

# First Findings in the Identification of Mary Bowdoin, wife of William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1740) as Mary Magdalene Mallet: New French Huguenot Connections through DNA and Records

Joseph T. Richardson <[joseph.t.richardson@gmail.com](mailto:joseph.t.richardson@gmail.com)>

<https://www.jtrichardson.com/bowdoin>

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## Introduction

Last year, I undertook a thorough historical survey and a close DNA study of my Bowdoin family, which concluded in connecting my ancestor, William Bowdoin (b. 1802) of Autauga County, Alabama, as the son of Josiah Bowdoin (b. ca. 1780), son of William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1740). I have learned a great deal about the Bowdoin family in the past year, but one of the remaining mysteries has been the identity of William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1740)'s wife. Though identified in many family trees as "Martha Elizabeth Macon," contemporary records clearly identify her as **Mary M. Bowdoin** (b. ca. 1742). Through an unexpected confluence of DNA matches and records, I believe I have identified her further as **Mary Magdalene Mallet**, a daughter of **Stephen Mallet** (b. ca. 1706) and **Olive Magdalene Salle** (b. 1710), the children of French Huguenot immigrants to Virginia. In this paper, I will present evidence for this identification, in particular a strong, triangulated DNA cluster, as well as records in Lunenburg County, Virginia, and Granville County, North Carolina.

## Bowdoin and French Huguenot Ancestry Redux

According to widely accepted legend, the Bowdoin family too has French Huguenot heritage. An identification that has become nearly universal in online family trees has that **William Bowdoin** (b. ca. 1715), the father of William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1740), was the son of **John Bowdoin "Jr."**, the grandson of the French Huguenot immigrant **Peter (Pierre) Bowdoin**, originally *Baudouin*. This claim was codified by researcher U. Bowdoin Marsh in his 1982 book, *A Research of the Bowdoin Family in the United States*.<sup>1</sup> Marsh's argument, however, is based entirely on speculation:

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<sup>1</sup> U. Bowdoin Marsh, *A Research of the Bowdoin Family in the United States* (Tallahassee, Fla.: Self-published, 1982). Available on FamilySearch.org at <https://www.familysearch.org/library/books/records/item/547811-a-research-of-the-bowdoin-family-in-the-united-states> (accessed 23 Aug 2024).

Speculation is that John Bowdoin, Jr. married a Travis in Northampton County, Virginia, had at least one son, William, and that he died there leaving this son who migrated to Granville County ...<sup>2</sup>

It is apparent that our "southern" Bowdoins came from a son of John Bowdoin, Jr., William Bowdon/Bowdoin, who is found in the court records of Granville County, North Carolina, in 1760 ...<sup>3</sup>

The supposed connection between William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1715) and John Bowdoin "Jr." is based entirely on the disappearance of John from records after 1717 and speculation ensuing from his absence. John "Jr." was the son of **John Bowdoin "Sr."** (born 1674 in France), the oldest son of Peter (born 1640). John "Sr." died in 1717 in Northampton County, Virginia, on the Virginia Eastern Shore, what is called informally the "Delmarva Peninsula" (from the names of *Delaware*, *Maryland*, and *Virginia*, the three states that each have part of the peninsula's land). His will left 825 acres of land in Maryland to his son John.<sup>4</sup>

Marsh stated:

[After the will of John,] there is no further legal or other records to be found on the son, John Bowdoin Jr. or the widow, Susannah Bowdoin. An investigation of the records concerning the 825 acres left to John Bowdoin in Maryland which was finally sold to Capel King in 1739 by Peter Bowdoin, the brother of John, shows that Peter Bowdoin and James Bowdoin of Boston made some further payment on the land prior to the sale apparently to clear the title.

It is the conclusion of this research that John Bowdoin Jr., the son of the original immigrant John Bowdoin ..., made some agreement with Peter, his brother, either through the Episcopal vestry records which apparently were lost or some legal agreement which did not get entered into the court records and which gave Peter the right to sell properties left [to] his brother John in the will of their father.<sup>5</sup>

Marsh presumed the presence of an agreement from the *absence* of records. It is far more likely that the "right" Peter had to sell properties bequeathed to his brother was that his brother was dead and the property had reverted to him.

Marsh further wrote:

Speculation is that John Bowdoin, Jr. moved with his wife, probably a Travis since this name repeatedly appears as a given name beginning in Granville County, North Carolina

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<sup>2</sup> Marsh, [32](#).

<sup>3</sup> Marsh, [34](#).

