

Three John Gibbs

My Narrative – By Betty Gibbs

When I was growing up, I used to look at the Gibbs family tree that my Aunt Katherine maintained. My parents referred to it when the babies were born to find names for their kids. The chart listed Lt. John Gibbs as the prime settler who came to Jamestowne in 1619. He had a long pedigree going back into the 1200s. Very nice!

Then I met some other distant Gibbs relatives who were active genealogists for the family. Dorothy was convinced that Lt. John, a member of the first House of Burgesses, was our ancestor. Then I heard that one of the relatives had tried to join the Jamestowne Society through Lt. John and was denied. Why would that be? (I wasn't surprised since I knew about the other Gibbs relative who applied.) So I submitted an application and was also denied. Because of that application I did get more information about two John Gibbises. The more references I found the more confusing it got. A third John Gibbs was present in the Jamestowne colony, but it seems he was a servant.

So the 3 Johns are: Lt. John the Burgess, John the Immigrant, and John the Servant (probably indentured, but could have been an employee of the London Company).

The Society said that the Lt. John that I and others were sure was our ancestor was killed in the March 22, 1622 Indian massacre. Then I looked into another John that was in Jamestowne at the same time and discovered there was another third John also. If Lt. John died in the massacre, possibly one of the other Johns was the ancestor.

Some of the Jamestowne records survived and documentation about the John Gibbs' can be found. Also, some records have been lost so some of the connections are blurry. The difficulty has been sorting out which John Gibbs was where at what time and which one was killed and which one(s) survived. The records don't identify John as being from a particular place or plantation.

Lt. John was involved with Captain Ward and was called Lt. The Captain applied to be a part of the first House of Burgesses. Their petition and acceptance is documented in the transcript of the first meetings. Lt. John was given (or bought) land adjacent to the Ward plantation further up the James River from Jamestowne.

THE PROCEEDINGS of the FIRST ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA,
Held July 30th, 1619.

<https://archive.org/details/colonialrecordso00virg/page/n19/mode/2up?q=THE+PROCEEDINGS+of+the+FIRST+ASSEMBLY+OF+VIRGINIA>

The document can be downloaded in pdf format.

This book contains citations about Captain Ward and Lt John Gibbs and how they got accepted to the First House of Burgesses. Lt. John was very young, probably only 19 and the other Burgesses thought he was too young to hold such a position.

After the massacre in 1622, a list was made of the living and the dead. John Gibbes was listed as dead at Lt. Gibbs His Hundred. That is pretty clear. The list also shows John Gibbs alive at Jordan's Journey, a plantation further down the river and across the river from Jamestowne.

The Jamestowne Society provided me with an analysis of the Gibbs lineage that was done when someone else applied for membership with Lt. John as the ancestor. They said that the Lt. John that is claimed as the ancestor was the one who died in the 1622 massacre. Their analysis also says that there is no evidence that Francis was a child of Zacharias Gibbs, so that is a gap that also prevents verification for membership.

Another researcher talks about Lt. John Gibbs making several trips by ship to fish for the colony. He thinks that this person was "Lt." John and that he may have been on a fishing trip at the time of the Massacre. The List of living and dead lists John with the Gibbes spelling. John Gibbes is listed as being at Jordan's Journey at an earlier time. Was this John Gibbes the person who was actually at Lt. Gibbs Hundred and died in the massacre?

John The Immigrant (and also Partner to Christopher Stafford) is documented as living at Jordan's Journey beginning in 1621 and there is a record of John Gibbs on a ship, the Supply, that landed that year in Jamestowne. If Lt. John died in 1622, this John was probably the one who became a Justice in later years. His decisions are documented in Virginia Colonial court records. The court records only refer to "Mr. Gibbs", so there is an assumption that he was John and not another Gibbs. He was also apparently called a lieutenant at some point. Were there two Lt. John Gibbs? Is that a source of confusion?

