

The Parke Society

Clearing - house for research on all Park/e/s immigrants from the British Isles.
Promoting Fellowship, Genealogical Research and the Preservation of our Heritage

Thomas Parks (1C1) of Virginia, 1676-1761

by Phyllis Kumler, PS #525, and T. Joe Parks, PS #349

Introductory note by the Historian

Over the years the Society has gathered information on a large number of Park/e/s lines. Our Lineage Binder collection has binders that contain the many fragment lines: those that seem to have popped up out of nowhere, with little or no evidence as to what their parentage was. We also have single binders dedicated to one founder, where we have been lucky to find good records and descendants who left more than normal tracks for research.

After this come what we call the Major Lines: those that take up several binders containing descendants' records. The first such line is that of Robert Parke, who appears to have come to what is now Massachusetts in 1630 aboard the Winthrop Fleet. The descendants of this line are so numerous that we have actually subdivided it into Samuel (2S1), William (2W1), and Thomas (2T1) sub-lines, being the

three major children of Robert. Then we have Richard (1R1) Parke who came to Massachusetts in 1635 aboard the "Defense." Moving south we find Roger (1K1) Parke of West Jersey who appears to arrived sometime around 1682.

Finally we come to Thomas (1C1) of Virginia, who appears in the records by the early eighteenth century. The following summarizes research by the Society's two major researchers of this line. Phyllis Kumler, PS#525 is the standing Lineage Leader for this line.

Regarding Thomas of Virginia (1C1)

This is a story of the earliest generations of one line of Park/e/s in America, that beginning with Thomas Parke of Virginia (1C1). It includes what we know about him and his children.

We have carefully reviewed all the literature that refers to Thomas Parke, starting with Zella Armstrong, one of the earliest researchers, who mentions Thomas in her review of *Notable Southern Families*. We have reviewed more than 30 articles and references that have appeared in *The Parke Society Newsletter*. The most recent publication included in our review was written by Society Member (#417) Patricia Fulton in her book *The Ancestors and Descendants of Harry Vern Hall, Sr. of Iowa, and Allied families*

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324 Sullivan Road
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Fr. Michael (Tad) Parks #425H
P.O. Box 590
Milwaukee, WI 53201-0590

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Editor: Dr. Paul Jordan-Smith
Email: parkenews@csedl.org or parkeditor@csedl.org
(Please use one or the other; please do *not* send to both.)

Immediate Past Editor: Percival D. Park #140

Publisher and Editor Emeritus: David L. Parke #13H
Email: davcel080@aol.com

President: Keith Harrison #710
Email: pcinc@prodigy.net

Immediate Past President: Jeanne Reisler #514L

Vice President: Curtis H. Parks #1166L
Email: curtparks4@netscape.net

Executive Director: Fr. Michael (Tad) Parks #425H
Email: 70741.2122@compuserve.com

Secretary: Arlene P. Callahan #396
324 Sullivan Road
Schenectady, NY 12304-3625

Treasurer: Lu Terock #861

Registrar: R. Dan Park #1422
Email: registrar@parke.org

Registered agent: W. Scott Park #264

Historian: Fr. Michael (Tad) Parks #425H

DNA Group Administrator: Ken M. Parks, PS#1406

Librarian, Dana Parks Jr. Memorial Circulating Library:
Jean C. Churchill #934H
Email: sdtjs2001@yahoo.com

Archivist: Mrs. Corabelle E. DeClerg #842H
873 Kent St.
Portland, MI 48875-1741

Website: <http://www.parke.org>

Webmaster: Curtis H. Parks #1166L
Email: curtparks4@netscape.net

Thomas Park (1C1) of Virginia
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of Archer, Baird, Craig, Emery and Parks. We also review more than 58 land grants of early Virginia involving Park/e/s from 1635 to 1735 as reported by our Cousin, the late Earl Franklin Arnett, PS#604.

We found the surname spelled several different ways—Parke, Parkes, Parks. We don't know when the spelling of the name was changed. In this article we will use the present day spelling and will refer to him as *Thomas of VA*. From this search we can trace Thomas Parke of VA back to 1723. How do we prove that our Thomas of VA lived in Virginia as early as 1723? To establish this date we start with Thomas in 1761 when his will was probated and work backwards, a process we call reverse research.

Thomas Parks of Bellinger's Mountain, Albermarle County, Virginia, wrote his will in 1752. He was probably in poor health because he begins, "Being very weak in bodily constitution but in perfect sence [sic] and memory." However, his health apparently improved or the old boy was not as bad as he thought because he lived another nine years.¹

His will, probated in Albermarle Co., on 11 March 1761, identifies seven children: John, Mary, Samuel, Charles, Martha, Elizabeth, and Thomas, Jr. Failure to mention a wife suggests that she must have already been deceased by the time the will was written. More about his children appears below.

Now we go to Orange County, where Thomas of VA bought 280 acres of land in 1736. A few years later he gave his son Samuel 200 acres of his Orange County land and in 1741 sold 147 acres to his son-in-law, Christopher Hutchins, wife of the Elizabeth Parke named above. (Clearly, he must have owned additional acreage.) It was from Orange County that Thomas of VA and his sons moved to Albermarle Court in about 1750.²

In 1728, Thomas Parks leased land from Governor Alexander Spotswood, who deeded 100 acres at the fork of the Rappahannock River and Hunting Run to Thomas and his sons, John Thomas, Jr., and Samuel. He paid annual payments of eight barrels of "good Indian Corn" and 530 pounds of good tobacco.³

We know from reading Thomas's will that he had a daughter, Mary Bond. In Spotsylvania County in 1723, Thomas Parks witnessed John Bond's will, and John Bond's wife Mary acknowledged her dowry. Several transactions in Spotsylvania County connect Mary Bond with John Bond.⁴

It seems safe to conclude that Thomas Parke of Virginia was living in Virginia in 1723. He was a farmer, perhaps even owned enough land to carry the title of planter. Based upon his children's ages, it is possible that he was born between 1675 and 1690. He died around 1761. Some think he was an immigrant but there is no proof of his place of birth. Perhaps someone will pick up the story of Thomas of Virginia here and move it back another generation or two.

