

The Possible Welsh Ancestry of Captain William Peirce of Jamestown and Mulberry Island, Virginia

by Jim White

The genealogy and history of Captain William Peirce is given in several sources, including *Adventurers of Purse and Person*,¹ *Encyclopedia Virginia*,² *The Two Captains William Peirce*,³ *Virginia Immigrants and Adventurers*,⁴ and *A History of Mulberry Island, Warwick County, 1610-1784*.⁵ However, none of these sources attempt to locate his origins, except for one that mentions he was probably born around 1580 in England. This research shows that he may have been William Peirce, son of Humfrey Peirce of Welshpool in Montgomeryshire, weaver, who was apprenticed in the London Cutlers' Company in 1599.⁶

The clue that lead to this conclusion is based on an apparent relation of William to Thomas Peirce who died in the Indian Massacre of 1622.⁷ Their names appeared together on a regrant of land in Warwick County in 1668 as the original grantees along with John Rolfe and William Spenser.⁸ Thomas Peirce's possible daughter Elizabeth married Anthony Barham of Mulberry Island and the will of Anthony Barham, dated 6 Sept. 1641, gave to "Mrs Joane Perce, wife of Mr William Perce, fifty shillings to make her a ring."⁹ Finally, an inventory of the estate of Thomas Peirce was entered in the General Court Minutes 19 April 1625. The appraisers were Richard Buck minister and

-
- 1 V. M. Meyer and J. F. Dorman eds., *Adventurers of Purse and Person*, 3rd edition (Virginia, 1987), 489.
 - 2 Brendan Wolfe, "Peirce, William (d. btw. 1645 and 1647)", <https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/peirce-william-d-btw-1645-and-1647>.
 - 3 Dorothy F. and Arthur H. Vollertsen, "The Two Captains William Peirce" (unpublished, 1971). Prepared for Fort Eustis Historical & Archaeological Association.
 - 4 M. W. McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants and Adventurers, 1607-1635* (Baltimore, 2007), 545.
 - 5 Julie Richter, *A History of Mulberry Island, Warwick County, 1610-1784*, (Williamsburg, 2000).
 - 6 Apprentice Bindings Book of the Cutlers Company (Guildhall Ms 7159/1). No further records in London or the Cutlers Company were located. Search of Findmypast found only the 1599 apprentice record, so he does not seem to have lived in London as a master with apprentices. The Cutlers Company freedom admissions do not start until 1613, six years after he probably would have been entered in the record and were not searched. The Cutlers' Company Court Minutes were searched from 1602 to 1609 but found no mention of William Peirce. A John Addams of Trowbridge, Wiltshire, was apprenticed to a William Perry of the Cutlers Company in 1616. However, William Perry can be identified as William Perry of Trowbridge, Wiltshire, who was apprenticed in 1607 in the Cutlers Company (London Apprenticeship Abstracts, 1442-1850, findmypast.com). He could be the same as William Perrie living in St. Botolph, Aldgate, in 1638 in the same parish as the master of William Piers, John Gillett (T C Dale. "Inhabitants of London in 1638: St. Botolph, Aldgate," in *The Inhabitants of London in 1638*, [London: Society of Genealogists, 1931], 210-224. British History Online, accessed December 27, 2021, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/no-series/london-inhabitants/1638/pp210-224>).
 - 7 John Bennett Boddie, "Thomas Pierse of Virginia, Sargent at Armes of America's First Constitutional Convention and First Legislative Assembly 1619," *Southside Virginia Families*, 1:48-51.
 - 8 Nell Marion Nugent, *Cavalier and Pioneers* (Richmond, 1977), 2:43. The relationship of William Peirce to Thomas Peirce and John Rolfe is known in that Thomas Peirce and William Peirce were both from the Shropshire Montgomeryshire area and John Rolfe and William Peirce both traveled to Virginia on the *Seaventure* and were stranded together on Bermuda. However, it is not known if William Peirce and William Spencer knew each other before coming to Virginia or just became acquainted after arriving.
 - 9 H. F. Waters, *Genealogical gleanings in England* (Boston, 1901), 1:290.

Captain William Peerce. The value of the estate was 12 pounds 17 shillings.¹⁰ Although the inventory was entered into the record in 1625, it must have been taken before April 1623 since Rev. Buck died between December 1622 and April 1623.¹¹

A clue to the English origins of Thomas Peirce is recorded in the records of the Virginia Company. At “An Extraordinary Court Holden for Virginia on Monday the 7 of October 1622” there is this record:

Edward Peirs Cittizen and Marchantaylor of London, peticoninge for leaue to administer vpon the estate of one Thomas Peirs his Brother, late inhabitinge neare Mulbery Ilands in Virginia (who was there slaine with his wife and child in the late Massacre) It was ordered that forsomuch as it hath bin testified as well by Certificate from Sr Wm Owen knight and Thomas Jones esquire Bayliffe of the Towne of Shrewsbury as also vpon oath taken of the Peticonr and one Robert Corbett¹² by the Deputy and some other of his Majst Counsell for Virginia that the said Edward Peirs is the onely Brother of the said Thomas deceased, and that he hath but one only Sister namely Ann Peirs lyvinge That the Gouvernor and Councill of Virginia should be entreated to shewe the Peticoner or his Assignes what lawfull fauor and assistance they may in the premisses that the Proprietors may receaue the benifitt of the proceed of those goods that shalbe found out with all expidicon.¹³

The Merchant Taylors’ apprentice record for Edward Peers was located and it records that he was the son of William Peers II of Shrewsbury in county Shropshire mercer deceased and was apprenticed to Nicholas Treswell in February of 1605¹⁴ He married at St. Olave, Hart Street, on 5 Sept. 1631, Margaret Bonifant,¹⁵ the widow of James Bonifant.¹⁶ His will recorded in London.

The twentieth day of March Anno 1643 ... I Edward Peirce of the Parish of Allhallowes Barking in London Gentleman ... to be buried in the Parish church of St. Olave in Hartstreete in London ... I give unto my sister Ann Peirce the some of twenty pounds of lawful money of England ... I give and bequeath unto my loveing friend Mr. Oliver Morris the summe of twenty shillings of like money to make him a ringe ... the rest unto my deare and welbeloved daughter Anne Peirce to be delivered unto her at 21 or be married... and after my decease daughter to be continued att schoole unto and with Mr Salmon of Hackney in the county of Middlesex ... my saide sister Ann Peirce to be executrix ... and John Smith and Robert Walker to be overseers ... aiding and assisting in letting and selling my now dwelling house situate on Tower Hill in the Parish of Allhallows Barkinge Edw Peirce¹⁷

10 H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia, 1622–1632, 1670–1676* (Richmond, 1924), 55.

11 Martha McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants and Adventurers 1607-1635* (Baltimore, 2007), 167.

12 Robert Corbett was probably Robert Corbet Goldsmith of London. He married Etheldred Drury 1620 at St Michael Crooked Lane. (Boyd's Inhabitants Of London, Robert Corbet, <https://www.findmypast.com/>) His apprentice record dated 1611 shows he was the son of Thomas Corbett of Shropshire. In 1620 he took as apprentice Gregory Massy, son of Michael Massy, clerk of Berrington, Shropshire. (<https://www.londonroll.org/>) Berrington parish is adjacent to the parish of Cound where the earliest records of the family of Thomas Pierce are located.

13 Susan Myra Kingsbury, ed., *Virginia Company of London. The records of the Virginia Company of London*, 2:106, <https://www.loc.gov/resource/mtj8.vc02/?sp=108>.

14 Registers apprentice bindings, Merchant Taylors’ Company records, 1260-1909, “Merchant Taylors Company Membership Records, 1603-1605,” 289, FHL film #2262350.

15 W. Bruce Bannerman, ed., *The registers of St. Olave, Hart street, London. 1563-1700* (London, 1916), 265.

16 TNA PROB 11/158/122, “Will of James Bonifant, Woolman of London”. Also, Boyd's Inhabitants Of London, James Bonifant, <https://www.findmypast.com/>

17 London Metropolitan Archives and Guildhall Library, Ms 9172/51, Will Number: 265, Ancestry.com London, England, Wills and Probate, 1507-1858, indexed as Edward Peire.

The identification of Edward Peirce, brother of Thomas Peirce of Virginia as Edward Peirce of St. Olave is almost certain given that he named only one sibling in his will, his sister Ann. He did not identify as a Merchant Taylor in the will, but the mention of his friend Oliver Morris helps confirm this. Oliver Morris and Edward Peirce were both admitted as freeman in the Merchant Taylor's Company on 11 March 1615.¹⁸ The apprentice binding for Oliver Morris in 1607 to Edwin Baker shows that he was the son of David Morris of Welshpool in Montgomery, cleric, deceased.¹⁹ Two records have been found of David Morris in Welshpool. The first is particularly relevant since it shows that he knew Humffrey Piers Reynald. Since there was more than one Humfrey Piers living in Welshpool at this time this record is a clue to help to identify the correct one and it also clearly connects him with the will of Edward Piers of London

Recognizance taken at Poole on 6 August 1591, before Griffith Lloyd, esq., J.P., of Katherine Johnson the wife of Robert Johnson of London, in £20, to appear at the next Great Session to answer.

Sureties: David Morris of Trelydan, cleric (£10) and Humffrey Piers Reynald of Poole, burgess (£10)²⁰

The second record is a recognizance taken at Poole 3 August 1605 where David Morris of Welsh Town²¹, cleric, was a surety for £20.²²

There is a pedigree for this family in the *The Visitation of Shropshire taken in the year 1623*.²³ The pedigree for Pyrs of Shrewsbury has a William Pyrs married to Dorothy daughter of Thomas Wilson Dean of Westminster²⁴ with 3 children Thomas, Edward and Anne. The pedigree shows that William of Shrewsbury was the son of William of Shrewsbury and Margaret the daughter of Edward Hoorde. The parish register of St. Julians, Shrewsbury, gives the christening of Thomas' father William the son of William Perse on 16 March 1560, his brother Edward son of William Pearse on 12 October 1588, and his sister Ann daughter of William Pearse, mercer, 16 May 1590.²⁵ The christening of Thomas was not located. Thomas' grandfather William Peers was elected Bailiff of Shrewsbury in 1565 and 1571.²⁶ William Pearce of Shrewsbury,

18 Merchant Taylors Membership Index 1530 – 1928, (Docklands Ancestors, 2009).

19 Registers apprentice bindings, Merchant Taylors' Company records, 1260-1909, "Merchant Taylors membership records, 1606-1609", 173. FHL film #8760266.

