

Cavaliers and Pioneers: Not Just a Record of Land Patents

Among the rich resources on the Library of Virginia's web site are the digital images of Virginia's land patents and grants. The description of the database which gives access to these records is described as a fully-searchable index to [among other things] land patents issued prior to 1779. And it is. Each patentee is listed in the database with such information as the date of the patent, book and page number, the county in which the land lay when patented, if noted in the patent, and a brief description of geographic features or adjacent land owners named in the patent. **The index does not include all of the individuals named in the patent.** For example, no headrights are listed in the Library's index, nor are references to military service or relationships. To access these hidden names the researcher must either read the thousands of individual patents or use *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, the first seven volumes of which abstract all information (except for metes and bounds) found in all the colonial patents

That these patents contain information that can unlock the door to solve many brick wall problems is a well kept secret. For example:

A patent is listed in the database as James Places, 550 acres upon a small creek by a cleare field, called by the name of Princefields field otherwise porridges field. The abstracts in *Cavaliers and Pioneers* tell us the name of his current wife, and the names of her two previous husbands, as well as the name of the first wife of her second husband.

A patent is listed in the database as Robert Poole, 300 acres on the southerly side of Warwicke River, easterly on Gilbert Peppett's land. The abstracts in *Cavaliers and Pioneers* name his father and his brother, identify them as "Ancient Planters" and give the name of the ship in which they came.

A patent is listed in the database as Patrick Ferguson, Prince George County, 580 acres on the branches of Lows Branch and on both sides of Moccosoneck Creek. The abstracts in *Cavaliers and Pioneers* provide the name of Patrick's son.

References to Jamestown's ancient planters, French and Indian War service noted in patents issued for bounty land warrants, names of prior owners of escheated and lapsed patents which were reissued, relationships mentioned in chains of title to patented land, and women whose identity can sometimes be gleaned from references to how they have obtained their right to land are also not found in the database. The following are selected references that attempt to demonstrate the broad range of information hidden in the Virginia land patents. Information readily accessible only through the abstracts found in *Cavaliers and Pioneers*.

Jamestown's Ancient Planters

- Henrico County: James Place patented 550 acres, 1 June 1636, due in right of his now wife Elizabeth to whom it was due: 250 acres in right of her first husband George Boates; 300 acres in right of her late husband John Ward (100 acres as ancient planter and 200 acres for his first wife Grace Ward and three other persons). (1:52)

- Robert Poole, 300 acres patented on 8 September 1637: 100 acres for his own personal adventure; 200 acres for the personal adventure of Robert Poole his father deceased and John Poole his brother deceased, they being all three ancient planters coming in the Starr with Sir Thomas Dale. (1:8)
- William Dawkes of Verinas within the Corp of Charles City, planter, patented 200 acres on 7 September 1737: 100 acres due as lawful heir of his father Henry Dawkes being an ancient planter and 100 acres by bill of adventure of £12.101.0 dated 14 July 1608 in right of his father. (1:15)

Headrights

The bulk of the headright lists are found in volumes one through three, which sometimes provide extra details. For example:

- Mulberry Island, 1632: Richard Atkins patented 100 acres: 50 acres for his own personal adventure in the Abigall in 1621 at the charge of Capt Wm Pierce and 50 acres in right of his wife who came in the Tyger in 1621 at his own charge.(1:14)

Additional headright lists can be found in later patents. For example:

- Two 1733 patents to Jacob Stover on the “Sherando” River lists 193 headrights. (4:22)
- A 1739 patent to John White in Orange County for importation of 5 persons: John Thompson, John White, Robert Ramsey, Alexander Cummins and Thomas Chambers. (4:190)
- A 1742 patent to the Rev. John Craig for land in that part of Orange County called Augusta for the importation of Alexander McPherson, Susanna McPherson, Joseph Harris and Mark Fink. (5:39)
- A 1747 patent to James Farguson for land in Amelia County for the importation of seven persons: John Norton, Patrick Stewart, Bryant Critisley [Carlisle?], Lazarus Jessee, William Cammel, George Hankisson and John Bushel. (5:325)
- A 1742 patent to John McDowell in Orange County for the importation of John McDowell, Magdaline MccDowell, Samuel McDowell and John Rutter. (5:45)
- A 1755 patent to Tully Choice in Louisa County for the importation of 5 persons: Anne Choice, Robert Stuart, John Weatheral, John Shotwell & Thomas Marshall. (6:110)
- A 1757 patent to George Sommers in Brunswick Col for the importation of Henry Barrow and Mary Barrow. (6:326)
- A 1763 patent to Charles Taliaferro for land in Albemarle County for the importation of eight persons: John Ray, Charles Stuart, John Miller, John Bowie, Thomas Wild Robert Gilchrist, Alexander Marr and Archibald Ritchie. (7:19)
- A 1763 patent to George Fraiser for land in Lunenburg County for the importation of eight persons: Daniel Campbell, Robert Phillips, Miles Jordan, Alexander Campbell, John Crouder, Edward Chapman, William Brooks, and Joseph Welch. (7:29)

Earlier settlers

- Augusta County 1773: Whereas John Herman hath failed to pay quitrents and Robert Bratton hath obtained a patent which he hath assigned to Thomas Poage. (7:325 [pt Beverley])

- Charles City County, 1736/7: Herman Woodhouse died seized of the land which escheated; Samuel Harwood, deceased in his lifetime obtained a patent which he relinquished to William Owen of said county. (4:134)
- Essex County, 1736: Whereas Margaret Mkeny, formerly of Essex County, died seized of 240 acres which is found to escheat and William Roan hath obtained a patent which he relinquished to Jeremiah Upshaw. (4:105)

