

Timothy Ives of Virginia Life, Origins, and Family A Brief Survey of Sources

By Ken Ives (kenives99@gmail.com), 3/8/2013

In this paper we will examine what is known of Timothy Ives, who immigrated to the Virginia colony in the early 1600's. In these days of internet genealogy, much about Timothy can be found with a quick Google search. Some of it is factual; some is quite dubious. We will try to separate what is actually known, based on documentary evidence, and what reasonable inferences can be made from the evidence. In particular, we will examine the following questions:

1. When did Timothy settle in Virginia?
2. Who was his wife?
3. When and where was Timothy born, and who were his parents?
4. Where did he settle?
5. Who were his children?
6. When did he die?

Before beginning, let me state one obvious caveat. Everything in this paper is based on my research into the Timothy Ives line, and when I speak here of a "known" source, it means "known, to me". I have spent some time researching Timothy and his line, and have the great good fortune to have ready access to many of the most important original sources. I make no claim, however, to have found every document pertaining to Timothy. In fact, I fervently hope there are still documents to be found. As all authors of historical work will tell you, any mistakes and omissions herein are entirely mine. I encourage any reader who has evidence from primary sources that either clarifies, contradicts, or amplifies anything in this paper to contact me. I want to know.

A bit of introduction.

Genealogist Arthur Coon Ives says of Timothy:

Came to America in 1638, taking up a grant of land of 100 acres at Deep Creek, near Portsmouth, VA. It is probable that he was a brother to Robert and John IVES of Accomack Co. VA. And there are some interesting associations that make it possible that he was brother of William IVES of New Haven, CT. (Consider: the land grant to Timothy was recorded in New York State; the military service record of William was recorded in Virginia.) (Genealogy of the Ives Family, pp. 171-173)

ACI further claims (p. 171) that "John and Robert Ives settled in Accomac County the same year that Timothy made his appearance in Princess Anne County." In fact, a fairly large number of persons named Ives are listed as importees to the Virginia Colony in early colonial land grants. The following is a list of Ives importees and the date of the grant in which they are named (all found in *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, v. 1 & 2). The date of the grant is not necessarily the same as, nor even necessarily near in time to the date the importee arrived in Virginia.

Edward Ives - 1664

Johanna Ives - 1663

Timothy Ives & Margaret, his wife - c. 1655 (the grant is undated, but is found among others dated in 1655 and 1656).

Robert Ives - 1643 (possibly the Robert mentioned by ACI, above)

William Ives - 1662

John Ives - 1688

John Ives - 1689

Sarah Ives - 1673/4

Thomas Ives - 1690

Timothy Ives - 1683

William Ives - 1690

It is known that some people made multiple passages across the Atlantic and, if another person paid their return passage to Virginia, these people's names can appear twice. Thus, the above list may include duplications. In fact, though quite unlikely, some of the later importees could conceivably have been descendants of Timothy and Margaret.

Genealogist Mrs. John Bennett Boddie offers the following summary of Timothy and his first two generations of descendants: "JOHN IVES, who married Sarah Etheridge, daughter of Edward Etheridge, seems to have been the son of an older John Ives, who was deeded 150 acres of land by John Digby, Aug 26, 1675.... In 1702 John Ives made a deed of gift to his son Timothy Ives Jr (Bk 6, p 243) and was still living Oct 20, 1715, when as John Ives, Sr he deeded William Ives (perhaps another son) 283 acres (Bk 9, p 441). John Ives, Sr was almost certainly a son of Timothy Ives, who with his wife Margaret were importees of John Marshall in a grant to the latter of 100 acres in Lower Norfolk County ca 1655-6. Another son of Timothy Ives Sr was Timothy Ives Jr., whose wife was left 5 pounds in the will of Joseph Hurley, dated Jan 15, 1676/7 and probated in Norfolk County April 17, 1677. Timothy Ives, (the Jr of 1677), John Ives Sr and his son Timothy Ives Jr., were all landowners in Norfolk County in the Quitrent Rolls of 1704" (Historical Southern Families, v. XIV, p. 41).

When did Timothy come to America?

