

The Story of the Holbrook Family

Interactive Map: [Holbrook Family](#)

See [Appendix](#) for wills, abstracts and genealogies.

Holbrooks of Cheshire County, England

|
Randolph Holbrook (? - 1777)

m. Mary LNU (? - bef 1733)

|
John Holbrook Sr. (bef 1733-1805)

m. aft 1763 Mary Elizabeth Hargiss (1742 - ca 1782)

|
John Holbrook Jr. (ca 1765 - ca 1820)

m. 1784 Wilkes Co NC Mary "Molly" Cooksey (1768-1833)

|
Robert Alford Holbrook Sr (ca 1785-1849)

m. 1809 Mary "Polly" McCoy (ca 1790-1864)

|
James Floyd Holbrook (1815-1892)

m. Jul 1837 Frances Jordan (1816-1887) [[Jordan Family](#)]

|
John Nelson Holbrook (1850-1927)

m. 15 Jan 1873, Scott Co VA Frances Elizabeth Davis [[Davis Family](#)]

|
Manervia Holbrook (1880-1974)

m. 27 Dec 1900, Scott Co VA Henry Ramey Corder (1877-1948) [[Corder Family](#)]

In England [[Interactive Map](#)]

There is compelling circumstantial and minor documentary evidence to suggest that our Holbrook family of early Goochland County, Virginia, was closely connected to the Holbrook families of late 17th and early 18th century Cheshire, England. None of the evidence is conclusive, so genealogies and trees connecting our first documented Holbrook ancestors of Virginia to England should be approached with a degree of caution pending further proof of relationship, whether documentary or genetic.¹

Until a few years ago, most genealogies connected Randolph Holbrook Sr. of Goochland County, Virginia, to the Ralph "of Hough" Holbrook whose will was probated in Cheshire 20th April 1725, but a careful study of the records has yielded no firm conclusions and there are at least two other candidate families in the area at the time.

¹ "The late J. C. Halbrooks of Connecticut (1940-1999), a respected Holbrook researcher, presents [a] reasonable, but inconclusive bridge to England in his *The Holbrook Report*, prepared in 1988." Helen Thomas & Max Ervin, *Holbrook on the Clinch 1798-2005*, Second Ed., Self Published, page ix.



Image of Cheshire countryside, Depositphotos.com

There are several entries in the parish registers of [Wistaston](#) and [Wybunbury](#) which appear to pertain to Ralph Holbrook “of [Hough](#).” Daughter Elizabeth was christened in 1693 (Wistaston), son Randol in 1696 (Wybunbury), son William in 1700 and son Thomas in 1704 (same parish, sons of “Ralph of Haugh”).

In 1998 Holbrook researcher JC Halbrooks identified another family of Holbrooks contemporary to Ralph of Hough. Randol Holbrook “of [Little Budworth](#)” married Mary Willcockson in 1687 in the parish of [Whitegate](#). Little Budworth is only about eight miles from Wybunbury, so Ralph and Randol were very probably two different men, but likely from the same larger Holbrook family. Randol and Mary were the parents of a daughter, Elizabeth, christened on 28 Feb 1689 in Little Budworth. In the parish register she is called the “daughter of Randle and Mary.”

No further information on this line has come to light, unless the Jane Holbrook born in 1704 in the parish of Wybunbury, daughter of “Randle of Hough,” also belonged to this couple.² Her mother is not named and it is unclear in what month Jane was born, but since “*Ralph* of Hough’s” son Thomas was christened that same year, the closeness of the births and difference in the father’s names make me wonder whether Randle and Ralph, both originally of Hough, were both living in the parish of Wybunbury in the early 1700’s?

A Jane Holbrook died in her teens (1719) and was recorded in the Wybunbury parish register as “daughter of Ralph of *Acton*,” it is conceivable that those who maintained the parish registers interchanged “Ralph” and “Randle,” or transcriptionists misread the names, however, in 1684 a *Randolph* Holbrook married Elizabeth Hodgekisson in the parish of [Acton](#), Cheshire. Acton is only about four miles from Wybunbury. Perhaps this Jane was the daughter of *Randolph* (rather than Ralph) and Elizabeth Hodgekisson Holbrook?

The burial of Elizabeth, “wife of Ralph of Hough” is recorded in 1699. Ralph’s 1725 will mentions second wife Mary, daughter Elizabeth Venables, son John (who is apparently no longer in Cheshire and has seven years to come and claim his share of the estate), son William, son Thomas, and grandson Ralph (“son of my son Ralph”).

