

---

# Essex County Museum and Historical Society Bulletin



VOLUME 55

TAPPAHANNOCK, VIRGINIA

NOVEMBER 2010

## William Beverley, James Patton, and the Settling of the Shenandoah Valley

by Jim Glanville and Ryan Mays

©2010

---

**T**he collaboration between William Beverley of Essex County and the Scotch-Irish immigrant James Patton was of considerable significance for Virginia's westward movement and the early settlement of the Shenandoah Valley.

Following the founding of Jamestown in 1607, colonial Virginians took well over a century to begin exploiting the Shenandoah Valley. Virginia's westward expansion can conveniently said to have begun in 1716. In that year, an expedition party, to which history gives the colorful name "The Knights of the Golden Horseshoe," traveled across the crest of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The party of about 50 persons was led by Governor Alexander Spotswood and included leading Virginians, rangers, and Meherrin Indians. After leaving Williamsburg, on 21 August the party arrived at the home of Robert Beverley (1673-1722) near Newtown in present-day King and Queen County, where Beverley himself joined the expedition. By 6 September they had crossed the Blue Ridge and reached the Shenandoah River near present-day Elkton in Rockingham County, where they caught fish, fired celebratory volleys of musketry, and toasted King George I and his family's health with several sorts of liquors.<sup>1</sup>

There is no evidence that Robert Beverley's only son William Beverley (1696-1756) accompanied the expedition. However, the events of 1716 must have left a deep

impression on him, because two decades later he became a prominent figure in the settling of the Shenandoah Valley. William Beverley, as his father's only child, received a huge inheritance. He married Elizabeth Bland about 1725 and they moved to a plantation on the Rappahannock River which he named in her honor, and where the magnificent, restored Blandfield House now stands. The plantation produced much tobacco — shipped directly from its wharves across the Atlantic.

By 1722, the settlement of Virginia's western frontier regions had become a matter of colonial policy. In that year the General Assembly petitioned for his "Majesty's Royal Bounty towards encouraging the speedy Settlement of the Frontier Countys of Brunswick and Spotsylvania...by exempting the Inhabitants of the two late Erected Countys from the purchase of Rights & payment of Quitt Rents."<sup>2</sup>

Shenandoah Valley historian Warren Hofstra has closely examined the reasons for the adoption of a somewhat improbable colonial policy that encouraged valley settlement by Scotch-Irish, German, and other non-English immigrants, who were very unlike the English-derived population already long established in eastern Virginia.<sup>3</sup> These settlers practiced dissenting faiths, rarely

---

<sup>1</sup> Edward P. Alexander, ed. *The Journal of John Fontaine: An Irish Huguenot Son in Spain and Virginia, 1710-1719* (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1972 [1840]) 101-109.

---

<sup>2</sup> Charles E. Kemper. "The Early Westward Movement in Virginia, 1722-1734." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* XII: 337-352, 1904. The counties of Spotsylvania and Brunswick were formed in 1720. Orange County was formed from Spotsylvania in 1734 and Augusta County from Orange in 1745.

<sup>3</sup> Warren R. Hofstra. "The Extention of His Majesties Dominions: The Virginia Backcountry and the Reconfiguration of Imperial Frontiers," *The Journal of American History*, 84(4): (continued)

held slaves, and did not raise tobacco. Hofstra concluded that their settlements acted as buffers serving British imperial policy in that they: 1. Checked French expansion into the region, 2. Extended English dominion, 3. Secured a region destabilized by Indian conflict, and 4. Occupied mountainous terrain that provided refuge for runaway slaves [and indentured servants].