Exactly when Timothy and his wife, Margaret, arrived in the Virginia colony remains an unsettled question. Their arrival date is almost always given as 1638. One can find this date in many a genealogy on the internet, though virtually always without attribution. Though uncited, the date is surely based on ACI's genealogy, quoted above. While many genealogists accept this date without question, some few doubt the veracity of the 1638 date, preferring a date nearer 1655, based on the John Marshall grant cited by Boddie, above. This latter date, however, is clearly too late, since Timothy Ives' name appears in Lower Norfolk County court minutes in 1642, 1649, and 1650/1. (Lower Norfolk County Court Minute Books 1 and 2).

Unfortunately, there is no known documentation for the 1638 date, other than ACI. Equally unfortunately, ACI famously did not cite his sources. He probably based the date on a source, but he didn't cite it, and we can no longer be certain what the source may have been. He implies that he found Timothy's name on a land grant filed in New York State, but even that isn't unambiguously clear. If true, how a 1638 land grant in the British colony of Virginia came to be filed in New York - until 1664 a Dutch colony - must rank as one of genealogy's pre-eminent mysteries.

The earliest known (to this author) documentary evidence of Timothy's presence in the New World is the 1642 court record mentioned above. This is only four years after ACI's 1638 date, so ACI can't have been far from the mark. Nonetheless, what can be said for certain is that Timothy arrived in the Virginia colony in or before 1642. 1638, as claimed by ACI, is realistically possible, but no documentary evidence to support this claim is known.

Timothy and Margaret, though married, had no recorded children when they arrived in the New World, and their children were almost certainly all born in Virginia after their arrival. We have an estimate of the birth date for their son, John, of about 1650, based on his age ("...aged 39 or thereabouts...") given in a 1689 document. If John was indeed born in Virginia, then Timothy and Margaret must have arrived prior to 1650, as is in fact established by the early court records mentioned above. They were certainly here prior to 1668, when "Tymothy Ives" is mentioned in a land patent dated 4/20/1668 for Richard Church, for land in Lower Norfolk County "...on the East side of Billingsgate Creek...500 acres purchased of Tymothy Ives..." (Cavaliers and Pioneers, Nell Marion Nugent, v. 2, p. 40, who cites Patent Book 6, p. 148). In 1671 Timothy was deeded a parcel of land in Lower Norfolk County, on the South Branch of the Elizabeth River (Cavaliers and Pioneers, v. 2, p. 173). Taken together, the evidence suggests that Timothy arrived in the Virginia Colony sometime between the late 1630's and no later than 1642.

Timothy's wife.

We have even less evidence for question #2, the identity of Timothy's wife. Mention of Timothy's wife has been found only twice in colonial Virginia records. The first and most definitive reference is the John Marshall land grant cited by Boddie, above. This source gives us her first name - Margaret. The source also makes clear that Timothy and Margaret were married prior to their arrival in the Virginia colony. The only other source known to this author is a reference to "Timothy Ives and his wife" in the Lower Norfolk County court minutes for January 15, 1650/1. This 1650/1 wife was probably Margaret, but we don't actually even know that for certain.

Where did Timothy settle?

If we don't know for sure when Timothy arrived in the Virginia Colony, at least we can pinpoint with reasonable accuracy where he settled. Deep Creek, where ACI says he settled, is a major tributary of the Elizabeth River. Deep Creek enters the South Branch of the Elizabeth River from the West at the present-day bridge carrying I-64 over the South Branch. A 1675 land patent (Cavaliers and Pioneers, v.2, p. 173) describes 200 acres "on the West side of the South Branch of the Elizabeth River" that was "assigned to Timothy Ives, Senr" in 1671. In 1713 and again in 1724, John and Fenford Ferree sold property on Deep Creek to Timothy Ives (either the son or grandson of the original Timothy). The Ferree sales are confirmed in Norfolk County deed books. These and other early grants and deeds clearly place Timothy Ives and his early descendants on the West bank of the South Branch of the Elizabeth River, near its confluence with Deep Creek, within the geographic boundaries of the present-day city of Chesapeake, VA. It is likely that part of present-day Interstate Highway 64 is built on land once owned by Timothy Ives.

Timothy's birth, death, and parentage.

