

# The Seven Perry Brothers of Old Granville County, North Carolina; Origins, Issues, and Y-DNA

P.I. Yarborough, March 2015



Cascine Plantation, Franklin County, North Carolina: Left, Dr. Algernon S. Perry house, circa 1850; right, house of Col. Jeremiah Perry circa 1751. Photos by P.I. Yarborough, 2010.

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## The Seven Perry Brothers of Old Granville County, North Carolina



P.I. Yarborough, 2015

The ‘Seven Perry Brothers’ of old Granville County,<sup>1</sup> North Carolina, (the “Seven”) are believed to be Jeremiah, John, Joshua, Nathaniel, William, Francis, and Burwell (aka Burrell). They were born in Virginia and all were living in Granville County by 1751. The following is a general overview of the Seven, focusing mainly on earliest records, evidence of blood relationships, and material that may be of interest to their descendants or individuals related to Family Group Nine of the Perry Y-DNA Project. (See [www.perry-dna.org/](http://www.perry-dna.org/).)

Currently, Family Group Nine (“Niners”) includes Y-DNA results from several confirmed descendants of three of the seven brothers (William, Francis, and Burwell). While *all* Perry men in Group Nine do indeed share a common Perry ancestor, it is important to note that most Niners cannot prove a connection to the Seven. Thus, for many of them, the ancestor they have in common lived before the ‘brothers.’ Nonetheless, the seven brothers are important both historically and symbolically because they are the earliest identifiable group of Perry patriarchs in Group Nine, and all Niners are related to them. As such, knowing about the Seven may provide helpful information for Perry family researchers.

### Part I: Origins of the Seven Perry Brothers

Oral tradition holds that the seven Perry brothers migrated south from the Isle of Wight/Nansemond/Surry County area of Virginia and that they were displeased with their father’s second marriage.<sup>2</sup> There is documentation

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<sup>1</sup> Old Granville Co. was later divided. It once included the counties of Bute, Warren, Wake and Franklin where records for the seven Perry brothers are found.

<sup>2</sup> To mark the bicentennial celebration in 1973 of the founding of Maple Spring Baptist Church in Franklin County, NC, an article was prepared that included a history of the church. It stated that in July 1773, "several men in the Mapleville community went back to their old home place at the Isle of Wight in Virginia.... Mr.

indicating that three of the Seven - William, Nathaniel, and Joshua - were residing in Brunswick County, Virginia prior to settling in North Carolina. This is consistent with Perry family history since Brunswick County was formed out of parts of Prince George, Surry, and Isle of Wight Counties.<sup>3</sup>

The first evidence of one of the Perry brothers in Granville County dates from court minutes in 1746 recording the appointment of William Perry as constable of Crooked Creek and Cedar Creek. However, William and Nathaniel Perry may have been in North Carolina as early as 1740, evidenced by their appearance on a jury list in Edgecombe County.<sup>4</sup> (Granville County was formed from Edgecombe County in 1746.)

Although some early tax records of Granville County are missing, four of the Seven were first listed in 1749.<sup>5</sup> Eventually, each of the brothers obtained land grants in Granville. All grants but Joshua's were located in present day

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Peyton... and Herbert Harris along with Mr. Jeremiah and Mr. William Perry made the trip." See Eudora C. Hodges, "Religion – Perry Families," Texas, October 1, 1991 (<http://archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com/th/read/PERRY/1999-03/0922807686> : accessed April 14, 2014). See also, Ree Herring Hendrick, *The Lineage and Tradition of the Herring, Conyers, Hendrick, Boddie, Perry, ... Families*, (1916) p. 107, concerning the displeasure at their father's second marriage.

<sup>3</sup> Research from: Steve Watson, *Origins of the Seven Brothers of North Carolina*, Chapter 2 (unpublished) (<http://www.perryfamilyhistory.com/OriginsOfSevenPerryBrothers2.pdf> : accessed March 16, 2014) unpublished research material (~2003). See the following deeds from Brunswick County, VA: Deed Book 5, page 44, March 1751, "William Perry and Martha his wife of Granville County NC" sold land; Deed Book 6, page 156, May 23, 1757, "Nathaniel Perry of Granville County, NC" sold land granted to Nathaniel Perry in Isle of Wight County VA in 1724; Deed Book 6, page 616, "Nathaniel Perry of Granville County, NC" sold 140 acres. Source: *Brunswick County, Virginia Deed Books*, Vols. 1-3, 1732-1764, abstracted by Dr. Stephen E. Bradley Jr. (1997-1998) 68-69. See also, Brunswick Co., VA, Court Order Book, Vol. 1, February 1, 1733, Nathaniel Perry, together with Joshua Perry, his security, acknowledge their bond for Nathaniel's administration of the estate of John Smith. Source: Brunswick Co. VA Court Orders, 1732-1737, T.L.C. Genealogy, p 9.

<sup>4</sup> February 25, 1740, ("Monday, the 25th of Febr'y 1739/40."), List of Jurymen for Bertie and Edgecombe County, NC – including William and Nathaniel Perry. Source: William L. Saunders (ed.), *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, (Raleigh: State of North Carolina, Vol. IV, 1734-1752) 515, 523. Nathaniel Perry witnessed the will of Burrell Brown in 1750, so he apparently went back to Virginia for a time. See, Will of Burrell Brown, 1749/50, Brunswick Co., VA, Will Book 2-180.

