

William Rountree (c1700-1765) of New Kent County

Based solely on proximity, the earlier William Rountree of New Kent County, Virginia was probably the father of this William Rountree, but we have no proof and are unlikely to find any owing to the absence of records.

The malicious burning of the New Kent County courthouse in 1787 destroyed all the early records of that county and another courthouse fire in Hanover County in 1865 destroyed nearly all of its records as well. The result is that we have virtually no public records that might allow us to determine the early genealogy of this family. The only New Kent records that remain are in the vestry books of two of New Kent's six parishes, and they are little help to us, since they merely confirm that our William Rountree resided somewhere in old New Kent County.

The first mention of this William Rountree is in Saint Peter's parish of New Kent County. The vestry book of that parish contains an entry for the 2 March 1728/9 baptism of "Dudley son of Wm. & Dorcas Rowntree", born on 4 January 1728/9.¹ There are no other citations for any Rountree in the St. Peter's records. However, the vestry book of Blisland Parish contains an entry dated 15 October 1741 of the account due "Mr. William Rountree Junr" for some unknown service to the parish.² It is not clear whether this was William Rountree or his son – if William, then this record suggests that his father (or some other elder William Rountree) was still alive at the time and living in Blisland.³ A John Rountree is also mentioned in the same vestry book on three occasions from 1725 through 1729. He was likely another son of the elusive William Rountree Sr.

A Note on the Parish Records: An interesting question is why only one Rountree birth is recorded in the St. Peter's parish vestry book. Although the register is known to be incomplete, births are recorded for many years before and after 1729.⁴ The obvious answer, given the absence of earlier and later entries in either the St. Peter's or St. Paul's vestry books, is that William Rountree may have initially lived in the eastern part of New Kent in the area covered by Blisland parish for several years prior to the first citation for him. [Blisland parish covered roughly the eastern half of what was then New Kent County. The eastern end of New Kent was added into James City County in 1767 to create the present boundaries.] Although Blisland parish's vestry books are partly preserved after 1721, there are few birth or baptismal records for the period when the Rountree children were born.

Another possibility is that he lived within the bounds of Wilmington parish, which included a large part of New Kent north of the Chickahominy River, and for which no records survive. The part of Wilmington lying between the Chickahominy and the ridge crossing New Kent was added into St. Peter's (on the west) and Blisland (to the east) when Wilmington parish was dissolved in 1725. However, the inhabitants of the former Wilmington parish who had been annexed into Blisland parish petitioned the House of Burgesses on 8 February 1727/8 to be transferred from Blisland parish to St. Peter's, owing to its convenience.⁵ If William Rountree lived in that area, it would explain why he might have found it convenient to baptize a son in St. Peter's a year later, though his home parish would have been Blisland.

Although we have no other records for New Kent or Hanover, our William Rountree later moved several miles west to Goochland County. On 25 March 1749, as "William Rowntree" of

Blisland parish, New Kent County, he purchased 700 acres in St. James parish of Goochland County.⁶ When his son Randall Rountree bought a patent of Charles Turner's in 1753, it was described as cornering William Rountree.⁷ By locating Turner's patent, we can place William Rountree's purchase as being east of Genito Creek on the upper reaches of Mill Creek (now called Dover Creek) in northeastern Goochland County, about two miles south of the Hanover County line and perhaps five or six miles west of the Henrico county line. Further clarification is found in a 1 January 1781 renewal of a 1718 patent to John Johnson which describes it as adjoining William Rountree on two sides.⁸

He may have owned land in Hanover County as well, for on 14 November 1757 he was "William Rowntree Sen." of St. Paul's Parish of Hanover County when he purchased an additional 700 acres in Goochland County on Beaverdam Creek, just west of the Mill Creek land.⁹ The following day he gave this second parcel in two equal pieces to his sons William and Randall describing the reason in each case as "*especially for the father-like love which I bear to my son...*".¹⁰

