

My reasons for believing that Col. William Leigh was not the grandfather of James Lea (CL), or of any of the other Leas of Caswell and Person Counties NC, are set forth fully in Chapter 9 of this book, and my thinking begins with the fact that there is absolutely no evidence which shows that any man by the name of *Leigh* in early Virginia ever changed his name to *Lea*. We know of Leas who changed their name to *Lee*¹⁵, and that is understandable. Lees were far more numerous than Leas in Virginia, the Carolinas and Tennessee, and Leas probably grew weary of correcting clerks. But we know of no incident of a *Leigh* who changed his name to *Lea*. That idea apparently originated with Albert E. Casey because it helped him to make sense out of the confusion of the records of Leas in Virginia and it enabled him to put together a pedigree chart of his Lea ancestry.

¹⁴ Published materials which (using Casey & Otken) say that James Lea (CL) or other Leas in Caswell or Person Co NC were the descendants of Col. William Leigh of K&Q Co VA include: *Thomas Jamagin, Appendix B*, by Lee L. Powers, p.143; *How I Am Kin to Whom -The Leas* by Martha Lea Hayes Gardner and Richard T. Gardner, p.9; *Caswell County Heritage* #436; *Lineage Book of National Society of Daughters of American Colonists, XXVII*, p.150, *XXIX*, pp 75-76; *The Lea Family of Virginia & North Carolina etc.*, by Elizabeth G. Dixon. In addition to these are several unpublished papers which make the claim about Col. William Leigh of K&Q Co VA.

¹⁵ See sketches in this book of Edmund Lea, p.45, Elliott Lea, p.47 and Owen Lea, p.91.

CHAPTER 7

Leas in Early Virginia

Leas may have been in Virginia as early as 1618¹, but we are sure that a Thomas Lea was an inhabitant of the colony in 1624², a William Lea in 1649³, a John Lea in 1659⁴ and a James Lea in 1662⁵. By 1700 we can identify at least nine Leas in six different counties of Virginia, and several more moved into the colony before 1800⁶. Since there had been Leas in Virginia for 130 years before any of the Virginia Leas began to move to North Carolina around 1755, and since the Leas of Virginia were never confined to one area of the colony, and since we know that some families of Leas from England remained in Virginia for only a brief time before moving on to North Carolina⁷, there is no reason to believe that all the Leas who settled in Caswell and Person Counties NC were kin to each other. They may have been distant cousins, but we can not assume that all of them were closely related. We should, therefore, not be surprised when we find Leas in Caswell or Person County whose parents we do not know.

In this chapter we shall list the Leas in early Virginia, as we have been able to locate them, and shall record some of the things that we know about them. We shall also offer an occasional guess as to their ties, if it appears that there were any, to the Leas of Caswell and Person Counties, North Carolina.

¹ *Report of Research*, p.17.

² *Ibid*, p.22.

³ *Ibid*, p.23.

⁴ *Ibid*, p.17.

⁵ *Ibid*, p.22.

⁶ *Ibid*, pp 9-28.

⁷ Beverly Rose's memoir in *Alexander Rose*, pp 178-181.

1. **Ambrose Lea** of Amherst Co VA, son of William Lea of Amelia Co VA, died before Nov. 1764 when his will was proved in Amherst Co VA¹. His will, which is recorded in the clerk's office as Lee, mentions his sons Frank, George and Richard, who were under 21 years of age, and four daughters. The estate records continued to spell the name Lee and many of his descendants adopted that spelling, although in other records in Virginia his son, George, is referred to as George Lea². Ambrose is mentioned as a deceased son in his father's will which was written in 1770 and proved in Amelia Co VA in that same year³.

2. **Andrew Lea**, son of William Lea of Amelia Co VA, is mentioned in his father's will which was proved in that county in 1770⁴. Andrew witnessed the marriage of his sister, Milly, to Dudley Thomas in 1767⁵. He is mentioned in the will of his brother, John, which was proved in Charlotte Co VA in 1783⁶ and he is listed in the 1790 census of Virginia in Halifax Co VA with 8 white souls and 1 dwelling house. He may have been the Andrew Lea who in 1799 witnessed several deeds in Person Co NC and who in 1801⁷, as "Andrew Lea of Caswell Co NC", sold land in Nottoway Co VA⁸. Nottoway Co VA is adjacent to Amelia Co VA.

