

RD-023	Is George Gurley Sr. the father of my John Gurley?
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Change History

Version	Date	Changes
RD-023.01	16-Jun-2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Original document

Notes: The newest version is in **blue font**, and the changes made to the document are also denoted in **blue font** in the document below (except for original documents – the **blue font** is only in document revisions).

In my system, an “RD-####” document is a “Research Document” that is used before I transfer information to an “FT-####” document, which is a “Family Tree” document. The Family Tree documents are more statements of the various facts of that particular family, while the Research documents are more investigative, intuitive, and sometimes just plain guessing. If you see something named “Source ###”, that is my numbering system for the various sources that back up the conclusions in the FT and RD documents. Sources, FT documents, and RD documents are all numbered sequentially as I create them.

In this document, I will be trying to flesh out the Gurley family. My ultimate goal is to identify the ancestors of John Gurley (~1722 – 1795). I have a couple of options so far, but no good verification data. The specific question is: Is George Gurley Sr. the father of my John Gurley?

Item # 1	Topic	Date, URLs, Search Terms, Etc.
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From [Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com):

Virginia, U.S., Extracted Vital Records, 1660-1923 for George Gurley

← Virginia Vital Records

Colony &c. Dec. 14.

Virginia Gazette, edited by Alexander Purdie and John Dixon.
January, 1771-January, 1772.
 1771.

On Monday 3d ult. died at his seat in Southampton county in the 61st year of his age Colonel Jesse Brown, a Gentleman who was thoroughly versed in surgery &c. Jan. 3.

Deaths—Gabriel Cay, Esq., Comptroller of his Majesty’s customs for the Port of Hampton. Mr. Thomas Jameson, merchant of Yorktown. George Gurley father of Rev. George Gurley, rector of St. Luke’s Parish in this (Southampton) county. Jan. 10.

So we have George Gurley (d. January 10, 1771), father of Reverend George Gurley (still in Virginia). This was printed in the [Virginia Gazette](#):

Virginia Gazettes

The Virginia Gazette was printed in Williamsburg from 1736 until 1780 and was the official newspaper of Virginia during that time. A typical issue of the Virginia Gazette was likely to contain official pronouncements, items of foreign or local intelligence, literary, religious, or political pieces, and advertising.

- *There were sometimes two or three newspapers in Williamsburg that used the title "Virginia Gazette."*
- *Newspapers using the same title are distinguishable by their printers.*
- *In addition, a Virginia Gazette newspaper was printed in Norfolk from 1774 to 1775.*
- *After 1780, newspaper printing continued in Richmond before spreading to other localities in Virginia.*

Are these two George Gurleys related to my John Gurley? I don't know yet. I know that the www.gurleyfamily.com website says that John Gurley's father was George Gurley, Sr.

Item # 2	John Gurley's Father	ChatGPT
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I have two different sources that give different parents for John. One says Joseph Gurley and Susan Wise. The other says George Gurley, Sr. and Elizabeth Edwards. I first asked ChatGPT "Who was John Gurley's father, who died in 1795?" I got back the following answer:

The father of John Gurley, who died between November 6, 1794, and May 1795, was also named John Gurley. He was born around 1727 and passed away between November 6, 1794, and May 1795. His wife was Elizabeth Edwards, born in 1726. Together, they had several children, including:(gurleyfamily.com, (gurleyfamily.com))

- *Robert Gurley (1744/45–1760)*
- *Joel Gurley (1747–1826)*
- *William Gurley (1749–1781)*
- *Edwards Gurley (1752–1795)*
- *Lewis Gurley (1755–1819)*
- *Lazarus Gurley (1757–?)*
- *Jeremiah Gurley (1759–1843)*
- *George Gurley (1762–1805)*
- *John Gurley (1767–1771)(gurleyfamily.com)*

This family was based in Johnston County, North Carolina, and their genealogical records have been preserved through various historical documents and family records.

