

The Ancestry of David Jackson Of Jessamine County, Kentucky

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David Jackson was born in Virginia in about 1763 and settled in 1788 in the neighboring area that would soon become Kentucky, where he died in Jessamine County in 1832. His large family and many descendants have attracted the attention of numerous genealogical researchers who have discovered that they descend from him. As of this writing, for example, he is included in over three hundred family trees posted on Ancestry.com. Those that identify his father assert that he was either Burwell Jackson or William Jamison, yet they provide no evidence in support of either of these paternal assignments.

In fact, there is no explicit documentary evidence whatever regarding the identity of David Jackson's father. No document before 1788 mentions David Jackson, and, more important, no later document such as a land deed or will names him as an heir or descendant, so the name of his father is never explicitly recorded. Yet significant appearances in other documents provide inferential evidence of David's relationship to specific individuals.

David Jackson's first appearance in the archived records of Virginia was a listing in the tax book of Fayette County (which in 1798 became Jessamine County, Kentucky), dated 11 December 1788. It reported that he owned no land but possessed two enslaved persons and three horses. By 1792 he had made his first purchase of land, on Hickman Creek. During his lifetime, David's wealth was typical for a yeoman farmer in Kentucky at that time. He gradually increased his land holdings to 280 acres and in 1808 acquired a further 350 acres, also on Hickman Creek. Having early sold his enslaved persons, he next purchased an enslaved person in 1796 and increased his holdings to three in 1813 and five in 1820. At the height of his wealth, in 1819, his estate was valued at \$5,500.

Given the absence of explicit documentary evidence regarding the identity of David Jackson's father, inferential evidence, as detailed below, strongly suggests that he was a son of John Jackson Jr. (ca 1735-aft 1808) and a brother of Hezekiah Jackson (1760-aft 1810):

1. 1769: John Jackson appears in court in Prince Edward County, Virginia: "**John** Jackson father of [H]Ezekiah Jackson came into Court and informs the Court that his son the said **Hezekiah** of the age of about nine years old had the misfortune to have his right ear bit off by a horse and moves to have the same admitted to record, whereupon ordered that the same be recorded and certified."¹

Establishes that Hezekiah Jackson, born in about 1760, was a son of John Jackson, who in 1769 was a resident of Prince Edward County, Virginia.

2. 1775-1776: In the extended case of John Jackson against James McGraw in Halifax County, Virginia, involving a property dispute, the defendant testifies that in “about the year 1775 or 1776” **John** Jackson was “then in Prince Edward County.”²

Establishes that John Jackson resided in Prince Edward County, Virginia, until at least 1776.

3. 1778: In the case of John Royall against John Jackson, **John** Jackson is by May 1778 a resident of Halifax County, Virginia.³

Establishes that John Jackson had relocated to Halifax County, Virginia, by 1778.

4. 1770s: In the extended case of John Jackson against James McGraw, **John** Jackson is referred to as “**John Jackson Jr.**” in transcriptions of two official documents, one of which signed by Thomas Jefferson, Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia.⁴

Establishes that John Jackson of Halifax County was officially referred to as John Jackson Jr. and was therefore very likely a son of John Jackson.

5. 1782-1787: **John** Jackson (Jr.) is listed in the tax books of Halifax County, Virginia, from 1782 (the first available year) through 1787. Throughout this period, he possessed between 4 and 7 enslaved persons, 4 and 5 horses, and 14 and 16 cattle. Information on landholdings was not included during these years.⁵

Establishes that John Jackson (Jr.) probably departed Halifax County, Virginia, in about 1788.

6. 1786: **Hezekiah** Jackson is listed for the first time in the tax books of Halifax County, Virginia, as a man over the age of twenty-one with one horse. On 22 October 1787 he married Alice Shelton, daughter of Francis Shelton, in Halifax County.⁶

Establishes that Hezekiah Jackson had returned to Halifax County in 1786 and married there in 1787.

7. 1786: **John** Jackson (Jr.) of Halifax County is ordered to pay **Hezekiah** Jackson for four days’ attendance as a witness for him against Joel Bolt.⁷

Further establishes the relationship between John Jackson (Jr.) and Hezekiah Jackson.