<sup>5</sup> William, Francis, Joshua and John. See, Timothy W. Rackley, *Granville County, NC Tax Lists: 1747 to 1759* (2004).

Franklin County, North Carolina. (The following list does not include all grants received by the seven brothers.<sup>6</sup>)

Land grants on Cedar Creek by William in 1749, Francis in 1752, Jeremiah in 1752, Burwell in 1761<sup>7</sup>, and John in 1761; a grant on Flat Rock Creek by Nathaniel in 1761; and a grant by Joshua on Shocco Creek in present day Warren County, NC in 1749.<sup>8</sup>

### Seven Brothers and their Father

It is well known among Perry researchers that no records have survived naming the father of the seven brothers. Yet, an unsubstantiated theory has gained wide acceptance that the Seven were sons of Phillip Perry (III). This popular assertion seems to have sprung from a vague statement, unsupported by any proof, which appeared in *A History of the John Wesley Perry Jr., Family*, pages 68-69.<sup>9</sup> This claim has endured almost fifty years without any confirming evidence.

There were indeed several Phillip Perrys in Virginia and North Carolina between the late 16<sup>th</sup> and mid-17<sup>th</sup> century. Phillip Perry, III, is generally known as the Phillip whose will was written in Perquimans County, NC on 5 July 1751.<sup>10</sup> His will was proven at Perquimans County Court in October of 1751. Phillip Perry, III, is thought to be the grandson of Phillip Perry, Sr., who

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<sup>6</sup> This list highlights the earliest grants of each of the seven brothers on Cedar Creek and in Franklin County but is not an exhaustive listing of all the land they owned.

<sup>7</sup> Burrell Perry's first land grant in Granville County was in 1752 on the Tar River - Patent Book 14-27.

<sup>8</sup> Granville County, North Carolina Deeds: Deed Book C-241, E-113, E-423, E-207; Granville County Land Grants: Patent Book 14-31, Patent Book 14-32, Patent Book 14-16.

<sup>9</sup> Charles Perry acknowledged in his book that all the Nansemond County courthouse records had burned and that he was unable to get "full information and proof beyond a shadow of a doubt." Nevertheless, he speculated that he was "quite sure and positive" that Phillip Perry, III, was father of the Seven. See, Charles W. Perry, *A History of the John Wesley Perry Jr., Family*, (1967) 68-69.

<sup>10</sup> Phillip Perry will, 5 July 1751, proved in Perquimans Co. NC, Oct. 1751, NC Secretary of Estate, original wills, microfilm S. 108.200, NC State Archives, Raleigh, N.C.; see also, J. Bryan Grimes, NC Secretary of State, *Abstracts of North Carolina Wills*, Raleigh: E.M. Uzzell & Co., State Printers and Binders, Raleigh (1910) 285.

left a will dated 20 November 1667, which was proven in Isle of Wight County, Virginia on 9 October 1669.<sup>11</sup>

Phillip Perry, III's, 1751 will named six daughters and two sons, Jesse and Phillip. The will states that neither Jesse nor Phillip had yet "come of age." This means that in 1751 they were minors, born *after* July 1730. Likewise, at least one and possibly two of the seven Perry brothers are believed to have been born *after* July 1730 (Jeremiah and Burwell).<sup>12</sup> Accordingly, they too would have been minors at the time of Phillip's death in 1751. However, provisions for them do not appear in his will.<sup>13</sup>

Surely, the reality that none of the seven Perry brothers are mentioned in the 1751 will of Phillip, III, drastically undercuts the possibility that he was their father. When we add to this the fact that the brothers are also missing from Isaac Hunter's 1752 will, which named Phillip's children from his previous marriage to Jean Hunter, the theory is stretched to its breaking point.<sup>14</sup>

Of further concern, none of the earliest known descendants of the seven brothers were named Phillip. This has been rationalized by arguing that the name Phillip was shunned because, according to oral tradition, the Seven were dissatisfied with their father's second marriage.<sup>15</sup> Even so, this reasoning has no practical value when it appears certain that Phillip was not their father in the first place. Thus it seems compelling, considering the inconsistencies and lack

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<sup>11</sup> See, Steve Watson, *Origins of the Seven Brothers of North Carolina*, Chapter 1, (unpublished) (~2003) available at <http://www.perryfamilyhistory.com/OriginsOfSevenPerryBrothers1.pdf>.

<sup>12</sup> See Dennis G. Perry's compilation of information on the seven Perry brothers at: (<http://s301420419.onlinehome.us/Decendents/b9696.htm> : accessed January 3, 2015).

<sup>13</sup> See December 19, 2010 email from Carla Tate to Sally's Family Place website, (<http://sallysfamilyplace.com/new/the-seven-perry-brothers/>: accessed November 25, 2014) unpublished material.

<sup>14</sup> Will of Isaac Hunter, Ap. 17, 1752, Chowan County, NC, proved in Bertie County, NC court April 1753, North Carolina Secretary of Estate, original wills, microfilm S. 108.198, NC State Archives, Raleigh, N.C. (Research shows that Phillip Perry, III, had previously been married to Jean Hunter and that four of the children named in his 1751 will were born during this earlier marriage.) See also, Watson, *Origins of the Seven Brothers*, Chapter 1; Grimes, *Abstracts of NC Wills*, 177.

