

## THE PEEBLES FAMILY

### Sources:

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Coming of the Revolution by Lawrence Henry Gibson

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Records of Chesterfield county, South Carolina

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book by A. B. Peebles in Munfordville Ky. museum

1810, 1820 Census records of Grayson county, Kentucky

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Old Churches, Ministers and Families of Virginia by William Meade

Virginia's First Century by Mary Newton Stanard

Westward Expansion by Ray Billington

The Great Plantation by Clifford Dowdey

Shaping of Colonial Virginia by Wertenbaker

Albion's Seed by David Hackett Fischer

Tidewater Virginia by Wiltach

Various court records, deed and marriage books of Prince Georges

County, Virginia, Quaker church records, records from South and North

Carolina and Kentucky. I kept poor notes on my sources at this point, but



Carolina and Kentucky. I kept poor notes on my sources at this point, but all my work is duplicated and more in Anne Peebles book of geneology cited above. In the Peebles history, few specific records are given.

David Peebles m (1) Elspeth Mackie

c1600 - 1659      C 1610 - probably before 1659

(2) ELIZABETH BISHOPP

There is no record in Virginia of Elspeth Mackie or any of their five children born in Scotland except William. Either she stayed in Scotland with most of her children, unable or unwilling to escape or leave, or she died en route or shortly upon arrival.

We know very little of David's life in Scotland. An oddity is that the children were baptized in four different towns in Fife from St. Andrews to Kilconquhar. Why? Perhaps he was on the run.

In 1649 over 300 adherents of Charles I were condemned to the block by Cromwell and escaped to Virginia. It is assumed that the Peebles were Royalists since Charles had granted a coat of arms to an Alex Peebles, Earl of Wemyss and Marquis of Queensbury (both titles now extinct). Whether or how closely related Alex was to David is unknown. In any case this was possibly the reason David Peebles came to Virginia at this time.

In any case he was well enough off to have paid the passage and thereby earned the land rights for 16 other people. This amounted to 833 acres which was patented in August of 1650. At that time, it took about 6 months to obtain a patent which would put his arrival in late 1649 or early 1650. His land was in the present St. Georges County, Virginia on the south side of the James on Powells Creek roughly opposite Westover. The land here is poorer than that of the northern shore.

On a visit, I found the land, but there was no building from the early period. The creek is still named Powell and the plantation is still called by its original name, *Bon Accord* regionally disintegrated to *Bonniecord*.

It is hard to imagine what David Peebles thought when confronted by the hot humid climate of Virginia. He seemed not to have been a farmer in Scotland, but that was really the only full-time occupation available in these early days. And even if he had had agricultural knowledge, the crop of tobacco and the conditions would have been completely different. He may have had the services of an overseer or manager of his land. In any case, he busied himself with other matters as well as stewardship of the land.

Between 1655 and 1665 he appears as a Justice of the Court, a vestryman of Westover Parish and Captain of the Militia.

The powers of a vestryman were substantial as they were responsible for the



parish budget, apportionment of taxes and the election of churchwardens who usually served as tax collectors, exercised control over land title records by the "processioning of the bounds of every person's land", and supervised the counting of tobacco which served as the currency of the times.

As for anything in local government not controled by the vestrymen, the remainder was in the hands of the eight justices appointed by the Governor. Until 1652, Governor Berkeley was in this office.

As captain of the militia, the area in his charge lay between Powell and Wards Creek near his land. Usually officers of the militia dined together after muster. Peter Jefferson, the father of Thomas was the militia captain in Henrico to the north. As a neighbor, Justice and Vestrymen of Westover it is likely that David was at least on speaking terms with William Byrd, and perhaps Peter Jefferson as well.

By 1655, David had married Elizabeth Bishopp, a widow.

Her father was John Bishopp who was transported as a servant. As soon as a man had worked off his indenture, or if hired, had earned enough money to get some land, he struck off on his own. Soon many former servants had prospered. He had come to Virginia in 1638 and in that same year became a landowner. This swift rise in fortune and status was achievable before 1660 but later land was not available and only migration was an option to bettering oneself. As a prime example, John Bishopp represented Charles City in the House of Burgesses in 1644, 1652 and 1653. He sent for his family, who arrived in 1651.

