the daughter of this Joseph Brown. True, he does name a daughter Sarah in his will dated October 22, 1795; but he also provides for this daughter's education. By then the wife of John Dent was either a grandmother or was soon to be one. Moreover, both John and Sarah Dent witnessed Joseph's will.

On January 2, 1777 John paid £29 for 293 acres in Bedford County. That same year he and several of his Bedford County neighbors signed an oath of allegiance to the Commonwealth of Virginia. Genealogists consider these oaths a gold mine for they are a mini-census telling us where a Whig-leaning ancestor lived that year. The oaths originated as a way to detect a man's true feelings towards independence from England. Refusal to sign placed the man firmly in the Tory camp. For those still undecided, it was the impetus to jump off the fence. In that era, women were considered to be on the same side as their husbands or fathers.

Virginians appear on two kinds of property tax lists -- real and personal -- but not all lists for all counties are extant. Real property is land and improvements thereon while personal property lists recorded the tithe on all white males over a certain age, (specific age differed yearly) slaves, horses and cattle. The more wealthy were also taxed on the number of axles on their wagons and innkeepers were assessed a tax on their billiard tables. Personal property taxes for John Dent from 1782 to 1791 show only minor variations in the number of horses and livestock owned. In 1783 he is shown with three horses, one up from the year before. But the number of horses drops back to two for the next two tax years. He may have decided the extra horse was a luxury he couldn't afford. In 1785 John purchased 150 acres

increasing his need for another team of horses. Also by now John had teen-aged sons to help him with the plowing. In 1786 John had 3 horses, four in 1789 and five in 1791. Clearly things were looking up for the Dent household.

1791 is the first year John was taxed on two white males which indicates his eldest son had reached tithable age. William Dent's tombstone shows December 26, 1773 as his birth date, so the tithable age for 1791 must have been 18. On January 24, 1803 John gave William 75 acres which suggests William was establishing his own home with a new bride by his side. Also in 1803 John was listed as owning land which had previously belonged to his father Peter. Thus we suspect Peter had recently died. December 25, 1809 John consented to the marriage of his underage daughter (your) Nancy to marry Sashwell Jordan. He was an old-hand at this for had previously given consent for her older sisters to marry.

John's death date is given as November 9, 1820 by one researcher, but we can only document that his sons Peter and Marble N. petitioned the November 1820 court to begin probate. John apparently didn't write a will for I acquired only the appraisal of his estate. Taken March 26, 1821, the most interesting items were the flare, wheel, loom and slea (all used in spinning and weaving), sundry shoemakers tools, a walnut cupboard and chest and 10 geese. Plates and glassware were divided into categories: pewter, earthenware, glass and wooden.

Of John and Sarah's eleven known children, the most interesting to us are your Nancy, who married Sashwell Jordan, and Lydia, who married his brother Jeremiah Jordan. Sons Marble N. and Jabez Dent give us the origin of those names in the Sashwell Jordan line.

## **Jeremiah Pate and Mary "Polly"**

Records located in Breckinridge County, Kentucky are explicit: the father of your Edward is Jeremiah Pate who died in Botetourt County, Virginia in 1797. Most researchers agree that Jeremiah's father was Edward who died about 1768 in Bedford County, Virginia. But some also say this Edward's son Jeremiah lived on the New River in far southwestern Virginia. The Jeremiah on New River is a different Jeremiah Pate from the father of your Edward. Thus one theory errs, but which? Pate research gets even more murky beyond Edward. The problem lies in the colonial tradition of every family naming the first son after one of the grandfathers, second son after the other grandfather and usually the third son after the father. Thus one often finds numerous men with the same given name living in the same county. Therefore I stop these Pate narratives with Jeremiah. But one last comment about the Edward who died in Bedford County, since I lean toward him as father of your Jeremiah. He purchased 774 acres in Bedford County just months before signing his will November 19, 1767. This suggests a recent change of counties by a man not contemplating his death in the near future. However, Edward's will wasn't probated until the May 1768 court session, suggesting a lingering illness was involved. His will names his wife Martha and children: Matthew, Anthony, Thomas, Judith and Jeremiah.

