

Major Francis Wright, son, John Wright I, and grandson, John Wright II

Summary by Michelle Fansler written 28 May 2019 using source:

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"The Washington-Wright Connection and Some Descendants of Major Francis and Anne (Washington) Wright" by Charles Arthur Hoppin

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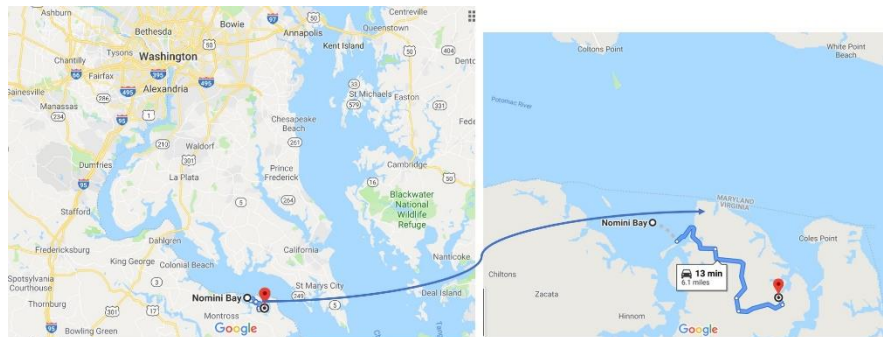
Major Francis Wright (1659-1713, 53 years)

Childhood:

According to the article written in the link above Francis Wright's father, Richard Wright, died when Francis was less than five years old. His guardian, Nicholas Spencer, who was the Secretary of the Virginia Colony for ten years from 1679-1689 was "second in rank only to the Governor." Francis received an education for the law and visited England with his Uncle Nicholas Spencer. (Francis Wright's mother, Anne Mottrom Wright, was sister to Frances Mottrom Spencer who married Nicholas Spencer.)

Property:

When Francis Wright was 18 years old he received 1400 acres fronting the Potomac river and flanked by Nomini bay and Lower Machodoc river where he lived for 35 years making improvements. He started serving as justice of the peace of the county Westmoreland, Virginia around age 24. **He married Anne Washington, sister of Lawrence Washington (grandfather of Pres. George Washington).** She received an inheritance of 1400 acres also.



Francis Wright's 1400 acres fronting the Potomac river and flanked by Nomini bay and Lower Machodoc river

Character:

Francis Wright "was active, influential and comfortable, always appearing in the records as a man who upheld the prestige of his caste and insisted upon his rights; but, as to his service in official positions, he has left evidence of that consideration for others less fortunate than himself which characterizes a true gentleman" (Hoppin 155).

Career Details:

"On one day the justices were trying offenders, the next day ordering military preparations, the building of highways, the levying of taxes, the settling of estates and suits, and the administering of public affairs in general" (Hoppin 163).

In 1688 a court order concerning killing wolves: 300 pounds of tobacco to be paid for each wolf that is killed within the county as they are considered nuisances and vermin for killing off "sheep, hogs, cattle, and colts" (Hoppin 164).

In 1690 Francis Wright was made Sheriff of Westmoreland County, Virginia for two years though he continued serving as a Justice as well under "King William and Mary." As sheriff his duties included "collecting all taxes, serve as treasurer of the county, attend court, and be responsible for all prisoners" *Hoppin 165).

In 1692 Lawrence Washington (Francis' brother-in-law) succeeded Francis Wright as Sheriff. Francis Wright continued as a Justice of the Peace for thirty years.

On 26 May 1697 Francis Wright ordered "that a Ducking Stool be forthwith provided and fixed in each parish of this County as soon as conveniently may be" (Hoppin 166).