Ok, this didn't tell me anything I didn't know. ChatGPT confused the two John Gurleys (the John Gurley I was asking about, and his son that died young in 1711). So I went back and asked "Who were Edwards Gurley's parents, who died in 1794?). I got back a much better answer:

The grandfather of Edwards Gurley (1752–1795) was George Gurley Sr., a prominent landowner and planter in Southampton County, Virginia. George Sr. was married to Ann Edwards, and they had several children, including John Gurley, who was Edwards's father(gurleyfamily.com).

George Gurley Sr. is known for his will dated August 12, 1768, in which he bequeathed property to his son John Gurley and grandson George Edwards, among others. This document underscores his role as a patriarch in the Gurley family lineage(gurleyfamily.com).

Edwards Gurley was born on August 13, 1752, in Johnston County, North Carolina, to John Gurley and Elizabeth Edwards. He married Mary Davis on September 19, 1776, and they had several children, including Mary Gurley, who was born on April 26, 1795, just months after Edwards's passing in February 1795 (gurleyfamily.com).

This lineage places George Gurley Sr. as the paternal grandfather of Edwards Gurley, establishing a direct ancestral connection to the early colonial Gurley families in Virginia and North Carolina(gurleyfamily.com).

This is a much better answer. I already knew about the "www.gurleyfamily.com" website. But this answer referred me to a will by George Gurley, Sr from August 12, 1768, that references John Gurley and George Edwards. I know the Gurley family and the Edwards family were tightly connected, as my ancestor - Edwards Gurley - was the son of John Gurley.

However, ChatGPT only knows what it reads on the web. There's no certainty that George Gurley, Sr. was **MY** John Gurley's father. In the next item, let's look at this will written by George Gurley, Sr.

Item # 3	John Gurley's Father	George Gurley, Sr.'s will, dated August 12, 1768
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I found George Gurley Sr.'s will on Ancestry.com. The transcript is below, followed by the original image.

*In the name of God amen, I George Gurley of the County of SHmton **[John Note: Southampton]** in the parish of St. Luke being of Sound & disposing mind & memory thank be given to almighty for the same & knowing that is appointed to all men to die & being possessed of his estate real & personal do dispose of the same in form & manner as following.*

To wit, I give, bequeath, & devise unto my loving wife one Bed & furniture where we lie **John**
Note: "live"?]

Item. I give, bequeath, & devise unto my loving Son George Gurley, Jr. my plantation.

Item. I give, bequeath, & devise unto my loving son John Gurley all my [???] ["Sleaths"?
 "bleaths"]?

Item. I give, bequeath, & devise unto my loving daughter Mary [???] [???] bed & furniture that
 went by the name of her's

Item. I give, bequeath, & devise unto my loving Daughter Fathay Sellers 4 of current money.

Item. I give, bequeath, & devise unto my grandson George Edwards my mare, Bridle, & Saddle.

Lastly, my will & desire is that after my Dec'd, my whole estate that shall be left after payment of
 my debts & Legacies afores^d to be equally divided between my son George Gurley, Jr., & Ann
 Edwards. I do also appoint my son George Gurley my whole executor of this my last Will &
 Testament. In Witness whereof I do hereunto set my hand & seal this 12 day of August 1768.

George G.(his mark) Gurley (LS)

Witness W ^m Thomas Jesse Brasswell Jame Peding	}	At a Court held for the County of Southampton the 10 th day of January 1771 – This will was presented in Court by George Gurley, Jr. the exec. therein named & proved by the oaths of W ^m Thomas & Jesse Brasswell two of the witnesses thereto & ordered to be recorded. And on the motion of this executor who made oath according to Law a Certificate was granted for him to obtaining aprobat whereof in due form giving Security whereupon.
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[???] Kello

So we have a George Gurley, Sr., an unnamed wife, sons George Jr., and John, daughters Mary and Fathay, and a grandson named George Edwards. Interestingly enough, we don't have a daughter with the last name of Edwards who would obviously be the mother of George Edwards, although there is someone who is named Ann Edwards. Is this George Gurley's wife, or is this George Edwards' mother (who would be George Gurley's daughter)? So there are some options – George Edwards' mother has died by August 12, 1768 or Mary was married to an Edwards, but the husband died and Mary and George Edwards were back living with George Gurley, Sr. Or Ann Edwards is George Edwards' mother.

