



# James Crumley (abt. 1712 - abt. 1764)



## James Crumley

Born **about 1712** in **Yorkshire, England**

Son of [John Crumley](#) and [Mary \(Ritche\) Crumley](#)

ANCESTORS

[sibling(s) unknown]

Husband of **[Catherine \(Bowen\) Crumley](#)** — married about 1732 in Chester, Pennsylvania

Father of [John Crumley](#), [William Crumley](#) and [Mary \(Crumley\) Doster](#)  DESCENDANTS

Died **about Aug 1764** at about age 52 in **Frederick, Virginia colony**

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PROBLEMS/QUESTIONS

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## Biography

### Origins



James was a Friend (Quaker)

We don't know where James Crumley was born, but he was born in or before 1711. Some early accounts tell us that James was born in County Monaghan, Ireland and some say Yorkshire, England.

The oldest reference found asserting that James Crumley "was born in Yorkshire, England" was the 1957 volume of Colonial and Revolutionary Lineages of America in which no supporting documentation was presented.

We also know, from James' will in 1757, that he has a brother Thomas and a sister, Joan, but he doesn't say if they live in the US or they are still in the old country, wherever that was. If they are in this country, in particular, Thomas Crumley who carries the same surname, where is he??? Or was he perhaps disabled and that's why James was leaving him money?

## DNA Connections

It may be possible to confirm family relationships with James by comparing test results with other carriers of [his Y-chromosome](#) or [his mother's mitochondrial DNA](#). However, there are no known yDNA or mtDNA test-takers in his direct paternal or maternal line. It is likely that these autosomal DNA test-takers will share [some percentage](#) of DNA with James:

~0.39% [Addison Griffith](#) : [23andMe](#) + [Family Tree DNA](#) Family Finder

~0.39% [Anonymous Coker](#) : [23andMe](#) + [Family Tree DNA](#) Family Finder, GEDmatch [T177666](#)  [\[compare\]](#), FTDNA kit #70525

~0.39% [Gary Cameron](#) : [23andMe](#)

~0.39% [Ralph Hammer](#) : [23andMe](#) + [Family Tree DNA](#) Family Finder, GEDmatch [TV8124690](#)  [\[compare\]](#), FTDNA kit #B285574

~0.39% [John Witz](#) : [23andMe](#) + [AncestryDNA](#)

~0.39% [Anne Pagenhart](#) : [23andMe](#)

~0.39% [Alice Marie \(Baker\) Griffin](#) : [23andMe](#), GEDmatch [DP9071324](#)  [\[compare\]](#)

~0.39% [Lowell Trotter](#) : [23andMe](#) + [AncestryDNA](#), GEDmatch [A408542](#)  [\[compare\]](#), Ancestry member trotterlowell

~0.39% [David Roberds](#) : [AncestryDNA](#), GEDmatch [A166357](#)  [\[compare\]](#), Ancestry member davidroberds

~0.39% [Allen Money](#) : [AncestryDNA](#), GEDmatch [A103183](#)  [\[compare\]](#), Ancestry member amoney56

A cursory search in the early Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania records, so far, has turned up nothing about Thomas.

James is first found in the US in 1732 on a tax list in East Nottingham, Chester County, Pennsylvania with a tax amount of 1 shilling. Only 6 other people had a tax this low, so he, in essence, was one of the 6 poorest people in the township. The only people poorer were those with nothing at all. By 1735, James was taxed at 2 pence, 6 shillings, which was about average, so he was moving up in the world.

We know that James was a member of the Quaker church after he moved to Frederick County, VA. East Nottingham in Chester County supported the largest Quaker Meeting House south of Philadelphia, however the Crumley surname is not mentioned in the existent records. It is doubtful that he was born here as there is no record of his parents or birth.

James clearly was not part of the first wave of migration into this area. He followed in the 1730s and remained on the Chester County tax list until 1740, after which he disappeared.

