

## **JOHN COOKE ALIAS BUTCHER**

(30 March 1630 - 16 May 1691)

**Son of Thomas Cooke Alias Butcher, and Mary (Thomas' 1<sup>st</sup> wife)**

**Father of John Cook**

**GGGG Grandfather of Henry Freeman Cook**

(Henry Freeman, William, Abial, Job, Thomas, John, **John**, Thomas, Thomas)

(The following was taken from the book *Thomas Cooke of Rhode Island*,  
Compiled and published by Jane Fletcher Fiske, Boxford, Massachusetts, 1987,  
Volume One, pages 13 - 19, 23.)

3. **JOHN COOKE ALIAS BUTCHER**, son of Thomas Cooke alias Butcher, was baptized 30 March 1630 in the parish church of St. Mary, Netherbury, Dorset, England, and died, as **JOHN COOK**, 16 May 1691 at Portsmouth, R.I., probably of smallpox. He married, probably about 1652, **MARY BORDEN**, daughter of Richard and Joan (Fowle) Borden. She was baptized in the parish of Cranbrook, Kent, England, on 13 January 1632/33 and died 23 December 1690 at Portsmouth. See the New England Historical Genealogical Register, 75 (1921):226-233 and 84 (1930):70-84; 225-229 for extensive material on the English ancestry of the Borden family.

John Cook was made a freeman of Portsmouth on 10 July 1648, when he was only eighteen years old (Early Records of Portsmouth, p. 39). His name appears again on a 1655 list of freemen, and on the Conanicut Purchase agreement, dated 10 March 1656/7 at Newport, for 1/250th part of (Jamestown) Island (R.I. Archives). On 14 May 1660 his parents deeded to him sixty acres of land in Portsmouth, using for both father and son the name "Cooke alias Butcher." This deed in 1979 provided the necessary link in discovery of the English origins of the family.

The ear mark for John's cattle was recorded 26 April 1668, as of fourteen years standing: "a crope one the left Eare and a hapene under the crop one the fore side of ye Eare and a slitt on the Right Eare and a hapeny before or one the fore side of the same Eare," which, translated into modern English, meant a crop (small cut) on the left ear with the brand of a halfpenny under it, and a slit on the right ear with the brand of a halfpenny in front of it (*ibid.*, p. 277)

On 22 February 1665/6, John Cooke was among those Portsmouth men chosen to serve on a committee to make a rate (i.e. an assessment for tax purposes) of £100 to pay Dr. John Clarke (*ibid.*, p. 131). Dr. Clarke had gone to England to obtain from King Charles II a new Royal Charter which would give the Colony much needed legal guarantees and freedoms; his efforts were successful and the General Assembly voted to pay his expenses and to give him an additional sum for his trouble.

John Cooke was chosen 17 October 1667, along with his brother Thomas, to be a grand jurymen at the Court of Trials, a duty he performed again in 1669 and 1673. In 1670 he was a deputy to the General Assembly in Newport, and on 5 June 1671 was chosen as constable for Portsmouth (*ibid.*, pp. 139, 155, 162).

On 3 June 1668 John Cook and Daniel Wilcox were given the privilege of running a ferry

at Pocasset. This was the ferry at the northern end of the island, sometimes called Howland's Ferry, about where the Stone Bridge to Tiverton was later built.

On 20 March 1669/70 John Cook signed his mark to a receipt for "six hundred and three quarters and three pounds of good and merchantable barr iron received from Capt. Thomas Leonard and James Leonard Jr. of Taunton in the county of Bristol upon he account of Theodotious Moore chaynmaker of Boston in New England for the use of Jonathan Blackman of Little Compton in ye county of Bristol" (scrapbook in office of Taunton city clerk, p. 301).

John Cooke of Portsmouth on 22 August 1671 purchased from Thomas Burge of Newport one-sixth share of land in Dartmouth "at Acushnet Ponegansett" for £11, 5 shillings. He evidently owned land in New Jersey before 15 July 1673, when, calling himself yeoman, he deeded to Robert Gibbs of Punkatest in New Plymouth three-fourths of a share of land at Portageage, N.J., the deed being witnessed by John Sanford and Francis Brayton. This deed was annulled 24 January 1674 by mutual agreement (R. I. Land Evidences 1:30, 31). In 1677, a warrant for 240 acres in the Monmouth Patent, "to be subsequently located and surveyed," was issued by the East Jersey Proprietors to Caleb Shrieve (Shrieve) in the right of John Cook (Edwin Salter, A History of Monmouth and Ocean Counties (Bayonne, N.J., 1890), p. 30), but the deed from Cook to Shrieve was apparently never recorded. Salter comments that many of those "to whom warrants were issued in 1675 or later had been settlers for a number of years previous" (ibid., 28).