But we have a lot of names, so maybe this will make it easier to identify this family.

One of the things to note about this will is that there is no mention of sons named Joseph or Isham. In RD-022, I have found some sources that my John Gurley had brothers named Joseph and Isham. Isham was still alive during the Revolutionary War, so it seems that either my source in RD-022 was wrong, or this is not my John Gurley family.

However, this is clearly the George Gurley family listed in Item #1. It appears that George Sr. wrote his will in August 1768, but didn't die until January 1771.

Virginia, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1652-1900 for G Gurly

← Southampton > Will Book, No 1-3 1749-1782

In the name of God amen I George Gurley of the County of Spotsylvania in the parish of St Luke being of Sound life disposing mind & Will memory thanks be given to almighty for the same & knowing that I am appointed unto all men once to die & being possessed of the late Real & Personal estate of the same in form & manner as following I do give bequeath & devise unto my loving wife one Red & White plantation where we live I give & bequeath & devise unto my loving son George Gurley Jr. my plantation I give bequeath & devise unto my loving son John Gurley all my remaining estate I give bequeath & devise unto my loving daughter Mary

Virginia, U.S., Wills and Probate Records, 1652-1900 for G Gurly

Save

← Southampton > Will Book, No 1-3 1749-1782

363 *What thou had & possessions that went by the name of her's*
I give bequeath & demise unto my loving Daughter Pethory Sellers
60 of current money
I give bequeath & demise unto Grandson George Edwards my mare
Bridle & Saddle
Lastly my will & desire is that after my Die my whole estate that
shall be left after payment of my debts & Legacies aforesd. to be equally
divided between my son George Gurley Senr & Ann Edwards also
appoint my son George Gurley my whole executor of this my last
Will & Testament In Witness whereof I do hereunto set my hand &
seal this 12 day of August 1768
Witness
Wm Thomas } *George G Gurley*
Sepe Braswell } *At a Court held for the County of Southampton*
James Piding } *the 10 day of January 1771 - This will was*
presented in Court by George Gurley & the same there
named & proved by the oaths of Wm Thomas & Sepe Braswell two
the witnesses thereto & ordered to be recorded And on the motion of the
executor who made oath according to Law a Certificate was granted
him for obtaining a probat thereof in due form giving Security
whereupon &c

Item # 4

More
George
Gurley Info.

[Ancestry.com](https://www.ancestry.com)

I am really beginning to think that this George Gurley Sr./Jr. family may not be related to mine. It's still possible that George Gurley Sr.'s son John IS MY John Gurley. But here is more information on the Sr/Jr family:

ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/49403/images/FLHG_WillsAdminIsleWightCnty-0167?usePUB=true&phsrc=IUh5609&pId=117248&backlabel=Return&queryId=1b

Fidelity Investments... First Tech Federal Cr... Log In - UUCWC... Imported Genealogy Ram Truck Science-Fiction Boo... Religion Science Studies

Wills and Administrations of Isle of Wight County, Virginia, 1647-1800 Save

Will Book V

DESHEY, John: Estate appraised by Edward Goodrich, George Wilson, William Harrison, John Hodges. Signed John Wrenn. Ordered June 9, 1748. R. April 13, 1749. Page 174

ROCHESTER, William: Of Nottoway Parish. Leg. son Joshua; daughter Ann; daughter Charity; wife Catherine. Ex., Nicholas Gurley. D. January 1, 1748/49. R. April 13, 1749. Wit: George Gurley, James Carter, George Gurley, Jr. Page 176

So, the Sr/Jr family was in Nottoway Parish in Isle of Wight County, VA in 1749, where they were both witnesses to William Rochester's will. Nicholas Gurley was the executor of the will, and I am not yet sure of Nicholas' connection to the Georges. I have seen something before where Nicholas did mention his good friend George Gurley.