While we may not be able to sort these men and their families with 100% accuracy, based on these records my first guess would be that there were at least *three contemporary Holbrook families* living in reasonable proximity in

² Holbrook-L Archives, Archiver > HOLBROOK > 1998-05 > 0895668907, Subject: S: [Origins- Randolph & John](#), From: jcdha, Date: Wed, 20 May 1998 08:55:07 -0400, per JC Halbrooks.

Compiled by Laura Henderson-Franta. Email questions or corrections to info.itsallrelative@gmail.com. These research notes have been assembled for personal use by family history researchers. You may provide a link back to this document, but please do not copy or redistribute these notes, as some information may be copyrighted or outdated.

Cheshire in the period of about 1680-1720. They had similar names and may have moved between parishes, which muddies our waters a bit, but my best effort to sort them yields the following (in order of assumed age based on birth of children):

- 1) [Randolph "of Acton"](#) who married Elizabeth Hodgekisson in 1684,
- 2) [Randol "of Little Budworth"](#) who married Mary Willcockson in 1689, and
- 3) [Ralph "of Hough"](#) who married Elizabeth bef 1693 and then Mary aft 1699.

Due to "Randolph" of Acton having married an Elizabeth, and "Randol" of Little Budworth having married a Mary, I might have wondered if perhaps Randolph, Randol and Ralph were all the same man, since "Ralph" of Hough was married first to Elizabeth and second to Mary. However, Ralph's Elizabeth didn't die until 1699, and while it seems he took a new wife (named Mary) with unseemly haste in order to have a son born in 1700, these two dates do not fit with the marriage records of Randolph and Randol. (Not to mention the fact that there were two Elizabeths and two Ralphs/Randols born to the different couples).

However, due to their proximity ([see map](#)) and similarity of family naming patterns, it seems safe to speculate that they were probably related, not only to each other, but to the men with similar names who would appear in Goochland County, Virginia, in the 18th century.

In Virginia

The same caveats apply to the first generation of Holbrooks found in Goochland County, VA as are in effect for the Cheshire Holbrooks. It is generally accepted that our family's line of Holbrooks descends from Randolph Holbrook Sr. of Goochland County. Randolph was the brother of John Holbrook who died in 1733 and [made his will](#) in King George County VA.

It is worth observing that the 1725 will of Ralph "of Hough" Holbrook clearly implies that son John Holbrook is no longer in Cheshire (or perhaps England) as he is given seven years to claim his portion of his father's estate. Another son, Randall, is not mentioned in the will, but Randall's son Ralph *is* mentioned. It is unclear whether Randall has died or whether perhaps, like John, he is simply absent. Were he absent, I would expect that he would have shared in the estate in the same manner as John, so since he is not mentioned, I am operating under the assumption that Randall had died by 1725. This ambiguity is unfortunate, however, since we find brothers John and *Randolph* living in King George County VA by 1721. Were I not inclined to believe Randall, son of Ralph of Hough, had died, I might suspect he was the brother Randolph mentioned in [John Holbrook's 1733 King George County VA will](#) (this Randolph was also called Randall in early Virginia records).

John Holbrook's 1733 will³ specifically states that Randolph Holbrook is his brother.

See comment.

³ Holbrook researcher JC Halbrooks mentions that the King George County will book which contained the will of John Holbrook was stolen from the courthouse during the Civil War when the courthouse was burned. A Union soldier "saved" the book and took it back north. Later, his family offered to sell the book back to the county, but at such a price that it had to be "ransomed" by an interested doctor from Charleston, WV

Appendix

Holbrooks of Cheshire

Family Line 1 - Randolph/Ralph Holbrook “of [Acton](#),” Cheshire, England
m. Elizabeth Hodgekisson in 1684, Acton, Cheshire, ENG

Children of Randolph/Ralph and Mary

1. Randol b ca 26 Mar 1689 “son of Randolph”
2. Jane b ? d 1719, Wybunbury, “daughter of *Ralph* of Acton”

Family Line 2 - Randol/Randle Holbrook “of [Little Budworth](#),” Cheshire, England, b ca 1660-1670
m Mary Willcockson in 1687 in Whitegate, Cheshire, ENG

Children of Randle and Mary

1. Elizabeth b ca Feb 28, 1689, Little Budworth
2. Jane b ca 1704, Wybunbury (*may be dau of Family Line 1*)

Family Line 3 - Ralph Holbrook “of [Hough](#),” Cheshire, England, b ca 1670 d bef 20 Apr 1725⁴
m 1) bef 1693 **Elizabeth** LNU d 1699
m 2) aft 1699 **Mary** LNU d aft 1704

