

Edward Palmer 1550 – 1624

My 10th Great Grandfather in the Skinner, Chandler, Palmer Line of my Mother's grandmother Sallie Skinner

&

My 11th Great Uncle in the Overby, Palmer line of my Mother's grandfather David Overby

My Great Grand Parents David Overby and Sallie Skinner are not only husband and wife, but are also 9th Cousins.

Virginia Vetusta,

DURING THE REIGN OF JAMES THE FIRST.

CONTAINING

Letters and Documents never before Printed.

A SUPPLEMENT TO

THE HISTORY OF THE VIRGINIA COMPANY.

EDWARD D. NEILL.

NEC FALSA DICERE, NEC VERA RETICERE.

ALBANY, N. Y.:

JOEL MUNSELL'S SONS, 82 STATE ST.

6 i' 7 1 915.17

1885

Edward Palmer, Projector of the First University and School of Art in North America.

The traveller while crossing the high bridge of the Philadelphia and Baltimore Railroad over the Susquehanna river, beholds a few rods above, a small and quite picturesque isle, which upon a map engraved by Faithorne, the celebrated copper plate artist, was designated as Palmer's Island, but in modern maps is marked Watson's Island.

Edward Palmer, after whom this island was named, was the eldest son of Giles, and grandson of John Palmer, who belonged to a family identified with Warwickshire from

^ History of Virginia Company, p. 363.

' Heming's Statutes, Vol. 1, p. 116.

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the time of William the Conqueror. Edward was born in Lemington, parish of Toddenham Gloucester, near the boundary line of Warwickshire. His sister Mary was the mother of the unfortunate poet Sir Thomas Overbury, who was poisoned at the instigation of the wanton wife of the Earl of Somerset. He married a relative, Muriel, daughter of Richard Palmer of Burton. Quaint Thomas Fuller writes :
" Palmero Palmera nubuit, sic nubilis amnis Auctior adjunctis nobilitatis aquis."

During the latter part of his life, he resided in London, distinguished as a virtuoso. On July 3, 1622, he received a patent from the Virginia Company. In his will, made November 22, 1624, he leaves all lands and tenements "in Virginia and New England" to Giles my son and heirs male of his body, remainder to Edward only son of my brother William Palmer and his heirs male, but if all issue fail, then all said lands to remain "for the founding of maintenance of a Universitie, and such schooles in Virginia, as shall be there erected and shall be called Academia Virgmiensis et Oxoniensis and shall bee divided into several streets or alleyes of Twentye foot broade. Provided always that all such as can prove their lawful descent from John Palmer, Esq., of Lemington aforesaid, my grandfather deceased,

and from my late grandmother his wife, being sonnes, shall be there freelye admitted and shall be brought upp in such schooles as shall be fitt for their age and learninge, and shall be removed from time to time as they shall profitt in knowledge and understandinge.

'''- And further, my will is, that the schollers of said Universitye for avoydinge of Idleness at their houres of recreation shall have two paynters, the one for oyle cullors, and the other for water cullors which shall bee admitted fellowes in the same Colledge to the end and intent that the said schollers shall or may learne the arts of payntinge, and further, my will and mind is, that two grinders, the one for oyle collours, & the other for water collours, and also coullers, oyle, and gumme waters shal be provided from tyme to tyme at the charges of the said Colledge, beseeching God to add a blessing to all these intents."

THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY.

FIRST ENDOWMENT OF AN AMERICAN COLLEGE.

In 1619—one year before the Pilgrim Fathers came to the land named New England by Captain John Smith—Sir Edwin Sandys, president of the Virginia Company in old England, moved the grant of ten thousand acres of land for the establishment of a university at Henrico. The proposed grant, which was duly made, included one thousand acres for an Indian college; the remainder was to be "the foundation of a seminary of learning for the English." The very same year the bishops of England, at the suggestion of the King, raised the sum of fifteen hundred pounds for the encouragement of Indian education. Thus, by the combined authority of church and state, was anticipated by more than two centuries the endowment of such institutions as are now represented by the Hampton School and by the University of Virginia.

It was not from lack of generosity or good-will toward the cause of higher education and the improvement of the Indians, that these, the earliest of all American endowments, bore no immediate fruit beyond the subscription of one hundred and fifty pounds in 1621, for a preparatory or collegiate school at Charles City, and the appropriation of one thousand acres of land, with five servants and an overseer to improve the same. The Virginia Company was thoroughly in earnest with regard to its educational project. Tenants were sent over to occupy the university lands, and Mr. George Thorpe, a gentleman of His Majesty's

Privy Chamber, came over to be the superintendent of the university itself. This first beginning of philanthropy toward the Indians and of educational foundations for the English in America was suspended by reason of the Indian massacre, in the spring of 1622, when Mr. Thorpe and three hundred and forty settlers, including tenants of the university, were cut off by an insurrection of savages.

