

THE POYTHRESS FAMILY  
OF  
FLOWER de HUNDRED

By Richard McI. Dunn

This is an attempt to trace the ancestry and some of the descendants of Joshua Poythress who in 1725 purchased a tract of land on the south side of the James River in Prince George County, Virginia, called Flower de Hundred.

The task has not been an easy one for in Charles City and Prince George Counties, where the Poythress family of Virginia settled, early county records are almost non-existent. As for the ancient parishes of Westover, Weyanoke and Martin's Brandon, where members of the family worshiped at Brandon and Merchant's Hope churches, all early records of births, baptisms, marriages and deaths have disappeared into the limbo of time. It is believed it would have been impossible except for the fact that Joshua Poythress and certain of his descendants have remained in continuous possession of Flower de Hundred from the year 1725 to the year 1949.

I

Captain Francis Poythress, The Emigrant

(Born about 1600, Died prior to 1661)

The founder of the Poythress family in Charles City and Prince George Counties was Francis Poythress who came to Virginia about 1633 and settled south of the James River in what was then Charles City County, but in 1702 was included in the then newly formed county of Prince George.

By court order dated February 27, 1636, land patent dated July 13, 1637 and land patent dated May 8, 1648, he acquired 750 acres of land in Charles City County near the mouth of Bailey's Creek, bound on the west by the Creek, south by the main woods, east by land of Captain Woodliffe, and north by his own land (Grant Book 1, page 439 and Grant Book 2, page 139). This locates his land a few miles east of the present city of Hopewell, on the east bank of Bailey's Creek, near the James River and not far from "Flower de Hundred", "Bonaccord" and "Branchester", all homes of later generations of the Poythress family.

Francis Poythress probably came to Virginia as agent or factor for Lawrence Evans, merchant of London, for Evans claimed that Poythress had committed abuses in his trust, discharged him and brought suit in the General Court. In March 1639, the Governor and Council referred the matter to four of the "ablest merchants in Virginia" for arbitration. Poythress was exonerated and it was decided that Evan's new factor should pay him "ten pounds" in the hundred for goods sold and tobacco received".

Evidently Francis Poythress was a man of energy and ability. In March 1645, the Assembly appointed him a Lieutenant and placed him in command of a force to march against the Indians, but cautioned that he should follow the directions of Captain Henry Fleet and that they should build a fort on the Rappahannock River. In October 1648, the Assembly ordered Captain Francis Poythress, who commanded the militia north of the York River, to collect the taxes from the new and disorderly county of Northumberland. (Henings Statutes V. 1, pages 318 and 353) He was a member of the House of Burgesses from Charles City County for 1644 through 1647 and from Northumberland County in 1648. (Henings Statues V. 1, pages 283, 339 and 359)

There is no known record of the birth, marriage or death of Captain Francis Poythress. From that which has been set forth, it can be concluded that he was born in England about 1600 and came to Virginia about 1633. He died before 1661, for at court held at Westover in April 1661 "Col. Edward Hill, esq., did give to John Poythress, the son of Cap. Francis Poythress, deceased, 50 acres at Jordans, adjoining the land now occupied by Cap. Robert Wynne". This court record also establishes John Poythress as a son of Cap. Francis Poythress (Charles City County, Court Orders 1655 - 1665, page 273). For some descendants of John Poythress, see the following section on John Poythress.

In all likelihood, Thomas Poythress, who was mentioned as a god-child of Cap. Thomas Pawlett of Charles City County in his will dated January 12, 1643, was also a son of Cap. Francis Poythress (Westover Church, Kirkland Ruffin Saunders, page 32).

It is also probable that Jane Poythress, who is purported to have married Thomas Rolph, the son of John Rolph and his wife Pocahontas was a daughter of Cap. Francis Poythress. (Old Churches And Families of Virginia, Bishop Meade, V. 1, page 77, 78, 79 & 80; Pocahontas And Her Descendants, Wyndham Robertson, page 30).

Then too, according to William B. Hall (William & Mary Quarterly, VI4-2, pages 72 to 79), Major Francis Poythress, who was alive in 1681 and died before 1694, was a son of Captain Francis Poythress. He is purported to have had the following children:

- (1) Francis Poythress
- (2) John Poythress of Martin's Brandon Parish, Prince George County - He married Mary Batte. His undated will was proved May 12, 1724, Prince George County. It mentions his daughters Elizabeth, Rebecca and Ann and his sons, John, Francis and William and states that William was less than 18 years old.
- (3) Ann Poythress m. Burrell Green
- (4) Rebecca Poythress
- (5) Thomas Poythress m. Elizabeth Cocke

Captain John Poythress of Deep Bottom

(Born prior to 1640 - Died prior to 1723)

About Captain John Poythress of Deep Bottom, Charles City County, son of Captain Francis Poythress, the following abstracts of records have been collected.

At court held at Westover in April 1661, Colonel Edward Hill, Esq., did give to John Poythress, the son of Captain Francis Poythress, deceased, 50 acres at Jordans, adjoining the land now occupied by Captain Robert Wynne. (Charles City County, Court Orders 1655-1665, Page 273.)

