

NEW ENGLAND'S CONTRIBUTIONS
TO VIRGINIA

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THE spirit of discovering unknown people and strange lands calls, I suppose, to everyone at some time in his life. Never having had the opportunity to go very far from my home I remember the fascination which I experienced some forty years ago, when I first began to explore the old record books of the early Virginia Counties. It was a new land, as strange as any that Hakluyt describes in his great Epic of travel. I found myself introduced to a state of society very different from that to which I had been accustomed. Instead of a class of farmers and planters, my new acquaintances were tradesmen and storekeepers who had taken up the raising of tobacco, corn and other farm produce as incidental to the main purpose of merchandising. Thus every prominent Virginian in these early days called himself "merchant," and had his storehouse from which he provided for his neighbors, his servants and dependents; and suggestive of the club life of London we are told in 1760 of a banqueting hall in Westmoreland County where several gentlemen met for conversation and entertainment.

There was a community of living which was very marked, in spite of apparent separation, and the bonds of neighborhood were the sea, the rivers and creeks. The prominent feature in Virginia, during the early part of the 17th Century, as it was in New England, was the sloop and schooner, which were kept busy plying in every direction to supply the needs of the settlers, bringing other emigrants, servants, all kinds of hardware, clothing, bedding and furniture, and

transporting furs, corn and tobacco. In reading over these early records, I found I was no longer in Virginia but in a suburb of one of the English cities.

The pioneers of Virginia and New England must have been people of a very different type from the advance guard of the West, of whom we read in the pages of Joaquin Miller and Bret Harte. Remote from all civilizing influences, surrounded by Indian bands, dressed like the savages in furs and feathers, and roaming about in the great spaces with no books, no school teachers, no preachers, no news from over the seas, the trappers were scarcely removed from barbarism. Between the Western pioneer with his wild inheritance, and Col. Richard Lee of Westmoreland County, Virginia, with his fine house and horses, his squad of servants and his income of perhaps \$200,000 annually, there was an immense difference.

A correct conception of things in the 17th Century pictures a strip of mainly English settlements along the Atlantic Coast from Maine to Georgia, having, through the ships, a very close connection with one another, but drawing apart as the settlements extended more and more into the interior. The ocean, instead of being a barrier, was a highway and connecting link not only with the mother country but with the different colonies themselves. The sea captain was a great man in those days, and such he continued to be in all America till after the United States acquired independence of Great Britain and the ties of intercourse with the Mother Country were interrupted. His arrival in Virginia was an occasion of much excitement, and there were merry scenes on his deck which were visited by the Gentlemen and their families in the neighborhood, who were duly honored by the discharge of his artillery. Col. Landon Carter states in his diary that the mirrors in his parlor at Sabine Hall on the Rappahannock were broken by the concussion of the guns of a merry captain who made the night uproarious by repeated broadsides.

The Washington, Madison and Monroe families were founded like many other Virginia families by seafaring men, who deserted the fore-castle to make Virginia their home.

Under such conditions it is not surprising that there was much shifting of population. The records of Maryland and Virginia are full of evidences of the coming of the New Englanders southward. Various influences brought them—the better opportunities for trade and the cooler atmosphere of religious discussions and observances in Maryland and Virginia.

It is not the impossible purpose of this paper to give a catalogue of these emigrant people which doubtless ran up into the hundreds, but I want to give some personal illustrations suggestive of the importance and social standing of the multitude that came to Virginia from New England during the 17th Century, and left permanent impressions behind them.

The name of Thomas Weston rests on the threshold of the history of New England. He was chief of the merchants, about seventy in number, who furnished the means of transportation of the Puritan Settlers to Plymouth in 1620. The merchants had hoped to make the colonists convenient instruments for the establishment of a permanent trading post in the new country, but the people of Plymouth, like the settlers at Jamestown, had too much hard work to ward off disease and starvation to prove much of a commercial asset, and the partnership broke up.

When this was done, Weston, after attempting unsuccessfully a private settlement in Massachusetts, transferred his activities to Virginia and patented lands in that colony. In 1640 he settled in Maryland and served in the Assembly of 1642. Receiving a patent for 1200 acres of land, for transporting himself and five able bodied men into Maryland, he erected it into a manor under the name of Westbury Manor. He returned to England in 1644-45 and before 1647 died at Bristol.

According to the Maryland Archives, John Hansford, of York County in Virginia, was appointed by the Maryland Court, his administrator, with the will annexed. Whether this was because he was a near relative or creditor does not appear. Weston left a tract of 500 acres at the head of Felgates Creek, midway between Williamsburg and Yorktown in Virginia, to his daughter Elizabeth, who married Roger Conant; and she sold the land to John Hansford as stated in his will.

