

DATE: 18 May 2022
REPORT TO: [Name redacted for privacy reasons]
REPORT NO: 3
SUBJECT: Joseph Horton, Named in the 1749 Will of Richard Parker

BACKGROUND

Two previous reports traced the client's descent from the Horton family of Orange (now Durham) County, North Carolina. Report #2 proved that the client's ancestor William Horton (*ca.* 1786–after 1860) was the son of Charles and Sarah (Parker) Horton of Orange County. Sarah, in turn, was named as “my daugh[t]er Sarah Horton” in the will of Daniel Parker, dated 1780 in Gates County, North Carolina.

A strong candidate for the father of Sarah's husband Charles Horton (by 1757–*ca.* May 1791) was also located in an older William Horton (by July 1733–by May 1765). William is the earliest Horton recorded in Orange County; in 1752, he purchased land very close to land later owned by Charles Horton, and he may have passed down another tract to Charles for which an original deed is lacking.

Beyond this point, the records of Hortons in the area of Orange/Durham County go cold. However, at the end of the second research block, an intriguing coincidence was found: in 1749, one **Richard Parker** of Chowan County, North Carolina, wrote a will naming Daniel Parker – possibly the father of Sarah (Parker) Horton – as a son. *In his will, Richard also names **Joseph Horton** as a neighboring landowner to a piece of land he (Richard) owned, as well as the former owner of a mare in Richard's possession.* Gates County, where Sarah's father Daniel Parker wrote his will in 1780, was cut in part from former Chowan County.

To avoid confusion, I will refer to the elder William Horton – hypothesized to be the father of Charles Horton – as “William Horton the Elder.” (For a pedigree chart, see **Figure 1** on the following page).

OBJECTIVE

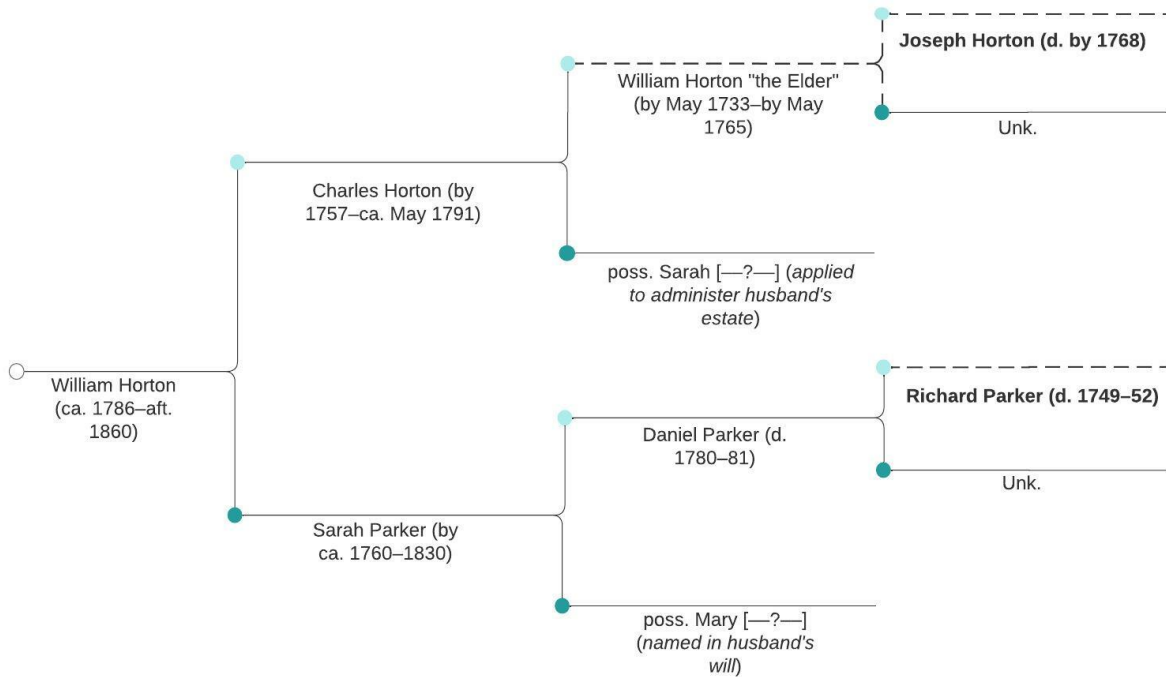
Determine whether Joseph Horton was the father of William Horton the Elder (by 1733–by May 1765), who first appears on record purchasing land in Granville (now Durham) County, North Carolina in 1752. Confirm whether Daniel Parker, father of Sarah (Parker) Horton, was the son of Richard Parker who wrote a will in Chowan County, North Carolina in 1749.

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Figure 1: Proposed Pedigree of William Horton (ca. 1786–aft. 1860)

Note: Dotted lines indicate proposed, not certain, relationships.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

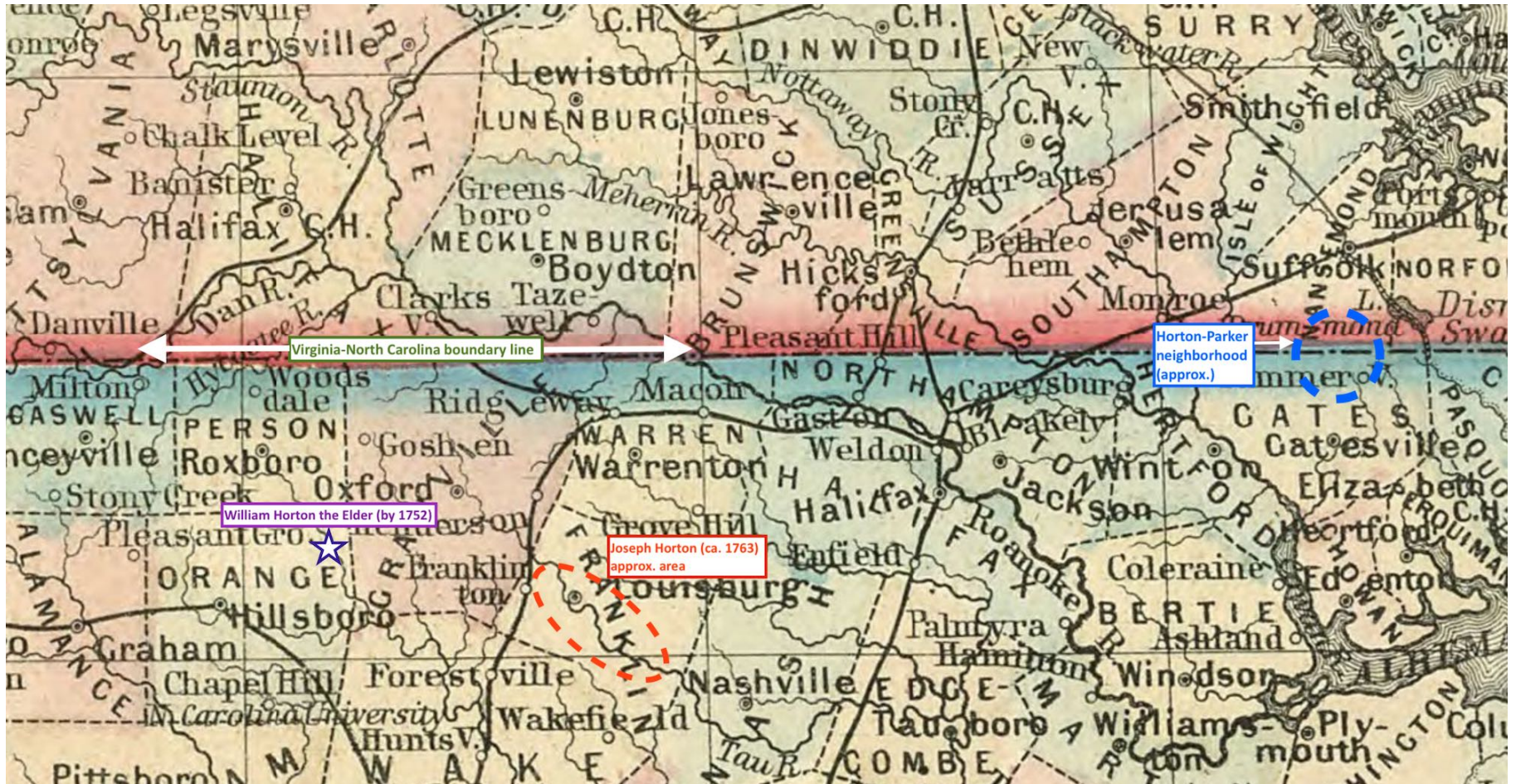
Richard Parker is more closely identified through his activities on the Virginia/North Carolina border, *ca.* 1714–50. The client's known ancestor, Daniel Parker (d. 1780/81), is then proven to be Richard's son, satisfying the second research objective. Next, the Joseph Horton named in Richard's will is shown to have been a resident of the Upper Parish of Nansemond County, Virginia, along the North Carolina line.

