

CHAPTER V

THE JAMES RIVER BLANDS OF VIRGINIA, 1687-1833Virginia 1700

By 1700, Virginia was beginning to settle down. Politically, it was governed very loosely from England, by a governor who never set foot in the colony, but simply sold the lieutenant governorship to various surrogates, only some of whom were competent men. The result was that English control over American colonial life was largely neglectful and imprecise. Within Virginia, a three-tier class society had developed by the dawn of the 18th century, bred by a desperate need for labor, intensive capital supply and an immense potential for growth and success in the colony. If a man had a reasonable amount of capital and a white skin, he could, with skill and some luck, make a considerable fortune in Virginia.

Such a person would likely be in the top third of society, which was supported from beneath by slave labor and poor whites. Slavery was not a precisely defined institution, but by 1700 there was no question who was slave and who was master. Black skin equaled slavery, and white skin equaled lordship. By 1700, slavery as an economic system was firmly entrenched in Virginia, fueled by the enormous demand for cheap labor in service to the British trade system. Along with it went an awesome cost in moral contradiction for masters and slaves. Here, as Virginians transplanted from whatever geographic location, lived out their daily lives almost three hundred years ago, was born all the hatred, malice, suspicion and social and economic inequality that has

been the most glaring contradiction in the expressed ideals and values of the American people throughout subsequent American history.

In the middle was a class of people that for lack of a better term may be called poor whites. They might be native born, but also included a substantial number of immigrants, fueled by the same labor demand that created slavery, the only difference being that as Englishmen, or as whites, at least certain minimal human rights were guaranteed to them. They had been recruited from the poor farm lands in northern England and Scotland and Ireland, from the insane asylums, from prisons, and from off the streets of London and other English cities. Some lived in squalid poverty, even after reaching Virginia, and there was no master to even look upon them as a labor investment to be protected and cared for. Others accumulated varying amounts of property and capital and themselves joined the top level of society in slave ownership.

At the top were the elite, a combination of Englishborn men of wealth and title, but substantially a "creole elite," or Englishmen born in America, the sons of men who in the antecedent generation had migrated to America from England. This was, for example, the case of Richard Bland (fifth generation 1665-1720), whose father Theodorick Bland (1629-1671) had migrated to Virginia in 1653 or 1654. As the 18th century passed, these men filled the seats of power in colonial government, forming an effective provincial counterweight to the power of England. They also lived out lives and work in Virginia, developing increasingly distinctive cultural and social references, modeled consciously after England, but modified to suit the needs of Virginia.

Life in Virginia in the early 18th century seemed largely peaceful, unmarred by war, generally blessed by prosperity and growth, and seemed

to move without ripples. A prototype in the lifestyle of the Virginia elite in 1700 is suggested by the fragmentary diaries of William Byrd (1674-1744),¹ a wealthy landowner, planter and sometime gentleman politician.

Byrd lived out his life in fairly comfortable circumstances. His diary entries become tedious and stupefying, and lack the richness and delightful detail of Samuel Pepys' notes. Byrd records day after day of a pleasant, sociable and completely predictable life, one day being very much like the other. The diary shows Byrd to be a somewhat unreflective individual. There is a little of his inner feelings and thoughts, dreams and some salty observations about this or that woman, or his wife or a slave. Byrd's diary talks a great deal, however, about what he did.

As Byrd turns to the outer world however, his diary becomes a source of revelation that reveals to the modern reader a glimmering of what daily life was like in early 18th century Virginia. Byrd lived a busy life, managing the personnel and details of farm life, and himself took a hand in planting fruit trees and in other work.

With his slaves, as well as his wife, Byrd was alternately tender and compassionate, and brutal and exploitative. There are passages, for example, in which a slave is whipped for serving half-cooked bacon, or kicked for lighting a candle in daylight. Also, Byrd had an enormous sexual appetite. When his wife or another white woman was not available,

¹ Byrd's diaries are reprinted by Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling, Ed., The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover: 1709-1712 (Richmond, Virginia, 1941), hereafter called Byrd I; and Wright and Tinling, The London Diary of William Byrd of Virginia: 1717-1721, and Other Writings (New York: 1958), hereafter called Byrd II.

Byrd had no hesitation in taking his sexual pleasure with a slave woman. The other side of Byrd, in this respect, was that he treated and cared for his slaves when they were sick, and provided for children and widows, when the husband or father in the slave family died or, to revert to the dark side of slavery, when he was sold away.

Byrd worried about his frequently colorful dreams, which were filled with fiery stars, lightning, flaming swords, and terrible portents, as when he dreamed the following about his wife:

I had a bad dream this morning which seemed to foretell the death of some of my family. I thought I saw my yard full of people and when I came into the house I could not find my wife.¹

Byrd's diary also dispels a lot of nonsensical illusions about life in early 18th century Virginia. Byrd himself was a philanderer who chased everything in skirts, feared God's wrath for it, and frequently prayed forgiveness. His neighbor's beds stank, the wife of a local minister was habitually drunk. The men and women in Byrd's life showed generosity, kindness, lust, small mindedness; in short, they were timeless. Byrd lived just across the James River from Richard Bland, in fact on the Westover estate his father had purchased from Richard Bland and his brother Theodorick in 1688. Much of his life, its slow, seemingly motionless pace, and graceful passage, free from external forces and influences,² probably reflects the lifestyle of his neighbor, Richard Bland (fifth generation, 1665-1720).

¹ Byrd I, p. 60. Byrd also had a dream about his neighbor, Richard Bland, which will be noted presently.

² Byrd I, pp. xiii-xxv.

The Bland Family in 1700: The Hard Year

By 1700, Adam Bland and Joan Atkyns had been dead for more than a century. John Bland, the Grocer, had been dead for almost seventy years, and his wife, Susan Deblere, was dead for thirty-five years. All the children of John and Susan were now dead. Anna Bennett Bland Codd was dead, and Sarah Greene was living out the balance of her old age in solitude in London. All the passionate struggles of that earlier London family, the martyrdom of John Bland in 1555, the mental breakdown of Peter Bland, the animosity between John, the Grocer, and his brother Gregory, all these were surely receding in the minds of the living. Now a new generation was coming into maturity and facing new issues and lives, increasingly in a far away new land, Virginia.

In the previous chapter, the issues of settlement in Virginia for the Bland family narrowed by the 1670's into a dramatic power struggle over the family's vast landholdings in Virginia. It was a struggle that claimed the life of Giles Bland (fifth generation, 1647-1677). Anna Bennett held on doggedly to the Westover and Jordans estates and possibly other lands until her sons had reached a majority. When Anna died in 1687, the property reverted to her oldest son Theodorick (1663-1700), who admitted his brother Richard (1665-1720) into joint tenancy. Together they sold 1200 acres of the 2000 acre Westover estate to the Byrd family.

By 1700, the most prominent Bland living in Virginia was Theodorick Bland's and Anna Bennett's second son, Richard (fifth generation, 1665-1720). His younger brother John, by then had moved to Yorkshire in England. Richard's older brother Theodorick died in that hard year of 1700, as did Richard's first wife, Mary Swann. Mary bore Richard

seven children in the eight years of their marriage, but all of them had died before 1700. His extended family relationships were somewhat precarious. The grandchildren of his uncle Edward Bland (1614-1652) still were living in Virginia. There were some relations in the Northern Neck of Virginia, in Stafford County, and possibly Maryland (how many relatives is not certain). Certainly, some children by a Susan Bland West (fifth generation, 1632-1698) who would have been Richard's cousins, were there, and perhaps some relatives who had descended through Richard's great uncle, Thomas Bland of London (1558-1618). But it would strain credibility to think that these Northern Neck, Virginia or Maryland Blands, even if related to Richard, would have substantially comforted him. So, essentially he was alone. Richard's land acquisitions in the 1690's had not been great, but combined with what was left of his father's estate, would have been enough to make him a much sought after young widower and better times were ahead. In 1701, he married Elizabeth Randolph. Elizabeth gave him five children, all of whom lived to adulthood and married well, and he lived with Elizabeth for the remaining two decades of his life. Richard Bland and Elizabeth Randolph are to this chapter what John Bland and Sarah Greene were to Chapter IV. Before moving to the genealogical details of their family, however, some attention should be given to the briefer information available about Richard's two brothers, Theodorick and John (fifth generation).

TABLE VIII

THE FAMILY OF THEODORICK BLAND OF WESTOVER,

VIRGINIA: THREE GENERATIONS

(3) John Bland (1572-1632) = Susan Deblere (1590-1664)

(4) Theodorick Bland (1629-1671) = Anna Bennett (c. 1639-1687)

(5-1)

Theodorick Bland
(1663-1700) married
Margaret _____.

(5-2)

Richard Bland (1665-1720)
married (1) Mary Swann in
1692; and (2) Elizabeth
Randolph in 1701.

(5-3)

John Bland (1668-1746)
married (1) Mary Breckon,
date uncertain; and (2)
Elizabeth Dale in 1709.

TABLE IX

THE FAMILY OF THEODORICK BLAND OF JORDANS

IN VIRGINIA: FOUR GENERATIONS

(4) Theodorick Bland (1629-1671) = Anna Bennett (1639-1687)

(5) Theodorick Bland (1663-1700) = Margaret _____

(6-1)

Theodorick (c. 1697-1701)

(6-2)

John (c. 1698-?), married
Anne West (?-1758) about
1629.

(7-1)

John Bland (1730-1750). Never
married. An unspecified number
of other seventh generation
children died young.

The Family of Theodorick Bland: Fifth Generation

Theodorick was the eldest son of Theodorick Bland (fourth generation) and his wife, Anna Bennett.¹ He was born February 1663/1664 and died in November 1700. As an adult, Theodorick is said to have been a member of the Virginia Council, although the chief source for Council membership does not record his name as such.² He was a surveyor for the Virginia government in Stafford County and apparently was a fancier of thoroughbred horses.³ He lived on the remainder of the Westover estate.

He married Margaret, a widow whose maiden name is unknown. The date of Theodorick's marriage to Margaret is not known, but may be deduced as about 1695 or 1696, inasmuch as their first child was born before 1698. His name was Theodorick (sixth generation). He died in 1700 or 1701, soon after his father. A second son, John, was born December 8, 1698. He was sixth generation in the Bland family, and as an adult he moved to Scarborough in Yorkshire County, England, where he married Anne West of Mustons in Yorkshire about 1729. Anne's birthdate is uncertain, but she died November 24, 1758. The date of death of John Bland (sixth generation) is unknown. John Bland and Anne West had a single child who lived to adulthood. His name was

¹ Information about Theodorick Bland is taken from Hiden and Jester, p. 99; Thoresby, p. 588; Hunter, p. 425; Slaughter, p. 155; Campbell, Vol. I, p. 149; Lee, p. 138; and Carlisle, p. 302.

² William G. and Mary N. Stannard, The Virginia Colonial Register (1902: Reprinted 1965).

³ VMHB, Vol. 2, p. 295.

John (seventh generation) who was born at Scarborough in 1730. He was drowned at sea on a voyage to Malaga about 1750. John Bland and Anne West had an unspecified number of other children, all of whom died young.

The Family of John Bland: Fifth Generation

John Bland was the third son of Theodorick Bland and Anna Bennett. He was born at Westover on February 8, 1668, and died in Scarborough, Yorkshire, England sometime in 1746. John was educated in England, and was a merchant. He lived in Scarborough, and Carlisle attributes to him the construction of a road that came to be known as Bland's cliff and stretched from Scarborough to the sea. The road, according to Carlisle, was constructed at John Bland's own cost and was still operable in 1826.¹

Perhaps John Bland's most significant contribution to the family is that he may have been the source, through marriage, of the seminal genealogical information about Adam Bland (second generation), and his family. John married first, when is not certain, Mary Breckon of Scarborough. After Mary's death (there is no record of any children), John married in November 1709, Elizabeth Dale, also of Scarborough. Elizabeth was born in 1688 and died about 1746. She was the sister of Robert Dale, who was the source in 1712 for Ralph Thoresby's genealogical portent of the Bland family in his Ducatus Leodensis (1715), which is the earliest known such treatment.

¹ Carlisle, pp. 303-304. Other information about John Bland is found in Hiden and Jester, p. 100; Thoresby, p. 588; Hunter, p. 426; and Campbell, Vol. I, p. 149.

John Bland and Elizabeth Dale appear to have had two sons and one daughter, all sixth generation. The first of their children was Richard, born August 22, 1710. Richard was living in Scarborough unmarried in 1759. Nothing further is known of him.¹ The third child was a daughter, Anne, who was born May 4, 1714, and who died either in 1730 or 1731, unmarried and without issue.

The only child of John Bland and Elizabeth Dale who lived to adulthood, married and had children was the second son, John Bland (sixth generation), who was born at Scarborough on August 5, 1712, and died in Iford, Essex County, on November 14, 1787. A letter to Theodorick Bland (sixth generation, 1719-1784) from Richard and John Bland, his cousins, dated March 5, 1744/1745, makes it evident that John Bland was a merchant in Scarborough. The letter indicates that Richard and John Bland had visited John's home and found "he has not quitted his intentions of a Virginia trade, but is resolved to venture upon it as soon as a convenient opportunity offers."² John married Anne Buck of Sheffield in York County on July 1, 1739. Anne was born on August 18, 1718, and died November 10, 1770.