<sup>15</sup> This may be a specious argument since the mortality rate of children in the 18<sup>th</sup> century was high, and the memory of some names used by families may have, therefore, perished along with the children who carried them.

of evidence, that Phillip Perry, III, should be ruled out as a paternity candidate.<sup>16</sup> Descendants of the seven Perry brothers are, therefore, strongly encouraged to revise family trees and remove any mention that Phillip Perry was the father of the Seven. For further discussion of this issue, see Steve Watson's *Origins of the Seven Brothers of North Carolina*, Chapter 1 (~2003), available online.<sup>17</sup>

More recently, researchers Joan Fortune and Carolyn Fleetwood investigated the possibility that Micajah 'Cage' Perry may have been the father of the seven brothers.<sup>18</sup> They noted that in the 1755 Granville County tax list, Micajah appeared alongside six of the Perry brothers and had a much larger household, indicating he may have been old enough to be their father.<sup>19</sup> However, only one of the brothers, Jeremiah Perry, is known to have named a son Micajah. (Again, the failure to use the name Micajah might be rationalized by their alleged dissatisfaction with their father's second marriage.) Micajah returned to Brunswick County, Virginia sometime after 1756, leaving an estate inventory there in 1760 that named no heirs.<sup>20</sup> Thus, unfortunately, the trail goes cold, leaving no obvious way to further investigate this premise.

Steve Watson, in the wake of Fortune and Fleetwood, examined additional records and presented his findings in an essay containing clues that the father of the seven brothers was Nathaniel Perry who bought 100 acres in Isle of Wight County, Virginia in July 1724.<sup>21</sup> The crux of the evidence emerges 33

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<sup>16</sup> Some believe that Family Group Three in the Perry Y-DNA project includes individuals who are descended from the Phillip Perry line. Group Three is an entirely separate blood line from Family Group Nine, which includes men descended from the seven Perry brothers.

<sup>17</sup> Watson, *Origins of the Seven Brothers*, Chapter 1, available at <http://www.perryfamilyhistory.com/OriginsOfSevenPerryBrothers1.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> Fortune and Fleetwood previously authored, *Edwards – Perry and Allied Families* in 1992 (privately published).

<sup>19</sup> Micajah Perry appeared on the Granville County, NC tax lists from 1753 through 1756. He was in Brunswick County, VA in Sept. 1751, appearing as a buyer of items in the estate of Thomas Lanier. See Brunswick Co. VA, Will Book 3-37.

<sup>20</sup> Micajah Perry Estate, Brunswick Co., VA, 1760 - 61, Will Book 3, pages 322-23, & 392-93, microfilm, reel 20, *Brunswick County, Virginia, Will Book 2, 1739 - 1750, Will Book 3, 1751- 1761 & 1765 – 1769*; see also, Watson, *Origins of the Seven Brothers*, Chapter 2; and Fleetwood and Fortune, *History of Edwards – Perry and other Allied Families*.

<sup>21</sup> Patent Book No. 12, page 88, Virginia Land Patents and Grants, Nathaniel Perry, 100 acres in Isle of Wight Co., Virginia; (described as) south side of Maherin

years later, in May 1757, when “Nathaniel Perry of *Granville County, North Carolina*” sold this same piece of land, which was documented in a Brunswick County, Virginia deed (emphasis added).<sup>22</sup> At first glance, it appears that “Nathaniel Perry of Granville County,” one of the seven brothers, was the son of an earlier Nathaniel Perry who bought the land in 1724. And this is truly a possibility.<sup>23</sup> Yet, the greater likelihood is that the Nathaniel Perrys named in both of these deeds, 33 years apart, were the same man. Support for this is found in the 1860 diary of Col. Oliver Hazard Perry, Nathaniel’s descendant, which states that “Nat Perry lived and died in NC, age 106.”<sup>24</sup> If this diary is correct, Nathaniel Perry, commonly known as one of the seven brothers, may

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River on south side of the Dutchman' Meadow. Source: *Cavaliers and Pioneers, Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants 1623 – 1800*, Volume 3; Abstracted and Indexed by Nell Marion Nugent, (1934) 272. See also, Watson, *Origins of the Seven Brothers*, Chapter 2.

<sup>22</sup> Brunswick County, VA, Deed Book 6, page 156-8, May 23, 1757, Nathaniel Perry of Granville County, NC sold 100 acres on south side of Maherrin River and south side of Dutchman’s meadow. (The original purchase deed for Nathaniel’s ‘Dutchman Meadows’ tract [Isle of Wight Co. Patent Book 12, page 88, July 9, 1724] has the exact same description; therefore, it is clear this tract had once been in Isle of Wight County until it was made a part of Brunswick County VA in 1732.) Nathaniel Perry of Granville County, NC also sold another tract of land in Brunswick Co., VA in 1761 that had originally been purchased by Nathaniel Perry in 1727 in Isle of Wight Co., VA, containing 140 acres on a branch of Cattail Creek. (See Isle of Wight Co. Patent Book 13-184 (*Cavaliers and Pioneers*, Volume Three, p. 334, and Brunswick Co., VA, Deed Book 6 - 616.)

<sup>23</sup> The deed for the sale of this land in 1757 by Nathaniel Perry of Granville Co. includes old English legalese stating he was possessed of the property by an “absolute Estate of Inheritance.” This seems to insinuate that the land was inherited; however, this legal phrase was often used in colonial deeds to convey that the owner had ‘perfect title,’ or in modern parlance, that the land was held in ‘fee simple.’ See Brunswick Co., Deed Book 6-156-8, May 23, 1757; see also, *Blacks Law Dictionary*, definition of ‘Fee Simple.’