20 Murray Chapman, ed., *Montgomeryshire Court of Great Sessions Gaol Files 1591-1595*, (Aberystwyth, 2008), 28, entry #112. Trelydan is a township in Guilsfield parish, 2 miles north of Welshpool.

21 The area lying north of the central township of Pool, possibly inhabited primarily by the Welsh.

22 Chapman, *Montgomeryshire Gaol Files 1601-1605*, 301, entry #1860.

23 Robert Treswell, *The Visitation of Shropshire taken in the year 1623*, (London, 1889), 2:416. The coat of arms for this pedigree is 'Quarterly or and azure, four pheons countercharged'. The pedigree fails to list the eldest son of Edward Pyrs, Lloyd, baptized 24 August 1595 at Myddle, Shropshire and incorrectly identifies his wife as Elizabeth, daughter to Thomas Mort. The will of William Peers of Shrewsbury mentions 'Lloyd Peers eldest sonne of Edward Peers my sonne'.

24 This should probably read Dean of Worcester and not Westminster. The PCC will of "Thomas Wilson or Willson, Clerk, Dean of the Cathedral Church of Worcester" (TNA PROB 11/69/573) was made in 1585, and named a daughter Dorothy.

25 Shropshire, parish registers, 1538-1900, www.findmypast.co.uk

26 H. Owen and J.B. Blakely, *A History of Shrewsbury* (London, 1825), 1:531,532.

mercier, son of Thomas Pearce of Cressage²⁷, yeoman, was admitted a burgess of Shrewsbury in 1551.²⁸ William Pearce the younger was admitted to the Shrewsbury mercers on 3 Oct 1583.²⁹

The will of William Peers, Mercer of Shrewsbury and grandfather of Thomas of Virginia, was dated 1 June 1598:

I doe give and bequeath unto George Peers my sonne all that my messuage or tenement with all profitt commodities and appurtenances to the same belonging situate lying and being in the parishe of Guilsfield in the countie of Montgomerie and now or late in the the tenure and occupacon of Edward Mathewes ... and for default of such issue then to remayne to Lloyd Peers eldest sonne of Edward Peers my sonne ... I give and bequeath unto my said sonne Edward Peers all my landes tenemente and hereditamente within the severall townes of Stemerton als Stenwerdine in the fields in the parish of Bathchurch and in Morton in the parishe of Middle ... after his decease to remayne to the heires males of my said sonne Edward Peers by him lawfully to be begotten and for default of such if no then my will is the all and singular my said landes and tenement in Stanton als Standie, middle and in the towne and libertie of Shrewsbury aforesaid to remayne to Thomas Peers the younger sonne of William Peers the younger deceased sone of me the said William Peers the elder George Peers and Edmonde Peers my said sonnes equally to be divided amongst them the said Thomas Peers the younger George and Edmond Peers ... my said sonne Edward or his assignes doe yield and pay the some of fyve poundes of lawfull englishe money to the said Thomas Peers the younger sonne of my said sonne William Peers deceased towards his maynetenance and bringing up ... Iteme I doe make consititue and ordane Edward Peers and George Peers two of my sonnes executore of this my last will and testament ...³⁰

The eldest son of William Peers, Edward, baptized at St Julians 6 December 1559, married Elizabeth daughter of Griffith Lloyd, armiger, at Guilsfield on 16 July 1581.³¹ He was buried at Guilsfield 17 May 1616.³² She was buried at Guilsfield 9 July 1622 as Elizabeth Peers widow of Maesmawr.³³ Guilsfield parish is adjacent to the parish of Welshpool which is about 20 miles west of Shrewsbury, just across the border of Wales.

The will of 'John Peers of Cressage in the parishe of Counde within the county of Salope, yoman', dated 21 January 1578, named 'William Peers of Salop my brother, gent,' one of the executors. Also mentioned were his son and heir William Peers, and other children Mary, Frances, John, Edmond, Roger, Elene, and Margaret.³⁴ William Pearce of Cressage made his will in 1615.³⁵ In 1533 John Peerys of Cressage leased a tenement for 66 years from the prior of St. Milburga, Wenlock.³⁶ Between 1533 and 1538 John Perse and his father Thomas were named in a chancery case involving goods left on a property they leased in Harnarge, a village near to Cressage.³⁷ A search of the

27 Cressage is a village on the Severn River several mile below Shrewsbury.

28 Burgess book for Shrewsbury Borough, Shropshire archives, 3365/68 page B41.

29 Mercers guild admissions, Shropshire Archives, 6001/6645.

30 TNA PROB 11/96/379, "Will of William Peers, Mercer of Shrewsbury, Shropshire"

31 David Petley-Jones, ed., *Guilsfield Register 1573-1609* (Montgomeryshire, 2004), 12.

32 Petley-Jones, *Guilsfield Register 1609-1642*, 13.

33 Petley-Jones, *Guilsfield Register 1609-1642*, 25.

34 Staffordshire, Dioceses Of Lichfield And Coventry Wills And Probate 1521-1860, findmypast.co.uk.

35 TNA PROB 11/131/356, "Will of William Pearce, Yeoman of Cound, Shropshire"

36 Shropshire Archives, Reference: 1/74.

37 TNA C1/916/5, 'Walker v Perse'

Peirce family in Shrewsbury and Cressage did not find anyone named William Peirce who could possibly have been William Peirce of Virginia concluding that William Peirce and Thomas Peirce of Virginia were probably more distantly related than second cousins.

The attempt to identify Humfrey Peirce of Welshpool found 3 people with a variant of the name living in Welshpool in the second half of the sixteenth century. The first was the son of Pyers Reynold and Thomasyn and was variously called Humffrey Piers, Humffrey ap Piers, Humffrey ap Piers Reynald and Humffrey Piers Reynald. His grandmother on his mothers side was named Margaret verch David and he inherited property in Welshpool from her as an infant as both his parents and maternal grandparents died before 1541 and he was named in several chancery suits concerning this property.³⁸ Another was Humffrey Piers ap Ieuan ap Eignion who was a burgess of Pool in 1576.³⁹ He may have been the same Humfry Peers attached to the list of burgesses of the bylaws of Welshpool of 1570,⁴⁰ or that could have been Humffrey Piers Reynald. The third was the son of Roger Piers and Gwen verch Rynald and he was named in his mother's will dated 1570.⁴¹

Since the premise that Captain William Pierce and Thomas Pierce were related depends to an extent on the fact that they have the same last name it might seem more likely that he was the son of Humfrey the son of Roger since he would have inherited the name Piers as an English surname style as opposed to a Welsh patronymic. However, there are 2 records that indicate the father of William was more likely to be Humfrey ap Piers Reynald. The first one already cited shows that Humfrey Piers Reynald was acquainted with the father of Oliver Morris who was mentioned in the will of Edward Piers of London. The second is a record that shows Humfrey ap Piers Reynald was likely a weaver.

Indictment against Edward ap Lewis of Garth, Labr., that during the month of February 1574 and at diverse other times before and after, at Garth, he undertook the art and mystery of a "kyrveld" weavers craft, contrary to the statute 5 Elizabeth concerning artificiers, labourers, servants of husbandry and apprentices.

Endorsed: Prosecutor: Humffrey ap Piers Reynald. Witnesses: Hugh Lloyd, Robert ap Llewellyn, James ap John Reynald. Jury for the Boroughs. True Bill.⁴²

Humffrey ap Piers Reynald shown here as a prosecutor was probably not an official of the court, but was instead a private citizen who gave evidence against the accused,

38 TNA, C1/1055/150, "Ap David v Lloid"; C1/1055/149, "Ap David v Ap Meredith"; C3/143/30, "Peares v David"; C3/139/92, "Pirse v Dyo".

39 Chapman, *Montgomeryshire Gaol Files 1571-1580*, 291, entry #2112.

40 "Welshpool: Materials for the History of the Parish and Borough", *Montgomeryshire Collections*, (Montgomeryshire, 1880), 13:209-212.

41 Rynald, Gwen Vch, [Welshpool], Montgomery. Gwen Vch Rynald : Will, 1570, https://discover.library.wales/permalink/f/1eskrbt/44NLW_FED4954943

42 Chapman, *Montgomeryshire Gaol Files 1571-1580*, 187-8, entry #1407. Garth is a township in Guilsfield parish 2 miles NNW of Welshpool.

which was common at this time.⁴³ This was the only time he appeared as a prosecutor in the gaol file records. It is likely that Humfrey was a member of the weavers guild or perhaps even an official of that guild bringing the case against the accused. Since the father of William the apprentice was known to be a weaver, then this record supports the conclusion that his father was Humffrey ap Piers Reynald.

It is possible that the Piers family of Shrewsbury was descended from an earlier Piers family that lived in Welshpool and that Humffrey ap Piers Reynald was also related perhaps by a maternal Piers ancestry of Piers Reynald. In 1356 Roger Peres, possibly an English settler, was a witness for a grant by the abbot of Lilleshall Abbey for a plot in Welshpool⁴⁴ and in 1375 Roger Piers appeared as bailiff of Welshpool on a grant of land in Welshpool.⁴⁵ In 1396 and in 1417 William Piers was witness to 2 grants from the abbot of Lilleshall Abbey for plots in Welshpool.⁴⁶ Two grants of a tenement in Shrewsbury, the first, a grant to William Piers dated 1390, and the second, a grant by William Piers, dated 1417, show the connection of Roger Piers of Welshpool and his son William Piers to Shrewsbury.

Let it be known to those present & future that we, John son of Roger Piers of Pool (Welshpool), Hugh Baggesovers & Sybil his wife, John Clerdyn & Helen his wife, & Eleanor formerly wife of Richard Reymond of Pool have given, granted & by this our present deed have confirmed to William son of Roger Piers our whole tenement with its appurtenances in Shrewsbury ...⁴⁷

The two deeds to and by William Piers for property in Shrewsbury have seals attached. The second deed has the name of William Piers on the seal tag and the impression on the seal is a shield with a lion rampant. The 1390 deed to William Piers is from his brother and 3 probably related couples or widow (sisters?) and two of the seals have a similar impression of a lion rampant on a shield as the 1418 deed, which shows this early Piers family of Welshpool was using a coat of arms.

