

ADAM SYMES OF BRUNSWICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA

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## ADAM SYMES OF BRUNSWICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA

Among the pioneer settlers of Brunswick County, Virginia came Adam Symes about 1720. It is not known if he was a native of Virginia or migrated from England. There is no record of this Adam Symes to be found earlier than 1719 in Virginia. By this time there were several Symes families in Virginia. His ancestry has been a controversial subject among family researchers for many years. Circumstantial evidence as well as family tradition suggests that he sprang from a branch of the Symes families in Somersetshire, England.

There was a consensus among most early family researchers that Adam Symes was a son of George Symes, who came from Antigua, West Indies. The History of Antigua, Vol. III, p. 110, by Oliver contains the genealogy of the Antigua Symes families back to John Symes, of Barwick, and his wife Jane, in Somersetshire, England. George Symes was born no earlier than 1672 according to the Antigua records and would have had to marry before 1685 to be Adam Symes father. Therefore, it would seem that George Symes would be too young to be his father. Furthermore, George Symes apparently arrived in Surry County, Virginia during the summer of 1687, some two years after Adam was born.

Early family researchers also claim that Adam Symes was a brother to the Sims brothers in New Kent County, Virginia. Unfortunately, they did not have available a key legal document that reveals these Sims brothers were sons of William Symes, Senior, of James City County, Virginia. This William Symes, Senior did not name Adam Symes as a son in his will and he can no longer be considered a brother of the Sims families in New Kent County, Virginia.

Adam Symes was born no later than 1685 and died in Brunswick County, Virginia during July of 1733. The loss of so many records in this area makes it impossible to determine his parents. There was one Adam Symes living in New Kent County, Virginia who was mentioned in a grant issued to Sarah Allen on 17 September 1683. Boundaries of this grant were described in part as: "Beginning on the south side of York River and the southeast side of Ware Creek, beginning at the corner tree that divides this land from Adam Symes land," etc.

There is no other record found in New Kent County of this Adam Symes or from what branch of the family he sprang. However, for him to own land in 1683 would suggest that he was born on or before 1662. This would make him too old to be the same one that settled in Brunswick County, Virginia or the Brunswick County Adam was much older than the records indicate.

Adam Symes of Brunswick County, Virginia appeared in Prince George County in 1719 when he acquired 150 acres of land by lease and release for one year from Francis Coleman, Jr. that touched Warrick Swamp. He was married and had at least six children by this time, but there are no records of his activities prior to his purchase of this land.

The Brunswick County Adam Symes first acquired land that touched Warrick Swamp in Prince George County, Virginia. It has been suggested that this land joined land listed in the Quit Rent Rolls of 1704 as belonging to George Symes of Surry County, Virginia, who came from Antigua. This was based solely on George Symes being the father of Adam Symes since Warrick Swamp was party in Prince George County and partly in Surry County. With so few records available for the counties involved there is little opportunity to prove such an assumption. But it represents the only possible connection with George Symes.

The deed of lease and release was made to Adam Symes in part, as follows:

This indenture made this seventh day of August in the year of Our Lord God one thousand seven hundred and nineteen, between Francis Coleman, Junr. and Mary his wife of the County of Prince George of the one part and Adam Sims of the same place on the other part, WITNESSETH, that the said Francis Coleman, Junr. and Mary his wife for and in consideration of the sum of five shillings sterling to him in hand paid, by the said Adam Sims, whereof he doth hereby acknowledge receipt, hath bargained and sold unto the said Adam Sims, etc. ... one parcel or tract of land containing one hundred and fifty acres bonded, Viz: Beginning at the lower corner of trees , of the dividend land, whereon John Ledbetter now lives, and running from thence along up that line, forty four poles to a corner in that line, thence north east forty chains from thence northwest up that line, and from thence a straight course to the main Warrick Swamp to complete on hundred and fifty acres.

To have and to hold the said tract of land, with the appurtenances, unto the said Adam Sims, his executors, administrators, and assigns, from the next day before the date hereof, for and during the term of one whole year, from thence next ensuing and fully to be complete and ended, and this is hereby declared that these presents are so made and accepted that thereby and by virtue and force of the statute made in the seven and twentyeth year of the Reign of King Henry the Eighth, for the transferring of use into possession, etc..... Signed Sealed and Delivered by Francis and Mary Coleman in the presence of: Robert Munford, Geo. Tillman & Richard Cocke.

At a court held at Mearchantshope for the County of Prince George on the second Tuesday in October, being the thirteenth day of the said month Anno Domini 1719. The above written Deed of Lease of Land was in Open Court acknowledged by Francis Coleman the subscriber thereto, to be his Act and Deed to Adam Sims named therein, and then also appeared in Court Mary the wife of said Francis Coleman and voluntarily relinquished her right of dower, etc. ...

Adam Symes conveyed the same land to John Ledbetter on the 6 January 1719/20 (1720). Prior to an Act of Parliament passed in 1750 the legal year begin in England, and its colonies, on twenty-fifth of March, instead of first of January. So the 6 January 1719 was actually 6 January 1720, as it would now be called.

The release of Adam Symes lease to John Ledbetter was made and recorded in part, as follows:

This indenture made the fifth day of August in the sixth year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord George by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King Defender of the Faith, and in the year of Our Lord God, one thousand seven hundred and twenty, between Adam Simms of Surry County of the one part and John Ledbetter of Prince George County of the other part. WITNESSETH: that the said Adam Simms hath demise, granted and to farm letted, and by these presents doth demise, grant and to farm letted unto John Ledbetter one hundred and fifty acres of land now in his quit and peaceable possession and seized by virtue of these presents situated lying and being on Warrick Swamp in Prince George County, Viz: Beginning at the lower corner trees of the dividend of land, whereon the said John Ledbetter now lives, and running along that line, forty

poles to a corner in that line and from thence a straight course to the main Warrick Swamp, including the aforesaid one hundred and fifty acres of land, etc. ... (Signed) Adam Symes

Signed Sealed and Delivered

in the presence of us

Wm. Hamlin, Gil Hay, Wm. Hardyman & Richard Ingrum.

At a Court held at Merchants Hope for the County of Prince George on the second Tuesday in December, being the thirteenth day of the said month, Anno Dom. 1720.

The above written Deed of Lease of Land (Sealed) was in open Court proven by the oaths of Gilbert Hay, William Hardyman and William Hamlin. Witnesses thereto, to be the Act and Deed of Adam Simms to John Ledbetter, Prince George County, Virginia.

The lease dated 6 January 1719 (1720) stated that Adam lived in the "Parish of Bristol in Prince George County," but in the release dated 5 August 1720 stated that he was living in Surry County, Virginia. No record of Adam Symes owning land in Surry County has been found, but many family historians claim that he was on the two hundred acres listed in the 1704 Quit Rent Rolls as belonging to George Symes. No evidence has been discovered to confirm such an assumption.

Adam Symes appeared in Brunswick County, Virginia records after the preceding transaction, where he lived until his death in 1733. Brunswick County was established by Acts of Assembly in November of 1720 from Prince George County. The government taking note of the slow development in this area exempted payment of all levies for ten years to encourage faster settlement. People living in Prince George County and adjacent counties took advantage of this offer, including Adam Symes.

Adam Symes received a grant recorded in part, as follows:

George &c. To All &c. Whereas &c. We have given granted and confirmed and by these presents for us our heirs and successors do give grant and confirm unto Adam Sims of Brunswick County one certain tract or parcel of land containing two hundred and fifty acres land lying and being on the south side of the fifty acres of land lying and being on the south side of the Meherrin River in the County of Brunswick aforesaid and bonded as followeth (to-wit) Beginning at three trees chopped inwards at a corner of the land of Mrs. Chapmans line south forty-one degrees east one hundred and seventy poles to a hickory thence south twenty-six degrees east one hundred and twenty-four poles to three trees chopped inwards thence north thirty degrees west thirty-one and half degrees east seventy pole to a pine, a corner tree of William Ledbetter, etc. ... Witness our Trusty and well beloved Robert Carte of our said Colony and Dominion at Williamsburg under the Seal of our said Colony the thirty-first day of October one thousand seven hundred and twenty-six in the thirteenth year of our Reign.

State Land Office

(Signed) Robert Carter.

Patent Book No. 13, page 69  
Richmond, Virginia.

George Sims also received a grant in Brunswick County issued the same day and recorded on the same page as Adam Symes grant. This George Sims was one of the Sims brothers living in Hanover County, Virginia. The grant being recorded in part, as follows:

George &c. To All &c. Whereas &c. We have given granted and confirmed, and by these presents for or heirs and Successors do give grant and confirm unto George Sims of Brunswick County one certain tract or parcel of land containing two hundred and seventy acres lying and being on the south side of Meherrin River and bounded as followeth (to-wit): Beginning at a beech on the north side of the Rattle Snake Swamp thence north forty degrees east one hundred and ninety pole to a red oake thence north forty degrees west two hundred and fifty-six pole to pole to a scrub oake thence south forty degrees west one hundred and sixty-four pole to a white wood at the Rattle Snake aforesaid thence down the water courses of the swamp to the beginning.

With All &c. To have and hold &c. to be held &c. yielding and paying &c. Provided &c. In witness &c. witness our Trusty and well beloved Robert Carter, Esqr., President of our council and Commander in Chief of our said Colony the thirty-first day of October one thousand seven hundred and twenty-six in the thirteenth year of our Reign.

State Land Office

(Signed) Robert Carter

Patent Book No. 13, page 69, Richmond, Virginia.

The significance of George Sims grant being issued on the same day as Adam Symes grant, and apparently on joining tracts has never been understood. Although the grants were both dated the same day and recorded on the same page of the Patent Book, they may have been applied for much earlier and at different times, and were merely executed on the same date.

The two grants certainly suggest contact between the two families. Family historians have worked under the contention that this George Sims and Adam Symes were brothers. Accordingly, they have emphasized a family relationship between Adam Symes of Brunswick County and the Sims brothers living in New Kent-Hanover County. There is ample evidence that the Sims brothers in Hanover County were sons of William Symes of James City County, Virginia and that they were not brothers of Adam Symes in Brunswick County. However that may be, their relation has not been correctly established.

Adam Symes received another two hundred and ninety acres of land by grant dated 28 September 1728 and located on the south side of the Meherrin River in Brunswick County. This grant was recorded in Patent Book 14, page 86, Richmond, Virginia. He bought an additional three hundred and twenty-five acres of land from Joseph Kimball and Ralph Jackson and recorded in Deed Book 1, page 24, Brunswick County, Virginia.

The land owned by Adam Symes after this purchase totaled 865 acres located in the southern part of Brunswick County, Virginia and near the North Carolina state line between the Cold Water Run and Reedy Branch and their confluence with the Meherrin River.

Adam Symes of Brunswick County, Virginia was born no later than 1685 based on existing records and died in Brunswick County, Virginia in July 1733. It has been said that he married about 1705 or 1706 to Mary Isham, of a prominent Charles City County, Virginia family.

Adam and Mary Symes had issue:

1. George Symes born ca. 1707.
2. Adam Symes born ca. 1709.
3. Isham Symes born ca. 1711.
4. William Symes born ca. 1713.
5. John Symes born ca. 1715.
6. David Symes born ca. 1717.
7. Mary Symes born ca. 1719.
8. Charles Symes born ca. 1721.
9. James Symes born ca. 1723.

Adam Symes' will may be found, somewhat illegibly, in a volume of Brunswick County Deeds, Wills, &c., 1732-1740, as follows:

In the name of God Amen – I Adam Syms of Brunswick County do make and ordain this my Last Will and Testament in manner and form following (to-wit) First bequeathing my soul to the hands that gave it and my body to the earth from whence it came and for what worldly estate it hath pleased God to bless me with I give and bequeath as follows after arrangement of my funeral expenses and just debts are paid.