¹ *Report of Research*, p.9. This reference erroneously gives Ambrose's death date as 1754, but 1764 is correct. The will was written Oct 23, 1764 and proved in court Nov 5, 1764.

² *Ibid*, p.14.

³ *Ibid*, pp 10 & 27.

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ *Ibid*, p.10.

⁶ *Ibid*.

⁷ *Person Co NC Deed Books 1792-1825*, by Kendall, pp 41,42 & 45.

⁸ *Report of Research*, p.10.

3. **Francis Lea** appears first in the records of Louisa Co VA in 1751 when he purchased land in that county¹. He died before July 1766 when his will was proved in Louisa Co VA². In his will he mentioned his sons: John, Wainright and Gideon and two daughters, and he appointed his wife and Thomas White of Spotsylvania Co VA³ as executors. Francis's wife, Ann Lea, outlived him and died before May 1783 when her will was proved in Louisa Co VA⁴.

4. **Francis Wainright Lea** was the son of Francis and Ann Lea of Louisa Co VA, being mentioned as "Wainright" in his father's will which was proved in that county in 1766⁵. He is also mentioned in the will of his mother, Ann Lea, which was proved in the same county in 1783⁶. He apparently served in the Revolutionary War and in 1788 received several grants of land in Fayette Co KY⁷. According to the *DAR Patriot Index* he was born in 1741, married Mary Saunders and died May 1, 1815⁸.

¹ *Report of Research* p.13.

² *Ibid*.

³ This Thomas White of Spotsylvania Co VA was probably married to Betty Lea, the orphaned daughter of John Lea of King & Queen Co VA (*Report of Research*, pp 12 & 82). Francis Lea may, therefore, have been kin to John Lea (KQ).

⁴ *Report of Research*, p.11.

⁵ *Report of Research*, p.13.

⁶ *Ibid*, p.11.

⁷ *Ibid*, pp 13-14.

⁸ *Ibid*, p.14.

5. **George Lea** was the son of Ambrose Lea, being mentioned in his father's will which was proved in Amherst Co VA in 1764¹. Along with his uncles: William, Joseph, Andrew and John Lea (the surviving brothers of his father and sons of William Lea of Amelia Co VA), George, as the son of his deceased father Ambrose Lea, signed a deed in 1776 for the sale of 662 acres in Amelia Co VA which had been left by his grandfather². John Lea of Charlotte Co VA in 1783 in his will mentioned "my nephew George Lea"³ and it was probably this same George Lea who in 1793 in the District Court in Staunton VA was a witness on a bill of indictment⁴. Apparently this George Lea never left Virginia.

6. **Gideon Lea**⁵ was the son of Francis Lea being mentioned in his father's will which was proved in Louisa Co VA in 1766⁶. In 1777 he married Anny Caffery in Orange Co VA⁷. In 1781 "Gideon Lea and Ann his wife of Campbell Co VA" sold land in Orange Co VA⁸. In 1784 he manumitted his slaves in Campbell CO VA⁹ and in 1812 there is a deed of trust between Gideon Lea, Senr, and Samuel Davidson, with Thomas Lea as witness¹⁰. We believe that Gideon had at least two children, for in 1801 Gideon Lea Jr. married Phebe Farris¹¹, and in 1807 Gideon Lea gave consent for the marriage of his daughter, Eleanor, to Samuel Davidson in Campbell Co VA¹². Thomas may also have been Gideon's son. There are other deeds in Campbell Co regarding Gideon Lea.

¹ *Report of Research*, p.9. See Footnote 1 on page 137.

² *Ibid*, p.14.

³ *Ibid*.

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ The name in some records is spelled Gidison, Gedion and Gideon.

⁶ *Report of Research*, 13.

⁷ *Ibid*, p.11.

⁸ *Ibid*, p.14.

⁹ *Ibid*.

¹⁰ Campbell Co DB 9, p.627..

¹¹ *Report of Research*, p.15. We assume that Gideon Jr. was the son of Gideon Sr. because we know of no other Gideon Lea in Louisa Co or Campbell Co at that time.

¹² *Ibid*, p.15.

7. **Henry Lea**. Three Henry Leas appear in the records of Virginia before 1800.

(1) Henry Lea in 1659 at age 16 years declared in a deposition recorded in Surry Co VA that he had heard his master, Richard Hopkins, before his death, say that Mr. Batt or Mr. Binns should have the ordering of his estate after his death and that he (Henry) might live with either of them that he chose¹.