We find records of Thomas of VA filing deeds and other transactions in several different counties of Virginia. This does not necessary mean that he moved from county to county. Counties changed boundaries and new counties were created as the area grew.

In summary, we know very little about Thomas of VA. We know that he lived in the Colony of Virginia from about 1670 to 1760. We can assume that our Parks' progenitors (Thomas or his parents) came to the new world seeking a better life. Did they find life easy in the new world? Let us review what we know about the Virginia Colony during the time that Thomas lived there.

The first settlers arrived by boat in 1607 and landed in the area of the present city of Jamestown. More than half of those arriving on the first three boats died due to lack of nourishment and other illnesses. In the summer of 1608 another boat of 120 immigrants and supplies arrived. Each year several boats of immigrants arrived. The death rate was high among the early settlers. Virginia became a royal colony in 1624. From then until the revolution in 1776 there was constant trouble between the colonists and the Crown. Thomas Parks of Virginia died before the revolution but without a doubt he lived during the troublesome times preceding it.⁵

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Thomas Park (1C1) of Virginia

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John Parks (2C1) was born 18 May 1706, probably in Essex County, Virginia; he died about 1791 in Wilkes County, North Carolina. In Virginia on 20 August 1732, he married Mary Sharp.⁶ Unfortunately, there has been a great deal of confusion concerning the name of John's wife. Many years ago someone wrote that John and his wife Sarah Wingfield were the parents of seventeen children. Within the last few years a descendant of John Parks brought forward the diary of Elijah Moore Parks that positively identified John's wife as Mary Sharp. (And yes, they did have seventeen children.)⁷

Thomas (2C2) Parks II was born about 1725 and died circa 1790-1791. There are some that think that Thomas Jr., was not the oldest but was probably the younger of the boys and may have been the last child born to Thomas and his wife. Like his brothers and sisters, he was probably born in Essex Co., Virginia and moved with his parents to Orange County. He later moved to Albermarle Co., where he lived until 1770 when he sold the land he had inherited from his father. Thomas II joined his brothers in their move south to North Carolina. There, in 1790, he wrote his will, probated in early 1791 in Wilkes Co., North Carolina, in which he names his wife Priscilla, two daughters, and six sons.⁸

Charles Parks (2C3) was born circa 1718, and died circa 1784. Charles did not share in the Orange Co. land but did own land near his father in Albermarle Co. He left Virginia and moved south to North Carolina.⁹

Samuel Parks (2C4) was born circa 1714 and died after his father's will was written in 1752. Thomas (1C1) gave his son Samuel land in Orange Co., Virginia. He may have lived in other counties also. In about 1776 he moved, with his brothers to North Carolina where he died. He married Mary North.¹⁰

Martha Parks (2C5) was born circa 1710, and died after her father's will was written in 1752. She is mentioned in her father's will by the name of Martha Russell. We do not have any information on Martha or her descendants.¹¹

Mary Parks (2C6) was born around 1712 and died around 1779. Mary was the mother of at least two girls. Again, from the will we know her by the name of Mary Bond, as discussed previously.¹²

Elizabeth Parks (2C7) was probably born before 1725 and died around 1803. Elizabeth married Christopher Hutchins and lived in Orange and Pittsylvania Co., Virginia. The Hutchins did not migrate south with her brothers. They remained in Virginia and raised a rather large family as identified in their will.¹³

Sources and Collections:

The Parke Society is a secondary repository of materials concerning Thomas Parks of Virginia.

TPOVR (the Thomas Parks of Virginia Repository) was established in 1990. The hallmark of this collection is the set of Family Group Sheets of descendants of Thomas of Virginia, both the male and female lines. Over ten years (and many letters and phone calls), more than 3,000 Family Group Sheets, containing more than 10,000 names have been collected, organized, and made retrievable. In addition to the Family Group Sheets, a sizable collection of verifications, documents, books, letters, and other family data sources have been placed in the Repository. Most of the Family Group Sheets have been computerized and are available to those interested. PAF and Family Tree Maker software were used to organize the Family Group Sheets. These materials are in the hands of the Thomas of Virginia Lineage Leader, Phyllis Kumler, PS#525, at Kumler1@mtco.com.

The Earl Franklin Arnett Collection. Earl Arnett (1913-1992) of Columbus, Ohio, did a massive amount of legwork and research in Virginia and North Carolina, probably more than anyone. In the early 1980s, he began developing papers, writing articles, eventually combining all his work into one document. Mr. Arnett gave his papers to Joe Parks PS#349 of Texas (co-author of this piece) and now those files are a part of the TPOVR listed above.

There are a number of other source materials in existence, most of which have copies in the TPOVR.

[The Historian of the Society feels that the Zella Armstrong *Notable Southern Families* should be used with caution.]

Notes:

- ¹ Will of Thomas Parks, Albemarle Co., VA, 1761, Will Bk 2, pp 101 & 106
- ² Wood, Sadie Rucker, *The Rucker Family Genealogy*, 1932
- ³ Deed from Alexander Spotswood, Spotsylvania Co., VA 1729, Deed Bk A, pg 377, from the Earl Arnett Collection.
- ⁴ Fulton, Patricia, *The Ancestors and Descendants of Harry Vern Hull, Sr. of Iowa*, 1998, pg 159
- ⁵ Paul, Lewis, *Rise of the American Nation*, Harcourt Brace and World, Inc., 1961, pp20-21.
- ⁶ Diary of Elijah Moore Parks, written 1848, Aug. 20. Photo copy in the TPOVR collection.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁸ Will of Thomas Parks II, Wilkes Co., NC, 1790, Will Bk 1. Pg. 296.
- ⁹ See endnote 1.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*
- ¹¹ *Ibid.*
- ¹² *Ibid.*
- ¹³ Will of Samuel Parks, Pittsylvania Co., VA

Query

John Cox writes: On a trip to Northern Ireland to look up some of the Parks line, we stopped at Dublin's Museum of Natural History. There we saw a statue of Thomas Heazle Parke, MD. We found that one of his sons lived at Parks Castle, near Dromahair. We stopped by and saw the castle, built in the 1600s, and noted that the builder of the castle had no adult heirs. In our Park line, Arthur came to Pennsylvania in 1720 after receiving a grant from William Penn. The family originally came from Scotland (in the 1600s), as did the builders of the Parke Castle. Thomas Heazle Parke's family came from the same area that Arthur Park's family came from. If anyone has any information I would appreciate helping fill in the blanks. My email address is jandn@cebridge.net.