Grants of frontier land followed. Between 1730 and 1732 Governor William Gooch granted 385,000 acres of Shenandoah Valley land to nine individuals or groups of individuals. Eight of these grants went to men who were neither English nor Virginian. The ninth grant went to William Beverley of Essex County, a Virginia oligarch and member of the elite class of men who had earlier received the Piedmont land grants. To ensure the desired settlement, the grantees were required by Governor Gooch to place one family on every thousand acres of their grant. This requirement fell also upon William Beverley. By 1735, Virginia had issued 87 land patents and about 160 families had settled in the region stretching 50 miles southwest down the Valley from the Potomac River.<sup>4</sup>

William Beverley's early interest in Shenandoah Valley land is evidenced by a letter he wrote in 1732: "I am persuaded that I can get a number of people from Pennsylvania to settle on Shenandore, if I can obtain an order of Council for some Land there ..."<sup>5</sup>

### ***William Beverley and the Beverley Manor Grant***

As was his father before him, William Beverley was a full-fledged member of the Virginia elite. His economic base derived from his land holdings and plantations. For example, in 1745 a partial inventory of his estate listed 119 tenants in five different counties and 61 slaves at four different plantations. Ships trading in and out of Blandfield carried tobacco, slaves, sugar, rum, corn, and a host of other goods.

His political base was in Essex County, where he served for 28 years in the lucrative position of clerk, with the actual work of his office being conducted by deputies. In the House of Burgesses, he represented Orange County (1736-1740) and Essex County (1742-1749). He was appointed to the governor's council in 1752 and served until his death.<sup>6</sup>

The Beverley Manor grant of 118,491 acres (a property of about 13 × 14 miles centered on today's town of Staunton) was made on 12 August 1736 to Sir John Randolph, John Robinson, and Richard Randolph. William Russell and Robert Brooke then purchased the Randolph

and Robertson interests, which were three-fourths of the grant, who in turn conveyed their interests to William Beverley.<sup>7</sup>



**Figure 1.** The circa 1740 graveyard at Tinkling Spring Church on the Beverley Manor land grant. Today, this historic site and the nearby spring lie just a few hundred yards from Interstate 64. James Patton's wife is buried here. An adjacent monument tells that her name was Mary Osborne, though we have been unable to substantiate that claim with any primary documentation. Authors' picture.

This apparently complex transaction seems to have been merely a prearranged contrivance to establish Beverley's title to the land.<sup>8</sup>

### ***James Patton***

In contrast to the excellent lifelong documentation of William Beverley, the origins of James Patton are frustratingly elusive; he does not enter the historical record until he was already about forty-five years old. Patton's sole biographer was the Blacksburg-based, regional historian Patricia Givens Johnson who recounts in the first chapter<sup>9</sup> of her biography the received Patton-Preston family genealogy as recorded in the Lyman Draper papers<sup>10</sup> and developed by Preston Davie.<sup>11</sup> She concluded, "Mystery shrouds James Patton's activities before [his] coming to America." One reviewer of Johnson's biography commented "...[she] tells this story in a simple, straightforward manner, utilizing her limited sources well, although

<sup>7</sup> Charles E. Kemper, "The Settlement of the Valley." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 30(2): 169-182, 1922, footnote p. 175.

<sup>8</sup> Jane Dennison Carson, *William Beverley and Beverley Manor* (MS thesis, University of Virginia, 1937), 42.

<sup>9</sup> Patricia Givens Johnson, *James Patton and the Appalachian Colonists*, 3rd ed., (Charlotte, NC: Jostens, 1983), 3-15.

<sup>10</sup> Mabel Clare Weaks, *The Preston and Virginia Papers of the Draper Collection of Manuscripts* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1915).

<sup>11</sup> William Preston was Patton's nephew and principal successor and became the founding father of a great southern family dynasty that continues today. Descendant Preston Davie (1881-1967) was a wealthy, New York lawyer, who spent many years amassing family records and attempted to establish James Patton's genealogy. Davie's long planned Patton biography was never published, though his genealogical notes and several useful genealogical memoranda he wrote are today housed in the collections of the Filson Historical Society, formerly called the Filson Club.

1281-1312, 1998. Hofstra's conclusions are on p. 1284.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1298 and 1303.

<sup>5</sup> William Beverley. Letter of 30 April 1732 to a person unknown. Virginia Colonial Papers Box 146, folder 36. Microfilm reel 611, Library of Virginia.