Children of Ralph and Elizabeth LNU

1. Elizabeth b ca 1693, Wistaston, m. Samuel Venables of Whitegate and Nantwich
2. Randall b ca 1696, Wybunbury d bef Jan 1725⁵
m. 1716 in Whitegate, Ann Stanway
 - a. Ralph b ca 1717 d ca 1759 Maddenly, Shropshire
3. John b. ? (*no christening record - difficult to place John correctly but his 1720 marriage makes him of an age to belong to Elizabeth*)
m. 1) 1720 in Bridgemere, Mary Brassy
 - a. Mary b ca 1720 Bridgemere - no further info
 - b. William b ca 1722, Bridgemere m. 1744 ? Stafford Co VA, d Stokes Co NC aft 1758
m 2) Katherine LNU; d. 1733

Children of Ralph and Mary LNU

1. William b ca 1700, Wybunbury, living in Bruerton in 1759
m. 1727 in Wybunbury, Hannah Wheelock
2. Thomas b ca 1704, Wybunbury d 1732
m. in Bridgemere, Elizabeth LNU (she m. 2nd James Goodall)

⁴ All information for this tree comes from Holbrook-L Archives, Archiver > HOLBROOK > 1998-05 > 0895668907, Subject: S: [Origins- Randolph & John](#), From: jcdha, Date: Wed, 20 May 1998 08:55:07 -0400, per J.C. Halbrooks.

⁵ Not named in father's will, although his son, Ralph b 1717 (living in Shropshire 1759) was mentioned. Since Ralph specified that son John was absent, but made no such statements about son Randall, I have to assume Randall was dead.

Will of Ralph “of Hough” Holbrook

January 2nd 1725

In the name of God Amen. I **Ralph Holbrook of Walgherton in the county Chester yeoman**, being a of sound and disposing of mind and memory do make and publishe this as my last will and testament. In manner and form following.

Imprimus my mind and will it is that all my debts and funeral expenses be paid out of my real and personal estate.

Item I give and bequeath all my messuage or tenement with the lands hereditiments and appurtenances thereto belonging situate lying and being in Walgherton aforesaid now in my possession and which I hold by lease under Sir Thomas Selees Baron unto my son **Thomas**, his executors, administrators, and assigns during the continuance of the said Lease.

I leave and bequeath to my loving wife **Mary** the use of parlour belonging to the said the said Messuage and of yearly sum of five pounds of lawful British money to be paid her by my said the son Thomas at quarterly payments yearly during her life and I charge my said messuage or tenement with the payment of the said five pounds per annum accordingly and further it is my mind and will that my said wife shall at any time after my decease in default of payment of the said five pounds or any part of it yearly in manner aforesaid to enter the aforesaid premises and to the distrain for the same and the distress to take and dispose towards payments and dissatisfaction of such a lease.

Item, I leave and devise to my son **William** the some of 60 pounds of lawful British money to be paid him within 12 months after my deceased.

Item I leave and bequeath to my daughter **Elizabeth** now wife of **Samuel Venables** the sum of 20 pounds of like lawful money to be paid aforesaid.

I leave unto my son **John** the like sum of 20 pounds of lawful money provided he shall in person, come and demand it in the space of seven years if not then I believe the same 20 pounds to my sons and son-in-law, **Thomas Holbrook**, **William Holbrook**, and **Samuel Venables** be equally divided among with them.

I leave to my **grandson Ralph** son of my son **Randall** the like sum of 20 pounds and my mind and will is on this same shall be put out and in yield at interest by my executor herein after name and in their names for the use of my grandson till he obtains the age of 21 years and if he shall die in the mean time then I order that the said 20 pounds shall be equally divided between my said children **William**, **Thomas**, and **Elizabeth** share and share alike.

Item I leave to my said wife and to my sons **William** and **Thomas**, each a bed and furniture and all the rest residue of my personal estate I devised to my said children **William, Thomas, Elizabeth**, and my said **grandchild Ralph** to be equally divided amongst them; and lastly I nominate and appoint **Thomas Holbrook, William Holbrook, and Samuel Venables** executors of this, my last will and testament hereby revokeing all former wills and rattifying and confirming this to be my last will and testament in witness hereof I the said Testtor, have unto set my hand and seal the second day of January. in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and twenty four or five.