John the Immigrant married and had a bunch of kids. One child Gregory was born at Jordan's Journey (Charles City), although the proof is not definitive. Births of John's other children were documented in the Christ Church records. Gregory's children are also listed in the Christ Church records. John The Immigrant died in 1659. This John might be my ancestor, but there is no definitive proof. The Jamestowne Society says there is no record of Gregory's birth.

My ancestry is fairly well proven to Gregory Gibbs who was said to be a son of John Gibbs. However, the Jamestowne Society states that Gregory's birth cannot be connected to any John Gibbs. One speculation is that he was an immigrant, but I don't think that is the case.

The third John, The Servant, also arrived in Jamestowne in 1621. He is shown as an employee of the London Company and worked for William Berry/Barry. When the London Company failed, he was sent (or went) to work for Governor Yearly. Not much else is known about him.

When I looked at genealogies on Family Search, several different people had connections to Lt. John and the other Johns. This was very confusing. Some of the information was consistent between the genealogies and some was different. It seems to me that there is a lot of mix-up between which John was which and who the parents were of the Johns that came to Jamestowne. I have found some original records that support what the Johns did, but am not sure where some of the information comes from.

The other confusing thing is that the wives and parents are different for the various Johns. Which one was House of Burgesses John and which was John the Immigrant? There is more to sort out there. The information is entered by multiple people and it seems like different people have different interpretations of the surviving records.

Some information sources:

The blog “The Lives of Serfs and City Folk” has an excellent summary of the Three Johns. It can be read at: <https://livesofserfs.wordpress.com/2013/09/28/the-tale-of-three-john-gibbs/> . She (Hanna) speculates that Gregory, son of a John, might have been an immigrant, although I think that is not likely based on his birth date and supposed place of birth. Information from several sources say he was born at Jordan’s Journey

On Ancestry, there is a page for Lt. John “Immigrant” Gibbs. This seems to combine the two John Gibbsses. Some data doesn’t hang together too well in the Ancestry list. My guess is that these timelines collect information from multiple researchers and the results can be conflicting.

**Hon. Lt. John "Immigrant" Gibbs,
Honorable, Gentleman Justice of Charles
City County, Lieutenant of the Militia at
Jordan’s Journey, Member of the 1st
Virginia House of Burgesses (1st
Legislative Meeting in America)**

1595–1659

BIRTH 1595 • Netherby, Dorset, England

DEATH 10 JAN 1659 • Charles City, Charles, Virginia, United States

The Virginia Gibbs Ancestor may not ever be proven. The records are lost and incomplete, so not everything can be definitely determined. Maybe there is more hidden away somewhere. My best guess is that my family is descended from John The Immigrant. This totally disrupts the whole family belief and tradition that we are descended from the House of Burgesses Lt. John.

=====

Which one, if any, is my ancestor

The purpose of this document is to gather what I can find on each person, keep track of the sources, and try to resolve what seems the most likely.

Lt. John is on Aunt Katherine’s chart as being our ancestor. The chart was originally made by Bohannon in late 1890s. I don’t have any references for anything on her chart. The more recent stuff is accurate. I have found some of the sources back to about 3rd great.

I think Dorothy combined some of the information from various sources and made it into one narrative. She was convinced we are descended from Lt. John. I had questions about her narrative. I haven’t found all her references yet. It seems to me she combined information from several sources.

When I look for John Gibbs in Family Search (for genealogies) between 1600 and 1700, 900 hits come up. Some of them don't make any sense. They are from different sources such as genealogies. There is a lot of conflicting information. I haven't traced the sources. Doing a records search wasn't much help.

