

# Among Cousins

## The Bland Family Newsletter



Bland

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Dear Cousins,

"Genealogy is the search for someone better than yourself."

Caption in a card from Joyce Bland McCool

Charles L. Bland, **A Vision of Unity: The Bland Family in England and American 1555-1900**, (1982), 610PP., indexed, is published twice annually, June 1 and October 1. Payment of \$74.95, (\$59.95 for libraries), must reach the publisher by May 1 and October 1.

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**Among Cousins: The Bland Family Newsletter**, is conceived as an organic extension of **A Vision of Unity: The Bland Family In England and America**. These works do not represent one person's research or viewpoint but a collective effort by many people, shared with many others, through the Newsletter.

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### The Sixth National Reunion

The Bland family's Sixth National Reunion was held on August 10-12 1990 at the Northern Virginia Community College at Prince William County Virginia. The Reunion was sponsored by twin brothers, Thomas H. Bland of Burke Virginia and William G. Bland of Woodbridge Virginia, and their wives Diana and Diane. There was a fine turn out, some 140 cousins from twenty states and the District of Columbia, and it was a wonderful event, in which the Bland family was launched onto a new direction. The Reunion group discussed the idea of a National Bland Organization, which is discussed below.

The Reunion ceremony included several special events, among them a declaration by Prince William County supervisor Hilda Barg that August 11, 1990 would be **BLAND DAY** in Prince William County and a similar gesture by Mayor Sam Bauckman of Dumfries Virginia, declaring August 10-12 "Bland Days" in Dumfries and presenting the group with the key to the town of Dumfries. In addition to my own talk, there were excellent talks about genealogy, by Don Curtis, an historian of the Lee family, who is also descended from Blands, and Larry Blann of Alexandria Virginia. My most memorable moment during the reunion, however, was a trip with Tommy to the banks of the Potomac river, which spread out like an ocean, between Cock Pit Points and Powell's Creek, an area that more or less approximates the place where our ancestor James Bland (1661-1708) purchased land in 1701. Tommy and I walked out onto a fishing pier and looked back at the beautiful, shimmering hot green landscape, and took several good photographs. It was truly beautiful.

The 1991 Reunion, our seventh, will be held at North Vernon Indiana August 9-11, 1991, and will be sponsored by David and Lois Taylor of Shelbyville Indiana and Glen and Mary Ella Day and Earl Bland of North Vernon. North Vernon is about 60 miles north of Louisville Kentucky. I am pleased to see that Tom Bland has advertised the 1991 Reunion through the Bland Family Organization and that Bob Bland of Deland Florida has announced the reunion in advance to the members of the James River Bland group. Lois says she is expecting a super turnout and I look forward to seeing you there.

### Other Reunions:

During the past reporting period, I also received word of National Bland Reunions held in Jacksonville Georgia, June 10, 1990 and in Merkel Texas, June 24, 1990. Hope they were a success.

### Proposed Bland Family Organization

As noted above, a major new issue discussed the National Reunion in August 1990 was a proposal for a Bland Family Organization. I support the idea because it would provide several advantages, not least of them tax benefits for our national reunions and other undertakings, potential special research support opportunities in the future, and generational continuity. A special committee consisting of John W. Bland of Elizabethtown Kentucky, Richard P. Bland of Denver Colorado, Robert O. Bland of Deland Florida, Larry Blann of Alexandria Virginia, Mildred Hunter of State College Pennsylvania, and myself, was appointed to further develop the proposal for discussion at the Seventh Reunion, August 1991. We agreed on an initial membership of \$10. annual per family group. If you would like to join and support the new organization, send your membership fee (for individual or family) to Thomas H. Bland 10586 Reeds Circle Landing, Burke Virginia 22015.

