

Once a Knight is Enough

Knight Genealogy

by Laura Knight

John Knight of Sussex County VA

UPDATE! FIRST THINGS FIRST: I've communicated with a documented descendant of Capt. Peter Knight of Northumberland via his son James, and a documented descendant of John Knight of Lunenburg County VA who married Elizabeth Woodson. The two Y-DNA lineages are so far apart that there is no possibility of John Knight of Lunenburg being descended from Capt. Peter Knight of Northumberland.

However, the DNA evidence shows that a documented descendant of John Knight and Rachel Anderson of GA/FL, and documented descendants of Thomas Knight and Frances Newnan, are closely related in such a way that strongly indicates that John and Thomas were brothers. Additionally, John and Thomas of GA/FL have the same lineage (and very, very close) as the documented descendant of Capt. Peter Knight of Northumberland, thus confirming descent.

The conclusion is that the Woodson Knights are not descended from Capt. Peter Knight of Northumberland as Lucian Lamar Knight assumed.

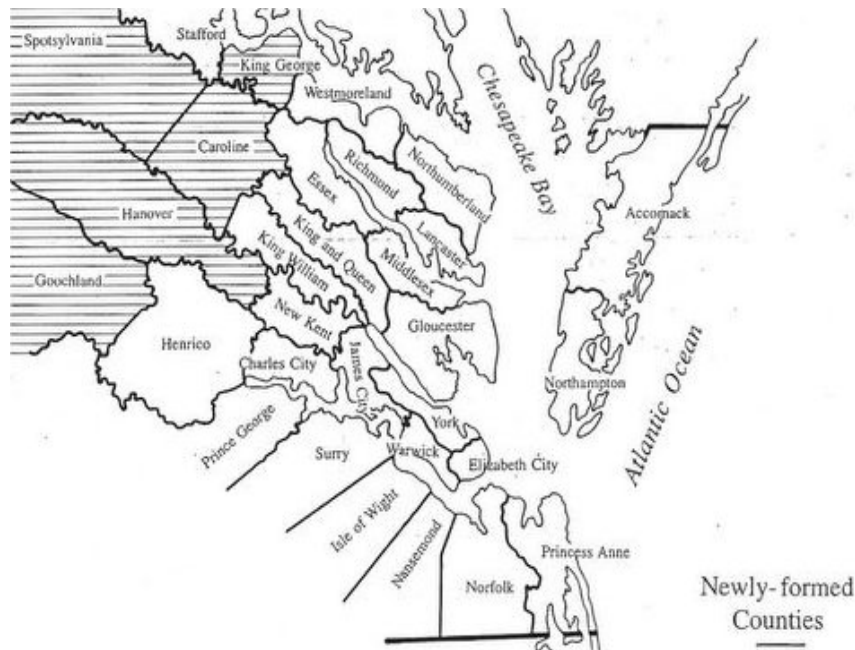
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As I have noted elsewhere, and as anybody who has worked on the Southern Knights soon realizes, there has been a big problem in Knight Genealogy that centers around three particular John Knights who all lived around the same time, and all three of them left wills proving that they are clearly separate people and only two of them are directly related, and it doesn't include John Knight of Lunenburg:

1. John Knight of Sussex VA who left a will in 1762.
2. John Knight of Sussex VA who left a will in 1791.
3. John Knight of Lunenburg VA who left a will in 1772.

Here, I am going to deal with John Knight of Sussex and, tangentially, with John Knight of Edgecombe. John Knight of Lunenburg will have his own separate discussion.

Below is a map of VA counties between 1720 and 1730. You will see that Surry, Isle of Wight and Nansemond more or less extend right down to the NC line part of which you can see just below Norfolk and Nansemond counties.



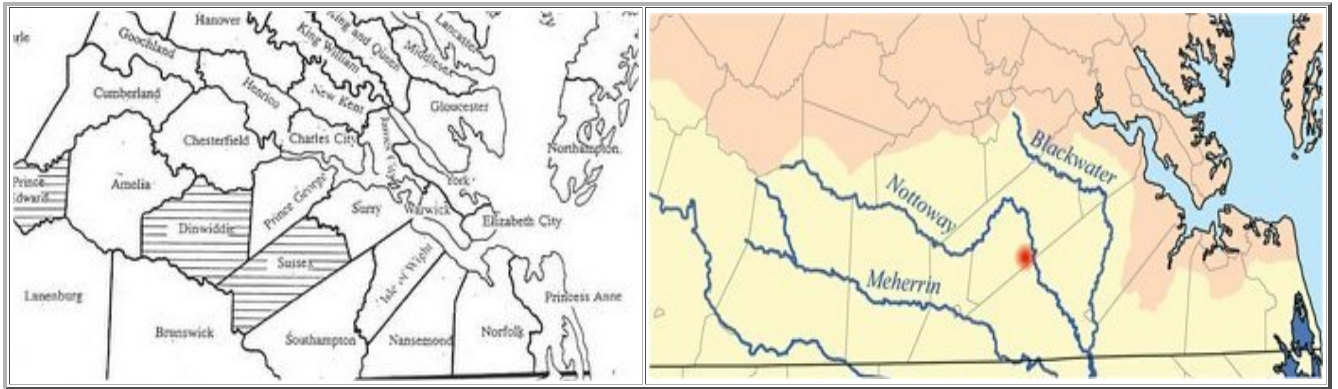
There are two patents of interest in relation to the topics below, both of them issued in 1725, when the above county lines were intact:

1725 - Mar 24 - VA Isle of Wight - Admin - William Lee - Land patent for 340 acs. on N. side of Maherin Riv; adj Hugh Lee & James Grecian's line 35 shill.