Joseph of Nansemond moved to Granville County, North Carolina by 1763 – the same county where the client's ancestor William Horton first surfaces in 1752. A will was located for Joseph in Granville *in which Joseph names William Horton as a son*. While this is a good start, some questions remain about the relationship. First, the two men cannot be placed in the same neighborhood in Granville. Second, there remain a number of unplaced Hortons in the Flat and Little River neighborhood of Orange who could represent unknown kin of the client's ancestors. Finally, another William Horton was located near Joseph in Nansemond County, Virginia in 1756, after the client's apparent ancestor William Horton the Elder had already migrated to North Carolina.

In summary, the first research objective was not fully met: firm proof is still lacking that Joseph was the father of William Horton the Elder. However, a decent circumstantial case is made here – one that could be strengthened through several avenues of research: the origins of potentially related Hortons in Orange County; the origins of Horton family associates (such as James and Zachariah Prosser, discussed within); or targeted Y-DNA testing of male-line Hortons.

A compilation of all research notes made to date accompanies this report; it includes transcriptions or abstracts of many records discussed here and in previous reports, arranged by type (original vs. published), place, and time.

Map 1
Major Locations in Report



Source: S. A. Mitchell, *County Map of Virginia and North Carolina* (Philadelphia?: S. A. Mitchell, c1860); digital image, *Library of Congress* (<https://www.loc.gov/resource/glva01.lva00076/> : accessed 25 April 2022).

DETAILED RESEARCH NOTES

*Richard Parker (ca. 1676–bef. Jan. 1752)*¹

Richard Parker, who wrote his will in Chowan County in 1749, was a prominent and well-attested member of his community along the Virginia-North Carolina border. He first appears in a Chowan County deed in 1723, when – as “Richard Parker of the Upper Parish of the County of Nansemond in Virg^a [Virginia]” – he bought land near the White Pot Pocosin.²

A **pocosin**, pronounced “puh-COH-sin,” is described by the National Ocean Service as follows:

“a wetland bog with sandy peat soil and woody shrubs...generally found along the Atlantic coastal plain of the United States, from southern Virginia to northern Florida...Pocosins are formed by the accumulation of organic matter, resembling black muck, which builds up over thousands of years...[The] soil [is] highly acidic and nutrient-deficient.”*

Land records reveal that the Parker neighborhood along the Virginia-North Carolina border was full of various named pocosins, including the *White Pot*, *Maple*, *Gallberry*, *Merry Hill*, and *Knotty Pine* pocosins. The presence of so many swamps and marshy areas is probably tied to the Great Dismal Swamp, which borders roughly 5–10 miles to the east and covers an area of some 750 square miles; it was once perhaps twice as large.

*Source: National Ocean Service (<https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/pocosin.html> : accessed 29 April 2022)
> Ocean Facts > What is a pocosin?

However, Richard’s earliest known records in that neighborhood date from 1714, when he took out two patents (government land grants) from Virginia totaling 606 acres.³

The history of Richard’s community is complicated by boundary changes: the line between Virginia and North Carolina was not surveyed until 1728. Many people who believed they lived in Virginia fell on the North Carolina side of the line, and the Virginia government had issued land grants that lay many miles beyond their newly-drawn boundary. A parcel map created by a local historian suggests that Richard’s two Virginia land grants from 1714 straddle the line, falling mostly on the North Carolina side.

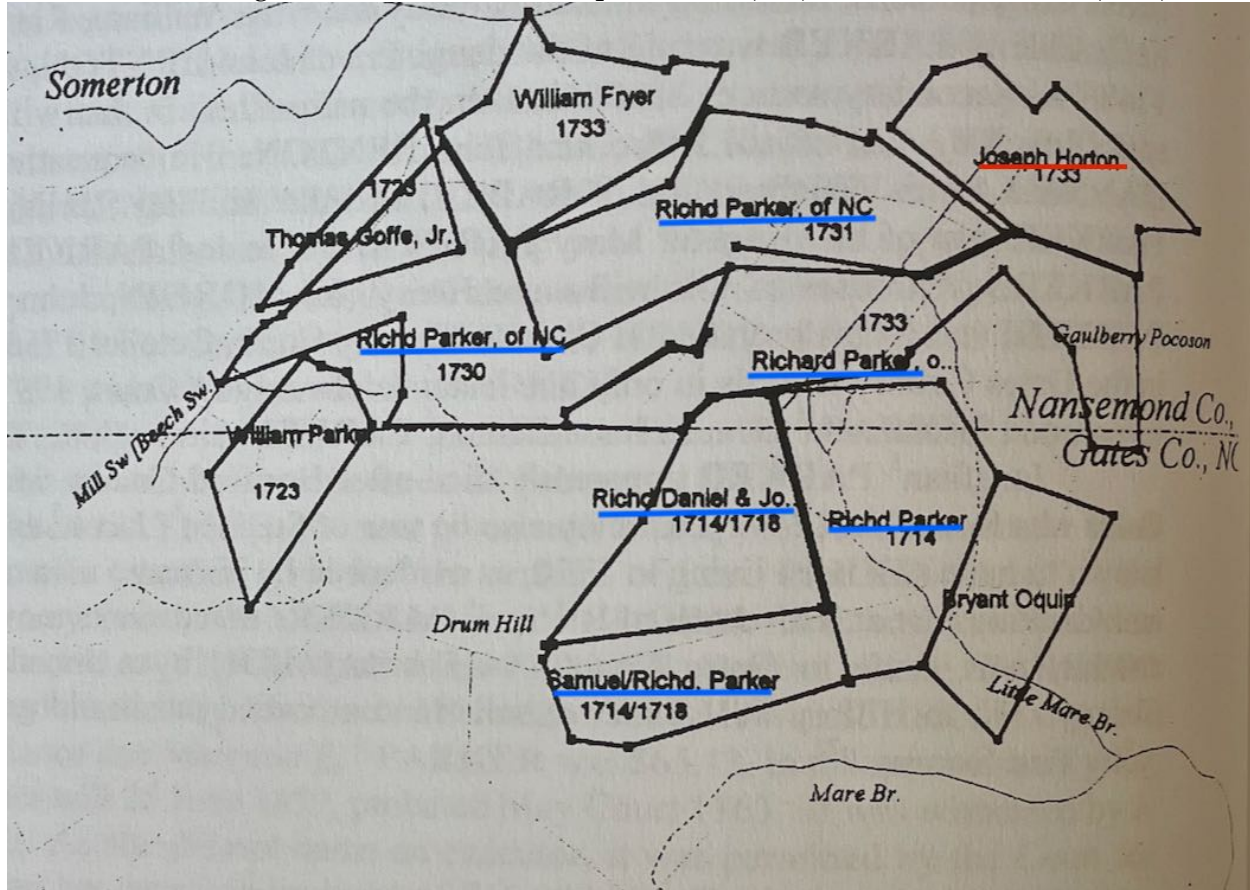
¹ For Richard’s approximate birth year, see Raymond Parker Fouts, *Following the Land: A Genealogical History of Some of the PARKERs of Nansemond County, Virginia and Chowan/Hertford/Gates Counties, North Carolina* (Cocoa, FL: privately printed, 2005), 13.

