

Richard Hooper was an older son of Obadiah Hooper, Jr. The family had moved from Lunenburg County, Virginia to South Carolina and thence to Franklin County, Georgia after the time of the American Revolution. After his marriage, Richard Hooper moved through several counties in Tennessee before he ultimately settled in Texas in February 1836. He served in the first Congress of the Republic of Texas.

This document (©2004 by Anne Goodwin) is meant to serve as an example of one of the shorter articles published recently in the Hooper newsletter. All text below the blue rule comes directly from the *Hooper Compass*, Volume 5, #3, pages 456-458.

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Obadiah lineage

## Angie Asks...

*I'm again reversing my "Ask Angie" help column. Here, I'm the one who needs help with another question pertaining to the Obadiah Hooper lineage. Future issues will publish correspondence that seems to answer the puzzle.\**

? **Richard Hooper, born 1783 in Virginia to Obadiah Hooper, Jr., lived in Franklin County, Georgia about 1800. Later, he moved to Texas with a wife named Isabel[la]. Was his first wife the former Jemima Harbour?**

**Background information:** I'm no authority on the descendants of Obadiah Hooper - there are some of them I've traced, but I've largely ignored others. One of the more popular lines in that family comes from the Richard Hooper who left Franklin County, Georgia for Tennessee and then for the frontiers of Texas. A family record listing birth, marriage, and some death dates apparently once existed; a photo-static copy was cited by Flora Hooper Collier in her book *Hooper Genealogy, a Southern Branch*.

Other transcriptions of the Richard Hooper family record appear on the Internet. One site with the information is  
<<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.com/~hooper/hooperobiahjr.htm>>.

(Caution: this site includes known errors.).

Whether the original family record even exists today is questionable; certainly I have not been able to compare it with the various transcriptions. Some of the information from the family record can be compared with other information sources.

\* Publication of reader's correspondence is, of course, contingent upon obtaining permission to publish the comments. For email, <mailto:Editor@fscompass.com> and include "Angie Asks" in the Subject heading.

Richard Hooper's birth date was listed in the family record as 29 March 1783. This birth date matches his age as given on the 1850 census listing in Shelby County, Texas.

Most researchers list the marriage date for Richard Hooper and his wife Isabella as 23 December 1806. They probably married in the area that then was Franklin County, Georgia; however, no county record of the marriage survives.

The marriage date causes some consternation. The family record gives a birth date for Richard's first child that is twenty months prior to Richard and Isabella's wedding. William Hooper's birthday is given as 7 April 1804. Then, among the deaths is this notation:

William M. Hooper departed this life Aug. 4, 1840.

William Hooper appears by name on only one census - the 1830 listing for Tipton County, Tennessee (page 284). He was between 20 and 30 and was the only person in the household. William was quite a few households after Richard Hooper's entry (on page 268). However, William Hooper was listed immediately after William H. Sanders, whose wife Elizabeth (Hooper) was a daughter of Richard Hooper.

So, was William's birthday recorded incorrectly? Or was he adopted? Was he born to out-of-wedlock parents? Evidence in Franklin County suggests he was born legitimately to a prior wife of Richard Hooper.

Richard probably married Miss Harbour sometime between when Richard reached the age of 18 (about 1801) and a few months before the birth date for William (early 1804 at the latest). This earlier wife then died (or could have been divorced from Richard Hooper) sometime between April 1804 and December 1806. The evidence for this prior marriage arises in county records from the 1830s concerning probate of the Esaias Harbour estate.

Old Esaias Harbour was aged somewhere between 80 and 90 when he answered the questions for the 1830 Franklin County census. His wife was of a similar age. Thus, all their children must have been born before 1800 and long gone from the home. The only other people identified as living within the household were several slaves.

Harbour probably died in the spring or summer of 1833. Then, in September 1833, some interested party appeared before the Ordinary Court of Franklin County, bringing the Harbour will to be proven before the justices.

**Richard Hooper had once been married to a daughter of Esaias Harbour.** When he created the will, Esaias Harbour mentioned his wife, children Talman Harbour, Rebecca Skelton, John Harbour, Catherine Molder, Sally Aderhold, and his *former son-in-law Richard Hooper*. Fortunately, the will also listed several grandchildren by name. The only Hooper among the grandchildren was William Hooper. This will, then, seems to me to be definitive proof that Richard Hooper's oldest son was the product of a marriage before the one in 1806 to Isabella.

Among the loose papers filed with the estate records was a receipt from William M. Hooper. **(1)** The receipt was turned in by the executor (William's maternal uncle John Harbour) in 1836. Considering the date of probate, William M. Hooper must have signed the receipt between 1833 and 1836. Further study of the actual documents (will, returns, other loose papers) might include clues for where William M. Hooper was living when he acknowledged receipt of his grandfather's legacy. It's not clear whether William had gone to Texas with his father. He might have remained elsewhere, perhaps moving from western Tennessee to Pickens County, Alabama with his paternal grandfather, Obadiah Hooper, Jr. Nor is it clear whether William had ever married or had children. A careful exploration of the Harbour estate documents might help answer these questions about William M. Hooper.