John Bland and Anne Buck had a large family (seventh generation) of eleven children:

The first child, and first son of John Bland and Anne Buck, was John Bland, who was born December 8, 1741, at Scarborough. As an adult he moved to Virginia and resided at Jordans, homeplace of his great uncle, Richard Bland (1665-1720). John married a widow in Virginia, whose name is not known. No children resulted from this marriage.

¹ This information is in Hunter, p. 426.

² Campbell, Vol. I, p. 2.

The second child, and second son of John Bland and Anne Buck, was Thomas Bland, who was born at Scarborough on December 6, 1742, and died on June 1, 1807, at Sheffield, York County, where he was a merchant. He married Ann Broadbent, who was born about 1742, and died in 1823. They had seven children, including six daughters and a son, of whom nothing is known.

The third child, and third son of John Bland and Anne Buck, was Edward, who was born at Scarborough April 30, 1744. Edward died at sea while serving in the British Navy, in 1771. He was unmarried and left no children.

The fourth child, and fourth son of John Bland and Anne Buck, was Joseph Bland, who was born at Scarborough on September 1, 1745, and died October 10, 1810, at Bush Hill in Herts County, where he had lived and worked as a merchant. Joseph married Jane Cockshutt of Huthwaite in York County. They were assumed to have married about 1770 or 1771, but Jane's dates of birth and death are unknown. Joseph Bland and Jane Cockshutt had six children, all of whom lived out their lives in England.

The fifth child, and fifth son of John Bland and Anne Buck, was Theodorick Bland, who was born at Scarborough on September 21, 1746, and in his adult life moved to Stafford County, Virginia, where he resided for the rest of his life and worked as a merchant. On December 1772,¹ he married Sarah Fitzhugh, who was born August 2, 1748, and died in 1793.

¹ VMHB, Vol. 75 (1967); and John Macklin, St. Paul's Parish, Stafford County, Virginia, 1715-1798 (1962).

It is important to distinguish between this Theodorick (the merchant) and the patriot physician and statesman, Theodorick Bland (1740-1790), also seventh generation.¹ Both were cousins, but they were entirely different men. The latter Theodorick, who descended through Richard Bland (1665-1720) and Theodorick Bland (1719-1784) will be discussed later in this chapter. Theodorick Bland and Sarah Fitzhugh had three known children: John, born April 1, 1774; Theodorick, born in 1777; and Sophia.

The son, Theodorick, and the daughter, Sophia (eighth generation) were correspondents in an exchange of letters preserved by the Maryland Historical Society.² In one letter, written in 1799 from Tennessee, Theodorick, a very model of enlightened thought commends to his sister the work of the early feminist writer, Mary Wollstonecraft, Vindication of the Rights of Women, which sold heavily and was reprinted four times in America:

I do sincerely wish women enjoyed their rights according to Mrs. Wollstonecraft's ideas of them, a wife would then be indeed a treasure of inestimable value.³

Theodorick wrote to Sophia again on September 7, 1800, expressing his outrage at "the Baptistical preachers" he had seen in Tennessee. Out there in the early days in Tennessee, just at the dawning of the 19th century. Theodorick was getting his taste of the fire and brimstone revivalism of the Second Great Awakening:

¹ Theodorick Bland (1740-1790), the physician, soldier and patriot, is discussed in this chapter on pp. 170-181.

² The Bland Papers, MS 134, Maryland Historical Society, cited in Henry May, The Enlightenment in America (1976), pp. 377 and 387.

³ May, pp. 225, 387.

I have so often been gorged with the hum-drum balderdash nonsense of baptistical preachers that I had resolved not to go to meeting today, but when I got in, much to my most agreeable disappointment I beheld in the pulpit a tall, agreeable fellow, whose countenance bespoke philanthropy and benevolence, going on in a quite eloquent strain. ¹

As one can imagine, this paragon described by young Bland was a fellow Virginian of the established ministry, coming into the wilds of Virginia to save the backwoods savages from "ranting tattering puritanical preachers."² Later in his life, Theodorick moved to Maryland and became a U.S. District Court Judge.³

An interesting historical aside about Theodorick Bland (eighth generation) has to do with his appointment by President Monroe in 1819, to replace a judge who died in the midst of a prominent piracy trial that threatened to expose a Baltimore, Maryland piracy ring. Theodorick Bland was the father-in-law of one of the suspected parties, John Stuart Skinner. Monroe's motives in making the appointment might have been a hope that Theodorick would tamp down whatever damage there was to be done to the piracy business, one of the most lucrative, crooked, violent and well-respected in the country. Monroe had not, however, reckoned on the perverse interest of his anachronistically puritan Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams. To Adams, who was a paragon of clear and lucid thinking in his best moments, piracy was not a business opportunity, but piracy, and he went after Theodorick

1 May, pp. 140, 377.

2 Ibid.

3 Dawson Notes, p. 62 (gleaned from The Bland Papers, Maryland Historical Society).

Bland like a Victorian father chasing a dustman from his daughter's bedroom. Adams dug up an old deposition that showed a loose connection between Theodorick Bland and a man named Sands, in the piracy trade, and thrust the evidence in front of Monroe who, chagrined at having this unseemly piece of evidence cast into what was otherwise not a large agenda item in his presidency, ordered the matter investigated. But Theodorick Bland retaliated, and on August 21, 1819, Adams entered in his diary:

Judge Bland came with a number of documents which he had procured at Baltimore to discredit the reputation of Sands and his deposition against him. They do entirely discredit him. I firmly believe that Sands' deposition is false in every particular that he states respecting Bland...¹

Adams was directed by Monroe to write a letter of apology to Bland, clearing him of the charges brought against him. Grudgingly, Adams did so, but he remained unreconciled, confiding his doubts to his diary, but noting his duty not to resist the President's wish when a decision had been made.²

The sixth child, and sixth son of John Bland and Anne Buck, was William, who was born at Scarborough January 16, 1747/1748, and died there in January 1748/1749.

The seventh child, and first daughter of John Bland and Anne Buck, was Anna Bland, who was born at Scarborough on May 26, 1749, and died unmarried at Sion Hill, Bath, on January 6, 1833. She was a genealogist whose information was used by Hunter in his construction of the Bland family for Familiae Minorum Gentium (1895).

¹ Walker Lewis, "John Quincy Adams and the Baltimore Pirates," American Bar Association Journal, Vol. 67 (August 1981), pp. 1011-1014.

² Ibid.

The eighth child, and second daughter of John Bland and Anne Buck, was Sarah Bland, born March 18, 1750/1751 at Scarborough. Her date of death is uncertain, but she married Thomas Miller of Iford, Essex County.

The ninth child, and third daughter of John Bland and Anna Buck, was Elizabeth Bland, born November 1, 1752, at Scarborough. She married Richard Butler, a London merchant, but by him had no children. She died in 1780.

The tenth child, and seventh son of John Bland and Anne Buck, was Robert Bland, born at Scarborough April 16, 1755. Robert served in the British Navy. He died unmarried in 1781.

The eleventh child, and fourth daughter of John Bland and Anne Buck, was Susannah, born in 1760 at Scarborough. She died unmarried at Sion Hill on November 5, 1817.

Thus, John Bland's and Elizabeth Dale's children and grandchildren lived primarily in England, but on occasion came full circle back to Virginia to their grandfather's birthplace. But no one in this line made any significant genealogical linkage for future American generations. That was left to Richard, the second son of Theodorick Bland (fourth generation) and Anna Bennett.

The Family of Richard Bland: Fifth Generation

Richard was born at Westover on August 11, 1665, and he died near there on his Jordans estate April 6, 1720.¹ Legend has it that as a little boy Richard had a cow which went with him to a small boarding school in Henrico County.² In his adult life Richard was a gentleman farmer; also member of the House of Burgesses for Charles City County 1700 and 1702, and for Prince George County in 1705-1706. As a farmer statesman, he was a representative of the so-called "Creole Elite" of American-born Englishmen who lived in and largely governed Virginia in the 18th century.

Previously, I indicated that in 1687, following the death of his mother, Richard's older brother, Theodorick, admitted him into joint tenancy for the landholdings that had been bequeathed them. Together they sold 1200 acres of the 2000-acre Westover estate to the Byrd family. Apparently, Theodorick Bland lived, together with his family and the family of Richard Bland, on the remaining 800 acres of land.³

¹ Sources for Richard Bland are prolific, but contain basically an economy of information. The discussion of Richard Bland and his descendants is taken from Hunter, pp. 425-427; Hiden and Jester, p. 100; Lee, pp. 138-140; an extract from Wyndham Robertson, provided by Mrs. Nel Ford; genealogical information provided by Mrs. Paul Gaston, Columbus, Missouri, October 6, 1980; Slaughter, pp. 155-163; Campbell, Vol. I, passim, esp. pp. 148-149, and Vol. II, passim; Carlisle, p. 302; and a genealogical log shared with me by Mr. Leslie Dawson, Plainfield, New Jersey.

² Wyndham Blanton, Medicine in Virginia: The 18th Century (1934), p. 229; hereafter in notes referred to as Blanton.

³ Later surveys of the land actually conveyed to the Byrds show that it amounted to somewhat less than 1200 acres.

To this nucleus of land, Richard Bland began additions that continued for the rest of his life. On April 20, 1687, he was awarded 1254 acres of land in Bristol Parish, Henrico County, for transportation of twenty-six persons to the colony.¹ In April 28, 1691, Richard was awarded 593 acres of land in Charles City County as part of a clarification of entitlement due him from his father's will.²

This was probably the land that came to be known as Cawsons, the homeplace of Theodorick Bland (sixth generation, 1719-1784). It was just north of Jordan's where the James River joins the mouth of the Appomatox River, and was called "Causes Creek" at the time of purchase.³

In 1704, Richard Bland purchased 1,000 acres in Prince George County.⁴ He gained another 1254 acres in Prince George County in November 2, 1705, for transportation of twenty-five persons to the colony.⁵ On May 1, 1706, Bland was awarded 5,660 acres in Prince George County for transportation of 114 persons to Virginia, but then divested himself of most of this property by selling 5,644 of the same acres to William Byrd on June 2, 1707.⁶

In 1717, Richard Bland was granted 800 acres in Prince George County for cash payment.⁷ On November 13, 1721, 219 acres of land he had

¹ Nugent, Vol. II, p. 307. The land Richard Bland acquired was in the area of Charles City, Surry, Prince George, and Henrico County, along the James River near the mouth of the Appomatox River.

² Nugent, Vol. II, p. 364.

³ VMHB, Vol. 7, p. 191.

⁴ VMHB, Vol. 28, p. 329.

⁵ Nugent, Vol. III, p. 104.

⁶ Nugent, Vol. III, pp. 105, 107-108; VMHB, Vol. 48, p. 205, and Virginia County Records, Vol. VII, No. I (March 1910), Book 9, Henrico County Records, p. 731 (1706).

⁷ Nugent, Vol. III, p. 188.

TABLE X

THE FAMILY OF JOHN BLAND OF SCARBOROUGH, YORK COUNTY, ENGLAND: FOUR GENERATIONS

- (4) Theodorick Bland (1629-1671) = Anna Bennett (C. 1639-1687)
 (5) John Bland (1668-1746) = (1) Mary Breckon*, and (2) Elizabeth Dale (C. 1688-1746)

(6-1)

Richard Bland (1710-living in 1759), never married.

(6-2)

John Bland (1712-1787) married Anne Buck (1718-1770) in 1739.

(6-3)

Anne Bland (1714-1731), never married.

(7-1)

John Bland (1741-?); moved to Virginia, married, but no known children.

(7-2)

Thomas Bland (1742-1807); married Anne Broadbent (1742-1823).

(7-3)

Edward Bland (1744-1771); died unmarried.

(7-4)

Joseph Bland (1745-1810); married Jane Cockshutt.

(7-5)

Theodorick Bland (1746-?); married Sarah Fitzhugh (1748-1793) in 1772.

(7-6)

William Bland (1747-1748)

(7-7)

Anna Bland (1749-1833); never married.

(7-8)

Sarah Bland (1750-?); married Thomas Miller. Richard Butler.

(7-9)

Elizabeth Bland (1752-1780); married Robert Bland (1755-1781); died unmarried.

(7-10)

Susannah Bland (1760-1817); died unmarried.

(7-11)

* There were no known children in the marriage of John Bland and Mary Breckon.

Table XI

THE FAMILY OF RICHARD BLAND (fifth GENERATION) OF JORDANS IN VIRGINIA:
THREE GENERATIONS

- (4) Theodorick Bland (1629-1671 = Anna Bennett (C1639-1687)
 (5) Richard Bland (1665-1720) = (1) Mary Swann (1669-1700) in 1692 *
 and (2) Elizabeth Randolph (-1719) in 1701.

