

*The Great Book of John Cory*



*David A. Cory, M.D.*

# The Great Book of John Cory

David A. Cory, M.D.

Copyright 2019 David A. Cory, M.D.

Cover Photo: *The Puritan* by Augustus Saint-Gaudens, from the Metropolitan Museum of Art.  
Used under Creative Commons CC0 1.0 Universal Public Domain Dedication

## Introduction

John Cory was a weaver who lived on the eastern end of Long Island in the seventeenth century. Marge Chilson, as historian of the Cory Family Society, performed a great service to John Cory's descendants when she published two booklets—*Excerpts from the Greate Book* in 1991 and *Cory Correspondence* in 1994. The first booklet included photocopies of pages from a book which was passed down through generations of John Cory's descendants. The most interesting pages were those with handwriting. The booklet *Cory Correspondence* included letters written by James Enos Cory, a descendant who researched the Greate Book (I will use the modern spelling *Great* going forward) in the twentieth century. The Great Book still exists, though in delicate condition. Even in 1991, Marge noted in her *Excerpts*, "The book is in very fragile condition, & it doesn't bear handling." Despite the risk of further damage, she and the descendants then in possession of the book felt it was important to preserve images of some of its pages by photocopying them, and these copies were included in *Excerpts from the Great Book* and *Cory Correspondence*.

In the following essay, I examine in detail some myths and mysteries of the Great Book.

David A. Cory, M.D.

## Figures

Figure 1 - Title Page 1603 Edition .....	4
Figure 2 - Box Containing the Great Book. Photo Courtesy of Marge Chilson.....	5
Figure 3 - Title pages from different editions of Seven Treatises, all printed in London.....	5
Figure 4 – Comparison of the same page from, L to R, the Great Book, a known 1603 edition, and a known 1610 edition. ....	6
Figure 5 - Cover of the Great Book. Photo by Joe Cory14. ....	7
Figure 6 - The "Autograph Page" of the Great Book. ....	8
Figure 7 - Deed witnessed by John1 and wife Ann in the upper left margin. J.W. Case penciled in “Proof to here” when he transcribed the record book in the 19 <sup>th</sup> century. ....	10
Figure 8 - Details from the left margin of the 1649 Salmon deed. Ann Corey signed with a serpentine mark and Edward Treadwell signed with a mark resembling a 7. No mark is indicated for John1. ....	11
Figure 9 - John Core is first in the list of Southold men signing this 1673 deed. Only one man, Richard Brown, signed with a mark.....	11
Figure 10 - The handwriting of the John Core signature is different than the rest of the text of this 1675 deed. Is it possible that John1 personally signed the book after the recorder entered this copy in the record book? .....	12
Figure 11 - Details from two 1680 deeds entered into the Southold town records. John1 used a similar mark on each document. Note the Corey spelling in one case and Corye in the other.....	12
Figure 12 - Detail from a 1657 deed showing the serpentine mark resembling a tilted S used by John1. “John Corey” would have been written by someone else to identify who made the mark. ....	13
Figure 13 - John1 signed this 1660 deed, which mentions his wife Ann and son John2, with a simple cross. ..	13
Figure 14 - The top image shows the handwriting John2 used to enter a deed in the Huntington town records in his capacity of town recorder. Note that he used the Corey spelling and his handwriting does not resemble any of the "autographs." .....	14
Figure 15 - The "grat hale" of 1825.....	15
Figure 16 - Signature of Elnathan Cory6. ....	15
Figure 17 - The Family Record of Ebenezer and Mary Cory in the Great Book as photocopied by Marge Chilson.....	16
Figure 18 - Copy of Ebenezer5's Family Record with added caption. ....	17
Figure 19 - Copy of the "Autograph" page with added caption. ....	18
Figure 20 - Note written by James Enos Cory to accompany the cabinet he built for the “Greate Booke.” .....	19

## The Great Book

Among the bequests made in his will dated 1 Feb 1684/5<sup>1</sup> and proved 20 Oct 1685, John Cory1\* of Southold, Long Island gave his son John2, among other things, “the great bible.”<sup>2</sup> Instead of referring to the Christian book of scriptures, in this instance the word bible is more broadly defined as a book. The book subsequently passed from John2 to John3, and then to John3’s son Elnathan4. When Elnathan Cory4 wrote his will on 4 July 1762, he gave to his son Ebenezer5 “30 acres on the south side of road and my great Bible.”<sup>3</sup> The book was passed down to male heirs of each succeeding Cory generation—Elnathan6, John7, and Elnathan8. When Elnathan Cory8 died in 1874, the book was left with his widow Hannah Bartram Cory and their son William Smith Cory9 in Darlington, Pennsylvania.

## The Seven Treatises and the Myth of Publication in Scotland

On 28 November 1903, James Enos Cory8 of Canonsburg, Pennsylvania wrote a letter to his distant cousin William Smith Cory9. Reporting on what he had learned about the old book he had borrowed from William, James wrote:

My dear cousin – I am so glad that I am at last ready to send the dear precious old book back to its owners. I had no idea I would have such a time trying to establish the identity of the book, as soon as I got able to do so I started in search of someone able to help me out in getting date and so on of the book and finally had to go to Washington, D.C. and called on the Librarian of Congress, an[d] there I found that the book was called the “Seven Treati[s]es” written by Richard Rogers, a minister born in 1550-1, died April 21, 1618 at Weathersfield, Essex Co., England. Four Folio Editions was published the 1<sup>st</sup> in 1603, 2<sup>nd</sup> 1605, 3<sup>rd</sup> 1610, 4<sup>th</sup> 1616.<sup>4</sup>

The book James Enos Cory8 had borrowed must have been missing the title page. Otherwise, he would not have had to seek the help of the Librarian of Congress to establish the identity and publication date of the book. If present, the title page would have provided James the publication date and the full title in all its glorious prolixity: *Seven treatises containing such direction as is gathered out of the Holie Scriptures, leading and guiding to true happines, both in this life, and in the life to come: and may be called the practise of Christianitie. Profitable for all such as heartily desire the same: in the which, more particularly true Christians may learne how to leade a godly and comfortable life every day. Penned by Richard Rogers, preacher of the word of God at Wethersfield in Essex* (Figure 1).

---

\* In this essay, the generations descended from John Cory of Southold, Long Island are designated by an attached numeral.

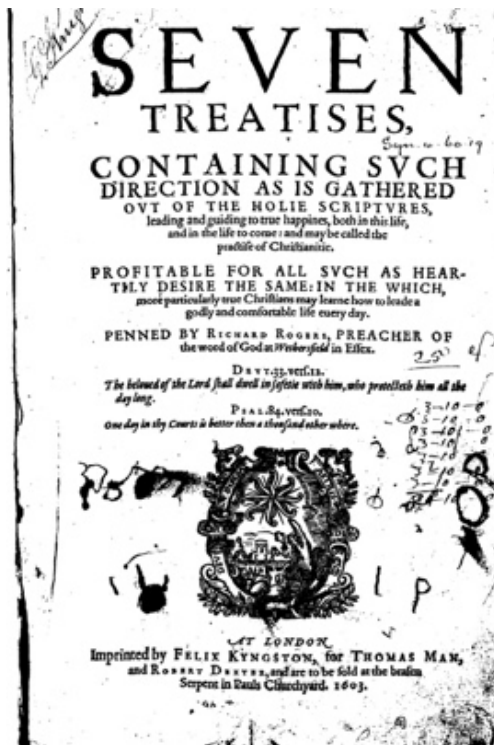


Figure 1 - Title Page 1603 Edition

Later in his letter, James wrote:

I am fully satisfied in my mind that it is the book that was brought to this country by John Cory, but what I would like to know more about is did he bring it from Scotland or from England. I wish you or your good wife would find out all you can from your mother whether she always was told that the book came from Scotland. I think she told me, yes I feel certain she said it was brought from Scotland. Also ask her who she first heard say that it was from S[cotland.] Did she hear your grandfather John Cory speak of it?<sup>5</sup>

William<sup>9</sup>'s reply is not available. Even if Hannah Bartram Cory had heard the Scottish origin story from her father-in-law John Cory<sup>7</sup>, there is no guarantee of the accuracy of the oral family tradition without supporting documentary evidence. Regardless, James Enos Cory<sup>8</sup> convinced himself that John Cory<sup>1</sup> brought the Great Book to America from Scotland. When he built a box (Figure 2) to contain the Great Book, James<sup>8</sup> wanted to use woods from areas with a family connection. He obtained cherry lumber from John Cory<sup>1</sup>'s home lot in Southold; oak from Hashamomuck, Long Island, where John<sup>1</sup> died; wood from a rose bush on the property of William Smith Cory<sup>9</sup> in Beaver County, Pennsylvania; and yew from Scotland, indicating he firmly believed that is where John<sup>1</sup> originated. The first letters of the respective woods spell *CORY*.



Figure 2 - Box Containing the Great Book. Photo Courtesy of Marge Chilson.