The other issue is that if these are not the same families, there are huge similarities between them and my John Gurley family. As you can see below, the George Sr/Jr family was also close friends with an Edwards family, just like mine! I have no idea how I will tease these apart if they are different families!

Fidelity Investments... First Tech Federal Cr... Log In - UUCWC... Imported Genealogy Ram Truck Science-Fiction Boo... Religion Science Studies

Wills and Administrations of Southampton County, Virginia, 1749-1800 Save

Will Book III

MOORE, Betsey MOORE, Rebecca MOORE, Edwin Seward. Page 330.

EDWARDS, Thomas. Of the Parish of St. Luke. Leg.- son Jordan hunting gun and brandy, which he had of Joseph Washington as his substitute in the service; son Newit, long gun, brandy and 200 L in the hands of Thomas Taylor, being what he was to receive from him as his substitute in the service; son Benjamin; daughter Mary; daughter Ann; wife Ann; daughter Lucy; daughter Elizabeth Edwards. Exs., Wife Ann and son Benjamin Edwards. Trustees, friends William Thomas and George Gurley. D. March 26, 1781. R. July 12, 1781. Wit. Thomas Newsum, James Atkinson, Martha Gurley. Page 331.

More Edwards – Gurley connections:

Wills and Administrations of Southampton County, Virginia, 1749-1800

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Will Book I

EDWARDS, Benjamin. Leg.- to all my sisters and brothers; to mother; brother William; brother Thomas; brother John. Exs., brothers Thomas and John Edwards. D. George Gurley, Jr., Mary Gurley, Mary Peden. Page 489.

GURLEY, Benjamin. Account estate audited by Micajah Edwards and Joseph Cobb. R. May 13, 1762. Page 490.

EDWARDS, Benjamin. Estate appraised by George Gurley, Jr. Robert Newsum and Will Thomas. R. June 13, 1762. Page 491.

More Edwards – Gurley connections, plus Jesse Braswell (I have some Braswell's in another ancestral line – the Applewhites):

Wills and Administrations of Southampton County, Virginia, 1749-1800

Save

Will Book I

EDWARDS, John. Leg.- son Jacob three-fourths of estate, one-fourth to Jesse Braswell. Ex., Thomas Edwards. D. R. March 11, 1762. Wit. William Edwards, Patience Edwards, Ann Newsum. Page 438.

GURLEY, Nicholas of the Parish of Nottoway. Leg.- son Benjamin; son Nicholas; son William; wife Ann Gurley. Exs., friends George Gurley, Jr. and Joseph Cobb. D. April 23, 1761. R. March 11, 1762. Wit. George Gurley Sr., Mary Gurley Jr., Thomas Edwards. Page 439.

More Edwards – Gurley connections. Maybe this is my John Gurley, which would place him in Southampton, VA in 1750. This also connects him to an Elizabeth Edwards, who may have been MY John Gurley's wife! Still not sure about this, though.

As to this Nicholas Gurley, who is he? He has sons Nicholas Jr., William, and Benjamin (Benjamin may be the oldest as he gets Nicholas Sr.'s plantation. His wife seems to be "Anne Hands", as I read the will. However, he lists George Gurley, Jr. as a "trusty friend" in his [will](#) when he appoints George Gurley, Jr. and Joseph Cobb as his executors. In the will, Mary Gurley is listed as a "Jr." – a little surprising. Also George Gurley, Sr. is listed as a witness for the will in 1762. Maybe Nicholas Gurley is related to the George Sr./Jr. Gurleys – maybe they are not only friends but cousins?