Same date: Richard King, 190 acs **Surry Co**; S. side of Nottoway Riv; on S. side of Hunting Quarter Sw; on N. side of Lee's Branch, adj. **William Lee**; & Richard Woodrooffe's line &c.. 20 shill. (Both items Nugent III, p. 307)

Note that one tract is on the N side of the Maherrin River, and the other is on the S side of the Nottoway River, and in different counties, yet both patents mention William Lee who must have held tracts in two places not adjacent to each other. What is important here is the S side of the Nottoway River adjacent Lee's Branch which is where John Knight of Sussex patented land. As I learned, from scrutinizing maps, being on the south side of a river didn't necessarily mean being all that close to the river!

Below is a map of Virginia Counties about 1750 not long after the John Knight family, subject of this discussion, moved there from elsewhere. When they arrived, they were in Surry County; not too long after, they found themselves in Sussex County on the South side of the Nottoway River. Yet, if you look at the zig-zag of this river right below the letter Y in Nottoway, it looks like a short part of the river was part of the county boundary between Sussex and Brunswick. So any land south of the Nottoway and in Brunswick county would be under this dip. After some searches and scrutinizing maps, I've placed a red splotch on the approximate location of the land that would be south of the Nottoway and south of the Hunting Quarter Swamp. Note that, at the time, it would be very close to the line with Isle of Wight County.



Albemarle Parish is a lineal descendant of James City Parish, the first Anglican parish to be established in the New World. At its inception, James City County laid astride the north and south sides of the James River. **In 1652 Surry County was formed from that part of James City County lying south of the James River.** The new county included two parishes that had been created earlier out of James City County: **Lawne's Creek Parish (1640) and Southwark Parish (1647).** **In 1738 these two parishes were divided,** with parts of both parishes north of the Blackwater River united into one parish and retaining the name Southwark. **The parts on the south side of the Blackwater River became another distinct parish, named Albemarle.** With the changes in boundaries, Lawne's Creek Parish then became extinct. **Sussex County was created from Surry County in 1754,** with Surry County remaining in Southwark Parish and **Albemarle Parish encompassing the new county.** A change in boundary lines configured Albemarle Parish to fit entirely into Sussex County. (Davis 2008, Introduction)

Basically, before 1652, Surry was part of James City. After this, there was James City and Surry which included what was to become Sussex. After 1754, Sussex was divided off from Surry. Sometimes, when I know from later records, that an earlier record refers to an area that will become Sussex County, I will use the designation "Surry/Sussex".

To get a good feeling for the time and place, below is a house located a short distance from Hunting Quarter Swamp called "Hunting Quarter Plantation", built between 1745 and 1772 by Henry Harrison, the uncle of President William Henry Harrison. [SOURCE](#) It is probably a bit larger than the houses of the time, but it appears that John Knight was a carpenter/builder and his own house may have been quite similar. For all we know, he assisted with the building of this particular house that has survived. John's daughter, Mary, married Frederick Fort, a family of house carpenters; read about them [HERE](#). Their chief surviving work is Fairtosh Plantation in Orange County NC (now Durham County), built for Duncan Cameron. You can have a look at Fairtosh [HERE](#).



To get on with things, my lynchpin for this discussion is the will of John Knight of **Sussex** County VA:

1762 - Feb 18 – VA Sussex County – Will - John Knight – I, John Knight of *Sussex County*, being in perfect health of body and of sound mind memory and understanding (thanks be to Almighty God) do constitute, ordain and appoint this to be my true last Will and Testament hereby Revoking and annulling all former Wills or Testaments by me heretofore made in manner or form following, that is to say,

IMPRIMIS I give and Devise to my loving son **William** and to his heirs forever one moiety of the **tract of land I live upon to be laid off adjoining to Lee's Branch**, provided always and upon condition that he pay or cause to be paid to each of my loving sons **John, Joel, Edward, Peter & Richard**, fifty shillings Current money of Virginia within three months after my decease.

ITEM I give and Devise to my loving son **Jordan** and to his heirs forever, the other moiety of my tract of land to be laid off on that part whereon the houses now stand, provided always and upon Condition the he pay or cause to be paid to each of my loving sons **John, Joel, Edward, Peter & Richard** fifty shillings current money of Virginia within three months after my decease. I also give to my son **Jordan** one Bed and furniture, six Pewter Plates and two Pewter Dishes, and two Cows and Calves.

ITEM I give and Devise all and every part of the Residue of my Estate whatsoever to be equally Divided amongst my loving children, **William, John, Jordan, Edward, Joel, Peter, Richard, Sara, Anne and Mary**, and my **Grandson John, Knight**, share and share alike to them and their Heirs forever.

ITEM My Will and Desire is that my Estate may not be Appraised.

Lastly I hereby constitute and appoint my loving sons **William and Jordan** my true and Lawful **Executors** of all and every part of this my last Will and Testament.

In WITNESS whereof I have hereunto set my Hand and affixed my Seal this seventh Day of February 1760.

Signed Sealed and Delivered by the Testator to be his John Knight (L.S.) last Will in Present of us: Nicholas Massenburg, John Cargill, Edmund

Hass (his mark)

At a court held for Sussex County the 18th Day of February 1762. The aforewritten last Will and Testament of John Knight deceased was presented in Court by William and Jordan Knight the Executors therein named who made Oath thereto as the Same directs, and the same was proved by the Oaths of [the witnesses].. and by the Court ordered to be recorded... the motion is granted them for obtaining a Probate thereof in due form. A. Claiborne, Esq.

