

Abraham Cooke  
(c1660 - 1720s)

Where he came from is unknown, though there are some intriguing possibilities to consider (see endnote below). It seems likely that our Abraham Cook is the same person who first appears, with a wife named Martha, in Old Rappahannock County, Virginia in the 1680s. The first record of him is his witness to a deed from William Fautleroy to William Lloyd on 28 January 1683/4, for land on the north bank of the Rappahannock about four miles upriver from the mouth of Totasky Creek.<sup>1</sup> Thereafter, he appears as plaintiff or defendant in nine separate suits from mid-1686 through late 1690 [see footnote for details].<sup>2</sup> From these records, his children's apparent ages, and the fact that he apparently lived until the mid-1720s, he appears to have been born about 1660, perhaps earlier.

Although he is described in some of these records as a "planter", it is not clear what land he was occupying. Wherever it was, it surely lay in the North Farnum Parish of Old Rappahannock, in the area which later became Richmond County. There are no lease or deed records for him until those mentioned below in 1689.

He may have been a stepson or son-in-law of William Clayton (or Cleaton), who died about 1680, leaving a widow named Hannah and at least two children. William Clayton had purchased 100 acres west of Totasky Creek on the north side of the Rappahannock River on 6 March 1666/7<sup>3</sup>, and another 224 acres nearby in 1670 as William Clayton "of the County of New Kent".<sup>4</sup> Abraham Cook's first appearance in early 1684 was his witness of a deed for land about three miles upriver. I found no record of the disposal of Clayton's 224 acres, but the 100 acre tract was clearly the land he was living on at his death. He was dead by 28 January 1680/1 when his son, William Clayton Jr., was called an "orphant".<sup>5</sup> The son was of age by 7 July 1686, when "being arrived at the age of 21" he claimed 23 cows belonging "to the orphans of William Cleaton dec'd."<sup>6</sup> and exchanged some of the cows for land.<sup>7</sup> The word "orphans" is clearly plural in the record, implying that William Clayton Jr. had at least one sibling.

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<sup>1</sup> Old Rappahannock County Deed Book 1682-1686, Ruth & Sam Sparacio, (The Antient Press, 1996) p50

<sup>2</sup> 1687: Attachment granted to William Barber, executor of John Palmer, against Abraham Cook for 500 lbs tobacco on a bill dated 7 July 1686 (Orders 1686-92, p28, p33) 1688: Judgments against Abraham Cook by Walter Pavey for three barrels of Indian corn (p50) and by Abraham Carter for 400 lbs tobacco (p50); Judgments in favor of Abraham Cook from Ann Dacres, widow and executrix of Charles Dacres, for three barrels of Indian corn (p52, p69, p77) and from John Jones for 500 lbs tobacco (p50, p52); 1689: Judgment against Abraham Cook, as security of Thomas Dedman, for three hundred pounds of tobacco by John Morgan (p138, p144); judgment against Abraham Cook by William Powell for 560 lbs of tobacco (p166, p173); 1690: Abraham Cook granted judgment against the estate of John Patridge for 304 lbs tobacco (p173) and suit by Henry Lewis vs. Abraham Cook and Peter Evans (p188, p190). This latter was referred by a court held on 1 October 1690 and not mentioned thereafter.

<sup>3</sup> Old Rappahannock County Deed Book 3, p207. William Landman to William "Clayton." William Landman acknowledged the deed in court the same day. His wife, however, did not release dower until 5 August 1674, more than seven years later, when she did so as the wife of Thomas Short and relict of William Landman.

<sup>4</sup> Old Rappahannock County Deed Book 4, p135.

<sup>5</sup> Old Rappahannock County Deed Book 1677-1682, Ruth & Sam Sparacio, (The Antient Press, 1996), Vol II, p299. Benjamin Goodrich, son and heir of Thomas Goodrich, sold his father's patent to Edward Hill in exchange for Hill paying whatever debts "might become due from Col. Thomas Goodrich deceased unto William Cleaton, orphant" and other considerations.

<sup>6</sup> Old Rappahannock County Court Orders 1685-87, Ruth & Sam Sparacio, p161. This record mentions the cows belonged to the "orphans" (plural) of William Cleaton. William Cleaton Jr. claimed all 23, however.