Harry Harmon Cory was another family researcher who spoke directly with William Smith Cory<sup>9</sup>. In his book *The Cory Family, A Genealogy*, he wrote, “William Smith Cory was of the opinion that John Cory... emigrated to this country from Scotland instead of England inasmuch as ‘The Grate Book’ was published in Scotland.”<sup>6</sup>

Although the birthplace of John Cory is still unknown, online images show that seven editions of *Seven Treatises* published from 1603 to 1630 were all printed in London (Figure 3).<sup>7</sup> Publication of the book in London suggests that John Cory came from England, but it does not entirely exclude the possibility he might have carried the book from elsewhere.



Figure 3 - Title pages from different editions of *Seven Treatises*, all printed in London.

In 1991, Marge Chilson, who was at the time the historian of the Cory Family Society, compiled a booklet, *Excerpts from the Greate Book*, which included photocopies of some pages from the original. Of note, the photocopies do not include a title page, providing additional evidence that it had gone missing sometime before James Enos Cory<sup>8</sup> began his research early in the twentieth century. Comparison of the photocopy of the first page of the first treatise from the Great Book with editions of the book available online shows the decorative header and text match only the 1603 and 1610 editions, and the marginal annotations match only the 1603 edition (Figure 4). This comparison confirms the 1603 publication date for the Great Book, well before the common estimates of 1618 or 1611 for John Cory<sup>1</sup>'s birth year.\*

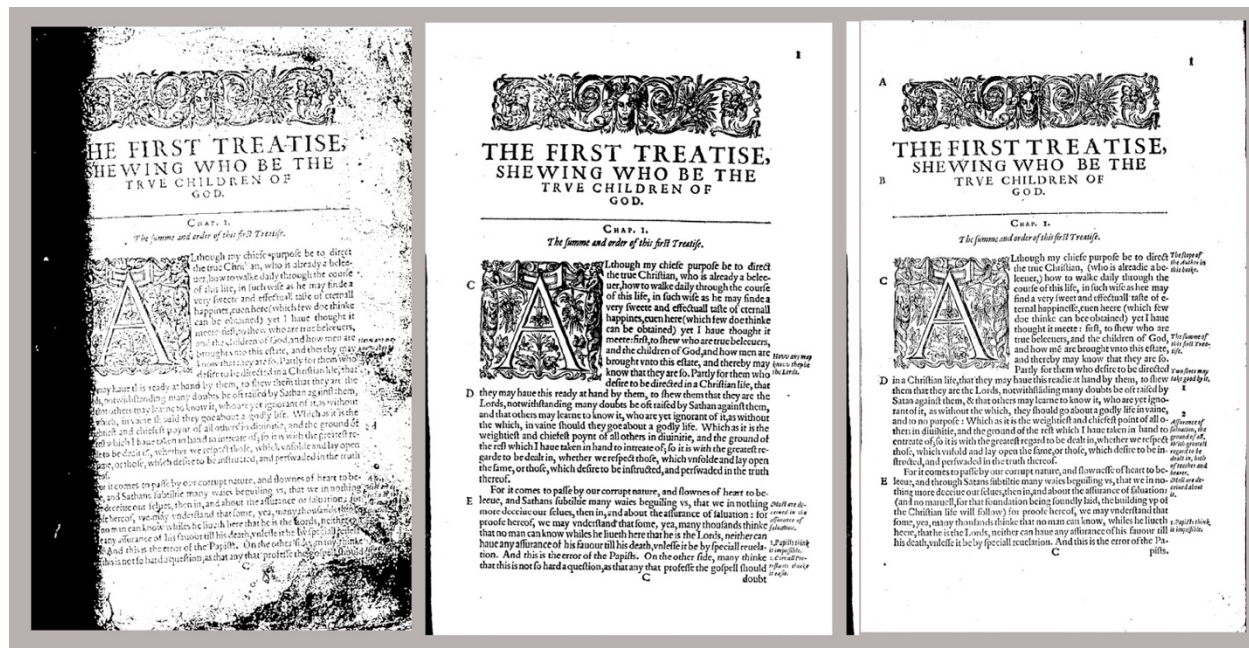


Figure 4 – Comparison of the same page from, L to R, the Great Book, a known 1603 edition, and a known 1610 edition.

\* No record of John Cory<sup>1</sup>'s birth has yet been found. The estimate of 1618 for his birth year is based on a 1660 deed in the Southold, New York records which mentions John<sup>1</sup>, his wife Ann, and their son John<sup>2</sup>. As he was a party to the deed, it has been assumed John<sup>2</sup> was at least 21. If he was 21 in 1660, John<sup>2</sup> would have been born about 1639, which is usually stated as his birth year, but without any documentation. A further assumption was made that John Cory<sup>1</sup> was 21 when John<sup>2</sup> was born, and thus would have been born about 1618. All of this is unsubstantiated estimation. Another birthdate often cited for John<sup>1</sup> is 9 October 1611. The source of this date is unclear, although in his 1937 book, *Lineal Ancestors of Captain James Cory, Vol. 1, Book 1*, Charles Henry Cory wrote of a "rare book, of about thirty pages, published near Boston before 1815... The late James Enos Cory had a copy given him by an aged lady, whose maiden name was Cory, but unfortunately he lost it in a fire in 1883... It told... of the marriage of our JOHN CORY and of his death, 'at the age of seventy-four years.'" If John Cory<sup>1</sup> was indeed 74 when he died in 1685, his birth year would have been about 1611. This has not been confirmed.



It is therefore plausible that the book was given to him by his mother before he emigrated to British America, as stated in a note pasted, most likely by James Enos Cory<sup>8</sup>, to the cover of the Great Book, (Figure 5). Marge Chilson wrote, in her 1991 booklet, “The inscription on the last page was almost faded out when he [James Enos Cory] witnessed it in 1907. It is completely faded out now. It read ‘This book given to John Cory by his mother to carry to America.’”<sup>8</sup> The letters in Marge’s booklet give no further details, but in his 1937 book, *Lineal Ancestors of Captain James Cory, Vol. I, Book I*, Charles Henry Cory wrote “The underscored words, ‘given to’ and ‘to carry’ were supplied by James E. Cory to make the sense complete. The rest of the sentence is as it appeared on the third page of the cover of the book when chemically developed by him.”<sup>9</sup> Charles provided no details of how James<sup>8</sup> “chemically developed” the writing. Marge Chilson and Charles H. Cory differ where the original inscription was located in the book, but they agree it was somewhere inside and later was copied to the cover. Who made the original inscription inside the book remains unknown.

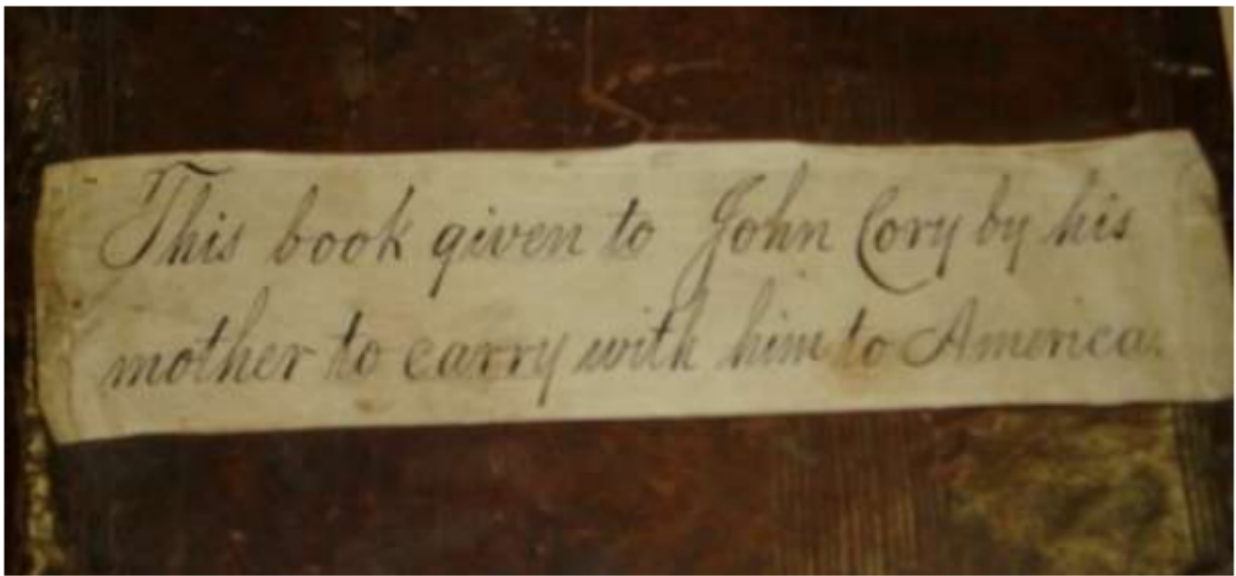


Figure 5 - Cover of the Great Book. Photo by Joe Cory<sup>14</sup>.

