

***Chichester...***

***The History of our  
Family  
from 1653-present***



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## Dedication

I can remember many nights when Pop and I would sit on the front steps. It was on those nights that he shared with me his remembrances of growing up in Fauquier County, Virginia. As a young boy I did not comprehend the value and importance of his memories. Now as an adult, I am pained knowing I will never have that chance again. The regret is deepened by finding an obscure name in an even more obscure reference and remembering it as one Pop often mentioned.

It was more than just facts. While his words may escape my memory, the wistfulness in his voice is yet clear. When Pop spoke of "going down the country", the farm, Warrenton, and seemingly endless relatives, in his voice I distinctly heard the soothing effect of recalling simpler times. I would wonder why he had left his pastoral preferences for the city while being thankful that he had. Now when I enjoy the memories of my childhood, I understand.

Some would say that if Pop's recollections were not contrived, altered, or just plain wrong, they were singular to the point of being meaningless. To them I say not true! Memories, like history, are never meaningless. Facts may give history its lines and shape but memories add shading and color. Everyone is perfectly free to interpret history as they see fit but it is undeniably crucial that history...OUR history...be preserved and retold. It is no less crucial that our children understand that we are a people of unearthly grace and dignity, tempered by the fires of prejudice and hatred. Our elders should be reminded that in a society with such short memory and misplaced passions it is remarkable that they have brought us this far. And for those who would dare long for a dark past when a man's identity could be subverted for the sake of "free enterprise", let them know that we have not and cannot forget.

So to those who led the way, to those who will follow, and in loving memory of my father, Arthur E. Chichester, I dedicate my efforts to collect our family history.

# Family Name History

## Chichester

It was not until the Middle Ages that surnames were first used to distinguish between numbers of people bearing the same personal or Christian name. With the growth of documentation in the later Middle Ages, such names became essential, and a person whose distinguishing name described his trade, his place of residence, his father's name, or some personal characteristic passed that name on to his children, and the surname became hereditary. The English surname Chichester is of local origin, belonging to that group of names derived from the area or locality where the original bearer once lived or held land. In this instance the surname has its origin in the place name Chichester, a city and market town in county Sussex. Chichester was originally a Roman fortification. In 491 it was partially demolished by the Saxons under Ella following the demise of Roman rule in England; however, the fort was rebuilt by Ella's son Cissa, from whom it takes its name.

Records of the surname in England date back to the thirteenth century when the Curia Regis for Sussex record one James de Cicestrie in the year 1225, and in 1382 the Assize Rolls for Lancashire mention one William Chichestre.

The surname appears to have been introduced to the New World at an early date. Records for New England show William Chichester living in Marblehead, Massachusetts in 1648, and one James Chichester in Salem, Massachusetts in the year 1651. The surname is well represented in the United States today; however, it is now rarely found in England.

Blazon of Arms

Chequy, or, and gules a chief vair

Crest

A heron rising with an eel in the beak proper

Motto

Firm en foi. (French)

Translation

Firm in faith

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While the first Chichesters in the New World probably arrived in New England, our European ancestors landed in Lancaster County, Virginia around 1700. Richard Chichester and his brother, John, came to Virginia from County Dorset, England. John traveled back to England where legend says either his servant and an innkeeper murdered him in England or his servant killed him aboard ship as they were returning to the Virginia colony. Richard, who is our direct ancestor, married twice. His first wife (name and origin unknown) produced a son, John. His second wife, Ann Chinn (Chynn) Fox, was the daughter of John Chinn and the widow of William Fox. She is not known to have had any children with Richard Chichester. Richard died in June of 1734. This was five years after Ann's death and six years after that of his son's.

John married Elizabeth Symes of Poorstock, County Dorset, England. She died in 1728 at the age of 55. John died later that same year. It is likely he was at least as old as she. This suggests his father had been born in or before approximately 1653. John and Elizabeth had one son, Richard, probably around 1700. Richard married Ellen Ball on July 3, 1734. They had six children: Hannah, Ellen, Mary, Elizabeth, John, and Richard. Richard died in Exeter, England on December 30, 1743.<sup>1</sup>

Richard was born in Lancaster County, Virginia in 1736. He was apparently a colonel in the colonial army although the title may have been honorary.<sup>2,3</sup> Records indicate he received a land grant in the Northern Neck of Virginia (the wedge of land between the Rappahannock and Potomac Rivers). The land was described as being in Fairfax County "on a small branch of the long branch of Accotink adjoining his own land purchased of Richard Watts."<sup>4</sup> Richard Chichester owned many thousands of acres in Fairfax County<sup>5</sup>. (Fairfax County at one time included all or parts of Fairfax, Stafford, Fauquier, Prince William, and Loudon Counties and perhaps others.) There was also a public service claim for tobacco given for "public use". Richard moved to Fauquier County in 1765. He served as Fairfax County clerk and commissioner of Specific Tax. He was later a justice. Richard was married twice. His first wife was Anne Gordon<sup>1,2</sup> with whom he had no children. His second wife, Sarah McCarty, gave him six children. They were Sarah McCarty, Mary Syms, Sinah Ellen, Dodderidge Pitt, Daniel McCarty, and Richard McCarty Chichester. Richard died August 22, 1796<sup>3</sup>.