8. 1787: **Hezekiah** Jackson is ordered to pay **John** Jackson (Jr.) of Halifax County for thirteen days’ attendance as a witness for him against Thomas Cobbs.⁸

Further establishes the relationship between John Jackson (Jr.) and Hezekiah Jackson.

9. 1788: The extended case of John Jackson (Jr.) against James McGraw contains a transcription of a deposition taken from **David** Jackson of Fayette County on 17 February 1790. In his affidavit, David Jackson “of lawful age” swears that in Halifax County in August 1788 he personally witnessed a business transaction between **John** Jackson (Jr.) and James McGraw, which he describes in considerable detail.⁹

Establishes a relationship between John Jackson (Jr.) and David Jackson, who was in 1788 resident in Halifax County and by 1790 resident in Fayette County.

10. 1788: In the continuing case of Hezekiah Jackson against Thomas Cobbs, it is noted that in September 1788 **Hezekiah** “is not an inhabitant of this state” and therefore must give security for court costs.¹⁰

Establishes that by September 1788 Hezekiah Jackson had departed Halifax County.

11. 1788-1797: **David** Jackson and **Hezekiah** Jackson first appear in Fayette County, Virginia/Kentucky, in adjacent tax listings dated 11 December 1788. They each soon acquired 180 acres of land on Hickman Creek, originally patented by John Craig. For the following nine years, until 1797, they were listed adjacently or nearly adjacently in the annual tax books, after which Hezekiah was no longer listed. The Fayette/Jessamine County tax book is missing for the year 1798, and by 1799 Hezekiah had departed Fayette County.¹¹ (Note: Fayette County, Virginia, was established in 1780 and was one of the three Virginia counties that constituted Kentucky when that state was created in 1792. The section of Fayette County in which David and Hezekiah settled became Jessamine County, Kentucky, in 1798.)

Establishes that both David Jackson and Hezekiah Jackson arrived in Fayette County, Virginia/Kentucky, in 1788, that each purchased land on Hickman Creek, and that they lived very near each other for at least ten years.

12. 1789: On 4 February 1789 **Hezekiah** Jackson “of the County of Fayette” appoints **John** Jackson (Jr.) “my attorney to transact, negotiate, and settle the whole or any part of my business in the State of Virginia.” In June 1789, “A power of attorney between Hezekiah Jackson of the one part and John Jackson [Jr.] of the other part was proved by the oath of one of the witnesses thereto subscribed to be the act and deed of the said Hezekiah and was ordered to be recorded.”¹²

Further establishes the relationship between John Jackson (Jr.) and Hezekiah Jackson.

13. 1789: In the case of Hezekiah Jackson against William Fisher in Halifax County, **Hezekiah** Jackson is ordered to pay **John** Jackson (Jr.) for one day’s attendance as his attorney.¹³

Further establishes the relationship between John Jackson (Jr.) and Hezekiah Jackson.

14. 1789: In the case in Halifax County of Richard Owin against John Jackson (Jr.), **John** Jackson (Jr.) is authorized to take the depositions of **David** Jackson and **Hezekiah** Jackson.¹⁴

Further establishes a relationship between John Jackson (Jr.), David Jackson, and Hezekiah Jackson.

15. 1792: In the extended case of John Jackson (Jr.) against James McGraw, the Halifax County Court requires that **John** Jackson (Jr.) enter into a bond for £100, which he does on 23 July 1792. Co-signing the bond as one of his two securities is Francis Shelton, father of Alice Shelton, who had married **Hezekiah** Jackson in Halifax County in 1787.¹⁵ (See item number 6 above.)

Confirms the relationship between John Jackson (Jr.) and Hezekiah Jackson.

16. 1792: In the extended case of John Jackson (Jr.) against James McGraw, **John** Jackson (Jr.) testifies that by May 1792 he was resident in Kentucky.¹⁶

Establishes that by 1792 John Jackson (Jr.) had relocated to Kentucky.

17. 1792-1793: For two years **John** Jackson (Jr.) appears in the tax list of Fayette County, Kentucky, adjacent to **David** Jackson and **Hezekiah** Jackson. His property is reported in these two years as 9 to 11 enslaved persons, 5 to 8 horses, and 8-21 cattle, which compares very closely to his previous listings in Halifax County. (See item number 5 above.) He owns no land, which suggests that he was in transit.¹⁷

Establishes that John Jackson (Jr.) lived for two years, evidently in transit, in Fayette County, Kentucky, very near David Jackson and Hezekiah Jackson.

