

The Perry Family of Nansemond, Chowan & Bertie County, NC

Preliminary Report — Based on Research at andersonnc.com

Compiled by Scout / August 20, 2026 / For revision

Research Note: This is a preliminary working draft synthesized from the genealogical research published at andersonnc.com ("Andersons of Colonial N. Carolina") by the site's author, combined with supporting records drawn from Bertie County court minutes, deed abstracts (Bell, Hofmann, Haun), and the Sally's Family Place compilation. As the site author notes: "*My glimpse of the Perry family is not even in a preliminary stage.*" What follows is a structured summary of the clues gathered to date — not a finished family tree.

I. Origins: Isle of Wight / Nansemond, Virginia (pre-1700)

The earliest Perry footprint in this research is in the **Isle of Wight / Nansemond County, Virginia** corridor, where the family appears in property records and headright lists before migrating southward into the Albemarle / Chowan precinct of North Carolina.

Phillip Perry is the earliest positively named ancestor in this chain. A deed of 1673 establishes his son:

"Deed of John Perry, son of Phillip Perry, of ye Whitemarsh, to Col. Joseph Bridger, 1673." — Pagan River Notes (andersonnc.com)

This places a **John Perry** (son of Phillip) in Isle of Wight County by 1673, transacting land near the Pagan River / White Marsh area — the same territory associated with the Bridger family and other early colonial Tidewater planters.

The **1704 Nansemond County Quit Rents** list two Perrys with substantial land holdings: - **Jno [John] Perry** — 870 acres - **Nicholas Perry** — 200 acres

These two are among the larger landholders in the region. Whether Nicholas is a brother, son, or cousin of John remains undetermined, but the pairing of John and Nicholas Perry will recur in North Carolina records through subsequent generations.

II. The Move Into Chowan / Bertie Precinct (ca. 1700–1730)

The Perrys' transition from Nansemond, Virginia into the Albemarle Sound region of North Carolina tracks alongside other families of the period — Spiers, Freemans, Brownes, and Rosses — who followed the same migratory corridor south across the state line.

Key Records:

1700 — Chowan deed / Thomas Speight connection: A deed involving Thomas Speight connects a **John Perry of Nansemond** to Chowan land records around 1700, suggesting the family began acquiring land south of

the Virginia line at an early date. (Andrew Ross will page, andersonnc.com)

1718 — Thomas Browne's will witnessed by two Perrys: Thomas Browne (son of John Browne "the Indian Trader" of Kingsale, Nansemond) left a will in 1718 that was **witnessed by two Perrys**. The author of andersonnc.com notes: *"It is my opinion that witnesses to a will generally were 'connected' in some fashion to the Testator."* This places Perry family members in proximity to the Browne / Kingsale network ca. 1718.

1719–1721 — The Howcott / Beale Brown / John Perry land chain: A chain of transactions documents a Perry acquiring land in the Chowan / Bertie area:

- **Oct 17, 1719:** Beale Brown (son of William Brown) swaps land near Ahoskey Swamp with Edward Howcott (same day, same witnesses — John Hardy, Rebecca Hardy).
- **Apr 17, 1721:** Edward Howcott of Chowan Precinct and wife Tamar convey to **John Perry of the upper parish of Nansemond County, Virginia** — 250 acres on Wiccacon Pocosin, joining the Pequosen, formerly surveyed for George Gladstaine, then assigned to William Browne, descended to his son Beale Browne, then assigned to Howcott.
- Deed Book F#1, Chowan Co., pg. 123 (Hofmann abstract)
- Witnesses: Thomas Spires, Abraham Hill
- Registered Chowan Ct., April 1721

This is a significant document: it identifies the buyer explicitly as **John Perry of Nansemond**, purchasing land in Chowan precinct — the act of a man beginning to put down roots across the line.

1724 — Bertie Court jury duty:

"10 Feb 1724 – Bertie Ct – John Perry is on jury 'to lay out the road from Mr Simon Jeffries Landing on the Roanoke to the maine branch that begins at Mr James Bryants and goes to Chesshires Landing on Maherin River..." — andersonnc.com, "A Road from Roanoke River to Meherrin River"

John Perry is now established in Bertie County, serving on civic juries. His presence alongside William Bridgers and James Bryan in this road order places him in the Roanoke-to-Meherrin corridor — the geographic spine of early Bertie County settlement.