Elizabeth had two children, whom David adopted. They were Sarah and Christian who married John Poythress, about whom more later. Women were in such short supply that in the 1600's they remarried very quickly after being widowed, sometimes within days.

And there was a lot of death. Tidewater Virginia was a most unhealthy place then due to fever which took off an astonishing number of new arrivals in particular. Persons who survived the first year were regarded as "seasoned" and given a better chance for survival. Not only were the swamps a problem, but the generally high water table meant that the drinking water was easily polluted. It was much safer to drink ale.

As was the custom, David leased portions of his plantation as there was a shortage of persons to work the land either for hire or as bound servants.

A litigious lot, these early Virginians sued at every step. There are court records wherein money waws owed to or by David Peebles with the following people: Theodorick Bland, Lt. Col. Walter Alston, Mrs. Sarah Rice Hoe, Morgan Jones, Rich Jones, and William Ditty whose High Peake plantation was put for security against his debt to Peebles.

There was also a considerable dispute with James Crews who had much to



do with the shipping of tobacco to England. He continually demanded payments in the court and finally engaged in personal dispute, taking his claim to the General Court. There in 1656 it is recorded "...for the Stabs and Blows mentioned...they were occasioned by Crewes unworthy and uncivil provocation for which Notwithstanding, Peebles hath given satisfaction and...no just proof appears on Crewes part, whereas we humbly Conceive that the said Crews ought to be made example of for such foul Base and unworthy defamations against Capt. Peibles...by paying costs of Suit and a fine to Capt. Peebles...and that this be a final Determination of the differences between them, this Report being by Unanimous Vote of Both Houses." Even that did not stop Crews. Without paying what he owed, he continued to sue Capt. Peebles in county courts.

In the summer of 1656 there was unrest and Indian troubles which Capt. David's militia helped subdue. He was possibly injured at that time as he is not thereafter present in court, even though the court had moved closer to his plantation, from Westover to Merchant's Hope Church.

His plantation was named "Bon Accord," locally called then - and now, "Bonniecord". Few early Virginia patents contain plantation names unless on the river front. Captain David or his Scottish wife (Mackie is a Highland name however) may have been from Aberdeen, the "City of Bon Accord" hence the farm's name.

David lived for two years more. He must have been an invalid as "Mrs. Peibils" appears in records involving his tobacco transactions and in suits, two of which she lost. She was exempted from paying tax on "2 persons escaped". no doubt runaway indentured servants.

In 1659 there appeared a record for the appraisal of the estate of "the orphans of Capt. David Peibils", presumably the adopted children of Elizabeth, Sarah and Christian. Later Sarah married Rice Hoe and Christian wed John Poythress.

William Peebles I m (1) Judeth \_\_\_\_ (ward of John Drayton)  
1635 - 1695 (2) \_\_\_\_\_  
(3) Elizabeth (Busby)

William, the eldest son of David Peebles, arrived from Scotland to take over affairs in the year after his father's death,. A court order in 1661 ordered a bill due him to be paid. A year later, he married Judeth, a ward of John Drayton. His receipt for her "porcon" (portion) was recorded at court in 1662/3.

In that same year Rice Hoe on behalf of his wife Sarah Peebles sued for her estate "pretended to be in the hands of John Drayton". If clearly proved it was ordered to be granted. But there is no further mention of the outcome.

Drayton himself subsequently married Elizabeth Bishopp Peebles who outlived



this her third husband. He acquired some of Bonniecord, and the rest was taken over by John Poythress on behalf of his wife, Christian Peebles. The ins and outs of all this is most complicated, but the end result was that William no longer possessed Bonniecord. His father's estate had been lost to him and somehow transferred to his adopted children. An interesting side note tartly noted by Anne Bradbury Peebles, is that it was claimed that this plantation was the original seat of the Poythress family, but they "have never found the patent" and "the records do not uphold them".