The will of “Gwen verch Rynald late wife to Roger Piers of the pishe of pole” was made in 1570. In it she named a son Humfrey. The executors of the will were “John Piers clerck vicar of pole Hughe ap Rinald and Thomas ap Rinald my two bretherne.”⁴⁸ There is an entry for her family at “The Parish of Castell: Trevhelig” in a visitation of Wales that shows she was married to Roger ap John Pierce.⁴⁹ Evidently the father of Roger Piers was the parish vicar. He was appointed vicar of Welshpool in 1531.⁵⁰ It is

43 John H. Langbein, “The Origins of Public Prosecution at Common Law”, https://www.law.yale.edu/sites/default/files/documents/pdf/Faculty/Langbein_Origins_of_Public_Prosecution_at_Common_Law.pdf

44 Shropshire Archives, Document Reference: 972/1/1/617

45 TNA E 326/2928, “Grant by Madoc ap Rhyd, a burgess of Pola, and Sibil his wife”

46 Shropshire Archives, Document Reference: 972/1/1/625; Document Reference: 972/1/1/623.

47 Shropshire Archives, Document Reference: 6000/3943, Shropshire Archives, Document Reference: 6000/3945. Latin translation by Diana Spelman of Norwich, Norfolk.

48 Rynald, Gwen vch, [Welshpool], Montgomery, 1570. *Gwen vch Rynald : will*, 22. https://discover.library.wales/permalink/f/1k971tf/44NLW_FED4954943.

49 John Rhydderch, *Pedigrees of Montgomeryshire Families from Lewis Dwnn's Original Visitation*, (London, 1888), 22.

50 “1531 Henry Bishop of St Asaph to John Peres chaplain to lord John Peres chaplain, greeting.... We confer on you the parish church of Pole in our diocese of (St) Asaph being vacant, and in our possession and collation, by the resignation of lord John Lloyd, the last vicar there, in exchange for the vicarage of Gylffild in our diocese of (St) Asaph. Given near

not unreasonable to assume that given this family used the name Roger Piers and lived in Welshpool, that they were related to the family of that name that lived there 200 years earlier. Humfrey, son of Roger, was probably the same as Humffrey Piers of Gungrog, yeo., who was in court records in 1582 for taking oaks and saplings from another persons land.⁵¹ Gungrog is an area a mile or two north of the main township of Welshpool.

The accepted genealogy of William Peirce has that he was the father of Joan who married John Rolfe around 1619. However, if he was apprenticed in 1599 for eight years, for him to be the father of Joan he would have had to quit the apprenticeship. Evidently this was not uncommon⁵², but if he did finish, he would not have married before 1607, so could not be the father of Joan. Two facts support the latter idea. First, William and wife Joan and daughter Joan sailed for Virginia on the same supply convoy, but in different ships. This would have made more sense if they were not married when they sailed but married in Virginia. Second, as far as I can tell the evidence that he was the father of Joan is the will of John Rolfe that called him his father-in-law.⁵³ In fact, especially according to the usage of the seventeenth century, this designation appears to be ambiguous as to whether Joan was his daughter or daughter of his wife by a previous marriage.

An early name for Warwick County where Mulberry Island is located and Captain William Peirce lived was Denbigh County. Many counties in Virginia were named for counties in England, so Denbigh County must have been named for Denbighshire in Wales, a county adjacent to Montgomeryshire where Welshpool was located. However, Denby was listed as a separate location than Mulberry Island as early as 1629/30,⁵⁴ so it is perhaps just a coincidence, or maybe this was an area where other Welsh people lived.

GENEALOGICAL SUMMARY

1. John ap Llewellyn^C married Margaret verch David. He was a mercer and burgess of Welshpool and was dead by 1540 when his widow made her will. The 1540 will of Margaret verch David names a sister, Mally, a neice, Margaret, and a servant Lowry. The executors of her will were Reynalde ap David ap Gruffid and David Vaughn ap Mathew Goz.

[Latin heading in margin] Margaret v[er]ch David, late wife of John ap Ll[ewell]en of Pole

[Latin translation] In the name of God amen, the 29th day of the month of August in the year of the Lord 1540

the house of the Franciscan friars in London 6 March 1531/2.” Library of Wales, St Asaph Diocesan Records SA/MB/14. Translated from Latin by Diana Spelman of Norwich, Norfolk.

51 Chapman, *Montgomeryshire Gaol Files 1581-1590*, 138, entry #1021.

52 Patrick Wallis & Christopher Minns, “Apprenticeship in early modern London” (Gresham College, 2012).

53 Jane Carson, ‘The Will of John Rolfe’, *Virginia Magazine of History*, 58:58-65.

54 H.R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journal of the House of Burgesses 1619-1658/9*, (Richmond, 1915), xi.

[English transcription] I Margaret v[er]ch David now of late the wyff of John ap LL[ewell]en burges of the towne of Pole beyng seke in bodye whole & perfet in mynde of Remembrance do ordeyn and make my last will & testament in maner and forme folowyng. Furst I do bequeth my sowle to almyghtie god to his blessid moder, (my) bodye to be burejd wythyn the pariche church of the Pole. Also I wyll that the prestes & clerkes there be att my dirige & masse & they to be Rewarded after the custeme & maner there. Also I bequeth to the cathederall church of Seynt Assaph iiijd. Allso I wyll that iiijer new torches & viijte new tapers do braine (ie burn) a bowte my bodye in the tyme of the sayd dirige and masse. Allso I do bequeth to the hye aulter of sayd Pole a table clothe of dyapurne of the best I have wyth a towell of the same to our lades aulter. Also I do bequeth to my gostly father sir Jhon Pris [Piers] vjs viijd. Item sir David ap Jhon Pris [Piers] iijjs iiijd. Item to sir David Parles xxd. Item to sir Watter Raffe xxd. Item to sir John Blanye xxd to pray for my soule and all krysten sowles. Allso I do bequeth the howse the wich I dwellyn to Robart the sone of Richiart Llect'[er]. Allso I do bequeth to my syster Mally my best gowne and my best kyrtell Allso I do bequeth to Marget my nece my thryde gowne. Allso I do bequeth to Lowry my servaunt my fowrthe gowne. Allso I wyll that myne executors with the over syght of my over seers shall equally deivyde all my howsewalde stuff in too partes & to delyver the ton[e] party to Anne my douyghter & Robart hir sonne & to deliver the toder parte to hunfrey the sonne Pirs Reynald. Also I do ordeyn and make to be my executors to performe this my last wyll by Reynalde ap David ap Gruff & David Vichyaun ap Mathey Go'[ch] and over seers of trust to see this my last wyll performyd I do ordeyn & make, videlicet (namely), Owen Go'[ch] & David ap Cade[r] ap Rees. Allso I wyll that my sayd executors shall occupye all the stuff of my shoppe to helpe to pay my funerales & dettes. The Resudue of my goodes not bequethed, my bequestes funerallles & dettes payd, I wyll that my executors shall depose the same as they do thynke most expedient for the welthe of my sowle & all crysten sowles. In wyttnes hereof videlicet (namely) Ho[w]el ap tenau' ap John Gwyn baylyff of the towne of Pole, sir David ap John Pris [Piers] chaplen there David Myvod, Olyver Glover, Richiart Hunfrey wyth dyverse other the day & yere above writtyn. Allso I wyll that my executors shall have the keypyng of Hunffrey the sonne of Pirs Reynald & his parte of my goodes, the wych I have bequethed hym with the over seying of all his howsses landes & tenyments after the syght of my over seers tell he com to Full age & than to delyver hym his parte. In wittes of this parcell videlicet David Myvot, Oliver Glover, David Go'[ch] ap Rychyart & Mores ap Dew Gilmer with⁵⁵

She left her dwelling to Robart the sone of Richiart Llect'[er]. Llecter does not appear to be a surname and could instead an occupational description. Possibly he was a lector which is a minor order in the church who read from the bible. The Montgomeryshire court has a record from 1562 that mentions Robert ap Richard alias Robert Benllyn of Poole, cleric.⁵⁶ It seems that this is may have been the person given the dwelling.

A chancery case of 1549⁵⁷ of the executor of the will of Maly or Mary ap [sic] David versus Reynold and Roger ap David ap Griffith is certainly referring to the sister mentioned in the will of Margaret. Mally is an unusual name and the fact that the 2 executors of the estate of Margaret are parties in the case shows that it must be the same Mally. Whether David a[p] Mathewe Gough is the same as David Vichyaun ap Mathey

55 Will of "margarete vz dd" [Margaret ferch David], NLW ref. SA/BR/1, f. 48v. Transcribed by Diana Spelman, AGRA.

56 Chapman, *Montgomeryshire Gaol Files 1541-1570*, 222, entry # 1767.

57 Edward VI started his reign 28 January 1546/7. The will of Mally was in the spring of 1548, and a year and a half after puts the date of this case in the fall of 1549.

Goch, one of the executors of Margaret's estate, is not certain as vichyaun means junior in Welsh so it was perhaps his son or was dropped in the document.

The apparent odd or erroneous reference of Mary ap David is noted in the National Archives catalog entry with (sic) as Mary would not be a son of David. However, there is note in the index to Hereford probates for an entry dated 1530 where the executor was Johan ap John verch Rees. The note says that " 'Ap' was at this period often used in the names of women, but 'verch' was not used in men's names". From this note we see that Mary ap David's name may not have been a clerical error and that it may not be synonymous with verch David and its meaning is unclear. Looking over the index of this volume did in fact show a considerable number of women's names with 'Ap'.⁵⁸

To the Right honorable sir Rychard Rych knight
Lord Rych and lord Chauncelor of England