² Margaret M. Hoffman (comp.), *Chowan Precinct, North Carolina, 1696 to 1723: Genealogical Abstracts of Deed Books* (Weldon, NC: Roanoke News Company, 1972), 191; citing Chowan County, North Carolina, Deed Book C-1: 342.

³ Virginia, Patent Book 10:133, Richard Parker, 16 June 1714; also, Patent Book 10:185, Richard Parker, 16 June 1714; digital images, “Virginia Land Patents and Grants,” database with images, *Library of Virginia* (<https://lva-virginia.libguides.com/land-grants> : accessed 29 April 2022). This freely-available database was the means of access for all Virginia land patents cited in this report.

The map also depicts a piece of land owned by **Joseph Horton**, the man named as a neighbor in Richard's 1749 will.

Map 2
Selected Virginia Land Grants to Joseph Horton (red) and Richard Parker (blue)



Source: Raymond Parker Fouts, *Following the Land: A Genealogical History of Some of the PARKERS of Nansmond County, Virginia and Chowan/Hertford/Gates Counties, North Carolina* (Cocoa, FL: privately printed, 2005), 30.

Richard purchased and patented land on both sides of the colony line even after it was surveyed in 1728. His Virginia grants of 1730 and 1733 both mention the "Country line," i.e. the colony line.⁴

His appearances in Chowan County deeds (and his will) can be summarized as follows.

⁴ Virginia, Patent Book 14:137, Richard Parker, 28 September 1730; also, Virginia, Patent Book 15:14, Richard Parker, 20 June 1733.

Table 1
Selected Activities of Richard Parker in Chowan County, NC

Date	Activity	Named Landmarks
23 Mar. 1723	bought land from Jonathan Kitterell ¹	White Pott Pocosin
28 May 1736	owned land adjoining a tract sold by Richard and Ann Hines to Moses Boyce ²	Bennett's Creek (head)
20 Feb. 1740	owned land adjoining a tract sold by Jonathan Kitterill to Richard Baker ³	Middle Swamp, White Pot Pocosin
22 Feb. 1740	owned land adjoining a tract sold by Jonathan Kitterill to Christopher Boyce ⁴	White Pott Pocosin
1 Dec. 1740	arbitrator on "a matter between Thomas Norris & Sarah Hackley." ⁵	<i>n/a</i>
19 Oct. 1742	bought land from John Small ⁶	Maple Pocosin
10 Dec. 1742	bought land from Robert Abrams ⁷	Bound Pocosin, Frier's Pocosin, Forked Branch, Bear Branch
2 Mar. 1744	owned land adjoining a tract sold by Christopher Boyce to Epaphroditus Boyce ⁸	White Pot Pocosin
10 Jan. 1748	sold land to Peter Parker ⁹	"country line," Mill Dam Branch
22 Sep. 1749	Wrote a will naming: "my Loving wife": [unnamed] <u>sons</u> : Richard, Daniel , Francis, Stephen, Peter, Jonathan, Jonas, and Jacob Parker <u>daughters</u> : Elizabeth Hunter, Anna Spivey, Also Daughtery, and Patience [Parker] <u>grandsons</u> : Richard Parker, William Parker <u>friend</u> : Jonathan Benton. ¹⁰	Gallberry Pocosin, Little Mare Branch, Mill Pond/Swamp, "country line," Sommerton Swamp, Meheason Pocosin, Loosing Swamp, Bennett's Creek
17 Apr. 1750	witnessed deed from Edward Vann to Demsey Parker ¹¹	Knotty Pine Pocosin

Sources:

1. Margaret M. Hoffman (comp.), *Chowan Precinct, North Carolina, 1696 to 1723: Genealogical Abstracts of Deed Books* (Weldon, NC: Roanoke News Company, 1972), 191; citing Chowan Co., N.C., Deed Book C-1: 342.
2. Weynette Parks Haun (comp.), *Chowan County, North Carolina Deed Books, Vol. 1* (Durham, NC: W.P. Haun, 1998), 22-3; citing Chowan Co., N.C., Deed Book W-1: 312-13.
3. *Ibid.*, 97; citing Chowan Co., N.C., Deed Book C-2: 49.
4. *Ibid.*; citing Chowan Co., N.C., Deed Book C-2: 50.
5. Weynette Parks Haun (comp.), *Chowan County, North Carolina Deed Books, Vol. 2* (Durham, NC: W.P. Haun, n.d.), 37; citing Chowan Co., N.C., Deed Book A-1: 215.
6. *Ibid.*, 29; citing Chowan Co., N.C., Deed Book A-1: 167-8.
7. *Ibid.*; citing Chowan Co., N.C., Deed Book A-1: 166-7.
8. *Ibid.*, 41; citing Chowan Co., N.C., Deed Book A-1: 238.
9. Haun (comp.), *Chowan County, North Carolina Deed Books, Vol. 1*, 110; citing Chowan Co., N.C., Deed Book D: 150.

10. Chowan Co., N.C., original will of Richard Parker, 22 Sep. 1749; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-89GC-F9ZG-C>); digital film 007640349, imgs. 887-92.
11. Haun (comp.), *Chowan County, North Carolina Deed Books, Vol. 2*, 105; citing Chowan Co., N.C., Deed Book F-1: 232.

For a full abstract of Richard's will, see **Appendix A**, pp. 5–6. Richard's will also names Joseph Horton twice:

- Richard left to his son Richard "my land and Plantation where I now live," bounding on *Joseph Horton's* line, William Russel's [?] line, the Gallberry Pocosin, the Little Mare Branch, and the Mill Pond.
- Richard left to his son Daniel a mare "named Boney Branded with H formerly Belonging to *Joseph Horton*."

Daniel Parker (by ca. 1697–1780/1)

At the beginning of this research block, it was hypothesized that the Daniel Parker named in Richard's will was the same man as the Daniel Parker who wrote a will in Gates County in 1780 naming Sarah Horton as his daughter.⁵ That identity can now be considered proven beyond a reasonable doubt. Records of Daniel in three successive jurisdictions – Chowan, Hertford, and Gates County – pertain to one man who remained in one neighborhood; the county lines simply changed around him.

(1) Daniel Parker of Chowan County, North Carolina

Daniel first appears on record 13 July 1718 as a co-patentee with Jonathan Parker of a grant that their father, Richard Parker, had allowed to lapse.⁶ This was one of the two grants first taken out by Richard Parker in 1714 (see the parcel on Figure 2, above, labelled **Richd/Daniel & Jo...**). The grants now straddle the Virginia-North Carolina state line, falling mostly into North Carolina. Richard had sons named Daniel and Jonathan; in all likelihood, he allowed his patent to lapse so that his sons could settle it and secure title to it in their own names.

The patent pushes back the latest possible date for Daniel's birth to 1697, since the limited information found suggests that only men aged twenty-one or older could patent land.⁷ This means that he lived to at least age eighty-two – a long time for the eighteenth century, but not exceedingly rare.

Daniel appears consistently in Chowan County land records from the 1730s to the 1750s. (Before this time, his neighborhood was probably considered to be part of Nansemond County, Virginia). In almost every case, his actions place him with other Parkers – as buyers, sellers, or fellow witnesses to deeds.

He received the following property in his father Richard's will, penned when Daniel was already in his early fifties:

⁵ For Daniel's will, see Gates County, North Carolina, original (holograph) will of Daniel Parker, 30 November 1780; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-89G4-MXWS>; accessed 25 March 2022); digital film 007639881, img. 491.

⁶ Virginia, Patent Book 10:388, issued to Daniel and Jonathan Parker, 12 July 1718.

⁷ Robert W. Baird, "Legal Age," *Bob's Genealogy Filing Cabinet* (<https://genfiles.com/articles/legal-age/>; accessed 2 May 2022).