In the 1704 census, the following acreages are filed:

William Peoples - 150 A

Elizabeth Peoples - 235 A (William's third wife)

Francis Poythress, Sr. - 1283 A

William Peebles took no prominent part in local activities, but was a good citizen, serving as member or foreman of juries, appraised estates and signed bonds for persons he felt were good security risks. Most of the records for this period are missing.

It may be that he was simply concentrating on making a living for in 1667, tobacco prices fell to a ha'penny a pound. This was due to the Navigation Acts which brought inflation and hardship. Payment within the colony was usually by tobacco barter, but the English required cash payment of taxes and shipping costs. Tobacco could be shipped only to England thus cutting out the direct lucrative trade with Holland. Also it had to be transported in English ships and in England a duty of 2 pence a pound would be collected, more than the seller would realize during the next two decades following 1660 when the Acts were passed.

During this time yeomen usually had plentiful food but were often clad in rags as clothing had to be brought from England and paid for in cash. Homespun was a substitute. Sheep did not prosper in the Virginia climate, so wool clothing was not generally available. At first the small planter could keep going by raising the finest quality Orinoco leaf, but the quality of the large estate tobacco improved and then the small landholder was finished. This was particularly true when slaves started arriving in significant numbers.

In 1664, the first of his three sons was born, William, Jr. Henry, and David were the other two. From subsequent records it is assumed that William's second - or possibly third - wife was a widow of one Busby for in 1690 the orphan Wilmot Munford was bound to her as "the now wife of William Peebles". This would indicate that she had not long been so.

She was the likely mother of Henry Peebles, but the mother of the second son David might have been Judeth or a second wife.

In 1670 and 1673, he obtained patents for 473 acres on the headwaters of the Birchen Swamp, a few miles south of Bonniecord. And it was here that



Burleigh Plantation was situated. And it was here that William, Sr. lived until his death.

An interesting note is that the headquarters of Bacon's Rebellion of 1676 was at Jordan's Point, very close to Burleigh. The Rebellion took place because of the ineffective defense against the Indians as well as the taxes levied to pay for forts and the soldiers needed. Governor Berkeley refused to call out the militia. Nathaniel Bacon was the leader of this abortive undertaking and although routing Berkeley, he himself was either killed or died in camp and the rebellion collapsed. It was the last challenge of the yeomanry. From that time, the House of Burgesses became a gathering of the privileged.

Indians and the fever were not the only problems. In 1667 a violent hailstorm ruined the new tobacco and killed young hogs and calves; In that same year there was a Dutch raid followed by a 40 day rain which effectively destroyed everything still growing. As if that weren't enough there was next a hurricane and flooding which wrecked houses and fences. In that year Virginia produced only 30 shiploads of tobacco. And in 1673 there was another Dutch raid and a fierce winter.

So after a tumultuous and difficult life, William died at the age of 60 in 1695.

William Peebles II m \_\_\_\_ (possibly Hamlin)\*  
c 1670 - after 1740

\*Detective work by Anne Peebles in her book is shown in the following: "The first Hamlin in Virginia was Stephen. The Hamlin whose dau. m William [II] had sons Abraham, Thomas, John and Peter, all names repeated in sons of William [II]. Peter Peebles named a son Stephen, and a grandson of Abraham [Peebles] was named Hamlin.

He was the first Peebles to be born in America and the only family member who did not sign his name. His mark was WP joined together with the last stroke of the W also the first stroke of the P (this may very probably have been his tobacco hogshead logo. These identifications served to show ownership of tobacco in Virginia, on board ship, and in London).

As Dumas Malone wrote, "Before William and Mary College was established only the wealthy could send children to Great Britain for education. It was probably the most difficult time in the history of Virginia to become educated." Even basic education was hard to come by. As transportation was almost exclusively by river which linked the plantations, there were no centers for the establishment of schools, unlike New England which had roads and towns as well as the Puritan emphasis on literacy.