1725–1726 — Ahosky Marsh land: The Bertie deed books show **John Perry** as a named adjacent landowner near **Ahosky Marsh**:

"Bertie Co, NC Deed Book B pg 166 — Beale Brown & wife Sarah to James Howard, 13 May 1726 — 450 A. known by name 'Little Ahoskey.' Adj. John Perry on Ahosky Marsh." — Bell's abstract

John Perry appears again in the same deed (pg. 169, same date) as adjacent landowner on the same Ahoskey Marsh tract. His land is now well-established in the Bertie/Chowan area.

III. The Bryan Family Connection (ca. 1720s)

A Bryan family connection to the Perrys is noted but not yet resolved. The author at andersonnc.com, while researching the **Bryan family of Nansemond/Chowan precinct**, encountered Perry references again, noting:

"I am presently researching the BRYAN family of Nansemond/Chowan 'precinct' and up pops the PERRYs again."

The nature of the Bryan-Perry relationship — neighboring landowners, kin, or business associates — is an open research question. The Macland family is mentioned as another adjacent group: *"it would appear the Maclands*

were in Nansemond in the early 1700s... I suspect but cannot prove, that Macland may be a bastardization of McClendon."

IV. John Perry of Bertie County — The Patriarch (d. 1760)

The John Perry active in Bertie County records through the 1720s–1750s is the man who died in Bertie County in **October 1760**, leaving a will proved at the October Court 1760. He is the father of **Josiah Perry (1741–1821)**, the most extensively documented member of the family.

His 1742 rights record shows his household in full:

"11 May 1742 — John Perry prov'd his Rights on Oath Vizt: John Perry, Sarah Perry, Nichs. Perry, Jacob Perry, Isaac Perry, Benja. Perry, Sarah Perry, Grace Perry, James Perry, Anne Perry, Josiah Perry, Saml. Thomas — whites. Mingo, Cesar, Venus, Bridget, Hager, Phillis — blacks." — Bertie Ct. Records (cited at sallysfamilyplace.com)

His wife was **Sarah Walton** — a name that will recur in the next generation (his son Josiah later has a daughter named Christian Walton, suggesting the Walton kin connection was maintained).

His children named in the 1761 estate division: 1. Nicholas Perry 2. Isaac Perry 3. Benjamin Perry 4. James Perry 5. **Josiah Perry** (*the subject of detailed research below*) 6. Michael Collins (*married a Perry daughter*) 7. James Early (*married a Perry daughter*) 8. William Rice (*married a Perry daughter*) 9. Rachel Perry 10. Ruth Perry 11. Frusanna Perry

The estate inventory (October 1760, by son James Perry, executor) noted **17 unnamed enslaved people**, indicating a well-established planter household.

V. The Spier Family Connection (Nansemond)

The Spier Family study (andersonnc.com PDF, June 2025) references John and William Perry as sons of a John Perry, with land interactions in Nansemond and Chowan records dating to approximately 1700. A **Dr. James Perry** appears in Nansemond/Bertie contexts, suggesting the family had diversified occupational roles beyond planting by the early 1700s. The Perry-Spier connection likely ran through land adjacency and shared witness networks.

VI. Josiah Perry (ca. 1741–1821) — The Bertie County Planter

The best-documented Perry of this research window is **Josiah Perry, Esq.**, son of John Perry and Sarah Walton. A full chronological summary of his documented life follows. (*See also the companion record summary compiled August 20, 2026.*)

Vital Facts

- **Born:** ca. 19 November 1741, probably Chowan County; family moved to Bertie shortly after
- **Died:** before November 1821, Bertie County
- **Community:** Pine Tree Store / Powellsville area, Bertie County

First Marriage: Elizabeth Freeman (ca. 1743–ca. 1779)

Married ca. December 1761. Elizabeth was the daughter of **William Freeman of Chowan County** and wife Christian (thought to be an Outlaw). She died ca. 1775–1779. Her father William Freeman's 1781 will (Chowan Co.) remembered Josiah as his son-in-law, bequeathing him a feather bed and furniture, and bequeathing grandson **William Perry** a Negro boy named Jacob.