<sup>24</sup> The whereabouts of the original Oliver Perry diary, or copies of it, is undetermined. Information transcribed from the diary contains some discrepancies not dealt with in this article. See, *Diary of Col. Oliver Hazard Perry of Perry County, Alabama*, circa 1860, as presented in an article by Alice Woods Perry and Mrs. Willie Perry Rose, entitled, “Alabama’s Descendants of John Perry Son of Nathaniel Perry of North Carolina.” Source: John Bennett Boddie and Mrs. John Bennett Boddie, *Historical Southern Families*, Vol. VII, Redwood City, California: Pacific Coast Publishers (1963), 146-153.

have instead been their father.<sup>25</sup> Watson's excellent research and intriguing analysis concerning Nathaniel Perry can be read online in his *Origins of the Seven Brothers of North Carolina*, Chapter 2.<sup>26</sup>

### Brothers, Cousins or Kin

Oral tradition maintains that all of the Seven were brothers, but hard evidence is lacking. Nonetheless, indications are they were blood-related siblings with the same father. While there are no records proving brother relationships for William, Nathaniel, and Francis, there are two entries on the 1751 Granville County tax list identifying two sets of the Perry brothers.<sup>27</sup> This record affirms that John was the brother of Burwell and that Joshua was the brother of Jeremiah. Other than this, no other documents have survived naming any of them as brothers.

1751 tax list - John & his brother Burrell -

(Deeds prove all four are brothers.)

1751 tax list - Joshua & his brother Jeremiah -

William, Nathaniel and Francis – presumed brothers per oral tradition, etc.

Language contained in two deeds from Green County, Georgia, executed in 1797, establish a sibling connection between both sets of brothers named in the 1751 tax lists, i.e. John, Burwell, Joshua, and Jeremiah. These records document the transfer of two large tracts of land from Joshua Perry's son, Joshua Perry, Jr., of Franklin County, North Carolina to his "uncle Burrell Perry," also of Franklin County.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Nathaniel Perry left a will in Franklin County, North Carolina in 1790, and is traditionally considered one of the seven brothers. See Franklin County Will Book A, page 72-3, NC State Archives, microfilm, C.039.80002 (original will not extant).

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.perryfamilyhistory.com/OriginsOfSevenPerryBrothers2.pdf>. Watson's book is not in print and remains unfinished as of this date.

<sup>27</sup> List of Tithes, 1751, taken by John Brantley. Source: North Carolina State Archives, Granville County Taxables, 1747 – 1762, microfilm CR.044.701.20 (Box 1 of 1).

<sup>28</sup> Greene Co., Georgia, Deed Book 2 - 299-300 and 329-330; source: *Some Georgia County Records*, Volume 2, compiled by Rev. Silas E. Lucas Jr., Southern Historical Press (1977) 266, and 277. Joshua Perry, Jr., will (probated 1811, Franklin County, NC, Will Book C-216) mentions this Georgia land and names his two brothers: "To... sons... my real estate in N.C. and Georgia, to be divided equally.... The estate should be divided by my brother Benjamin Perry, my brother Jeremiah



Further confirmation of a sibling relationship between the two sets of Perry brothers named on the 1751 tax list can be deduced from deeds associated with Cascine, the Perry plantation established in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. Some Perry family histories say that the heirs of Jeremiah Perry sold the Cascine land to their ‘Uncle’ Burwell who gave it to his son (Col.) Jeremiah Perry. Two Franklin County deeds appear to provide support for this tradition.<sup>29</sup>

Additional support of kinship may be found in the year 1752 on an unalphabetized Granville County tax record that listed all Seven together, one after the other, which probably demonstrates the close proximity of their households.<sup>30</sup> Furthermore, six of the Seven appeared on a Granville County muster roll for Col. William Eaton’s Militia dated 8 October 1754; five of the Seven were in Osborne’s Company while Joshua was in Jones’ Company. Some think Burwell, who did not muster, was too young for the militia in 1754.<sup>31</sup>

There are also at least three Granville County land transactions that may indicate familial ties:

William Perry and Burwell Perry served together as sworn chain carriers on a survey crew for a land grant in 1752;

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Perry, Colo. Jeremiah Perry, his b[r]other Joshua Perry...” (Colonel Jeremiah and his brother Joshua were known sons of Joshua, Jr.’s, Uncle Burrell Perry, one of the seven brothers.) Joshua Perry (Sr.) of the Seven named just three sons in his 1792 will - Joshua, Benjamin and Jeremiah. Thus, the relationships stated in the 1811 will of Joshua Perry, Jr., confirm that he was the son of Joshua Perry (Sr.) of the Seven. (Seven brothers William and John can be ruled out because William did not have a son named Jeremiah, and John did not have a son named Joshua.)

<sup>29</sup> Hendrick, *The Lineage and Tradition...Perry... Families*, p. 111, and Edward Hill Davis, *Historical Sketches of Franklin County, North Carolina*, Edwards, Broughton Co., Raleigh, NC (1948) p. 210-11. Franklin County, NC, Deed Book 9, p. 64; and Book 7, p. 88. When Jeremiah Perry, one of the Seven, died in 1778, his son, Willis Perry, was named administrator of the remaining estate. In 1785, Willis sold his Uncle Burwell Perry 884 acres on the south side of Cedar Creek (DB9-64). Five years later Burwell gave this same land to his son, (Col.) Jeremiah Perry (DB7-88).

