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Dear Mr. Cochrane:

I am afraid I can offer very little on the claim that William Claiborne had a daughter Mary who married Edward Rice and Robert Harris. When working on *Claiborne of Virginia* I attempted to determine the origin of this identification and the earliest statement I could find was William H. Miller's published in 1907. I am enclosing a copy of Mrs. Virginia Davis' study, which your sources do not list, and it appears her very thorough investigations produced the same starting date for the claim. Since surviving evidence refers to William Claiborne's two daughters, one of whom is well identified as Jane, and I believe footnote 26 on page 6 of *Claiborne of Virginia* fairly well settles that the other daughter was named Elizabeth, my research on Mary Rice-Harris did not proceed further. More than two centuries is a long time for factual information to be passed down and never, so far as I could find, ever be committed to paper. When this is considered in connection with the many other suppositions about seventeenth century ancestral connections of Virginia families that have subsequently been shown to have been in error, the Claiborne-Rice-Harris story may also have been concocted in the same period when interest in DAR, Colonial Dames and other memberships led to other spurious claims.

I am sorry to have such a negative response. My Slaughter research continues, but I have found nothing more on the Cochran intermarriage than I had when you kindly sen me the information from the family Bible. Thank you again.

Sincerely yours,

John Dorman

TIDEWATER VIRGINIA FAMILIES:

A Social History

Virginia Lee Hutcheson Davis

The families of
Bell, Binford, Bonner, Butler, Campbell, Cheadle,
Chiles, Clements, Cotton, Dejarnatt, Dumas, Ellyson,
Fishback, Fleming, Hamlin, Hampton, Harnison, Harris,
Haynie, Hurt, Hutcheson, Lee, Mosby, Mundy, Nelson,
Peatross, Pettyjohn, Ruffin, Short, Spencer, Tarleton
Tatum, Taylor, Terrell, Watkins, Winston, Woodson

Urbanna, Virginia
1989

GEN. 9 WILLIAM WINSTON		m.	SARAH
Issue:	ANTHONY		
	William	m.	(1)Sarah Jennings Dabney
		m.	(2)Martha Tomlin Gouldman
			(3)Barbara Overton
GEN. 8 ANTHONY WINSTON		m.	
Issue:	Isaac	m.	Mary
	ANTHONY	m.	
Gen. 7 ANTHONY WINSTON		m.	
Issue:	Isaac	m.	Sarah
	NATHANIEL	m.	JEMIMA BELL
Gen. 6 NATHANIEL WINSTON		m.	JEMIMA BELL
Issue:	MARY	m.	JOHN CHILES
	Samuel	m.	Elizabeth Bates
	Rebecca	m.	George Harwood
	Anthony	m.	
	GEORGE	m.	JUDITH HARRIS
	Martha	m.	Edmund Collins
	Sarah	m.	dis med
	Pleasant	m.	dis med
	Nathan	m.	Ann Yarbrough
	Edmund	unmarried	
Gen. 5 GEORGE WINSTON		m.	JUDITH HARRIS
issue:	James	m.	Ann R. Ricks
	Pleasant	m.	Elizabeth Clark
	George	m.	died in infancy
	Mary H.	m.	Arnold W. Ricks
	Nathaniel	m.	Zalinda Lynch
	Elizabeth H.	m.	William Clark
	Lucy Ann	m.	Hazlett Kyle
	Ann	died in infancy	
	George	m.	
	Amelia H.	m.	George Simpson
	Benjamin Thomas	died in infancy	
	Thomas B.	m.	
	Benjamin	died in infancy	
	VIRGINIA JUDITH	m.	WILLIAM FLEMING BUTLER

Mary Winston was the seventh generation in ascent from Bernard Hutcheson, through John Chiles. George Winston was the fifth generation in ascent from Nellie Butler. This is explained in the Winston family sketch.