Of the above listed children, *only* 3 births are found in the Albemarle Parish register though the register begins in 1717:

1740 – Feb 10 – VA Surry/Sussex – Bap – Peter Knight – s/o John Knight and Elizabeth; (b. Jan 8); sps: Peter Hawthorn, Chauncy Tatum, Mary Eppes. (Richards 1958, p. 39)

1742 – Sep 12 – VA Surry/Sussex – Bap – Sarah Knight – d/o John Knight and Elizabeth; Albemarle Parish: born Aug 25; Sps. John Tatum, Bridget Tatum, Anne Hutchins. (Richards 1958, p. 49)

1749 – Sep 21 – VA Surry/Sussex – Bap – Mary Knight – d/o John Knight and wife Elizabeth born; Albemarle Parish; Bap 3 Dec sps William Hutchins, Sarah Evans, Anne King. (Richards 1958, p. 150)

These children from the register are listed in the will along with the others, so we are surely looking at the right family. However, we encounter a surprising difficulty when we read the following:

1748 – Apr 12 – VA Surry/Sussex – Admin – John Knight, Jordan Knight & Richard Knight - Albemarle Parish Vestry Meeting: Christopher Tatum & John Mason jr Appointed Church Wardens for the year ensuing.

*A Letter from Mr. Robert Jones junior setting forth the Misfortunes of a Certain **Jordan Knight son of John Knight**, being read, it is ordered that the said **Jordan** be Exempt from paying his Parish Levies during his Continuance Under his Calamity.

* Results of prev. ordered Processioning given including: Francis Eppe's, Edward Eppes, James Cain, Richard Knight, Benjamin Jordan, John Knight, Col. Bland, John Bass, Samuel Bass. "In pursuance to an Order of Vestry held for the parish of Albemarle Aug 26 in the year of our Lord 1747 we the said James Cain & Rob Farrington have seen every person's Land procession'd within our precinct & the land marks renew'd except a line between James Cain & George Robinson which the said George Robinson refused to have procession'd the reason was the former lines are Cut down And the sd Robinson says the sd James Cain hath removed his Land mark. (p. 35 APVB) "**Richard Knight's** land not procession'd because he wou'd not attend & he alledg'd he never had done it." (pp. 33-45 Procession lists APVB)

The item about Jordan Knight makes it certain that he is well of taxable age, no doubt in his 20s, and responsible for paying his own taxes. That would put his birth in the early-1720s, meaning that his father, John, would have to be born at the turn of the century, or thereabouts! Yet, we have no baptismal record of Jordan, and the first child to actually be listed in the parish registry arrived in only in 1740! One wonders, of course, what Jordan's "calamity" was? Did he travel somewhere else - alone or with his family - and did something terrible happen, so that a letter had to be written about it? Otherwise, one would think that everyone would know the situation. Also notice that bad-tempered Richard Knight. Well, we pass over that for the moment. Right now we are concerned with the rather lengthy time between the apparent birth of John's son, Jordan (surely his, because he is named in the will), born perhaps 1723, and Peter, born 1740; that is a 17 year gap. Not only that, but Peter is then followed by other children right up to 1749, totalling 26 years after Jordan, surely a miracle?!

Of course not; the obvious solution is that this John Knight had two wives and children by each and that will account for all the children. We know that in 1753, John Knight of Sussex was married to Elizabeth Eppes because the will of her father says so:

1753 – Jan 16 – VA Surry/Sussex – Will – Daniel Eppes - Of Albemarle Parish, Date: 6 Sept. 1749. Proved 16 Jan 1753. William Willie (pastor) and Edward Eppes Executors. Wife: Mary. Son: Edward. Daughters: **Elizabeth Knight** and **Mary Tatum**. Grandson: Daniel Eppes (not 21) Wit: William Willie. (Parks 1982, p. 592) "Daniel Eppes, aged eighty-one, died June 6 1753, certified by Edward Eppes. (McGahn 1982, p. 514)

Going by the date of the will of Daniel Eppes, we know then that it was the *second* wife who was clearly Elizabeth Eppes, and she was still living as late as 1753. She was then, *not* the mother of Jordan Knight; Jordan's mother must have been a Jordan, as many genealogists have long suspected, and we notice in the 1748 Apr 12 record cited above, there was a Benjamin Jordan close to John Knight in the processioning list. My bet would be on him being related to John Knight's first wife, possibly a brother or father. There has long been a tradition that a John Knight was married to a daughter of Richard Jordan and Rebecca Ratcliff (Radcliffe), but perhaps the reality is that it was a daughter of Richard Jordan's brother, Benjamin? These Jordans were Quakers which might explain the dearth of records. When they were preserved, Quaker records were the best, but often they were not and then, there is nothing at all. This is probably the reason that there are no church records for the first set of children born to John Knight and Elizabeth Jordan. His second wife, Elizabeth Eppes, may not have been of the Quaker persuasion, thus at least a few baptismal records in the local parish. But, can we figure out which children belonged to which mother?

Now, let's back up a minute.

We can note from the [Raw Records](#) that John Knight, who is obviously a mature man with grown children as we note from the 1748 Vestry meeting record, first patented land in Surry/Sussex in 1741. This patent would have been applied for about 3 years previously, so we can propose that he moved to this area in about 1738/9 from somewhere else. We notice also, from the records, that he is not the first Knight in Surry County. What we see first is a William Knight apparently obtaining land from a John and Mary Robinson with the note that William is "of Surry County", so he surely must have been there already but when we encounter him, he seems to be on the move 10 years before John shows up.

1731 – Jan – VA Brunswick – Admin – William Knight - John Robinson of [torn] to **William Knight of Surry Co.** [torn] joining Harrison. Also signed by Mary (x) Robinson. Wit: Moses Dunkley, Mary Dunkley, Proved 7 Sep 1732. Drury Stith CC Note: Probate indicates that the grantors were John & Mary Robinson. (Bradley 1997, p. 1)

Four years later there is the following, obviously the same people, only the name has been spelled differently which may be why the clerk in the above record later noted that the name was Robinson and not Robertson:

1735 – Sep – VA Brunswick – Admin – William Knight - Court minutes: John Robertson and Mary his wife (she being first privately examined) came into Court & presented and acknowledged their Deeds of Lease and Release to William Knight which at the sd Knights mo[torn] (Bradley 2000, p. 7)

Then, 10 years after this William moves from Surry to Brunswick there is this:

1742 – Feb 12 – VA Brunswick – Admin - John Knight - Land patent for 383 acs. on S. side of Nottoway Riv. bounded by Fishers Corner on dry Cr. (VA Gen. Soc. Qrtly. Vol. 26, No. 3, p. 217)

This John, in Brunswick, may be the son of William in Brunswick, formerly of Surry. Notice from the maps and discussion above that this group must have been way to the left (on the map) of Surry County when the county lines changed and thus found themselves in Brunswick. I don't yet know who these two were, or how they connect into the tree; perhaps another clue about them will turn up eventually. For the moment, we have to leave them dangling in space and time.