<sup>4</sup> Northampton County, Virginia, Wills & Deeds 1711-1718, page 125; on FamilySearch, Image Group 007645509, [Image 143](#) of 807; "John Bowdoin," tombstone photo at Find a Grave Memorial #136074685, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/136074685/> (accessed 20 Jan 2025).

<sup>5</sup> Marsh, [32](#).

records, to King and Queen County, Virginia where all county records were destroyed by fire and from there the family members moved southward and into Granville County.<sup>6</sup>

With no evidence at all, Marsh presumed that John “Jr.” moved to someplace else in Virginia, where conveniently records had been lost, and raised a family of whom no record survives. There is no record that places John Bowdoin “Jr.” in King and Queen County, Virginia, or anywhere else after 1717. There is no record placing William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1715) in Northampton County or King and Queen County, or in any way connecting him to John Bowdoin “Jr.”

So I consider the claim very suspect that William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1715) was connected to John Bowdoin “Jr.” or to the Peter Bowdoin family at all. In addition to the lack of supporting evidence, anecdotal Y-DNA evidence indicates that several other French *Baudouin* or *Beaudoin* families who settled in French Canada, claiming origins in La Rochelle, France, whence the Peter Bowdoin family is also believed to have come, match each other in the haplogroup G-P303, but do not match the tested descendants of William Bowdoin (b. 1740), who are in haplogroup I-FTE13532, or any other Bowden or Bowdoin family who has tested from Virginia or North Carolina.<sup>7</sup>

This Y-DNA evidence is certainly not definitive—for all we know, there were multiple Baudouin families in France with different paternal lines—but it does urge caution and restraint from hasty conclusions. Likewise, the lack of known documentation connecting William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1715) to the Peter Bowdoin family is not conclusive evidence *against* such a connection. It is, however, a firm rejection of accepting William’s connection to John as verified fact.

The spelling of the name *Bowdoin*, which did appear in some early records of William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1715) in Granville County, and later was emphasized by several branches of descendants, does suggest a possible French origin for the family. But if the family did have a French origin, is the Peter Bowdoin family the only possible ancestral path?

## Manakin Town

In 1685, the French king Louis XIV issued the Edict of Fontainebleau, revoking the Edict of Nantes (1598) which had granted religious toleration, freedom of worship, and other civil rights to French Calvinist Protestants, known as Huguenots. As a result of this revocation, around 150,000 Huguenots left France within the next twenty to thirty years, settling in the Netherlands, Switzerland, England, modern-day Germany, Scandinavia, Ireland, and the Americas.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Marsh, [32](#).

<sup>7</sup> Y-DNA testing on two different sons of William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1742) has shown that his paternal line was haplogroup I-M253 (I1) > I-DF29 > I-Z63 > I-FTT66 > I-FTE13532, which is estimated not to have shared a common paternal ancestor with haplogroup G-P303 since about 46,000 BCE. Most unfortunately, the patrilineal line from Peter Bowdoin (b. 1640) appears to be extinct on all lines and unable to be verified.

<sup>8</sup> Susanne Lachenicht, “Huguenot Immigrants and the Formation of National Identities, 1548–1787,” in *The Historical Journal*, vol. 50, no. 2 (June 2007), 309–331, at 310.

As many as 30,000 Huguenots emigrated to England immediately following the revocation. Largely consisting of artisans and merchants, this group gravitated to urban areas, especially London. In 1700, a group called the Protestant Relief Committee organized an expedition of Huguenots, mostly from these London congregations, for transportation as refugees and resettlement in the colony of Virginia.<sup>9</sup>

Some 800 French settlers came in the first group to cross the Atlantic, arriving in July 1700, with three more crossings that followed by March 1701. Only around 300 of the immigrants settled in Manakin, a town founded on the James River in what was then Henrico County, today in Goochland County. The settlement was fraught with internal strife and conflict, and by 1714, as many as 70 percent of the original settlers had left Manakin. But Manakin, as an organized Huguenot expedition, did bring many French families to Virginia.<sup>10</sup>

I have found no evidence of settlers named Bowdoin or Baudouin in the records of Manakin Town. But among Manakin's leaders during its time was **Abraham Salle** (b. 1670), who became a clerk of the parish, a captain of the militia, and a county justice. His wife was **Olive Perault**. One of their daughters, **Olive Magdalene Salle** (b. 1710), became the wife of Stephen Mallet (b. ca. 1706).

