

THE PRYOR FAMILY

As published in
Virginia Magazine of History and Biography
Volume 7, Number 1, July 1899
Volume 7, Number 2, October 1899
Volume 7, Number 3, January 1900

[I added some names in brackets and numbering for children to improve clarity in reading]

On account of the destruction of county records, this account of the PRYORs must be at present rather a collection of data than a connected and complete account of the family, though it is hoped the publication will elicit information which will enable it to be completed.

The earliest land grant to one of the name is dated in 1689, to Mr. ROBERT PRYOR, for 309 acres at the head of Craney creek, Ware Parish, Gloucester County; 92 acres, of which, was granted to Thomas Jefferson (who is he?) April 1, 1668, and by him deserted and afterwards granted to Robert Collis, who on April 21, 1689 assigned to ROBERT PRYOR. On October 29, 1693, Mr. ROBERT PRYOR had a grant for 92 acres on Craney Creek, Gloucester. The next grants were much later, one October 15, 1741 to PHILIP PRYOR for 386 acres in Amelia County, between the branches of Great and Little Nottoway rivers, and another to WILLIAM PRYOR, September 5, 1762 for 350 acres in Amherst County, on Pedlar river.

I am indebted to Judge James T. Mitchell, of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, for the following copy of an account prepared by his grandfather, James Mitchell, who was born in 1785 and died in 1869:

Extract from notes in the Mitchell family Bible, made by James Mitchell from personal recollection and conversations, correspondence, etc. with older members of the family.

Grandmother's father, COLONEL SAMUEL PRYOR's parents were from England, and had settled in Caroline County, Virginia. He married a Miss Thornton, whose parents were also from England, and settled in Caroline, Hanover and Spotsylvania Counties.

They [*Samuel Pryor and Miss Thornton*] had ten children, eight sons and two daughters:

1. WILLIAM
2. SAMUEL
3. JOHN
4. THORNTON
5. ROBERT
6. LUKE
7. FRANK
8. JOSEPH

The youngest of the brothers and least of them weighed 220 pounds.

9. NANCY married Colonel Samuel Wells, Judge of the County Court, Amelia County
10. MOLLY was born 15th November 1730 and married Major William Berry of Gloucester, Virginia, who died leaving two daughters, Nancy and Prudence.
 - a. Nancy Berry married Jonathan Taylor, son of Colonel George Taylor.
 - b. Prudence Berry married Major George Blackburn

Both families removed to Kentucky in 1797

MOLLY PRYOR BERRY's second marriage was to James Mitchell. She died in 1804 and James Mitchell, her husband died in 1819.

Their [*Molly Pryor Berry Mitchell and James Mitchell*] children were:

1. Edward born 1760 died 1837
2. James born 1762 died 1781
3. Samuel born 1764 died 1855

Edward Mitchell (1760-1837) married Haley and had James Mitchell, 1785-1869, who married Ann George Walton and had Edward Phillips Mitchell, 1812-1880, who married Elizabeth Tyndall and had James T. Mitchell, 1834, Judge of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

Judge Mitchell states that he has no further account of the PRYOR family. It was COLONEL SAMUEL PRYOR who married Miss Thornton and had ten children one of whom it is stated was born in 1730. It is probable supposition that their marriage took place about 1720. And it was highly probable that Mr. ROBERT PRYOR of the patents was the father of this SAMUEL PRYOR.

For the following account of the branch of the family to which Judge R. A. PRYOR of New York belongs, I am indebted to a member of the family:

SAMUEL PRYOR, first of the name known, married Prudence Thornton, said by tradition to have been a daughter of William Thornton, of Gloucester County. (An old Thornton Bible shows that this William Thornton had a daughter, Prudence born March 31, 1699.)

As stated above, NANCY, daughter of COLONEL SAMUEL PRYOR, married Lawrence Wells or Wills of Amelia County (son of Matthew Wills and Miss Moore, his wife, who lived in York (? Warwick County) Mulberry Island. The son, Lawrence who married NANCY PRYOR removed to Amelia County and had seven sons and four daughters.