### **The Myth of the Three Autographs**

In a letter dated 30 September 1903, James Enos Cory<sup>8</sup> wrote to William Smith Cory<sup>9</sup>:

In the old bible I saw something like this, viz—“This is the property of John Cory” or “This Book belongs to John Cory.” Your mother told me it was written there by John Cory while in Scotland (about 1674), that he was the father of Elnathan that came to America and brought the bible with him.<sup>10</sup>

This passage contains multiple errors, due to the faulty recollections of James Enos Cory<sup>8</sup>, Hannah Bartram Cory, or both. At the time, James Enos<sup>8</sup> apparently was not aware that the original Cory immigrant was named John, not Elnathan, and that John<sup>1</sup> was in Southold, Long Island by 1674. He was also mistaken about John<sup>1</sup> having a son named Elnathan. The first Elnathan to possess the book was of the fourth American generation.

James Enos Cory<sup>8</sup> was, however, correct about seeing an inscription in the Great Book. On a blank part of the page at the end of the preface of the Great Book the phrase "John Cory his Book" is handwritten in three different styles (Figure 6). An enduring family legend is that John Cory<sup>1</sup> (d. 1685), John Cory<sup>2</sup> (d. 1685 or 1685/6), and John Cory<sup>3</sup> (d. abt. 1722) had each signed the page. The idea was put in writing, probably for the first time, in a letter dated 5 February 1904, when James Enos Cory<sup>8</sup> wrote to Sidney Cory<sup>10</sup>, son of William Smith Cory<sup>9</sup>:

For several days I have been thinking about the written names in the "Great Book." The names I refer to are on a blank part of one of the leaves not far from the front of the book on left hand page ...The first three owners were named John Cory and I am inclined to think that possibly each John wrote his name there.<sup>11</sup>

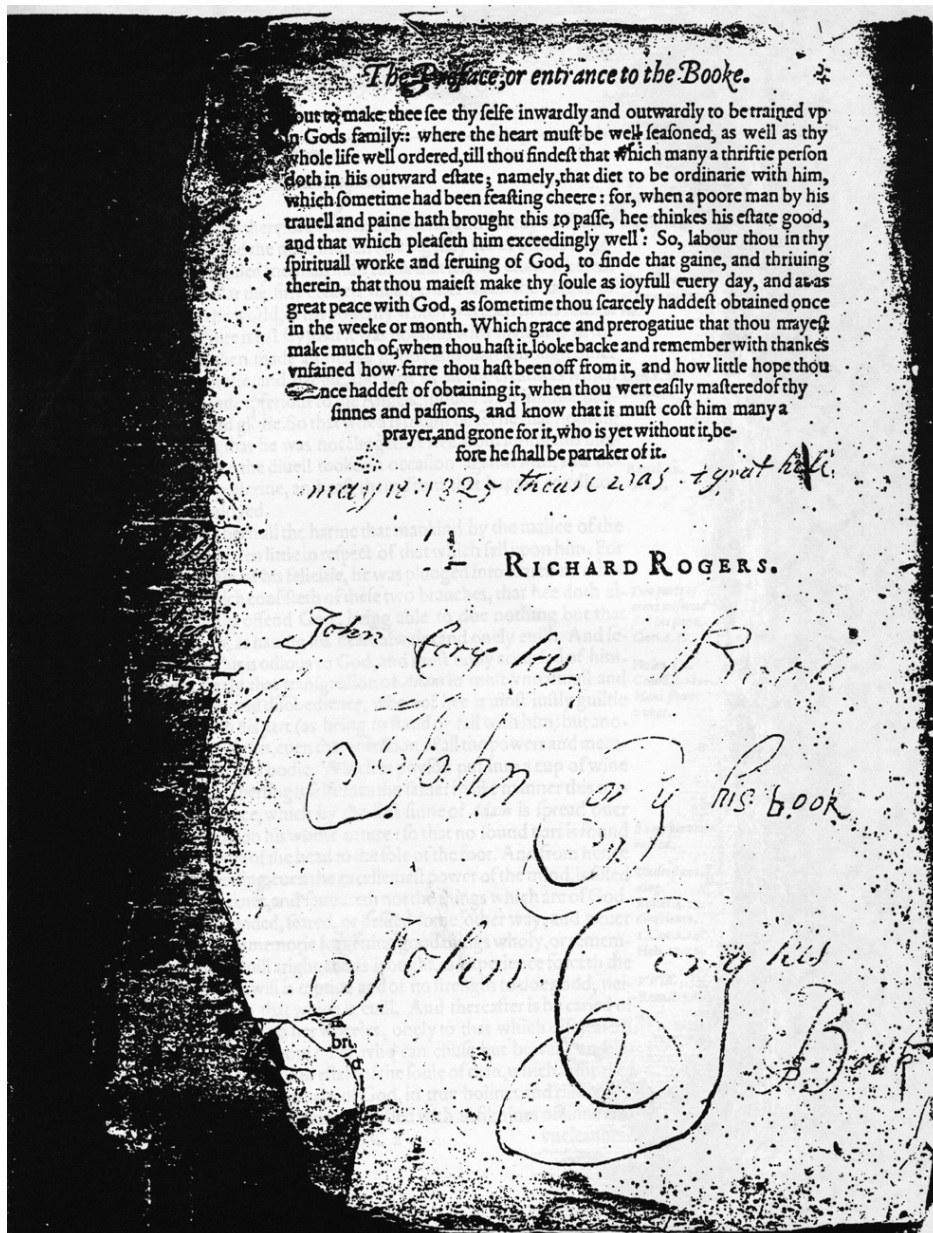


Figure 6 - The "Autograph Page" of the Great Book.

James Enos Cory<sup>8</sup>'s theory raises these questions:

1. What evidence exists that each of the first three American John Corys could write?
2. Do any verified samples of their handwriting exist?
3. How likely is it that each would have signed his name with the *Cory* spelling?

### Spelling in Colonial America

Some researchers of the Cory family have made much of the spelling of the surname, where it originated, when the spelling changed, and the reasons for the changes. A typical example is Harriet Cory Dickinson, who wrote in 1914:

Though spelled originally Corrie, in Scotland, it has since met with many changes, viz: Cori, Corie, Curie, Currie, Korrie, Karre, Korry, Corry, Corye, etc.

It is generally supposed that in this country the name was first spelled Cory, changed at an early date to Corey, following in this, the example of many Puritans, who leaving England, during the Protectorate of Cromwell, changed the orthography of their names, possibly to escape identity in case of pursuit, into this country. John Cory may have felt the urgency of this inasmuch as his father was a prominent man in England, who had been knighted by Charles I. The Norfolk family, from which he sprang, certainly spelled the name Cory.<sup>12</sup>

The foregoing is so riddled with speculation, misconceptions, and conclusions without evidence that it should be dismissed out of hand. The idea that any name in the English (or Scottish) language was originally spelled in a standard way, and that the spelling changed in a logical fashion has no basis in fact. The fact of the matter is that spelling was remarkably inconsistent in early documents. The spelling of surnames sometimes varied within a single document, and the spelling of an individual's name could go back and forth among several variations over time. The speculation that John Cory<sup>1</sup> may have changed the spelling of his surname to avoid being pursued by political enemies is pure fantasy, and the story of his father being a knight in England from a Norfolk family has no basis in fact.

### John Cory<sup>1</sup>

By convention, the immigrant John<sup>1</sup>'s name is now spelled Cory, and the majority, but by no means all, of his descendants have adopted that spelling. The index of Al B. Cory's 1994 second edition of *Corys of America, Ancestors and Descendants, Vol. 1, Book 1: John Cory of Southold, Long Island, New York* contains approximately 24 pages of the *Cory* spelling of the surname and only four pages of *Corey*.<sup>13</sup> Three mentions of John<sup>1</sup>, using the *Cory* spelling, are present in the 1644 town records of Southampton, Long Island.<sup>14</sup> At some point between 1644 and 1649, he moved to Southold. Interestingly, the *Cory* spelling was never used in records of the colony of New Haven, which held jurisdiction over Southold until thirty-two freemen of the town switched allegiance to the Connecticut colony in 1662.<sup>15</sup> John<sup>1</sup>'s name, spelled *Corey*, appears several times in the New Haven records related to his refusal to take an oath of fidelity to the colony and in reference to disputes he had with his neighbors. The *Cory* spelling does not appear in the first two record books of the town of Southold, rarely appears in the third book (referring not to John<sup>1</sup>, but to his sons Abraham<sup>2</sup> and Isaac<sup>2</sup>), and *Cory* never appears in a signature in the records. The most prevalent spelling in the Southold records for John<sup>1</sup>, his wife Ann, and their sons John<sup>2</sup>, Abraham<sup>2</sup>, Jacob<sup>2</sup>, and Isaac<sup>2</sup> is *Corey*, with less frequent use of the variants *Core*, *Coree*, and *Corye*.<sup>16</sup> In the printed records of the Connecticut colony, John<sup>1</sup>'s name appears once, as *Goodman Cory*<sup>\*</sup>, when he and other Southold residents were admitted as freemen of Connecticut on 4 October 1662.<sup>17</sup>

---

\* *Goodman* was a courtesy title for a man not of noble birth, similar to *Mister* in modern usage.

