

THE VIRGINIA GENEALOGIST

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THE JOHN FINLEYS OF AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA: CORRECTING THE RECORD

By Carmen J. Finley, CG, Ph.D.
Santa Rosa, California

Augusta County, Virginia, provided a haven for Scotch-Irish Presbyterian immigrants as they began their migration south in the mid- to late-1730s.¹ Tinkling Spring Meeting House was one of the first in the Valley to have a settled pastor by 1740. Prominent in the history of that church was the name Finley, especially John Finley who was a church commissioner and elder during the formative years.

However, between 1740 and 1800 there were numerous John Finleys in this area of Virginia, the earliest Finley records dating from the late 1730s. In addition to the Johns, there were also multiple Roberts, Williams, and Georges. With each new generation, the duplication of traditional family given names compounded the problem of placing the correct family units together properly. Two previous papers have dealt with portions of this overall problem, involving the Georges and a Robert and his brother James.² The purpose of the present paper is to deal with the John Finleys of Augusta County and present some hypotheses based on information not previously considered by earlier Finley researchers.

Interest in this problem came originally from attempting to verify earlier research as to the stated parents of this writer's third great-grandfather, David Finley. It was discovered there were two John Finleys living in Virginia during the late 1730s, each with a son David, and each David with a wife Elizabeth. The David of interest to this writer was the son of the John Finley who lived on South River in Augusta County and spent his last days in Montgomery (later Wythe) County. This John Finley died prior to Aug. 1782. The other David was the one named in the will of John Finley in 1791 in Augusta County. The proof

¹ The area where they settled, around Staunton, was in Orange County until sometime in the late 1730s and early 1740s, when Augusta was formed.

² Carmen J. Finley, "The George Finleys of Augusta County, Virginia," *The American Genealogist*, v. 64, pp. 216-25; Carmen J. Finley, "Robert and James Finley of Augusta County, Virginia," *The American Genealogist*, v. 66, pp. 239-46.

of these two families and the corrections for the David of primary interest was published in 1988.³

An earlier Finley researcher, Albert Finley France, along with Herald F. Stout who used and expanded his work, fused there two families together. They incorrectly identified the David who belonged to the Montgomery County family as belonging to the Augusta County John Finley who left a will dated 1791. They further assumed a father-son relationship between these two early Augusta County John Finleys, one of whom lived along Middle River and the other along South River.⁴ The present paper contends that the two John Finleys are not father and son, but rather they are contemporaries who settled in Augusta County about the same time.

The John Finley of Middle River settled there in the late 1730s where he remained leaving a will in 1791. The John Finley of South River settled there also in the late 1730s. He then removed about 1765 to Prince Edward County where he remained until about 1772/1773. In 1773 he purchased property on Sally Run in Montgomery County, where he died prior to Aug. 1782. To demonstrate this, the cast of characters, of necessity, becomes very large, spans the time period between the late 1740s and the early 1800s, and involves geographical areas in Pennsylvania, Virginia, the Carolinas and Tennessee. In Virginia, the counties of Augusta, Prince Edward and Montgomery (later Wythe) are critical in tracing South River John, as is his association with the Rev. John Thomson and John Caldwell, settler of Cub Creek, as well as Thomson's descendants in those locations.

Within Augusta County there were at least four additional persons by the name of John Finley, two of whom were sons of the respective senior John Finleys. The present writer has endeavored to stay as close to primary source documents as possible. This leads both to support of some of the work done by earlier researchers, France and Stout, as well as major differences. Where differences exist, they will be indicated and discussed.

³ Carmen J. Finley, "David Finley (1754-1848): Correcting the Record," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, v. 76, pp. 112-20.

⁴ Albert Finley France, untitled manuscript (Annapolis, Md., 1940), copy in possession of author; Herald F. Stout, *The Clan Finley* (2nd ed., 2 v. in 1; Dover, Ohio, 1956).

JOHN FINLEY #1 - MIDDLE RIVER

The earliest land record for the John Finley who lived on Middle River was a patent for 183 acres "on a branch of Cathey's River (now Middle River) called Finley's Branch," in Dec. 1740.⁵ In that society, obtaining a patent was step three in the process of acquiring land. First, a petition was made for title and this resulted in a warrant which authorized a survey. Next, the survey was made. After the survey, a patent was granted. It was not unusual for this process to take several years, so it is probably safe to say that the Middle River John Finley must have been in that location in the late 1730s. In Oct. 1741 John Finley received his second patent for 300 acres "on a draft of Cathey's River."⁶

One distinguishing point between Middle River John and South River John is that the first was referred to as a "cooper" and the latter as a "Gentleman." In May 1746 "Robert Armstrong was appointed overseer of a road from Jennings Gap⁷ to Daniel McNaires (McNair)⁸ thence to John Finla's cooper - thence to the Courthouse all tithes within four miles on each side to work the road."⁹ While this was the only reference found indicating his trade, the inventory of his estate, taken 20 Dec. 1791, did include a set of cooper tools.¹⁰

In Nov. 1749 John Finley sold his first land acquisition, 183 acres, to Alex Gardner.¹¹ It wasn't until Nov. 1767 that mention of his wife, Thankful, was made when they deeded 179 acres, "a part of the Tract John Finley now lives on," to their son George Finley for 5 shillings.¹² In Nov. 1771 when Samuel Doak wrote his will he referred to John Finley, his brother-in-law.¹³ This is consistent with France and Stout who state there was a John Finley who married Thankful Doak living in Augusta County in this time period. Thankful was

⁵ Virginia Patent Bk. 15, p. 852.

⁶ Virginia Patent Bk. 20, p. 83.

⁷ Jennings Gap is about 8 miles northwest of Staunton and about 6 miles from the Middle River property of John Finley.

⁸ Daniel McNair was a neighbor of John Finley and apparently a life-long friend. His name appeared many times in conjunction with Finley. Daniel's son David McNair witnessed the 1791 will of John Finley.

⁹ Lyman Chalkley, *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia, Extracted from the Original Court Records of Augusta County* (Roslyn, Va., 1912), v. 1, p. 18.

¹⁰ Augusta Co., Va., Will Bk. 7, p. 431.

¹¹ Chalkley, *op. cit.*, v. 3, p. 276; Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 2, p. 365.

¹² Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 14, pp. 104-06

¹³ Augusta Co., Va., Will Bk. 4, p. 497.

named in only two other documents found by this writer. She and John Finley each received 5 pounds 6 shillings in March 1773 from Samuel Craig when he accounted for his guardianship function in the estate of John Black, orphan of Anthony Black.¹⁴ She was also named in the will of John Finley, written in 1791, to be discussed following.

Shortly after John and Thankful deeded property to their son George, John received another patent in July 1768 for 238 acres "on a branch of the middle River of Shanando joining to the land he lives on."¹⁵ This same year he was named as one of the representatives and Commissioners of Brown's Meeting House¹⁶ to receive two acres on Meadow Run, a branch of Middle River, from John and Margaret Brown.¹⁷

Especially important is a deed from Robert Clendenen to John Finley in March 1775, because France claims the John who married Thankful died in 1773. The property was the same John and Thankful had deeded to George Finley in 1767. George sold this property to Robert Clendenen in March 1772¹⁸ and when the Clendenens sold it back to John Finley it was designated "formerly a part of his land" in March 1775.¹⁹

Middle River John is definitely identified as having a son David, living with him in 1786 and 1787, and their neighborhood can be established from neighbors and witnesses identified in a variety of documents.

THE MIDDLE RIVER NEIGHBORHOOD: Tax lists for the years 1782-1787²⁰ show consistently just one John Finley in the Middle River area and four to six Finley families in the South River area, Neighbors and witnesses identified in Middle River documents include Daniel McNair, William Anderson,²¹

¹⁴ Augusta Co., Va., Will Bk. V, pp. 74-75.

¹⁵ Virginia Patent Bk. 37, p. 281.

¹⁶ Others names as Commissioners included John Trimble, William McPeters, Jr., George Berry and Hugh Young.

¹⁷ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 14, p. 450.

¹⁸ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 18, pp. 92-93.

¹⁹ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 21, pp. 17-21. See also Finley, "The George Finleys of Augusta County." The three deeds involved in these transactions specify different acreages, but the descriptions are identical.

²⁰ Augusta Co., Va., Personal Property Tax 1782-1790, LDS film #0029288.

²¹ Virginia Patent Bk. 17, p. 852, John Finley's patent for 183 acres on "Cathey's River called Finley's Branch," 1740.

Alexander Gardner, Robert Scott, James McCorkale, Francis Beaty,²² John Buchanan, Thomas Brown, Robert Finley,²³ John Trimble, William McPheeters, Jr., George Berry, Hugh Young, James Brown, Pat Martin, James Crow, John Brown, Margaret Brown,²⁴ Robert Clendenen, William Bell, James Trimble, David Trimble,²⁵ William McPheeters, Sr.,²⁶ Jeremiah Ofriel, Robert Armstrong,²⁷ David McNair, John Thomas and John Wilson.²⁸ Several of these persons (John Brown, Hugh Young, John Trimble) can be located on Hildebrand's map²⁹ in the extreme northwestern portion of Beverley Manor where Middle River intersects the Manor line. This grouping of names was sufficient to identify and separate the tax lists for 1782-1787 into Middle River and South River areas. The years 1786 and 1787 were especially significant for the Middle River John Finley. In 1786 his entry read "Jno & Dd"; in 1787 it read "self & son David." Meanwhile, on South River there were two John Finleys each year except for 1784 when a third John Finley, designated as "junr," was listed.

John of Middle River left a will in 1791 that clearly identified his wife Thankful and their children.³⁰ However, there also exists a copy made by the clerk that has created genealogical havoc. John's original draft, bearing his actual signature and those of his witnesses, provides the following key information:

Drafted 17 Aug. 1791; Proved 20 Sept. 1791.

Beneficiaries: Wife Thankful; sons David, George, Robert, James, John; daughters Margaret Shields, Jean, and Thankful McKarter; grandson, John

²² Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 2, p. 365, John Finley to Alexander Gardner "on Cathey's Branch called Finley's Branch," 1749.

²³ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 14, p. 104, John and Thankful to George, 1767.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 450, John and Margaret Brown land for meeting house, 1768.

²⁵ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 18, p. 92, George and Jane Finley to Robert Clendenen, 1772.

²⁶ Augusta Co., Va., Will Bk. V, p. 63, John Finley bonded in William McPheeters' estate settlement, 1773.

²⁷ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 21, p. 17, Robert and Margaret Clendenen to John Finley, 1775.

²⁸ Augusta Co., Va., Will Bk. 7, p. 404, John Finley will, 1791.

²⁹ J. R. Hildebrand, "The Beverley Patent: 1736," (1954), folded insert inside back cover of Howard McKnight Wilson, *The Tinkling Spring, Headwater of Freedom, a Study of the Church and Her People, 1732-1952* (Fisherville, Va., 1954).

³⁰ Augusta Co., Va., Will Bk. 7, p. 404.

son of Jean.

Executor: Son, David.

Witnesses: David McNair, John Thomas, John Wilson

The second copy of the will, written in a completely different hand, is clearly a clerical copy. The "signatures" of the testator and the witnesses are in the same pen as the body of the will. Unfortunately, this second document transcribes the name of son James as *Thomas*. Compounding the problem is the fact that Chalkley's published abstract was made from the flawed copy rather than from the original.³¹

Confirmation that John of Middle River did have a son James is found in another document filed in the settlement of the estate. In one clause of the will John wrote: "I give to my beloved son James (incorrectly transcribed in the clerk's copy as Thomas) one hundred and twenty pounds Virginia currency with interest from this Date [17 Aug. 1791]." In the course of settling the estate, John's son and executor, David, made a deed of trust to John Shields of Amherst County (husband of Margaret Shields named by John's will as his daughter) which allowed for payment of a debt of £120 to *James Finley*, "with legal interest from August one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one."³²

Confirmation that this is the same John Finley who patented land on Middle River is found in the disposal of the Middle River property in 1794 by his son and executor, David, and the latter's wife Elizabeth. David and Elizabeth sold 648 acres to John Johnston 1 Oct. 1794.³³ The 648 acres consisted of three separate parcels containing 300, 238 and 110 acres each. The 300 acre parcel and the 238 acre parcel were, by description, those patented in 1741 and 1769 by John of Middle River. However, the 110 acre parcel which David also sold must have been pending when John died, since the patent was issued in the name of David Finley as "assignee of John Finley," and was dated 18 Nov. 1791, three months after proving of the will.³⁴ There is substantial evidence that David and Elizabeth then moved on to Montgomery Co., Ky.³⁵

³¹ Chalkley, *op. cit.*, v. 3, p. 195.

³² Augusta Co., Va., Deed of Trust Bk. 1-A, p. 122.

³³ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 28, p. 268.

³⁴ Virginia Grant Bk. 24, p. 385.