(6-1)	(6-2)	(6-3)	(6-4)	(6-5)
Mary Bland (1704-1764); married Henry Lee in 1723/ 1724	Elizabeth Bland (1706-1781); married William Beverly (1698- (1756).	Richard Bland (1710-1776) Married (1) Anne Poythress (1712-1758) in 1729; (2) Martha Macon Massie; and (3) Elizabeth Blair Bolling	Anna Bland (1711-) Married (1) Robert Munford (2) George Currie	Theodorick Bland, (1719-1784) Married Frances Bolling c. 1739; and (2) Elizabeth Randolph Yates. 1780

purchased outright in Prince George County, were recorded, and another 240 acres were recorded on September 17, 1731.¹ In summary, Richard Bland appears to have amassed some 6700 known acres of land, a sizeable plantation though not among the largest in Virginia, and far smaller than the joint holdings of the brothers John, Edward and Theodorick Bland in the 17th century.

Periodic references to "Mr. Bland's" servants or slaves by William Byrd in his diary make it fairly clear, as would be natural, that Richard Bland was a slaveholder. An inventory of slaves held by Richard Bland on April 14, 1719, yields the names of four young slave boys between the ages of 9 and 11. They bore the names Europe, Asia, Africa and America.²

The life of Richard Bland at Jordans seems to have been spent, according to Byrd's diary, in relative peace and tranquility. Byrd frequently made social calls to Bland and his wife, dined with them, played cards, gossiped, schemed one or another small plot. Though Byrd's diary is too fragmentary to form a general conclusion, he makes no mention of any large scale crisis in Richard Bland's life. Byrd was evidently very fond of Richard Bland. He returned to Virginia from a stint in England just a few months before Richard died, and diary entries record Richard's end:

February 29, 1719/1720: We...got about 11 o'clock to Mr. Bland's and found him very much indisposed but very glad to see me...I counseled Mr. Bland to drink milk from the cow every day, which he promised me to take.

¹ Nugent, Vol. III, pp. 228, 410. These two transactions apparently were recorded posthumously.

² VMHB, Vol. 56, p. 208; information from Prince George County Order Book 1714-1720, p. 245.

April 4, 1720: I went over the river and went to visit good Mr. Bland whom I found extremely ill, so that he just knew me. I could not forbear crying to see my friend so bad.¹

Richard Bland died on April 6, 1720, and was buried on April 9. On that day, his friend Byrd read some Hebrew and Greek, "because I prepared to go to Mr. Bland's funeral." The funeral, as Byrd puts it, was attended by "an abundance of company of both sexes. We had a sermon and everything that was necessary for the occasion."² Thus Byrd, as he usually did, kept even from these intimate diaries any inner feelings or thoughts he might have had about the passing of his friend, Richard Bland.

But Byrd's inner feelings were not hidden so easily. On July 20, he had a dream in which Richard Bland appeared and told him that good people were happy but had to prove themselves by passing through the fire. In the dream, Byrd prevailed upon Richard Bland to sing for him, but Richard's voice was drowned out by a neighbor who "hindered me from hearing him."³

Richard Bland's first wife was Mary Swann, whom he married on September 6, 1692. Mary was born August 5, 1669, and died September 1700.⁴ Traditional sources indicate that Richard and Mary had six or seven children and that all died young. On February 11, 1701/1702, Richard remarried, to Elizabeth Randolph, the ninth child of William Randolph and Mary Isham, of Turkey Island on the James River. Elizabeth's

1 Byrd, Vol. II, pp. 378-380, 391, 393, 432, 434.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., pp. 393, 432.

4 Mary Swann's dates are from WMQ (1), Vol. XVI (1907), p. 234.

birthdate is unknown, but she died January 22, 1719/1720, just two months before the death of Richard himself. Elizabeth died because of complications in the birth of her last child, Theodorick.¹ It is through Elizabeth that the Bland family delights genealogists by tracing its lineage to Pocohontas, and even, if one fancies it, all the way back to Lady Godiva (c. 1040-1080), the famous naked equestrienne with the long blonde locks. (Imagine all that hair!)²

Although not enough is known about Elizabeth Randolph to pay tribute to her as to Susan Deblere and Sarah Greene in the previous chapters, it is clear that she is the central woman in the James River Bland family's development during the 18th century. As we shall see, though she was not nearly as fecund as Susan Deblere, and though we know little about her (William Byrd called her "a handsome woman"), she was one of the founding mothers of Virginia.

Richard Bland and Elizabeth Randolph had five children (sixth generation), that survived to adulthood. They were in order: Mary, Elizabeth, Richard, Anna and Theodorick. The logical sequence of discussion is to present the genealogical information about the daughters first, then that of the sons.

The Daughters of Richard Bland: Fifth Generation

The first child of Richard Bland and Elizabeth Randolph was Mary (sixth generation) who was born August 21, 1704, and died May 1764.³

¹ VMHB, Vol. 44 (1939), p. 255.

² Wyndham Robertson, Pocohontas and Her Descendants (1934), and "The Line of Lady Godiva," Virginia State Library, Friends Collection.

³ The date of Mary Bland's death is surmised by a letter from Henry Lee, her son, to his brothers, dated May 13, 1764, in which he says he has just heard of his mother's death. WMQ (1), Vol. 8, pp. 34-35.

Mary was married at Dumfries in Stafford County, Virginia, about 1723 or 1724, to Colonel Henry Lee,¹ and by him had four children: John, Letitia, Richard and Henry. This is not the place to discuss the genealogy of the Lee family, but the line of Lees descending from the last son of Henry Lee and Mary Bland is significant. The last son, Henry (seventh generation) whose dates are 1729-1787, married Lucy Grymes, who was known traditionally as the Lowland Beauty.

According to information available to Campbell, Lucy Grymes' renowned beauty far exceeded her intelligence (which probably meant that every male on the James was in hot pursuit after her). Campbell ascribes to both Lucy and her husband, Henry Lee, "a rather limited intelligence." Henry Lee, their son, when asked how, in light of such doltish parents he came to be such a bright man, is said to have shrugged it off with a laugh and the observation that "two negatives make an affirmative."²

Among their children (eighth generation) was Henry "Light Horse Harry" Lee, born January 29, 1756, and died March 25, 1818, who married Matilda Lee, a cousin, and following her death, on July 18, 1793, married Anne Carter, by whom he had (ninth generation), Robert E. Lee, who was born January 19, 1807 and died October 12, 1870. Lee was the supreme military commander for the Confederate States of America from 1861-1865.³

¹ In a letter to Mary B. Lorentz, March 23, 1894, Theodore Bland, a member of the Stafford County Bland family, indicated that Mary Bland had married Henry Lee at Dumfries, a Virginia town in Stafford County, home of that branch of the Bland family. James Edgard Bland, A Genealogy of the Brown Family (1930), pp. 556-557.

² Campbell, Vol. I, XXV.

³ Lee, p. 140; Slaughter, pp. 156-157; and Hiden and Jester, p. 100.



Sarah Fitzhugh Bland (1748-1793), wife of Theodorick Bland (seventh generation) of Stafford County, Virginia, mother of Judge Theodorick Bland of Maryland (cf. pp. 136-139). Photograph of an oil on canvas by John Hesselius.

Original painting is located at the Maryland Historical Society.



Mary Bland Lee (1704-1764), sixth generation daughter of Richard Bland (1665-1720) and Elizabeth Randolph (-1720).

Courtesy: The Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum, Delaware.

The second child, and second daughter of Richard Bland and Elizabeth Randolph, was Elizabeth (sixth generation) who was born May 21, 1706. Her specific date of death is unknown, but her husband's will in 1756 leaves his estate in her hands and makes it clear that she was living then.¹ Other information suggests that she was still alive in October 1781.² She was, as a young teenager, evidently a favorite of William Byrd, who mentions on several occasions playing cards with Elizabeth and her sister Mary.

June 23, 1720: The two Misses Bland to play cards with me, but also others.

December 12, 1720: I gave Betty Bland the chance of one card and Hannah Ludwell the chance of another, but neither won. I then danced country dances with them.³

Elizabeth married William Beverly (1698-1756), son of the emigrant, Robert Beverly, the famous historian of Virginia life, and Ursula Byrd. William Beverly was a man of immense wealth, owning more than 118,000 acres of land, including property upon which the famous Blandfield estate in Essex County, Virginia was constructed and named in tribute to his wife.⁴ As we shall see, Beverly was not as loving and generous with the rest of the Bland family.

William Beverly and his wife Elizabeth Bland evidently had five children, including two sons and three daughters. One son, John, died young, around 1743. On May 11, 1743, Beverly writes a letter to a cousin:

1 VMHB, Vol. 22 (1914), pp. 297-301.

2 WMQ (1), Vol. 16 (1911), p. 60.

3 Byrd II, pp. 421-422, 485. Byrd habitually cheated at cards when playing with women.

4 VMHB, Vol. 36 (1928), pp. 27-28.

Since you left it hath pleased God in his anger to deprive me of my dear son John, in whom was my chief delight and my greatest hope, he having so fine a genius. I vainly thought he would be an exceeding great comfort to me in my old age (if I should attain it) but now he is gone the way of all flesh, and I shall endeavour not to be fond of anything in this world.¹

Beverly's language would lead one to assume that John was a youth in his teens when he died. The other son was Robert Bland Beverly, whose birthdate is unknown, but who died in 1800, and married Maria Carter (1745-1817). Robert Beverly (seventh generation) was trained in law in England between 1750-1761, and returned to Virginia where "he spent his life quietly without desire for office higher than magistrate of his county." During the Revolution he was a Tory, but apparently kept his nose clean by staying out of politics.²

William Beverly and Elizabeth Bland had three daughters, of whom the oldest was Elizabeth, who married James Mill, and Ursula, who married William Fitzhugh. These two daughters were of legal age by 1756 which means that they had to be born sometime before 1738. The third daughter, Anna, was unmarried and under age 18 at the time her father's will was filed in 1756. Subsequently, she married a cousin, Robert Munford, son of Anna Bland (sixth generation) and Robert Munford.

The fourth child, and third daughter of Richard Bland and Elizabeth Randolph was Anna, who was born February 25, 1711/1712. Her date of death is unknown. She married twice. Her first husband was Robert Munford, whom she married about 1729. Munford was referred to as

¹ Beverly to Richard Bland, Scarborough, May 11, 1743, WMQ (1), Vol. 1, pp. 233-234; Cf. Campbell I, p. 2.

² VMHB, Vol. 36 (1928), p. 27.

Captain Munford, and his marriage with Anna appears to have been very unhappy. By the time of his death in 1744, Munford seems to have been an alcoholic and chronically in debt. William Beverly writes in 1743:

My sister Munford is ruined, the estate most of it sold to pay the drunken husband's debts.¹

By 1744 Beverly, who had helped Anna Bland Munford financially, had apparently run out of patience, and much to his wife's embarrassment and chagrin, refused to help her more. In a letter dated June 4, 1745, Elizabeth Bland Beverly expresses bitterness that she would like to help her sister, but her husband will not permit it.² By Robert Munford, Anna Bland had three children, including two sons, Robert and Theodorick, and one daughter, Elizabeth.

Although it is not certain, the eldest son was Robert Munford (seventh generation). Robert was born in 1730 and died in 1784. He was trained at Wakefield School in York County, England. He served as a captain in the French and Indian War; following formation of Mecklenburg County, Virginia, he was appointed county lieutenant.³ He was a member of the House of Burgesses for Mecklenburg from 1765-1776, and of the House of Delegates from 1779-1780. Interestingly, he married Anna, daughter of William Beverly and Elizabeth Bland of Blandfield, a cousin. They had three children, including Elizabeth Beverly Munford who married General Richard Kennon; Ann, who married into the Byrd family; and a son, William Munford, who was born August 15, 1775 and

¹ WMQ (1), Vol. L (1895), p. 233.

² VMHB, Vol. 23 (1915), pp. 261-262.

³ Tylers, Vol. 3 (1921-1922), p. 177.

died June 21, 1825. This William Munford was a trained lawyer, educated at William and Mary, who published two notable translations of Homer that evidently were published posthumously in London in 1846.¹

The second child, and second son of Anna Bland (sixth generation) and Robert Munford, was Theodorick Bland Munford born February 21, 1742/1743. He died October 1772. The third child, and only daughter of Anna Bland and Robert Munford, was Elizabeth Munford (seventh generation) who was born September 22, 1734, and who married John Bannister in 1755. The date of Elizabeth's death is uncertain. Subsequently, Bannister married directly into the Bland family, marrying Elizabeth, daughter of Theodorick Bland of Cawsons. (See discussion of Bannister's second marriage on page 169).

Upon the death of Robert Munford, Anna Bland remarried to George Currie, a lawyer and minister, and by him had two daughters (seventh generation), Anne and Margaret.

When he died on April 6, 1720, Richard Bland's children were left without parents and all were minors. Richard designated his brothers-in-law, Richard and William Randolph, as the guardians of the children, stipulating that upon the children's majority, the daughters were to receive 500 pounds sterling and various household items, while the son Theodorick was to receive the property called Cawsons, and the elder son Richard would receive all other lands, comprising the Jordans estate. All daughters were to receive two negro slaves, while the other slaves would be divided between the two sons.² It was not an

¹ VMHB, Vol. 31 (1923), pp. 186-187. Cf. letter Elizabeth Bland Beverly to Richard Bennett February 12, 1744/1745, cited in J. B. Hubbell, The South in American Literature: 1607-1900 (1954), p. 142. For a portrait of William Munford (1775-1825) see Hubbell, pp. 283-287.