Among other references to him, seven documents signed or witnessed by John Cory I were copied into the record books of the town of Southold. Of these seven documents, the town recorder indicated four were signed with a mark, while no marks are associated with the other three transcribed signatures. It appears that the town recorders did their best to copy the original documents accurately into the record books, including all signatures and marks. For example, a 1649 deed (Figure 7) witnessed by John I and Ann Cory was signed by William Salmon with his mark, which resembled an F with a circle attached.

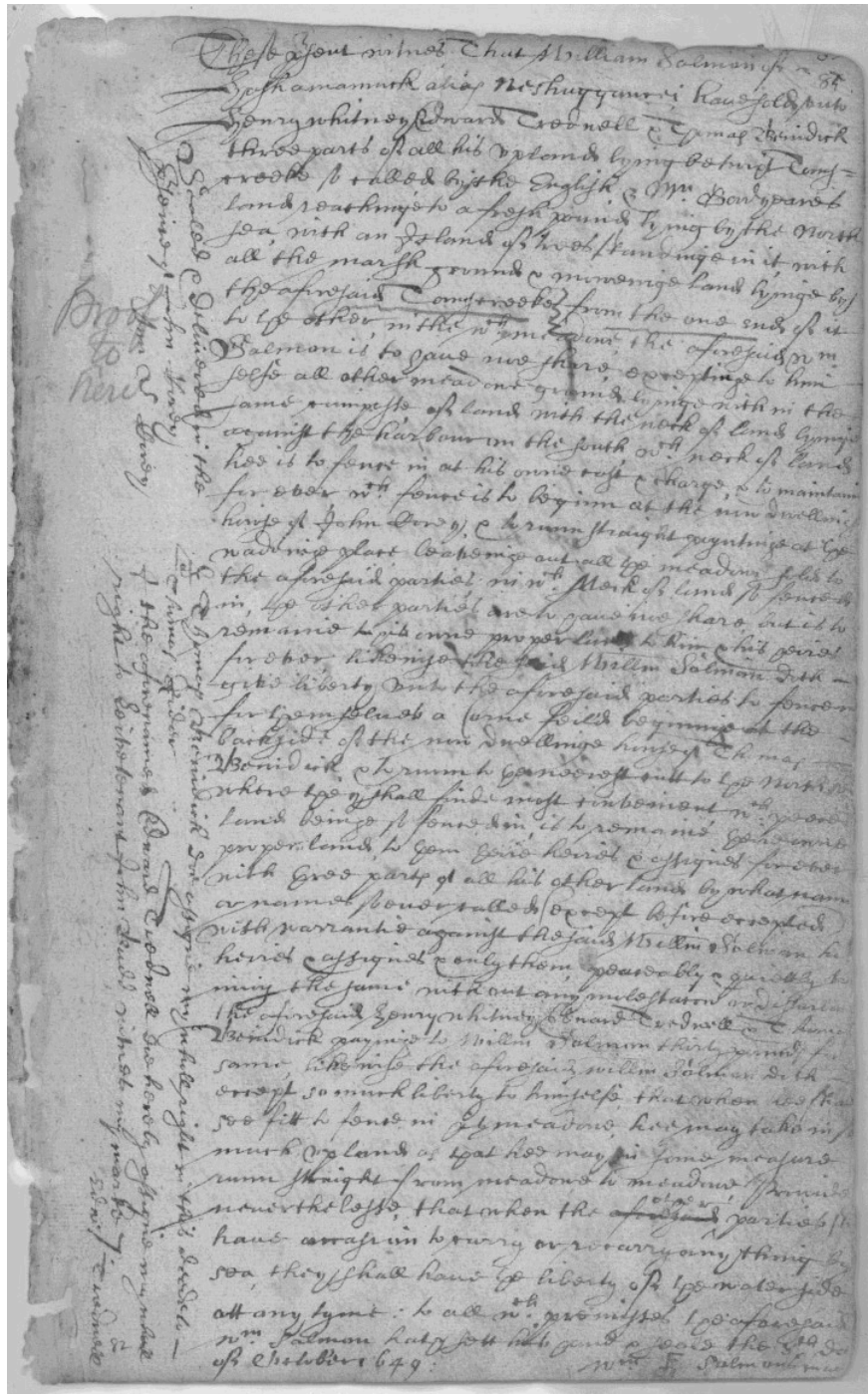


Figure 7 - Deed witnessed by John I and wife Ann in the upper left margin. J.W. Case penciled in "Proof to here" when he transcribed the record book in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Besides William Salmon, other signers of the document, including Ann Cory and Edward Treadwell, used marks, but there is no indication that John Cory1 did so. The handwriting reads “Sealed & Delivered in the Presence of John Corey/Ann [her mark] Corey” (Figure 8).

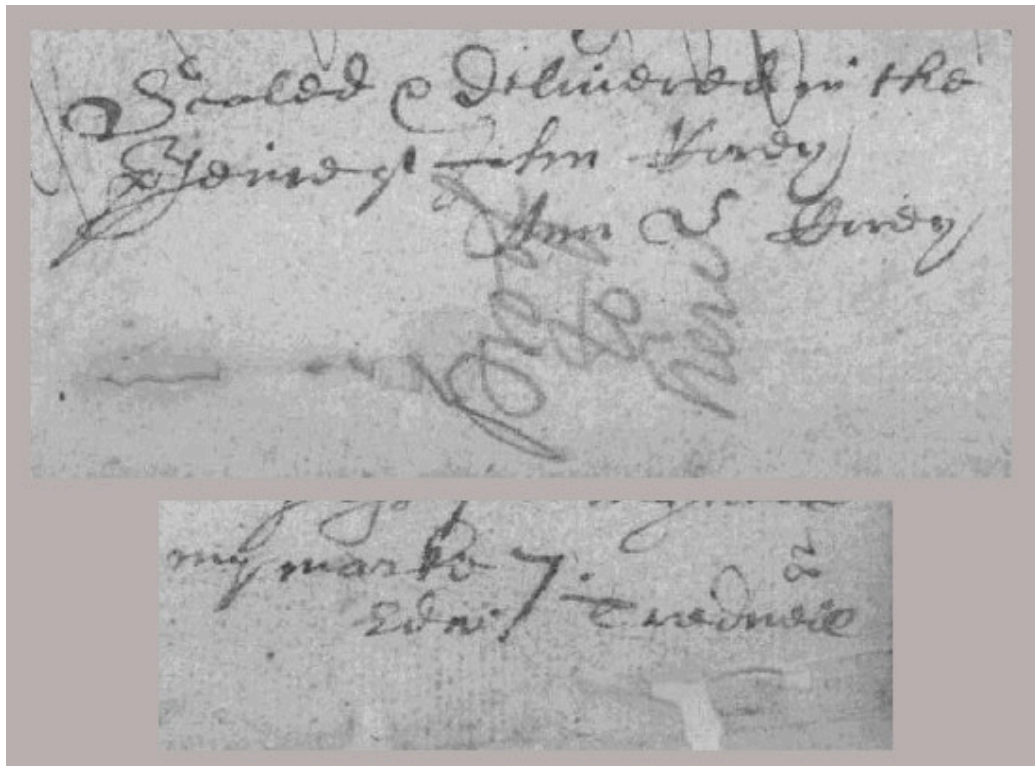


Figure 8 - Details from the left margin of the 1649 Salmon deed. Ann Corey signed with a serpentine mark and Edward Treadwell signed with a mark resembling a 7. No mark is indicated for John1.

On one other deed where John1’s signature was recorded with no accompanying mark, another signatory did use a mark (Figure 9). Barring a transcription error, this implies that John1 was able to write his own name.

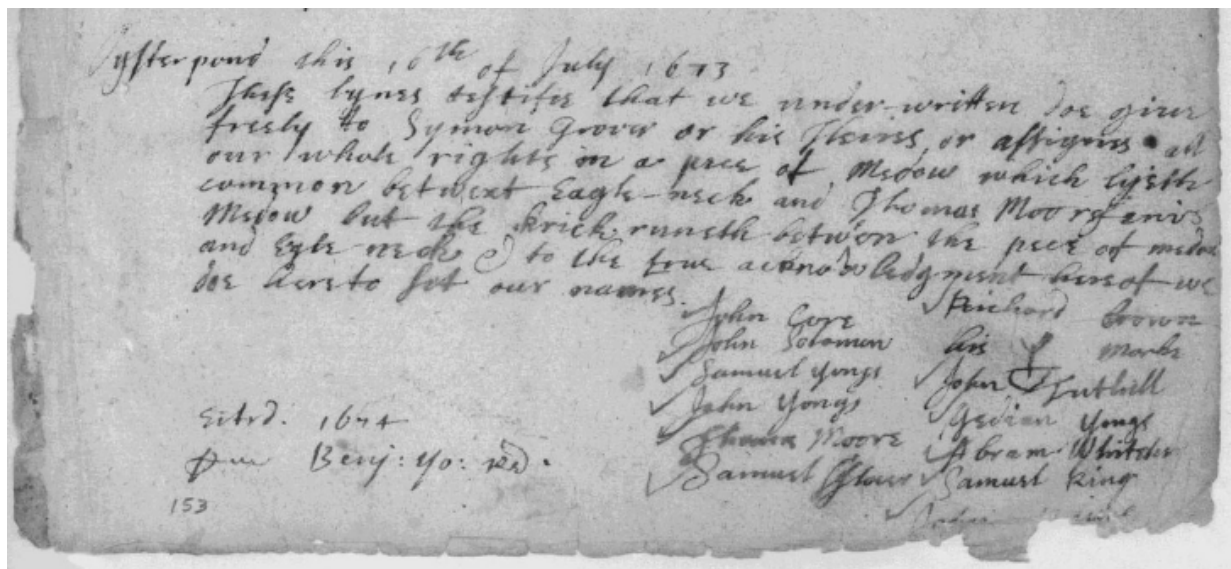


Figure 9 - John Core is first in the list of Southold men signing this 1673 deed. Only one man, Richard Brown, signed with a mark.