Richard McCarty Chichester was born in Fauquier County February 27, 1769. He made his living by farming in Fairfax County.<sup>3</sup> His wife, Mary Mason, had four children with him: Ann Mason, Sarah Mason, Richard McCarty Barnes, and George Thompson Mason Chichester.<sup>6</sup> By 1810, Richard McC. Chichester had come to own a family of slaves whose matriarch was Peggy Moran. It is possible that the Morans were acquired from a family of merchants named Moran who lived in Loudon County and had other family members in Maryland.<sup>7,8</sup> There is evidence in the Fauquier County Minute Books that they did business in Fauquier County.<sup>9</sup> Records indicate Peggy Moran had seven sons. The oldest, John Moran, died in 1882 at the age of 105! The other sons were Pandarus, Sylvanus, Thomas(b. 1802), Thornton, Henry Locto, and William Moran. There is no mention of who their father might have been.

Sometime prior to 1815, the Morans received their freedom from the Chichesters<sup>10</sup> but no deed of emancipation was found. (Ironically, Thomas Moran owned a black woman, Aga Burwell, whom he freed in 1836.<sup>11,12</sup>) However, they may have maintained a relationship with the Chichesters. In his will dated September 16, 1818 and probated March 24, 1830<sup>6</sup>, Richard McCarty Chichester explicitly excluded three of his four "lawful children". He directed that all of his property be sold and that the proceeds be divided between his daughter Sarah and the Moran brothers with William receiving two shares to support Peggy. I find it surprising that a very wealthy white man in 1818 would leave any of his estate to a family of free blacks!



Fig 1. Survey map of land disputed in FauCo CC #170 Morin v. Morin. The square near the horizontal boundary is a house. (Courtesy of Fauquier County Clerk)

The Moran family used their inheritance to buy 117 acres of land from the estate of Richard McCarty Chichester. This land seems to have been located along Dumfries Road 4 miles southeast of Warrenton. The area is currently known as Auburn or Barnetts Mill. The purchase price in 1833 was \$4.15 per

acre. Even with their combined shares from the Chichester estate, the Morans had to borrow money from the executor of the will to pay the \$485.55. They received clear title to the land on November 26, 1834<sup>13</sup>. Various records show the Morans earned a living by farming. However, in 1841 Thomas Moran failed to pay real estate taxes on his farm. It was ordered that he be hired out until the debt was paid. Thomas was among 56 delinquent tax payers listed<sup>14</sup>. At the time the value of the land had decreased to one-third of its value from just two years before<sup>15</sup>.

William Moran married Sally Mann (b.1802-d.4Apr1878), daughter of Isaac and Charlotte Mann. (An entry in the minute books for 1822 mentions William and John Mann as orphan children of Charlotte Mann<sup>16</sup>. These may have been younger brothers of Sally. This would also tell us Isaac and Charlotte died before 1822.) William and Sally had seven children who were: Jane (b. 1825), Susan (b. 1829 m. 26Dec1850, James Shumate), Betsy (b.1830), John (b. 1Jan1832 - d. May1885), Judy (b. 1835), Robert (b. 1838), and Sarah (b. 1848).

Sylvanus Moran married a Nancy in Washington, DC and then moved to Morgan County, Ohio where he died in the fall of 1852. In Fauquier County Court in 1853, his children, James, Frances Ann, Mary E. and her husband, Paden Cocks, and Margaret Ann and her husband, William Rutherford filed a claim as heirs of Sylvanus. Their mother, sister, and brother, Maria and George, were named as defendants in a chancery case seeking distribution of the estate of Sylvanus Moran<sup>17</sup>. The estate in this case was his share of the 117 acres bought from the Chichester estate. As a result of the claim, Fauquier County Court ordered the land divided as follows: Lot #1, 35-1/2 acres with dwelling to Peggy Moran and then to William Moran upon her death; Lot #2, 35-1/2 acres to Sylvanus Moran; Lot #3 25 acres to Pandarus Moran; and Lot #4, 18 acres to Henry Moran. See Figure 1. Lot #2 was then sold for \$384.22 to Inman Horner, the court appointed commissioner for this case. In 1843, Peggy had sold all her rights and interests in the 43 acres divided to Henry and Pandarus to her son Thomas. Fourteen years later Thornton did the same. William was charged by the will of Richard McC. Chichester with the care of his mother, Peggy. She lived with him. When he died in April of 1849, his will directed that his house and 35 acres go to Peggy for her upkeep. Upon her death, the property was to be sold and the proceeds shared by Sally Moran and her four youngest children. A



record of Peggy's death was not found but she probably died before 1853. It would appear that the property was not sold.