## Notes on James' wife Catherine

James wife is widely reported to be Catherine Gilkey, however there is no real proof. In Paul Morton's book, "The Crumley Family," he reports that James married a Scottish lass named Catherine Gilkey in 1732 in Chester County. He also reports that James arrived in Chester County in 1731 from Yorkshire, England, but he provides no documentation for either piece of information.

If James had married a Presbyterian, he would have been dismissed from the Quaker Church, so either she became Quaker or he did not marry a Presbyterian – or he wasn't yet a Quaker.

Furthermore, we first find James in association with the Gilkey name in Frederick County, not in Chester County. The Gilkey name does not appear in the Nottingham book, but of course it would not if they were Presbyterians. I have not researched the Chester County records to see if the Gilkey surname appears in those records, but that task needs to be added to the 'to do' list.

Paul Nichols reports in his document, The Crumley Family, that "very old family records from Richard Griffith, a prominent Frederick County genealogist, indicate that the Gilkeys may have been the parents of his wife Catherine, but no marriage documentation has ever been found."

At the Handley Library and Archives in Winchester, VA, among the papers of Richard Griffin, a local genealogist from the 1930's is the following dating from 1872:

"NOTES ON MY FAMILY"


Written by Aaron H. Griffith, 1872

*My grandfather John Griffith 2nd married Mary Faulkner daughter of Jesse Faulkner and Mary his wife. Mary Faulkner was the daughter of James Cromley and his wife Catherine.*


James Cromley lived on Apple Pie Ridge on land he bought from his father-in-law Davie Gilkie. This land was originally granted by the King to our kinsmen James Wright and John Litler in 1734 who sold it to John Cheadle the eminent Friend who lived in eastern Virginia. John Cheadle sold it to David Gilkie who as I have said sold it to his son-in-law James Cromley, who in turn, willed it to his son John Cromley. John Cromley sold it to his brother-in-law Jesse Faulkner who sold it in 1778 to his son-in-law John Griffith. There my father was born, and there I was born on the 11th of the 3rd Mo. 1802.


Of all the evidence, this seems to be the most reliable, because he was born only 40 years after James Crumley died, and only a couple years after his wife Catherine died. His parents and family would have known this family first hand. However, some researchers offer notes of caution about Richard Griffin's work, stating that it contains

~0.39% [Jim Vincent](#)  : [AncestryDNA](#), GEDmatch [A359566](#) [\[compare\]](#), Ancestry member jim1936


~0.39% [Sharon \(Williamson\) Sahilu](#)  : [AncestryDNA](#), GEDmatch [HC6158153](#) [\[compare\]](#), Ancestry member sarima91


~0.39% [Berry \(Allen\) Hill](#)  : [AncestryDNA](#), Ancestry member LynneHill39 + [Family Tree DNA](#) Family Finder


~0.39% [Jan \(Allen\) Thomas](#)  : [AncestryDNA](#), Ancestry member JA

~0.39% [Jessica West](#)  : [AncestryDNA](#), Ancestry member pagenhartwest

~0.39% [Larry Parton](#)  : [AncestryDNA](#)

~0.39% [Roberta Estes](#)  : [Family Tree DNA](#) Family Finder, GEDmatch [T524738](#) [\[compare\]](#), FTDNA kit #6656

~0.39% [Kathy \(Postell\) Postelle Rixon](#)  : [Family Tree DNA](#) Family Finder, GEDmatch [PV1991974](#) [\[compare\]](#), yourDNAportal KAT5ce28662, FTDNA kit #IN92163 + [Living DNA](#), GEDmatch [PV1991974](#) [\[compare\]](#)

~0.39% [Larry Baker](#)  : [Family Tree DNA](#) Family Finder, GEDmatch [BP6511520](#) [\[compare\]](#), FTDNA kit #112019

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known errors. However, Aaron's letter is original.

Often a family tiff suffices to prove a relationship, but sometimes, they just add to the mystery. After David Gilkey's death, his widow, Barbara, married James Hagen.

