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N O T E S

THE COLEMAN FAMILY OF VIRGINIA

By

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SOME OF THE DESCENDANTS OF
ROBERT COLEMAN OF GLOUCESTER, COUNTY, VIRGINIA

The Coleman family of Virginia has been the subject of considerable research, but there has been no real effort to catalogue or put together those branches of the family which apparently grew from a common ancestor. See: Manuscript of Daniel Coleman of Norfolk, Virginia, (1928); Manuscript of Aylett B. Coleman of Roanoke, Virginia; History of Caroline County, Virginia (1924) by Marshall Wingfield; Baskerville Genealogy (1917); Descendants of John Stubbs of Capahasic, Gloucester County, Virginia, (1902); The Descendants of Francis Morgan; The Old Free State (1927) by Landon Bell; a chart entitled Descendants of Captain Robert Coleman of Essex County, Virginia, which may be found in the Archives Division of the Virginia State Library; and many others.

A number of family legends agree that two or more brothers of the name came to the Virginia Colony from England at an early date and that the Coleman family of Virginia stemmed from one of the immigrant brothers.

In answer to an inquiry by Doctor John Scott Coleman of Augusta, Georgia, Reverend Reubin L. Coleman of Albemarle County, Virginia, replied in 1874 that according

to his recollection of statements made by his father, the Virginia family sprang from one of five brothers who came to the Colony about seventeen hundred.

Shortly thereafter his wife corrected the date by stating that the immigrant ancestor arrived in the Colony about the middle of the seventeenth century.

Descendants of Francis Morgan, page 110, et seq.

A study of the given names of succeeding generations disclose that "Robert", "Thomas", "Daniel", "John" and "James" predominate throughout the male lines with the name "Spilsbe" (sometimes spelled "Spilsby") appearing frequently in the male descendants of two of the family branches. The unusual given name of "Grizzell" (sometimes spelled "Grissell") often appears in most of the branches of the family in the female descendants. Neither the name "Grizzell" nor "Spilsbe" has been found in the early records as surnames save in three instances. First: Humphrey Grizzell appears as a head right in a patent grant to Robert Hollom under date of June 2, 1636. Pat. Book I, Part I, page 538. Second: Ann Spilsbe was a witness to a deed from Edward Grey to William Smith under date of May 2, 1676. Orders, Wills and Deeds Book 1672-1676, page 136. York County, Virginia, Records. Third: Order of the

was married, but whether he left children is not known. Daniel Diskin's wife may have been his daughter, but other than the deed of gift to him, no proof that she was his daughter has been found by the compiler of this paper.

Neither a will of Richard Coleman nor an administration of his estate has been found. It may be fairly inferred from his power of attorney in 1670 that he and his wife left the Colony.

(d) Robert Coleman.

Hawes Coleman, writing in 1839, at which time he was in his eighty-third year (a copy of the memorandum is in the compiler's possession), stated that according to his information his great-grandfather (unquestionably he meant his great, great-grandfather) came to Virginia about two hundred years prior to the date of his writing. This statement agrees with the date of arrival of a Robert Coleman named as head right in a grant to Thomas Symons, March 2, 1638. Pat. Book I, Part II, page 624. It is to be noted that Thomas Symons, by grant dated October 10, 1642, received a tract of land in that part of the Colony which was to become Gloucester County. Pat. Book I, Part II, page 830. It is established that

4 Jan 9. Robert Coleman was settled in Gloucester County in 1658, for by deed dated August 2, 1658, Francis Carpenter conveyed a tract of land in Westmoreland County to "Robert Coleman of Mobjack Bay, Gloucester County." D. & W. Book 1, page 103. Westmoreland County Records. Thereafter he acquired by grant a tract of land on Burnt Creek in Gloucester County, adjoining lands of Daniel Clark, Richard Foster "and another development of his own." This grant is dated March 18, 1662. Pat. Book 5, page 352. By grant dated March 10, 1672, he acquired two hundred acres adjoining Clark and others. Pat. Book 6, page 34. His neighbors and adjoining land owners were, among others, Captain Lawrence Smith, Daniel Clark, Daniel Laugham, Thomas and Jeffrey Graves. See Pat. Book 5, page 240; Pat. Book 6, page 560; Pat. Book 7, page 163. From the location of the lands described in the various grants, the property of Robert Coleman can be said to have been situated near "The Great Road leading to Tindall's point" (now Gloucester Point) in Gloucester County, Virginia.

All of the early Gloucester County land and court records have been destroyed. Therefore, neither a will of Robert Coleman of Gloucester County nor documentary evidence of the date of his death has been found. It is reasonable to assume, however, that his death occurred

circa 1680, for after that date no further evidence of his activities was found.