<sup>30</sup> Granville County, NC List of Tithes; Granville County Taxables (1747-1765), CR 044 701.20 (Box 1 of 1) North Carolina State Archives.

<sup>31</sup> Worth S. Ray, “List of Earliest Inhabitants of Granville Co., NC,” appearing in *Colonial Granville County and its People: Loose Leaves from “The Lost Tribes of North Carolina”*, Austin, TX, published by the author (1945) 291-292, 294.

William Perry sold 302 acres to John Perry in 1761, part of a 605 acre land grant obtained by William Perry in 1749 (the John in this deed was too young to be William's son, who was born in 1754);

Francis Perry's 482 acre land grant in 1761 bordered on John Perry's property line.

The deeds mentioned above document conveyances of land lying along Cedar Creek in present day Franklin County, North Carolina.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to the seven brothers, there were other Perry men residing in Granville County during this same period. These men appeared on the Granville tax lists as follows: Thomas Perry, 1749;<sup>33</sup> Jacob Perry, 1751;<sup>34</sup> Stephen Perry, 1752;<sup>35</sup> Micajah Perry, 1752;<sup>36</sup> and Joseph Perry, 1758.<sup>37</sup> The exact relationship of these men to the Perry 'brothers' remains a mystery;

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<sup>32</sup> Granville County: Patent Book 11 – 455, Deed Book E-52-3, Deed Book C-241-3, Deed Book E-200-1.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Perry died in Granville County, NC prior to December 1752, evidenced by court minutes showing a bond placed on his orphans Booth and Valentine Perry. His estate inventory and accounts name no heirs. (NC Archives, Thomas Perry 1753, Granville Co., NC, CR 044.508.179).

<sup>34</sup> Jacob Perry Land Grants 1754, Granville Co., NC, DB C-304 and 311; 620 and 390 acres on S side of Fishing Creek. Fishing Creek lies south of present day Oxford, NC, flowing southward into the Tar River. This is about 20 miles west of the area settled by the Seven Brothers.

<sup>35</sup> Stephen Perry of Hanover County, VA bought 400 acres on Nutbush Creek in Granville County, NC in 1752, per Deed Book B-62, Granville County, NC.

<sup>36</sup> Micajah Perry witnessed a deed in Granville County, NC in Dec. 1752, Deed Book B-166, and was on tax lists there between 1753 and 1756. He seems to have come from Brunswick County, VA, but stayed only a few years in NC. His estate account was filed in Brunswick County in 1760. (See footnote 17 above.)

<sup>37</sup> Joseph Perry may have been the 'eighth' Perry brother. He appears to have been closely associated with Nathaniel Perry in Brunswick Co., VA in 1755, when they were both sued by the same man. (Source: January 29, 1755. Brunswick Co., VA Order Book 5, Page 337-8, research by Steve Watson) Joseph's first appearance in NC was on June 21, 1758 when he swore an oath in Granville Co. Court. Source: *History and Genealogy of Old Granville County*, Thomas McAdory Owen (1993) 156. He was later identified in deeds as Joseph Perry, Planter, of Wake County and believed to have had sons named John, James, and Joseph Jr.

nevertheless, it is very possible that some, or all, of them were blood related to the Seven.

## Summary

Before settling in Granville County, North Carolina, some of the seven Perry brothers resided in Brunswick County, Virginia (see page 3). Unfortunately, it is unlikely that the true identity of their father will ever be proven. However, based on surviving evidence, it appears the most plausible candidate is Nathaniel Perry who bought land in Isle of Wight County, Virginia in 1724 and 1727 (see pages 6-7).

Extant records do indeed support that John, Burwell, Joshua and Jeremiah were brothers, but there is no evidentiary proof that William, Francis or Nathaniel were brothers of these four. Yet, considering oral tradition, proximity and their associations in deeds and tax records, a strong likelihood exists that all seven had the same father.

In addition to the seven Perry 'brothers,' there were at least five other Perry men living in Granville County, North Carolina during the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. The relationship of these Perrys to the seven brothers remains undetermined due an absence of records.

Numerous sons and grandsons of the Seven are known to have migrated out of North Carolina thereby leaving descendants throughout the United States. Even so, because of a lack of documentary evidence, many of these descendants, including most Family Group Nine members, cannot prove a connection to the seven 'brothers'. Still, all the Perry men in Group Nine are 'related' to the Seven and share a common Perry patriarch - probably one who lived before the seven brothers and resided in early colonial Virginia or in the British Isles.

## Part II: The Perry Y-DNA Surname Project, Family Group Nine

### Introduction

The Perry Y-DNA Project, with the help of Family Tree DNA (FTDNA), has identified closely matching samples of Y-DNA received from Perry men and organized the results into separate Family Groups. Some, but not all, of the men in ‘Family Group Nine’ (Niners) are *directly* descended from the seven Perry brothers (the “Seven”) of Granville County, North Carolina. Group Nine’s blood connection to the Seven was fully confirmed when Bennett H. Perry, Jr., owner and ancestral heir of Cascine, submitted a Y-DNA sample in 2010 that matched Family Group Nine.<sup>38</sup>

Cascine is the old Perry plantation, established about 1751, lying just south of Louisburg in Franklin County, North Carolina.<sup>39</sup> It was originally owned by Jeremiah Perry and later deeded to his brother, Burwell Perry (both of the Seven). Cascine was passed down to Bennett H. Perry, Jr., through the direct male line of Burwell Perry descendants spanning over two centuries. Bennett died in 2011, and title to Cascine has now passed to his nephew, a descendant of Burwell Perry through the maternal line. The Bennett H. Perry, Jr., Y-DNA sample is in Group Nine – kit number 180938; another Burwell descendant in Group 9 is 143482.