ITEM: I give unto my well beloved son Adam Syms one hundred and ninety acres of land ... [torn from book] ... on both sides of the aforesaid Cold Water on the upper part of the said land to him and his heirs forever.

ITEM: I give unto my well beloved son Adam Syms three cows and calves and their increase and one young steer.

ITEM: I give unto my well beloved son Isham Syms one hundred acres of land out of the tract of [land] which I gave my son Adam Syms the lower part of the aforesaid tract of land beyond being on Cold Water and it is to be on both sides of Cold Water to him and his heirs forever.

ITEM: I give to my well beloved son Isham Syms three cows and calves and their increase.

ITEM: I give unto my two sons William and John Symes that tract or parcel of land that lies on the Rattle Snake to be equally divided between them and their heirs forever.

ITEM: I give to my well beloved son William Symes one cow and calf and her increase.

ITEM: I give to my well beloved son John Symes one cow and calf and her increase. I give to my well beloved son David Symes one cow and calf and her increase.

ITEM: I give to my well beloved daughter Mary Symes one feather bed and furniture... one cow and calf and her increase.

ITEM: I give to my well beloved son Charles Symes the plantation known as Watson and all the land thereto belonging as far as Spring Branch to him and his heirs forever.

ITEM: I give to my well beloved son James Symes my plantation and all the land thereto belonging to him and his heirs forever.

ITEM: I give unto my well beloved son George Symes after his mothers deceased one shilling sterling.

ITEM: The remainder of my estate and all the residue I give to my well beloved wife Mary the profits of the same and to her disposal of as she shall think fit in what manner or quantity whatsoever.

I hereby nominate and appoint my loving wife Mary Sims and my son George Sims to be executors of this my Last Will and Testament hereby revoking all former wills by me heretofore made. In witness whereof I have hereto set my hand and affixed my seal this fifteenth day of March one thousand seven hundred and thirty two.

Signed Sealed and Published

(Signed) Adam Symes

Proved 15 July 1733

Book 1, 1722-1740, pages 65 and 66

Brunswick County, Virginia.

The difference in spelling Symes/Symes/Sims name was copied exactly as it appeared in the will book and only can be contributed to the recording clerk's failure to use the correct spelling as is appeared in the original document. A clerk frequently spelled a name as he thought it should be rather than bother checking the established spelling. Furthermore, it is obvious that the clerk omitted the part of the since no bequeath was made to daughter Mary, or the son David Symes. But both sold land in later years that they had inherited from their father.

Mary, wife of Adam Symes, conveyed household items to her son Charles about the same time he married Easther Murry from Isle of Wight County, Virginia. The deed recorded as follows:

To all people to whom this present writing shall come I send greetings, know ye that I the said Mary Sims as well for and in consideration of the natural love and affection which I have and bear unto my son Charles Sims for his advancement and preservement in this world as also for divers and other good causes and considerations I have given and granted and by these presents do fully clearly and absolutely give, grant and absolutely give, grant and confirm unto the said Charles Sims his heirs, executors and administrators all and singular such goods, chattels, implements of household commodities as follows,

Viz, To one featherbed and furniture, two cows and calves, To one iron pot, one pewter dish, one pewter basin and three pewter plates, one chest and a table commonly called his "Father's Table." To have and to hold all and singular the goods and commodities whatsoever as aforesaid to be the aforesaid Charles Sims, his heirs executors and administrators and assigns to his and their own proper use and behoof forever thereof and therewith to do use and dispose at his and their will and pleasure as of his and their own proper goods and chattels without any manner of challenge claim or demand of me the said Mary Sims or any other person or persons for me in my name by any cause means consent or procurement and further ye know that the said Mary Sims have put the said Charles Sims in

full possession of all and singular the aforesaid premises by the delivery unto him at the ensealing hereof (one piece of silver in the name of the whole.)

In witness whereof I the said Mary Sims have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal the first day of March one thousand seven hundred forty-three.

Witnesses:

(Signed) Mary Sims

Adam Sims

David Sims

Proved 5 April 1744 and recorded in Deed Book 2, page 418

Brunswick County, Virginia

This is the only known record made by Mary Symes after Adam Symes death and she apparently died about 1747.

## CHILDREN OF ADAM AND MARY SYMES

Adam and Mary Symes are known to have had nine children according to his will. The surname of Symes was spelled many ways during their generation. But it was spelled Simms or Sims most often when the original spelling was not used.

George Symes of Brunswick County, Virginia has been assumed to be the oldest child of Adam and Mary Symes since he was named executor of his father's estate. He was born about 1707 and married Martha Walton about 1728. It has been said that she was a sister or cousin of John Walton, who married Mary Sims, a daughter of George Sims, Senior of Hanover County, Virginia.

George Symes received a grant in Brunswick County, Virginia for four hundred acres of land on 13 August 1743, which was recorded in Patent Book 21, page 456, State Land Office, Richmond, Virginia. He also bought land from his brother John Symes on 5 November 1747 and witnessed by Micajah Perry and Millington Blalock, Deed Book 3, page 352. This land was later sold to Henry Britt on 23 April 1754, Deed Book 5, page 583, Brunswick County, Virginia.

George Symes was not given land in his father's will, but it has already been suggested that part of the will was omitted by the recording clerk. It is also possible that he had already received a portion of land when he was married. However that may be, he sold land apparently inherited from his father to a brother John Symes on 7 May 1747. This deed was witnessed by George Symes and Millington Blalock and recorded in Book 3, page 298, Brunswick County, Virginia.

Concerning the witness, Millington Blalock, there is evidence that he continued living near the Symes family after they moved into North Carolina. But it is not known if they were related, or just a neighbor and close friend. The two families had been neighbors for some time according to Order book, 1743-1748, page 145, Brunswick County, which states:

At a Court held for Louisa County, Virginia on 23 April 1745. Ordered that Henry Ledbetter, John Barton, Nathan Harris and Adam Sims of the County of Brunswick or any three of them do meet at the late dwelling house of John Blalock, dec'd. and appraise that part of the estate of the said John Blalock lying in the aforesaid county in current money having first taken an oath for their true and just valuing the same to the best of their judgment to be administered unto them by a Justice of the Peace of the said county and that they report their proceedings herein to Louisa County Court.

The witness Micajah Perry's identity is not known, but he may be a distant cousin. John Symes, Junior of Montserrat, West Indies was a descendant of the Symes family in Somersetshire, England. He was killed while in the King's service, at the Battle of Port Mahon, and left a will stating he had no wife or children and gave his estate to a nephew and Godson, Symes Parry, son of Samuel Parry and his wife Elizabeth, who was a sister to John Symes, Junior.

The will of George Symes, son of Adam, was recorded as follows:

In the name of God, Amen. I George Simms of the Parish of Meherrin and County of Brunswick, Virginia being sick and weak, but of sound and disposing memory, thanks be to Almighty God for the same, do make and ordain this my

Last Will and Testament in manner and form following. IMPRIMIS, My will and desire is that all my debts and funeral charges be duly settled.

ITEM: I give and bequeath unto my son Nath'l Simms all that tract or parcel of land lying between Lightfoot's line that was formerly Col. Benjamin Harrison's, on a prong of the Deep Branch, thence up the said branch to the head, thence beginning at two small sassafras and running a south course to a black jack, at the head of a slash, near the westward road, thence down the said slash crossing the said road to two black jacks, on the old Shop Branch, thence down the said branch to his own line, to him and his heirs forever.

ITEM: I give and bequeath unto my son Zachariah Simms all my tract or parcel of land, lying and being without the south side of the Bridge Branch to the head of the said branch, thence beginning at the Turkey Branch to the head of said branch, and running a west course to the cart path and out the said path as the line goes to the back line to him and his heirs forever.

ITEM: I give and bequeath to my son Bartlet Simms after the decease of this mother my manor plantation with all the land and below the cart path (not touching of land purchased of Robt. Taylor) and between lands already given to my son Nath'l and Zachariah to him and his heirs forever.

ITEM: I give and bequeath to my son Burrell Boswell Simms all that part or tract of land lying on the upper side of the branch below Burrell's line to him and his heirs forever. And it is my further will and desire that my son Burrell shall not have any share or part of my estate that I leave to be divided amongst my children.

ITEM: I give and bequeath unto my son William all that tract or parcel of land containing two hundred and fifty acres purchased of Robert Taylor. Also the remainder part of the cart path and joining the land given my son Burrell, lying on the lower Cold Water and down Cold Water joining the land purchased of Robert Taylor already given my son William, to him and his heirs forever. I also give my son William three Negroes (to-wit) one boy named Johnson, one girl named Fibb and one boy named Roger, also at the death or marriage of his mother, I give to my said son William my best bed and furniture, three young cows and calves, and four likely sows and pigs to him and his heirs forever. I likewise devise that my said son shall be put in possession of his land and receive the legacies above given at the age of twenty years and in case my said son should die without issue lawfully begotten of his body that then my will is that the land and legacies above given shall be sold and the money equally divided between my children, that shall be then living, my son Burrell excepted.

ITEM: I constitute and appoint my son Millington Simms my whole and sole executor of this my Last Will and Testament hereby revoking all former wills by me heretofore made.

In witness whereof I have hereto set my hand and affixed my seal this third day of June in the year of Our Lord Christ one thousand seven hundred and sixty-three.

Signed Sealed and Delivered as his Last Will and Testament in the presence of us:

Jack Clark  
William Clack  
William Chapman.

(Signed) George Simms

At a Court held for Brunswick County the twenty-sixth day of September 1763 this will was presented into Court and made oath to by Millington Simms the Executor therein named and proved by the oaths of William Chapman and William Clack, two of the witnesses thereto and ordered to be recorded, and a certificate granted the said executor for obtaining probate thereof in securities, entered into and acknowledge bond.

Will Book 4, page 370  
Brunswick County, Virginia

Thomas Lyall was George Simms' son-in-law. Adam Simms and George Simms were brothers. George Symes' will did not name all his children. But Court Records reveal that George and Martha Simms had issue:

1. George Sims, Junior, oldest child of George and Martha Symes, is said to have married a Miss Bullock, although no record of the marriage has been found. There has also been much contention about his identity.
2. Adam Sims, who was a signer of the Tryon Association on 14 August 1775, in Tryon, North Carolina. Married Elizabeth Walton, daughter of George Walton, Senior of Brunswick County, Virginia.
3. Millington Sims married a Miss Briggs or possible a Swanson, died before 1768.
4. Hannah Sims, who married Thomas Lyall.
5. Nathaniel Sims, who moved to Warren County, North Carolina. Married Ann, daughter of Samuel and Ann (Jackson) Harwell.
6. Burrell Boswell Sims moved to Wake County, North Carolina.
7. Zachariah Sims born 1739, died after 1790, married Mary Briggs, believed to be a daughter of Captain Howell Briggs.
8. Bartlett Sims, whose will in Warren County, Georgia named a wife Catherine and son Bartlett Sims.
9. Daughter that married Allen Love, administrator of George Symes' estate after the death of Millington Sims in 1768.
10. Daughter that married Peter Thomas, guardian of her brother William Sims.
11. William Sims born circa 1755, died in November of 1810 in Baldwin County, Georgia. He was a Revolutionary War soldier and married Judith, daughter of Frederick Green of Brunswick County, Virginia.

25 July 1774: "Bond of Peter Thomas as guardian of William Sims orphan of George Sims for 2,000 pounds. William Starke and John Powell, Securities."