The final example (Figure 10) is particularly interesting because it is signed *John Core* in handwriting different from the rest of the deed as recorded in the Southold record book, raising the question of whether John1 personally signed the recorded copy. In the absence of a proven sample of his handwriting, this is an open question.

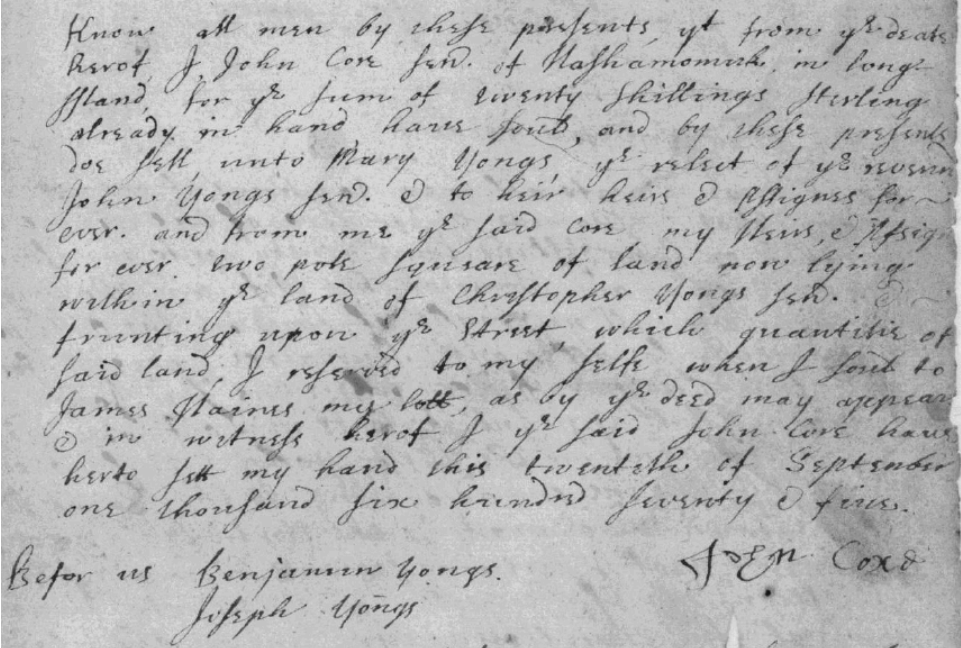


Figure 10 - The handwriting of the John Core signature is different than the rest of the text of this 1675 deed. Is it possible that John1 personally signed the book after the recorder entered this copy in the record book?

When John1 did sign with a mark, he used “IC” with an extra horizontal line in two cases (Figure 11), a serpentine mark in the third case (Figure 12), and a simple cross in the fourth (Figure 13).

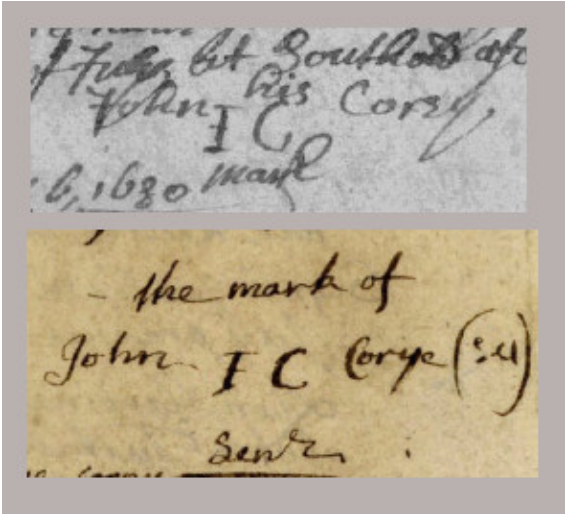


Figure 11 - Details from two 1680 deeds entered into the Southold town records. John1 used a similar mark on each document. Note the Corey spelling in one case and Corye in the other.

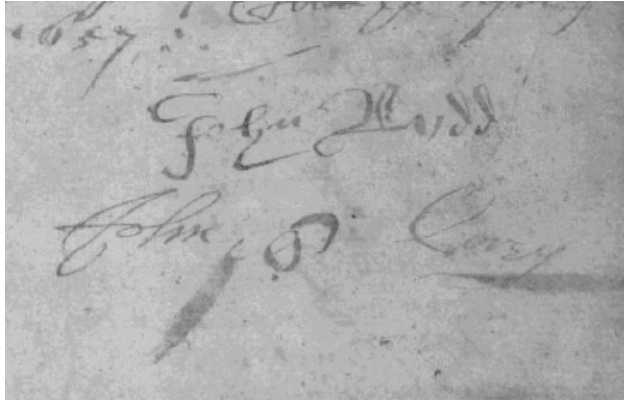


Figure 12 - Detail from a 1657 deed showing the serpentine mark resembling a tilted S used by John I. "John Corey" would have been written by someone else to identify who made the mark.

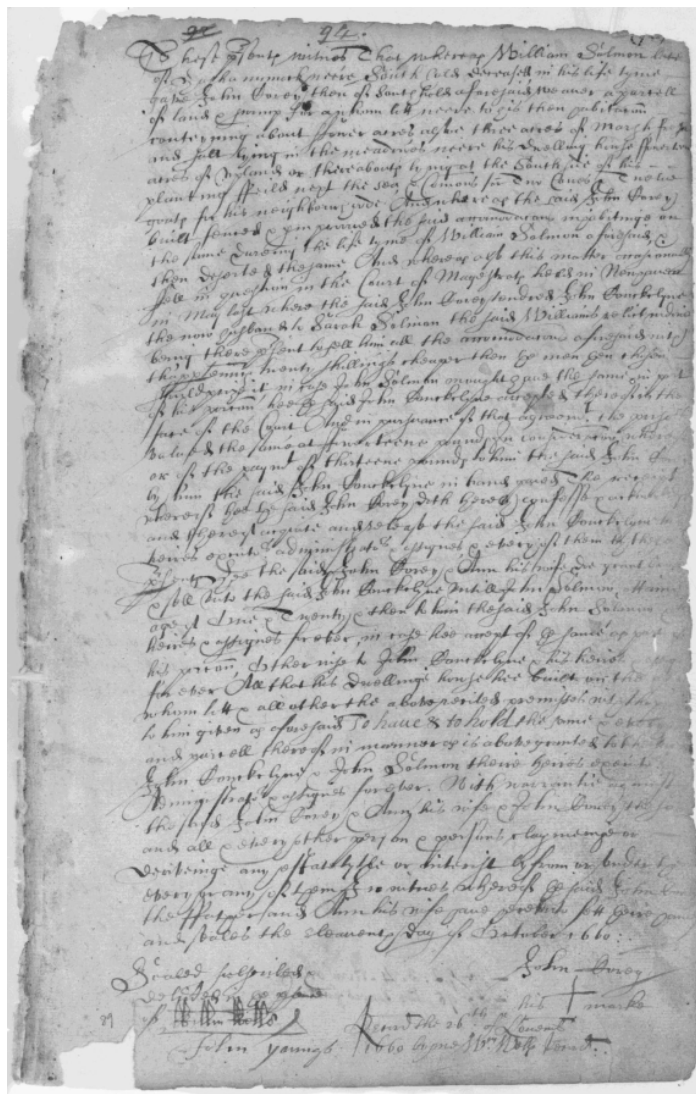


Figure 13 - John I signed this 1660 deed, which mentions his wife Ann and son John2, with a simple cross.

The will of John1 in the records of the court of sessions of Suffolk County does not include his signature, but he is referred to as John *Corey* in the will, and his son Abraham *Corey* is executor.<sup>18</sup>

The evidence is conflicting as to whether John1 could write his name. Perhaps he could, but for convenience or other reasons chose to use a mark in some cases. This seems more likely than the otherwise meticulous town recorders failing to transcribe his mark in those cases where only his name appears as a signature. Assuming John Cory1 was able to write his name, it seems unlikely he would have written “John Cory his Book” in the Great Book when his name was always spelled with an *e* (*Corey*, *Core*, or *Corye*) in the Southold town records and in his will (*Corey*).