Several other Perry men in Group Nine have documented genealogies supporting a direct connection to the seven brothers – see Y-DNA samples of descendants of William Perry (54034) (N84033) (169184), samples of descendants of Francis Perry (108447) (218165), and samples of descendants of John Perry (456642) and (361295). However, even though all Niners are blood related, most have no proof of a connection to the seven brothers.<sup>40</sup> This is mainly because their earliest traceable Perry patriarch lived more recently than the seven brothers. Some of these men, nonetheless, may be direct

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<sup>38</sup> See Perry DNA Project webpage at <http://www.perry-dna.org/> and the Family Tree DNA results for the Perry Surname Project posted online at <https://www.familytreedna.com/public/perry/default.aspx?section=yresults>.

<sup>39</sup> See National Historic Register Inventory for excellent background on Cascine. Available at: <http://www.hpo.ncdcr.gov/nr/FK0002.pdf>; accessed January 4, 2015.

<sup>40</sup> The lack of proof is probably related to the loss or destruction of old county records or a son not being named in his father’s estate.

descendants of the Seven, lacking only the documentary proof, which may have been lost or destroyed over the centuries. Other Niners without evidence of a link to the seven brothers may instead be descended from cousins of the Seven.<sup>41</sup> For example, various ‘Niners’ might share a Most Recent Common Ancestor (MRCA) from a generation or more preceding the father of the brothers – perhaps the grandfather, or great grandfather of the Seven (ad infinitum). It is even possible that their common ancestor lived in the British Isles before the Perry family came to the colonies.

### Gleanings from the Y-DNA Results of Group Nine

The following paragraphs address some basic questions that may arise when reviewing the Y-DNA results for Family Group Nine. The discussion presumes some fundamental knowledge of Y-DNA testing and is based on my understanding as a nonprofessional. In the future, the evolution and refinement of DNA technology may permit insights that are not contemplated in the issues covered below. For tutorials on these topics see: <http://blairdna.com/dna101.html>

- Is it possible to identify the ‘Most Recent Common Ancestor’ (MRCA) for two members of Family Group Nine by comparing their Y-DNA results?

Y-DNA, alone, cannot prove the exact identity of the MRCA for two Niners. To do so, both men must have a documented paper trail that connects to the same MRCA. If both men have this proof and their Y-DNA results match, the accuracy of the MRCA relationship is confirmed, but only if their paper trails are correct.

A probability table is available at Family Tree DNA, which provides an estimation of how many generations back an unidentified MRCA is for two men with closely matching Y-DNA samples.<sup>42</sup> However, it may be wise to heed the words of Brian Sykes, Oxford University genetics professor:

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<sup>41</sup> Some members of Family Group Nine may be descended from one of the other Perry men from old Granville County, NC, previously mentioned, Thomas, Jacob, Stephen, Micajah, or Joseph. All were contemporaries of the Seven and resided in close proximity to them.

<sup>42</sup> See explanation of MRCA probabilities at <https://www.familytreedna.com/faq-markers.aspx>. see also Bruce Walsh estimator

“[t]he random nature of mutation and the complications of parallel mutation will see to it that no estimate of the time to a common ancestor for any two men will be much more than a shot in the dark, even with the abundance of markers that are now available [with Y-DNA testing].”<sup>43</sup>

- Is it possible to use Y-DNA to identify the father of the seven Perry brothers?

With current technology, Y-DNA testing, by itself, cannot identify the father of the seven brothers. However, under some scenarios, Y-DNA can confirm paternity. For this to happen in Group Nine, a Perry man with a direct documentary connection to the *known* father of the Seven would have to be tested. Yet, as previously noted in Part I, the father of the seven brothers will probably never be identified due to the lack of colonial records. Hence, taking into consideration these unfortunate circumstances, the father of the seven brothers cannot be established with Y-DNA testing.

Bottom line, without documentary proof clearly identifying the father of the Seven, a Y-DNA match to Group Nine by a descendant of any one of the paternal candidates for the seven brothers cannot prove paternity or exclude other potential fathers.

- Can Y-DNA testing of male-line descendants of the seven Perry brothers prove the Seven were actually brothers?

Like paternity, an exact blood relationship between any of the seven brothers cannot be proven without documentary evidence of its existence. Similarly, Y-DNA matches between Perry men descended from different, contemporaneous ancestors cannot, alone, establish that those ancestors were brothers. (As discussed above, a Y-DNA match between two men cannot, without an accurate paper trail establishing their relationship, precisely identify their MRCA.)

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at, <http://www.moseswalker.com/mrca/calculator.asp?q=1> , and <http://dna-project.clan-donald-usa.org/tmrca.htm> (another calculator).

<sup>43</sup> Brian Sykes, *DNA USA, A Genetic Portrait of America*, Liveright Publishing Corporation, New York, London (2012) p. 111, and author of other popular works on genetics and DNA, i.e. *Seven Daughters of Eve*, *Adams Curse*, *Blood of the Isles*, *The Human Inheritance*, and *Saxons Vikings and Celts*.