Researchers estimate Jeremiah's birth as about 1745 and Hanover County, Virginia is given by most as his place of birth. The only thing known about Jeremiah's wife is her name; but like so many other Marys, she went by the nickname Polly. They probably married around 1765. Removing the entries in court records that probably refer to the other Jeremiah leaves few records on your Jeremiah in either Bedford or Botetourt Counties. Edward's son was in Bedford County in 1768 for he was appointed executor of the

estate. A Jeremiah marched with Bedford County troops into South Carolina during the Revolutionary War. That one is identified by researchers as the Pate later in Montgomery County, Virginia. However, I suspect they err. Pates lived on the New River when it was in Augusta County Virginia (before 1770) and I suspect the other Jeremiah belongs with them.

Two of your Jeremiah's sons (Edward and John) married sisters in Botetourt County about 1790, suggesting his move across the Blue Ridge was made mid-to-late 1780s. In 1793 he purchased 170 acres on Mason's Creek, but as in all Pate research, that purchaser could be Jeremiah's son of the same name. A Pate's Mill and Tavern appear on early maps of Roanoke County (taken from parts of Botetourt and Montgomery County in 1838), but these were built, or first appear in records, after Jeremiah's death. Perhaps his grandsons were the owners.

Per his will Jeremiah gave each of their ten children a horse valued at £15, a bridle and saddle plus featherbed and a cow and calf. He considered this wedding gift their major inheritance for the will stipulates many had already received their share. He desired his estate be kept together until his youngest child was fourteen. Also, at no extra charge to them the three youngest children were to receive a good education and maintenance paid by his estate. When the youngest reached fourteen the personal estate was to be sold and divided equally among his children. The last few words of the otherwise "boilerplate will statement" allow us a bit of insight into his piety and humility: "I recommend my Soul to god who gave it & my body to be buried in a decent manner without Pomp or Vanity."

### **Samuel Crawford and Janet (Mason)**

Mary Crawford, wife of Edward Pate, was the daughter of Samuel Crawford "of Roan Oak." This was the moniker attached to his name by the Botetourt County clerk to separate him from the five other Samuel Crawfords living in the same county until boundary lines and migrations removed some of them. He and his brother James arrived in the Roanoke River valley around 1770, but they first appear in a Bedford County record that identifies them as sons of "William Crawford deceased." The only William Crawford found so far in Bedford County Court records is one who appears as a witness in an Augusta County lawsuit in 1755. The search for William is on-going, but for now we stop narratives on this Crawford line here. Although both of your Crawford lines lived in the valley of Virginia, I've yet to find anything suggesting they were kin.

We estimate Samuel's birth as about 1745 and that of his wife Janet Mason as early 1750s. They were married March 25, 1771 in Botetourt County and all their children were born in that county. No one has attempted locating all the land Samuel owned, but most of it lay on the Roanoke River watershed and along Mason's Creek and at Mason's Cove. He also owned land in Bedford County. Like all planters in the region where tobacco was more difficult to grow, his major cash crop was hemp, the variety used in making rope, not the kind one smokes. He owned a few slaves, another indicator he was among the more prosperous planters in the valley.

He served his stint in the Revolutionary War in Captain Pauling's Company alongside his brother-in-law James Mason. Additionally, Samuel furnished a wagon and team for the war effort -- willingly or not is unknown. My guess is some Quartermaster discovered it while roaming the countryside looking for such items to commandeer. The wagon was "borrowed" for 22 days at one time and was away 67 days

another. This last was during the time of the siege of Yorktown and the wagon was used to convey prisoners to Winchester. Your Capt. Thomas Rankin's militia company reportedly left the siege to escort prisoners into central Virginia; one wonders if Rankin and the Crawford wagon ended up in the same convoy. Samuel also was credited with supplying corn, wheat and flour for the use of the troops. The Justices commissioned to decide the value of such claims placed the total value of his contributions at £50, 18 shillings and 9 pence, a large sum then.