On 28 May 1689, William Clayton Jr. and his wife Mary assigned his interest in half the 100 acre home place to Abraham Cook, “which belongeth to my mother’s plantation and her hundred acres of land that she doth now live on”.<sup>8</sup> On 26 September 1689, just a few months later, Abraham Cook and his wife Martha sold this land to Thomas Gladman.<sup>9</sup> The deal with Gladman was reversed for some reason, perhaps his failure to deliver on his bond for the purchase money, as Thomas Gladman and his wife Katherine deeded the land back to Abraham Cook just four months later on 1 February 1689/90.<sup>10</sup> On 22 February 1689/90 Abraham and Martha Cook sold the land to John Morgan.<sup>11</sup> [William Clayton Jr. then sold the remaining half of the 100 acres to the same John Morgan on 1 May 1690.<sup>12</sup>] Abraham Cook continues to appear in court records in Old Rappahannock for several more months, but is not mentioned after 1 October 1690.<sup>13</sup>

While we can’t prove it, it seems likely that he is the same Abraham Cook who next appears about thirty miles southwest in New Kent County, Virginia in the 1690s. This person first appears in the 1690s in the part of New Kent that later became Hanover County, and seems to be about the same age as the Abraham Cook of Old Rappahannock.

The colonial records of New Kent County were destroyed by a malicious courthouse fire in 1787, for which the arsonist was hung. That’s small consolation to genealogists, because all early records of New Kent were lost. Further, Hanover County, which was formed in 1720 from part of New Kent, suffered its own courthouse fire in 1865, destroying all but a handful of Hanover’s colonial records. The destruction of both county’s records leaves us with very little information, and certainly not enough to establish familial relationships with certainty. There are, however, colonial land grants which were kept elsewhere, as well as the partial vestry books of New Kent’s parishes. These records are enough to suggest that the Abraham Cook of Old Rappahannock may have been the same person as in New Kent.

In the vestry book of St. Peter’s Parish (encompassing roughly all of old New Kent County), in a section noting baptisms and births, are the following entries<sup>14</sup>:

Matthew, son of Abraham Cook born the 27 June, \_\_\_\_.  
Hannah daughter of Abraham Cook baptiz 21 Dec., \_\_\_\_.

Both entries, from context, appear to be dated in the mid to late 1690s though the years are unreadable. The parish record begins in 1682, yet the first mention of Abraham Cook is in the 1690s. He surely had children born before Matthew and Hannah, which is conveniently

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<sup>7</sup> Deed Abstracts of Old Rappahannock County 1686-1688, Ruth & Sam Sparacio, (The Antient Press, 1990), p286.

<sup>8</sup> Old Rappahannock County Deed Book 8, p58.

<sup>9</sup> Old Rappahannock County Deed Book 8, p87. Interestingly, he bought the land in May for 2,000 lbs tobacco and sold it in September for 2,400 lbs. After Gladman reneged, he sold it the following February for 2,000 lbs tobacco.

<sup>10</sup> Old Rappahannock County Deed Book 8, p179. (No consideration is mentioned.)

<sup>11</sup> Old Rappahannock County Deed Book 8, p172.

<sup>12</sup> Old Rappahannock County Deed Book 8, p259.

<sup>13</sup> Old Rappahannock County Orders 1686-92, p190. A suit by Henry Lewis versus Abraham Cook and Peter Evans was referred by a court held on 1 October 1690 and not mentioned thereafter

<sup>14</sup> The Vestry Book and Register of St. Peter's Parish, New Kent County, Virginia 1684 to 1786, edited by Dr. C. G. Chamberlayne, (Virginia State Library, 1937), both entries on p4, not consecutive.

explained if he did not move into New Kent until about 1690 or later. This vestry book contains a few other Cook entries, mainly the notations of the death of a John Cooke on 27 September 1717 and his wife Frances, who died 4 March 1716/7.<sup>15</sup> They apparently had a son William Cooke born 23 February 1716/7<sup>16</sup> who himself seems to have died in 1722.<sup>17</sup> The vestry book also notes that a Jeffrey Cook and a Thomas Cook both died in December of 1687.<sup>18</sup> [There is also a notation on the same page for the 13 Dec 169\_ baptism of “Abraham Cox”, son of “Abraham Cox”, which may refer to our Abraham, since there seems to be no further mention of any Abraham Cox.]

The 1704 Quit Rent roll for New Kent County shows Abraham Cooke with 200 acres of land. How and when he acquired this land is unknown. There are no patents for him (or any other Cook) in New Kent predating 1704, so he must have purchased the land by a lost deed. From later records this land was in what is now eastern Hanover County.

In 1704, a widow named Hannah McAllister [“MacKallister” in this record] of King William County made a power of attorney to her “loveing son in law Abraham Cook” of New Kent County.<sup>19</sup> She authorized Cook to collect debts due her and to sell or rent a plantation, apparently located in King William County.<sup>20</sup> [At the time, King William County lay between Old Rappahannock and New Kent.] Although it seems clear this was our Abraham Cook, it’s not entirely clear who Hannah McAllister was or what the relationship was between the two. See the separate McAllister page for a thorough discussion of the possibilities.

