

Sponsored Emigrants to America



Mobjack Bay

William Thornton of Yorkshire, England came to Virginia in 1650 when his sponsor, William Pryor, patented land. This is the manner in which the early Virginians settled the land.

In other words, people indentured themselves to the first planters in order to have their passage paid. Thornton first settled in York County before receiving his own land grant and removing to Gloucester.

He named his plantation "The Hills" after the ancestral estate of his great-grandfather Francis Thornton who died in Yorkshire in 1566. William traded in shipping on Mobjack Bay across the bay from Norfolk, operating the vessel "Mary Jane." He was a shipper of goods to Barbadoes in the West Indies. Thornton served as a vestryman from 1677 to 1704 of Lunenburg Parish in Richmond.