On May 7, 1665, John Poythress was member of a jury summoned and sworn to inquire into and examine an unnatural death. (Charles City County, Court Orders 1655-1665, Page 565.)

On October 24, 1701, John Poythress, Sr. of Deep Bottom received 350 acres of land lying on the north side of Nottoway River along the Indian Swamp for the transportation of seven persons. (Grant Book 9, 1696-1706, Page 396.)

On October 21, 1707, Captain John Poythress was appointed member of a commission to examine persons concerning the lines dividing the Colony of Virginia from North Carolina. (Executive Journals of Council of Colonial Virginia, V.III, Page 155.)

On June 22, 1708, John Poythress petitioned for a correction in land, setting forth that he had acquired 600 acres of land supposed to have been in Prince George County but later found to have been partly in Surry County. (Executive Journals of Council of Colonial Virginia, V.III, Page 187.)

Deed dated July 18, 1735, from David Poythress to Robert Poythress for 600 acres of land on the north side of the Nottoway River in Surry County, 350 acres of said land having been devised to said David by his father, John Poythress, under his last will and testament, and the other 250 acres patented by David Poythress on September 5, 1723. (Surry County, Deed Book 1730-1735, Page 506.)

A tombstone at Blandford Cemetery, Petersburg, Virginia, is inscribed as follows:

Here lies the corpse  
of  
Col. William Poythress  
Son of  
Mr. John Poythress  
Who died  
the 18th of Jan. 1763  
Aged 68 years.

A land patent dated June 20, 1733, to William Poythress for 1024 acres of land "on the south side of Tommaheton Swamp" and a land patent dated March 24, 1734, to Joshua Poythress for 382 acres of land "being on the southside of Tommaheton Swamp, beginning at his brother William's upper corner gum upon the said swamp", establishes Joshua Poythress as the brother of William Poythress and therefore the son of John Poythress. (Grant Book 15, 1732-1735, Pages 39 and 437.)

Close relationship between Joshua and William Poythress is indicated over and over again in the records. On July 11, 1725, Joshua sold to William 100 acres of land on Bailey's Creek in Prince George County adjoining land owned by William. This land may well have been part of the original tract of land acquired on Bailey's Creek in 1636 by their grandfather Captain Francis Poythress. Again on July 9, 1725, William witnessed the deed by which Joshua acquired the Flower de Hundred farm. Again on March 11, 1728, William Poythress and Francis Eppes (father-in-law of Colonel William Poythress) witnessed a deed by which Joshua acquired 200 acres of land in Prince George County from John Fitzgerald. Again on July 11, 1725, William and Joshua witnessed a deed conveying a mill on Ward's Creek to John Poythress. Again on March 24, 1734, in the land patent abstracted above, it is specifically mentioned that William is the brother of Joshua. Moreover, the land acquired by Joshua under this patent was in what is now Dinwiddie County close to Colonel William Poythress' home on Butterwood Swamp. Again on April 8, 1740, it is shown that William went bond for the executors of Joshua's estate in the sizable amount of 5,000 lbs. current money. Again Mrs. Susanna Maitland, the granddaughter of Joshua, is buried in the private family burial plot of Colonel William Poythress at Blandford, her tombstone reading: "In remembrance of Susanna Maitland, the affectionate wife of David Maitland, Merchant in Blandford, who departed this life February 1799, aged 33 years. She was the daughter of Joshua and Mary Poythress of Flower de Hundred".

There is no record of the birth, marriage or death of Captain John Poythress of Deep Bottom, Charles City County. It has been shown however that he acquired land in 1661 and served on a jury in 1665. Thus it seems that he must have been born before 1640. The deed from his son David Poythress to Robert Poythress indicates that his death occurred some time before 1723.

The children of Captain John Poythress were:

(1) Colonel William Poythress (Born 1695 - Died 1763). According to his tombstone at Blandford, he was a son of John Poythress. He became a member of the vestry of Bristol Parish on November 10, 1726, (Bristol Parish Vestry Book, Chamberlayne), was appointed Sheriff of Prince George County on April 23, 1728, May 2, 1729 and April 27, 1731 (Executive Journals of Council of Colonial Virginia), was elected Church Warden on October 15, 1728 (Bristol Parish Vestry Book, Chamberlayne) and became trustee for the town of Blandford on November 3, 1762 (Henings Statutes, Page 608). As has heretofore been shown, he was a brother of and closely associated with Joshua Poythress of Flower de Hundred. According to his wife's tombstone at Blandford, he married Sarah Eppes (Born 1702 - Died 1750) daughter of Colonel Francis Eppes. According to the register of Bristol Parish, his children were Anne Isham (Born April 9, 1726), William (Born March 14, 1728), Sarah (Born August 7, 1731) and Elizabeth (Born September 21, 1741), (Bristol Parish Vestry Book, Chamberlayne).

(2) Joshua Poythress (I) of Flower de Hundred (Born about 1690 - Died 1740). According to Grant Book 15, 1732-1735, Page 437, he was a brother of William Poythress and therefore a son of John Poythress. He purchased Flower de Hundred in 1725. He was a merchant and planter and a man of means in his day and time. See the following section on Joshua Poythress.