This John Hansford was a prominent merchant and planter of York County, and one of its magistrates. His son Thomas was a Lieut. Colonel under Nathaniel Bacon, and from his son Charles descended Miss Betsy Hansford of whom a story is told which, though not strictly connected with my subject, may be excused by a New England audience because of its likeness to the famous story of Priscilla Mullins, Miles Standish and John Alden.

This is the story. At the head of the clergy in Virginia in 1769 stood John Camm, then Professor of Divinity in the College of William and Mary at Williamsburg, and afterwards its last royal President. He was the trusted champion of the Brethren in the celebrated controversy over the Two Penny Act, which convulsed society in Virginia for fourteen years and which, mingling with the excitement of the Stamp Act, rolled the Colony of Virginia on to Rebellion and Revolution. The great romance of his life came to him in the following remarkable manner at the age of fifty-one years as an old bachelor.

Mr. Camm had in addition to his college duties the charge of a church near the Hansford ordinary, which ordinary was known as the Half-way House and was situated on the very land that Weston had deeded to John Hansford about a century before. Among his parishoners was this descendant, Miss Betsy Hansford, whom he had baptized in his early rectorship, and who now was in the flush of her beauty of twenty years.

A young friend who had wooed Miss Betsy without success persuaded the worthy parson to aid him with his influence as the family religious guide. He called upon her, and after praising the young man in no limited terms, quoted the Bible as an authority for matrimony. His persuasions had no effect, however, and the young lady finally suggested that if the parson would go home and look at 2 Samuel, Chapter XII, verse 7 he would be able to divine the reason for her refusal. Mr. Camm did as directed—went back to College and “searched the scriptures,” when he found these significant words staring him in the face; “And Nathan said to David, *thou art the man.*” The sequel is told in an item of the *Virginia Gazette*, in July, 1769, announcing the marriage of Rev. John Camm to the young lady in question.

Resuming my narrative, both the Captain and pilot of the *Mayflower*, Jones and Clark, were in the employment of the Virginia Company of London and made many voyages to Virginia. The bones of the latter rest not in New England but in Virginia. Even vessels of the names of *Mayflower* and *Speedwell* were not unknown to the waters of the Potomac—the *Mayflower* in 1659 and the *Speedwell* in 1684, but these of course could not be the same as the two leaky vessels of 1620, which had doubtless long been scrapped. It is an interesting fact asserted by Col. Charles E. Banks of this city in his interesting work *The English Ancestry and Home of the Pilgrim Fathers* that the Port Books of England in the reign of King James the First show that there were as many as twenty-six vessels bearing the name of the Pilgrim ship *Mayflower*.

Edward Lister, one of the signers of the Mayflower Compact, removed soon after to Virginia and perished in James River at May-Cox's, opposite to Westover, in the massacre of 1622. In 1774, many years later, this was the property of David Meade, one of the earliest devotees of horticulture in America. The

twelve acres of his river front were so displayed, we are told by a contemporary, as to produce the most charming and enchanting effect, through the tasteful arrangement of sward, trees and vistas opening on stretches of the water.

What name could be more New England than that of Isaac Allerton, whose blood is mingled with the Lees, Newtons, and other prominent families of the Northern Neck of Virginia, the region between the Potomac and the Rappahannock. He was the son of Isaac Allerton, Sr., so prominent in the affairs of the Plymouth Colony, and of Fear Brewster, the daughter of Elder William Brewster, who stood at the head of the Plymouth Church. Isaac Allerton, the Virginian, was a Major in the Militia over which John Washington, ancestor of the Immortal George, was Colonel and his only son Willoughby Allerton was Collector of the Customs for Potomac River in 1711.

The name of Willoughby's wife, Hannah Bushrod, suggests another New England connection never noticed before, I believe. She was a daughter of William Keene and widow of John Bushrod, whose name after two generations found noble expression in Bushrod Washington, one of the ablest Judges that ever sat on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States.

If we look to the first volume of the records of Massachusetts we will find mention made several times of one Thomas Bushrod. On Friday the 3rd day of the 7th month, 1639, Thomas Bushrod being accused of "defaming the government" was convicted and fined £6-13s-4d, which, considering the depreciation of money in our days, was not much short of \$700. Evidently Bushrod did not like the fine any more than he did the government, and not long after we find him in York County in Virginia. Here he was a prominent merchant and justice of the peace, but still "agin the government." He appears to have been a friend of those supposed dangerous

enemies of orderly rule, the Quakers, and he got into a long and wordy quarrel in defence of them with the minister of the parish, Rev. Justinian Alymer, whom he called "blind priest," "Anti Christ" "Sent from the Pope," and several other names not relished by the Minister. He was suspended from his office but was soon restored without perhaps any change in his convictions, as, in his will in 1677, he requested that no "common prayer" be said at his burial. He died without male issue but his brother Richard Bushrod's sons married into several of the leading families of the Northern Neck--the Fauntleroy's, Washington's, Lees and Kenners--and it was this Richard Bushrod's grandson, John Bushrod, whose widow Willoughby Allerton married.

