

The Thornton Family

Author(s): W. G. Stanard

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Author(s): W. G. Stanard

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"It is clear from the language of the Lichfield record that the lady was *Anne Washington* when she died, and that she had previously been the wife of Walter Brodhurst, because her son Walter Brodhurst administered.

"Whether she died before or after her husband Washington, there is nothing to show. She may have been dead in 1678.

"These are all the facts that I can give you, and I hope that you may be able to do something with them. It is clear from the records you give that the elder Walter Brodhurst was living 14 Sept., 1655, and was dead 9 Dec., 1662. The grant to Anne Pope, *alias* Washington, is rather puzzling, but she had ceased to have any title to the name Brodhurst, having changed it for Washington. In the Lichfield record the formula 'Washington, *als.* Brodhurst,' was, no doubt, used in order to establish her identity as the person to whom the legacy was left. Of course, after all (for one of my maxims is, that there is nothing impossible in genealogy), there may have been *two Anne Washingtons* living contemporaneously in Washington parish; but I think that the evidences are against it. The will of Nathaniel Pope might be important."¹

THE THORNTON FAMILY.

BY W. G. STANARD.

Though there have been in Virginia several different families of this name, the largest and most prominent has been that which originally settled in Gloucester county, spread to Stafford, King George, Richmond, Northumberland, Essex, Caroline, Spottsylvania, Orange, Culpeper, Madison, Brunswick, and other counties, and has now representatives in almost every State in the Union.

The first of the name of whom there is any record is said to have come from Yorkshire. On May 11, 1646, William Thornton obliged himself, by a paper recorded in York county (including Gloucester), to care for the cattle of John Liptrot until the latter came of age. On February 16th, 1665-'66, as "Mr. William¹ Thornton," he had a grant of 16½ acres of land, in Petsworth parish, Gloucester, adjoining the land where he lived, and that of Mr. Richard Barnard. He was a vestryman of Petsworth parish in 1677. There is on record in Essex a power of attorney, dated September, 1673, from William¹ Thornton, of Gloucester, to James Kay, of Rappahannock county, concerning 2,000 acres of land in the freshes of Rappahannock, on the north side of the river, ad-

¹ The dates referred to as having been sent by me were abstracts from the State registry of various grants of land. A grant of 350 acres in Westmoreland county was reissued December 9, 1662, to Walter Brodhurst, which had been formerly granted, September 14, 1655, to his deceased father, Walter Brodhurst. Anne Pope, *alias* Washington, was granted 700 acres in Westmoreland county, Virginia, 13 January, 1661. (O. S., 1662, N. S.) I have not the full note as to this grant.—*R. A. Brock.*

joining the lands of Andrew Buckner, Col. Wm. Ball, and Mr. Richard Whitehead, and Muddy Creek, a tract of land which he had bought from Mott. There is also recorded in Essex, in 1708, a deed, dated July 16, 1675, from William Thornton, of Gloucester, gentleman, to Francis and Rowland, "two of his sons," conveying 2,000 acres in Rappahannock county, and also a power of attorney, dated 1708, from Wm¹ Thornton, formerly of Gloucester, but now of Stafford, authorizing the confirmation of said deed. So in his old age Wm. Thornton removed from Gloucester to Stafford. It is not known whom he married, but he had issue: 1, William,² Jr; 2, Francis²; 3, Rowland²; was witness to a will in Rappahannock, 1686. There is a deed, Richmond county, 1692, from Rowland Thornton, of Rappahannock county, planter, and his wife Elizabeth, daughter of Alexander Fleming, to Francis Thornton, of the same county, gentleman. Elizabeth Thornton, daughter of Captain Alexander Fleming, sold land in what was afterwards King George, in 1699. In May, 1701, the bond of Elizabeth Thornton, as administratrix of Rowland Thornton, of Richmond county, deceased, was recorded. There is no evidence that they had issue.