From the diary of REV. THEODERICK PRYOR, 1830, it appears that JOHN PRYOR, son of COLONEL SAMUEL went to the present Nottoway County, married and had issue:

1. RICHARD PRYOR married Anne Bland, daughter of Rev. William Bland and Elizabeth Yates, "had nine children" (see Dr. PRYOR's diary)
 - a. WILLIAM BLAND PRYOR married Jane Atkinson, daughter of Roger Atkinson of Olive Hill and moved to Mississippi.
 - b. MARY ANN PRYOR married John Atkinson, son of Roger Atkinson of Olive Hill.
 - c. RICHARD PRYOR married Virginia Boyd and moved to Arkansas, where he died
 - d. SAMUEL PRYOR married Mary Ann Hamlin of Amelia County, her mother was Miss Goode
 - i. Their son is COLONEL WILLIAM PRYOR of Lynchburg, married Margaret Walker, descended from Dr. Thomas Walker, of Castle Hill, Albemarle. Their sons:
 1. SAMUEL MORRIS PRYOR married Laura McKim; their son
 - a. SAMUEL MORRIS PRYOR
 2. GILMER PRYOR
 - e. ELIZABETH YATES PRYOR married Benjamin Jones of Petersburg
 - f. THEODORICK BLAND – Rev. Theodorick Bland Pryor, D.D., LL. D., was married first to Lucy Atkinson, Daughter of Roger Atkinson of Olive Hill. They had one son and one daughter, Roger and Lucy.
 - i. LUCY PRYOR married Robert McIlwaine of Petersburg, Virginia

- ii. ROGER ATKINSON PRYOR, member of Congress from Virginia, Colonel in Confederate Army, Judge of Supreme Court of New York, married Sarah Agnes Rice, great-granddaughter of Rev. David Rice, one of the founders of Hampden-Sidney College. Their children:
 - 1. MARIE GORDON PRYOR married Henry Rice of Charlotte
 - 2. THEODORICK BLAND PRYOR first honor man of Princeton University and scholar of Cambridge University, England died young. He was prepared for college by Gordon McCabe of Richmond. His short career was one of unprecedented brilliancy.
 - 3. ROGER ATKINSON PRYOR, now a lawyer in New York City.
 - 4. MARY BLAIR PRYOR married Francis Thomas Walker
 - 5. WILLIAM RICE PRYOR, physician and surgeon in New York City married Louise Allan of Richmond. Their son
 - a. HOFFMAN ALLAN PRYOR
 - 6. LUCY ATKINSON PRYOR married Arthur Page Brown
 - 7. FRANCIS BLAND PRYOR married William de Leftwich Dodge, resides in Paris.

Rev. THEODORICK PRYOR married secondly, Frances Epes, by whom

- 8. FRANCES PRYOR married Thomas Campbell
- 9. NANNY PRYOR married George Jones
- 10. ARCHIBALD CAMPBELL PRYOR married Ann Augusta Bannister of Petersburg. They have sons and daughters, live at Centre Hill, Petersburg.

g. Others died in childhood

- 2. SAMUEL PRYOR
- 3. LUKE PRYOR emigrated to Alabama; In Virginia he married Martha Scott, sister to General Wingfield Scott and was the father of LUKE PRYOR, United States Senator from Alabama. Luke married secondly, Mrs. Lane, of Brunswick County, Virginia and Senator PRYOR was the eldest son of the second marriage.
- 4. PHILIP PRYOR settled in Brunswick County and married Miss Wilkes
- 5. MARY PRYOR married Alexander Bolling and died at an advanced age.

It is believed that JOHN PRYOR [*son of Colonel Samuel Pryor*] married Ann, a daughter of Richard Bland of Jordans. It seems to have been almost the universal custom to name the first two sons, respectively, after the father's and mother's fathers. John Pryor's first two sons were named SAMUEL and RICHARD. The descendents of JOHN PRYOR have been under the impression he was twice married.

A list of the children (and their marriages) of Richard Bland contains this entry: "3d. Ann Bland-b. 15 Aug., 1735 married Pryor."

The following abstracts are from the records of Amelia County:

- 1. Will of SAMUEL PRYOR of Amelia dated February 20 and proved May 27, 1790; legatees: brothers RICHARD and PHILIP PRYOR. (LUKE Pryor, also a legatee, is not described as brother, but he undoubtedly was, as these were sons of JOHN PRYOR, as in the account just given.)