² Tylers, Vol. 3, 1921-1922, p. 177; Campbell I, pp. xxvii-xxviii.

unusually devised will, and as would be expected, left relatively little to the daughters and a great deal to the sons. Especially for the youngest daughter Anna, the custodial arrangement in which the Randolphs were enjoined to raise the minor children of Richard Bland and Elizabeth Randolph, foretold Anna's early marriage to Munford and sealed her most unhappy fate.

Richard Bland of Jordans (Sixth Generation): Life in a Flame

Richard Bland (sixth generation) was the first of two sons born to Richard Bland (Fifth Generation) and Elizabeth Randolph. He was born on May 6, 1710 and died October 28, 1776. In 1729, Richard married Anne Poythress, in advance probably of his inheriting title as an adult to his father's estate. As a youth he was educated at William and Mary College, and perhaps in England at Edinburgh University. As an adult he lived in Martin's Brandon Parish in Prince George County. He taught himself law well enough to qualify for legal practice in 1746.

Richard Bland was slight of build¹ but appears to have enjoyed good health and have had energy to burn. He survived three marriages.²

As an intellectual and political man, he was representative of the "Creole" aristocrats who controlled Virginia society in the seventy-

¹ Clinton Rossiter, "Richard Bland: The Whig In America," WMQ (3) (1953), pp. 33-79, esp. pp. 37-38.

² Ibid. It is interesting to note, however, that Anne Poythress, Bland's first wife died in 1758. She was the mother of all his 12 children. He would have been about 50 upon remarriage, but had no children by his last two wives.

five years of the 18th century in Virginia prior to the Revolution. These men have been overshadowed historically by the brilliant generation that succeeded them and conceived and executed the American Revolution: names like Washington, Jefferson, Mason, Madison, Monroe, Henry and Lee. Typically, Richard Bland's generation consisted of the large landowners and planters who in the 18th century began to breathe political life and independent power into the lower houses of assembly, to create a structural body for political exchange and discourse that would evolve into a forum in which the revolutionary generation could conceive its resistance to England.

Richard Bland and his contemporaries taught the revolutionary generation. John Adams called Bland "a learned bookish man," and George Washington recalled that he was "a man of erudition and intelligence." Jefferson remembered him, in a back-handed compliment, as "the most learned man south of the James River," which of course set poor Bland off from most of the rest of his fellows, including Jefferson, who lived north of the James.¹

An incident involving Jefferson is especially worthy of note. In 1769, Jefferson persuaded "Colonel Bland, one of the ablest and most respected members" of the Burgesses to sponsor a modest proposal on behalf of slaves. Jefferson "undertook to move for certain moderate extensions of the protection of the laws to these people...merely to remove...restrictions imposed upon voluntary manumission..."² As

¹ These quotes are found in Rossiter, *passim*.

² Jefferson to Governor Coles, August 25, 1814, quoted in Hugh Gribbsby, The Virginia Convention of 1788 (1888), p. 133.

Jefferson put it, he was protected from the violent uproar that followed, because of his youth, but the "learned, patriotic Bland was denounced as an enemy of his country and was treated with the grossest indecorum."¹

In 1774, Roger Atkinson wrote of Richard Bland, then 64, that he was:

A very old experienced veteran at ye senate or ye bar--
staunch and tough as Whittleather--has something of ye
look of old musty parchments, which he handleth and
studieth much...²

One historian has characterized Richard Bland as half a practical farmer, half scholar and lawyer, a pleasant, well-mannered person who was somewhat untidy and sloppy in his dress.³ The same historian writes, drastically overstating the case, that Richard Bland, "more than any other man, was the author of the revolution in Virginia."⁴ If that compliment goes too far, it is perhaps not too much to say that Richard Bland was the prototype of early pamphleteers who developed intellectual arguments that fueled the rebellious impulse of colonists during the 1760's. Bland was trained toward reasoned argumentation, and well ordered stability. He would have been horrified (probably was) at the flaming arguments of men like Samuel Adams and Thomas Paine. Rather, his most well remembered writings reflect the early literary motions toward resistance that by 1774 or 1775 were looked upon by his fellow Virginians as appeasement.

Briefly, the traditional story of the Revolution is that at the end of the Seven Years' War (1756-1763, known in North America as the French and Indian War), the British Empire, demanding new resources to

¹ Rossiter, op. cit., p. 36.

² VMHB, Vol. 15 (1907), p. 356.

³ H. J. Eckenrode, The Revolution in Virginia, Vol. II.

⁴ ibid

maintain prizes won in the peace, began to tighten trade regulations in its colonial empires, including the Americas. The North American colonists, who for over a century had prospered under the loosely administered colonial system, gradually escalated acts of resistance until by 1776, they asserted their independence from England. For most of this time, they considered themselves Englishmen, as Richard Bland did. They revered the crown and England's political and social institutions, but in their arguments against England's new regulatory posture, some self-serving, some grand and noble, began to chip away at their allegiance to England, first by asserting strongly their own rights to self-government, then attacking the authority and motives of Parliament and finally, the King himself.

This is not the place to elaborate upon the above theme. Suffice it to say that in all Richard Bland wrote, he fits politically and intellectually into this earlier litigious and intellectual form of resistance. He was deeply and devoutly an Englishman. One could never imagine Richard Bland writing about the King or the King's motives as vituperatively as did, say, his nephew Theodorick Bland (1740-1790). Richard Bland served in the House of Burgesses between 1742-1775, so his public career spans the entire historical period up to the time of the severance from England and the Revolutionary War. Bland was in the thick of some five incidents of legal political controversies in the course of this long career. They were the Pistole Fee Affair, the Two-Penny Act, and subsequently the fight of native Virginians against establishment of an American Episcopate, the Stamp Act crisis, and the series of events that led to rebellion against England.

The Pistole Fee controversy was a minor incident but for subsequent acts of rebellion, prophetic in nature. When Governor Robert Dinwiddie began his tenure as Governor of Virginia, 1751-1756, he decided to tighten up the land grant practices that prevailed in Virginia by imposing a fee of one pistole (a gold coin valued in Virginia at about \$3.60 in contemporary value) for each land grant transaction. This action was taken without knowledge of the House of Burgesses, who as prime property owners were the heaviest traffickers in land, and was timed so as to guarantee a rich bonus to the crown and also to Dinwiddie himself. Upon reconvening, the lower House of Assembly, in one of the earliest acts of colonial resistance, asked Dinwiddie to "acquaint us with the Authority that empowers you to demand this extraordinary fee."¹ Dinwiddie politely informed the Burgesses that it was none of their damned business. An ever escalating war of words ensued, and resulted in an appeal before the Privy Council and Board of Trade in England, whose final decision supported Dinwiddie in principle but limited his power. Richard Bland was a key participant in the deliberations in the Burgesses and composed the only extant public comment on the issue, a pamphlet called A Modest and True State of the Case. Comparison of the style of this fragment with the motions and resolutions issuing from the House of Burgesses, leaves little doubt that Richard Bland was the chief penman for the Burgesses on this issue. The Burgesses insisted upon regarding the pistole fee as a tax, and the entire affair left them with a sour taste in their mouths.

¹ VMHB, Vol. 48 (1940), pp. 209-221.

During the late 1750's, Bland was active in the Burgesses on various appropriations committees, and was a defender, with some foresight, of a young colonel of the Virginia militia named George Washington. Beginning in 1758, Bland became engaged as a primary combatant against the Reverend John Camm, representing a body of clergymen of the Church of England. Briefly, since the 17th century, the medium of exchange in Virginia had been in pounds of tobacco. A crop failure in 1758 threatened to drive the price of tobacco higher than anyone calculated, and one group that stood to profit conspicuously from the problem was the clergy, whose salary was fixed by a 1748 law at 17,280 pounds of tobacco per year. Most people however, including the members of the Burgesses, were in a position of serious potential loss. In face of this, the Burgesses in 1758 set the price of tobacco used in payment for debts at two pence per pound--hence the name, Two-Penny Act--about half the prevailing market rate.

The governor approved the act as an emergency measure, thus altering a standing salary law of 1748, in excess of his authority from the crown. The clergy in Virginia, led by John Camm, immediately rose in opposition, and successfully petitioned the Board of Trade to disallow the Act. As usual, in dealing with the Board of Trade all sorts of allies were drawn into the controversy. For the clergy, it was the Bishop of London, and when the wrath of the Virginia assembly followed the disallowance, it was directed not at the King or his representatives on the Board of Trade, but at the Bishop. The first salvo was issued by Colonel Landon Carter in 1759, followed quickly by Richard Bland's Letter to the Clergy of Virginia, a model of the colonists' early acts

of resistance to English authority. The colonists could not conceptually entertain the thought of crown or parliamentary malice toward the Virginia colony. The culprits rather were little men, plotters and certain advisors who, deliberately and with malice, misinformed the beloved king and his council. Chief of these, Bland's pamphlet makes clear, was the Bishop of London, whose letter in support of the Virginia clergy Bland called "an evidence of the imbecility of the human mind...crafty and malevolent."¹ Bland charged that neither the Burgesses nor the Two-Penny Act, but the clergy, were undermining the authority of the crown.²

As is the case in most of these prerevolutionary pamphlets, the words are fiery: In this case, Richard Bland accused Camm of being "very prolix in invalidating arguments that nobody lays any stress upon," while Camm in his turn calls Bland a "turbulent man who delights to live in a flame."³ After further exchanges, Richard Bland published a famous piece on the controversy called The Colonel Dismounted, or the Record Vindicated in which Bland unmercifully ridiculed Camm by reversing roles with him, and condemning him, so to speak, from his own mouth. It was such a delicately done piece of literary savagery that Camm was reduced to explaining to his readers who was who in the dispute.

The underlying issue was long since settled in favor of the clergy when Bland wrote The Colonel Dismounted, so the chief value of it as

¹ Bernard Bailyn, Pamphlets on the Revolution, 1750-1776 (1965), pp. 295-296. The entire exchange between Richard Bland and John Camm is contained on pp. 292-354. Bailyn's work is available in a more concise form as The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (1967) and is one of the most valuable interpretations of the Revolution.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., pp. 296, 329.

a period piece is in Bland's delineation of and attempt to clarify the roles of the English and colonial governments. His definitions were dynamite to a colony grappling for a way to locate and assert its natural sovereignty while also maintaining ties with its government and its cultural heritage. The government of Virginia, Bland asserted, was supreme over the power of parliament, and wholly independent of England except for its link to the crown, whose function in governance Bland saw as one of prescribing general limits to the Burgesses' power. Bland did not fully develop his arguments, and by 1766 when he wrote his second major treatise, An Inquiry Into the Rights of the British Colonies, in the midst of the Stamp Act controversy, the argument had given way to philosophically tighter and more forceful arguments. But the constitutional boundaries Bland had crudely delineated in The Colonel Dismounted remained at the heart of America's growing struggle with England.

In June 1764, Parliament passed an act imposing a Stamp Tax on most forms of correspondence and literature circulating in the colonies. An immediate, spontaneous and contagious storm of protest swept through the colonies, of such magnitude that the English government, caught off guard, was forced to reconsider and eventually rescind the stamp laws. Bland was part of a Virginia committee of correspondence which composed an address to King and Parliament informing them that they had no right to lay taxes upon a people unrepresented in the Parliament. The Stamp Act signaled the decline of Bland's type of prudent conservatism, the logic of well-reasoned argument, which gave way to the rising call to arms by such radicals as Jefferson and Patrick Henry. Although Richard Bland may never have used stamped paper, he was getting old by now, too

old to change his thinking, and he was no match in oratory for men like Henry. His Inquiry Into the Rights of the British Colonies, which came out in 1766, was quickly forgotten in the public furor that followed repeal of the Stamp Acts. In it, Bland expressed for the first time the critical notion of expatriation, or alienation of affections between England and her American colonial subjects. He defined expatriation as a natural right, following just cause, when subjects within a political order feel as grieved substantially to reject the contract:

When men exercise this right, and withdraw from their country, they recover their natural freedom and independence. The jurisdiction and sovereignty of the state they have quitted, ceases.¹

A dramatic departure! Bland's Inquiry, though not popular, was read by the people who counted and is generally considered the intellectual pregenitor of Thomas Jefferson's Summary View of the Rights of British America. But there was a difference in Bland's Inquiry and Jefferson's Summary View. Richard Bland had no stomach for severance from England. To Bland, expatriation was an intellectual possibility, stated for the record but largely a threat without true actionable substance. In 1766, no one, let alone Richard Bland, could have carried the logical consequences of the idea of expatriation as far as Jefferson did in 1774, when it became not just an idea but a mighty battle cry. Jefferson showed a keen acuity for Bland's ambivalence:

He was the most learned and logical man of those who took prominent lead in public affairs, profound in constitutional lore, a most ungraceful speaker... He

¹ Quoted in Garry Wills, Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence (1978), pp. 82-84.

wrote the first pamphlet on the nature of the connection with Great Britain, which had any pretension to accuracy of view on that subject, but it was a singular one. He would set out on sound principles, pursue them logically till he found them leading to the precipice, which he had to leap, start back alarmed, then resume his ground, go over it in another direction, be led again by the correctness of his reasoning to the same place, and again back about, and try other processes to reconcile right and wrong, but finally left his reader and himself bewildered between the steady index of the compass in their hand, and the phantasm to which it seemed to point.¹

The kind of ambiguity and inner contradiction in Jefferson's comment delineates Bland from the revolutionary generation. Belonging to an older generation, Bland could never bring himself to go as far as the revolutionaries of the mid-1770's, and his resignation from the Burgesses in 1775 must have been greeted by relief as well as regrets, because the old curmudgeon, almost blind by then, had in his desire for settlement in peace through reason, opposed Patrick Henry's resolution to arm Virginia. Now he was gone, and the passing of his type cleared the way for the final intellectual as well as political break with England.