What I think:

1. Lt John was an associate or partner of Capt Ward. Both are shown as being in the First House of Burgesses. This is documented in Colonial Records (source?) when Capt Ward applied to join the House of Burgesses.
2. Lt John had property up the James River from Berkley Plantation. Lt Gibbs Hundred. In the list of living and dead, John Gibbs is listed. There is no note about him being the Lt.
 - a. In my opinion, Lt John is probably the one killed. It is not likely another John would have been there at the time. Also, a John is not listed among the living at that location. The assumption is that this list is correct in the colonial record.
3. The John Gibbs that was living at Jordan's Journey is a different person and more likely to be the father of Gregory. He is called "The Immigrant". He was also active in governance of the colony and lived to about 1659.
 - a. This John has several versions of his birth. Dates, parents are different.
 - b. There are a lot of references in colonial records about Mr. Gibbs as a 'gentleman justice' after 1622 massacre. I assume that is like a justice of the peace. Mr. Gibbs does not have a first name in the citations.
 - c. His marriage date is shown in some references as 1625, but the first child (Gregory) was not born until 1635. Then there were a bunch of kids. So was his marriage later? It seems unlikely there would be a ten-year gap between the marriage and children, although it is possible.
 - d. Another reference shows the marriage date as 1622 which is the year of the massacre. That would be 13 years before the birth of Gregory.
 - e. Jamestowne Society does not seem to consider this John Gibbs eligible to be an ancestor. Lt. John is in the list, but the Society believes he is the one who died in the 1622 massacre.
 - f. At least one reference labels this John as Lt.
4. Gregory Gibbs is shown in a lot of places as the son of John Gibbs of Jordan's Journey (including Dorothy's) and born at Jordan's Journey. Jamestowne Society says that there is no provable reference that says he is the son of John Gibbs. The records are incomplete.
 - a. One person speculates that Gregory might have been an immigrant himself. I don't think I believe that.
 - b. Gregory is listed in the Christ Church records.
 - c. Later children of John were born in Charles City.
5. There is conflicting information about John arriving in Jamestown on ships.
6. There are various birth records for English John Gibbs. However, it is another thing to make the connection between these and the John Gibbs in Jamestowne. There are some ship records, but those records have only names, not who the parents are.

McCartney's "Virginia Immigrants & Adventurers, 1607 – 1635: A Biographical Dictionary" (Genealogical Publishing, 2007, Baltimore MD).

McCartney's Timeline:

- 1619 July – The Lieutenant serves as Burgess of Ward Plantation
- Fall – The Lieutenant moves to his plantation of Westover
- 1620 September – The Partner leaves England for Jamestown
- 1621 January – The Partner arrives at Berkeley Hundred aboard the Supply
- The Servant arrives aboard the Abigail
- 1622 March 22 – Powhatan attack on the plantations surrounding Jamestown
- March 22 – The Lieutenant is killed at Westover
- 1625 The Partner is listed as living at Jordan's Journey
- The Servant is in the Berry Household, south side of Elizabeth River
- 1627 The servant is transferred to Governor Yeardley's household
- 1632 The Partner writes to revive Berkeley Hundred plantation

The following references are from someone else's family trees, so without the direct references they should be taken with a skeptical eye. But they can give me some clues. Since they seemed to come to J with the London Company, maybe there is more info there.

John Gibbs Parents

#1

John Gibbes (Immigrant) and twin Frances, b 1602 in Netherbury. Father: Grigory Gybbes, Mother: Joan (Hadder). D. 1680 in Charles City Va. Bapt: 10 Feb 1602, Stratton Dorset. Ar VA: 1621, also 1635.

 Death of brother Lt. John on Jan 10, 1659 in Charles City VA. (is this in the church records?)

(JohnGibbsAncestry Person - Print.pdf – this is an Ancestry timeline.)

#2

Hon. Lt. John "Immigrant" Gibbs, Honorable, Gentleman Justice of Charles City County, Lieutenant of the militia at Jordan's Journey, member of the 1st Virginia House of Burgesses. Birth: 1595 in Netherby Dorset. Bapt 25 Dec 1595 in Thorncombe, Dorset (approx 5 mi from Netherbury). Death: 10 Jan 1659 in Charles City. Parents: Walter Gybbes, Helen Cary. Spouse MaryLou Jo Gregory (Gibbs). Ar Virginia 1621. This one shows children born in 1625, then Gregory in 1635.

(LtJohnTimelineonAncestry.pdf – this is an Ancestry timeline. Different tree. 155447965 This shows 2 Johns died on the same day. That could not be correct.)