In 1704 St. Paul’s Parish was carved out of St. Peter’s, covering the area that became Hanover County in 1720. The vestry book of St. Paul’s Parish also has been partly preserved and contains several entries for Cooks. On 28 November 1707, there is referenced a court order “appointing Abraham Cook Surveyor of a Bridle Road from Maj<sup>r</sup> Meriwethers Mill to the three runs of the Chickohommany Swamp.”<sup>21</sup> Among the helpers appointed to assist him was a Robert Cook.<sup>22</sup> Then at a vestry held on 26 April 1709, Abraham Cook was ordered to send four tithables out of his precinct to assist in making bridges over Crump’s Creek and the Deep Swamp. Both of these records suggest that Abraham Cook was living in the part of New Kent County which later became Hanover County. The combination of the landmarks mentioned and patent references to the other names in these records suggest his land was located somewhere between Crump’s Creek and Totopotomoy Creek in what is now eastern Hanover.

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p57.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p79

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p61

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p41

<sup>19</sup> King William County Deed Book 1, p288.

<sup>20</sup> There are no Cleatons or MacAllisters on the 1704 quit rent rolls of either New Kent or King William. Perhaps Abraham Cook was paying the rent on this land.

<sup>21</sup> The Vestry Book and Register of St. Paul's Parish, Hanover County, Virginia 1706-1786 edited by Dr. C.G. Chamberlayne, (Virginia State Library, 1940), p23

<sup>22</sup> The other members of that road gang, presumably comprised of neighbors, included Anthony Waddy, Charles Lewis, William Meriwether, Jeremiah Parker, and Martin Baker. [Jeremiah Parker’s precinct supplied John Cooke to a later road gang.]

Further evidence is provided by processioning entries in the St. Paul's vestry book. In 1708 the lands of Abraham Cook, James Knuckles, John Kimbrough, Thomas Bradley, and Henry Bowe "lying adjacent to one another" were processioned.<sup>23</sup> [Henry Bowe and John Kimbrough Jr. were also among the helpers assigned to Abraham Cook in 1707.] On 26 February 1711/2 the report for the processioning of this same land was returned by Abraham Cook and William Merriwether acting as overseers for their precinct.<sup>24</sup> This time, the adjoining landowners were William Merriwether, Stephen and John Raglin, Francis Rhodes, John Mahone, Thomas Peak, Henry Bowe, William Walker, and John Anderson. From patents and later processioning records, it appears that Abraham Cook's land was on or near Crump's Creek in the eastern part of present Hanover County.<sup>25</sup> He must have moved not long thereafter. On 10 October 1719, Abraham Cook and Edward Garland were appointed overseers for the processioning of their precinct, which included the lands of Abraham Cook, William Cook, William Meriwether, John Harris, Edward Garland, Thomas Barlow, John Kimbrough (the former Jr.), John Whatley, and John Harris.<sup>26</sup> They made their report on 18 March 1720, mentioning a dispute over the lines of John Harris and John Kimbrough which was later resolved by a parish court.<sup>27</sup> That record tells us that Cook's land was a different plot of land entirely from that processioned in 1708 and 1711, located several miles to the northwest.<sup>28</sup> There are no further Cook references in the vestry book.

The land processioned in 1719 was two contiguous patents on the North Anna River, both issued on 14 July 1718. The first patent was for 300 acres on the North Anna River bordering Robert Walker.<sup>29</sup> The second patent was a combined headright and fee patent for the transportation of three persons<sup>30</sup> totaling 204 acres in New Kent County on the North Anna River and Beaverdam Creek.<sup>31</sup> Both patents were for land on the south bank of the North Anna River in St. Paul's Parish, and were clearly contiguous. This was obviously the land processioned in 1719, several miles west of his earlier land. The North Anna River is a fork of the Pamunkey starting midway in present-day Hanover County, and forms the later border between western Hanover to the south and Caroline to the north. A bit further west, it forms the border between Louisa to the south and Spotsylvania to the north. Both land grants to Abraham Cook would have been on the Hanover County side of the river a few miles east of the border of present-day Louisa County.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p210

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p231 and 243

<sup>25</sup> Henry Bowe and John Anderson lived on Crump's Creek. It appears that the earliest records reflect a fairly sparse population. The two road orders and the 1708 processioning district suggest the parties were all living in the area between Crump's Creek and Totopotomoy Creek. By the 1711 processioning, enough people had moved into the area that the districts were geographically smaller. I also note (Chamberlayne, p86) that John Kimbrough and James Knuckles were mentioned in the area as early as 1704: "Upon the petition of the upper inhabitants of this parish presented by John Kimburrow, James Nuckols and Richard Corley, laying down that they live very remote from the church, it is ordered that a new church or chapel be built (upon the upper side of Meachamp Creek adjoining to the King's Road)... Mr. John Kimburrow assuming to this vestry that he will give two acres of land convenient to said road and a spring and like wise all manner of timbers for building the said church."