Hanover County had been formed from western New Kent in 1720, essentially following the geography of St. Paul's parish, and adjoined old Goochland County to the south and west. William Rountree seems to have bought, or perhaps inherited, land in Hanover, though the loss of its records prevent us from knowing when or exactly where it was located. It appears, though, that he did not acquire the land there until about 1750, as the processioning records prior to 1751 do not mention a Rountree.¹¹ Like New Kent, Hanover County suffered a loss of its early records, thus there is no record of him in the county records. However, the vestry book for St. Paul's Parish of Hanover County mentions the processioning of land belonging to William Rountree in 1751, 1755, 1759, and 1763.¹² He held this land for more than a decade, but had sold it by early 1764. The vestry record assigning the processioners on 30 November 1763 refers to the land as William Rountree's, but the processioner's report of 29 February 1764 called it "the land of William Roundtree transferred to Thomas Hooper".¹³ That he sold his entire holding is evident from his will a year later, when no Hanover county land was mentioned.

For more than a decade, William Rountree thus appears to have owned land in both Hanover and Goochland counties. Which county he may have lived in is uncertain, though his will implies that he lived in Hanover for at least the latter part of that period. His ownership of the Goochland County parcel since 1749 suggests that one or more of his elder sons may have occupied it in the interim.

After disposing of his land in Hanover, it is clear that he lived on his land in Goochland. His will was written there on 1 October 1765 and witnessed by an adjoining landowner. He apparently died within a month or two of writing the will, for an inventory of his estate was dated in December 1765. The will itself was not proven until several months later, on 16 September 1766, when both it and the inventory were recorded.¹⁴ The will does not mention a wife, who evidently predeceased him, and is signed as William "Rowntree."

Having already provided land to sons William and Randall, and apparently having done the same for son Dudley in some unrecorded fashion, he left his 700-acre parcel in Goochland to three younger sons. The land is described as lying on Middle Creek, which was then the name of what had earlier been Mill Creek, and was the same land he had purchased in 1749.¹⁵ He left 200 acres, one slave and five cattle to his son Richardson Rountree, 250 acres and a slave to son Thomas Rountree, and the manor plantation (presumably the remaining 250 acres) and a slave to son Turner Rountree. His sons Randall, William, and Dudley each received a slave. His son

William Rountree Jr. was also given £10 “*as recompense for tending me in my sickness in Hanover Co.*” and five cattle. The will also gave legacies to a daughter named Betsey Bailey and her daughter Molley Bailey; to Drury Murrell and grandson John Murrell; to daughter Molley, who got some extra items “*for her kindness during my sickness*”; to daughter Isebell and her children; to daughter Dorcas; and to daughter Drusiller Haden.

The will and subsequent estate records identify the following children, not necessarily in birth order. Marriage records are from William Douglas’s journal.¹⁶

Note: I have done minimal research on these children, focusing mainly on merely identifying them. I have made a rough attempt to determine their approximate order of birth, without much success. Therefore, the birth years are, in most cases, simply guesses. I would note though, the possibility that his will may have named the younger sons (to whom he gave land) in birth sequence, and the elder sons (to whom he gave slaves) in birth sequence as well.