Book Review

by Jean Churchill #934, Librarian

I chose to review this book because of its reference to the William Parke (VA 1631) lineage. The chart shows the relationship back to William Parke of Whight House, Gestingthorpe, Essex Co, England. William¹, Daniel², Daniel³, Frances⁴ married John Custis. Since Daniel³ did not have any surviving sons to carry on the Parke surname, one of the conditions of his will was that his descendants take 'Parke' as part of their name—thus becoming known as the Parke/Custis line.

Martha Washington (an American Life) by Patricia Brady. New York: Viking, 2005. (Note: this book is not available in our Society Library. Borrow it from your local library or through interlibrary loan).

I believe that Martha deserves much more credit for her part in our early nation's heritage than she has received. Yes, George Washington was a great man and certainly a major player in the formation of our government but very little has been said about any influence that Martha may have had. However, my question has always been: would he have been able to reach that pinnacle of power if he hadn't married the most eligible widow in Virginia—Martha (Dandridge) Parke-Custis?

This book is very interesting because it presents more insight into Martha Washington's character. It is unfortunate that Martha was a very private person who burned almost all of her correspondence before her death. Therefore, much of what has been written is dependent upon her few remaining letters, descriptions written by those who knew her, and by understanding the mores of the 18th century life in which she lived. As has been mentioned in other historic articles, the gentlewoman of this time period only received notice twice: at her marriage and at her death.

To help understand Martha, Dr. Brady has researched her genealogy. Martha was at least a fourth-generation Virginian on her maternal side. It has been difficult to establish all of Martha's roots because so often the wife's name was not mentioned in

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legal documents. Two genealogy charts are included to help the reader. Martha's family was a large interconnected relationship of kinfolk and neighbors who formed community ties in this rural Virginia country. The major crop was tobacco for the export market. Because the family was close-knit, it was customary to honor family members by re-using their given name down through the generations, and cousins of the same generation might also have that same given name, usually without a middle name to distinguish one from another.

Martha (Patsy) Dandridge was born on June 2, 1731 in New Kent County, Virginia, the oldest child of Frances Jones and John Dandridge. Her mother's unhappy childhood was a major influence in Martha's life. Frances was only six when her mother, Martha Macon Jones died in 1716. Her father, Orlando Jones, soon remarried but died three years later, leaving the guardianship of his children to his second wife. His will directed that she sell her rental house in Williamsburg and that the family should remain on the plantation. Instead, the widow married John James Flournoy and soon had several children of her own besides the two stepchildren. Frances and her brother were not happy with their living arrangements but as guardians, the Flournoys had the legal right to use the income from the plantation and its slaves to maintain the household where the stepchildren were residing. An aunt sued twice unsuccessfully to gain custody of the children but both children eventually sued to emancipate themselves from the Flournoys. This left Frances with a deeply suspicious view of stepparents which she passed on to her own children..

Martha was soon joined by her brother John and by the time she was eight, there were three more additions to the Dandridge family. She was very fortunate to have both parents living during her growing years and as the eldest daughter, she was certainly her mother's helper since there were not many servants. She learned to do all the necessary general housecleaning as well as to spin, dye, make curtains, sheets, clothing, and other skills. She also was taught the home remedies using various herbs, and cook-

ing and preserving. Dr. Brady gives the long list of household duties and notes that the most common verb is "make" because that is what colonial women did. Small planters such as the Dandridge family did not import luxury items.

The Virginia gentry also taught their children the importance of proper manners, dress, and general deportment patterned after the British aristocracy. Martha learned to manage her wide skirts gracefully, do fine sewing, sing popular songs, carry on general conversation with all types of people, and always to be gracious to their guests. She also had to learn to ride sidesaddle on her horse. Dancing was another important accomplishment considered more essential to a girl than reading, writing, or math—although Martha received a good basic education in those areas.

In rural Virginia, church attendance was important, not just for the religious aspect but because that was when neighbors had an opportunity to visit with each other. The Dandridges were Church of England and her father was a vestryman at St. Peter's. There were also Court days when legal matters were dealt with. Both were followed by social activities such as dances, dinners, or house parties; the latter is where marriageable young women had the opportunity to spend time with potential suitors.

In 1748, Martha was seventeen and old enough to think of marriage. Dr. Brady describes her as follows: "She was what the English called a pocket Venus, a petite, cuddlesome armful. Barely five feet tall, she had the tiny hands and feet that were considered marks of gentility. With dark brown hair and strongly marked eyebrows, smooth white shoulders sloping down to full breasts, bright hazel eyes, and a ready smile displaying beautiful white teeth (a rarity for the time), she epitomized the feminine ideal for many Virginians."

Although Martha was a very appealing young lady, she lacked one major essential—a dowry. At this time, marriage was not decided for love but rather on social position, religion, parental permission, and gain (either monetary or property). Even so, most young couples did manage to make happy marriages within their social set. However, the Dandridges

must have been thrilled when Daniel Parke Custis came to call. He was a bachelor of thirty-seven, the descendant of one of Virginia's most prominent and wealthiest families. (William VA 1633) He and Martha had known each other for several years since he was running one of his father's plantations just a few miles down from Chestnut Grove.

His father, John Parke Custis IV, was a very rich, exceedingly bad-tempered man who had dominated Daniel and his sister. He had succeeded in breaking Daniel's engagement to Evelyn Bryd, who was an heiress, but when Daniel later fell deeply in love with Martha, he decided that he would have her as his wife, no matter what. There was an unholy uproar with Custis verbally abusing his son, Martha, and her father in public all over Williamsburg. He finally threatened to disinherit Daniel and leave all his unentailed estate to his mixed-race child, Jack. The argument continued for several months but Martha and Daniel remained steadfast. Finally, Martha managed to contrive an interview with her prospective father-in-law and impressed him by her strength of character and eventually, in 1749, he consented to the marriage. John Parke Custis made his will in favor of Daniel (with a generous provision for Jack) before his death in November 1749.