(3) David Poythress of Surry. According to deed recorded in Surry County, he was a son of John Poythress (Surry, Deed Book 1730-1735, Page 506).

(4) Peter Poythress. According to the belief of William B. Hall, he was a son of John Poythress (William & Mary Quarterly V.15-2, Page 68). He was an Indian trader and interpreter and assisted the Governor and Council to negotiate with the Tuscarora Indians (Secret Diary of William Byrd, 1702-1712, Pages 1, 418, 424, 472, 481, 499, 501). According to family tradition, he lived at Flower de Hundred. His only daughter and heir Anne married Richard Bland, the "Antiquarian". They lived at Jordans and both she and her husband Richard Bland were witnesses to the last will and testament of Joshua Poythress of Flower de Hundred (Prince George County, Minute Book, April 18, 1740).

(5) Robert Poythress (Died prior to 1750). According to the belief of William B. Hall, he was a son of John Poythress (William & Mary Quarterly, V. 15-2, Page 55). According to an account of his will dated May 24, 1743, he had several daughters, one being Tabitha who married Henry Randolph of Henrico and Chesterfield Counties. His sons' names were set forth as Robert, William and Peter (Deed recorded Chesterfield County June 1793, Deed Book 12, Page 396).

JOSHUA POYTHRESS (I) OF FLOWER de HUNDRED

(Born about 1690 - Died 1740)

About Joshua Poythress (I) of Flower de Hundred, son of Cap. John Poythress of Deep Bottom, the following abstracts of records have been collected.

By deed dated February 10, 1717, he acquired from James Parram 200 acres of land in Prince George County on the south side of Bailey's Creek. The deed was witnessed by James Cocke and William Worsham.

By land patent dated June 22, 1722, he acquired 333 acres of land in Prince George County on the north side of Moccasonek Creek for the transportation of six persons.

By deed dated July 9, 1725, he acquired from John Hardyman and Henrietta Maria Hardyman, his wife, "one tract of land, containing 300 acres, situated and being in the Parish of Martin's Brandon in said county of Prince George, commonly called and known by the name of Flower de Hundred, bound on the North by the James River, on the East by the land of Robert Wilkins, on the South by land called Dutchy Hill and on the West by land of Elizabeth Duke". The deed was witnessed by William Poythress and Thomas Eldredge. Also by deed dated October 9, 1732, "Joshua Poythress, Merchant of Prince George County", acquired from Elizabeth Duke for 400 lbs. current money "all messuage, tenements, plantation and tract of land commonly known by the name of Flower de Hundred containing by estimation 250 acres more or less, situate lying and being in the Parish of Martin's Brandon and the county aforesaid and bound as follows -- Beginning at the line of the land of the said Joshua Poythress and the line of Francis Greenhill, thence northward along said Francis Greenhill's line to the James River, thence eastward along the Town Land and James River to a point called Wind Mill Point, thence southward along the marsh adjoining the James River to a corner tree of the said Joshua Poythress' land, thence westward along the line of the said Joshua Poythress' land to the beginning" ... "including 4 lots of the Town Land aforesaid". The deed was witnessed by Dan Eubank, John Duke, John Taylor Duke and Henry Duke. (Accessions-Virginian Historical Society). Although increased in size by subsequent purchases of land until it contained 2060 acres, the Flower de Hundred plantation continued to remain in the possession of descendants of Joshua Poythress until 1949 when it was sold by Dr. William Willcox Dunn to J. Roland Rooke.

Joshua Poythress and William Poythress witnessed deed dated July 11, 1725 by which John Poythress acquired a mill in Prince George County on Ward's Creek.

By deed dated July 11, 1725, Joshua Poythress conveyed to William Poythress 100 acres of land in Prince George County on Bailey's Creek adjoining land owned by William Poythress.

By deed dated March 11, 1728, Joshua Poythress acquired from John Fitzgerrald 200 acres of land in Prince George County on the southside of White Oak Creek. Deed witnessed by William Poythress and Frances Eppes (Accessions - Virginia State Library).

By land patent, dated March 24, 1734 (Book 15, page 437), Joshua Poythress acquired 382 acres of land in Prince George County "being on the south side of Tommaheton Swamp, beginning at his brother William's upper corner gum upon the said swamp".

In Prince George County in 1738, suit was brought by Joshua Poythress and Francis Poythress against Hannah Poythress, executrix of Francis Poythress, deceased.

Prince George County, September 15, 1738, suit in chancery by Franey Haddin against Joshua Poythress.

Prince George County, Minute Book, April 18, 1740:- "The last will and testament of Joshua Poythress, deceased, was exhibited into Court by Robert Poythress and Thomas Poythress, his executors, who made oath thereof and it being proven by the oaths of Richard Bland, Gent., and Anne Bland, two of the witnesses thereto, who also made oath that they saw Christian Poythress subscribe the said will as a witness". Robert Poythress and Thomas Poythress, executors, with Richard Bland and William Poythress, Gents., their securities under bond in the sum of 5,000 lbs. current money.

Charles City County, July, 1741, suit brought by Robert Poythress and Thomas Poythress executors of Joshua Poythress, deceased, against Benjamin Harrison.