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p267

<sup>27</sup> All dates herein are corrected to the Gregorian calendar

<sup>28</sup> The dispute between Harris and Kimbrough identifies the land as part of a patent to Edward Garland on the south side of the North Anna. Garland had several patents but the only one on the North Anna was his 1714 patent. This, incidentally, adjoined the later patent to Abraham Cook Jr.

<sup>29</sup> Virginia Patent Book 10, p395. (This patent does not appear in the index to patents.)

<sup>30</sup> Benjamin Clerk and Mary his wife, and John Simpson

<sup>31</sup> Virginia Patent Book 10, p396.

On 18 February 1722/3, following the formation of Hanover County, two additional patents were issued. "Abraham Cook of Hanover County" received 400 acres on the south side of the North Anna River "beginning at Abraham Cook's lower corner red Oake on the river."<sup>32</sup> This land was adjacent to the 504 acres he already owned, on the south side of the earlier patents, giving him a contiguous parcel on the south bank of the river almost 2½ miles long.

On the same day, "Abraham Cook Junr. of Hanover County" received a patent for 400 acres in Hanover County "on the Ridge between the North Anna and Little Rivers" which we can locate as being about five miles west of Abraham Cook Sr.'s patents on the river.<sup>33</sup> It was separated from Abraham Cook Sr. mainly by a large patent to Edward Garland covering about five miles of the riverbank. Although the terms "Sr." and "Jr." at that time merely differentiated between two people with the same name, it seems a good bet that the two Abraham Cooks were father and son.

Abraham Cook probably died not long after his 1723 patent, if not before.<sup>34</sup> In 1726, 1728, and 1731 patents were issued to others for land adjoining the Abraham Cook Jr. patent, each of which refers to the land as belonging to "Abraham Cook", with no modifier.<sup>35</sup> A 1724 patent adjoining Abraham Cook Sr. refers to the adjoining land as belonging to "Abraham Cook", though we have no way of knowing the date of the survey from which this description was drawn.<sup>36</sup> The absence of any further reference to a "Senior" or "Junior" suggests that Abraham Cook Sr. died sometime in the 1720s.

The only other surviving public records of Hanover County are a single book, for the two years 1734-1735, of court orders, wills, and deeds. In that book, an Abraham Cook was a witness to two deeds dated 4 June 1734 by Shirley Whatley for patents that lay just west of Abraham Cook Jr.'s patent.<sup>37</sup> Abraham Cook also appears as one of the appraisers of the estate of Elisabeth Penik on 4 July 1735.<sup>38</sup> It seems most plausible that these citations were for Abraham Cook Jr., particularly given the absence of a modifier to his name.

With the destruction of county records, there is precious little evidence to help us identify Abraham Cook's children. However, we can make a fairly compelling circumstantial argument that Abraham, William, and John Cook were among his children. Benjamin Cook may have been another son, though the case is a very weak one. Some claim he had a daughter named Frances, but the evidence is against it.

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<sup>32</sup> Virginia Patent Book 11, p164.

<sup>33</sup> Virginia Patent Book 11, p160.

<sup>34</sup> Note that he may well have been dead when the patent was issued. The date on the patent is the date it was signed by the Governor, which was a minimum of several months after the application. I have seen several cases of patents signed after the applicant's death, so it is certainly possible.

<sup>35</sup> Virginia Patent Book 13, p19 and p293, and Book 14, p215.

<sup>36</sup> Virginia Patent Book 12, p29.

<sup>37</sup> Hanover County, Virginia Court Records 1733-1735, Rosalie Edith Davis (1979), p24-25. Shirley Whatley had received two patents earlier that year, both located nearly on the Louisa County line west of Abraham Cook Jr., and it was apparently these patents which were being sold (See Virginia Patent Book 15, p216 and p231.)