After several months of mourning, Daniel and Martha were married on May 15, 1750 at home at Chestnut Grove. It was customary to have the wedding at home in the afternoon or evening with the bride wearing her most beautiful and colorful gown. After the ceremony would be dinner and dancing and later the bride and groom would slip off to their reserved room. There would be teasing the next morning at breakfast and often the festivities might continue for several days. After their celebration, Daniel and Martha moved to White House, the Custis plantation where they would live throughout their marriage. With her marriage, Martha had become a wealthy woman with social position. Daniel Custis had inherited nearly eighteen thousand acres of prime farmland, houses in Williamsburg and Jamestown, nearly three hundred slaves, and several thousand pounds in English treasury notes and cash. But Patsy brought her husband an equally valuable gift—happiness. Motherless since he was a toddler, frustrated and

humiliated by his father throughout his life, he was almost thirty-nine when he married and at last found an emotional haven.

Daniel kept a memorandum book in which he recorded everything that he ordered from the British Isles. This included farm implements, household items, and luxuries such as satin suits, china, damask for tablecloths, and matching furniture. It had become the custom to have a separate dining room with table, chairs, silverware. Many planters went deeply in debt, but not Daniel Parke Custis. He was an excellent businessman who kept track of his home plantation, read carefully his overseers' reports from his other properties, watched over his English investments, and was able to lend money to his less fortunate neighbors who repaid him when their crops were sold.

Much of the economic success of the Virginia large landowners depended upon their slaves. Daniel owned nearly 300 and the author finds no indication that either Daniel or Martha had any "doubts about the justice of unfree labor." Both of them treated their slaves fairly and looked after the elderly and Martha never understood when later after her marriage to George Washington, one of her household slaves ran away while they were living in Philadelphia. She simply did not comprehend their need to be free. George Washington's will freed all of those slaves under his ownership but he had no authority to make changes of those belonging to the Parke Custis estate.

(This was left to George Washington Parke Custis, who stipulated in his will that his slaves be freed. His wife had spent much time teaching them to read and write in preparation for their freedom. The American Colonization Society founded Liberia in 1822 and it became an independent republic in 1847 and as executor of his father-in-law's will, Robert E. Lee carried out the provisions of the will. He sent those who wished to settle in Liberia there before the Civil War broke out and freed the rest of them in 1862. *Growing up in the 1850's—The Journal of Agnes Lee* edited by Mary Custis Lee deButts , p.xiv)

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Martha was a charming hostess who delighted in having a house full of guests. There was always an abundance of food which included imported delicacies and a broad selection of wines. Soon Martha was pregnant with their first child and Daniel Parke Custis was born on November 19, 1751. His father was overjoyed and often referred to the child as “my son.” Daniel and Martha, along with other planters and their families, spent time in Williamsburg during the social seasons. They probably stayed at his father’s house with its beautiful gardens and attended the balls, parades, and also the theater.

In April 1753, Martha gave birth to a daughter, Frances Parke Custis, at White House. As many of us know, the middle name Parke was given to all the Custis children as a condition of inheritance under Daniel Parke’s will. Sadness came to the family when little Daniel died of fever shortly after his second birthday. The Tidewater region was humid, warm and very damp which made it a haven for mosquitoes leading to many cases of what was called the ague, actually malaria. Death was common among the families, no matter what their income. Daniel was buried at Queen’s Creek in the family burial ground.

The author believes that the loss of her first born son caused Martha’s lifelong anxiety about her children. She loved them deeply but constantly worried about possible illness or accident. Martha soon became pregnant again and John (Jacky) Parke Custis was born in 1754 and in 1756, another daughter, Martha (Patsy) Parke Custis was born. This same year, Martha’s father, John Dandridge died suddenly while on a trip in Fredericksburg. Daniel’s record book shows orders for the Dandridge family as well as fashionable items for his three children, and also a slate and pencils for Fanny who was almost four. Unfortunately, she died in April 1757 and was buried by her brother at Queen’s Creek.

Death was too common a factor in colonial homes to allow for the families to interrupt their daily routines. Life must continue on and soon after Fanny’s death, the portrait painter John Wollaston came to

stay with the Parke Custis family. While he was there, he painted portraits of Jacky and Patsy together, and also separate ones of Daniel and Martha—all of them dressed in their best. The cost was 56 pistoles (a Spanish gold coin) which reflected the artist’s popularity in the colonies.

Unfortunately, only three months later in early July, Daniel and his son both fell ill. Martha sent for medicine from Williamsburg and when there was no improvement then called Dr. James Carter, an excellent physician. From the medications that he ordered, it suggests that the patients had some sort of serious throat infection, possibly scarlet fever, diphtheria, or quinsy. Dr. Carter did not use purges or emetics but instead made up medicinal pastes with honey which covered their tongues and gums and were absorbed slowly instead of being immediately swallowed. If the patients’ throats were severely inflamed or swollen, they would have been unable to swallow normally. Their son Jacky survived but Daniel died on July 8, 1757 after only seven years of marriage. He was buried at Queen’s Creek.

Daniel’s last writing in his book was 1757 and turning the page, we see Martha’s handwriting two weeks after his death. She ordered items needed for the plantation and also a tombstone of the best durable marble to cost about 100 pounds with the following inscription:

Here Lies the Body of Daniel Parke Custis Esquire who was born the 15th day of Oct. of 1711 and departed this Life the 8th Day of July 1757. Age 45 Years.

At the age of twenty-six, Martha Parke Custis was a widow who was independent and able to make any decisions she chose about her own future. Daniel had left no will and English common law ensured the dower rights of the widows of property-owning men meaning that Martha automatically inherited one-third of Daniel’s estate for her lifetime—and she had no trustees to interfere with judgment. “Her youngest brother, Bat, an attorney of twenty, acted as her go-between in early August, seeking general advice from two of the colony’s leading attorneys. They approved of her intention to administer the estate herself, offering practical advice on maritime

insurance for tobacco shipments and the suggestion that she hire a trustworthy steward.”