It should be noted that in the deed dated October 9, 1732, conveying a part of Flower de Hundred, Joshua Poythress was referred to a "Merchant of Prince George County". We can be reasonably sure that his mercantile business was conducted from the town that adjoined his plantation Flower de Hundred. As early as 1624 Flower de Hundred had "12 dwelling houses, 3 store houses and 4 tobacco houses" (Abraham Peirse's tax return, 1624). In 1626, it had "many houses already poled and palizadoed in and all ye necke is well railed in and it hath 10 or 12 pieces of ordinance well mounted and planted for ye defense of ye place" (court records of James City, Oct. 13, 1626). In June, 1680, (Acts of the General Assembly provided for the purchase of 50 acres of land "in Charles City County at Flower de Hundred" for a "store-house for the reception of merchandize imported and the receiving of tobaccos for exportation". Acts of the General Assembly, April, 1691, described the town "for Charles City County" as "layd out and payd for and several dwelling houses and warehouses built"



and being at "Flower de Hundred over against Swyneards". In 1702, that portion of Charles City County lying south of the James River was constituted a new political subdivision and named Prince George County in honor of Queen Anne's consort. Thus Flower de Hundred changed from Charles City to Prince George County; and in 1705 the Assembly directed that the town of "Flower de Hundred" was "to be called Powhatan and was to have Tuesdays and Saturdays in each week for market days". It also authorized a public ferry from "Powhatan town to the landings at Sweneherds". Benjamin Harrison of Wakefield, Surry County, who died in 1713 left in his will to his son Nathaniel "half an acre of land in ye town of Flowerdieu Hundred". By deed dated October 9, 1732, Joshua Poythress, Merchant of Prince George County, acquired from Elizabeth Duke 250 acres of land at Flower de Hundred "including 4 lots of the Town". In 1738, the town of Flower de Hundred was mentioned as a "social, business and shopping center of the community". Yet today there seems to be no surface traces of where the town stood. Perhaps its wharves and remaining buildings were destroyed in January 1781 by the renegade Benedict Arnold after he attacked and captured Fort Hood which stood on the bank of the James River just east of Flower de Hundred. Perhaps it met its doom in May of the same year when General William Phillips with 2,500 Red Coats marched on Petersburg, the line of march being through Garysville, only 3.7 miles from Flower de Hundred; or in the same month when Lord Cornwallis crossed the James from Maycocks, just west of Flower de Hundred, in pursuit of "the boy" Lafayette; or it may merely have served its purpose and having out-lived its usefulness, have fallen prey to time and corruption.

From that which has been set forth, it can be concluded that Joshua Poythress (I) of Flower de Hundred was born prior to 1690, died about 1740, was a merchant and planter and a man of some means. There is no record left of his marriage or children. The descent of Joshua Poythress (II) of Flower de Hundred is based upon identical names, upon continuity of possession of the Flower de Hundred plantation from 1725 to 1949 and upon family tradition as unfolded hereinafter.

IV

Joshua Poythress (II) of Flower de Hundred

(Born prior to 1720 - Died prior to 1782)

About Joshua Poythress (II) of Flower de Hundred, son of Joshua Poythress (I), the following abstracts of records have been collected.

On May 15, 1750, an attachment was obtained in Surry County by Peter and Elizabeth Poythress, executors of the estate of Robert Poythress, deceased, and Joshua Poythress, executor of the estate of Thomas Poythress, deceased, against the estate of Thomas Sissen.

On June 15, 1753, in the Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia, it was ordered that a New Commission of Peace be issued for Prince George County and "that Alexander Bolling, Benjamin Cocke and Joshua Poythress be added".

In the Virginia Gazette, July 19, 1754, Page 4, Column 1, appeared the following: "There is at the subscribers plantation at Flower-de Hundred, Prince George County, a dapple-grey horse four feet, six inches high, branded I.L. The owner may have it from me on paying as the law directs. Joshua Poythress."

In Surry County, the last will and testament of William Short, dated December 24, 1756, proved May 15, 1757, mentions his daughter Sarah Cocke and said daughter's children William Cocke, Elizabeth Cocke, Susanna Cocke and Sarah Cocke; also son-in-law Joshua Poythress (bequeaths to him slaves already in his possession); daughter Mary Poythress' children, namely Joshua Poythress, William Poythress and Elizabeth Poythress; daughter Mary Reade; wife Mary Short; and son William Short.

In the Virginia Gazette, November 30, 1759, Page 3, Column 2, was published the following: "For sale, twelve valuable Virginia born slaves, chiefly Fellows; likewise household furniture, being part of the estate of Edward Munford, deceased. - Joshua Poythress, Administrator."

In the Virginia Gazette, November 4, 1763, Page 2, Column 3, Joshua Poythress, of Flower de Hundred advertised for a runaway slave.

In Surry County, deed, dated November 27, 1763, from Joshua Poythress and Mary, his wife, of Prince George County conveyed to William Wilkerson, et als., for 400 lbs. current money "All

that tract of land and plantation with appertinances thereunto belonging situate, lying and being on Monksneck Creek in Sussex County containing 595 acres commonly called and known by the name Whortle Berry Pond". Witnessed by William Gilliam, John Poythress, Jr., and William Hamlin.

