

Biographical Sketch:

James Leeper (1746-1826)

and

Mary Jane “Jennie” Amspoker Leeper (1746-1826)

of

Muddy Creek Forks, Chanceford, Township, York Co., PA (Until 1780)

and

Cross Creek, Ohio Co. (Brooke Co.), VA (WV) Washington Co., Penn (after 1780)

Courtesy of Fort Vance Historical Society

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH:

JAMES LEEPER (1746-1826)

AND

MARY JANE “JENNIE” AMSPOKER LEEPER (1746-1826)

of

Muddy Creek Forks, Chanceford Township, York Co., Penn. (until 1780)

and

Cross Creek, Ohio Co. (Brooke Co.), VA(WV)/Washington Co., Penn. (after 1780)

AND THEIR CHILDREN (WHO ARE NOT IN OUR DIRECT LINE)

Compilation (as of January 2006) of:

**Stephen A. Leeper
1907 Bayberry Lane
West Lafayette, IN 47906**

A Chapter in the Leeper Family History entitled

**“James and ‘Jennie’ Leeper
to
Capt. Wesley Roy Leeper, My Father
(With Information on Allied Families)”**

JAMES AND MARY JANE "JENNIE" AMSPOKER LEEPER

According to Mary Leeper Long (great granddaughter of James and Jennie Leeper via William Alexander Leeper) and Emmett Adair (great grandson of James and Jennie Leeper via Martha Jane Leeper Adair), **James Leeper** is the first definitively identifiable Leeper of our line. This relationship, based on the statements of descendants removed by only two generations (i.e., William Alexander Leeper and Martha Jane Leeper Adair), can be considered firmly established.

According to the Leeper Family sketch (pages 1031 to 1033) of the Commemorative Biographical Record of Carroll County, Ohio, published by J. H. Beers & Co., 1891 (possibly the work of Emmett Adair, son of William and Martha Leeper Adair and grandson of William and Eleanor Lawther Leeper), James Leeper was born in Ireland, where he married **Jennie Amspoker**. Per this account, James and Jennie emigrated to America about the time of the Revolutionary War and first settled at Muddy Creek Forks, York County, Pennsylvania. In 1780, they moved to Ohio Co., VA (now Brooke Co., West Virginia). Their children were James, John, Martha (Mattie), Ann, William, and Jane. The Carroll County History continues with William and Eleanor Lawther Leeper.

James Leeper, who married Jennie Amspoker, may have been born in Pennsylvania and may have been the son of James Leeper of Chanceford Township, York County, Pennsylvania. Evidence of this relationship is interspersed in this chapter and expanded in the chapter on James Leeper of Chanceford Township, York County, Pennsylvania.

Jennie Amspoker, who married James Leeper, had the legal name -- Mary Jane Amspoker; Jennie (apparently a nickname) is the name remembered by the descendants of her son, William Leeper, and her daughter, Ann Leeper Dillon. She may also have been born in York County, Pennsylvania. Evidence for this statement is provided in the Amspoker chapter.

The name James Leeper (Leaper, Leiper, and other variations) is found more than once in the records of York and Washington Counties, Pennsylvania (and surrounding areas, including Ohio and Brook Counties, Virginia). However, more than one James Leeper lived in these areas at the same time. [Every Leeper family seems to have had the tradition of naming their first son James.] Separating these James Leepers from each other may remain impossible. In western Pennsylvania, the James Leeper associated with Ohio Co., Virginia, and/or Cross Creek or Jefferson Townships in Washington County, Pennsylvania, has a high probability of being our James Leeper.

In 1778, the men of the 6th Battalion of the York County Militia submitted the following petition (dated March 13, 1778) to the president, requesting that their new wagon master be replaced because they viewed him as a traitor [text reproduced as written, with original misspellings]:

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. Per David Rohrer Leeper [Leeper Lineage, p. 2; available in the St. Joseph's County Public Library in South Bend, IN], the three men named James Leeper were 1) James Leeper of Chanceford; 2) James Leeper, Jr., the son of James Leeper of Chanceford; and 3) James Leeper, the nephew of James Leeper of Chanceford.