(2) Henry Lea in 1672, along with seven other persons, was transported to Virginia by Edward Rowsey who was granted 400 acres of land in Settingborne Parish on the south side of the Rappahannock River for transporting these eight persons².

(3) Henry Lea in 1715 was mentioned in the will of George Duksbery which was proved in Essex Co VA. In the will Duksbery says, "I give my boy, Henry Lea, the mill unto his mother Mary Smith until he comes of age 18 years"³. This Henry Lea could have been the Henry Lea who witnessed the will of James Lea of Country Line Creek of Orange Co NC in 1771 and who died in that county before 1774 leaving a wife named Elizabeth and a daughter named Frances⁴. We have no clue as to his kinship with any other Leas of Virginia or of North Carolina.

¹ *Report of Research*, p.15.

² *Ibid*.

³ *Ibid*. We guess from this record that Mary Duksbery, dau. of George Duksbery, married a Lea and had a son, Henry Lea. When her Lea husband died, Mary married a Smith, thus this Henry Lea would have been the grandson of George Duksbery by a Lea father whose name we do not know.

⁴ See page 49 of this book for a sketch of Henry Lea of Orange Co NC.

8. **James Lea.** Four James Leas appear in the records of Virginia before 1800.

(1) James Lea who in 1662 in Essex Co VA entered into a complicated agreement with Hum. Killenbeck and Peter (last name illegible)¹.

(2) James Lea of St. Stephens Parish, King & Queen Co VA, Planter who in 1739 purchased 200 acres in Spotsylvania Co VA from Joseph Brock with Edmund Waller as a witness to the deed². In 1743 this James Lea, along with Thomas Dillard, John Crain and Robert Coleman, was appointed by the vestry of St. George's Parish to procession "all lands from the county line up so high between the ridge of Mattapony & Pamunkey and the river Ta as to include the lands of Joseph Brock"³. In 1748 this James Lea was overseer of the road from Mattapony Church to Col. John Waller's bridge⁴. In 1743 "James Lea and Ann his wife of St. George's Parish, Spotsylvania County" sold to John Coleman the 200 acres of land which he had purchased from Joseph Brock in 1739⁵. We note that this James Lea moved to Spotsylvania Co VA from King & Queen Co VA and when he purchased land in Spotsylvania County in 1739 he was identified as "Planter" from "King & Queen Co VA". We note too that in 1743 he was prominent enough in the church and the community to be given the responsible task of processioning the land⁶, including the land of Joseph Brock, who was a Justice, a vestryman and one of the largest land owners in the county at the time. This James Lea was obviously a different person from the James Lea (see sketch following) who was a teenage orphan in 1731, the step-son of a man (Thomas Creathers) who could not even write his name. We note further that all the transactions regarding this James Lea

are in the eastern part of Spotsylvania County, while those of the James Lea the orphan were in the western part of the county⁷. We believe therefore that this James Lea is the one who moved to North Carolina around 1753 (after selling his land in Virginia) and settled on Country Line Creek in Orange (later Caswell) County NC where he became known as James Lea of Country Line Creek.

(3) James Lea, the Orphan, who in 1731 is identified in the records of Spotsylvania Co VA as one of three orphans of John Lea of King & Queen Co VA (The other two orphans were William and Betty)⁸. In 1731 John Key was appointed by the court as guardian of this James Lea⁹, which means that at the time James was under 14 years of age¹⁰. James's brother and sister, William and Betty, were allowed by the court to choose their guardian¹¹, which means that they were over 14 but not yet 21 years of age¹². In 1754 this James Lea was a witness to the sale of a small parcel of land by Thomas White and his wife, Betty (whom we believe was James's sister), to the church wardens for the new church on East North East¹³. Four years before this, in 1750, the vestry of St. George's Parish had ordered that a church be built "on William Lea's old field" on East North East Creek¹⁴. In 1766 James Lee (Lea) and his wife Ann of Orange Co VA sold 100 acres of land in Orange Co VA (Orange County had been formed from Spotsylvania County in 1734) on "a branch of the Pamunkey River called Arseforemost"¹⁵. This was almost certainly the 100 acres which James Lea, the orphan, had inherited from his father, John Lea (KQ). Although no deed for this has been found,

¹ *Report of Research*, p.15.

² *Ibid*, p.16.

³ *Ibid*.