1. WILLIAM² THORNTON, JR., of Gloucester county, was born March 27, 1649, and died February 15, 1727 (*Family Bible*). He was married three times, viz., on August 24, 1671; April 11, 1688; and October 20, 1720; but the name of none of his wives is known. On April 26, 1704, as "William Thornton the younger," he received a grant of 110 acres of land in Petsworth parish, Gloucester, adjoining the land of "Mr. William Thornton the elder." He was a vestryman of Petsworth. Issue (1st m.): 4, Elizabeth², born August 26, 1672; 5, Margaret², born August 14, 1674; 6, Mary², born May 11, 1676; 7, Esther², born January 6, 1677; 8, Sarah², born August 17, 1679; 9, Jane², born August 10, 1681; 10, Judith², born October 22, 1683; 11, Anna², born June 15, 1685; 12, William², born September 11, 1686; (2d m.): 13, Susan², born June 11, 1686; 14, Francis²; 15, Seth², born October 13, 1694 (vestryman of Petsworth); 16 and 17, William² and Prudence² (twins), born March 31, 1699; 18, John², born April 17, 1701; 19, Johanna², born December 3, 1703.

2. FRANCIS² THORNTON, born Nov. 5, 1651, settled in Stafford county, probably before the year 1700. He married first, Alice, daughter of Captain Anthony Savage, of Gloucester county (who was a justice of Gloucester in 1660, and had considerable landed

estates on the Rappahannock), and secondly Jane, widow of John Harvey, of Stafford. He had no issue by the second marriage. In 1706 Francis Thornton, of Stafford, and his wife, Jane, widow of John Harvey, made a deed of 684 acres in Stafford and Westmoreland to Anthony, son of the said Francis Thornton, with reversion to his other sons, Francis, Rowland, and William. (*Westmoreland and Stafford Records*.) In 1715-'16 Anthony Thornton, of Stafford, petitioned the proprietors of the Northern Neck for a regrant of this land, which he stated had been left to Mrs. Jane Thornton, by her former husband, in 1700; that the said Jane died without heirs; but being "an imperfect deed" gave the land to him (A. T.) in 1706. The grant requested was issued. It is not known when Francis² Thornton died, unless he was the Francis Thornton whose will was presented to King George County Court for probate, by his widow Anne, in 1726. (This appears from the order-book. The will-book covering this period was carried off by Federal soldiers during the late war. About ten years ago some person in the State of New York wrote to the authorities of the county offering to sell them this book. Unfortunately, the offer was not acted on, and it is not now known where the book is. It is to be hoped the present possessor will make its existence known, as possibly arrangements may be made to purchase it.)

Issue (first marriage only): 20, Elizabeth³, born January 3, 1674; 21, Margaret³, born April 2, 1678, married Wm. Strother, who was sheriff of King George in 1726. There is recorded in King George a deed, dated 1727, from Margaret Strother, widow, for land deeded by her grandfather, Anthony Savage, gentleman, to her father, Francis Thornton, and Alice his wife; 22, William³ (twin with Sarah); 23, Sarah³, born December 17, 1680 (twin), married Laurence Taliaferro. There is recorded in Richmond county a deed, dated 1706, from Francis Thornton, of Stafford, conveying land to his daughter, Sarah, wife of Laurence Taliaferro; 24, Francis³; 25, Rowland³; 26, Anne³, born March 22, 1689; 27, Anthony³.

It is probable that there were many descendants of the various sons of Wm² Thornton, of Gloucester, especially in Gloucester county; but of these we have, at present, only disconnected notes, which will be given later in this account.

14. FRANCIS³ THORNTON (William², William¹), of Gloucester county, was born June 7, 1692, and died February 6, 1737. He

was a vestryman of Petsworth parish. He married ———, who died August 1, 1741.

