

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

# JAMES LEEPER

(1746-1826)

AND

# MARY JANE AMSPOKER

"Jennie" (1746-1826)

Of

Muddy Creek Forks, Chanceford Township, York County, PA (after 1780)

**Parents of William Leeper**  
(1782-1858)

Compilation of Stephen A. Leeper  
As of December 2011

1907 Bayberry Lane  
West Lafayette, IN 47906

A Chapter in the Leeper Family History entitled

**"James and 'Jennie' Leeper**  
**To**  
**Captain Wesley Roy Leeper, My Father**  
(With Information on Allied Families)

*Courtesy of Fort Vance Historical Society*

## **JAMES AND MARY JANE "JENNIE" AMSPOKER LEEPER**

**James Leeper** (1746-1826) and Mary Jane "Jennie" Amspoker Leeper (1746-1826) of Muddy Creek Forks, Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania, until 1780 and, after 1780, of Ohio Co., Virginia (became Brooke Co., Virginia/West Virginia) and Washington Co., Pennsylvania, are our earliest Leeper ancestors known with certainty. Our descent from James and Jennie Leeper is based on statements by descendants removed by only two generations (i.e., William Alexander Leeper and Martha Jane Leeper Adair, children of William and Eleanor Lawther Leeper) and can be considered firmly established.

### **SUMMARY OF LINE TO CALIFORNIA LEEPERS**

William Leeper (~1782-1858), the son of James Leeper (1746-1826) and Mary Jane (Jennie) Amspoker Leeper (1746-1826), married Eleanor Lawther (1791-1844). William and Eleanor Leeper had a son named William Alexander Leeper (1828-1897), who married Margaret Masters (1838-1917). William Alexander and Margaret Leeper were the parents of Ernest Leeper (1860-1928; founder of our California Leeper family); James Lawther Leeper (1862-1944; progenitor of our Ohio Leeper family), and Mary Eleanor Leeper Long (1866-1940; our aunt, who uncovered and preserved so much of our family history).

Ernest Leeper (1860-1928), son of William Alexander and Margaret Masters Leeper, settled in San Bernardino, California, and married Nettie Gibbs; they were the parents of Ernest Wesley Leeper (1896-1989), Margaret Rebecca Leeper King (1900-1966), Laverne Davidson Leeper (1910-1999), and Dr. Roy William Leeper (1916-2006). Margaret King and Roy Leeper did not have children.

Ernest Wesley Leeper (1896-1989), son of Ernest and Nettie Gibbs Leeper, married Thelma Place; they were the parents of Donald Leeper (born and died 1920), Capt. Wesley Roy Leeper, USNR (1922-1979), Lenore Evelyn Leeper White (born 1924), and Roberta Ernestine Leeper Dewey (born 1930).

Wesley Roy Leeper married Edith Mae Allen and settled in West Covina, California; they were the parents of Jeanne Diane Leeper Campbell (born 1946) and Stephen Allen Leeper (born 1953). Jeanne Leeper married James Gordon Campbell; they are the parents of James Gordon Campbell, Jr. (called Scott within the family) and Jackie Campbell Page. Steve Leeper married Wendy Rae Hilliard; they are the parents of Wesley Leeper and Sarah Leeper.

Lenore Leeper married William White and settled in Arcadia, California; they were the parents of Laurinda Leigh White (Rinda; born 1946) and Lawrence Alan White (Larry; born 1949). Rinda married first (spouse name not known; child: Allison), second Phil Carlson (children: Ginger, and Holly Carlson), and third Chuck Andrews. Larry married Charlene Jarvi; they are the parents of Julie and Kevin White.

Roberta Leeper married Jack Dewey; they raised their family in the San Bernardino Mountains outside of Crestline, California, and are the parents of David Alan Dewey (born

1952), Martin William Dewey (born 1955), and Jeffery Dewey (born 1957). David married Julie Carney; they are the parents of Glyn, Jon, and Evan. Martin married Angela Morris; they are the parents of Erin, Morgan, and Brian Dewey. Jeff married Cynthia Hardy; they are the parents of William and Amber Dewey.

Laverne Davidson Leeper (1910-1999), son of Ernest and Nettie Gibbs Leeper, married Mary Bleth and settled in Arcadia, California; they were the parents of James Leeper (born 1947; married Sharon Cooper), Margaret Leeper (1949-1951), Mary Catherine Leeper (born 1952), Jeannette Leeper (married Bill O'Malley), and John Leeper (married Lisa; children: Thomas and Victor Leeper).

### **SUMMARY OF LINE TO JAMES LAWTHER LEEPER (OHIO LEEPERS)**

James Lawther Leeper (1862-1944), son of William Alexander and Margaret Masters Leeper, lived on the old Leeper place in Leesville, Ohio. He married Ermina Arnetta Wilson and they were the parents of William Wilson Leeper, Sr. (1898-1971); Eva Lucille Leeper McMath (1900-1955); Robert M. Leeper (born and died 1904); Francis Lawther(s) Leeper (1909-1997); and Mary Marguerite/Margaret Leeper (born and died 1919).

William Wilson Leeper, Sr. (1898-1971), son of James and Ermina Wilson Leeper, married Gertrude Olga Thomas; they were the parents of William Wilson Leeper, Jr. (1924-2009), Francis Arthur Leeper, Sr. (1925-1998), Shirley Eileen Leeper (1926-1984), Dorothy Gertrude Leeper (born 1928), Robert Eugene (Bob) Leeper (1929-2009), Marilyn Joann Leeper (1930-1939), Thomas James Leeper (1937-2008), and Alice Ermina Leeper Tope (born 1942).

William Wilson Leeper, Jr., son of William, Sr. and Gertrude Thomas Leeper, married Gloria Lee Felgenhauer; they were the parents of William James (Jim) Leeper (b. 1948, married Christine Lynn Tucker) and Janette Lee Leeper (b. 1951). Janette married Harold Malcomb Haver; they are the parents of Tara Kay Haver (b. 1972) and Joseph Wilson Haver (b. 1973).

Eva Lucille Leeper (1900-1955), daughter of James and Ermina Wilson Leeper, married Charles Wilbur McMath and they lived in Connotton, Ohio. They had three children: John Dean, Betty Jean, and Charles Lewis McMath.

Francis Lawther/Lawthers Leeper (1909-1997), son of James and Ermina Wilson Leeper, married Mabel Amelia Shuberg and they settled in Detroit, Michigan. They were the parents of Gordon James Leeper (b. 1941), Joy Ann Leeper (b. 1944), and Marvin Leeper (born/died 1951).

Gordon James Leeper, son of Francis and Mabel Shuberg Leeper, married Sharon Lee Barnes. They are the birth parents of Diane Louise Leeper (born 1970) and Gary Jay Leeper (born 1973). They adopted Vincent James (born 1963), Sandra Elizabeth (born 1968), Lisa Lynn (born 1979), and Danielle Elizabeth (born 1986) Leeper. Diane married Mark Allen Loucks.

## JAMES AND “JENNIE” AMSPOKER LEEPER

According to the Leeper Family sketch in *Commemorative Biographical Record of Carroll County, Ohio* [J. H. Beers & Co., publisher, 1891, pp. 1031-1033], **James Leeper** (1746-1826) was born in Ireland, where he married **Jennie Amspoker**. James and Jennie Leeper immigrated to America about the time of the Revolutionary War and settled at Muddy Creek Forks, Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania. In 1780, James and Jennie Leeper moved to Ohio Co., Virginia. Six of their children [James, John, Martha (Mattie), Ann, William, and Jane] lived into adulthood. William Leeper, son of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, married Eleanor Lawther (descendant of Lawther, Murchland, and Shaw families) and settled in Carroll Co., Ohio. [The author of the Leeper family sketch in the *Commemorative Biographical Record of Carroll County, Ohio* could have been William Adair (historian and husband of Martha Leeper Adair, granddaughter of James and Jennie Leeper and daughter of William Leeper), Emmett Adair (great grandson of James and Jennie Leeper, grandson of William Leeper, and son of Martha Leeper Adair), or Mary Leeper (great granddaughter of James and Jennie Leeper, granddaughter of William Leeper, and daughter of William Alexander Leeper).]

In spite of statements in the Carroll County Leeper family sketch, James Leeper, who married Jennie Amspoker, may actually have been born in Pennsylvania and may have been the son of James Leeper of Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania. Evidence of this relationship is interspersed within this document. A substantial case for the case that James Leeper (1746-1826) is the son of James Leeper of Chanceford is summarized at the end of this biographical sketch.

Jennie Amspoker, wife of James Leeper, was actually named Mary Jane; however, she is remembered as “Jennie” by the descendants of her son, William Leeper, and her daughter, Ann Leeper Dillon. Mary Jane “Jennie” Amspoker may also have been born in York Co., Pennsylvania. Evidence for this statement is provided in the chapter on the Amspoker family.

In the regions where our James Leeper (1746-1826) lived [York and Washington Counties, Pennsylvania and Ohio and Brooke Counties, Virginia], the name James Leeper (Leaper, Leiper, and other variations) is found in multiple records. During these times, many Leeper families named their first son James, so multiple men named James Leeper lived in the same place at the same time. Definitively separating each James Leeper from another in a given place and time can be difficult; ascribing any given record to a specific James Leeper may create errors. The available information must be carefully examined and clearly reported to avoid multiple claims on facts and persons. In York Co., the James Leeper associated with Muddy Creek Forks may be our James Leeper. In western Pennsylvania, the James Leeper associated with Ohio and Brooke Counties, Virginia and Cross Creek/ Jefferson Townships of Washington Co., Pennsylvania, is most likely our James Leeper (1746-1826), who married Jennie Amspoker. But, researchers beware: several men named James Leeper lived in these areas. This author, through many years of reading and sifting through the records, has attempted to provide a reasonably plausible record of the life of our James Leeper (1746-1826), who married Mary Jane “Jennie” Amspoker.

The first (possible) mention of our James Leeper in an official document may have occurred on March 13, 1778, when our James Leeper would have been ~31 years old. On that date, the men of the 6th Battalion of the York County Militia submitted the following petition to the president, requesting that their new wagon master be replaced because they viewed him as a traitor [text reproduced as written]:

To the Hon. President or Vice President. The petition humbly sheweth that we, your humble petitioners, do look upon ourselves not only much aggrieved, but even insulted by reason of a certain John McKinley (a most avowed enemy of our Constitution) being imposed upon us as a Wagon Master for this Battalion. It is very notorious that said McKinley has long been an enemy to the Common Cause of our Country, frequently speaking most bitterly against measures for defense, etc. We humbly hope therefore that proper measures will be taken to turn out said McKinley, and that some other person be put in his place. Finally we humbly beg that your Honors will take this, our prayer, under your serious consideration and re-dress our grievances, and we, your petitioners, are in duty bound shall ever pray. [Vol. 2, p. 551, 5th or 6th series Penn. Archives, as cited by David Rohrer Leeper and Jerry D. Leeper]

Among the 63 men that signed this petition were the names Alexander Leeper, Samuel Leeper, James Leeper, James Leeper, Jr., and James Leeper. According to David Rohrer Leeper [Leeper Lineage, p. 2, ~1900; available in the St. Joseph's County Public Library, South Bend, IN], the three men named James Leeper were 1) James Leeper of Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania (~59 years old; referred to throughout this document as "James Leeper of Chanceford"); 2) James Leeper, Jr., son of James Leeper of Chanceford (age: ~31 years); and 3) James Leeper, nephew of James Leeper of Chanceford (and possible son of the named Samuel Leeper, brother of James Leeper of Chanceford). James Leeper, Jr., may be the James Leeper of this biographical sketch (speculation). [David Rohrer Leeper was the great great grandson of James Leeper of Chanceford; his genealogy work and conclusions are vital to our understanding of our Leeper family and are discussed in much greater detail below.]

The following statement can be considered to be known with a high degree of certainty based on the biographical sketch of the Leeper family (Carroll County History, cited above), oral tradition from the William Leeper and Ann Leeper Dillon families, and information obtained from Washington Co., Pennsylvania and Brooke County, Virginia (West Virginia) histories.

In 1780, James Leeper moved his family, consisting of his wife, Jennie, and at least four children Martha (~7), James (~6), Ann (~6), and John (~5) from the relative civilization of Muddy Creek Forks, Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania, to the wilderness of western Pennsylvania (Washington County)/western Virginia (Ohio County).

James Leeper staked a tomahawk claim on land on a ridge in Ohio County, Virginia, between streams that became known as Scott's Run on the east and Paramour's (or Pournoy's) Run on the west. In a tomahawk claim, undeveloped land was claimed by marking trees with slashes (using a tomahawk or an axe) to define the perimeter of the claim; this task had to be completed in a single day while walking on foot.

**Historical/Geographical Background:** Until August 1785, the Colonies of Virginia and Pennsylvania both claimed overlapping territory that comprises much of current western Pennsylvania and the panhandle of West Virginia. For instance, Virginia considered the settlement at Fort Pitt (Pittsburgh) to be within the boundaries of Virginia and claimed territory that now comprises Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. (For a detailed discussion, see Alfred Creigh, *History of Western Pennsylvania ...*, 1870.) Through 1785, when the Pennsylvania and Virginia border was finally settled, persons born within the current boundaries of Pennsylvania may be stated to have been born in Virginia. In 1778, Virginia divided West Augusta County (which included present-day western Pennsylvania) into Youghiogheny, Ohio, and Monongalia Counties.

James Leeper made his claim in Ohio County, Virginia. In 1785, when the Pennsylvania-Virginia border was finally defined by the Mason-Dixon Line, the James Leeper farm straddled the Pennsylvania-Virginia border and was in Hopewell Township, Washington Co., Pennsylvania and Ohio Co., Virginia. In 1789, Cross Creek Township was formed from Hopewell Township; the Leeper farm was then in Cross Creek Township, Washington Co., Pennsylvania and Ohio Co., Virginia. In 1796, Brooke Co., Virginia, was formed from Ohio Co., Virginia; the Leeper farm was then in Cross Creek Township, Washington Co., Pennsylvania, and Brooke Co., Virginia. In 1853, Jefferson Township was formed from Cross Creek Township and the Leeper farm (then owned by Jane Leeper, the last surviving child of James and Jennie Leeper) lay in Jefferson Township, Washington Co., Pennsylvania, and Brooke Co., Virginia. In 1863 (when West Virginia ceded from Virginia), Brooke Co., Virginia, became Brooke Co., West Virginia; the Leeper farm was then located in Jefferson Township, Washington Co., Pennsylvania, and Brooke Co., West Virginia. Hence, reference to the location of our James Leeper is highly convoluted. Herein, our Leeper family shall be referred to as being in the Cross Creek/Jefferson region of Washington Co., Pennsylvania, Ohio Co., Virginia, and Brooke Co., Virginia (or West Virginia).

Hopewell Township, Washington Co., Pennsylvania, first began to be settled between 1772 to 1790. Surnames of early settlers (not meant to be all inclusive) included Amspoker, Brackenridge, Campbell, Crawford, Curry, Hayes, Headington, Leeper, Johnston, Marquis, McCready, Miller, Morrison, Scott, Smiley, Smith, Vance, Wells, and Wilson, including Jonas Amspoker (likely brother of Mary Jane "Jennie" Amspoker Leeper) and James, John, and Samuel Leeper. John and Samuel Leeper were known to be brothers and may have been the brothers of our James Leeper (1746-1826), who married Jennie Amspoker. Our Lawther, Murchland, and Shaw ancestors (see chapter on Lawther) came directly from the north of Ireland in 1790.

The early settlers of western Pennsylvania/western Virginia were predominately of Scotch-Irish descent and came from eastern and central Pennsylvania, northern Virginia, North Carolina, or direct from the north of Ireland. Many early settlers of western Pennsylvania came from York Co., Pennsylvania, and were veterans of the Revolutionary War. Those who moved to this region during the War were the guardians of the western frontier, joining militias and fighting the Indians who sided with the British. Many were excellent sharp shooters and could load and shoot while running. They moved to this remote wilderness, which presented constant threats to survival, including attacks from animals and Indians, to start new lives with their newly won

freedom. These people were fiercely independent, self-reliant, and hearty. They wanted to build free lives.