2. Deed, 1761, from THORNTON PRYOR of Amelia (The son of Colonel Samuel Pryor as given in the Mitchell account)
3. Deed, March 16, 1763, from THORNTON PRYOR, of Halifax County, North Carolina to SAMUEL PRYOR of Goochland County, Virginia, conveying that portion of the estate of their father, SAMUEL PRYOR, deceased, which he bequeathed to the said THORNTON PRYOR, and which at the time of making the deed, was in possession of their mother, PRUDENCE PRYOR. (This deed also confirms the statements made above.)
4. Deed, May 18, 1742, from PHILIP PRYOR of Hanover County and Ann his wife, conveying land in Amelia. (His name does not appear in the pedigrees given above. Probably a brother of Colonel SAMUEL PRYOR.)
5. Will of JOHN PRYOR, dated September 23rd and proved October 27, 1785. Legatees: sons RICHARD, LUKE and SAMUEL; daughter ELIZABETH TIMBERLAKE, daughter MARY BOLLING; son-in-law JOHN TIMBERLAKE; mentions legacy left by deceased brother LUKE PRYOR. (This was the JOHN PRYOR, son of COLONEL SAMUEL PRYOR.)

(To Be Continued)

[The above section was printed in Vol. 7, No. 1, July 1899, Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, pages 75 through 79]

THE PRYOR FAMILY

(continued)

The following notices of the PRYORs occur in the Goochland County records:

1. Bond of WILLIAM PRYOR, as sheriff of Goochland, August 21st, 1753.
2. Will of JOHN PRYOR, legatees: daughters ANN WRIGHT and REBECCA WOODSON and grandson, JOHN WOODSON. Dated June 24, and proved August 19, 1755.
3. Bond of WILLIAM PRYOR, February 9, 1758 to Valentine Wood, administrator of Henry Wood, reciting that said PRYOR had married Sarah, daughter of Henry Wood.
4. Deed from Mrs. FRANCIS PRYOR, December 1770 to her son George Meriwether, son of her former husband Nicholas Meriwether.
5. Inventories of the personal estate of SAMUEL PRYOR, deceased in Goochland and Dinwiddie Counties, dated 1766.
6. Marriage bond October 27, 1757 WILLIAM PRYOR and Sarah Wood
7. Marriage bond, August 27, 1760 SAMUEL PRYOR of Amelia County and FRANCES, widow of Nicholas Meriwether.
8. Marriage bond, April 30, 1773, Matthew Payne and SALLY, daughter of WILLIAM PRYOR, gent.
9. Will of WILLIAM PRYOR legatees: son SAMUEL, wife SARAH, sons WILLIAM and JOHN, daughter SALLY PAYNE, daughters PATTY and MARY PRYOR. Friend Colonel William Fleming, of Cumberland, executor. Dated May 16, and proved July 21, 1777.

The records of Louisa County contain the following:

1. Will of George Meriwether, dated July 6, 1775, legacies to his mother FRANCES PRYOR and "her son SAMUEL PRYOR, my brother-in-law" (half-brother)
2. Deed, March, 1768 from FRANCIS PRYOR of Orange County and Frances his wife, conveying land in Louisa.

And of Hanover County:

1. Deed, October 1st, 1735 from William Harris of Hanover to JOHN PRYOR of King and Queen County.

WILLIAM PRYOR, of Goochland, from comparison of all data, must have been the son of Colonel SAMUEL PRYOR, with whom the account of this family given in the last number begins. SAMUEL PRYOR, of Amelia and Goochland, must also have been another son. FRANCIS PRYOR, of Orange, named in the Louisa deed, another son. JOHN PRYOR, of King and Queen, named in the Hanover deed, was probably a brother of Colonel SAMUEL PRYOR.

In Trimble County, Kentucky are tombs bearing the following inscriptions:

“In memory of SAMUEL PRYOR, who departed this life December 1811”

“In memory of Mary (Curd), wife of SAMUEL PRYOR, who departed this life June 30, 1833, in the 60th year of her age.”

SAMUEL PRYOR and his wife Mary, went from Goochland County to Kentucky about 1800. She was born in 1773, and he probably some years before that date. It is a question as to whose son he was. SAMUEL PRYOR, who died in 1766, apparently left no will, so that the names of his children (if any) can not be ascertained from that source. WILLIAM PRYOR, of Goochland, whose will was dated 1777, left a son Samuel. It is known, however, that Frances, who married first, Nicholas Meriwether, and secondly, SAMUEL PRYOR was a sister of Joseph Morton of James City County (long a member of the House of Burgesses) and as the name Morton frequently appeared among the descendants of this SAMUEL PRYOR, who removed to Kentucky, it is probable that he was a son of SAMUEL and FRANCES.