In moste humble wyse compleynyng shewith unto your honorable lordship your poer supplyante & dayly orator David amathewe / Gough executor of the testament of Maly otherwys called Mary ap [sic] David that where as the seid Maly by Juste tytle & lawfull / conveyance in the lawe was seased in herr demeane as of Fee to herr & her heirez for ever of & in serteyn landes with thappurtenaunces / in Burgeddyng in the Countie of Munggomory conteynyng by estymacion to the value of xxte acres or ther abowtes & so beyng / therof seased abowte xviiij yerez laste paste devysed or lessed or dyd lett to Ferme All the seid landes with thappurtenaunces in / Burgeddyng aforeseid to Reynold ap David ap Gryffyth & to Roger ap David ap Gryffyth beyng nyghe kynsman to the / seid Mary or Mally And For a very especyall amytye & Frenship that she bare unto theme To have & to hold the seid landes / with thappurtenaunces in Burgeddyng aforeseid to the seid Reynold & Roger For & duryng terme of oon yere & so Frome yere to / yere so longe as the parties where contentyd & agr[eed] [t]endryng & paying therfore yerly to the seid Mallye or Marye / vjs viijd of lawfull money of england at the Fest of seynt Mychaell tharchangell Wheras the seid lande with / thappurtenaunces is & was then worth & of the yerly value of xxvjs viijd and above by Force wherof the seid / Reynold & Roger where therof lawfully possessyd & paid the seid Rente wll & truly to the seid Mallye or Mary / by the space of iiij yeres next & immedyatly Folyng after the seid leas And after the seid Mallye abowte a yere and a / halffe laste paste that is to say abowte mydlente in the Seconde yere of the reign of our soveran lord the kyng that / now is At Ile in the parishe of seynt Chadde in the Countie of Shropshyer made her laste wyll & Testament / and by the same dyd ordyn & constytute your poer orator her only executor and ther dyed after whose deth & the / Will of the seid Mally or Mary proved your seid orator toke upon hym as executor of the seid Mally or Mary as / in paying of dettes & legacyes & payng and disbursyng abowte the Funeralles of the seid Mally or Mary xs / & above So it is right honorable lord that the seid Reynold & Roger have occupied the seid landes with thappurtenaunces in / Burgeddyng aforeseid by Force & vertue of the seid leas by the space of xv yeres and above and the seid rente of vjs viijd / is behynd & unpaid by the space of xj yere which rente so beyng behynd notwithstanding that the seid Maly or Mary / in her lyff And also the seid David amathewe Goughe after her deth as executor unto the seid Maly or Mary haith dyvers / and soundry tymes requyred the seid Reynold & Roger to pay unto them that is [to] say to the seid Maly or Mary in / her lyffe & to your poer orator as executor unto herr after her deth which to do they have alwayes denied / & refused & yett do denye & refuse contrary to all ryght equitye & Consyens For the

58 MA Faraday, ed., *Calendar of Probate and Administration Acts, 1407-1550 in the Consistory Court of the Bishops of Hereford*, (2008), 250, note 1.

which rente your seid poer orator / is distitute & voide of all remydy by the due order & Couerse of the Commyn lawe For as much as the seid demyse / or leas was made in the seid Countie of Munggomory and also the seid landes do lye ther where as your seid oratore / shalbe compelled to bryng his accion by the commyn lawe For as much as the cause of accion dyd furde aryse & groue / there which if he shuld do He is lykly to be tryed for as much as he is a Straunger inhabytyng in a nother / Countrye that is to say in the Countie of Shropshyer & nott knowen in the seid Countie of Mungomory nor havyng / any Frend or acqueyntance ther and the seid Reyhold & Roger where borne in the seid Countie of Mungomory / and greatly alyed & Frendyd there and ar very Ryche persons & also busye & Trobleus persons and your seid poer / orator beyng a quyett & a symple persone & also very poer is not able to try with theme in the seid Countie / Mungomory and so is clere withoute remydy unles your lordship lawfull favour to hym be shewed in / this behalffe. In consyderacion wherof it may please your good lordship the premisses consydered to graunte the kynges / maiestiez moste gracyus wrytt of subpena to the seid Reyhold & Roger to be directed commandyng theme & eyther of / theme by vertue of the same personally to appere before your good lordship in the kynges moste honorable courte of / the Chaunsery at certeyn a day & upon a certeyn peyne by your good lordship To be lymyted then and there / to make answere to the premyssez And Furder to abyde suche order & dyreccion in the same as by your good lordship / shalbe thought mett and convenyent And your seid orator shall dayly pray for your pre... spacious? estate in / honor longe to enduer

Thornhyll⁵⁹

Reynald ap David ap Griffith is certainly the same whose genealogy is recorded in a list of pedigrees published in 1716 and held by the British Library. The pedigree shows that his family was from Burgedin, a township in Guilsfield. Reynalde ap David ap Gruffid was descended from an Ithel Goch who "had a gavel of lands in Bargeding which was of bond tenure and was made free by doubling ye rent he was the son of David ap Meredith ap Blithen ap Kynsyn".⁶⁰ Meredith ap Blethyn was a prince of Powis.⁶¹

Bartrum's Welsh Genealogies has a page for the family of Reynald ap David ap Griffith of Burgedin and also a page for the genealogy of the mother of Reynold and Roger who was named Marsli versh David Goch and who was in the 'tribe of Gwenwys'.⁶² Marsli was a diminutive of Margaret.

The chancery case concerning the property owned in Burgedin by Maly did not indicate that it was a widow's life portion or that it was jointly held with a living or deceased husband or that she was married or a widow. She may have been unmarried. Also, searching in the genealogies did not show any ways she might have been related to Reynold ap David by marriage and it seems more likely she was related by common ancestry. The fact that the case called Roger and Reynold Mally's kinsman and not brothers probably means that they were not her brothers. She could not have been the

59 TNA C 1/1224/16, "Amathewe v Ap David", transcription by Diana Spelman, AGRA

60 The British Library, Manuscript ADD 9865, fo. 6; W. A. Griffiths, "The Three Rogers Benefactors to Guilsfield Chrch", The Montgomeryshire collections (Montgomeryshire, 1958), 55:133.

61 Rhydderch, "Descendants of Meredith, Prince of Powis", Montgomeryshire Families, 133-34.

62 Dr P. C. Bartrum, "Welsh Genealogies", Bledodyn ap Cynfyn 35(A), Gwenwys 1.

<https://research.aber.ac.uk/en/datasets/bartrum-genealogical-project>

sister of their father David ap Griffith since her Margaret and Mally's father was named David.

A tax list for the hundred of Pool for 1546 has a list for Burgedin and the names Rynald ap David ap Griffin, Roger ap David ap Griffin, David ap Griffin, and Hugh ap David ap Jevan ap Dio.⁶³ One possibility is that Hugh ap David ap Jevan ap Dio was the brother of Margaret and Mally since in a chancery case 1559-1570 (see below) 60 acres that Humfrey ap Pyers Reynold claimed to own was owned by Jevan ap Dio of Trewern, a township near to Burgedin.

Probably Margaret and Mally were related to Marsli verch David Goch and that is how Reynold and Roger were kinsmen of Mally. The fact that Margaret and Marsli shared the same name supports this. Exactly how they might have been related is not clear. If Margaret vch David and Mally were descendants of the "tribe" of Gwenys then Humfrey Piers would have been a distant cousin of Elizabeth Lloyd who married Thomas Pierce's uncle Edward Pierce who was also a descendant of the "tribe" of Gwenys.⁶⁴ The Gwenys tribe can trace their ancestry back to Brochwel Ysgithrog who was king of Powys in the sixth century.

There is also a connection of the Piers family of Shrewsbury to Burgedin. The 1598 will of William Peers of Shrewsbury had the bequest of land in Guilsfield that was 'in the tenure and occupacon of Edward Mathewes'. The subsidies of 41 Elizabeth and 42 Elizabeth for Montgomeryshire show an Edward Mathew taxed in Travnaney & Keel.⁶⁵ This is evidently Trefnanney located about 8 miles north of Welshpool but just about a mile from Burgedin. Parish records for Guilsfield show that Edward Mathewes was married 1577 to Elizabeth vz Richard Ffyrniffall. The will of Hugh Furnifall who lived in Burgedin shows that his father was Richard Furnifall so that Edward Mathewes was related by marriage to a Burgedin family.

... in the year of our Lord god 1583 I Hugh Furnifall of the parish of Gilesfield ...I give and bequeath to Barbara my wedded wife & Thomas my sone all my right title interest & terme of years in one messuage & tenement wherein I do now inhabit situate lying & being in the township of Burgedyne in the county of Montgomery for said which I have & hold of the gyfte & grant of Richard Furnifall my father and David ap Owen ap Ieuan LLoid for the space & terme of xxvi years⁶⁶

The chancery case in 1540-1 of the executors of Margaret verch David was against Richard and Robert Lloid.

To the right honourable Sir Thomas Awdeley Knyght lord Awdeley of Walden & Chauncelour of England

63 TNA E 179/222/355, Pola, 1546.

64 The most recent common ancestor of Elizabeth (Lloyd) Piers and Marsli vch David Goch was Madog ap Gwenwys. The Bartrum pedigrees give a rough estimate to the date of birth of the people in the pedigrees and it assigns an approximate date of birth of Madog ap Gwenwys of 1300.

65 Archives and Special Collections, Bangor University, Bangor MS 13973, pp. 237-42, MS 13973, pp. 222-36.

66 NLW, Furnifall, Hugh, Burgedin, Guilsfield, Montgomery; St. Asaph Probate Records, 1521-1858.

In most humble wise complaynyng Showith unto your good lordshippe your dayly Orators Reynold ap [David?] ap G[ryffith?] &ap Matheo Gour Executors of/ the last will & Testament of Margaret late the wiff of John ap Lle[wellyn] That wh[ere]as the said Margaret was possessed of diverse goodes & catalles amountyng/ to the value of a hundred markes or therabowte And she beyng so of the seid goodes & catalles possessed [there?] by the last wyll & Testament made your seid/ Orators hyr executo[r]s at (no place recorded) dyed the xxixth day of August last past at a Towne called Welshepole in Neath with the Whiche last will & Testament/ of the seid Margaret is duly proved by your seid Orators before the ordinarye of the dioces ther at ther great cost & charge as by the [same?] redy to be/ shewed it playnly shall appere So it is Neverthelesse right honorable lord that one Richard Lloid Robert Lloid & David ap Idri[s?] ap Owen mayntenaunt appon the deth/ of the seid Margaret entred ynto the howse wheryn the seid Margaret dyed at Walshepole aforeseid and wher hyr seid goodes & catalles at the tyme of / hyr deth dyd Rest and all the seid goodes & catalles of the seid Margaret of ther ...awne more extort poer withowte any Colour of Title or/ resonable cause have takyn ynto ther possession & custodye and the same contynually dothe deteyne & withhold from your seid Orators to ther great hynderaunce/ And wher your seid orators arr putt yn trust by the [same] Margaret to oversee certen howses & landes of [one?] Humfrey ap Pyers son of Pyers Reynold [senior] & Thomasin/ his wiff daughter of the seid Margaret duryng the infancye of the seid [deleted: Margaret] Humfrey & to have the custodye & kepyng Aswell of the seid Humfrey as of all the/ Revenus issues & proffittes of his seid howses & landes duryng the seid tyme So yt is Right honorable lords that the forseid Richard & Robert with one Hoell ap John/ of ther Ferde wronge & by ther extort poer have entred ynto a howsse of the seid Humfrey yn Walshepole aforeseid appon the Just & lafull possession of the seid Humfrey/ to hym & his heires conveyd from the seid Margaret & hyr late husbond and wherof the seid Pyers Reynold & Thomasyn successyvely dyed seised and therof/ Wrongfully hath disseised the seid Humfrey and the issues & proffittes therof hath takyn ever syn the deth of the seid Margaret yn August last to the disserison of the seid/ Humfrey forever unlesse your lordshippis Favour be unto hym shewed yn this behalff And wher Also one Humfrey ap Merdd ap Gwillam was indetted unto the/ seid Margaret in a hundred shillynges sterlinge for money to hym lent by the seid Margaret yn hyr tyme and the which shold have byn repaid unto the seid/ at a day long past So yt is Right honorable lord that although the seid money which byn dyvers & Sondry tymes demaunded of the (said) Humfrey ap Merdd/ ap Gwillam aswell by the seid Margaret as by your seid Orators Neverthelesse the seid Humfrey that to pay at all tymes hath refused & denyed/ & yet doth Refuse & denye contrary to all right equitie & conscience by reson of the which Inyuries & wronges afore rehersed your seid orators/ hath hetherto not only susteyned gret costes & expences of ther awne goodes aswell abowte the buryall of the seid Margaret & probat of/ hyr Testament but lykwise dyvers persons to whom the seid Margaret was indetted & made sondry bequestes hath susteyned muche/ Inyurye & wronge by forbeyryng ther seid dettes & bequestes In Tender Considering wherof and forasmuche as one of your seid Orators/ Compelled to inhabyt & withyn the Countie of Salopp and dare not Resort unto the seid towne called Walshepole or the Cuntre therunto/ adyoynyng For dred of the seid Richard Lloid & Robert Lloid ther Kynsmen Fryndes & adherents who withowte cause bere dedly matice unto hym/ for a murder heretofore don & Commytted wherof your seid Orator is clerly & lafully acquyted by the due order of the Kynges prosecuted ageinst/ hym yn the same cuntre & yet Neverthelesse lyeth yn wayt daily for fyne to the Kyngeswrittes of Sub pena to be directed unto the forseid/ Richard Lloyd, Robert Lloyd, Hoell ap John Gwyn & Humfrey ap Merdd ap Gwillam Com[m]aundyng them & every of them by the same personally to appere yn

