

Among Cousins The Bland Family Newsletter



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Dear Cousins,

The Sixth National Bland Reunion will be held in Prince William County Virginia, August 10-12, 1990. The Reunion Site will be the Northern Virginia Community College, located, as it were on the banks of Powell's Creek and just South of the Occoquan River. This is a special treat for those of you who know Bland genealogy well, for the largest known branch of the Bland family descends from James Bland (1661-1708) who settled in 1701 in this area, so

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it is truly the major seat of the Bland family. The sponsors for this year's reunion are twin brother's Thomas H. Bland of Burke Virginia and William G. Bland of Woodbridge Virginia and their wives Diana and Diane Bland.

The reunion will be an exiting day. August 11 will be declared Bland Day in Prince William County. Genealogist Larry Blann will speak about the trials and tribulations of doing genealogical research. Don Curtis, a Prince William County historian and a Bland descendant, will discuss the history of the county. The luncheon promises to be delicious and it will be catered at Leesylvania State Park along Powell's Creek. Also contemplated is a tour of the site where James Bland first settled.

In addition to this, there are a host of wonderful research opportunities at the Virginia State Library in Richmond, as well as the Virginia Historical Society. In Washington D.C., there are opportunities at the National Archives, the Library of Congress and the Daughters of the American Revolution headquarter, among a few that come to mind. Of course, Herbert Francis Bland of Paragould Arkansas, (or is it Francis Herbert?), will be there serving humor, baloney and Dr. Pepper, a rare opportunity for the uninitiated, not to be missed.

The Reunion is being expanded to three days in keeping with a practice that has evolved during the past few years wherein the faithful out-of-towners congregate the night before the formal reunion for a sort of party. After all this is a once a year time when we can all see each other again, especially Herb (or Fran). But also it is not a closed event and those of you who live nearby or have never before been to a reunion will be welcome to attend Friday night at Reunion Headquarters, the Best Western Motel on Highway 50, just off I-95.

I'm looking forward to this Reunion and hope to see many of you in Virginia.

Other Reunions

I received invitations to attend two annual Bland Reunions. One was held at Jacksonville Georgia, June 10, 1990. This reunion represents the branch of the family that originated in Northern Virginia, but migrated to Duplin County N.C. Descendants of the North Carolina family migrated to Bulloch County Georgia, and these celebrants are their descendants. The other reunion was held at Merkel Texas, June 24, 1990. This family descends from Samuel Bland and Martha Merritt of Mecklenburg County Virginia. I was unable to attend either of these reunions but know that some of my correspondents did, and trust that all had a good time.

Dora Tarrant Foster of Lehigh Acres Florida has informed me that there will be a Bland Reunion at Langford Creek State Park in Fort Lawn South Carolina, August 11, 1990, which coincides with our National Reunion. The Bland celebrants are new to my knowledge, and are discussed below, pp. 42-43.

Transition

Mary Jane and I were divorced in March 1990. I hope that those of you who knew Jane and enjoyed her company will still count her your friend. Although it has not been easy for Jane and me, I'm sure we will be alright. If you pray, however, remember our two children Christina and Tommy in your prayers and keep them in your heart.

Ruth Bland White of Greenbrier Tennessee wrote to me that her mother, Mary Ruth Jackson Bland died January 13, 1990. Ruth's father, Thomas Allen Bland had died January 2, 1988. Dorothea Gilbreath of St. Louis Missouri wrote to me that her mother Mabel Greene Kennedy died at age 93, on February 13, 1990. Mabel was the daughter grand daughter of Elizabeth Bland Tetley, sister of Richard Parks "Silver Dick" Bland, (VU. pp. 468A and 469, and AC 8-1, pp. 29-30). I received word from Mary Smart of Bremond Texas, a descendant from the James River Bland Family, that her son Bill, not yet 20, died in a work accident on March 28, 1990. Bill Smart was buried at Walnut Cemetery, five miles east of Bremond. Angelia Bland Alford of Maben Mississippi, called to tell me that her niece Corrine White Walker died after a long illness. Corrine White Walker was the daughter of Pinkie Bland White of Maben.

Book and Photo Reconstruction

I have made no progress regarding the photo reconstruction project and now think the work will not be done until the June 1991 publication date. So there is plenty of time for you to make an input if you wish. If I do not have any contributions, I will find photos from old copies of the Newsletter. These will have to be treated, so that they are preserved longer. Thus, if you have photos that fit in the narrative of the book and would like to contribute them to this project, please let me know.

I have a more ambitious project in mind. Several correspondents in the last few years have pointed out that the Newsletters have out-dated A Vision of Unity. Although I do not believe the book is out-dated, I think it is incomplete and needs to be redone. Actually, what we have now is not just one book but at least two, maybe three volumes, with an index as a fourth volume. I have also lost my grip on the indexing question, having failed to find time to index volumes 6-8 of the Newsletter, which makes tracing down answers much more difficult. The task is staggering and time, more than anything is my enemy.

This is my proposal for a long term project that would take five years, as an initial target. During the next year, I would

like to ask for a volunteer to index Volumes 6-9 of the Newsletter. Also for volunteers to type on a compatible computer disk, the chapters of A Vision of Unity, verbatim. These disks I could transfer to my hard disk. I use Word Perfect 5.0. My employee, the State University of New York, Buffalo, has conversion capability for many major word processing software to WP 5.0. From this base, I could incorporate the data contained in the Newsletters, while continuing to turn out Newsletters, and then organize the resulting work into whatever format seems best at the time. In a project like this the objective would be to create free standing volumes so that those who could not afford a multi-volume set could at least afford the volume that discusses their particular line. Inasmuch as completion is some five years down the road, there will be plenty of time to research the most economic costs for production, once the project is finished.

I will volunteer in 1991 to transcribe Chapters 1-4 and 11 of the book (about 200 pages). That means seven volunteers would need to volunteer to transcribe the other six chapters of the book and to index Volumes 6-9. When I say volunteer, I mean it. Time is not my only enemy. Money is also, and there simply isn't enough from the proceeds of sales of the books and newsletters to have the book privately typed or the Newsletter Indexed (besides, indexing requires someone with a feeling for the family's history). Thus, I could trade with a few of you in free subscriptions to the Newsletter, perhaps on a multiple year basis, and/or free copies of the eventual final product but that is about all.

The objective them would be, by the end of 1995, to have consolidated all that we have done through that date into book form. The shorter term objective is two-fold:

1. The Original manuscript of A Vision of Unity was misplaced in the Spring of 1989. Before it was lost, my printer, whose judgement I trust, had impressed upon me that the quality of the photos in the book were wearing out and the photos needed to be treated in order to preserve them. That point was muted when the manuscript was lost. The issue now is to place new photos in the manuscript, pre-treated, so that good quality copies of the book can still be turned out. I would like to have these photos in place, by your contributions or buy culling the Newsletters, by June 1991.

2. By the end of 1991, volumes 6-9 of Among Cousins needs to be indexed.

Anyone interested should contact me. 716-83BLAND.

**"THE UNDESERVED MISFORTUNES OF OUR UNHAPPY FAMILIES":
BEING A STORY ABOUT HOW GILES BLAND GOT HANGED AND
WHY THE JAMES RIVER BLANDS SETTLED IN AMERICA**

Prologue

This is a different kind of story than usually appears on these pages. It is a saga that unfolded in England and Virginia over 150 years, leading to the endurance in this country of the James River Bland family, the first to set down roots in the new world. It was not inevitable that the London Bland antecedents to this family would settle in Virginia. Indeed, there was a strong chance that this branch could have died out altogether, save for the outcome of a dramatic trans-Atlantic confrontation that involved deep and violent family passions and political fortune.

The story you are about to read, my dear subscribers, is true. It is the kind of story that could only be told by a genealogist, for it requires someone who possesses the right admixture of, monkish devotion, ego and audacity to imagine there is an audience interested in reading it. And a mad determination to force truth to emerge from fragmentary evidence. For the task, I humbly propose myself.

March 27, 1677

Giles Bland, Customs Collector in Virginia for His Majesty King Charles II, was hanged near Jamestown on March 27, 1677. Giles was a leader probably second in command, of the rebel forces in a sorry little event that history records as Bacon's Rebellion. ¹ Giles' paid for his disloyalty with his life, yet the chain of events and causes that led to Giles death were not entirely dependent on his affiliation with Bacon. Rather, his role in Bacon's Rebellion and his subsequent execution were the product of a complex matrix of inter-family conflicts that reached back to the Sixteenth Century. ² Bacon's Rebellion,

¹ William Waller Hening The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia, 1619-1792, II, p. 550. Hereafter referred to as Hening; Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Office, Charles II, X (1677-1680), pp. 14, 42-43, 165, 189. Hereafter Calendar of State Papers, Colonial and Domestic Series, will be referred to as CSPC and CSPD respectively. The background of Giles Bland's trial is found in Stephen Saunders Webb, 1676, (New York: 1984), pp. 128-154, esp. 151-154, hereafter referred to as Webb, 1676.

² Ralph Thoresby, Ducatus Leodensis, (Leeds: 1715), pp. 91, 94, 206-209 and 577-589, esp. 583-589. Hereafter referred to as Thoresby.

which resembled nothing so much as a gang of greedy pirates squabbling over rights to their ill gotten spoils, is not a sufficient legacy for Giles Bland. Indirectly, however, his misfortune led to the first foot hold in the New World for the James River Blands, for which we owe this obnoxious fellow a debt of gratitude and it couldn't have happened to a nicer guy. Had Giles' role been played by a smoother man, the Bland wealth in the New World might have been liquidated, with this branch of the family removing from Virginia to London. The Blands, like many English families, faced the challenge of mastering the personal and pragmatic qualities that were necessary to peacefully perpetuate family wealth in the New World. It is our good fortune that Giles Bland or his father John Bland didn't have a clue about how to achieve this balance. The conflicts within the family came to a head about 1674-1677, just in time to spill over into the cesspool of Virginia politics. Giles Bland paid for this old inter-generational rivalry with his life. In order to understand the conflict as it existed in the 1670s, one must go way back to the middle of the previous century and begin with the career of a remarkable young man who was Giles' Great Grandfather.

Adam Bland "The Ambitious"

Adam Bland (C1528-1594) was an ambitious young man from the provinces, who migrated to London about 1542, and secured an apprenticeship with a member of the Skinner's Company of London. Adam was born in Orton Parish, Westmoreland County England, just across the border from Sedberg in Yorkshire, and also, incidentally, not far from Penrith, Cumberland County, where another major branch of the family originated. ³ Adam must have been a very ambitious and intelligent young man, for by 1559 he had risen to membership in the Livery, or the managerial inner circle, of the Skinner's Company. This honor was capped by his appointment as Skinner to Queen Elizabeth in 1560. ⁴ The title of

³ Adam completed his apprenticeship in 1549. Apprenticeships were usually completed between a boys 14th and 21st years, thus it is reasonable to assume Adam was born about 1528, (VU, pp. 7-14). Adam was replaced by his eldest son Peter as Skinner to Queen Elizabeth in 1594, CSPD, Elizabeth I, III (1591-1594), p. 502.

⁴ A.W. Rowse, The Elizabethan Renaissance: Life of the Society, (New York: 1971, p. 47; J.W. Cross, Beadle of the Skinner's Company of London to Charles L. Bland, October 27, 1980; Prof. Elspeth Veale to Charles L. Bland, September 15, 1980; Nicholas Carlisle, Collections for A History of the Ancient Family of Bland, (London: 1826), p. 123, hereafter referred to as Carlisle.

Skinner to the Queen, though it demanded more service than monetary reward, certainly placed Adam in a position of high leadership in one of the most prominent of the Twelve Great Liveries of London and also positioned him to amass a considerable fortune. Along the way, Adam had married Joan or Jane Atkyns of London and they had a family of thirteen children. In the custom of his time, Adam passed on his fortune and position to his eldest son.