As it happens, while one William Knight is establishing himself in the new Brunswick County, another William Knight appears in Surry described in the same way:

1735 – Jan 10 – Surry VA – Admin - William Knight - Of Surry Co., 285 acs. Surry Co., both sides of the little Sw., on S side of Nottoway Riv., adj. John Evans. (Nugent IV, p. 95)

Is this the same William Knight of Surry or do we now have another? The next thing we see is this "new" William of Surry, in Surry, getting rid of the land he just patented:

1737 – May 17 – VA Surry – Admin – William Knight & wife Alice – Conveyed 285 acs to Thomas Moore. This was the same land granted to William in 1735. (Harlander, p. i)

As a bonus, we learn the name of his wife.

The very next Knight record, three years later, is the above cited birth of Peter Knight, son of John and Elizabeth; but there is actually a little flurry of Knight activity in that year:

1740 – Feb 10 – VA Surry/Sussex – Bap – Peter Knight – s/o John Knight and Elizabeth; (b. Jan 8); sps: Peter Hawthorn, Chauncy Tatum, Mary Eppes. (Richards 1958, p. 39)

1740 - Mar 16 – VA Surry/Sussex – Bap – Sylvanus Stokes – s/o Jones and Anne Stokes; Albemarle Parish: **William Knight**, Vaughan Kilborn, Rebecca Harwood, sps. (Richards 1958, p. 48)

1740 - Jun 8 – VA Surry/Sussex – Admin – William Knight and Richard Knight – W/ Elizabeth Horn; sps to Joshua King s/o John King and Sarah; Albemarle Parish: (Richards 1958, p. 32)

1740 - Nov 2 - VA Surry/Sussex – Admin – William Knight – with Hannah Felse, Rebecca Harris, sps. to Lucretia Sansenick, d/o James and Mary Sassenick; Albemarle Parish. (Richards 1958, p. 32)

The second item above, a Stokes baptism with William Knight as one of the sponsors, may tell us something. Again, checking the raw records, we find this:

1723 - Sep 5 – VA Surry – Admin - Silvanus Stokes (Stoakes) – Land patent for 380 acs. Surry Co; S. side of Nottoway River, & on both sides of Raccoon Sw.;. 40 Shill. (Nugent III, p. 254)

This would be Sylvanus Stokes (c. 1692-1766) and Cecilia Walker Stokes, who were the parents of an Elizabeth Stokes who will marry John Knight JR, but we will come to that. The point is that the Stokes were in Surry for at least 14 years before the arrival of this group of Knights. And then it looks like a recently arrived Knight daughter has married a Jones Stokes and produced an infant in the same year that her father and his second wife produced Peter Knight. This Jones Stokes who married Anne was the brother of Sylvanus Stokes who was married to Cecilia. The mother of this Sylvanus and his brother Jones, was Susanna Jones, and their father was still another Sylvanus Stokes who died in Charles City County in 1647.

The third item above, William Knight and Richard Knight acting together as baptismal sponsors makes one think that they might be brothers, or at least of a similar age and socializing with the same group. We'll come back to this.

Next, in the following year, an event of significance:

1741 - Mar 2 – VA Surry/Sussex – Bur – Alice Knight - Albemarle Parish: death reported to parish by William Knight. (Richards 1958, p. 212)

Was this William's wife or a child? Alice may have died from sickness or childbirth; we just don't know. Was this William the son, or a brother, or cousin, of John Knight?

One thing that suggests this William is the *son* of John Knight is the following:

1742 Oct 7 – VA Surry/Sussex – Bap - Charles Knight - s/o William Knight and Mary Knight; sps: Thomas Andrews, William Land, Elizabeth Shelton. (Boddie 1998, pp. 83-84)

That is to say, he almost immediately found a new wife, remarried, and started a family. And this William Knight, married to Mary, is assuredly the son of John Knight. It was common in that time for this exact scenario to play out.

In the same year that William's wife died, John Knight SR's patent was granted:

1741 - Jul 25 – VA Surry – Admin - John Knight – Land patent for 540 acres S side of Nottoway Riv., S side of Lee's br., adj. Richard Avery & Abraham Evans. (Nugent IV, p. 248)

We are reminded of the land description of Richard King from 1725 "S. side of **Nottoway Riv**; on S. side of Hunting Quarter Sw; on N. side of **Lee's Branch**, **adj. William Lee**". John Knight must have settled and applied for his land patent about 3 years prior to receiving the official grant. That is, he arrived in the same year that William Knight and his wife, Alice, sold or traded off land to Thomas Moore and they may have decided that different tracts were more desirable.

The next event is the land patent of Richard, whom we saw above hanging out with William:

1742 - May 20 – VA Surry – Admin - Richard Knight - Land patent for 200 acs. S. side of Nottoway River bounded by E. side of Cypress br. & Mr. Howell Briggs. (VA Gen. Soc. Qtrly. Vol. 26 No. 2, p. 137)

He, too, is choosing land in the same general area. Now, the initial impression was that this might be a brother of William, but further reading through the records suggest that this is not the case, and there are several reasons I say that. First of all, as things develop, we learn he has children born as early as 1730 and the last born 1739 so he appears to be in an "in-between" age bracket from that of John SR and William. Secondly, John SR's son also named Richard, later appears with his own records.