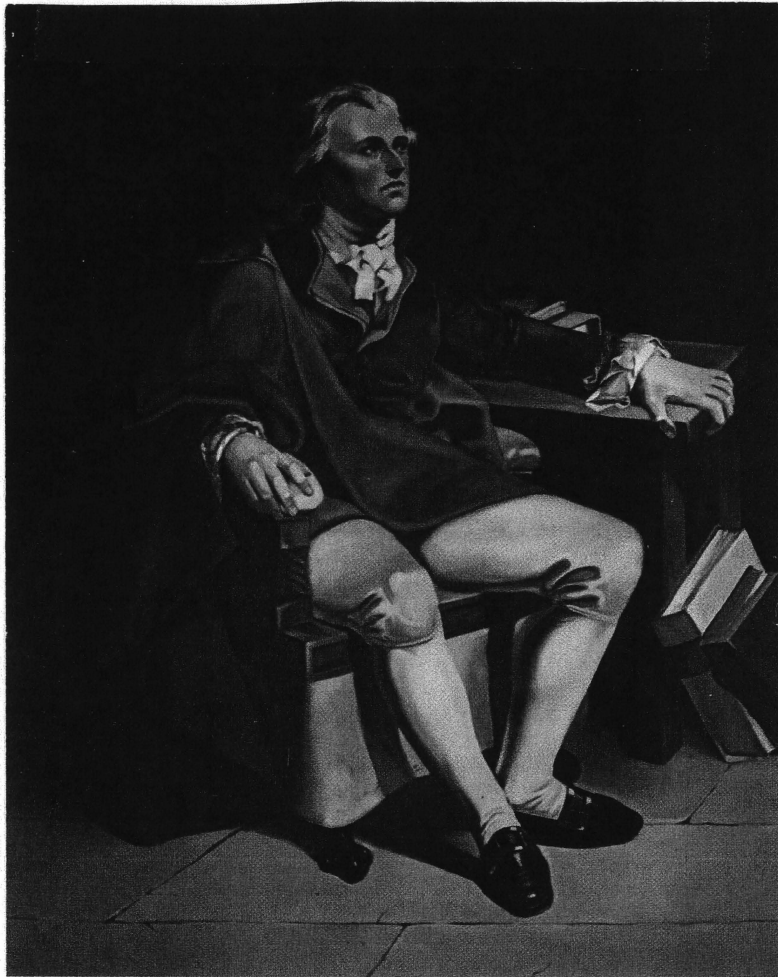
Richard Bland lingered on for another year. In October 1776, he came to Williamsburg as a delegate for Prince George County to the first continental state legislature. In the midst of the revolutionary generation he must have seemed quaint and out of place, a venerable old man whose time had passed. On October 28, while walking down a Williamsburg street, he collapsed and was taken to the home of a friend, where he died of "apoplexy" just a few hours later.

¹ Jefferson is quoted in Rossiter, pp. 52-53.

160A.

RICHARD BLAND (1710-1776)

This is an artist's conception, by Susan Brown. The reader is invited to compare this portrait to the word-portrait of Richard Bland which appears on page 153.



RICHARD BLAND
by Susan Brown

Patriot, statesman, planter for whom Richard Bland College of the College of William and Mary in Virginia is named. Founded by the General Assembly in 1960 in Petersburg, Va.

This portrait was provided courtesy of E. Ike Huter, Librarian, Richard Bland College, Petersburg Virginia. Ms. Brown based her portrait on an engraving done in 1852 and owned by a family member in Maryland.

The Family of Richard Bland: Sixth Generation

Richard Bland had three wives: Anne Poythress, whom he married on March 21, 1729/1730. Anne Poythress was born December 13, 1712, and died on April 9, 1758. Following her death, Richard married Martha Macon Massie, and following her, Elizabeth Blair Bolling. The dates of these later marriages are uncertain, but occurred between 1758-1775. (Elizabeth Blair Bolling Bland died April 28, 1775.) All of Richard Bland's twelve children, born between 1730-1754, were by his first wife, Anne Poythress, and they belong to the seventh generation. 1

The first child, and first son of Richard Bland and Anne Poythress, was Richard. Richard was born at Jordan's on February 20, 1730/1731. He died in 1766. Richard served in the Virginia House of Burgesses from 1761-1765, alongside his father, as representative from Prince George County. On October 8, 1761, Richard Bland (seventh generation) married Mary Bolling, who was born on July 16, 1744, and died sometime in 1775. Richard Bland and Mary Bolling (seventh generation) had two sons and two daughters. The first son, also named Richard (eighth generation) was born on July 23, 1762, and died March 26, 1806. Richard Bland (eighth generation) married Susannah Poythress about 1787. Susannah was from the same family as her grandmother, Anne Poythress (1712-1758).
Richard Bland and Susannah Poythress (eighth generation)

1 Richard Bland (Sixth Generation) has genealogically one of the most well cultivated families. What follows is taken primarily from notes provided by Mr. Leslie Dawson, of New York City, and is based upon the following Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Lineage Books: 1/pp. 53, 155; 2/231/267; 10/148; 14/310; 16/140; 32/353; 33/270; 36/13,15,235,253; 37/210; 38/199; 39/114; 40/288; 51/260; 54/75; 55/450; 56/445; 60/22; 62/143; 65/295; 77/282; 85/372; 86/350; 102/18, 93, 265; 117/153; 125/44; 129/167.

had three sons (ninth generation), Richard, John and Theodorick, and two daughters, Sarah and Mary. Sarah married Thomas Bott, and Mary married Elgin Russell. Among the sons, it is unknown whether Richard married. Theodorick married Mary Harrison and had by her (tenth generation) one son, Theodorick, and four daughters: Susannah Poythress Bland, who married Edward Temple, and Sally, Anne and Mary. John Bland (ninth generation, 1798-1863) has descendants who have traced his family up to 1900. John married three times. His first wife is unknown, but he had by her, four children (tenth generation), Magdalen, Robert, John Bolling, and William. By his second wife, Rachel Reed (1816-1841), whom he married in 1840, he had Rachel (tenth generation 1841-1864) who married James D. Proctor (1832- 1900). John Bland's third wife was Elizabeth Cargill.

The second child, and first daughter of Richard Bland and Anne Poythress, was Elizabeth Bland, who was born March 17, 1732/1733, and died about 1790. She married Peter Poythress. Elizabeth Bland and Peter Poythress had five daughters (eighth generation) including Elizabeth (1759-1806, eighth generation) who married William Mayo (1757- 1833), in 1778. Another daughter of Elizabeth Bland and Peter Poythress was Jane, who married Joseph Mayo (probably a brother of William Mayo). The remaining two daughters of Peter Poythress and Elizabeth Bland were Agnes, whose dates are unknown and who married Roger Atkinson (1788- 1864) and Mary Poythress, whose dates also are unknown, married John Batte.

1. By Now, it must be clear that the Bland and Poythress families must have shared many experiences.

The third child, and second daughter of Richard Bland (sixth generation) and Anne Poythress, was Anne, who was born on August 15, 1735. The dates of her death are unknown, but she married John Pryor, by whom she had (eighth generation) a son Luke, who married Anne Batte Lane (1790-).

The fourth child, and second son of Richard Bland (sixth generation) and Anne Poythress, was Peter (seventh generation) who was born February 2, 1736/1737, and died February 16, 1781. Peter married Judith Booker by whom he had no known children, and Rebecca Spiceley, by whom he had two sons, Peter and Edward (eighth generation).

Peter Bland (eighth generation) has no recorded dates. He married Martha Nash and by her had a son, Richard Bland (ninth generation), who married Henrietta Williams.

Edward Bland (eighth generation) lived from 1767-1831. In 1808, he married Rebecca Jones (1791-1841) and by her had (ninth generation): Judith Maria Bland (1810-1856), who married Henry Warsham (1801-1873); Emma Bland (1811-1867), who married George Harrison in 1828; William Richard Bland (1818-1878), who married Matilda Eppes in 1840 and had by her (tenth generation), Edward Bland (1851-1901), who married Nannie Cooke. This is one of the few instances in which the Bland name survived to 1900 through the James River family.

The fifth and sixth children of Richard Bland (sixth generation) and Anne Poythress, were John, who was born October 19, 1739, and Mary, who was born February 15, 1740/1741. Both died in their infancy.

The seventh child, and fourth son of Richard Bland (sixth generation) and Anne Poythress, was William Bland (seventh

generation). He was born on December 26, 1742. Between 1758-1763, William attended William and Mary College, and he was ordained and licensed as a minister on June 24, 1767. (One wonders what he thought of his father's role in the Two-Penny Act affair.) He served as minister of the James City parish in James City County from his ordination until about 1777. William was one of thirteen ministers who signed an association channeled through the House of Burgesses on May 27, 1774, to protest the closing of the port of Boston, following the Boston Tea Party of December 1773. Various information indicates he was a chaplain in the Virginia militia during the Revolutionary War. After the revolution, he represented Warwick County Parish and Elizabeth City County Parish in Diocesan conventions held in 1785-1786. He appears to have run upon hard times as the 1780's ended, for he laid claim to being Rector of St. Paul's Church in Norfolk, but was denied by the Diocesan convention in 1790. After that, he became an alcoholic and was defrocked from the Virginia ministry in 1794. The date of his death is uncertain. William married Elizabeth Yates, the daughter of a minister. One should note that William's uncle, Theodorick Bland (sixth generation, 1719-1784) also married an Elizabeth Yates in his later life. William's wife Elizabeth was descended, as it turns out, from Pocohontas, that wily old squaw, whose blood appears to have coursed through the loins of about half of 18th century Virginia. William Bland and Elizabeth Yates had a daughter, Nancy or Anne (eighth generation); married Richard Pryor and had by him seven children

1. VMHB, vol 41 (1933), pp. 124-125.

(Ninth generation). The eighth child, and fifth son of Richard Bland (sixth generation) and Anne Poythress, was Theodorick (seventh generation). He was born September 28, 1744, and died in 1754. The ninth child, and sixth son of Richard Bland and Anne Poythress, was Edward Bland (seventh generation), who was born December 16, 1746. His date of death is unknown. Edward married Elizabeth Cooke and by her had a daughter and son (eighth generation). The daughter Louise married Robert Harrison. The son, John Bland, married first Mary Parkinson and had by her (ninth generation) a daughter Imogen. Second, John Bland married a Miss Jones and had by her (ninth generation) John Archer Bland, and Cornelia Bland, who married a Mr. Knight. The tenth child, and fourth daughter of Richard Bland (sixth generation) and Anne Poythress, was Sarah or Sally Bland (seventh generation). Sally was born September 19, 1750, and she died about 1807. About 1772, she married Robert Goode by whom she had two sons (eighth generation). The eleventh child, and fifth daughter of Richard Bland (sixth generation) and Anne Poythress, was Susan, who was born February 20, 1752, and died young. The twelfth child, and sixth daughter, of Richard Bland (sixth generation) and Anne Poythress, was Lucy (seventh generation). She was born September 22, 1754, and on May 31, 1780, married Jacob Rubsamen. This concludes the known lines of descent from Richard Bland (sixth generation) and Anne Poythress. Richard Bland had a younger brother, Theodorick, who in the course of his family life had children and grandchildren who were important to Virginia. If not empowered of the wealth and logical precision of Richard Bland, they were much more colorful.