In the Virginia Gazette, Purdie and Dixon publishers, September 24, 1767, Page 2, Column 3, a 138 acres tract of land and a ferry at Flower de Hundred late belonging to Joseph Wilkins, deceased, was offered for rent by Joshua Poythress, administrator.

In The Virginia Gazette, Purdie & Dixon publishers, September 17, 1771, Page 3, Column 1, it was requested that those having demands against the estate of Mr. Walter Boyd send them to Joshua Poythress so that provision may be made for payment.

In the Virginia Gazette, Purdie publisher, March 7, 1777, Page 1 supplement, Column 3, the following appeared: "Taken up in Prince George County at Flower de Hundred, a small bay mare branded IC. The owner may have her on paying the expense of this advertisement. Joshua Poythress, Sr.

In the Virginia Gazette, Purdie publisher, June 6, 1777, Page 3, Column 1, a good plantation blacksmith was offered for sale by Joshua Poythress, Sr., of Flower de Hundred, Prince George County.

The last will and testament of Mary Poythress of the Parish of Martin's Brandon, Prince George County, Dated February 9, 1782, proved February 1788, mentions: she "is sick and weak but of sound mind and memory". Leaves a small legacy to her daughter Wilmouth Harrison and leaves to her daughter Susanna Poythress the rest of her estate, including the testatrix's share in property bequeathed to her by her dead son Peter Poythress, being his share from his late father's will. Peter Poythress and Joshua Poythress were made executors. Witnesses were Susanna Cocke, Dorothy Reade, Colin Cocke, Joshua Poythress and Barbara I. Norton. Notice the similarity of family names in the wills of this Mary Poythress and William Short of Surry. In the former, Mary Poythress is the testatrix; Joshua Poythress is an executor; and Susanna Cocke, Dorothy Reade and Colin Cocke are witnesses. In the latter, William Short is testator; Mary Poythress, Sarah Cocke and Mary Reade are mentioned as his daughters; Joshua Poythress is mentioned as his son-in-law; and Susanna Cocke and Joshua Poythress are shown to be his grandchildren. Then, too, not only was Flower de Hundred located in Martin's Brandon Parish, Prince George County, as was Mary Poythress of the above will, but also Colin Cocke, one of the witnesses to her will, lived on the farm adjoining Flower de Hundred for on August 16, 1787, he obtained the sum of 324 lbs. from Thomas Harrison tendering as

security "200 acres of land bounded by the James River, Flower de Hundred Creek and the land of William Poythress, it being the land wherein the said Colin Cocke now liveth". All of this, together with the tombstone inscription which follows, seems to point to Mary Poythress of the will being the daughter of William Short of Surry and the wife of Joshua Poythress II of Flower de Hundred.

An inscription on a gravestone in Colonel William Poythress' family plot back of old Blandford Church at Petersburg is inscribed:

Memento Morti  
In Remembrance of  
Mrs. Susanna Maitland  
The Affectionate Wife of David Maitland  
Merchant in Blandford  
Who Departed This Life The 9th of  
February 1799, Aged 33 years  
She Was The Daughter of Joshua and Mary  
Poythress of Flower de Hundred.

In Prince George County, deed dated October 2, 1790, from William Poythress to William Samuel Peachey conveying for 1350 lbs. current money "a tract of land situate lying and being on the James River in the County of Prince George, containing by estimation 300 acres, it being the lower part of the Flower de Hundred tract of land whereon Joshua Poythress, the Elder, formerly lived and which was devised to said William Poythress by the last will and testament of said Joshua, his late father".

From that which has been set forth, we conclude that Joshua Poythress (II) was born prior to 1720, married Mary Short daughter of William Short of Surry, and died prior to 1782. That he owned, lived at and devised Flower de Hundred is not merely family tradition, is proved by the various items in the Virginia Gazette, by the deed from William Poythress to William Samuel Peachey and affirmed by the inscription on the tombstone of his daughter Mrs. Susanna Maitland, all herein set forth.

The children of Joshua Poythress (II) and his wife Mary Poythress as shown by the will of his father-in law William Short of Surry and the will of his wife Mary Poythress, were Joshua, William, Elizabeth, Peter, Wilmuth Harrison and Susanna.

They married as follows:

(1) Joshua Poythress, (III) Born prior to 1756-Died 1789) married Elizabeth Robertson daughter of Archibald Robertson and his wife Elizabeth Fitzgerald. Issue Susanna Peachey Poythress married John Vaughan Willcox. (See following section).

(2) William Poythress (Will proved November 11, 1795) married Mary Gilliam. Issue Joshua married Mary Angus; Patrick Henry married Mary Elizabeth Eppes; William unmarried; Thomas Eppes married widow of Collier Harrison, but had no children. (The George Lay Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina.)

(3) Elizabeth Poythress (Died 1801) married Captain James Cocke. They lived at Bonaccord, near Flower de Hundred. Issue Dr. James Cocke of Baltimore married Elizabeth Kent; Elizabeth Poythress Cocke married J. Hoffman of Baltimore; Benjamin Cocke married Sarah Colley of Tar Bay. (The Richmond Standard and Family Bible of Nathaniel Cocke)

(4) Peter Poythress (Died prior to 1782) - No information.