Adam Symes (Junior) second child of Adam and Mary Symes, was born about 1711 and died in November 1771. He married Tabitha Jackson in 1731 and second Elizabeth, daughter of George Mosley. Tabitha was a daughter of Ambrose and Ann Jackson of Brunswick County. Her father's will dated 14 June 1745 and proved 5 December 1745 was recorded in Will Book 2, page 109, in Brunswick County. One bequest stated "I give unto my daughter Tabitha Simms and her heirs ten pounds cash to be paid after the death of her mother."

Adam Symes had but one child, and that by his first wife, Tabitha Jackson. Their daughter, Tabitha, was born in 1732 and died in 1768. She married William Wyche about 1749, who died in April of 1756, and married second William Chapman, on 24 January 1758. William Chapman was a son of John and Rebecca Chapman of Rockford, St. Andrew's Parish, Brunswick County.

William and Tabitha Wyche had issue:

1. Rebecca Wyche born 1751, married Edmund Wilkins, Gent.
2. Tabitha Wyche born 1753, married Douglas Wilkins, Gent.
3. Winifred Wyche born in 1755.

Adam Sims (Symes) was appointed administrator of William Wyche's estate prior to becoming guardian of granddaughter Tabitha Wyche, according to the following:

Order Book 11, page 5.

September 26, 1768: Tabatha Wynch this day in Court chose Adam Sims her guardian, whereupon the said Adam Sims together with Douglas Wilkins his security entered into and acknowledged a bond in the penalty of 2,000 pounds for the said orphan's estate.

The same Order Book 11, page 218, reveals that Adam Sims remained the administrator for William Wyche's estate through 28 November 1769; and probably until his death, although he was concerned about his granddaughter not being satisfied with her portion of the estate in his will.

Deed made by Adam Sims to his son-in-law, William Chapman, recorded in part, as follows:

To all whom these presents shall come Greetings: Know ye that I Adam Sims of the Parish of St. Andrew's n the County of Brunswick for and in consideration of a marriage had and solemnize between William Chapman of the County of Brunswick and my daughter Tabitha and also for the consideration of the sum of five shillings to me in hand paid by the said William Chapman at and before the ensealing and delivery of these, the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge and by these presents doth grant, bargain, sell assign, make over release and deliver unto the said William Chapman these following Negro slaves, to-wit Bess, Lucy, Will, Nat, Sall, George, Woodley and America Silvia and together with the future increase of the female slaves. To have and to hold, etc. ...

Dated 26 July 1762

Signed and Delivered

(Signed) Adam Sims

in the presence of:

Daniel Fisher.

Recorded 26 July 1762

Deed Book 7, page 151

Brunswick County, Virginia.

Adam Sims (Symes) was very active in acquiring land and had accumulated a large estate before making his will, being recorded in 1771, as follows:

In the name of God Amen, I Adam Sims of the County of Brunswick and Parish of Saint Andrews do make and ordain this my Last Will and Testament in manner and form following:

ITEM: I give and bequeath to my nephew William Sims, the son of John Sims, the plantation whereon I now live to him and his heirs forever.

ITEM: I give unto my Grand Daughter Winny Wyche one hundred and forty pounds or in lieu thereof three Negroes which shall be equal in value to that sum to her and her heirs forever, provided she shall at the age of twenty-one years or marriage agree to and abide by the division of her Father's Estate made by me, Douglas Wilkins and Edmund Wilkins, in case she shall refuse to stand and abide by the said division my will and desire is that the aforesaid one hundred and forty pounds or Negroes together with all other gift or legacies hereafter to her made or given shall be equally divided between my two Grand Daughters Rebecca Wilkins and Tabitha Wilkins to them and their heirs forever.

ITEM: I give all the residue of my estate of what nature or kind soever to be equally divided between my three Grand Daughters Rebecca Wilkins, Tabitha Wilkins, and Winny Wyche, to them and their heirs forever.

I do nominate and appoint my brother John Sims, Douglas Wilkins and Edmund Wilkins Executors of this my Last Will and Testament hereby revoking all former wills by me made.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal this eighth day of December 1770.

(Signed) Adam Sims

Signed, sealed Published and declared by the Testator to be his Last Will and Testament, in the presence of us who subscribed our names as witnesses in his presence at his request and by his express direction.

William Ferguson  
John Sisson  
William Edwards

At a Court held for Brunswick County the 25<sup>th</sup> day of November 1771. This will was presented in Court by John Sims, Douglas Watkins, and Edmund Wilkins the Executors therein named who made oath thereto according to law and the same being proved by the oath of William Ferguson and John Sisson two of the witnesses thereto and ordered to be recorded. And on the motion of the said Executors who together with Isaac Collier, William Sims, Daniel Nolly and Frederick Maclin their securities entered into and acknowledged their bond in the penalty of five thousand pounds with condition as law directs. Certificate is granted them for obtaining a probate thereof in due form.

Test: P. Pelham, Jr. Cler. Cur.

Will Book 4, page 87  
Brunswick County, Virginia.

Colonel Frederick Maclin, one of the securities, was a Burgess and later a member of the Virginia Convention in 1775.

Isham Symes, third child of Adam and Mary Symes, was born circa 1712 and died in December of 1791 in Wake County, North Carolina, married Mary Murray, whose parents' name is not known.

Isham and Mary Symes left Virginia and appeared in Craven County, North Carolina where a survey was made 20 November 1744 for a grant of two hundred acres of land. (File Number 0547) The grant being approved 10 April 1745 by a Council held in New Bern for the County of Craven. This land became part of Johnston County, North Carolina when it was created from Craven County in 1746. Wake County, North Carolina, North Carolina was then created from Johnston County in 1771 and the land was in the part that became Wake County.

Isham Symes' will:

In the name of God, Amen: I Isim Sims of Wake County in the State of North Carolina being weak in body but perfect mind and sound memory do hereby (after hoping God will receive my soul at my departure from this life) will and dispose of my terrestrial effects in manner following, that is to say, I lend to my loving wife Mary my land and plantation where I now live during her natural life or widowhood and after her decease or widowhood I give and demise all my land and plantation whereon I now live to my son Isim, his heirs and assigns forever.

ITEM: I give and bequeath to my granddaughter Leathy Upchurch one cow and calf, one featherbed which she has been at the making of to her and her heirs forever.

I lend to my loving wife Mary all the remaining part of my stock of cattle and two head of horses and all my hogs and sheep, and every other thing which I am possessed with, during her natural life or widowhood, then to be divided between all my children. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this twenty-sixth day of March Anno Domini 1791.

Signed Sealed and Declared to be the  
Testators Last Will and Testament  
in the presence of:

(Signed) Isim Sims

Nathl. Jones, Jr., James Smith and Mark Jinks.

N.B. I appoint my son Adam and my son Isim and my wife Mary Executors and executrix.

Proved December 1791 by Nathl. Jones, Junr. Esq. and James Smith.

Recorded in the Clerks office  
Book C, page 185, 15 May 1792.  
Wake County, North Carolina

The will did not name all of his children, but other records reveal that Isham and Mary Symes had issue:

1. James (Jemmy) Sims born circa 1745, died in 1842.
2. Lewis Sims, no information

3. Isham Sims, Junior, who married Silvey Buffalow on 17 October 1784 in Wake County, North Carolina.
4. Adam Sims, who married Mary Ann Bridges on 16 November 1779 in Wake County, North Carolina.
5. Julia Sims, who married William Dodd on 1 January 1781.
6. Shelia Sims, who married John Pearce on 6 March 1786.
7. Mary Sims born 1757, married Moses Upchurch in 1772 and died in 1847.

James (Jimmy) Sims, son of Isham and Mary Symes, married Sarah Duskin, probably in Johnston County, North Carolina. They moved to Wilkes County, Georgia and sold Colin Campbell of Brunswick County, Virginia two hundred acres of land on Crabtree Creek in Wake County, North Carolina for one hundred and fifty pounds. The same being a part of parcel of land granted to Isham Sims, Sr. by the Earl of Granville, by deed bearing 22<sup>nd</sup> day of June 1761. Witnessed by Isam Sims, Jr. and T. Abernathy. Recorded in Deed Book G, page 23, Wake County, North Carolina.

James (Jimmy) Sims is listed as a Revolutionary Soldier that had a headright grant issued in Wilkes County, Georgia for three hundred and fifty acres. He is also listed as a Revolutionary Soldier residing in Oglethorpe County, Georgia in the 1827 Land Lottery of Georgia and drew successfully land in Lee County, but never occupied this land.

Jimmy Sims' will, dated 1842, was recorded in Will Book D, page 85, in Oglethorpe County, Georgia. Jimmy and Mary had issue, not necessarily listed in order of birth:

1. Isham Sims, who married Polly Paton on 12 January 1813 in Madison County, Georgia. Their children were James M. Sims and Minerva Sims. James M. Sims married Martha E. Moon on 10 September 1839 in Madison County, Georgia.
2. James Sims, who died in 1814 without issue.
3. John Sims born 17 November 1781 and died 16 November 1864. He married Frances Garr on 10 October 1805 and had ten children. Married second, Mrs. Martha Spartling on 28 June 1852.
4. Son, whose son, Lewis Sims, was raised by Jimmy Sims.
5. William Sims born 15 December 1792, died 23 August 1864 in Jackson Parish, Louisiana. He married Elizabeth Milner on 2 March 1815 in Jones County, Georgia and had eleven children. Elizabeth born 26 August 1797, daughter of Pitt Milner (1769-1839) and wife Apsilla Homes (1770-1854). Elizabeth Sims died on 16 August 1859.
6. Nancy Sims, who married William Murray.
7. Sally Sims, who married a Mr. Paton.

Adam Sims, son of Isham and Mary Symes, left a will in Wake County, North Carolina naming wife, Mary Ann (Bridges) Sims and the following children:

1. Bennett Sims, no information
2. Allen Sims, who married Patsey Spain
3. Alley Sims, who married Edwin Hartsfield on 19 December 1812.
4. Clara Sims, who married George Anderson on 8 December 1819
5. Gilly Sims, who married Elisha Speight on 14 February 1801.

There is very little known about the family of Adam Sims, who was the son of Isham and Mary Symes.

Mary Sims, daughter of Isham and Mary Symes, born in 1757 and died in 1847, married Moses Upchurch in 1772. Moses Upchurch was a Revolutionary Soldier and from his pension application dated 13 November 1836, he declared: "I was born in Brunswick County, Virginia, 13 Feb. 1755." Moses Upchurch is said to have fell from his horse while crossing a stream at the age of 103, which would have been in 1858.

Neither Moses nor Mary left a will in Chatham County, North Carolina where they died, but they are known to have had issue:

1. Letha Upchurch born about 1775 married Helekiah Massey on 13 June 1807.
2. Parthenia Upchurch, who married a Mr. Smith.
3. Gilliam Upchurch born 1782.
4. Mary Upchurch born 1785, married Adam Burn on 5 February 1806.
5. Ruffin Upchurch born in 1787, married twice and had twenty-one children.
6. Whitney Upchurch born 1793, married Elizabeth Goodwin on 3 January 1811.
7. Galorgy Upchurch born 1795, never married.
8. Murray Upchurch born 1 November 1797, died 19 February 1872, married Nancy Scott on 23 August 1820, married second, Mrs. Nancy Carson, and married third to Sallie Temples on 1 Marcy 1870.
9. Clegg Upchurch born 1800.
10. Sims Upchurch born 11 December 1808, married Abigail Olive on 11 December 1832, married second Malitda Temples, and married third Tabitha Williams on 23 December 1852.

No more information is known about the other children of Isham and Mary Symes of Wake County, North Carolina.