Alternate Perspectives

At the beginning of this report, it was noted that numerous family trees posted on Ancestry.com had specified without evidence that the father of David Jackson was either of two individuals:

1. Burwell Jackson. A number of years ago it was observed that the Lunenburg County personal property tax list of 1785 included a man named David Johnson in the household of Burwell Jackson. Since it was possible that this reflected a clerical error by the tax collector (substituting Johnson for Jackson), a prominent authority on early Virginia genealogy, Neil D. Thompson (author of *The Family of Bartholomew Stovall: Eight Generations of Stovalls in England and America*), was engaged to investigate the possibility. After extensive research, Mr. Thompson reported that David Johnson was definitely an individual who appeared in later records and that no document regarding the Burwell Jackson family, including wills and deeds, named David Jackson as his son. Apart from this single potential but mistaken connection, no evidence whatever has been found suggesting that Burwell Jackson was the father of David Jackson.
2. William Jamison. William Jamison, of Fayette and Jessamine Counties, who would have been no more than ten years old in the year that David Jackson was born, was not his father. Rather, William and David were in-laws: In 1812 in Jessamine County, William's son, David Jamison, married David's daughter, Mary (Polly) Jackson. There is no evidence of any kind that David Jackson was a son of William Jamison.

Because the relevant colonial records of Virginia and Kentucky are relatively well-maintained and complete for the years of David Jackson's life, there is a strong likelihood that documentary evidence of a filial relationship between David Jackson and either Burwell Jackson or William Jamison would have been found if in fact such a relationship existed, but there is none.

Conclusion

The evidence presented in this report strongly suggests that David Jackson (ca 1763-1832) was a son of John Jackson Jr. (ca 1735-aft 1808) and a brother of Hezekiah Jackson (1760-aft 1810). The author has been particularly attentive to any evidence that might challenge, complicate, or refute this conclusion or, especially, suggest an alternative interpretation, but he has found none.

John Jackson Jr. (ca 1735-aft 1808) was a son of John Jackson (ca 1710-1788), a grandson of Williams Jackson (ca 1688-1738), and a great grandson of immigrant Ralph Jackson of Henrico County, Virginia (ca 1650-1709).

The author welcomes criticisms, corrections, comments, and questions regarding this report. He can be contacted by leaving a message on [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com) for member rdjackson43.

Notes

¹ Prince Edward County, Virginia, Court Order Book for October 1769, page 244: FamilySearch.org, DGS 007897268, image 693.

Two individuals named Hezekiah Jackson were born in Virginia in about 1760: Hezekiah son of John Jackson Jr., as discussed in this report, and Hezekiah son of Abel Jackson, reportedly born in Lunenburg County. Several researchers, not realizing that there were two Hezekiahs, have published genealogies that conflate details gathered about both of them into a single unwieldy narrative as though they were one person. It is important to distinguish that it was Hezekiah son of John Jackson Jr., not Hezekiah son of Abel Jackson, who lived in Halifax and Fayette Counties and married Alice Shelton in 1787. Hezekiah son of Abel Jackson died in Henry County, Kentucky, on 30 October 1808; Hezekiah son of John Jackson Jr. was still alive in 1810, when he and his family appeared in the U.S. census for Cumberland County, Kentucky.

² Halifax County, Virginia, Court Order Book for November 1796, page 60: FamilySearch.org, DGS 007898567, image 343.

³ Halifax County, Virginia, Court Order Book for May 1778, page 413: FamilySearch.org, DGS 007898193, image 232.

⁴ Halifax County, Virginia, Court Order Book for November 1796, pages 58 and 64: FamilySearch.org, DGS 007898567, images 342 and 345.

⁵ Halifax County, Virginia, Personal Property Tax Books: FamilySearch.org, DGS 007849129, images 19, 34, 61, 73, 95, and 118.

⁶ Halifax County, Virginia, Personal Property Tax Books: FamilySearch.org, DGS 007849129, image 91. Halifax County, Virginia, Marriage Bonds, 1753-1854: FamilySearch.org, microfilm 847778; or Virginia Compiled Marriages, 1660-1800: <Ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/117362:3002>.