The Goochland records would probably show: SAMUEL and MARY (CURD) PRYOR had issue:

1. Captain JACK
2. MARY
3. LUCY
4. CATHERINE
5. GEORGE MORTON
6. JAMES
7. SAMUEL
8. NANCY
9. MARTHA
10. FRANCES

11. HARRY [*listed as child number 10½ in original document, possibly this means Frances and Harry were twins?*]

1. Captain Jack Pryor born 1790, died 1858 was long sheriff of Oldham County, Kentucky; married Sally Duncan and had issue:

- a. Joseph
- b. Samuel
- c. Catherine, unmarried
- d. Lucy died unmarried
- e. George died unmarried

2. Mary Pryor, married Charles Dorsey. They went to California during the “Gold Fever”. No information regarding their children.

3. Lucy Pryor, married James Duncan and had issue:
 - a. Sarah
 - b. Mary

4. Catherine Pryor, married first James Duncan (her brother-in-law) and second Moses Tandy
Issue:
 - a. Lena Duncan
 - b. Milton Tandy
 - c. Granville Tandy

5. George Morton Pryor married Elizabeth Lewis and had issue:
 - a. Mary Frances, died unmarried
 - b. Sallie, married --Lincoln, nephew of the President
 - c. Joseph, who had an only son James, who left two children
 - d. Jack, died unmarried
 - e. Frank had five children

6. James Pryor married first Eliza Samuel; second Caroline Butler (no issue by second marriage).
Issue:
 - a. Nancy, married Jacob Chambers
 - b. Mary, married John Sherer
 - c. Eliza, married Harry Tarvin
 - d. Samuel, died young
 - e. Honorable James Pryor, Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals of Kentucky

7. Samuel Pryor, married Nancy Samuels; Issue:
 - a. Honorable William S. Pryor, of Frankfort, Kentucky
 - b. Ann Eliza, married James Roberts

8. Nancy Pryor, married Taverner Beale Young. Issue:
 - a. Jack
 - b. Margaret, died unmarried
 - c. Lucy
 - d. Martha
 - e. Morton
 - f. Samuel
 - g. Mary died unmarried
 - h. Francis

9. Martha Pryor, married Willis Duncan. Issue:
 - a. Mary Ann, married Samuel Jackson
 - b. Eliza, married William Grey
 - c. Francis married Alexander Grant
 - d. Martha Henry, married --Ringe
 - e. Benjamin married --Lemon
 - f. Albert died unmarried
 - g. Samuel died unmarried

10. Frances Pryor, married Jeremiah Strother Issue:

- a. Mary Frances died unmarried
- b. Joseph died unmarried
- c. Samuel married Nancy Jackson Issue:
 - i. Jack
 - ii. Mary
 - iii. Kate

11. Harry Pryor married first Amelia Tandy; second Barbara Robbins Issue:

- a. Tandy married Barbara Giltner and had:
 - i. Henry
 - ii. Moses
 - iii. Catherine
 - iv. Nobel
 - v. Michael
 - vi. Amelia
 - vii. Mary
 - viii. Parker
- b. Katherine died unmarried
- c. Sarah died unmarried
- d. Anna died unmarried
- e. Mary married Patrick Baker and had:
 - i. Rose
 - ii. Pryor
- f. Rose married –Howard
- g. Caroline married –
- h. James married Mrs. Hall
- i. Alice married John McDaniell and had
 - i. Pryor

(To Be Continued)

[The above section was printed in Vol. 7, No. 2, Oct 1899, Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, pages 206 through 208]

THE PRYOR FAMILY
(continued)

The account of the descendants of DAVID PRYOR is derived chiefly from the entries in an old Bible. Information connecting him with the other branches of the family is desired.