Peter Bland "The Mad"

Upon his death, Adam's post as Skinner to the Queen passed to his eldest son Peter Bland, (C1557-1627). Peter entered the Skinner's Guild by patrimony.⁵ He attained the pinnacle of success in the Company, Master Skinner, in 1618, but in 1611, he relinquished the title of Skinner to The Crown to a son-in-law. When he made out his will in 1615, Peter's annual earnings had a rateable value of 240 pounds sterling and he possessed a "grate personall estate worth \$10,000 pounds." ⁶

All of Peter's sons died young and his wife died in 1614. In his will, which he made out in 1615, Peter "divided all his faid eftate, real and personall (some small legacies excepted) among his faid daughters and their children." ⁷ Peter's clearly

⁵ Going in by patrimony meant that papa used his influence to get the young man in, probably when Peter was 21. Adam Bland and his wife Joan Atkyns had a family of 13 children, discussed in VU, pp. 15-75. Peter is discussed in VU pp. 23-33. After VU was published, Conrad and Nelle Mang of Houston Texas, discovered that Peter married Susan Mason of All Hallows Church, Lombard Street, London, August 12, 1583, (AC 3-1, p. 6).

⁶ "An Abstract of a Case in Chancerie, Wherein Sir Arnold Knight and others, are Plaintifes againft Lawrence Lownes of London, Scrivner, and other Defendants." (London, 1632), Public Record Office, (PRO) S.P. 16/102 003101, Hereafter referred to as An Abstract of a Case. Reference to this case is also found in John Rushworth, Historical Collections, II, (London: 1703) pp. 151-152 and; Carlisle, pp. 130-133; The case is briefly discussed in CSPD, Charles I, II, (1627-1628) p. 550 and V, (1631-1633), p. 233; CSPD, Elizabeth I, III, (1591-1594), p. 502 and CSPD, James I, IX (1611-1618), p. 76. Peter's service to the Skinner's Company is noted in Cross and Veale, Op. Cit. and in John James Lambert, Ed. Records of the Skinner's Company of London, (London: 1934), pp. 281, 286 and James Foster Wadmore, Some Account of the Worshipful Company of Skinners, (London: 1912), p. 192. Cf, William Herbert, The History of the Twelve Great Livery Companys of London, II, (London: 1837), pp. 299-382, hereafter referred to as Herbert.

⁷ "An Abstract of a Case" Ibid.

intended to pass his fortune on to his daughters is clear, but was complicated by the McAwber like presence of two surviving brothers, most significantly the youngest, John Bland (1572-1632), and by the appearance within the family of one Lawrence Lownes, a Scrivener, (a copyist or writer) who married Peter's niece in 1617.

Peter was so taken with Lownes, an artful, cunning and charming young man, that he bestowed upon him a wedding gift of 150 pounds and employed him as manager of his estate. ⁸ In 1621, Peter estated all his lands upon his brother John Bland and Lawrence Lownes, making them joint executors of his will and enjoining them to sell all his land and divide the resulting proceeds among his children and grand-children. By this time, however, Peter was aging and had become "weake in his memorie and underftanding." Peter would greet visitors by saying "Yea, I am a poore man and the King hath all my eftate." Peter could not remember the faces or names of old friends, and when they came to visit he would admonish them to bring their own food. ⁹ He must also have become paranoid, for in 1622 he made a further legal move which proved to be his undoing. Peter made up a new codicil to his will, adding a trusted old friend named Baldwin to the list of co-executors. He placed the will in a strong-box with three locks and gave one key each to the three executors. By whatever means, Lownes got the keys from the other two executors and burned the will. Lownes and Peter's corrupt man-servant Hoskins, removed the poor old feeble Peter from his home in London to Lownes' country residence, where they euchred him into revising his will, cutting out Baldwin and John Bland and "tending exceedingly to the prejudice of his children and grand-children and to the fole benefit of Lownes, fo as Lownes thereby compaffed to himfelf," what we today would call the whole pile. Outraged, Peter's family, led by Sir Arnold Herbert, a son in-law, brought charges against Lownes in a case that was resolved in 1632, which resulted in the jailing of Lownes, his attorney and Hoskins. ¹⁰

John Bland "The Grosser"

The posture of Peter's brother John in this matter remains a mystery. Was he a legitimate executor, cut out of the proceedings by his unscrupulous nephew Lownes, or was he an accomplice who

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid

somehow profited from the scheme? ¹¹ Whatever the answer, the trouble with Peter's estate seems to have created a family crisis that would take a century and generations to heal. Peter died about 1627, and one of his brother's Gregory Bland (1567-???) fled to Ireland soon after his death. ¹² John Bland hastened to make up his own will in 1627 and its language left no doubt about his displeasure with Gregory Bland and Lawrence Lownes:

I give to my god children twenty shillings apiece, except Lawrence Lownes daughter and Gregory Bland's son or daughter, for Lownes played the knave with me, and Gregory Bland deceived me likewise, so neither they nor theirs shall have one penny of mine . . . Judith Lownes not to have anything, the wife of Lawrence Lownes. ¹³

When Peter died, the sole male heir of Adam Bland and Joan Atkyns was their youngest son John Bland. John's huge family was instrumental to the settlement of the Bland family in Virginia. By 1627, John was a successful international merchant. Also, John was appointed receiver of the King's rents in Yorkshire in 1628 and was an active member of the Grocer's company, having bought his way into the Guild in 1626 and attaining the rank of Company Warden in 1629. ¹⁴ John also was an active member of the Virginia Company of London. From 1618-1624, John held 400 acres in Virginia and was invested in Martin's Hundred. He was also a participant in a shipping consortium that conducted trade with Virginia. ¹⁵ Because of his connection with the Grocer's Company

¹¹ John was by 1622 a successful businessman with a sharp acumen for the bottom line. It seems doubtful that Lownes could have "played the knave" with him so completely about such a sensitive matter for so long.

¹² Thoresby, p. 208.

¹³ Henry Waters, Genealogical Gleanings (London: 1901), pp. 813-814. Hereafter referred to as Waters.

¹⁴ CSPD, Charles I, III (1628-1629), pp. 209, 331, 508-509. Joseph Aubrey Rees, The Worshipful Company of Grocers, an Historical Retrospect, (London: 1923), app. 1, p. 189; W.W. Grantham, List of the Wardens of the Grocer's Company from 1345 to 1907 (London: 1907), p. 25; CF Herbert I, pp. 297-388.

¹⁵ Susan Myra Kingsbury, Ed. Records of the Virginia Company of London, (London: 1906-1924), I, pp. 275-276, 386, 391-392, 410, 413, 467; II, p. 420; III, pp. 59, 66, 81, 466, 592-593; Bernard Bailyn, "Politics and Social Structure in Virginia," in James K. Martin, Ed. Interpreting Colonial America, (New York: 1975) pp. 187-204, Hereafter referred to as Bailyn.

(actually, very prominent merchants or "grossers" who dealt in large volume merchandise), John is known to family genealogists as "John the Grocer."¹⁶

Whether John Bland made his fortune on his own or got a boost from the estate of his brother Peter is not certain. When he died suddenly in 1632, however, John Bland was a wealthy man. The extent of John's wealth is suggested by a petition to the King by his widow Susan, who in 1633 begged protection from creditors, claiming already to have satisfied claims exceeding 15,000 pounds sterling.¹⁷ John's accumulated wealth and the breadth of his business ventures, suggests that by the time of his death, he had reached the upper strata of the London Merchant class and aspired to a position within the landed gentry.

On September 30, 1606, John married a Huguenot girl, Susan DeBlere, (1590-1664/1665) in Stade, Germany. Susan bore John sixteen children, including twelve, eight sons and four daughters, who survived to adulthood.¹⁸ The marriages of these children left John and Susan's family well connected in London society. In 1626, their eldest daughter Mary married Emmanuel Proby, whose father, an active member of the Grocer's Company, was also Lord Mayor of London. Daughters Susannah and Anne married merchants and daughter Elizabeth married a minister of the gospel.¹⁹ Similarly, John's eight sons were groomed to succeed him. The eldest, Thomas Bland, (1610-1678) was trained at the Inner Temple and with his brother John (1612-1680), was appointed receiver of the King's Rents in Yorkshire, possibly simply having them passed on from their father. Robert Bland (1617-1669) was trained in the ministry at Cambridge and was Rector of the Wigboro Magna Church in Essex. Robert's daughter Elizabeth married a half-brother or in-law to Sir Joseph Williamson, the junior secretary of state for the Privy Council,

¹⁶ Joseph Hunter, Familiae Minorium Gentium, (London: 1895), pp. 421-427.

¹⁷ Richard Smith, Obituaries: 1623-1674, 44, (London: Camden Society Publications); On Susan Deblere's petition to the King, CSPD, Charles I, VI, (1633-1634), p. 44.

¹⁸ AC 3-1, p. 6 and VU, pp. 52-69. Susan was the daughter of Marie DeBlere. Her father's name is unknown. One possibility is Theodorick, a name given John and Susan's youngest son, that had not theretofore appeared in the Bland family. The Huguenots were French Protestants, persecuted terribly before the rule of King Henry Navarre, himself a Protestant who had to adopt the Catholic faith to claim the throne of France.

¹⁹ VU, pp. 55-56 and 64-65.

called "the northern secretary", a high government official that Giles Bland communicated with during Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia. Richard Bland, (1624-1692) moved to Leeds and was called "Lord of Beeston Manor."²⁰

The remaining sons were merchants, including most importantly Edward Bland (1613-1652), Adam Bland, (1616-1647), William Bland (1622-1658) and Theodorick Bland (1629-1671). These sons became the spearheads of settlement of the Bland family in Virginia.²¹ From 1640-1671, the brothers managed the family's affairs somewhat as follows:

Thomas, with the assistance of John, acted as Receiver of the King's Rents at Yorkshire until 1648 and after the accession of Charles II in 1660. Apparently, the family was stripped of the position during the Puritan interregnum. John directed merchant affairs from London and later Tangier, supervising the family business in Malaga, Spain and Virginia. The younger brothers, Edward, Adam, William and Theodorick acted as on scene agents in Spain and Virginia.

As noted before, the family's Virginia connection dated back to John the Grosser's participation in the Virginia Company. The elder John never set foot in Virginia but ship passenger lists show his sons John and Edward shuttling back and forth between Virginia and London from 1635-1645. By the mid 1640s, Adam and William were acting as family agents in Virginia. Adam died at sea in 1647, probably enroute to Virginia in the company of a contingent of 26 settlers, including his older brother Edward and his family, a sister and a nephew.²² Edward took over affairs about 1647. William and Theodorick went to Spain, where William died about 1658.²³

²⁰ W.G. Cooke, Students Admitted to the Inner Temple, 1547-1660, (London: 1877), p. 25; John Venn and John Venn, Comp. Alumni Cantabrigenses (1) Part 1, (Cambridge: 1922), p. 165; Thoresby, pp. 91, 94, and 587. CF VU, pp. 64, 110, 115.

²¹ As did three daughters. Mary Bland Proby's children and her sisters Susan and Elizabeth migrated to Virginia. Descendants of Susan Bland Pearson still live in the United States.

²² VU, pp. 81-91.

²³ VU, pp. 65, 68-69. It is probable that a cousin, George Bland (1630-1658) also died in service to John Bland at or about the same time and place as William, VU pp. 46-47.

Edward Bland "The Fair"

Edward Bland was a formidable man, educated at Westminster and fluent in Spanish, Dutch and Latin. He was a Spanish merchant in 1643, just before moving to Virginia. Soon after his arrival in Virginia, Edward ceased calling himself a "London Merchant" and simply called himself a merchant. By the time he died in 1652, he had built a house in Virginia. ²⁴ Edward had also brought his immediate and extended family with him to Virginia, suggesting, in conjunction with these other attributes, that he intended to settle down.