the kynges honorable/ court of Chauncerye at a certen day & appon a certayn payne yn the seid writt to be lymyted there to aunswer unto the premysses &c⁶⁷

This case shows that Humfrey ap Piers was the son of Pyers Reynold and Thomasin, the daughter of Margaret verch David.

The above mentioned murder involving one of the executors was the murder of Roger Lloyd.

Sir Edward Gray to Cromwell [Thomas].

I have received your letter desiring a commission for Rob. Dudley and Ric. Snede to sit on the trial of Davyth ap Mathe Goch, John Williams and others, for the murder of Roger Lloyd, that they should have the trial made by 16 burgesses of the town. It will be hard to find 16 impartial burgesses in that poor town who are not either kin or ally to one party or other. If, therefore, Dudley and Snede cannot find indifferent quest in that town, I beg they may order the matter according to the custom of the country. Affection leads my countrymen many times to say more than truth is, and I beg, therefore, my officer may be in the commission. Beddnalle Green, 20 Feb. [1536]⁶⁸

Grants in June 1538.

George ap Matthew Gogh, of Pool, in the lordship of Powes, labourer. Pardon as accessory to the murder of Roger Lloid at Pool by David Vachan ap Matthew Gough of Pool, yeoman, 7 Jan. 24 Hen. VIII; the said George having been present aiding and abetting with Peter ap David, husbandman, John ap Jevan ap Tudor, Matthew Say, Roger Wydd, John William, David ap John Edwards, labourers, John ap Ll'n, mercer, and Gruff ap D'd ap Owen, labourer; all of Pool, 24 June 30 Hen. VIII.⁶⁹

Children of John ap Llewellyn and Margaret verch David:

- i. [2] Thomasin, also called Syna, died before 1541
- ii. Anne
- iii. Elizabeth

2. Thomasin^B (John ap Llewellyn^C) married Pyers Reynold. Piers Reynolds was a defendant in a case dated 1535 and was described as a burgess of Pole. The case involved several men who lived in Shrewsbury suing to have burgess privileges in Welshpool.⁷⁰ Thomasin and her husband were dead by 1541.

Child of Pyers and Thomasin:

67 The National Archives, C 1/1055/150, "Ap David v Lloid". Transcribed by Diana Spelman, AGRA.

68 "Henry VIII: February 1536, 11-20," in Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 10, January-June 1536, ed. James Gairdner (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1887), 108-126. British History Online, accessed February 11, 2024, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/letters-papers-hen8/vol10/pp108-126>. WRB Robinson, "Earl Grey, Lord Powis", *The Montgomeryshire Collections*, (Montgomeryshire, 1979) 67:132-135.

69 "Henry VIII: June 1538, 26-30," in Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 13 Part 1, January-July 1538, ed. James Gairdner (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1892), 464-491. British History Online, accessed February 11, 2024, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/letters-papers-hen8/vol13/no1/pp464-491>.

70 "Welshpool: Materials for the History of the Parish and Borough", *Montgomeryshire Collections*, (Montgomeryshire, 1880), 13:202-204.

i. [3]Humfrey Peirce, also known as Humfrey ap Piers, Humfrey ap Piers Reynold, and Humfrey Piers Reynold.

3. Humfrey^A Peirce (Thomasin^B, John ap Llewellyn^C), was born before 1540, but was a minor at that time. On 20 Feb 1572 John Piers, Humffrey Piers and Anne his wife were witnesses against John Molyner for theft of a sheet and pillow bier at Pool.⁷¹ The name in the record is Humffrey Piers so it is not certain it is Humfrey Piers Reynald, however the appearance of John Piers as one of the witnesses seems to support this conclusion. Probably if this was a reference to the parish priest he would have been identified as a cleric or with the title of Sir. He was a weaver of Welshpool, and in 1574 he was prosecutor in a case involving weaving so he was probably in the weavers guild or an official of that guild. The last record of Humfrey Piers Reynald was on 7 April 1597 when he was one of the sureties for William ap Thomas of Broniarth.⁷² He was deceased between this date and 1599 when William Piers' apprentice record was entered. Since he was born before 1540 then if his son William was born circa 1580 he would have probably been in his forties William was born.

There were two later chancery cases which concerned property owned by Humfrey Piers Reynald. The first is dated 1562 and is notable since the complainant used the name Humfray Peares and not his full Welsh name showing an instance where Humfrey Piers Reynald was known by an English style name. It concerned 3 parcels of land of 40, 20 and 13 acres in Welshpool. The date of the second is not known but while Nicholas Bacon was chancellor (1558-1571). In it John Pirse was the complainant concerning a tenement or burgage in Welshpool and 60 acres in the township of Trewern which was granted to him by Humfrey Piers Reynald. Trewern is a township 3 miles northeast of Welshpool in the parish of Buttington and about 2 miles from Burgedin.

xii november Anno quarto Eliz R 1562

To the ryht honorable S. Nycolas Bacon Knyght Lord Keeper of the great Seale of England

In most humble wyse Complaynyng Shewythe unto youre Honorable Lordship youre dayly Supplyaunt Humfray Peares that / Whereas John ap Lle[welly]n graundfather to youre seid Orator and Margaret his wyffe were Joyntlye scyased in there demeasn as of Fre / hold that is to say to theym and to the Survyvors of theym for tearme of there naturall Lyves of and in one messuage xl acres of / Arable Land xx acre of pasture and xiiij acres of medow wyth the appurtenaunces Sett Lyinge and Beinge in Welshe poole in / the County of Mountgemerry the Revercyon whereof Expectant and Ryght Fully Belongynge and Suffycyently in Law / Conveyhid to the said John ap Lle[elly]n and to his heyres for ever And they so beinge thereof scyeased in maner and Forme as / is aforsaid the said John ap Lle[welly]n havynge yssue the Daughters that is to say Anne Lle[welly]n, Elyzabeth Lle[welly]n and Syna Lle[welly]n mother of / youre said Supplyaunt Doughters and heyres [of] the said John ap Lle[welly]n of the Body of the said Margaret Lawfully Begotten and / afterwarde the said Syna mother of the said Complayunt Dyed and afterwarde the said John ap Lle[welly]n Dyed and afterwarde the said / Margaret also Dyed after whose Death

71 Chapman, *Montgomeryshire Gaol Files 1571-1580*, 75, entry # 610.

72 Chapman, *Montgomeryshire Gaol Files 1596-1600*, 88, entry # 730. Broniarth is in Guilsfield parish.

the thyrd parte of all the said premysses Decendyd and came and of Ryght ought to descend and / come to youre said Orator as cosen and Ryght heyre of the said John And so yt is Ryght honorable Lord that sothyns the Deathe / of the said John and Margaret his wyffe that Davyd ap D[avid?] Olyver ap David and Davyd Wyn Ap Hoell by confederat practyse / Betwyxt theym and the said Elyzabethe and Anne and By cullor of havynge in there handes Certen Dedes Evidences mynymentes and / wrytynges touchynge and Concernynge only the premisses And Ryghtfully Belongynge to youre said Orator have entred into all the / premysses and wyll nott Suffer youre said Orator to occupye the same nor any parte thereof But wrongfully wyth hold [them?] / the said thyrd parte and the yssues and proffytes thereofinge and [growing?] together wyth the said other ij partes have Levyed / Receyved and taken to there owne proper use and to the Expresse wronge and Dyssheryson of youre said orator of his Ryght / full tittle to the said thyrd parte And for as [?muche] as by the want of havynge of the said Dedes and Certen Intellygens of the / true Dates thereof youre said orator Beinge but a pore man And they said desendantses well Frendyd Bynned and allyed / wyth in the said Countye of Mountgomerry And for that also the quenes Comysseyoners in her marches of Wales wyll nott But do / Reffuse to heare or Determyn any matters or causes of enh(eryt?)ans therefore youre said Orator is nott only wythout all Remedy to Recover the premysses / By the order of the Comen Law But also wythout Remedy for the Recovery thereof Before the quenes hyghnes Councell and comysseyoners / in her marches of Walles In tender Consyderacion whereof yt may playse youre good Lordship to graunt the quenes maiesties severall / wryttes of Subpena to Be dyrected to the said David ap David, Olyver ap David and Davyd Wyn Ap Hoell Comaundyng them and every of / theym By the same personally to appere Before youre good Lordship in the quenes maiesties hyghe Court of Chauncery at a certen / Day and under a certen payne therein By youre Lordship to Be Lymyted then and ther to Awnswer to the premysses and further / to stand an abyde to such further order and dyrecyion therein as to youre Lordship shall Be thought to stand wyth Ryght / Equity and good Consyens and youre said orator shall dayly pray to allmyghty god for the preservacion of youre good Lordship / in honor Longe to endure⁷³