From October 1853, there are records of birth by Jane and Betsy Chichester reported by Sally Chichester, heretofore Moran<sup>18</sup>. The babies were Catherine (aka Kitty) and Isaac, respectively. Some time later Thomas Moran recorded the births under the name Moran. Thus began our branch of the Chichester family as we know it. There are no precipitating events or reasons yet evident for Sally and her children to spontaneously change their surname to Chichester. In the Fauquier County, Virginia Personal Property Tax lists for 1860-1870, Sally uses Moran and Chichester interchangeably. By 1870, she and her family were using Chichester exclusively. Sally died April 8, 1878 of consumption (tuberculosis). Her daughter Jane reported the death. She believed Sally was only 70 years old but various census records indicate Sally was 76. Note that none of the other Morans used the name Chichester except that Thomas's wife was listed as Mary Jane Chichester in the death register as reported by the undertaker<sup>19</sup>.

By 1860 the only other Chichesters living in Fauquier County was the family of Richard McCarty Barnes Chichester. A chancery case filed in 1844 against him by his children, George B., Ann Mason, and Eliza, details a flagrant extramarital affair with one Alice Edmonds<sup>20</sup>. The elder Chichester housed Mrs. Edmonds and her daughter in the granary on his property. He was described by his children and a neighbor as being violent, insolvent, and prone to carrying concealed weapons. Violence and threats of violence against his wife Frances V. (Barnett) are also alleged.

Sally's son John Moran took Virginia Pinn (b. 28Mar1854) as his wife<sup>21</sup>. The year was 1863. He was 31 and she was 18. Virginia, or Jenny as she was known, had been "bound" to Edwin Hunton to "learn the art and business of sewing and of housework generally"<sup>22</sup>. Her brother Henry was likewise "bound" to learn farming. Jenny's mother, Mary, apparently ran afoul of the law. She was to have received 20 lashes upon her bare back for an unspecified offense<sup>23</sup>. The sentence was overturned on appeal. A knowledgeable source said that 20 lashes may have been the most severe punishment entered in county records to that time<sup>24</sup>.

John Moran's marriage to Virginia Pinn apparently ended sometime prior to 1873 when Fanny Russell Chichester (b. 1804) bore their son Franklin. (Aunt Inez says she remembers Fanny as tall and slender with a big wisp of hair. She also is supposed to have smoked a corn cob pipe. Inez thinks she died c. 1925 in the Brightwood section of Washington.) No record of divorce or death for Virginia Pinn Moran or Chichester has been found. There is also no record of marriage of John Moran now Jack Chichester (a.k.a. Jack Chitister) to Fanny Russell. Fanny's parents were William Russell (b. 1793), a white carpenter, and Fanny Brown (b. 1804), a mulatto woman. The census of 1860 indicates William Russell and Fanny Brown were not married until that year when his oldest child, James, was 16. It is not clear if the three oldest of the Russell children were by Fanny Brown, but it is likely.

Jack and Fanny Chichester had five children: Franklin (b. 1873 -d. ?), Russell (b. 1875 - d. c. 1919), Arthur (b. 3Mar1877 - d. 27Feb1952), William Sydney (b. 1878 - d. ?), and Emma (b. Dec1881 - d. 29Mar1882). Emma died when she was only four months old from tuberculosis.

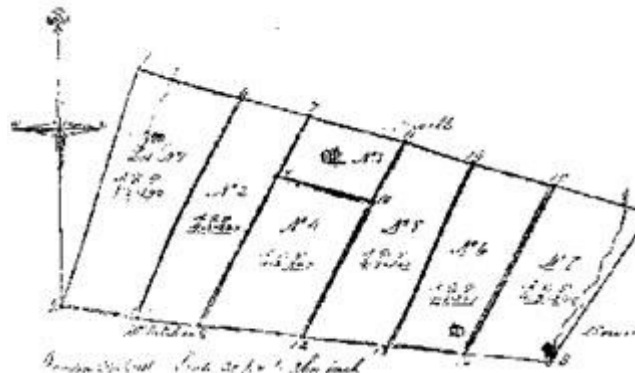


Fig 2. Survey map of land disputed in FauCo CC#336 Moran v. Hudnall. This map shows Lot No. 1 of Fig. 1. Lot No.3 above is where Jack Chichester lived. He called it the "Moran Tract". (Courtesy of Fauquier County Clerk.)