1. **Randall Rountree** (c1725 – c1788) He may have been the eldest child, though the evidence is flimsy. He is the first of the children to appear as an adult in the records, and more than likely he occupied the land his father bought in 1749. On 3 November 1753 he was already a resident of Goochland County, when he bought 30 acres adjoining his father’s 1749 purchase there.¹⁷ The purchase included a dwelling house, and can accurately be located on Genito Creek just south of the Hanover County line.¹⁸ On 14 November 1757, his father gifted him another 350 acres from his purchase the day before.¹⁹ Surely Randall was already married by this time, especially if it was his daughter Rebecca who married in 1771. No record of his own marriage appears in the Douglas Register, suggesting the possibility that he may have married before Douglas began keeping records in 1750 (or at least, before Randall arrived in Goochland in 1753.) He received a “negro wench named Nan” in his father’s will. He gave permission for the marriages of three minor children: his daughter Sarah’s marriage to John Dennis on a bond dated 9 January 1782, his daughter Mary’s marriage to John Gordon on a bond dated 17 August 1783, and his son John’s marriage to Lucy Gordon by bond dated 19 February 1786. His own will in Goochland County was dated 15 December 1788 and proved on 20 October 1788.²⁰ I have not read this will, but I understand it named his wife **Sarah**, sons **John** and **Randall**, and daughters **Mary Gordon**, **Elizabeth Curle**, and **Rebecca Wade**.
2. **William Rountree** (? – Aug/Sept 1775) His birth year is uncertain, but his name alone suggests he was either the first or second son. He does not appear to be the same William Rountree who served in 1756 in the French and Indian War, though some descendants insist on claiming so.²¹ However, it is conceivable that he was the William Rountree “Junr.” mentioned in the Blisland parish record of 1741 cited above, placing his birth at 1720 or earlier. [See the explanatory footnote.²²] He first appears in Goochland County in 1757 when his father made a deed of gift of 350 acres each to his sons Randall and William.²³ He is apparently the William Rountree who married Jean Fenton in adjoining Henrico County (presumably her residence rather than his) on 4 November 1759.²⁴ He received a slave in his father’s will, plus £10 “*as recompense for tending me in my sickness in Hanover Co.*” He died in Goochland County, leaving a will dated 18 August 1775 and recorded 16 September 1775 which presumably named all five of his children.²⁵

He left his plantation to son **Thomas Rountree**, and divided his other lands between sons **Samuel Rountree** and **William Rountree**. The remainder of his estate was split among the three sons and “my two daughters” **Jane Rountree** and **Nancy Rountree**. He named his “brother Randolph (sic) Rountree” one of the executors. His son William Rountree was apparently the one who applied for a Revolutionary pension in 1833 from Henrico County, giving his birth date as 3 January 1763.²⁶

3. **Dudley Rountree** (4 January 1729 – 1812) The only child whose birth was recorded at St. Peter’s parish, he also received one slave from his father’s will. We have no record of his receiving land from his father, meaning that a gift may have been made in Hanover County. He is said to have married Susannah Roberts. He appears in Bedford County as early as 1771, but began acquiring land in Kentucky by 1793 when he received the first of several grants. Descendants say he died in Hart County, Kentucky in 1812. His children were Samuel, Nathaniel, Dudley, Henry, Susan, Nancy, and Mary. According to descendants and pension applications, the children were born between 1756 and roughly 1770.
4. **Richardson Rountree** (c1735 – March 1819) See separate page.
5. **Isabella Rountree** (c1736? – ?) was probably the wife of William Goldsmith. William Rountree’s will names “*my daughter Isebell and her children*” to receive the income from the hire of a slave, and left to “*granddaughters Martha, Massie, Lewsy, Eliza, Leusender and Milley Goldsmith 15 shillings each to be made into rings and delivered to each of them when they reach the age of 15.*” The will does not give Isabella Rountree’s surname, but we assume that the Goldsmith grandchildren were hers. It is clear that William Goldsmith was their father, as he later claimed the legacy for his children.

Some descendants have assumed that her husband was Richard Goldsmith based on quite flimsy evidence. A grandson of the William Goldsmith who married Isabella’s niece Elizabeth Rountree reported in 1902 that his great-grandfather was Richard Goldsmith.²⁷ He wrote that his grandfather William Goldsmith married his “cousin” Elizabeth Rountree. That has led to the conclusion that Richard Goldsmith was the husband of Isabella, a conclusion clearly disproved by Goochland records. It is not known how Isabella’s husband William Goldsmith might be related to the William Goldsmith who married her niece, but they were probably not father and son.

