

NANSEMOND COUNTY, VIRGINIA, DEEDS CONVEYING LAND IN THE UPPER PARISH

Contributed by Fillmore Norfleet
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The early records of Nansemond County were destroyed by fire. The deeds which are abstracted here are a major part of the papers of the Riddick Family of Nansemond County, 1720-1856, at the Virginia State Library.¹ For a long time the Vestry Book of the Upper Parish of Nansemond County has remained a mere collection of shadowy names as remote and vague as the century in which the people bearing them lived. These deeds present the first opportunity to take a fleeting look at a few of those who lived on the mucky White Marsh Road that Washington forced his horse along on his two visits to the Dismal Swamp.

25 Sept. 1722. Terlah Oquin to Humphrey Griffin, of the Upper Parish. For "two hundred Tar barills." 100 acres in the Upper Parish, "a tract formerly granted Henry Jurnagan", adjoining Bennett's Creek, the Mare Branch, John King's land. Sarah Oquin, wife of Terlah, relinquishes her dower. [No signature; no witnesses]

A patent was issued to Thurlo Oquin 14 July 1719 for 227 acres on the northeast side of the Mare Branch of Bennett's Creek, adjoining land of David Gwin.² A patent was issued to Henry Jurnagan 24 April 1703 for 100 acres in the Upper Parish on the west side of Bennett's Creek, the southwest side of the Mare Branch, beginning at John King's land.³

15 March 1734/5. Samuel Smith, planter, of the Upper Parish, to Richard Newsam, of the Upper Parish. For £20. 75 acres which Samuel Smith bought of Francis Harrell late of Nansemond County; likewise 147 acres which he (Samuel Smith) patented 26 June 1731. Signed: Samuel Smith. Witnesses: James Babb, Nicholas Skinner. Acknowledged in Court 26 March 1735. "The ... Deed having been burnt with the Records of said County which at this motion is recorded." Teste: Christopher Jackson, Cl. Court.

1 Virginia State Library, acc. no. 23846-a-gg.

2 Virginia Patent Book 10, p. 443.

3 *Ibid.*, v. 9, p. 568.

A patent was issued to Samuel Smith 26 June 1731 for 147 acres in the Upper Parish, beginning at William Speight's line, at Oxley's Branch, adjoining land of Thomas Gewin (Gwin), Francis Harrel(1), and John Duke.⁴ Christopher Jackson was clerk of the Nansemond County Court from 1734 to 1749. His house, in the Upper Parish, containing all the county records, was destroyed by fire in April 1734.⁵ Christopher Jackson was married and had at least two children, Christopher Jackson, Jr., and Michael Jackson, who married Mary Godwin, daughter of Joseph Godwin.⁶

28 June 1736. Walter Price of the Upper Parish to Moses Riddick of the Upper Parish. For £20 "credit in a store in Virginia." 150 acres "at the 4th Branch, it being part of a tract of land ... formerly granted to Humphrey [Griffin] containing 407 acres ... by a patent dated" 21 Jan. 1717, adjoining Larcom's Road, "together with one half of the pocoson ground of the entire grant Signed: Walter Price and Sarah Price, his wife. Witnesses: Lemuel Riddick, Humphrey Griffin, Henry Lawrence. Acknowledged in Nansemond County Court 28 June 1736. Copy teste, Christopher Jackson, Cl.Crt.

A patent was issued to Walter Price and Thomas Dyas 26 April 1683 for 400 acres in the Upper Parish, "high the run of Barbicu Swamp",⁷ adjoining Winborn's land and Chillcott's head line.⁸ John Chillcott's account book with an item dated 1694⁹ passed to John Granbery, Jr., between 1695 and 1723.

Moses Riddick, whose will was dated 12 Aug. 1790⁹, was the son of John Riddick who owned 550 acres of land in 1704¹⁰ and lived on a "Plantation on the White Marsh" according to the will of his daughter Jean (or Joan) Riddick, dated Nansemond County 29 Jan. 1752.¹¹ The third child of John Riddick was Samuel Riddick. Moses Riddick, whose wife's name is