In this remote wilderness of the 1780s and among these hearty and self-reliant people, James and Jennie Leeper settled upon a ridge in one of the most remote areas of western Pennsylvania/western Virginia. [Even in 2011, the location of the James and Jennie Leeper farm remains remote and difficult to reach.]

The name of our James Leeper is engraved on the Jefferson Township Veterans' Memorial in Burgettstown, Pennsylvania. He is listed as a Frontier Ranger, who served during and after the Revolutionary War. Frontier ranger militias were formed for protection against Indians fighting on the side of the British during the Revolutionary War (and thereafter). Quoting from the research of Mary Szymanowski (4X great granddaughter of James Leeper, via his daughter Ann):

According to what I have read in the local southwest Pennsylvania histories, the Frontier Rangers were like special forces set aside for special training and duties (had to be the best of the best) from the local militias, usually with a Captain put over them who was hands-on and fought right along with those under them. (Like Capt. Samuel Brady) When there was an Indian attack or special missions, these were the men who mustered forth and went out to do whatever needed to be done. I read they were especially adept at loading and firing on the run, had great endurance, and were very athletic.

Frontier rangers, who served between 1776 and 1783, are considered veterans of the Revolutionary War. Mary Szymanowski, 4X great granddaughter of James Leeper, and June Campbell Grossman, local historian, state that they saw documents stating that our James Leeper was a member of the Washington County Frontier Rangers, but the references and the documents have not been reproduced; nonetheless, the builders of the Washington County Veteran's Memorial found the evidence sufficient to include the name of James Leeper on this monument.

The ridge on which James and Jennie Leeper settled became known as Amspoker Ridge, named after Jonas Amspoker, neighbor, Revolutionary War veteran, and husband of Elizabeth Leeper. Jonas Amspoker was very likely the brother of Mary Jane "Jennie" Amspoker Leeper; see the chapter on the Amspoker family. Elizabeth Leeper was possibly the sister of James Leeper; see chapters on Amspoker family and James Leeper of Chanceford. In the late-1770s, Samuel Leeper and John Leeper, likely sons of James Leeper of Chanceford and both veterans of the Revolutionary War, settled in this region very near the future site of the James Leeper farm. Lawther, Murchland, and Shaw families settled in this area in 1790; see the chapter on the Lawther family.

The Leeper cabin was built over a small stream, called Leeper's Run (which ran into Paramour's Run); this stream provided water, cool air, and a means of food preservation.

Even though the Leeper and Amspoker farms were located partially in Virginia, the geography of this region directed their lives toward the Cross Creek/Jefferson region of Washington Co., Pennsylvania.

In the 1780s, James and Jennie Leeper very likely began attending Cross Creek Presbyterian Church (located ~7 miles east of the Leeper farm in Cross Creek village). [James and Jennie Leeper and three of their adult children (John, Martha, and Jane Leeper) are buried in the Cross Creek Church Cemetery.] Until the 1850s, Cross Creek Church was the most-easily accessible church available to the James Leeper family – but this seven-mile trip could have been difficult in the winter and rainy months. Yet, travel west to churches in Charleston (later Wellsburg), Virginia was far more difficult than traveling east to Cross Creek. At some point, James and Jennie Leeper and their children became members of this church. Since Cross Creek Presbyterian Church is deeply intertwined with our Leeper family and the history of Washington Co., Pennsylvania, a brief history of the early years of this church is provided, along with a discussion of the Whiskey Rebellion. This information will enrich our understanding of James and Jennie Leeper and their children. James and Jennie may have been members of this church for over 40 years. As of 2011, Cross Creek Presbyterian Church was still an active church.

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A Brief, Relevant History of Cross Creek Church: 1775 to 1826,  
Including a discussion of the Whiskey Rebellion (1791 to 1794) and Its Effects on the Region

Cross Creek Church was formed by settlers who began meeting at two locations. As early as 1775, settlers living in eastern Cross Creek and western Hopewell Township began meeting at Vance's Fort (located near the present town of Slovan, Pennsylvania); Vance's fort was built by Capt. William Vance, who came to the area in 1773 from Winchester, Virginia. Settlers living in the western Cross Creek and Jefferson regions met at Well's Fort in Ohio Co., Virginia (just west of the present town of Eldersville, Pennsylvania, in an area that may have been called Irish Ridge). These forts were built out of necessity to protect early settlers from frequent attacks by Indians from the Ohio frontier; these Indians were determined to drive the new settlers from their historic hunting grounds. Over time, these forts became social gathering areas, where church services were held. [Eleanor Lawther, wife of William Leeper (son of James and Jennie Leeper), was born in Wells Fort during an Indian siege in 1791; see the chapter on our Lawther family.]

Cross Creek Presbyterian Church was officially founded in 1779, when, in a letter signed by 204 persons, Joseph Smith was called as its first pastor (and as co-pastor of Upper Buffalo Creek Presbyterian Church). Joseph Smith accepted the call, arriving in the spring of 1780. Joseph Smith, born in Nottingham Township of Maryland in 1736, was a 1764 graduate of Princeton University. "In the winter of 1871-82, there was a considerable revival in the congregations of Upper Buffalo and Cross Creek. In the autumn of 1782 ... about 50 persons from both congregations were received into full membership. This work continued with but little abatement for six or seven years." [Boyd Crumine, Cross Creek Township section of *History of Washington County, Pennsylvania ...*, 1882]

The following story [from Boyd Crumine, Hopewell Township section of *History of Washington County, Pennsylvania ...*, 1882] provides insight into the character of the settlers who founded these two churches. James and Jennie Leeper may well have been among these people, who donated wheat to this endeavor and witnessed the remarkable outcome.



On the 2d of May, 1780, [Robert Smith] purchased from Joseph Wells three hundred and seventy-six acres of land lying on the waters of Cross Creek, the consideration being 1625 (British pounds). ... When Mr. Smith purchased the land ... he depended largely on the prospective income from his salary as a means of meeting the payments, a calculation which brought him to no little disappointment afterwards. The Rev. James W. Miller relates an incident having reference to the financial relations between Mr. Smith and his people, as follows:

“He found them a willing and united people, but still unable to pay him a salary which would support his family. He in common with all the early ministers must cultivate a farm. He purchased one on credit, promising to pay for it with the salary pledged to him by his people. Years passed away. The pastor was unpaid. Little or no money was in circulation. Wheat was abundant, but there was no market ... Even their salt had to be brought across the mountain on pack-horses ... and twenty-one bushels of wheat had to be given for one of salt. The time came when the last payment must be made, and Mr. Smith was told he must pay or leave his farm. Three years’ salary was now due from his people. For the want of this salary, his land, his improvements, and his hopes of remaining among a beloved people must be abandoned. The people were called together and the case laid before them; they were greatly moved; counsel from on high was sought, plan after plan was proposed and abandoned; the congregations were unable to pay a title of their debts, and no money could be borrowed. In despair they adjourned to meet again the following week. In the meantime it was ascertained that a Mr. Moore ... would grind for them wheat on reasonable terms. At the next meeting it was resolved to carry their wheat to Mr. Moore’s mill; some gave fifty bushels, some more. This was carried from fifteen to twenty-six miles on horses to the mill. In a month word came that the flour was ready to go to market [down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to New Orleans]. Again the people were called together. After an earnest prayer, the question was asked, ‘Who will run the flour to New Orleans?’ This was a startling question. The work was perilous in the extreme; months might pass before the adventurer could hope to return, even though his journey should be fortunate; nearly all the way was wilderness, and gloomy tales had been told of the treacherous Indian. More than one boat’s crew had gone on that journey and came back no more. Who, then, would endure the toil and brave the danger? None volunteered; the young shrank back and the middle-aged had their excuse. The scheme at last seemed likely to fail. At length a hoary-headed man [Robert Smiley], an elder in [Buffalo] church, sixty-four years of age, arose, and to the astonishment of the assembly, said, ‘Here I am, send me.’ The deepest feeling at once pervaded the assembly. To see their venerated old elder thus devote himself for their good melted them all to tears. They gathered around Father Smiley to learn that his resolution was indeed taken; that, rather than lose their pastor, he would brave danger, toil, and even death. ... two young men were induced by hope of large reward to go as his assistants. A day was appointed for their starting. The young and old from far and near, from love to Father Smiley, and their deep interest in the object of his mission, gathered together, and, with their pastor at their head, came down from the church, fifteen miles away, to the bank of the river to bid the old man farewell. Then a prayer was offered up by their pastor, a parting hymn was sung. [Father Smiley, an old

Scotchman] said, 'There, untie the cable, and let us see what the Lord will do for us.' This was done and the boat floated slowly away. More than nine months passed and no word back from Father Smiley. Many a prayer had been breathed for him, but what was fate was unknown. Another Sabbath came; the people came together for worship, and there, on his rude bench before the preacher, composed and devout, sat Father Smiley. After the services, the people were requested to meet [on Monday, so as not to interrupt the Sabbath] to hear the report. All came again. After thanks had been returned to God for his safe return, Father Smiley rose and told his story; that the Lord had prospered his mission; that he had sold his flour for twenty-seven dollars a barrel, and then got safely back. He then drew a large purse, and poured upon the table a larger pile of gold than any of the spectators had ever seen before. The young men were each paid a hundred dollars. Father Smiley was asked his charges. He meekly replied that he thought he ought to have the same as one of the young men though he had not done quite as much work. It was immediately proposed to pay him three-hundred dollars. This he refused till the pastor was paid. Upon counting the money it was found that there was enough to pay what was due Mr. Smith, to advance his salary for the year to come, to reward Father Smiley with three-hundred dollars, and then have a large dividend for each contributor. Thus their debts were paid, their pastor relieved, and while life lasted he broke for them the bread of life. The bones of both pastor and elder have long reposed in the same church-yard [Buffalo], but a grateful posterity still tells the pleasing story of the past."

Clearly, the people of these two churches loved their pastor. Since the churches owed Pastor Smith three years salary, this story probably could not have taken place prior to about 1784 or 1785. James and Jennie Leeper were likely members of Cross Creek Church during this time.

According to A. D. White, *History of The Cross Creek Presbyterian Church*, Pastor Smith was described as follows:

As a preacher, Mr. Smith is described as a "son of thunder"; he dealt so largely with the terrors of the law as to have been called "Hell-Fire Smith" by those who were lacking in reverence. A contemporary minister said of him, "I never heard a man who could so completely unbar the gates of hell and make me look down into the deep abyss, or who could so through open the gates of heaven and let me look upon the insufferable brightness of the great white throne." He was a very devotional man, ever keeping a cloak near his bed in winter to wrap himself in when he would arise in the night for prayer.

As a pastor, Mr. Smith was one who sought out the poor and maimed, the halt and the blind, and compelled them to come in that the Master's house might be filled. He was a respectable scholar and as such assisted a number of excellent young men in their preparations for the gospel ministry

The will of the Rev. Joseph Smith, written in 1788, permits us to imagine the powerful and elegant sermons heard by James and Jennie Leeper and their children. In his will, he left, to each of his children, a *Bible*, to be purchased out of his estate, with the stated purpose to:

“... intimate to them as I am a dying man and in the sight of God, that it is ten thousand times more my will and desire that they should find and possess the pearl of great price hid in the field of Scriptures, than they enjoy anything else which I can bequeath to them, or even ten thousand worlds, were they composed of the purest gold, and all brim full of the richest jewels, and yet be ignorant of the precious treasures in God’s Word that are entirely hid even to the most eagle-eyed and quick-sighted men that are properly of this present world.”

Continuing from A. D. White, *History of The Cross Creek Presbyterian Church:*

His last sermon was preached at the Cross Creek Church on the first Sabbath of April [1792] when he used for his text Galatians 1:8: “Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” ... he reviewed his years with these people in the hope that the gospel which he had preached to them over the years had been a gospel acceptable to God and to His Son, Jesus Christ.

Pastor Smith fell ill during that final sermon and died at his home on April 19, 1792.

In 1793, Rev. Thomas Marquis (also spelled Marques), a former elder and a man trained by Rev. Joseph Smith and Rev. John McMillen, became the second pastor of Cross Creek Church, a post he held until 1826. He took his new post at the height of the Whiskey Rebellion.

The Whiskey Rebellion arose, when, in March 1791, a tax was imposed on the production and sale of domestic distilled spirits, i.e., whiskey, by the new, eastern US government. This tax was imposed to collect revenue to pay off Revolutionary War debt -- owed, in large part, to rich easterners who were seen by the westerners as financial speculators who sat out the actual fighting. Due to the specific nature of this tax, debt repayment was disproportionately imposed on those who had actually fought the battles of the War -- small farmers on the western frontiers of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Kentucky. These small, western farmers, who fought because they believed that a distant government should not have the power to impose taxes, especially resented this new tax. After winning their freedom, they moved west to start their new, free lives. Now, a new, distant government had imposed an unfair tax on their primary means of making a living. To the westerners, this new tax created an unfair burden and rewarded those who had not put their lives and fortunes at risk.

Nowhere was resentment higher than in western Pennsylvania and Ohio County, Virginia, the whiskey brewing center of the new country and highly concentrated with veterans of the War. Western Pennsylvania and Virginia were separated from the east by rugged mountains making eastern markets difficult to reach. The western land was productive and wheat yields were high, but the local market for wheat was virtually non-existent and the cost of transporting wheat to eastern markets was not profitable. By converting wheat to whiskey, farmers from western Pennsylvania and Virginia increased value and reduced transportation costs; whiskey served as their primary source of income. In addition, since cash was virtually non-existent in the west, whiskey became the region’s currency. Western Pennsylvania and Virginia farmers viewed the whiskey tax as unfair because eastern wheat producers could afford to transport their wheat to

market and did not need to make whiskey. In addition, large, eastern distillers were allowed to pay a flat tax on their high levels of whiskey production and, hence, paid a much lower tax per gallon of whiskey; large, eastern distillers thereby gained unfair advantage.

Westerners had additional grievances against the federal government. Western settlers felt the federal government took inadequate action against Spain (which held Louisiana) for refusing to open the Mississippi River for commercial navigation – severely limiting access to the lucrative New Orleans market. Westerners also felt the federal government was not providing adequate defense of the western frontier from Indians. Westerners faced constant attacks from Indians. In 1791, many settlers and their wives and children had been savagely killed by Indians from the northwest. Westerners fought in the Revolutionary War and, yet, they still had to fight.

As a result, many western Pennsylvania and Virginia farmers refused to pay the tax. In time, small groups intimidated and attacked tax collectors, who were literally (on a couple of occasions) tarred and feathered. Then, the “Tom the Tinker” movement emerged; black-faced, anonymous, roving groups threatened the safety and property of those who rented space to tax collectors and even those who, although they despised the tax, chose to obey the law and pay it. After a single warning, families were threatened; barns were burned and stills were destroyed in the night. Eventually, even refusal to participate in the “Tom the Tinker” movement became an offense that resulted in threats. The western community became deeply split because no one knew who they could trust and who was threatening them. During this period (1791 to 1794), western Pennsylvania entered a state of near insurrection and anarchy.

The Whiskey Rebellion climaxed in July 1794, when federal authorities arrived to arrest rebellious whiskey distillers. On July 16 and 17, 1794, at the Battle of Bowers Hill, more than 500 Pennsylvanians attacked the heavily-guarded home of the tax inspector, General Neville, a man who had lived in Washington, Pennsylvania, for many years. Shots were fired; three rebels and perhaps one US soldier were killed. After a white flag was waved from the home, Major George McFarlane, rebel leader, highly-respected citizen of western Pennsylvania, and veteran of the Revolutionary War, stepped into the open; he was shot and killed. Enraged rebels burned the Neville home to the ground and took several captives.