A chancery case was brought by John Pirse about property he received from Humfrey Pirse:

To the Right honorable Sr Nicholas Bakon knight lorde keeper of the great seale of England

In moste humble wise complayneth and showeth unto your good and honourable Lordeship your poore and dailie orator John Pirse of Ednoppe in the / Countie of Saloppe that whereas one Humferie ap Pirse Renald of pole in the Countie of montgomerie was lawfullie seased in his demeasne as of / fee of and in one tente or burgage of lande set lyinge and beinge in the towne and liberties of pole in the said countie of montgomerie and also of and / in threeskore acres of land medowe [???] woods and pastures with the appurtenances set lynge and being in trewerne in the said countie of montgomerie / and so seased thereof about mychelmas last past by his wryting indented and sufficient in lawe devysed and granted the premys unto your said / Orator To have and to hold unto your said orator and his assigns for manye yeares ... So yt is right honorable Lorde that the / said indenture is sychens that tyme by casuall means come to the hands custodie and possession of one Robert ap John ap Jevan ap Dio & Jevan / ap Richard Dackinge and David Lloid ap Edward the younger by cullor of havinge thereof they and [...] not onelie forcablie unto the / premisses

73 TNA C 3/143/30, "Humphrey Peares vs David ap David and others". Transcribed by Diana Spelman of Norwich, Norfolk.

entered and of and from the possession thereof wrongfullie expulsed your said orator contrarie unto all right spirit and good conscience ...

The Answer of Robte ap John ap Jevan ap Dyo for his pte to the Byll of Complaynt of John Pyrse complaynte

... then the said deft for his pte sayeth as to ye tenemente & pcell of threescore acres of land with apptenance Lyinge and/ beinge in Trewerne in the said countye of montgomery which this deft thinketh ys pcell of the lande in the byll specyfied sayeth/ that one Jevan ap Dio grandfather to this deft was lawfully seased in his as of fee and soe being thereof seased about fiftye/ yeares now last paste dyed thereof seased by and after whose decesse the the prmysse descended and came as of right ??? to/ descend & come unto John ap Jevan ap Dio as sonne & heyre unto the said Jevan ap Dio by force whereof the said John ap Jevan ap/ Dio unto the prmisses entered & was thereof lawfully seased in his demeane as of fee & soe beinge thereof seased aboute nyne/ yeares last paste by good and suffycient conveyance in lawe did conveye & asine the same two tenementes and lx acres of/ lande to this deft to have and to hold the same to this def & to his heyres for ever by force whereof was and/ yet ys thereof lawfully seased in his demesne as of fee & the yssues and pfette thereof did & yet doth preave & take/ accordingly as well and Lawfull was for him to doe And as unto the said tenement or burgage of land set lyeing and beinge in/ the town & lybties of Pool in the said countye of montgomerye the said deft for his pte utterly declaymeth to have any/ thinge in the same or in pcell thereof wythyne to that that the said Humfreye ap Pyerse Reynolde of Poole in the countye of/ montgomerye was lawfully seased in hs demeane as of fee of & in one tenement of burgage of land sett lyeing & being in the/ towne & lybties of Pole in the said cnt of Montgmrye and allso of and in threescore acres of land meadows .. woode/ and pastures wythe the apptence set lyeinge & being in Treweren ...⁷⁴

This chancery case gives no indication of the relation of John to Humphrey. John Piers was probably the same who was mentioned in the will of Richard ap Howell of Ednop⁷⁵, dated 1557. It states that “I doe give to Howell, my sonne, and to his heires after the decease of his mother, the tenement and lands which Thomas Cocke and John Piers occupieth.”⁷⁶ However, by 1576 he was evidently living in Montgomeryshire when he was juror for a case of a man who drowned in the River Severn at Trewern.⁷⁷ Since John Piers seems to be about the same age as Humphrey Piers he was possibly a half-brother or cousin. Since he may have had a cousin last named Piers, then his father Piers Reynald was possibly related to the Piers family in some way.

Child of Humfrey Peirce:

i. [4] William Peirce

4. William¹ Peirce (Humffrey Piers^A, Thomasin^B, John ap Llewellyn^C) born in Welshpool ca. 1580. By 1599 his father had died and he moved to London and was apprenticed with the London Cutlers’ Company:

⁷⁴ TNA C 3/139/92, “Pirse v Dyo”.

⁷⁵ Edenhope in the parish of Mainstone, Shropshire.

⁷⁶ “Early Montgomeryshire Wills at Somerset House”, *The Montgomeryshire Collections*, 21:182-186.

⁷⁷ Chapman, *Montgomeryshire Gaol Files 1571-1580*, 340, entry # 2482.

William Peirce sonne of Humfrey Peirce late of Pole in the [missing] of Monngmmery weaver deceased bound to John Gillet [missing] cutler of London from the feast of the Nativitie of St. John Bap [missing] last for eight yeres dated xxi of October 1599⁷⁸

This identification of Captain William Peirce as the son of Humfrey of Welshpool is supported with several important facts. The will of Thomas of Virginia's grandfather, William of Shrewsbury, mentioned property in Guilsfield a parish adjacent to the parish of Welshpool where the town of Welshpool is located and and Thomas' uncle Edward Peers married Elizabeth Lloyd of Guilsfield. Thomas' brother Edward of Allhallows Barking in London in his will mentioned Oliver Morris, son of David Morris of Welshpool. David Morris, clerk, was acquainted with the father of William Piers in Welshpool and Oliver was apprenticed and living in London at the same time as William Peirce. His grandfather Piers Reynold was shown in the court record of 1535 to have had connections to Shrewsbury merchants. William was about the right age to be Captain Peirce, and he would have probably been living in London where many of the settlers for the 1609 voyage were recruited.⁷⁹ No records were located that indicate he may have continued to live in London.

After arriving in Virginia in 1609 and 1610 William Peirce and his wife Jone and her daughter Joane continued to live in Virginia. In the muster of inhabitants of Virginia taken in 1624/5 at James City were listed Capt. William Peirce who came in the *Sea-venture*, Mrs Jone Peirce his wife who came in the *Blessinge*, and her daughter who was married to Captain Roger Smith as Mrs. Joane Smith who came in the *Blessinge*. At Mulberry Island was the muster of the servants of Captain William Peirce.⁸⁰ The foundations of his house in Jamestown are still there. Captain Peirce was an important person in early Virginia and served on the governor's council from 1632 to 1643. In May 1623, he was appointed captain of the Governor's guards and commander of James City.⁸¹ A grant for 2100 acres to Captain William Peirce, dated 16 December 1643, in or near Mulberry Island includes a regrant of 650 acres granted to him 31 December 1619 and was "near the now dwelling howse of sd Peirce".⁸²

An English record indicates that Captain Peirce had more than one child. In 1635 Captain Peirce was among the members of the Council that tried to remove the governor. For this he was sent to England to appear before the Star chamber. On 29 September 1637 he made a petition to the court.

78 Apprentice Bindings Book of the Cutlers Company (Guildhall Ms 7159/1).

79 In early 1609 a broadside was distributed over England calling for all work-people who wished to go to Virginia "to come to the house of Sir Thomas Smythe in Filpot Lane," and "they will be entered as adventurers in the present voyage to Virginia." Seven ships sailed from London on May 25 and with 2 small vessels added to the fleet at Plymouth they sailed for Virginia on June 12 1609. Alexander Brown, *The First Republic of America* (Boston and New York, 1898), 76, 84.

80 Meyer and Dorman, *Purse and Person*, 31, 46.

81 Wolfe, "William Peirce". In the census of 1624/5 Captain Peirce reported 30 swords, second most in the colony, and 24 snaphance pieces. This is probably explained by the fact he was Captain of the guard, but if he was the same as William Peirce, cutler of London, then it would make sense that he was captain and armourer. Brown, *Republic*, p. 626.

82 Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 1:149.

Upon a petition presented to the boord in the name of William Peirce, shewing that about 18 months since, he came into England from Virginia ... having spent the meanes brought over with him, soe as hee is unable to subsist here any longer, besought their Lordshipps to give him License to goe back into Virginia, for some short time, to make his Provision, and to settle his Estate there, which is in danger to bee lost, to his utter ruine, having noe other meanes to maintaine himselfe, his wife and Children...⁸³

By January 1638/9 he was back in Virginia when he is mentioned in a gift of Thomas Peirce.

I Tho. Peirce of Mulberry Island in Virginia ... I the sd. Tho. Peirce ... make over unto Wm. Peirce my eldest sonne one cove wch Capt. Wm. Peirce and Mr. Wm. Spencer shall make choice ... In case the sd Wm. shall hapen to dye before hee attaine the years of 21 ...dated 21 Jan. 1638, recorded 20 May 1658⁸⁴

He was dead by 22 June 1647 when there is an estate record of Captain William Peirce deceased in Warwick County.⁸⁵

Children of William and Joanne:

i. Joane (possibly), born England ca. 1600-1605. More likely Joane was a daughter of a previous marriage of Joanne and step-daughter of William. She married around 1619 John Rolfe, and after his death Captain Roger Smith. Her daughter by John Rolfe, Elizabeth, was born 1620.

ii. [5]Thomas (possibly)⁸⁶

iii. [6]Anne (possibly)⁸⁷

5. Thomas² Peirce (William¹, Humffrey Piers^A, Thomasin^B, John ap Llewellyn^C) was was not recorded in the muster of 1624/5. According to Virginia Immigrants and Adventurers there were only 44 people known to be missing from this muster, which accounts for 3.5 percent of the total.⁸⁸ Either he was in Virginia but for some reason was not counted or he was not living in the colony at the time. The name of his wife is not recorded.

Thomas Peirce was dead by 21 Oct. 1665 when one of the heirs of Captain Thomas Peirce petitioned concerning a legacy.

The petition preferred by Mr. Thomas Iken as he intermarried with Grace Harwood against Thomas Peirce as one of the executors of Captaine Thomas Peirce deceased for a legacy given by

83 *Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial Series, 1613-1680* (London, 1908), 233.

84 Wynette Parks Haun, *Surry County records 1652-1663* (Durham, N.C., 1986), 66.

85 Richard Dunn, ed., *Warwick County, Virginia Colonial Court Records in Transcription*, (Baltimore, 2000) 26.

86 Thomas Peirce was mentioned in a footnote of the entry for William Peirce in *Adventurers of Purse and Person* as a possible son, however the English record where he states he has children was not mentioned and the date for the deed of gift is erroneously entered as 1655. (Meyer and Dorman, *Purse and Person*, 477).