Second Marriage: Amilicent (Millicent) Freeman (1763–1823)

Married ca. 1782. Amilicent was the daughter of John Freeman and his first wife Christian Rountree — and notably was the **niece of Josiah's first wife** Elizabeth Freeman. Her father John Freeman died in Bertie County in November 1793.

Civic and Economic Life

Josiah Perry was one of the more active civic figures in late-colonial and early-republic Bertie County:

Date	Activity
1768	Grand Jury selection
1770	Appointed Road Overseer (replacing James Boon Wynns); sold 50 ac. to Isaac Carter
1774	Proved a deed (Jones to Rayner)
1775	Appointed to mill jury, Barbeque Swamp; deed witness
1778	Grand Jury
1779	Tax Assessor
1782	Grand Jury
1783	Jury duty; proved will of Nathaniel Holley
1784	Superior Court juror, Edenton
1797	Co-purchased Colerain Fishery (Chowan River beach) with Samuel Rayner, James Ward, Charles Freeman, Jeremiah Freeman, Joshua Freeman Jr.

He also purchased the **Liberty Hill Fishery** on the Chowan River from John Winborne, which he devised in his will to his wife for life, then to son Freeman Perry and daughter Amilicent Simmons.

His land was in the **Powellville section** of Bertie County, adjoining Timothy Walton's land near Barbeque Swamp.

Revolutionary War

Josiah Perry is listed as a **North Carolina Patriot** in DAR-related records, consistent with his civic roles during 1778–1779.

Children (from will, 1820)

From his two marriages, Josiah Perry fathered at least 13 named heirs: 1. **William Perry** — received Negro man Jack 2. **Sally Stephens** — received Negro woman Rachel 3. **Christian Walton** — received Negro woman Pat 4. **John Perry** — received Negro boy Nelson 5. **Josiah Perry Jr.** — received Negro Eliza 6. **Bershaba Garrett** — share of Edgecombe land proceeds 7. **Mary Jenkins** — share of Edgecombe land proceeds 8. **Celia Rayner** — received enslaved people for life 9. **Freeman Perry** — received land (Ward tract, 95 acres, Colerain Fishery share) 10. **Nancy Balfour** — received enslaved people for life 11. **Frusanna Mercer** — received enslaved people for life 12. **Penelope Sessoms** — plantation land and enslaved people 13. **Amilicent Simmons** — 133 acres (from Isaac Perry) + enslaved people

Plus a son **James Perry** who had predeceased him, leaving a son **Jeremiah Perry** (Josiah's grandson, who received land in Edgecombe and enslaved people).

Will (April 25, 1820; proved before November 1821)

Executed in full health and sound mind. Wife **Amilicent Perry** and **John Simons** appointed executrix/executor. Witnesses: **James Ward** and **Benjamin Hill**.

VII. Edgecombe County Branch — James Perry and Rawls Perry

A distinct Perry line appears in **Edgecombe County** along the Swift Creek / Beech Swamp corridor, documented in the "Edgecombe (newer) Swift Creek area" page at andersonnc.com. A commenter to that post notes:

"I am focusing on John Bass, John Yeates, Matthew Raiford Jr., James Perry and William Rawles who all owned land next to each other... On 4 December 1739, John Yeates sells 100 acres to James Perry."

James Perry acquired 100 acres on the north side of Beech Swamp on December 4, 1739 — part of a 340-acre tract originally in the name of John Yeates (acquired 1739) that was itself carved from a William Whitehead 640-acre patent of 1737.

His neighbors: John Bass, John Yeates, Matthew Raiford Jr., and **William Rawles of the upper parish of Nansemond County, Virginia** (the Nansemond connection again).

Rawls Perry — James Perry named a son "Rawls Perry," which the researcher notes as a potential clue to a family connection between the Perrys and the Rawles/Rawls family. Whether this James Perry of Edgecombe is the same James Perry who was a brother of Josiah Perry of Bertie County (both sons of John Perry d. 1760) has not been confirmed — but the timing and geography are consistent.