Martha did follow their advice about insurance but opted to act as her own steward, retaining those who were already at work. “She settled accounts, arranged for a power of attorney, and informed the Custises’ British factors of Daniel’s death. The tone of her letters is strikingly businesslike.” These men of the British Isles were businessmen—not friends. “She notified them all that she would be managing the Custis estate, requesting an up-to-date account from each of them. Expressing her hope that their association would be agreeable and lasting to us both, she made it clear that she expected them to sell her tobacco at a good price. The implication that she would otherwise take her custom elsewhere couldn’t be missed. Martha understood financial power and didn’t hesitate to use it.”

Martha also continued Daniel’s practice of lending money to colony landowners at regular interest rates. She kept very careful records and when a Williamsburg attorney’s accounts did not suit her, she “had the horses hitched up and drove into town to confront him face-to-face to his shrill and voluble indignation.”

Due to Martha’s upbringing, she had the ability to handle the affairs of this large estate but she had no desire to continue this as her life’s work. In her colonial society, it was expected that the surviving spouse would remarry after what would be a fairly short period of mourning. As a widow, Martha was an independent woman free to make her own choices. When she remarried, however, her legal status would change. Her new husband would have control over wealth, children, everything even if there was a separation during his lifetime. (The Parke Custis estate was entailed.) Thoughts of her mother’s sad experience must have often come to her mind.

By March 1758, Martha had two active suitors. Charles Carter was of the same social standing as Daniel Parke Custis and both financially and socially secure. He would take good care of the Custis family interests. He was in love with Martha, but he was almost fifty and had twelve children, with ten of them still living at home! Martha was not at all sure she

wanted a husband that much older than herself and in particular one with so many children.

George Washington was her other suitor, younger than her by eight months and far less secure either financially and socially; but his youth and physical magnetism were very attractive attributes. George had visited Williamsburg to see a physician because he was worried about his health. After being reassured by Dr. Amson, he felt well enough to take part in the local social scene and no doubt heard about the widow Martha Parke Custis. The next day, he rode out to her plantation to see the lady, herself. He had been thinking that it was time to consider marriage.

George saw a small petite woman with that same charm and beauty that caused Daniel to defy his father. Her smile and loving personality made a man dream of the comforts of home with her by his side. Martha saw a tall graceful man who could dance as well as he could sit a horse, with acceptable though not overly-handsome looks. Supposedly, George was still infatuated with Sally Fairfax, a married woman but it isn’t known whether Martha was aware of this or not. George had everything to gain from marrying Martha since this marriage would give him the financial capability to make his own plantation a success besides providing him with a warm loving partner. Why did Martha choose him? It certainly was not from necessity. There was no reason for her to hurry into marriage unless she really wanted to. It seems fairly clear that she said “yes” to George out of love. George and Martha were united in marriage on January 6, 1759 at White House.

George and Martha Washington could have stayed in New Kent County after their marriage. Most of the Custis family holdings were in New Kent and York counties and Martha’s families and friends were nearby but George had always dreamed of living at Mount Vernon, the home of his father and elder brother. Mount Vernon was a far cry from the gracious living Martha had been used to and moving there shows the love that she had for her new husband. Before that move, Martha had never been further than twenty miles from home. Although she

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was not fond of travel, she would follow George wherever he asked.

They had no children of their own, but George did adopt two of Martha's grandchildren: Eleanor Parke (1779-1852) and George Washington Parke (1781-1857). (See *Last Will and Testament of George Washington*, edited by Dr. John C. Fitzpatrick p.22: "And whereas it has always been my intention, since my expectation of having Issue has ceased, to consider the Grandchildren of my wife in the same light as I do my own relations, and to act a friendly part by them; more especially by the two whom we have reared from their earliest infancy—namely Eleanor Parke Custis and George Washington Parke Custis....) From reading the rest of this book, it becomes clear that it was George who wanted and needed Martha near him at all times. It was he who was dependent upon Martha making a home for him even during the war years. She provided an island of comfort which helped him to relax and show his very personable side.

This biography is highly recommended.

Corrections

Vol. 42, No. 2: Bob Blakeslee (PS#1358), author of the lead article on searching for his ancestors, draws attention to two errors in the article. The editor, in preparing the text, entered "brother-in-law, John Quick, who married George's sister, Jeanette Landerking." Jeanette was Henry's sister. Bob also notes that Rufus Park's death place was not Alma, but Arcada (both in Gratiot Co., Michigan).

The next editorial due date is
October 15, 2006

Historian's Corner: the final FAQs!

by (Fr.) Michael (Tad) Parks+, PS #425H

A little more on the Society's genealogical records

In the last two issues of the Newsletter we discussed how the Society organizes and maintains its genealogical records. We first talked about the Lineage Keys, how they came to be, how they are assigned and used, and how they help us keep the various Jameses, Samuels, and Georges sorted out. At this point, we have over 40 large binders of Family Group Sheets organized by these Lineage Keys.

We next discussed how we find our way into those 40-plus Lineage Binders by use of the **Givename Index**. Without this tool, we probably couldn't find specific Park/e/s entries on the family group sheets. With over 22,000 records, the Givename Index is a godsend in finding individual records. It is our route into the Lineage Binders.

In this piece we will wrap up our discussion of how The Society maintains its genealogical records with a few Frequently Asked Questions.

FAQ #1: From time to time I see references to Charts. What are these?

Once we had established the Lineage Keys, it soon became apparent that we needed some way to group members further than just being members of the Robert of Massachusetts line. Especially when the descendants of that particular line seemed to be so numerous.

What the then-Historian, David L. Parke, PS#13, did was to create Chart Lists, listing the members who were members of various sub-lines of descent. A Chart lists in one place all members who are descended through, say, Robert-Thomas-Thomas-Thomas.

At this juncture there are a total of 17 identified Charts, 13 of which are sub-lines of the Robert of Massachusetts line. They are, in order:

Chart 3: Children descended from Robert, Thomas (2T1), and of his Daughters.