Gen.9 ROBERT HARRIS

Robert Harris must have owned land on the head branches of Ware Creek before 1659. While there is no record of a land patent to Robert Harris, the land patented by George Browne by April 29, 1659, was on "the north side of the head branches of Ware Creek, on William Gilliam and Mr. Overman (Overton), and southwest on a branch parting it from Robert Harris". [1]

Two years later, on January 29, 1661, James Wilson was granted land on "the east side of Ware Creek, to a branch of Cowper Swamp and the lines of Robert Harris". Fourteen years later, when Wilson repatented the land, it was again described as adjoining the land of Robert Harris. [2] There are a number

patents for land in the area of the above patents, describing land which adjoined the land of Robert Harris. [3]

It is difficult to locate the small creeks and branches named in the early land patents, but Ware Creek can be identified and, also, where it flows into the Pamunkey-York River. Robert must have owned land in the area near Barhamsville (presently Route 30 and 600 in New Kent County), since this approximates the head branches of Ware Creek. The land would have been north of the present day boundary of New Kent and James City Counties, between Barhamsville and the confluence of Ware Creek and the York River. [4]

To confirm the fact that Robert Harris was living on the land he owned, it is known that he served on a jury in New Kent County on October 9, 1673. He was among the jury impaneled to determine whether George Browne, his neighbor had owned land when he died. He served along with Wm. Hall, Tho. Hancock, Wm. Overton, Evan Jones, Tho. Baker, Rich. Comings, Benj. Strange, Rich. Haselwood, Rich. Taylor and Tho. Ingell. [5]

Everyone with a Harris ancestor and a curious mind has searched for the answer to the origins of his Harris line in Virginia. This researcher is among them, and can now state fairly definitively which Harris progenitors can be eliminated. It is not as simple to identify the correct relationships. There has been a great deal of difficulty in tracing the various Harris families in Virginia, not only because of the fact that it is a common name, with the same given names used in the several unrelated families, but also because of the dirth of early records available.

It is believed that Major Robert Harris of New Kent County was the father of Captain William Harris, who later lived in the Forks in Hanover County. Dr. Malcolm Hart Harris, a respected genealogist (and physican), did extensive research concerning Major Robert Harris, his land holdings, and who he possibly married. His article in The Virginia Genealogist [6] is required reading for those interested.

Dr. Harris felt there was little doubt that Robert Harris was the father of William Harris who settled in the Forks in Hanover County. Unfortunately, no early records have survived in New Kent County [a] [7] and few in Hanover County, so no direct link has been made between the two. Some of the same land owners of the area of Robert Harris' holdings later patented land in St. Paul's Parish, [8] and it is believed that it was through these associations that William Harris went to the Forks area.

There has been much skepticism as to who Robert Harris of New Kent County married; however, early genealogists and family records seem to have independently arrived at the same conclusions. The first printed information contained the statement: "One Robert Harris of Wales (1630-1700), about 1650, married Mrs. Rice, whose maiden name was Caliborne, daughter of Secretary William Claiborne, to whom was born, a son William Harris." This was written in 1907 by William H. Miller in his History and Genealogies. [9] The wife of William Claiborne was Elizabeth Butler.

Other writers seem to have independently arrived at the same information, adding that Mary Claiborne Rice was the widow of Edward Rice and that Robert later settled in the Forks area of Hanover County. [10] His son William, born in 1665, married Temperance Overton, born 1679, the daughter of William Overton. [11]

Confirmation of the fact that William Claiborne had a daughter named Mary has not been found in the records, but it is known that he had two daughters. One was Jane, who married Thomas Brereton, and is well documented in the records of that time. [12] Another daughter, not named, was referred to in a request by William Claiborne to have Samuel Smith, as guardian of his two daughers, collect debts owed William for them (1648). [13] A later land patent, of 1668, in New Kent County, named Mrs. Elizabeth Claiborne, Jr.. Some take this to be the name of the other daughter. It was also the name of the wife of William Claiborne, Jr. (II). [14]

The land holdings of Robert Harris and William Overton were in Blisland Parish, New Kent County, and not far from the plantation where Col. William Claiborne had established his home, after he left Kent Island in the Chesapeake Bay. He had become a leader in the colony and been appointed the