Edward was principally engaged in land acquisition. In 1646 and 1647, through head rights and direct purchase, he gained 3,300 acres in Charles City and Surry Counties. In 1649, he gained an additional 3,000 acres and at about the same time, purchased an 8,000 acre tract called Kymages, originally a part of Berkeley Hundred. ²⁵

Thus, soon after his arrival in Virginia, Edward had acquired some 14,300 acres. His brother Theodorick would later add to these holdings, especially a 2,000 acre tract called Westover, and another large property named Jordans, so that by 1678, John Bland could boast of extensive family ownership of land in Virginia, including:

Bartletts, Kimechys, Herring Creek, Jordanes, Westover, Upper Chippoakes, Sunken Marsh, Basses Choice, Jamestown Lott, Lawnes Creek and all other lands. ²⁶

Edward is best remembered for The Discovery of New Brittain which recounts his travels with three Englishmen and a native guide south from Fort Henry to upper North Carolina. Convinced that the area would yield a rich tobacco and sugar crop, Edward wrote the pamphlet, circulated it in London and petitioned the

²⁴ VU, pp. 87-91.

²⁵ Ibid. and Nell Marion Nugent, Cavaliers and Pioneers, I, (Richmond: 1934) pp. 160, 171, hereafter referred to in notes as Nugent; Hening, VI, pp. 303-306.

²⁶ William and Mary Quarterly (2), IV (1924) pp. 202-203, hereafter referred to as WMQ. Edward Bland lived at Kymages, though he was known as Edward Bland of Lawnes Creek, Thoresby, p. 586.

Virginia Council for permission to settle the territory. The council granted the petition, but Edward died in 1652 and the project with him. ²⁷

Edward Bland represents the prototype of the younger English son sent to Virginia to draw together the rudimentary elements of a settlement in order to replicate the style of the English landed class in the entirely unpredictable social, legal and physical environment of the new world. ²⁸ Edward's death undoubtedly disrupted this family striving, and his death must have given pause to John Bland while he considered his next move. By now Virginia had claimed the lives of two brothers. The prospect of sending more of his family's blood there might not have been inviting to John. On the other hand, John had little choice, for the huge family land holdings as well as John's lucrative shipping interests in far away Virginia were vulnerable to encroachment. Coupled with set-backs John had experienced with the Cromwell Government and the precarious nature of trade with Spain, ²⁹ the Virginia situation demanded the on-scene coordination of a highly trustworthy person to manage family affairs. For this task, John turned to his youngest brother.

Theodorick Bland "The Virginian"

Theodorick Bland (1629-1671) was a providential choice. Before going to Virginia, he had been working with his brother William in St. Lucar, Spain. It is doubly the Bland family's good fortune that Theodorick went to Virginia, thus avoiding the fate that befell his brother William and cousin George a few years later in Spain. Also, Theodorick was a young man when he arrived in Virginia about 1654. He was perhaps the first thoroughbred Virginian. For seventeen years Theodorick managed and built up the family's estate in Virginia in what appears to have been an atmosphere of calm harmony and reconciliation. Quickly, he became a model citizen, donating land for the erection of a church, a court-house and country prison and becoming active in Virginia

²⁷ Edward Bland. The Discoverie of New Brittain, (London: 1651). Edward's exploration is discussed in Allan Briceland, "The Search for Edward Bland's New Brittain," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 87, (1979), pp. 131-157, hereafter referred to as VMHB.

²⁸ Bailyn, p. 192.

²⁹ Neville Williams, "The Tribulations of John Bland, Merchant, London, Seville, Jamestown, Tangier, 1643-1680," VMHB, LXXII, (1964), pp. 19-41, esp. 23-24. Hereafter referred to as Williams. This article clearly establishes John Bland's relationship with Samuel Pepys and identifies John and the London Merchant and Mayor of Tangier by the same name.

politics, serving as speaker of the House of Burgesses from 1659-1661, Justice of Charles City County, 1665-1666 and as a member of the governor's council, 1665-1671.³⁰ Perhaps Theodorick's most enduring achievement, however, was his well placed marriage and the family he left behind. He married in 1660, Anna Bennett, (1639-1688), daughter of Richard Bennett, a former Puritan governor of Virginia. Part of Anna's dowry was her father's home in Jamestown. Theodorick and Anna had three sons, Theodorick (1663-1700), Richard (1665-1720) and John (1668-1746).³¹ Richard and John had descendants who contributed significantly to political life in Virginia and Maryland during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth centuries.

Theodorick's death in 1671 lay bare some underlying and intergenerational problems that he had apparently handled through graceful inter-personal skills. Part of the problem lay in the widow of the elder Edward Bland. She was a first cousin, Jane Bland, daughter of Gregory Bland, despised brother of Edward's father. It is not clear whether the older animosities carried over to the next generation - certainly it didn't in the case of Edward and Jane - but the question of land ownership had to be ambiguous. Upon his death, title to Edward's property in Virginia, though it was purchased with family money and, John

³⁰ Observations about Theodorick's positive work in Colonial Virginia Government should be tempered by Carole Shammas' comment that "Colonists sought offices primarily to protect their interests." Shammas, "English Born and Creole Elites in Turn-of-The Century Virginia," in Thad Tate and David Ammerman, Ed., The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century, (New York: 1979), p. 279. Hereafter referred to as Shammas. Also worthy of note is Edmund Morgan's brief but excellent analysis of the interests of the various parties in Bacon's Rebellion, in American Slavery, American Freedom, (New York: 1975), pp. 250-270, hereafter referred to as Morgan. Morgan, as well as Webb, 1676, makes it clear that the Virginia Council was composed of a gang of thieves and hoodlums that would make the Godfather blush and fear for his good name. Whether Theodorick could stand amid this nest of vipers while remaining unblemished is a secret history has not yielded. Theodorick was buried at Westover, and his grave may be found at the Westover estate today, with the heart felt inscription of his widow on the tomb stone. Theodorick is a beautiful and musical name that was replicated down through the generations and is still used today, even in families not directly related to the James River Blands.

³¹ Theodorick's activities are discussed in VU, pp. 91-94. The lines of his sons comprise VU, Chapter 5, pp. 127-190 and AC 5-1, pp. 7-25.

made abundantly clear, was regarded as family property, duly passed to the widow Jane Bland. Three factors complicated this development. First, Edward and Jane had a son, Edward (1635-1690), who attained his majority before his mother's death and consequently had claim to the land, most particularly the giant Chipchoakes and Kymages tract and the smaller Basse's Choice and Lawnes Creek properties. Second, the widow Jane Bland very quickly married Edward's lawyer, John Holmwood. While he was living Theodorick managed to join with his in-law Holmwood and his nephew Edward Bland in an amicable joint custody of the Virginia property. After Theodorick's death, however, it would have been natural for John to feel uneasy about Holmwood, a family member by marriage only, in such close and uncontested proximity to the family's holdings. Third, however, there was another in-law on Gregory Bland's side that no one was ever able to deal with. It seems that soon after Edward's death, Jane's elder sister Frances Bland, (C1603-1677), "at near fifty years of age," migrated to Virginia and settled in, then quickly married one John Coggan, a "chiurgeon", which meant he was a quack doctor.³²

However much he knew about medicine, Coggan was a boozier, brawler, an irascible cheat and scoundrel. His patients fought with him over what they thought were exorbitant and unfair fees, and survivors of patients whose deaths he had hastened, sued him.³³ In 1665, Coggan was fined in court for an assault upon one Wilkins in which Coggan, axe in hand, had threatened to chop off Wilkins' leg and "knock out his brains."³⁴ Again, in 1673:

John Black for laying hands on John Coggan (in the court and Coggan appearing bloody at the nose). Also, John Coggan for the assault made by him on John Black, pulling him by the hayre of the head and other rudeness . . .³⁵

Transition

A troublesome vacuum in family affairs existed after Theodorick's death. Coggan and Holmwood must have been unsettling to John Bland. There was a lesson in Theodorick Bland's experience in Virginia that his brother John never quite learned. In a far off colony where events were fluid and life was brief, where quack ministers of the gospel, lawyers, doctors,

³² Thoresby, p. 585 and Beverly Fleet, Virginia Colonial Abstracts, XXII, (1961), p. 12, hereafter referred to as Fleet.

³³ Fleet, XI and XII (1961) passim.

³⁴ Fleet, XIII, pp. 61, 69-72.

³⁵ Fleet, XIII, p. 95.

politicians and other like bandits, like Coggan, were among the chief predators upon the vulnerable estates of the deceased, established institutional forms could not be relied upon to retain family wealth. Theodorick's personal touch with the widow and in-laws of his brother Edward could not be replaced by a caveat from London. The vast family land holdings were now divided, with the widows of Edward and Theodorick and their heirs claiming large disparate chunks of it. John perceived the need for a reliable (to John) family male to consolidate and look after what he still considered unified family interests. His choice of a successor to Theodorick could not have been more unfortunate in this pivotal moment for the Bland family. After a brief hiatus, about 1674, John decided to send his son Giles Bland to Virginia. Disaster followed closely. But before discussing Giles Bland's brief experience in Virginia, let us turn back the clock to examine the adult life of John Bland himself. To do so provides a more logical explanation of John's attempt to maintain control of the family claim in Virginia.

John Bland "The Merchant"

John Bland was born in 1612, the fourth child and second eldest son of John Bland the Grosser and Susan Deblere. His educational background is unclear, but in the midst of well educated brothers, we may assume that he was equally well trained. Though Samuel Pepys would later pronounce him "no scholler, he knows not the rules of writing orderly,"³⁶ John wrote several pamphlets on trade and commerce, including Trade Revived, or a Way Proposed to Restore the Trade of This Our English Nation, (1659), To the King's Most Humble Majesty, the Humble Remonstrance of John Bland, (1663) and probably A Short Discourse of the Late Forren Acquests Which England Holds, Vis, of Dunkirk, Tangier, Boombay, Jamayca ect., (1662).³⁷ It is clear from Neville Williams' brief essay that by 1640 John Bland was well established among London merchants, trading in wine and tobacco in Seville, Virginia and London.³⁸ John was intensely interested in business, well respected among his peers though not brilliant, persistent, harsh, stubborn and heavy handed.

John was an Anglican and was a member of the St. Olaves Parish from the 1640s, but when religion collided with business

³⁶ Robert Latham and William Matthews, Ed., The Diary of Samuel Pepys, III, (Berkeley, California: 1970-1983), p. 291, hereafter all references to the Pepys diary are referred to as Pepys, pronounced Peeps.

³⁷ Ibid, Note 7.

³⁸ Williams, p. 20.

or personal affairs, like other members of his family, he was pragmatic. He married, about 1645, Sarah Greene, daughter of Giles Greene, a prominent parliamentarian from Dorset on the Puritan side. It was a move that reflected John's religious toleration and good business sense, though oblique references by Pepys also suggest that Sarah was a beautiful and stunning woman. Although he was a loyalist during the Civil War period, John attempted to tread carefully between the warring factions, testing and probing but trying to avoid provocation of either side.³⁹

Alas, John was somewhat inept at these postures. He never tired of reminding politicians how much money he brought into the treasury by his trade and investment, and how powerful a merchant he was. In an atmosphere as volatile as Civil War England, such posturing eventually got John in hot water. In 1648, John and his brother Thomas were charged by Parliamentarians of embezzling 6,000 pounds of Yorkshire rents. There was nothing to the charges. Thomas and John were only pawns in an attempt to discredit Giles Greene. The charges were exposed by Sir Henry Vane as "notoriously base", and were dropped, but not before they resulted in a suspension of John and Thomas from the Yorkshire receivership, a severe blow indeed.⁴⁰

Also, the false charges finally ensnared John with the government over another matter. John had been attempting for about five years to reclaim confiscated merchandise valued at about 14,000 pounds. The new charges cast suspicion on the validity of the old claim, which was not finally settled until 1654, and then at only a fraction of the original estimated value.

In 1655, John Bland secured a contract to provision the British Fleet for its war with the Spain, and he sent his "kinsman and loyal subject" George Bland to assist his brother William in the war zone, where both were killed.⁴¹ Additionally John had lost two young sons in 1654 and 1659, as well as his brothers Adam and Edward in Virginia. In a business, political and personal sense, the Civil War and Protectorate years were hard for John Bland and his wife Sarah Greene.

³⁹ Williams, *Passim*; Carlisle, pp. 142-143. On John Bland's religious views, see E.M.Q. Routh, Tangier: England's Lost Atlantic Outpost, 1661-1684, (London: 1912), p. 304, hereafter referred to as Routh.