(5) Wilmuth Harrison - No information.

(6) Susanna Poythress (Born 1766 - Died 1799) married David Maitland on October 25, 1788. Issue Mary Currie, Elizabeth Agnes and Susanna Poythress. (Her tombstone at Blandford; Cumberland Parish by Bell, Page 309; Bristol Parish Vestry & Register by Chamberlayne, Pages 344 & 345; Tylers Quarterly, V. 17, Page 188).

Joshua Poythress (III) of Flower de Hundred

(Born prior to 1756 - Died about 1786)

About Joshua Poythress (III) of Flower de Hundred, son of Joshua Poythress (II), the following abstracts of records have been collected.

Both he and his father were mentioned in the will of his grandfather William Short of Surry, dated December 24, 1756 and heretofore setforth.

On June 16, 1774, page 3, col. 1 of the Virginia Gazette, published by Purdie and Dixon, a five pound reward was offered to the person who would deliver to Joshua Poythress, Junior, at Flower de Hundred, a runaway indented servant man named Benjamin Parrot, born in London, 32 years of age, 5 feet 6 inches high and by trade a house carpenter.

On February 10, 1776, page 3, Col. 3 of the Virginia Gazette, published by Dixon & Hunter, Joshua Poythress, Junior, advertised for sale eleven valuable negro Fellows among whom is a very good ship carpenter. Also two schooner flats, one of 85 & the other of 70 hogsheads burden.

In all probability, he was the Joshua Poythress named executor in the will of his mother Mary Poythress of Prince George County, dated February 2, 1782 and heretofore setforth.

An account of the estate of Alexander Robertson, filed in Prince George County on February 13, 1787, shows that the executors paid Joshua Poythress sums of money on April 23, 1781, on June 19, 1782 and June 19, 1784.

At the August 1789 term of court in Prince George County, it was set forth that Joshua Poythress, executor of the estate of James Cocke, had died and Walter Peter, Colin Cocke and John Morrison were appointed to examine, state and settle his accounts.

The earliest remaining land books in Prince George County, commencing with the year 1782 and continuing through 1794, assessed one parcel of 404 acres and another of 200 acres in the name of Joshua Poythress. The acreage was assessed from 1795 to 1804 in the estate of Joshua Poythress. Starting with the year 1805, the same amount of acreage with the same valuation was assessed in the name of John V. Willcox who in 1804 had married Susanna Peachey Poythress the daughter of Joshua Poythress (III).

Extract from the family register of William Robertson (1750-1829) of Richmond, concerning his sister states: "Elizabeth Robertson married Joshua Poythress of Flower de Hundred, a seat on the James River in Prince George County; left issue one daughter. She was married to John V. Willcox, merchant in Petersburg; died leaving issue." (The Richmond Standard, April 7, 1880.) Also in an account of the Robertson Family published in William and Mary Quarterly V 5, pages 185-186, it is set forth that Archibald Robertson married Elizabeth, the daughter of John Fitzgerald and his wife Elizabeth Poythress, and had the following children:

1. William Robertson married Elizabeth Bolling
2. Christian Robertson married Richard Eppes
3. Elizabeth Robertson in 1780 married Joshua Poythress

From that which has been set forth, we conclude that Joshua Poythress (III), of Flower de Hundred, was born prior to 1756, in 1780 married Elizabeth Robertson daughter of Archibald Robertson had one child whose name we know was Susanna Peachey Poythress, and died about 1788.

Susanna Peachey Poythress of Flower de Hundred

(Born in 1785 - Died 1815)

Susanna Peachey Poythress, daughter of Joshua Poythress (III) and Elizabeth Robertson, was born in 1785 at the old Poythress home at Flower de Hundred

This home was destroyed by fire about 1800. Its site is near the bank of the James River below the remains of the wharf burned in 1862 and about opposite Buckland's Landing on the north side of the river. Here one still finds pieces of old glazed brick and traces of an ancient garden where in the spring flags and a few other flowers bear mute evidence to generations long past. In an open field back of the old site is a clump of unkempt trees up whose trunks twine English Ivy. This we know to be the Poythress burying ground. Unfortunately, not a grave stone stands for they were used as cooking stones by Federal troops who bivouacked on the plantation in 1864.

Early bereft of both parents, Susanna Peachey Poythress was raised at Appomattox Manor by her Aunt Christian Robertson Eppes, wife of Richard Eppes also related to her.

From her father she inherited the upper part of the Flower de Hundred plantation. In 1804, she was married to John Vaughan Willcox in the dining room of Appomattox Manor.

In the same year, she and her husband built the present house at Flower de Hundred - a white wooden structure -- on a rolling bit of ground, back from the river. It was never their home, for they lived at Petersburg, but it was often visited. Later, her son came to live and added wings to either end of the house. His children, in turn, built other wings.

In 1815, she died and was buried in the Poythress burying ground at Flower de Hundred. She was survived by her husband, by a son John Poythress Willcox and by a daughter Mary Edloe Brown (Born July 15, 1810 - Died July 3, 1868) who married John Thompson Brown, lawyer and legislator of Petersburg.

