

## EARLY HISTORY

### **George Prestnall**

*ca 1667-1691*

### **"The First American Pressnall?"**

George Prestnall is listed on the Militia Roll, 23rd day of November, 1687, in Middlesex County, Virginia. His name was followed by William Carter of Carter's Grove, both of whom attended church services at the Episcopal Christ Church located at the head of Carter's Creek (actually, there were three separate churches, the Great Church, the Upper and the Lower Church, all with the same name). It may be safe to assume that it is the Great Church, that still stands today in its more than two hundred years, although somewhat dilapidated.

The Register of Christ Church, Urbana, Virginia, page 23, "George Priestnall & Elizabeth Williams, both of this parish were married in January of 1684." Page 53 reports, "John Kersey & Elizabeth Priestnall were married on the 2nd of June, 1692." Was this the wife of George Pressnall remarrying, following her husband's death? Had George been killed in military service, or by Indians, or died naturally from one of the many afflictions of those early times in our country's beginning? This we may never know and can only speculate, as we attempt to unravel the past of our forefathers. It was the custom of those days for a female to remarry soon after the death of her spouse. If Elizabeth Priestnall, who married John

Kersey was the wife of George Pressnall, she may have been married to George for seven years before his death. They could have had five or more children. At this time we do not know if there were any children or not, one can only guess as to what may have been. The records of Christ Church do not note children for this couple. However, since each of the three churches kept their own records, the existing Christ Church record

George Pressnall died or was killed (maybe in colonial service) sometime during the time period after his marriage (1684-1691). Then, his wife, Elizabeth, married, secondly to John Kersey.

I wonder if Martha Pressnall (this being the spelling on the Register of Christ Church Parish, Middlesex County, Virginia) who married George Coleman, 27th of January, 1700, was the daughter of George Pressnall? -she would have been fifteen years old at the time of the marriage, if she were born in the first year following the marriage of her father, George Pressnall, to Elizabeth Williams???

There were no members of the Coleman or Williams families listed in the Militia of Middlesex County, Virginia in 1687, there was a Williamson. This Williamson could have been Williams.

No Pressnalls, Colemans, or Williams, are listed in the July 10, 1676 Militia of Middlesex County, so it would be fair to assume all these families came to the area after 1676-1684.

I do not understand why early researchers of the Pressnall, Pressnell, Priestnall, etc... family had chosen to ignore George. No where can I find one line concerning him although he appears to be the first in America with our name. It seems there simply was not then, nor now, enough concrete information about George Pressnall to comment about his brief life.

The given name George, appears with some degree of regularity down through the generations, in the various Pressnell families. Is this just a coincidence or some thin ribbon tying these later generations back to the first George Pressnall of Middlesex County, Virginia? We may never know.

One's head may swirl after reading the aforementioned possibilities and more questions than answers are raised. But lacking any real facts or knowledge, assumption of "what might have been" may be the only path to discovering the first families in America and their real relationships. I hope the sum of my research will assist future genealogists in more conclusively determining "what really was."

Written by :

**Mr James Holland Pressnall**  
**36 Maurice Circle Drive**  
East St. Louis, IL 62203  
(618) 398-3858