For example, we know there is evidence verifying that Jeremiah, Joshua, Burwell and John were brothers; yet, records fail to confirm that the other three - William, Francis and Nathaniel - were their brothers. (See pages 8-9.) Thus, considering the absence of such proof, the Y-DNA samples currently in Group Nine for the known descendants of William and Francis cannot, by themselves, prove they are the brothers of Jeremiah, Joshua, Burwell or John. Nevertheless, the fact that they are a close match to the Burwell (180938 and 143482) and John (456642 and 361295) does *support* the oral tradition that they were all brothers.

On the other hand, there is not a Y-DNA sample in Group Nine from a proven descendant of Nathaniel Perry, allegedly one of the seven brothers. But, as in the case of William and Francis, there is the presumption that Nathaniel was also one of the Seven because of existing oral tradition and ‘circumstantial’ evidence. Even so, we cannot say that Y-DNA *supports* Nathaniel as one of the seven ‘brothers’ until one of his proven male-line descendants submits a Y-DNA sample matching Group Nine. It is important to note, however, that such a result would still not rule out the chance that Nathaniel, who left a will in Franklin County in 1790, was indeed the real father of the Seven ‘brothers’ (because colonial records seem to hold out this possibility).<sup>44</sup> (See pages 6-7.)

Moreover, like Nathaniel, there are currently no known Y-DNA samples in Group Nine from descendants of Jeremiah, or Joshua. Nonetheless, when a Perry male with a proven descent from one of these two brothers is tested, his Y-DNA results should match up closely with the Burwell and John Perry samples, 180938, 143482, 456642 and 361295. We can make this assumption because records do exist that say these four men were brothers. (See pages 8-9.) Hence, a Y-DNA match under these circumstances would indeed confirm the accuracy of the brother relationship.

- What is the value in Y-DNA testing when the results alone, minus a supporting paper trail, cannot accurately identify exact ancestral relationships?

There are many Perry families who believe they have a blood connection to the seven ‘brothers’ but are unable to prove it. In such cases, Y-DNA test results

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<sup>44</sup> See Steve Watson, *Origins of the Seven Brothers of NC*, Chapter 2, available at <http://www.perryfamilyhistory.com/OriginsOfSevenPerryBrothers2.pdf>.

can serve to confirm, or deny, a genetic relationship to Group Nine. Thus, by testing, a person can obtain valuable information on where to focus their research efforts. This was the problem I faced with my own Perry ancestry. Consequently, my only option was to convince a Perry cousin to submit a Y-DNA sample in order to see which of the Family Groups our Perry patriarch matched. (My cousin is in Group Nine, but we can only trace our earliest Perry patriarch back to the generation coming after the Seven.)

- What conclusions can be drawn at present concerning the ancestral relationships between Family Group Nine members?

Some men in Group Nine closely match the Y-DNA samples of proven descendants of Burwell and John Perry of the Seven. However, such a match, without an accompanying paper trail, does not prove or disprove a direct descent from one of the seven Perry brothers. Indeed, the possibility would remain that the common Perry patriarch they share was a grandfather or a great grandfather of the Seven.

Y-DNA results in Group Nine from known descendants of William Perry and Francis Perry *support* the ‘seven brother’ tradition but fall short of undeniable proof of a ‘brother relationship’ to brothers Burwell, John, Jeremiah, and Joshua who were named as brothers in early tax records.

Viewed in the aggregate, Group Nine results reveal at least two subsets of samples that differ from each other at similar markers. Presently, this subgrouping appears to be split between the upper and lower half of Group Nine on the FTDNA results page. See the FTDNA ‘colorized’ results at: <https://www.familytreedna.com/public/perry/default.aspx?section=ycolorized> As more Perry men test and upgrade to higher numbers of markers, these subgroups may become more clearly defined. It is certainly worth paying attention to this trend as the situation is still evolving and may hold new insights in the future.

- Closing Remarks

Despite the intense focus on the seven Perry brothers in this article, it is key to remember the simple fact that all men in Family Group Nine are blood related and are descended from a common Perry patriarch through the male line. For some Niners, this patriarch was not one of the Seven. Instead, he probably



lived generations earlier than the brothers, perhaps even in the British Isles, before our Perry ancestors settled in the American colonies.

Yet, it is instructive to study the seven brothers because they are the earliest documented Perry patriarchs in Group Nine, and records still exist that establish brother relationships of four of them. As a result, they make excellent case studies, allowing unique perspectives on Y-DNA science and how it can be used to confirm or deny the truth about blood relationships in our Perry family surname lines.

### Part III:

Children of the Seven Perry Brothers named in Wills, Estates, Etc.<sup>45</sup>

#### **Surviving estate records of the Seven Perry brothers:**

Jeremiah Perry (Estate Administration, 1778, Bute Co., NC)

Nathaniel Perry (Will, 1790 Franklin Co., NC)

Joshua Perry (Will, 1792 Warren Co., NC)

John Perry (Will, 1796 Franklin Co. NC)

Burwell/Burrell Perry (Will, 1801 Franklin Co., NC)

William Perry (Family Bible, Franklin Co., NC)

Francis Perry (Will, 1813 Wake Co., NC)

**Jeremiah Perry** estate and guardianship records (no will extant), Franklin County, NC, court minutes 1778 & 1785; deeds, 1778-1785. [Sources: Bute County Ct. minutes, February to August, 1778 (estate), and Franklin County Ct. minutes, Dec. 4, 1785 (guardianship for orphans of Jeremiah – Micajah and William); Franklin County deeds, DB 1-23, 5-30, 9-64 (Willis Perry, administrator, land deeded to Jeremiah, Benjamin, and Burwell.)]