In 1780, our James Leeper (previously of Muddy Creek Forks, Chanceford Township, York Co., Penn.) made a tomahawk claim on land in the Cross Creek region of Ohio Co., Virginia, and Washington Co., Pennsylvania. The farm of our James and Jennie Leeper straddled the present day border of Pennsylvania and West Virginia. In 1796, Brooke County, Virginia, was formed from Ohio Co.; the James Leeper farm was then in Brooke Co., VA, and Washington Co., PA. Brooke Co., VA, became Brooke Co., WV, when West Virginia ceded from Virginia in 1863.

James and Jennie Leeper became members of Cross Creek Presbyterian Church (located in Washington Co., PA), founded in 1775 at Vance's Fort. [As of 2005, Cross Creek remained an active church.] In 1779, Joseph Smith became the first pastor of Cross Creek Church [The Planting of Civilization in Western Pennsylvania by Solon J. Buck and Elizabeth Hawthorn Buck, University of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1939, p. 405]. In the following letter (written in 1801) Sally Hastings describes the preaching of Thomas Maquire, the second pastor of Cross Creek Church. 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 Dreadfulest 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 etceras 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. [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]

On April 4, 1786, James Leeper 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 Crumrine, L. H. Leverts & Co., Philadelphia, 1882, Vol. 2, p. 733]. South Strabane Township (south of Washington, Pennsylvania) is some distance from Cross Creek/Jefferson Townships.

In 1787, James Leeper of Ohio Co., VA (part of which became Brooke Co., VA, in 1796), paid personal property taxes on himself, three horses, and four cows.

Per the 1790 US census (Roll M637_9; Page 254; Image 0105), the household of one James Leeper of Washington Co., Penn. (township not listed) consisted of one male over 16, four males under 16, and six females. As of 1790, the family of our James Leeper (per our knowledge) consisted of one male over 16 (James Leeper, 44), two males under 16 (John, 14; William, ~8), and four females (Jennie, 44; Martha, 16; Ann, 15; Jane ~8). We know of the children that survived to adulthood and have no evidence that James and Jennie had other children (who died young), e.g., the only Leepers buried in Cross Creek Church Cemetery are James, Mary Jane "Jennie", Martha, John, and Jane. Therefore, this census entry may not be for our James Leeper.

James Leeper, of Cross Creek Township, Washington County, PA, signed an oath of allegiance to the United States during the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794.

"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."

This document was signed by a large number of persons from several townships of Washington County, PA, including, from Cross Creek Township (on September 11, 1794), James Leeper, John Leeper, Samuel Leeper, James Clark, and John Lawther [History of Washington County, Alfred Creigh, B. Singerly Printer, Harrisburg, PA, 1871].

A Mr. Leeper was one of the earliest teachers at the McMillen school house in Cross Creek Township; this school was in existence as early as 1796 [Cross Creek Section of History of Washington County, Pennsylvania with Biographical Sketches of Many of Its Pioneers and Prominent Men, Boyd Crumrine, L. H. Leverts & Co., Philadelphia, 1882].

James Leeper is mentioned as a landowner in, but not a resident of, East and West Crumrine Townships [History of Washington County, Alfred Creigh, B. Singerly Printer, Harrisburg, PA, 1871].

In 1797, James Leeper of Brooke County filed a suit against Samuel Leeper (per page 108 of County Court Order Book #1, May 1797 to August 1898). Mary Szymanowski believes that details of this suit are described in records kept on microfilm in Morgantown, WV. James Leeper of Chanceford, considered the father of Samuel Leeper (1748-1805) of Washington Co.,

Penn., and possibly the father of James Leeper (1746-1826) of Brooke County, VA (WV), is thought to have died about 1795. This suit may have been related to disagreement as to the settlement of the estate of James Leeper of Chanceford; if found, the record of this lawsuit could prove that James and Samuel Leeper were brothers and that James Leeper (1746-1826) was the son of James Leeper of Chanceford?