⁴⁰ Violet A. Rowe, Sir Henry Vane the Younger: A Study in Political and Administrative History, (London: 1970), pp. 103, 136.

⁴¹ VU, pp. 46-47 and Williams, pp. 23-24. CSPD, Commonwealth, XI, (1657-1658), pp. 352-353 and CSPD, Commonwealth, XII, (1658-1659), pp. 172-174.

The restoration which brought Charles II to the throne in 1660, brought a new and happier life to John and Sarah. By then, they lived with their single surviving child Giles, in a large house on Hart Street not far from the Thames and the London Navy Yard. The house was shared by a melange of John and Sarah's siblings, relatives and government lodgers.

The restoration also brought a period of better business for John, whose influence in the court of Charles II grew steadily. John's most important connection was Samuel Pepys, whose sharp and insightful writing leaves a fleshly record of the daily lives of the Blands, whom he evidently visited often:

They have a kinswoman that they call daughter in the house, a short, ugly, red-haired slut that plays upon the virginalls and sings, but after such a country manner I was weary of it but yet could not but commend it. ⁴²

John Bland and Pepys shared in interests and ties with the London merchant community. John's mother and Pepys wife were Huguenots, and both lived within St. Olaves parish. Pepys wrote of frequent visits to the Bland's home and of stuffing himself while there, with food, drink and conviviality. Business, however, was the cement of their relationship and Pepys extended John's circle of influential acquaintances. Pepys introduced John Bland to Thomas Povey, one of the Masters of Request for King Charles, and treasurer of the Tangier colony until 1665. Later, John's son Giles and Povey's daughter Frances were married, and by extension, John Bland and his wife were introduced to the prominent administrator William Blathwayt, whose mother was a Povey. ⁴³

Pepys admired John's business acumen, if not his literary style and long windedness:

. . . comes Mr. Bland to me and sat till 11 at night with me, talking of a garrison at Tangier and serving them with pieces of eight. . . being quite tired with him, I got him gone . . . ⁴⁴

⁴² Pepys, IV, (1663), pp. 242-243.

⁴³ On The Povey, Pepys, Blathwayt, Bland connection, see Gertrude A. Jacobsen, William A. Blathwayt: A Late Seventeenth Century English Administrator, (New Haven: 1932), pp. 43-49, passim, and Wilcomb Washburn, Bacon's Rebellion, Unpublished Dissertation, (Harvard:1955), pp. 232-245, hereafter referred to as Washburn, Bacon's Rebellion.

⁴⁴ Pepys, III, (1662) p. 291; IX, (1668-1669), pp. 392-393 and V, (1664) p. 226. Pieces of eight refers to a contemporary Spanish coin that was marked by the figure eight.

Pepys most important association with John Bland concerned England's newly acquired colony of Tangier, which had been gained as part of Catherine Braganza's marriage dowry. ⁴⁵ John quickly grasped the importance of Tangier as a critically located trading center at the mouth of the Mediterranean, and as a financial opportunity. He first mentioned the possibility of some role in Tangier affairs to Pepys in 1662. Bland hoped to consolidate his commercial position by gaining appointment as consul to Malaga, where he hoped to spend "all the vintage time", devoting his off-seasons to Tangier. Though he never got Malaga, he continued to press Pepys for Tangier:

. . . comes Mr. Bland . . . a mind hath he to be employed there (in Tangier) but dares not desire any courtesy of me; and yet would fain engage me to be for him. ⁴⁶

John's lobbying paid off. By October 1664 he moved to Tangier with his son Giles. ⁴⁷ By 1665, John was writing rhapsodically to Pepys about the colony, urging settlement by men of property, that Tangier could be made a "beautiful and delightful place:" ⁴⁸

Nothing can be of greater service to the King than to make Tangier famous, which can be done by making it cheaper for ships to land and reship from thence to go direct to Spain. ⁴⁹

The above was consistent with John's business pragmatism, which favored the immediately workable in a business situation so fluid that its needs could not be encompassed by law or fixed procedure. It was in harmony with his earlier "Remonstrance" to the King which he wrote in 1663, protesting the negative effects of the Acts of Trade on his Virginia-London business. In the remonstrance, he denounced the Acts as ill conceived and doomed

⁴⁵ Tangier's connection to Charles II and Catherine of Braganza and its importance to England is discussed in Antonia Frazer, Royal Charles, (New York: 1979) pp. 203-205, and Routh, *Passim*.

⁴⁶ Williams, p. 26 and Pepys, V, (1664), p. 226.

⁴⁷ Sarah Greene remained in London to care for the aging and sick Susan Deblere, then near death. Susan died the following February.

⁴⁸ CSPD, Charles II, IV, (1664-1665), pp. 307-308.

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 346.

to failure because they excluded the "Hollanders" who had been vital in siphoning off low grade tobacco that had no English market. He also objected to the necessity to clear goods through English ports. Ironically, John's arguments were in harmony with those of Governor Berkeley.⁵⁰

There is no evidence that the government heeded John's opinions about the Acts of Trade, but in questions of Tangier he was closer to the policy makers and he had some effect. Although Tangier's chief role was military - the strategic oversight of the Straits of Gibraltar - English policy from the start had encouraged its use for trade, as evidenced by the first Governor's instructions to construct a mole (a pier or break-water) to protect shipping. In 1668, when the Tangier Committee moved to reinforce the merchant's leverage in the colony by creating a civil government to counterbalance the military influence, John Bland was appointed Tangier's first Mayor.⁵¹

John was hostile to military authority from the start. Once, even before he reached Tangier, John harangued Pepys "till eleven at night" about the obstacles raised by the military to free trade in Tangier. On his return to London in April 1666, Bland told Pepys:

In short, how all things are out of order there and likely to be - and the place never likely to come to anything while the soldier governs all and doth not encourage trade.⁵²

Soon after his appointment as mayor, John picked an unseemly quarrel with Colonel Henry Norwood, the military commander who was also acting Governor. In retaliation, Norwood "undertook to jostle just a little," upon Bland's mayoral charter, demanding that the merchants - and he was surely referring to John Bland - cease what he claimed was the unlicensed selling of wine. With the aid of his son Giles, John Bland set about spreading rumors that Norwood was pocketing his soldier's wages and profiting from other underhanded practices. Norwood wrote to a friend that John Bland had him "by the eares" but the Governor was a tough old

⁵⁰ The Remonstrance, written probably about 1662-1663, is located in the Library of Congress, CO/1, Folio 36, No. 142. CF, Charles McClean Andrews, The Colonial Period of American History, IV, (New Haven: 1938) p. 137.

⁵¹ Routh, pp. 113-117.

⁵² Pepys, VII, (1666), p. 109.

customer who had once been imprisoned on suspicion of murder and had also here and there been rumored to be a cannibal.⁵³ Chastened as they contemplated a head to head confrontation with Norwood, (perhaps at the dinner table). John and Giles fled to London where John lodged a complaint against Norwood. An enraged Pepys hit the ceiling, calling John Bland a "foolish, light headed man:"

Never did I see so great an instance of the use of grammar and knowledge how to tell a man's tale as this day, Bland having spoiled his business by ill telling it.⁵⁴

Pepys anger however was momentary. He called Norwood "shitty, carping, insolent and ironically, so profane in style that I ever saw in my life."⁵⁵ A more important figure, with a longer memory and infinitely more power than Pepys, would remember this episode, however, to the detriment of John Bland and his son Giles. He was the Duke of York, James Stuart, to become James II in 1685. James blamed John Bland and Thomas Povey whose daughter married Giles Bland, and who was also on the Tangier Committee, for the problems in the colony. In the shorter term, although Pepys blamed Norwood for blocking some "really good reforms" proposed by John Bland and concluded that Tangier would never do well with the two of them there, the Tangier Committee executed a typical British remedy for a festering problem: it sent the Blands and Norwood back to Tangier to battle it out, thwarting the prophecy of one of Norwood's men that Tangier would thrive "provided Mr. John Bland comes not againe to disturbe us."⁵⁶ Unreconstructed and unregenerate in his opposition to the military, John Bland remained in Tangier until 1676 when news from Virginia that his son Giles had been captured and imprisoned forced him to return to London.

Giles Bland and the Family Claim

By this time, Giles Bland (1647-1677) had been in Virginia for two years. John had sent Giles, his only surviving son, to Virginia to settle the tangled family affairs left in the wake

⁵³ Routh, pp. 117, 122-123 and Williams, p. 26. On Norwood,, P.H. Hardacre, "The Further Adventures of Henry Norwood," VMHB, LXVII, (1959), pp. 271-283, esp. 276-278.

⁵⁴ Pepys, IX, (1668-1669), pp. 392-393.

⁵⁵ Ibid, pp. 430-431.

⁵⁶ Routh, p. 153; Webb, 1676, pp. 152-153.

of Theodorick Bland's death in 1671. As noted above, it was logical for John to look to his son for this mission. By 1674, there was no other younger Bland male to perform the work. Whatever John's reasons, however, Giles was a disastrous choice. To understand why, it may be useful to contrast Giles with his two predecessors in Virginia. Edward and Theodorick Bland had presided over some twenty five years of calm family stewardship in Virginia. Both arrived in Virginia as merchants but both also made the gestures of settling down and becoming part of what was somewhat euphemistically called the Virginia community, Edward by his land acquisitions and construction of a house, Theodorick by his marriage to the daughter of a prominent Virginian, his residence in Jamestown, his various services in the Virginia government and continued land acquisitions. During this time, as evidenced by John Bland's remonstrance to the King over the trade laws, the Bland family was in approximate harmony with the Virginia government. Theodorick must have possessed a conciliatory nature, evidenced by the semblance of family peace from 1654-1671, which was potentially a disruptive time, both in a legal and inter-family context.

The characteristics of Giles Bland could not have been more different. Giles has been described, somewhat charitably, as "a man of active and stirring disposition."⁵⁷ The discussion above about his joint rabble-rousing with his father in Tangier coupled with what we know of his behavior in Virginia, makes it clear that he was an abrasive, haughty, intemperate, somewhat immature man. Giles also was a boozier, and "heated with too much brandy and wine," twice made critical blunders that hastened his isolation and death.⁵⁸

Further, whereas Theodorick Bland had married a local woman, Giles married Frances Povey, daughter of his father's London associate, Thomas Povey. Theodorick settled in Virginia for the long haul; Giles mission was very different: he came to Virginia to liquidate the family claim and leave. He never intended to settle down. Further, while Theodorick Bland had ingratiated himself with the local elite by community building and holding public office, Giles came to Virginia in a posture of defiance of local authority from the start. Giles was not very likeable and not liked, he was not trusted by the locals. He was in the classic sense an intruder.

⁵⁷ Charles M. Andrews, Ed., Narratives of the Insurrections: 1675-1690, (New York: 1915) p. 64, hereafter referred to as Andrews.

⁵⁸ See quote about brandy and wine below, Note 67, p. 25

It is likely that the reputation Giles made for himself in Tangier preceded him, for Henry Norwood was a kinsman of Governor Berkeley by a "near affinity in blood."⁵⁹ In 1675, after Giles had unified the Virginia Council, particularly Berkeley, against him, Norwood was in London for a discussion with the Virginia agents.⁶⁰ Certainly then, and probably earlier, Norwood would have had ample opportunity to apprise Berkeley of Giles' reputation, intelligence which no doubt reinforced Berkeley's almost total contempt of Giles Bland. Though Giles was "no grate admirer of Sir William's goodness," Berkeley reserved for Giles Bland a cold and unreserved fury.⁶¹ Saddled by these reputational and self-inflicted negatives, Giles was doomed from the start.