But, if Richard is not a son of John's, is he a brother? It is possible, but some things don't fit that scenario exactly including the "in-between" age bracket factor; he appears more as a cousin. At a later point, when he is in trouble in the court system, John SR's son, William, speaks on his behalf but is not referred to as his brother; he is never referred to in any of the records as a son of John SR's and he finally takes off on his own as though he were a black sheep of the family which, in a manner of speaking, he was. The whole impression is of a relationship, but not brotherly or father-son, and that leaves, pretty much, being a nephew to John SR and cousin to William, son of John. That means that we can legitimately infer that there must have been a brother of John SR who does not appear on the scene at all who would be father to this Richard. Taking the dates of birth of Richard's children into account, it is likely that he, himself, was born about 1708 or so. That would push his father's year of birth back to about 1686 which is in line with my retrocalculations for the year of birth for John SR himself, i.e. c. 1690 or so.

Now, coming back to the will of John SR, we see there that William and Jordan get tracts of land, but they have to pay the other sons sums of money. John twice lists the less favored sons in this order: **John, Joel, Edward, Peter & Richard**, so one might be justified in thinking that they are in order of age, i.e. **William, Jordan, John, Joel, Edward, Peter & Richard**. However, tracking their activity in the parish, as well as other clues, *does not* support that assumption at all if we expect them to do certain things by certain ages! However, we can't exclude late-bloomers, but we don't have enough data to deal with that, so we will just go by what data we do have.

Let me list them with estimated y.o.b. based on activity that can be tracked in the records:

Children of Elizabeth Jordan, born elsewhere:

1713 - William Knight: William appears with a first wife, Alice, in 1735, patenting land, so he must be about 22 or 23. In 1739/40 William Knight stands as sponsor to child of Jones and Anne Stokes, Anne probably being his sister. William's wife dies 6 years later in 1741; he remarries and his own 1st *recorded* child is registered in 1742. He may have had unrecorded children with Alice, but there is no evidence for that. William's age and activities suggest that his father was born by at least 1691, more likely, 1690 or even earlier.

1715 - Anne Knight: Her 1st child is registered in 1740. Her relationship to her brother, who was the sponsor of the child, would explain why William was the one who reported the death of another of her children, Jones Stokes JR (b. 1743) to the parish in 1750/1.

1723 - Jordan Knight: Is fully an adult with taxable property in 1748 when his calamity at a distant place is reported at the Vestry Meeting. Notice that the report was made by letter from a Robert Jones and the mother of Jones Stokes is - surprise! - a Jones. He does not reappear on the records scene again until 1761 when he has apparently married and a 1st child is being baptized in 1766. He could have been, (likely was), previously married and his calamity could have involved a previous family being lost and resulting in an injury to himself that took a long recovery time. We just don't know and I'm speculating.

1725 - Richard Knight: Richard shows up with his first child being baptized in 1746. We know this is not the other Richard because of the name of the wives, and later documents that don't concern us here, regarding the elder Richard (see [Raw Records](#) for the Saga of Richard and Ephraim Knight). This Richard, son of John, has bad luck too. His first wife, Martha, apparently dies and he marries again, producing a second child. This second child is mentioned in the will of her maternal grandfather, William Andrews, so we know that the second wife is Elizabeth Andrews. We don't know if the first child of Richard, Martha, survived, but the second one apparently did.

1727 - Edward Knight: I find nothing on him *at all*, but he is in the will, so must have been living at the time it was written and died or moved elsewhere after his father's death.

At this point, we come to a sort of small gap of about 4 years that was created when I estimated Daniel's age based on his first documented activity. And, since Daniel was the name of the father of Elizabeth Eppes, it would be reasonable for her to thus name her first child. So this is, I think, the point at which Elizabeth Jordan has died and John Sr has married again.

Now, keep in mind, it seems pretty certain that all of the above children were born elsewhere and came to Surry County when their brother, first, and then their father, moved there. Where was this? Most likely Isle of Wight County where the Jordan family resided for quite awhile. There was a significant Quaker enclave there. Note also that a Benjamin Jordan was listed in the 1748 Vestry Meeting entry above. This was likely the brother of Elizabeth who, and he seems to have lived temporarily, in Surry County. A Benjamin Jordan is found in Henrico County marrying Lydia Pleasants in 1741; how he was related to the Benjamin in Surry is not known as yet. I suspect strongly that they are the same person.

Children of Elizabeth Eppes:

1731 - Daniel Knight: First appearance in the records as bap. sponsor of infant in 1752. He appears in the same role twice more and then disappears completely. He was not mentioned in his father's will so must have died. The other records considered, he may have been born in Isle of Wight or Nansemond County.

1736 - John Knight JR: His 1st child was bap. in 1757; appears as bap. sponsor in 1762. He may have been born just before the removal to Surry County, or just after based on the dates of other records. He was not baptized in Albemarle Parish.

1740 - Peter Knight: His was the first birth registered in Albemarle Parish. He appeared on schedule as bap. sponsor in 1762. His name is probably a clue as to his lineage: a great grandson of Capt. Peter Knight, whose son James, we know to have removed to Nansemond County. His sponsors, according to the Parish Register were: Peter Hawthorn, Chauncy Tatum, Mary Eppes. (Richards 1958, p. 39) Mary Eppes was the sister of Elizabeth Eppes and later married John Tatum.