In 1758, it seems that James Crumley had a bit of a meltdown in court and it may have had to do with Barbara Gilkey Hagen. In the court records, the first record, before a proceeding with Barbara Hagen having to do with her bond (probably in conjunction with an estate), states that it was ordered "that the sheriff take James Crumley into custody for behaving indecently before the court." In a 1936 letter, J. W. Baker, another Frederick County genealogist interpreted this behavior as evidence of some kind of family row.

However, James could have been in court to testify for Barbara, or it may have been circumstantial. I do have to wonder what would provoke a Quaker into doing something indecent before the court. Do you think maybe he swore?

If Catherine was the daughter of David and Barbara Gilkey, why are there no children named David or Barbara, although there are also no children names James or Catherine.

Another rumor having to do with James wife, Catherine, is that she was a Bowen, the daughter of Henry Bowen. James Crumley and Henry Bowen were neighbors in Frederick County, VA, but James's marriage took place years before in Pennsylvania.

However, A.C. Nash, David Williams Cassat and Lillian May Berryhill: their descendants and ancestors, (1986) has a chapter on the Crumleys. And indicates Catherine may have been a Bowen and not a Gilkey.

Dorothy T. Hennen, Hennen's Choice: a compilation of the descendants of Matthew ... (1972) Page 390 also suggests Catherine was a Bowen.

There is other circumstantial evidence that also hints at this possibility. In Virginia, at that time, when a man died, three men were assigned to appraise his estate. Typically, one was the dead man's largest creditor, one was someone in the wife's family, and one was a disinterested party. The three individuals had to agree on the value of the man's estate, with the exception of his real estate.

The three men who appraised James Crumley's estate after his death in 1764 included Henry Bowen. If Catherine was a Bowen, then this Henry was her brother. Of course, the Bowens were neighbors, so it's impossible to surmise whether this interaction was a result of living in the same neighborhood or being related to Catherine.

There is a Bowen family in the Nottingham Quakers book referencing the church in Cecil County Maryland, adjoining Chester County, PA, but there is no David, Barbara or Catherine mentioned.

## Relocation to Frederick County, Virginia

James apparently followed or moved with the Nottingham Quakers when they moved to Frederick County which was at that time an unsettled frontier. Many of the Nottingham families were establishing families of the Hopewell Friend's Meeting House and James Crumley was among the members.

On June 3, 1744, James Crumley purchased land in Frederick County, 250 acres at the head of Yorkshireman's Branch where he was described as a cordwainer, a French derived English term for a man who makes shoes from new leather. He bought this property from Giles and Sarah Chapman who were among the 70 original Quaker families that settled in the Shenandoah Valley and organized the Hopewell Friends Meeting.

This must have been great cause for celebration. James would have been about 35 years old, or older, and finally saved enough for his own land. Perhaps the move to Frederick County had been for this exact opportunity - where land was more affordable - and of course - required a lot more work to make it farmable as well.

In 1748, James purchased land from David and Barbara Gilkey.

In 1752, according to the Hopewell Friends History, James Crumley, one of three Quakers, was elected to the Vestry of Frederick parish. This seems odd, because the vestry was the Anglican Church, and local researchers indicate that it was not unusual for Quakers to be members in order to perform political functions. This is actually quite interesting, because the previous vestry has been dissolved amid charges of persecution of Quakers and failure to build a church with money provided. By including three Quakers, they assured that the Quakers at least had a voice. James was a church warden again in 1755 and 1756.