The ducking stool in use in England by the 17th century, the apparatus consisted of a wooden or iron armchair onto which the culprit was strapped. The chair was attached to a long wooden beam, usually located alongside a pond or river, and was lowered into the water. Repeated duckings routinely proved fatal, the victim dying of shock or drowning. (Brittanica.com)



Death of Lawrence Washington:

On 11 March 1697-98 Lawrence Washington will referred to his sister Ann (Washington) Wright and her husband Francis Wright, but Anne had died before the will was executed. "Anne (Washington) Wright had died before the date of (Lawrence Washington's will) March 11, 1697-8, hence no bequest to her, and hence the reference of the testator to be buried "by the side of my Father and Mother & neare my Brothers and Sisters," in the family burying ground on the original Washington estate near Pope's Creek in Washington parish, Westmoreland, where now stands the tall granite shaft erected by an act of Congress. The death of Anne (Washington) Wright, when aged under thirty-eight, is also established by the deed of sale, executed by her only son John Wright and his father, of land she had inherited from her father, Col. John Washington" (Hoppin 167).

Church – Temporary Vestryman:

"The record of Major Francis Wright serving as a vestryman (in Cople parish) appears in a petition to the governor (1698-1702)" (Hoppin 171)

"For one hundred and fifty years Virginia had but one church, the Church of England. Schisms and isms were scarcely tolerated, though a few Quakers quietly maintained themselves. This unity was a source of strength and of peace to the colony. Money given for religious uses all went into one pile, with the result of creating those fine old brick edifices, some of which still remain to grace the landscape and receive the veneration of the American people. Among these extant churches stand Yeocomico Church, built in 1706, one of the most quaint and best loved by antiquarians in America. This is the church of which Major Francis Wright was a founder, vestryman and communicant all the while he lived in Cople parish, as also his son John Wright" (Hoppin 172).



Yeocomico Episcopal Church built in 1706

Judicial Duties:

On 13 Sept. 1701 Major Francis Wright was re-commissioned as justice by a royal warrant under King William III (Hoppin 173).



Queen Anne reigned
from 1702-1714

On 30 May 1702 Major Francis Wright and his fellow justices received a mandate through Governor Nicholson from Queen Anne after she ascended the throne to “proclaim the death of William III, and to appoint a General Muster of all Militia... at the court house... and jointly in most solemn manner by sound of trumpet and beat of drums to proclaim her most sacred Majesty Queen Anne – and to testify their rejoicing by a triple discharge of all their muskets and fire arms and other public acclamacon of joy usual on like occasions to the end that all of her Majesties loving subjects may be certified of her Majesties most happy accession to the throne of her ancestors, and of her Royal inclinations towards all her subjects” (Hoppin 173).

On 26 April 1703 Major Francis Wright received a written commission from Queen Ann herself through Governor Nicholson assigning his duties as justice of the peace under Queen Ann for the Westmoreland County in the Virginia colony under British rule (Hoppin 175).

On 7 Sept 1704 Major Francis Wright attended court held at the house of Coll. William Taylor for the examination of prisoners apprehended to take evidence related to the murder of John Rowley, two women and a child by Indians. Francis Wright was selected as one of the judges “in so important a matter may be considered as a compliment to his ability and position, he not being a resident of the county wherein the Indian trouble occurred” (Hoppin 178).

In 1712 Major Francis Wright again served as Sheriff of Westmoreland County, Virginia appointed by the acting Governor of Virginia. “Francis Wright did not live to complete his term as sheriff, but was able to carry out the collection and disbursement of taxes for the same year, 1712” (Hoppin 182).

Death:

Francis Wright died between May 28-June 24, 1713, aged about 53 years. He was buried “in his own estate at Lower Machodoc in an enclosure perpetually to be reserved to the Wright descendants” (Hoppin 183).