## A Mallet DNA Cluster on Chromosome 1

While I was doing the previous DNA study on my grandfather, Robert P. Richardson, and the Bowdoin family, I discovered a large, strongly triangulated cluster on Chromosome 1. At first it appeared to be related to the Read family, but I soon found triangulation with descendants of more than one child of William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1740) and his wife Mary. And the family that emerged clearly as the center of the triangulation was the **Mallet(t)** family—descendants of **Stephen Mallet**, born about 1706 in Manakin, Virginia, and his wife, **Olive Magdalene Salle**. Stephen was the son of **Stephen (Estienne) Mallet**, the Huguenot immigrant to Manakin Town, born 1674 in London.

I have catalogued, so far, more than fifty confirmed descendants of Stephen Mallet (b. 1706) who match my grandfather, Robert P. Richardson, on AncestryDNA. I catalogued an additional thirty matches whose connection, to Mallet or Bowdoin or another family, I cannot yet determine, but who are strongly clustered with the Chromosome 1 cluster. I cannot confirm definitely that all these matches map to the same Chromosome 1 segment, but given their strong clustering, it is likely that they do.

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<sup>9</sup> Robert L. Crewdson, "The Manakin Experiment: A French Protestant Colony in the New World," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church*, vol. 3, no. 55 (September 1986), 203–211, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42974798> (accessed 5 Feb 2025).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

These Mallet matches are descended from multiple children of Stephen Mallet (b. 1706), and are shared with descendants of multiple children of William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1740) and his wife Mary M. Bowdoin. This indicates that the common ancestor of the cluster definitely belonged to either William Bowdoin or his wife Mary. None of the confirmed Mallet descendants matches any of the nineteen descendants of William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1715) who match my grandfather. This is suggestive that the match is on the maternal side.

When this evidence began to solidify, I suspected the connection might belong to Mary M. Bowdoin, William Bowdoin’s wife and the mother of the family I had been studying. I began to search the records for Mallet references and to take a closer look at the Mallet family.

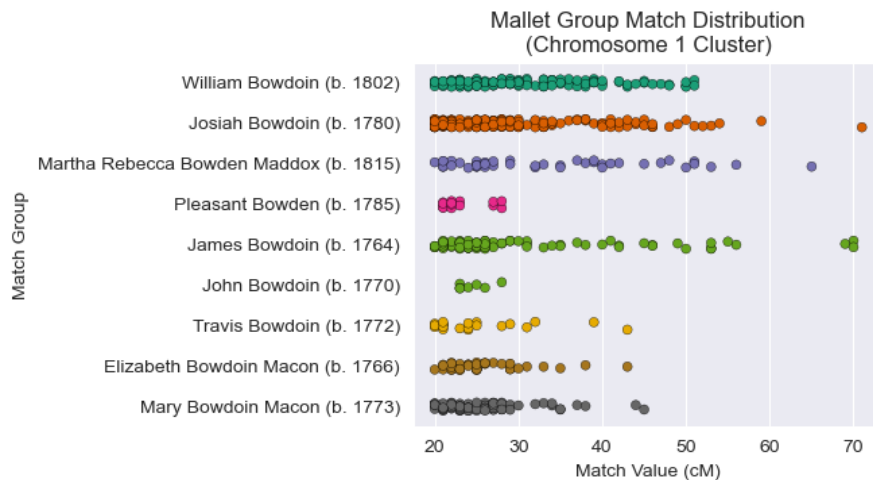


Figure 1: Distribution of matches for Mallet match group (Chromosome 1 cluster) with desc

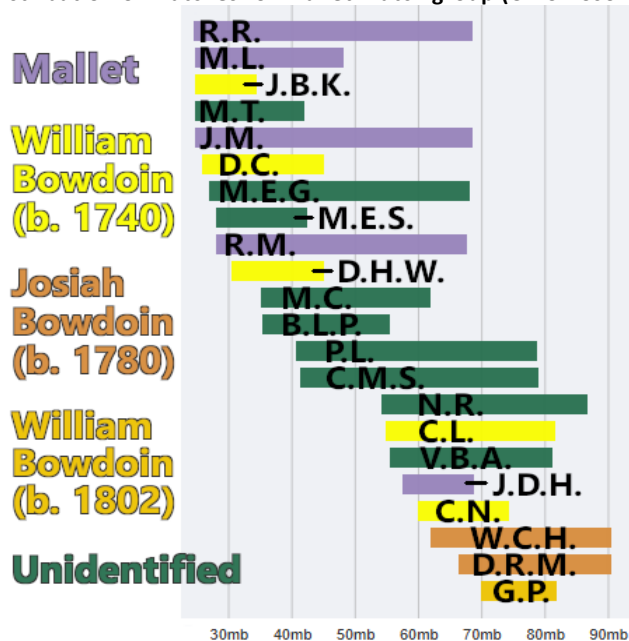
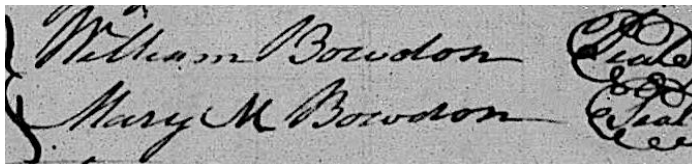