Zoeth Howland was murdered by Indians at Little Compton, and 24 August 1676 John Cooke aged about 45 years, testified that he "being at punckatest in the middle of July or thereabouts, did ask of severall Indians named as followeth, Woodcock, Matocoat, and Job whome they were that kl'd Zow Howland ... answer was that there was six of them in company and Manasses was the Indian that fetched him out of the water" (Newport Court Book A. p. 36, Providence College Archives).

Thomas Cook Sr. died in 1677 and sometime "in the year of 1678" John Cook, Sr. signed a receipt for his inheritance under his father's will, "of my mother-in-law [i.e. stepmother] Mary Cook as executrix to the estate of my deceased father Thomas Cook." Under the terms of the will, he received only one cow, (probably because his father had already give him land in 1660), and each of his children was to have one shilling.

On 30 April 1680 John Cooke of Portsmouth sold to Thomas Ward of Newport for £18, 5 shillings the land in Dartmouth that he had bought from Thomas Burge in 1671 (R. I. Land Evidences. 1: 134). Although he was not one of the original proprietors of the Pocasset Purchase in March 1680, whereby the area which became Tiverton was bought from Plymouth Colony, John Cooke on 24 November 1680 purchased two shares in the Purchase from his son-in-law William Manchester, who owned five. Called John Cook, Sr., of Portsmouth, yeoman, he paid £73:05:08 to William Manchester of Punkatest, yeoman, and his wife Mary (R. I. Land Evidence, 1:138). When the Great Lots were laid out, from the Sakonnet River eastward, John Cooke drew number 16 and 19.

On the same day that he bought the Pocasset land, John Cooke purchased one-half of thirteen shares of land laying in Punkatest Neck from William Manchester and his wife Mary for £60, it being land which Manchester had bought from Thomas Lawton of Portsmouth in 1677 (ibid.). On 17 July 1682 John Cooke aged 51 years, and Joh Cooke Jr., aged 26 years, both of Portsmouth, testified that in March last they had witnessed the delivery of premises in Portsmouth deeded by William Browne of Salem, Mass. To George Sisson. This deed, dated 11

February 1681/2, conveyed a 400 acre farm which had been given to Mehitable Brown, wife of Joseph Brown, by her father William Benton. It was bounded on the south by land “late in the Teanure of Thomas Cooke senr. deceased and Westerly ... Partly by the land lately in Teanure of John Cooke senr. and partly by the land of the late Widow Cooke” (ibid., p. 160).

John Cooke Sen’r of Portsmouth and Mary his wife on 1 June 1686 deeded to Thomas Waite of Punckatest five shares in the 13<sup>th</sup> lot and one share in the 11<sup>th</sup> lot at Punckatest Neck. William Manchester and Ephraim Turner witnessed the deed (Bristol Co. Deeds 4:78). On 28 February 1686/7 Benjamin Church of New Bristol in New England, for £36 paid by John Cooke Sr., inhabitant of Portsmouth on Rhode Island, deeded to him land on Punckatest Neck, the whole of the 10<sup>th</sup> lot which was laid out for 22 acres, which Church had bought of Edward Gray of Plymouth and Arthur Hathaway of Dartmouth by deeds dated 4 March 1679. George Sisson and Gilbert Magick witnessed this deed (Court Files, Suffolk, 42579).

On 29 March 1688 Jeremiah Browne of Newport and his wife Mary, formerly wife of Thomas Cooke Sr., deeded to John Cooke of Portsmouth for £39 ten acres in Portsmouth bounded on the east by land of George Sisson, north by Stephen Cornell, west by land formerly of Thomas Fish, deceased, and south by land of said John Cooke and the Common. Robert Little and Weston Clarke were witnesses (R. I. Land Evidence 1:211). This was evidently the ten acres which Thomas Cooke in his will had left to Mary for her own use.

John Cooke signed his mark to his will 15 May 1691, less than five months after the death of his wife, Mary. He stated that although he was of sound memory and understanding, “yet being aged and calling to mind the brevity and uncertainty of this life not Knowing how soon the Lord may call me from hence Especially considering the sore visitation of the smallpox wherewith many are now visited and many have been taken away.”