John Wright I (~ 1682-1739, 57 years)

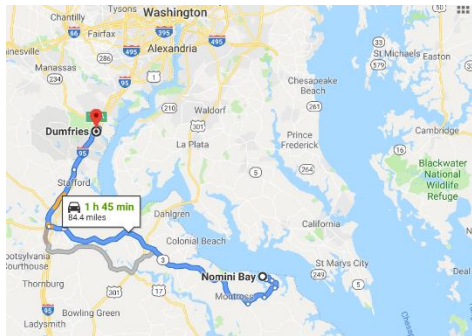
John Wright I was a gentleman planter and farmer, specifically in tobacco. He sold out the estate and moved to another part of Virginia. He “succeeded his father as attorney, sheriff’s deputy, surveyor, vestryman and judge; and he is always of record as a “gentleman” maintaining his excellent social position.” He was a “better sportsman than farmer or merchant, and more pleased with entertaining than in advancing his political and private fortunes” (Hoppin 186).

John Wright relocated from “the head of King Copsico pond on the broad peninsula between Lower Machodoc river and Nomini bay to Prince William County, fifty to eighty miles up the Potomac River” (Hoppin 187).

“Augustine Washington, gentleman, father of George Washington (then unborn), appears as justice at various sessions. He was on the bench on February 22, 1720, when John Wright, gentleman, son of Major Francis Wright, was formally admitted to the bench as a justice of the same court, and the oaths of office were formally administered by him to John Wright, the new justice, **these two men being first cousins**” (Hoppin 198).



King George I
reigned 1714-1727



In 1723 John Wright moved his family to the “thousand-acre plantation he bought of Henry Lee on Powell’s Run originally in Stafford but after 1732 in Prince William county” (Hoppin 200). The Wrights moved “some fifty miles up the Potomac river, where he appeared as a pioneer, and where his family was the first and remained for many years the only family surnamed Wright in all that wide region embraced by the counties of Prince William, Fauquier, Fairfax and Loudon” (Hoppin 201).

“This eldest son John Wright, Gent., then of Prince William county, also died intestate and his thousand-acre plantation (purchased of Henry Lee, Gent. In 1723) between Powell’s run and Neapsco creek close to the Potomac river and three miles north of the then Prince William county-seat of Dumfries, fell to his eldest son Francis Wright by force of the same law of primogeniture” (Hoppin 210).

“Francis, after his father’s death, proceeded to turn the well-developed thousand-acre plantation into cash, and to remove northward, away from his brother, John, to an inferior property upon the north fork of Bull run (near the subsequent site of one of the first fights of the Civil War)” (Hoppin 211). Francis sold 1/3 of the plantation then the final 2/3 of the plantation back to Henry Lee.

“Francis died fourteen months after the sale. He died in about his thirty-third year,” between 29 March and 27 September 1742 (Hoppin 215).

“Confirmation of the displeasure of John Wright Jr. Gent., at the sale of the family home is also seen in the fact that Henry Lee, Gent. In buying back the estate at a low price from Francis was not satisfied to recover a full and legal title to the property upon the customary means of a warranty deed. He saw that the younger brother John Wright, Gent., was a lawyer, and as a precaution against any future claim that might arise by any unforeseen or possible accident or event from this brother John against Francis or the

latter's estate, or against the estate of their deceased father John Wright, Gentl, Lee required, in addition to the said perfect warranty deed, that Francis should enter into a bond of 520 pounds. To protect him (Lee and his heirs) against John or any other unnamed person at any and all times thereafter.) (Bond recorded at page 339, in deed book E at Manassas, Prince William county, Virginia). (Hoppin 216-217).

John Wright II (1710-1792, 82 years)

John Wright Jr. was born in 1710 in Virginia. He bought 236 acres of land in 1740-41 in Prince William County, Virginia "situated about twenty miles west of Dumfries" (Hoppin 220).

John Wright Jr.'s "education and political preferment were the gift and inheritance from his father, but he soon made his individuality apparent. He was about twelve years of age when his father removed from Westmoreland to Powell's run, and when about twenty was a witness to the formalities and meetings at Dumfries in 1730, which established the new county of Prince William. He early entered into public affairs and as he was a judge of the county court before 1743, he must have served in minor offices before that date" (Hoppin 223).