We find the following passage in the Virginia Hopewell Friends History:

*When the new county of Frederick was erected in 1743 Isaac Parkins became very prominent in the conduct of its affairs. He served [p.19] many years as a justice, a captain of militia, and a vestryman. He was elected to the House of Burgesses, representing Frederick County in the sessions of 1754 and 1755. He used his influence to ameliorate the sufferings of Friends caused by the laws governing those dissenting in religious opinions from the Established Church, and the court orders of Frederick County show that he repeatedly secured the release of persons "imprisoned for conscience sake," and was active in their defence. In 1751 he presented to the Frederick County Court a petition asking that the vestry for Frederick Parish be dissolved, charging misappropriation of funds. In the following February, 1752, the General Assembly passed an act charging the vestry for Frederick Parish with oppressive and corrupt practices, and ordering its dissolution and the election of a new vestry. Along with two other Friends, James Cromley and Lewis Neill, Isaac Parkins was elected to this new vestry, and served for many years*

On March 20, 1753, James Crumley received a grant for 39 acres from Lord Fairfax. This land was on Back Creek and abutted Rodary? Rubits and William Dillon.

On February 1, 1754, James received a large land grant for 752 acres on Mill Creek, land which now spans the border of Frederick County, Virginia and Berkeley County, West Virginia. This land was originally surveyed for James Anderson in 1753 and was sold to James Crumley in 1754. The final land grant was made to James.

James 1754 grant abutted Thomas Martin, John Bozioth, Col. Morgan Morgan and Nicholas Hanoshaos or Hanshaw. It was on Mill Creek, a branch of Obeckon.

In February 1754, Henry Bowen Sr. gave to his son, Henry Jr, a tract of land adjoining Thomas Rees, Nicholas Henshaw and James Crumley. In April of 1755, Henry Bowen sold James Crumley 53 of 103 acres.

On February 28, 1757, James Cromley (sic) sold to his son John the 219 acres that he purchased from David and Barbara Gilkey.

In February 1757, James Cromley (sic) sold to his son, William, 270 acres at the southern end of the Lord Fairfax tract, in what is now Berkeley County, West Virginia.

Frederick County Deed Book 4, page 229, recorded on March 1, 1757:

On February 28, 1757, this indenture between James Crumley (spelled Cromley throughout) and William Crumley (spelled Cromley throughout) both of Frederick County, for 2 shillings current money of Virginia, Frederick County tract of 270 acres...Thomas Martin corner...foot of a ridge...along Martin's line...crossing Mill Creek...part of 742 acres granted to James Crumley by deed from the proprietors office bearing the date of first of February MDCCLIV (1754). William Crumley to pay the rent of one ear of Indian corn on Lady Day next. Signed by James Crumley his mark and witnessed by Thomas Wood, Edmond Cullen and William Dillon

This deed is registered with the court and followed by a similar deed which seems to release William from a one year indenture.

March 1, 1757 James Crumley to William Crumley for 22 shillings...release and confirm unto the said William Crumley (in his actual possession now being by virtue of a bargain and sale to him hereof made for one year indenture bearing date the day next before the date of these presents and force of the statute for transferring uses into possessions)...tract or parcel containing 270 acres.

The description is exactly as the first document as are the witnesses and it is filed on the same day, March 1st, 1757

On September 14, 1758, James received 5 shillings, 4.5 pence for furnishing provisions to the colonial militia. This would have been the beginning of the French and Indian War.

On January 19, 1761, James Crumley received another 53 acres from Lord Fairfax which abutted James' own land and that of Benjamin Barret and Mathias Elmore. It says it is at the foot of N. Mountain, which I presume means North.

In August, 1761, John Lindsey sold to James Crumley for 13 pounds several animals and some furniture.

The last living entry we have is from Henings's Statutes of Virginia and it says "7/1756/1763 James Crumley to Henry Bowen for provisions, 5 pounds, 5.5 pence."

## Will and Estate

James wrote his will on June 27, 1757 but it wasn't probated until August 9, 1764 where it is recorded in Frederick County Will Book 3, 1761-1770, page 68.