John Symes, fifth child of Adam and Mary Symes, was born about 1715, and his name was spelled, Symes, Simms, and Sims in the records. The name of his first wife is not known, but married second Honour Lightfoot sometime between 1754 and 1756. Issue by first marriage:

1. Lucy Sims, who married William Randle.
2. Daughter, name unknown, who married William Finch
3. Elizabeth Sims, who married Alexander Williams on 17 March 1770.
4. William Sims, who married Elizabeth Wall on 23 April 1770.

John and Honour Sims had issue:

1. John Sims, no information.
2. Mary Sims, who married Peter Randle.
3. Sarah Sims married Christopher Tower on 24 September 1781.
4. Benjamin Sims, who moved to Richmond County, Georgia.
5. Frederick Sims, who moved to Richmond County, Georgia.

John Symes acquired additional land that joined the property inherited from his father. He also received a grant for two hundred and thirty-five acres of land on 20 September 1745 that joined his property. Patent Book 24, page 100, Office, Secretary of the Commonwealth, Richmond, Virginia.

However, John Symes had sold part of his land in Brunswick County, Virginia and moved to Surry County, Virginia by 5 March 1746. The deed being recorded in Book 3, page 299.

John Symes, while still living in Surry County, bought one hundred and seventy-five acres of land from his brother, George Symes, on 6 May 1747 that was inherited from their father. (Deed Book 3, page 298) Then John conveyed one hundred acres of land to George on 5 November 1747. (Deed Book 3, page 352) This same land was conveyed to Henry Britt by George and Martha Symes on 23 April 1754, Deed Book 5, page 583.

John Symes returning to Brunswick County bought another one hundred and thirty acres of land from his brother Charles Symes on 17 November 1749. (Deed Book 3, page 618) John remained in Brunswick County and continued to buy and sell land in the area where his father had lived.

George Wilson of Isle of Wight County, Virginia bought land which was devised by the will of Thomas Thropp to Elias George, Jeremiah Pierce and Honour Lightfoot. The deed being recorded in part, as follows:

This indenture made the fifth day of September, one thousand seven hundred and fifty-four, between Elias George of Surry County, Jeremiah Pierce and Honour Lightfoot of Isle of Wight for and in consideration of the sum of fifty pounds Current money of Virginia, the receipt whereof and themselves therewith to be fully satisfied content and paid they do hereby acknowledge, etc. ... unto the said George Wilson his heirs and assigns forever all that tract or parcel of land which was devised by the Last Will and Testament of Thomas Thropp to his son John Thropp, and by the devise of the said John Thropp to his sister Stratified Pierce and thence descended to her son Thomas Pierce, which by his Last Will and Testament devised to his brother Jeremiah Pierce and sister-in-law Honour Lightfoot during their natural lives, which after said deaths, descends to Elias George, it being the land which Honour Pierce now liveth on etc. ... [signed by the three named].

At a Court held by Isle of Wight County, 5 September, Elias George, Jeremiah Pierce and Honour Lightfoot came into Court and acknowledged their indenture of Bargain and Sale with a receipt thereon endorsed for the consideration money to George Wilson which is ordered to be recorded.

Deed Book 9, page 261.

Isle of Wight County, Virginia.

The will of Thomas Pierce identifies Honour Lightfoot as a sister-in-law, by which Thomas Pierce had apparently married Honour Lightfoot's sister, although not stated. The will of John Lightfoot was proved in Brunswick County on 6 November 1751, which named brothers Williams and Armistead Lightfoot, but did not name any sisters. Honour Lightfoot married John Symes sometime between 1754 and 1756; and later in 1771 Armistead Lightfoot had land dealings with John Symes, but the indenture did not state Honour was a sister. The land was located on the north side of the Meherrin River in Saint Andrews Parish, Brunswick County, Virginia. The deed was dated 1 January 1771, but not proved until 22 July 1777, recorded in Deed Book 10, page 171, Brunswick County, Virginia.

John Symes (and others) had sold Edmund Wilkins land that joined the above land on 10 July 1770. The deed stated that John Sims and Honour his wife and John Alen and Frances his wife of the County of Brunswick of the one part and Edmund Wilkins of the aforesaid county of the

other part. The land contained 650 acres and included the land acquired from his brother, Charles Symes, Deed Book 12, page 284.

John Symes bought land from the grandchildren of Adam Sims (Junior), which was inherited by Adam's will, the deed in part:

This indenture made this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of November in the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and seventy three between Douglas Wilkins and Rebecca his wife and Winney Wyche of the County of Brunswick of the one part and John Sims of the said county of the other part.

Witnesseth: that the said Douglas Wilkins and Tabitha his wife, in consideration of the sum of Two hundred pounds current money of Virginia to them in hand paid by the said John Sims the receipt whereof the said Douglas Wilkins and Edmund Wilkins and Winney Wyche doth hereby acknowledge hath granted bargained and sold, etc. ... one certain tract or parcel of land lying situated in the County of Brunswick on the north side of the Meherrin River containing by estimation Five hundred and forty acres be the same more or less. Beginning at the mouth side of Wyche's Branch, thence up the north west branch to a whit oak, thence along Joseph Peeples line to Johnson's line to the said John Sims' line, thence along the said line to a corner persimmon in the blue branch, thence along the said Peeples line to a corner pine of John Robinson's land, thence along the said Robinson's line to Peter Freeman's line, thence continuing along Robinson's line to a corner hickory on the Meherrin River, thence up the meanders of the said river to the beginning, etc. ...

In witness whereof the said Douglas Wilkins and Tabatha his wife, Edmund Wilkins and Rebecca his wife and Winney Wyche have hereunto set their hands and sealed this day and date, etc.

Fully proved 22 February 1790

Deed Book 11, page 185  
Brunswick County, Virginia.

John Symes Deed-of-Gift to his son-in-law, William Randle, was recorded in part as follows:

Know all men by these presents that I John Symes of the County of Brunswick and Parish of St. Andrews for and in consideration of the love and affection of my daughter Lucy Randle (with whom the said William Randle intermarried) and for the advancement in this world have given, granted and confirmed and by these presents do freely give, grant and confirm unto the said William Randle and his heirs and assigns two Negroes, viz, a wench named Phillis and a girl named Aggy and their further increase, etc., ....

In witness whereof the said John Sims hath hereunto set his hand and affixed his seal this twenty-second day of July One thousand seven hundred and sixty-five.

(Signed) John Sims

(No witnesses)

At a Court held for Brunswick County the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of July 1765. This deed of Gift was acknowledged by John Sims partly thereto and ordered to be recorded.

Teste: N. Edward, Jr., Cler. Cur.  
Brunswick County, Virginia.

John Symes will:

In the name of God Amen: I John Simms of the County of Brunswick and Parish of St. Andrews being very sick and weak but of sound and perfect sense and memory and calling to mind the mortality of the body and that it is appointed for all men once to die do make this my Last Will and Testament in manner and form following. And first principally I give my soul to Jesus Christ that gave it and my body to be buried in such a place as my executors shall think fit.

ITEM: I give and bequeath to my son William Sims two Negroes namely Jimmy and Doctor in lieu of the money that came from the Jacksons.

ITEM: I give and bequeath to William Randolph one Negro boy namely Clayborne.

ITEM: I give and bequeath to Ellick Williams one Negro boy namely Moses.

ITEM: I give and bequeath to William Finch one Negro boy namely Ransom.

ITEM: I lend my beloved wife Honour Simms all the other estate both real and personal during her natural life or widowhood for her better support to raise her small children.

ITEM: I give and bequeath to my son John Simms my land and plantation whereon I now live, at the death or marriage of his mother, also to Negroes named Aggie and Temple.

ITEM: I give my son Frederick Simms two hundred pounds cash to be raised out of the profits of my estate to purchase him land.

ITEM: I give and bequeath to my son Benjamin Simms two hundred pounds cash to be raised out of the profits of my estate.

ITEM: I give and bequeath to John Lightfoot one cow and calf.

ITEM: I leave the remainder of my estate to be divided between my five youngest children namely Mary Randolph, John Simms, Frederick Simms, Sarah Simms, and Benjamin Simms to be equally divided at their mothers death or marriage, but if my executors should see that any of those of my children have need of my estate to enable them to keep house and they see that it may be spared that they shall let them have the use of such things before their mothers death, and lastly I appoint my wife Honour executrix with William Randolph and Peter Randolph my executors of this my Last Will and Testament, disannulling all executors or wills or testaments heretofore made constitute and confirm this my Last Will and Testament made constitute and confirm this my Last Will and Testament whereunto I have set my hand and affixed my seal this 12<sup>th</sup> day of May 1778.

(Signed) John Simms

In the presence of Thomas Rivers,  
Josh Peeples and Hubbard Peeples.

At a court held for Brunswick County the 25<sup>th</sup> day of May 1778. This will was proved according to law by the oaths of the witnesses thereunto and ordered to be recorded. And on the motion of William Randolph and Peter Randolph the executors therein named who made oath thereto according to law and together with Thomas Rivers and Douglas Wilkins and their securities entered into and acknowledge their bond in the penalty of ten thousand pounds conditioned as the law directs. Certificate is granted them for obtaining probate thereof in due form.

There is a discrepancy of the surname of Randolph in John Symes will, although it was accurately copied from the records in Brunswick County. John Symes left a legacy to his daughter Mary Randolph, and appointed William and Peter Randolph executors of his will. But a deed-of-gift made by John Symes to William Randle and “my daughter Lucy Randle (with whom the said William Randle intermarried)” indicated his son-in-law was named Randle rather than Randolph. The executors Bond Book, 1770-1780, in Brunswick shows that William Randle and Peter Randle made bond on 25 May 1778 in the sum of ten thousand pounds as executors of John Symes’ will. So apparently the surname of Randle was recorded erroneously as Randolph in John Symes’ will.

John Sims, son of John Symes, conveyed land inherited from his father to William Edward Brodnax on 1 February 1788. (Deed Book 9, page 260, Brunswick County) This deed was followed by another deed in which Peter Randle and his wife Mary (Sims) relinquished their interest in her father’s plantation after the death of Honour Simms. The deed being recorded in part:

This indenture made this third day of February in the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-eight between Peter Randle and Mary his wife of the County of Montgomery in the State of North Carolina of the one part and William Brodnax of the County of Brunswick of the other part. Witnesseth: That the said Peter Randle and Mary his wife for and in consideration of the sum of five hundred pounds current money of Virginia to the said Peter Randle and Mary his wife in hand paid by the said William Edward Brodnax the receipt whereof they do hereby acknowledge have given, granted, sold, release and confirm and by these presents to give, grant, bargain, sell and confirm unto the said William Edward Brodnax, etc., interest in and to the plantation of John Simms, decd., father of the said Mary, unto her brother John Simms, his son, after the death of their mother, the said will bearing date 12<sup>th</sup> day of May 1778 and recorded in the County Court of Brunswick, will more fully appear, the said John Simms having conveyed the same to the said William Edward Brodnax by deed of feoffment and now who has possession thereof. In witness whereof the said Peter Randle and Mary his wife have hereunto set their hand and affixed their seal the year and day above written.

(Signed) Peter Randle  
Mary Randle

Witnesses: James Fletcher, James Gray,  
Wm. Johnson and Peyton Randle.

Proved 22 September 1788  
Brunswick County, Virginia.

William Sims, son of John Symes, married Elizabeth Wall on 23 April 1770 and had issue:

1. Robert Wall Sims, died in Greensville County, Virginia
2. William Sims, died in Greensville County, Virginia
3. Lucy Sims
4. Sally Sims

William Sims left a will in Brunswick County, Virginia dated 12 May 1780 and proved 24 July 1780. Will Book 5, page 102. All his children were living at that time.