Issue : 28, *William*.⁴

22. WILLIAM³ THORNTON, born December 14, 1680; settled in that part of Richmond county which was afterwards in King George; was sheriff of Richmond in 1709 and 1717, one of the first justices of King George in 1720, and member of the House of Burgesses from that county in 1723 and 1726. (*Virginia Historical Register*.) He married Frances ———, and died in 1742 or 1743. In 1742 they made a deed for land in King George, and in 1743 Frances Thornton, widow of Francis Thornton, late of King George, gentleman, made a deed to William Thornton, only son and heir of her husband, Wm. Thornton, deceased. The will of Wm. Thornton was dated Nov. 3, 1742, and was in the missing will-book.

Issue: 29, *William*.⁴ He cannot be identified with any other Wm. Thornton who made a deed or will in King George between 1750 and 1800. I cannot trace him further. Perhaps he lived in that portion of King George which was made part of Stafford. A more complete examination of the records of King George might show.

24. FRANCIS³ THORNTON, born January 4, 1682; according to a deposition made in 1733, in relation to the dispute over the boundary of the Northern Neck (printed in Slaughter's *St. Mark's Parish*, in the deposition he is styled "Francis Thornton, of Caroline county, gentleman"), he settled at Snow Creek, near the present Fredericksburg, about 1703. There is recorded in Essex a deed, dated March, 1703-'4, from Francis Thornton, of Stafford, conveying to Francis Thornton, Jr., then of Essex, a tract of about 700 acres at Snow Creek. In May, 1719, Francis Thornton, Jr., and Mary his wife, of St. Mary's parish, Essex, conveyed to Augustine Smith and John Taliaferro, church wardens, for a consideration of five shillings, 300 acres in the fork of Snow Creek, for a glebe. Francis Thornton was one of the first justices of Caroline. There is a deed, recorded in Spottsylvania, dated 1722, by which Mary and Winifred Thornton relinquish the right of dower in 400 acres of land sold by Francis and Anthony Thornton. Francis Thornton, a justice of Essex, was Burgess for Spottsylvania in 1723 and 1726. (*Virginia Historical Register*.) Though I have not been able to ascertain the fact with absolute certainty, yet I have no doubt that this Francis Thornton, Jr., who settled at Snow Creek in 1703, was the Francis Thornton who was Burgess

from Spottsylvania, as above stated, and who was the first of what are generally called, from their seat, the "Fall Hill" Thorntons. The only thing to cause a doubt is that the Francis³ Thornton here treated of calls himself, in 1733, "of Caroline county." Probably he lived at various times on estates in both Caroline and Spottsylvania. It will, in this account, be assumed, tentatively, that he was the first of the "Fall Hill" Thorntons.

Issue: 30, *Francis*⁴; 31, *Reuben*; 32, *John*.

25. Rowland³ Thornton, of "Crowes," King George county, born August 1, 1685, died 1748; was vestryman of Hanover parish, King George, 1723, and was appointed a justice of King George in 1722. He was alive in 1733. Married Elizabeth (born Sept. 6, 1689, died 1751), daughter of Col. John Catlett, of Essex.

Issue: 33, *Francis*⁴ 35; *Alice*⁴, married John Fitzhugh, of "Bellair," Stafford county (and perhaps other issue).

27. ANTHONY³ THORNTON, of St. Paul's Parish, Stafford county, born — 27, 1695, died 1757. He was a justice of Stafford, and, having been for a time out of the commission, was restored in 1733. He married Winifred, daughter and heiress of Col. Peter Presley (note 1) of "Northumberland House," Northumberland county. His will was dated January 3d, and proved November 8, 1757, in Stafford county. He gives his son Presley Thornton the several negroes which he (Presley) had in possession, and which the testator had a title to in right of his wife, except one negro woman and her children, which he had before given to his son Francis; to son Anthony Thornton, all the land he (the testator) had at the mountains; to daughter Winifred Bernard, a tract of land on Wash Run, in Spottsylvania, containing 650 acres; to son Peter Thornton, a tract of land on Mattapony River, containing 1313 acres, with all the negroes, cattle, horses, etc, and all other things on said land; also ten head of young cattle from the plantation where he (the testator) lived, and four other negroes; to wife Winifred, a tract of low ground where William Conner then lived, this to go after her death to his son Anthony; also to his wife four negroes, which are to go after her death to his son Peter; gives remainder of negroes, not otherwise disposed of, to his wife, with his stock of horses, cattle, and sheep, and remainder of estate to be equally divided between wife and son Peter, and appoints the latter his executor.