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p70

1. **William Cooke ?** (c1685 – by1752) He appears very likely to have been a son, perhaps the eldest, based mainly on his proximity to Abraham Cook. At a vestry held on 10 October 1719, the lands of Abraham Cook, William Cook, Edward Garland and four others were made a precinct for processioning purposes.<sup>39</sup> It seems clear that this precinct included the two 1718 patents to Abraham Cook and the adjoining patent to Edward Garland, meaning that William Cook had either been given part of Abraham Cook's land or had purchased nearby land from someone else. The accounts of Partridge & Company 1734-1756 (see above) contain an account for William Cook with the first entry dated 13 April 1736 when he bought a pair of woman's shoes.<sup>40</sup> This was surely the same man, for his account shows several debits and credits to Robert Harris and James Glenn, both of whom had patented land within a mile or two of Abraham Cook Sr. These ledger entries also show that William Cook and John Cook were brothers, for they include a credit of 24 October 1737 from "yr brother Jno. Cook" and a corresponding debit in the account of John Cook to "yr. brother Wm. Cook".<sup>41</sup> The ledgers also show that William Cooke had a son named Clayton Cook, and probably others for whom he purchased three boy's hats .<sup>42</sup> The date of the final ledger entry is 13 July 1738, and the account is not marked "carried forward", suggesting that he left the area in 1738. He moved about this time to Goochland (now Cumberland) County on Great Guinea Creek. William Cooke of Hanover County was issued a patent for 430 acres there on 24 March 1740.<sup>43</sup> This land was adjacent to James Glenn, whose name appears in William Cooke's accounts with Partridge & Company, and was less than three miles from a patent to his brother John Cook of the same date. He sold his patent in two parts to Nathaniel Henderson and John Brown on 16 October 1744, signing with a mark and identifying himself as of St. Martin's Parish in Hanover County when he patented the land.<sup>44</sup> There is no record of his death, but when Nathaniel Henderson resold the land on 29 November 1752, it was described as where "William Cooke deceased" had lived.

William Cook, from the Partridge records, had a son named **Clayton Cook**, lending some weight to the idea that his mother was Martha Clayton. Clayton Cook was apparently in Albemarle County by 1751, when he and his uncle John Cook witnessed a sale by Tyree Harris of land adjoining his uncle John Cook's 1756 patent. In 1754, as a resident of Albemarle, he sold land in Cumberland County adjoining his father's old patent which his wife Henrietta had inherited from her father Richard Henderson.<sup>45</sup>

A possible son was an **Abraham Cook** who seems to be a different person than Abraham Cook Jr. John Cook's 1740 patent in Goochland (later Cumberland) County was adjoined to the north and west by a 1741 patent to Thomas Wood.<sup>46</sup> A few years later, on 5 June 1746, an adjoining patent to William Mayo refers to this patent as Abraham Cook's.<sup>47</sup> Then on 10

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<sup>39</sup> Chamberlayne, p267.

<sup>40</sup> *Virginia Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 2, p26.

<sup>41</sup> *Virginia Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 3, p27 (John Cook's account) and p32 (William Cook's account).

<sup>42</sup> *Virginia Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 23, No. 3, p32.

<sup>43</sup> Virginia Patent Book 19, p935.

<sup>44</sup> Goochland County Deed Book ?, p421 and p423. Both dated 16 October 1744.

<sup>45</sup> Cumberland County Deed Book 2, p163.

<sup>46</sup> Virginia Patent Book 20, p26.

<sup>47</sup> Virginia Patent Book 25, p57.

August 1748, a patent issued to Joseph Woodson which bordered both the Wood patent and John Cook's patent also describes Wood's patent as belonging to Abraham Cook.<sup>48</sup> How and when this Abraham Cook acquired this land and then disposed of it is a subject worth more research. Unfortunately, John Cook's description of the adjoining patent in 1768 used the same survey as the patent itself, and mentions neither Wood nor Cook. But a sale of abutting land in 1765 also refers to this land as Abraham Cook's.<sup>49</sup> This may not be the same person as Abraham Cook Jr., who was dead by 1748 and whose will does not mention this land.

William Cooke had bought three boys hats from Partridge & Company in 1736, so he may have had other sons. It is worth considering a **William Cook** who appears as a tithable in Cumberland County in 1759 near the old William Cook patent, and a **Charles Cook** who appears in a 1756 Cumberland court record.

- Abraham Cook II** (c1690 – 1748) Although we can't prove he was a son of Abraham Cook Sr., it seems highly likely. As mentioned above, Abraham Cook "Junr." of Hanover County patented land within a figurative stone's throw of Abraham Cook Sr. in February 1723.<sup>50</sup> It was evidently him who was mentioned in the 1734 and 1735 records of Hanover County mentioned above. The ledger books of the store of Thomas Partridge & Company in Hanover County mention Abraham Cook once: on 4 May 1738 he was paid from the account of Capt. Charles Hudson for a note from William Thacker.<sup>51</sup> [See also note under William Cooke above, regarding an Abraham Cook in Cumberland County.] On 6 August 1741, as "Abraham Cook of Hanover County" he purchased 300 acres in Brunswick County, on the north side of the Roanoke River in the area that became Lunenburg County.<sup>52</sup> Three years later, on 30 August 1744, Abraham Cook was issued a patent for 289 acres in Brunswick County on the Roanoke River in the same vicinity.<sup>53</sup> On 3 October 1745, Abraham Cook and his wife Sarah sold this 289 acres to their son-in-law James Hester of Louisa County.<sup>54</sup> By 1746, Abraham Cook's land was in Lunenburg County, where he was sworn in as a justice and appointed by the June court to take the list of tithables "from Allen's Creek to Blew Stone Creek". Abraham Cook's will in the Cumberland parish of Lunenburg County is dated 2 April 1748 and recorded on 4 July the same year.<sup>55</sup> It names his wife **Sarah**, sons **Benjamin, James, and Charles**, and daughters **Francis Hester and Barbary Hester**. [Barbara was evidently the wife of Robert Hester, who died in Louisa County in 1770 – from that family's records, it appears she was born ca 1725. Frances was the wife of James Hester, who died in Granville County, NC. See the HESTER section of this site.] The executors were Sarah Cook and Benjamin Cook. The 1748 tithables list of Cargill's District shows Benjamin Cook together with "widow Cook" with 3 tithes – presumably the three sons. The 1749 tithables list for the same district shows "Mrs. Cook's list – Benjamin Cook" with three tithes. In 1750, Sarah may have been deceased since Benjamin Cook and Gideon Grainger