Her husband, John Vaughan Willcox, was a successful merchant, a large land owner, a member of the Vestry of Blandford Church commencing with the year 1824 and an ardent believer in the Southern Confederacy. J. Pinckney Williamson, in his "Petersburg In Ye Olden Tymes", referred to him as "the only millionarie at the time in Virginia". According to his great grandson, Dr. Joseph Bragg Dunn, he died possessed of more Confederate Bonds than any other individual in Virginia.



Miss Elise Eppes of Appomattox Manor said that her aunt, Miss Mary Eppes, who in 1949 was 91 years old, remembered her Mother saying that her husband felt very close to old Mr. John Vaughan Willcox and there were many references to him in his journals now in the library at the University of Virginia. When her Mother was a bride in 1854, he used to come down to City Point and spend the day at Appomattox Manor. When he died, he left her husband \$500, which with the devaluation of currency enabled her to buy the baby a few linens.

In 1809, John V. Willcox acquired the lower part of Flower de Hundred from the estate of William Samuel Peachey. He later purchased the Belleview and Seldon farms and added them to Flower de Hundred. Land books show that he owned other farms in Prince George County. The period that Flower de Hundred was under his direct supervision was from 1804 to 1838. According to personal property books of Prince George County, he never had less than 46 slaves, frequently as many as 80 and once as much as 105.

He is buried in Blandford Cemetery at Petersburg, Virginia, in the plot with his daughter Mary and her husband John Thompson Brown. The inscription on his tombstone reads: "Here rest the mortal remains of John Vaughan Willcox - Born in Charles City County, Virginia, on the 11th of August, 1779 - Died in Petersburg on the 23rd of November, 1863. Sacred to the Memory of my affectionate and beloved father".

John Poythress Willcox of Flower de Hundred

(Born 1805 - Died 1857)

John Poythress Willcox, son of John Vaughan Willcox and Susanna Peachey Poythress, was born October 3, 1805; married Mary Jane McGowan, daughter of William McGowan, merchant of Petersburg (born April 17, 1780 in town of Dromahais, County Sligo, Ireland) and his wife Margaret Phelan (Daughter of Mary Lalor and Dennis Phelan of Lalor, Queens County, Ireland).

In 1838, he was given Flower de Hundred. He lived there until his death in 1857. After the Civil War, his body was moved from the Poythress burying ground at Flower de Hundred to Blandford Cemetery where it was buried in the Willcox section by the side of his wife. Their tombstones are inscribed:

Our Father  
John Poythress Willcox  
of  
Flower de Hundred  
Born Oct. 3, 1805  
Died Mch 24, 1857

Our Mother  
Mary Jane Willcox  
Daughter of  
William and Margaret McGowan  
Born Sep 15, 1817  
Died Sep 16, 1892

Their children were as follows:

(1) John Poythress Willcox. Killed while duck hunting prior to the Civil War.

(2) Eliza Phelan Willcox, born January 20, 1840, died October 26, 1917. Married John George Dunn of Petersburg. Issue Dr. John Dunn born November 14, 1862, died November 7, 1934, James Dunn born 1864, died 1936, Rev. Joseph Bragg Dunn born June 9, 1868 died October 17, 1949, Mary Dunn, Dr. William Willcox Dunn and Thomas Lyteland Dunn born July 14, 1879, died November 20, 1942.

(3) William McGowan Willcox, born January 19, 1843, died April 28, 1882. Fought in the Civil War. Married Susan Ruffin. Died leaving no children.

(4) Susan Peachey Povthress Willcox, born June 26, 1845, died January 31, 1914. Never married. Inherited the Flower de Hundred home tract and on her death devised it to her nephew Dr. William Willcox Dunn.

(5) Robert Bolling Willcox, born October 6, 1847, died December 9, 1914. Fought in the Civil War, was a lawyer, a member of the state legislature and farmed Flower de Hundred. Married Dora Dodson. Issue Elizabeth M. Willcox, born July 28, 1872, died May 7, 1947; Robert Bolling Willcox, born August 5, 1879, died December 30, 1935; Dennis Hamilton Willcox, born September 14, 1885, died August 12, 1921; Lalor Romaine Willcox born November 5, 1881, died April 30, 1915; Dr. Daniel Dodson Willcox; and John Vaughan Willcox.

Before the Civil War, Flower de Hundred had been a prosperous, thriving plantation with its own wharf, to which river steamers and sailing ships came, and with sufficient slaves to cultivate its fertile fields. The beginning of the end came in 1862 when its "new wharf" was burned by order of the Confederate Government to delay the landing of the Federal troops on the south bank of the James River. Before the embers were cold, the first Federal gunboat seen that far up the river hove into sight. Two years later in June 1864, General Grant, on the march to Petersburg, made his famous crossing of the James, 130,000 strong. From Willcox Landing, opposite Flower de Hundred, to Windmill Point on that plantation, his engineers constructed a superb pontoon bridge over which hordes of his soldiers marched. (R. E. Lee, Douglas S. Freeman, V. 3, Pages 439 and 441). A glorious, inspiring sight it must have been to the Federal Generals who watched the crossing under brilliant skies in fields of green drenched in sunlight. But to the mistress of Flower de Hundred, who with her aged mother and a few faithful servants, viewed the crossing from afar, it presented a picture of despair and utter desolation. She thought of her two sons and her friends and relatives in the Confederate Army who must defend Petersburg. She saw the trampling down of her standing crops, the bivouac about her house, the place swarming with enemies of her country, covered with tents, horses, wagons, batteries, - and, when at last they left, there were floors torn up, silver stolen, mahogany hacked by sabers, marble hearths broken to bits and the memory of one drunken trooper disappearing down the road decked in the bridal veil of a daughter of the house. The end of an era had come as Grant marched on to Petersburg, to Richmond and then to Appomattox.