unknown, had issue: 1) Jason Riddick (died 1784 at "Green Hill" near Cypress Chapel), captain in the Continental Line,¹² who married Euphane Fiveash,¹³ 2) Moses Riddick, Jr., who died 1801,¹⁴ 3) Abraham Riddick, died 1789, 4) Dempsey Riddick, and 5) Jethro Riddick I (1741-1797), who married Elizabeth Sumner and had issue Edward Riddick (born 1765, died 10 Oct. 1849¹⁵). This Edward, the first identified owner of the Riddick Papers, married Ann (Nancy) J. Goodman (born 1782, died 25 Oct. 1855) and had issue, among others, Jethro Riddick II (born 1803, died 17 Jan. 1874¹⁶) who married Elizabeth Vaughan (born 1803, died 19 Sept. 1880). Jethro Riddick I (1741-1797) received a patent dated 11 Jan. 1799, "by virtue of a survey bearing date April 7, 1797" for 247 acres, "176 acres part thereof patented the 10th day of November 1678 to William Speight "At a place called Barbicu—Joining the hindermost side of Humphrey Griffin" by him conveyed to Moses Riddick & by him devised to his son the said Jethro, and 71 acres the residue being surplus," adjoining the Cross Swamp, land of Thomas Harrell and James Griffin," to the main run of Barbicu Swamp at a place called Hubbards fishing hole, to an island in Cross Swamp, to the land of James Duke.¹⁸

No patent of 407 acres and dated 21 Jan. 1717 is of record in the name of Humphrey Griffin.

Lemuel Riddick (born 23 Aug. 1711, died 1775¹⁹) married twice, first on 17 Dec. 1729 Anne (or Anna) ---- (died 17 Nov. 1760) and second on 5 May 1761 Esther Robins (born 10 Nov. 1722, died 1775), daughter of John and Katherine Robins of Northampton Co., Va., and widow of Theophilus Pugh.

22 Nov. 1739. John Duke to Richard Nusam. For £20.8.0. 250 acres adjoining the Cross Swamp on Richard Newsam's

12 Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army* (Washington, 1914), p. 467.

13 Fillmore Norfleet, *Bible Records of Suffolk and Nansemond County, Virginia* ... (n.p., 1963), pp. 121-22.

14 *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, v. 64, p. 98.

15 Norfleet, *op. cit.*, p. 121, 195.

16 *Ibid.*, pp. 125-29.

17 Virginia Patent Book 6, p. 669.

18 *Ibid.*, v. 41, p. 44.

19 Norfleet, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-38.

4 *Ibid.*, v. 14, p. 189.

5 William Waller Hening, *The Statutes at Large ... of Virginia*, v. 4 (Richmond, 1820), p. 448.

6 Nansemond Co., Va., Will Book 7, p. 259, rerecorded.

7 Virginia Patent Book 7, p. 392.

8 Julian Hastings Granbery, *John Granbery of Virginia* (New York, 1964), p. xi.

9 Chancery petition of Thomas Fiveash Riddick (1781-1830), undated, suit compromised ca.1823-24, Riddick Papers, *loc. cit.*

10 Quit rent roll, 1704, Nansemond Co., Va.

11 Riddick Papers, *loc. cit.* The witnesses were Solomon Riddick, Mills Riddick and her brother Moses Riddick, also appointed an executor.

land, &c which "land my Grandfather Daniel Pugh bought of one James Peters and gave to me being the Son and heir of his Daughter Ann [Pugh] according to his last Will and Testament made the 25th of March seventeen hundred." Signed: John Duke. Witnesses: not listed. Receipt for £20.8.0 dated 22 Nov. 1739 given by John Duke to Richard Newsam.

Daniel Pugh I (will dated 25 March 1700) is listed as a headright "twice imported" of Nicholas Stallings in a patent of 25 April 1701.²⁰ Daniel Pugh I patented land in Nansemond County in 1695, 1698, 1699 and 1700, in all 2639 acres. In 1704 Ann Pugh paid quit rents on 2300 acres. By his wife Ann, Daniel Pugh had issue: 1) Ann Pugh who married --- Duke; 2) John Pugh (will dated 14 April 1740, Bertie Co., N.C., probated 5 Aug. 1740); 3) Francis Pugh (will dated 5 July 1733, Bertie Co., N.C., probated May Court 1736) who married Feb. 1722 Sarah Ferebee Savage of Northampton Co., Va.; 4) Theophilus Pugh of Nansemond County (the inventory of his estate is dated 1745/6²¹) who married Feb. 1738, as her first husband, Esther Robins (born 10 Nov. 1722, died 1775) of Northampton Co., Va.; and 5) Daniel Pugh (died 1745²²), sheriff, major and then colonel of militia (1743-44), burgess (1734-40), vestryman (1743) of Nansemond County. Daniel Pugh, Jr., died testate leaving 450 acres of land (part of a patent for 750 acres granted Col. Thomas Dew 10 Oct. 1670, on which today lies the city of Suffolk) inherited from his father Daniel Pugh, to his son Daniel Pugh III who in turn left the land to his mother and three sisters: 1) Mary Pugh, who married the Rev. John Reid, 2) Ann Pugh, who married William Gibson, a merchant of Suffolk, and 3) Philishia Pugh, who married John Jones of Suffolk. The descent of this land from the original grant to Col. Thomas Dew in 1670 through John Peters, the three Daniel Pughs, to the descendants of Mary Pugh, the wife of the Rev. John Reid, will be found in "Suffolk in 1843. Letters of Archibald Allen, of 'Rose Hill,' Nansemond County, 23 to William G. Driver," edited by Fillmore Norfleet.²³