Giles Bland first appeared in the Virginia records in the Autumn of 1674. He moved quickly to recover and dispose of the disputed family property. In a transaction consummated with his cousin Edward Bland on March 20, 1674/1675 he appears to have

⁵⁹ Berkeley's "near affinity in blood" with Norwood is noted in Bailyn, "Politics and Social Structure in Virginia," P. 194. Washburn noted that Berkeley's brother served on the Tangier Committee and fell out with Povey over his handling of the Tangier Accounts, Washburn, Bacon's Rebellion, p. 237.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Andrews, p. 64. An excellent discussion of Berkeley's attitude and performance as well as his "fit" within the British Colonial Administration and Norwood's relationship to Virginia, is found in Stephen Saunders Webb, The Governors General: The English Army and the Definition of Empire, 1569-1681, (Chapel Hill: 1979), pp. 329-372, esp. 340-343, referred to hereafter as Webb, The Governors General. Fuller portraits of Berkeley and Bland are provided in Webb, 1676, (New York: 1984), passim. Webb gives Giles Bland credit for considerably more intelligence, political acuity and purpose than he ever had. Webb's interpretation varies from my own which is that Giles Bland was appointed to the post of Customs Collector for reasons typical in the British system, but was otherwise the wrong man for the job, who had a knack for doing the wrong thing, in the wrong way, at the wrong time, and for the wrong reasons. Webb's portrait of Berkeley as a man of failing mental, physical and political powers, poised precariously between compulsive thievery, senility and loss of control of the political situation, is a welcome corrective to the somewhat adulatory treatment of Berkeley in Wilcomb Washburn's The Governor and the Rebel, (New York: 1957), passim, hereafter referred to as Washburn, The Governor and the Rebel.

reclaimed Kymages. Similarly, he liquidated Basse's Choice and Lawnes Creek without difficulty in January 1675-1676.⁶²

Westover, Jordans Point and Jamestown Lot didn't fall so easily. Anna Bennett Bland, now a widow and executrix of Theodorick Bland's estate, viewed the property as rightfully hers, to be transmitted to her sons when they attained their majority, (they were children, ages 6, 9 and 11 in 1674). Anna dug in her heels, whereby Giles "in accommodating ye whole affaire with his aunt . . . found many difficulties."⁶³

Giles did not move against Anna Bennett until November 18, 1674, but had in fact been trying to negotiate with her for several months. Settlement of what was at best a very delicate matter was exacerbated by Giles' mean spirited approach, exemplified by his demand that a mare Theodorick had given one of his sons be turned over in the property settlement, and his seizure of several servants, who had been employed in Theodorick's household for many years.⁶⁴ Anna Bennett was not without defenses however, for Theodorick had befriended powerful members of the Governor's Council, most notably the Ludwells, Philip and Thomas, who came to her defense.⁶⁵ Though Berkeley and Anna's father Richard Bennett were not friendly, Anna's position of prominence in the Jamestown Community as a daughter of a former governor gave her some insulation. Finally, in 1675 Anna remarried to one St. Ledger Codd of Northumberland County, a lawyer and military man who supported Governor Berkeley during Bacon's Rebellion. Anna was a dangerous woman to trifle with.⁶⁶

The initial confrontation that dragged the Berkeley government into the Bland's family matter occurred at the home of Thomas Ludwell on October 3, 1674. Giles had gone to Ludwell's

⁶² Hening, VI, p. 303; Thoresby, p. 586; Nugent II, p. 217; Elizabeth David ed. Surry County Virginia Records, Book 1, (1652-1684), (Richmond: 1957) p. 137, and WMQ (1) V, (1900), pp. 214-215.

⁶³ VMHB, XXI (1913), p. 127; Interestingly, Morgan states that the first major rally in Bacon's Rebellion in which Nathaniel Bacon took leadership of the rebel forces, was held at Jordan's Point, Morgan, p. 256.

⁶⁴ H. R. McIlwaine, Ed. Minutes of the Council and General Court of Colonial Virginia (Richmond: 1979), pp. 394, 448-449, hereafter referred to as McIlwaine, and Edward Neil, Virginia Calorum, (New York: 1886), pp. 341-342, hereafter referred to as Neil.

⁶⁵ The family connection between the Ludwell brothers and Berkeley is shown in Stephen Sauders Webb, 1676, p. 51.

⁶⁶ Thoresby, p. 588. VMHB, X, (1901), pp. 374-375.

home and tarried for a few drinks. Presently, too drunk to get home, Giles was offered food and lodging for the night. More drinks were consumed and the conversation turned toward Giles' dispute with Anna Bennett. Too much drink got Giles in trouble. From partisan reports of the incident:

Both (Ludwell and Bland) heated with too much Brandy and wine . . . Ludwell (told Giles) that his father had sent him to Virginia to cheate a widowe. ⁶⁷

Angrily, Giles retorted that Ludwell was a "pittyful fellow, puppy and son of a whore." Giles cinched the insult by stealing Ludwell's glove, (so Ludwell claimed) and "did ignominiously, presumptuously and unworthily nayl the same at the state house door with a most false and scandalous libel." ⁶⁸

To say the least, this quarrel with Ludwell did nothing to advance Giles' claim against his aunt. Far worse, however, it left Giles in bad odor with the ruling class in Jamestown.

Ludwell and the aging and already irritable Governor Berkeley closed ranks against Giles. On November 21, 1674, at Thomas Ludwell's behest, Giles Bland was hauled before the Council and ordered by Berkeley to "immediately acknowledge the horrid injuries he hath done the aid secretary," and he was fined 500 pounds. Grudgingly, Giles did apologize, but "hee did soe in so slight and scornfull a manner as rather to shew a further contempt of ye said secretary and the whole court that a submission to their order." ⁶⁹ This standoff further fueled the animosities between Giles Bland and the Berkeley faction, for friends of John Bland, aided by the London government, blocked the fine against Giles and it was never paid.

Giles Bland "Collector of His Majesty's Customs"

Avoidance of Berkeley's fine, combined with Giles' unrepentant attitude, lay like a pall over already muddied waters that were stirred further when Giles was appointed Customs Collector for Virginia by Charles II on February 12 1674/1675. ⁷⁰

⁶⁷ VMHB, XX, (1912), pp. 350-352 and XXI (1913), pp. 126-127, 132-133. Webb, 1676, p. 51, asserts that the Ludwells had extorted the property from Anna Bennett, but this doesn't appear consistent with later developments.

⁶⁸ Ibid and CSPC, Charles II, XIV, (1669-1674), p. 609.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ CSPC, Charles II, XV (1675) p. 231.

The office of Customs Collector had been created in 1671 and lodged within the Treasury as part of a reorganization of Crown administrative affairs, and was created to act as a watch dog over collection of the King's revenues in faraway colonies. The job competed with the power of the colonial Governors and as such, it demanded a tactful, discrete, conciliatory temperament in its incumbent, one who could tread carefully between the interests of local powers and the Crown, and could coexist with local authority while exercising powers and jurisdictions that were bound to conflict and overlap.⁷¹ As such, the prerequisites for the post perfectly embodied the personal skills that were needed in Virginia to succeed, skills that would not have been as vital in England, where the innate authority of the office would have counted for much more.

To perform this exacting task, the Treasury in its wisdom, appointed Giles Bland. Accommodation and co-existence with Berkeley, also a King's man, would have been an exacting task for an Customs Collector who was a model of diplomacy and tact, given the disparate nature of the two offices. The appointment of Giles Bland was administrative insanity, though it was made within the norms of British political thinking. It reflected an indifference to the already explosive personality clash between Giles Bland and Berkeley, and was made in deference to the influence of men like Blathwayt, Pepys, Povey and John Bland within the government and the merchant class. The sources of their influence were admittedly imposing. The relationship between Blathwayt and Povey as well as a Bland family connection to Sir Joseph Williamson has been previously noted.⁷² In other words, the patronage dividend was in London and the internal interests of the Virginia government were not consulted. Partially, this neglect of Virginia was intentional, as will be seen, but certainly it guaranteed that Giles' persona as an intruder would be magnified to local authorities.

That Giles never measured up to the demands of the Customs Collector's job may be attributed to five factors: (1) The earlier confrontation with Ludwell placed Giles in a defiant and confrontational attitude from which he lacked sufficient finesse, inclination and experience to back down. (2) Also a byproduct of administrative inexperience, Giles was somewhat literal minded about his duties, evidenced by his damning written personal attacks against Berkeley, which deprived Giles of deniability and forced the Governor into intractable postures

⁷¹ Thomas C. Barrow, Trade and Empire: The British Customs Service in Colonial America, 1660-1675, (New York: 1967), pp. 4-24 provides an excellent overview of the embryonic Customs Service. Hereafter referred to as Barrow.

⁷² See above, page, note.

he would not otherwise have had to take. The same lack of experiential savvy is evidenced by Giles refusal to recognize any of Berkeley's authority while naively demanding Berkeley's full cooperation in every matter. ⁷³ (3) Giles Bland was a scapegoat for the hostility toward London merchants expressed by Virginia officials. Of course, the London merchants in general reciprocated in full. As a newcomer with no plans for permanent residence in Virginia, Giles Bland no doubt shared in this antipathy for the locals. ⁷⁴ Certainly Giles displayed a contempt for Berkeley in both his demeanor toward the governor and in written communications. (4) By his experience in Tangier, Giles Bland already had been conditioned to regard Colonial authority with suspicion and to deal with it by confrontation rather than by more conciliatory approaches. ⁷⁵ (5) In its charge to Giles Bland, the Crown laid blame for non-enforcement of the Acts of Trade upon the neglect and contempt of the colonial governors generally and specifically to Berkeley. ⁷⁶

The quarrel between Berkeley and Bland simmered through the summer of 1675, and suddenly boiled over in September, when Giles sent to Berkeley a rambling and litigious list of complaints which he said he was putting in writing because of Berkeley's "daily threats of imprisonment and sending me home prisoner in chains for England." ⁷⁷ Giles obviously wrote the letter for consumption by his superiors in London who, at best, could be expected to pay only scant attention. Shunning subtlety, Giles blamed Berkeley for multiple transgressions of the Acts of Trade, and imperiously put the Governor on notice that in execution of his duties he was acting as the King's representative and owed fealty to no one else:

⁷³ McIlwaine, pp. 423-424.

⁷⁴ Shammass, pp. 274-279.

⁷⁵ Cf. Note 54 above.

⁷⁶ Barrow, p. 12, is especially good on this point. Cf. Webb, pp. 340-343; Egerton MSS, Folios 511, 515, 517, as well as Giles' letter to Williamson, April 28, 1676, VMHB XX (1912), pp. 352-353, and CSPC, Charles II, XVI, (1676), p. 385.

⁷⁷ Egerton MSS, 2395, Folio 511.

Sir, when I received my deputacon and instructions from the commissioners, I addressed myself to your honour and delivered you their letter with one from his majesty, which required your honour as now governor and ye governor for ye time being, to be ayding and assisting unto their collector in ye due collection of ye stated duties, which had hitherto been very impracticable in this colony as is inserted in his majesty's stated letter. ⁷⁸

Giles, apparently oblivious to having just accused Berkeley of treason against the king, insisted upon the Governor's cooperation in enforcing the Acts, which could not be done "without your honour's assistance." ⁷⁹ Giles went on to insist upon sole appointive powers over custom's officers, whom Berkeley would merely rubber-stamp. ⁸⁰

The Governor and his men grew angrier when Giles reported to the Treasury the matter of the "wrecking" of a ship called *The Phoenix*. The ship, heavily laden with valuable cargo, was wrecked - Giles Bland claimed it was sabotaged by the Governor's men - and plundered. Goods valued at 12,000 pounds were removed from the ship without informing the Treasury in London or crediting the public accounts. ⁸¹ Berkeley quickly let Giles Bland know that he wasn't the only King's man in Virginia. Giles was summoned before the Council on October 7, 1675, where Berkeley, "arising from his seate and stepping one step below the place of judicature," demanded that the Council exact "just satisfacon and vindication from and against the sayd Gyles Bland." The Council promptly suspended Giles from the Collector of Customs position, "until his Majestie's pleasure shall be further knowne." ⁸² As Giles told it, Berkeley angrily threatened:

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Webb, 1676, p. 51.

⁸² McIlwaine, pp. 423-424.

