



# *Bacon's Rebellion: The First American Revolution*

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# *What We'll Cover*

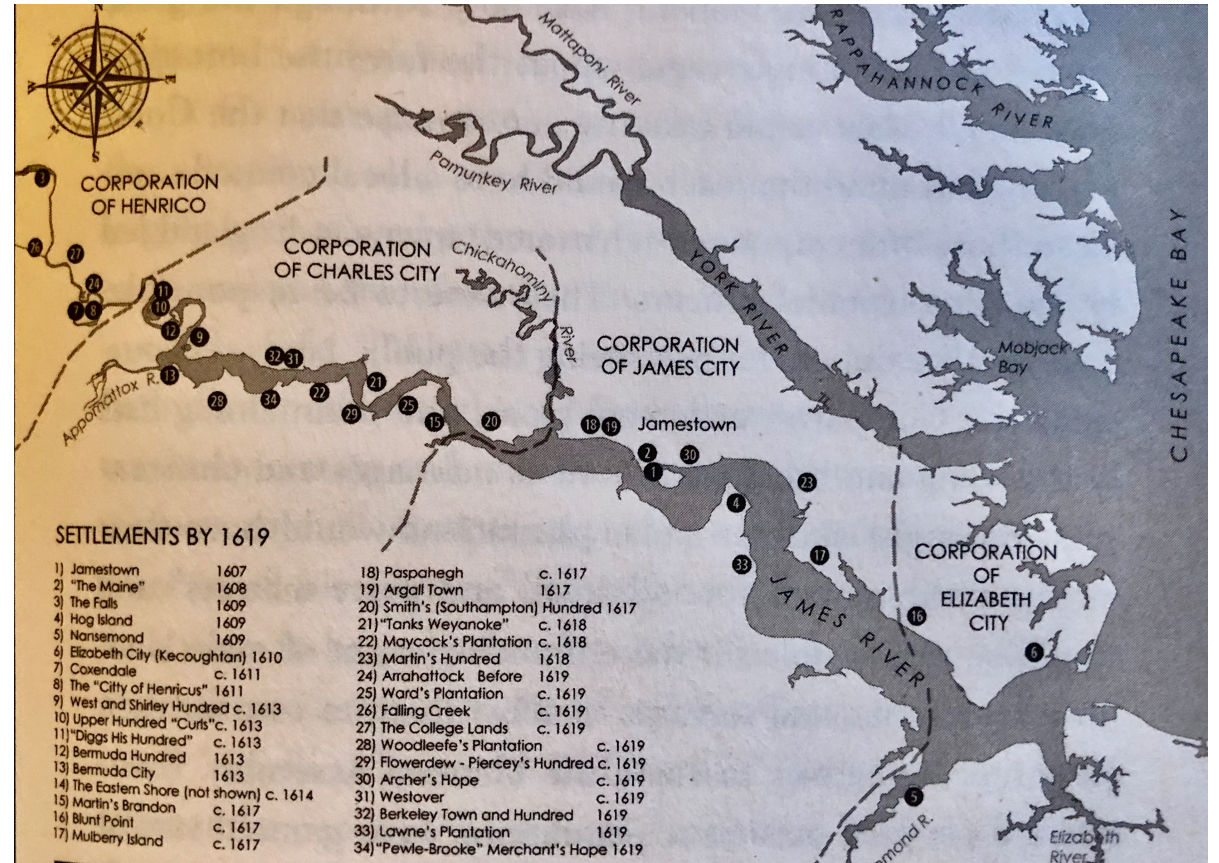
- Background to the Rebellion: North America in the 1660's-1670's
- The Early Period in Virginia: 1607 to 1619
- The Middle Period: 1619 to 1670
- Major Protagonists in the Rebellion of 1676
- The Rebellion and its Aftermath
- Selected Genealogical Research Resources
- Potentially Related Societies