Timothy's birth date, like his arrival date in Virginia, is unsettled - and for much the same reason. A date c. 1610 is commonly seen, but without attribution. The source of this date is not known for certain, but may be based on the 1638 grant cited by ACI. If Timothy was granted land with his wife in that year, it is reasonable to assume that Timothy was of legal age, and that he and his wife were relatively newly married (they arrived in Virginia married, but without children). If Timothy and Margaret were in their early 20's in 1638, then birth dates for both would have been in the vicinity of 1610-15. We can also establish a rough upper boundary on Timothy's birth date based on the birth date of his son, John Ives. John was born about 1650, as reasoned above. Timothy would probably have been at least in his early 20's when his son was born, and thus was probably born no later than the late 1620's. Taken together, these arguments lead us only to conclude that Timothy was most likely born sometime between roughly 1610 and perhaps 1628. He was still living in late 1682, when he witnessed a neighbor's will, and had probably died by 4/1703, when his son deeded property as "Tymothy Ives Sr."

On the question of Timothy's parents, there is virtually no evidence, though this hasn't stopped some family historians from making claims. Some genealogies say his father's name was John Ives, but none I have seen presents any supporting evidence. My conclusion is that we simply don't know.

Likewise, little definitive can be said of his birthplace. Some internet genealogies assert Ipswich, in Suffolk, England, but as with so much else in such documents no evidence is presented. The origin of this claim is unclear. The John Marshall land grant, mentioned several times previously, does allow us to say definitively that he came to Virginia from England, and it requires only a modest leap of faith to suppose he was born there, but beyond that we cannot say.

One tantalizing possibility is presented by the will of one Thomas Ives, of Ipswich, Suffolk, published by Henry Fitz-Gilbert in the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register*, v. 63, and quoted in part below, with the key sentence highlighted. It is unclear, but possible, that this will is the origin of the claim that Timothy was from Ipswich, Suffolk.

The Will of Thomas Ives of Ipswich in the County of Suffolk...21 Jan. 1662. Body to be buried in the chancel of St. Lawrence Church in Ipswich, near the body of my father... To three sisters, Elizabeth, the wife of John Sympson, Clerke, Deborah, wife of James Horningold, and Beatrix, wife of Thomas Clarke, £20 apiece, they severally paying unto my executor such sums of money as are due from them to me as executor of Thomas Ives, my late father. To niece Rose Comyn £10. To niece Elizabeth Sympson £20 at the age of nineteen years. To [name *omitted*] Newman, widow, and Elizabeth her daughter, Margaret the wife of [name *omitted*] Grove, James Salmon, and Jane Ives, my cousins, 40s. each. To loving brother-in-law James Horningold £5. To Finett Partrich, my maidservant, £5. **To John Ives, my brother, now at Virginia or elsewhere. in the parts beyond the Seas, if he shall be living at the time of my decease and shall afterwards return into England, annuity of £12 for life.** Executors shall lay out £50 for a gravestone to be laid over the body of my deceased father. Brother-in-law Thomas Clarke sole executor. To Thomas Clarke and Beatrix his wife, my sister...

Unfortunately, the connection, if any, between this will and Timothy is somewhere between tenuous and invisible. We can guess (guess - not know, nor even reasonably infer) that the John Ives mentioned in this will "...now at Virginia or elsewhere..." might be the John Ives whom ACI mentions as having settled in Accomac County, Virginia. Even that is a big assumption, since John is such a common name. The name John Ives appears twice in the list of importees to the Virginia colony, as presented at the beginning of this article, and that list should in no way be considered a complete list of

Ives who crossed the Atlantic to Virginia. The two could be the same man, but are not necessarily so. But if the John Ives mentioned in the Thomas Ives will is the same John who settled in Accomac County, and if John and Timothy were brothers, as speculated by ACI, then the will would represent a major breakthrough. It would establish not only that Timothy was from Ipswich, Suffolk, but that he was the son of Thomas Ives of Ipswich, and the grandson of yet another Thomas Ives. If, and if. At this point, though interesting, the will establishes nothing concerning Timothy's origins. In fact, there are good reasons to believe it doesn't. Among the most obvious: if Timothy was the brother of the John Ives mentioned in the will, why was Timothy himself not mentioned, when John and three sisters all received bequests? On the other hand, it would explain why the name John was so prolific among the early generations of Timothy's descendents.

Children of Timothy (and Margaret?)