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶ Those appointed by the vestry to procession the land, according to an article in *William & Mary Quarterly* Vol.6, Series 8, 1949, p.428, "were always men of considerable importance within the parish".

⁷ Map of Spotsylvania Co VA p.169 of this book.

⁸ *Ibid*, pp 16, 71-85.

⁹ *Ibid*, p.16.

¹⁰ *Virginia Genealogy, Sources & Resources*, by Carol McGinnis, p.107.

¹¹ *Report of Research*, pp 12 & 25.

¹² *Virginia Genealogy*, same as Footnote 10 above.

¹³ *Report of Research*, p.16.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.26.

¹⁵ For a discussion of Arseforemost see *Report of Research*, p.80, Footnote 19. This creek, which crosses the county line between what is now Orange Co VA and Spotsylvania Co VA, was near where Thomas Creathers lived (*Report of Research* pp 25-26; Spotsylvania Co VA DB B, pp 227-228).

James's brother William received 100 acres from his father's estate¹⁶, so we assume that James received the same since Creathers, the administrator of John Lea's estate, reported to the court that he had paid two of the orphans and was "ready to give security for the payment of the third"¹⁷. We note that all these transactions were in the extreme western part of Spotsylvania Co VA near the line between Spotsylvania County and Orange County and that Arseforemost is a creek in that vicinity¹⁸. After he sold his land in 1766, this James Lea disappears from the records of Spotsylvania and Orange Counties VA. The records of these counties between 1731 and 1766 tie together James Lea, William Lea and Betty, orphans of John Lea (KQ), and Thomas Creathers who was step-father of the three orphans and administrator of the estate of John Lea (KQ)¹⁹, in such a way as to leave no doubt that James Lea, the orphan of John Lea (KQ), did not leave Virginia until after 1766. The other James Lea of Spotsylvania Co VA (see sketch of James Lea, Planter, above) sold his land in Virginia and apparently settled on Country Line Creek in Orange Co NC thirteen years before this²⁰. We believe that James Lea, the orphan of John Lea (KQ), moved to North Carolina after 1766 and settled on Kilgore's Branch and was known in North Carolina as James Lea of Kilgore's Branch. We believe further that this James Lea was the brother of Capt. William Lea who, we hold, was also one of the orphans of John Lea of King & Queen Co VA²¹.

(4) James Lea Junr. in 1787 was granted 570 acres in Harrison Co VA²². Harrison County is now in the state of West Virginia.

¹⁶ *Report of Research*, p.26.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.72.

¹⁸ Map of Spotsylvania Co VA p.169 of this book.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, p.78, Footnotes 7-10.

²⁰ *Ibid*, p.96. See page 12 of this book for a sketch of James Lea of Country Line Creek.

²¹ See sketch of Capt Wm. Lea on page 23-26 of this book and the article about him on page 99 of this book.

²² *Ibid*, p.17.

9. John Lea. There were eight or nine John Leas in Virginia before 1800. In 1618 a John Lea was witness to the will of Sir Henry Peyton, who was a member of the Virginia Company of London and a knight¹, but we did not count that John Lea as one of those in Virginia before 1800 because the will may have been signed in London.

(1) John Lea in 1656 was one of thirty persons who were transported to Virginia by John Chandler. Chandler was granted 1500 acres of land in Northumberland Co VA for transporting these persons². This may have been the same John Lea who is shown as "bound for Virginia" from the port of Bristol 1654-1685 as listed in *Bristol & America, A Record of the First Settlers in the Colonies of North America* between 1654 and 1663³.

(2) John Lea in 1659 who sold a horse to Thomas Morgaine, Planter, of Charles City Co VA. The record is in Surry Co VA; William Lea and Alice his wife were witnesses⁴. This may have been the same John Lea as (1) above.

(3) John Lea in 1675 who was one of fifteen persons who were transported to Virginia by Humphrey Griffin⁵. Griffin was granted 450 acres of land in Up. Parish in Nansemond Co VA for transporting these persons.

(4) John Lea of King & Queen Co VA who in 1731 was dead leaving a wife, Ann (her last name is unknown)⁶, and three children: William, James and Betty⁷. We believe that this John Lea came to Virginia directly from England around 1720, that he purchased land in King & Queen Co VA and that he died in that county before 1731. Ann, his widow, married Thomas Creathers who moved the family to

¹ *Report of Research*, p.17.

² *Ibid*.