1742 - Sarah Knight: Birth registered in Albemarle Parish. Her baptismal sponsors were John Tatum, Bridget Tatum, Anne Hutchins. (Richards 1958, p. 49)

1744 - Joel Knight: His birth is not in the Albemarle Parish Register, but he is in John Sr's will and appears as bap. sponsor in 1765 followed by the birth of his own first child, Mary Knight, in 1765 also. He could have been a late-bloomer, but based on the records, I put him here. Also, note the gap between the registered births of Sarah and Mary and Joel fits well here. It is also possible that he was born earlier, remained in Nansemond or Isle of Wight, and only later moved to Sussex. He could, therefore, have had an earlier family.

1749 - Mary Knight: Birth registered. Her baptismal sponsors were William Hutchins, Sarah Evans, Anne King. (Richards 1958, p. 150)

The above year-of-birth estimates make a reasonable spread with no anomalies, fit the later records, so for all practical purposes, I think we can go forward with them. As noted before, one thing that seems absolutely certain is that John Knight SR of Sussex had two wives and one's name is known for sure, the other is known by tradition. In this case, it looks like the tradition is correct.

As I noted, if John's eldest son, William, was born c. 1713, that means this John would be born c. 1690 himself, or even a little earlier, say 1688/89. And after all we have gone through above, this fact leads to a very interesting speculative conclusion: that this John Knight was himself the son of James Knight, and grandson of Capt. Peter Knight.

The records for James Knight are on the "[Two Peter Knights](#)" pages, but I'll recap a couple of them here. First, we see Capt. Peter Knight's son hiring or lending himself out as a headright along with Samuel Clarke, most likely the son and heir of Samuel Clarke who was the "heir and next of kin" of Peter Knight of Gloucester, and a Michael Thomas.

1682 - Nov 20 - VA Nansemond - Admin - Col. John Lear - Land patent for 900 acs., in Up. Par. Of Nansemond; at Plumpton Park alias Orapeak; p. 196. ... Trans. Of 18 pers: Andrew Beech (?), 4 times; Thomas Andrews, Jonathan Griffin, Jonathan Freeman, Thomas Harding, Adam Rable, Luke Neale, Tomsin Turner (or Tanner), Mary Price, **Samuel Clarke**, Walter Noak, Jonathan Wharton, Phillip Powell, **Michael Thomas, James Knight.** (Nugent II, p. 246)

As I've pointed out elsewhere, a number of these names are obviously sons of already established Virginia planters. A careful reading of patents reveals that there was a veritable industry in lending out or hiring out sons to be headrights either as favors, or the sons were actually being apprenticed to other planters for their education. And, sure enough, just four years later, we see the two young men patenting their own land, meaning that they probably applied for the patent *within one year* of arriving in Nansemond. They must have looked it over, decided they liked it, and stayed. According to the probable date of birth of James, he would be exactly 21 when the patent was filed.

1686 - Apr 27 - VA Nansemond - Admin - Michael Thomas & James Knight - Land patent for 450 acs., Up. Par. Of Nansemond Co: at mouth of a br. Of Orapeake Sw.... Trans of 9 pers: Incl: Thomas Conroe, Cock Cromwell, William Mandor. (Nugent II, p. 297)

There is a complete lack of records for 18 years, (Nansemond was hit hard by record destruction), but then we see that James is still hanging around in Nansemond:

1704 - VA Nansemond - Admin - Rent Roll - James Knight, 600 acres. (des Cognets, pp. 198-204)

He has his own land now, and more of it. Other interesting names from that Rent Roll are:

Robert Baker, William Parker, Francis Parker, Thomas Parker, Capt. John Speir, John Gorden, Robert Lassiter, Thomas Davis, John Cole, Thomas Norfleet, James Speirs, Epaphroditus Benton, Gresham Coffield, Edward Norfleet, John Norfleet, Edward Moore, Thomas Moore, William Speirs, John Lawrence, Sampson Meredith, Joseph Meredith, Henry Lawrence, William Keene, William Everett, Richard Lawrence, Thomas Vaughan, John Parker, John Moore, Richard Moore, John Lee, Robert Coleman, John Butler, James Butler, William Collins, Robert Lawrence, James Lawrence, George Lawrence, Richard Taylor, Peter Parker, Thomas Mason, James Moore, James Knott, John Brassieur, Edward Welsh, John White, John Hambleton, Robert Jordan, Maj. Thomas Jordan, Margaret Jordan, William Butler.

Many of those family names are ones that were associated with Capt. Peter Knight; others are definitely associated with the Edgecombe NC Knights of the next generation or two. Some of them appear to have drifted into Surry County and then elsewhere. Isle of Wight County was between Nansemond and Surry for a time, so it was a natural flow direction toward the interior of Virginia.

The next we hear of James is when his father, Capt. Peter Knight, died in 1705, and his will was probated. James had to return to Northumberland County to manage affairs there. In 1705 and 1710, there are records of him selling off some of his father's land and there are probably many more records missing because, ultimately all of Capt. Peter's land was in other hands. In 1712, James re-recorded one of his father's patents. He was required by the terms of the will to maintain some land there for his sister, Elizabeth and that was probably the reason.

Sixty-three years after James's first patent in Nansemond as a twenty-something, another record turns up:

1749 - Jun 20 - VA Nansemond - Admin - James Knight - Land patent for 247 acs. on N side **Orapeak** Sw, in the sd, James Knight's line, on the land of Thomas Ellis, deceased, on the land of William Trevethan, on the land of John Riddick, and Thomas Bord, on Edward Arnolds land. (VA. Gen. Soc. Qrtly. Vol. 30, No. 2, p. 145)

This is surely the son of James, grandson of Capt. Peter. We note, from the wording of the patent, that he already has land, that it is in the same location as the previous land of James Knight, so we can suggest that he is adding to what he inherited from his father. And we are now in the decade in which John Knight showed up in Surry County with his Knight-Jordan children and a new Eppes wife. There is probably a connection: James's son, James, inherited, and any other sons received some money and went off on their own.

If our John SR is really from Nansemond as I propose, we would expect to see some activity from him by 1718 - 1721 at the latest: I found a possible: a 1714 Jun 16 patent of Samuel Parker in Nansemond County.