Finally, let us review Timothy's children (who are assumed here, for simplicity, to be children of Margaret). The evidence here is extremely fragmentary, and surely incomplete. The following children are either known or reasonably inferred:

1. A son, also named Timothy. His name and relationship are established by a 1675 land patent issued to "...Timothy Ives, Jr.," for 270 acres in Lower Norfolk County, "on the West side of the South Branch of the Elizabeth River, beginning near the mouth of Guillam's Run to a marsh against old Butts (or Britt's) Creek..." 200 acres of this parcel was described as having been "...assigned to Timothy Ives, Senr." on 2/15/1671, "who assigned to the above named, his son..." (Cavaliers and Pioneers, v. 2, p. 173). Timothy and his wife appear in a few other Norfolk County land records as well. The last known mention of this Timothy's name is in 1704, when he was listed as a landowner in a Norfolk County quitrent roll. Timothy's birth date is frequently given as 1640 in unverified on-line sources, but no source is ever shown for this date and, while not unreasonable, the origin of and evidence for this supposition are not known.
2. A son named John. He was "aged 39 or thereabouts" in 1689, when he signed a deposition related to the will of John Bustian (Norfolk County Will Book 5, p. 162). From this, we can calculate an approximate birth year of 1650. John first appears in Norfolk County records in 1675, when he was deeded land as described by Boddie, above. The last record of his name that has been discovered is March 20, 1716, when he witnessed a deed made by another individual (Norfolk County Deed Book #9, pp. 581-582). We should also note that, unlike his brother, Timothy, there is no actual documentation of John's parentage. That he was a son of Timothy and Margaret is reasonably inferred based on circumstances of place and time. The circumstantial evidence is strong, but direct evidence is lacking.
3. (Probably) a third son named William. Evidence of this individual is almost entirely lacking. In fact, the only known evidence for his existence is the 1687 will of John Bustian, which was witnessed by William Ives and his presumed brother, John Ives (Norfolk County Will Book #5, p. 68). We can also infer a bit of support for William's relationship from the fact that John gave the name William to one of his sons - possibly naming the son for his uncle. Unfortunately, but for the Bustian will, no other evidence of William's life has been discovered. If he married and had children, these facts are lost to us - or at least yet to be discovered. ACI lists William as a son of the original Timothy, and indicates he "may have rem. NC." What led him to this

supposition he sadly did not say. There are certainly many Ives families found in North Carolina. Almost certainly, the majority of them descended in some way from Timothy's line, but for only a few have the connections been firmly established. Perhaps these unconnected lines descend from William. Perhaps not.

It is not unreasonable to suspect that Timothy and Margaret might have had other children beyond the three named above. If Timothy (Jr) was indeed born about 1640 (and again, no proof of this often-stated non-fact is known), then there were some 10 years between Timothy's birth and his brother, John. Even if William was born between Timothy (Jr) and John, there is still plenty of "room" other children. But again, this is pure speculation. The reality is, we just don't know.

End Notes

Some of Timothy's descendants remained in Norfolk County (present-day cities of Norfolk, Chesapeake, and Portsmouth), where their names appear in local telephone books to this day. Many others clearly moved on. From extent records we can infer that one major migration pathway was up the South Branch ("upstream" here being South), then eastward overland to the headwaters of the North Landing River, thence down river (i.e., South). One branch settled on Blackwater Creek, which enters the North Landing River from the West, and were early residents of the community of Blackwater in southern Princess Anne County (present-day City of Virginia Beach). Others continued further downstream to Currituck County, NC, and on to points South and West via Currituck, Albemarle, and Pamlico Sounds and their tributary rivers. One branch of the family migrated down the sounds to settle on the Neuse River, in Craven County, NC. Another appears eventually to have traveled up the Roanoke River, settling for a time in Halifax County, NC.

As the American population moved west, we can expect that Timothy's descendants also moved west. Only a few miles of westward travel would have taken them to Nansemond County (present-day City of Suffolk), which is one of Virginia's "burned record counties." Public records of early Nansemond County were lost to several courthouse fires from the colonial through the Confederate periods, and little remains. If descendants of Timothy passed through Nansemond County, the records are probably forever lost.

Wherever they went, tracing Timothy's descendants is a slow and frustrating process. Even the Norfolk County records are fragmentary, and some records either were not kept or no longer exist. In many cases, individuals can be identified from records, but their relationships are not apparent. Much remains to be done.