The Family of Theodorick Bland of Cawsons: Sixth Generation

The last child of Richard Bland (fifth generation) and his wife, Elizabeth Randolph, was Theodorick Bland, generally known as of Cawsons. Theodorick was born on December 2, 1719. Tragically, his mother died a little more than a month later on January 22 or 30, 1719-1720, from complications in Theodorick's birth. His father, Richard, died just a few months later on April 6, 1720. He was raised apparently in the care of his maternal relatives, the Randolphs. There is no way of knowing whether his childhood was particularly happy. A letter from his sister Elizabeth intimates that (at least, she believes, or Theodorick has told her) he was in rather pitiful straits:

I am very sorry we should be deprived of your company for want of cloaths & wish it ware in my power to give you some & I am sure if Mr. Beverly had money to command, you would not want them...¹

Campbell says of him that he was a plain, practical man, with slender advantages of education, but a man of good fortune and character. Nothing is known of his education, but it is illogical that he should have not had advantages equal to his older brother Richard. Governor Faquier in 1758 appointed Theodorick as colonel of the Prince George County Militia, and he was also clerk of the county and in several terms a member of the Burgesses from the county.²

Theodorick's moral values seem to be of a piece with those of the times, as witnessed by the strictures he placed on a young man hired in 1760 to be his assistant in the county clerk's office. Among the promises to which the young man was enjoined:

¹ VMHB, Vol. 23 (1915), pp. 361-362. The letter is undated, probably sometime in early to mid-1730's.

² Campbell I, pp. xiv-xv.

To any at cards, Dice or at any other Unlawfull games he shall not play, Taverns or Tippling houses he shall not frequent, Fornication he shall not committ, matrimony he shall not contract * * * but in all things as a Good and Faithfull apprentice shall and will Demean and behave himself towards his said master.¹

The major part of Theodorick's bequest from his father appears to have been the land that came to be called Cawsons. As indicated previously, it probably was purchased by Theodorick's father in 1691. Cawsons was located south of the James, as it joins the Appomatox River. It was just north of Jordans, homeplace of Theodorick's father. Cawsons must have been very spacious and luxuriant, for it was said to have been a place of some thirty rooms and set off by grounds "adorned by shrubbery, serpentine walks and other artificial embellishments."² The place was accidentally destroyed by fire in 1781.³ One of the casualties of the fire was the portrait of Richard Bland (sixth generation, 1710-1776). Supposedly, Cawsons was burned about April 1781. A large company of guests were gathered at a party when a servant informed Theodorick that his house was on fire. With "great coolness and composure," Theodorick told the servant to put the fire out, and returning to his guests, told them to continue with the party. Soon, however, the fire raged out of control and the house was lost.

¹ VMHB, Vol. 4 (1896-1897), p. 280.

² Campbell I, VIII, and William Cabell Bruce, John Randolph of Roanoke: 1773-1833 (1922), Vol. 1, p. 3.

³ Campbell I, pp. 36-37.

During his lifetime, Theodorick married twice. His first wife, and mother of all his children, was Frances Bolling, the daughter of Drury Bolling, who was born in 1724, and died in 1774.¹ He married Frances in 1739.² Frances was the mother of all of Theodorick's children. By 1777, Theodorick was rummaging around for another wife, but without the most unqualified approbation of his son Theodorick, as witnessed by this observation by his son-in-law, John Bannister:

You were certainly right in ... your sentiments upon the old gentleman's matrimonial plans, and he was pleased that you did so. I believe, from best information, that he has laid aside all thoughts of that lady, for a very good reason, her having altered her mind.³

In other words, "that lady," whoever she was, jilted old Theodorick. But things ended well, for sometime before 1780, Theodorick married Elizabeth Randolph Yates, daughter of Edward Randolph and widow of William Yates. By her he had no children. His will was formulated July 16, 1783, and he died about May 8, 1784. Elizabeth died in the same year.⁴

The children of Theodorick Bland and Frances Bolling were as follows: 1) Elizabeth; 2) Theodorick; 3) Mary; 4) Anna; 5) Jane; and 6) Frances. All these children are seventh generation.

¹ Frances Bolling descended from her grandfather, Robert Bolling, through his second wife, Anne Stith, rather than his first wife, Jane Rolfe. Therefore, alas, no Pocohontas blood flowed through the veins of Frances Bolling.

² WMQ (I), Vol. 8, p. 99.

³ Campbell, I, pp. 55-59.

⁴ VMHB, Vol. 9 (1901-1902), pp. 66-67.

Table XII

THE FAMILY OF RICHARD BLAND (SIXTH GENERATION) OF JORDANS IN VIRGINIA:
FOUR GENERATIONS

- (4) Theodorick Bland (1629-1671 = Anna Bennett (C1639-1687)
 (5) Richard Bland (1665-1720) = Elizabeth Randolph (-1719)
 (6) Richard Bland (1710-1776) = Anne Poythress (1712-1758)

(7-1)	(7-2)	(7-3)	(7-4)	(7-5)	(7-6)
Richard Bland (1730-1766) Married Mary Bolling (1744- 1775 in 1761).	Elizabeth Bland (1732-C1790) Married Peter Poythress c. 1758.	Anne Bland (1735-?) Married John Pryor.	Peter Bland (1736-1781) Married (1) Judith Booker and (2) Rebecca Spiceley.	John Bland (1739-Died in infancy).	Mary Bland (1740-died in infancy).

(7-7)	(7-8)	(7-9)	(7-10)	(7-11)	(7-12)
William Bland (1742-died after 1795). Married Elizabeth Yates	Theodorick Bland (1744 -1754)	Edward Bland (1746-?) married Elizabeth Cooke	Sarah Bland (1750-1807) married Robert Goode about 1772.	Susan Bland (1752-Died Young)	Lucy Bland (1754-?), married Jacob Rubasmen in 1780.

TABLE XIII

THE FAMILY OF THEODORICK BLAND OF CAWSONS: FOUR GENERATIONS

- (4) Theodorick Bland (1629-1671) = Anna Bennett (C. 1629-1687)
- (5) Richard Bland (1665-1720) = Elizabeth Randolph (? - 1719)
- (6) Theodorick Bland (1719-1784) = (1) Frances Bolling (1724-1774); and
 (2) Elizabeth Randolph Yates *

(7-1)

Theodorick Bland (1740-1790)
 married Martha Dangerfield
 about 1765.

(7-2)

Elizabeth Bland (1739-?)
 married John Bannister
 (?-1787)

(7-3)

Mary Bland (1745-1765)
 married William Ruffin
 about 1762

(7-4)

Anna Bland (1747-?)
 married Thomas Eaton

(7-5)

Jane Bland (1749-?)
 married Herbert Harris

(7-6)

Frances Bland (1752-1788)
 married (1) John Randolph
 (1742-1775) in 1769; (2)
 St. George Tucker in 1777.
 John Randolph and Frances
 Bland were the parents of
 Virginia statesman John
 Randolph "of Roanoke"
 (eighth generation, 1773-
 1833)

* There were no children by the marriage of Theodorick Bland and Elizabeth Randolph Yates.

Elizabeth, the first daughter, was born January 4, 1739/1740. She married John Bannister,¹ who is described glowingly by Campbell, and was a frequent correspondent with his brother-in-law, Theodorick Bland, while the latter served as a Colonel in the Revolutionary War. Bannister died in 1787. There is no record of Elizabeth Bland Bannister's death. They had three children, of whom one was named Wilamatha. Campbell indicates that the entire family was extinct by 1840.²

The second daughter, Mary, was born August 22, 1745. She married William Ruffin in 1762, and she died in 1765. William Ruffin and Mary Bland had one child (eighth generation), Theodorick Bland Ruffin (born about 1763) who married Susan Murray.³

The third daughter, Anna Bland, was born September 5, 1747. She married Thomas Eaton of Roanoke River in North Carolina. Jane Bland, the fourth daughter, was born September 30, 1749, and married Herbert Harris. Two of the children of Theodorick Bland (sixth generation) and Frances Bolling have gained general historical notice. They are the only son, Theodorick Bland (seventh generation) and the last daughter, Frances Bland, who was the mother of John Randolph of Roanoke.⁴

¹ Leslie Dawson, notes citing Torrence Wills and Administrations. Campbell, I, pp. xxvii-xxviii. Cf. p. 150.

² Recall that John Bannister's first wife was Elizabeth Munford, his second wife's first cousin and child of Anna Bland and Robert Munford. Evidently, Mr. Bannister found the Bland women entirely to his liking.

³ William Ruffin and Mary Bland are the antecedents of one correspondent, Elizabeth Eugenia Blake Gaston, of Columbus, Mississippi. Mrs. Gaston to Charles Bland, October 6, 1980.

⁴ Ibid.

Theodorick Bland (Seventh Generation): Physician, Soldier and Statesman

The only son of Theodorick Bland (sixth generation) and Frances Bolling was Theodorick (seventh generation), who was born at Cawsons on December 31, 1740, and was baptized May 26, 1742. He died June 1, 1790.¹

Of all the members of this 18th century family of Blands, he seems to have led the most interesting life, next to his uncle Richard (1710-1776), and probably is the best known. At various times he was a student, poet (a very poor one), a physician, lover, revolutionary warrior and patriot statesman. Of the three Blands who were best known, he strikes the cleanest balance between reason and passion. He falls somewhere between the coldly severe and logical mind of his uncle Richard Bland (1710-1776) and the wildly irrational and emotional statesmanship (the expression almost seems contradictory) of his nephew John Randolph of Roanoke (1773-1833). His life seems to have been principally a positive and joyous experience. He lived in times that for an upper-class Virginian must have been the most exhilarating and he seems to have lived it to the hilt.

Nothing is known of Theodorick's first years. From a letter written to him by his father in 1763, it appears that he went to England in York County about 1753, there to be educated. He was, at any rate, at school in Wakefield between the years 1756-1758. In 1758, a Mr. Clarke, his headmaster at the school, wrote to his father, informing him that Theodorick required "discipline as much as any other young

¹ Information about Theodorick's birth was included in Mrs. Gaston's letter to me. She cited Bristol Parish, Virginia records as her source, and I believe her information is reliable.



Colonel Theodorick Bland
(1740-1790)

Photograph of a Profile by
Charles Balthazar Julien
Saint-Memin. Source: Virginia
State Library

gentleman." Mr. Clarke reported that his composition and Latin were not good, but Theodorick did stand second in his class, and showed evidences of having read Horace and Xenophon.¹

In 1759, and continuing apparently until about 1763, Theodorick entered medical studies, first at an Infirmary in Liverpool. His father considered sending him to Oxford, but the expense, in addition to the fourteen year matriculation, caused him instead to decide upon Edinburgh, the favorite university for students from Virginia. He entered Edinburgh in 1761. In the same year he finished his thesis, de Coctione Alimentorum in Ventriculo.² While in Edinburgh, Theodorick also organized the Virginia Club, restricted to Virginia students and dedicated to the wholehearted pursuit of anatomical studies. Wholehearted or not, young Theodorick still found time for a brief love affair with a young woman named Annie Miller, which upset his father perhaps beyond the proportions it deserved. Subsequently, Theodorick renounced the affair; Miss Miller remained his amiable friend.³

After graduating from Edinburgh, Theodorick spent another year in Germany and in Paris to, as he put it to his father, complete "that education on which my dear father has spared nothing that I could wish for."⁴ He wound up his sojourn in Europe in 1764 or 1765 and returned home to Virginia, where he set up a medical practice and married Martha Dangerfield, a young lady from Stafford County.

1 Blanton, p. 230.

2 Blanton, pp. 87, 91.

3 Campbell I, xvii-xviii, pp. 20-24. Blanton, p. 230.

4 Campbell I, p. 24.

These middle years of his life, newly wed, a new physician, were not free of turmoil. Theodorick evidently was not very strong physically. He described himself as "weak and infirm from my cradle," yet he wanted to lead the quiet life of a country farmer and give up the practice of medicine. He had apparently studied medicine to please his parents, and because medicine provided him with some "amusements for the mind." But by 1771, after seven years of practice, Theodorick was fed up with the ungrateful patients and measly pay he was able to eke out from his practice. (How far medicine had gone since John Coggan's time!) His plan to give up medicine met with the studied disapproval of his parents, to which Theodorick wrote, "would it then please my parents more to see me a lifeless carcass in one or two years?"¹ In 1771 then, the same man who upon his return to Virginia had entered upon the medical profession with a ringing recommendation for reform of medical practice in Virginia, dissolved his practice in Petersburg with a Dr. Stark and retired, presumably, to his farm.

The silence in his life that marks the next several years may attest to a brief interlude of happiness and peace. But not for long. For his return to Virginia coincided more or less with the end of the Seven Years' War and the heightening of tensions between the North American Colonies and the British Empire. Bland's consciousness appears to have been raised, at least in writing, in a letter to Bristol, England in December 1774, in which he writes, "...political disputes between these colonies and the mother country...threaten us with a deprivation of our liberties and every thing that is dear to us."² In 1775, he

¹ Theodorick Bland's disenchantment with medical practice is outlined in a letter to his parents dated January 12, 1771. Campbell I, pp. 30-32.

² Campbell, XXI.

joined a raiding party against the governor's palace at Williamsburg, at which 230 rifles and 300 swords were captured. He picked up the threads of some youthful poetic effusions by celebrating the battle of Lexington, a piece which Campbell calls "rather distinguished for its patriotism than for its poetic merit."¹ Also in 1775, Theodorick wrote a series of angry tirades against the then-Governor of Virginia, the Earl of Dunmore. In these essays, he assails Dunmore both privately and politically, not unlike his Uncle Richard's attack upon the Virginia clergy and Bishop of London, seeing in him the most designing of men with a soul rotted by corruption, vice and greed.