³ *Ibid*.

⁴ *Ibid*.

⁵ *Ibid*.

⁶ Someone guessed that Ann's surname was Taylor and recorded it as such, but we have seen no documentary evidence to support this.

⁷ References to support the statements made about John Lea (KQ) in this sketch will be found in a long article on him in *Report of Research*, pages 71 thru 85. See also the article on pages 99-102 in this book which gives the reasons why we believe that John Lea (KQ) was the father of Capt. William Lea of Person Co NC.

Spotsylvania Co VA where Creathers, who could not write, was appointed by the court as administrator of the estate of John Lea (KQ). Sketches of the two sons of John Lea (KQ), William and James, will be found on pages 143 and 135 of this book. There is no clear evidence that John Lea (KQ) was kin to any of the other Leas in Virginia at that time. The fact that he came to Virginia and settled near other Leas in the colony suggests that there was some kinship, but we do not know what it was. Nor is there any evidence that John Lea (KQ) had any other children than William, James and Betty. Some persons have suggested that because, according to Spotsylvania Co records, Catherine Shackelford was interested in the estate of John Lea (KQ) she was an older daughter of his. Some have suggested also that, because John Key was appointed as the guardian of one of the orphans of John Lea (KQ), John Key's wife was another daughter of John Lea (KQ). All that is conjecture and may be correct but it has no documentary support. The fact is that John Lea of King & Queen Co VA remains a mystery. There is not the slightest clue as to who his parents were. Casey guessed that he was the same person as John Leigh and that his father was Col. William Leigh to King & Queen Co VA⁸.

(5) John Lea of St. George's Parish, Spotsylvania Co VA who, in 1745, with Ann his wife, received a deed of gift from George Carter, his wife's father, for 185 acres of land in Spotsylvania Co VA⁹. A few years later John and Ann apparently moved to North Carolina and a deed is recorded in Spotsylvania Co VA in 1752 by which "John Lea of Orange Co NC and Anne his wife" sold to Thomas McNeal the same 185 acres of land that Ann Lea's father had given to them in 1745¹⁰. There is little doubt that this is the same John Lea who in 1752 and again in 1754 was granted land in Orange Co NC on Richland and South Hico Creeks¹¹ and to whom we refer in this book as John Lea of Richland Creek¹².

⁸ See discussion of this issue in *Report of Research* Footnote 1 on page 73; Also Chapter 9 of this book.

⁹ *Report of Research*, p.17. See also Swem 18W(1)100 which gives information about George Carter and says that Ann, wife of John Lea, was born Aug 8, 1720.

¹⁰ *Report of Research*, p.18.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p.101.

¹² See page 32 of this book for sketch of John Lea of Richland Creek.

(6) John Lea, son of Francis Lea, who in 1765 was mentioned in his father's will which was proved in Louisa Co VA¹³ and was mentioned also in the will of his mother, Ann Lea, which was proved in Louisa Co VA in 1780¹⁴. This is apparently the same John Lea who, in the Louisa County records between 1775 and 1815, participated in numerous purchases and sales of land¹⁵. He was also probably the John Lea who was a soldier in Capt. Christian's company of Rangers in 1760, who was appointed a 2nd Lieutenant in the Louisa County militia in 1777, was promoted to 1st Lieutenant in 1778 and was paid off at Romney for his Revolutionary War service and discharged in 1779¹⁶.

(7) John Lea, son of William Lea of Amelia Co VA who was mentioned in his father's will which was proved in Amelia Co VA in 1770¹⁷ and who participated in 1776 in the sale of the lands which had belonged to his father¹⁸. John Lea died before Jan 1783 when his will was proved in Charlotte Co VA¹⁹. Apparently he never married for in his will he mentioned neither wife nor children.

(8) John Lea in Amherst Co VA in 1781, along with nine other persons including Ambrose Rucker, sold 100 acres of land to Anthony Rucker²⁰. (James Lea of Caswell Co NC married Frances Rucker, dau. of Ambrose Rucker of Amherst Co VA²¹).

(9) & (10) John Lea. There are records of two John Leas who apparently lived in Louisa Co VA before 1800; one of them died in that county before 1808²² and the other died in that county in 1814²³.

¹³ *Report of Research*, p.18.

¹⁴ *Ibid*.

¹⁵ *Ibid*.

¹⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.27.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p.18.

¹⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

²¹ Page 83 of this book.