DAVID PRYOR of Buckingham County, Virginia married a Miss Susan Ballow. He died the fourth Monday in September, 1804 in Buckingham where he had lived many years. He had children, viz:

1. Dr. William S. Pryor, who lived in Hanover County, Virginia and died 1840
2. Judge John C. Pryor, who lived in Herman, DeSoto County, Mississippi and afterwards in Tampa, Florida; married a Miss Bullock; had five sons and one daughter
 - a. Medora who educated at Bardstown, Kentucky in a Catholic school and married a man named Taylor.
 - b. Frank
 - c. John

d. Daniel

One of the sons was drowned in the Mississippi river with a large sum of money around his body, was just from California, and one son died at Tampa Bay, Florida.

3. Zane Pryor died 1854 married a Miss Patteson of Buckingham, County, Virginia and lived at a place called Zanesville, near Mt. Vinco Post Office now in Buckingham and had two children:
 - a. Captain William Pryor who now lives at White Hall, Dillwin Post Office Buckingham County and keeps the White House Hotel married a Miss Cobbs and they have no children.
 - b. Mrs. Edmondson Nicholas Davis, his sister, lives in Lynchburg, 603 Cabell Street and has five children.
 - i. Elwood T. Davis is a conductor on the Norfolk and Western Railroad
 - ii. David Conway Davis
 - iii. John Bernard Davis
 - iv. Jonnie Davis
 - v. Aurelia Davis

Mr. Davis has the family Bible and record of marriage and death, births and dates.

4. Langston Pryor who died in 1854
5. Leonard Pryor who died in 1830
6. Nicholas Ballow Pryor born in Buckingham 1789; married Sallie Thomas of Amherst County, Virginia; moved to Tennessee and died in Nashville, Tennessee in 1833. Two of his daughters married Dr. James A. Dibrell of Van Buren, Arkansas; the first (Ann Eliza) was the mother of Medora Dibrell who married Dr. Du Val and of Dr. James A Dibrell now of Little Rock, Arkansas.
7. Baynton Pryor
8. Zachariah B. Pryor died 1837 aged 55 years
9. Mitchie B. Pryor married Randolph Jefferson, brother of the President. Randolph Jefferson died 7th August, 1815. This couple left a son, John Jefferson who was raised by Nicholas B. Pryor and his wife.

Susan Ballow wife of David Pryor died in Nashville, Tennessee 1831 aged 94.

The following information was kindly furnished by Hon. Luke Pryor of Athens, Alabama in response to a request made to him:

My father Luke Pryor, son of John Pryor was born April 3, 1770 in Hanover County, near Richmond, Virginia. His oldest brother Richard was a tobacco merchant in Richmond, who under the primogeniture laws of England, had care of the children and estate of his father John. My father (Luke) married twice, his first wife was Miss Martha Scott, sister of General Winfield Scott, by whom he had one son, George, born October 24, 1802; died October 24, 1803. They were married October 8, 1801. Martha Scott Pryor died November 5, 1802.

On August 22, 1808 my father the second time married my mother, Miss Ann Batte Lane, daughter of Sylvia and Benjamin Lane. Mrs. Lane was Sylvia Perry. My mother Ann Batte Lane was born June 21, 1790; died March 2, 1864. I believe her native county was Brunswick. They had ten children:

1. Martha who married William D. Allison
2. John Benjamin

3. Ann Batte, who married Frederick R. Shelton
4. Elizabeth who married Fleming Douglas
5. Mary Dennis who married Henry W. Campbell
6. Harriet Bolling who married Dr. Thomas S. Malone
7. I myself married Miss Isabella Virginia Harris, daughter of Captain John H. Harris and Francis Rowsie Hiarris all of Virginia
8. A younger brother Richard [9] a sister Virginia, both died when children, the latter being nine years old
10. Emily, the youngest married Dr. Andrew Jackson McWilhaney

The children of myself and wife are as follows:

1. Aurora, who married Robert A. McClellan
2. My only son, William Richard married Ida M. Harris
3. Memory married William Shirley Peebles
4. Anne Batte married Maclin Sloss
5. Frances now unmarried
6. Mary D. married Thomas Bass Leslie
7. Harriet married Robert C. Lowe
8. Isabella Benjamin died at an early age.

All of my family and most of those whom they have intermarried are of Virginia blood paternally and maternally their ancestors were of English, Scotch and Irish blood.

(Additions and corrections are requested. –Ed.)

[The above section was printed in Vol. 7, No. 3, Jan 1900, Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, pages 325 through 326]