John Wright Jr. "the records describing him as "Captain" indicate that as a young man he received training in the colonial militia of Virginia, and upon his appointment as a judge in the county court he automatically became a captain in the militia, as the judges had authority over the armed forces of the county and were responsible to the colony for the maintenance, training, command, equipment and uses of such forces. His commission as a captain from the governor of Virginia and his taking of the oath of military allegiance to the sovereign of Great Britain probably were recorded in the missing court minute or record books. During the French and Indian War of 1754-56 he does not appear to have "taken the field," but remained on the bench to direct the preparation and dispatch of soldiers. This detention on "home duty" does not invalidate him as a qualifying ancestor for patriotic societies admittance to which is based upon services in colonial wars" (Hoppin 227-228).

On 25 July 1751 John Wright was proclaimed sheriff of Prince William County on a document signed by Lewis Burwell, Esq, President of His Majesties Council and Commander in Chief of the Colony and Dominion Virginia (Hoppin 231). John Wright served two terms as sheriff until 27 August 1753 (Hoppin 233). After which he resumed his oath as a Justice of the Peace in 1753 for twenty more years.



King George II reigned
1727-1760

"On 26 March 1754 John Wright, Gent., was again commissioned a justice and took the **oaths of allegiance to George II**" (Hoppin 235).

On 27 May 1755 Augustine Washington, Gent. (age 61) (father of Col. George Washington) came before Justice John Wright II (his first cousin 1x removed) as "plaintiff in a suit against Thomas Highlander." Justice Wright gave a verdict in the favor of Augustine Washington to receive 625 pounds of tobacco. (Hoppin 235).



On 25 August 1755, John Wright II, Gent. (age 45) “as president of the court” received “The Right Honorable Thomas, Lord Fairfax, of Leeds Castle in the County of Kent, England, and Baron of Cameron in Scotland” who presided over the day’s session and administered to John Wright, and Bertrand Ewell, gentlemen-justices the oath of allegiance to George II. (Hoppin 236).

George Washington, John Wright II’s second cousin, was age twenty-three in 1755 and had just completed his three years as surveyor for Lord Fairfax (Hoppin 236).

On 5 April 1759 the new county Fauquier was created from the western part of Prince William County. John Wright Jr. “continued in the same office in the new county” (Hoppin 231 & 237).

“In 1769 men eligible to vote in Virginia were fined two hundred pounds of tobacco if they failed to vote” (225).

“Justice Wright was still recorded as a captain during the War of the Revolution, the same as he was thirty years earlier, and also, as owning several of the same slaves he had in 1759, to-wit: Capt. John Wright’s tithes Negro Bray, Dinah, Easter & Jude. Aged above sixty-five in 1778 it should not be claimed that he served with troops in the War of the Revolution, but rather in an honorary or administrative capacity at home, for which service his name did not become entered in the lists of soldiers. Thomas Marshall, Justice Wright’s associate on the bench, being twenty years younger, met in his prime, the field opportunities of the Revolution and was carried to wider fame by them. That Captain Wright was not a Tory is certain for his sons William and James were American soldiers in that war, his son John Wright III having left Virginia for North Carolina in the year before the war” (Hoppin 240).



King George III reigned
1760-1820

“The last records of Justice Wright’s appearances in court are those of April 1779, when he sued John Peake for debt and of July 1780, when he won a suit brought against him by Minor Winn” (Hoppin 240).

“In 1787 John Wright II (age 77), his wife, unmarried daughters, Rosamond and Mary, and son James Wright were living together on that remaining portion of the estate that the judge had purchased forty-six years earlier” (Hoppin 240).

“Though the longest-lived of any of the Wrights he maintained, during the reigns of three kings, one queen, a Council of State, and one president the prestige and English characteristics of his ancestors” (Hoppin 241).

John Wright II died on 27 Feb 1792 at 82 years old.

He had three sons, three daughters (two remained unmarried), and 33 grandchildren.



President George Washington served
as President 1789-1797
(John Wright II’s 2nd cousin)