Per 1800 US census (Roll 44; Page 750; Image 35), two heads of households named James Leiper are found in Cross Creek Township, Washington Co., Penn. One household consists of a James Leiper (age 26 to 44) only; our James Leeper was ~54 in 1800 and his wife, Mary Jane "Jennie" age ~54, was still living and should have been in this household (along with an expectation of finding evidence of Martha, John, and Jane – all in adulthood). The James Leiper household consisting of one male (between 26 and 44) is presumably James Leeper the son of James and Jennie Leeper, whose age 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 two children under 10 (the son and daughter of this James Leeper and his wife?). 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 (Roll 66; Page 689; Image 674.00), 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 (James), one female over 45 (Jennie), two males between 16 and 25 [presumably John (actually 34) and William (actually ~28)], and two females between 16 and 25 [presumably Martha (actually 36) and Jane (actually ~28)]. Interestingly, the next entry was John Armshpoker, presumed brother of Mary Jane "Jennie" Amspoker Leeper.

Per the 1820 census (Roll M33_132; Page 88; Image 61), 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 Anna Leeper Dillon, the daughter of this James Leeper. She was contacted by Stephen A. Leeper via the Washington County Genealogy Web site on the Internet. Spelling is per the will.

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 bead and furniture one kettle and beack oven one half of the loom and tacklings with seventy five dollars to be paid in to 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 bead and furniture one kettle one beack 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 and Margaret McKee Leeper. An extended case for this relationship is provided under James Leeper of Chanceford Township. A small portion of the evidence follows. John Leeper is the son of this James. John Amspoker is the son of Jonas and Elizabeth Leeper Amspoker. Alexander Smith is possibly the son of Robert and Mary Leeper Smith. Elizabeth Leeper and Mary Leeper are the daughters of James and Margaret McKee Leeper. Alexander Smith and John Amspoker are likely the nephews of James Leeper, indicating that James is the brother of Elizabeth and Mary and the son of James and Margaret Leeper. 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 astoundingly similar to McKee.

Regarding the inheritance given to James, William, and Ann, the bequest of one dollar may indicate that the children were given a share of their mother and father's estate at the time of their respective marriages.

James and Mary/Jennie Leeper, along with three of their children and various Amspokers, are buried in the Cross Creek Presbyterian Cemetery in Washington County, Pennsylvania. [To reach this cemetery, go to Weirton, WV. Take US 22 to PA state 18. Turn right (South). Go 6 or 7 miles to Slovan. Turn right and go about 2 miles.] The church is brick and is surrounded by the cemetery. The cemetery is not very large. Mary Szymanowski has reportedly seen all five Leeper markers; relevant data had been recorded from and photos had been taken of the markers.

According to his tombstone [Cross Creek Presbyterian Cemetery in Washington County, Pennsylvania], James Leeper died on August 16, 1826, aged 80 years (year of birth: 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 (year of birth: 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.

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:

MARTHA LEEPER: Martha "Mattie" Leeper, the daughter of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, was born about 1774. She never married and lived her entire life working on the family farm. She was a member of Cross Creek Presbyterian Church until 1849, when she left to help organize Pine Grove Presbyterian Church [See John Leeper, her brother]. She died (per

gravestone) at the age of 76 on June 2, 1850, and is buried in the Cross Creek Presbyterian Cemetery, Washington Co, PA. Her will was probated in 1850 and names sister Jane as an heir.

JAMES LEEPER: James Leeper, the son of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, was born about 1775. According to the Leeper history of Laverne Leeper, this James Leeper married a widow by the name of Wilson (born about 1780) and lived in Jefferson Co., OH. This assertion is doubtful for two reasons (but certainly not totally able to be discounted). One, James's brother, William, married a widow named Martha Wilson; her maiden name was Holmes. Two, some sources have the widow's name as Martha Holmes Wilson, who was the second wife of William Leeper (the brother of this James Leeper).

James Leeper of Jefferson County, Ohio, patented 160 acres on April 1806 (in Stark or Archer Township): SE ¼ Sec. 3, Township 11, Range 5. Last payment 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 this James Leeper may be James Leeper, the son of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper.]

The following information about this James Leeper should be regarded as highly speculative.

James Leeper, the son of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, may have married a woman named Elizabeth and had eight children (born in the early 1800s): Mary (married Samuel Boyd), Elizabeth (married Daniel Shively), Jane (married a Layport or Laporte), Letticia (married a Lyle), William (possibly married Maria), Martha (married a Wise), John (no further information), and Margaret (married John Danner) Leeper. The source of this information is not clear.

