

Origins of Joseph Sr. and Nancy Taylor of North Carolina, ca 1728-1808

The Problem: Competing Theories

Who were the parents of Joseph Taylor Sr.? A number of ideas have been put forward and a few have been discarded, but several avenues of research still remain. We have just received a new report that offers the potential to harmonize some conflicting ideas.

The Zachary Taylor theory:

A lot of Taylor families have attached themselves to President Zachary Taylor in error. Mistakes like this were common when records were not widely available and this error is still in the records of some of our Taylors who have been out of touch. Our yDNA study¹ has shown that we are not a match with well-documented Zachary Taylor family members. There is a pedigree linking us with a Zachary Taylor (ancestor of the president) as Joseph Taylor Jr.'s father. It requires us to omit Joseph Taylor Sr., who received the Granville grant in North Carolina. We have many documents linking us with Joseph Sr. but none with Zachary.² We believe we have completely disproved this theory.

Joseph Taylor Sr. was born in Orange County, Virginia and married Nancy Walker:

There is a Joseph Taylor of this description, but we are not connected to him³. We would have to drop Joseph Taylor Sr., same as above. When we found the information about the Granville Grant, we had the necessary proof of the connection between Joseph Jr. & Joseph Sr., thus proving that this theory is wrong.

The theory that Joseph Taylor Sr. came from Norfolk Co., Virginia⁴ and was the son of Richard and Dinah Taylor.⁵ Most of the evidence for this comes from William Thorndale's research and the research into the Granville grant in North Carolina located in what was Tyrell County, then Martin County, then Edgecombe County as the boundaries changed.⁶ We are convinced that this theory is correct.

Richard Taylor, son and grandson of the Richard Taylors of Julian Creek:

The Pleasant Green Taylor Family paid William Thorndale, who is a professional genealogist, to investigate just who "Mr. Taylor," the father of Joseph Taylor, was. He concluded that "Mr. Taylor" was Richard Taylor, son of Richard T and grandson of Richard T who lived at the junction of Julian Creek & the Southern Branch of the Elizabeth River in Norfolk County. However, the evidence he found, though comprehensive, was circumstantial. (That's often the only proof you can get in the South.) The Joseph Taylor Jr. Association also hired Bill Linder, who passed away in 2000, who had contacts near the courthouses. He uncovered some more evidence⁷, but still circumstantial, that supported the Richard theory. We are now digging out information about all the neighbors⁸ and witnesses. The Richard line is already posted in one or two places as if it was fact, but it is still considered a theory by the association. No record has found that mentions Joseph as being a member of this family. There are only records of sales of North Carolina land⁹ that link him to them. One very important document William Thorndale found was a letter to the earliest Richard¹⁰ from a John Hardin/g, husband of Richard's sister

Susannah in London, providing clues as to the first Richard's possible family in England. (See William Thorndale's research on this website.) Gayle Hix found some London parish records¹¹ that seemed to apply to this family and he has also written a number of reports of the Julian Creek Taylors.¹² We have also hired Phil Dunn to search out more possible London records.

We have not been able to find enough yDNA testing subjects to confirm or discard this theory. A positive match would determine kinship but not prove that one of the Julian Creek Richards was the actual father of our Joseph Taylor Sr.

Richard Taylor and Roger Hodges:

Since then, our yDNA project has brought another theory into prominence. We have discovered a match of our yDNA with a man whose surname is Hodges.¹³ He is working with us to find the link. We find that in the Western Branch [of the Elizabeth River] area of Norfolk County, the area where we think Joseph Sr. came from, there are a number of place names for both Taylor & Hodges¹⁴ and we find those names in lists of early settlers. We have found a 1635 passenger list¹⁵ where a Richard Taylor, age 16 and a Roger Hodges, age 17, both sailed from London to Bermuda on the ship Truelove. That ship is known to have sailed on to the colonies. We find that two Manning sisters¹⁶ in Virginia married a Taylor and a Hodges. We are also investigating the possibility that the sister who married a Hodges was the widow of a Taylor. Unlike the other theory, this one starts early and requires descendancy research to tie in with our Taylors. It was difficult to reconcile certain dates between this Richard Taylor and the family Gayle Hix discovered in the London Parish Registers, which prompted the Taylor Association to hire Phil Dunn to continue the London search.