Issue: 37, *Presley*⁴; 38, *Francis*⁴; 39, *Peter*⁴; 40, *Anthony*⁴; 41, *Winifred*⁴, married — Bernard.

(To be Continued.)

THE THORNTON FAMILY.¹

By W. G. STANARD.

[Continued from page 93.]

In the first installment of this genealogy it was stated that it would be "assumed tentatively" that Francis³ Thornton, who settled at Snow Creek in 1703, was the ancestor of the "Fall Hill" family of the name. Additional evidence since examined now makes it certain that he was. An old Bible in the possession of the late Col. Lewis B. Thornton, of Tusculum, Ala. (a descendant of Anthony³ Thornton), contains entries giving the dates of the births of the children of Francis³ Thornton, of Stafford county. It states that his son Francis was born January 4, 1682. The deposition of "Francis Thornton, of Caroline county, gentleman" (printed in Slaughter's *St. Mark's Parish*), dated in 1735 (not 1733), states that he settled at Snow Creek about thirty years before, and that he was at the time of making the deposition, aged fifty-three years and upwards, which would be the case with a man born early in 1682. There is recorded in Spotsylvania county a deed dated June 1, 1736, from Francis Thornton, of St. Mary's Parish, Caroline county, gent., to his son Francis Thornton, Jr., conveying forty-one acres at the falls of Rappahannock, which were granted to Francis Thornton, the father, on February 25, 1720. There is also a power of attorney, dated in 1735, from Thos. Griffin, of Ledenhall street, London, merchant, to Francis Thornton, Sr., of Caroline, merchant, and Francis Thornton, the younger, of Spotsylvania, merchant. On December 15, 1739, Mrs. Mildred Willis, formerly the wife of Roger Gregory, made a deed to her three daughters, one of whom was "Frances, wife of Francis Thornton, Jr." That the "Fall Hill" Thorntons were descended from Francis and Frances (Gregory) Thornton is certain, and it appears equally certain from the above that this Francis Thornton, was the son of Francis Thornton of Caroline, who appears to be clearly identified with 24 Francis³ Thornton of the genealogy. It was of course Francis³ Thornton who was Burgess in 1723 and 1726. His son would hardly have been old enough.

There is recorded in Orange a deed, dated November 1, 1737, from Francis Thornton, of St. Mary's Parish, Caroline, and Mary,

¹The compiler of this genealogy wishes to express his obligation to Mr. Arthur Conway Thornton, of Richmond, for information, without which it would have been impossible to prepare any fairly complete account of the family.

his wife; and another, dated May 21, 1738, from Francis Thornton, of St. Mary's Parish, Caroline, gentleman, to his daughter, Elizabeth, wife of Thomas Meriwether, of Hanover county.

It appears from the will of 31. Reuben⁴ Thornton, that Francis³ Thornton also had issue, daughters, Sarah who married Slaughter, one who married Buckner, another who married Woodford, and (from another source her name appears to have been Alice), and another who married James Taylor, of Caroline county.

28. WILLIAM⁴ THORNTON (*Francis*,³ *Wm.*,² *Wm.*¹), called "Wm. Thornton, Jr.," born December 20, 1717, d. ——. He removed from Gloucester to Brunswick county, and was a member of the House of Burgesses from that county in 1756, 1757, 1758, 1759, 1761, 1762, 1765, 1767, 1768 (*Virginia Almanacs*). He married, June 25, 1738, Jane Clack (born January 9, 1721), of Brunswick county, probably a daughter of Sterling Clack, who was long clerk of that county.