But Theodorick apparently took no sustained delight in these verbal sallies, and on June 13, 1776, as the political conflict veered into military combat, he organized, at his own expense, the First Continental Dragoons (mounted horsemen). He was appointed a colonel, and served as commander of the Dragoons until he was relieved of duty in March 1780.²

Theodorick Bland, let us admit, was not one of the great soldiers of the Revolutionary War. Fortunately, the movements of his troops came under the sharp eye of General Washington, who kept him straight, and with that military man's keen appreciation for ineptness, Bland managed to be in some fairly important places during the war.

In July 1776, while the American patriots were gathered to declare independence, General William Howe landed unopposed at Staten Island with several thousand troops. Presently, his brother, Admiral Lord

¹ Campbell, XXI-XXIII; Blanton, p. 232.

² Campbell I, XXV, and II, pp. 36-39. Blanton, p. 232.

Howe, arrived with a battle fleet. During that long summer of 1776, British troops poured into the colony by the thousands. England had one of the most formidable military forces in the world, and the right commander at its helm might have used it to mince the upstart Americans. Fortunately for the fate of our fledgling nation, however, the Howe brothers were just the ones to challenge George Washington's supremacy in military incompetence.¹ At the first major battle near Long Island in August 1776, Washington's large but unskilled forces were completely routed and were spared from destruction only by Howe's cautious and methodical refusal to push his adversaries. But Washington, never being one to take no for an answer, could muster no forceful resistance, and during the long fall and early winter was driven further southward, across the Delaware River. Having gotten Washington in full flight, Howe paused for the winter.

As every school boy and girl knows (at least until recently anyway), Washington seized his opportunity by stealthily crossing the Delaware River on Christmas night 1776, and his troops fell upon one thousand unsuspecting Hessian mercenaries under British command at Trenton, thus sending a strong message to Howe that it wasn't going to be easy for him.

During the early months of 1777, General Howe and his subordinate, General Burgoyne, masterfully executed a sweep down from Canada through the Hudson Valley region, hoping to cut off New England from the rest of the rebellious colonies. Alas, the British already held New York,

¹ There was of course more to George Washington than his military prowess. Politically, he had the Midas touch and seems to have invented the word "charisma." He guided the presidency through its most critical precedent-setting period. After his presidency, the mold was thrown away. None of his successors have come close to him.

and New England had no substantial land communication with the colonies to her south where incidentally most of the American main forces were massed. Thus, Howe's move was a masterwork of irrelevance. Recovering himself, he changed directions and marched his troops toward Philadelphia. Washington tried to block his movement but already confused by the ineptness of Howe's actions, and overwhelmed by the brute force of the British army, had to fall back again. Howe swept into Philadelphia. Another act of irrelevance, since most Americans lived out in the vast and diffuse hinterlands and not in the coastal cities. So it went until the summer, when Burgoyne's and Washington's forces engaged in the Hudson Valley for an extended and fateful battle. Our hero, Theodorick Bland, and his Dragoons were present there and later at the battle of Brandywine, near Philadelphia, with a primary task of reconnaissance. Theodorick spotted one of Howe's advance guards about three hours before the two forces engaged at Brandywine, and quickly relayed information to Washington that Howe's columns were separated. In fact, the columns were intact and preparing a classic hammer and anvil sweep. Washington quickly changed his plans and avoided having his men entrapped, a near brush with fate that prompted General Henry Lee to comment that "Bland was noble, sensible, honorable and amiable, but never intended for the department of military intelligence."¹ In spite of this, Washington persevered with Theodorick Bland, perhaps mindful of the support he had received in the 1750's from Theodorick's uncle Richard. On October 25, 1777, Washington severely reprimanded Theodorick Bland for his failure to control pillaging and plunder by his troops, and told him that his, Washington's, generous latitude to

¹ Campbell, I, pp. xxvii-xxviii.

Bland's Dragoons had been "perverted into a mere plundering scheme."¹ Washington cancelled all leaves in Bland's unit, and ordered that Bland's troops not interfere in any way with horses or other private property. This evidently set Bland to brooding about how much Washington did or did not appreciate his services, for on November 8, Washington refused Theodorick's request to resign his commission.²

These exchanges between Washington and Bland occurred during the cleanup phase of a military action that had led to Burgoyne's dramatic surrender at Saratoga on October 17, 1777, an action that could have ended the war if Lord North back in England had his way.

But good King George insisted that the contest be pressed on, as it were, more or less in stalemate for three more years. The American victory at Saratoga, however, came as incredibly good news to Benjamin Franklin, then in Paris trying desperately to gain an alliance with France. Quickly (for those days of slow communication), France in February 1778 signed treaties of Amity and Commerce and of Alliance with America, offering to fight with the Americans to maintain "the liberty, sovereignty and independence, absolute and unlimited, of the United States;" further, not to make a separate peace or lay down arms until the independence of the United States was assured. Ultimate American victory was assured from that point onward.³

After Saratoga, Howe, under safe conduct from the American forces, was allowed to return to England, where he resigned. The army he left

1 Campbell, I, pp. 67-68.

2 Ibid.

3 A fact we know only in hindsight. To contemporaries, the continue presence of large-scale British military forces was terrible and frightening, and caused great suffering, with no assurance of the ultimate outcome.

behind, called convention troops, were removed to Boston and detained for reasons of state for about a year. Washington bowed to pressure from the Congress to remove them to the south to Charlottesville, Virginia, and on November 5, 1778, he appointed Colonel Theodorick Bland to superintend the forced march of these British prisoners through Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland and to Charlottesville. He also directed Bland to take command of the convention troops at Charlottesville.

According to Campbell, Bland conducted this responsibility well, and proved a good and sensitive diplomat in his dealings with the captured British command, particularly with Major General Phillips, a subordinate of Burgoyne's. Letters between Phillips and Bland indicate a very correct and tactful conduct between the two men, with each honoring the integrity and position of the other. The relationship bore a rather perverse reward for Theodorick Bland!

Phillips left Charlottesville in September 1779, just before Bland finally insisted that Washington relieve him. Washington acceded to Theodorick's request and he was notified of his relief in November. He was actually relieved of his command in March 1780. Theodorick retired to his plantation, called Farmingdell, while Phillips, after going to New York, joined up with General Henry Clinton, the British Commander who replaced Howe.¹ Clinton had orders to shift the British offensive to the south. His forces gathered in Georgia and swept upward through the south. After recapturing Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina, Clinton left the British southern forces in command of Cornwallis, and himself went north. Cornwallis at first moved against

¹ For a brief statement about Phillips, see Campbell II, p. 124.

slight resistance and defeated the Americans at Camden, South Carolina. But he began to meet intensely hostile opposition in North Carolina. Washington, in December 1780, sent a brilliant subordinate, General Nathaniel Greene, to attack Cornwallis' forces. Greene used hit and run tactics to slow Cornwallis down, but rather than retreat Cornwallis pressed into Virginia in the winter and spring of 1781. It was a fatal move for British forces, for Greene cut the Cornwallis army in half and tied it down in multiple local skirmishes, while Washington, with the aid of the French, closed in on Yorktown to the north. Cornwallis' badly severed army was forced to surrender on October 17, 1781.

Although political negotiations continued until 1783, the war ended effectively with Cornwallis' surrender. But to return to Virginia in the winter months of 1781, Cornwallis had sent General Phillips in a devastating sweep up the James River to Petersburg. Phillips, in an act of gallantry and remembrance for the man who had treated him so well while he was in captivity, ordered that the property of Colonel Theodorick Bland be spared. Phillips did not reckon with the fact that his troops would find the entire southern Virginia countryside crawling with Theodorick Blands. Doing the best they could under the circumstances, the British soldiers passed by Cawsons, home of Theodorick's father, Colonel Theodorick Bland, but devastated Farmingdell, the home of Colonel Theodorick Bland, object of Phillips' friendly gesture. They "broke his furniture to pieces, pounded up his chinaware, destroyed his crops and livestock, and carried off his negroes."¹ (Actually, a

¹ Bruce, Life of Randolph, II, p. 733. Phillips himself died at Petersburg on May 13, 1781 of a sickness but also under heavy fire from Lafayette.

letter to Theodorick, Jr. from his father makes it pretty clear that the slaves went off with the British pretty much of their own volition.)

One Thomas Anburey, who was a British officer of the imprisoned convention troops, described the experience in Charlottesville. He spoke harshly of the "misery and confusion" in the camp. He ridiculed Bland's Dragoons, portraying them as ridiculously and poorly clad troops, with an odd assortment of clothing from their heads to their necks, "but all have fine dragoon caps, and long swords slung around them ... but gadamercy pistols ... but they are tolerably mounted and that is the only thing you can advance in their favor"¹ (notwithstanding which, note who had been captured by whom):

The colonel is so fond of his dragoons that he reviews and manoeuvres them every morning, and whenever he rides out, has two drawn swords before and two behind. It is really laughable to see him thus attended with his ragged regiment, which looks, to borrow Shakespeare's idea, as if the gibbets had been robbed to make it up.²

Of Theodorick Bland, Anburey gives this burlesque portrait:

The colonel himself ... has all the grave deportment as if he were going to a consultation ... Having some business with Colonel Bland ... I went to his house just as he had mounted his horse, but in justice to him, I must say, he shows to the British officers, dismounted and invited me in, and after communicating my business, upon my taking leave of him, notwithstanding his politeness and attention, I could not help smiling at the pomposity and the great importance he assumes to make himself appear consequential; for to convince us that he was conversant with the French language, having mounted his horse without his sword, he called to a negro ... to bring it to him, which the fellow did without the scabbard. ... the colonel, in great anger said to him, Donney moi, donney moi, and after great hesitation, donney moi, mon scabbard.³

1 Campbell, II, p. 122.

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., pp. 123-124.

For his military services, Theodorick was paid off handsomely in land. Notes supplied me by Mr. Leslie Dawson indicate that Theodorick was awarded 6,666 acres of land in the Kentucky Territory in 1784, and 6,983 acres in Nelson County, Kentucky in 1785.¹ What happened to these lands after Theodorick's death is uncertain.

Theodorick Bland spent the last ten years of his life in politics. In 1780, he was appointed by the Virginia assembly to be a delegate in Congress and continued in the post for three years, his term being limited by the Articles of Confederation. In 1785, Governor Henry appointed him lieutenant of Prince George County. Subsequently, he was a member of the Virginia Convention that convened to consider the Federal Constitution. In this role, he was on the losing side, joining those who voted against it. After its ratification, however, he was elected to represent Virginia at the first Congress and while serving in that capacity, he died in New York on June 1, 1790.

Campbell described Theodorick Bland as tall, "corpulent in his latter days," and handsome. The Marquis of Chastellux, in his travel memoirs, described Bland in 1781 as "a tall, handsome man, who has been in the West Indies, where he acquired French. He is said to be a good soldier, but at present serves his country, and serves it well, in Congress."²

Theodorick's marriage to Martha Dangerfield, whom he called affectionately "Patsy," appears to have been a happy one. Campbell's collection of letters include many to "My dearest Patsy," which are filled with news of his experiences in the war, concern for her health,

¹ Dawson notes, citing for 1784, NSGQ, Vol. 16, p. 61, and Wilson, Sons of the Revolution in Kentucky (1913). For 1785, Kentucky Historical Society Index of Great Men.

² Campbell, XXX-XXXI.

expressions of loneliness without her, and gently upbraiding her for not writing more often. Martha was appointed sole executrix of Theodorick's will in 1790 and he left all his property to "my wife Martha and her heirs forever," aside for a specific bequest of land "on which ... it is my desire the publick may erect a college for the education of youth within 15 years of my decease,"¹ a scheme that was never carried out,² and various grants to nephews, in-laws and friends. Apparently, Theodorick had no children. Martha remarried in 1792 to a Nathan Blodgett, but in doing so, secured expressly in the marriage agreement that she would retain the same unlimited and uncontrolled power over the estate Theodorick left her.³ Blodgett died about 1795, and Martha kept a journal of her life during the years until her marriage⁴ to one Corran, a sea captain, about 1798 or 1799. Corran took her to France and she died there in 1804.

Frances Bland (Seventh Generation) and Her Son, John Randolph of Roanoke (Eighth Generation)

The last child, and fifth daughter of Theodorick Bland of Cawsons (sixth generation) and Frances Bolling, was Frances Bland, who was born on September 24, 1752. On March 9, 1769, she married John Randolph, the youngest son of Richard Randolph of Curles, who was himself a brother of Frances Bland's grandmother, Elizabeth Randolph, who married

¹ VMHB, Vol. 3 (1895-1896), p. 315.

² VMHB, Vol. 4 (1896-1897), p. 280.

³ VMHB, Vol. 4 (1896-1897), p. 280. Cf. Julia Cherry Spruill, Women's Life and Work in the Southern Colonies (1938), p. 366. On Martha's marriage to Nathan Blodgett, see WMQ (I), Vol. 9, p. 189, and WMQ (I), Vol. 26, p. 197.

⁴ Ibid. Cf. Campbell I, p. 74.