Figure 2: Mapped matches on Chromosome 1 cluster. Mallet matches span most of the range from about 25M to 70M, and William Bowdoin (b. 1740) matches intersect nearly the same whole range.

## Mary M. Bowdon

To review, we know that the name of William Bowdoin's wife was *Mary M. Bowdoin* because of a 1786 deed in Granville County, North Carolina, in which Mary signed with her husband.<sup>11</sup> The name of *Mary Bowdon* also occurs in a number of court records in



**Figure 3.** Copied signatures from 1786 Granville County, North Carolina deed, where William Bowdoin's wife is shown as Mary M. Bowdon.

Granville County. For example, in a November 1782 court docket, on an action of the State of North Carolina versus William Bowdoin labeled "recognizance", the note appears:

For Mary Bowdon to appear and give evidence vs. Denton as also for Jas. Bowdon to appear & give evidence &c. as above. in al. 20 # specie for each.<sup>12</sup>

Finally, Mary Bowdoin appeared in Randolph County in February 1808 to make a criminal complaint against Susannah Macon, stepmother of her grandson James Macon, accusing her of causing James's death:

Bill of complaint (4 Feb 1808) by Mary BOWDOWN accusing Susannah MACON of delivering a blow to James MACON which caused his death, and that John MACON, her husband was an accessory.<sup>13</sup>

This is the last known record of Mary by name. She apparently died sometime prior to about 1819, when her husband William moved to Georgia and remarried.

Mary, we can presume, was born sometime around the same time as her husband, *circa* 1742. William and Mary would have married perhaps around 1763 to 1764, in or around Granville County, North Carolina, where the Bowdoin family settled in about 1760. William and Mary's oldest son, James Bowdoin, is believed to have been born about 1764.

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<sup>11</sup> Granville County, North Carolina, Deed Book O, 494, William Bowdon to John Moss, 26 Dec 1786, on FamilySearch, "Granville County, North Carolina, Deeds, 1779–1790," Image Group 007416755, Image 399 of 524, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-89C5-ZS5F>, also Image Group 007513648, Image 510 or 668, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QSQ-G98Y-696S> (accessed 15 Sep 2024).

<sup>12</sup> Granville County, North Carolina, Minutes, Court of Pleas & Quarter Sessions, 1773–1783, State Reference Docket to November Court 1782, on Family Search, "Granville County, North Carolina, Court Minutes, 1754–1791," Image Group 008195467, Image 291 of 595, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSLV-V9C7-M> (accessed 2 Feb 2025).

<sup>13</sup> "Gleanings from Randolph Criminal Actions, Part IX: 1808–1809," *The Genealogical Journal of the Randolph County Genealogical Society* (Asheboro, N.C.), vol. XXV, no. 3 (Fall 2001), 44–46.

## Mary Mallet (now Bowdon)

I discovered a reference in the Lunenburg County, Virginia, county court, dated 8 Mar 1764:

On the motion of **Mary Mallet** (now **Bowdon**) a witness for **Stephen Mallet Senr.** against **Pinkethman Hawkins**, it is ordered that the said Mallet do pay her for three Days attendance at this Court, and twice coming and returning twenty-six miles according to Law.<sup>14</sup>

A previous reference in the same order book, dated 16 Jul 1763, reads:

On the motion of **Mary Mallet** a witness for **Stephen Mallet Junior** at the such of **John Bealk** Assignee of **Mary Chamberlain** It is ordered that the said Stephen Mallet pay her for nine days attendance at this court according to law.<sup>15</sup>

Based on these records, it would appear that Mary Mallet married Mr. Bowdon between July 1763 and March 1764. This order book is evidently the only record that survives of these court proceedings.

The only **Mary Bowdon** or **Bowdoin** that I know of is the wife of William Bowdoin in Granville County and later Randolph County. Late 1763 to early 1764 is precisely the date we expect that William and Mary would have married. Can we tie this record to our Mary Bowdoin in any other way?