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[a] *On a July night in 1787, the clerk's office of New Kent County was burned and all of the records of the county were destroyed. The fire was the result of arson and the person was apprehended, tried, convicted, and hanged. The records were lost to posterity, however.*

secretary of the colony. It has been said that New Kent County was named for his native county in England when it was formed in 1654 from York County. [15]

There is no definitive answer concerning the wife of Robert Harris. Pursuit of Edward Rice, in the records, failed to provide additional information as to the identity of his wife. It has been the intent of this writer not to perpetuate old family legends that cannot be documented. Just as it cannot be certain that Robert Harris married Mary, a daughter of William Claiborne, it cannot be documented that CAPT. WILLIAM HARRIS was his son.

It seems that WILLIAM HARRIS married TEMPERANCE, the daughter of William Overton. The Overton family, living originally in the Ware Creek, New Kent County area, later moved to the Forks area of Hanover County. Soon after the threat of Indian raids lessened, following Bacon's rebellion, the colonists began to move into the upper reaches of the Pamunkey River and its tributaries, the North and South Anna rivers.

The sons of Col. William Claiborne patented land in the upper Pamunkey River area. [16] Evan Jones and William Overton, who had served on the jury with Robert Harris patented land on the south side of the Pamunkey River by 1681. [17] By 1704 William Harris owned at least 100 acres in St. Paul's Parish in New Kent County. [18]

It is interesting to note that other Harris men also owned land in New Kent County at the same time. John Harris was charged with 100 acres, Edward Harris, with 100 acres, Thomas Harris, with 100 acres, Benjamin Harris, with 100 acres and Robert Harris, with 75 acres. [b] While these Harris men have not been identified at to any relationship with Robert Harris, it is thought that some of them may have been his sons. [19]

In 1711 Robert Harris and WILLIAM HARRIS were named in the same precinct of St. Paul's Parish in the processioning lists, and this precinct was in the area of the Forks of the Pamunkey, as evidenced by the other land owners in that same precinct who are known to have had land in the area. [20] They may have been brothers. [21] Records of land patented by William are of a later date. [22]

Gideon Harris, in his Harris genealogy, stated that Major Robert Harris was born in the 1630's and that he died in 1701. [23] Robert Harris' name has not been found in the vestry records of Blisland Parish, nor can he be identified later in other vestry records. There does not seem to be any conclusive evidence as to where or when he died.

NOTES

1. *Land Patent Book 4, p.268.*
2. *Ibid, p. 285; Book 6, p.589.*
3. *Malcolm Hart Harris, "Major Robert Harris of New Kent County", The Virginia Genealogist, Vol.25, No.3, pp.191-203.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. *The Virginia Genealogist, Vol.20, p.174.*
6. *Ibid., Vol. 25, No.3, 1981, pp.191-203.*
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Chamberlayne, op. cit., p.220.*
9. *William H. Miller, History and Genealogies of the Families of Miller, Harris, Etc., 1907, p.262.*
10. *Gideon Dowse Harris, Harris Genealogy, 1914, p.47; manuscript in possession of Dr. Malcolm Harris; correspondence with Dr. Harris Hancock, of the University of Cincinnati of Dr. M. Harris.*
11. *G. M. Claiborne, Claiborne Pedigree, 1900, p.14.*
12. *V.M.H.B., Vol.50, p.446.*
13. *Northumberland County Deeds, Orders, 1650-1652, p.36.*
14. *Nugent, op. cit. Vol.2.*
15. *Salmon, op. cit., p.114-115.*
16. *Land Patent Book 6, pp.154,595,634.*
17. *Land Patent Book 7, pp 75,121.*
18. *Wertenbaker, op. cit., p.217.*
19. *M. Harris, op. cit., p.199.*
20. *Chamberlayne, op. cit., p.220.*
21. *M. Harris, op. cit., p.199.*
22. *see Biographical Sketch of William Harris.*
23. *Ibid., p.192.*

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b. *There was, additionally, in the quit rent rolls a listing for William Harris, 150 acres. This seems to have been another William Harris, and care has been taken to differentiate between the two in compiling the life of Capt. William Harris.*