That if I pretended to cleare ships . . . he would jay me by the heeles, withal calling me rogue, puppy, villan and such like, all with passion I impute not soe much to himselfe, but as hee is swayed by some intressed persons who for their own private advantage fill his eares continually with strange stories which he, being ancient, is apt to believe. ⁸³

Berkeley lacked the authority to suspend Giles from anything until the end, when he took matters forcefully in his own hands and, in defiance of the King and everyone else, suspended Giles from a rope! Giles Bland clung to his customs post and was active as late as June 13, 1676, when Philip Ludwell wrote to his brother Thomas, then in London that Giles Bland:

Refuses to have any of his papers recorded, yett sayes all the world (though he keeps them in his pockett) ought to be obliged to obey them and within these two howers, most malapertly to the Governor's face, thretened the Councill to give an account of them in England. ⁸⁴

The Customs Collector could not enforce the Acts of Trade without assistance from the Governor, and if the two were at odds, the home office could only choose between removal of the Customs Collector or reconstruction of the colonial government. Given such a choice, the former would have been much easier. ⁸⁵ Rather, the treasury, commiserating with John Bland about his son's plight in Virginia and concerned about the corruption and drainage of colonial revenues manifested by the Berkeley government, was yet typically inattentive to the growing need to refashion the Virginia government. That awaited the aftermath of Bacon's Rebellion when the pre-1676 Virginia government lay in ruin. For the present, English authorities allowed the situation to remain muddled. Their inaction drove Giles Bland into alliance with Nathaniel Bacon who, in a manner of speaking, was bringing about a change in the government.

Giles Bland "Rebel"

Bacon's Rebellion, as the uprising against Governor Berkeley was called, grew in one sense from scattered clashes between settlers and the indians in 1675, and their unhappiness with Governor Berkeley's policies toward the indians and proposed remedial measures to protect the settlers on the remote frontier.

⁸³ Egerton MSS 2395, Folio 515.

⁸⁴ Washburn, The Governor and the Rebel, p. 54.

⁸⁵ Barrow, p. 23.

In a much deeper sense, the rebellion grew from a decade of accumulating frustrations on the part of Virginia planters and frontiersmen because of unparalleled hardships and the incompetence and venality of their government, led by William Berkeley. Hard times were brought on by two wars with the Dutch, in 1664-1667 and 1672-1674. Generally, the British merchants and the Virginia planters coveted a good relationship with the Dutch, because they were good trading partners.⁸⁶ In war, however, the erstwhile trading partners wreaked havoc on Virginia shipping and trade and deprived the colonists of necessary goods for their livelihood. The destruction of war in 1667 was compounded between April and September by hailstorms, a forty day rain and "the great gust" the worst hurricane in memory of Virginians, which destroyed houses, tobacco and corn crops, hogs and cattle, and fouled up transportation routes for years. When the Dutch war ships came again in 1673, burning or sinking eleven ships harbored on the James River, it was after a winter in which some fifty thousand head of cattle had died of disease and the corn crop had been exhausted in feeding the surviving farm animals. Typically, the English government responded to war time provocations by building forts, which were generally ineffective instruments of war and, like the aforementioned man-made and natural disasters, added to the tax burden of the little man (the members of the Governor's Council paid little if any in taxes), proceeds which lined the pockets building contractors and Berkeley's men. Thus, when in 1675, Berkeley responded to the "indian threat" by proposing the construction of a series of forts, it seemed like more of the same. Berkeley made things worse by forbidding those manning the forts to fire on the indians until he gave his approval, by which time obviously any indian worth his wampum would be long gone.⁸⁷ Popular resentment boiled over:

All this was hardly reassuring and a newcomer, Nathaniel Bacon, was among those not assured. Bacon was well heeled, and like Giles Bland, felt a certain disdain for what he considered the money-grubbing elite in Virginia. He too, in a sense, was an intruder. Yet Bacon was a favorite of the Governor's. Berkeley and Bacon were cousins and Bacon's wife was friendly with Lady Berkeley. The Governor quickly appointed young Bacon to the Council. Bacon settled upriver from Jamestown and quickly took on his neighbor's dislike for the indians. By April 1676, Bacon had emerged as the leader of those planters who were pressing Berkeley for action against the indians.

⁸⁶ A good example of this sentiment is expressed in John Bland's Remonstrance of 1662-1663, cf Note 51, above.

⁸⁷ The "Indian Threat" was at best negligible, their numbers far outstripped by Englishmen. As a scapegoat, the indians were marvelous, Morgan, p. 251-153.

Bacon and Giles Bland became allies at this juncture. ⁸⁸

To lead these malcontents, Bacon needed a commission from the Governor. Since indiscriminate killing of the indians did not conform to Berkeley's policy and because Berkeley sensed that the men lining up behind Bacon were a "rabble crue" who could become dangerous, he refused. Bacon, now beginning to feel the intoxication of popular power, proceeded without the governor's blessing, killing all indians, regardless of tribe or nation, thus complicating the always delicate business of finding indian allies to fight against other indians. Berkeley promptly denounced Bacon and removed him from the Council, seeking an outlet by offering to hold special elections so that those who were unhappy with indian policy could speak their mind. Berkeley also blurred his own interpretation of the difference between good and bad indians, to bring himself closer to the popular opinion that the only good indians were dead. Poor indians!

As Bacon's ally, Giles learned that for the past decade the grievances on the people had gone unattended by a Council elected illegally, unsupervised and extremely venal and self-interested. As early as April 28, 1676, Giles Bland had written a letter to Sir Joseph Williamson, performing what appears to have been his most powerful role in the rebellion, liaison with prominent English authorities and communication with them on behalf of the Bacon forces, portraying in a light most favorable to them, the deteriorating and destabilized political situation in Virginia and the incompetence of Berkeley and his administration, "which all readie has so little Reverence Paide them . . ." ⁸⁹ "I have suffered many hardships and discouragements . . ." Giles complained and "the state of things heere . . . I find to be in a verie distracted posture." ⁹⁰ Giles went on to remind Williamson that the 100,000 pounds in revenue yielded annually to the crown from Virginia was in jeopardy unless something were done to relieve the plight and insecurity of the people, of whom he spoke darkly as having "armed themselves without commission against their enemies."

A larger threat, which the authorities in London had to consider, was that a foreign power would intercede on the side of the rebels, thus making recovery of Virginia an extremely difficult circumstance. The remedy proposed by Giles was direct royal rule of Virginia. ⁹¹

⁸⁸ For much of the above, see Morgan, pp. 242-246, 250-264.

⁸⁹ Egerton MSS, Folio 515.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ CO/1, Folio 36, No. 103, (Library of Congress); VMHB, XX, (1912), pp 352-353 and CSPC, Charles II, XVI. (1676), pp. 385-386.

In late May, the elections promised by Berkeley took place. Overwhelmingly, the election went to Bacon men. ⁹² Bacon himself came to Jamestown to take his seat, accompanied by fifty armed men. Berkeley captured Bacon and presented him to the house of Burgesses on his knees. Then, having shown everyone who was the chief rooster, Berkeley pardoned Bacon, restored him to the Council (which disqualified him to hold his seat in the Burgesses), and promised him the long sought commission to fight the indians. Bacon absented himself from Jamestown before the commission was actually granted. In his absence, the Bacon Assembly, also called The June Assembly, enacted sweeping new laws that went a long way to pacify the general discontents that had built up during the last decade, including abandonment of the fort schemes in favor of a larger number of local militia who were induced to be indian fighters with the promise that whatever they could recover by way of booty was their to keep. ⁹³

After the June 1676 Assembly, Giles advocated a land tax to replace the poll tax, a measure similar to one recommended by the Royal Commissioners in 1677, although "perhaps some of the richest sort will not like it, who hold greater proportions of land than they actually plant." ⁹⁴ This was an odd posture for Giles Bland, whose primary mission in Virginia was to reclaim the disparate large land holdings of the Bland family for his father. One rationale may have been that the tax would place pressure on Anna Bennett Bland to release her holdings. Alternately, Giles may simply have been going along with the sweeping reforms of the June assembly. Possibly also, he made the pronouncement to goad Berkeley. Giles position does, however, illustrate his extreme effectiveness in exposing the intricacies of the rebellion to English authorities in a light unfailingly flattering to the rebels, while using his customs office to intercept Berkeley's communications with England. ⁹⁵

Things got worse. On June 22, with 500 up-country men behind him Bacon marched into the Jamestown Court Yard and demanded his commission from Berkeley. Exasperated, Berkeley stormed out the state house door and ripped off his shirt. "Here!" he shouted "Shoot me, 'fore God, fair Mark, shoot." ⁹⁶

⁹² Webb, 1676, p. 52

⁹³ Morgan, pp. 262-263.

⁹⁴ Thomas J. Wertenbaker, Virginia Under the Stuarts: 1607-1688, (Princeton: 1914), P. 139, and Morgan, p. 278.

⁹⁵ Washburn, The Governor and the Rebel, p. 93, citing a letter from Berkeley to Secretary of State Henry Coventry, July 1, 1676.

⁹⁶ Morgan, p. 264.

Suddenly from the gloomy darkness, there appeared a wonderful opportunity for Bacon to do something truly good for mankind. Startled by the Governor's anger however, and lacking the vision to see beyond the long sought commission, which he had amply demonstrated he didn't need anyway, Bacon passed up his chance. Backed up by the steel of his new power, Bacon got his commission and by Mid-Summer 1676, a despairing Berkeley wrote to Thomas Ludwell that "everything here is now deplorable . . . and . . . young men that have not beene two years in the country absolutely governe it: Mr. Bacon /and/ Mr. Bland. . ." ⁹⁷ Fearing for his life, Berkeley fled to the Eastern Shore.

On July 8, 1676, Giles sent Thomas Povey "A Remonstrance of the Overall Counties in Virginia," which the rebels were circulating among Virginians. The rebels had chosen Giles Bland "our agent, faithfully to remonstrate to his majesty the presentation of us his poore distressed subjects." ⁹⁸ Giles told Povey that as soon as all signatures on the petition were obtained, he planned to come home, and in an eternal lament from son (in-law) to father (in-law) "I wait only for money." Thus, Giles contrived to simultaneously represent the King's interest by returning to London to present the remonstrance of the rebels, while following the maxim, when the going gets tough, the tough get going. ⁹⁹ But communications were slow in those days. A trans-Atlantic communication took months for a round trip, and while he tarried in Virginia, Giles luck ran out.

Giles Bland "Admiral of the Ocean Sea" (Groan!!!)

While the rebels, in superb emulation of those they had just driven from the temple of power, plundered Virginia and killed every indian they could get their hands on, Bacon, on August 1, 1676, placed Giles Bland and one William Carver, "a valient, stout man", in charge of a 300 man rebel force manning a small flotilla of ships captured from the Berkeley forces. Their objectives were two-fold: (1) They were to prevent the departure from the James River of a ship named **The Rebecca** belonging to Captain Christopher Evelyn, which was laden with important government papers presenting Governor Berkeley's view of the rebellion. (2) They were to capture Governor Berkeley, which Bland swore "a thousand God Dame him he would doe." ¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Egerton MSS 2395, Folio 555; CSPC, Charles II, XVI, (1676), p. 426.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Webb, 1676, pp. 53-55. Berkeley to Coventry, February 2, 1677, WMQ (3) XIV, (July 1957), p. 408.

"Admirals" Bland and Carver captured a ship, also named *The Rebecca* (confounding historians more than themselves), owned by Captain Thomas Larrimore and converted it into a war ship.