Upon this and previous news, President George Washington sent authorities to ‘negotiate’ with the “rebels”; basically, the authorities demanded complete submission, in writing, to the federal government by every citizen of western Pennsylvania and Ohio County, Virginia. At the same time, President Washington ordered an army to assemble and move west to suppress the violence. [Even this effort led to draft resistance and violence in the east; however, the army was raised.] As an army of more than 12,000 soldiers approached, the rebellion collapsed and most rebel leaders escaped. Twenty rebels were arrested and taken to Philadelphia for trial. Even in Philadelphia, which had little sympathy for the western insurrection, eighteen of the defendants were acquitted. Two men were convicted and then pardoned by President Washington.

The tax on whiskey continued to be highly resented in western Pennsylvania and difficult to collect. This tax and the Whiskey rebellion started our young country on the path to the formation of political parties, the Hamiltonian Federalist Party (generally seeking a centralized

federal government with expanding powers) and the Jeffersonian Republican Party (resisting formation of a centralized, powerful federal government). In 1802, President Thomas Jefferson and a Jeffersonian Republican Congress struck down the federal whiskey tax.

[An excellent, readable account of the Whiskey Rebellion is William Hogeland, *The Whiskey Rebellion: George Washington, Alexander Hamilton, and the Frontier Rebels Who Challenged America's Newfound Sovereignty*, 2006. Per this account, Alexander Hamilton appears to be a highly ambitious and corrupt politician. Substantial research notes and sources are provided. An early, highly interesting documentary source on the Whiskey Rebellion is provided in the related appendix of Alfred Criegh, *History of Western Pennsylvania ...*, 1870 (available online and in many libraries).]

During this period, Robert Marques and the leadership of Cross Creek Church urged its members “to submit to the government and to obey its laws.” Most members of Cross Creek Church refrained from participation in the insurrection and intimidation of tax collectors. From A. D. White, *History of The Cross Creek Presbyterian Church*:

When an amnesty was declared and the signing of the oath of allegiance to the government was proposed, it was promptly subscribed to by a great number of people from the Cross Creek County. It would appear from the list of names of these persons that it could well, be also, a list of the members of the Cross Creek congregation. ... this document ... bears the place and date: Cross Creek, September 11, 1794.

This document (see below) was signed by James Leeper.

Per Crumrine’s history of Washington County (Cross Creek), Rev. Marquis was known as “Silver-Tongued” Marquis, due to the musical nature of his voice and preaching.

The preaching of the Rev. Thomas Marquis has been described in a letter written in 1801 by Sally Hastings (no relation to our Leeper family), who published a book of poems, with a diary of the 21-day trip across the mountains from Donegal (central) Pennsylvania to Washington County [*Poems on Different Subjects: To Which is Added A Descriptive Account of a Family Tour to the West in the Year 1800, in a Letter to a Lady*, published by Wm. Dickson, Lancaster, Pa, 1808]. Her letter provides insight into the preaching James Leeper and his family heard each Sunday:

To hear him is harmony, Though he often gives us the lash of the law in all its severity. He has before now fairly made me jump off my seat in terror and slapping the pulpit ... But the people here would not like him if he would preach in moderation, he is the Dreadfullest Thunderer I ever heard. Nothing seems more at variance than his preaching and his countenance, one is all Terror t’other all Sweetness and Mild persuasion ... But you donnegall people would not bear him at all if he would take fit of sending you to D\_\_\_\_\_ and that he would do without any Ceremony, for things you would scarce think you merited Sutch rough treatment. Oh how he would handle your Dancing, and Singing your Dressing and Gay conversations your giddy round of – visits, your state and refinements, your preparations for Company, and all the etceteras of your Factions. I just

wish to hear him at you. Yet he would do it so nicely, and with such grace, you would love him.” [from *The Planting of Civilization in Western Pennsylvania* by Solon J. Buck and Elizabeth Hawthorn Buck, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1939, pp. 422-423]

During the Whiskey Rebellion years and the late 1790s, church attendance declined as the bitter disagreements of the early 1790s were not forgotten. In the early 1800s, a revival of renewed belief in the gospel of Christ spread across America and western Pennsylvania was included. From A. D. White, *History of The Cross Creek Presbyterian Church*:

In the latter part of 1801 and the early part of 1802, meetings for worship and for the observance of the ordinances of the Church began to show a manifestation of greater interest on the part of the people. Attendance at church services grew numerically, and church members were becoming impressed with the low state of religion among their own numbers, and also they were deeply concerned for the salvation of those still without the pale of the church. To stimulate their thinking about these deeper things of the Spirit, news of spiritual awakenings in other parts of the West and South began coming into the flocks [throughout western Pennsylvania]. ... During the summer of 1802 there was great increase in prayers that showers of spiritual blessing might descend upon the people of these wilderness churches. The gracious presence of the Spirit of God was clearly felt in many of these assemblies. This was especially true during the sacramental season at Cross Creek and Lower Buffalo in the latter part of June 1802, when the “children of God were much quickened and revived, where numbers of sinners were brought under serious concern, and some were hopefully led to Christ.”

The great revival of 1802 is said to have come to the people of western Pennsylvania, “appearing at first as a cloud no larger than a man’s hand coming into sight on the western horizon, and as it approached becoming larger and larger, until it burst upon the whole region as a rushing, mighty wind, engulfing all and carrying all before it as a storm.”

With its beginning in the meeting for prayer, already alluded to, the great movement began to take definite form in the late summer of that fateful year ...

Were James and Jennie Leeper among those praying for spiritual blessings on western Pennsylvania? Rev. Thomas Marquis was a leading preacher in this movement.

At neighboring Three Springs Church, a service started on a Sunday and became a prayer and commitment service, continuing without interruption into the following Sunday and into the next week.

The Rev. Thomas Marquis heard of the state of things at the Three Springs Church and on Monday following the sacrament, he went over to that place to assist. [That church’s pastor] urged him to preach to the assembled people, and he did so, using Hosea 10:12: “Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up the fallow ground; for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.” The effect was immediate and wonderful as the musical voice of the silver-tongued Marquis called upon the people to heed the words of the Old Testament prophet. When the congregation

was dismissed, hundreds remained upon the ground unwilling to leave, and fifty or more were unable to leave through bodily weakness from the effects of this powerful sermon. And so the meeting continued for two more days in that place.

This revival movement culminated on the second Sunday of November 1802 at Upper Buffalo Church, when 10,000 people came from all the churches of the area (some from as far away as 100 miles) to a meeting that lasted from Sunday to Tuesday. Continuing from A. D. White, *History of The Cross Creek Presbyterian Church:*

It was on this occasion, at Upper Buffalo, that the Rev. Elisha McCurdy preached his great “war sermon.” Among the twelve or fifteen ministers on the grounds and conducting simultaneous and almost continuous meetings were the Rev. Thomas Marquis and Dr. John McMillan, both men then being perhaps at the height of their powers as proclaimers of the Gospel of Christ in this western country.

In light of the freshness of the wounds of the Whiskey Rebellion and the effect that this “famous war sermon” of Rev. Elisha McCurdy had on those who heard it, a surviving summary of this sermon is provided as found at <http://www.moreillustrations.com/Illustrations/revival%201.html>, a website on revival sermons.

McCurdy ascended the wagon pulpit with fear and trembling not knowing what he should say. After a hymn and a prayer, he opened the *Bible* at random and his eye fell on the second Psalm – “Why do the heathen rage?”

The Whiskey Rebellion and the terms of amnesty offered by the government were still fresh in the memory of the congregation. McCurdy startled his hearers by announcing that he would preach a sermon on politics. He said he had just received a letter from the government, informing him that an insurrection had taken place and that measures had been taken to suppress the rebellion, and amnesty had been proclaimed to all who would return to their duty. Since many of the rebels were present in his congregation, he said he would read them the proclamation of the government.

He then read the second Psalm as describing the condition of sinners and announcing the terms of the amnesty offered to them in Christ (v. 12): “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry.” During the sermon which followed, many fell to the ground, crying out in anguish that they had been sinners against God. The scene was like the close of a battle in which every tenth man had been wounded.

This sermon on the second Psalm, famous as McCurdy’s War Sermon, played a mighty part in the Great Revival, which swept the country in the first decade of the nineteenth century and left behind it the missionary society, the prayer meeting, and the agitation against slavery and strong drink.

#### Psalm 2 (King James)

Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing?

The Kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against his anointed saying,

Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall have them in derision.

Then he shall speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.  
 Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion.  
 Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.  
 Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.  
 Be wise now therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth.  
 Serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling.  
 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Could James and Jennie Leeper and their family have been at this famous service and heard that famous sermon? Or heard about it afterwards? Could they have remained unaffected by these times, when their own church and pastor were so deeply a part of this revival?

In 1803, the log building, built in 1784, that served as Cross Creek Church burned to the ground. The congregation quickly moved to rebuild their church. On November, 14, 1804, church services were held for the first Sunday at the new stone church. Continuing from A. D. White, *History of The Cross Creek Presbyterian Church:*

Following the years of the Great Revival, the Church at Cross Creek, under the faithful ministrations of the Rev. Thomas Marquis, continuing to grow in numbers, in usefulness to the community, and in importance as one of the churches of the Ohio Presbytery. Mr. Marquis was a popular and persuasive preacher and his fame as an orator was known far and wide over the Presbyterian Church of that day. In the judicatories of the Church, he was known as a wise and judicious counselor. ...

As a searcher for souls to bring into the Kingdom, Mr. Marquis was remarkably successful, and during his ministry at Cross Creek upwards of four hundred persons were added to the church roll. ...

...after nearly thirty-three years in Cross Creek Church, [Rev. Thomas Marquis] resigned the pastoral office and preached his farewell sermon on October 3, 1826. ...

Since James Leeper died on August 16, 1826, and he is buried in Cross Creek Church Cemetery, Thomas Marquis most likely presided at his funeral ceremony. Mary (Jennie) Amspoker Leeper died on November 9, 1826 and is buried in Cross Creek Church Cemetery; perhaps, Rev. Marquis returned to the church to preside at her funeral ceremony.

In April 1827, Rev. John Stockton, D.D. became the third pastor of Cross Creek Church, a position he held for 50 years, until 1877. He survived Martha, John, and Jane Leeper, the three children of James and Jennie Leeper who remained in the Cross Creek/Jefferson region. Jane Leeper, the last surviving Leeper in the Cross Creek/Jefferson region died in 1868.

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On April 4, 1786, James Leeper (not necessarily our James) purchased 340 acres (called "Round Bottom") in Lower Strabane Township, Washington Co., Pennsylvania [*History of Washington*



*County, Pennsylvania with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men*, Boyd Crumine, L. H. Leverts & Co., Philadelphia, 1882, Vol. 2, p. 733]. South Strabane Township (south of Washington, Pennsylvania) is some distance from the known James Leeper farm. This purchase could have been made by one of the many men of that time named James Leeper from throughout Pennsylvania and Virginia.

By 1787, James Leeper appears to have established ownership of the farm he claimed in 1780, as this date is the first time James Leeper appears to have paid taxes on the land and his belongings.

In 1787, James Leeper of Ohio Co., Virginia, paid personal property taxes on himself, three horses, and four cows.

Per the 1790 US census, only one James Leeper is found in Ohio Co., Virginia or Washington Co., Pennsylvania. James Leeper is found in Washington Co. (township not listed), Pennsylvania; this household consisted of one free white male over 16, four free white males under 16, and six free white females (for a total of 11 persons). As of 1790, the known family of our James Leeper (based on children who survived to adulthood) consisted of one male over 16 (James Leeper, ~44), three males under 16 (James, ~15; John, ~14; William, ~8), and four females (Mary Jane "Jennie", 44; Martha, ~16; Ann, ~15; Jane ~8). Identities of the additional male under age 16 and the two additional females are not known. If James and Jennie Leeper had children who died young, burial at Cross Creek Cemetery might be expected. However, according to *History of Cross Creek Graveyard and Cemetery* [James Simpson, 1894], the only persons named Leeper buried in Cross Creek Church Cemetery are James and Mary Leeper and three of their adult children: Martha, John, and Jane Leeper. Considering that, for the children known to have survived to adulthood, a six-year gap exists between John Leeper (born 1776) and William and Jane Leeper (born ~1782), three children (ages 8 to 14) could have been born in this six-year period. Since only children known to have survived to adulthood are mentioned in the wills of James Leeper, John Leeper, and Jane Leeper (see below), these three unidentified persons (listed in the 1790 census) could be children (who died prior to 1800 and were buried on the farm), other relatives, or unrelated persons. For the 1790 census, the entry prior to James Leeper is either James or John McClean and the following entry is John Miller. [A Miller family is believed to have lived near our James Leeper.] As an alternate explanation for the additional members of the household, this census record could represent the household of the James Leeper who purchased "Round Bottom" in Lower Strabane Township (considering that this census record does not list the township).

The Whiskey Rebellion is described above. On September 11, 1794, James Leeper, of Cross Creek Township, Washington Co., Pennsylvania, signed an oath of allegiance to the United States, which was required to ensure the end of the Whiskey Rebellion:

I do solemnly, in the presence of Almighty God, swear and declare that I will faithfully and sincerely support the Constitution of the United States, and obey all laws thereof, and will discontinue opposition thereto, except by way of petition and remonstrance, all attempts to resist, obstruct, or illtreat the officers of the United States in the execution of their respective duties, so help me God.

In pursuance of the oath hereto annexed, I do hereby engage and associate to and with all others who may subscribe to these presents to countenance and protect the officers of the United States in execution of their duties according to the law, and to discover and bring to justice all persons who may be concerned, directly or indirectly, in illegally hindering or obstructing the said officers, or any of them, in the execution of their duty, or in doing any manner of violence to them,. In witness of all which I have hereunto subscribed my hand the day and year opposite my name.

This document was created to allow the citizens of Washington County to accept the pardon offered by the United States government for crimes committed during the rebellion, if any, and, if they had committed no crimes, to demonstrate their desire to return the country to a state of peace. Signing of this document was, per various statements and understandings, not meant to imply guilt. This oath of allegiance was signed by a large number of persons from several townships of Washington County; among the names of those who signed in Cross Creek Township is found James Leeper, John Leeper, Samuel Leeper, James Clark, and John Lawther [from Alfred Creigh, *History of Washington County*, 1870]. The risks taken by publically signing this document should not be underestimated. As of September 1794, vigilante forces continued to roam Washington County threatening those who signed this document. To end the insurrection, a military force was stationed in western Pennsylvania.

A Leeper was “among the earliest teachers ... at the McMillen school-house” in Cross Creek, which may have been in existence as early as 1796 [*History of Washington County, Pennsylvania with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men*, Boyd Crumrine, L. H. Leverts & Co., Philadelphia, 1882]. Our James Leeper would have been ~50 years old in 1796. Martha Leeper, eldest daughter of James and Jennie Leeper, would have been ~22 years old. John Leeper, eldest son of James and Jennie, would have been ~21 years old. Since a Samuel Leeper and a John Leeper (and possibly other persons named Leeper) were living in Washington County at this time, numerous persons named Leeper could have been this teacher.

James Leeper is mentioned as a landowner in, but not a resident of, East and West Crumrine Townships [Alfred Creigh, *History of Washington County*, 1870]. This man could have been any number of men named James Leeper.

On Tuesday March 26, 1797, James Leeper of Brooke County filed a suit against Samuel Leeper and others. This record on page 108 (page 174 of transcribed records) of County Court Order Book # ( May 1797 to August 1898) has been examined by Steve Leeper. The case was a “chancery” suit (which generally dealt with the settlement of estates) and it was continued; however, no further records of a suit between James Leeper and Samuel Leeper could be found. The use of the term “chancery” supports the following speculation by Mary Szymanowski (4X great granddaughter of James Leeper), who also believes that details of this suit are described in records kept on microfilm in Morgantown, WV. Samuel Leeper (1748-1805) of Washington Co., Pennsylvania, is generally considered to be the son of James Leeper of Chanceford, York Co., Pennsylvania; James Leeper of Chanceford is thought to have died ~1795. This suit may have been related to the settlement of the estate of James Leeper of Chanceford; if additional records of this lawsuit were found, such information could prove that James and Samuel Leeper

were brothers and that James Leeper (1746-1826) was the son of James Leeper of Chanceford. Since no further records are found of a suit between James Leeper and Samuel Leeper, a reasonable conclusion is that this suit was settled out of court.