³⁵ There is strong evidence that David and Elizabeth Finley went to Montgomery Co., Ky., after selling his father's remaining Augusta County property. David and Elizabeth Wilson, daughter of Joseph Wilson, were bonded to marry on 9 March 1791 (Chalkley, *op. cit.*, v. 2, p. 295). The marriage was solemnized 10 March 1791 by the Rev. Archibald Scott (Col. Thomas

Then, too, confirmation that John, who died in 1791, is the "John Finla, cooper," who settled along Middle River in the late 1730s is provided by the inventory of the deceased. Taken on 20 Dec. 1791 by the same men who witnessed his will in August, the estate valued at £99.5.2 included a set of cooper's tools.³⁶

THE CHILDREN OF MIDDLE RIVER JOHN FINLEY #1. Children listed in the will written in 1791 included David, George, Robert, James, Margaret Shields, Jean Trimble and Thankful McKarter. Baptismal records at Tinkling Spring Meeting House between 1740 and 1749, the only years for which records are available, show eight Finley children born to two John Finleys during the period of time as follows:³⁷

Child:	Elizabeth	Baptismal date:	18 January 1741
	William		30 January 1743
	George*		30 January 1743
	Robert*		21 April 1745
	Margaret*		December 1746
	James		8 March 1747
	George		4 January 1748
			(Baptized by Rev. John Thomson)
	James		26 March 1749

According to Wilson, these children were from two different John Finley families, those three with asterisks (*) belonging to one John Finley. An unsuccessful

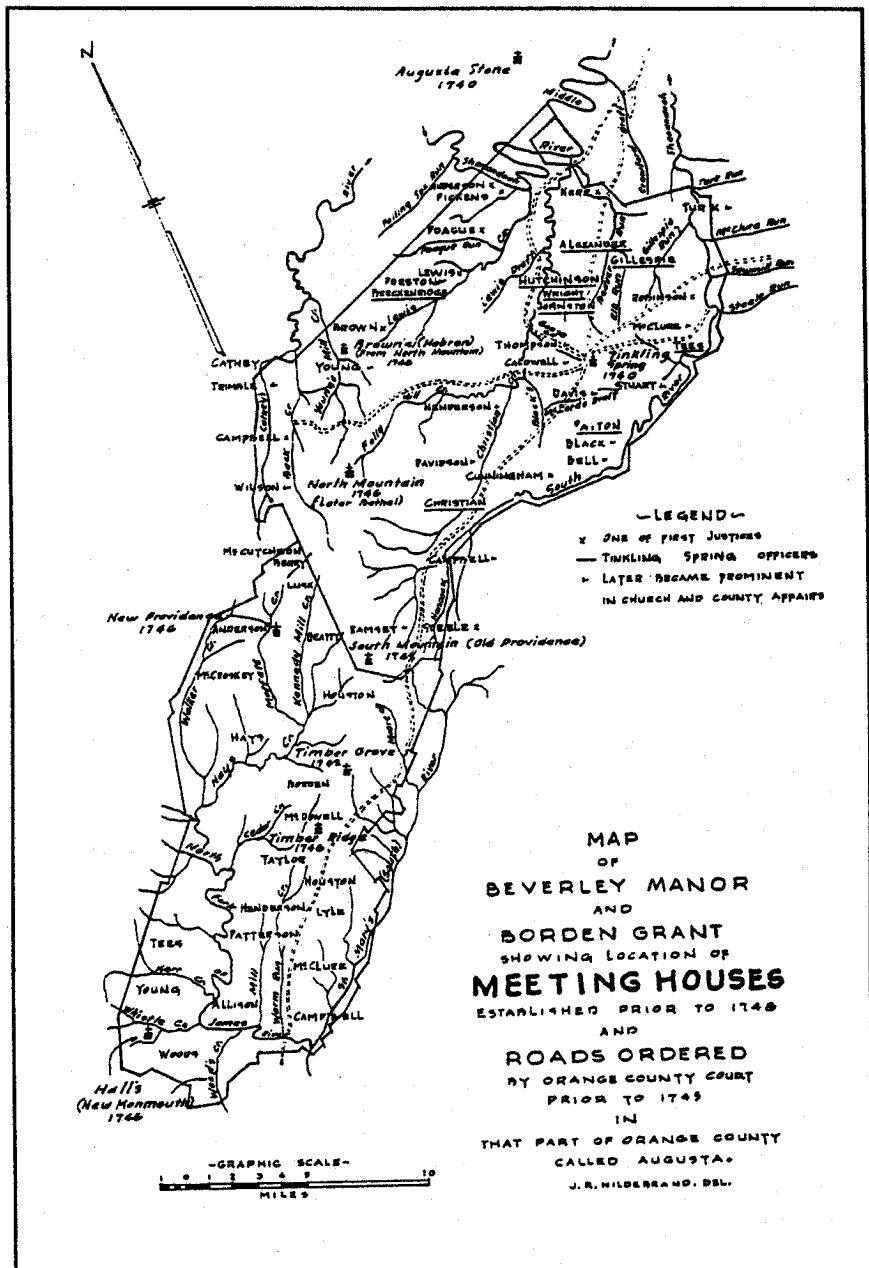
Hughart Chapter DAR, "Marriage Records of Augusta County, Virginia, 1785-1813," [typewritten; n.p., 1970], p. 12). A descendant (Christina Faux, 4611 Glencannon St., Santa Rosa, CA 95405, a great-great-great-granddaughter of Ebenezer) of Ebenezer Finley, born 12 May 1802 in Montgomery Co., Ky., has in her possession a letter written by Achilles Finley to his brother Harrison, both sons of Ebenezer, dated 7 Aug. 1868, which lists the dates of birth of "grandfather's family," including:

John Finley	9 April 1792
Joseph Wilson Finley	27 February 1794
Thankful Sallie Finley	7 July 1799
Ebenezer Finley	12 May 1802

The birth of the first child is right for a marriage of 10 March 1791 and he is named for David's father. The second child is named for Elizabeth's father. The third child is named for David's mother. A David Finley appeared in the Montgomery County tax records in 1801, 1802 and 1804. Unfortunately, most other Montgomery County records were destroyed during the Civil War.

³⁶ Augusta Co., Va., Will Bk. 7, p. 431.

³⁷ Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 474.



attempt was made to find the original records to determine on what basis this division was made. Nevertheless, the three designated by Wilson with an asterisk (George, born 1743, Robert and Margaret) were named in the 1791 will of John of Middle River.

Both John Finleys were designated by Wilson as members of the Tinkling Spring Congregation when the children were baptized, Why would John Finley of Middle River be a member of Tinkling Spring when North Mountain Meeting House (later Bethel) was nearer his home? In the early years of North Mountain, the Rev. John Craig, Tinkling Spring's minister, was ordered to serve one Sabbath in two months and "as many week days as he can," (1740 to 1745).³⁸ Then the revivalist New Side group of the Presbytery took over. It was at this point that Brown took steps to establish the meeting house which bears his name. Brown's Meeting House was "received by the Augusta court as a place of worship 16 February 1748."³⁹ (See Figure 1 for the location of Tinkling Spring, North Mountain and Brown's Meeting House.)

John Finley's Middle River property was just across the Beverley Manor boundary line very close to the word "Cathey" printed on the map. It may well be that the extra ten miles to travel to the parent church for an occasion such as a baptism was worth the effort, considering the sporadic nature of services available at North Mountain, especially after the New Side took control of North Mountain.

COMPARISON WITH FRANCE AND STOUT. The above analysis is clearly at variance with France and Stout. They say the John Finley who married Thankful Doak died in 1773. However, in 1775 Robert Clendenen deeded land to John Finley, "formerly a part of the land John Finley now lives on." The property description matched exactly that property John and Thankful deeded to their son George in 1767. The property sold by John's son and executor, David, matched exactly the patents received by John Finley in 1741 and 1768.

France states the John Finley who left the 1791 will was John, Jr., son of John and Thankful and that he married Mary Caldwell. He also claims that David who administered the will married Elizabeth Mounts and died in Orange Co., Ind., in 1843. It has already been shown that David who married Elizabeth Mounts and died in Indiana cannot be the son of the John who wrote the 1791

³⁸ Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 485

³⁹ *Ibid.*

will. David of Indiana was the son of John and Mary (Caldwell) Finley of South River, who left Augusta County about 1765, migrated through Prince Edward to Montgomery (later Wythe) County by 1772/1773. John Finley of South River died in Montgomery County about 1782.⁴⁰

France does not attempt to deal with the question of why the wife in the 1791 will was named Thankful. Stout agrees with France, but indicates the wife's name was really Mary Thankful Caldwell; he also says she died in 1787.⁴¹ If Mary Thankful Caldwell died in 1787, why would she be left property in 1791? The will specifically states:

I give and bequeath unto my Dearly beloved wife Thankful all my household furniture to be at her Disposal, Except one old bed and furniture and my Negro Woman Hannah During her life and a good horse and Saddle Likewise a good Deasent room and Decent Mantainance to be found her out of part of my Estate I have will'd to my son David.

Clearly, wife Thankful was alive in 1791.

France quotes from the fly leaf of an old Bible belonging to Jane (Finley) Smith as follows:

Your grandfather was David Finley, born Jan. 10, 1748 who married Elizabeth Mounts. His father was John Finley and he married Mary Caldwell, daughter of Thomas Caldwell and a cousin to Martha Caldwell who was the Mother of the famous Statesman, John C. Calhoun.⁴²

A similar excerpt from France states:

Your grandfather was David Finley and he married Elizabeth Mounts his father was John Finley who married Mary Caldwell, a cousin of Martha Caldwell who was the mother of the famous Statesman John C. Calhoun (unpublished data in D.A.R. Library, compiled & certified by Maj. Albert Finley France).⁴³

Clearly one or both citations are not direct quotes from the original source.

Nevertheless, Jane (Finley) Smith was the daughter of this David and Elizabeth (Mounts) Finley, but her Finley grandparents were John and Mary (Caldwell) Finley of South River.⁴⁴

The only reasonable conclusion is that John and Thankful (Doak) Finley

⁴⁰ Finley, "David Finley ...," *loc. cit.*

⁴¹ Stout, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

⁴² France, *op. cit.*, p. 2 of section on Finleys in Virginia.

⁴³ Query, *Genealogy and History*, 15 Dec. 1943, #8347, The unpublished data in the DAR Library cannot be located there.

⁴⁴ Finley, "David Finley ...," *loc. cit.*

were the couple who settled and lived out their lives on Middle River. He did not die in 1773 as claimed by France and copied by Stout. It was he who left the will of 1791.

(To be continued)

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THE JOHN FINLEYS OF AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA: CORRECTING THE RECORD

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(Continued from V. 46, p. 13)

JOHN FINLEY #2 - SOUTH RIVER

There was at least one Finley living in Beverley Manor on South River in 1738. Chalkley cites notes from "Hume's Old Field Book," which he describes as small, leather bound, homemade, measuring 3 by 5 inches.⁴⁵ The notes give survey information, sometimes incomplete, but taken with Hildebrand's map of Beverley Manor,⁴⁶ allow one to place the property being referenced. A series of notes places a Finley (given name not specified) near James McClure, Joseph Tees, Guy (Gay), and Rob Turk. These are all found in the immediate vicinity of the George Robinson property which was purchased by John Finley from George Robinson in 1746.⁴⁷ While Hume's notes do not specify the given name for that Finley, two adjacent 1802 Circuit Court Records of the case of Williams vs. Alexander spell out very clearly that John Finley owned property adjacent to the George Robinson property at least as early as 1740. This was the 414 acres purchased by Charles Dalhouse in 1749 as shown on the Hildebrand map in Figure 2.⁴⁸

In the first instance:

Williams vs. Alexander - Original deed by Thomas Chew to Saml. Gay, 26th July, 1745. Letter to attorney by George Williams, late of the County of Augusta, but resident in County of Ross in Ohio. Original deed by Beverley to Danis Bryne, 23d July, 1740, 567 acres in Beverley Manor, corner Robt.

⁴⁵ Chalkley, *op. cit.*, v. 2, p. 375.

⁴⁶ J. R. Hildebrand, "The Beverley Patent: 1736" (1954), folded insert, inside back cover of Wilson, *The Tinkling Spring*.

⁴⁷ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 1, pp. 75-79.

⁴⁸ Chalkley, *op. cit.*, v. 2, p. 41.

Turk, corner Finley, Saml. Guy's line, George Hume's corner. Original deed, 15th June, 1757. Saml. Givens and Martha to John Williams.⁴⁹

The Dennis Byrne property is clearly shown in Figure 2, adjacent to George Hume on the East, to James Gillespie on the West, and to Charles Dalhouse on the South.

In the second instance:

Ditto - Richard Pilson to Jno. Williams, recorded March 20th, 1764. Depn. John Dolass (Dolhouse), 1802; deposes he is about 52 years and son of Charles Dolass, to whom Wm. Beverley conveyed 414 acres originally run out for John Finley and sold by Finley to John McCullogh. Depn. Saml. Pilson, aged 62, between 40 and 50 years ago. Depn. John Hamilton, aged about 72 years.⁵⁰

This pinpoints the property owned by John Finley on 23 July 1740 when Dennis Byrne bought his land. At that time Finley owned what is identified as Charles Dalhouse's property in Figure 2. No deed showing Finley's purchase could be located in either Augusta or Orange County, from which Augusta was formed. Nor could a survey be found. One possibility, other than a deed lost or unrecorded might be that Finley had the survey made and before he obtained complete title he sold the property to McCullogh.⁵¹

On 13 May 1746 John Finley bought the 892 acre George Robinson property.⁵² Because this property and its division over the next 40 years is critical to the understanding of the movement of the South River John Finley and other related Finleys, time will be taken to present it now.