87 The entry for Thomas Harwood in *Adventurers of Purse and Person* states that the petition of Grace Harwood against Thomas Peirce 'may be a clue to her mother's identity' (Meyer and Dorman, *Purse and Person*, 364).

88 McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants and Adventurers*, 13.

Capt. Peirce to Grace of tenne pounds sterling is, in regard Thomas Peirce is not yet of age and hath not yet his estate in his hands nor acted as executor, referred until Thomas Peirce comes to age at which tyme he that is then his guardian is ordered to keepe soe much of his hands in his hands as shall bee satisfactory for the debt or legacy.⁸⁹

Children of Thomas:

- i. [7] William, born before 1638.
- ii. [8] Thomas
- iii. Jeremiah (possibly), was living in 1673 when the general court of 27 October 1673 record an order concerning a parcel of land in Warwick County to be returned to Jeremiah Peirce and that he 'be possessed of the said land according the the will of his father'.⁹⁰

6. Anne² Peirce (William¹, Humffrey Piers^A, Thomasin^B, John ap Llewellyn^C), who was possibly named for her putative grandmother, Anne the wife of Humffrey Piers, married after 1625 Thomas Harwood of Warwick County who died in 1652. She married second Henry Blagrove. In 1653 Anne Harwood, widow of Captain Thomas Harwood made a deed of gift to her 3 children who were later named in an expense account as "Humphey, Grace, and Margaret Harwood, orphans of Captain Thomas Harwood."⁹¹ Since her children were minors in 1653 she could have been born after the census of 1624/5 or she could have been absent at the time. Her son Humphrey could have been named for his great-grandfather Humfrey Peirce. If so this would give credence to the theory that Captain Peirce was from Welshpool and also that Ann Harwood was his daughter.

Children of Anne and Thomas:

- i. Humphey
- ii. [9] Grace
- iii. Margaret

7. William Peirce (Thomas², William¹, Humffrey Piers^A, Thomasin^B, John ap Llewellyn^C) was born before 1638. He was living in 1668 when he patented 100 acres at "Scotts Creek along Mr Harwoods line &. Granted John Rolfe, Wm Peirce, Tho Peirce & William Spencer".⁹²

Child of William:

- i. [10] — male (probably).

8. Thomas³ Peirce (Thomas², William¹, Humffrey Piers^A, Thomasin^B, John ap Llewellyn^C) was born ca. 1645-1650 since he was not of age in 1665, but was granted 155 acres in Warwick County in Mulberry Island Parish near George Harwood's house

89 Warwick County Court Records, *The Virginia Genealogist*, 18:286. This record was one that was taken by a Union soldier during the Civil War but later returned.

90 McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Virginia*, 354.

91 Meyer and Dorman, *Purse and Person*, 361-364.

92 Nugent, *Cavalier and Pioneers*, 2:43.

on 2 March 1673/4.⁹³ Thomas Peirce left a will in Warwick County dated 7 October 1696. He left to his ‘wife Elizabeth my own plantacion with fifty acres of land during her life and afterward to my son William Pierce... if my wife marryes the plantacion to be delivered forthwith’. He also left land to daughter Elizabeth and son Jeremiah.⁹⁴ The quit rent for 1704 for Warwick County has a single entry for the Peirce family, Widow Peirce – 155 acres.⁹⁵

Children of Thomas and Elizabeth:

- i. [11] William
- ii. Jeremiah
- iii. Elizabeth

9. Grace³ Harwood (Anne² Peirce, William¹, Humffrey Piers^A, Thomasin^B, John ap Llewellyn^C) married by 21 Oct. 1665, Thomas Iken, and was dead by 14 May 1669.⁹⁶ Thomas Iken married after her decease Elizabeth, widow of Emanuel Wills, Capt. Henry Jackson, and Maj. Edward Griffith.⁹⁷ He was granted 1350 acres in Mulberry Island Parish in 14 May 1669 at which time he was living at the former dwelling of Capt. William Peirce.

Beginning at the mouth of a creek nere his now dwelling house formerly the dwelling house of Capt. Wm. Peirce ... neer George Harwood, John Basse ... Part of 2100 acs granted sd. Wm. Peirce 16 Dec 1643, etc. 400 acs overplus found herein due in right of his wife Elizabeth, late wife of Mr. Edward Griffith decd.⁹⁸

Thomas Iken deposed in York County court on 27th August, 1661 that he was 28 years old.⁹⁹ He was certainly the same as Thomas Iken who was baptized 5th Dec. 1632 at Stifford, Essex. He attended Cambridge as did his father James Iken who was rector of Stifford.¹⁰⁰ His grandfather was Thomas Iken citizen and skinner, of London who in his will says that he was born in Shropshire in the parish of Hodnett.¹⁰¹ Hodnet is about 12 miles from Shrewsbury and 30 miles from Welshpool.

10. —⁴ Peirce (William³, Thomas², William¹, Humffrey^A, Thomasin^B, John ap Llewellyn^C) No record of children of William exist, but analysis of the land record of Spencer Pierce of 1768 shows that it could be the same 100 acres patented in 1668 indicating he may have been a descendant of William.

The Warwick County court order book for 1713-1714 gives a record of people named Pierce living in the County before the gap of 35 years when the record of court minutes

93 Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 2:144.

94 Dunn, *Warwick County*, 275.

95 The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 30, No. 4 (Oct., 1922), 345.

96 Meyer and Dorman, *Purse and Person*, 364

97 Meyer and Dorman, *Purse and Person*, 604

98 Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 2:56

99 “Proceedings in York County Court”, *The William and Mary Quarterly* (Jul., 1902), 11:32.

100 A Cambridge Alumni Database, <https://venn.lib.cam.ac.uk/>

101 TNA PROB 11/77/220, “Will of Thomas Iken, Skinner of London”.

start in 1748. Jeremiah Pierce junior and senior both appear in court cases. John Pierce, Jr. and William Pierce together gave bond for the widow of George King. A Joseph Pierce junior and senior both appeared at separate times on a grand jury.¹⁰² Probably one of these was a son of William (or grandson) and father of Spencer.

Child of —:

i. [12] Spencer

11. William⁴ Peirce (Thomas³, Thomas², William¹, Humffrey^A, Thomasin^B, John ap Llewellyn^C) was mentioned in his father's will and that he was to receive the plantation of Thomas Peirce after Thomas' widow died or remarried. The 1713 rent roll for Warwick County has William Pierce listed for 155 acres which is the same acreage listed to widow Peirce in 1704 so she had evidently died or remarried.¹⁰³

12. Spencer⁵ Pierce (—⁴, William³, Thomas², William¹, Humffrey Piers^A, Thomasin^B, John ap Llewellyn^C) first appears in Warwick County records in 1749 when he petitioned for counter security of the estate William Folks.¹⁰⁴ The records for Warwick County are mostly missing from the court order book for 1713-1714 to the court minutes that start in 1748, so there is no record that connects Spencer Pierce to the earlier Peirce family. However, his family is the only Pierce or Peirce family that appears in the records starting in 1748. Spencer Pierce was dead by 7 August 1760 when his estate administration was recorded.

On the motion of Martha Pierce ordered that John George Wills, Benjamin Wills, Samuel Wills and John Pate Wills, or any three of them do examine & settle an account of the admon of the estate of Spencer Pierce deceased and report the same to the court.¹⁰⁵

The name Spencer could refer to a connection to the family of William Spencer, the Jamestown era immigrant. The name was mentioned already twice in the grant of land to John Rolfe, Wm Peirce, Tho Peirce & William Spencer and the 1638 gift of a cow to the son of Thomas Peirce. In 1626 William Spencer deposed that in 1620 "he did oversee the labours of six or seaven men belonging to Capt William Peerce who planted in the main."¹⁰⁶ He was a burgess for Mulberry Island in 1633,¹⁰⁷ and owned land adjoining William Peirce in what became Surry County.¹⁰⁸ William Spencer had a brother Nicholas Spencer who lived in Surry County and was living in Virginia as early as 1628. In 1658 a Robert Spencer who was probably related acted as attorney for a gift of land to Nicholas Spencer.¹⁰⁹ However, there is no known marriage of any of William

102 Dunn, *Warwick County*, pp. 207-264. There are a few Warwick County records around 1730, but none mention anyone named Pierce, pp. 132-156.

103 The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library, William Blathwayt Papers, MS1946.2, VOL XIII

104 Dunn, *Warwick County*, 317.

105 Dunn, *Warwick County*, 530.

106 McIlwaine, *Minutes of the Council and General Court of Virginia*, 99.

107 McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants and Adventurers*, 662.

108 Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 1:29.

109 B.C. Holtzaw, "The Newsom Family", *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 47:371-2

Spencer's descendants or descendants of the other Surry County Spencers to the Peirces.

Children of Spencer and Martha:

i. [13] Spencer

ii. [14] Rice Bolton

13. Spencer⁶ Pierce (Spencer⁵, —⁴, William³, Thomas², William¹, Humffrey Piers^A, Thomasin^B, John ap Llewellyn^C) was appointed constable for Stanley Hundred Precinct on 7 August 1760.¹¹⁰ He was married to Elizabeth.¹¹¹ Stanley Hundred was an area in the middle of Mulberry Island. It is probably the area where the first residents of Mulberry Island lived.¹¹²

Spencer Pierce owned 100 acres in Warwick County at some time as shown by a deed dated 1768.¹¹³ This court record was evidently taken by a union soldier as a souvenir during the Civil War and by the 1930s was held by the New York Public Library. A copy is presently at the Library of Virginia¹¹⁴. The Spencer mentioned in the record could be either the father or the son but assuming the reference is to a recent transfer it is more likely the son, although he likely inherited it from his father Spencer.

A Memorial of Bargain and Sales Mortgages, Marriage Settlements Deeds of Tracts & other Conveyances/ which have been proved or acknowledged & recorded in the County Court of Warwick from the last Day of Dec. 1768/ to the last day of Nov. 1769.

Deed & Date of Conveyance – Feoffment 2nd May 1768

from whom – John Geo. Wills & May (Mary?) his wife of this County

to whom – Wm. Wills of Isle of Wight County

Consideration – One hundred & ten Pounds

Quantity of Acres Situation & Bounds of the Land and other etc. conveyed – one hundred acres of land in the County of Warwick formerly in the Posson of Spencer Pierce who sold the same to Mr. Wills who conveyed the same to the sd. J.G. Wills and bounded by the most known ancient & reputed bounds thereof

when ack. or proved – Nov. 10. 1768

The record appears to be a transcription of some deed book pages. However, the transcription is confusing as to who the grantor and grantees were. Since the description is more explicit it seems more likely that the from and to columns were wrong and the transfer was from William Wills to John George Wills. There are no further county records of this land but the State has land tax records starting in 1782. For the year of 1782 there is this entry.