- “the Plantation and Land whar he now Liveth,” beginning at the Mill Swamp, containing about 350 acres, along John Mores [Moore’s] line, Pugh’s line, a line of trees in or near the country [*i.e. Virginia-North Carolina*] line, the Gallberry Pocosin, and the Mare Branch
- 50 acres on the Meheason Pocosin below Pugh’s Ferry
- 5 cows and a mare named Boney formerly belonging to Joseph Horton.

Apparently, the will was misplaced for a time after Richard’s death, for in December 1751 – about six months before the will was presented in court and proved – a different Richard Parker of Upper Parish, Nansemond County, Virginia, deeded land to “his uncle,” Daniel Parker, “which said tract or parcel of land was granted by patent to Rich.^d Parker grandfather to the parties to these presents who never had disposed of the same in his lifetime & dying without will that is known of the said land & premises decend to the said Rich.^d Parker as heir at law to his Grandfather.”⁸ The deeded land matches the 350 acres left by Richard Parker, Sr. to Daniel in his will.

(2) Daniel Parker of Hertford County, North Carolina

In 1760, the Parker neighborhood in northwestern Chowan fell into the new county of Hertford. Unfortunately, courthouse fires in 1822 and 1830 destroyed the majority of records then existing in Hertford County, including deeds and other documents from the period when Daniel would have lived there (1760–1779).⁹ This is a regrettable loss because it covers the years when many of his children – likely including Sarah (Parker) Horton, the client’s ancestor – came of age and married. Daniel may have also deeded land to his sons as they came of age.

One known record of Daniel has survived from Hertford, however: a Daniel Parker was reportedly listed in a Hertford County tax list from 1768 preserved in a notebook now held at the State Archives of North Carolina.¹⁰

(3) Daniel Parker of Gates County, North Carolina

In 1779, just one year before Daniel made his will, the old Parker neighborhood along the Virginia border fell into another new county: Gates. Though the county names had changed several times over his life, Daniel may have lived in the same neighborhood in 1780 where he had lived in 1718.

Reviewing the Evidence

A review of the evidence for Daniel’s life *and key associates*, including his family, makes it virtually certain that the father of Sarah (Parker) Horton was the son of Richard Parker (d.

⁸ Chowan Co., N.C., Deed Book H:249–50, Richard Parker to Daniel Parker, 21 December 1751 (recorded 25 March 1758); digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-898M-D9D5> : accessed 27 April 2022); digital film 007513269, img. 362.

⁹ *FamilySearch Wiki* (https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Hertford_County,_North_Carolina_Genealogy : accessed 27 April 2022), “Hertford County, North Carolina Genealogy,” last updated 4 March 2022.

¹⁰ Raymond Parker Fouts, *Following the Land: A Genealogical History of Some of the PARKERS of Nansemond County, Virginia, and Chowan/Hertford/Gates Counties, North Carolina, 1604–2004* (Cocoa, FL: privately printed, 2005), 24; citing Raymond Parker Fouts (comp.), *William Murfree Tax Receipt Book, Hertford County, North Carolina, 1768–1770* (GenRec Books [?]: unknown place, 1993), 13:#16.

1749/52). Shared places, kin, and neighbors tie the 1780 testator to the man on record in Chowan County between 1718 and the 1750s.

POINT ONE: As noted above, Daniel’s earliest known record, a land patent from 1718, pushes his birth back to at least 1697 and his age at death up to at least 82. That age is consistent with the fact that Daniel names four grandchildren in his 1780 will, some of whom may have already been adults. (In each case, the grandchild’s mother or father – probably Daniel’s child – is mentioned but not left anything, raising the possibility that they were deceased.)

POINT TWO: The 1780 testator names **Dempsy Parker** as one of his sons.¹¹ In 1749, Daniel Parker and Demsey Parker both witnessed a deed in Chowan County.¹² The following year, Demsey Parker bought land on the Knotty Pine Pocosin from Edward Vann.¹³ If Daniel was old enough to patent land in 1718, then he was old enough to have fathered a son who was an adult by 1750 (thus, born by *ca.* 1729).

The Parker neighborhood in Chowan/Hertford/Gates County was apparently home to only one Dem(p)sey Parker in the eighteenth century – a man who wrote his will in May 1807 and died by February 1808. Land records created locally and at the state level show that Demsey of Gates lived among the same local landmarks and families in the 1780s–1800s as Demsey of Chowan, on record in the 1740s and 1750s:

- Demsey of Chowan bought land on *Knotty Pine Pocosin* from **Edward Vann** in 1750.¹⁴
- Demsey of Gates sold land on *Notepine* [i.e. Knotty Pine] *Swamp* bordering **William Van** in 1785 (a pocosin is a swampy area, so “Notepine Swamp” is probably the same place as Knotty Pine Pocosin).¹⁵
- Demsey of Gates patented land on *Knotty Pine Swamp* in 1798.¹⁶
- Demsey of Gates named Edith **Vann** as his daughter in his 1807 will.¹⁷

Like Daniel, Demsey was evidently somewhat elderly when he died, as he names a “son Robert Parker dec^d [*deceased*]” who had left heirs.¹⁸

¹¹ Gates County, North Carolina, original (holograph) will of Daniel Parker, 30 November 1780; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-89G4-MXWS>; accessed 25 March 2022); digital film 007639881, img. 491.

¹² Haun (comp.), *Chowan County, North Carolina Deed Books, Vol. 1*, 110; citing Chowan Co., N.C., Deed Book D: 150.

¹³ Haun (comp.), *Chowan County, North Carolina Deed Books, Vol. 2*, 105; citing Chowan Co., N.C., Deed Book F-1: 232.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Gates Co., N.C., Deed Book 1: 87–88, Demsey Parker to Isaac Parker, 19 February 1785; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-8983-6DZ4>; accessed 12 April 2022); digital film 007513502, img. 460.

¹⁶ Gates Co., N.C., land grant file 119, Demsey Parker, survey dated October 1798; digital images, *NC Land Grant Images and Data* (<https://www.nclandgrants.com/frame/?fdr=751&frm=550&mars=12.14.63.118>; accessed 3 May 2022); citing State Archives of North Carolina, microfilm S.108.712, Gates County Land Grant Files 1–172.

¹⁷ Sandra L. Almsy (comp.), *Gates County, North Carolina Wills – Book 2 (1807–1838)* (Rothschild, WI: n.p., 1985), 3; citing Gates County, North Carolina, Wills, Book 2: 6–7, Will of Demsey Parker, 6 May 1807.

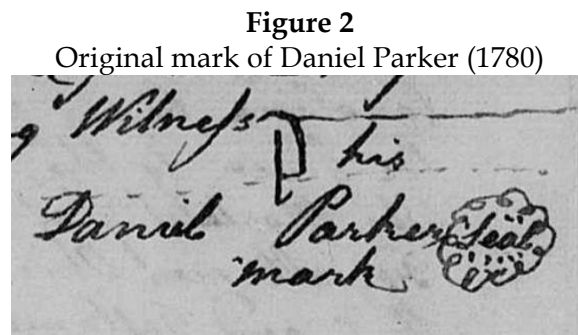
¹⁸ *Ibid.*

POINT THREE: A number of the names mentioned in Daniel's 1780 will, or belonging to the men who witnessed it, tie him to the earlier Parker neighborhood.