From Virtual Jamestowne

http://www.virtualjamestowne.org/Muster/search.muster.cgi?start_page=0&search_type=basic&databse=muster_1624&last=Gibbs&first=John&muster=&age-op=&age1=&age2=&month=&year=&date=

Muster Search Results

Name	Muster Date	Status	Location	Notes	Corporation	Age	Ship	Date of Arrival	Muster
John Gibbs	1619		Safford	21 January 1624/5	his p[ar]tner		Jordans Journey	Charles Cittie	Supply

This shows in the Muster Record: It doesn't show names of any people.

Muster Record Building Records

Name: Christopher Safford

Muster: Safford Christopher

Status: head

Location: Jordans Journey

Corporation: Charles Cittie

Age:

Ship: Treasurer

Date of Arrival: 1613

Notes: Boats: 0

Canoes: 0

House: 1

Storehouse: 0

Tobacco House: 0

Windmill: 0

Palisade: 0

Fort: 0

Notes:

Lt. John – the Burgess

From Family Search

Birth – Christening: 27 Mar 1600. At Bath Abbey Cemetery, Bath, Somerset England. [*Why at a cemetery?*]

Parents – George Gibbs.

Comment: I am not sure this is Lt. John who might have been from Dorset. Maybe it is John the Immigrant?

Sources

On Family Search:

C:\Genealogy\0Research\JamestowneSociety\09LtJohn\LtJohnChristening1600.jpg

This might be Lt. John.

John Gibbs(es) – the Immigrant at Jordans Journey

From Ancestry

Birth – 1602. He had a twin sister Frances. In Netherby (Netherbury) Dorset, England.

Baptised 10 Feb 1602 in Stratton, Dorset, England.

Parents – Grigory Gybbes (27) and Joan Hadder (22)

Died 1680 in Charles City Va.

Arrived in Virginia in 1621 (age 19). Also in 1635 (age 33). [Did he make a trip to England to get married?]

Child – Gregory. B. 1635 at Jordan’s Journey, Charles City, Virginia. D 1696

Also, Ancestry shows a child Elizabeth, b 1635 in Charles City. Maybe a twin?

Other children born up until 1645.

Ancestry shows: This is odd. Where did this come from?

Death of Brother

His brother Lt John died on January 10, 1659, in Charles City, Virginia, when John was 57 years old.



Lt John Gibbs
1595-1659

10 Jan 1659 • Charles City, Charles, Virginia, United States

Sources

I believe this source is this person – the Immigrant

JohnGibbsAncestry Person - Print.pdf

C:\Genealogy\0Research\JamestowneSociety\09LtJohn

It is from Ancestry. <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/19727516/person/883>

This is from someone’s family tree.

John Gibbs – the Indentured servant

Sources

Gregory - Child of a John, or an immigrant?

Sources with information about more than one John Gibbs

3J ohns

<https://livesofserfs.wordpress.com/2013/09/28/the-tale-of-three-john-gibbs/comment-page-1/?unapproved=98&moderation-hash=e0fa8dd1f11263b24%E2%80%A6>

The Tale of Three John Gibbs

The Tale of Three John Gibbs _ The Lives of Serfs and City Folk.pdf

C:\Genealogy\0Research\JamestowneSociety\09LtJohn

This is the discussion about the three and what this person knows.

Other

Research from Jamestowne Society from an Orange County genealogist – Barbara Vines Little. This one was in response to someone who claimed Lt John as an ancestor – as more than one person has done. This was sent to me by the person at the JSoc.

scangibbsResearchFromJS.pdf

C:\Genealogy\0Research\JamestowneSociety\09LtJohn

Ms. Little seems to be a thorough researcher and familiar with the county records in Orange, Culpeper, and Madison Counties. I accept what she documents until I find otherwise.

Interesting information:

<https://www.jamestowne.org/chronology-1606-1700.html>

Chronology of the Jamestowne Period 1606 - 1700

Sources for events listed below are Mary Stanard's "Virginia First Century," William Abbot's "A Virginia Chronology 1585-1783," and Warren Billings' "A Little Parliament"