Chart 4: Children descended from Robert, Thomas (2T1), Thomas (3T2), Daughters

Chart 5: Children descended from Robert, Thomas (2T1), Thomas (3T2), Samuel (4T10)

Chart 6: Children descended from Robert, Thomas (2T1), Thomas (3T2), Thomas (4T11)

Chart 7: Children descended from Robert, Thomas (2T1), Thomas (3T2), Eleazer (4T14)

Chart 8: Children descended from Robert, Thomas (2T1), Robert (3T3), Daughters

Chart 9: Children descended from Robert, Thomas (2T1), Robert (3T3), James (4T18)

Chart 10: Children descended from Robert, Thomas (2T1), Robert (3T3), Hezekiah (4T20)

Chart 11: Children descended from Robert, Thomas (2T1), Robert (3T3), Robert (4T22)

Chart 12: Children descended from Robert, Thomas (2T1), Nathaniel (3T4)

Chart 13: Children descended from Robert, Thomas (2T1), Nathaniel (3T4), Joseph (4T31)

Chart 14: Children descended from Robert, Thomas (2T1), William (3T6)

Chart 15: Children descended from Robert, Thomas (2T1), John (3T7)

There is also a Chart for the Robert-William line (**Chart #2**), descendants through 2W1, and a chart for the Robert-Samuel line (**Chart #16**), descendants through 2S1. However these really did not prove to be very useful as the descendants of these two sub-lines already have their own distinctive Lineage Key.

The remaining two Chart numbers in use are not really very effective either as they also have their own distinctive Lineage Key, but for the record, they are:

Chart 1: Children descended from Richard of Massachusetts, Lineage Key "R."

Chart 17: Children descended from Peter of Con-

necticut (1P1).

FAQ #2: In some places I see Lineage Keys like S2 or R1, What are these, as they don't seem to fit the descriptions given so far?

This was something that I developed as an alternative to the Charts. While the Chart numbers were useful, they are not easy to remember or understand unless you have that secret decoder ring, or work with them all the time. What I did was to create something that had some sort of mnemonic relationship to the actual Lineage Key.

For example: Richard (MA, 1635) has four known children. To indicate that a member was a descendant of, say, the second son of Richard, Thomas (2R2), we give them the Lineage Key reference in our records of R2. The other sub-lines would be:

Richard-Richard (2R1)	R1
Richard-Isabel (2R3)	R3
Richard-Elizabeth (2R4)	R4

Another example would be for the Robert-Samuel lines:

Robert-Samuel-Samuel (3S1)	S1
Robert-Samuel-Martha (3S2)	S2
Robert-Samuel-Robert (3S3)	S3
Robert-Samuel-William (3S4)	S4
Robert-Samuel-Thomas (3S5)	S5
Robert-Samuel-Joseph (3S6)	S6
Robert-Samuel-Elizabeth (3S7)	S7

We use this methodology for the Richard of Massachusetts, Roger of New Jersey, Thomas of Virginia lines as well as for the Robert-Samuel and Robert-William sub-lines. It's another way to conveniently group together descendants with common ancestry.

FAQ #3: Does the Society have any other genealogical databases?

No production ones. We have been experimenting with creating a Givename Index for non-Park/e/s surnamed descendants, but that tends to be problematic. It sounds simple enough, but it really isn't when you get into the development mode. We will

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continue to work on such a database. If we do create such a file, it could turn out to be really massive, which is another consideration. Would such a database contribute to our real mission, to locate and properly identify all Park/e/s-surnamed individuals that came to this side of the pond? I wonder about that question.

A few years ago, we started to build up a paper based data file on cemeteries and burial locations for Park/e/s-surnamed individuals. In theory, we should be able to have a one-to-one match between a deceased Park/e/s and a burial location. Even though we think we have that now, who knows for sure? It is quite possible that two different lines are claiming a single burial. This is possible anywhere, but especially in those areas where more than one Park/e/s family line traveled through the territory. For example, in North Carolina, we have descendants of both Roger of NJ and Thomas of VA in abundance, all living near one another. And not related. Taking the data we already have, putting it into an electronic form, and then assigning FGS numbers to the occupant of that grave, just might turn up some interesting results.

Even though Ancestry.com has done a great job of putting all of the Census records on line, I would still like to see us have a complete listing of all Park/e/s listed in each census in some database form. We have a considerable amount of material in this area already, from the 1790 census through part of the 1850 census. We just need to organize it in a better fashion. We would assign each entry the appropriate family group sheet number, and wait to see if we have more than one line claiming a particular entry as their own. My ultimate goal would be all to index all available census documents, but that is really going long range. On a more practical level I would like to see us get up to the 1850 Census over the next year or so. Rechecked and verified, of course, against the on-line records.

Another project under development I think will have great importance to both the Society and to the whole of the Park/e/s-researching community. Rob

Stamm, PS#1428, of Birmingham, AL, has been the lead on this project.

Here's the issue. We all have pictures of our ancestors. They are in scrapbooks, drawers, files, and other places. They mean something to us, because we know who there are. But what if something happens to us? Or to our residence, be it hurricane, fire, flood? Will those pictures still be around for someone else in the future to use?

What if something happens to us? Are there family members who know the value of these pictures to family history, and will be sure that the proper person will get them, or will they just be tossed into a box, and soon forgotten and perhaps lost?

This is what The Society is hoping to prevent. The loss of really valuable archival photos by scanning them into electronic form, and storing them in a database.

Unfortunately, I have not had the time to assist Rob Stamm in this project, and to really get it underway. He has developed the basic database in Access, and it looks good. We just need to think it all through, developed the identification keys, and the procedures and then get it going to the Society as a whole.

Well, that wraps up everything I think I can say about our genealogical collections, how they are organized and maintained. I hope that these discussions have answered some questions you might have had, and now you know how we operate in this realm.

Please take note!

If you're planning to relocate for any reason, be it a permanent move, a vacation, or to a winter residence, be sure to notify us of your new or temporary address, so we can get the Newsletter to you on time. Send your changes to your Executive Director, **Fr. Michael (Tad) Parks #425H at 70741.2122@compuserve.com**, or

**P.O. Box 590
Milwaukee, WI 53201-0590**

The Park/e/s DNA Surname Project

by Ken Parks PS #1406

Group Administrator

PARK/E/S DNA Surname Project

I am happy to report that we now have 90 participants in the database—well on our way to the goal of 100 by the end of 2006! On a personal note, I am also pleased to share the news that, after several years of waiting for a genetic match with my own results (and those of my two third cousins), we finally found a new “cousin” and the search has begun to find our common ancestor. This participant, unfortunately not (yet) a PS member, is a 66/67 match with my test results, indicating a fairly tight relationship.

