

Group01 – James River, VA

The "James River Blands" are the earliest line to settle in the American colonies. They are the Blands we find in history books, and so this is often the first line that captures a genealogist's imagination. A word of caution is in order. We don't all descend through this branch. I think perhaps it is easier to enter the gates of heaven than to prove you are a descendant from this line.

One of the earliest of these Blands was John Bland (ca 1515 -), a Protestant minister who was burned to death by the fiercely Catholic Queen Mary Tudor in her purges of 1555. Others frolic through the pages of the great London diarist Samuel Pepys, in our historybooks we find their names in the rolls of the Virginia Company of London, and one of them was an inept drunkard who contributed mightily to the collapse of Bacon's rebellion of 1676, thus doing his share to set back the cause of freedom for a century.

One of these Blands was in William Byrd's Virginia Diary. Another was the grandmother of General Robert E. Lee; another was a notable pre-revolutionary spokesman and mentor to Thomas Jefferson, another still a quirky politician of the early Republic who scandalized the hallowed halls of Congress by attending with a whip in hand and a fat old female dog. The whip was ok, but females were not allowed in Congress. Some of them claim descent from Pochohontas. The origin of this branch was Orton Parish in Westmoreland and Sedbergh in York County in what is now Cumbria in England.

The oldest known Bland was identified by the venerable historian Ralph Thoresby as Roger Bland, but I believe old Thoresby misheard the name of Robert who was born about the turn of the 16th Century and was the father of Adam Bland (ca 1528-1594). About 1551 Adam married Jane or Joan Atkyns and with her raised a family of 13 children. By 1559 Adam was a high-ranking member of the Skinner's Company of London and in 1560 was chosen personal skinner to Queen Elizabeth I, a post he held until his death. He was succeeded by his son Peter, who by 1618 was crazy as a bed-bug. He was kicked upstairs to the title of Master Warden. The post of Skinner to, now, King James I devolved to his son-in-law, Thomas Lanthorne. This intimate relationship in the early Bland family with the Skinner's Company and the Crown seems to have been a source of great wealth. A great family conflict over the estate of Peter Bland ended to the advantage of John Bland "The Grosser" (1572-1632), a large volume merchant, sometimes erroneously called John the Grocer. Don't confuse this man with the corner grocery proprietor. He was a stockholder in the Virginia Company of London. John quickly made his will, which excluded a brother, Gregory, and an infamous nephew, Lawrence Lownes. Shortly after he died in 1632, John's widow, Susan, appealed to the King for relief of debts amounting to £15,000, an immense sum, worth about \$15 million in today's currency, which is indicative of the wealth that John possessed.

Adam and Joan were parents of 13 children, including the above named Peter, (ca 1557-1627), Gregory (1567 -), and John (1572-1632). Children of Gregory and John settled in Virginia about the middle of the Seventeenth Century. From this settlement, primarily from the children of Theodorick Bland (1629-1671), youngest son of John Bland and his wife Susannah Deblere

(1590-1665), the 18th Century Bland Family #1 had its origins. They are the family we now know as the James River Blands.

The following listing of members of this group is presented in the new (2012) numbering system format. (Also note in brackets the old numbering system Charles Bland originally used.) Basically, the prefix "G01." refers to the group number. After the period ("."), the modified Henry system begins. DNA Participants listed are identified by name unless anonymity is requested, in which case they are identified by DNA Kit #.

G01.1[1-1]Robert or Roger Bland(ca 1500 -), Westmoreland County England, wife unknown.

G01.11[1-2]Adam Bland (1528-1594), Westmoreland County and London, married Joan Atkyns, (ca1530-1596). Adam and Joan had thirteen children including:

G01.111Robert Bland (1552-before 1559).

G01.112Jane, or Joan Bland (1554 -) who married William Hope 1586/1587

G01.113Peter Bland(1557 – soon after June 27, 1625) who married Susan ____ about 1584.

G01.114Thomas Bland (ca 1558 – 1617) who had two or three wives: (1) perhaps Alice Garmain; (2) Elizabeth Harrison Yeardley; and Mary Catcher Moody.

G01.115Elizabeth Bland (1560 – after 1627) who married William Burie.

G01.116Frances Bland (1561-1566).

G01.117Richard Bland (1562 – died in infancy).

G01.118John Bland (1563-1564).

G01.119William Bland (1566-1596) who married Judith Wood.

G01.11AGregory Bland (1567- after 1627) who married, but wife unknown 1st Frances ____; 2nd Jane ____.

G01.11BJasper Bland (1568-1596).

G01.11CMary Bland (1569 – before 1617) who married ____ Gilbie.

***G01.11D[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 3 (marked with *) were responsible for settlements in Virginia: Susan Bland, Edward Bland, and Theodorick Bland.

G01.11D1Mary Bland (1607 – died after 1652) who married Emmanuel Proby.

- * **G01.11D2[1-4A]**Susan, or Susannah, Bland (1609 – died in Stafford County, VA after 1664) who married Thomas Pearson.

G01.11D3Thomas Bland (1610-1678), who married: (1) Elizabeth Witham, (2) Anne Jegon, and (3) Katherine Sandys.

G01.11D4John Bland (1612-1680) who married Sarah Greene.

- * **G01.11D5[1-4B]**Edward Bland (1613-1652) who married Jane Bland, daughter of Edward's Uncle Gregory Bland. He settled in VA ca 1647.

G01.11D6Adam Bland (1616-1647) who did not marry.

G01.11D7Robert Bland (1617-1669) who married Mary Hinton.

G01.11D8Anne Bland (1619 - ?) who married Stephen Jackson.

G01.11D9Elizabeth Bland (1620 – died after 1673) who married William Beard.

G01.11DAWilliam Bland (1622 – died after 1658) who did not marry.

G01.11DBHester Bland (1623-1624).

G01.11DCRichard Bland (1624-1692) who married Jane Lane Pott.

G01.11DDRachel Bland (1626-1633).

G01.11DEArnold Bland (1627-1634).

- * **G01.11DF[1-4C]**Theodorick Bland (1629-1671), who married Anna Bennett. He was a Speaker in the House of Burgesses. His VA estate was called Westover.

The “*” indicates which Blands settled in the New World.

DNA participants for this line are:

Edward Cole Bland

Robert Oliver Bland

G01.11DGJoan Amy Bland (1631-1632).

This family is discussed in *Vision of Unity* (VU), pp. 1-75. The Virginia experience of this family is found in VU, pp. 76-239. Information about this family in the Seventeenth Century was enlarged in the newsletters, "Among Cousins" (AC), Volume 8-2, pp. 5-40; The Eighteenth Century line was updated by AC3-1, p. 6; AC3-2, pp. 7-8; AC4-1, pp. 17-18; AC5-1, pp. 7-25; AC7-1, pp. 7-11; AC8-1, pp. 6-8; AC8-2, p. 41; AC11-1, pp. 7-8, 33; AC18, pp. 52 & 56; and AC27/28, pp. 44-148.