Issue: 42. Francis⁵ born June 25, 1738, died July 16, 1746; 43. James⁵ born July 11, 1743; 44. John⁵ born September 13, 1744; 45. Elizabeth⁵ born March 23, 1745, died September 27, 1746; 46. Francis⁵ born January 22, 1747; 47. Mary⁵ born December 1, 1749, died December 15, 1749; 48. William⁵ born April 14, 1751; 49. Sterling Clack⁵ born August 12, 1753; 50. Reuben⁵ born March 28, 1756; 51. Ann Sterling⁵ born March 27, 1758; 52. Mary⁵ born July 21, 1760; 53. Jane⁵ born January 9, 1763; 54. *Peter Presley*.⁵ (It is very probable that there are many descendants of the sons of Wm.⁴ Thornton; but I am informed only of those from Peter Presley.⁵)

30. FRANCIS⁴ THORNTON (*Francis*,³ *Francis*,² *William*¹) of "Fall Hill," near Fredericksburg, Spotsylvania county; born —, died 1749; was a member of the House of Burgesses from Spotsylvania, 1744, 1745, 1752, 1754 (*Journals of Burgesses*); was a justice of Spotsylvania, and appointed Colonel of Militia in 1742 (*original commission preserved*.) He is stated to have been aged thirty-five at his death. He married shortly after November 3, 1736 (*date of marriage licence*), Frances, daughter of Roger Gregory, deceased, and his wife, Mildred Washington, aunt of President Washington. Mrs. Mildred Gregory had before this date become the wife of Col. Henry Willis, of Fredericksburg (*Spotsylvania Records*). His will was dated November 11, 1748 (with a codicil November 21, 1748), and proved in Spotsylvania September 5, 1749. The following is an abstract:

I, Francis Thornton, give my wife Frances twelve negroes for her life, and one-fifth part of my cattle, horses, &c., and during her widowhood, the lower half of the plantation I live on, with the houses and half the orchard, making two hundred acres; also the use of all the household goods during her widowhood. To son Francis, the remaining part of the plantation where I live, with the reversion of that devised to his mother. To son George, all the land in King George I bought of Mr. Benjamin Berry, and two tracts of land in Orange county. To son William, all my lands in the great mountains of Orange county, about 2,600 acres. To son John, the land lying on the branch of the Naull and Massaponax Rivers, about seven hundred and fifty acres, and two lots in Fredericksburg. To daughter Mildred Thornton, £500, and one negro girl. To daughter Mary Thornton £500, and one negro girl. My executors are to buy young men and women negro slaves with the cash left in the house for the use of my four sons, and also to give them stocks of all kinds. Wife to divide household goods, &c., among all my children. Appoint wife Frances Thornton, father Francis Thornton, brother John Thornton, and son Francis Thornton, executors.

Issue: 55. *Francis*⁵; 56. *George*⁵; 57. *William*⁵; 58. *John*⁵; 59. Mildred,⁵ married Charles Washington, brother of the President; 60. Mary,⁵ married (1), Wm. Champe, of King George county, who was Colonel of Minute Men in 1775, and died without issue April 19, 1784; (2), Churchill Jones, of "The Wilderness," Spotsylvania, and had no issue.

31. REUBEN⁴ THORNTON (*Francis*,³ *Francis*,² *William*¹) of Drysdale Parish, Caroline Co., b. —, d. 1768; married Elizabeth, daughter of Roger and Mildred Gregory, and widow of Henry Willis, Jr. of Spotsylvania County. (*Spotsylvania Records*.) According to the account preserved in the family, Mrs. Thornton married, 3d, Dr. Thomas Walker, of Albemarle, and 4th, Dr. Alcock, of the British Army. (It has been stated that Elizabeth, 2d wife of Dr. Thomas Walker, was daughter of Col. Francis Thornton; but a close examination of all the evidence shows that the statement just given is doubtless correct.) Reuben Thornton had no issue. A very much mutilated copy of his will has been preserved, of which the following is a copy:

"In the name of God, I Reuben Thornton of Drysdale Parish in the County of Caroline being sick and weak but of sound and disposing mind for settling my temporal affairs do make and or-

dain this my last will and testament Hereby revoking all other wills by me before made. Imprimis. I lend to my dear wife Elizabeth Thornton . . . (land beginning at Green Swamp to my mill pond) . . . to contain [?] on west side with Capt. W^m Buckner's line . . . Thence to the river and down to Peter Thornton's line to the Beginning . . . her dower out of her former husband's estate . . . Item. I give to my beloved brother John Thornton all that tract of land lying in Culpeper which he has now in his possession . . . Item. I give to my nephew James Taylor . . . Item. I give to my niece Mary Woodford . . . Item. I give to my nephew Thornton Washington . . . Slaves to remain under direction of my brother John Thornton till the said Thornton Washington shall marry or arrive at the age of 21 years, and then to him and his heirs forever. And if the said Thornton Washington shall die before he marries or becomes of age . . . I give the said . . . to be equally divided between my nieces Betty Thornton and Lucy Thornton . . . Item. I give to my beloved sister Sarah Slaughter . . . I give to Reuben Thornton son of Anthony Thornton but if the said Reuben Thornton shall die before my said wife, then my will is that . . . be divided between my three nephews George, William and John Thornton. Item. I give to my nephew Richard Buckner . . . Item. I give to my nephew Francis Thornton £50. Item. I give to my niece Lucy Gilmer [daughter of Thomas Walker] £50; but do not intend that legacy to be any bar against Dr Geo Gilmer in his charge as attending me as physician. Item. I give to my niece Mildred Washington £50. Item. I give to Francis Hermes [?] £50. Item. I give to Dr Hugh Mercer £20 and the residue to be equally divided between my three nephews George Thornton, W^m Thornton and John Thornton . . . Lastly I constitute and appoint my beloved wife Elizabeth Thornton, my beloved brother John Thornton, my two nephews James Taylor and George Thornton, and friend W^m Woodford Executrix and Executcrs of this my last will and tesstament.

"In witness whereof I have herewith set my hand and seal this 23^d day of March 1768. REUBEN THORNTON." [Seal]

"Signed sealed and published in the presence of W^m Buckner, Matthew Gale Jr. Anthony Thornton, Geo Todd."

[Proved] Caroline May court, 1768.

32. JOHN⁴ THORNTON (*Francis*,³ *Francis*,² *William*¹), of Spotsylvania, and afterwards of Caroline, County, b. —, d. 1777 (*Call's Reports*) was appointed J. P. of Spotsylvania, 1742; was sheriff in

1751 (his bond dated September 3d); elected member of the House of Burgesses for that county December 6, 1753. In 1756 he was senior colonel of the Spotsylvania militia, and led the opposition made by several of the officers to Col. John Spotswood, the county lieutenant. He presented to the Governor a paper dated at Williamsburg, October 29th, 1756, complaining that Col. Spotswood had given a captain's commission to a man who was returned delinquent in the county levy, and to another, who had neither land nor slaves in the county, and who had lived there for three years without following any just calling; while a major's commission had been given to a man in regard to whose character there was no complaint, but who had no estate, and who kept an ordinary, "when there are many Gent^l in the county of good Estates that never had any of the above commissions offered them." The dispute is one of numerous illustrations of the jealous pride with which the colonial militia officers held their commissions. At the session of October, 1778, the General Assembly passed an act reciting that "John Thornton, late of the county of Caroline, esq., died intestate, seized and interested in fee-simple of and in the following tracts of land lying in that county and Spotsylvania, to-wit: His manor plantation on Rappahannock River, containing three hundred and fifty acres; a tract called Moorfield, containing four hundred and eighty acres; a tract of two hundred and ninety acres, purchased of Daniel Duval; a tract called Long Branch, containing eight hundred acres; a tract of one thousand seven hundred acres, lying on Mattapony River, purchased of Griffin Jones and the executors of Reuben Thornton, gentlemen, but not conveyed; and the reversion in fee expectant on the death of Mrs. Betty Thornton, widow of the said Reuben Thornton, of and in another tract of five hundred and thirty acres, lying on Mattapony River, in the said county of Caroline, purchased of Francis Thornton, but not conveyed; and was also possessed of sundry slaves and a considerable personal property," and directed that the said lands should be sold, and the proceeds divided among the heirs. Subsequently there was a suit in regard to the property, which is reported in Call's Reports. It is stated that the lands were sold in January, 1779, for £41,583 (equal to \$5,197.18.2 specie), and that if credit had been given they would have brought more. He married, thirdly, after October 28, 1740 (the date of the license), Mildred, daughter of Roger Gregory. Issue (as given in the act in Hening, IX., 573): 61. Mildred,^s married Samuel Washington (a