DIVISION OF THE GEORGE ROBINSON PROPERTY. The first division of the George Robinson property was made on 22 May 1750 when it was divided into three almost equal parcels of 298, 297 and 297 acres. The 298 acre parcel was deeded by John Finley, Gent., to William Finley, Gent.⁵³ One of the 297 acre parcels was deeded by John Finley, Gent., to Robert Finley, Gent.,⁵⁴ while the remaining parcel was kept by John Finley. Both William and Robert

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ Since Charles Dalhouse bought from William Beverley, it would appear that McCullogh never cleared title either.

⁵² Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 1, pp. 75-79.

⁵³ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 2, pp. 708-10.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 711-14.

Finley appeared on the list of John Finley's Quarter in 1744.⁵⁵ In addition, William Finley appeared as early as 14 Aug. 1741, a subscriber to Tinkling Spring, who along with others appointed John Finley and others Commissioner of the meeting house. The Commissioners charge was to attend to the executive functions of the newly established Presbyterian congregation.

The next division of the Robinson property came on 16 May 1758 when Robert and Martha Finley deeded 100 acres of their original parcel to William Finley.⁵⁶ Then on 17 March 1765 John Finley, Gent., deeded his remaining 297 acres to William Finley, Gent.⁵⁷ The next year Robert Finley, Gent., sold 88 acres to John Ramsey, Gent.⁵⁸ John Ramsey was now his neighbor to the north, having about 1750/51 bought Samuel Gay's property (Figure 2) from Israel Christian,⁵⁹ who had bought it from Gay on 5 Oct. 1747.⁶⁰ On 22 Aug. 1770 William Finley sold 215 acres of his land to his son John.⁶¹ Finally, on 19 July 1784, Robert Finley, Sr., and his wife Martha sold 88 acres to Robert Finley, Jr.⁶² By 1784 then, the original Robinson property was owned by:

Land owner: William Finley, Gent.	Acres: 480
Robert Finley, Gent.	21
John Finley, son of William	215
Robert Finley, Jr. (most likely son of Wm.) ⁶³	88
John Ramsey	88
Total	892

The John Finley who originally purchased the property and is the main subject of this section, no longer an owner, sold his remaining share in 1765.

IDENTITY OF SOUTH RIVER JOHN FINLEY. Could John of South River who lived on the Robinson property from 1746 to 1765 be the same John

⁵⁵ Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 439.

⁵⁶ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 11, p. 642.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 808-09.

⁵⁸ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 13, p. 93.

⁵⁹ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 4, p. 177. The deed itself was undated but positioned between two deeds dated 1750 and 1751. The deed was recorded 9 Oct. 1772.

⁶⁰ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 1, p. 459.

⁶¹ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 16, p. 522.

⁶² Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 24, p. 277.

⁶³ On 16 May 1758 deed, when Robert and Martha Finley sold 100 acres to William Finley, a marginal note states "Delivered to Robert Finley son of Wm. Finley, 13 April 1758" (Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 11, p. 642).

Finley who lived on Middle River? It seems highly unlikely. When John of South River divided the 892 acre Robinson property into three equal pieces (298, 297 and 297 acres) and sold two of them to William and Robert Finley in 1750, his wife was named Mary.⁶⁴ Furthermore, this John was referred to as "Gent." in those deeds, while the John on Middle River was referred to as "cooper" in 1746. In addition, John of South River headed one of three congregational districts for Tinkling Spring Meeting House in 1744. His district included Andrew McClure, Robert Turk, Samuel Gay, Robert Finley, John Finley, William Finley, John McCollock, James Gelaspey, David Edmiston, James McClure, Andrew McClure, James Campbell, Arsbold Stewart, William Peterson, William Cear, Joseph Tays, Samuel Steel, Isaac White and John McClure.⁶⁵ Hildebrand's map (Figure 2) shows most of these men clustered closely around the George Robinson property.⁶⁶ South River John was also a Trustee or Commissioner who took an active part in constructing and supporting the church and paying the pastor, his service beginning in Aug. 1741.⁶⁷ He was made an Elder of the Church sometime before 1748 and served in that capacity until about 1763.⁶⁸ Meanwhile the Middle River Finley property was about 15 miles from Tinkling Spring - near enough to travel to baptize children but rather far to take an active role in the affairs of Tinkling Spring.

Could the South River John Finley be the son of John and Thankful of Middle River? This also is quite unlikely. France and Stout claim John, son of John and Thankful, was born in 1724.⁶⁹ The John Finley on South River owned property as early as 1740 and bought the Robinson property in 1746. He was clearly active in the affairs of Tinkling Springs in 1741 when he was appointed (along with Col. James Patton, George Hutchison, John Christian and Alexander Breckenridge) to manage the affairs of the Congregation.⁷⁰ If John, son of John and Thankful, was, in fact, born in 1724, he would have been only 17 years old in 1741 when appointed a church commissioner. The only reasonable conclusion is that the John Finley of Middle River and the John Finley of South River were

⁶⁴ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 2, pp. 708-13.

⁶⁵ Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 439.

⁶⁶ The George Robinson property, where the South River John Finley lived, was about 3 or 4 miles from Tinkling Spring Meeting House.

⁶⁷ Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 433.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 431.

⁶⁹ France, *op. cit.*, p. 2 of section on Finleys of Virginia; Stout, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

⁷⁰ Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 84-85.

two distinct, contemporary persons and not father and son.

The South River John Finley sold his remaining interest in the Robinson property (297 acres) to William Finley in March 1765.⁷¹ This may well have been due to the virtual collapse of support for Tinkling Spring. By 1764, the Rev. John Craig's position at Tinkling Spring was in jeopardy due, primarily, to the inability of the congregation to support him.

At the fall meeting of presbytery (Hanover) in Cumberland County, 3 Oct. 1764, the first item of business, following "Supplication for Supplies," was that Mr. Craig is dismissed from the Tinkling Spring, and sustains the pastoral relation as to the Congregation of Stone meeting House only. The elder representing Tinkling Spring at this meeting was John Finley. He put in a request for a supply assignment at Tinkling Spring but none was made except "... ministers in Augusta County, are left to their own discretion, in supplying." Mr. Craig preached his farewell sermon at Tinkling Spring in Nov. 1764.⁷²

Wilson, in discussing post war problems of the French and Indian War, summarizes the situation succinctly:

Tinkling Spring people, with Rev. John Craig as their pastor, pioneered in the practice of religious freedom in the Colony of Virginia ... Her men, though reluctant in aggression, were invaluable in defense against Indian cruelty. They were among the stalwart leaders that turned the tide in the frontier phase of the French-British struggle out of which grew the short-lived English rule over America. Tinkling Spring's first quarter of a century of service left her a changed and weakened meeting house group. Alexander Breckenridge, James Patton, John Preston, Archibald Stuart and John Lewis were dead by this time; John Finley, an active elder, disappears from the record, probably transferring his efforts to Brown's Meeting House, and families now removed entirely, or in part, were the Breckenridges, Lewises, Prestons, Campbells, Bells, Thompsons, and others.⁷³

Wilson, who published his book in 1954, probably made the same assumptions that earlier Finley researchers made and did not realize there were two distinct contemporary John Finleys in the area. What then, happened to John of South River?

⁷¹ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 11, pp. 808-09.

⁷² Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-65.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 166.

PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY AND THE FINLEYS. About 150 miles southwest of Beverley Manor, Prince Edward County was formed in 1754 from Amelia County. Amelia County and its neighbor Brunswick (now Charlotte) became the sites of two additional Scotch-Irish settlements in the mid to late-1730s. John Caldwell is credited with the settlement of both Cub Creek (Charlotte) and Buffalo Creek (Prince Edward) about 1735 according to one historian.⁷⁴ The actual date may be a bit later since John Caldwell appeared before the Synod of Philadelphia on 25 May 1738 asking leave to settle in the "back part" of Virginia under the Act of Toleration.⁷⁵ Caldwell was joined by the Rev. John Thomson in 1744 when he settled at Buffalo and served as pastor there until 1751.⁷⁶ The lives of the Rev. Mr. Thomson and his descendants are interwoven with that of John Finley and his descendants over a period of about 50 years. So a brief history of Thomson seems warranted.

THE REVEREND JOHN THOMSON.⁷⁷ Rev. John Thomson was born about 1690 in Ulster, Ireland. He entered the University of Glasgow 1 March 1706 and was licensed by the Ulster Synod meeting at Antrim 23 June 1713. He arrived in York [New York?], about 1713 or 1714, but soon moved to New Castle on-the-Delaware. He sought assistance from the Presbytery of Pennsylvania meeting at New Castle in finding a position and was ordained by the Presbytery in April 1717. From April 1717 to Sept. 1729 he served as Pastor at Lewes, Del. During 1729 and 1733 he divided his time among four Pennsylvania communities—Newcastle, Nottingham (Lower Octorara congregation), Fishing Creek (Middle Octorara congregation) and Drumore (Chestnut Level congregation). Then he devoted full time to Chestnut Level until 1744. However, during his term at Chestnut Level he became interested in the "back parts" of Virginia and in 1738 visited the Valley of Virginia. This included the Beverley Manor area where he was asked to remain and develop what became Tinkling Spring Meeting House. His petition to the Donegal Presbytery on 30

⁷⁴ Herbert Clarence Bradshaw, *History of Prince Edward County, Virginia* (Richmond, 1955), p. 10.

⁷⁵ Elizabeth Venable Gains, *Cub Creek Church and Congregation, 1738-1838* (Richmond, n.d.), p. 11.

⁷⁶ John Goodwin Herndon, *John Thomson, Presbyterian Constitutionalist, Minister of the Word of God, Educational Leader and Church Builder* (n.p., 1943), pp. 42, 47, 56.

⁷⁷ Based on Herndon whose history of Thomson is the most comprehensive of several found by this writer.

Oct. 1739 to release him from Chestnut Level was refused. To satisfy the Beverley Manor request, the Rev. John Craig was sent in place of Thomson. While still at Chestnut Level Thomson continued to serve Virginia communities including Winchester, Staunton in Orange County (now Augusta), Opekon, Rockfish Gap (now in Nelson County), Cub Creek in Lunenburg (now Charlotte), Buffalo and Walkers in Amelia (now Prince Edward), and at Hat Creek and Concord in what became Campbell County.

On 4 April 1744 Rev. John Thomson again requested leave to go to Virginia. This time his request was approved and he settled at Buffalo in what is now Prince Edward County, where he remained until 1751. During his tenure there he traveled to Augusta County where, on 4 Jan. 1748, he baptized George Finley, son of John Finley, in a ceremony at Tinkling Spring. He moved on to North Carolina and settled near Centre Church in Anson County (later Rowan, later Iredell) and died there sometime within the year following 27 May 1752.

However, a number of his children and grandchildren were found in locations important to this discussion of John Finley.⁷⁸ They included Esther, who married (1) Samuel Crockett about 1734 in Lancaster Co., Pa., and (2) William Sayers about 1753 in Southwestern Virginia. The Sayers lived in Montgomery County (later Wythe) during the 1770s. A daughter, Sarah, married the Rev. Richard Sankey about 1737. The Sankeys moved to Buffalo in Prince Edward County in the summer of 1759, taking much of his Pennsylvania congregation with him. A daughter, Mary, married Robert Baker and they were living in Prince Edward County in the 1760s. A son of the Rev. John Thomson's son, John, married Jane Shilladay, daughter of George and Jane (Mitchell) Shilladay who lived in Wythe County. Each of these had dealings with John Finley or his descendants in the locations where they lived and will be treated in turn. In addition, Herndon states that another daughter of the Rev. John Thomson, name unknown, married John Finley.

JOHN FINLEY IN PRINCE EDWARD COUNTY. In view of the foregoing discussion, it is not surprising to find a John Finley living in Prince

⁷⁸ The personal life of Thomson which follows is also based on Herndon's work in a separate article, "Some of the Descendants of the Rev. John Thomson, 1690-1753," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, v. 51, pp. 394-404, reprinted in *Genealogies of Virginia Families from The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (Baltimore, 1981), v. 5, pp. 454-64.

