

John Cockton's Day Book
Virginia Beach Genealogy Day Read-Ahead
15 April 2023

John Cockton, who ran afoul of the law in his native northern England, resettled in Virginia a few years before the Revolutionary War. He opened a tavern/store at North Landing in Princess Anne County in February 1772, retailing drink, food, clothing, fabric, household items, and gunpowder. His daybook, in which he recorded his sales, provides insights regarding the colonial lives of over two hundred locals.

The North Carolina State Archives holds Cockton's original day book.¹ Over the past several months, my brother and I have jointly transcribed that leather-bound volume on behalf of the North Carolina Genealogical Society. We discovered, in the process, that Cockton did not spend 1772 in North Carolina, as mistakenly asserted in the archive's catalog. He can be demonstrated, beyond a doubt, to have resided in Virginia then. My talk at the Virginia Beach Central Library will be the first public presentation of these findings.

My brother and I have provided soft copy of a full transcription of the Princess Anne County segment of John Cockton's daybook to the Virginia Beach Genealogical Society. The North Carolina Genealogical Society has posted that same material to the Members' Only section of its website (*ncgenealogy.org*) and will feature excerpts in its next journal. A spiral-bound transcription of John Cockton's Princess Anne County daybook entries is now also available at the Virginia Beach Central Library's Local History and Genealogy reference section. Those with an interest in Princess Anne County on the eve of the Revolutionary War will hopefully benefit from this material.

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¹ North Carolina State Archives Record ID: PC.AB.78.1 (John Cockton's Day Book and Ledger).