⁷ Halifax County, Virginia, Court Order Book for October 1786, page 24: FamilySearch.org, DGS 008572480, image 33.

⁸ Halifax County, Virginia, Court Order Book for August 1787, page 251: FamilySearch.org, DGS 008572480, image 146.

⁹ Halifax County, Virginia: Court Order Book for November 1796, page 71: FamilySearch.org, DGS 007898567, image 348.

¹⁰ Halifax County, Virginia, Court Order Book for September 1788, page 13: FamilySearch.org, DGS 008572480, image 292.

¹¹ Fayette County, Virginia/Kentucky, Tax Books: FamilySearch.org, DGS 007834426, images 80, 154, 213, 239, 292, 342, 409, 454, 502-3, and 614.

The fact that David and Hezekiah Jackson were able, as young men, to purchase and equip substantial landholdings when they arrived in Fayette County suggests that they had received in vivo shares of their inheritance from their father before departing Halifax County. Among other things, this reduces the likelihood of their being mentioned in their father's will.

After leaving Fayette/Jessamine County, Hezekiah Jackson settled in Cumberland County, Kentucky, where by 1805 he had acquired 162 acres of land on the Cumberland River (Cumberland County Surveyor's Books: FamilySearch DGS 004818996, image 38). He and his wife "Alois" (Alice) sold a portion of their land in April 1809 to satisfy a debt (Cumberland County Deed Book B, pages 18-20: FamilySearch DGS 008193847, images 179-181). In November 1810 the family was listed in the U.S. census for Cumberland County (<www.usgwararchives.net/ky/cumberland/census/1810/0176.gif>): One male over 45, one female 26-45, one male 16-25, one female under 10, and five enslaved persons. In their last appearance in the Fayette/Jessamine County tax book, in 1797, they had been listed with four enslaved persons (FamilySearch.org, DGS 007834426, image 614).

¹² Halifax County, Virginia, Deed Book for June 1789, pages 456-457: FamilySearch.org, DGS 008151691, image 237; and Halifax County, Virginia, Court Order Book for June 1789, page 247: FamilySearch.org, DGS 008572480, image 409.

¹³ Halifax County, Virginia, Court Order Book for April 1789, page 173: FamilySearch.org, DGS 008572480, image 372.

¹⁴ Halifax County, Virginia, Court Order Book for October 1789, page 69, and November 1789, page 87: FamilySearch.org, DGS 008572480, images 498 and 507.

¹⁵ Halifax County, Virginia, Court Order Book for November 1796, page 59: FamilySearch.org, DGS 007898567, image 342.

¹⁶ Halifax County, Virginia, Court Order Book for November 1796, pages 57 and 74: FamilySearch.org, DGS 007898567, images 341 and 350.

¹⁷ Fayette County, Virginia/Kentucky, Tax Books: FamilySearch.org, DGS 007834426, images 292 and 342.

John Jackson (Jr.) was unsuccessful in his extended case against James McGraw, and in November 1796 he appealed the verdict to the High Court of Chancery in Richmond, to be heard in March 1797. The appeal required his submission of a bond for \$500, which was signed by John Jackson (Jr.) and four other individuals. Unfortunately, the archives of the High Court of Chancery were destroyed in an 1865 fire. (Halifax County, Virginia, Court Order Book for November 1796, page 87: FamilySearch.org, DGS 007898567, image 356.)

John Jackson (Jr.) next settled in 1794 in nearby Clark County, Kentucky. The record for him in the 1794 tax book of Clark County lists his possessions as 11 enslaved persons, 4 horses, and 22 cattle, which compares very closely to his 1793 tax record in Fayette County: 9 enslaved persons, 5 horses, and 21 cattle. (Clark County Tax Book, 1794: FamilySearch DGS 007834416, image 35). He acquired 100 acres of land in Clark County in 1795 and sold the same parcel in 1808 (Clark County Deeds, volume 1, 1795, pages 354-356; FamilySearch DGS 007899071, images 187-188. Clark County Deeds, volume 6, 1808, pages 175-176; FamilySearch DGS 007899070, image 100). He continued to appear in the Clark County tax book through 1808 and may have died soon thereafter, although no record of his passing has so far been found.