The following information was found by Mary Szymanowski (descendant of Ann Leeper Dillon).

Jefferson Co., Ohio, records show the following marriages: Daniel Shively and Elizabeth Leeper, June 26, 1825; Felix Wise and Martha Leeper, Feb. 16, 1837; Letitia Leeper and Ishmael Lisle, Jan. 8, 1835.]

A widowed Mary Boyd and three children, Samuel (23), Martha (12), and George (8), are listed on page 78, visit number 1111-1116 of the Jefferson Co., OH, census of 1850. Mary Boyd is listed 48 years of age, putting her birth in about 1802.

William and Jane Layport are found in the Harrison Co., OH, census of 1850 on page 319, visit number 114-114. William, age 37, is listed as a farmer, from Jefferson Co., OH. Jane is listed as 25 years of age, indicating she was born in 1825. Their children are listed as Edward (5 ½) and Leslie (a male); a Christopher Maummy is also living with them (no age).

John and Margaret Danner and one child, Elizabeth Danner, age 13, are found on page 13, visit number 568-600 of the Jefferson Co., OH, census of 1850. John, age 32, is a spinner. Margaret is listed as age 31, indicating she was born in 1819. Elizabeth Leeper, age 76, is listed as living with John and Margaret Danner, 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.

Per Jerry D. Leeper (Leeper family researcher), James Leeper, the son of James and Mary Jane "Jennie" Amspoker Leeper, married Elizabeth Kimball (daughter of Moses, born ca. 1747, and Jemina Clement Kimball/Kimble). This assertion is not consistent with known information and should be considered doubtful. According to 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., OH), Elizabeth Kimball married James Leeper on May 16, 1805; James Leeper, son of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, would have been about 30 in 1805. According to the History of Harrison County (Ohio), Elizabeth Leeper, wife of James Leeper, died on January 22, 1860 (Freeport Graveyard, Harrison Co.), at the age 80 years (born ca. 1780 and 25 when married). The Elizabeth who married James Leeper, the son of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, was born in about 1774. According to some 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. (See Samuel Leeper, the son of Andrew Leeper.) According to Freeport Presbyterian Church records, a James Leeper was the son of Archibald Leeper and Archibald Leeper died in 1826 at age 70. Archibald Leeper, born 1756, could have had a son between the years of 1775 and 1780, who would have been 25 to 30 in 1805 (and about the correct age to have married a 25-year old woman). James and Elizabeth Kimball had a son named Moses (born May 8, 1810; died September 4, 1880), presumably named after Elizabeth's father. Moses and Rachel Leeper (died May 23, 1869, age 68 years) are buried in Freeport Graveyard near Elizabeth Leeper. In addition, Elizabeth Leeper was living in the same township (Freeport) as Moses Leeper during the 1850 census (Harrison Co., OH). Moses and Rachel Leeper had a son named James and a daughter named Elizabeth.

What to conclude? The fate of James Leeper, the son of James and Jennie Leeper, is not clear. But, he most likely married an Elizabeth other than Elizabeth Kimball.

ANN LEEPER: Ann (or Anna) Leeper, the daughter of James and Mary Jane "Jennie" Amspoker Leeper, was born about 1775. She married Henry Dillon (born about 1771 and possibly the son or brother of John Dillon of Washington Co., Penn.). In one census, Henry Dillon was born in Virginia (but Washington Co., Penn. was once 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, where Henry Dillon died. Henry and Ann Leeper Dillon are buried at Stevens Cemetery (now known as Robb Cemetery) in Elk Township, Vinton Co., Ohio. [To reach this cemetery, tank 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.] According to the stones, Ann Leeper Dillon died in 1859 and Henry Dillon died on Sept. 13, 1861.

Mary Szymanowski of West Virginia is the 3X-great grand daughter of Henry and Ann Leeper Dillon and the 4X-great grand daughter of James and Mary Jane "Jennie" Amspoker Leeper.

According to Mary Szymanowski, Henry and Anna had, among other children, two sons who were said to have moved to Montana and were never heard from again.