Giles Bland's brief sojourn as a naval commander ended ignominiously. The rebels failed to intercept Evelyn's *Rebecca*, which reached London in October, 1676, leading King Charles to dispatch a massive expeditionary force that would have crushed the rebellion if it hadn't ended sooner. Even earlier, the King had sent a three man commission of inquiry to Virginia, prompted by his desire to restore order.¹⁰¹ Although the rebels found Berkeley, Bland and Carver also discovered that the Governor hadn't survived in Virginia politics for decades without learning a few tricks. On September 1, 1676, pretending to seek a truce, Berkeley lured Captain Carver ashore to talk peace and attempted to convert the disgruntled Carver into a fifth column. Carver would not be converted but Berkeley was only using him as a diversion anyway. Unknown to Carver, while Berkeley was entreating with him, the Governor's forces, led by Philip Ludwell, rushed aboard the ship and captured Giles Bland who was too drunk to resist.¹⁰² A Berkeley man "clapt a pistoll to Bland's breast saying 'you are my prisoner' . . . so as Bland and Carver's men were amazed and yielded."¹⁰³ Carver sailed back out to the *Rebecca*, unsuspecting that he was walking right into the governor's trap. When he saw Bland and his men in chains, "he storm'd, tore his haire off and curst, and exclaimed at the cowardice of Bland that he had betray'd and lost all their designes."¹⁰⁴

Carver's unwigged head was next to go. Bacon made a hasty attempt to negotiate Bland's and Carver's release, but Berkeley would not hear of it. Carver was executed a few days later and Bland, perhaps because of his sensitive political position, "was put in irons", and imprisoned on board *The Rebecca*, now a Berkeley ship.¹⁰⁵

This was not the end of the rebellion, which dragged on for another two months, with Berkeley trying ineffectively to regain his authority. Bacon burned Jamestown to the ground on September 19, 1676, but a few weeks later, October 26, he died of the "Bloody Flux" (diarrhea).¹⁰⁶ It was Giles Bland's 29th birthday.

¹⁰¹ Webb, 1676, pp. 55, 219.

¹⁰² Andrews, p. 65

¹⁰³ Ibid. p. 37.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 128.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 37. See discussion in Webb, 1676, pp. 54-57, 131.

¹⁰⁶ Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom, pp. 264-269.

Retribution

With Bacon's death the rebellion fizzled out. By the following January, when the King's Commission of Inquiry began its work, Berkeley was relieved and ordered to go to London to explain the rebellion. "We know very well from whom this kindness and severity proceeds and the causes of both," the old man growled. Obviously he was referring to Giles Bland's frequent reports to London. Yet in one of those paradoxes of British administration and justice, Berkeley and the Ludwell Brothers joined the King's three Royal Commissioners as judges when the rebels were tried. Further, the King's Commissioners were armed with the King's Pardon of all the rebels save for Bacon himself, who was already dead. To assure that Giles Bland didn't slip away, however, Berkeley defied the King's Pardon, replacing it by an indemnity that exempted from the King's mercy forty one persons including Giles Bland. Undoubtedly, Berkeley was braced by the statement of the Duke of York, "By God, Bacon and Bland must dye," a pronouncement that was made earlier, when Bacon and Bland were the only names that had reached officials in England.

Swiftly, Giles was tried and convicted of treason and on March 15, 1676/1677 was sentenced to die. There was an awkward moment when Giles laid before the court a copy of the King's instructions to Berkeley for a general pardon and argued that it should include him. Giles thus revealed Governor Berkeley's cavalier handling of the King's private instructions. If Giles Bland had possession of the instructions, it could only mean that Berkeley had flaunted them and somehow they had been leaked to Giles. Although the Royal Commissioners were embarrassed by the truculence, indiscretion and disloyalty of the old Governor, because of the emphatic declaration of the Duke of York, and their inability to quickly get clarification from London, they felt they had no alternative but to acquiesce in Bland's execution. Giles was taken to the hold of The Adam and Eve where he languished until he was hanged on March 27, 1677. The Royal Commissioners lamented "hanging here goes by chance and destiny." Ironically, Giles Bland was the last rebel to be executed. Bland's estate was assessed for the expense of his imprisonment, an act of rapaciousness that was characteristic of the way Berkeley's party was trying to pillage the estates of the rebels. This was so repugnant to the King's Commissioners that they finally screwed up their courage and suspended Berkeley from all authority, per the King's original instructions. ¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷ Andrews, p. 137. On the trial of Giles Bland and Berkeley's defiance of the King's authority, see Webb, 1676, pp. 128-154.

Aftermath

It must have taken about six weeks for the news to travel back to London. ¹⁰⁸ For John and Sarah Bland the news of Giles' death was grievous and terrible. Quickly, John retrieved Giles' widow, Frances Povey and returned her to London, where she gave birth to a son John on November 5, 1677, at John and Sarah Bland's home. ¹⁰⁹ In his will of 1680, John left a "competent provision" for young John and Frances, "my good daughter in law . . . who hath had her share in the undeserved misfortunes of our unhappie familie." ¹¹⁰ In her grief, Sarah Greene Bland wrote a blistering letter to King Charles, which was delivered and read to his government by Pepys on May 20, 1677:

Wherein are found words very reflective upon the government and the proceedings of justice against him (Giles Bland), vindicating the innocency of her son by an irreverent comparing thereof to that of his late sacred majesty. ¹¹¹

In other words, Sarah told the King that her son was less innocent than his father, Charles I, who was beheaded in 1649. The depth of Sarah's grief may be imagined by the fact that she forced Pepys, an old family friend, to present such a letter. The letter was referred to the Attorney General for investigation, but was soon dropped. In fact, less than a week before the letter was read, King Charles had sharply rebuked Berkeley for his lese majeste in ignoring the general pardon, which, however, profited Giles' nothing. The King's letter reached Virginia in September 1677, after Berkeley had gone to England to lay his case before the King. Before he got his audience, or the letter caught up with him, Berkeley was dead. He is said to have died of heartbreak after hearing that King Charles snapped "that old fool has hanged more men in that naked country than I hanged for the murder of my father." ¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ See note 111 below. Sarah dated her letter to the King May 20, 1677.

¹⁰⁹ VU, p. 60.

¹¹⁰ Waters, pp. 814-815; Carlisle, p. 146.

¹¹¹ J.R. Tanner, Ed. A Descriptive Catalogue of the Naval Manuscripts in the Pepysian Library, IV, (London: 1923), pp. CXVIII, 430.

¹¹² Washburn, The Governor and the Rebel, pp. 138-141; Morgan, p. 274.

Now old and enfeebled with a Lear-like collection of dead Blands strewn around him, John Bland was determined to bring closure to affairs in Virginia. The Bland property was unprotected and "divers persons under several pretensions . . . have procured themselves of slaves, cattle and other goods belonging to him." ¹¹³ Having sacrificed three brothers and a son to Virginia, and never one to change a method that didn't work, John invested his wife Sarah with power of attorney, packed her up and sent her thither to Virginia to rescue the family claim. The odds against success were staggering, but if anyone could do it, Sarah Greene Bland was the woman for the job.

By this time, Sarah was well into her fifties and had a reputation as a flinty and competent, well-regarded business woman. Pepys, an unregenerate womanizer, whose assessments of women rarely extended to their intelligence, admired Sarah and considered her an astute merchant. On December 31, 1662, Pepys left the Bland home, "above all pleased to hear Mrs. Bland talk like a merchant, in her husband's business very well, and it seems she doth understand it and perform a great deal." ¹¹⁴ Again, on September 8, 1664, Pepys remarked "I being fain to admire the knowledge and experience of Mrs. Bland, whom I think to be as good a merchant as her husband." ¹¹⁵

An enchanting human warmth in the married lives of John Bland and Sarah Greene is implied in Pepys diaries, which speak of large, boisterous communions among business associates at the Bland house, good food and lively company. Sarah appeared able to turn male heads, suggesting that she must have been a beautiful woman. Although Pepys' famous diaries suggest nothing improper between them, other sources show that he could not resist a mild flirtation, which Sarah reciprocated:

Really sir . . . he (the captain) did treat me with that respect that if I had been the greatest lady in England, he could nott show me more, and clearly it was upon your account. ¹¹⁶

¹¹³ CSPC, Charles II, (1677-1680), p. 275; WMQ, (2) IV, (1924) pp. 202-203 and WMQ (1), VII, (1899), p. 231.

¹¹⁴ Pepys, III, (1662), p. 300.

¹¹⁵ Edwin Chappel, Ed. Shorthand Letters of Samuel Pepys, (London: 1937), p. 29.

¹¹⁶ Sarah Greene Bland to Samuel Pepys, Rawlinson MSS, A174, Folio 95 and Pepys, VI, (1665), pp. 42-45.

Like her husband, however, Sarah was somewhat short on political acuity. This is apparent from her petition to the King on April 22, 1676, concerning the old issue of the attempted fine of 500 pounds for Giles' insult to Thomas Ludwell an issue that was already dead. Sarah's petition and the reinforcing "relation" of John Bland on the same issue was referred to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, who, discovering that Thomas Ludwell was in London, summoned him to explain himself.¹¹⁷ Ludwell, attempting to convince his superior in London that Virginia was coming apart, in order to rally support for Berkeley, and embarrassed by Sarah's persistence in a relatively minor matter, came out swinging "finding myself particularly bespattered with a part of that dirt which is thrown upon the whole government of Virginia. . . by Mrs. Bland."¹¹⁸

But Sarah Bland, with her strengths and limitations, traveled to Virginia, and remained there for two years, trying to work out the family claim. Though she showed more grace and style than Giles had shown, returning for example, 2,000 acres of Kymages and the manor house to her nephew Edward Bland,¹¹⁹ she got nowhere with Anna Bennett Bland Codd, who refused to yield her property.¹²⁰ Defeated, Sarah was forced to return to London in 1680, when John Bland died. John, having sent to many kinsmen to die in Virginia, himself died alone, but he remembered his wife with this poignant passage:

I . . . feeling no greater griefe under my many adversities and infirmities I now labor under, than her (Sarah's) necessary absence in Virginia about my unhappy affairs and estates there, she having been the principal comfort of my passed life, by her exemplary virtue, discretion, affection, prudence and patience, having deserved much more from mee than I am able to give . . .¹²¹

¹¹⁷ VMHB, XX (1912), pp. 350-352 and XXI, (1913), pp. 126-127. CO/1, Folio 36, P. 50; CSPC, Charles II, IX, (1676), pp. 379, 392, 397-398.

¹¹⁸ CSPC, Charles II, IX, (1676), pp. 401, 404 and VMHB XXI, (1913), pp. 128-129, 134-135. Stephen Saunders Webb, 1676, pp. 203-204.

¹¹⁹ Hening, VI, p. 303.

¹²⁰ Neil, pp. 298, 347; Thoresby, p. 589 and Carlisle, p. 301.

¹²¹ See note 101 above.

Back in London, Sarah pressed ahead with what by now was a lost cause. She hired William Fitzhugh to negotiate with the Codds in Virginia, while William Blathwayt interceded on her behalf in London. But Fitzhugh was no more successful than anyone else had been in dealing with Anna Bennett Bland Codd. Matters were further complicated about 1683 when, because of other judgements against him, Codd fled Virginia and resettled in Maryland, taking Anna and her sons with him. ¹²² The case dragged on for several more years until in 1686, Lord Effingham was appointed arbiter in the case and squelched it. ¹²³ It is doubtful that the matter persisted after 1686, and if it did, it was mooted in November 1688, when Anna died and the property she had held onto so doggedly over the years was passed on to her now adult sons. ¹²⁴ Theodorick and Anna's sons retained Jordan's point and sold Westover to the Byrd family. ¹²⁵ Back in London, with John Bland dead, Sarah aging and no other Bland willing to carry on the fight, the matter quietly died. Sarah Greene Bland lived out her life in London and died March 4, 1712/1713, aged near 90. She was buried in the St. Olave Parish church, by her husband and their oldest son, also named John. ¹²⁶

The old rivalries from London were forgotten by later generations. In Virginia, only the sons of Theodorick Bland and Anna Bennett survived in Virginia as Blands. Of these, the eldest, Theodorick (1663-1700) married and had children but none survived to marry and have children of their own. The youngest

¹²² Richard Beale Davis, Ed., William Fitzhugh and His Chesapeake World, 1676-1701, (New York: 1963), pp. 116, 140-142, CF VMHB I, (1893-1894) pp. 118-121.

¹²³ The litigation from 1683-1686 is noted in CSPC, Charles II, XI, (1681-1685), pp. 268-269, 272-273, 421, 623, 626-627, 660, 695, 717, 731 and 763, and CSPC, James II, XII, (1685-1688), pp. 7, 9, 53, 213, 219, 229. References are also found in Anna Ruth Fisher, Comp. Journals of the Lords of Trade and Plantations, 1670-1674, 1; 1677-1679, 1685-1686, prepared for the Library of Congress, pp. 20, 105-106.