The “twenty-six miles reference”: If we begin at the site of the original Lunenburg Courthouse, as marked on colonial maps, which was in what is now Mecklenburg County, and measure a line from there to “the waters of Hawtree Creek” in colonial Granville County, North Carolina, which are today in Warren County—the site of the 1761 North Carolina land grant in the name of William Bowdoin<sup>16</sup>—the line measures almost exactly twenty-six miles.<sup>17</sup> This is circumstantial evidence—the said Mary could have lived twenty-six miles in the opposite direction and not be related at all to the Granville Bowdoins—but the name of Mary Bowdon, combined with the date of her marriage, the coincidence of distance, and the DNA evidence on top of that, begins to stack up to a compelling case.

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<sup>14</sup> Lunenburg County, Virginia, Order Book 9, 293, on FamilySearch, “County Court Order Books, 1746–1865,” Image Group 007897233, Image 180 of 658, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CS4V-6S6T-W> (accessed 3 Feb 2025).

<sup>15</sup> Lunenburg County, Virginia, Order Book 9, 141, on FamilySearch, “County Court Order Books, 1746–1865,” Image Group 007897233, Image 88 of 658, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CS4V-6SXW-R> (accessed 3 Feb 2025).

<sup>16</sup> Granville warrant dated 12 Oct 1761 (MARS 12.12.26.29); Granville deed no. 66, Box SSLG 33E (MARS 12.33.33.20); file no. 80, but no loose documents in shuck at time of filming; North Carolina Land Patent Book 11, page 322, grant no. 66, entry 1 Mar 1762; all available on *North Carolina Land Grants and Image Data*, NCLandGrants.com, <https://nclandgrants.com/> (accessed 30 Aug 2024).

<sup>17</sup> This assumes that the 1761 land grant was very close to the Virginia-North Carolina border. Since this was a frontier area in 1761, this is perhaps reasonable.

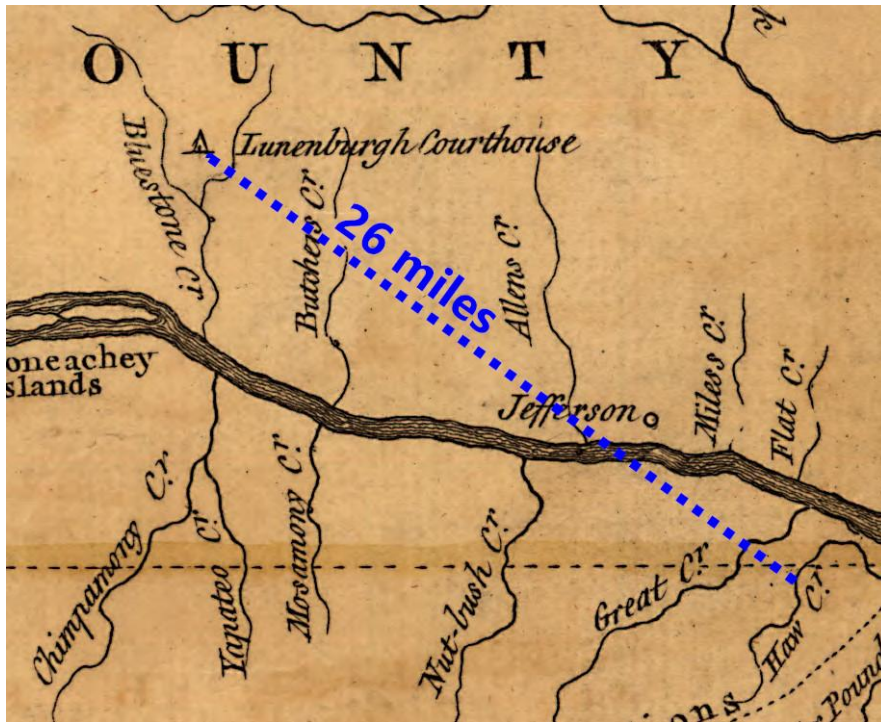


Figure 5: Location of colonial Lunenburg Courthouse on 1755 Fry-Jefferson map of Virginia, with line drawn to Hawtree Creek. (Library of Congress)



Figure 4: Projected location of colonial Lunenburg Courthouse on 1966 USGS topographic map, with line drawn to Hawtree Creek.