<sup>6</sup> Emory G. Evans, "William Beverley," *Dictionary of Virginia Biography*, (Richmond: The Library of Virginia, 1998), volume 1, 477-478. A "Topping People:" *The Rise and Decline of Virginia's Old Political Elite, 1680-1790* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 96.

occasionally recording family tradition as fact and relying on outdated articles. While she may claim too much for Patton, she is faithful to her subject. He was litigious, dominated county politics, and gave no quarter to Indians, his pastor, or his former associates. Patton was instrumental in settling western Virginia,<sup>12</sup> but he was not the stuff of which popular heroes are made."<sup>13</sup> However, it is clear from her handwritten notes in her papers,<sup>14</sup> that she was highly skeptical of the asserted facts in Preston Davie's genealogical account of James Patton. Specifically, Johnson wrote to the curator of manuscripts at the Filson Club, "I see no real proof that Preston Davie gives of James Patton being the child of Henry Patton other than just a statement that he was."<sup>15</sup> Johnson's analysis and conclusion notwithstanding, an internet search today will produce hundreds of genealogy sites that assert without qualification that Henry Patton was the father of James Patton.

Pending further work, which we are pursuing in Irish and English archives, we conclude that all published accounts of James Patton's early life and family history derive from unproven sources.

### ***William Beverley to James Patton Letters of 1737***

Given the vast disparity between their social ranks, it is astonishing to find that James Patton enters the historical record in 1737 as the recipient, in Kirkcudbright, Scotland, of two letters from William Beverley.<sup>16</sup> The letters imply that the two men had a long-standing, close relationship, showing they had exchanged a number of earlier, now-lost letters.

On 8 August 1737, Beverley sent Patton, as requested by him, a copy of the order of the Virginia Council granting Beverley western land. Beverley told Patton "I should be very glad if you could import families enough to take the whole off from our hands at a reasonable price and tho' the order mentions families from Pensilvania, yet families from Ireland will do as well." On 22 August Beverley added in his second letter that the grant was for 30,000 acres of land

<sup>12</sup> Between 1745 and his death in 1755 Patton held such Augusta County offices as Justice of the Peace, Colonel of Militia, County Lieutenant, President of the Court, and County Sheriff. He also was President of the Augusta Parish Vestry and a member of the House of Burgesses. He earlier held offices in Orange County before Augusta was separated from it.

<sup>13</sup> Alan D. Williams, "Review of *James Patton and the Appalachian Colonists* by Patricia Givens Johnson," *The Journal of American History*, 63(2): 386, 1976.

<sup>14</sup> Patricia Givens Johnson Papers 1920-1986, Ms88-007. Special Collections, Newman Library, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Va.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, Patricia Givens Johnson, letter to James R. Bentley of the Filson Club from Camp Springs, Maryland, 22 September 1972.

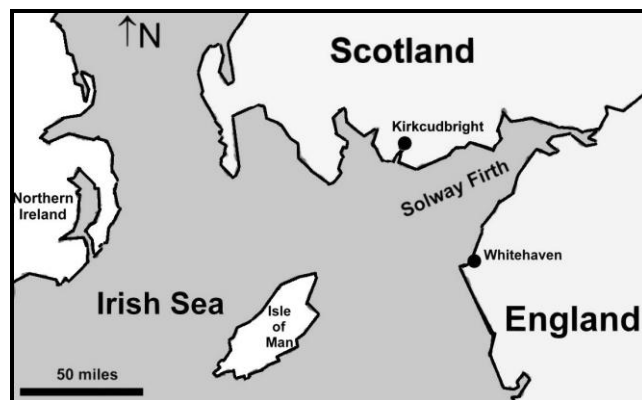
<sup>16</sup> William Beverley. Letters to James Patton on 8 and 22 August 1737. *Letter book, 1737-1744*, microfilm M-1334, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Library, Colonial Williamsburg. Also, transcribed by Worthington Ford as "Some Letters of William Beverley" *William and Mary Quarterly Historical Magazine*, second series, III: 223-239, 1895.

and offering Patton one-quarter of it in exchange for Patton exerting his "...utmost endeavour to procure families to come in & settle it." In the second letter Beverley also wrote, "I heartily wish you success & a safe return to us" and explained to Patton that he would not be voting for Edwin Conway in the upcoming vote for Speaker of the House of Burgesses. That is a report of little consequence in itself, but remarkable in that it was made by a man of great prominence (Beverley) to another man who at that date was on the record both obscure and inconsequential (Patton).