brother of the President), and died before her father, leaving Thornton Washington only son and heir; 62, Mary,⁵ married Brigadier-General W^m Woodford, of the Revolutionary army; 63. Elizabeth,⁶ married John Taliaferro, Jr., of "Dissington," King George Co.; 64. Lucy,⁵ married John Lewis, of Spotsylvania Co., and died before her father, leaving a daughter, Mildred Lewis, her only heir. It has been stated that Mildred (born 1739,² died 1764), daughter of Col. Jno. Thornton, married, 1st, Nicholas Meriwether, and 2d, Dr. Thomas Walker (his first wife); but the act in Henning shows that his daughter Mildred married Samuel Washington, who survived her. It is possible that Mrs. Walker may have been a daughter of Col. Francis Thornton.

33. FRANCIS⁴ THORNTON (*Rowland*,³ *Francis*,² *William*¹), of "Crowes," King George county; b. —, d. 1767. (His will was proved that year in King George county.) There is recorded in King George a deed, dated 1760, from Francis Thornton, of King George, and Elizabeth, his wife, conveying land bought in 1733 by his father, Rowland Thornton. He may have been the Francis Thornton who was appointed lieutenant-colonel of the Stafford militia in 1752; but this was more probably Col. Francis Thornton, of "Society Hill."

Issue: 65, *William*;⁵ 66, Francis,⁵ of King George county, *d. s. p.* 1800, when his will was proved. He bequeathed his residence to his nephew, Francis Thornton, and legacies to his nieces, Susan Courts and Elizabeth and Anne Thornton, and appointed Col. Henry Fitzhugh, Col. Anthony Thornton, Col. Francis Thornton executors.

37. PRESLEY⁴ THORNTON (*Anthony*,³ *Francis*,² *William*¹), of "Northumberland House," Northumberland county; b. 1721, d. December 8, 1769 (*epitaph*), inherited almost all the large estates of the Presley family, under the will of his grandfather, Col. Peter Presley, of "Northumberland House." At an early age he was elected to the House of Burgesses, and served continuously in that body, certainly from 1748–1760 (*Burke's Virginia, III.; Journals of Burgesses; Virginia Almanacs*), until 1760, when he was appointed to the council. He appears to have been a man of influence and high standing in the colony. Washington, writing in 1777, when appointing one of his sons to office, speaks of "the great worth of his father," and again in 1799, says he was "one of the most respectable gentlemen, now deceased, of this State" (meaning colony). —*Ford's Writings of Washington*. One of the *Virginia Ga-*

zettes says of him, on December 14, 1769: "On Friday last died at his house, in Northumberland county, the Hon. Presley Thornton, Esq., one of his Majesty's council in this colony. The virtues of this gentleman are so generally known that it may be unnecessary to enlarge on them in this place. In justice to his memory, we must say his mind was as exalted as his station; that in his youth he imbibed the sentiments of benevolence, honour, and integrity, and to his death invariably practiced them. The happiness of the good and the estimation of mankind, he amply and deservedly enjoyed. It is much to be wished that his survivors would follow his fair example."