Edward County during the period from about 1765 to about 1772 or 1773. Seven land transactions involving three Finleys there were:

	Deed		
Finley Deeds in Prince Edward County	Date	Bk/Pg	Acres
Jacob & Honour Garrett to John Finley	15 June 1765	3:1	400
John Caldwell to William Finley	19 Aug. 1765	3:21	430
Thomas Fulton to son-in-law George Finley	28 April 1769	3:487	200
William Finley to Charles Smith	29 June 1772	5:54	175
John Finley to Stephen Pettus	20 July 1772	5:63	400
George Finley to Alexander Garden	20 Dec. 1773	5:184	200
William Finley & Mary, his wife, of Montgomery, to Joseph Fore	10 July 1787	7:297	50

All of the above property was described as being on Vaughan's Creek. Three Finleys buy and sell in the same general period, on the same waterway. It is reasonable to assume they are related, but there is no indication of what that relationship might be. Note that John and William Finley bought and sold within a month or two of each other. George bought almost four years after John and sold about a year and a half after John.

Even before these Finleys moved into Prince Edward County, ties to Augusta County were evident. A year and a half earlier, Elizabeth Finley married James Gillespy of Augusta County in Prince Edward County (bond issued 5 Jan. 1764).⁷⁹ Her father, John Finley, Sr., gave his consent; another John Finley (probably her brother) and Robert Baker, probably a son-in-law of the Rev. John Thomson, witnessed the consent.

Elizabeth was living with Richard Sankey, son-in-law of the Rev. John Thomson, at the time of her marriage. Among the documents concerning her marriage was found the following:

Sir

James Gillespy a single man from Augusta County has courted and proposes to marry Elizabeth Finley a young woman, Sister' Daughter to my wife [i.e. a daughter of a sister to my wife] who has lived with me between two and three years last passed. He applies to you for license to be married by Mr. Garden, wch may be safely granted, as I am assured is with consent of the friends of both parties. Wch is all from

Sir, Yr humble Servant,

⁷⁹ Prince Edward Co., Va., Marriage Records, loose papers, 1754-1850.

Richard Sankey⁸⁰

How did James Gillespy and Elizabeth Finley meet? One real possibility is that Elizabeth was also originally from Augusta County and they met there. We know that John Finley of South River purchased the Robinson property in 1746 and lived there until 1765. We know that John Finley had a daughter, Elizabeth, baptized 18 Jan. 1741 at Tinkling Spring. The James Gillespie property in Augusta County was very close to the Robinson property, as can be seen on Hildebrand's map (Figure 2). The ties between the South River Gillespys and the Finleys must have been substantial. James Gillespie, Sr., imported himself and family, including Jennet, Agnes, John, James and William, in 1740.⁸¹ In addition to being a neighbor of the Finleys, James Gillespy, Sr., was an Elder at Tinkling Spring from before 1748 until before 1770, overlapping completely with the term of John Finley of South River.⁸² When James Gilaspey, Sr., wrote his will 5 Sept. 1768 he left to son James the plantation on which he was then living.⁸³ Clearly, the newly married couple returned to Augusta County after their mrrriage in 1764. In Aug. 1773 James and Elizabeth Gillespie sold 100 acres to a John Finley⁸⁴ (discussion to follow).

Hypothesis 1: John Finley of South River is the John Finley who moved into Prince Edward County in 1765. Consider the following facts: 1. The purchase in Prince Edward County occurred only three months after John of South River ssold his remaining 297 acres of the George Robinson property. He had received crushing defeat in the support of Tinkling Spring after 25 years of devotion and faithful service, first as a Commissioner, then as an Elder.

2. John Finley baptized a daughter Elizabeth at Tinkling Spring 18 Jan. 1741. (This may really have been 1741/42 since this predates the change from the Julian to the Gregorian calendar in Sept. 1752.) When Elizabeth Finley married James Gillespie, the date on the consent was 1 Jan. 1763, while the date on the marriage bond was 5 Jan. 1674. This makes it difficult to know, for sure, her age at the time of marriage. One could argue that since she received her

⁸⁰ Herndon, "Some of the Descendants of the Rev. John Thomson," pp. 401-02.

⁸¹ Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 426.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 431. A more complete discussion is given in Finley, "The George Finleys of Augusta County," *loc. cit.*

⁸³ Augusta Co., Va., Will Bk. 4, p. 263.

⁸⁴ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 19, p. 414.

father's consent she had to be under 21, which she would have been if born between 2 Jan. 1741/42 and the time of her baptism. However, the bond reads "between James Gillispie of Augusta County & Elizabeth Finley of Prince Edwd County Spinster." Her age at marriage remains unclear, but certainly does not rule out her being the Elizabeth who was baptized at Tinkling Spring.

3. Other children born to John Finley not already accounted for by the 1791 will of John of Middle River include William (30 Jan. 1743), George (4 Jan. 1748) and James (8 March 1747 or 26 March 1749). William and George accompanied John Finley to Prince Edward County. William bought property in 1765 (about age 23 if the one baptized in 1743); George did not buy until 1769 (about age 21 if the one baptized in 1748).

Hypothesis 2: John Finley of South River married, first, a daughter of Rev. John Thomson: Consider the following: 1. Richard Sankey, son-in-law of Rev. John Thomson, referred to Elizabeth as "Sister' Daughter to my wife [i.e. a daughter of a sister to my wife." This means Elizabeth's mother was also a daughter of the Rev. John Thomson and the Herndon article does state that a daughter, given name unknown, married a John Finley.⁸⁵ Hence, if we accept hypothesis 1, hypothesis 2 must follow. The John Finley who moved into Prince Edward County was moving into Thomson territory. What better place to go after the disillusioning experience at Tinkling Spring?

2. Rev. John Thomson made a trip to Tinkling Spring from Prince Edward County to baptize George Finley, son of John, on 4 Jan. 1748. The baptisms reported by Wilson during the period 1740-1749 included no others performed by Thomson. If we accept hypotheses 1 and 2, George would have been his grandson.

3. Rev. John Thomson had been asked in 1738/39 by Beverley Manor citizens to come to the area and serve as their pastor. Although the "citizens" who made this request were not identified by name, John Finley was prominent as a church Commissioner when the Rev. John Craig came in Thomson's place. Thomson had been interested enough to request his release from Chestnut Level (to go to an area where a daughter and son-in-law lived).

MONTGOMERY COUNTY AND THE FINLEYS. Montgomery County

⁸⁵ Herndon, "Some Descendants ...," p. 401.

was formed 1776/1777 from Fincastle County. Even before its formation the long arm of the Rev. John Craig was reaching up the Valley. Craig, dismissed from Tinkling Spring in 1764 for lack of funds, was authorized by the Hanover Presbytery to conduct a special mission in 1768. This mission took him up the Valley working with representatives of eight congregations between Craig's Creek, on the north, and Reed Creek to the south. As Wilson notes, "The minutes of Hanover Presbytery suggest the ties with the old Beverley Manor settlers when we note names and families (at these southwest settlements).⁸⁶ At Sinking Spring on the Catawba and James River a Robert Finley was one of the representatives.⁸⁷ Among those serving Reed Creek at Boiling Spring were David and William Sairs (Sayers).⁸⁸ Rev. John Thomson's oldest daughter, Esther, married William Sayers in 1753 in Southwest Virginia.

When Montgomery County was formed, two James Finleys (Sr. and Jr.) were already living there according to early entries in the first Court Order Book.⁸⁹ Actually, court records begin in 1773 before the county was officially formed. The first entry for John Finley was in Nov. 1773 when he purchased property from John McFarland.⁹⁰ From other documents, it was determined this was 327 acres on Sally Run waters of Reed Creek.⁹¹ The purchase date for this property was 17 months after John Finley sold his property and one month before George Finley sold his property in Prince Edward County. John "& sons David and Thomas" appeared on the list of New River⁹² tithables for the first time in 1773 in what became Montgomery County, in Capt. Crockett's area. George showed up in 1772, 1773, and James Sr. and James Jr. were listed in 1771, 1772 and only James Finley in 1773.⁹³ George and both Jameses were on Capt. Doack's list. A settlement map of Wythe (formerly Montgomery) places Capt. Doack's property on Black Lick, about eight miles southwest of the Sally Run

⁸⁶ Wilson, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

⁸⁷ While no proof has been found, this writer wonders if this might be Robert Finley, Gent./Sr., who was gradually selling off his interest in the George Robinson property.

⁸⁸ Wilson, *op. cit.*, pp. 170-71.

⁸⁹ Montgomery Co., Va., Order Bk. 1, pp. 2-3, 178.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁹¹ Montgomery Co., Va., Deed Bk. A, pp. 283, 338.

⁹² Reed Creek is a tributary of New River.

⁹³ Mary B. Kegley, comp., *New River Tithables, 1770-1773* (Wytheville, Va., 1941), pp. 9-10, 14, 27, 29.

property of John Finley.⁹⁴ Although the relationship of either James to John Finley has not been proven, there is a DAR application which states James, Jr. (a captain in the militia) was the son of James, Sr. In addition, the application states James, Sr., was the son of James and Elizabeth (Patterons) Finley (Stout's 2-02).⁹⁵ Stout claims James and Elizabeth were the parents of the John who married Thankful Doak. While not an objective of the present study, this certainly has implications for further research on this line.

Through articles of agreement, on 13 March 1779, John Finley and "Meary" his wife gave their property to sons David and Samuel in exchange for life care.⁹⁶ John died sometime prior to Aug. 1782, for on that date William Davies, William Doak and William Ward or any two of them were ordered to take a deposition of Mary Finley. This was done on 23 Sept. 1782 when she acknowledged the agreement as the act of John Finley.

There is unmistakable evidence that the William Finley who lived in Prince Edward County also came to Montgomery County at a later date (about 1785).

1. William Finley and Mary, his wife, of Montgomery County sold property in Prince Edward in 1787.⁹⁷ In addition, Dabney Pettus in his will in 1788 in Charlotte County referred to a son, "Stephen Pettus of Prince Edward," and a daughter Mary Finley.⁹⁸ Prince Edward and Charlotte are adjacent counties. Recall that John Finley sold his Prince Edward property to Stephen Pettus.

2. In 1800, Dabney Finley of Lee Co., Va., brought suit in Wythe County against his father, William Finley, to recover slaves owned by his mother, Mary Pettus, at the time of her marriage to William Finley.⁹⁹

3. In 1801, William Finley, Sr., of Wythe County, wrote his will and named son John Pettis [*sic*] Finley. He also provided for his second wife, Judith, and

⁹⁴ F. B. Kegley and Mary B. Kegley, "A Settlement Map of Wythe County, Virginia" (Wytheville?, 1974).

⁹⁵ DAR application of Laura Lester Finley Suiter, #323352, 9 July 1940. Interestingly, James and Elizabeth (Patterson) Finley are claimed, by South, to be the parents of the John Finley (of Middle River) who married Thankful Doak. Since Stout confused John Finley of Middle River with John Finley of South River, could James and Elizabeth (Patterson) Finley really be the parents of John Finley of South River who migrated to Montgomery/Wythe County?

⁹⁶ Montgomery Co., Va., Deed Bk. A, p. 283. See also Finley, "David Finley . . .," *loc. cit.*

⁹⁷ Prince Edward Co., Va., Deed Bk. 7, p. 297.

⁹⁸ Charlotte Co., Va., Will Bk. 1, p. 407a.

⁹⁹ Wythe Co., Va., Deed Bk. 2, p. 477.

children Mary Ann, Esau, William, Rhoda, Margaret, and an unborn child.¹⁰⁰

Hypothesis 3: John Finley who lived on Vaughan's Creek in Prince Edward County is the John Finley who moved to Montgomery County in 1772/1773. Consider the following: 1. John and George Finley, both of whom lived on Vaughan's Creek in Prince Edward, sold their total holdings in 1772 and 1773. John and George Finley both appeared on the New River list of tithables in 1773, John for the first time, George having first appeared in 1772.

2. The William Finley who also lived on Vaughan's Creek, beyond any doubt, is the same who moved to Montgomery County about 1785.

3. The southernmost Presbyterian congregation with whom Rev. John Craig (former pastor of Tinkling Spring on South River) had influence was Boiling Spring, which served the people on lower Reed Creek where John Finley bought property in 1775.

4. Kin of the Rev. John Thomson were present in this area and interacted with the Finleys. William Sayers, who married Thomson's daughter Esther, was one of the representatives at Boiling Spring when Rev. John Craig made his mission there, William Sayers together with John and Elizabeth Crockeet in 1773 deeded to James Finley, Jr., 100 acres "on Reed Creek below the fork and branch of New River."¹⁰¹

5. After the death of John Finley, his sons David and Samuel gave power-of-attorney to "trusty and beloved friend William Finley" to transfer 327 acres on Sally Run delivered to them "by out beloved father John Finley."¹⁰² A witness to this document was George Shelladay. As mentioned earlier, Jane Shilladay, daughter of George and Jane (Mitchell) Shilladay, married a grandson of Rev. John Thomson.

THE WIVES OF JOHN FINLEY OF SOUTH RIVER, PRINCE EDWARD AND MONTGOMERY COUNTIES. An unnamed daughter of Rev. John Thomson was married to John Finley of South River; she was the mother of Elizabeth who was baptized in 1741. The name of South River John's wife in 1750, when he divided the Robinson property, was Mary. However, this cannot be Mary Thomson, as Rev. John Thomson had another daughter Mary,

¹⁰⁰ Wythe Co., Va., Will Bk. 1, p. 202.

