

GENERATION EIGHT

INSTANT HALL AND MARY, HIS WIFE

(Circa 1675-1757)

Instant: son of James Hall?

Mary: probable daughter of John Willson?

Instant and Mary are probably not our direct ancestors. Nothing has ever been found in any old Virginia records to prove their relationship to us, but because of the odd name Instant/Instance, which comes down the line of descendants for every succeeding generation, we know he simply has to be one of many early Virginians we can call ours. We do not know when he was born....we surmise it was about 1675. We do not know when he died....the Bristol Parish church registry lists a birth of a slave "Nann, belonging to Instant and Mary Hall on 9-30-1749", so he might have been alive at that time. However, while he lived he left enough "footprints" to let us know he was a pretty important man in his area and his name seems more revered than that of our known ancestor Isaac. T

he first record known of Instant is when he received a land grant on October 28, 1697 for 215 acres in Charles City County. This property was bordering on the property of James Hall and is in an area just southeast of present-day Petersburg. About 1702, Prince George County was formed from part of the original Charles City County, which was on the south side of the James River and south of the Appomattox River. Prince George County was (and is) bordered on the east by Surry County. This particular area was home to many of the prominent families in early Virginia.

I have The Vestry Book and Register of Bristol Parish, Virginia: 1720-1789. The first known vestry minutes are in this book, even though the church was established 1643. Where the earlier records are is unknown, but they would be invaluable in trying to reconstruct the Hall family history. Many of the area records were burned by

Northern Army troops during the Civil War; however some deed records have survived and they give us good proof of the land transactions going in the Hall family.

Instant and his wife, Mary are recorded prominently in the various activities of the church. Since vestrymen were the leading citizens in the area, we know that this branch of our Hall family members was closely associated with some of the great early Virginia families. For instance, the Bollings were also prominent in this little church and they are direct descendants of Pocahontas and John Rolfe. (See write-up of this connection to our family in pages following.)

Births of Instant and Mary's children are also recorded in the vestry register. Babies born to them beginning in 1701-2 and until 1721 were James, Judith, Instant, John, Frances, and George and William. At the second recorded meeting of the vestry a George Wilson is present, and he may be Mary's brother. Also listed on the vestry at this time is Luis (Lewis) Green and we believe he is the father of Judith Green who married our Isaac. Mary is listed over and over as being paid by the church for taking in various children, but in November 1757, the vestry of the church gets aggravated at her as can be seen in this entry: 'That the church wardens employ some person to commence process against Mary Hall for not complying with her husband's will in keeping Judith Nance'. What an intriguing entry!! Obviously, Instant was dead by this time. There was a Daniel Nance living adjacent to Instant Hall in 1714, according to a land deed between William Anderson and Mr. Nance...so perhaps this Judith WAS Mary's own daughter, who married into the Nance family. And from the above reference in the vestry minutes, there seems to have been an Instant Hall will. What happened to it?

Instant was a fairly large landowner, certainly raised tobacco and is also listed as a slave owner. Even the births of his slaves' children are listed in the church registry. He had to be prosperous and respected.

He is mentioned several times in survey and deed records, as well as in some probate records, i.e.: in 1717 Instant Hall witnessed a deed between James Parham and Lewis Green, Jr. And in 1709, Lewis Green Sr. and Jr. were mentioned in the will of Edward Parham in association with John Gillam. We don't know who the Gillams and Parhams were, but suspect they married Mary Thweatt's daughters, and Mary is probably Instant's sister. The Bolling family remained as neighbors of Instant in the White Oak Swamp area for many years. Just think of it.... he was able to say "Pocahontas's great grandson is a friend of mine!!!" And a final note. On Shirley's mother's side....the Hancock County, GA people...one of the early grandmothers in that tree married directly into the Pocahontas family line. This means that Shirley's Halls and Humphreys both had their early roots in the very same part of Virginia and both families were members of the same little church before their descendants began their trek into separate counties in Georgia. Genealogy is absolutely AMAZING!!!!