- Daniel mentions daughters named Mary Chitril and Abigail [Chitril], both possibly deceased. "Chitril," otherwise unknown, is probably a variant spelling of *Kittrell*; Jonathan Kittrell was a close neighbor of the Parkers in Chowan County, and sold land to Richard Parker in 1723.
- Thomas *Fryer* witnessed Daniel's will; a William *Fryer* had witnessed Demsey Parker's 1750 purchase of land from Edward Vann.¹⁹
- *Peter Parker* witnessed Daniel's will; Daniel, son of Richard, had a brother of the same name.²⁰
- Jacob *Sumner* witnessed Daniel's will; *Demsey Sumner* had witnessed a deed whereby Daniel Parker purchased land in 1742.²¹ (The first name Demsey also raises the possibility of a family connection to Daniel's son Demsey Parker; indeed, Raymond Parker Fouts, author of a well-supported genealogy of the Parker family, states, "From the Parkers' long and close association with the Sumners, it is likely that Daniel's wife was of that family...Daniel and Mary's eldest son was named 'Luke,' a Sumner name").²²

POINT FOUR: On the occasions when Daniel signed a deed in Chowan County – always as a witness – he apparently signed with "D" or "DP" rather than signing his full name. While the original, signed deeds likely do not exist anymore, the clerk who recorded them in the deed register imitated Daniel's mark that way.

The testator in 1780 *also* made a mark that looks like either a D or a P. In this case, the mark on the surviving will sheet was made by Daniel himself:



Source: Gates County, North Carolina, original (holograph) will of Daniel Parker, 30 November 1780; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-89G4-MN9H> : accessed 25 March 2022); digital film 007639881, img. 492.

¹⁹ Haun (comp.), *Chowan County, North Carolina Deed Books, Vol. 2*, 105; citing Chowan Co., N.C., Deed Book F-1: 232.

²⁰ Chowan Co., N.C., will of Richard Parker, 22 September 1749; digital images, *FamilySearch* > digital film 007640349 > imgs. 888

²¹ Haun (comp.), *Chowan County, North Carolina Deed Books, Vol. 2*, 11; citing Chowan Co., N.C., Deed Book A[-1]: 169-70 [*i.e.* 69-70].

²² Fouts, *Following the Land*, 24.

Taken together, the evidence is conclusive: Daniel Parker, father of Sarah (Parker) Horton, was the son of Richard Parker of Chowan County, North Carolina (d. 1749/51).

Joseph Horton (by 1698–by Nov. 1768)

The primary subject of this report is Joseph Horton, named twice in the 1749 will of Richard Parker. Southerners in the eighteenth century often found their spouse within their extended family network. In this case, if Joseph Horton was the father of William Horton the Elder, it would mean that Charles Horton married a girl from a family his own family had known for generations.

(1) Joseph Horton of Nansemond County, Virginia

As a glance at the map on p. 6 shows, Joseph Horton's 1733 patent lay in Virginia. In fact, a search of Chowan County (North Carolina) deeds, grants, and wills suggests that Joseph never acquired or disposed of land in that jurisdiction.²³ He only appears one time in a Chowan County deed – as one of a group of neighbors who met to arbitrate a dispute over land. Richard Parker was also a member of the group.²⁴

Evidently, it is to Nansemond (now Suffolk) County, Virginia that we must turn for records of Joseph Horton. Unfortunately, Nansemond records burned on three separate occasions, resulting in the loss of almost all early deeds.²⁵ Two kinds of records in particular help to fill the gap:

- Virginia land patents (grants), which were issued by the king through his officials and preserved at the colonial and later state capital
- land processioning records, created by the *vestry* or governing board of each Anglican parish as a way to ratify uncertain land boundaries (the Church of England, remember, was the established church in Virginia until the Revolution)

Virginia's Colonial Land Patents

Only two patents were issued to a Joseph Horton in colonial Virginia. Both appear to refer to the same man:

²³ Negative searches for Joseph Horton deeds in the following books, which abstract all known early deed books in Chowan County:

- Margaret M. Hoffman (comp.), *Chowan Precinct, North Carolina, 1696 to 1723: Genealogical Abstracts of Deed Books* (Weldon, NC: Roanoke News Company, 1972).
- Weynette Parks Haun (comp.), *Chowan County, North Carolina Deed Books*, 3 vols. (Durham, NC: W.P. Haun, 1998–2004).

Also, negative searches for Joseph Horton as grantee in early North Carolina grants (1700–1770), accessed on North Carolina Historical Records Online (NCHRO), *NC Land Grant Images and Data* (<https://www.nclandgrants.com> : accessed 24 March 2022).

Also, negative search for Joseph Horton in original cross indexes to Chowan County deeds; for **grantor** (direct) indexes, see *FamilySearch*, digital film 007526349, imgs. 19–22 (Book W), 48–9 (Book C1), 68–9 (Book B), 82 (Book C2), 110–11 (Book F), 124–5 (Book H), 131 (Book K). For **grantee** (indirect) indexes, see *FamilySearch*, digital film 007526350, imgs. 20–21 (Book W), 49–51 (Book C), 70–71 (Book B), 84 (Book C2), 96–97 (Book A), 113–15 (Book F), 126–7 (Book H), 132–3 (Book K).

²⁴ Weynette Parks Haun (comp.), *Chowan County, North Carolina Deed Books, Vol. 2* (Durham, NC: W.P. Haun, n.d.), 37; citing Chowan Co., N.C., Deed Book A-1: 215.

²⁵ Library of Virginia, Research Notes No. 30, “Lost Records Localities: Counties and Cities with Missing Records,” undated, p. 3; downloadable PDF, *Library of Virginia* (https://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/rn30_lostrecords.pdf : accessed 25 March 2022).

1. On 11 July 1719, Joseph Horton received 242 acres of land “in the upper parish of Nansemond County” along the Long Branch of the Knuckle Swamp, adjacent to John Cole and *Andrew Ross’s* lines.²⁶
2. On 20 June 1733, Joseph Horton patented 338 acres “in the upper Parish of Nansemond County” with bounds on the Long Branch, *Andrew Ross*, Samuel Smith, Bennet’s Creek, John Knight, and **Richard Parker**.²⁷

While Joseph may have already been an adult for some time, the first patent was the earliest record examined for him in this report, and provides a latest possible date for his birth of *ca.* July 1698.

The second tract is the one shown in the map on p. 6 above, with Joseph’s name underlined in red.

Upper Parish (Nansemond County) Vestry Book

If Joseph lived along the Nansemond (Virginia)-Chowan (North Carolina) border, then he should have lived in Nansemond’s Upper Parish, which—contrary to what might be supposed—is actually on the southern end of the county: further from the James River and Chesapeake Bay, the original place of English settlement.²⁸

One of the most useful sources for neighborhood reconstruction in early Virginia is the book kept by the vestry (governing board) of each Anglican parish. Among the vestry’s duties was to order all parcel boundaries to be *processioned* every few years—walked by at least one landowner of an adjoining tract and confirmed in its location. This could help avoid boundary or title disputes. The vestry would typically divide the parish into a number of districts and appoint two or three men to oversee the processioning in each district.

In 1752, Joseph Horton’s name appears alongside that of Richard Parker and a number of other names or surnames familiar from records created by the Hortons and Parkers. The relevant processioning district was number 28, described as:

all the Bounds of Land, from the **Knuckle Swamp** Bridge on the South Side the Swamp, up the East side **Summ**. [*Summertown?*] Road, to the **Country Line**, so Down the South side thereof to the first Station.²⁹

James Roberds [Roberts] and John Rogers, the men in charge of processioning District 28, recorded the process in a simple fashion, noting the owner of the land on each side of the boundary and the men present to confirm the line. To make this text easier to follow visually, I

²⁶ Virginia, Patent Book 10: 441–2, Joseph Horton, 11 July 1719; “Virginia Land Patents and Grants,” database with images, *Library of Virginia* (<https://lva-virginia.libguides.com/land-grants> : accessed 25 March 2022).

²⁷ Virginia, Patent Book 15: 68–9, Joseph Horton, 20 June 1733.

²⁸ For the formation of the Upper Parish, see Wilmer L. Hall, ed., *The Vestry Book of the Upper Parish, Nansemond County, Virginia, 1743–1793* (Richmond: Library Board of Virginia, 1949), xiii–xvii; downloadable PDF, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/search/catalog/115319> : accessed 25 March 2022).