¹⁰¹ Montgomery Co., Va., Deed Bk. A, pp. 8-9.

¹⁰² Lincoln Co., Va. [Ky.], Deed Bk. A, p. 338.

who married Robert Baker, Jr.¹⁰³ George Finley, baptized in 1748 by Rev. John Thomson, was most likely a son of John and South River by the Thomson daughter.

Found in the literature of Finley family researchers (as noted above in the discussion of Middle River John) was the following, as cited earlier:

Eliz. Mounts' Bible is still in existence and on fly leaf written by her dau., Jane Ann (Finley) Smith, is statement (apparently addressed to next generation): "Your grandfather was David Finley and he married Elizabeth Mounts his father was John Finley who married Mary Caldwell, a cousin of Martha Caldwell who was the mother of the famous Statesman John C. Calhoun." (unpublished data in D.A.R. Library, compiled & certified by Maj. Albert Finley France).¹⁰⁴

Proof that the David Finley who married Elizabeth Mounts is the son of John and Mary of Montgomery (later Wythe) County has been given in an earlier paper.¹⁰⁵

The Caldwell family literature is in conflict as to the parents of Mary Caldwell but even those that disagree on this point do agree that the father of Mary Caldwell, who married John Finley, was a son of the John Caldwell who settled Cub Creek. The association between John Caldwell and Rev. John Thomson pre-dated Cub Creek and Buffalo. Caldwell was a member of Thomson's congregation at Chestnut Level in Lancaster Co., Pa., prior to the time he requested leave to go to Virginia.¹⁰⁶ John Finley, son-in-law of Rev. John Thomson, in all likelihood also knew the Caldwells.

Hypothesis 4: John Finley who lived on Sally Run in Montgomery County was John of South River who married (1) a daughter of Rev. John Thomson and (2) Mary Caldwell, granddaughter of John Caldwell. If we accept hypotheses 1, 2 and 3, hypothesis 4 must follow.

COMPARISON WITH FRANCE AND STOUT. Many of the comments made under the section for John of Middle River apply here. France and Stout never considered the possibility that the Middle River and South River Finleys

¹⁰³ Herndon, "Some Descendants ...," p. 396.

¹⁰⁴ Query, *Genealogy and History*, 15 Dec. 1943, #8347. The unpublished data in the DAR Library cannot be located there.

¹⁰⁵ Finley, "David Finley ...," *loc. cit.* See also Carmen J. Finley, "John and Mary Finley of Montgomery (Wythe) County, Virginia," *The Virginia Genealogist*, v. 34, pp. 244-46.

¹⁰⁶ Herndon, *John Thomson ...*, p. 40.

were two independent families. The present writer would not rule out a relationship (perhaps cousins) a generation or two back, but the facts strongly indicate they are not father and son as claimed by France and Stout.

Since John of Middle River and John of South River both had a son John, the next task is to trace them over time.

(To be continued)

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THE JOHN FINLEYS OF AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA: CORRECTING THE RECORD

By Carmen J. Finley, C.G., Ph.D.
Santa Rosa, California

(Continued from V. 46, p. 113)

JOHN FINLEY #3, WHEELWRIGHT - SON OF SOUTH RIVER JOHN FINLEY #2

John Finley, most likely the eldest son of South River John, lived in the South River area of Augusta County at least from 1773 to his death in 1807. He can be so identified because he conveyed a deed for the 327 acres on Sally Run in Montgomery/Wythe County (originally owned by John McFarland and transferred to John Finley in Nov. 1773) to David and Samuel Finley in June 1792.¹⁰⁷ David and Samuel had been given the Sally Run property by their father many years earlier in 1779 in exchange for life care.¹⁰⁸ A transcription of the document follows:

Articles of [agreement¹⁰⁹] made this thirtieth day of March 1779. Between John Finley of the one part and David Finley and Samuel Finley of the other part witnesseth in that the sd. John Finley heath given unto the sd. David Finley and Samuel Finley the Benefits of sd. Planttesion he now lives on and all the lives of the stock that is on the sd. planttesion at this time which contains eight horses and mears, one is a horse about 14 years of age 14 hands high, one mear 14 hands high nine years ould and one mare about 14 hands and one inch high five years ould one small mare and yearling coalt one two year old mare small one same mare pretty old and yearling coult and 12 hed of grown chatel two years ould and five yearlings and 30 hed of sheep which stock or to the number there of the said John Finley holds sd. hoal and sole property and rights thereof in his

¹⁰⁷ Wythe Co., Va., Deed Bk. 1, p. 84.

¹⁰⁸ Montgomery Co., Va., Deed Bk. A, p. 283.

¹⁰⁹ An earlier document with only minor changes in wording was recorded in Montgomery County Deed Bk. A, p. 258, and carried the word "agreement" which was omitted from the one quoted here. Only the latter one carried the 1782 order re: Mary Finley.

own hand at the said John Finley's death the aforesaid plantation with all rights and benefirs shall bothe real right and property of the said David Finley's and Samuel Finley's for ever and the sd. David Finley and Samuel Finley shall provide and live in comfortable menteanance to the sd. John Finley and Meary his wife all there days and that the above mentioned articles and every otherwise be truely and faithfully performed we do bind ourselves in the just sume of two thousand pounds curent money of Virginia in wittness whereof we have sett our hands and seals the say and the year above menchoned

Signed, sealed and delivered	John Finley
in the presence of	David Finley
Thos. Finley	Samuel Finley
Mary Finley	

Montgomery Augt Court 1782 Ordered that William Davies, William Doak, William Ward or any of them take the Deposition of Mary Finley, with regard to the Above agreement John Finley of the one part and David Finley and Samuel Finley of the other part, and her deposition shall be binding therein, the heirs of the sd John Finley having first legal notice thereof. Witness James M'Cooke of our sd Court this 19th Day of Agt in seventh year of the Commonwealth.

James McCorkle

Montgomery County

By virtue of this dedemus to us directed we the under written did go to the dwelling House of the sd Mary Finley who being examined touching the sd agreement saith that the within Article of Agreement was the act and Deed of John Finley decd Given under our hand this twenty third day of Septr 1782

Wm Doak

Wm Ward

When John died in Montgomery County, intestate, prior to Aug. 1782, primogeniture was still in force, That is, the eldest son had a legal claim on real property.¹¹⁰ Hence it would seem John Finley of Augusta County was the eldest son of John Finley of Montgomery County and his deed to David and Samuel in 1792 was necessary to abide by the wishes of his father. The transaction was actually carried out by William Finley of Wythe County to whom John Finley of Augusta County had given power-of-attorney.¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ William Waller Hening, *The Statutes at Large, Being a Collection of all the Laws of Virginia from the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619*, v. 12 (Richmond, 1823), pp. 138-40.

¹¹¹ Wythe Co., Va., Deed Bk. 1, p. 82.

The John Finley who deeded the Sally Run property to David and Samuel can also be identified as the one who left a will in Augusta County dated 6 July 1807.¹¹² As will be shown, he was a wheelwright, lived on property adjacent to and sold to him by James and Elizabeth (Finley) Gillespie in 1773.¹¹³ He accepted children as apprentices and is linked through Matthew Gleaves to the Montgomery/Wythe Finleys and through Margaret (Peggy) Mooney to the 1807 will.

THE SOUTH RIVER NEIGHBORHOOD IN THE 1780s. John Finley of South River had sold his remaining interest of 297 acres on South River in 1765. By 1782 the original Robinson property was divided among three Finleys—William, Gent.; Robert, Gent.; and John, son of William. By 1784 Robert Finley, Jr., also had title to 88 acres.¹¹⁴ This is clearly seen in the tax lists for Augusta County in 1782-1787, cited earlier. While the records were sometimes listed in alphabetical order, thus destroying neighborhood clues, the listing for 1782 is quite legible and was left in neighborhood groupings. For this year, “John Finley W.Right” was listed adjacent to James Gillespy (the John who bought 100 acres from the Gillespys in 1773); ten entries further down the list were Robert Finley jur., John Finley farmer, and William Finley adjacent to one another (the three Finleys living on the Robinson property). This pattern remained constant throughout the 1782-1787 time period except for 1784 when both Robert, Sr., and Robert, Jr., appeared. (Refer to Figure 2 and note the locations of the George Robinson property on South River and the James Gillespie property just to the west.) It is clear, also, that John Finley, wheelwright and neighbor of the James Gillespies, had unmistakable ties to the Finleys of Montgomery/Wythe County.

In Jan. 1775 in Augusta County John Finley accepted Matthew Gleaves, son of Matthew Gleaves, deceased, as an apprentice to learn the trade of wheelwright.¹¹⁵ William Gleaves, uncle of young Matthew, had been appointed guardian for Esther Gleaves, orphan of Matthew Gleaves, deceased, in 1771 .

¹¹² Augusta Co., Va., Will Bk. 10, p. 172.

¹¹³ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 19, p. 414.

¹¹⁴ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 24, p. 277. Robert, Jr., bought from Robert, Sr., and his wife Martha. Robert, Jr., is most likely the son of William, Gent., original purchaser of 298 acres from John Finley in 1750.

¹¹⁵ Augusta Co., Va., Drawer 449, Matthew Gleaves vs. John Finley, March 1794.

At that time he was "probably still living on the South River of the Shenandoah." By 1772 William Gleaves was, however, living in Montgomery County.¹¹⁶ In March 1794 Matthew Gleaves brought suit against John Finley, wheelwright, for not fulfilling his part of the contract. As a part of this file, John Finley stated his intent to take a deposition of James Gilaspy, then living on Little River waters of the Holsten.¹¹⁷ (James and Elizabeth Gillespie had sold their major holdings, including their 300 acre parcel where they lived, to Michael Coyner in Aug. 1787).¹¹⁸ In addition, Esau (Asa) Finley,¹¹⁹ son of the William Finley who migrated through Prince Edward County to Montgomery County with South River John, married Esther Gleaves, daughter of William Gleaves in Wythe County in Aug. 1806.¹²⁰

In 1795 John Finley #3 accepted another apprentice in the person of Margaret Mooney.¹²¹ She was but four years old and was to remain with him until 18 to learn "spinning, knitting, sewing and other housework." The originals of this document and the Matthew Gleaves document are both available and show identical John Finley signatures as shown in Figure 3.

Two John Finley wills were written after that left by Middle River John Finley #1. They were written in 1802 and in 1807. The 1802 will named a son James, daughters Esther, Polly and Ann Shannon, and Patsey Dicktam, relationship not determined. The will referred to "land left me by Daddy Reid," on Green River (presumably Kentucky). It also named executors John Caldwell and Samuel Steele Finley, both designated as nephews.¹²² The 1807 will named wife Sarah, sons John, William and Samuel, daughters Sally, Peggy Huchison, Jinney Fraser; and Peggy Mooney, relationship unstated. This will refers to land on the Elkhorn, Green and Dicks rivers in Kentucky to be divided among his heirs. Executors were William Finley and Andrew Ramsey, both designated as

¹¹⁶ Mary B. Kegley, comp., *Glimpses of Wythe County* (n.p., 1986), pp. 35-36.

¹¹⁷ Augusta Co., Va., Drawer 449, Matthew Gleaves vs. John Finley, March 1794.

¹¹⁸ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 26, p. 37.

¹¹⁹ Named in the will of William Finley, Sr., Wythe Co., Va., Will Bk. 1, p. 202, 15 Dec. 1801.

¹²⁰ John Vogt and T. William Kethley, *Wythe County Marriages: 1790-1850* (Athens, Ga., 1985), p. 45.

¹²¹ Augusta Co., Va., Apprentice Bonds, Loose Papers. This document is not recorded in any Deed Book, Court Order or other book.

¹²² Augusta Co., Va., Will Bk. 9, p. 242.