VIII

Eliza Phelan Willcox of Flower de Hundred

(Born 1840 - Died 1917)

Eliza Phelan Willcox, daughter of John Poythress Willcox and Mary Jane McCowan, was born January 20, 1840 at Flower de Hundred; married John George Dunn, banker in Petersburg and son of John Dunn, merchant in Petersburg (born "Salley Spallen", County Derry, Ireland) and his wife Mary Page Bragg of Petersburg; and died October 26, 1917. Her tombstone and her husband's in the Dunn section in Blandford Cemetary are inscribed:

Eliza Phelan Willcox  
Wife of  
John G. Dunn  
And Daughter of  
John P. Willcox and Mary Jane McGowan  
His wife  
of  
Flower de Hundred  
Born Jan. 20, 1840 - Died Oct. 26, 1917

John G. Dunn  
Of Petersburg, Virginia  
Son of  
John Dunn and Page Bragg  
His Wife  
Born Jan. 17, 1839 - Died Feb. 4, 1920

Their children were as follows:

1. John Dunn of Richmond, Virginia, Doctor of Medicine.  
Born. Nov. 14, 1862, Died Nov. 7, 1934. Married Nellie Porterfield. Their only child John Dunn died a soldier in World War I without marrying.
2. James Dunn of Petersburg. Born 1864 - Died 1936.  
Married Ida Buffington Simmones. Had no children.
3. Joseph Bragg Dunn of Richmond, Doctor of Divinity.  
Born June 9, 1868, Died Oct. 17, 1949. Married Martha Southall. Issue Willcox Dunn, Emily Dunn, John S. Dunn and Martha Dunn and Mary Dunn.

4. Mary Dunn married Dr. Kirkland Ruffin of Norfolk. Issue Kirkland Ruffin, Phelan Ruffin, Jane Ruffin and Willcox Ruffin.
5. William Willcox Dunn of Richmond, Doctor of Medicine. Born Oct. 7, 1870. Married Anne Watkins McIlwaine, daughter of Dr. Richard McIlwaine and his wife Elizabeth Read. Issue Richard McIlwaine Dunn and William Willcox Dunn, Jr.
6. Thomas Lyteland Dunn of Richmond. Born July 14, 1879 - Died Nov. 20, 1942.. Married Lileh O. Carmichael. Had no children.

## FAMILY INFORMATION

So far as is known, the Flower de Hundred branch of the Poythress family has no family records and family tradition is of a meager sort.

Lack of records and tradition can perhaps be explained by the following:

(1) The Poythress home at Flower de Hundred was destroyed by fire. According to Eliza Phelan Willcox Dunn (1840-1917), who was born and raised at Flower de Hundred, this occurred about 1800.

(2) Susanna Peachey Poythress (1785-1815), who inherited Flower de Hundred, was the only child of her parents, became an orphan at an early age (her father dying when she was 4 years old) and was raised by the Eppes family.

(3) She died when her son, John Poythress Willcox (1805-1857) who inherited and afterwards lived and died at Flower de Hundred, was only 10 years old.

(4) He in turn died when his oldest child, Eliza Phelan Willcox Dunn (1840-1917), was only 17 years old.

(5) There are no grave stones left in the Poythress family burying ground at Flower de Hundred. According to Eliza Phelan Willcox (1840-1917), they were destroyed when Federal troops used them as cooking stones in 1864.

(6) Those members of the family that the writer has known have seemed to have little, if any, interest in family genealogy.

According to Eliza Phelan Willcox Dunn (1840-1917) and her brother Robert Bolling Willcox (1847-1914), who were grandchildren of John V. Willcox (1779-1863) and his wife Susanna Peachey Poythress (1785-1815) and were born and raised at Flower de Hundred, the father of their grandmother Susanna Peachey Poythress Willcox (1785-1815) was Joshua Poythress of Flower de Hundred and their branch of the Poythress family had owned and lived at Flower de Hundred for years before the Revolutionary War.

This is borne out by Mrs. Nellie Porterfield Dunn (wife of Dr. John Dunn, 1862-1934), who intimately knew the older generation at Flower de Hundred, in an article of hers published by The James River Garden Club on pages 17,18,19 and 20 of its book "Historic Gardens of Virginia" in which she stated "Joshua Poythress (I) bought Flower de Hundred in 1725 and 1732 from the heirs of John Taylor." "Susanna Peachey Poythress, only daughter and sole heiress of Joshua Poythress (III), was born at Flower de Hundred in 1785 and was buried there in 1815. She married John Vaughan Willcox of Charles City and Petersburg in 1804."