In 1799, three feet of snow fell on Washington County in 72 hours.

Per the 1800 US census, two households headed by James Leiper are found in Cross Creek Township, Washington Co., Pennsylvania. The James Leiper household consisting of one male (age: 16 to 25) is possibly James Leeper (age: 25 to 26), son of James and Jennie Leeper. This James Leiper household also consisted of one female between 16 and 25 (wife) and two children under 10 (son and daughter). The James Leiper household consisting of only one male (age: 26 to 44), with no other persons, presents difficulty. James Leeper (born 1746) would be ~54 at the time of this census. The age of this James Leiper is wrong. In addition, Mary Leeper (~54) and four children [Martha Leeper (~26), John Leeper (~24), William Leeper (~18), and Jane Leeper (~18)] are missing. Did the census taker visit when the family was gone and just guess about this household or was another James Leeper living in Cross Creek Township? Making sense of this census record is difficult. William Leeper, son of James and Mary/Jennie Leeper, may have been in Norfolk, Virginia, in 1800; perhaps the entire family was gone at the time of the census. Interestingly, just prior to the entry for these two James Leipers is Samuel Leiper (over 45: household presumably consisting of a wife and five children) and, just following the entry for these two James Leipers is John Leiper (over 45: household presumably consisting of a wife and two daughters). The households of Samuel Leiper and John Leiper approximate expectations of the families of the Samuel Leeper and the John Leeper known to be the sons of James Leeper of Chanceford. Proximity to the Samuel and John Leeper, who are believed to be the sons of James Leeper of Chanceford, provides evidence that James Leeper (elder) of this 1800 census could be the son of James Leeper of Chanceford. One other observation deserves mention: the entry after John Leiper is Alexander Lawthers, possibly the grandfather of Eleanor Lawther (daughter of James and Jennette Shaw Lawther), who married William Leeper (son of James and Jennie Leeper)].

Per the 1810 census, James Leeper (transcribed as Luper by Ancestry.com) was head of a household in Brooke Co., Virginia, that consisted (extremely difficult to read) of one male over 45 (presumably James), one female over 45 (presumably Jennie), two males between 16 and 25 [presumably John (~34) and William (~28)], and two females between 16 and 25 [presumably Martha (~36) and Jane (~28)]. Interestingly, the next entry was John Armshpoker, son of Jonas and Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker and possible nephew of Mary Jane "Jennie" Amspoker Leeper.

Per the 1820 census, James Leeper (transcribed as Luper by Ancestry.com) was head of a household in Wellsburg Township, Brooke Co., Virginia, that consisted of one male over 45 (James), one female over 45 (Jennie), one male between 27 and 45 (John, 44), and two females (interestingly) between 17 and 26 [presumably Martha (actually ~46) and Jane (actually ~38)].

The will (Deed Book 2D 418, page 236) of James Leeper was obtained in 1997 by Stephen A. Leeper from Mary Szymanowski of West Virginia, the great great great granddaughter of Ann Leeper Dillon, the daughter of this James Leeper. She was contacted by Stephen A. Leeper via

the Washington County Genealogy website. Spelling is per the will. The estate of James Leeper was valued at \$870.62.

## WILL OF JAMES LEEPER

In the name of God, Amen.

I James Leeper of Brooke County and State of Virginia being weak in body but in perfect mind and memory calling to mind the mortality of my body and knowing that it is appointed to all men once to die do make and ordain this my last will and testament that is to say principally and first of all I give and recommend my soul unto the hand of God that gave it and my body to the earth to be buried in a decent manner and sutch worldly estate as God has been pleased to bless me in this life with I do hereby give and dispose of in the following manner and form.

Imprenus I give and bequeath to my beloved wife Mary Leeper the full privilege of all the house with the furniture therein except sutch as is hereafter mentioned with a plentiful supply of the necessaries of life during her natural life which is to be raised and taken out of my whole estate.

2nd item I do give and bequeath to my son James Leeper one dollar also to my daughter Ann Dillon the sum of one dollar and to my son William Leeper the sum of one dollar to be paid out of my estate.

3rd I give and bequeath to my son John Leeper the plantation whereon I now live with all the rights and privileges thereof but not to have possession till after death of me and my wife. Also I give and bequeath to the aforesaid John Leeper all my farming utentials and personall property except sutch as is hereafter mentioned.

I do give and bequeath to my daughter Martha one horse by the name of Medly one sadle cow four sheep one bed and furniture one kettle and brick oven one half of the loom and tacklings with seventy five dollars to be paid in two years after decease of me and my wife. I do give and bequeath to my daughter Jane Leeper one horse known by the name of Samson one sadle one cow and four sheep one bed and furniture one kettle one brick oven one half of the loom and tackling also seventy five dollars to be paid in three years after the decease of me and my wife. The above sumes to be raised out of my whole estate.

Also I do hereby constitute mak and ordain John Leeper, John Amspoker and Alexander Smith to be my only and sole executors of this my last will and testament and do hereby ratify and confirm this my last and no other to be my last will and testament.

Signed sealed acknowledged and declared by me this 14 day of August 1818.

James Leeper (SEAL)  
Done in the presence of  
Nicholas Headington  
Robert Magee

I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true copy of the last will and testament of James Leeper deceased admitted to record in the County Court of Brooke on the 31 day of March 1828.

Adam Kuhn C.B.C.

The executors and witnesses of this will provide evidence that James Leeper is the son of James Leeper of Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania. An extended summary of the case for this relationship is provided below. A small portion of the evidence follows. John Leeper is the son of this James Leeper. John Amspoker is the son of Jonas and Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker. Alexander Smith is possibly the son of Robert and Mary Leeper Smith of York Co., Pennsylvania. Elizabeth Leeper and Mary Leeper are the daughters of James and Margaret McKee Leeper (of York Co., Penn.). Alexander Smith and John Amspoker are likely the nephews of the James Leeper of this will, indicating that this James Leeper is the brother of Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker and Mary Leeper Smith and the son of James and Margaret Leeper of Chanceford Township, York Co, Pennsylvania. An Alexander Smith, who died December 9, 1848, at the age 83 years, is buried in Cross Creek Presbyterian Church Cemetery; Jane Smith, wife of Alexander Smith, who died March 1, 1851, at the age of 85, is buried beside him. Finally, the name Robert Magee is a variation of McKee. Nicholas Headington was a neighbor.

Regarding the inheritance of James, William, and Ann, the bequest of one dollar indicates that these children received their share of their parent's estate at the time of their marriages.

James and Mary Leeper are buried in Cross Creek Presbyterian Church Cemetery in Washington County, Pennsylvania (not to be confused with Cross Creek Cemetery in Brooke Co., WV). John, Martha, and Jane Leeper are also buried in Cross Creek Cemetery (at some distance from the markers for James and Mary/Jennie Leeper). [To reach Cross Creek Church Cemetery, start from Weirton, WV. Take US 22 to PA State 18. Turn right (South). Go 6 or 7 miles to Altasburg. Turn right on Cross Creek Road and go about 2 miles.] The church is brick and is surrounded by the cemetery. Mary Szymanowski reported that she had seen and photographed all five Leeper markers; relevant data had been recorded from the stones and the photos of the stones. Steve Leeper recalls having found and seen the stones for James, Mary/Jennie, Martha, John, and Jane Leeper during a visit to the cemetery in the mid 1990s.

According to his original tombstone [Cross Creek Presbyterian Church Cemetery in Washington County, Pennsylvania], James Leeper died on August 16, 1826, aged 80 years (born: 1745/1746). According to her tombstone (also in the Cross Creek Cemetery), Mary (Jennie) Amspoker Leeper died at the age of 80 on November 9, 1826 (born: 1745/46). [These dates are also provided in *History of The Cross Creek Graveyard and Cross Creek Cemetery*, Originally compiled in 1894 by James Simpson, Republished in 1942, Reprinted in 1969, 1989, by Cross Creek Presbyterian Church.] In the late-1990s, descendants of James and Jennie Leeper placed a prominent marble marker near the original markers of James and Mary Amspoker Leeper (located just a few feet from the corner of Cross Creek Road and Parker Road, across the street from the church); the new marker mistakenly lists the year of death for James and Jennie Leeper as 1828. The stone for Jonas Amspoker is located very close to the markers for James and Mary Leeper. Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker is buried nearby (but the stone may be damaged).

John Amspoker, as referenced in the will of James Leeper, may have been the nephew of Mary (Jennie) Amspoker Leeper; he was buried in the Cross Creek Cemetery, having died on February 23, 1852, at the age of 73.

Per information passed down through the families of William Leeper and Ann Leeper Dillon, James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper had six children (all of whom lived into adulthood):

MARTHA LEEPER: Martha “Mattie” Leeper, daughter of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, was born ~1774. She never married and spent seventy years on the Leeper farm.

She was likely a member of Cross Creek Church from an early age.

In 1849, Martha Leeper, along with her brother, John Leeper, and sister, Jane Leeper, helped found Pine Grove Church, located in the southwest corner of the future Jefferson Township, Washington Co., Pennsylvania, ~2 miles from the Leeper farm. John and Martha Leeper were in their seventies and Jane Leeper was in her late sixties. Perhaps they helped found this new church because they wanted to be able to travel a shorter and easier distance to church.

The short history of Pine Grove Church is summarized by Alvin D. White [*History of Cross Creek Presbyterian Church*, 1969; available from Cross Creek Presbyterian Church, pp. 45-46]:

... in 1849 ... several of the families living within the area of present Jefferson Township, the Millers, Hays, Leepers and Wrights, to name a few, were dismissed to help in the organization of the Pine Grove Presbyterian Church on Scott's Run near the West Virginia line. This congregation was never a strong one and after a few years' precarious existence, it finally had to bow to the inevitable and to pass from the scene as quietly as it had been born. It is difficult at this late date to assess the reasons for the organization of this small congregation. True it was that it enabled the few families which composed it to attend divine services nearer their homes. A good example would be that of George Miller, Jr., who lived where his great grandson, Albert Miller, now lives on Bancroft Farm in the southwestern part of Jefferson Township. He lived within one and one-half miles of the Pine Grove Church in comparison with the seven miles one way which he had to travel in coming to Cross Creek. And that was quite an item in the days when the fastest mode of travel was by horse and buggy, or in times of deep mud roads, a saddle horse, or even walking on foot. So these few families did succeed in bringing the church nearer their homes by founding the Pine Grove Church. But it would seem now that its potential for membership was always small, and one wonders what other factors beside distance prompted their actions in organizing this church. The writer surmises that there might have been some political considerations involved, since the Pine Grove Church was organized about the time of the agitation for the separation of the territory now comprising Jefferson Township from the mother township of Cross Creek, but again, the lapse of time and the lack of confirming information preclude an exact analysis of the situation at that time. The Pine Grove Church struggled for its existence until about 1886 beyond which time the records of Washington Presbytery regarding this congregation are silent.

A more complete history of Pine Grove Church was published by A. D. White in two newspaper articles, entitled “Forgotten Churches of the Cross Creek Country” (*Burgettstown Enterprise*, Wednesday April 22, 1970, p. 5, and Wednesday April 29, 1970, p. 3).

From the minutes of Session of Cross Creek Church (December 21, 1849): The moderator (Dr. John Stockwell) reported that the following members had obtained letters of dismissal – Elder George Miller and Margaret, his wife, Mrs. Edit Wright, Mrs. Nancy McConnell, Mrs. Nancy Lowthers, Misses Martha and Jane Leeper, and Enoch Hayes and Nancy, his wife – to join the Church of Pine Grove.

Martha Leeper (age 72) and Jane Leeper (age 63) are found in the 1850 census for District 3 of Brooke Co., Virginia. Martha Leeper was ~76 years old in 1850.

Per her gravestone, Martha Leeper died on June 2, 1850 at the age of 76. Martha Leeper is buried in the Cross Creek Church Cemetery, Washington Co, Pennsylvania. Her will was probated in 1850 and names her sister Jane Leeper as an heir.

JAMES LEEPER: James Leeper, son of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, was born ~1775. Per the will of his sister, Jane Leeper (see below), this James Leeper had children and he died prior to September 1858. According to the Leeper history of Laverne Leeper, James Leeper settled in Jefferson Co., Ohio. This paragraph contains all the information known with certainty about James Leeper, son of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper. The following information is speculation or (in the case of the conclusions of Jerry D. Leeper) is shown to likely be untrue.

According to some sources, James Leeper married a widow by the name of Wilson (born about 1780). Interestingly, William Leeper, the brother of this James Leeper, is known, in his second marriage, to have married a widow named Martha Wilson (maiden name was Holmes).

Per the 1800 census, two households headed by a James Leiper are found in Cross Creek Township, Washington Co., Pennsylvania. The James Leiper household consisting of one male (between 26 and 44) is presumably the household of James Leeper, son of James and Jennie Leeper (who would have been 25 to 26); this James Leiper household also had one female between 25 and 44 (the wife of this James Leeper?), and a boy and a girl under the age of 10. If this census record represents the household of James Leeper, son of James and Jennie Leeper, then this James Leeper married between 1790 and 1800 (likely in Washington Co., Pennsylvania); a marriage record is not found for a James Leeper in Ohio or Brooke Co., Virginia between those years.

Mary Szymanowski [descendant of James and Jennie Leeper and their daughter, Ann Leeper Dillon; Mary was an ardent Leeper family researcher, from whom Stephen A. Leeper received substantial information] found the following record: In April 1806, James Leeper of Jefferson County, Ohio, patented 160 acres (in Stark or Archer Township): SE ¼ Sec. 3, Township 11, Range 5; the final payment was made on Aug. 15, 1811; James Leeper (Assignee of Henry Dillon) owned 320 acres East ½, SE ¼, Sec. 3, Township 11, Range 5 in, what was then Archer Township of Harrison Co., Ohio; paid by Aug. 12, 1816. [Mention of Henry Dillon indicates that the James Leeper of this record was James Leeper, son of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper – as his sister had married a Henry Dillon.]

A James Leeper is found in Archer Township, Harrison Co., Ohio, in the 1820 and 1830 census records. Per the 1820 census, this James Leeper household consisted of one white male and one

white female over the ages of 45, one male under the age of 10, one male between the ages of 10 and 15, three females under the age of 10, and one female between the ages of 16 and 25. Per the 1830 census, this James Leeper household consisted of one male between the ages of 60 and 69, one female between the ages of 50 and 59, one male between the ages of 10 and 14, two males between the ages of 20 and 29, one female between the ages of 10 and 14, and two females between the ages of 15 and 19. Based on this land record and these census records, perhaps the James Leeper of Archer Township, Harrison Co., Ohio, is James Leeper, the son of James and Jennie Leeper. A James Leeper is not found in Archer Township, Harrison Co., Ohio, after the 1830 census. A James Leeper is not found in Jefferson Co., Ohio census records (1810 to 1860).

An Elizabeth Leeper (age 76) is found in the 1860 census of Steubenville, Jefferson Co., Ohio, living in the household of John Dauner/Danner (age 32), with Elizabeth Dauner/Danner (age 31), and Elizabeth Dauner/Danner (age 13). This finding implies that Elizabeth Leeper was a widow living with her daughter, Elizabeth Leeper Dauner/Danner. Based on the will of Jane Leeper (see below), the widow, Elizabeth Leeper, in this census, is highly likely to be the widow of James Leeper, son of James and Jennie Leeper – as Jane Leeper left an inheritance to Margaret Danner, legatee of James Leeper (the brother of Jane Leeper).

The following information about the family of James Leeper is the speculation based on relevant marriage and census records found by Mary Szymanowski [Leeper researcher].

James Leeper, son of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, may have married a woman named Elizabeth and had the following children (born in the early 1800s): Mary (married Samuel Boyd), Elizabeth (married Daniel Shively), Jane (married a Layport or Laporte), Lettica (married a Lyle), William (possibly married Maria), John (no further information), and Margaret (married John Danner) Leeper.