David Symes, sixth child of Adam and Mary Symes, was born about 1717, married Elizabeth (surname unknown), and had issue:

1. Tabitha Sims, married James Adams of Halifax County, NC.
2. Silvia Sims, who married John Blanks.
3. Rebecca Sims, who died in October of 1787.
4. David Sims, no information
5. Littleton Sims, who died in October of 1807.
6. Wythe Sims, a minor in 1791.
7. Son, living in 1773, of whose name is not known.
8. Molly Sims, no information.
9. Caty Sims, no information.

David and Elizabeth Symes conveyed land on 26 April 1757 that was acquired from his sister, Mary (Symes) Smith. The deed being recorded in Brunswick County Book 6, page 126. They were living in Sussex County, Virginia when the deed was made, but returned to Brunswick County before 24 October 1768. A deed made on that date states in part:

Ephraim Parham to David Sims of Brunswick, 240 acres on the north side of the Meherrin River. Land conveyed by David Crawley to John Wall, Junr., decd. and by him conveyed to Sampson Lainer, decd. and by whose deed the above named Ephraim Parham became seized, land whereon the said David Sims now lives.

Deed Book 9, page 220

David Symes will:

In the name of God Amen: I David Sims of Brunswick County do make and ordain this my Last Will and Testament in manner and form following: ITEM. I devise all my lands on the north side of Grassey Pond Road that leads to the Court House to be sold to discharge my debts. ITEM. I lend to my loving wife Elizabeth Sims all my lands on the south side of Grassey Pond Road that leads to the Court House during her

[[The bottom half of page 24 was apparently miscopied in the typed original. It is an exact copy of the bottom half of page 25, included below]]

David Symes' nephew William Sims or Edmund Wilkins who married Adam Symes' (Junior) granddaughter, Rebecca Wyche, would accept the responsibility of being executor of the will. The court appointed an administrator to assume the duty, which was recorded as follows: "28 September 1773, Bond of James Mason administrator with the will annexed of David Simms. Daniel Fisher and Peter Pelnam, Junr. securities."

Guardian Bond Book for Brunswick County: "27 June 1774, Bond of John Blanks guardian of Caty Sims and Mollie Sims orphans of David Sims, decd. according to law. James Adams, Surety."

At a court held for Greenville County, Virginia dated September 4, 1782, Order Book 1, page 52: "Order that the Church Wardens of St. Andrews Parish bind out the orphans of David Sims, decd. according to law." Greenville County was once a part of Brunswick County, Virginia.

Deed made by two of David Symes' daughters:

We, James Adams, Tabatha Adams his wife of Halifax County and State of North Carolina and Rebecca Sims of Greenville County, Virginia hath bargained and sold unto Edmund Wilkins of the County of Greenville and State of Virginia all their rights titles and property that was left them by David Sims, decd. consisting of two children's part in the lands and slaves willed to the said James Adams, Tabatha Adams his wife, and Rebecca Sims, by the said David Sims, decd. for and in consideration of the sum of one hundred pounds current money of Virginia and six seasons of Spadile or Liberty or any other horse of equal value. To have and to hold the said lands & slaves to the said Edmund Wilkins, and to his heirs and assigns forever. And the said James Adams, Tabatha Adams, and Rebecca Sims for themselves their heirs, ex'ors., adm'rs., or assigns do agree to warrant and forever defend their rights of the above mentioned lands and slaves to the said Edmund Wilkins and to his heirs and assigns forever against the claim of all and every person whatsoever. In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals this 22<sup>nd</sup> day of July 1783.

Signed in the presence of:  
Lyda Adkins, Lewis Jackson  
Jesse Adkins, A. Williams  
Ephraim Jackson, Benj. Simmons  
and Aron Smith

Tabatha Adams  
James Adams  
Rebecca Sims

Proved 23 October 1783  
Deed Book 1, page 52.

David Symes' land was sold 22 April 1785, "notwithstanding his widow be now living." The court directed Edmund Wilkins trustee for the execution of the will of David Sims, decd., to convey the land to Gardner Harwell. Deed Book 1, page 104, Greenville County, Virginia.

At a Court held for Greenville at the Courthouse, Thursday 25 October 1787. "On the motion of David Sims (Junior) Certificate is granted him for obtaining Letters of Administration of the Estate of Rebecca Sims, deceased, he having made oath thereto, and with Edmund Wilkins his Security entered into and acknowledged bond in the penalty of five hundred pound conditioned according to law."

Mary Symes, seventh child of Adam and Mary Symes, was born about 1719, married William Smith in 1737, who first appeared as a vestry man of St. Andrew's Parish in Brunswick County in 1732 and remained there until 1786. Their total number of children is not known, but they had issue, (and probably others):

1. James Smith
2. Isham Smith
3. Stephen Smith

William and Mary Smith conveyed land to her brother, David Symes, which was apparently inherited from their father. The land being described in the deed in part:

20 March 1749, Mary Smith and William Smith to David Sims of Brunswick County, Virginia one hundred acres of land in Brunswick County: Beginning at the north side of Rattlesnake Creek as a maple, thence along the line of the above David Sims to a corner hickory thence north west along a line of marked trees to a corner white oak of William Smith Spring Branch to a corner beech, thence down the above said branch to the beginning. Witnesses: Sampson Lainer, Edward Wesson (Sisson) and William Johnson.

Deed Book 4, page 136, Brunswick County, Virginia

David Symes and Elizabeth his wife, of Sussex County, sold the above land to David Hines of Sussex County, Virginia on 26 April 1757. (Deed Book 6, page 126, Brunswick County)

Charles Symes, eighth child of Adam and Mary Symes, was born ca. 1721, married Easter, daughter of Thomas Murry of Isle of Wight County, Virginia. Her name is spelled Esther or Easter in the records, but the spelling of Easter is used more often. Their marriage apparently occurred on or before 1 March 1743 when his mother conveyed a number of household commodities for his "advancement and preservation in this world," the deed being recorded in Brunswick County, Virginia Deed Book 2, page 419.

Charles Symes sold the land inherited from his father to brother John Symes, the deed in part:

17 November 1749: Charles Sims to John Sims, both of Brunswick County: Witnesseth, That said Charles Sims for in consideration of the sum of forty pounds current money of Virginia to him in hand paid by the said John Sims the receipt whereof be doth acknowledge, etc. ... Unto the said John Sims his heirs and assigns forever one hundred and thirty acres of land more or less situated in Brunswick County being part of a tract granted Adam Sims, Senr. by patent for three hundred and seventy acres and bounded as followeth, viz, Beginning in a Spring Branch to a white oak, thence along a line of marked trees to Richard Parkers line, thence down his line to a mouth of a branch commonly called Burnits Branch, from thence to Little Creek, thence down Little Creek to the mouth of the aforesaid Spring Branch, etc. ... In witness whereof the said Charles Sims hath hereunto set his hand and affixed his seal the day and year first above written.

Sealed and Delivered in the presence of:  
Sampson Lainer, Daniel Hicks & John Tomlinson.

(Signed) Charles Sims

Proved 26 December 1749, Bk. 3, page 618.  
Brunswick County, Virginia

Charles Symes moved to Edgecombe County, North Carolina where he and Esther sold land inherited from her father, the deed being recorded in part, as follows:

This indenture made this eighth day of March in the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and sixty-two between Charles Sims of the County of Edgecombe and Colony of North Carolina and Easter his wife of one part and Thomas Lee of the Parish of Newport in the County of Isle of Wight and Colony of Virginia to them in hand paid by the said Thomas Lee at or before the sealing and delivery of these presents the receipt whereof the said Charles Sims and Easter his wife doth hereby acknowledge, etc. ... unto the said Thomas Lee his heirs and assigns one certain tract or parcel of land formerly belonging to Thomas Murry late of the county aforesaid and after the deceased of said Murry to Elizabeth Lee, Mary Davis, Sarah Wrenn and the aforesaid Easter as daughters and coheirs according to law and the part of the said Easter contains by estimation forty acres be the same more or less, etc. ... unto the said Thomas Lee his heirs and assigns forever. In witness whereof the said Charles Sims and Easter his wife hath hereunto set their hands and affirmed their seals the day and year above written.

Sealed and Delivered  
in the presence of:  
William Davis  
Sarah Bridger  
Patience Bell

(Signed) Charles Sims  
Easter Sims

At a Court held for the County of Isle of Wight, on Thursday, the second day of September 1762.

This indenture and receipt were proved by the oath of William Davis, Sarah Bridger and Patience Bell, and ordered recorded.

Deed Book 11, page 62  
Isle of Wight County, Virginia

No other record of Charles and Easter Symes being in the County of Edgecombe has been found, but on 8 January 1763 land was acquired by him in Johnston County, North Carolina stating that he was from Edgecombe County. The deed was witnessed by Millington Blalock and nephew William Sims, Junior and brother William Sims, Senior. Johnston County Transcript 1, page 53. The Johnston County Court Minutes, April Term, 1763, page 145, also has an entry: "Charles Sims applies for license to keep tavern at his own house. Sec. Dons. Wright and William Sims, Senr."

Johnston County Deed Book E1, page 42, Quit Claims of Charles Sims to Joseph Munford of Halifax County, North Carolina, dated 8 August 1765, a tract of land on both sides of Neuse River containing two hundred acres. Where or when he acquired this land is not known, but it was located in the same area as his other land. The deed was witnessed by Wm. Brewer, John London, and John Mays, all of whom lived along the Neuse River in Johnston County on land that became Wake County, North Carolina, in 1771.

Johnston County Court Minutes, October 1766, page 205:

Executor Joseph Martin vs. Charles Sims.

Phillip Jones and James Mays delivered said Charles Sims as securities to the Court.

Details of the suit or its results were not given, but executors usually took the deceased accounts to court in settling an estate quickly.

Charles and Easter sold three hundred and twenty-five acres of land to Joel Lane of Halifax County, North Carolina. The deed was witnessed by Millington Blalock, John T. Blalock, and Sally Sims (a daughter). Deed Book E1, page 383.

This land had been acquired from John Higdon on 8 January 1763, who had received it by patent bearing date 17 September 1744.

Charles Symes also received a grant for two hundred and twenty-five acres of land joining his own land and that of John Spain. Dated 27 May 1779 and recorded in Grant Book 49, page 696, file 698. He also received another grant for three hundred and twenty-five acres of land joining the first grant. Dated 9 August 1779 and recorded in Grant Book 29, page 152, file 78. Survey for this grant was made on 19 November 1778 with chain bearers Aaron Rogers and Murry Sims (son of Charles and Easter Symes).

Charles Symes sold all of his lands in Wake County, North Carolina by 1785, probably after the death of his wife Easter, and moved to Wilkes County, Georgia. Several members of his family and their relatives also moved to Wilkes County, Georgia about the same time. There is no record of Charles Symes owning property in Wilkes County, or Oglethorpe County. He apparently lived with a son, Wiley Sims, as indicated in the 1800 census for Oglethorpe County, Georgia. Charles Symes appeared in the 1805 Land Lottery of Georgia when he would be about eighty-two years old and probably did not live long afterwards. He left no will nor did he have an estate since no record of a settlement has been found.

A complete record of Charles and Easter Symes children doesn't exist, but they had, among others, issue:

1. Sarah (Sally) Sims, who married John McElroy.
2. Writter Sims, who married Nathaniel Bridges in Wake County, North Carolina on 17 November 1778.
3. Murray Sims, who died in June 1799 in Wake County, NC.
4. Charles Sims, Junior, who moved to Georgia.
5. Wiley Sims, who moved to Georgia.