# *North America in the 1660-70's*

- 1660: English Parliament enacts first of several laws restricting trade in the Colonies (the “Navigation Acts” of 1660, 1663, and 1673)
- 1664: New Netherland is taken over by England; New Amsterdam becomes “New York”, beginning competition between New York and Virginia for trade between England and North America
- 1664-67: Second Anglo-Dutch War; Treaty of Breda
- 1672-74: Third Anglo Dutch War; Treaty of Westminster
- 1675-76: King Philip’s War: devastating war between New England settlers and Native-American tribes
- Virginia slave trade is accelerating: from @ 300 slaves in 1648 to @ 3,000 in 1680; Virginia’s tobacco exports increase exponentially

# The Early Period in Virginia: 1607 to 1619

- Expansion to western lands along the James River
- Death & disease: “The Starving Time” of 1609-10
- Development of a viable economy: *tobacco*
- Importation of skilled workers, indentured servants & enslaved peoples
- Evolution from goal of short-term profits to long-term stable community (including families)





# *The Middle Period: 1619-1670*

- 1619: first General Assembly
- 1622: the “Massacre of 1622”
- 1623: The Virginia Company loses its charter; the Crown assumes control
- 1635: first major shipments of tobacco
- 1641: Arrival of Gov. Berkeley
- 1643/44: Opechancanough leads another massacre; murdered after capture
- 1650’s-60’s: economic concerns caused by declining tobacco prices, rising population (more than tripling), and Crown limits on trade (“Navigations Act”)



# *Protagonists in Bacon's Rebellion: Sir William Berkeley*

- Born 1605; educated at Oxford, received degree in fifteen months
- Parents were stockholders in The Virginia Company
- In his 30's he received commission to serve in the household of King Charles I, later knighted
- Major landholder in VA (Green Spring Plantation)
- Governor of the Virginia Colony from 1641 to 1652 and from 1660-1677
- Died in England shortly after his return to England in 1677





# *Protagonists in Bacon's Rebellion: Nathaniel Bacon*

- Born 1647; educated at Cambridge and Gray's Inn
- Arrived in Jamestown in 1675 following a scandal; bought two plantations on the James River using money from his father
- Arrived the same year as King Philip's War in New England, and after the Anglo-Powhatan Wars in Virginia & Maryland
- Given seat on the Governor's Council by Gov. Berkeley, who was a cousin by marriage



# *Growing Conflicts with Tribes Lead to War*

- 1673: Relations deteriorate; colonists prepare for attacks
- July 1675: Indian raid on plantation on Potomac River; colonists retaliate
- March 1676: the “Long Assembly” declares war on all “bad” Indians; new fortifications built; taxes imposed; trade restrictions imposed
- Bacon mobilizes troops to attack the tribes: ***“if the Redskins meddle with me, I will harry them.”***



# *The War of Words*

## **Bacon:**

*Gov. Berkeley “has traitorously attempted, violates and injures his Majesty’s interest hereby by a great loss of his colony and his faithful loyal subjects.”*

***“Our Design [is] to ruin and extirpate all Indians in General”***

## **Berkeley:**

*“I would have preserved those Indians that I knew were hourly at our mercy to have been our spies and intelligence to fund out the more bloody Ennemies.”*



# *June- Oct. 1676: The Climax of the Rebellion*

- June 6: Bacon arrested, then released; expelled from the General Assembly
- June 23: the General Assembly convenes; Bacon attends, with his troops; threatens to shoot Berkeley; “Bacon’s Laws” adopted
- July 30: Bacon issues his *“Declaration in the Name of the People of Virginia”*
- Aug. 3: Bacon convenes meeting of “prime gentlemen”, who sign a declaration challenging the authority of Gov. Berkeley, who flees
- Sept. 8: Berkeley returns with troops; rebels prevail in 1<sup>st</sup> skirmish, burn 1.5 mil pounds of tobacco
- Sept. 19: Bacon’s army captures Jamestown and burns it



# *End of the Rebellion, and the Aftermath*

- Bacon unexpectedly dies of dysentery on October 26, 1676
- Oct 27: King Charles II issues Proclamation to put down the rebellion; troops sent; commission appointed to investigate; Berkeley is removed as Governor
- The rebellion collapses; many of Bacon's men are given reprieves, but a number of the leaders are executed
- 1678: Gov. Berkeley returns to England, replaced by Lord Culpeper; Berkeley dies before he could appeal his case to the King

# *Nathaniel Bacon's Legacy*

- Bacon was revered for over a century as a great leader of a citizen's revolt against government oppression. Thomas Jefferson lauded him. A plaque in the VA State Capitol calls him "*A Great Patriot Leader of the Virginia People who died defending their rights/ October 26, 1676.*"
- Some historians claim that Bacon's Rebellion was the stimulus for the "Virginia Slave Codes" in 1705, because a segment of Bacon's troops were indentured servants and enslaved people.
- Today, Bacon's reputation is tarnished, particularly because of his rabid hatred of Native-Americans, and his open advocacy for their extermination.