Here are the children of Instant and Mary Hall (listed in hopes of finding some proof that they are first cousins of Isaac's boys...our known ancestor)

1. *James Hall*, born January 3, 1701-2
2. *Judith Hall*, born June 17, 1703
3. *Instant Hall*, born October 20, 1707
4. *John Hall*, born January 13, 1707 (?)
5. *Frances Hall*, born July 20, 1716
6. *George Hall*, born January 20, 1719
7. *William Hall*, born April 22, 1721

Since records have been kept on some of these children, we will follow them further.

James Hall and wife, *Ruth Evans*, have Bristol Parish records of the birth of two children: *James, (Jr.)* born November 27, 1726 and *John Hall*, born March 20, 1730. This family lived in that portion of Prince George County which became Amelia County in 1734. They are shown there as late as 1773. It is possible that there was also a daughter named *Frances*, b. 2-8-1725. *James* and *Ruth's* son, *John*,

seems to have died early, leaving a son named for his grandfather Instant, and the church wardens, William Eppes and Theoderick Bland arrange for him to be apprenticed to William Sturdivant in 1748 to learn the trade of shoemaker. (Some of this information needs to be verified!)

Nothing is known of *Judith*, and only a mention of *Instant* is given in the “two unrelated John Halls of Amelia” article written by Wm. B. Hall, M.A., M.D. This Instant seems to have died unmarried prior to 1759.

Now we come to *John* Hall. Born and raised in Prince George County, he appears on Amelia records in 1737 buying land from William Hudson. If it were true that one of the original Hall “girls”, Elizabeth, married a Hudson, then this purchase would likely be between first cousin families. He sells this land and in 1742, buys 150 acres on Deep Creek, adjoining the property of Robert Bolling and over the years gradually acquires about 1400 acres of land. Some land and slaves were bought from the Munford family. This John Hall’s wife is known only as Elizabeth, but it is possible that she was a Bott. This couple had one son, Bowler, and three daughters: Ann Hall Purnall, Milly Hall DeJarnette and Dyce Hall Fowlkes.

Nothing is known of *Frances and George* Hall, but *William*, the youngest child of Instant and Mary left a few clues to his life. In 1738, when he was 17, he chose his brother, John, to be his guardian. Why? William soon married Ann Bott, b. 1723, daughter of Thomas Bott of Chesterfield County. Subsequent records of this family show children listed in Ann Bott Hall’s will as: Thomas Hall, Ann Hall who married John Archer, Mary Israel Hall who married John Willson . Thomas Hall was a minor in 1765 when his father consented to his marriage to Frances Williams. Thomas and Frances had a son named Instance, who, in 1790, married his first cousin Mary Archer (AKA Polly) daughter of his Aunt Ann Hall. (see Archer family info at end of this write-up).

Instant Hall's wife, Mary, has been shown by some to be a Willson. Although not proved, she is probably the Mary mentioned in the 1716 will which is shown below.

THE WILL OF JOHN WILLSON

Colonial Wills of Henrico County, VA as abstracted and compiled by Benjamin B. Weisiger III shows the following on p. 148:

Will of John Willson, Sr. of Bristol Parish: to eldest son Henry, I confirm the land I gave him by deed. To son John, the same, and said John to pay George Archer, Sr. (pounds?) 3 in goods. To son Richard, land on upper side of road from the mill formerly called Mr. Field's mill, next to line of George Willson, George Worsham and Platt Jones. To son James, 200 acres on Miry Branch, next to Philip Jones and to son Henry Willson, also to Thomas, the land where Richard Greson now dwelleth, when his lease expires, also certain slaves, items and most household goods. To son George land in Henrico on the north side of the Great Branch of Swift Creek, next to Maj. Field's line and Nottoway Run. To daughter Mary Hall, a Bible, bed, etc. To granddaughter Frances Willson, livestock. Sons George and Thomas to be executors. Dated 24 October 1716 (?), Witnesses: George Robertson, Charles Roberts, Henry Vaden. Recorded 1 Feb. 1716. Page 156:Inventory of John Willson appraised Feb. 18, 1716. Value 104/13/6 by George Worsham, Peter Rowlett and Wm. Rowlett. Presented in court by George Worsham and Thomas Willson and recorded 4 March, 1716.

THIS INFORMATION WRITTEN BY SHIRLEY HALL BOWERS...
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