Even though life was good in Virginia, the "call of the frontier" in the mid-1790s persuaded Samuel and Janet to pack up and head west along the wilderness road to Kentucky. One researcher claims Samuel purchased 1000 acres in Hardin County before Ohio and Breckinridge were taken from it. He and Janet chose to build their home in the more hilly area near the Forks of Rough River in the area that fell into Ohio County in 1797. After visiting both areas, I decided this area around Rough River was more like the area around the Roanoke River in Virginia than the tract they sold to your Edward Pate. From my "raised on the prairie" viewpoint, Edward's land was better farmland, but Samuel's was far more scenic.

Janet is last found in records July 10, 1810, but when Samuel signed his will February 11, 1818, it named his wife Mary Elizabeth. Until a record for his second marriage is found, all we know is: Janet died and he married Mary Elizabeth Blacklock between July 10, 1810 and February 11, 1818. Samuel died before November 12, 1821, the date his will was submitted for probate.

Eight of his and Janet's children lived to adulthood. Two daughters married Pate brothers (your Mary and Jane) and son William married Malinda Hardin, daughter or granddaughter of "Indian Bill" for whom the county was named.

## **John Meason**

Nothing is known of your John Meason's life before the early 1740s when he arrived in the area that became Augusta County, Virginia. His closest associates are traced back to Pennsylvania and Maryland, so it's a good bet he will be too. However, the Tosh family reportedly is the one that gave their name to Toshes Village in present day Pittsylvania County, Virginia. If this is correct, then John might have met them on his due-westward journey towards the Blue Ridge from an eastern Virginia county. Regional historians speculate Mason's Creek was named for an early hunter, but there's no question in my mind that Mason's Creek and Mason's Cove (west of present day Salem and near the city of Roanoke) were named for this man. We located the creek on our visit to Virginia in 1991. Ten-year-old Jeffrey wondered "why anyone would leave this area, it's so beautiful!" I on the other hand wondered where they found level land for their cabins and cornfields. This area is about ninety miles from the courthouse in Staunton, but the distance seemed much greater because of the steep ascents and descents especially in this area.

Moravian missionaries traveling through the area in the early 1750s wrote that "Once past the Augusta Court House ... the bad road begins. ... The road ran up and down continually, and we had either to push the wagon or keep it back with ropes which we had fastened to the rear ... [We] went to several plantations to buy feed for our horses. But the people had none themselves. However, they were very friendly and regretted that they could not help us. [page 137, *The Tinkling Spring: Headwater of Freedom* by Howard McKnight Wilson, 1954.]

John Meason ran a store on Back Creek near the fork in the wilderness road used by all travelers. Turning right took one into southwestern Virginia and finally over the Cumberland Gap into Kentucky. Those taking the left fork ended up in the Waxhaws area of the Carolinas. Because colonial Virginia was always short of coin, he probably usually exchanged his supplies for customer's commodities (such as whiskey) rather than money. Our best guess is the land where his trading post was located is now a south-side park within the city of Roanoke. The ground is much more level here and the pass through the mountains heading to the Carolinas is clearly visible from near the park.

We haven't discovered the exact relationship between four families who were among the first settlers in this area, but we can be sure there was kinship. They refer to each other in various wills as cousin, uncle and brother-in-law. Additionally, court records show the families stepped in to help each other during the difficult times. The later-arriving Crawford brothers are likely related to them as well for James married a Tosh and your Samuel a Mason.