6. **Dorcus Rountree** (c1738? – ?) She married Drury Murrell 29 September 1763.²⁸ The marriage bond in Goochland County, dated the previous day, identifies her as the daughter of William Rountree. Her father’s will left a slave girl to be delivered to Drury Murrell and delivered to “his son” John Murrell, Rountree’s grandson, at the age of 21. His daughter “Darcas”, not otherwise identified as Dorcas Murrell, also received a legacy. Drury Murrell apparently joined several of the other children in South Carolina, appearing in the 1790 Union County census near Turner and Richardson Rountree.

7. **Elizabeth Rountree** (c1740? – by1783) Called “my daughter Betsey Bailey” in her father’s will, she had married Callum Bailey on 4 June 1761.²⁹ The marriage bond in Goochland County, dated the previous day, also identifies her as the daughter of William Rountree. William Rountree’s will left a negro girl to be brought up by Betsy Bailey and delivered to her daughter Molly Bailey when Molly either reached 18 or married. John Bailey, another grandson was to receive a legacy upon reaching the age of 21. Callum Bailey’s will, dated 9 August 1783 and proven 8 February 1787 in Albemarle County, mentions a son John Bailey and “*thirty Pounds which was left to him by his grandfather Roundtree.*”³⁰ No wife is mentioned, Elizabeth evidently being dead. The will names several children, some of whom appear to be by a wife previous to Elizabeth Rountree: **William, John, Charles, Callum, Ann Perkins, Ann, Mary, Nancy, and Fanny** (the latter two the youngest).
8. **Thomas Rountree** (c1740? – c1815) We can infer from his father’s will that he was a younger son, but was of age in 1765. He received a slave, land, a feather bed and furniture from his father’s will. He married Letitia Barnard on 6 July 1767 in Albemarle County.³¹ They appear in Fluvanna County (formed from Albemarle) in the state census a few years later and, as residents of Rutherford County, North Carolina, in 1791 they sold land in Fluvanna.³² According to descendants, they shortly thereafter moved to Kentucky where Thomas died about 1815 in Warren County. Their children are said to have included John, Green F., Jesse, William, James, Holly, Susan, Elizabeth, Drucilla, and Sally.
9. **Turner Rountree** (c1742? – 24 December 1797) William Rountree’s will left “my manor plantation”, slaves and furniture to Turner, who was apparently of age but unmarried. He married Sarah Woodson on 26 August 1766 in Goochland County.³³ The births of two children in 1769 (Woodson) and 1771 (Molly) are recorded in the Douglas Register. He moved to South Carolina sometime after 1774 when he witnessed a will in Goochland but before 1779, when he and his brother Richardson appear on a jury list for what would later become Union District.³⁴ On 6 March 1780 Turner purchased 200 acres and a dwelling house “whereon the said Turner Rountree now lives” on Fairforest Creek in Union District.³⁵ Within a few months he was serving with his brother Richardson in Col. Thomas Brandon’s regiment. He and his son Woodson are listed consecutively in 1790, with Henry Birdsong nearby. He bought nearby land from Thomas Brandon in 1795, which he gifted to his son Woodson Rountree in 1797.³⁶ His will in Union County was dated 24 December 1797 (the date of his death according to testimony of the witnesses) and proved on 1 January 1798, and mentions his unnamed wife and four children.³⁷ The children were “my two sons” **Woodson Rountree** and **William Rountree**, and daughters **Molly Blassingame** (the wife of Thomas Blassingame) and **Sally Birdsong** (the wife of Henry Birdsong). His widow Sarah is in the 1800 census of Union District with three males (a mystery) and 8 slaves. Woodson Rountree, who maintained his own household in 1800, had married Jane Brandon, daughter of Thomas, and apparently removed to Alabama about 1815, settling for a while in Madison County very near his cousin William, the son of Richardson Rountree.³⁸ His

brother William Rountree, apparently considerably younger, remained in South Carolina until 1830, then disappears.