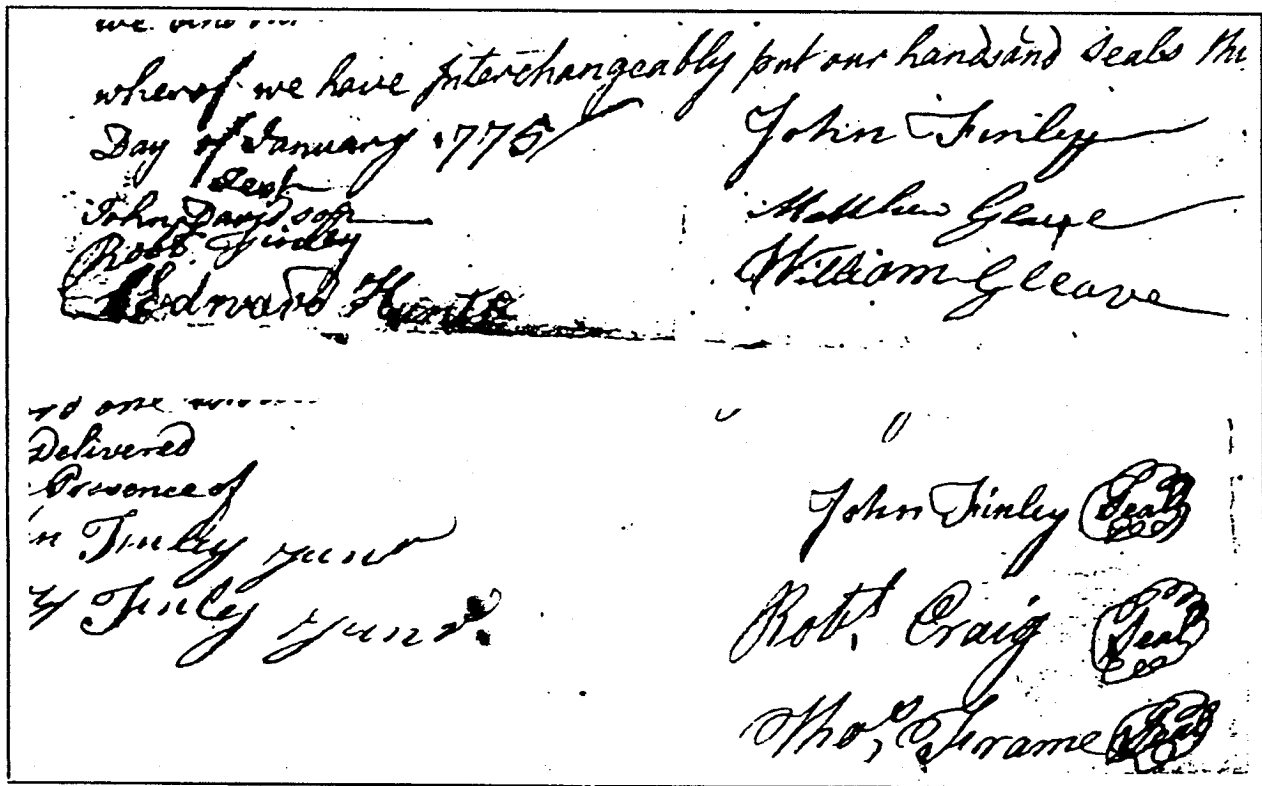


Figure 3: John Finley signatures from Gleaves and Mooney documents.

friends.¹²³ In addition to the obvious ties between the apprenticed Margaret Mooney and the Peggy Mooney named in the 1807 will, there are other ties to the Montgomery/Wythe County Finleys.

The Dicks River area is where David Finley, son of John and Mary Finley of Montgomery County, settled about 1781, on 1000 acres.¹²⁴ David Finley appeared in court in Oct. 1779 to claim this land. His right to it had been contested by Wm Frazer through Joseph Frazer.¹²⁵ According to one Hutchison family historian, "About 1796 John (Hutchison) and his wife (Margaret Finley) moved from Virginia to Bourbon County, Kentucky near Paris. They were accompanied by William Frazier and his wife Jean Finley, a sister of Margaret."¹²⁶ While the William Frazer who contested David's land may not be the same who married Margaret (unless she married a man considerably her senior), one can conclude that a relationship most likely exists. Parenthetically, the John who left the will of 1802 is identified by Stout as the son of William Finley¹²⁷ and this is supported by the present study (discussion of this John Finley to follow).

RELATIONSHIPS AMONG JOHN, DAVID, SAMUEL AND ELIZABETH (FINLEY) GILLESPIE. As shown above, John Finley, wheelwright, is most likely the oldest son of the John who lived last on 327 acres on Sally Run in Montgomery County, hence the oldest son of John of South River. The relationship of John Finley #3 to David and Samuel, however, was most likely that of half-brother. The argument for South River John's marriage to (1) [?] Thomson and (2) Mary Caldwell has been presented above. We know from the division of the Robinson property in 1750 that South River John's wife was Mary at that time. While we do not know the given name of his first wife, we do not it was not Mary, since Rev. John Thomson had another daughter Mary, who married Robert Baker.¹²⁸ It has also been shown that the most likely baptismal

¹²³ Augusta Co., Va., Will Bk. 10, p. 172.

¹²⁴ Finley, "David Finley ...," *loc. cit.*

¹²⁵ H. V. McChesney, ed., "Certificate Book," *The Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society*, v. 21, p. 20.

¹²⁶ Milford E. Barnes and Andrew Wallace Barnes, comps., *John and Margaret (Finley) Hutchison and Their Descendants* (Iowa City, 1965), p. 49. Available at LDS Library in Salt Lake City.

¹²⁷ Stout, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

¹²⁸ Herndon, "Some Descendants ...," p. 396.

date for the George Finley found on Vaughan's Creek in Prince Edward County is 4 Jan. 1748.¹²⁹ He was also the only child baptized at Tinkling Spring by the Rev. John Thomson during the period 1740-1749.- probably the last grandchild by the daughter who married John Finley. Therefore, John #3, wheelwright, as oldest son, was most likely the first son of John Thomson's daughter. This would make him a full brother to Elizabeth (Finley) Gillespie and half-brother to David and Samuel.

Hypothesis 5: John Finley #3, wheelwright and neighbor of the Gillespies, was the oldest son of John of Wythe and hence the son of John of South River by his first wife (Thomson). Consider the following: 1. This John gave power-of-attorney in 1792 to William Finley of Wythe County for the sale of property. A few months later the property was deeded by John, through William, to David and Samuel Finley. The property was the 327 acres on Sally Run given to David and Samuel by their father, John, in 1779. John died intestate prior to Aug. 1782. Since primogeniture was not abolished until 1 Jan. 1787, the oldest son would have a legal claim on the property at the time of John's death.

2. This John bought property from the Gillespys in 1773, about the same time two of the three Finleys living on Vaughan's Creek in Prince Edward County moved on to Montgomery County.

3. This John accepted an apprentice, Matthew Gleaves, who was orphaned in 1771. Matthew's uncle, William Gleaves, lived on South River at that time. William Gleaves moved to Montgomery County the next year. Esther, daughter of William Gleaves, married Esau (Asa) Finley, son of William Finley who had lived in Prince Edward County and later moved to Montgomery County.

4. In his will, this John left land on the Dicks River to daughters Peggy Hutchison and Sally Finley. The Dicks River is where David Finley, son of John of Montgomery, settled. David and this John were half-brothers.

5. In his will, this John left land on the Elkhorn in Kentucky to his son, John. To son Samuel he left land on the Green River in Kentucky. John and Samuel went to Kentucky to claim their land shortly after their father's death. They were located in Scott County.¹³⁰ In John's probate records in 1837 and 1839, he was

¹²⁹ Finley, "The George Finleys of Augusta County," *loc. cit.*

¹³⁰ A descendant of John S. or T. Finley, Stella G. Finley, PO Box 612, Georgetown, KY 40324, provided much information on these two sons.

referred to as John S. or T. Finley,¹³¹ and a Thomson Finley was listed in his inventory.¹³² Samuel had a son named Samuel Thomson Finley.¹³³ This is consistent with the hypothesis that this John's mother was a Thomson, daughter of Rev. John Thomson.

Hypothesis 6: John Finley #3, wheelwright, wrote his will in 1807. Consider the following: 1. This John accepted Margaret Mooney as an apprentice. Peggy Mooney was provided for in the will written by John Finley in 1807.

COMPARISON WITH FRANCE AND STOUT. France does not refer to John Finley #3. Stout believes he is the son of Samuel Finley who was a son of John and Thankful (Doak) Finley. Stout lists all the children named in the 1807 will, but claims this John Finley died in 1811. The 1807 will was proved 28 Dec. 1807.¹³⁴ Stout further believes Samuel was holding 170 acres in Augusta County between 1754 and 1761. Chalkley lists no Samuel Finley during this time period, nor is a Samuel found in the Augusta County Deed Index. No grants were issued to a Samuel Finley during this time period. Samuel Finley was not named as an heir in the will of John Finley #1 who left the will of 1791. The line of this Samuel Finley has not been pursued further by this writer.

(To be continued)

¹³¹ Scott Co., Ky., Will Bk. F, pp. 46, 396.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 42.

¹³³ *Marion County Democrat*, Palmyra, Mo., 27 Feb. 1879, obituary for S. Thomson Finley.

¹³⁴ Augusta Co., Va., Will Bk. 10, p. 172.

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THE JOHN FINLEYS OF AUGUSTA COUNTY, VIRGINIA: CORRECTING THE RECORD

By Carmen J. Finley, C.G., Ph.D.
Santa Rosa, California

(Continued from V. 46, p. 178)

JOHN FINLEY #4 - SON OF JOHN FINLEY #1 OF MIDDLE RIVER

As indicated above, there is strong evidence that the John Finley who left the will of 1791 was the one who lived on Middle River and was married to Thankful Doak. France claims John, the son named in the 1791 will, was baptized by Rev. John Craig 24 June 1742¹³⁵ and died in Lincoln Co., N.C., 1818, age 76 years, 2 months, and lies buried in Bethel Church graveyard. He moved with his brothers Robert and Thomas (James)¹³⁶ to North Carolina prior to 1766 as on 7 June 1766 "he enlisted in Captain Adam's Alexander company of North Carolina militia." He states further he married Ann Miller, daughter of David.¹³⁷

The 1790 census listed only one Finley in Lincoln Co., N.C. He was Robt Finly, with three white males over 16, two white males under 16 and two white females living in his household.¹³⁸ This is undoubtedly the Robert Finley who died 1791/1792 leaving a will dated 19 Feb. 1791, probated April 1792. He named wife Isabel, eldest son John, second son James (both minors), younger sons Robert and Alexander; daughter Agness.¹³⁹ A bond was made by Robert Finley to John Reed on 15 March 1789 because:

... on Jan. 7, 1772 John Reed & wife Martha made a deed for 300 ac to

¹³⁵ Wilson, *op. cit.*, lists John Craig's baptisms between 1740 and 1749. None of the Finley parents listed a child John during this period of time.

¹³⁶ Recall that "Thomas" was an error of transcription for "James" in the 1791 will.

¹³⁷ France, *op. cit.*, p. 3 of section on Finleys of Virginia.

¹³⁸ *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States in the Year 1790, North Carolina* (reprint; Baltimore, 1973), p. 113.

¹³⁹ Miles S. Philbeck, Jr., and Grace Turner, *Lincoln County, North Carolina Will Abstracts, 1770-1910* (n.p., 1986), entry #383.

James Finley desc, and it wasn't good enough so John Reed was to make a new deed to Robert Finely [*sic*], heir of James Finley desc., now Robert Finley is to pay damages that may arise due to John Reed making a deed and then bond is void.¹⁴⁰

This clearly rules out this Robert as a son of John and Thankful and hence he is not the brother who is said to have accompanied John to the Carolinas. And Robert's father, James, would have been too old to have been a son of John and Thankful.

No John or James of proper age was found in Lincoln County for the period 1790 to 1820. The only John Finley listed in the 1790 census of North Carolina was found in Halifax, Warren County, on the Virginia border, with one male over 16, one male under 16, and two females living in his household.¹⁴¹ According to France, John Finley of Lincoln County had, by 1790, seven sons and two daughters ranging in age from 8 to 27. By 1800 the Lincoln County Finleys consisted of Isabella (presumably Robert's widow), Alexander, and two John Finleys (both too young to be the one from Augusta County).¹⁴²

Negative research results also came from investigating records for the Bethel Church graveyard. The research historian for the Presbyterian Church Department of History (Montreat) states:

I can find no mention of a Bethel Presbyterian Church within the present or past boundaries of Lincoln County, NC. One possibility may be the Bethel Presbyterian Church in York County, SC, located 5 miles east of Clover, SC, 8 miles west of the Catawba River, and 4 miles from the North Carolina line, which in that area borders Gaston County, formerly Lincoln. However, the cemetery inscriptions from this church, compiled 1981, do not mention a John Finley. (The transcriptions do mention other Finleys who died 1849-1883.) The other possibility is the Bethel Presbyterian Church in Mecklenburg County, NC, located one mile west of Cornelius. This church was not founded until 1828-29, but it is possible that John Finley was reburied there at a later date.¹⁴³

¹⁴⁰ R. B. Pruitt, *Abstracts of Deeds, Lincoln Co., NC, 1786-1793*, Nooks 3, 4, and 16 (n.p., 1988), p. 52.

¹⁴¹ *Heads of Families ... 1790*, p. 77.

¹⁴² Paul H. Dellinger, *The 1800 Federal Census of Lincoln County, North Carolina* (Lincolnton, N.C., n.d.), p. 16.

¹⁴³ William B. Bynum, research historian, Presbyterian Church Department of History, Montreat, N.C., to author, 13 July 1990.

THE JOHN FINLEYS OF SOUTH CAROLINA. There were at least four John Finleys living in the area of South Carolina relatively near Lincoln Co., N.C., during the period 1790 to 1825. Two of them left probate records, one in Fairfield County in 1820 and the other in Chester County in 1823,¹⁴⁴ ruling them out as the John Finley from Augusta County. Census records for 1790 included the following:¹⁴⁵

John Finley households	Chester	Fairfield	Union	York
males 16+	2	1	1	2
males 16-	2	2	0	1
females	1	3	2	3

In addition, a David Miller was listed in York County (recall, France stated Ann Miller, daughter of David, married the John Finley of interest.)