Based on entires in the Register of Abbingdon Parish, Gloucester County, which covers this period, and other available evidence, it is conchded that Robert Coleman and his wife, whose name is unknown, but possibly may have been Elizabeth Grizzell, left the following children:

- (2) Thomas m. Rebecca _____
- Jan 8* (2) Robert m. Ann Spilsbe _____
- (2) Grizzell m. Benjamin Clements
- (2) John m. (1) Margaret _____, (2) Ann _____
- (2) Joseph m. Agnes Adleston(?)
- (2) Daniel m. _____

Your compiler has examined all of the evidence which he has found available, and based on this evidence he has drawn the following conclusions: (a) That Henry Coleman was the first of the name to settle in the Colony and that he was married; (b) Anthony Coleman was related to William Coleman and probably a brother; (c) Richard Coleman was active in the Colony from 1650-1670. He was married, but whether he left children is problematical; (d) That William Coleman died in Westmoreland County in 1665, unmarried and without issue and was a brother of *Men. 9,* Richard Coleman; (e) Robert Coleman immigrated to the *Contd.* Colony circa 1638, and was settled in Gloucester County near Mobjack Bay in 1658; (f) That Robert Coleman of

According to the Abbingdon Parish Register, Benjamin Clemments and (2) Grizzell Coleman (?) had the following children baptised.

- (3) Ann
- (3) Elizabeth
- (3) Grizzell
- (3) Richard
- (3) Grizzell
- (3) Benjamin
- (3) Thomas

It is to be noted that two daughters of this couple bore the name Grizzell. This was probably due to the death of the first in infancy, and a second daughter was given the same name, a practice not uncommon in the early days.

Men. 8. (2) Robert Coleman was born in 1656 as evidenced
Contd. by his depositions given in 1712. See Deed and Will Book 13, page 76. Essex County, Virginia, Records.

His first appearance in available records is as a signer of the "New Kent Petition" in 1688. 41 Va. Mag. of Hist. and Biog., page 196, et seq. He was probably living in New Kent County at that time. The records of New Kent County have been destroyed; therefore, nothing further has been ascertained about the life of (2) Robert Coleman until he moved into Old Rappahannock County.

By deed dated January 22, 1688, (2) Robert Coleman and Leonard Chamberlain, as joint tenants, acquired a

Coleman to acknowledge sale of her dowery in the land sold. Incorporated in the instrument is the following: "Mr. Coleman when acknowledged demand twenty shillings for yr friend and Servant: Katherine Langford". Rappahannock Deeds, 1688-1691, page 272. In 1692 Robert Yard of Gloucester County appointed him as his attorney. Orders 1692-1695, page 143. Essex County Records.

He was licensed to keep an ordinary at Hobbs Hole (now Tappahannock) by order entered April 10, 1693. Order Book 1, page 176. Essex County Records. He operated this ordinary for the remainder of his life.

Having been appointed a member of the County Court, he qualified as such April 11, 1700. Deed and Will Book 10 page 45. Essex County Records. (2) Robert Coleman continued as a member of the Court until he was appointed Sheriff of the County on April 27, 1710. Deed, etc. Book 1 page 314. Essex County Records. At times he also appears a member of courts of Oyer and Terminer. See Order Book 1704-1710. Essex County Records. For purpose and jurisdiction of Courts of Oyer and Terminer in the Colony see 1 Bruce, Institutional History of Virginia, page 671, et. seq.

From 1704 he was referred to as Captain Robert Coleman. Order Book 3, page 147 and subsequent order books. Essex County Records.

Hen. 8.
Contd.

The evidence discovered is convincing that (2) Robert Coleman was born in Gloucester County, Virginia, and a son of (1) Robert Coleman of Mobjack Bay in that County. See also The Graves Family of Essex County, Mrs. P. W. Hiden, 16 William and Mary Quarterly (2d) page 650, et seq.

There is little, if any, doubt that (2) Robert Coleman married Ann Spilsbe circa 1678 in Gloucester County and after living in New Kent County settled in that part of Old Rappahannock County which became Essex County in 1688.

He died in Essex County, and his will was admitted to probate August 13, 1713. Will Book 13, page 439. Essex County Records. His will names his children as follows:

- Essex 7.
- (3) Thomas m. Sarah
 - (3) Robert m. Mary Clayton
 - (3) Elizabeth m. Daniel Brown
 - (3) Edward m. Ann Reeves
 - (3) Ann m. William Covington
 - (3) Grizzell m. John Chamberlain
 - (3) Spilsbe m. Mary Crow

(2) Daniel Coleman was a land owner and living in King and Queen County, Virginia, in 1704. See Rent Rolls of King and Queen County, Virginia, Colonial Abstracts by Beverly Fleet. The Records of both King and Queen and King William Counties have been destroyed; therefore,

The children of this couple were:

- (6) Mary m. James Wilson
- (6) Thomas m. Frances Catherine Hill
- (6) Elizabeth m. Preston Trotter

(4) Ann Coleman (daughter of (3) Thomas Coleman) married Philip Clayton and settled in Culpeper County, Virginia. See History of St. Mark's Parish as Revised by Green, page 55, et seq.

