

Richard Ratcliff

Richard Ratcliff was the son of Richard and Alice Ratcliff of Chapel Hill, Rossendale Parish, Lancashire, England. At the age of 21, Richard Ratcliff left England on September 16, 1682 aboard the ship "Submission" sailing from Liverpool England and bound for "the Delaware River, or elsewhere in Pennsylvania." His passage cost four pounds and five shillings. On November 10, 1682, he landed at the mouth of the Choptank River in the Chesapeake Bay on the Eastern Shore of the Maryland Colony. It seems the Maryland Colony was in need of people and the ships captains received a bounty for each person brought into the colony. This must have been one of several ships from England which was often "blown off-course" by "unfavorable trade winds." Richard thus landed in the Maryland Colony and not Pennsylvania then a safe-haven for Quakers. Richard's older brother James did travel to Pennsylvania with his wife, children and a nephew in 1685. Richard managed to travel to and spent some time with his brother in Pennsylvania, and may have been even promised in marriage to the daughter of Henry Baker since he was required by the Third Haven Friends Meeting to gain "clearance from Mr. Baker prior to his marriage to Mary Caterne." In 1691 he married Mary Caterne. In 1695 he purchase land in Talbot County Maryland. This deed indicates Richard was a "lawyer." This term does not mean an "attorney of law," but instead indicates that Richard was educated in "civil law," and understood legally binding contracts such as land purchases, mortgages, and indentures. Richard was certainly literate to sign his name and used the spelling "RATLIEF" in a deed of 1695. In 1710, Richard bought "Jerusalem", a four hundred acre tract of land in Queen Anne's Co. MD. Sellers were Chet Hollingsworth and wife. "Jerusalem" was first surveyed, 2 Jun 1685 for John Hollingsworth of Talbot Co. Md. "Jerusalem" was located on the south side of the Chester River, and on the southeast branch of the head of the river, or near where the Bay Bridge now touches the eastern shore of Maryland. Deed records LL#7, Folio 148 and rent rolls of Maryland Office, 1733-1744, page 412. Queen Anne's Co. had been formed from Talbot Co. in 1706, as Talbot Co. had been broken off Kent Co. in 1662. Richard Ratcliff sold 200 acres of "Jerusalem" to Richard Tilghman, 1 Nov. 1715. See Hall of Records, Annapolis, MD. By his will dated 8 Jan 1720, Richard bequeathed 100 acres of "Jerusalem" to his son Samuel Ratcliff. The last 100 acres was bequeathed to his widow, Mary, with the stipulation that upon her death or remarriage, their children; William, Samuel, Alice, and Mary Ratcliff were to divided it among themselves. Richard Ratcliff, Lawyer, planter, and weaver, bought "Jacob and John's Pasture" from Samuel Cochayne, deed dated 5 Nov 1715, purchase price being 15000 pounds of good, merchantible tobacco. See deeds Liber RF#12, Folio 220. The rent rolls, 1733-1744, Maryland Office, Annapolis, MD, indicate that Richard paid a rent of 6 shillings 10 pence. See Folio 156, also Debt Book, 1733, page 43. "Jacob and John's Pasture" was originally a 340 acre tract of land "lying in the forest near the head of Miles River" near what is now St. Michael's, Talbot Co. MD, and was first surveyed for John Newman, 15 Jul 1687. (Rent Rolls, Folio 156).