One of the adult John Findleys in Chester County was deceased by 27 Sept. 1792 for on that date his son John, John's mother Ann, and John's wife Elizabeth of Chester County sold 450 acres on Beaver Creek, Kershaw County (originally Craven) to Charles Barber.¹⁴⁶ This property was originally obtained by John Findley, Sr., through South Carolina's Headright System. Legislation passed in the mid-1760s was for the express purpose of encouraging "free Protestants settlers" to immigrate from the British Isles or Europe. Between 29 Sept. 1767 and 25 March 1768 the Public Treasurer of South Carolina paid Bounty for this John Finley and he was granted 450 acres in Craven County on branches of Beaver Creek on 12 May 1768.¹⁴⁷ Hence these John Finleys, father and son, can be eliminated from consideration as the Augusta County person.

By 1800 there was some shift, but four John Finleys remained in the area near the North Carolina border:¹⁴⁸

	Chester	Fairfield	Union	York
males <10	2	0	4	0
males 10-16	0	2	0	0
males 16-26	0	1	0	1

¹⁴⁴ Fairfield Co., S.C., Bk. E, fol. 285; Chester Co., S.C., Apartment No. 20, Package No. 325.

¹⁴⁵ *Heads of Families at the First Census of the United States Taken in the Year 1790, South Carolina* (Washington, 1908), pp. 16, 22, 23, 28.

¹⁴⁶ Kershaw Co., S.C., Deed Bk. B, p. 162.

¹⁴⁷ Mary Bondurant Warren, *Citizens and Immigrants - South Carolina, 1768* (Danielsville, Ga., 1980), pp. 143, 201.

¹⁴⁸ Chester Co., S.C., 1800 census, p. 102; Fairfield Co., S.C., 1800 census, p. 212; Union Co., S.C., 1800 census, p. 248; York Co., S.C., 1800 census, p. 94.

males 26-45	1	0	1	0
males 45+	0	1	0	1
females <10	1	3	1	0
females 10-16	0	0	0	0
females 16-26	0	0	0	1
females 26-45	2	1	1	0
females 45+	0	0	0	1

By 1800 John Finley of Augusta would have been 45+, making the Fairfield and York County families the most likely to fit the profile set by France. But the Fairfield John Finley named heirs Isham Finly, John Finly, Judith Ringer, Martha Gibson, Daniel Finly, Susan Finly, Nancy Finly and Elizabeth Finly, and thus does not qualify as the family France described.

JOHN FINLEY OF YORK COUNTY. In 1780 John Finley, wheelwright of Craven County, bought 230 acres on the Southfork of Fishing Creek from Henry Good.¹⁴⁹ John and his wife Ann sold 21.2 acres of this property to Reuben McConnell 13 Feb. 1813.¹⁵⁰ A few court records were found during this time period involving various John Finleys. In Jan. 1786 a deed from John Finley to Ann Miller "otherwise Hartness" was proved and ordered recorded in Chester County.¹⁵¹ However, France claims John Finley and Ann Miller were married 10 April 1762.¹⁵² In addition, the known John Finley of Chester County, who left probate records in 1823, had wife Elizabeth and heirs totally different from the children ascribed to the John Finley/Ann Miller couple.¹⁵³

There was also a John Finley, Jr., in York County who, on 9 Feb. 1807, purchased 100 acres (part of 791 acres originally granted to John Davidson, Sr., in 1753).¹⁵⁴ John, Jr., sold this back to Hugh Davidson on 24 May 1814.¹⁵⁵ The 1810 census shows only one John Findley living in York County.¹⁵⁶ However, there were two males living in the household, one in the age range of 26-45, the

¹⁴⁹ York Co., S.C., Deed Bk. B, p. 44.

¹⁵⁰ York Co., S.C., Deed Bk. G, p. 529.

¹⁵¹ Brent Holcomb and Elmer O. Parker, *Chester County, South Carolina, Minutes of the County Court, 1785-1799* (Easley, S.C., 1979), p. 23, recorded in Chester Co., S.C., Order Bk. A, p. 63.

¹⁵² France, *op. cit.*, p. 3 of section on Finleys of Virginia.

¹⁵³ Chester Co., S.C., Apartment No. 20, Package No. 325.

¹⁵⁴ York Co., S.C., Deed Bk. F, p. 764.

¹⁵⁵ York Co., S.C., Deed Bk. F, p. 522.

¹⁵⁶ York Co., S.C., 1810 census, p. 656 or 273A (records carry two sets of numbers).

other over 45, suggesting these John Finleys could well be father and son living in the same household. By 1820 all John Finleys in York County had disappeared.

Additional intensive study was made of the York County John Finley and the neighborhood in which he lived.¹⁵⁷ One concern was whether any connection could be made between the Finleys of York County and the Miller family into which John Finley supposedly married. The other concern was whether an extended neighborhood around John Finley included any familiar names from the Augusta County area where he supposedly originated.

Two David Millers came into the area. The first David Miller arrived in 1768 and settled on 400 acres on waters of Wateree.¹⁵⁸ The second David Miller arrived in 1772 from Northern Island and claimed 300 acres on the upper branches of Bever Creek, Parish of St. Marks, Craven County.¹⁵⁹ According to France, John Finley married Ann Miller on 10 April 1762, four years before the arrival of the first David Miller.

Four analyses were made of the neighborhood in which John Finley of York County lived. The first was based on Jury Lists of South Carolina¹⁶⁰ and land records in the area. The second, third and fourth were based on census records for 1790, 1800 and 1810. Consistently, no names were found on any of these lists that were in common with the Middle River neighborhood from which John Finley is said to have come. One possible exception is the name Davison, since there was a John Davidson who appeared in Beverley Manor, but that Davidson was consistently associated with the South River Finleys, not the Middle River Finleys. It was unusual in that period of our history to find persons migrating alone and not found in the company of family or neighborhood friends from a former location.

This analysis indicates that John Finley, son of John and Thankful (Doak) Finley, most likely did not migrate to the Carolinas. Meanwhile, a viable alternative exists in Washington Co., Va.

¹⁵⁷ This phase of the study was conducted by GeLee Corley Hendrix, CG, FASG, of Greenville, S.C.

¹⁵⁸ Warren, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

¹⁵⁹ Jean Stephenson, *Scotch-Irish Migration to South Carolina, 1772* (Strasburg, Va., 1971), p. 77.

¹⁶⁰ GeLee Corley Hendrix and Morn McKoy Lindsay, comps. *The Jury Lists of South Carolina, 1778-1779* (Greenville, S.C., 1975), pp. 57-59.

JOHN FINLEY OF WASHINGTON COUNTY, VIRGINIA. It has already been shown that one son of John #1, George, was living in Washington County from the mid-1770s to the early 1800s.¹⁶¹ Living on the property adjacent to George was a John Finley. John received his grant for 312 acres on Wallace's Branch of the Holston adjacent to land of George Finley on 2 Oct. 1786, the same day George received his grant.¹⁶² According to Summers, John had settled on a 400 acre parcel on the North Fork of the Holston in 1774.¹⁶³ There were also records for John in 1777. In that year

John Finly making it appear to the satisfaction of the Court of Washington County that he upon the twentieth Day of July 1776 received a wound in the Thigh in the Battle fought with the Cherokees near the great Island and it now appears to the said Court that he in consequence of said wound is rendered unable to gain a living by his Labour as formerly, therefore his case is recommended to the consideration of the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia.¹⁶⁴

Summers refers to this as the battle at Long Island Flats and says John Finley was listed as a private in the company of William Christian in the Cherokee Expedition of Aug. 1776.¹⁶⁵

On 9 Oct. 1780 when Thomas McCullough wrote his will, John Finley was a witness.¹⁶⁶ On 24 Nov. 1780 when McCullough's will was proved, George Finley served as security.¹⁶⁷ John Finley also served on the Washington County jury in 1777 and 1782¹⁶⁸ and in 1784 he witnessed a bill of sale.¹⁶⁹ Finally, on 31 Oct. 1792 he sold his 312 acre grant on Wallace's Branch of the Holston to Peter Fulkerson. At that time he was described as "of Knox County, Territory

¹⁶¹ Finley, "The George Finleys of Augusta County, Virginia," *loc. cit.*

¹⁶² Virginia Grant Bk. 6, 1786, pp. 451, 534.

¹⁶³ Lewis Preston Summers, *Annals of Southwest Virginia, 1769-1800* (reprint; Baltimore, 1970), p. 1216. Surveys are shown for both John and George Finley, 400 acres on the North Fork of the Holston. John's survey is dated 1 Sept. 1781 and George's is dated just 1781, with a settlement date of 1781. It is not known whether this is the same 400 acres or whether it represents two different 400 acre parcels.

¹⁶⁴ Washington Co., Va., Minutes of the County Court, p. 957, 26 Feb. 1777.

¹⁶⁵ Summers, *op. cit.*, pp. 957, 1390, 1419.

¹⁶⁶ Washington Co., Va., Will Bk. 1, p. 82.

¹⁶⁷ Summers, *op. cit.*, p. 1064.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 974, 1110, 1112.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1169.

South West of River Ohio."¹⁷⁰

This is the picture of a John Finley, old enough to have fought in the Revolution, who lived for at least fifteen years next door to George Finley, proven son of Middle River John #1. On at least one occasion, both John and George were involved in witnessing and securing the will of the same person, Thomas McCullough. It is reasonable to assume a relationship between John and George. Since George is known to have been born in 1743, he can be neither John's father nor his son; rather, John and George were contemporaries.

THE JOHN FINLEYS OF KNOX COUNTY, TENNESSEE. Records were readily found for several John Finleys in Knox Co., Tenn. A marriage record between John Finley and Margaret Kerr was found 13 Nov. 1793, while another was found between John Finley and Liddy Grove on 12 June 1804.¹⁷¹ Military records were found for the period 1792-1794.¹⁷² Tax records were available for the years 1804 through 1812 (except for 1805),¹⁷³ indicating there were at least two John Finleys during that period of time. Between 1795 and 1812 there were 21 deeds in which a John Finley was either grantor or gantee. In addition, a John Finley had 78 acres, 2 roods in the District South of French Broad and the Holston rivers surveyed in 1807 and received a grant in 1809.¹⁷⁴ Court records revealed a John Finley as plaintiff in a number of suits between 1794 and 1802, often represented by an "assignee." He also appeared as a defendant in 1804 and 1806.¹⁷⁵

The analyses of these date has been published separately,¹⁷⁶ but the essential points are these:

1. There were at least three John Finleys living in Knox County during at least a portion of the time between 1790 to 1820.
2. One John Finley, a land speculator, bought lots in and around Knoxville

¹⁷⁰ Washington Co., Va., Deed Bk. 1, p. 305.

¹⁷¹ Roscoe Carlisle d'Armand and Virginia Carlisle d'Armand, comps., *Knox County, Tennessee, Marriage Records, 1792-1900* (Knoxville, 1970), p. 337.

¹⁷² Virgil D. White, *Index to Volunteer Soldiers, 1784-1811* (Waynesboro, Tenn., 1987), p. 218.

¹⁷³ Knox Co., Tenn., Tax Records, Tennessee State Archives, Nashville.

¹⁷⁴ Tennessee Land Grants, v. 3, 1810-1814, LDS film #1012794, grant #1790.

¹⁷⁵ Knox Co., Tenn., General Index to County Court Minutes, pp. 69-70.

¹⁷⁶ Carmen J. Finley, "The John Finleys of Knox County, Tennessee," *Tennessee Ancestors*, v. 9, pp. 33-43.

and other places in the county. He was from Franklin Co., Pa., the son of James and Jane (Rippey) Finley. His purchases were often made with one of his brothers-in-law, Stephen Duncan or James Gilbreath, or with Patrick Jack, his uncle-in-law, or with John Findley Jack, Patrick's son, or with one or more of them acting as witnesses. His stay in Knox County ran from about 1795 (date of first purchase) to 10 March 1797, although his purchases and sales extended well after this time period. A number of his Knoxville lots were sold for taxes and continued until about 1812. It is possible this might be the John Finley who married Margaret Kerr, since the homestead in Franklin County adjoined Kerr property. If so, he would have been in Knox County a couple of years prior to his first purchase of land.

2. A second John Finley appeared on the Tax Lists between 1804 and 1812 owning no land. He was under 50 years old when he died prior to July 1817. Letters of administration were issued to Stephen Groves, hence it seems likely this is the John Finley who married Liddy Grove.

3. A third John Finley was granted 78 acres in 1810 (surveyed in 1807). Because he was not assessed a poll tax, we can assume he was over 50 and a candidate to be the son of Middle River John Finley #1. Court Minutes show a suit between John Finley, plaintiff, and David Miller, defendant, 1 Aug. 1795,¹⁷⁷ also John Finley as an assignee in a case against David Miller, 30 Oct. 1795.¹⁷⁸ Recall France claims the John Finley named in the 1791 will married Ann Miller, daughter of David. In addition, the July 1819 Court carried a notice that John Finley granted power-of-attorney to David Finley.¹⁷⁹ Recall John Finley #1 of Middle River had a son David, born about 1765, who served as his executor. David's last known whereabouts in the early 1800s was in Montgomery Co., Ky., about 130 miles due north of Knoxville. No other David Finley records were found in Knox County court or land records. This does not prove this John Finley is the one who was living earlier next to George Finley in Washington Co., Va. Neither does it rule him out as a good prospect.