²⁹ Hall, ed., *The Vestry Book of the Upper Parish, Nansemond...1743–1793*, 67; citing Upper Parish, Nansemond Co., Va., Vestry Book (1743–1793): 61.

have introduced punctuation and lineated each statement separately (however, the capitalization is original):

Pursuant to an Order of Vestry to us Directed we have Process^d all the Lands in the bounds Mentioned in the said Order Viz[;]

A Line Between Lemuel Riddick and the Plantation Richard **Smith** live on Pres^t the said

Lemuel Riddick_[;] John Streator_[;] Richard Smith_[;] John Cross_[;] Lemuel **Riddick** Jun^r[;]

a Line between the said Riddick and William Landing the same persons Pres^t and Wm Landing[;]

a line between the s^d Riddick and John Bearfield all these s^d Persons pres^t[;]

a line between the s^d Riddick and Hugh Goff all the aforesaid Persons pres^t[;]

a line Between Rob^t **Parker** and James Long[;] Rob^t **Parker** Pres^t and Adam **Harrod**[;]

a line Between Edmund Bird and Rob^t **Parker**[;] Pres^t **Joseph Horton**[;]

a line Between **Rich^d Parker** and John Cole Jun^r[;] pres^t John Bird[;]

a line between John Bird and John Cole[;] Pres^t **Richard Parker**[;]

a line Between John Cole and W^m Everat[;] Pres^t the s^d Cole and the S^d Everat,

a line Between W^m Peal and Francis **Parker**[;] Pres^t William Peal,

a line Between Moses **Horton** and John Taylor[;] pres^t Sam^l **Horton**[;]

a line Between Peter **Parker** and **Joseph Horton**[;] Pres^t Peter **Parker** [;]

a line Between **Rich^d Parker** and Peter **Parker**[;] Pres^t Peter **Parker**,

a line Between Rich^d Taylor and Edw^d Baker[;] pres^t Rich^d Taylor,

a line Between Charles Russell and Francis Parker[;] Pres^t Charles Russell,

a line Between Charles Russell and Rob^t **Smith**[;] Pres^t Rob^t Smith,

a line Between John Roger and W^m Roger[;] pres^t John Roger,

a line Between James Roberts and John Rogers[;] Pres^t the S^d Rogers and Roberts,

all the Said Lands in Quiet and Peacable Procession as Witness our Hands this Sixth day of March 1752.³⁰

(2) *Joseph Horton of Granville County, North Carolina*

Because of record loss in Nansemond County, Joseph cannot be easily traced there beyond these few snapshots of land ownership. However, a same-name man appears in 1763 in Granville County, North Carolina – the county where William Horton the Elder first surfaced in 1752.

On 24 November 1763, Daniel Potter of Granville County sold to “Joseph Horton of Nansemond County in virginia” for £125 Virginia currency a tract of 400 acres on the Cypress Beaver Dams in Granville County.³¹ Less than one month later, Joseph wrote his will.³²

Declaring himself to be “of the County of Granville,” he named the following heirs:

- “my Daughter Sarah, widow relict of William Smith”
- “my son Joseph Horton”
- “my Son **William Horton**”

³⁰ Ibid., 70–1; citing Upper Parish, Nansemond Co., Va., Vestry Book (1743–1793): 65–6.

³¹ Granville Co., N.C., Deed Book F: 502, Daniel Potter to Joseph Horton, 24 November 1763; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-89C5-6ZB9> : accessed 25 March 2022); digital film 007416749, img. 423.

³² Granville Co., N.C. [filed with Bute County records], original (holograph) will of Joseph Horton, 12 December 1763 (proved November Court 1768); digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:d/61903/3:1:3QS7-L98M-VCVT> : accessed 25 March 2022); digital film 007613187, imgs. 253–5.

- “my son David Horton”
- “my Daughter Margaret late the Wife of James Harrard”
- “my Daughter Charity ye Wife of Henry Bir__ [*Birum?*]”
- “my Grandson Samuel Horton son of David Horton”
- “my son Samuel Horton”

For a transcript of the entire will, see **Appendix A**, pp. 7-8.

Joseph left the token amount of one shilling sterling to each of his heirs apart from his grandson Samuel, who received “all my Blacksmith Tools, and One feather Bed with all the furniture belonging thereto,” and his son Samuel, who received “a Tract or Parcel of Land...I now live on” in Granville County, the description of which matches the land Joseph had purchased by deed shortly before. The token bequest to most of his children suggests that Joseph had already given gifts to those children and they were now self-supporting adults.

Joseph was deceased by November 1768, when his will was admitted to probate in Bute County, which had been cut from Granville.³³

The designation of Joseph as “of Nansemond County” when he bought his land in Granville makes it likely that the testator of 1763 was also the neighbor of Richard Parker of 1749. Moreover, two surnames of the men involved in the 1752 processioning record remind us of the testator’s sons-in-law:

- Adam *Harrod*, present at the processioning of Parker family land in 1752, may have been related to the James *Harrard* who had married Joseph’s daughter Margaret Horton.
- Robert and Richard Smith, both involved in the processioning, may have been kin to the William Smith who had married Joseph’s daughter Sarah Horton. However, this is less certain due to the commonality of the name Smith.

Midpoint Summary

So far, the argument can be summarized as follows:

1. Charles Horton, probable son of William Horton the Elder of Granville > Orange County, North Carolina, married Sarah Parker, daughter of Daniel Parker of Gates County.
2. Charles Horton’s father-in-law Daniel Parker (d. 1780/81) was the son of Richard Parker of Chowan County who, in his 1749 will, mentions a neighbor and associate named Joseph Horton.
3. Joseph Horton and Richard Parker both lived in a neighborhood that straddled the Nansemond County, Virginia-Chowan County, North Carolina line.
4. In 1763, Joseph of Nansemond bought land in Granville County, North Carolina.
5. Joseph, now of Granville, soon wrote a will that named a son William who was evidently an adult, since he only received a token bequest. That is consistent with

³³ Granville Co., N.C., original (holograph) will of Joseph Horton, 12 December 1763 (proved November Court 1768 in Bute County).

William Horton the Elder's birthdate of March 1733 or earlier, since he was ordered in March 1754 to attend the next court as a juror.³⁴

The evidence appears to be quite good, but not totally conclusive. Several caveats and potential conflicts need to be kept in mind:

Caveat #1: Joseph's Granville County Neighborhood

Joseph's 1763 deed described his land as being along the "Cypress Beaver Dams" in Granville County. His will adds the detail that his land was "upon the Cyprus Beaver Dams near Tarr River."³⁵ The Cypress Beaver Dams have not been located. However, the Tar River flows through the southern portion of what was then Granville County. On 9 June 1764, Bute County was created out of the eastern half of Granville;³⁶ Joseph's will was probated in Bute, where his land presumably lay.³⁷

William Horton, meanwhile, had purchased land in 1752 in the western portion of Granville that was soon cut off into Orange County. While both men lived at one point in Granville County, they did so at different times, and their neighborhoods were probably some 30–50 miles apart. (See **Map 1** on p. 4, above). The evidence of a shared county is therefore somewhat deceptive. However, it would not have been unusual for a young man like William to move from his father's home to a new area on the frontier – perhaps after marrying and receiving a portion of money or goods from his father.

Caveat #2: Other Unplaced Hortons

The survey of Horton deeds in Orange (now Durham) County, North Carolina, carried out as part of the second research block, identified a number of other Hortons who lived near William the Elder and Charles Horton or, in some cases, even associated with them as kin might do. They include:

- **James Horton**, who can be placed in the Horton neighborhood in eastern Orange County as early as 1752 and died *ca.* 1781–2;³⁸
- **Henry Horton**, who owned land a little north and west of the client's known ancestors and wrote his will on 25 March 1805;³⁹

³⁴ Ruth Herndon Shields (comp.), *Abstracts of the Minutes of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions of Orange County in the Province of North Carolina, September 1752 through August 1766* (Chapel Hill, NC: n.p., 1965), 10; citing original p. 15-30' [sic].

³⁵ Granville Co., N.C. [filed with Bute County records], original (holograph) will of Joseph Horton, 12 December 1763 (proved November Court 1768).