²⁰ Virginia Patent Book 9, p. 303.

²¹ J. R. B. Hathaway, *North Carolina Historical and Genealogical Register*, v. 2, p. 627.

²² Wilmer L. Hall, ed., *The Vestry Book of the Upper Parish, Nansemond County, Virginia, 1743-1793* (Richmond, 1949), p. 15.

²³ *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, v. 64, p. 82, note 30.

James Peters on 20 April 1683 patented 750 acres near the Cross Swamp that goes out of Barbecue.²⁴

5 May 1746. Richard Nusum of the Upper Parish to Charles Jennings of Elizabeth City Co., Va. For £12. 103 acres at "a place called the Wagon Road" adjoining the Cypress Swamp, the land of Thomas Gwinn, near a "branch on the land I formerly sold ... Jennings called Axleys" [i.e. Oxley's], the land "being part of that land the said Nusum bought of Mr. John Duke ... and is now in the possession of said Jennings." Signed: Richard Nusum. Witnesses: James Griffin. Receipt dated 5 May 1746 for £12 made by Richard Nusum to Charles Jennings. Recorded "At a Court held for Nansemond County June 9th 1746."

Richard Nusum's land was processed by order of the Vestry dated 3 Aug. 1747.²⁵ His name appears no more in the record.

9 April 1748. Jotham Lacitter, planter, of the Upper Parish, to Moses Riddick, planter, of the Upper Parish. For £6.10.0. 50 acres adjoining the Forks Branch, "being part of a tract of land granted to George Laciter father to the said Jotham Laciter ... by a patent dated ..." 1740, adjoining "Moses Riddicks own land which he purchased of Walter Price standing in the West line of the said Laciters patent," Mills Riddick and Jotham Laciter. Signed: Jotham Laciter. Witnesses: John Campbell, Mills Riddick. Deed acknowledged and receipt given at the Court held 11 April 1748. Copy teste: J. Wright, Cl.Ct.

George Lassiter patented 769 acres of land 1 Dec. 1740 "at the head of Joseph Booths land, in the run of Mairy Pocason Swamp."²⁶ Mills Riddick (died 1764), vestryman of Upper Parish, 1743, witnessed the will of Jean Riddick 29 Jan. 1752 and owned land in 1748 adjoining that of Jotham Lassiter. He married Margaret Barradale, executrix of the estate of her father Matthew Barradale in 1764.²⁷

20 Dec. 1755. Humphrey Griffin to Thomas Harrell. For £30. A tract Humphrey Griffin "bought of Abraham Riddick

²⁴ Virginia Patent Book 7, p. 3.

²⁵ Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

²⁶ Virginia Patent Book 19, p. 906.

²⁷ Blanche Adams Chapman, *Wills and Administrations of Elizabeth City County, Virginia ... 1610-1800* (Smithfield, Va., 1941), p. 100; Elizabeth City Co., Va., Deeds and Wills 1763-1771, pp. 8, 22.

containing" 276 acres "only 25 acres that the said Humphrey Griffin sold to John Harrell out of the same patent," adjoining John Harrell's land. Signed: Humphrey Griffin. Witnesses: Willis Riddick, Ely Brinkley, Joshua Spivey, James Powell. Recorded at Nansemond County Court 12 Jan. 1756. Teste: Lemuel Riddick, Clerk.

