

## Pendarvis Narrative

### Summary

The Pendarvis family has been long-established in South Carolina and is connected to many other prominent families throughout the South. Prior to the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, there were two Pendarvis lines: One came through Joseph Pendarvis, who died in 1734 or thereabouts, and one through his younger half-brother, Josiah Pendarvis, born around 1724. Joseph's only descendants were his children by his enslaved consort, as will be seen below. Josiah, after he reached majority, changed his name to Bedon, his mother's maiden name, putting an end to any legitimate Pendarvis line through him.

Joseph Pendarvis' illegitimate children, born in slavery, but manumitted prior to this death, inherited his large estate through his will. They became one of the very few families of color who owned slaves. More on the statistics of slave ownership by families of color can be found at [Politifact](#). There's misinformation "out there" that implies that it was common. It wasn't.

### Joseph Pendarvis

The first of the Pendarvis American ancestors arrived in South Carolina on *The Blessing* in August of 1671. He was at that time employed by Thomas Hurt. By 1672 he married a widow named Elizabeth with a daughter Priscilla. Elizabeth arrived on an earlier ship – part of the "First Fleet." She has been tentatively identified as the wife of Thomas Humfreys, who died shortly after their arrival. Joseph and Elizabeth had three children together: John, Mary and Ann.

Joseph Pendarvis probably came from Cornwall although I have not seen any proof of this. He died in late 1694 or early 1695.

### John Pendarvis

At the time John Pendarvis wrote his will on 15 Sep. 1719, his wife, Mary West, had died and he had four living children: Joseph, Benjamin, John and Mary. He stipulated in this will that if his eldest son Joseph should die without leaving male heirs "lawfully begotten," his share of the estate

should go to Benjamin. John also stated that if all three of his sons should die without legitimate male issue, the estate should go to his "rite heirs" providing they take the name Pendarvis. He would not live to see the irony of this bequest.

After making this will, John married again and his second wife Hannah had a son Josiah, but John never got around to making a new will before dying at the end of 1724. The change in his family invalidated the existing will and his estate was distributed as if he had died intestate. The executors named in the will declined to serve, so Joseph and Hannah were appointed joint executors. To further complicate matters, sons Benjamin and John died intestate, both unmarried, before the distribution occurred.

In 1725 daughter Mary, who had by that time married Thomas Elliott, petitioned for her share of the legacy. The court disposed of the estate by giving the widow her one-third share and dividing the rest among the five children.

There were accusations that Joseph had not been accounting for the estate properly – particularly for the slaves, which composed a significant part. He agreed to submit the accounts and asked for the court to appoint someone to oversee the distribution.

### Joseph Pendarvis

Joseph never married, as far as we know, but he did have seven children. Their mother was one of his slaves named Parthena. There is a legend told by some descendants that he had made a trip to the Caribbean with his father, saw the young girl there, and asked his father to buy her. Who knows? As a slave Parthena would not have any choice in the relationship with her master. Joseph eventually manumitted her and all the children in April, 1734. Both parents died not long thereafter.

In Joseph's will he designates his friends Childemas Croft and John Hyrne to be the guardians to the children he describes as: "James, Brand, William, John, Thomas, Mary, and Elizabeth, Children of a Negro Woman named Parthena that lived with me the said Joseph Pendarvis." They must have

done their duty well because Brand, at least, was very well off. They inherited all of their father's property.

It is believed that the children were actually by their step-grandmother Hannah Bedon Pendarvis, who had married Joseph Hasfort after the death of her husband John Pendarvis. The court also appointed him to be the legal guardian of her son Josiah Pendarvis.

Here is where the irony of John Pendarvis' will comes into play. Had it remained in force Joseph, who had no *legitimate* issue could not have left his estate to his children. Moreover, Josiah Pendarvis's son, also named Josiah, later took his mother's maiden name, Bedon, supposedly to disassociate himself from the mixed-blood Pendarvis line. The only "lawfully begotten" descendents of John Pendarvis were not named Pendarvis after all.

### Brand Pendarvis

I have read that the concept of "race" was not as strong, even in the slave-holding southern states, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century as it later became. Or it may just be that money talks. Brand Pendarvis, whose plantations were in the Orangeburg District of South Carolina, married Ursetta (or Sertina or Ursula) Jennings, the daughter of immigrants from Switzerland.

Orangeburg civil records were destroyed during the Civil War, so there isn't a lot of data that could normally be gleaned from wills or land records. There is an invaluable source of information, however, in the "Book of Record" kept by Reverend John Giessendanner, pastor of the Lutheran Church in Orangeburg starting in 1737. The christening of Brand and Sertina's children are recorded here and also the fact that Brand Pendarvis and his wife stood as sponsors for the baptism of children in several different families. This implies that he was well regarded in the community regardless of his birth.

There is evidence that Brand supported the American Revolution, which was not true of all the Pendarvises.

Brand and Ursetta had three children: John, Benjamin and Joseph.

## Benjamin Pendarvis

Benjamin Pendarvis married Sarah Salley whose ancestors had also immigrated to South Carolina from Switzerland. Benjamin and Sarah had two daughters: Susannah and Mary.

Unlike his father, Benjamin supported the loyalist cause and was killed (or "murdered") as described in a 1782 petition to Lord Germaine. A man named Isaac Hayne (or Haynes), who was fighting on the American side against the British, was captured and then paroled. This meant that he could return home after giving his word that he would not take up arms again. The recognized penalty for violating parole was hanging although it was seldom enforced. Hayne did take up arms again and was captured. He was hanged in 1781 and controversy ensued. This occasioned some high-level maneuvering and one result was that in a speech in the House of Lords, the Duke of Richmond asserted that the South Carolina loyalists viewed Hayne's execution as "murder ... of the foulest complexion." The petitioners, on the contrary, stated that the execution was just treatment for a traitor and should have been more generally applied. They go on to list over 300 loyalists who were "murdered ... some after and some without pretended trials." Benjamin Pendarvis was one of those listed. No details, such as date or circumstances of his death were supplied.

Benjamin's daughters would have been quite young when their father died. Their mother married John Ott sometime prior to 1786 and had two more children: John Ott and Elizabeth Ott.

## Mary Pendarvis

Mary Pendarvis married Joseph Cutterer (Cutrer) prior to 1798. They sold their expectations in Mary's inheritance from her grandfather Brand Pendarvis and left South Carolina in the early part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to settle in Spanish West Florida, the "Florida parishes" of Louisiana. There they raised a family of eleven children including my great-grandfather Isaac Wesley Cutrer. Other members of the Cutrer family moved at the same time, including Joseph's mother Sarah/Sally Cutrer.

Joseph died in 1839 and Mary in 1844. They are buried in Washington Parish, Louisiana.