### Progress on Revision of Book and Indexing of Newsletter

I am happy to report that I received a volunteer to help with this monumental task, which will unfold during the next few years. Jeanette Bickley Bland of Richardson Texas has volunteered to begin Indexing Volumes 6-9 of "Among Cousins". By use of a scanner, she will be able to transfer the text of A Vision of Unity to computer disks, which will make the book malleable to revision. If this works out, it will be great stride for the family. The shape of the Bland family history will be interesting to see. In terms of volume, it is bound to evolve into a multi-volume work. An example is that family of Thomas Bland of Pendleton County Virginia, which appeared in the book as a two page essay (VU, pp. 398-399) but has consumed 35 pages of single spaced newsletter since then. My hunch is that by 1995, projected publication date, the present body of work contained in the book and the by then 12-13 volumes of the Newsletter will comprise two or three volumes the size of the present book. Of course, these will be the product of many contributions by many individuals over the years, and much hard work by many, a legacy to future generations that will be a source of pride for this generation.

### Every Highway Out of Nashville

I am pleased to announce the publication of Howard O. White Jr., with Ruth Bland White, Every Highway Out of Nashville (Picker's Rest Books, 2731 New Halls Road, Greenbrier Tennessee, 37073:1990). Cost of the book is \$10. plus \$2. shipping and handling. I have had the pleasure of meeting Howard and Ruth at the past two national reunions and so had what I thought was a personal feeling for the book and some empathy because of experiences portrayed by Howard which happened in my family. This is the story

of Howard's struggle to overcome adversities in his life, which include exposure to chemical warfare in the Navy during World War II, followed by a nervous breakdown and recovery to realize his dream of playing a steel guitar at the Grand Ole Opry. The book is about significant personalities in the country music field. As a former country lad who spent a lot of his childhood listening to singers like Hank Williams, I found myself thumbing to the index to find references to Williams, Chet Atkins, Cowboy Copas, Ernie Tubb, Roy Acuff etc. Chet Atkins wrote of the book, "A lot of so-called stars have written their biographies but I don't remember any significant books written by accompanying musicians. I think it will be welcomed by interested people because of this different perspective." Finally, the book is about Ruth and Howard's life together. I hope you will wish to know more about this fine and touching book.

#### TRANSITION

##### Albert Sinclair Hunter (1908-1991)

I am saddened to report the passing of Albert Sinclair Hunter of State College Pennsylvania on January 22, 1991. Albert and his wife Mildred Pixton Bowers Hunter were among my earliest correspondents and supporters when A Vision of Unity was taking shape and contributed significantly to my work by providing substantial contribution on their own line and others. Al was born in Greene County Indiana, October 21, 1908, the son of Sinclair Hunter and Effie Alice Carpenter. Al's grandmother Mary Elizabeth Bland, who married Columbus Jefferson Hunter, was descended from one of the two Bland families in Greene County, the one that migrated to the county from Chatham County North Carolina. Al married Mildred on September 5, 1947 and they had a daughter Alice, who married Jeffrey Walker and lives now in Avon, Ohio.

Al entered Utah State Agricultural College in 1934 and earned his bachelors degree in Chemistry in 1938. He earned a master's degree in Chemistry in 1940, from Washington State College and his doctoral degree in soil chemistry from Rutgers University in 1943. Following fifteen years of varied teaching and professional experiences, Al and Mildred moved to State College Pennsylvania in 1957 where Al joined the faculty of Pennsylvania State University as a professor of Agronomy, until he retired in 1974. Al taught between 1974-1977 at the Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil. In 1979, Al was named Man of the Year by the Pennsylvania Plant Food and Protectant Education Society for contributions in his field.

Al and Mildred were avid genealogists. Both were possessed of enormous energy and intelligence. As his obituary notice indicated, Al was known for his "zest, inquisitiveness and good humor, which he maintained despite many years of serious maladies." Al and Mildred, during the decade I knew them, provided a current stream of updates and refinements to information already known about his family, including the linkage of his Indiana family with James Bland of Duplin County North Carolina, a discovery which linked his line with the furthest back Bland's we know. Al was a big, barrel chested man, with a strong, clear voice, who loved to talk genealogy. His energy is evident in his indexing of the Centre County Pennsylvania Census of 1860. I remember well the day my family and I spent with Al and Mildred in the Summer of 1983, and how Al took me up to the campus of Penn State where we found an old book by Thomas Bland of Greene County Indiana that talked about his father and mother, Thomas Bland and Sarah Thornton and their migration into Indiana. Al and Mildred demonstrated their devotion to the Bland family by their constant attendance at every Bland Reunion, dating to 1985.