Willis Riddick I (born 25 June 1725, will dated 10 April 1781, proved 8 April 1782²⁸), was burgess 1756-59 and 1771-75, and colonel commandant of Nansemond County militia 1776-81. He patented 96 acres on 19 May 1759²⁹ and 353 acres on 15 Aug. 1764,³⁰ which land descended by will to his son Willis Riddick II who, in turn, left it to his son Lemuel Hoops Riddick, who sold it, with other acreage, 19 May 1821 to Col. Josiah Riddick. The farm was known as "The Retreat". Willis Riddick I married in 1744 Mary Foulke (or Faulk) and had issue, among others, 1) James Riddick (1745-1786), 2) Elizabeth Riddick (1747-1793) who married first Capt. Samuel Carr of Albemarle County and second, as his second wife, Robert Moore Riddick, 3) Anne Riddick (born 1752) who married Josiah Riddick, 4) Theresa Riddick (born 1754) who married, as his first wife, Robert Moore Riddick, 5) Willis Riddick II (born 1757, died 12 Oct. 1800³¹), Revolutionary soldier,³² original member of the Society of the Cincinnati, who married Anna Maria Syme of Hanover County, 6) Christian Riddick (1759-1822) who married Archibald Richardson.³³

27 Dec. 1762. Thomas Gwin and John Gwin to Moses Riddick of the Upper Parish. For £40, "that is to say 20 pounds to Thomas Gwin & 20 to John Gwin." 250 acres, "that is to say" 125 acres of Thomas Gwin and 125 acres of John Gwin" in the Upper Parish, adjoining the Bull Branch, land of Bryan Quinn and William Sp(e)ight, "as will appear by Deed from Thomas Gwin's father to Thomas Gwin and John Gwin Party to these presents bearing date" 24 April 1761. Signed: Thomas Gwin, John Gwin. Witnesses: Willis Riddick, Joseph Booth,

28 Copy of will in Kilby Papers, Duke University.

29 Virginia Patent Book 33, p. 365.

30 *Ibid.*, v. 35, p. 591.

31 Obituary in *Examiner*, Richmond, Va., 24 Oct. 1800.

32 Heitman, *op. cit.*, p. 467; John H. Gwathmey, *Historical Register of Virginians in the Revolution* (Richmond, 1938), p. 664.

33 Norfleet, *op. cit.*, pp. 152-54.

Ezekias Riddick. Thomas Gwin, with the three witnesses, signed the receipt 27 Dec. 1762. Recorded at a Court held 10 Jan. 1763. Teste: Lemuel Riddick, Cl.Ct.

15 Sept. 1762. Christopher Gwin of the Upper Parish to Moses Riddick of the Upper Parish. For £40. 125 acres adjoining land of (William) Sp(e)ight, "a line between Spight & Gwin", a dividing line between Christopher Gwin and Asahal Gwin, thence up the swamp. Signed: Christopher Gwin, Alice Gwin his wife. Witnesses: Willis Riddick, Jacob Sumner, Joseph Booth, Jethro Riddick. Receipt for £40.0.0 from Christopher Gwin signed 15 Sept. 1762. Deed recorded at a Court held 11 Oct. 1762. Teste: Lemuel Riddick, Cl.Ct.

8 June 1767. John Jones and Philisha [Pugh] his wife, "of the town of Suffolk", to Moses Riddick Senr. of Nansemond County. For £8. A plantation of 112 acres. beginning "at the Middle Trudge Path" to a patent line made by one Humphrey Griffin, the land being "Part of a Parcel of land Patented by one Humphrey Griffin" 24 Feb. 1717 "and by him sold to Walter Price by deed bearing Date 26th July 1736, which said Price sold the Land hereby conveyed unto his Nephew Joseph Price Part of the Patent aforesaid by Deed ... Proved in Nansemond County Court which said Joseph Price sold the said Land to Samuel Riddick by Deed Dated 13th August 1750, who soon after departed this life, having just made his will to his wife Ruth Riddick, who also soon after died testate & gave the said piece of land to her Brother John Giles, this said John Giles sold the same land by deed bearing date the 13th day of April 1762 to John Jones party to these presents." Signed: John Jones, Phelasha Jones. Recorded at a Court held 10 Aug. 1767. Teste: Lemuel Riddick, Cl.Ct.