(4) Grizzell Coleman is referred to in the will of John Chamberlain as being a daughter of (3) Thomas Coleman. See Will Book 4, page 110. Essex County Records. Nothing further is known of her.

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Contd. (3) Robert Coleman (son of (2) Robert Coleman) born circa 1680, married Mary Clayton January 26, 1702, and settled in King and Queen County.

Fortunately, there has been preserved a memorandum book kept by (3) Robert Coleman. This book is now in the possession of Miss Helen Mills, one of his descendants. Miss Mills is presently dean of Coker College, Hartsville, South Carolina. This book, among other memoranda, contains the following:

"January ye 26th, 1702

Then was Robert Coleman and Mary Clayton joined in the holy estate of matrimony.

April ye 27th 1704, then was Samuel

Coleman born.

February ye 18th 1707, then was Ann
Coleman born.

October ye 24th 1709, then was Susanna
Coleman born.

Susanna Clayton died November 6th 1710.

Susanna Coleman was born October ye 18th ye
same year."

See 7. Mary Clayton, wife of (3) Robert Coleman, was a
Contd. daughter of Samuel Clayton and Susanna, his wife. Samuel
Clayton died in Essex County, for his will was admitted
to probate there. See Will Book 5, page 349. Essex
County Records.

It is to be noted that two daughters of (3) Robert
Coleman and Mary, nee Clayton, were given the name of
Susanna. The first probably died in infancy, and the
next child was given the same name.

(3) Robert Coleman apparently was a man of conside-
rable means and took quite an interest in the affairs
of his county. The records of King and Queen have all
been destroyed, but from records of other counties, it
appears that he was a large landowner and was designated
as Robert Coleman, Gent. of King and Queen County in some
records. This designation leads to the belief that he
was either a member of the County Court or held some
other position of public trust.

By patent of December 2, 1723, he acquired Fifteen Hundred acres of land in Spotsylvania County on south side of the middle river of the Mattaponi. Pat. Book 11, page 226. He acquired six hundred and eighty-eight acres in Spotsylvania County in addition to the above mentioned patent. Pat. Book 13, page 90. Then by patent of May 4, 1734, he acquired four hundred acres in "the great forks of the Rappahannock River". Pat. Book 15, page 209.

Mary, wife of (3) Robert Coleman, died probably about 1735, for thereafter she does not appear as a party to deeds. Sometime after the death of his wife, he moved to Caroline County. He conveyed four hundred and forty acres of land to his son, Robert, in Spotsylvania County, in 1741. Deed Book C, page 155. Spotsylvania County Records. In 1745 he conveyed three hundred and sixteen acres to his son, John, in Spotsylvania County. Deed Book D, page 172. Spotsylvania County Records. By deed of October 1, 1745, he conveyed three hundred and forty-six acres in Spotsylvania County to his son, Thomas, Deed Book D, page 238. Spotsylvania County Records.

Allen 7. (3) Robert Coleman died in Caroline County, for his will was admitted to probate there May 13, 1748. His son, Spilsbe Coleman, qualified as executor. Order Book 1746-1755, page 81. Caroline County Records.

The will books of Caroline County for this period have been destroyed. Therefore, the contents of the will of (3) Robert Coleman and the names of his beneficiaries are not of record. Hawes Coleman, a grandson of (3) Robert Coleman, in his manuscript stated that his grandfather had "seven sons and several daughters." He named the sons as follows: Wyatt, Samuel, Robert, John, Thomas, Richard and Spilsby. He did not, unfortunately, give the names of the daughters.

It must be considered that at the time Hawes Coleman wrote his sketch of the family line he was eighty-three years of age and may have been mistaken in some of his statements. This compiler is convinced that Wyatt Coleman was a son of Samuel Coleman and a grandson of (3) Robert Coleman, for no record of a son of (3) Robert Coleman bearing the name of Wyatt has been found.

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could The children of (3) Robert Coleman and his wife Mary, nee Clayton, were as follows:

- (4) Samuel m. Elizabeth Wyatt
- (4) Robert m. Elizabeth Lindsay
- (4) Thomas m. Sarah Farish
- John m.* (4) John m. Eunice Hawes
- (4) Richard m. Ann Wooten
- (4) Spilsbe died unmarried
- (4) Ann
- (4) Susanna
- (4) Elizabeth m. William Daniel.