## John Cory2

John Cory2 first appeared in the records of the town of Huntington, Long Island in 1663.<sup>19</sup> He was chosen an overseer of the town in 1677, and in that capacity sometimes served as town clerk when the elected recorder was absent.<sup>20</sup> In 1679, he was chosen as full-time recorder.<sup>21</sup> He signed the town records approximately 180 times.<sup>22</sup> The last record he entered was a deed dated 6 August 1685.<sup>23</sup> He died at some point between then and the inventory of his estate on 25 Jan 1685/6.<sup>24</sup> In the printed records of Huntington, his signature appears as *Corey* about 143 times, about 34 times as *Core*, and only three times as *Cory*. The town records include a family record for John2 and his wife Mary Cornish.<sup>25</sup> In the list, the surname is spelled *Core* for John2 and six of the children, and *Corey* for two of the children.

Given the preponderance of *Corey* and *Core* spellings in the town records, it seems highly unlikely John2 would have signed the Great Book with the *Cory* spelling.

Additional evidence comes from comparing John2’s signature from a deed in the Huntington town records with the alleged autographs in the Great Book (Figure 14). His signature matches neither the style nor spelling of any of the Great Book inscriptions.

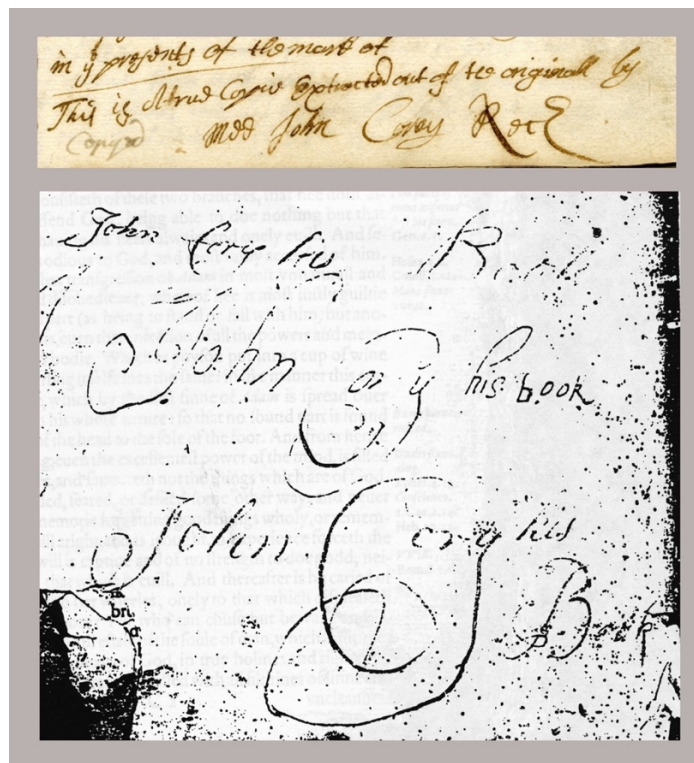


Figure 14 - The top image shows the handwriting John2 used to enter a deed in the Huntington town records in his capacity of town recorder. Note that he used the *Corey* spelling and his handwriting does not resemble any of the "autographs."



## John Cory<sup>3</sup>

No samples of John Cory<sup>3</sup>'s handwriting are available online. He was the grantor of three deeds in 1695 and 1696 in the Huntington records—one to his brother-in-law Samuel Smith (who married John<sup>3</sup>'s sister Mary<sup>3</sup>),<sup>26</sup> one to his brother Abraham<sup>3</sup>,<sup>27</sup> and one to his brother Thomas<sup>3</sup>.<sup>28</sup> In each case his signature was transcribed as *John Corey*. John<sup>3</sup> subsequently moved to Elizabethtown, New Jersey. The abstracts of the wills of John<sup>3</sup> and his wife Priscilla both use the *Cory* spelling.<sup>29</sup>

### The Authenticity of the Autographs

It is clear that James Enos Cory's speculation about the three lines of "John Cory his Book" being written by John Cory<sup>1</sup>, <sup>2</sup>, and <sup>3</sup> is not supported by the evidence. The most direct evidence is that a sample of John<sup>2</sup>'s signature differs in both style and spelling from the lines in the Great Book. While the evidence regarding John<sup>1</sup> and John<sup>3</sup> is not as clear-cut, it is unlikely John<sup>1</sup> would have used the *Cory* spelling, which was rarely used in the records of the jurisdictions in which he lived and was not used in his will. The few available records for John<sup>3</sup> favor his use of the *Corey* spelling, but he may have made a change to *Cory* later in life. Who actually wrote the lines may never be known, and it is best not to speculate without further evidence.

### The Great Hail of 1825

An additional line of handwriting in the Great Book which has not been addressed by previous Cory family historians appears above the three lines of "John Cory his Book." This line reads "May 18, 1825 thean [then] was 1 grat hale [great hail]." (Figure 15). Contemporaneous newspaper reports confirm that a highly destructive storm passed through parts of Pennsylvania and Ohio on 18 May 1825. It was estimated that 15 to 20 thousand panes of glass were broken by hail in Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, and extensive crop damage occurred in the area.<sup>30</sup> Houses, barns, trees, and fences were blown down in Butler County, Pennsylvania, where hailstones measured up to eight inches in circumference.<sup>31</sup> Portage County, Ohio, suffered similar damage, with the size of the hailstones described as "varying from the size of a common marble to that of a hen's egg," with one of the larger stones measured at nine inches in circumference.<sup>32</sup> Several other counties in both states were affected.

The Great Book would have been in the possession of Elnathan Cory<sup>6</sup> (1759-1838) when the storm hit western Pennsylvania in 1825. Whether he or someone else in the family recorded the event in the Great Book is unknown. The writing does not clearly match a signature from Elnathan<sup>6</sup>'s Revolutionary War pension file (Figure 16). It is unlikely his wife Sarah wrote the line, as she signed her 1842 deposition in the pension file with an *X*.<sup>33</sup>

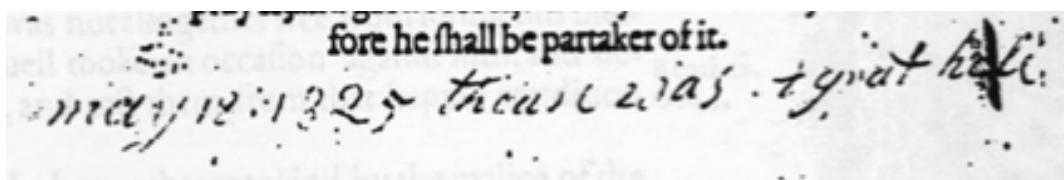


Figure 15 - The "grat hale" of 1825

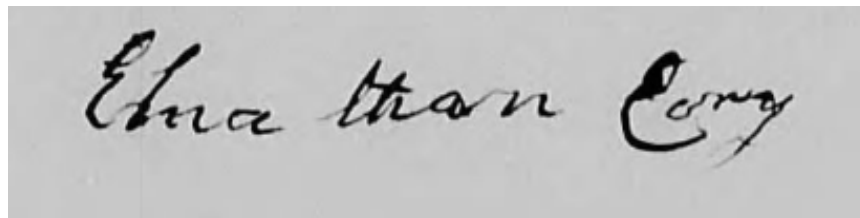


Figure 16 - Signature of Elnathan Cory<sup>6</sup>.

Regardless of who did it, the mere fact that someone wrote the line about the hailstorm in the Great Book indicates that at least one descendant of John 1 felt no compunction about writing in a family heirloom which was over two centuries old at the time.