Sarah (Sally) Sims, daughter of Charles and Easter Symes, married John McElroy, a Revolutionary War soldier, although their marriage record has not been found. They moved to Georgia about the same time as Charles Symes, Senior. John McElroy's will in Oglethorpe County, Georgia dated 31 April 1803 and proved 3 February 1804 appointed a brother, James McElroy, and brother-in-law Wiley Sims, executors. The witnesses were Thomas S. Scott and brother-in-law Charles Sims, Junior. Oglethorpe County Will Book A, page 132.

The Court of Oglethorpe County, Georgia appointed Wiley Sims guardian of John and Sally McElroy's minor children, with Charles Sims, Junior serving as his security.

Charles Sims, Junior, son of Charles and Easter Symes, apparently married a daughter of Osburn Jeffrey of Wake County, North Carolina, although no record of their marriage has been found, nor is her Christian name known. They moved to Wilkes County, Georgia with Charles Symes, Senior and made their home near the Broad River. Charles Sims, Junior married second Nancy Ward on 10 January 1822 in Madison County, Georgia.

Issue by first marriage:

1. Richard Ranson Sims, who married Mary Wyatt Bullock on 5 October 1813 in Madison County, Georgia.
2. Cullin Sims, no information
3. Burkley Sims, who married Mary Strickland on 7 April 1817.
4. Clary Sims, who married John Hamlet on 2 December 1823.
5. Orry Sims, who married John Wiley on 7 March 1817.
6. Mary (Polly) Sims, who married Silas Sanders on 4 January 1824 in Madison County, Georgia.
7. Orpha Sims, who married Simeon Sanders on 17 September 1823.

Issue by second marriage:

1. Wiley Henry Sims
2. Charles Bennett Sims
3. Ritter Aditha Sims

Charles Sims, Junior will dated 4 July 1832 and was proven 5 November 1832 in Madison County, Georgia.

Wiley Sims, son of Charles and Easter Symes, was born before 1775, and possibly as early as 1755. He married Mary Hartsfield on 27 May 1796 in Oglethorpe County, Georgia and died 5 October 1828 in Oglethorpe County, Georgia. Mary (Polly) was born 14 April 1774, daughter of Richard and Hannah (McElroy) Hartsfield. Wiley and Mary Sims' Bible records named issue:

1. Murry Sims born 4 April 1797, died 17 December 1834. Married Louisa Bullock on 4 January 1821.
2. Bennett Sims born 17 November 1798.
3. Sallie Sims born 24 January 1800.
4. John H. Sims born 23 June 1801.
5. Charley Sims born 16 April 1803, married Minerva Witcher on 4 October 1832 and died 16 March 1841.
6. Biddie Sims born 21 November 1805 and died 11 November 1889.
7. Julia Sims born 16 November 1807.
8. Martha (Patsey) Sims born 1 January 1810 and died 27 August 1889, married Ranford Hitchcock on 31 October 1826.
9. Wiley Sims, Junior born 4 November 1814.
10. Bitcy Sims born 28 June 1814.
11. Andrew Jackson Sims born 5 September 1816.
12. Nancy E. Sims born 22 April 1819 and died 29 November 1864.

James Symes, probably a child of Adam and Mary Symes, was born about 1723 in Brunswick County, Virginia. There is no known record identifying this James Symes and it is possible that he died a minor. There were several James Symeses appearing in Virginia and North Carolina

by the time James would have become of age. So it cannot be ruled out that one of them was Adam and Mary Symes' son.

## WILLIAM SYMES OF BRUNSWICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA

William Symes was born about 1713 in Bristol Parish, Prince George County, Virginia and died in March of 1779 in Wake County, North Carolina. He has long fascinated those interested in the children of Adam and Mary Symes, all of whom still question exactly what he did and where he did it.

The recurrence of the Christian name William in many branches of the Sims family has caused frequent errors and much confusion concerning the identity of any Sims with this name. As a result there has been a bewildering amount of information published about him that is more fanciful than factual.

William Symes, the son of Adam and Mary Symes, has been memorialized in the unreality of such fabricated myths that, among other things, he was a deputy surveyor in North Carolina while active serving in the Wake County militia as a captain. Later it was claimed that he moved to Georgia and served as a private in the Revolutionary War.

In fact it was his son that served in the Wake County militia and there is no record that either served as a surveyor. Also, the records reveal that once William Symes (Sr.) settled on lands granted him in Johnston County, North Carolina, he remained on the same land until his death, although this land became part of Wake County in 1771.

William Symes' father appeared in Brunswick County soon after it was created. This county was sparsely settled at that time and it was considered to be a wilderness on the frontier. So William was taken into an uninhabited area when he was very young and had no opportunity to receive a formal education, which became an important factor in determining his identity.

The records requiring his signature exhibits a distinct "W" for his mark. To make a mark with ones initial was a common practice for people living in Brunswick County who could not write their name. Just how wide spread this custom became is not known, but no other person with the name William Symes has been found to use the initial "W" for their mark. This has made it possible to separate his records from records of other persons with the same name.

The records of Brunswick County, Virginia reveal that William Symes was married by 1741 and probably before that date. Some family historians believe he married Susanna, daughter of Richard and Ann Bullock. This assumption was based on circumstantial evidence that cannot be documented. There is sufficient evidence that her Christian name was Susanna, but there is no evidence that she was a daughter of Richard Bullock. The total number of William and Susanna Symes' children has not been determined, but existing records reveal that they had issue:

1. Mark Sims born ca. 1740 and married Fanny Embrough on 12 December 1784 in Wake County, North Carolina.
2. Matthew Sims born before 1749.
3. William Sims born ca. 1743.
4. Joel Sims born ca. 1744.
5. Molley Sims born ca. 1749.

William Symes first appeared in the records of Brunswick County, Virginia when he bought land belonging to George Sims of Hanover County, Virginia, who had received it by grant on the same day Adam Symes received the adjoining land by grant. Both grants were recorded in

Patent Book 13, page 69. George Sims deed to William Symes being recorded in part, as follows:

This indenture made the 27<sup>th</sup> day of June in the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and thirty-three between George Syms of the County of Hanover in Virginia of the one part and William Syms of the County of Brunswick of the other part. Witnesseth, that the said George Syms for and in consideration of the sum of ten pounds to him in hand paid, etc. ... a certain tract of land on the south side of Meherrin River of Rattlesnake Swamp, thence north forty degrees east one hundred and ninety poles to a red oak, thence north forty degrees west two hundred and fifty-six poles to a scrub oak, thence south forty degrees west one hundred and sixty-four poles to a white wood at the Rattlesnake aforesaid, thence down the water courses of the swamp to the beginning etc. ... (Signed) George Syms.

Witnessed by Adam Sims, John Sims and John Northcut.

Proved at a Court held for Brunswick County, Virginia the fourth day of October, 1733. George Syms came into Court and presented and acknowledged this lease of land to William Sims, which on the motion of William Sims, etc. ...

Deed Book 1, page 78  
Brunswick County, Virginia

The spelling of the Sims/Syms name is as it appeared in the deed. Adam Symes apparently died about the time George Sims sold his land to William Symes, since Adam Symes' will was proved 15 July 1733. The relationship between the Brunswick County Symes family and the Hanover/New Kent County Sims family has never been documented. However, the fact that George Sims sold land to William Symes is proof that they had contact. It would also be logical to assume that George Sims returned to Brunswick County when his kinsman, Adam Symes, became ill, and remained for a time to convey his land to William Symes. However, that may be, the land George Sims acquired in Brunswick County represents the only known contact between the two families.

George Sims of Hanover County, Virginia, as previously stated, was the fourth son of William Symes, Senior of James City County, Virginia. He was born about 1685 in James City County, Virginia and his land processed in St. Paul's Parish of Hanover County, Virginia for the first time in 1711. He continued to own land in this county until his death about 1740, according to records in that county.

The will of Adam Symes gave half of the land granted him on 31 October 1726 to son William and gave the other half to another son John, who later purchased the part owned by William Symes. This deed is the earliest known document requiring William Symes' signature and exhibits a "W" for his mark. The deed also contains the earliest evidence of William Symes marriage to Susanna, who came into Court and relinquished her right of dower to the land owned.

The deed and memorandum made by William Symes to his brother was recorded as follows:

This indenture made this Twenty-seventh day in September in the year of Our Lord Christ one thousand seven hundred and forty-one between William Sims of the County of Brunswick of the one part and John Sims of the county of the other

part. Witnesseth that the said William Sims for and in consideration of the sum of ten pounds current money of Virginia to him in hand paid by the said John Sims the receipt whereof he doth hereby acknowledge hath given granted sold bargained and enfeoffed and doth by these presents give grant bargain sell enfeoff unto the said John Sims his heirs and assigns forever a certain tract or parcel of land situated and being in the Parish of Saint Andrews of the said County of Brunswick on the north side of Rattlesnake Creek containing one hundred and seventy-five acres granted to George Sims and coveyed by George Sims to William Sims and is bounded as followeth, viz: Beginning at the mouth of Reedy Branch at a beech tree on the north side of Rattlesnake Creek and up the said branch to the mouth of Spring Branch and up the Spring Branch to a white oak a line tree of William Sims land including all the land above the said branches. To have and to hold the said tract or parcel of land with the appurtenances unto the said John Sims his heir and assigns forever defend to the said John Sims his heirs and assigns the said land and premises against all men forever in witness whereof the said William Sims hath hereunto set his hand and affixed his seal the day and year above written.

Signed Sealed and Delivered  
in the presence of:

his  
Sam'l "X" Hardin  
mark  
his  
Will "W" Ledbetter  
mark

Signum  
William "W" Sims

Memorandum: That on the twenty-seventh day of September in the year of Our Lord Christ 1741 full and peaceable possession was seisin of the land within mentioned with the appurtenances was given and delivered by the within named William Sims in his proper person unto the within named John Sims according to the form and effect of the within deed.

Signum  
William "W" Sims

At a Court held for Brunswick County October the 1<sup>st</sup> 1741. This indenture with the memorandum of Livery and Seisin were acknowledged by William Sims one of the parties and ordered to be recorded and Susannah the wife of the said William Sims appeared in Court and being first privately examined as the law directs voluntarily relinquished her right of dower to the lands conveyed by the said indenture.

Test: Sterling Clack, Clerk of Court

Deed Book 2, page 100  
Brunswick County, Virginia

William Symes witnessed Deeds of Gifts made by George Walton, Senior of Brunswick County to daughters Mary Ledbetter and Katherine Harris. George Walton, Senior had received this

land by grant containing seven hundred and thirty-eight acres in 1739. He gave each daughter three hundred and sixty-nine acres of land (See Walton Family)

The Colonial Records of North Carolina, Volume IV, page 710, reveal that William Symes petitioned the Council at New Bern for 300 acres of land, which was recorded 20 April 1745. The grant apparently did not survive in the records, is not listed in the Land Grant Office. Reference to the grant was made in a deed by William Symes to Anthony and John Rachy, which was recorded in part, as follows:

This indenture made this tenth day of April in the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and forty-nine, etc. ... between William Simms of the Province of North Carolina, County of Granville of the one part and Anthony and John Rachly, so of Anthony and Jane his wife of the other part. Witnesseth: that the said William Simms, etc. ... for and in consideration of the sum of twenty pounds, etc. ... one certain tract or parcel of land on the north side of Tar River and on the south side of a branch thereof known by the name of Fox Swamp containing by the dimensions of the warrant three hundred acres more or less having the contents of a patent granted the aforesaid William Simms and dated 20 April 1745, etc. ...

Signed Sealed and Delivered  
in the presence of  
Samuel Lanier  
Olda Southman

his  
William "W" Symms  
mark

Granville County December Court: The within deed of sale from Wm. Symms to Anthony Rachly was proven in open Court in due form of law by the oath of Samuel Lanier, Esq. and on motion ordered to be recorded. Certified by Dan Walton, Clerk.