Jefferson Co., Ohio, records show the following (potentially relevant) marriages: Daniel Shively and Elizabeth Leeper, June 26, 1825; Letitia Leeper and Ishmael Lisle, Jan. 8, 1835.

A widowed Mary Boyd is found in the 1850 census of Jefferson Co., Ohio. She had three children: Samuel (23), Martha (12), and George (8). Mary Boyd was 48 years old, putting her birth in about 1802.

William and Jane Layport are found in the 1850 census of Harrison Co., Ohio. William Layport, age 37, is a farmer, from Jefferson Co., Ohio. Jane is 25 years old, indicating she was born in 1825. [If her father had been James Leeper, son of James and Jennie Leeper, her father would have been ~50 years old at her birth.] Their children are Edward (5 ½) and Leslie (a male); a Christopher Maummy is also living with them (no age).

John and Margaret Danner are found the 1850 census of Jefferson Co., Ohio. John Danner, age 32, is a spinner. Margaret is 31 years old, indicating she was born in 1819. They have one child (Elizabeth Danner, age 13). Elizabeth Leeper, age 76, is living in this household, indicating: James Leeper, died prior to 1850, leaving Elizabeth as a widow, and Elizabeth Leeper, the wife



of James Leeper, was born about 1774. This information is consistent with the will of Jane Leeper, the sister of James Leeper (see below).

In his Leeper family history, Jerry D. Leeper (Leeper family researcher, with whom Stephen A. Leeper corresponded) asserts: James Leeper, son of James and Mary Jane “Jennie” Amspoker Leeper, married Elizabeth Kimball [daughter of Moses Kimble/Kimball, born ~1747, and Jemina Clement]. The assertion that James Leeper, son of James and Jennie Leeper, is the James Leeper that married Elizabeth Kimball may be incorrect. Although a James Leeper did marry Elizabeth Kimball on May 16, 1805 [Early Marriages of Jefferson County, Ohio, 1789-1838 (compiled by Mary Donaldson Sinclair in the 1930s; published by Dohrman J. Sinclair in 1982; available from the Steubenville Public Library, Steubenville, Jefferson Co., Ohio)], according to descendants of James and Elizabeth Kimball Leeper (e.g., letter of Margaret Weber, Waverly, Ohio, to Mary Szymanowski, dated Jan. 22, 1968), the father of the James Leeper who married Elizabeth Kimball was Archibald Leeper. A James Leeper is found in Freeport Township, Harrison Co., Ohio in the 1820, 1830, and 1850 census records; the James Leeper of Freeport Township, Harrison Co., Ohio, is likely the James Leeper who married Elizabeth Kimball.

ANN LEEPER: Ann (or Anna) Leeper, daughter of James and Mary Jane “Jennie” Amspoker Leeper, was born ~1775. She married Henry Dillon (born ~1771 and possibly the son or brother of John Dillon of Washington Co., Penn.). In one census, Henry Dillon was born in Virginia (but in 1771, present-day Washington Co., Penn. was claimed by Virginia). In 1810, Henry and Anna Leeper Dillon lived in Washington Co., Penn. Later they moved to Harrison Co., Ohio, and then to Vinton Co., Ohio.

Ann Leeper Dillon died in 1859. Henry Dillon died on Sept. 13, 1861. They are buried at Stevens Cemetery (now known as Robb Cemetery) in Elk Township, Vinton Co., Ohio. [To reach this cemetery, take highway 93 north to county road 23 (Locust Grove Rd.) and turn left. About 3.5 miles down this road, turn right on Robb Cemetery Rd. After traveling 300 yards and crossing a bridge, Robb Cemetery is on left.]

In addition to the children listed below, Henry and Ann Leeper Dillon had two sons who were said to have moved to Montana and were never heard from again.

The known children of Henry and Anna Leeper Dillon are:

Martha Dillon: Martha Dillon, daughter of Henry and Ann Leeper Dillon, was born ~1801. She married first to Washington Larkin (born about 1801) and second to John Wortman (born about 1800 and died about 1847 in Mahaska Co., Iowa). Based on the birth dates of the children Martha Dillon, she married John Wortman after 1824 and before 1839. John and Martha Dillon (Larkin) Wortman apparently settled in Mahaska County, Iowa, where they both died in 1847.

Washington and Martha Dillon Larkin had at least two children:

Mary Larkin: Mary Larkin, daughter of Washington and Martha Dillon Larkin, was born ~1824 and married John Nickells.

Washington Larkin, Jr.: Nothing more is known of Washington Larkin, Jr., son of Washington and Martha Dillon Larkin.

John and Martha Dillon Wortman had three children:

Henry Wortman: Henry Wortman, son of John and Martha Dillon Wortman, was born ~1839 in Iowa.

John Wortman: John Wortman, son of John and Martha Dillon Wortman, was born on July 4, 1843, in Iowa.

Martin Van Wortman: Martin Van Wortman, son of John and Martha Dillon Wortman, was born on July 4, 1843 in Iowa. He married Mary Laird, daughter of Jesse and Anne Sherwood Marshall Laird. He died in Jackson, Ohio, about 1933. Martin and Mary Sherwood Van Wortman had at least one child:

Edward Wortman: Edward Wortman, son of Martin and Mary Laird Wortman, married Mary Alice Ball about 1900 in Jackson, Ohio. Edward and Mary Ball Wortman had at least one daughter:

Alice Francis Wortman: Alice Wortman, daughter of Edward and Mary Ball Wortman, was born August 31, 1903, in Jackson, Ohio. Alice Wortman married Alfred Carl Wieland. Alfred and Alice Wortman Wieland had at least one daughter:

Louisa Mary Wieland: Louisa Mary Wieland, daughter of Alfred and Alice Wortman Wieland, was born on September 28, 1924 in Roseville, Michigan. She married Robert P. Szymanowski on February 8, 1948 in Port Huron, Michigan. Robert and Mary Wieland Szymanowski had two daughters: Theresa Clare (born 1/4/54, in Arlington, VA) and Karen Ann (born August 16, 1955; died May 29, 1972). Theresa married, first, James Berdine (in 1976) and, second, Martin John Gumtz (in 1986). Mary Szymanowski has one grandchild, Stephen Michael Gumtz, born January 8, 1991, in Sarasota, Florida.

Mary Szymanowski, still living as of 2011, was an ardent Leeper and Dillon family researcher. She graciously and generously shared her substantial research findings with this author, Stephen Allen Leeper.

James Dillon: James Dillon, son of Henry and Ann Leeper Dillon, was born ~1804. He married Rachel McQueen on January 5, 1825, and they lived in Harrison, Carroll, and Vinton Counties in Ohio. James and Rachel McQueen Dillon had six children: Ann (born ~1826 in Harrison County, Ohio), Esther (born ~1831), Mary D. (born ~1833), John R. (born ~1836), Henry (born ~1838), and Lydia M. (born ~ 1840 and may have married a Cozad?).

William Dillon: William Dillon, son of Henry and Ann Leeper Dillon, was born ~1808 and married Sarah Scott(?). They lived in Carroll and Vinton Counties in Ohio. William and Sarah Dillon had four children:

John Dillon: John Dillon, son of William and Sarah Dillon, was born ~1834 and married Araville Stevens on July 22, 1858; they lived in Vinton County, Ohio.

Sarah S. Dillon: Sarah Dillon, daughter of William and Sarah Dillon, was born ~1841. She married Levi Pursley on January 17, 1859 in Vinton County, Ohio.

Jasper Dillon: Jasper Dillon, son of William and Sarah Dillon, was born ~1844. On July 22, 1858, he married Sarah E. Ullom. Jasper and Sara Ullom Dillon had two daughters: Frances, who married a Weisenbarger, and Lillina, who married a Swain.

Louisa Dillon: Louisa Dillon, daughter of William and Sarah Dillon, was born ~1847.

Jane Dillon: Jane Dillon, son of Henry and Ann Leeper Dillon, was born ~1811 (perhaps 1814/1815, per listing in 1860 census of Vinton Co., Ohio). She married Amon McQueen. They lived in Carroll and Vinton Counties, Ohio. They had a daughter named Harriet, born ~1839. Per the 1860 Carroll County census, Henry Dillon (father of this Jane Dillon) was living in his daughter's household; she appeared to be a widow (and may be listed in this census as James McQueen). Jane McQueen is listed in the will of Jane Leeper, daughter of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper.

John L. Dillon: John Dillon, son of Henry and Ann Leeper Dillon, was born ~1812 in Pennsylvania. He married Eleanor Huston [daughter of John C. and Nancy McQueen Huston, (possibly) of Carroll Co., Ohio)]. John and Eleanor Dillon had six children:

Mary Ann Dillon: Mary Dillon, daughter of John and Eleanor Huston Dillon, was born ~1837.

Martha J. Dillon: Martha Dillon, daughter of John and Eleanor Huston Dillon, was born ~1838 and married a Billingham.

Nancy Dillon: Nancy Dillon, daughter of John and Eleanor Huston Dillon, was born ~1840. On August 13, 1863, she married Henry Westcott and they lived in Vinton County, Ohio.

Rachel Dillon: Rachel Dillon, daughter of John and Eleanor Huston Dillon, was born ~1843 and married twice: first to Isaac K. Clark (August 13, 1863) and second to a Nixon.

Emma Dillon: Emma Dillon, daughter of John and Eleanor Huston Dillon, was born ~1845. On January 17, 1859, she married Abram Clark.

Ben Dillon: Nothing more is known of Ben Dillon, son of John and Eleanor Dillon.

JOHN LEEPER: John Leeper, son of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, was born ~1776. He never married and lived his entire life on the Leeper farm with his father, mother, and two sisters, Martha and Jane Leeper.

Per the 1830 census, a John Leeper household, with three persons (ages 20 to 49) is found in Brooke Co., Virginia. John Leeper would have been ~54 years old. Martha Leeper would have been ~56 years old. Jane Leeper would have been ~48 years old. A John Leeper household was not found in Washington Co., Pennsylvania.

Per the 1840 census a John Leeper household is found in Brooke Co., Virginia, with 2 or 3 persons under 20 years of age and 2 to 3 persons 20 to 49 years of age. John Leeper would have been ~64 years old. Martha Leeper would have been ~66 years old and Jane Leeper would have been ~58 years of age. A John Leeper household was not found in Washington Co., Pennsylvania in this census.

In 1849, John Leeper, along with his sisters, Martha and Jane Leeper, were dismissed from Cross Creek Church to help found Pine Grove Church, located in the southwest corner of the future Jefferson Township, Washington Co., Pennsylvania (near the old site of Chriswell's/Creswell's Mill (later known as Kidd's Mill)). The new Pine Grove Church was ~2 miles from the Leeper farm. At this time, John and Martha Leeper were in their seventies and Jane Leeper was in her late sixties. Perhaps they helped form this new church because they wanted to alleviate travelling hardships related to their age and distance to Cross Creek.

John Leeper is mentioned several times in the history of Pine Grove Church; he was a founding elder and the entries create something of a mystery about the life of John Leeper. The following entries are extracted from Pine Grove Church documents.

December 3, 1849: Commenced with Prayer. In pursuance of public notice given at the close of sermon on Sabbath last, the members of Pine Grove congregation met and proceeded to the election of elders according to the form of government of the Presbyterian Church.

The following persons were elected:

George Miller

Enoch Hays

John Leeper

David Harvey, Moderator of the Meeting

December 8, 1849: Congregation met and proceeded to the Installation and ordination of the following elders: George Miller, Enoch Hays, John Leeper.

December 8, 1849: Session met according to order. The following members were present: David Harvey, Moderator; George Miller, Enoch Hays, John Leeper. Elders opened with prayer. The session then proceeded to the examination of William Pettybone for admission into said church. The session being satisfied with his examination unanimously voted to receive him as a member of said church. Close with prayer.

David Harvey/Moderator

June 18, 1850: Session met according to order. The following members were present: David Harvey, Moderator; George Miller, Enoch Hays, John Leeper. Opened with prayer. The session then proceeded to the examination of Mrs. Fleming for admission into the Church. The session

being satisfied with the examination voted unanimously to receive her as a member of said church. Closed in prayer.

David Harvey/Moderator

September 28, 1850: Session met according to order. The following members were present: David Harvey, Moderator; George Miller, Enoch Hays, John Leeper, elders. Opened with prayer. Mrs. Barber presented a certificate from the Church at Cross Creek and recommendation to the Church at Pine Grove. Session voted to receive her as a member of said church. Closed with prayer.

David Harvey/Moderator

February 22, 1851: Session met according to order. The following members were present: John Stockton, Moderator; George Miller, Enoch Hays, John Leeper, elders. Opened with prayer. The session then proceeded to the examination of Miss Rebecca Ann Hays, [Miss] Elizabeth Hays, and Julian Hays [brother] for admission into the Church. The session being satisfied with the examination voted unanimously to receive them as members of said church. Closed with prayer.

John Stockton – Moderator

The Presbytery at Wheeling, April 16, 1851. Approved.

Signed James J. Brownson, Moderator.

August 23, 1851: Session met according to appointment and was opened with prayer.

Members present: George Miller, Enoch Hays, and John Leeper.

The subject of organizing a Sabbath School under the care of the session and to meet in the Church was considered, whereupon it was resolved that a Constitution be proposed and read on next Monday with a view to said organization.

John Leeper was appointed a delegate to attend the next meeting of Presbytery. Session adjourned. Concluded with prayer.

J. McCluskey, Moderator

[Note: J. McClusky was pastor of West Alexander Church]

Now, consider this mystery. According to the gravestone of John Leeper in Cross Creek Presbyterian Church Cemetery (next to the stones of Martha and Jane Leeper), John Leeper died on October 22, 1849 at the age of 73 (before completion of Pine Grove Church). Yet, John Leeper attended meetings of the session of Pine Grove Church through August 23, 1851. This author offers no explanation.

Interestingly, a John Leeper household was not found in Brooke Co., Virginia in the 1850 census (but Martha and Jane Leeper are found, see below) – indicating that John Leeper was not living in 1850.

The will of John Leeper of Brooke Co., Virginia, was recorded in December 1849 and is available in the Brooke County will book. Martha and Jane Leeper, his sisters, are named in the will. The executor was John Headington. Isaiah Steen and George Amspoker (grandson of Jonas and Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker) were witnesses. The appearance of George Amspoker as a witness to the will John Leeper provides evidence that James Leeper, father

of this John Leeper, was the brother of Elizabeth Leeper, who married Jonas Amspoker; Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker is generally considered the daughter of James Leeper of Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania. This connection between John Leeper and George Amspoker provides evidence that James Leeper, father of John Leeper, may have been the son of James Leeper of Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania.

**WILLIAM LEEPER:** William Leeper, son of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, was born ~1782 and died on September 9/10, 1858, aged about 76, in Carroll Co., Ohio. William Leeper is in our direct line of ancestry and is treated in a separate biographical sketch.

**JANE LEEPER:** Jane Leeper, daughter of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, was born ~1782. Confusion exists about the year of her birth because of a transcription error in History of The Cross Creek Graveyard and The Cross Creek Cemetery [originally compiled in 1894 by James Simpson, republished in 1942, available from Cross Creek Cemetery Company, Cross Creek, Washington Co., PA]. Per page 47 of this book, Jane Leeper died in 1868 at the age of 68. However, this book is in error. In 1999, Steve Leeper saw her gravestone, which clearly showed that she died in 1868 at the age of 86 -- making her year of birth ~1782.

Jane Leeper never married. After her parents died, she remained on the family farm, with her brother, John, and sister, Martha/Mattie, who also never married. She was a member of Cross Creek Presbyterian Church until 1849, when she left to help organize Pine Grove Church.

Jane Leeper (age 63) and Martha Leeper (age 72) are found in the 1850 census District 3 of Brooke Co., Virginia. Jane Leeper could be ~68 years old in 1850. The information in this census also indicates that Jane Leeper was not born in 1800.

Jane Leeper is again found in the Brooke Co., Virginia, census of 1860. William and Ellen Fleming and their eight children, aged 10 months to 20 years, were also living on the Leeper farm. Two Fleming sons, Joseph and William, Jr., died in the Civil War. [Ellen Fleming may be a daughter (possibly, granddaughter) of James Leeper, the brother of Jane Leeper; no record of the marriage of William and Ellen Fleming is found in Brooke County.]