The known children of James and Anna Leeper Dillon are:

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

Washington and Martha Dillon Larkin had at least two children:

Mary Larkin: Mary Larkin was born about 1824 and married John Nickells.

Washington Larkin, Jr.: Nothing more is known of Washington Larkin, Jr.

John and Martha Dillon Wortman had three children:

Henry Wortman: Henry Wortman was born about 1839 in Iowa.

John Wortman: John Wortman was born on July 4, 1843, in Iowa.

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

Alice Francis Wortman: Alice Wortman was born August 31, 1903, in Jackson, Ohio. Alice Wortman married (1) Alfred Carl Wieland. Alfred and Alice Wortman Wieland had at least one daughter:

Louisa Mary Wieland: Louisa Mary 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 graciously shared her Leeper family research findings with Stephen Allen Leeper, in preparation of our Leeper Family History.

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

William Dillon: William Dillon was born about 1808 and married Sarah Scott(?). William and Sarah Dillon had four children:

John Dillon: John Dillon was born about 1834 and married Araville Stevens on July 22, 1858; they lived in Vinton County, Ohio.

Sarah S. Dillon: Sarah Dillon was born in about 1841. She married Levi Pursley on January 17, 1859 in Vinton County, Ohio.

Jasper Dillon: Jasper Dillon was born about 1844. He married Sarah E. Ullom on July 22, 1858. Jasper and Sara Ullom Dillon had two daughters: Frances, who married a Weisenbarger, and Lillina, who married a Swain.

Louisa Dillon: Louisa Dillon was born about 1847.

Jane Dillon: Jane Dillon was born about 1811. She married a McQueen and had a daughter named Harriet, born about 1839.

John L. Dillon: John Dillon was born about 1812 in Pennsylvania. His wife's name was Eleanor. John and Eleanor Dillon had six children:

Mary Ann Dillon: Mary Ann Dillon was born about 1837.

Martha J. Dillon: Martha Dillon was born about 1838 and married a Billinghamst.

Nancy Dillon: Nancy Dillon was born about 1840. She married Henry Westcott on August 13, 1863 and they lived in Vinton County, Ohio.

Rachel Dillon: Rachel Dillon was born about 1843 and married twice: first to Isaac K. Clark (August 13, 1863) and second to a Nixon.

Emma Dillon: Emma Dillon was born about 1845 and married Abram Clark on January 17, 1859.

Ben Dillon: Nothing more is known of Ben Dillon.

JOHN LEEPER: John Leeper, the son of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, was born about 1776. He never married and lived his entire life working the Leeper farm with his father, mother, and sisters. John Leeper helped plan, and was an original elder of, Pine Grove

Presbyterian Church, located near the site of Creswell's Mill (later known as Kidd's Mill) in Jefferson Township, Washington Co., Penn., about two miles from the Leeper farm (much closer to the Leeper home than Cross Creek Presbyterian Church). He died (per gravestone) on October 22, 1849, at the age of 73, before Pine Grove Church was completed and is buried in the Cross Creek Presbyterian Church Cemetery. His will, undated, recorded December 1849, is available in the Brooke County, WV, will book. Martha and Jane Leeper, his sisters, are named in the will. The executor was John Headington. Isaiah Steen and George Amspoker (the 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, the father of this John Leeper, was the brother of Elizabeth Leeper. Elizabeth Leeper, who married Jonas Amspoker, is generally considered the daughter of James and Margaret McKee Leeper. This connection between John Leeper and George Amspoker provides evidence that James Leeper, the father of John Leeper, may have been the son of James and Margaret McKee Leeper.

Per History of Cross Creek Presbyterian Church [by Alvin D. White, McClain Printing Company, Parsons, West Virginia, 1969; available from Cross Creek Presbyterian Church].

... in 1849 a number of families left Cross Creek Church to help form two new congregations. 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.

WILLIAM LEEPER: William Leeper, the son of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, was born about 1782. As he is in the direct line of ancestry, he is treated in a separate biographical sketch.

JANE LEEPER: Jane Leeper, the daughter of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, was born about 1782. Confusion exists about her year of birth because of an error of transcription 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 viewed her gravestone. Per her gravestone, she died in 1868 at the age of 86 -- making her year of birth about 1782.