Richard Taylor, cooper, of the Western Branch:

Gayle Hix uncovered an additional source, *Norfolk County Tithables*¹⁷ a three-volume set of tax lists of early settlers that points to a different Richard Taylor from the Julian Creek Richard as the possible father of our Joseph Taylor Sr. He is listed in the Western Bank Precinct, as opposed to the Julian Creek-Southern Branch area. He was not a landowner and so did not appear in the land records that form the basis of much of early Southern research. He appears several times in the tithable lists of the early 1730's. There is a gap in the records until 1750 and then a Joseph Taylor appears, first listed as being a minor in the household of what looks like Dinah Taylor, the likely widow of Richard Taylor, who is no longer listed. For precise details, see the database for the Norfolk Tithables on our website, which lists individuals of special interest to us. Joseph Taylor appears for several years and then disappears at about the time that our Joseph Sr. was known to arrive in North Carolina.

A Richard Taylor estate inventory¹⁸ shows he owned some cooper's tools and mentions Dinah, his wife. Dinah Taylor's inventory¹⁹ shows no such tools. A North Carolina deed²⁰ shows Joseph Taylor Sr. selling cooper's tools. The presumption is that Joseph acquired the tools from his father's estate. Laura Winder has located a biography of a Roger Hodges²¹ that says he was a cooper by trade, which ties this theory in with the Taylor-Hodges connection theory.

This last theory conflicts with the Julian Creek theory when it comes to Joseph Sr.'s father, but does not debunk the possibility that there is a biological relationship between the two Taylor families, who lived only a few miles from each other. We know there was at least a long-standing business connection. It is possible that Richard Taylor (the cooper) was a descendant (great or 2nd great-grandson) of the earliest Richard Taylor of Julian Creek, but will we ever find documents to show the exact link? Perhaps not, but we continue to hope that we will find descendants of this family, on either side of the Atlantic that we can test for yDNA.

Another London Family, with the correct ages:

Phil Dunn, who is accredited in English research, has searched for a family in London with a son Richard who would have been 16 in 1635 and a daughter Susannah (the future wife of John Hardin/g of the letter mentioned above. He has found such a family in the parish of St. Lawrence Pountney, London.²² He has also found, in two parishes only a quarter-mile away, a couple of John Harding christenings of the right age to become Susannah's husband. This would make it possible for the first of the Julian Creek Richard Taylors to be the same Richard Taylor who sailed from London on the Truelove. (The fact that the passenger list only shows Richard sailing as far as Bermuda does not mean he couldn't have continued on. Many lists are lost, and some studies have shown that other passengers chose not to stay in Bermuda because of the limited opportunity to acquire land.)²³

Agreeing to disagree:

One reason we're paying professionals is that no one is going to be as upset if the person is a disinterested party (not a blood relation) if they don't agree with the conclusions. We can not expect to find all the proofs we would like to have and we may never be able to settle on only one pedigree. However, we still need the help of many interested Taylor descendants volunteering to gather and submit material and we don't want to scoff at each other's ideas and cause anyone to feel their efforts aren't welcome. We are initiating a number of forums and will post comments. Please read the research carefully and let us know your opinion. Are there any more facts out there? Let us know by clicking on "Readers Forum" to have your comments posted or if you prefer you can click on "Send Comments" to email your comments. Comments to the "Readers' Forum" are posted with the submitter's email address.

Endnotes:

¹. See our website.

². See *Family History of the Joseph Taylor, Jr. (ca, 1751-1819) and Sarah Best (ca. 1764-1836) Family of Tyrrell/Martin/Edgecombe Counties, North Carolina and Warren County, Kentucky*, Volume 1, by Shari Humpherys Franke. pp. 710-711.

³. See endnote 2.

⁴. First paragraph of Part 1 of William Thorndale's July 1978 letter.

⁵. See also paragraph 4 of William Thorndale's November 1978 final report.