Per her gravestone (seen by Stephen Leeper in 1999 at Cross Creek Church Cemetery, Cross Creek Township, Washington Co., PA), Jane Leeper died on June 13, 1868 at the age of 86. The will of Jane Leeper (written in September 1858, when Brooke County was still part of Virginia) is reproduced below; all spellings are as in the original will.

### **The Last Will and testament of Jane Leeper.**

I, Jane Leeper of Brooke county, Virginia as yet enjoying the blessings of health and also of sound mind and memory. Blessed be Almighty God for the same, yet knowing the uncertainty of this present life do make this my last Will and testament, revoking all others.

Item 1<sup>st</sup> I will and bequeath my soul unto God who gave it.

Item 2<sup>nd</sup> I will that as soon as convenient after my decease my Executors hereinafter to be named pay all my just debts and funeral expenses.

Item 3<sup>rd</sup> I bequeath unto the children of my deceased brother James Leeper, four hundred dollars to be divided equally amongst them. My Executors to pay them, as soon after my said Executors shall have received full payment for my farm, that by another item in this will I have authorized them to sell oc.

Item 4<sup>th</sup> I bequeath to my sister Ann Dillen of the State of Ohio, three hundred dollars to be paid her by my Executors at the time set forth in item 3<sup>rd</sup> of this my will

Item 5<sup>th</sup> I give and bequeath to my niece Jane McQueen one hundred dollars to be paid in accordance as to the time set forth in item third.

Item 6<sup>th</sup> I bequeath to my brother William Leeper four hundred dollars (he resides in the State of Ohio) and to be paid him at the time fixed in item 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Item 7<sup>th</sup> I bequeath to Benjamin Long fifty dollars for his own use and fifty dollars which he is to give to his two children to-wit William Edward Leeper, his son, and his daughter Martha Jane, when they arrive at an age he shall deem right and at furthest when they severally arrive at the age of twenty-one years my executor to pay him the bequest at the time fixed in Item 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Item 8<sup>th</sup> I bequeath to Martha Ellen Fleming fifty dollars to be paid her when she arrives at the eighteen years but should she die before she arrives at said age then in that case my executor to apply it to some presbyterian church as they shall choose.

Item 9<sup>th</sup> My will is and I order my Executors as soon as they deem best after my decease (or should any one of them be dead the survivors to sell my farm that is part in Brooke County Va. and part in Washington County Pa. adjoining land of George Amspoker, the heirs of William McGee and others and receive all monies therefor to make such bargains for the sale thereof as they shall think best for times of sale and times of payment and to make a good and sufficient deed or deeds of same without any interference of any court of record of either the State of Virginia or Pennsylvania and the deed or deeds which they, or any one of them shall make for the said farm or any part thereof to be as good and valid as though the same had been sold by my order - any Court they the said Executors to sell and dispose of my personal estate as they think best, and the monies arising from the sale of any said farm and personal estate, they are to take into their possession and after paying all debts and expenses in settling my estate or any lawful claim or demand that my Estate shall derive out of said monies and also pay out of the same all the bequests I have already made in this my will as well as expenses that may occur, as well as expenses that may occur in my burial as my desire is that my Executors have me buried in Cross Creek Presbyterian Churchyard, as near as practicable to where my Father and Mother is, and that they have put upon my grave decent and becoming head and foot stones, they to be judges of the same and whatever balance shall then remain after said debts, expenses, and bequests are fully paid off, then are to appropriate

to the supplying of preaching in the Presbyterian Church called pine grove in Jefferson Township, Washington County, Pa. but before the said Executors have paid any or a part of each surplus money for the use of said church as aforesaid, said church should cease to be a Presbyterian Church that at the discretion and choice of said Executors, or should any one of them be dead at the time said church should cease to be a Presbyterian Church the survivor to apply whatever balance of said monies that shall remain in their hands, or in the hands of the survivor to the support of whatever Presbyterian Church they or he shall deem most needy.

Item 10<sup>th</sup> My will is and I appoint George Miller and James Donahoo both of Washington County the Executors of this my last Will and testament Amen. As witness my hand and seal in presence of James A. Stewart and Charles Scott who I desired to witness my will this eighteenth day of September in the year of our Lord one thousand and Eight hundred and fifty eight.

Witness Her Mark  
Jane X Leeper (seal)

We do certify that Jane Leeper requested us to witness this her last will and testament that she said it was hers and that we saw her write her name and seal the same, she made her mark declaring that she could not write, and at her request her name was written by James Donehoo.

Charles Scott  
James A. Stewart

I certify the foregoing to be a true copy of the Last Will and Testament of Jane Leeper dec'd. Admitted to probate on order made at July Term of the Recorder Court 1868.

Henry Melvin, Recorder R.C. by Chas. E. Melvin, Deputy

George Miller, Jr., of Washington Co., Pennsylvania, was an elder of both Cross Creek and Pine Grove Presbyterian Churches.

James Donahoo was an elder of Cross Creek Presbyterian Church. He may have withdrawn from the role of executor of the Jane Leeper estate, leaving the task solely to George Miller, Jr.

Appraisal of the estate of Jane Leeper was recorded in Brooke County Inventory Book 7 (page 526) and is transcribed (as well as possible, with punctuation added):

An appraisement of the estate of Jane Leeper deceased –  
We, David Murchland, William Steen, and John Amspoker, being appointed by the Recorder of Brooke County, W. Virginia, to appraise the value of real estate of Jane Leeper dec'd late of Cross Creek Township in said county of Brook and also to appraise



the personal property of deceased (said appointment being made July 14<sup>th</sup>, 1868, in the Recorder's Office) do report that first being sworn according to law, do say that in value the said estate at Forty dollars per acre and ask in cash and also that the personal estate of said Jane Leeper by items or lots of items at a cash evaluation and herein set the items or lots of items with the value henceof annexed. Said appraisement held on the premises of deceased the 25<sup>th</sup> day of August 1868.

Personal Estate

1 Old B??????	3.00	
1 Table \$1.50 Bed b?????? & bedding \$3.00	4.50	
1 Chest \$1.50 one other old sheet \$1.00 an old book case 50	3.00	
5 old Windsor chairs & 1 rocker \$1.50 & an old armchair \$2.00	3.50	
1 old Table \$1.00 1 side saddle \$5.00 another \$3.00	9.00	
1 Farming blade(?) \$5.00 1 Bed ???? 25 cts 1 plow 50 cts	5.75	
4 iron kettles \$10.00 1 do(?) kettle 25	10.25	
1 Copper Kettle \$5.00 Cooking stove \$5.00	10.00	
Six old S spoons \$3.00 Cups 1.00 10 old plates 50 cts	4.50	\$52.50

In 1869, Daniel Shively (and others) filed suit against George Miller and James Donahoo (executors) and William Steen, John Amspoker, and Mary C. Amspoker (and possibly David Murchland). The claimants (possibly sons-in-law of James Leeper, the deceased brother of Jane Leeper) were seeking reimbursement from the estate of Jane Leeper for taxes paid on the Leeper farm from 1862 to 1867 and for care given to an elderly Jane Leeper over a period of years. [John Amspoker may be the grandson of Jonas and Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker, via their son John; Jonas/John Amspoker (b. 1807) married Mary Daugherty, likely the named Mary Amspoker. As noted above, John Amspoker, William Steen, and David Murchland appraised the estate of Jane Leeper.]

Distribution of the estate of Jane Leeper was (apparently) last recorded in Brooke County Inventory Book 7 (page 553). The James Leeper mentioned in this record is assumed to be the deceased brother of Jane Leeper. As of May 24, 1869, total disbursements were \$337.64, including \$50 to William Leeper, legatee of James Leeper (on March 16, 1869), \$50 to Margaret Danner, legatee of James Leeper (on May 24, 1869), \$196.02 of interest (on a loan of \$3920.50), and balance for various fees. Balance due the estate, as of May 24, 1869, was \$3862.25. On December 29, 1869, \$717.56 was paid to Shirley Puch(?); the identity and relationship of this person to Jane Leeper is not known. On January 14, 1870, \$50 was paid to Mary Boyd (legatee of James Leeper). Total disbursements from the estate as of January 14, 1870, were \$912.93, with a balance due the estate of \$3,341.68. The record ends with the following statement: "I, W. H. White, Recorder, in and for said County, do certify that the forgoing is a true statement of the acct of Geo Miller one of the Executors of the Estate of Jane Leeper dec'd, as audited before me on this 14 day of Jan'y 1870 and that I was actually and necessarily employed 4 hours in stating the same. W. H. White."

On January 29, 1870, the 143-acre, Leeper farm on Scott's and Paramour's Runs, marked by a stone on the Virginia and Pennsylvania state line and bordered by the farms of Silas Morgan,

John Headington, and Jonas Armspoker, was sold to George Miller for \$4,878.32 [per Brooke County Deed Book 21, page 394].

Inferences from information provided in the will and estate of Jane Leeper are discussed.

Per item 3, James Leeper, brother of Jane Leeper, was deceased as of September 18, 1858 (when this will was written, per item 10). This item also establishes that James Leeper had children.

Per item 4, Ann Leeper Dillon, sister of Jane Leeper, was living in Ohio as of September 18, 1858. Ann Leeper Dillon died in 1859, prior to the death of Jane Leeper and the execution of this will. No distribution appears to have been made to any member of the Ann Leeper Dillon family.

Per item 5, Jane McQueen is most likely the daughter of Henry and Ann Leeper Dillon. Jane Dillon, daughter of Henry and Ann Leeper Dillon, married Amon McQueen and they likely had a daughter named Jane McQueen. In the 1860 census of Vinton Co., Ohio, Henry Dillon (age 80) is found living in the household of James Mcqueller (possibly McQueen). No distribution appears to have been to anyone named McQueen.

Per item 6, apparently Jane Leeper did not know that her brother, William Leeper, died (on September 9 or 10, 1858), just a few days before she wrote her will (September 18, 1858). No distribution appears to have been made to any member of the family of William Leeper of Carroll County, Ohio.

Per item 7, a son of James Leeper, brother of Jane Leeper, must have had children named William and Martha Jane Leeper. The relationship of Benjamin Long (and his children with the last name of Leeper) to our Leeper family is not known. However, in 1849, a Benjamin Long, who paid personal property taxes, was living on the Leeper farm. How can a man named Benjamin Long have a son named William Edward Leeper (and presumably a daughter named Martha Jane Leeper) – both of whom are under the age of 21 at the writing of this will (1858)? Perhaps, Benjamin Long was the second husband of the widow of a son of James Leeper (brother of Jane Leeper) and William and Martha Jane Leeper are actually the children of this son of James Leeper (brother of Jane Leeper). James Leeper, son of James and Jennie Armspoker Leeper, may have had a son named William (who possibly married Maria) and John (about whom no further information is known). A distribution was made to this William Leeper.

Per item 8, the relationship of Martha Jane Fleming to our Leeper family is not known (but she is likely the daughter of William and Ellen Fleming, whose family was living on the Leeper farm per the 1860 census, and, possibly, the granddaughter of James Leeper, brother of Jane Leeper). No distribution was made to any person named Fleming.

The distributions from the estate of Jane Leeper to Margaret Danner and Mary Boyd (both legatees of James Leeper, brother of Jane Leeper) provide evidence that James Leeper, brother of Jane Leeper, had daughters by the names of Margaret and Mary, who respectively married a Danner and a Boyd.

Per item 9, the balance of the estate of Jane Leeper was left to "... the supplying of preaching in the Presbyterian Church called pine grove in Jefferson Township, Washington County, Pa." At least a portion of the estate of Jane Leeper was used for support of Pine Grove Church.

From the historical papers of George Miller (February 1871): Received of Geo. Miller, executor of Jane Leiper, deceased, Twenty-five dollars for supplies and twenty-seven dollars for repairs for Pine Grove Congregation paid out of Jane Leiper funds.

George Miller, Member of the session of the Pine Grove Congregation

From the historical papers of George Miller (April 29, 1871): Received of Elder George Miller, Executor of Jane Leeper, deceased, the sum of one-hundred and fifty-five dollars (\$155.00) paid me by order of the session of the Presbyterian Church of Pine Grove, as part of my salary as pastor of said church, and which sum should be credited to said executor as it was paid out of the Jane Leeper fund, belong(ing) to this church.

S. J. Davis, Independence, Pa, April 29<sup>th</sup> A.D. 1871

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### **Was James Leeper (1746 - 1826) a Revolutionary War Veteran?**

James Leeper (1746-1826) may have been a veteran of the Revolutionary War, as this James Leeper may have served as a frontier ranger from Western Pennsylvania. His service is commemorated on a veteran's monument in Burgettstown, Washington County, Pennsylvania. This monument was seen by Stephen A. Leeper (4X great grandson of this James Leeper) on a visit in 2008.

Additional evidence is examined.

Per the petition of 1778 (cited above), at least three men of York County, Pennsylvania, named James Leeper, served in the 6<sup>th</sup> Battalion during the Revolutionary War. Was one of them our ancestor James Leeper?

James Leeper (1746-1826) lived in York County, PA, until 1780, when he moved from Muddy Creek Forks, Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania to Ohio County/Brooke County, Virginia/Washington County, Pennsylvania. Based on these dates, our James Leeper could have served in the Revolutionary War.

As stated above, the search for information on persons named James Leeper is complicated by the number of Leepers given the name James. This fact must be kept in mind. At one time during the Revolutionary War, four persons named James Leeper may have been simultaneously living in York County. Two lived in Chanceford Township: James Leeper (1719-ca.1795), who married Margaret McKee, and was known as James Leeper of Chanceford, and his son James Leeper, who is possibly James Leeper (1746-1826) of Muddy Creek Forks, Pennsylvania, who married Mary Jane "Jennie" Amspoker (this relationship should be considered speculation). One James Leeper is of Hopewell township, who married Anne (maiden name not known); this James Leeper may be a cousin of James of Chanceford (via a brother of Andrew Leeper), but such a

relationship is not proven. A fourth James Leeper is said to be the nephew of James of Chanceford.

The facts are now considered.

A James Leeper was a member of the Committee for York County (a militia), as of Nov. 3, 1775 [John Gibson, *History of York County, Pennsylvania*, 1886]. The James Leeper who was on this committee is not clear, but our James Leeper (age 29) may have been too young to be named to such a post. James Leeper of Chanceford (age ~56) is a more likely candidate.

A James Leeper was elected to the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania as a representative from York County, announced at the meeting of October 23, 1779 [Ref.: *Colonial Record of Pennsylvania, Minutes of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania, Volume 12*, page 145]. The James Leeper elected to this Council is not clear, but James Leeper of Chanceford, who married Margaret McKee, is a likely candidate, as he would have been ~60 years old at this time.

Per Jerry D. Leeper [Glendora, CA, who believes himself to be a descendant of James Leeper of Chanceford, *Search for the Leeper Descendants in America, Volume I: Andrew Leeper 1676 – 1997*, unpublished as of his death], the following statements are made:

"His sons served in the First Pennsylvania Regiment in the Revolutionary War for three years."

The above statement pertains to the sons of James Leeper of Chanceford (1719-ca.1795) and further, Jerry D. Leeper, believed that James Leeper (1746-1826) was one of the sons of James Leeper of Chanceford.

Alexander Leeper (1744-1804), elder son of James Leeper of Chanceford (1719- ca.1795), was a member of the 6th Battalion of York County, PA in 1778 (Vol. 2, 5th series Penn. Archives, p. 551; vol. 11, 6th series Penn. Archives, p. 547).

Samuel Leeper (ca.1748/50-1805), third son of James Leeper of Chanceford (1719- ca.1795), is listed in the Daughters of the American Revolution Patriot list as Lt/Pa from Pennsylvania.