10. **Mary (Molly) Rountree** (c1745 –1813) was apparently unmarried when her father made his will, calling her simply “Molley”. As “Mary” Rountree she married William Whitlock on 11 December 1767. They joined several of the younger children in South Carolina, where Mary Whitlock left a will proven 5 July 1813 in Union County.
11. **Drucilla Rountree** (17 February 1748 – 17 February 1781) She was “Drusiller Haden” in her father’s will, having married Anthony Haden on 4 July 1765, according to the Douglas Register. Anthony Hayden either was living in Albemarle County at the time, or would shortly move there. Druscilla died on the above date and Anthony Hayden remarried to Mary Ann Crenshaw a few months later, according to a Bible record.³⁹ According to a book on the family, Anthony Hayden had six children by Drucilla: **Jane Haden** (9 January 1768 – ?), **Elizabeth Haden** (4 December 1769 – ?), **John Haden** (25 January 1772 – 22 September 1842, **Turner Richardson Hayden** (13 November 1773 – 1 September 1812), **Hendley Hayden** (27 September 1776 – 1865), and **Rebecca Hayden** (1 December 1778 – 21 November 1838).⁴⁰

1. The Vestry Book and Registry of St. Peters Parish, New Kent and James City Counties,

Virginia 1684-1786, G. C. Chamberlayne (1937), p489. [↔]

2. The Vestry Book of Blisland Parish, New Kent and James City Counties, Virginia, 1721-

1786, G. C. Chamberlayne, (1935), p 77 [↔]

3. A William Rountree used as a headright in 1684 who was a militia member in 1700 may not have still been alive in 1741. Thus we have to consider the possibility that the “Junr.” was not our William Rountree, but rather his son. Other records of the son do not suggest that he was old enough in 1741 (the reference is surely to an adult) but the possibility

exists. [↔]

4. A Virginia law passed in 1661 required parents of each newborn child (free or slave) to report the birth to the parish, which was then required to maintain a record of the birth or of a subsequent baptism. It is obvious that not all such births are actually recorded in the

St. Peter's vestry book, but there are numerous births recorded for each year for more than a decade on either side of 1729. Thus the absence of a second entry for a Rountree

is almost certainly significant. [↔]

5. Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1727-1740, p13. [↔]

6. Goochland County Deed Book 5, p555-58 [↔]

7. Goochland County Deed Book 6, p342. [↔]

8. Virginia Grant Book E, p893. This is a state grant renewal of a portion of a crown grant in 1718 to John Johnson. The survey used was obviously done many years earlier, as it refers to the patent of Charles Johnson which he had sold to Randall Rountree in 1753. However, it describes the same "pine corner to Charles Johnson and William Rountree"

which is used in the deed from Charles Johnson to Randall Rountree. [↔]

9. Goochland County Deed Book 7, p206. [↔]

10. Goochland County Deed Book 7, p202-6 [↔]

11. He apparently acquired the land within a few years of the 1751 processioning. And, he was living in Blisland Parish in 1749 when he bought the Goochland land. No Hanover patents mention a Rountree (other than the 1686 patent to Charles Turner for land in what became Hanover), nor are any Rountrees mentioned in the single surviving book of court

records, wills, and deeds covering the two years 1734-1735. The only other surviving record of Hanover and western New Kent is a series of ledger books for a merchant named Thomas Partridge, which mention hundreds of residents for the periods 1736-1738

and 1756-1757, but no Rountrees. [↔]

12. The Vestry Book and Registry of St. Paul's Parish, Hanover County, Virginia 1706-1786, G. C. Chamberlayne, p319, p350, p386, p423. "Processioning" was a peculiarity designed to avoid boundary disputes caused by faulty surveys and the removal of landmarks. A Virginia law passed in 1662 required each parish to organize groups of local landowners into small precincts to "goe in procession", or walk the property lines, to examine and renew the boundaries. The law required this to be done every four years

between September and March. [↔]