110 Dunn, *Warwick County*, 531.

111 Dunn, *Warwick County*, 543.

112 Richter, *Mulberry Island*, 73.

113 Dunn, *Warwick County*, 581.

114 *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine*, (1943), 52-64; Library of Virginia, Warwick County Miscellaneous 1646-1915, Barcode 7417689.

Capt. Matthew Wills 20 years purchase on Capt. John George Wills's estate [^on the same] - 372 acres¹¹⁵

There was no entry for a William Wills, but this was 14 years after the date of the deed. Since John George Wills owned land in the county and William Wills did not, at least at this time, then most likely the above deed was from William Wills to John George Wills and his wife.

The Wills family operated a ferry from Mulberry Island across the James River to Isle of Wight County. From 1742 Matthew Wills operated the ferry. When he died in 1761 his son John George Wills took over operation of the ferry. In 1776 John George Wills advertised to sell the ferry and the description states it was 372 acres, so that the 100 acres sold by Spencer Pierce seemed to be part of the property where the ferry was located. In 1792 the General Assembly discontinued the Mulberry Island ferry at Mulberry Island point.¹¹⁶

The 155 acres owned by William Pierce in 1713 lay along the Warwick River which is about 2 miles from Mulberry Island Point at its closest so it was probably not the land owned by Spencer Pierce. The 100 acres granted to William Pierce in 1668 was along Scotts Creek. The grant to Capt. William Peirce for 2100 acres of 1643 describes the land as 'near the now dwelling house of sd. Peirce ... along the James river unto the old point from thence into the water side unto Scot's quarter...'.¹¹⁷ This description shows that Scotts Creek or quarter was near the Mulberry Island point so the land owned by Spencer Pierce could have been the same as the 100 acres granted William Peirce in 1668. The acreage also matches although there was not a 100 acre entry owned by a Peirce in the 1704 or 1713 tax lists.

Since all of these records - the estate record, the apprenticeship indenture of Rice Bolton Pierce and the deed - are made with member of the Wills family it must be concluded that they were either neighbors or related by marriage. The connection of the Wills family to the Pierces of Mulberry Island goes back to at least 1669 when the above mentioned Thomas Iken, whose wife Grace Harwood had died, married Elizabeth, the widow of Emanuel Wills, immigrant ancestor of the Wills family.¹¹⁸

Inquisitions on escheated lands has an entry dated 6 Jan. 1674/5, writ dated 6 Feb. 1673/4, stating that 'Mr. Thomas Iken late of Warwick County died seized of 400 acres in Mulberry Island Parish as by patent appears bearing date 14 May 1669. The 400 acres of land doth escheat. Granted to Jo: and Emanuel Wills'.¹¹⁹ Further, Emanuel Wells was granted 159 acres in 1682, also escheated from Thomas Ikins and John Wells was granted 255 acres of escheat land of Thomas Ikins also in 1682¹²⁰, and in 1690 Emanuel Wills was granted another 100 acres of escheate land of Thomas Iken as part of a patent

¹¹⁵ Library of Virginia, Warwick County Land Tax 1782-1861, reel 331

¹¹⁶ Richter, *Mulberry Island*, 45-47.

¹¹⁷ Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, I:149.

¹¹⁸ Meyer and Dorman, *Purse and Person*, 604. Elizabeth married first Emanuel Wills, second Captain Henry Jackson, third Major Edward Griffith and fourth Thomas Iken.

¹¹⁹ Virginia Genealogist, 21:30

¹²⁰ Nugent, 2:251

of 155 acres. The grant was described as “on the W. side of Warwick River parting this from land of Thomas Pierce; along George Harwood”.¹²¹ This grant is clearly identified as adjacent to the 2 March 1673/4 grant to Thomas Pierce of 155 acres. This totals to something like 900 acres of the 1350 acres that included land formerly owned by Capt. William Pierce, including his former dwelling.

However, although members of the Wills family owned land formerly owned by Captain William Pierce in the late 1600s, the connection of the Pierce and Wills family may actually originate in London where Edward Pierce and the Emanuel and Elizabeth Wills both were recorded in the St Olaves parish register. The baptisms of seven children, and the burial of one child of Emanuell and Elizabeth Wills were recorded in the register of St. Olave, Hart Street, from 1636 to 1648.¹²² This connection to the Wills family can be seen as circumstantial evidence that the family of Spencer Pierce was related to the earlier Peirce family of Mulberry Island.

14. Rice Bolton⁶ Pierce (Spencer⁵, —⁴, William³, Thomas², William¹, Humffrey Piers^A, Thomasin^B, John ap Llewellyn^C) was apprenticed in Warwick County in March 1761.

An Indenture of Apprenticeship from Rice Bolton Pierce to William Wills was with the Approbation of the court acknowledged by the parties and ordered to be certified.¹²³

The name Rice Bolton probably indicates a relationship with Rice Bolton who was living in Mulberry Island parish in 1707.¹²⁴ Possibly his mother was a daughter of Rice Bolton.

On 24 Dec. 1767 Rice Bolton Pierce of Southampton County purchased a tract of land of 282 acres in Southampton County.¹²⁵ Rice Bolton Pierce submitted a claim for £20-3-6 for bacon supplied to the troops during the Revolutionary War.¹²⁶

He died in 1792 in Southampton County.¹²⁷ A petition to the Virginia House of Delegates in 1793 by the heirs of Rice Bolton Pierce describes that he agreed to build a church in Newport Parish in Isle of Wight County in 1773, and that his estate was still owed money from work on the church.¹²⁸ The settlement of his estate shows that his oldest son was Spencer Pierce,¹²⁹ which is consistent with naming patterns of naming the oldest son for the grandfather. His widow, Elizabeth, left a will dated 28 April 1794 and recorded 9 Oct. 1794.¹³⁰

¹²¹ Nugent, 2:348

¹²² Fred Eggleston, “The Earliest Members of the Wills Family of Warwick County”, , <http://thefamilywills.blogspot.com/2010/08/earliest-members-of-wills-family-of.html>

¹²³ Dunn, *Warwick County*, 541.

¹²⁴ Dunn, *Warwick County*, 127.

¹²⁵ Southampton, Virginia, Deed Book 4 1767-1773, 56,

http://www.brantleyassociation.com/southampton_project/southampton_project_list.htm.

¹²⁶ J.L. Abercrombie and R. Slatten, *Virginia Revolutionary Publick Claims* (Athens, GA, 1992), 3:851.

¹²⁷ 1794-020, Southampton County Chancery Papers, Pierce’s Heirs vs Pierce, Widow 9/1794

¹²⁸ Religious Petitions, 1774-1802, Presented to the General Assembly of Virginia, (Richmond, VA: Archives Division, Virginia State Library, 1966).

¹²⁹ Southampton MB 1793-99, 1

¹³⁰ Southampton Will bk 4, 644

Children of Rice Bolton and Elizabeth:

- i. Spencer, married Mary Calvert 19 Sept 1793 in Southampton County¹³¹.
- ii. Matthew died before his fathers estate was settled.
- iii. Martha married Michael Cobb.
- iv. Betsy
- v. Nathaniel, married Priscilla Riddick 3 Aug 1801 in Southampton County.¹³² On 20 Dec. 1816 Nathaniel Pierce of Southampton County purchased 400 acres in Halifax County, NC, on the south side of Little Quankey Swamp. Rice B. Pierce was a witness.¹³³
- vi. Peter
- vii. Rice Bolton married Frances Cook 22 June 1809 in Southampton County¹³⁴. On 9 March 1816 Rice B. Pierce of Halifax County purchased 290 acres on the south side of Quankey Creek in Halifax county.¹³⁵ This property seems to be the same as where the old Pierce burial site on SR 903 in Halifax County is located and where he is buried. He served in the war of 1812. His application for bounty land, dated 16 Dec. 1850, states that he was 62 years old and that he was a captain of light infantry and enlisted at Southampton County.¹³⁶ He was dead by 8 August 1876 when administration of his estate was granted to his son Alexander B Pierce in Halifax County, N.C.¹³⁷

A male line descendant of Rice B Pierce has taken the Y-DNA test at Family Tree DNA, and there were no matches to a Pierce surname at the 37 marker test or above. The 37 marker test yielded 4 matches, the 67 marker 2 matches, and the 111 marker test no matches. One of the 67 marker matches also took the more accurate snps test and it did show he shared a common ancestor who lived in the middle ages with the Toogood family of Somerset England with a 95% confidence between 129 and 1365 CE, best guess 861 CE. The more ancient lineage of this branch of the tree shows that it has roots in Italy, suggesting the ancestor may have been a Roman soldier/colonist.¹³⁸

131 Southampton County, Va., Marriage Registry 1750-1853, 91.

132 Southampton Registry 1750-1853, 145.

133 Stephen Bradley, *The Deeds of Halifax County, North Carolina 1817-1820*, (Virginia Beach, 1995), 10.

134 War of 1812 Bounty Land Application, SO 29636, SO 21381, <https://www.fold3.com/image/642977702>. The date of the Bond is 25 June, 1809. (Southampton Registry 1750-1853, 192).

135 Bradley, *The Deeds of Halifax County, 1811-1817*, 101.

136 Bounty Land Application, , <https://www.fold3.com/image/642977706>.

137 Halifax County loose estate records, N.C. Archives, Raleigh, N.C. Descendants of Rice B Pierce have in the past held several family reunions in Halifax County.

138 <https://discover.familytreedna.com/y-dna/R-FT345582/migration>

Jim White lives near Raleigh, N.C., and is a descendant of Rice Bolton Pierce. He can be contacted at jmsbrcwht@gmail.com.

I thank Diana Spelman, AGRA, of Norwich, Norfolk, Ian Hilder, AGRA, of Lewes, Sussex, Mike Sharpe, AGRA, of Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, and Martin Robson Riley at the National Library of Wales for helping to locate, transcribe, translate, and interpret records in England and Wales.

If you use please cite:

James White, "The Possible Welsh Ancestry of Captain William Peirce of Jamestown and Mulberry Island, Virginia" (unpublished manuscript, 2021), http://jimserver.net/downloads/Capt_Wm_Peirce.pdf.