In summary, the conclusion that James Leeper (1746-1826) was a Revolutionary War veteran is speculative. No such claim is made in the existing family tradition (based on information in the biographical sketch found in the Carroll County history nor in information collected by Mary Leeper (Long), and Laverne Leeper). Mary Leeper (Long) was a young adult in the late 1800s and was the great granddaughter of this James Leeper (1746-1826). If Mary Leeper had known that her great grandfather had been a veteran of the Revolutionary War, she would have surely recorded it. Having a father or grandfather who was a veteran of the Revolutionary War is a fact that, if known, would be proudly passed down. So why, if such was the case, didn't Mary Leeper learn this from her parents or grandparents? Perhaps, our James Leeper was not a veteran of the Revolutionary War.

Note: This conclusion casts some doubt on the connection between our James Leeper (1746-1826) and James Leeper of Chanceford (1719-ca.1795), as the James Leeper who was the son of James Leeper of Chanceford was believed to have been in the Revolutionary War.

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**The Old Leeper Homestead**  
**[Washington Co., Penn./Brooke Co., West Virginia]**  
**May and November 1999**

In her history of Brooke County, June Campbell Grossman described the location of the "Old Leeper Farm" as follows: "As one goes up old Amspoker Hill from Scott's Run, the flat place on the hillside at the bend in the road can still be seen where once the Leeper house so proudly stood." Amspoker Hill is named after Jonas Amspoker, whose farm lay at the top of the hill and who is believed to be the brother of Mary Jane "Jennie" Amspoker Leeper.

[Note: June Campbell Grossman-Welch and her sister, Katherine Campbell Slasor, grew up in western Washington County. As descendants of the Headington family, they were essentially neighbors to our Leeper family. These two women dedicated their lifetimes to finding and recording information on the pioneer families of western Washington Co., Pennsylvania and eastern Brooke Co., Virginia/West Virginia. Steve Leeper is most graciously indebted to these two selfless women for valuable information about our Leeper family of western Pennsylvania and Virginia/West Virginia. Descendants of pioneer families of this area lost a dedicated historian and beautiful lady when June passed out of this world on October 17, 2011.]

On two occasions, Stephen Allen Leeper, 4X great grandson of James and Jennie Leeper, visited the Old Leeper Place. In May 1999, June Grossman graciously showed Steve (and three other descendants) the general location of the farm. At that time of year, hiking to the site of the farm was impossible due to the thickness of the underbrush. The four visitors had to content themselves with standing on the road and looking up the hollow that led to the farm.

Directions to the vicinity of the Old Leeper Place are as follows. In Brooke County, WV, take Cross Creek road toward Virginville, WV. Just before crossing Cross Creek, bear straight ahead on the last dirt road before crossing over the bridge across Cross Creek (do not cross the bridge). This dirt road is Amspoker Road. Parnouy's Run is the small creek on the left. Continue straight up the hill on Amspoker Road. About a mile up the steep hill is a 90-degree turn to the left around a deep hollow (about 100 feet deep with rock outcroppings). This hollow is Leeper Run. On the right will be a hollow running up toward the ridge; a distinct tree, very large with a knot in the left branch, marks this place. A black pipe also runs under the road and empties into Leeper Run. The Leeper house was located about a quarter mile up the hollow, just below the top of the ridge; the farm was on the ridge straddling Pennsylvania and Virginia (West Virginia).

In a second trip in November 1999 (arranged by June Grossman and Katherine Slasor), Steve Leeper hiked to and stood on the site of the Leeper home and recorded the following:

With Jim Leeper (my third cousin), Mary Szymanowski (my fifth cousin) and her husband Bob, and Bob Cline (our guide), we hiked to the site of the James and Jennie Leeper house. Bob Cline, retired and in his 60s, has lived his entire life at the base of Amspoker Hill. During hikes in these hills with his grandfather and father, he was told the names of the families that once lived in the homes that had become nothing but foundations and ruins. The old Leeper place was one such place. Bob Cline knew its exact location.

We hiked a round-about way to the home site, because strip mining in the 1950s (completed before the laws requiring restoration of the land) had created a 60-foot "high wall" (the cliff created when the coal dredge carves away the side of a hill to expose the coal) between the road and the site. Bob Cline considered a climb up this high wall to be too risky. Instead, we started farther up the hill and climbed a 20-foot high wall, followed by making our way down the ridge through wild rose bushes with thorns that made a bowie knife look small. The path would have been absolutely impassable when the rose bushes were full. After a 30-minute hike, we came to the site of the Old Leeper place located on Leeper's Run, a stream formed by a spring on the side of the ridge. This spring was the family's source of water and cooling. It stopped flowing sometime in the past.

The site, disturbed, though not destroyed, by the strip mining, could easily be missed. On the surface, no evidence of man's presence could be seen. I could have walked over it without even knowing that I was at the Old Leeper Place. Bob Cline stopped, stooped down, and pulled up 2 inches of green moss, exposing a foundation stone. We joined in, clearing several feet of stone, finding red bricks scattered around the site. We were standing where our 4X grandparents had lived and our 3X grandfather, William Leeper, had grown up. Bob Cline told us that before the land had been strip-mined in the 1950s, this ridge had been wheat fields; now, just 50 years later, it was covered with wild roses and 50-foot trees. We looked around, sat, talked, took pictures. We hiked down Leeper's Run to the 60-foot highwall and found an impressive rock overhang that may have provided the material for the foundation stones. We looked at the cut in the hill made by the coal dredge and the spoil piled on the downhill side. We turned and walked back up the hill. I took a few more pictures. I walked up the ridge, but had to turn back for the rose bushes. I joined the others, leaving now, having seen what we came for, having stood where they stood. On November 19, 1999, I shared space with the people from whom I came. Did they ever wonder if their great great great great grandson would someday stand where they had worked and lived and died? I suppose not.

If this land had been restored, there would today be no trace of the Old Leeper place.

As of 2008, this area had once again been strip mined and any remnants of the Old Leeper place were likely destroyed at that time.

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**EVIDENCE THAT JAMES AND MARGARET MCKEE LEEPER  
OF CHANCEFORD TOWNSHIP, YORK COUNTY, PENN.,  
WERE THE PARENTS OF JAMES LEEPER (1746-1826)**

The following discussion is not easy to follow, may seem redundant, and will require an in-depth familiarity with the family of James Leeper (born ~1719) of Muddy Creek Forks, Chanceford Township, York County, Pennsylvania (known as James Leeper of Chanceford) and the Leeper family of our James Leeper (1746-1826) [of Muddy Creek Forks, Chanceford Township, York County, Pennsylvania and of Cross Creek/Jefferson Townships of Brooke County, Virginia (West Virginia)/Washington County, Pennsylvania]. The case is painstakingly presented.

According to the earliest accounts of the Leeper line from James (1746-1826) and Mary Jane “Jennie” Amspoker Leeper, the first positively-known member of our Leeper line is **James Leeper**, born 1746. The relationship of the descendants of William Alexander Leeper to James (1746-1826) and Jennie Amspoker Leeper can be considered firmly established, as this line of relationships is based on statements of descendants removed by only two generations (i.e., William Alexander Leeper and Martha Jane Leeper Adair).

According to the Leeper Family sketch in *Commemorative Biographical Record of Carroll County, Ohio* [J. H. Beers & Co., publisher, 1891, pp. 1031-1033], **James Leeper (1746-1826)** is said to have been born in Ireland. While still living in Ireland, he married **Mary Jane (Jennie) Amspoker**. Apparently Jennie, as she has been known to the descendants of William Leeper (their son), was her nickname and Mary Jane was her legal name. James and Jennie Leeper are said to have then emigrated from Ireland to America at about the time of the Revolutionary War. In this account, they first settled at Muddy Creek Forks, York County, Pennsylvania and, in 1780, they moved to Ohio Co., Virginia (now Brooke Co. West Virginia), and lived on land that straddled Washington Co. (Cross Creek/Jefferson Township), Pennsylvania and Virginia.

However, Stephen A. Leeper had uncovered substantial evidence that could be viewed as supporting the possibility that James Leeper (1746-1826), who married Jennie Amspoker, was born in America and was the son of James and Margaret McKee Leeper of Chanceford Township, York County, Pennsylvania. This evidence is discussed below.

Per land records of the 1700s, numerous persons named Leeper were in America before the Revolutionary War. Evidence of potential relationship of James Leeper (1746-1826) to these early-American Leepers is interesting, if not outright perplexing.

James Leeper married Mary Jane “Jennie” Amspoker. Most Amspoker (spelled Amspoker, Anspacher, Anspaker, Armspoker, etc., by various and the same members of the family at various times) family histories conclude that the Amspoker Family is from Germany, with little evidence that any Amspokers are from Ireland. The Amspoker name was also present in Virginia and Pennsylvania during the mid to late 1700s. If James was from Ireland and Jennie was from Germany, how did they meet in Ireland? Perhaps the Amspokers came to America via Ireland. Could James and Jennie have met in America?

According to the conclusions of Leeper family researcher Jerry D. Leeper [of Glendora, CA, and Kansas], Mary Jane Amspoker was the sister of Jonas Amspoker, born in 1740 and an immigrant from Germany, perhaps, by way of Ireland. Jonas Amspoker married Elizabeth Leeper, daughter of James and Mary McKee Leeper of Chanceford Township, York County, Pennsylvania. Jerry D. Leeper concluded that James Leeper who married Mary Jane “Jennie” Amspoker was the brother of this Elizabeth Leeper and, therefore, was the son James and Margaret McKee Leeper. Unfortunately, sources used by Jerry D. Leeper to reach this conclusion remain unidentified.

Two letters written by David Rohrer Leeper in 1900 provide compelling evidence that James Leeper (1746-1826) is the son of James Leeper of Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania. These two letters were written to Mary Leeper [great granddaughter of James Leeper (1746-1826); grand daughter of William and Eleanor Lawther Leeper; daughter of William Alexander and Margaret Masters Leeper; wife of James Madison Long]. David Rohrer Leeper, an ardent Leeper family researcher, was descended from James Leeper of Chanceford via his son Samuel Leeper. In these letters, David Rohrer Leeper stated that he had compiled significant information on the Leeper Family in America and back to Ireland. After receiving these two letters, Mary Leeper scheduled a meeting with David R. Leeper to exchange information. Unfortunately, this meeting never took place because of the sudden and unexpected death of David Rohrer Leeper in 1900. These two letters, and two obituaries on David Rohrer Leeper, were included in the Leeper Family History compiled by Laverne Leeper in the 1930s. As of 2011, the two original letters were in the possession of Stephen A. Leeper.

In these two letters, David Rohrer Leeper made two very significant statements that carry significant implications regarding the ancestry of our James Leeper (1746-1826) – and that completely contradict the information in the Leeper Family sketch in *Commemorative Biographical Record of Carroll County, Ohio* [J. H. Beers & Co., publisher, 1891, pp. 1031-1033]. The two letters of David Rohrer Leeper and the two following statements in these letters provided the impetus for searching for additional evidence of a relationship between the family of James Leeper of Chanceford and our James Leeper (1746-1826).

One, David R. Leeper said that his father, Samuel, and Mary Leeper’s grandfather, William, were second cousins. In order to make this statement, David R. Leeper had to know (or believe that he knew) the lineage of these two men back three generations to the great grandfather from whom they were both descended.

Two, David R. Leeper said that he had been on the farm of the father of Mary Leeper’s great grandfather (James, 1746-1826, who married Mary Jane “Jennie” Amspoker), that the father of James Leeper (1746-1826) was named James, and that the farm of the father of James Leeper (1746-1826) had been in York County, Pennsylvania. If David R. Leeper was correct, then the father of James Leeper (1746-1826) was named James and James Leeper, the father of our James Leeper, was from York County, Pennsylvania.

Furthermore, in *Leeper Lineage*, David R. Leeper wrote that James Leeper of Chanceford had a child born in 1746 and had a child named James. James Leeper, who married Mary Jane “Jennie” Amspoker, was born in 1746. In 1780, at the age of 34, James Leeper (1746-1826) moved from Muddy Creek Forks (in Chanceford Township), York Co., Pennsylvania. James



Leeper of Chanceford is a well established early citizen of, and owned a farm in, Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania, and, per the statement of David R. Leeper, James Leeper of Chanceford had a son named James. Our James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper moved from Muddy Creek Forks, Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania to Ohio Co., Virginia (which became Brooke Co., West Virginia)/Washington County, Pennsylvania. These facts are highly significant.

Among the papers collected by Laverne Leeper was a document from David Rohrer Leeper that provided the genealogy of Samuel Leeper, the father of David R. Leeper. The genealogy was traced back to his great great grandfather, "James Leeper of Chanceford," as follows: Samuel Leeper (father of D. R. Leeper) was the son of James Leeper, who was the son of Samuel, Leeper, who was the son of James Leeper of Chanceford.

Based on the record preserved by Laverne Leeper (obtained from Mary Leeper Long), the first known Leeper ancestor of Mary Leeper Long was our James Leeper (1746-1826), who married Mary Jane "Jennie" Amspoker and moved from Muddy Creek Forks, Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania. Per his original tombstone, our James Leeper lived from 1746 to 1826. The known line back from Mary Leeper Long to our James Leeper (1746-1826) is: William Alexander Leeper (father of Mary Leeper Long) was the son of William Leeper, who was the son of James Leeper (1746-1826).

If David R. Leeper had his definition of "second cousin" correct, "James Leeper of Chanceford", born in 1719, was the brother of James (1746-1826). In this case, two brothers, both of whom lived into adulthood, would both have been named James and would have been born 27 years apart – not likely. Therefore, this statement of David R. Leeper may represent one of the following two understandable errors.

One, David R. Leeper could have incorrectly used the term "second cousins" in place of the correct term "first cousins once removed" for Samuel Leeper (father of David R. Leeper and great grandson of James Leeper of Chanceford) and William Leeper [son of James Leeper (1746-1826)].

Two, since both the father and grandfather of Mary Leeper were named William Leeper, David R. Leeper could have mistakenly overlooked one generation in the line from our James Leeper (1746-1826) to Mary Leeper Long. David R. Leeper could have actually meant that Samuel Leeper (father of David R. Leeper and great grandson of James Leeper of Chanceford) and William Alexander Leeper [father of Mary Leeper and grandson of James Leeper (1746-1826)] were second cousins. Interestingly, either error leads to the same relationships between the lines of David R. Leeper and Mary Leeper Long. With either error, Samuel Leeper and William Leeper were first cousins once removed and Samuel Leeper and William Alexander Leeper were second cousins and the (unlikely) occurrence of a family with two adult brothers named James Leeper is no longer required.

Assuming that David R. Leeper did make either one of these errors (but was otherwise correct about other information, as stated above), then James Leeper (1746-1826), who married Mary Jane "Jennie" Amspoker and lived in Washington/Virginia, was the son of James Leeper of

Chanceford. This conclusion is demonstrated in the following table, based on the inference (from the previous paragraph) that Samuel Leeper (great grandson of James Leeper of Chanceford) and William Alexander Leeper [grandson of James Leeper (1746-1826)] were second cousins. The known line of David R. Leeper (stated above) is provided in the left column. The known line to Mary Leeper is provided in the right column. The second cousin relationship (per discussion of in previous paragraph) is provided in the middle column.

Table. James Leeper of Chanceford is father of James Leeper (1746-1826)

<u>Line of David R. Leeper</u>	<u>Relationship</u>	<u>Line of Mary Leeper</u>
David R. Leeper, son of		Mary Leeper, daughter of
Samuel Leeper, son of	Second cousins	William Alexander Leeper, son of
James Leeper, son of		William Leeper, son of
Samuel Leeper, son of		James Leeper (1746-1826)
James Leeper of Chanceford		

Assuming that Samuel Leeper (great grandson of James Leeper of Chanceford) and William Alexander Leeper [grandson of James Leeper (1746-1826)] are second cousins, then the following relationships emerge. James Leeper (grandson of James Leeper of Chanceford) and William Leeper [son of James Leeper (1746-1826)] are first cousins. Samuel Leeper (son of James Leeper of Chanceford) and James Leeper (1746-1826) are brothers. The father of Samuel Leeper was James Leeper of Chanceford. Therefore, James Leeper of Chanceford was the father of James Leeper (1746-1826), who married Mary Jane 'Jennie' Amspoker and moved from Muddy Creek Forks, Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania to Washington Co., Pennsylvania/Virginia in 1780.