I considered Al a good friend and source of spiritual and intellectual strength to our family. He will surely be missed. A photo of Albert Sinclair Hunter appears on the following page.

#### Gordon N. Owens (1912-1991)

Another stalwart veteran at the first six Bland reunions was Commander Gordon N. Owens, who died on January 27, 1991. Gordon was accompanied to these reunions by his wife of forty eight years, Frances Pollard Owens. He is also survived by a son Douglas Owens of Seattle, Washington and two daughters, Kate Kavack of Media Pennsylvania and Nancy Owens of Claymont Pennsylvania.

Gordon Owens was born in Altus Oklahoma. After attaining an Associates degree at Cameron College in Oklahoma, Gordon earned his Bachelor's degree in military science from the University of Maryland and a Master's Degree in Education from Villanova University. Gordon joined the Navy and earned his Navy Wings in 1939. During World War II, Gordon served aboard the aircraft carrier Bunker Hill in the Pacific Theater. Gordon was a decorated Navy man, whose honors included the Navy Cross. Gordon retired from the Navy in 1962 and worked as a guidance counselor in Newtown Square schools until he retired in 1976.

I first met Gordon Owens and his wife Frances at the first National Reunion in 1985. He was then seeking the identity of the parents of his grandfather Joseph Bland (C1849-1934). During the time I was in communication with him, Gordon, aided by some research done by a consortium in 1986 and by his own work and that of a niece in Texas, ascertained that his great grandfather was William E. Bland (1812-1870) from Alabama. Knowing him was a great pleasure and the national reunions will not be the same without him.

### Other Transitions

I was saddened to learn of the death of Dorothea E. Gilbreath on October 29, 1990. I received the information from her daughter Susan Stanley, after having met both of them for the first time at the 1990 National Reunion. Dorothea descended from Elizabeth Bland Tetley, a sister of Richard Parks Bland, the Presidential Candidate in 1896. Dorothea had corresponded frequently with me since 1988 and had been instrumental in arranging my contact with several individuals who knew Harriet C. Bland Greene, the 1936 Olympics Gold Medalist, whose story was told in a previous issue (AC 7-2, pp. 4-8). Dorothea was a much valued new Cousin, who was interested in knowing more about our family. I am encouraged that her daughter Susan Stanley plans to carry on her work.

Last July, I learned belatedly of the death of Inez Turner of Hope Arkansas on November 18, 1989. Inez was a Bland descendant, whose line was previously reported (AC 5-2, pp. 32-33). She provided me with a great deal of additional material that made our knowledge of the Bland family more complete.

Anne Armistead of Roanoke Virginia informed me of the passing away of her brother George C. Armistead Jr. on June 9, 1990. George was 74 when he died. He and Ann are descended from the Bland family through the James River line.

Neil Bland of Lumberport West Virginia informed me that his brother Martin died suddenly on January 8, 1991. Martin would have been 75 on July 11.

It is always especially saddening to hear of the death of the very young. Laverne Bland of Edgerton Missouri told me of the death of his nephew, David A. Sellars, son of Vernon L. and Delores Bland Sellars, who died January 27, 1991 at age 18. David's grandparents were Cleatis and Esther Bland of Centralia Illinois.

As always I am grateful for clippings of obituary and other notices concerning Blands, whom I have never met. These include: from the Cabot Arkansas Star Herald, the death of Alice Nancy Reeves Bland, age 96, on May 22, 1981. She was the widow of James Monroe Bland; Catherine Bland Matz, who died at Pompano Beach Florida, March 26, 1987 at age 83. Thomas Franklin Bland, age 78, on July 13, 1988 at Southern Pines North Carolina. Thomas was born in Los Angeles California and lived in Washington before moving to Southern Pines in 1970.

In the midst of such sad events, it is heartening to find one note of happiness. Vera Moore of Hopewell Virginia sent me a notice of the marriage between William Robert Bland, son of Mr. and Mrs. James F. Bland of Williamsburg Virginia, with Sarah Bridges Ford on December 30, 1989.