### The Tracings

The other examples of handwriting photocopied by Marge Chilson appear on fly leaves at the front and back of the Great Book. The birth dates of the issue of Ebenezer<sup>5</sup> and his wife Mary are written at the front, and the birth dates of Ebenezer<sup>5</sup> and Mary are written at the back (Figure 17).<sup>34</sup>

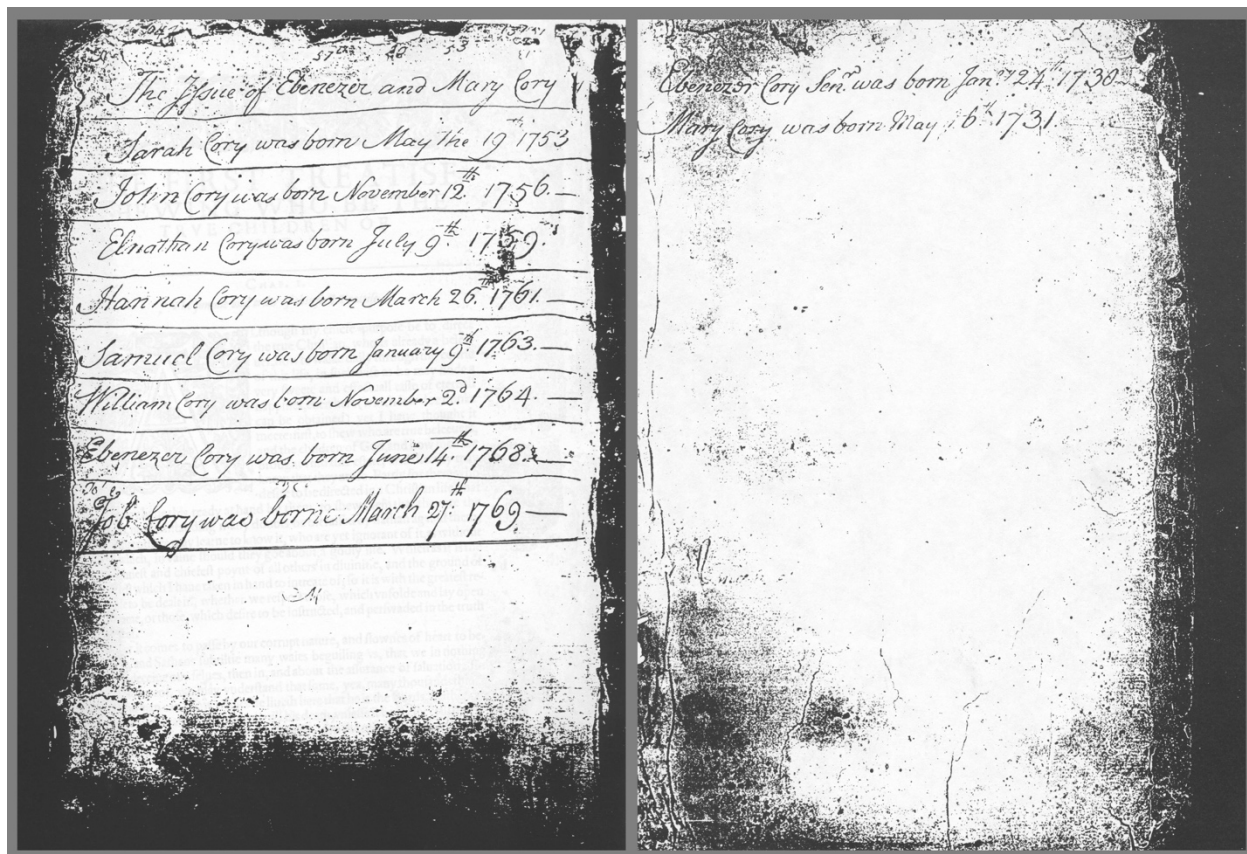


Figure 17 - The Family Record of Ebenezer and Mary Cory in the Great Book as photocopied by Marge Chilson.

In her booklet *Cory Correspondence*, Marge Chilson reproduced a page from an unidentified source which included copies of the handwritten birthdates of Ebenezer<sup>5</sup>'s family as they appeared in the Great Book, combined into one list (Figure 18).<sup>35</sup>

Ebenezer Cory Sen<sup>r</sup> was born Jan. <sup>th</sup>24 1730

---

Mary Cory was born May 6<sup>th</sup> 1731.

---

The Issue of Ebenezer and Mary Cory

---

Sarah Cory was born May the 19<sup>th</sup> 1753

---

John Cory was born November 12<sup>th</sup> 1756

---

Elnathan Cory was born July 9<sup>th</sup> 1759.

---

Hannah Cory was born March 26. 1761.

---

Samuel Cory was born January 9<sup>th</sup> 1763.

---

William Cory was born November 2<sup>d</sup> 1764.

---

Ebenezer Cory was born June 14<sup>th</sup> 1768.

---

Job Cory was born March 27<sup>th</sup> 1769.

Record page found in "Greate Booke."

Figure 18 - Copy of Ebenezer<sup>5</sup>'s Family Record with added caption.

In the earlier *Excerpts From the Greate Book*, she had included a reproduction of a page which appears to be from the same unidentified source (Figure 19).<sup>36</sup> This page included a copy of the three lines of “John Cory his Book” from the Great Book. The caption on this page contains some gaps that indicate the caption was incompletely photocopied from the source page and not added later by Marge. The caption in Figure 19 also shares characteristics with the caption from Figure 18: the typeface is the same and both use the phrase “Greate Booke,” including the quotation marks and the *e* at the ends of both words. This is the same spelling used by James Enos Cory<sup>8</sup> in a note (Figure 20) he wrote to accompany the wooden box he built to contain the Great Book.<sup>37</sup> The caption in Figure 19 reads in part, “As the first three American possessors of the book were named John Cory, we readily conclude that each left his autograph in the book.” This statement is reminiscent of the statement from James Enos Cory<sup>8</sup>’s 5 February 1904 letter to Sidney Cory<sup>10</sup>: “The first three owners were named John Cory and I am inclined to think that possibly each John wrote his name there.”

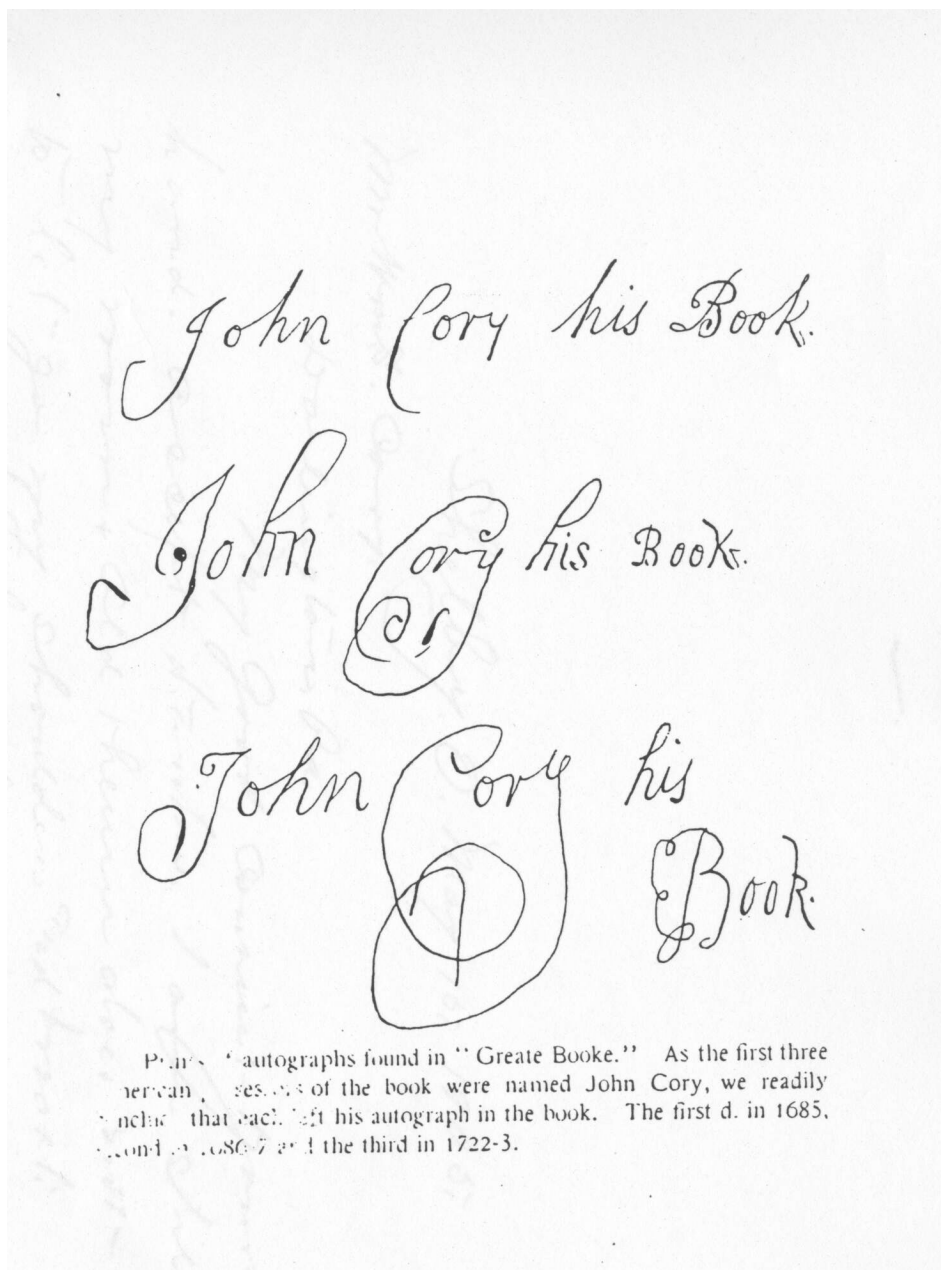


Figure 19 - Copy of the "Autograph" page with added caption.

This cabinet was made in 1907  
by James E. Cory, who was born in  
Crawford Co., O. September 14<sup>th</sup> 1840. being of  
the 8<sup>th</sup> generation (American) from John ~~John~~  
Cory the emigrant.