The Toshes -- Tasker and Thomas -- are thought the first to arrive in this area for Tasker operated the ferry across the Roanoke River (then called Goose Creek.) According to regional historians this was the most fertile farmland in the entire area. Thomas appears a bit later than Tasker in court records so may have followed Tasker from their former home in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Although "Tosh" could be a corruption of "McTosh or McIntosh", one historian says they are of Swiss origin. A few neighbors were German; these tended to settle on the bottom lands while second-generation Scots-Irish tended to live up in the hills. Of special interest is neighbor Robert Poage, son of your Robert Sr. who settled north of Staunton. Your Robert was the patentee for the land here, but his son is the one who settled on it.

William Alexander, another early settler in the area, died in 1750 leaving four children. Two were "bound out" (apprenticed or indentured) to John Meason and a third to James McKeachy. The 1774 will of William's son, James Alexander, gave among other things 150 acres to the then three-year-old (your) Mary Crawford, daughter of Samuel and Janet (Mason). James Alexander also named his uncle James Keatley, cousin Sarah Keatley and cousin James Tosh (son of Tasker) in the will. Once individual bequests were taken care of, he left the rest of estate to be divided among the children of John Mason. James McKeachy (also seen Keachy, Caghey and other misspellings) is called brother in law in the will of John Mason. However, in this era that term can mean step-brother or half-brother, as well as one of the two men was married to the other's sister or their wives were sisters, and not kin to either of the men. Needless to say, research is ongoing as to how these four families (five counting the Crawfords) are related.

John Meason and Tasker Tosh appear in the rolls of Capt. George Robinson's militia company in 1742. In November 1746 John, Tasker and Thomas Tosh and other neighbors were ordered to build a road from the "Ridge dividing waters of New River from waters of South Branch of the Roanoke to end of a road that leads over the Blue Ridge." This is part of what we refer to now as the Wilderness Road to Kentucky. John Mason also appears as a frequent appraiser of his neighbor's estates: May 1749 for James Robinson; and in December 1749 for Charles Hungate and Simon Acre. Then in February 1750 he and James McKachey were appointed administrators of the estate of William Alexander. Perhaps these latter three were casualties of the August 1749 flood?

"... on the 25th of August, a little past midnight, on the Roanoke and the area northeast of it .... There was much damage. At several spots entire hills were swept down and leveled and several tracts of bottom land, all inhabited, were filled with so much gravel and sand that they can no longer be lived on. ... Also, houses and barns were carried away and with them a great deal of the crop. The Roanoke was a mile wide at several places and the water rose to 15 feet above otherwise dry land. ... livestock was practically all drowned because the water rose so suddenly and right at midnight that none could have been driven away." [page 63 James Patton and the Appalachian Colonists by Patricia Givens Johnson, 1973.]

The French and Indian War (1754 - 1763) known in Europe as the Seven Years War was especially troublesome to those Virginians living on the western side of the Blue Ridge. For them the war started in 1755 with Braddock's defeat near present day Philadelphia. But more important to these pioneers, Col. James Patton was killed later that year. Early one summer morning he sent his nephew on a military errand, thus saving William Preston's life. Patton was sitting at the Ingles family table writing more military orders when Indians burst through the opened cabin door. He was struck by a tomahawk before he could reach for his rifle. A string of forts were ordered built along the remote frontier and several were constructed. In 1759 John Mason and Thomas Tosh were reimbursed for their labor at Fort Amherst. I haven't found the specific location of Fort Amherst, but nearby Fort Lewis and Fort Vause are traced to this time. At times I've considered the possibility Ft. Amherst was renamed. The fort ordered built at John Mason's apparently never left the drawing board. Regional historians mention it, but add no one knows exactly where it was constructed or even if it was constructed. Grain for use of the local militia was stored at Thomas Tosh's farm. John Mason and both of the Toses were later paid for provisions they provided William Preston's company. Even with all this fortification going on, there was a steady stream of wagons rolling east across the Blue Ridge. Before the end of the decade, these Roanoke River families were living on the very edge of the frontier.