Some of you may recall I began my DNA testing back in 2001 to link my third great grandfather, Henry Parks (b. c1800 NC?-d. c1838 Monroe Co. TN), to one of the known Parks lines in East Tennessee. No luck on that front to date, but Henry does show a genetic match to the other participant’s line, which has been traced back to Thomas Parks (b. c1760 PA?-d. 1831 Orange Co. IN), a Revolutionary War veteran. Some other researchers have suggested that Thomas Parks is descended from the Arthur Park (PA 1720) LK=A line, and we currently have a descendant from the LK=A line with a test in progress to see if there is indeed a match.

I mention my own success story simply to illustrate the importance of getting one’s Park/e/s line represented in the DNA database. Even if no match turns up immediately, the larger the database grows, the more likely (as in my case) a match will appear in the future. My success story is only one of many in the Park/e/s surname project, and we will share some of these in future issues to show the value of DNA testing to your own Park/e/s research.

Interpreting your Y-DNA matches

Rather than focus on a particular LK group in this issue, I thought it might be helpful to address the topic of how to interpret some of your matching DNA test results.

For a brief explanation of the science of Y-DNA testing, I would refer readers to my article in Vol.

41, No. 1 (Unfortunately, the section addressing the science of Y-DNA testing is not included in the excerpt available on the PS website—hang on to those back issues!) I will also list some online articles and books below which will be of interest to those wishing to pursue this subject in greater depth. For this article, I have relied heavily on the excellent book by Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak and Ann Turner entitled, “Trace Your Roots with DNA—Using Genetic Tests to Explore Your Family Tree.” I highly recommend this book to anyone interested in exploring the subject further.

Yes—we *are* all related!

There have been a number of books, magazine articles and television programs about how scientists have determined that all humans alive today can trace their origins to the continent of Africa. This “out of Africa theory” is possible entirely because of the science of genetics. Though we have given it little discussion in our newsletter articles, mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) testing makes it possible to trace one’s lineage back in time through the maternal line, *i.e.* one’s mother’s mother’s mother and so on.

Mitochondrial DNA testing has brought about the concept of “The Seven Daughters of Eve” (see below for the URL for an online explanation Brian Sykes’s book by that title.) This theory basically traces all modern Europeans through seven mitochondrial lineages (though some put the number at 11 or 12) to a common female ancestor, the so-called “Mitochondrial Eve.” The number of mitochondrial lineages for the entire human race is much larger.

In our Park/e/s surname project we have used the Y-DNA test, simply because of the fact that the Y chromosome (found only in males and passed virtually unchanged from father to son through many generations) follows the surname, thus making it possible to identify one single track of a person’s lineage, *i.e.* one’s father’s father’s father and so on.

Y-Adam

It may be difficult to believe, but every man living

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today can trace his Y chromosome back to one man, dubbed “Y-Adam”!

If we take all the males living today who have no sons of their own, we would come up with a large number, perhaps approaching a billion. All living males, both with or without sons, inherited their Y chromosome from their fathers. How many fathers? If every man were an only son, the number of fathers would be identical. However, some men have brothers, so the number of fathers would be smaller.

The same calculation applies to the fathers of those fathers. The total number shrinks a little bit more with each generation back in time. In some families there are no grandsons carrying on the family name, while in other families several male first cousins may converge on one grandfather. The exact count may be hard to estimate, but the number of males going back in time can never grow, for no man has two biological fathers.

As we go back in time, generation by generation, the tally of males dwindles, from millions to thousands to hundreds. Eventually all the branches lead to one man, the *Most Recent Common Ancestor (MRCA)* of all men in the straight paternal line. He was a real person, not an abstraction. He is sometimes called “Y-Adam,” but that name can cause some confusion since, unlike the biblical Adam, he was not the first man. Y-Adam also inherited his Y chromosome from his father. He is simply the most *recent* Y-line ancestor.

If Y-Adam was not the first man, neither was he the only man living at the time. Other men living at the same time may have had even more living descendants than Y-Adam, but some of these men had only daughters and their Y chromosomes died out immediately. Others had sons who kept their Y chromosomes going along for a few more generations, perhaps even thousands of years, but eventually there were no sons to carry on the Y in all those other branches.

So, if this is true, then how are we able to differentiate our Park/e/s Y-DNA “signatures” from those of Smith or Jones? Shouldn't we all have exactly the

same DNA “signature”?

We have met the mutants, and they are us!

Though the word “mutation” may conjure up grotesque images from science fiction or horror films, the word simply means a change, and changes in DNA can be good, bad, or indifferent. Since the markers we use for genealogical testing are located on what is known as non-coding or “junk” DNA, changes in this case are automatically indifferent.

When testing certain markers on the Y chromosome, what the lab is looking at are repeated patterns of the *bases*—called adenine, guanine, thymine, and cytosine (abbreviated A, G, T, and C). These bases fit together in something called *Short Tandem Repeats or STRs*. For instance, GATAGATAGATA would be three repeats of the GATA sequence. When you view test results as a series of numbers, such as 13-23-14-10-11-14-12-12-12-12-13-28, what those numbers represent are the number of STRs on each particular marker.

Though the DNA on the Y chromosome duplicates itself with amazing accuracy, occasionally a glitch in the copying process occurs, and the number of repeated segments will be altered. Thus, the pattern of numbers in the previous paragraph may be altered by a change on one of the markers thus: 13-23-14-10-11-14-12-12-12-12-13-**29**, with the 12th marker showing an additional STR making the number 29 rather than the previous 28. These mutations have been calculated to occur, at random, about once in every 500 generations, though some markers have a tendency to mutate at a faster rate.

With this mutation rate in mind, we can see that the chance that one of these random mutations occurring between you and your father are slight, but still possible. The more time between you and a distant ancestor, the more chance that a mutation (or mutations) may have occurred on one or more of the markers being tested. This is how FTDNA is able to determine the probabilities of when two genetically related individuals may have shared a common ancestor.

Even though all males are descended from Y-Adam, he is calculated to have lived anywhere from less

than 100,000 years ago to as recently as 60,000 years ago. This time span is long enough to account for all the mutational differences that have led to the various “distinct” haplotypes in existence today.