He inherited 150 acres of his father's land west of the Birchen Swamp. Thirty years later in 1727 he patented 200 acres on the south side of the Black Swamp in Surrey County. Of this he gave half to one of his sons and in 1740 sold the other half.

The land in Surrey and the other areas of Southside - that is the land south of the James - had the poorest soil and with the greater menace of Indian trouble.

More and more the differences were being felt between the great landholders and the small farmers with the latter being driven out or subjugated. They would be advanced money by the merchant planters, be unable to pay it back or have to borrow more the following year and soon became little better than tenant farmers of the planter. It was becoming less and less economic for the individual small farmer to make a living against the large operations of the big holdings as slaves gradually became a major factor in cotton and tobacco production.

As to the increase in slaves, a rough estimate would be 2,500 slaves in 1674 and 10,000 in 1704.

In 1670 the population of the Colony was between 32,000 and 48,000 whereas in 1650 it had been around 14,800. This increase was due to three factors. The first was found in the increasingly healthy conditions. For instance, more orchards were planted and cider and other fermented drinks were consumed instead of contaminated water. About the time when Capt. David Peebles arrived five out of six immigrants died "in seasoning". Now it was only one in nine who died.

The second factor was that with so many indentured servants having worked out their period of servitude, they had become freedmen and were trying to find land and establish themselves.

Thirdly, in the early years it was mostly males who came, but increasingly women came also, so that not only were more babies being born but more of them were surviving.

There are very few records for William II, and they involve minor matters such as witnessing deeds and wills. He inherited some hogs and "yews" (ewes) by a Jno. Green, another small landholder; one of William's sons Abraham married a Green as his second wife.

Perhaps the most interesting fact of his life was that he was a Quaker and his plantation, still called Burleigh, gave the site and name to the first Quaker Meeting established south of the James River. It was a subsidiary of Henrico County Monthly Meeting. How or why he became a Quaker is unknown, but it certainly was no help to him in improving his lot. Burleigh is mentioned although not dwelled on in Friends' histories of the journals of Edmund Peckover and Thomas Story.



William was the father of eight children.

Abraham Peebles m (1) (Mary Green)  
c1695 -c1783 \_\_\_\_\_ -before 1752  
(2) Kesiah (Carlile)

There are two records for him in Virginia: when as a Quaker he signed for the marriage of his sister, and in 1745 in the Bristol Parish Register when his last son Reuben was baptized. Presumably this indicates that he had gone back to the established church as his son was baptized and noted in the parish books.

One reason may have been that although at first slavery was not prohibited for Quakers, after 1746 they were expected to stop buying and selling slaves. However, many Quakers while not buying new slaves, did continue to work the already-held slaves and their descendents. We can be fairly sure that Abraham was not in agreement with this point of view. He was a very conservative man politically, and public opinion was harsh against the Quakers for selling their slaves. Also he soon decamped for tidewater South Carolina where slaves were essential to work the crops there. In addition, Quakers were quite discriminated against by the Anglican church in Virginia and as has been noted, the church was instrumental in many legal and political matters as well as religious ones.

Mary is thought to be the daughter of Lewis Green. Abraham's wife's name in 1745 is spelled "Esaia" so we know that Mary had died sometime previously, probably before 1740. This is based on the birthdates of Abraham's six sons. .

Interestingly, all of them, but Reuben were known rather grandly by where they lived, i.e. David and William of Pitt, Isham of Beaufort, Lewis of Kershaw, and Henry of Lancaster. I've not run across another such set of designations on this side of the Atlantic.

Abraham became the master of Burleigh in middle age. There were the usual records of witnessing deeds and wills, buying 100 acres, being sued and finally in 1752, he sold his land with the consent of Keziah. Accompanying them on their next move were John Green and Lewis Green, presumably kinsmen of Mary Green, Abraham's first wife.

Shortly thereafter, he patented 250 acres on Lynches Creek in Craven County, South Carolina. This was another tidewater area where indigo and rice were the chief crops. The climate was hot and humid and those two crops were raised only by incredibly hard labor which killed slaves at a great rate.