Will Paton, Public Register. Deed Book A, pages 226-228.

Isham Symes, brother of William Symes, also moved to North Carolina about the same time. He received grant for two hundred acres of land in Craven County, which became part of Johnston County, North Carolina in 1746. The survey describing its boundaries was recorded, as follows:

File No. 0547, November ye 20 day 1744 for Isom Sims 200 acres of land in Craven County on the south side of Neuse River and Little River beginning at a pine tree above William Moses line running north twenty degrees west 320 poles to a white oak south seventy degrees 100 poles to a poplar tree south twenty degrees 320 poles to a pine tree then with a straight line to the beginning containing two hundred acres of land.

Isham Sims apparently remained with his brother, William, until after the grant was issued, according to an entry in the Granville County Court, August 1748: "Isham Simms late of the county aforesaid, planter, was attached to answer Nathaniel Edwards of a plea of trespass on the case and so hereupon the said Nathaniel by Robert Jones, Junr. his attorney" So he was in Granville County, North Carolina for a time after the survey had been made in Craven County, North Carolina.

A deed by William and Susanna Symes recorded in Brunswick County, Virginia reveals that they had moved to Johnston County, North Carolina. The deed being recorded in part, as follows:

This indenture made the twenty-eighth day of November in the twenty-fifth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the second by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France, and Ireland King Defender of the faith &c. and in the year of Our Lord God one thousand seven hundred and fifty-two. Between William Simms of the Providence of North Carolina and County of Johnston and Susanna his wife of the one part and William Brewster of the Colony of Virginia and the County of Brunswick County of the other part. Witnesseth that the said William Simms and Susannah his wife for and in consideration of the sum of seventy pounds current money of Virginia to the said William Simms in hand paid, etc. ... tract of land situated lying and being in the Parish of St. Andrew's in the County of Brunswick and on the north side of the Rattlesnake Creek containing one hundred and four acres of land be the same more or less and bounded as followeth, to-wit, Beginning at the mouth of the Reedy Branch running up that branch to the mouth of Spring Branch to the corner of Francis Price's thence along the said Price's line to a red oak, from thence up the said creek to the beginning. To have and to hold, etc. ... unto the said William Brewster his heirs and assigns shall and will warrant and by these presents forever defend in witness whereof the said William Simms and Susanna his wife have hereunto set their hand and affixed their seal the day and year above written.

Sealed and Delivered  
in the presence of:  
(No witnesses given)

William Simms (L.S.)  
Susanna Simms (L.S.)

Memorandum: That on the twenty-eight day of November in the year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and fifty-two full and peaceable possession and seisin of the messuage plantation and premises within mentioned was given and delivered by the within mentioned William Simms unto the named William Brewer according to the true intent and meaning to the written deed.

Sealed and Delivered  
in the presence of:  
(No witnesses given)

William Simms (L.S.)  
Susanna Simms (L.S.)

At a Court held for Brunswick County the 28<sup>th</sup> day of November 1752. This indenture and Memorandum of seisin were acknowledged by William Simms and Susanna his wife parties thereto and ordered to be recorded and the said Susannah Simms having been first privately examined as the law directs freely and voluntarily relinquished her right of dower in the land mentioned.

Deed Book 5, pages 282-294, Brunswick County, Virginia.

This deed did not exhibit William Symes' identifying mark, nor was it witnessed. Register of Deeds were required to copy exactly into the records the form of the original deed, but this was an exception. There is no question that the described land was the remaining land owned by William Symes, son of Adam Symes.

Charles Symes' mortgage to his brother, William Symes, made in part as follows:

This agreement made the fourteenth day of September in the twenty-seventh year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the second by the Grace of God of Great Britain, France and Ireland, King Defender of the faith and so forth and in the year of Our Lord God one thousand seven hundred and fifty-three between Charles Simms of the Parish of St. Andrew's in the County of Brunswick of the one part and William Simms of the Province of North Carolina. Witnesseth that the said William Simms at and before the ensembling and delivery of these presents to the said Charles Simms lent for payment of his debts and supplying his other necessary occasions the receipt whereof these presents doth grant bargain and sell one Negro girl slave called and known by the name of Janey, etc., ... To have and to hold the said Negro slave aforementioned unto the said William Simms his heirs and assigns to the only sale proper use and behoof of the said William Simms his heirs and assigns forever and to and for no other use, intent or purpose whatsoever provided and it is by these presents, covenanted and agreed by and between the said William Simms and Charles Simms that if the said Charles Simms his heirs, executors, administrators or assigns shall and doth well and truly pay or cause to be paid and satisfy unto the said William Simms, his executors, administrators the aforesaid sum of twenty pounds current money at or before the last day of June next which shall be in the year one thousand seven hundred and fifty-four without any agreement and everything therein mentioned shall cause, determine and become utterly void to all intents and purposes, and the said Negro shall be by the said William Sims, his heirs or assigns. In witness whereof the said Charles Sims and Easter his wife hath hereunto set their hands and affixed their seals the day and year first above written.

Sealed and Delivered  
in the presence of:  
Sampson Lanier  
George Simms

(Signed) Charles Simms  
Easter Simms

At a Court for Brunswick County the 26<sup>th</sup> day of December 1753, This deed was proved by the oaths of Sampson Lanier and George Simms the witnesses thereto ordered to be recorded.

Test: Litt. Trazewell, Clerk Cur.

Deed Book 5, page 491

Brunswick County, Virginia: Received of Charles Simms twenty pounds of current money of Virginia, it being in full of redeeming a Negro girl named Janey which the said Charles Simms mortgage to me for the sum of twenty pounds, and doth appear on the records of Brunswick County. Received of me November 3<sup>rd</sup> 1755.

Test: Adam Simms  
Sampson Lanier  
Charles Lucas.

his  
William "W" Simms  
mark

William Symes returned to Johnston County, North Carolina, where he had applied for a land grant. A survey required prior to the grant describes the land as follows:

Surveyed the 15<sup>th</sup> day of December 1755 for William Simms a tract of land containing six hundred and eighty acres in the County of Johnston and Province of North Carolina and lying on the north side of Manning Creek beginning at a white oak on the head of a small branch thence north four hundred poles to a pine on the south side of Reedy Branch thence east two hundred and seventy-two poles to a white oak thence south four hundred poles to a hickory thence west two hundred and seventy-two poles to the first station according to the plan announced.

Sworn Chain Carriers:

Nicholas White

John Muckelroy

W. Haywood, Surveyor

John Muckelroy (McElroy) received a grant for land adjoining the land of Isham Symes and surveyed the same day as the land for William Symes, which was described as follows:

Surveyed 15<sup>th</sup> day of December 1755 for John Muckelroy a tract of land containing three hundred and sixty-five acres in the County of Johnston and Province of North Carolina and lying on both sides of Mash Creek beginning at Wm. Jeags corner pine thence along the line west one hundred and sixty poles to a white oak on the Bridge Branch thence north three hundred and twenty poles to a pine on Mash Creek thence east two hundred and eighty poles to a pine thence south sixty poles to a pine in Jeags line thence west to the first station according to the plan announced.

Sworn Chain Carriers:

Isom Simms

Wm. Simms

W. Haywood, Surveyor

William Symes grant being issued 11 January 1761 and recorded as Grant Number 43 in Book 14, page 245, File Number 773. This land was located in that part of Johnston County, as well as John McElroy's land, that became Wake County in 1771. The Symes families and McElroy families intermarried and were neighbors for generations in North Carolina and Georgia. However that may be, William and Susanna Symes, as well as John McElroy and wife, made their home on the land granted them and remained on their land until their respective deaths.

When Johnston County, North Carolina was created in 1746 from Craven County, a courthouse was erected about eight miles southeast of present day Goldsboro near Walnut Creek. Dobbs County, North Carolina was then taken from that part of county in 1758. Its courthouse and records were moved to Kingston (present day Kinston) in 1779. Dobbs County was abolished in 1791 and the counties of Lenoir and Glasgow were formed in its place. The Lenoir County Courthouse, being established at Kingston, contained the old records of Johnston, Dobbs, and the new formed Lenoir County. Such frustrating and confusing circumstances would make it difficult to determine the Symes Family activities in this area, as well as their related families. But many of these records have been destroyed by fire and no longer exist.

The Lenoir Courthouse burned 21 October 1878, set by an incendiary, and all records were destroyed except those of the Register of Deeds, only Deed Book 47 of those records were lost.

The surviving deed books were placed in a nearby building until a new courthouse could be built. This building also burned 20 February 1880 and the Superior Court Clerk was suspected of arson since there had been considerable graft and corruption in land dealings and evidence of this was destroyed in the fire. All the remaining records of old Johnston, Dobbs and Lenoir counties were consumed in the fire, except a simple index of activities of anyone living in these counties during their formative years. The State Land Office contains most of the informative records remaining. The warrant and survey plat made prior to a person receiving a grant for land describe the boundaries, as well as naming relatives and neighbors near the land.

Isham Symes received a grant for land in Johnston County, North Carolina issued 22 July 1760 and recorded as Grant Number 28, Book 14, page 245, File Number 776. The survey being made as follows:

Survey of Isham Simms a tract of land containing four hundred and eighty-one acres lying in Johnston County on the south side of Neuse River and on both sides of Mash Creek. Beginning at a pine on John McElroy's corner running east one hundred and twenty poles to a pine thence four hundred poles to a white oak thence west two hundred and two poles thence a direct line to the beginning. 16 March 1760.

John McElroy

Wm. Davis, C.B.'s

Charles Young, Surveyor

Johnston County, North Carolina

The chain bearer, William Davis, married Mary Murry, sister of Esther Murray, wife of Charles Symes. John McElroy, Junior married Sarah, daughter of Charles and Easther Symes.

William Symes received another grant for four hundred and seventy-two acres of land joining the land previously patented, making a total of 1,152 acres. The latter grant dated 22 July 1761 was recorded as Grant Number 41, Book 14, page 244, File Number 772. According to the date of survey, the grant was expedited much faster than the first, which took six years. The survey being recorded as follows:

Surveyed for William Simms a tract of land containing four hundred and seventy-two acres in Johnston County on the south side of Neuse River joining his own and Jeffery's lines beginning at a red oak in said Jeffrey's line running north 420 poles to a poplar thence east 78 poles to his own corner thence south 250 poles thence a direct line to the beginning.

5<sup>th</sup> May 1761

Mark Simms

Matthew Simms, C.B.'s

Charles Young, Surveyor

Johnston County, North Carolina

The chain bearers Mark and Matthew Simms were sons of William and Susannah Symes. Mark Simms accidentally shot the surveyor, Charles Young, in October of 1761, as revealed in the Court Minutes of Johnston County, July Term, 1764, page 190.

Johnston County October Term of Court, 1762, page 128, shows that William Symes, Senior was appointed guardian of William McElroy, orphan of John McElroy, deceased.

Charles and Easter Symes moved to Johnston County in the winter of 1762-63 and bought land near his brothers William and Isham Symes. The deed being recorded as follows:

This indenture made this eighth day of January in the year of Our Lord 1763 between Dan Higdon of North Carolina and the County of Johnston of the one part and Charles Sims of North Carolina and Edgecombe County of the other part. Witnesseth that for and in consideration of one hundred pounds current money of Virginia to him in hand paid before the signing and delivery of these presents by the above Charles Sims the receipt is hereof the said Dan Higdon doth acknowledge and confess unto the said Charles Sims. A certain tract or parcel of land containing three hundred and twenty acres granted the said Higdon bearing date 17<sup>th</sup> day of September 1744 and bounded as followeth:

Beginning at a hickory on the north side of Neuse River at John Higdon's line then north 160 poles to a pine then west 260 poles to a red oak then south 14 poles to the river side corner continuing across the said river 168 poles to a hickory then east 160 poles to a pine then north 40 poles crossing the river to the beginning. And the said Higdon for himself, his heirs, executors, administrators or assigns do promise, confirm, and assign to and with the said Charles Sims, his heirs, executors, administrators that he or they have in them lawful and lawful power in themselves to sell and convey the premises unto the said Charles Sims, his heirs and assigns forever all and every the premises within mentioned with all houses, gardens, orchards. In witness whereof the said Dan Higdon hath hereunto set his hand and seal the day and year above written.