³⁶ Newberry Library, *Atlas of Historical County Boundaries, North Carolina > 1764-06-10*.

³⁷ Brent Holcomb (comp.), *Bute County, North Carolina Minutes of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Session, 1767-79* (Columbia, SC: SCMAR, 1994), 28; citing Bute County, North Carolina, Minutes Book 1: 44, 14 November 1768.

³⁸ See below.

³⁹ Orange Co., N.C., Deeds, Bk. 6:330, Henry Horton to Thomas McFarlin; digital images, *FamilySearch*; digital film 007545823, img. 571. Also, Orange Co., N.C., original (holograph) will of Henry Horton, 25 March 1805; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C9RW-F9TS-Q> : accessed 3 March 2021); digital film 007665370, img. 1537.

- **William Horton**, who in 1778 bought land from client's ancestor Charles Horton that may have been inherited from Charles's putative father, William Horton the Elder;⁴⁰
- **John Horton**, who is named in an undated document (*ca.* 1780–1820) in which Julius King and wife Susannah sold to John Taylor, Jr., “all the right Title Interest and Claim which we may...have in and to the property of John Horton Deceased which may be in the County of Gates”; Gates County, of course, is where client's proven ancestor Daniel Parker died *ca.* 1780–1.⁴¹

In the interest of time and space, this report will only give thorough consideration to the first person on that list and to a pair of possible associates, the Prossers.

James Horton

The earliest Horton to appear in the area of Granville > Orange > Durham County, apart from William Horton the Elder, is **James Horton**, who secured grants of land on Dials Creek and Mountain Creek in the 1750s.⁴²

James apparently died *ca.* 1781–2 without making a will, but estate papers from the 1790s name his wife Anne and sons Thomas, Prosser, James, Sherwood, John, Jeremiah, and Stephen Horton.⁴³ James is easily ruled out as the client's direct ancestor: neither Charles Horton nor his surviving children, such as William Horton (*ca.* 1786–aft. 1860), appear on the list. William Horton the Elder remains by far the most likely candidate for Charles's father.

However, a kinship between Charles and James Horton is suggested by the fact that James witnessed a 1778 deed whereby Charles and Sarah Horton sold 202 acres to William Horton “II” (He is not called William Horton II in original records; I call him that because his activities place him chronologically between William the Elder and William-of-Charles).⁴⁴ A father-son relationship is ruled out by James's probate papers, and a brother-brother relationship also seems unlikely due to age differences. It's possible, however, that James was Charles's uncle. Joseph Horton of Nansemond and Granville did not mention a son named James Horton in his will.

⁴⁰ Orange Co., N.C., Deeds, Bk. 2:2, Charles Horton and Sarah Horton to William Horton; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-99DH-X9DP-3> : accessed 2 March 2021); digital film 007545821, img. 156.

⁴¹ Orange County, North Carolina, probate files, John Horton (undated); digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-99CD-1H73> : accessed 16 May 2022), digital film 007384095, img. 303.

⁴² William D. Bennett (comp.), *Granville Proprietary Land Office: Abstracts of Loose Papers*, Orange County Records, Volume I (Raleigh, NC: p.p., 1987), pp. 4 (citing warrants dated 30 April 1753 and 2 May 1753) and 6 (citing surveys dated 19 and 20 February 1754).

⁴³ Orange Co., N.C., probate file of James Horton (1795), memorandum for widow's petition for dower, undated; “North Carolina Estate Files, 1663–1979,” database with images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-L9CD-14YJ> : accessed 9 May 2022) > Orange County > H > Horton, James (1795), img. 10 of 13.

⁴⁴ Orange Co., N.C., Deeds, Bk. 2:2, Charles Horton and Sarah Horton to William Horton; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-99DH-X9DP-3> : accessed 2 March 2021); digital film 007545821, img. 156.

The use of the distinctive first name *Prosser* for a son of James Horton is intriguing in that it may indicate a relationship to a Prosser family. The name Prosser was quite rare in colonial North Carolina. Thornton W. Mitchell's one-volume index of North Carolina wills from 1665 to 1900, which was pivotal in locating the Granville County will of Joseph Horton, contains no will written by a Prosser.⁴⁵

James and Zachariah Prosser

This makes it all the more intriguing that men named **James Prosser** and **Zachariah Prosser** acquired land in the Horton neighborhood between Flat and Little River.

James Prosser first appears in a cluster of land entries – the first step in the process of acquiring unclaimed land – in 1778, all of which place him on Cain Creek and its tributaries.⁴⁶ Cain Creek is located in far western Orange County, whereas the Hortons lived on the eastern end of the county. In 1780, Benjamin Lamb, son and orphan of Francis Lamb, was ordered to be bound to James Prosser until he (Benjamin) reached adulthood.⁴⁷ The Lambs' neighborhood is unknown.

Intriguingly, one of the land entries that places James in the Cain Creek area also names a ~~John~~ [?] ~~Horton~~ (crossed out) as a neighbor. The first name is difficult to read, but the last name is clearly "Horton." James Prosser's name is written in the place of this unknown Horton.

After a gap of some seven years, James reappears on Little River, in the Horton neighborhood.⁴⁸ He bought and patented land here in the 1790s and evidently disposed of it by *ca.* 1801 – some to John Cain and James Patterson by deeds, and some perhaps to Zachariah Prosser, whose

⁴⁵ Thornton W. Mitchell (comp.), *North Carolina Wills: A Testator Index, 1665–1900*, rev. ed. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1992), was checked for "Prosser" or variant spellings.

⁴⁶ Orange County, North Carolina, Land Entries, 1778: unpaginated, entry no. 195, Rob^t Cates, 24 March 1778; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:2:77T2-V89G> : accessed 11 May 2022); digital film 004770551, img. 52.

Also, *Ibid.*, entry no. 620, James Prosser, 7 September 1778; digital images, *FamilySearch*; digital film 004770551, img. 166.

Finally, Orange County, North Carolina, Land Entries, 1779–1795, unpaginated, entry no. 1019, Isaac Kirk, 6 January 1779; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:2:77T2-V8CT> : accessed 11 May 2022); digital film 004770551, img. 296.

⁴⁷ Weynette Parks Haun (comp.), *Orange County, North Carolina, Court Minutes 1777–1786*, Book III (Durham, NC: p.p., 1995; citing folio 42, [page?] 84, minutes for February Term 1780.

⁴⁸ No Prossers were found in abstracted deed books 12–14 or in the index to William Doub Bennett (comp.), *Inventories and Accounts of Sales, 1800–1808*, Orange County Records, Volume XVI (Raleigh, NC: p.p., 1995).

Orange County, North Carolina, Land Entries, 1779–1795, unpaginated, entry no. 213, John Cain, 11 October 1787; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:2:77T2-V8DW> : accessed 11 May 2022); digital film 004770551, img. 366.

Also, *Ibid.*, entry no. 214, Wm. Cain, 11 October 1787; digital film 004770551, img. 366 (James isn't mentioned in this entry, but it is included for context).

Also, *Ibid.*, entry no. 260, Wm. Ray, 19 January 1789; digital images, *FamilySearch*, digital film 004770551, img. 377.

Finally, *Ibid.*, entry no. 413, James Prosser, 10 February 1794; digital images, *FamilySearch* (<https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:2:77T2-V86K> : accessed 11 May 2022), digital film 004770551, img. 409.

relationship to James is unknown. Zachariah made two sales of his personal property in 1802 and 1803, perhaps really deeds of trust to secure debts.⁴⁹

James and Zachariah Prosser appear next in **Montgomery County, North Carolina**. James claimed land on Barnes Creek there by August 1801.⁵⁰ He is also found there in the 1810 census, when he headed a household as a man aged forty-five or older.⁵¹

Zachariah Prosser, meanwhile, signed a petition presented in December 1805 to the North Carolina state legislature by some inhabitants of Montgomery County.⁵²

Nothing else is known of James or Zachariah, but a genealogist online claims that James of Montgomery “was the son of William Prosser and he was Orphaned in 1780 at the age of 14...and he was then raised by Brittain Barnes of Edgecombe Co., NC.”⁵³

The same genealogist claims that James Prosser of Montgomery was not the same man as James Prosser of Orange County, but the evidence suggests that he probably was:

- The Montgomery County man was 45 or older in 1810, placing his birth in 1765 or before – not 1766, as this genealogist claims. The Orange County man was evidently an adult by 1778, placing his birth *ca.* 1757 or earlier.
- James of Montgomery appears in fall 1801, around the same time that James of Orange was disposing of his land in Orange County.
- The Orange County man was associated with a Zachariah Prosser; a man of that distinctive name also appears in Montgomery County soon after he disappears from Orange County records.