Philisha Jones was one of the three daughters of Daniel Pugh. John Jones and Philishia his wife of Nansemond Co., Va., sold to John Webb of the town of Halifax, N.C., for £500, land on the east side of Bennett's Creek, Chowan Co., N.C., "which s^d land had become the property of s^d Philishia on a division of the estate of Daniel Pugh dec^d and joining the land wherein Ann [Pugh] Gibson now liveth."³⁴

On 24 Feb. 1717 Humphrey Griffin received a patent for 275 acres in the Upper Parish beginning at Abraham Riddick's line, adjoining land of William Thompson, John Brinkley, to the head of Mossey Swamp

34 Gates Co., N.C., Deed Book A, no. 1.

to Peter's Branch, and adjoining land of (George) Gwilliam.³⁵

Samuel Riddick, son of John Riddick, is listed only once in the Vestry Book,³⁶ when in 1752 "The Line [was renewed] Between John Riddick and Willis Riddick-in Presence of Willis Riddick and Samuel Riddick." His name does not appear anywhere in the land patents. He and his wife, Ruth Giles, both of whom died ca. 1752, were the parents of Robert Moore Riddick (died 4 Dec. 1804³⁷) whose son Richard W. Riddick (1802-1853) wrote to and visited his "cousin" Thomas Fiveash Riddick in St. Louis, Mo., 1825-27. Moses Riddick, the grandfather of Thomas Fiveash Riddick, was a brother of Samuel Riddick.

12 March 1770. Thomas Jinings of the County of Elizabeth City, to Jethro Riddick. For £25. 250 acres made up of two parcels of land, one in the Upper Parish containing 147 acres "as by Patent granted to Samuel Smith & by Smith Sold to Richard Nusum & by said Nusum by his deed dated" 10 July 1740 "to Charles Jinings, father to Thomas", also "one other parcel of land the said Charles Jinings, the father, purchased from Nusum by Deed bearing the date the 5th May 1746 containing" 103 acres, and "is part of the Land purchased by Richard Nusum from John Duke, all of which deeds have been recorded" in Nansemond County Court. The two parcels of land contain 250 acres, which were "by the said Charles Jinings by his last will given unto his son Thomas Jinings." Signed: Thomas Jinings. Witnesses: Nathaniel Flemmyng, Lemuel Riddick, Ja Gibson, Tho. Brikell. Receipt given by Thomas Jinings 12 March 1770, with the same witnesses. Deed recorded at Nansemond County Court 9 April 1770. Teste: Lemuel Riddick, Clk.Ct.

The Vestry Book on 22 Nov. 1769 lists payment to "Nathaniel Fleming for 3 Levies overcharg'd 1768."³⁸ James Gibson, a partner (ca. 1770) in the firm of Gibson, [John] Granbery & Co., and ca. 1783 of James Gibson, [Samuel] Donaldson & Co., "British subjects", is listed many times in the Vestry Book.³⁹ The Vestry met at the house of Thomas Brickel (Brickel) "in Suffolk Town," 25 Jan., 19 Oct. and 22 Nov. 1769.

35 Virginia Patent Book 10, p. 361.

36 Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 81.

37 Norfleet, *op. cit.*, pp. 147-50.

38 Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

39 *Ibid.*, *passim*. For further reference to Gibson, see Granbery, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

Since he was never a member of the vestry, he was evidently an innkeeper.

19 Feb. 1788. Abraham Sumner of Gates Co., N.C., to Jethroe Riddick of Nansemond Co., Va. For £200 "lawful money of the State of Virginia." The plantation of 400 acres "whereon Jacob Sumner formerly dwelt in the County of Nansemond," adjoining the Mill dam, the land of Joseph Ellis, Kedar Raby, Willis Wiggins, Jethro Riddick &c" for "500 years ... paying ... yearly during the said term one ear of corn upon the 25th day of March in each year if demanded, provided ... Abraham Sumner ... will ... pay unto Jethro Riddick &c the sum of £175 with legal interest ... in ... twelve months after the signing of these presents, then these presents shall cease ... and Abraham Sumner will pay the aforesaid sum to Jethroe Riddick" and if not paid "Jethro Riddick ... may enter ... and occupy ... the premises ... clear from me ... Abraham Sumner." Signed: Abraham Sumner. Witnesses: Noah Wiggins, Willis Wiggins, Joseph Thompson. "This lease recorded" 13 Oct. 1788. Teste: Wm. Ely, D.Cl.

Jacob Sumner's name first appears in the Vestry Book in 1747,⁴⁰ when his land was processioned, and continues to appear (he was vestryman, churchwarden, processioner, and on the committee to build and inspect the chapel "on Tho^s Harrels Land") until the vestry met 11 Feb. 1777, noting "Mr Jacob sumner resign'd"⁴¹ He died ca. 1790 when Jethro Riddick was named administrator of "the estate of Jacob Sumner dec'd".⁴² Jacob Sumner married Sarah (Parker?) and had issue: 1) Abraham Sumner, and 2) Elizabeth Sumner who married Jethro Riddick I.

(To be continued)

40 Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 238.

42 Nansemond Co., Va., Fee Book, p. 26.