To his son John Cook he left his land at Puncatest Neck, it being about 150 acres, together with the housing thereon, 4 acres of saltmarsh meadow at Sapowet in Little Compton, together with one-half of the upland he had there, 8 head of neat cattle, the feather bed and bedding in the house John, Jr. now lived in at Puncatest, and 20 sheep. From this bequest was reserved for Joseph Cook the right during his lifetime to keep 15 head of cattle at Puncatest and to harvest hay there for the wintering of those cattle.

His son Joseph Cook received the housing were John now lived in Portsmouth, together with all the land and outbuildings, 4 acres of saltmarsh meadow at Sapowet and one-half of the upland there. If Joseph should die without male heirs this property was to pass to son Thomas and his male heirs.

Joseph, within half a year after his father’s decease, was to pay to his sister Mary, wife of William Manchester, £10 and to deliver to her 10 sheep. To his sister, Elizabeth, wife of William Briggs, Sara, wife of Thomas Wait, Hannah, wife of Daniel Wilcox, and Martha, Wife of William Cory, Joseph was to pay £10 apiece. Sister Deborah, wife of William Almy, was to have only one shilling. Sister Amy, wife of David Clayton, was to be paid £10 in money, “and to each of his other sisters being six of them he shall deliver to each of them a cow.” Elizabeth Briggs also received a feather bed, bedding and furniture.

The reference in the will to “other sisters being six of them” has been often misinterpreted to mean that John left six additional daughters whose names he omitted. No evidence whatever has been found to indicate any other daughters, and the explanation seems simple: Amy Clayton was in New Jersey by 1691, making delivery of a cow to her impractical, and the other daughters whose name are given to add up to six.

To Joseph he left his Negro man call Jack “who is of service for time of his Life” and his Indian woman Maria to be his servant for ten years and then to be freed, and his Indian boy Goan Francisco to serve with him until he be twenty-four years old, at which time Joseph was to put him in good apparel and give him corn and a horse. Joseph also received a feather bed and bedding.

To son Thomas Cook he left the 16<sup>th</sup> lot in Pocasset Purchase, divided or undivided, and 4 acres of salt marsh.

To son Samuel Cook he left the 19<sup>th</sup> lot in Pocasset Purchase, but Samuel was not to have the disposal of this without the advice and consent of the executor and overseers of the will.

John further bequeathed to his son John his Negro woman Betty and to his son Thomas 20 sheep, 3 cows and a mare. He named son Joseph whole and sole executor of the will and “Request and Intreat my Loving friends and neighbors George Sisson and Isaac Lawton to by my overseers to do their utmost that all Things may be managed aright according as I do hereby dispose. Moreover I will and bequeath to my Granddaughter Sarah Manchester a cow to be delivered her at the day of her marriage....”

George Sisson, Margaret Hall and John Yelthro witnessed the will; Yelthro was a schoolmaster and probably the scribe who wrote it. All three testified to it authenticity when it was proved 25 May 1691 (Portsmouth TC [Town Records] 2:266). A copy of this will is included in Court Files, Suffolk, 42579, where it was entered into evidence over fifty years later by John’s great-grandson William Cook when he was seeking to recover his inheritance.

John and Mary Cook are buried in the small burial ground in what is now an open field, on the Glen Farm in Portsmouth. The site is beside a stone wall, on the south side of Glen Road, about three-tenths of a mile east of East Main Road, on land that was granted to John by th town council ca. 1655. John’s stone reads that he “lived neare 60 years.” Mary’s stone is broken, her name gone and the remaining inscription not completely legible, although it does state that she was “AE 57 years.” Buried with them are their grandson, Joseph Cook, Jr. and his infant son Paul. Selden S. Cooke, writing in 1860, stated that there were about forty graves in the cemetery, but at that time the only stones that were visible were those that were still there in 1981, and Mary’s was already broken. No other graves are now apparent, and the remaining stones are in danger.

For some reason this burial ground was not designated as “Rhode Island Historical” and was never fenced off; recent attempts to have the situation remedied have not been successful. Until about 1980, it was open to cattle grazing, but the installation of a water line through the field has made it necessary to keep the livestock out, and cows have been replaced with a more devastating hazard — modern mowing equipment. When the grass is high, the stones cannot be seen, and that of Paul has already been knocked to pieces and Joseph’s severely damaged. The owner of Glen Farm lives in New York City, and it is managed by a caretaker. International horse shows and riding events are held there.