²² *Report of Research*, p.19.

²³ *Ibid*.

10. **Joseph Lea**, son of William Lea of Amelia Co VA, is mentioned in his father's will which was proved in Amelia Co in 1770¹ and in 1776 he participated in the sale of lands which had belonged to his father². On Oct 6, 1777 Joseph Lea of Mecklenburg Co VA bought 450 acres of land in Charlotte Co from Ambrose Hammond³ and on Oct 20, 1777 "Josiah Lea of Amelia Co VA" purchased 95 acres in Goochland Co VA from Matthew Woodson⁴. In 1781 Joseph Lea of Charlotte Co VA and his wife Mary sold 640 acres in Charlotte Co to Japheth Towles of Goochland Co VA⁵. In 1782 Joseph Lea of Charlotte Co VA bought 400 acres in Charlotte Co from Henry Isbell and his wife Hannah of Charlotte Co⁶. In 1788 Joseph Lea gave Power of Attorney to Mack Goode of Charlotte Co⁷. Whether all these refer to the same person we do not know.

11. **Martin Lea** married in 1785 in Augusta Co VA, but the name of his bride is not given⁸.

12. **Matthew Lea** in 1704 purchased land from James King in King & Queen Co VA⁹. In 1705 Charles Taliaferro was granted 966 acres in Essex Co VA for importing twenty persons including Math. Lea¹⁰.

13. **Richard Lea** in 1645 in York Co VA was the plaintiff in a case against Charles Smith. The case was dismissed¹¹.

¹ *Report of Research*, p.19.

² *Ibid.*

³ Charlotte Co DB 4, p.30.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.20.

⁵ Charlotte Co DB 4, p.264.

⁶ Charlotte Co DB 5, p.2 & DB 6, p.87.

⁷ *Report of Research*, p.20.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p.21.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

14. **Robert Lea** in 1704 was mentioned in the will of John Alexander of Essex Co VA as follows, "I leave to my wife, Mary Alexander, all of the estate during her life, and afterwards to god-daughter, Mary Lea, dau. of Robert Lea".¹

15. **Thomas Lea** (1), age 50, is listed in 1623 in *Original List of Persons of Quality* as one of the 19 servants of Mr. Abraham Piersey who arrived on the *Southampton*². (2) In 1700 in Essex Co VA a Thomas Lea and Ann his wife were awarded a judgement against Robert Coleman³ and in 1701 in Essex Co VA Thomas Lea and Ann his wife were ordered to pay Jere. Hook⁴. (3) Another Thomas Lea on Oct 19, 1784 sold land in Campbell Co VA to Gideon Lea⁵ and in 1812 witnessed a deed of trust between Gideon Lea and Samuel Davidson⁶. We guess that this Thomas Lea #3 was the son of Gideon Lea.

¹ *Report of Research*, p.21.

² *Original List of Persons of Quality* by John C. Hotten, p.217.

³ *Report of Research*, p.22.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Campbell Co VA DB 11, p.185.

⁶ Campbell Co VA DB 9, p.627.

16. **William Lea.** There are numerous references to William Lea in the century and a half of Virginia records from 1649 to 1800, and it is sometimes difficult to identify which William Lea is referred to by a particular reference. However, it appears that there were at least eight William Leas in Virginia before 1800.

(1) William Lea of the Parish of St. Clements Danes in Middlesex Co VA in 1649 gave power of attorney to William Sheares of London¹. It was probably this same William Lea who is mentioned in 1651 in a letter-receipt by Thos. Whettzell of neighboring Lancaster Co VA².

(2) William Lea of Surry Co VA, between 1653 and 1678, appears in the records of Surry, Charles City and York Counties approximately thirty times³. Since these three counties are quite close to each other, we assume that the records refer to the same person (though that may not be so). These records show that William Lea granted power of attorney to William Thomas in Surry Co and to Matthew Hogson in Charles City Co; that he was executor for Gregorye Rawlings; that he was granted 500 acres of land on the west side of Indian Swamp in Charles City Co for transporting ten persons to Virginia, including "John Trediskin" (who was probably John Tredecant, the famous botanist and master gardener who visited Virginia several times, catalogued the plants of that colony and took numerous specimen back to England); that he owned land on Chipchoake Creek in Surry Co; that the field where he lived was mentioned in Capt. Nicholas Martinau's will which was probated in York Co in 1656; that he was ordered by the court of Charles City Co to pay 300 pounds of tobacco on one occasion, 350 pounds in the same county on another occasion, and 750 pounds in Surry Co on another; that he witnessed several deeds in Surry Co; that he sold a heifer and also two cows and bought a gray mare; that he bought and sold several tracts of land; that he and his wife assigned rights and title to a plantation in Surry Co to Christopher Greenfield; and that he was sued in York county court but the case was declared a non-suit. These records

¹ *Report of Research* p.23.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid*, pp 23-25.

show that his wife's name was Alice and that she was previously married to Thomas Felton. Unfortunately there is no mention of children nor any suggestion of who were his parents.