A very ill John Mason wrote his will October 12, 1760, but it wasn't probated until August 18, 1761. Perhaps he lingered several months or the family and administrators had other things to do than make the 180 mile round trip to Staunton. He didn't name his wife in the will, thus we guess that she, like so many other women, had died in childbirth or complications from it. There are many reasons for death on the frontier, but for women, that is the most common cause.

Their eldest son is the only one whose birth was registered by the Presbyterian minister John Craig. Like so many other church registers, only one of his is extant. He is the same minister who served Augusta Stone Church where your Poage, Rankin and Crawford ancestors worshipped. Few if any Anglican ministers served such a large area as Craig did. Eldest son John was baptized March 7, 1749 and the youngest son Joseph was born September 22, 1757. Thus the other children were born between these two dates. A note in the Augusta County Minute Book says the Mason orphans were bound out, but it doesn't state which families took them in.

Per his will, John gave his son John 270 acres on Mason's Creek; son James 150 acres on Back Creek; his son William 250 acres on Goosey Hill Branch and his youngest son Joseph, his home plantation of 155 acres. To his daughter, your Jannet, he gave a gray natural pacing mare; his daughter Mary received a young dapple grey mare and his daughter Margaret was given a black mare. His mother Leah was to receive £25 in cash, then a large sum of money. [John's gift to us future genealogists is providing his mother's given name, even though several insist Leah is his wife instead of his mother.] The rest of his

estate, both real and movable, was to be divided equally among the children. William Boyd of the north fork of the Otter River in Bedford County and brother-in-law James McKeachy were appointed executors. Witnesses were Magret Boyd and Wm. Ritchie. He signed the will John Meason, but most court entries dropped the "e" as did all his sons.

Augusta Court records show James McKeachy was the sole executor, but one researcher found William Boyd took the required oaths for administering this estate in Bedford County. James with George Robinson, John Miller and James Bane co-signed a 700 pound security note for James as administrator of John's will. Things of interest in John's inventory include: 21 horses, 7 mares with colts and a gray stallion, 10 cows and calves, 1 wagon and gears, two books and two Bibles plus one old book and a pair of silver buckles. One wonders if the buckles were family items or part of the store's inventory.

James, the second son and I suspect third child, remained in Botetourt County when all the others moved away. He served at one time as the County Sheriff and may have held other county positions. We are fortunate that his will, dated March 2, 1803 and entered into probate at the May 1808 court, tells us much about the other family members. It's intriguing to learn that forty years later there's an outstanding debt, or perhaps just grievance on James's part, over the administration of his father's estate: "Item. It is my Desire that all Debts & demands due to me by James McKeachey Either as Executor to my father or otherwise of what nature soever Be fully discharged in case his Son Andrew should survive me if he should not this Request to be void."

He followed up this item with special bequests to each of the children of Samuel and Janet Crawford. One is of interest to you: "Item. I leave to Mary Pate, wife of Edward Pate, who is also Daughter of the said Samuel & Jenet Crawford five pounds to be paid out of my personal Estate." And then: "Item. To my said Sister & best friend Jenet Crawford I leave my mulatto girl named Nelly during her life & at her death to leave the said Nelly to any of her children she may think proper or free her by Emancipation as she pleaseth."

He follows with a list of tracts to be "sold & the proceeds of such sales to be equally divided between the children of my Dec'd Brother William Mason late of the state of Kentucky, the children of my Dec'd Sister Mary Edgar late the wife of James Edgar of Bedford County & the Children of my Sister Margaret Snodgrass, wife of Joseph Snodgrass of Tennessee State to each of them respectively male or female In equal proportions.

He then left other lands to his brother Joseph in Kentucky. Joseph's Revolutionary War Pension application provides us with the specific birth and death date of September 22, 1757 and November 21, 1834. He is buried in the Pisgah Baptist Church in Breckinridge County. More than most pensioners, he was able to give specific details of his war record, including his volunteering for his brother William's tour of militia duty.