# *Selected Genealogical Research Resources*

# *Jamestowne Society's "Lineage Papers Project"*

## ***Examples from website:***

- Abbe, Thomas (1731 - 1811) married Penelope Terry (1730 - 1817) – QA John Vassall A9471
- Abbott, Elisha (bef 1760 - wp 1837) married Lydia Clay (ca 1775 - ca 1857) – QA John Clay A1706
- Adams, David (1756 - 1833) married Abigail Carver (1754 - 1838) – QA Stephen Hopkins A9441
- Adams, Ebenezer (1744-1820) married Lydia Cooke (1744-1829) - QA Stephen Hopkins A9441
- Adams, Levi (bapt 1728 - 1816) married Margaret Perkins (1729 - 1827) – QA Stephen Hopkins A9441
- Adams, Richard (1726-1800) married Elizabeth Griffin (1738-1800) - QA Richard Cocke A1712



# *Other Research Resources*

- Jamestowne Society (website)
  - See handout– *“Selected Readings”*
  - *“Adventurers of Purse and Person”* in particular
- Jamestown Rediscovery website
  - “History” tab
- Sutro Library (SF State)
- California Genealogical Society [“CGS”] Library (Oakland)
- California State Library (Sacramento)

*Potentially Related Societies*

# *“Order of Bacon’s Rebellion”*

*orderofbaconsrebellion.org*

## ***Qualifying ancestors:***

- Bacon’s Rebels
- Jamestowne Residents 1675-1677
- Governor William Berkeley
- Virginia Militia 1675-1677
- Governor’s Counsel 1675-1677
- House of Burgesses 1675-1677
- Virginia Landowners 1675-1677
- Occaneechis Indians
- Pamunkey Indians
- Susquehannock Indians

# *Order of Bacon's Rebellion- Surname Listings*

**“Bacon's Rebellion of 1676 in Colonial Virginia:  
A List of the Names & Some of the Residences of the Rebel Participants”**

***Name; County of Residence  
Miscellaneous Information***

**Adams, Peter**  
Norfolk  
exempt from pardon?

**Allen, Stephen**  
Surry  
Southwark Parish

**Anderton, George**  
Middlesex  
charged with adultery after revolt

**Arnell, Anthony**  
executed

# *National Society of Sons and Daughters of Antebellum Planters- Qualifying Ancestors*

- “lineal descendants of a “**planter**” living on land today included in the 48 states of the continental United States between **1607- April 12, 1861.**”
- “A ‘planter’ is a large farmer, one owning **not less than 500 acres of land**. A rancher would be included in this definition. The 500 acres or more, does not have to be in one plot or in contiguous plots or even in the same county or same state. The property of one spouse may be aggregated with the property of the other spouse even if legal title is vested in a trustee, but aggregation is permitted only where the applicant descends from both spouses.
- Also eligible are **collateral descendants** of a “planter” brother or sister of the whole blood of a lineal ancestor, both residing on land in one of the 48 states of the continental United States between 1607 and April 12, 1861.



# *Guild of Colonial Artisans and Tradesmen*

- “**Ancestor Register**” on the Guild’s website lists names of individual qualifying artisans or tradesmen, including many Virginians
  - (Also many New England ancestors, dating back to the Mayflower and Plymouth Colony, including Alden, Allerton, Bradford, Brewster, Chandler, and Howland)
- Qualifying time period: 1607-1783
- Six categories of “guilds”: arts, provisions, smiths, textiles, trades & wrights
  - Example: William Byrd I, “fur trader”

*Q&A: contact me at [jcdickey@me.com](mailto:jcdickey@me.com)!*