*In the name of God, Amen. I James Crumley of the County of Frederick and the colony of Virginia cordwainer being at present in perfect health of body and sound and perfect mind and memory praise be therefore given to Almighty God, do make, constitute and ordain this my last will and testament in manner and form following. First and principally I recommend my soul into the hands of Almighty God who gave it, hoping through the merits death and passion of Jesus Christ my savior to obtain remission of all my sins and to inherit everlasting life, and my body I commit to the earth whence it came to be decently buried at the discretion of my executors hereafter named and as touching the desposition of all such men such worldly estate as it hath pleased Almighty God to bestow upon me. I leave and bequeath as followeth:*

*First I will that all my just debts and funeral charges be fully paid and discharged.*

*Item, I leave until my son John Crumley 219 acres with an addition of a piece more to be divided betwixt Benjamin Barret and me to him his heirs and assigns forever.*

*Item, I leave unto my two sons William and Henry Crumley 644 acres of land equally to be divided betwixt them in quantity and quality to them their heirs and assigns forever.*

*Item, I leave unto my granddaughter Ruth Doster 100 acres of land joining the tracts of my sons William and Henry and joining upon John Boisers to her her heirs and assigns forever.*

*Item, I leave unto my loving wife Catherine Crumley all that present plantation where I now live during her natural life of whilst she continues under the name of Catherine Crumley and upon her decease or upon altering her said name I leave and bequeath the said plantation to my youngest son Samuel Crumley and to his heirs and assigns forever.*

*Item, I leave and it is my will that all the rest and remainder of my estate both real and personal be equally divided betwixt my five children, Mary, John, William Henry and Samuel upon the decease of my wife of upon altering her*

*present name and not before. And moreover my will is that if my wife shall see cause to alter her condition that she shall have a like equal dividend of my moveable estate with my children. As also my will is that my wife shall keep the children with her till of age or until they settle their places and my desire and will is that the quit rents yearly and other publick demands be paid out of the product of the plantation, not to diminish any part of the childrens dividend in the estate thereby.*

*Item, I leave unto each of my 4 sons aforesaid out of moveable estate to the value 15 pounds in whatever they shall stand in need of upon their setting by themselves.*

*Item, I leave unto my brother Thomas Crumley 15 pounds current money and to my sister Joan 5 pounds current money.*

*Lastly, I leave, constitute ordain and appoint my well beloved friends Robert Cunningham and George Ross together with my well beloved wife Catherine Crumley executors of this my last will and testament hereby revoking disallowing and making void all former wills testaments legacies or executors heretofore by me made ordained or appointed ratifying and confirming this and this only to be my last will and testament in presence of these witnesses this 27th day of June in the year of our Lord 1757.*

*James Crumley signs and Catherine Crumley signs also with a mark of R*

*Witnesses:  
William Dillon  
M. Kean  
William Frost*

We don't know where James is buried, but it's likely at the Hopewell Friends Meeting House Cemetery.

James will was probated on August 9th, 1764, so he likely died during the summer of 1764. Both William Frost and Matthew Keen swear as witnesses and prove the will. Catherine Crumley, his widow and administratrix of the will, enters into bond with John Neavill, John McMachen and Francis Lilburne as her securities in the penalty of 1000 pounds for her "due and faithful administration of the said estate." This tells us that James has a significant estate, as this is a very high bond for that time period. James had gone from being one of the 6 poorest men in the township in 1732 to a substantial estate thirty two years later in 1764.

James would have been in his 50s, not an old man by any stretch, and he likely had children still at home when he died. Son Samuel, referenced in the will never appears in any records, so he obviously died before coming of age, and perhaps even before James himself died. If Catherine was the same age as James, when James wrote his will in 1757, he could have had children at home as young as 2 or 3 years of age.

James estate inventory, given that he as a Quaker, is quite interesting, and unexpected. He had 4 slaves who could have been a family, and he had 15 gallons of liquor and a still. Given the Quaker stance on slavery – and that many Quakers bought slaves with the sole intention of freeing them – he may have been in conflict with the Quaker church over this. I have seen commentaries that he was reprimanded by the church for this practice, but there are no records supporting this in the Hopewell records.