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<sup>48</sup> Virginia Patent Book 26, p571.

<sup>49</sup> Cumberland County Deed Book 4, p30.

<sup>50</sup> Virginia Patent Book 11, p160.

<sup>51</sup> *Virginia Genealogical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 24, No. 2, p43.

<sup>52</sup> Brunswick County Deed Book 2, pp93-4

<sup>53</sup> Virginia Patent Book 23, p720

<sup>54</sup> Brunswick County, Virginia Deed Book 3, p76

<sup>55</sup> Lunenburg County, Virginia Will Book 1, p7

(Crenshaw?) were listed together with 4 tithes. Benjamin and Charles Cook together patented 400 acres in Lunenburg County on 20 August 1760<sup>56</sup>, sold it to their brother James, and both moved to Granville County, NC in 1761. Benjamin Cook moved to and died in Elbert County, Georgia in 1805 [not to be confused with the son of Benjamin Cook who died there in 1805.] Charles Cook apparently returned to Lunenburg about 1770 and died there a few years later. James Cook, the third son, stayed in Lunenburg for a few years, then moved to Granville County, NC – he may have been one of the James Cooks who later showed up in Georgia.

3. **John Cooke** (c1700? – 1775) As mentioned above, the 1737 ledger entry in the Partridge & Company accounts proves that William Cook had a brother named John. The single mention of a John Cook in St. Paul's Parish is his assignment to a road crew "from Jeremiah Parker's gang" in 1721.<sup>57</sup> The physical location suggests he lived quite near Abraham Cook.<sup>58</sup> His own account in the Partridge & Company ledgers for 1736-1739 includes several credits and debits, the last dated 16 July 1739. In 1741 it was noted on his account that "we believe (the balance) to be bad", probably because he left the area. [However, a John Cook was assigned as a road surveyor in Hanover county as 1742.] He is apparently the same John Cook whose 400-acre patent in Goochland (now Cumberland) County was dated the same day as William Cook's and located less than three miles away.<sup>59</sup> Nine years later, on 15 December 1749, John Cook added another 368 acres adjoining the first patent.<sup>60</sup> He mortgaged the 1740 patent in 1768, describing it as the land he then lived on and signing with his mark.<sup>61</sup> The second, 368-acre patent, he later sold to John Holman. He can be demonstrated to be the same John Cooke who patented 400 acres about six miles west in Albemarle (later Buckingham) County on 5 February 1753<sup>62</sup> and who added nearby patents of 400 acres on 10 March 1756 and 285 acres on 14 July 1769.<sup>63</sup> In 1754 he bought 400 acres adjoining one of these with Clayton Cook and John Cook Jr. among the witnesses.<sup>64</sup> He sold one of his patents in Buckingham in 1761 as a resident of Cumberland County, and apparently sold the other one as well, though I didn't see the deed.<sup>65</sup> The 285-acre patent in Buckingham and the 400 acres in Cumberland were mentioned in his will. He appears on the tithables in Cumberland County for the years they exist 1748-68, appearing with varying numbers of tithes.

His will was dated 15 April 1775 and proved 25 September 1775 in Cumberland County.<sup>66</sup> His land in Buckingham and Cumberland and personal property was to be sold and the proceeds distributed to his wife Mary as a life estate. After her death or remarriage the

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<sup>56</sup> Virginia Patent Book 34, p660

<sup>57</sup> The Vestry Book and Register of St. Paul's Parish, Hanover County, Virginia 1706-1786 edited by Dr. C.G. Chamberlayne, (Virginia State Library, 1940), p101

<sup>58</sup> Jeremiah Parker lived adjoining William Meriwether at that time, and in 1707 had been a member of the same road gang appointed to assist Abraham Cook. Martin Baker and Anthony Waddy were members of the same gang.