¹²⁴ Thoresby, p. 589; Carlisle, p. 301.

¹²⁵ Phillip Slaughter, A History of Bristol Parish, Virginia, (Richmond: 1879) p. 153.

¹²⁶ Thoresby, p. 586. John and Sarah also had a son named Thomas (1649-1654) who was buried with his grandparents in St. Antholins church cemetery.

son, John Bland, (1668-1746) returned to England, settling at Leeds, where he married Elizabeth Dale. Some of their children came back to Virginia.¹²⁷ The middle son, Richard Bland (1665-1720), married Mary Swann and after she died, Elizabeth Randolph, (1685-1719). No adult children resulted from the first marriage but from the second emerged an illustrious family line that included Mary Bland Lee (1704-1764) great grandmother of Robert E. Lee; Richard Bland (1710-1776), revolutionary legislator, pamphleteer, statesman and most important of all, elder mentor to young Thomas Jefferson and Theodorick Bland, grandfather to John Randolph of Roanoke.¹²⁸ In 1814 Randolph visited the old Bland home place at Jordans and standing at the shore of the James river, looking inland, professed that "all was sad and desolate . . . mute and deserted."¹²⁹

Mute? Deserted? No, not at all. That place is full of ghosts and if you stand right still even today, you can still hear Giles Bland swearing a "thousand God Dame him" he will kill Governor Berkeley if he can get his hands on him. Keep listening and you can hear Berkeley laughing.

MISCELLANEOUS

The New England Blands

Yet another correspondent has appeared who descends from John Bland Smith (C1585/1590-1668) of Martha's Vineyard Massachusetts, (AC 4-1, p. 34 and 8-1, p. 34). She is Paula Perkins Mortensen, 363 South Park Victoria Drive, Milpitas California, 95035-5708. Paula's information is somewhat more complete than previous information. She finds that John, who changed his name to Smith, after his Step-Father, was the son of Anthony Bland, who married Adrian _____ who later married someone named Smith, and thirdly married Jeremiah Norcross on September 14, 1611, at St. Luke's church in Chelsea England. Adrian had four children by Norcross.

¹²⁷ This generation of Blands is discussed in my book, A Vision of Unity, pp. 127-190. Fortuitously for the Blands, Ralph Thoresby, then compiling Ducatus Leodensis, met Elizabeth Dale's brother Robert, who gave him a remarkably accurate genealogy of the Bland Family, which is reprinted in his book, pp. 583-589.

¹²⁸ Ibid. Richard and Elizabeth also had two daughters Elizabeth (1706-1781) who married William Beverly and Anna, who married a man named Munford and later Curry.

¹²⁹ William Cabell Bruce, John Randolph of Roanoke: 1773-1833, I, (New York: 1922) p. 8.

The children of Anthony Bland and Adrian _____ included John Bland Smith (C1590-1668) who married Isabel Drake (C1579-1639), of Halstead England, about 1611. Their children were:

1. Annabella Bland (C1613-1683) who married William Barsham.
2. Isabel Bland (C1615-1698/1699), who married (I) Francis Austin and (II) Thomas Lovett.
3. Thomas Bland/Smith (C1619-1693), who married Mary Knapp.
4. Francis Bland/Smith (C1620)
5. John Bland/Smith Jr. (January 5, 1621/1622-February 4, 1670), who married Deborah Parkhurst of Nantucket Massachusetts, June 10, 1643.
6. Daniel Bland/Smith, (C1623).

Secondly, John Bland Smith married Joanna_____. Interestingly, when he made his will in 1663, John named "wife Joanna and two daughters Annabella and Isabel, who are all the children that are alive whome I own." This is welcome information, particularly the information about John's parents. Carlisle, thanks to Al Hunter's fine index, shows four entries for Anthony Bland, which demand further research. ¹³⁰

The James River Blands

Hazel Wright Bouldin, 713 Klyce Street, Eden North Carolina, 27288, wrote to me that she had a birth date for Elizabeth Cocke, first wife of Edward Bland (1746-1795) as March 15, 1745/1746. ¹³¹ This family was discussed previously, (VU, p. 165 and AC 5-1, pp. 21-25), but Elizabeth's dates are new information, for which we are grateful.

The Blands of King and Queen County Virginia

I still have not collected, to my satisfaction, enough material to undertake a rewriting of the history of this family branch, but will do so in the next number.

¹³⁰ Paula P. Mortensen to Charles Bland, May 7, 1990. Al S. Hunter, Index of Nicholas Carlisle, Collections for a History of the Ancient Family of Bland.

¹³¹ Letter, Hazel Bouldin to Charles Bland, March 18, 1990, citing Vestry Book and Register, Bruton Parish, 1720-1789.

The Blands of Duplin County North Carolina

I received a communication from Kathryn B. Bonnell, 8301 Canaan Drive, Columbus Georgia 31904, whose husband descends from the Bland family through the marriage of Edith Bland (1829-1906) to Batt Gay (1825-1863). In the most recent issue Gene Funderburke of Beaver West Virginia, also claiming descent from Batt Gay claimed he lived from 1825-1899. ¹³² Here is a contradiction in need of reconciliation.

In VU, P. 297, I stated that Harmon Bland (1839-1924) married Alvania Peterson (1842-1896) and Sarah Bland (1844-1937) and had three daughters, Dollie, Nettie and Minnie, but I wasn't certain whether Alvania or Sarah was their mother. George King, Box 641, Erwin North Carolina 28339, wrote to me that he was the grandson of Dollie Ann and that the other daughters were Minnie V. and Nettie Pearl and they were the children of Alvania Peterson, who died August 10, 1896. There were no other children.

Secondly, Harmon Bland married Sarah Sylvania Bland (1852 -), who was the daughter of Timothy Bland and Adeline Ward, (VU, pp. 318-319). They were married at ages 58 and 45 on September 23, 1897, but had no children. ¹³³

The Family of Charles B. Bland of Mississippi

In October 1989, I received a letter from Edward L. and Dora (Bland-Tarrant) Foster, 207 North Lake Avenue, Lehigh Acres Florida, 33936, seeking information to connect to a line further back, Charles B. Bland, born C. 1819 in Mississippi. There is one possibility, though it remains speculative. Charles W. Bland, was born in North Carolina about 1821 and died in Webster County Mississippi after 1870. He is the son of Joseph Henry Bland (1785-1862) and Mary Ann Ray, (AC 3-1, pp. 16-20 and 8-1, pp. 11-15). That is only speculative. Charles married Marguaritte Bennett, (C1823 -). It appears that this family doubled back to South Carolina and that Charles served in the Civil War. Their children were:

1. William R. Bland, (C1853 -) born in South Carolina.
2. Abner J. Bland, (C1857 -) born in South Carolina.
3. Arthur Bland, (C1859 -) born in South Carolina.
4. John Bland, (C1866 -) born in South Carolina.

¹³² Kathryn Bonnell to Charles L. Bland, March 14, 1990.

¹³³ George W. King to Charles L. Bland, March 19, 1990.

5. Thomas Jefferson Bland, (July 4, 1869 - February 23, 1936), was born in South Carolina and died in Chester South Carolina. According to Peggy Bland Brakefield, 9103 Liberty Hill Rd. Camden South Carolina 29020, who also descends from this line, Thomas Jefferson Bland was a photographer. His wife was Effie Barzella Tansy Monsur Modlin, (May 18, 1870 -December 2, 1866). They were married in 1886 and their children were:

1. Charles Christopher Bland, (September 14, 1889 - April 11, 1948), died at Chester South Carolina. Charles married Abbie Braswell about 1908.

2. Evalina Rebecca Bland (June 27, 1891 - August 2, 1954), was born in Darlington South Carolina and died in Chester South Carolina. She married Ed. Griffin in Union South Carolina, December 6, 1908.

3. Almena Cordelia Bland (March 12, 1894 - November 28, 1970), was born in Darlington and died in Columbia South Carolina. She married Elmer Lorraine Roberts-Tarrant, February 15, 1921, at Chester South Carolina. Dora Rachel Tarrant, wife of Edward Foster, is the child of Almena and Elmer.

4. William Thomas "Willy" Bland (C1896 - February 14, 1968) married Mary Peterson.

5. James Downing Bland (1898 -) was born in Darlington South Carolina, and married Dora Rutledge.

6. Sylvester Joshua Bland, who married Nealy Bailey. They were the parents of Peggy Bland Brakefield.

7. Leon Walter Bland (April 5, 1905 - May 26, 1908) died in Chester South Carolina and married Ella Gullledge.

8. Stanley Jefferson Bland (C1909 -) married Margaret McAfee, about 1938. ¹³⁴

The Family of William Bland of North Carolina and Mississippi

Harry Lucas, 4550 Post Oak Place, Suite 109, Houston Texas, 77027 and Maureen Scallon, 1916 Portsmouth, Houston Texas, 77098, in linking to a further back generation William Bland, (January 8, 1813 - May 31, 1898), who was born in North Carolina and died in Brandon Mississippi. He is buried at the New Prospect Cemetery in Palahatchie, Rankin County Mississippi. William married twice.

¹³⁴ Letters, Edward Foster to Charles Bland, October 5, 1989 and Peggy Bland Brakefield to Charles Bland, February 26 and March 29, 1990.

His first wife was Selena Cater, (September 24, 1824 - December 9, 1865), born in Mississippi and died in Brandon Mississippi. William and Selena were married March 18, 1841. They had nine children:

1. Nancy Adaline Bland (March 29, 1842 - July 15, 1913). Addie was born and died in Mississippi. She married R.F. Grimes August 9, 1865.
2. Ruth Jane Bland (October 7, 1844 - August 16, 1897), married T.E. Lamb.
3. Jasper James Bland (April 19, 1850 - March 31, 1932) was born in Deasonville Mississippi and died in Beaumont Texas. He married Agnes Elizabeth Edwards (June 11, 1867 - May 23, 1938), who was born in New Orleans and died in Beaumont. Both Jasper and Agnes are buried in New Orleans. Their children were A. Agnes Bland (1895-1979) of Louisiana who married Urban Beh, and B. Mildred Bland (1902-1987), who was born in Ocean Springs Mississippi, and died in Beaumont. She married Harry Lucas (1901-1951) on June 15, 1926. Their son was my correspondent Harry Lucas Jr.
4. George Duncan Bland (March 26, 1853 - December 22, 1917), married Lida M. Jordan, December 16, 1885 in Rankin County Mississippi. They had five children: A. Roy Livingston Bland (December 22, 1879 -), born in Rankin County Mississippi, married Linnie Davis, November 17, 1904; B. George Bland (1882-); C. Irene Bland (1887-); D. Bessie Bland (1889-); E. Estella Bland (1893-).
5. Emeline Elizabeth Bland (1856-1858)
6. Martha Louise Bland (1857-1858). It should be noted that these two daughters died within ten days of each other.
7. William Henderson Bland (June 3, 1859 - November 8, 1906).
8. Selena Ella Bland (March 4, 1862 -) who married John G. Knight, 1860, in Mississippi.
9. Marian Cisro Bland (1864-1866).

Secondly, William Bland married on September 21, 1870, Hattie Pettus (April 18, 1842 - September 20, 1914) who was born in Alabama and died in Rankin County Mississippi. Their children were:

1. Tommie Sanford Bland (1872-1872).
2. Annie Bland (May 20, 1875 - November 26, 1961). She married John Hartfield.
3. Horatio Bland (July 25, 1878 -) who evidently lived to adulthood.

Fannie L. Bland and George E. Newport

I am pleased to display below the wedding photo, taken December 23, 1890, of George Elsworth Newport and Fannie Lourenia Bland, (1874-1895), daughter of David Bland (1843-1927) and Martha Allen. Fannie was the grandmother of my correspondent Helen Bourque of Houston Texas, by whose courtesy the photos are received (CF AC 3-1, p. 37 and 6-1, p. 27)