1714 - Jun 16 – VA Nansemond – Admin – Samuel Parker - Land Patent for 200 acres "near head of Bennett's Cr. ... Imp. Of 4 pers: John Eye, Oril Hinson, James Gullaway, **John Knight**. (Nugent III, p. 155)

Samuel Parker not only confirms my view that sons of planters lent/rented/apprenticed themselves out to other planters in order to start their own careers as planters because we then find this later very interesting connection:

1758 - Dec 31 – NC Edgecombe – Will – Simon Parker - *James Knight (brother-in-law)* named executor of the will of Simon Parker. Wife is Judith Knight, children: Francis, Simon, William, Robert, James, Judah, Sarah, Winne, Charitie and Ruth. (Grimes 1910, p. 279)

The James Knight here in question is James Moore Knight, son of John Knight and Isabell Carter Knight. This John Knight is the son of a William Knight and Martha Carter who appear in Bertie County NC, just below Nansemond, as early as 1739, (pretty much the same time as John Knight of Sussex appears in Sussex!):

1739 - Feb 2 – NC Bertie – Admin - William Knight - Witness to deed of land at mouth of Blundering Branch at Catawatskey Swamp between John Browne and John Battle. Also Witnessed by **Isaac Carter**. (Bell, p. 156)

So, it looks to me as though James Knight, son of Capt. Peter Knight, had at least three sons: James, William and John. I have already suggested that Richard Knight, who appears in Surry/Sussex along with John SR and his Jordan children, was a nephew. This Richard doesn't appear to be a son of William Knight who apparently went off to Bertie County NC about the same time that John Knight went off to Surry/Sussex. He could possibly be a younger son of James JR who was not in line to inherit, and thus, made his own way in the usual manner of younger sons. There's no point in speculating an additional son of James Knight, son of Capt. Peter, to be the father of Richard, when we have circumstantial evidence for three already; and we know that these three existed. We need to keep firmly in mind that we are operating from records and children named in wills, not phantoms; these children are important data points, as are the records around them and there are certainly strong connections in terms of associations, and the times are exactly right to support the construction I am giving here.

Coming back for a moment to the Jordans: there were many Jordans from the line of an Arthur in part of Surry county much earlier, but what is of greater interest here is the fact that Benjamin Jordan appears to be near to this particular John Knight and thus, probably related to the first wife. I've speculated that Elizabeth Jordan died before the move was made, but it is equally possible that she died after and this Benjamin Jordan accompanied his sister and brother-in-law to the new location. was almost certainly Benjamin Jordan Jr (1708-1775), son of Benjamin Jordan SR of Isle of Wight/Nansemond. But, we also know that the Benjamin Jordan in question married Lydia Pleasants in Henrico County in 1741. So how could he be on a Processioning list in Surry in 1748? The distances are not great and, as I noted, Surry is next door to Isle of Wight County and one would have to pass through Surry to get to Henrico, so it is entirely possible for Ben Jordan to have had land in both places at least for a period. We know that James Knight had land in Nansemond and later in Northumberland, which he held simultaneously. There is also evidence for other Knights, even earlier, going back and forth between Henrico and Surry.

As noted, these Jordans were Quakers and this could go a long way toward explaining the dearth of records. When they were preserved, Quaker records were the best, but when they weren't, there is often nothing at all. The Puritans, Quakers, and later other religious groups, very strongly objected to paying tithes to support a church and its ministers with which they did not agree; this is one reason why some people managed to consistently avoid being listed on Tithables list. We don't know how they managed, but they did. It is also probably the reason that there are no church records for the first set of children born to John Knight and Elizabeth Jordan. It seems that the second wife, Elizabeth Eppes, had no such scruples. We are certainly glad they had three children baptized by the Reverend Willie, because it really helped to understand the time gap in records, and thus confirm the fact that this John Knight had two wives and two sets of children. Both wives were dead by the time he made his will, and he made no distinction between the children, and without some pegs to work from, we would be utterly clueless. As it is, we aren't much more than that, but at least I am trying to work toward a logical, reasonable, and even realistic genealogy.

Family Groups

Now that we have a reasonable grasp on the general set-up of this group of Knights in Albemarle Parish, Surry-then-Sussex VA, I'm going to list here the family groups that I've assembled from the records there plus later wills made elsewhere. You can see all the records in Raw, chronological form, [HERE](#).

John Knight prob. son of James Knight who was son of Capt. Peter Knight, born c. 1690 - d. 1762, left will naming children. with 1st wife Elizabeth Jordan:

William Knight c. 1713
Anne Knight c. 1715
Jordan Knight c. 1723
Richard Knight c. 1725
Edward Knight c. 1727

with 2nd wife, Elizabeth Eppes:

Daniel Knight c. 1731
John Knight JR c. 1736
Peter Knight c. 1740 Jan 8
Sarah Knight 1742 Sep 12
Joel Knight c. 1744 -
Mary Knight 1749 Sep 21

Richard Knight, prob. nephew to John Knight SR, pos. younger son of James Knight JR of Nansemond, born c. 1709 d. 1760 wife Elizabeth:

Alice Knight c. 1730 - m. Edward Threewit - To Tennessee
Ephraim Knight c. 1730 m. Mary Carrell - To Halifax NC
Moses Knight c. 1738 m. Judith - Last seen in Sussex in 1775
Richard Knight JR c. 1740 m. Ann - To NC

William Knight, son of John Knight and Elizabeth Jordan, born c. 1713 d. 1767 wife Mary

Charles Knight 1742 Oct 7 m. Mary Rochell (or Rachell)
John Knight 1745 Sep 17 m. Rachel Anderson -> Georgia
Elizabeth Knight 1747 Apr 19 m. William Newsom
Sarah Knight 1748 Jan 19 m. Levi Bailey?
Archibald Knight 1750 Jan 10 - To Guilford Co NC

Joel Knight 1750 Nov 17
William Knight 1753 Mar 18 m. Nancy Whitfield?