The crops were planted in thickly timbered swamps bordering fresh water rivers. Here they used tidal pressure to back river water over the fields. This could be done with ample corps of slaves despite the danger from alligators and



water mocassins. Rice could be shipped directly to Europe after 1730, and it rose steadily to become the money crop.

Unlike Virginia, here it was often considered more economic to use up a slave than care for him as he paid back his purchase price in a year. Most slaves in the Carolinas at this time were fresh from Africa and therefore "unseasoned". They were rebellious as a result and there was considerable fear on the parts of whites - especially around Charleston.

There was a tremendous migration to the Carolinas of both whites and blacks. In the period of 1754-64, the population doubled of which 6.5% were slaves, but many of the new people moved on either farther south or to the back country. Therefore, ten years later there were fewer people but of these 70% were slaves!

In 1777 he sold 150 acres of his land as the Revolutionary War closed in. There is a mention of a grant to him in Lancaster County where his son Lewis lived. The last we know of him was that after his death in 1783 at 88 years, he and his youngest son Reuben are listed in Reports on Loyalists Exiles from South Carolina, 1783". A lot of these royalist sympathizers wound up in Georgia or the Caribbean or even in England, but as Reuben cannot be found, we have no idea where Abraham died. The rest of his sons stayed in the southern colonies.

Lewis Peebles of Kershaw m (1) \_\_\_\_\_  
C1735 - after 1830 (DAR records death at 1840)  
(2) Elizabeth \_\_\_\_\_

He may have been named for his purported grandfather, Lewis Green. Lewis Green lived next to Abraham, his father in South Carolina in 1767 as well as earlier in Virginia. My grandfather, John Lewis Wright, was the grandson of Lewis Peebles, so the name continued for some time.

Although having gone with his father to South Carolina, Lewis left the coast, moving to the interior Chesterfield County, North Carolina. The last of the Indian uprisings had been put down thus opening up the back country to many land-hungry people. At the time of Lewis' move, the population had grown four-fold.

His first land was on the PeeDee river on Goodmans Creek in 1772 and next he took up 100 acres in Lancaster County adjacent to a 150 acre grant to Abraham, which his father later sold.

Although Abraham was a Loyalist, Lewis furnished many supplies to the Continental troops, and had receipts for payments of same in 1781, 1784, and 1787.

Following the War, Lewis energetically bought land in the amount of 625 acres on the south side of Scape Creek. There are two versions of the name of







lived on Rocky Creek in Chester county, South Carolina for twenty years where he was a farmer and blacksmith by trade. Here their eight children were born, the fourth being a daughter Hannah. The Wrights and Leas were also living nearby.

A year after Wilmouth's death, he married Martha Patsy Johnsey and in 1806 moved his family along with that of John Wright and the Blessit family in a caravan to Kentucky.

In Hardin County of that state, his and Martha Patsy's six children were born. There is some confusion on exactly how many children he had, but the total of 14 seems most likely! His daughter Hannah married Allen Wright here. (See Allen Wright in that family's geneology.)

In the tax records of Grayson county, Kentucky he is living on 170 acres on the Nolin river where he had 2 mares, no slaves and paid \$485 in taxes. Almost the same information is entered in 1833, the last year he was in that state. There are actually tax records for each year, but they are very hard to read. The census records are also faint and not well preserved, made even harder to make out on microfiche.

In 1836 he and some of his children moved farther west, as did many of the Wrights to Macoupin County, Illinois. Others of his family stayed in Kentucky. Those who went north did so in opposition to slavery.

The main town of the area was Chesterfield, Illinois, a small town laid out by John's son Jesse and a friend in 1836. A log school was first built even before the town was platted. A store was established and later a Methodist church. In the Peebles Cemetery there, John, Martha Patsy and many of the family were buried.

John had been ill for thirty days with "bowel complications" according to an 1850 document. He was another long-lived man in the Peebles line, dying at 86 years of age. The epitaph on John's headstone:

In every walk of life he filled he measure of true manhood, He rests here from all his labors and his works do follow him.