### ***James Patton at Kirkcudbright and Whitehaven, 1737-1740***

Kirkcudbright in Scotland and Whitehaven in England are ports twenty-seven miles apart across the Solway Firth. Three documentary sources recount the activities of James Patton in this vicinity in the final three years before, at the age of about forty-eight, he made his permanent home in the Shenandoah Valley.

Virginia shipping returns<sup>17</sup> tell that Captain James Patton of the *Walpole* arrived in Virginia on 26 August 1738 and departed on 23 April 1739. Records of the port of Whitehaven<sup>18</sup> tell of his arrival from Holland on the same vessel on 11 September and 30 October, 1739, and of his shipment of goods to Virginia aboard the *William* on 1 February 1740 (1739 old style) and aboard the *Hope* on 21 April 1740.



**Figure 2.** Location map for James Patton during the years 1737-1740. Documentary records place him at Kirkcudbright in Scotland and Whitehaven in England – two ports on the Irish Sea. Although there is little doubt that Patton came originally from the north of Ireland, there are no extant contemporary documents to that effect. Authors' diagram.

The third and most remarkable source of documentary evidence for Patton's activities, comes from the letter books of the Whitehaven merchant, Walter Lutwidge. Lutwidge's letter books,<sup>19</sup> with their many references to James Patton,

<sup>17</sup> Virginia Shipping Returns, South Potomac and Accomac Districts, 1735-56, C.O. 5/1445, British Public Record Office. Library of Virginia, Virginia Colonial Records Project microfilm reel 26.

<sup>18</sup> Whitehaven shipping records. PRO E190/1460/5, Exchequer, King's Remembrancer Port Books. Library of Virginia Colonial Records Project Reel 930.

<sup>19</sup> Walter Lutwidge, *Letter book, 1739-40*, Cumbria Archive item YDX 79/1, microfilm M-1419, John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Colonial Williamsburg.

---

came to light about 1960.<sup>20</sup> They reveal that Patton and Lutwidge had a stormy relationship, described in some detail by Richard MacMaster.<sup>21</sup> Our analysis of the Lutwidge letter book has produced over 40 references to Patton and includes both letters from Lutwidge to Patton and from Patton to Lutwidge.

### ***Eighteenth Century Tobacco Trade on the Solway Firth***

The study of tobacco trade between Britain and America has received considerable academic attention.<sup>22</sup> Between 1700 and 1750, British tobacco imports doubled, with much of the trade growth occurring at the port of Whitehaven. An important factor in the burgeoning Whitehaven tobacco trade was the development of a Dutch market by Walter Lutwidge and other members of the Lutwidge family.<sup>23</sup> However, during this period much fraud occurred in tobacco-importing ports. Smuggling was a problem, as was the corrupt collusion of merchants and customs officials. Collusion happened most severely at Scottish and northwestern ports.<sup>24</sup>

In retirement from a 40-year career as a Customs & Excise officer, Ronald Gibbon amassed documentary evidence relating to historic smuggling and corruption in the Solway Firth region. Based on this evidence, he drafted a manuscript which, after his death, was published in Whitehaven.<sup>25</sup> Gibbon wrote, "Cumbria [the county in which Whitehaven is located] offered particularly good opportunities for smuggling due to its geographical position. Customs duties in both Scotland and the Isle of Man were often quite different from those in England. Goods could be carried across the Scottish Border on foot, or by a short voyage over the Solway, whilst the Isle of Man, was little further. During the 17th and throughout the 18th centuries, important trade-links existed between Cumbria and the New World. Tobacco, spirits, and other goods were legally imported under the watchful eye of

Customs Officers based in Cumbrian ports. Alongside this legitimate trade, smuggling also flourished," (page 7). Gibbon also wrote that "In addition to goods smuggled into Cumbria from Scotland, the Isle of Man and Ireland, there was a considerable 'trade' in contraband from other countries," (page 11). Another method of defrauding the customs involved "Drawback." Duty was payable on tobacco when it entered England, however if the same tobacco were to be subsequently re-exported, the owner could reclaim the original payment as drawback. Around 1724 the tax collector at Dumfries reported evidence that the eminent Whitehaven tobacco merchant Thomas Lutwidge was involved in this type of fraud. In another scheme, hogsheads of tobacco on which the drawback may have been legitimately paid were often slipped to the Isle of Man (in far larger quantities than necessary for consumption there). Gibbon concluded, "...[T]he Collectors at Whitehaven and Dumfries were convinced that most of it was re-packed and returned illegally into Britain in small boats," (page 13).