<sup>59</sup> Virginia Patent Book 19, p938.

<sup>60</sup> Virginia Patent Book 29, p71.

<sup>61</sup> Cumberland County Deed Book 4, p249.

<sup>62</sup> Virginia Patent Book 32, p58 (He is called merely John Cook, with no county of residence mentioned.)

<sup>63</sup> Virginia Patent Book 32, p682 and Book 38, p701.

<sup>64</sup> Buckingham County Deed Book 1, p3.

<sup>65</sup> Buckingham County Deed Book 1, p50.

<sup>66</sup> Cumberland County Will Book 2, p193.

remaining money was to be equally distributed among **Stephen Cook**, **Mary Noell**, and **Frances Cook**. “all the rest of my children which are” **John Cook Junr.**, **Aggy Chambers**, **Sarah Edwards**, **Elizabeth Hooper**, **James Cook**, **Agathy Bostick**, and **Anne Coleman** were to receive “nothing more than what I have already given them.” George Hooper and Stephen Cook were named executors. The children, who I have not researched, appear to have been born in the late 1720s and thereafter, thus the estimated birth date for John Cook.

4. **Benjamin Cook** (1690s – 1759) The case for Benjamin Cook as a son of Abraham Cook is less compelling than for the prior three Cooks, being based entirely on his having patented land in 1726 about fifteen miles west of Abraham Cook Sr. He was issued the patent as a resident of Hanover County, and remained on that land (which eventually lay in Louisa County) until his death about 1759. He left two known sons, William Cook and Benjamin Cook Jr. (See separate page)
5. **Robert Cook** (? - ?) It is possible that he was another son, or perhaps a brother. As mentioned above, on 28 November 1707, Abraham Cook was appointed to inspect a road, with Robert Cook among the helpers directed to assist him.<sup>67</sup> This not only indicates proximity, but it also implies that Robert Cook was nearly, if not already, an adult, meaning he was probably born earlier than we would otherwise think Abraham Cook was married. There is no further mention of a Robert Cook in New Kent, Hanover, or surrounding counties for several decades. He may have been the same person as one of the Robert Cooks who several decades later shows up in Henrico or Brunswick counties, but there seems no way to prove it.
6. **Matthew Cooke** (1690s - ?) There is no further mention of him other than the entry in the St. Peter’s Parish vestry book. Given that more than a third of all children born around this time did not live to reach majority, it is not unusual that we should have no further record of him.
7. **Hannah Cook** (1690s - ?) There is no mention of her other than the entry in the St. Peter’s Parish vestry book. Presumably she was named for Abraham Cook’s mother-in-law.

## A Possible Daughter?

**Frances Cooke:** Descendants of Edmund Butler theorize that his wife Francis was a Cook, probably the daughter of Abraham Cook. I have seen no evidence whatsoever that she was a Cook, and believe that this theory is based entirely on an apparent relationship between Edmund Butler and John and William Cook. Unfortunately, this apparent relationship does not manifest itself until the end of Butler’s life, and can be alternatively explained by the fact that Edmund Butler died while living on a patent located less than a mile from John Cook. That is, the evidence doesn’t tell us whether he was associated with the Cooks because he was a close neighbor – or whether he was a close neighbor because he was related. In my view, the evidence

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<sup>67</sup> The Vestry Book and Register of St. Paul's Parish, Hanover County, Virginia 1706-1786 edited by Dr. C.G. Chamberlayne, (Virginia State Library, 1940), p23

actually favors the conclusion that no relationship existed between Butler and the Cooks other than geography.

Edmund Butler, who may have been the same person claimed as a headright by Edward Garland, appears in Goochland County records beginning in 1728, at least ten years before the earliest date the Cooks could have arrived there. The 1744 will of Jacob Mischeaux devised to Edmund Butler fifty acres on which Butler then lived, referring to part of a 1742 patent located just south of John Cook.<sup>68</sup> Edmund Butler was issued a posthumous patent for 400 acres adjoining this Mischeaux patent on 5 April 1748 that was separated from John Cook only by a patent to Brazure Cocks.<sup>69</sup> [It is obvious from Butler's will that the 50 acres from Mischeaux was contiguous with his own 400-acre survey.] Edmund Butler died leaving a will, dated 27 April 1747 and proved 17 September 1747, for which William Cook was a witness. The other two witnesses held patents adjoining Butler's. The will names his wife Francis Butler as executor and devises the 450 acres to four sons: Aaron, John, Edmund, and John Butler. John Cook and three other neighbors were appointed appraisers. [This suggests that John Cook was not related, for the courts were instructed to appoint neighbors who were unrelated to the deceased.] There is no other association between Edmund Butler and the Cook brothers. Nor are there any later connections between the children of Edmund Butler and the Cooks that I am aware of. The nearest we can come is Aaron Butler's witness to a deed of gift by his neighbor, the widow of Richard Henderson, one of whose daughters married Clayton Cook.