Signed **Ralph Holbrook** (Mark)

Witnesses: **William Whitehead, William Gibbons, Peter Gibbons.**

Probated April 20, 1725

Holbrooks of Virginia

Father of John and Randolph Holbrook (Unknown), probably Cheshire, England⁶

m. Unknown

Children of Unknown Holbrook and Wife

1. **John** b ? (ca 1700?) d bet 29 Mar - 4 May 1733 King George Co VA
m Katherine LNU
2. **Randolph/Randall** b ? (ca 1700?) d bef 28 Oct 1777
m 1) Mary LNU
 - a. **John** Holbrook b bef 1733 (ca 1720?) m. Mary Hargis Hammon, d ?
 - b. **Randall** Holbrook b bef 1733 (ca 1720?) d bef 15 Feb 1778, Goochland Co VA
 - c. **Edy (Eddy)** Holbrook b bef 1733 (ca 1720?) d bef 1787
m. **Mary Tolben(?)**⁷ 17 Oct 1756 Goochland Co VA (? - bet 1821-1824 GA)
 - i. **Edy Holbrook Jr.** b ? d 24 Nov 1833 Franklin Co GA⁸
m 1792 **Charity Roberts/Roberds** d/o **Olive Roberds**, Wilkes Co GA
 - ii. **Jesse Holbrook**
m **Susannah Meanly** d/o **Isaac and Elizabeth Dennet Meanly**
 - iii. **Randolph Holbrook**
m **Hannah Meanly** d/o **Isaac and Elizabeth Dennet Meanly**
- m 2) ca 1733 **Janet Patterson/Pattison** (widow of **Henry Conyers**⁹), b ? d bef 8 Dec 1755
 - a. **Elizabeth** b ca 1734 m. 13 Jan 1754 **Samuel Earle**, Stafford Co VA (second wife)

⁶ "In thousands of other Holbrook records of England, it is only in Cheshire, and then in the parish of Little Budworth, that the given names Ralph, Randolph, and [Randall] are found in any numbers. There are two (2) other instances found of a Randolph or of a Randol in other parts of England in the 1600s. Their origins have not been determined so it is not known if they, too, came from Cheshire." *per JC Halbrooks*.

⁷ In 1821 Edy Holbrook of Franklin Co GA was granted a sum of \$30 to care for "a certain old woman known as Mary Holbrook" (probably his mother, Mary Tolben Holbrook).

⁸ Edy Holbrook's Revolutionary War pension application states that he served in Goochland Co VA, then lived in Wilkes Co NC before moving to Spartanburg Co SC and finally to Franklin Co GA.

⁹ "Jannett Pattison (Janet Patterson) was first married to Henry Conyers of Stafford Co., VA, an immigrant from England who served as County Surveyor of Stafford County, a widower. Janett was a maid in his household and they had a child prior to their marriage, and then three subsequent children." Source: Katherine Holbrook Traynham, [For all Edy, John, Randall Holbrook of Goochland VA researchers](#)

Will of John Holbrook of King George County VA

In the Name of God Amen the Twenty ninth day of March in the year of our Lord God 1733, I **John Holbrook** of King George County in Brunswick parish being very sick and weak of body but of perfect mind and memory thanks be given unto God. I do make and ordain this to be my last will and Testament in manner and form following (vizt)

Item I give and bequeath unto my brother **Randall Holbrook** one Durey Coat and one sceersucer Jack Coat and breeches.

Item I give and bequeath unto **William Rowley Junr.**¹⁰ one gold ring.

Item I give and bequeath unto my three Godsons **John Holbrook Randall Holbrook** and **Edy Holbrook** one half of my whole Estate after my wife's decease.

Item I give and bequeath unto my well beloved wife **Katherine Hollbrook** all my whole Estate only the one half of it to be equally divided between my three Cousens above mentioned after my wife's decease

And this to be my last Will and Testament revoke and disanull all other Wills and Testaments by me made In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this day and year above written

John Holbrook{seal}

Signed Sealed and Delivered in the presence of us, Nathaniel Elkins, Joseph Crouch, Elizabeth Simpsen

At a Court held for King George County the 4th day of May 1733 The last Will and Testament of **John Holbrook** desed presented into Court by **Katherine** his widow and Executrix who made oath thereunto and the same was proved by the oaths of Nathaniel Elkins and Joseph Crouch and admitted to record.

Copa TestT Turner

¹⁰ William Rowley Jr. was the son of William Rowley and Mary King Rowley of Brunswick Parish, King George County, VA. He married Ann Grigsby and died in 1774. The Grigsby, Rosser and Rowley families of King George County are frequently found together in records, including a 20 Oct 1732 deed witnessed by John Holbrook.

Chronology

1721

King George County, VA

RANDOLPH HOLBROOK and wife Mary¹¹ sue James Grant for tobacco.

1722

King George County, VA

RANDOLPH HOLBROOK is sued by Richard Bryant.

1724

King George County, VA

RANDOLPH HOLBROOK on list of tobacco tenders; 20,828 tobacco plants with Alexander Robertson.