Children, (born Portsmouth, R.I. order uncertain):

- +16    i    **ELIZABETH**, b. ca. 1653; m. William Briggs.
- +17    ii    **JOHN**, b. 1655; m. Ruth Shaw.
- +18    iii    **MARY**, b. ca. 1656; m. William Manchester.
- +19    iv    **SARAH**, b. ca. 1658; m. Thomas Waite.

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| +20 | v    | <b>HANNAH</b> , b. ca. 1660; m. (1) Daniel Wilcox, (2) Enoch Briggs.   |
| +21 | vi   | <b>JOSEPH</b> , b. ca. 1662; m. Susanna Briggs.  |
| +22 | vii  | <b>THOMAS</b> , b. ca 1664; m. Mary Cory.  |
| +23 | viii | <b>DEBORAH</b> , b. ca. 1666; m. William Almy.   |
| +24 | ix   | <b>MARTHA</b> , b. ca. 1668; m. William Cory   |
| +25 | x    | <b>AMY</b> , b. ca. 1671; m. David Clayton.  |
| 26  | xi   | <b>SAMUEL</b> , b. probably ca. 1674, d. after 1705. He was mentally incompetent and under the care of his brother Joseph, who was allowed £100 by order of the Superior Court at Bristol in 1701 for having maintained him for “ye space of tenn years”, this amount to be raised from the profits of Samuel’s land in Tiverton, “he being an idiott and not able to provide for himself.” His father had left him the 19 <sup>th</sup> Great Lot there, but with the restriction that he was not to have the disposal of it himself. |

(*Thomas Cooke of Rhode Island*, Compiled and published by Jane Fletcher Fiske, Boxford, Massachusetts, 1987, Volume One, pages 13 - 19, 23.)

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(The following is taken from the book *Little Compton Families*, Published by the Little Compton Historical Society from records compiled by Benjamin Franklin Wilbour, “The Cook Family” Salt Lake Family History Library call # 974.56/L2 D3w, 1985, p 205 - 206.)

**JOHN COOK**, born in 1631 probably in Earles Colne, Exex County, England, died 16 May 1691 in Portsmouth, Residence: Portsmouth.

He married **MARY BORDEN**, daughter of Richard and Joan (Fowle) Borden, from Hedcorn, Kent County, England, died after 1691.

He and Daniel Wilcox ran a ferry to Pocasset.

There is a small burial lot in Portsmouth wherein are buried the family of John Cook.

His will made 15 May 1691 and proved 25 May 1691: “To son John one hundred and fifty acres at Punketest with housing and four acres in Sapowet in LC reserving right of my son Joseph of getting hay at Punketest for 15 head of cattle; to son Joseph housing and land where I now dwell in Portsmouth and four acres at Sapowet Marsh and son Joseph to pay his sisters Mary Manchester, wife of William, Elizabeth Briggs, wife of William, Sarah Wait, wife of Thomas, Hannah Wilcox, wife of Daniel and Martha Cory, wife of William, 10 pounds each; to Deborah Almy, wife of William, 1 shilling; to Amey Clayton, wife of David, 10 pounds; and to each other sister there being six of them, a cow; to daughter Mary Manchester 10 sheep; to daughter Elizabeth Briggs a feather bed; to son Joseph Negro man Jack for rest of life and Indian Woman Maria to be his servant for 10 years and then freed, and Indian boy Joan Francisco to serve him

till 24 years of age; to son Thomas a share of land at Pocasset, 20 sheep, etc.; to son Samuel land at Posasset; to son John Negro woman Betty and child; to granddaughter Sarah Manchester a cow..."

Children, born in Portsmouth:

- i       **MARY**, d. in 1716 or later; m. John Manchester, son of Thomas and Margaret (Wood) Manchester.
- ii       **ELIZABETH**, b. in 1653; d. after 1716; m. about 1680 William Briggs, son of John and Sarah (Cornell) Briggs.
- iii       **SARAH**, d. after 1733; m. Thomas Wait, son of Thomas and Hannah Wait.
- iv       **JOHN**, b. in 1656.
- v        **HANNAH**, b. in 1736; d. in 1786; m. (1) Daniel Wilcox; m. (2) Enoch Briggs, son of John and Sarah (Cornell) Briggs.
- vi       **JOSEPH**.
- vii       **MARTHA**, d. in 1704; m. William Cory, son of William and Mary (Earle) Cory.
- viii      **AMEY**, d. in 1729; m. David Clayton.
- ix       **SAMUEL**, went to Manmouth, N.J.

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