French and Indian War veterans

- Peter Hogg, late a Captain (7:359)
- William Edmiston, late an ensign (7:338)
- John Posey, late a captain (7:336)
- Alexander McClanahan, late a lieutenant (7:336)
- William Ingles, late a lieutenant (7:336)
- John Draper, late a lieutenant (7:337)
- Hugh Stephenson, late a captain (7:337)
- Charles Warnstorf, late an ensign in the Pennsylvania Regiment (7:335)
- Henry William, late a lieutenant (7:335)
- William Bronaugh, James Craik, George Muse (7:334)
- John Connolly, late a surgeon (7:334)
- John Fry, Adam Stephen, Andrew Lewis Peter Hogg, John Savage, Thomas Bullett, _____ Wright, John David Wilper, David Richardson (the representative of Robert Stobo), Jacob Vanbraam & John Baynes (representatives of James Towers), Andrew Fowler, Thomas Napp, Arthur Watt's representatives, John Fox, Francis Self, Robert Stewart, Robert Murphy, John Smith, Alexander Bonny, William McAnulty and Mary Horn (7:333)
- A list of 61 individuals. (7:291)

Relationships

- Edward Minter patented 250 acres on 22 July 1635 as son and heir of his father Richard Minter deceased: 50 acres for his [father Richard's] personal adventure; 50 acres for his [father Richard's] wife Ann Minter, mother of said Edward; 150 acres for himself, his brother John and a servant. (1: 29)
- Isle of Wight County, 1756: Patent issued to Bryant Daughtry in 1740 purchased by John Daughtry, son of Lewis Daughtry, and John Daughtry, son of William Daughtry, failed to make cultivation and improvements, patent issued to Thomas Cutchins. (6:213).
- Dinwiddie County: Patent issued to Patrick Fergusson, since dec'd, patented land in 1737/8 which vested in John Fergusson, his son and heir, who failed to make improvements.
- King William County, 1739: part of the land laid off for the Pamunky Indians and relinquished to sd Fendall Southerland being formerly purchased of the sd Indians by George Southerland, grandfather of the sd Fendall. (4:188)
- New Kent County, 1736: A patent issued in 1728 to John Thornton of New Kent County, Gent., said John Thronton in his lifetime and John Thornton, son & heir, since the death of the first John, failed to make improvements, land escheats. (4:126)
- Pittsylvania County, 1773: Whereas William Kennon, son & heir of Richard Kennon dec'd hath failed to pay quit rents patent issued to Richard Gwyn (7:317)

- King William County, 1736: Whereas Ralph Bowker (since deceased) in his lifetime and Achilles Bowker, devisee of said Ralph Bowker, since his death, hath failed to make cultivation & improvements, land escheats to Bird Bowker.
- Spotsylvania County, 1738: Thomas Chew, heir-at-law of Larken and Joseph Chew, Richard Buckner, heir-at-law of Richard Buckner and Samuel Sutton, heir-at-law of John Sutton.
- Prince George County, 1737/8: Given to said George Smith by the last will & testament of his father Richard Smith, deceased. (4:153).
- Augusta County, 1772: Whereas the title to land patented by Adam Dickeson in 1750 has become vested in John Brown and Isabella his wife, William Armstrong and Agnes his wife, Nathaniel Dunlop and Jane his wife, Robert Crawford and Elizabeth his wife and Mary Guthery and [they] have failed to pay quitrents the land escheats. (7:268)

Women

- Elizabeth City, 1624: Capt. William Tucker patented 150 acres adjoining Richard Boulton & John Powell for transportation out of England at his own charge George Tompson, Paul Tompson and William Tompson "his wives bretheren." (1:5)
- Only Richard Boulton mentioned in LVA database
- Norfolk County, 1733: Patent dated 1655 to John Green who devised the land to John Windfield who devised the same to Susanna his daughter who married Richard Deal, who all failed to make seating and planting, land escheats to Thomas Scott. (4:19)
- Brunswick County, 1737: tract granted by patent to Joshua Fry of James City County and George Bingley of Williamsburg, who failed to make cultivation & improvements; Martha Fry, spinster, made humble suit and obtained a patent which she relinquished to said Joshua Fry. (4:145)
- Louisa County, 1759: Tract granted by patent to John Aylett 1734 title to part of which became vested in Joseph Herron and Lydia his wife who failed to pay quit rents, Lawrence Young obtains a patent. (6:244)
- Princess Anne County, 1736: Whereas William Lovett, dec'd, in his lifetime purchased George Kemp's right to the land and Henry Woodhouse and Mary his wife, William Cock and Anne his wife, which said Mary & Anne are daughters and coheirs of said Lovett have failed to make seating and planting, land escheats to John Knowis. (4:122)
- Dinwiddie County, 1758: Tract granted by patent to John Fitzgerrald whose title became vested in Anne Fitzgerrald who failed to pay quit rents, was granted by patent to Henry Randolph who assigned same to Anne Fitzgerrald.

Too many individuals limit their use of Virginia's land patents to identifying when or if an ancestor patented land or to locating counties in which they owned land. Failing to search for the details on both land-owning and non-land owning individuals that can be found in the one reasonably complete colonial record group available to researchers often creates brick walls. These brick walls can easily be scaled by using the readily available abstracts to these records found in *Cavaliers and Pioneers*.

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