

Lea, JAMES

4501 Roland, Apt. A  
Dallas, Texas 75219  
February 9, 1979

Dear Dr. Casey,

I am a descendant of James Lea of Caswell Co., N.C. (d. 1702) through his daughter Isabella, who married John Graves of Caswell Co., N.C. Also I am descended from William Lea, d. 1770 in Amelia Co., Va., through his daughter Ann Lea, who married Richard Bennett.

In 1977 I published a book on my Graves line, with a short sketch on James Lea and William Lea. I was fortunate to have the benefits of the research of several genealogists on my Graves line; and I believe it was documented as well as can be done in view of the loss of King and Queen County records of Virginia. I am now doing some further study on my LEA and WILLIAMS lines. Again, there is the problem of destruction of Virginia records, particularly the King and Queen County ones.

Your impressive presentation of accumulated data on the Leas in your History of Amite County has, no doubt, made many people happy; and I am one of those grateful for your efforts. I have pored over this for hours as well as that of other researchers, namely - Miss Oker, Mrs. Dixon, Mrs. Harrelson, and Mr. Archibald Bennett ("Finding Your Forefathers in America"), and Mr. John McElroy. I have Crozier's Spotsylvania County Records. In 1960 and again in 1961 I went to North Carolina, where I acquired copies of original wills, etc. in the Archives at Raleigh and other data in Yanceyville, Caswell Co.

As I am sure you know, there are varying views and opinions as to the several William and James Leas.

Last year I ordered from the Virginia Archives copies of transfer of property from Thomas Crethers in Spotsylvania Co., Va. to William Lea, minor son of John Lea, in which he is mentioned as the heir of John Lea and from which his age can be determined as 20 years.

To refresh your memory, I quote from the Spotsylvania County Records, edited by William Armstrong Crozier, 1965.

Page 112:

"April 4, 1730. John White of St. John Par., King Wm. Co., Gent., to Thomas Crethers of St. Geo. Par. Spts. Co., planter, 100 a. in St. Geo. Par., Spts. Co. L<sup>y</sup> curr. Richd. Gregory, Jos. x Roberts, Thos. White. April 7, 1730. Mary, wife of John White acknowledged her dower, etc."

and

4501 Roland, Apt. A  
Dallas, Texas 75219  
February 7, 1979

Dear Dr. Casey,

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and



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"Oct. 5, 1731, Thomas x Crethers of Spts. Co. to William Lea of same County and Robert Baylor of King and Queen Co., Gent., L12 by Lea, L30 by Baylor, 100 a. in St. Geo. Par., Spts. Co., whereon sd. Crethers now lives and bought by Crethers of John White of King William, as per deed April 4, 1730. Z. Lewis, Zach. Taylor, Octr. 5, 1731. (Zach. Taylor, guardian to sd. Wm. Lea, a minor)"

This seems to be the same 100 a. of land referred to in Crozier's Page 191."

"Sept. 1, 1752. William Lea of Spts. Co. and Frances, his wife, to Thomas White of the same county. L55 curr., 100 a. whereon sd. Lea lives and part of a pat. belonging to sd. Thomas White in Spts. Co. Chilton White, Millisent x White. Sepr. 1, 1752."

NOW, THIS IS MY PUZZLEMENT:

FULLY  
DOCUMENTED

WILLIAM LEA, minor son of John Lea of King & Queen Co., Va., (proved) - and Court Record shows married to a Frances (maiden name not given) Sept. 1, 1752. Born 1711.

DR.-CASEY

WILLIAM LEA, son of John Leigh of King & Queen Co., b. 1711, (same parents as Fully Documented William Lea above) Shown in History of Amite Co., as being b. 1711 - d. 1763 at Leasburg, N.C., m. Mary Barnett d. 1784.

Question: How could William Lea (fully documented) have son Barnett Lea [obviously mother's surname] b. 1731 as shown in your Amite Co. history, as he was married to a Frances in 1752 and Mary Barnett Lea was still living and having children by William Lea from 1732 - 1743. He died in 1763.