## Marie Magdelaine Mallet

Looking into the Mallet family of Virginia, I did not have to go very far to discover that **Stephen Mallet** (b. ca. 1706) and his wife **Olive Magdalene Salle** (b. 1710) had a daughter named **Marie Magdelaine Mallet**, born about 1742 and baptized in King William Parish, Virginia:

[Baptized] 10 Nov 1742—**Marie Magdelaine**, dau. **Etiene** and **Olive Mallet**.<sup>18</sup>

This is exactly the time we would expect **Mary M. Bowdoin** to have been born. In an era when middle names were uncommon, and most middle names were part of double names pertaining to namesakes, there are not many double names a woman could be expected to have—but for a woman named “Mary M.”, **Mary Magdalene** is certainly one of them.

## Thomas Mallet bound to William Bowdoin

In the clearest direct link between William Bowdoin and the Mallet family, a young boy named Thomas Mallet was bound to William Bowdoin as an apprentice in 1770:

Ordered that Thomas Mallett aged Eleven Years a base born Child born of the body of Esther Mallett be bound to William Bowdown, the said Master to learn his said Apprentice to read & Write the planter’s business.<sup>19</sup>

In an undated tax list from a folio of miscellaneous Granville County tax lists, dating to probably about 1780, William Bowdon is shown paying tax for Thomas Mallet:

**William Bowdon, Thos. Mallet**, [negro] Hampton: 2 white polls, 1 black poll, total 3.<sup>20</sup>

**Esther Mallet** (b. 1738) was the older sister of Mary Magdalene Mallet. **Thomas Mallet** was born out of wedlock in about 1759. He married in about 1781 and later moved to Kentucky.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> William Macfarlane Jones, ed., *The Douglas Register* (Richmond: J. W. Fergusson, 1928), King William Parish records, 383, on Ancestry, [https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/25436/images/dvm\\_LocHist010582-00198-1](https://www.ancestry.com/imageviewer/collections/25436/images/dvm_LocHist010582-00198-1); on FamilySearch, Image Group 007412573, Image 199 of 218, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3QS7-89CL-YQNK> (accessed 4 Feb 2025); FamilySearch, “Virginia Births and Christenings, 1584–1917,” <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:VRR4-LPB> (accessed 4 Feb 2025).

<sup>19</sup> Brent H. Holcomb, ed., *Bute County, North Carolina, Minutes of the Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, 1767–1779*, 67, on Ancestry.com.

<sup>20</sup> Granville County, miscellaneous tax lists, on FamilySearch, Image Group 008193632, Image 59 of 729, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSLF-D9W4-4> (accessed 5 Feb 2025).

<sup>21</sup> FamilySearch Tree, “Thomas Mallet,” b. 1759 ([PMMW-R2Y](https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CSLF-D9W4-4)) (accessed 5 Feb 2025).

William Farrar. Son Nat <sup>l</sup>	2	2
William Bowdon Tho <sup>s</sup> . Mallet. Hampton	2	3
Josiah Mitchel. Son Randolph Neg <sup>s</sup>	2	4
Jack. Patt		

Figure 6. William Bowdon paying tax for Thos. Mallet, undated Granville County tax list.

Notably, William Bowdoin was also enumerated adjacent to a William Farrar.

## Connections to Farrar and Nichols

In the March 1764 legal proceeding, the defense called several other witnesses to appear on behalf of Stephen Mallet: **Mary Chamberlain**, **William Farrar**, and **John Farrar**. The name **Farrar** also appears in other records with Stephen Mallet in Lunenburg and Mecklenburg counties, including the names of **William Farrar**, **Francis Farrar**, and **Thomas Farrar**.<sup>22</sup> **Stephen Mallet**, both **Senior** and **Junior**, also were in a record with **Julius Nichols**.<sup>23</sup>

It is not immediately clear how these Farrar men are related—online family trees appear confused and conflated, and the matter could bear more research—but **John Bowdoin**, older brother of William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1743), is held in most trees to have married **Judith Farrar**. There is some dispute about her parentage—with the FamilySearch Tree currently holding that she was the daughter of **William Farrar** (d. 1788), apparently the same William Farrar who had dealings with Stephen Mallet.<sup>24</sup>