ACADEMIA VIRGINIENSIS ET OXONIENSIS.

It was only two years after this terrible catastrophe that the idea of a university in Virginia was revived. Experience with treacherous Indians suggested that the institution should be erected upon a secluded, sheltered site—an island in the Susquehanna River. The curious trav-

eller, glancing at that charming river view to the northwest as he crosses to Havre de Grace on the Pennsylvania Railroad, may see this island-retreat in the foreground, serving now to support the piers of the Baltimore and Ohio bridge. The island was actually granted in 1624 for the "Foundinge and maintenance of a university, and such schools in Virginia as shall there be erected, and shall be called *Academia Virginiensis et Oxoniensis*."¹ Such a refuge for learning in Virginia reminds the student of that river-encircled monastery, called Lindisfarne, among the savage Northumbrians. If one should continue his journey to Charlottesville, and to the present University of Virginia, he would be again reminded of the old monastic system of seclusion and protection from the dangers of the world. It was, perhaps, a pleasant irony of fate which led the free-thinking Jefferson to imitate the ground-plan of the monastic schools of Europe, when he laid the foundations of real university education in Virginia and America.

The project for a university called *Academia Virginiensis et Oxoniensis*, upon that island refuge in the Susquehanna River, failed like the original project for a university at Henrico. The plan was broken off by the death of its chief advocate and promoter, Mr. Edward Palmer. But the idea of a university for Virginia was not lost; it slumbered on during the next generation, which was too busy repairing its material losses, and in strengthening its colonial position, to think of the higher education.

THE VIRGINIANS VOTE FOR THE HIGHER EDUCATION.

In 1660, the colonial Assembly of Virginia took into their own hands the project of founding educational institutions within their borders. The motive of the Virginians was precisely the same as that of the great and general Court of Massachusetts, when it established Harvard College, and grammar schools to fit youth "for ye university." The Virginians voted "that for the advance of learning, education of youth, supply of the ministry, and promotion of piety, there be land taken upon purchases for a Colledge and free schoole, and that there be, with as much speede as may be convenient, houseing erected thereon for

entertainment of students and schollers."² It was also voted in 1660 that the various commissioners of county courts take subscriptions on court days for the benefit of the college, and that the commissioners send orders throughout their respective counties to the vestrymen of all the parishes for the purpose of raising money from such inhabitants as "have not already subscribed."

¹ This novel point in the educational history of Virginia was first suggested to the writer by President D. C. Gilman's Phi Beta Kappa oration at Cambridge, Mass., July 1, 1886. The original authority upon the point is Neill's *Virginia Fetusta*, 183.

The mention of the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Harvard University recalls the fact that the parent chapter of this distinguished body was organized in Williamsburg, Va., at William and Mary College, December 5, 1776.

² Hening. *Statutes of Virginia*, ii, 25.

<https://books.google.com/books?id=9i3PAAAAMAAJ&pg=PA11&lpg=PA11&dq=Academia+Virginiensis+et+Oxoniensis&source=bl&ots=xKAKgBgaHn&sig=oL1wFcbzPUVd3dQO6zmoRPFJmg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjHrNjpm6HPAhUFeSYKHZq7CXYQ6AEIHjAA#v=onepage&q=Academia%20Virginiensis%20et%20Oxoniensis&f=false>

Edward Palmer was my 11th Great Uncle in Overby line & 10th Great Grandfather in the Chandler line.

Had this proposed University succeeded, I would have had free tuition as per the following copied from above.

“prove their lawful descent from John Palmer, Esq., of Lemington aforesaid, my grandfather deceased, and from my late grandmother his wife, being sonnes, shall be there freeely admitted and shall be brought upp in such schooles as shall be fitt for their age and learninge,”

John Palmer was my 12th Great-Grandfather in both the Overby and Chandler lines of my ancestry – by David Arthur

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garrett_Island_\(Maryland\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Garrett_Island_(Maryland))

Human presence on Garrett Island is known from 8,000 to 5,000 years ago. John Smith may have visited the island in 1608 but there is no definitive documentation proving this. In 1622, the island was given to Edward Palmer as part of a land grant by King James I, and the earliest documented European presence dates to 1637 when William Claiborne established a trading post on the island. In the same year, Maryland troops evicted Claiborne's Virginia traders from the Upper Chesapeake region and built Fort Conquest on what was then called "Palmer's Island." During the later colonial period, the island was farmed by a family named "Watson" and it eventually came to be called "Watson Island." Watson Island was purchased by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad (B&O) in the 1880s so a bridge could be built across the Susquehanna River at that point. The island was named after John W. Garrett, then president of the railroad.