Jane Leeper never married. After her parents died, she remained on the family farm, with her brother, John, and sister Mattie, who also never married. She was a member of Cross Creek Presbyterian Church until 1849, when she left to help organize Pine Grove Presbyterian Church [See John Leeper, her brother]. She survived her brother and her sister by 18 years, and was the last Leeper to live on the Leeper family farm in Brooke Co., WV.

According to the 1860 census, William and Ellen Fleming and their eight children, aged 10 months to 20 years, were living on the Leeper farm with her. Two Fleming sons, Joseph and William, Jr., died in the Civil War. [Ellen Fleming may be a daughter or grand daughter of James Leeper, the brother of Jane Leeper.]

Per her gravestone (Cross Creek Presbyterian Church Cemetery, Cross Creek Township, Washington Co., PA), Jane Leeper died on June 13, 1868 at the age of 86.

According to estate papers, Jane Leeper's estate was worth in excess of \$300,000 (the value may be a transcription error, and should perhaps be read as \$3000, as acknowledged by Mary Szymanowski). The will of Jane Leeper is reproduced below; all spellings are as in the original will. The relationship of Jane to Benjamin Long (and his children with the last name of Leeper) is not known. She was apparently not aware of her brother William's death, about 10 years before her own, or she had written the will while he was still living and then had never updated it. In Item 9, Jane left a substantial sum (~\$200,000) to Pine Grove Presbyterian Church and, if these funds could not go to Pine Grove, she wanted to ensure that they went only to a Presbyterian Church.

Will of JANE LEEPER

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 by 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 1st. I will and bequeath my soul unto God who gave it.

Item 2nd, 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 3rd. 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 4th. 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 3rd of this my will

Item 5th. 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 6th. 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 3rd.

Item 7th. 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 the severally arrive at the age of twenty-one years my executor to pay him the bequest at the time fixed in Item 3rd.

Item 8th. 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 9th. 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 10th. 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
Jane X Leeper (seal)
Mark

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

Item 7 demands some speculation. How can 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 (about 1868)? Answer: Benjamin Long is the second husband of the wife of one of the sons of James Leeper (brother of Jane Leeper) and William and Martha Jane Leeper of actually the children of this son of James Leeper (brother of Jane Leeper). James Leeper, the son of James and Jennie Amspoker Leeper, may have had a son named William (who possibly married Maria) and John (about whom no further information is known). If a search of the 1870 census revealed a Benjamin Long household, with wife named Maria and/or a son/stepson named William and daughter/stepdaughter named Martha Jane, then the above speculation may be validated. Item 3 provides validation of this speculation.

**

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

Per the petition of 1778 (cited above), at least three men in York County, Pennsylvania, served in the 6th 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 County, PA 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, who is called James of Chanceford, and his son James Leeper, who is possibly James Leeper (1746-1826) of Muddy Creek Forks, PA, who married Mary Jane "Jennie" Amspoker (but this relationship should be considered speculation). One James Leeper is of Hopewell township, who married Anne (maiden name not known); this James 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 highly speculative. No such claim is made in the existing family tradition (based on information collected by Emmett Adair (son of Martha Jane Leeper Adair), Mary Leeper (Long), and Laverne Leeper). Emmett Adair and Mary Leeper (Long), first cousins, were young adults in the late 1800s and were the great grandchildren of this James Leeper (1746-1826). If he had been a veteran of the Revolutionary War, Emmett Adair and Mary Leeper would have surely recorded it, if they knew. 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 and Emmett Adair hear this from their parents or grandparents? Perhaps, the most likely conclusion is that 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.

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

In a history of Brooke Co. written by June Grossman, the location of the "Old Leeper Farm" is described 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.

Stephen Allen Leeper, the 4X great grandson of James and Jennie Leeper visited the Old Leeper Place. In May 1999, June Grossman (Washington County historian) 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. They had to content themselves with standing on the road and looking up the hollow that led to the farm.

The directions 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, Steve Leeper hiked to and stood on the site of the Leeper home. He wrote the following account of the trip.

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.