(John Leigh)

ARCHIBALD  
BENNETT

WILLIAM LEA, son of John Lea of King & Queen Co. (same as William Lea, Fully Documented as to parents). Died in Amelia Co., Va. 1770, wife Rachael still living.

QUESTION: How could William Lea (fully documented) have wife Rachael at his death in 1770 when William Lea with wife Rachael was married to her in Oct. 2, 1744 [Croz. 166].

AN  
UNIDENTIFIED  
WILLIAM LEA

There was a William Lea who received a child's full share of the Estate of Thomas Graves of Spts. Co., Va., (formerly of K&Q Co.) who died in Spts. Co., Va. and will probated June 6, 1768.

I have copy of the will of this Thomas Graves and Settlement of his estate, but it does not give any identification as to William Lea. In most instances, payment from Est. of Thomas Graves was made to a child of the deceased child of Thomas Graves. Not so, in the case of William Lea. (or not so stated). Full payment made in Oct. 1792.

Mrs. P. W. Hiden, who said she spent 12 years in research on the Graves family (her mother was a Graves) and who published her findings in Tyler's Quarterly in 1939 on THE GRAVES FAMILY OF SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY said she had made two trips to Caswell Co., N. C. to try to identify the Wm. Lea mentioned in will (or settlement of estate rather) of Thomas Graves - she had no success.

QUESTION: The Leas and the Graves were closely associated in Spotsylvania Co. as Wm. Lea and John Graves appear as witnesses to court documents. The Leas and the Graves went to Caswell Co., N. C. at about the same time. Also James Lea and John Graves jointly witness court documents. (Spts. Co.) Afterwards, in Caswell Co., N. C. - they inter-married so much, one of my distant cousins there said it was a wonder we weren't all idiots, and Graves married Graves.

Do you think there is a possibility that this unidentified William Lea could be William Lea, son of John Lea (Leigh), b. 1711 and married Frances Graves : I have found nothing <sup>to</sup> give the name of the child of Thomas Graves who married William Lea.

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I, like several of the other researchers I mentioned on page 1, do not believe our James Lea m. Anne Herndon, was the one who made claim to the 100 a. in King & Queen Co. (or his part of it) which belonged to (supposedly his father) William Lea. (Power of Attorney, dated March, 1784, Caswell Co. Deed Bk. B, p. 36.) I think that James Lea, as others have considered most likely, was the son of William Lea and Mary Barnett and his name was James Lea.

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I do hope that since you published the History of Amite Co., Vol. III, you have done further research that may enlighten me. If I have anything that would be of interest to you (though I am sure you have much more than I have ever heard of), please call on me. The Graves and the Leas are noted for their longevity.

Last mentioned but not least in importance to me are the abstracts from Caswell County records of Mrs. Katharine Kendall, Raleigh, N. C., to

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whom I am sending a copy of this letter. She is close to the original records in North Carolina and Virginia, for that matter, and is far more knowledgeable than I as to the Leas in North Carolina. I just hope she will uncover something that has heretofore been overlooked.

My guess, at this time, is that your James Lea, and mine, who died 1792, wife Anne Herndon, is the brother of William Lea of Spots. Co., Va., minor son of John Lea (Leigh) who d. 1729, and whose wife m. Thomas Crethers. The dates would be about right.

Dr. Casey, I would be so pleased to hear from you regardless of how you feel about my theorizing. What have you found, if anything, as to where the Leas lived in England? Do you know of anyone who has tried to trace our Leas back to England? And if you don't have the deed transferring the 100 a. in Spts. Co. to William Lea, let me know and I will send you a copy of it.

Most sincerely,

Louise Graves (Miss)

Mr. Albert E. Casey  
2011 Southwood Road  
Vestavia (Birmingham), Alabama 35216