Wills and Administrations of Southampton County, Virginia, 1749-1800

Save

Will Book I

Gardner and Phillip Brantley. R. Feb. 14, 1750. Page 33.

EDWARDS, William of Nottoway Parish. Leg.- son William; son John; daughter Elizabeth; wife Elizabeth Ex. son Thomas Edwards. D. Sept. 30, 1750. R. Feb. 14, 1750/51. Wit. George Gurley, Jr., John Gurley.. Page 33.

Wills and Administrations of Southampton County, Virginia, 1749-1800



Will Book IV

THOMAS, William. Of Parish of St. Luke. Leg.- son Henry the land adjoining my land called Sarah Carter's; son William twenty one; son John when twenty one; daughter Lucy; my sister Elizabeth; son John land known as Betty Edwards'; grand-daughter Charlotte Pretlow; son George Gurley Thomas when twenty one. Exs., son Henry Thomas and George Gurley, Jr. D. Dec. 29, 1794. R. Feb. 12, 1795. Wit. William Newsum, John Gurley, John T. Blow, Sr. Page 670.

Abstract of George Sr.'s will, which I already have:

Wills and Administrations of Southampton County, Virginia, 1749-1800

Will Book II

GURLEY, George, Sr. of St. Luke Parish. Leg.- loving wife; son George; son John; daughter Mary West; daughter Fathey Sellers; grandson George Edwards; residue of estate to George Gurley, Jr. and Ann Edwards. Ex., son George Gurley. D. Aug. 12, 1768. R. Jan. 10, 1771. Wit. William Thomas, Jesse Braswell, James Peding. Page 362.

Wills and Administrations of Southampton County, Virginia, 1749-1800



Will Book IV

MARTIN, James. Leg.- wife Amey; son Kinchen; daughter Lucy Gurley. Exs., wife and son-in-law George Gurley. D. Oct. 18, 1791. R. Dec. 8, 1791. Wit. George Gurley, Thomas Newsum, Jr., John Newsum. Page 460.