In 1879, Sally Chichester's third child Betsy filed a chancery case seeking division of the 35 acres on which Jack lived which was the lot granted to their father, William Moran, in the case of Morin v. Morin, FauCo CC #170. In the settlement of Betsy's suit, Jack was left with about 4-1/2 acres with the house on it and about 2 acres from the division of lot #2 which was Henry Moran's<sup>25</sup> (figure 2).

Jack died in 1885 also of tuberculosis<sup>26</sup>. His will provided for his wife, Fanny, and their four sons. He requested to be buried in his garden and that no

one outside the family should be buried there. Also his will says he owned 7 acres called the "Moran Tract"<sup>27</sup>, all that is left of the original 117 acres bought by his father and uncles. Furthermore, his death record (recorded by Thomas Russell, probably his brother-in-law) listed his parents as Billy and Sallie Chichester.

I conclude that the most likely explanation for the Moran-Chichester name change is that William Moran was the son of Richard McCarty Chichester and Peggy Moran. Since a child had the same status (free or slave) as its mother, it may have done more harm than good to use the Chichester name at that time. This may also explain the somewhat unusual inclusion in Richard McCarty Chichester's will (see page 2). Other or all of the Moran brothers may have been sons of Richard Chichester but chose to identify with the Black Morans rather than the white Chichesters. It should be noted that Sally Moran and her family did not begin using the Chichester name until after William's death. However, this conclusion is based on circumstantial evidence.

Ironically, Jack and Fanny's oldest son Franklin later chose to call himself Frank Helm for reasons as yet unknown.

Arthur married Aura Geneva Nickens<sup>28,29</sup>. Arthur seems to have been the first in our family who could read and write. (Reference 30 is cited in evidence). Their eleven children were: Florence (b. 1908- d. 1967), Beulah ( b. 4Jul1909 - d. 12Dec1982), [John] Randolph (b. 1911 - d. 27Jun1994), Arthur E.(b. 23May1917 - d. 10Feb1979), Fanny, Inez (b. 1920), Howard (b. 1922 - d. 1988), Isabelle (b. 1925 - d. 1967), Mary (b. 19Jun1929 - d. 28Jan1976), Frank (b. 22Nov1927 - d. 29Jul1967), and Sylvia. Some were born in Virginia and some, mostly the younger ones, were born in Washington. Inez and Randolph both remember spending time at Ringwood<sup>29,31</sup>. Randolph was ill as a child and may have spent more time there than his sisters and brothers. Inez remembers a large portion of the house at Ringwood being closed off and having typical childhood fears of the deserted section of the house.

My parents, Arthur E. Chichester and [Mattie] Belle Robinson (b. 21May1915), were married August 25, 1941.

## **Closing Thoughts**

I have spent almost two years compiling this relatively small amount of information and questions still remain. Among them are the following:

1. Are there records indicating the ultimate origin of the Morans, i.e., previous owners, Peggy Moran's spouse and/or mate, if any, etc.?
2. Under what circumstances did the Morans get their freedom?
3. Why was Sally Moran's family the only ones to use the name Chichester?
4. How long did the Morans maintain a relationship with the white Chichesters?
5. What became of Virginia Pinn, John Moran Chichester's first wife?
6. Is my conclusion about the Morans and the Chichesters correct?
7. Why did Franklin Chichester become Frank Helm?
8. My father and Uncle Randolph remembered an Uncle Mark. Who was he?

Obviously more work is needed. I would like to the Archives in Richmond and Warrenton to gather more information. I will also try a longshot by trying to find records of slaves purchased from the docks of Maryland by Morans, Chichesters, or their in-laws, which may be at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore. However, important things missing from this manuscript are stories about people. I implore anyone with anecdotal information or photographs to contact me. This would help to put a face on the people discovered from our history. Also, if anyone can prove or disprove any of my conclusions or data, I would appreciate that too.

This research is more than a hobby or a conversation piece for me. It is a quest to put a perspective on who I am and that with which the past has endowed me. I have been surprised, angered, proud, shocked, and moved to tears by what I have found while conducting this research.

What made the late Alex Haley so successful was that his family repeated the story of the "Old African" to every new generation. We may have lost that root of our family tree but we should find as much as we can and preserve all that we know. Our family history is a living entity that makes each one of us the individual that we are. It is most important that our children learn their heritage and recognize the impact they will have on the future.

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