Online records for the Nichols family also appear conflated and confused; but **Sarah Bowdoin**, sister of William and John, married **William Nichols**.<sup>25</sup> William and Sarah (Bowdoin) Nichols named a son Julius Nichols, the same name that appeared in the above record. It appears likely that the Julius Nichols who had dealings with Stephen Mallet was Julius Nichols (b. 1728), perhaps a brother to William Nichols.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Mecklenburg County, Deed Book 5, 281–282, Mallet to Morris (1778), on FamilySearch, Image Group 008589115, Item 2 of 3, Image 145 of 273, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C37X-2WC5>; Mecklenburg County, Deed Book 6, 162, Mallet to Bailey (1782), on FamilySearch, Image Group 008578115, Item 3 of 3, Image 86 of 217, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C37X-24ZW>;

<sup>23</sup> Lunenburg County, Order Book 2, 528, Mallet from Nichols, ack'd (1752), on FamilySearch, Image Group 007895932 (Item 2 of 2), Image 309 of 311, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-CS4X-941P-4> (accessed 4 Feb 2025).

<sup>24</sup> FamilySearch Tree, "William Farrar" ([L8W4-24R](#)) (accessed 4 Feb 2024).

<sup>25</sup> FamilySearch Tree, "Sarah Bowdon" ([9K8T-YP8](#)), supported by Granville County, North Carolina, Will Book 1, page 51–52, will of William Bowdon, 8 Jul 1773, on FamilySearch, Image Group 007653486, Image 73–74 of 574, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q9M-C956-FS7C-Z> (accessed 15 Sep 2024).

<sup>26</sup> FamilySearch Tree, "Julius Nichols" ([L51P-DCV](#)) (accessed 4 Feb 2024).

These records indicate a likelihood that the Farrar and Nichols families into whom the Bowdoin family married were neighbors to and had an association with the Stephen Mallet family in Lunenburg and Mecklenburg counties in Virginia. This further bolsters the case that the “Bowdon” to whom Mary Mallet married in 1763/1764 was William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1740). This may suggest too that the Bowdoin family could also have been in the area of Lunenburg and Mecklenburg before coming to Granville County, North Carolina.

## Stephen Mallet Junior and Senior

The suffixes “Junior” and “Senior” were generally used in early records to distinguish between two people of the same name involved in the same matter or who lived in the same community at the same time, one who was “younger” and the other “older,” respectively. Two Stephen Mallets, Junior and Senior, did appear in many records, separately and together, in Lunenburg and Mecklenburg counties in the 1750s and 1760s. It appears that these two men were likely Stephen Mallet (b. 1706, d. ca. 1773), “Senior”, the father of Mary Magdalene Mallet (b. 1742), and Stephen Mallet (b. 1731, d. ca. 1800), “Junior”, the son of Stephen “Senior” and brother to Mary Magdalene Mallet.<sup>27</sup>

## Changing county lines

The Virginia and North Carolina county lines changed several times between 1764 and 1788, when the Bowdoin family moved to Randolph County.

- In 1764, the Stephen Mallet family was living in Lunenburg County, Virginia. William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1740) had entered a land grant in 1761 in Granville County, North Carolina, “on both sides of Haw Tree Creek”. I marked the mouth of Hawtree Creek on the map with a green dot, and the colonial Lunenburg Courthouse with a blue star (see Figure 4 and Figure 5).
- On the North Carolina side, William and Mary Bowdoin apparently did not stay on the Hawtree Creek land. On 5 May 1764, William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1715) of Granville County sold 320 acres of Granville County land to his son William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1740). Both Williams thereafter appeared in Granville County records.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> FamilySearch Tree, “Stephen Mallet,” b. 1706 ([L44K-6XK](#)), “Stephen Mallet,” b. 1731 ([LHKL-3H3](#)) (accessed 4 Feb 2024).

<sup>28</sup> Warren County, North Carolina, Deed Book A, 39–40, William Bowdon to William Bowdown, 5 May 1764, on FamilySearch, Image Group 007518973, Image 51 of 856, <https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/3:1:3Q57-898Q-Q692> (accessed 5 Feb 2025).

- In June 1764, the now-extinct Bute County, North Carolina, was created from part of Granville County. The land grant of William Bowdoin on Hawtree Creek was taken in by Bute. In March 1765, Mecklenburg and Charlotte counties were created in Virginia from parts of Lunenburg County. The Mallet families appear to have been in Mecklenburg County following the county split. Wake County, North Carolina was created in March 1771.