But what was the given name of William's mother? The Esaias Harbour will is silent about her. After all, she evidently had died over 25 years before her parents did. Her husband and child had left the state. Thus, her birth family may not have had much reason to talk about her.

But deeds do suggest a name. Esaias Harbour was a large landowner and had owned land since the earliest days of settlement in Franklin County. Among his early acquisitions in 1789 were 575 acres on Nails Creek and 300 acres on a fork of Bear Creek. Nearly a decade later, on the last day of 1798, Richard Hooper's father Obadiah Hooper purchased a tract of 189 acres from James H. Little. This tract was on Nails Creek, adjacent to land already owned by Obadiah and touching lands of John Hubbard and Esaias Harbour.

Then in April 1803, Obadiah Hooper purchased 575 acres from Augustine and Alice Webb of Elbert County. The land was from a grant issued to Webb; the property sat adjacent to Esaias Harbour and John Hubbard. So Obadiah Hooper had accumu

lated more than one tract next door to Esaias Harbour and along Nails Creek.

By 1805, his two oldest sons Richard and John M. Hooper both were in their early twenties. Both should have been able to work long hours to manage the family interests. Also, as adults, they began to be called upon to serve as witnesses. By this time, Richard Hooper was not only married, but also a father.

Late in the spring of 1805, Joshua Kennedy of Washington County, Georgia probably visited the Franklin County home of Obadiah Hooper and pondered a sale of some excess lands. The Hoopers had been politically active in Franklin County and must have been recognized as reliable businessmen. Kennedy asked Obadiah Hooper to take care of selling the land. One of the larger tracts was on Nails Creek, so Hooper would have had a vested interest in seeing that the land sale was conducted properly. Thus, on 24 May 1805, Kennedy assigned to Hooper his Power of Attorney for the sale:

...to sell two tracts in Franklin County, as follows:  
5000 acres on Hudson River and Nails Creek and  
500 acres on Middle Fork of Broad River and Dog  
Creek, granted to John Hinson.

Witnesses: *Richard Hooper; Jemima (x) Hooper.*

Apparently, once the Power of Attorney had been drawn, Obadiah Hooper called on his eldest son to sign as a witness. Richard was over the age of 21, and could speak for himself when the County Court met.

But who is the woman Jemima? She's not Obadiah's wife, for Obadiah had remarried to Sarah Saunders in March of 1805. She does not seem to be the Jemima (Bankston) Hooper who was the wife of James Hooper. (The parentage of James has not yet been deciphered, but DNA studies show he

belonged to the Obadiah Hooper, Sr. lineage. Known birthplaces of offspring of James and Jemima suggest that couple had reached Illinois by 1805). Because a woman still in her minority (especially one still living in her father's household) had no standing in court, the witness seems unlikely to have been an unmarried daughter of Obadiah Hooper, Jr.

One possibility is that Obadiah had asked his daughter-in-law to witness. She was, after all, the daughter of a nearby and interested landowner. She was the mother of Obadiah's oldest grandchild. Although she was young, her community would have considered her a responsible matron. So guessing that this Jemima Hooper was the wife of Richard seems reasonable.

One other notation with the Power of Attorney hints that the witness Jemima Hooper was wife to Richard. When the time came to prove the Power of Attorney before a Justice of the Peace in October 1805, only Richard Hooper presented himself. Yes, only a single witness was mandated. However, swearing by both witnesses would have enhanced the legitimacy of such a transaction. The presence of Richard Hooper without Jemima Hooper might mean that she already had died, or was too ill to appear. Such a death, or eminent death, might have accelerated the effort to prove the Power of Attorney while a living witness was available.

Even though Richard Hooper was still in Georgia after 1805, Jemima Hooper fails to appear in any other deeds. This failure to reappear is exactly what would be expected had she been the first wife of Richard and daughter of Esaias Harbour.

Thus, my hypothesis is that Jemima Harbour married Richard Hooper sometime around 1803, had one child in 1804, and died sometime in 1805.

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Notes:

1. I have not viewed the actual papers; instead, my interpretations are from abstracts in the book below: Acker, Martha Walters, 1989, *Franklin County, Georgia Court of Ordinary records 1787-1849*: the author [2504 Watkins Circle] Birmingham, AL [35223], pp. 190-191  
The pertinent papers are filed at the Georgia Archives in Franklin County, Record Group 159-2-39, volume 10, page 39 (Book A); 159-2-27, volume 8, pages 109-110 (Book G), and RG 159-2-1 Box 05-22.

2. Acker, Martha Walters, 1976, *Deeds of Franklin County, Georgia 1784-1826*: the author, Birmingham, AL, pages 15, 172-173, 196. (referring to Deed Book C, pp. 117-118; Deed Book OO, pp. 114-116; Deed Book P, pp. 96-97). Other deeds dating between 1806 and 1810 regarding Nails Creek land mention Obadiah Hooper, his wife Sarah (Sally), Richard Hooper, and Esaias Harbour. See pages 235, 263, 279, and 314 (citing Deed Book RR, pp. 64-65; Deed Book T, pages 31-32, 170-171; and Deed Book TTT, pp. 163-164.)