Pos Additions:
Joseph Knight
Thomas James Knight

**Anne Knight, dau. of John Knight SR, b. 1722 d. ?
husband, Jones Stokes:**

Sylvanus Stokes 1737 Feb 18
Jones Stokes JR 1743-1751
Elizabeth Stokes 1747 Sep 10
Edith Stokes 1750 Jan 21

**Jordan Knight, son of John Knight and Elizabeth Jordan, born c. 1723 d. c. 1782
wife Elizabeth:**

Agnes Knight 1765 Mar 4
John Knight 1766 Sep 23
Lucy Knight 1668 May 15 m. Augustine Whitehead
William Knight 1769 Dec 30
Mary Knight 1770 Feb 3
Daniel Knight 1771 Nov 20

Note: John Knight SR made no mention in his will of a grandson, Jordan Knight, only his son by that name. This is, therefore, likely the same Jordan who had the terrible calamity in 1748, 18 years previously. But, I won't exclude the possibility that this could be a Jordan JR.

**Richard Knight, son of John Knight and Elizabeth Jordan, born c. 1725 d. ?
wife Martha:**

Martha Knight 1746 Oct 28

with 2nd wife, Elizabeth Andrews:

Rebecca Knight 1750 Apr 10

**John Knight JR, son of John Knight and Elizabeth Eppes, born c. 1736 d. 1791, left will naming children
wife Elizabeth Stokes:**

Lydia Knight 1757 Apr 27
Lucretia Knight 1760 Apr 27
Walker Knight 1762 May 24
Lewis Knight 1763 Dec 20
Francis Eppes Knight 1766 Feb 11
Sylvanus Knight 1770 Feb 5

with 2nd wife, Sarah, subsequent children named in will:

Elizabeth Knight c. 1772
Charles Knight c. 1774 (underage, left in care of bro. Lewis)
John Knight c. 1775 (underage, left in care of bro. Walker)
Rhoda Knight c. 1776 (underage)

**Peter Knight, son of John Knight and Elizabeth Eppes, b. 1740 Jan 8, d. 1809 in Edgecombe NC, left will naming children.
wife Ann (prob. Bell):**

Jesse Knight 1757 - 1815 m. 1st Frances Edith Howard; 2nd Mary Cobb, left NC will naming children.
Arthur Knight 1759 -1829 m. 1st Sally Barlow; 2nd Lavina Booth; left NC will, no issue.
John Knight 1762 - 1823 in KY. m. Susannah Braddy (Brady?)
Willis Knight 1768 - 1846 m. 1st, Sarah Foxhall; 2nd Mary Cobb Knight, widow of Jesse Knight, his brother. Left NC will.
Lucy Knight 1770 - 1867 m. Isaac Batts
Mary Knight 1774 - 1871 m. Joshua Lawrence
Elizabeth Knight 1780 - 1830 m. Walker Knight, son of John Knight JR and Elizabeth Stokes, i.e. 1st cousin
Charles Knight 1785 - 1874 m. Lucy Evans and Sarah Adams
Peter Eppes Knight 1790 - 1864 m. 1st Martha Phippen; 2nd Elizabeth Best

**Joel Knight, son of John Knight SR and Elizabeth Eppes, born c. 1744 d. 1809, left will naming children.
wife Hannah Porch:**

Mary Knight 1765 Aug 11 m. John Huskey
Lucretia Knight 1767 Oct 22 m. Lattana Jones
Sylvia Knight 1769 Sep 13

with 2nd wife, name unknown:

Silas Knight 1777 m. 1st Mary Ann Davis; 2nd Elizabeth Fielding
William Knight 1778 m. Isabella

**Mary Knight, dau of John Knight SR and Elizabeth Eppes, b. 1749 d. 1837
husb Frederick Fort:**

Elizabeth Fort 1762 - 1845
William Knight Fort 1764 - 1845 m. 1st Charlotte Lyle or Lisle; 2nd Elizabeth W. Whitfield - Wake NC
Anne Fort 1766 - 1829 m. John Burnham - To KY?

Frederick Fort 1767 -1768
Dutchea Fort 1768 - 1862
Polly Fort 1775 -
Lucy Fort 1778 - 1846
Sally Fort 1779 - 1850
Foster Fort 1780 - 1843 m. Elizabeth H. J. Justice
John Fort 1780 - 1843 m. Jane Justice

Moses Knight, prob. son of Richard Knight (the elder), born c. 1738
wife Judith:

Patty Knight 1760 Mar 25
Elizabeth Knight 1765 Oct 29
Moses Knight 1767 Jan 24
Ephraim Knight 1772 Aug 2
William Knight 1774 Sep 20
James Knight 1770 May 31

John Knight
Wife Anne:

William Knight 1769 Dec 30
Benjamin Knight 1772 Jan 30
Wilson Knight 1774 Mar 6

I don't know who this last John Knight is. He should be born no later than 1739 which would put him in the age group with the son of John Knight SR. I've found Wilson Knight - not so common a name - in Cumberland NC 1830 census, along with a Henry Knight of a similar age and a John Knight young enough to be a son of Wilson's. Wilson is alone in Cumberland in 1840. The name Wilson shows up again as a 16 year old son of James Knight, 38, in the 1850 Clarke, Mississippi census along with a Mark Knight, 32. BUT, it also shows up in the same census, alone, in Frederick VA as a 27 year old, this time with a son, James Knight. One gets the feeling that this John may have been a great grandson of James Knight who was the son of Capt. Peter Knight via James, and then another James. Well, it fits, but it's just speculation. DNA might help to solve it if anyone has Wilson in their upline. Write and let me know!

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