(3) William Lea, (the thief), in 1694 was apprehended in Charles City Co and confessed that he had certain monies "and a ring mentioned in a hue and cry signed by Robert Byrd of King & Queen Co VA". The court ordered the constable to take Lea into custody and convey him to King & Queen Co according to the warrant⁴. Whether this William Lea is the same person as one of the other William Leas on this list is anybody's guess, but I think he was not.

(4) William Lea in 1703 was one of twenty-four persons transported to Virginia by William Byrd. Byrd was granted 1200 acres of land in King & Queen Co for transporting these persons⁵. We believe that this was the same William Lea who, in 1714, was granted 100 acres in King & Queen Co on the west side of John Madison's Mill Swamp on the north side of the Mattaponi River⁶. Almost certainly this was the same tract of land and, we believe, it was the same William Lea who is mentioned in 1784 by James Lea of Caswell Co NC who in a letter of attorney described himself as "son and heir of William Lea, dec'd" and empowered Thomas Phelps to sue for title "to a certain tract of land lying in King & Queen Co VA containing 25 acres on the waters of Matipone River, lying near Maddison's mill"⁷. It is my guess that this William Lea is the same person as William Lea of Cobbs Creek in Orange Co NC⁸.

(5) William Lea, son of John Lea of King & Queen Co VA who in 1731 first appears in the records of Spotsylvania Co VA when he is described as "orphan of John Lea of King & Queen Co, dec'd"⁹. Being over 14 years of age, he was allowed to choose his own guardian and he

⁴ *Ibid*, p.25.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid*, p.98. See article about this Letter of Attorney on page 111 of this book.

⁸ See sketch of William Lea of Cobbs Creek on page 20 of this book.

⁹ *Report of Research*, pp 25-26.

chose Thomas Creathers, his step-father. (Creathers had married his mother, the widow of John Lea (KQ) and had been appointed administrator of his father's estate). A month later, however, William changed his mind and chose Zachary Taylor as his guardian¹⁰. In the settlement of his father's estate, William received 100 acres of land in Spotsylvania Co VA¹¹. The deed for this 100 acres contained an agreement which stated that, since Robert Baylor of King & Queen Co had contributed 30 pounds toward the payment, William would, when he came of age, convey to Robert Baylor land in King & Queen Co which belonged to William's father. William apparently settled on his 100 acres in Spotsylvania Co and married. His wife's first name was Frances, but we have no indication as to what was her last name. In 1743 he witnessed a deed for land purchased by Thomas White (whom we believe had married William's sister, Betty). Three years later William and Thomas White witnessed a deed in Spotsylvania Co which conveyed land to George Musick. In 1752 William sold to Thomas White the 100 acres on which he was living, the deed for which was signed by "William Lea and Frances, his wife". The fact that Frances signed her name instead of making an X shows that she had some education. Having sold his land in Spotsylvania Co VA, William and Frances apparently moved to Orange County, North Carolina, where he became known as Capt. William Lea¹².

(6) William Lea of Louisa Co VA, Planter, who, in 1751 with his wife Anne, sold 150 acres "on North side of Northanna on Negro Run" to Thomas Graves Jr¹³. This William Lea gave evidence in court for Thomas Graves several times in Spotsylvania Co VA and was granted mileage expenses for the same¹⁴. (Spotsylvania and Orange counties adjoin each other.) In 1753 this William Lea patented 350 acres in

¹⁰ This Zachary Taylor was almost certainly the grandfather of President Zachary Taylor who was born in Orange Co VA in 1784.

¹¹ *Report of Research*, p.26.

¹² See sketch of Capt William Lea on pages 23-26 of this book. Also article on page 99 of this book which deals with the question of who was the father of this William Lea.

¹³ *Report of Research*, p.27.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.26.