About the same time the Lords and Appletons of New England were represented in the Northern Neck by Captain John Lord, brother of Richard Lord of Hartford, Connecticut, and Captain John Appleton of Massachusetts. The former had a mare of which he was proud, appearing in the records under the name of "John Lord's New England mare." Lord was survived by a daughter Elizabeth who married James Neale, lord of Wollaston Manor in Maryland, a member of the Council of that province; and William Lord, who moved to Maryland and was the progenitor of many persons of distinction in that State as well as Virginia.

John Appleton (born 1640 died 1676.), like John Lord was a Captain of the Militia of Westmoreland County and one of the justices. He was closely allied with John Washington, for the third wife of John Washington was the widow of Captain Appleton. Some confusion has arisen regarding John Washington's matrimonial dealings by his marrying two Annes and hiding away his third wife between the making and the proof of his will. This lady was a daughter of Dr. Thomas Gerard, lord of St. Clements Manor, Maryland, Frances Gerard, who after enduring

four husbands in Col. Thomas Speke, Col. Valentine Peyton, Capt. John Appleton and Col. John Washington signalized a fifth sacrifice by taking the name of Hardwich as the wife of Col. William Hardwich, of Nominy Creek, Westmoreland County, Virginia.

The names of ministers John Lyford, Nathaniel Eaton, first President of Harvard College, Francis Doty and William Thompson who came to Virginia and lived out their lives there are doubtless well known to most New England students. The first two have been usually painted in dark colors, but it is on the authority of their enemies, and it must be always remembered that there have been some people who have contended that even the devil himself is not as black as he is painted. What an enemy says in detraction or a friend says in praise must always be received by the historian with a great deal of caution. A praiseworthy attempt at putting Lyford in his true light has been made by Col. Charles E. Banks in an interesting paper read before the Massachusetts Historical Society. On his arrival in Virginia, Lyford was put in charge of Martin's Hundred Parish near Williamsburg, and died not long after. Winthrop says of Nathaniel Eaton that he became "a drunken preacher in Virginia," but as to this the records of Virginia are silent and other than the fact that, as minister of Hungar's Parish in Northampton County, he became involved in numerous suits, nothing is known to his discredit. Eaton doubtless drank, but his were not the days of the 18th Amendment. Everybody drank!

Francis Doughty and William Thompson were highly respected in Virginia, and despite their non-conformists views were entrusted with the care of various parishes in the Colony.

Among the people who came from New England in the latter part of the 17th Century and founded a prominent family of Virginia was Captain Samuel Ravenscroft. He was one of the eleven persons who

founded King's Chapel in Boston for the service of the Church of England. When, after the accession of King William, Sir Edmund Andros was seized by the Boston authorities, the same fate befell Captain Ravenscroft. He was released and emigrated to Virginia when Sir Edmund became governor. He married Dyonisia Savage, daughter of Major Thomas Savage of Salem, and Ravenscroft, dying in 1695, his widow, Dyonisia, married Thomas Hadly who had been imported from England to superintend the building of the Capitol at Williamsburg, the first use of that name for State House. From Samuel Ravenscroft came, through several Virginia generations, John Stark Ravenscroft, first Episcopal Bishop of North Carolina.

And so the catalogue of names continues—Billington, Broughton, Clarke, Cogan, Claughton, Dewy, Gardiner, Hollingsworth, Smalley, Washburn, Wheelright, etc. I deal not with the 18th Century, though New Englanders still appeared in respectable numbers, becoming good Virginians devoted to the ideals of the Colony and State, but one name I may not avoid mentioning, that of Simeon Deane (brother of Silas Deane of Connecticut), who brought from France to America the treaty of Alliance between the two countries. He came over in the French frigate *Sensible* of thirty-six guns sent by the French King for that express purpose, and arrived at Falmouth, now Portland, Maine, the 13th of April 1778. Not long after he settled in Williamsburg, Virginia, where he died in June 1788. He was buried in Bruton Church yard at that place, with full masonic honors, President Madison of William and Mary College delivering the funeral sermon. But the fact appears to have been forgotten by the Dictionaries of Biography, and nothing survives to mark the exact place of his burial in that historic churchyard.

There is another side of the emigration question involving the contribution of Virginia to New England,

as illustrated by Major General Daniel Cookin, whose father founded Newport News in Virginia with his emigrants from Port Neuce in Ireland. But emigration has always gone westward or southward, and the Virginia names in the history of New England are comparatively few. Still the influence of Virginia upon New England should be recognized. Had it not been for a Virginia Governor there can be no doubt that the Coast of New England would have been preempted by the French, and Bradford tells us that had not the Plymouth settlers been succored by Virginia ships, the settlers there would in two years after the landing, have all perished of famine. And in 1634 it was reported by Governor Harvey that "Virginia had become the granary of all his Majesty's Northern Colonies."

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