### Library Placements

This was a banner period for placement of A Vision of Unity in libraries around the country. As noted above, a copy of the book was given to Ms. Hilda Barg, Supervisor of Prince William County, who donated the book to the Prince William Public Library. Robert O. Bland of Deland Florida placed a copy of the book at The Deland Public Library, Deland Florida. Francis Bland of Paragould Arkansas donated a copy of the book to the Tennessee Genealogical Society, Memphis Tennessee. An order for the book was placed by the Schleicher County Public Library, Eldorado Texas. The sixth and seventh copies of ten projected placements by an anonymous donor, were donated to the Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham Alabama, and to The Ohio Public Library, Columbus Ohio.

### **BLAND FAMILY LINES INDEXED**

It is useful upon occasion to review the specific pages upon which discussions of the various Bland family groups have appeared in the pages of A Vision of Unity and "Among Cousins". By now, writing on the family has grown prolific and diverse, the material covered in the previous sixteen numbers of "Among Cousins" wholly equalling or exceeding that of A Vision of Unity. In the course of writing "Among Cousins" over the last decade, complete lines have come to my attention that were not even addressed in the book. By the following count there are eight major families of Bland's (who sometimes style themselves Blann or Blan), and no less than thirty lines that have been identified but not well developed by genealogists. The idea of the theme in A Vision of Unity that we all descend from one line, seems to have gone a glimmering, and now seems a rather naive and innocent notion. What follows is a kind of outline of the family groups, marked by pages in which they have been discussed, with special notations where major revisions in thinking have taken place, or special hypotheses have been developed.

#### The Blands of England and the James River in Virginia

1-1. Robert or Roger Bland (C1500- ), Westmoreland County England, wife unknown.

1-2. Adam Bland (1528-1594), Westmoreland County and London, married Joan Atkyns, (C1530-1596). Adam and Joan had thirteen children including:

1-3. John Bland (1572-1632), "The Grosser" of London, who married Susan Deblere (1590-1665). John and Susan had a family of 17, of whom 12 lived to adulthood. Of these, the following were responsible for settlements in Virginia.

- 1-4A. Susan Bland (1609 - ) who married Thomas Pearson.  
1-4B. Edward Bland (1614-1652), who married Jane Bland, daughter of Edward's uncle Gregory Bland.  
1-4C. Theodorick Bland (1629-1671), who married Anna Bennett.

Sources: This family is discussed in Vision of Unity (VU), pp. 1-75. The Virginia experience of this family is found in VU, pp. 76-249.

Information about this family in the Seventeenth Century was enlarged in Among Cousins (AC), Volume 8-2, pp. 5-40; The Eighteenth Century line was updated by AC: 3-1, p. 6; 3-2, pp. 7-8; 5-1, pp. 7-25; 7-1, pp. 7-11; 8-1, pp. 6-8; and 8-2, p. 41.

The Blands of England and Northern Virginia, Stafford and Prince William Counties

- 2-1. James Bland (C1575- ) of Penrith, St. Andrews Parish, Cumberland County England, married Alice Pettison or Patterson.  
2-2. James Bland (C1600-1651/1652), of his father's town and parish, married Susan Cooke.  
2-3. George Bland (1636-died after 1675), of his father's town and parish, married Grace \_\_\_\_\_.  
2-4. James Bland (1661 - 1709), of his father's town and parish, moved to London and to East Jersey in 1684, was in Virginia by 1687, and died in Stafford County in 1709. He may have married twice, but at the time of his death was married to Margaret \_\_\_\_\_.

Sources: Re the Blands of Penrith, St. Andrews Parish, Cumberland County England, see VU, pp. 249-254 and AC: 3-1, pp. 8-9; 6-1, pp. 5-8. On some theories about the parentage of James Bland (1661-1709) see VU, pp. 191-248, inter alia, and pp. 255-266.

- 2-5A. William Bland (C1682-1744), eldest son of James (1661-1709). William resided in Stafford/Prince William County Virginia. He married twice, to an unknown woman and Catherine Key.

By his first wife, William had the following sons:

- 2-5A-6A. James Bland (1704-1774), Prince William County Virginia and New Hanover/Duplin County North Carolina. James married Mary (Buchanan?).  
2-5A-6B. Robert Bland (C1708-1760), Prince William and Loudon Counties Virginia. Robert Married Jane \_\_\_\_\_. This line remains hypothetical.