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## Leonard Loftin's Journey to America

Tradition says that the family refueged from England to Holland and later a branch returned to England and there was John Loftin a tailor who invented the thimble; this he first wore on his thumb and called it thumble. The spelling of the name was originally Loftingh but when the family became throughly Angelicized they dropped the final gh and the american Ancestor of the famly spelled it Loftin -family: times Leonard came over as an indentured Servant in JULY 12,1636 aboard the ship "West" from England to the Virginia Colonies at Henrico Co, VA. Recorded in the VIRGINIA MAGAZINE OF HISTORY and Biography, Volume 5, page 343, is a Leonard Laughton who sailed from Kent, England, July 12, 1636, aboard the ship WEST. He, along with six other whites and two negroes, were to work a plantation located on the Charles River in Henrico County, Virginia, owned by Mrs. Elizabeth Parker. In 1642 Leonard sold out in Virginia and headed for Pennsylvania. From all indications, Leonard traveled by boat down the Charles River along Cheseapeake Bay and up the Susquehana River into Pennsylvania where he and wife Elizabeth raised a family which included four boys named John, Leonard, Cornelius and William. Leonard Loftin came from Pennsylvania to North Carolina about 1688. He was a member of St. Paul's Parish Vestery, Chowan Precinct from 1711 to 1716. Leonard Loftin and wife Elizabeth apparently decided to take advantage of the offer of good land in NC. Each man was promised 100 acres and each woman 50 acres if the came to the colony. This land came to them immediatly. Children were also promised 50 acres; however Leonard and Elizabeth apparently had no children at that time as he did not ask for headright for them. In the 1680's Leonard Loftin had two complaints and he wrote from the heart (in excellent English) to the home church in England. First, the churches who were supposed to forward books mailed to his church from England were keeping the precious books for themselves (There was an informal mail system and the religious books didn't make it to him). In his disappointment he couldn't help but end with, "Without the books we are but little better then the Indians". I found another letter written 50 years later in 1836 by James Loftin, Leonard's great-grandson. His well written letter begged for military help against the Indian's making raids into their community in south Georgia. Indentured servant's social status in the Colony was not much better than slaves. Poor people in England who longed to improve their economic situation entered into a written agreement with monied families. This agreement assured free passage to the colonies with a comitment to serve from five to seven years. No pay was given for their services but they received clothing, board and room. At the end of the indenture, their employer was to provide them with two suits of clothing, two hoes and an axe. With these meager items and a grant of 50 acres of land from the Colonial government, they could take part in the government as members of the Colony. Most of the servant-immigrants to Virginia were half grown boys and young men. Three out of four were between the ages of fifteen and twenty four. Only three percent were under the age of fifteen and less than one percent were over the age of thirty-five. From records in Middlesex County, VA, during the mid seventeenth century, the mean age at first marriage for former servants was about thirty years for males and twenty three for females.