James's will provides details about all his siblings except the eldest brother John. Although a plethora of researchers disagree with me, I'm convinced John died before reaching adulthood. My reasons: lack of his name on any Revolutionary War militia list or Virginia Continental Line roll; lack of his name in Botetourt County Court records; and especially the lack of his name in his brother's will. However, others insist he married Sarah McKeachy and moved to Kentucky.



## John Dent and Katherine

Leon Wilde is credited with locating the records that identify two additional sons, your Peter and Thomas, to the family of John Dent and Katherine (surname unknown). John born 1674 in St. Mary's County, Maryland, was the son of the original Dent emigrant, Captain John and his wife Mary Hatch. This younger John and Catherine married about 1700 in either St. Mary's or Charles County, Maryland. By 1707 John was paying taxes on four tracts: 200 acres called Cumberton; 300 acres called Reding, 100 acres referred to as Evans Addition and 20 acres known as Barnaby. Patentees in Maryland named their tracts which are often good clues to their family origins back in England. The names were retained as long as the tract was kept within the family or until added to others under an inclusive survey.

These four tracts were apparently a marriage gift for John's father listed them in his will dated September 25, 1711. In addition John received under the will his father's land and house at Newporte in St. Mary's County and nearby tracts called Providence, Pearl's Progress and Harrison's Adventure. John resurveyed the four tracts in Charles County (Cumberton, Reading, Evans Addition and Barnaby) August 19, 1720. The surveyor located an additional 509 acres of vacant land which was included in the inclusive survey; this new tract was called Dent's Inheritance.

John Dent died before March 10, 1733, the date Katherine Dent qualified as the administratrix of her husband's estate. Researchers don't mention a will but the inventory of his personal estate totaled £95.11.2. Interestingly, no slaves or servants are listed on the appraisal sheet; in Virginia slaves are included in inventory (appraisal) lists.

The inventory of John's estate was signed by the appraisers, plus Benjamin Edwards and Dr. John Haw (identified as the greatest creditors) and George Dent and Edward Turner (listed as nearest of kin.) George is his brother and Turner his nephew. They were present to oversee the family interest, but Maryland law required they not receive any part of the estate. This is another difference between the estate laws of Maryland and Virginia. In Virginia only the appraisers of the estate signed the inventory list. The administrator or executor represented the family interest and unless the greatest creditor became the administrator by default, the only way to determine whom the deceased owed and how much at the time of his death was by reviewing the account receipts. Catherine was a good administrator for the final estate accounting showed a balance of £121.14.7 3/4.

Primogeniture was the law of the land; without a will, all the father's land passed to his eldest son without question or legal recourse by the younger sons. However, widows received 1/3 of the landed estate as "their dower portion." But again upon their death, the land went to the eldest son unless the father directed otherwise in his will. By law the widow was expected to live within the income from this portion of the estate including the cost of raising the younger children. Catherine received 390 acres taken out of Dent's Inheritance, as her widow's dower.

Eldest son John was more benevolent than many oldest sons because he divided the entire 1,169 acre resurveyed lands in Charles County into roughly eight equal portions, or so Leon's theory goes. Between 1733 and 1757 John and his wife Mary gave about 146 acres each to Hatch Dent, Benjamin Dent and Michael Dent, all identified within the original deed as brothers of John. Later they gave tracts to Thomas Dent and your Peter Dent without the relationship stated. In the same timeframe they executed deeds to the former three brothers, assigning the same tracts to each but the wording differed, and this time the relationship was left out. That left Leon with two 146 acre tracts not accounted for, plus one

tract for John. His thinking was John paid his sisters their share, thus keeping  $\frac{3}{8}$  of the total tract for himself. Without a record of the exchange it's difficult to prove. John as the owner can't be faulted for retaining a larger portion for himself.