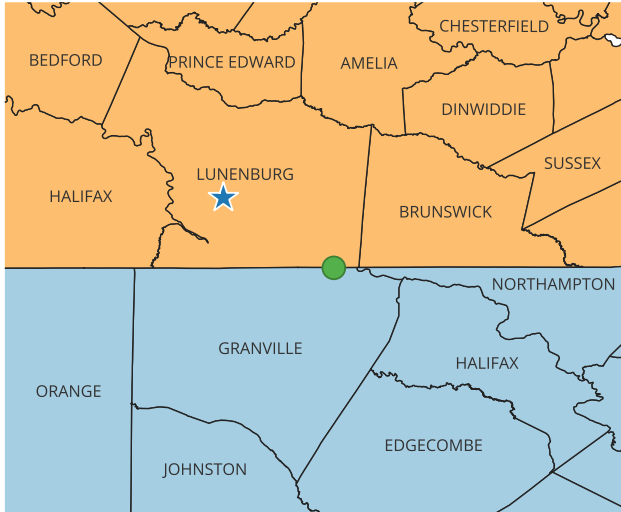


Figure 7. Virginia and North Carolina counties in 1764.

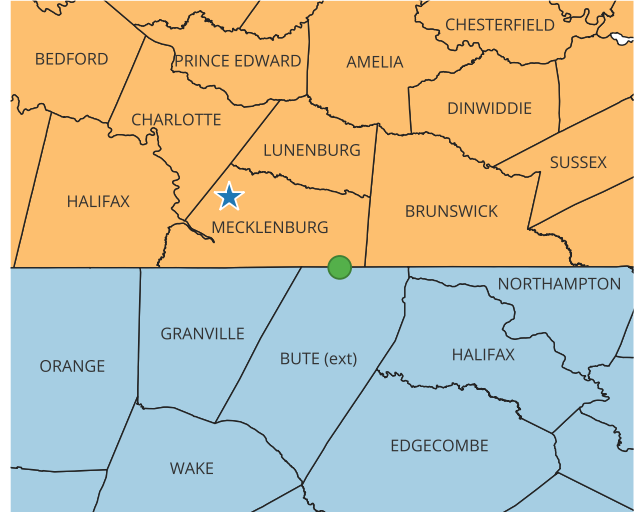


Figure 8. Virginia and North Carolina counties in 1775.

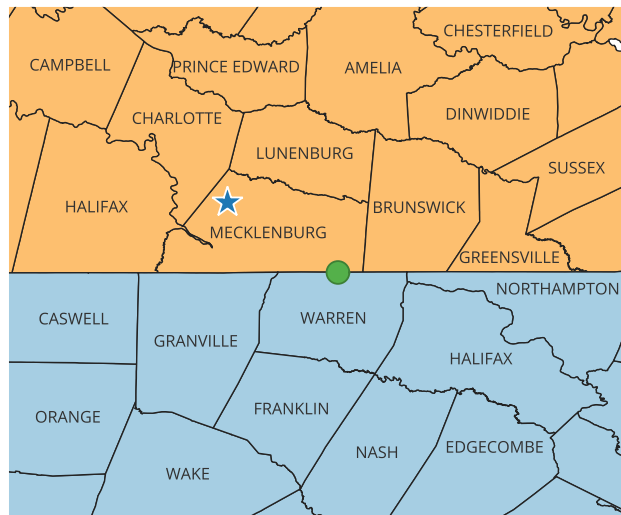


Figure 9. Virginia and North Carolina counties in 1788.

- In December 1777, Nash County, North Carolina, was created from Edgemcombe County. In February 1779, Bute County was abolished and split into Warren County and Franklin County. In about 1788, William and Mary Bowdoin moved their family to Randolph County, North Carolina.

## Conclusion

The weight of this combined evidence—the clear and unmistakable DNA connection; the appearance of “Mary Mallet (now Bowdon)” in early 1764, at precisely the time we believed William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1740) married his wife Mary; her signature as *Mary M. Bowdon*, with the baptismal record of Mary Mallet as *Marie Magdelaine Mallet*; the apparent proximity and possible relation between the Mallet, Farrar, Nichols, and Bowdoin families; and the fact of William Bowdoin paying tax for Thomas Mallet—presents a compelling circumstantial case for the identity of Mary M. Bowdoin, wife of William, being Mary Magdalene Mallet. Though none of these pieces by itself proves the connection irrefutably, together they become a convincing argument.

This Mallet connection reinvigorates the legends of the Bowdoin family having French Huguenot ancestry. Does this support the case for their connection to the Peter Bowdoin family of Boston or the John Bowdoin family of Northampton County, Virginia? There remains no clear evidence tying the elder William Bowdoin (b. ca. 1715) to this family. But perhaps connecting Mary to the Mallets may serve to open a path to also finding William Bowdoin’s roots, possibly elsewhere in the Huguenot diaspora.