### ***Conclusions and Speculations***

It has long been recognized that the collaboration between William Beverley and James Patton was a key factor in the early settlement of the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. However, it has never been made clear on what basis the collaboration developed, and how it came that by 1737 Beverley was treating Patton as a trusted and respected associate. For many years, Patton-Preston family historians have hinted that before coming to America, Patton had been involved in some nefarious activity. For example, Thomas Marshall Green wrote that Patton was "...a man of some property, acquired by privateering on the Spanish main."<sup>26</sup> Surely, if circumstantial evidence carries any weight, for engagement in disreputable activity involving Virginia, the Solway, and tobacco, James Patton was the right man at the right place at the right time.

We speculate that by 1737 Beverley and Patton already had a long standing business relationship and that mutual profit from some unspecified, questionable activity cemented the relationship between them. Lutwidge's letter books show that Patton in 1739 and 1740 dared Lutwidge to take legal action against him. However, the generally highly litigious<sup>27</sup> Lutwidge failed to take such action, leaving Patton to travel to Virginia in peace. Indeed, Patton seems to have acted with the knowledge that his future position in Virginia was guaranteed by Beverley.

Unless further documentary evidence appears, we will never know quite what was going on between Beverley and Patton prior to 1737. However, notwithstanding the absence of direct evidence, the circumstantial evidence that *something* was going on is persuasive.

---

<sup>20</sup> Edward. Hughes, *North Country Life in the Eighteenth Century*, Volume 2, *Cumberland and Westmoreland* (London, Oxford University Press, 1965), 34-35.

<sup>21</sup> R. K. MacMaster, "Captain James Patton Comes to America 1737-1740," *Augusta Historical Bulletin* 16(2): 4-13, 1980.

<sup>22</sup> Jacob M. Price, *Tobacco Atlantic Trade: the Chesapeake, London, and Glasgow, 1675-1775*, ten reprinted articles, (Aldershot: Ashgate Variorum, 1995).

<sup>23</sup> Alan W. Routledge, *Whitehaven: History and Guide*, (Stroud: Tempus, 2002), 57. Chapter 5 of this work, pp. 52-62, is titled "The American Connection." Incidentally, it notes that George Washington's grandmother Mildred Gale is buried in St. Nicholas Church in Whitehaven.

<sup>24</sup> Robert C. Nash, "The English and Scottish Tobacco Trades in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Legal and Illegal Trade," *The Economic History Review*, New Series. 35(3): 354-372, 1982. See also, T. C. Barker, "Smuggling in the Eighteenth Century: The Evidence of the Scottish Tobacco Trade," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 62(4): 387-399, 1954.

<sup>25</sup> Ronald T. Gibbon, *To the King's Deceit: a Study of Smuggling on the Solway* (Whitehaven: The Friends of Whitehaven Museum, 1983).

---

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Marshall Green, *Historic Families of Kentucky* (Cincinnati: Robert Clarke, 1889), 8.

<sup>27</sup> Christine Churches, "Business at Law: Retrieving Commercial Disputes from Eighteenth-century Chancery," *The Historical Journal*, 43(4): 937-954, 2000.



Figure 3. The well-weathered James Patton memorial bronze plaque near the Smithfield Plantation in Blacksburg. Authors' picture.

TO COLONEL JAMES PATTON  
AND PIONEERS WHO LOST  
THEIR LIVES IN THE  
DRAPERS MEADOW MASSACRE  
JULY - 1755  
ERECTED BY  
THE ALLEGHENY CHAPTER D. A. R.  
BLACKSBURG 1938

---

### Acknowledgments

We thank Mary Kegley and Brent Tarter for their criticisms and suggestions as we developed this manuscript. Thanks to Alan Routledge in Whitehaven for helpful discussions. Thanks to the staffs of the interlibrary loan offices at Newman Library at Virginia Tech and the Library of Virginia, the staff at Special Collections at Newman Library at Virginia Tech, and to Deena Flinchum.