Richard Bland of Jordan's (1665-1720). John Randolph was born June 29, 1742, and died at his plantation, Matoax, on October 28, 1775, after Frances bore him three sons.

Following the death of John Randolph, Frances Bland Randolph married St. George Tucker on September 22, 1777.¹

A contemporary described Frances Bland thus: "The world thought her son spoke as no man ever spake, but she could charm a bird out of a tree by the music of her tongue."² She had a peculiarly strong maternal influence upon her last son and namesake of John Randolph, teaching him, in the absence of his dead father, the credo of the Virginia aristocracy, loving him intensely and being loved in return with as much intensity by her son.³

By John Randolph, Frances had three sons, who were eighth generation. The first was Richard, who was born on March 9, 1770, and died June 14, 1796. On December 31, 1789, Richard married his cousin, Judith Randolph, daughter of Thomas Mann Randolph of Tuckahoe. Richard and Judith Randolph had two sons, St. George and Tudor, both of whom died in their youth and left no issue. The second child of

¹ By her second marriage to St. George Tucker, Frances Bland had the following children: Anne Frances Bland Tucker (1778-1813); Henry St. George Tucker (1780-1848); Theodorick Tudor Tucker (1782-1795); Nathaniel Beverly Tucker (1784-1851); Henrietta Elizabeth (1787-1796). Their descendants are traced through several generations in Slaughter, pp. 159-163.

² Benjamin Watkins Leigh, quoted in Robert Dawidoff, The Education of John Randolph (1979), p. 80; hereafter, in notes referred to as Dawidoff.

³ For Randolph's relationship with his mother, see Dawidoff, pp. 80-83, and William Cabell Bruce, John Randolph of Roanoke, pp. 21-48 passim. Of the two biographies, Dawidoff's is a pale copy of Bruce's earlier work.

John Randolph and Frances Bland was Theodorick, who was born on January 22, 1771 and died unmarried on February 14, 1792. The final son, and the most famous, was John Randolph, later styled "of Roanoke," who was born June 3, 1773 and died in Philadelphia on May 24, 1833.

Of these children of John Randolph and Frances Bland, the most famous was John Randolph (eighth generation) "of Roanoke." With all of his passions and eccentricities, he is as good a study of the Virginia gentlemen at the opening of the 19th century as William Byrd, the neighbor of his great grandfather Richard Bland was for the early 18th century.

All of his biographers agree that he was very close to his mother, and that she taught him the way of life for a gentleman in Virginia, but taught him in such a way that he adopted the creed with a literalness that hampered him throughout his life. The way his biographer Dawidoff puts it is that because of his mother's smothering presence, Randolph "never developed the strategies to discount the meaning of what adults told him."¹ In other words, Randolph set impossibly high and unrealistic ideals for himself and others, and refused to tolerate the subtle shades and variances from the written creed of social and more importantly, political behavior.

Another Virginian, Edgar Allen Poe, had a similar maternal experience, though he was younger when his mother died. Poe's short fiction, particularly that which deals with women (Morella, Berenice, Ligea, House of Usher, etc.) poses an impossibly high and ethereal idealism upon the subjects, which denies them any fleshly experience, and forces them into the most macabre struggles in which death is made beautiful

¹ Dawidoff, p. 82.

and possessing. Yet to make Poe's artistic expression the product of his mother's love or overlove is as simplistic and absurd as is Dawidoff's argument about Randolph. But the Randolph-Poe analogy draws together again when one notes that both, though undoubtedly for different reasons, were not altogether sexually functional. In respect to Randolph, the years 1788-1796 were critical in this respect: On January 18, 1788, when John was fifteen, Frances Bland Randolph Tucker died, leaving her son in the care of her second husband, with whom John had at first a warm relationship that was abrogated by a split in 1810.

Following his mother's death, his entire family was his brothers, but in 1792, Theodorick, who had become a deep disappointment to John, died, the victim of corrupting influences in the parlance of the times, "dissipation and self-indulgence" (in other words, he lived hard, womanizing, drinking, gambling, doing all the things that made life worthwhile for the young Virginia gentry, but he overdid it and burned himself out). To Randolph, Theodorick had been consumed by indulgences in all the vices their mother had cautioned absolutely against. John's father, had he lived, might have told him on the sly to sample the underside of life just a bit, as his brother had. Theodorick's death, however, in John's view was a dire warning about the wages of sin.

His next best hope lay in the example of his oldest brother Richard who, by the time of Theodorick's death, had been married for three years to a cousin, Judith Randolph, and now had two children. Richard was, and remained a hero to his younger brother. In the year 1792, John joined Richard's household at his plantation, named with a strange aptness, "Bizarre." Shortly, Richard was publicly disgraced in

what Dawidoff calls "a grotesque scandal of incest and infanticide," which had a traumatic effect upon John Randolph that will be discussed presently.¹

Dawidoff's claim is an exaggeration. How anyone can claim incest amid such a staggering array of cousin marriages as this chapter attests is beyond me. Infanticide, yes!

Richard's wife, Judith, had a sister, Anne Cary Randolph, who had lived at Bizarre in 1792. Evidently, with Judith's knowledge, Anne became Richard's lover in an explicit triangle. On October 1, 1792, Richard and Judith Randolph and Anne Cary Randolph, and a man whom Bruce calls "one of Nancy's* lovers," arrived at a place called Glenlyvar, seat of one Randolph Harrison. Soon after dinner, Nancy, Richard and Judith went to bed in the same set of rooms (including a smaller room off the larger one, which led to a hallway). During the night, Mrs. Harrison responded to screams from the guest bedroom, and discovered in the smaller quarters, Nancy screaming from the pain of ingesting laudanum, while Richard stood by her bed, alongside a fifteen year old slave girl and a young girl of about seven named Virginia. To make a very long and involved story short, Nancy had aborted Richard's baby (hence Dawidoff's claim of incest and infanticide).

A public trial ensued in 1793. Richard was acquitted by a spectacular set of lawyers, including Alexander Campbell, Patrick Henry and John Marshall, who made deft use of severely restricted admissible testimony. But his good name was disgraced and his family was stained. Richard died a broken man in 1796. John was so stunned by the incident that he never recovered from the shock. One result may have been an

¹ Cf. Dawidoff and Bruce I, pp. 106-123, and II, pp. 272-295.

* A nickname for Anne Cary Randolph.

acute physical debility suffered at about the same time, a kind of disease that left him with a beardless chin and shrill high-pitched voice, and the suspicion of historians that he may have been left sterile.

As a result, Randolph never married although an exchange of letters between him and Anne Cary Randolph Morrison in 1814, in which all the dirt about his brother Richard's disgrace with her was dredged up, leaves a hint that he had at least a brief and tormented affair with Anne, sometime after his brother's death.¹ At any rate, the combination of this demasculinization process, his mother's investment of high literalism in him, and his inability to control his passion and hatred for Anne Cary Randolph Morrison and his lack of progeny, set the stage for a public career every bit as strange as his personal life.

He was elected to the House of Representatives in 1799 and promptly made his eccentricities a trademark. He was accustomed, so it is said, to appear at sessions of Congress, whip in hand, pistols belted to his waist, and leading an old bitch dog by a leash, prompting one of his adversaries to call for his expulsion on account of his having admitted a female to the house floor. Notwithstanding these behavioral quirks, he made a rapid rise in politics and after Thomas Jefferson's election in 1800, became leader of the House Republicans. His sympathy's however, increasingly lay with a splinter group called the Quids, or old Republicans. The Quids were reactionaries who held dogmatically to a

¹ These letters are quoted in full in Bruce II, pp. 272-295. Bruce also supports Randolph's continued virility, while not denying he was sterile, by documenting a long romance with one Maria Ward.

set of principles which they claimed were the political legacy of the federal constitution. They were the political right of the Jefferson-Madison center Republicans. Jefferson, one of the ablest politicians this nation has had, cast his cold and methodical eye over the antics of John Randolph with increasing disapprobation. Searching for a way to discredit him, in 1804 the master found a way to kill two birds with one stone: Throughout his administration, Jefferson had chafed at the political opposition of the judiciary, which was dominated by Federalist judges, the archetype of whom was Supreme Court Justice Samuel Chase, a New England arch-Federalist. In the summer of 1803, Randolph began advocating the impeachment of Judge Chase. Jefferson urged, and ultimately persuaded Randolph to take on the role of prosecutor in the impeachment effort. As Jefferson calculated, Randolph's attack was principally an emotional one that was legally naive, and Justice Chase and his lawyers cut him to shreds. Jefferson had his two birds. Chase, though he continued on the Supreme Court until he died in 1811, kept himself out of politics after the trial. Politically, Randolph was ruined. He drifted away from Jefferson and Madison, and although he served in the House almost constantly until 1829, never regained his prominence and influence.¹ His star rose briefly in 1820 when he fiercely opposed the Missouri Compromises. Henry Clay said of his role in the Missouri conflict: "His acts came near to shaking this union to the center and desolating this fair land." In 1825, when he got into an unseemly quarrel with Clay, whom he accused of being the chief culprit in throwing the presidential election from Andrew Jackson

¹ For a knowledgeable discussion of the politics of the Chase impeachment, see Richard Ellis, The Jeffersonian Crisis (1971), pp. 76-107.

to John Quincy Adams. His comment about Clay and Adams was brilliant, cutting and effective:

I was defeated, horse, foot and dragoons-cut up, and clean broke down by the coalition of Bilfil and Black George-and by the combination unheard of until then, of the puritan with the black leg.¹

Henry Clay felt a long nourished love for John Quincy Adams that was both personal and professional. Bilfil-Puritan: That was Adams. Black George-Blackleg: that was, by God, Clay himself!

Clay quickly challenged Randolph to a duel, which was resolved by one man firing in the air, the other at the ground, and shaking hands. At the end of his congressional career, Andrew Jackson sent Randolph on a special mission to Russia. When he returned to America, he came out against Jackson in the nullification controversy that involved the critical question of federal versus state sovereignty.

It is interesting that in the face of the fear and paranoia that swept through the slaveholding South following the Nat Turner Rebellion at Southhampton, Virginia in August 1831, John Randolph, upon his death in 1833, although adamantly opposed to outside interference with slavery manumitted all his slaves.

The James River Blands: A Eulogy

This chapter concludes discussion about the James River Blands who were descended from the London Skinner, Adam Bland (second generation and his wife Joan Atkyns, through their son John Bland (third generation and his wife Susan Deblere. The process by which a family in London

¹ Randolph died thinking Clay was a rogue. It is said that contrary to Virginia custom, Randolph was buried facing west, so he would keep an eye on Clay.

became interested in the opportunities in the new world and began to settle there, is most intriguing. It is clear from discussions in Chapters III and IV that John Bland, the Grocer, and his son John regarded Virginia as no more than a part of their commercial business and had no intrinsic desire to settle there. Undoubtedly, John Bland (fourth generation), had he been able to do so, would have withdrawn all of his wealth from Virginia after his son Giles was hanged following Bacon's Rebellion. It is quite likely that the James River family persisted in Virginia for the most circumstantial reason: that Anna Bennett Bland Codd hung on fiercely to the property that had been bequeathed to her upon the death of her first husband. Also, she died just as two of her sons were reaching adulthood. One wonders what would have happened, for example, if Anna had died, say, in 1678 or 1679 when her sons were minors and soon after Sarah Greene came to Virginia to try and reclaim the lands. A further historical coincidence was the timing of the death of Mary Swann, Richard Bland's first wife. Had she not died in 1700, Richard might not have had the opportunity to marry Elizabeth Randolph. Such "what if" speculations could go on endlessly.

The point is that the family known as the James River Blands did flourish and became one of the most prominent Virginia families of the 18th century. Yet, according to historical evidence available, by the

time of John Randolph of Roanoke's death in 1833, the once prolific family had dwindled, and by 1900, very few descendants of this family, bearing the surname Bland, survived.¹

Families vanish quietly. At some time the last member dies, property is sold, letters and portraits are discarded, and gradually memories fade. John Randolph of Roanoke, recalling a visit he made to the old Cawsons home in 1814, spoke of the sting of nostalgia he felt for a concretely felt and remembered life that was past for him:

I made a little excursion last week, to the seat of my ancestors in the maternal line at the confluence of the James and Appomatox Rivers. The sight of that noble sheet of water in front of the house seemed to revive me. I was tossed in a boat for three miles and sprinkled with the spray that broke over her. The scenes of my early youth were renewed...the sight of the broad bay, formed by the junction of the two rivers, gave a new impulse to my being. But when the boat struck the beach, all was sad and desolate. The fires of ancient hospitality were long since extinguished, and the hearth stone cold. Here was my mother given in marriage and here was I born. Once the seat of plenty and cheerfulness...now mute and deserted...²

"Desolate," "mute," these are the words that eulogize the vibrant and passionate family of Blands that once upon a time settled and lived along the James River in Virginia.

¹ Although many people, particularly members of the DAR, trace their antecedents to the James River family, all that I have seen are maternal lines of descent.

² Bruce, Vol. I, p. 8.

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YOUNG JOHN RANDOLPH (1773-1833)

from the portrait by Gilbert Stuart
Corcoran Art Gallery, Washington D.C.