1732 Oct 20

King George County, VA

JOHN HOLBROOK witnesses a deed between Richard Griffis of Hanover, King George Co VA and Thomas Grigsby, Gent., of St. Paul's Parish in Stafford Co VA. The patent of 600a sold by Richard Rosser to John Rowley by deed 12 Jan 1668, and by William Rowley, son and heir of said John Rowley, conveyed to Richard Griffis by deed dated 4th Dec 1729..." Additional witnesses were Joseph Crouch, John Simpson and Richard Griffis. Deed recorded 3 Nov 1732.

John Holbrook would leave a bequest of a gold ring to William Rowley Jr. the following March when he made his will. The Rossers and Rowleys were neighbors in Richmond Co VA in about 1704.

1733 Mar 29

King George County, VA

JOHN HOLBROOK makes his will in King George County, VA and names brother **RANDALL HOLBROOK** as well as godsons/cousins (meaning close relative) **JOHN HOLBROOK**, **RANDALL HOLBROOK** and **EDY HOLBROOK**. He also mentions William Rowley Jr., perhaps a close relative. *Will of John Holbrook, dated March 29, 1733, King George County, VA Will Book A-I*

John, Randall and Edy are believed to be the sons of John's brother, Randolph.

1733 May 4

King George County, VA

[The will](#) of **JOHN HOLBROOK** is admitted to record.

1733 Jun 13

Stafford County, VA

Henry Conyers of Stafford County VA has died and his will is recorded in Stafford County VA. His wife, Jennet, and daughters are mentioned in the will, and Mr. Conyers specifies that his wife is to give **RANDOLPH HOLBROOK** the value of a negro named Philip, should he (Philip) be recovered.

1733 Jun 13 aft

Goochland County, VA

¹¹ Mary LNU Holbrook would have been of legal age by 1721, so estimate date of birth accordingly. She died before 1733.

RANDOLPH HOLBROOK marries Janet Patterson/Pattison Conyers, widow of Henry Conyers who died bef June 13th, 1733; Janet had died by December of 1755 (*per assignment of title by Randolph*).

The Register of Overwharton Parish, Stafford County Virginia 1723-1758, compiled and published by George Harrison Sanford King, 1961. Page 22: "Jannett Patterson Conyers, widow, married secondly in 1733 shortly after the death of Henry Conyers, Randall Holbrook."

Randolph Holbrook and Janet Patterson Conyers were the parents of a daughter, Elizabeth, who would marry Major Samuel Earle on 13 Jan 1754 in Overwharton Parish, Stafford Co VA. This couple would move to Frederick County VA and live near the Corders and Bransons.

1754 Jan 13

Stafford County, VA

ELIZABETH HOLBROOK, daughter of Randolph and Janet Patterson Conyers Holbrook, marries Samuel Earle in Overwharton Parish.

1755 Dec 8

Stafford County, VA

RANDOLPH HOLBROOK makes a deed of gift to "...my loving son in law **Samuel Earle** of Stafford County and **Elizabeth**, his wife.... all my goods wares plate jewels ready money household goods implements servants slaves chattels and all other things to me belonging which my wife **Jennet Holdbrook** died possessed..." (*admitted to record 9 Mar 1756*).

1777 Oct 28

Goochland County, VA

RANDOLPH HOLBROOK buried in Goochland Co VA; "Randolph Holbrooks, fun: Ser: Gen: 5.24 - in Gooch" (*per The Douglas Register*)

1778 Feb 15

Goochland County, VA

RAN. HOLBROOK buried in Goochland Co VA; "Ran: Holbrooks, fun; Goochland" (*per The Douglas Register*)

1784-1787

Wilkes County, NC

Holbrooks on Wilkes Co NC State Census

HOLBROOK Randolph: 1 WM 21-60; 6 WM under 16 and over 60; 4 Females

HARGIS William: 2 WM under 16 and over 60; 1 Female

HOLBROOK John Jr.: 1 WM 21-60; 1 WM under 16 and over 60; 1 Female

HOLBROOK Zachariah: 1 WM 21-60; 1 WM under 16 and over 60

1803 Nov 8

Bedford County, VA¹²

JOHN HOLBROOK (JR.), John Cooksey and John Fugit appraise estate of Henry Martin. Recorded 27 Feb 1804.

Bedford County Virginia Will Book 3 1794 – 1810

¹² Note that the [Jordan-Carter families](#) were also in Bedford Co VA in 1803. In 1837 Frances, A. Jordan, the daughter of Covey and Patsey Carter Jordan of Bedford County, would marry James F. Holbrook, son of Robert A. and Mary "Polly" McCoy and grandson of John and Molly Cooksey Holbrook.