This conclusion is consistent with the statement of David R. Leeper that James Leeper, the great grandfather of Mary Leeper, had a father named James Leeper, who had a farm in Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania.

This conclusion is also consistent with the family tradition (as recorded by Laverne Leeper in the 1930s) that James (1746-1826) moved in 1780 from Muddy Creek Forks, Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania, the very township and county he might be expected to be from if he were the son of James and Margaret McKee Leeper of Chanceford Township.

Between 1766 and 1794, property (between 73 and 100 acres; surveys C.391 and C.396) called Muddy Creek Forks was owned by Samuel Leeper, likely the son of James and Margaret McKee Leeper. This Samuel Leeper is likely the Samuel Leeper who, in 1794, sold the Muddy Creek Forks property and moved to Washington Co., Pennsylvania to a farm adjacent to the farm of our James Leeper (1746-1826). Could our James Leeper (1746-1826) have been living, until 1780,

at Muddy Creek Forks, on or near property owned by Samuel Leeper and have not been related to this Samuel Leeper and James Leeper of Chanceford? Of course, he could have been unrelated. But, based on this coincidence of circumstances, could our James Leeper (1746-1826) have been the brother of this Samuel Leeper and the son of James and Margaret McKee Leeper? Could this Samuel Leeper have moved to Washington County, PA and have bought a farm adjacent to this James Leeper (1746-1826) and have done so because they were brothers?

Tax records from Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania, provide interesting information. James Leeper and James Leeper, Jr. appear on the tax list of Chanceford Township in 1778. James Leeper continues to appear on the Chanceford Township tax lists of 1781, 1785, 1786, 1787, and 1788; yet, James Leeper, Jr. is gone as of the tax list of 1781 – which coincides with the time at which James Leeper (1746-1826), who married Jennie Amspoker, is said to have left Chanceford Township. If this James Leeper, Jr. is a different James Leeper from our James Leeper (1746-1826), what an amazing coincidence that this different James Leeper left Chanceford Township at the very time that our James Leeper (1746-1826) is also said to have left this very location.

The will of our James Leeper (1746-1826) provides fascinating insights into a possible relationship between our James Leeper (1746-1826) and the family of James Leeper of Chanceford and amazing coincidences, if our James Leeper (1746-1826) is not related to, or the son of, James Leeper of Chanceford. The entire text of the will is provided above.

James and Margaret McKee Leeper (of Chanceford) had a daughter, Mary Leeper (1746-1828), who married Robert Smith. According to p. 181 *of A History of Chanceford Township, York County, Pennsylvania, 1747 - 1997*, Robert and Mary Leeper Smith had a son named Alexander. This son is also named in the will of Robert Smith (filed Feb. 14, 1823, York Bk N14, p. 542), along with all their other children. Nothing more is known of Alexander Smith and he is not buried with his relatives in Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania. Did he move? Did he move to Washington Co., Pennsylvania?

An Alexander Smith is named as one of the executors of the will of James Leeper (1746-1826). This Alexander Smith likely lived in or near Washington Co., Pennsylvania, since proximity to James Leeper (1746-1826) would be expected of an effective executor. The following possibility must be considered. James named his trusted nephew, who had left York Co., Pennsylvania, and moved to Washington Co., Pennsylvania, as one of his executors. Granted, other explanations may exist, but they start to require amazing coincidences, which could be harder to explain than the simple one: James Leeper (1746-1826) is the uncle of Alexander Smith, brother of Mary Leeper Smith (1746-1828), and son of James and Margaret McKee Leeper of Chanceford. And the statement written by David Rohrer Leeper to Mary Leeper in 1900 makes tremendous sense.

Additional evidence or other amazing name coincidences are found in the will of James Leeper (1746-1826). Each of the name coincidences cited herein is not enough by themselves to establish a relationship between James Leeper (1746-1826) and James Leeper of Chanceford, but all of them together begin to strain credibility. At some point, the logical conclusion becomes that the number of common names that re-occur are more likely explained by a relationship, rather than by just coincidence.

On page 20 of David R. Leeper's *Leeper Lineage/The Leeper Genealogy*, the children of James Leeper of Chanceford are listed as: James, Mary, Alexander, Samuel, John, and Elizabeth. On page 11 of this same document is mention of "Jonah Amspoker ...[who] often heard his mother, who was a daughter of the first named James Leeper ...". Considering the rarity of the Amspoker name, the most probable explanation is that this unnamed daughter is Elizabeth Leeper, who married Jonas Amspoker; the James Leeper spoken of in this sentence is clearly James Leeper of Chanceford. As further evidence, per the Amspoker history, Jonas Amspoker married Elizabeth Leeper of York Co., Pennsylvania, and her father's farm was near the Susquehanna River (the location of the farm of James Leeper of Chanceford); these facts, though not proof, are certainly consistent with the conclusion that the father of Elizabeth Leeper was James Leeper of Chanceford.

Mary Leeper, who married Robert Smith of York Co., Pennsylvania, is listed on page 181 of *A History of Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania, 1747-1997* [June R. Grove and Richard K. Konkell, editors, sponsored by the Brogue Community Lions Club, Print-O-Stat, Inc. York, PA, 1997; referred to hereafter as Chanceford History]; she named a son James and a daughter Margaret -- again, not proof, but consistent with having had a father named James and a mother named Margaret. The other Leeper family in the area at the time (James and Ann Leiper of Hopewell) did not name a son James nor did they name a daughter Margaret (as far as can be found in records). The parents of Mary Leeper are not listed in the Chanceford History, but James Leeper of Chanceford is listed in the Chanceford History.

The fates of Robert and James Smith (sons of Robert and Mary Leeper Smith) are documented on page 181 of the Chanceford History; neither of them married and, therefore, neither of them is likely to have had a son named Alexander Smith. The fate of Alexander Smith (the other son of Robert and Mary Leeper Smith) is not covered in the Chanceford History. Why? Perhaps, he left the area and does not appear in Chanceford again. Where did he go? We do not know. Perhaps, he went to Washington Co., Pennsylvania, because he had uncles there, namely, Samuel Leeper, known (via David Rohrer Leeper) to be the son of James Leeper of Chanceford, and (perhaps) James Leeper (1746-1826). Furthermore, James Leeper (1746-1826) asked an Alexander Smith to be an executor of his will. If the Alexander Smith who was asked to be an executor of the will of James Leeper (1746-1826) is not the Alexander Smith who was the son of Robert and Mary Leeper Smith and the Alexander Smith who disappeared from the records of York Co., then this fact is another amazing name coincidence. That an unrelated Alexander Smith could be an executor of the will of James Leeper (1746-1826), when a potentially related person named Alexander Smith existed, although possible, is almost beyond belief.

Per the history of the descendants of Jonas Amspoker, Jonas Amspoker married Elizabeth Leeper (of York Co., Pennsylvania -- the daughter of James and Margaret McKee Leeper of Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania), Jonas and Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker settled in Brooke Co., Virginia/Washington Co., Pennsylvania), and had six children: John, Mattie, Mary, Sarah, Samuel, and Alexander.

James Leeper (1746-1826) married Mary Jane "Jennie" Amspoker, who is said to be the sister of Jonas Amspoker, who married Elizabeth Leeper (per Jerry D. Leeper). James Leeper (1746-

1826) is said to be brother of Elizabeth Leeper, both being the children of James and Margaret McKee Leeper (per Jerry D. Leeper). [James (1746-1826) and Jennie Amspoker Leeper had six children: James, Anna, Mattie/Martha, John, William, and Jane.]

In 1780, James Leeper (1746-1826), who married Jennie Amspoker, moved to a farm on the border of Ohio Co., Virginia, and Washington Co., Pennsylvania. Their farm was located next to the farm of Jonas and Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker. Why did James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper live next to Jonas and Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker? Could they be related? What are the odds that they are not related?

In his will, James Leeper (1746-1826) names John Amspoker as an executor. Why would James Leeper (1746-1826) have named John Amspoker as an executor of his estate (when John Amspoker was the child of an Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker) if John Amspoker were not his nephew? What are the odds of both an Alexander Smith and a John Amspoker, who are not related to James Leeper (1746-1826), Mary Leeper Smith, and Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker, but who also lived in the vicinity of Washington Co., Pennsylvania, being named as executors of this will, when there are also another Alexander Smith (possibly) and another John Amspoker (certainly) in the vicinity who are related to Mary Leeper Smith and Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker? The odds seem miniscule. James Leeper (1746-1826) sure looks like the brother of Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker, who is (likely) the daughter of James and Margaret McKee Leeper of Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania, making James Leeper (1746-1826) look like the son of James and Margaret McKee Leeper of Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania. James Leeper (1746-1826) sure looks like the brother of Mary Leeper Smith, who is the (likely) daughter of James and Margaret McKee Leeper of Chanceford Township, York Co., Penn., making James Leeper (1746-1826) look like the son of James and Margaret McKee Leeper of Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania.

However, more names provide further evidence. The will of John Leeper, son of James (1746-1826) and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, has an interesting name in it.

John Amspoker, son of Jonas and Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker, married Polly Mary Ramsey. John and Polly Ramsey Amspoker had seven children: George, Jonas, Elizabeth, MaryAnn, Martha, John, and Samuel (per Amspoker History). John and Polly Ramsey Amspoker lived in Brooke Co., West Virginia/Washington Co., Pennsylvania (per Amspoker History). Jonas Amspoker, son of John and Polly Ramsey Amspoker, grandson of Jonas and Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker was the great grandson of James Leeper of Chanceford (per *Leeper Lineage*, p. 11, by David R. Leeper). Therefore, George Amspoker was the grandson of Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker and the great grandson of James Leeper of Chanceford.

The will of John Leeper of Brooke Co., Virginia, is in the Brooke County will book. The will, undated, was recorded in 1849; this John Leeper names his sisters, Martha and Jane Leeper in the will. One of the witnesses is George Amspoker.

This John Leeper is the son of James (1746-1826) and Jennie Amspoker Leeper. Who is George Amspoker? Is he the son of John Amspoker, cousin of John Leeper? Could an unrelated Elizabeth Leeper have had a grandson named George Amspoker? Could an unrelated George

Amspoker have witnessed the will of John Leeper, when there are so few Amspokers and one of them is the grandson of a person named Elizabeth Leeper? John Leeper appears to be related to George Amspoker. The most likely relationship is that John Leeper and George Amspoker are first cousins once removed, making John Amspoker the first cousin and Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker the aunt of this John Leeper. If these relationships are correct, then Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker is the sister of James Leeper (1746-1826), making James and Margaret McKee Leeper of Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania, the parents of James Leeper (1746-1826).

The will of Alexander Lawther, father-in-law of William Leeper (son of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper), provides another connection. William Leeper married Eleanor Lawther, daughter of Alexander Lawther, in Washington Co., Pennsylvania. Alexander Lawther died in late 1821 or early 1822, presumably in Washington Co., Pennsylvania. His will was codified on August 23, 1821 and probated on March 7, 1822. Alexander Leeper is a witness of this will.

Among the children of James and Margaret McKee Leeper of Chanceford is Alexander Leeper (born 1744; died after 1804). This Alexander Leeper, who married Margaret Snodgrass, had a son named Alexander Leeper, who was born in 1794. Both of these men named Alexander Leeper lived in Lancaster Co., Pennsylvania.

James and Margaret McKee Leeper also had a son named Samuel, who settled in Washington County, Pennsylvania; this Samuel Leeper married Margaret Clark and they also had a son named Alexander Leeper, born 1775, who easily could have been living in Washington Co., Pennsylvania, at the time the will of Alexander Lawther was witnessed.

Why would Alexander Lawther have an Alexander Leeper witness his will, unless Alexander Leeper was related to his son-in-law William Leeper? Even if there were other, unrelated Alexander Leepers in Washington County at this time, why would Alexander Lawther have his will witnessed by one of them? The mention of an Alexander Leeper in the will of Alexander Lawther provides additional evidence tying James Leeper (1746-1826) to James and Margaret McKee Leeper of Chanceford.

Another piece of evidence that James Leeper (1746-1826), who moved to Ohio Co., Virginia/Washington Co., Pennsylvania, was related to James Leeper of Chanceford is provided. This piece of evidence was discovered by Stephen A. Leeper during a trip to both Washington and York Counties, Pennsylvania, in the summer of 1999. Background information is needed: In 1849, three children of James Leeper (1746-1826), namely John, Martha, and Jane Leeper, helped establish Pine Grove Presbyterian Church in Jefferson Township, Washington Co., Pennsylvania; the distance between Jefferson Township, Washington Co., Pennsylvania, and Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania, is ~300 miles – not a short distance in the 1700s and 1800s. After the trip, Steve Leeper wrote the following:

One last interesting fact . . . . I got very near the vicinity of (in fact, I may have been on) the farm of James Leeper of Chanceford Township, York Co., PA (listed by David Rohrer Leeper as being about 1.5 miles SW of McCall's Ferry). [... James Leeper of Chanceford Township, York Co., PA, may be the father of the James Leeper of Cross

Creek Township, Washington Co., PA (our known ancestor).] The McCalls Ferry site is still very recognizable. I followed the roads as closely as I could to a point about 1.5 miles SW of McCalls Ferry and I stopped and talked to a local. After describing what I was looking for, he said something to the effect of ‘Go down to the next road, turn left; at the next road, turn left again and go to the end of that road. That should be a point about 1.5 miles southwest of McCalls Ferry.’ I followed his instructions, at the second left, there it was – ‘Pine Grove Road.’ It sent chills down my spine; it still does.

The Pine Grove Road that lies at the past location of the farm of James Leeper of Chanceford in York Co., Pennsylvania, is 300 miles from Pine Grove Church in Jefferson Township, Washington C., Pennsylvania. Could the fact that the children of James Leeper (1746-1826) named a church (Pine Grove Presbyterian Church), that they were part of founding, the same name as the road (Pine Grove Road) on which James Leeper of Chanceford Township, York Co., Pennsylvania lived be simply another coincidence? Or did they know the name of the road that ran to their grandfather’s farm, 300 miles away?

One last fact bears on this question. This author [Stephen A. Leeper] has found not one shred of evidence that any other James Leeper was the son of James Leeper of Chanceford. No other Leeper family claims they are descended from James Leeper, the son of James Leeper of Chanceford.

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**ROBERT LEEPER OF IRELAND:  
FATHER OF OUR JAMES LEEPER?**

The will of Robert Leeper of Ballilean, Parish of Mullabracke, County Armagh, Ireland (north) was written on March 30, 1780 and executed in 1783. This man was a farmer and his will mentions a son named James Leeper who was in America. To his sons, John Leeper and William Leeper, he left portions of his farm in Ireland. To his grandson, Robert Leeper (son of John Leeper), he left ~2.5 pounds sterling. To his daughter, Agness Leeper (apparently unmarried), he left land in Ireland and numerous belongings. To his grandson, Robert Smith, son of his daughter Margaret Leeper Smith, he left two guineas. To his son, James Leeper (“... now in America ...”), he left “...pounds 5 ster. or goods to that value to be sent to him when opportunity serveth in lieu thereof.” The location of James Leeper in America is not stated.

If the information in the Carroll County Leeper Family sketch [*Commemorative Biographical Record of Carroll County, Ohio*, J. H. Beers & Co., publisher, 1891, pp. 1031-1033] is true, stating that **James Leeper** (1746-1826) was born in Ireland, where he married **Jennie Amspoker**, and James and Jennie Leeper immigrated to Muddy Creek Forks, York Co., Pennsylvania about the time of the Revolutionary War, then this Robert Leeper could be the father of our James Leeper (subject of this biographical sketch).

The following must be kept in mind. Several men named James Leeper came to America between 1730 and 1780. This Robert Leeper could be the father of any number of men named James Leeper. Since the location of James Leeper, son of this Robert Leeper, is not stated in the will, identification of the James Leeper who was the son of this Robert Leeper may remain impossible.