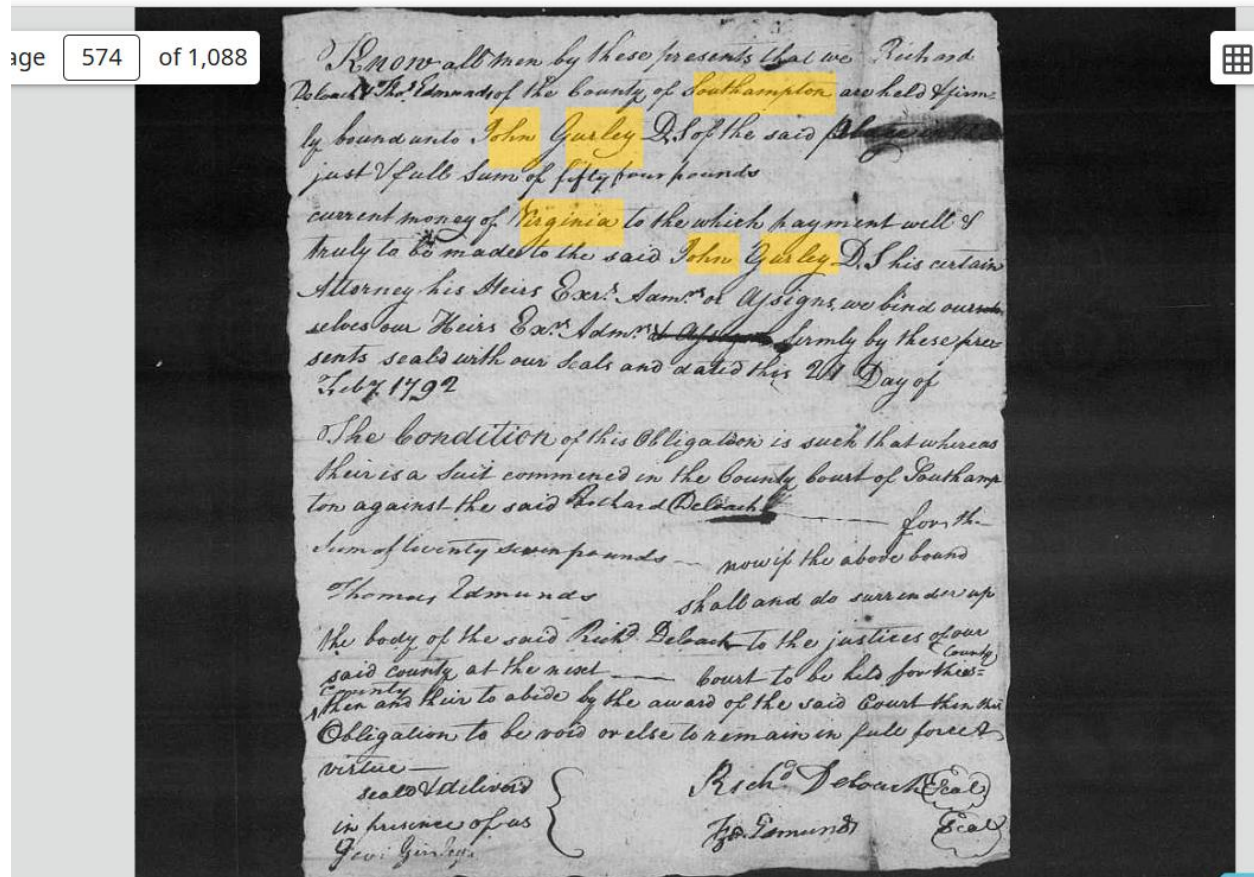
It may be that the George Sr./Jr. family is related to my John Gurley family, but not in a direct lineage. Maybe I can try to trace the George Sr./Jr. family out and see if I can make a connection.

There is a John Gurley who died in Southampton County, VA in October 1805. His [will](#) lists a nephew John Edwards, a nephew John Drake, and wife Elizabeth. No children of his own. Definitely not my John Gurley, but is he George Gurley Sr.'s John Gurley? Dunno.

Item # 5	John Gurley Info.	John Gurley in Southampton, VA in 1792 FamilySearch.org
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I think I am coming to the conclusion that that the Gurley family in Southampton County VA, is not "exactly" my John Gurley family. My John Gurley was in Johnston County, NC by 1779 when he gave some land to his son Edwards. John had acquired this land in 1762, so he was there by 1762. However, the Southampton VA John Gurley was still in VA in 1792, as evidenced by the legal claim document below.

Judgment Papers, 1793, Southampton County, Virginia: Southampton. Court Rec...



Item # 6	John Gurley Info.	1795 – 1796 Property Tax Records from Southampton, VA FamilySearch.org
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The following property tax records from Southampton, VA from 1795-1796 show that a John Gurley, who was associated with George Gurley Jr. and Sr. was still in Southampton, VA in 1795-1796. So the George Gurley Sr./Jr. is not the family of my John Gurley.

Persons Names Charged with the Law	Names of white Male Adults above 16 years old
Gurley Geo. Sr.	
Gurley Geo. Sr.	Gurley Geo. Sr. & Glover J. Sr.
Gurley John	Gurley John & Gurley Geo. Sr.

No. of blacks above 16 years old	No. Between 12 & 16 years old	No. of Males 16 & above	No. of Riding Chair wheels	No. of Chariot wheels
+	+	+	+	
4	.	3		
6	2	4	2	

Summary of Information researched

So I am of the conclusion that the George Gurley Sr./Jr./John Gurley family from Southampton, VA is not my John Gurley family from Johnston County, NC. They may be related further up the lineage, and both families may be from the same area of Scotland, but the George Gurley Sr./Jr. family is not in my direct lineage.