In the making of the cabinet four kinds of  
wood were used - <sup>Cherry</sup> Oak, <sup>Rose</sup> Yew, and one  
grew on farms or town lots owned by <sup>and one</sup>  
which lived one or more of those Corys  
who for a time possessed the "Greate  
Booke" (as it was called in some of  
the early American Cory wills), some of  
the oak grew on the farm on which John  
Cory, died in 1685 near Southold, (eastern Long Island  
some in property owned by Eleuthan, and Ebenezer  
in Essex-Union Counties N. J. some of the cherry  
on the town lot Southold, L. I. on which John Cory  
lived in 1640. some in N. J. the rose on the farm  
owned by <sup>and one</sup> which William S. Cory, who now holds the book.

Figure 20 - Note written by James Enos Cory to accompany the cabinet he built for the "Greate Booke."

Other evidence suggests that James Enos Cory<sup>8</sup> was the source of the copies of the handwriting, and that these copies were traced from the Great Book. In the same 5 February 1904 letter to Sidney Cory<sup>10</sup>, James<sup>8</sup> wrote, referring to the page containing the three lines:

I will enclose a piece of tracing cloth. I wish you would lay it on the page I speak of smooth side down, put a weight on it or in some way hold it from slipping so that you can with a pen and (black ink is best) ink carefully trace each line just as it is in the book.<sup>38</sup>

James<sup>8</sup> expressed his thanks for the tracing of the names in a letter dated 20 March 1904.<sup>39</sup> On 17 March 1905, James<sup>8</sup> again wrote to William Smith Cory<sup>9</sup>. James<sup>8</sup> noted that on Ground Hog Day 1905, he had mailed copies of a manuscript he had written about the Great Book to a New Jersey newspaper along with “a copy of the tracings of the three John’s and of all the other records in the book.” The “other records” were undoubtedly Ebenezer<sup>5</sup>’s family records. James<sup>8</sup> explained the manuscripts and copies of the tracings were lost in the mail. He sent a piece of tracing parchment to William with the request to retrace a few lines from Ebenezer<sup>5</sup>’s family records. He stated he had copies of the rest.<sup>40</sup>

In *Lineal Ancestors of Captain James Cory, Vol. I, Book I*, Charles Henry Cory cited as an authority consulted, “‘Coryology’ (unpublished) by James Enos Cory.”<sup>41</sup> Perhaps this is where the copies of handwriting from the Great Book (Figure 18 and Figure 19) were printed. This could be confirmed or ruled out if a copy of *Coryology* could be located.

## Conclusions

Based on available evidence, the following may be stated with confidence:

1. A book of religious treatises titled *Seven Treatises*, written by Richard Rogers, and published in London in 1603, has been passed down through many generations of the descendants of John Cory<sup>1</sup> of Southold, Long Island. The book is commonly known as the Great Book.
2. A faded inscription inside the Great Book was interpreted as “This book was given to John Cory by his mother to carry with him to America” by James Enos Cory<sup>8</sup>, who made a copy which is now pasted to the cover of the Great Book. The author and date of the original inscription are unknown.
3. Three lines reading “John Cory his Book” in the Great Book were *not* written by John Cory<sup>1</sup>, <sup>2</sup>, and <sup>3</sup>. The author or authors of these lines are unknown, and the date or dates of entry are likewise unknown.
4. An unknown party, possibly a member of the family of Elnathan Cory<sup>6</sup>, made note of an 1825 hailstorm of epic proportions in the Great Book.
5. Records of birth dates for the family of Ebenezer Cory<sup>5</sup> were entered in the Great Book by an unknown party or parties.
6. Tracings of the handwriting in the Great Book were made at the request of James Enos Cory in the early twentieth century.

## Endnotes

---

- <sup>1</sup> In 1752, the British colonies transitioned from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian calendar. On the Julian calendar, the new year begins on March 25, which presents a problem in writing about events that occurred between January 1 and March 24. For instance, on the Julian calendar March 24, 1650 would be followed by March 25, 1651. By convention, dates affected by the discrepancy between the two calendars are written with the year in the format *Julian/Gregorian*. Using this convention, the preceding example would be written March 24, 1650/1 and the next day would be March 25, 1651. Beginning the following January 1, dates would be designated 1651/2 until the Julian year ended on March 24.
- <sup>2</sup> Thomas W. Cooper, *The Records of the Court of Sessions of Suffolk County in the Province of New York, 1670-1688* (Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books), 1993, 190.
- <sup>3</sup> Ancestry.com, *New Jersey, Abstract of Wills, 1670-1817* [database on-line], Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.
- <sup>4</sup> Marge Chilson, *Excerpts from the Greate Book* (East Palestine, Ohio: The Author), 1991, 2.
- <sup>5</sup> Chilson, *Excerpts*, 3.
- <sup>6</sup> Harry Harmon Cory, *The Cory Family, A Genealogy* (Minneapolis: Argus Publishing Co.), 1941, 21.
- <sup>7</sup> Scanned pages from the various editions of *Seven Treatises* were accessed via the *Early English Books Online* database.
- <sup>8</sup> Chilson, *Excerpts*, 1.
- <sup>9</sup> Charles H. Cory, *Lineal Ancestors of Captain James Cory and of his Descendants; Genealogical, Historical, and Biographical, Vol. I, Part I* (no publisher), 1937, 12.
- <sup>10</sup> Marge Chilson, *Cory Correspondence: The Letters of James Enos Cory 1840-1923 to William Smith Cory 1837-1931 and Associated Letters 1903-1957* (New Palestine, Ohio: The Author), 1994, 12.
- <sup>11</sup> Chilson, *Excerpts*, 5-6.
- <sup>12</sup> Harriet Cory Dickinson, *Some Chronicles of the Cory Family Relating to Eliakim and Sarah Sayre Cory and Their Descendants, Westfield, N.J., and Ballston, N.Y., With Others From "John of Southold"* (New York: Tobias A. Wright), 1914, 11.
- <sup>13</sup> Al B. Cory, *Corys of America, Ancestors and Descendants, Vol. 1, Book 1: John Cory of Southold, Long Island, New York*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (Jacksonville, Florida: The Author), 1994, 763-791.
- <sup>14</sup> William S. Pelletreau, *The First Book of Records of the Town of Southampton With Other Ancient Documents of Historic Value* (Sag Harbor: John H. Hunt), 1874, 32-33.
- <sup>15</sup> J. Hammond Trumbull, *The Public Records of the Colony of Connecticut, Prior to the Union with New Haven Colony, May 1665, Vol. 1* (Bowie, Maryland: Heritage Books), 1992, 386.
- <sup>16</sup> The various spellings of the surname and their relative frequencies were determined by review of images of the original record books and the handwritten transcriptions made by J.W. Case. Both can be accessed at the Town of Southold web site ([southoldtownny.gov](http://southoldtownny.gov)>town records>town historian>books>town record books).
- <sup>17</sup> Trumbull, 388.
- <sup>18</sup> Cooper, 190.

- 
- <sup>19</sup> Charles Rufus Street, *Huntington Town Records, Including Babyon, Long Island, N.Y., Vol. I* (Huntington, NY: The “Long Islander” Print), 1887, 48.
- <sup>20</sup> Street, *Vol. I*, 243.
- <sup>21</sup> Street, *Vol. I*, 243.
- <sup>22</sup> The estimate of the number of times John Cory<sup>2</sup> signed the Huntington town records is based on a combination of automated search and visual scan of the online images of the printed record books.
- <sup>23</sup> Street, *Vol. I*, 432-433.
- <sup>24</sup> Street, *Vol. I*, 435.
- <sup>25</sup> Street, *Vol. I*, 376.
- <sup>26</sup> Charles Rufus Street, *Huntington Town Records, Including Babyon, Long Island, N.Y., Vol. II* (Huntington, NY: The “Long Islander” Print), 1887, 163.
- <sup>27</sup> Street, *Vol. II*, 184.
- <sup>28</sup> Street, *Vol. II*, 184-5.
- <sup>29</sup> Ancestry.com. *New Jersey, Abstract of Wills, 1670-1817* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2011.
- <sup>30</sup> *The National Gazette*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 27 May 1825, 2.
- <sup>31</sup> *The National Gazette*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1 Jun 1825, 2.
- <sup>32</sup> *The National Gazette*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1 Jun 1825, 2.
- <sup>33</sup> Ancestry.com. *U.S., Revolutionary War Pension and Bounty-Land Warrant Application Files, 1800-1900* [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations, Inc., 2010.
- <sup>34</sup> Chilson, *Excerpts*, 15, 48.
- <sup>35</sup> Chilson, *Correspondence*, 9.
- <sup>36</sup> Chilson, *Excerpts*, 7.
- <sup>37</sup> Chilson, *Excerpts*, 10.
- <sup>38</sup> Chilson, *Excerpts*, 5.
- <sup>39</sup> Chilson, *Correspondence*, 30.
- <sup>40</sup> Chilson, *Correspondence*, 35-36.
- <sup>41</sup> C.H. Cory, *Lineal Ancestors, Vol. I, Part I*, 8.