The possible clue about Edgecombe County could not be followed up in this report, but it is intriguing as another (supposedly) recorded Prosser in colonial North Carolina. Compiled abstracts of land records in colonial North Carolina and Virginia⁵⁴ located only a handful of

⁴⁹ Orange Co., N.C., Deed Book 10:102, Zachariah Prosser to John Duke, 8 February 1802 [accessed as abstract]. Also, *Ibid.*, Deed Book 10:249, Zachariah Prosser to John Cain, 26 January 1803 [accessed as abstract].

⁵⁰ Montgomery County, North Carolina, land grant file (shuck) 198, James Prosser, warrant dated 4 August 1801; digital images, “North Carolina, U.S., Land Grant Files, 1693–1960,” database with images, *Ancestry* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/60621/images/44173_353550-00875 : accessed 11 May 2022).

⁵¹ 1810 U.S. census, Montgomery Co., N.C., no district, p. 19 (stamped), line 5, James Prosser; digital images, *Ancestry.com* (https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/7613/images/4433311_00041 : accessed 11 May 2022); citing NARA microfilm M252, roll 41.

⁵² See “13 Dec. 1805 Petition, Montgomery County, N.C.,” Ronald Lamneck, discussion board post, 4 March 2005, *Genealogy.com* (<https://www.genealogy.com/forum/surnames/topics/russell/10692/> : accessed 10 May 2022).

⁵³ James Prosser [no birth or death date] page, *Sorrell(s) Genealogy* (<http://www.sorrellgenealogy.com/tng/getperson.php?personID=I48460&tree=Sorrell1> : accessed 11 May 2022), “Notes,” signed Bob Tobin.

⁵⁴ No Prosser entries were found in Margaret M. Hofmann (comp.), *The Granville District of North Carolina, 1748–1763*, 5 vols. (Weldon, NC: Roanoke News Company, 1986) or Hofmann (comp.), *Colony of North Carolina, 1735–1764: Abstracts of Land Patents* (Weldon, NC: Roanoke News Company, 1982) or *Ibid.*,

Prosser records in the area of Hanover and Caroline counties in Virginia, far from the other geographical areas discussed in this report.⁵⁵

Summary

The James Horton connection currently remains a mystery: an unresolved clue that may pose a conflict with the circumstantial evidence tying William Horton the Elder of Granville > Orange > Durham County to Joseph Horton of Nansemond > Granville > Bute County.

Conflict: Another William Horton?

While researching Horton land grants in Virginia, a possible new family member was found: on 10 March 1756, **William Horton** received a patent for 118 acres in Nansemond County adjacent to the land of **Joseph Horton**, Edward Roberts, William Bird, and the Knuckle Swamp.⁵⁶ This William could have been Joseph's son of that name – but it probably could *not* have been William of Orange County, who had moved to North Carolina by 1752.

Once again, the loss of Nansemond County records hinders attempts to understand who this William was. It is possible, however, that he was a more distant relative of Joseph, such as a nephew. He may be the William Horton paid by the vestry of Upper Parish on a number of occasions for keeping Mary Harris and, in one case, Eliz^a [Elizabeth?] Hackett, wards of the parish.⁵⁷ In about 1768, a processioning in the Upper Parish mentioned "Land of Coln Riddicks Purchas^d from W^m & John Horton."⁵⁸ Joseph had no son named John.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

While the evidence assembled here is suggestive, questions remain – especially about the still-unplaced Hortons of early Orange County and the William Horton who received a land grant next to Joseph Horton in Nansemond County in 1756.

Pursuing the latter question – tracing those early Horton neighbors – appears to be the most promising avenue for future research. It's unlikely that James Horton, Henry Horton, or the others went entirely unrecorded before they first appeared in Orange County. Other counties of northeastern North Carolina may hold some answers. For instance, a website that compiles

Colony of North Carolina, 1765–1775, Abstracts of Land Patents (Weldon, NC: Roanoke News Company, 1984).

⁵⁵ Thomas Prosser patented 400a in Hanover Co., VA adj. lines of Richard Allen and John Cassey; 3 March 1760, VPB 33:711. Whereas by patent 1 Dec. 1733 granted Thomas Prosser [VPB 15:127]. And whereas William Overton (in whom the Right and Title is since become vested) hath failed to pay Quit Rents and to make Cultiv. and Improv. and Sylvanus Walker hath made Humble Suit and hath obtained a G. for the same (which he hath assigned unto Thomas Prosser). See Dennis Ray Hudgins, ed., *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, Vol. 6: 1749–1762 (Richmond: Virginia Genealogical Society, 1998), 265; citing VPB 33:711.

⁵⁶ Virginia, Patent Book 34: 43, William Horton, 10 March 1756.

⁵⁷ Hall, ed., *The Vestry Book of the Upper Parish, Nansemond...1743–1793*, 21; citing original p. 16 (24 January 1747); 26, citing original p. 21 (19 December 1747); 45, citing original p. 43 (14 October 1748); 50, citing original p. 48 (16 October 1749); 52, citing original p. 50 (5 November 1750); 152, citing original p. 163 (28 November 1760).

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 191; citing original p. 208 (undated, but original order to procession apparently made 30 December 1767).

some early Horton land records across the Southeast contains a handful of deeds from Bertie County, North Carolina that mention a Hugh Horton, John Horton, David Horton, and William Wharton (a possible variant of Horton).⁵⁹ Though the name “Horton” is generally fairly common, there are relatively few Horton families in this place and time (northeastern North Carolina, eighteenth century).

Orange County also has no shortage of important Horton *associates*: people who did not carry the Horton name but were nonetheless kith and kin. The Prossers have been mentioned here, but others are also named in land, probate, and court records.

Finally, Y-DNA could hold answers, given that this is a case involving paternity. (Y-DNA is passed down from fathers to their sons almost unchanged, making it a powerful tool for questions of ancestral paternity). The client is not a candidate for Y-testing himself, since he is not a patrilineal descendant of the Hortons. However, targeted testing of a male Horton in his line, or analysis of existing test results, could establish whether the Y-DNA of Charles Horton (d. *ca.* May 1791) is shared by the descendants of other known Horton lines in Orange County – or of Joseph Horton, the paternal candidate for William Horton the Elder explored in this report. It appears that Y-descendants of James Horton (d. *ca.* 1781–2) of Orange County have tested and uploaded their results to the Horton Surname Project at *FamilyTreeDNA*, where they are Group 16.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ “Horton Land Records” (<http://freepages.rootsweb.com/~horton1/genealogy/langen.html> : accessed 16 May 2022).

⁶⁰ “The Horton Surname Project – Y-DNA Classic Chart,” *FamilyTreeDNA* (<https://www.familytreedna.com/public/Horton?iframe=yresults> : accessed 16 May 2022), Group 16. See especially kits #44456 (descending from “Thomas Horton, b. abt. 1760, NC and d. 1821, GA”); 56308 (descending from “Stephen Horton,” no dates given but matching the name of one of James Horton (d. *ca.* 1781–2)’s sons); 40950 (descending from “Sherrod Horton, b. 1796 and d. 1850,” whose name resembles that of *Sherwood* Horton, a known son of James Horton and who may have been a grandson); and B47749 (descending from “Sherrod Horton,” no dates given).