Signed Sealed and Delivered  
in the presence of us:  
William Sims, Jr.

(Signed) Dan Higdon

his

William "W" Sims, Senr.  
mark

April 1763 Term of Court: The within deed proved by the oath of Wm. Sims and ordered to be recorded. Bob Rainey, C.C.

Transcript 1, page 53, Johnston County, North Carolina.

Charles Symes conveyed two hundred acres of land to Joseph Munford of Halifax County, North Carolina, for five shillings on 8 August 1765. There is no information as to when Charles Symes acquired this land since the recorded deed is missing. The deed to Joseph Munford describes is as being on both sides of the Neuse River and "Beginning on the south side of the said river at an elm, thence crossing the said river to a post oak on the north side of the said river thence along a line of marked trees to the said Munford's line, thence along the said line crossing the river to the first station, containing two hundred acres be the same more or less." The deed was witnesses by James Mays, John London and William Brewer. The witness William Brewer is the same person that purchased land from William and Susannah Symes in Brunswick County, Virginia.

Isham Symes bought one hundred acres in Johnston County from John Belk, Senior on 20 November 1765:

Beginning at a white oak on upper side of Long Branch where the line crosses the branch thence with the said Belk's corner pine on the south side of Mash Creek south with Belk's line to James Mackwans line on Mash Creek thence down the said creek with Mackwans line to Archabale Muckelroy (McElroy) corner red oak thence with said Belk's line to the Long Branch to where the line crosses thence up the various courses of the said branch to the beginning tree, it being part of a tract of land granted by deed out of the Earl of Granville Office unto the said John Belk, Senr. the twenty-first day of May in the year of Our Lord 1762, ... (Signed) John Belk

Witnessed by James Martin and John Turner

Be it remembered that whereas an act of Parliament passed in the fifth year of his present Majesties reign all deeds of conveyance of land ought to be written upon stamp paper and as it is impossible at present to procure any such paper stamp, as by the act directed, therefore the said John Belk obliges himself at any time hereafter to sign and execute another deed for the above land to the said Isim Sims when necessary stamp paper can be procured. John Belk, 6 October 1766

Deed Book E1, page 92, Johnston County, North Carolina.

The memorandum in the proceeding deed mentions the controversial Stamp Act, which was passed by the British Parliament in 1765. The colonists were required to use stamp paper bought from the government for legal and official documents. The act extended to the colonies a system of stamp duties then employed in Great Britain, and was intended to raise money to defray expense of the French and Indian War and cost of maintaining the military defense of the colonies. The unity engendered among the colonists in their opposition to the Stamp Act contributed substantially to the rise of American nationalist sentiments and the conflict between the colonists and the British government over the Stamp Act is often considered one of the chief causes of the American Revolution.

Joel Lane purchased land from Charles Symes, the deed in part:

This indenture made this first day of May in the year of Our Lord 1767 between Charles Simms and Easter his wife of the County of Johnston and the Province of North Carolina of the one part and Joel Lane of the County of Halifax and Province aforesaid, etc. ... one certain tract or parcel of land and plantation situated in Johnston County aforesaid and lying at the Falls of Neuse River containing 325 acres more or less of land granted to Daniel Higdon bearing date 17 September 1744, and bounded as followeth: viz, beginning at a hickory on the north side of the Neuse River, John Higdon's corner, thence north 160 poles to a pine, thence west 260 poles to a red oak, thence south 182 poles to the river at a corner and continuing across the river to a hickory, thence east to the beginning, etc. ...

Signed Sealed and Delivered  
in the presence of:  
Milington Blalock  
John I. Blalock

Charles Simms  
Easter Simms

Deed Book E1, pages 383-384, Johnston County, North Carolina.

Joel Lane, who purchased Charles Symes' land, moved into the county and acquired several tracts of land, including where the present city of Raleigh is located. His home, a small farm house called "Wakefield" later became the birthplace of Andrew Johnson on 29 December 1808 and is now preserved as a historic shrine for the seventeenth President of the United States.

That part of Johnston County where Charles, Isham and William Symes lived became Wake County in 1771. Their homes laid between Crabtree Creek, Neuse River, and the community of Falls, north of Raleigh, which was selected for the State Capital site and county seat for Wake County in 1788. Within this area the Symes brothers bought and sold land, as well as received vast tracts of land in grants. Just how large their estate became will never be known since such records for Wake County during its formative years have been destroyed.

Richard Smith, the Register of Deed for Wake County in 1832 also owned a store on the west side of Fayetteville Street in Raleigh, which was destroyed by fire in September of that year, along with all the other buildings on that block. Mr. Smith had apparently found it more convenient to keep the county deed books in his store rather than the courthouse since eighteen of Wake County's earliest deed books went up in smoke of this fire. It was later discovered that a clerk, Benjamin F. Seaborn, had set fire to the store to cover up a theft from his employer. He was later convicted for the crime and hung in 1834.

Susannah, wife of William Symes, died sometime after Wake County was formed, but the exact date is not known. However, William married Mrs. Anne Mays on 13 June 1777, so Susannah died prior to this date. Mrs. Anna Mays was the widow of John Mays of Wake County, whose will was proved in Court on 12 June 1777. William Symes, Senior was also in Court during the June Term of 1777, serving on the Grand Jury, but they being neighbors had known each other for a long time.

The marriage of William Symes, Senior and Mrs. Anne Mays being issued as follows:

State of North Carolina, Wake County: Know all men by these presents that we William Symes, Sr. and Joel Simms both of the county aforesaid are held and firmly bound unto his Excellency Richard Caswell, Esquire, our Governor in the sum of Fifty Pounds good money to which payment will and truly be made and done we bind ourselves and executors and each of our heirs equally and jointly and severally and by these presents sealed with our seals and date this 13<sup>th</sup> day of June Anno Dy 1777.

The conditions of the above obligation is such that whereas the above bounded William Simms, Sr. hath this day applied for and obtained a license to be joined in the Holy State of Matrimony with Anne Mays. Now if therefore there is no lawful cause to obstruct the above obligation the marriage for which the said license is issued then the above obligation to be void or else to remain in full and effect.

Signed Sealed and Delivered  
in the presence of:  
John Rice

his  
William "W" Simms  
mark  
Joel Simms

Wake County, North Carolina.

William Symes was also appointed guardian of John Mays and Mary Mays, the two minor children of John and Anne Mays. One of the two bonds being recorded in Wake County as follows:

Know all me by these presents, that we William Simms, Senior, of North Carolina, are jointly and severally held and firmly bound unto the Worshipful Justice of Wake County aforesaid, in the sum of 2,000 pounds in proclamation money; to be paid to the said Justice, and their successors. To which payment well and truly to be made and don, we bind ourselves, our heirs, executors and administrators, jointly and severally, firmly by these presents. Sealed with our seals, and dated the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of September in the year of Our Lord 1777.

Whereas the above bonded William Simms, Senior has been appointed guardian of John Mays, an orphan and minor of the county aforesaid. Now the conditions of the above obligation is such that if the above bonded William Simms, Senior do well and truly bring up the said John Mays during his minority and nonage, with necessary meat, drink, washing, lodging and apparel and learning according to his degree; and shall during the time of his minority and nonage, be guardian and tutor of the said John Mays from Lots and Goods and Chattels, so far as in his power lieth; and all such portions as shall fall due to the said John Mays, deceased, or of the Goods and Chattels of any other person or persons, according to the inventory, or any other way whatsoever, if the said William Simms, Senior do and shall attain the age of twenty-one or shall be married; and do and shall to the utmost of his power, secure and preserve the estate and effects of the said John Mays from all Lots and Waste during the time that he shall be guardian of the said John Mays and do and shall, from time to time, during the said time of his Guardian, as often as thereto required, render and deliver to the Justice aforesaid, a true and just account of his Tuition or Guardianship aforesaid, and do and shall save harmless, and keep indemnified, the Governor or Commander in Chief of this Province of North Carolina, and the Justice aforesaid; then this obligation to be void; otherwise to remain in full force and virtue.

Sealed and Delivered  
in the presence of:  
John Rice

his  
Wm. "W" Simms  
mark  
William Mays  
Michael Rogers

Wake County, North Carolina

William Symes, Senior also made bond on the same day and year for the guardianship of Mary Mays, minor daughter of John and Anne Mays with the same bondsmen. These two guardianship bonds were the last known documents, which have survived in the records, requiring William Symes, Senior's mark for his signature.

The Court Minutes for Wake County during the March Term, 1779, page 94 states: "Joel Simms came into Court and prayed administration of the estate of William Simms, dec'd., which was granted on his giving bond in the sum of 2,000 pounds current money, with good surety, to-wit, Isaac Hunter and John Giles Thomas, who were appointed at the time."

Also on the same page: “The said Joel Simms came into Court and qualified as an administrator agreeable to law and returned an inventory of the said estate which was duly approved.”

Then page 95 states: “John Mays and Mary Mays, orphans of John Mays, Dec’d., came into Court and made choice of Thomas Crawford, Esquire for their guardian, which choice was approved by the Court on the said Thomas Crawford.”

Joel Simms as administrator of his father’s estate had some difficulties settling John and Mary Mays inheritance with their new guardian. The Court Minutes do not give enough details about the reason for the problem, but the accounts had not been settled by the September Term of 1783. After that date the Minute Books are missing.

Anne, the widow of William Symes, Senior, married George Martin on 6 May 1780, with David Spain bondsman. It was a custom for a bride’s father to be bondsman in those days and if he was not available, a relative or friend would take his place. Just what relation David Spain was to Anne is not known, but it would appear that he was a brother. David Spain’s wife and son witnessed the will of John Mays in Wake County on 13 November 1773. The will gave no evidence of their relation although Mays and Spain families were neighbors and their names appear together on a number of recorded documents.

George Martin’s will dated 19 January 1806 and probated in August of 1808 named his wife Betsey and children John Martin, George Washington Martin, Letitia Martin, Eliza Martin, Luckey Norris, Vickey Harrison, Liley Hawkins and Nancy Liggan. The will shows that George Martin’s wife was named Betsey at that time, but it is also possible that her full name was Elizabeth Anne. It is also possible that Anne had died and George Martin married again before making his will.

A deed made in Wake County, North Carolina and recorded in Book R, page 109, dated 15 August 1801, made by Joseph Gray and his wife Salley, Anderson Sims and wife Patsey, Thomas Gray and his wife Nancy, William Spain, John Spain, Needham Thomerson and his wife Betsey, Rebekah Spain, Amelia Spain and wife Lucy Spain, all being joint heirs and legates of David Spain, Dec’d., grant to Thomas Spain, son of David Spain, Dec’d., for love and affection, a tract of land on the south side of Neuse River on the waters of Little Falls Creek.

Abigail, wife of David Spain, only named seven heirs in her will dated 5 June 1821 and probated in August of 1821, namely John Spain, William Spain, David Spain, Sally Gray, Patsey Sims, Betsey Thomerson and Rebecca Roberts.

No further search into the records for Anne, widow of William Symes, Senior, or the Spain family, has been made.