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<sup>45</sup> Dennis G. Perry has compiled many records for the Seven brothers and their descendants on his excellent website, *Descendents of the 7 Perry Brothers of NC*. Available at <http://s301420419.onlinehome.us/Decendents/index.htm>

Sons attributed:

Willis Perry, administrator of estate,  
 Jeremiah,  
 Benjamin,  
 Burrell,  
 Micajah,  
 William,  
 John (aka 'Speck'),<sup>46</sup>  
 James (*believed* to be a son).

**Nathaniel Perry** will, Franklin County, NC, Aug 25, 1790. Proved Sept Ct. 1790. [Sources: Franklin County Will Book A, page 72-3, NC State Archives, microfilm, C.039.80002 (original will not extant).] The 1761 Granville tax list places Isham, Ephraim, and Simon in Nathaniel's household (presumably sons). Simon Perry witnessed a deed for Nathaniel; see Granville County, NC, 1761 Patent Book 14, page 32.

Children named in will:

Drury,  
 Ephraim,  
 Sarah Taylor,  
 Mrs. (Mary) Sanders (dec'd).

Other presumed sons:

Isham  
 Simon

**Joshua Perry** will, Warren County, NC, Sept 11, 1792. Proven Nov. Ct. 1793. [Source: Warren County Will Book 6, page 225.] Warren County deeds, the State census of 1784-87, and the federal census of 1790 indicate that Joshua may have had a fourth son.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> John 'Speck' Perry deeded his son, Strickland Perry, the western part of a land grant received by Jeremiah Perry on April 11, 1762. See Franklin County, NC Deed Book 20, page 72; see also Deed Books 6-10 and 7-34.

<sup>47</sup> Deeds in 1782 to Joshua's sons, Benjamin and Joshua, indicate they had left their father's home and established households of their own. Yet the NC state census in 1784-87 and the federal census of 1790 show there was a fourth male still in Joshua Sr.'s home. See Warren Co., NC Deed Book 5, pages 90 and 92. James M. Allen Jr., *Joshua Perry of Granville, Bute and Warren Counties...*, Genealogical Report..., April 13, 1999, page 10-11, available at Granville County Library, Oxford, NC.

Children named in will:

Benjamin,  
 Joshua,  
 Jeremiah;  
 Winnifred Darnall,  
 Amay Person,  
 Lettice Ingram,  
 Mary Howel,  
 Charity Gee,  
 Lizzie Perry,  
 Priscilla Perry,  
 Rebecca Perry.

**John Perry** will, Franklin County, NC, 15 Mar 179? (some say 1796).<sup>48</sup>  
 Recorded at Louisburg, Franklin Co., NC. Wit: Thomas Lanier and Benjamin  
 Perry. [Source: Franklin County Will Book B, page 75, NC State Archives,  
 microfilm, C.039.80002 (original will not extant).]

Children named in will:

Burwell,  
 John,  
 Solomon,  
 Jeremiah,  
 Abraham,  
 Rebekah Ferrell,  
 Mary Strickland,  
 Francis Richards,  
 Ann Baker,  
 Abey (Aley) Conyars.

**Burwell Perry** will, Franklin County, NC, November 5, 1800. Proven at June  
 Court 1801. [Source: Franklin County Will Book B, page 119.]

Children named in will:

Jeremiah,  
 John,  
 Burrell,

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<sup>48</sup> Dr. Stephen E. Bradley, Jr., genealogist and record abstracter, states the  
 John Perry will is torn near the date. This is true, the date is illegible.

Joshua,  
Edith Perry,  
Mary Perry,  
Elizabeth Jones.

**William Perry** – family Bible,<sup>49</sup> Franklin County, NC, no will or estate documents survived. Wife Martha Perry's 1807 obituary established William's birth at 1717, and their marriage date as 1744, obit states William was 90 in 1807.<sup>50</sup> [Source: See Bible at <http://www.marvhamm.com/perry/index.html>]

Children named in Bible:

James, b. 1746;  
William, b. 1748;  
Judith, b. 1750;  
Lydia, b. 1752;  
John, b. 1754,  
Martha, b. 1757;  
Nathaniel, b. 1759;  
Joshua, b. 1761;  
Benjamin, b. 1764;  
Rebecca, b. 1767.

**Francis Perry** will, Wake County, NC, Nov. 10, 1813. Proven at November Court 1814. [Source: Wake County Record Book 11, page 315.]

Children named in will:

Sion,  
Francis,  
Nathan,  
Aaron,  
Darling, (son)  
William,  
Mary Truelove,  
Mabel Williams,  
Salley Hunter,

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<sup>49</sup> Old Perry Family Bible is currently owned by Jim Perry; it may be the Bible once owned by Carl Perry of Guymon, OK (original owner undetermined).

<sup>50</sup> Lois S. Neal, et. al, *Abstracts of vital records from Raleigh, North Carolina, newspapers*, Spartanburg, SC (1979, reprint 1995) p. 398.

Agnes MaGeehee,  
Ann Bridges,  
Rachael Arundel,  
Olive Wright,  
Hamar Parham,  
Mrs. Lowry (dec'd).

**Note:** Dennis G. Perry has compiled many records for the seven Perry brothers and their descendants on his outstanding website, *Descendents of the 7 Perry Brothers of NC*:  
See <http://s301420419.onlinehome.us/Decendents/index.htm>

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