Matches with others of a different surname

Some DNA “signatures,” or haplotypes, are more common than others. Thus, when testing at a low number of markers such as the 12-marker test level, it is possible to have dozens, or even hundreds, of 12/12 matches with individuals bearing different surnames. Since we are all related to Y-Adam, the question becomes: When do two individuals share their MRCA (Most Recent Common Ancestor)? At the 12-marker test level, that MRCA cannot be estimated within a genealogically significant timeframe.

As we up the ante to a higher test marker level, we may still find individuals with different surnames showing what seems to be a close match. If the match is a 37/37 or a 67/67 match, then it may be time to exchange family information with the matching non-surname individual to see if a connection can be found using traditional research methods, as scenarios such as informal adoption, blended families, name changes, illegitimacy, and other non-paternity situations may have occurred.

A near match with someone of a different surname can be a trickier proposition, as different circumstances can account for this near match. While a 35/37 match with another Park/e/s individual is considered by FTDNA “Related,” a 35/37 match with a non-surname individual may drift beyond the “Related” range when tested at a higher marker level. This does not mean the two individuals do not share a common ancestor, only that the *Time to Most Recent Common Ancestor (TMRCA)* is likely to be greater than that between individuals who share a common surname (or variant).

Also, in these non-surname near matches, a “genetic drift” may have occurred which could result in a near match that misleadingly indicates a common ancestor more recent in time than is actually the case. For instance, if Mr. Park and Mr. Smith show a 23/25 match (a genetic distance of 2-“Probably Related”), what *may* have occurred is this:

Note: Markers to watch are in bold.

Mr. Park’s ancestor, a fictional Stanley Park’s 25-marker ancestral “signature” or haplotype might be:

13-23-14-11-11-14-12-12-12-13-13-28-**17**-9-**10**-11-11-25-15-19-31-14-15-17-**18**

Mr. Park’s 25-marker test results might be:

12-23-14-11-11-14-12-12-12-13-13-28-**18**-9-**10**-11-11-25-15-19-31-14-15-17-**18**

Mr. Park would be a genetic distance of 2 from his ancestral haplotype, and is considered “Probably Related” by FTDNA.

Mr. Smith’s 25-marker test results might be:

12-23-14-11-11-14-12-12-12-13-13-28-**18**-9-**11**-11-11-25-15-19-31-14-15-17-**17**

Mr. Smith’s ancestor, a fictional Ralph Smith’s 25-marker ancestral “signature” or haplotype might be:

11-23-14-11-11-14-12-12-12-13-13-28-**19**-9-**11**-11-11-25-15-19-31-14-15-17-**17**

Mr. Smith would be a genetic distance of 2-“Probably Related” from his ancestral haplotype, as well as being a genetic distance of 2 from Mr. Park. However, Mr. Park is a genetic distance of 4-“Not Related” from the ancestral Ralph Smith, as is Mr. Smith from the ancestral Stanley Park. Ancestors Stanley Park and Ralph Smith are a genetic distance of 6-“Not Related” from each other.

Confusing? I hope not, but I did want to give one possible scenario for why we do not generally place as much weight on near matches with non-surname individuals. Again, if you have a perfect 37/37 or 67/67 (or even 66/67) match with a non-surname individual, you may indeed want to investigate the possibility of a connection.

For instance, in another surname project for my paternal grandmother’s line (Bankston), my Bankston cousin turned out to be a non-match with other Bankstons, while he proved to be a 37/37 match with

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DNA Surname Project

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a Walker individual in the FTDNA database. Upon contacting the researcher for the Walker line, we discovered a connection between these two families in Rutherford Co., NC, in the early nineteenth century. How my Bankston line ended up with the Bankston surname and the Walker DNA is not clear at this point, but it seems obvious that given the DNA evidence and the proximity of these two families at one point, the test results are not the result of a "mix-up" at the lab!

This has far from exhausted the subject, but I hope some of the topics discussed here have been enlightening to project participants and non-participants alike. I'll try to cover other areas in future newsletter articles, and as always, feel free to email me anytime with questions, comments, or suggestions!

For further reading

Online:

Mitochondrial DNA: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Seven_Daughters_of_Eve

An excellent explanation of Y-DNA testing: <http://blairgenealogy.com/dna/dna101.html>

FTNDA's tutorial pages: <http://www.familytreedna.com/dna101.html>

Books:

Trace Your Roots with DNA-Using Genetic Tests to Explore Your Family Tree by Megan Smolenyak Smolenyak and Ann Turner. Rodale, 2004.

DNA and Genealogy by Colleen Fitzpatrick, PhD. Rice Book Press, 2005

Forensic Genealogy by Colleen Fitzpatrick, PhD. Rice Book Press, 2005

The Seven Daughters of Eve by Brian Sykes. W. W. Norton and Company, 2002 (reprint edition)

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

- 1303 Bobby Wayne Mays**, Corinth, MS
Revision, not previously classified. Lineage has been classified as another Fragment Line, Lineage Key "KP". Line is from a Benjamin Franklin¹ (1812-1877) to Mary Lou² Park (1861-1890), who married in Dyer Co., TN, James Green Mays, to Ernest Tapley³ Mays (1883-1938) to James Emmett⁴ Mays (1905-1975), to member.
- 1467 Norma Jean LeMay**, Alma, AR
Correction: This line should have been identified as Lineage Key "MP." Line is from a William¹ (?) [lots of unknown data], to Abraham², born 1834, OH(?), who married in 1860 Hester Roseann Bishop. He died in 1893 in Madison Co., AR, to Otis Everett³ Park, William Everette⁴ Park, to Norma Jean⁵ Park, member.
- 1470 Gaylord Keith Parks**, Placerville, CA
Fragment Line, Lineage Key "NP," John¹ Park, Sr (c1746-?), married to Susanna Poole (or Phuhl) (c1784-1874) [Age difference verified]; to John² Park, Jr., (c1810-1875) m. Angelina Friz, to William Henry³ Parks (1840-1927) thence to Charles Custer⁴ Parks, Ralph Albert⁵ Parks, to Gaylord Keith⁶ Parks, member.

The next editorial due date is

October 15, 2006