The other *Gazette* of the same date, says: "On Friday last died at his house, in Northumberland, after a short illness (though he has been for sometime in a declining state of health), the Hon. Presley Thornton, Esq., one of his Majesty's council of this colony, a gentleman possessed of every amiable qualification, which will endear and keep his memory alive with his family and the publick, who were all his friends, to many a one of whom he was a most liberal comforter."

Meade, in *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, II., p. 143, gives the following notice of "Northumberland House": "On the Potomac, and within sight of the bay, are the remains of an old graveyard belonging to what has always gone by the name of the 'Northumberland House.' The place was originally settled and a house built on it by a Mr. Presley, one of the earliest settlers, who was murdered by his own servants. [This is a mistake. The person murdered was Col. Peter Presley, the last of this name, and the grandfather of Col. Presley Thornton.] It was afterwards owned by Mr. Presley Thornton, who lies buried here."

The following extract from the letter of a friend is worthy of insertion: "I have, according to promise, visited the graveyard of old Northumberland House, and found the remains of but one tombstone. This, although erected of the heaviest materials, has been so much mutilated by lightning and the waste of time that nothing more can be deciphered than that it was erected to the memory of Presley Thornton, who was elected in early life to the House of Burgesses from the county of Northumberland, which office he held until 1760, when he was appointed one of the council of state for this colony; that he filled both offices with great credit to himself and to the public emolument. He departed this life on the 8th of December, 1769, in the forty-eighth year of his age, having enjoyed all the chief honours of his country."

The will of Col. Presley Thornton was dated March 9, 1763, and proved in Northumberland, May 14, 1770. He directs that all his estate, excepting certain specific legacies, shall be equally divided between his sons, Peter Presley Thornton and Presley Thornton, and if they die without issue, between his daughters Elizabeth, Winifred and Charlotte; gives each of these daughters 150 £ current money; to wife, Charlotte, during her widowhood, the use of his dwelling-house and furniture, the choice of eight slaves, and 150 £ current money annually. Desires his friend, Mrs. Elizabeth, wife of Dr. Wm. Flood, to have charge of his daughter, Winifred, and appoints his friends, John Tayloe, Esq., Dr. Nicholas Flood, his brother Francis Thornton, and friend Capt. Richard Hull, executors, and wife, executrix. It will be observed (*post*) that two sons were born after this will was made.

It appears from the earliest of the State land tax books, that Peter P. Thornton owned 1200 acres, and Presley Thornton, 1800 acres, both in Northumberland county, so the size of the "Northumberland House" estate was, doubtless, 3000 acres.

Col. Presley Thornton married (I) Elizabeth —, (II) Charlotte Belson, "an English lady, adopted daughter of Col. Jno. Tayloe of Mt. Airy" (Judge J. T. Lomax in *De Bow's Review*, Vol., — p. —.) In the *Richmond Enquirer*, March 27, 1812, is notice of a suit in the Supreme Court of Chancery, for the Richmond District, by Charlotte Thornton, of the Kingdom of Great Britain, widow of Presley Thornton, plaintiff, against (apparently) all the other heirs and legal representatives of her deceased husband. A few years before the Revolution broke out, she removed, with her children, to England.

Issue: (1st m.) 67. Elizabeth⁵ born March 2nd 1748-'9 (*St. Stephen's Parish Register*); 68. Peter Presley⁵; 69. Winifred⁵ married John Catesby Cocke, of Prince William county, a captain in the Virginia marine corps during the Revolution; (2nd m.) 70. Presley⁵; 71. Charlotte⁵; 72. Charles Wade⁵; 73. John Tayloe.⁵

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

COATS-OF-ARMS IN VIRGINIA.

CHAPMAN AND PEARSON.—In a Will of Constantia Chapman, wife of Nathaniel Chapman & dau. of Simon Pearson Gent. of Overwharton Parish Stafford Co, there occurs the following bequest:

"I give & bequeath unto each of my three grand-children H. C.