We know that James' slaves were not freed, during or after his life, because in 1768, James' son John Crumley releases his future right in James' estate after his mother, Katherine, dies, including "all rights to the negroes."

Given the amount of liquor James had, it's unlikely that this was only for personal use. Fifteen gallons, along with the still, is suggestive that he was distilling alcohol for sale

Clearly, given James' alliance with the church as a vestry member as late as 1756, these apparent "flaws" in his Quakerness didn't interfere with his church membership. He was never dismissed.

## Children of James & Catherine Crumley

As evidenced by James will, James and Catherine had 5 children who were living in 1757, but apparently only 4 who survived to adulthood. Samuel is not mentioned in any records after his father's will in 1757.

- John Crumley was probably the eldest child. He was probably born about 1733 or 1734 in Chester County, PA. He was of age by 1757 when James sold him land. John married Hannah Faulkner about 1761 in Frederick County, VA and moved to Newberry County, SC before 1790 where he is found in the 96 District. He died according in 1794 with a will, having 9 children.
- William Crumley was probably the second eldest son, born around 1735 or 1736, also in Chester County, PA. He too was of age by 1757 when James sold him land. William married Hannah Mercer about 1761 in Frederick County, VA. William lived his life on the land originally owned by James and died in 1793 in Berkeley County, West Virginia where that land was located after Virginia and West Virginia divided. He married a second time to Sarah Dunn in 1774, having a total of 15 children by his two wives.
- Mary Crumley was also born early to the marriage, as she was already married to Thomas Doster and had daughter Ruth in 1757 when James wrote his will. It's unclear, but Mary may have been married a second time to a Jesse Faulkner.
- Henry Crumley married Sarah whose last name is unknown. Very little is known about Henry. Henry signed deeds in 1766 and 1768 and in 1770 appointed William Crumley his power of attorney. He apparently moved from the area and died about 1792. There are no known children but that doesn't mean they don't exist.

James and Catherine likely had additional children...probably 5 or 6, who died as children. Note that there are no children named James or Catherine.

## Research Notes

Date of birth is estimated from his life's events. James will was probated August 9, 1764, it is likely he died during the summer of 1764.

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James Crumley was the subject of the September 5, 2015 blog post by Roberta Estes of DNA Explained titled: [James Crumley \(c1711-1764\), Slave-Ownning Quaker Moonshiner, 52 Ancestors #88](#). The post can be read in its entirety at Roberta's website: [dna-explained.com](#). The biography below has been extracted from that post to be included here with Roberta's permission.

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## Sources

See also:


- Estes, Roberta. ""[James Crumley \(c1711-1764\), Slave-Ownning Quaker Moonshiner, 52 Ancestors #88](#)". Web blog post. *DNA Explained*, September 5, 2015

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#### **Sue Miller S**

Catherine Bowen may have been the first wife of James, married 1729 [ <https://sites.google.com/site/genealogistjournalfamilytrees/home/bowen-family> ], followed by James remarrying about 1732 to Catherine Gilkey, mother of James' six children (birth dates are after that). The two Catherine's seem not to be the same person (first Catherine daughter of Henry Bowen and Jean Carter, second Catherine daughter of David Gilkey and Barbara Crossley. Sue Smith

[posted](#) Feb 24, 2018 by [Sue Miller S](#)

James is [13 degrees from Maria Mitchell](#), [22 degrees from Carl Sagan](#), [20 degrees from Tycho Brahe](#), [28 degrees from Nicolaus Copernicus](#), [24 degrees from Eise Eisinga](#), [19 degrees from Caroline Lucretia Herschel](#), [24 degrees from Thomas Maclear](#), [15 degrees from Simon Newcomb](#), [15 degrees from Isaac Newton](#), [27 degrees from Pierre Henri Puisseux](#), [23 degrees from Beatrice Tinsley](#) and [14 degrees from Edith Woodward](#) on our [single family tree](#). [Login](#) to find your connection.

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