Orange Co VA on the north side of the Northanna River¹⁵. In 1754 he sold 200 acres to George Livingston of Louisa Co VA and 150 acres to William Warren on the North Side of Negro Run¹⁶. In 1786 he received "a proportion of the amount of 105/16/5" in the division of the estate of Thomas Graves who died in Spotsylvania Co VA in 1768¹⁷. This latter record leads us to believe that this William Lea married a daughter of Thomas Graves. We believe that this William Lea moved to North Carolina and was known there as "William Lea of Country Line Creek". He appears on the 1755 Tax List of Orange Co NC¹⁸. In Virginia records his wife's name is given as Anne; in North Carolina records her name is given as Nancy, but Nancy was often a nick-name for Anne.

(7) William Lea of Amelia Co VA. We first meet this William Lea in 1742 when as "William Lea of King & Queen Co VA" he purchased 500 acres in Spotsylvania Co VA¹⁹. Two years later he sold the same 500 acres and is identified in the deed as "of King & Queen Co, Planter"²⁰. In 1747/48 he purchased 400 acres in Amelia Co VA²¹ and in 1750 purchased 262 more acres in the same county²² and apparently settled in Amelia Co VA. In 1770 he wrote his will in which he mentioned his wife, Rachel, and his eleven children, namely, Elizabeth, Mary, Ann, Sarah, Milly, Lucy, William, Joseph, Andrew, John and Ambrose²³ (the last named was dead at the writing of the will). William died three months after writing his will which was proved in Amelia Co VA in Sept 1770²⁴. There is much speculation as to how this William Lea was related to other Leas in the area but, again, we have no solid clues.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p.27.

¹⁶ *Ibid*.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.28.

¹⁸ See sketch of William Lea of Country Line Creek on page 30 of this book.

¹⁹ *Report of Research*, p.26.

²⁰ *Ibid*.

²¹ *Ibid*.

²² *Ibid*, p.27.

²³ *Ibid*.

²⁴ *Ibid*.

(8) William Lea, son of William Lea of Amelia Co VA is mentioned in his father's will which was proved in Amelia Co VA in 1770²⁵. In 1776 he joined with his brothers in the sale of acreage that had belonged to their father²⁶. He is mentioned in the will of his brother, John, which was proved in Charlotte Co VA in 1783²⁷. After that we do not find him in the records in Virginia. There was a William Lea who was a Captain in the Revolution and he seems the most likely prospect, although our guess may be wrong there²⁸.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid, p.28.

CHAPTER 8

Origins

Where did the Leas who were in Virginia before 1800 come from? There are some guesses but very little solid information. It is commonly agreed that they came from England, and we know that they settled in several of the other colonies besides Virginia. *Passengers and Immigration List Index* lists 14 Leas who came to this country before 1800: five to Virginia, five to New England, two to Massachusetts, one to Pennsylvania and one simply to "America"¹. But from what part or parts of England they came we do not know.

There were Leas in many parts of England in the 17th and 18th centuries. In 1623/4 a John Lea was a witness to the will of Sir Henry Peyton of London. Peyton was a knight and a member of the Virginia Company². In 1635 a Robert Lea from Billerica in Essex was "licensed to go beyond the seas...bound for New England"³. In 1636 a William Lea of Winslade of County Devon Gentleman" was mentioned in the will of John Atkins of Chard in Somerset⁴. And in 1668 a Thomas Lea was a witness to the will of Edmund Fabian of St. Andrews Holborne, County Middlesex⁵.

The Ancestry and Posterity of John Lea of Christian Malford, Wiltshire, by John Henry Lea & George Henry Lea, published in 1906, gives a thoroughly researched account of one branch of the Lea family that came to this country from England⁶. This John Lea was baptized in Christian Malford, Wiltshire, in 1674, moved to Gloucester and then emigrated to Pennsylvania. The first paragraph of this book says:

¹ *Passengers & Immigration List Index*, Vol. 2, H-N, p.1189.

² *Virginia Gleanings in England*, by Lothrop Withington, p.297.

³ *Original List of Persons of Quality*, by John C. Hotten, p.57.

⁴ *Virginia Gleanings in England*, p.33.

⁵ Ibid, p.207.

⁶ *The Ancestry & Posterity of John Lea of Christian Malford, Wiltshire, England and Pennsylvania* by John Henry Lea & George Henry Lea, p.3.