13. Ibid., p423. [↔]
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14. Goochland County Deed Book 9, p38-39 (will) and p39-40 (inventory). [↔]
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15. He refers to the land as lying on "Middle Creek". This creek had earlier been called

"Mill Creek" and is today called "Dover Creek". [↔]

16. The Douglas Register, (J.W. Fergusson & Sons, 1928). Rev. William Douglas's journal

of marriages performed in St. James Parish of Goochland County. [↔]

17. Goochland County Deed Book 6, p342. [↔]

18. The seller, Charles Johnson, described the land as a patent to him (Virginia Patent Book 14, page 466) and the land he then lived on. The patent description locates the land fairly precisely. [↔]

19. Goochland County Deed Book 7, p202-6. [↔]

20. Goochland County Deed Book 15, p166. [↔]

21. See separate page for more on this subject. [↔]

22. If “Junr” was our William Rountree, then some elder William Rountree “Senr.” must have still been alive. A William Rountree used as a headright in 1684 who was a militia member in 1700 may not have still been alive in 1741. Even if imported as a young teenager, he would have been in his mid seventies by 1741. Thus we have to consider the possibility that the “Junr.” was not our William Rountree, but rather his son. Other records of the son do not suggest that he was old enough in 1741 (the reference is surely to an adult) but the possibility exists. That might also explain the deed of gift to William and Randall if they were the two eldest sons. His name is also significant, in that Virginians of the early 1700s commonly named either their first or second sons after themselves. Thus it is possible that William Rountree Jr. was born as early as 1720 or

before. [↔]

23. Goochland County Deed Book 7, p202-6. [[↔](#)]

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24. Douglas Register, p4. [[↔](#)]

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25. Goochland County Deed Book 11, pp133. [[↔](#)]

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26. Pension file #S6028. [[↔](#)]

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27. Historical Collections of the Joseph Habersham Chapter, D.A.R., (Blosser Printing Co., 1902), Vol. 2, p148-153. William T. Goldsmith, the informant, called his grandfather “Daniel” rather than Richardson Rountree. However, he seemed certain that his great-grandfather Goldsmith’s name was Richard and that he lived in or near Richmond,

Virginia. [[↔](#)]

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28. Douglas Register, p7. This was apparently her husband’s second marriage, for the

Douglas Register contains a 1758 entry for his marriage to Judith Sampson. [[↔](#)]

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29. Douglas Register, p6. [[↔](#)]

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30. Albemarle County Will Book 3, pp24. [[↔](#)]

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31. Douglas Register, p9. [[↔](#)]

32. Fluvanna County Deed Book 2, p481. The deed says the land was conveyed by Col. John Payne, who had died in 1784, so the purchase must have occurred before that date.

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33. *William and Mary College Quarterly Historical Magazine*, Vol. 15, No. 1, p29. Also

Douglas Register, p9. [[↔](#)]

34. The Jury Lists of South Carolina 1778-1779, Hendrix & Lindsay, ed., (1975) p80, p102. Turner and Richardson Rountree appear consecutively on both the grand jury list and the petit jury list, both dated sometime after February 1779, for the Spartan Division of 96

District (which included what was later Union County), [[↔](#)]

35. Union County Deed Book A, pp148. [[↔](#)]

36. Union County Deed Book D, p284 and p553. [[↔](#)]

37. Union County Will Book A, p82-4. [[↔](#)]

38. Woodson Rountree was still in South Carolina for the 1810 census, but obtained a grant in Madison County (now Alabama) on 22 February 1810. He sold his land in Union

County to his brother William on 10 September 1810. [[↔](#)]

39. From *Kentucky Ancestors*, Vol. 3, No. 4, "Records from Family Bible of Captain Jack

Jouett" [[↔](#)]

40. John Haden of Virginia: His Parents and Some of His Descendants, Dorothy Kabler

Haden (Adams Press, 1968). [[↔](#)]