---

### About the Authors

*Jim Glanville* lives in Blacksburg and is a former Virginia Tech chemistry professor who has published over twenty articles in historical and archeology journals since he retired six years ago. *Ryan Mays* is a staff biologist at Virginia Tech specializing in forest ecology and entomology. He is a Blacksburg native and a student of the early settlement of Southwest Virginia using primary documents. Ryan is currently working on the first-ever biography of the surveyor-explorer Colonel John Buchanan — James Patton's son-in-law. This article is the first collaboration between these authors.



Anticipating the upcoming 150th anniversary of the Civil War, and to ensure preservation for future generations, we are asking our members and the Essex community at large to consider submitting any original artifacts, documents, or other items of interest relating to the War Between The States, either on loan or by gift, for potential inclusion in our new CW150 exhibit. By appointment, we can also digitally scan your documents and photographs while you wait. Please contact the museum:

#### Anne Jackson

Virginia Civil War 150 Commission (Chairman for Essex County)  
Archivist, Essex County Museum and Historical Society  
218 Water Lane, Tappahannock, VA 22560  
804-443-4690

---

---

*Executive Committee*

*Interim President* ..... Robert LaFollette  
*1st Vice President* ..... Robert LaFollette  
*2nd Vice President* ..... Ron Geiger  
*Secretary* ..... Denise Rigerink  
*Treasurer* ..... Bill Croxton  
*Public Relations* ..... Kia Ware  
*Archivist/Research Coordinator* ..... Anne Jackson  
*Educational Director* ..... Joan Moore

**Board of Directors**

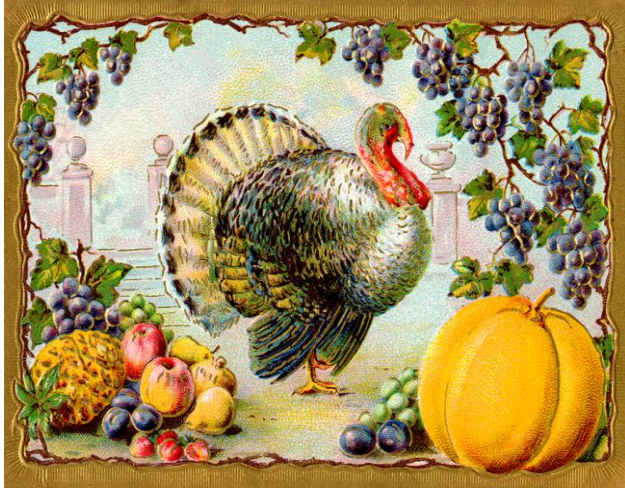
Tommy Blackwell	Gordon Harrower
Regina Blagmon	Joe Johnston
David Broad	Shepherd Lewis
Kevin Dolan	Howard Reisinger
Harry T. Gladding	Louise Velletri

*\*The Board of Directors also includes all members of the Executive Committee.*

**Museum Staff**

*Curator/Collection Management* ..... David Jett  
*Administrative Assistant* ..... Kelly LaFollette

Editor: C. H. Harris



*Happy Thanksgiving*

---

---

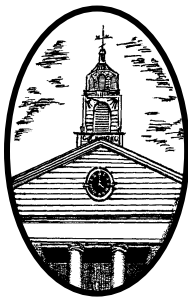
**December 31, 2010 Annual Fund Drive Closes**

All donations are greatly appreciated. For more information, please visit the 'Donations' page on our web site [www.essexmuseum.org](http://www.essexmuseum.org), stop by or call the museum at 804-443-4690, or mail to P. O. Box 404, Tappahannock, VA 22560.

---

---

Essex County Museum Hours  
10 am-3 pm on M, T, Th, F, S  
*Admission is always free*



*Essex County Museum & Historical Society*  
*Post Office Box 404*  
*Tappahannock, Virginia 22560*

NONPROFIT ORG  
U. S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
PERMIT NO. 34  
WARSAW, VA