⁶. See the maps in Taylor Times, Volume 9 No. 3. p.2.

⁷. Reports in the TTs prior to Summer of 2000 issue. I will have to retype and send them to Karl and he will add Bill Linder to the Researchers' list. Also, where is the material that was on Bill's website? Noel may know.

⁸. See the listings for the Western Branch Precinct in *Norfolk County, Virginia Tithables*, written and published by Elizabeth B. Wingo. Gayle Hix and others have created plat maps of the North Carolina neighborhood of Joseph Sr.'s Granville grant.

⁹. See the deed abstracts of Joseph Taylor Sr. 17 June 1761, selling part of his grant to Richard Taylor and the 20 Jan 1785 deed recorded in Norfolk Co. of Richard subsequently selling to Joseph's son David.

¹⁰. See the letter to Richard Taylor from his brother-in-law John Hardin/g in William Thorndale's July 1978 letter.

¹¹. Family Group sheets compiled by Gayle Hix, show Richard Taylor, of the combined parish of St. Martin Orgar & St. Clement's Eastcheap, who apparently had several wives over his lifespan. One family group sheet lists a Richard and a Susannah as two of his children.

¹². See papers of Gayle Hix.

¹³. See our website. See also Taylor Times, Vol 10 Issue 2, p. 3.

¹⁴. See the map on p. 3 of Vol. 11, Issue 1 of the Taylor Times.

¹⁵. See <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~bmuwgw/truelove.htm>.

¹⁶. See the Manning website at <http://manningfamily.org>. See also Taylor Times, Vol 10 Issue 3, p. 2.

¹⁷. *Norfolk County, Virginia Tithables*, written and published by Elizabeth B. Wingo, 1979-1985. Family History Library Call # 975.5523 R4w (3 vols.) US/CAN Book. Note that William Thorndale had access to the 1730 Tithables, which were published in the Virginia Genealogist, but not those for later years, which were published after his contract was completed with the Taylors.

¹⁸. This may be in the Norfolk, VA Adopt-a-County binder, in possession of Noel Taylor. Or it may be in later papers collected by Gayle Hix.

¹⁹. See note 17.

²⁰. This may be in one of the NC Adopt-a-County binders, either Tyrell, Martin, or Edgecombe.

²¹. See http://www.manningfamily.org/hodges_family_2/d1.htm

²². See Phil Dunn's report under his name in our list of researchers, reports and databases.

²³. From <http://www.aggregate.com/documents/aboutus-History-Hayfield.pdf> Chapter two: Hayfield and the Taylors. Excerpts: "In 1635, however, another James Taylor is said to have emigrated to Virginia on the sailing vessel *Truelove*... The ship in which the tailors sailed was 'the barke called the *Trulove* of London of about forty-six tunn' and belonged 'unto Rowland Truelove of London, Clothworker' to whom in 1621 the Virginia Company had assigned a share of land. He received a patent as 'a new adventurer' which allowed him to transport a hundred people to Virginia and was joined in this venture by 'divers other patentees' and 'adventurers'... [This Taylor family was apparently from Carlisle and not known to be related to our Taylors.] Another example was found at <http://www.pipesfamily.com/baylesfamily.pdf> from the book *The Bayles Family of Long Island and New Jersey* by Howard Green Bayles. Excerpts from P.2 JOHN BAYLES [first ancestor in this country] "1635. June 10. Sailed from London on the *Truelove* for Bermuda at the alleged age of 18. [Hotten.] It is customary for a ship to clear for the first port of call. During the colonial period it was very common for ships to make a triangular voyage, calling first at the West Indies with trade goods, thence to New England with molasses

and finally back to England with rum and other New England produce. Their prompt appearance in New England proves beyond question that many, if not all, of the passengers on this trip stayed with the Truelove until it reached Boston. ... We are satisfied that John (1) came to America as an indentured servant of William Wells...”

[William Wells, “Jo Baylie,” and James Taylor all appear on Hotten’s list of Truelove passengers to Bermuda in 1635, along with Richard Taylor and Roger Hodges.]