4. The possibility of a fourth John Finley exists, as the one who purchased land on Wolf River. Wolf River today runs through Pickett and north Fentress County, some 75 miles northwest of Knoxville near the Kentucky border. We cannot positively identify him as one of the above three, nor can we positively say

¹⁷⁷ Knox Co., Tenn., Court Minutes Bk. 1, p. 45.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹⁷⁹ Knox Co., Tenn., Court Minutes, Bk. 10-2, p. 70, July session 1819.

this was a unique fourth John Finley. However, the pattern of buying land for speculative reasons and letting it lapse for non-payment of taxes established by the John Finley of Franklin County makes one wonder if the Wolf River property could also be attributed to him.

OTHER POSSIBLE TENNESSEE CONNECTIONS. At this point it is interesting to return to France to pick up another thread on the children of John Finley, son of the John who left the 1791 will in Augusta County. According to France, this John had a son William, born 11 April 1765, who died in Jefferson Co., Tenn., with will dated 13 April 1818 and proved June 1819. One of William's daughters was Mary Finley who married David (Davy) Crockett 3 Aug. 1806. Mary was born in 1788 in Tennessee and died there in 1814.¹⁸⁰ Much of this part of France's claim can be documented. According to one biographer of Davy Crockett:

The father and mother were William and Joan Finley, the daughter, Mary, nicknamed Polly. David obtained this second marriage license at the Dandridge Courthouse on Tuesday, August 12, 1806, five days before his twentieth birthday.¹⁸¹

A will does exist for William Finley, dated 3 April 1818, proved in Jefferson County, June Session 1819.¹⁸² In his will he provides for "my daughter Mary Crockett's three Children, John, William & Polly." A picture of the grave of William Finley, father-in-law of Davy Crockett is carried on the cover of a Jefferson County cemetery booklet with the sub-title *South of the French Broad River and Dumplin Valley Sections*.¹⁸³ Jefferson and Knox County share a common border and John of Knox described above as a possible candidate son of John and Thankful is the one who also lived South of the French Broad River.

Hypotheses #7: A John Finley who lived in Washington Co., Va., during the

¹⁸⁰ France, *op. cit.*, p. 3 of section on Finleys of Virginia.

¹⁸¹ John B. Shackford, ed., *David Crockett, The Man and The Legend* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1986), p. 15. The author notes, "That instrument (marriage license) itself seems not to have survived, but the fact of its issuance and the date are recorded in the Jefferson County Marriage and Bond Book, 1792-1940, and reads "David Crockett to Polly Finley Aug 12, 1806."

¹⁸² Jefferson Co., Tenn., Will Bk. 2, pp. 237-39.

¹⁸³ David H. Templin and Chere Bolin Henderson, *Stories in Stone: Jefferson County Cemeteries, Volume I, South of the French Broad River and Dumplin Valley Sections* (Knoxville, 1986), cover page.

1770s and 1780s and then moved to Knox Co., Tenn., provides a good rival hypothesis as John #4, son of Middle River John and Thankful, when compared to the undocumented claims of France. Consider the following: 1. An examination of the area he was said to have gone to with brothers Robert and Thomas (James) (the Carolinas) produced only negative results. The Robert living in Lincoln Co., N.C., was the son of James. There is no Bethel Churchyard Cemetery in Lincoln County; the nearest of that name being in York Co., S.C. While a John Finley was found living in York County, there is no record of his burial at Bethel. The David Millers who were found in the area arrived from four to ten years after Ann Miller is said to have married John Finley. An extensive analysis of the area in which this John Finley lived could find no neighbors in common with those where the son of John and Thankful (Doak) Finley lived on Middle River.

2. A John Finley lived adjacent to George Finley, proven son of Middle River John and Thankful, in Washington County for at least fifteen years. John and George were contemporaries.

3. The John Finley who lived adjacent to George in Washington County moved on to Knox Co., Tenn. One of the Knox County John Finleys was over 50 in 1804, eligible to be the son of Middle River John. He assigned power-of-attorney to a David Finley, not found elsewhere in Knox County records. John and Thankful had a son David. One of the Knox County John Finleys left court records involving a David Miller.

4. France reports that one of John's children, William, was the father of Davy Crockett's first wife, Mary (Polly) Finley. The relationship between William, daughter Mary, and Davy Crockett can be documented. Both John of Knox and William were living in a district described as South of the French Broad River in adjacent counties.

This is certainly more support than could be found for the hypothesis that he ever lived in Lincoln Co., N.C.

COMPARISON WITH FRANCE AND STOUT. As in the case of other John Finleys who originated in Augusta County, only minor elements can be confirmed by the current research. No trace of a John Finley in his age group could be found in Lincoln (now Gaston) Co., N.C. The Presbyterian Church Department of History at Montreat could find no trace of a Bethel Church in that area of North Carolina. However, there is a Bethel Church just across the border in York Co., S.C., but there are no records for the burial of this John Finley

(though there are later Finleys buried there). Searching the counties near the North Carolina border located four or five John Finleys, and it was possible to eliminate all except the one in York County. Further extensive searching of York County provided no tangible confirmation of ties for this John Finley to Augusta County. The investigation in York County yielded only negative results. Meanwhile in Washington Co., Va., a John Finley, contemporary of George Finley known to be the son of Middle River John #1, was found living adjacent to George for at least 15 years. Following his move to Knox Co., Tenn., additional records showed at least three John Finleys were living there during the late 1700s and early 1800s. One John Finley was the son of James and Jane (Ripsey) Finley of Franklin Co., Pa., and returned there prior to 1800. Another John Finley, a man under 50, owning no land, died prior to July 1817. A third John Finley who owned land but paid no poll tax was probably the one who gave power-of-attorney to David Finley in July 1819. This does not prove he is the one who lived earlier in Washington County nor that he is the son of Middle River John #1. However, it provides a plausible theory which rivals that of France who claimed this John Finley lived and died in North Carolina in 1818.

JOHN FINLEY #5 - SON OF WILLIAM FINLEY OF SOUTH RIVER

As noted above there was also a John Finley who wrote his will in 1802 and Stout claims he is the son of the William Finley who lived on South River. There is certainly ample proof that William had a son John. In Aug. 1770 William Finley deeded 215 acres to his son John Finley, it "being a part of a Tract of two hundred and ninety two Acres laid off for John Finley Senior being his part of a larger tract of eight hundred and ninety two Acres on both sides of the South River of Shanandore surveyed for John Finley Junior ..."¹⁸⁴ This is clearly a

¹⁸⁴ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 16, p. 522. This particular document has caused some confusion as to which John Finley originally bought the Robinson property. Consider the following excerpt:

... unto the said John Finley one piece or parcel of land containing two hundred and fifteen acres be the saim more or less in Beverly Manor (being a part of a Tract of two hundred and ninety seven Acres laid off for John Finley Senior being his part of a larger Tract of eight hundred and ninety two Acres on both sides of the South River of Shanandore) surveyed for John Finley Junior and Bounded as followeth ...

Without the brackets, as originally written, it sounds as though the 892 acres was surveyed for John Finley, Jr. However, sentence structure was often convoluted in those days and the only

portion of the Robinson property bought initially in 1746 by John Finley #2 of South River. Once again the tenants included three Finleys - William, Robert and John. This shows up clearly in the tax records of 1782-1787. For each year 1782 through 1787 there were at least two John Finleys enumerated in the South River area. One is sometimes designated "wheelwright" (living adjacent to the Gillespys), the other sometimes "farmer" (living on the Robinson property). The tax list of 1782 that preserved neighborhood clues listed Robert Finley Jun,¹⁸⁵ John Finley farmer and William Finley in adjacent entries, clearly the Robinson property (John Finley W. Right appeared ten lines before the three adjacent Finleys). In 1784 there was a third John Finley tagged as Junior - a one time occurrence in this time period.

In Dec. 1787 William Finley wrote his will, naming sons William, Robert and John.¹⁸⁶ All sons were living on South River at that time. John had already received his share of land from his father. William and Robert received the land where they were each currently living, plus the remainder of William's 200 acre patent of 1770¹⁸⁷ not already given to John.

COMPARISON WITH FRANCE AND STOUT. France does not give information on John Finley #5. The information presented here is entirely consistent with that presented by Stout.¹⁸⁸

JOHN FINLEY #6 - SON OF JAMES FINLEY

There is only brief mention of another John Finley who lived for a short time in Augusta County. A Robert Finley, merchant, lived at Staunton from about

interpretation that makes sense is to separate the two phrases as follows:

... unto the said John Finley one piece or parcel of land containing two hundred and fifteen acres be the saim more or less in Beverly Mannor surveyed for John Finley Junior and Bounded as followeth

... being a part of a Tract of two hundred and ninety seven Acres laid off for John Finley Senior being his part of a larger Tract of eight hundred and ninety two Acres on both sides of the South River of Shanandore ...

¹⁸⁵ Robert Finley, Sr., and wife Martha deeded 88 acres on South River to Robert Finley, Jr., in Nov. 1784 (Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 24, p. 277). Robert, Sr., appears on the tax list in 1784 only.

¹⁸⁶ Augusta Co., Va., Will Bk. 7, p. 176.

¹⁸⁷ Virginia Land Patent Grants, 1623-1921, LDS film #7116, part 50, p. 4.

¹⁸⁸ Stout, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

1753 until he died sometime prior to Nov. 1763. His brother James was appointed administrator and moved from Carlisle, Cumberland Co., Pa., to take care of his brother's estate.¹⁸⁹ James' son John received his inheritance from his uncle Robert's estate in Oct. 1765.¹⁹⁰ The family of James Finley soon moved on to Bedford County where they lived until the death of James in 1785. The accounts of this family have been published and documented in a separate paper.¹⁹¹

COMPARISON WITH FRANCE AND STOUT. France does not discuss this family. Stout claims this James and Robert were the sons of Samuel and Margaret (Rowland) Finley of Peters Township, Cumberland Co., Pa.¹⁹² That particular relationship has not been investigated by this writer. The remaining information Stout presents on John Finley #6, son of James, bears no resemblance to that found by this writer.

SUMMARY

The many John Finleys who lived in Augusta County between 1740 and 1800 have been a source of confusion for Finley researchers. Major Albert Finley France and Admiral Herald F. Stout, who used and expanded France's work, have served as the primary authorities for this branch of the Finleys. Most Finley family historians have accepted their earlier work and have simply copied it without question. However, errors have already been documented for Stout's David (5-01-114), George (5-02-117), George (4-02-18), and James Finley (4-02-31).

The current paper demonstrates how a basic error was made between two early John Finleys, one of whom lived on Middle River and the other on South River. Both men were in Augusta County in the late 1730s. France assigned a father-son relationship between them and Stout did not question that. The present paper demonstrates they could not have been father and son, but rather

¹⁸⁹ James sold Robert's holdings in Pennsylvania to Samuel Rippey (Cumberland Co., Pa., Deed Bk. 2A, p. 227). One of the Knox County John Finleys was the son of Jane Rippey, daughter of Samuel Rippey.

¹⁹⁰ Augusta Co., Va., Deed Bk. 12, p. 400.

¹⁹¹ Finley, "Robert and James Finley of Augusta County, Virginia," *loc. cit.*

¹⁹² Stout, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

they were two early contemporary John Finleys. This, in turn, seriously affects existing research on subsequent generations from these two men.

Each of four additional John Finleys who lived in Augusta County have been further investigated. The John Finley who left the will of 1802 is clearly the son of the William Finley of South River. The John Finley who left the will of 1807 is clearly the son of John Finley #2 who lived on South River until 1765, then went on to Prince Edward County and finally to Montgomery County.

The John Finley who was named in the 1791 will was the son of the John Finley #1 of Middle River. He could not be found where France claimed he went in North Carolina. An extended search of both North and South Carolina could confirm no part of what had been written previously about him. However, there was a John Finley in York Co., S.C., whose earlier connections could not be proved nor disproved. Meanwhile, a John Finley was found in Washington Co., Va., living adjacent to George Finley, proven son of the John Finley of Middle River. He moved on to Knox Co., Tenn., about 1792, but records there indicate there were at least three John Finleys living there in the late 1700s and early 1800s. While this falls short of proof that one of them is the son of the John Finley of Middle River, it presents a plausible alternative to the unproved information presented by France.

A sixth John Finley was in Augusta County for a brief period of time around 1765. He was the son of James Finley (Stout's 4-02-31).

The message to researchers of Finleys in Augusta County is clear—especially if they believe they are descendants of either Thankful Doak or Mary Caldwell. It is absolutely essential that they prove the link to one or the other. They cannot be linked to both.

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