VIII. Micajah Perry — Martin County (1779)

The Robert Anderson of Cashy River page (andersonnc.com) references **Micajah Perry** in a 1779 military draft/role list from Martin County. This individual may represent a branch of the family that moved into the Cashie River / Martin County area — or could reflect the wider Perry network's participation in Revolutionary War-era service rosters.

IX. Open Research Questions

The author of andersonnc.com freely acknowledges the preliminary state of this research. Key unresolved questions:

1. **The link between Phillip Perry (Isle of Wight) → John Perry (Nansemond, 870 ac., 1704) → John Perry (Bertie, d. 1760):** Is this one and the same John Perry, or are there two generations of "John Perry" between Phillip and the Bertie patriarch? The 1704 quit rent entry for John Perry (870 acres) may predate the Bertie John Perry's active period, suggesting these could be father and son.
2. **Nicholas Perry (Nansemond, 200 ac., 1704):** Relationship to John Perry unknown. Nicholas also appears in the 1742 Bertie rights list as a child of John Perry (d. 1760), but a Nicholas Perry in Nansemond in 1704 would be from an earlier generation.

3. **The two Perrys who witnessed Thomas Browne's 1718 will:** Their identities are not specified in the current research. Given the date, these may be John Perry (the Bertie patriarch) and a brother or son.
4. **James Perry of Edgecombe / James Perry of Bertie:** Whether the Edgecombe James Perry (acquiring land 1739) is the same as the Bertie James Perry (brother of Josiah, son of John d. 1760) needs documentary confirmation.
5. **Macland / McClendon connection to the Perrys:** The author suspects but cannot prove a link; this remains a clue awaiting evidence.
6. **Israel Perry:** Not mentioned directly in the andersonnc.com research, but appears in Sally's Family Place notes as another Perry line in Bertie County — a younger Josiah Perry was the son of Israel Perry, and was confused by Judge Winborne and Major John W. Moore with Josiah son of John Perry.
7. **Dr. James Perry of Nansemond/Bertie:** His relationship to the main Perry line is unestablished.

X. Geographic Summary: The Perry Migration Arc

Isle of Wight / Pagan River, VA

↓ (Phillip Perry → John Perry, 1673)

Nansemond County, VA

↓ (John Perry, 870 ac, 1704; Nicholas Perry, 200 ac)

Chowan Precinct / Bertie Precinct, NC

↓ (John Perry in deed records ~1700–1721; jury 1724)

Bertie County, NC – Ahosky Marsh / Barbeque Swamp / Powellsville area

↓ (John Perry d. 1760, Sarah Walton)

[Josiah Perry (1741–1821) – Bertie County planter]

[James Perry → Edgecombe County (Swift Creek / Beech Swamp)]

[Micajah Perry – Martin County, 1779]

XI. Primary Sources Consulted

- andersonnc.com — "The Perry Folks of Nansemond and Chowan" (July 2024)
- andersonnc.com — "A Road from Roanoke River to Meherrin River" (June 2023)
- andersonnc.com — "Beale Brown, 1720s Bertie County" (August 2013)
- andersonnc.com — "TTT John Browne of Kingsale, 1639–1713, Indian Trader"
- andersonnc.com — "Back Swamp Study, Colonial Nansemond County VA" (May 2021)
- andersonnc.com — "Edgecombe (newer) Swift Creek Area"
- andersonnc.com — "Robert Anderson of Cashy River"
- andersonnc.com — Spier Family of Nansemond County Virginia (PDF, June 2025)
- andersonnc.com — Pagan River Notes (PDF, November 2023)
- Bertie County Deed Book B, L-2, M, R-441 (Bell's abstracts)
- Chowan County Deed Book F#1, B#1 (Hofmann's abstracts)
- Bertie County Court Minutes (Haun abstracts)
- Nansemond County Quit Rents 1704 (Wertenbaker, *Planters of Colonial Virginia*)
- Sally's Family Place — Josiah Perry, Elizabeth Freeman & Amilicent Freeman
- FamilySearch: 93C2-N1D (Josiah Perry Sr., 1741–1820)
- WikiTree: Perry-2028

This report is a preliminary draft for revision. Corrections, additions, and source challenges welcome.