In summary, the evidence we have does not justify the assumption of a familial relationship when the geographic one suffices to explain the facts. In fact, the evidence we have argues that there was no familial relationship. I suspect that an early Butler researcher assumed that the will witnesses and appraisers were related parties, rather than merely neighbors, and proposed a theory which eventually achieved greater status than it deserved.

## Possible Origin of Abraham Cook

There are no records of the importation of anyone who might be our Abraham Cook, nor are there any records of any Abraham Cook that predate the Old Rappahannock references. "Abraham", although a common enough name a few generations later, was a relatively rare given name in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, "Cook" and its variations is an exceedingly common name in early Virginia. Common enough, in fact, that a discouragingly large number of Cooks are found in the New Kent and Old Rappahannock area. There is no particular reason to think any of these people were related to our Abraham Cooke. There is, however, one intriguing possibility.

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<sup>68</sup> Goochland County Deed Book 4, pp476.

<sup>69</sup> Virginia Patent Book 26, p373. I should note that the delay between claiming the land and the signature date of the patent was normally anywhere from one to several years. As soon as Butler claimed the land and obtained a warrant, his interest was protected. The patent may not have been signed until months or even a year or two later.

A John Cooke bought land in Old Rappahannock from William and Martha Mosely in 1667, with William Land(man?) a witness.<sup>70</sup> From later sales by neighbors, it appears this land was located on or near Occupacia Creek, on the opposite side of the Rappahannock River from William Clayton, and almost 15 miles upriver. Although his land is still mentioned in deeds as late as 1684, a John Cooke “orphan” (represented by Alexander Robin) is mentioned as plaintiff in a 2 June 1683 suit, which required the orphan’s land to be surveyed by William Mosely. [Perhaps just a coincidence; Mosely was a surveyor.] This land is described as located on Gilson’s and Hodgkin’s Creek, nearly opposite Totaskey Creek. This orphan John Cooke, presumably the son of the earlier John Cooke, is named in the 1684 will of Alexander Robin as “the son of my wife Judith”. He may be the John Cooke apprenticed in 1686 to Elias Robinson until he reached the age of 21. [Note that this would make him younger than Abraham Cook, thus casting some doubt on this scenario.] He was probably the same John Cooke later found living on a branch of the Occupacia Creek in Essex County (formed from the part of Old Rappahannock south of the Rappahannock River). That John Cook died in 1726 leaving a widow Susannah and children John, Thomas, William, Hannah, and a daughter married to a Biswell. To add to the intrigue, the son Thomas Cooke sold land in 1716 to Samuel Clayton, a likely relative of William Clayton Jr.

Might Abraham Cooke have been another son of John Cooke? Possible, but I can’t see any way to prove it. Further, if John Cooke died intestate then the eldest son would have inherited, not the younger one. This may just be an interesting coincidence. The fact that the same names should appear associated with these Cooks may merely reflect the relatively sparse population of the area.

The records of Old Rappahannock also mention a Rowland Cooke as a witness in 1684, a Benjamin Cooke as a legatee of Robert Taylor in 1699, and a Robert Cooke as a witness in 1712. In addition, a distressingly large number of people named Cooke were imported by people claiming land in the area of Rappahannock and New Kent in the mid to late 1600s. An interesting coincidence is the importation by a James Clayton of William and Sarah Cook mentioned in a 1665 patent in Northumberland.

An Abraham “Cock”, possibly our Abraham Cooke, was left “my great coat” in the will of James Simons 24 February 1686/7 in Old Rappahannock.

## Thomas Partridge & Company

Some ledger books covering scattered periods from 1734-56 still exist for this general store in Hanover County and were published in the *Virginia Genealogical Society Quarterly* as a multi-part series. This store, which sold general merchandise on credit and acted as a sort of bank, was located somewhere within the boundaries of St. Paul’s Parish in Hanover County, probably in the vicinity of the original courthouse. Since currency was rare at the time, the store often acted as a middleman in transactions between individuals, crediting one account and debiting another, so

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<sup>70</sup> Old Rappahannock County Deed Book 3, p140.

the names mentioned in an individual's account provide valuable clues to neighbors and business associates as well as family members. These ledger books mention several Cooks who probably lived in the general vicinity, though not necessarily in Hanover County.

As mentioned above, there are accounts for 1736-8 for William Cook and his brother John Cook. The next set of accounts, for the period 1756-7, mention a larger number of Cooks. Benjamin Cook and his son William Cook had accounts, as did George Cook, Mrs. Dorothy Cook, Jeremiah Cook and Thomas Cook, the identities of whom are unknown.